

SEPTEMBER 2025

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STEM TEMBER

Unleash Curiosity!

All September long, Tulsa comes alive with hands-on **science, technology, engineering, and math** experiences for every child.

Spark imagination, build confidence, and discover the wonder of STEM right here in our community!



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Women of the 918

This year we decided to do something a little different from our usual back-to-school articles. We love our city, but who are some of the people behind making the 918 so great? We decided to ask you, our readers, about women you know who make the 918 run. We put out a call for nominations, and you all responded with stories of many amazing women.

I was struck by the dedication that these women have to their jobs, but also by their love for the community. Each one is actively doing something to bring people together, to lift others, to find a problem and figure out a way to improve it. It's people like this who make Tulsa such a wonderful place to live, and we are happy to share the stories of a few of them.

One way that all of us can support our city is by finding places to volunteer. On our cover is a family who volunteers together at Emergency Infant Services. Too often, we can feel isolated in our own town. Volunteering can be a wonderful way to not only help others, but to meet others, especially when you choose activities that truly interest you. You'll find like-minded individuals sharing their time and talents. And volunteering with your children, even an hour or so a week, can show them how they can contribute to something bigger than themselves – they may make a few new friends as well.

As you head back into the rush of the new school year, take some time to think about where you and your family might find a way, however small, to support and improve our community. I hope the stories of our Impactful Women will inspire you. We love the 918.



Betty Casey

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

tulsakids

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*A fun afternoon for your family
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scarecrows!

Children are free with Adult ticket!
Get your tickets now!

TulsaBotanic.org



CONTESTS + GIVEAWAYS

Get links to the following at tulsakids.com/contests

WHAT'S GOING ON(LINE)?

Cutest Baby Contest, sponsored by On the Cusp

From Sept. 1-30, enter your baby (1 year old and younger) in our Cutest Baby Contest!

One lucky winner will receive a large cup with a \$100 On the Cusp gift card, a \$25 Kiddletix gift card and a \$25 QuikTrip gift card.



Disney on Ice Giveaway

From Sept. 5-18, Enter to win a Family 4-Pack to "Disney on Ice: Let's Dance!" returning to the Expo Square Pavilion Sept. 25-28! Additional details available on the entry form at tulsakids.com/contests



DIG Ticket Giveaway

From Sept. 8-21, enter to win two adult tickets to Tulsa Botanic Garden's 12th Annual DIG: Day in the Garden, coming up on Sept. 28. Children get in free with an adult ticket.

About DIG: Explore Tulsa Botanic Garden's pumpkin patch, navigate the hay maze and vote for your favorite scarecrow! Plus, there will be bubble-making stations, face painting, a DJ, Garden Activity stations and more. Details at tulsabotanic.org



Frontier Airlines Ticket Giveaway, sponsored by Tulsa International Airport & Frontier Airlines

Starting Oct. 12, Frontier Airlines returns to Tulsa with nonstop flights to Denver, flying twice a week on Sundays and Thursdays — and we are giving away four of these tickets (roundtrip), along with a 5-day valet parking pass! Enter to win this incredible giveaway from Sept. 1-14 — or book your tickets today at flyfrontier.com.



Tulsa State Fair Giveaway

From Sept. 10-23, enter to win two Mega Ride Passes and two gate admission tickets to the Tulsa State Fair, coming to Expo Square Sept. 25-Oct. 5!





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GRANDPARENTS DAY

PHOTO CONTEST

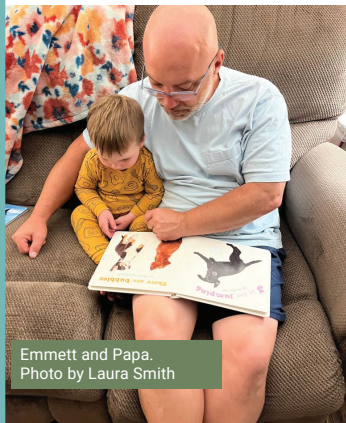
Enter Aug. 11 - Sept. 7

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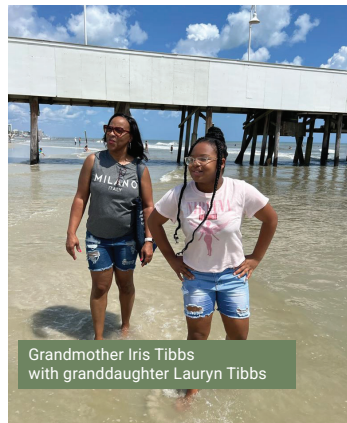


Happy Grandparents Day!

Thank you to everyone who has already entered our Grandparents Day Photo Contest, sponsored by Melting Pot. Here are a few of the wonderful submissions – and you can still enter through Sept. 7! tulsakids.com/contests



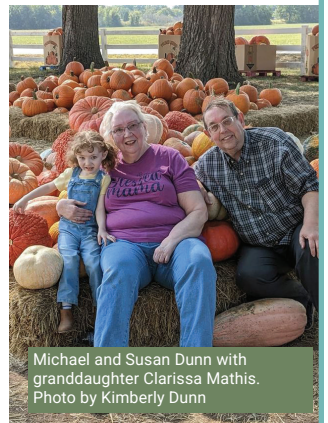
Emmett and Papa.
Photo by Laura Smith



Grandmother Iris Tibbs
with granddaughter Lauryn Tibbs



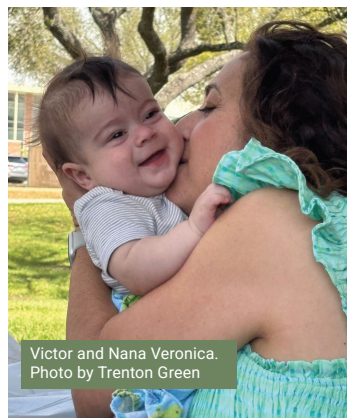
Grandparents Tony Kah and Cecilia Jee
with grandkids Caila, Jemma
and Jameson Ting.
Photo by Cassandra Ting



Michael and Susan Dunn with
granddaughter Clarissa Mathis.
Photo by Kimberly Dunn



Florence, Pop Pop and Gigi.
Photo by Ginny Sarraf



Victor and Nana Veronica.
Photo by Trenton Green



Grandparents Efrain Santos and Evalina Rocha with grandson Shawn McKay Rocha and granddaughters Crystal Angelina Rocha and Sofia Evangelina Rocha. Photo by Bella Peralta

"Be a Scout for a Day" Welcomes Families to Scouting

By Angela Ashmore, event chair

Be a Scout for a Day is a hands-on, family-friendly event designed to introduce children in kindergarten through 5th grade—and their parents—to the fun and values of Cub Scouting. It's a chance for kids to try out real Scouting activities like outdoor games, crafts and range and target activities, such as BB guns, archery and Wrist rockets, as well as some basic Scout skills. The event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Graves Scout Reservation in Broken Arrow. Whether your child is new to Scouting or just curious about what Scouting is, this event is a great way to start.

Kids will have the opportunity to participate in activities designed for elementary-age children. These may include knot-tying, fishing, STEM experiments, outdoor safety skills, etc. The goal is to give young people a taste of the adventure and activities that Cub Scouting offers, as well as meet Scouts and adult leaders. Parents can see how the program encourages confidence, responsibility, and character development. At the meet-and-greet table, knowledgeable volunteers can help you learn more about the program and how to get started.

And Scouting is no longer just for boys. Since 2018, girls have been able to join Cub Scouts. Packs now serve both boys and girls in coed dens. Families appreciate that siblings can participate, and girls thrive in the program—learning leadership, teamwork and outdoor skills alongside their peers. Interest and enrollment among girls continue to grow as more people discover how inclusive and family-oriented Scouting has become.

Since 2023, 1,339 young ladies have joined the programs of Scouting America—and six of them have earned the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout.

Scouting helps children build character, make friends, and learn real-world skills while having fun. It's a program that grows with your child, encourages family involvement, and provides lifelong memories. Whether your child is into sports, science, nature or service, there's a place for them in Cub Scouts.

Be a Scout for a Day is the perfect way to experience Scouting up close and hands-on.

To learn more or to find a Cub Scout pack near you, visit beascout.scouting.org or www.okscouts.org/join



Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hernan Diaz to receive 2025 Helmerich Award

Pulitzer Prize-winning and bestselling Argentine American author Hernan Diaz is coming to Tulsa Dec. 4 and 5 to receive the 2025 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award, given by the Tulsa City-County Library and Tulsa Library Trust.

Diaz 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. 5. He will give a free public presentation at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 4, 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.

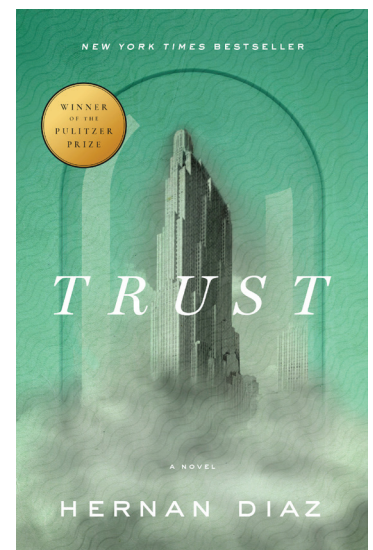
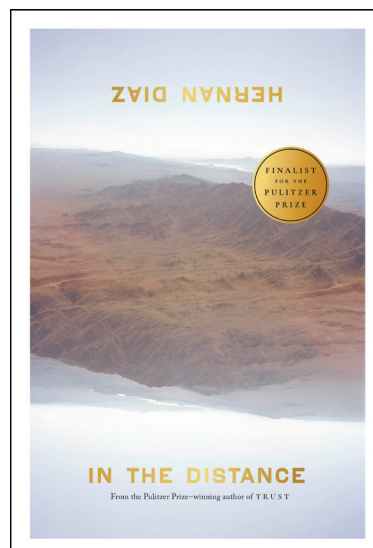
Diaz is the Pulitzer Prize-winning and New York Times bestselling author of two novels published in 37 languages. He was the recipient of the 2023 John Updike Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, given to "a writer whose contributions to American literature have demonstrated consistent excellence."

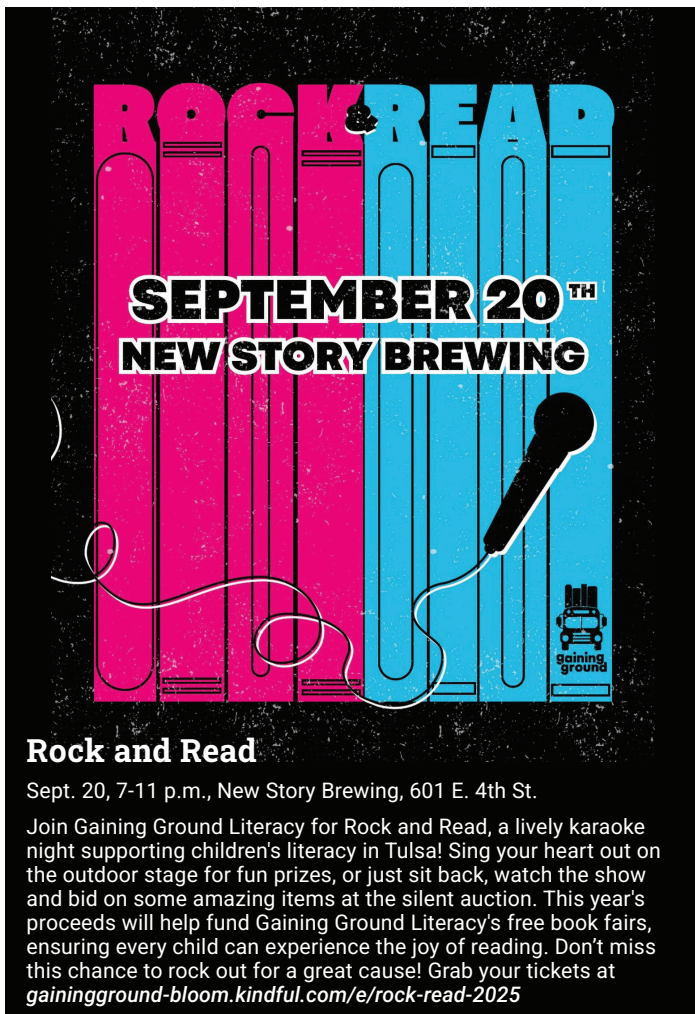
His first novel, "In the Distance," was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award, and it was the winner of the Saroyan International Prize, the Cabell Award, the Prix Page America and the New American Voices Award, among other distinctions. It was also a Publishers Weekly Top 10 Book of the Year and one of Lit Hub's 20 Best Novels of the Decade.

His second novel, "Trust," received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and was a New York Times bestseller, the winner of the Kirkus Prize and longlisted for the Booker Prize, among other nominations. It was listed as a best book of the year by over 30 publications and named one of the 10 Best Books of the Year by The New York Times, The Washington Post, NPR and Time magazine, and was one of The New Yorker's 12 Essential Reads of the Year and one of The New York Times' Best 100 Books of the 21st Century. "Trust" is currently being developed as a limited series for HBO, starring Kate Winslet.

Diaz's stories and essays have appeared in The Paris Review, Harper's, The Atlantic, Granta, The Yale Review, Playboy, McSweeney's and elsewhere. He has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Award and fellowships from the New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, among others. He holds a doctorate from NYU and is also the author of the nonfiction "Borges, Between History and Eternity."

For more information about the Distinguished Author Award, visit www.tulsalibrary.org/helmerichaward or call 918.549-7323.





Rock and Read

Sept. 20, 7-11 p.m., New Story Brewing, 601 E. 4th St.

Join Gaining Ground Literacy for Rock and Read, a lively karaoke night supporting children's literacy in Tulsa! Sing your heart out on the outdoor stage for fun prizes, or just sit back, watch the show and bid on some amazing items at the silent auction. This year's proceeds will help fund Gaining Ground Literacy's free book fairs, ensuring every child can experience the joy of reading. Don't miss this chance to rock out for a great cause! Grab your tickets at gainingground-bloom.kindful.com/e/rock-read-2025

Oklahoma Aquarium Earns 2025 Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award

The Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks, Oklahoma, recently received the 2025 Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award, placing it among the top 10% of attractions worldwide based on visitor reviews and ratings.

The Travelers' Choice Award honors businesses that consistently deliver outstanding experiences, representing the top tier of global destinations, experiences, and attractions.

As the state's only ocean, the Aquarium's 10,000 animals, unique exhibits like the world's largest collection of bull sharks, and commitment to education and conservation continue to make waves with visitors near and far.

The award is based on reviews from travelers worldwide on Tripadvisor over the past 12 months.



Tulsa Ballet Appoints New Executive Director

Tulsa Ballet recently announced the promotion of Stacey Jenkins to the role of Executive Director. With more than two decades of service and leadership within the organization, Jenkins steps into this role as a natural next chapter in her longstanding dedication to Tulsa Ballet.

Over the past 21 years, Jenkins has held several key roles at Tulsa Ballet, including Education and Outreach Manager, Director of Education, and most recently, General Manager for the past 12 years.

Jenkins helped grow the Tulsa Ballet Center for Dance Education from just 60 students to more than 775. She also played a central role in the development of the Hardesty Center for Dance Education, led initiatives that increased ticket sales from \$1.09 million to \$1.8 million and produced record-breaking seasons in both single ticket and subscription revenue. Her leadership was instrumental in steering the organization through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and guiding its path to recovery.

As Executive Director, Jenkins will oversee all administrative departments and functions, including continued leadership of the Center for Dance Education. She will work closely with the artistic team and Board of Directors to chart the organization's strategic course for the next five years and beyond.



The Power of Play and the Art of Asking Questions



By **Angie Porter, MS, CCPS**

Children learn best through meaningful interaction, and one of the most powerful tools we have is play. When paired with thoughtful, open-ended questions, play becomes more than fun—it becomes a bridge for emotional growth, social learning and stronger relationships. Here are some ways for you to explore how simple moments of joy and curiosity can shape your child’s development in lasting ways.

The Power of Play

Play isn’t just entertainment—it’s a core strategy for connection, learning and emotional growth. Here’s how:

- **Connection & Engagement:** Play builds trust and emotional bonds. It shows children they are valued and loved.
- **Teaching Social Skills:** Through pretend play, games and group activities, children learn sharing, empathy, turn-taking and cooperation.
- **Correction & Reconnection:** After discipline or conflict, playful interactions can restore warmth and rebuild relationships.
- **Joyful Presence:** Singing, dancing, swinging and silliness make everyday moments magical and memorable.

Asking Questions to Spark Thinking

Open-ended questions encourage curiosity, autonomy and problem-solving. They also help children feel heard and respected.

Examples of Effective Questions:

Situation	Question	Purpose
Transition time	"I wonder which activity is next?"	Helps children anticipate and prepare
Clean-up time	"Does anyone know where this book belongs?"	Promotes responsibility and teamwork
Free play	"Hmmm, I wonder where this toy truck goes?"	Encourages exploration and storytelling
Routine check	"Is it outside time or lunch time?"	Builds awareness of daily structure



Tips for Using Play and Questions Together

- **Follow the child’s lead:** Let their interests guide the play.
- **Use playful tones:** Even questions can be asked with a sense of wonder and fun.
- **Validate responses:** Acknowledge their ideas to build confidence.
- **Mix movement and imagination:** Physical play combined with storytelling deepens engagement.

Conclusion

Play and purposeful questions aren’t extras—they’re essentials in nurturing confident, connected and curious children. By leaning into playful engagement and asking questions that invite thinking, we strengthen relationships and support children’s natural love of learning. Small moments can make a big impact—especially when we choose to be present, playful and tuned in.

Angela Percival-Porter serves as a Child Development Specialist for the State of Oklahoma and is an adjunct professor, teaching various child development and child care administration courses at both community and national colleges. With 33 years of experience working with families and children, Angela has held roles such as director of an NAEYC-accredited early care and education center and has provided mental health consultation to local childcare centers.



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Junk Food Curriculum



By **Tamecca Rogers, Ph.D.**



Dr. Tamecca Rogers speaking at the State Capitol.

If you wouldn't let your child eat candy for dinner, why let them consume junk history at school?

Parents are careful about what their kids eat. We read nutrition labels, limit the sugar, and push the veggies because we know that what children consume shapes their growth. But what about what they consume in the classroom? Curriculum is food for the mind—and lately, some of what's being served looks a lot like junk food.

In Oklahoma, proposals are on the table to funnel tax dollars into schools and programs that aren't accredited here, don't have Oklahoma teachers, and in some cases, are openly driven by political agendas. One example making headlines is the American Virtual Academy, an online school tied to national organizations like PragerU. Even though the Oklahoma Tax Commission has ruled it ineligible for the state's Parental Choice Tax Credit, there's still a push to get it funded. That means public dollars could support a program with no real foothold in our state.

Why should parents care? Because what our kids learn in Social Studies, English and other core classes doesn't just prepare them for tests—it shapes how they see the world. A recent video circulating from one of these curriculum sources features a cartoon version of Christopher Columbus telling children that slavery was “no big deal” and “better than being killed.” That's not education. That's distortion.

Elementary students are sponges. At this age, they are forming their understanding of fairness, justice and community. If we allow misleading or politically motivated lessons to sneak into the classroom, we're handing our children candy when what they really need is nourishment. Junk history, like junk food, might look appealing on the surface, but it leaves long-term harm.

"IF WE ALLOW MISLEADING OR POLITICALLY MOTIVATED LESSONS TO SNEAK INTO THE CLASSROOM, WE'RE HANDING OUR CHILDREN CANDY WHEN WHAT THEY REALLY NEED IS NOURISHMENT."

For teachers, the challenge is real. They already balance standards, testing and the diverse needs of students. Now they may also have to push back against materials that undermine their work. Teachers should not be put in a position where they have to choose between state policy and telling children the truth. Parents, too, are left wondering who they can trust to provide their kids with accurate, age-appropriate lessons.

So, what can families do? First, stay curious. Ask your children what they learned in school today, and don't settle for a shrug. Watch the videos they're shown in class when possible. Look over worksheets and ask questions. If something sounds off, it's OK to dig deeper.

Second, show up. Attend school board meetings, parent-teacher nights and curriculum discussions. Your voice matters. Education decisions are often made by those who show up consistently. And when parents and teachers work together, they form a powerful partnership that keeps kids' best interests at the center.

Finally, remember that this isn't about left or right—it's about right or wrong. Teaching children that slavery wasn't a big deal is not a political issue, it's a moral one. Parents of all backgrounds can agree: Our kids deserve to learn truthful history and meaningful lessons that help them grow into thoughtful citizens.

We wouldn't let our children eat candy for every meal. We know it would harm their health. In the same way, we can't let them fill up on junk history just because it's being marketed with bright colors and friendly cartoons. Their futures—and our shared future—depend on something better.

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.

Meals that give back.



RESTAURANT WEEK SEPTEMBER 5 - 14

Celebrate Tulsa's BEST restaurants September 5-14 during Tulsa's 19th annual Restaurant Week benefitting the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma's Food for Kids programs. Some of Tulsa's best will participate in Restaurant Week 2025 by offering special prix fixe menus, special menu items or cocktails which will all include an automatic 3% donation to the Food Bank! Plus all donations will be generously matched up to \$25,000 by the George Kaiser Family Foundation.

Participating restaurants include*:

Doubletree at Warren Place • Jimmy's Chophouse • Malfi • Mr. Kim's
Queenie's • Rise Souffle • Roka • Sisserou's • The Pump Bar
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PJ'S CORNER



New Treatment for Snakebites



Q&A with

Dr. Brandon Woods

SAINT FRANCIS PEDIATRIC CRITICAL CARE

Do you see a lot of snakebites in the Pediatric ICU?

Statewide, we see about 350-400 snakebites on average per year. We're able to treat snakebites without needing a lot of intensive care, but we're readily available whenever a child needs us.

What is the most prevalent time of year for snakebites?

Typically, snakes come out of hibernation in April, and the snakebite season lasts through October.

What prevention steps can parents take to protect their children from snakebites?

Stay vigilant. Don't step where you can't see what you're stepping on. Don't put your hand down and grab things that you can't see. If you hear things that sound concerning, like a rattle, back up. Stay at least five feet away from a snake. Wear closed-toed shoes or boots. A walking stick also provides a barrier for you to have more time to move away.

Which snakes are the most dangerous in terms of venom?

Rattle snakes, copperheads, cottonmouths and water moccasins are common in Oklahoma. These snakes have a venom that can affect our muscles, our ability to form clots and our coagulation cascade.

We hear about antivenom. What is it?

We've been able to develop immunoglobulins, or antibodies, against toxins and venoms for

pediatric and adult use. It does require an IV and observation, and it's only available in emergency departments and emergency facilities.

What is the new treatment for snakebites?

Generally, we'll start kids with antivenom in the emergency room to mitigate the effects of the toxin. If a child is systemically ill with this, we can do therapeutic apheresis, or plasmapheresis, in our pediatric ICU. It's like we're giving the body an oil change by discarding plasma containing the toxin. That allows us to both remove some of the toxin and dilute the effects of it.

If your child is bitten by a snake, what steps should parents take?

Stay calm. Get to an emergency department as soon as possible. Let it bleed naturally; don't apply a tourniquet or any sort of restrictive device. Remove anything restrictive like a watch, wristband or bracelets. Don't use a lancet or a knife on blisters or swelling. Just cover it with gauze and seek care. You can call 911. Memorize the Poison Control Center number for help with any poison or toxin - 1.800.222.1222.

In the emergency department, the child may get an IV formulation of the antiserum, and if that doesn't work, we have therapeutic techniques in our pediatric ICU to further help them.

For the complete interview, visit TulsaKids.com

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



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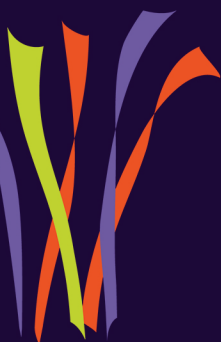
11 DAYS UNLIMITED RIDES
11 DAYS GATE ADMISSION

SEP 25 - OCT 5, 2025



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Packing on the Protein — the Healthy Way



By **Julie Wenger Watson**

Good nutrition, along with adequate sleep and exercise, is key to a healthy lifestyle for everyone, but it's particularly important for adolescents who are experiencing a time of rapid growth and development. Any discussion about what constitutes a healthy diet includes the term "macronutrients," the three main types of nutrients — carbohydrates, proteins and fats — every body needs in large amounts to support growth, energy and overall health. Recently, protein, in particular, has become the darling of fitness influencers and health bloggers, many of whom advocate that "more" is both better, and even necessary. As always, it's important to cut through the buzz and take a look at the science, especially when it comes to our kids.

Why is protein important?

Protein is an important building block of bones, muscles, cartilage and skin. It also supports tissue repair and plays a role in hormone regulation. All of these functions are crucial for a developing teen.

"The teen years are the body's second-biggest growth phase after infancy. Protein is the raw material for nearly every structure and system in the body, so it's vital during this time," says Dr. Harpreet Pall, a pediatric gastroenterologist who serves as the academic chair



"...GULPING DOWN PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTS, SHAKES AND BARS IN AN EFFORT TO ATTAIN A MUSCULAR PHYSIQUE AND GREATER ATHLETIC PROWESS ISN'T WITHOUT RISK."

and professor in New Jersey's Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics. "It fuels the building of muscle, bone, skin and hair; supports hormone production during puberty; strengthens the immune system; and even plays a role in brain chemistry that affects mood, focus and learning. Protein also helps teens feel full after meals and keeps their energy more stable by slowing the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream."

Too much? Too little?

Although protein is clearly an essential part of a healthy diet, consuming too much or too little can be problematic. As with Goldilocks and her porridge, there is a sweet spot. Insufficient protein intake over long periods of time can cause muscle loss, tiredness or worsened mood swings. However, despite what your average fitness influencer may tell you, it's also possible to get too much of a good thing. In other words, gulping down protein supplements, shakes and bars in an effort to attain a muscular physique and greater athletic prowess isn't without risk.

According to Dr. Pall, too much protein can be harmful to teens, especially if it crowds out other nutrients.

"High-protein diets can strain the kidneys, cause

dehydration, lead to constipation if fiber is low, and in some cases contribute to unwanted weight gain," he says. "The safest approach is 'food first' and a balanced diet."

The emphasis on real food is an important one, as protein supplement intake appears to be on the rise in teens. A recent poll from the National Poll on Children's Health found that approximately two in five parents report their teenager has consumed protein supplements within the past year, with teen boys using them more regularly than teen girls. At the same time, there has been an 80% global surge in colon cancer diagnoses among young people over the past three decades, raising concerns about a possible link between protein supplement consumption and an increased risk of colon cancer.

How much protein do teens require?

When determining teen protein requirements, Dr. Pall recommends about 0.4 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day as a good rule of thumb.

"That means a 140-pound teen needs roughly 56 grams a day. Boys and girls have similar needs per pound, but because boys often have more muscle mass and weigh more on average, their total daily needs may be higher," he says.

If your teen is very active, or participates in sports, their needs may be higher.

"Sports and strength training create tiny tears in muscle fibers that need protein to repair and grow stronger," Dr. Pall says. "Athletes often benefit from 0.5 to 0.8 grams per pound of body weight, spaced out over the day rather than all at once."

Dr. Pall recommends whole foods as the best source of proteins. Good animal-based protein sources include lean meats, fish, eggs and dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt). Plant-based proteins, such as beans, lentils, tofu, edamame (soybeans), nuts, seeds, quinoa and seitan (made from wheat gluten) are also good sources.

When considering dietary supplements, Dr. Pall says protein powders can be helpful for busy athletes who can't get enough from food, but it's important to choose one that's third-party tested for safety. He doesn't recommend creatine (an amino acid compound) for younger teens, and for older teens, only under medical supervision. Dr. Pall advises young athletes to avoid pre-workouts, "testosterone boosters" and "fat burners" because they're risky, unregulated and unnecessary.

There's no doubt a healthy diet is crucial for a developing teen, and that includes adequate amounts of protein, preferably in the form of "whole foods." For adolescents eager to achieve that idealized physique, it can be tempting to jump on the latest trend and consume massive amounts of protein, often in the form of shakes, bars or powders. Rather than assuming more is always better, encouraging our teens to do the research and seek the science will result in a more balanced, healthier approach to nutrition.

PROTEIN MYTH BUSTING WITH DR. PALL

"More is always better."

Not true—your body can only use so much at one time for building muscle.

"Carbs are bad if you want to build muscle."

Carbohydrates fuel exercise and help protect muscle tissue.

"Plant proteins are incomplete and inferior."

Eating a variety of plant sources easily covers all essential amino acids.

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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**ANIMAL
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TULSA**

Family of Seven Takes a One-Year Break to Travel the World



By **Nancy A. Moore**

When Ashley Campbell first read about a family who spent a year traveling the world, she couldn't shake the thought: What if we did that? Over the next 18 years, she and her husband Chris made choices in saving — both big and small — with that dream in mind. In 2022, they finally set out with their five children on a year-long global adventure, living on a tight budget that was rich in experiences. From wandering quiet streets and sharing meals at tiny tables, to joining pickup basketball games in city parks, Ashley found beauty in the everyday moments that made each place feel like home. Her journey wasn't just about seeing the world — it was about slowing down, being fully present and letting connection and curiosity lead the way.

What was it really like to turn a long-held dream into a reality? How did a year away reshape her family's perspective? Why do the smallest moments often leave the biggest impact?

Ashley also shares her best budget travel tips, the story behind her new book "I've Never Been Here Before", and what's next for her adventurous crew.

TK: Avoiding clichés and dreaming big! What inspired your family to take on a one-year global journey on a tight budget?

Ashley: When our oldest son was a toddler, I came across a magazine article about a family of four that traveled the world for a year. Chris and I daydreamed about how we'd love to do a trip like that one day. It became a

thought we couldn't shake. Over the next couple of years, we decided it was more than just an idea for us - we wanted to make it happen. The tight budget part wasn't a goal, just a reality. For us to do it, it would have to be a tight budget. For the next 17-ish years, we made big and small decisions in light of making the dream a reality. It was the soundtrack that played in the background of my kids' childhoods.

TK: You acknowledge spending most of your life living in a 10-mile radius. What was it like to travel and live thousands of miles away from the safety and security of home?

Ashley: It was beyond my dreams. We never considered home to be more safe than anywhere else. As a result, we never felt like we were leaving that behind. With my husband and kids by my side, I had all I needed to feel at home anywhere. We were on an adventure together, and I love adventure! The everyday responsibilities and obligations I carried back home were gone.

During our year away, I experienced the overwhelming wonder of the world and its people. I felt alive, and my days felt light. I had a year of rest. I watched my kids experience people and places that impacted them in beautiful ways. Innately curious, I love to learn. Having a year of being immersed in new cultures and experiences alongside my family was incredibly life-giving and rejuvenating. I felt wildly awake to life in all the very best ways.

TK: After saving for nearly 18 years for this journey, was it ever surreal to you that your family took the trip?

Ashley: Absolutely. There was rarely a day on our trip that I didn't say to myself, "I can't believe this is my life! I can't believe we are doing this!" There were the obvious surreal moments like dune surfing on the edge of the Sahara, mountain climbing in Albania, canyoneering in Ecuador, scuba diving in Egypt, and moped exploring in Vietnam. However, I mostly said it to myself when I followed behind my family as we wandered through quaint towns or when we squeezed around tiny tables on food streets savoring the local dish. It was the simple, ordinary moments in new places that captivated me the most.

TK: How did your children's perspectives change over the course of the year?

Ashley: My kids' view of community and what makes for a truly rich life shifted as they experienced different worldviews and what other cultures prioritize. For a year, they were the guests - the ones who didn't know the language, the culture, the insider information - and were warmly welcomed onto courts and inside homes. As a result, they developed an eye for those in our country who might feel a little lost like they once did.

Other countries became more than headlines as they spent time in communities across the globe. Those interactions gave them a fuller perspective of the world and their place in it. They learned to

recognize false narratives, to listen actively, to ask insightful questions, and to be open to learning from those with different perspectives. Their view of the world is not one defined by it being dangerous, on fire or full of places to avoid. They experienced the opposite. They know the world to be a place full of endearing people, incredible food, vibrant communities and possibilities.

TK: The book includes beautiful photos captured by you. Can you walk us through your process of weaving photography and storytelling together?

Ashley: While traveling, I had no plan to write a book. The book part came about six months after we returned home. Photography has always been a way for me to slow down and notice the world around me. For some, taking a photo is a distraction from being present. For me, it is the opposite. Looking through a camera is like putting on blinders and bringing things into focus that I miss otherwise. Whether I am at home or traveling, I am capturing the ordinary with my camera. As we traveled, I journaled most evenings, keeping track of details and experiences I didn't want to forget. Photography and storytelling are very natural ways I process my days and the world as I experience it.



TK: I found the budget travel sections of your book so insightful! Can you share one that really helped you on this adventure?

Ashley: I recommend considering staying at hostels. Hostels often have a bad reputation, and there are ones to avoid as a family. However, keep in mind that international hostels are more common and affordable than those found in the U.S. The hostel industry has come a long way over the last few decades. Some of our most stunning stays were hostels in Indonesia, Thailand and Morocco. Many offer private rooms, double rooms and bunk rooms. As a large family, we often booked bunk rooms and had a private bathroom.

Hostels frequently offer additional amenities at significantly lower prices. We took cooking classes in Thailand, salsa lessons in Colombia, snorkeling in Indonesia, and a hummus-making class in Jerusalem. They are also a fantastic place to meet other travelers and get ideas for local places to explore. As a bonus: Breakfast is often included.

When it comes to hostels (or any booking), always read the reviews. It is very easy to tell by the reviews if the hostel is a party spot for young backpackers, a quiet retreat or something in between.

TK: What would be your top tip for immersing into a culture?

Ashley: For quick and fun immersion, take an extrovert and a basketball with you. We traveled with carry-on-sized backpacks for the year. My kids are old enough to pack their bags without my suggestions. One of my sons included a basketball and a pump, which at first I questioned the practicality of. Turns out, it became the MVP of our trip. Most nights, our family would head to a local park, and the guys would join pick-up games. The interactions that took place in parks often led to learning more about the area, invitations into homes and recommendations for things to try in the area. Having an extrovert who is more than willing to take the first step is very helpful, too!

TK: Share more about feeding a family of seven on a budget?

Ashley: My goal was to keep us around \$28/day for food, for seven, not individually. At home, this means we never eat out. While

traveling, it meant the opposite! Our itinerary focused on more budget-friendly countries rather than expensive ones. If we found street vendors and hole-in-the-wall shops, that is where we ate. When we saw kids getting out of school, we paid attention to where they stopped for snacks because it often meant places in our budget. We avoided places that catered to tourists or expensive areas of town, opting instead for side streets where locals gathered.

We also did a lot of grocery shopping and cooking meals. I count grocery shopping in other places as some of the most fun and interesting parts of travel. I'm always asked if we got sick - a common fear. We did, twice. Once, after eating at a fancy hotel with friends, and another was at a guest house.

TK: You acknowledged your role in setting the tone for your family, but even as seasoned travelers, it can be frustrating to miss a bus, flight or ride. Tell us about how you dealt with travel delays, rescheduling, etc.

Ashley: Those frustrating moments happened. I think the biggest thing that helped us was recognizing early on that we would have challenges, and we'd all need to rise to the occasion until they passed. We took this trip with teenagers who had the self-awareness and self-control to navigate stressful situations. As a group, we could all recognize if one member was especially stressed about something, and we'd give that person space. We also knew the challenging moments were just that - moments. They'd come, but they'd also pass.

My kids are great at handling being uncomfortable and inconvenienced. They rarely complain, which makes difficult situations a million times easier as parents. While those situations are not ideal, we all learn from them, too. I think having grace, respect, and patience with each other made dealing with the challenges easier. And food. Typically, any stressful moment was made drastically better if we stopped by a street vendor for a snack or a coffee shop for iced lattes.

TK: How did you navigate other cultures, languages, reading food labels, etc.?

Ashley: Google Translate has a camera option, and we used it a ton! If we needed a

quick translation of a menu, food label, bus timetable, etc., we opened the app, hovered the phone over the text, and it translated in real time. Super easy. Rarely did we have an issue with internet access. We never really had a problem figuring things out due to language. The biggest downside to language barriers was that we couldn't go as deep into conversations as we would have liked.

TK: In the book you mention re-evaluating your "loyal and stable" life upon your return. I'm wondering how you made the decision on what to return to?

Ashley: I asked myself, "Does this make me happy?" That sounds selfish, but I had just returned from visiting countless cultures where happiness and joy were chased after more than achievements and material success. It was beautiful to witness. I was gone for a year, and everything carried on perfectly fine without me. It was sobering, but also freeing to realize I wasn't as needed in certain places as I once thought. Others filled those roles and found joy in them.

As much as I stepped away from some things, I stepped into other things. For instance, I enrolled in Spanish 1 at Tulsa Community College. It feels impossible to learn a new language, but I have friendships in the Spanish-speaking community that bring tremendous joy to my life. Going back to school, doing homework, being scared I'd get to class and have forgotten my reading glasses at home - it is hard, but it makes me so happy and excited for what could come my way in the future when I can communicate more fluently in Spanish.

TK: What's next for you?

Ashley: We have two kids in high school, two in college, and one with a thriving career. All that to say, their schedules are much harder to match up. There are no current trips planned, but we all have an itch to travel. Since our big trip, different ones of us have visited Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile and Spain. If we get them all on the same schedule for a break, our next hope is to rent tuk-tuks and travel around Sri Lanka. Until then, you'll often find us in the Global District of Tulsa soaking up all the food, shops and festivals.

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

tulsakids

IMPACTFUL WOMEN

OF THE 918



Amanda Curtis
Special Waste Manager
American Waste Control

"During a difficult season in my life, I needed a job, and that led me to a position as a scale house attendant at a landfill," Amanda Curtis says. "Little did I know this would grow into a career I would truly love."

Her roles at American Waste Control (AWC) have ranged from customer service to VP of Sales. But Curtis says her favorite may have been as the company mascot, Mr. Murph.

"If you recycle at home or at your business, chances are those recyclables come through our Material Recovery Facility in Tulsa." What can't be recycled is used to capture methane gas to generate electricity for over 25,000 Oklahomans daily. "It's incredibly rewarding to be part of a company that prioritizes sustainability."

AWC supports the Tulsa Christmas Parade and the American Therapeutic Riding Center, which provides equestrian therapy for children and adults with disabilities, and Curtis serves on the board for the parade.

She says her involvement with the National Waste and Recycling Association's Women's Council has inspired her to support other women, just as she was supported in her career.

Curtis also serves on Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary and completed Leadership Broken Arrow. "The Angel Tree Program is especially close to my heart because I was an Angel Tree child growing up. Giving back through that program is incredibly meaningful."

"Tulsa is a city that truly cares about its people," Curtis says. "It's business-friendly, community-focused and incredibly supportive of small and locally owned businesses."

Curtis says that she grew up in poverty, and education wasn't emphasized in her family. "I want to see children in similar situations have access to resources and opportunities that can change their lives," she says. "When we're all serving, our community becomes stronger, more united, and more hopeful for generations to come."



Amber Litwack
Executive Director
Tulsa Girls Art School

Amber Litwack stepped into the role of Executive Director of Tulsa Girls Art School (TGAS) just a few months ago, but she has been impacting youth for years through her work with Tulsa Foundation for Architecture, the Any Given Child-Tulsa program and aha Tulsa. In her current role, Litwack says she "has the privilege of shaping a program that gives girls not only artistic skills but also the confidence, mentorship and opportunities they need to thrive."

Litwack believes that investing in young people is an investment in "the health, vitality and future of our entire community."

While girls at TGAS learn artistic skills, Litwack says that she particularly enjoys seeing them find their voice. She is "nurturing future leaders, creative thinkers and changemakers who will go on to strengthen Tulsa in countless ways."

Litwack enjoys collaborating with others by serving on the board of 108 Contemporary and the Tulsa Route 66 Commission. "I'm also involved with the Tulsa 5th Street Alley Project, a creative placemaking initiative that's reimagining underused spaces in our city."

Litwack feels that Tulsa's sense of community and welcoming spirit are its greatest strengths. "People here genuinely care about one another and are eager to come together to support local causes, businesses and the arts." At the same time, she recognizes the barriers and limited resources for some young people.

"By focusing on inclusivity and investing in both people and infrastructure, Tulsa can build on its strengths to become an even more vibrant, equitable and connected city," she says.

As the owner of a historic home and a vintage business, Litwack enjoys exploring new spots in Tulsa when she's not working like Ava June, Maple Ridge Grocer and Tina's, along with a craft beer from local breweries.

Litwack also admits that she's "obsessed with thrifting." As a vintage – and sustainable – shopper, her go-to store is Love Me Two Times. She's excited about the opening of The Hive Antique Mall at 26th and Harvard this month.



Koddi Dunn
Founder
Love Mobile

Koddi Dunn says that she has three "wows" when you meet her. First, she and her husband of 17 years have a "beautiful, blended family of seven children." They created Love Mobile, a cell phone company, and the third "wow" is that they moved to Broken Arrow four years ago when they were actively trying to move to Florida from Georgia. As they were looking online at property in Florida, their 9-year-old son said, "Mom, I found a house." The house happened to be in Broken Arrow. Four years later, they are entrenched in the BA community and loving it.

Love Mobile grew from a desire to create a business, while also giving to others.

"That's how we came up with the concept of Love Mobile, a cell phone company that gives back in these areas, or 'Four Pillars': environment, education, humanitarian efforts and pet service and adoption," Dunn says. "We believe we are creating not just a company, but a movement, and we are excited to have others join us."

Subscribers to Love Mobile can see "that their phone bill is part of the solution, not just another expense."

Love Mobile's first partnership is with the BeHeard Movement. A portion of the wireless revenue will go to helping BeHeard provide free showers, laundry and hygiene care for unhoused individuals across the 918.

Dunn also launched the Love Mobile Grow with Google partnership so that participants can earn career certificates at no cost.

Dunn says that they are actively looking for organizations to partner with. "There's a form on our website that you can fill out," Dunn says. "Nominate an organization even if it's small."

Dunn says that, too often, it's the big nonprofits with marketing budgets that get the funding. "We're trying to find lesser knowns that are quietly doing the work. Give us those names."

When asked if she could share a fun fact about herself, Dunn laughed. "I danced in the 1994 Super Bowl in Atlanta when I was in high school. They grabbed all the local high school dance groups and we practiced for four months to perform at half-time."



Shannon Luper

Program Manager for Girl Scouts
Beyond Bars
Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma

Shannon Luper believes that her work gives people a second chance – whether that's a parent in prison learning to reconnect with their child, a young girl discovering her leadership voice or someone in recovery reclaiming hope. "For me," she says, "this isn't just a job; it's a calling. When someone realizes their worth and begins to walk in it, it creates ripples of change that can touch generations."

Luper leads programs and initiatives that support vulnerable populations for Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma. "I facilitate parenting classes in prison, develop leadership curricula for young girls and run a 12-step, faith-based recovery program."

Informed by her deep faith, Luper wants those she serves to know that they are not defined by their trauma or struggles. "They can write a new story for their life."

Beyond her Girl Scout work, Luper is involved in many youth mentorship and women's leadership programs such as Women Helping Other Women, Birthright Living Legacy, the Oklahoma Fatherhood Initiatives, the Oklahoma Homeless Children and Youth Initiative, just to name a few.

"I also invest time in building nonprofit initiatives that connect resources to those who often fall through the cracks," Luper says. "Volunteer work matters to me because it's an extension of my heart."

While she believes that Tulsa has a "strong spirit of community and collaboration," she feels there is work to be done in addressing cycles of poverty, homelessness and the barriers that keep people from accessing mental health and reentry support. "I believe more investment in prevention, mentorship and long-term support systems could create lasting change."

Luper encourages everyone to be involved in volunteering, or just connecting with neighbors. "Every action plants a seed."



Rose Gamble

Vice President for Research and
Economic Development
The University of Tulsa

The person nominating Rose Gamble wrote, "It's often those working quietly behind the scenes who make the greatest impact...simply striving to do their best, day in and day out."

An interview with Gamble reflected this humility. She gave credit, not to herself, but to her "remarkable team whose objective is to engage with and energize faculty, staff and students to explore new ideas, innovate and disseminate their findings..."

Gamble says she is honored to work with scholar-teachers who "bring this energy and novelty into the classroom."

With funding from the Oklahoma Center for Science and Innovation and matching funding from the George Kaiser Family Foundation, Gamble has helped the university establish the Oklahoma Cyber Innovation Institute (OCII). The institute's many programs include student camps, teacher training, hands-on experiences and curriculum development for youth, support of Fab-Lab and more.

In addition, Gamble has helped establish the Institute for Robotics and Autonomy. "Teams at this institute are investigating the building and deployment of robots that may assist elderly people who are aging in place to maintain their independence."

Gamble sees much promise in the future for Tulsa. "The new designation of a Tech Hub by the Economic Development Administration will foster talent generation in AI, cybersecurity, drones and robots, beginning with elementary school students."

Gamble encourages people to explore technology opportunities in Tulsa, and to be "creative in how they leverage their strengths to make a difference."

Getting away from technology, Gamble says her family loves kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding on Oklahoma's lakes.



Heather Van Hooser

Director of Private Banking, EVP
Mabrey Bank

"My parents always told me that the rent we pay for our place on earth is community service, giving back, and supporting those who need us most. That's a value I carry with me every day," Heather Van Hooser says.

Van Hooser models that sentiment for her "three incredible bonus children" that she shares with husband Marc, and in her leadership of a team of 10 women at Mabrey Bank.

"I am so grateful to be in a position where I can make a difference and work for an organization like Mabrey Bank which encourages me to do so," Van Hooser says. "I believe it is our responsibility to create change in our communities to positively impact as many people as we can."

Mabrey sponsors and supports more than 100 nonprofits and organizations across Oklahoma, and the Private Banking team has specifically focused on volunteering, fundraising and promoting some of those organizations.

Personally, Van Hooser has volunteered for several organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Ronald McDonald House and Oklahoma Project Woman. She has served as a Big Sister to her Little Sister, Antwanette, for more than 25 years. "I make it a priority to give to my community – because that's the rent I'll never stop paying."

Van Hooser encourages others to make their own impact on the community, noting that one of the easiest ways is to give to the Tulsa Area United Way.

When she's not working or volunteering, Van Hooser competes nationally showing horses, an activity she started at age 8, "which is just a fancy way of saying I turned a childhood hobby into an expensive addiction."



Tracy Copeland, CEO, TGI Enterprises Inc.

"I started TGI in 1990, just two years after women could legally own and sign for their own business loans without a male co-signer," says Tracy Copeland. "Those barriers were there for me to knock down, not just for myself, but for the women who would come after me." Thirty-five years later, TGI Enterprises operates out of a 25,000-square-foot facility, providing custom branded apparel and graphics to clients in all 50 states. The company employs over 70 people, including 20 full-time graphic designers and illustrators.

Through it all, "Our business has always been built with intention and creating opportunities for other creators, especially women-owned and minority-owned businesses," says Copeland. "We actively hire Oklahoma-based talent and prioritize opportunities for individuals from underserved and minority communities, including Cherokee citizens and other Native individuals." TGI Enterprises also has a history of supporting nonprofit initiatives, community sponsorships, etc.

A unique way TGI Enterprises supports women-owned businesses is through the StartHER Up program, which provides branding and mentorship services to small, women-owned businesses, whether they are just getting started or needing a refresh. Businesses are encouraged to apply and, if chosen, receive everything "from professional design services and custom products to marketing resources and guidance," explains Copeland.

"Women business owners face unique challenges, from access to capital to breaking into male-dominated industries," she continues. "But we also have a unique advantage: We know how to build community. When women-owned businesses collaborate instead of competing in isolation, we amplify each other's reach, share customers and strengthen our local economy. For me, community connection isn't 'nice-to-have,' it's a growth strategy."



Lindsay Hutchinson, CFRE

President & CEO
Tulsa Zoo

Hutchinson says she fell in love with the Tulsa Zoo when she was a little girl. Her dad served on the Tulsa Zoo Friends Board and her mom helped chair zoo events. "My brother and I were at the zoo any chance we could get."

After a nationwide search, Hutchinson became CEO in 2020, and says it "is an absolute joy. My husband and kids now get to experience this amazing zoo, and I love seeing the historic transformation that we are undergoing through their eyes."

The impact of the current public-private partnership has been transformational. "In just over 14 years, we have invested over \$70 million into the zoo, increased staffing by 78% and are now the largest daily paid attraction in the region with almost 700,000 annual guests every year. A world class zoo affects quality of life in our region."

Hutchinson also emphasized the educational impact of zoo programs, with over 250,000 people participating.

Besides zoo work, Hutchinson enjoys volunteering and mentoring. "I have served as a mentor for the Executive Leadership Development Program for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. This program identifies 10 individuals that would like to be president/CEO or zoo director. It helped me prepare for this role, and I enjoy giving back in this way." She also loves volunteering at her children's school, especially library duty.

"Tulsa is dynamic, welcoming and constantly changing and growing," she says. "I think many underestimate the amazing access we have to arts and culture, great food and world-class attractions." Hutchinson encourages others to experience the region and also to support their favorites. "Our unique cultural and arts attractions cannot survive without everyone's support and advocacy."

While Hutchinson loves her job, she says she is a mom and wife first. "I love spending time with my family," she says. "My nights and weekends are typically filled with lots of kids' activities and games – I wouldn't have it any other way."



Lindsey Baker, LCSW

Youth Services of Tulsa

Lindsey Baker says working in El Paso, Texas, on the border with Juarez, Mexico, taught her about herself and the world. "I got to work and live in an amazing community doing community development work with teens and their families," she says. "My time there really broadened my views on community, culture and language. I am passionate about working with immigrant families. They inspire me with their passion for seeking better lives for their children."

In Tulsa, Baker does therapy at Youth Services with primarily Spanish-speaking adolescents and their families from countries around the world. The youth may access mental health services at no cost. "I love that there are no barriers for youth or their families when they need assistance," she says, emphasizing how difficult it can be to access services due to systemic inequalities. "I love that we are able to provide services in peoples' native language. I know how isolating it can feel when you don't feel confident in a non-native language."

By visiting Latin America as often as possible, Baker says she can not only enjoy the sights and food of other cultures but can share experiences with the families she serves.

"I encourage people to get to know someone different from them," Baker says. "One of the greatest things I think needs improvement is the State of Oklahoma needs to focus on supporting our public schools and making them better rather than demonizing certain populations like trans youth. They are already suffering enough and need support and kindness. At the end of the day, we have more in common as human beings than differences."



Sharon Guest

Child Care Director and Master Teacher
DVIS

Sharon Guest says that her passion for helping children recovering from the trauma of domestic violence "is due to the domestic violence that occurred in my own home as a child." Before becoming Child Care Director at Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS), Guest owned a family child care home in California and worked for Tulsa Educare. Guest is the mom of two children and has three grandchildren.

Overseeing DVIS child care programs at three sites, Guest provides "families with children a safe and loving environment for parents/guardians to bring their children while they are going through the recovery process." She says all the DVIS providers have "a passion to provide care for children who have experienced trauma of some type."

Guest says that one of Tulsa's strengths is the donor and nonprofit support for organizations like DVIS, and it hurts families when programs are not funded. "I was just talking with other professionals in the education department about the effect of removing the SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) program from schools impacting even the youngest kids," she says. "They are being kicked out of school because they don't have the skills to socially/emotionally regulate themselves."

Guest encourages everyone to do something to help the community, even if it's a small thing like picking up trash or just listening and talking to someone. "The simple things can make a world of difference in someone's life."



Krystal S. Reyes, Deputy Mayor, City of Tulsa

Krystal Reyes holds the distinction of being the City of Tulsa's first Latina Deputy Mayor, a position which involves overseeing the city's education, youth and resilience initiatives. However, "While I am the first Latina and Mexican American Deputy Mayor, I will not be the last," she says. "It is up to me and those in positions of leadership to help others see themselves in positions like this."

She views her job as a chance to help Tulsa become a thriving city "where no one is or feels left behind." Day-to-day, this includes (among other things) launching and developing the new Office of Children, Youth, and Families and the Tulsa Children's Cabinet, whose goal is to put "an additional 15,000 youth on a path to economic mobility," explains Reyes.

Even prior to becoming Deputy Mayor in February 2025, Reyes has had a rich career of advocating for children and families. In Tulsa, she was the City's Chief Resilience Officer for five years. She has also worked in New York City, holding positions in the health department, the Office of the Mayor, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, and other organizations.

"I'll take this opportunity to share a message with young people," she says. "You may be young, but you are already part of something big. Your dreams, your voice, your actions, your kindness – they matter." Reyes encourages young people to study history and government, to ask questions, register to vote, and "actively make your community the best it can be."



Susanne Barnard

Owner
The Bead Merchant

For 35 years, Susanne Barnard has been helping people buy all types of beads, findings, cord and everything necessary to fashion their own creations, whether at home or at The Bead Merchant on South Harvard Ave.

Barnard loves the connections she's made over the years. "I have gotten to know so many people, and see them through different stages of their lives," she says. "I love that. It just makes those connections really sweet and rich."

She calls the shop a "third space" where people from different backgrounds can share ideas, learn new skills and create something beautiful.

Looking back at the span of time she has been a business-owner, Barnard says that Tulsa is finally realizing how cool it really is. "I feel like we have our own unique personality. Tulsa is a really amazing place to live right now. There is so much talent here. I'm super proud to call myself a Tulsa."

She, her husband and friends particularly enjoy the music scene. "Check out the Colony, Thelma's Peach and The Mercury for live music any day of the week."

Barnard also has a long list of favorite places to grab a bite: Chimera, Tina's, Oren, Cow and Cabbage, Pure Café, The Vault, El Seme — all fresh and local.

"The Circle Cinema is also amazing!" she says. And don't forget First Fridays.

If you're catching a theme here, it's all about keeping it in the community. "Let's keep shopping local and keep up the good work, Tulsa!" Barnard says.

Barnard continues to create community with the next generation. She says that kids who had birthday parties at The Bead Merchant are now bringing their own kids for birthday parties.

"We had eight second-generation parties here last year," Barnard says. "It's about the sweetest way to be told you're getting old!"



Ziva Branstetter

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Journalist

Ziva Branstetter recently left her job as senior editor at ProPublica, a national nonprofit newsroom focused on investigative and enterprise journalism. While there, she helped manage, edit and write "Life of the Mother," an investigation into the deaths of five women who were unable to access timely reproductive care in Georgia and Texas after the states banned abortion. The piece was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in May.

"Our project changed the national conversation from 'Can abortion bans lead to deaths?' to showing how experts agree that this has happened in five cases," Branstetter says. "Our project showed how these laws can be modified to ensure pregnant women receive the healthcare they need to live. I am hopeful that states, including Oklahoma, will use our project as a blueprint to respond to preventable maternal deaths, as occurred in Texas."

Branstetter credits her first job as an editor and reporter at the Tulsa Tribune for providing a foundation for her expansive career, including being an editor at The Washington Post and Reveal, two decades with the Tulsa World, and co-founding The Frontier, an investigative newsroom based in Tulsa.

For three decades, Branstetter's investigations have exposed issues such as Oklahoma's death penalty process, corruption within the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office, and how energy companies were causing earthquakes that damaged homes and property.

In leaving her ProPublica role, Branstetter is focusing on building a company to coach and train employees at for-profit and non-profit companies in writing and related skill sets.

"I also mentor journalists, mostly journalists of color, in career strategy," she says. "I volunteer with Investigative Reporters & Editors Inc., which provides education and training to journalists around the world."

A lover of the 918, Branstetter and her husband of 37 years enjoy the parks, cycling and jogging paths, museums, and concerts at Cain's. She proudly displays a 918 tattoo on her wrist.

A true investigative journalist, Branstetter is also aware of areas that Tulsa could improve, pointing out that city leaders could provide more opportunities for people in different parts of the city to interact. She also believes Tulsa must recognize and deal with "its painful past from the Tulsa Race Massacre."

Finally, if you're wondering where Ziva got her unusual name, she picked it out when she was 5 years old. Until she was in kindergarten, her name was Lisa, but there were four other Lisas in her class. Determined not to be Lisa #5, Branstetter's parents let her pick out a name from a book of names, and it was officially changed at the courthouse.



Brittany Stokes

Co-Founder
Project Orphans and Tulsa Girls' Home

About 13 years ago, Brittany Stokes had a life-changing conversation that inspired her to shift from a corporate career to one working with vulnerable children. Initially, this led Stokes to found Project Orphans, which provides holistic care for children in Uganda. While working with Project Orphans, she began to recognize a problem closer to home. "We saw a gap for teen girls in foster care — especially those aging out of the system," Stokes recalls. "That gap became the foundation for Tulsa Girls' Home."

Tulsa Girls' Home provides "therapeutic, hope-rooted care in a safe, loving home," says Stokes. Girls living at the home receive counseling, education support, job training, mentorship and more. In addition to the primary home, Tulsa Girls' Home provides transitional living — fully furnished townhomes located on the TGH property in Jenks.

"The impact has rippled far beyond our home," says Stokes. "The Jenks and Tulsa communities have embraced our girls with open arms — offering job opportunities, classes, church support and genuine encouragement. Together, we're creating a culture that no longer sees these girls as 'foster kids,' but as valuable, capable young women who matter."

As a licensed therapist-candidate, Stokes also serves on the board for Aetna Better Healthcare of Oklahoma and is an adjunct therapist at Glenpool schools with CREOKS. And as a mother of four, Stokes is teaching her children to make an impact, too. "My husband and I want our kids to grow up knowing that we don't ignore people in need—we respond," she says. "One of my proudest mom moments was when my son saw someone in need and asked if we could get them a Happy Meal. That's empathy in action. That's the goal."

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Amanda's leadership in the waste & recycling industry, dedication to community, and love for family inspire us all. Thank you for making Tulsa a better place — at work, at home, and everywhere in between.



Congratulations to RFR Attorney, Rhiannon Thoreson, on her selection to TulsaKids Impactful Women of the 918

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Katerina Alder

Founder, Amelia's Friends Foundation; EL Department Head
Union Freshman Academy

Katerina Alder's life hasn't always been easy. "I moved to the United States from Belarus in 2008, bringing with me the hope of a better future," she recounts. However, "Life didn't follow the easiest path—I became a single mother after my children's father chose not to continue parenting a child with a disability."

Alder's 14-year-old daughter, Amelia, the younger of two siblings, has Down syndrome. "She is a radiant light in our lives," says Alder. "But as she grew, we noticed something quietly painful. The birthday party invitations slowed. The playdates stopped. While her classmates formed friendships, Amelia was often left on the margins—not out of cruelty, but out of discomfort and misunderstanding." As Amelia got older, Alder says, she began noticing this dynamic and questioning "why she didn't have real friends."

This encouraged Alder to act, and she launched Amelia's Friends Foundation in January 2025. "Our mission is simple but powerful," Alder says. "To create moments where kids like Amelia can feel seen, loved and connected—not as an exception, but as part of the whole."

Although the organization is fairly new, Alder says it has already been able to make a meaningful impact on the community. "We've hosted inclusive play meetups, seasonal events and parents' respite events," she says. Follow Amelia's Friends Foundation on social media for information about upcoming events.

For other parents of children with disabilities, Alder offers this advice: "Believe in your children. Challenge them, nurture their strengths and take it one step at a time....Our kids have amazing potential—sometimes it just needs a little extra time, love and creativity to bloom."



Rhiannon K. Thoreson

Attorney (Rosenstein, Fist & Ringold),
Advocate, Author & Speaker

Attorney Rhiannon K. Thoreson says she is guided by the question, "How can I use this to help someone else?" As the survivor of a traumatic attack and kidnapping, this question has frequently motivated Thoreson to advocate for others going through traumatic situations and to share her story in order to "light a path for someone else."

"Surviving trauma taught me firsthand what it feels like to be voiceless, dismissed and unseen by systems that were supposed to protect me," says Thoreson. "That experience lit a fire in me, not just to heal, but to change the way we show up for survivors."

In addition to her work in civil litigation, Thoreson is the Board President of Tulsa Lawyers for Children (TLC) as well as a board member for Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS). Thoreson reports that, under her leadership this past year, TLC has increased its support for vulnerable children, now focusing not only on helping children in "deprived cases" but also on supporting those going through guardianship, custody and adoption proceedings. "Without this advocacy," she says, "many would be left to navigate an overwhelmed system alone."

Thoreson has also impacted others by sharing her story through her TEDx Talk, "Forgiving the Unforgiveable," and will soon publish a memoir, "My Beauty from Ashes." "As an author and speaker," she says, "I hope to keep telling the truth about what it means to heal after trauma—not in a way that ties things up in a bow, but in a way that gives others permission to face their own stories with compassion and courage. I want to create more spaces—whether in courtrooms, conferences or community settings—where survivors feel seen and empowered to use their voices."



Kristin Tipps

Co-Founder & CEO, 9Ranch; Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor,
Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor

Kristin Tipps has been supporting children and families through her work as a licensed professional counselor for more than 20 years. More recently — in January 2024 — she co-founded Nurtured In Natural Environments Ranch (9Ranch), whose mission is "to provide psychotherapy in the heart of nature, empowering children to overcome obstacles and find their divine purpose." (9ranch.net). In addition to nature-based therapy, the practice offers play therapy, animal-assisted therapy, sand tray therapy, and other "alternative therapy" methods.

"The role of the 'alternative methods' is simply about building rapport and trust with our clients," explains Tipps. "By utilizing these activities, kids get to express themselves differently and with less pressure." Taking therapy out of the office and into nature can change the therapy dynamics in a way that encourages clients to open up. "One example of this process was a client who lost a parent to a terminal illness and was unwilling to engage (or even speak) when meeting in the office," says Tipps. "Once we moved the sessions to 9Ranch and incorporated hikes in nature, the client was able to open up, share more, and begin the grieving process alongside the remaining parent."

Over the next several months, Tipps hopes to expand the offerings at 9Ranch to include equine therapy, nutrition coaching, eating disorder recovery and additional group sessions.

Outside of her work at 9Ranch, Tipps is making an impact by supporting new therapists through their licensure process. As stress relief from an emotionally demanding job, Tipps enjoys working out, dancing and, playing pickleball.



Karen L. Tilkin
Executive Director/CEO
CAP Tulsa

Prior to joining CAP Tulsa in 2008, Karen Tilkin held leadership positions at The Bama Companies, Inc., and worked in international banking— jobs which took her around the globe to New York, Taiwan and China. Now CAP Tulsa's Executive Director, a role she has held since 2019, Tilkin brings her skills as business leader and mentor to this nonprofit that serves early learners and their families.

"I derive great satisfaction from helping our community's young children flourish," Tilkin says. "In talking with our teachers and the parents of the children we serve, I know we are making a meaningful difference in the trajectory of their lives." Furthermore, she continues, research backs this up.

Beyond working with the children and families who participate in CAP Tulsa's programming, Tilkin's leadership position means she is largely responsible for facilitating a strong organizational culture. "My greatest joy as a leader is helping others reach their full potential," she says. "My leadership philosophy is informed by my mentor, Ms. Paula A. Marshall, CEO of Bama, who taught me that all employees want to be successful. When performance falters, 80% of the time it is due to management's failure to set up the job for success...Instead of blaming the employee, management must first look in the mirror to identify the source of the problem."

A self-proclaimed life-long learner, Tilkin recently earned her PhD in Organizational and Community Leadership from the University of Oklahoma and looks forward to teaching her first class at OU-Tulsa this fall. She has also served on the Board of Housing Solutions and is on the board of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa.



Alison Anthony
President and CEO
Tulsa Area United Way

Alison Anthony has been the CEO of Tulsa Area United Way (TAUW) since 2018. "Every day when I awake," she says, "I know that hardworking families across our community are having a tough time making ends meet. Every dollar we raise — every incredible nonprofit we fund and strengthen — means someone will have a better life."

This desire to help others has been a key factor of Anthony's life going back to her time as a sixteen-year-old Campfire counselor. Now a grandmother of five, she is motivated by her belief that "every child in our community should be just as loved and have just as many opportunities as my own kids — because, really, aren't they all our children?"

During her time at the helm of TAUW, the organization has raised more than \$184 million through annual fundraising, and it was able to establish an endowment of \$12.6 million in 2024, as part of TAUW's centennial campaign. Funds raised by TAUW go toward programs that support community health and better opportunities for individuals, including youth. For example, the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program, which works with girls whose parents are incarcerated, aiming to "break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration." "I love knowing our work is changing the trajectory of a child's life," says Anthony.

In addition to her work with TAUW, Anthony makes time to mentor youth and young professionals. And she is writing three books, including a children's book (reading to her grandkids is a favorite activity!) "I try to live so that the people and causes most important to me know that they are," she says.



Scottie Rae Lawrence
Owner
Magnolia Soap & Bath Co.

"Local small business owners," says Scottie Rae Lawrence, "are the heart and soul of every city or town." They put in long hours, building connections among community members and supporting employees, she explains. And Magnolia Soap & Bath Co. isn't Lawrence's first foray into entrepreneurship. She is also a Doctor of Chiropractic with a clinic in Sapulpa; she has owned and sold a variety of successful businesses; and she invests in real estate. Lawrence opened Magnolia Soap & Bath Co. in December 2020, hoping to create "a place you can walk into, instantly feel happy, invited and welcomed..."

But in addition to the business aspect, Magnolia is also a way Lawrence can give back to the community, through the Hope in Soap project. Each month, the business partners with a local organization to create a unique soap design. "We donate 50% of the proceeds of every bar sold back to the company," says Lawrence. Furthermore, the company donates 20% of every sale to that month's charity if a customer mentions it at checkout.

One particularly successful campaign was in partnership with Lisa Bain Ministries, when they sold 3,000 soaps in support of the ministry — 2,500 more than their original goal. Lawrence was able to accompany Lisa Bain to the cancer treatment center and pass out soaps to patients there. "My own mom was in chemo last year, and I sat with her for her treatments," says Lawrence. "To come full circle and be there to see other patients and give them some hope and love, it was forever life-changing."

Meet-ups Bring Women Together



By **Betty Casey**

Nancy A. Moore interviews interesting people in the community for TulsaKids "Green Country Grown-up" column. This month we're turning the tables and interviewing Nancy. Besides her column, Nancy is an adjunct instructor at Tulsa Community College (TCC), records her own podcast, "Sharing Passion and Purpose," and has most recently started a monthly networking luncheon for women that consistently sells out.

"When I started interviewing people for Green Country Grown-up, I could hear the excitement in their voices about what they were doing," Nancy says. "I've always been interested in finding out about peoples' career paths and helping them with their choices."

An accounting major in college with an MBA, Nancy says she hated her job and felt that she had chosen the wrong major, although she loves teaching. She taught accounting at TCC for 15 years and has taught Introduction to Business for approximately nine years.

"I enjoy having guest speakers in my class," Nancy says. "I can see the students are so interested in what they're doing. I have them interview someone in the community. They ask about the company and their mission, vision and values."

Mission, Vision and Values

Through her interviews and teaching, Nancy began to see how people connect over their passions, whether it's a current career or a dream job that they may be considering. She kept going back to the core concepts of mission, vision and values, and how she could bring people together to share those concepts.

"I wanted to tap into what people are passionate about and what their purpose is, so that led to the idea of a podcast," Nancy says. "I had no idea how to do it or record it, but during the COVID quarantine, I launched my first podcast. I hear from others how people really connect to it."

As she listened to women, Nancy heard a common desire for in-person connections.

"I never anticipated doing events," Nancy says, "but people said they would love to hear in person from other women who have started businesses."

The first luncheon event, "Conversations with Passion & Purpose Live," held at The Vault, was a sell-out. Women ranging from college students to seasoned professionals gathered to hear a speaker and enjoy conversation over lunch.



Photo by kaleigh.creative

"I want people to go away from the meetings thinking, 'I met the coolest woman,'" she says. "I'd love for everyone to leave thinking that they made a great connection."

Building Community

Nancy's slogan is Providing Clarity, Confidence and Community for Women. She says that not only are women making connections at the networking events, they're forming sub-groups with people they meet.

Beyond that, she sees women gaining clarity and confidence in their journey, as they share successes, failures and mishaps.

"Knowing other women who understand what you're going through is so beneficial," Nancy says. "It's neat to meet women at different ages and stages, from somebody who just had a baby to someone who just retired. I'm hoping mentorships will happen organically."

Nancy continues to listen and do surveys to provide what women want. Because of her business background, others often ask her for advice, which is leading her to take on some job coaching and mentorship.

"I need to take a chance on myself and see how this grows," she says.

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Betty Casey is the Associate Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of TulsaKids Magazine. She has been with TulsaKids for over 30 years.

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Easy, Go-To Dinners Your Family Will Love



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

By **Natalie Mikles**

Dinner doesn't have to be complicated—or pricey—to be good. In fact, some of the best family meals are the simplest ones. With food costs on the rise, it helps to have a few reliable recipes that are budget-friendly, kid-approved and quick to pull together.

The good news is that cooking at home is still one of the best ways to save money and feed your family well. Whether you're navigating rising prices or just trying to make your grocery runs stretch a little farther, the key is planning meals that are affordable, flexible and—most importantly—ones your family will actually eat.

These are a few of our favorite go-to dinners that are inexpensive, easy to prep and endlessly adaptable. And yes, they've all passed the picky-eater test.

Tip: Budget-Friendly Pantry Starter Kit

Keep these ingredients stocked to ensure you can cook at home rather than running through the drive-through window.

- Canned beans
- Frozen veggies
- Rice
- Pasta
- Rotisserie chicken (portioned and stored in the freezer)
- Block cheese
- Tortillas
- Canned tomatoes
- Oats
- Peanut butter

Chili

There's a reason chili shows up in just about every budget recipe roundup—it checks all the boxes. It's easy to make, easy to freeze and works just as well on its own as it does served over spaghetti, hot dogs or baked potatoes.

With higher meat prices, I've found myself leaning even more on beans and using less ground beef. For chili, sometimes I swap the meat for all beans and other times I cut the amount of ground beef in half. It still tastes hearty and satisfying, and my kids don't miss the extra meat. I also like doubling the recipe and freezing leftovers in quart-size bags for quick dinners down the road.

Don't underestimate what chili can become the next day: taco salad, chili-topped nachos or even a baked potato bar.

3 Bean Chili

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups chopped yellow onion (from 1 large onion)
- 2 cups chopped poblano chiles (from 2 large chiles)
- 1 1/2 pounds ground sirloin
- 4 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 (6-ounce) can no-salt-added tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans
- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans
- 1 (15-ounce) can dark red kidney beans
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced fire-roasted tomatoes

Toppings: sour cream, shredded cheese, cilantro, candied jalapenos, lime wedges

1. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high. Add onion and chiles, and cook, stirring occasionally, until chiles are softened and onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add ground sirloin to onion mixture in Dutch oven. Cook, stirring occasionally, until meat is crumbly, 4 to 5 minutes. Add chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, kosher salt, coriander and oregano. Cook, stirring constantly, until spices are toasted and fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomato paste and chopped garlic; cook, stirring constantly, until tomato paste darkens and garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute more.
3. Drain and rinse cans of beans. Stir beans, tomatoes and 2 cups water into Dutch oven; bring mixture to a boil over medium-high. Reduce heat to medium-low and cover. Simmer until slightly thickened, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Divide evenly among bowls then top as desired.



Rotisserie Chicken

Rotisserie chicken is one of my favorite dinner shortcuts. And buying a cooked rotisserie chicken is often cheaper than buying a whole, raw chicken from the grocery store. Plus, the convenience can't be beat, especially during those first few weeks of school when dinner needs to be fast.

I like to buy two chickens: one to serve right away with rice and a vegetable, and one to shred and use throughout the week. With just a few seasonings or sauces, you can turn that chicken into tacos, quesadillas, wraps, pizza toppings or rice bowls.

Here's one of my favorite ways to use leftover chicken—especially if you have kids who like to be in charge of their own meals. It's a build-your-own pizza night that's fun, fast and frugal. Tip: The Trader Joe's pizza dough is delicious and easy to use. Or if you're out of dough or don't have any crusts around, use a tortilla! Give each kid a tortilla to make their own personal pizza.

Chicken Bruschetta Pizza

- 1 cup chopped cooked chicken
 - 2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
 - 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
 - 1 large, prebaked pizza crust
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 - 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
 - 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1. Heat oven to 450 degrees.
 2. Combine chicken, tomatoes, garlic, balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper in bowl.
 3. Brush olive oil over pizza crust. Bake 3 minutes; remove from oven. Top with chicken mixture and mozzarella cheese. Bake 7 to 9 minutes or until cheese is melted and bubbly.
 4. Once out of oven, top with Parmesan cheese and fresh basil. Cut into slices.

Beans

Beans are still one of the most budget-friendly ingredients out there. Even with grocery prices up, dried or canned beans are an inexpensive way to build a meal that's full of fiber and protein.

I've learned that kids are more likely to eat beans if they're presented in familiar ways: as nachos, burritos, burgers or even bean and cheese quesadillas. Two of my family's go-to meatless dinners are mixed bean soup with cornbread and these bean and cheese burritos.

The burritos are one of those dinners that checks all the boxes: cheap, filling and freezer friendly. Start with the basics—beans, rice, cheese and salsa—then add whatever vegetables or protein you have on hand. Add spinach, roasted sweet potatoes or corn, depending on what's in the fridge.

You can make a big batch, wrap them in foil and freeze for future lunches or dinners. And if your kids are anything like mine, they'll enjoy building their own burritos, even if they only add cheese and a suspiciously small scoop of beans.

Cheesy Bean and Rice Burritos

- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto or black beans, drained and rinsed
 - 1 cup cooked rice
 - 1/2 cup salsa
 - 1 teaspoon cumin
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup shredded cheddar
 - 6 to 8 (8-inch) flour tortillas
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
 2. In a large bowl, combine beans, rice, salsa, cumin, garlic powder and salt. Stir in cheese and any optional add-ins (like corn, spinach or sweet potatoes).
 3. Warm the tortillas slightly to make them easier to fold. Place about 1/3 cup filling in the center of each tortilla. Fold sides in, then roll tightly.
 4. Place burritos seam-side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or sprayed with cooking spray.
 5. Bake 15-20 minutes, until heated through and slightly crispy on the edges.
 6. Serve with sour cream, guacamole or more salsa for dipping.

Tip: To freeze, wrap each burrito in foil and place in a freezer bag until ready to heat and eat.



Shared Service Creates Family and Community Connections



By **Natalie Mikles**

When Jen Buckner began volunteering at Emergency Infant Services (EIS), it was to fulfill a requirement for a college class. But what started as an obligation quickly turned into a mission—first for Jen and then for her three children.

Buckner's youngest child, Luka, was just 3 years old when he started tagging along with his mom. Luka is now 7 and a regular fixture, along with his 13-year-old brother, Declan, and 15-year-old sister Bella.

"Volunteering at EIS has inspired confidence in all my kids," Jen says.

It's also shown them the impact they can make by giving their time.

"Teaching kids to care for other people around them is so valuable, and I love the hands-on opportunity to teach them about this when we volunteer together at EIS."

The reasons kids choose to volunteer vary, but the effect is almost always positive: encouraging responsibility, building empathy and giving kids a new perspective. Many start through required service hours for school or church youth groups, while others begin at a young age by watching and modeling their parents' example.

For the Buckner family, EIS has become an extension of their own family. The kids know the staff and have formed friendships with other longtime volunteers. When they first started, the Buckners spent much of their time cleaning toys to put into the boutique. It's a simple but meaningful job that gives even the youngest volunteers a chance to contribute. Declan especially enjoys finding special toys for other kids to take home, Jen said.

Harmony Blackburn also brought her kids to volunteer at EIS when they were just 3 and 4 years old. Now 9 and 11, they've grown up helping at the organization.

"Whether sorting donated clothes, bagging diapers or helping me interview and gather necessities for clients, they interact with families and volunteers from all walks of life and gain valuable life skills," she said.

Why Volunteering Matters

Volunteering isn't just helpful for the organizations being served—it also benefits the volunteers themselves. Kids who volunteer often gain confidence, empathy and a sense of purpose. For parents, it's a chance to model values, connect with their kids and become more involved in their community.

Research shows that volunteering can even improve mental well-being and strengthen social bonds, especially when done regularly. That consistency creates momentum, making families want to serve more and often encouraging kindness, resilience and a deeper understanding of how we're all connected.



Mom Jen Buckner with her children, Luka, Declan and Bella volunteering at Emergency Infant Services (EIS). EIS serves 100-150 clients a day.

Choosing to Volunteer

The process of finding the right volunteer opportunity—especially one that fits your family's interests and schedule—can feel overwhelming.

Some parents worry their child may be too young or not mature enough to handle certain tasks, especially when volunteering with organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness or crisis. But many nonprofits, including City Lights Foundation of Oklahoma, welcome young volunteers. At City Lights' Night Light Tulsa program, children work alongside their parents serving food, handing out toiletries and meeting other needs of Tulsa's homeless population.

Of course, volunteering with kids isn't always straightforward. And some families simply don't have extra time.

Blackburn acknowledges the time crunch many parents feel but encourages them to start small.

"Whether we have 30 minutes or an entire afternoon, there is never a shortage of meaningful tasks to be done," she said.

What matters most is showing kids what it looks like to show up for someone else.

Some families opt for more structured opportunities, like National Charity League or the Young Men's Service League. NCL, which has chapters in Tulsa and Jenks, is for mothers and daughters in grades 7-12. YMSL is for mothers and sons in grades 9-12. Both organizations require a multiyear commitment and partner with local nonprofits to offer hands-on service.

Wendy Buehrer and her daughter, Sophie, joined NCL when Sophie was entering seventh grade.

"The timing was perfect," Buehrer said. "It was a time when Sophie was spending more time with friends, and NCL gave us the opportunity to bond and experience new things together."

The two have volunteered with organizations including EIS, Global Gardens and Pet Adoption League.

"When we walk away from volunteering, we praise God and we pray for everybody we just served," Buehrer said. "Our hearts are so filled and full. It creates momentum and makes you want to volunteer more."

Connecting With Your Child

Volunteering isn't just about giving—it's also about connecting. When families serve together, they often build relationships not only with each other, but also with fellow volunteers, staff and the people they serve.

Declan Buckner became friends with one of the older volunteers at EIS, and they still enjoy catching up when there together. It's relationships like those that make this more than just a task—it has become part of the Buckners' lives.

Shared service also creates space for parents and kids to talk, reflect and strengthen their bond.

Buehrer says the time she spends volunteering with her daughter is meaningful in a way that's hard to replicate, and that they walk away with a shared purpose.

Whether it's bagging diapers or planting vegetables, volunteering as a family does more than fill a need in the community—it creates meaningful, shared experiences that last. It shows kids they matter, and that their time, energy and compassion can make a real difference.



Where to Volunteer in Tulsa

There are many volunteer opportunities for families across the Tulsa area. Reach out to the volunteer coordinator at a nonprofit to ask what their needs might be and if kids are welcome. Some organizations allow supervised participation even if there's a minimum age requirement.

Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma

Sort donated food or assist with drive-through distribution events.

Emergency Infant Services

Sort donations, clean toys and assist clients.

Iron Gate

Serve community meals or work in the grocery pantry.

Pet Adoption League

Walk dogs or help at adoption events.

Tulsa Dream Center

Help with food distribution and events.

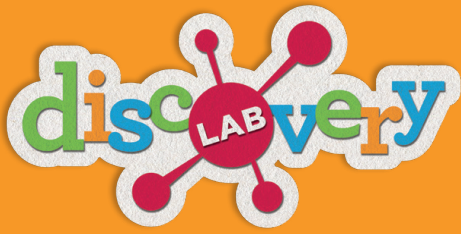
Catholic Charities

Make meals for the Porta Caeli House, serve in the onsite food pantry market or help at the Madonna House.

Tips: How to Start Volunteering with Your Kids

1. Start small. Look for one-time or short shifts that match your child's age and interest.
2. Ask about age requirements. Many nonprofits have guidelines but will welcome younger kids with supervision.
3. Make it a routine. Whether once a month or once a season, set a goal that works for your family.
4. Follow your child's lead. If your child loves animals, art or books, find a cause that connects.
5. Talk about it. After volunteering, ask your child how it felt and what they noticed. Reflection helps reinforce the experience.





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T U L S A K I D S
BABY
handbook



Healthy
PREGNANCY TIPS

Baby's First Year
SLEEPING • EATING • LEARNING

Resources
FOR PARENTS

Pregnancy

THE 411 FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

BY MARNIE FERNANDEZ

IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE, FINDING RELIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION IS MORE CONFUSING THAN EVER. A LOCAL OBGYN HELPS FILTER FACT FROM FICTION TO HELP SET HEALTHY PREGNANCY GOALS.

"How much weight should I gain? Is fish OK to eat? Will sex hurt the baby? Can I still get my hair done? Can I work out? Do I really have to get rid of my cat?"

While pregnancy can be an incredibly exciting time in a woman's life, it can also be extremely overwhelming. Trying to navigate the bombardment of information from endless sources, whether it be online or from well-intentioned friends, family and even strangers, can induce all kinds of anxiety. (What is it about being pregnant that encourages complete strangers to offer their unsolicited advice?)

Jennifer Donnelly, M.D. of Tulsa OBGYN Associates is a board-certified physician who has been practicing medicine in Tulsa for 23 years. In her opinion, the best approach to a healthy pregnancy journey is a mutually respectful relationship where patients can self-advocate and have open discussions with their doctor with the shared goal of a healthy pregnancy.

"A move towards a holistic approach to healthcare has benefits in terms of preventing and not just treating illnesses," Dr. Donnelly says. "On the other hand, traditional evidence-based medicine has led to significant advances. But I think there can be a balance between the two."

DIET

An ideal pregnancy diet is not all that different from a healthy adult diet, focusing on fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats.

However, there are certain foods that should be avoided, such as raw or undercooked meat and fish that are high in mercury.

"It's a common misconception that you can't eat fish," Dr. Donnelly says. "Just don't eat fish that have high mercury content such as swordfish and tuna. Salmon, trout and shrimp are all good choices, if you aren't eating them raw."

Other foods to avoid while pregnant include unpasteurized dairy products, unheated deli meats, alcohol and highly processed foods such as fast food or prepackaged food, as it can cause unnecessary chemical exposure.

"I also recommend that women take a prenatal vitamin to fill in any gaps with vitamins and minerals they aren't getting in their food," Dr. Donnelly says. "Vegetarians may need additional supplements as well."

EXERCISE

According to Dr. Donnelly, exercise recommendations will vary by person, but in general, women with a low-risk pregnancy are encouraged to stay active and may even begin a new exercise routine, gradually working up to more intensity.

"A guide of 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of aerobic exercise per week is a good goal," she says. "This could be five 30-minute sessions per week, or fewer sessions of longer length."

Some exercises she says to consider are ones with a low risk of falling or injury, such as walking, stationary cycling, dancing, Pilates, yoga and swimming.

"Staying active in pregnancy can increase the likelihood of a vaginal delivery and lower the incidence of excessive weight gain, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia and a c-section."

Resistance training such as bands and light weights are recommended in appropriate low-risk pregnancies, but heavy weightlifting or extreme exercise should be avoided or discussed with a doctor.

"Extreme exercises such as those done by elite and professional athletes may carry some risk to mom and baby," she says.

WEIGHT GAIN

Just like exercise, pregnancy weight gain recommendations vary as well. Dr. Donnelly says this should be a shared discussion between the patient and her doctor.

General guidelines state that women with a BMI under 24 should gain somewhere in the 28–40-pound range, while women with a BMI of 25 or higher may be counseled by their doctor to keep weight gain under 25 pounds, or in some cases, significantly less.

"It all starts with creating healthy habits with diet and exercise," Dr. Donnelly says. "Those are the building blocks that will help maintain a proper weight during pregnancy and can help with weight loss after delivery."

"Pregnancy is an ideal time to make healthy lifestyle changes that can have long-term health benefits," Dr. Donnelly says. "The bottom line is building a trusting relationship with your doctor, where you are comfortable asking questions and advocating for yourself."

FEEDING YOUR BABY

Your baby will let you know when they're hungry. Breastfed infants should eat eight to 12 times in a 24-hour period, and formula-fed infants should be fed six to 10 times in a 24-hour period. Don't be tempted to add cereal to your baby's bottle. It will not help them sleep through the night and may even be a choking hazard. When your baby starts eating solid foods, offer it in a spoon, not in a bottle.

TYPICAL PORTION SIZES FOR AN INFANT

0 TO 4 MONTHS

- Breast milk or infant formula (2 to 4 ounces);
Feedings per day: eight to 12

NOTE: Do not warm your baby's bottle in the microwave because it can burn the baby's mouth and throat. Warm in a pan of warm water. Shake the bottle for even heat distribution and test by putting a drop on your skin to make sure it's not too hot.

Hold your baby during feeding. Do not let your baby fall asleep with a bottle. It can cause tooth decay and choking.

4 TO 6 MONTHS

- Breast milk or infant formula (6 to 8 ounces);
Feedings per day: four to six
- Infant cereal (1 to 2 tablespoons)

6 TO 8 MONTHS

- Breast milk or infant formula (6 to 8 ounces); Feedings per day: three to five
- Infant cereal (2 to 4 tablespoons)
- Crackers (2); bread (1/2 slice)
- Juice or water (0 to 3 ounces)
- Fruit or vegetable (2 to 3 tablespoons)
- Meat or beans (1 to 2 tablespoons)

8 TO 12 MONTHS

- Breast milk or infant formula (6 to 8 ounces);
Feedings per day: three to four
- Cheese (1/2 ounce) or yogurt (1/2 cup)
- Infant cereal (2-4 tablespoons); bread (1/2 slice); crackers (2);
or pasta (3 to 4 tablespoons)
- Juice or water (3 ounces)
- Fruit or vegetable (3 to 4 tablespoons)
- Meat or beans (3 to 4 tablespoons)

When you start feeding solid foods, start slowly with a small amount of food – just a teaspoon at first – until you are feeding the equivalent of a small 4-oz. jar or cup of baby food per meal. Talk to your baby's pediatrician about which foods to start with. Usually, begin with cereal. Introduce one food at a time and note possible allergic reactions.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends not giving fruit juices to infants younger than 1 year old.



Feed your baby healthy foods such as meat, poultry, fish, vegetables and fruits. Avoid added salt and sugars.

While babies do not need additional water or juice for hydration, you may provide water or diluted juice in a cup to help with transition off the bottle, which is recommended at 12 months. If you have any questions about your baby's diet and nutrition, talk to your pediatrician or a dietitian.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics and the Cleveland Clinic

SAFE SLEEP GUIDELINES

STAFF

Families and caregivers can help reduce a baby's risk of SIDS and other sleep-related deaths by doing the following:

- Place baby on his or her back for all sleep times – naps and at night.
- Use a firm, flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a crib, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Have the baby share your room but not your bed. The baby should not sleep on an adult bed, cot, air mattress or couch, or on a chair alone, with anyone.
- Keep soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads and soft toys out of baby's sleep area.
- Do not cover baby's head or allow baby to get too hot. The signs the baby may be getting too hot include if he or she is sweating or if his or her chest feels hot.
- Do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke around the baby.

Additionally, the Safe Sleep for Babies Act bans the sale of crib bumpers and inclined sleepers. This law bans the manufacturing and sale of new products, but secondhand and hand-me-down products may still be in circulation. You can check for recalls on older products at [cpsc.gov/recalls](https://www.cpsc.gov/recalls). If you purchase one of these used products or are given one, safety and health experts advise against using them.



HUMOROUS PARENTING ADVICE

We asked our Facebook followers (@tulsakidsmagazine) to share the worst/most humorous parenting advice they received while pregnant. Here are some of the responses!

“Kids are overrated.” – Brienne V.H.

“If you put your hands up over your head, your baby will be born with the cord wrapped around its neck.” – Alicia K.

“Don't eat corn or your baby will get jaundice.” – Shamili N.

“‘Better sleep now’ – as if I can 'store up' for when the baby comes...” – Courtney H.





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BABY handbook

DON'T WORRY, BUT DON'T WAIT: A FEW SIGNS TO KEEP AN EYE ON IN YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

BY LESLEY GUDGEL



Lesley Gudgel is a local child development professional with over 35 years' experience. A grandmother, Lesley combines expert guidance with heartfelt care to help families understand and support their children's development. Through Next Step Child Development, Lesley provides developmental screening, early intervention support, guidance and reassurance to parents. www.nextstepchilddevelopment.com

You've probably heard that babies grow and learn at their own pace—and that's true. But it's also true that there are certain skills most babies can do by certain ages. These are called developmental milestones, and they give us helpful clues about how a baby is growing.

It's just as important to notice when a baby isn't meeting those milestones. Maybe your baby isn't making eye contact yet or isn't reaching for toys like other babies you've seen. You might wonder, "Is this normal?"—and then second-guess yourself for even asking.

But here's something every parent should know: Your instincts are important. If something feels off, it's OK to ask questions. In fact, it's better to speak up early. The sooner a concern is noticed, the sooner your child can get the support they might need.

The good news? You don't need to worry—but you also don't need to wait. This guide will walk you through some early signs to watch for in your baby's first year and help you know what to do if something doesn't seem quite right.

WHY THE FIRST YEAR MATTERS

Your baby's brain is growing faster during the first year than at any other time in life. It is when they begin to build the foundations for movement, speech and language, problem-solving, and relationships. That's why spotting possible concerns early can make such a big difference. Simple steps now can lead to better progress later.

Missing one skill doesn't always mean there's a problem. However, delays in more than one area, or the loss of abilities they once had, are signs to ask for help.

DEVELOPMENTAL RED FLAGS: A FEW THINGS TO WATCH FOR

BY 1 TO 3 MONTHS

- Doesn't respond to loud noises
- Doesn't smile at the sound of your voice
- Doesn't follow things with their eyes
- Cannot support head well
- Doesn't bring objects to mouth

BY 4 TO 6 MONTHS

- Doesn't show interest in people or smile
- Doesn't babble or make vowel sounds like "ah" or "oh"
- Cannot roll over (4-5 months)
- Their body feels either very stiff or very floppy
- Doesn't actively reach for toys
- Doesn't push up with their arms during tummy time

BY 7 TO 9 MONTHS

- Doesn't respond to their name
- Doesn't sit up with help
- Doesn't babble with several different sounds
- Shows little interest in games like peek-a-boo
- Favors one side of their body or head

BY 10 TO 12 MONTHS

- Doesn't crawl or pull up to stand
- Doesn't point, wave or use gestures
- Doesn't say simple words like "mama" or "dada"
- Doesn't look where you point
- Doesn't sit without support
- Doesn't react to tone of voice or familiar words



BABY handbook

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED

- Trust your gut. If something feels off, speak up—you know your baby best. Your instincts are a powerful tool in your parenting journey, and they should be trusted and valued. Talk to your doctor and be specific, saying something like, “She doesn’t make eye contact or smile, or her body feels floppy,” instead of “She seems behind.”
- Ask for a developmental screening. Doctors often use tools like the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) to screen for developmental concerns.
- If you don’t feel like you’ve been heard, consider asking someone else who knows about child development.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

Here are a few simple ways to support your baby's growth and development:

- Give your baby supervised tummy time every day. They may fuss, but make your goal 30 minutes a day. That can be 10 minutes, three times a day. Put toys or your face in front of them to look at. And, if you lie flat and put them on their tummy on your chest, that counts, too!
- Talk, sing, and smile—your face and voice are powerful tools. Be sure to make eye contact with them when you're talking, singing and smiling. Take turns: When they coo, wait until they finish, then respond, just as you would in a conversation.
- Play simple games like peek-a-boo or sing nursery rhymes. Even though infants can't actively participate, they'll be delighted to watch you.

Pay attention to what your baby enjoys, and do more of it. Activities like reading, playing music and singing are great options.

FROM A GRANDMOTHER'S HEART: A PERSONAL STORY

"When my grandson was about 9 months old, I noticed something small but important—he was babbling but not making some of the sounds expected at that age.

Because I knew he'd been on antibiotics for several months because of back-to-back ear infections, I wondered if he might not be hearing everything clearly.

I suggested his parents ask for a tympanogram at his next checkup. (This is a simple test that checks for inner ear fluid behind the eardrum, common during and after an ear infection.) He ended up failing the test. When he went to the ENT specialist, the doctor said it looked like 'glue' in his ears, and he was not hearing everything. He had ear tubes placed, and suddenly, everything changed. Once he could hear clearly, he started making the missing sounds.

He did need a little speech therapy later, but because it was caught early, he made quick progress. If we had waited longer, he would have missed more sounds during a critical time for speech development—and the delay could have been much worse."

FINAL THOUGHTS: YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Hearing the words “developmental delay” can feel scary, but early help is one of the best gifts you can give your baby.

It doesn't mean something is wrong. It means you're learning what your baby needs to grow and thrive. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. There are people and programs ready to support your family every step of the way.



BABY handbook

Babies Can't Read!

(BUT THIS IS WHY STORYTIME STILL HELPS THEM – AND YOU!)

BY LAURA RAPHAEL, MA, MLIS, CHILDREN'S SERVICES COORDINATOR, TCCL

Babies and young children can't read, but they are still developing the early literacy skills that will make learning to read much easier when they are older. That's what drives the "Build A Reader" program at the Tulsa City-County Library, which includes weekly storytimes, parent-child play workshops, and even an app with videos, book suggestions and learning tips.

Here are three ways our Build A Reader storytimes are especially AWESOME for you and your baby:

- 1. Babies' brains need both fun AND learning to thrive!** Observe any storytime and you'll see how much fun everyone is having. But don't be fooled – there is a lot of educational thought and planning behind the bouncy songs, captivating stories and funny fingerplays. Not only are children getting practice in hearing and using language, parents and caregivers (like yourself!) are learning how to incorporate literacy routines in their everyday lives.
- 2. It's a safe place to play, grow and meet other people.** Having a baby can be isolating for new parents who do not have close-by family or friends. Storytimes at the library are an excellent place for you to meet other adults – and for your baby to see and play with other babies! Social interaction in a safe, climate-controlled space is beneficial for everyone.
- 3. There's at least one storytime scheduled at every location every week.** With the exception of the months of May and August, when we are first preparing for and then cleaning up after the Summer Reading Program, you will find at least one Build A Reader storytime scheduled every week at all 24 library locations. Pick up a monthly event guide at any library to find out days and times, or go to tulsalibrary.org.

TRY STORYTIME AT HOME WITH FREE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-5

BY REBECCA HARRISON, DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, TCCL

Through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Tulsa County children can receive a free, high-quality book every month until their fifth birthday. Checking the mail becomes a special occasion because the books are sent directly to your home! Books are chosen by literacy experts to match your child's developmental stage, so your little one's growing bookshelf keeps pace with their growing mind. The Imagination Library is an easy way to build early literacy and foster a lifelong love of reading and learning.

Even more exciting: Families enrolling in the Imagination Library can now choose to receive all of their books as bilingual English/Spanish titles. This new option helps us better serve Spanish-speaking families and ensures that more Tulsa County children can see themselves reflected in the stories they read. Families already enrolled can switch to the fully bilingual option at any time.

Registering to receive your monthly book is simple and takes just a few minutes. Visit tulsalibrary.org/imagination-library to get started, or stop by any Tulsa City-County Library location.

Have questions? Email us at ImaginationLibrary@tulsalibrary.org. We're happy to help!



NEWBORN TIPS FROM A PEDIATRICIAN

Parents can sometimes feel overwhelmed with inadequacy once they are home with their baby. Unfortunately, we can't bring the nurses home with us, so we asked Dr. James Ross, a Tulsa pediatrician, to answer some common questions about newborns and newborn care. Here are his top tips regarding newborn care.

SLEEPING

Newborns sleep a lot. In fact, they sleep more than they are awake in a 24-hour day. However, they don't sleep or stay awake for long stretches at a time. It varies, but on average, a newborn will sleep a total of 14-18 hours in a 24-hour time frame. Every parent prays their child will sleep through the night as soon as possible, but there is much variability here, depending on the baby and parenting (sleep training) approaches. Newborns will eat around the clock. Some babies will maybe get a 3-4 hour stretch at a time. I have seen babies start sleeping through the night (a 5-6 hour stretch) as early as 2 months, but most will take longer. Honestly, it is rare before 4-6 months.

Developing a routine and schedule can be helpful to get them used to falling asleep at desired times. The sooner a parent can help a baby learn to fall back to sleep (self-soothe) on their own, the easier the transition will be.

EATING

Newborns eat all the time. Breastfed newborns will eat every 2-3 hours and nurse anywhere from 15-30 minutes at a time (anywhere from 10-20 minutes per breast). The first few weeks of life, babies should be fed on demand. As they get older, they will nurse less often and won't take as long to feed. Bottle-fed newborns can go a little longer stretch, like every 3-4 hours or so. In the first two days of life, they often take in 1/2-1 ounce per feeding, then start taking in about 1-2 ounces per feeding. By 2 weeks of age, they can increase to 2-3 ounces per feeding.

Babies typically let you know when they are hungry or when they have had enough. If babies are fed too much, they often can spit up excessively. As long as they are making wet and dirty diapers and growing, you know they are getting what they need.

A little spit-up is common, but spitting up large amounts after every feed or projectile vomiting can be a sign of an underlying problem, and your baby should be checked out by their doctor.

CRYING

Babies cry for different reasons, but it is their way of communicating with us to make their needs known. Crying is normal. Parents can begin to differentiate their baby's cries. For example, when they are hungry, when they have a wet or dirty diaper, are gassy/colicky or when they are overstimulated. When the baby is crying for an excessively longer time than is normal for them, is inconsolable, has a change in the quality or sound of the cry, or if the baby has other symptoms associated with the crying such as poor feeding, decreased activity, fever or cough, then it would be advisable to call your doctor.

POOPING

Babies should have at least 6-8 wet diapers per day. The way a newborn baby's stool looks will depend on if they are breast- or bottle-fed. All brand-new babies have the dark greenish-black and tarry meconium stools in the first 24 hours. The newborn stools then begin to look different after 24 hours when the meconium has passed. We call these transitional stools, and they can look dark, greenish-yellow, loose and seedy.

After 3-4 days or so, the stool will vary based on breast or bottle feeding. Breastfed babies will often have stools that are mustard looking, loose or watery appearing and have a seedy texture. Formula-fed babies can vary more but their stools are usually more formed, but still soft, and colors range from yellow to brown or brownish-green.

BATHING

Bathing a newborn is often a very sweet experience. I recommend sponge bathing until the umbilical cord falls off and is healed, which can take 1-3 weeks or so. I also recommend sponge bathing for at least one week after a circumcision as well to allow time for healing. Babies don't need to be bathed every single day. Too many baths can dry out a baby's skin. So, I recommend tub baths about 2-3 times a week in the first year of life.



HEALTHY PARENTING HACKS

BY SANDRA GORDON

When I became a parent, nobody told me how hard it would be—especially on my wrists, elbows, back and neck. In a word—ow! All the lifting, bending and twisting I do without thinking countless times a day to get my 8-month-old and my 3-year-old in and out of strollers, cribs, car seats and on and off changing tables is taking a physical toll in the form of creaky knees, achy elbows and a rebellious back.

I'M FAR FROM ALONE.

"I'm constantly treating parents who are suffering from repetitive-stress injuries (RSIs) that result from the wear and tear of being a parent," says Peggy Brill, a physical therapist and author of "The Core Program." RSIs are degenerative disorders caused by chronically using poor posture to perform everyday tasks, such as carrying your baby in an infant car seat on your forearm like a handbag. Such poor body mechanics place too much force on ligaments, muscles, joints, tendons and spinal discs and can be harmful if you do them often. Women are especially prone to RSIs because, unlike men, they naturally lack upper-body strength.

Luckily, having good posture and learning how to lift and carry your child properly can reduce your risk of injury. With that in mind, here are five body-breaking moves and how to fix them.

BABY handbook

LUGGING AN INFANT CAR SEAT

Don't: Lean to the side and carry it on your forearm like a purse. "This position stresses your back, shoulder, and—especially—that arm," says physical therapist Mary Modica.

"After my youngest child was born, I developed pain in my shoulders that wouldn't go away," says Sandy Cummings, a mother of three. "The doctor diagnosed it as bursitis." The culprit: lugging around a 12-pound car seat with a baby inside.

"Carrying an infant car seat on your arm is equivalent to walking around with three or four full paint cans in one hand, something most people wouldn't do, but yet, they'll carry a car seat that way," Modica says.

Do: When toting an infant car seat, put both hands on the handle, bend your elbows, and carry the car seat in front of you. The less distance between your torso and what you're carrying, the better for your back. Using both hands also helps distribute the weight evenly. Also, factor in infant car seat weights (without the base) when you're car seat shopping; they can vary greatly. The Orbit Baby infant car seat weighs in at 13 pounds without the base, for example, compared to the UPPAbaby Aria infant car seat at just six pounds. Or, use a Doona infant car seat stroller, which features a quick conversion from car seat to stroller, eliminating the need to "tote the bucket."

LIFTING YOUR BABY FROM THE CRIB

Don't: Lock your knees or hold your baby at arms' length as you pick them up. "This puts extreme pressure on your spinal discs," says Nicholas Warren, Sc.D., an ergonomics specialist.

Do: Plant your feet shoulder-width apart and bend your knees. Then bring your baby as close to your body as possible before lifting them up out of the crib.

CARRYING A TODDLER

Don't: Balance your child on one hip. This can strain your back and the ligaments on that side of the body. In addition, as your arm presses against your child, your muscles continually contract, reducing blood flow. Over time, this can lead to trauma of the tissues in your arm and shoulder.

Do: Hold baby in front of you with their legs wrapped around your waist. Keeping your child centered will help you stand upright—your spine's natural position. Another option: Use a soft infant carrier, such as Tushbaby, an ergonomic hip seat that sits above your hips at your natural waist so you can carry your little one comfortably longer, or use a stroller. The strapless carrier's memory-foam seat shifts the bulk of your child's weight from your arms and shoulders to your hips and core, helping to reduce arm, wrist and shoulder strain. Moreover, Tushbaby's wide, firm waistband acts like a back brace to reduce lower back strain, compared to carrying your toddler without this seat support. Also, encourage your child to walk as often as possible.

PUTTING YOUR CHILD ON YOUR LAP

Don't: Lean forward while you remain seated. Why? "As you lift, the pressure on your spinal discs multiples to three to 10 times the weight of your child," Modica says. "If you're tall, for example, lifting a 20-pound toddler from the floor could put as much as 200 pounds of pressure on your back!"

Do: Get down on one knee with the other foot planted in front of you and hold your child as you move back into your seat. Or, have your child climb into your lap.

LIFTING YOUR TODDLER FROM A CAR SEAT

Don't: Do the twisted car seat lift. Worst-case scenario: With both your feet on the ground, you twist and lean into the car seat with your arms extended, your toddler at the end of them. Lifting your toddler that way can do a number on your knees, lower back, neck, shoulder, elbows and wrists.

Do: "Put one leg into the car and face the car seat as you're putting your child in it," says Physical Therapist Traci O'Hara. You'll take pressure off your back. If your car seat is in the middle of the back seat, climb in and face the car seat as you lift your child into it. Or, invest in a rotating infant or convertible car seat, which features the ability to turn the seat to face you while getting your child in and out, eliminating twisting and awkward back-straining bending.

Of course, positioning yourself properly before lifting, bending or twisting can take a few extra seconds you don't always have with a feisty toddler in tow. Still, it doesn't have to be perfect all the time. But the more often you maneuver correctly, the better your neck, shoulders and back will be able to tolerate it when you don't.

GET STRONG!

Did you know that strengthening your abdominal, back, pelvic and hip muscles can reduce your risk of developing a repetitive-stress injury? Physical Therapist Peggy Brill recommends practicing this simple exercise at least three times a week.

A. Lie on your back with your arms straight up toward the ceiling. Keeping your back flat against the floor, lift your legs over your pelvis and bend your knees at a 90-degree angle.

B. In one slow, smooth motion, bring your left knee toward your chest as you extend your right leg. Keep alternating legs as you incorporate your arms: When your left leg moves toward your chest, extend your left arm over your head, and vice versa. Repeat up to a count of 60.

Sandra Gordon is an award-winning freelance writer who delivers expert advice and the latest developments in health, nutrition, parenting and consumer issues.

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BABY handbook

RESOURCE LIST

BREASTFEEDING

La Leche League of Oklahoma

Breastfeeding support and information.
lllok.org

Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline

24-hour, toll-free Breastfeeding Support Line for nursing mothers, their families, partners, expecting parents and healthcare workers.
1.877.271.MILK (6455)

Innovations Family Wellness, Inc.

ifwinc.org

Area hospitals offer breastfeeding information and classes (see hospital information).

CHILDBIRTH INFORMATION

(See hospital information for childbirth classes)

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Addresses a wide range of topics such as breastfeeding and gestational diabetes. acog.org

Patient-centered information about a wide range of women's health topics, including informative information for teens, can be found on the "For Patients" tab or at: acog.org/womens-health

American College of Nurse-Midwives

Provides information about certified nurse-midwives and their support of women's health through all stages of life, including pregnancy. midwife.org
Find a midwifery practice in your area:
midwife.org/find-a-midwife

Birthright of Tulsa

For women facing unplanned pregnancies, Birthright of Tulsa is a nonprofit crisis pregnancy service to help "every pregnant woman and mother struggling with a troubled pregnancy or parenting concerns, regardless of age, race, religion, marital standing or economic status."

Pregnancy testing, counseling, prenatal care, parenting classes, maternity and baby clothing, diapers/wipes, medical referrals, agency referrals, select financial assistance.
800.550.4900; 918.481.4884; 6600 S. Yale, Suite 1307, Tulsa; birthright.org/tulsa; tulsa@birthright.org

Bradley Method of Husband-Coached Childbirth

Classes that guide pregnant women and their partners through the Bradley Method of childbirth, including information on prenatal nutrition and exercise.
818.788.6662; bradleybirth.com

Lamaze International

Provides parents with education pertaining to pregnancy, birth practices and parenthood.
lamaze.org

DONA International

Information about doulas, finding a doula or becoming a doula can be found at dona.org.

PLAYGROUPS, PROGRAMS, SUPPORT, CLASSES AND INFORMATION

American Academy of Pediatrics

Information for parents on a wide range of child development and health topics, covering every stage from prenatal to young adult.
aap.org; healthychildren.org

Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma

Care clinic offering pregnancy testing, prenatal care and postnatal care. Other services include counseling, prenatal education, immigration legal services, care for homeless mothers and children, residential program for pregnant women, adoption services and assistance applying for Medicaid (SoonerCare).
2450 N. Harvard Ave. Tulsa; 918.949.4673; cceok.org



Community Action Project (CAP) of Tulsa

Early Childhood Education and other related family services with the mission "to help young children in lower-income families grow up and achieve economic success." captulsa.org

Eastern Oklahoma 2-1-1 Helpline

Provides referrals to a wide range of community services and resources as well as information, referral and crisis intervention for Eastern Oklahoma. **211eok.org**

Tulsa Educare

A state-of-the-art early childhood center that provides education and care for children (birth to age 5) and their families with full-day, year-round early childhood education, family support services and ongoing medical care.
tulsaeducare.org

BABY handbook



Emergency Infant Services

Provides formula, milk, blankets, clothing, medicine, etc. to meet the basic needs of infants and children under age 5 whose families are in crisis or emergency situations. 1110 S. Denver Ave., Tulsa; 918.582.2469; eistulsa.org

Family & Children's Services

Offers a variety services, including children's counseling and mental health services, family counseling, family life education classes and workshops, and more. Make an appointment: 918.587.9471; fcsok.org
Also operates Tulsa's crisis and emotional support hotline, COPES, which helps F&CS clients, community, adults and children in need. **918.744.4800**

International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN)

ICAN gives support and information to mothers who have experienced cesarean births as well as those who would like further information before

making informed decisions about their birthing options. For newsletter or information, call **1.800.686.4226**. ican-online.org

ICAN Tulsa

Local cesarean awareness and support. **1.800.686.4226 EXT 237**; tulsa.ok@ican-online.org; ican-online.org/placemarks/ican-of-tulsa

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals with a wide range of resources regarding learning and teaching young children. naeyc.org

Parent Child Center of Tulsa

Education and treatment aimed at preventing child abuse. Includes crisis/respice services, prevention program, counseling services, resource library and parenting classes. **1421 S. Boston, Tulsa. 918.599.7999**; parentchildcenter.org

Planned Parenthood

Offers a range of reproductive health services and information about a variety of topics, including pregnancy, health and wellness, and contraception. **1007 S. Peoria Ave., Tulsa**; for information on services and appointments, call **918.858.4661**; plannedparenthood.org

Postpartum Support International (PSI)

Support for new mothers suffering from postpartum depression or those who have questions about it. Includes information on a range of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and sources for help and care. Helpline for support, information and resources, **800.944.4773 (English and Spanish)**; postpartum.net

SoonerCare (Oklahoma Medicaid)

A health coverage program jointly funded by the federal and state government to help pay some or all medical bills for those who can't afford them. Qualified children get free medical, vision, hearing and dental check-ups and services. **SoonerCare Help Line: 800.987.7767**; oklahoma.gov/ohca.html. Oklahoma Department of Human Services: oklahoma.gov/okdhs.html

SoonerStart

Oklahoma's early intervention program for families with infants or toddlers ages birth to 3 with developmental delays and/or disabilities. Provides support and resources to enhance learning and development. **For more information or to apply, go to oklahoma.gov/education/services/soonerstart.html**

Tulsa City-County Health Department: Child Health and Guidance

Promotes and supports healthy family relationships and child development. Provides prevention, education, screenings, diagnostics and treatment to children and families. Children First offers home-based services by registered nurses to help first-time mothers prepare for parenthood at no cost. Many of the services and classes are for a minimal fee. **918.582.9355**; tulsa-health.org/services/family-health-services/child-health-and-guidance

BABY handbook

WIC Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Program

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that helps protect the health of income eligible women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. Families who qualify may receive nutrition education, social service referrals, breastfeeding support and benefits, and food benefits to be used for healthful foods. **918.582.9355; tulsa-health.org/WIC**

INFANT LOSS

The Tristesse Grief Center

Support and counseling services for bereaved parents who have suffered the loss of an infant or child, regardless of any family's ability to pay. Support groups, training and professional grief counseling for adults, children and teens in one-to-one, couple and family settings. **2502 E. 71st St., Suite A; 918.587.1200; thegriefcenter.org**

First Candle

Provides comfort and promotes healing for families who have lost an infant. Works to eliminate SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths through education and research, while providing bereavement support for grieving families who have suffered a loss. Support groups, bereavement library and a 24-hour grief line. **800.221.7437; firstcandle.org**

American Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Institute

A health care organization that works to prevent sudden infant death while promoting infant health through research, education and family support. **239.431.5425; sids.org**

Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

For moms, dads and families (adults only) who have lost a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. **mend.org**

SAFETY & HEALTH

American Association of Poison Control Centers

24-hour poison emergency information, tips for prevention at home, daycare. Safe medicine disposal. **Poison helpline 800.222.1222; aapcc.org; poisonhelp.org**

American Red Cross

Provides life-saving information and training, including CPR, babysitting courses, swimming instruction, safety information, first aid and more. **918.831.1166; redcross.org**

Auto Safety Hotline

Information on infant car seats and recalls: **888.327.4236; www.nhtsa.gov/recalls**
Car seat safety info: nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats

Safe Kids Tulsa Area

Led by The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, Safe Kids Tulsa Area helps families prevent child injuries with a wide range of safety information. Provides car seat checkup events, call **918.494.SAFE (7233); safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-tulsa-area**

Consumer Product Safety Commission

Information on safety standards and product recalls for cribs, toys and other children's accessories. Safety education section with a variety of topics pertaining to children's products and safe environments for infants and children. **800.638.2772; cpsc.gov**

InfantSEE

A Public Health Program that ensures infants between 6 and 12 months of age begin life with essential eye and vision care. American Optometric Association member optometrists provide free eye and vision assessments for infants between 6 and 12 months old, regardless of income or insurance coverage. **infantsee.org**

Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA)

Information about product quality, safe usage, and product recalls as well as educational information about safety. **jpma.org**

Miller Swim School

Year-round infant and toddler classes for children ages 4 months to 3 years, prenatal water fitness classes for expectant mothers, swim lessons, CPR and First Aid certifications and safety instruction for parents and children in and around the water. Locations in Tulsa, Owasso and Jenks. **918.254.1988; millerswimschool.com**

Oklahoma Caring Van

Provides all immunizations required by Oklahoma law for enrollment in schools or childcare facilities. Services provided at no charge to children 6 weeks to 18 years who qualify; includes children who are uninsured, Medicaid eligible or American Indian. **918.551.3397; oklahomacaringfoundation.org/caring-van; Text TULSAVAN to 33633 to receive a van schedule.**

Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank

Provides donor breast milk to meet the needs of infants, specifically those who are preterm or ill. **405.297.5683; okmilkbank.org**

Save Babies Through Screening Foundation, Inc. A nonprofit foundation dedicated to making sure every newborn baby in the U.S. undergoes comprehensive and effective screening for a variety of diseases that are usually hidden at birth. **888.454.3383; savebabies.org**

Tulsa Health Department Immunizations

Information about immunizations and vaccines for children, including vaccine safety and a printable vaccine guide. Children through the age of 18 are eligible to receive vaccines at no charge through the Vaccines for Children program if they are uninsured, Native American Indian, Native Alaskan, or their insurance policy does not cover vaccines. THD currently accepts Cigna, Community Care, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Health Choice, Medicare and SoonerCare Medicaid for immunizations. Fee for clients with private insurance (other than those listed) to be immunized at THD clinics to cover cost of vaccine. **918.582.9355; tulsa-health.org/personal-and-family-health/testing-and-immunizations/vaccines**

DISABILITIES

Ability Connection Oklahoma

Provides programs and services for Oklahomans with physical disabilities and their families, helping to advance independence, productivity and full citizenship. **405.759.3562; acok.org**

Autism Resources

Autism support and information: **autismoklahoma.org; peakbh.org; okautism.org; autismfoundationok.org**

BABY handbook

CHADD

Seeks to improve the lives of children and adults with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); online support communities for parents and caregivers. **1.866.200.8098; chadd.org**

Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa (DSAT)

Provides families and communities by with educational events and connections while increasing awareness and an attitude of inclusion within the community. **918.804.3728; dsat.org**

Little Light House, Inc.

Tuition-free, Christian education and therapeutic services for children age birth to 6 with special needs and their families. Resources, tools and hands-on training to help parents and guardians become confident caregivers; **5120 E. 36 St.; 918.664.6746; littlelighthouse.org**

March of Dimes

Advocates for healthy moms and babies and seeks to end preventable maternal health risks and deaths, preventable preterm birth and infant death while closing the health equity gap. March of Dimes provides education on pregnancy, breastfeeding, birth defects, nutrition and more. **888.663.4637; marchofdimes.org**

The Arc of Oklahoma

Provides information about intellectual and developmental disabilities, legal rights, available programs and services for individuals with disabilities. **2516 E. 71st St., Suite A; 918.582.8272; thearcok.org**

The Center for Individuals with Physical Challenges

Mission: "Provide opportunities for youth and adults with physical challenges to enhance the quality of their lives." This includes Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services like Sign Language classes and interpreter services. **918.584.8607; tulsacenter.org**

ADOPTION & SUPPORT

AdoptUsKids

The mission of AdoptUsKids is to recruit and connect foster and adoptive families with waiting children throughout the United States.

Supports and guides families with the adoption process. National photo listing. **888.200.4005 (English); 877.236.7831 (Spanish); adoptuskids.org**

Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS)

Find foster care and adoption information and resources, including post-adoption resources. **918.794.7575; okdhs.org**

Eastern Oklahoma Catholic Charities Adoption Services

Adoption services and support for pregnant women looking into adoption for their baby and for adopting parents; pregnancy care resources; post-adoption search. **918.984.3507; cceok.org/adoption**

Gladney Center for Adoption

Support, guidance and resources for those considering adoption. Post-adoption services for families as well as children or adult adoptees. **405.477.1063 (Oklahoma office); 817.922.6000; adoptionsbygladney.com**

Oklahoma Fosters Resource Center for New Foster Care & Adoption Families Hotline

Information on foster care for prospective foster parents, current foster parents, those wishing to adopt through foster care or those who have already adopted a child in foster care. Support groups, help finding an agency, online training, and more. **1.800.376.9729; okfosters.org**

HOSPITAL CLASSES & INFORMATION

Ascension St. John Medical Center

Tulsa: 1923 S. Utica Ave.; 918.744.3131
Owasso: 12451 E. 100th St. North; 918.274.5000
Breastfeeding Basics, Dads Basic Training, Cesarean Birth Class, Maternity Orientation Class, Grandparenting Class. For more information and a complete, current list of classes, visit **healthcare.ascension.org**



Oklahoma State University Medical Center

Recently renovated Department of Maternal Child Health with a family-friendly environment and a wide variety of medical professionals who are passionate about delivering babies and are available 24 hours a day, including neonatologists, neonatal nurses and respiratory therapists.

744 W. 9th St.; 918.599.1000; 918.599.5355; osumc.com

Peggy V. Helmerich Women's Health Center

Women's Center @ Hillcrest: 1120 S. Utica Ave.; 918.579.8000

Women's Center @ Hillcrest South: 8801 S. 101st E. Ave.; 918.294.4000

Classes include childbirth classes, car seat workshops, breastfeeding basics, baby care basics and infant and child CPR.

For a current listing of childbirth education classes, visit **helmerichwomenscenter.com**

Saint Francis Health System

6161 South Yale Ave.; 918.494.2200
South Campus: Hwy 169 & 91st Street; 10501 E. 91st St. S.; 918.307.6000

The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, 6161 S. Yale Ave.; 918.502.6000

Classes include a childbirth series, a weekend childbirth class, childbirth education, grandparenting resources, maternity area tours and breastfeeding basics. For more information about all classes, community events or for printed materials, **visit saintfrancis.com or call 918.494.2200.**

Eva Mahajan: Gold Award Girl Scout



By **Betty Casey**

Eva Mahajan, a recent Jenks High School graduate, began Girl Scouts as a Daisy at age 11 and just earned the prestigious Gold Award, the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn. The award has allowed her to apply for various scholarships and ultimately led to expanded opportunities.

TK: Tell us a little about yourself.

Eva: I graduated from Jenks High School in May and have lived in Tulsa for 12 years. I have an older sister who goes to college in California and a black lab named Simba.

TK: You were recently honored by the Girl Scouts. Tell us about that.

Eva: I spent this past year working on my Gold Award, which is the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn. I essentially spent 80 hours creating a sustainable and impactful community project. My project is called "Leap," and it's a pen pal program between elementary schoolers in the English Language Learners department and high school volunteers. By the end of this first year, we had over 1000 letters exchanged, 200 participants at four different schools within Jenks. I hope that it continues growing across Tulsa and that other schools launch something similar.

After earning my award in late December, I was able to apply to different scholarships. I became a Juliette Lowe Scholar with Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma and recently earned the GSUSA scholarship. Each council can have one girl receive the GSUSA scholarship, so I feel incredibly grateful for this opportunity.

TK: What has been your favorite part about being involved in Girl Scouts?

Eva: I really enjoy the sense of support and community within Girl Scouts. The entire organization is built on strengthening girlhood and developing both physical and emotional skills. Even as I got older, I still felt like troop leaders and other girl scouts (regardless of troop) encouraged me. I especially loved going to journey retreats with girls from around Oklahoma. The cookies are a great bonus, too!

TK: What has scouting taught you? Have you learned things that you have used in other aspects of your life?

Eva: Scouting has taught me many things, from outdoor survival skills to how DNA testing works. The variety of lessons and patches may seem unrelated to each other, but scouting really teaches you how to explore in every sense of the word. Girl Scouts gave me an outlet to discover what I was good at, and honestly, not so good at. These experiences follow me in how I approach situations in my life by internalizing the badge-earning format. I research, plan and then act. I used these lessons when I would have to plan events through my school and when completing tasks for work.

TK: What would you tell others who might want to get involved in Girl Scouts?

Eva: To any parents or kids reading this, please join your local scouting council! Girl Scouts is a great opportunity to grow skills that will stay with



you throughout your life. Also, as someone who just graduated, Girl Scouts was a huge part of my college applications and helped me earn other positions like internships and scholarships.

The troop dynamic helped me learn how to work in groups, built relationships and allowed me to learn from other girls around me. It's a great introduction to helping your community and gives girls so many opportunities to explore what they like. Earning patches is a nice plus, too!

TK: What are your future plans?

Eva: I'm attending Brown University in the fall and plan to major in economics and International Affairs and Policy. I might change majors down the line, but I want to work with nonprofits and in the international sphere.

TK: What are your favorite places to go or do in Tulsa?

Eva: My favorite pastime is just exploring what Tulsa has to offer with my friends, so I have an entire list. I always go to cafés to get work done, and my favorites are Pony Coffee and Shades of Brown. In terms of activities, I love going to the Admiral Twin Drive-in, Gathering Place and flea markets. As a self-proclaimed foodie, a few must-try places in Tulsa are Super Secret Donuts in Foolish Things Coffee Company, Et Al/Natsukashii pop-ups, and Mandarin Taste.

TK: Can you share a fun fact about yourself that others may not know or may be surprised to learn?

Eva: I'm currently trying to earn my private pilot's license! I'm hoping that I can complete my flying hours and ground school before my junior year.

Betty Casey is the Associate Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of TulsaKids Magazine. She has been with TulsaKids for over 30 years.



Congratulations to our 2025 Cover Kid Contest winners!

Age group 1-4: Tahlia Campbell

Age group 5-8: Bayzee Joseph

Age group 9-12: Amari McCoy

Age group 13-17: Ashlee Hamilton

Thank you to our sponsor



ASK THE EXPERTS



GRAND MENTAL HEALTH

How does screen time impact children's mental health, and what strategies can families use to find balance?

While technology offers opportunities for learning and entertainment, excessive screen time can contribute to increased anxiety, disrupted sleep and decreased face-to-face interactions. Striking a healthy balance is essential to ensure that digital engagement enhances, rather than hinders, emotional well-being.

One way to promote balance is by encouraging social connections both offline. Parents can foster healthy digital habits by setting designated screen-free times, such as during meals or before bedtime, allowing children to engage in meaningful conversations and unwind without digital distractions. Encouraging participation in extracurricular activities, sports and in-person social events helps children develop interpersonal skills and build strong relationships beyond the screen.

Modeling responsible screen use is another powerful strategy. When parents practice mindful technology habits, such as limiting their own screen time and prioritizing face-to-face interactions, children are more likely to adopt similar behaviors.

Rather than viewing screen time as inherently harmful, families can focus on fostering intentional and meaningful digital interactions. By prioritizing social engagement, setting boundaries, and leading by example, parents can support their children's mental health while helping them navigate the digital world in a healthy way.

(844) 458-2100
24/7 Crisis Line: (800) 722-3611



MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

Why are swim lessons important for babies under one year old?

Many parents wonder if starting swim lessons for babies under one year old is necessary. The short answer is yes! Here's why early swim lessons are beneficial for your little one:

- **Building Essential Skills:** Although infants won't be swimming laps, early swim lessons focus on fundamental water skills, which are crucial for later swim development.
- **Bonding Time:** Swim lessons provide a unique opportunity for parents and babies to bond in a fun, relaxed environment.
- **Lays the Groundwork for Safety:** Early exposure to water, under the guidance of trained instructors, introduces babies to basic water safety concepts.
- **Social Interaction:** Even at a young age, babies benefit from the social aspects of group swim classes.
- **Routine and Consistency:** Establishing a routine with swim lessons helps create a sense of consistency and security for your baby. It also sets the stage for lifelong water safety habits.

Starting swim lessons early builds a strong foundation for water safety and is an investment into their future that goes beyond the pool!

6415 S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa
525 W. 91st St. S., Jenks
7820 E 101st St, Tulsa OK

918.254.1988

MillerSwimSchool.com



DENTAL DEPOT

As families ease back into school routines, how can parents help their kids maintain healthy smiles during the busy days ahead?

Summer's over—and for many kids, so is the structure that helps them stick to healthy habits. Here are three tips from Dr. Christian Doan with Dental Depot Tulsa:

1. **Bring back routine and reward:** You only get one set of adult teeth. Make brushing part of the morning checklist, just like packing a backpack or tying shoes. Supervise brushing when you can and offer simple rewards. Maybe it's extra time at the park or getting to pick dinner on Friday—whatever helps reinforce the habit.
2. **Track progress in a visible way,** like a sticker chart or checklist: If they hit their brushing goals for the week, celebrate it. Then when they go to the dentist and have a great checkup, that's a bigger reward.
3. **Start small:** Don't expect perfection. If they're brushing more often than they were last month, that's already a win.

Dr. Christian Doan, Dental Depot Tulsa

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations
DentalDepot.net



SIMON HARWOOD, FRY & ELDER

Does it matter who files for divorce or custody first?

Ultimately, filing first or second affects who goes first at trial. Does it affect the outcome legally? No, not directly. The judge will hear the same evidence either way—unlike the movies that show the first to file wins the case! There are preferences between attorneys on whether having the "first impression" versus the "last word" is important, especially if you want to frame an issue before the other side has that chance.

Practically, the one that files first gets some short-term advantages, such as choosing when to file. This can help in preparing finances, living situations, or children for the upcoming legal battle before rules go into place that stops that flexibility. Plus, some like the psychological advantage of having the other side being "served" by a sheriff or process server. If you need a more detailed discussion, please call me and mention TulsaKids for a free consult.

Simon Harwood, Fry & Elder



1630 S Main St, Tulsa, OK 74119
(918) 585-1107
simonharwoodlaw.com

Photo courtesy Tulsa State Fair



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2025

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



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Tulsa Zoo's Malayan tiger cubs recently celebrated their first birthday! Swing by this month to see how they've grown! Photo courtesy Tulsa Zoo



Join Tulsa Air and Space Museum Sept. 6 for the opening of their newest exhibition, "Women in Aviation." Photo courtesy TASM

September 1 Monday

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: OPERATION ICE SPY

All ages, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org/popsicle

Purchase an Ice Spy card for a \$10 near the globe by the main entrance. Visit four locations to receive a stamp on your card; return it before leaving to receive a prize!

LAST CHANCE: ZOORASSIC WORLD

All ages, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org/roar

Sept. 1 is the final day to see Tulsa Zoo's Zoorassic World exhibit featuring more than 25 life-sized animatronic dinosaurs and giants of the Ice Age.

September 2 Tuesday

MIDDLE SCHOOL D&D

For tweens, 4-5:30 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Join Robin from Brookside Library for Dungeons & Dragons. Repeats Sept. 16.

"KIMBERLY AKIMBO"

Recommended ages 14+, 7:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., celebrityattractions.com

Nearly 16-year-old Kim is forced to navigate family dysfunction, a rare genetic condition, her first crush ... and possible felony charges. Additional showtimes through Sept. 7

September 3 Wednesday

LITTLE GARDEN EXPLORERS

Ages 0-5, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Spark wonder at this easygoing play invitation.

September 4 Thursday

CAF AIRPOWER HISTORY TOUR

All ages, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tulsa Air and Space Museum, 3625 N. 74th E. Ave., tulsamuseum.org

Experience some of the most iconic aircraft from World War II up close. Repeats Sept. 4-7

TEEN NIGHT

Ages 13-18, 5-7 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Make crafts and play games at this casual monthly hangout. Snacks provided.

OWASSO GATHERING ON MAIN

All ages, 6-9 p.m., Redbud Festival Park, 109 N. Main St., owassogathering.com

Come out for downtown Owasso's monthly block party!

BANDS & BLOOMS

All ages, 6-8 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Unwind in the garden with live music, food and drink available for purchase. A new band will play each Thursday.

September 5 Friday

HOMESCHOOL FUN FRIDAY

For preschoolers to teens, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Charles Page Library, 551 E. 4th St., Sand Springs, tulsalibrary.org

The library will provide materials for creating structures and learning about engineering.

COMMUNITY NIGHT: A NIGHT OF SPIDER SNIFFING

All ages, 6:30-8 p.m., Chandler Park, 6500 W. 21st St., facebook.com/chandlerparktulsa

Meet at the Samuel Woodhouse Nature Center, then let the Naturalists of Chandler Park guide you into the fascinating world of spiders after dark!

September 6 Saturday

MONARCH MIGRATION GAME

All ages, Sept. 6-13, Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow, facebook.com/rayharralnaturecenter

This self-guided adventure lets participants experience the life cycle of a monarch butterfly.

**JENKS RIVERWALK
CAR, TRUCK &
MOTORCYCLE SHOW** **F**

All ages, 9 a.m.-1:15 p.m., Jenks Riverwalk, 300 Riverwalk Terrace, Jenks, jenksriverwalk.com

Hundreds of vehicles are expected at this event, also featuring live music and more.

**WOMEN IN AVIATION –
EXHIBITION DEDICATION
AND FLY-IN**

All ages, 11 a.m., Tulsa Air and Space Museum, 3624 N. 74th E. Ave., tulsamuseum.org

Join TASM to celebrate the opening of their new exhibition! Free admission to the dedication.

FC TULSA GAME

All ages, 7 p.m., ONEOK Field, 201 N. Elgin Ave., fctulsa.com

It's Vamos Tulsa Night! FC Tulsa celebrates Hispanic and Latino communities and heritage as the team takes on Birmingham Legion FC.

September 7 Sunday**SENSORY SKATE SUNDAY**

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

Visit Wheels and Thrills at a time when there is no flashing lights or loud music; the arcade and laser tag are suspended as well.

September 8 Monday**LITTLE LAB
PROGRAMMING** **W**

Ages 0-4, 11-11:30 a.m., Discovery Lab, 3123 S. Riverside Dr., discoverylab.org

Activities will focus on learning shapes, colors, working on fine motor skills and more.

**NATIVE HAND TALK
FOR FAMILIES** **F**

All ages, 4-5 p.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Mike Pahsetopah teaches simple sign language phrases and stories from the Hand Talk Native peoples of this land once used.

September 9 Tuesday**BUILD A READER PLAY
WORKSHOP** **F**

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

A fun play workshop featuring music with Katherine Battenberg.

"EARTH, MOON, AND SUN"

Ages 4+, 6:30 p.m., Jenks Planetarium, 321 N. 2nd St., jenksps.eleyo.com/planetarium

This fast-paced and fun show explores lunar phases, eclipses and other puzzles. Purchase tickets online in advance.

September 10 Wednesday**BUILD A READER
STORYTIME/STAY AND
PLAY: FAMILY** **F W**

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

After storytime, head to the garden for games, toys and activities that foster critical early literacy skills.

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL
BASH** **F**

For elementary schoolers, 4-5 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Join for crafts, games and information about how the library can help you make this your best school year yet!

September 11 Thursday**STORYTIME WITH
THE TULSA OPERA**

Geared toward ages 10 and under, 10-10:30 a.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Enjoy a special storytime performance with the Tulsa Opera!

ROGERS COUNTY FAIR **F**

All ages, Sept. 11-14, Claremore Expo Center, 400 Veterans Pkwy., Claremore, rogerscountyfair.com

Expect carnival rides, livestock shows, food trucks and more family fun. Free admission.

September 12 Friday**FULL STEAM AHEAD!** **F**

Ages 5-12, 2-3 p.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Join for STEAM-focused activities for homeschooled and distance-learning kids.

**JENKS LIBRARY'S
50TH ANNIVERSARY
RECEPTION** **F**

All ages, 2-3:30 p.m., Jenks Library, 523 W. B St., Jenks, tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate this milestone with special guests, light refreshments and reminiscences.

**POPS YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT
SERVICES PARENT
SUPPORT GROUP** **F**

For adults, 6-8 p.m., 5924 E. 31st St., popsprogram.org

Parents can come together to share experiences, offer mutual support and discuss the challenges and successes of raising children. Pre-register online.

"HAIRSPRAY"

All ages, 8 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., tulsapac.com

You can't stop the beat in this fun, bold musical about one girl's inspiring dream to dance and the revolution she begins. Presented by Theatre Tulsa. Additional showtimes Sept. 12-21

September 13 Saturday**BE A SCOUT FOR A DAY** **F**

Ages K-5th grade, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Jack Graves Scout Reservation, 2800 E. New Orleans St., Broken Arrow, beascout.org

The Scouting America Indian National Council invites you to enjoy a day of scouting activities, like archery, fishery and more.

**COMMUNITY LITTER
CLEANUP MEETING: KEEP
OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL** **F**

For tweens to adults, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Nathan Hale Library, 6038 E. 23rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Grab a donut, meet your neighbors, and help your community be healthy and sustainable.

**CELEBRATE THE
918 PICNIC** **F**

All ages, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy popcorn, karaoke, trivia and yard games while connecting with your community. All ages.

REDBUD RUMBLE **F**

All ages, 5:15-8 p.m., Redbud Festival Park, 109 N. Main St., Owasso, cityofowasso.com

Come out to Owasso for a car and bike show, marble run, live music, food...and a Battle of the Beards!

September 14 Sunday**SENSORY-FRIENDLY
FAMILY HOURS**

All ages, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Discovery Lab, 3123 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.

September 15 Monday**FIND MORE AT
TULSAKIDS.COM/
CALENDAR****September 16 Tuesday****BUILD A READER
STORYTIME:
PRESCHOOL** **F 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.

September 17 Wednesday**STORYTIME AT
TULSA ZOO** **W**

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

Join Tulsa Zoo for storytime at the COX Nature Exchange inside the Life in the Cold building.

TEEN LOUNGE F W

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.

September 18 Thursday

STORYTIME AT THE AIRPORT F

Ages 0-5, 10-10:30 a.m., Tulsa International Airport, 7777 Airport Dr., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a Build A Reader storytime at the airport!

TULSAKIDS PARENT TALKS: A SPEAKER SERIES WITH EXPERIENCE TULSA F

For adults, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Tandy YMCA, 5005 S. Darlington Ave., tulsakids.com

Child development experts will provide practical information to help you understand your child's temperament — and your own parenting style. Ask questions and discuss your concerns with other parents. Limited childcare available. RSVP at tulsakids.com

ALL ABOARD THURSDAY F

All ages, 6-9 p.m., Depot Green, 205 Elgin St., Muskogee, muskogeeeparks.org

Enjoy local and regional street vendors, live music, free kids' activities and train rides.

September 19 Friday

WE ARE OKLAHOMA BOOK DISCUSSION: "WHAT BLOOMS FROM DUST" F

For adults and teens, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Rivendell Books & Baubles, 2034 W. Houston St., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

Discuss "What Blooms from Dust" by James Markert at this unique independent bookstore. Pre-registration required.

"CREATIONS IN STUDIO K"

7 p.m., Studio K, 1212 E. 45th Pl., tulsaballet.org

Tulsa Ballet's "Creations in Studio K" program features new works but the most in-demand choreographers in the world. Additional showtimes through Sept. 28

September 20 Saturday

MONARCHS ON THE MOUNTAIN F

All ages, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Chandler Park, 6500 W. 21st St., facebook.com/chandlerparktulsa

Join the celebration of Eastern Oklahoma's vital role in the incredible Monarch butterfly migration!

TINKERFEST

All ages, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Discovery Lab, 3123 Riverside Dr., discoverylab.org

Makers, artists, and tinkerers come together to showcase their work and invite you to join the DIY fun.

9TH ANNUAL NORTH TULSA COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER F

11 a.m.-2 p.m., TCC Northeast Campus, 3727 E. Apache St., tulsa-health.org

A FREE community baby shower for pregnant parents and families with infants who live in the following North Tulsa ZIP codes: 74110, 74115, 74116, 74117, 74126, 74127 and 74130.

GUATEMALAN WORRY DOLL CRAFTING F

Ages 3-10, 2-3 p.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by crafting your own Guatemalan worry doll. Must pre-register.

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS: PATHWAY TO POSSIBILITIES F

For adults and teens, 2-4 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Learn about college applications, financial aid, scholarships and exciting careers beyond high school. Must pre-register.

ROCK AND READ

7-11 p.m., New Story Brewing, 601 E. 4th St., gaininggroundliteracy.org

Sing your heart out on the outdoor stage for fun prizes, or just sit back, watch the show and bid on some amazing items at the silent auction. Proceeds support Gaining Ground Literacy

LAST CHANCE: FLORIGAMI IN THE GARDEN

All ages, Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Today is the last day to see Tulsa Botanic Garden's unique FLORIGAMI IN THE GARDEN exhibition.

September 22 Monday

TEEN TIME: GAMING F

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

Play a video game on the library's switch or just hang out.

September 23 Tuesday

NATURE BUDDIES: WILD WONDERS

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

Parents and their children can bond during hands-on nature-based activities and close-up encounters with zoo ambassador animals. Pre-register.

BUILD A READER STORYTIME/STAY AND PLAY: BILINGUAL F W

10:30-11:30 a.m., Maxwell Park Library, 1313 N. Canton Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish.

September 24 Wednesday

STORY TIME WITH MS. HOLLY F

All ages, 10:30-11 a.m., Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow, facebook.com/rayharralnaturecenter

Ms. Holly will sing songs and read interactive stories to all who wish to listen.

"WALL FLOWERS: PATRICK GORDON PAINTINGS" OPENS

All ages, Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Philbrook Museum of Art presents Patrick Gordon's first museum retrospective. The exhibition will be open Sept. 24-Jan. 3, 2026.

TEEN VOLUNTEER DROP-IN HOUR F

Ages 12-16, 4-5 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Drop by the library to volunteer for a service hour. Repeats Sept. 12.

September 25 Thursday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME/STAY AND PLAY: SENSORY F

Ages 2-10, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

This inclusive program is designed for children with a variety of learning styles or sensory integration challenges. Must pre-register.

DISNEY ON ICE: LET'S DANCE!

All ages, 7:30 p.m., Expo Square Pavilion, 4145 E. 21st St., tulsastatefair.com

Feel the electric atmosphere as Mickey and his pals remix favorite Disney tunes into colorful worlds. Additional showtimes through Sept. 28.

September 26 Friday

NATURE ACADEMY

For homeschoolers, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Tulsa Zoo, 6421 E. 36th St. N., tulsazoo.org

Join the Zoo for Nature Academy at the Nature Exchange! There will be a treasure trove of exciting activities and prompts, all designed to inspire you to explore the outdoors. Free with general admission; no registration required.

MOVIE NIGHT AT THE WILL ROGERS THEATRE F

All ages, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore, willrogers.com

Watch "Roman Holiday" in the Will Rogers Theatre. Free popcorn and admission.

September 27 Saturday

KIDS CLAY STUDIO

Ages 8-14, 12-4 p.m., Ruby Clay Co., 409 E. 8th St., Suite B, rubyclaycompany.com

Students will start by learning basic hand building techniques, then receive inspiration to create ceramic pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns and other fun Fall and spooky Halloween goodies. Pre-register online.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST"

All ages, 3 and 8 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., okworldstage.org

Secrets, schemes, and society swirl together in Oscar Wilde's most celebrated comedy. Additional showtimes Sept. 19-28

TSO ON THE GO: WIND QUINTET

All ages, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Engage with musicians from Tulsa Symphony Orchestra's Wind Quintet.

September 28 Sunday

DIG: DAY IN THE GARDEN

All ages, 2-5 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Enjoy a fall afternoon with your family in support of the Botanic Garden! Activities include bubble-making stations, face painting, decorating a "spooky fairy garden," complimentary sno cones and much more. Kids get in free with adult ticket.

CHEER FOR TULSA DRILLERS!

The Tulsa Drillers are playing their final games of the 2025 season this month. Get tickets and details at tulsadrillers.com. The following home games take place at ONEOK Field, 201 N. Elgin Ave.

9/9, 7 p.m. vs. Arkansas
9/10, 12:05 p.m. vs. Arkansas
9/11, 7 p.m. vs. Arkansas
9/12, 7 p.m. vs. Arkansas*
9/13, 7 p.m. vs. Arkansas
9/14, 6 p.m. vs. Arkansas*

*Fireworks

September 29 Monday

BABY BOARD BOOK BOOK CLUB

For babies and toddlers, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Experience the joy of reading with your baby while making new friends. Visit Central Library to pick up your book club books in advance, or just drop in.

September 30 Tuesday

THE FALL FAIRY-TALE PLAY

All ages, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

A special live performance of a favorite fairy tale performed by talented local students from Holland Hall.

"INTO THE DEEP"

Ages 6+, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Jenks Planetarium, 321 N. 2nd St., Jenks, jenksps.ce.eleyo.com/planetarium

A breathtaking journey of sea exploration combining marine biology and underwater geology with a history of deep-sea exploration. Pre-purchase tickets online.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FALL FESTIVALS

MORE AT TULSAKIDS.COM/FESTIVALS

SAPULPA'S ROUTE 66 BLOWOUT - CAR SHOW AND FESTIVAL

Sept. 13, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Downtown Sapulpa

See classic cars while enjoying shopping and dining in downtown Sapulpa. route66blowout.com

LA FIESTA DE TULSA

Sept. 13, 3-9 p.m.

Hannah Hall, 1801 S. Garnett Rd.

This celebration of Tulsa's Hispanic community kicks off with a parade starting at Cooper Elementary, then continues at Hannah Hall with live performances, cultural showcases and more. globaldistrict.org/lafiestadetulsa

918 DAY FESTIVAL

Sept. 18, 5-9 p.m.

Chapman Green, 605 S. Main St.

Downtown Tulsa Partnership is celebrating Tulsa's diverse heritage with a festival featuring local food vendors, musicians and other entertainers. downtowntulsa.com

TULSA GREEK FESTIVAL

Sept. 18-20

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1222 S. Guthrie Ave.

Let Tulsa Greek Festival whisk you away with authentic Greek food and drink, live music, traditional folk dancing, shopping and cultural experiences! tulsagreekfestival.com

AUTUMN IN THE BOTANIC GARDEN

Sept. 18-Oct. 30

Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.

Daily activities include a hay maze, pumpkin patch and scarecrow display. Don't miss Bands & Blooms on Thursday evenings. tulsabotanic.org

BROKEN ARROW ROSE FESTIVAL/CHALK IT UP FESTIVAL

Sept. 19, 5-8:30 p.m.; Sept. 20, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Broken Arrow Rose District

This two-day festival includes a chalk art competition, the annual Rose Show, a big Kid Zone and more. Repeats Sept. 20, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. keepbabeautiful.org/arts302.com/chalkitup

NOCHE FESTIVAL: A CELEBRATION OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Sept. 19, 7-9 p.m.

Kendall-Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis Ave.

Enjoy refreshments, piñatas, and singing and dancing along to music provided by a live mariachi band. tulsalibrary.org

ROSE KITES OVER BROKEN ARROW

Sept. 21, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Nienhuis Park, 3201 N. 9th St.

Tulsa Wind Riders Kite Club will fly large kites, demonstrate kite flying, etc. Decorate your own free kite! keepbabeautiful.org

RED FORK EQUINOX FESTIVAL

Sept. 21, See website for schedule

Tulsa's Red Fork District

A full day of engaging activities, including live music, free art workshops and local art vendors. raftulsa.org

ROUTE 66 BALLOON AND KITE FESTIVAL

Sept. 26-28

Parkhurst Pumpkin Patch, 15176 NE 178th St., Arcadia

Three days of family friendly entertainment featuring over a dozen hot air balloons, kite show, helicopter rides, tethered balloon rides and more. Facebook: @Route 66 Balloon Festival

TULSA STATE FAIR

Sept. 25-Oct. 5

Expo Square, 4145 E. 21st St.

Tulsa State Fair's "11 Days of Awesome" feature live music, midway rides, livestock shows, food you've never tried before, and more. tulsastatefair.com

CHALK IT UP FESTIVAL

PHOTO COURTESY DRONEOCLE





SPOOKY
BUT NOT-TOO-SCARY

HALLOW ZOOEEN

PRESENTED BY



CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE

day & night

OCT. 17-19 & 24-26

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tulsazoo.org/boo



**PIRATE
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**PUMPKIN
PATCH**



**NEVERGLADES
HAUNTED HOUSE**



**HALLOWZOOEEN
PASSPORT**



THE ZINK FOUNDATIONS
ZINK FAMILY FOUNDATION

**ARAGHNID
ARGADE**



**GREEPY
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**BANK OF
OKLAHOMA**

**HAUNTED
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The Genuine. The Original.



**PIRATES &
PRINCESSES DINNER**