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A Magazine for UH Alumni

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FOUR  
UNDER  
40





*Steven McDonald*



*Cory Owen*



*Seante Johnson*



*Jackie Battle*

What do you get when you combine hard work and determination with passion and commitment?

Simple.

You get four dynamic alumni who personify what it means to be a Coog!

Learn more about their unique journeys in our "Four Under 40" feature.

# Seante Johnson

'14

For many of us, birthdays come and go. For UH alumna, Seante Johnson ('14), birthdays are an everyday way of life. Since childhood, Seante has always had wonderful birthday celebrations. One day, her mother told her about a little girl who was so sad because it was her birthday, and she would be at Seante's party standing around all alone. It touched young Seante's heart, and she never forgot it.

One memorable birthday began the pathway to a successful career. "I was serving as a Resident Advisor in Moody Towers when my RA friends gave me a surprise birthday celebration," said Johnson "I will never forget how their kindness made me feel. After that celebration, I decided to start celebrating the birthdays of all of the residents on my floor. I wanted to make everyone feel special and loved."

Seante had no idea that "birthdays" in some form or fashion would occupy a very special place in her life. However, after reflecting and seeing the joy of her residents when their birthdays were celebrated, she knew

that she had to create a nonprofit that celebrated birthdays.

After Johnson graduated from the Conrad N. Hilton College and completed her Nonprofit Management Certification through the UH Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, she began honing her skills by working in the nonprofit sector. She was laid off in 2016, and used that as an opportunity to work on the business plan for the nonprofit. In 2018, she received the 501(c)(3) designation for Birthday Bash Box, a Literacy and Social-Emotional Learning experience through birthday celebrations for children. She celebrated the birthdays of 654 children in 2019, her first year of programming and hopes to celebrate even more in the second year.

Johnson attributes the success of Birthday Box Bash to her time and connection with UH. "Everything I am is UH," said Johnson. Since graduating, Johnson has participated in the SURE™ Program at the C. T. Bauer College of Business, which provides educational modules and mentorship for businesses in their beginning stages of development.

Johnson also credits her mother for her business acumen and philanthropic spirit. "My mother is an entrepreneur, with a Bachelor's in Business Administration. "My mom is one of my business mentors and has taught me, by example, to have empathy for those who are less fortunate", said Johnson.

When asked about her future, Johnson answers quite emphatically, "I hope one day to go back to school," said Johnson. "I would like to be a professor at the University of Houston and teach on the topic of building successful philanthropic businesses while keeping in mind the need for hospitality in a nonprofit's generosity. The University of Houston is an important part of my life. I currently serve on two alumni constituent groups; the UH Alumni Young Alumni Council and the executive board of the UH Cougar Athletic Alliance.

"I have received enormous support from my various connections at UH," said Johnson. Being able to give back in this way would be icing on the cake!"

