

# LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE

2025 Q2



## LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOUNDATION AWARDS

and the Lawrence Magnet - Returning to start a New Chapter

Stephanie Pasas-Farmer  
in her Lawrence office.

This scientist returned to Lawrence to make a home in an atmosphere she feels is ripe to grow the pharmaceutical industry, with local businesses and universities working together to secure and retain talent.

by Tara Trenary,  
photos by Steven Hertzog

# The Future of Tech

For many University of Kansas (KU) graduates from near and far, Lawrence is a place where they feel at home. Whether it's the community, the university, the culture, the small-town feel with big-city vibes, they move back here to be part of a community where they once got their roots. For many, starting a new business or bringing along an established business is part of that dream.

What characteristics make Lawrence an ideal choice for starting or relocating a business? Quality of life, an inclusive business environment, KU and other local colleges, a community that supports buying local, big-city amenities with a small-town feel, access to a skilled workforce, incentives and funding from the local government, and an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, to name a few.

Stephanie Pasas-Farmer fell in love with Lawrence when she lived here during graduate school, where she earned Ph.D. and Master of Science degrees in pharmaceutical chemistry. She and her husband, a chemist and now a patent and intellectual property lawyer, as well as a KU graduate, had always wanted to move back. The owner of BioData Solutions didn't want to leave 20 years ago after completing her degrees but felt she had to because of the lack of opportunity here in her field.

"There were a few different contract labs that I could have gone to, but I was looking for a large pharmaceutical company," she explains. So, after graduating, Pasas-Farmer worked on the East Coast for large pharma companies before moving to biotechnology and then into contract research organization.

## Heading West

In 2019, Pasas-Farmer and her husband moved their family back to the Midwest. They wanted to raise their three kids, then in elementary and middle school, in Lawrence, where the cost of living was affordable, and they had family closeby.

"I was really interested in getting the entrepreneurial ecosystem, pharma ecosystem, to grow ... here. I thought, if I could come here and help establish that ecosystem, that would be great—but that was lofty goal," she says.

Pasas-Farmer's company, BioData Solutions, established in 2015, is a bioanalytical consulting and software firm that serves the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry, explains Rashi Jain, director of product management and marketing for the company. On the consulting end, it provides services that range from strategic planning and establishing regulatory labs to data analysis, regulatory submissions and market planning. On the software end, it develops a cutting-edge suite of software, Red Thread, which brings efficiencies, objectivity and rigor to bioanalytical programs.

"BioData has a global presence," she continues, "and through the work performed via consulting and software, it is addressing an unmet medical need by helping establish regulated labs and programs in developing and underdeveloped countries, such as South Africa; helping numerous oncology programs succeed by providing strategic planning, operational program management, data analysis, regulatory

COVERAGE FOR  
EVERYTHING YOU  
CARE ABOUT.



**CEK**  
INSURANCE

[cekinsurance.com](http://cekinsurance.com)

# WE LOVE PARTIES!

Whatever the occasion, we want to help you celebrate.



[JohnnysTavern.com](http://JohnnysTavern.com)

**J. WILSON'S**

INAPPROPRIATELY GOOD.

[JWilsonsRestaurant.com](http://JWilsonsRestaurant.com)

Two great restaurants, one big family.

Johnny's North  
785-842-0377

Johnny's West  
785-843-0704

Johnny's Topeka  
785-329-5541

J. Wilson's  
785-312-9057

submissions and market planning; and supporting several drug approvals through strategic planning, regulatory submissions and use of our software in drug development.”

The company is a remote workforce with a brick-and-mortar in Downtown Lawrence and employs about 18 (only four are here in Kansas). “We have seven Ph.D.s and one master’s level consultant,” Pasas-Farmer explains. “We have a master’s level consultant who does quality assurance on the software that’s on the consultant side of things and a KU intern who will start in the summer.”

The company offers full benefits: 401(k), vision, health, dental, long- and short-term disability. “I mean, it’s a pretty instant, comprehensive benefit program for a small company, especially as far as wages are concerned. I believe we’re a pretty high-paying company, because I feel like you should be if you work with the highly educated,” she says. “They probably have many other options, so you have to be up there. But our attrition rate is really, really low.”

BioData “adapts to employees’ needs and promotes a healthy work-life balance, with unlimited vacation time, flexible timings and training opportunities,” Jain adds. “Empowerment is central to our culture, giving employees the autonomy and resources to succeed. Everyone is treated with dignity and consideration, ensuring a respectful workplace.”

Getting funding for BioData Solutions has proved complicated thus far, so for now, Pasas-Farmer is its sole financier. She says the ecosystem of venture capital has to move along with what her sights are and find a way to feel less risk-averse. In the Midwest right now, companies are standoffish when it comes to tech. “They have deep pockets, it’s just they’re not used to it. Tech is definitely coastal. I could go out, I could get money from other places, but then I couldn’t be here.”

Last year, BioData Solutions netted about \$2.3 million.

## A New Adventure

The core of BioData Solutions is scientific consulting. After moving into contract research organization (contracting out certain parts of the work) when she was in Philadelphia, Pasas-Farmer ran bioanalytical labs and did preclinical and clinical testing on small molecule, biologics, cell therapy, gene therapy and other drug modalities. During that time, people began asking her to problem-solve situations that they were having issues with. “But I couldn’t,” she says, “because it was unethical based on what role I was doing.”

Because the questions were usually related to a different program she wasn’t working on in her firm, they’d have to pay her separately to consultant for them, which was a conflict of interest. “I was a full-time employee at a lab, so I decided that maybe I wanted to start my own lab,” she explains. “I had enough people asking me to consult for them, [so I thought], ‘I’ll just stop for a year, consult for people, and then I’ll start my own lab.’ That was 10 years ago.”

Pasas-Farmer loved consulting so much, she never went back to running the lab. After a year or so, she had so many requests for help, with people



Allie Renfro, Stephanie Pasas-Farmer, & Brittany Taylor

leaving one company to go to another and running into the same issues, she either had to turn down the work or start partnering with other consultants. “And so I brought in a few other consultants ... and just started growing that way.”

She added Ariadne Software to her portfolio in 2018 to automate data as a way to help the company increase quality, throughput and efficiency. As a consultant, trying to review enormous amounts of data by reading Excel spreadsheets was overwhelming, Pasas-Farmer explains. Her husband had been reading a book on artificial intelligence (AI) around that time, and as he watched her comb through reports hundreds of pages long with three computer monitors up simultaneously for hours on end, he casually said one day: “You know, software’s taking over the world. Don’t you wish you had a software that could do that for you?”

A lightbulb went off in her head. “I hired a consultant, a software developer part time, and within six months, we had a prototype.”

## Removing the Red Tape

Red Thread, as the software is called, has a global presence. Initially a separate entity, two years ago BioData Solutions and Ariadne were combined into one company. With BioData being a consumer of Ariadne, and rather than paying two taxes and two payrolls, Pasas-Farmer chose to consolidate the two into one—both under the BioData Solutions moniker. All of the intellectual property was transferred over from Ariadne, and Pasas-Farmer remains the sole owner of the conglomeration—less paperwork, less hassle.

Jain explains: “Stephanie is an exceptional scientist with strong business acumen. She understands industry trends and the target audience, and has a unique ability to connect with people, which is rare among expert scientists.”

Pasas-Farmer says with the Red Thread technology onboard, she and her employees continually find new things to automate. “I’ve actually had to stop myself this year, because there’s just so much we could do, it is really a never-ending list.” Daily, they perform very risky tasks, and software tools would seem like the obvious help. But she says everyday people can be afraid of big changes.

# BETTER SPACE FOR EXCELLENCE



Expanded and improved living and studying space will help Sigma Nu Fraternity members “Excel with Honor” at the University of Kansas. McElroy’s is proud to be the heating, air and plumbing contractor – partners with Mar Lan Construction.

**McELROYS.COM** **785.266.4870**

EST. **CRAFTSMANSHIP** 1951  
**McElroy's**  
MECHANICAL - PLUMBING - HEATING - AIR



# Rumsey-Yost

**FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY, INC.**

Locally Owned and Operated for **OVER 100 YEARS**

*Providing personalized care with dignity.*

Bart Yost   Todd Miller   Gayle Davis   Rose Foster   Barbara Rich

601 Indiana Street | Lawrence, KS 66044 | 785-843-5111 | yost@sunflower.com  
**www.rumsey-yost.com**

Brittany Taylor,  
Stephanie Pasas-Farmer  
& Allie Renfro



"We've had to wait till people caught up with us. You're talking about using AI, and that makes people nervous," she explains. So how do you validate that and make sure the conclusions the software is making are correct? "We focus a lot on human-augmented intelligence. The best way to make software work really well, even AI, is to have the human and the software working together and not alone. They're a decision-helper, not decision-maker."

## Embracing Differences

Pasas-Farmer says BioData Solutions is a very diverse operation. "Balance is very important for me," she says. "Being a woman and just the reputation of treating people well and retaining people, I think that has spoken a lot to getting the right people and also being more diverse."

The company employs about 75% women, as well as sponsors visas. There are employees from China, India, the Philippines, the United Kingdom—women and men of color. "I guess the way I see it is we try to be a safe place for all people and merit-based," she explains. "And I think that's honestly why we do have a high percentage of women because of just being more open to inclusions and balanced work life."

Pasas-Farmer encourages others to take a leap in the area of entrepreneurship. "I really want to encourage individuals to take that chance and strike out on their own. I don't care if you are a man or a woman. Entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs, need to see someone like them out there," she says.

She donates to and has lectured kids at Bishop Seabury, where her children attend, to encourage them to learn more about the current state of sciences and career opportunities. She participated in the 2024 Douglas County Leadership class, has spoken on panels at the KU Innovation Center and participates on KU's Conflict of Interest Committee. She also guest-lectures at KU for various departments, most recently speaking to a group of biology graduate students on career paths and AI in drug development. And she will be speaking in June in Denver about women entrepreneurship.

"Leadership and giving back are important to me. So I do give. I try to live through service," Pasas-Farmer explains. "That's my love language, if you want to call it that."

# Adecco



## Your Staffing Solutions, Simplified

From temporary positions to long-term placements, Adecco delivers strategic staffing solutions designed for your business.

**Experience the difference today!**

1201 Wakarusa Drive | Building B Suite 5 | Lawrence KS 66049  
785-842-1515

## ELECTRICAL EXPERTISE FOR LABORATORIES



From hospital medical labs to environmentally secure Biosafety Level 3 facilities, McElroy Electric's specialized expertise fulfills the most critical electrical needs.

MCELROYELECTRIC.COM

785.266.7111

GENERATING TRUST

**McElroy**  
EST. ELECTRIC 1985

## TIRED? GAINING WEIGHT? LOSING LIBIDO? FOCUS AND DRIVE LACKING?

Come experience the movement we are creating to help you get back to the top of your game!



*The Gameday Lawrence team's mission is to help you restore maximum health and vitality back in your life.*

*We offer complimentary in-house lab tests and consults in a luxurious and comfortable setting.*

TESTOSTERONE  
PEPTIDES  
VITAMINS  
WEIGHT LOSS  
ERECTILE  
DYSFUNCTION  
THERAPIES

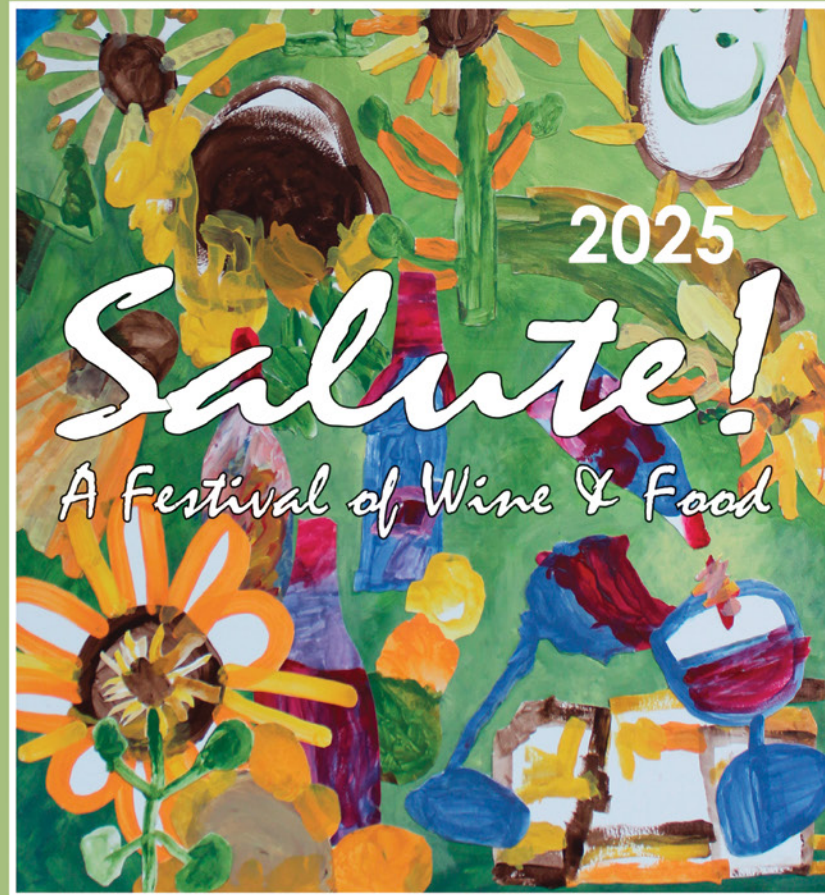
**GAMEDAY**  
MEN'S HEALTH

4910 Corporate Centre Drive, Suite 100, Lawrence, KS 66047  
785-222-4272 [www.gamedaymenshealth.com/lawrence](http://www.gamedaymenshealth.com/lawrence)

**Book Here:**



# SAVE THESE DATES!



Thursday, July 10th  
**Mass St. Mosey**

Friday, July 11th  
**Winemaker Dinner**

Saturday, July 12th  
**Grand Tasting & Auctions**

[www.salutewinefest.com](http://www.salutewinefest.com) or  
785-840-1604

Attendees at all events must be at  
least 21 years of age



Salute is a benefit for  **COTTONWOOD**  
INCORPORATED

Presented by Standard Beverage Corporation &  
The Oread Lawrence Tapestry Collection by Hilton

Salute is a benefit for Cottonwood, Inc. a 501 (c) 3  
not-for-profit organization that was established in  
1972 to provide services to individuals with  
intellectual/ developmental disabilities.  
Over the years, Cottonwood has earned a  
reputation for quality services and care as a  
community service provider.

Visit us at [www.cwood.org](http://www.cwood.org)

We help people with disabilities shape  
their own future.



## Plans for Growth

She would like to see BioData Solutions grow, and that includes working more with KU. She's also having discussions with a large (\$200-billion) potential distributor and partner for the software side of the company.

Pasas-Farmer feels the partnership with KU could "really grow some entrepreneurial breakout companies from that work and research. I have a lot of crazy ideas in my head, and I'd like to find a group ... a couple of different like-minded individuals over there to do some research in that. And those could easily spin out."

Her family's choice to move back to Lawrence was the right one, she says, and being back in this environment has been rewarding. She believes having local universities nearby and being able to grow talent locally is beneficial to the business community as a whole. And she really loves this community.

"I just want to see this place become a future tech growth location. It has the ability and the talent," Pasas-Farmer says. "I see a really bright future if we could just figure out how to get and retain the talent here, and make it attractive to stay. The quality of life is so much better here."

Her only obstacle to being located in Lawrence is that her potential client base is mostly external to this area, and travel can be tricky. She can't just drive up and down the coast and run into thousands of clients like she used to. Here, she has to make a conscious effort to do business development and go meet with new clients all over the country. "But the quality of life being here in Lawrence and being able to work with the university has made that worth it," she says.



Jain says one of Pasas-Farmer's greatest achievements is turning the idea of creating software into a successful business. Plus, she treats her staff like family, fostering a supportive and trusting environment. "Stephanie encourages her employees to learn and try new things, ensuring everyone feels heard and valued."

She acknowledges failures and learns from them to improve, encouraging her team to do the same, Jain adds, and is proactive, ensuring a healthy work-life balance for everyone while providing ample opportunities for growth. Ultimately, "Stephanie has a clear vision and works tirelessly to achieve her goals."



Let us manage  
your Lawrence  
investment  
property!

**Affordable rates.** We handle  
the daily details and send you  
the money by direct deposit  
each month.

**LOCATION**  
**PROPERTIES**

[www.HomesForLease.org](http://www.HomesForLease.org)

1037 Vermont Street, Lawrence, KS 66044  
Office 785-841-7300 ext 1 | Toll-Free 800-883-0412

Equal Housing Opportunity. If you have a brokerage relationship with another agency, this is not intended as a solicitation.



*Hedges helps investors find excellent*

**RENTAL  
HOMES!**

*Ask us about our investment property  
finding service.*

**REALTY  
EXECUTIVES**

HEDGES REAL ESTATE, INC.

[www.HedgesRE.com](http://www.HedgesRE.com)



# Let's thrive together.

As friends, neighbors and healthcare teams, LMH Health supports vibrant communities. With leading edge medicine and dedicated clinicians and staff, we're building a strong, healthy future.

See what's possible at [lmh.org/thrive](https://lmh.org/thrive).



A partner for lifelong health