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SUMMER PROGRAMS

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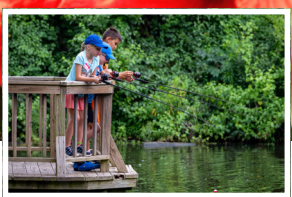




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MEET THE COVER FAMILY!

The Savage family made our June cover shoot easy and fun. Virgil and Tori Savage brought toddlers Rudy and Naomi to the colorful murals near Route 66 for a photo shoot with photographer Valerie Wei-Haas. Virgil, this year's TulsaKids Amazing Dads winner, spent the morning chasing toddlers and making the kids laugh between shots. The shoot wrapped up at TulsaRama, where Rudy and Naomi were rewarded with hobby horses after posing for a few final photos.



Meet the Publisher:

Amanda Murphy

Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in Tulsa. My roots are in Tulsa proper and northeast Oklahoma. In fact, two of my grandparents were graduates of Central High School when it was located downtown. I grew up always being aware of Tulsa's history because I've been surrounded by people who lived it. I am also a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

I graduated from the University of Tulsa with a bachelor's degree in communication and Spanish. After that I spent time in Chicago earning a master's degree from Northwestern University in management and from DePaul University in media studies. The Chicago area is where I launched my career in marketing. After living and working in Maine, I returned to Tulsa in 2014. I worked for a variety of organizations either in full-time or consulting roles in Tulsa and some out of state prior to TulsaKids.

I have a daughter who will be heading into fifth grade and a stepson who will be a freshman in college this fall. My husband, the kids, and I stay busy. When work and school don't keep us hopping, we enjoy traveling and spending time in the Tahlequah area by the Illinois River.

What drew you to TulsaKids, and what made you want to become the publisher?

I started reading TulsaKids when my stepson was little. Several years down the road, I got the opportunity to blog for TulsaKids. At the time it was a hobby, but one that I took very seriously. Even during my busiest workweeks, I'd find time to write whether that meant from an airplane, the passenger seat of a car, or at midnight. There was a particular moment when I knew the publication was supposed to be my entire career and not just a side gig. I couldn't imagine doing anything else. Prior to taking on the role of owner/publisher in December 2025, I learned the ropes from the TulsaKids team for a year and a half as an account executive. My background is in business, and I love the community-driven nature of TulsaKids. It is a blessing to be in this role.

You're an animal lover! Can you tell us about your pets and your heart for animals?

Let's just say our smallest dog is 7 pounds and our largest dog is about 117 pounds! My oldest dog, Yoko, is around 18, according to a recent dog DNA test. All of the dogs I've had throughout my adult life, except one, have been from shelters or nonprofit animal rescues.

We also have a cat. He's the first cat I've ever had. My stepson immediately cuddles the dogs when he gets home, whereas my daughter goes right to the cat. Having an animal in the house you can connect with is special.

Fun fact: I wanted to be a vet growing up, but decided against it in early high school after



my dad took me to see a veterinarian perform a dog surgery. You probably shouldn't be a veterinarian if you pass out while giving dogs shots or doing basic procedures—just in case anyone was wondering.

What excites you most about the future of TulsaKids?

I'm excited about the fantastic ideas that come from our team. We are building new relationships within our state and region while continuing to nurture existing relationships. Everyone on the team is committed to the mission.

Though we are known for our print publication, we've had a large digital distribution for years, and it has expanded significantly this year. People definitely have their reading preferences and we want to meet them where they are. We are rolling out a new website soon and other projects on the horizon to cater to our readers and our advertising partners.

There truly isn't a better time to be part of TulsaKids.

What do you love about raising a family in Tulsa?

The Tulsa area has changed in many ways since I grew up here. There are so many things to do now! There are museums, entertainment centers, parks, sports games, a thriving performing arts community and numerous festivals and free family activities. You can stay as busy as you want. Meanwhile, places like Dallas, Kansas City, and Wichita are close enough for a long weekend.

This issue is all about summer travel. Do you have any summer travel plans?

We have a few regional trips planned already within Oklahoma and to Texas and Missouri. We enjoy Colorado summers so perhaps some time there. I hope to spend a week in Maine.

What else would you like TulsaKids readers to know?

Relationships are at the core of what we do. We want this to be a space that resonates with you. If you have something to share, don't be a stranger. Feel free to reach out to us at ***hello@tulsakids.com*** or to me personally at ***amanda@tulsakids.com***.

tulsakids

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CONTESTS & GIVEAWAYS



COURTESY TULSA DRILLERS

Take Me Out to the Ballgame Photo Contest

presented by Tulsa Drillers!

Share a photo of your child playing baseball or enjoying a ballgame, and you could win tickets to a Tulsa Drillers game, the chance to throw the first pitch at the Drillers' July 12 game and a Tulsa Drillers Prize Pack! Entry is open June 1-30.

Even More Summer Fun!

Head to ***tulsakids.com/summer*** for our digital Summer Family Fun Guide, featuring even more activities to keep your kids entertained all summer long. Here, you'll find our new Tulsa scavenger hunt, lists of indoor places to play and kid-friendly museums, and more.

Presented by Tulsa Zoo



PHOTO CREDIT TOM GILBERT

TULSAKIDS Family Favorites 2026

2026 Family Favorites Update

Thank you to everyone who voted in our 2026 Family Favorites Contest last month! The winners will be announced in our July issue.

NEW PRIZES EVERY MONTH

SCAN HERE to get links to all of our contests and giveaways, or visit us at ***tulsakids.com/contests***.

WHAT'S GOING ONLINE?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

We asked our Facebook followers (@tulsakidsmagazine) to share photos from their child's most recent birthday party! Here are a few of the wonderful submissions:

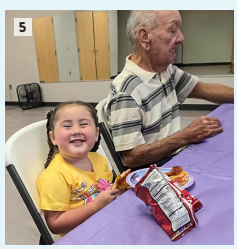
1. Theodoros Hanus, 1st birthday: Buc-ee's theme
2. Jude Swift, 6-7 birthday
3. Julianna and Sadie Richard, 3rd birthday party
4. Eric and Kelly Miller, with twin daughters Alex and Natasha
5. Hadley, 4th birthday, with her Papa Denton











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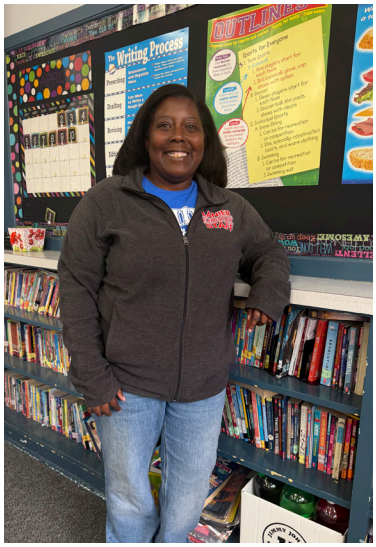


Akela Leach, a fifth grade teacher at Lanier Elementary School, was named Tulsa Public Schools' 2026 Teacher of the Year.

AKELA LEACH NAMED DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Tulsa Public Schools has named Akela Leach its 2026 Teacher of the Year, recognizing her impact in the classroom and roots in the district.

A Tulsa native and TPS graduate, Leach attended Mayo Demonstration Elementary, Thoreau Demonstration Academy and Booker T. Washington High School before returning to teach in the same community that shaped her.

"It feels full circle," she says. "I've always loved learning and felt connected to this community."

Leach, a fifth grade teacher at Lanier Elementary School, didn't initially plan to become a teacher. After working with nonprofit organizations through AmeriCorps, she realized she was most drawn to programs serving students. She returned to Tulsa, started as a paraprofessional and later earned her teaching credentials.

Now in her 11th year at Lanier, Leach is passionate about creating opportunities for students to take ownership, whether through morning announcements, safety patrol or student-led clubs.

"I like giving kids responsibility," she says. "They take it seriously."

Leach was selected through a multi-step process that included nominations, interviews and a professional portfolio before being named the district's Teacher of the Year.



Elmo and friends will be on the stage at the Tulsa PAC on June 24 for a fun show for Sesame Street fans.

ELMO'S GOT THE MOVES

Families can sing, dance and move along with favorite Sesame Street characters when *Elmo's Got the Moves* comes to the Tulsa Performing Arts Center at 6 p.m. June 24. The interactive live show features Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Cookie Monster and more in a music-filled performance designed for young children. The show is presented by Celebrity Attractions. Tickets are available through Celebrity Attractions and the Tulsa PAC box office.

TEEN MUSICIANS TAKE THE STAGE AT THE CHURCH STUDIO

Students from Tulsa's Street School stepped into one of the city's most iconic music spaces this spring, recording original songs at The Church Studio through a program designed to give young musicians a creative outlet and professional mentorship.

The experience was part of Tangled Up in Tunes, an education initiative through the Bob Dylan Center that brings local musicians into Tulsa schools to teach students guitar, piano, harmonica, percussion and songwriting.



Street School students recorded original songs at The Church Studio this spring through Tangled Up in Tunes, a music education program from the Bob Dylan Center.

ETHAN VOELKERS/COURTESY OF AMERICAN SONG ARCHIVES

Over the course of this last school year, students from Street School worked alongside Tulsa musicians including Jesse Aycock, Chris Combs and Amber Watson, eventually forming a band called Hallow and writing two original songs.

When students arrived at The Church Studio to record, organizers said the moment immediately felt significant.

"We'd been building it up for two months," said Rebecca Roseberry, who helps lead the program for the Bob Dylan Center. "But they're high school kids, so I don't think they fully realized it until they walked in. Their eyes were just wide open."

Rebecca said the program began three years ago with only a few elementary schools before expanding to high schools, including Street School. One motivation behind the initiative, she said, was the decline of music education opportunities in schools.

"Music has been cut from so many schools," she said. "Tulsa has such an incredible music community, so it made sense to bring those two worlds together."

Students meet weekly after school, practice together and are given instruments to take home so they can continue learning outside the classroom. Beyond learning songs, students collaborate to write original music and perform publicly.

For Street School student Miguel Salazar, the program helped build both musical and personal confidence. Salazar, a self-taught guitarist who learned through YouTube videos and by listening to songs, said the experience taught him how to collaborate with others.

"Being in the program helped me learn how to play with more than just yourself," he said. "It gives you more people skills, too."

Musicians working with the students said the experience has been meaningful for them as well.

Amber Watson said she grew up without access to opportunities like these and became emotional watching students enter the studio for the first time.

"They get to record in one of the biggest recording studios around. And their music is going to be out there forever," Watson said. "They just want to be seen. This is them being seen."

Tangled Up in Tunes is part of the Bob Dylan Center's broader educational outreach efforts and is supported by donors, local foundations and community arts grants.

PLACES TO GO

Beginner-Friendly Mountain Bike Trails

Is your kid curious about mountain biking? While Tulsa certainly has some steep drops and speedy curves that may give a parent pause, these trails are perfect for riders new to the sport. Don't forget your helmet!



TURKEY MOUNTAIN: LITTLE LOOP

Someone had a lot of fun naming the trails at Turkey Mountain. There's Tree Hugger, Zingo, the Soda Pop Loop…and many others. While some trails are best for experienced riders, very young or beginner riders can start out on the Little Loop, a .25-mile trail designed for riders just learning to pedal. You can even tackle the trail on a Strider bike, says River Parks Authority's Ryan Howell. The Little Loop features gentle curves and inclines, he says, and is also flat enough to allow for easy pedaling. "It's wide enough in most places that the parent can easily walk beside or behind," Howell says.

Little Loop is accessible from the Lower Main parking lot behind the north pavilion.

If you're ready for more of a challenge but not yet pro-level, Howell recommends sticking to the green-rated trails, as opposed to blue (intermediate) or black (difficult).

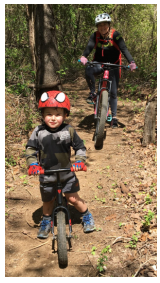
"Once you're comfortable [with Little Loop], head over to the Campaign Trail," he says. "After you get good at that trail, try Stay Gold. And once you do that, you'll have a new passion that will get you outdoors a lot more often!"

For moms wanting to get in on the action, Howell recommends a free women's mountain biking group — Women Empowered Riding Oklahoma (WeRoK) — which hosts monthly group rides and teaches mountain biking basics.

6850 S. Elwood Ave., Tulsa

riverparks.org/experience/turkey-mountain





CLAREMORE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS: SAWTOOTH TRAIL

Rory Peterson has been active in designing and developing the Claremore Mountain Bike Trails for the past 13 years, so he is quite familiar with the system! Peterson recommends families and new riders start with the Sawtooth trail, a 2-mile loop accessible from the main parking lot.

As your group becomes comfortable with Sawtooth, Peterson suggests moving onto the Cloab trail, which is longer and has a mix of beginner and intermediate features.

"A good beginner trail is 30+ inches wide and has fewer obstacles such as small rocks or steep climbs," Peterson explains. "Some of the challenges on the beginner trails will be a few small rock gardens, roots and maybe a 6-inch drop."

As at Turkey Mountain, the Claremore trails are clearly marked green, blue, or black depending on their level of difficulty.

"Riders who are just starting to mountain bike should take it slow and enjoy the adventure," Peterson advises. "It is totally fine to get off your bike and walk an area you are not comfortable with." He reminds new riders to bring a helmet, sunscreen and bug spray, and to ride with a more experienced rider if possible.

North Trailhead:
15011 E. 470 Rd., Claremore

facebook.com/claremoremtnbiketrail





MOOSER CREEK GREENWAY

Thanks to Bike Club, West Tulsa has about 10 miles of beginning and intermediate mountain bike trails, as part of the Mooser Creek Greenway. The Greenway has three connected yet distinct trail systems, spanning Lubell Park, Mooser Hollow and Bales Park.

While all of the trails in the system are rated for beginners or intermediate riders — and many are adaptive mountain bike-friendly — the Lookout Ridge trail at Bales Park (.4 miles) or Mary's Loop at Lubell (2.2 miles) are good starting places. Simply park in the main parking lots and start pedaling!

Lubell Park also has a few wooden features near the parking lot if you want to practice some mountain biking skills before hitting the trails.

Helpful signs near the trailheads provide a comprehensive map of the system and remind riders to avoid the trails when they're wet; stick to the trails; and generally be respectful of both the environment and others using the trail.

Lubell Park: 2910 W. 53rd St., Tulsa

Bales Park: 5801 S. Union Ave.

bikeclubtulsa.com

Meet Blake Smith

UNDER THE STARS AT THE ADMIRAL TWIN

PEOPLE TO MEET



Blake Smith grew up loving movies, and today he helps carry on one of Tulsa's most recognizable landmarks: the Admiral Twin Drive-In.

For Smith, the drive-in has always been about more than showing films.

"Running a well-known Tulsa spot means being a steward of a place that holds special memories and significance for the community," he says. "It's both an honor and a responsibility, knowing that people associate the drive-in with good times and local culture."

Some of his own favorite memories happened there, too. Smith still remembers opening night in 1988, after his father purchased the Admiral Twin. Cars stretched all the way from the drive-in to Memorial Drive as crowds packed in.

That same excitement still fills summer nights at the Admiral Twin today, especially for families looking for something different.

"Families still love the drive-in experience because it's both nostalgic and refreshingly different from a typical night out. Drive-ins in general offer a relaxed, affordable way for everyone to spend time together," he says.

He understands the magic from both sides now—as someone who grew up loving drive-ins and now experiences them as a dad to sons Jude and Maxwell. He remembers visiting a drive-in in Florida as a teenager and being amazed by the big screen outside at night and the experience of watching a movie from the family car. Today, he sees families making those same kinds of memories at the Admiral Twin.

"Being a dad has given me a whole new perspective on what the drive-in represents," Smith says. "I get to see it through my kids' eyes. It reminds me that the drive-in is more than just a place to watch movies—it's about making memories together."

Part of the appeal, he says, is that the experience feels different from a traditional movie theater. Kids can wear pajamas, stay up late and pile into the back of the car with popcorn and snacks. For some families, it even feels a little like a mini camping trip.

He's seen thousands of movies over the years, but it's a classic that remains his all-time favorite: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Surprisingly, Smith says it's one he's never actually shown at the Admiral Twin, though that may change during the drive-in's 75th anniversary this year.

DRIVE-IN TIPS FROM BLAKE SMITH

- Arrive early to grab a good spot and let kids play before the movie starts.
- Bring blankets, pillows and lawn chairs to make your setup extra cozy.
- Tune your radio in early so you're ready for movie audio.
- Pack jackets and bug spray for cooler night-time temperatures.
- Plan ahead for sleepy kids if you're staying for the second feature.
- Most importantly: Relax and enjoy time together as a family.

For kids, though, the magic of the drive-in often has less to do with what's on the screen.

"The novelty of watching a film outdoors, with the excitement of being part of a big gathering, makes the drive-in a magical place for kids," he says.

TULSAKIDS STAFF

Blake Smith shares his love of the Admiral Twin Drive-In with sons Jude, 10, and Maxwell, 8. Smith grew up visiting drive-ins himself and now helps carry on one of Tulsa's landmarks.





DID YOU KNOW?

The Admiral Twin appeared in the 1983 film *The Outsiders*, which was filmed in Tulsa by director Francis Ford Coppola. The drive-in has remained a favorite for generations of moviegoers.

Right on Time

New guidelines reflect the wide range of normal development in babies.

By **Angela Percival-Porter**





GETTY IMAGES

WHAT COUNTS AS "WALKING"?

Parents often wonder what qualifies as "walking." In developmental terms, walking means:

- Taking a few independent steps without support
- Moving from one place to another on their own
- Not relying on furniture, toys or a person for balance

Cruising along furniture or pushing a toy is an important step—but it's not considered independent walking yet.

We've all done it—watched a baby take a first step and immediately wondered: Is that early? Late? Right on time? Developmental milestones have long felt like a moving target for parents trying to gauge what's typical.

Developmental milestone guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), reflect when most children have reached key skills rather than an average age. This shift helps identify potential delays earlier and more consistently.

This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Allow your child to explore different environments—living room floor, bedroom floor, front or backyard, parks, etc.
- Make sure there are no hazards—pad sharp corners on furniture and remove large rocks or hard surfaces they could fall on
- Provide stable objects they can pull up on—coffee table, picnic bench or even your leg. Note: some push toys are on wheels and may feel unstable, which can discourage early walking
- Make the area around them interesting to promote the desire to move toward objects, pull up and cruise

The above strategies support your child in learning to walk, but when they take those first steps is up to them—their body and their developing skills. It is hard not to push our children to meet the next milestones and to succeed or excel, but remember: They are still evolving, and they need to do it in the way that best fits their needs. Your job is to provide the opportunities and "teachable moments."

Children learn from the adults, interactions and opportunities in their everyday lives. You, their parents, know your child best. If you have concerns that your child is not meeting their milestones, check with your pediatrician and/or explore your local early intervention program.

Warning signs that your child may need extra help:

- Not rolling over or sitting by 10 months
- Not crawling by 12 months
- Not walking by 18 months (earlier guidelines often cited 12 months as typical, but current CDC and AAP guidance reflects a wider range of development)

If children are delayed, the earlier they receive intervention, the better. Early intervention decreases the chances they will have additional delays or need special services or education later.

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.

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR MILESTONES FOR BABIES

Most children reach these skills within these ranges:

NEWBORN TO 2 MONTHS
Turns head to both sides while on back

3-4 MONTHS
Rolls from belly to back

5 MONTHS
Plays with objects using hands and feet

6-8 MONTHS
Sits up without support

8-10 MONTHS
Crawls on hands and knees

9-12 MONTHS
Cruises around furniture

12-18 MONTHS
Walks alone



What Adults Wish They'd Learned in School

From friendships to finances, the lessons that matter most often aren't part of the curriculum.

By **Tamecca Rogers**



Hey, students who just made it through the school year: School is out, your schedule looks different, and for the first time in a while, you have room to breathe. Summer has a way of slowing things down just enough for you to think—even if you don't realize it.

Here's something most adults don't say out loud often enough: Some lessons from school help you succeed in the classroom. Others, you don't fully learn until life teaches them the hard way.

If someone had pulled us aside earlier and had a real conversation about a few things, it could have saved time, frustration and a lot of second-guessing. This is one of those conversations.

Your Voice Matters More Than You Think

Many of us grew up thinking being "good" meant being quiet, agreeable and easy to manage. Speaking up felt uncomfortable—or even risky. Over time, that silence can become harder to break.

Using your voice isn't about being loud or disrespectful. It's about recognizing that your thoughts and feelings have value. It means asking questions, speaking up when something doesn't feel right and advocating for yourself clearly and respectfully.

Friendships Will Change—and That's OK

Right now, friendships can feel like everything. But not every friendship is meant to last forever. People grow, interests shift and sometimes paths simply change.

Pay attention to how you feel around others. The right friendships feel supportive, not stressful. You won't have to pretend or shrink yourself to fit in.

Mistakes Are Part of the Process

Mistakes don't define you—but they will teach you.

Many people spend years trying to get everything right. When something goes wrong, it can feel personal. But mistakes are part of learning and growth.

You'll try things that don't work and make choices you wish you could redo. That doesn't mean you've failed. It means you're learning. What matters most is what you do next.

Let's Talk About Money

This is one many adults wish they had learned sooner.

Money moves quickly when you're not paying attention, and managing it takes discipline. You don't need to have everything figured out right now, but you do need to start paying attention.

When you get money, pause before spending it. Practice saving toward a goal. Those habits stick—and they matter more than you think.

Your Feelings Are Real—Your Choices Still Matter

You're going to feel a lot of emotions—sometimes all in the same day. That's normal.

What takes practice is learning how to respond to those feelings without letting them control your decisions. Take a moment, breathe and think about how you want to respond, not just how you feel in the moment. That's where you level up.

For Parents and Educators

Summer creates a different kind of opportunity. The structure of the school year fades, schedules open up and there's more space for meaningful conversations without the pressure of assignments and daily routines.

Young people are often more open than they seem—especially in relaxed environments where they don't feel corrected or evaluated. They may not start the conversation, but they'll respond when they feel safe.

Simple questions can open the door:

- What did you learn about yourself this year?
- What felt more challenging than you expected?
- What's something you want to do differently moving forward?

These conversations don't need to be long or formal. What matters most is consistency and authenticity.

As Summer Begins: What Really Sticks

Summer brings more freedom, independence and unstructured time. With that comes more decision-making—often without the built-in guidance of the school day.

School provides knowledge. Life skills—like communication, emotional awareness, self-discipline and decision-making—determine how that knowledge is used.

Summer offers a window to strengthen those skills through everyday moments, conversations and reflection.

Summer will pass quickly. What remains is how students have grown—not just academically, but personally. That growth is what prepares them for what comes next. TK

Tamecca Rogers, PhD, 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.

Reel Summer Fun

Fishing offers kids and teens a chance to unplug, learn patience and spend time outdoors.

By **Julie Wenger Watson**





Ethan Ackerman fishing at Camp Loughridge with the Bishop Kelley High School Fishing Club.

As a parent in the age of ubiquitous "screens," it often feels like your job consists of trying to keep your kids off of them. It's no secret there's an ugly side to social media and excessive gaming, but resisting the siren song of technology is tough. If you're searching for a summer break activity that doesn't involve tech, try the closest fishing hole.

Cast a Wide Net

Whether you're after a prize bass or just looking for some crappie to fry, learning to fish is a valuable experience with a surprising number of mental and physical benefits. Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, improve mood and even enhance immune function. It can also spark creativity. Angling teaches an appreciation of aquatic ecosystems, and fishermen (and women!) are often good stewards of the environment. Anyone who's ever cast a line knows that fishing can develop important life skills like patience, persistence and problem solving. Finally, fishing provides a wonderful chance to bond with family and friends.

Inspired by the Animal Planet series *River Monsters*, which chronicles the exploits of extreme angler Jeremy Wade, some students of Bishop Kelley High School science teacher Caroline Jones started their own catch-and-release fishing club last fall. As the club's advisor, Jones thinks it's a great way for students to meet others with similar interests, as well as an opportunity to teach conservation.

"I think the purpose of any club is camaraderie. A lot of the fisher-type people are introverted, so it's nice to have a shared activity outside of sports or school," she says. "I also want them to get outside to just have some fun and appreciate nature."

The club has about 15 members, both male and female. Some have significant fishing experience, while others are new to the sport. Jones, who rates her own angling skills as "not very good," appreciates the way the students help each other, sharing equipment and advice.

"It's interesting to see students in such a different light with something that they're passionate about, and they get to teach me, too," she says.

Getting Started

If you grew up in Oklahoma, chances are good you know someone who knows how to fish. Even though they may not share the location of their favorite fishing hole, most fisherfolk are happy to help a new angler get started. Stores like Walmart, Bass Pro Shops or any sporting goods store carry entry-level fishing rigs for around $30-$50 (a Zebco 33 is highly recommended), and if you're crafty, you can make your own.

"You don't have to have fancy gear," says Jones. "You can literally use a piece of cane and a piece of hotdog on a string."

In Tulsa, recreational fishing is allowed at most public bodies of water. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) and municipalities across Oklahoma are partners in a "Close to Home Fishing Program" that stocks and manages small bodies of water in urban areas. This includes city park ponds at Braden Park (5036 E. Seventh St.), Hunter Park (5804 E. 91st St.), and two ponds at the southeast corner of Mohawk Park. The ODWC also offers free fishing clinics at various locations around the state. Although everyone must comply with ODWC regulations, Oklahoma residents under the age of 18 aren't required to have a fishing license. For more information, visit wildlifedepartment.com.

SCHEELS in Tulsa also offers free or low-cost fishing courses; visit facebook.com/tulsascheels. Bass Pro Shops also offers fishing classes; visit facebook.com/bassproshopsbrokenarrowok.

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

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Autumn Worten and her daughter, Delaney Reid, create custom cotton candy through their business, Clouds Cotton Candy Creations.

Spinning Sweet Success

A Tulsa teen and her mom turn custom cotton candy into a growing business.

By **Sharon Bishop-Baldwin**



It's a bit ironic that cotton candy was invented by a dentist.

Why Dr. William Morrison thought the treat made of pure sugar, which he called "fairy floss" in 1897, was a good idea isn't known. One theory is that it was easier on the teeth than stickier confections.

It's all in how you spin it.

It's also a bit ironic that 14-year-old Delaney Reid eyed dentistry as a career consideration in her younger days and now sells cotton candy to fund extracurricular activities and college plans.

It's all in how you spin it.

And Autumn Worten is working hard to make sure that Delaney, her daughter, sees the connection between spinning that sugar through their company, Clouds Cotton Candy Creations, and the dreams and goals it will fund.

Through the company, the pair creates custom cotton candy creations, both as a premade product and through a cart they take to events, where they spin the sugar live. Worten, a "natural entrepreneur" who has started three businesses, was helping get the nonprofit Impact Tulsa off the ground when a co-worker shared a photo of a *Ratatouille*-inspired cotton candy creation.

That sent her and Delaney "down a rabbit hole." They found that cotton candy businesses were popular in Asia and Australia with a foothold on the U.S. coasts, but no one was operating a custom cotton candy company in the middle of the country.

"So we thought we would start one," Worten said. "We were looking for ways to pay for college, and I really liked the idea of being able to walk alongside her and show her how a business worked so she would always be able to go out and get that for herself."

Learning the Craft

The beginnings weren't exactly auspicious.

"We were actually really bad at spinning cotton candy, but I had already done all of the branding and everything, so we were just going to figure it out," Worten said.

They worked with a trainer in Florida who did a lot of Disney- and Universal Studios-themed creations and had a "low spin time, and get the customer gone quickly" approach. They worked with a trainer from Michigan with a slower approach that focused on big, elaborate creations.

Studying both has given Worten and Delaney the flexibility to vary their services to fit the occasion. But "school" wasn't easy.

"Humidity is something I've never thought more about than since we started this," Worten said. "Cotton candy just dissolves as humidity goes up."

The duo started with private parties in 2024, and the Carver Middle School prom that year was their first public event. Delaney, who graduated from Carver in May, will attend Booker T. Washington High School in the fall.

They worked mostly private parties through 2025 but also did Mayfest that year.

Building a Business

"We're doing a lot of corporate events, weddings and such," Worten said. "We're doing a lot, which is exciting and awesome."

Worten's business acumen told her that most businesses don't turn a profit in the first two years, but "I knew if we were going to do something (that would help Delaney with college expenses), we had to start early enough for it to accumulate some type of profit."

And is it?

"We're so close. We're so very close," she said, adding that in one quarter this year, the company surpassed its total sales from last year.

Worten said having a cotton candy business doesn't take the fun out of the treat.

"We customize to each client, which really allows my creativity to shine," she said. "It also never gets old seeing the faces of the people you're handing the cotton candy to.

"I make everyone happy here."

That includes adults.

"I was kind of surprised by that," she said, adding that at the Carver





prom, "the chaperones were the first in line."

"It's been really cool to watch how grown-ups almost turn into kids again around cotton candy," she said.

Also cool is watching her teenager begin to embrace grown-up pursuits and start down a path toward owning the business someday.

Delaney doesn't necessarily have that same natural head for business, but "she is learning," Worten said, adding that she has contributed ideas about marketing to a younger audience and promoting the company on social media.

"It's been really cool to watch how her brain works and see her figuring out ways to showcase it visually."

For more information about Clouds Cotton Candy Creations, find them on Facebook and Instagram or email Autumn Worten at cloudscottoncandycreations@gmail.com

Sharon Bishop-Baldwin is a Tulsa-area freelance writer who also publishes the Sand Springs Line on Substack. She's a cat mom who raises foster kittens for adoption and also a wildlife rehabilitator.

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Miles of Memories

In a restored 1967 Ford Mustang, one Tulsa family is taking the ultimate Route 66 road trip.

By **Art Haddaway**





Shane and Fran Bevel with their children, Graham and Ruby, are driving Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica this summer.

Shane Bevel has 2,448 reasons to set his sights on the open road.

That figure represents the total number of miles along U.S. Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica that he and his family plan to travel in early June.

In a restored 1967 Ford Mustang, Shane, his wife, Fran, and their two children, Ruby, 10, and Graham, 12, will head west for a nearly three-week journey along the historic Mother Road.

"I think it'll be a lot of fun," said Shane, a professional photographer who started preparing for the trip about two years ago. "It's exciting for us, a reason to build a car and something fun to do as a family."

Fran, a grant writer, added, "It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing for us, and it'll be fun to just have the pictures and the memories. This is something that we'll never forget."

The Bevels' long-awaited trek across the country will follow Tulsa's Route 66 Capital Cruise and Guinness World Record attempt commemorating the centennial year of the legendary highway — a milestone they were determined not to miss before heading to the Windy City.

"That's a huge event in the car world," said Shane, who registered the Brittany Blue Mustang in the May 30 procession, especially for his wife and children to enjoy. "They're going to see a lot of cool stuff and get to ride in the parade and wave to their friends as they go by."

The foursome will join thousands of other classic car enthusiasts for a five-mile cruise through Tulsa before towing the vintage coupe to Chicago, where they will then kick off their cross-country excursion.

Covering between 90 and 200 miles per day, the Bevels are "going to stop where we want to stop," Shane said, but are still mapping out their destinations, with Route 66's many iconic "Muffler Men" ranking at the top of their list.

They also plan to stay at roadside inns like the Wagon Wheel Motel in Cuba, Mo.; the Big Texan Steak Ranch & Brewery in Amarillo, Texas; and the Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari, N.M., to name a few.

"We're going to see parts of the country that I haven't really seen all that much," Shane said. "It's mainly making memories with them (the kids), just spending 18 days on the road with no plans except where you're going to lay your head down."

Fran added, "There's a lot of stuff out there that are just abandoned towns, and just seeing a little bit of all of it, seeing all those landmarks that made Route 66 cool."

Ruby and Graham's shared space in the backseat will also give the young siblings ample time to take in the terrain and flag their favorite spots.

"All the tourist attractions and all the hotels, I think that'll be fun to see," Ruby said.

Graham added, "I'm pretty excited to get back to Cadillac Ranch (in Amarillo)."

The Bevels' trip goes beyond just seeing the sights, however. It's a chance for them to retrace the path of their Mustang's VIN history, which happens to lead back to a Hollywood Ford dealership near the end of Route 66.

What's more, it's also an opportunity for Fran to honor her late father, who not only grew up and owned a pizza place in Chicago, but also purchased and maintained the family's Mustang before recently passing away.

"The trip is meaningful, the car is meaningful — the time I've put into it, that it was Fran's late father's car, that we're going to start where he was born and where he owned a pizza restaurant," Shane said.

"The fact that it's the centennial amplifies that."

Fran added, "The 100th anniversary made sense, and I told Shane, 'Let's do the whole route in the car.'"

Sharing the scenic experience with like-minded travelers will also be a priority for the California-bound family.

"Just the ability to meet all those people and talk to them from all over the country, all over the world, for my kids to meet them and then to see the things that we'll see, is going to be fun," Shane said.

Fran added, "I think it's just exciting to join all these people from around the world and take this trek that not many people do anymore."

Art Haddaway is a journalist and photographer with over 20 years of experience covering a wide range of subjects, with a passion for telling uplifting stories that highlight the best in people and communities.

A Gateway to Reading

Graphic novel adaptations bring beloved classics to life.

By **April Harden**



We love graphic novels! Your kids love graphic novels! The pairing of story and art appeals to readers of all tastes and ages—strong and struggling alike.

From *Pokémon Adventures* to *Smile* to *Dog Man*, graphic novels find fans among a generation accustomed to the dynamic visuals and comic-style dialogue of video games and TV.

But do these comics hold the same value for kids as traditional chapter books? Should I be concerned when my child wants to read nothing but comics?

The good news is that graphic novels do get kids motivated to read and produce tangible improvements in a child's reading abilities. One 2020 study demonstrated the positive benefits of graphic novels on reading comprehension, vocabulary and reading motivation for learners of English. Other studies show how illustrations that communicate setting, sequence and complex details rapidly and dramatically develop skills of discernment and inference, paving the road to comprehension of longer texts. Due to their high entertainment value, these books help children fall in love with reading, and studies show that the reading of graphic novels is likely to turn one into a lifelong reader of prose.

So how exactly can graphic novels entice kids to pick up the traditional novel, with its intimidating pages of solid text?

One idea is to first hook a child on a book's graphic adaptation. If they like it, they may come back for more. Thankfully, such adaptations are trending nearly as much as live action remakes. You have a lot of great literature to pick from, based on your child's interests (drama? horror? dragons?). Here are a few recently published and popular graphic novels to get you started:



Mary Pope Osborne's Magic Tree House, The Graphic Novel: Dinosaurs Before Dark
adapted by Jenny Laird

This series has been an intro to chapter books for decades of children. Now you can travel back in time with Jack and Annie in a whole new way!



Lauren Tarshis's I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912, the Graphic Novel
adapted by Georgia Ball

This series puts you on the edge of your seat, experiencing historical disasters firsthand. Now you can see the excitement as well as read it!



Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library, the Graphic Novel,
by Chris Grabenstein

It's the library of the future, the coolest in the world, and 12 sixth graders win an exclusive overnight lock-in to see it first! It's all fun and games, until they discover they have to solve all the riddles and puzzles to escape. Then it's more fun and games!



One Crazy Summer, The Graphic Novel,
by Rita Williams-Garcia

Three sisters join their estranged mother for a summer in Oakland, Calif. – and get sent to a Black Panther summer camp! Your kids will travel along with these girls as they learn about their family, their history and their country. This is a beautiful adaptation of an already beloved award-winning novel.



Heidi, The Graphic Novel,
based on the classic by Johanna Spyri adapted by Mariah Marsden

Did you know you can find graphic adaptations of many of the world's finest children's classics? This author has also adapted *The Secret Garden* and *Anne of Green Gables*—and they're gorgeous.



100 Cupboards, The Graphic Novel
by N. D. Wilson

An unfamiliar house. An attic full of doors. Portals to other worlds? Evil that threatens to creep into Henry's world and a cousin Henrietta who enters and doesn't come back?! Your children are in for a thrilling Narnia-esque ride with this one!



The Lemonade War, The Graphic Novel
by Jacqueline Davies

Sibling rivalry turns into dollars and cents, as Evan and Jesse, soon to be classed together in the fourth grade, battle to earn the first $100 with lemonade stands! This book is full of the heart and colors of summer.



Aru Shah and the End of Time, The Graphic Novel
by Roshani Chokshi adapted by Joe Caramagna

This kid-favorite series from Rick Riordan Presents, based on Hindu mythology—with reincarnated Pandava brothers and a demon on the loose—is now a graphic novel! After this, your child will want to read the whole series ... but they will have to read the chapter books to do it as, so far, this is the only graphic adaptation. Sneaky.

And here's one more bit of good news: When it comes to what books kids can read to complete Tulsa City-County Library's 2026 Summer Reading Program, graphic novels totally count!

April Harden, MLIS, is the youth librarian at Bronson Brookside Library. Check out her storytimes from 10:15-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tuesday is family storytime and Thursday is baby and toddler storytime.

Join Tulsa City-County Library's 2026

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

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Jason Collington

On Fatherhood, Raising Thoughtful Thinkers and Writing His Next Chapter

By **Nancy A. Moore**







As we celebrate Father's Day, it's the perfect time to highlight the impact of intentional fathers and the powerful role they play in shaping the next generation.

This visit features Tulsan Jason Collington, former executive editor of Tulsa World Media Company, a position he quietly stepped away from after almost three decades to pursue a career that leverages his expertise to help leaders, businesses and organizations navigate some of their biggest decisions through Collington Consulting.

His perspective on storytelling, leadership and parenting offers meaningful insight for families navigating today's fast-moving world.

TK: After almost 30 years at the Tulsa World, you've stepped into a new chapter as a consultant. What inspired that transition?

Jason: A lot of things came together at once. I had spent decades at the Tulsa World, working my way up, and the company was going through some changes. I made the decision to step away, and that created an opportunity to start what I call my "second mountain." It wasn't a long, strategic plan. It was a decision made in a short window of time. I had to ask myself, "What can I do now that makes the most impact?" I realized I could build something using my experience, my relationships and my reputation. Now I'm working with leaders, nonprofits and businesses—helping them with strategy, storytelling and creating something meaningful.

TK: Let's talk about storytelling. What makes a story truly connect with people today?

Jason: We're living in what I call the attention economy. Getting attention is actually easier than ever, but keeping it is the challenge. A great story connects when it makes someone stop. I call it the "thumb test." You have less than a second before someone scrolls. If your message doesn't stop them, it's gone. But when a story is real, emotional and relevant, it moves people. It can inspire action. It can change behavior. That's the power of storytelling.

TK: What are some of the biggest challenges you see leaders and organizations facing right now?

Jason: A lot of people are busy running their business, but they don't have time to grow it. They know where they want to go, but they don't know how to get there. Or they're struggling to communicate clearly in a world that's constantly changing. That's where I come in. I help them step back, clarify their strategy and then connect that to the story they're telling and the impact they want to create.

TK: As a father, what do you believe is most important in raising thoughtful children today?

Jason: Children model what they see. If they see you reading, they'll read. If they see you learning, they'll learn. If they see curiosity, they'll become curious. We can't just tell them what to do — we have to show them. I was fortunate to grow up in a home where reading was constant. But I struggled at first. What helped me was starting with something visual, like comic books, and that led me into reading everything else. So I think it's about meeting kids where they are and helping them grow from there.

TK: How can parents help children become thoughtful thinkers in such a fast-moving, distracted world?

Jason: We have to help them develop the ability to focus and think deeply. That starts with encouraging reading, creating space without constant distraction and having real conversations. I also think debate is incredibly valuable—not arguing, but learning to see both sides, to think critically and to communicate clearly. And again, it comes back to modeling. Kids are watching how we think, how we respond and how we engage with the world.

TK: What role does technology and artificial intelligence (AI) play in all of this? Should families be concerned?

Jason: I'm actually very optimistic. AI is a tool. It can help us do things faster and more efficiently, but it doesn't replace human intelligence. In fact, I think it's going to make



Jason and Monica Collington (center) with family members (from left) Elizabeth and Jack Roberts, Oscar Roberts, Lucy Roberts and Kellon Collington.

MORE WITH JASON

To listen to the full interview, including more about The Collington Index and how it is starting a movement in journalism, check out the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast with Nancy Moore on your favorite podcast platform or directly at NancyMoore.co/podcast.

You can connect with Jason online at JasonCollington.com and CollingtonIndex.com.

human intelligence—H.I.—even more important. Things like critical thinking, emotional intelligence, real conversations and authentic storytelling—those are human skills, and they're not going away. If anything, they're becoming more valuable.

TK: What advice would you give to kids or young people considering a future in journalism or storytelling?

Jason: I believe the golden age of journalism is ahead of us. The tools are better than ever. You can gather information faster, access more data and tell stories in new ways. But the core of journalism hasn't changed—it's still about getting it right and telling the truth. That requires human effort. Human curiosity. Human integrity. So if you're drawn to it, lean in. There's a real opportunity there.

TK: What is one habit or value you believe every father should prioritize?

Jason: Be present, be intentional and understand that your kids are always watching. It's not just about what you say—it's how you live. That's what shapes them.

TK: What excites you most about this next chapter of your life?

Jason: The opportunity to help people. Whether it's a business trying to grow, a nonprofit trying to make an impact or someone navigating a career transition, I love being able to help them figure out what's next. And I truly believe we're entering a time where people are going to become more connected, more human and more intentional in how they live and work.

Nancy A. Moore is an adjunct professor at Tulsa Community College and has been a writer for TulsaKids for more than 20 years. Her podcast, Sharing Passion and Purpose, can be found on most podcasting platforms or on NancyMoore.co.







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Saisha, 10, and Reya, 5, Hatkar explore the playground at the Tulsa Zoo. The sisters' favorite part of the zoo's Helmerich Playground is the swings.

SUMMER family fun guide

PRESENTED BY TULSAZOO

Summer in Tulsa is packed with ways for families to make memories—from outdoor movies and live music to splash pads, berry picking, festivals and weekend adventures around town. Our annual Summer Family Fun Guide is your go-to source for keeping kids entertained all season long, whether you're planning a big outing or just looking for something fun to do this afternoon. In this special section, you'll find some of our favorite summer happenings, and you can explore even more ideas, events and family fun in the full digital issue online.



PHOTO COURTESY AAA ROUTE 66 ROAD FEST

FAMILY-FRIENDLY summer festivals

JUNE



Williams Townie.
PHOTO COURTESY SAINT FRANCIS TULSA TOUGH

OKM MUSIC ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS FESTIVAL

May 29-June 4

Various locations, Bartlesville

Enjoy seven days full of engaging books, creative crafts and thrilling concerts, featuring lively performances that will have everyone dancing. **okmmusic.org**

OKM MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 5-7

Various locations, Bartlesville

Three days and nights of world-renowned performances across a diverse array of genres, set against the backdrop of historical landmark venues. **okmmusic.org**

SAINT FRANCIS TULSA TOUGH

June 5-7

Blue Dome District (June 5); Tulsa Arts District (June 6); Riverside Drive (June 7)

A three-day party on wheels! Beyond watching exciting bicycle races, kids 9 and under can participate in the kids' race Saturday at 2 p.m. as part of the Brainard Family Festival, and everyone is invited to join the free, 5-mile Williams Townie Ride on Sunday. **tulsatough.com**

VINITA ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL

June 5-6

Vinita

Live music, a Kids Zone Inflatable Park, open houses at local attractions, a marketplace, car show and other entertainment. **vinitaroute66festival.com**

KIDSFEST

June 19-20, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve, Bartlesville

This traditional event features arts and crafts, games, live music, inflatables and so much more! Included with museum admission. **woolaroc.org**

TULSA JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL

June 19-21

Historic Greenwood District

This multi-day celebration invites you to embrace Tulsa as home—a place where generations of dreamers, doers and visionaries unite. **tulsajuneteenth.org**

CLAREMORE MOH JUNETEENTH FREEDOM FESTIVAL

June 20, 1-4 p.m.

Claremore Museum of History

Experience the museum's *Building Heritage, History and Hope* exhibit. The museum will provide bites and beverages, musical entertainment and a lively panel discussion. **claremoremoh.org**

BIXBY GREEN CORN FESTIVAL

June 24-27

Bentley Park, Bixby

Bixby's Green Corn Festival is designed as good, old-fashioned, family-oriented fun. Activities include carnival rides, live music, turtle and bull frog races, a talent show, street dancing and more. **bixbyoptimist.com**

AAA ROUTE 66 ROAD FEST

June 27, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; June 28, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Expo Square

Celebrate all things Route 66 through historic displays, a look at new technologies, a classic car show and more. Kids will enjoy playing Route 66-themed mini golf, racing in a Pinewood Derby, interactive art opportunities, etc. **route66roadfest.com**

MUSCOGEE NATION FESTIVAL

June 25-28

Claude Cox Omniplex, Okmulgee

A weekend filled with activities celebrating the Muscogee people, including sports tournaments, concerts, cultural exhibitions and more. **muscogeenationfestival.com**

JULY

WOODY GUTHRIE FOLK FESTIVAL

July 8-11

Okemah

This annual celebration of Woody Guthrie's life features plenty of live music! The Children's Festival will take place on Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Okemah City Park. **woodyfest.com**

PORTER PEACH FESTIVAL

July 16-18

Porter

Porter fills with music, food, friendly competition and plenty of peach treats as neighbors and visitors gather to enjoy this beloved small-town festival. **porterpeachfestivals.com**



TULSA-AREA

farmers markets & berry farms

PHOTOS COURTESY OWASSO TREE FARM

Farmers Markets

Bartlesville Area Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8-11:30 a.m.
Frank Phillips Park, Bartlesville
bartlesvillefarmersmarket.com

Bristow, OK Artisans and Gardeners Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
Tractor Supply Co., Bristow

Downtown Tulsa Market

Wednesdays, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Santa Fe Square
downtowntulsa.com

Glenpool Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
BlackGold Park, Glenpool
glenpoolonline.com

North Eastern Traveling Market

Sundays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Balk parking lot, Owasso
Facebook: North Eastern Traveling Market

Owasso Farmers and Artisans Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
Redbud Festival Park, Owasso
owassofarmerandartisanmarket.com

Rogers County Farmers Market on 66

Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
Rogers County Courthouse, Claremore
rogerscountyfarmersmarket.com

Rose District Farmers Market

Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.;
Tuesdays, 4-8 p.m.
Rose District Plaza, Broken Arrow
brokenarrowok.gov

Tulsa Farmers' Market

Saturdays, 7-11 a.m.;
Wednesdays, 8-11 a.m.
Kendall Whittier Square
tulsafarmersmarket.org

Berry Farms

There's something satisfying about filling a bucket with fresh-picked berries on a summer morning. Across Oklahoma, family farms open their fields for blueberry and blackberry picking each summer, giving kids a chance to see where food comes from and to bring home berries to eat or mix into muffins.

While each year can vary, Oklahoma's blueberry season typically begins in June and blackberry season in July. Before you head out, check each farm's social media for current hours, availability and picking conditions.

Endicott Farms

Location: 30 minutes south of Midtown Tulsa. 211th St. South between Lewis Ave. and Harvard Ave. (Liberty Mounds)

Find them on facebook.com/EndicottFarms or endicottfarms.com.

Joe's Farm

Location: 12811 S. Sheridan Road, Bixby

Find them at facebook.com/joesfarmbixby and joesfarmok.com

Pick berries and flowers!

Maple Creek Berry Farm

Location: 33423 Pleasant Valley Road, Poteau

Find them on facebook.com/maplecreekberryfarm or oklahomablueberries.com

N40 Berries

Location: 8920 N. Western Road, Stillwater

Find them on facebook.com/n40berries or n40berries.com

Outback Farm

Location: 4163 East 470 Road, Pryor

Find them on facebook.com/blueberriesatoutback or outbackfarm.org

Owasso Christmas Tree and Berry Farm

Location: 10939 N. 129th E. Ave., Owasso

Find them at facebook.com/OwassoTreeFarm or owassotreefarm.com

Thunderbird Berry Farm

Location: 7515 S. 321st E. Ave., Broken Arrow

Find them on facebook.com/thunderbirdberryfarm or thunderbirdberry.com



Endicott Farms.
PHOTO BY KACEY GILPIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Thinking of berry picking in the Tulsa area?

Here are five tips from Betsy Endicott of Endicott Farms to get you ready.

- All ages of kids are welcome, but elementary school age kids really enjoy the experience.
- Dress for the outdoors. Most berry farms are well maintained, but you should still wear sturdy shoes. Also, bring water to stay hydrated while picking.
- Make it an experience. Talk to the kids about the farm and growing food locally. Then, get them excited about eating and cooking on the way home.
- Be safe. Remember you are on a working farm, so especially keep an eye on young kids.
- Have fun! Enjoy your time on the farm and fruits of your labor.



PHOTO COURTESY KATIE BAXTER

FUN IN THE SUN: PLACES TO

swim & splash

SWIMMING POOLS

Community Parks

Please check social media channels and websites before heading to the pool, as hours can change due to lifeguard availability, maintenance, etc.

Chamberlain Park | 4940 N. Frankfort Ave. | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: Thursday-Monday, 12-6 p.m.; Closed Tuesday and Wednesday

County Aire Pool | 100 N. Fir Ave., Broken Arrow | brokenarrowok.gov
Hours: Friday and Saturday, 12-8 p.m.; Sunday, 12-5 p.m.

Family Aquatic Center | 1400 S. Main St., Broken Arrow | brokenarrowok.gov
Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 12-8 p.m.; Tuesday, 1:30-6 p.m.; Sunday, 2-5 p.m.

Lacy Park | 2134 N. Madison Pl. | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: Saturday-Wednesday, 12-6 p.m.; Closed Thursday and Friday

McLure Park | 7440 E. 7th St. | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 12-6 p.m.; Closed Monday

Nienhuis Aquatic Facility | 3201 N. 9th St., Broken Arrow | brokenarrowok.gov
Hours: Monday, 12-8 p.m.; Tuesday-Wednesday, 1:30-8 p.m.; Thursday, 12-6 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 12-8 p.m.; Sunday, 12-5 p.m.

Reed Park | 4233 S. Yukon Ave. | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-6 p.m.; Closed Monday and Tuesday

River Country Family Water Park | 3600 Arline Ave., Muskogee | muskogeeparks.org
Hours: Tuesday-Wednesday, 12-6 p.m.; Thursday, 12-8 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, 1-6 p.m.; Closed Monday

Sapulpa Aquatics Center | 515 E. Dewey Ave., Sapulpa | sapulpaok.gov
Hours: See website or facebook.com/SapulpaAquaticsCenter for hours

South County Pool | 13800 S. Peoria Ave., Bixby | www2.tulsacounty.org
Hours: Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 12-8 p.m., and Thursdays- Sundays, 12-5 p.m.; Closed Mondays

Whiteside Park | 4009 S. Pittsburg Ave. | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: Friday-Tuesday, 12-6 p.m.; Closed Wednesday and Thursday

YMCA Of Greater Tulsa

YMCA of Greater Tulsa operates both indoor and outdoor pools in the Tulsa area, in addition to two splash pads at the Tandy Family and Herman and Kate Kaiser branches. Non-members must purchase a day pass, which is $20 for adults and $15 for children. ymcatulsa.org/pools

Indoor Pools

- Daily Family YMCA: 7910 E. 134th St. South, Bixby
- Hutcherson Family YMCA: 1120 E. Pine St.
- Owasso Family YMCA: 8300 N. Owasso Expy., Owasso
- Tandy Family YMCA: 5005 S. Darlington Ave.

Outdoor Pools

- R.C. Dickenson Family YMCA: 8501 S. Garnett Road, Broken Arrow
- Herman & Kate Kaiser YMCA: 5400 S. Olympia Ave.
- Okmulgee Family YMCA: 106 W. 13th St., Okmulgee

More Places to Swim

Blue Hole Park | 84 S. 447, Salina | travelok.com
Hours: 9 a.m.-8 p.m. daily

OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark | 639 First Americans Blvd., Oklahoma City | okanaresort.com
Hours: See website

Paradise Beach Water Park | 4707 E. 21st St. | paradisebeach.com
Hours: See website

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park at Keystone Lake
29365 W. Highway 51, Mannford | keystonelakejp.com
Hours: Open daily, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Splash Pads and Water Playgrounds

Tulsa City Parks | cityoftulsa.org/aquatics
Hours: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Water Playgrounds

- Celebration Park, 1002 W. 21st St.
- Chamberlain Park, 4949 N. Frankfort Ave.
- Helmerich Park, 7301 S. Riverside Drive
- Hunter Park, 5804 E. 91st St.
- Kendall Whittier Park, 2645 E. Fifth St.
- Lacy Park, 2134 N. Madison Place
- Manion Park, 3003 E. 56th St.
- Maxwell Park, 5251 E. Newton St.
- McCullough Park, 11534 E. 25th St.
- Mohawk Park, 5701 E. 36th St. North
- Owen Park, 560 N. Maybelle St.
- Reed Park, 4233 S. Yukon Ave.
- Schlegel Park, 3825 W. 53rd Pl.
- Springdale, 2223 E. Pine St.
- Vining Park, 6502 N. Cincinnati Ave.
- Whiteside Park, 4009 S. Pittsburg Ave.
- Zeigler Park, 3903 W. Fourth St.

Splash Pads

- Archer Park, 2831 E. Archer St.
- Braden Park, 5036 E. Seventh St.
- Carbondale Park, 2802 W. 48th St.
- Crutchfield Park, 1345 E. Independence Ave.
- Dawson Park, 2035 N. Kingston Place
- Florence Park, 1936 S. Gary Ave.
- Highland Park, 4909 E. 36th St.
- Johnson Park, 6002 S. Riverside Dr.
- Maple Park, 404 E. 15th St.
- Penney Park, 531 S. 49th West Ave.
- Starks Park, 1622 N. Main St.
- Tracy Park, 1134 S. Peoria Ave. (by reservation only)
- Dream Keepers Park, 1875 S. Boulder Ave.
- Wheeling Park, 2209 W. Wheeling Ave.
- Zink Park, 3216 S. Trenton Ave.



Guthrie Green splash pad PHOTO BY JEWEL A. THOMPSON



PHOTO COURTESY LINDSAY MORRIS

Chandler Park Splash Park | 6500 W. 21st St. | www2.tulsacounty.org
Hours: Open Tuesday-Sunday, 9-11 a.m.; 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; 2-4 p.m.; 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Purchase tickets for your chosen time frame at the gate. $5 per person. Visit the website for more information.

41st Street and Riverside Drive riverparks.org
Hours: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Gathering Place | 2650 S. John Williams Way | gatheringplace.org
Hours: See website

Guthrie Green | 111 E. Reconciliation Way | guthriegreen.com
Hours: See website

O'Brien Park | 6159 N. Lewis Ave. | www2.tulsacounty.org
Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

Bixby | bixbyok.gov
- Bentley Park, 8505 E. 148th St. S., Bixby I 9 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Charley Young Event Park, 50 W. Dawes Ave., Bixby I 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and 6-11 p.m.

Broken Arrow | brokenarrowok.gov
Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

- Camino Villa Park, 2812 E. Madison Pl., BA
- Haskell Park, 601 E. Dallas St., BA
- Jackson Park, 4800 West Washington St. S., BA
- Leisure Park, 801 W. Charleston St., BA
- Preserve Park, 3000 N. 37th St., BA
- Rockwood West Park, 1308 N. Narcissus Ave., BA
- Sieling Park, 801-899 N. Elm Ave., BA
- Rose District Plaza, 418 S. Main St., BA

Jenks | jenks.com
Hours: 7 a.m.-11 p.m.
(Veterans and Central Parks)

- Veterans Park, 305 S. Birch St., Jenks
- Central Park, A Street and Elm
- Jenks Riverwalk, 300 Riverwalk Terrace, jenksriverwalk.com

Owasso | cityofowasso.com
Hours: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

- Rayola Park, 8300 Owasso Expressway, Owasso
- Funtastic Island, 10320 E. 116th St. N., Owasso

Sand Springs | sandspringsok.org
Hours: 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

- Case Community Park, 2500 S. River City Park Road, Sand Springs
- Pratt Civitan Center, 306 W. 43rd St., Sand Springs



PHOTO CREDIT VISIT OKC

Get Your Kicks in OKC:

FAMILY FUN ALONG ROUTE 66

ROUTE 66

TulsaKids is hitting the road! We're exploring family-friendly Route 66 stops and experiences worth the drive.

A Tulsa-to-OKC Route 66 itinerary full of photo ops and family favorites

ARTICLE BY ERIN PAGE

TRAVELING ALONG ROUTE 66 makes even a short drive feel like an adventure. For me, it's a combination of history, roadside surprises and the reminder that the journey itself is part of the fun.

The good news for families: You don't have to travel all 400-plus miles of the Mother Road across Oklahoma to experience it. Between Tulsa and Oklahoma City, you'll find plenty of stops that make the trip feel bigger than the miles, from quirky attractions and classic diners to unique and meaningful art.

Choose a day or a weekend getaway, pack the car and head southwest. Take your time to enjoy this mix of nostalgia, discovery and delight.

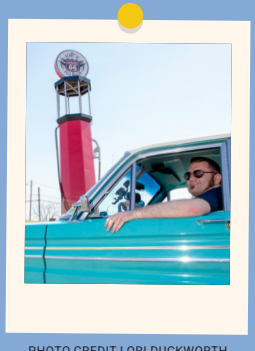

PHOTO CREDIT LORI DUCKWORTH

ON THE ROAD:

Tulsa to OKC

You'll barely have time to get comfortable in the car before your first stop (a win with kids in tow!). In **Sapulpa**, the **Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum** is hard to miss, thanks to the world's tallest gas pump out front. Inside, you'll find an extensive collection of historic automobiles and Route 66 artifacts.

Admission is $9.50 for adults; kids 12 and under get in free. The museum is open daily; check heartofroute66.org for hours.

Your next stop is **Stroud**, just under 40 minutes from Sapulpa. Pull over at the iconic **Rock Café**, a Route 66 staple since 1939 known for its vintage charm and connection to Pixar's Cars. Owner Dawn Welch helped inspire the character Sally Carrera, and you'll find memorabilia from the film throughout the café. Order anything cooked on "Betsy," the original 200-pound grill that survived a 2008 fire and is still serving up burgers and chicken fried steak.

Less than 20 minutes later, **Chandler** offers a worthwhile look at the history of the Mother Road. At the **Route 66 Interpretive Center**, families can experience a virtual "drive" from the 1920s to today through immersive video exhibits.

Admission is $7.50 for adults and $6 for seniors and students. Days and hours vary by season, so check route66interpretivecenter.org before you go.

If you're up for one more detour, head west to the **Seaba Station Motorcycle Museum** in nearby **Warwick** to check out the quirky collection of vintage bikes and memorabilia. The museum is open daily and admission is free.

JUST BEFORE THE CITY:

Arcadia

As you get closer to Oklahoma City, spend time exploring **Arcadia**. First up is the **Round Barn**, built in 1898. The original builder hoped the round shape would make the barn "tornado proof." Take a photo in front of the iconic barn (the only round barn on Route 66!) before you head inside.

Downstairs, a small museum includes exhibits about the barn's history and how it was built (using wood soaked in water so it could bend into that iconic circular shape). But the part we loved most was the upstairs loft. Climb up the stairs and take a moment to look up at the beautiful curved ceiling and imagine the space filled with music and dancing. Take my lead and embarrass your kids with a few dance moves of your own!

The barn is open daily, and it's free to visit.



Just down the road, you'll spot **Pops**. And you really can't miss it. The 66-foot-tall soda bottle out front is a beacon for road-trippers and a recognizable photo stop along Route 66, especially when it lights up at night.

Snap photos by the giant bottle, fill up the gas tank and then venture inside to browse a huge selection of soda. There are hundreds of options, from classic favorites to the "soda-gusting" section filled with flavors so strange you can't help but laugh (think bacon, peanut butter and even more questionable picks). My kids dared each other to pick something wild, but in the end, they stuck with flavors like black cherry, lemon lime and blue raspberry.

If you want to sit awhile, the diner serves up burgers, sandwiches, hot dogs and ice cream confections.



PHOTO CREDIT VISIT OKC

IN THE HEART OF IT:

Oklahoma City

As you make your way into **Oklahoma City**, Route 66 shifts from quirky roadside stops to a mix of history and culture.

Start in the **Asian District**, one of the city's most vibrant and diverse neighborhoods and home to several iconic photo ops on the Mother Road. The **Braum's Milk Bottle Building** at Northwest 23rd Street and Classen Boulevard is a 1930 landmark. Perched on a tiny triangular lot, the building is, you guessed it, topped by a giant milk bottle. Admire it from

Route 66 Photo Ops

One of the best parts of traveling Route 66 has got to be the photo ops! From quirky roadside landmarks to bold public art, these are perfect Insta-worthy backdrops for your adventures.

- **Heart of Route 66 Auto Museum, Sapulpa**
  Snap a photo in front of the world's tallest gas pump
- **Rock Café, Stroud**
  Don't miss a shot outside the classic Route 66 diner
- **Round Barn, Arcadia**
  Grab a photo in front of the only round barn on Route 66, then head upstairs for a completely different perspective
- **Pops, Arcadia**
  Hold your normal-sized sodas in front of the 66-foot-tall soda bottle
- **Braum's Milk Bottle Building, OKC**
  Pull over for the quirkiest pic of the trip
- **Tower Theatre, OKC**
  Pause in Uptown for retro architecture and neon signage
- **Cloud Embrace, Bricktown**
  Climb in this larger-than-life sculpture designed to reflect Oklahoma's changing sky

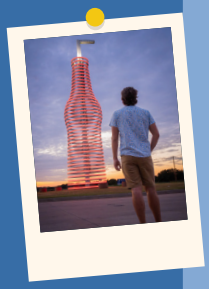

PHOTO CREDIT VISIT OKC





PHOTO CREDIT LORI DUCKWORTH



PHOTO CREDIT VISIT OKC

the car or pull over for a quick picture. Across the intersection sits the **Gold Dome Building**, built in 1958 and the fifth geodesic dome constructed in the world.

You'll also find a host of local restaurants in the area, including one of our family's favorites, **Café Kacao**, where the recipes are both comforting and unforgettable. Expect a wait (it's worth it!) so hop on the Yelp waitlist and explore nearby while you wait.

My kids' eyes always light up when their plate-sized, fluffy pancakes arrive, decorated beautifully with mango, berries or Nutella. For me, it's the Izabal: sautéed potatoes with peppers, onions and chorizo, eggs cooked to order, black beans and tortillas. And don't forget a horchata latte!

After your meal, continue west on 23rd Street to spot the neon-lit **Tower Theatre** in Uptown. If you're craving Southwestern fare with a side of history, stop in to **Cheever's Café**. In addition to fresh seasonal dishes and consistently great service, the restaurant's claim to fame is that part of the building was once a home and the site of the first baby born in the city in 1889. Tulsa readers may recognize the name—Cheever's now also has a second location on Cherry Street.

Next, head downtown to experience how Oklahoma City is telling both its history and its future through public art. The **Clara Luper National Sit-In Plaza** on Robinson Avenue marks the site of the 1958 Katz Drugstore sit-in, where Luper and her students peacefully protested segregation at the lunch counter.

Today, the life-sized installation invites you to step into the scene—sit on an open stool, stand alongside the students or observe from the background. What struck me most was Luper's expression, slightly set apart, watching the history she set in motion unfold. The sculpture opens the door for meaningful conversation as you look at the faces of everyone represented, from the students to the servers to the bystanders, and consider what each might have been thinking and feeling.

Just a few minutes away in **Bricktown** at Reno and Walnut avenues, **Cloud Embrace** is a massive, interactive public art sculpture designed to reflect the changing Oklahoma sky. We love that you can explore this piece by walking around it or climbing inside (which we all did immediately). The colors shift depending on where you stand and how the sunlight hits.

If you have extra time while you're in the heart of the city, consider adding a museum stop to your day. The **Oklahoma State Capitol**, **American Pigeon Museum** and **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum** each offer a different lens into Oklahoma's story and are well worth a visit.

OPT OUTDOORS:

Lake Overholser

Continue west toward **Lake Overholser** for a change of pace and a chance to experience Route 66 in a different way. For our family, a good park and space to move are essential to reset after a lot of time spent in the car.

Route 66 Park sits just off the original highway and offers a mix of history and open space, including a walkable stretch of the road, a watchtower, wetlands, trails, a skate court and plenty of room for kids (and parents!) to run. The park is open daily and admission is free.

Nearby, the **Lake Overholser Bridge**, once a critical link for Route 66 travelers, is a reminder of the road's early days. If your crew is up for an activity, **RIVERSPORT OKC** offers kayak and paddleboard rentals.



PHOTO CREDIT VISIT OKC



ONE MORE STOP:

El Reno

If you're not quite ready for the day to end, keep heading west. Just about 20 minutes from Lake Overholser, **El Reno** adds one more layer of history — and a well-earned treat.

If your crew still has energy to explore, **Fort Reno** sits just outside town and offers a look into Oklahoma's past. Established in 1875, the site has served many roles, from a military post during the Indian Wars to a base for Buffalo Soldiers, a Land Run landmark and even a World War II POW camp. Today, families can walk the grounds, visit the museum and take in the stories that shaped this part of the state.

Admission to the museum is $6 for adults and $4 for kids. The museum is typically open Monday through Friday, but check hours at fortreno.org.

On your way back through town, make time for one final stop.

Sid's is a family-run, old-fashioned diner known for its famous onion burgers. For my crew, the experience is all about the handspun milkshakes. The orange shake (think creamsicle in a glass) was the clear favorite. Cold, sweet and just the right amount of nostalgia, it's the perfect reward after a full day on the road.

When your family looks back on your Route 66 adventure, it won't be the miles you remember (or the kids asking if you're there yet). For us, the magic is in the small moments, like the conversations in the car and the places that made us pause a little longer than planned.

On a trip like this, the best parts aren't the destination. They're everything you discover along the way. Happy trails!





Where to Stay

If you decide to turn your Route 66 road trip into an overnight adventure, Oklahoma City offers options that are just as memorable as the stops along the way.

For a full family getaway: OKANA Resort & Indoor Waterpark

If your kids still have energy to burn, OKANA is a destination all on its own. The Chickasaw Nation's new resort pairs a luxury stay with a 100,000-square-foot indoor waterpark featuring slides, a wave pool and a lazy river — plus an outdoor waterpark with a sandy beach and zipline. Spacious suites make it easy for families to spread out, and with multiple dining options and activities beyond the water, it's an easy way to turn your road trip into a full getaway. Day passes are available if you're not staying overnight.

For Route 66 character: Classen Inn

For a classic Route 66 experience, book a stay at Classen Inn, a renovated roadside motel with mid-century style and retro flair. While it's not directly on today's Route 66 alignment, Classen Boulevard was part of the historic route through OKC, making it a fitting stop. Families can book adjoining queen rooms for extra space, then grab snacks from the on-site Superette and relax on the private balcony.

Explore the possibilities at University School
Summer Explorers Camp

The Summer Explorers Camp invites students ages 4 through 8th grade to enjoy six weeks of discovery, creativity, engaging learning experiences, and FUN!

Each age group follows its own unique set of weekly themes designed to match developmental stages and interests. Through hands-on projects, outdoor play, and collaborative learning, campers explore new ideas and build lasting friendships. Campers may choose to attend one week or all sessions available **June 1–July 17**! Learn how Summer Explorers Camp keeps kids learning, laughing, and growing—**find full details and register at uschool.utulsa.edu** or (918) 631-5060.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA
University School

USCHOOL.UTULSA.EDU
PreK3-8th grade education



Tulsa Rock and Gem Show

Rocks, Gems, Minerals, Fossils, Beads and Jewelry

July 10-12, 2026

Exchange Center at Expo Square
4145 E. 21st St.

9-6 Friday & Saturday
10-5 Sunday

RTM

www.trmsok.org

$7 Adults, Kids 12 and under
free with paid adult



Southwood

LANDSCAPE & GARDEN CENTER

Learn • Explore • Play • Grow!

Create a garden where the entire family can grow together at Tulsa's largest independent garden center.

9025 S. Lewis Ave, Tulsa, OK 74137
www.southwoodgardencenter.com

MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

How long does it take to learn to swim?

While every child progresses differently, most swimmers can begin developing essential water safety skills within months with consistent weekly lessons.

At Miller Swim School, we focus on more than swim strokes — we teach the skills that help children stay safer in and around water. Through our S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Promise, swimmers ages 4+ work toward mastering 10 essential water safety skills designed to build real-world water competency and confidence.

With regular attendance, many swimmers are on track to complete the S.A.F.E.R. Swimmer Test within 12 months. If they don't meet that milestone, we provide up to 2 months of free lessons to help them continue progressing safely and confidently.

Our curriculum prioritizes the skills that matter most in an emergency, including floating, turning to safety, swimming short distances and exiting the water independently. Because learning to swim isn't about rushing through levels — it's about building lifelong water safety skills that help protect children every time they're in or around water.

6415 S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa
525 W. 91st St. S., Jenks
918.254.1988
MillerSwimSchool.com



SIMON HARWOOD
FRY & ELDER

What do I need to do if my ex isn't paying child support?

If your ex is Court (or DHS) ordered to pay child support, then the primary way to enforce payments is through a contempt of court. If your case was through DHS, then they may do it for you (you would want to talk to them to find out), or you can hire an attorney to enforce it (you would typically get your attorney fees back, if the enforcement is successful).

The Court's way of enforcing it, besides options like garnishment, would include jail time as the ultimate threat. This is a specialized court that is designed to move much quicker than regular court, and you should have results within a few months.

If you there is not a court (or DHS) order for child support, then there is nothing to enforce yet. You would need to set up child support first and probably should talk to DHS or an attorney.

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

GRAND MENTAL HEALTH

How can fathers strengthen their connection with their children while supporting mental health during family travel and summer activities?

Summer adventures, whether a Route 66 road trip or a simple weekend outing, offer dads meaningful opportunities to support their children's mental health through connection. Shared experiences build trust, create memories, and open the door for important conversations.

Travel naturally brings moments of excitement, but it can also cause anxiety or stress. Fathers can model healthy coping by staying flexible, talking through frustrations, and focusing on problem-solving rather than perfection. These moments teach children that unexpected left turns and changed plans are part of life's adventure, and how to manage emotions when it happens.

One-on-one time is especially powerful. A conversation in the car, a walk at a rest stop, or the sharing of a favorite activity gives kids a natural, comfortable space to open up without pressure. Dads should also remember that asking open-ended questions and listening without immediately being the "fixer" builds emotional safety.

Finally, routine still matters, even on the road. Adequate rest, snacks, and quiet time help prevent emotional overload. By combining adventure with connection and care, fathers can support their children's emotional well-being while making summer experiences meaningful and fun.

844.458.2100
24/7 Crisis Line: 800.722.3611
GrandMH.com

DENTAL DEPOT

My preteen's permanent teeth are starting to turn a bit yellow. What should I do?

This is very common. Permanent teeth naturally appear more yellow than baby teeth because the enamel is more translucent. Good brushing, regular cleanings and a healthy diet usually keep teeth looking their best. Whitening products are generally not recommended for children, so talk with your dentist before trying anything.

Six Convenient Tulsa Metro Locations
DentalDepot.net

Amazing Dad: Virgil Savage

Between foster care, youth ministry and life with two toddlers, he shows up for kids—at home and far beyond.

By **Natalie Mikles**



PHOTO BY VALERIE WEI-HAAS

Virgil Savage treats every child in his life the same way.

"If they're in our home, they're in our hearts forever," he says.

That mindset shapes everything he does—from mentoring youth at John 3:16 Mission's Family and Youth Center to fostering and adopting children with his wife, Tori, an emergency room nurse practitioner.

Virgil is this year's TulsaKids Amazing Dad winner, selected from more than 100 nominees. His friend and co-worker at John 3:16, Ian Atchison, described him as "the calm in everyone's storm… a rock for everyone around him."

Much of that work happens at John 3:16, where Virgil has served as youth pastor for nearly seven years, working with about 60 kids during the school year. In the summer, that number climbs to nearly 95, with a waiting list behind it.

"I tell them all the time, I'm going to treat you guys like you're my own," Virgil says. "I'm going to give you advice. I'm not your parent—I'll work with your parents—but I'm going to love you like my own while you're here." Not every child in his program has a father at home. Some send him Father's Day cards, and some call him Papa Savage.

"Every time I think about it, I start to choke up," he says.

One of those kids is Corey, who came through the program from kindergarten through high school graduation and took full advantage of the opportunities along the way. Over the years, he traveled to Washington, D.C., and to Europe through a leadership program and joined mission trips with John 3:16 to Guatemala.

"He's taken hold of the opportunity," Virgil says. "He's not let his circumstances stop him from being great."

Every other spring break, Virgil takes students to Guatemala to serve at an orphanage called Eagle's Nest. For many, it's their first time out of the country—and their first look at a very different way of life. They dig trenches by hand, carry supplies and see how other families live, often without running water or modern conveniences.

"It changes your perspective," Virgil says. Back in Tulsa, the lessons Virgil teaches the youth in his program are more everyday: how to change oil, cook a meal, raise chickens or tend a garden.

"These are things you don't learn in school," he says.

The goal is simple—help kids build a life that keeps them from needing the recovery programs John 3:16 offers later.

"My job is to show them how we don't get to that situation," he says.

Some days are harder than others, especially when the needs of the kids are high and the situations are complicated.

Virgil shakes his head. "There are times I'm like, 'I have the right answer for you, I promise, if you'll just listen,'" he says. "But then I think about kids like Corey, and I remember—it's worth it."

At home, Virgil and Tori have opened their door to children who need a loving home, fostering nine babies and toddlers since 2021.

One little girl stayed for two years before being reunited with her father.

"That one was hard to let go of," Virgil says.

Today, they are raising 2-year-old Rudy and 2-year-old Naomi—the two are just four months apart.

"You can't tell them they're not brother and sister," Virgil says. "He calls her sister. She calls him Bubba."

Life with two toddlers is busy, filled with small routines—like starting every car ride with *The Lion King* soundtrack already playing. It's the kind of everyday moment Virgil doesn't take for granted. He smiles and laughs when talking about the morning routine with his kids.

For Virgil, fatherhood is the role that means the most.

"I tell people all the time my favorite label so far is dad," he says. "I love being a youth pastor. I love being a husband. But being a dad—there's nothing like it."

Virgil's own father, who died in 2021, shaped that view. Growing up in Oklahoma City, his dad coached his teams and showed up for him in big and small ways.

"We did everything together," he says.

Now, Virgil sees firsthand the difference that kind of presence makes.

"You can tell who has a father figure in their life and who doesn't," he says. "It makes a difference."

He's also quick to downplay the idea that involved dads are doing something extraordinary. He's noticed people often praise him for doing day-to-day things like taking the kids to the park or fixing his daughter's hair.

"I'm not babysitting," he says. "I'm just being their dad."

Whether he's mentoring students, leading a mission trip or rocking a toddler to sleep, Virgil is there for the kids who need him most.

"I wouldn't do anything else," he says.

Our Amazing Dads Finalists

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We received more than 100 nominations for this year's Amazing Dads contest, each one highlighting the many ways fathers show up for their families. Here are a few more dads we're proud to recognize.



Cory Williams

Cory Williams didn't grow up with a strong father figure, but he's built his own approach to parenting—one that's playful, present and hands-on.

"In order to make a real change in the world, we need to raise good humans because it's not about leaving a better world for our kids, it's leaving better kids for our world," Cory says.

Whether he's carrying his kids, Chell and Atlas, to bed—sometimes flipped upside down or slung over his shoulder—he makes everyday moments feel fun. He brings that same energy when he stays after school to play games with a whole group of kids. He's known beyond his own family, too—many kids recognize him as "Silly Crocodile," the animated character he created on YouTube to reach children who might need encouragement and imagination. "Being a dad is my true calling," he says. "It's about giving my kids the best of myself."



Theo Jenkins

Theo Jenkins is the father of seven, and he makes time for each of his children—listening, encouraging and being present, whether that's at their games or in the everyday moments at home.

"What I love most about being a dad is being there for my kids and pouring into them every day," he says. "Having seven kids is a huge blessing, and I don't take that responsibility lightly."

He's intentional about being available, taking time for conversations, guidance and connection with each of his kids. He brings that same commitment beyond his own home as a youth mentor with I Am Victorious Ministries, investing in young people who need guidance and support. "I enjoy supporting them and just being there," he says. "I want them to always know they're loved and that I've got their back."



Seth Nienhuis

Seth Nienhuis builds his days around his five kids. He gets up early to shoot basketball with his son or practice volleyball with his daughter before work, and looks for ways to connect with each of them individually—whether that's a trip to a Tulsa Drillers game, a round of disc golf or a special one-on-one trip when they reach their teen years. He's just as committed at home, where he and his wife regularly open their doors to their kids' friends.

"I love making them laugh and helping them navigate life in an environment where they know they are loved," he says.

Those who know him point to the same thing: a dad who works hard, stays engaged and makes time for what matters most.

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For kids, summer at the YMCA means making friends, trying new activities, and building skills through camp adventures, swimming, STEM activities, and outdoor play. For adults, it's a place to recharge, challenge yourself, and connect with others – whether that's an early morning workout, a strength class, water exercise, or simply finding accountability in a supportive community.

And because the YMCA believes everyone deserves the opportunity to belong, financial assistance is available for memberships and programs across all 15 locations. At the YMCA, no one is turned away due to the inability to pay.

JUNE EVENTS

All Month: Summer camp, swim lessons & youth sports sign up

June 15: Father's Day at the YMCA – Bring Dad to work out free

June 19: BFF Friday – Bring a Friend Free, try the YMCA free and $0 joining fee if you join!

Dates Vary By Location: Parents' Night Out

Indoor & Outdoor Pools Open: Pool schedules at ymcatulsa.org/pools

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Outstanding Seniors

CLASS OF 2026

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TULSAKIDS CELEBRATES GREAT KIDS EVERY DAY. But in late spring, we feel especially celebratory when it comes to honoring high school graduates. This year we wanted to honor them in a big way—asking area schools to nominate their outstanding seniors. **In May, you got to read about some Tulsa area outstanding seniors. We are excited to introduce you to more.**

But how would schools choose? The graduating class of 2026 is full of standout kids. And we love that the definition of "outstanding" has expanded over the years. We're celebrating 4.0 GPAs and National Merit Scholars, but also students heading to trade schools, taking gap years to pursue their passions and those who simply kept going to make it to graduation day.

Making it through 12 years of school—waking up early after working a late shift at work, walking too far to the bus stop when you wish you had your own car, pushing through algebra when it just won't click—that's outstanding, too. Here's to the high achievers, the middle of the pack and the kids who crossed the finish line by sheer determination.

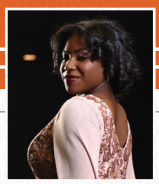
We're proud to introduce some of the Tulsa area's outstanding seniors.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



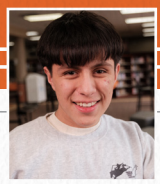
Malik Abouhouli

Malik is a youth ambassador and a member of the Green Team and the Fantasy Football Club. He is also a varsity soccer captain. He has committed to playing soccer for Benedictine University, where he hopes to pursue sports medicine and make a meaningful impact.



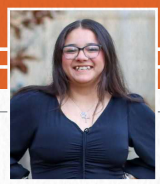
Mackenzie Manning

Mackenzie is passionate about drama and plans to attend OU's prestigious drama school upon graduation. She relishes being the star in plays and hopes to one day do movies. She also loves giving back to her community and makes time each week to teach Sunday School to kids at her church.



Justin Monsibals

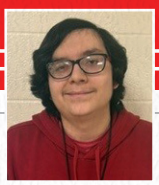
Justin is a first-generation Mexican-American who will be the first in his family to attend college. He is captain of the speech and debate team and the Model UN president. He is interested in photography and plans to pursue immigration law to advocate for his community.



Yocelyn Vargas

Yocelyn was awarded the Superintendents Award for outstanding leadership, citizenship and scholarship. She has also earned the Daughters of the American Revolution Award and the Leadership Diamond Sharp Award. Yocelyn is involved in AFJROTC and archery. She has enlisted in the U.S. Navy and will be working as an aviation machinist's mate after graduation.

EAST CENTRAL



Kevin Escobar-Muniz

Kevin is a senior at East Central who teachers say is a pleasant pupil and quick study. He is inquisitive in the classroom and enjoys challenging himself in new ways. He plans to explore accounting after graduation.



Nelly Romero Larios

Nelly is involved in cheer and Hispanic Club. Her mother says she is "sensitive, responsible and unique," and that she treats others with kindness, respect and empathy. Her positive outlook on life has left a lasting impression on those who know her. Her goal is to graduate high school and pursue a college degree in psychology.

CENTRAL



Ralph Stokes

Ralph is Mr. Central at Central High School and involved in ROTC and athletics. His teachers note he is always smiling and brings a positive energy to every room he enters. Voted as the homecoming king, Ralph is entertaining several offers for basketball and hopes to further his athletic career in college.



Arianna Williams

Arianna is the president of Student Council and has been Central Middle and Central High class president. She is involved in speech and debate, dramatic interpretation, JROTC and the Future Teachers Program. She plans to pursue becoming a medical psychiatrist and is also interested in teaching and backstage drama management.

EDISON



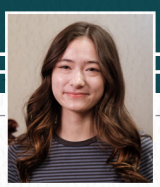
Emmylou Garrison

Emmylou was voted Miss Edison and is involved in student council and tennis. She is a member of the National Honor Society and her teachers say she is a leader among her peers who always has a go-getter mindset and is unstoppable when she sets her mind to achieve something.



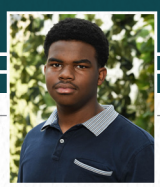
Corrine Kabel

Corrine is a two-year varsity volleyball player and four-year varsity swimmer who is committed to Kansas State to compete in rowing. She maintains a 4.3 GPA and is a National Honor Society member. In her free time, she is a taekwondo instructor and a third-degree black belt. She plans to pursue dietetics and nutrition in college.



Madison Ingram

Madison is a musically talented student at Edison and is actively involved in High School Orchestra, Rock Orchestra, All-State Orchestra and Tulsa Youth Symphony. Despite being visually impaired, she has excelled both with her music and in the classroom, and plans to pursue pre-med with an eye toward becoming a neurologist or neuro-oncologist.



Jaxon Philip

Jaxon has a 4.2 GPA and is a National Honor Society member. He has taken ten AP courses at Edison and is completing an engineering program at Tulsa Tech. He's also completing an internship with Tulsa Public Schools' IT department, where he provides technical assistance to teachers and students.

HALE



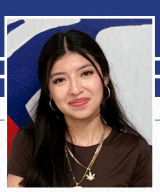
DaShaun Brown

DaShaun is poised to finish in the top 10% of students at Nathan Hale. A member of the National Honor Society, he is equally accomplished as an athlete -- with offers from nearly two dozen colleges after an illustrious career in basketball, track and football. He plans to attend Northwestern Oklahoma State University and will play football while majoring in electrical engineering.



Kadden Clayton

Kadden is the captain of Hale's varsity soccer team and a kicker and punter on its football team. He is involved in student council and volunteers with Special Olympics and baseball. He has overcome a diagnosis of alpha gal to become a prolific athlete, and he aspires to play college soccer or football.



Daniela Juan

Daniela is a three-sport athlete and captain at Nathan Hale in soccer, softball and cheer. She has overcome a lot of adversity, and after the passing of her father at 15 years old, she has left a lasting impact on many around her. She plans to become a dental hygienist after graduation.



Colton Wheat

Colton has been a key member of the baseball program at Hale as a player and mentor. He has made an impression on teachers with his work ethic and with his willingness to go out of his way to help others. He plans to play baseball at Rogers State.

MCLAIN



Nikyrah Beamon

Nikyrah is a star student at McLain who her teachers say "exudes joy." She is the prom chair for the senior class board, involved in both CTE student organizations, and an exemplary leader who sets the bar for all students in her community. Nikyrah has been nominated by almost every department for awards for excellence.



Zachary Daniels

Zachary is a leader in the McLain community and actively involved in the school's band program. Teachers say he is respectful to his fellow students and to teachers and displays kindness everywhere he goes. He was the Band King this year.



Monica Goudeau

Monica is a caring leader who has served as a Lead Ambassador for the Terence Crutcher Foundation and as an active member with Tulsa Changemakers, a group that drives positive impact in Tulsa by supporting youth. She plans to attend UCO and major in finance and minor in real estate.



Joseph Morgan

Joseph is a standout athlete committed to play receiver at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. He was voted homecoming king and is a member of Student Council, My Brother's Keeper, and 100 Black Men. He plans to pursue a business degree at SWOSU and aspires to own his own business so he can give back to his community.

MEMORIAL



Andi Butler

Andi served as Senior Class Officer and a Major with JROTC. She is a four-year varsity volleyball player, a two-year member of Student Council, and a member of the school's Sports Media Team. She is also proud of her Native American Heritage and has volunteered time making ribbon skirts. She will graduate with her associate degree from TCC this May.



Fabian Harris

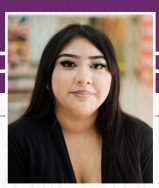
Fabian is Senior Class President, a member of the National Honor Society and Student Council, and concurrently enrolled at TCU. He is also a standout athlete who is a four-year varsity player and three-year starter. He is passionate about aviation, earning his private pilot's license and piloting trips with his family. He plans to pursue a college aviation program to become a commercial airline pilot for a major carrier.



Grayson Mosher

Grayson is a member of Student Council and JROTC, attaining the rank of Cadet Colonel and is the Battalion Commander. He has developed skills in digital photography, even taking photos at various school events. He is on the autism spectrum and has ADHD, but successfully overcame adversity academically and managed to be involved in the school community. He plans to attend UCO and to study forensic science.

NORTH STAR ACADEMY



Yaretzy Diaz

Yaretzy has displayed determination and perseverance to diligently catch up on credits and is on track to graduate one full year early. She wants to attend TCC after graduation and plans to study radiology to eventually become an ultrasound doctor. Teachers say she is an introspective, kind person who likes helping others, especially her family.

Want More Information on Our Outstanding Seniors?

Scan Here or visit us at tulsakids.com to learn more!

ROGERS



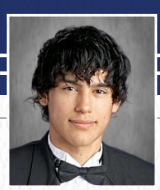
Eli Araiza

Eli is an esteemed Rogers High School senior who is concurrently enrolled at both TCC and Tulsa Tech. She is ranked No. 2 in her graduating class and is the recipient of the T.R.E.E. Conference scholarship. Eli is on track to graduate with 21 college credits from TCC.



Ireland Conwell

Ireland is a member of the Student Council and the debate team. She was selected to participate as a cohort member of University of Tulsa's prestigious "Freedom, Happiness and the Common Good" program to grow in leadership and civic engagement. She is enrolled in TCC classes and is on track to graduate high school with 33 college credits.



Alex Fuentes

Alex is a standout student in TCC's EDGE cohort who is on track to graduate from TCC in May with an associate's degree. They are enrolled in TCC's Manufacturing Engineering Technology program and have accrued more than 60 college credits ahead of high school graduation.



Kendrick Tolon

Kendrick is Senior Class Vice President, Student Council Secretary, involved in basketball, football, and track, and concurrently enrolled in TCC. He is Mr. Will Rogers for 2026, former BPA Vice President, and a member of the Student Indigenous Club, the prestigious OKC Thunder Fellow program and TU's "Freedom, Happiness and the Common Good" program. He plans to attend UCLA.

TULSA MET



Shayzalea Alonzo Andrade

Shayzalea has served in student council for four years, served as student body vice president, was heavily involved in continued education and athletics, and is concurrently enrolled in Tulsa Tech. She is a first-generation high school graduate and has overcome multiple health issues, but she persevered and is on track to graduate while being a light and leader in her community.

TULSA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



Micah Brubaker

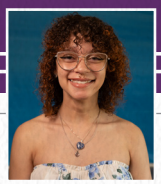
Micah participated in university summer institutes in nuclear engineering and international relations. He is active in NHS and Chess Club, and earned medals in Speech. For his Senior Capstone Project he designed and 3-D printed parts for a home movie projector. Micah plans to study physics at St. Olaf's College.



Janae Grey

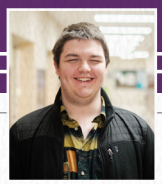
Janae is active in community building and volunteerism and was crowned as Prom Royalty. Her Senior Capstone Project examined the supportive role of friendship and personal success. Helping others is central to her future. She plans to become a veterinarian and begins her academic journey attending TCC in the fall.

TULSA VIRTUAL ACADEMY



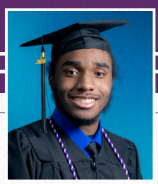
Neveah Barnes

Neveah has been Student Council President for three consecutive years and was honored with the OCCJ Leadership Award in 2024 for her public advocacy against bullying. She is a member of the National Honor Society and represents her school through organizations like Native Youth Board, the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, LiberatED, and Tulsa Changemakers. A StreetCats' volunteer, she wants to pursue veterinary technology after graduation.



Matthew Dretske

Matthew is a member of the National Honor Society and has gained valuable postsecondary readiness experience through both concurrent enrollment at TCC and involvement at Tulsa Tech offered through Tulsa Virtual Academy. He is in his second year at Tulsa Tech and has shown a fascination with animation and programming. He plans to continue pursuing the programming side of animation upon graduation.



Alexander Windam Murray

Alexander's journey to graduation embodies his resilience, determination and heart, succeeding while navigating the challenges of autism. He participated in basketball, soccer, visual arts, and theater, through which he built confidence and showcased his creativity. He plans to attend TCC after graduation to pursue a degree through the School of Visual and Performing Arts. His goal is to build a future in digital media and animation.

WEBSTER



Christopher Merritt

Christopher is a valued longtime member of the Webster football team serving as the team manager, equipment assistant and hydration consultant. He's involved with JROTC, volunteers at his church and enjoys working out, fishing and gaming. He has been an active volunteer with the Special Olympics, helped with the Unified Sports program and enjoys archery classes through the JROTC program.



AnnaBelle Cue

AnnaBelle ranks first in her class. She is a talented flute and piccolo player, selected to Tulsa's Metro Honor Band every year. She is also involved in student council, OSSAA, and a member of the National Honor Society. She attends Tulsa Tech's Biomedical Science program. She has earned a scholarship to TU and plans to study biology before attending medical school to become a medical examiner.



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Hit the Road!

From quick getaways to full-on summer adventures, these drivable trips from Tulsa deliver big fun for families.

By Amanda Murphy, Natalie Mikles, Tara Rittler and Lyssa Flanagan



Families visiting Dallas can step into the fossil hall at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science to explore giant dinosaur skeletons and interactive exhibits.
PHOTO COURTESY PEROT MUSEUM

You don't have to travel far to feel like you've gone somewhere. From Tulsa, several family-friendly destinations are just a few hours away—outdoor adventures, hands-on museums, vibrant city stops and high-energy attractions.

Think of this as your guide to drivable getaways that make the most of your time on the road. Whether you're planning a quick weekend or a longer summer escape, these trips make it easy to hit the road and find your family's kind of fun.

BIG CITY EXPERIENCE:

Dallas

For families ready for a road trip with big energy, major attractions and endless things to do, Dallas is a fantastic choice. In just 3.5 to 4 hours, you can trade familiar scenery for a skyline full of excitement, world-class museums, pro sports, great food and neighborhoods packed with personality. Dallas makes it easy to build a trip around your family's interests—whether that means animals, science, art, shopping, history or cheering in a packed arena.

One of the best things about Dallas is that it works equally well for a quick weekend or a longer getaway. Families can spend one day exploring museums and parks, another visiting major attractions and another simply eating their way through the city. It's also one of the best sports cities in the country—which means there's often a game or event worth planning around.

Can't Miss

If you only choose one area to explore, make it downtown Dallas around **Klyde Warren Park**. This lively urban green space is one of the city's most family-friendly gathering spots. Families will find playgrounds, open lawns, splash areas in warm weather, games, food trucks, events and space for kids to run free. It also sits right next to the **Dallas Museum of Art**, making it easy to combine outdoor fun with indoor culture. Just steps away, art lovers should also make time for the **Crow Museum of Asian Art**.

Try This

Start your morning at the **Perot Museum of Nature and Science**, one of the top family attractions in Texas. Kids can dive into hands-on exhibits, engineering challenges and dinosaur discoveries that make learning feel like play.

Animal lovers should head to the **Dallas World Aquarium**, where rainforest habitats, exotic birds, marine life and immersive environments create a memorable experience. Another option is the **Dallas Zoo**, a large and well-regarded zoo with excellent exhibits and plenty of room to explore.

Later, make your way to Klyde Warren Park for a break. Grab a snack from a food truck, let the kids burn off energy on the playground, relax on the lawn or catch one of the many seasonal programs and family events. Then step into the Dallas Museum of Art or nearby Crow Museum of Asian Art for an easy culture stop.

History lovers should carve out time for **The Sixth Floor Museum** at Dealey Plaza. Families with older kids and teens will also appreciate the **Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum**.

As evening approaches, head to **Reunion Tower** for one of the best views in the city. Families can visit the Geo-Deck observation level for sweeping skyline views or reserve dinner at **Crown Block**.

For families wanting a resort-style stay, consider **Hilton Anatole**. The standout is JadeWaters, a resort water complex featuring slides, a lazy river, splash zones, cabanas and leisure pools.

If your family enjoys sports, Dallas offers outstanding options depending on the season. Spring and summer are ideal for catching the Texas Rangers or FC Dallas. Fall is football season with the Dallas Cowboys. Winter brings Dallas Mavericks basketball and Dallas Stars hockey.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE:

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City offers something for everyone, and there are continually new things to explore in our capital city. It's the sort of place where you can spend the morning animal watching or strolling through a museum, the afternoon splashing through rapids and the evening sharing dinner at a one-of-a-kind eatery.

This city is packed with museums, parks, entertainment districts and attractions for kids and adults.

Can't Miss

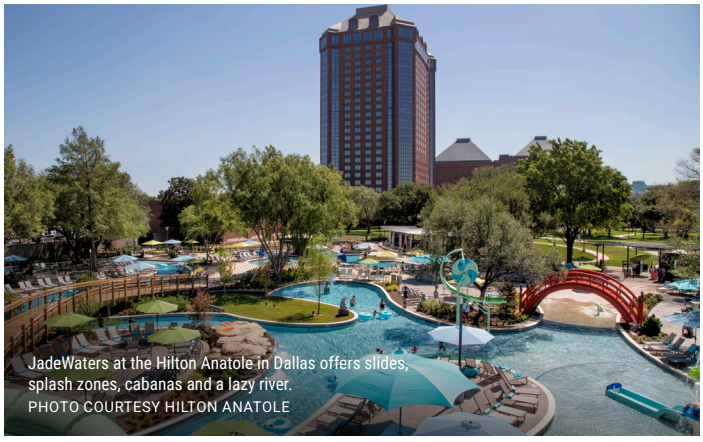
If you only have time for one big outing, make it the Adventure District. This family-favorite area is home to the Oklahoma City Zoo, Science Museum Oklahoma and the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Try This

Start your day at the **Oklahoma City Zoo**, then head next door to **Science Museum Oklahoma.**

Later, slow things down at **Scissortail Park** or **Myriad Botanical Gardens**.

Families craving the adrenaline rush should consider **RIVERSPORT OKC**, where you'll find rafting, zip lines, climbing and more.



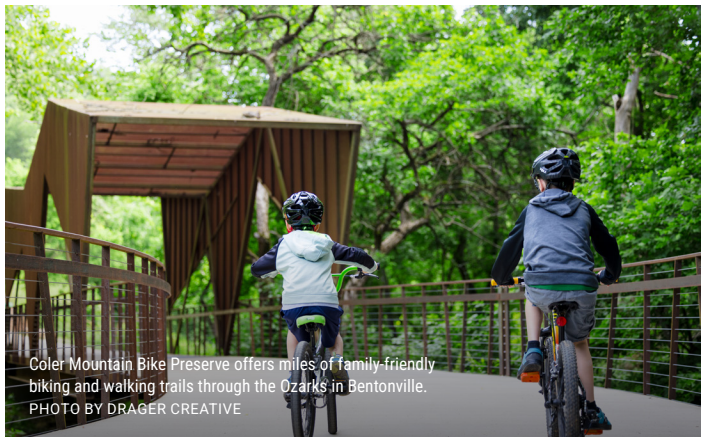
JadeWaters at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas offers slides, splash zones, cabanas and a lazy river.
PHOTO COURTESY HILTON ANATOLE



Kids and adults can take on the rapids at RIVERSPORT OKC.
PHOTO COURTESY RIVERSPORT



RIVERSPORT OKC offers aerial adventure courses, rafting and zip lines for families looking for high-energy summer fun.
PHOTO COURTESY RIVERSPORT



Coler Mountain Bike Preserve offers miles of family-friendly biking and walking trails through the Ozarks in Bentonville.
PHOTO BY DRAGER CREATIVE

Wrap up in Bricktown, where families can stroll, ride the water taxi and grab dinner.

On the Way

Take historic Route 66 for a nostalgic drive, or head through Stillwater for a fun college-town stop.

CLASSIC MIDWEST FUN: Kansas City

As the old song goes, "Everything's up to date in Kansas City!" Head north this summer. The city is known for barbecue, major league sports, hands-on museums and neighborhoods full of character.

Can't Miss

Spend time at **Union Station**, where families can explore Science City and rotating exhibits.

Try This

Start at the **Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium**, then head to Union Station. Later, visit **Crown Center** for shopping and easy family fun.

Add a stop at **The Rabbit Hole**, a one-of-a-kind children's literature museum where kids can step inside storybook worlds and explore hands-on exhibits inspired by favorite books.

Art lovers will enjoy the **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art** grounds, and history buffs can visit the **National WWI Museum and Memorial**.

Country Club Plaza is a great evening stop for dinner and a walk.

On the Way

Joplin and Springfield both make great stops, with **Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium** as a standout attraction

NATURE & ADVENTURE: Bentonville

One of the perks of a road trip is being able to bring along the extras—like your bikes. **Coler Mountain Bike Preserve** in Bentonville makes it easy to turn that into a full day of adventure. With more than 19 miles of trails, the preserve offers options for all ages and skill levels, and admission is free.

Spend the day walking or riding through the Ozarks, taking in the natural landscape and quirky art installations along the way, including a rainbow dinosaur. Families looking for a little extra movement can tackle The Rise, a scenic stairway that leads to views from the top of the preserve. Private guided rides are also available for more experienced riders who want to make the most of their time on the trails.

Take a Break

Afterward, refuel at **Airship**, the open-air cafe located right along the trail. You'll find locally roasted coffee, smoothies, shareable nachos and easy options for a quick break.

In the summer, plan to stay a little later. Coler hosts free Firefly Walks through Arkansas' first certified firefly sanctuary, offering a chance to see these insects in their natural habitat.

Extend Your Stay

If your family enjoys camping, consider staying onsite at the **Coler Campgrounds**. Located just minutes from downtown Bentonville, the campground accommodates tents and camper vans and includes convenient onsite amenities. Reserving ahead is recommended.

While You're There

Add a few of these Bentonville favorites to your itinerary:

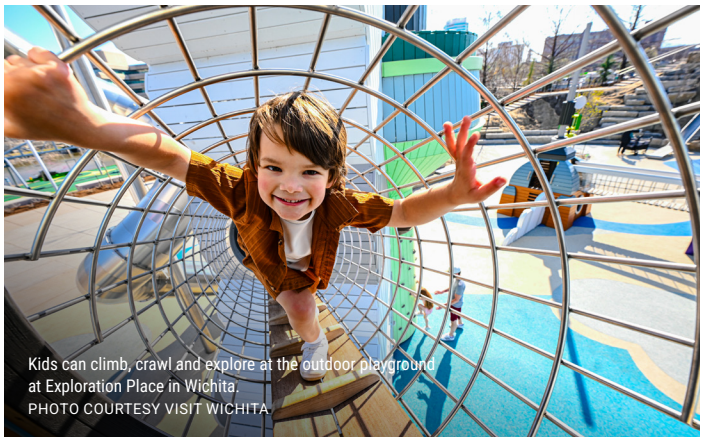
- **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**: world-class art, trails and outdoor spaces to explore
- **Scott Family Amazeum**: hands-on children's museum designed for play and discovery
- **The Momentary**: contemporary art space with outdoor areas, events and room to roam
- **Trash Ice Cream**: creative, over-the-top ice cream in a colorful, immersive setting
- **Downtown Bentonville Square**: shops, restaurants and a great place to walk and unwind



The Rabbit Hole in Kansas City invites families to step inside interactive exhibits inspired by favorite children's books.
PHOTO BY AARON FUHRMAN



Families visiting Bentonville can stroll the downtown square. There you'll find restaurants, shops and markets.
PHOTO BY DION VANBOEKEL



Kids can climb, crawl and explore at the outdoor playground at Exploration Place in Wichita.
PHOTO COURTESY VISIT WICHITA

RELAXED FAMILY FUN: Wichita

At just 2.5 hours from Tulsa, a weekend getaway in Wichita means relatively short travel time and plenty to do at your destination.

Nature

Wichita's **Sedgwick County Zoo** was recently named one of America's top zoos by USA TODAY's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards. While it may be hard to cover all 250 acres in a day, do not skip the KOCH Orangutan & Chimpanzee Habitat, where you can say hello to baby orangutan Riang, born in early 2026. Make your visit even more memorable by scheduling an Animal Encounter—chat with a rhino keeper while feeding one of these powerful animals or step into the Aldabra Tortoise enclosure to hand them a healthy snack (subject to availability).

Balance out your "fauna" fun with "flora" at **Botanica**, Wichita's botanic garden. A colorful Rainbow Trail leads to the Downing Children's Garden, where visitors can splash in the Sunflower Plaza Fountain, play dress up in the Enchanted Glen, go on a salamander scavenger hunt and more. Next, swing by the Koch Carousel Gardens to ride the carousel, roll down Sleeping Troll Hill and play lawn games.

For a free activity, take to the trails at **Chisholm Creek Park**. One of the largest parks in Wichita, you won't find a traditional playground here. Rather, the park features 2.5 miles of paved trails that take visitors across a variety of ecosystems, as well as some unpaved trails to explore. Bring your binoculars for bird and animal watching. The park is home to 160 species of birds and 20 mammal species, not to mention plenty of fish, reptiles and amphibians. Before you leave, visit the **Great Plains Nature Center** for hands-on learning opportunities. (Note: Great Plains Nature Center will be closing mid-summer for construction.)

Science

Chances are, your kids are big fans of Gathering Place. In that case, you'll definitely want to add **Exploration Place** to your travel itinerary. This science museum recently opened a 6.5-acre outdoor playground inspired by Gathering Place, but featuring uniquely Kansas-themed elements like a 20-foot-tall bison, wooden sunflower meadow and more. While you do have to purchase museum admission to access the playground, that just means you can spend more time at this kid-friendly attraction. The museum itself is home to a dome theater, immersive medieval castle room and other features perfect for young science enthusiasts.

Exploration Place is located along the Arkansas River (don't forget to pronounce it Ar-Kansas when you're in the area). Stroll along the nearby river trails to visit **Keeper of the Plains**, a 44-foot-tall sculpture created by Native American artist Blackbear Bosin. It's been a Wichita landmark since the 1970s. The nearby **Mid-America All-Indian Museum** is also worth a visit

History

Located in the heart of Old Town Wichita, the **Museum of World Treasures** showcases historical artifacts dating back centuries. Collections include the Fossil Gallery, home to several dinosaur skeletons, as well as American history and world civilizations. When you've had your fill of history, unwind by wandering Old Town, where you'll discover iconic Wichita restaurants such as **Old Mill Tasty Shop** and **River City Brewing Company**, along with unique shops.

While the Museum of World Treasures is certainly kid-friendly, **Old Cowtown Museum** may be an even more appealing stop if your kids have energy to burn. "Cowtown" is a fully immersive experience inviting visitors to explore a recreated Kansas town from the late 1800s. Walk through historic structures like a one-room schoolhouse, several homes and a five-acre farm. Admission is free on Sundays from April through October.



Wichita's riverfront trails give families a chance to bike, walk and explore near the Keeper of the Plains sculpture.
PHOTO COURTESY VISIT WICHITA



Families ride the Time Traveler at Silver Dollar City, one of Branson's most popular roller coasters.
PHOTO COURTESY SILVER DOLLAR CITY

ADRENALINE AND HIGH-ENERGY FUN

If your crew is less about slow strolls and more about hands-in-the-air fun, consider these high-energy destinations. They're all about big rides, loud laughs and a vacation that leaves the kids sleeping well on the drive home.

WHERE TO GO

In Branson, it's got to be **Silver Dollar City**, where the experience goes well beyond roller coasters. The old-time Ozarks theming, live demonstrations and surprisingly great food make it feel like more than just an amusement park. You can ride the Time Traveler, catch a show and sit down to a real meal all in the same afternoon. It's an easy win for families with mixed ages and interests.

For a more classic, high-speed amusement park experience, head to **Six Flags Over Texas** in Arlington. This is your quintessential "big rides" destination, with towering coasters, spinning attractions and plenty to keep teens and thrill-seekers busy all day. It's loud, fast and packed with energy—exactly what some families are looking for in a vacation. If you're already Dallas-bound, it's an easy add-on.

Closer to home, **Frontier City** in Oklahoma City offers a more manageable and budget-friendly option without sacrificing the fun. The Western theme gives it personality, and the mix of roller coasters, water rides and kid-friendly attractions makes it a good choice for a day trip or as part of an Oklahoma City weekend.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TULSAKIDS' 2026

DRIVABLE DESTINATIONS GUIDE

FIRST AMERICANS MUSEUM

famok.org

659 First Americans Blvd., Oklahoma City
405.594.2100

Welcome to First Americans Museum.

In one place, visitors experience the collective histories of 39 distinctive First American Nations in Oklahoma today. The 175,000 square foot museum, located in Oklahoma City's new Horizons District, showcases state-of-the-art exhibitions in First American history, community events and educational programs, a restaurant and café offering unique Indigenous-inspired cuisine, a multi-purpose theater and a museum store featuring exclusive items created by premiere First American artists.

Don't miss the FAMily Discovery Center, which invites visitors to step inside the pages of a giant illustrated pop-up book! See the birds, animals and trees of Oklahoma and explore an immersive world infused with First American values. Learn more and purchase tickets at **familydiscoverycenter.org**

NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM

nationalcowboymuseum.org

1700 NE 63rd St., Oklahoma City
405.478.2250
info@thecowboy.org

Discover big family fun at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Just a short drive from Tulsa, The Cowboy offers plenty of room for kids to explore, imagine and burn off energy while parents enjoy one of the nation's premier museums dedicated to Western art, history and culture.

Families can step into Prosperity Junction, a life-size, turn-of-the-century Western town complete with a saloon, schoolhouse and jail, then head outside to Liichokoshkomo', a hands-on, 100,000-square-foot outdoor learning and play space featuring climbing structures, Native dwellings, gardens and room to roam. Inside the museum, kids can encounter cowboys, rodeo legends, Native American art and artifacts, Western movie history and more.

The Cowboy is also home to family-friendly events throughout the year, including National Day of the Cowboy, seasonal festivals, hands-on activities and special exhibitions. Whether your family loves history, art, animals, adventure or just discovering something new, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Make a day of it and experience the West together at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum — where family memories are made, curiosity is encouraged and the spirit of the West comes to life.

OKANA RESORT & INDOOR WATERPARK

okanaresort.com

639 First Americans Blvd., Oklahoma City
572.228.4001

Whether you're chasing thrills in the waterpark, sipping your way through every menu or melting into a massage at the spa, OKANA serves indulgence on your terms. It's a choose-your-own-adventure kind of place—even if your adventure is staying in your robe all day. Day passes are available for those not staying overnight.

Waterparks and Lagoon
Immerse yourself in a world of adventure with thrilling rides and slides, a shimmering wave pool and a relaxing sandy beach. Whether you're racing a friend down Racing Rapids, catching the perfect swell or unwinding in a private cabana with a refreshing drink, the fun at OKANA's waterparks is never ordinary.

With engaging activities for kids and peaceful adults-only retreats in both our indoor and outdoor parks, everyone can find their happy place in the water. Your ideal day is just a splash away! Call us at 572.228.4004 for any questions.

OKLAHOMA HALL OF FAME AT THE GAYLORD-PICKENS MUSEUM

oklahomahof.com

1400 Classen Dr., Oklahoma City

405.235.4458

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame was created to honor extraordinary Oklahomans and to provide educational programming for students of all ages. The organization supports education in a variety of ways including awarding scholarships, providing free statewide field trips, hosting Homeschool Days, offering free family fun days and more. Free family programs at the Oklahoma Hall of Fame are offered throughout the year: over spring break, Thursdays in June and July, over fall break, and the second Saturday of each month. Activities include crafts, art projects, educational activities, story time and unique partnerships.

Permanent exhibits within the Gaylord-Pickens Museum are updated seasonally to provide visitors with new experiences on a regular basis. Permanent exhibits include the Oklahoma Hall of Fame Gallery, featuring

science museum OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY'S ADVENTURE DISTRICT

SHORT DRIVE.

BIG SCIENCE



sciencemuseumok.org

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PROSPERITY JUNCTION



more than 700 Oklahoma Hall of Fame members; the Makerspace, where visitors can enjoy STEAM-based learning activities; and Picture Yourself, which invites guests to jump into life-sized photo experiences inspired by Oklahoma Hall of Fame Member professions. And don't miss the **Chickasaw Nation Oklahoma Through Its People Gallery**, which explores the five characteristics every change-making Oklahoman possesses: perseverance, pioneer spirit, optimism, generosity and individualism.

OKLAHOMA RAILWAY MUSEUM

oklahomarailwaymuseum.org

3400 NE Grand Blvd., Oklahoma City
405.424.8222

Ever get tired of staring at museum exhibits? We do, too.

Our exhibits are different.

Here at the Oklahoma Railway Museum, we believe history is meant to be experienced, not just looked at. Sure, you can look at artifacts from local and national railroading history. But where else are you going to get the chance to actually drive a diesel locomotive or ride on historical passenger coaches?

Come visit us today and experience history in motion.

Train rides available April through August on the 1st and 3rd Saturday

SCIENCE MUSEUM OKLAHOMA

sciencemuseumok.org

2020 Remington Place, Oklahoma City
405.602.6664

At more than 390,000 square feet, Science Museum Oklahoma is one of the largest hands-on science museums in the nation. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a rich history spanning decades, our mission is to ignite curiosity and inspire learning by showcasing the vast impact of science in nearly every aspect of our world.

With over 500 exhibits designed to pique every curiosity, our museum invites families and visitors of all ages to experiment, tinker and explore. Each experience is crafted to spark imagination, deepen understanding and make science an adventure you'll remember long after your visit.

But discovery doesn't stop at the exhibits. One-of-a-kind experiences invite guests to dive deeper into science, creativity and curiosity. Take a seat under the stars in the Love's Planetarium, where space comes alive in one of the most advanced planetariums in the world. Watch science defy expectations during a live demonstration in Science Live! Let kids take the lead in CurioCity, an imaginative children's museum tucked inside the museum itself. Build, tinker and test in our open-ended Tinkering Spaces, stroll through the ever-changing Gardens, or explore the intersection of art and science in smART Space.

These unique special features come at no extra cost and transform a museum visit into something extraordinary.



Get ready to climb, crawl and explore!

FAMily Discovery Center

at First Americans Museum













The all-new FAMily Discovery Center at First Americans Museum offers adventure for everyone ages three to 103! Step into this giant pop-up book world, filled with Native stories, animal relatives and Oklahoma's changing seasons — come play and discover how We Are All Connected!

FAMily Discovery Center Hours
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday | 10 am – 4 pm
Saturday, Sunday | 11 am – 4 pm
Closed Tuesday

Reserve tickets

659 First Americans Blvd., OKC, OK | famok.org/tickets | (405) 594-2100



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DALLAS

2201 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX 75207 | hiltonanatole.com

EXPLORATION PLACE

exploration.org

300 N. McLean Blvd., Wichita
316.660.0600

Many one-of-a-kind experiences await you at Exploration Place, featuring hands-on science fun for the entire family! Our various permanent exhibits will allow you to rivet an airplane wing, chuck buffalo chips, marvel at a miniaturized 1950s Kansas, rule a medieval castle, get comfortable in a giant meadowlark nest and more! We are also pleased to host various special exhibits throughout the year, so plan your visit as soon as possible.

In spring 2026, we opened the 6-acre outdoor Adventure Playscape for all ages. The Adventure Playscape features 10 interactive play areas, including Sunflower Meadow for younger visitors, Bison Hill, a Sensory Garden and the Textron Aviation Flight Adventure. When you need a break from playing, grab a bite at Graze, an outdoor café serving fresh food and snacks.

Learn more and plan your visit at **exploration.org.**

HILTON ANATOLE

hilton.com/en/hotels/dfwanhh-hilton-anatole

2201 N. Stemmons Fwy., Dallas
214.748.1200

Perfect for a memorable family road trip from Tulsa, the iconic Hilton Anatole offers a full vacation experience just a drive away in the heart of Dallas. Families can spend the day at JadeWaters, the hotel's resort-style pool complex featuring a lazy river, water slides, splash zones, private cabanas and a kid-friendly beach-entry pool. Kids and teens will also love the on-site arcade and Topgolf Swing Suite, offering interactive games and entertainment without ever leaving the property.

Guests can enjoy multiple dining options throughout the resort, including award-winning dining at SĒR Steak + Spirits, the hotel's elevated steakhouse located on the 27th floor with sweeping Dallas skyline views.

Beyond the resort, families are minutes from top attractions including the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, featuring hands-on exhibits focused on dinosaurs, space, engineering, weather and STEM discovery for all ages, as well as the Dallas Zoo, Klyde Warren Park and the Dallas Arts District.

VISIT BENTONVILLE

visitbentonville.com

125 W. Central, Suite 200, Bentonville
479.271.9153
info@visitbentonville.com

Visit Bentonville is the tourism team for Bentonville, Ark., and your first stop for planning an unforgettable family getaway just two hours from Tulsa.

Our team is dedicated to helping visitors make the most of everything Bentonville has to offer. Through our website, visitbentonville.com, families can explore family-friendly dining, lodging and things to do.

Browse a comprehensive events calendar and find insider tips that only locals know. Whether you're planning a weekend bike trip, a museum day or a full family vacation, we've done the legwork so you don't have to.

Beyond the website, our visitor services team is available to answer questions, suggest personalized recommendations, and connect you with the experiences that fit your family's interests and pace.

Plan your visit at **visitbentonville.com.**

VISIT CHEROKEE NATION

visitcherokeenation.com

Tahlequah
877.779.6977
info@visitcherokeenation.com

In just a short drive from Tulsa in Cherokee Nation's capital city of Tahlequah, you'll find a collection of cultural sites that make the perfect day trip for you and your family. This includes the Cherokee National History Museum, offering an overview of the tribe's history from pre-European contact through the Trail of Tears and the revitalization of the tribe after the American Civil War.

A short walk south utilizing the Cherokee Cultural Pathway will lead you to both the Cherokee National Supreme Court and the Cherokee National Prison Museums.

As the oldest government building still standing in Oklahoma today, the Supreme Court Museum educates visitors on the evolution of Cherokee Nation's judicial system. The site also shares a connection to the Cherokee Advocate and Cherokee Phoenix newspapers with the original printing press on display.

Serving as the only penitentiary building in Indian Territory from 1875 to 1901, the Cherokee National Prison Museum offers a unique perspective on law and order in Indian Territory and shares details about daring escapes, notable prisoners and more.

Additionally, Cherokee Nation holds several family-friendly events at these sites throughout the year. For more information or to plan your trip, go to **VisitCherokeeNation.com**.

VISIT STILLWATER

visitstillwater.org

2617 W. 6th Ave., Stillwater
405.743.3697

Welcome to America's Friendliest College Town! Stillwater is the perfect family-friendly getaway an hour from Tulsa, where smiles from strangers and hometown hospitality are part of everyday life. Rooted in Oklahoma history and energized by Oklahoma State University, Stillwater offers families a fun mix of college town excitement and small-town charm. Spend the day exploring our vibrant historic downtown filled with local shops, sweet treats and family-friendly restaurants, stroll through OSU's beautiful campus, or enjoy attractions kids and parents alike will love.

Families can explore the National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum, visit The HUB Family Entertainment Center with bowling, arcade games, movie theaters, pickleball courts and more, and enjoy seasonal festivals, live music and community events throughout the year.

Whether you're visiting for a weekend road trip, an OSU event or a family adventure, Stillwater invites you to soak up the energy, friendliness, and unforgettable experiences that make our community so special. Plan your visit at **VisitStillwater.org**!

The trip they'll talk about all summer.

Amazing art. Parks and trails around every corner. A science museum that'll blow their minds. Bentonville, Arkansas is just two hours away — and so worth the drive.

FIND OUR FAMILY FUN GUIDE

visitbentonville.com



VISIT Bentonville



Easy drive, zero stress, kids just being kids

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SCAN THIS

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VisitStillwaterOK.org

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918.865.2845
info@keystonelakejp.com

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort at Keystone Lake is a great place for your family to enjoy boating, fishing and other water-related activities while making wonderful memories that last a lifetime. The Jellystone Park™ campground is located on the banks of the 25,000-acre Keystone Lake and offers shaded, sunny and lakefront sites for all types of camping, from Big Rig RVs to pop-up campers and tents.

Overnight campers and day pass holders can enjoy a variety of activities on the water: Swim in our outdoor Activity and Spray Pools, ride the water slides, play on the largest Wibit Aqua Park in Oklahoma, paddle around on paddle boards and kayaks, and even launch your own boat or jet skis!

We've created a safe, exciting space where kids can build confidence, develop new skills, make lifelong friendships and discover new interests. No matter what your child is passionate about, YMCA Summer Day Camps offer the perfect setting to explore, learn, and thrive. So, get ready to watch your kids create unforgettable memories and leave with a smile!









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Exploration Place

exploration.org

WICHITA | KANSAS

TULSAKIDS' 2026

PARTY PLANNER

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discoverylab.org

3123 Riverside Dr.
918.295.8144
reservations@discoverylab.org
Contact: Lauren Scott

Discover the Best Birthday Party Ever at Discovery Lab!

All parties include one hour in a private party room, assistance from a Party Facilitator, liquid nitrogen ice cream and admission to the museum for all your guests.

Want to add more excitement for your young scientist? We have a liquid nitrogen science showcase you can add for just $40 extra! Members receive 10% off all party packages.

MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

millerswimschool.com

Miller Swim School Tulsa | 6415 S. Mingo Rd., Tulsa

Miller Swim School Jenks | 525 W. 91st St. S., Tulsa

Miller Swim School South Tulsa | 7820 E. 101st St., Tulsa

918.254.1988

Parties at Miller Swim School are a BLAST! You can party year-round – rain or shine – our indoor heated pool is perfect any time! All parties are two hours and are scheduled at Tulsa, South Tulsa and Jenks locations on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

The basic party package includes a party room and a T-shirt for the birthday child. All your guests will receive a pass to come back to a family swim and, of course, we provide a lifeguard.

To view party package options and prices, go to our home page at millerswimschool.com — and choose birthday detail information.

To reserve your party, call Miller Swim School at 918.254.1988 and plan to make a big splash! Gift certificates are also available — what better gift could you give than the skills that could someday save your loved one's life?

CAMP LOUGHRIDGE

camploughridge.org

4900 W. Oak Leaf Dr., Tulsa
918.446.4194

From intimate gatherings to lively parties, Camp Loughridge can cater to a wide range of celebrations, including birthday parties, weddings, corporate meetings and more. With both indoor and outdoor options, you can create a personalized event that fits your vision. Our rental rates start at $50 per hour, with various packages available to enhance your gathering.

Our venue features:

- **Spacious Lodges:** Host your party in one of our rustic yet elegant lodges, perfect for adult gatherings or teen parties.
- **Outdoor Pavilions:** Ideal for kids' birthday parties, these open-air spaces allow plenty of room for games and activities.
- **Picturesque Lakes:** Enhance your celebration with serene lake views, perfect for capturing beautiful photos.
- **Fire Pits:** Add a cozy touch to your party with a fun marshmallow roast or storytelling session under the stars.

Enhance your party with unforgettable experiences through our activities:

- **Ropes Course:** Strengthen bonds through fun and challenging high and low ropes activities.
- **Archery:** Test your skills and create lasting memories with this classic outdoor activity.
- **Walking Trails:** Explore the beauty of nature along our wooded pathways and around our three serene lakes.
- **Canoeing:** Paddle across tranquil waters and connect with the peaceful surroundings.
- **Fire Pits:** End the day by gathering around a crackling fire, sharing stories, and enjoying quality time.

Visit our website to learn more.



LOOKING FOR THE PARTY VENUE IN TULSA?

BOOKING REQUEST

Celebrate life's biggest moments at Camp Loughridge, a scenic venue just minutes from Tulsa. With 188 acres of wooded hills, open spaces, and peaceful lakes, we provide the perfect setting for weddings, corporate retreats, birthday parties, receptions, and private events. Whether you're planning an elegant celebration or a team getaway, Camp Loughridge offers a beautiful natural backdrop for unforgettable experiences.

CAMP LOUGHRIDGE
Tulsa 1959







SOCCERCITY TULSA

soccercitytulsa.com/parties-events

5817 S. 118th E. Ave. Tulsa
918.249.0044
alex@soccercitytulsa.com

Your child will have a blast bouncing off the walls at our house. Let us do the work while you have the fun. With hundreds of age-appropriate Lil' Kickers games to choose from and our high-energy coaches, you can't go wrong.

Youth and adult packages available. All party packages include field time, time in our party room and unlimited number of guests. Let your imagination run wild with endless possibilities of what you can do with your individual field time or have a birthday party hosted by a Lil' Kickers coach.

Our Lil' Kickers child development program – ages 18 months to 9 years – and camps, parties and lock-ins are offered year round as well.

Please contact **alex@soccercitytulsa.com** for party booking and availability.

TULSA ZOO

tulsazoo.org/visit/private-events

6421 E. 36th St. N., Tulsa
918.669.6609
wshaw@tulsazoo.org
Contact: Wylie Shaw

From birthday parties, to company celebrations, to weddings, the Tulsa Zoo offers just the right setting for your special event. Zoo staff will cater to your wildest instincts, helping you plan and customize your unique zoo experience. From the total package to our a la carte options, you'll find plenty of ways to party at the zoo.

WESTREET ICE CENTER

westreeticecenter.com

westreeticecenter.com
4143 S. Yale Ave., Tulsa
539.333.4668
cheyenne.hampton@tulsaicecenters.com
Contact: Cheyenne Hampton

Make their birthday cooler at WeStreet Ice Center! Celebrate the big day on the ice and create a party you'll never forget. Our birthday packages make planning easy so you can focus on making memories.





CIRCLE CINEMA

circlecinema.org

10 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa
918.585.3456
david@circlecinema.org
Contact: David Kimball

Make It a Movie Birthday They'll Never Forget!

Give your birthday kid the ultimate celebration at Tulsa's beloved historic Circle Cinema! Skip the ordinary party venue and treat your crew to a private theater experience they'll be talking about all year.

Rent one of four unique theaters and screen your child's favorite film in true cinematic style: big screen, surround sound and the magic of a real movie house, all to yourselves. Whether you're planning a small gathering or a full-on birthday blowout, Circle Cinema has the perfect space to fit your party.

Located at 10 S. Lewis Ave. in Midtown Tulsa, Circle Cinema is a one-of-a-kind nonprofit gem that's been part of the community for decades. A birthday party here isn't just fun; it supports local arts and independent film right here in Tulsa.

Ready to roll out the red carpet? Call **918.585.3456** or visit **circlecinema.org/rent** to book your event today.

DICK'S HOUSE OF SPORT

dickssportinggoods.com

10021 E. 71st St., Tulsa
918.249.4444
ExperienceTUL@dcsg.com

Celebrate big with an unforgettable birthday party at DICK'S House of Sport! Give your athlete the ultimate experience with exciting activities like the HitTrax Multi Sport Cage, Rock Wall Climb and Golf Simulator Bays, perfect for ages 6 and up and all skill levels.

Each party includes two dedicated hosts, two full hours of action-packed fun, a private party space, reserved seating for up to 20 guests and party favors for everyone to take home. Designed to keep things simple and stress free for parents, you can bring your own food and drinks to make the day your own.

Whether they try one experience or all of them, this high-energy celebration keeps kids active, engaged and making lasting memories. Book today and turn their birthday into the ultimate play day!

GOLDFISH SWIM SCHOOL

goldfishswimschool.com

Tulsa Hills: 7514 S. Olympia Ave., Tulsa
Broken Arrow: 2208 E. Hillside Ave., Broken Arrow
539.265.3109
swimtulsahills@goldfishss.com
Contact: Pam Haggin

From pool birthday parties to summer kickoffs, nothing says "party" like a warm pool that's exclusively decorated for a boy or girl's special day. Goldfish Swim School – Tulsa Hills and Goldfish Swim School – Broken Arrow can put together the party of your child's dreams and take care of all of the details, setup and cleanup for you. Any party has a dedicated private space for your group to celebrate.

Plan Your Indoor Pool Party Today!

Parties with 24 guests or less are coordinated by two certified lifeguards that will also help with the event. We'll plan to have additional lifeguards if you'd like to invite more than 24 guests.

Our special party package includes:

- Invitations to your party and matching envelopes
- Two hours of private pool access to the facility
- Certified lifeguards on duty to oversee all pool activities
- Centerpieces, balloons and tropical decorations
- Forks, napkins, cups, plates and table coverings
- Party room with space for large groups

Mention TULSAKIDS when booking your party to redeem a special offer!

KILWINS BROKEN ARROW

kilwins.com

217 S. Main St., Broken Arrow
539.367.1918

Broken Arrow: Dubai Chocolate, Fudge, Caramel Apples, & Ice Cream.

Set along Main Street in the award-winning Rose District, this Kilwins in Broken Arrow offers hand-crafted Dubai chocolate, traditional fudge, freshly made caramel apples and ice cream in a walkable location filled with local shops, dining and events. Visitors can pause from exploring the historic Rose District corridor to enjoy freshly made sweets and friendly service. The shop provides a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere that fits right into the downtown community, making it an easy stop for an afternoon dessert, evening treat or takeaway gift for friends, coworkers and family gatherings. Whether you are downtown for a community festival, a casual date night or a quick stop on the way home, this Broken Arrow sweet shop is ready with scoops, slices and gifts to share.

THE MEAT & CHEESE SHOW

themeatandcheeseshow.com

1306 E. 11th St., Suite H, Tulsa
918.764.8881
joel@themeatandcheeseshow.com
Contact: Joel Bein

When Tulsa plans a wedding, a fundraising gala or an intimate private dinner, they call The Meat & Cheese Show. As Tulsa's premier catering company, we serve up stylish, unforgettable cuisine with high-end ingredients and style.

Beyond catering, our specialty food shop features hard-to-find cheeses, charcuterie, wines and unique pantry staples. Taste what we do at our multi-course Friday Supper Club dining experience, or join us mid-week for Winesday, a weekly happy hour for wine and food obsessives.

At The Meat & Cheese Show, we bring extraordinary ingredients and creative experiences to every table.


CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY WITH US!
CUSTOM PACKAGES AVAILABLE!
STRESS-FREE FUN
PRIVATE PARTY ROOMS
ICE SKATING
ARCADE GAMES
FOOD INCLUDED
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Wheels and Thrills
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PIZZA & DRINKS// $10 ARCADE CARD // FUN
UNLIMITED DELUXE PARTY
Some restrictions may apply
WWW.WHEELSANDTHRILLS.COM 10637 N GARNETT RD OWASSO, OK 918-272-7537


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HAVE A KILLER BIRTHDAY
CONTACT DAVID KIMBALL: DAVID@CIRCLECINEMA.ORG


discovery LAB
Party at the Lab!
Booking Birthday Parties for '26-27!
Liquid Nitrogen Ice Cream
Museum Admission for all Guests
Engaging Add-On Activities Available
One Hour in Private Party Room
Assistance From a Party Facilitator
Members Get 10% Off All Party Packages
3123 Riverside Drive, Tulsa, OK 74105
discoverylab.org/birthday-parties
918-295-8144


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www.riverrunfarmok.com
9300 S. 51st West Ave.
918-855-5032
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7715 E 91st St #D Tulsa, OK 74133
918.324.0151 - info@nextdoorescapes.com



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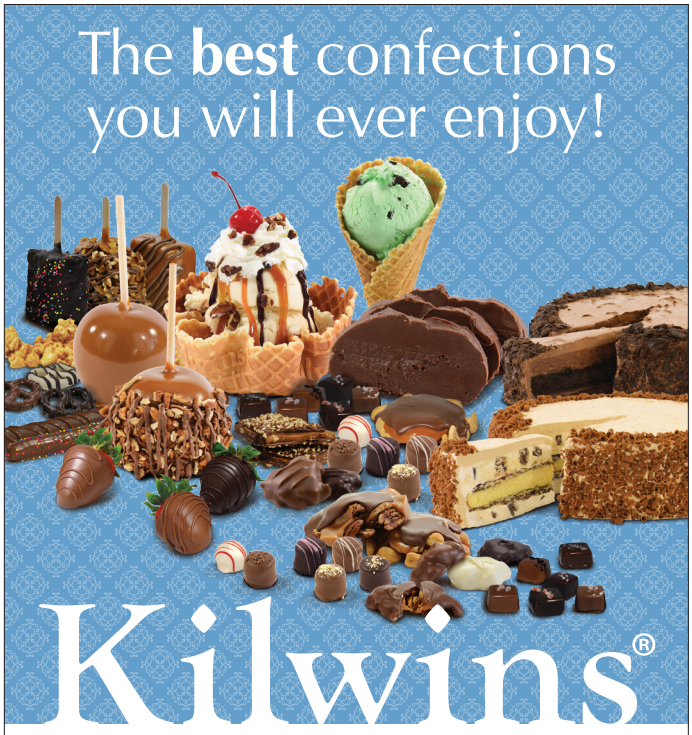
WHAT'S INCLUDED:
- Certified lifeguards and party coordinator on duty to oversee all activities
- Table coverings, plates, utensils and napkins
- Balloons, tropical decorations & centerpieces
- Birthday gift for the guest of honor
- Invitations & envelopes
BROKEN ARROW | 918.818.3949
TULSA HILLS | 539.233.6295
MENTION TULSAKIDS WHEN BOOKING YOUR PARTY TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL OFFER!



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the YMCA
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Staff Events
Weddings
& More
ymcatulsa.org/rentals



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NEXT DOOR ESCAPES AND ENTERTAINMENT

nextdoorescapes.com

7715 E. 91st St., Suite D, Tulsa
918.324.0151
info@nextdoorescapes.com

Celebrate your next birthday in the most exciting way possible at Next Door Escapes and Entertainment in Tulsa, Oklahoma! Perfect for kids, teens and adults alike, our unique venue combines thrilling adventure with relaxed social fun. Your party kicks off in one of our immersive escape rooms, where guests work together to solve puzzles, crack codes and race against the clock in a themed challenge full of excitement and teamwork.

After the adventure, the celebration continues in your own private party room—exclusively reserved for you and your guests. We'll take care of the fun and the food, so you can focus on making memories. Enjoy refreshing cold drinks, delicious pizza and festive cupcakes, all included to make your birthday hassle-free and unforgettable.

Once everyone's recharged, hang out in our cozy café and board game lounge where you can enjoy even more quality time with your group. With a welcoming atmosphere and activities for all ages, Next Door Escapes and Entertainment is Tulsa's go-to spot for birthday parties that are anything but ordinary.

Book your party today and give your guests an experience full of laughter, adventure, and celebration from start to finish!

OKLAHOMA AQUARIUM

okaquarium.org/183/birthday-party-packages

300 S. Aquarium Dr., Jenks
918.296.3474

The Oklahoma Aquarium offers a variety of birthday party packages designed to provide families with a fun and memorable celebration experience at Oklahoma's only ocean.

Birthday party packages include private party room access, aquarium admission for guests, and themed experiences that allow visitors to celebrate surrounded by thousands of aquatic animals, including the world's largest collection of bull sharks in an aquarium.

The aquarium currently offers several themed party options, including:

- Shark-themed parties
- Mermaid-themed parties
- Pirate-themed parties
- Seaside-themed parties

Packages also include optional add-ons such as stingray feedings, themed goodie bags, carousel tickets, face painting and character appearances.

The Oklahoma Aquarium's birthday experiences are designed to combine entertainment and education while giving families the opportunity to explore interactive exhibits and aquatic life throughout the facility.

More information about packages, pricing, and booking can be found here: **okaquarium.org/183/Birthday-Party-Packages.**

RIVER RUN FARM

riverrunfarmok.com

9300 S. 51st W. Ave., Tulsa
918.855.5032
barnmanager@riverrunfarmok.com

Our Pony Parties delight both kids and parents. We specialize in parties with our miniature horses for young horse lovers, but also offer parties with ponies and horses for older horse enthusiasts.

Our parties are held in the beautiful, wooded setting of a working stable. We hold the party inside our nice, clean barn and provide the pony rides in our indoor riding arena. Parties are fun, entertaining and include hands-on activities like petting, brushing and learning fun information about horses.

Our parties are much more than games and a pony ride and provide a wonderful experience for horse lovers of all ages. Party times are limited, so plan ahead to reserve your space for this memorable party.

WHEELS AND THRILLS

wheelsandthrills.com

10637 N. Garnett Rd., Owasso
918.272.7537
tammy@wheelsandthrills.com
facebook.com/wheelsandthrills

We are your one-stop shop for hassle-free birthday parties. We've got it all!

Our party packages include food, drinks and fun all rolled into one! We'll make the birthday honoree feel like this day was created just for them! With many custom birthday packages to choose from, you'll be the hero as we help you host the perfect party for the big day. We have three attractions to choose from: Skating, Playzone, and Laser Tag!

What's our secret to the perfect party? Your Party Pal!

Your Party Pal will set up your party supplies and paper products which are included with your package. When it's time to gather for your celebration, they will greet your guests and serve your pizza and drinks. When it's time, your Party Pal will take a group photo, lead your guests in the "Happy Birthday Song," then cut and serve your cake. They will interact with your guests and, once the party has been dismissed, your Party Pal will take care of all the clean-up.

Please visit our website, wheelsandthrills.com for complete package details or contact **tammy@wheelsandthrills.com**.

YMCA OF GREATER TULSA

ymcatulsa.org/rentals

Multiple locations

Make a Splash with Your Next Celebration at the YMCA of Greater Tulsa!

Looking for the perfect place to throw an unforgettable birthday bash? The YMCA of Greater Tulsa has everything you need to make your child's big day extra special—without the cleanup stress!

From cannonballs to cake, our pool parties are a hit for kids of all ages. You'll get exclusive access to our indoor or outdoor pools (depending on location), plus lifeguards on duty to keep everyone safe while the kids splash, swim and celebrate. Not into water? No problem! We offer party rooms and multi-purpose spaces perfect for themed parties, dance-offs, game days or whatever your little one dreams up.

The Y's party packages are flexible and fun—whether you're planning a small get-together or a blowout birthday bash, we'll help you customize the day to fit your needs. Perfect for birthdays, team parties, and special family celebrations, YMCA rentals are available across multiple locations in the Greater Tulsa area.

Let us help you plan a party that's active, affordable and absolutely unforgettable. Learn more and book your event today at **ymcatulsa.org/rentals**.


DIVE INTO FUN
with the whole family this weekend.
At Oklahoma's Only Ocean, adventures and discoveries await. Right here in Jenks, Oklahoma, you can spend the day with the world's largest collection of bull sharks and 10,000 other amazing aquatic animals who call the aquarium home! Splash into a world were curious minds of all ages find wonder above and below.
OKLAHOMA AQUARIUM


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THE MEAT & CHEESE SHOW



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WINESDAY

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We're a high-end catering and specialty food shop offering private dinners, full-service event catering and monthly dining experiences like Friday Supper Club and Winesdays.

Meadow Gold District on Route 66

1306 E. 11th St., Suite H | 918.764.8881

Learn more at www.meatandcheeseshow.com



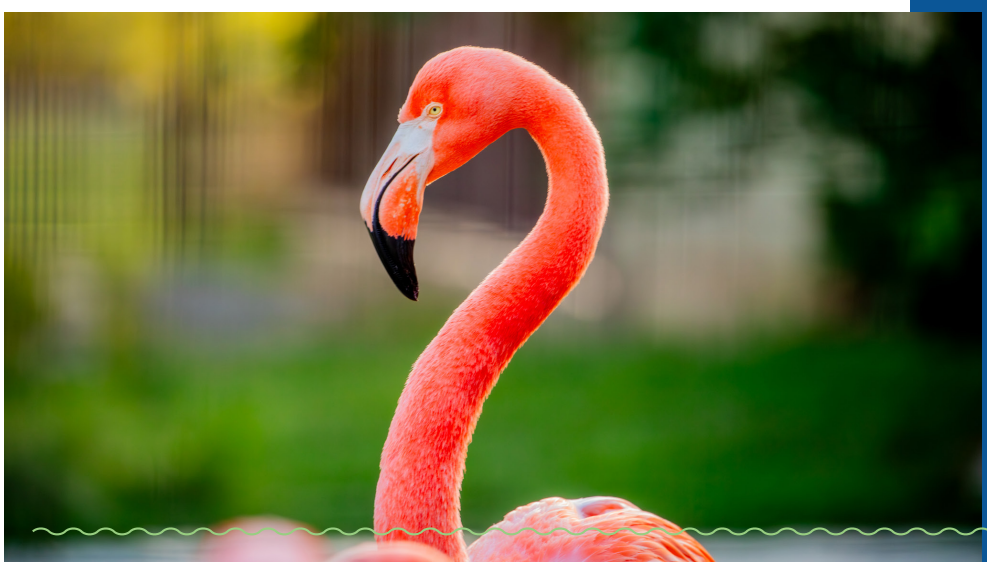
Visit tulsazoo.org to learn about Giraffe Feeding Experiences

PHOTO COURTESY TULSA ZOO

COMMUNITY **CALENDAR**

JUNE 2026

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



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

TULSAZOO



Inspyral Circus with Jeremy, June 4.
PHOTO COURTESY TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

June 1 Monday

PARADE OF ANIMALS: SUMMER READING PROGRAM (F)

Ages 0-5, 10:30-11 a.m.

Kendall-Whittier Library

tulsalibrary.org

Come dressed as your favorite animal and help kick off the Summer Reading Program! Treats provided.

FOSSIL DIG SUMMER KICKOFF (F)

All ages, 1-3 p.m.

Bronson Brookside Library

tulsalibrary.org

Sign up for the Summer Reading Program, and the library will hand you some digging tools!

LITTLE LAB (W)

Ages 0-4, 11-11:30 a.m.

Discovery Lab

discoverylab.org

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

June 2 Tuesday

DRIVE-IN AT THE LIBRARY! (F)

For pre-K to 8th grade, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Herman and Kate Kaiser Library

tulsalibrary.org

Zoom in and make your own car out of cardboard, then drive it to the meeting room for a family-friendly movie. Registration required.

DUNGEONS & DINOSAURS (F)

For teens and tweens, 4-5:30 p.m.

Bronson Brookside Library

tulsalibrary.org

Unearth a Story with D&D at the library! No experience required.

SENSORY NIGHT

All ages, 6-8 p.m.

Oklahoma Aquarium

okaquarium.org

Visit the aquarium when there's less of a crowd. Complete a self-guided scavenger hunt for a prize!

June 3 Wednesday

STONELION PUPPET THEATRE PRESENTS *I'D RATHER BE A HUMMINGBIRD* AND PRAIRIE SONGS

All ages, 3-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m.

Hardesty Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

In this puppet show, Nigel the beaver learns he wants to be like a hummingbird and do the best he can, no matter the size of the problem. Sponsored by OKM Music.

DOWNTOWN TULSA MARKET (F) (W)

All ages, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Santa Fe Square Plaza

downtowntulsa.com

A vibrant urban market celebrating local food, home goods, art and more.

June 4 Thursday

INSPYRAL CIRCUS WITH JEREMY (F)

All ages, 10-11 a.m.

QuikTrip Plaza, 41st and Riverside

tulsalibrary.org

A colorful circus adventure featuring giraffe unicycles, walking globes and crazy cool acrobats.

BANDS & BLOOMS (W)

All ages, 5-8:30 p.m.

Tulsa Botanic Garden

tulsabotanic.org

A relaxed outdoor concert set among thousands of spring flowers.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM KICKOFF (F)

All ages, 6-7 p.m.

Bixby Library

tulsalibrary.org

Sign up for the Summer Reading Program and enjoy dinosaur-themed crafts and prizes.

66 DAYS OF FUN: FAMILY PROM (F)

All ages, 6-8 p.m.

Mother Road Market

motherroadmarket.com

A night of dancing and fun. Dress up in your prom best or keep it comfy.

June 5 Friday

MOVIE AND A CRAFT FRIDAY (F)

All ages, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Central Library

tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a movie and a craft in the garden. Repeats June 12 and 26.

NOAH'S FLOOD

All ages, 7:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church

tulsaopera.com

Britten's delightful retelling of the Noah's Ark story is especially composed for children's voices and performance in a church. Repeats June 6 at 2:30 p.m.

June 6 Saturday

AQUARIUM RUN

All ages, 8 a.m.

Oklahoma Aquarium

okaquarium.org

A USATF-sanctioned flat-course and fun run that promises a wave of excitement for participants of all ages!

SATURDAY STORYWALK AT KEYSTONE ANCIENT FOREST (F)

All ages, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Keystone Ancient Forest

tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a morning StoryWalk on the paved Childers Trail.

TULSA PAGE MASTERS: INTERGENERATIONAL BOOK CLUB (F)

All ages, 10-11:30 a.m.

Central Library

tulsalibrary.org

An intergenerational book club focused on dinosaurs. There will be games and crafts related to the books for each age group. (Details online.)

June 7 Sunday

SENSORY SUNDAY

All ages, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wheels and Thrills

wheelsandthrills.com

Wheels and Thrills suspends the arcade and laser tag on the first Sunday of the month; there will be no flashing lights or loud music.

ZOOLIGHTFUL

All ages, 6-10 p.m.

Tulsa Zoo

tulsazoo.org/zoolightful

Tulsa Zoo is illuminated with 100s of animal lanterns. Weekends through June 28.

June 8 Monday

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION WITH MAYOR MONROE NICHOLS (F)

All ages, 5:30-7 p.m.

36th Street North Event Center

cityoftulsa.org

Personnel from across the City will be present to answer questions and engage directly with attendees.

June 9 Tuesday

DUNO-LOGAH: EXCITING FOLKTALES FROM NATIVE AMERICA (F)

All ages, 2-3 p.m.

Collinsville Library

tulsalibrary.org

Will Hill regales the audience with the stories of ancient America, highlighted with song and laughter.

June 10 Wednesday

STORYTIME AT TULSA ZOO (W)

All ages, 10-10:30 a.m.

Tulsa Zoo

tulsazoo.org

Join Tulsa Zoo for their weekly storytime, held at the Oklahoma Central Credit Union Nature Exchange inside the Life in the Cold building.

EXPLORATION STATION: ROUTE 66 PIT STOP! (F)

All ages, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Gathering Place

gatheringplace.org

Explore the physics and engineering of the tools essential to Route 66 travel.

STORIES ON THE SQUARE (F) (W)

All ages, 10-11:30 a.m.

Cherokee National Peace Pavilion, Tahlequah

visitcherokeenation.com

Hear from Cherokee storytellers and do a craft activity.

TEEN LOUNGE (F) (W)

For teens and tweens, 4-6 p.m.

Central Library

tulsalibrary.org

Kick back and chill with art supplies, video games and plenty of space to study, read or hang out with friends.

June 11 Thursday

PHILBROOK DAY OF PLAY

All ages, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Philbrook

philbrook.org

From giant spinning tops and big building, to artmaking, gaming and more, all ages will feel like kids again and experience the joy of play.

June 12 Friday

FOAM PARTY WITH DUSTIN REUDELHUBER (F)

Ages 5+, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Redbud Festival Park, Owasso

tulsalibrary.org

A foam party with beach balls, pool noodles and music!

Drillers™



Cheer for Tulsa Drillers!

The following games take place at ONEOK Field. Visit tulsadrillers.com for tickets and information about additional game-day promotions.

Plus, sign up for the Kilwins Kids Club for kids ages 14 and under! Your $30 membership includes tickets to select games, birthday party discounts, team store discounts and other great perks!

*Fireworks games **FUNday Sunday

6/9, 7 p.m. vs. Wichita

6/10, 12:05 p.m. vs. Wichita

6/11, 7 p.m. vs. Wichita

6/12, 7 p.m.* vs. Wichita

6/13, 7 p.m.* vs. Wichita

6/14, 1 p.m.** vs. Wichita

6/23, 7 p.m. vs. Corpus Christi

6/24, 7 p.m. vs. Corpus Christi

6/25, 7 p.m. vs. Corpus Christi

6/26, 7 p.m.* vs. Corpus Christi

6/27, 7 p.m. vs. Corpus Christi (Drone show)

6/28, 6:30 p.m.* vs. Corpus Christi

This information is correct to the best of our knowledge. However, check with the organizer before attending events, as information can change.

FLIPPIN' AWESOME TIME (F)

All ages, 2-4 p.m.

South Broken Arrow Library

tulsalibrary.org

A colorful party with pom-pom llamas, DIY beaded jewelry, tasty snacks and a cozy movie.

June 13 Saturday

TASTE OF SUMMER

All ages, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Central Park, Broken Arrow

tasteofsummerba.com

All-you-can-eat Blue Bell ice cream and novelties, plus a vendor market, inflatables and more.

PAWNEE BILL'S ORIGINAL WILD WEST SHOW

All ages, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum, Pawnee

okhistory.org

This event will feature acts from the original Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show; historical entertainment and demonstrations will be available throughout the day.

June 14 Sunday

ART GARFUNKEL: (WHAT A) WONDERFUL WORLD TOUR

6:30 p.m.

Tulsa PAC

celebrityattractions.com

Legendary musician Art Garfunkel brings his tour to Tulsa.

SENSORY-FRIENDLY FAMILY HOURS

All ages, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Discovery Lab

discoverylab.org

These early hours are designed for families with children on the spectrum and other sensory needs.

June 15 Monday

TULSA ZOO CAMPS

Grades K4-12, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. (aftercare available)

Tulsa Zoo

tulsazoo.org/camps

Explore the world around you, make new friends and celebrate nature! Multiple camps throughout the summer available.

June 16 Tuesday

DINOSAUR BOOK CLUB (F)

For elementary schoolers, 3-4 p.m.

Jenks Library

tulsalibrary.org

Read *Don't Disturb the Dinosaurs* by Ada Hopper and join in a discussion and activities related to the book.

THE NOTEBOOK

Recommended ages 10+, 7:30 p.m.

Tulsa PAC

celebrityattractions.com

A deeply moving portrait of the enduring power of love. Additional showtimes through June 21.

June 17 Wednesday

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

10-11 a.m.

Martin Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish.

DUNGEON MASTER ACADEMY (F)

Ages 13-17, 3-4 p.m.

Bixby Library

tulsalibrary.org

Aspiring Dungeons and Dragons DMs, join DnD MC's Wes Rose for an overview of everything you need to succeed! Pre-registration required.

CAMP READ-A-LOT (F)

All ages, 5-7 p.m.

Charles Page High School

sandites.org

Participate in interactive literacy activities, explore strategies that build strong readers and receive resources to continue learning throughout the summer.

June 18 Thursday

BALLOON-TWISTING WORKSHOP WITH JOE COOVER (F)

For elementary schoolers, 10-11 a.m.

Central Library

tulsalibrary.org

Learn the basics of balloon twisting as you create simple animals, hats and other shapes.

SUMMER MOVIES @ CIRCLE CINEMA (F)

All ages, 1:30-3 p.m.

Circle Cinema

tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a family-friendly movie. Seating is limited; visit website for movie titles. Repeats June 25.

WINGS OF FIRE FANDOM PARTY (F)

For teens and tweens, 5-7 p.m.

Schusterman-Benson Library

tulsalibrary.org

Create fierce and scaly dragon eye sculptures, beaded dragons, pipe cleaner dragons and more.

June 19 Friday

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

7:30 p.m.

Tulsa PAC

okworldstage.org

A timeless reflection on justice, empathy and the courage to do what's right. Additional showtimes through June 28.

June 20 Saturday

ICE SPY: MISSION IMPOPSICLE

All ages

Tulsa Zoo

tulsazoo.org/popsicle

Purchase your Operation: Ice Spy card that day at the Front Globe for $10, and visit the four stops to receive a special Mission ImPopsicle prize as you leave the zoo.

SCT ACTOR'S CAMP

Ages 6-15, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Spotlight Theater

tulsaspotlighttheater.com

Spotlight Children's Theatre hosts a one-day acting camp focused on various aspects of the craft.

June 21 Sunday

Happy Father's Day
from TulsaKids!

WELLNESS DAY

All ages, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Philbrook

philbrook.org

Rest and recharge in the sunshine with a sampling of wellness-inspired activities and local vendors.

FATHER'S DAY RC BOAT FUN

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tulsa Botanic Garden

tulsabotanic.org

Bring your own RC boat and spend the day driving it around the Garden lake.

June 22 Monday

INSPYRAL CIRCUS PRESENTS DINO-LIGHT (F)

For elementary schoolers, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 2-3 p.m.

Hardesty Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

Jeremy Philo of Inspyral Circus brings dinosaurs to life through this fantastic glow circus including a 5-foot-tall unicycle, juggling and more.

June 23 Tuesday

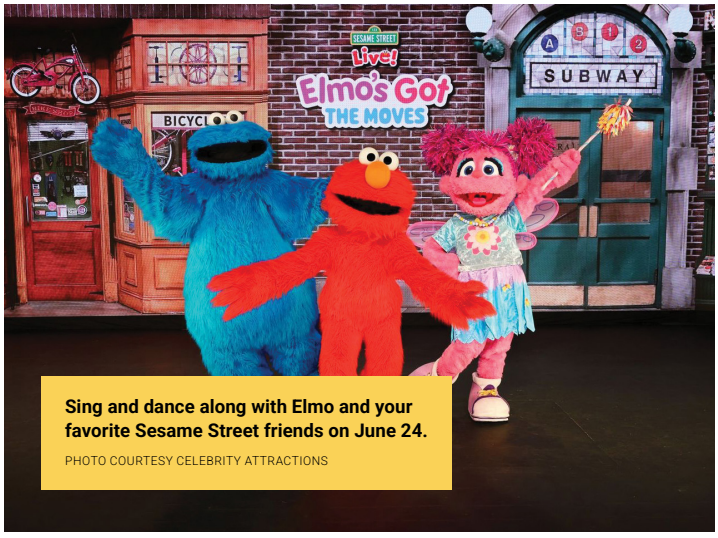
TULSA ZOO PRESENTS ZOO 2 U! (F)

For elementary schoolers, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Herman and Kate Kaiser Library

tulsalibrary.org

Enjoy a presentation, activities and an encounter with a Tulsa Zoo education ambassador animal. Registration encouraged; space is limited.



Sing and dance along with Elmo and your favorite Sesame Street friends on June 24.

PHOTO COURTESY CELEBRITY ATTRACTIONS



DISCOVERY LAB: MAKE YOUR (LAND)MARK (F)

For 1st-5th grades, 2-3 p.m.

Schusterman-Benson Library

tulsalibrary.org

Design and build your own Route 66-inspired landmark.

June 24 Wednesday

STORY TIME WITH MS. HOLLY (F)

All ages, 10:30-11 a.m.

Ray Harral Nature Center

facebook.com/rayharralnaturecenter

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

TEEN CONNECTIONS (F)

For middle and high schoolers, 4:30-6 p.m.

The Arc of Oklahoma

thearcok.org

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

ELMO'S GOT THE MOVES

All ages, 6 p.m.

Tulsa PAC

celebrityattractions.com

Elmo and his Sesame Street friends sing and dance along to favorite songs like Sunny Days.

June 25 Thursday

BUBBLE STAGE SHOW WITH DUSTIN REUDELHUBER (F)

All ages, 10-11 a.m.

Central Library

tulsalibrary.org

It's the craziest, most creative bubble show around!

HOT TOAST MUSIC COMPANY (F)

All ages, 10-11 a.m.

Hicks Park

tulsalibrary.org

Through thoughtful lyrics and catchy melodies, Mr. Symon explores the world around and the world within.

MINI DINO GARDENS (F)

For teens and tweens, 3-4 p.m.

Bixby Library

tulsalibrary.org

Plant a succulent in a small planter, then decorate it with dinos.

June 26 Friday

CHESS CLUB (F)

For elementary schoolers to adults, 3-4 p.m.

Broken Arrow Library

tulsalibrary.org

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

June 27 Saturday

ROUTE 66 SAND SCULPTURE (F)

All ages, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Gathering Place

gatheringplace.org

Watch the spirit of Route 66 come alive through a sand sculpting demonstration.

BRONTOSAURUS STOMP: LEARN SWING DANCE AT THE LIBRARY (F)

For teens and tweens, 2-3:30 p.m.

Zarrow Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

Learn East Coast Swing with the Oklahoma Swing Syndicate, then stick around for an open dance.

June 28 Sunday

Find more at tulsakids.com/calendar

June 29 Monday

DINOSAUR ADOPTION WEEK (F)

Ages 5-10, June 29-July 3

Helmerich Library

tulsalibrary.org

Drop in to adopt a dino that fits your lifestyle, while supplies last.

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BABIES (F)

For babies, 10-10:20 a.m.

Hardesty Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

Learn and enjoy songs, stories and activities at this lapsit storytime.

June 30 Tuesday

ROLL BACK IN TIME: BOARD GAME AFTERNOON (F)

All ages, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Martin Regional Library

tulsalibrary.org

A relaxed, family-friendly game afternoon.

MINECRAFT PIXEL PARTY (F)

Ages 5+, 3-4 p.m.

Charles Page Library

tulsalibrary.org

Make crafts and enjoy activities inspired by the video game Minecraft.

ROUTE 66 WEEKEND (F)

All ages, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tulsa Botanic Garden

tulsabotanic.org

Celebrate Route 66 at Tulsa Botanic Garden. Repeats June 27.

This information is correct to the best of our knowledge. However, check with the organizer before attending events, as information can change.

Cecilia Lockhart: Creating Her Own Style

By **Natalie Mikles**


Cecilia Lockhart



At Jenks Middle School, seventh grader Cecilia Lockhart brings a creative eye to her personal style—and the handmade details that often go with it. Whether she's layering colorful accessories or planning her next outfit, she approaches style as a form of self-expression.

Cecilia creates bracelets in bold colors and patterns. What started as something she saw friends making quickly became her own creative outlet. Now, she spends hours designing and building pieces by hand, from intricate cuffs to more ambitious projects like a beaded tie.

When she's not creating, Cecilia stays busy with orchestra, including the Jenks Middle School Honor Orchestra and private lessons with Karen Naifeh Harmon. She has also competed at the regional and state level and is involved in Girl Scouts and the Jenks swim team. But making things remains her favorite way to express herself—and she's already thinking about what to try next.

TK: How did you first get into making bracelets?

Cecilia: I first started making them because some of my friends were making them and I thought they looked really cool. When I tried it, it came naturally to me and I loved it!

TK: Where do your ideas come from when you're designing something new?

Cecilia: Sometimes I find things online, like YouTube tutorials, that I want to try. Other times there's just an idea in my head that I think would be fun to make.

TK: What's your favorite thing you've made so far?

Cecilia: Definitely my tie! It took me about four hours over a few days, and it's one of my biggest projects.

TK: What's something you want to learn how to make next?

Cecilia: I really want to make a bag.

TK: You have such a great fashion sense. How would you describe your style?

Cecilia: I would describe my style as scene or maybe even decora sometimes. The types of bracelets I make and wear are called Kandi.

TK: What do you like to do while you're making bracelets?

Cecilia: I like listening to music, especially Billie Eilish or Olivia Rodrigo, and sometimes The Flaming Lips. Or I'll watch a show on my phone as I create my bracelets.

TK: Do you like making bracelets for your friends?

Cecilia: Yes. I've made quite a few for friends. I'd also love to have an Etsy shop someday so other people could buy them.

TK: What hobbies and activities do you have besides bracelet making?

Cecilia: I do orchestra at Jenks, Girl Scouts and the Jenks swim team. I'm also interested in acting in drama and I love to draw.

TK: What are your favorite subjects in school?

Cecilia: My favorite core subject is science. I also like art and drama.

TK: When you think about the future, what would you like to be when you grow up?

Cecilia: I really haven't thought about it too much, but I may like to own a business or be a nurse.

TK: Do you have a fun fact about yourself?

Cecilia: I have this thing called brachydactyly, where some of my fingers are shorter than normal because the knuckle is basically nonexistent. It's genetic—I got it from my mom, who has a short pinky. TK

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