

# Finding Your SILVER LINING

**Jennifer Dillard, 2021-22 TBA Sergeant-at-Arms**

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On behalf of my husband Jerriald, and our daughters Elizabeth and Jessica, please accept our heartfelt thanks, to not only the Board of Directors, but to all the wonderful Band Directors across the great state of Texas. We are excited and honored for the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors in the coming years and to give our all to the support to the greatest profession in world.

A sincere thanks to the TBA Board of Directors and Executive Director, Mike Brashear for bringing us “together again” and putting together a wonderful convention. I cannot express how refreshing it was to have a feeling of normalcy. Spending a summer without an in-person TBA convention is something I do not want to experience again.

As we all navigate the “new normal,” don’t forget the silver lining the pandemic has brought to all of us. Many of us have had the opportunity to step back and take inventory of what we do and why it is so important to our students, families, and communities. Band and the arts are needed now more than ever before. We have seen so much taken away from our programs, students, and families in the last year and a half. We are needed now, more than ever!

One of my favorite quotes is from Simone Biles: “Practice creates confidence, confidence empowers you.”

This summer was far from normal in the world. As I watched Simone Biles struggle this summer at the Tokyo Olympics, I couldn’t help but admire her for speaking about her mental health. Simone trained for years to get to the Olympics, but in that one instance, it all fell apart. She had the confidence to deal with an unexpected circumstance and outcome and yet persevere. It reminded me that we, as teachers, are needed more than ever before in our Band halls. We must not forget that our students are carrying higher levels of anxiety and depression, much due to the pandemic.

Be your students’ champion. Take the time and ask them about their day. Encourage them to always be their best and take the time to let them know when they fail, it is just part of getting better. Continue to be there for them when no one else will. Sometimes the students that seemingly “have it all together” can be the ones that carry the biggest load. Teach them to problem solve and work through strife, rather than back down. We, as Band Directors, get the unique opportunity of spending so much more time with our students. We get the opportunity to build positive, long lasting relationships with our students and empower them with the needed skills to be healthy young adults inside and out!