

KEY PEOPLE

New Orleans' soul runs deep, making good things happen daily. Three who call the Crescent City home are changing lives in ways big and small.

BY MARY BETH ROMIG

Patron Saint

What can you say about the exciting run the New Orleans Saints, the city's beloved NFL franchise, made in 2009? Led by quarterback Drew Brees, the team strives for success not only on the football field, but also in the community. And Brees is also leading that charge.



He and his wife, Brittany, are improving the lives of the city's youngest citizens through their Brees Dream Foundation, dedicating \$4.5 million and funding approximately 14 projects. They include supporting various nonprofit organizations, the construction of athletic facilities, and building playgrounds and edible gardens at schools.

But perhaps the most powerful of Brees' actions is simply the way he and his family have embraced the city of New Orleans and how the people have embraced them in return. As he explained in a recent interview, the star quarterback went from knowing very little about the city to feeling as though he's "100 percent" a part of it.

"I'm proud to call myself a New Orleanian," Brees says.

Mad About New Orleans

Bryan Batt has found success onstage and on the big and small screens. It would be easy for this talented actor to settle on the East or West Coast. But the native New Orleanian returns home every break he gets.

Batt first found acting success on Broadway, and he has won critical acclaim for his portrayal of Sal Romano for three seasons on the AMC series *Mad Men*.

His affection for his hometown goes beyond just singing the city's praises. After Katrina, he hosted and performed at fundraisers to support the recovery. And as a business owner — he and partner Tom Cianfichi own a home-furnishings boutique, Hazelnut, on trendy Magazine Street — Batt vociferously supports shopping local. In the wake of Katrina, Batt created Magazine Street Retail Relief, promoting local businesses and chari-



ties. Batt has successfully woven together three roles — actor, merchant, and philanthropist — to the great benefit of New Orleans.

Courting the Love

Chris Paul joined the New Orleans Hornets after his sophomore year at Wake Forest University. Selected fourth overall in the 2005 NBA Draft, Paul was named Rookie of the Year (2005-06) and won an Olympic gold medal with the U.S. national basketball team. But Paul is worth his weight in gold off the court too.

Fans point with pride to the way Paul carries himself when he's in uniform and to his philanthropic and charitable work in the community with the team and through his CP3 Foundation. He has committed to refurbishing three local basketball courts, as well as helping to feed the needy and homeless throughout the region. This is one NBA player who knows the score.

CHRIS GRANGER (3)

Ça fait chaud
(IT'S HOT)

Lagniappe
(A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA)

C'est bon!
(THAT'S GOOD!)



Spice up your vocabulary. Our culture, like our dialect, is seasoned with a taste of Cajun French and Creole. Lafayette is a flavorful combination of spirited festivals, savory cuisine, outdoor activities, breath-taking scenery and a rich history. Experience the distinct joie de vivre (joy of life) that is Lafayette.

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For more on Bryan Batt's hometown efforts, go to helpthecityofneworleans.com.