



We're in transition...

A lot of things have changed over the past year and a half. We've decided to take this opportunity to make a couple of changes to our program as well. We usually have our annual conference in the fall. This year, we will host a mini-conference virtually and transition to a spring conference in person, we hope.

One of the ways we share best practices is to look for communities and persons who have cool things going on from which we all learn a little something that we might use or by which we might be inspired. We invite you to join us on October 28 to hear from two Arkansas residents who are making cool things happen in their local communities.

ACDS Fall Mini Conference 2021 October 28

10 am – 11 am

Will Staley, [Thrive](#)

Will will share some of the projects they are working on that look to improve quality of place in some of our rural communities.

Thrive Inc is a nonprofit design firm. It applies a community-centric design process to the development of branding, graphic design, public art, and other public amenities for Helena-West Helena, in Phillips County, Arkansas and the Delta Region. Local youth contribute in an integral way to Thrive's work, including through paid internship opportunities, which further fosters civic pride and economic development while introducing creative leadership career paths.

Click [here](#) to register for the Zoom meeting for this session and the business meeting that will follow.



WILL STALEY founder & executive director, Thrive

An Arkansas native, Will studied at the University of Arkansas School of Architecture for two years, received his BFA in Graphic Design at the Kansas City Art Institute (2004) and a Masters of Industrial Design from Pratt in New York City, where Thrive was birthed as a thesis project in 2007. Will was a design intern at the Smithsonian Institute and then worked for a year at the William J. Clinton Foundation in Harlem, NYC, as a Fellow in the Department of Domestic Policy. A co-founder of Thrive, Will is the Executive Director and Creative Director of Thrive's Design Services department.

11 am – 11:30 am

ACDS Membership meeting -- for those members who are interested, we will conduct a very short membership meeting after Will's session to present our annual updates.

2 pm – 3 pm

Christy Ouei, [MuleKick Restaurant](#)

Christy will share how her unique business strategy provides positive results for her company as well as her staff and discuss adjustments she made to survive the pandemic.

After both having separate careers, Burt Adams and Christy Ouei wanted something they could do together and for that something to have a purpose. Late in the summer of 2018, they found a location near SAU that they thought fit their vision, and after a short negotiation, it was theirs.

The whole year prior, they had been trying to come up with "what Magnolia needed." Finally, it was decided that craft beer, pizza, wings, coffee, small-batch ice cream from Arkansas, live events and music IS just what the town needed.

Any given Wednesday night sees the place packed. Packed... on a Wednesday. So maybe they are on the right track. Throw in their desire to be environmentally sustainable, and that their employees are also the recipient of an amazing experience so they can pass it onto customers, and it seems like a winning combination.

Click [here](#) to register for the Zoom meeting for this session.



Christy Ouei, entrepreneur and business owner, MuleKick

A life-long resident of south Arkansas, Christy attended Stamps High School and Southern Arkansas University where she obtained a degree in agribusiness. Christy and her husband opened MuleKick in 2019 and have been “kickin’ it” ever since. Leadership and staff development are a big part of her business success as her business footprint in south Arkansas continues to grow. With a business motto of “never business as usual”, customers get a unique experience at MuleKick with top customer service. Christy and her husband have a son, Beau, who is a college freshman at Texas Tech University.

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