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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Bailey Curwick |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Relationship |
| What is your name and email address? | Jamie Rivera; Rivera.j18@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Instagram: bwick454 |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Bailey has always been an advocate for change and equality. She is passionate about our community and strives to educate people about current events rather than pushing her own agenda. Bailey works for the city as a journalist and prior to that worked as a film editor for the news. She helps me understand what's new in our city and what thoughts she has on our current events. Bailey aims to fight injustice through peace and she NEVER misses an opportunity to VOTE! Bailey has told me that there is power in numbers and every voice counts and she makes sure that she gets out and does what she can in her power. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Bailey is kind, passionate, loving and a true Texan. If there is ever a moment where I call Bailey up and let her know that I need her to participate in any community event that I'm involved with at HEB, she's there in a heart beat. She has a real love for people and embraces diversity to it's core. Bailey has even found her own voice at her precious work and has spoken out about injustices and brought about change. I don't know anyone more deserving of their dream wedding than this amazing couple. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | I am not sure. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Bailey has always been an advocate for change and equality. She is passionate about our community and strives to educate people about current events rather than pushing her own agenda. Bailey works for the city as a journalist and prior to that worked as a film editor for the news. She helps me understand what's new in our city and what thoughts she has on our current events. Bailey aims to fight injustice through peace and she NEVER misses an opportunity to VOTE! Bailey has told me that there is power in numbers and every voice counts and she makes sure that she gets out and does what she can in her power. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Bailey grew up in bay city where the town was tiny and everyone knew each other. She definitely faced some extremely hard challenges that I truly would be best if these stories came from her, but it rattled her family in many ways. She's overcame all the hurdles and never once let them hold her back. With these challenges, the only thing that kept them all together was love. I believe this love is what has made her the woman she is today. She believes so much in love; love her for family, her friends, her community and for people who believe in "treat people the way you would like to be treated". |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | She is frequently posting articles on her social media about our current events. Since she works for the city, she will post and share information that is relevant without trying to be "too biased". |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Bertha Rios & Addison |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Kara, karajobmann@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | @yo_gurlbertha |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Bertha and Addison have been together for years, truly high school sweet hearts, and they embody everything love is. They love each other so unconditionally and fiercely and you can feel that love in every move they make. Bertha is a Black woman and a works tirelessly as a caretaker- she brings joy, empathy and life to the people shes takes care of. You can see the love Addison has for Bertha just by the look in his eyes- whether in pictures or in person you can feel the adoration he carries for his fiance. I couldn't think of a better couple to win this- you couldn't write a more perfect love story or imagine or create a more deserving couple. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Addison and Bertha are extremely hard workers and deserve nothing less than an extraordinary day. Bertha helps to support her mother, who has a chronic illness, and her family with financial aid and caretaking. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Unsure |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | As a Black woman and caretaker Bertha works tirelessly to advocate on behalf of not only Black lives, but also those who are vulnerable, suffering from chronic illness and cannot advocate or take care of themselves. She is selfless and relentless in her work, her hobbies and in fighting against racial injustice of all kinds. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Bertha has not had an easy life. She has suffered from mental health issues and worked her a** off to lose over 100 pounds. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Bertha embodies the daily activist. She is fearless in addressing injustices to encourage people to not only speak out themselves but to let them know that the are not alone in their fight and feelings/emotions. I seriously cannot say enough about how this woman not only fights every day against racial injustice and to make the world a better place as a whole but to also make the lives of her friends/family exponentially more fun, interesting and full of love. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Brock Birden & Jesus Villegas |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Relationship |
| What is your name and email address? | Brooke Schmolly brookesschmolly@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | @mostlybirden @lasvillegas_ |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Brock & Jesus' love story is not your "typical" love story, but it makes it even more special. They met on Tinder (okay I guess that's "typical") when Brock first moved to Austin in 2017. Despite having not been "out" yet, Brock took his first leap of faith in meeting someone he could potentially envision a relationship with. Brock & Jesus hit it off right away on their first date, when they went to a bar for Jesus' birthday... they've been inseparable ever since. They made long distance work, moved across the country together, & then eventually made the decision to relocate permanently back to Austin, where they could picture raising a family together. They have had their fair share of ups & downs, especially being an interracial gay couple, but have proved to be stronger amidst every obstacle. They recently finished building a house together & will be moving into their first house in just a few days! They are always a pleasure to be around, their personalities are infectious, & they always make you feel welcome. It's truly a delight to watch their love story progress & grow throughout the years. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Brock & Jesus are the epitome of love. Not only do they exhibit the love for each other that everyone dreams of, they also exhibit that same love for their: friends, family, & strangers who are just as deserving despite race, gender, sex, religion, etc. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | They support Give Me 5 & BLM. Jesus donates a portion of his paycheck to provide support for underprivileged children to attend college. Brock & Jesus also provide Christmas gifts for underprivileged children each year. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Brock & Jesus advocate for racial equality, justice, & diversity by educating friends, family, & strangers: with their voices, through their social media pages, & work. As the Portfolio Sales and Marketing Manager for Cardinal Group Companies & member of the Culture Team, Brock regularly uses his voice as a proud, black, gay man to advocate for what is right. Following the George Floyd murder, Brock instructed his teams to close the offices for a day in order to educate themselves on Black History, racial equality, & diversity. As a 2nd grade teacher, Jesus utilizes the entire school year to educate his students on Black History & created a month long lesson plan for Black History Month. As an interracial gay couple, Brock & Jesus regularly encounter bias & prejudice. However, their spirit & love to continue advocating for BLM, LGBTQ+, & justice does not waiver. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Brock grew up in Baltimore, MD with his mom, step-mom, & sister. In high school, he struggled with accepting himself & chose to keep his sexuality secret. After graduating from high school, he attended Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, PA where he received his Bachelors Of Science & Public Relations degree, while still keeping his sexuality a secret. Following graduation, Brock followed his desire for wanderlust & moved to Gainesville, FL, 814 miles away from home to start his career in student housing. When a job opportunity presented itself that he couldn't pass up, Brock then made the even farther move to Austin, TX where he eventually met the love of his life, Jesus. Brock & Jesus continued to follow Brock's career, & moved to Pittsburgh, PA for a short 1 year before eventually returning to Austin. In 2018, Brock unexpectedly lost his sister to a diabetic coma. Within less of a year later, Brock lost his mother to a tragic work accident. Jesus has been Brock's constant throughout the past 2 years of sorrow & turmoil. Jesus' upbringing formed him into the strong, independent man needed to support Brock. Jesus grew up on a farm in a small country town in South Texas. With a graduating high school class of 23 students, he created his own path to be a teacher despite his father & brother both working in Border Patrol. Jesus graduated from Texas A&M Kingsville with a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies EC through 6 generalist. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Brock & Jesus are both proud supporters of the BLM movement. Being a black, gay man & Hispanic, gay man, Brock & Jesus both utilize their voices in their jobs, friendships, & every day life to educate & advocate for BLM. |
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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Brock Birden & Jesus Villegas |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Relationship |
| What is your name and email address? | Zaahirah Sourì zsourì@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Brock: @mostlybirden, Jesus: @lasvillegas_ |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Brock and Jesus's love story all started with a right swipe! A few months before the two met, Brock had recently decided to make the move to Austin from Gainesville to move up in his career. With a new city came new opportunities of a home for Brock. He took the opportunity of moving to a new city, especially one as welcoming to all as Austin, to take the first step to becoming true to his sexuality as a gay man. At this time, Jesus was attending college in Kingsville and had already come out as gay for a few years. As most do these days, the two turned to dating apps and crossed each other's paths (or screens) on Tinder. It was love at first swipe! They hit it off when Jesus visited Austin for his 22nd birthday and were inseparable since! I've been fortunate to watch their relationship develop from the beginning and it's one that most, including myself, aspire to have. They love to experience new cuisines, travel together and love spending time with their fur child Chase. In a short time, they were able to create a strong bond by going through a ton of life experiences together. Together they have both literally and figuratively experienced some of the harshest summers in Texas and even the coldest winters when they moved across the country to Pennsylvania. They have been there for each other through it all including experiences as extremely devastating as losing loved ones, in the case of Brock losing both his sister and his mother unexpectedly. These experiences have helped them come out stronger and it is this continued support that makes their bond unbreakable. I believe the next chapter for them is taking their relationship to the next level and getting married (which they talk about all the time). |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | When I saw this giveaway I couldn't think of a couple more deserving! I believe they embody all the values you are looking for in the winner of this contest. Since I met them I've seen them continue to put others before themselves by the way they support their family, friends, community and each other. They love life, love the Austin community, and despite all the negativity that comes to them for being an openly gay minority couple, they always shine bright through their happiness. Furthermore, with everything that has happened over these past two years, with Brock's sister and mother passing unexpectedly, I feel like this would be a great positive thing for this couple. I can't imagine when this big day comes for Brock and how he will feel knowing that his sister and mother with not be with him in person for one of the biggest days of his life, rather they will be with him in spirit and memory. Making this day special for him would be a great gift and it is my honor nominating such a deserving couple. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Brock and Jesus are always looking to give back to those who are less fortunate. They donate to organizations that help underprivileged kids go to college and they donate gifts for kids in need during the holidays. Anytime they have the means to do so, they donate whatever they can to the homeless population around Austin. Recently, they've been donating to organizations that have been fighting for the BLM movement. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | As gay minorities, Brock being black and Jesus being Hispanic, the two have had plenty of first hand experiences with the inequalities and the injustices of the world we live in. Brock and Jesus both hold positions of leadership in their work in the community. Jesus is a 2nd grade teacher and regularly promotes racial equality and diversity in his classroom. He is a role model to his students and uses his position as an educator to teach his students about the importance of equality throughout his lessons. Jesus often thinks about his and Brock's future children, who will be Black/Hispanic, and always reminds his students of color that their success matters to him because society may not be on their side. As a teacher, Jesus also makes sure to educate his students on historic figures in Black History. He does this by creating lesson plans for his classroom and having discussions on racial injustices that have happened in our past and talks to students about what we can do to make a change. Jesus also is also a member of his school's Tiger Team that focuses on diversity, equality, and inclusion in schools. Brock also holds a position of leadership as a marketing manager for multiple different student housing communities. As a marketing manager Brock has the ability to control the messaging around promotions, advertisements and the websites of these communities. He makes sure that minorities are included and represented in all forms of communications. His values are shown and reflected throughout his work and those on his team are also able to learn from him. Aside from work, the two advocate for racial equality, justice and diversity in their personal lives as well. Not only do they quickly befriend everyone and anyone but they also educate their friends by sharing resources on social media as well having conversations that some might think are difficult and uncomfortable. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | <p>About Brock: Brock grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. The streets of Baltimore are not always the happiest of places and as a young boy, Brock thought that Baltimore lifestyle was the only lifestyle. Growing up Brock's mothers put him in sports like his other cousins. At that point in time Brock knew that was something he was not interested in but he never knew what that meant. His mother's noticed that Brock was a bright young boy and knew he was destined for something greater. In the middle of Brock's freshman year in high, which we all know is a crucial time in any teens life, his family including his mom, step-mom and older sister, moved out of Baltimore to give Brock a better chance to be something great. Brock played football, participated in track and became interested in musical theater all while he struggled his sexuality. After high school, Brock attended Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania where he earned his Bachelors of Science & Public Relations degree. Following graduation, Brock decided to move to Florida to find himself when a job opportunity arose. Then, as he moved into his career and excelled, he got a better offer but this time in Austin, TX. As I mentioned, Brock took this new opportunity to come out as gay.</p> <p>About Brock & Jesus: You can say that Brock likes to pick up and go with the flow, but, that all changed when he met Jesus. Brock and Jesus started dating and hit things off pretty quick. I noticed that Jesus drove 3 hours to Austin and 3 hours back to college in Kingsville every weekend. They did this long distance for 1 year until Jesus graduated college. After living in Austin together, the two followed Brock's career and moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a year. Jesus decided to follow his heart to support Brock and went along for the ride. Brock supported Jesus by helping him deal with moving to an unknown territory (it was the first time he has ever moved out of Texas) and Jesus supported Brock in this new career opportunity. They were together and their love for each other grew even more.</p> <p>Jesus also supported Brock in the most difficult times in his life. In 2018, Brock experienced his first unexpected and tragic loss in the family, his older sister who suffered from a diabetic coma. Brock was extremely devastated and was still mourning the loss of his sister when in 2019, he unexpectedly lost his mom to an accident that occurred at her work. Jesus was there for comfort and support when Brock needed him most. While Brock's family physically got smaller the love from his family, Jesus, grew much larger. They have truly shown what its like to be there for one another.</p> <p>About Jesus: Jesus grew in a small South Texas town where everybody knows everything. He was the youngest of three children and always lived in the shadows of his older brother and sister. He struggled with being bullied about his sexuality. To try to break down barriers while he struggled with finding himself, he found himself excelling in sports and academics to try to relieve any negativity coming his way. His father, instilled that with hard work, you can do what ever you put your mind to. After long school weeks, Jesus helped his dad work on his family ranch. This hard work made him realized that even though he loved the small town life, he wanted more and he truly did not know who he was yet. It was in college where he started becoming him true self and created his own path to be a teacher. During his time in College, Jesus realized that not everyone in the world would judge him for being himself; rather they loved his personally and supported him. He had a hard time coming out to his parents but once he did, his parents welcomed him with loving arms and continue to support him. Jesus graduated from Texas A&M Kingsville with a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies where he vowed to be the teacher he wished he had during his school years. Fast forward 3½ years later, Jesus' family have supported his love for Brock and have embraced that they are ready for their next step in life, marriage!</p> <p>Brock and Jesus grew up in what it seems as two different worlds that collided at the right time! Jesus has always said, "when I first laid eyes on Brock it was like a movie. My world stopped and he was the only one I saw standing in front of me. No one else seemed to be around." Now they have created such a beautiful life together and have become such strong men who love each other and those around them.</p> |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | They've helped spread resources through their social media to educate their many followers, they've signed and promoted petitions and they've donated to various organizations. Since, all that has occurred during the BLM movement they have vowed to support our local black owned businesses in Austin. From restaurants, movers, and even home inspectors, they have used/bought from black owned businesses at least once a week. They have even found new favorites that they have visited even more than once. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Erika Wright & Kirk Teal |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Kirk Teal Jr., kirktealjr@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Instagram: Erikamichelle__ Facebook: Erika Wright |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Erika met her fiance (me) back in college at Baylor University. Though we weren't close friends at the time, we went to the same church and shared many of the same friends. Unbeknownst to the two of us we were both native to Austin. Upon returning home we reconnected and established our friendship by deepening our faith. Love soon blossomed in the wake of our companionship and now the path to marriage has been placed before us! |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Erika lives with a few family members who are in the "at risk" portion of our population where COVID-19 is concerned. I mention this because she has had a strong desire to help in these turbulent times, in any way possible. Where some may throw in the towel because they can't protest in person, Erika trekked onward. She has done everything in her power to educate people on what has contributed to our society's current state in addition to identifying solutions in the form of literature, petitions, and businesses owned by people of color that can be supported. She gives everything. Everything she has. She's incredibly empathetic. For the most part she disregards how immersing herself in the midst of all that pain and confusion will affect her because she cares more about bringing people out of the darkness and strengthening our communities. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | The Refuge Place |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Erika is bright, kind hearted, and quite sociable. She is uniquely positioned to affect change because she has formed a diverse array of friendships. This has served to inform her outlook and further has left her poised to call people in who are searching for ways to better understand issues of social justice. She uses every opportunity to bravely hold tough ,though constructive, conversations in virtual forums in the wake of this COVID era. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Erika grew up in a family that valued matters of social justice second only to matters of faith. When it comes to either area the message conveyed is the same at its core. That is to say loving each other through the most trying of conditions is the mission Erika was raised on. Her roots are steeped in unrelenting love that conquer hate, break down divides, and bridge communities together. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | In regards to the BLM movement Erika lobbies on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. She utilizes her platform to connect people with the resources to affect change themselves. This includes non-profits soliciting donations, petitions for justice for those who have been unjustly killed, educational material to help people understand these issues if they are unfamiliar and/or standing contrary to this movement. One last thing I'll say about Erika is that she is not naturally confrontational. She has thrown caution to the wind and shed any aversion to conflict embracing many a difficult conversation in the hopes of winning over hearts and minds. I am very proud to know her. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : | I would |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Erika Wright & Kirk Teal |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | DeAndra Dyer, deandrabd@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Erikamichelle__ |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | I humbly take a bit of credit in helping them kick start their romantic relationship. In college they knew of each other but didn't necessarily know each other in depth. Erika being my best friend, and Kirk being someone I worked with through NAACP put me in a position to encourage them to explore their connection. They can both be shy & cautious in their own way. Still after just a couple group and individual dates, the bond they formed quickly snowballed. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | These two share a genuine love and true friendship. I understand they may not be the only couple who have a strong bond. Of the people I know though Erika and Kirk can't help but stand a part from your typical couple. There is a consistent selfless expression of love that they approach life from. It is evident in how they care of each other, their, families, and communities. Even those who don't reciprocate that goodwill. These two are committed to love and by extension transforming this world for the better. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Both of these individuals are servant leaders. Kirk is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. He spent time on a weekly basis volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club mentoring the youth. He also served as the President of the campus NAACP, organizing countless forums and voter registration drives. He continues to be a member of both organizations and is a lifetime member of the NAACP in fact. Erika is a youth leader in her church. Her faith has prompted her to find ways to give time to building up her neighbors. She volunteers on local college campuses in Austin and nursing homes as well sharing her faith through music and fellowship. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Erika has gone above and beyond her comfort zone in order to facilitate discussions amongst her local and online community to foster understand and progress. Where she may have historically been more reserved amongst strangers, lately she has used her platform to improve community relations. This compliments Kirk's past experience conducting forums on social justice and racial inequality. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Erika's family has a strong culture founded in the Christian faith and an aptitude for spreading their beliefs through their gifts as leaders and musicians. This faith has led her family to seek out ways to improve the lives of the downtrodden for many generations now. Kirk's family values service as well. His grandparents are lifetime members of the NAACP. His late grandfather served in the Air Force and was a part of the Becas County Buffalo Soldier Association as well. Both of their families passed down these legacies and passions to Kirk and Erika. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Erika uses her social media platforms to bring attention to those who otherwise might be unaware of ongoing disparate conditions existing in the United States. Additionally she sheds light on educational material for those wanting to understand the history contributing to those conditions and petitions to address avenues of change. |
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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Erika Wright & Kirk Teal |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Samuel Prusse, samuelbprusse@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | erikamichelle__ |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | The couple both went to college together but didn't cross each other's path very much. Even then, they were both still committed to the community in their own way. Erika was heavily involved and devoted in her church community where she provided solitude and guidance to the children in the surrounding impoverished communities. Kirk served on the NAACP E-board, of which he was president for one of those years. He was devoted to promoting equality, change and providing opportunities for those who never thought these opportunities were feasible. It wasn't until 4 years later their paths crossed again and they've been inseparable, working towards the betterment of their community and nurturing their love ever since. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Erika and Kirk are deserving of this giveaway to exemplify their love as they are a pure example of service before self. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Kirk is a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha fraternity that is devoted to providing scholarships to those in need and serving the community. Erika is a youth leader at her church that provides support to various volunteer organizations. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Both Erika and Kirk show their passion for making necessary changes and creating equality through their church communities. Ranging from leading youth camps during times where kids in impoverished communities have no where else to turn to besides the street, facilitating scholarship fundraisers for accessibility to higher education, volunteering regularly at recreational centers, assisting children with academic areas of struggle, and volunteering at homeless shelters to not only nourish but to listen to their stories, creating a deeper understanding of how to create a path forward. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Erika grew up in a single mother household that has taught her endless compassion and understanding. It has allowed her to connect with others that are deemed unreachable and to never give up on the change you seek. Kirk comes from a line of veterans that has always fought for what they believed in. This lineage has shaped him into a being of strength and encouragement to those around him. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Both nominees have taken it upon themselves to have individual and personal conversations with those around them to facilitate an understanding. Everyone has a specific role in this movement and theirs is fostered through personal relationships, reaching those they can. The movement didn't just start though, they have been devoted for years, organizing peaceful protests and die-in's with their university's blessings to bring awareness and meeting with local politicians for advocacy to the cause. |
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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Erika Wright & Kirk Teal |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Amber Navy (amber.navy1@gmail.com) |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | @Erikamichelle_ (IG) |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Erika and Kirk met during college at Baylor but did not really connect until years later in their hometown of Austin, TX. They connected through a mutual friend and really hit it off right away. They immediately started meeting each others friends, family members, and shared a mutual love for God and service. It was clear early on that they were a good fit and decided last month to get engaged |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | These nominees have a long history of demonstrating how staying connected to the community can benefit all those involved. From college until today, both have consistently found avenues to give of themselves for the benefit of others. Their future together will undoubtedly be filled with community work and dedication. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Erika is a youth leader at her church "The Refuge". Kirk is a member of alpha phi alpha, a service based fraternity organization. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Erika and Kirk are leaders in their communities, demonstrating the perfect combination of when passion meets opportunity. For Erika, serving others is second nature. In college, Every Friday morning she woke up early to join our dorm leader in serving food to the homeless. She worked tirelessly with our college church group to create a spring break camp that taught, and loved on children that lived in low income housing. I worked with Kirk in NAACP during college. He started off as a committee member and within a year was elected president of the organization because of the dedication and passion he demonstrated. Under Kirk's leadership, NAACP was able to make its mark at Baylor as a place where minority students could connect, discuss the inequities that plagued our community, and make efforts to facilitate change. We held voter registration drives, scholarship fundraisers, networking events, and weekly community service. Both Erika and Kirk individually demonstrated a dedication to service and I'm sure generations of people will be blessed by their efforts. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Erika is one of six siblings with many nieces and nephews. I think that growing up in a large family with younger nieces and nephews, molded her into the selfless and considerate person that she is. She was raised in a Christian home that taught her to love others as yourself which she really demonstrates through her friendships and work in the community. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | They are supporting the BLM movement through their service groups. As a youth leader, Erika is helping to guide teens and younger adults as they decide how they can best support this movement. As a mentor, she helps create space for them to process the meaning of this movement and its effects on young lives. Kirk remains a member of the alpha phi alpha fraternity that's mission is to serve and uplift the black community. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Kat Newman and Ryan Seymour |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Hannah Reynoso hanreynoso@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | @kushcowboi666 |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Kat is non-binary and is a full time student majoring in women and gender studies. They are very active in local politics and use their free time to help their East End Houston community. Ryan is their partner who is also extremely active within the community. He is passionate about human rights, coffee, and aquatics! They are the perfect match, loving and constantly growing with each other! |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | They are going through a challenging time emotionally and physically and are trying their best to use their privilege to help marginalized communities. They don't make much since they're a full time student and they've expressed being frustrated about the affordability of weddings while they are saving up for a surgery. Kat is so selfless and is constantly doing work to be anti racist and is a leader for the community. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | I'm honestly not sure! I know they have a grant from their university but I'm not sure specifically what the organization is. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | They are constantly showing up for their community, especially the Black trans and non-binary community. They promote Black and brown voices on their social media, physically march in protests (despite having challenging medical issues), and are using their degree to empower marginalized groups. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | They came from a verbally abusive home life that not supportive of their "coming out" as nonbinary. Despite this, they stay true to themself and continue to do the work in their community. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | They have been creating artwork and using their social media as a way to advocate for BLM. They have been participating in BLM protests and marches even with chronic health issues making it difficult. They are also using their educational privilege to get a graduate degree that will benefit marginalized communities including Black and LGBTQ communities. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Kiyathompson90@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Le'Arrionn Jackson on Facebook |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | In this generation...love, especially black love, is a scarcity. They exude the feeling towards each other in every glance, touch and gesture. She is an essential worker, an RN who risks her life DAILY. It would only be proper to bless people who are a blessing to others just by their very existence. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Because her blessing is PAST due. Good things dont hapoen to good people as often as it should. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | She is an advocate for BLM |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | She saves lives! Enough said. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | I grew up with her since 5th grade. She grew up in a family of love and genuity. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Having to be in the field she is in, you have to care for ALL selflessly. Which is difficult at times being Black. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | LeArrionn Jackson Msljack.lj@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Leilei Da HemiQueen |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | We have been together for 7 years. He's from Louisiana and I'm from Ohio and we have built our relationship on friendship first. We have struggled together, laughed together, cried and over come together. And on June 20, 2020 he asked me to spend the rest of my life with him! I cried like a baby!!! I am a full time nurse as well as we are both independent business owners pushing to support our community! We are foster parents and would appreciate any opportunity given to us! |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | I've risked my life on the frontlines in healthcare far before coronavirus! We are law abiding citizens who pay taxes and care about our people. We work hard. We door to door campaigned for Barack Obama. We can only pray that we can be considered. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | We are both Foster parents for benchmark. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | We have provided water and create tees for the movement. I have thought a lot of my brothers and sisters how to be in business for themselves and we are not shy to speak up and out about injustice! |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Be both made a decision to be better than our families. We want our names to mean something when we're gone. It wasn't always easy, but strive daily to be better tomorrow than we were yesterday! |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | We are openly in support of BLM movement. We have rallied and supported rather it was sending donations, open communication platforms and creating tshirts for people who would like them. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Dedeon Jackson madjack@yahoo.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Lei da hemiqueen |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | This couple has stood together through some seriously tough times. They are helpful in the community. Le'Arrionn is a nurse and cares for patients beyond the normally expected care. They are beautiful people and deserve to be celebrated in love. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | These are great people. They give more than they have. Their plate is full but their hearts are huge. It would be great to see them to be on the receiving end. They deserve it! |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | They have volunteered for the Democratic Party, walked in door knocks, called to get out the vote. They are a part of a car club that does advocacy work for the less fortunate. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | LeArrionn and Ethan have participated in BLM protest here in San Antonio. They support black owned businesses. They are working towards becoming certified foster parents to advocate for black children in need. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Ethan grew up without a lot of support and had to figure a lot out on his own. He has struggled to become a fine gentleman. Le'Arrionn has struggled through some health adversities. This lead her to becoming a nurse. I believe that both of their trials made them more caring people. They truly advocate for others. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | They educate through social media. They take on 1 on 1 conversations. They advocate for foster children. They march with the local BLM at various rallies. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | AngieKiesey kiesey76@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Leilei Da HemiQueen |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Incredible, selfless, God fearing love. Plus she's an essential healthcare worker. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | She is kind, essential worker regardless of race, treats others fairly, has mad hustle and positive spirit. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Yes |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | She is sharing positivity with others, always spreading love across racial lines. And she's advocating for black owned businesses. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | No |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Idk |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | jleicewilliams85@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | They are both amazing and deserve something so special |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Jureen Vanterpool, jvanterpool28@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Lei lei Hemiqueen |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Been together since 2014 |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Alicia Shannon, buffpandme@yahoo.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | leilei da hemiqueen on Facebook |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Ethan is from Louisiana and LeArrionn is from Ohio. They met in 2014 in San Antonio. The became friends and from there they decided to take it to the next level as boyfriend and girlfriend and now they're soulmates. They are the epitome of how love prevails any situation. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | I feel that LeArrionn and Ethan are deserving of this gift because they are truly great and inspiring people. They come from two different walks of life and work really hard a daily basis to promote a healthy and prosperous life for themselves and their foster children. They have no children of their own, but the way they interact with the kids are great. It takes a village to raise kids and they definitely true examples of this. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | LeArrionn and Ethan are foster parents and also volunteer their to tine to help support and advocate for the youth in their community. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Ethan and LeArrionn are dedicated to making sure every person is treated fairly and equally. They are foster parents and have taken in all ethnicities and treat them all as if they were their birth parents. They engage with the children and try their best to show them a better way of life by having them engage in family style environment. They are family oriented people so they make sure to let them know what is like to be apart of a family that shows love. They have taken the children to family reunions. They bond with the children on individual basis having talks about daily life, about future goals, and tells them on a daily basis how special they are and that they will always be there for them. They have marched at different events, sometimes with the children, to support the BLM movement. They have had conversations with the kids to explain what's going on in today's society. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | LeArrionn's childhood was built on love. She was raised by loving parents and is she is a supportive sister to her brother, Kahlil. She has always been a determined and hard working individual. Even when nursing school was difficult she hung in there to fight for her dream of becoming a nurse. I don't know much about Ethan's childhood, but what I know of him he is kind and caring and working hard to pursue his dream of becoming a fashion designer. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Together they work with the youth in their community. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Le'Arrion Jackson and Ethan Coleman |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Laneshia Nelloms, laneshan@icloud.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Leilei da HemiQueen on Facebook |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | They have been together for six years and have grown to love each other. These two are focused, determined individuals whom would like to become one. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | This would be a wonderful gift and fulfilling of their dream wedding without the frustration of planning and source of funds. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Yes |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Newly entrepreneurs has set out to help those who have experienced abuse, adversities, and struggle with hardship to overcome and be empowered as they learn who they are. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Yes. They post awareness of how and why black lives matter on their social media platforms as well as restoring the beauty and confidence in the communities. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Meme & Cliff Styles |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Maria Brown-Spence maria@hearts2heal.org |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Instagram @memeofaustin Instagram @wemeasureus |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | <p>Meme and Cliff were childhood sweethearts and have 3 beautiful children together. They were together since they were 14 years old and married before separating a few years ago. Life circumstances, military deployments and overall change can make us forget what truly matters. Meme, would always tell me that she knew deep in her heart that she knew Cliff was "Her Person" the only person she wanted to love and it broke her heart when they parted ways. But, that didn't last long because Cliff, knew that "Meme was his person". When he proposed to her last year, my heart and an entire community supporting their union was overwhelmed with emotion! We knew that they had true love and needed to be together. I am literally in tears typing this because we all want to believe in finding our soul mates and that one true love and Meme and Cliff did.</p> <p>As an Army Veteran, like Cliff ,I understand the strain deployments and the military can put on a family. A lot of time, there isn't enough support given to ensure a family is setup for success. Mental health challenges that Veterans face, don't only impact the Veteran, but the family.</p> <p>Cliff, has supported Meme without missing a beat, even during their separation. He is a dedicated father, dedicated spouse and dedicated friend. I have never seen a bigger cheerleader than Cliff! He attends her speaking engagements and records for her. He watches the kids and holds the fort down, when she has to attend meetings with the Mayor or attend a march.</p> <p>One life change I'm excited to report is that Meme & Cliff are expecting!!!! They were supposed to get married in May, but COVID devastated their plans. They spent money on deposits that they can't get back, wedding dresses and so much more that they lost. But, they did not lose their love for each other.</p> <p>I beg you to select this deserving couple and I am more than willing to share more via interview, phone, ZOOM or whatever else is needed to advocate for this Social Justice union!</p> |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | I shared more in the first question, but when I think of Social Justice, Advocacy and the Black Community, I think of Meme Styles! |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Meme Styles and MEASURE support a plethora of nonprofits in Central Texas and around the US! She even created the first Big Data & Community Policing Conference, which is now held in Austin, Houston & San Diego! |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | <p>When I think of social justice and advocacy I automatically think of Meme Styles. Meme, is the Founder & President of the award winning nonprofit, MEASURE!</p> <p>MEASURE seeks a better quality of life for members of underrepresented communities - especially People of Color in through shared research, best practices, and community participatory action. MEASURE empowers underserved communities to become active participants in the process of changing statistics.</p> <p>Meme, was a featured speaker at the Women's March ATX and advocated for black women not just in Central Austin, but around the world.</p> <p>Meme, partnered with my organization Hearts2Heal, to create the first ever Travis County Girl Squad. The Girl Squad is a direct service program for self-identified Black Girls ages 13-17 who have had contact with the justice and/or child welfare systems or have been adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>There are numerous projects, organizations & individuals that Meme & MEASURE have given time, energy & financial support to, to ensure that disparities within the black community are addressed and have measurable action in place, to make a difference.</p> <p>I could write an entire thesis on how Meme has given back to the black community and worked diligently to support ALL marginalized communities. Learn more here: https://www.measureaustin.org/</p> |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has led them to where they are today? | Meme comes from a long line of social justice advocates and growing up in California, her father was a Black Panther and advocate for fair schools in the black community. Meme, is also the wife/fiancee of a military veteran and advocates for veterans rights with everything she does. I am a Veteran and she has helped me develop programming to support Veterans of Color. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | <p>Created the Travis County Girl Squad: The Girl Squad is a direct service program for self-identified Black Girls ages 13-17 who have had contact with the justice and/or child welfare systems or have been adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Received the first ever social innovation grant from Impact Austin, for the Innocence Initiative! The Innocence Initiative is a collaboration that will elevate the data, listen to the real-life stories of Black girls, and address disparities that perpetuate adultification through advocacy, training, and a public awareness campaign. In order to eliminate adultification bias and change the narratives dictating how our children are viewed and treated, our community has decided on 6 courses of action.</p> <p>Create the first data research course for Huston Tillotson</p> <p>Advocated to make Juneteenth a recognized holiday for Plugerville</p> |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : | I would |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Mercia Bakouetila |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Eric Martin ericm4464@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Twitter: @merciapt Instagram: @beyoutiful_sunshine |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | <p>Life is an interesting story. It is full of mystery, sadness and joy. Each day holding new challenges and new discoveries. It brings people to you, sometimes for a moment, a day, a month, a season. It was when I met Mercia I knew that it would be for a lifetime. Although there are many stories like this, our story is the one I will share with you.</p> <p>College for many is full of fond memories. Whether it going to parties, watching movies with friends, or just learning about interesting subjects. However, the fondest memory for me happened in a government class of all places. It was in that class that I met the love of my life Mercia Bakouetila.</p> <p>You see I was (and still am) sort of a nerdy and awkward guy. I sat in the front of the class and always had my hand ready to answer a question. One day I was sitting there chatting with a fellow student when out of the corner of my eye I saw her enter the room. When I turned I saw the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Her skin was full of luster as the moon in a night sky, her smile beaming like the sun, her hair like unto a soft cloud, I was so stunned I almost didn't notice her crutches. That whole semester I never said a word to her. Just each day I watched as she would enter and sit behind me. I may have never even got her name if it weren't for one fateful day.</p> <p>Remember when I said I am awkward, well it's because of this that I finally got her name. Don't ask why because I don't remember, but one day near the end of the semester I got this wild idea that I would start arm wrestling people after class. There weren't many challenges so I was about to chalk another one up to being too weird when from behind me came a voice "I'll try!". When I turn it was her the woman I never had the courage to speak to, my heart began to race and I said "you sure I'm pretty sure I'll win" (what an idiot thing to say to your crush). We locked hands squared up and began our battle. To my surprise she was pretty strong, but in the end I was the victor (I know I should have let her win right). I asked her what her name was and she said Mercia and I told her mine was Eric we chatted a little bit and she left. I was in love but even after the end of the semester I never reached out or even got her number. Fate would have that one day she would invite me to be friends on Facebook and from then on 7 years later we have been together. Facing the world and all its challenges knowing that we have each other's backs through it all.</p> |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Their isn't anyone else I know that deserves this. Mercia works tirelessly for the black community. Not just with her words but her concrete actions, she daily answers the call to help out people in need. There is no one more giving, caring, and selfless when it comes to making sure that not only her voice but all those disenfranchised by the system to have a voice. Not only that she uses her experience and expertises to bring others to higher heights. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | She is a mentor in the "Black Girl White Coat" a Houston, TX based organization which helps foster and grow women's healthcare profession within the black community. She is also a volunteer for "U.R. Our Hope" an Austin, TX based organization that helps children with rare and undiagnosed diseases. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Mercia is an advocate for racial equality and diversity within the Physical Therapy field. She is the main author of a soon to be published paper "The Experiences of Black Students in Physical Therapy Education in Texas", and has discussed this on the "PT Pintcast" podcast hosted by Jimmy McKay. She presented a workshop at a diversity leadership conference at Sam Houston State University. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Mercia was born on November 1st, 1994 in the Republic of Congo of Central Africa. A few years later there was a civil war. At the time the democratically elected president was ousted and there was much chaos. Her, her parents, and her older sister lost everything and for a time they even lived on a boat. Her father and mother are two of the most inspirational man and woman I know. They worked tirelessly to not only rebuild their home which had been destroyed, but do everything in their power to make sure their children would succeed in life. I believe their will to see their children succeed has helped to lead Mercia to where she is today. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Mercia believes with everything she is that Black Lives Matter. She sees the injustices and does all that she can to support the struggle of the black community. Whether it is being vocal on social media, speaking before people, or volunteering in the community she has done many things that show her support for the BLM movement. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Mercia Bakouetila |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Maryse Bakouetila, maryse_bakwett@yahoo.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Instagram: beyoutiful_sunshine |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Mercia and Eric met in their political science class freshman year of college and immediately hit it off. They have been inseparable ever since! They love each other strong and the way they care and support each other is so pure and beautiful! They really are each other's person. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | I feel that Mercia should win this giveaway because she genuinely care about others regardless of their ethnic background, because she is unafraid to speak up in the face of injustice, because she consistently finds way to use her voice as a Black female and now as a Black Doctor of Physical Therapy to speak up on racial injustice and educate on diversity, and because her love with Eric is so pure, they deserve to have this free wedding. They are a beautiful of Black love and of lifting each other up through the obstacles of life. I genuinely want this free wedding for them. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | She is a mentor with Black Girls White Coat and ã volunteer with U R our hope. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | She constantly uses her voice as a Black female to educate on racial equality and diversity. In 2017 in college, she presented at the SHSU diversity leadership conference. For her doctorate in physical therapy school, she choose to research and present on: The Experiences of Black Students In Physical Therapy Education in Texas. She recently did a podcast on this same subject. And she recently contributed to drafting a Black Rehab Manifesto with other PT, OT, and SLP professionals. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Growing up in Congo, it was a change to come to a place where being Black is now the minority and you have to show others how to open up to people of different ethnic backgrounds or cultures. I think that desire to demonstrate how you can still get along with people if you take the time to know them and her overall positive attitude have led her to where she is today. She doesn't get tired of answering questions for the sake of education and she always stands up for others. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | She has been reposting social media posts and supporting the BLM movement that way by sharing those with her instagram followers. She also was a contributing writer to a Black Rehab Manifesto with other rehab professionals. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Michael and Christi Carter |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Married |
| What is your name and email address? | Ashley Carter acarter1622@yahoo.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Facebook: Christi Lynne Carter |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | They fell in love while Michael was in the military and she was raising 2 kids on her own. Soon after Christi was pregnant with their love child and they had a quick court house wedding to show their commitment to each other. They continued to have children the following 2 years; now 7 years later they want to try and have the wedding they deserve-the one they never had. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Michael and Christi should win this giveaway because after serving his country and becoming a police officer Michael always puts the needs of his family first. Christi is a stay at home mom and they deserve to have the wedding of their dreams. With 5 kids and 2 dogs on a single family household; Michael shows exactly what a Black man should be. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | As mentioned previously, Christi dedicates her time to helping the elderly. Christi also assist with kids sports to keep kids out of the streets. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Michael transitioned from the military to being a Black police officer to help his community. Even without his uniform on, he always approaches kids and encourages them ...if they are playing sports...if they are at the school...to do good. Michael and Christi are considered "the neighborhood house." All the kids in the neighborhood from all kinds of different backgrounds come to their house to be free of racial discrimination and enjoy hanging out, playing basketball, board games on the lawn, or play in the water. Christi dedicates her time as a stay at home mom to help the 55plus community. Specifically, Christi creates puzzles and painting activities. She also plays music and audio stories for the elderly. Christi helps with meal prep, grocery shopping. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Michael grew up in a predominately Caucasian neighborhood and was discriminated against at a young age. When crimes would occur in the area, Michael was always one of the first people they would suspect; then it would be discovered it was a Caucasian individual. Michael did not have his father around and when he got older, Michael spent time struggling when he moved to NYC on the streets before deciding to turn his life around and join the military. Christi, has a similar upbringing being raised in predominantly Mexican neighborhood as a Caucasian woman. Christi and her sisters were abandoned by their mother and her father was left to try his best to raise 3 girls. Christi then suffered an unhealthy relationship in which she brought in two children. However, she was then abandoned by the children's father and left to raise two kids on her own. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Michael and Christi support the BLM movement. Michael uses his platform as a Black police officer to be all inclusive with everyone no matter who they are; both young and old. Within their own community and neighborhood. Michael makes a point to speak to the young black kids he comes in contact with; even when he is not on the job. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Rebecca Chavez and Danny Wong |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Victoria Chavez/ Victoriachavez7712@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | @becca3224 ; @danwerk |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | Rebecca and Danny met in New York about five years ago doing Crossfit in New York City at Crossfit Hell's Kitchen. Their love story started about 2 years ago when they started dating. Rebecca is originally from Texas and always had the dream of moving back to Texas after getting her Master's in Social Work at NYU, and Danny has never lived anywhere other than New York City. Danny made the first move, both in starting their love story and moving them back to Texas. He moved out by himself to Austin in December and Rebecca joined him in May. Soon after they got a baby corgi named Harrison and started their journey as pet parents. In March of 2019, Danny proposed to her at Mount Bonnell. They wanted to get married this year, but as most of Danny's family is in NYC and China, they have started making wedding plans for October of 2021 giving them enough time to get another corgi and buy a house in the Austin area. |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Rebecca and Danny constantly give of themselves to others. Their love story is sweet and unconventional. Before they even started dating long term, they moved across the country with each other. Rebecca is constantly giving of herself to the community and working to make it better from the inside. Since the beginning of her time in social work, she has been dedicated to improving access to services for everyone but especially the LGBT community. Rebecca wants to incorporate small businesses and BLM into her wedding as much as possible, one to continue to raise awareness, but also to ensure that her wedding is supported by only those people who support BLM. She plans to have a BLM donation button on her RSVP wedding website. She has been donating for bail funds for those put in jail during the protests in Austin. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | Rebecca works for Lifeworks in the Austin area assisting homeless POC. She works to make the system equal for POC via her work in the system. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Rebecca is very outspoken about racial equality and justice. Currently as a social worker in the Austin area she works with homeless youth who tend to be POC and she is constantly advocating for fair housing rights, and equal access to community services. Rebecca is acutely aware of the difficulties that face not only homeless POC, but also trans POC. In NYC, she helped run a homeless shelter for trans youth in the basement of a church for many years before leaving to Austin. She is constantly trying to educate those around her, including friends and family about racial inequality through book recommendations and posts enlightening those around her. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Rebecca came from a largely Hispanic populated community in Texas. In going to college, she attended college in one of the poorest zip codes in the state of Texas. During her time practicing social work in this area she became passionate about providing sex education to middle schoolers in this area, as access to adequate sex education was poor (and remains poor) in the state of Texas generally, but especially in these areas. She encountered middle school children on their second pregnancy. Spending her time in NYC she continued to become passionate about those that have difficulty accessing adequate healthcare and housing. Coming from a Hispanic family, la familia es todo. That has been the cornerstone of everything she does. She sees those that are lacking adequate access as her family and she strives to give back to the community that she came from. Rebecca was lucky in growing up in a middle class family but she knows not everyone else is so fortunate. And while these families may be rich in love and understanding, because of who they are it often leads to gaps in the system for them. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | Rebecca has been involved in advocating for BLM for as long as I can remember. For her graduation with a Master's from NYU, she wore regalia embroidered with Black Lives Matter. She is constantly trying to advocate, especially within her family and her community about the importance of her Hispanic community supporting Black Lives Matter. She makes an effort to read Black literature and recommending those books and supporting those authors as much as she can. She donates to BLM and she donates to bail funds for those jailed during protests. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : | I would |

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| What is the name of the individual or couple you are nominating? | Shelby Taylor |
| What is the relationship status of the nominee(s)? | Engaged |
| What is your name and email address? | Jessenia Garcia jessenia.garcia@gmail.com |
| Please provide at least one of your nominee's social media accounts. | Shelby Paige -FB |
| Tell us what you can about their love story! | |
| Explain in detail why you feel like your nomination should win this giveaway? | Shelby is always involved in issues around racial justice. She has challenged me to reflect more on myself and challenges others to do the same. She is a fighter and passionate about making the world better. She deserves to be recognized for it. |
| Does your nominee support any local organizations or participate in any volunteer work? | She supports Black Lives Matter Houston Chapter and participates in their events. |
| In what ways is your nominee currently advocating for racial equality, justice, diversity and/or are demonstrating being a change maker in our community? Please list specific examples, if possible. | Shelby works in the court house under a republican judge. She uses her position to educate others and challenge people to do more for racial justice. In addition, she participates in community led events and always invites others to join. She promotes complex discourse and does a lot to help people process what it means to live in a world like ours. |
| Can you talk about anything regarding their past or growing up that has lead them to where they are today? | Shelby is biracial and was raised by a racist White mother. She didn't always understand how she fit into the world however, she has developed into a strong, proud, and bold Black woman. She had many obstacles growing up but she always pushed past and helped others on her way. Shelby came from a low SES and dysfunctional family. This has shaped her identity in a way that only makes her stronger and more passionate about making a difference in the lives of others. |
| What is their involvement with the BLM movement? Is there anything specific you can address that they are doing to educate, support, and advocate for it specifically? | They are involved in the Black Lives Matter Houston chapter. She supports all their events and donates to their causes. She currently promotes discussion on social media and always brings up topics many others shy away from. She is not afraid of challenges and always is willing to help others find ways they can become more involved. She especially advocates for ways parents can talk to their children about race. |
| If your nominee is chosen as the winner, would you be willing to participate in any photo/video announcement? : I would | |