

Renaissance woman Crystal Lathrop does it all. She is an entrepreneur, volunteer, cheerleader and a business owner who was nominated for the Wichita Business Journal's 40 under 40. She is also the youngest co-chair in the history of the Cattleman's Ball, which has been around for 21 years.

What is the Cattleman's Ball?

For anyone unfamiliar with the Cattleman's Ball, it is the main fundraiser of the American Cancer Society, takes about a year to plan and usually has about 750 people in attendance. For the past three years, the event has been held at the Old Cowtown Museum in Wichita and has included an open bar including specialty drinks, a buffet-style dinner with desserts, live and posted bid auctions, bachelor/bachelorette auctions, games, live entertainment and late-night dancing. This year's live entertainment includes local bands that completely donate their time, so it's now more of a community event that helps support local talent and helps raise money for the American Cancer Society.

Everyone is welcome to attend, donate and volunteer

As co-chair of the event, Crystal Lathrop wants to let "everyone know that anyone and everyone can come." The event has been characterized in the past for attracting an older audience, but she wants to reach out to the younger crowd as well. She also wants to encourage others to volunteer because "everyone needs to do something - no matter your age."

Why do you volunteer?

Lathrop has been volunteering for the American Cancer Society for four years now, ever since her father died of cancer. A friend of hers suggested that she get involved, so Lathrop showed up to one of the weekly meetings and has been volunteering ever since. "I'm doing this for my father. Period. And that's what keeps me going," said Lathrop. Lathrop emphasized that volunteering is "very rewarding." And although being a co-chair for a main fundraiser can be very stressful and one of the "hardest jobs that you will ever do for free," she also said that she tries to look at the bigger picture. "Everyone is touched by cancer. Everyone is affected, and I wanted to help everyone," said Lathrop.

How do you cope with the loss of a loved one?

Lathrop had to rely on her faith to make it through the tough times. She said it's a word that can be seen throughout her house. She advises others affected by cancer to "keep the faith." Lathrop is from a small family, and she said that "something like this makes you lean on your family. You are there for each other." It helped bring her family closer. She even started a business with her brother and believes that is why "everything happens for a reason."

Crystal Lathrop's background

Crystal Lathrop was born and raised in Wichita. She attended South High and Friends University and majored in marketing. She has been involved with cheerleading for many years and started out as a Wichita Stealth cheerleader right out of high school. She did that for 10 years and has now been a cheerleader for the Wichita Wingnuts and Wichita Thunder for the past three years.

Lathrop was in the family business for 15 years helping her family with their concession trailer. And just two years ago, Crystal and her brother Cody started Xclusive bartending and catering in order to expand the family business. They do bartending and catering for weddings, private parties, luncheons and company parties.

Lathrop just bought an advertising business as well. It is called Ad Reflectionz and has to do with marketing mirrors. In addition to owning two businesses, Lathrop also works part time at a dentist's office a few days a week. She also likes to make kettle corn a few times a year and sells it at area craft shows.

How do you make time for volunteering?

Lathrop volunteers for the American Cancer Society, LLS, Young Professionals of Wichita and was on the committee for Death by Chocolate (an Exploration Place fundraiser). She has numerous jobs and very little down time. She said that she is constantly working, but she loves it. Lathrop said, "You have to make time to volunteer. You have to prioritize your life and then make time to volunteer." She also said that "you have to give up something in order to help someone else."

Crystal Lathrop:

Not Your  
Average Volunteer



21st Annual Cattleman's Ball  
Who: American Cancer Society fundraiser  
What: An evening of Western-style fun to help fight cancer  
Where: Old Cowtown Museum, Wichita  
When: July 24, 5pm-midnight  
Why: All proceeds from the 21st Annual Cattleman's Ball benefit cancer research, education, advocacy and patient services.  
Cost: General admission tickets are \$100 and VIP tickets are \$200.  
To purchase tickets call 316-265-3471,  
or visit [cattlemansballwichita.org](http://cattlemansballwichita.org).