

# The right choice for your child, from birth to young adult.

# PEDIATRIC CARE AND SUBSPECIALTIES

- Allergy/Immunology
- Cardiology
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- Genetics

- Hematology/Oncology
   Ophthalmology
- Neonatology
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
- Orthopedics
- Otolaryngology
- · Pediatric Critical Care
- Pulmonology
- Surgery

- Urology
- - Pediatrics in

seven locations





Welcome Wednesday open house Scan the QR code to learn more!



(918) 481-1111 hollandhall.org

# VOLUME XXXVIII | ISSUE 10

# **CONTENTS**

4 FDITOR'S NOTE

6 WHAT'S GOING ON(LINE)?

8 NEWS & NOTES

10
BABIES & TODDLERS
Nurturing Touch:
Why It Matters
By Angie Porter, MS, CCPS

12 SCHOOL AGE Beyond Labels: Building Belonging for All Kids By Tamecca Rogers, Ph.D.

14
BOOKS
A Love Letter to the Library
By Laura Raphael, MA, MLIS

16
TWEENS & TEENS
The Light and Rainbows
of Transition Academy
By Julie Wenger Watson

18
GREEN COUNTRY
GROWN-UP
Dr. Meg Myers
Morgan: Intentionally
Unraveling Motherhood
and Mental Health
By Nancy A. Moore

21 INCLUSIVE RESOURCE GUIDE

24
FEATURE
The Neurodiverse Brain:
Parenting Kids With Autism
By Betty Casey

26
KID CULTURE
Tulsa Performing Arts
Center Unveils
New Season of Imagination
Series with Cultural Gems
By Lindsay Morris

28
COMMUNITY
Amelia's Friends Provides
Connection,
Friendships and
Inclusion for All
By Betty Casey

30 GET COOKING Add Spice to Warm Up Fall Days By Natalie Mikles

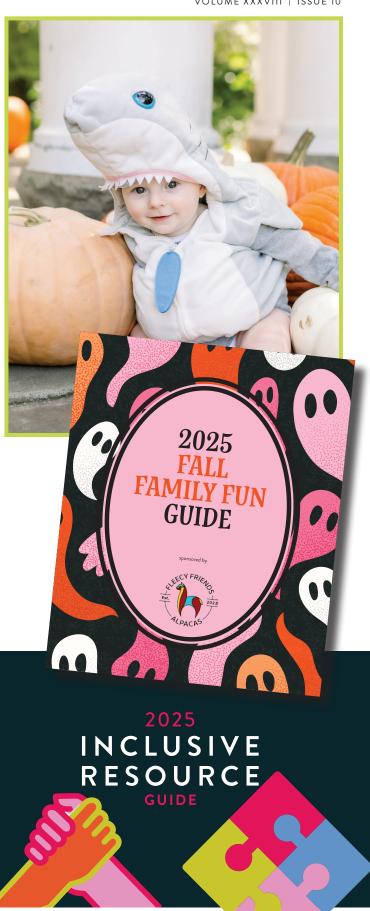
32
EDUCATION
What to Do When Kids
Are Struggling in School
By Natalie Mikles

34
TULSAKIDS 2025
FALL FAMILY
FUN GUIDE

47
I'M A TULSAKID
Jaxon Huffman:
Wrestling Triple
Crown Winner
By Betty Casey

48
Sponsored Content:
Ask The Experts

**49 Community Calendar**By Tara Rittler

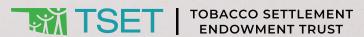


# **Dinner Just Got Easier**



Find quick, healthy recipes your family will actually eat at





# **Are the Kids Alright?**

can attest to the fact that you never stop worrying about your kids. My three kids are all in their 30s (unbelievable!), but I still worry about them. My daughter just went on a work trip to Costa Rica. She let me know when she took off, when she landed and when she was safely home. I just want to know....

When my kids were little, they weren't flying around to far-flung parts of the world, but they were beginning to learn about themselves and their place in the world. I watched for missed developmental milestones, trouble at school, friendships gone awry. Were they eating? Sleeping? Were they getting enough outdoor time and fun family time? There were times when I had to ask a professional because I wasn't sure. Occasionally, I would find out some, well, interesting information at parent/teacher conferences. (pro tip: always go to parent/teacher conferences)

This issue is devoted to what to look for and what to do when the kids aren't alright. I don't know about you, but I'm not perfect and my kids aren't perfect. Sometimes getting a little help, whether it's a math tutor or a therapist, can make life easier for everyone.

Being human means not being perfect. If your little human seems to need extra help, ask for it.



Betty Casey
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# tulsakids

#### Volume XXXVIII | Number 10

©TK Publishing, Inc. 2025. All Rights Reserved.

TulsaKids is published monthly TK Publishing, Inc. 1622 S. Denver Ave., Tulsa, OK 74119 Phone: 918-582-8504 Fax: 918-583-1366 tulsakids com



#### Publisher

Charles Foshee publisher@tulsakids.com

#### **Fditor-in-Chief**

Betty Casey editor@tulsakids.com

#### Web Editor & Calendar

Tara Rittler tara.rittler@gmail.com

#### **Art Director**

Jinger Belcher

#### **Advertising Sales**

Amanda Murphy Lindsey Copes

## Distribution

Joan Ross

#### **Contributing Writers**

Angie Porter, MS, CCPS Tamecca Rogers, Ph.D. Julie Wenger Watson Nancy A. Moore Natalie Mikles Laura Raphael Lindsay Morris

Articles and advertisements in TulsaKids do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the magazine or TK Publishing, Inc. We do not assume responsibility for statements made by advertisers or editorial contributors. The acceptance of advertising in TulsaKids does not constitute an endorsement of the products, services, or information. We do not knowingly present any product or service which is fraudulent or misleading in nature.









# University School at UTulsa

# **Curious. Creative. Committed.**

Let the learning begin. At University School, we believe early education shapes bright minds. Even our youngest learners dive into a rich curriculum—building pre-literacy skills and exploring art, music, Spanish, math and science. From creative projects to hands-on activities, every moment sparks curiosity and inspires a lifelong love of learning.

Experience what makes University School exceptional! **Join us for an Open House School Tour on Oct. 3 or Nov. 12.** Private tours are also available by appointment. Schedule your visit at uschool.utulsa.edu or (918) 631-5062.





# USCHOOL.UTULSA.EDU





You're doing the right thing for your family *and* your future.





You can do it all - with the right team behind you!

Call 918-935-0109 celebreeschool.com/tulsa-ok/

# CONTESTS + GIVEAWAYS

Get links to the following at tulsakids.com/contests

WHAT'S
GOING
ON(LINE)?









# Thank you for entering our Cutest Baby Contest!

We loved seeing the Cutest Baby Contest photos roll in - so many sweet smiles and mischievous grins. Thank you to everyone who entered, and to On the Cusp for sponsoring this fun contest!

- 1. Crucyn Cariker, Photo credit: Katie Cariker
- 2. Kassidy Vasquez, Photo credit: Robyn Burrell
- 3. Zy'aire Blue, Photo credit: Samantha Marzano
- 4. Cadence, Photo credit: Carley Moore
- 5. Eleanor, Photo credit: Michelle Stoermer













# **TODAY Show in Tulsa**

Fans will have an opportunity to see The 3rd Hour of TODAY when it heads to the Sooner State to broadcast from Tulsa. The show will broadcast live Friday, October 10 at 8 a.m., CST.

The 3rd Hour of TODAY co-hosts will explore all Tulsa has to offer, including its many cultural attractions, art and food scene, and more. The show will also highlight Tulsa's historic past as well as its up-and-coming businesses. Fans and viewers can join the audience by registering at TODAY.com/Tulsa.

The show is sponsored by Visit Tulsa.

# Holland Hall Announces 48th Annual ARTworks

Holland Hall's 48th annual ARTworks will take place Oct. 21–Nov. 24, 2025. Featured artists are Rachel Hayes and Eric Sall, whose vibrant works will inspire and engage students and patrons alike.

For nearly five decades, ARTworks has brought renowned contemporary artists to Holland Hall, offering students and the Tulsa community unique opportunities to connect with the creative process through workshops, lectures and exhibitions. Proceeds from ARTworks benefit Holland Hall's financial aid program and the arts.

Rachel Hayes' large-scale textile installations transform light, space and color into immersive experiences. Her work has been exhibited at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Parrish Art Museum, and internationally at the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan.

Eric Sall, a Tulsa native, creates bold, energetic paintings that merge abstraction with vibrant color and expressive gesture. His work has been featured at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, and in numerous private collections across the country. The ARTworks 2025 Gallery Exhibition is open to the public Oct. 21-Nov. 24, Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Holland Hall, 5666 E. 81st St. Tickets to the Oct. 21 Gallery Opening are available at hollandhall.org/artworks.

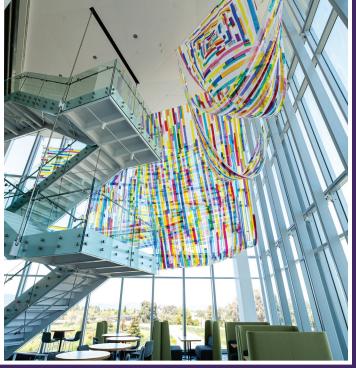


# AAPD Presidents Recommend Fluoride in Water

An article in The Journal of the American Medical Association, written by Dr. Brett Kessler, current president of the American Association of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), and Dr. Scott Smith, immediate past president of the AAPD, stated, "If we are serious about protecting children's health and creating a healthier workforce, then preserving community water fluoridation is not optional – it is essential."

The doctors say that community water fluoridation has been part of public health for decades because it protects people throughout their lifespan —perhaps most importantly, children who cannot regularly visit a dentist or do not have toothpaste or toothbrushes. Removing fluoride from water leads to more cavities and higher treatment costs.

Early childhood cavities impact nutrition and can result in failure to thrive, delayed speech development, pain, infection and missed school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that 34 million hours of school are lost per year because of dental problems.



# **Nutcracker Festival Returns**

Tulsa Ballet, TulsaGo, and Hardesty Family Foundation recently announced the return of Nutcracker Festival this December at the SageNet Center Upper Level at Expo Square. Nutcracker Festival offers a blend of festive activities, culinary delights, live performances, and a premier holiday marketplace featuring over 75 local artists, makers, and vendors.

The 2025 Nutcracker Festival is set for Fri., Dec. 5, Noon -9 p.m. and Sat., Dec. 6, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

The festival team will transform the SageNet Center yet again into a winter wonderland, offering a unique and enchanting experience for the Tulsa community and beyond in which attendees can immerse themselves in the magic of the season. The festival marketplace will offer an array of unique gifts, seasonal décor, and artisanal goods perfect for holiday shopping. Festival attendees can expect to ride the Nutcracker Express trackless train, play in Mother Ginger's Giant Inflatables, try the Cavalier Cake Walk, shop at the Mouse King Marketplace, meet the Sugarplum Fairy, and more. This year, enjoy holiday bingo and excerpts from "The Nutcracker" in the new "Marie's Movie Haus" and meet "Fritz's Furry Friends" at the new petting zoo.

For more information, tickets, sponsorship opportunities or ways to volunteer, visit www.nutcrackerfest.com.









SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY

**ENGINEERING MATHEMATICS** 

# Discover science with **Discovery Lab**

# Leaf Chromatography: **Hidden Colors in** Leaves

By Kirsten Lang

Why do leaves change color in fall? Even green leaves contain many pigments - you just can't always see them. With a simple chromatography experiment, you can uncover the hidden colors.

### What you will need:

- Fresh leaves
- Small jars or cups
- Rubbing alcohol
- Coffee filters
- Scissors
- Warm water bath (bowl of hot water)

#### Step-by-step

- 1. Tear leaves into small pieces and place them in jars.
- 2. Add rubbing alcohol and mash leaves gently.
- Place jars in a warm-water bath for 30 minutes.
- Insert strips of coffee filter so the tips touch the liquid.

Watch as colors climb the paper, then let strips dry.

## The Science Behind It!

Leaves contain chlorophyll (green), carotenoids (yellow/orange), and anthocyanins (red/purple). In summer, green chlorophyll hides the others. Chromatography separates these pigments, revealing the "secret rainbow" inside every leaf.

NEW! Follow along online. To watch Kirsten demonstrate this experiment, go to www.tulsakids.com.

# Downtown Tulsa Midweek Market **Fall Events**

The Downtown Tulsa Midweek Market Fall 2025 event schedule includes live music, theme nights and Wellness Wednesdays at Chapman Green Park.

Each Wednesday, visitors can head downtown from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. to enjoy crafts, baked goods, local honey, food and more from more than 30 local vendors. Be sure to check out Kids Night with Tom Prevear & The Backyard Band on Oct. 15. Parking is free after 5 p.m., and visitors are invited to park at Trinity Episcopal Church, just one block away. Downtown Midweek Market goes through Nov. 5.

# **Owasso Pumpkin Patch for Mission Celebrates 25 Years**

The Pumpkin Patch for Mission in Owasso at Owasso First Methodist Church is celebrating the 25th anniversary of fall fun with a purpose.

"For the past 25 years, our pumpkin patch has been a beloved seasonal tradition for families in Owasso and surrounding areas," said Katie Henson, director of communications at Owasso First Methodist Church. "What began as a small church fundraiser has grown into an event that brings people of all ages together, fostering connection and fall fun, while supporting local and global missions."

The Pumpkin Patch for Mission will be open every day from Mon., Oct. 6 - Fri., Oct. 31. Three events are planned: Movie in the Patch, Oct. 11; Birthday Bash, Oct. 25; and Trunk or Treat, Oct. 31.

Owasso First Methodist Church is located at 13800 E 106th St N. Owasso, OK; owassofmc.org.





# Nurturing Touch: Why It Matters



By Angie Porter, MS, CCPS

ho wouldn't want to live in a compassionate, nurturing community filled with caring people? Parents and childcare providers can help create that circle of unity for children each day. One of the most powerful ways we do this is through nurturing touch.

Touch is not a luxury—it is a basic human need. Research tells us that children who are not held, hugged or comforted enough may experience developmental delays, emotional struggles and even serious health risks. According to Psychology Today (2010), babies and children deprived of healthy touch can stop growing, and if deprivation lasts long enough, may even die. On the other hand, cultures that embrace affectionate care tend to be less violent and more cooperative.

Touch is a language of respect. It supports healthy brain development, strengthens social and emotional skills, reduces stress and promotes positive behavior. When stress is lowered, children are happier—and so are their caregivers.

#### **Everyday Opportunities for Healthy Touch**

At home and in childcare settings, daily routines naturally offer many chances for healthy, nurturing touch. Consider incorporating touch during:

- Greeting and saying goodbye
- Feeding and diapering routines
- Rocking or holding
- Free play and circle time
- · Nap time and transitions
- · Hand washing and self-care moments

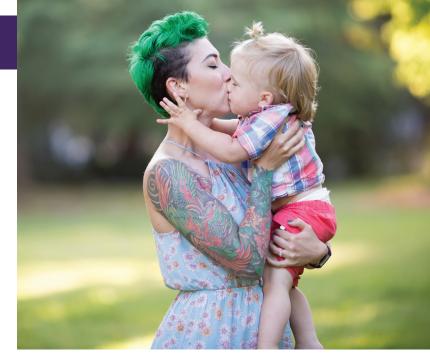
Keep in mind that the least intrusive areas for touch are a child's shoulder or back. Many children dislike being touched on the head or neck, so avoid "patting" their heads.

# Rituals that Connect

Daily rituals are powerful tools for building relationships. They create "love moments"—times when everything else pauses so we can be fully present with our children. Here is a lovely ritual by Becky Bailey, child development and early education expert.

Good Night, Elbow ("I Love You Rituals," by Becky Bailey, Ph.D., author of "Conscious Discipline")

 As you put your child down to rest, say: "I'm going to say good night to your ears, your hair, your forehead, your shoulders and your elbows."



- Gently touch or massage each body part as you name it, moving slowly down the child's body.
- Use the time to relax yourself, letting go of mental clutter and being present with the child.

Variation: In the morning, play "Wake Up, Elbow" by touching and naming body parts to help children start the day with connection.

#### Weather Report

Have your child sit with their back to you.

Tell this story (or make up your own) about the weather as you trace the following movements gently on your child's back. Then let them do the movements on your back as you tell the story.

Sun - draw large circles. "The sun shines."

Clouds - make small circles. "Clouds cover the sun."

Wind - sweep side to side. "The wind blows the clouds across the sky."

Tornado - swirl hands. "A tornado is in the clouds."

Lightning - draw bolts. "Lightning flashes!"

Thunder - clap gently. "Thunder booms!"

Rain and hail – tap fingers lightly or firmly. "It begins to rain and hail on the ground."

Snow - soft fingertip touches. "Cold snow falls."

Fog – rest palms quietly. "Fogs quietly settles on the town."

Sun returns - lift hands slowly away. "The sunshine returns."

This playful story not only engages imagination but also provides soothing touch and connection.

## A Final Word

Nurturing touch is not an extra—it is essential. It helps children feel safe, valued and connected, while also supporting healthy development in every domain. As you care for your child, bring intentional touch into daily routines and rituals to create a safe, happy environment for children to grow and thrive.

So go ahead—be hands-on, connect, and move forward with joy.

**Angela Percival-Porter** is a child development specialist for the State of Oklahoma. She is an adjunct professor, former director of an NAEYC-accredited early learning center, and a consultant to childcare centers.

October 24 - November 2

Support,
Shop &
Save

Give a donation for 10-20% OFF at your favorite local businesses!



BUY A CARD carecardok.com

Every Care Card sold helps FCS provide gifts, necessities and hope to its neediest clients this holiday season.



# Thank you to our sponsors

Chris Siemens, M.D., Eastern Oklahoma Ear, Nose and Throat ♥ The Silver Needle ♥

Southern Agriculture ♥ Ann Arthur Outerwear ♥ Big River Footwear Co. ♥

Ella + Orchid ◆ Griffin Media 106.9 K-Hits and Mattress Firm ◆

Luminate Clinic ♥ Margo's Gift Shop ♥ Morgan's Glam Boutique ♥

Reading Glasses to Go ♥ TulsaPeople ♥ Zero







By Tamecca Rogers, Ph.D.

alk into an elementary school classroom and you'll find a mix of personalities. Some kids are eager to answer every question, while others prefer to observe quietly. Some children shine in math, some get lost in books, and others come alive with a paintbrush in hand. Now imagine a child who experiences the world in a way that doesn't always fit the usual rhythm of the classroom. They might avoid eye contact, communicate differently, or move at their own pace. These are the children who remind us that learning is not one-size-fits-all.

Neurodiverse students and students with disabilities bring something irreplaceable to the classroom. When we choose to see them not for what services they need, but for the gifts they bring, we begin to understand that inclusion is not just about fairness—it's about community. That's what I learned after talking with Paula Bearden, a counselor at Tulsa Tech who has spent years watching the power of belonging transform lives. Although she primarily works with high schoolers, her insights extend back to the elementary years, when children are first forming ideas about what it means to belong.

So, what does belonging look like? Bearden describes it beautifully: "Belonging means being seen and valued for the different ways they see any given situation. They want authentic and organic interactions that show connecting with them is meaningful." She adds, with a smile, that many of these students have the sharpest comedic timing—funny without even trying. It's a reminder that belonging isn't about changing who a child is; it's about noticing, celebrating and valuing them as they

Bearden believes inclusion is one of the greatest gifts we can give our kids early in life. "Having students participate in interactions, at any age, with others of ALL abilities is an amazing opportunity to prepare them for life's unexpected twists and turns. Inclusion equals community," she explained. Think about that for a moment: When children grow

up learning side by side with peers who think, move or communicate differently, they develop empathy, patience and adaptability—skills that matter far beyond the classroom. They are learning how to be good humans.

But inclusion isn't only about supports or accommodations. Too often, conversations focus on what services a student needs rather than what strengths they already bring. Bearden emphasizes that schools must also highlight qualities like honesty, courage, patience and kindness—the very values we all want our children to carry into adulthood. By focusing on character and resilience, we remind every child that they are more than a label.

For parents who want to see more inclusion in their schools, Bearden's advice is practical: "Find the research that supports inclusion and then find the faces that represent the benefits. Interview students, educators, business owners and parents in your community who can show how inclusion positively impacts everyone. Never give up advocating."

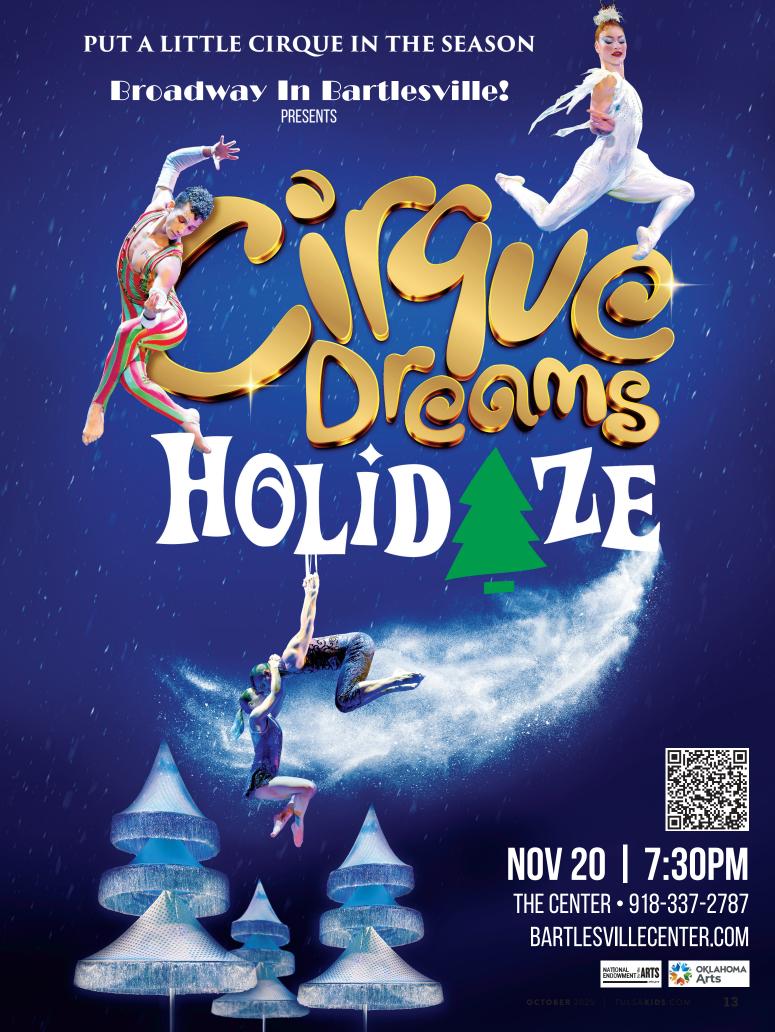
Sometimes that means showing up at a school meeting with articles in hand. Sometimes it means telling your child's story, so others see their humanity first. And sometimes it's just persistence—knowing that change is slow but possible.

Bearden shared one story that captures why this matters so deeply. In 2020, a young man enrolled in Tulsa Tech's Mobile App Development program. At the time, he didn't make eye contact and wore a mask all year. Still, he thrived. Encouraged by his progress, he returned the following year for more IT classes. Over time, something incredible happened—he got his driver's license, began taking on IT projects, and grew into a confident, independent young adult. His parents often thank Tulsa Tech, but Bearden is quick to say the real credit belongs to him and to the inclusive environment that gave him space to flourish. "Inclusion benefits us ALL," she said.

What does this mean for our elementary classrooms? It means every time we encourage kids to sit with someone different at lunch, or when teachers adapt lessons so every child can participate, we are planting seeds of empathy and acceptance. It means telling our children that everyone—whether they crack the funniest jokes or quietly code an app—deserves to belong.

Inclusion is not charity. It's not a favor. It's a mindset that benefits us all. When we move beyond labels and focus on building belonging, we change not just one child's life, but the future of our entire community.

**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.



# A Love Letter to the Library



By **Laura Raphael**, MA, MLIS, Children's Services Coordinator, Tulsa City-County Library

"Libraries change lives." That was the unofficial motto of the Tulsa City-County Library for many years, and while I agreed with it (still do), I always wanted to add: Libraries change lives... for the better.

Raúl the Third is our honored illustrator for the 2025 Books To Treasure program, and he can honestly say that the library really did change his life – for the better.

Not only did the library help his mother learn English and prepare for her citizenship test, but his librarians also set him on the path of best-selling authorship and artistry by asking him to draw scenes from his favorite books.

In his book, "Vamos! Let's Go Read," the library is full of adventure, wonder, and delight. This book is truly a love letter to the library. In his Author's Note, Raúl the Third writes:

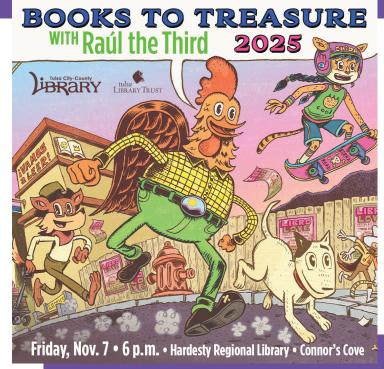
Ever since the fateful day that my mom decided to take us to the library because she was sick and tired of our shenanigans in our tiny one-bedroom apartment, I have been obsessed with books and illustration. The library became a second home for us when we were kids.

The creation of this book was thanks to the generosity and knowledge that a library shares with its patrons no matter where they are from or how much money they have. I will forever be grateful for my experiences there and for the amazing journey they inspired me to take.

As part of the Books To Treasure program, every second grader in Tulsa and Tulsa County will receive a free "Vamos! Let's Go Read" illustrated library card thanks to the generosity of the Zarrow Family Foundation.

To honor Raúl the Third's love for libraries, here are some of my favorite books where the library is an important character in its own right:





Raúl the Third, library champion and best-selling author and illustrator, to visit Tulsa on November 7 for Books To Treasure

# "Lola at the Library" by Anna McQuinn

- Also streaming on Hoopla.

In this gentle picture book, beloved character Lola loves the library and all its magical ways. Watch the video, then read the book together.

## "Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library" by Chris Grabenstein

The original 2014 chapter book, in which children stay overnight in a library and solve puzzles by a gamemaster (Mr. Lemoncello, of course) in order to escape the building, has been followed by additional books, including graphic novels.

### "I Want to Read All the Books" by Debbie Ridpath Ohi

This is the rallying cry of most librarians. In this colorful picture book, a young girl discovers the place where all the books live: the library.

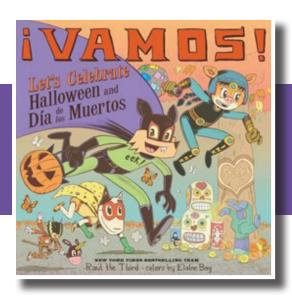
# "The Not So Quiet Library" by Zachariah OHora

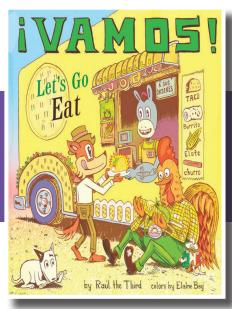
What happens when a monster visits a library and starts trying to eat the readers? Hint: it's loud! And one child decides to fight back.

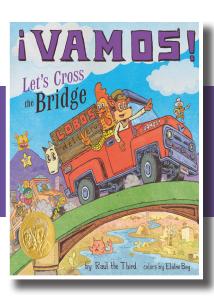
### "Do Not Bring Your Dragon to the Library" by Julie Gassman

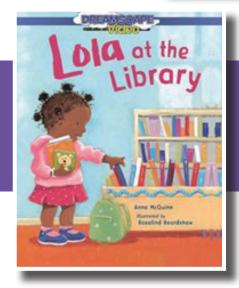
Dragons and libraries do not mix in this hilarious romp of a picture book.

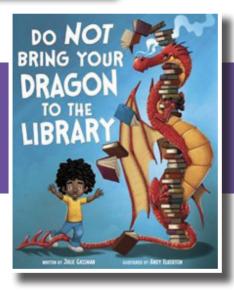
BONUS: Raúl the Third is still adding to his Vamos! series – check out these award-winning titles: "Vamos! Let's Cross the Bridge"; "Vamos! Let's Go Eat"; "Vamos! Let's Celebrate Halloween and Dia de los Muertos"

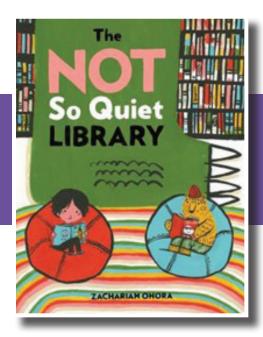


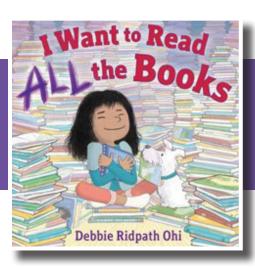














# The Light and Rainbows of Transition Academy



By Julie Wenger Watson

"Our hope for her, from the beginning, has been what it is for our other kids, that she will be a contributing member in society and that she will end up in a place that makes her happy and where she'll thrive," says Alana Kennon of her eldest child and only daughter, Lucy.

Lucy, who graduated from Memorial High School in 2024, is currently enrolled in Tulsa Transition Academy (TTA). Located in the former Grimes Elementary School, 3113 E. 56th, TTA is a Tulsa Public Schools program that provides a bridge from high school to adulthood for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For Lucy, who has trisomy 21, or Down syndrome, TTA provides an opportunity to socialize with peers, while gaining daily life and employment skills that will help her live more independently.

"She calls it college," Kennon says. "For these students, this is their college, and it's their opportunity to learn what they want to do."

According to Jennifer Diggs, TPS' Transition Program Coordinator, TTA is a consequence of House Bill 1041, which passed in 2023. In effect, the bill resulted in the creation of an alternate high school diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities and the requirement that Oklahoma school districts continue to provide educational services for those students through the age of 22. The program is free and available to students who live in the district and meet the alternate diploma requirements.

Diggs describes the program as "holistic" and individualized to meet the needs of each student.

"The overarching goal of the program is to support our students with developing independence at whatever level they're capable of achieving," she says. "That independence is in the four areas of transition, which are employment, independent living, community participation and post-secondary education, so that's lifelong learning."

For Lucy this translates to mastering basic tasks of daily life like dishwashing, cooking and cleaning and acquiring skills that will help her land a job, like alphabetizing, proper greetings and handshakes.

"It's wonderful for her because it also gives her that socialization piece as part of the curriculum," Kennon says. "They're sitting down at breakfast and learning how to have conversations, learning how to have that back and forth, to say good morning and shake hands. It's a continuation for her of being around her friends. Those are her people."

Diggs says TTA has an occupational therapist assistant on staff to help the students learn life skills, which they practice in a mock apartment and kitchen. A speech pathologist is also available three days a week to help students overcome language barriers and learn alternate modes of communication. One of the best ways the students learn, however, is from each other

"We also encourage our students to work together to learn new skills,"



Diggs says. "They're helping each other. They're supporting each other. They're problem solving and seeing growth."

To help students find their purpose and place in the community, TTA partners with area nonprofits and other organizations to create real-world experiences and opportunities.

"Our students are some of the most wonderful potential employees I've ever seen," Diggs says. "They show up. They're ready to go. They love to work. They love to interact with people. They want to do a good job. I mean, you couldn't ask for a better potential employee or volunteer at your site."

Ultimately, Kennon would like to see Lucy find a part-time job that uses her skills and fits her passions. She says Lucy loves to serve and gravitates towards children.

"Our hope is that maybe she could be an aide in a classroom, or an afternoon worker at a daycare, even if it's just the one delivering the food," Kennon says.

She also hopes the broader community will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for this population.

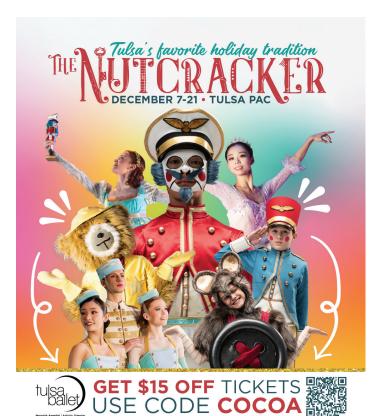
"What a lot of people don't understand is how, yes, cognitively, they are delayed, but they have so much they can offer if the community will open its arms," she says.

Diggs, who's been with the program since its inception, agrees.

"As a special education teacher, which I am at heart and will always be, having the opportunity to do this program has been beyond rewarding for me. It's the dream. It's being able to do all of the things that these students need, give them all of the opportunities," she says. "I just want people to know how wonderful this population of people are. IDD (Intellectual or Developmental Disability) citizens are just the best. They're so much fun. We always say at Transition Academy that this is the light and rainbows location. We just have so much fun, and it's so wonderful."

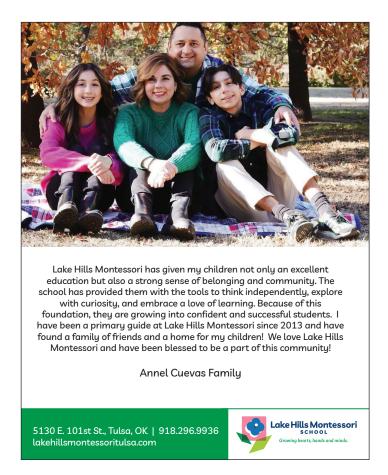
For more on TTA, including information about the extended school year program available for all ages of students, visit tulsaschools.org.

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



TULSABALLET.ORG | 918.749.6006







# Dr. Meg Myers Morgan: Intentionally Unraveling Motherhood and Mental Health



By Nancy A. Moore

When best-selling author and professor Dr. Meg Myers Morgan decided to make the leap from nonfiction to fiction, she wasn't just changing genres, she was stepping into deeper storytelling rooted in personal truth. Her new novel, "The Inconvenient Unraveling of Gemma Sinclair," bravely and wittily explores themes of postpartum depression, family trauma and the complex world of motherhood. In this discussion, Meg shares her real-life experiences that shaped her novel, how writing became a path to healing, and why women deserve the space to live unapologetically.

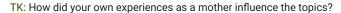
TK: This novel marks a big shift for you—from nonfiction to fiction. What inspired the idea for this book?

MMM: My first book was a collection of essays called "Harebrained." I wrote that because I had an experience (motherhood) to share. My second book, "Everything is Negotiable," is a personal development for women who are navigating their careers and motherhood. I wrote that because I had a point to make. With this novel, "The Inconvenient Unraveling of Gemma Sinclair," I had a story to tell. I guess I think less about what genre I write in and, instead, think about what I need to say. Then I pick the best format for that.

TK: Your book explores past family trauma and postpartum depression—topics not often discussed. What inspired you to center those themes in Gemma's journey?

MMM: I suffered from postpartum depression and anxiety with my first daughter, who is now 14 years old. It was such an isolating experience. Everyone told me I'd feel this tremendous rush of unconditional love the second I laid eyes on my child. And when that didn't happen, I was so afraid and ashamed. Luckily, I got help with talk therapy and medical intervention. Then I was able to bond with my daughter. But even after that, it took

years for me to find my footing as a mother. Giving birth is traumatic, even if it goes wonderfully, and becoming a mother is deeply transformative. We do not give enough space for that change in women. I wanted to tell that story.



MMM: Our parenting of our children is directly related to how we were parented—either in imitation or in opposition. Either way, it is based on how we were parented. So you are learning to parent while also making sense out of how you were parented. What do you want to emulate? What do you want to change? It's a trip!

My huge revelatory moment in parenting came when I snapped at my daughter, who was maybe 2 at the time, and I realized I didn't want to be that parent. She didn't cause me to snap—that was on me. So, if I was going to be asking her one day to manage her emotions, I first had to figure out my own. I needed to get at the root of my anxiety so that I could better help her. That pattern, that we either break or pass on, was the basis of this book.

TK: Did writing this story bring any new understanding or healing to you personally? If so, how?

MMM: For sure. This book is all about the impact parents have on their children, intentionally or not. We are all ultimately responsible for addressing our issues as adults and writing Gemma's journey with this allowed me to explore my own. More than that, though, sharing it with others and having them react so strongly to that aspect of the book made me feel very seen. That was the most healing part of all.

TK: What do you hope readers, especially mothers, take away from Gemma's unraveling and transformation?

MMM: That the light was turned on in a room, they were invited into the room, and that in the room were other people who nodded knowingly at all the experiences and feelings you never felt were acknowledged. I hope readers truly see Gemma and feel seen in return.





TK: One of the most enlightening aspects is the connection between how a person's past shapes their present. Why did you feel this was an important topic and link in the story?

MMM: Parenthood is the perfect example of a repeating pattern. And how hard it can be to break a cycle if we haven't even acknowledged the cycle. We have to unravel our life to find where the thread started. Then when can stitch ourselves back together.

TK: As a mom of two daughters (ages 14 and 11), how do you model what it looks like to live authentically and unapologetically—even when it's hard?

MMM: I tell my kids, and show my kids, that I do not care about the accomplishment or the outcome. I care about the effort and the attitude of the process. With this book, for example, I talked only about the craft and the effort, not what I hope this book's success will look like. So, for them, I don't focus on grades, I focus on the time they put into studying. Recently, my girls asked me why I don't even get mad at them when they accidentally spill something. They referenced many examples of times they've spilled a drink at a restaurant, or spilled nail polish on the kitchen floor. And I told them that it's the same principle: I'm never really watching the outcome, I'm watching the intentions. So, if it was an accident, why would I judge? Why would I ask for an apology? Now, if they came up to me and dumped a drink on my head intentionally, heads are going to roll!

The point is, I work to make them think about how they move through life. The attitude they bring to their experiences. The effort they put into their tasks. And I think when we focus on that—and disconnect ourselves from the outcome, which we often can't control—we find ourselves living more authentically and without apology.

TK: We'd love to learn more about how your husband and daughters have supported this new book.

MMM: My husband, Jim, went to film school and is also certified in developmental editing. So the man knows story structure. Beyond that, he's worked as a magazine editor and is currently a communications executive, so he's a meticulous proofreader. That man has been working as my editor for 15 years. And especially with "Gemma." I outlined the novel and wrote the first draft in 2020. Got notes from my agent, made her suggested edits, and shopped the book. It didn't sell then, so we shelved it. A few years later, Jim encouraged me to revisit it. We combed back through it together and worked on some issues with the plot. This book is strong because of the diligence Jim took with it—and forced me to take with it!

The girls support the book because I do not get to write like those male authors who always brag about locking themselves away in a cabin for a year. Please. I write in spurts between kid taxiing, making dinner and teaching at OU. I've become an expert at not writing a complete sentence

before one of the girls comes into my office to ask a question, or give a hug, or request a snack. They'll always ask what I'm working on (as they are interrupting it), and so they are completely engrained in this book because they were there for every paragraph. Interrupting it.

### TK: What's next for you?

MMM: Always more writing. My second novel is ready for edits and revisions, so I'll turn my attention toward that early next year. In the interim, you can find me on a stage giving a keynote, lecturing in the classroom or taking to my bed!

Check out the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast on your favorite podcasting platform to hear the full interview that also includes Meg Myers Morgan's commentary on why it's especially difficult for women to be fully themselves—without apology or editing—especially when navigating roles like motherhood and career.

You can connect with Meg online and find "The Inconvenient Unraveling of Gemma Sinclair" at Magic City Books in Tulsa and online as well as other retailers. MegMyersMorgan.com; Instagram: @megmyersmorgan

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.





# PARENTING YOUR NEURODIVERSE CHILD

A FREE VIRTUAL PARENT TALK

WITH DANIEL NELSON, MD, MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF THE CHILD PSYCHIATRY UNIT AT CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

THURS., OCT. 23, NOON - 1 P.M.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS PRESENTATION AND Q & A TIME WITH A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PSYCHIATRIST AND PROFESSOR WITH OVER 30 YEARS' EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS.

RSVP AT TULSAKIDS.COM
TO RECEIVE THE ZOOM LINK

# **GREENHOUSE**

Consulting & Developmental Services



Occupational Therapy
DIR Floortime
Home Visits
Consultations
Children and Adults
Staff Training

**Call or Text** 

918-777-3507

Kassie Allison, OT

- AutismBehaviors
- Regulation
- Giftedness/2E
- Feeding Therapy
- Sensory Processing
- Infant/Toddler Development
- Social Emotional Development

www.GreenhouseOK.com info@GreenhouseOK.com





# Serving Oklahoma for 50 years

Benjamin Brownlee, MD Cody Buchanan, DO Jeremy Foon, MD David Hall, MD Scott Hudson, MD Landon Massoth, MD Evan Moore, MD Chris Siemens, MD Atul Vaidya, MD



**EASTERN OKLAHOMA** EAR, NOSE & THROAT, Inc

918-492-3636 | www.eoent.com | 68th & Yale | 93rd & Mingo



# 2025 INCLUSIVE RESOURCE GUIDE

# CLARK YOUTH THEATRE'S PENGUIN PROJECT

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

Established in Tulsa in 2015, the Penguin Project at Clark Youth Theatre offers not only theatre, but also fun and friends! Artists with disabilities and their volunteer peer mentors gather each year to present a fully staged musical like "Aladdin, Jr.", "The Music Man, Jr.," "Seussical, Jr.," "The Little Mermaid, Jr.," or "The Lion King, Jr."! No previous experience required, just a willingness to show up and participate in the fun. Weekly rehearsals culminate in a full performance – informational meetings happening soon!

Artists and volunteer mentors should be ages 10 to 23, and parents are very welcome to attend and get to know each other – we love our parent volunteers! We can't wait to see all of our Penguin friends thrive on stage!

For older Penguins, ages 24 and above, we are excited to begin our Penguin Player program! See our website for more details!

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

fcsok.org 5130 E. 31st St., Tulsa 918.587.9471 communications@fcsok.org

Family & Children's Services promotes, supports and strengthens the well-being and behavioral health of adults, children and families. We have proudly served the Tulsa community for over 100 years and have been a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) since 2021. As an integral part of the healthcare continuum in the Tulsa area, we collaborate with hospitals, healthcare providers, first responders, police departments, fire departments and pharmacies to address critical needs and save lives.

# GREENHOUSE CONSULTING AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

greenhouseOK.com Tulsa Metro 918.777.3507 info@greenhouseOK.com

Kassie Allison, OT, proudly serves the Tulsa area through Greenhouse. Specializing in DIR Floortime, Autism Spectrum Disorder, challenging behaviors, feeding and regulation. Infants through adults.

# J.D. MCCARTY CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

jdmc.org 2002 E. Robinson St., Norman 405.307.2800

The J.D. McCarty Center is a pediatric rehab hospital that specializes in the care and treatment of children with developmental disabilities from birth to age 21.

The hospital in Norman provides medical care and physical, occupational, speech and language therapy and Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for children on an inpatient and outpatient basis.

The center also offers free therapeutic screenings for families; Camp Claphans, a summer camp for children with disabilities; specialized clinics; outreach programs; and resources for families.

In addition, the center offers a psychological assessment clinic that provides comprehensive psychological and developmental assessments for children from birth to age 21. The assessments can help families in determining if a child meets criteria for diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Developmental Disorders and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

For more information about our programs and services, visit our website or call us today!

## **MILLER SWIM SCHOOL**

millerswimschool.com

MILLER SWIM SCHOOL TULSA 6415 S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa

MILLER SWIM SCHOOL JENKS 525 W. 91st St. S., Tulsa

MILLER SWIM SCHOOL OWASSO 10001 N. 127th E. Ave., Owasso

# MILLER SWIM SCHOOL TULSA SOUTH 7820 E. 101st St., Suite A, Tulsa 918.254.1988

Miller Swim School has been teaching Tulsa and surrounding communities about water safety for over 60 years. We offer private or group swim lessons with our highly trained instructors for students with disabilities or special needs.

Individuals with special needs can benefit from swimming to increase confidence and self-respect, as well as improve physical strength and coordination. Most importantly, ongoing swimming lessons reduce the risk of drowning by 88%, an incident students with special needs are at a higher risk for. Swim lessons offer social interaction, joy, friendship and a sense of accomplishment.

We offer year-round swim lessons for ages 6 months to adult. Miller Swim School is an authorized American Red Cross provider and a member of the United States Swim School Association.

## YOUTH SERVICES OF TULSA

yst.org 311 S. Madison, Tulsa 918.582.0061 youthservices@yst.org

Youth Services of Tulsa is a non-profit agency that serves young people in Tulsa County ages 12 - 24 through a variety of programs and services under four main umbrellas, including:

- Counseling
- Runaway & Homelessness Services
- Delinquency Prevention
- Youth Development

Since 1969, YST has served youth in the Tulsa area to ensure each young person we encounter feels valued and accepted, supporting and challenging them to embrace their potential. Through almost 20 different programs, Youth Services encounters close to 19,000 youth annually, and often acts as the support network young people don't have otherwise.

YST uses evidence-based models and frameworks to create and facilitate programs that are impactful, meaningful and make a real difference in the lives and trajectories of our clients. No one is turned away for inability to pay - all services are free or use a sliding-scale fee model.

We know that when an adolescent needs help, they need it ASAP. We work with clients to get needs met as soon as we're able, whether it's support for mental health through counseling, emergency shelter for teens, access to health services, housing or opportunities to socialize, Youth Services of Tulsa is here to support, encourage, challenge, nurture and empower young people in our community.





# **Tulsa's Agency** for Adolescents

Youth Services of Tulsa serves young people

- Youth Development programs
  Runaway & Homelessness Services

For more than 50 years, YST has been a lifeline for our community's youth, ensuring they feel valued, empowered and challenged to achieve



311 S. Madison Ave. 918.582.0061









Tulsa International Airport

# An Airport for All.

At Tulsa International Airport, we are committed to ensuring that travel is accessible for everyone. To learn more about our accessibility efforts, visit **flytulsa.com**.

Dementia-Friendly Airport | Sunflower Lanyard Program | Aira App for Blind or Low Vision Nursing Rooms | Family Restrooms | Quiet Rooms | Sensory Rooms | Pet Relief Areas

# The Neurodiverse Brain: Parenting Kids With Autism

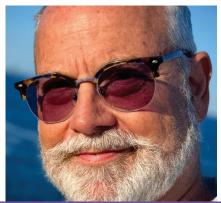
# By Betty Casey



Christi Tom, Occupational Therapist



Ed Callahan, PhD, with Neurodiversity University, has expertise in effective parenting for neurodiverse children and teens.



Daniel Nelson, MD, is the medical director for the Child Psychiatry Unit at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

"My oldest was a really difficult baby," Christi Tom says. "She was meeting major milestones, but, looking back, she was behind socially with peers and her sensory issues interfered with sleeping and eating."

Tom says that loud noises such as automatic toilets, blenders, vacuums and hand dryers were terrifying and overwhelming.
Tom's daughter also had what she calls "big emotions" that she had trouble regulating.

## **Getting a Diagnosis**

Feeling in her gut that something was wrong, and suspecting autism, Tom began to ask questions, but was told her daughter didn't have the typical signs of autism.

"She wasn't meeting the checklist," Tom says. "She was speaking. She was very verbal, but not able to communicate what she wanted. She would make eye contact with people she knew well."

Still in the process of seeking help, Tom says that her daughter was treated for sensory issues, but not autism

Tom finally sought an evaluation with a DIR Therapy specialist. "It's a very neurodiverse-positive model," Tom says. The therapist met with her before evaluating her daughter, and then spent an hour observing her daughter play. Ultimately, Tom's daughter did get an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

Autism spectrum disorder is defined by the National Institute of Mental Health as "a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave." Individuals with autism range from those having severe limitations to those who are highly functional.

"Autism is underdiagnosed in girls," says Ed Callahan, Ph.D., and founder of Neurodiversity University. Callahan coaches parents on strategies to work with their neurodivergent child, teen or young adult. "As a society, we haven't been trained to look at it. Girls often are better at masking." Callahan also says that girls often focus on neurotypical interests, but the intensity level is higher than their neurotypical peers, which was something Tom noticed with both of her daughters.

Both of Tom's daughters have been diagnosed with autism and ADHD but are also gifted. It is not uncommon for individuals with autism to have other disorders such as ADHD.

### Signs

Daniel Nelson, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and medical director for the Child Psychiatry Unit at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, says that autism begins in utero, although the exact cause is unknown. He says that the bioposy of a brain with autism will show structural

disorganization. "We don't know why it happens," he says. "It could be a neurodevelopmental variant, an environmental cause, and autism can run in families, so there can be a genetic component." He is quick to point out that childhood vaccines do not cause autism.

Tom noted a genetic component in her own family and in her ex-husband's family.

Dr. Nelson says, for that reason, doctors should always ask for a family history. "Whatever illnesses run in the family are more likely to be expressed," he says.

Signs that parents can look for, according to Nelson, include lack of "molding" and unusual emotional reactions. "Infants typically mold to your body when you pick them up. With these kids, it's like holding a board," he says. "They can freak out at textures or being held. Very subtle changes can cause them to become upset. For example, if you move the ottoman in your living room, and the kid comes in and it doesn't look right, the kid will scream. You move the furniture back, and it's like a flipped switch and they're fine."

Kids with autism may also violate social norms. "We don't ask permission to sit in a chair, but we wouldn't just sit in someone's lap," Nelson says. "They may do unsusual social things." He described a recent patient whose mom bought him a book about insects and butterflies. "He was

smart in his understanding of butterflies," Nelson says, "but that's all he talked about."

#### Other signs include:

- Developmental and psychosocial delays (not getting along with other kids);
- An inability to understand their feelings or the feelings of others.
- A lack of reciprocity. As early as 7 months, kids flip from being ok with everybody, to recognizing strangers. Kids with autism may be indifferent to people.
- Intense focus on one thing, such as drawing or cars. "Sometimes there's an obsessive quality to it," Nelson says. "They may want to watch the same Disney movie over and over for 10 hours a day every day."
- · Delayed speech.
- · Limited eye contact.
- Lack of social skills. They may think very literally, not understand jokes or sarcasm.
- Sensory issues. Light, noise, textures bother them.
- Difficulty with transitions or shifting from one task to another. Callahan says that autism may not show up until kids are transitioning to middle school when social pressure and the need

for higher-level executive function gets more complex. "That's when the challenges start to show up," he says. "They may be able to hold it together to get by and do well at school, but they come home and can't hold it together."

- Difficulty with changes in routine or schedules. "That's why meltdowns are pretty common," Callahan says. "They've put together a whole plan on how the day's going to go. They process a situation by seeing the details first while neurotypicals look at context first. When one detail is changed, they have to rebuild the whole model. It takes a lot of energy to do that."
- Repetitive behaviors.
- · Rigid thinking.
- Masking. As children get older, they may mask certain behaviors to fit in with peers. "They can act like everyone else and pretend to be other people," Callahan says. "That takes a toll on their self-esteem, and the energy it takes to blend in can be exhausting."

How do you know if it's a problem? Callahan says to look at the spectrum and the circumstances where problems occur. Do they have problems with friends, food sensitivities, hyper-focused interests, coordination issues, dyslexia or dysgraphia?

"Some kids (with autism) can be very social and play sports," Callahan says. "They can look OK at school, but when they get home, they fall apart. They may be honest to a fault because it's hard for them to not tell the truth. They may misinterpret situations."

While there are overarching similarities, each child is unique.

# Finding Help and Accommodations

Not every child has every behavior. What works for one child may not work for another. Both Nelson and Callahan say that it's important for parents to seek professional help if they have concerns about their child. Don't try to self-diagnose.

Nelson says to find a professional who will listen to you and work with you as a partner in diagnosis and treatment. "I tell parents that I work with, 'look, I don't know your child as well as you do. You know them far better, but I've seen thousands of these cases, and I want to share information with you, and you can share your information with me.' The interaction between doctor and patient should be mutually enjoyable."

Parents have a legal right to ask public schools for an evaluation if a disability is suspected, but schools also have budget pressures, so it may take time. Callahan urges parents to be proactive and push for testing and accommodations, if necessary.

Tom, who is a newly trained occupational therapist, advises starting early. She suggests getting a SoonerStart developmental assessment if you have concerns in the first year of life. "Follow your gut if you see signs," she says. "Getting services can take a long time. Keep asking questions." Tom also recommends keeping notes of "quirks" that you observe in your child, so you have it ready when you see a doctor or therapist.

Understanding what your child needs and communicating with teachers can help neurodivergent children succeed in school. For example, Tom says her teacher put a Post-It over the automatic flusher, so the noise wouldn't bother her daughter. Kids who have trouble following several directions at once may need to have fewer directions.

Visual calendars, untimed tests, movement breaks, quiet times and predictable routines help her girls.

"Slow the process and break it down," Callahan says. "I call it leaving breadcrumbs. Give them time to process a change because the initial response will be resistant. Parents have to know how to advocate for their neurodivergent kid."

Tom says that it helps to show up at school; get to know the teacher and the aid. Communicate about the diagnosis so they can help provide what your child needs.

# Parenting: "Goodness of Fit"

Healthy parenting, whether with a neurotypical or neurodivergent child, is the same, Nelson says. Healthy parents provide structure and set firm, consistent, predictable and reasonable limits without being overly strict.

"Kids love predictability," he says.

Tom uses predictable systems, and she recognizes when her girls need extra help.

"Recognize that you know your kid best," Tom says. "Understand what overwhelms your kid, what stresses them, what triggers behaviors, what helps them cope or calm down. Sometimes when I think they're not listening or being frustrating, I do side by side coaching. Neurodiverse kids may be behind a few years, so giving them multiple steps may be overwhelming."

Nelson says such awareness is important. "The best type of parenting is 'Goodness of Fit'," he says. "Kids have different needs, so reasonable limits may be different for certain kids. Expectations for a child who doesn't have challenges may be different from expectations of a child who does have challenges. For example, a child with a high aggressive index will need more restriction. If they're hitting other kids at preschool, they'll need more redirection."

Callahan advises parents to hold boundaries, but also recognize the reasons behind meltdowns. "Punishments don't work well," he says. "It has to be logical to the kid. Solve problems together. Help them find and maximize their strengths, while working on their challenges. Their brain is working differently, so our solutions may not be the right ones for them."

While it may be tempting to allow your neurodivergent child to focus on one thing obsessively all day, it won't help their development. Instead, you might use the obsession as a reward. "If you indulge it full tilt, all of a sudden,

you've created a monster," Nelson says. "Games like Minecraft and Roblox grab autistic kids. They're addictive to the autistic brain. I would recommend against letting a kid do it more than an hour or two a day. Beyond that, you've eaten up all their learning time."

Nelson says that neurodiverse and neurotypical people can meet halfway. The world needs to be more accepting and accommodating, but neurodiverse kids also need to understand that there are a lot of things we don't love doing, but will make life easier.

"Parenting is that way," he says.
"Get our shoes on, get in the car
seat, etc. If you let kids – any kid
– do only the stuff they want to
do, they won't learn. A child who
is challenged can get over hurdles
with a little help and they can do a
lot of things. If they don't get help,
they can get overwhelmed and
they may think, 'I'm damaged' and
'why would anyone like me?' There
is a balance between getting some
of the things you love and getting
up, putting your clothes on and
going to school."

"If parents can understand one thing," Callahan says, "it's that neurodiverse kids' brains work differently. Make room for them in the world and understand that a certain part of the population operates differently. Find ways to approach gently because the world can feel pretty hostile to them already." Callahan also urges parents to manage their own emotions.

Working with adolescents and young adults means helping them prepare. "Have them manage their own money," Callahan says. "Do laundry." He uses the "I do, we do, you do" method of showing them a few times, then doing it along with them, and then having them do the task on their own.

Tom knows firsthand that a parent "can't pour from an empty cup." Ask for help and communicate with others. And communicate with your neurodiverse child. "My goal is for my kids to know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses and to understand the supports they need...to advocate for themselves so they can be capable and confident in a world that is not made with them in mind."

Nelson encourages parents to learn what normal, healthy development looks like and then get expert help if they need it. "Always go ask for help when you have a feeling that something is wrong."



# Tulsa Performing Arts Center Unveils New Season of Imagination Series with

**Cultural Gems** 



By Lindsay Morris

he Tulsa Performing Arts Center is welcoming another season of the Imagination Series, a lineup of professional performances designed to be both educational and entertaining for children and families. The series blends traditional storytelling stage shows with learning opportunities.

Each performance runs about an hour, making them ideal for school field trips during the day and for families to enjoy together in the evening. The goal is to introduce young audiences to live theater in a way that sparks curiosity, creativity and conversation long after the curtain falls.

The season opens Oct. 21–22 with "Sugar Skull! A Día de Muertos Musical Adventure." Recommended for children ages 4 to 12, the bilingual production celebrates the Mexican tradition of sugar skulls. The show tells the story of Vita Flores, a 12-year-old girl who is introduced to the colorful world of Día de Muertos through music and dance. The touring musical features traditional regional songs from Mexico and blends Spanish and English dialogue, making it accessible for a wide range of audiences.

Following that, the PAC will host "Channeling Our Ancestors" from Nov. 4–7. Aimed at middle schoolers, especially those ages 12 to 14, the show was written by Native artists in Oklahoma and focuses on themes of identity, cultural appropriation and the importance of heritage.

Becca Worthington, director and co-writer of the play, said the production gives young people the opportunity to connect with Native history while also exploring what it means to be Indigenous today.

"In Oklahoma, it's crazy to me that a lot of these kids are unaware of the land we stand on," Worthington said. "We want to make sure kids growing up in Oklahoma understand the history and see that Native people are still here and thriving."

The Foundation for Tulsa Schools funds tickets so every seventh grader in Tulsa Public Schools can attend "Channeling Our Ancestors" at no cost. This year, extra seats will be offered to sixth through eighth graders for \$6 each. Families may also purchase tickets to the public performances for \$10.

Worthington said the show encourages both "learning and unlearning" as it examines well-known historical narratives. "There's a lot of history in our show that is important," she said. "We'll talk about Christopher Columbus and how he affected Native populations … Pocahontas and how she wasn't really in love with John Smith."

Presented as a series of comedic sketches inspired by popular television formats, "Channeling Our Ancestors" also includes an interactive game show segment called "Are You an Indi-genius?" Students and teachers are invited on stage to answer questions, which are provided in advance

"Channeling Our Ancestors" gives young people the opportunity to connect with Native history while also exploring what it means to be Indigenous today. Photo by C. Andrew Nichols



through a study guide.

Worthington co-wrote the production with her cousin, Jason Tillery, along with other Native writers, and said the chance to create the show with fellow Native artists was "a big gift." The cast is also mainly Osage. She hopes the PAC's support will inspire more Native stories to be represented in live theater.

"I would love the Native community to come out and see what we've done," she said. "We have a booming Native film industry in Oklahoma, but in music and theater there is still a lack of representation. My personal goal is to invite more Native voices onto the stage."

The season will conclude in early 2026 with two classics for younger audiences. "The Wind in the Willows" will be performed Jan. 27, followed by "Aesop's Greatest Hits" from Feb. 23–27.

Each performance in the Imagination Series is designed to meet Common Core Standards and National Core Arts Standards, ensuring that the experience supports what students are learning in school.

Tickets are available online at tulsapac.com/imagination-series or by calling 918.596.7111.

# A great education really does matter.

# Oklahoma's public education ranks 50th nationally.

If we want to improve that ranking, we have to understand why education matters and what you can do a home to foster a good learning environment.





# A great education isn't just good grades...

- ...It enhances critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills.
- ...It leads to better jobs and higher earning potential.
- ...It provides skills for a knowledgeable workforce.
- ...It promotes healthier lifestyles for better informed health decisions.
- ...And it fosters independence and self-reliance.

# It starts at home – it starts with you!

- ... Make reading a daily activity.
- ...Create a quiet learning space.
- ...Praise your child's efforts.
- ...And be an active part of their education.



Learn more about why education really matters and what you can do to help.

# Amelia's Friends Provides Connection, Friendships and Inclusion for All



By Betty Casey

aterina Alder, founder of Amelia's Friends Foundation, noticed that as her daughter Amelia grew older, she began to be left out of parties, gatherings and friendships at school. The daughter she describes as "a radiant light in our lives – full of joy, determination and a pure-hearted love of life," was often left on the margins. "The birthday party invitations slowed. The playdates stopped," Alder says. "She would ask why she didn't have real friends."

Alder says that her classmates weren't purposely cruel, but because Amelia has Down syndrome, they felt uncomfortable or lacked understanding.

Inspired by her daughter and the belief that "every child, regardless of ability, deserves joy, friendship and inclusion," Alder launched Amelia's Friends Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is "to create moments where kids like Amelia can feel seen, loved and connected – not as an exception, but as part of the whole."

Too often, families with children like Amelia face a lack of meaningful social opportunities, says Alder. "Kids with disabilities are often left out of typical childhood experiences – not by intention, but by a lack of inclusion and awareness."

To fill that gap, Amelia's Friends hosts inclusive play meetups, seasonal events and parents' respite events. "Each gathering is thoughtfully designed to help children feel seen, supported and celebrated."

The goal of the meetups is to foster confidence, build friendships and, above all, to ignore labels and have fun. "Every smile, every connection, and every 'Can we come back again?' reminds me why we do this work," Alder says. "It's more than inclusion – it's about belonging."

Alder says feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Community partners such as Miss Shelly's School of Dance, Philbrook Museum of Art, Will's House and other venues make it possible for the foundation to host monthly events.

Next year, Alder says she plans to launch a Peer Ambassador Program to train neurotypical teens to co-lead events with peers who have disabilities. "These ambassadors will help host game nights, art workshops and community service projects alongside their peers," Alder says, "forming real friendships built on respect and shared experiences."

As an educator for 30 years, parent to Amelia and a son who is an OU graduate, Alder has a lifetime of supporting children. She came to the U.S. from Belarus in 2008. When Amelia was born, doctors told Alder not to expect too much, certainly not to expect her to speak two languages. Today, at 14, Amelia speaks English and Russian, enjoys books, horseback riding, music, chess, tennis, swimming – and has a joyful sense of humor.



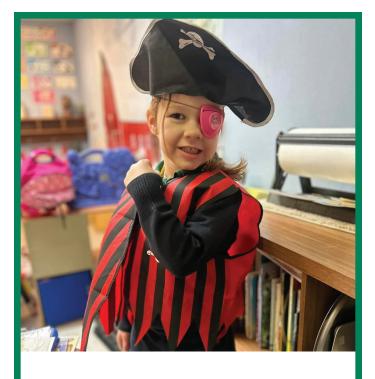
Alder's message to parents of children of all abilities is this: "Believe in your children. Challenge them, nurture their strengths, and take it one step at a time. Be consistent, even when it's hard. Our kids have amazing potential—sometimes it just needs a little extra time, love, and creativity to bloom.

To help Amelia's Friends Foundation grow, Alder says she is always looking for compassionate young people (ages 10-18) to be peer buddies. She also welcomes volunteers to organize crafts, lead games or to help in other ways. Financial support ensures that all the activities are free for participants. For details, visit ameliasfriendsfoundation.com.

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







Small classes provide more opportunities to be challenged in an accredited learning environment

Now Enrolling for 3, 4, & 5 year old and Kindergarten Programs



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



3 MONTHS-PRE-K M-W-F | 9:30am-2:30pm

ChristChurchonHarvard.org 3515 South Harvard Ave. | 918.743.7673

# Add Spice to Warm Up Fall Days



By Natalie Mikles

October brings out the cozy in all of us. It's when the light shifts just enough to make evenings feel softer. We dig out hoodies from the bottom drawer, put soup back into rotation and let cinnamon sneak into everything from coffee to muffins.

At our house, fall doesn't arrive all at once—it slips in slowly, through the little things.

We don't have grand autumn traditions. But we do have little rituals that show up like clockwork this time of year: making popcorn balls, carving pumpkins at my aunt's house with our cousins, watching "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" in our pajamas.

These are the rhythms my kids remember—not the big moments, but the repeated ones. And the beauty is, those small traditions are usually the easiest one to create.

Some of our favorite traditions come from the kitchen. Making chili on the first cool night of the year. Baking an apple pie on a free weekend afternoon. These sensory experiences can become your family's comforts—the reliable glue that bonds you and helps you appreciate the season.

One of our favorite fall rituals is making (or just eating) pumpkin pancakes. They're fragrant and just sweet enough. These freeze well, so you may want to make a double batch.

## **Pumpkin Pancakes**

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- · 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- ½ cup pumpkin puree
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Toppings: warm maple syrup, chopped pecans, whipped cream, cinnamon-sugar

- In a large bowl, whisk together flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together buttermilk, pumpkin puree, egg, melted butter and vanilla. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and stir gently just until combined.
- Heat a buttered skillet or griddle over medium heat. Pour batter (about ¼ cup at a time) onto the skillet for each pancake. Cook until
  bubbles appear on the surface and edges look set, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook another 1-2 minutes until golden and cooked
  through.
- 4. Serve warm with your favorite fall toppings.



Here's another favorite pumpkin recipe. These muffins are perfect for breakfast—or how about with tea for a teddy bear picnic or tea party.

# **Butterscotch Pumpkin Muffins**

- 1 ¾ cups flour
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- · 1 teaspoon baking soda
- · 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- · ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup pumpkin
- · 1 stick butter, melted
- ¾ to 1 cup butterscotch chips
- In a large bowl, mix the flour, brown sugar, granulated sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, ginger, nutmeg and cloves.
- 2. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs with the pumpkin and butter. Add to the dry mixture, mixing just until combined. Fold in the butterscotch chips.
- Spoon batter evenly into 18 regular-size muffin cups. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until the muffins are done.

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



We're not making these for nutrition. These popcorn balls are a purely fun food.

# **Candy Corn Popcorn Balls**

- 50 large marshmallows
- 1/3 cup butter
- · 20 cups popcorn
- 2 ½ cups candy corn
- 20 wooden craft sticks
- Combine marshmallows and butter in a large Dutch oven.
   Cook over medium-low heat until marshmallows melt, stirring occasionally. Remove mixture from heat.
- Pour popcorn into a very large bowl. Pour marshmallow mixture over popcorn, tossing to coat. Add candy corn; stir well.
- Coat hands with cooking spray or butter. Shape popcorn into 3-inch balls. Insert a wooden craft stick into each popcorn ball.
- 4. Let cool on wax paper.

Start a tradition: Make a big batch of apple cider to keep warm on the stove Halloween night. It's perfect for when friends and neighbors stop by.

# Spiced Apple Cider

- 1/2 gallon apple cider
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons whole cloves
- 1 whole nutmeg
- 2 cups orange juice
- Cinnamon sticks
- . Combine the apple cider and sugar in a Dutch oven. Tie the cloves and nutmeg in a cheesecloth bag and add to the cider mixture. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Discard the spice bag.
- Stir in the orange juice. Cook just until heated through. Serve in mugs with cinnamon sticks.

# What to Do When Kids Are Struggling in School



By Natalie Mikles

choolwork doesn't always come easily, and for some kids the struggle becomes overwhelming. Parents may wonder: Is this a rough patch, or does my child need more support? Should we hire a tutor, talk with the teacher or request school testing? Knowing when and how to act can make a difference between frustration and confidence.

Academic challenges can show up at any age and in different ways. A first grader may stumble over learning to read, while a middle schooler suddenly hits a wall in math. Some students excel in most subjects but find themselves struggling in one area, which can chip away at confidence and affect their overall love of learning. No matter the stage, it's important for parents to recognize when difficulties go beyond normal ups and downs.

# How to Know When Your Child Needs Help

- Every child has off days, but patterns of difficulty are worth attention. Here are some signs your child may benefit from extra academic support:
- Homework leads to tears or meltdowns. If assignments routinely end in frustration or conflict, the work may feel too difficult or overwhelming.
- Grades are slipping despite effort. A sudden or ongoing drop in test scores can signal gaps in understanding.
- Frequent comments from the teacher. If you're hearing that your child is struggling to keep up, losing focus or missing skills, take it seriously.
- Avoidance of schoolwork. Children may procrastinate, "forget" assignments or dread reading aloud if they're covering up difficulties.
- Big differences compared to peers. Falling significantly behind grade-level expectations in reading, writing or math may mean it's time for intervention.
- Low confidence. Phrases like "I'll never get this," or "I'm stupid" are red flags that academic struggles are affecting self-esteem.

### What Help Is Available?

Support looks different depending on the child, the school and the family, but the goal should always be the same: helping children feel good about learning so they can grow. Caitriona Harris, director of learning initiatives at Monte Cassino School, says this kind of support must go beyond procedures and paperwork.

"It's easy for schools to get wrapped up in protocols and protections," she said. "But when the focus shifts away from the child, that's when thriving stops. Support should feel straightforward and positive—an expression of love. When people feel good, they grow, and that's the purpose of school."



At Monte Cassino, that philosophy is put into practice through REACH, a program that identifies and supports students early. Children are assessed at the start of the year, with progress monitored several times throughout. If teachers or specialists notice a child is struggling, interventions are put in place right away—without waiting for a formal diagnosis. That may look different depending on the grade. For instance, at least a quarter of Monte Cassino first graders are placed in first grade reading clubs with small-group instruction designed to strengthen literacy skills before bigger issues take root. Middle school students can access support through coaching and mentoring classes. These resource teachers act as bridges, helping students with executive skills like planning, organization and prioritization. For a middle schooler juggling multiple teachers and assignments, this means someone is there to prompt, cue and keep communication flowing between teachers and students.

Private tutoring is another option many families explore, especially when children need reinforcement in a particular subject. Tutoring can take many forms: reviewing daily homework, reteaching difficult concepts or building skills for students with ADHD or dyslexia. A good place for finding a tutor? Start with a school counselor, school reading specialist or learning support staff. One-on-one tutors can reinforce classroom material, reteach concepts or preview upcoming lessons, and since tutoring can take place in person or online, the schedule can be tailored to your child's needs and extracurricular activities.

Another option in tutoring is a learning center. National programs like Kumon or Sylvan provide structured approaches to skills and can be just the thing a child needs for specific help, particularly in math or reading.

While resources differ from school to school, the underlying principle is the same: Children need timely, compassionate support that honors their individuality. Harris puts it this way: "When kids can do well, they do well. Our job is to stay curious about what's getting in the way and to respond with care."

#### Who to Contact at Your School

Here's where to start if you suspect your child needs academic help.

- Start with the classroom teacher. Share your concerns and request strategies that can be used at home.
- Reach out to the school counselor or learning specialist. They can
  explain what interventions the school offers and how to access
  them.
- Ask about evaluation. Schools can conduct testing at no cost to families. Results may qualify your child for formal support, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Put requests in writing. If you ask for an evaluation, a dated written request helps ensure the process moves forward.

Every child learns differently. Struggles in school don't necessarily mean a child can't succeed—they may just need tools, strategies and encouragement to reach their potential. The earlier you address concerns, the easier it is to close gaps and build confidence.

And just as importantly, getting the right support can help protect your child's natural curiosity and love of learning. When challenges are met with patience and resources, kids are more likely to rediscover joy in the classroom—and carry that confidence with them well beyond school.

# **Resources for Tulsa Families**

# Your School

Start with your child's counselor, who can direct you to both in-school and community resources.

# **Tulsa City-County Library**

Offers homework help, online tutoring and study resources. The program Homework HelpNow is free with a library card and provides live tutoring from 2-11 p.m. seven days a week. Spanish-speaking tutors are also available.

# **Learning Centers:**

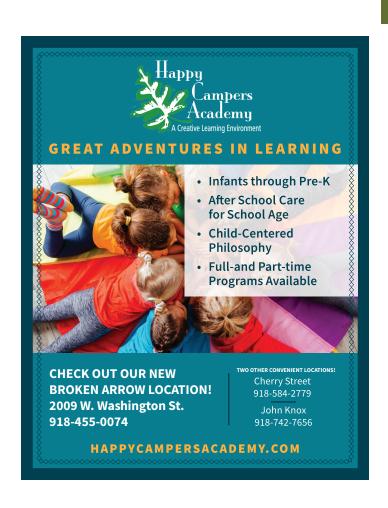
Tutors at Kumon and Sylvan offer support for kids of all ages and are a good source for parents seeking structured help.

# Parent Advocacy Groups:

Online support groups and grassroots organizations like Decoding Dyslexia Oklahoma can provide resources and support.

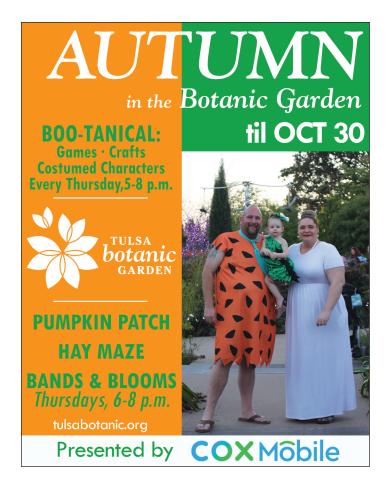
# Khan Academy:

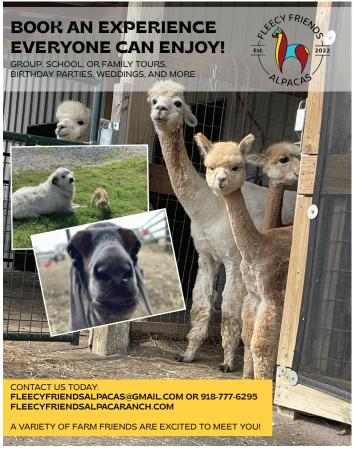
Find free online lessons and practice in math, reading and more.













### **PUMPKIN PATCHES**

### CARMICHAEL'S

Opens Sept. 20-Oct. 31; Open daily, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

17137 S. Mingo Rd., Bixby

Highlights: A unique activity is the Budgie Experience, where visitors can feed parakeets within an enclosure. Plus, ooh and aah over all the baby animals!

Facebook: @Carmichael's Pumpkin Patch

### LIVESAY ORCHARDS

Sept. 27-Oct. 26, Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, 1-6 p.m.

39232 E. 231st St., Porter

Highlights: Take a hay ride out to the pumpkin patch to pick your pumpkin right off the vine! Plus, there's apple picking, a giant corn maze, sunflower field, cider, donuts and more.

livesayorchards.com

### OKLAHOMA HERITAGE FARM

Sept. 27-Nov. 2, Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, 1-6 p.m.

38512 US 75 Hwy., Ramona

Highlights: Activities take place on a familyowned, fully functioning farm. Learn about life on the farm, visit the collective farm toy museum, and don't forget your ticket for the pumpkin canon.

okheritagefarm.com

36

### **PLEASANT VALLEY FARMS**

Open daily in October, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
22350 W. 71st St. S., Sand Springs
Highlights: Grab a bag of kettle corn and enjoy
more than 20 free activities. Play a round of
mini golf, ride the cow train, visit barnyard
animals...give yourself plenty of time to
explore everything!
pleasantvalleyfarmsok.com



### PUMPKIN PATCH AT SHEPHERD'S CROSS

Sept. 23-Nov. 1, Tuesday-Sunday, 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m. (also open Monday, Oct. 27) 16792 E. 450 Rd., Claremore

Highlights: Shepherd's Cross invites guests to enjoy a peaceful atmosphere at a working sheep and cattle ranch. Several activities focus on farm education, including antique farming equipment, a pecan cracking station, and wool mill tools (available by request).

shepherdscross.com

### PUMPKIN PATCH FOR MISSION

Oct. 6-31, 12-7 p.m.

Owasso FMC, 13800 106th St. N.

Highlights: This patch raises money to support local and global missions. Check their Facebook page for special events throughout the season.

facebook.com/pumpkinpatchformission

### THE PATCH @ SAND SPRINGS AND GLENPOOL

Open daily, Oct. 1-Nov. 2, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Open 12-7 p.m. on Sundays 17516 W. 8th St., Sand Springs; 17902 S.

Highway 75, Glenpool

Highlights: The Sand Springs patch is specifically geared toward younger visitors, including inflatables, a toddler zone and kids hay maze. The Glenpool experience is for all ages, and includes a hamster wheel, jumping pad, super slide, etc.

seeyouatthepatch.com

### **PUMPKIN TOWN FARMS**

Sept. 26-Nov. 2, Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

### 61st and Garnett

Highlights: Pumpkin Town Farms is conveniently located within Tulsa, and has all your pumpkin patch favorites. Plus, older family members can visit Insanity Farms on the weekend (zombie paintball, haunted corn maze, and clown-infested pallet maze), for a more frightening experience.

pumpkintownfarm.com

### **TULSA BOTANIC GARDEN**

Sept. 18-Oct. 30, during garden hours
Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic D
Highlights: Select from a variety of beautiful
pumpkins and gourds, visit the scarecrow
display, explore the hay maze, and don't forge
your camera! tulsabotanic.org





TULSAKIDS.COM | OCTOBER 2025 SPONSORED BY FLEECY FRIENDS ALPACAS

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY FALL FESTIVALS

### **TULSA STATE FAIR**

Sept. 25-Oct. 5

Expo Square, 4145 E. 21st St

Midway rides, jaw-dropping performances live

tulsastatefair.com

### FESTIVAL AMERICAS

Oct. 4, 3-9 p.m.

**Guthrie Green, 111 E. Reconciliation Way** A high-energy festival celebrating Hispanic and Latino culture with an afternoon of live performances, dance, music, artisan vendors and other family activities.

facebook.com/festivalamericas

### **OKM MUSIC OKTOBERFEST**

Oct. 4, 4-9 p.m.

Downtown Bartlesville

Enjoy handcrafted beer and delicious food. Plus live music, dancing, games for all ages prizes and more!

okmmusic.org

### **OKMULGEE PECAN FESTIVAL**

Oct. 10-11, 6-9 p.m.

Claude Cox Omniplex, 2950 Warrior Rd., Okmulgee

This two-day event jam will be packed with food, fun, and core memory making.

Facebook.com/okmulgeepecanfes

### **OWASSO HARVEST FESTIVAL**

Oct. 11, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Redbud Festival Park, 109 N. Main St., Owasso

This is a free family event loaded with family fun activities such as touch a truck, games, live music, a kid zone, a balloon artist, face painting and much, much more! cityofowasso.com

### **BRUSH CREEK BAZAAR**

Oct. 11-12

10900 S. Louisville Ave., Tulsa

With live music, numerous vendors, and dining areas, the entire family will have a place to enjoy this beautiful fall weekend at South Tulsa's premier Arts and Crafts Event.

brushcreekbazaar.com

### **TULSA PRIDE**

Oct. 11-12

Dennis R. Neill Equality Center, 621 E. 4th St.

Tulsa's annual Pride Parade will take place Oct. 11 at 4 p.m., starting at Boston Avenue Methodist Church. It ends at the Equality Center, where you can find a market, entertainment and food trucks.

tulsapride.org

### **TULSA OKTOBERFEST**

Oct. 16-19

River West Festival Park, 2100 S. Jackson Ave.

Zeeco Oktoberfest Tulsa celebrates authentic Bavarian culture in the heart of Oklahoma through live music, food and beverages, the KinderPlatz (kid zone), carnival rides and more. Enjoy Zeeco Family Free Day on Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. No advance tickets necessary. tulsaoktoberfest.org

### TURKISH FOOD AND ART FESTIVAL

Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Raindrop Turkish House, 4444 W. Houston St., Broken Arrow

Enjoy a full day of delicious food, beautiful art, and cultural experiences.

facebook.com/raindropturkishhousetuls

### **FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL**

Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Sequoyah's Cabin Museum, 470288 Highway 101, Sallisaw

This fun-filled day features a variety of events, including traditional games and food demonstrations, artist demonstrations, a scenic photo op area and more.

visitcherokeenation.com

### DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS ARTS FESTIVAL

Nov. 1, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

Living Arts, 307 E. Reconciliation Way

Día de Los Muertos is a celebration of the

Latinx heritage honoring loved ones who have

passed away.

Ivingarts.org

### HALLOWEEN FUN

### HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL AT CASTLE OF MUSKOGEE

Fridays and Saturdays, Sept. 26-Nov. 1; Gates open at 5:30 p.m., ticket sales end at 10 p.m. Castle of Muskogee, 3400 W. Fern Mountain Rd., Muskogee

Haunts for every age, from the charming Enchanted Boardwalk to the terrifying Casa Morte.

okcastle.com

### BOOTANICAL

Thursdays in October, 5-9 p.m.
Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr
Wander lighted pathways, visit BOOtanical
booths that mix fun with learning, meet
costumed characters and collect plenty of

ulsabotanic.org



### HALLOWZOOEEN PRESENTED BY OKLAHOMA CENTRAL CREDIT UNION

Oct. 17-18, 24-25, 6-9 p.m.; Oct. 19, 25-26, 2-5 p.m

Tulsa Zoo. 6421 E. 36th St. N.

Pick up treats at Goblin Stops throughout the zoo, play carnival games

tulsazoo.org/boo

### PIRATES AND PRINCESSES PRESENTED BY OVERHEAD DOOR

Oct. 17 and 24, 5 p.m.

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

Enter the zoo early before your HallowZOOeen session begins for a feast fit for your prince, princess or budding buccaneer. Your ticket includes an interactive dinner, admission to HallowZOOeen and a complimentary Haunted Train ticket. Find a pre-registration link at

tulsazoo.org/boo

### HALLOWMARINE

Oct. 17-18, 2-5 p.m.; Oct. 24-25, 31, 6:30-8 p.m. Oklahoma Aquarium, 300 Aquarium Dr., Jenks

Trick or treat at the Oklahoma Aquarium while enjoying a Diving Pirate Show, photo ops and other entertainment.

okaquarium.org

### **BROOKSIDE BOOHAHA**

Oct. 18, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Brookside, Tulsa

Trick or treat along Peoria and play in the Kids Zones before the popular BooHaHa parade.

Tulsaboohaha.com

### **HALLOWEST**

Oct. 23, 5-8 p.m.

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, 1700 NE 63rd St., OKC

Enjoy thrilling activities with a western twist.

nationalcowboymuseum.org

### PHILBOO WEEKEND, PRESENTED BY TULSAKIDS

Oct. 24-26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.

of seasons, find a magical world hidden in the gardens and so much more!

philbrook.org

### **BIXBY'S 8TH ANNUAL HALLOW(THEMED) PARTY**

Oct. 25, 4-7 p.m.

Downtown Bixby

This free community event features carnival games and rides, inflatables, pony rides, trick or treating and more family-friendly activities.

facebook.com/hallowthemedparty

### SAFETY SPOOKTACULAR

Oct. 25, 5-9 p.m.

**Broken Arrow Rose District** 

Hosted by the Broken Arrow Police Department, this event features live music, inflatables, a costume contest and more.

brokenarrowok.gov

### HALLOWEEN TRAIN

Oct. 25-26; Trains leave the station at 12, 1:15, 2:30 and 3:45 p.m. Oklahoma Railway Museum, 3400 NE Grand Blvd., Oklahoma City Ride a decked-out Halloween train and receive a candy gift bag. Do I Halloween scavenger hunt around the museum grounds and play hrough the mini-golf course. Advanced tickets recommended.

oklahomarailwaymuseum.org

### HALLOWEEN NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Oct. 30, 4-6 p.m.

Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore Organizations and businesses in Claremore set up stations for kids in costumes to gather treats

illrogers.com

### TRICK OR TREAT ON THE RIVERWALK

Oct. 31, 4-6 p.m.

Jenks Riverwalk, 300 Riverwalk Terrace, Jenks

Local businesses and organizations will be set up along the walkways with creatively decorated tables and plenty of candy and goodies for trick-or-treaters.

jenksriverwalk.com



# FOUR ART-INSPIRED COSTUMES HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

TulsaKids is thrilled to be partnering with Philbrook to present this year's PhilBOO event, Oct. 24-26! In honor of that, here are some art-inspired costume ideas:

### **GENERIC ARTIST**

Starting it off simple, this is a versatile costume, and there are many ways to go about it. However, the most common elements seem to be:

- A beref
- A paint-splattered apron
- A paintbrush/paint palette. (Tip: Make oversized versions so your costume really pops! We saw one vintage illustration where the flared skirt was the paint palette; and you can find instructions online for making a kid-sized paintbrush out of pool noodles.)

As far as the rest of the outfit, either a black-and-white-striped shirt (often paired with a red bandana), or bold, solid colors should get the point across nicely.

### **BOB ROSS (AND PAINTING)**

Give your "generic artist" costume a happy little twist by swapping out the paint-spattered apron for a light blue, collared shirt and jeans. And of course, you'll need that signature curly brown hair and beard. Turn this into an impressive family costume by taking a blank canvas, cutting an oval-shaped hole in it (large enough to fit around a face), and painting a Bob Ross-inspired landscape on the rest. Finish out the illusion by painting your family member's face to look like the missing part of the picture.

### THE SHEPHERDESS

Inspired by Philbrook's own collection, turn yourself into William-Adolphe Bougureau's contemplative shepherdess. Here's what you'll need:

- · Calf-length green skirt
- · Loose-fitting white shirt with elbow-length sleeves
- · Long brown scarf or swath of fabric
- · Brown-and-yellow plaid scarf

Once you've put on the skirt and shirt, wrap the plaid scarf around your shoulders so it comes to a "V" in front. Wrap the brown fabric around your waist, securing the scarf.

The Shepherdess's hair is dark brown, slightly curly and hangs loose; she is also holding a straight stick, about three feet long, if you want to accessorize. But although she doesn't wear shoes, please don't go trick-or-treating barefoot!



### "WALL FLOWERS" COSTUME

Philbrook's current exhibition, "Wall Flowers: Patrick Gordon Paintings," celebrates the work of Claremore native Patrick Gordon, known for his vibrant oil paintings that frequently feature colorful floral arrangements. For this "Wall Flowers"-inspired costume, you'll need a cheap T-shirt, hat and green leggings, as well as an array of artificial flowers. Staple the flowers to the shirt and hat to turn yourself into a living bouquet.

If you put together one of these costumes, tag us in a photo — and don't forget to wear it to PhilBOO!

Get your tickets at philbrook.org





# HALLOW LOCKEN

PRESENTED BY





**CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE** 

day&night oct. 17-19 & 24-26

LEARN MORE & BUY TICKETS AT:

TULSAZOO.ORG/BOO

ONLINE
RESERVATIONS
REQUIRED

**MAJOR SPONSORS** 



AZA PUMPKIN PATCH









CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

















## ENJOY OUR SPOOKY BUT NOT- ATTRACTIONS















FXPLORE THE HAUNTED HOUSE OF THE NEVERGLADES



ROYAL GASTLE

















PIRATES & PRINCESSES DINNER

SPECIAL THANKS





ANDY B'S

FREE SPIRIT CHIROPRACTIC

**GREEN COUNTRY** CHEVY DEALERS

**HILLCREST** 

**MEDWISE** 

WESTERN SUN FEDERAL **CREDIT UNION** 



ARACHNID ARGADE

**SPOOKY SIPS & SNACKS SPONSOR** 





### TRICK-OR-TREAT YOURSELF:

### COZY FALL DRINK SPECIALS TO TRY

People may rave about the Starbucks PSL, and we won't judge — but we always love seeing the creative drinks local coffeeshops come up with! Here are a few we can't wait to sip this season.

### 1. PUMPKIN HORCHATA

Find it at: Dulce Vida Café, 8038 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa (Instagram: @dulcevidacafe.918)

Description: Housemade pumpkin-spiced horchata topped with espresso

Dulce Vida Café is "Tulsa's first Mexican-inspired specialty coffee shop" – and they've already found themselves in the New York Times, thanks to their jumbo-sized coffee-in-a-bucket option this past summer. Pair their perfectly spiced pumpkin horchata with one of their fall pastries, including pumpkin tres leches cake (when available).

### 1. HARVEST COLD BREW

Find it at: T3 Coffee Roasters, 113 S. 11th St., Collinsville (Instagram: @t3roasters)

Description: "A seasonal favorite that brings together all the flavors of fall to enhance your coffee experience. Served over ice."

Do yourself a favor and plan a morning in downtown Collinsville. There are so many fun, local businesses to support, including family-owned T3 Coffee Roasters. While the adults drink their beverage, the kids can play in the kids' area under the stairs, with games, books, and comfy cushions. Follow them on Facebook for details about a Halloween cookie-decorating event in partnership with Heather B's Sweets, another Collinsville favorite.

### 1. HOCUS POCUS LATTE

Find it at: Blended and Brewed Snow and Coffee, 806 W. Tucson St., Broken Arrow (Instagram: @blendedandbrewedtulsa)

Description: Pumpkin spice, white chocolate, cinnamon, espresso, whole milk, whip, Halloween sprinkles

This woman-owned drive-through opened in May 2025, and they've gained an enthusiastic following on social media thanks to their engaging videos, vibrant aesthetic — and creative drinks. Beyond the Hocus Pocus Latte, a fun twist on regular pumpkin spice, their fall drink menu includes the Vampire Bite (vanilla and raspherry cold blew with strawberry "blood" drizzle and pink cold foam), and others. Mention this article to receive \$1 off your order!

### 1. SMOKED MAPLE FIG LATTE AND SMOKED MAPLE FIG HOUJICHA

Find it at: Fulfilled Coffee Lab, 105 S. Main St., Owasso (Instagram: @fulfilledcoffeelab)

Description: Smoked Maple Fig Latte: sweet and smoky bourbon maple syrup meets dried figs and warming spices; Smoked Maple Fig Houjicha: roasted matcha meets the rich sweetness of bourbon-aged maple syrup, dried figs and warming spices

Fulfilled Coffee Lab's mission is "to cultivate fulfillment through connection and coffee." They roast their own coffee, make their own syrups, hand-whisk their matcha, and always have an innovative lineup of drinks on their seasonal menu. Plus, the shop hosts frequent community events like open mic and game nights.

### 1. PUMPKIN DULCE DE LECHE LATTE

Find it at: Luchador Coffee, 6808 S. Memorial Dr. #340 (Instagram: @luchadorcoffee)

Description: Pumpkin dulce de leche latte topper with pumpkin spice and marshmallow fluff Luchador Coffee, an authentic Mexican coffee shop, is located near Woodland Hills Mall at 68th and Memorial. While Luchador is a newcomer to Tulsa, having just opened in summer 2025, the business previously enjoyed years of success in California before relocating in Oklahoma. Other items on their Hispanic Heritage X Fall Menu include a couple of tasty concha options: spiced apple caramel and pumpkin spice.

### 1. HOT CHOCOLATE

Find it at: Pony Coffee, 1623 S. Main St. (Instagram: @ponycoffeetulsa)

Description: Hot chocolate made with Ghirardelli chocolate syrup, topped with marshmallows and whipped cream. Ask for caramel drizzle!

While Pony Coffee's hot chocolate isn't a specifically seasonal drink, we wanted to include it because it's such a great option for kids (or when you need a non-caffeinated treat). Plus, Pony Coffee hosts a special Kids Hour on Tuesday afternoons (3:30-4:30 p.m.); adults can enjoy the comfy coffeeshop atmosphere while their children participate in self-guided crafts, bubbles and playtime.





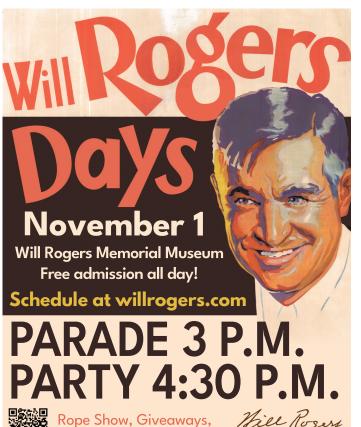






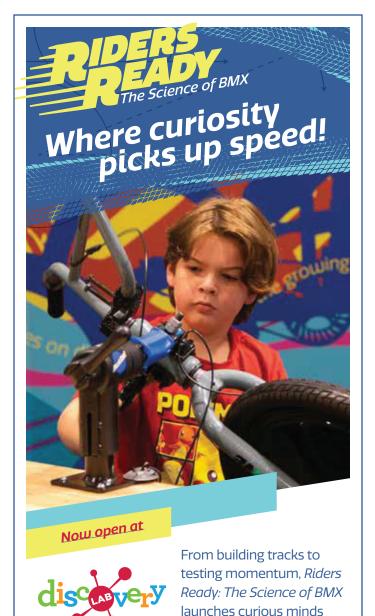






Buckaroo Bart's new book!

MEMORIAL MUSEUM





discoverylab.org

into the world of bikes, balance, and brilliant ideas.

## FALL BREAK FUN

### BE EDU-VENTUROUS! OKLAHOMA'S MOST AMAZING EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURES

### By Macy Goodnight

When seeking hands-on educational fun for the whole family, there are numerous places around the state within driving distance that offer inspiration, learning opportunities and intellectual growth, all while creating lasting memories together. Fall break may be the perfect time to explore some of these Oklahoma treasures. Plan a visit to one or more, or even all, of the following locations for day trips that offer immersive and exciting experiences for everyone to enjoy.

### SAM NOBLE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (NORMAN, OK)

Get out your best Halloween garb! Spooktacular Curiousiday at the Sam Noble Museum happens to be during fall break. On Saturday, October 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., museum guests can participate in costume contests and hands-on activities with a scientific twist. The museum may even have a few creepy surprises in store. Your young scientists will love seeing the dinosaur bones, learning about the people of Oklahoma, other cultures, and the natural world, all in a fun, engaging environment. Plan your visit at samnoblemuseum.ou.edu



### ALABASTER CAVERNS STATE PARK (FREEDOM, OK)

This incredible 200-acre park is home to the world's largest publicly accessible gypsum cave. The natural resources found here include pink, white and rare black alabaster, which is only found in three places in the world, including this vein in Oklahoma, as well as in China and Italy. Guided tours are available, and for those who are even more adventurous, wild caving or spelunking opportunities are offered, with a permit required. The caves additionally provide a sanctuary for five different species of bats.

After an ancient, shallow sea receded from the area during the Permian Period, over 200 million years ago, evaporation left large deposits of gypsum and other minerals. The gypsum was raised close to the surface during upheaval, and with water erosion over time, streams carved the tunnels that are found today. The first documented exploration of the cave system was in 1898. Now, visitors can explore the caves and enjoy hiking trails, camping, and more onsite.

For more information on planning a visit, please visit travelok.com/state-parks/alabaster-caverns-state-park.

### NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER TOURS (UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA - NORMAN, OK)

Interested in meteorology? In Oklahoma, most people find this science fascinating as its studies affect us throughout the year. The National Weather Center (NWC) at OU offers tours of its facilities by reservation only, on specific days and times. Tours are free to the public and last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, with a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to predict the weather. Multiple organizations are housed within the center, including the National Weather Service (NWS) Norman Office and the NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory. Highlights of the tours could include the OU School of Meteorology, the McCasland Family Observation Deck, the Storm Prediction Center, the National Severe Storms Laboratory, and the NWS Forecast Office. Sometimes movie props from the movie "Twister" can also be viewed, as well as an opportunity to visit The Flying Cow Café.

In the fall, NWC hosts the annual National Weather Festival, featuring weather research vehicles and activities. This year's event will be held on November 1st from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is the most significant event hosted by the NWC, with an expected 4,000 guests annually. Several weather-related organizations will be in attendance, including the Oklahoma Mesonet and meteorologists from local news outlets. The festival is a family-friendly event offering fun and educational activities for all ages.

Visit ou.edu/nwc for more information on booking a tour, planning your visit, and making plans to attend the National Weather Festival this fall.



### SCIENCE MUSEUM OKLAHOMA (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK)

There aren't many places in the state where you can be fully immersed in hands-on experiences while exploring all the many studies of science that exist, but it is possible to find your passion for learning at this facility in OKC, with more than 500 exhibits to explore. Science is all about adventure here, inspiring imagination and deepening our understanding of how the world works. Many studies can be examined, including aviation, space, weather, light, mechanics, gravity, biology and more. Every nook and cranny of the museum is filled with curiosities and experiments designed to broaden the mind and spark a desire to learn more. Fun for all ages, plan a long day filled with excitement and discovery. Make sure to visit the planetarium, the garden, tinkering spaces, and don't miss the Science Live Show!

Visit their website at sciencemuseumok.org/ to plan your trip.

### FIRST AMERICANS MUSEUM (OKLAHOMA CITY)

The FAMily Discovery Center at First Americans Museum (FAM) opened in September. Experience what is described as "a giant pop-up-book world filled with Native stories, animal relatives and Oklahoma's changing seasons." Visitors will see the birds, animals, trees and plants of Oklahoma in this immersive world. Celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day at FAM. This large, public performance on Oct. 13 highlights the resiliency and vibrancy of global Indigenous people. Any day at FAM, families can learn about the 39 distinctive First American Nations in Oklahoma today. *Plan your visit at famok.org* 



### **ENDANGERED ARK FOUNDATION (HUGO, OK)**

It's not every day you can get close enough to an elephant to look it in the eye, but at Endangered Ark, it is within reach.

The Endangered Ark Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the future of Asian elephants in North America. It functions as a retirement ranch for former circus elephants, while providing close-up encounters to educate the public about this endangered species. Public, private and group tours are available, along with special expeditions and cabin rentals. Reservations for each experience are required. Nearly a dozen elephants live and thrive on the property, receiving love and care from the staff.

In operation since 1993, their mission is "to respect the intimate understanding of the bond and partnership formed between animals and humans, and the need for action to save endangered animals. We believe that education and preservation efforts will ensure that people can continue to experience the joy and wonder of the Asian elephant for generations to come."

Booking information and planning details can be found at endangeredarkfoundation.org.



### **EUCHEE BUTTERFLY FARM (LEONARD, OK)**

An enchanting adventure awaits just a short drive out of Tulsa at the Euchee Butterfly Farm.

Guided tours of the farm include a walk through an outdoor aviary featuring native plant landscaping and over 1,000 live butterflies, available from May through October. Year-round, guests will be treated to a visit to the indoor tropical butterfly aviary with a vaulted 18-foot-tall ceiling, palm trees, and over 500 live butterflies. Additionally, 1.6 miles of nature trails are available for exploration, and a behind-the-scenes tour is offered to provide insight into how the butterflies are raised. Greenhouse tours are also available, where over 20,000 milkweed native plants are cultivated for monarch habitat restoration on tribal land, with a stop at the unique native plant seed bank. Inspiration for planting pollinator gardens can also be found, along with a native stone picnic area.

The butterflies on the farm are raised by the Natives Raising Natives Project, with a mission to create sustainable economic development for Native people in rural Oklahoma, provide hands-on science learning opportunities for Native youth, and raise awareness of the need for Native butterfly conservation. This mission also offers tribal members from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation with training, supplies, and technical support to become butterfly farmers.

For more information and to book a tour, visit their website at nativebutterflies.org.



### NOMAD'S ANIMAL ENCOUNTER (SEMINOLE, OK)

An experience unlike any other awaits you in animal encounters at Nomad's. This facility offers a fully hands-on wildlife adventure, where visitors are permitted to enter the animals' enclosures for exciting interactions. Reservations are required for entry with guided tours, which allow guests to spend time with the zoo's residents, accompanied by an educator who provides an educational presentation about each creature. Interactions are never forced on the animals as their welfare is the top priority.

Ticket prices start at \$35 per person for individuals aged 2 and above, and each guided tour lasts approximately one hour. Visitors will enjoy time with a wide array of species, including native wildlife and some exotic creatures.

To book a visit to Nomad's, guests can message the Facebook page at Nomad's Animal Encounter, call 405.584.8159, or email from the website at nomadsanimalencounter.com.



## FALL BREAK ECETAWAYS

THE HIGHWAY IS CALLING! PACK YOUR BAGS AND HIT THE ROAD FOR A QUICK FALL BREAK ROAD TRIP.

### **WICHITA, KANSAS**

Wichita is the ultimate kid-friendly getaway. At around three hours from Tulsa, the drive isn't bad, but you wouldn't necessarily want to go there and back in a single day — especially if you want to pack in the fun.

This month, we'd recommend a visit to Botanica, Wichita's beautiful botanic gardens. Walk the Rainbow Trail into the Downing Children's Garden, where you'll find Granny Jean's Treehouse, the Monster Woods and other engaging features. Plus, the last three weekends in October are BOOtanica, complete with improv in the Haunted Shakespeare Garden, the Spooky Woodland Light Show, a scarecrow display, shadow dancing, etc.

For history buffs, there's the Old Cowtown Museum, a recreated, fully immersive town from the late-1800s. If you visit on the tail end of Fall Break (Oct. 18-19), Cowtown's Hay, Hooves and Halloween event sees the streets come...alive?...with zombie cowboys, ghosts and ghouls.



### DOGWOOD CANYON AND BIG CEDAR LODGE

Want to "get away from it all"? Consider a trip to Big Cedar Lodge or Dogwood Canyon, both located in southwestern Missouri near Branson. At Dogwood Canyon, online day passes start at \$13 for kids ages 4-11, and \$18 for adults. Add-on activities include Wildlife Tram Tours, horseback riding, and an autumn special – evening Owl Prowls! Educational activities included with your daily admission include access to the Treehouse, Conservation Center, a virtual scavenger hunt and more. Unlike Dogwood Canyon, Big Cedar Lodge offers onsite accommodations. However, Big Cedar's Fun Mountain — offering a ropes and zipline course, go-karts, arcade, underwater-themed bowling (and childcare!) — is open to the public. Some activities may be available only on weekends, so plan accordingly.

For a more natural environment, visit Top of the Rock, where you can explore the 2.5-mile Lost Canyon Cave & Nature Trail, home to nine waterfalls and other gorgeous features like the eponymous cave. Your ticket includes admission to the Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum.



### **OKLAHOMA CITY**

Much like Tulsa, there's always something new to do in Oklahoma City. This fall, visit the First Americans Museum to be among the first to explore the new FAMily Discovery Center, a "giant, illustrated pop-up book" introducing kids to Oklahoma's native wildlife through interactive activities like a climbing area.

Myriad Botanical Gardens always hosts an incredible pumpkin display throughout October, and this year's theme is "The Museum of Pumpkinville." Different areas of the garden will feature pumpkin displays based on famous works of art, space exploration, natural history and more.



Jaxon Huffman: Wrestling Triple Crown Winner



By Betty Casey

axon Huffman, a third grader at Victory Christian School, is already a seasoned winner on the wrestling mat. In June, Jaxon won the Triple Crown, an honor given to athletes who win three specific national titles in USA Wrestling in the same year. Jaxon won championships in Folkstyle, Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. He wrestles for Team Tulsa Wrestling Club.

### TulsaKids: How long have you been wrestling?

Jaxon: I've been wrestling for 4 years. I started wrestling after I watched my older cousins wrestle, and I asked my mom if I could do it, too. It looked like a lot of fun.

### TulsaKids: You recently won a national title. Tell me more about that.

Jaxon: I'm beyond thrilled to have won! It felt so good to set a goal and crush it. Seeing my parents and teammates cheering for me was the best feeling, too.

TulsaKids: Do you have any mentors or people you look up to who have inspired you in wrestling or helped you along the way?

Jaxon: Wyatt Hendrickson. He's a college wrestler, and I hope to be like him someday.

### TulsaKids: Does wrestling help you in other parts of your life?

Jaxon: Wrestling has really helped me in other sports, like football. Plus, it's taught me a lot about self-discipline. I run an extra lap every night after football practice because I know pushing myself to do more will always pay off.

### TulsaKids: What do you think is the best thing about the sport?

Jaxon: Wrestling keeps me in great shape, teaches me a lot about discipline, and has brought me many friends all across the state and other states, too!

### TulsaKids: What has been the most difficult thing about wrestling for you?

**Jaxon:** The physical discipline of wrestling is no joke! It's great for building strength and endurance, but it's definitely not easy.

### TulsaKids: What other things do you like to do besides wrestling?

Jaxon: I love staying active, whether it's football, baseball or just riding on my bike.

### TulsaKids: Can you share a fun fact about yourself?

Jaxon: At 6 years old, I taught myself to do a back handspring and then later a backflip, all because a gymnastics instructor said I never would be able to. I got on my trampoline at home and worked on it until I decided to try it on the grass, and I've been doing flips ever since.



IONALS

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

### **ASK THE EXPERTS**



### **GRAND MENTAL HEALTH**

### What are the long-term effects of untreated mental health issues in children, and why is prevention and early intervention so crucial?

Mental health is just as important as physical health, especially for kids. When left unaddressed, mental health challenges in children can lead to significant long-term consequences.

Children experiencing anxiety, depression, ADHD, trauma or other emotional and behavioral disorders may struggle with:

- Academic Difficulties Poor concentration, low motivation and emotional distress can lead to falling behind in school.
- Social and Relationship Challenges Difficulty regulating emotions can hinder friendships and family bonds.
- Increased Risk of Substance Abuse Unmanaged mental health struggles can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, including drug and alcohol abuse.
- Chronic Mental Health Conditions Untreated childhood issues often persist, increasing the likelihood of adult mental health disorders.
- Lower Self-Esteem and Resilience Without support, children may develop negative self-perceptions, making it harder to cope with future challenges.

The good news is that early intervention can make a profound difference. Working with experts such as those at GRAND Mental Health can identify and address concerns early, helping children develop coping skills, emotional regulation, and a strong support system. Open conversations, counseling, school support and family involvement will reduce stigma and foster resilience, allowing children to thrive rather than struggle in silence.

844.458.2100

24/7 Crisis Line: 800.722.3611



### MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

The weather is getting cooler, so we aren't swimming in our pool. Should we postpone our swim lessons until spring?

Ironically, winter is one of the BEST times to learn to swim! Experts all agree that drowning knows no season, and an accident can happen at any time, regardless of season or temperature. In fact, accidental drowning incidents increase in November and December at residential pools (usually during a family event). Unfortunately, the water doesn't disappear with the cooler temps. Fall and winter are truly the ideal time of year to start and continue a learn-to-swim program. Students proactively learn to swim before summertime and go into lake and boating season prepared to be safe in and around the water.

Furthermore, during cooler winter months, it is more difficult to get outside to play and stay active. The indoor heated pool becomes a tropical oasis to look forward to each week and is a great way to keep kids active and healthy. So grab your beach bag and head to the pool. The water is warm year-round!

6415 S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa 525 W. 91st St. S., Jenks 7820 E. 101st St., Tulsa 10001 N. 127th E. Ave., Owasso 918.254.1988 MillerSwimSchool.com



### **DENTAL DEPOT**

### How can parents reinforce healthy dental routines at home?

Good dental habits start at home—and it's never too early to get consistent. Here is some advice from Dr. Christian Doan, a general dentist at Dental Depot in Tulsa with a passion for helping kids build lifelong oral health habits. According to Dr. Doan, the best thing parents can do is keep brushing and flossing part of the daily rhythm.

"Some kids will say they brushed their teeth, but they really didn't," he says. "Ideally, we like to see at least two minutes of brushing and then flossing. And definitely no soda or juice before bed—it creates an acidic environment that's perfect for cavities."

Supervision helps, especially with younger children who are still learning proper technique. But Dr. Doan also emphasizes keeping things positive: "Make brushing part of their routine and incentivize it. If they do well, maybe they get extra park time or a small treat."

The goal, he says, isn't perfection—it's consistency. Over time, these healthy behaviors become automatic, setting kids up for a lifetime of good oral health.

Dr. Christian Doan, Dental Depot Tulsa

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations DentalDepot.net



### SIMON HARWOOD, FRY & ELDER

When can child support be adjusted? Is it automatic?

Most of the time, it isn't automatic. Sometimes when DHS is handling your child support, they will file to update the amount, but it isn't often. Child support can be revisited anytime there is a substantial change in the income situation. While almost any raise or new job would qualify, you need to think of the costs of doing so. It is not worth an attorney retainer to increase it by \$25 a month. If the other parent has a low support amount, and isn't using their visitation time, that is also a good time to revisit it, as they may lose their shared parenting credit of hundreds of dollars a month. Check with an attorney that offers a free consult to get an idea whether the time is right.

Simon Hardwood, Fry & Elder



1630 S Main St, Tulsa, OK 74119 918.585.1107 simonharwoodlaw.com



### **OCTOBER 2025**

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



BROUGHT TO YOU BY







### October 1 Wednesday

### STORYTIME AT TULSA ZOO (V)

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.

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

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St., tulsalibrary.org

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

### October 2 Thursday

### **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: CHILDREN'S** LITERATURE LOTERÍA ()

Ages 4-12, 4-5 p.m., Nathan Hale Library, 6038 E. 23rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Play the traditional Mexican board game Lotería, with a twist.

### **BANDS & BLOOMS: MARY COGAN**

All ages, 5-8 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Enjoy live music as the sun sets in the garden. Food and drinks available for purchase.

### TEEN NIGHT (3)

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 teen hangout.

### October 3 Friday

### **ASIAN NIGHT MARKET FESTIVAL**

All ages, 5-11 p.m., Military Park, 2561 N. Military Ave., OKC, asiandistrictok.com

One of the largest and most culturally diverse events in Oklahoma, packed with cultural performances, food vendors, kids activities, a fashion show, karaoke and more. Repeats Oct. 4.

### SYMPHONY & SWEETS ()

All ages, 7 p.m., Jenks Downtown Commons, 224 E. A St., Jenks, jenkschamber.com

Jenks High School provides symphony music, and local vendors provide sweet treats.

### "EERIE ACADEMY"

All ages, 7 p.m., Spotlight Theater, 1381 Riverside Dr., tulsaspotlighttheater.com

A frighteningly fun collection of vignettes set in a school filled with ghosts, ghouls, vampires, aliens and the scariest of them all... teenagers! Presented by Spotlight Children's Theatre. Additional showtimes through Oct. 12.

### October 4 Saturday

### **FRIENDS & FAMILY EVENT** AT CAMP WAYPOINT (

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Camp Waypoint, 67246 S. 320 Rd., Choteau, tulsacampfire.org

Enjoy the outdoors with your family and friends at Camp Waypoint. Go on a hike, shoot a bow and arrow, make a nature craft, and learn more about us! Online registration encouraged.

### ART IN THE SOUARE (3)

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Utica Square, uticasquare.com

Utica Square is filled with artists selling their work; plus, there is a Kid's Art Alley with fun activities.

### **BAIVA 4TH ANNUAL POWWOW**

All ages, 1-9 p.m., BA Public Schools Event Center, 2200 N. 23rd St., Broken Arrow, facebook. com/baiva4veterans

The Broken Arrow Intertribal Veterans Association hosts this event honoring service men and women, featuring traditional food, arts and crafts vendors, and more.

### **1940S HANGAR DANCE**

All ages, 5-9:30 p.m., Tulsa Air and Space Museum, 3624 N. 74th E. Ave., tulsamuseum.org

Live Big Band Music will fill the air as guests dance the night away among historic aircraft and vintage décor.



### October 5 Sunday

### **SENSORY-FRIENDLY MORNING**

All ages, 9-11 a.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Enjoy the galleries and gardens when there's less of a crowd.

### **SENSORY SKATE SUNDAY**

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

Wheels and Thrills will suspend the arcade and laser tag. There will be no flashing lights or loud music.

### October 6 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.

### October 7 Tuesday

### **TEENS READ MONTH: PETRIFYING PICTURE BOOKS**

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

Create ominous books of the picture variety and sample spooky snacks

### **FITNESS IN THE PARK:** LINE DANCING (DO)

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Gathering Place, 2650 S. John Williams Way, gatheringplace.org

Muddy Boots Line Dancing leads this fun, welcoming session filled with upbeat moves and live music.

### "THE OUTSIDERS: A **NEW MUSICAL**"

Recommended ages 10+, 7:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., celebrityattractions.com

This thrilling new Broadway musical navigates the complexities of selfdiscovery. Additional showtimes through Oct. 12

### October 8 Wednesday

### **MEXICAN FOLK DANCE** BY BALLET FOLKLORICO SOL AZTECA (3)

All ages, 6-7 p.m., Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy colorful and enchanting traditional dances of Mexico.

### October 9 Thursday

### **BANDS & BLOOMS:** STEPHANIE OLIVER TRIO

All ages, 5-8 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Enjoy live music as the sun sets in the garden. Food and drinks available for purchase.

### SPACE WEEK: SIEGFRIED COMMUNITY NIGHT ()

All ages, 6-8 p.m., Discovery Lab, 3123 Riverside Dr., TulsaSTEM. org/Space-Week

Meet astronaut Commander John B. Herrington and engage in spacethemed activities. Must pre-register.

### **BACHTOBERFEST**

Ages 21+, 6 p.m., Marshall Brewing Company, 1742 E. 6th St., signaturesymphony.org

Experience the music of Bach and the fun of Oktoberfest with Signature Symphony while enjoying thoughtfully paired local beer.

### October 10 Friday

### "PETER AND THE WOLF"

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

This beloved production was created specifically for children with a 45-minute run-time, on-stage narration and audience interaction. Repeats Oct. 11 at 11:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.

### October 11 Saturday

### RUBY MARKET (5)

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Ruby Clay Company, 409 E. 8th St., Suite B, rubyclaycompany.com

An art market featuring artists of all kinds, food vendors, art making activities, and much more.

### **FALL STEAM TRAIN**

All ages. Oct. 11-12, 18-29. various times, Oklahoma Railway Museum, 3400 NE Grand Boulevard. oklahomarailwaymuseum.org

Ride in vintage 1920s and 30s passenger cars or on an open flatcar or caboose and enjoy the unique experience of hearing that engine chug down the track during the 40 minute excursion.

### **GILCREASE FAMILY** FESTIVAL G

All ages, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Gilcrease Museum, 1400 N. Gilcrease Museum Rd., gilcrease.org

Enjoy a day of creativity and connection with live music, hands-on art activities, workshops. and a chance to get a glimpse of the new Gilcrease building before the official re-opening.

### **FC TULSA GAME: TASTE OF TULSA**

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

Indulge in a celebration of the city's local breweries, food trucks and more, while enjoying the thrill of live soccer

### October 12 Sunday

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

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

Lights are dimmed and exhibit sounds are turned down.

### October 13 Monday

### **TULSA NATIVE** AMERICAN DAY (3)

All ages, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Dream Keepers Park, 1875 S. Boulder Park Dr., cityoftulsa.org/nad

Native American Day acknowledges the legacy, cultures and contributions of Native people in our city and region. The parade begins at 11 a.m.

### **CAMP CREEPY CRITTERS:** (NOT SO) SPOOKY AND SCARY ANIMALS

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

Campers will explore the legends. lore and science behind animals that may make some people's skin crawl. Single-day camps from Oct. 13-17. Aftercare available until 5:15 p.m. for additional charge. Pre-register.

### **STORYBOOK PARADE** STORYTIME (3)

For toddlers and preschoolers, 6-7 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Dress up as your favorite storybook characters and join for a musical parade after storytime. Repeats Oct. 14-15, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

### October 14 Tuesday

### **FALL FAIR**

For families with children ages 5 and under, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., **Emergency Infant Services, 1110** S. Denver Ave., eistulsa.org

Families can receive free costumes for their little ones and connect with a supportive community dedicated to maternal health and childhood resources.

### October 15 Wednesday

### **FALL BREAK ATELIER: DRAW AND PAINT**

All ages, 10 am.-2 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Create your own still life portrait. Repeats daily through Oct. 18.

### **DOWNTOWN MIDWEEK** MARKET **G**W

All ages, 4:30-7:30 p.m., Chapman Green, 605 S. Main St., downtowntulsa.com

It's Kids Night, with music by Tom Pevear & The Backyard Band.

### October 16 Thursday

### **INTRODUCTION TO** TINKERCAD (3)

For tweens to adults, 3-4 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

A basic introduction to Tinkercad, a free online 3D modeling platform.

### **BANDS & BLOOMS: PAUL ROPER BAND**

All ages, 5-8 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.. tulsabotanic.org

Enjoy live music as the sun goes down. Food and drink available for purchase.



### **TEENS READ MONTH:** SPOOKY SPELLBOOKS (3)

For teens and tweens, 5-7 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library. 3333 E. 32nd Pl. tulsalibrary.org

Transform journals into spooky spellbooks, sip cider and watch a classic Halloween movie (rated PG).

### October 17 Friday

### DROP-IN PARK TOUR 🕒 🖤

All ages, 10-11 a.m., Gathering Place, 2650 S. John Williams Way, gatheringplace.org

The tour departs from Guest Services in the Williams Lodge. Space limited.

### **HOMESCHOOL FUN FRIDAY (**

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

Explore density through a hands-on experiment and craft.

### **FALL-OWEEN! (3)**

All ages, 3-5 p.m., Herman and Kate Kaiser Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Wear your costume and join for fall activities.

### October 18 Saturday

### **SATURDAY MORNING BOTANY WALK**

All ages, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Oxley Nature Center, 6700 Mohawk Blvd., oxleynaturecenter.org

Explore the lives of plants in the forest, prairie and wetlands.

### **PUMPKIN STORYTIME** (1)

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Jenks Library, 523 W. B St., Jenks, tulsalibrary.org

Read pumpkin-themed books, sing pumpkin-themed songs and paint a pumpkin (while supplies last).

### **BREAST CANCER** PRETTY PINK PARTY (

All ages, 2-3:30 p.m., Suburban Acres Library, 4606 N. Garrison Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Honor those who have conquered and those who have lost the battle against breast cancer. There will be karaoke, activities and light refreshments.

### October 19 Sunday

### SWAT MEET INC. PRESENTS RAIN ON RIVERSIDE G

For 6th-12th graders, 6-9 p.m., **Gathering Place - Energy Transfer** Sports Courts, gatheringplace.org

Experience rotating 3-on-3 basketball games, record an original song, challenge friends at a video game truck and more.

### October 20 Monday

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

Ages 0-5, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

After storytime, enjoy games, toys and activities that foster critical early literacy skills.

### October 21 Tuesday

### "SUGAR SKULL! A DÍA **DE MUERTOS MUSICAL ADVENTURE**"

Recommended grades K-6, 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., tulsapac.com

This musical uses traditional regional music and dance from Mexico to tell the story of 12-yearold Vita Flores and her growing understanding of Día de Muertos. Repeats Oct. 22, 9:30 and 11:30

### October 22 Wednesday

### STORYTIME AT THE **PUMPKIN PATCH**

All ages, 11-11:30 a.m., Carmichael's Pumpkin Patch, 17137 S. Mingo, Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Join TCCL for a special family storytime at Carmichael's Pumpkin Patch.

### CHESS CLUB (3)

For elementary schoolers to adults, 4-5 p.m., Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., Broken Arrow, tulsalibrary.org

All skill levels are invited to enjoy this classic board game in a relaxed, supportive environment.

### October 23 Thursday

### **BRONSON BROOKSIDE LIBRARY GRAND OPENING**

All ages, 11 a.m., Bronson Brookside Library, 4607 S. Madison Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate the grand opening of the new Bronson Brookside Library with a ribbon cutting at 11 a.m., followed by a festive day of activities.

### PARENTING YOUR **NEURODIVERSE CHILD**

For adults, 12-1 p.m., Virtual, tulsakids.com

TulsaKids and Experience Tulsa are teaming up to provide free information for parents and caregivers, along with time for attendees to connect with one another. RSVP on our website to receive the Zoom link.



### **BANDS & BLOOMS: MICHELE WARREN DUO**

All ages, 5-8 p.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Enjoy live music as the sun sets in the garden. Food and drink available for purchase.

### **CROW PARTY (3)**

For adults and teens, 6-7:30 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Dress in black and bring trinkets to trade. Chill to spooky LoFi beats while coloring, crafting and cawing with delight.

### October 24 Friday

### **FLINT FOUNDATION FAMILY CONCERT** SERIES G

All ages, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Experience Tulsa Symphony Orchestra's Percussion Ensemble. Learn about the instruments, meet the musicians and enjoy a Halloween-themed concert.

### October 25 Saturday

### KIDS CLAY STUDIO

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

Learn the basics of hand building techniques, then create ceramic game boards. Pre-register.

### THE MOTH BALL: A **FESTIVE CELEBRATION** OF BUGS! (3)

All ages, 2-3 p.m., Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate bugs with real life creepy crawlies, cool biofacts from Tulsa Zoo, crafts, face painting and more!

### **MOVIE NIGHT AT THE WILL** ROGERS THEATRE G

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

Watch "The Phantom of the Opera." Free popcorn and drinks provided.





### October 26 Sunday

### "OTHELLO"

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

Theatre North presents this production of Shakespeare's famous play. Additional showtimes starting Oct. 18.

### October 27 Monday

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

Ages 0-5, 6-7 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

There's something for everyone at this 0-5 storytime.

### October 28 Tuesday

### **JOB LAB: RÉSUME AND JOB ASSISTANCE**

For adults, 2-3 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Get job-hunting help from TCCL.

### **FINDING YOUR NICHE: A MINI CAREER EXPLORATION EVENT**

For teens and tweens, 4-6 p.m., South Broken Arrow Library, 3600 S. Chestnut Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Discover a variety of specialized fields and engage with experienced professionals.

### October 29 Wednesday

### STORY TIME WITH MS. HOLLY ()

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

### **NO TRICKS, ALL TREATS: CRAFTS AND TRICK-OR-TREATING**

Ages 0-5, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Bixby Library, 20 E. Breckenridge Ave., Bixby, tulsalibrary.org

Bring your little monsters by the library for crafts and treats.

### October 30 Thursday

### **BUILD A READER** STORYTIME: **BILINGUAL G**W

10:15-10:45 a.m., Kendall-Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish.

### **LITTLE BOOS** COSTUME PARTY (3)

Ages 0-5, 11-11:45 a.m., Helmerich Library, 5131 E. 91st St., tulsalibrary.org

Have a fun time with simple games, crafts, treats and BOOks.

### **TEEN CONNECTION (3)**

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

This is a social group for middle and high school students with highfunctioning autism. Please contact Sherilyn at swalton@thearcok.org prior to attending for the first time.

### October 31 Friday

### **NATURE ACADEMY**

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

Join Tulsa 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. No registration required.

### **FOWLER AUTOMOTIVE** FILMS ON THE LAWN: "WICKED" SING ALONG

All ages, 7 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

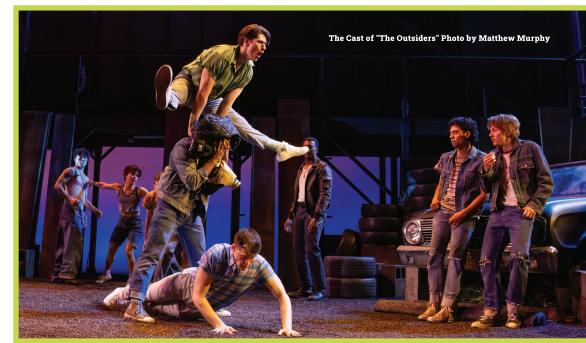
Immerse yourself in a magical singalong experience with "Wicked" (2024). Check-in and pre-show activities begin at 5 p.m.

### "GISELLE"

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

Under the pale light of a haunted moon, "Giselle" unravels a tragic tale of love and vengeance. Additional showtimes through Nov. 2.







## HALLOW EEN

PRESENTED BY





**CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE** 

day&night oct. 17-19 & 24-26



online reservations required at tulsazoo.org/boo



PIRATE ISLAND



**PUMPKIN** PATCH



**NEVERGLADES** HAUNTED HOUSE



**HALLOWZOOEEN PASSPORT** 



THE ZINK FOUNDATIONS

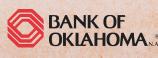
ARACHNID ARGADE



**GREEPY GAROUSEL** 



ROYAL **CASTLE** 



HAUNTED TRAIN

The Genuine. The Original.



PIRATES & PRINCESSES DINNER