



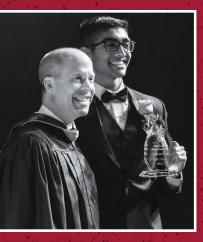
# The Beginning of Something Big

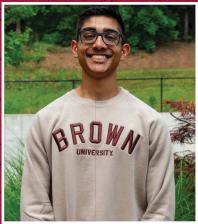
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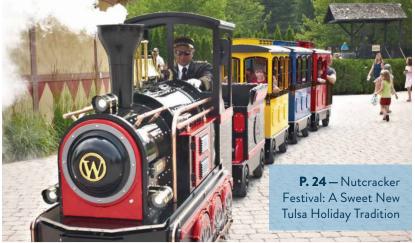
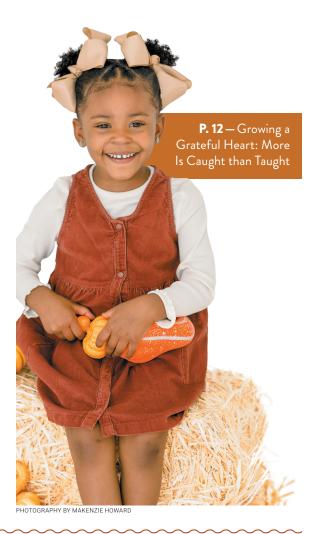


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PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN UPT

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By Betty Casey



The TSET Healthy Youth Initiative empowers Oklahoma's youth to adopt healthier lifestyles through tobacco cessation, nutrition education and physical activity programs.



Youth-led program



Rural tobacco prevention



Vaping prevention Tobacco cessation





Vaping cessation



Obesity prevention



Health in schools



Tobacco prevention



# November Is Here

Have you put away your Halloween skeletons yet? It seems like there's no breathing room between now and January. Or is it just me?

Did you know that Nov. 17 is National Take a Hike Day? And that the week of Thanksgiving is National Family Week? So maybe you could take your family on a hike after eating a big meal. Writer Julie Watson gives you some reasons to hike as well as some gorgeous places to get outside this fall and winter.

One of my favorite November traditions is the Von Franken Family Food Run on Thanksgiving morning. It starts at 9 a.m. at River West Festival Park and makes a 3 mile-ish loop around the river. The entry fee is food for the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma. You can walk it, jog it, run it, stroll it — bring your dog and whoever's hanging out at your house for Thanksgiving.

This month is also National Prematurity Awareness Month. One in 10 babies in the United States is born too early. A Tulsa family shared their preemie story with us, and you'll want to read about baby Greer and the sweet medical team that surrounded and supported the family during Greer's stay at the NICU and beyond.

November kicks off the holiday season, and we have all the shows, activities and family fun that you can pack in. Speaking of events, the Tulsa Ballet is doing a new Nutcracker-themed event in early December at Expo Square SageNet Center. You'll find an article with all the information on Nutcracker Festival in this issue.

I hope you get to enjoy time with family and friends this month. Bring them out to the Von Franken Family Food Run! I'll see you on the trail.



**Betty Casey**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# tulsakids

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#### Publisher

Charles Foshee publisher@tulsakids.com

### Associate Publisher & Editor-In-Chief

Betty Casey editor@tulsakids.com

# Web Editor & Calendar

Tara Rittler tara.rittler@gmail.com

### Art Director

Annie Tyndall

# **Advertising Sales**

Amanda Murphy Lindsey Copes

# Distribution

Joan Ross

## **Contributing Writers**

Alicia Kobilnyk Tamecca Rogers, PhD Julie Wenger Watson Nancy A. Moore Marnie Fernandez Natalie Mikles Rachel Ann Dennis, MFA

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# **NEWS** & **NOTES**



PICTURED FROM L TO R:
RACHEL KASIKA, MS, RDN, LD, IBCLC,
JANET POTTS, RD/LD, CLS, LEILA
WADE, ROSIE RAMIREZ, PAM HOLT, MS,
RD/LD, CLS, JUANAKEE "KIKI" BURRIS,
MARIA MARES, KRISTI RING, RD/LD,
IBCLC, AND ADRIANNA HALSTEAD,
RDN, LD, IBCLC.

# Tulsa Health Department Honored with WIC Breastfeeding Award

The Tulsa Health Department WIC clinics at the James O. Goodwin Health Center, Central Regional Health Center, North Regional Health & Wellness Center, Mingo WIC Clinic and South Peoria WIC Clinic locations are recipients of the 2024 Gold WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence. The awards are granted annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

The award program was established to recognize local WIC agencies which have provided exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support activities. The intent is to serve as a model and motivate other local agencies to strengthen their breastfeeding promotion and support activities

and ultimately increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants.

"Our WIC peer counselors play a vital role in supporting breastfeeding mothers. Their guidance and encouragement are essential to helping women achieve their breastfeeding goals," said Peer Counselor Supervisor Janet Potts. "It is an honor to be recognized for our organization's efforts to promote and support breastfeeding."

A WIC breastfeeding peer counselor is a trained employee who provides support and guidance to breastfeeding mothers. They are mothers themselves who have had successful breastfeeding experiences and are passionate about helping others achieve their breastfeeding goals.

In addition to the peer counselors, THD employs International Board-Certified Lactation

Consultants (IBCLC) who provide lactation support at no cost to prenatal and postpartum families who qualify for SoonerCare or WIC and live within Tulsa County. Services are provided for THD WIC clients who live outside of Tulsa County as well.

WIC is a federally funded nutrition education and supplemental food program for income-eligble pregnant and breastfeeding women, or women who have delivered within the last six months, as well as infants, and children under age 5. The program offers nutritious foods, nutrition education and breastfeeding support that can improve the health of those it serves.

To see if you may qualify for WIC Services, contact the Tulsa Health Department at (918) 582-9355 or visit www.tulsa-health.org/WIC.

## **Stocking Drive Brings Joy for Seniors**

LIFE Senior Service's Holiday Project stocking drive seeks to bring joy to seniors in the community at a time of year when many may be alone or are unable to see family and friends. Caring individuals, families, groups and businesses are invited to contribute filled stockings to seniors in need. This is a fun opportunity for families to spend time together while teaching children about the importance about giving to others. LIFE's

main stocking drive will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 19 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Legacy Plaza East building. LIFE also will have two drop-off sites where community members can drop off filled stockings from Nov. 1–30. Last year, LIFE gave out over 1,200 stockings.

# LIFE's Main Stocking Drive:

Nov. 19, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Legacy Plaza Tower East, 5330 E. 31st St., Tulsa

# **Stocking Drop-Off Spots:**

Nov. 1-Nov. 19, Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., 8 a.m.-1 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., LIFE's Roma Berry Senior Center, 4821 S. 72nd E. Ave., Tulsa

Nov. 1-Nov. 19, Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5p.m., LIFE Senior Services Central Office, 5950 E. 31st St., Tulsa

## American Historian H. W. Brands to Receive Distinguished Author Award

Bestselling American author and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist H. W. Brands is coming to Tulsa Dec. 5 and 6 to receive the 2024 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award, given by the Tulsa City-County Library and Tulsa Library Trust

Brands will receive the Helmerich Award, which consists of a \$40,000 cash prize and an engraved crystal book, at a black-tie gala in his honor on Friday, Dec. 6. He will give a free public presentation at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 5, and speak about his life and works, answer questions and sign autographs. Copies of his books will be available for purchase at the event. Both presentations will take place at Central Library, Fifth Street and Denver Avenue.

An acclaimed historian and professor, Brands has written more than 30 books, co-authored or edited five others, and published dozens of articles and scores of reviews. Two of his biographies, The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin and Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize

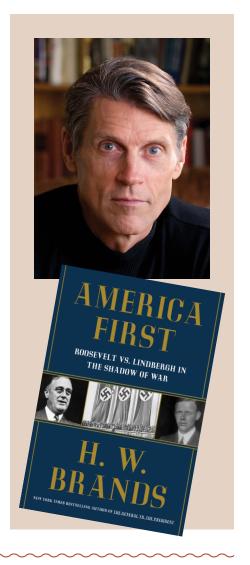
In addition to works on U.S. history, Brands has written books on the economic development of the United States and biographies of key leaders in corporate America. His most recent works are America First: Roosevelt vs. Lindbergh in the

Shadow of War (2024) and Founding Partisans: Hamilton, Madison, Jefferson, Adams and the Brawling Birth of American Politics (2023). His writings have been translated into Spanish, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Czech, Danish and Ukrainian.

Brands holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. chair in history at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of various honorary societies, including the Society of American Historians and the Philosophical Society of Texas. He is a regular guest on national radio and television programs, and is frequently interviewed by the American and foreign press.

To complement Brands' visit to Tulsa, the Herman and Kate Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave., will offer a discussion of Brands' Founding Partisans for its Creative Truths: A History Book Discussion program on Saturday, Nov. 16 at 9 a.m. In addition, the Friends of the Tulsa City-County Libraries will offer a "H. W. Brands Sampler" as a part of its popular Books Sandwiched In series on Monday, Dec. 2 at 12:10 p.m. at Central Library in Aaronson Auditorium. Adrian Alexander, dean emeritus of McFarlin Library at The University of Tulsa, will present the retrospect of Brands' work.

For more information about the Distinguished Author Award, visit **www.tulsalibrary.org/helmerichaward** or call 918.549.7323.





# Dove Science Academy Celebrates New Building

Dove Science Academy (DSA), a pre-K through 12 charter school in Tulsa, held a ribbon cutting in October for their new high school building. Dove focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and character development, and serves more than 3,700 students in eight schools across Oklahoma in addition to having one virtual campus. The ribbon cutting for the high school, located at 4343 S. 118th E. Ave., expands the current DSA Tulsa building, which previously served students in pre-K through eighth grade.

Students Kaden Mason, grade 12, Estefania Sanchez, grade 9, Julianna Duran-Frausito, grade 9, and Lizbeth Duran, grade 12, participated in the ribbon cutting, and were excited about the opportunities offered at DSA. Besides more classroom space for expanded learning opportunities, the building will house a separate library.

# CONTESTS & GIVEAWAYS

Get links to the following at tulsakids.com/contests.



# THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Ticket Giveaway

All aboard! From Oct. 28-Nov. 10, enter to win four tickets to THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride, departing from Oklahoma City! This magical holiday train ride includes a one-hour trip to meet Santa, hot chocolate and Walker's shortbread, a "The Polar Express" readalong and more. The tickets will be for Dec. 6, departing at 8 p.m. Details at okcthepolarexpressride.com



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# WHAT'S GOING ONLINE?



# Enchant Christmas Ticket Giveaway

From Nov. 4–17, enter to win a Family 4-Pack to Coca-Cola's Classic Christmas, coming to Oklahoma City's Remington Park Nov. 22–Dec. 29. Step into a world of real holiday magic in this immersive holiday celebration, where cherished holiday traditions come to life amid a spectacle of dazzling lights. Learn more at classicchristmas.com





# Magical Lights Adventure Giveaway

four hot chocolates.

From Nov. 7–20, enter to win a season pass to Magical Lights Adventure, a music-synced Christmas light drive-through show at Tulsa Raceway Park, happening Nov. 22–Dec. 30 (magicallightsadventure.com). The winner will also receive a bag of kettle corn, a bag of cookies and

# Thank you for entering our Favorite Things To Do in Tulsa Photo Contest!

We loved seeing what local families enjoy most about our city! Here are some of the amazing entries:





# "WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PARENTS WITH A BABY IN THE NICU?"

To complement this month's feature article, we asked our Facebook followers (@tulsakidsmagazine) to share advice for parents with a baby in the NICU. We appreciate them sharing their stories and experience. Here are some of the answers; find more at bit.ly/3Y6eRMv:

"My daughter was in NICU for the first two weeks of her life. My advice is to keep being hopeful, talk to your baby every day, do not forget to practice self-care, your positivity will rub off onto all situations...Ask all the questions. Don't stress. I know it's hard, but everything will be alright. Find a support system."

"Ask lots of questions. Continually ask for updates and if certain things from each shift were done. Surround yourself with support. In this tech age, even without people in your corner, there are so many great Tulsa mom FB pages, and I always love seeing how moms show up for each other."

ANDEE C.

"We bought a story book and read to him before we could even hold him. He's grown and a wonderful father himself. It is only a season."

"[T]alk to your baby and speak words of encouragement to them. Stoke their cheek with your hand. It causes a smile, which also helps strengthen their mouth to help get them off of the feeding tube if they have one in. Staying calm and strong for your baby is also important."

"Ask questions and, if you don't understand their answers, do not be afraid to ask for clarification. Write down questions when you have them so you have a list ready when the doctor makes rounds. NICU nurses are a great resource, don't be afraid to ask them questions."

**SHANNON M.** 

"Remember your rights as your child's advocate. Get to know the staff in your baby's care and treat them with as much kindness as you can. Although your baby is your top priority, the staff have several in their care at one time. You never know what they have faced in the room before yours...

Bring a photo or item that brings you comfort to make your baby's room feel softer for you."

AMANDA G.

"Keep notes in your phone or a notebook. You'll be tired and the days will run together, and it will be hard to remember things.

Sleep at home. NICU nurses are angels, and your baby couldn't be in better hands! You have to let your body heal, too."

SHANNON D. L

"[E]ven if absolutely nothing went according to plan, everything that you wanted and dreamed of didn't come to fruition, it doesn't make your experience any less. From the birth plan to the feeding situation, and anything else that happens, it is okay if it looks different than you envisioned, and it is okay to grieve that vision."

# Growing a Grateful Heart: More Is Caught than Taught

By Alicia Kobilnyk



ave you ever watched a child, in the absence of adult direction, complete a task with precision or awareness seemingly beyond their age? Whenever I see a young child, barely walking, squat to wipe up a little mess on the floor or a 2-year-old pull a skeptical face and wag a warning finger at an older sibling, I smile. An old adage comes to mind from my early days as a parent: *More is caught than taught*.

One area where this rings true to me more than most is the process of fostering a grateful heart in young children. How do we lead our little ones from the narrow, selffocused scope of infancy into the openness and conscientiousness of an emotionally healthy and socially successful adult? It's not in a book, a game or in speeches delivered while en route to Thanksgiving dinner. Rather, it is caught. Once again, modeling the behavior we want to see in our children empowers them to grow into those behaviors, one developmental leap at a time. Here are some ideas to get you started modeling gratitude.

## Share the Language

When your baby hands you their little oatmeal-coated spoon instead of throwing it on the floor, say "Thank you" and smile. Form an early connection between gratitude,

connection and positive feelings. If you see someone share a ball at the park, you can show your child and say, "That was kind." And at the end of the day, when you lie back on the couch and wonder how you're going to land this plane, receive your child's bedtime hug with a grateful sigh and thank them, perhaps even adding, "That made me feel better" or "You give great snuggles!" Genuine expression of gratitude teaches children how and when to use these new words to convey their own feelings, often echoed in similar tasks. An example near to my heart happened recently with my 1-year-old. My husband came back from a diaper change with her, an amused look on his face. Well, that's a first" he said. "I've never been thanked for changing a poopy diaper before." No one had specifically told our daughter to say "dank-oo" for that (or any occasion, actually). She simply began to connect the concept that when someone does something to help you, you can say "thank you."

## Speak for Them

When we sit children in a big room full of strange new people listening to strange new music and strange new customs, it's hardly fair to expect them to seamlessly and enthusiastically participate in

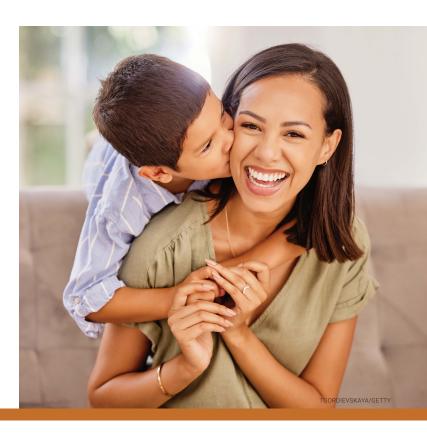
social niceties, such as thanking someone who compliments their clothing or gives them a present. Yet this is exactly what we do with birthday parties, family gatherings and holidays. We, the adults of the world, sit and stare, waiting for them to return an expected and compulsory expression of gratitude. And if it does not come or comes in an unconvincing tone, the mood of the room shifts from doting to disapproval. To avoid this unpleasant and confusing experience for yourself (and your children), fill in the gap between their understanding and the expectations of the group. "Oh look. Grandma got you a gift. Thank you!" Even when in casual settings, you can provide the words for your child and show them, one instance at a time, how to handle the situation with gratitude and grace. As the little old lady passes your preschooler in the checkout line and comments on their new sneakers, you can reply, "She likes your shoes! That was kind. We like them too, don't we?"

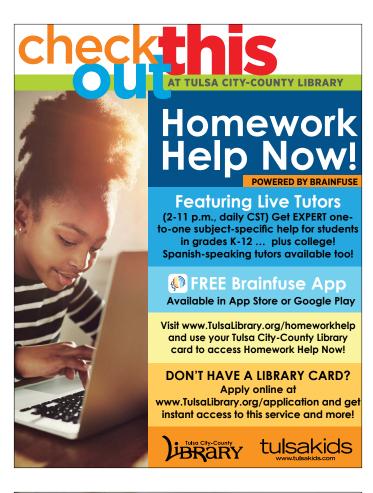
In my own life, with my own children (outside of the "I'm a professional" safety zone of my classroom), I struggled with this some. I wondered, even though it felt right, if I was stunting my

children's growth. Would I always have to speak for them? I ought to have known better. I ought to have known that one day, my oldest child, barely a preschooler herself, would smile at the kind stranger who called her baby sister "a real cutie" and say "Thanks. We like her, too." That moment had us all clutching our hearts and grinning. At that moment, I knew that my daughter had been paying attention and felt ready to start participating a little more as she navigated the world around her. In my heart, I felt a swirl of gratitude for her blossoming kindness and growing heart. The smile in her eyes as she looked at me for feedback and reassurance showed me that she felt grateful for our close connection and this positive result. When we trust our children to follow our lead (and trust ourselves to be good leaders), we make this growth possible.

Every day we get chances to grow a grateful heart, both in our children and in ourselves. 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.







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tulsakids

# Serving Families:

A Deep Dive into the Tulsa Dream Center's Six Pillars of Support

By Tamecca Rogers, PhD



The Dream Center provides wrap-around services for people in need.



he Tulsa Dream Center is a force for transformation in the community, dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty, fostering healing and creating a brighter future. Through its comprehensive services, the Dream Center ensures families can access essential needs such as food, healthcare and educational opportunities. In a conversation with Executive Director Tim Newton and Family Support Specialist Syreeta Burrell, I learned about the core values and programs driving this mission forward.

# THE SIX PILLARS OF THE TULSA DREAM CENTER

The Dream Center's impact is built on six key pillars: food, clothing, medical, education, recreation and housing. Each of these pillars addresses a specific area of need, helping to create a holistic approach to community support. These

pillars work together for children and families within the Tulsa community.

## 1. Food Security

At the heart of the Dream Center's services is ensuring no family goes hungry. The center provides hot meals for children and adults, afterschool meals for kids, and dinner for teens twice weekly. Tim Newton shared how Chick-fil-A has stepped in to donate food, affectionately referred to as "Jesus chicken," allowing the Dream Center to serve between 40 to 100 young people across both campuses each night.

In addition to hot meals, the Dream Center offers a grocery giveaway twice a week at its North and West campuses, ensuring families in need can access the necessary food staples. Newton emphasized that the Dream Center's philosophy is to serve based on the community's needs, responding with empathy and practical solutions.

### 2. Clothing Support

Access to clothing is another critical need that the Dream Center addresses. Families can visit the center's clothing room to select essential items for free. This service is available several days a week, ensuring families have consistent access to the clothes they need for work, school and everyday life. Much like their other services, clothing support is tailored to meet the immediate needs of those seeking assistance.

### 3. Medical Services

The Dream Center's medical clinic is a lifeline for families without health insurance. Open Monday through Thursday at the North campus, with expanded days planned for the West campus, the clinic provides essential medical care to those who otherwise might not have access. The Dream Center partners with programs like FreshRx to help families manage chronic conditions, such as

diabetes and high blood pressure, by prescribing healthy food instead of medication.

The medical program's emphasis on preventative care has significantly impacted the community, with patients reporting improved health outcomes as they embrace healthier lifestyles.

### 4. Education and After-School Programs

Education is a cornerstone of the Dream Center's mission. Their after-school program serves 300 to 500 children daily, providing them with academic support, tutoring and enrichment activities. Newton explained how the program started with simple homework help and became a comprehensive educational service. Today, the Dream Center focuses heavily on literacy, particularly for pre-K through third-grade students, to ensure they have the reading skills necessary for academic success.

In addition to traditional academics, the Dream Center offers a variety of enrichment activities, including coding, 3D printing, cooking, dance and even swim lessons. These programs help children develop essential skills and give them a safe space for fun and to explore new interests

### 5. Recreation

Recreation is vital to the Dream Center's mission to promote health and well-being. The center offers a wide range of youth sports activities, including basketball, soccer and flag football leagues. Soccer has grown significantly in popularity, especially among the Hispanic community.

For younger children, recreational activities are combined with educational support, creating a holistic approach that emphasizes physical health and academic growth. The Dream Center helps children build confidence, teamwork skills and a sense of belonging by providing these outlets.

### 6. Housing and Community Support

The housing component of the Dream Center's services addresses both emergency needs and long-term community development. Through programs like Adopt the Block, the Dream Center engages in community cleanups, home repairs and elder care. Newton described how these efforts are designed to help families stay in their homes safely, especially as many seniors in the community "age in place."

Additionally, the Safe and Secure program helps homeless or at-risk youth aged 16 to 24 by providing housing support and preventing homelessness. One particularly poignant story Newton shared was about a young man whose car broke down while trying to get to work. The Dream Center stepped in to help fix his car, ensuring he could keep his job and remain in his home.

## A PERSONAL JOURNEY: SYREETA BURRELL'S STORY

Family Support Specialist Syreeta Burrell's connection to the Dream Center runs deep. Before she became an employee, she was a recipient of the center's services, coming to the Dream Center for chapel and groceries. Burrell expressed how the care and love she received during that time changed her life. She now takes pride in being able to give back to the community in the same way.

"It's the reward I get every day," Burrell shared. "You know how people feel when they get Grammys? That's how I feel every day when I come here." Her story is a powerful reminder of the transformative impact the Dream Center can have, not just on those it serves but on those who serve it as well.

# THE DREAM CENTER'S LEGACY OF HOPE

The Dream Center's consistent and compassionate approach has made it a cornerstone of the Tulsa community. Tim Newton and Syreeta Burrell emphasized that the Dream Center isn't just about meeting basic needs—it's about doing life with the community, building trust and offering hope.

For families in need, the Dream Center is not just a service provider; it's a partner in their journey toward stability and success. By addressing immediate needs while fostering long-term growth, the Tulsa Dream Center is changing lives and, in turn, helping to transform the entire community. TK

Dr. Tamecca Rogers serves as Director of Student Access and Success at Tulsa Technology Center. An award-winning author and filmmaker, she is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in all her endeavors.

# PJ'S CORNER

# Help for Picky Eaters and Problem Feeders



**O&A** with

# Katherine Brier Bode, R.D.

SAINT FRANCIS CHILDREN'S PHYSICIANS PEDIATRIC GASTROENTEROLOGY DIETITIAN

#### How do you define picky eating?

There is a spectrum to picky eating habits, and it can be difficult to identify each type of picky eater or problem feeder.

Picky eaters will typically eat at least 30 foods, 80-100 percent of the time that it is given to them.

They also have "food jagging" behaviors when children love a food and want to eat it all the time. Picky eaters will burn out on that food, take a break, and then eventually come back to that food. They also eat at least one food from each food group: proteins, grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy products. And at least one from each texture group: purees, soft foods, wet foods, crunchy foods, chewy foods.

Picky eaters can tolerate new foods, even if they complain.

They frequently eat different sets of foods than family members, but they will eat at the same times and in the same area as family members.

### What about problem feeders?

Problem feeders eat less than 20 foods, 80-100 percent of the time. There are entire categories of food that they do not eat such as fruits or vegetables, soft or wet foods. When they burn out on foods that they're food jagging on, they don't come back to them, so the number of foods that they will eat keeps getting smaller. There will be meltdowns, crying and screaming when new foods are introduced.

Like picky eaters, they don't eat the same foods as family members, but they also don't eat at the same time as family members, sometimes not even in the same area.

If your child is exhibiting picky eating or problem feeding behaviors, talk to your primary care physician to get a referral to either a dietitian or to a feeding therapist.

# Is a nutrition supplement a solution for picky eating?

It's not a solution. If you have a regularly eating child, they don't need a supplement. Just increase the volume of what they eat right now. If your child can't eat adequately because you feel like they don't have a good appetite, or you feel like they get full very quickly, that's another sign to talk to your primary care doctor.

# What other resources are available to parents with picky eaters or problem feeders?

Your child's medical care team can connect you with resources and other medical professionals. The dietitians at the Saint Francis Children's Physicians Pediatric Gastroenterology clinic are taking new patients right now.

Other resources are the SOS (Sequential, Oral, Sensory)
Approach to Feeding website,
sosapproachtofeeding.com. They
have a free, two-hour parent
workshop and many educational
resources. Feeding Matters,
feedingmatters.org, is a parent-peer
support resource for parents with a
directory of SOS-trained providers.
Their feeding questionnaires are
helpful to fill out and bring to a
primary care appointment.

If you have questions for a Saint Francis Children's Physicians provider to answer, please email editor@tulsakids.com



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# Get Outdoors! Hiking is Good for the Mind and Body

By Julie Wenger Watson



Just because the weather has turned cooler doesn't mean it's time to hibernate indoors. Fall and winter are a great time of year to enjoy outdoor activities in Oklahoma, and hiking is a fun and affordable way to start. Whether you're looking for a family activity, or offering your teen an alternative to organized sports, screens or boredom, wandering through the wilderness should be at the top of your list.

# Why Hike?

Beyond the basic pleasure of being in nature, hiking provides some very real physical and mental benefits to people of all ages. From a health perspective, hiking is a whole-body workout. It's aerobic exercise in disguise, raising heart rates and improving endurance. It's also a weight-bearing activity, which builds strength and helps improve bone density over time. Encountering uneven surfaces and ascending/descending trails helps improve balance, too.

Activities like hiking are also an investment in future health. Studies have shown that regular exercise in childhood and adolescence increases the odds of staying physically active and healthy during adulthood, which means a lower risk of obesity, certain types of cancer and cardiovascular disease

A 2015 Stanford-led study showed that spending time in nature, away from the stressors of everyday life, is also beneficial to mental health. The researchers found that being outside for extended periods of time helped to lessen both negative thinking patterns and activity in the part of the brain associated with mental illness.

Hiking outdoors can also raise serotonin levels, enhancing focus and problem-solving abilities, as well as fostering a sense of personal and social renewal. Extended time in nature may also help teens perform better in school by relieving stress and recharging their ability to think creatively and solve problems. A 2012 study by researchers at the University of Kansas demonstrated that people from all walks of life show significant cognitive improvement — as much as a 50 percent boost in creativity - after living for a few days steeped in nature, unplugged from cell phones, the internet and other screens.

Although hiking is an enjoyable solo activity, hiking with a friend, family or group improves relational health by fostering connection, creating bonds and positive memories, and providing quality time. A challenging hike can provide opportunities to overcome obstacles together, which engenders trust. Easier hikes create a shared experience and an opportunity to have conversations, explore and bond. The benefits of improved, positive relationships include feelings of self-worth, confidence, support systems, enhanced communication skills and increased conflict management skills - all of which can help your teen navigate adolescence.

# **Getting Started**

Like any sport, the amount of gear available is endless (as is the amount you can spend), but for beginner "day hikers" following an existing, well-marked path, the bar is low for entry when it comes to equipment. Temperature, season, weather forecast, hike duration and common sense should dictate clothing choices — with a heavy emphasis on comfort. Good hiking clothes are moisture wicking, drawing sweat and moisture away

from the skin and drying quickly, thereby helping to avoid skin discomfort and making it easier to regulate core body temperature. Dressing in layers, especially in the winter, is smart.

In Oklahoma, sun protection is important year-round, whether it's a hat, sunscreen or UV-protective clothing. Similarly, a water bottle is a must for longer hikes or for any hike in the summer heat, and an easily digestible snack is always nice if you plan to be out more than an hour or so. In the summer, bug repellent is a smart choice, too. For hiking after dark, a headlamp can come in handy. In uneven terrain, sturdy footwear, like hiking boots or trail shoes, will make your life a lot easier, even on a short trek. A backpack or fanny pack to store your phone, ID, etc., is a good option, too.

Don't let a lack of equipment keep you from hiking, though. You likely already have everything you need to tackle a short, easy-to-moderately difficult, well-marked trail. Tennis shoes, gym clothes, water and sunscreen — you're set. If you decide to explore longer, more challenging hikes, you can slowly add to your gear as your budget allows.





# Finding a Trail

You don't have to go far to get in a good hike when you live in Tulsa. Turkey Mountain is an accessible urban wilderness with miles of trails right near the intersection of W. 71st St. and S. Elwood Ave. Ample parking, bathrooms and water fountains make this park a perfect place to begin. You can bring your dog, too. Just keep your furry friend on a leash and pick up after it. This park does get heavy use, but the good news is that they are adding another 88 acres, with six new miles of trails, next year. More at riverparks.org.

The Keystone Ancient Forest Preserve is a 20-minute drive west of Tulsa. The trails are well marked and rated, so that hikers can choose their challenge, from relatively easy to fairly difficult. The facility features plenty of parking and a lovely visitor's center with very nice bathrooms and helpful staff. The preserve is open Thursday through Sunday, and dogs are allowed on leashes the first and third weekends of each month. This is an old-growth forest, with live post oak and red cedar trees that pre-date the existence of the

United States, some up to 500 years old! More at facebook.com/ KeystoneAncientForest.

Oxley Nature Center in Mohawk Park boasts nearly nine miles of trails; most of them are flat and fairly smooth. Hiking is allowed seven days a week, yearround, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., although the Interpretive Center (and its bathrooms!) keep more limited hours. Pets are not allowed at Oxley. For more information, visit oxleynaturecenter.org.

For more information on hiking in Oklahoma, visit travelok.com. **TK** 

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.



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# Sallie Dale:

# Growing a Business and a Family

By Nancy A. Moore



Sallie Dale, founder of The Urban Acres and mother of three - soon to be four — has always enjoyed exploring her creativity. In fact, she remembers sitting at the art table in elementary school and, when her classmates rotated to other tables, staying to continue her art project. Her creative talent continued to flourish and, years later, after she and her husband Andrew were married, she entered a contest for Mrs. Meyer's Homemaker of the Year and won, in large part, because of her imaginative and innovative projects. She has been blogging about her DIY creations since 2014.

Now, Sallie is inspiring a new generation of creators by bringing an old-school craft known as punch needle embroidery up to date. If you're wondering what punch needle art is, it's a simpler form of embroidery and uses a large needlelike tool to punch loops of yarn into fabric stretched on a hoop. Sallie's artfully created signature punch-needle patterns are available in her curated kits, making it easy to have everything you need to start, or continue, this hobby. Punch needle is an engaging activity for adults as well as kids — it benefits fine-motor skills and lessens screen time. Sallie is encouraging people to reconnect to their creativity.

TK: Tell us about the contest you won in 2016 and the opportunities that created for you.

Sallie: The Mrs. Meyer's Homemaker contest was looking for a brand ambassador to partner with for a year. The winner would fly to New York for a photo shoot, and then the big prize was \$75,000. So, not a small thing. I learned about the contest from my friend who sent it to me on Instagram. I entered by filming two videos: one showing me making felt flowers, and the other of a chicken coop that my husband built based off of a design I found on Pinterest. It had a big vegetable garden on the top and the chickens lived on the bottom.

I filmed that video, submitted it and, right around Christmas in 2015, found out that I was a semifinalist, and I had to make some other videos. Voter participation was a part of it, so we launched our campaign and had everyone we knew voting for us and voting for me. And I ended up winning, which was wild!

# TK: You won, in large part, due to your creativity. Have you always been creative?'

Sallie: I drew all over the closet shelves with crayons in my childhood bedroom. I remember crafting in my car, like always, having little bins of paper and stickers and making yarn and just always making stuff.

TK: Where do you think your love of art began?



Sallie: My mom is an artist. She sewed, cross-stitched and really nurtured that in me. We would sit and work on projects together. She would find things that she liked, for example, from Martha Stewart magazine, and we would figure out how to make them. This was all before Pinterest was a thing, so we'd go to Hobby Lobby and get things that we thought we needed and start. She was so wonderful to give me the tools and the time and let me get messy. She also taught me how to clean up.

# TK: How did The Urban Acres get started?

Sallie: The Urban Acres looked very different when it started in 2014. Andrew and I were newlyweds, and we didn't have any money. I wanted to decorate our house, but that's difficult when you don't have the money. So, I started a blog. The name came about because I got some chickens, including one breed called a silky chicken; I loved it because they look like cotton balls — white, fluffy and so cute. It got me thinking that I could blog about what I was doing where I lived in the middle of town. And one day the name just came to me, The Urban Acres. It hit me because we lived in the city, urban, but I also had chickens.

My first posts were about our chickens and making pies. I also had a couple of DIYs, like a

macrame table runner and vases. I took it very seriously. I had a content calendar and shared different things that I was doing and recipes that I was making. In the beginning, I didn't have a huge following, but it was really fun. I loved working on it.

# TK: Let's talk about what it has turned into. You still have that creative spin, but its focus is now on punch needle art. Can you share what punch needle is and how you got into it?

Sallie: I did something similar with my mom when I was young and then rediscovered punch needle in 2018. As soon as I saw it on Instagram, it was one of those things that I thought I wanted to do. Because the supplies to get started can be expensive, I asked Andrew if I could take an advance on my future gifts — birthday, Valentine's, Christmas, anniversary — and buy the supplies. He agreed, and I bought a full set of needles, a frame and some fabric. I already had yarn. And then I started punching. The first thing I punched was not very good, but I really enjoyed it. It didn't take long to catch on to it, and I figured other people would enjoy it, too, and they do!

# TK: How did you turn this into a business?

**Sallie:** There were a few kits on the market, but they weren't very good.



There weren't any designs that I really liked either, so I just took it upon myself to create my own designs. Then, I bought the components for 10 kits and sold those. And then I bought the components for 10 more and sold those. And went to 25 and then 100. Now we're selling hundreds of kits each month.

# TK: Can you share how your business has grown as your family has grown?

Sallie: When I started, my goal was to pay for our groceries. It was in 2019 that the punch needle art really took off, and I was teaching high school art. I also found out I was pregnant with our first child, Dot, halfway through the school year, and I immediately knew I wasn't going to go back and teach the next year. I wanted to stay home with my baby. I figured out how many kits I would have to sell to replace my teaching income.

I spent that summer working on my Etsy shop. Andrew would go to work, and I would be at home just working on designing kits and working on social media. It took that whole summer and, by the time Dot was born, I was in labor, actively having contractions and packing orders to get them out so that I could go have my baby and not have to worry about getting all the orders out.

# TK: What were the early days of building your business like with a baby?

Sallie: When she was born, it was

just me working on the business, so I would work during her nap times. I would work frantically and then when she woke up, I'd spend time with her and play. As she got older, she could play independently, and I would work. My husband has been a huge part of this. I could not have done this without him.

# TK: When did you realize that you needed to hire help?

Sallie: One night, I felt so overwhelmed and was on my kitchen floor crying. I told Andrew that I just wanted to be a mom, and the business was taking too much time. I didn't know how to keep up. He looked and me and said, "Well, you can't do it all." But I didn't think I could afford to pay anyone. And then he said something that made me realize what I needed to do to scale the business. He said, "You're treating yourself as though the work you do doesn't cost you anything, and that's not true. It's costing you your time, which is the most valuable thing of all."

After he said that, I had a moment of realization. Shortly after, I was in my office one day and felt like I heard the Lord say to me, "I didn't just give you this business to be a blessing to you, but so that you could be a blessing to other people."

### TK: So, what was your next step?

Sallie: I quickly realized that there were so many other stay-at-home moms who wanted to be with their babies. They also needed to make

money, but they didn't want to leave their kids, which is exactly what I wanted. So, I looked for people willing to help me in my business in different ways. Many of them wind yarn for me, and that is still how it works. They get yarn, wind it, pack it and then they give it back to my shipping manager.

# TK: Did you see the benefits of their efforts?

Sallie: It's been wonderful to experience this level of growth where The Urban Acres is not just supporting my family, but also supporting a lot of other families in the Tulsa area. That's been a big lesson for me—giving people the opportunity to do what they can do and let it be a blessing for them to do it.

# TK: As your business has grown, what have you learned?

Sallie: I've had to learn that I need to divide my work with others so that I can focus on what I'm really good at, which is teaching and coming up with designs. Those are the things I love. I'm happy to have learned all the various aspects of the business and thankful my knowledge has grown. But ultimately, I want to help empower others who work with me to operate in their gifts and talents, which ultimately benefits both of us, and I think that's wonderful

# TK: Talk to us about the importance of adults and kids tapping into our creativity.

Sallie: I think you have to be intentional with your creative time because it's one of the first things on the chopping block when you get busy. You have to be really intentional about making the time to sit down and do it. It's interesting because, historically, handiwork handcrafts were things that women have always done. They've sewn, made rugs or knitted, and it was creative, but it also had a purpose in the family. For example, knitting socks for your children, making dresses for your daughters, things like that.

And now, with the way things are, you don't have to make things you need anymore. You just go

to the store and get it. So, I think that's why a lot of people have lost that creative side, because it's not useful. It's now considered a luxury to be creative instead of a necessity. And so that's really what I want to help bring people back to. Let's get creative. Let's take time away from social media and your computer and do something that is relaxing and reduces stress and anxiety. You can sit next to someone and have a conversation, and you're together, and that's wonderful.

## TK: You mentioned people unplugging from social media, including kids. It's easy to put a screen in front of a child on a road trip, and I happened to notice that you had your daughter doing a little project on a road trip.

Sallie: It's really wonderful to introduce people to a craft that could be something they do and introduce their kids to. As Dot has gotten older, she has become more interested in doing projects. She did her first beginner kit at age 4, and I showed her how to do it. Once she got started, she just sat there intently for about an hour and a half, working quietly on her project. She got almost to the end and said, "OK, I'm done." She came back and finished it later, but I was so impressed with her! I think kids are capable of a lot more than we think they are. It just takes a little bit of time for us to explain and show them how. Then, once we give them the opportunity to do it, they can do it! TK

You can find Sallie online: TheUrbanAcres.com and also on social media: Instagram: @theurbanacres

Listen to the entire interview and learn how Sallie is achieving professional and personal growth on the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast. Access this podcast 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

# Going Against Our Genes

Metabolic health issues are on the rise as we continue to push against our genetic makeup

By Marnie Fernandez



"An example would be to start with one meal where they can make a change, like adding a fruit or vegetable. We must start with small steps. This is a marathon, not a sprint."

nce upon a time, in a land not so far away, cultures of hunters and gatherers roamed our planet. These prehistoric nomadic groups hunted or foraged for food from their environment. Then, a mere 12,000 years ago, studies show evidence of the emergence of agriculture, and human lifestyles began to change.

Fast forward to the last 75 years, when processed foods and refined sugar have become a staple in our diet. At the same time, health issues such as diabetes and obesity began to rise, especially in children and youth.

Dr. Carley Meade, a pediatric obesity specialist at Clover Pediatrics, says none of this is a coincidence "During the prehistoric era, people would only eat every few days," Dr. Meade says. "Our bodies aren't made for eating as often as we do or eating processed food that has become so prevalent in today's culture. We are literally going against our genetic makeup."

Dr. Meade is a certified pediatric endocrinologist who specializes in metabolic health issues for children and youth. She runs a small clinic in South Tulsa where she treats patients from a wide geographic area, as she is one of only two pediatric obesity specialists in the state.

"In addition to going against our evolutionary makeup, there are some children who handle weight and metabolism differently — they have some sort of metabolic dysfunction that makes them gain weight," she says.

Dr. Mead says there are several factors that come into play when addressing metabolic health issues with children and youth, so her first meeting involves a two-hour intake session.

"I want to spend lots of time with each patient, getting to know them and learning all about their habits," she says. "Every treatment plan is different and takes into consideration a holistic view of the patient."

She learns everything from their eating habits, sleeping patterns, and internal and external stressors before she devises a treatment plan for her patients and

their guardians. Everyone must buy into the plan before moving forward.

"I like to present options so the patient can choose which one they think they can stick to, and we go from there," Dr. Meade says. "An example would be to start with one meal where they can make a change, like adding a fruit or vegetable. We must start with small steps. This is a marathon, not a sprint."

Sleep and exercise are built into the plan as well.

"Again, we focus on one small item at a time. For example, adding one hour of activity of something they like to do and cutting back one hour of screen time a day."



Incremental changes and monthly meetings are the key to long-term success. Finding out the family dynamics and where everyone is on their child's health journey is crucial as well.

"We have to get everyone (in the family) on board," Dr. Meade says. "Once we are on the same page, we chip away at the plan — little successes at the beginning can make the difference on continuing to move in the right direction."

Dr. Meade doesn't believe in weigh-ins or counting calories.

"The goal is metabolic health, not weight loss. And that is different for every patient, especially when dealing with children versus teenagers." As patients follow their individualized plan, it becomes a lifestyle rather than a "program" or "diet."

"Ultimately, I help children and youth make substantiable changes to improve their health, function and quality of life. I want them to leave here equipped with the tools they need to live their best life." TK

Marnie Fernandez is an accomplished PR professional with over two decades of experience in public relations, community engagement, event planning, strategic communications, nonprofit management, writing and media relations.





# Thanksgiving Crafts to Inspire Gratitude

By Tara Rittler





What are you grateful for? These simple crafts can encourage your family to ponder this question and share the answers together.

### Gratitude Jar

Decorate a jar and set it in a place that is easy for the kids to reach. Leave some colorful scraps of paper next to the jar. When family members think of something they are grateful for, they can write it down on a piece of paper and leave it in the jar. At the end of each week, the whole family can sit down together, empty the jar and read what they were thankful for!

Variation: Instead of random pieces of paper, cut the paper into leaf shapes. Paint a "gratitude tree" on a large sheet of paper. When you empty your gratitude jar at the end of the week, glue the leaves onto the tree—and watch it grow!

# Gratitude Journal

Purchase a special journal for each of your kids. Take some time at the end of each day to write down what you are thankful for. Share some as a family. Alternately, use one journal for the whole family. You can either just write down your thoughts, or turn this into a

scrapbook-type project, gluing in mementos like concert tickets, photos, etc.

## Make and Write Thank-You Notes

Buy some blank note cards or high-quality paper (watercolor paper might work well) and create your own thank you cards! Give some out at Thanksgiving, or simply work on them over the Thanksgiving holiday so you're prepared to send cards after Christmas.

### Gratitude Garland

This project can double as fall décor. All you need is colorful

paper, ribbon or twine, and clothespins. Hang the ribbon in your home — for example, along a mantelpiece. Cut the paper into whatever shape you like (again, leaf shapes can work well for this).

Have your family discuss what they are grateful for and write the answers on the paper. Use the clothespins to hang the paper on the ribbon as an on-going reminder of all the good things and people in your life. TK

**Tara Rittler** has worked as TulsaKids' web and social media editor since spring 2017. She is also a mom to a 9-year-old son.





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# FESTIVAL A Sweet New Tulsa By Tayar Holiday Tradition



f you've only seen one ballet in your life, chances are, it's *The Nutcracker*.

"The Nutcracker is a staple for every ballet company around the world, the United States in particular," says Scott Black, managing director for Tulsa Ballet. He attributes the ballet's success to our collective love of holidays and family traditions. "It's a story that all ages can relate to." he explains. "And it's really seeing the magic of the holidays through the eyes of a child. That's what it's all about."

Because of this, going to *The Nutcracker* has become a holiday tradition for generations of families — in Tulsa in particular. Tulsa Ballet's production has been running for over 50 years and includes a cast of around 100 children playing party-goers, rats and toy soldiers. So, many Tulsans have grown up not just attending the production but participating in it as well. "If you go to any place in Tulsa and talk about The Nutcracker, there will be somebody in that room who was in *The Nutcracker* at one point," Black says.

# "Oklahoma's Most Exciting Holiday Experience"

This year, Nutcracker enthusiasts can experience the classic story in a brand-new way, at the inaugural Nutcracker Festival, sponsored by the Hardesty Family Foundation and presented by Tulsa Ballet and TulsaGo®. The festival will take place Dec. 6-7 at the SageNet Center at Expo Square.

Activities include a holiday gift market, live entertainment, photo backdrops, holiday-themed inflatables, an iceless ice-skating rink, cake walk, Santa and a train ride to meet the Sugarplum Fairy.

"Being the Nutcracker Festival, we are trying to tie everything in as much as possible to the theme of *The Nutcracker*, even the story of *The* Nutcracker," Black says.

Those familiar with the ballet will know that the second act features Clara's visit to the Land of Sweets, where ballerinas representing delectable items such as coffee, tea, marzipan — and of course, the Sugarplum Fairy — delight the audience through a series of iconic dance numbers. The Nutcracker Festival will have its own "Land of Sweets and Eats," featuring a special Nutcracker Festival blend of Topeca Coffee, specialty chocolates and even a Nutcracker Festival beer by Marshall Brewery. "They don't really drink beer in The Nutcracker," Black jokes, "but we're going to allow that as an opportunity at this event."

While Tulsa is no stranger to winter festivals, the Nutcracker Festival will be unique not just because of its theme, but because of its indoor setting — which reduces concerns of inclement weather disrupting an event that has been many years in the making.



# The Marketplace

Erik-Michael Collins, senior managing partner at TulsaGo®, says they are excited to be partnering with Tulsa Ballet in this unique endeavor. "When Scott came to me with this idea," Collins says, "I almost immediately said 'yes' to it. Because it's something I know that is not happening here in the city, and then in our research, it's not happening anywhere else in the country."

TulsaGo® has produced the successful OKGO Market® for several years, making them the perfect organization to partner with in planning the Nutcracker Festival's massive holiday market. Not to mention, Erik-Michael Collins himself is one of the many Tulsans who have performed in Tulsa Ballet's *The Nutcracker* as a child. While Tulsa Ballet is handling most of the Nutcracker Festival logistics, TulsaGo® is taking the lead on organizing the marketplace.

Collins says they currently have over 50 local vendors signed up, who will be selling everything from clothing, jewelry and accessories to food, health and beauty products and more. "All the people that are going to be set up there, they're really cottage-based businesses," he says. "So this gives them an opportunity to set up in a store-front setting, whereas normally they work out of their home."

And, while doing your holiday shopping online or at a big box store may be convenient, Collins emphasizes the importance of shopping local so that tax revenue goes toward local endeavors like infrastructure projects. "It's always so important to support local businesses because they are the foundation for a thriving community," he says.

# Attending the Festival

Dec. 6-7

SageNet Center at Expo Square (Upper Level), 4145 E. 21st St.

nutcrackerfest.com

facebook.com/nutcrackerfest

Nutcracker Festival tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at **nutcrackerfest.com**. Adult tickets are \$13, and child tickets (ages 3–12) are \$11. Children under 3 get in free, and group discounts are available.

These general admission tickets grant you access to the market, live entertainment, bowling provided by Andy B's Bowling, the Land of Sweets and Eats, and photo ops. Add-on activities (ranging from \$5–15) include the cake walk, ice skating, a reindeer photo experience, etc.

Nutcracker Festival attendees will also be able to purchase discounted tickets to *The Nutcracker* performance, which runs at the Tulsa PAC on select days, Dec. 8–22. Visit **tulsaballet.org** for details.





At only 23 weeks' gestation, Hilliary Eslinker began having contractions. Alarmed, she and her husband, Scott, rushed to the emergency room. They never imagined that their successful IVF pregnancy would lead to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Ascension St. John Hospital. Two days after being admitted to the hospital in early labor, baby Greer was born and immediately intubated.

"I didn't know if she was going to make it, and I just wanted to see her face," Hilliary said through tears. "They brought her around so I could see her."

Hilliary and Scott's baby girl weighed 1 pound 4 ounces at birth and was only 11.75 inches long. They visited Greer that night and saw her for the first time in her glass enclosure, separating them from touch.

Like Greer, one in 10 babies in the United States is born before term. Preterm births are a leading cause of infant mortality. To raise awareness of this issue, November is designated National Prematurity Awareness month. It highlights the health issues arising from preterm births like the Eslinkers experienced. It also highlights what can be done to prevent preterm births and new innovations to help preemies.

Ultimately, hope is at the root of this awareness. Teams of caretakers like the ones caring for Greer at Ascension St. John and in NICUs across the country are committed to saving lives. The NICU staff is charged with fighting to save preterm babies and very ill newborns, a career that is challenging, stressful and sometimes heartbreaking. The rewards are worth the stress when health professionals see babies in their care go home. Promising data

show that the survival rate for a baby born at 28 weeks is 80 to 90 percent, with some data showing rates as high as 94 to 98 percent, with only 10 percent of babies born at 28 weeks having long-term complications.

"The first two weeks were wild and stressful, and I didn't get to hold her for the first time until she was 41 days old," Hilliary said. "I had so much guilt and didn't think I wanted to touch her at first. I felt like it was all my fault."

Hilliary's feelings are not uncommon to moms of preemies, according to research published by the NIH in England. Many women in the study experienced anxiety, fatigue, flashbacks and negative feelings in the early months after giving birth. A caring NICU staff, therefore, is crucial in helping ease the parents' stress as they navigate the unexpected outcome of a premature birth and the unfamiliar environment of the neonatal unit.



During the Greer's entire stay in the NICU, the staff supported the Eslinkers, giving them love, encouraging them and holding their hands during one of the most trying times in their lives.

Kennedy Raby, RN, was one of the nurses who cared for Greer. "I started taking care of Greer within her first week of life and took care of her all of her stay in the NICU," she said. "I was there for many of baby's milestones, through the good and the bad times."

NICU staff work daily to set goals with the families and emphasize their committed presence. NICUs have evolved and developed significantly in the last decade to provide the most optimal and successful care to premature and ill babies, with increased staff training, technological advancements, improved language bridges, innovative family-centered care, and improvements in testing, ultimately increasing the survival rates for newborns.

Claire Cromie-Johnson, manager of external communications for Ascension St. John, is proud to work alongside the professionals who give so much of themselves to the care they provide.

"I really admire these people like Kennedy, staff, associates and nurses who do this because they are passionate about it and make such a difference in the world," Claire said. "There is an extraordinary amount of work, time and talent that goes into making sure the families that come for care get that and have confidence in their care team."

When it was time to take baby Greer off her ventilators to prepare for life outside the NICU, Scott and Hilliary were warned of the many possible challenges that could be ahead of them. "It was terrifying, but she never had to be intubated again," Hilliary said. "The staff provided so much comfort and just wanted to love on and hug my baby. They were so there for her."

One of the staff attributed Greer's strong will to her survival. Today, Greer is a fun, tough and happy almost 2-year-old little girl, who keeps her mommy and daddy on their toes. Kennedy and other staff members from Ascension St. John NICU have kept in touch with the family. Kennedy sometimes babysits for them. "They shared all of those emotions with us in the most challenging times," she said. "They waited for this little girl for so long, and now she's just thriving."

"It takes an incredible amount of courage to share such a personal journey, but the opportunity for hope is what makes all of our work so rewarding," Claire said. "By sharing this story, it could give some modicum of comfort to others who may be going through the same thing, or who have experienced it firsthand."

"We are just so thankful for everything they did for us," Hilliary said. "It was scary, but when it was time to go home, it was honestly hard to leave them. We were there for 124 days, and I cried saying goodbye to our nurses. The staff there is just really special to me."

Macy Goodnight is a freelance writer and photographer from Broken Arrow. She loves spending time with her family and friends, and has a keen interest in studying history, gardening, hiking, and traveling.

Above: Hilliary and Scott Eslinker with daughter Greer.

Right: (L to R) Kennedy Raby, NICU nurse, Greer Eslinker, and Kaylee Gorry, front desk worker, NICU nurse's aide, who is in nursing school with plans to be a NICU nurse.



# Your Child's Point of View:

An Interview with Kelsie Olds, The Occuplaytional Therapist

By Tara Rittler





"I was 13 and newly allowed to use the internet, so I followed their blog," Olds explains, which is where they first encountered the term occupational therapy. "And when I researched it, I was like, 'That's what I want to do with my life.""

Pursuing this career brought Kelsie back to Tulsa in 2012 for college and grad school at ORU and OU-Tulsa. They worked in the area until 2020 in public schools, skilled nursing facilities and the Laura Dester Children's Center in north Tulsa.

In 2021, after moving away from Tulsa, Olds started a Facebook page called The Occuplaytional Therapist, which has grown to over 160,000 followers. When they started the page, Olds says, "I was trying to post activities that you should do with your kids, and what they would be teaching them." However, Olds' approach has shifted since

then, as they've continued to write and research. The page's emphasis is now on child-led play.

"I think that adults often get in the way of kids when they decide, 'We're going to play this activity, and I hope that you're going to learn this from it, and this will be your takeaway," Olds says.

# Occupational Therapy and Play

Child-led play is central to Olds' mindset as a pediatric occupational therapist. An occupational therapist is trained to address both physical and social/emotional difficulties. "OT is in the middle of a lot of Venn diagrams," Olds says. "If there's a very physical, bio-mechanical, medicine-based on one side, and then...people's minds and people's emotions on the other side, OT's in the middle."

OT differs from other types of therapy, Olds explains, because "it is rooted in what occupies your time. What's meaningful to the person." They give an example of two people recovering from wrist surgery: "An occupational therapist might find

out that one has kids and loves knitting and needs to type on the computer all the time, and one is retired and likes to go fishing and doesn't have anybody they have to take care of besides themselves. [The OT] might approach therapy differently with those two people because they're rooting it in what's meaningful to that person."

When it comes to working with pediatric patients, Olds says, a primary difference is that the child isn't the one who decided they needed therapy, rather, "it was a bunch of adults on behalf of the child." And yet the child is the one who must show up for appointments and do the work.

"So the part of [OT] where it's rooted in what's meaningful to the person experiencing the therapy is absent if I come at it only from the lens of 'I need to meet everything the adult said and please the adults' — and leave the child out of the equation entirely. That's not at all occupational therapy," Olds says.

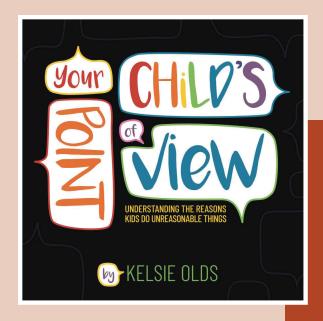
Using a child-led approach allows Olds to help the patient in a way that is meaningful to them, accomplishing therapy goals through activities the child enjoys. And what's more, this approach is more effective than simply doing worksheets or exercises.

"[Children] play as naturally as they breathe," Olds says. "And so, if I turn something into meaningful play, or give them an idea of a way to meaningfully play, then they'll do it with their siblings and with their friends at recess and in the spare moments that they have at home...and I didn't have to be like, 'Here's a bunch of assigned homework' because I tapped into what's magic about OT — it's rooted in the meaning."

# Understanding Your Child's Point of View

Olds says that people often comment that they have a knack for seeing things from a child's point of view. And Olds has recently turned this gift into a book, Your Child's Point of View: Understanding the Reasons Kids Do Unreasonable Things, to help parents develop this skill as well.





'We're a team. The team has a bunch of different needs depending on how big it is. And we all need to get our needs met. Nobody's needs are more important than somebody else's needs...And that takes a lot of figuring out, and it's very hard, and it's also possible. That's what I hope to convey."

"I think that a lot of adults don't remember what it's like to be a child," Olds says. Furthermore, "when people try to take a child's perspective, I find that a lot of times they will get it wrong in ways that really reveal that the person might be thinking more about themself. Like, when a child is screaming and losing their mind, and the adult's like, "They're doing it to get attention from me,' [when in reality] the child might just be losing their mind because they feel really bad."

Your Child's Point of View is divided into five main chapters: Babies and Toddlers, Littles and Middles, Tweens and Teens, At School and Inner Child. On the left-hand side of each spread are two word bubbles, one with an adult's perspective on a challenging behavior, and one with "one possible child's point of view."

For example, in the Littles and Middles section, one adult's point of view is, "She refuses to do simple things that she already knows how to do and insists she needs me to help her. She's known how to do them for years. She doesn't need my help."

The possible child's point of view states, "Please take care of me, even though I am big. Don't expect me to do everything all by myself just because I physically can; I emotionally can't."

Beyond this, each scenario is accompanied by a page filled with

relevant child development information, which can help adults realize when their expectations might not line up with a child's abilities, and some problem-solving activities adults can try when the situation arises.

Although the book can't cover every possible situation, Olds hopes that adults can take the general concepts and create a framework from which they're able to work through other challenging scenarios.

## **Sensory Processing**

A concept that comes up throughout the book is sensory processing. "Sensory processing is the way in which people take input from the world through their senses, which includes the five senses that you learned about in school, but also other ones like your sense of balance, your sense of movement, being able to interpret your inner body sensations — like hunger, the need to go to the toilet, things like that," Olds explains. "And turning it into something meaningful or actionable or what you need to be able to function at the best level that you can."

There are four sensory processing styles that affect how people react in different situations. "Some people need a lot of sensory input in order to be able to regulate their body," Olds says. "And some people get overwhelmed by too much sensory input and need ways to filter some of it out."

A child more prone to being overwhelmed by sensory input may get upset over loud noises, unexpected or uncomfortable sensations, etc. A child who generally needs more sensory input may tend to wiggle, fidget, and so on.

"It's not that having a sensory processing style is dysfunctional or anything like that," Olds says. "But if you're at the very extremes of them, you could be seeing impacts on your day-to-day life. You could be having a harder time getting your needs met."

At these extremes, seeing an OT might help a child learn to function in a healthier way. "But if it's just one or two 'annoying' things that your child is doing...then coming at it from a sensory lens of problem solving might help," Olds says. "You might be able to realize, 'Oh, they're probably not making a lot of noise all the time to annoy me, they're making a lot of noise all the time because they want to hear the sound of something. Maybe we could play music in the house."

## Caring for Your Inner Child

Your Child's Point of View can not only help parents and caretakers relate to children in a more understanding way, it can also help adults find more compassion for themselves and prioritize making sure their own needs are met.

"There's a huge component where [an adult reader] might be like, 'Nobody ever saw me this way.

Nobody ever afforded me this grace," Olds explains. "Nobody ever told me about my brain and the way it processes things. How am I supposed to do that for another human being? I don't even know how to do it for me!

"It takes time to override the messaging that you might have heard from adults growing up," Olds continues, "so there's a whole section about your inner child because I'm also trying to convey how to take care of yourself and how to balance this. No part of the book is supposed to be like, 'Adults are wrong, kids are right, get over yourself.' None of that would ever be any messaging that I would hope to convey. It's like, 'We're a team. The team has a bunch of different needs depending on how big it is. And we all need to get our needs met. Nobody's needs are more important than somebody else's needs...And that takes a lot of figuring out, and it's very hard, and it's also possible. That's what I hope to convey." TK

Follow Kelsie Olds on Facebook and Instagram: @occuplaytional, or visit their website, occuplaytional com, for additional resources. Your Child's Point of View: Understanding the Reasons Kids do Unreasonable Things is available on Amazon.

**Tara Rittler** has worked as TulsaKids' web and social media editor since spring 2017. She is also a mom to a 9-year-old son.

# The Rules of Civility: Manners at Every Age

By Natalie Mikles



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

f Miss Manners showed up unexpectedly to dinner at my house, she would be appalled. My hooligans might be slumped over their plates — some sitting on barstools and some at the table, reaching across their siblings' plates for another piece of bread or talking

But! When it counts, they know how to act. At least there's that. Life is altogether less formal than it was decades ago. Dress codes have loosened, and the rules of etiquette are not so stringent. But kids still need to know the rules of civility at the dinner table. Understanding basic mealtime manners saves embarrassment for parents and for kids.

with their mouths full. And I can't

in their laps.

promise they would all have napkins

Kids need to use their best table manners when they go to a restaurant or have guests over, but it's best to use basic table manners every day rather than wait for a crash course right before getting together with family for Thanksgiving or another big event.

Here are our tips for mealtime etiquette, for toddlers and beyond.

### **TODDLERS**

Teaching manners can begin as soon as kids can talk!

Please and Thank You: How cute is it when you hear a toddler say "please!" and "thank you!" Teach them when they're young to say please and thank you, and it will become a habit.

**Take Turns:** Taking turns is hard for older kids, so it can be practically painful for toddlers. But teaching little ones to hang tight while you're filling plates or passing out sippy cups to each kiddo teaches them manners and patience.

Play Tea Party: They may not be practicing table manners yet in real life, but it's fun to pretend. Play tea party with your toddlers, so they can model how you ask politely for more tea, and sip rather than slurp. It's a fun way to sneak in an etiquette lesson.

### **PRESCHOOL**

Preschoolers are still little and should be given grace when it comes to table manners. But these are great years of learning and growing!

**Set the Table:** Let your preschooler set the table before dinner. This

can be as simple as putting paper or melamine plates around the kitchen island or can be more formal with cloth napkins and silverware at the table. Either way, give your preschooler some creative expression by letting them choose the plates or the cups they would like to use.

Be Playful: One of the most difficult things for a preschooler to do at the table is sit still. Do a round robin of questions, letting everyone have a turn asking questions like, "What is your favorite color? Would you rather play in the snow or in the sand? If you could fly, where would you go?" Learning to make conversation at the dinner table is a big part of mealtime etiquette!

Dress-Up Dinner: Have a black-tie dinner at home and ask the family to come dressed to the nines. For parents, that might mean a sparkly dress or jacket, but to kids it could mean anything from a Cinderella gown to last year's Superman Halloween costume to an Easter dress. Let them choose. But let them know that everyone is expected to use their best

### **ELEMENTARY**

Expectations rise a bit for elementary school-age kids. By this age, kids can do more to help and participate in mealtime.

JACOB WACKERHAUSEN/GETTY

Mini Lessons: Sunday dinner, when you might have more time than on a weeknight, is a good time to remind kids of table etiquette. You can't expect them to know what you haven't taught them! Quiz them on silverware placement, which way to pass a dish and whether their glass should go on the left or right of their plates.

Let Them Cook: When kids prepare the meal, they're often more interested in using good manners when they sit down to eat. They will appreciate everyone sitting up straight, the polite conversation and putting their napkins in their laps after they've taken the time to make dinner, which can be anything from spaghetti (with your help at the stove) to PB&J with applesauce and milk.

**Back to Basics:** Remember those things you taught your toddler? It's always a good idea to circle back to basic manners — saying please and thank you, taking turns to talk and waiting for everyone to come to the table before you start eating.



### **TABLE MANNERS 101**

Before your kids leave the house, you want them to feel comfortable anywhere from a barbecue dinner to a country club. Here are some of the basics they should know before they graduate high school.

- Wait for everyone to sit down before you begin to eat, then wait for a cue from the host to know when you should begin.
- Cut a piece at a time rather than the entire chicken breast or eggplant Parmesan.
- **3.** Same goes with butter. Butter each bite of bread rather than the entire roll or biscuit.
- When finished eating, place your knife and fork at 4 o'clock.
   Tell the kids to imagine their plate as a clock.
- Take small bites and pace yourself when eating — even if it's delicious! You don't want to be finished long before everyone else.
- Chew with your mouth closed. Practice this at home before going out and embarrassing yourself around others.
- 7. Pass to the right.
- 8. Think of something to say before dinner starts so that you have a couple of points of dinner table conversation. For little kids, this may be talking about their last soccer game or a project they're working on at school.
- **9.** Sit up straight. Slouching makes you look uninterested and bored.
- 10. Don't point out another's poor etiquette. If someone at the table grabs your utensils or water glass, just go with the flow.

### **RECIPE**

Want to make something delicious while teaching table manners to your kids? Good food is always an incentive.

Kids can help make these no-bake cheesecakes. Serve them with different toppings depending on the season. Sugared and toasted pecans with a caramel drizzle are perfect for Thanksgiving. Crushed candy canes are cute for Christmas.

## NO-BAKE MINI CHEESECAKES

MAKES 12 MINI CHEESECAKES

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs (about 8 full graham crackers, crushed)
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Toppings: Caramel drizzle, mini chocolate chips, pecans, fruit or anything you like!
- Combine the graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and granulated sugar. Mix until combined.
- 2. Press graham cracker mixture evenly among a 12-cup muffin pan lined with paper or silicone liners. Press the crumb mixture firmly into the bottom of each liner to create the crust. Set aside.
- **3.** Whip the heavy cream until stiff peaks form. Set aside.
- 4. In a large bowl or stand mixer, mix the softened cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla extract until smooth and creamy. Gently fold in the whipped cream until fully combined.
- 5. Fill each muffin cup with the cheesecake mixture, spreading it evenly over the graham cracker crust and smoothing the tops. Place the muffin pan in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours (or until the cheesecakes are firm).
- **6.** Top with your favorite toppings, and peel off liners before serving. **TK**





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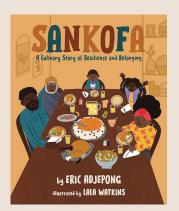
# Stories That Bring Us Together:

Children's Books that Celebrate Food, Family and the Joy of Shared Meals

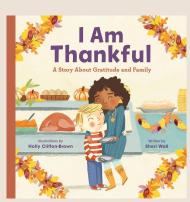
By **Rachel Ann Dennis, MFA**YOUTH LIBRARIAN, CENTRAL LIBRARY











ovember is a time when many families come together by sharing food, honoring different cultural traditions and enjoying the togetherness that emerges when friends and families prepare and share meals. Each family has unique traditions, making them special.

When I was growing up, my family always ate green beans with freshly made red sauce. I remember helping my mom peel the skin off blanched bell peppers and tomatoes for the sauce. What I didn't know then was that while many families were eating green bean casserole, my family was different because my grandmother was from Italy. In her small village at the base of the Dolomite mountains, beans in red sauce was a common dish, familiar to my mother and passed

down to me. Knowing the roots of my family's traditions makes me feel deeply connected to my heritage. Learning about the diverse customs in our community and discovering other families' traditions is a delightful and enriching experience.

Here is a selection of books that share stories about families, food and connection. Many of these books include recipes and are available as eBooks through your local Tulsa City-County Library. I hope these stories inspire you and your family to discuss your cultural traditions, celebrate your unique heritage and appreciate the rich cultural histories of others!

# My Food, Your Food, Our Food

by Emma Carlson Berne; illustrated by Sharon Sordo Explore the delightful diversity of our palates and the unifying fact that food nourishes us all. Discover the unique and shared aspects of our food experiences in this engaging book that celebrates our individual tastes and global cuisine.

# Sankofa: A Culinary Story of Resilience and Belonging

by Eric Adjepong; illustrated by Lala Watkins

As Kofi prepares a potluck lunch for his school event, his grandfather shares stories of strength and perseverance rooted in their Ghanaian ancestry. Through this journey, Kofi develops a deeper appreciation for the role of cuisine in his cultural heritage. Includes a Jollof rice recipe for readers to enjoy.

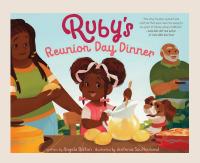
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Noble Maillard; illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal Embracing the heartwarming Native American custom of enjoying fry bread together during family gatherings, this story beautifully weaves together themes of family bonds, cultural heritage, history and the interplay between longstanding and contemporary traditions.

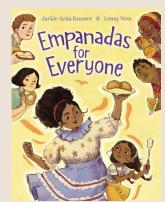
### I Am Thankful: A Story About Gratitude and Family

by Sheri Wall; illustrated
Holly Clifton-Brown
Kids learn the value of gratitude
through this heartwarming,
rhyming storybook about three
families celebrating Thanksgiving.
Emphasizing diverse traditions,
kindness and giving, the book
features delightful illustrations and
promotes thankfulness, generosity
and sharing.

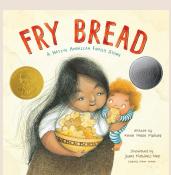


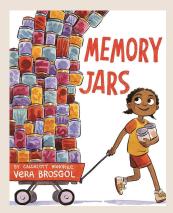


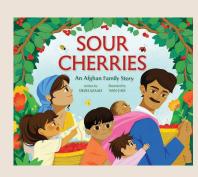












**Thank You, Omu!** by Oge Mora In this story, a character shares her meal with neighbors, emphasizing generosity and community. The book's narrative, characters and illustrations promote empathy and giving, inspiring conversations about kindness and unity.

**The Spice Box** by Meera Sriram; illustrated by Sandhya Prabhat Rishi anticipates his grandmother's arrival from India and plans to cook a traditional curry with his father using their treasured family spice box. When Rishi accidentally drops the box, he must gather the courage to make things right, embracing their rich heritage and shared history.

**Memory Jars** by Vera Brosgol Freda, inspired by her grandmother's tradition of preserving summer blueberries, collects her own cherished moments in jars. From a chocolate chip cookie to the full moon, she captures memories to savor. The story includes a delightful blueberry jam recipe.

Dumplings for Lili by Melissa Iwai Lili and her grandmother bond over making baos, little dumplings. Needing cabbage, Lili visits neighbors in her grandmother's building, gathering ingredients and helping grandmothers from various cultures create dumplings like Jamaican meat patties, Italian ravioli and Lebanese fatayer. The story celebrates community and cultural exchange.

**A Taste of Home** by Richard Ho; illustrated by Sibu T. P. In this story, children explore their city, meeting friends with immigrant parents and grandparents.

They collect ingredients from diverse cultures and work together to cook a meal that reflects the rich cultural tapestry of their community, fostering friendship and celebrating diversity.

Sour Cherries: An Afghan
Family Story by Desh Azzad;
illustrated by Nan Cao
An Afghan refugee child spends a
summer day picking cherries and
making traditional dishes with his
mother, as she once did with her
own mother. They share stories
of family and home, celebrating
the connection between food and
heritage in this heartwarming tale
based on the author's life.

## **Empanadas for Everyone**

by Jackie Azúa Kramer; illustrated by Lenny Wen A young girl spends a weekend at her tía's home, where she learns valuable lessons about the significance of community and discovers the joy of making empanadas.

### Ruby's Reunion Day Dinner

by Angela Dalton; illustrated by Jestenia Southerland
Drawing from the rich African
American reunion tradition, this story follows young Ruby as she helps her family prepare food for the event. Along the way, she attempts to create her own unique dish to share.

# **SEASON** OF **GIVING** Give back this holiday season! These nonprofits fulfill key needs in the Tulsa community. Learn how to support their missions below, and find even more HOLIDAY GIFTS AND DONATIONS

ways to give at tulsakids.com/tulsa-area-holiday-gifts-and-donations-listing.



### **TULSA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM**

With a mission of "Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future," Tulsa Air and Space Museum & Planetarium (TASM) has been engaging students with hands-on STEM learning since 1994. Each year, more than 35,000 students participate in museum tours, interactive exhibits, and planetarium programs, inspiring their interest in STEM and

As Oklahoma's second-largest industry, aviation is rapidly growing, creating a demand for skilled workers in all sectors of the industry, including aircraft maintenance, unmanned aerial systems, general aviation, and beyond. Your support helps fund scholarships for area students and schools to visit TASM, providing experiential learning opportunities and potential career pathways in aerospace and beyond.

3624 N 74th E Ave Tulsa, OK 74115 918.834.9900 tulsamuseum.org





### THE LEMON-AID PROJECT

THANK YOU, TULSA!! Over Labor Day Weekend, 170+ Tulsa-area youth - our next generation of impactful entrepreneurs and philanthropists - volunteered their time running 26 Lemon-Aid stands sprinkled across Green Country, raising more than \$20,000. Nearly a dozen restaurants joined in on the fun with week-long promotions of Lemon-Aid-inspired treats and beverages, while another 24 sponsors and partners supported in other ways.

We could not be more grateful for the collaborative effort of this community to back our youth as they help support their peers in need — kids helping kids. Help us end this year and start 2025 off strong!

Learn more and get involved! thelemonaidproject.org lemonaidproject25@gmail.com





### CIRCLE OF CARE

On any given day in Oklahoma, between 400 to 500 children are waiting to be placed in a foster home. Circle of Care provides help, healing, and hope to these children and families to ensure safe, healthy, and spiritual futures.

Circle of Care is a faith-based agency providing foster care and prevention services. Our vision is to see and serve the wholeness of people to empower thriving individuals throughout the state of Oklahoma. We are committed to keeping families together through intervention, prevention, and restoration.

Help us today at circleofcare.org/donate

6910 S. 101st E. Ave., Suite 130 Tulsa, OK 74133 918.549.0088 circleofcare.org





## **OPP PROJECT LLC**

We're on a mission to ensure that all Tulsa youth have access to high-quality afterschool experiences. Through Tulsa EnrichED, we pay educators \$25/hour to create and lead clubs at no cost to families. As one club leader shared: "I hope that my students will feel loved and valued for their unique selves."

Through Tulsa EnrichED, The Opp Project will put \$180,000 into the pockets of Tulsa's educators this year and provide youth with dynamic clubs, like Culinary Arts, Drone Racing, Watercolor Club (above), and Bug Club!

A \$25 gift provides one hour of afterschool programming. Donate today!

907 S. Detroit Ave. STE 1100A Tulsa, OK 74112 info@theopp.org theopp.org





## CITY YEAR TULSA

At City Year Tulsa, we believe that all children have tremendous potential, and in collaboration with educators, schools, and families, we work to ensure that every student has the resources and support they need to fulfill that potential in school and beyond. Incorporating individualized and small-group supports, our programs empower student achievement in coursework, attendance, and behavior and help students stay on-track to graduation.

During this season of giving, give the gift of a brighter future. Support City Year and help students succeed:

support.cityyear.org/TulsaKids

15 E 5th St Suite 1621, Tulsa, OK 74103 918.986.1940 cityyear.org/tulsa





## **FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

### Give the gift of joy to families in need this holiday season.

The FCS Holiday Assistance program turns a stressful season into a joyous one for overburdened families. You can help by adopting a family in need or donating items to our Santa Shop:

- Toys, books and games for kids of all ages
- Gifts for teens
- HUGS (hats, underwear, gloves and socks)
- Clothing, coats and pajamas
- Small household items and toiletries
- Monetary gifts/grocery cards

## **Donation Deadline**

December 11, 2024 FCS Gail Lapidus Center 650 S. Peoria Ave., Tulsa

918.600.3815 holidayassistance@fcsok.org fcsok.ora





#### **TULSA HIGHER EDUCATION** CONSORTIUM

The Tulsa Higher Education Consortium (THE Consortium) is a non-profit collaboration of nine colleges and universities in Northeast Oklahoma. We work to support Tulsa-area residents in their pursuit of earning a degree and gaining employment. THE Consortium equips individuals with information about degree programs offered in the region, scholarships, tuition assistance benefits, financial aid resources, and more. To learn more about us, visit tulsahighered.com. Our wish list includes donations for THE Consortium's

student support initiatives including: High school outreach and college

- application events Financial aid and scholarship supports
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#### **TULSA ZOO**

You can help enrich the lives of Tulsa Zoo animals! From Art Untamed, to our ADOPT program or our Animals' Amazon Wishlist, each one provides a unique form of enrichment for animals to enjoy!

Enrichment is fun to watch, but it's also part of the daily care of the animals at the zoo. Enrichment helps to encourage natural behaviors, keep animals mentally and physically healthy while creating an engaging experience for zoo guests.

This year, consider purchasing our second annual holiday ornament featuring footprints from River the African penguin. This 2024 limited edition ornament, which features specialty artwork from our Art Untamed program, is only available now through December 31, 2024.

On behalf of Tulsa Zoo, thank you for your commitment to wildlife, education and conservation.

6421 E. 36th St. N., Tulsa, OK 74115 918.669.6600 tulsazoo.org/holiday





#### **TULSA BALLET**

Hope for the Holidays is Tulsa Ballet's special performance of The Nutcracker dedicated to underserved children and their families. Each vear, we provide thousands of free tickets to local social service partners who, in turn, distribute those tickets to their clients. For many attendees, this will be their first experience with ballet. The evening features photo opportunities with fun, costumed characters, and each attendee receives a cookie, juice and a special gift. We request monetary donations to ensure Tulsa Ballet can continue to host this program this year and for years to come. Donate \$25 today to sponsor a child to attend Hope for the Holidays!

1212 East 45th Place South Tulsa, OK 74105 918.749.6030 | tulsaballet.org bit.ly/tulsaballethopefor







#### THE DEMAND PROJECT

Did you know the largest capacity safehouse in the nation for survivors of sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children is right here in Oklahoma? The Demand Project's Mount Arukah campus houses girls 11-17 free of charge, providing a comprehensive Journey to Freedom program that includes education, counseling, life skills, and much more! Your gift will help fully fund this campus while supporting free prevention programs that teach students, and the adults in their lives, how to protect themselves from online

Visit thedemandproject.org and learn more about how you can join the fight to end human trafficking.

P.O. Box 1352 Jenks, OK 74037 539.525.0191 thedemandproject.org





#### LITTLE LIGHT HOUSE

Little Light House is a tuition-free, Christian, nonprofit Developmental Center that provides education and therapy services for children with special needs. Our mission is to glorify God by improving the quality of life for children with special needs, their families, and their communities. Our transdisciplinary team of teachers and therapists maximizes the potential of every child by providing best-practice tools and personalized support tailored to individual needs.

Little Light House's services are made possible by the generosity of donors. With your donation, big or small, monthly or annually, you can make a lasting impact on the disability community of Tulsa.

5120 E 36th Street, Tulsa, OK 74135 918.664.6746 littlelighthouse.org





#### **HUNGER FREE OKLAHOMA**

Oklahoma's children experience some of the highest levels of food insecurity in the nation, but there are ways to make a difference. Hunger Free Oklahoma (HFO) leverages the power of collaboration to solve hunger in our state by improving systems, policies, and practices.

HFO brings a unified, statewide voice to the issue so that all Oklahomans have access to affordable, nutritious food. Our core belief is that hunger is solvable, unnecessary, unjust, and it affects everyone in Oklahoma.

HFO creates lasting change and improves the lives of children and families across the state. Learn more at HungerFreeOK.org.

907 S Detroit Ave. Suite 600 Tulsa, OK 74120 254.733.6261 hungerfreeok.org



#### SEASON OF GIVING



#### AMPLIFY YOUTH HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Amplify is advancing youth sexual health and well-being through collaboration, education, and advocacy. Amplify is the collective impact agency for adolescent sexual health in Tulsa and provides training and resources to school and community-based organizations to educate and support youth, parents, and other trusted adults. Tulsa County's teen birth numbers have declined 56% in the last decade, alongside the expansion of effective, evidence-based sexual health education programs and services. When young people are given accurate information, they make the healthiest decisions for themselves. Our vision is to create vibrant communities with informed youth and equitable access.

#### **Donation Page URL**

flipcause.com/secure/cause\_pdetails/MjA2MDc3

1601 S Main St Ste. 200, Tulsa, OK 74119 info@amplifytulsa.org amplifytulsa.org





#### CLARK YOUTH THEATER

Clark Youth Theatre is Tulsa's longest-running youth arts program outside the public schools. We offer a full season of main stage productions, a full lineup of improv and acting classes on Saturdays, homeschool weekday classes, as well as camps. Youth ages 8–18 can participate, and all skill levels are welcome.

Clark Youth Theatre also is home to The Penguin Project each year. The Penguin Project is a free program where artists ages 8–18 with cognitive, learning, motor, hearing and visual impairments, genetic disorders, and neurological conditions have the opportunity to star in a full performance along-side trained mentors. Past productions have included Aladdin, Jr., The Music Man, Jr. and Seussical, Jr.

Support Clark Youth Theatre by donating today. You can find a "donate" button on our homepage at **clarkyouththeatre.com**.

4825 S Quaker Ave, Tulsa, OK 74105 918.596.1412 clarkyouththeatre.com





#### GIRL SCOUTS OF EASTERN OKLAHOMA

#### **Empower Girls to Make a Difference**

Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma (GSEOK) empowers girls to become courageous leaders. Through initiatives like Girl Scouts Beyond Bars (reuniting girls with incarcerated parents), Staff-Led Troops (serving underserved communities), and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (building confidence and character), GSEOK is shaping future changemakers.

#### This holiday season, help by:

- Donating items for GSBB welcome baskets, hygiene packs, or gifts.
- Making a direct donation to help girls reach their full potential.
- Volunteering your time or expertise to mentor girls.

Learn more at **GSEOK.org/give** or contact aturner@gseok.org

4810 S 129th E Ave, Tulsa, OK 74134 918.745.5252 gseok.org

girl scouts of eastern oklahoma



#### COUNSELING & RECOVERY SERVICES

Counseling & Recovery Services helps make spirits bright through our Holiday Giving Program! Since 2018, the Holiday Giving Program has given gifts to over 350 families and children thanks to our generous donors. Each year, our program grows to include more children and families in need. If you are interested in adopting a child or family and providing gifts from their wish lists, please contact Lindsay DeWeese at Ideweese@crsok.org.

7010 S. Yale Tulsa, OK 74136 918.492.2554 crsok.org





#### JOHN 3:16 MISSION

#### STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

It starts with a meal, but it doesn't end there. In addition to emergency care at our shelter, we provide residential recovery, job training, community life skills classes, and more.

The Family & Youth Center's ministries offer at-risk Tulsans a chance to break the cycles that can create homelessness. Our programs, including after-school tutoring, teen leadership training, and parenting and budgeting classes, help kids and families plan for a better future.

We invite you to be a part of supporting the community through John 3:16 Mission.

575 N 39th W Ave., Tulsa, OK 74127 918.857.8750 john316mission.org



#### WANT TO FIND MORE WAYS TO GIVE?

Visit tulsakids.com/ tulsa-area-holiday-giftsand-donations-listing

tulsakids

#### AMERICAN THEATRE COMPANY



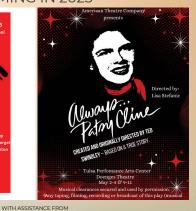


Get ready to embrace the holiday joy with American Theater Company's spectacular musical adaptation of A Christmas Carol. Crafted by the talented duo Robert Odle and Rick Averill, this show has been a cherished tradition in Tulsa for nearly 50 years, brought to life by the local community. Don't let this opportunity pass you by - experience the enchantment of this timeless Christmas classic as it graces Tulsa once again with its magical presence https://secure.tulsapac.com/4659.



COMING IN 2025



















#### TULSA'S 1ST & LARGEST DRIVE THRU LIGHT SHOW!

Proud to be locally & family owned. Supporting local charities! At The Admiral Twin Drive-In Theater - JollyLaneLights.com







#### MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

#### What should I keep in mind when it comes to water safety during holiday travel?

Holiday travel often takes families to new environments, and while we may not always think about water safety during these trips, it's essential to stay vigilant. Whether you're visiting relatives with a pool, staying at a hotel with an indoor swimming area, or traveling to a warmer destination where beaches and lakes are accessible, water hazards are often closer than we realize.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- 1. Assess the Environment: As soon as you arrive, take note of any water features, such as pools, hot tubs or even ponds, and make sure children understand that they should never enter these areas unsupervised.
- 2. Establish Boundaries: Make sure all family members know the rules around water during your stay. Ensure doors to pool areas are locked and secure when not
- 3. Bring Proper Swim Gear: If your child is still learning to swim, pack flotation devices or swim aids. Just because it's vacation doesn't mean water safety habits should change.
- 4. Supervision is Key: Adults should take turns being the designated water watcher during swim time, even if a lifeguard is present. Keep close attention on children, especially in unfamiliar surroundings.

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

918.254.1988 MillerSwimSchool.com

#### **DENTAL DEPOT**



As the holidays roll around, candy becomes an inevitable part of the celebration. Between Halloween candy and holiday treats, your kid's sugar intake can skyrocket. But don't worry - according to Dr. Daniel Keesh, who works at Dental Depot's Tulsa Garnett location, it's not about cutting out sweets entirely - it's about managing them smartly. Here are some tips for doing so:

- The best time to enjoy candy is during meals. When eaten with a meal, saliva helps to wash away sugar and neutralize acids.
- After eating, always encourage your child to rinse their mouth with water and brush their teeth.
- Sticky candies are more problematic because they cling to the teeth and can get trapped in the grooves. I prefer chocolate over sticky candy because it's easier to wash away.
- If your child loves gum, consider gum with xylitol, a natural

- sweetener that helps fight cavities.
- Try healthier candy alternatives like Zollipops or Dr. John's Healthy
- Starchy snacks, like crackers and chips, can contribute to cavities, too. Limit how often your child is snacking on these foods and make sure they drink water and brush afterwards.
- Set boundaries when it comes to candy. Lock up leftover candy and give it out in small portions.

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations DentalDepot.net



### **Explore New Horizons** with University School at UTulsa.

As Tulsa's leader in gifted education for more than four decades, University School empowers students to reach their considerable potential through challenging curriculum, personalized support, and collaborative experiences on The University of Tulsa campus.





PreK3-8th grade gifted education



# Roper Kevin Fitzpatrick and his son will perform at

#### NOVEMBER 2024

SCAN THE QR CODE to find more events at tulsakids.com/calendar!



Living Arts will host the

Muertos Arts Festival on

30th annual Día de los



Looking for a purr-fectly fun Thanksgiving break activity? Visit Tulsa Zoo! PHOTO COURTESY TULSA ZOO

World Champion Trick

the Will Rogers Memorial Museum on Nov. 2. PHOTO COURTESY WRMM





#### November 1 Friday

#### DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS **FESTIVAL**

All ages, 6 p.m., Living Arts, 307 E. Reconciliation Way, livingarts.org

Living Arts' Día de los Muertos Arts Festival features REE Art Kits, performances, vendors, a procession and blessing of the ofrendas (altars), and live music and dancing.

#### ART MARKET AFTER DARK 📵

All ages, 6-9 p.m., Guthrie Green, 111 E. Reconciliation Way, guthriegreen.com

Join Guthrie Green for this annual event featuring a large vendor market, live music and art, food trucks and more.

#### DRACULA

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

Tulsa Ballet's Dracula features awe-inspiring theatrics, spooky vampire brides who soar through the air, an exploding chandelier, and live accompaniment by Tulsa Symphony Orchestra. Additional showtimes through Nov. 3.

#### **November 2** Saturday

#### **FAMILY NATURE WALK** AT KEYSTONE LAKE 📵

All ages, 9-11 a.m., Brush Creek Recreation Area, W. Wewika Rd., Sand Springs, Int.org

Join Leave No Trace and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a fun-filled Family Nature Walk to learn how to protect nature and the outdoors.

#### WILD AT ART (3



All ages, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Arts@302, 302 S. Main St., Broken Arrow, facebook.com/wingintulsa

Support local business, local art and local wildlife at this annual WING IT fundraiser. Repeats Nov. 3, 12-5 p.m.

#### WILL ROGERS DAY PARADE (3

All ages, 3 p.m., downtown Claremore, willrogers.com

Celebrate Will Rogers' birthday with a parade through downtown Claremore! After, head to the Will

Rogers Memorial Museum (1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore) for free cake, a trick roping show and other activities!

#### HARVEST MOON BALL

All ages, 7-10 p.m., Southminster Presbyterian Church, 3500 S. Peoria Ave., theoklahomaswingsyndicate.org

Wear vintage-inspired clothes and have fun dancing the night away to the sounds of a live band! A free beginning lesson will take place from 7-7:30 p.m.

#### **November 3** Sunday

#### SENSORY SKATE SUNDAY

All ages, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wheels and Thrills, 10637 N. Garnett Rd., wheelsandthrills.com

On the first Sunday of the month. Wheels and Thrills will suspend their arcade and laser tag. There will be no flashing lights or loud music.

#### SUNDAY FUN DAY WITH TULSA OILERS

All ages, 3:05 p.m., BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave., tulsaoilers.com

Cheer for the Tulsa Oilers as they play the Iowa Heartlanders! The first 1,000 fans will receive a free mini hockey stick, and there will be a post-game skate with the players.

#### **November 4** Monday

#### **HOMESCHOOL DAY**

All ages, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Oklahoma Aguarium, 300 Aguarium Dr., Jenks, okaguarium.org

Homeschool students and their parents can enjoy a special discount to Oklahoma Aquarium. See details online.

#### MONDAY MORNING PROGRAMMING W

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.





#### COSTUME PARADE (3)



Ages 0-12, 11-11:45 a.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Come dressed in your favorite costume for fun crafts and a costume parade.

#### **November 5** Tuesday

#### **TUESDAYS WITH TULSA** GARDEN CLUB (1) (2)

All ages, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., **Teaching Garden at Woodward** Park, 2435 S. Peoria Ave., tulsagardenclub.org

Tulsa Garden Club's Generation Green team helps future gardeners with a rotating lineup of hands-on fun and educational nature activities! See website for additional info.

#### TASM TODDLER TIME W



For toddlers, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Tulsa Air and Space Museum, 3624 N. 74th E. Ave., tulsamuseum.org

Enjoy a craft or storytime, exclusive access to the playground and time to explore the museum. Also occurs on Thursdays.

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: FAMILY -OUTSIDE! ()

Ages 0-5, 4-4:30 p.m., Nathan Hale Library, 6038 E. 23rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Bring your jacket for this storytime in the library's courtyard. There's something for everyone at this special election day storytime.

#### **November 6** Wednesday

#### BIKES AND BALLS W



For toddlers and preschoolers, 9:30-11 a.m., Whiteside Park, 4009 S. Pittsburg Ave., tulsaparks.recdesk.com

This program provides a delightful and secure environment for children to engage in active play. Does not meet when TPS is not in session. \$1 per child.

#### STORYTIME AT TULSA ZOO 🚳

All ages, 10-10:30 a.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Listen to a story and meet an animal ambassador at the world globe by

the zoo entrance. (Will move indoors in case of inclement weather.) On Nov. 6, Philbrook will lead arts and crafts following story time.

#### **November 7** Thursday

#### STORYTIME CRAFTS (3)



Ages 2-5, 10-11 a.m., Nienhuis Park Community Center, 3201 N. 9th St., Broken Arrow, secure.rec1.com/OK/brokenarrow-ok/catalog

Read a different book each week and create a craft to go along with the book. Pre-register online.

#### **CRAFT CASTLE: PUMPKIN** SPICE SLIME (1)

For elementary schoolers, 3-4 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate fall by making festive pumpkin spice slime.

#### November 8 Friday

#### PETER AND THE WOLF

All ages, 1:30 p.m., Tulsa Ballet Studio K, 1212 E. 45th Pl., tulsaballet.org

Learn about music, dance and theater in this exciting, fun-filled production. Additional showtimes on Nov. 9

#### ART LAB: FIBONACCI SEQUENCE DOODLES (3)



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

Use high-quality Micron pens and Zentangle tiles to explore the Fibonacci sequence, otherwise known as the "golden ratio."

#### **BOOKS TO TREASURE:** MEET ILLUSTRATOR SOPHIE BLACKALL! (

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate the iov and beauty of children's literature with the 2024 Books To Treasure illustrator Sophie Blackall. During this presentation, she will discuss her creative process and artistic inspiration. Books written and illustrated by Blackall will be for sale. Book signing to follow.

#### **November 9** Saturday

#### **GENERATIONS CELEBRATIONS: ALICE IN WONDERLAND** TEA PARTY (3

All ages, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Herman and Kate Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave.. tulsalibrary.org

Get ready to raise your pinky and solve some riddles, answer trivia and get crafty. Costumes encouraged. Registration required. Register by calling 918.549.7542 or at tulsalibrary.org/events.

#### **SKASDICON**

11 a.m.-6 p.m., Chota Conference Center in Cherokee Casino, 3307 S. Seven Clans Ave., Tahlequah, skasdicon.com

Experience this thrilling one-day celebration of Indigenous people and pop culture, featuring exclusive screenings, the opportunity to meet Indigenous artists and celebrities. and more.

#### THE ARTIST & THE ASTRONAUT

2 p.m., Tulsa Air and Space Museum, 3624 N. 74th E. Ave., tulsamuseum.org

Join TASM for an exhilarating screening of The Artist & the Astronaut, a remarkable film brought to life by Bill Muench, the visionary behind the film, and Todd Hobin, the brilliant composer. Tickets include a reception, film, panel Q&A and dinner in the museum.

#### **BIG BAND VETERANS DAY DANCE**

All ages, 7 p.m., VFW Post 577, 1109 E. 6th St., theoklahomaswingsyndicate.org

Get ready to dance the night away to the nostalgic sounds of a live big hand orchestra



#### November 10 Sunday

#### SENSORY-FRIENDLY **FAMILY HOURS**

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

These early hours are designed for families with children on the spectrum and other sensory needs. Lights are dimmed and exhibit sounds are turned down.

#### **DREAMLAND FESTIVAL**

All ages, Nov. 8-10. Greenwood and Archer, dreamlandtulsa.com

Dreamland Festival celebrates art music and film in downtown Tulsa's Greenwood Historical District.

#### November 11 Monday

#### **106TH ANNUAL TULSA VETERANS** DAY PARADE (

All ages, 11 a.m., downtown Tulsa to VFW Post 577, 1109 E. 6th St., tulsaveteransdayparade.com

Honor veterans by attending the Tulsa Veterans Day Parade, a longstanding and meaningful tradition. See the route online.

#### **November 12** Tuesday

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: FAMILY/ STAY AND PLAY (3)

Ages 0-5, 10:15-11:15 a.m., Brookside Library, 1207 E. 45th Pl., tulsalibrary.org

After storytime, enjoy games, toys and activities that foster critical early literacy skills. Repeats Nov. 19 and 26.

#### **BEGINNING PLAINS INDIAN SIGN** LANGUAGE (3

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Learn introductions, greetings and simple directions by fourth generation signer Mike Pahsetopah. Repeats Nov. 26.

#### **CHARLOTTE'S WEB**

Recommended ages 4-10. 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., tulsapac.com

Join Charlotte, Wilbur, and their farm animal friends in this terrific tale of bravery and hopefulness.

#### **November 13** Wednesday

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: BILINGUAL (3 (2)

3-3:45 p.m., Kendall-Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish.

#### TEEN LOUNGE 📵 🚳



For teens and tweens, 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 with friends.

#### **November 14** Thursday

#### **GAMES IN THE** GARDEN (3)

Ages 4-10, 4-5 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy some outdoor fun and games. Activities will move indoors in the event of inclement weather. Repeats Nov. 7 and 21.

#### November 15 Friday

#### A NIGHT WITH AMERICAN ARTISTS

All ages, 5:30-9 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Join in a special evening of art, music, and activities inspired by the exhibition American Artists, American Stories Tickets available online

#### November 16 Saturday

#### **FAMILY WORKSHOP:** MAKE A TREASURE BOX

Ages 5+, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Discover the joy of crafting together in this multi-media Treasure Box Workshop, designed for families with children. Tickets available online

#### BARK IN THE PARK (3)



All ages, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow. facebook.com/ ravharralnaturecenter

Bring your dogs and enjoy a day in the park filled with fun activities and a pet friendly atmosphere – and to adopt homeless pets from area rescues and shelters!

#### **GILCREASE FAMILY FESTIVAL AND** ART SHOW (3)

All ages, 1-3 p.m., Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., gilcrease.org

Celebrate Black history/culture and photography through familyfocused activities like a student photography show, hands-on art and photography experiences, a tintype demonstration, a photo booth and more! Please RSVP online.

#### **November 17** Sunday

#### FAMILY SWIM



All ages, 4-6 p.m., Miller Swim School, 6415 S. Mingo Rd.. millerswimschool.com

Practice water safety, improve swim skills and socialize with other families. \$5 per person ages 3+.

#### November 18 Monday

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: BABIES AND TODDLERS (3)

For babies and toddlers, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

This beginning storytime focuses on helping your child develop important literacy skills while emphasizing the fun of reading. Repeats Nov. 4 and 25

#### **November 19** Tuesday

#### **NATURE BUDDIES**

Ages 0-3, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Parents and their children can bond during hands on naturebased activities and close-up encounters with zoo ambassador animals. \$10 per child. Sign up at 2584.blackbaudhosting.com/2584/ Nature-Buddies-19Nov2024

#### YOGA FOR EVERY BODY 📵 🔞

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

This beginner-friendly yoga class is taught by certified yoga instructor Beth Richmond.

#### COMPASS. CALENDAR AND CLOCK

Ages 10+, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Jenks Planetarium, 205 E. B St., Jenks, jenksps.ce.eleyo.com/Planetarium

Understanding how our planet is aligned with the distance stars allows anyone to use the sky as a compass, a calendar and a clock. Come learn how to use the sky yourself!

#### **November 20** Wednesday

#### STORYTIME AT TULSA ZOO 🔞

All ages, 10-10:30 a.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Listen to a story and meet an animal ambassador at the world globe by the zoo entrance. (Will move indoors in case of inclement weather.)

#### November 21 Thursday

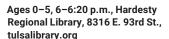
#### ANIME CLUB 📵



Ages 12-18, 4:30-6 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Discuss, watch and increase your overall knowledge of anime and manga. Light snacks provided. Repeats Nov. 7

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: FAMILY ()



Bring the whole family for this 0-to-5 storytime. Repeats Nov. 7 and 14.

#### **November 22** Friday

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: FAMILY/ STAY AND PLAY - DAILY ROUTINES! G

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Judy Z. Kishner Library, 10150 N. Cincinnati Ave., Sperry, tulsalibrary.org

Bring the whole family for a fun daily life-themed storytime featuring playful stories, songs, rhymes and bubbles.







#### November 23 Saturday

#### TINY TOTS M

Ages 0-6, 9-11 a.m., Wheels and Thrills. 10637 N. Garnett Rd... Owasso, wheelsandthrills.com

Jump, ride, play and meet a new favorite character each week! Socks required.

#### **JENKS CHRISTMAS** PARADE (3

All ages, 10 a.m., Downtown Jenks, facebook.com/jenkschamber

This amazing event will feature a display of floats, local organizations and community members celebrating the holiday season.

#### November 24 Sunday

#### FAMILY SWIM

All ages, 4-6 p.m., Miller Swim School, 6415 S. Mingo Rd., millerswimschool.com

Enjoy warm water, exercise and family fun time.

#### **November 25** Monday

#### TULSA OILERS VS. **UTAH GRIZZLIES**

All ages, 3:05 p.m., BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave., tulsaoilers.com

It's Sunday Funday with Tulsa Oilers! Head to the Grand Lobby at 1:30 p.m. for a pre-party, and paint the ice after the game! The first 1,000 kids (12 and under) receive a free jersey.

#### November 26 Tuesday

#### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: PRESCHOOL 1 W

For preschoolers, 10:30-11 a.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

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

#### November 27 Wednesday

#### **TULSA OILERS VS.** KANSAS CITY MAVERICKS

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

Kick off Thanksgiving weekend with a Tulsa Oilers game! Head to the Grand Lobby at 5:30 p.m. for a pre-party.

#### **November 28** Thursday

#### **VON FRANKEN FAMILY** FOOD RUN (3

All ages, 9 a.m., River West Festival Park, 2100 S. Jackson Ave., facebook.com/tulsarunningclub

Everyone is invited to this untimed, 3-ish mile run/walk. No pre-registration; please bring nonperishable food items, pet supplies and/or toys to donate.

#### November 29 Friday

#### TULSA OILERS VS. KANSAS CITY MAVERICKS

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

It's Teddy Bear Toss Night with the Tulsa Oilers! The first 1,000 fans get a Tulsa Oilers beanie.

#### **November 30** Saturday

#### TINY TULSA: INCLUSIVE PLAY PROGRAM []

Ages pre-K through 5th grade, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Gathering Place, 2650 S. John Williams Way, gatheringplace.org

This program features low lighting, soothing sounds, creative toys, art materials and adaptive play elements in an inclusive environment. Repeats weekly, Nov. 9-30.

#### RAINFOREST TOUR W



All ages, 1:30 p.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Rainforest walking tours will meet in the Tropical American Rainforest plaza (next to the St. John's Family Den). Tour Tickets are \$9 per person; group discount available.

# HOLIDAT SCA

Ithough the weather may be frosty and the days short, there's nothing quite like the winter holiday season, with Christmas lights brightening the dark, community ice rinks, carols and other festivities. Here are a few ways to get into the holiday spirit this month — with more to come in our December issue!

#### LIGHTS ON! EVENTS

#### CHRISTMAS KICK OFF

Nov. 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

#### **Broken Arrow Rose District**

Downtown Broken Arrow — and its signature Christmas tree — will light up on Nov. 14! The celebrations include live music by Grady Nichols and his band, a visit from Santa, ice skating and horse-drawn carriage rides. **brokenarrowok.gov** 

#### LIGHTS ON!

Nov. 21, 5-9 p.m.

#### **Downtown Jenks**

Jenks Chamber of Commerce hosts this festive event, featuring merchant booths for shopping and information, and a lights-on countdown around 6 p.m. **jenkschamber.com** 

#### CHRISTMAS IN DOWNTOWN - LIGHTS ON

Nov. 23, 5-7 p.m.

#### Downtown Bixby, 50 W. Dawes Ave., Bixby

Head to downtown Bixby for this seasonal celebration featuring live music from Team Galaxy and a special visitor from the North Pole! downtownriverdistrictbixby.com

#### LIGHTS ON AT UTICA SQUARE

Nov. 28, 6:30 p.m.

#### Utica Square, 21st and Utica

This beautiful Thanksgiving tradition features Christmas carols sung by local musicians, Santa's arrival and counting down to the illumination of 700,000 lights! **uticasquare.com** 

#### BRISTOW'S COWBOY CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENT

Nov. 28, 5:50 p.m.

#### Downtown Bristow, 8th and Main

Bristow is lighting up their HUGE Christmas tree! Santa's reindeer will be there, too, along with shopping opportunities. Search "Bristow's Route 66 Cowboy Christmas" on Facebook.



#### ICE SKATING

#### **BAICE RINK**

Nov. 8-Jan. 6; Monday-Thursday, 3-9 p.m.; Friday, 3-10 p.m.; Saturday, 12-10 p.m.; Sunday, 12-9 p.m. (Special hours during school breaks and holidays; see website)

#### **Broken Arrow Rose District**

Take to the ice in charming downtown Broken Arrow! General admission is \$13 (includes skate rental), and \$10 for children 5 and under.

baicerink.com

#### BIXBY'S WINTER WONDERLAND

Nov. 16-Jan. 5, see website for hours

Charley Young Event Park, 50 W. Dawes Ave., Bixby

Come experience the magic of skating under the Christmas lights at Bixby's Winter Wonderland! A charming holiday activity that is sure to provide lasting memories. **bixbyswinterwonderland.com** 

#### WESTREET ICE CENTER

See website for public skating schedule

4143 S. Yale Ave.

No matter what the weather's doing, you'll find perfect skating conditions inside the WeStreet Ice Center! Public skating is available every day at select times. westreeticecenter.com

#### MUSIC & THEATER

#### JIM BRICKMAN COMFORT & JOY

Nov. 14, 7:30 p.m.

Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Composer, pianist and vocalist Jim Brickman will blend original holiday classics along with seasonal favorites. **tulsapac.com** 

#### **MARIACHI CHRISTMAS**

Nov. 30, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Join the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, led by Maestro Hector Guzman, for a spectacular Christmas event featuring the world-renowned Mariachi Los Camperos! **tulsasymphony.org** 

#### ALL ABOARD!

#### THE POLAR EXPRESS™ TRAIN RIDE

Select dates and times, Nov. 11-Dec. 29

Oklahoma Railway Museum, 3400 NE Grand Blvd., OKC

With the holidays quickly approaching, Oklahoma Railway Museum is celebrating the return of THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride in Oklahoma City! Tickets are on sale now at **okcthepolarexpressride.com**. Guests are encouraged to book soon, as this beloved holiday tradition is expected to sell out!

## LOON KICHOFF

#### LIGHTS, SIGHTS & FESTIVALS

#### **ROUTE 66 CHRISTMAS CHUTE**

Opens Nov. 14

#### **Downtown Sapulpa**

Walk along Sapulpa's Main Street beneath exquisitely themed canopies bursting with holiday decorations. Do some shopping while you're in the area! route66christmaschute.com

#### **DICKENS ON THE BOULEVARD**

Nov. 22-23, 6-9 p.m.

#### **Downtown Claremore**

Dickens on the Boulevard is a free, Victorian-themed Christmas event featuring live entertainment, a costume contest, dancing, carriage rides, Santa and more. **downtownclaremore.org** 

#### **JOLLY LANE LIGHTS**

Nov. 22-Jan. 1, 5:30-10 p.m.

Admiral Twin Drive-In, 7355 E. Easton St.

Drive through over 1 mile of hundreds and thousands of twinkling lights as they change colors and dance in sync with your favorite Christmas Songs. Ticket available for purchase online. jollylanelights.com

#### COCA-COLA CLASSIC CHRISTMAS

Nov. 22-Dec. 29

Remington Park, 1 Remington Pl., Oklahoma City

This immersive holiday experience features an incredible light display, an ice skating rink, carolers, snow slides, carolers and more! classicchristmas.com

#### **MAGICAL LIGHTS ADVENTURE**

Nov. 22-Dec. 30; Sunday-Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 5:30-10:30 p.m.

Tulsa Raceway Park, 3101 N. Garnett Rd.





Pay per vehicle, load up your entire family or friends, and drive through a mile-long path filled with giant tunnels, candy land, and many themed sections with all of your favorite Christmas characters. magicallightsadventure.com

#### **CASTLE CHRISTMAS**

Open nightly, Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve, 5:30-10 p.m.

Castle of Muskogee, 3400 W. Fern Mountain Rd., Muskogee

Drive through Castleton Village, filled with over 2,000 holiday displays and thousands of colorful lights. Other attractions include visits with Father Christmas, train rides through the village, a café, and more. Drive-through is free; donations accepted. Activities may cost extra. **okcastle.com** 

#### **GARDEN OF LIGHTS**

Open Thanksgiving through New Year's Day; Sunday-Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m.

Honor Heights Park, 1400 Honor Heights Dr., Muskogee

Experience animated displays with more than 1,000,000 LED shimmering lights. Park and walk around, and visit the concession stand. Admission is free on Mondays and Tuesdays, or \$10 per car Wednesday through Sunday. muskogeeparks.org

#### **RHEMA LIGHTS**

Nov. 27-Jan. 1, 5:30-11:30 p.m. (Lights turn on at 6 p.m. Nov. 27)

Rhema Park, 1025 W. Kenosha St., Broken Arrow Rhema's mesmerizing Christmas light display has been drawing visitors since 1982. Admission is free; carriage rides and concessions cost extra. rhemalights.org

#### BIXBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Nov. 28, 4 p.m.-Dec. 22

15 E. Needles Ave., Bixby

Join the Bixby Historical Society for the Lighting of the Trees on Thanksgiving night and enjoy the Festival of Lights until Christmas! downtownriverdistrictbixby.com

#### **WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS**

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 29–Dec. 22, 5–9 p.m.

Woolaroc, 1925 Woolaroc Ranch Rd., Bartlesville

The grounds and buildings of Woolaroc will be covered with over 750,000 lights as the historic ranch transforms itself into a magical winter wonderland! Santa will be at the museum, and cozy concessions are available at the café. Admission is \$7 for adults, and \$2 for kids 12 and under. Free for members and ages 3 and under. woolaroc.org

#### **BOTANIC GARDEN OF LIGHTS**

Nov. 29-Dec. 1, Dec. 5-8, Dec. 12-23, Dec. 26-30, 5-9 p.m.

Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.

Reconnect with family and friends in the garden illuminated with colorful lights. Make s'mores over fire pits, enjoy holiday music and take in the spirit of the season in our magical garden escape. **tulsabotanic.org** 







Saturday, Nov. 16, 1-3 p.m. at Greenwood Cultural Center

#### **CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY & CULTURE**

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#### Taisen Malone:

UScellular's Hispanic Heritage Month Art Contest Winner

By Betty Casey





en-year-olu raisci. z a fourth grader at Emerson en-year-old Taisen Malone is Elementary. Taisen entered UScellular's third annual Hispanic Heritage Month Art Contest with The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Tulsa. Taisen, from Tulsa's North Mabee Club, not only won locally, but his entry was one of the top three first-place submissions with the most votes from all participating Clubs and was named a national winner. Taisen received \$250 for each win, totaling \$500, while The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Tulsa received a \$1.000 donation.

TulsaKids: Tell us about the art contest. Was there a theme you were asked to follow?

Taisen: The contest celebrates diversity, honors Hispanic and Latino STEM icons and showcases youth in Tulsa. It honors the contributions of Hispanic people and encourages young people to learn more about them. We were encouraged to research and learn more about Hispanic STEM role models and what they contributed.

TulsaKids: What did you decide to draw? How did you come up with your idea?

Taisen: I drew a portrait of Carlos Finlay. I chose him from the group that was given to us. I was interested in what he studied. (Editor's note: Carlos Juan Finlay was a Cuban epidemiologist who studied yellow fever and found that it was transmitted through mosquitoes.)

TulsaKids: You won first place and were also a national winner. How did you feel when you found out you won?

**Taisen:** I felt really surprised and happy. I had never won first place before. That was my goal.

TulsaKids: Have you always enjoyed doing art? What kinds of things do you like to draw?

**Taisen:** Yes! I like drawing characters, objects, science material and nature.

TulsaKids: Who inspires you, or who do you look up to, and why?

Taisen: My parents. They taught me to do many things. And Leonardo Da Vinci because I respect his art creations.

TulsaKids: What advice would you give to other kids who like to draw?

Taisen: Anyone can be an artist. You just have to practice and never throw away your drawings. Always keep them for memory and to reflect on so that you can do better.

TulsaKids: What other hobbies do you have beside art?

**Taisen:** I like hanging out with my friends, playing video games and playing sports.

TulsaKids: What are your plans for the future?

**Taisen:** I want to become a great athlete and make great art so that I can show it to people.

TulsaKids: What are your favorite things to do in Tulsa?

**Taisen:** Go to the Tulsa Fair, waterparks, pumpkin patches — and my favorite restaurant is Blue Coast.

TulsaKids: Can you tell us a fun fact about yourself?

Taisen: I make lots of friends and I finish my power hour work faster than everyone else at The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club. TK

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

# Tulsa's favorite holiday tradition CRACK ALL DECEMBER 8-22 • TULSA PAC





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