

Congratulations! Jennifer ‘Say Hey’ Sanders Earns Promotion

by Thomas Wyatt | THE VILLAGER

(AUSTIN, TX) – On Wednesday, KXAN digital reporter, Kelsey Thompson, posted some absolutely wonderful news. At 4:29pm, Thompson announced that our beloved midday news anchor, Jennifer Sanders has been promoted to full-time evening anchor; co-hosting with Daniel Marin.

Note of trivia for all you Austinites out there. It seems KXAN is a pipeline for exceptional media talent from upstate New York. Did you know Sanders held a post there before gracing us with her gift? According to Sanders’s bio, she began a stint in Syracuse, New York as a weekend reporter for NewsChannel 9 WSYR-TV, “and worked her way up,” to become the sta-

tions “morning news anchor”. Coincidentally, Thompson, who broke the news of Sanders’s promotion, is an upstate New Yorker who graduated from Syracuse University in 2019. What are the odds of them both being here and awarding us with their journalistic talents less than five years later? Good on you, KXAN. Good on you!

Returning to Sanders; her journey to the Austin prime-time desk included work-rewarding stops at Seguin, Sherman and Dallas/Ft. Worth Texas. While in Sherman, Sanders was responsible for “shooting, writing and editing her news and sports stories.” Like my father, who hosted ‘The Bottom Line’ here in East Austin,

Sanders hosted “Forum” in Sherman. Her show focused on “in-depth coverage of key issues impacting people across Texas and Oklahoma.” While in Dallas/Ft. Worth, Sanders honed valued skills behind the camera while working as a writer and web producer for KDAF-TV. There, Sanders was responsible for “writing stories for the evening newscasts and station’s website.” Furthermore, Sanders did extensive work in the control room, co-producing “special projects in the Dallas/Ft. Worth television market.” Sanders credits Seguin as the place her “journalism career in newspaper and radio” started.

Some of Sanders’s work included “coverage of



Jennifer Sanders

the water crisis in Flint, Michigan” as well as interviewing the award-winning Oprah Winfrey and covering the iconic President Barack

Obama during his visit to Cooperstown. Congratulations to Sanders for an outstanding job well done in the past and present. We are all

looking forward to seeing one of our favorite local TV personalities in action during our nightly news debriefs in the coming future.

Biden backs Harris, ends 2024 bid in address to nation

By Emma Colton | Fox News

(POLITICS) - President Biden addressed the nation for the first time on Wednesday since bowing out of the 2024 election on Sunday, saying he is passing the torch to “a new generation” while again

throwing his support behind Vice President Harris in her campaign to secure the Democratic Party’s nomination.

“I decided the best way forward is to pass the torch to a new gen-

eration. It’s the best way to unite our nation. You know, there is a time and a place for long years of experience in public life. There’s also a time and place for new voices, fresh voices, yes, younger voices. And that time and place is now,” Biden said.

The speech lasted roughly 11 minutes, with

the president sitting at the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office while touting his years in political office and decision to bow out. Members of the president’s family were in attendance for the speech, including first lady Jill Biden, daughter Ashley Biden, son Hunter Biden and others.

The president said he looks forward to the work before him in his final six months in office, including pushing for Supreme Court reforms.

“I’m going to call for Supreme Court reform because this is critical to our democracy,” he said. Media reports recently surfaced that Biden is considering supporting



legislation that would attempt to impose term limits on Supreme Court justices and a new enforceable ethics code.

Downtown Austin safety team increases patrol in response to APD staffing shortage

By Lucciana Choueiry | KUT NEWS



(AUSTIN, TX) - Austin has been grappling with a police understaffing problem, making patrolling the downtown area harder. In an effort to fill that gap, the Downtown Austin Alliance created a safety team to hit the streets.

The DAA, a nonprofit that works with businesses and property owners downtown, began the effort in May and has tripled the size of the team since its launch.

What does the safety team do?

First things first. Members of the safety team are not police officers, but they do collaborate with the Austin Police Department. You can identify members of the team by their black and yellow uniforms.

“You’ll see them riding throughout the public improvement district on bikes and generally in pairs, one on either side of the street,” Brandon Fahy, director of Public Space Experience for the DAA, said.

The team had 14 members as of July 1. From 6 to 10 p.m., the officers patrol the area from the Texas Capitol to Lady Bird Lake.

Their main focus is low-level violations — specifically Class C misdemeanors, such as public intoxication and lying on a public sidewalk — that Fahy says are on the rise downtown.



Downtown Austin Alliance Safety ambassador Nathan Froehlich makes rounds on his bike at Austin’s Republic Square Park. Manoo Sirivelu/KUT News

If a team member sees someone in violation, their first step is to ask the person to change their behavior and comply with the law. Because they are not law enforcement, team members cannot arrest or physically remove someone from the situation. Fahy said the DAA safety team is successful about 86% of the time when using this tactic.

“Our goal is not to penalize people violating the Class C ordinances, but to help them understand the nature of the ordinance,” Fahy said.

If people continue not to comply with their requests, team members call police. The responding officers are part of APD’s overtime patrols and intervene when the DAA safety team needs help. The DAA pays two APD officers overtime to focus solely on downtown, without worrying about being called away to other parts of the city.

APD faces an ongoing staffing shortage APD Cmdr. Craig Smith said 23% of police po-

sitions in the area that DAA patrols are vacant.

This is part of a larger problem for APD. The department has 351 officer vacancies, impacting the types of calls police can respond to, and Class C misdemeanors fall to the bottom of the priority list.

“With the vacancy, we’ve had to adjust our call volume. ... So if it’s not an actual crime in progress or violent crime, we are not really going to those as much,” Smith said. “So with DAA, they have built in to help with those Class C’s; those quality-of-life issues.”

Smith said Austinites in nonviolent situations can call the DAA first to see if it can help before dialing 911. The number is 512-937-7422.

APD does receive a monthly report from the safety team that includes the number of calls received and which ones they responded to.

The DAA safety team will enter its final roll-out phase in October with 23 safety members.