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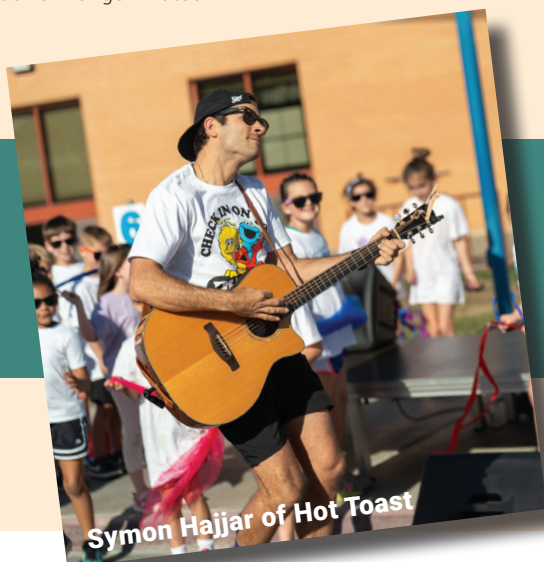
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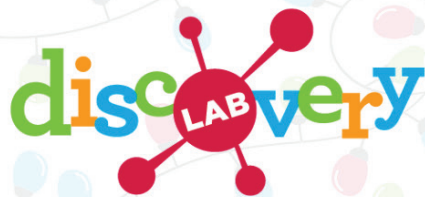


Symon Hajjar of Hot Toast

COVER FEATURE
Local Children's Musician
Uses Music to Share
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November: A Time of Reflection

In our feature story, singer-songwriter Symon Hajjar temporarily lost his ability to write music and was forced to ask himself who he would be if he could no longer sing and write music. He asks the question that all of us face: Who am I?

Poets and writers have always seen fall as a season of slowing down, pulling back, reflecting on the past and even as a metaphor for approaching death. As heavy as that sounds, Symon's story reminds us to slow down, appreciate what we have, pull our families close and reflect on what is meaningful to us.

What do you value? What values do you hope to instill in your children?

Who are you and what is important to you? This issue is about asking ourselves that question in a variety of ways. The Babies & Toddlers column invites us to pull back, slow down and take some time to gain energy as a family before the busy-ness of the holidays hit. In the recipe column, you may learn more about your own identity or that of others by cooking foods of indigenous people. You'll learn about serious illness in teens and why they should be treated differently from adults. Dr. Rogers, in the School Age column, invites all of us to be active participants in our children's schools as Ryan Walters' chaotic tenure ends. Stop and reflect – then act.

Who are you? What example do you want to set for your children? How do you fit into the larger world? Those are questions worth pondering as we wind down the year.



Betty Casey
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

tulsakids

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Publisher

Charles Foshee
publisher@tulsakids.com

Editor-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
Art Haddaway
Macy Goodnight
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.
Katy M. Clark
Shannon Dean

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WHAT'S
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Nutcracker Ballet Ticket Giveaway

From Nov. 1-15, enter to win a Family 4-Pack to Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker," playing at the Tulsa PAC Dec. 7-21. The tickets can be used for a showtime of your choosing. Learn more about the production at tulsaballet.org.

Nutcracker Festival Ticket Giveaway

The Nutcracker Festival is returning to Expo Square Dec. 5-6, and we are giving away a Family 4-Pack of All-Inclusive Passes! These passes allow a family of four free admission and free unlimited access to paid activities, including the Nutcracker Express trackless train, Mother Ginger's Giant Inflatables, the Cavalier Cake Walk, and more.

Enter to win Nov. 10-23.





"The Snowman" Ticket Giveaway

Experience the magic of Christmas, the symphony and film all together as Signature Symphony provides the soundtrack to the holiday classic, "The Snowman." Enter to win two tickets to this incredible production, happening Dec. 13 at 2 p.m.

Giveaway dates: Nov. 17-30.



Tulsa Opera Giveaway

Through Nov. 9, enter to win a Family Pack containing two adult and two child orchestra tickets to each of the upcoming Tulsa Opera productions: "The Sound of Music" (Nov. 15); "The Pirates of Penzance"; and "Noah's Flood." A second winner will receive a Sound of Music Swag Bag containing two orchestra tickets to "Sound of Music," plus some Tulsa Opera branded items.

Congratulations to our Cutest Baby Contest winner, Lilliana Bloom!

Cutest Baby Contest sponsor:



Photo courtesy Tessa Hill

Thank you for entering our Halloween Yard Contest!

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Mayor Nichols Invites Public to State of the City Address

Mayor Monroe Nichols will deliver his first State of the City address on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Chapman Music Hall. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

According to a press release, the address will highlight Mayor Nichols' vision for Tulsa while providing updates on the city's priorities, achievements and challenges. Since taking office in December 2024, Mayor Nichols has focused on reaching functional zero homelessness by 2030, increasing affordable housing stock by 6,000 units by 2028, improving student and youth outcomes, making Tulsa the safest big city in the country, strengthening partnerships with tribal nations, and creating more economic development opportunities for the community.



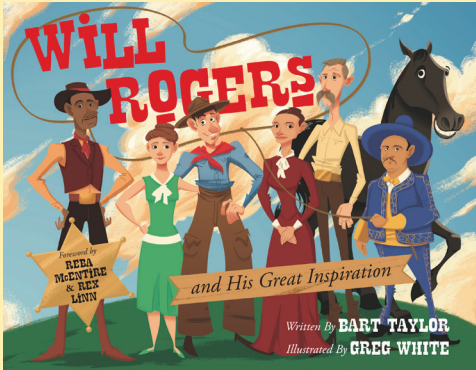
Photo courtesy C. Andrew Nichols



OSU Medicine's Curiosity Clinic Opens at Discovery Lab

Discovery Lab and OSU Medicine have partnered to offer visitors a chance to check out the Curiosity Clinic, a special hands-on exhibit where visitors can learn more about aspects of science and health care through interactive activities, including making casts, DNA experiments, surgery simulation and more. Visitors can also learn more about the many career opportunities in medicine and health care at OSU Center for Health Sciences and OSU Medicine.

The exhibit will be open through November.



New Children's Book Celebrates Will Rogers

On Will Rogers' birthday (November 4), Yorkshire Publishing will release the new picture book, "Will Rogers and His Great Inspiration," the final installment in Bart Taylor's award-winning children's picture book series honoring one of America's most beloved humorists and storytellers. Illustrated by Greg White, the book features a foreword by country music legend Reba McEntire and actor Rex Linn.

Taylor is the Will Rogers Interpreter and Creative Curator at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum. His mission is to keep Rogers' story alive in a way that's fun and accessible.

"Will Rogers and His Great Inspiration" is available beginning November 4 on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, the Will Rogers Memorial Museum gift shop and wherever books are sold.

The Nutcracker Festival Returns

A holiday experience for the entire family, the Nutcracker Festival returns for its second year, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5-6 at the Sagenet Center, upper level of Expo Square.

Step into a holiday wonderland filled with treats, live performances, an indoor train, giant inflatables, a holiday market, photo opportunities and, of course, Santa will be there to make the season bright.

Shop the Marketplace for gifts and stocking stuffers for friends and family as you enjoy performances that will get you in the holiday spirit. Kids will love riding the train, meeting Santa, doing crafts and visiting Fritz's Furry Friends Petting Zoo.

Kick the season off with a day at the Nutcracker Festival. For more information and tickets, visit nutcrackerfest.com.



The Mothers Group, Inc. Plans Santa Visit in Early December

Founded by Dr. Brenda Joy Lloyd-Jones, The Mothers Group continues its tradition of welcoming families to their annual holiday event. Children can visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and receive new, age-appropriate books. Families can take photos and enjoy local entertainment.

The Mothers Group Santa event is planned for Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, from 9 a.m. to noon at OU-Tulsa Founder's Hall (Learning Center), 4501 E. 41st St., Tulsa, OK. The event is free and open to the public. For more information about The Mothers Group, Inc., visit themothersgroup.org.



The Calm Before the Holidays

Finding Peace and Balance Before the Busy Season



By **Angie Porter, MS, CCPS**

As the calendar turns to November, families begin to feel that familiar pull—school events, holiday plans, travel coordination, and the endless to-do lists that come with the season. Before the whirlwind begins, it's worth pausing to create a little calm before the holidays. Slowing down now allows families to enter the season grounded, connected and ready to enjoy what truly matters.

Slow the Pace

The quiet weeks of early November are the perfect time to breathe. Schedule one or two unstructured weekends before Thanksgiving. Let everyone stay in pajamas, enjoy breakfast together and move through the day without rushing. Children thrive when they have downtime to play freely and recharge emotionally. A slower pace now creates emotional reserves for the busier weeks ahead.

Set Gentle Expectations

Holiday stress often comes from unrealistic expectations—perfect decorations, flawless dinners, or everyone getting along. Try setting a new tone this year. Ask each family member what matters most to them about the season. Maybe it's baking cookies, watching a favorite movie or visiting grandparents. Simplify plans around those priorities and let go of the rest. When expectations are realistic, joy becomes easier to find.

Keep Routines Steady

Routines are especially important around the holidays because this time of year often brings increased stress, disrupted schedules and heightened emotions. They act as an emotional and organizational anchor—a steady rhythm that gives children (and adults) a sense of security even when everything else feels unpredictable.

Familiar routines like bedtime, meals and morning rituals provide stability and predictability, helping everyone manage emotions, maintain healthy habits and reduce stress. Even simple structure—like having breakfast together, taking a short walk after dinner or reading before bed—helps children feel grounded and supported.

Here are a few gentle routines families can keep through the holidays without feeling over-scheduled:

- **Morning Moments:** Wake up and eat breakfast at a consistent time. Take a few quiet minutes to stretch, read a story or talk about the day ahead.
- **Shared Mealtimes:** Try to eat together at roughly the same times each day. Include a healthy choice alongside holiday treats and use mealtime for connection.



- **Movement Breaks:** Schedule a daily short walk, dance party or backyard playtime. Movement helps burn energy, relieve stress and improve sleep.
- **Quiet or "Wind-Down" Time:** Spend 15–20 minutes of quiet time before bed—reading, coloring or listening to calm music. Keep bedtime consistent, even during gatherings.
- **Daily Connection:** Pick one simple family ritual each day—baking, storytelling or sharing gratitude. These moments build security and joyful memories.
- **Flexible Planning:** Create a loose outline for visits or events, and let children know what to expect. Predictability helps everyone feel calm and included.
- **Care for Yourself, Too:** Parents often carry the emotional load of making the holidays magical. Make space for your own calm—take a walk, listen to music or enjoy a quiet cup of coffee before the day begins. When parents are centered, children sense that calm and reflect it back.
- **Keep the Focus on Connection:** The best memories rarely come from perfect moments—they come from laughter, shared stories and simple time together. By slowing the pace, protecting routines and cultivating gratitude, families can turn November into a month of renewal instead of rush.

Takeaway: Slow down now so you can show up joyfully later. The calm before the holidays isn't wasted time—it's the foundation for a meaningful, memorable season ahead.

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.



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Goodbye and Good Riddance: Oklahoma's Shift in Education Leadership Offers Hope, Healing and a Call to Action



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

Doesn't it feel good to finally not wake up to an inflammatory post from the very person who was supposed to lead education in Oklahoma? Have you noticed the stillness—the kind that doesn't come with fear, but with relief? Isn't it a powerful shift to finally feel seen—not as a problem to manage, but as a partner in shaping our children's future?

After years of tension, anxiety and political distractions, the Oklahoma education community is finally starting to exhale. With new leadership under interim State Superintendent Lindel Fields, there is a renewed sense of hope, calm and possibility. And not just for those of us in education, but for every parent, grandparent and guardian who has had to navigate the turmoil while trying to do what's best for their child.

As a veteran, educator and mother, I've felt the weight of the uncertainty. Let's talk about the fear that seeped into our schools. It wasn't imagined—it was lived. After rhetoric that painted a librarian as an enemy and stoked division in our communities, some of our schools started receiving bomb threats. Yes—bomb threats. Over books. Over learning. Over love. Including my son's school.

For the first two weeks of school last year, I received calls, emails and texts every single day—sometimes several times a day

about the bomb squad sweeping our schools for everyone's safety. Parents were scared. Students were scared. Educators were drained before the first bell of the school year even rang. Then came the chilling ICE announcement—greenlit by the top education official—leaving families in survival mode. I know parents who had emergency plans for their children: The oldest would walk the youngest home if Mom or Dad didn't make it back. Teachers watched as desks sat empty because some families were too afraid to send their children at all. One mother told me it reminded her of “The Diary of Anne Frank”—and I can't forget that.

This wasn't about politics—it was about people. About our babies walking into school buildings and needing to feel safe, supported and loved. But instead, they've been caught in the middle of adult power plays while teachers stood on the frontlines—overworked, undervalued and holding the line for our kids. Our administrators felt cut off. Entire schools operated like islands, doing everything they could just to stay afloat. If you're not in the classroom changing lives, then your job is to lift up the ones who are. That's it. That's the charge. That's the only way forward. Dr. Lindel Fields' letter to Oklahoma parents came like a deep breath we didn't know we were holding. After everything

we've been through—being constantly on edge, defending our schools instead of building them up—just seeing educators acknowledged, not attacked, felt like a sacred shift. His words didn't scream for attention or stir division. They focused on what matters: our kids, our classrooms, and the people who show up every day to make a difference.

He spoke about literacy as a gateway, about communication that builds trust, and about the need to create schools where students feel safe, valued and inspired. And after years of feeling dismissed, gaslit or pitted against each other, that message landed in a powerful way.

But let's be clear—this is just the start. One letter can't fix years of harm. As a mom who's walked through Oklahoma's public school system with my children, I've seen what happens when students are uplifted. I've also seen how quickly things unravel when schools are underfunded, teachers are unprotected, and families are made to feel like outsiders. We've got work to do. And we've got to do it together.

We need more than cheerleading. We need change. And that change starts with us. To every parent or guardian who's had to tune

out just to protect your peace—I see you. I've been you. But now? Now is the time to check back in, not for the system, but for our children. Show up again. Ask the hard questions. Go to the school board meetings. Know who's making decisions about your child. Build relationships with their teachers. Lend your voice, your presence, your time. Support where you can; challenge when you must.

Hold your elected officials accountable—but also hold yourself accountable. Because education isn't a spectator sport, and our kids can't afford for us to sit in the stands. They need us in the game, fighting for their future, together.

As my grandpa used to say, “Goodbye—and good riddance.” The only direction from here is up. We've survived the storms, the silence, the suspicion. Now it's time to rebuild—not just better, but braver. Braver for our kids, for our classrooms, for our communities. And if anyone's wondering where change begins—look in the mirror. Because the era of pretending everything is fine is over. We are the movement, and we're not waiting for permission to lead.

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.



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Toys Are for...Reading?

Play is an important element to get your child ready to read.



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

TOYS AT THE LIBRARY

Did you know you can find toys at the library? Every Tulsa City-County Library location has toys available for children to play with in the library! From puppets to train sets, baby dolls to blocks, these toys are hard to resist because of their fun potential!

One of my favorite toys growing up was a reversible doll. On one side was Little Red Riding Hood in a cape, holding her basket of treats for her granny. When you flipped her over, suddenly you would get the wolf dressed in Granny's nightgown and cap!

What a surprise! What fun! What endless hours of flipping, flipping, flipping and re-playing the classic fairy tale, with invented dialogue and new wacky scenarios. (Could Little Red and Wolf go on a boat trip to Capri? Play together on the same soccer team and win the championship? Why not?)

Not every play scenario needs to have a narrative or book as inspiration, but this bit of childhood memory does point to the importance of play itself in developing young minds. In fact, education researchers have identified play as particularly effective in creating cognitive pathways to support learning to read.

It's one of the reasons the Tulsa City-County Library emphasizes play in our Build A Reader storytimes, offering "Stay and Play" times (usually scheduled right after storytimes) for children to play with developmentally appropriate toys.

(Check the library's event guide for exact dates and times.)

Here are just a few (very funny) books that can be easily used to inspire your child's play:

"Oh, Are You Awake?"
written by Bob Shea and
illustrated by Jarvis

Bob Shea is one of the most playful authors and illustrators working in children's books today. In this one, a sleepy penguin is friends with a not-so-sleepy lion, and their back and forth is great fun to imitate with your child in play.

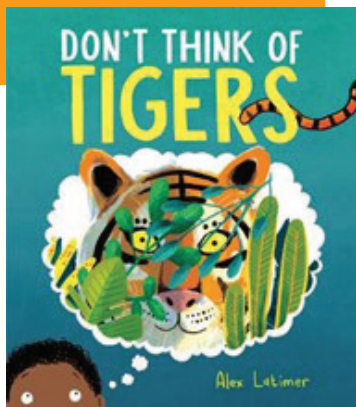
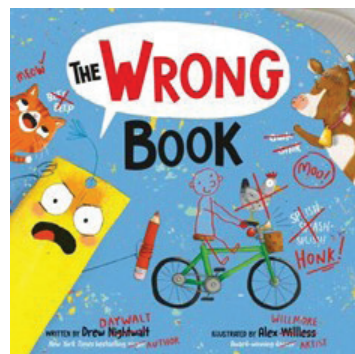
Oh, Are You
AWAKE?



BOB SHEA illustrated by JARVIS

"The Wrong Book," written by
Drew Daywalt and illustrated by
Alex Willmore

Warning: This may start a long-running contest in your household to come up with the funniest WRONG statement, as the narrator identifies firefighters that shout "Ding Dong!" before putting out a fire, or a bicycle that loves toast. Playing with language can be super fun, but so can picking up a shoe and asking if it wants to go out for a nice lunch.

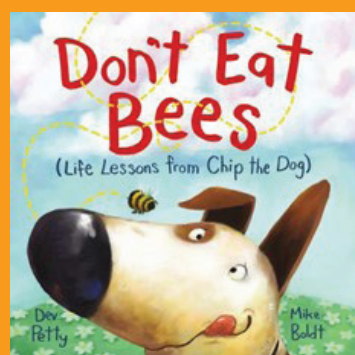


"Don't Think of Tigers," by Alex
Latimer

When you say, "Don't think of tigers," guess what you're going to think about? There are many opportunities to play the unmentionable tiger as well as other animals in this fun and funny book!

"Don't Eat Bees: Life Lessons
from Chip the Dog," by Dev
Petty

Chip the Dog wants to give you lessons on how to live your best doggy life! This is an especially good book to use as a model in playing eating dinner or at a pretend tea party. Should you eat these important papers, Grandpa's teeth, Mom's shoes? Chip the Dog says: yum yum, yes!





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Teens and Young Adults with Cancer Require Unique Care



By **Julie Wenger Watson**

Although we sometimes forget, teenagers aren't miniature adults. Their needs – everything from nutrition and sleep to exercise and psychological/emotional support – vary significantly from their grown-up counterparts, as do their challenges. Health care is one area where this is particularly evident. In general, teens and young adults face different health risks than adults, and consequently, require a different approach to prevention and treatment. This is especially true when it comes to the diagnosis and management of cancer.

Overview

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 90,000 adolescents and young adults (ages 15-39) are diagnosed with cancer each year. Although this number accounts for only 4.2% of the country's annual cancer diagnoses, cancer appears to be on the rise in this younger population, and it's the fifth leading cause of death. The most commonly occurring cancers are breast, thyroid, testicular and melanoma, with thyroid and Hodgkin's lymphoma more prevalent among 15-19 year olds.

"When thinking of this population, they are truly a unique subset of patients whose diseases may behave differently from their pediatric or adult counterparts and therefore really need to be classified into their own group," notes Danielle Blair, an Adolescent and Young Adult Program Nurse Navigator at the Children's Cancer Institute and John Theurer Cancer Center in New Jersey's Hackensack University Medical Center.

Challenges

Adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer patients face distinctive challenges, both physically and emotionally.

"These patients are living in an incredible time of transition and life milestones. They may be in school, either high school, college or even graduate school. They're learning to be functioning adults, which includes learning independence, problem-solving skills, social interactions, financial responsibilities, etc. They may be starting new careers or moving away from home. They're developing relationships, friendships or romantic relationships, for example, and may be even creating families," Blair says. "All of this comes to a screeching halt when you add a cancer diagnosis into the picture."

As a result, Blair says, the experience can be very isolating. AYA patients may experience depression and anxiety, as well as concerns about fertility (related to treatment) and finances.

While the five-year survival rates for children and older adults with cancer diagnoses have drastically improved over the last 30 years, survival rates in the AYA population have remained relatively unchanged due to a number of factors specific to that population.



For example, AYA patients often experience a delay in diagnosis, which can result in a cancer that is later-stage, and thus more difficult to treat and cure. This can happen because adolescents and young adults may not know their family medical history, including any predisposition to cancer. They may not recognize cancer symptoms, either. A lack of medical insurance, or discomfort talking to medical professionals can also come into play. In addition, AYA patients may not adhere to the medical treatment plan, and low AYA participation rates in research-based clinical trials translates into a lack of data to use in developing newer, better treatment options.

AYA-specific care

Fortunately, as the medical community and general public have become more aware of the distinct needs of the AYA population, more facilities are developing designated AYA cancer programs to address them.

"These [AYA cancer] programs serve as a bridge between adult and pediatric centers in order to fill known gaps in AYA care and to provide age appropriate, as well as medically appropriate, care," Blair says.

According to Blair, an integrative and "full team approach to cancer care," which exists in many pediatric cancer programs and includes services like creative arts and financial and family support, is a good model for developing AYA-focused programs.

"To effectively support the AYA population, collaboration between pediatric and adult centers will be key, as these patients will be cared for in either setting depending on a variety of factors such as diagnosis, treatment plan, and research study availability, as well as age and geographic location," she says.

AYA cancer care in Oklahoma

If you live in Oklahoma, there are several medical facilities with AYA-specific cancer programs or AYA support integrated into their services. The OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center, 800 NE 10th St., Oklahoma City (and recently expanded to the Schusterman Center on the OU Health Tulsa campus), is the state's only National Cancer Institute-Designated Cancer Center. The Oklahoma Children's Hospital Jimmy Everest Center in Oklahoma City provides specialized pediatric cancer care, including diagnosis for cancer conditions in children and teens. More at ouhealth.com.

Saint Francis Children's Hospital in Tulsa also provides pediatric and adolescent cancer care. The Hospital's pediatric hematology/oncology outpatient clinic is an affiliate of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. More at saintfrancis.com.

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



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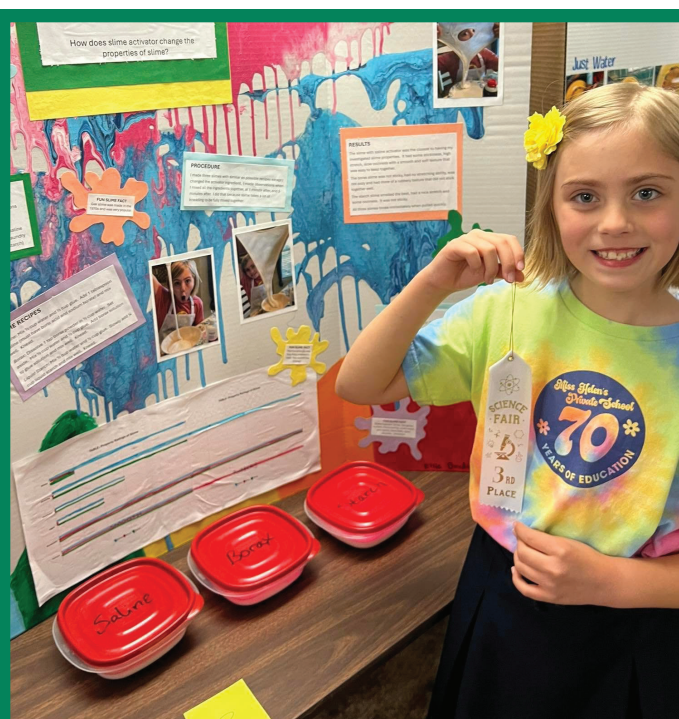
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Couple Builds a Loving Family Through Adoption



By **Nancy A. Moore**

To honor National Adoption Month, we're introducing you to Jackie and Chad Potter. For this couple, the path to building their family began with heartbreak, but, ultimately, they found hope through adoption. As high school sweethearts, they dreamed of starting a family early in their marriage; however, they faced unimaginable loss before discovering that adoption wasn't just an option—it was their calling. And interestingly, the idea of adoption was very familiar because Jackie herself was adopted at age 2.

TK: Can you share a little about your journey—what first led you to consider adoption?

Jackie: Chad and I were high school sweethearts and married right out of college, at 22 and 23 years old. We decided right away that we were ready to start our family. Things didn't necessarily go as planned, and I had a late miscarriage at 20 weeks. Due to a variety of concerns with the pregnancy, Chad and I decided to look into adoption to form our family, which fortunately was a very natural option for us. My stepdad adopted me at 2 years old, so it was already part of who I was, so it just made sense that this would now be our path.

TK: Every adoption story is unique—what has been the most surprising or unexpected part of yours?

Jackie: For us, the most unexpected part of our story is how quickly everything happened.

Chad is Native American and because of the Indian Child Welfare Act, Native American children are placed in Native American families. We called Chad's Indian card our golden ticket. Within our adoption agency, there were very few Indian families, so we were often called to see if they could share about our family.

We were chosen for our oldest child after waiting for only one month. He was such a welcome gift after losing our first child at six weeks to a failed adoption. Our second child came to us when we were not even expecting her and didn't even have our application in to adopt. She was a great surprise, putting our first and second kids only 18 months apart.

Several years later we decided to put our application back in, and we were chosen again. After five beautiful months together, we tragically lost him to SIDS. We thought after losing him that our adoption journey was finished, but little did we know, there was more to come for our story.

Our third and fourth babies came to us in an interesting way. In January of 2014, we were chosen for our fourth baby and two weeks later we were chosen for our third baby, who was already born. We met our third baby's birth mom one afternoon, and by 5:30 that evening, she was in my arms. She was only 8 weeks old. Only two months later, our fourth baby, we lovingly refer to as



Chad and Jackie Potter
Photo by Abby Graves Photography

our Potter caboose, arrived. Our last two children are a little over four months apart. Each of the children's stories are so unique and precious in their own way.

TK: What have been some of the biggest challenges you've faced, and how have you overcome them?

Jackie: Looking back, there were so many hurdles and obstacles in our adoption journey; however, I wouldn't change a thing. I'm afraid if I told my younger self of the tragedy that lies ahead, I may not have taken the next step. Over the course of creating our family, we've lost six babies, two to late miscarriages, three to failed adoption and one baby to SIDS.

In the beginning of our adoption journey, we had so many fears and wondered if anyone would like our Lifebook? (The Lifebook is a book presented to birth families so they can get to know you.) Would a birth mom actually choose us to raise her baby? Would we be able to love the baby as if it were biologically ours? Would we attach? Would the baby attach? After a placement is made, then the ultimate fear sets in: Will our birth mom change her mind? So many questions

and zero answers. Fear of the unknown was, at times, torture.

However, pushing through every fear and challenge has led to beautiful redemption in the end. We now have four beautiful children who are ours forever.

TK: What are some of the greatest joys or most rewarding moments you've experienced as an adoptive parent?

Jackie: We've been blessed with 10 children. One stayed for six weeks; two stayed for only 10 days; two went straight to heaven; one blessed us with nearly five months of joy before going to heaven, while four more fill our home with all kinds of craziness every day, forever. The absolute best part of being an adoptive parent is them, the four children that made us parents and call us mom and dad. The best part is just being a typical family with sports, school, family dinners, holidays etc. Without adoption, none of this would have been possible.

TK: What kind of support—emotional, practical or community—made the biggest difference for your family during the adoption process?

Jackie: Our family and friends were our biggest fans, our number one supporters and constant encouragers. They carried us through the deepest valleys and celebrated with us on every win. They sat, cried and prayed with us. They delivered many dinners, threw baby showers and spoiled the babies with clothes and gifts. We were covered by our family and friends and encouraged by them every step of the way!

TK: National Adoption Month is about raising awareness—what message would you most like to share with others considering adoption?

Jackie: If you're considering adoption, I hope you realize that desire was placed on your heart for a reason. My hope and prayer is that you act on this nudging! It's up to you to take the next step, make the phone call, fill out the paperwork. Nothing comes easy in life, why would it be any different for building your family? I encourage you to follow your heart and let God do His work in your life.

TK: What else would you like to share?

Jackie: I'm an open book. If I can answer questions for you or be a sounding board and just listen, I'm here for it. My email is jackie@jpottercollective.com. I'd love to hear from you!

To listen to the full interview, check out the *Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast with Nancy Moore* on your favorite podcasting platform or directly at NancyMoore.co and select Podcast.

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



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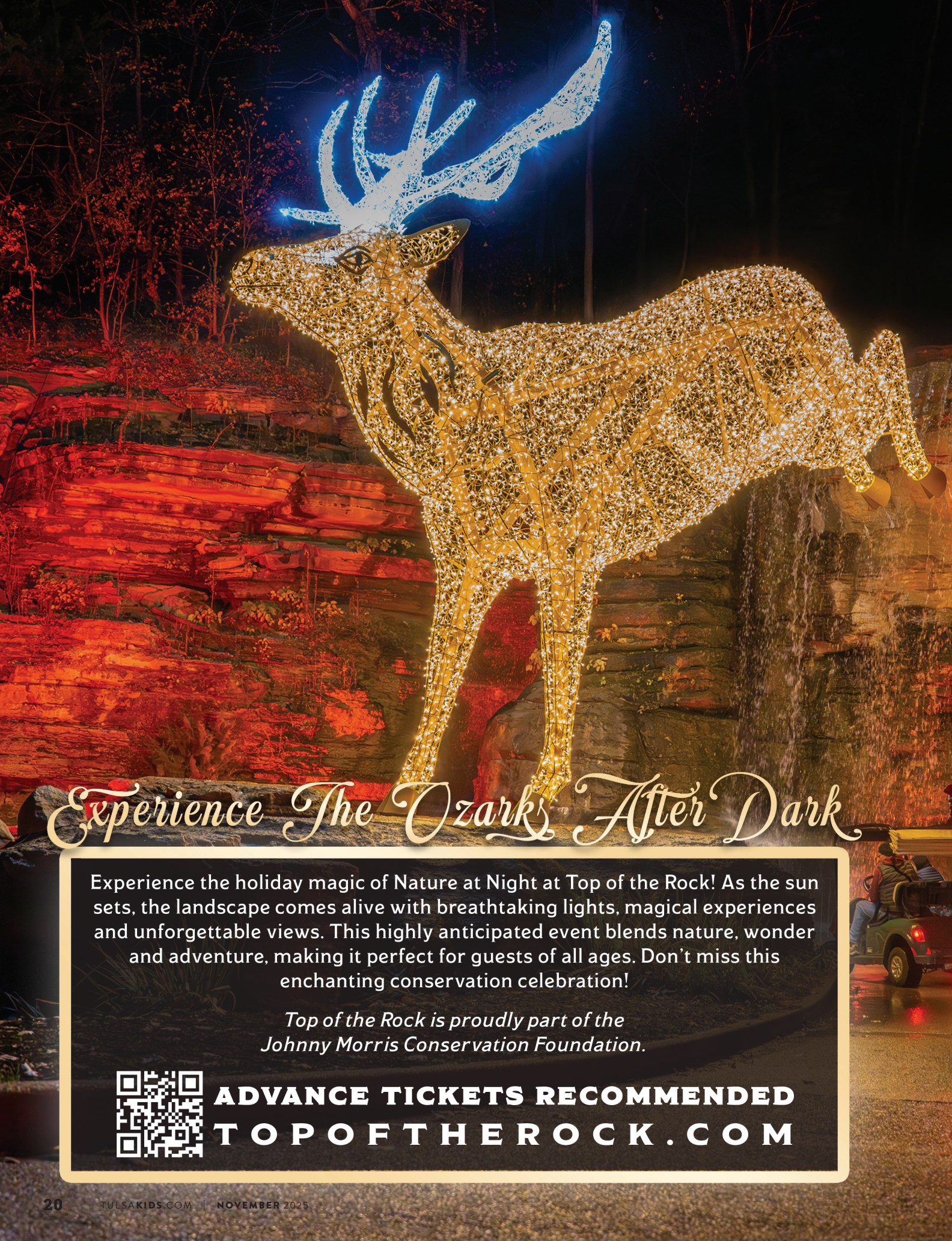
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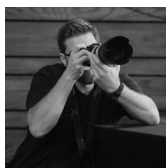
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Local Children's Musician Uses Music to Share Joy – and Hardships

Symon Hajjar's songwriting has helped him process and share the complex emotions of his cancer diagnosis.



By **Art Haddaway**

Symon Hajjar's passion for songwriting has been instrumental in his road to recovery.

The 44-year-old Tulsa native is embracing his longtime role as a children's musician to overcome a rectal cancer diagnosis he received in May.

Symon has faced an uphill battle, but humming tunes and penning lyrics in between hospital visits over the past several months have helped him stay a step ahead of the hardships.

"My knee-jerk reaction is to just stuff it down or to crawl in a hole," Symon said. "Music pulls me out of that. Music allows me to put hard feelings into a beautiful song and then to share it with others."

Four years before his diagnosis, Symon was performing his first gig as Hot Toast Music Company, a specialized band he created for children that would eventually propel him to local stardom among young audiences.

Hot Toast inspires, teaches, and connects with children through live, interactive experiences to "create the ultimate mixtape for growing up," according to the band's mission statement.

The group uses unique sounds, props, imagery and other fun tools to engage with kids on a deeper level, giving them an opportunity to express themselves through the show's lively lyrics – a concept that Symon first adopted as a music teacher at B'nai Emunah Preschool in Tulsa.

"I would try to mimic and amplify as much of their perspective and their world of play that I could in the music, and it just became

really exciting and an endless source of inspiration for me," Symon said of his students. "It's something fresh, a different way of seeing things."

Symon's knack for novel tunes didn't stop at the classroom, however. He, alongside his wife, Princess, have gleaned even more creative ideas for new melodies at home from their two sons, Ezra, 8, and Isaac, 10, who have helped steer the topics of each chorus and verse.

"In a way, they're like a compass," Symon said. "They are the experts at some of the things that are the most important like kindness, generosity, gentleness, getting along ... but through the lens of childhood wisdom and innocence."

Princess added, "There's so many individual situations happening in the world with specific nuances and complications. As our kids are getting older, it's just continuing to use music or songwriting as a way to have those conversations."

Symon's ability to foster that open dialogue through music has ultimately expanded Hot Toast into the popular program it is today, boasting hundreds of humorous and heartening songs across multiple albums and thousands of followers throughout the Tulsa area.

That growth also came with a busy schedule, with Symon regularly booking a full lineup of crowded gigs, "playing multiple shows every day, upwards of 300 concerts a year," he said.

His plans to continue that trend, however, suddenly paused at the beginning of the summer when he received unexpected news

that he had colorectal cancer – a diagnosis that led him to undergo four major surgeries in less than two months.

"I felt healthy, so the diagnosis definitely came as a shock," he said. "By the time the second surgery came along, it was apparent that I was going to need to cancel everything for my summer, which was over 100 concerts."

What was slated to be Symon's busiest season to date turned into his slowest, trading his time performing on a stage with that of recovering in a hospital bed.

His tour indefinitely halted, Symon shifted gears to focus on traveling between both Ascension St. John Medical Center and Oklahoma Cancer Specialists and Research Institute in Tulsa as well as MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

Within a short period of time from May to July, complications that "became a bigger and bigger deal as we went along," he said, continued to arise.

Enduring everything from sepsis to a hematoma to an emergency ileostomy, Symon's longest time admitted to the hospital was 29 straight days.

More obstacles also meant he would have to spend more time away from writing and performing his music – around 90 days in total.

"That three months where I couldn't play is the longest I've gone in 24 years," Symon said. "I mean, I've literally done it every single day of my life since I was 19 years old. I'm always writing, and so to have that taken from me

during that time was really hard."

Princess added, "The hospital experience was a lot. I knew I couldn't just say, 'It'll be fine, you'll be back at it in no time,' because we just don't know those things. It can be hard to deal with."

Symon also faced several rounds of chemotherapy – six in all, as of November – which contributed to his piling stress amid the ongoing difficulties, including forgetfulness and trouble focusing as a result of the treatments.

The Hajjars didn't give up, however. With each uphill step, the married couple of 15 years grew closer together, embraced their faith, and held onto hope that Symon's songwriting would eventually return, even if it was one lyric at a time.

"Since chemo, I've had thousands of little voice notes and just scribbling things on paper," he said. "Any time a thought pops in my mind, I know it's going to be gone immediately, so I have to write everything down."

Princess closely walked alongside her husband as he struggled to relearn old songs and create and memorize new ones in between appointments. But every recording and pen stroke served as another reminder that Symon's heart for music and reaching others through his craft was far from fading out.

"I think it was just remarkable to feel like there was still weight to the art that he had made thus far," Princess said. "It was wild to see how much he missed it, and this was still what he wanted to do. It was like, 'This has been meaningful; it still is.'"



Photo by Austin Smith

By the end of July, Symon was able to pick his guitar back up and slowly begin combining chords and melodies to create new sounds to the tune of a renewed spirit.

"There's this anxiety of, 'Is it (my music) gone?' And then when it was still there, it was just a burst of hope," he said.

Symon took that inspiration to write about a dozen new songs, including one of his favorites titled, "Am I Still Myself?" which addresses the concepts of identity and loss.

"It's just this idea that we have all these measures for how we identify ourselves," he said, "and so much of it is tied to the things we do or create, sometimes the jobs we have, or the opinions we have, and in the hospital, those things were all stripped away from me.

"I was left thinking, 'OK, well, who am I without all these things?' And what I found is that I was still myself and that my art flowed out of the person that I was and not vice versa. So, I think that

since being able to play again, it has helped me process my own grief and melancholy through the situation."

Princess echoed her husband's sentiments, particularly as it relates to many of the tracks that he wrote prior to receiving his cancer diagnosis.

"I think we felt so grateful for the songs because so many of them focus on how to process emotions and how to deal with hard things and giving yourself grace and giving yourself space, and those are so needed now," she said.

Thankfully, the Hajjars haven't had to navigate that range of feelings alone. Their friends and family, along with many of Symon's devoted followers, have rallied around them with an outpouring of prayers, encouragement and support over the past several months.

"So many families of Hot Toast fans, the kids that I played for all these years, really came to our rescue, showing up at the hospital, bringing us supplies when we

Colorectal Cancer on the Rise in Younger People: What You Should Know

Information from Dr. Bryce Murray (colon and rectal surgery, Surgical Associates/Oklahoma Surgical Hospital):

There definitely has been an increase in the incidents of colorectal cancer in younger individuals. We've seen that probably for the last 10 years, enough so that the screening recommendations have changed. About two years ago, the screening age for colon cancer was 50; it's now down to 45. So asymptomatic people who are 45 are now recommended to have some screening modality for colorectal cancer because of the incidents in younger people.

The reason we do screening for colon cancer is that oftentimes it's asymptomatic until it's present or it's become more pronounced or at a more advanced stage, so that's why we do screening because we want to catch polyps before they become cancer.

For people that are young, the concerning symptoms would be bleeding or a change in bowel function. If you have symptoms like rectal bleeding, it needs to be evaluated with a colonoscopy or some other modality to make sure it's not something more ominous.

For colonoscopy, you start at age 45, and then if that colonoscopy is normal and you don't have any other risk factors like family history, then it would be every 10 years. If you have other risk factors, if you have a family history of colon cancer, or a personal history of polyps or other disease, then that frequency gets dropped down to five years or less.

We're not really sure why there's been this increase (of colorectal cancer) in younger people. I think the concern is that it's got to be something in our environment, we're just not entirely sure what it is.

I think there could be more awareness. Because of social media, I think we do hear more conversations about it, but I definitely think there could be more awareness on the topic.

didn't have them, just being on call for any kind of advice and advocating for us," Symon said. "I think that has been incredibly humbling ... just this circle of connectivity and community."

Princess added, "There have been so many little experiences that just absolutely make all of this bearable. It's just been unreal how much people gave and supported us in all of this."

Rounding the corner to recovery, Symon recently completed chemotherapy and is awaiting the results from various cancer tests to greenlight him for a low-risk or remission status.

In the meantime, he is continuing to put pen to paper on new material, playing for small crowds of his friends and family, and posting brief updates and catchy jingles on his social media pages. He's also planning to release a new album and a new book sometime in the coming months.

"I've done so much with music, and I think one thing I've taken away from this experience is that

I just really want to share it more," Symon said. "These are a very human experiences, and music allows me to be present in it and not run away from it, because I think there is deep meaning in our suffering."

Through it all, Symon is simply focused on making kids smile through silly songs that carry soul-stirring messages — tying it all back to one of Hot Toast's core tenets: "If it sparks a child's imagination or piques their curiosity, then it's a song waiting to be written."

For more information about Hot Toast Music Company, visit their [Facebook page](#), [Instagram \(@hottoastmusicco\)](#) or [website at hottoastmusic.com](#).



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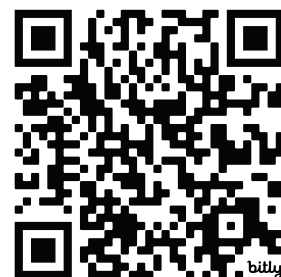
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Be SafER-

Emergency Room Insight for The Holiday Season



By **Macy Goodnight**

Holiday revelry is top of mind for most people in the latter months of the year, and no one really wants to consider the possibility of ending up in the emergency room during a season of celebration. According to Mark Blubaugh, D.O., medical director of Tulsa ER and Hospital, prioritizing safety and wellness at the forefront of festivities will help to make everyone's season brighter.

Emergency rooms typically experience a slight surge in visits due to holiday-related injuries, accidents and illnesses at this time of year, with respiratory diseases leading the list.

"Respiratory infections like COVID and the flu top the list as the flu season hits," Dr. Blubaugh said. "It is more prevalent as people tend to stay indoors in more close contact during the winter months. GI-related issues are also prevalent."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that influenza activity last year during the flu season was classified as the highest and most severe since 2017-2018. "We recommend getting your flu shots and obviously good hand hygiene; wash your hands frequently," Dr. Blubaugh advised. "Don't drink after anybody. Masks are going to be a personal preference, but the mask is actually fairly effective against the flu virus."

A good multivitamin can also be helpful. Vitamin C is the most common supplement to support immunity; however, studies suggest that vitamin D can also benefit and support a healthy immune response, including reducing the risk and severity of inflammatory and infectious conditions. Vitamin D has additionally been shown to contribute to improved emotional and mental well-being.

"Another thing to consider is seasonal affective disorder. The days are shorter and there is less sunlight available, and this does affect adults and kids as well," Dr. Blubaugh said. "Get outside as much as possible, get good exercise and proper sleep."

The weather in Oklahoma often sees extreme changes, even day to day or hour to hour. "As we start to see more weather, temperature and barometric pressure changes, these can really affect people with chronic respiratory illnesses like asthma and COPD, and can cause flare-ups," Dr. Blubaugh said. "As we get later into the winter months, we have more cool, dry air, which can again irritate people with these conditions. A humidifier in your room can help with those issues."

Underlying heart issues can sometimes be exposed during the holiday season, with many factors contributing to a visit to the emergency room.

"We see some cardiac issues unmasked by people who get out and exert themselves, raking leaves or shoveling snow, where they might not have had issues before," Dr. Blubaugh noted. "Prevention is always the key with that. Regular checkups with your doctor are important. If you are of the age and have risk factors for heart disease, see a cardiologist and have an exercise stress test done as a first find."

Taking steps to lead a healthy lifestyle is essential throughout the year, but being vigilant about preventing illness during this season will help to ensure it is not spent unnecessarily in the hospital.

EDITOR'S NOTE: FIND PART II OF THIS ARTICLE IN OUR DECEMBER ISSUE.



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Q&A with
Tammi Lahr, DO
PEDIATRICIAN WITH SAINT FRANCIS CHILDREN'S PHYSICIANS

What are the most important signs of ADHD in children?
It's more than just being "busy." We look for impairment at home and school. For younger kids, that might mean climbing on tables during reading time; for older kids, it could be forgetting assignments or constant distraction. The key is impairment across settings.

How much is genetic vs. environmental?
About 1 in 4 kids with ADHD have a parent with ADHD, showing a strong genetic link. Environmental risks include prenatal nicotine or alcohol exposure, lead, recurrent concussions, and early-life stress or instability.

What are the most effective treatments?
Treatment usually combines therapy and medication. Counseling is especially effective in younger kids, but stimulant medications remain the most proven intervention. Families' comfort levels guide whether we start with therapy, medication or both.

What daily strategies help?

- Keep consistent routines.
- Limit distractions during focus times.
- Organize spaces to reduce lost items.
- Use rewards to reinforce positive behavior.
- Set small, clear goals with checklists.
- Keep instructions brief.
- Limit choices for young children.
- Use calm, consistent discipline.
- Partner with teachers for support.

What myths exist about ADHD?
Many think kids are lazy or poorly disciplined, when in fact they often try hard but struggle to focus. Others believe medication "cures" ADHD—it doesn't. Parents may also wonder why kids focus on video games but not chores; fun activities stimulate the brain differently than schoolwork. ADHD is not bad parenting.

What resources are available?
Trusted sites include healthychildren.org (from the American Academy of Pediatrics) and understood.org. Depending on insurance and location, schools and community therapists can also be valuable supports.

Does ADHD improve with age?
During puberty, about one-third improve, one-third stay the same, and one-third may need more support. Around 80-85% of children with ADHD continue to experience symptoms into adulthood, though needs vary.

Where should parents start if concerned?
Begin with your child's healthcare provider. Pediatricians are trained to diagnose, treat and connect families with resources.

For the complete interview, visit TulsaKids.com
If you have questions for a Saint Francis Children's Physicians provider to answer, please email editor@tulsakids.com



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My Mother Hid Her Cancer Diagnosis from Me - I made a different choice with my own children

By **Gina Rich**

In the summer of 1998, I returned home after a yearlong college study abroad program. One day as my mother and I were catching up, the conversation took an odd shift. "I need to tell you about a little medical problem I had while you were away," she said.

"What problem?" I said. I hadn't noticed anything amiss with her health.

"Well," she said, sounding sheepish. "Breast cancer."

Over the next few days, the truth dribbled out. My mother had been diagnosed shortly after the holidays. She'd undergone two surgeries and radiation. And everyone else — from my younger siblings to the cantor at our church — had known for months.

My mom was no helicopter parent. But this decision was different: She wanted to protect me from worry and all its ramifications. As she put it, "We were afraid if we told you, you'd freak out and fly home."

After learning the truth, I thought back to my time abroad, now shaded with the reality of my mom's illness. While I was hopping on trains and practicing Austrian dialect, my mother had been recovering from surgeries and meeting with a small army of doctors. I imagined her sitting up in bed, bandages across her chest as she composed cheerful e-mails to me on the laptop my father had brought to the hospital. I remembered calling home one random spring day and feeling surprised to hear my grandmother's voice. Why was she in California, not home in Illinois?

"Is everything OK?" I asked.

"Of course! Everything is fine," she told me.

I felt angry and betrayed when I realized my parents — and even my extended family — had lied to me. And I couldn't shake the thought that my parents had decided I wasn't mature or stable enough to cope.

When parents lie, the underlying message is, "You can't handle the truth," says Wendy S. Harpham, M.D., author of "When a Parent Has Cancer: A Guide to Caring for Your Children." Diagnosed with cancer when her children were 1, 3 and 5 years old, Harpham says her perspective as an internal medicine physician guided her decision to be honest from the beginning. "I had patients who, as children, had been lied to, and some reacted in very maladaptive ways to signs of illness or having illness," she says.

While there is a powerful instinct to protect children from upsetting news and the pain it causes, hiding a diagnosis can backfire. "Children's brains are wired to draw conclusions based on what they see, hear and know," Harpham says. "If they're seeing stuff without context, without explanation, they are going to draw conclusions which may be worse than what is the truth."

In the years following my mother's illness, I worried constantly about her prognosis, even when she told me everything was going well. And while I've always struggled with generalized anxiety, as an adult I've found health anxiety is my biggest challenge.



Gina Rich with her mom

How to Tell the Kids

Since her diagnosis, Harpham has worked to raise awareness among clinicians and patients about the challenges of survivorship, including caring for children when a parent has cancer. When telling kids about a serious illness, Harpham advises two steps: First, accept that the illness has entered your life. Second, choose to use the unwanted experience positively.

By being honest, "parents can shape the child's understanding of what is going on, of what to do. They can guide the child to healthy responses, to a healthy perspective," she says.

When breaking the news, offer compassion rather than pity. "Compassion is when you help the children feel heard and help them through, whereas pity disempowers them," Harpham says.

Be prepared for any reaction, from an emotional outburst to apparent indifference. On one occasion, Harpham's daughter stormed out the door after hearing bad news. While painful to witness, such reactions represent a normal, healthy response, Harpham says. They indicate the child understands the significance of what's happening and feels safe enough to show you they need comfort. Keep in mind that a child who reacts calmly at first may need support later.

Harpham encourages parents to focus on kids' fundamental needs, whether the children are toddlers or teenagers. Do children have transportation to school, soccer practice and piano lessons? Do they know they'll be cared for amid the crisis, even though some household routines are changing?

It's also important for kids to have a basic understanding of the parent's treatment plan, though the amount of detail will vary depending on the child. If the parent is undergoing chemotherapy, for example, a teenager may want to know more than a first grader, who may just need to understand why Mom or Dad will be more tired than usual. Harpham recalls that her middle child was fascinated by the X-rays she brought home, while her oldest only wanted to know when her mother would be away for treatment.

Regular communication is critical, not only when parents share a diagnosis, but also later as children continue to cope with its impact. "If there's open communication, you can see how they're processing," Harpham says. Children whose parents have faced cancer are acutely aware that life is fragile, she adds. "If you don't talk about it, if they just experience the uncertainty and the fragility, it's a recipe for anxiety."

Even if adults didn't tell the truth about an illness from the start, it's possible to rebuild trust. Harpham suggests that parents explain why they kept the information a secret. Maybe they did what they felt was best in a difficult situation, or a spouse or doctor advised them not to share the news. Offering an apology for the harm this caused, and asking what children need in order to move forward, is also a good idea. While nothing

can change the past, parents can commit to keeping children in the loop going forward.

A Different Path

My mother passed away in 2004. While we didn't discuss the impact of her decision, I've never doubted that she loved me and wanted the best for me. But in 2022, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I wanted to handle things differently. A few days after my diagnosis, my husband and I sat down to tell our daughters, then 13 and 11 years old. There were tears and hugs as each reacted in her own way.

In that moment, I knew I'd stolen a piece of my children's innocence, changing their worlds irrevocably. But over time, my daughters have learned to cope with the reality of cancer in their family. My oldest has volunteered for the same breast cancer support organization where I serve as a board member and peer mentor. She talks about becoming a mentor herself one day so she can be a resource for other kids. My youngest raises awareness with her friends about how peer support helps breast cancer survivors.

Today, when my daughters share their fears about developing breast cancer, I tell them I hope they'll never be diagnosed, but that I understand their worries. We talk about the options they'll have if needed, from earlier screenings to treatments that we can't even fathom today.

"The greatest gift we can give our children is not protection from the world, but the confidence and tools to cope and grow," Harpham says. To the adage, "the truth sets you free," she adds this caveat: "Even if it hurts when you learn it. Even if it hurts when you share it."

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LOCAL RESOURCES

The Tristesse Grief Center, thegriefcenter.org. One-on-one, couple, family and group counseling for adults, children and teens.

Pediatric Cancer Care. A Child Life Specialist can assist when talking to your child about their disease. saintfrancis.com

Family & Children's Services Support Groups, fcsok.org.

Oklahoma Family Network, oklahomafamilynetwork.org. Has a directory of resources.

CLIMB Support Group, saintfrancis.com. An emotional support program for children and adolescents, ages 6-18, whose parents are diagnosed with cancer.



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A Delicious Way to Learn Native Culture



By **Natalie Mikles**

Fall is a season for gathering, cooking and telling stories. It's the perfect time to explore the foods that connect us to the past. For many Native American families, food isn't just about what's on the table. It's about the land, the seasons and the stories passed down from one generation to the next. Teaching kids about Native foods offers families a way to celebrate tradition while learning about the people who first grew the foods we love.

For Sand Springs teacher Stacy Clipp, sharing Native American culture with her students often starts with something familiar—food. As a member of the Cherokee Nation and an Indian Education teacher for Sand Springs Public Schools, Clipp uses traditional foods to spark curiosity and conversation. Through the smells, tastes and stories that come with traditional foods, she helps students see that Native culture isn't something from the past, but rather something living and shared today.

In her own family, digging and frying wild onions is a cherished routine passed down through generations. It's both a family custom and a beloved Cherokee tradition—one that brings people together to share in the work, the laughter and the satisfaction of preparing food from the land. It's a chance for families to connect, share stories and be together.

For classroom lessons, Clipp ties food to storytelling, especially during the fall when she teaches about the Three Sisters: corn, beans and squash. One of her favorite books to use in teaching this unit is "The Three Sisters Garden."

"The Three Sisters Garden' and story is a vital part of Native American life: past, present and future," Clipp said.

One of her favorite ways to make that lesson come alive is through a simple classroom craft of beaded corn. Using pipe cleaners and beads, students create colorful ears of corn while learning about the importance of corn to Native communities. This fun and hands-on project can easily be done at home, particularly in the days leading up to Thanksgiving. It's a way for parents to talk with their kids about the early Native Americans who grew and relied on corn.

A Delicious Way to Learn

For families wanting to explore Native foods together, fall is the perfect time. Corn, beans and squash—the Three Sisters—can all be used to prepare a meal while learning the story behind them.

Families don't need special ingredients or elaborate recipes to make Native food traditions meaningful. Try roasting corn, making a simple bean stew or reading a children's book about the Three Sisters while dinner is cooking. These small activities help kids see that Native culture isn't something far away or long ago, but rather woven into everyday life.

Whether through a bowl of wild onions, a story told from a kernel of corn's point of view or a handful of beads strung together by small fingers, Native culture is worth discovering and exploring together.



Slate Tiger, a Sand Springs student, learns about Native foods and stories in teacher Stacy Clipp's class.

Stacy recommends these books for sharing Native American culture with children.

"Fry Bread" by Kevin Maillard

A warm and beautifully illustrated picture book that celebrates the modern and historical meaning of fry bread—a food born from hardship but transformed into a symbol of resilience and togetherness.

"Keepunumuk: Weeachumun's Thanksgiving Story" by Danielle Greendeer, Anthony Perry and Alexis Bunten

Told from the perspective of the corn itself, this story shares a Native view of the first Thanksgiving, teaching respect for the land and for each other.

"Itse Selu: The Cherokee Harvest Festival" by Daniel Pennington

A look at the importance of corn in Cherokee culture, paired with lively illustrations and activities. Perfect for pairing with a corn craft at home or school.

This recipe, from the Cherokee National Tribal Youth Council and Cherokee Nation Public Health Program, is a good one to make with kids.

Cherokee Bean Bread

- 2 tablespoons bacon drippings or vegetable oil
 - 2 cups yellow or white cornmeal
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
 - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 1 ½ cups milk
 - 2 cups cooked, drained pinto beans
1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place bacon drippings or oil in 10-inch cast iron skillet or 9-inch pan, and place in oven to heat.
 2. In a medium size bowl, stir together cornmeal, salt, baking powder and cayenne pepper (if desired).
 3. In a separate bowl, combine eggs and milk.
 4. Stir wet mixture in dry mixture. Drain beans, and spoon into batter.
 5. Remove hot pan from oven, pour batter in pan and bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

This comforting soup is just what you want on a cool day. If your kids are meat lovers, you can start this soup by cooking 1/2-1 pound ground beef, which adds even more flavor and richness.

Three Sisters Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter
 - 1 small onion, chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 medium carrot, chopped
 - 2 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
 - ½ teaspoon ground cumin
 - ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, with juices
 - 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
 - 2 cups corn kernels (fresh, frozen or canned)
 - 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans or kidney beans, drained and rinsed
 - 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
 - Fresh cilantro or parsley
1. In a large soup pot, heat olive oil or butter over medium heat. Add onion and carrot and cook 4-5 minutes or until softened. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute more.
 2. Add cubed squash, cumin, smoked paprika, salt and pepper. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 3. Pour in broth and diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 10-15 minutes, until the squash is tender.
 4. Stir in corn, pinto beans and black beans. Simmer another 5-10 minutes to heat through and allow flavors to blend. Add more salt or seasoning if needed.
 5. Ladle into bowls and garnish with fresh herbs. Serve with cornbread or warm rolls.



This fall twist on traditional Native fry bread uses pumpkin for flavor and color. It's soft on the inside and lightly sweet.

Pumpkin Fry Bread

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons sugar
 - ½ cup canned pumpkin puree
 - ½ cup warm water (approximately)
 - Oil for frying (vegetable or canola)
 - Honey, maple syrup or cinnamon sugar for serving
1. In a large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, salt and sugar.
 2. Add pumpkin puree and warm water (you may need more or less than the ½ cup), stirring until a soft dough forms. The dough should be slightly sticky but not wet. Add a little more flour or water if needed.
 3. Cover with a towel and let rest for 20-30 minutes. This helps it relax and fry evenly.
 4. Heat 1-2 inches of oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat, around 350 degrees. Divide dough into 6-8 balls. Flatten each ball with your hands into a circle about ¼-inch thick (around 5 inches wide). You can poke a small hole in the center to help it cook evenly.
 5. Fry each piece 1-2 minutes per side until golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels. Serve warm with honey, maple syrup or cinnamon sugar.

Grape dumplings were traditionally made from wild "possum grapes." But grape juice from the grocery store is a good substitute today. Share in making this version from the Chickasaw Nation with your kids or grandkids.

Grape Dumplings

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 egg
 - 1 ¼ cups water
 - 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 - 64 ounces grape juice
 - Sugar, to taste
1. Place flour in a heap on countertop. Make a well in center of flour and crack an egg in center. Using a fork, begin mixing the egg into the flour and add water as you go. Form the dough into a ball and roll out very thin. Cut into 1-inch squares.
 2. In a large pot place grape juice and sugar to taste. Bring to a rolling boil. Drop dumplings into boiling grape juice.
 3. Mix 1 tablespoon cornstarch in 1 cup water. Add to hot grape juice. Cook for a few minutes and serve hot.





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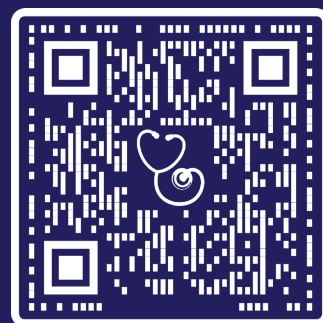


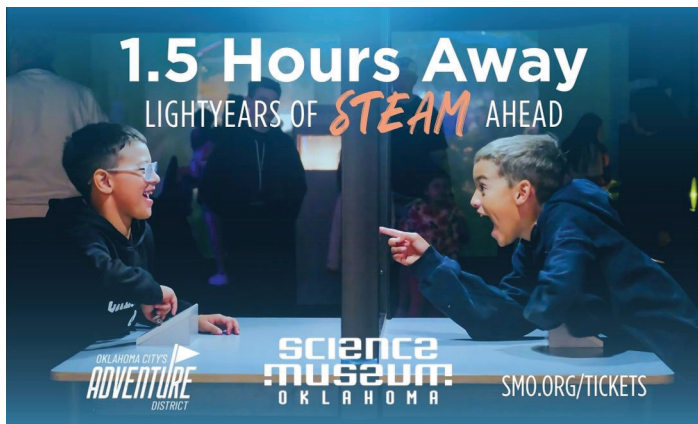
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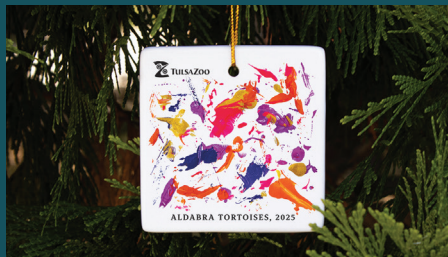
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Resourceful Books for Kids About Loss and Grieving

By **Tanni Haas, Ph.D.**



Death is an inherent and unavoidable part of life, but that doesn't make it any less challenging for parents to discuss with their kids. Coming up December 2–8 is National Grief Awareness Week, a suitable occasion for parents to broach this important but difficult topic. Here are some of the best books about loss and grieving for toddlers, young kids, tweens and teens.

Books For Toddlers (2-4 years old)

"Something Very Sad Happened," by Bonnie Zucker; (Magination Press)

Toddlers have a hard time understanding the finality of death: that someone they loved and cared for, and who loved and cared for them in turn, is no longer there. In "Something Very Sad Happened," Bonnie Tucker does a good job of explaining, in language that toddlers can understand, what death means and what it feels like when someone passes. Toddlers learn that it's normal to feel sad and cry when someone has died. Key words in the story are highlighted in red to encourage parents to insert the name and pronoun of people who may have passed in their own family.

At the end of the book is a useful note to parents with further information about how to talk to kids about death, guidelines for answering their questions, advice for attending funerals and visiting cemeteries with kids, and ideas for commemorating loved ones. The author, Dr. Bonnie Zucker, is a psychologist who's written many other books for and about children.

Books For Young Kids (5-8 years old)

"I Miss You," by Pat Thomas; (Turtleback Books)

Written with a slightly older audience in mind, this book in rhymes also does a good job of explaining to kids the nature of loss and grieving. In simple and straightforward language, the book focuses on the physical aspects of what happens to the body when someone passes (their body organs stop functioning), and the different reasons why people die (accidents, sickness, old age).

The author, Pat Thomas, is a psychotherapist who works in the field of child development. The book is part of the 40-volume "A First Look At" series for young kids, all written by Pat Thomas. Other titles in this series on mental health and well-being explore topics like bullying, conflict resolution, honesty, respect and sibling rivalry.

Books For Tweens (9-12 years old)

"How I Feel," by Mia Rolden; (Callisto Kids)

For tweens, who typically do understand what death entails, there's more of a need for books that can help them through the grieving process after a loved one has passed. "How I Feel," a grief journal with guided writing prompts specifically aimed at tweens, fills that need. Divided into three major parts – "Explore Your Feelings," "Create Comfort," and "Find Peace" – the book prompts tweens to reflect on and write about topics like the source of their grief and what caused it, people in their lives who truly understand them and might be able to help them while they're grieving, and places that give them comfort and allow them to find a sense of peace.

The author, Mia Roldan, is a mental health counselor with decades of experience working with young kids and families on loss and grieving. She's the author of several other books on mental health.

Books For Teens (13 years and older)

"Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens," by Alan Wolfelt; (Companion Press)

Like "How I Feel," this book also features good advice and useful writing prompts, aimed at a more mature audience of teens. The book offers 100 different facts and action-oriented tips related to death and grieving to which readers are encouraged to respond with their personal experiences. This includes important topics such as the difference between grief (one's internal thoughts and feelings) and mourning (one's expression of those thoughts and feelings to others), and the various steps of the mourning process (acknowledging the reality of the death, embracing the pain of the loss, remembering the person who died, and receiving ongoing support from others).

The author, Dr. Alan Wolfelt, is the founder of the Center for Loss & Life Transition and one of the foremost death educators and grief counselors in North America. The book is part of the 24-volume "Healing Your Grieving Heart" series, all written by Dr. Wolfelt.

Tanni Haas, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Sciences, and Disorders at The City University of New York – Brooklyn College.

Debunking Myths About Vaccine Safety

Source: National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)



As the respiratory season gets underway and immunization guidance continues to shift, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is helping to debunk myths and misinformation around vaccines. The following information is from a NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

MYTH: There isn't enough information about the safety of vaccines.

REALITY: There is an enormous amount of scientific evidence supporting vaccine safety, reviewed by panels of experts. These reviews cover data from all age groups and special populations, ensuring that recommendations are grounded in the latest and most reliable research.

There are a number of systems in place that are monitoring both safety and the effectiveness [of vaccines] ... The Vaccine Integrity Project was really looking at a focus on evidence and what we did particularly for this season was to align a group of nationwide experts in virology, epidemiology, clinical practice and research methodology to do a massive review. "We reviewed all the peer reviewed literature where these three viruses or the disease were mentioned. It started with 17,000. It was winnowed down to a review of almost 600 that were teased out to look at, the vaccine efficacy, vaccine safety code administration, epidemiology and virology among each of the different populations here: Pediatrics and obstetrics. Other population included adults, older adults and immunocompromised. So, you can imagine the complexity of all this. But that was the basis on which the evidence review was developed so that the medical societies, in addition to the other ways that they looked at this evidence, could use that as the basis for making the recommendations that they have." – Bruce Gellin, MD, MPH (Vaccine Integrity Project), during the NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

VACCINES IN CHILDREN

MYTH: Kids are resilient and don't need COVID-19 vaccines.

REALITY: While children are often resilient, they are not immune to the risks of COVID-19. Kids, including those without underlying health conditions, can still get seriously ill, be hospitalized, or experience long-term complications from the virus.

"We really did want to emphasize the importance of getting those younger children vaccinated, because their risk of hospitalization is actually similar to the risk of hospitalization for older adults 50 to 64. And I'll say we also highly endorse ACOG's recommendation for COVID vaccination during pregnancy. Because those infants under 6 months of age have hospitalization rates similar to adults 65 to 74 years of age." – Sean O'Leary, MD, MPH (AAP), during the NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

MYTH: Kids can't get the flu and COVID-19 vaccine together.

REALITY: It is safe and effective for children to receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same visit. Studies show no increased risk and no reduction in effectiveness when vaccines are administered together.

"When vaccines are studied, they're put into common use, they're studied in combination to make sure that they're safe to give, to make sure that they don't cause one vaccine not to work as well as it should. And so, we're confident that when we give vaccines at the same time that they're both effective and they're safe." – Sean O'Leary, MD, MPH (AAP), during the NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

"The idea that kids can get too many vaccines at once is really basically a myth. The main problem is the public's like, 'we don't like, you know, nobody likes shots, right?' But it is perfectly safe to give multiple shots in a single visit." – Sean O'Leary, MD, MPH (AAP), during the NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

VACCINES IN PREGNANCY

MYTH: Babies aren't at risk for severe COVID-19.

REALITY: Babies under 6 months are at higher risk for severe COVID-19, yet they're too young to be vaccinated. Pregnant mothers can protect their babies by getting vaccinated and passing antibodies to their newborns.

"The data suggests that children less than 6 months of age have a high rate of severe illness and literally moms are the only people who can really protect them with those passive antibodies because they [children less than 6 months of age] can't be vaccinated yet." – Laura Riley, MD (ACOG), during the NFID Respiratory Season News Briefing.

MYTH: A pregnant mother getting sick with the flu isn't serious for the baby.

REALITY: Flu during pregnancy increases the risk of premature birth and complications that can have lifelong consequences for the baby. Vaccination reduces these risks, protecting both mom and baby from serious outcomes.

How to Throw a December Birthday Party Without Losing Your Mind

By **Katy M. Clark**

When my daughter was born on a cold December night, I was overwhelmed with love. I cuddled with her as my husband and I listened to Christmas music. We found an ornament in the hospital gift shop with her name on it. We dined on a Christmas dinner that year that someone else prepared.

Having a baby in December? It was better than I expected.

Fast forward 10 years and nearly as many birthday parties later. December birthdays can be sweet, but they can be hard when it comes to throwing birthday parties. Luckily, I have years of experience and 10 tips to share that will make your child's next December birthday party as fun and stress-free as possible.

1. **Plan in advance.** Everyone is busy during the holidays. There are gifts to buy, parties to attend, and special activities at school. I recommend picking a date for your party as far in advance as possible.
2. **Be flexible with your date.** Every year our town hosts a holiday parade on the Saturday closest to my daughter's birthday. The whole town goes. Thus, to avoid competing with it, we usually have her party a week or so after her birthday.

3. **Consider piggybacking on a special holiday event.** Once we took my daughter and her friends to a "Visit with Santa" event. The kids visited businesses in a shopping center collecting candy or toys before meeting Santa. The treats served as their goody bags (bonus!), and afterwards we celebrated with cake at our house. That party was one of the easiest we've had.
4. **Think right before or after the holidays.** If you can wait until the weekend before Christmas, then kids are ready to attend a birthday party. By then, they've already visited Santa, had their school party, performed in the holiday play, etc. The same goes with right after the New Year. All the holiday excitement is gone, and kids are bored—and available.
5. **Skip the week between Christmas and New Years.** Not only is it Kwanzaa, but most people are traveling or entertaining relatives.
6. **Prepare your child that not everyone can come.** One year a friend couldn't come because she was celebrating the holidays early with out-of-town family. However, it's no different from other times of the year. My oldest child has a summer birthday, and someone is always on vacation.
7. **Go full-out birthday party mode.** Yes, Christmas music blares from every stereo and the stores offer gifts galore for Hanukkah's eight nights. That makes it even more important to celebrate with a standard birthday cake and typical birthday party decorations.
8. **Prepare your child that someone may double-up on a birthday/holiday gift.** Most kids don't do this. Usually, the two-for-one gift is from a relative. It's not the end of the world.
9. **Give yourself a pep-talk.** I'm not going to lie. Planning and throwing a birthday party amidst all the other things you have to do during the holidays is hard. But we are parents. We are nothing if not strong!
10. **Remember it is your child's special day, no matter where it falls on the calendar.** I like to remind people of this fact whenever someone says, "It must be so hard having a birthday in December." Because it doesn't have to be hard, it can be awesome.

Throwing a birthday party during the holidays? It can be done without losing your mind. And, if you keep these tips handy, it can be a happy birthday indeed.

Katy M. Clark is a writer and mom of two who embraces her imperfections on her blog *Experienced Bad Mom*.





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Sign up today at

tulsakids.com/birthday-club



Unplugging Together: Tips For a Family Digital Detox Weekend

By **Shannon Dean**

Most parents can picture this scene: It's dinner time, but instead of talking about the day, everyone is glued to a device. One child is watching videos, another insists on finishing a game, and your partner is scrolling through a social media feed. The constant buzz of screens has become the soundtrack of modern family life, and it often leaves us feeling disconnected, overwhelmed and guilty.

But what if you could hit the reset button? Not with a drastic, permanent ban that sparks mutiny, but with a short, intentional break.

A digital detox weekend isn't a punishment. It's a positive experiment in rediscovering connection, creativity and calm at home. And it's short enough to be doable.

November might be the perfect time to take a weekend off – off-line and screen-free. Create some calm before the holiday chaos. You might even spend some time talking about what each family member hopes to gain from the holidays.

Why Unplugging Matters

Before we talk about how to detox, it helps to understand why screens can be so draining, and why even a 48-hour break can be powerful.

Research published in *Psychological Bulletin* found that higher screen use is linked to anxiety, depression, aggression and hyperactivity in children. One of the study's authors, Roberta Vasconcellos, explains, "The problem is that screens get in the way of learning, sleep, play and social connections that underpin healthy development."

It's a conclusion that lines up with what many families experience firsthand. Many parents notice that the rewards of unplugging are immediate and tangible. Without the constant dopamine hits from games and videos, kids' nervous systems settle, which often means fewer meltdowns and improved focus.

Bedtime also becomes smoother. Blue light from screens suppresses melatonin, the hormone that helps us fall asleep. Removing screens – especially in the evening – leads to better rest for the whole family, and a calmer mood the next day.

Setting the Stage for Success

Knowing screens can cause problems doesn't mean kids (or adults) will happily hand them over. The key to a successful detox is collaboration, not declaration. Here are some tips:

- **Call a Family Meeting.** Introduce the idea as an experiment, not a punishment. Try: "This weekend, let's see what we can do with our time if we set phones and tablets aside. What's something fun we never have time for?"
- **Define the Rules Together.** Decide what's essential (like GPS for a hike or calls to Grandma) and what's off-limits (solo gaming, YouTube, TikTok). You might agree to make one exception for a family movie night.
- **Create a Device Hotel.** Choose a central spot where all phones and tablets (yes, parents included) will stay for the weekend. A basket, box or drawer works. Out of sight, out of mind really does help, especially if you power devices down.
- **Prep in Advance.** Gather board games, puzzles, books, art supplies and sports equipment before you start. That way, when boredom hits (and it will), you're ready with options.

A Sample 48-Hour Detox Weekend

Having a loose plan can make success more likely. Here's one way to structure it:

- **Friday Night: Kickoff**
Check all devices into the "hotel" after dinner. Celebrate the start with a special dessert (build-your-own sundaes are always a hit) and a silly, high-energy game like charades, Trivial Pursuit or Pictionary to set a fun tone.
- **Saturday Morning: Get Moving**
Start with a big, screen-free breakfast, then head outside. A hike, a soccer game, or a trip to a park shifts energy and keeps everyone from missing their screens.

- **Saturday Afternoon: Embrace Boredom**
This is when kids might complain. Let them! Boredom often sparks creativity. Suggest building a blanket fort, holding a Lego challenge, or putting on music and creating something together.
- **Saturday Evening: Family Feast**
Cook dinner as a team - tacos, pizza or anything interactive. Afterward, if you agreed on it, enjoy a family movie night with popcorn. The key is that it's a shared, intentional choice. If you'd prefer not to do screens at all, go to a live performance that everyone will love.
- **Sunday Morning: Get Creative**
Pull out art supplies, bake cookies or write a silly story where each person adds a line. Keep it playful. Allow kids who love to read to get lost in stories.
- **Sunday Afternoon: One Last Adventure**
Head outdoors again for bikes, gardening or a playground visit. If your kids are resistant to the outdoors, consider an indoor play facility.
- **Sunday Evening: Reflect Together**
Over dinner, talk about the experience. Ask: What was hardest? What was most fun? What did we learn? This reflection often reveals the true value of the detox.

Expect Resistance (and Embrace It)

Let's be honest: there will be whining, especially at first. But that's the point. Screens have trained our brains to crave constant stimulation. Lean into the discomfort. Creativity, conversation and imagination usually emerge on the other side.

Sometimes, the hardest part isn't the kids. It's us. If parents sneak a peek at emails or scroll "just for a second," the detox collapses. But if you lean in, laugh through the boredom, and show you're in it too, the weekend feels like a shared adventure instead of a rule.

The Payoff

By the end of the weekend, you may notice your child's attention span is longer, bedtime routines are smoother, or you finally had a conversation with your teenager without a phone in their hand. The payoff isn't measured in hours offline – it's in the small, meaningful moments of connection that surface when the noise quiets down.

It may not be realistic to give up technology forever. But it's possible to break the autopilot habit and remind your family that life beyond screens is calmer, closer and surprisingly fun. And the best part? You can hit reset any time you want.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR DETOX RUN SMOOTHLY:

1. **Blanket-fort reading**
Cuddle in with flashlights and books.
Ask: "If our fort were a castle, what would it be called?"
2. **Make-your-own pizza night**
Lay out toppings and let everyone create.
Ask: "What's the wildest pizza flavor you can dream up?"
3. **Family walk with a scavenger hunt**
Look for shapes, colors or nature treasures.
Ask: "If we could walk anywhere in the world, where would we go?"
4. **Lego or block challenge**
Set a theme: tallest tower, funniest vehicle or animal of the day.
Ask: "If your creation came alive, what would it say first?"
5. **Cookie baking and neighbor delivery**
Bake a batch and share the extras in your neighborhood.
Ask: "If you owned a bakery, what would your best-seller be?"
6. **Picnic in the backyard or living room**
Spread out a blanket and eat outdoors (or indoors if necessary.)
Ask: "If you could invite anyone (real or imaginary) to our picnic, who would it be?"
7. **Family board game or card night**
Dust off classics or teach a new one.
Ask: "If you could invent your own game, what would it be about?"
8. **Art station**
Put out crayons, paints or sidewalk chalk.
Ask: "If you could paint the sky any color, which would you choose?"
9. **Dance party**
Turn on music and let everyone pick a song.
Ask: "If our family had a theme song, what would it be?"
10. **Build-your-own obstacle course**
Use couch cushions, chairs or outdoor gear.
Ask: "If you could design a course for superheroes, what would it include?"
11. **Family storytelling circle**
Each person adds a sentence to a made-up story.
Ask: "If you could be any character in this story, who would you be?"
12. **Stargazing (or cloud-gazing)**
Lie on blankets and look up.
Ask: "If you could name a star, what would you call it?"
13. **Cooking challenge**
Choose three surprise ingredients and make a snack together.
Ask: "If you were a famous chef, what would be your signature dish?"
14. **Puzzle marathon**
Work on a jigsaw together over the weekend.
Ask: "If we could step into this puzzle picture, what would we do first?"
15. **Gratitude circle**
Take turns sharing something good about the day.
Ask: "What's one little thing that made you smile today?"

tulsakids

HOLIDAY

SEASON

KICKOFF

ICE SKATING



Photos courtesy Bixby's Winter Wonderland

BA ICE RINK

Nov. 7-Jan. 5, see website for hours

Rose District Plaza, 418 S. Main St., Broken Arrow

Take to the ice in BA's charming Rose District! General admission is \$14 (includes skate rental), and \$10 for children 5 and under. baicerink.com

BIXBY'S WINTER WONDERLAND

Opens Nov. 22 at 5:30 p.m.; Open 7 days a week, Monday-Friday, 5:30-9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 2-9 p.m.

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

Beyond ice skating, attractions at Bixby's Winter Wonderland include thousands of lights in the park, live reindeer nights and Disney theme nights, photo props, "Elf Wars," a candy store and more! They have many skate aids available, making this a particularly kid-friendly stop. bixbyswinterwonderland.com

CHRISTMAS IN THE 'VILLE

Opens Nov. 29, see website for hours

Downtown Bartlesville

Bartlesville goes all-out for Christmas, with an ice-skating rink, visits from Santa, horse-drawn carriage rides, photo opportunities and more. bartlesvillechristmas.com

DEVON ICE RINK

Nov. 14-Feb. 1, see website for hours

Myriad Botanical Gardens, 301 W. Reno, Oklahoma City

This ice rink in the heart of Oklahoma City promises "endless fun for all ages and skill levels." Pricing is \$15 per person, which includes skate rental; or \$10 per person if you bring your own skates. myriadgardens.org

WESTREET ICE CENTER

See website for public skating hours

4143 S. Yale Ave.

WeStreet Ice Center hosts public ice skating seven days a week for all ages. Skating is indoors for all-weather fun! weststreeticecenter.com

STRAIGHT NO CHASER HOLIDAY ROAD TOUR

Nov. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

A cappella group Straight No Chaser share the joy, “dad jokes” and songs of the season. tulsapac.com

DR. SEUSS' "HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS!"

Nov. 18-23, various showtimes
Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Max the Dog narrates as the mean and scheming Grinch, whose heart is “two sizes too small,” decides to steal Christmas away from the holiday-loving Whos. celebrityattractions.com

CIRQUE DREAMS HOLIDAZE

Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.
Bartlesville Community Center, 300 SE Adams Blvd., Bartlesville

This annual tradition wraps a Broadway-style production around awe-inspiring contemporary circus arts. bartlesvillecenter.com

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

Dec. 4-23, various showtimes
Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Dive into the heartwarming story of Scrooge, a grumpy miser whose journey leads to redemption and the discovery of true joy. americantheatrecompany.org





HOLIDAY SHOPPING

WILD AT ART

Nov. 1, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Nov. 2, 12-5 p.m.

Arts@302, 302 S. Main St., Broken Arrow

Support local business, local art and local wildlife at this annual WING IT fundraiser. tulsaadubon.org/wild-at-art

CREEK COUNTY LITERACY PROGRAM HOLIDAY ART MARKET

Nov. 21-23, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Creek County Literacy Program Office, 15 N. Poplar St., Sapulpa

Proceeds from this Holiday Art Market will go to help fund new AV equipment for the Creek County Literacy Program. creekliteracy.org

CHRISTKINDL MARKET

Nov. 28-30, 4-9 p.m.

Woolaroc, 1925 Woolaroc Ranch Rd., Bartlesville

This enchanting Christmas market was designed to evoke the charm of a festive holiday village straight from a German storybook. Features include performances by Mr. and Mrs. Claus and local organizations, kids' activities and more. okmmusic.org

THE ORNAMENT FESTIVAL

Nov. 29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Ruby Clay Company, 409 E. 8th St., Suite B

Guests will find a treasure trove of handmade ornaments from an array of artists from Tulsa and the surrounding areas. Plus, make your own ornament for just \$5 per person. rubyclaycompany.com

LIGHTS, SIGHTS AND FESTIVALS

COCA-COLA CLASSIC CHRISTMAS

Nov. 21-Dec. 28,
see website for schedule
Remington Park,
1 Remington Pl., OKC

A world of Christmas wonder awaits: Explore a larger-than-life light display; snap a photo with Santa in his ski gondola; race down a snow slide; grab some holiday-themed food and drinks; and much more. classicchristmas.com

JOLLY LANE LIGHTS

Nov. 21-Jan. 1; Monday-Thursday,
5:30-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday,
5:30-10:30 p.m.
(closed Christmas Day)
Admiral Twin Drive-In,
7355 E. Easton St.

More than one mile of twinkling lights dancing in sync with your favorite Christmas songs. Proceeds support local charities. jollylanelights.com

RHEMA LIGHTS

Nov. 26-Jan. 1, 5:30-11:30 p.m.
(opens at 6 p.m. Nov. 26)
Rhema Bible Church, 1025 W.
Kenosha St., Broken Arrow
This incredible light display has been dazzling visitors since 1982. Free admission; concessions available for purchase. rhemalights.org

CASTLE CHRISTMAS

Open nightly, Thanksgiving
through New Year's Eve,
5:30-10 p.m.
Castle of Muskogee, 3400 W.
Fern Mountain Rd., Muskogee
Drive through a world aglow with thousands of twinkling lights, enchanting displays and more. Drive-through is free; donations accepted. okcastle.com

GARDEN OF LIGHTS

Open nightly, Thanksgiving
through New Year's Day; Sunday-
Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m.; Friday-
Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m.
Honor Heights Park, 1400
Honor Heights Dr., Muskogee
Celebrate the holidays and experience animated displays with more than 1,000,000 LED shimmering lights. Park and walk around; purchase concessions if you need a pick-me-up. muskogee-parks.org

WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS

Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays,
Nov. 28-Dec. 21, 5-9 p.m.
Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife
Preserve, 1925 Woolaroc Ranch
Rd., Bartlesville
The grounds and buildings of Woolaroc will be covered with over 750,000 lights as the historic ranch transforms into a magical winter wonderland! woolaroc.org

BOTANIC GARDEN OF LIGHTS

Nov. 28-30, Dec. 3-7, Dec. 10-14,
Dec. 17-23, Dec. 26-28, 5-9 p.m.
Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa
Botanic Dr.
Reconnect with family and friends in the garden illuminated with colorful lights. Make s'mores over fire pits, enjoy holiday music and more. tulsabotanic.org

PHILBROOK FESTIVAL

Select nights, Nov. 28-Jan. 3
Philbrook Museum,
2727 S. Rockford Rd.
Enjoy thousands of holiday lights, music and fun for the whole family. With concessions, Santa, art projects and more. philbrook.org/festival



Photo courtesy Coca-Cola Classic Christmas

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON!

CHRISTMAS IN BROKEN ARROW KICK OFF

Nov. 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Broken Arrow Rose District

Highlights include a tree-lighting ceremony, live music by Grady Nichols, free horse-drawn carriage rides, ice skating, Santa and more. Free and family friendly. facebook.com/rosedistrict

LIGHTS ON! IN JENKS

Nov. 20, 5-9 p.m.

Downtown Jenks

Activities include visits with Santa, local vendors, live entertainment, and a Lights On! countdown around 6 p.m. Don't miss the Jenks Christmas Parade on Nov. 22 at 10 a.m. jenkschamber.com

LIGHTS ON AT UTICA SQUARE

Nov. 27, 6:30 p.m.

Utica Square

Enjoy Christmas carols sung by local musicians and a lights-on countdown! uticasquare.com

SHINE ON GREENWOOD

Nov. 29, 6-7:30 p.m.

Historic Greenwood District

This event features live holiday music, a traditional holiday lights countdown, a toy giveaway and more. shineongreenwood.org

LIGHTS ON OWASSO

Nov. 29, 6-8 p.m.

Redbud Festival Park, 109 N. Main St., Owasso

Photo opportunities, real reindeer, meet and greets with Santa, live music, food trucks, a 34-foot tree lighting and more. facebook.com/redbudfestivalpark



ASK THE EXPERTS



GRAND MENTAL HEALTH

What are some of the most common mental health challenges that kids face today, and how can they be addressed?

Children face many mental health challenges, with anxiety, depression and behavioral disorders among the most common. Factors such as academic pressure, social media influence, family stress and world events can contribute to these struggles.

To address these issues, a variety of strategies and resources are available:

School-Based Support: Many schools offer counseling services, mental health education and social-emotional learning programs to help students develop coping skills.

Therapy/Counseling: Licensed therapists provide cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and other evidence-based treatments to help children manage anxiety, depression and emotional regulation.

Community Programs: Nonprofits and healthcare organizations offer mental health screenings, group therapy and crisis intervention services for children and families.

Digital and Telehealth Resources: Online therapy platforms and mental health apps provide accessible support.

Mental Health Services: Organizations like GRAND Mental Health specialize in treatment and care for those dealing with mental health issues, including adolescents and children.

Parental Involvement: Encouraging open conversations, validating emotions and modeling healthy coping strategies can make a significant difference in a child's mental well-being.

The Tulsa area has many resources available to address the mental health challenges our kids face today. Reach out to your physician, counselor or mental health professional for guidance.

844.458.2100
24/7 Crisis Line: 800.722.3611



MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

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

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

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Assess the Environment: As soon as you arrive, take note of any water features, such as pools, hot tubs or even ponds, and make sure children understand that they should never enter these areas unsupervised.

Establish Boundaries: Make sure all family members know the rules around water during your stay. Ensure doors to pool areas are locked and secure when not in use.

Bring Proper Swim Gear: If your child is still learning to swim, pack flotation devices or swim aids. Just because it's vacation doesn't mean water safety habits should change.

Supervision is Key: Adults should take turns being the designated water watcher during swim time, even if a lifeguard is present. Keep close attention on children, especially in unfamiliar surroundings.

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

918.254.1988
MillerSwimSchool.com



DENTAL DEPOT

What should parents know about food, drinks and dental care on-the-go?

Whether it's snack time at school or drinks after soccer practice, many parents wonder what's actually best for their child's teeth. Dr. Christian Doan shares advice regarding some common situations:

What to avoid packing for lunch: Soda is the big one—even diet soda is acidic. Juices are also high in sugar. If your child does have them, rinsing with water right after helps rebalance the mouth's pH.

Snacking: Certain dairy foods are actually OK—at least in moderation. Cheese and milk can be protective for teeth and help with avoiding cavities. Definitely avoid sticky chips that get trapped in molars. Those little particles can lead to cavities if not brushed out.

Brushing at school: It's a tough ask. Most kids won't, and logistically it's hard. But brushing more than twice a day isn't harmful. If anything, discreet flossers or rinsing with water after lunch can still help a lot.

Dr. Doan also recommends that parents establish a dental home when their kid becomes 12 months old or within 6 months of their tooth eruption.

Dr. Christian Doan, Dental Depot Tulsa

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations
DentalDepot.net



SIMON HARWOOD, FRY & ELDER

Can my ex and I change an ordered visitation schedule?

Yes, the courts are generally happy for the parents to make changes to the schedule as needed, provided it is agreed to by both. I would advise that these changes be in writing or at least a text. Both sides should work together for small changes as the other side may need similar consideration in the future. But any long term changes should be changed in the court orders, and it is best to speak with an attorney to effectuate those changes.

Simon Hardwood, Fry & Elder



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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2025

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



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TULSAZOO



Photos courtesy Tulsa Zoo



"Dog Man" Touring Company

Photo by Jeremy Daniel.

L-R/ Glory Yepassis-Zembrou, Mundo Ballejos, Jake Wernecke,
Sadie Jayne Kennedy, Marquise Neal, Brandon James Butorovich



"Dog Man" Touring Company
Photo by Jeremy Daniel Back.
L-R/ Mundo Ballejos, Glory Yepassis-Zembrou, Jake Wernecke. Front L-R/
Marquise Neal, Brandon James Butorovich

November 1 Saturday

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS ARTS FESTIVAL **F**

All ages, 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Living Arts of Tulsa, 307 E. Reconciliation Way, livingarts.org

Honor loved ones who have passed away through ofrendas and more.

WILL ROGERS DAYS PARADE **F**

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

Celebrate Oklahoma's Favorite Son and Claremore native Will Rogers with a "Hollywood"-themed parade.

WILL ROGERS BIRTHDAY PARTY **F**

All ages, 4 p.m., Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore, willrogers.com

Free cake and admission at this party in honor of Will Rogers.

MUERTITOS FAMILY PARTY **F**

All ages, 4 p.m., Hannah Hall, 1801 S. Garnett Rd., globaldistrict.org

This family-oriented Día de los Muertos celebration features crafts and altars, a "Death Sprint" Kids' Race (pre-register online), screening of "Coco" and more.

November 2 Sunday

SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNING

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

Enjoy Philbrook's galleries when there's less of a crowd. Designated quiet space available.

"GISELLE"

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

A timeless masterpiece featuring an ethereal setting, compelling narrative and breathtaking choreography. Additional showtimes, Oct. 30-Nov. 2.

November 3 Monday

LITTLE LAB PROGRAMMING **W**

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

Activities will focus on shapes, colors, fine motor skills, identifying emotions and more!

CARDBOARD CRUISERS: A MINI BOOKS TO TREASURE EVENT **F**

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

Create lowriders with a tissue or shoe box. Please bring your own tissue box.

November 4 Tuesday

SEAMORE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

All ages, 11 a.m., Oklahoma Aquarium, 300 Aquarium Dr., Jenks, okaquarium.org

Celebrate Seamore the sea turtle's birthday with refreshments, crafts and plenty of fun!

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD **F**

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

Help plan programs at Nathan Hale Library for community service hours.

"DOG MAN: THE MUSICAL"

Recommended ages 6+, 6:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St., celebrityattractions.com

An epic musical adventure featuring the hilarity and heart of beloved characters from Dav Pilkey, the creator of "Captain Underpants" and "Cat Kid Comic Club."

November 5 Wednesday

STORYTIME AT TULSA ZOO **W**

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

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

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

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

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

**DOWNTOWN TULSA
MIDWEEK MARKET** **F**

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

Enjoy a karaoke party with Mr.
Greenwood at the final Midweek
Market of the season.

November 6 Thursday**STORYTIME AT
PHILBROOK** **W**

Ages 0-10, 10-10:30 a.m.,
Philbrook Museum, 2727 S.
Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

Philbrook hosts a weekly storytime;
this week, Tulsa Zoo will be the
special guest.

**BUILD A READER
STORYTIME: BILINGUAL** **F**

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11 a.m., Kendall-
Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis Ave.,
tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities
in English and Spanish. Repeats
Nov. 13 and 20.

**GENERATIONS
CELEBRATIONS: FAMILY
STEAM NIGHT** **F**

All ages, 6-7:30 p.m., Charles
Page Library, 551 E. 4th St., Sand
Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Work together on STEAM-based
activities and challenges.

November 7 Friday**ART MARKET
AFTER DARK** **F**

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

Dozens of local vendors, live art
demonstrations and performances.

**BOOKS TO TREASURE:
A TULSA TRADITION —
MEET RAÚL THE THIRD** **F**

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

Celebrate the joy and beauty of
children's literature with the 2025
Books To Treasure illustrator Raúl
the Third.

**"CHANNELING OUR
ANCESTORS"**

Recommended for grades 6-9,
6:30 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd
St., tulsapac.com

An original production created
by Indigenous Oklahoman artists
exploring themes of identity,
appropriation, the connection of
generations, and bringing heritage
and traditions forward into modern
life.

"THE BREAKFAST CLUB"

7-9 p.m., Philbrook Museum, 2727
S. Rockford Rd., philbrook.org

A special anniversary screening
of the 1985 classic, complete with
costume contest, pre-film trivia and
discussion.

**WILLIAM GOLDING'S
"LORD OF THE FLIES"**

7:30 p.m., World Stage Studio,
1130 S. Harvard, okworldstage.org

This electrifying stage adaptation
thrusts audiences into a world
where rules crumble, and humanity
is laid bare. Additional showtimes,
Oct. 31-Nov. 9

November 8 Saturday**SKASDICON**

All ages, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Chota
Conference Center, 3307 S. Seven
Clans Ave., Tahlequah, skasdicon.
com

A thrilling one-day celebration of
Indigenous people and pop culture.

TREE FORT STORYTIME

Ages 0-10, 10:30-11 a.m., Tulsa
Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa
Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Read a nature-themed story
together.

**KILWINS TULSA GIVEBACK
EVENT BENEFITTING
TULSA ZOO**

All ages, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Kilwins
Tulsa, 418 E. 2nd St., Suite B,
tulsazoo.org

Kilwins will donate 20% of event
proceeds back to the zoo. Animal
education and face painting from
2-4 p.m.

HOLST'S "THE PLANETS"

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

The program includes "The Planets"
by Holst, as well as selections
from John Williams' "ET: The Extra-
Terrestrial" and "Star Wars."

November 9 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.

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

It's Family Fun Day with the Tulsa
Oilers! The first 1,000 fans will
receive an Oilers flag.

November 10 Monday**NATIVE HAND TALK
FOR FAMILIES** **F**

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

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

November 11 Tuesday**"SOLAR SYSTEM
PROTECTION AGENCY"**

Ages 4+, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Jenks
Planetarium, 321 N. 2nd St.,
Jenks, jenksps.ce.eleyo.com/
planetarium

This Choose-Your-Own adventure
show allows the audience to pick
where Agent Weldon goes through
the adventure! Purchase tickets in
advance.

**VETERAN APPRECIATION
CEREMONY AND
CONCERT** **F**

All ages, 7 p.m., Owasso
Community Center, 301 S. Cedar
St., Owasso, facebook.com/
owassorecreationandculture

This event honors all those who
have served in the U.S. military;
it includes guest speakers and a
concert courtesy of Foyil Music
Studios of Owasso.

November 12 Wednesday**HONORING THE
BRAVE: BROWN
ARROW'S MILITARY
HISTORY CENTER** **F**

For adults and teens, 2-3 p.m.,
Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E.
93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Representatives from Broken
Arrow's Oklahoma Military History
Center share the how this local
institution honors service members
past and present. Pre-register.

**SNACKS AROUND
THE WORLD** **F**

For teens and tweens, 4:30-5:30
p.m., Herman and Kate Kaiser
Library, 5202 S. Hudson Ave.,
tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy an hour of sweet and savory
snacks from all around the world.
Registration required.

**STATE OF THE CITY
ADDRESS** **F**

7 p.m., Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.,
cityoftulsa.org

Mayor Monroe Nichols will deliver
his first State of the City address
since taking office. The event
is open to the public and will be
streamed as well.

November 13 Thursday**DUNO-LOGAH: EXCITING
FOLKTALES FROM
NATIVE AMERICA** **F**

All ages, 4-5 p.m., Charles Page
Library, 551 E. 4th St., Sand
Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Will Hill regales listeners with
stories of ancient America. Hear the
serenade of the buffalo hide drum,
Native flute and turtle shell rattle.

November 14 Friday

FULL STEAM AHEAD!

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

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

November 15 Saturday

TULSA TRASH BASH

All ages, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Hicks Park, 3443 S. Mingo Rd., cityoftulsa.org

An opportunity for Tulsa residents to get rid of waste. Must bring driver's license or current City of Tulsa utility bill to participate. See website for more details, including a list of acceptable items.

BARK IN THE PARK

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

A day in the park filled with fun activities in a pet-friendly atmosphere. Local rescues present with adoptable pets.

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.

"THE SOUND OF MUSIC"

7:30 p.m., VanTrease PACE, 10300 E. 81st St., tulsaopera.com

Tulsa Opera presents this beloved musical as a semi-staged and costumed concert featuring both internationally recognized and local talent.

November 16 Sunday

FIND MORE AT
TULSAKIDS.COM/CALENDAR

November 17 Monday

BABY BOARD BOOK BOOK CLUB

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

Experience the joy of reading together featuring board books, playtime and a chance to make new friends.

November 18 Tuesday

NATURE BUDDIES: FALL FRENZY

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

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

BEGINNING GENEALOGY

For adults and teens, 2-3:30 p.m., Bronson Brookside Library, 4607 S. Madison Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Genealogy Associate James Toburen will guide you through the basics of genealogical research.

November 19 Wednesday

CHESS CLUB

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

Enjoy this classic board game in a relaxed and supportive environment.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION SERIES: THRIVING ON A SMALL BUDGET

For adults and teens, 6-7 p.m., Bronson Brookside Library, 4607 S. Madison Pl., tulsalibrary.org

A workshop exploring money-saving strategies, tips and tricks, and how to use resources when money is tight. Pre-register.

November 20 Thursday

KIDS CLAY STUDIO

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

Students will learn basic hand-building techniques then receive inspiration to create gifts! Pre-register.

November 21 Friday

GENERATIONS CELEBRATIONS: PIZZA AND PAINT!

All ages, 4-5:30 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Come enjoy a night of pizza, painting and togetherness. Pre-register.

MOVIE NIGHT AT THE WILL ROGERS THEATRE

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

Watch "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory." Free admission, popcorn and drinks.

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

The Tulsa Oilers play hockey against the Utah Grizzlies!

November 22 Saturday

LOCAL AUTHOR BOOK FAIR

All ages, 12-2 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Shop for an array of books written by Tulsa-area authors.

TREE FORT STORYTIME

Ages 0-10, 10:30-11 a.m., Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr., tulsabotanic.org

Read a nature-themed story together.

GENERATIONS CELEBRATIONS: HERE BE DRAGONS — ALL AGES DRAGON PARTY

All ages, 2-4 p.m., Jenks Library, 523 W. B St., Jenks, tulsalibrary.org

Crafts, book recommendations for dragon fans, trivia about dragons and photo opportunities.

COFFEE HOUSE

Ages 12-18, 7-11 p.m., Youth Services of Tulsa, 311 S. Madison Ave., yst.org

Hang out and enjoy live music, wifi and free hot beverages courtesy of QuikTrip. Check their Facebook page for activity details or cancellations.

November 23 Sunday

See our

HOLIDAY KICKOFF

[section for additional events!](#)

November 24 Monday

GENERATIONS CELEBRATIONS: FAMILY BOARD GAME DAY

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Celebrate National Family Week with a selection of board games and simple crafts.

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

Join after storytime for games, toys and activities that foster early literacy skills.

November 25 Tuesday

TECH TAKE-APART

For teens and tweens, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Dismantle CPUs, phones and more!

GENERATIONS CELEBRATIONS: FAMILY FIBER ART

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

Yarn crafts and art activities for the whole family.

November 26 Wednesday

STORY TIME WITH MS. HOLLY **F**

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

Ms. Holly will sing songs and read interactive stories.

TEEN CONNECTIONS **F**

For middle and high schoolers, 4:30-6 p.m., The Arc of Oklahoma, 2516 E. 71st St. Suite A, thearcok.org

A social group for youth with autism. Please contact Sherilyn at swalton@thearcok.org prior to attending for the first time.

November 27 Thursday

VON FRANKEN FAMILY FOOD RUN **F**

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

This untimed walk/run is hosted by Tulsa Running Club. Participation is free, but please bring nonperishable food items, toys, or pet supplies to donate.

November 28 Friday

NATURE ACADEMY

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

Calling all homeschoolers! The Zoo will have a treasure trove of exciting activities and prompts. No registration required.

November 29 Saturday

MOVIES IN THE COVE **F W**

All ages, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a family-friendly movie in Connor's Cove.

November 30 Sunday

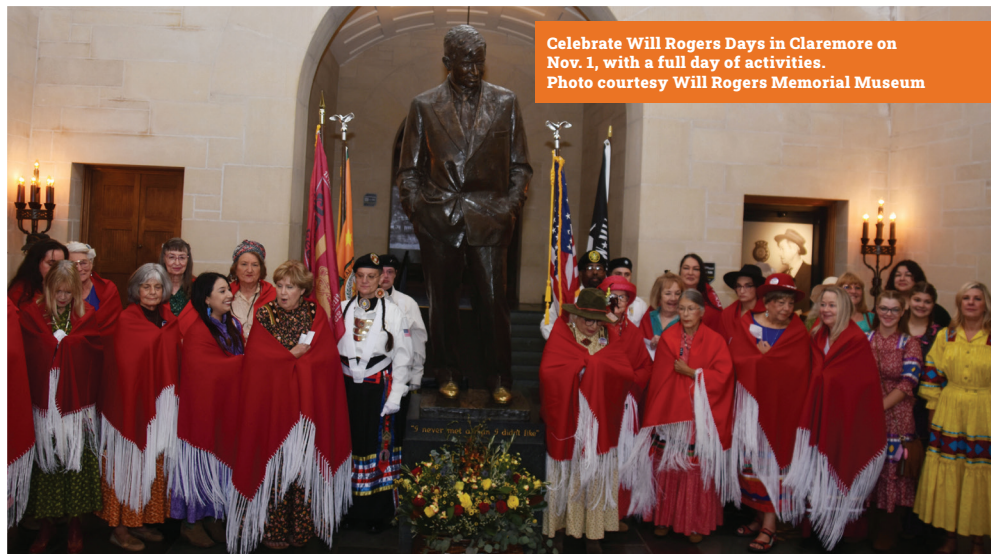
See our

HOLIDAY KICKOFF

section for additional events!



Sam Briggs (Captain von Trapp) rehearses with Tulsa Youth Opera singers for Tulsa Opera's upcoming production of *The Sound of Music*. L-R: Olive Cross (Marta), Michael Hacker (Kurt), Pete White (Friedrich), Zoey Wilson (Brigitta). Photo by Maddie Breedlove



Celebrate Will Rogers Days in Claremore on Nov. 1, with a full day of activities. Photo courtesy Will Rogers Memorial Museum



Introducing **HATCHLINGS' FIRST HOLIDAYS**

Our 2025 Annual Ornament



Now available at

TULSAZOO.ORG/HOLIDAY

About the Artists

Every color of the design documents the early, little steps of one Aldabra tortoise hatchling before they grow up to become one of the largest tortoise species in the world with a lifespan that could reach over 150 years old.

Proceeds from the annual ornament collection directly support your Tulsa Zoo's operating fund.

