



# TASO NEWS

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

The purpose of this organization shall be, "To promote, develop and support symphony orchestras"

*Celebrating 51 Years Fall - 2020*

## Power of the Arts - The Arts Matter!

### **Marking the work of the 86th Texas Legislature - January - May 2019**

Texans for the Arts is honored to have led the legislative strategy in the 86th Texas Legislative Session that led to the largest single increase and the largest total budget for the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) in the state agency's history. (The TCA was established in 1965).

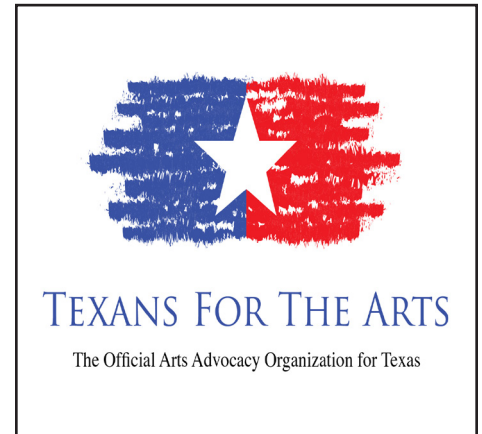
The final budget approved in the 86th for the Texas Commission on the Arts is \$16,443,083 for 2019-2020 and \$11,493,038 for 2020-2021. These funds include a restoration of \$5 million initially appropriated in the 84th Session and cut in the 85th Session, and an additional increase of \$5 million for a total of \$10 million for the TCA's Cultural District grant program, and a new \$250,000 for the TCA's Arts Respond grants that expressly fund programs that use the arts as a means for healing in working with veterans and active duty service men and women and their families.

Texans for the Arts would like to give a particular shout out to Chairman **Jane Nelson**, Chair of Senate Finance Committee and Chairman **John Zerwas**, Chair of House Appropriations Committee, (and both leading the Conference Committee) in addition to a "thank you" to all of the legislators and their staffs who worked with us on this effort, all of our member

organizations and individuals who support our work year round, to the Texas Cultural Trust for the important use of the "State of the Arts/Invest in the Arts" economic impact analysis and for providing testimony and advocacy support throughout the session, to all of the attendees at Texans for the Arts Foundation's 2019 Arts Advocacy Day who made over 80 legislative visits, and to the other arts leaders who traveled across the state to testify at House Appropriation and Senate Finance Committee hearings. It has taken ongoing work over the past 19 months to build a strong advocacy case for increasing the state's investment in the arts.

These funds will make a significant difference in the Texas Commission on the Arts' capacity to reach even more citizens across the state with dynamic, engaging, thoughtful and community enriching cultural and arts programming.

In addition to our funding efforts for the Texas Commission on the Arts', Texans for the Arts helped initiate SB1319, the County HOT Transparency Bill. This bill would have required County leadership to submit annual reports to the Texas Comptroller of County HOT % and receipts from across the state some % of which is eligible for arts and cultural tourism funding. While the bill passed in both the House and Senate it got vetoed by the Governor at the 11th hour



due to an unrelated amendment attached to the bill. We would like to thank Senator **Brian Birdwell**, and our partnership with Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, for their support in trying to ensure the passage of this bill. We will start fresh in the 87th Session with a revised version and try again!

### **Awards of Excellence**

Please send in your Awards of Excellence. When we are able to assemble and celebrate, we will combine the winners from both years.

This will be a very festive occasion joining 2019 through 2021 winners, so please send in your application- ASAP. The 2020-2021 applications are on line and waiting for you to submit your proposals. <https://www.tasovolunteers.com>.

The deadline is September 1, 2020. Send to [afind1527@gmail.com](mailto:afind1527@gmail.com). Contact **Annette Findley** TASO Awards of Excellence 2020-2021, if you have questions.

# President's Letter



August 1, 2020

Greetings from the President:

Our first Zoom TASO Board Meeting was attended by over 40 TASO Members. Who would have thought that we could accomplish a successful meeting with no one travelling? We did get much done in a record time in that meeting.

As you know, life as we knew it is not with any of us currently. I ran into an old friend today . . . and the closeness that we all share in TASO, or with any close person or group, is not accidental because of the bonds that we have forged in the past.

Our organization, founded in 1966 by **Mrs. Juanita Miller** and many other great Texas volunteers, got its beginnings by the synergy and enthusiasm of others in the same room.

At our Zoom meeting, we appreciate that **Ann Graham**, Texans for the Arts, was able to give us incite of how we must advocate, and advocate, and advocate for our Texas Symphony organizations.

Thank you for the ground work laid by many of our past TASO Presidents, including **Kathy Sheldon**, 2019-2020 TASO President, who was not able to be honored at the Austin Conference in April. **Susan Douglas** and **Beth Grimm**, we all thank you for your excellent planning for the 2020 Austin Conference, that we did not get to enjoy.

Events may be cancelled; however, it makes the challenge greater that we continue "Moving our Texas Symphonies Forward," the tagline that was chosen for this TASO year.

Think of what you can do for your Symphony organization, and the musicians. While we shelter in place, there is much that we can do. We can attend Zoom meetings, we can call our symphony friends, we can watch performances online, or see performances through live streaming. Our own Plano Symphony Orchestra is planning a "virtual happy hour," so that we can stay connected.

While the future is not promised, we must act to keep our volunteer organizations alive. In our Newsletter, I look forward to hearing about how our member groups "keep the music playing." Thank you to **Sandy Secor**, for publishing another wonderful newsletter.

One last request, is that your group submit an Awards of Excellence applicant, and a Recognized Project that your organization has successfully completed. Both of the awards applications are on the website [www.tasovolunteers.com](http://www.tasovolunteers.com). It is another way that we share the Awards of Excellence recipients and our Recognized Projects among our groups.

We do plan of recognizing the 2020 winners at our upcoming Conference in Waco. Plan your calendar now for April 8-10, 2021 in Waco. **Marsha Green**, **Dianne Sawyer**, and **Suzanne Alexander** are planning great speakers and events for our 2021 TASO Conference.

Until we meet, please keep yourselves healthy. I look forward to our meeting in September.  
Sincerely,

Janie Orr  
TASO President

*Newsletter Deadlines; August 1, 2020; December 1, 2020; March 1, 2021*  
*TASO Newsletter Editor, Sandy Secor, [jwsecor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jwsecor@sbcglobal.net)*

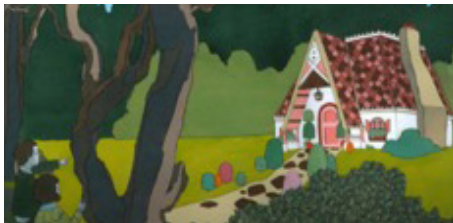


To learn more about the Austin Symphony Youth Leadership Council, go to: <https://wslaustin.org/youth-programs/youth-leadership-council/mission>.



**Can't Stop the Music – Austin Symphony Orchestra**  
Opening Season is Going Virtual!  
The Austin Symphony Orchestra has pushed its in-person opening to January 2021. For its Fall opening season, the ASO is hosting virtual concerts with many interactive participation suggestions!

### **Austin Symphony Orchestra's Children's Day Art Park**



Another award-winning summer program that the Women's Symphony League organizes and provides volunteers for is the ASO Children's Day Art Park. From the petting orchestra instruments, balloon-making and face-painting, free lemonade, and concerts from local and national children artists, this fifty-plus year event has entertained thousands of Austin visitors each year. This year, the program has gone virtual. The Austin Symphony Orchestra is excited to bring "Children's Day Art Park" to viewers in the comfort and safety of their own homes!

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!**

As if we all haven't figured it out already, COVID-19 has wrecked havoc with life as we used to know it. TASO has not escaped. Since March 2020 this pandemic has presented many challenges seemingly without solutions and requiring us to put our collective heads together to try to manage it. All that to say that TASO needs your help.

Because of the situation many member organizations have not been able to meet in person. Many concerts, fundraising, educational programs and business meetings have come to a screeching halt. Much of the usual business of these groups has been left undone. In picking the pieces back up again, there is much to do.

Most of the guilds/leagues have paid their annual dues and for this we say thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU! Your membership in TASO allows us to continue to support our work on behalf on symphonic music statewide and with the individual guild and leagues. To date 14 groups have rejoined, 17 individuals have joined as Patrons and 2 have come in as Affiliates. There's always room for more; there's strength in numbers.

Is your organization on our list? Would you like to be included as a Patron or Affiliate member? Please contact me at [janw.taso@gmail.com](mailto:janw.taso@gmail.com) if you have any questions about membership or visit [www.tasovolunteers.com](http://www.tasovolunteers.com) to find the membership forms and more information.

Thank you again for your membership with TASO and your contribution of time to our great organization!

**Jan Woodward**, Membership Chairman 2020-2021

## **The Amarillo Symphony Guild**

The Amarillo Symphony Guild and the Amarillo Symphony are excited about our new season even though we are not sure what all that will hold for us. We continue to make plans and be flexible as guidelines unfold across our city and state.

Our fiscal year ended well in spite of the season being cut short. The Amarillo community is

very supportive. Guild President **LaDonna Tunnell** says the Guild was able to raise over \$60,000.00, for our programs and our symphony.

This year the Guild and the Symphony have new branding and are making some changes to our fundraisers and programs which I will tell you about as the year unfolds.

May you all be safe and well and have a prosperous year!

## Big Spring Symphony Guild

Prior to the COVID-19 Shutdown, The Big Spring Symphony (BSSO) and The Big Spring Symphony Guild were having a very successful season. Both the BSSO and the Guild were seeing major increases in fundraising numbers, ticket sales and attendance.

The 38th season, entitled, “The Good, The Better and The Beethoven” had a well attended kick-off week in September as reported in the TASO 2019/2020 Winter Newsletter. There was a near capacity crowd in the Big Spring Municipal Auditorium for “The Nutcracker Ballet”, featuring The Midland Festival Ballet on December 14th. Patrons came from all over Texas and it was a very special night, partially funded by a special \$10,000 grant from H-E-B Tournament of Champions. The Midland Festival Ballet did an outstanding job helping the audience capture the spirit of the season. At the close of the event, candy canes were distributed to the patrons by the Guild that were donated by Big Spring Ford. The Guild raised over \$1000 for their music student scholarship program with their Nutcracker ornament sales, water sales and the “Tips for Scholarship” Jar.

The February 8th, 2020 concert celebrated Beethoven’s 250th birthday and featured guest conductor, Maestro John Giordano, along with a special guest artist soprano, **Nicole Keeling**. Keeling is the daughter of long time BSSO Principal



Top: Courtesy photos from the Big Spring Herald of “The Nutcracker” Center: **Nicole Keeling** with her parents, **Nancy** and **Bruce** and **Maestro Giordano**. Bottom: Guest Conductor **John Giordano** leading the BSSO musicians during the February Concert.

# 7ASO News

Trombone Player, Doctor **Bruce Keeling**. The patrons were treated to a mix of Broadway and Pop to go with their Beethoven as Keeling stole their hearts with her incredible voice. Guest Conductor, Maestro **John Giordano**, knocked it out of the park as he led the very talented BSSO musicians. The Big Spring Symphony Guild hosted a Beethoven Birthday Party Reception at the close sponsored by Prosperity Bank and also celebrated another great fundraising intake on water sales and the "Tips for Scholarships" Jar.

Unfortunately in March, the Guild's big spring fundraiser with a Beethoven Birthday Party theme was postponed along with BSSO's Queen Concert with Guest Artists, Jeans 'N Classics that was scheduled for April. The July 3rd Pops in the Park Celebration was also canceled by the city and as of press time, all indoor large venues are still closed in Big Spring. The patrons and community have been very kind and patient thru this ordeal and still pledge their support when the new season begins.

**Keith Graumann**, Music Director and Conductor of the Big Spring Symphony, the BSSO Board and The Big Spring Symphony Guild are working very hard to bring Howard County and surrounding areas the great music experience they expect, while keeping the health and safety of their patrons at the top of their priority list. With high hopes for the ongoing

crises to improve, they marched on with plans for their 39th Season.

In a recent press release, Dr. Keith Graumann discussed the new season and the COVID-19 precautions. "We have obviously had to adjust our plans due to the Pandemic and social distancing requirements," he said. "While I had originally planned a season using a large number of players and adding extra players to several concerts, I have adjusted our plans and we will use a normal size orchestra in order to accomplish proper social distancing. Due to the many adjustments that have been made, I have entitled the season 'The Versatile Big Spring Symphony'." Graumann continued, "We will provide social distancing for the audience at our concerts in the Municipal Auditorium by skipping seats between individuals, couples or family groups. Social distancing will be a little more challenging for our players. For one thing, the winds and brass will not be able to wear masks. However, we can separate the players more than usual and move the entire orchestra downstage toward the audience providing more space between players. This will require adjustments in tuning and balance, another reason to call the season: 'The Versatile Big Spring Symphony'.

We have twice rescheduled our April Pops concert from last season and we will now perform 'The Music of Queen' on October 17, 2020. We will honor all tickets from last season and will include it as an extra concert

for our upcoming season subscribers."

Maestro Graumann gave a brief synopsis of the upcoming season: "Our opening concert is on September 19, 2020 and is entitled 'A Breath of Fresh Air'. We will feature Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, No. 6, a work that will be refreshing and entertaining for our audience. We will also feature one of my favorite artists, cellist **Jeffrey Lastrapes**, who will play the Elgar cello concerto.. 'The Music of Queen' will follow on October 17, 2020 as previously mentioned.

We will perform a 'Holiday Spectacular' on December 19, 2020. This is one of my favorite concerts to present and will include holiday favorites, sing-a-longs, vocal ensembles and soloists. We will feature students of **Gershon Garcia** as well as soloists **Lawrence Thibeault** and **Tara Trowbridge**.

Our winter concert will be on February 6, 2021 and is entitled 'Out of this World'. Maestro **John Giordano** will guest conduct. We will announce a guest artist for this concert as plans are finalized. Our final concert of the season, 'Pops Extravaganza' will be on April 24, 2021 and feature 'The Texas Tenors'. The three 'Texas Tenors' are each well known artists in their own genres and include pop, country and operatic repertory. Their popularity has grown exponentially recently. Their performance with our orchestra will be a very fitting finale for our season, 'The Versatile Big Spring Symphony'."

## Dallas Symphony Orchestra League

\$954,722 was raised by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League for DSO's Education and Outreach Initiatives.

"Because of the dedication of the Board of Directors, League members, and generous donors, I am pleased to announce that the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League will be making a gift of \$954,722 to the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Education and Outreach initiatives," said League President **Kim Brannon**.

With pandemic restrictions in place, Kim ended her year as President through a Zoom video call with the board members to make the announcement of the gift and the turnover of leadership to the new President **Anne Ligon**. Kim held up the gavel for all to see which will later be given in person. The call was held on Wednesday, May 13 at the exact time their normal annual meeting would have been held.

"It has been the privilege of my lifetime to serve as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra League 2019-2020 President," said Kim.

An hour later, DSO President & CEO **Kim Noltemy** arrived at her home for the check exchange and board members surprised her with a drive by parade. The members kept 6 feet social distancing requirements while driving by in their cars decorated with festive signs and balloons. DSO Trumpet player **Kevin Finnamore** made a surprise visit and played a brief celebratory serenade from the



Top: DSOL board member **Carole Ann Brown**, DSO Vice President of Development **James Leffler**, DSOL President **Kim Brannon**, DSO President & CEO **Kim Noltemy**, DSOL incoming President **Anne Ligon**, DSO Director of Volunteer Services **Allison Brodnax**. Left: President **Kim Brannon** with check. Right: Drive by Parade.

sidewalk.

The League's success resulted from the fundraisers held earlier in the year which included Fashion Notes, the Presentation Ball, and the Junior Symphony Ball. A final fundraiser Savor the Symphony was a seated wine dinner planned to be held in April, but was transformed into an online raffle.

## Houston Symphony League

### "Making Music at Home"

Houston Symphony's "Making Music at Home" project is a fun way to educate your children and grandchildren during COVID-19

and help the Symphony improve their children's programming! It includes fun and educational videos such as "Go High, Go Low! Kids Activity Inspired by **Richard Strauss**", "Make Music at Home! Percussion with the Family, with **Mark Griffith**", "For Kids & Families: Exploring Harmonies through Canon". Feel free to pass this on to your friends with kids and grand kids.

Those of us with small children or grandchildren can access the Making Music at Home Webpage on the Houston Symphony website. **Allison Conlan** in the Symphony's Education Department would love to hear feedback about what kids find

engaging and what they didn't seem to engage with as much. Please include the age(s) of children. There is no deadline.

## Summer Solstice Event

The Houston Symphony League and Tootsies hosted its inaugural Summer Solstice Event for potential new members on June 20, 2020. The event was streamed via zoom with President **Fran Fawcett Peterson** providing the welcome remarks, followed by **Cheryl Byington**, VP of Membership, advising on the perks of Symphony League membership, along with the chairs of the social connection groups talking about the new informal activities being initiated this season. The brief presentations were followed by **Fady** of Tootsies giving a 'show and tell' on fun and festive summer fashions and accessories. Everyone enjoyed the event and did a lot of shopping with 10% of the proceeds going to the Houston Symphony!

## Our Symphony during COVID 19

Please enjoy these inspiring examples of how the Symphony and Embedded musicians are sharing their talents during the Covid shutdown with students and the healing power of music with our Community when it is needed most.

High School Residency students were able to learn and record music to play duos with our Community-Embedded Musicians to keep them motivated to play their instruments while at home. This includes Beverly Hills Intermediate School and Dobie High School students performing the "Goin' Home" theme from



Left: **Fady of Tootsies**. Right: **Cheryl Byington, Fran Peterson and Beth Wolff**.

Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 and "Gavotte" by Reinhold Glière: <https://houston-symphony.org/high-school-residency-chamber-music-project/>

**David Connor**, Community-Embedded Musician, arranged his own version of "Baby Shark" as requested by a patient at MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital. He starts with the "Jaws Theme" and then wonderfully utilizes the mandolin as "Baby Shark" and various guitars as "Mommy Shark", "Daddy Shark", and "Grandma Shark" and the Double Bass as "Grandpa Shark": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPWwfS3VChc&feature=youtu.be>.



Houston Symphony violinist **Christopher Neal** explains "how

the violin works" virtually to patients in our partner hospitals: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onsWCbKquJc>

Community-Embedded Musician David Connor performing the Justin Timberlake song "Can't Stop the Feeling" from the movie "Trolls" for Symphony partner Brookwood Community, a center for adults with disabilities, to incorporate in their "music & movement" class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7luprpVD4aY&feature=youtu.be>.

## Plano Symphony Orchestra

During the COVID-19 VIRUS Pandemic, the Plano Symphony Orchestra (PSO) has adapted and changed the way we provide music to our subscribers and the public. The following actions have been taken to keep Board and Guild members informed, subscribers and the public engaged, and to acquire new and additional funds.



# TASO News

**2020-2021 SEASON:** The PSO plans to perform a full 8-concert subscription season of performances, commencing in September 2020 and ending in April 2021. Any performances that cannot be performed live will be moved to the summer months. We are working with our performance venues to implement new health and safety measures that follow local and state public health COVID-19 guidelines. In addition, the PSO has been exploring new ways to engage our subscribers who may be reluctant to attend a live concert. In that regard, we are exploring “live streaming” our concerts for ticket holders who choose not to attend in person. Subscription ticket sales are ongoing and, while behind last year’s rate, are still very encouraging.

**The Zoom Life:** Zoom is a lifesaver! Zoom conferencing software is being utilized for Board and Guild meetings as well as other meetings. The PSO will be hosting a “Virtual Donor Happy Hour with the Maestro” on Thursday, August 20 at 6 pm. There will be short videos and Q&A sessions.

**ADULT CONCERTS:** When faced with the COVID-19 outbreak this spring, the PSO was forced to cancel the remainder of our 2019-2020 season. Fortunately, most ticket holders chose to donate the value of their tickets back to the PSO in lieu of receiving a refund. At that time, we began

exploring new ways to bring music to our community. Fifteen broadcasts of past performances were shown on Saturday evenings for free via the PSO website and YouTube, beginning in March 2020. Response to the broadcasts was very positive. This program has kept our patrons engaged and has been viewed as far away as Mexico. Since the PSO Patriotic Pops concert could not be presented live, the 2016 concert was broadcast on July 4, 2020 and was also made available at the Dallas Arboretum.

The videos of these and other PSO concerts and Maestro’s notes are available on YouTube using the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PlanoSymphony/videos>

**CHILDREN CONCERTS:** The PSO presented a live Family Concert on June 21, 2020 at a venue where appropriate social distance practices were achieved. The PSO also partnered with the Plano Public Libraries and sponsors, Ebby Halliday Realtors and the Plano Rotary Club, to present virtual musical story-times geared towards pre-K and early elementary school children.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** A major success story! Since the pandemic started, the PSO has seen an extraordinary increase in its social media presence. Social media engagement has increased 700% based on Facebook analytics, due to a regular calendar of



weekly posts designed to help tell the PSO’s story and thank our donors. Information on our virtual concerts were posted on Facebook, as were updates on our Emergency Relief Fund. All donors who contributed were thanked. During this time, the PSO has also introduced to the public PSO staff members, musicians, and volunteers on Facebook.

**EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND:** The PSO Board of Directors set up an Emergency Relief Fund. The purpose was to help replace lost revenue from concerts and educational programs. To date, the PSO has raised \$47,300.00 from 105 donors, of which 63% are new donors to the PSO. In addition, the PSO has received grants from TCA and TACA. For the upcoming season, the Dallas Foundation AWARE organization has provided a grant for our Healing Notes program. Several organizations have renewed their sponsorship as well.

<https://www.tasovolunteers.com>

## San Angelo Symphony Guild

Greetings from the San Angelo Symphony Guild!

We hope this publication finds you all doing well as we learn to navigate these uncertain times.

We are thrilled that we did have a chance to complete our Journey to the East as our gala was held on August 1, 2020. It was previously scheduled for March 21 and then again for May second. We are so very proud of the gala chair mothers and sponsors that persevered to see this through. It was very different in that it is usually an event of 300+ people and had to be only 60 due to space restrictions. This meant that it could only be attended by the parents and grandparents of our ninth grade Belle and Beaux honorees. The presentation was aired on Facebook live. I have shared two videos on the Taso Facebook page of this event and pictures are shown here.

A crew of board members and our high school ambassadors delivered meals to the homes of those underwriters who had purchased large tables but were not attending family members of the honorees.

Plans were already underway for next year's gala as we were waiting to have this year's so that was a new dynamic for sure. I know that you have experienced fundraising deficits as have we due to the pandemic. Our Gala silent auction was online and also at the event and did very well as did the live auction.



*Beaux , Belles and their families from the "Journey to the East " Gala held August 1st.*

Earlier in the spring baskets were delivered to our graduating High school guild ambassador seniors and each board member wrote a note to each of them as we tried to be a significant part of our community's efforts to honor the seniors that were so sadly robbed of most if not all of their spring events.

We are gearing up for our next year which is themed the "San Angelo Symphony Guild, The Greatest Show on Earth and will have a gala with a Cirque du Soleil theme. Our first meeting will be entitled "Juggling into



a New Year" which we think is highly appropriate. Our symphony season will start in December instead of having the normal October and November concerts. I know many of you are in the same situation.

# CREATING CONNECTIONS TASO 2021

**APRIL 8-10, 2021**

**Hosted by: Waco Symphony Council**

The WSC is delighted to be hosting TASO 2021! We realize that we may have some special challenges, but feel we are ready to meet them head on with careful planning. It is our hope that TASO 2021 will be a time for reconnecting with each other as we continue our work of supporting symphony orchestras in Texas.

We are approaching planning cautiously for the time being. The Hilton in Waco just opened the end of July but with limited staff. The block of rooms and meeting space has been secured. You will find the link for hotel reservations on the **TASO Website**. We encourage members to go ahead and make their hotel reservations.

The Waco Symphony Orchestra will not technically have a new 2020-2021 season but there are a few concerts on the schedule carried over from this past year including a scheduled pops concert on Thursday, April 8, 2021 featuring America. Although this concert was sold out this past year before it was postponed we think there will be some tickets available for TASO attendees. This aspect of the conference is just one of those situations that require us to be flexible. We will keep you posted about the status of the concert.

Again, Waco is excited to welcome you to our city and we promise we will do our best to meet your expectations for a fun but educational conference!

**Marsha K. Green, Dianne Sawyer and Suzanne Alexander, Co-Chairs TASO 2021**