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tulsakids

December 2021

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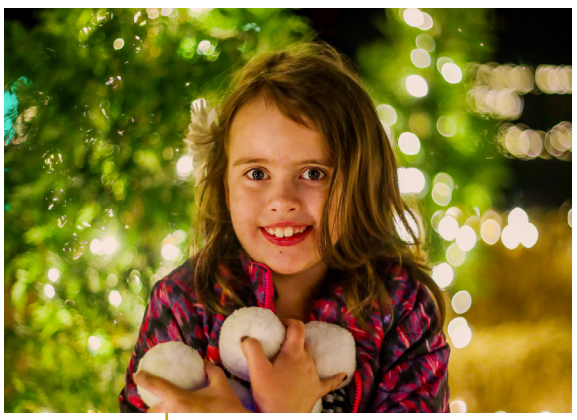
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Sponsored by Victory Christian School

editor's note

A GIANT GIFT TO TULSA

Many years ago, Allyson Jannotta came to me to ask how TulsaKids might help promote a children's museum that didn't exist. She didn't use those words, but at that time, the museum was little more than an idea supported by a group of passionate women who were willing to work hard for their vision — a first-class, accredited children's museum. Of course I would support that! Through the years, we ran many articles supporting each rendition of the museum up to this point — the soon-to-be-open permanent home for Discovery Lab. You can read about the journey to get to this point in these pages. Congratulations to everyone involved with Discovery Lab. I know how many years you have worked to bring this gift to Tulsa.

Speaking of gifts, the pages of this issue of TulsaKids looks like a big hug of holiday happiness. If you're looking for family togetherness, you'll find no shortage of shows, holiday light events, activities and special ways to spend days off.

If you will have teens or older kids at home or visiting, Julie Watson has come up with a great list of activities and places to go for young people in her Tweens & Teens column.

And what would the holidays be without cookies? Sad. Very sad. Natalie Mikles left no crumb unturned to find great cookie recipes for her cooking column. You'll find easy three-ingredient cookies and fancier cookies that will look lovely on your dessert plate.

Cooking with your family is a fun and delicious way to build memories. You can find more creative and interesting ideas for gift-giving in our feature about grandparents. Sometimes giving an experience or giving a gift along with an experience can be more meaningful than too many toys. I know you'll find more than one idea that you can use this season.

Have a safe and happy holiday break with your families.

Be sure to pick up a January issue or find it online — TulsaKids is going to have a new look for 2022. We're very excited to unveil our redesign and to continue to bring parents the same great content every month.



Betty Casey
associate publisher and
editor in chief



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If you like to read TulsaKids, you may not know that you can watch us, too! Every Thursday morning on Tulsa's Channel 8, the local ABC affiliate, join Editor Betty Casey on Good Day Tulsa for tips to plan your family's weekend and more. Watch Good Morning Oklahoma on Tuesdays for tips on timely topics and family information you'll want to know.

ON THE COVER:
COVER KID WINNER, RAIDEN VANG, EXPLORES THE NEW HOME FOR DISCOVERY LAB.

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HANSON RELEASES NEW ALBUM

Just in time for the holidays, Hanson released their new album, *Against the World.*

"These seven songs each highlight different musical influences, but the common thread is in their message, facing adversity in its many forms, and seeking a way forward. It's exciting that fans can finally hear the songs as the body of work that is *Against The World,* the album," said Taylor Hanson.

The Associated Press called the seven-track collection "a rich and diverse group of songs that showcase the brothers' range, musicianship and influences."

While fans may have been downloading songs from the album since the May release of the debut single and video "Annalie" and subsequent monthly releases, the final song, "Fearless," was released in November, completing the album set.

to the editor...

TULSA AREA HOLIDAY GIFTS AND DONATIONS LISTING

I applaud you for gathering all the information and helping families see the opportunities to assist others. You consistently publish these articles and we find them very helpful in choosing where to invest our time and resources. Many times our bad attitudes turn into gratitude once we serve.

Well done and thank you! Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!

Sincerely, Kelli Portman

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON COVID VACCINE FOR KIDS

The FDA and CDC have issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the administration of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to children ages 5 to 11 years. The Tulsa Health Department (THD) will begin administering the vaccine for children in this age group.

The CDC recommends that children and adolescents age 5 and older get a COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for children and adolescents age 5 and up, as a 2-dose series taken 3 weeks apart. The dose for children age 5-11 is one-third of the dosage of the vaccine for older adolescents and adults.

While COVID-19 tends to be milder in children compared with adults, children can have both short and long-term health complications from COVID-19. There have been 14,147 confirmed cases and two deaths reported in Tulsa County among children age 5-17.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their pediatrician or family medical provider with questions about the vaccine. More than 300 local providers are eligible to administer COVID-19 vaccines, and many local pharmacies and doctors' offices will offer the vaccine.

Parents and guardians may schedule an appointment at a THD vaccine clinic for their child at www.vaccinate918.com or by calling the Tulsa Health Department at 918.582.9355.

Children who have not received a seasonal flu vaccination or need other recommended childhood vaccinations can receive them at the same time as their COVID-19 vaccination.

Scientists have conducted clinical trials with more than 3,000 children and the FDA has determined that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has met the safety and efficacy standards for authorization in children ages 5 through 15 years. Possible side effects include pain, redness or swelling at the injection site. Additional side effects include fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and nausea. These are normal signs that their body is building protection. Some people have no side effects and severe allergic reactions are rare.

More information regarding vaccine clinic locations in Tulsa County can be found at vaccinate918.com.

Student Athlete Photos



Madelyn Baker



Natanii Toppah



Harper Senger

Christmas Photo Contest

How do you celebrate the holidays? Let us know by entering our Holiday Fun Photo Contest! Enter December 1–31 for a chance to win a $100 Visa gift card! Details at **tulsakids.com/contest**. Sponsored by:

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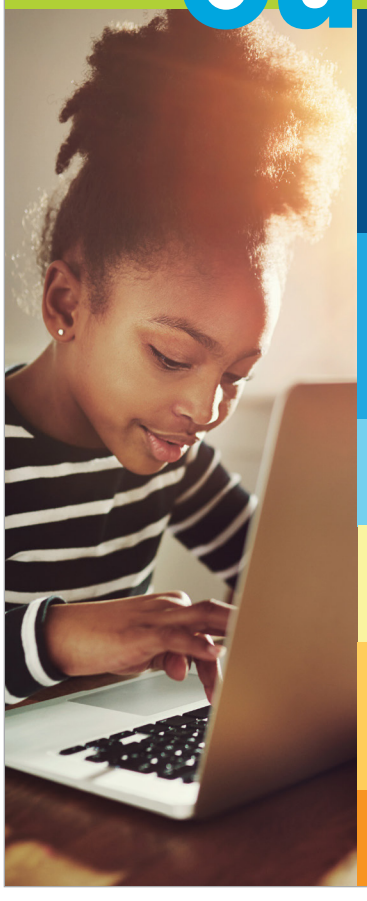


TASM & PLANETARIUM RECEIVES EXHIBIT GRANT

The Tulsa Air and Space Museum & Planetarium announced that Oklahoma Humanities has awarded a $20,000 Major Challenge Grant for the development and creation of a new exhibit to honor the Tuskegee Airmen, WWII aviators. Additional funding of $20,000 was contributed by Tulsa donors, creating a total of $40,000 for the development and launch planned to start on Jan. 1, 2022 and completed by July 1, 2022.

Exhibition elements will be centered around individual Tuskegee Airmen who have had roots in Oklahoma and mid-west aviation. Visitors will be able to tour the exhibition and progress through each individual career as a Tuskegee Airmen. This exhibition will focus on the heroism, and lost recognition, of the Tuskegee Airmen.

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CONTESTS + GIVEAWAYS

Find links to enter the following contests at **tulsakids.com/contests**.



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Win 4 free tickets to see the World Premiere of Tulsa Ballet's The Nutcracker this December! With brand-new choreography, and spectacular new sets and costumes, you and your family will marvel at the epic battle between the Nutcracker Prince and Mouse King, and journey to the Sugar Plum Fairy's Land of Sweets. Join Tulsa Ballet for this magical premiere at the Tulsa PAC!

HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN PHOTO CONTEST

How does your family celebrate the holidays? Let us know by entering our Holiday Family Fun Photo Contest, sponsored by The Orthopaedic Center! Enter December 1-31 for a chance to win a $100 Visa gift card.



JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS GIVEAWAY

Get great bargains on all your holiday shopping at the Just Between Friends sale! We will be giving away 2 VIP passes and $20 in JBF Bucks. Go to tulsakids.com/contests for giveaway dates and sale information.

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS Giveaways

Enter a new giveaway each day from December 1–12!

December 1: 26-inch Noble Fir Christmas Wreath, courtesy of Cascia Hall

December 2: 4 Skating Passes + 4 Hot Chocolate Vouchers, courtesy of Arvest Winterfest

December 3: $100 gift card to Smitty's Garage

December 4: Fun4Kidz Playground Play Pass (Two winners will be chosen!)

December 5: 4 Tickets to the ORU Men's Basketball game vs. Denver on December 30, plus four Summit League Champions T-shirts

December 6: A Camp Registration Certificate to SoccerCity Tulsa

December 7: Family Swim Pass + Merch from Miller Swim School

December 8: $100 Gift Card to Pub W

December 9: Family Membership + Swag from Oklahoma Aquarium

December 10–12: TBD

SEASON OF GIVING:
Holiday Gifts and Donations

Give back this holiday season! These non-profits fulfill key needs in the Tulsa community. Learn how to support their missions below, and find even more ways to give at tulsakids.com/tulsa-area-holiday-gifts-and-donations-listing.

SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army assists approximately **23 million** Americans annually. From homeless shelters, to disaster relief, to holiday giving, we exist to meet human need without discrimination. While we serve our community year-round, the holiday season is especially special to us! We believe every child deserves to experience the joy of Christmas morning. Through our Angel Tree program, we can provide this to thousands of kids in our community. To pull this off, we need YOU! To easily shop and ship a gift for the Angel Tree program, please visit www.salarmytulsa.org, and click on the Registry for Good button.

924 S. Hudson Ave., Tulsa | 918.587.7801

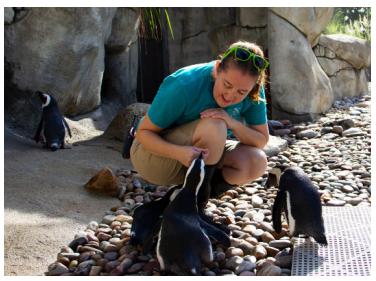
TULSA ZOO

You can help enrich the lives of Tulsa Zoo animals by purchasing wish list item(s) from their Amazon store. Items can be shipped directly to the zoo for wildlife to enjoy!

Enrichment is fun to watch, but it's also part of the daily care of animals at the zoo. Enrichment helps to encourage natural behaviors, keep animals mentally and physically healthy while creating an engaging experience for zoo guests.

On behalf of the Tulsa Zoo, thank you for your commitment to wildlife education and conservation. tulsazoo.org/support-us

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FOSTERING HOPE

Fostering Hope is a non-profit organization with a desire to aid children from birth to 18 when placed in foster care. The Bag Full of Hope program provides much-needed emergency supplies and bridges the gap from when a child is removed to when families receive state funding. Fostering Hope House is our newest program. Here, we provide bathing facilities and a safe place for foster children to await placement.

How can you help? Join us on Dec. 4 for Gingerbread Land at 810 Ranch in Muskogee. Tickets include: decorating a gingerbread house with over 50 candies, photos with Santa, a hot cocoa bar, letters to Santa, an appearance from Elsa, and much more. We hope this festive event will become a holiday tradition for families near and far. For tickets and other ways to support, go to fosteringhopemuskogee.org.

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918.616.8143



DISCOVERY LAB

Give the gift of inspiration at Discovery Lab this holiday season! Discovery Lab's mission is to inspire children, connect families, and build community through exploration, exhibits, programming and play. Build rockets, make robots, and explore exhibits while learning about science, technology, engineering, arts, and math.

Memberships make great gifts – Join the Gizmo Guild and a part of your donation will go towards keeping Discovery Lab accessible for ALL families in our community.
discoverylab.org/gizmoguild

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discovery LAB

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It's in the name. We serve Tulsa's homeless and at-risk youth!

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The holidays can be the most difficult times for youth living in poverty and for homeless youth without a family. You can help by joining us for Gifts of Hope. Donations made to Gifts of Hope help brighten the holidays by providing gifts to youth and their families in need. To donate cash go to yst.org/holiday-assistance.

To donate items, check out our wish list here: **yst.org/wishlist**.

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youth services

THE ARC

The Arc of Oklahoma (formerly TARC) is a statewide nonprofit that promotes and protects the human rights of Oklahomans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. Learn more at TheArcOK.org.

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Family & Children's Services (F&CS) is a non-profit in Tulsa that serves hurting and abused children, strengthens families and gives a path of hope and recovery to those battling mental illness and addiction. We have been serving this mission for 100 years. Our Santa Shop provides gifts and necessities to F&CS's neediest families. Monetary donations are also appreciated at www.fcsok.org/donate.

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goodwilltulsa.org/tulsakids

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Tulsa Symphony resonates throughout the Tulsa community and Northeastern Oklahoma as the professional orchestra that educates, entertains, and inspires through creative and innovative programming. Tulsa Symphony prides itself on enriching the Tulsa community and beyond through musical excellence, education and community service. Serving as the cornerstone of the arts in Tulsa, Tulsa Symphony partners and collaborates with Tulsa Ballet, Tulsa Chorale, Philbrook Museum, Gilcrease Museum and Oklahoma Aquarium. A leader in classical music and music education, TSO presents over 30 major performances per season which touch over 55,000 people in the Northeast Oklahoma region. At the forefront of the orchestra is artistic integrity, collaborating with artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Joshua Bell, Amy Grant, Eric Whitacre, Sarah Coburn, Yefim Bronfman, Rachel Barton Pine, Robin Sutherland, and Hanson.

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Green Country Habitat for Humanity (GCHFH) is a nonprofit organization devoted to building quality, affordable homes for hardworking families in the Tulsa area. Serving our community since 1988, GCHFH offers training, financial literacy courses and affordable, low-interest mortgages for first-time homeowners.

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BY KILEY ROBERSON

top holiday toys for tots

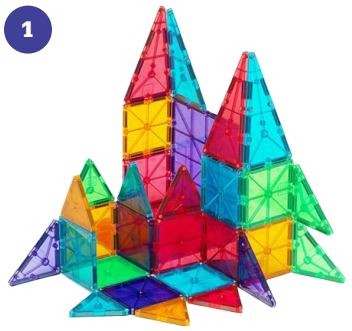
It's that time of year again—holiday shopping! At this stage, you most likely have some experience selecting the best holiday gifts for baby—but shopping for tots is a whole different ballgame. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), between the ages of 1 and 3, toddlers hit some major developmental milestones and begin to form a strong sense of their likes and dislikes.

"I think picking out toys for toddlers is my favorite age group," says Jana Doyle. Jana and her husband, Chuck, own Kiddlestix, the Tulsa toy store at 3815 S. Harvard Ave.

"They are so curious about the world around them and are interested in such a wide variety of toys," Jana says. "Most toddlers haven't zoned in on one particular interest so seem to be excited by toys in all categories, whether it's problem solving, imaginative play or active play."

With so many options to choose from, picking the right gift for your child might seem like a nightmare… but don't worry, Jana has some hot toys for tots to add to your holiday shopping list.

1



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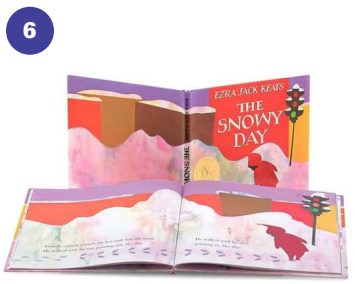
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1 MAGNATILES

Magnatiles are always a STEM toy fan favorite. They are magnetic building tiles that come in different brightly colored geometric shapes. Kids learn about colors, shapes and magnetism, all while building and playing. And who doesn't love a toy that promotes both creativity and imaginative play?

2 MICRO AIR HOPPER

This active toy is brand new and comes from the same company who makes Micro Kickboard scooters. It's an inflatable hopper but with the option to use with or without the wheeled base. It can be used inside or out and is a great way to expend all that toddler energy.

3 FAT BRAIN TOYS ROLL AGAIN TOWER

The Roll Again Tower is a mesmerizing ball track. When you grab the ball from the bottom of the tower, more balls roll down from the top. It's a great cause and effect toy.

4 HAPE MUSICAL WHALE FOUNTAIN

Bath toys are always a hit! The musical whale fountain attaches to the bottom of the tub and squirts water while the child plays music by touching each colored whale.

5 GREEN TOYS

For a sustainable option, Green Toys are great for toddlers. Green Toys use recycled plastics to make their toys. They are durable and long lasting. Favorites are definitely the orange wagon and the new RV camper.

6 BOOKS

Children love stories and at this age, a new book also means quality time with you—it's a win-win. You can't go wrong with popular toddler titles like *The Snowy Day, Brown Bear, Brown Bear* or *Good Night Moon.*

While toys are always the talk of the season, don't forget that the best gift you can give your child, regardless of age, is time with you. So after you've checked your list twice, don't forget to snuggle up for some cozy time together enjoying the true magic of the holidays…each other.



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BY DR. TAMECCA ROGERS

how to help english language learners feel welcome at school

The number of English language learners (ELL) in the United States is increasing. These students usually come from homes where English isn't spoken, so they may initially struggle to communicate.

I spoke to English language (EL) specialist Elizabeth Benavides — who has been in education for 21 years — to learn more about the needs of ELL students and what schools can do to assist them better.

She says that 60 percent of the students at her school are currently English language learners. While many of these students were born in the United States, they speak only social English and struggle with academic language. Frequently, their parents are immigrants who may only speak limited English and are unable to assist them.

Benavides' school district provides resources to teachers and services for the increasing number of English language learners to help them succeed in the academic environment.

> The most important thing that teachers can do to provide a better learning experience for their English language learners is to know them as well as possible. Learn about their interests and strengths, as well as their family backgrounds.

THE BENEFITS OF MAKING EL LEARNERS FEEL WELCOME IN CLASS

English language learners will be successful in the classroom if they feel comfortable taking risks. This requires planning by the teacher to overcome communication barriers. They are also more successful if they feel accepted as part of the school community. They may feel overwhelmed by the unfamiliar language, and EL learners may also struggle socially.

Benavides says teachers must know their students, which will help them understand how to best support them.

"It is a rewarding experience to work with these students and see them become confident in using English," Benavides says. "They have so much to offer the other students and their teachers."

Parents can encourage their children to treat ELL classmates with kindness and give them specific ways to help. Teachers can use the following techniques to help EL learners feel confident at school.

- Pronouncing the students' names correctly will help them feel welcome.
- Assign friendly and responsible classmates to help new EL students find their way around. Students can rotate this responsibility so that the new students get to know as many people as possible.
- Get someone who speaks the student's native language to help them, if possible. This person could act as an interpreter between the new student and their classmates for the first few days.
- Encourage the parents to become involved in the school community. Assist them by having interpreters available at your first meeting with them. You could also translate communication from the school into their first language, if possible.
- Use techniques such as speaking slowly and repeating instructions to make sure the student understands. Using simple sentences, pictures, photos, and physical gestures will be beneficial when you talk to them as well. This is a good tip for peers and volunteers as well.
- A Pictorial Exchange Communication System (PECS) chart may help your English language learners express themselves and become more independent in the classroom. By pointing at one of the images, they can let you know how they're feeling or what they need. Please encourage them to say the words aloud as they point to each image on the chart.
- Encourage an appreciation of cultural diversity in your classes through exciting activities such as food festivals, having students teach the class words from their native languages, or interviewing their parents. Teachers, volunteers and

classmates can read aloud to EL learners to improve their language skills and vocabulary. They can share books with students who are learning English. ELLs should also be encouraged to continue to develop literacy and skills in their native language. Teachers, peers, staff and volunteers can provide a supportive environment by learning about the cultural backgrounds of EL learners. They will see this as a sign of respect. As suggested by Benavides, the students themselves are the most helpful resources, as they come from a rich background full of experiences.

THE NEED FOR TEACHERS TO RECEIVE EL TRAINING

Benavides says that even though EL instruction is not part of the teacher preparation program in Oklahoma, her district provides professional development and study groups for teachers interested in taking the state test to become EL certified.

"We need to remember that all teachers are EL teachers as EL students are in mainstream classes," Benavides says. She recommends that all non-EL certified teachers attend training to learn strategies that will help them teach language within the context of their different subjects. School administrators should prioritize this training to improve the classroom performance of both teachers and ELLs.

Research indicates that students learn English faster and more effectively when they learn it within the context of their other school subjects.

Teachers can learn simple strategies such as writing down or drawing keywords or writing instructions on the board to help ELLs. Lessons can be recorded. Vocabulary words for lessons can be given in advance. Lessons can also be made available for students to preview, which helps increase understanding.

These are just a few things that can be done in any classroom.

If you have access to an ELL specialist, like Elizabeth Benavides, make it a priority to build a strong relationship with them. Talk to the ELL specialist about what you are doing in class, as students can also use some of the same vocabulary in the English as a Second Language (ESL) class.

OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

Communication difficulties may develop as teachers might think that students who can follow written and verbal instructions can also speak and write in English, but that is not always the case.

It's essential to take interactions with students seriously and really focus on what they're saying. Never regard their struggle to express themselves in English as a lack of intelligence or maturity. Most ELL students know a lot but have difficulty describing the information in English.

It's best to not make a big deal of ELLs' mispronunciations and treat their input in class with respect. It can be disheartening for them to learn English at first, as it can take a long time to see results.

Try to have fun while helping English language learners overcome communication gaps. Help them develop the courage to take risks by encouraging a sense of humor while learning to improve their English.

The most important thing that teachers can do to provide a better learning experience for their English language learners is to know them as well as possible. Learn about their interests and strengths, as well as their family backgrounds. This will help you understand how to best support them. It will also provide a model of behavior for all students in your classroom.

It can be a challenge to work with ELLs, so instructors may have to be creative and think outside the box. However, it's such a rewarding experience to see these students progress and become confident English speakers.





BY JULIE WENGER WATSON

want to find some fun?

TULSA HAS TONS OF OPTIONS FOR TEENS

The winter holidays are fast approaching, with a break from school and routines bringing opportunities for time together with family and friends. While board and card games or movie nights are always reliable family fun, here are a few more options that will satisfy the teens in your house.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CLIMB TULSA

GET PHYSICAL

Scale new heights at **Climb Tulsa.** This midtown Tulsa climbing gym features over 20,000 square feet of climbing walls. Try the "Adult Intro Class." Limited to four participants (ages 13 and up), it includes instruction on how to properly fit a harness, tie in with the right knot, and correctly belay your climbing partner. The $35/person class fee covers training, a climbing pass and gear rental. More information at climbtulsa.com.

The **Engine Room Boxing Gym** at 316 E. 11th St. offers free trial classes for potential pugilists. All you need is a pair of hand wraps (available for $10 at the gym); loaner gloves are available for first-timers. Parents and kids ages 15 and up can participate together in the adult fitness class. Younger siblings can try the youth boxing classes. Details and registration at engineroomboxing.com.

GET OUTSIDE

With indoor and outdoor exhibits and hundreds of animals, the **Tulsa Zoo** is a fun outing for kids of all ages. Admission is $14/adult and $10/child. More at tulsazoo.org. While you're in the Mohawk Park neighborhood, check out Oxley Nature Center for a family hike. Admission is free, and the extensive trail system passes through forests, fields and wetlands. Visit oxleynaturecenter.org.

Located in the beautiful Osage Hills, **Tulsa Botanic Garden** is a lovely spot for a walk, even in the winter. Visit the "Botanic Garden of Lights" in the evenings through early January (tickets required). In addition to the festive lighting and fire pits, s'more kits and beverages (including adult versions) are available. See tulsabotanic.org.

Stroll through the **Gathering Place** near E. 31st & Riverside. The $400 million park is free to enter, with basketball courts, playgrounds, skate parks and more available for use. Check the park calendar at gatheringplace.org for special events. Walk or bike (check out thismachinetulsa.com for rentals) at River Parks' expansive trail system. Explore over 300 acres of rugged parkland at **Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area,** near E. 71st St. Find out more at riverparks.org.

Guthrie Green, a free urban park in the heart of Tulsa's Arts District, turns on its holiday lights with vendors, live music food and hot drinks on Dec. 3. If you can't make the opening event, it's a lovely stop en route to downtown any night of the week. See guthriegreen.com.

Looking for a physical challenge? Climb **Big Bertha,** a tall hill at the corner of the Gilcrease Expressway and L.L. Tisdale Parkway. Used as an unofficial gym by numerous athletes, a worn pathway straight up to the top marks the way. You'll be rewarded at the summit with a spectacular view of north Tulsa.

If you want Fido to join in the fun, pack a thermos of hot chocolate and visit one of Tulsa's dog parks. Try South Tulsa's **Biscuit Acres** in Hunter Park or **Joe Station** on Charles Page Blvd. New for canines

and their families is **Route 66 Dog Park** in the Gunboat Park neighborhood at the southeast edge of downtown.

GET IN THE MOOD

Visit Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa's historic honky tonk, for a night of music both you and your teens can enjoy with **JD McPherson's Socks: A Rock N' Roll Christmas Tour.** McPherson is a former Tulsan who's made a national splash. Tickets for the high energy show start at $22. Visit cainsballroom.com.

Tulsa Ballet presents **The Nutcracker,** a holiday tradition for many families, at the Performing Arts Center Dec. 10-19. The latest iteration of this classic includes all new choreography, sets and costumes. More at tulsaballet.org.

American Theater Company's performance of "**A Christmas Carol,**" a musical based on the perennially popular Charles Dickens' novella, is Dec. 10–23 at the PAC's John H. Williams Theatre. With a run of over four decades, ATC has perfected this family-friendly, and visually immersive holiday experience. Visit americantheatrecompany.org.

During the day, Philbrook's **Festival of the Trees** offers a variety of activities, special exhibitions, a community-created Lego Villa, and plenty of seasonal décor. At night, the gardens are filled with lights. Enjoy hot cocoa, art projects and even a visit with Santa. See philbrook.org for more.

GET CREATIVE

Remember how fun it was to bake and decorate cookies with your kids when they were little? It's still fun even when your offspring are tall enough to reach all the ingredients themselves. If you're ambitious, make the dough from scratch. However, no one will fault you if you want to cut to the artistic part with purchased slice and bake and pre-made frosting. Crunched for time, but still want that home-baked taste? Purchase a cookie decorating kit from local bakeries **barbeecookies.com** or **cookiemomster.com.**

With two Tulsa locations, **Purple Glaze** studios offer a turnkey art experience. Choose from countless unfinished ceramic items to paint or wood shapes to mosaic. Create your own holiday gifts or home décor. Join with another family and schedule your own class. More information at purpleglazestudio.com.





BY NATALIE MIKLES

holiday cookie exchange? we've got you covered

There's no food like a cookie to represent the holiday season.

Cookies are a symbol of love poured into a mixing bowl. The gift of cookies is one of the sweetest, knowing the time someone took to roll, shape, bake and decorate.

The Christmas season gives us many opportunities to bake and enjoy cookies together.

Colleen Smith and her daughters, Melina and Maren, have had a Christmas cookie baking day for many years. Colleen's mom, sister-in-law and the girls' cousins make a day of it, baking 10 to 15 different types of cookies.

They make everything from easy peanut butter blossoms to a more time-consuming Ina Garten recipe for peanut butter and jelly bars. By the end of the day, they've easily made 30 dozen cookies.

"I try to sneak in a new recipe every year just because I love the favorites but want to expand our repertoire," Colleen said.

She and her mom usually make most of the doughs ahead of time, then they all spend time turning the dough into cookies. This is a great tip when you're baking with kids. Making the dough ahead lets everyone have more fun shaping and decorating on cookie day.



COLLEEN SMITH AND HER FAMILY SPEND A DAY BAKING COOKIES TO GIVE AS GIFTS.

Once all the cookies are cooked and cooled, Colleen and her family cooking crew package the cookies to give to friends and family.

"It's a fun holiday tradition, and my daughters have invited friends to help over the years. Everyone gets to take home huge plates piled high with cookies, and we also send them to family around the country," Colleen said.

Some of Colleen's other favorites are chocolate mint cookies, oatmeal chocolate cherry cookies and Swedish ginger cookies. One cookie they make every year is her great-grandmother's Italian cookies. They also make a similar cookie with crushed anise seeds.

Colleen's great-grandmother brought this recipe with her when she immigrated from Italy in the early 1900s. It's a family favorite more than 100 years later.

ITALIAN COOKIES

- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup milk
- 5 ½ cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 tablespoon lemon extract or vanilla flavoring

1. Melt butter over low heat. Remove from heat and stir in milk.
2. In a large bowl, mix flour, sugar, baking powder, eggs and lemon or vanilla extract. Mix in butter and milk. The dough will be very soft and sticky. Coat hands with flour. Take small pieces of dough, and roll out like a pencil. Shape into bows, knots, pinwheels, S shapes or circles.
3. Brush top with egg, and cover with sprinkles or leave plain. Bake at 350 degrees until light brown on bottom, about 15–20 minutes.

Colleen found this recipe online years ago.

COWBOY OATMEAL COOKIES

Makes 3 dozen

- 1 cup shortening
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1 package butterscotch chips
- 1 cup chopped pecans

1. Cream together shortening and sugars. Add eggs and vanilla and beat well.
2. Sift together flour, salt and baking soda, then add to sugar mixture. Add oats, butterscotch chips and pecans. Dough will be stiff.
3. Drop spoonfuls on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes or until golden brown.

This is a pretty cookie that's great for gifting or including on a cookie tray.

JAM COCONUT DROPS

Makes 2–3 dozen

- ⅓ cup butter, softened
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons orange juice
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 ¾ cups sweetened shredded coconut, divided
- 1 cup seedless raspberry preserves, warmed

1. Cream butter, cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk, orange juice and almond extract.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Stir in 3 cups coconut. Refrigerate until easy to handle, about 30 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Shape rounded tablespoons of dough into balls, then roll in remaining coconut. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets.
4. Press a deep thumbprint in the center of each cookie. Bake until edges are light brown, 8–10 minutes. Cool 1 minute. Using a wooden spoon, enlarge any indentations that may have narrowed or closed. Remove cookies from pans to wire racks. Fill with preserves; cool completely.

Here's a fun cookie for the holidays or anytime. You won't find a cookie easier to make than this one.

THREE-INGREDIENT PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

Makes 2 dozen

- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Roll tablespoons of dough into balls. Place on an ungreased baking sheet, then flatten with a fork.
2. Bake until crisp, 10–14 minutes.

It's not a cookie, but this easy recipe for white chocolate-peanut butter bark is a favorite of kids to make and to eat.

TIGER BUTTER BARK

- 1 pound white candy coating, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup chunky peanut butter
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon shortening

1. Line a 15-by-10-inch pan with parchment paper. In a microwave, melt candy coating and peanut butter, stirring until smooth. Spread into pan.
2. In microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening, stirring to blend. Drizzle over top, swirling mixture with a knife.
3. Refrigerate until firm, then break into pieces.

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BY SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

healthy holiday swaps

Too much fat, sodium and sugar during the holidays can make anyone feel ho-ho-heavy and humdrum. But healthy doesn't mean giving up traditional flavor in your holiday recipes. A few simple swaps can provide delicious options that are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber that will give your family energy to enjoy whatever the season brings!

SWAP sugary holiday cookies and pies for tasty **Apple Pie Flautas.**

The smells and taste of the season are captured in these sweet apple roll-ups. Kids can help you roll the tortillas.

APPLE PIE FLAUTAS

Ingredients:

- 4 large apples, sliced
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- Dash salt
- 5 (6-inch) whole wheat flour tortillas
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon flour or cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons butter

Directions:

1. Add apple pieces, 2 tablespoons honey, cinnamon, flour or cornstarch, salt and butter to a large pot.
2. Cover and cook on low heat until apples are tender, approximately 30 minutes
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Place 1 heaping tablespoon of apple pie filling in the center of each tortilla, roll the tortilla as tightly as possible, place seam side down. Spray each flauta with cooking spray oil or melted butter. Spread last tablespoon of honey over flautas.
5. Bake for 20-25 minute or until lightly golden and crisp on the outside. Allow to cool at room temperature until the filling has cooled enough to eat.



SWAP the fatty baked goods for **gooey brownies** to share with friends and family.

These tasty treats will go fast—and no one will know they're low in fat.

LOW-FAT BROWNIES

Ingredients:

- ½ cup cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 ¾ cups white sugar
- ¾ cup applesauce
- 1 cup flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 egg whites

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar. Add egg whites, applesauce and vanilla; mix until combined.
2. In a separate bowl, mix all other ingredients. Then add to the wet ingredients in the large bowl and mix.
3. Spray an 8x8 baking dish with cooking spray and bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes.

SWAP unhealthy, high-calorie chips or Chex Mix for **Chili Popcorn.**

This popcorn delivers high-impact taste along with the crunchiness we crave.

CHILI POPCORN

Ingredients:

- 1 small bag of light microwave popcorn
- Chili powder
- Garlic powder

Directions:

1. For microwave popcorn, follow directions on the package.
2. Sprinkle chili and garlic powder on popcorn for desired taste.

MORE HEALTHY SWAPS:

Swap This For This:

- **Mashed potatoes**
  Mashed cauliflower for less fat and calories or mashed sweet potatoes, which are loaded with vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber.
- **Soda or sugary drinks**
  Make Apple Infused Cinnamon Water by putting chunks of organic apples and a cinnamon stick into a jar of water. Let sit in refrigerator for 1 hour. Enjoy.
- **Canned cranberry sauce**
  Making your own saves calories and sugar. Mash fresh cranberries with juice from an orange, plus a splash of 100 percent apple juice.

Give your family the gift of health this season and into the new year!

Find more great ideas for a healthy holiday season, from recipes and healthy swaps to family-friendly activities, at ShapeYourFutureOK.com.

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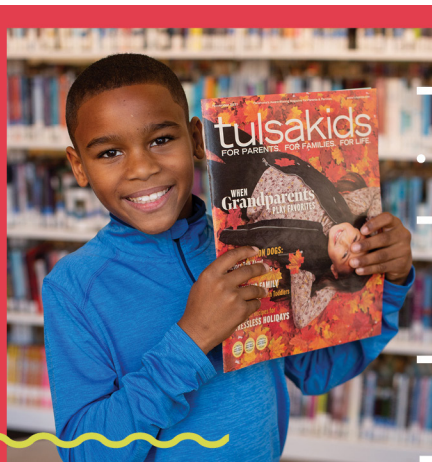
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Jonathon, our January Cover Kid, is looking forward to seeing himself on the newly redesigned magazine!



tulsakids

BY NANCY A. MOORE

meet onikah asamoa-caesar: building a brighter future

Onikah Asamoa-Caesar was a voracious reader growing up and dreamed of one day opening a bookstore. That dream became reality when she opened Fulton Street Books and Coffee a little over a year ago.

Onikah's clear focus on building community and developing relationships is the foundation of this bookstore, and its supporting pillars include a strong mission of representing diversity and building literacy across generations. Fulton Street centers around the stories, narratives and lived experiences of Black people, people of color, and marginalized communities.

In addition to her entrepreneurial role, Onikah is also experiencing the joys of motherhood with her 18-month-old daughter, Hadassah. In fact, her daughter is frequently alongside her mom at Fulton Street—which brings both tremendous joy! And although the business and her daughter are still in their infancy, everyone is growing and learning together with their sights set on a better, brighter future for Tulsa.

TK: Tell us a little about yourself.

Onikah: I am a new mom. I had my first child at the beginning of the pandemic; she's now 18 months old. I am also the owner and founder of Fulton Street Books and Coffee; we opened three months postpartum in June. I also work for the George Kaiser Family Foundation as a Program Coordinator.



PHOTO CREDIT: ONIKAH ASAMOA-CAESAR

TK: Coffee and books are two of my favorite things! Can you share why you decided to open a bookstore and coffee shop?

Onikah: My dream was always about being a bookstore owner. I've always loved books—they have been adventure for me, an escape for me, and windows into other worlds—and as an adult I still love books! As a child, I had access to a lot of diverse books. When I moved to Tulsa as a Teach for America Corps teacher, my first-grade students weren't excited about reading. As someone who was so in love with books, I wanted to understand why they didn't feel the same. I realized that the literature I was presenting them was a world where they did not exist. The stories did not reflect their lives or culture. I quickly went about diversifying my library. Sharing these new books transformed our classroom culture and reading time. The students were excited to read! Knowing that pain point as a teacher, I wanted to open a bookstore that provided diverse representation.

When it came down to business planning—independent bookstores were closing every day—I took that information and found a way to build something else into the plan that people could enjoy, too—coffee! Coffee shops can be community centers and community hubs. It has enhanced our space—people are enjoying both.

TK: Can you share the mission of Fulton Street Books?

Onikah: Bookstores in the Black community are only second in importance to the Black church. We have a mission of building community—and our physical location is in the middle of a neighborhood—and also increasing intergenerational literacy.

TK: Can you share what your bookstore offers in terms of representation?

Onikah: A pain point for book lovers, parents and educators alike is finding and accessing literature that represents a real and diverse array of identities and lived experiences. At Fulton Street, at least 70 percent of our books are written by or feature BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and/or marginalized communities. We believe that representation matters.

TK: You share a Tulsa Fact on your website that calls attention to literacy. Can you share how you are working to help increase literacy?

Onikah: We are building a space in which we can all get the most from meaningful learning opportunities. There are so many other ways, besides books, that we take in information—cinema, music and poetry—we are providing experiences for everyone. We believe that literacy is a tool for liberation. We cannot chart a future for ourselves if we are not armed with knowledge of our past and how that has formed our present. We use literacy as a tool to empower people with the knowledge to make better choices about themselves, their lives and their futures.

TK: Is there something that Fulton Street Books has specifically for kids?

Onikah: We offer a Little and Lit Subscription Box with two curated books arriving monthly. Books are great for the whole family and specifically target pre-kindergarten through third grade. This is an excellent way for families to ensure their kids have very diverse bookshelves. Books are one of the first opportunities to see a world that they are not readily surrounded by.

TK: Your website refers to the Tulsa Equality Indicators Report, noting that when compared with white Tulsans, Black Tulsans are three times more likely to find it difficult to access resources, activities and opportunities in Tulsa. How are you working to make everyone in the community feel welcome?

Onikah: A lot of the way in which we do community is different—a lot of kids are living with grandparents or aunts, and the family is a little more communal, with many family members living together—I wanted to open a space that was centered around people of color and marginalized communities. I wanted these communities to have a space where they felt welcomed and help push conversations in Tulsa and hopefully nationwide. We're building relationships while discussing issues of race and identity—infusing our learning experiences through the lens of the whole person.

TK: In the Centennial year of the Tulsa Race Massacre, how is Fulton Street serving as a space for civic discourse?

Onikah: This has been a heavy year for a lot of folks in Tulsa because we know the rich legacy that was, and we know the way in which that legacy was interrupted. First, it was a very violent destruction, and the second destruction of Black Wall Street in Greenwood was very policy driven; it was very race silent, but not race neutral.

A lot of folks are really excited about being part of the third wave of the resurrection of the spirit of Greenwood and being young Black entrepreneurs in Tulsa. I think a lot of us are looking at the horizon to figure out what's next, considering if are we creating an environment in which our community of entrepreneurs is going to be able to thrive or not.

This year, one thing we are trying to do is amplify the voices of other Black entrepreneurs through Buy Black Tulsa, a guide we created in partnership with United Way, YWCA, Goldmill, QuikTrip, TulsaPeople and Fulton Street Books and Coffee. This allows people the opportunity to support through their dollars. We all have a level of personal responsibility both in acknowledging, commemorating and building a Tulsa that is starting to right some of those wrongs.

TK: What is one unique offering of Fulton Street Books for adults?

Onikah: Fulton Street hosts a book club called Syllabus. We read a book but also supplement that with experiences, speakers and deeper conversations. When we are talking about issues like race and identity, I think there is a gap between that theoretical thinking and our practice, considering the way you show up in the world based on what you're learning. In Syllabus, we're going to have some real-life experiences and realize how it impacts people on a day-to-day basis.

TK: Owning a business is a lot of work, can you share what you do to unplug?

Onikah: One of things that the pandemic exposed is the extent that we work and don't take rest. I have discovered The Nap Ministry (@thenapministry on Instagram) and am now taking more naps! I'm not resting so I can produce more, I'm resting to rest. It's necessary for my own preservation and survival, and I want to be fully present for my daughter!

TK: What's one thing you are passionate about right now?

Onikah: I'm passionate about being a mom! Mothering is entwined in everything I do, and I love it! I'm really excited to be Hadassah's mom and to have an opportunity to raise a young, free, Black child in this country!

To find out more about Fulton Street Books visit them at 210 W. Latimer Street or online at: fultonstreet918.com, Instagram: @fultonstreet918 and Facebook: Fulton Street Books and Coffee. For a printable PDF version of the Buy Black Tulsa guide, visit buyblacktulsa.com.

To listen to the full interview with Onikah, including bonus content that includes what is currently on her nightstand and the current activities of the Fulton Street Book Club, check out the Sharing Passion and Purpose Podcast at SharingPassionandPurpose.com or on your favorite podcasting app.









BY REP. JOHN WALDRON

the next big fight

As a former teacher and a middle school dad, I'm very concerned about the future of public education in Oklahoma. As a state legislator, I'm worried about the direction in which we seem to be heading. We just finished rounds of interim studies in which we brought in experts to testify on issues of interest to the state Legislature. Many of them were convened in the Common Education committee. We looked at a bunch of problems we face—assessment challenges, the need for good professional development models and the massive teacher shortage. Some of my colleagues bridled at what they were hearing. After all, didn't we just vote for big teacher raises? Why are education experts complaining? Some of them would say things like "Education spending is at record levels. Why aren't districts using the money we gave them to do better?"

Those questions should concern us all and are worth addressing. As a history teacher, I'll begin by pointing out that while we did increase salaries for teachers in 2018 and 2019, this followed a decade of flat salaries. Other states also raised salaries, and in this competitive job market we have to keep moving to keep up if we want people to consider teaching as a career. By the same token, record spending after a decade of drought brought us closer to where we need to be, but hardly means we solved the education crisis.

Public school critics are using the pandemic to tee up the next education reform agenda: privatization.

I'm not saying money is the only issue. But if we're going to talk about the money we spend on education, we should do it honestly. After all, your school district is not sitting on a pile of cash. Most of the new money they received from the state went to salaries, and only for teachers. Support staff continue to receive shamefully poor salaries. And the pandemic has placed all kinds of new strain on our public schools. I'm hearing from teachers in the field, and even from administrators, about how tired and strapped everyone is.

Which brings us to the next big fight in public education. Public school critics are using the pandemic to tee up the next education reform agenda: privatization. If public schools are not giving us the results we want, why not use vouchers to move kids and public education dollars to private schools?

Now, full disclosure: I attended excellent private schools. Generous scholarships allowed this eighth of nine children raised by a single mom to afford the best education. That's one of the reasons I entered teaching—I felt I needed to give something back. There will always be a place for private schools in America. But we should be careful about distorting the private school market with massive public subsidies. Right now people are demanding an audit of Tulsa Public Schools, something that already happens annually. Do you think we'll be able to audit a private school even if it receives hundreds of thousands of public dollars? Oklahoma guarantees a right to a public education, but we have private schools in this city that expel students—even very young students—on the basis of their sexual orientation. Should they be eligible for public tuition dollars?

We'll find out in the next legislative session. I remember back in 2018 when parents and students rallied behind teachers as they marched on the Capitol. The feeling of support, or mattering to the communities they served, buoyed teachers up in a tough period. Since then, we've seen our leaders return to the old rhetoric bashing public schools. I wonder sometimes how much this has to do with the lobbyists who would benefit from privatization. In any event, it's a shame to see our public schools under so much pressure, and our teaching corps feeling so low. That's something I'll be taking up when I head back into the fight next February.

John Waldron is an Oklahoma State Legislator, dad, and former teacher.

BY BRIAN A. CRAIN,
ATTORNEY, SOUTH TULSA LAW

Estate Planning for Families with Special Needs Children



Families with special needs children must exercise extra care in making their estate plans. It isn't something any parent likes to think about, but there will come a time when you will not be around to care for your child. You want to enhance and enrich the life of your child now and in the future. This can be met through a properly prepared Special Needs Trust.

Also known as a Supplemental Needs Trust, a Special Needs Trust is very similar to any other trust. The big difference is that the trust is for the benefit of an individual who is disabled or is a child. It is not uncommon for people to lose their SSI, Medicaid, or other benefits when inheriting life insurance, real estate, or other assets. Special needs planning works to preserve these benefits, as well as:

- provide lifetime money management for the benefit of the disabled child;
- protect the child s eligibility for public benefits; and
- ensure a pool of funds available for future use in the event public funding should cease or be restricted.

It's important to make your wishes known and get the appropriate documents in place sooner rather than later. These crucial steps will assure your child will receive proper care when you are no longer able to provide that care yourself. Allow South Tulsa Law the privilege of helping you with a Special Needs Trust. We can meet in person, via video chat, or by phone. Contact us at 918-512-1800 or email info@southtulsalaw.com.

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tulsakids family favorites 2021 WINNER

BY LAURA RAPHAEL, MLIS, CHILDREN'S SERVICES COORDINATOR, TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

librarians choose favorite children's books of 2021

When it comes to books, your friendly children's librarians have a hard time choosing favorites! (We can find something to love in just about every book, you see.) Nevertheless, here are some books that stood out to Tulsa City-County Library Youth Librarians Julia Cantrell, Joy Carr, Sarah Davis, Dana Henson, Steven Hulford, Haley Hurt, Maureen O'Keefe, Melody Palmer and Shelly Wimberley this year.

HEARTFELT PICTURE BOOKS

These picture books captured deep emotions with beautiful stories, extraordinary illustrations, and an empathy we all want our children to develop.

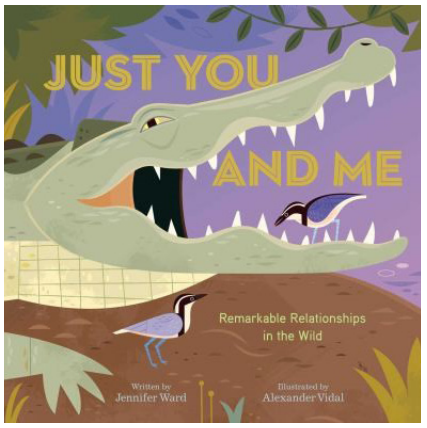
Wishes written by Muon Thi Van and illustrated by Victo Ngai.

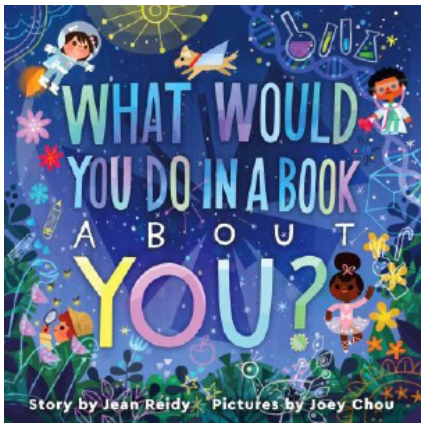
A family moves across the sea, carried moment by moment with their wishes for a safe future together.

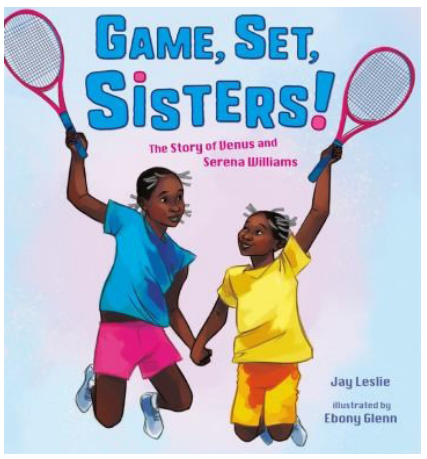
The Cot in the Living Room written by Hilda Eunice Burgos and illustrated by Gaby D'Alessandro

The main character in this warm picture book debut moves from envy to compassion as she recognizes how lucky she is — and how other children deserve her kindness.

Best Day Ever! written by Marilyn Singer and illustrated by Leah Nixon













On the more joyful and exuberant side of emotions, this book follows a puppy and boy as they have small adventures together.

NONFICTION STANDOUTS

2021 has been a banner year for outstanding nonfiction books for children — so good that they easily intrigue and educate adults, too!

Just You and Me: Remarkable Relationships in the Wild written by Jennifer Ward and illustrated by Alexander Vidal

Nature is as much about cooperation as it is competition, and this book explores the different ways plants, animals and humans work together for survival and more.

Masters of Disguise: Camouflaging Creatures and Magnificent Mimics written and illustrated by Marc Martin

Cosplay is nothing new for these creatures! Discover all the amazing ways plants and animals appear to be what they are not.

Game, Set, Sisters! The Story of Venus and Serena Williams written by Jay Leslie and illustrated by Ebony Glenn.

Find out about how these famous sisters became the tennis superstars they are today.

Honorable Mentions:

Invented By Animals by Christiane Dorion and **Unconventional Vehicles** by Michael Hearst

LOOKING FOR A LAUGH?

Hilarity ensues with these laugh-centric titles.

No Pants! written and illustrated by Jacob Grant

What can you do with pants when you decide not to wear them? A young boy finds out!

Arlo & Pips. Volume 1, King of the Birds written and illustrated by Elise Gravel

This beginning reader graphic novel teaches children many different facts about crows (truly the king of the birds) while introducing readers to a delightful pair of characters.

I Am Not a Penguin by Liz Wong

In a classic case of mistaken identities, a pangolin tries to convince readers that it is NOT a penguin (or any other animal), despite its collection of quirky characteristics.

CHARMING CHAPTER BOOKS

For independent readers or for family read-alouds, these chapter books feature fascinating characters and engaging settings.

Aven Green, Sleuthing Machine by Dusti Bowling

The second in a series (more, please!), this chapter book follows amateur detective Aven Green as she tries to unravel the mysteries of a missing lunch AND a missing dog.

Willa of Dark Hollow by Robert Beatty

A book for the child who loves gentle fantasies with mysterious creatures and lush settings.

Ancestor Approved edited by Cynthia Leitich Smith

Set during a powwow with different tribes, these interconnected stories by Native writers introduce readers into a world of dreams, hopes, humor and daily life.

SUI GENERIS

What Would You Do in a Book About You? written by Jean Reidy and illustrated by Joey Chou

Just as each child is one of a kind ("sui generis"), this final book is one unto itself: all about future selves, possibilities and the wideness of life.





Dyslexia Center of Tulsa
Dr. Penny Stack, Founder & Owner



Q. Our son's teacher recommended testing for dyslexia. Why do you recommend testing for ocular motor insufficiency as well?

A. Dyslexia is not caused or cured by how our eye muscles do or do not work together. In fact, if vision therapy alone cured your dyslexia, you did not have dyslexia, but rather a glitch in how your eyes worked together. It is not uncommon to have both dyslexia and ocular motor dysfunction. If the eye muscles do not work as a team, often the eyes can grow easily fatigued when reading: lines may be skipped, you may get lost in the text, letters may be reversed or appear as if they are vibrating or falling off the page. Occupational therapy services can strengthen the eye muscles so they work together, easing reading difficulties and to best prepare your son for dyslexia intervention.

Dyslexia Center of Tulsa
8988 S. Sheridan Rd #D1,
Tulsa OK 74133
918.313.5518
DyslexiaTulsa.com

Greenhouse Pediatric Therapy
Kassie Allison, MOT, OTR/L



Q: My 8-year-old son has a terrible diet. He basically eats 5 things. I am worried about his nutrition, and he seems to be getting pickier. A friend told me you do feeding therapy. What does that look like?

A: The main goal of Feeding Therapy is to increase your child's comfort with exploring new foods. There are many reasons for a child to have feeding challenges, such as medical issues, oral motor challenges, sensory aversions, and anxiety. An Occupational Therapist gathers information and observes your child eating preferred foods to figure out why he has trouble with feeding. Then we create a plan to work on the skills that impact feeding.

Rule number one in Feeding Therapy: You don't have to eat anything you don't want to eat. Above all, children must feel safe. New foods can be very scary for our kiddos!

We make Feeding Therapy fun and playful. We might make art with food, have cotton ball races across the floor, learn tricks for keeping the mouth calm when eating an unpleasant texture (crunchy carbs to the rescue!). When exploring food is a safe activity, he can then begin to add new foods to his diet.

Greenhouse Pediatric Therapy
2033 W. Houston, Broken Arrow
11211 N. Garnett, Suite B, Owasso
918.994.7799
GreenHousePeds.com

Miller Swim School | Sarah Clavin



Q: When my child puts his face in the water, he tends to just drink or lick the water. How/when should I teach him to blow bubbles or hold his breath?

A. Believe it or not, this is common with beginner swimmers, infants and toddlers. Developmentally, babies instinctually hold their breath when they submerge in the water. This reflex (laryngeal reflex) disappears around 6 months of age, which opens the door to prepare infants for submersion with a "cue." At Miller, we cue by saying, "One, two, ready, go," before they submerge. The babies very quickly learn to associate this cue with holding their breath. This way, the reflex seamlessly turns into a learned response, and you will never notice the reflex wearing off. It is amazing how soon even the littlest babies learn to anticipate going under water in response to the verbal cue. From there, infants/toddlers can learn to blow bubbles on the surface of the water anywhere from 9 months and up. Both blowing bubbles and breath holding are two forms of breath control that are key elements in learning to swim and water safety.

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

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For information, call 918.582.8504

COVER FEATURE

DISCOVERY LAB

BY BETTY CASEY

DISCOVERY LAB: A GIFT WE'VE ALL BEEN GIVEN

IN THE SUMMER OF 2007, Leah Saidy Storm and Stephanie Stump happened to be at the National Association of Children's Museums conference. Both from Tulsa, they were on parallel paths to bring a quality children's museum to Tulsa but hadn't met each other yet. The pre-conference-day topic interested both of them: Starting a Children's Museum.

When the two met, they realized that they were part of a larger group of individuals who shared their vision and passion. As a lawyer and parent, Stump brought a business perspective to creating a children's museum, and as a teacher and parent, Storm brought an education perspective.

Both women were founding board members of Discovery Lab. Stump is currently board president of Discovery Lab, and Storm is co-chair of Discovery Lab's Education Advisory Committee.

It's a dream come true. What a beautiful way to impact our community. It's a gift we've all been given.



COVER KID WINNER, RAIDEN VANG, EXPLORES THE NEW WORKSHOP AT DISCOVERY LAB.

THAT SEED OF AN IDEA has now seen final fruition as the new Discovery Lab opens this month at the south end of Gathering Place on Riverside Drive. The 57,000-square-foot museum houses over 20,000 square feet of exhibits and an almost 7,000-square-foot education center. Discovery Lab also has an outdoor amphitheater and a STEAM Center to provide hands-on experiences for Tulsa Public School students in pre-K through sixth grade.

In addition, the museum will be available for birthday parties and private rentals, including a rooftop terrace space called Thirty-One Twenty-Three Discovery Lab. The rooftop space offers incredible views of the river and the Tulsa skyline.

It's hard to imagine that the large building gracing Riverside Drive was once a "museum without walls."

"We were a museum without walls for seven years," Stump said. "It was never a matter of 'if' but 'when'. We just wouldn't quit. We had so much momentum over the years. People saying, 'I want to volunteer'."

"We were learning as we were going," Storm said. "It was an amazing, creative time."

Volunteers took the museum's traveling exhibits to schools, libraries and the Historical Society, not just to provide hands-on experiences for children, but to raise awareness about the importance of play.

"Play is disappearing from even early childhood classrooms," Storm said. "Recess is being reduced throughout the day. Tulsa is so family focused, yet we didn't have a children's museum."

Stump and Storm said that from the beginning, everyone wanted the museum to be successful—a journey that took years of ongoing research.

"It's not just a play place," Storm said. "We wanted it to be founded in the best educational practices from early childhood and up."

They sought input from community leaders about Tulsa's strengths and weaknesses. They talked to people at the YMCA and the Tulsa Library system, not wanting to duplicate services.

"Our board was not just mission-driven, but vision-driven," Storm said. "We recognized that Tulsa is pretty segregated. We wanted to bring discovery and play, but we also wanted to bring children and families together, to create a place to have engagement with other children, a place to literally connect with children and other families."

As plans progressed, the board hired Ray Vandiver from a museum in Oregon as executive director, and he continues in that role.

A year later, after searching for an ideal spot, the Owen Park facility opened. The board saw it as a hub that would draw visitors from all parts of the city, fitting their vision of being accessible to all Tulsans. The museum, through supporters and generous donations, provided experiences for children in Title 1 schools, offering fieldtrips and hands-on classroom learning experiences. That mission will continue at the new location.

Owen Park also allowed the museum to grow slowly. "A children's museum should be what the community wants," Storm said. "We got our feet wet at Owen Park."

Staying focused on the mission to provide a safe, educational environment for children to explore, the board hired a national consultant months before opening the Owen Park facility.

"That's where the tape tunnel came from," Stump said. "A funder said, 'Nobody will want to play in those tape tunnels.'" Meant to be temporary, the tape tunnel was so popular that it remained at Owen Park and will be part of the new location as well.

As the Owen Park recreation center was transformed, board members and community volunteers helped with painting, cleaning and refurbishing. Vandiver turned out to be more than an experienced director; he was a hands-on worker, pitching in where needed.

"When he was a kid, Ray wanted to be an astronaut or a plumber," Stump laughed. "He has a Ph.D. in physics and has a knack for construction. When the splash pad toilets wouldn't flush, Ray and I would put a bucket of water in them. When we rented exhibits, they came in large crates. We had to store them in my garage, which taught us that we would need storage in the new location."

Anne Mannell, a founding board member who is currently Discovery Lab's director of organizational development, said that it quickly became clear that Tulsans needed a larger museum than the Owen Park building, which had twice the number of children and families visit than had been projected.

"Owen Park would not be large enough to meet the demand for that type of programming," she said. "It was always meant to be a temporary space."

"It was a bit of a 'test kitchen' where we could prototype and test ideas with the community for an eventual permanent site," Vandiver said. "The experiment was definitely a success as evidenced by the incredible support our capital campaign received."

The George Kaiser Family Foundation gave a gift of land within Gathering Place to Discovery Lab, providing a permanent home for the new museum.

"We are planning for a soft opening towards mid-December and are projecting 300,000 visitors in the first year," Mannell said.

Those visitors can expect to see seven galleries and "three high facilitation areas ranging from a water area to an interactive projected reality experience. There is something along the entire continuum of technology," Mannell said.

In the early days, Stump said she had visions of her 3-year-old daughter playing in the museum. That child is now 16. "It took a lot longer than we thought," she said. "It's one of the things I'm most proud of outside of my family. I want to thank everyone who visited, completed a survey, volunteered…everybody built it."

"It's been a family and community affair," Storm added. "It's a dream come true. What a beautiful way to impact our community. It's a gift we've all been given." TK

A WORD ABOUT THE BUILDING



KKT ARCHITECT'S RENDERING OF DISCOVERY LAB

A children's museum must be planned with children in mind. We asked Sarah Gould, AIA, president and CEO, and Jim Boulware, AIA, principal with KKT Architecture\Interiors\Engineering to answer a few questions about what went in to designing the new Discovery Lab building.

Q: In planning a children's museum, what were the main considerations regarding the look and feel of the building as well as the practical aspects?

A: The building design was driven by function and context. To understand the function, we looked at the way that kids and adults would move through the building and the experiences they would have along the way. Hundreds of kids will be flowing through the building at any given time, so we spent a lot of time studying pathways, site lines and flow.

The heart and soul of the Discovery Lab are the exhibits, and the heart of the building is a container for that experience. So, starting there, we designed a large, open, 2-story clear-span exhibit hall four times larger than the Owen Park facility. Because the exhibits are not meant to be permanent, we had to ensure that the building infrastructure will allow exhibits to be easily modified, added to, removed and replaced. An onsite fabrication shop will provide them the space and tools to experiment and create new experiences for the customers.

Flexibility was important for the classroom spaces as well. We needed to ensure that the classrooms provided appropriate acoustics and functionality whether serving a group of 10, or an entire grade level filling all five classrooms.

KKT loves designing spaces for kids! While we pay special attention to things like durability, cleanability, tactile experiences and acoustic control, the best part is that kids don't come in with any preconceived expectations, so we can really let our imagination run wild. We hope that by providing new experiences and surroundings, we can help broaden kids' perspective of their surroundings, and see that anything is possible.


RAIDEN ENJOYS BEING ONE OF THE FIRST KIDS ON THE NEW TAPE TUNNEL AT DISCOVERY LAB.

Q: What do you think will be the architectural elements that visitors will notice about the building?

A: Hopefully, they notice something new every time they visit! We hoped they would take a minute to explore and discover things about the building that might not be visible at a distance, might appear differently from a different perspective, or at a different time of day or year. In the beginning, we asked, "When do we want the museum experience to begin?" We were in this incredible park, so why not start when you enter the Gathering Place? There's always something new and different to discover each time you visit Gathering Place.

Q: Since so many people will be using the Discovery Lab, what safety elements did you incorporate into designing the building?

A: Safety was on our mind throughout the entire design process. Not only did we want to meet or exceed all standards of safety, we also spent a lot of time studying how to accommodate the many different groups that would be using the space to create an environment that is accommodating to a wide range of group sizes, ages and physical capabilities.

Q: Those bricks! Tell us about the interesting and unusual brick configuration used on the outside of the building.

A: One of the design goals behind the Discovery Lab's exhibits is to find new and unique uses for ordinary materials (like suspended tunnels made of packing tape!). So, when budget moved us away from the materials of the other buildings at Gathering Place, we explored ways to do something unique with brick and eventually landed on a solution that reduced cost and fit the image and concepts behind the Discovery Lab.

Conceptually, we envisioned a 4-dimensional expression to create an undulating façade design that would appear to change depending on your perspective and the constantly changing shadow patterns.

At this point, we are pretty obsessed with bricks…. Sarah actually gave Jim a box of toy miniature bricks for Christmas while in schematic design. She might have been initially joking, but Jim definitely enjoyed messing around with the bricks, and ultimately realized he could make a template out of cardboard, and stack the bricks against it, then raised the next course (row), and then the next and continued to stack and explore. That little brick model is how we explained the exterior concept to Discovery Lab….and it's the same method the masons actually used to construct it (although not miniature)!

Q: OK, let's talk about the tape tunnels.

A: The tape tunnels are engineered! KKT's Director of Structural Engineering, Jim Guerin, works with the Discovery Lab exhibits and fabrication team to design and engineer the packing tape pattern to create the tunnels. He is currently working with their team on the new tape tunnels for this location, and it actually takes an effort from a team of 8-10 people to create (and re-create) those tunnels multiple times throughout the year.



STORYTIMES AND OTHER EVENTS ARE BACK IN-PERSON AT TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY! TULSALIBRARY.ORG/EVENTS

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

[FREE, W] = FREE, WEEKLY
[W] = WEEKLY

December 1 Wednesday

TAKE-HOME CRAFT: ORIGAMI HOLIDAY CARDS [FREE]

Pick up a free holiday card kit, while supplies last. For ages 10–18. Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St., 9 a.m.-9 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

WINTER ARTS AND CRAFTS [FREE]

Stop in with the little ones for winter-themed arts and crafts, perfect for handing out during the holidays! For toddlers and preschoolers. Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., 11 a.m.–12 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 2 Thursday

THURSDAY MORNING TINY TOTS [W]

Skate, play, ride and jump! For kids ages 6 and under. Wheels and Thrills, 10637 N. Garnett Rd., Owasso, 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m. wheelsandthrills.com

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BILINGUAL/CUENTOS BILINGÜES [FREE]

Enjoy stories, songs and activities in English and Spanish. / Cuentos, canciones y actividades en inglés y español. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., 11–11:30 a.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 3 Friday

VISIT THE STUDIO AT AHHA TULSA [ONGOING]

Use plastic embroidery to make a delicate snowflake or create a collage with winter-themed materials. ahha Tulsa, 101 E. Archer St., 12–9 p.m. ahhatulsa.org

FIRST FRIDAY DRAWING RALLY

Artists will draw live, and participants have the opportunity to bid on their favorite works. Living Arts of Tulsa, 307 E. Reconciliation Way, 6-9 p.m. livingarts.org

December 4 Saturday

OPEN SWIM AT MILLER SWIM SCHOOL JENKS [W]

Everyone is invited to open swim time at Miller! Just $5 per person, ages 3+. Miller Swim School Jenks, 525 W. 91st St. S., 1:15–3:15 p.m. millerswim-school.com

December 5 Sunday

SENSORY SKATE AT WHEELS AND THRILLS

All the fun of Wheels and Thrills, but with no loud noises or flashing lights. The arcade and laser tag with also be suspended. Wheels and Thrills, 10637 N. Garnett Rd., Owasso, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. wheelsandthrills.com

ORU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAME

Watch the ORU Women's Basketball Team play USAO! Kids ages 13 and under get in free when accompanied by an adult. Mabee Center, 7777 S. Lewis Ave., 2:30 p.m. oruathletics.com

December 6 Monday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY—HOLIDAY PAJAMA STORYTIME! [FREE]

Bring the whole family for this storytime geared toward ages 0 to 5! Children may wear holiday pajamas or bring their favorite stuffed animal to this winter-themed storytime! Central Library, 400 Civic Center, 6–6:30 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 7 Tuesday

CREATIVE WRITING PARTY/ FIESTA DE ESCRITURA CREATIVA [FREE]

Shake the dust off your brain and warm up your writing fingers at the Creative Writing Party! There will be a variety of writing and storytelling games and activities you can move through at your own pace. Registration is required and limited. Register at tulsalibrary.org/events. For ages 10–18. Martin Regional Library, 2601 S. Garnett Rd., 6–7 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

NOS APOYAMOS! [FREE]

For Spanish-speaking parents of children with developmental disabilities. For more information, contact Hannah Chaboya at TARC, at 918.582.8272. Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma, 2450 N. Harvard Ave., 6–7:30 p.m. thearcok.org

December 8 Wednesday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY [FREE]

Bring the whole family for this 0-to-5 storytime! There's something for everyone – simple songs and books for the little ones, more interactive stories and activities for your older children. Owasso Library, 103 W. Broadway St., Owasso, 10–10:30 a.m. Repeats Dec. 1 and 15. tulsalibrary.org

CLAY DAY

It's the one day of the month you can play with air-dry clay in The STUDIO at ahha Tulsa, 101 E. Archer St., 12–9 p.m. ahhatulsa.org

SCI-FI & FANTASY BOOK CLUB [FREE]

Join on Zoom to discuss "Long Way Down" by Jason Reynolds. Contact rebecca.mcwilliams@tulsalibrary.org for the Zoom link. For ages 16 and up. 6–7 p.m.

December 9 Thursday

KIDS CONNECTION [FREE]

This is a social group designed for children, grades K–5, with high-functioning autism For more information, contact Sherilyn Walton or Steve Pitts at 918.582.8272. Tulsa Arc, 2516 E. 71st St. A, 4:30–5:30 p.m. thearcok.org

December 10 Friday

ORU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAME

Watch the ORU Women's Basketball Team play Central Christian! Kids ages 13 and under get in free when accompanied by an adult. Mabee Center, 7777 S. Lewis Ave., 11 a.m. oruathletics.com

GAMING FOR TEENS [FREE]

Play party games, trivia and more! Registration is required. Register at tulsalibrary.org/events to receive a Zoom link. For ages 10–18. 5–6 p.m.

December 11 Saturday

OU VS. ARKANSAS MEN'S BASKETBALL

Cheer for OU as they play Arkansas at the BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave., 12:30 p.m. bokcenter.com

3D CHRISTMAS CARDS AND COASTER MAKING [FREE]

Make 3D Christmas cards and fabric coasters for gifts using glitter, glue and tiny bells. Registration is required. Call 918.549.7323 to register. For ages 10-18. Glenpool Library, 730 E. 141st St., Glenpool, 1–2 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 12 Sunday

Visit **tulsakids.com/calendar** for more family-friendly events!

December 13 Monday

ELL CONVERSATION CIRCLES [FREE]

Practice your English speaking and listening skills in this fun and friendly class. Contact the Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service at 918.549.7400 or literacy@tulsalibrary.org to register and receive a Zoom link. For adults. 1–3 p.m. Repeats Dec. 6. Additional dates/times available. tulsalibrary.org

IN THE MIDDLE: TWEEN BOOK CLUB [FREE]

Does your tween enjoy cooking shows or concocting treats in the kitchen? They may enjoy "A Place at the Table" by Saadia Faruqi! Join for snacks, a discussion and a fun activity based on the featured book. South Broken Arrow Library, 3600 S. Chestnut Ave., Broken Arrow, 6:30-7:30 p.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 14 Tuesday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY—EARLY EDITION! [FREE]

Bring the whole family for this 0-to-5 storytime! Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Pl., 9:30–10 a.m. Repeats Dec. 7. tulsalibrary.org

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY [FREE]

Bring the whole family for this 0-to-5 storytime! Owasso Library, 103 W. Broadway St., Owasso, 10–10:30 a.m. Repeats Dec. 7. tulsalibrary.org

CREATIVE WRITING PARTY/ FIESTA DE ESCRITURA CREATIVA [FREE]

Shake the dust off your brain and warm up your writing fingers at the Creative Writing Party! There will be a variety of writing and storytelling games and activities you can move through at your own pace. Registration is required. Register at tulsalibrary.org/events. For ages 10–18. Central Library, 400 Civic Center, 6–7 p.m. tulsalibrary.org



FOLLOW @DISCOVERYLABTULSA ON FACEBOOK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR GRAND OPENING AT GATHERING PLACE!

December 15 Wednesday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: PRESCHOOL [FREE]

The best in children's literature, songs, games, and other reading-related activities. Attendance is limited to 25. Brookside Library, 1207 E. 45th Pl., 10:15–10:45 a.m. Repeats Dec. 1 and 15. tulsalibrary.org

December 16 Thursday

FOOD ON THE MOVE COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY [FREE]

Food on the Move's Community Block Parties offer fresh, pay-as-you-can produce and resources from community partners as well as a DJ, food trucks and other fun activities. TCC Northeast Campus, 3727 E. Apache St., 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. foodonthemoveok.com

MISTAKES TO MASTERPIECES: FAMILY-FRIENDLY PAINT-ALONG [FREE]

Learn how to make an original acrylic painting, step-by-step. Register at tulsalibrary.org/events for Zoom link. For age 5 to adult. 5–6:30 p.m.

ORU MEN'S BASKETBALL GAME

Watch the ORU Men's Basketball Team play UT Arlington! Kids ages 13 and under get in free when accompanied by an adult. Mabee Center, 7777 S. Lewis Ave., 7 p.m. oruathletics.com

December 17 Friday

OUT-LIT: YA BOOK CLUB [FREE]

Join in reading "Spell Hacker" by M.K. England. Book Club guests will discuss the book and have an activity to go along with it. Join either in-person or virtually. Register at tulsalibrary.org/events for the Zoom link. For ages 10-18. South Broken Arrow Library, 3600 S. Chestnut Ave., 4:30–5:30 p.m.

December 18 Saturday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BABIES & TODDLERS [FREE]

This beginning storytime with Ms. Tiffany will focus on helping your baby or toddler develop important literacy skills while emphasizing the fun of reading. Suburban Acres Library, 4606 N. Garrison Ave., 1–2 p.m. Repeats Dec. 11. tulsalibrary.org

FULL COLD MOON WALK

Hike beneath the beautiful full moon at Oxley Nature Center. $3 for Oxley Nature Center members, $5 for non-members. Registration required by 4:30 p.m. two days before the walk. Oxley Nature Center, 6700 Mohawk Blvd., 7–8:30 p.m. oxleynaturecenter.org

December 19 Sunday

STUDIO SUNDAY

Learn how to make faux stained glass and tissue paper candle holders in The STUDIO at ahha Tulsa, 101 E. Archer St., 1–5 p.m. ahhatulsa.org



THE WATER IS WARM YEAR-ROUND AT MILLER SWIM SCHOOL! CHECK MILLERSWIMSCHOOL.COM FOR DETAILS ABOUT SPECIAL HOLIDAY EDITION FAMILY SWIM TIMES. PHOTO COURTESY OF MILLER SWIM SCHOOL

December 20 Monday

BUILD A READER STORYTIME: PRESCHOOL [FREE]

The best in children's literature, songs, games and other reading-related activities are shared with your pre-schooler. Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway Ave., 10:30–10:55 a.m. tulsalibrary.org

December 21 Tuesday

FOOD ON THE MOVE COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY [FREE]

Food on the Move's Community Block Parties offer fresh, pay-as-you-can produce and resources from community partners as well as a DJ, food trucks and other fun activities. Greenwood Cultural Center, 322 N. Greenwood Ave., 5:30–7:30 p.m. foodonthemoveok.com

December 22 Wednesday

TEEN CONNECTION [FREE]

This is a social group for middle and high school students with high functioning autism. For more information, contact Sherilyn Walton or Steve Pitts at 918.582.8272. Tulsa Arc, 2516 E. 71st St. A, 4:30–6 p.m. thearcok.org

December 23 Thursday

G.R.O.W. MOBILE LIBRARY [FREE, W]

GROW Saturdays kick off with a themed story time and literacy tips from Early Learning Works. Plus, all ages can enjoy literacy-based activities and crafts. Gathering Place, 2600 S. Riverside Dr., 9:30–11:30 a.m. gatheringplace.org

December 24 Friday

Find more events at **tulsakids.com/holiday**!

December 25 Saturday

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM TULSAKIDS!

December 26 Sunday

HOLIDAY EDITION FAMILY SWIM

Looking for something fun to do the day after Christmas? Swim with the family at Miller Swim School, 6415 S. Mingo Rd., 4–6 p.m. millerswimschool.com

December 27 Monday

HOLIDAY EDITION FAMILY SWIM

The water is warm year-round at Miller Swim School, and they've added several Open Swim sessions over Winter Break. Miller Swim School Jenks, 525 W. 91st St., 10 a.m.–12 p.m. millerswimschool.com

December 28 Tuesday

YOGA FOR EVERY BODY [FREE]

Join TCCL for a free beginner-friendly yoga class taught by certified yoga instructor Beth Richmond. Registration is limited and required. Register at www.tulsalibrary.org/events. For adults. Central Library, 400 Civic Center, 6–7 p.m. Repeats Dec. 7 and 14.

December 29 Wednesday

KWANZAA CRAFT KITS [FREE]

Pick up a Kwanzaa craft kit and a FREE book! Create at the library or take the kit home. Available while supplies last. Rudisill Regional Library, 1520 N. Hartford Ave., Dec. 26–31. tulsalibrary.org

December 30 Thursday

STORY TIME AT ELEANOR'S BOOKSHOP [FREE, W]

Enjoy story time each day (excluding Mondays) at Eleanor's Bookshop, 1102 S. Lewis Ave., Suite D, 11:30 a.m. eleanorsbookshop.com

December 31 Friday

HOLIDAY EDITION FAMILY SWIM

End the year with a fun and invigorating swim at Miller Swim School Jenks, 525 W. 91st St., 12–2 p.m. millerswimschool.com

WILL ROGERS MOVIE NIGHT [FREE]

Watch Life Begins at 40, starring Will Rogers. Free admission, popcorn and water. New Year's Eve Party following. Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore 7 p.m. willrogers.com



Photo courtesy of Cascia Hall

HOLIDAY FAMILY FUN GUIDE

SPONSORED BY

VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



Photo courtesy of Philbrook Museum of Art

Find more festive fun at **tulsakids.com/holiday**.



Photo courtesy of Tulsa Botanic Garden

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

WILL ROGERS COUNTRY CHRISTMAS

When: Friday–Saturday, December 3–4, 5–9 p.m.

Where: Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, 9501 E. 380 Rd., Oologah

Enjoy pictures with Santa, storytelling, crafts, 19th-century games, carriage rides and much more. Fun for the whole family! Free admission. **willrogers.com**

TSHA'S DEAF/HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY

When: December 4, 12–2 p.m.

Where: Asbury United Methodist Church, 6767 S. Mingo Rd.

TSHA's party is a time when kids with hearing loss can go and talk to a deaf Santa. The party is for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired and hearing children of deaf adults as well as their families. Enjoy refreshments, games, crafts, prizes, AND a stocking filled with goodies! Email **demerson@tsha.cc** for more information. **tsha.cc**

KWANZAA CELEBRATION: CELEBRATING REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

When: December 26, 5–6:30 p.m.

Where: Virtual

Join the African-American Resource Center virtually to explore the seven principles of Kwanzaa through dance, song and spoken word.

Join here: **m.facebook.com/tulsalibrary/** and **facebook.com/TulsaLibraryAARC/**. For all ages.

CHRISTMAS PARADES

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 3, 7 p.m.

Where: Sand Springs, OK

facebook.com/sandsprings.ok

DRIVE-THRU CLAREMORE CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 4, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Rogers State University, 1701 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore

visitclaremore.org

SAPULPA CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 4, 6–9 p.m.

Where: Sapulpa, OK

sapulpachamber.com

OWASSO CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 11, 9–10 a.m.

Where: SmithFarm MarketPlace, 9002 N. 121st E. Ave., Owasso

cityofowasso.com

TULSA CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 11, 11 a.m.

Where: Downtown Tulsa

tulsachristmasparade.org

CATOOSA CHRISTMAS PARADE

When: December 11, 2 p.m.

Where: Catoosa, OK

catoosachamber.org









Photos courtesy of Philbrook Museum of Art

FESTIVE FESTIVALS

BA ICE RINK

When: Open November 12–January 3. Open Monday–Thursday, 3–9 p.m.; Friday, 3–10 p.m.; Saturday, 12–10 p.m.; Sunday, 12–9 p.m. Also open special hours over the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Where: Rose District, Broken Arrow

Enjoy ice skating in Broken Arrow's Rose District! Leave time for some district shopping afterwards! **baicerink.com**

ARVEST WINTERFEST

When: November 19–January 3

Where: Outside BOK Center, 200 S. Denver Ave.

Skate beneath the Tulsa skyline! Don't miss Sundays with Santa on December 5, 12 and 19, 2–4 p.m., and ride the Winterfest Express Fueled by Fox23 every Saturday from 12–3 p.m.! Visit their website for a daily schedule. **tulsawinterfest.com**

PHILBROOK FESTIVAL

When: November 26–27, December 2–4, 9–11, 16–18, 23 and 24, 5:30–9:30 p.m.

Where: Philbrook Museum of Art, 2727 S. Rockford Rd.

Philbrook Festival returns with all of your favorites: thousands of holiday lights and a spectacular musical light show, holiday shopping, the LEGO Village, visits with Santa, and more. Festival Nights are special ticketed event nights and require advance, timed tickets. Philbrook will also offer special festival activities daily throughout the holiday season during regular business hours. **philbrook.org**

GARDEN OF LIGHTS

When: Thursdays through Sundays, November 26–January 2, 5–9 p.m.; Also open December 20–22, 27–29 (Closed December 24 and 25)

Where: Tulsa Botanic Garden, 3900 Tulsa Botanic Dr.

Reconnect with family and friends in the garden illuminated with colorful lights. Make s'mores over fire pits, enjoy holiday music and take in the spirit of the season in a magical garden escape. Advance tickets required. **tulsabotanic.org**

WINTER WONDERLAND PRESENTED BY AMERICAN AIRLINES

When: December 17–26

Where: Gathering Place, 2650 S. John Williams Way

Gathering Place will once again transform into a Winter Wonderland, spreading holiday cheer with special performances, carolers, festive food, holiday drinks and more. Don't forget to capture a holiday family photo with Santa Claus! **gatheringplace.org**

FIND THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS TREE

CASCIA HALL'S MIDTOWN CHRISTMAS TREE LOT

When: November 26, 5–7 p.m.; November 27, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.; November 28, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.; December 3, 4–7 p.m.; December 4, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.

Where: Cascia Hall, 2520 S. Yorktown Ave. (enter off S. Utica Ave.)

Cascia Hall's Christmas Tree Lot, presented by Vast.bank, will feature over 200 Fraser fir trees for purchase as well as noble fir wreaths for sale. The tree lot will also feature a Santa's Village that will have fun activities, including Elf on the Shelf Scavenger Hunt, Kids' Christmas Train, lawn games, arts and crafts, photo staging areas and more. Don't miss Family Food Truck Night featuring food trucks from Brownies, Andollini's, and Joel's Tacos on Friday, December 4 from 5–7 p.m. **casciahall.com/cascia-christmas-walk**

OWASSO CHRISTMAS TREE AND BLACKBERRY FARM

When: Open November 20–December 23; Open Monday through Friday, 1–7 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday, 9 a.m.–7 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving Day; Open 9 a.m.–7 p.m. Friday, November 26.

Where: 11039 N 129th East Ave. in Owasso

The Owasso Tree and Berry Farm is a great place to find your special holiday tree. Whether you choose to cut your own or purchase a pre-cut tree, it is sure to be a tradition to cherish. There is also a gift shop with everything you need to decorate your tree, as well as complimentary hayrides, cider and candy canes! **owassotreefarm.com**

PLEASANT VALLEY FARMS

When: Opens November 26; Hours: Monday through Thursday, 12–6 p.m.; Friday through Sunday, 9 a.m.–7 p.m.

Where: 22350 W. 71st S., Sand Springs

Pleasant Valley Farm offers expertly trimmed, Virginia Pine Christmas Trees, which you can cut yourself or with the help of a Pleasant Valley woodsman. Pre-cut trees and holiday decor are also available. Complete your experience with complimentary warm beverages and a hayride! Plus, Santa visits every Saturday and Sunday from 2–6 p.m. **pleasantvalleyfarmsok.com**





Photo courtesy of Tulsa Glassblowing School

HOLIDAY MARKETS

TULSA GLASSBLOWING SCHOOL'S HOLIDAY SALE

When: November 30–December 4

Where: Tulsa Glassblowing School, 7440 E. 7th St.

Mark your calendar for Tulsa Glassblowing School's Holiday Sale, featuring one-of-a-kind, holiday-themed and unique gift items. Appointments are recommended. Call 918.582.4527 to reserve your spot! **tulsaglassblowing.org**

CHRISTKINDLMARKT

When: December 3–5, 2021

Where: GAST Event Center, 2301 E. 15th St.

Purchase traditional German treats and gift items, like Nutcrackers, Smoker-männle, ornaments and Stollen. GAST Center is transformed into a Christmas wonderland, which includes many crafters displaying their wares. **gastulsa.org**

CAROLS & CRUMPETS

When: Saturday, Dec. 4, 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

Where: Tulsa Garden Center, 2435 S. Peoria Ave.

Tulsa Herb Society's herbal craft fair features homemade herbal jams and vinegars, Christmas ornaments, dryer balls, folding cards, fresh greenery and more. The Snowflake Café will be open from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. for lunch. No reservations needed. **tulsagardencenter.org**

THE CENTER'S HOLIDAY MART!

When: December 4, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Where: The Center for Individuals with Physical Challenges, Hardesty Family Adaptive Sports Complex, 815 S. Utica Ave.

Shop for holiday decorations, jewelry, knitted and crocheted items, mosaics, paintings, stained glass and more, created by CENTER members. Masks are required in THE CENTER. **tulsacenter.org**

BIXBY HOLIDAY ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

When: Saturday, December 4, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Where: Bixby Community Center, 211 N. Cabaniss Ave., Bixby

Keep it local and finish up your holiday gift shopping! Free admission + door prizes. **www2.tulsacounty.org/parks**

LAFORTUNE PARK HOLIDAY CRAFT BAZAAR

When: Saturday, December 4, 2021, 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Where: LaFortune Park Community Center, 5202 S. Hudson Ave.

Browse homemade items, decorations, scarves, jewelry, and other unique treasures for your holiday shopping list from quality vendors. No admission fee. **www2.tulsacounty.org/parks**

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ALL THAT GLITTERS & GLOWS:

THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN TULSA

Note: Check out our Festive Festivals page for even more glorious light displays!

RHEMA LIGHTS

When: November 24–January 1, 5:30–11:30 p.m.

Where: Rhema Bible Church, 1025 W. Kenosha St., Broken Arrow

More than two million lights adorn the Rhema campus, including a 22-foot Christmas tree! Admission is free; donations accepted. **rhemalights.org**

CASTLE CHRISTMAS

When: November 25–December 31, 5:30–10 p.m.

Where: The Castle of Muskogee, 3400 W. Fern Mountain Rd., Muskogee

Drive through Castleton Village, filled with over 2,000 holiday displays and thousands of colorful lights, creating an unforgettable experience. Drive-through is free; donations accepted. Other activities, including visits with Father Christmas a cafe, train rides through the village, and more, are available certain days for an additional fee. Learn more at **okcastle.com**.

GARDEN OF LIGHTS AT HONOR HEIGHTS PARK

When: Thanksgiving through New Year's Day. Gates open daily at 5:30 p.m.

Where: 1400 Honor Heights Dr., Muskogee

Celebrate the holidays and experience animated displays with more than 1,000,000 LED shimmering lights at Muskogee's Annual Garden of Lights, an attraction for the whole family to enjoy.

facebook.com/muskogeeparksandtrails

WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS

When: Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, November 26–December 19, 5–9 p.m.

Where: Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve, 1925 Woolaroc Ranch Rd., Bartlesville

The grounds and buildings of Woolaroc will be covered with over 750,000 lights as the historic ranch transforms itself into a magical winter wonderland! Entertainment will be in the Heritage Theater almost every Friday and Saturday night. Admission is $6 for adults and $1 for children 11 and under. **woolaroc.org**

HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS!



SANTA AT WOODLAND HILLS MALL

When: November 19-December 24,

Where: Woodland Hills Mall, 7021 S. Memorial Dr.

Santa returns to Woodland Hills Mall, with safety precautions in place. Reserve your time slot to visit Santa by visiting simonsanta.com. Don't miss Caring Santa on December 12 from 9–11 a.m.

SANTA AT UTICA SQUARE

When: Through December 24; See **uticasquare.com** for hours

Where: Utica Square, 21st and Utica Ave.

Visit Santa at Utica Square! After your visit, walk around the square to find all of the moving Nutcracker dioramas! **uticasquare.com**

PICTURES WITH SANTA AT THE WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

When: Saturday, Dec. 4 and 11, 2021, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

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

Visit Santa at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum! Children are invited to write letters to Santa and have it sent directly to the North Pole! **willrogers.com**

VISIT FROM SANTA CLAUS

When: Friday, December 10, 4–5 p.m.

Where: Bixby Community Center, 211 N. Cabaniss Ave.

Cookies and punch with the big guy in red! Ages 0–12. **www2.tulsacounty.org/parks**

DONUTS WITH SANTA!

When: Saturday, Dec. 11, 10–11:30 a.m.

Where: LaFortune Park, 5202 S. Hudson Ave.

Join Tulsa County Parks for donuts and milk with the jolliest guy around! Ages: 0–12, no admission fee. **www2.tulsacounty.org/parks**

COOKIES & MILK WITH SANTA

When: Saturday, Dec. 11, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

Where: O'Brien Park, 6149 N. Lewis Ave.

Join Tulsa County Parks for games, snacks and a visit from Santa! Ages 0–12, FREE. **www2.tulsacounty.org/parks**



Photo courtesy of Tulsa Ballet

SEASONAL SHOWTIMES

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

When: December 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11 at 7:30 p.m. and December 5 and 12 at 2 p.m.

Where: Clark Youth Theatre, 4825 S. Quaker Ave.

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

THE POLAR EXPRESS™ IN CONCERT WITH THE TULSA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

When: December 4, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

Experience the magic of The Polar Express, accompanied by live symphony orchestra! **tulsasymphony.org**



Photo courtesy of Tulsa Symphony

TULSA BALLET'S "THE NUTCRACKER"

When: December 10–19, various showtimes

Where: Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

This beloved holiday tradition is back in 2021, with brand-new choreography and spectacular new sets and costumes! **tulsaballet.org**

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL" PRESENTED BY AMERICAN THEATRE COMPANY

When: December 10–23, Various Showtimes

Where: Tulsa PAC, 110 E. 2nd St.

No humbugs here! This musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved tale is sure to delight the whole family!. **americantheatrecompany.org**

"THE ELF ON THE SHELF: A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL"

When: December 12, 2 and 6 p.m.

Where: Tulsa Theater, 105 E. Reconciliation Way

If your family enjoys The Elf on the Shelf, don't miss this live performance that gives audience members a glimpse into the lives of Scout Elves. **tulsatheater.com**

"RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER: THE MUSICAL"

When: December 16, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Broken Arrow Performing Arts Center, 701 S. Main St., Broken Arrow

This is a stage adaptation of the classic Christmas film, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," featuring all your favorite characters like Rudolph, Yukon Cornelius, Hermey the Elf and the Abominable Snow Monster! **brokenarrowpac.com**

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3123 South Riverside Drive
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I'M A TULSA KID

BY SHEEBA ATIQI

LAYA KOTIHAL: SCHOLASTIC KID REPORTER

The award-winning Scholastic Kids Press program allows kid reporters to cover politics, entertainment, the environment, sports and their hometowns. The Scholastic Kids Press is "news for kids, by kids!" Tulsa's own Laya Kotihal, a fifth-grade student at University School, has been given the honor to be one of Scholastic's Kid Reporters. Laya's articles can be found online at the Scholastic Kids Press website or Scholastic Magazines+ ; these stories will reach more than 25 million readers in classrooms across the nation!

TK: What is the Scholastic Kids Press program? How were you selected?

Laya: The Scholastic Kids Press program gives kids ages 10–14 from across the country and around the world a chance to write about current events and learn more about the art of journalism.

To apply for the program, I went online, where I entered some basic information about myself, provided a sample article I wrote about a topic in my community, and an essay explaining why I would like to join Scholastic Kids Press. After my application was submitted, it was reviewed and selected as one of the 36 kids chosen to be part of this program.

TK: Who are some of the memorable people you have interviewed?

Laya: Some of the memorable people I have interviewed include Rabbi Kaiman from Congregation B'nai Emunah, Deacon Hamel from Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma, and Tung Nguyen, a former Vietnamese refugee.

TK: What is your favorite interview?

Laya: I think my favorite interview was with Rabbi Kaiman. This was because I got more in-depth and bigger answers, and it was in-person. It was fun, too.

TK: What made you start writing? How long have you been writing?

Laya: In fourth grade, my creative writing teacher, Mrs. Lindsey, told us we would be writing a bunch of creative stories, and that we would make them into a book. I think that assignment was a little spark in getting me to apply to the Scholastic Kids Press program. I have been writing short stories for fun for a while, but I only started journalism through Scholastic Kids Press about a month or two ago.

TK: Where have you been published?

Laya: I wrote creative writing stories at school, but technically it wasn't officially "published." All Kids Press stories will appear online at www.scholastic.com/kidspress, and some articles might be featured in issues of Scholastic Magazines+, which reach more than 25 million students in classrooms nationwide!

TK: What advice do you have for other children who want to follow your path?

Laya: My advice is: Write your heart out, for that's where the writing starts. Also don't procrastinate—I know this from personal experience!

TK: Who inspires you?

Laya: I think all my teachers, friends and family inspire me because they help me every step of the way and help me grow into a better person.

TK: What do you want to do when you get older?



Laya: To be truthful, I don't know. I don't like to dwell on it because I just get distracted, but I think I would love it to have something to do with science, robotics, or the arts.

TK: What other hobbies do you have?

Laya: I do a lot of arts, and I play the piano, volleyball, soccer and basketball for fun. I'm also in a robotics club at school.

TK: What is a fun fact about you?

Laya: I'm a big Harry Potter and Percy Jackson nerd. I love Japanese culture, and I love robotics.

To learn more or to read Laya's articles, go to scholastic.com/kidspress; Twitter: twitter.com/KidsPress; Instagram: instagram.com/kidspress





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