



Person You Should KNOW

Tamara Lee Leonard (TC Leonard)

Current town: Mokena

Birthday: January 25

Birthplace: Blue Island

How long have you lived/worked in Frankfort? All my life in the Mokena/Frankfort area

Family: Married to Bob; sons Ezekiel, 7; Elijah, 5; and Noah, 3.

Occupation: President, Grant Seekers, Inc. We raise money for not-for-profit agencies, helping them get funds for capital and program support. Through our efforts, we have raised more than \$12 million since 2001 and have indirectly helped 2.7 million people. We also help families start their own private foundations and match them with charities that fit within their giving goals and interests.

What is your favorite thing about Frankfort? The Fall Fest. Graduating from Lincoln-Way!

What is your favorite place to travel/visit and why? Hawaii because it was the first trip alone with my husband without the kids, and Disney World because the entire trip is about the kids.

What is your favorite food/meal? My sister-in-law's (Barb Skala of New Lenox) chocolate chip cookies. If I mention her name, (Barb Skala), she might make me a batch! (Barb Skala)

What is your favorite Frankfort restaurant and why? Aurelio's!!!! I put myself through college waitressing at Aurelio's. Joe and Linda are family even though you're (technically) not. Twenty years later, I still CRAVE their pizza.

What is your favorite book and why? Whatever book I am reading at the time - reading is my favorite pastime. I just read "The Good Guy" by Dean Koontz and "Nineteen Minutes" by Jodi Picoult. I am no fun at book clubs - I hog the conversation.

What is your favorite movie and why? "Finding Nemo" because it is my three-year-old son's favorite movie, and he can quote the entire thing as we watch it (751 days in a row and counting!). Seeing my kids happy is the best feeling in the world.

What is your favorite saying/quote and why? "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love." (Mother Theresa). It is the foundation of what we do with Grant Seekers.

What time of year do you enjoy most and why? Christmas, because working in the not-for-profit world I see so much need. During Christmas, people are so filled with love, generosity, and faith. Unfortunately, what they don't see is that the same needs exist year round. I think we should all celebrate "Christmas in July" to keep the giving and generosity going.

What is your best childhood memory? My mother was my Girl Scout leader. At a very early age, through her example, I learned how important it was to make a difference in the lives of others. My firm, Grant Seekers, has donated more than 1,600 hours of volunteer time to not-for-profits in our community.

If you were stranded on a desert island, what are the three things you couldn't live without? My family, my books, and possibly a nanny - then Bob and I could sip island drinks and dance!

If you could meet one person, dead or alive, who would it be? Mary, the Mother of God.

If you could be an animal, which one would it be and why? My son Eli really wants to be a dolphin and asked if I could still be his momma. I told him I really did like being a person, but for him I would become a dolphin.

What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you? I competed on the United States Karate Team at two Karate World Cups, in Greece and Ireland, and won one silver medal and three bronze medals. I tried telling my kids I was a real-life Power Ranger, but they didn't believe me!

In three words, how would your family/friends describe you? They would say I am the worst cook and speller, BUT, I live a life of compassion, optimism, and faith. Most of all, I think I am appreciated for being a mentor. Somehow I am able to help others find what they need.