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A photograph of three children—a boy on the left, a girl in the middle, and a younger girl on the right—smiling and sitting on a blue surface. A globe is positioned in front of them. The boy is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and jeans. The girl in the middle has long brown hair and wears a floral headband and a dark blue dress with yellow floral patterns. The youngest girl is also wearing a dark blue dress with yellow floral patterns and brown shoes. The globe is a standard desktop model with a wooden base and a metal frame.

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A New Year, a New...School?

This month's cover story explains some of the ins and outs of the new law giving parents a tax break if their children attend private school or are homeschooled. We had questions and thought you would, too. We partnered with MetroFamily, the Oklahoma City parenting publication, to ask Oklahoma Watch's education reporter, Jennifer Palmer, to find answers to our questions. Oklahoma Watch (oklahomawatch.org) is a nonprofit that produces in-depth and investigative journalism as a public service in Oklahoma.

Most parents also want to know how they can support their children in school. Dr. Anita Ede, who teaches early childhood education at Northeastern State University, explains the difference between literacy and the enjoyment of reading and why children often may not enjoy reading. She gives parents some tips on how they can encourage that love of reading at home.

And, while it may seem early to start looking for a school for your child, it's not. There are many options in and around Tulsa — public, private, charter and virtual — that you may want to consider. Our annual school guide is a great place to start. As you consider schools, think about your child's temperament, personality, strengths and weaknesses and interests. As a family, transportation, values and budget all come into play.

And, as you think about the new year, why not teach your children to cook? Natalie Mikles' column this month has some delicious recipes to get families into the kitchen.

Whether you're looking for fun activities to do with your family or starting a serious search for schools, we've got you covered.

Happy New Year!



Betty Casey

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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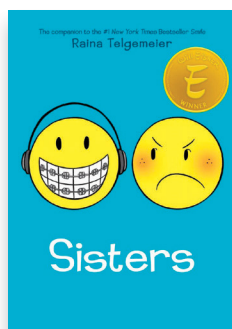
Mr. Henry's Books EDUCATOR WORKSHOP

Saturday, Feb. 17 • 9-11 a.m.
Central Library • Pochontas Greadington
Learning and Creativity Center
Fifth Street and Denver Avenue

Attention, middle school teachers and librarians! You are invited to this continuing-education workshop focusing on the works of author Raina Telgemeier, winner of the 2024 Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature.

You will:

- Receive 50 copies of *Sisters* by Raina Telgemeier for your students to keep as their own. This book is suited for ages 8-12.
- Learn how to incorporate various elements of *Sisters* into your classroom and receive lesson plans on how to use Telgemeier's works in a variety of school subjects.
- Be introduced to Tulsa City-County Library's Anne V. Zarrow Award for Young Readers' Literature.
- Gain an opportunity to win a classroom visit by Raina Telgemeier on Friday, May 3.



Every participant will receive their copies of *Sisters* **after** the workshop, as well as an official continuing-education certificate. Participants must be employed by a school district within Tulsa County.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Deadline: Saturday, Feb. 10
Registration is limited.
www.tulsalibrary.org/mr-henrys-books-registration



Mr. Henry's Books is a program of the Tulsa City-County Library, sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust, made possible by a grant from the Anne & Henry Zarrow Foundation.



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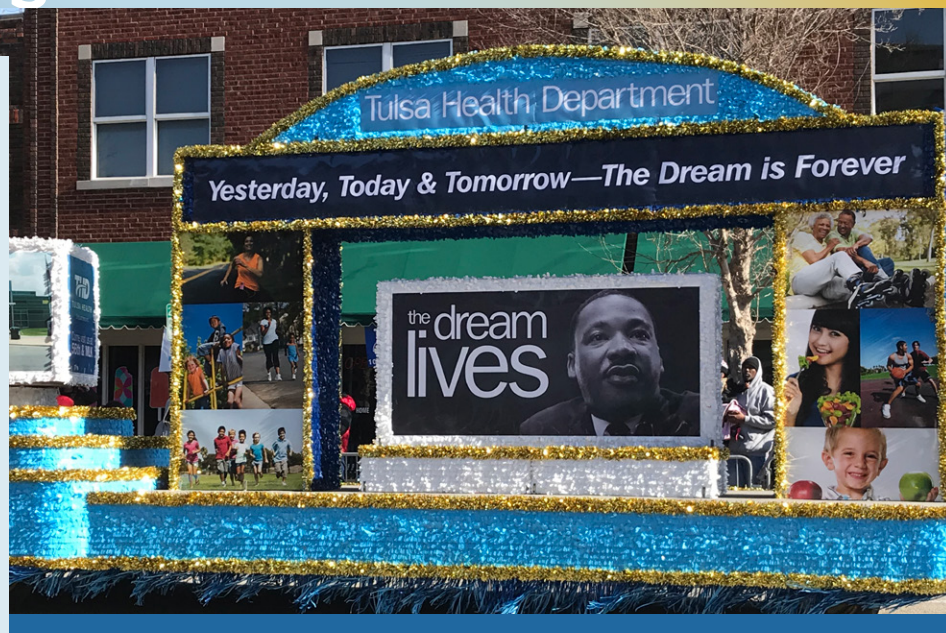
LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am a retired educator and enjoy TulsaKids Magazine. I was pleasantly surprised that you would include the article in the Dec. magazine that was critical of PragerU and of State Superintendent Walters. As a lifelong learner, I have been horrified by legislation that has caused fear and suspicion on public education and public school teachers. PragerU is horrifying and Walters is way off base. Thank you for your courage to call out the injustices that our state government is doing to public education. I am proud of the Tulsa area schools that have rejected the PragerU curriculum. Shout-out to Rep. Monroe Nichols for standing strong for kids and educators.

I thank you again for your courage to publish this very informative article.

Nancy Droemer, Tulsa



45TH ANNUAL MLK COMMEMORATIVE PARADE JAN. 15

Dr. King's Dream: A Vision for the Future is the theme for the 45th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Parade that will celebrate the revered civil rights leaders' legacy on Jan. 15, 2024. Each year, over 100 entries participate in the parade featuring themed floats, music and marchers. Thousands of people are expected to attend the parade that begins at the corner of N. Detroit Ave. and John Hope Franklin Blvd. and meanders through historic Greenwood Avenue to Archer, ending near ONEOK Field. The parade begins at 11 a.m. and is free to the public.

"Dr. King continues to challenge our world with a vision of the future in which racism has been eliminated, and all people are treated with respect, dignity and integrity," said Pleas

Thompson, president of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Society. "On January 15, Tulsa's MLK Parade will once again pay tribute to Dr. King and his message of peace, love and equality. The dream is alive and well in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Please join us as we celebrate Dr. King's vision of this glorious future."

The goal of the MLK Day Parade is for participants of all ages to have fun, remember Dr. King's legacy and how they can be a part of keeping his dream alive. Parade marshals, security personnel and volunteers will be posted along the parade route to ensure the safety of participants and guests.

A map of the parade route is available at mlktulsa.com. Please visit the website for the latest parade updates.

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR MENTORING GRANTS

New and existing Oklahoma mentoring programs that serve students in grades K–12 can now apply for Boren Mentoring Initiative Grants from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

The foundation offers two types of grants. Organizations and programs in their first three years of operation can apply for start-up grants of \$3,000, while existing mentoring programs are eligible for \$1,500 opportunity grants to help fund programming, training, materials or other needs that advance excellence in mentoring. There will be two start-up grants and six opportunity grants available for the 2024 grant cycle.

To be eligible, programs must serve K–12 age children in Oklahoma. Preference is given to organizations that work in partnership with local public schools. Programs must also conduct background checks on all mentors, agree to report quantitative and qualitative outcomes, and provide proof of 501(c)3 status or proof of an agreement with a local public school district or other qualified 501(c)3 umbrella organization.

The deadline to submit applications is Jan. 15, 2024. Applications are available at OFE.org.

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is a statewide nonprofit that recognizes and encourages excellence in Oklahoma's public schools. The foundation's David and Molly Boren Mentoring Initiative promotes the growth and development of quality mentoring programs in Oklahoma.



Cache students create planters for local businesses and senior citizens as part of a community service day for the BEST! Mentoring Program. Launched in 2019, the program matches fifth–12th graders with a positive role model in the community.



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Read about our 2023 winners and finalists at tulsakids.com/family-favorites.

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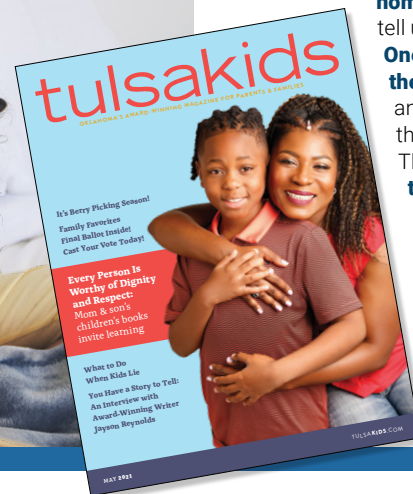


JACOB WACKERHAUSEN/GETTY

CONTESTS & GIVEAWAYS

COMING SOON: AMAZING MOMS CONTEST

We want to celebrate the many amazing moms living in and near Tulsa! From **Feb. 15-29**, **nominate a mom** you know and tell us what makes her amazing! **One winner will be featured on the cover of our May issue**, and we will share some of the other stories as well. The link will be available at **tulsakids.com/contests**.



THANK YOU FOR
ENTERING OUR HOLIDAY
FUN PHOTO CONTEST,
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- 1-Josephine Dryer with Santa
- 2-Bella Ambrose in a performance of *A Christmas Carol*
- 3-Savannah P. and The Grinch
- 4-Happy holidays from The Kumar Family

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BLOG SPOTLIGHT: Grand Life by Diane Morrow-Kondos

On Oct. 10, Diane Morrow-Kondos published a blog post titled "Unexpected Moments of Grief — The Day I Canceled My Parents' Phone Line." She wrote about how, after two years of cleaning out her deceased parents' home, it was finally time for the final step — canceling their phone line. Although canceling the line brought a wave of grief, her article concludes, "Canceling the phone number did not cancel my parents' love. In many ways, my parents are always with me."



Diane's post touched over 100,000 readers, and we received heartfelt responses from many of them. Here are just a few:

"I just had to let you know how much I enjoyed reading your article about changing your childhood phone number. I, too am caring for parents with dementia. You really described very well the feelings and emotions attached with something as simple as a phone number. I'm so glad Google directed me to your page. God bless you and your family." —**BETSY J.**

"Oh my...I read this with a resurgence of 'grief' and 'loss', yet 'joy' and 'thanksgiving' for my parents. I too, along with my sister, spent over two years 'letting go' of my parents' home. One of the most difficult things I've ever had to do. I've yet to 'let go' of them! They are in my heart and mind all the time, as I'm sure yours are. Thank you for sharing this deeply heartfelt part of your life!" —**MARY E. A.**

"As I sat at my computer trying to force myself to do one more thing to get my late mom's home ready to sell, your article came up, and I had to read it. Boy, did it help. I lost my dad first as well. When mom passed, I thought, I'm an orphan. My husband laughed at me. 'You're in your 60s,' he said. Did that really matter. You were the first person in two years who has said that sentence, too. It was a relief. I wasn't alone in that thought. I've been struggling with letting go of her house, but your comment that the memories will still be there really helped. I was able to contact the final house cleaners and carpet cleaners so I can get it on the market. Thanks!" —**DENISE S.**

"Thank you for writing this article. You expressed my grief exactly. When your parents are gone and, as with myself, [you] don't have a husband or children, you are so very much alone, an adult orphan, in this world. Even though I'm an 'old' person, not a day goes by where I don't think about them and so wish at least one were still here. A person can have another husband, wife, partner, but you can never replace your parents. My parents happily gave EVERYTHING of themselves to myself and my two siblings. Thank you again for your beautiful article." —**GLORIA K.**

Read Grand Life at tulsakids.com/blog.



Demystifying Online Education with Oklahoma Connections Academy

Despite the growing popularity of online education, many people are still unsure about how online school works for K–12 students. Here are five myths and the realities of this education option.

Myth #1: Online school is the same as homeschooling.

TRUTH: Online public schools like Oklahoma Connections Academy provide public education at home supported by state-certified teachers and rigorous curricula. In contrast, homeschooling requires parents to manage curriculum development, teaching, and grading.

Myth #2: Online schools are all about technology.

TRUTH: Online schools prioritize curriculum and instruction for students. Technology is a tool, not the focus, of online schools.

Myth #3: Online school is essentially "teacher-less."

TRUTH: Certified teachers play a crucial role in online education and are actively involved in online

courses, tailoring instruction to students' needs and learning preferences.

Myth #4: Online school students spend all their time in front of a computer.

TRUTH: Students use various resources beyond the computer, including textbooks, microscopes, and interactive curricula, completing some assignments "unplugged" for a well-rounded education.

Myth #5: Online schooling limits quality social interactions for kids.

TRUTH: Students regularly socialize with peers through the online classroom, clubs and field trips. Many students also participate in extra-curriculars in their communities. **TK**



For more information,
call **800-382-6010** or visit
OklahomaConnectionsAcademy.com.

The Tiny Teacher in Your Arms

By **Alicia Kobilnyk**



HALFPOINT/GETTY

Open your mind and heart
to seeing the world from
your child's perspective.

Take a journey with me, if you will, through time. A trip to the late 1990s. Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake's relationship is the main topic of conversation, probably so people can take a break from the unrest in the Middle East. Choker necklaces, wide-leg pants and neon colors are in. And every day across America, millions tune in with eager anticipation to hear what Oprah Winfrey, guru of American philosophical thought, is reading. On one such fated day, Oprah, soothing voice of self-care and awareness before it was cool, interviews Mitch Albom about his book *Tuesdays with Morrie*. As Albom describes his relationship with his unexpected influence, Morrie, we laugh, we cry, we clutch our collective hearts. We ponder, "Who, aside from the obvious — Oprah Winfrey — will be our greatest teacher?"

Okay. Trip is over. Jump back in the time machine. Disregard that

bag of 3D Doritos. We're headed back to 2023. Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake are all people talk about, probably so they can take a break from the unrest in the Middle East. Choker necklaces, wide-leg pants and neon colors are in. And, despite the care of Mother Winfrey, many of us have yet to find our teacher. Our Morrie. Our wizened, charming and poetic guide to the complexities of life. Fear not, fellow seekers. Allow me to introduce you to a concept so grand one can only imagine it came from the Oracle of Daytime TV herself: Children can be our greatest teachers.

It was an ordinary day for me. I was sitting by a little girl, not yet 18 months old, watching her transition from the classroom and a tearful wake up, to the outdoor classroom and the beloved sand pit. Through big sniffs and shaky breaths, she took her hands and slowly buried them in the sand, pulling them out slowly. Sand

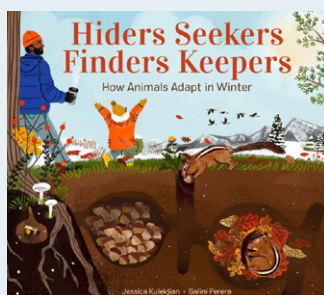
trickled off her as she removed her hands only to slide them once more, fingers spread far apart, back into a cool, grainy void. Her breaths slowed and deepened. Her tearful, shiny eyes began to dry.

Within moments, she was recentered, standing up and joining her peers in exploration. The overwhelming urge to weep had passed. She, a human so new she could not be served raisins or relied upon not to touch hot stoves, had found a way to feel, process and heal in a way most of us adults can only envy. Though little, she was wise.

Children have become some of my greatest teachers. With every question voiced, every dawdle on what adults think will be a short walk and every reach for a familiar hand, they inspire those who pay attention to live slower, more authentic and more connected lives, unhurried by intangible pressures and unbothered by cumbersome social constructs.

As you study your child and ponder their development, remind yourself that your child was *made* to learn, has been learning since before they were born and finds you a source of endless enlightenment. You are your child's first teacher. And, as any good teacher will tell you, we never really stop learning. Open your mind and heart to seeing the world from your child's perspective. Observe them and spend time living at their pace. The world is in a big enough hurry. Take a masterclass in being present and curious from your own homegrown expert, and you'll find your world forever changed. **TK**

Alicia Kobilnyk is an Early Childhood Educator who works with young toddlers. She finds joy and inspiration to write in their cheeky shenanigans, as well as those of her three daughters.



Winter Crafts for You & Your Cats!

Connect your children to books about beloved pets for an extra literacy boost

By **Laura Raphael, MA, MLIS**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COORDINATOR
TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY



When my niece was a toddler, she was obsessed with the family cat. (And all other cats, to be honest.) She loved watching Frankie prowl and sleep and eat, and she took our “gentle, gentle” petting directions well — for a 3-year-old!

My sister and brother-in-law capitalized on this early interest in cats by taking her to the library to check out books about cats and with cats as characters. I will be forever grateful for the children’s librarian who set aside “the best cat books” for my niece in anticipation of her weekly library visits. (Yes, children’s librarians will do this for you. All you need to do is ask.)

Twenty years later, with an undergraduate and graduate degree under her belt, my niece still loves (and now owns) cats — and, of course, she is a terrific reader.

The lesson for parents is pretty simple: If you have family pets and your child is interested in them, use this as an interest anchor for great books you can get at the library.

This month’s book suggestions combine winter and animals in interesting ways and are from a terrific online library account maintained by the library’s Youth Nonfiction Selector and long-time children’s librarian Sally Kotarsky. Find more of these lists by going to tccl.bibliocommons.com and searching the catalog by “LIST” (instead of “keyword” or “title”) with: **TCCL Kids Read Nonfiction.**

A Winter Treasury of Recipes, Crafts, and Wisdom

by Angela Ferraro-Fanning

If you’re hankering for a little dose of *Little House on the Prairie* crafts, bakes and gardening projects, look

no more! This book focuses on how modern-day homesteaders use eco-friendly methods and a deep knowledge of what nature offers in the winter to give you a variety of fun cooking, crafting and planting projects to try with your child.

Hello Winter! by Shelley Rotner

A beautiful compendium of photos showing the different ways that plants and animals live during the winter, this book also gives basic information about the coldest season. Look out for surprising signs of life and get ready to say, “Hello Winter!” with your child.

Hiders Seekers Finders Keepers: How Animals Adapt in Winter

by Jessica Kulekjian

How exactly do animals survive the cold in winter? Many different ways! This book is a great resource of information about a variety of

animals, from frogs to box turtles to dragonflies to deer, and how they have learned how to make it through late fall to early spring. The book features detailed illustrations showing such concepts as the migration of butterflies and more.

Get Crafting for Your Cool Cat
by Ruth Owen

Cool cats need your crafts! In this delightful mash-up of craft projects and cat-care information, kids can discover how to make things like a lion’s mane hat, an eating game that’s also a puzzle for your cat and a pyramid hideaway.

And since an article that starts with cats and ends with cats wouldn’t be complete without at least one picture of a cat, here’s a picture of my Lizzy and Darcy. Appropriately enough, this was taken during a snow day a few years ago. **TK**

Combating Youth Suicide in Oklahoma: A Call to Action for All

By **Dr. Tamecca Rogers**, PhD



During my first year of teaching, I had a student who always arrived to class on time with a huge smile. She was a joy. She always had a joke or a fun fact to share. Toward the end of the semester, she began to miss several classes, and when she did make it to class, she was late, without her usual uplifting personality. After class, I pulled her aside and asked her if she was OK. She responded, "Ms. Rogers, I don't want to be here anymore." I probed a little more and realized that she was thinking about taking her own life. This conversation occurred over 20 years ago, and I still remember it like yesterday.

Although the conversation with my student happened years ago, Oklahoma is currently facing a crisis that demands our immediate attention and collective action. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, our state ranks seventh in suicides across the United States. In Oklahoma, suicide stands as the second most prevalent cause of death among individuals ages 10–25, accompanied by

a significant 50% surge in suicide attempts among girls ages 12 to 17. This is a call to action for parents, caregivers, educators and lawmakers to join forces in preventing the tragic loss of young lives.

Alarming Statistics

The gravity of the situation becomes even more apparent when we delve into the statistics. In 2019, suicide became the leading cause of death among individuals ages 10–17 in Oklahoma, surpassing the national average. Implementing Oklahoma House Bill 4106 is a step in the right direction. It outlines school protocols to identify and address students in mental health crises. It connects schools with local resources and intervention services, fostering a proactive approach to suicide prevention.

The intent behind this law is to ensure that every school in Oklahoma adopts an evidence-based protocol to address students facing mental health and suicidal crises. The overarching aim of the schools' suicide prevention

and intervention initiatives is to create a safe and supportive learning environment for students. Consequently, this legislation fosters collaboration between schools and mental health agencies to prioritize student safety, formulate effective protocols and consistently inform parents and guardians when a student is in crisis.

Understanding the Reasons

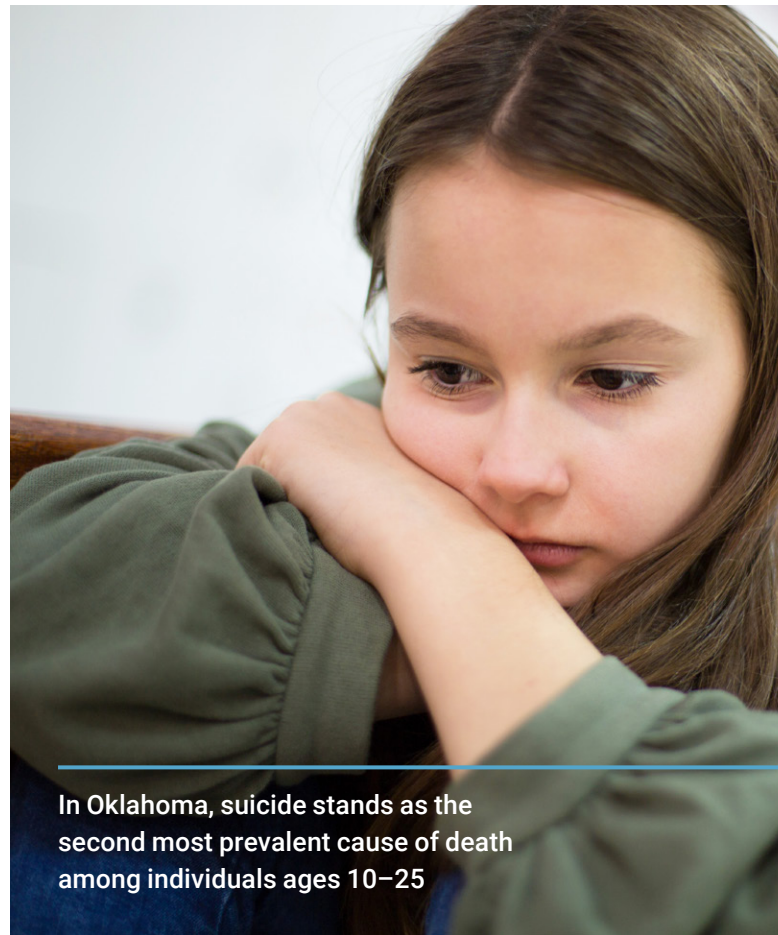
To effectively combat youth suicide, it's crucial to understand the factors contributing to this alarming trend. In younger children, suicide attempts frequently occur impulsively and are linked to feelings of sadness, confusion and attention-related issues. Factors that increase the risk involve a history of suicide attempts within the family, exposure to violence, impulsivity, access to firearms, bullying and feelings of hopelessness.

Although online platforms such as social media and gaming offer valuable opportunities for children to discover their identities and build communities, there can

be harmful consequences if these spaces are not adequately monitored. Cyberbullying, for instance, has been linked to numerous attempted suicides among our youth. Additionally, social media platforms may contribute to adverse effects on mental health, elevating the risk of self-harm and suicide. The prevalence of influencer culture, coupled with an emphasis on appearance and sexuality, can contribute to challenges like body image issues, diminished self-esteem and a distorted perception of self-worth.

Steps for Prevention

Preventing youth suicide necessitates proactive steps and open communication. Parents, caregivers and educators play pivotal roles in preventing youth suicide. Open communication is vital, and uncomfortable as it may be, discussing depression and suicidal thoughts with children is essential. Asking direct questions such as, "Are you feeling sad or depressed?" and "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" can assure children that someone cares.



In Oklahoma, suicide stands as the second most prevalent cause of death among individuals ages 10–25

Resources and Support

Several organizations in Oklahoma offer crucial resources and support:

- **Oklahoma's statewide mental health lifeline:** Call or text 988.
- **Family & Children's Services COPES crisis and emotional support hotline:** 918.744.4800
- **OK RIDE CARE:** A mobile crisis team dispatched after 988 for assessment and intervention.
- **Oklahomans for Equality:** Offers specific counseling services to the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Laureate Psychiatric Clinic and Hospital:** An inpatient facility providing care and resources for recovery.
- **Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health:** Mental health services and psychiatric care for individuals aged 18 and older.
- **CREOKS Behavioral Health Services:** creoks.org; 1.877.327.3657
- **Mental Health Association Oklahoma:** mhaok.org

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988.

NATISSIMA/GETTY

Regular check-ins become even more critical, particularly for those in high-risk groups, including females, LGBTQ+, or Black and Hispanic youth. Sharing personal experiences, especially moments of navigating challenging emotions and the coping mechanisms that proved effective, can create a supportive environment.

It's crucial to ensure that young people have access to safe spaces where they can engage with mental health professionals. Equally important is early education on coping skills, providing our children with tools to manage thoughts and emotions effectively. Additionally, removing access to potentially harmful items like medicines, chemicals and guns is a vital precautionary measure. By implementing these strategies, we contribute to building a resilient and supportive foundation for the mental well-being of our young generation.

Call to Action

We must all take responsibility for fostering an environment

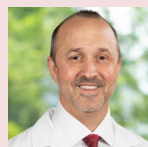
where mental health is prioritized. Research indicates that taking practical actions such as offering support services, discussing suicide openly, limiting access to self-harm means and following up with loved ones are reasonable actions. The Prevention Division at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services offers extensive suicide prevention training and resources to help create comprehensive strategies for reducing suicides in our state.

Let us unite as parents, caregivers, educators and lawmakers to break the silence surrounding youth suicide. We can work together to ensure a brighter and safer future for Oklahoma's youth by implementing preventive measures, fostering open conversations and utilizing available resources. **TK**

Dr. Tamecca Rogers is Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Tulsa Technology Center. She is a writer and mom to three boys who love adventures.

PJ'S CORNER

What Parents Need to Know About Appendicitis



**Q & A WITH
Barry Berch, M.D.**

**PEDIATRIC SURGEON,
THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AT SAINT FRANCIS**

What is appendicitis?

The appendix is a finger-like protrusion off the first part of the colon, where the small intestine meets the large intestine. Appendicitis is inflammation of the appendix, which can lead to infection, sometimes very severe infection.

How common is appendicitis, and can children of any age get it?

Parents need to understand is that appendicitis is very common. There are up to 70- to 100,000 appendicitis cases annually in the United States. At The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, we operate on an average of one patient a day.

The most common time to get appendicitis is between the ages of 10-18, but it's a misconception that younger kids don't get this. We have 2-year-olds and 5-year-olds with appendicitis. There's even such thing as neonatal appendicitis.

What are the signs of an inflamed appendix that parents can watch for?

Classically, pain. The child may say, "My belly hurts." Usually, it will be on the right, lower abdomen just above the hip-bone area, between the point of the hip and the belly button. But you see kids present in a variety of ways. Sometimes

pain follows a generalized feeling of being unwell. They may have some vomiting, fever, nausea or diarrhea, but it typically starts with the child complaining of pain. Take your child's complaints seriously. Get them to a pediatrician or a children's hospital. It's important for a pediatric specialist to evaluate the child.

What is the treatment for appendicitis?

The treatment is a combination of IV antibiotics and surgery. The sooner treatment is started, the better. Depending on the child's age and size, the infection can progress quickly from just a little inflammation to a rupture within a couple of days. For smaller kids, it can be 24 hours. Older kids, depending on their size and anatomy, may progress more slowly, but if they don't get started on antibiotics within 24 or 48 hours, it gets worse as days go by.

My final word for parents is to take your children's complaints seriously. Get them checked out. As a parent myself, I understand that we all get busy, and it's easy to trivialize. But kids usually know when they're sick, and fortunately, most parents are really good at knowing when their kid's not well. Just get them to the right place, and we can get them taken care of.

For the complete interview, visit **TulsaKids.com**

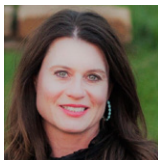
If you have a question for one of the Saint Francis pediatricians to answer, please email **editor@tulsakids.com**



6161 South Yale Avenue, Tulsa, OK
918-502-6000 | saintfrancis.com

Make This an Epic Year with Shelly Weaver

By **Nancy A. Moore**



Shelly Weaver is focused on creating epic opportunities for kids across Oklahoma. As the founder of Epos Sports Experience, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of youth, she has built an impactful organization in a short time. Epos, the Greek word for "Epic," sponsors camps and events for kids in grades seven through 12 in mainstream sports, rodeo and agriculture.

TK: Can you share what Epos is.

Shelly: Epos is a nonprofit organization designed to impact young athletes and coaches to overcome adversities through the importance of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health. We are the largest sports camp in the state of Oklahoma. Epos is the Greek word for "epic," and that is exactly the kind of impact and experience that I want to bring to our youth.

TK: Some people think about giving back, but you took it to the next level. Tell us about what prompted you to start Epos?

Shelly: Looking back, I know I wasn't asking for something else to do, but during prayer, the overall vision of Epos started to be apparent. I have always had a passion for teenagers, so when this was put so strongly on my heart, I knew God was asking me to walk through this door.

TK: Can you share a success story that has been a result of a student who attended the camp?

Shelly: We have seen so many successes come from camp! We have several kids that had failing grades and were on the verge of being held back, with the outcome being they drop out of school. One of the young men had never been on the honor roll and had a lot of conflicts at school. Once school resumed, he went in with a totally different attitude. He received the leadership award that year and also the principal's honor roll. He graduated that following year. His mother reached out and said our camp changed her son's life and that he had never received an award in all his years of school. Her tears were heard loud and clear over the phone.

TK: Why is it important that top-level athletes and coaches, including professionals, lead the camps?

Shelly: Every child deserves the opportunity to train with top coaches. Camps at this level are very costly so most children aren't given that opportunity. We want kids to always know they have positive mentors year-round to help them with training or in life.

TK: Can you share some details about what the camps offer?



Shelly: Our camp provides an environment that enhances an athlete's skill level in football, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, wrestling, volleyball and tennis. This is a top-tier training camp with an additional, important focus: We pride ourselves on the life skills classes that we offer. Sports are important, but for any child to become a high-level competitor it takes mental skills to be developed along with the ability to train with a speed and agility coach.

TK: This program takes place on the Oklahoma State University campus, so there are some classes involved for these student athletes. What types of classes are offered?

Shelly: We all know the statistics of the likelihood of a child playing sports in college or going on to play professionally, so our focus is beyond sports. Kids today face a lot more obstacles than we did 20 years ago. Our classes offer drug and alcohol awareness, marketing/branding, team building and life coaching. Our classrooms are very driven to give them the keys for success not only in sports but in school, family and future employment.

TK: Tell us about the sports camp this summer — when registration opens, cost, where it is and what it includes.

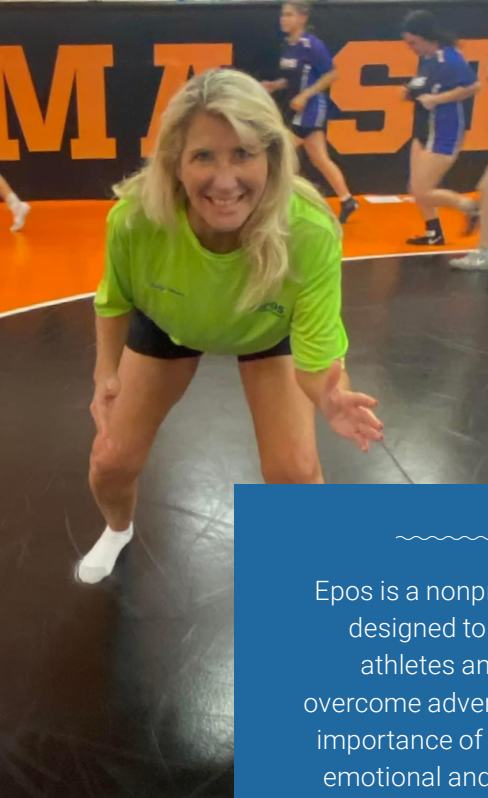
Shelly: Registration opens March 1. Camp will be June 17-22, 2024, at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The cost is \$99, which includes dorms, meals and sports camp. Note: if students can't afford that amount, a request can be made to cover that fee.

TK: Epos is going into five years. Can you share some statistics of your impact?

Shelly: Our state has a large number of families struggling financially. It is important to Epos to provide scholarships for those children. Epos sponsored over 650 kids last year at 100%. All funds raised pay for the kids requesting sponsorship. In addition, the funds raised also help pay for all the meals provided during camp. We served 19,900 meals last year. In addition to camp, we help coaches who have students that do not have athletic shoes and are without the means to obtain them. We provided 102 pairs of shoes in 2023! With such an immense need in our public schools, we hope to double that number next year.

TK: Can you share some details about the Epos Gala?

Shelly: The average cost for one student to attend camp is \$350, and we only charge \$99. The



Epos is a nonprofit organization designed to impact young athletes and coaches to overcome adversities through the importance of mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

difference in that cost comes through generous donations at our fundraising events. Our Gala will be next month, February 17, 2024, at Southern Hills. The keynote speaker is Adrian Peterson. This is a great time to hear from students who have been positively impacted by our organization as well as a fun way to support our organization.

TK: What is your advice for someone thinking about starting a nonprofit?

Shelly: Be prepared to personally invest in the nonprofit. While small donations or grants help, it takes a minimum of three years for revenue to be generated. If your heart is solely to help others, then there will be success if you bring together a strong team of like-minded individuals who are also looking to support the organization's mission. Epos is 100% volunteer based, so all the revenue goes to projects that directly benefit the kids.

TK: How can people get involved?

Shelly: Epos is always looking for volunteers who have a servant's heart. We host many events, including overnight camp, day camps and outreach programs along with the Clay Shoot and Gala for fundraisers. You can go to the Epos website to reach out,

purchase a ticket to the Gala, or register for camp. Our hashtag is #BeTheDifference, and together, we can!

TK: What else would you like to share?

Shelly: I feel that it is important for everyone to understand the pivotal place our teens are in. If we are not willing to stand with them and support them then our future generations will be faced with huge obstacles and not have the tools to succeed. Together, we can help every child succeed in life. **TK**

You can find more information about Epos online: EposAthletes.org — including purchasing tickets for the Gala or registering for the 2024 camp experience. Registration for the 2024 camp opens on March 1 for kids going into seventh through 12th grades.

Listen to the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast to hear from Shelly and learn her plans for grow Epos in the near future. Listen on your favorite podcasting platform or directly at SharingPassionandPurpose.com

Nancy A. Moore is a Public Relations Coordinator at Montereau, Adjunct Professor at Tulsa Community College, and has been writing for TulsaKids for almost 20 years.



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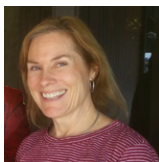


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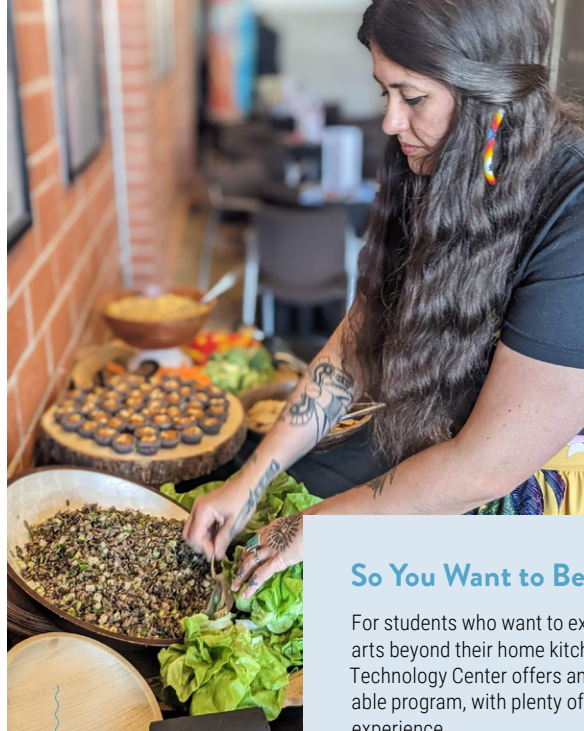


Chef Nico Albert Williams

Food & Cultural Identity



By **Julie Wenger Watson**



Nico Albert Williams prepares foods from her Indigenous heritage.

Growing up, Nico Albert Williams enjoyed helping her mom shop for ingredients and prepare meals, but it never occurred to her she might actually want to become a chef. Instead, she dreamed of a career as a Navy SEAL or photojournalist.

"I grew up in a family where cooking was just something that we always did. It was very normal to me," she recalls. "Later in life, I realized most people didn't grow up this way, and that I was very fortunate to grow up in a family where we ate dinner together around the dining table every single night."

But like a slow-simmering pot, those culinary skills she learned from her mom eventually came in handy when Williams started working in restaurants years later, every position from hostess and server to bartending and prep work, gaining valuable experience along the way.

As Williams describes it, her decision to become a chef was more practical than romantic. She needed a steady income. While Williams didn't pursue a formal training program, she worked hard to learn from those around her in the kitchen.

"I had the basic skills, and then I just found a way to get the job, and it all just fell into place," she recalls. "I discovered that I had a natural knack for it. It made sense to me, and my hands felt right."

While Williams was working her way through the industry ranks to eventually serve as the executive chef at a several local restaurants, her interest in Indigenous foods was also growing.

"Food became my gateway to reconnect with my Cherokee community because I grew up away from Oklahoma," she says. "The more

I learned about my own culture, my own identity, the more I incorporated Indigenous food as an influence in my cooking, and the more opportunity I had to bring it into the menus that I was creating."

For Williams, that desire to express Indigenous values and identity through food eventually ran up against the reality of corporate restaurant culture.

"The cultural significance of the ingredients, how they were grown, where they were grown, and who grew them — all of those things are very important in Indigenous food," she says. "There is still a separation of Indigenous values inherent in the restaurant industry."

Ultimately, Williams made a decision to "decolonize" her livelihood, creating the nonprofit Burning Cedar Sovereign Wellness, where she serves as executive director. Located in a house near E. 49th St. and S. Peoria, Burning Cedar is "dedicated to bringing the knowledge of healthy traditional foodways and Indigenous wellness practices to Native families and individuals living in the urban Tulsa area." The organization hosts educational and community events. Profits from Burning Cedar's catering and consulting business, which specializes in Native foods, support its mission.

Williams loves her work.

"I like making people feel good with the food that I'm making now because there's an element of healing and wellness to it," she says. "I think the story that goes along with it makes people feel like they're having a good experience and gives them some sense of peace after eating."

For more information, visit burningcedar.org. **TK**

So You Want to Be a Chef?

For students who want to explore culinary arts beyond their home kitchen, Tulsa Technology Center offers an affordable program, with plenty of hands-on experience.

"The Tulsa Technology culinary program is a two-year program," says KateLynn Dunning, Tulsa Tech culinary instructor, who currently teaches first-year students. "My class can accept both juniors and seniors in high school, as well as adults, whether that adult means, 'I'm 19 years old, and I graduated from high school last year,' or 'I'm 65, and I always dreamt of going to culinary school.' So I have quite the assortment of students in my classroom."

Dunning's students are interested in everything from improving their cooking or working in a restaurant to operating their own a food truck or opening a bakery.

The program is accredited by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education and offers several certifications, and many of the students are already employed when they complete the program.

"We do something called the 'Work Based Learning Program.' During the second semester of their first and second years, students have to go out and find a food service job," Dunning says. "They get a paid job, and part of their education hours are being earned in the workforce. Those relationships then carry on outside of graduation, so most of our students graduate, and they've had a job for five months."

For more information on Tulsa Tech high school programs, visit tulsatech.edu. For more information on concurrent enrollment, visit tulsaschools.org.

Julie Wenger Watson is a freelance writer who's worked in all aspects of music promotion. She's also Co-Director of "Live From Cain's," a public radio show pilot.

Riverfield Country Day School's New Center for Creativity: Educating Students for Life

By **Mikaela LeBlanc**



Riverfield Country Day School opened its Center for Creativity last fall, holding its ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 17, 2023.

The Center for Creativity houses a black box theatre, two art studios, a film studio, a music atelier, two rock band classrooms with a recording studio and a large maker space.

Jerry Bates is the Head of School at Riverfield Country Day School. He says the Center was needed to serve its 625 students.

"We had not had a good building for band. We didn't have a drama facility on campus," Bates says. "We needed to expand our art studios and then, because of the way we work through project work, we needed a large maker space that the whole campus could utilize."

The maker space has another important function.

"It's an ICC 500 storm shelter, and I think it's the first in Tulsa, so it will allow us to put the whole school in there," Bates says. "And

the rock band classrooms are also hardened spaces."

Some of the Center's other features include four individual sound-proof rooms for podcasts and individual practice sessions for instruments or small bands.

"We've had our first drama production in early December," Bates says. "The middle and upper school students did the play *Orphan Train*."

The Center for Creativity project has been in the works for more than five years. The school completed a \$7 million Inspired Campaign for athletics and the arts that brought in donations from individual donors, parents and grandparents of students and the William S. Smith Charitable Trust, which donated \$2 million to the project.

What started as a performing arts center evolved into what it is today.

"We built an expansion to our gym, which has a couple [of] locker rooms, a weight room and a training room," Bates said. "And then, a new entrance to our facility

and some office space and film rooms."

Even the younger students are using the Center.

"We've had toddlers over there doing things. We have small tables that are built just for them," Bates says.

He says the Center helps the students by providing targeted facilities and larger spaces where students can take risks in trying new extracurricular activities.

"At Riverfield, you can be a student athlete and participate in a play and do art and do rock band," he says. "You can participate in all these things, which I think opens up opportunities for our students and gives them a lot of experiences that will help them later in life."

Riverfield's Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, which emphasizes that children are in control of their own learning and exploration, played a part in the placement of the new Center for Creativity on campus. The original plan was to put the building at the back of the

campus, which would have taken away playground space.

"[The second, third, fourth and fifth graders] at the time felt we were taking up too much playground space," he says. "I asked them to find an alternative location, and they brought their suggestion to me. I took it to our board, and we moved our building."

Bates says the Center for Creativity and the gym expansion project fits into the school's educational philosophy.

"We're talking about educating students both for college and for life," Bates says. "Part of the work, the project work we do, is incredibly collaborative. They work in groups and teams, which is the way that most of our parents are working now."

He says that teamwork takes place not just in classrooms but also in student athletics, a rock band, a speech and debate class and a drama production — activities that now have a new home to house it all. **TK**

Kids in the Kitchen:

A Time for Bonding and Learning



By **Natalie Mikles**

Time spent together in the kitchen is time you won't regret.

Sure, in the moment when one child is learning to peel carrots and another wants to stir, you might question why you didn't give in to more iPad time. But those moments of learning, talking, laughing and cooking are formational.

Toddlers to teens have a place in the kitchen — and it's as much about building relationships as it is having a helping hand to get food prepared. Age-appropriate skills can be developed in the kitchen starting with young children.

"Can you count five apples for me?" "Place one muffin liner in each cup."

And as kids get older, their presence in the kitchen can be a real help to parents. It also teaches them valuable skills so they can feel confident about making their own snacks or cooking entire meals.

"Let me show you the best way to chop an onion." "Can you slowly add the milk to the butter and flour? Look at you — you're making a roux!"

For young children, the act of assisting in the cooking process is much less important than the concepts of sequencing, counting and matching colors and patterns. Strengthening fine and gross motor skills can be done in the kitchen. If it's fine motor you're working on, use a dull knife to cut the stems off strawberries or spread peanut butter on

toast. For gross motor skills, kids can stir the batter using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. When the batter is stiff, that can be a workout!

Once kids are in elementary school and beyond, they can take the lead on cooking a meal, depending on their skill. Letting them take the lead, with mom or dad nearby if they need help, builds confidence and makes kids feel proud of themselves.

Here are some recipes great for kids to make themselves. Hand them the recipe and let them see how much they can do before they need some help. Let them know it's fine to ask for help — especially when it comes to turning on the stove or getting something hot out of the oven!

Start a tradition this year of spending some time with your kids in the kitchen. It's invaluable for learning and bonding.

It's the taste of lasagna in an easy recipe. Kids can feel proud making this delicious dinner. If you don't have fresh basil, you can leave it out.

Ravioli Lasagna

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound Italian sausage
- 1 jar marinara sauce
- ½ cup water
- 1 (20-ounce) package refrigerated cheese ravioli
- 8-ounce mozzarella ball, shredded (or 2 cups pre-shredded mozzarella cheese)



- Fresh basil leaves (about 2 tablespoons)
1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
 2. Heat oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage, stirring to crumble, and cook until browned and no longer pink, about 6 minutes.
 3. Add marinara sauce and water. Cook until mixture boils, about 2 minutes, stirring and scraping bottom of skillet to release any browned bits.
 4. Add ravioli, cooking until sauce is thickened, about 3 minutes.
 5. Transfer half of ravioli to medium bowl. Set aside.
 6. Sprinkle half the cheese on top of ravioli in the skillet. Top with remaining ravioli mixture, then top with remaining cheese. Bake 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Top with basil leaves, if using.

These might take a little time for kids to make, but it's a good lesson in prepping everything and having it ready to go before cooking. These chicken tenders are great dipped in pepper jelly!

Coconut Chicken Tenders

- 3 egg whites
- ½ cup cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika

- 12 chicken breast tenders
1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
 2. In a small bowl, whisk the egg whites until foamy. In a shallow dish, stir together the cornstarch and garlic salt. In a separate shallow dish, stir together the coconut, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper and paprika.
 3. Dredge each chicken tender first in the cornstarch mixture and then in the egg whites. Last, dredge in the coconut mixture, pressing it gently to adhere.
 4. Place chicken on a wire rack set over a baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes.

Here's a fun recipe kids can make for breakfast or as an after-school snack. It makes two, 8-ounce smoothies.

PB&J Smoothie

- 1 cup frozen blueberries
 - 1 banana, sliced
 - ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
 - 2 tablespoons peanut butter
 - 1 tablespoon honey
1. Combine all the ingredients in a blender, and blend until smooth. If the smoothie is too thick, add a little water or apple juice. **TK**

Natalie Mikles is a mom of three. She writes about food, sharing recipes for busy families and picky eaters.



Gilcrease may not have a building, but you can find the artwork in a neighborhood near you.

Gilcrease Builds on Success of Community Art Program for 2024

By **Betty Casey**



Last year, Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood installed reproductions of artwork from Gilcrease Museum's collection at 31 sites across the metro area. The pop-up installations were in sites such as Gathering Place, Tulsa Dream Center, Mother Road Market and LaFortune Park. Displaying one work in three-month cycles, Gilcrease staff created community activities around each piece, expanding the reach of Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood beyond the partner sites to venues such as The Center for Individuals With Physical Challenges, DVIS and public schools.

"We wanted to provide programming for all ages," said Alison Rossi, the Anne and Henry Zarrow director of learning and community engagement at Gilcrease. "We have to do our best to have Gilcrease serve everyone. We ended up doing 92 programs, and over 4,000 people participated. It's exciting the way people responded in unexpected ways."

Using behavioral observations at various sites, Rossi estimates that Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood reached approximately 350,000 people in 2023.

Learning from last year's ambitious program, Rossi says Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood 2024 will be focused on only two works of art that will be placed at five sites for six months each. Public responses from last year indicated that people wanted the opportunity to slow down and relax, to have a shared experience.

"One of the major findings was that people said that they connected

with someone new while viewing the art," Rossi says. "What we heard is that people really responded to the outdoor installations. We've determined that encountering art in a natural setting is unexpected—there's a surprise factor. If someone is on a walk or at the park, they are experiencing a moment of leisure. They have time to slow down and connect, to have a shared experience. As a city museum, we have a responsibility to listen to the citizens."

Using the scaled-back model allows people to have a deeper experience with the artwork than they might have in a museum. Rossi says they found that many citizens had never been to Gilcrease, and some were unaware that it existed. She hopes that by going into the community, Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood will encourage individuals and families to visit the brick-and-mortar museum when it opens.

"Kids and families are our audience," she says, "so we created family activity guides for each site that connect the work of art to the site. Last year, kids would often stop their parents or grandparents to look at the art. Kids will blow you away with what they observe."

The first artwork, weather permitting, will be installed on Jan. 20. It features a Mexican woman at a festival in Oaxaca, so viewers might learn about the region, about Monarch butterfly migration, festivals, clothing, the paper banners (papel picado) or the nature in the region depicted in the art.

"We also want community members to see themselves in the art, and to make cultural connections," Rossi says. "Accessibility is important to me and to the museum. The program guides and activity guides will be bilingual."

Each location also includes a scavenger hunt with prizes, and a QR code that visitors can scan for augmented reality, history and expanded information related to the art. Children are invited to create their own work of art, which will be displayed at the 101 Archer Building.

"Art museums are also places where people can increase well-being," Rossi says. "The family guides help facilitate that. Everyone needs a different entry into works of art. It's our job to figure that out. People connect with one another, and they're inspired—and their day is just a little bit better."

She said that the Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood anecdotal findings tracked with a national study on the public value of art museums. The research found that 95% of people expressed some benefit to their well-being when they visited a museum.

Rossi says they also learned that family festivals were preferred over lectures and informative talks. Family festivals, performances, art-making experiences, fashion shows, cooking, family workshops

and intergenerational projects were popular last year and will be implemented this year as well.

"I felt validated," Rossi says. "We're teaching people about art, but we're learning from the public to make art accessible and engaging. They're connecting to identity and culture. We want to pique people's curiosity, to inspire. This will continue to inform what we do when the museum reopens."

The sites for this year's Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood include Turkey Mountain, Keystone Ancient Forest, Gathering Place, Oxley Nature Center and Ray Harrall Nature Center.

"All of our sites have been incredibly generous with their time," Rossi says. "We are partners in lifelong learning."

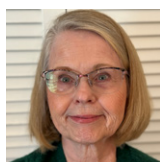
The project goals remain the same this year.

"This is our commitment," Rossi says. "To listen, partner with and to be responsive to our community. It's been a joy to get to know our partners and places where people recreate and spend time. It makes us fall in love with our community all over again." **TK**

Betty Casey is the Associate Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of TulsaKids Magazine. She has been with TulsaKids for over 20 years.

Learning to Read Versus Learning to Love Reading

By **Dr. Anita Ede**



Learning how to read is a major accomplishment for a child. Once achieved, a whole new world opens up for children because they can now independently read about topics that interest them. You may picture your child happily reading in a favorite chair and anticipate many visits to the library to check out a book about a favorite hero, mystery or snake. Sadly, this happy scenario may not happen.

The enjoyment of reading does not necessarily follow when children learn how to decode words and comprehend what the words are saying. Scholastic's 2019 Kids & Family Reading Survey found that the percentage of children who read for pleasure actually drops as they get older. In the study, 57% of 8-year-olds reported reading for fun five to seven days each week compared to only 35% of 9-year-olds. The rapid decline in children who said they actually enjoyed reading is even more disturbing. When 8-year-olds in the same study were asked if they enjoyed reading, 40% answered positively. By the time children turned 9,

only 28% had a positive response to the same question. You would think that the 9-year-olds' greater familiarity with reading skills and comprehension would also increase their enjoyment of reading. So why does literacy not necessarily lead to a love of reading?

Literacy and the enjoyment of reading are two very different things. Literacy refers to the ability to read and write. Developing literacy is an important goal in early childhood classrooms. Oklahoma's current literacy curriculum is based on the Science of Reading (SoR) and includes teaching phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Teachers are encouraged to follow a highly scripted, task-oriented curriculum in order to teach each of these skills. So why isn't all of this literacy instruction leading to a widespread love of reading?

Children, like adults, have vastly different interests. When they are interested in what they are doing and the activity is meaningful to them personally, they will be happy to complete it. But when

The enjoyment of reading most often comes from making choices based on individual **interests** and doing **activities** that are meaningful.

the activity is not interesting to them, they gradually lose interest. Reading lessons that may lead one child to love reading will lead others to view reading as a boring chore. The enjoyment of reading most often comes from making choices based on individual interests and doing activities that are meaningful. If this is not happening in your child's classroom, there are a variety of ways you can make reading fun and meaningful at home. Here are some suggestions.

- **Read Out Loud:** Reading out loud to your child makes a big difference in how much children enjoy reading on their own. Most children are read to when they are very young, but it often stops when children are able to read independently. The Understanding the Children's Book Consumer Survey (2020) found that 61% of 5- to 7-year-olds read daily for pleasure when someone read aloud to them every day. Similarly, 63% of 8- to 13-year-olds read for fun each day when someone else read out loud to them each

day. You can ask your child to help you pick out a book and read aloud a chapter each day. Afterwards, spend a few minutes talking about what you just read. You could ask, "What do you think will happen next?"

- **Write a Grocery List:** Provide your child with a pad of paper and an age-appropriate writing tool (crayon, pencil, pen) and ask them to write a grocery list when you write your own. You might tell them at the outset that they are not going to get all of those things, but you will select one item as a surprise. Older 2-year-olds and 3-year-olds will scribble and draw. This is the first stage of writing. Just say, "Tell me about your list," to find out what they wrote. Ages 4 and 5 will often draw what they want while adding the beginning letter of what they would like. You might still need to ask the question. Older 5-year-olds and first graders often invent spellings for their favorite items — another stage in writing development.

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Common items are most often spelled accurately by second or third grade. Writing a list for the grocery store is a meaningful way for your child to practice writing without resorting to a worksheet.

- **Be a Model:** Children model themselves on the behavior of the adults around them. When your children see you reading, they draw the conclusion that reading is an important and fun activity. You can set aside a short time each day for you and your child to sit down, put your feet up, and enjoy a good book, magazine, newspaper, etc. When you are done, make sure to talk a little about what you read and ask them for their thoughts on their book.
- **Travel with a Book:** There are bound to be times when children get bored in the car or waiting at the dentist's office and need some entertainment. Instead of handing them a tablet or smartphone, why not hand them a book or children's magazine instead?
- **Expand the Possibilities:** Reading does not have to be limited to just books. Comic books featuring a favorite superhero can be fun. Graphic novels are another fun way to engage young readers. Children's magazines such as *Highlights* and *National Geographic Kids* often introduce children to things they did not know they cared about. Having their own subscription arrive in the mail is something to look forward to each month.
- **Cook Together:** Children like to work with you in the kitchen. Creating a simple dish from a recipe is a great way to add reading to the activity. Check out a children's cookbook from the library and let your child pick out a dish they would like to prepare. Ask your child to read the instructions out loud while you both work on the dish. Here are some great children's cookbooks.
- *Food Network Magazine The Recipe-A-Day Kids Cookbook: 365 Fun, Easy Treats*
- *The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs: 100+ Recipes that You'll Love to Cook and Eat*
- *The Complete Baking Book for Young Chefs: 100+ Sweet and Savory Recipes that You'll Love to Bake*
- *Share and Eat! The Complete DIY Cookbook for Young Chefs: 100+ Simple Recipes for Making Absolutely Everything from Scratch*
- **Read the Menu:** Encourage children to read the menu when you go to a restaurant as they try to decide what to eat.
- **Read the Road Signs:** Ask children to read the road signs, street signs and billboards to you when you are walking or driving in the car.
- **Supermarket Helpers:** Turn grocery shopping into an opportunity for reading by encouraging children to read product labels, advertising posters, sale fliers, etc.
- **Read Picture Books:** For non-readers, gather books without words and let your child "read" them to you.

Doing so encourages your child to build their language skills, use pictures for clues and sequence a story. Here are some great picture books for young children:

Good Night, Gorilla
by Peggy Rathman

A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog
by Mercer Mayer

A Ball for Daisy
by Chris Raschka

Flora the Penguin by Molly Idol

Good Dog, Carl
by Alexandra Day

Pancakes for Breakfast
by Tomie de Paola **TK**

Dr. Anita Ede teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in early childhood education at Northeastern State University.

The World of Oklahoma's Education Tax Credits

What parents need to know about eligibility, limitations and how public schools will be impacted



By Jennifer Palmer
Oklahoma Watch

Photography by
Andrea Murphy



The state's new private school tax

credit program is underway amidst much debate. With differing opinions on accessibility, funding limits and implications for local schools, the program has become a focal point of discussion among parents, educators and policymakers.

We asked Jennifer Palmer, education reporter for Oklahoma Watch, for her insight about how the credits work, who is eligible and how public schools will be impacted.

What are the private school tax credits?

The Parental Choice Tax Credit offers Oklahoma families a refundable tax credit of \$5,000 to \$7,500 for private school tuition and fees. If you will pay, or expect to pay, for a child's private school this year, you can apply for the credit.

Though it's called a refundable tax credit, it functions like a voucher because families can advance the funds from the Oklahoma Tax Commission in a process that's separate from income tax filing.

The program was a major initiative for the Legislature and Governor Kevin Stitt in 2023.

Proponents say the program is needed to help low-income families afford private schools if it's the right fit for their children.

"I think it's going to be a tremendous blessing for our families," said Barbara Ohsfeldt, founder and principal of Community Christian School in Norman.

While the program could make private schools feasible for a few new families, critics say it will mostly cover the costs parents could already afford on their own.

"It was always sold as: For a parent who wants to send their kids to private school but for the cost, we're going to provide this option," said David Blatt, director of research and strategic impact at Oklahoma Appleseed Center for Law & Justice, a nonprofit organization that advocates for public education.

The application cycle, which opens in December of each year for the next calendar year, favors parents whose children already attend private school, not those the program was intended to serve, he said.

Folks on both sides of the issue say they will try to work with the Legislature to align the program with the school year.

Who is eligible, and will every family receive the credit?

Any student in pre-K through 12th grade is eligible. Previous public school enrollment isn't required.

Proponents say the tax credit program will be able to serve about 23,000 in its first year, but there are already 33,000 students attending

private schools in Oklahoma, so the funds are likely to run out. Families must reapply each year, and receiving the credit one year doesn't guarantee they'll receive it the following year.

Families of all income levels can qualify for a credit, but those who earn less than \$150,000 per year (based on adjusted gross income) will be prioritized if they apply by Feb. 1. The application deadline is Dec. 31 of each year, or when the cap is met.

Credit amounts are \$7,500 for families with an adjusted gross income of less than \$75,000; \$7,000 for income between \$75,001 and \$150,000; \$6,500 for income between \$150,001 and \$225,000; \$6,000 for income between \$225,001 and \$250,000; \$5,000 for income of \$250,001 and above.

The credits can't be split (say between divorced parents), and only one taxpayer can claim a child, though that person could be a grandparent or other relative if they pay for tuition.

Does the credit cover the cost of tuition at private schools?

For many, it will not cover the full cost.

Private school tuition costs slightly less than \$7,000 per year, on average, in Oklahoma, according to the Education Data Initiative. But there's a wide range within that: as low as \$500 at Cristo Rey Oklahoma City, where a corporate work-study program picks up most of the cost, to more than \$23,000 annually at a few schools such as Holland Hall in Tulsa and Casady School and Heritage Hall in Oklahoma City.

Families can apply for the credit even if they receive other types of assistance toward paying for a private school, including the Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship Fund or through the Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships.

Do the tax credits guarantee admission to a private school?

To apply, families must already be enrolled in the school their child is attending or planning to attend. An enrollment verification form from the school is required for application, and the school has to be accredited (a list of participating schools will be available at parentalchoice.ok.gov).

Private schools do not have to accept all students. Some reject students with behavioral issues or disabilities or who don't conform to the school's religious tenets, such as students who are LGBTQ+ (or whose parents are).

If a student has an individualized education program for a disability, does the private school have to provide services?

While private schools can offer disability services

to students, they aren't required to. To accept the Parental Choice Tax Credit, parents give up their child's right to disability services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, according to the new law. Disability services include physical, occupational and speech therapy and paraprofessional aides.

Are there guardrails around how the tax credits are used by parents?

A family can't claim more than its actual spending on tuition and fees, and uniforms purchased directly from the school.

To reduce fraud, the Oklahoma Tax Commission will mail taxpayers' payments to the school in two installments, half in the spring and half in the fall. Parents will need to go to the school in person and either sign the check over to the school or collect the check if tuition and fees have already been paid.

The Tax Commission said it will audit questionable claims and recapture credits that were awarded on behalf of a student no longer attending a private school or enrolled in a public school.

How does the funding for these tax credits affect local schools?

As a tax credit, the program reduces overall tax collections to the state, but lawmakers capped that each year so it's limited to \$150 million in 2024, \$200 million in 2025 and \$250 million in 2026 and beyond. Funding for the tax credits does not come from educational appropriations or out of the school funding formula.

If the state experiences a revenue failure, the credits will be reduced proportionately.

What about homeschool parents? Can they also qualify?

Yes, homeschooling parents can claim up to \$1,000 per student for curriculum, textbooks, tutoring, testing fees and other qualified expenses. Taxpayers may claim that credit on their income tax return starting in 2025. The Legislature capped this program at \$5 million per year.

How will the tax credits work, and what do parents need to know to apply for this program?

The application and more information are available at parentalchoice.ok.gov. **TK**

Editor's note: Oklahoma Watch is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) corporation that produces in-depth and investigative journalism as a public service for the benefit of all Oklahomans. Jennifer Palmer covers education for Oklahoma Watch and has more than a decade of news reporting experience. Learn more about the organization at oklahomawatch.org, and sign up for Palmer's weekly Education Watch updates at oklahomawatch.org/newsletters.



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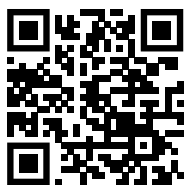


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DOVE SCHOOLS

Dove School of Discovery Tulsa (pre-K–8th Grade)
4115 S. 100th E. Ave., Tulsa
918.960.3131 discoveryok.org

DSA Tulsa (pre-K–8th Grade)
4343 S. 118th E. Ave., Tulsa
918.994.6797 dsatulsa.org

DSA High School Tulsa (9th–12th Grade)
4343 S. 118th E. Ave., Tulsa
918.576.6719 dsahstulsa.org

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METRO CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

CONTACT
Julie Frohrip
connect@metroca.com

6363 S. Trenton Ave., Tulsa
918.745.9868 metroca.com

Located on a 60-acre campus in the heart of Tulsa at 63rd and Trenton, Metro Christian Academy is an independent Christian school serving students aged three through 12th grade. They're all under one roof but with distinct preschool, elementary, middle and high school areas.

Metro's elementary school offers two tracks for students. One features traditional curriculum that students may join at any time. The other is a Spanish Immersion section that students may enter in pre-K or Kindergarten and continue through 5th grade. Spanish Immersion students become bilingual by learning core subject content in Spanish including history, language arts, science and math.

Metro's secondary school includes middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12). A range of academic programs are offered including Advanced Placement classes and courses for concurrent college credit. Metro offers many activities including varsity sports, leadership and missions classes as well as fine arts including studio art, drama and band.

At the heart of Metro is a sense of community. Students, parents, faculty and staff all work together to educate and nurture students to reach their full potential.

MISS HELEN'S PRIVATE SCHOOL

CONTACT
Jayne Wingo-Baker
director@misshelens.com

4849 S. Mingo, Tulsa
918.622.2327 misshelens.com

Miss Helen's Private School is a family-owned, family-focused business celebrating over 65 years. Teachers are college-degreed, caring and dedicated. All pre-kindergarten classes offer music, Spanish, art, stories and science, pre-reading skills, math and dance through small group and independent activities. Small class sizes in grades K–5 enable students to have more individualized instruction and work beyond traditional grade levels.

In addition to basic academics, we offer Spanish, fine arts, and community service and charitable projects, as well as, health, nutrition and fitness. After-school activities include computer tutorial, swimming and music. Serving ages 3 years through 5th grade.

MONTE CASSINO

CONTACT
Brooke Jones, Admissions

2206 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa
918.746.4238 montecassino.org

For more than 90 years, Monte Cassino School has been committed to academic excellence while educating the whole student. Beyond the classroom, Monte Cassino students develop socially and morally within a supportive community to develop skills they will use throughout their lifetime. Monte Cassino School offers a campus-wide (pre-K3–8th grade) average 10:1 student/teacher ratio, teachers with advanced degrees and a wide-serving support system in our REACH department. Extracurricular opportunities abound for all students including team sports, fine arts and music, Academic Bowl, theater arts and more.

Led by the legacy of the Benedictine Sisters, Monte Cassino School offers a value-based, quality, Catholic education. Ask about our 6th-grade scholarships! Now enrolling for middle school (grades 5–8). Wait pools are forming for preschool and elementary. Schedule a tour; we can't wait to meet you!



**PRIMROSE SCHOOL OF
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CONTACT

Gia Patel
GPatel@PrimroseBA.com

1701 W. Albany St., Broken Arrow
918.355.6827

primroseschools.com/schools/broken-arrow

Primrose School of Broken Arrow is the nation's leader in premier early education and care, serving infants through kindergarten, with over 500 schools in 34 states.

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Call today to enroll, schedule a tour, and learn how Primrose School can make a life-long impact on your family! Follow us on Facebook @PrimroseSchoolBrokenArrow.

**RIVERFIELD COUNTRY
DAY SCHOOL**

CONTACT

Kacey Davenport
admissions@riverfield.org

2433 W. 61st St., Tulsa
918.446.3553

riverfield.org

Riverfield Country Day School is a secular, independent private school nestled on 120 acres in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Founded in 1984, Riverfield provides infants through high school seniors a learning environment that ignites adventure, inspires inquiry and builds excellence to empower students to change their world. We believe students are innately intelligent and competent, and learner-centered inquiry is the underpinning of learning. Riverfield's small class sizes and teachers focus on nurturing each individual's unique cognitive, physical, behavioral, social and emotional growth and development. Tremendous family involvement and the examples set by our faculty and staff as life-long learners are all evidence of "The Riverfield Way."

Riverfield's country campus is a unique landscape that cultivates creativity, reflection, learning, and community with expanded athletics facilities, the new state-of-the-art Center for Creativity, hiking trails, creeks and ponds, and a barnyard with animals. Riverfield is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Commission (OPSCAC).

TOWN & COUNTRY SCHOOL

CONTACT

Denise Jurbala, Director of Admissions

8906 E. 34th St, Tulsa
918.296.3113 Ext. 111

tandcschool.org

Founded in 1961, Town & Country School is Northeastern Oklahoma's only accredited, non-public, full-day program specifically designed to meet the needs of students who have been diagnosed with learning disabilities, ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Serving students in grades 2–12, Town & Country improves each student's life by advancing critical academic, social and personal skills through individualized attention, family support and flexible curriculum enhancements. Children with learning disabilities, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorders are bright — they just learn differently.

We look beyond their difficulties to find our student's strengths. This builds self-esteem and inspires our students to learn. We believe that by providing the tools and skills needed our students can succeed in their life goals.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

CONTACT

Debra Price, Director
debra-price@utulsa.edu

326 S. College Ave., Tulsa
918.631.5060

uschool.utulsa.edu

The mission of University School is to challenge gifted students with a dynamic curriculum in a nurturing academic environment. From ages 3 to 8th grade, we offer a well-rounded program that includes art, music, physical education, foreign language and computer classes for all students.

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VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

CONTACT

Jennifer Miller, Superintendent

7700 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa

918.491.7720

vcstulsa.org

Facebook and Instagram: @vcstulsa

Victory Christian School is a fully accredited K3–12th grade school dedicated to rigorous instruction presented with a Biblical worldview. VCS serves families from Tulsa and surrounding communities on our campus at 7700 S. Lewis Ave.

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Our focus on excellent academics has resulted in eight National Merit scholars and over \$21.5 million awarded to VCS graduates in the last five years.

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CONTACT

Maithili Fulton

maithili@artacademygc.com

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AUGUSTINE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

CONTACT

John Ahrens

office@acatulsa.org

6310 E. 30th Street, Tulsa

918.832.4600

acatulsa.org

Augustine Christian Academy is a Christian, classical, multi-denominational, college preparatory school for grades K–12. We are dedicated to educating young people to think,

reason, and persuade from a distinctly Christian worldview. Our goal is to equip students to understand their times, to impact their culture and to serve God and man. Augustine Christian Academy uses a classical model that integrates every subject with the Biblical truths of the Christian faith.

Find us on Facebook, Instagram and on our website at acatulsa.org!

BRAIN BALANCE OF TULSA

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918.488.8991

brainbalancecenters.com

The Brain Balance Program is the leading drug-free program designed to help kids improve focus, behavior, social skills, anxiety, and academic performance. The Brain Balance Program offers a comprehensive, non-medicated option that goes beyond the more traditional, mainstream approaches you may have tried before to help your child get to the root of their challenges versus masking them.

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If your child suffers with behavioral issues, ADHD or a learning disability, then you've experienced their painful frustration and lack of confidence both academically and socially. Brain Balance can help! Call today to schedule an assessment.

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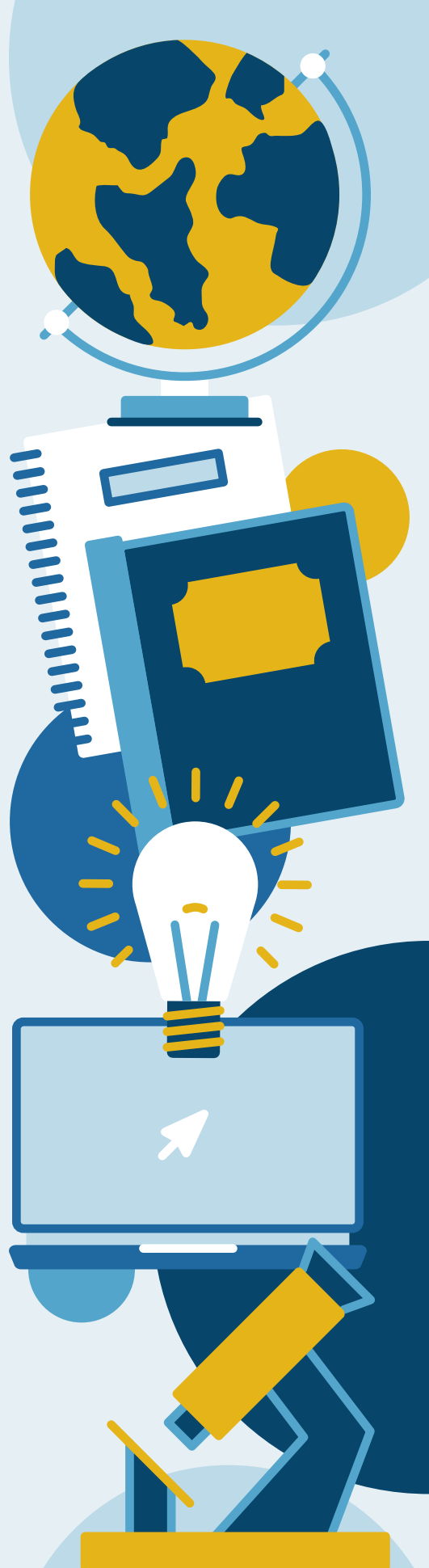
4825 S. Quaker Ave., Tulsa

918.596.1412

clarkyouththeatre.com

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Clark offers a full season of main stage, free-to-participate productions, a full lineup of improv, acting and musical theatre classes on Saturdays, homeschool weekday classes, TPS after-school clubs, as well as 11 weeks of camps. Youth ages 8–18 can participate, and all skill levels are welcome. Clark is also Oklahoma's home for the Penguin Project! 2024 camp enrollment starts February 1, 2024.



HAPPY CAMPERS ACADEMY

Happy Campers Academy—Cherry Street

hcatulsa@gmail.com
1819 E. 15th St., Tulsa
918.584.2779

Happy Campers at Temple Israel

happycamperstempleisrael@gmail.com
2004 E. 22nd Pl., Tulsa
918.747.3122

Happy Campers at John Knox

(This location has school-age after care and summer camp)
2929 E. 31st St., Tulsa
918.742.7656

happycampersacademy.com

Happy Campers Academy offers Tulsa and surrounding communities quality childcare. We accept children ages 6 weeks to pre-kindergarten. At all three of our midtown Tulsa locations, Happy Campers utilizes a child-centered philosophy and partners with our families to provide a quality educational experience in a nurturing environment.

Our highly trained staff works to get to know each individual child and his/her cognitive and developmental needs, while seeking input from families to make the home and school transition smooth and communication open for the success of the child. Through a balance of developmental play and planned educational activities, our students learn best through doing — all while having fun and expressing themselves creatively.

Our teachers conduct conferences twice a year in order to build a strong home and school team. We want to keep parents informed about what their child(ren) is learning, developmental milestones that are being achieved, and suggest skills that can be practiced at home. We believe that our child-centered philosophy will foster a love for learning in these ever-important early childhood years.

HOLLAND HALL

CONTACT

J.P. Culley, Head of School

5666 E. 81st St., Tulsa
918.481.1111

hollandhall.org

Grades: Preschool–Grade 12

Holland Hall is Tulsa's Pre-K3 through Grade 12 Independent Episcopal School. We offer an ambitious curriculum, an extensive array of exciting electives, dozens of individual and team sports, transformative arts programming, and an apprenticeship in self-reliance. Our student/teacher ratio of 10:1 means your child's teachers truly know who they are and where their strengths and passions lie.

Located on a beautiful 162-acre campus, Holland Hall provides a lively and uncommonly kind community that honors the individual integrity of each child while providing the bedrock education every student needs to succeed in college, work, and the world beyond.

KIDS IN MOTION ACADEMY

CONTACT

Caitlyn Buchan

office@kidsinmotionacademy.com

1700 N. Redbud Pl., Broken Arrow

918.258.5437

kidsinmotionacademy.com

Along with small class sizes, high test scores and

Christian-based values, our amazing teachers empower students with engaging, standards-aligned lessons using a variety of modalities in core subject areas. Students are met daily with goals and growth opportunities that help shape them into caring and responsible individuals, all within our unique and active-learning environment. Our mission is to educate and develop the whole child in character, faith, physical fitness and confidence in a peaceful learning environment to become a life-long learner.

Why Kids In Motion?

- Nursery/Infant through 1st Grade
- Smallest class sizes of any local private school
- High national test scores
- Christian values incorporated into daily lessons
- Active learning through movement and play
- State standards-aligned curriculum
- Experienced teachers
- Project Based Learning in all classes
- Special enrichment classes for 2 years old and up
- Before- and aftercare available
- Discounts with our sister company SSB! Kids

LAKE HILLS MONTESSORI

CONTACT

Jodie Whitman

5130 E. 101st St., Tulsa

918.296.9936

lakehillsmontessoritulsa.com

Lake Hills Montessori is committed to providing quality education for children ages 2–6 years in a safe, loving, and stimulating environment. Each child's day is organized to ensure successful experiences that will foster self-esteem and a love of learning.

LHM offers a traditional Montessori curriculum that allows children to learn through exploration and play. In addition to providing an atmosphere of discovery, LHM offers dance, Spanish, soccer, music, yoga and art.

School time is 8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and before/after care is 7:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Follow us on Instagram or Facebook!

MARQUETTE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1519 S. Quincy, Tulsa

918.584.4631

marquetteschool.org

At Marquette Catholic School, we have been educating the next generation for more than 100 years. Offering Pre-K3–eighth grade, Marquette is a place and community that first and foremost belongs to Jesus Christ. We form students with care, intentionality, and excellence, and then send them out into the world to transform it.

In our Early Childhood Development Center, three- and four-year-olds are immersed in a rich curriculum that prioritizes their physical and emotional needs in classrooms custom-made for their needs. In kindergarten through eighth grade, our teachers focus on developing well-rounded, happy and faith-filled students through our whole-child approach.

Our rigorous academic curriculum upholds the Catholic tradition as our faith animates every aspect of our school. The Sacraments, prayer and liturgy are not afterthoughts, but the source and summit of our existence. With an enrollment of approximately 500 (pre-K–8), our students possess great character and virtue, and are academically prepared for high school.

The best way to experience our community is to see it for yourself. Schedule a private tour today!



Making Education More Creative

Small classes provide more opportunities to be challenged. **Call for a tour!**



SMALL CLASS = BIG RESULTS

918-622-2327 | director@misshelens.com

MissHelens.com | 4849 South Mingo, Tulsa

NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS



MillerSwimSchool.com

918-254-1988



JENKS • TULSA • OWASSO • TULSA SOUTH



THIS IS TOWN & COUNTRY

Founded in 1961, Town & Country School serves students with Learning Disabilities, ADHD and High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Denise Jurbala

Director of Admissions

djurbala@tandcschool.org

918-296-3113, ext. 111



918-296-3113 • TANDCSCHOOL.ORG



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Choose Classical.*



Augustine Christian Academy
WWW.ACATULSA.ORG



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of love
&
dedication
to Tulsa
families!

**Thank you
Tulsa!**



3 Locations

Happy Campers Academy
918-584-2779

Happy Campers at Temple Israel
918-747-3122

Happy Campers at John Knox
918-742-7656



MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

Tulsa: 6415 S.Mingo Road, Tulsa

Tulsa South: 7820 E. 101st St, Suite A, Tulsa

Jenks: 525 W. 91st Street S., Jenks

Owasso: 10001 N. 127th E. Ave., Owasso

918.254.1988

millerswimschool.com

Miller Swim School has been in the unique business of teaching swimming for over 60 years. At Miller, our mission is to build a safer community, one family at a time, through swim lessons, water safety education and drowning prevention.

Swimming lessons are one of the best activities to keep a child active while providing them with a valuable set of life skills. Through participating in water activities, students are able to gain self-discipline, coordination and balance. Studies have also shown that swimming lessons help children grow socially and intellectually.

At Miller Swim School, students are grouped according to both age and swimming ability in the water. Classes are offered year-round, both morning and evening at all facilities. Year-round lessons are offered 7 days a week, with morning, afternoon and evening options to work around your busy schedule! Safety is our number one priority, both in the water and out.

Miller Swim School also offers party packages and open swim times, water aerobics, swim team, and triathlon training for families and friends to enjoy the pool year-round!

Check out our website for a comprehensive list of programs at millerswimschool.com and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for the latest news and specials!

MINGO VALLEY CHRISTIAN

CONTACT

Mrs. Rachael Beougher, Admissions

8304 S. 107th E. Ave., Tulsa

918.294.0404

mingovalley.org

Mingo Valley Christian (pre-K–12th) has been partnering with Tulsa area families for over 47 years! We are a fully accredited, college preparatory, non-denominational private Christian school. MVC encourages academic excellence and character development for each student in our care. We partner with parents and incorporate a Christian worldview into all aspects of the learning process.

Our students are tomorrow's leaders, infusing our school culture with opportunities for leadership, mentoring and service to the Tulsa community. Learning happens best in the context of relationships, so our teachers seek to engage personally with each student to foster academic success for all ages.

We offer honors and AP courses, NHS/NJHS, dual-credit college courses, art, computers, music and foreign language, with technology utilized throughout all academic disciplines. Our highly regarded theatre program attracts arts patrons from across the Tulsa community. MVC's athletic programs include volleyball, basketball, soccer, cross country, track, golf, cheer and pom.

We invite you to join us at our Open House on February 20, 2024! Visit mingovalley.org/open-house to learn more and register. You can also view our virtual tour at mingovalley.org/tour. To schedule a private tour or shadowing day, please contact our Admission Director Rachael Beougher at rachaelbeougher@mingovalley.org.

PRIMROSE SCHOOLS OF SOUTH TULSA AND MIDTOWN TULSA

Midtown Tulsa

Primrose@PrimroseMidtownTulsa.com

2835 E. Skelly Dr., Tulsa

918.900.9660

PrimroseMidtownTulsa.com

South Tulsa

Primrose@PrimroseSouthTulsa.com

10185 S. 85th E. Ave, Tulsa

918.364.0021

PrimroseSouthTulsa.com

Primrose Schools offers Cognia™ accredited early education and care for children from infants through pre-K. We are excited to add a Midtown Tulsa location in Spring of 2024. At Primrose we believe who children become is as important as what they know. For almost 40 years, our approach to teaching and learning has remained true to the Primrose core belief of nurturing balance among mind body and heart. With our Balanced Learning approach, we nurture curiosity, confidence, creativity, and compassion.

Balanced Learning emphasizes age-appropriate development. We help your child take on a skill when they are ready, so they can experience success. This is how your child begins to feel confident and enthusiastic about learning. It's why we purposefully select just the right furniture, books, and toys for every single classroom.

We offer enriching experiences in reading, science, technology, art, math, music, life skills, foreign language, and physical development. At Primrose Schools, Balance Learning even includes balanced meals and nutritious snacks prepared fresh daily by our chef, because we know that healthy eating habits formed early can last a lifetime.

Call or email today to learn how a Primrose education can make a life-long impact on your family!

SOCCERCITY TULSA

CONTACT

Dustin Knight

5817 S. 118th E. Ave., Tulsa

918.249.0044

soccercitytulsa.com

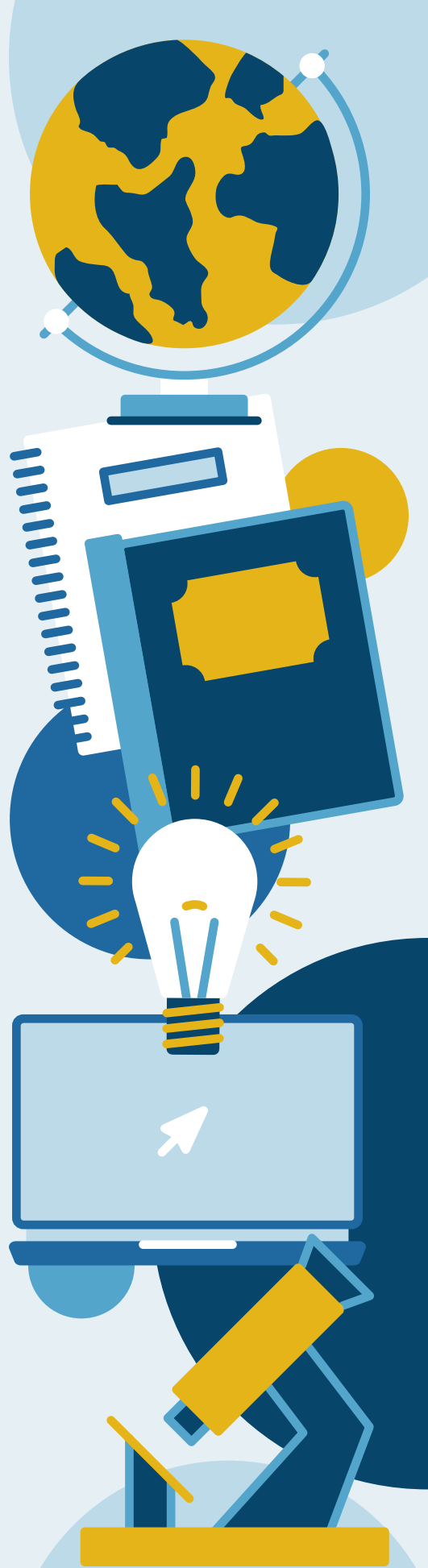
Ages: 18 months–9 years

Our well-trained coaches will thrill your child with 45–50 minutes of highly creative, high-energy and age-appropriate activities that serve as a great introduction to soccer, and help children master developmental milestones appropriate for their age. Because Lil' Kickers is first and foremost a child development program, our purpose is really to help children mature on all levels. 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.

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.

2nd Winter session runs Jan. 8–March 16. Open enrollment, SIGN UP TODAY!

SoccerCity offers classes for older kids throughout the day and accepts Epic payments for the program, camps and more.



TULSA ZOO

6421 E. 36th St. N., Tulsa
918.669.6600

tulsazoo.org

Encourage and grow your child's passion for wildlife at the Tulsa Zoo! Through our fun and engaging education programs, we inspire guests of all ages. Children can GO WILD in our in-person or virtual classes, learning about animals and meeting them up-close.

School and outreach programs offer unique ways to explore the zoo or to bring the zoo to you. The zoo offers year-round learning experiences for kids of all ages.

Visit tulsazoo.org to discover more about educational opportunities at the Tulsa Zoo.

Tulsa Zoo: Connecting, Caring, Advocating for Wildlife, People and Wild Places.

UNDERCROFT MONTESSORI

CONTACT

Nancy Davis, Head of School
nancy.davis@undercroft.org

3745 S. Hudson Ave., Tulsa
918.622.2890

undercroft.org

Undercroft Montessori School provides an authentic Montessori education to children from age 3 through 8th grade. As Oklahoma's only accredited American Montessori Society (AMS) school, we are committed to academic excellence; independence in thought and action; critical and collaborative thinking; and compassion and respect for self, community and the world. Established in 1964, the focus of the school is on the individual child, providing an environment that truly inspires a life-long love of learning in small, collaborative classrooms.

We invite you to come and tour Undercroft — the Montessori method is something you have to see to believe! Visit undercroft.org to request your tour today.

For more information, contact Lesley Wilkin, Admissions Coordinator, directly at 918.622.2890 or lesley.wilkin@undercroft.org.



**SCHEDULE A
TOUR!**

marquetteschool.org

| Diocesan Catholic school

| PreK - Grade 8

| Whole-child educational approach



DOVE SCHOOLS is a tuition-free, high-performing Pre-K through 12 public charter school system in Oklahoma that focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math to provide opportunities for underserved communities. With a 100% college acceptance rate, Dove Schools proudly serves more than 3,200 students in eight college preparatory schools across the state, and one state-wide virtual campus.

STEM

Our STEM-focused curriculum Dove prepares students for a future in STEM through STEM-labs at every campus, STEM-courses at every grade-level, and a wide variety of hands-on STEM extra-curricular programs.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character development is a key part of the Dove culture. Dove works together with parents and students to raise kind, responsible and productive members of our communities. Dove is proud to house one of the fifty National Schools of Character across the United States!

COLLEGE READINESS

We create a college-bound culture among all stakeholders with individualized support for students and their families, resulting in a 100% college acceptance rate and an average of \$90,000 in college scholarships per student for 2023.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

We prove that every student has the potential to succeed if given the opportunities, tools, and encouragement they need. Individualized goals, advanced coursework, AP courses and college credit propel students to realize their unique potential for success.

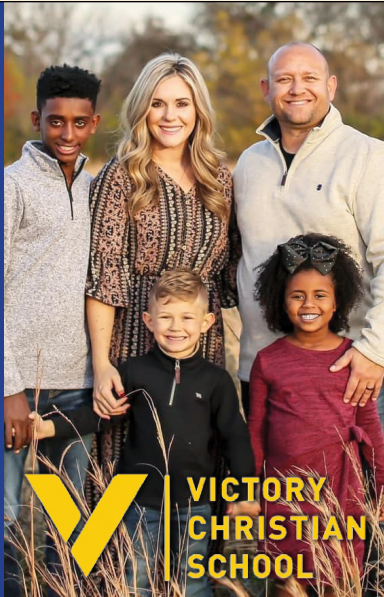


DoveSchools.org/Apply

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2016 and 2018, God grew our family through the gift of international adoption. As a multicultural family, we realized the importance and need to surround our children with diversity, both in race and culture. God opened our eyes to VCS and the moment we toured the school and walked through the hallways, we knew this was the place for our family. The culture of the school mirrors the culture of our own home. Knowing that our children are being taught a solid education all while being encouraged to develop the gifts and anointing God has uniquely placed inside of them is priceless. We are proud to be Conquerors!

–Rocky & Samantha Ausbrooks



VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
7700 S. Lewis Ave. | Tulsa, OK 74136
918.491.7720
www.vcstulsa.org | @vcstulsa
Contact: Jan Thomas,
Admission Specialist
jthomas@victory.com | 918.491.7763



We're so grateful for Miss Helen's! My daughter always felt like it was "home". The class sizes were small, and she learned everything from computers to music to Spanish/French and even cheerleading from 3 years old all the way through 5th grade. It's a very well-rounded education! When she graduated

from 5th grade, she was completely prepared for middle school at Holland Hall. The teachers really paid attention to all the little details of learning with my daughter. At her 5th grade graduation, my daughter said this, "A school is built with brick and mortar, but Miss Helen's is built with love and care."



918-622-2327 | Director@MissHelens.com
MissHelens.com | 4849 South Mingo, Tulsa



"As a mother, it was incredibly difficult to find somewhere I would trust to take care of my child. I even contemplated stepping away from my career in order to stay home so I would not have to leave my son with strangers. It is the unknown that is terrifying for any parent.

We decided to take a leap of faith and enrolled our son in Primrose in May 2023. It was the best decision we could have made for him. There were of course some tears during the initial transition period, but the staff was so loving and supportive to our son from day one. They provide such emotional support any time a child is in need, and now

my son loves going to school and is excited to see his teachers and friends each day. My husband and I absolutely look forward to the updates the school provides us throughout the day, including photos of his meal times and activities. He has grown in such a positive way both mentally and emotionally since he first began at the school. We will be forever grateful to the teachers and all the staff at Primrose for allowing us to go to work every day with the peace and comfort of knowing our son is in the best of hands."

Brianne and Jordan Smith



Primrose Schools®

1701 W. ALBANY ST. BROKEN ARROW, OK 74012
918-355-6827 | PRIMROSESCHOOLS.COM/SCHOOLS/BROKEN-ARROW/



We chose Monte Cassino because no other school in the Tulsa metro delivers a more individualized education in such a magical and happy environment. Each child is met exactly where they are and showered with love, kindness, grace and the exact amount of support they need to be successful not only in the classroom but in life as well. My family firmly believes that Monte Cassino is the happiest and most loving place on earth.

THE STANTON FAMILY

MONTE CASSINO
A Benedictine School

2206 S LEWIS AVE | TULSA, OK 74114
CONTACT: BROOKE JONES | 918-746-4238 | MONTECASSINO.ORG

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS



Metro Christian Academy prides itself on the many traditions established since the school's founding in 1983. The annual Veteran's Day program led by the third-grade class is one of everyone's favorites. From preschool through high school there is something for each grade to look forward to during the year.

Metro Christian Academy is an interdenominational Christian school with the mission of providing in partnership with involved parents, an accredited college preparatory education that is founded on biblical principles, cultivates Christian character, and equips students to excel academically, spiritually, physically, and socially.

Our campus includes P3-12th-grade classrooms, playgrounds, a variety of athletic practice and game fields, an indoor practice facility, a renovated football stadium, a state-of-the-art learning commons and media library. There are priceless benefits to having all our students on one campus including the opportunity for our youngest students to interact with our oldest — learning leadership skills by example at an early age and creating relationships to last a lifetime.

If you're looking to provide your student with an education that combines academic excellence, faith-based values, and a strong sense of community, be sure to visit Metro Christian Academy. Book a tour at visitmetro.com or call the admissions office with questions at 918.745.9868.



6363 S TRENTON AVE | TULSA, OK 74136 | 918-745-9868 | METROCA.COM



I love University School because of so many things, but my favorite thing about it is the learning environment. The students get very close to each other, even

across grades and have very strong friendships. If you don't understand something, it's easy to approach a teacher and ask for help. Saying "I don't know" in front of the class doesn't feel intimidating, or like people will laugh at you, because they understand that we are all learning. At USchool, we have all sorts of fun activities like movie nights, clubs, and seasonal markets with things made by students. I'm proud to tell people that I go to USchool!

- Evelyn, 8th grade



THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA
University School

TU is an EEO/AA institution.



As a mom of three and an educator myself, I couldn't imagine a better place than Augustine Christian Academy for my children's education. The teachers care about who they are and the students celebrate all of each other's quirks and amazings. I would love to shout from the rooftops with how special this school is, but I don't think words could really describe it. My kids are held to a high academic standard, while teaching them how to think critically and for themselves, rather than what to think. They are learning about the Lord and what He says in His Word, teaching them how to look at the

world through a biblical lens. They are learning social-emotional development, which in turn, models to them how to be kind and accepting to others different from themselves. They are exploring leadership-building skills with love and accountability. As a teacher myself, I have very high expectations when it comes to what I know education should look like for my children. ACA exceeds those expectations. It has been such an answer to the many times I have cried out to the Lord on behalf of my kids' education.

Kara Street, Music Director, ACA



AUGUSTINE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

6310 E 30TH ST | TULSA, OK 74114 | 918-832-4600 | ACATULSA.ORG



At Holland Hall, I have always felt like I belonged and felt loved by the inviting community of students, teachers, and families. Choosing to send me to Holland Hall was the best choice my parents made for me, and I could not be more grateful for the way this school has changed my life.

MADDIE, 10TH GRADE



HOLLAND HALL

5666 EAST 81ST STREET | TULSA, OK 74137

APARRISH@HOLLANDHALL.ORG | 918-481-1111 | HOLLANDHALL.ORG



The design and flow of the Montessori classroom create a learning environment that accommodates choice.

There are spaces suited to group activity and areas where a student can settle in alone. Parts of the room are open and spacious, allowing a preschooler to lay out strands of beads for counting, or an elementary student to ponder a 10-foot-long Timeline of Life.

Where are the rows of desks?

You won't find the customary rows of school desks; children work at tables or on the floor, rolling out mats on which to work and define their workspace.

There are well-defined spaces for each part of the curriculum, such as Language Arts, Math and Culture. Each of these areas features shelves or display tables with a variety of inviting materials from which students can choose.

Each classroom is uniquely suited to the needs of its students. Preschool rooms feature low sinks, chairs and tables; reachable shelves; and child-sized kitchen tools—elements that allow independence and help develop small motor skills. In upper-level classrooms you're likely to see large tables for group work, computers, interactive whiteboards and areas for science labs.

Undercroft
Montessori School • est. 1964

3745 S. HUDSON AVENUE, TULSA, OK 74135
918-622-2890 | UNDERCROFT.ORG

Read the
TULSAKIDS COLLEGE PLANNER

tulsakids.com/college

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918-746-4238.**

www.montecassino.org
or scan here



[montecassinoschool](https://www.montecassinoschool.org)
2206 South Lewis, Tulsa

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passionate teachers
diverse curriculum
excellent academics
a partnership
something different

MONTE 
CASSINO

Monte Cassino participates in the Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit Program.

NEW MIDTOWN LOCATION OPENING SPRING 2024

We know how young children learn best.



Learning is exciting, and your child is built to learn with a natural curiosity that knows no bounds. Through a balance of play and nurturing guidance, Primrose school teachers foster that curiosity and help your child feel a sense of pride and accomplishment that leads to a lifelong love of learning.



Primrose School of Midtown Tulsa
2835 E. Skelly Dr. Tulsa, OK 74105
918.900.9660 | PrimroseMidtownTulsa.com

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DENTAL DEPOT

As we ring in the New Year, prioritize your dental health with these thoughtful dental resolutions:

- 1. Commit to Consistent Oral Care.** Recommit to the basics of oral hygiene. Brush your teeth at least twice a day using fluoride toothpaste, and don't forget to floss daily.
- 2. Schedule Regular Dental Check-ups.** It might not be everyone's favorite thing to do, but scheduling check-ups helps your dentist detect and address potential issues before they become major problems.
- 3. Kick Bad Habits.** Use the New Year as an opportunity to kick detrimental habits such as eating sugary snacks, and soft drinks.
- 4. Stay Hydrated.** Make a resolution to stay hydrated, as it helps rinse away bacteria and food particles that can contribute to tooth decay.

Remember that small changes in your dental routine can lead to big improvements in your oral health. By setting realistic and achievable resolutions, you're investing in a healthier, happier smile that will last well beyond the year to come. Here's to a year filled with bright, confident smiles and optimal oral health! Happy New Year!

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations
DentalDepot.net



RIDDLE LAW, PLLC.

Trevor Riddle

What are your estate planning goals for 2024?

As 2023 draws to a close, it's time for those New Year's resolutions to take shape. Updating or creating an estate plan should be near the top of the list for busy parents.

If you have an estate plan, start by reviewing your existing will (or trust) and other supporting documents. Make sure your plan continues to reflect your goals and values. Your estate plan should ensure that you leave a legacy to whom you want in the way you want. If you find your plan is out of date or out of touch, now is the time to make changes.

If "making a will" has been on your to-do list since your first child was born, let your resolution be about peace of mind and security for your loved ones. Getting started is easier than you think. It begins with a phone call.

110 S. Hartford Ave., Suite 2548
Tulsa, OK 74120
918.779.1446
trevor.riddle@riddle.law



MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

I really want my little one to be comfortable in the water this spring and summer, but I'm not sure what to do for babies his age?

Babies as early as 4 months old can willingly accept water acclimation, sometimes even more so than their preschool-aged counterparts! While babies as young as 4 months old can begin swim lessons, there ARE some activities you can do at home to help familiarize them with the water beforehand!

Start by introducing simple toys to your child in the bath. Show them how to use the toys, and sing songs as you play. This creates a positive association with the water from the get-go!

Next, help them prepare for submersions. Start slowly, by introducing a light trickle of water on their head. Then, gradually increase the amount of water until you can wet their entire head.

Finally, make a point to keep bath time fun. Be silly, make up games and keep your infant laughing.

Remember, the earlier you can make your little one feel at ease in the water, the easier it'll be to get them swimming and enjoying water throughout their childhood.

6415 S. Mingo Rd.,
525 W. 91st St. S., Jenks

Tulsa 918.254.1988
MillerSwimSchool.com



SEEKING SITTERS

Adrienne Kallweit

Owner, Founder & Licensed
Private Investigator

How much should I pay my sitter?

As minimum wage increases on January 1 in many areas, determining how much to pay your sitter can be a tricky task, but it is important to ensure that your sitter is being compensated fairly for the job you are asking them to do. The amount you pay will depend on factors such as the number of children, length of the job and experience of the sitter.

While younger sitters may charge less, it's important to consider their experience and qualifications. A caregiver who is certified in First Aid/CPR and has years of experience caring for children will likely command a higher hourly rate than someone who is just starting out.

Paying your sitter a fair wage shows that you value their work and can result in better care of your children and home while you are away.

It's always a good idea to discuss the rate with your sitter before hiring them to ensure that both parties are on the same page.

918.749.3588
SeekingSitters.com

seeking **sitters**
and Nannies

JANUARY 2024

SCAN THE QR CODE
to find more events at
[tulsakids.com/calendar!](https://tulsakids.com/calendar)



Wrap up the holiday season with
Tulsa Youth Opera's production of
Amahl and the Night Visitors, Jan. 6-7.
PHOTO COURTESY TULSA OPERA.



Celebrate Dolly Parton's Jan. 19
birthday at special storytimes
with **Tulsa City-County Library**.

PHOTO COURTESY TCCL.



Learn about red pandas and
other jungle animals at **Tulsa
Zoo's Winter Camp** on Jan. 15.

PHOTO COURTESY TULSA ZOO.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY





Greg Kalafatas as "Edna Turnblad," Niki Metcalf as "Tracy Turnblad" and Company perform "Welcome to the 60s" in *Hairspray*.

PHOTO: JEREMY DANIEL

January 1 Monday

MONDAY MORNING PROGRAMMING F

For early learners, 11-11:30 a.m., Discovery Lab, 3123 S. Riverside Dr., discoverylab.org

Early learners and their caregivers can participate in educational activities taught by experienced educators.

January 2 Tuesday

BOARD GAME NIGHT F

Ages 6+, 5-7 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Join representatives from Dragon's Hoard Game Store of Bixby for demos featuring great new board games.

HAIRSPRAY

Recommended ages 8+, 7:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., celebrityattractions.com

Join 16-year-old Tracy Turnblad in 1960's Baltimore as she sets out to dance her way onto TV's most popular show. Additional showtimes available through Jan. 7.

January 3 Wednesday

TEEN LOUNGE F W

Ages 12-17, 4-6 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Kick back and chill with art supplies, video games and plenty of space to study, read or hang out. Snacks provided.

January 4 Thursday

TINY TOTS W

Ages 0-6, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Wheels and Thrills, 10637 N. Garnett Rd., Owasso, wheelsandthrills.com

Kids ages 6 and under are invited to skate, play, ride and jump! Don't forget your socks.

TEEN NIGHT F

Ages 12-18, 4-7 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Make crafts and play games at this casual monthly teen hangout.

January 5 Friday

TULSA OILERS GAME

All ages, 7:05 p.m., BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave., tulsaoilers.com

Cheer for the Tulsa Oilers as they play hockey against Rapid City Rush! Repeats Jan. 6; also repeats Jan. 7 at 4:05 p.m.

January 6 Saturday

SATURDAY MORNING BIRDING F

All ages, 8-9:45 a.m., Oxley Nature Center, 6700 Mohawk Blvd., oxleynaturecenter.org

Join Oxley for their monthly birding walk. Bring binoculars if you have them.

SATURDAY FAMILY FUN DAY F

All ages, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Charles Page Library, 551 E. 4th St., Sand Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Join the library for LEGOs, arts, crafts and fun.

January 7 Sunday

AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

2:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., tulsapac.com

Tulsa Youth Opera presents this story of the Three Kings and their visit with Amahl, a poor, crippled boy who lives with his widowed mother. Additional showtimes Jan. 6.

January 8 Monday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BABIES F

Ages 0-2, 10-10:20 a.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Learn and enjoy songs, stories and activities that are just right for your little one at this lapsit storytime. Repeats Jan. 22 and 29.

January 9 Tuesday

PAWS FOR READING F

For elementary students, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Jenks Library, 523 W. B St., Jenks, tulsalibrary.org

Read a favorite book to a furry, four-pawed friend. Pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323. Repeats Jan. 23.

KIDS CLUB — A LIFE SKILLS AND STEAM CLUB **F**

Grades 2-5, 4:30-5:30 p.m.,
Pratt Library, 3219 S. 113th Ave. W.,
Sand Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Learn baking skills *Nailed It* style! This month, make buttercream frosting and pudding. Practice your piping skills by making mini sandwich cookies. Registration suggested by not required.

CENTRAL BARDS' CLUB — THEATRE GAMES, IMPROV, DRAMATICS **F**

For teens and tweens, 6-7:30 p.m.,
Central Library, 400 Civic Center,
tulsalibrary.org

This monthly workshop is perfect for teens and tweens who are interested in performance arts.

January 10 Wednesday**STORY TIME AT TULSA ZOO** **W**

All ages, 10 a.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Listen to story and meet an animal ambassador every Wednesday morning at Tulsa Zoo! Storytime will take place indoors.

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD **F**

For teens and tweens, 4-5 p.m.,
Owasso Library, 103 W. Broadway St.,
Owasso, tulsalibrary.org

Have fun, eat snacks, earn community service hours and join in making the library a better place for teens.

January 11 Thursday**BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY/ STAY AND PLAY** **F**

Ages 0-5, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Herman and Kate Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave., tulsalibrary.org

After storytime, join for games, toys and activities that foster critical early literacy skills. Repeats Jan. 18 and 25.

January 12 Friday**YOUNG FILMMAKERS SERIES** **F**

Ages 12-18, 4-5:30 p.m., Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Learn about the process of making a film step by step. There will be eight sessions in total.

TULSA OILERS GAME

All ages, 7:05 p.m., BOK Center,
200 S. Denver Ave., tulsaoilers.com

Cheer for Tulsa Oilers as they play hockey against the Iowa Heartlanders! Repeats Jan. 13.

January 13 Saturday**CELEBRATE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WITH DREAM MOBILES** **F**

All ages, 2-3 p.m., Suburban Acres Library, 4606 N. Garrison Ave.,
Tulsa, tulsalibrary.org

Honor Martin Luther King Jr. and celebrate Make Your Dreams Come True Day by creating your very own dream mobile.

TULSA SYMPHONY PRESENTS EBB & FLOW

7:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.,
tulsasympphony.org

Sarah Hicks is guest conductor for this program featuring the works of Ravel, Debussy and Brahms.

January 14 Sunday**SENSORY FRIENDLY FAMILY TIME**

All ages, 9:30-11 a.m.,
Discovery Lab, 3123 S. Riverside Dr.,
discoverylab.org

Guests who need a quieter, less crowded place to play can enjoy the museum with their families.

January 15 Monday**45TH ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMEMORATIVE PARADE** **F**

All ages, 11 a.m., Historic Greenwood District, mlktulsa.com

The theme of this year's parade is *Dr. King's Dream: A Vision for the Future*.

WINTER CAMP: LEGEND OF THE LOST KINGDOM: RED PANDA

Grades 1-5, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.,
Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N.,
tulsazoo.org/learn/camps

Journey to a mysterious world deep within the heart of the Tulsa Zoo where ancient ruins of the jungle have been rediscovered! As campers explore, they will encounter some of the animals that have made this jungle home. Pre-register. After-care available till 5:15 p.m.

January 16 Tuesday

Find more events at
tulsakids.com/calendar.

January 17 Wednesday**BIKES & BALLS** **W**

For toddlers and preschoolers,
9:30-11 a.m., Whiteside Community Center, 4009 S. Pittsburg Ave., tulsaparks.org

Bikes & Balls is the perfect place for children to develop motor skills, socialize and have a blast. \$1 per child. Does not meet during TPS school breaks.

DOLLY PARTON'S BIRTHDAY STORYTIME **F**

All ages, 10-11 a.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St.,
tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Dolly's birthday with songs, stories and party favors! Also happening Jan. 17, 3-4 p.m. at Central Library, 400 Civic Center.

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY/ STAY AND PLAY **F**

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m.,
Peggy Helmerich Library,
5131 E. 91st St., tulsalibrary.org

After storytime, join for games, toys and activities that foster critical early literacy skills. Repeats Jan. 10, 24 and 31.

January 18 Thursday**STORYTIME AT PHILBROOK**

Ages 0-10, 10 a.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.,
philbrook.org

Join Philbrook educators and guest readers each week for Storytime at Philbrook. Drop in for imaginative stories geared towards kids 10 and under. Repeats Jan. 25.

DOLLY PARTON'S BIRTHDAY STORYTIME **F**

All ages, 10-10:30 a.m., Tulsa International Airport, 777 Airport Dr.,
Schwab Hall, tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Dolly's birthday with songs, stories and party favors!

KIDS CREATE: POINTILLISM **F**

For elementary schoolers,
5:30-6:30 p.m., Owasso Library,
103 W. Broadway St., Owasso,
tulsalibrary.org

Create art using pointillism.

January 19 Friday**DOLLY PARTON'S BIRTHDAY BASH!** **F**

All ages, 2-4 p.m., Gathering Place, 2650 S. John Williams Way,
tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Dolly Parton's 78th birthday with songs, stories, cake and party favors! Pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323.

PBR

All ages, 7:45 p.m., BOK Center,
200 S. Denver Ave., bokcenter.com

PBR's (Professional Bull Riders) elite Unleash The Beast tour will buck into Tulsa Jan. 19 and 20.

January 20 Saturday**MEDITATION AT THE MUSEUM WITH AT EASE MEDITATION**

10-11 a.m., Philbrook Museum,
2727 S. Rockford Rd.,
philbrook.org

This guided meditation welcomes participants of all experience levels. Repeats Jan. 27. Additional details at philbrook.org.

DOLLAR AND SENSE — A TEEN WORKSHOP ON MONEY MATTERS **F**

For teens, 2-3:30 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center,
tulsalibrary.org

Join for a presentation, as well as fun and games, centered around financial strategies and opportunities.

January 21 Sunday**ANNIE**

All ages, 2 p.m., Tulsa PAC,
110 E. 2nd St., tulsapac.com

Theatre Tulsa presents one of the world's best-loved musicals. Additional showtimes, Jan. 19-Feb. 4.

January 22 Monday**BUILD A READER STORYTIME: PRESCHOOL** **F**

For preschoolers, 10:30-10:55 a.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

The best in children's literature, songs, games, finger plays, rhymes and other reading-related activities are shared with your preschooler. Repeats Jan. 29.

January 23 Tuesday**CREATIVE WRITING FOR TEENS – GET READY FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST** **F**

For teens, 4-5 p.m., Herman and Kate Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Learn about the qualities judges look for in a creative writing contest entry. Pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or by calling 918.549.7323.

KIDS READ: ADVENTURE CREW – READY FOR AN ADVENTURE? **F**

Ages 8-12, Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Learn to create characters, understand game and story mechanics, develop special abilities and write your own story.

BIXBY ANIME AND MANGA CLUB **F**

For teens and tweens, 6-7 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Discuss your favorite manga and watch anime. Repeats Jan. 9.

January 24 Wednesday**BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BILINGUAL** **F**

Ages 0-5, 10-10:30 a.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish. Repeats Jan. 10, 17 and 31.

FANTASY AND SCI-FI FAIR **F**

All ages, 3-5:30 p.m., Suburban Acres Library, 4606 N. Garrison Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Join for a fun twist on a book fair and explore the wide variety of fantasy and sci-fi books the library has to offer.

January 25 Thursday**NATURE CRAFT** **F W**

Ages 2+, 3-4 p.m., Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow, facebook.com/rayharralnaturecenter

Drop in for a seasonal craft every week.

INTRO TO CHESS **F**

For teens and tweens, 4-5 p.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Learn about the history of chess, what the pieces are and how they are used, and some opening chess moves.

PAINT AND PLAY: PAINTING WITH MARBLES **F**

Ages 4-12, 4-4:45 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Create masterpieces using unconventional tools: marbles!

January 26 Friday**FAMILY NATURE WALK + NATURE FUN FRIDAYS**

All ages, 10-11:30 a.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Spark your curiosity at an easygoing Family Nature Walk, then stick around for an exciting hands-on nature exploration designed just for kids and their grownups. Repeats Jan. 19.

TULSA OILERS GAME

All ages, 7:05 p.m., BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave., tulsaoilers.com

Cheer for the Tulsa Oilers as they play hockey against the Idaho Steelheads! Repeats Jan. 27; also repeats Jan. 28 at 4:05 p.m.

January 27 Saturday**FAMILY WORKSHOP: ALCOHOL INK SUNCATCHERS**

All ages, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org



Tulsa's 45th Annual **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Parade** will take place Jan. 15.

Come and play in this color-filled workshop to make your very own Plexiglas suncatcher with nature educator Toni Willis. Additional details at philbrook.org.

AUDITIONS FOR A CHORUS LINE TEEN F

Ages 15-18, 3:15 p.m., Clark Youth Theatre, 4825 S. Quaker Ave., clarkyouththeatre.com

Audition for Clark Youth Theatre's upcoming teen production. Important details available at facebook.com/clarkyouththeatre.

January 28 Sunday

Find additional events at tulsakids.com/calendar.

January 29 Monday

TEEN TIME F

For teens and tweens, 3:30-5 p.m., Charles Page Library, 551 E. 4th S., Sand Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Hang out in the library's meeting room. There will be a Nintendo Switch, LEGOs and crafts. Repeats Jan. 22.

January 30 Tuesday

COOL CAT CRAFT PART TWO F

For teens and tweens, 4:30-5:30 p.m., South Broken Arrow Library, 3600 S. Chestnut Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Decorate bangle bracelets with cool cat swag.

MESSY ART CLUB: YARN BIRDS F

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St., tulsalibrary.org

Create hanging songbirds out of yarn, colorful feathers and felt.

January 31 Wednesday

TEEN CONNECTION F

For 6th-12th graders, 4:30-6 p.m., The Arc of Oklahoma, 2516 E. 71st St. Suite A, thearcok.org

This is a social group for students with high-functioning autism. Contact Sherilyn Walton at SWalton@TheArcOK.org or call 918.582.8272 for more information.



PHOTO COURTESY SOCCERCITY.

Activities for Homeschoolers

CLARK YOUTH THEATRE

4825 S. Quaker Ave., Tulsa

Clark Youth Theatre offers a variety of weekday classes for homeschoolers, in addition to their other programming like camps, Saturday classes and main stage productions. clarkyouththeatre.com

HOMESCHOOL FUN FRIDAY

Jan. 19, 1-2 p.m.

Charles Page Library, 551 E. 4th St., Sand Springs

Homeschoolers are invited to explore the science of snow! For all ages. tulsalibrary.org

SOCCERCITY

5817 S. 118th E. Ave., Tulsa

SoccerCity offers programs and classes for ages 18 months and older, including for older students in the morning. They also accept Epic payments for the program, camps and more. Learn more and sign up today at soccercitytulsa.com.

HOMESCHOOL SKATE AT WHEELS AND THRILLS

Wheels and Thrills, 10637 N. Garnett Rd., Owasso

Each month, Wheels and Thrills hosts a Home-school Skate event, with a different theme each month. An Unlimited Band is \$14.50 and includes skating, skate rental, Playzone access (for kids 56" and under) and unlimited laser tag. S.T.E.M. add-on available. wheelsandthrills.com

HOMESCHOOL FRIDAYS AT OILERS ICE CENTER

Oilers Ice Center, 6413 S. Mingo Rd.

The first Friday of every month, from 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., the Oilers Ice Center hosts a homeschool skate for all homeschool families. Price is \$6 and includes skate rental. oilersicecenter.net

HOMESCHOOL @ PHILBROOK

February-May, 1-3 p.m.

- 1st Wednesday of the month: Ages 5-8
- 2nd Wednesday of the month: Ages 9-12
- 3rd Wednesday of the month: Ages 13-16 (4th Wednesday in March due to Spring Break)

Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.

Join artist and teacher Katy Bruce each month for cross-disciplinary creative explorations of art and nature. This drop-off class will take place in the studio, the gardens and the galleries. Each lesson blends artmaking and hands-on nature exploration. Let our museum home become your child's classroom this spring!

\$15 Member Youth (\$54 for semester package). \$20 Youth (\$72 for semester package). philbrook.org

TULSA PARKS

Tulsa Parks offers some programs for homeschoolers. Reed Park is currently offering Homeschool Archery for both intermediate and beginner archers. Owen Park Community Center hosts periodic Homeschool Art classes. Learn more and sign up at tulsaparks.recdesk.com/community/program.

William Bailey:

Pokémon TCG Competitor and World Traveler

By **Tara Rittler**



Homeschool student William Bailey, age 9, began competing in Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) tournaments about two years ago. But his success in the game has led him to compete around the world, including Brazil, Japan, Canada and — in spring 2024 — London. William is the second highest-ranked junior player in the U.S. and Canada, and in the top five junior players across the globe. We spoke with William to learn more about what it's like to be a competitive Pokémon TCG player. William's dad, Johnson Bailey, provided some additional insight.

TK: How did you get into playing Pokémon TCG?

William: I started when I was 5, with basic Pokémon and energies (types of cards). When I was 7, I started to play local tournaments at Dice Addiction Game Store in Tulsa. After that, my first regional was Dallas Regional [in December 2022.] Then I went to Knoxville, Milwaukee and NAIC — North American International Championships. After that, I went to Japan for World Championships in August.

Then I started up the new season — I went to the first four regionals: Pittsburg, Peoria, Sacramento, Toronto. After that, I just came back from LAIC, Latin American International Championships, in Brazil.

TK: What do you enjoy about competing in Pokémon tournaments?

William: I like going to the tournaments and traveling with my family. It's just really fun. That's probably one of my favorite things about Pokémon, just traveling and having fun.

TK: Where are some interesting places you've gotten to play?

William: Probably Japan was my favorite one to travel to. I was not expecting it to be as much Pokémon as it was. There was a game called Mezzastar that was very, very cool. It's only in Japan, sadly.

Mezzastar is a Pokémon Go-style arcade game that is very popular in Japan.

TK: Can you tell us about some of the creative ways you've raised money for travel expenses?

William: We are doing a cookie fundraiser. We'll sell cookie tins and then for every cookie tin we sell, we'll build a Pokémon deck and donate it to the children's hospital. They're mostly going to be Pokémon, basic energies, more beginner decks.

Pokémon also offers travel stipends if you do well enough in larger tournaments. William explained that it's important for him to do well in tournaments because that travel stipend often determines whether he'll be able to go to the next tournament. Plus, there are cash prizes for placing high in a tournament, which he saves for travel expenses.



TK: How do you deal with pressure, especially at some of these larger tournaments?

William: It's not as hard for me. We've practiced on this. Every time I win or lose, I'll stick out my hand and say, "Good game." When I win, I won't jump up and get really excited, I'll just stand there and say, "Good game," and have a smile. And then I'll walk away.

When I lose, I don't get really angry or anything like that. It took me a little while to get used to that. I don't know exactly how to explain it, but just always take a deep breath every time you lose is what I do. I just remember everything's going to be all right.

TK: What are your goals as a Pokémon TCG player?

William: I'm going to try to compete as long as I can. My goal is to be up on Stream because they'll interview us on the big screen. I want to say, "Thank you, Lord, for giving me this ability to play these big tournaments."

Johnson: And you also want that championship trophy, right?

William, laughing: Yeah, that, too.

TK: Is having a homeschool schedule helpful in terms of travel flexibility?

Johnson: There's a block of 15–20 kids, and they travel. It's a mix of private school, homeschool and public school. A lot of schools recognize Pokémon as a sport now, so there's a lot more distance learning and flexibility that you can have with your school schedules.

Pokémon's great. You're competing basically using math, problem solving and reading. His homework and studying is amplified so much. There's so much built-in motivation. His reading went off

the charts as soon as he had a real reason — because reading books for fun is one thing, but learning to read those Pokémon cards you need to play [is another]. His multiplication, his division, everything has been so much easier for him to learn and understand because you can do so many math problems and questions just through a Pokémon attack. None of the kids use calculators there, either.

TK: What advice do you have for other kids interested in learning how to play Pokémon TCG?

William: TCG Live is a good place to learn. I recommend building a fun deck and then maybe go play a challenge or a cup or something, just a local tournament. Just play, meet other people and learn the ropes and the basics of how to play. And then build up for bigger tournaments if they're ready to do it.

Find information about upcoming tournaments via the Event Locator at [Pokémon.com](https://pokemon.com).

TK: Do you have a favorite Pokémon?

William: Yes, my favorite Pokémon is Pikachu. He's cute, and lightning is my favorite type.

TK: What is a fun fact about you?

William: I just really like traveling. I like traveling and seeing the sights. I like playing board games and other card games, nothing really competitive. But fun card games with my family, I always like those.

*This month, William will be playing in regional championship tournaments in Portland, Oregon, and Charlotte, North Carolina. Good luck! **TK***

Tara Rittler is the web & social media editor at TulsaKids Magazine. She enjoys exploring Tulsa with her son and shares their adventures in her blog at tulsakids.com/blog.



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In Oklahoma:

1 in 3

kids ages 10-17 is
overweight or obese

Obese children are
more likely to
be obese as adults

1 in 5

high schoolers is
categorized as obese



The Swap Up program focuses on youth obesity prevention across the state. Swap Up provides specific and realistic nutrition messages that our teens can relate to and incorporate in their daily lives.

For more information, visit SwapUpOK.com.



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