

Dave Campbell's TEXAS FOOTBALL



Special Edition
Presented by

optimum.



COOPER COUGARS COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

The Cooper Cougars Embrace Their Hometown Like None Other



Q & A

WITH

Kristen Benton

Q. How did you get involved at Abilene Cooper High School?

"One day I was talking to my daughter about making sure no matter what she did in life, to make sure it was something she loved and was passionate about. As I was talking to her, I realized the job I currently had was not my passion, I did enjoy it, but it wasn't a job that made me feel like I had a purpose personally. After thinking long and hard, I decided to take my own advice and apply to the school district. I have always had a passion for sports, and I love kids, so I felt like this job was the perfect fit for me. With not having any prior experience in the school district, I felt like it was a long shot, but I was willing to take it. Applying for this position is a decision I have never looked back on because the last four years at Cooper have been the best and most fulfilling job. Being able to work around kids and sports has been so rewarding, seeing players cheer and smile after a win, or seeing them take defeat and work hard and come back stronger and better the next week is something I never thought I would be able to experience from a front row seat. I will forever be so happy I took a leap a faith to follow a job I am truly passionate about."

Q. What makes the Abilene Cooper community special to you?

"The Abilene Cooper community is special to me because it is my community. This is the community I was born and raised in, so it holds a very special place in my heart. I was once a Bassetti Bear, that became a Clack Cardinal, that ended with being a Cooper Cougar. My mom, aunt, brother are all alumni of Cooper and my daughter will be graduating from Cooper in May. My dad also worked at Cooper for 21 years, so I consider him a Coog as well. This community is so much more to me than having a love for the school or the town, it is this community that built me into the person, wife, and mom I am today and for that I will forever be grateful. Having the opportunity to experience this community as a student, employee, and parent has been amazing. Being able to see all sides, and witnessing the greatness that Cooper has to offer brings me such pride. There is nothing like the Cooper community, even with odds stacked against us at times, we still stand together and support each other."

Q. What is your proudest moment as a part of the Abilene Cooper community?

"I don't think there is one specific proud moment I have had; I think it is a combination of things that have made me proud to be a part of this community. Being able to see the parents and their hard work that goes into decorating, goody bags, and meals makes me proud. Seeing the coaches daily work so hard to improve players on and off the field makes me proud to be apart of this school and community. Watching booster club and True Blue volunteer a lot of their time to sell shirts, plan events, and support all of our sports makes me amazed at how they have time to do it all. I feel like every week something happens to make me proud of our community as a



whole and knowing I play a small part in that means more than you know. If I had to pick one personal thing that has made me proud, it's graduation. Every graduation kids walk across the stage to get their diploma with such joy in their faces, knowing they did it. Kids will come to me and say "its graduation week Mrs. Benton, I made it" or some kids will come to me asking if I will be at graduation to watch them or kids will bring me an invitation to graduation and those are the moments that make me feel like I have a purpose. Knowing I did something in that student's life that makes them want to invite me to one of the most important days in their educational journey makes me know I made the best decision coming to Cooper High School."



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Dave Campbell's
TEXAS FOOTBALL

COOPER - COMMUNITY CONNECTOR AWARD

DAVE CAMPBELL'S TEXAS FOOTBALL

COOPER COUGARS**COMMUNITY CONNECTORS**

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optimum.**CONNECTING WITH**
Coach Aaron Roan**Q. Who is your Community Connector?
How are they involved with the program/
community?**

"Our Community Connector is Kristen Benton. Mrs. Benton works as the administrative assistant for athletics at Cooper High School. She works with all sports at Cooper High School. She tirelessly helps organize events and ensures our program is running smoothly. She pours into the kids at Cooper High School and is an amazing support for our staff, students, and community. From getting senior night organized, to simply checking on a student, Mrs. Benton is amazing!"

**Q. What do you talk to your team about
when you talk about representing your
community and how is your team involved in
the community?**

"We work to be our best everyday. We discuss with our players how they represent themselves, but more importantly their families, the Cooper Family, and our community. We want to do that the very best each day. Our players go to every elementary feeder school multiple throughout the year for High Five Fridays. This is an opportunity to greet the students and encourage them to be their best. We have read books to elementary students during the year to be involved with our future Coogs. We have volunteered with the Annual Book Sale for the public library. Our Booster Club hosts a Trunk or Treat and we have athletes from all sports passing out candy and working with the community."

Just as Optimum has been a source of keeping the community connected through its award-winning high-speed internet, Dave Campbell's Texas Football has been a "bible" source for millions of football fans across the Lone Star State.

During this year's Texas high school football season, Optimum is keeping score on local individuals who are making a difference in their community. As a result, Optimum is proud to have partnered with Dave Campbell's Texas Football to do so.

Leveraging Dave Campbell's insight and expertise in scouting, Optimum's partnership with Dave Campbell's Texas Football is nothing short of a "winning connection." The partnership enabled the creation of the Community Connector Award in order to celebrate the achievements of community difference makers year-round – both on and off the field.

Optimum is proud to recognize**Kristen
Benton****for her contributions
to the community**

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Optimum is a proud founder of this award as it celebrates committed students, teachers and parents who stay connected in their community and honor them for their generous hard work and support to make their community a better place.

**Q. Why is it important to teach your young
men about giving back and being good
stewards?**

"We wouldn't have success without the investment of people; parents, teachers, coaches, administrators, community members, family. We are where we are because people cared enough to help us along the way. We have tremendous support at Cooper HS and we must pay it forward for future Coogs to thrive. We strive to provide a vision for our younger community members to see what the Cougar Head represents and what it means by doing things the right way. Are we perfect no, can we push to be, absolutely. Love and service are the best way to illustrate to others how you care about them."

**Q. What is unique about your school
and community?**

"For a school our size, I believe the most unique thing is the sense of family. Our teachers, administrators, custodial, nutrition, everyone, work together to help our student achieve success and be the best version of themselves they can be. The campus and community care about one another."

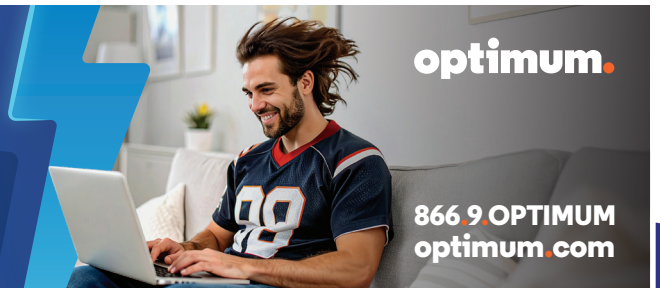
**Q. What does staying connected to the
community mean to you?**

"It means working for current success while building and investing in the future. It means connecting the school and community as a common entity to allow kids that come through Cooper High School an opportunity to build positive habits that will set them up to be successful when they graduate. That is the ultimate goal, to help them be achieve success and be positive, contributing members of our community and society."

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