

Scottsdale resident Q&A: Janelle Westfall



In an effort to create a stronger sense of community, the Daily Independent is asking residents to share a little about themselves with some standard questions. Here are Janelle Westfall's answers.

Name: Janelle Westfall, LPC, BCBA, LBA.

Where I live: I live in Scottsdale near Shea Boulevard and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard. I love being so close to the trails and having places like Lost Dog Wash and Sunrise Trail practically in my backyard.

What I do: I am the chief operations officer at Axiom Care, a Phoenix-based behavioral health organization serving individuals with substance use disorders and other complex needs. Axiom Care provides a continuum of care that includes residential treatment, outpatient services and recovery housing, with a strong commitment to serving individuals who may otherwise experience significant barriers to care. I oversee operations across the organization, with a focus on strategic growth, clinical quality and building integrated systems that help people achieve lasting recovery. I am also a licensed professional counselor. Continuing to work directly with clients keeps me connected to the deeply personal side of behavioral health care and complements my executive leadership work.

What I like most about living here: I love being able to stay active outdoors throughout most of the year. From hiking or running at Pinnacle Peak, Lost Dog Wash and Sunrise Trail to riding my bike up toward Adero Canyon, some of my favorite places are just minutes from home. The desert sunrises are magical, and even after living in Arizona for most of my life, the beauty of the desert never gets old.

Activities I enjoy: I have been a competitive swimmer since I was six-years-old, and I continue to enjoy open-water swimming, road cycling and triathlons. I also love traveling and finding ways to combine travel with being active. Some of my favorite experiences have included cycling through Italy with my husband and completing Colorado's Iron Horse Bicycle Classic together.

Clubs and organizations I'm involved in: I am actively involved with Tri-Scottsdale and its annual Tri for the Cure event benefiting Check for a Lump. It is a wonderful community of athletes who encourage one another while using the sport we love to support an important local cause.

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My favorite charity or volunteer activity and why it deserves support from others: Tri for the Cure is especially meaningful to me because it brings together two things I care deeply about: the multisport community and supporting people affected by breast cancer. The event benefits Check for a Lump, an Arizona nonprofit that provides education, support and access to breast-health services. It is inspiring to see athletes of all backgrounds and ability levels come together around a cause that has touched so many families.

My No. 1 suggestion to new residents looking for ways to get involved in their community: Begin with something you already care about—a cause, sport, hobby or professional interest—and find an organization where you can contribute your time and strengths. You do not have to begin with a major commitment. Some of the strongest relationships and most meaningful opportunities to make a difference start simply by showing up consistently and being willing to help.

What one thing would you like to see changed in your community: I would like to see greater access to behavioral health and substance use treatment, particularly for individuals with complex needs who often encounter significant barriers to receiving the right care at the right time. We need systems that meet people where they are and understand them within the full context of their families, cultures and communities. Access should not depend on someone's income, resources or ability to navigate a complicated system.

My family: My husband and I met while attending Arizona State University and have now been married for 30 years. We have two adult daughters and two rescue Labrador retrievers. Much of our family life has centered around staying active—from supporting our daughters in swimming and cross-country to cycling, traveling and exploring new places together.

People who are an inspiration to me: A close friend of mine has been living with stage IV metastatic breast cancer for several years. She continues to face extraordinarily difficult treatments with determination, optimism and an unmistakable joy for life. She reminds me that strength does not mean pretending something is easy; it means continuing to live fully, love people deeply and find reasons for gratitude even during the hardest circumstances.

My advice to today's youth: Do not feel pressured to have your entire life figured out too early. Stay curious, try new things, work hard and allow your path to evolve as you learn more about yourself and the world. Pay attention to what gives you a sense of joy but also be willing to try difficult things that build confidence and resilience. Most importantly, be a kind human. Maya Angelou famously reminded us that people will remember how we made them feel, and I believe that how we treat others ultimately matters far more than any individual accomplishment.