IN GOOD COMPANY

Jay Indovino, 48, Executive Director, Pedal the Cause

With just two years under its belt, Pedal the Cause is already becoming a popular turn of phrase in St. Louis, and it’s far from putting the brakes in 2012. The annual cycling challenge has succeeded in attracting more than 2,000 bike riders and raising upwards of $2 million seed-funding dollars for cancer research projects at Siteman Cancer Center and St. Louis Children’s Hospital in its first two years—an incredible feat for the young organization founded by two-time cancer survivor Bill Komar and avid endurance athlete Jay Indovino. It’s been so successful, in fact, that Indovino left his 25-year career in finance to act as the organization’s executive director. Today, Indovino and a handful of Pedal staffers are dedicated to raising $2 million dollars in 2012, building a platform for growth and spreading awareness on a more regional level. A tall order, no doubt, but Indovino knows they “can be a part of making great strides in cancer research—and have a lot of fun doing it.”

Faith Sandler, 51, Executive Director, The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis

“Every day when I come home, I don’t know what I did really matter; there’s not a better job in town.” After 22 years as executive director of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis—which, in 2011, alone, provided $3.5 million in interest-free loans and grants to 600 area students in need—Faith Sandler’s job satisfaction is tough to dispute. The fruit of her fundraising—from sales at the two local Scholarship Shop locations and charitable contributions (one of six is from a graduate whose education was supported by the 92-year-old foundation)—also support programs that educate an average of 3,000 students annually on applying for college admission and financial aid. With her efforts currently focused on building an online scholarship application system where students can tell their stories once to a number of organizations, Sandler hopes that 2012 will mark a revaluation in the management of private scholarships. “There shouldn’t be a single unused dollar—or a program that says ‘we just couldn’t find the right student.’” —Jeff Manoff

FOODIE FORTUNE

Kevin Willman, 33, Chef/Owner, Farmhaus

You’d hardly suspect a chef whose menu includes dishes like bacon-wrapped meatloaf or nachos to be honored by “Food and Wine Magazine” as one of the best new chefs of 2011. That is, until you savored the meatloaf reduction in Chef Kevin Willman’s meatloaf or tasted his house-made sweet potato chips with fire-roasted red pepper ketchup. It’s Willman’s laundry-focused menu and witty take on the classics that got the attention of “Food and Wine” editors and earned him national recognition just one year after opening Farmhaus in South City. But, don’t think the rapid success has gone to his head. The humble chef—who’s also known for tweeting his daily-changing menu and his made-on-site ice cream flavors. As for what’s next, Bailey points to more restaurants in the future, but his focus is elsewhere for now. If four restaurants and a new baby don’t keep him busy, we’re not sure what will. —Cristy Miller

David Bailey, 33, Owner, Bailey’s Range

For this unstoppable St. Louis restaurateur, 2011 marked two big milestones—the birth of his first child and the opening of his fourth restaurant. And, while David Bailey might be new to parenthood, he’s certainly no novice to creating successful restaurants. Most of us have savored a chocolate martini at Bailey’s Chocolate Bar, enjoyed a roasted apple crostini at Rooster or sipped a craft brew at Bridge. And now, the serial foodie has debuted the new grass-fed burgers and shakes concept, Bailey’s Range, which has already achieved hipster status—thanks to the deliciously creative burger menu (complete with house-made bun and sauce) and his made-on-site ice cream flavors. As for what’s next, Bailey points to more restauranteurs in the future, but his focus is elsewhere for now. If four restaurants and a new baby don’t keep him busy, we’re not sure what will. —Cristy Miller

Robbie Montgomery is experiencing a new kind of success as the star of her own reality show on the Oprah Winfrey Network. “Welcome to Sweetie Pie’s” debuted last year to much fanfare—so much that Robbie and her son Tim Norman began taping a second season in November. But, Robbie is no stranger to the spotlight. After finding fame as a backup singer for Tina Turner, The Supremes and the Rolling Stones, she opened the first Sweetie Pie’s in 1996. Eight years later, she opened a second location in The Grove, and today, she’s making headlines with the expansion of a third Sweetie Pie’s in Grand Center. The new ventures open this spring with a restaurant, banquet hall, culinary school and performing arts center—combining Robbie’s longtime love of music and food.