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**SEX  
EDUCATION:**  
TODDLERS  
THROUGH TEENS

**FEEDING YOUR  
CHILD'S BRAIN**

**FOOD MYTHS:**  
ARE THEY MAKING  
OUR KIDS FAT?

**DATING AFTER  
DIVORCE:**  
PROCEED WITH CAUTION

**TEENS & PDA:**  
NIXING THE  
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Allison and Ava R.

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The staff at Hillcrest South was so accommodating, and each went out of their way to make sure I was comfortable, including my postpartum nurse. They make you feel like you're important and they're glad you are there. Your needs and care are the staff's priority.

*I couldn't have asked for a better experience.*



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Volume XXX, Number 2

www.tulsakids.com

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## Talking About Sex

When I read Claire Combs' article about sex education at every age, I tried to remember how my husband and I handled "that discussion" with our three children. Badly. I vaguely remember throwing an appropriate book into a bedroom, mumbling something like "let me know if you have any questions" and quickly closing the door.

I did make them go to a class when they were in middle school (I think) where they talked a lot about STDs and different contraceptive options, which were passed around. I didn't know some of that stuff existed, which made me think that qualified medical personnel should be teaching this in schools. The kids could write anonymous questions to put in a box to be drawn out and answered by the nurse at the end of the class. There were some good questions, most of which I'm not sure I could have answered. And then there was my daughter's question, which was about what type of snack they might be getting the following week.

Hey, I'm not proud of my bad parenting. Thank goodness no teen pregnancies resulted.

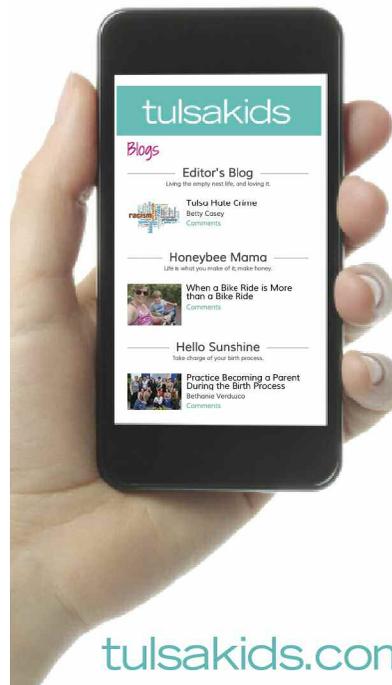
For most parents, sex is an uncomfortable topic, but it shouldn't be. It's a normal part of life and, according to the experts, is best handled as an age-appropriate conversation from toddlers to teens. I'm certain that if you don't act shocked or embarrassed and have a straight-forward discussion, kids respond well to that.

I do remember watching some TV shows that I felt didn't reflect the values of our family – the ones where sex is at the center of everything, regardless of personal connections and women act like their only role in life is to be sexy. Those were good opportunities for me to ask my kids what they thought of those shows, and for me to voice my own opinion.

I guess it really is about being open and ready to listen.

My hope as an editor is that you will find something new and informative in these pages. Maybe you'll meet a new Tulsan through I'm a Tulsa Kid or Green Country Grown-Up. Maybe you'll find a cause in one of our community columns, or a great recipe in Get Cooking. And we're always trying to uncover the latest research that you need to know – be sure to read the article about brain growth, intelligence and nutrition.

As always, have a wonderful month, and let us hear from you. Email me at editor@tulsakids.com.



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ON OUR COVER:  
TYLER DAVIDSON-MOORE IS HAPPY  
TO BE YOUR VALENTINE.

PHOTO BY: LESLIE HOYT  
PHOTOGRAPHY



If you like to read TulsaKids, you may not know that you can watch us, too! Every Thursday morning on Tulsa's Channel 8, the local ABC affiliate, join Editor Betty Casey on Good Day Tulsa for tips to plan your family's weekend and more. Watch Good Morning



Oklahoma on Tuesdays for tips on timely topics and family information you'll want to know.

## VALENTINE'S DAY FUN FACTS

Expressing one's love to another is a celebrated custom on Valentine's Day. Sweethearts and family members present gifts to one another, such as cards, candy, flowers and other symbols of affection. Opinions differ as to who was the original Valentine, but the most popular theory is that he was a clergyman who was executed for secretly marrying couples in ancient Rome. In A.D. 496, Pope Gelasius I declared Feb. 14 as Valentine Day. Esther Howland, a native of Massachusetts, is given credit for selling the first mass-produced valentine cards in the 1840s.

The spirit continues today with even young children exchanging valentine's cards with their fellow classmates.

**\$14.9 billion** The estimated value of chocolate and cocoa product shipments for manufacturing establishments that produced these products in 2014.

**\$272,180,347** The value of imports for cut flowers and buds for bouquets in 2014 through October. The total value of fresh cut roses as of October 2014 was \$381,757,889.

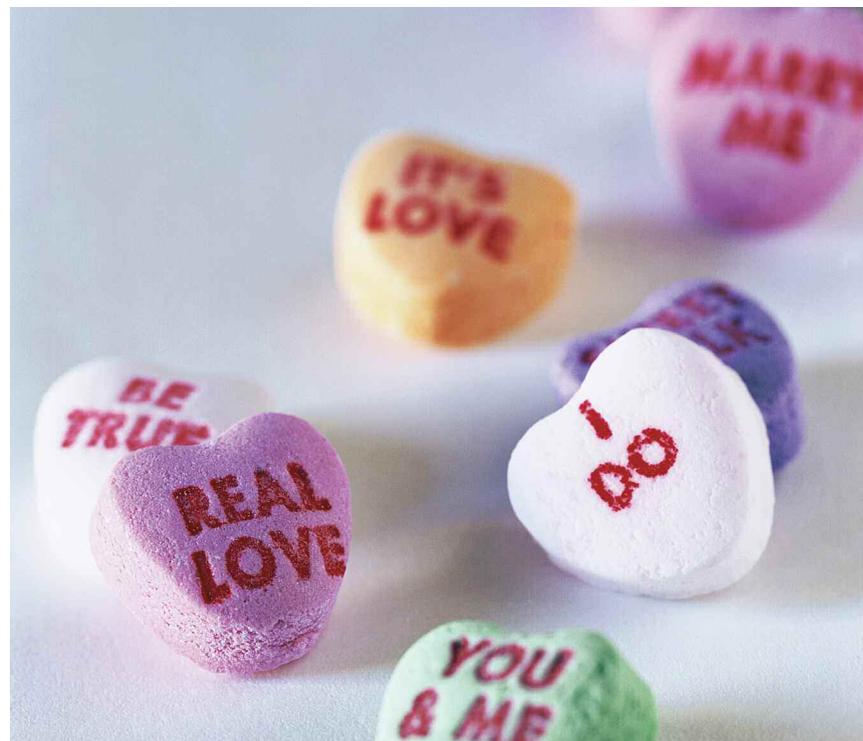
**29.5 and 27.6 years** Median age at first marriage in 2014 for men and women, respectively.

**47.7%** The overall percentage of people 15 and older who reported being married, except those separated.

**19.2%** Among people 15 and older who have been married, the percentage of men and women who have been married twice as of 2014. Five percent have married three or more times. By comparison, 75.5 percent of people who have ever been married have made only one trip down the aisle.

Romantic-sounding places in Oklahoma to spend Valentine's Day: Love County, OK or Loveland, OK.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



## THEY'RE OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

The Jenks Vocal Music Program will be performing The Wizard of Oz as their spring musical, March 2-5, 2017 at the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Jenks High School.

The production will feature 65 students from Jenks High School as well as students from all three elementary schools and both intermediate schools. Members of the Jenks High School Orchestra and Band will be joined by several professional musicians to play the score for the production.

Tickets are on sale now at [jenksvocal.tix.com](http://jenksvocal.tix.com). For more information, call the Jenks Public School Box Office at 918.299.4415 ext. 2368.

## LIBRARY'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

"Write every day." That is the advice any award-winning author gives to aspiring writers. The continuous practice helps build essential storytelling skills as well as establishes a daily routine to fuel creativity.

Tulsa City-County Library's annual Young People's Creative Writing contest can help achieve a writing routine. The contest is geared much like a publisher works. You are given deadline, parameters and encouraged to submit your best story.

Entries for the 2017 contest are being accepted Feb. 1 – March 4. The contest is free to enter and open to ages 10-18 for those who live in Tulsa County, attend school in Tulsa County or have a nonresident library card.

There are three age divisions: 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18. Participants may enter one manuscript per category. Within each age division, there are five categories:

**Short Story** – each entry no more than 1,500 words.

**Informal Essay** – a short composition on a topic of issue giving your opinion or recounting a personal experience. Limited to 1,500 words.

**Poetry** – one poem, no more than 300 words.

**Short Play** – no more than six characters, no more than three locations, no more than 10 pages. Limited to five to 10 minutes in length.

**Comix** – entry must be complete in and of itself, and not a fragment of a larger work. No more than eight pages. Work can be with or without words, in black and white or color, and fiction or nonfiction. Computer-generated images are acceptable as long as they are original works (no clip art). Use 8 ½" by 11" paper and submit as flat work, not as a booklet.

Within each age division and category, cash prizes are awarded in the following amounts: \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place and \$25 for third place. The "Writer to Watch" award is endowed by retired TCCL librarian Rosemary Moran, the award of \$100 recognizes a young adult who consistently entered the contest and demonstrated promising writing techniques.

All entrants will receive an invitation to the awards program, which will be held on Friday, May 5, 7 p.m. at Hardesty Regional Library's Connor's Cove, 8316 E. 93rd St. Laurie Halse Anderson, winner of the 2017 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature, will be the featured speaker and will present the awards.

Entry forms with rules and regulations are available at all TCCL locations or on the library's teen website, <http://teens.tulsalibrary.org/YPCWC>. For more information, call your local library or the AskUs Hotline, 918.549.7323.

## KIDS CAN GET CRAFTY AT COWBOY MUSEUM

A new hands-on children's exhibit opens this month at The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. The Power and Prestige Children's Gallery premieres February 3, 2017, offering hands-on crafts and continuous programming to encourage children to explore the West.

The new activity space takes visitors into the histories and cultures of the American Plains Indians, and complements the temporary Power and Prestige: Headdresses of the American Plains exhibition. Younger generations will participate in make-and-take activity areas, dramatic scenes and stories, a mapping journey, a story-station reading area, and other engaging activities allowing them to explore on their own, in small groups, or even as a family. Both temporary exhibitions will be on display through May 14, 2017.

"This is an important exhibition as it offers children and families in our community an opportunity to experience and enjoy the West in a myriad of new ways," said Museum President and CEO Steven Karr.

In conjunction with the gallery, several programs for the entire family are offered including drawing, interactive crafts, and "Circle of Stories" – where Native storyteller Patrick Red Bird (Kiowa) will share tales of family, bravery, power, and prestige. Programs are held each Saturday while the exhibition is on display.

For more information about the Museum's upcoming exhibitions and programming, visit [nationalcowboymuseum.org](http://nationalcowboymuseum.org) or call 405.478.2250.



## GET READY TO STOCK UP

The annual Just Between Friends (JBF) Tulsa spring/summer sale is set for Sunday, Feb. 26 through Saturday, March 4 at the Exchange Center Building at Expo Square. Co-founders Daven Tackett and Shannon Wilburn are "SELLabrating" 20 years of bringing bargains to Tulsa area families. Tackett and her husband Paul organize and facilitate JBF Tulsa.

Not only can parents and parents-to-be clean up on clothing from maternity to teen, toys and children's paraphernalia, they can clean out their gently used items and make some consignment cash. According to Tackett, the average JBF Tulsa consignor makes \$350. "If you want to make the most money at a consignment sales event," she says, "you should set a goal to tag at least 100 items."

Big spring/summer sellers include large outdoor playhouses, outdoor toys and swim items in addition to seasonal clothing.

Buyers can expect to save 50 to 90 percent off retail.

## CALLING ALL KID INVENTORS & ENTREPRENEURS

Kids and teens, if you have an idea for a product or business, the K-12 Tulsa StartUp Series has a category just for you. If you're in high school or younger, submit your idea to the K-12 Student Series this month. Your product or business should address a problem, solve the problem and then, if you win, you'll need to have an idea of how you will use the prize money to test your product or business.

For complete information on the K-12 Tulsa StartUp Series, how to enter and deadline, go to [tulsastartupseries.com](http://tulsastartupseries.com), click on "How to Enter," then "Pick Your Pitch."

## HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS CAN TAKE ACT OR SAT FREE

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister announced that Oklahoma public school districts will have the opportunity this year to choose whether their 11th-grade students can take the ACT or the SAT college-entrance exam free of charge.

This initiative is an extension of a 2015-2016 pilot program widely embraced across the state last spring, when all but two of Oklahoma's 459 public high schools provided the ACT for juniors. As a result, 79 percent of 11th graders – or 35,477 of 45,071 students – took the test, compared to a little more than half who had taken the exam the year before.

Giving schools the opportunity to administer the free tests onsite and during the school day eliminates cost and transportation barriers for students who otherwise might never have had access to the exam. An ACT or SAT score allows a student to earn college credit at a reduced cost while still in high school through concurrent enrollment and is a requirement for acceptance into most colleges and universities.

Participation in the program is optional this spring. The Oklahoma State Board of Education has recommended that a college- and career-readiness exam be a requirement for high school testing beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.

Pending approval by the Legislature and Governor, the ACT and SAT tests replace end-of-instruction (EOI) exams that were repealed last year in legislation signed by Gov. Fallin.

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BY KILEY ROBERSON



# are food myths making our kids fat?

**F**ew things are cuter than a baby with chubby cheeks and thigh rolls. But experts say that chubby babies and tubby toddlers are at risk of becoming overweight children and obese adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity rates in children are twice what they were 30 years ago. In fact, the National Academy of Sciences says that more than 10 percent of U.S. children between infancy and age 2 are overweight. Among kids ages 2 to 5, the situation is worse — more than 20 percent are too heavy, a rate that has doubled since the 1980s.

It may seem like an over-reaction, but doctors with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) say that parents and caregivers should pay close attention to weight, even in babies as young as 6 months. The more weight babies gain before age 2, the heavier they're likely to be as adults, studies show. If one or both parents are overweight, the concern is even greater. Some overweight kids as young as 3 or 4 can already have elevated levels of cholesterol, insulin, or blood pressure. So how do we stop the gain and make sure that baby weight is also healthy? The AAP says there are several common food myths that may be at fault.

**Myth 1: Juice is a Healthy Drink for Kids**



Many parents believe that since fruit is healthy, fruit juice is too. But, this high-calorie, sugary beverage could be contributing to weight gain. You're better off giving your child fresh fruit to eat, which also contains fiber that is lost in the juicing process.

**Myth 2: Whole Wheat Bread is Healthy Bread**

There are fewer differences between white bread and whole wheat bread than most people believe. They both have high levels of glucose that are broken down into the bloodstream the same way. This not only causes weight gain but can lead to a

more serious health problem, such as diabetes. Be careful when reading bread labels and look for packages that read 100 percent whole grains. These healthier alternatives have been shown to allow for a more balanced glucose level in children.

**Myth 3: Veggie Chips are Healthier than Potato Chips**

This sneaky snack often contains the same number of calories as potato chips and can have the same weight gaining effects, too. The small serving of vegetables found in veggie chips are countered by the high amounts of potato and corn flour. The vital

nutrients that vegetables contain are lost in the process when veggie chips are manufactured. Try cutting out the processed potato altogether and making healthy vegetable snacks at home. Kale baked with a small amount of olive oil and salt is crispy like a potato chip, without having the same unhealthy ingredients that can compromise children's health and weight.

**Myth 4: Cereal is a Great Way for Children to Start the Day**

Cereal is an easy and tasty breakfast option for kids rushing to make the school bus. But beware, most child-marketed cereal options contain more sugar than the standard dessert. Better breakfast options, like fruit, low-fat yogurt, eggs, and oatmeal, give kids the energy they need without packing on the pounds.

**Myth 5: Foods Labeled "Diet" and "Gluten Free" are Healthy Choices**

Food trends and product labels can mislead you into believing you're eating a healthy diet. When deciding what to feed growing children, it's important to look at foods as a whole. Look at things like sodium, artificial sweeteners, nutritional value, and calories. All of these play a role in determining if a food item is healthy or not.



BY JULIE WENGER WATSON

# the ABCs of PDA

**A**wwwkwaaaaard. Sex and sexuality might be one of the most important, and least comfortable, topics of conversation for parents and their teens. Try as they might to avoid it, inevitably, the day of reckoning arrives – often in the form of a first boy or girlfriend. Faced with occasionally indiscriminate PDA (“public displays of affection”) on the part of their offspring, parents are often forced to set some boundaries to avoid the “ick” factor of being the unintentional witness to someone else’s amorous overtures.

With PDA, determining how much is too much is a matter of opinion that may vary from family to family. Like US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously said, “I know it when I see it.” Before engaging in a conversation with teens, it’s important for parents to understand what their own beliefs are about the topic and what is acceptable behavior in their own homes.

For Denise L., a mom of three, her feelings about PDA are the same with regard to her teens as they are with the general public.

“I think it’s okay for older teens to hold hands, or give a quick hug hello or goodbye in public. I don’t like to see PDA beyond that,” Denise commented. “In all honesty, I wouldn’t want to see two adults ‘making out’ in public, either. To me, excessive PDA at any age shows a lack of respect for everyone involved.”



Respect, for yourself and others, seems to be the key word when it comes to acceptable behavior.

“Although we speak very openly about sex and sexuality in our house, we respect each other’s sensibilities, space and privacy,” said Brett D., also a mother of three. “Everyone agrees that anything beyond holding hands, or a quick kiss in public spaces, is not respectful of others in the room. It’s an agreement born out of understanding the discomfort of those around you.”

While most homes may not have rules about PDA carved in stone, Tulsa Public Schools has a specific policy to address the topic in the “Definitions of Inappropriate Behaviors” section of

the Student and Family Guide to Success. According to TPS, inappropriate PDA includes, but is not limited to: *kissing, fondling, cuddling, inappropriate touching, rubbing/massaging, caressing/stroking/petting, excessive hugging or other expressions of affection not in keeping with the social expectations of the school setting.* Hmmmm, with a list like that, it’s no wonder many parents shy away from this discussion.

If the TPS approach seems a little too technical to be practical on the home front, perhaps Brett’s “grandmother” litmus test is a useful alternative.

“I tell my younger daughter to ‘behave as though your big brother, or mom, or even worse, grandmother, is walking behind

you,’” Brett laughed. “Behaving respectfully leads to being respected.”

Denise has a similar approach.

“Our rules about PDA are pretty straightforward,” she said. “Respect yourself, the person you’re dating, and the people around you. Ask yourself, ‘would I do this if my principal, or grandparents, or insert any other authority or role model, were standing here in front of me?’”

Brett also relies on her two older children to set an example for their younger sister.

“There is a 10-year gap between my older son and daughter and my youngest daughter,” she explained. “I have impressed upon the older two the importance of being good role models for their younger sister. My son has shown his younger sisters how a girl should be respected. My older daughter has shown her little sister how to be a young woman who respects herself.”

Although it can certainly be awkward, it’s important to keep the lines of communication open. According to the experts, parents actually have more influence over their kids’ behavior than they realize. While it might be difficult to talk to your teens about sex, sexuality and PDA, if you’re not having those conversations, your children are going to end up making those decisions on their own. So take a deep breath and dive on in.

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BY LAURA RAPHAEL, CHILDREN'S SERVICES COORDINATOR, TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

# giggles galore: how (& why) to play with your baby

**M**y niece Emma is nearing the official age of adulthood, but one of my favorite memories of her will always be the time we spent playing with a basket of scarves. We would spend hours taking each scarf out, squishing them up in our hands, throwing them up in the air, and, of course, playing “Peek-a-boo!”

I wasn't a children's librarian yet (18 years ago!), so I only had a vague knowledge about children and play (namely, that it was good for them). I just knew that it was the best way to get a cascade of giggles and smiles from my niece, and I wasn't giving that up for anything.

Like privacy, liberty, and the freedom of expression, playing is a human right. No, really! On the surface it might seem ridiculous to lump making a LEGO pirate ship or using a scarf to play peek-a-boo with having access to clean water, but “The Right to Play” is important enough to be codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article #24).

In fact, play is so important that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises its members to discuss how to support play with parents at every check-up, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYP) has literally thou-



SCARVES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART STORYTIMES WITH CHILDREN, LIKE THIS PHOTO FROM A CENTRAL LIBRARY CHILDREN'S STORYTIME.

sands of research reports about the efficacy of play in things like building empathy and developing symbolic thought.

## 5 Easy Games To Play With Your Baby

While these lofty goals sound fantastic, you might be wondering how exactly you can “play” with a baby? After all, babies are blobs! OK, of course they aren't blobs, but they also aren't intellectually ready to engage in a pretend Star Wars battle or line up all of the trains for a theoretical cross-country trip in your living room.

The good news is that “playing” for a babies can be something as simple as giving them a fuzzy mitten to touch, or singing a song as you change their diapers. The “play” enters these easy activities because it involves your special attention and a fun and lively spirit.

**1. Looking at and Tracking Objects.** Find a colorful object that your baby can see. Move that object from side to side so that your baby's eyes can track it.

**2. BOOOM: Build it Up – Knock It Down!** Sit your baby in your lap, then build up blocks or

cups in front of you. Then knock them down, saying “BOOM!” Your baby will begin to anticipate the BOOMS, and eventually be able to help you build and knock down.

**3. Give & Take.** When your baby is old enough to grasp objects, practice giving her an object and then ask her to give it back. “I'm giving you a cup. Can you give the cup back to me?”

**4. Knowing & Naming.** Go around the room and point out everything you see by name. “And this is Baxter, our doggie, and here are the hooks where we keep our coats, and...”

**5. Pull a Toy.** Put a toy out of your baby's reach on a scarf or towel. See if he can pull it closer.

The most important thing to keep in mind while you are interacting with your baby is to have fun. Listen for the giggles, and know that 18 years will pass before you know it!

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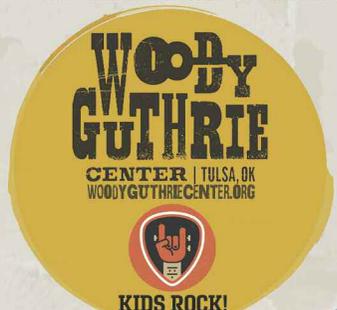
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BY DIANE MORROW KONDOS

# dating after divorce: proceed with caution

**D**ating again after divorce can be scary and intimidating, but it can also be exciting and fun. Dating is a very different journey the second time around; you've got baggage and you're not traveling alone. Most experts strongly advise keeping your dating life separate from your children until you become involved in a serious relationship that you're certain is permanent. Love the second time around is possible, but as parents with children, your evaluation process is much more complicated and should be very thorough.

The passage of time often reveals hidden flaws, and observing the way a person deals with challenges and conflicts may present possible deal breakers. Being a parent requires you to ask questions: Is this person worthy of being around my children? Would he or she be a good role model and influence? Is he or she a good fit for not just me, but also for my kids? Before you introduce your potential partners to your children, make sure you know his or her background and have met his or her family and friends. If something seems off, trust your instincts. It's our job as parents to protect our children and, although most people are good, an extra measure of vigilance is a warranted measure.

It's also advisable to take some time before heading back in to the dating scene. Focus on solitude and recovery following a divorce. Your system needs time to



process what has happened, a chance to heal. In some ways, a divorce is like a death, the death of the dream of a forever marriage. Seeing a counselor may be helpful in the grieving process, especially if your feelings of sadness are interfering with your ability to cope with daily life. Having a "fast" from love can be a beneficial and emotionally healthy part of the journey. It's essential to learn to be alone before you can learn to be part of a healthy couple. Your children also need this time to mourn the loss of the intact family and adjust to the idea of their parents having new partners.

When you feel ready to brave the dating world again, move slowly and with caution. Although it's tempting to throw yourself into the first relationship, hold back and proceed carefully.

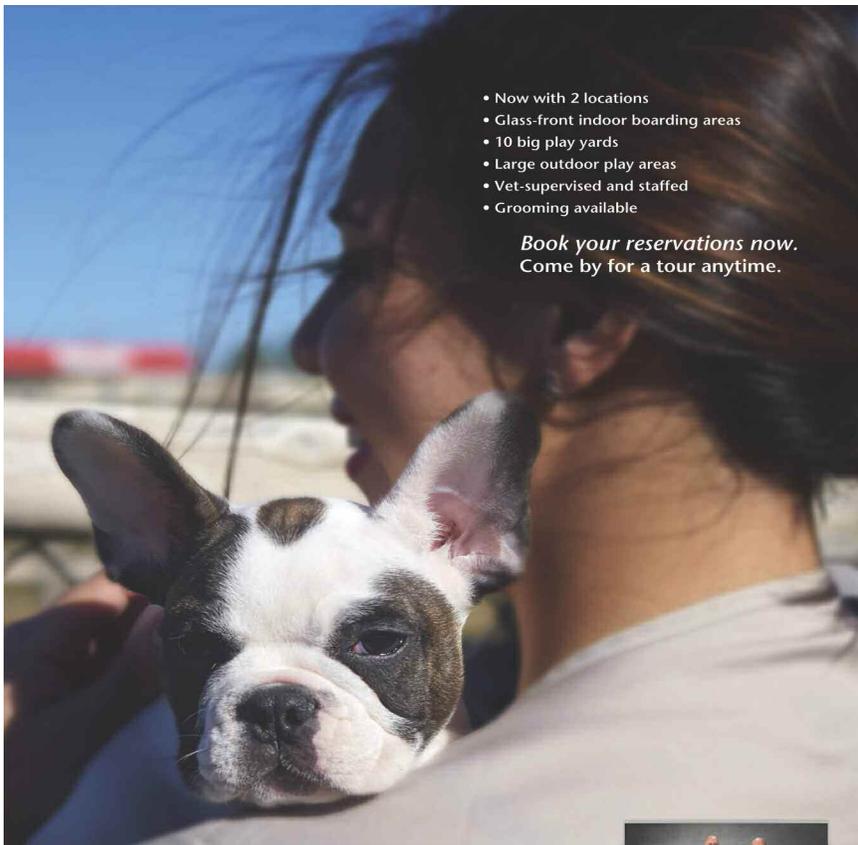
Your emotions are probably still raw and it's easy to believe that the first person you find yourself attracted to is going to be the "one." The first relationship post-divorce is very likely to be a rebound relationship. The relationship starts out so well, this person appreciates you, courts you and brings the long dead romance back into your life. You feel renewed, vital, beautiful and full of hope. But somehow this person rarely works out for long. Even if it's a great person, the timing isn't right. No real explanation, it's just too soon to jump into another committed relationship.

The next stage following the rebound relationship is often a dating flurry. It's normal to want to experience the attention of many people after having been in a long-term, monogamous mar-

riage. For some, dating numerous people fulfills a need to rebuild a bruised ego following the perceived rejection and failure of their marriage. Some may use this stage as an opportunity to prove to themselves, and maybe to their ex, that they are still attractive to others. Keep your physical and emotional safety in the forefront during this stage. Not everyone wants or needs this hyper-dating activity stage but, if you do, it's best to get it out of your system before you move on.

Although some people are happy to remain single and a few enjoy the thrill of the prolonged dating game, many are hoping for a second chance at true love. Finding "the one" takes patience, discipline and good judgement. This time around, you are choosing not just a partner for yourself but a family member that will also greatly impact the lives of your children. The needs and desires of all family members should be considered to create a successful, harmonious blended family.

Romantic Valentine's Day images of cupids, chocolates, hearts and flowers are hard to escape in February, making us long for a second chance at love. Have a happy Valentine's Day, but don't get swept up in the romance. Real relationships take time and work, especially when you involve children. If you decide to date again, approach it with a good balance of fun and wisdom!



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feature

# SEX EDUCATION AT EVERY AGE

BY CLAIRE COMBS



There are few topics that engender anxiety among parents quite like talking to kids about sex. For many, the time for “the talk” is seen as some future milestone that we will one day reach, don’t know how to prepare for, and consequently dread. However, educating our children on this topic is one of the best ways we can equip them to take charge of their health and relationships. (And, fortunately, reality may not be as hard as we imagine it to be.)

### Communication is key

A recent report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) finds that parental approaches to conversations about sex have a big influence on children. According to the report, “Parents who are engaged and comfortable talking about sexual health have teenagers who are more knowledgeable and may even be more proactive in seeking reproductive health medical services.”

Sharla Owens and Heather Duvall work with the Tulsa Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, which launched in 2013. In addition to providing educational resources for parents and teens, the Campaign also supports the implementation of sex education in schools.

Duvall advocates being proactive. She says the number one misconception about talking to kids about sex is that by bringing it up parents are giving implicit approval. “The research shows that teens who have information actually tend to delay sexual activity and are safer when they choose to be sexually active,” Duvall says.

That’s important because becoming a teen parent can dramatically alter the course of a person’s life. According to the United Health Foundation, Oklahoma ranked third in the nation for teen births in 2015, which means that “our kids just aren’t getting the same opportunities that kids in other states are,” Owens says.

### Conversation starters

Experts agree that ongoing discussions can be more effective than waiting for the perfect time to have one major, sit-down conversation.

Parents with young children can start by using scientific names for body parts and answering questions like ‘where do babies come from?’ in basic but factual terms. For older children, everyday moments can become teachable opportunities to discuss the social and emotional aspects of sex and healthy sexual relationships. No matter the age of your child, approaching the topic

with an attitude of openness and transparency can build trust and reduce anxiety for everyone involved.

Mom of two Shawna Fain has been open with her children about her own experience with an unplanned pregnancy that resulted in adoption, and she hopes that understanding the real-life impact of unprotected sex will encourage them to make responsible choices.

“I had to make really hard personal choices, and I don’t want my kids to be put through that if they can avoid it,” she says.

### Be ready when questions arise

Annette Leon manages the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) at the Tulsa Health Department. She has worked with the Health Department for nearly 30 years, and says that she receives questions from teens, as well as parents. In addition to providing factual information about sex and contraception, she also counsels teens to seek advice from adults they can trust.

“I will direct them to a caring adult in their lives. It might be a parent, grandparent, school nurse,” Leon says. “I ask who is in their circle of trust. [The person asking the question] must feel respected - not ashamed.”

Even well-prepared parents may feel blindsided by questions about sex. Youth Services Tulsa’s Cassidey Streber offers this advice: first and foremost, listen. She says parents should try to remember how it felt to be a young person.

“We’ve all been there. It’s OK to feel shocked that your child is bringing you a question about sex, but try to normalize the conversation,” Streber advises. “Allow the door to stay open for an ongoing dialogue.”

### Sex education in the classroom

Schools in Oklahoma are not mandated to teach pregnancy prevention, but several districts do. For example, Union Public Schools offers an adolescent pregnancy prevention program in grades 6-11. In 2013 Tulsa Public Schools started offering sex education for seventh- and ninth-graders.

The seventh-grade curriculum used in Tulsa Public Schools is an abstinence-based program that includes information about sex, but also covers topics like how to avoid feeling pressured into sexual activity and how thinking about life goals and dreams impacts decision making. In ninth grade, the curriculum educates students on how to reduce their risk of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy by abstaining from sex or using contraception. Students must opt-in to the program, meaning that parents

have to sign a permission slip for their children to attend.

Pregnancy prevention educators that teach the curriculum are provided through Youth Services of Tulsa with PREP grant funding. Streber says that students are allowed to ask follow-up questions to the material that’s covered in the classroom.

“With the younger kids, we get a lot of ‘Am I normal?’ questions, and ‘Is this supposed to happen?’” says Streber. She says ninth graders are more likely to ask ‘Is it OK to do this?’ or ‘If I do this, what would the consequences be?’

Streber says that educators are trained to answer these types of questions by addressing the facts and making sure the child feels validated. Values-based questions like, ‘Am I old enough to...’ are handled by telling the student ‘I hear what you are asking, but I don’t get to decide what’s right for you’ and recommending that he or she talk to a trusted adult for guidance.

The birth rate for teens aged 15-17 in Tulsa County decreased from 22.7 percent in 2012 to 16.4 percent in 2015. “Something is happening here. We are doing something right, and we can’t stop now,” Leon says.

### Parental perspectives

Shawna says that it was a very easy decision for her to allow her son to participate in the sex education program at school.

“I want my kids to be informed,” she says. “And sometimes it’s just easier to talk to other people [who aren’t your parents]. As far as I am concerned, any factual information is good. I just feel like the more education we give our children the better.”

Lisa DeJarnette is a Tulsa mom of three, and she agrees. Lisa says she definitely appreciates the program’s approach of discussing medically accurate information while steering clear of values discussions.

“Our family is pretty conservative,” Lisa says. “But it’s important to me that we don’t judge people, which is why I prefer the school to not talk about [sex] being wrong or right. Teaching my kids about our family’s values is my job. I think it’s good that they focus on the facts.” That’s not to say that Lisa did not cover the facts at home, too. She says ongoing discussions with her kids began around third grade.

Whether parenting a child in grade school, high school, or preschool, adults should remember that they are uniquely positioned to help shape their children’s outlooks. An October 2016 survey from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy found that 52 percent of teens under the age of 15 say that their par-



ents most influence their decisions about sex.

"[Your kids] really want to know the truth. They want to know what you as their mom, dad or guardian thinks about this," Owens says. And for parents who feel unsure, Duvall adds, "You know your own child's maturity level. You know what they are ready for...and it's not a one shot conversation."

**TIPS AND READING LISTS FOR EVERY AGE**

**AGES 3-5**

Talking openly to young children about their bodies and reproduction can help normalize the topic. Preschoolers can use real names for body parts and understand that a baby grows in a woman's uterus. They can also appreciate that not all families look exactly the same. Children this age are full of great questions, and it's important to answer with age-appropriate language and images that educate without overwhelming.

**Every age tip:** Let your kids know that healthy relationships include trust, respect and kindness.

*How Are Babies Made?* by Alastair Smith

*Amazing You! Getting Smart about your Private Parts* by Gail Saltz

*When You Were Inside Mommy* by Joanna Cole

*Who Has What?: All About Girls' Bodies and Boys' Bodies (Let's Talk about You and Me)* by Robie Harris

*NO Trespassing: This Is My Body!* by Pattie Fitzgerald

**AGES 6-9**

At this age, kids can understand the basics of intercourse and egg fertilization. They can also understand that personal boundaries and health are important. Some parents will find this is a good time to introduce the concept of mutual consent. ("Sex is a part of many loving adult relationships, but it's never OK to force someone to have sex if they don't want to. That's wrong, and it's illegal.") Continue talking to your child often to build a foundation of communication and trust.

**Every age tip:** Take advantage of everyday moments. The media is full of conversation-starting messages about love, sex and relationships.

*The Care and Keeping of You (American Girl Library)* by Valorie Schaefer

*I Said No! A Kid-to-Kid Guide to Keeping Your Private Parts Private* by Kimberly King and Sue Rama

*What's the Big Secret?: Talking about Sex with Girls and Boys* by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

**AGES 10-14**

Experts advise teaching children the basics of puberty before they get there. Tweens and young teens are dealing with a lot of physical and hormonal changes, and giving them the knowledge and language to understand those changes is important. Don't wait for your child to come to you with questions - be proactive.

**Every age tip:** Help your child set meaningful goals for the future, and talk

about what it takes to make future plans come true.

*It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris and Michael Emberley

*It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families* by Robie H Harris and Michael Emberley

*What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys: A Growing-Up Guide for Parents and Sons* by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras

*What's Happening to My Body? Book for Girls: A Growing-Up Guide for Parents and Daughters* by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras

**AGES 14 +**

Whether your teen is asking questions or not, it's a safe bet that he or she is getting information and messages about sex from the world outside your door. Communicating your own values about sex and proactively providing accurate and specific information about pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted infections will help your child make informed choices. If your teen doesn't feel comfortable talking to you, consider asking another trusted adult to act as their sounding board.

**Every age tip:** Be clear about your own values and attitudes when it comes to sex.

*Our Bodies, Ourselves* by Boston Women's Health Book Collective and Judy Norsigian

*Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* by Ruth Bell

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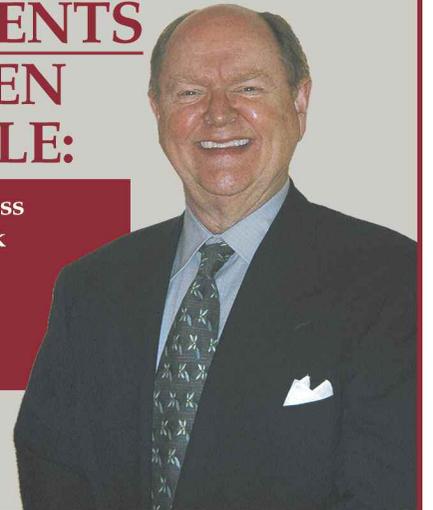
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BY LUCY MARTIN AND BETTY CASEY

# feeding your child's brain

**D**oes what we feed our kids make them smarter? While there's no single food or pill that guarantees super intellect, what experts do know is that nutrition plays a significant role in a child's brain development. And, current research suggests that the right nutrition, particularly in the very early years, and even before a child is born, can impact a child's cognitive ability.

Dr. Marianna Wetherill, registered dietitian and assistant professor in the College of Public Health at OU-Tulsa, explains that it's important for parents to know that a child's cognitive or intellectual potential is not entirely genetic. Smart parents don't necessarily produce smart children. Environmental factors such as a rich sensory and physical environment, a nurturing social environment and eating healthy foods all play a role in children's brain development. A child's potential is a complex interplay between genes (DNA) and the environment. While you can't change your children's genes, you can control what they eat.

"Nutrition is considered an environmental exposure because it's something that's outside of us that we take into our bodies. These external nutrients can influence the expression of our DNA while also directly becoming parts of our own cells, tissues and



DR. MARIANNA WETHERILL, REGISTERED DIETITIAN AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AT OU-TULSA

organs," Wetherill says.

Because it's easier to study, most research on nutrition and brain development has focused on pregnant women, and on infants up to age one who are breastfeeding or formula feeding. Once children enter elementary school after age 5, eating patterns level off, again making nutrition research easier.

"What we do know," Wetherill says, "is that about the second or third trimester [of pregnancy] there is rapid brain growth and development in the fetus, and for the first one to two years in life, the brain is still growing at a quick speed. By about the age of 4, that brain is almost the same size as an adult's."

To understand how nutrition can improve children's brains, researchers look at the structure of the brain, even at the cellular and neurological level, to determine what type of nutrition is needed to influence genes to reach their maximum potential during this time of rapid growth.

## What Nutrients Do We Need?

Wetherill suggests that we take a synergistic approach to feeding our bodies. There's no single food or supplement that will give us the nutrients we need. Rather, foods with multiple nutrients are most beneficial.

"I would recommend that first and foremost, parents should give their child or teen plenty of options to achieve good nutrition through a varied diet. Offer plenty of food options that are good sources of the nutrients that are the most important for brain health," she says.

Parents also should consider a child's developmental stage when they think about nutrition. "We know that there are these critical windows," Wetherill says. "For example, in the first few years of life, iron is highly essential for neurodevelopment. If there is a deficiency during those years, even if it's corrected, permanent problems with the brain can remain as the child grows into adulthood."

## Folate and Choline

*continued next page*

"Folate is a B vitamin, and is a nutrient that plays a role in DNA synthesis and cell division. For these reasons, it plays a very important role for growing children."

A brain that lacks folate will not have healthy cell division as it tries to grow. Pregnant moms take folate to prevent neural tube defects in their babies.

"Choline is also a critical nutrient for young children since it plays a role in building neurotransmitters," Wetherill says. "The liver can create choline for our bodies, but its best to also get choline from the diet, since most scientists recognize it as an essential nutrient."

Breast milk and egg yolks are rich in choline. And, while formula contains choline, it is not absorbed as efficiently as the choline in breast milk. "That's one of the reasons why breastfeeding is so much more helpful for brain development than formula feeding," Wetherill says. "Eggs are a great source of choline. For years, we villainized egg yolks as being bad for heart health, but it's the yolks that provide the choline. In fact, egg yolks provide many critical nutrients for growing brains."

#### **Zinc & Iron**

"Zinc is a mineral that is involved in cell signaling and the production of neurotransmitters," Wetherill says. "If your child is a very picky eater or eats a diet of healthy foods that is still low in variety, you may run into some issues with not getting enough zinc."

Children also need the right amount of iron in their diets for proper development. Those who have been exposed to lead in the water supply or paint in older homes may suffer from iron deficiency because lead prevents the body from absorbing iron.

#### **DHA**

DHA has been touted as a supplement to improve memory, thinking ability and cognition. But is the media hype justified? The brain contains rich concentrations of DHA, a type of omega 3 fat.

"While we know that DHA is important, we do not know if a lot of supplementation after brain development is a good thing," Wetherill says. "But we do know that an adequate supply during brain development is a good thing."

Wetherill suggests that moms' consumption of DHA before and while they're pregnant has the greatest impact on their babies' developing brains.

"The things a mom takes in while she's pregnant can have profound influences on her child's nutrition status and functioning independent of what the child eats after he or she is born," Wetherill says. "For 1- to 3-year-olds and 4- to 8-year-olds in the United States, about half or more are not getting enough choline, and about a third are not getting enough of their omega 3s."

However, only about 3 percent of U.S. children are lacking in zinc, folate and iron. "But, if you're a parent of a picky eater, chances are your kid might be in that 3 percent," Wetherill warns.

Overall, she says that "offering a variety of foods that are rich in these sources can set kids up for good brain development."

Many children balk at certain foods making it difficult to provide a varied diet, but Wetherill encourages parents to keep trying, and to prepare foods in different ways. For example, if a child doesn't like raw broccoli, try cooking it, or serve it with a fun dip.

"Strive to give kids nutrient-dense diets," Wetherill says. "Try to get creative and be persistent because the more exposures children have to a varied diet, the more likely they're not going to be picky eaters as they get older. If a child doesn't like a food, you need to offer it multiple times. Those first few years of feeding kids and giving them lots of opportunities and chances to learn to like different foods is crucial, not only for having good nutrition for the brain, but good nutrition for all other aspects of wellbeing."

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# Arthur Thompson shares his love for music

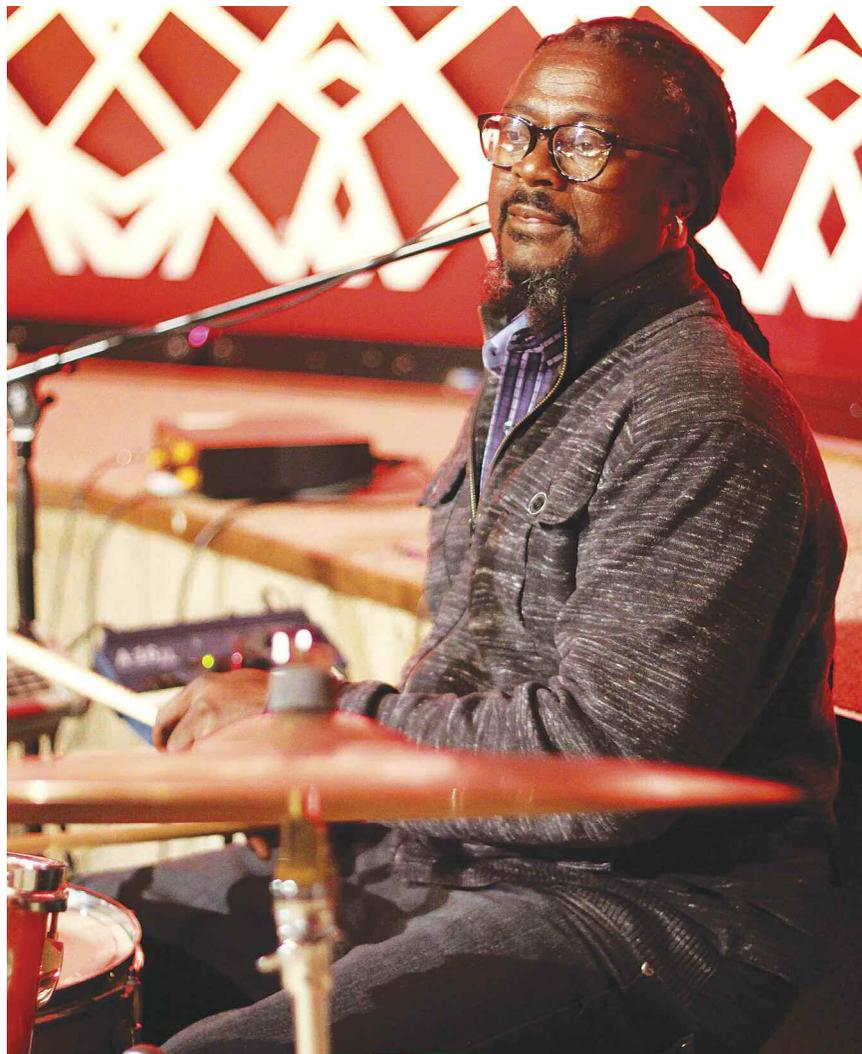
**A**rthur Thompson wears many hats: father, musician, teacher, author, entrepreneur and philanthropist. His love of music began at a very young age while growing up in Tulsa. Although his musical talent led him on a journey to play in venues around the globe, it eventually led him back to Tulsa. Thompson's passion and big heart are evident in his current projects that intertwine his love of music and working with children.

**TK: How did you become interested in music?**

**Thompson:** It all began at the age of four. I would get my daddy's wooden hangers and use them as drumsticks. I would play for hours on my mother's pots and pans and on old paint cans. I would make up songs with my brothers. We always sang in the church choir and occasionally I would get to play the drums at the church when my older brother was away at college. At the age of 6 or 7, I was playing my drums at a church revival and it was there that I discovered my purpose in life was to be a musician. To be able to play in this manner, everyone -- including myself -- realized I had a true gift from God to play the drums.

**TK: What did your parents think about your interest in music?**

**Thompson:** My parents loved it and were very supportive. My mother always allowed me to



practice my drums in the house, no matter how loud or how terrible it sounded!

**TK: How did you embark on your music career?**

**Thompson:** After graduating high school, I decided to attend The

University of Tulsa. I quickly found out that college was not for me. So, I dropped out of college and continued to play at night clubs here in Tulsa. Shortly thereafter, I decided to take a chance and follow my dreams of becoming

a professional musician. I bought a one-way Greyhound Bus ticket to Los Angeles. When I arrived, my father was waiting for me at the bus station. He looked at me and said, "What are you gonna do now?" I told him I was going to get a job and pursue my music career.

**TK: How did you start your musical tour?**

**Thompson:** After securing a job in a warehouse loading trucks, I made a phone call to Renard Luke, a saxophone player my mother used to listen to while sitting in the park in Pamona, California. My mother had told him about me and we connected. Together, we formed a band called Monkey Meet. After playing Hollywood Blvd., Sunset Strip, and colleges in the surrounding area, we decided to take the band on the road. Eventually we would spend 300 days on the road and play 280 shows a year for a period of six years. We performed in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

**TK: How did you become involved in a group with Wayman Tisdale?**

**Thompson:** Wayman and I knew each other as kids growing up in Tulsa. We would play music together at church and he would come over and play basketball in our yard. It wasn't happenstance that we ran into each other at a George Benson concert years later in Tempe, Arizona. He and

*continued next page*

his wife Regina invited me over for dinner and that's when he asked me to join his band called The Fifth Quarter. I began working for Wayman, not only as a drummer, but also as his personal assistant. At the time, he was still playing basketball for the Phoenix Suns. After retiring from the NBA, Wayman moved his music company back home to Tulsa.

**TK: When did you discover a passion for working with kids? How did that change your approach to music?**

**Thompson:** A few of my friends had young children who were interested in playing the drums. They asked me to teach them privately. During these lessons, I realized it was cool to pass on the language of drumming to others. So my approach to music changed as I began to articulate my drumming style and experiment with tuning and different ways to set up the drums in order to enhance my teaching skills. During this time, I began to create drumming programs the first of which was "Drums Speak." I wanted children to have a way to relax, calm down, breathe and think positive thoughts. Over time, I saw how much this program helped others to transform their anger, depression and fears into something positive.

**TK: How did your "Drums Speak" program evolve into co-founding the "Promises for Families Foundation"?**

**Thompson:** I approached the Arts and Humanities Council of Tulsa with the (Drums Speak) program. We took this program to L.E. Rader Juvenile Detention Center and it was extremely successful. I was later approached by Camp New Hope, an organization that worked with the children of incarcerated parents. I accepted this offer and it was life changing. While doing the Drums Speak program at Camp New Hope, I met Deacon Roland Rose from Midland, Texas. He asked me to bring the Drums Speak program to Promise Camp in Amarillo, Texas. I took the program to Amarillo and it was there I met my busi-

ness partner, Katy Hoskins, and we started "Promises for Families Foundation." This foundation also works with the children of incarcerated parents. Promises for Families is still in existence today and continues to serve families in Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado and New Mexico.

**TK: You have developed various ways to incorporate learning through music including developing a special curriculum used by numerous schools and programs. What led you to develop your teaching curriculum?**

**Thompson:** While giving private lessons, I noticed several of my drum students struggling to play rhythms that involved simple counting. I changed my approach and incorporated mathematics by changing music notes into numbers. I then began to develop my Math and Music Curriculum for students of all ages. The Math and Music Curriculum is designed to help kids learn math while incorporating repetitive auditory memorization by utilizing notes and scales.

**TK: What are you currently working on?**

**Thompson:** I am the Music Teacher and Band Director at Tulsa Legacy Charter School. I recently authored several children's books, including *The Professor Brown Series* and my latest book *Fables*. I work with *Power of a Nickel* teaching my Math and Music Curriculum and sharing my *Fables* through storytelling to the children of Uganda. I am the drummer for Redeemer Covenant Church's worship band. I continue to perform around Oklahoma with my trio Soul Cool.

**TK: What is on the horizon for you?**

**Thompson:** I am currently in the studio recording for my new project, *Dr. Rhythm*. I am also writing new Professor Brown books for the series and am trying my hand at writing a screen play.

*To find out more about Thompson, where his band is playing, his musical curriculum, or non-profit organization visit: [www.arthurthompsondrums.com](http://www.arthurthompsondrums.com)*

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BY THOMAS JONES

# Tulsa's Christian Ministers Alliance celebrates 49 years of service

Reverend W.R. Casey Jr. sets an example for others to follow through his involvement in Tulsa's Christian Ministers Alliance. After 35 years of being a member of the Alliance, he says his greatest benefit from the organization is helping others. "I've been given a mandate to help the poor, the broken-hearted and those who can't help themselves," Casey said.

The Christian Ministers Alliance was organized in 1968 through the leadership of Reverend Louis L. Tisdale and, according to Casey, Tisdale's vision of bringing together different denominations came true over the years. This year the Alliance will celebrate its 49th anniversary, and the organization continues to grow.

Under the umbrella of the Alliance, smaller organizations focus on specialized areas of need. Tulsa Together is an organization founded 24 years ago by the Christian Ministers Alliance and Tulsa Metro Baptist Association. "It's an organization where we work to break down the walls of racism," Casey said. "We have joint church services together. Whites, blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, we come together and work together."

When Casey joined the Christian Ministers Alliance 35



(L-R) REV. JOHN W. ANDERSON AND REV. W.R. CASEY, JR. OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTERS ALLIANCE.

years ago he says he liked how diverse the organization was. "Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ, we work with all denominations," he said.

Casey encourages members of all denominations to join the Christian Ministers Alliance. "We don't want to exclude anybody," Casey said. "We're trying to reach other ethnic groups to be a part of the Ministers Alliance because we want to let them know we want to work together."

Casey has been president of the Alliance for 25 years. His says a typical day for him involves making sure people have the necessities they need for life whether it's going to court with

them, feeding them or helping them with their bills.

To help with this effort, the Minister's Alliance created Save Our Kids and Concerned Clergy for Spiritual Renewal. Save Our Kids was established 18 years ago with hopes to end gang violence. Concerned Clergy for Spiritual Renewal works to create a better relationship between the community and law enforcement.

Both organizations share the Christian Ministers Alliance vision of bringing people together through their commonality. Casey says the police department and a few ministers of the Alliance went to Wal-Mart to buy items for children for a Christmas give-

away. "We were shopping for kids, buying bikes and we did it together."

Before Thanksgiving the Alliance had a Thanksgiving dinner giveaway at the Booker T. Washington Historical Building where hundreds stood in line. The organization has sponsored a food drive for Thanksgiving for 34 years. The Alliance holds similar giveaways at the beginning of the school year to provide children with clothing and school supplies.

Besides the ongoing help for needy families, the Christian Ministers Alliance's most ambitious project is to build a youth center and day care in north Tulsa. Through their Save Our Kids organization, the Alliance has purchased three acres at Apache Street and Lewis Avenue to build the center. Approximately half of the \$200,000 needed to purchase another four acres has been raised. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$7 million.

"My prayer is that when we have our 50th celebration we will have the youth center built," Casey says. "The youth center will have a computer lab, G.E.D. classes, teenage pregnancy classes, a basketball gym, pool, [and] [is] [a] place where [teens] can get off the streets."

Casey says the organization is asking for monetary donations

*continued next page*

to help with the youth center's community-based programs, which will provide mentoring, after-school activities and tutoring as well as a food pantry, clothes closet, utility assistance program, day care center and ministry center. The Alliance is also asking for in-kind donations. In-Kind donations of building materials are especially needed.

Pete Theban, who was a principal for Marquette Catholic School and longtime supporter of the Christian Ministers Alliance, will have his name on the youth center. Theban passed away in October from cancer at age 64. Dr. A.D. Phillips Sr., pastor of Mount Rose Baptist Church, will also be honored with his name on the building. He pastored at Mount Rose for 51 years.

The Christian Ministers Alliance also provides scholarships for youth. The organization will hold its scholarship banquet on Saturday, February 25. Dr. Jason Kirksey, vice president of Institu-

tional Diversity at Oklahoma State University, will be the speaker. Individual tickets are \$100 and a table of 10 can be reserved for \$1000. Last year the Christian Ministers Alliance awarded 30 scholarships. For tickets and information, call Casey at 918.951.7407.

Casey says he hopes to see the organization multiculturally diverse 10 years from now. "My hope is that we can look beyond color and see people as people."

CMA Meetings are held at Harvest Time Outreach Ministries

Each Saturday at 6:00 p.m.  
For more info contact Rev. W. R. Casey, 918.951.7407

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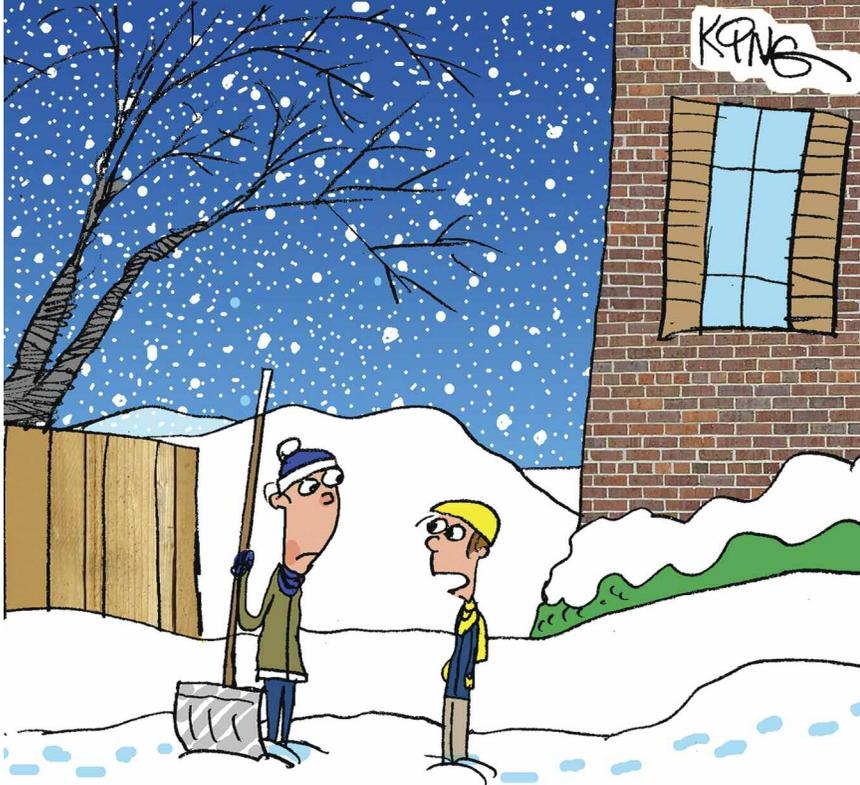
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**1 | WEDNESDAY**

**FAMILY PLAY DATE {FREE}**

Toddlers love to explore and learn! Join in for imaginative play and discovery with toys and activities designed to foster young ones' early literacy skills. For ages 1-3 and their caregivers. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S Garnett Rd.; 11 a.m.

**HOMESCHOOL ART CLASS AT PHILBROOK**

Each homeschool class offers gallery tours led by qualified art educators, an in-studio art-making project, as well as resources to guide parents through that week's class into a month-long learning opportunity. Philbrook Museum, 2727 S Rockford Rd.; 1 p.m. [www.philbrook.org](http://www.philbrook.org)

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{continued} From initiating the role of the president to the debates that surrounded the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, Washington will share with the audience the vision he has for this country's future. This live historical interpretation will provide engaging entertainment and rich historical content to kick off his birthday month. Presented by Mount Vernon and the Tulsa City-County Library. For all ages. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 7 p.m.

{continued} Educators are encouraged to bring their students. Sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust and African-American Resource Center. For teens. Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N Hartford Ave.; 10 a.m.

**HANDS ON! {FREE}**

Busy hands, busy brain! Preschool-age children learn through hands-on activities. We will explore, experiment and create. Be ready to get messy! Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 10:30 a.m.

**GAMING FOR TEENS**

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**BA SIDEWALK ASTRONOMERS**

Join in to discuss Spectroscopy, which can be used as a way to measure temperature and chemical composition of astronomical objects and more. A hands-on activity will follow. For ages 5-18. Broken Arrow Library/ South, 3600 S Chestnut Ave.; 6:30 p.m.

**2 | THURSDAY**

**CONTEMPORARY WRITING WORKSHOP WITH OMAR TYREE {FREE}**

Omar Tyree (aka The Urban Griot) is a New York Times best-selling author, journalist, lecturer, poet, screenwriter, songwriter, playwright, literacy advocate and founder of the Urban Literacy Project. Tyree's Urban Literacy Project has the goal of increasing the overall literacy rate among urban and other disadvantaged youth and citizens through informative lectures, performances, presentations and workshops. In this fun workshop, Tyree will focus on social media to teach students the five key components of literacy: reading, writing, thinking, visualization and application.

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

## STORYTIMES

**Bixby Library (20 E. Breckenridge, Bixby)**

- Preschool Storytime: Mondays, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27 • 11-11:30 a.m.
- My First Storytime: Mondays, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27 • 10:10-10:30 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Thursday, Feb. 9 • 6-7:30 p.m.

**Broken Arrow Library (300 W. Broadway, Broken Arrow)**

- My First Storytime: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- Preschool Storytime with Miss Hannah: Mondays, Feb. 6, 13, 27 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Wednesday, Feb. 8 • 4-5 p.m.
- Stay and Play: Thursdays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- Mother Goose on the Loose: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:30-11 a.m.

**Broken Arrow Library/South (3600 S. Chestnut, Broken Arrow)**

- Preschool Storytime: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- My First Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Wednesday, Feb. 1 • 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Ballet Storytime: Tuesday, Feb. 21 • 10:30-11 a.m.

**Brookside Library (1207 E. 45th Pl., Tulsa)**

- Preschool Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:15-10:45 a.m.
- My First Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 11-11:20 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Friday, Feb. 17 • 3:30-4:30 p.m.

**Central Library (400 Civic Center, Tulsa)**

- Family Fun Storytime: Mondays, Feb. 6, 13, 27 • 6:30-7 p.m.
- Babies, Bubbles & Books: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 15 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Saturday, Feb. 11 • 1-2 p.m.
- Toddlers & Tales: Wednesdays, Feb. 8, 22 • 10:30-11 a.m.

**Hardesty Regional Library (8316 E 93rd St., Tulsa)**

- My First Storytime: Mondays, Feb. 6, 13, 27 • 10-10:20 a.m. and Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10-10:20 a.m.
- Toddler Time: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10-10:20 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 11-11:20 a.m.
- Mr. Paul's Preschool Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 11-11:30 a.m.
- Family Storytime: Thursdays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 • 6:30-7 p.m.

**Helmerich Library (5131 E. 91st St., Tulsa)**

- Stay-And-Play Storytime with Mr. Adam: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30-11:30 a.m.

**Herman and Kate Kaiser Library (5202 S. Hudson, Tulsa)**

- My First Storytime: Thursdays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 • 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Preschool Storytime: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30-11:30 a.m.

**Jenks Library (523 W. B St., Jenks)**

- My First Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10-10:15 a.m.
- Preschool Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:30-11 a.m.
- PAWS for Reading: Tuesday, Feb. 7 • 4-5 p.m.

**Martin Regional Library (2601 S. Garnett Rd., Tulsa)**

- Bilingual Storytime: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 11-11:30 a.m.

**Pottery Barn Book Club Storytime (Utica Square)**

- Tuesdays at 11 a.m.

**Schusterman - Benson Library (3333 E. 32nd Place, Tulsa)**

- PAWS for Reading: Monday, Feb. 13 • 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- My First Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10-10:20 a.m. and Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:30-10:50 a.m.
- Stay and Play Storytime: Wednesdays, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 • 10:30-11:30 a.m. and Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 11-11:30 a.m.
- Bilingual Storytime: Tuesdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 • 10:30-11 a.m.

**Tulsa Toy Depot (101st & Sheridan, Tulsa)**

- Thursdays at 11 a.m.

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## 3 | FRIDAY

**CANDY HEART CATAPULT CONTEST**

How far can a candy heart fly? Using office supplies kids will build their own simple machine to launch candy hearts across the room! Prizes awarded in various categories. Ages 6-10. Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E 32nd Pl.; 2 p.m.

**FIRST FRIDAY ART WITH GILCREASE MUSEUM (FREE)**

Begin your First Friday Art Crawl with Gilcrease Museum at the Central Library! Gilcrease staff will help you explore artists featured at the museum while your young artist creates a masterpiece of his or her own. For ages 5-10. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 4:30 p.m.

**FIRST FRIDAY ART CRAWL (FREE)**

This year-round monthly event features all of the galleries, studios and museums as well as the part-time galleries in various shops opening their doors to show art. The Art Crawl is held on the first Friday of the month in the Brady District; 6-9 pm.

## 4 | SATURDAY

**PICTURE ME! (FREE)**

Bring your cellphone or camera and take selfies with fun and pretty props and backdrops to celebrate Valentine's Day. For ages 5-18. Brookside Library, 1207 E 45th Pl; 10 a.m.

**MINI MASTERS: FIVE SENSES IN ART II (A.M.)**

Children investigate the galleries and gardens of Gilcrease Museum using sight, sound, hearing, taste and touch. Children will learn to look at the world in new ways, which will inspire their art creations. For ages 3-6, who must be accompanied by an adult.

Space is limited and advanced registration is required: 918.596.2774. Gilcrease Museum, 1400 North Gilcrease Museum Rd.; 10:30 a.m.

**THE ART OF THE FOLD: ORIGAMI DOCUMENTARY AND PAPER-FOLDING WORKSHOP (FREE)**

Join in for "Between the Folds," an inspiring documentary about the amazing world of modern paper-folding artists. After the film, enjoy a paper-folding workshop with materials provided. For teens and adults. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 2 p.m.

**BRAIN STORMS: NEW WORKS BY YOUNG WRITERS (FREE)**

Watch as short plays by young writers ages 10-18 are brought to life by Professor Michael Wright of the University of Tulsa and his students. Brain Storms features the winning short plays from Tulsa City-County Library's Young People's Creative Writing Contest. Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St.; 7 p.m.

## 5 | SUNDAY

**RHEA LANA**

Shop name brand, quality children's and maternity clothing, shoes and more. Dates: February 5-9, times vary. Spirit Bank Event Center, 10441 S. Regal Blvd. Find more at [www.southtulsa.rhealana.com](http://www.southtulsa.rhealana.com).

## 6 | MONDAY

**PARENT/CHILD YOGA AT THE TULSA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

With music and movement, you and your child are bound to have fun during this short yoga practice together. Tulsa Children's Museum, 560 N Maybelle Ave.; 10:30 a.m.

**SERIES: INTRODUCTION TO CSS FOR TEENS (FREE)**

Learning to code can be intimidating. Where do you start? Why, at your library, of course! Join this 6-week series introduction to the basics of computer coding with CSS. For ages 12-18. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 4-5:30 p.m.

## 7 | TUESDAY

See sidebars for on-going activities.

## 8 | WEDNESDAY

**AQUA-TOTS AT THE OKLAHOMA AQUARIUM**

Bring your little ones out for a special Seaside Story Time and join educators for an interactive experience. Visit the Oklahoma Aquarium Coral Reef Café for lunch and order a Treasure Box. Aqua-Tots is for ages 1-5. There is a maximum of 35 children, first come, first served. Oklahoma Aquarium, 300 Aquarium Dr.; 11 a.m.

**LEGO LAB (FREE)**

Learn new building ideas, partner with other children during team-building challenges and explore free building. For ages 6-12. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S Garnett Rd.; 4 p.m.

9 | THURSDAY

**ZACH: TEEN TIME @ ZARROW**

Discover the world of art at the downtown Zarrow Center for Art & Education through this exciting program designed especially for the homeschooling community. Students will enjoy an arts enrichment experience as they create their own works of art in this engaging approach to arts education taught by qualified art instructors. This is the same art class that is offered at three different times during each month from September through May. For ages 6 - 12 years old. AM Classes, 10 a.m.; PM Classes, 1:30 p.m. Zarrow Center for Art & Education, 124 East M.B. Brady St. Registration required: 918.631.4402.

**CONFIDENT PARENTING SERIES: BABY TOUCH INFANT MASSAGE {FREE}**

Are you an expecting parent or have a newborn? Join Susan West from the Peggy V. Helmerich Women's Health Center as she shows how to comfort a fussy baby through infant massage. Informational booklet will be provided for the first 10 participants. This program is the first in the Confident Parenting Series, focusing on relevant topics for parents of children ages newborn to tween. Sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S Garnett Rd.; 6:30 p.m.

10 | FRIDAY

**1-2-3 PLAY WITH ME: A PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOP {FREE}**

Join this five-week series for parents and children ages 1-3. Each program offers opportunities for children to play with developmentally appropriate toys in a play group atmosphere and for parents to visit with early childhood specialists in the areas of child development, speech and language, nutrition, play movement and music. Class size is limited. Registration is required and is for the series: 918-549-7624. Owasso Library, 103 W Broadway St.; 10 a.m.

**MUSEUM BABIES AT GILCREASE**

Museum Babies is designed to nurture the needs of both parent and infant/toddler. Parents will enjoy a casual experience in the galleries, learning about the art of Gilcrease Museum, then it's "baby time" with activities to stimulate the five senses and refreshments. For ages Birth to not yet three years old, accompanied by caregiver. Space is limited and advanced registration is required: 918.596.2774. Gilcrease Museum 1400 North Gilcrease Museum Road; 10:30 a.m.

11 | SATURDAY

**SECOND SATURDAY AT PHILBROOK**

**{FREE}** Bring out the inner artist in each member of the family and experience Philbrook in a whole new way! Visit on the second Saturday of each month for free family-friendly art activities, tours and scavenger hunts for kids of all ages. Philbrook Museum of Art, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.; 10 a.m.

**THE GREAT TRAIN SHOW {FREE}**

The Great Train Show is a national, traveling show that caters to the model railroad enthusiast. Kids 11 and younger get in for free. Expo Square, 4145 E 21 St.; 10 a.m.

**GARDEN HEARTS AND CUPID'S WALK AT TULSA BOTANIC GARDEN**

Look for hearts in the Garden and create your own message (11 a.m. - 1 p.m.) to leave behind. Couples can pick up a special map with the best kissing spots along the trails. Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.

**LEGO ANIMATION WORKSHOP {FREE}**

Make your own animated mini movie using LEGOS and the free Stop Motion Studio app. Use their iPads or download Stop Motion Studio to your device and bring it with you. For ages 10-18. Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St.; 2-4 p.m.

**FULL SNOW MOON (LUNAR ECLIPSE) AT OXLEY NATURE CENTER {FREE}**

This can be a time of heavy snow. Bundle up in layers and join in to see how the weather may affect the activity around you. A bright moon and snow would mean some great tracks to follow. \$3 donation requested, all ages, must register 48 hours in advance: www.oxleynaturecenter.org. Oxley Nature Center; 7 p.m.

12 | SUNDAY

See sidebars for on-going activities.

13 | MONDAY

**NATURAL BABIES: BLUEBIRDS**

Young children learn by contact with real objects, events and people. Spend time on the trail to explore nature first hand. This will be a sensory experience. \$3 suggested donation. Registration required: www.oxleynaturecenter.org. Oxley Nature Center, 10:30 a.m.



**WACKY FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS**

February is both National Children's Dental Health and National Grapefruit month - we don't recommend combining the two.

Here are some bizarre and wacky holidays that may make your February a little more fun:

Saturday, February 4: Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day

Saturday, February 11: Make a Friend Day

Wednesday, February 15: National Gum Drop Day

Friday, February 17: Random Acts of Kindness Day

Saturday, February 18: National Drink Wine Day

Monday, February 20: Love Your Pet Day

Sunday, February 26: Tell a Fairy Tale Day

Monday, February 27: Polar Bear Day

Tuesday, February 28: National Tooth Fairy Day

14 | TUESDAY



15 | WEDNESDAY

**HOMESCHOOL WORKSHOP: DIGITAL ART**

**{FREE}** Homeschooling families are invited to join us as we create digital art using a variety of technology. Registration is required and limited: 918.549.7323. For ages 5-18.

16 | THURSDAY

**MUSEUM BABIES AT GILCREASE**

See previous description, 10:30 a.m.

**ORIGAMI WITH EMILY AT THE TULSA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

Learn the art of origami. Fold paper into something simple like a sail boat or try a more complicated creation like the Millennium Falcon. Tulsa Children's Museum, 560 N Maybelle Ave.; 4 p.m.

17 | FRIDAY

**MUSEUM BABIES AT GILCREASE**

See previous description, 10:30 a.m.

18 | SATURDAY

**PREPPING THE GARDEN FOR SPRING**

**{FREE}** Spring will be here before we know it. Get a jump on the season by joining Garden staff for a walk and talk. Go home with tips and new ideas for getting ready for the season ahead. Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.; 1 p.m.

**TICKET TO PLAY: BOARD GAME FUN**

**{FREE}** Open a game box (or two), draw a card and roll some dice. Even though this program is designed for children and teens, everyone is welcome. All board-game fanatics are welcome. Helmerich Library, 5131 E. 91st St.; 2-4 p.m.

**TASTE OF SUCCESS CULTURAL DINNER**

This event is being organized to commemorate the non-violent work of Martin Luther King, Jr., who advocated for unity and equality in America and around the world. Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave.; 6 p.m.

19 | SUNDAY

**FUNDAY SUNDAY AT GILCREASE**

It's an afternoon of museum fun for the whole family. Visitors can enjoy various art-making stations in the museum, each offering different materials and themes as well as teaching artists to help guide and inspire. An art hunt is available to explore in the galleries, with a prize at the end. Gilcrease Museum, 1400 North Gilcrease Museum Rd.; noon-4 p.m. gilcrease.utulsa.edu

20 | MONDAY

**DROP-IN FAMILY ART DAY @ ZARROW: PRESIDENTS' DAY (FREE)**

Show your patriotism for Presidents' Day by making exciting art projects while learning historical facts about U.S. presidents. It's fun for the whole family. Gilcrease Museum, 1400 North Gilcrease Museum Rd.; 1-4 p.m.

21 | TUESDAY

**INTRODUCTION TO CODING FOR TWEENS (FREE)**

Learn how to code using JavaScript and HTML. Registration is required. Class size is limited: 918.549.7323. For ages 9-11. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 4-5:30 p.m.

22 | WEDNESDAY

See sidebars for on-going activities.

23 | THURSDAY

**2017 AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE HISTORY BOWL (FREE)**

Designed around the national African-American History Month theme "The Crisis in Black Education," the trivia bowl is open to all junior high schools, high schools, sororities, fraternities, social and business organizations, churches, teams, book clubs, groups and families to enter. There is a Junior High/High School Bowl and a Community Bowl. Trophies will be awarded for first, second and third place in each bowl. All ages are welcome to attend. To participate or for more information, call the Rudisill Regional Library at 918.549.7645.

**MINECRAFT NIGHT (FREE)**

Put your imagination to the test building your own world in the popular game Minecraft! For ages 10-18. Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St.; 6 p.m.

24 | FRIDAY

**MINI MASTERS**

See previous description, 10 a.m. & noon.

25 | SATURDAY

**BOTANY WALK AT OXLEY (FREE)**

See if you can discover signs of renewed plant life along Oxley's trails. Oxley Nature Center, 10:30 a.m.

**TREE WALK AT TULSA BOTANIC GARDEN**

Bring the family for a walk to explore trees - inside and out. Look at tree shapes, make bark rubbings, and count rings. Meet at Children's Discovery Garden entrance. Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.; 11 a.m.

26 | SUNDAY

**JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS**

Save money and make money on stylish children's clothing and gear at this local Just Between Friends consignment sales event. February 26 - March 4, times vary Expo Square, 4145 E 21st St. www.tulsa.jbfsale.com

27 | MONDAY

**THE ART OF LISTENING (FREE)**

Homeschooling families are invited to join Miss Marilyn as she reads stories while you create a masterpiece. Each month, celebrate an author whose words inspire the imagination. For ages 5-10. Central Library, 400 Civic Center; 2 p.m.

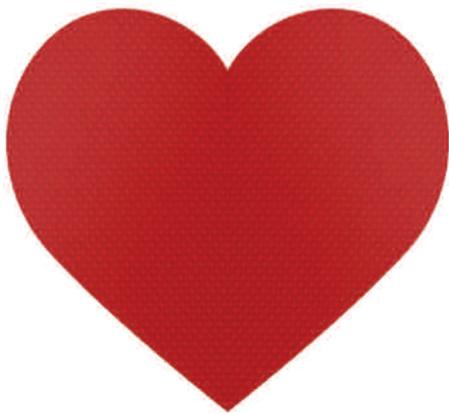
**LEGO LAB (FREE)**

Learn new building ideas, partner with other children during team-building challenges and explore free building. For ages 6-12. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S Garnett Rd.; 4 p.m.

28 | TUESDAY

See sidebars for on-going activities.

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				



SWEET VALENTINE EVENTS

**GARDEN HEARTS AND CUPID'S WALK**

- When: Saturday, February 11, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
  - Where: Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.
- Look for hearts in the Garden and create your own message to leave behind. Couples can pick up a special map with the best kissing spots along our trails.

**VALENTINE'S DAY FAMILY FUN**

- When: Tuesday, February 14, 4-5 p.m.
  - Where: Jenks Library, 523 W B St., Jenks
- Create cutie crafts for the ones you love and munch on yummy snacks as well! Fun for the whole family! For ages 5-12.

**DADDY/DAUGHTER DANCES**

**SOCO FATHER DAUGHTER VALENTINE'S DANCE**

- When: South County Recreation Center, 13800 S. Peoria Ave., Tulsa
  - Where: Saturday, February 4, 6 - 9 p.m.
- Make new memories together at our annual Father Daughter Valentine Dance. Enjoy an evening of music, refreshments, and dancing. Tickets will be sold in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door. There is a limit of 250 tickets. Purchase tickets at at South County Recreation Center. For all ages. Call for more information: 918.746.3780.

**LAFORTUNE DADDY DAUGHTER TEA TIME**

- When: Lafortune Community Center, 5202 S Hudson Ave.
  - Where: Saturday, February 11, 1:30 - 3 p.m.
- Enjoy tea, lemonade, and light hors d'oeuvres with your little princess(es). Enjoy making memories and a craft during this special time. \$10/couple, additional guests are \$2.50 each. All ages. Sign up at LaFortune Community Center.

**DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE**

- When: Saturday, February 11; 6-9:30 p.m.
  - Where: Nienhuis Community Center, 3201 North 9th St.; Broken Arrow
- For girls ages 4-18 and their dads. Casual to formal attire. Tickets available at Nienhuis or Central Park Community Centers. Call 918.259.6550 or 918.259.8437 for details.

**BIXBY DADDY DAUGHTER VALENTINE'S DAY DANCE**

- When: Saturday, February 11; 6-9 p.m.
  - Where: Bixby Community Center, 211 N Cabaniss Ave., Bixby
- Fathers and daughters of all ages are invited to a fun evening of dancing. Snacks and beverages are provided. Music is by D.J. Connection. Tickets available at the door, \$5/ person. For more information, call 918.366.4841.



Courtesy of Tulsa Ballet.

### **PETER AND THE STARCATCHER**

- When: January 27-28 and February 2-4 at 8 p.m.; January 29 and February 5 at 2 p.m.
- Where: Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 110 E. 2nd St.

This swashbuckling grown-up prequel to “Peter Pan” upends the century-old story of how a miserable orphan comes to be The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up. From marauding pirates and jungle tyrants to unwilling comrades and unlikely heroes, “Peter and the Starcatcher” playfully explores the depths of greed and despair and the bonds of friendship, duty and love. Find more at [www.tulsapac.com](http://www.tulsapac.com).

### **CLARK CONSERVATORY FESTIVAL**

- When: January 20-February 26, 2017
- Where: Henthorne Park, 4825 S. Quaker Avenue, Tulsa

Clark Youth Theatre present the first Clark Conservatory Festival. The Festival includes *Rumors*, *Play Nice!*, *I and You*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* throughout the end of January and mid-February.

Find a complete list of dates and times at [www.clarkyouththeatre.com](http://www.clarkyouththeatre.com).

### **TULSA BALLET: DOROTHY AND THE PRINCE OF OZ**

- When: Feb. 10-11 at 8 p.m.; Feb. 11-12 at 3 p.m.
- Where: Tulsa Performing Arts Center, 110 E. 2nd St.

To make the 60th season something special, the Tulsa Ballet has commissioned a brand-new, \$1 million full-length ballet. Through a collaboration with BalletMet of Columbus, Ohio, the World Premiere of *Dorothy and the Prince of Oz* (working title) will take place right here in Tulsa, and is guaranteed to delight audiences of all ages. Find more at [www.tulsaballet.org](http://www.tulsaballet.org).

### **TULSA YOUTH SYMPHONY WINTER CONCERT**

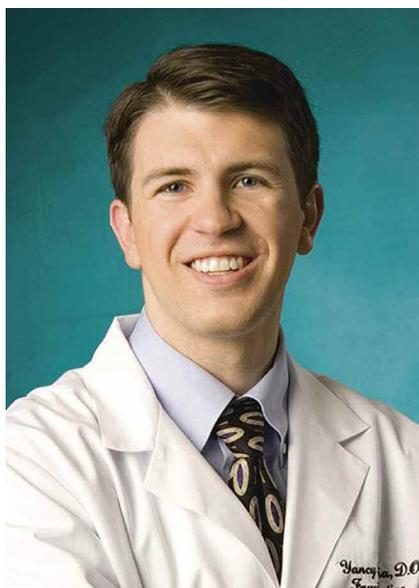
- When: Monday, February 20; 7 p.m.
- Where: Union High School PAC, 6636 S Mingo Rd, Tulsa

For more than a half century, the Tulsa Youth Symphony has been bringing together the best of the best talent from across Northeastern Oklahoma. Nurtured and trained by conductors of national caliber, these students learn to collaborate and produce music that will absolutely astound you.

Find more at [www.tyso.org](http://www.tyso.org).

BY BETTY CASEY

# what you need to know about the flu



**A**ccording to the CDC, February marks the height of flu season. Yancy Galutia, D.O., a family medicine physician at Utica Park Clinic in Owasso, says that flu cases start showing up by the end of October and continue through mid-March. With flu season underway, we asked Dr. Galutia to provide some information that we can apply now, and to keep in mind for future flu prevention.

## **Who should get a flu vaccine?**

Everyone 6 months of age and over should get a flu vaccine as soon as they are available each year, generally starting in October.

## **Is it too late to get a flu vaccine?**

If you have not yet had a flu vaccine, it is not too late. However, keep in mind that after you get the shot, it takes some time for your body to prepare its antibody defenses. From the time you get the shot until your body is ready to fight exposure to the flu is about two weeks.

## **I've heard that the nasal vaccine is not recommended this year. Is this true?**

The nasal vaccine is not recommended for this flu season as it was determined to not be effective. I recommend getting the shot, not the nasal vaccine.

## **Can you still get the flu even if you get a flu shot?**

Getting the flu vaccine does not guarantee that you will not get sick, but it greatly decreases your chance of dying due to influenza. The CDC estimates that 12,000 to 56,000 people have died

due to flu-related complications since 2010.

## **What are some things, besides getting the vaccine that we can do to prevent getting the flu?**

The best prevention is to avoid exposure by washing hands frequently and not sharing food or drink with someone who is ill.

## **What are the symptoms of the flu?**

Typical symptoms of the flu are fever, cough, runny nose, nausea, body aches, and headaches. If you have flu-like symptoms, you should see your doctor right away. Sometimes the doctor can make the diagnosis from an exam or other times the doctor will perform a Rapid Flu test. For the Rapid Flu test, a sample is gathered from the nose via a swab. The test takes about 10 minutes to get a result. A positive test confirms the presence of the influenza virus. If you are diagnosed with flu, your doctor may prescribe an anti-viral medication such as Tamiflu. The Tamiflu medication will help decrease the duration of the illness (decrease how long you are sick), but may not help decrease the symptoms.

## **Can anything else be done to decrease symptoms?**

To help decrease the symptoms of the flu (body aches, headaches, cough, fever, runny nose, etc), I recommend drinking large amounts of clear liquids (such as water, Gatorade, sprite, etc.) and trying to drink at least 2 liters (66+ ounces) each day you are sick. Ibuprofen can help with the body aches and headaches. An anti-histamine such as Benadryl or Claritin can help decrease the mucous production and help slow down the runny nose symptoms. Follow the label directions for dosing.

## **How can parents protect infants who are too young for a flu vaccine?**

If your child is younger than 6 months and is not yet eligible for a flu vaccine, it is extra important that parents and older sibling in the home be vaccinated to decrease the chance of exposing the baby to flu.



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# HEALTHY BRAINS FOR A HEALTHY OKLAHOMA

Laureate Institute for Brain Research

**Location**  
LIBR Conference Room, 1st Floor  
6655 South Yale  
Tulsa, OK 74136

**Time**  
6:00-8:00 pm

**For More Info**  
918-502-5100  
info@laureateinstitute.org  
www.laureateinstitute.org  
www.facebook.com/LIBResearch



**January 26**  
Healthy Body,  
Healthy Brain  
Kyle Simmons, PhD

**February 23**  
How to Be an Emotion  
Coach for Kids and Teens  
Amanda Morris, PhD

**March 23**  
Substance Use and  
Your Child  
Florence Breslin, MS, CCRP

**April 27**  
ABCD Progress Update  
Martin Paulus, MD

**May 25**  
The Balanced Brain  
Yoon-Hee Cha, MD

**TULSA'S LITTLE DRILLER**  
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and learning enthusiasts  
to LIBR's 2017 lecture series  
on brain development in kids



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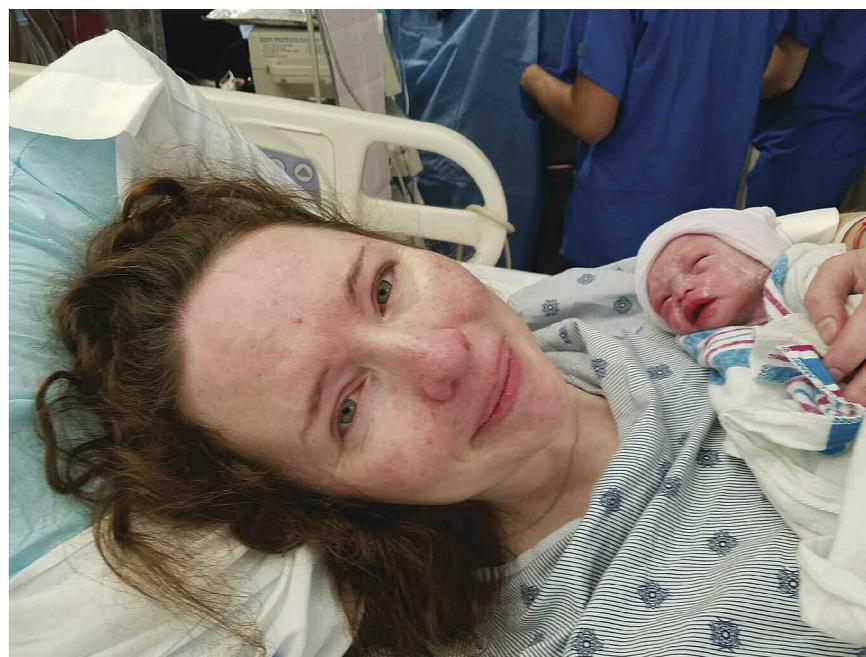
FROM THE HIP

# New Baby? Tulsa Has Its Perks

BY JILL VANTREASE

*Editor's Note: Jill's sister had her baby 6 weeks early on Jan. 10 - We will see how this story unfolds! For now, congratulations to the new family! B.C.*

**W**e are going to take a break from our regularly scheduled "hip" programming so I can talk about something terribly close to my heart right now: In a few short weeks, my little sister, at the ripe "advanced maternal age" of 40, is going to have her first baby. And I'm in a bit of an emotional tizzy about it. Why? Well, let me tell you a little about my sister. She's a smart girl. A lawyer, in fact. She does something fancy in intellectual property for the government in Washington, D.C. She's the primary breadwinner in her family, married to an assistant district attorney in the Bronx. Oh, what? They live in the Bronx? And she works in DC? Yes, that's right. My sister and her husband live in a fifth floor walkup with no washing machine, no elevator and no doorman to get her packages (she has to WAIT IN LINE at the post office!). So how does this work, you ask? Every Monday, at 3 dark-thirty in the morning, she walks down five flights of stairs and catches a cab to Penn Station. Then she boards the train from New York City to Washington, D.C., a four-to-five-hour ride. Once the train arrives in DC, she takes a short walk to a subway, takes a 15-minute subway ride, and then walks to her job. After her workday in DC, she stays in the basement of some chick I



JILL'S SISTER WITH HER BABY.

don't know. Then, on Friday, she repeats that gut-wrenching commute back to see her husband in the Bronx for le weekend.

So, what's she going to do when the baby comes? Well, eight weeks after the baby's born (that's all the paid time off she has; she can't afford to take more unpaid leave), she's going to bring the baby with her! She's going to pop that baby at 3 a.m. in a carseat, walk down those five flights of stairs, take an Uber with her husband to the train station (then he's going to keep the car seat?!), ride the train (does the baby need a ticket, too? She doesn't know!), hoof to the subway carrying the baby, and then walk

to one of two daycares she's hoping to get into, even though neither has an opening yet). Then she'll work, pick up the baby, and (I guess) head to the chick's basement.

Friends, what do you say to that? Besides the mind-boggling logistics of her work situation, there's the million and seven special considerations of having a baby in New York City. My sister doesn't have a trust fund. She doesn't even have a CAR. What if the baby is sick in the middle of the night? Do you just hail a cab? What about in a few years when you just want to lock the kid outside but you can't -- you've got to schlep to Central Park or some-

thing? And I've lived in New York: You hemorrhage money every time you walk out the door. And the preschools! You had better get your little snowflake on the waiting list as soon as you see that second line -- lest your child is relegated to some lousy second-tier preschool. And even if you magically get through the daunting application process for the top-tier preschool, you'll pay tuition roughly equal to four Holland Halls...for a 3-year-old! Ah, I could go on, but as my sister has asked me for advice here and there (and left it totally unheeded), it occurs to me I have a thing or two to say to a new mom (now stop laughing!). I've been pregnant many, many times, and birthed many babies, and while it looks like the sun is setting on that time of my life (sob, sob), I have a few opinions in case you, too, are having your first baby. So humor me and let me wax on a bit about those first few weeks and months of pregnancy and new mommyhood:

### 1. Doctor's appointments:

My sister is always bragging how her husband goes to every appointment. Ladies, this doesn't impress me at all. If your husband can get away, if he enjoys going, then by all means! But assuming you have a nice, boring, normal pregnancy, if it's difficult for him to make these appointments -- let it go! If my husband went to every doctor appointment, he'd

*continued next page*

be unemployed and we'd be living under a bridge somewhere. You can handle peeing and lying down on your own. If he can come to a big appointment -- the gender reveal, maybe? -- that's great. But use your leverage for later, when you want to shower or run away for an hour to do some blessed errands without the baby. That is when you will need some support -- not now!

### 2. Lamaze/birthing classes:

My sister was curious if she should take Lamaze classes. Well, I went with my first, and I guess the breathing exercises helped with those late, deep contractions from Hades. But then my first child was vacuumed out! Since then I've had C-sections, so I just show up and get sliced and diced. I don't know; go ahead and go to a class if you want to meet other pregnant people. Maybe you are passionate about wanting a drug-free birth, or giving birth in a big bathtub, or having the baby at home? You can probably look up some breathing techniques on YouTube. Well, have some thoughts, but don't get too hung up on anything. The best deliveries are the ones that result in a healthy baby and a healthy mama. The end.

**3. Are you spending a lot of time, sweat and love on a nursery?** If you are, that's great! But if you don't have the time, patience, money or stamina, don't sweat it at all. My husband was unemployed during my first pregnancy; we had a crib -- well, MY crib from when I was a baby -- and that was it. Since then, the babies started coming quickly enough that we'd have a room for the "big kid," and I had the "new" baby right next to my bed anyway. My sister's apartment is about 600 square feet; there's not going to be any nursery to speak of. Guess what? The baby doesn't care one little bit if he's sleeping in a Kardashian-inspired seraglio, or a modest bassinet next to you. All he wants and needs is your love, attention and food!

**4. Work:** Work is such a complicated thing once you have a baby. You just don't know how you are going to feel -- and quite probably how you feel is largely

irrelevant to your financial situation. But if you have any financial flexibility, see how it goes! With my first couple of children, I had a really great work situation: two days per week in the office, and a bit of working from home. And, yet, I still dreaded dropping them off, and could not leave work fast enough, especially when they were still little bundles of fleshly baby flab. I should note I was a CPA, and while the work was fine and paid the bills, the only aspects I truly loved about my job were lunch, gossiping with grown ups, and happy hour. Most of us have to work; my sister has to work. Hopefully you are able to work out a situation that suits you and your baby -- without a jillion-hour train ride. Which brings me to my last point:

**5. Move to Tulsa!** OK, smarty pants, you already live here? Great job! We moved here from Portland when I was pregnant with my third child; we had made the calculation that the costs of having three children in daycare even part-time meant I ought to be earning a salary roughly equal to the CEO of Nike. Alas, I was not. PVT found a job in Tulsa that meant we would need to make sacrifices, but that we could get by on one income for a while. And that we did! Now that I've been here 10 years, I appreciate Tulsa so much more: It's a city that aspires to be both hip and family-friendly. Oh, pregnant mamas, aren't you glad you live here? Whatever your pre-baby situation is, I bet it doesn't involve train rides, fifth-floor walk-ups, washing machines that might involve a trek in the rain or snow, and living in someone's basement. Another bonus? Somehow it seems like wherever you land here, you are bound to find a caring and concerned community surrounding your doorstep. My poor sister doesn't know a single neighbor. Whatever your concerns are regarding motherhood, dear mama, rest easy knowing your baby will be born here in our little lovely town of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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# healthy habits start early

CAPITALIZE ON TODDLERS' NATURAL CURIOSITY TO INTRODUCE A VARIETY OF FOODS.

It was when my kids were toddlers that I realized I needed to set a good example when it came to eating.

This meant my husband and I could no longer stand at the kitchen island eating chips and salsa and call it dinner – or at least we felt we shouldn't with little eyes watching us, unconsciously picking up our eating habits.

Once I realized they were at an age when those habits could be picked up for good or for bad, I took my own diet more seriously.

The toddler years – ages 1 to 3 years old – are a time of great exploration and discovery in all matters, including food. All children are of course different, but for many, toddlerhood is a time when kids are open to different tastes and textures.

The toddler years are the time to capitalize on this discovery period. This is your child's chance to potentially develop a fondness for spinach or a love for beets. Though a word of caution: Your beet-loving toddler may flip a switch and decide she despises them on a dime. I don't know if it's a change in taste buds or personality, but toddlers, and children for that matter, can go from loving a healthy food to hating it in no time.

I actually overheard a mother once say to her 2-year-old,



“But I thought you loved bananas?!” while the little boy just shook his head in a hard “No.” Any parent who has raised a toddler could have given her a knowing look.

But, take heart parents of littles, I have a child who was tube-fed as a toddler, and who ate nothing by mouth until age 3. That child, now age 7, eats Brussels sprouts, asparagus, beans, lasagna, stews and almost any-

thing I'll put on her plate today.

With three children – some with healthy appetites and others with sensory processing disorders and extreme food aversions – I know that while parents must do all they can to ensure their children are eating healthy, a child will ultimately decide what he or she will or won't eat.

Perhaps that's why I believe it's so important to offer a variety of healthy, colorful and appealing

foods in the toddler years. Some of those foods will be spit out – or flung across the room – but others may just become lifelong favorites.

*My kids scooped up this vegetarian chili when they were toddlers. I sprinkled theirs with a little grated cheese and crumbled Fritos. For a healthier meal, serve on top of brown rice.*

## Toddler-Approved Vegetarian Chili

- 1 cup tomato juice
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable or beef stock
- 1 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 medium potato, diced
- 1/4 cup red lentils, washed
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup finely chopped green pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

In a saucepan, combine tomato juice, stock, chickpeas, potato, lentils, carrot, onion, green pepper and garlic. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for about 20 minutes or until vegetables and lentils are tender. Stir frequently, since the chili has a tendency to stick as it thickens.

*continued next page*

Add chili powder, salt and pepper. Cook 5 minutes. Taste and adjust flavor.

*These little vegetable fritters make a great dinner. Toddlers can pick them up and eat with their hands. For grownups, have them for dinner with a green salad. You'll need a food processor to quickly make this recipe.*

**Carrot and Zucchini Fritters**

- 3 tablespoons ground almonds
- Large handful of baby carrots (about 12)
- 1/2 zucchini, peeled
- 1 baking potato, peeled
- 1 medium onion, peeled
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Vegetable or canola oil

Grind almonds in food processor to make 3 tablespoons.

In food processor, grate carrots, zucchini, potato and onion. Cup small handfuls of mixture, and squeeze out the excess moisture. Mix vegetables with ground almonds, flour and egg. Season with salt and pepper. If mixture seems too wet, add a little extra flour.

Form into six round, flat cakes, and saute in oil until golden on both sides and cooked through – about 6 minutes.

*My kids liked this cake as a snack. I also served it for breakfast with fresh fruit. It's a great use for overripe bananas.*

**Banana Yogurt Cake**

- 2 cups cake flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup mashed bananas (about 2)
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 2/3 cup plain yogurt

In a bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and nutmeg.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs until frothy. Gradually beat in sugar until very thick. Stir in ba-

nana and applesauce. Stir in dry ingredients alternately with yogurt, ending with yogurt. Spread in prepared 9-by-13-inch pan.

Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes or until center is firm to the touch. Let cool, then cut into squares.

**What about foods you shouldn't feed a toddler?**

**The main foods to avoid are any that could cause choking. According to the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital those include:**

- Whole grapes
- Hot dogs
- Large pieces of meat
- Candy and cough drops
- Marshmallows
- Popcorn
- Raw carrots
- Raisins
- Nuts



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BY DIANE TRITT EATON

PHOTOS COURTESY: DIANE TRITT EATON

# Siloam Springs, Arkansas: one of the best small towns around



DOWNTOWN SILOAM SPRINGS.

**D**uring the holidays, while attending my son's basketball tournament in Northwest Arkansas, I had the unexpected pleasure of exploring the darling downtown district in Siloam Springs. Much to my surprise, I was swept off of my feet by this charming little town while uncovering what the

historic district offers and quickly learning why it's gaining critical acclaim as a noteworthy destination.

Similar to Eureka Springs and Hot Springs, AR, Siloam Springs' original claim to fame was the healing properties found in the mineral-laced fresh water spouting up from the natural

landscape. With 28 natural springs in all, the town gained national attention as a summer resort community in the 1880s, and people flocked to her waters for medicinal purposes. When the railroad arrived in the late 1890s, the business district was developed, but the "boom" eventually subsided as the hype about the

healing powers waned. Inevitably, this resulted in a reduced population and a largely abandoned downtown district, lasting many decades.

However, since the 1990s, a labor of love has generated a grand plan to revive the district to enjoy and to showcase its historical significance. Collectively, local

*continued next page*



INN AT THE SPRINGS  
COURTESY: DIANE TRITT EATON

citizens have donated millions of dollars and thousands of volunteer hours to re-gentrify the mostly brick-clad downtown buildings. Main Street Siloam Springs, a non-profit organization, is hard at work to “preserve its glory” and turn it “...into an economically vigorous commercial center and a gathering place for hospitality, arts and entertainment...” Now the town is truly progressive and is part of a rapidly expanding region known as the Northwest Arkansas Corridor.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995, downtown is pedestrian-friendly and is attractively punctuated by fresh water Sager Creek streaming through town, lovely green space with three pretty parks, walking bridges and, of course, the adorning fountain springs—all of which add up to synergistic charm. Specialty shops for funky finds include Occasions, Savvy and Two Gals Junk, quaint restaurants such as 28 Springs and kid-friendly wood-oven pizza at Fratelli’s, and accommodations like the Inn at The Springs add a unique twist to the hospitable

vibe. Perhaps this helps sum up why downtown Siloam Springs has earned the distinctive title of one of “America’s best small towns” by Smithsonian Magazine and has been featured in Southern Living and Parade magazine over the past few years.

The original promise of bringing physical healing to its visitors may be long gone, but Siloam Springs’ current offering may just be mental healing. The friendly and welcoming environment and the slower pace

of yesteryear, with its history and cultural endeavors, bring joy and a sense of calm to its people and its guests.

Day trips or overnight jaunts are easy. In 90 minutes, you can cross the Oklahoma-Arkansas border from city life to small-town living—even for just a few hours or a few days. I look forward to spending the night this month at The Inn At the Springs, a quaint, revitalized European-style bed and breakfast establishment situated in the heart of the historic district. I also plan to revisit some of the eateries I missed the first time around and look forward to returning again later this year when the weather warms up to attend the Dogwood Festival and then again to take my boys to the nearby Wilderness Safari and Kayak Park, both highly rated nearby excursions.

Having such a perfect setting for a small town, it’s no wonder that when I stumbled upon this historic neighborhood, I felt as though I was on the set of an old-time television show, depicting a time when everyone said

hello with a smile and the community, proudly involved itself to make it the best place possible. I am thrilled to explore more now that I have learned what else there is to do and how close it is to Tulsa. When you go, what will you enjoy first?

For more details about the history of Siloam Springs, the restaurants, shops and lodging options, check out [www.siloamsprings.com](http://www.siloamsprings.com), [www.mainstreet-siloam.org](http://www.mainstreet-siloam.org) and [www.siloamchamber.com](http://www.siloamchamber.com). Upon arrival, stop by the Chamber of Commerce office at 108 E. University and pick up brochures and information about the area or call in advance at 479.524.6466 for help with planning your itinerary.

### Siloam Springs Area Offers Safari Time Fun

Situated only 11 miles north of Siloam Springs, the tiny town of Gentry, Arkansas is home to some big-time adventure for adults and kids alike.

The Wilderness Drive-Through Safari, a 400-acre wild animal park, is a spectacular way for the family to experience what it’s like on the African plains, without leaving the U.S.A. While trekking about safely in the car, the four-mile drive meanders through 400 acres filled with a long list of exotic animals roaming about, including black bears, Bengal tigers, lions, zebra and wildebeests. If that’s not enough, leopards, cougars and wolves live here, too—all among the sprawling natural landscape, laced with large ponds and shade trees. Sometimes, the animals come near the roadway and up to the cars, so keep the windows up and doors locked at all times.

For an added bit of fun, there is a petting zoo for up-close and personal time with kangaroos, chimpanzees, miniature donkeys and even giraffes. Depending on the time of year, camel and pony rides are available.

For information about hours and pricing, call 479.736.838 or visit [www.wildwildernessdrive-throughsafari.com](http://www.wildwildernessdrive-throughsafari.com)

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# WE'RE EXPECTING!

**The 2017-18 TulsaKids Baby Guide will hit the stands in March 2017!**

The [TulsaKids Baby Guide](#) is an annual resource for expectant and new parents. As a local guide, the magazine provides pregnant mothers and parents of infants up to one year current information on health, safety, nutrition, prenatal and infant development, new products and more.

Expectant and new parents have a world of worries, joys and questions – the [TulsaKids Baby Guide](#) is a friendly voice, packed with advice and information, that new parents will refer to throughout their pregnancy and the first year of their baby's life. The Baby Guide is distributed through OB/GYN offices, hospitals, infant and children's retailers and bookstores.

To celebrate the release of our annual Baby Guide we will shower one lucky expectant family with an array of new baby wants and needs. All that you have to do is visit participating businesses, fill out a short form and place it in the TulsaKids Baby Shower gift bag. You may enter one time at each participating location.

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# HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

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

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to help children mature on all levels. Our program focuses on helping children build strong physical, intellectual and emotional skills that will help them be successful on and off the soccer field. We believe in teaching children in ways that suit their developmental level. So, you won't see adult-like skill drills in our classes, but you will see teaching methods specifically designed to create an atmosphere that is effective and fun. You will also see happy, confident and sweaty kids who are eager to learn and want to keep coming back for more. Whether your child is new to soccer or has already developed a love for the game, the progressive nature of Lil' Kickers offers a place for children at every level. Our convenient class times provide families options to accommodate multiple children and busy schedules. Winter dates: NOW - March 11th; Spring Dates March 20th - May 27th.

## TULSA PEDIATRIC URGENT CARE

7723 East 91st St.

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Tulsa Pediatric Urgent Care provides medical care for nearly all pediatric illnesses and minor trauma. Our board certified physicians provide exceptional care for your child on evenings and weekends, when your pediatrician's office is closed. When your child requires a little extra care, our clinic offers in-office X-Ray, lab, splinting, suturing, oxygen and nebulized treatment therapy, as well as IV fluids. We only treat pediatric patients and will ensure that your child's visit is as pleasant as possible. From experienced pediatric nurses, to a child friendly waiting room with toys and cartoons, to fun, kid-themed rooms, your child's experience will offer a calm, soothing environment and the highest quality medical care. Hours are Monday-Friday from 4 PM to 11 PM, and Saturdays and Sundays from 9:30 AM to 10 PM.

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

Warren Clinic, a division of the Saint Francis Health System, has over 350 physicians and providers in more than 70 locations across Tulsa and eastern Oklahoma. Warren Clinic provides convenient, high quality primary care and specialty services for its patients. Warren Clinic offers a wide spectrum of medical services, from primary to specialty care, from disease prevention to the management of patients with chronic conditions. As an added service of Warren Clinic, patients have access to MyChart, a secure, online tool that allows 24/7 access to their healthcare information. Patients and approved caregivers can request a physician appointment, view lab and test results, request prescription refills, pay bills online and more. For more information or to make an appointment with a physician, please contact Saint Francis Health Link today at 918-488-6688.



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# I'M A TULSA KID

BY SHEEBA ATIQI

PHOTO CREDIT: OH SNAP! PHOTOGRAPHY

## Irish Dancer Ellie McKinney

Work hard and persevere is the name of the game for Ellie McKinney. Ellie has been taking the Irish dance world by storm and has become a real stand-out in competitions. With the help of mentor, dear friend and teacher KT Goode, Ellie has been able to achieve and surpass any goal she sets her mind to, all while being a student and traveling the world.

### TK: Who is Ellie?

**Ellie:** I am 15 and I go to Regent Preparatory School, and I love to dance! I take Irish dance at the Goode Academy.

### TK: Irish dancing! How did you get into Irish dancing?

**Ellie:** When I was young, we went to Silver Dollar City where I saw some Irish dancers. I told my mom I wanted to do that. I asked for three years if I could start dancing.

### TK: How old were you when you started Irish dancing?

**Ellie:** I was 7 when I started at the Goode Academy.

### TK: What exactly is Irish dancing?

**Ellie:** Irish dancing is considered traditional dancing based out of Ireland. One of the things about Irish dance that is unique is that they don't use their arms when they dance. They keep their arms straight down at their sides. Most people recognize Irish dance from the popular shows like Riverdance and Lord of the Dance and a lot of people know who [Irish dancer] Michael Flatley is.

### TK: What is your favorite thing about Irish dancing?

**Ellie:** I love the competition part of it! Competitions have given me the opportunity to travel a lot as well, from all over the US and Canada and now Ireland. I also just started teaching Irish dancing to the little kids at the Goode Academy.

### TK: How many competitions have you been in?

**Ellie:** A lot! My first competition was maybe when I was 10. They were just small competitions called Feisanna. A year later I danced at my first major competition, which is regionals but also called Oireachtas. Oireachtas is Gaelic for championship. I didn't qualify for nationals that year but I did the year after that. I have qualified for nationals four times. And this year I qualified for the world championship in Dublin, Ireland!

### TK: Tell me about the World Championships.

**Ellie:** Its coming up in April, and it's the biggest competition! It's the best of the best from around the world.

### TK: What advice do you have for other aspiring dancers, young and old?

**Ellie:** It takes a lot of hard work but it is so worth it!

### TK: How do you balance school, dance, a social life and preparing for competitions?

**Ellie:** We have made a schedule so I know where I have to be morning, afternoon and night. I practice dancing every day approximately 2 -3 hours. It takes a lot of communication and sacrifices. I have to give up a lot of stuff, but it's worth it.

**Fun Fact:** I will be spending my 16th birthday in Dublin, Ireland.



»»→ tulsakids ←««

# CAMP-A-PALOOZA



Join us for **Camp-A-Palooza on March 1, 2017!**

Parents are organizing summer schedules earlier than ever. Readers have spoken and we have listened - TulsaKids will provide our highly sought after Summer Camps & Activities Guide a full month in advance. We will kick it all off with Camp-A-Palooza on **March 1, 2017** - a virtual camp fair dedicated to all things summer camps and activities, as well as special summer-themed giveaways. **Don't miss it!**

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



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# His patients will always have a place in his heart.

As a native Tulsan, Dr. Matthew Kimberling says he wouldn't want to be anywhere else. As a pediatric cardiologist at The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, he and his partners care for infants, children and teens with heart conditions—some very complex. "The children's hospital allows local families the ability to stay close to home for their child's special healthcare needs," he says. "My greatest reward is seeing my patients come back years later after a diagnosis—healthy and strong. I think that I have the best job in the world."

