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MUST-HAVES!**

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TulsaKids Honored with PMA Awards

TulsaKids Media earned several editorial and design awards again this year at the annual Parenting Media Association conference and awards ceremony in Chicago, held November 6-7. You can read about the winners in this issue.

Over the past 30+ years, I've had the privilege of working with so many talented writers and designers. They have filled these pages with valuable information, entertaining essays and well-researched journalism that our readers have come to count on in the important, fun, but often difficult, journey of being a parent.

Our writers are part of the community, and I count on them to bring that community to these pages. My thought for every assignment and every column is "Does this help or serve our parent reader?" We are Service Journalism. Sometimes we fall short. We make mistakes. But we always try to serve our readers in the broader local ecosystem. How does TulsaKids connect readers to resources that they need, to practical information, to the community? Our identity is local. Our goal is to engage local families, in all their forms.

Writing service journalism isn't glamorous. Helping a parent understand an IEP and where they might find local resources or giving a harried mom some suggestions for ending a 2-year-old's tantrum or providing families with a checklist for choosing a school or publishing local activities to do with your child are mundane tasks of parenting. But they are important.

Connecting with civic partners, business resources, nonprofits and the broader web of Tulsa-area services that support, entertain and sustain families is important to us, and our writers bring that local connection to these pages. Thank you! And congratulations on well-deserved recognition.



Betty Casey
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

tulsakids

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CONTESTS + GIVEAWAYS

WHAT'S
GOING
ON(LINE)?

12 Days of Christmas Giveaways!

Merry Christmas from TulsaKids and our
12 Days of Christmas Giveaways partners!

Enter to win a new giveaway each day, Dec. 1-12. The
entry links are available at tulsakids.com/contests

DECEMBER 1

A 7-8-foot Live Fir Tree
from the Cascia Hall
Christmas Tree Lot



DECEMBER 2

A Family 4-Pack to Coca-
Cola Classic Christmas in
Oklahoma City



DECEMBER 3

Four Tickets to Disney's
"Beauty and the Beast"
from Celebrity Attractions



DECEMBER 4

Four Tickets to Tulsa
Ballet's "The Nutcracker"



Marcello Angelini | Artistic Director

DECEMBER 5

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Scalloped Monogrammed
Photo Frame from
Ruby Clay Co.



DECEMBER 6

A Skating Party from
Arvest Winterfest



DECEMBER 7

A Camp Registration
Certificate from
SoccerCity Tulsa



DECEMBER 8

A 42-Piece Grand
Holiday Truffle Tower
from Glacier Chocolate



DECEMBER 9

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YMCA of Greater Tulsa



DECEMBER 10

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Wristbands from
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DECEMBER 11

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The Big Biscuit



DECEMBER 12

A Month of Group Swim
Lessons from
Miller Swim School





Voices of Angels

A volunteer youth choir in a downtown church brings joy to the community as one of the only youth choirs in the country that leads a worship service

Over 40 youth ages 12-18, representing almost every school district in Tulsa County, lead the early worship service each Sunday at Boston Avenue Methodist Church. Along with being one of the only youth choirs to lead a worship service, the Chapel Choir has performed all over the United States and Canada, including the White House, the National Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Mormon Tabernacle. Music Director Dr. Oliver Brett works with all levels of talent, teaching young people to read music and sing different parts during rehearsal time.

"It's an honor to work with kids of all abilities and bring them together and see them achieve amazing things every week," Dr. Brett says. "We teach them invaluable life skills and give them opportunities they might not otherwise have. In addition to music, they learn teamwork, responsibility, accountability and how to be kind and thoughtful people."

Every Christmas Eve at the 11 p.m. service, the Chapel Choir and recent alumni sing the Hallelujah Chorus at midnight in the Great Hall. The performance is free and open to the public.

All youth are invited to participate in the Chapel Choir; no audition is required. For more information, visit bostonavenuechapelchoir.com

New School Opening in Bixby

The Goddard School, an early childhood education franchise, is opening this month in Bixby, OK. Co-owners Jeff and Kim Bowerman, who both previously worked as teachers for more than 15 years, are bringing the inquiry-based learning experience to area families.

Located at 12606 S. Memorial Drive, this over 10,000-square-foot early childhood education center will have 11 classrooms to provide care for and educate approximately 155 students from 6 weeks to 6 years old. Additionally, the school will add 25 teaching jobs to the community.

"As educators ourselves, we understand firsthand how important a child's early educational experience is, and we're excited to offer a safe, nurturing environment where our students can be best prepared for their next steps in school and in life," said Jeff Bowerman. "With the growing need for high-quality early childhood education growing in the Bixby and greater Tulsa communities, we are thrilled to bring The Goddard School experience to area families."

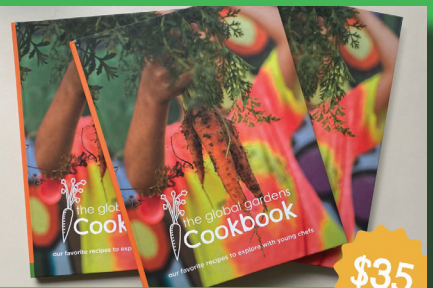
The new school will have an indoor multi-purpose room and multiple outdoor playgrounds. Additionally, the school will be equipped with hospital-grade sanitization equipment to ensure a healthy environment.

The Goddard School uses their exclusive inquiry-based curriculum, Wonder of Learning, developed by child development and education professionals to engage young children's natural curiosity as they explore and learn about the world around them.

For families interested in learning more about The Goddard School and how to enroll in the new Bixby location, visit GoddardSchool.com or call 918-880-2900.

A Delicious Gift

Global Gardens, a local nonprofit that teaches children about science, peace, health and the environment through gardening, has harvested some of their best recipes in "The Global Gardens Cookbook." Global Gardens students and staff invite you to use these recipes to prepare and share food at your own table. The cookbook is available online and at Magic City Books, Kiddlestix, Tulsa Botanic Garden, Philbrook, Decopolis, and Mother Road Market.



The Global Gardens Cookbook

Now Available!

store.global-gardens.net

Sport Clips Haircuts Benefit JAMES Inc.

This holiday season, getting a haircut means giving back to young families in Tulsa.

During the week of December 14-20, Sport Clips Haircuts of Kingspointe is partnering with JAMES Inc., a Tulsa nonprofit organization. For each MVP haircut, Sport Clips will donate \$5 to JAMES Inc., an organization dedicated to helping expectant and parenting adolescents become self-sufficient.

Customers who purchase an MVP haircut during Dec. 14-20 will receive 50% off their next visit. Sport Clips Haircuts of Kingspointe is located at 5958 S. Yale Ave.

Gear Up for Route 66 Centennial

With the Route 66 Centennial coming up in 2026, watch for yearlong celebrations and activities to commemorate the momentous occasion. Gathering Place will be honoring Tulsa, known at the Capital of Route 66, with immersive experiences and community events that highlight the Mother Road's history, culture and enduring spirit.

Highlights include a Route 66 Festival, a sneaker decorating contest, a retro "drive-in" movie night, sand sculpture showcases and themed fitness classes like swing and western dance.

The Route 66 story will also be woven into the park's natural elements, a ONEOK Boathouse exhibit and seasonal storytelling.



Discover science with Discovery Lab

Fizzy & Fun Holiday Magic

By Kirsten Lang

Want a sweet way to sneak in some science this holiday season? Try this candy cane experiment!

What you will need:

- Several candy canes
- Warm water
- Cold water
- Vinegar
- Oil
- Baking soda
- Mason jars

Step-by-step

Step 1: Drop a candy cane into each jar.

Step 2: Add warm water to one jar, cold water to another, vinegar and baking soda to a third, and oil to the last jar.

Step 3: Watch and record what happens!

The Science Behind It!

You'll notice the warm water dissolves the candy fastest. That is because heat makes the sugar molecules move around more quickly. The vinegar and baking soda fizz because of a chemical reaction that releases carbon dioxide gas. And the candy in oil just floats since sugar doesn't mix with oil.

Talk with your kiddos about why some liquids dissolve candy faster than others, and what the fizzing reaction tells us about chemical changes. It's a fun, hands-on way to explore solubility, reactions and temperature, all while enjoying a little holiday magic!

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



SPECIAL DAYS IN DECEMBER

December has a few other special days besides Hanukkah (begins Dec. 14); Christmas (Dec. 25); Kwanzaa (begins Dec. 26); and New Year's Eve (Dec. 31).

Here are a few more reasons to celebrate this month.
Grab the kids and find fun ways to honor these days



TulsaKids Honored with PMA Awards

We're excited to share that TulsaKids earned two Gold, two Silver and one Bronze award at the 2025 Parenting Media Association (PMA) Conference and awards ceremony, which recognizes excellence among parenting publications across the country.

Held in Chicago, Nov. 6-7, the PMA Conference brought together publishers, editors and sales professionals from around the U.S. to exchange ideas and celebrate excellence in parenting and family media. Conference sessions focused on new ideas across print and digital platforms to engage families in local communities.

Entries were judged by faculty of the prestigious Missouri School of Journalism. Below are the awards, along with judges' comments.

GOLD

Recurring Column: "School Age"; Dr. Tamecca Rogers

These columns include strong examples of local kids doing interesting things, which makes them a must-read feature. The youth showcased in these columns are inspiring and have stories that draw readers in. The writer makes use of good descriptions and quotations to bring readers into the conversation.

BRONZE

Child Development & Parenting Article: "Preventing Teen Sexual and Dating Violence"; Julie Wenger Watson

This article does a good job tackling an important and sensitive topic. It offers important advice for parents on how to identify signs of trouble in their kids' relationships and how to handle the situation.

SILVER

Travel Feature: "Uncommon Oklahoma: 25+ Unique Destinations in Our State"; Tara Rittler

The writer has selected a truly fascinating list of travel possibilities and arranged them smartly into ingenious categories -- out-of-the-box museums, "world's largest" roadside attractions, quirky accommodations, one-of-a-kind animal encounters and more. The ideas are whimsical and the tone is lighthearted, but the information is solid, which makes this a clever list, but also quite a practical one.

GOLD

Service Feature: "Preparing Kids for Severe Weather Season"; Kirsten Lang

What a great service feature about an issue that strikes many families and would be of relevance for Oklahoma readers. This feature starts with its local impact and quickly relates to a parenting issue many have faced. The opening line draws readers into the information they need to be able to help a child with storm anxiety.

BRONZE

Calendar of Event Design: Jinger Belcher

A full-page-width photograph that kicks off each calendar has the color and sense of motion to engage readers in the list of events that follow. Typography is clean and follows a familiar hierarchy: reverse date, color title, bold data points, and text description of event. This is easy to read and a small reversed "F" indicates free events.

For more than 30 years, TulsaKids has provided information, entertainment and support to families in Tulsa and surrounding communities. We are honored to be recognized again this year alongside other outstanding publications across the country. The recognition year after year affirms our commitment to providing inclusive, trustworthy and inspiring journalism for local families.

Congratulations to all of our writers and to TulsaKids staff for their dedication to highlighting information that parents look to as their trusted, local resource.



Choose Kid-Powered Toys for Early Brain Building



By **Angie Porter, MS, CCPS**

Flashing lights, catchy music and pushable buttons can definitely be fun—and they do teach cause and effect. However, toys that rely on kid power—where children move, think and create—build much deeper learning skills that carry over into real-life experiences. Toys that build children's brains are most often “open-ended” toys. Open-ended toys use imagination and, like wooden blocks, can be used in different ways at different ages.

When children explore with their hands and imagination, they are naturally practicing problem-solving. Sorting shapes builds early math (geometry) skills, while stacking and mixing colors introduces basic science (weight, balance and color blending).

Have you ever noticed how babies often prefer the wrapping paper and boxes over the gift inside? That's because real learning happens through hands-on exploration! Children are instinctive learners—they just need simple tools like blocks, crayons or shape sorters to build a foundation for future learning.

So, while the flashy toys can be fun for special occasions, the best “toys” might already be in your home—cereal boxes, Tupperware, wooden spoons or a pile of leaves outside.

As you look for toys this season, keep one thing in mind — let kids power the play!



Toys for Infants to Build Sensory, Emotional & Motor Skills

- Rattles
- Mirrors
- Board books or sturdy books with faces and high-contrast pictures
- Colorful floor mats
- Mobiles
- Musical toys

Toys for Early Math Skills

- Building blocks
- Magnetic sets
- Pattern blocks
- Sorting toys
- Construction toys (also builds fine motor skills)
- Stacking and nesting cups
- Wooden puzzles

Toys for Early Language Skills

- Play kitchens
- Books
- Dolls
- Stuffed toys
- Play farms, buses, child-propelled train sets, garages
- Dress-up clothes

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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Walking the Halls of Hope

A Visit with Interim Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Lindel Fields



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

When families, educators and school leaders across Oklahoma walked into classrooms this fall, many felt like survivors emerging from a long storm. Behind the smiles, lesson plans and back-to-school excitement, a quiet mix of fatigue, doubt and heartbreak lingered — the residue of three intense years that left teachers unseen, districts stretched thin, and parents questioning whether the system still had their backs.

What so many of us have been living through is EduPTSD™. It's the quiet weariness teachers, parents and even students carry after years of shifting mandates, public scrutiny and relentless demands to perform without real support. We've kept showing up — lesson after lesson, meeting after meeting — determined to hold things together. But beneath that dedication is a fatigue no long weekend can fix. EduPTSD™ isn't about fragility; it's about what happens when a system keeps asking for excellence from people already running on fumes. And yet, even through that exhaustion, a glimmer of hope is returning — the kind you feel when a new chapter begins and the air in the building just feels different.

The Walk: Hallway Healing

When Gina Wilson, principal of East Central High School, and I entered the Oklahoma Department of Education office in Oklahoma City, we were greeted with a warm smile and a joke from the security guard. It felt like an exhale we didn't realize we were holding. After years of tension and guarded interactions, that simple welcome meant something. After passing security, we were met by Bailey, the communications director, who guided us to the boardroom. But before we reached it, Gina and I stopped mid-stride. The Educator Hall of Fame photos — once removed under Ryan Walters — were back on the wall. Framed portraits of Oklahoma's most dedicated educators once again lined the hallway.

We paused, asked Bailey if we could take a moment, and she smiled: "Take as long as you need." Standing there reading the names felt like a quiet reminder that people were being seen again.

As we entered the boardroom, Jackie, Superintendent Fields' executive assistant, greeted us with a warm hug. It wasn't just professional courtesy — it was care. The feeling was indescribable, the kind you can't stage or script. After years of operating in fight-or-flight mode, we felt safe enough to simply breathe.



Interim Oklahoma State Superintendent Lindel Fields talks with Dr. Tamecca Rogers during a recent interview.

From Vo-Tech Student to The State Department of Education Superintendent

When interim Superintendent Lindel Fields walked into the room, it wasn't with the air of a politician, but of someone who had spent years in the trenches. A former vo-tech student himself, Fields once studied horticulture at what is now known as Tulsa Tech, while Dr. Joe Lemley served as superintendent. He didn't set out to run a statewide agency or even imagine holding this office after retiring from a 19-year tenure leading Tri-County Tech. But history has a way of calling people who understand what's at stake.

The Blueprint for Renewal

As I spoke with Superintendent Lindel Fields, he shared four core areas he intends to focus on to put Oklahoma's education system back on track. The areas include respect, access, rebuilding and elevation.

Restoring Respect

"I didn't come here to add more mandates," Fields told me. "I came to rebuild trust."

Fields believes that recovery begins with respect. "You can't rebuild education from the top down," he said. "You start with the people who make the system work."

His focus isn't just on filling vacancies, but on restoring the professional dignity that once made teaching a calling rather than a cautionary tale. That means listening to educators before legislating, recognizing paraprofessionals as essential to the learning process, and ensuring that new teachers have mentors instead of merely relying on manuals.

Expanding Access and Instruction Time

Fields discussed Oklahoma's teacher shortage and the increasing number of emergency-certified educators entering the classroom. In 2013–14, Oklahoma issued 189 emergency teaching certificates; by 2023–24, that number had surged to 4,676. He noted that colleges are graduating fewer students with teaching degrees, leaving schools to rely more heavily on individuals entering the profession through alternative routes.

"We hear about emergency certifications, and we put a bit of a stigma on that," Fields said. "But that may be our reality. So, what can we do to prepare those folks who are coming in at different times and may only want to teach for 10 or 15 years? If they're going to be with us 10 years, let's embrace that, but make them really good while they're here."

For Fields, access means providing every educator—regardless of how they enter the profession—with the mentorship, training and respect they need to succeed.

When our conversation turned to student learning, Fields smiled and said, "Now, this next one—my daughter's not going to like it." He laughed, referring to increasing instructional time. "If we want better outcomes," he continued, "we have to give students more meaningful time to learn."

Across the country, higher-performing states average around 1,170 to 1,200 instructional hours per year, while Oklahoma requires 1,080. That gap might not sound large on paper, but in practice, it equals several weeks of missed opportunities for growth each school year.

Rebuilding Workforce Pipelines

Fields sees Oklahoma's CareerTech network as a vital part of the solution for building an effective workforce. He understands that when students can connect classroom learning to real-world careers, it not only strengthens the economy but also helps cultivate future educators, industry leaders and innovators. He believes the system must evolve to prepare learners for both immediate employment and lifelong growth. In his eyes, rebuilding the pipeline isn't about creating a new system — it's about reigniting pride and purpose in the one that already exists.

Elevating Student Success and Community Partnership

Literacy sits at the heart of the basics. Oklahoma's most recent assessments show that fewer than one in four students is proficient in reading by fourth grade — a number Fields believes can't improve without strong classroom leadership and early intervention.

"Teaching is the most noble of all professions," he said. "And it's not just teachers; it's every educator who touches a child's life — bus drivers, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals. They all shape the learning experience." He's convinced that meaningful change requires collaboration beyond the school walls.

Superintendent Fields isn't offering quick fixes; he's offering steadiness and a plan for the long haul. Leadership grounded in listening, humility and human connection. Maybe that's what this new chapter in Oklahoma education is truly about: healing from EduPTSD™ by rebuilding trust, one conversation, one student and one relationship at a time.

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.



Don't Miss Out! Have your school listed in our annual **Education Guide** in January.

Learn more by calling **918.582.8504** or email Amanda at amandamurphytk@gmail.com or Lindsey at lindseycopesttk@gmail.com

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Santa's Super-Sized Bag of Books

Favorite books of 2025 from your favorite librarians

If you play Santa or co-Santa in your household, do I have some easy and fun books-as-gifts suggestions for you! Please find below a SUPER-SIZED list of some of your favorite children's librarians' favorite children's books from 2025.



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

**Kristina Acosta, MLIS,
Youth Librarian,
Herman and Kate Kaiser
Library**

"The Undead Fox of Deadwood Forest" by Aubrey Hartman

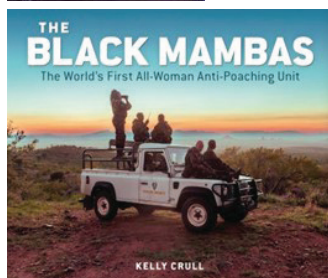
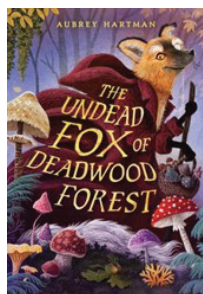
This whimsical chapter book with beautiful illustrations tells the story of a fox who has an important job to do. But all that changes when a mysterious badger shows up and turns his world upside down. It is a story about friendship, the dangers of judging a person before knowing them, and discovering self-love.

"The Black Mambas: The World's First All-woman Anti-Poaching Unit," by Kelly Crull

This nonfiction book with incredible photographs of wildlife tells the story of the amazing women who protect them. It is filled with information and fun facts/games such as matching the tracks to the animals and more.

"This Book Is Dangerous!" written and illustrated by Ben Clanton

One word: hilarious! This interactive book will have you laughing out loud with the iconic duo: Narwhal and Jelly.



**Julia Cantrell, MLIS,
Youth Librarian,
Peggy Helmerich Library**

"Pop! Goes the Nursery Rhyme," written by Betsy Bird and illustrated by Andrea Tsurumi

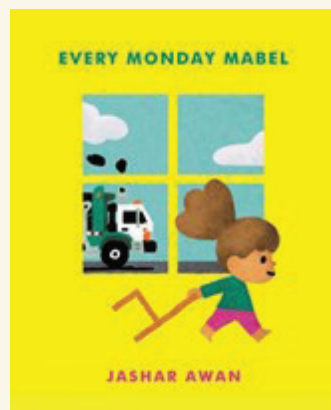
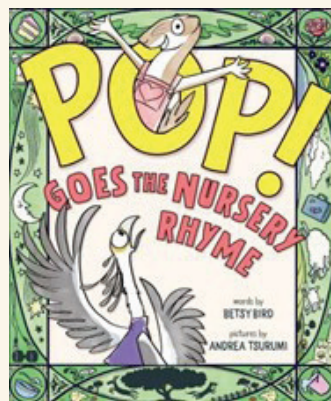
A fractured fairytale full of fun! Betsy Bird delivers an all-around good time, sprinkling silly, predictable—and delightfully unpredictable—surprises on every page that practically POP! Illustrator Andrea Tsurumi adds to the charm with her use of unusual characters (a secretary bird as a main character, a body-building mouse as another). I especially enjoyed how she isolates characters on the page to convey feelings of suspense or surprise.

"Every Monday Mabel," written and illustrated by Jashar Awan

The moment Mabel appeared on the page, she had my whole heart. She loves what she loves and doesn't let anyone's opinion dim her joy. Her bowl of cereal even has a personality of its own—an underrated, silent sidekick to our little truck-loving hero.

"Five Little Friends: A Collection of Finger Rhymes," written by Sean Taylor and illustrated by Fiona Woodcock

This delightful new collection of fingerplays instantly transported me back to childhood—endless rounds of "Johnny Whoops" with my sister. Fiona Woodcock's beautifully layered and flowing art enhances each fingerplay, subtly suggesting movement and adding visual rhythm. Together, Fiona and children's book powerhouse Sean Taylor have created a joyful and engaging collection that's sure to inspire playful moments.



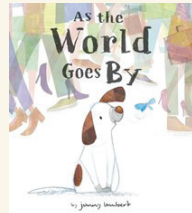
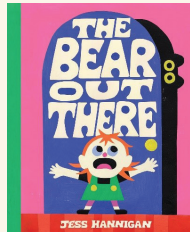
**Joy Carr, MLIS, Youth Librarian,
Schusterman-Benson Library**

"The Bear Out There," written and illustrated by Jess Hannigan

If you need new bear content now that Fat Bear Week is behind us, pop open "The Bear Out There." Hilarious and visually appealing for kids and their grown-ups!

"As the World Goes By," written and illustrated by Jonathan Lambert

Buttons the dog, accompanied by gorgeous illustrations, follows a butterfly and reminds us to find stillness in a bustling world.



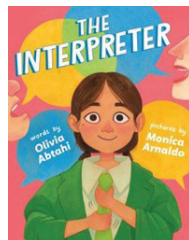
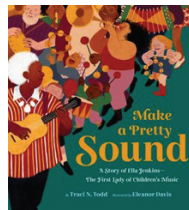
**Sarah Davis, MLIS, Children's
Area Supervisor,
Martin Regional Library**

"Make a Pretty Sound: The Story of Ella Jenkins – The First Lady of Children's Music," written by Traci N. Todd and illustrated by Eleanor Davis

Ella Jenkins is a titan of children's music: If you don't know her music, you need to meet her! This picture book biography highlights her life story and musical legacy with lovely illustrations.

"The Interpreter," written by Olivia Abtahi and illustrated by Monica Arnaldo

This book captures the feelings and experiences of a smart young girl who has big expectations placed on her shoulders!



Leah Weyand, Collection Development Librarian

"Everybelly," written and illustrated by Thao Lam

This gentle, humorous look at the wide range of body appearances and abilities is a great way to introduce young kids to our physical differences and similarities.

"Don't Trust Fish," written by Neil Sharpson and illustrated by Dan Santat

I loved this book so much that I had an impromptu storytime for my colleagues when we received it at the library! It's a hilarious read-aloud about the suspicious nature of fish, with fantastic one-liners and perfectly suited art from Caldecott Winner Dan Santat.



**Melody Palmer, MLIS, Youth Librarian,
South Broken Arrow Library**

"The Crayon Stub," written and illustrated by Marcus Cutler

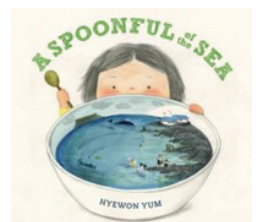
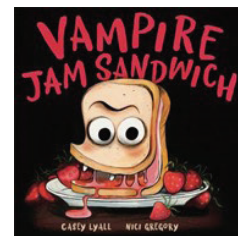
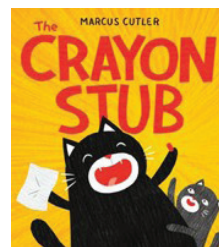
What happens when a big cat wants to create a coloring masterpiece and finds only the tiniest stub of a crayon available? Sometimes, you just have to get a little creative with how you create!

"Vampire Jam Sandwich," written by Casey Lyall and illustrated by Nici Gregory

This might be my new October spooky storytime favorite. Despite "vampire" in the title, it's only a little bit spooky at the beginning (but you can make it even more spooky if you read it quietly and intensely, maybe with a flashlight under your chin).

"A Spoonful of the Sea," written and illustrated by Hyewon Yum

Published late this year, this charmer is about a girl who doesn't like her birthday soup until her mom tells her the story behind it and how it's made. It's a beautiful story of living by the sea and mothers and grandmothers taking care of families.



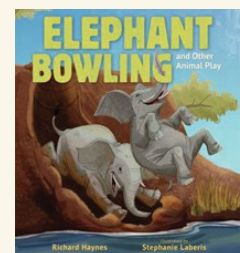
Laura Raphael, Children's Services Coordinator

"Papilio," written and illustrated by Ben Clanton, Corey R. Tabor and Andy Chou Musser

Written and illustrated by three children's book masters (and friends in real life), this three-part wonder of a book follows a caterpillar from chrysalis to butterfly. Beautiful illustrations and a life-affirming theme goes deep.

"Elephant Bowling and Other Animal Play," written by Robert Haynes and illustrated by Steph Laberis

Animals are fascinating! In this nonfiction book, your child will learn about the importance of play for a variety of animals as they grow into their adult selves.



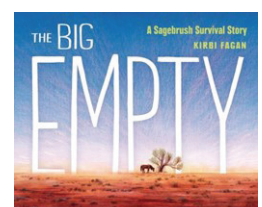
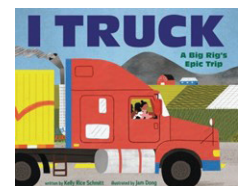
**Sally Kotarsky, MLIS, Collection
Development Librarian**

"I Truck: A Big Rig's Epic Trip," written by Kelly Rice Schmitt and illustrated by Jam Dong

One, it's a truck. Two, the truck is the narrator. Three, it's hauling toys. Four, did I mention it's a truck...

"The Big Empty: A Sagebrush Survival Story," written and illustrated by Kirby Fagan

Spoiler: Because the Sagebrush survives, so do a lot of other wildlife!



Brookside Library Has Brand New Digs

By **Marnie Fernandez**

Tucked into the Brookside neighborhood, the Bronson Brookside Library offers more amenities and twice the space of its predecessor.



Situated in a quiet nook of green space at 4607 S. Madison Pl., the newly opened Bronson Brookside Library is the first branch completed as part of the My Library, OUR Future campaign. Bronson Brookside Library is named in honor of the late Donald Bronson Atkins.

"This has been a long time coming," says Ellen Cummings, chief operating officer for the Tulsa City-County Library. "Brookside outgrew the old library years ago, and we were limited on what we could offer to the public with the lack of space."

Breaking ground in 2023, the new Bronson Brookside Library spans over 15,000 square feet, which allows the library to expand programming and other services, in addition to significantly adding to their book collection - thanks to the generous support of the Leslie Pritchard family. Other donors include the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation, the Helmerich Trust, the Hardesty Family Foundation, and the Sanford and Irene Burnstein Family Foundation.

"Our children's area was way too small," Cummings says. "Our new area is actually the size of what the entire Brookside Library used to be - so we can now offer so many more activities for children."

The children's area includes an outdoor play area and tricycle track, so when weather permits, storytime and other activities can be held outside. On the inside, the children's area is filled with colorful, modular furniture to accommodate all types of group settings. 3-D art of flowers lines the walls, and there are children's check-out stations as well as co-working spaces for both a child and their guardian, allowing parents to do their own research or work next to their child while they play games or do homework on the computer.

"We've also added an area specifically for teens," Cummings says. "They have their own 'lounge' area with their own book selections that is separated from the rest of the library, so they have a little more privacy."

In addition, the new library has a dedicated activity space for arts and crafts, where they can offer programming such as sewing and art classes. The room also has a 3-D printer and a laser cutter available for use by visitors.

"We also have four 'huddle rooms' in different sizes that can be reserved - first-come, first-served," Cummings says. "Those can be used for meeting space, tutoring sessions, study sessions or group work."

The library has also added a drive-through window, where the public can drop off and pick up books without having to get out of their vehicle.

"We love that we can offer this service," Cummings says. "It's great during inclement weather, if you have a sleeping baby or you are just short on time."

Beginning in January, the library will offer after-school tutoring programs available to students of all ages. Participants can sign up online or at the library beginning in December.

The Bronson Brookside Library is open 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday; and closed on Sunday. For more information on events and programming, visit tulsalibrary.org/locations/brookside



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Are Your Teens Bored? We've Got You Covered



By **Julie Wenger Watson**



This is the season of bored teens and unpredictable Oklahoma weather. While we can't do much about the elements, we're here to help you banish that dreaded school holiday specter – the “disgruntled adolescent” – with a list of family friendly fun.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Tulsa is gifted with a spectacular variety of parks and outdoor recreation areas. With the right weather, or the right gear, spending time outdoors is one of the best antidotes to the “winter blahs.” Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Gathering Place (gatheringplace.org)

This spectacular green space occupies close to 70 acres, eight alongside the Arkansas River. The sports courts, BMX pump track and skate park provide incredible opportunities for outdoor recreation, while the Williams Lodge is the perfect place to curl up with a book and enjoy a beautiful view of the grounds on a cold or rainy day.

River Parks System (riverparks.org)

River Parks' easily accessible trails include everything from paved multi-use paths adjacent to the river to 45+ miles of off-road options for hiking, mountain biking and trail running at Turkey Mountain. Looking for a hiking buddy? Check out facebook.com/turkeymountain for a volunteer-led, organized hike. If the weather allows, consider some fishing or try the disc golf course.

Keystone Ancient Forest (facebook.com/keystoneancientforest)

Nestled within a 1,380-acre nature preserve full of ancient cedars and post oaks, this park includes a beautiful visitor center (with bathrooms!), and 13 miles of trails with varying degrees of difficulty. Open Thursday through Sunday; leashed dogs are allowed on the first and third weekends.

Oxley Nature Center & Mohawk Park (oxleynaturecenter.org)

Mohawk Park is a 2,800-acre park, with playgrounds, picnic shelters and disc golf courses. It's also home to Oxley Nature Center with its 9 miles of trails and the Tulsa Zoo (tulsazoo.org).

FOR SPORTS & FITNESS FANS

TU Basketball (tulsahurricane.com)

Catch some college basketball this month at TU's Reynolds Center. Affordable tickets are available for both men's and women's games.

Tulsa Oilers (tulsaoilers.com)

The history of Tulsa hockey is surprisingly long for a city this far south. See what all of the excitement is about when you attend a Tulsa Oilers home game at the BOK Center (bokcenter.com).

WeStreet Ice Center (weststreeticecenter.com)

Brush up on your own skating skills with a visit to the WeStreet Ice Center. Check their calendar for public skating sessions (skate rentals are available),

or learn to skate classes (first lesson is free!).

Miller Swim School (millerswimschool.com)

Miller Swim School's Tulsa and Owasso locations offer one-off (or several-off) private swim lessons during the holiday break for those who'd like to perfect their butterfly or maybe even learn to swim!

YMCA of Greater Tulsa (ymcatulsa.org)

YMCA's “Youth Membership” is available for children ages 12-18 for \$28.50 a month, with no contract and no joining fee. The Youth Membership includes full access to all Y locations and free group exercise classes. Three of the Y locations have indoor pools, too.

LIVE MUSIC

Check out a local band with a national presence when Tulsa's Cliffdiver plays Cain's Ballroom Dec. 13. It's an all-ages, hometown show that everyone can enjoy. General admission tickets are \$20.22, all in, at cainsballroom.com.

For parents (or grandparents) who prefer a walk down memory lane with their offspring, try Dressed To Kill at The Vanguard the same night (thevanguardtulsa.com). This Kiss tribute band is also from Tulsa, and their all-ages show promises to entertain the whole family. Tickets are \$20, with fees.

CREATIVE SPIRITS

Red Heat Ceramic Art Studio (redheatceramics.com)

Red Heat offers a couple of holiday winter workshops where you can learn the basics of working with clay. As a bonus, you'll walk out with a completed piece to add to your holiday décor, or perhaps give as a gift.

Purple Glaze Studio (purpleglazestudio.com)

Purple Glaze's two locations are full of thousands of unpainted ceramics just waiting for your creative stamp. For a \$4 supply fee and the cost of your ceramic item, you can paint to your heart's content. The studio will glaze and fire your objet d'art, and you can pick up your finished piece in a few days.

WaterWorks Art Center (cityoftulsa.org/waterworks)

WaterWorks Art Center has art classes and workshops for ages 16 and up, and as well as other programs for all ages.

Philbrook Museum (philbrook.org)

This beautiful museum in midtown Tulsa has plenty of great programming during the months of December and January, including movies and workshops.

LIVING THINGS

Oklahoma Aquarium (okaaquarium.org)

In addition to a fabulous array of all kinds of water creatures, the Oklahoma Aquarium also offers a virtual reality ride. Choose from VR experiences like "The Shark Dive," "Legend of Lusca," or "Swimming with Humpbacks," or step into the Hurricane Simulator and feel the force of nature with winds ranging up to 75 miles per hour.

High On a Hill Dairy Goats (highonahilldairygoats.com)

Take a short drive to Kellyville to cuddle a cow or experience goat yoga. Painting and photography classes are also available.

Tulsa Zoo (tulsaazoo.org)

A perennial favorite, let your teens or holiday visitors loose at the Tulsa Zoo to commune with giraffes, elephants and chimpanzees, to name a few.

OPEN ANY DOOR WITH YOUR LIBRARY CARD

(tulsalibrary.org)

If it's been a while since you've visited one of the 24 Tulsa City-County Library locations, you might be surprised to learn how many activities and resources are available, almost entirely free, with your library card. Of course, there are traditional books, but there are also CDs, DVDs, ebooks and audio books. Every branch provides access to free public computers, and the Central location even has a "Maker Space," with a 3-D printer, sewing machines, laser engraving, screen printing, an audio recording studio and so much more. Library programs include arts, crafts and even yoga classes.

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.



NO PLACE LIKE THIS PLACE: HERMAN & KATE KAISER YMCA

Nestled near Turkey Mountain and its trail system, the Herman & Kate Kaiser YMCA combines fitness and family connections with the beauty of the outdoors. Families can enjoy hiking trails, kayaking, an outdoor sports court, campfire nights and family campouts.

Members have access to an indoor gymnasium, workout equipment, disc golf and group exercise classes for all levels. Camps, sports and swimming help kids build confidence, skills and friendships.

During the holiday season and year-round, the Herman & Kate Kaiser YMCA is a perfect destination for parties and events.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you're covered by one of our health partners, including Oklahoma Complete Health or Ambetter or are a member of the Cherokee Nation, you may qualify for a free or reduced membership. We value working together to support the YMCA's commitment to community health and well-being.

Also, as part of the YMCA of Greater Tulsa, Herman & Kate Kaiser members enjoy access to all 15 YMCA locations and programs that serve every age and ability.

DECEMBER EVENTS:

Herman & Kate Kaiser: Glow & Family Yoga (\$5/ non-member)
Sat., Dec. 6, 6-7 pm

Tandy Family YMCA: Cookies with Santa
Thurs., Dec 11, 6-8 pm

Herman & Kate Kaiser YMCA: Campfire Nights
Fri., Dec. 12, 5:30-7:30pm

Y at East Central: Community Health Assessment Day
Sat., Dec. 13, 10 am-2pm

Herman & Kate Kaiser, Daily & Tandy: School's Out Camps
Dec. 22 – Jan. 2, 7 am-6pm



Dr. Brenda Joy

Over Three Decades Building Community and Creating Lasting Connections



By **Nancy A. Moore**

Brenda Joy Lloyd-Jones, Ph.D., affectionately known as Dr. Brenda Joy, is a Human Relations professor at the University of Oklahoma whose life's work centers on leadership, connection and community. Drawing inspiration from her own motherhood journey, she founded The Mothers Group Inc. over three decades ago after moving to Tulsa and seeking meaningful connections for herself and her young son. What began as a small circle of moms sharing experiences has blossomed into a thriving, multigenerational network that continues to uplift families, foster belonging and strengthen community ties. The Mothers Group Inc. has grown over the years, including doing community projects such as hosting the Santa Community Project.

TK: Tell us a little about yourself and why you decided to start The Mothers Group Inc.

Dr. Brenda Joy: My son was the inspiration for starting The Mothers Group Inc. As a Human Relations professor, I study leadership and community engagement and understand intricately the power of human connection. When our family moved from Chicago to Tulsa, we arrived without family close by, no grandparents or cousins, just a heartfelt desire to give our son a strong sense of belonging. Out of that need, The Mothers Group Inc. was born. What began as a few moms seeking connection has blossomed into a lasting community where families share resources, laughter and encouragement.

Over the years, we've enjoyed playdates at the park, hands-on museum visits and conversations with child development experts about brain and speech growth. Thirty-six years later, our meetings are filled with joy and reflection, celebrating our now-adult children's achievements in academics, martial arts and careers. Some of us even share stories of becoming grandparents. What started as a circle of mothers has grown into a multigenerational network rooted in friendship, learning and joy.

TK: Tell us what starting and being a part of this community has provided to you and others over the years.

Dr. Brenda Joy: Even with fulfilling careers and a real understanding of human connection, it felt isolating, somewhat, to raise a child without a village. The Mothers Group Inc. became my way of creating that village, which was built on care, encouragement and shared experience. Over the years, it has grown into something genuinely special. The Mothers Group Inc. provides a space that offers friendship and support to mothers who, like me, live far from family. We share resources with one another, like names of trusted doctors, culturally responsive schools and welcoming places of worship. This experience reminds me that community is both a gift and a practice.

In the university classes I teach, I introduce ideas from social network theory. However, through The Mothers Group Inc., I get to live them, connecting children with educational opportunities, helping spouses identify job leads, and watching our networks make a difference. When women come together with open hearts and creative minds, we don't just raise children—we enrich our families and strengthen our communities.

TK: What is the secret to the longevity of this organization?

Dr. Brenda Joy: The secret to The Mothers Group Inc.'s longevity lies in the power of genuine connection and shared purpose. Since 1988, our mission has been simple yet significant: to support women through the exchange of positive information and to foster friendships among their children. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Mothers Group Inc. unites Tulsa-area women who are dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of children by advancing education, celebrating diversity and strengthening families.



Families can visit Santa and Mrs. Claus on Sat., Dec. 6, 9 a.m. - noon, OU-Tulsa Founder's Hall, 4502 E. 41st St. Free and open to the public.

As a Human Relations scholar, I know that relationships are the foundation of emotional and relational well-being. Our group thrives because it's rooted in care, learning and joy, which are values that never go out of style. We've supported one another through grief and loss, celebrated victories like a member becoming a national jiu-jitsu champion and encouraged each other through every season of life. Our endurance isn't just about time; it's about heart. It's every member showing up, year after year, committed to lifting one another and the children of our community.

TK: Share the details of what people can expect at The Santa Community Project on December 6.

Dr. Brenda Joy: The Santa Community Project is one of my favorite celebrations of the year. It's a joyful gathering that captures the spirit of community, giving and togetherness. Our Santa Community Project launched in 1989 and continues to connect us with the broader community in meaningful ways. This year, the event will take place on Saturday, December 6, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the OU-Tulsa Learning Center, Founder's Hall, 4502 E. 41st St. in Tulsa.

Each child who attends will have the opportunity to meet Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, whisper their heart's desires in Santa's ear, and take home a keepsake photo capturing that meaningful moment. One of the Clausess' favorite gifts is a brand-new, age-appropriate book, which will be given to every child, encouraging a lifelong love of reading. Adding to the joy, the atmosphere will be alive with the sounds and talents of local youth performers, filling the room with music and holiday spirit. It's a celebration of family, literacy and community. It's a reminder that the season's greatest gift is community connection.



TK: What else would you like to share?

Dr. Brenda Joy: Community doesn't just happen, it is something we build together, moment by moment and choice by choice. The Mothers Group Inc. and our annual Santa Community Project show what can grow when people come together with open hearts and a shared purpose. As a weekly well-being expert on News on 6, I've learned that connection is essential to emotional and relational health. When we invest in each other, we strengthen our communities. That is the true meaning of leadership, joy, and lasting change.

Hear the full interview on the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast on your favorite platform or at NancyMoore.co. Dr. Brenda Joy shares her top three intentional practices for the holidays. You can find The Mothers Group Inc. online: TheMothersGroup.org.

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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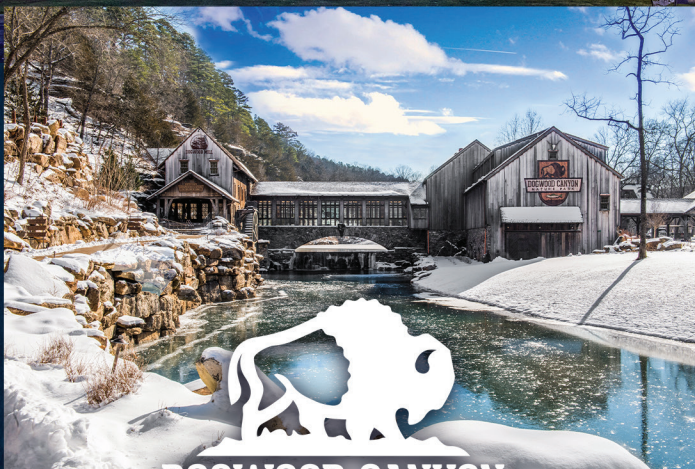
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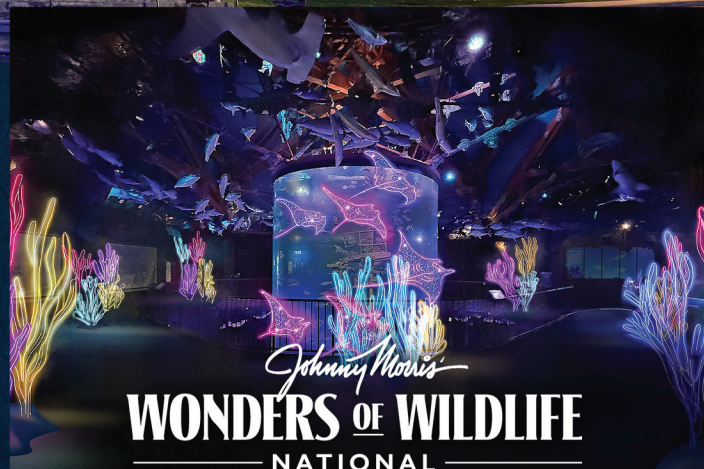
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Holiday Harmony

Prepping Kids (and Yourself) for Family Togetherness



By **Shannon Dean**

The winter holidays are supposed to be magical. But sometimes they feel more like mayhem. Somewhere between Pinterest-perfect dreams and real-life logistics, you're trying to create memories for your kids while managing travel, traditions and extended family dynamics.

So, you pack the car with snacks and extra clothes, remind your kids (again) to be on their best behavior, and then take a deep breath and head into togetherness with some people you adore and others who may try your patience.

Extended family gatherings can be heartwarming, but they can also be exhausting, overstimulating and emotionally complicated for both kids and grown-ups. Thankfully, a little preparation can help your family feel less frayed.

Know That Holiday Family Togetherness Isn't Always Picture-Perfect: When we picture the holidays, we imagine Norman Rockwell dinners and Hallmark-style moments. But, in reality, you might share a house with a cousin who never lowers his voice, a grandma who critiques your parenting and a toddler coming down from a sugar high.

Pediatric Occupational Therapist Shannon Rolph shares that during family holidays, emotions and expectations often run high, while self-regulation runs low. So it's completely normal for kids (and even adults) to feel a little on edge.

And kids aren't the only ones who feel it. A recent American Psychological Association survey found that 89% of adults feel increased stress around the holidays, with family gatherings being one of the top triggers. Add children who thrive on routine into that mix of unpredictability and unfamiliar rules, and everyone can quickly become overwhelmed.

Understand the Power of a Heads-Up: One of the most powerful things you can do to help kids through extended family time is to talk openly about it ahead of time. Start early and address what they can expect. Tell them who will be there, how the days might unfold, and how they can politely step away if they feel overwhelmed.

For example, you might explain, "Aunt Carol might ask about your school a lot. That's how she connects. You can just smile, give her a polite answer, and come find me if it feels like too much." That kind of scripting helps kids feel prepared, not pushed.



Psychologist Laura Markham, author of "Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids," encourages parents to "coach, not control." Let your child know you're on their team to help them navigate challenges, not just monitor their behavior.

Demonstrate Both Manners and Boundaries: Family members often mean well, but holiday gatherings can come with a flurry of sudden affection, food and unsolicited life advice. If your child seems shy or clingy, it's not necessarily rudeness. It may be their nervous system going on high alert.

Instead of forcing politeness, model it yourself, and protect their boundaries. And if someone pushes too hard? Try something like, "Thanks for offering, but he's taking a tiny break right now. Maybe later." Helping kids learn the language to set polite boundaries with your support shows respect without asking them to sacrifice their comfort to make adults happy.

Make Space for Breaks and Routines: Even the most even-keeled child can melt down when there's no nap, five adults talking at once and holiday sweets within arm's reach. Try to build in time for them to regroup. Even a short walk outside, a quick nap or reading quietly in a spare room can make a big difference.

You might also agree on a "safe signal" your child can give when they need a break. This might be a special word or a gesture, like a quick tug on your sleeve. And don't forget the basics. Simple things like food, hydration and sleep go a long way in keeping moods steady.

Side-Step Unwelcome Comments: Anytime you gather unique personalities in one space, you're bound to get unwelcome comments. Zingers like, "She's still using a pacifier?" or "He is a picky eater," needn't derail the holiday.

Licensed Therapist Nedra Glover Tawwab recommends setting what she calls “gracious boundaries” and then moving on. That might sound like, “Thanks for your concern. We’ve got it covered.” Or, “I appreciate your care. Let’s talk about something more fun.”

Focus on Practice, Not

Perfection: Many parents worry they’re “failing” when their child refuses to hug Great-Uncle Joe or melts down mid-dessert. But these aren’t failures. They’re just part of life with kids. You’re raising a human, not putting on a performance.

Instead of pointing out what went wrong with your child, celebrate what went right. You might tell them, “You handled it so well when things got a little loud. I saw you take a breath and look for me. That was really smart.” Small affirmations make kids feel safe and more likely to look forward to next year.

Create Space for “Just Us”

Traditions: Spending time with extended family is meaningful. These shared experiences help kids build connections, memories and a sense of belonging.

But there’s nothing wrong with carving out time for your own immediate family, too. Some families create a “just us” tradition - whether it’s pizza and pajamas the night before the holiday or a stroll around the neighborhood to see decorations or to walk off dinner. You might ask each family member to choose one simple holiday activity and prioritize doing it together.

Marisa Mansfield, LSW, says, “Traditions worth keeping are the ones where families are making memories together, and where everyone gets to enjoy the moment.” Stress, she says, is one tradition you can skip.

The True Measure

of Holiday Success: If you measure holiday success by how perfectly everyone behaved, you’ll always walk away a little disappointed. But if you look for the genuine connections – a cousin sharing a toy, a quiet moment in the car, a belly laugh during charades – you might see that even the messy parts are worth the effort.

Shannon Dean is a freelance writer who specializes in writing about families.

“Just Us” Rituals

8 “Just Us” Holiday Rituals to Ground Your Immediate Family: Big gatherings are great, but tiny traditions count, too. Even a quiet hour together can help kids feel grounded and connected during the holiday rush. Try one of these “just us” rituals:

Flashlight Story Time: Snuggle up in bed or under a blanket fort and take turns reading by flashlight. Bonus points for silly voices and hot cocoa.

Pajama Pancake

Morning: Pick one morning when nobody gets dressed. Make pancakes in your pajamas, extra sprinkles encouraged.

Wish Walk: Bundle up and go for a nighttime stroll. Let each person make a silent wish when they see the brightest star.

The “Yes” Hour: Let your child choose an hour’s worth of activities, whether that is board games, a dance party, or baking cookies for breakfast. Say “yes” as much as you can.

Holiday Hideaway: Set up a special quiet space with puzzles, crafts, books, cozy pillows and twinkle lights to create a soft retreat when things get loud.

Holiday Playlist Takeover: Let each family member pick one song that makes them feel joyful. Play them all during cleanup or dinner and let the dance party unfold.

Kindness Countdown: Each day before the holiday, do one small act of kindness together. Write a thank-you note, leave cookies for a neighbor, hold the door for someone. Gather each night to discuss what you did.

New Year’s Eve Jar: Write down one favorite memory from the year and put it in a jar. You’ll look forward to reading them together with sparkling cider before bedtime on New Year’s Eve (midnight optional!).

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Pete White

Tulsa Youth Opera Singer

By **Betty Casey**



Maria (Jenn Gambatese) teaches the Von Trapp children to sing. L-R: Liesl (Reagan Flake), Louisa (Siren Ledbetter), Friedrich (Pete White, on the chair), Kurt (Michael Hacker), Maria (Jenn Gambatese), Brigitta (Zoey Wilson), Marta (Olive Cross), and Gretl (Juniper Ledbetter). Photo credit: Eric Joannes

A Carver Middle School seventh grader, Pete White is experiencing his first year as a Tulsa Youth Opera (TYO) performer. Led by Music Director Aaron Beck, TYO gives students in grades 3 – 12 an opportunity to hone their singing and performing skills with a professional director – all at no cost. Young people may audition, usually in June, to become a member of TYO. No previous vocal training is required and, according to Pete's mom, the auditions are comfortable and "nurturing." Applicants are chosen based on potential, not necessarily current ability. They learn vocal technique, foreign language, acting, movement and performance skills. Pete has one word for his experiences with TYO – FUN.

TulsaKids: How did you get involved with TYO?

Pete: My older sister did it, and she thought it was a fun experience, so I wanted to try it.

TulsaKids: Have you done any performances yet?

Pete: We sang the National Anthem at a Drillers game, and we're going to sing at an awards ceremony.

TulsaKids: The Tulsa Opera is performing "The Sound of Music" on Nov. 15, before this interview is published. Are you involved in that performance?

Pete: I have the part of Friedrich (von Trapp). So far, it's been very fun. I've started to grow more (in my skills) by doing "The Sound of Music." My voice is getting better.

TulsaKids: TYO will be performing "Noah's Flood" in June. Do you have any performances coming up in December?

Pete: We'll sing at Signature Symphony's Christmas event. (The concert is Friday, Dec. 12 and Saturday, Dec. 13)

TulsaKids: Besides improving your vocals, what else do you enjoy about TYO?

Pete: I've met new people and made some new friends. My favorite thing is having the opportunity to do these performances. If I didn't have Tulsa Youth Opera, I wouldn't be able to do any of this. I also get to perform with an opera star. (Broadway award-winner Jenn Gambatese plays Maria, Sam Briggs is Captain von Trapp and Leona Mitchell is Mother Abbess in Tulsa Opera's "The Sound of Music.")

TulsaKids: Do you ever get nervous or have stage fright?

Pete: I usually get nervous at the first performance, but after that, I don't get nervous.

TulsaKids: You've been in other performances with Theatre Tulsa and Clark Youth Theatre. Have you ever made a mistake on stage?

Pete: In "Ragtime" after my costume change, I usually had enough time to run to get some water. I got some water and was a couple of seconds late to go on stage. No one noticed, but the mother character had to do a little ad-libbing.

TulsaKids: You obviously love being in TYO. Is there any negative side?

Pete: I don't get to do some other things like baseball this year, but I always wanted to do Tulsa Youth Opera. I still hang out with my baseball friends.

TulsaKids: How much time do you spend rehearsing?

Pete: Once a week. Then twice a week rehearsing for "The Sound of Music," and then we'll start doing more rehearsals, three or four times a week, when it gets closer.

TulsaKids: Has being in TYO helped you in other parts of your life?

Pete: Yes. It helps me be more respectful, and to respect authority. It also helps me with school projects because I don't get nervous speaking in front of the class. And I'm good at singing "Happy Birthday."

TulsaKids: What would you say to other kids who might be interested in auditioning for TYO?

Pete: Do it. It's very fun!

TulsaKids: What else do you enjoy doing besides singing, acting and dancing?

Pete: I play the trumpet, and I'm in Boy Scouts, church choir and academic bowl at school. I like to swim in the summer.

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

Pete: Howdy Burger! I also like both Brook restaurants, P.F. Chang's and NEFF Brewery because my brother has celiac, and it's gluten free.

TulsaKids: Do you have a fun fact to share?

Over the course of the interview, I discovered many fun facts about Pete: He is "missing an organ" – he had his appendix removed; he spent a week doing intensive training with the Royal Ballet in Richmond, England, when he was 10 (he liked the "toast machine" in the cafeteria); and he got to watch a pack of baboons playing in the pool at a friend's house where his family was staying during a trip to Africa.

Dancing to Her Own Beat

Hearing loss doesn't keep this young ballerina from performing in Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker."

By **Betty Casey**

Liberty Cronin in two of the roles she has performed over the years in Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker," which opens on Dec. 7, 2025 at the Tulsa PAC and runs through Dec. 21.



Liberty Cronin was 3 years old and had just gotten hearing aids when she saw her first performance of Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker" in 2019.

"She could hear the dancers' feet," said her mom, Candace. "She could actually hear them."

Liberty was so taken with the ballet that she jumped up to dance in the aisle. "She got in trouble for that," Candace said.

It was that December night, however, that changed the trajectory of Liberty's young life. Every year the Tulsa Ballet performs "The Nutcracker" one night free of charge for area social service organizations and their clients through a program called Hope for the Holidays. When Candace saw "The Nutcracker" performance listed in a TSHA newsletter, she thought it might be fun to take Liberty. (TSHA — now The Center's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services — provides services for individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss.)

"I was a little reluctant to take her at age 3," Candace said, "but she enjoyed it, and it held her attention."

The type of hearing loss that Liberty has can affect her balance, so Candace took advantage of Liberty's early interest and enrolled her in ballet, thinking it might help. She never imagined that dance and music would become Liberty's way to express herself.

Now age 9, Liberty has been dancing ever since the "aisle incident." She auditioned for "The Nutcracker" in 2021 and was cast as a small pudding cake. This year she is a Hawk Angel, a part she loves. Liberty will be dancing with over 160 other ballet students this month.

"I feel happy when I'm dancing — and free," Liberty says. "The snow scene in 'The Nutcracker' is my favorite."

Even with hearing aids, it's difficult for Liberty to hear the teacher during rehearsals, so she uses a device called a "Roger." The Roger is a special microphone that the teacher wears that connects to Liberty's hearing aids, allowing her to hear the teacher without added background noise and distraction. She also focuses

on vibrations and uses her other senses, counting and memorizing the music as well as taking advantage of patterns and visual cues to learn her role. She practices at home as well. During the performance, Liberty can't use a device, but by the time she's on stage, she is more than ready.

Colleen Lahti, Center for Dance Education (CDE) administrative assistant with Tulsa Ballet, says that they have had other students who were deaf or who had hearing loss at the Tulsa Ballet's CDE. "There's something about how you use your other senses," she says. "We've found that students who are hard of hearing or deaf have a different way of connecting to the music — it just flows out of them."

Liberty shrugs off her hearing loss, even though her mom says that people are shocked that Liberty is so accomplished at tumbling and dance.

"I want to be a professional dancer when I grow up," Liberty says.

Candace says neither she nor her husband have any connection to dance, but they are all in with Liberty's dance passion, taking her to lessons and rehearsals several times a week.

"It's a huge opportunity and learning tool for her," Candace says. "It's absolutely amazing. We let her make the decisions about trying out or going to the next level. We're so proud of her. It takes a lot for someone with hearing loss. She's come a long way."

Lahti says the sense of community at the CDE makes the students feel that they're part of a team. "It's collaborative rather than competitive," she says. "It's a sacrifice to families with rehearsals and late nights."

"I can't think of one thing that's negative. The dance instructors here are amazing," Candace says. "They have high expectations, which helps Liberty with accountability and responsibility. They're respectful and they treat others how they want to be treated. Tulsa Ballet has taught her a lot. She just loves it. If it hadn't been for the night that we got our free tickets, I don't think we would have paid attention to ballet. That one night changed our lives completely."

tulsakids

MERRY MUST-HAVES!

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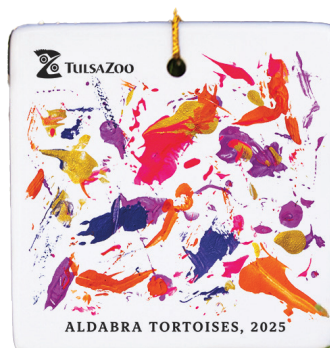
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MERRY MUST-HAVES!

Warm Their Hearts with Homemade Gifts



By **Natalie Mikles**

Homemade gifts—especially when made by kids—become some of the sweetest holiday keepsakes. In my house, it's a favorite December ritual: Christmas music playing, mugs of apple cider and all of us around the kitchen table making something for the people we love. Over the years, we've packaged spice tea, glued sequins onto felt to make simple ornaments and even made bookmarks with little drawings.

This year, one of my daughters has been busy sewing pillows for her grandparents and aunts. She's learning to thread a needle, but she's also learning that gifts don't have to be perfect to mean something.

My favorite ornaments are the homemade ones—the handprints, the crooked popsicle-stick stars, the ones with scribbled names and preschool photos glued inside. These ornaments are some of my greatest treasures and proof that the simplest projects can become the most memorable.

If you're looking for ideas this season, try a homemade food gift. They're thoughtful, kid-friendly and often cost far less than trinkets picked up at a store. We pulled together a few easy recipes that make wonderful gifts for neighbors, teachers and family.

This recipe is perfect for teens or older kids who want to take the lead. The steps are simple, and the finished jars look beautiful tied with ribbon. Let them give it a name, like Ben's Best Granola or Ella's Holiday Blend.

Family Favorite Granola

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 4 cups old-fashioned oats
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup butter
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup packed brown sugar
 - 1-2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 - 1-2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 1 cup slivered almonds
 - 1 cup chopped pecans
 - 1 cup dried cranberries
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped dates
1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add oats, tossing to coat in oil and toasting, just until beginning to turn brown. Remove from heat, setting oats aside.
 2. In the same skillet, add butter, honey and brown sugar, cooking over medium heat until mixture bubbles. Add cinnamon and vanilla. Remove from heat. Add oats back to sauté pan, stirring until coated. Add nuts and dried fruit, stirring to coat.
 3. Spread granola in a single layer on baking sheets. Bake for 10-15 minutes, watching to make sure granola doesn't turn dark.

Note: Granola will crisp after cooling. Store in airtight containers for up to three weeks.



Let the kids make tags to tie onto each jar. This recipe makes 3 pint-size jars. It can easily be doubled.

Holiday Cocoa Mix

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 cups powdered milk
- 1 ¼ cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt

1 cup mini chocolate chips

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Transfer to 3 pint-size jars. Store for up to six months.

2. To make a mug of hot chocolate, combine ½ cup mix with ¾ cup hot water in a mug. Stir well until frothy.



Family and friends will love this nut mix. With all the holiday sweets around, it's great to have something savory. Kids will need help with the oven but can otherwise make this one themselves. Package in small glass jars tied with ribbon.

Sweet and Spicy Nut Mix

- 2 cups raw cashews
- 2 cups pecan halves
- 2 cups raw almonds
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 3 egg whites

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Combine cashews, pecans and almonds in a bowl.

2. Whisk together sugar, cinnamon, cayenne and salt in a second bowl.

Whisk together egg whites and 2 tablespoons water in a third bowl until thick and frothy. Add egg white mixture to nuts and stir until coated. Divide nuts among prepared baking sheets and spread in a single layer.

3. Bake 35 to 40 minutes, stirring and rotating pans halfway through. Cool completely before storing in airtight containers.



FROM KITCHEN TO GIFT BAG

Dress It Up

Mason jars or clear cellophane bags tied with ribbon instantly make simple treats look special. For bread, wrap loaves tightly in foil, then add festive paper and a bow.

Add a Tag

Let the kids make their own gift tags with markers, stickers or stamps. Include the recipe name and a note like "Enjoy within three weeks" or "Stir into hot milk."

Think Small

For cocoa mix or nuts, use small jars. It's enough for a treat without being overwhelming.

Use What You Have

Clean jam jars and recycled ribbon make cute packaging and keep the cost low.

Make It Personal

Kids can give their creations a name—Ben's Best Granola or Ella's Holiday Blend—and write it on the tag.

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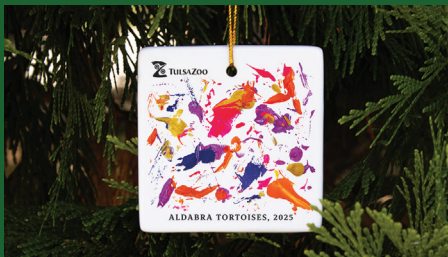
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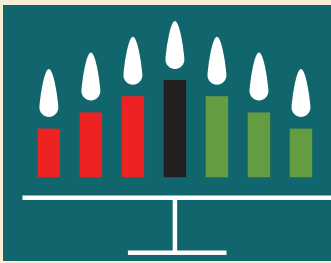
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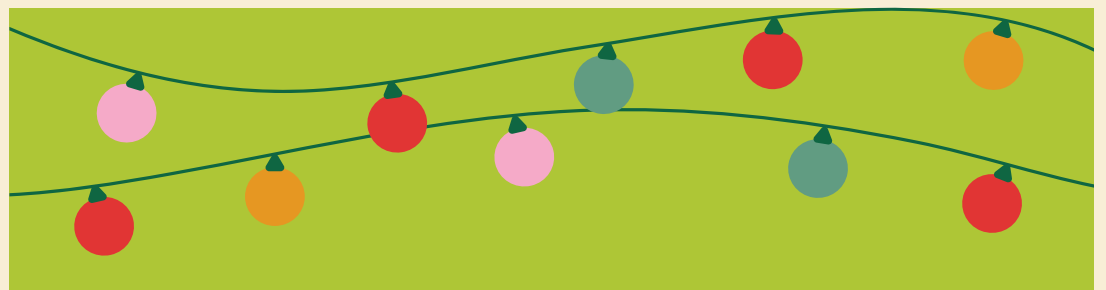
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Holiday

Family Fun



Guide



Lights, Sights And Festivals

IN AND NEAR TULSA

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**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; concessions available for purchase. Free Monday and Tuesday; \$10 per vehicle Wednesday-Sunday.

muskogee parks.org

Jolly Lane Lights

Nov. 21-Jan. 1; Monday-Thursday, 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, 5:30-10:30 p.m. (Closed Christmas day)

**Admiral Twin Drive-In,
5355 E. Easton St.**

Drive through a Winter Wonderland, Toy Land, a Magical Tree Forest and more!

Now featuring Tulsa's longest animated tunnel AND the tallest animated Christmas tree at 60' tall!

jollylanelights.com

Magical Lights Adventure

Nov. 21-Jan. 4, 6-10 p.m.

**Tulsa Raceway Park,
3101 N. Garnett Rd.**

Drive through a mile-long path filled with giant tunnels, candy land, and many themed sections with all of your favorite Christmas characters.

magicalightsadventure.com

Nutcracker Festival

**Dec. 5, 12-9 p.m.; Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Expo Square, 4145 E. 21st St.**

Enjoy a variety of holiday-themed activities, live entertainment by local performing arts groups, an enchanting marketplace, delectable sweets and eats, and more.

nutcrackerfest.com

Philbrook Festival

**Select nights, Nov. 28-Jan. 3,
5:30-9:30 p.m.**

**Philbrook Museum,
2727 S. Rockford Rd.**

Thousands of spectacular lights illuminate the Philbrook Gardens for a festive experience unlike any other. Celebrate the season with hot cocoa, musical light shows, make-and-take art projects, visits with Santa, and more. Certain Festival nights begin with a family-friendly movie starting at 3:30 p.m.

philbrook.org

Rhema Lights

Nov. 26-Jan. 1, 5:30-10 p.m.

**Rhema Bible Church,
1025 W. Kenosha St., Broken Arrow**

Rhema has delighted viewers from all over since its initial Christmas light display in 1982. Admission is free; concessions available for purchase.

rhemalights.org

Wonderland of Lights

Fridays-Sundays,

Nov. 28-Dec. 21, 5-9 p.m.

Woolaroc,

1925 Woolaroc Ranch Dr., Bartlesville

The grounds and buildings of Woolaroc will be covered with over 750,000 lights as the historic ranch transforms itself into a magical winter wonderland! Pay at the gate.

woolaroc.org

Holiday Adventure Park

Various dates, Dec. 5-28, time slots available from 5:30-9:30 p.m.

**POSTOAK Canopy Tours,
5323 W. 31st St. N.**

Soar down POSTOAK Canopy Tours' longest zip line, decked out with amazing lights and displays. Anyone can participate as long as they can safely fit in our harnesses (about 50-300 pounds). Then, head to the Treetop Adventure Park, a continuous belay system high in the air with balancing, rolling logs, skateboards AND MORE LIGHTS! A fire pit, hot chocolate and yard games are available as well.

well.ziptulsa.com

Glow on the Green presented by QuikTrip

Dec. 5, 6-9 p.m.

**Guthrie Green,
111 E. Reconciliation Way**

A festive evening for all ages, featuring a holiday market showcasing unique creations by local artists, live entertainment, family-friendly activities, photos with Santa, delicious offerings from food trucks, and much more.

guthriegreen.com

WORTH THE DRIVE

These light displays are more than one hour from Tulsa, but absolutely beautiful!

Botanica Illuminations

Nov. 22-Jan. 3; 5:30, 6:30, 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. time slots available

Botanica,

701 Amidon St., Wichita, Kansas

Stroll through the enchanted paths filled with twinkling lights, cozy up with hot cocoa, and make holiday memories that will last a lifetime!

botanica.org/illuminations

Chickasha Festival of Light

Nov. 20-Dec. 31, Sunday-Thursday, 6-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 6-11 p.m.

Shannon Springs Park,

2400 S. 9th St., Chickasha, Oklahoma

Drive- or walk-through light display that also has a Ferris wheel and carnival rides, camel rides, ice skating, Santa photos, food trucks and more. Free admission; activities may cost.

chickashafestivaloflight.org

Christmas in the Park

Nightly through New Year's Eve, 6-11 p.m.

2200 S. Holly Ave., Yukon, Oklahoma

Nearly three miles of illuminated fun, including 5 million lights and more than 500 lighted displays. Drive or walk through (admission is free); for a slight cost, you can ride the Santa Express Train. yukonchristmas.com

Coca-Cola Classic Christmas

Nov. 21-Dec. 28 (book tickets online)

Remington Park,

1 Remington Place, Oklahoma City

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/oklahoma-city

Nature at Night at Top of the Rock

Select evenings starting Nov. 2 through the end of the year, 5-9:30 p.m.

Top of the Rock at Big Cedar Lodge, 190 Top of the Rock Road, Ridgedale, Missouri

Drive your own golf cart along a 2.5-mile trail featuring dazzling lights, waterfalls, bridge crossings, and a spectacular cave featuring the one-of-a-kind Bat Bar. Become illuminated with inspiration to conserve our natural world on this one-of-a-kind holiday adventure.

bigcedar.com

Sea of Lights

Enchanted Christmas

Nov. 1-Jan. 31, during Aquarium hours Wonders of Wildlife, 500 W. Sunshine St., Springfield, Missouri

Immerse yourself in a dazzling holiday journey filled with brilliant lights, festive sounds, and interactive multimedia projections that transform the entire aquarium into a glowing conservation wonderland!

wondersofwildlife.org/holidays



Photo courtesy Jolly Lane Lights



Photo courtesy Tulsa Botanic Garden

Where to Visit Santa

Rose District Holiday Market

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23,
5:30-7:30 p.m.

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

Shop the market and see Santa! Dec. 9
is Claus & Paws – bring your pets for a
photo with Santa!

facebook.com/rosedistrict

Utica Square

Daily through Dec. 24; Monday-Friday,
1-7 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.;
Sunday, 12-6 p.m.; Christmas Eve,
11 a.m.-3 p.m.

21st and Utica Ave.

Experience the wonder of the season
and visit Santa's House in Miss Jackson's
Grassy Yard. Surround yourself with
festive décor including a sleigh with
reindeer, a 16-foot Christmas tree,
Nutcracker vignettes, and more.

uticasquare.com

Woodland Hills Mall

Daily through Dec. 24
7021 S. Memorial Dr.

Book your photo session at
[simon.com/mall/woodland-hills-mall/
stores/santa-photo-experience](https://simon.com/mall/woodland-hills-mall/stores/santa-photo-experience)

Kilwins Tulsa

Dec. 5, 6-9:30 p.m.

Kilwins Tulsa,
418 E. 2nd St. B

Get a free photo with Santa; plus, there
will be face painting for the kids from
6-9 p.m. Grab some treats while you're
there!

facebook.com/kilwinstulsa



Photo courtesy Oklahoma Aquarium



Santa Community Project

Dec. 6, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

OU-Tulsa Founder's Hall, 4502 E. 41st St.

Families will enjoy visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, receive new, age-appropriate books, take family photos, and watch entertainment by local talent who will keep children engaged as they wait their turn.

themothersgroup.org

Santa Fly-In

Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Tulsa Air and Space Museum,
3624 N. 74th E. Ave.**

Santa makes his grand entrance by airplane! Watch in wonder as he lands right at TASM, then head inside to meet him for photos, gifts, and festive fun the whole family will enjoy.

tulsamuseum.org

Will Rogers Memorial Museum

Dec. 6 and 13, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore

Santa is coming to the museum, and admission is free!

willrogers.com

Sensory Santa Meet and Greet

Dec. 7, 3-4:30 p.m.

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

A safe and welcoming way to enjoy the magic of Christmas. Arts@302 will provide a free craft, and there will be Touch A Truck vehicles and local resource vendors.

facebook.com/rosedistrict

Santa by the Sea

Dec. 12-14, 19-21, 2-4 p.m.

**Oklahoma Aquarium,
300 Aquarium Dr., Jenks**

Santa's trading his sleigh for fins and diving into the Polynesian Reef! This fin-tastic holiday adventure is free for members or included with daily admission.

okaquarium.org



Sweets with Santa

Dec. 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

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

A new family-friendly, interactive come-and-go style event at Rajan's restaurant, located in the center of the Zoo's Lost Kingdom exhibit complex. Guests will enjoy animal chats, participate in crafts, story time and most importantly, meet Santa Claus.

tulsazoo.org/santa

Breakfast with Santa presented by John Zink

Dec. 13, 9 a.m.

BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave.

After filling your plate, little ones get to share their Christmas wishes with Santa himself and snap fun, festive photos that freeze those joyful moments in time. Santa will also be at Arvest Winterfest presented with Ascension St. John on Saturdays and Sundays, 12-1 p.m., leading up to Christmas.

arvestwinterfest.com

Santa Storytime at the Airport!

Dec. 18, 10-10:20 a.m.

Tulsa International Airport, 7777 Airport Dr.

Join the Hardesty Regional Library at the Tulsa International Airport for a winter-inspired storytime with a special guest! See website for parking details

tulsalibrary.org/events

Christmas Parade Lineup

Bristow's Cowboy Christmas

Dec. 4, 6:30 p.m.

Main Street Bristow

Bristow's Route 66 Cowboy Christmas on Facebook

Festival of Lights Parade

Dec. 4, 7-8 p.m.

Okmulgee Main Street

okmulgeemainstreet.com

Coweta Christmas Parade

Dec. 6, 6 p.m.

Downtown Coweta, Broadway

cowetarotary.org

Owasso Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 9 a.m.

Smith Farm Marketplace, 9002 N. 121st E. Ave., Owasso

cityofowasso.com

Tulsa Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 11 a.m.

Downtown Tulsa

tulsachristmasparade.org

Catoosa Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 2 p.m.

Cherokee St., between Denbo St. and Pine St. in Catoosa

catoosachamber.org

Sapulpa Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 6-9 p.m.

Around downtown Sapulpa, see website for route
sapulpachamber.com

The Rotary Club of Bixby Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 6 p.m.

Downtown Bixby

facebook.com/bixbyrotaryclub

Festival of Lights Christmas Parade

Dec. 5, 7 p.m.

Downtown Sand Springs

sanditepride.com

Holiday Markets and Shopping

Tulsa Glassblowing School's Winter Holiday Sale

Dec. 2-6

Tulsa Glassblowing School, 7440 E. 7th St.

Purchase hand-crafted blown glass holiday decor and gifts. Call 918.582.4527 for more info. tulsaglassblowing.org

Darnaby Arts & Crafts Show

Dec. 6, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Union Multipurpose Activity Center, 6836 S. Mingo Rd.

A 40+ year tradition featuring over 100 vendors. Free to attend. darnabypta.org/artsandcraftshow

Christkindlmarkt

Dec. 4, 6-8 p.m.; Dec. 5, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Dec. 7, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
GAST Event Center, 2301 E. 15th St.

GAST Center is transformed into a Christmas wonderland, which includes many crafters displaying their wares and visits from the Christkindl and St. Nikolaus. While shopping, grab a bite to eat: Wurst, Kartoffelpuffer, Stollen, apple cider, etc. gastulsa.org

Carols & Crumpets

Dec. 6, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 S. Peoria Ave.

This market features Tulsa Herb Society crafts and culinary items as well as the handcrafted workmanship of over 25 skilled artisans. facebook.com/tulsa herb

Tulsa Zoo's Art Untamed Gallery Show

Dec. 13, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (or until all artwork is sold out)

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

Take home a piece of the Tulsa Zoo! Tulsa Zoo's Art Untamed Gallery Show is the perfect holiday market featuring original artwork by your favorite animals.

tulsazoo.org/artuntamed

Gift Market at the Tulsa Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, 11 a.m.

Chapman Green, 600 S. Main St.

Make sure to stop by the Children's Entrepreneur Market featuring local children selling handmade items. kidsmarkets.com



Tulsa Christmas Parade.
Photo courtesy American Waste Patrol



St. Nikolaus and the Christmas Angel at Christkindlmarkt. Photo courtesy German-American Society of Tulsa

Budget Friendly Holiday Traditions

By **Tara Rittler**

You don't have to spend a lot of money to create treasured holiday memories. These fun, low-cost activities may very well become your family's new favorite traditions.

Festive food and drinks

- **CHRISTMAS COOKIE DECORATING CONTEST**
Whip up your favorite sugar cookie recipe and a batch of royal icing. Buying reusable cookie-decorating equipment may be more of an investment up-front but should save you money in years to come. Who can make the prettiest cookie? The funniest? Most colorful? If you're not a fan of sugar cookies, try this with gingerbread.
- **HOT CHOCOLATE BAR**
Make homemade hot chocolate or grab a couple boxes of Swiss Miss, we love it all. Provide several topping options — marshmallows, crushed peppermint, whipped cream, sprinkles — and let everyone mix up the perfect cup. Perfect for a cozy movie night.
- **GINGERBREAD HOUSES**
You don't have to make homemade gingerbread or buy a fancy kit. A box or two of graham crackers and some storebought frosting will suffice. Decorate with leftover Halloween candy if you're still trying to get through it!
- **COOKIE EXCHANGE**
Host a cookie exchange. Each guest brings a batch or two of homemade cookies (along with recipes to share if they like). The cookies are set out on a table, and everyone grabs some of each to take home. The host may want to provide some to-go containers and instructions for the guests, if needed. For example: Do you want them to pre-package their cookies, or not? If you have a friend who doesn't enjoy baking, let them bring storebought cookies or perhaps a savory snack, like Chex Mix.
- **TRADITIONAL FAMILY RECIPES**
Kids may enjoy talking to their grandparents about what they remember from childhood holidays. Do they have a cherished recipe to share? Could you make it together?

Holiday entertainment

- **FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT**
Think about choosing a favorite holiday movie to watch year-after-year. Some families may also choose a series to watch over winter break: "Star Wars," "Toy Story," Muppets movies...there are so many options! Turn off the lights, get into cozy pajamas, and don't forget the popcorn.
- **GAME DAY**
Play an old standby or learn something new! Invite friends and family over and ask everyone to bring a favorite game. Keep it simple by playing a classic game that doesn't require anything other than possibly paper and pencils, like telephone, charades or exquisite corpse (which is far less morbid than it sounds).
- **ONGOING PUZZLE**
Leave a puzzle on a table over winter break so family members can work on it at their leisure. If you don't have one tucked away in a closet already, join your local Buy Nothing group and ask if anyone has one to share.

- **READING TIME**
Family reading sessions could be a nice respite from the hustle and bustle. Everyone can quietly read their own book, or perhaps this is more of a family storytime. Visit the library to stock up on exciting new books. This would be a fun family activity in itself; but parents could also go solo and wrap up some surprise books to read aloud later.
- **CHRISTMAS KARAOKE**
Throw on your favorite Christmas albums for a family sing-along. Are any family members musicians? Sing and play carols together.

Getting out of the house

- **CHRISTMAS LIGHT TOUR**
There are some amazing light displays around town; some are free (like Rhema), others may require tickets. Or hop in the family vehicle and simply drive (or walk) around the neighborhood.
- **HIKING**
A brisk hike may be just what you need when the kids get restless. Bundle up and head to Turkey Mountain, Oxley Nature Center, etc. What wildlife can you find, even in the winter?
- **CHRISTMAS PARADES**
We love the Tulsa Christmas Parade, which is nearing its 100-year anniversary. This year's parade in downtown Tulsa is Dec. 13. But other Tulsa-area communities have their own parades. Find a list in our Holiday Family Fun Guide.
- **VOLUNTEERING.**
Consider volunteering over the holidays. Go to tulsakids.com/ten-places-to-volunteer-with-your-family-in-tulsa for ideas. (Keep in mind that you may have to first apply and attend orientation.) If volunteering isn't an option, talk about other ways your family can give back. See our Season of Giving pages elsewhere in this issue to read about some local nonprofits to support. Or, do you have a neighbor/family member who could use some assistance?

Decorating and creating

- **TRIM THE TREE**
Whether you're Team Real or Team Faux Tree, decorating the Christmas tree together can be a wonderful way to kick off the season. Talk about your favorite ornaments or maybe make some new ones.
- **PAPER SNOWFLAKES**
Guarantee a white Christmas by cutting paper snowflakes and hanging them from the ceiling.
- **HOMEMADE GIFTS**
Make gifts to give to friends and neighbors. Cookie or soup mix jars, sugar scrubs, or homemade slime are all relatively simple projects that even younger kids can help with. Woven potholders, a set of watercolor cards or small cross stitch ornaments are other options. And any baked goods will probably be appreciated!



Ice Skating Rinks

Arvest Winterfest presented with Ascension St. John

Nov. 28-Jan. 4

BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave.

Tulsa's favorite holiday tradition returns as Arvest Winterfest presented with Ascension St. John celebrates its 18th year in downtown Tulsa. Guests can ice skate beneath the skyline, race down the giant ice slide, enjoy Weekends with Santa, and relax in private igloos. arvestwinterfest.com

BA Ice Rink

Through 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

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

Winter Wonderland at WeStreet Ice Center

Weekends only until Dec. 12, then open daily through Jan. 4; see website for hours
4143 S. Yale Ave.

WeStreet Ice Center's skating rink transforms into a sparkling winter village. Special activities include ice skating, winter train rides, holiday workshops, visits with Santa and more.

westreeticecenter.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



Photo courtesy WeStreet Ice Center

Seasonal Showtimes

Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Dec. 3, 7 p.m.

BOK Center,
200 S. Denver Ave.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra is bringing The Ghosts of Christmas Eve Tour to BOK Center. bokcenter.com

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever"

Dec. 4-6, 11-13 7:30 p.m.;

Dec. 7 and 14, 2 p.m.

Clark Youth Theatre,
4825 S. Quaker Ave.

The Herdmans never go to church. So how did they end up with the lead roles in the Christmas play? Chance, intimidation, and maybe a little Christmas magic help bring the Herdmans, as well as the rest of the town, to a new understanding of the holiday season. clarkyouththeatre.com

"A Christmas Carol" Presented by American Theatre Company

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

Robert Odle's and Richard Averill's musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved novella about the joy of giving has been a Tulsa tradition for more than 40 years.

americantheatrecompany.org

Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker"

Dec. 7-21, various showtimes
Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Join Tulsa Ballet for this classic story of a young girl's magical journey on Christmas Eve, set in 19th-century Germany.

tulsaballet.org

Sandi Patty: Christmas Blessings

Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Broken Arrow PAC,
701 S. Main St., BA

Sandi Patty, one of the most acclaimed vocalists of our time, performs a seasonal concert. brokenarrowpac.com

Winter Concert

Featuring the Heartland
Harmony Dulcimer
Club

Dec. 9, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Zarrow Regional
Library,
2224 W. 51st St.

Meet around the fireplace for spiced cider, music and holiday cheer. tulsalibrary.org

BBI: Tulsa Festival Ringers and The Tulsa Carolers

Dec. 10, 11

a.m. and

12:15 p.m.

Tulsa PAC,
110 E. 2nd St.

Tulsa Festival Ringers Inc., Tulsa's only auditioned community handbell ensemble, is

a seasonal favorite! They will perform along with The Tulsa Carolers, Tulsa's premiere Christmas caroling company. Free, but reserve tickets in advance. tulsapac.com

"Tiny Tim's Christmas"

Dec. 12 and 19, 7 p.m.;

Dec. 13-14, 20-21, 2 p.m.

Spotlight Theater,
1381 S. Riverside Dr.

An imaginative and delightful continuation of a Christmas classic.

tulsaspotlighttheater.com

"Christmas in Tulsa" presented by Signature Symphony

Dec. 12-13, 7:30 p.m.

VanTrease PACE,
10300 E. 81st St.

The voices of the Tulsa Opera Signature Chorale and guest vocalist Andra Pantelimon, the 2025 Tulsa Sings! Winner, join the Signature Symphony for cozy carols and holiday hoopla. signaturesymphony.org



Photo courtesy American Theatre Company

Christmas Movie Matinee: "The Snowman"

Dec. 13, 2 p.m.

VanTrease PACE,
10300 E. 81st St.

Enjoy "The Snowman" as Signature Symphony musicians provide the soundtrack, a symphonic poem, to this endearing Christmas classic.

signaturesymphony.org

"A Charlie Brown Christmas" – The music of Vince Guaraldi

Dec. 19-20, 6:30-7:45 p.m.

(All Ages); 9-10:15 p.m.

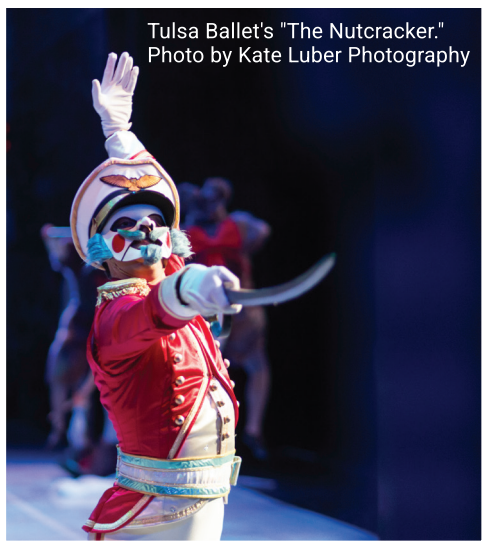
(Ages 21+)

LowDown, 108 N. Detroit Ave.

Listen to the Vince Guaraldi soundtrack brought to life by Tulsa's finest jazz musicians. Purchase tickets in advance.

lowdowntulsa.com

Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker."
Photo by Kate Luber Photography



Holiday Parties And Festive Films

Santa Shuffle

Dec. 5, 6-8 p.m.

Central Park Community Center,
1500 S. Main St., Broken Arrow

This brand-new community event features a fun and festive night of line dancing led by expert instructors. Free; sign up at secure.rec1.com/OK/broken-arrow-ok

Christmas at the Riverwalk, presented by Lee & Brown Consulting Engineers

Dec. 6, 5-8 p.m.

Jenks Riverwalk, 300 Riverwalk Terrace, Jenks

This free community event features a Santa Claus photo booth, live Christmas music, vendors and more. The Melting Pot – Tulsa will provide hot chocolate and fondue samples. jenksriverwalk.com

JSE Gingerbread Jubilee

Dec. 13, 3 timeslots available: 12-1:30, 2-3:30 or 4-5:30 p.m.

Jenks Southeast Elementary School Cafeteria,
10222 S. Yale Ave.

Families are invited to build, decorate, and celebrate the season. There will be special guests including Santa, Elsa and one of Santa's Elves, as well as a hot chocolate bar, candy decorating station, and more festive activities. Open to the community. Tickets and additional details at JSEmemberhub.com

White Christmas Sing-Alongs

Select dates, Dec. 12-24

Circle Cinema, 10 S. Lewis Ave.

Sing-along to this holiday favorite with props, trivia and more fun! Purchase tickets soon; they will sell out. circlecinema.org

Movie Night: "Elf"

Dec. 12, 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

Will Rogers Memorial Museum,
1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore

Laugh along while watching "Elf" at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum! Free admission and popcorn thanks to the Bank of Commerce. willrogers.com

Festival Films at Philbrook Museum

Dec. 7, 13-14, 20-21, 3:30-6 p.m.

Philbrook Museum, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.

Watch a family-friendly movie before Philbrook Festival! Film titles include "Elf," "Frozen" and "Home Alone." See website for schedule. philbrook.org

Bilingual Holiday Movies

Dec. 19, 22-23, 3-5 p.m.

Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd.

Watch a holiday movie in Spanish with English subtitles. There will be a read aloud of the movie's book before starting the movie, plus movie-themed crafts and a photo booth. For elementary schoolers. tulsalibrary.org

My Favorite Ornament

Is your Christmas tree a hodge-podge of eclectic ornaments, or more festively cohesive? We asked our Facebook followers and some TulsaKids staff and writers to tell us about their most cherished Christmas tree ornaments. Feel free to tag us in a Facebook or Instagram post about your own favorite ornament, and we'll share it to our Story!

Susan Doyle: "I still have several of these crochet snowflakes my grandmother made every year. They are so special because they help keep her memory alive for my children."



Susan Doyle: "This Garfield ornament had been mine since I was a little kid, as long as I can remember (I've always been a big fan of Garfield). I still put it on my tree every year. It's special because it reminds me of my childhood at Christmas and I love sharing those memories with my own kids."

Jenny Fisher: "My favorite ornaments are these little Bucilla kit ornaments that I made with my mom sitting around the dining table... just like my mom and grandma did together when my mom was young. We love pulling out our new and old ornaments each year."

Natalie Mikles (TK Columnist): We like collecting ornaments from vacations. Here's a new one we'll add to the tree this year!

Tara Rittler (TK Web Editor): For a few years, my mom got into making felt Christmas ornaments. She made snowmen, gingerbread men and stockings. She made so many, she even sold some at a local (Wichita) gift shop! She passed away earlier this year, so I am extra-grateful to have these treasures.

Kwanzaa Celebrations

Kwanzaa Celebration Dinner: Honoring Community Through Food and Fellowship

Friday, Dec. 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave.

Join the African American Resource Center for an evening of warmth, tradition and togetherness in honor of the first day of Kwanzaa – Umoja (Unity) – with a community dinner. Enjoy delicious food, meaningful conversation and the spirit of fellowship. Please register in advance to help the library plan for meals. For all ages. Visit tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918-549-7323 to register.

Kwanzaa Celebration: Fourth Principle – Ujamaa

Monday, Dec. 29, 4-5:30 p.m.

Suburban Acres Library, 4606 N. Garrison Ave.

In celebration of the fourth principle of Kwanzaa, Ujamaa or Cooperative Economics, learn about small, Black-owned businesses in Tulsa and the surrounding areas and online. There will also be a 'lighting' of the kinara for day four of the holiday. For all ages. tulsalibrary.org/events

Community Hanukkah Celebrations

Winterlight Chanukah Festival

Dec. 14, 5 p.m.

Congregation B'nai Emunah, 1719 S. Owasso Ave.

Enjoy food, songs and community fellowship while waiting for the lighting of a giant Chanukiah.
tulsagogue.com

Outdoor Hanukkah Lighting with Temple Israel

Dec. 14, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Jewish Federation of Tulsa, 2021 E. 71st St.

Gather around the large outdoor Hanukkah, sing songs, tell the story of Hanukkah, enjoy donuts and hot cocoa. Dreidels will be handed out to those in attendance.

jewishtulsa.org

Where to Find a Christmas Tree

Selecting the perfect Christmas tree can be a treasured family tradition. Are you looking for something towering and symmetrical? Or perhaps a smaller, slightly lopsided tree that may be overlooked by most. It's a great opportunity to let each family member voice their opinion and work on their negotiating skills.

CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS

Selecting your tree from a Christmas tree farm can be extra-special. Many farms offer complimentary concessions (like hot cocoa and cider), hayrides, and other fun activities. Ask the staff for information about what kinds of trees they sell — this will be a good learning opportunity for the kids, but can also give you a better idea of what variety may work best in your home. Many Christmas tree farms offer pre-cut trees as well, so you can have the fun holiday experience without working up a sweat.

Christmas tree farms in the Tulsa area include Crisp Tree Farm (Bixby), Molly and Socks (Bristow), Owasso Christmas Tree and Blackberry Farm, and Pleasant Valley Farms (Sand Springs).

CHRISTMAS TREE LOTS

Cascia Hall's annual Christmas Tree Lot promises a lot of the fun you'd experience at a Christmas tree farm right in the heart of Tulsa. This year's Christmas Tree Lot will happen Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Nov. 30, 12-4 p.m. and Dec. 3, 12-3 p.m. Activities include visits with Santa, sipping cocoa by the fire, and a tasty BBQ Cookoff on Dec. 6.

Another local midtown option is **Cohlmia's** at 15th and Cincinnati. They can even help with your holiday décor needs. And **Southwood Landscape and Garden Center** at 91st and Riverside is the perfect place to shop for a pre-cut tree or a living Christmas tree, if you want something you can plant later. They also offer a nice selection of "FirEver" faux trees.

CARING FOR YOUR TREE

Keep in mind that real Christmas trees require a lot of water. To ensure your tree stays fresh and hydrated, the National Christmas Tree Association recommends putting your Christmas tree in water as soon as possible after you get it home. Cut a half-inch disc off the bottom of the trunk (similar to how you would cut the stems off a flower bouquet before displaying it in a vase) before placing it in a well-fitted tree stand. Check your tree every day to make sure the bottom of the trunk is submerged in water; if not, add some. Turn off your Christmas lights when not at home and at night. Get more tips at realchristmastrees.org.

When the holidays are over, visit your city's website or social media pages for information about how to dispose of it.

Family Friendly New Year's Events

Tiny Tots New Year's Celebration

Dec. 27, 9-11 a.m.

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

A party just for those 6 and under and their families! Your \$14.50 (plus tax) ticket includes jumping, riding toys, skating, playzone, and more.

wheelsandthrills.com

Noon Year's Eve at Discovery Lab

Dec. 31, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Discovery Lab, 3123 Riverside Dr.

Welcome the New Year with exciting science activities, engaging demonstrations, and a spectacular 20,000-balloon drop at noon. Reserve your tickets ASAP.

discoverylab.org

Noon Year's Eve at Chandler Park

Dec. 31, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Chandler Park, 6500 W. 21st St.

Activities include games, snacks, a photo booth, hands-on STEM party favors, and a balloon drop at noon. Cost: \$2 per person. Pre-register at

tulsacountyparks.recdesk.com

Noon Year's Eve Party at Martin Regional Library

Dec. 31, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd.

Activities, songs and a New Year countdown for the young and young at heart.

tulsalibrary.org

Ringin' In At Redbud

Dec. 31, 7 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

(family-friendly hour is 7-8 p.m.)

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

A night of show-stopping entertainment including local musical acts, comedians, fun, and games.

facebook.com/owassorecreationandculture

New Year's Eve 1920s Swing Dance

Dec. 31, 9 p.m.-midnight

Southminster Community Center, 3500 S. Peoria Ave.

Join The Oklahoma Swing Syndicate for their annual New Year's Dance for all ages. There will be swing lessons from 9-9:30, followed by the dance. theoklahomaswingsyndicate.org

Photo courtesy Discovery Lab



ASK THE EXPERTS



GRAND MENTAL HEALTH

How can parents make positive, healthy holiday memories for their children?

The holidays can be a joyful but hectic time, and children often take their emotional cues from their parents. To create healthy, lasting memories, focus less on perfection and more on connection.

Kids remember how they felt—safe, loved and included—more than elaborate gifts or flawless decorations. Start by keeping traditions simple and meaningful: bake cookies together, volunteer as a family or take an evening walk to see lights. Maintain basic routines like regular meals and sleep to help children feel grounded amid the excitement. If family tensions arise, model calm communication and set gentle boundaries. Let children participate in planning like choosing a recipe, decorating or wrapping gifts so they feel valued. Above all, be present. Put away distractions, listen to their stories and share your own memories.

When parents manage stress and prioritize genuine connection, they teach their children that the holidays are not about doing or receiving, but about being together. Those moments of warmth, laughter and belonging are what truly last.

844.458.2100
24/7 Crisis Line: 800.722.3611



MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

What tips do you have that help keep my little one safe during the off-season?

Beyond the pool's edge, water dangers lurk in unexpected places. From bathtubs to buckets, even a few inches of water can pose risks, especially for little ones. Puddles, ponds and open containers become potential hazards. Always be vigilant around water sources, no matter how small, and ensure toddlers are within arm's reach.

It's not just about pools – awareness is key. Secure lids and empty containers, and create barriers to keep curious minds safe. Water is a joy, but respecting its potential dangers in various forms ensures a safer and happier water experience for everyone.

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

Recommendations on how to take care of your children's teeth during December:

December is full of fun treats, and you can still enjoy them while keeping your smile healthy!

Try to save sugary snacks, like cookies, candy canes and hot cocoa, for mealtimes. Your mouth makes more saliva during meals, which helps wash sugar away.

Drink plenty of water, especially after sweets, and try to choose snacks like cheese, fruit or nuts when you can. And don't forget the basics: Brush twice a day for two minutes and floss once a day to keep sugar from sticking around.

Most importantly, enjoy the holiday season, and keep your smile bright!

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations
DentalDepot.net



SIMON HARWOOD, FRY & ELDER

Can I change the court-ordered Christmas visitation schedule this year?

By agreement with the other parent, yes, absolutely. I recommend doing so in writing, email or text. But otherwise, absent some emergency (child in danger), the Court system works too slow to have a change within a month without an agreement. That process would need to be started by the spring to have a realistic shot at being done by the holidays. Instead, try to offer the other side some incentive to change it up a bit if needed, such as swapping days. In all situations, try to take the high road if you think it will go back to court, since unilateral action has the chance of backfiring.



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



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2025

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



• BROUGHT TO YOU BY



TULSAZOO

The zoo is offering child-price admission to everyone with an online ticket purchase through Dec. 31. Photos courtesy Tulsa Zoo





It's hockey season! Cheer for the Tulsa Oilers at the BOK Center. Photo courtesy Tulsa Oilers

December 1 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!

December 2 Tuesday

SENSORY NIGHT

6-8 p.m., Oklahoma Aquarium, 300 Aquarium Dr., Jenks, okaquarium.org

With low lights and quiet music, explore the Oklahoma Aquarium without the usual crowd. Includes a self-guided scavenger hunt and a prize for everyone who completes it.

YOGA FOR EVERY BODY **F W**

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

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

December 3 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: BILINGUAL **F**

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

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

December 4 Thursday

STORYTIME AT PHILBROOK

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

Drop in for imaginative stories. Repeats Dec. 11 and 18.

ART AFTER SCHOOL **F**

For elementary schoolers, 4-5 p.m., Bronson Brookside Library, 4607 S. Madison Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Get creative and make something at the library.

2025 HELMERICH AWARD: MEET ARGENTINE AMERICAN WRITER HERMAN DIAZ **F**

For adults and teens, 5:30-7 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hernan Diaz, the 2025 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award recipient, will speak, answer questions and sign books.

December 5 Friday

BIRDS AND BREWS **F W**

All ages, 9-10 a.m., Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow, facebook.com/rayharralnaturecenter

Nature Center staff will provide Birds & Beans coffee and various learning materials to help begin your birding adventure.

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

Cheer for the Tulsa Oilers as they play the Wichita Thunder! The first 1,000 fans receive an Oilers beanie.

December 6 Saturday

TULSA FARMERS' MARKET **F W**

All ages, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., Kendall Whittier Square, tulsafarmersmarket.org

Shop at the Tulsa Farmers' Market all year long. The market will be closed the Saturday after Christmas.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT **F**

All ages, 9-11:30 a.m., Ray Harral Nature Center, 7101 S. 3rd St., Broken Arrow, baparks.org

This family-friendly event is your chance to learn about the winter birds that call Ray Harral home, while contributing to a 123-year-old tradition that helps track bird populations across the U.S. Pre-register online.

DOG PAW PRINT ORNAMENT WORKSHOP

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

Bring your favorite furry friend to Ruby Clay Co.; staff will help you create a keepsake paw print ornament. Advance tickets recommended.

ZARROW REGIONAL WRAP BATTLE ^F

For teens and tweens, 2-3:30 p.m., Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St., tulsalibrary.org

Compete against your friends by wrapping a holiday package with available supplies.

SOUTHERN HILLS RIDING ACADEMY GRAND OPENING ^F

All ages, 2-4 p.m., Southern Hill Riding Academy, 14644 S. Lewis Ave., Bixby, Facebook: Southern Hills Riding Academy

Join Southern Hills Riding Academy for their grand opening! Take free pony rides and tour the barn.

**BLOOD DRIVE WITH OBI**

12-3 p.m., Spotlight Theater, 1381 Riverside Dr., facebook.com/tulsaspotlighttheatre

Every donor will receive a T-shirt from OBI and one free ticket to The Drunkard or a Spotlight Children's Theatre production.

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

It's Family Funday with Tulsa Oilers!

December 8 Monday**SCRIPT IT! WITH MARK FRANK ^F**

For 9th-12th graders, 4-6 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Local playwright Mark Frank will show you how to turn your ideas into short scripts ready for stage or film.

Join Southern Hills Riding Academy for their Grand Opening Dec. 6. Photo courtesy Southern Hills Riding Academy

December 10 Wednesday**CHESS CLUB ^F**

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. For all skill levels.

December 11 Thursday**BUILD A READER STORYTIME/STAY AND PLAY: SENSORY ^F**

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

This inclusive program of stories, songs and activities is designed for children with a variety of learning styles or sensory integration challenges. Must pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323.

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

The Tulsa Oilers play hockey against the Tahoe Knight Monsters! The first 1,000 fans receive a Oilers koozie.

December 12 Friday**WE ARE OKLAHOMA BOOK DISCUSSION: "KIND OF KIN" ^F**

For adults and teens, 7-8 p.m., Common Tart, 1717 E. 17th St., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a slice of homemade pie and delicious tea while discussing the relevancy of Rita Askew's 2013 novel "Kind of Kin." Must pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323.

December 13 Saturday**JINGLE AND MINGLE ^F**

All ages, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Pratt Library, 3219 S. 113th Ave. W., Sand Springs, tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy hot cocoa, apple cider and sweet treats while exploring winter-themed craft stations.

COOKIE STORYTIME ^F

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

Read cookie-themed books, sing cookie-themed songs and decorate a cookie to take home, while supplies last.

EGGNOG PAJAMA JOG

All ages, 10-11 a.m., 6th and Cincinnati, tulsaparks.recdesk.com

Race along the Tulsa Christmas Parade route before the parade begins. Eggnog, coffee and snacks provided after the race. Pre-register online.



Wear your comfiest PJs and run the Tulsa Christmas Parade route at the Eggnog Pajama Jog Dec. 13. Photo courtesy Tulsa Parks

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

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

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

TULSA OILERS GAME

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

It's Family Funday with the Tulsa Oilers!

December 7 Sunday**SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNING ^F**

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

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

SENSORY SKATE SUNDAY

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

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

BUILD A READER STORYTIME/STAY AND PLAY: FAMILY/PAJAMA ^F

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

Wear pajamas (or come as you are) and enjoy songs, stories and activities. Repeats Dec. 1.

December 9 Tuesday**UGLY HOLIDAY WREATHS ^F**

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

Celebrate the season with tacky tinsel, outrageous ornaments and gaudy garland. Must pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323.

December 15 Monday**TEEN TIME: GAMING ^F**

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

Play a video game on the library's Switch or just hang out in the space.

December 16 Tuesday**ROSE DISTRICT FARMERS MARKET ^F**

All ages, 4-8 p.m., Rose District Plaza, 418 S. Main St., Broken Arrow, brokenarrowok.gov

The Rose District Farmers Market will be open weekly through Dec. 23.

December 17 Wednesday**A WINTER BREAK LITTLE HANDS READ AND MAKE ^F**

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11:15 a.m., Helmerich Library, 5131 E. 91st St., tulsalibrary.org

Join Ms. Julia and Karma Wilson's "Bear and Friends." Wear your comfiest pajamas and bring your favorite blanket or stuffie.

FACTIVITIES: SNOWMEN ^F

Ages 4-12, 4-5 p.m., Suburban Acres Library, 3606 N. Garrison Ave., tulsalibrary.org
Learn about snowmen and do a snowman craft.

PREPARING FOR A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY: FINANCIAL EDUCATION SERIES ^F

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

Develop skills to protect yourself during times of financial uncertainty with Tinker Federal Credit Union Financial Educator Tina Herndon. Must pre-register at tulsalibrary.org/events or call 918.549.7323.

December 18 Thursday**BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BILINGUAL - PIÑATA PARTY! ^F**

Ages 0-5, 10:15-11 a.m., Kendall-Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis Ave., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish.

AFTER-SCHOOL HOLIDAY PARTY ^F

For elementary schoolers, 4-5 p.m., Bronson Brookside Library, 4607 S. Madison Pl., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy games, music and cheer.

POLYMER CLAY CRAFTING: WINTER GIFTS ^F

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

Make cute miniature crafts with polymer clay — for yourself or to give as a gift.

December 19 Friday**BILINGUAL HOLIDAY MOVIE ^F**

For elementary schoolers, 3-5 p.m., Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., tulsalibrary.org

Watch a holiday movie in Spanish with English subtitles. There will be a read-aloud of the movie's book before the movie, as well as movie-themed crafts and a photo booth. Repeats Dec. 22 and 23.

WINTER SOLSTICE SOIRÉE: 1,000 HOURS OUTSIDE ^F

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

Join in the Gardens at LaFortune Park for hot cocoa, nature-based crafts and music to welcome the season.

December 20 Saturday**MOVIES IN THE COVE ^F**

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

Watch a family-friendly movie (rated PG).

FESTIVE WASHI ORNAMENTS AND BAUBLES ^F

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

Make ornaments and baubles using washi tape and other simple craft items.

December 21 Sunday**FIND MORE EVENTS IN OUR HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN GUIDE
SPONSORED BY VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL****December 22 Monday****WINTER ZOO CAMP**

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

An exciting way to keep your campers engaged in fun and learning while on break from school. Pre-register online. Aftercare available till 5:15 p.m. for an additional charge.

December 23 Tuesday**HEARTLAND HARMONY DULCIMER CLUB ^F**

All ages, 6-8 p.m., Zarrow Regional Library, 2224 W. 51st St., tulsalibrary.org

Come to practice, learn or just listen to the sweet sounds of the dulcimer. Repeats Dec. 2, 16 and 30.

December 24 Wednesday**FIND MORE EVENTS IN OUR HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN GUIDE
SPONSORED BY VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL****December 25 Thursday**

MERRY CHRISTMAS

December 26 Friday**LET YOUR INNER CHILD RUN WILD!**

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

The zoo is offering child-price admission to everyone with an online ticket purchase. No discount code needed. Offer valid now through Dec. 31, 2025.

December 27 Saturday**"POLAR EXPRESS" FAMILY STORYTIME ^F**

All ages, 10-10:20 a.m., Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a reading of "The Polar Express" by Chris Van Allsburg, followed by a family-friendly movie (rated PG).

December 28 Sunday**FIND MORE FAMILY FUN AT TULSAKIDS.COM/CALENDAR****December 29 Monday****WINTER ZOO CAMP**

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

An exciting way to keep your campers engaged in fun and learning while on break from school. Pre-register online. Aftercare available till 5:15 p.m. for an additional charge.

TEEN LOUNGE: VIDEO GAMES, CRAFTS AND SNACKS ^F

For teens and tweens, 4-5:30 p.m., Collinsville Library, 1223 W. Main St., Collinsville, tulsalibrary.org

Join for video games, crafts and snacks.

December 30 Tuesday**WINTER CRAFT DAY ^F**

All ages, 1-4 p.m., Central Library, 400 Civic Center, tulsalibrary.org

Drop in to explore art supplies, get inspired by books and create winter-themed art together as a family.

CRAFTING AND A MOVIE ^F

For elementary schoolers, 2-3:45 p.m., Jenks Library, 523 W. B St., Jenks, tulsalibrary.org

Watch a seasonal family movie and make a cozy winter craft.

December 31 Wednesday



Where kids come first.

**Care
designed
for kids.**

We care for children as they grow—children like yours. Saint Francis Children's is the region's only specialty children's hospital, backed by a full network of pediatric clinics and board-certified specialists in everything from surgery to oncology. More than a hospital, we're a trusted partner in your child's health. Saint Francis Children's—where kids come first.



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