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FILM review

By Jack Kyser

DC League of Super-Pets

Read online at: www.austinfamily.com/films



This month's cover kid, Cole, is 11 years old and a sports fanatic. Two years ago, he started his own company. This summer, he is teaching himself to play piano. Photo by Karen Andrews at Jordan Ashley Photography.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

Lucksinger is a mom of two and author of the guidebook and app "Exploring Austin With Kids."

August has always felt to me like riding a long, slow wave where summer days gradually flow into fall. Although it will be a couple more months before you can tell from the weather, fall is coming!

This is the time when summer activities begin to wane and items on the bucket list are either checked off or stored away for next year. Excitement builds as back-to-school activities pop up: school supply and clothes shopping, play dates with classmates, getting schedules and meet-the-teacher nights.

This month's issue reflects this change in seasons too. We have great ideas for

backyard water activities to keep your kiddos cool during these last lazy days at home. Our "Austin in Action" section shares final events in summer series. The event calendar also highlights summer fun activities that shift to back-to-school bashes and celebrations by mid-month.

Does your child get butterflies in her stomach at the thought of school? This month's feature shares expert tips for relieving back-to-school anxiety. Parents can return to the classrooms as well ... as volunteers. This month's "The Learning Curve" column offers plenty of ways you can engage in your children's schools and support their teachers.

Live it up these last days of summer, Austin – and have an amazing start to your school year.

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Austin IN ACTION

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Teen Leaders

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB MACC) celebrated the fifth anniversary of their Teen Leadership Program, Caminos (“pathways”). Graduates of the 2022 program celebrated several accomplishments over the past year. Highlights include the comic books and zines they presented at the Mexican American Comic Con in November, the Latinx Youth Wellness Conference they produced in February, a presentation at SXSW EDU in March and an art exhibit chronicling five years of teen programming in April. Congrats to Amy, Edan, Paola, Lluvia, Greylen, Onyx, Juan, Emma and Sol!

Over half of this year’s graduates plan to continue working at the ESB MACC in different capacities, from graphic designers and event assistants to mentors for the 2023 class of Caminos teens, who are currently being interviewed.



Graduates of the 2022 Caminos program. Photo courtesy of ESB MACC.

Grand Opening

Austin PBS recently moved from their original home on the University of Texas at Austin campus to a new space at the Austin Community College (ACC) Highland campus. The public is invited to attend a grand-opening celebration on Saturday, August 27, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Among the celebrity guests will be Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittykat. They will help with “Be Our Neighbor Day” activities in honor of their new neighbors at ACC, the St. John’s Neighborhood and everyone who helps our local community.

Families can experience all that the Austin Media Center has to offer with kid-focused activities (indoors and outdoors), live music performances, interactive learning lounges, food and drink, community dialogues and more PBS Kids characters!



Austin PBS invites the local community to a grand opening celebration of its new home at ACC Highland.

Wild Wednesdays

Wild Wednesdays, presented by Waterloo Greenway in partnership with Families in Nature, feature science, nature and STEM programs to connect kids (ages 5-14) to the natural world. Activities focus on hands-on nature exploration and learning through problem-solving, outdoor play and journaling.

The final Wild Wednesday of the season will take place on August 3 from 10 a.m. to noon. The focus will be on ecology. Families are invited to come explore the ecological diversity and restoration of Waterloo Park and Waller Creek. Free and open to the public.

Volunteer Opportunity

Does your family enjoy the summer tradition of the Zilker Hillside Theatre?

Things To Do This August

August 5-7

Tax-free School Supply Shopping

August 6

Back-to-School Celebrations
Austin ISD
Round Rock ISD

Here’s your chance to see a great show and help out at the same time.

Austin Allies seeks volunteers to help set up the VIP area prior to the performances of Disney’s “Newsies” on August 4, 5, 6 and 11. At intermission, volunteers will assist in tearing down and cleaning up the area. This activity is for ages 10 and older. Kids under 16 must be accompanied by a parent.

Benefits of volunteering include a free parking pass and a saved seat to watch the show. For more information, go to austinallies.org/calendar.



Volunteers are needed to set up for Zilker Hillside Theater performances.



Young Scientists

Recently, 3M and Discovery Education announced the finalists of the 2022 3M Young Scientist Challenge, a nationwide middle school science competition. The finalists include Asvini Thivakaran, a student from Cedar Valley Middle School in the Round Rock Independent School District. Congratulations, Asvini!

This year's finalists feature outstanding innovations from fourteen students, ages 12 to 14, who submitted a short video communicating a solution to an everyday problem and the science behind their solution.

Entries were judged on creativity, scientific knowledge and communication effectiveness. The final event will take place in October when each finalist will be evaluated on a series of challenges, including a presentation of their completed innovation.

Book Club

This summer, Austin Allies will be hosting discussions of recently banned and challenged books, in partnership with Book People and Austin Public Library's Banned Camp summer series. Book club meetings are back in person.



"The Breakaways" by Cathy Johnson is August's book of the month. This month's book club will meet at 2 p.m. on August 28 at BookPeople's second floor amphitheater.

Everyone is welcome. First timers are invited to come and check out the club, whether they have read the book or not. For more information about the club and for discounts on book club books, go to austinallies.org/kids-book-club.

by the numbers



27

number of floors in the University of Texas tower
source: tower.utexas.edu/history



2,000+

number of food trucks now in Austin
source: kvue.com



106

number of steps it takes to climb to the top of Mount Bonnell
source: austinot.com

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New Book

Local author and teacher Nicholas Solis has published a new bilingual picture book, "My Town Mi Pueblo," about two cousins from opposite sides of the US/Mexico border who visit each other's towns and delight in their similarities and differences. Each spread features the same scene on each side of the border – one side with one cousin in English and one with the other cousin en español.



Readers get to see how two incredibly vibrant cultures live side-by-side and realize that despite living in separate countries with different languages, both cousins have a world of things in common.

We're Looking for a Few Good Kids ... To Brag On!



If you know of a young person who deserves recognition or a youth group working to positively impact our community, let us hear about it. They just might end up in next month's "Austin in Action" section of Austin Family magazine! Send details and a photo to editor2003@austinfamily.com.

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- Sarah F. (6yrs old)

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Play it product recalls **SAFE**

Government Recalls Activity Toys, Baby Rompers and Plush Books

The Manhattan Toy Company has recalled nearly **4,000 Activity Loops toys** due to the tubes on the toy detaching from the base, which can cause the release of small plastic rings. The rings pose a choking hazard to small children. This recall applies exclusively to toys with model number 215210 and lot codes EAN or FCN (found on the product's base). The Activity Loops were sold at independent specialty stores and online at manhattantoy.com from June 2021 through March 2022 for about \$25. Consumers should stop using the product and return it to Manhattan Toy or the place of purchase for a full refund.



The Children's Place is recalling about **11,000 Baby Boy Dino and Baby Boy Camo rompers**. The metal snaps on the rompers can detach, posing a choking hazard to young children. The sets were sold as two-packs that contained either two blue, short-sleeved rompers or one long sleeve camo romper and a short sleeve grey romper with black sleeves. The Baby Boy Dino Rompers were sold at The Children's Place stores nationwide as well as online at childrensplace.com and amazon.com from January 2022 through June 2022 for about \$25. The Camo Rompers were sold for about \$35. Consumers should return the product to The Children's Place for a full refund.



Scholastic has issued a recall for **185,700 Shake Look Touch Books**. Some versions of this plush book contain pink and green pompoms attached by a string. This recall only applies to books with these pompoms, which can become detached and pose a choking hazard to young children. The plush books were sold at bookstores, specialty shops and big box stores as well as online at barnesandnoble.com, homegoods.com, booksamillion.com and other websites from January 2020 through April 2022 for about \$13. Consumers should immediately remove the pompoms. The book can then safely be used. Consumers can receive a \$10 gift card by registering at recallrtr.com/slt.



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7 SIMPLE WAYS TO REDUCE BACK-TO- SCHOOL ANXIETY



TANNI HAAS

Haas, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Sciences and Disorders at the City University of New York – Brooklyn College.

“When you talk to your kids... let them know that you have confidence in them.”

A lot of kids feel anxious at back-to-school time, after a long summer full of fun. They are often the most anxious when they are about to go to a new school, are going through a transition year from elementary to middle school or middle to high school, or when a best friend has moved away over the summer break. What do you do to make your kids less anxious and more excited about the upcoming school year? Experts agree on the following tips.

Talk to Your Kids About Their Anxieties

If you suspect that your children are experiencing back-to-school anxiety, speak to them about it. Instead of sitting them down for a formal affair, talk about their anxieties as a natural part of your end-of-summer conversations. As Caroline Miller of the Child Mind Institute puts it: "Kids often say more when there's less pressure to 'have a talk.'" Ask open-ended questions that you know will get them to speak, listen carefully to how they respond, and acknowledge their anxieties no matter how exaggerated they may seem.

"When children know they can share their observations or challenges, and their parents will listen," says Dr. Laurie Hollman, a child psychologist, "they go to school with the parents' calm, steady voice in the back of their minds."

Stay Positive and Project Confidence in Them

When you talk to your kids, stay positive and let them know that you have confidence in them. Dr. Kurt Smith, a counseling psychologist, notes that it is your enthusiasm that kids will remember. Focus your conversation on how well everything turned out in previous years, and assure them that you're confident about this year, too. It can be helpful to recount your own back-to-school experiences with anxiety and how you overcame them. "Kids love to hear stories from their parents' childhood," says clinical psychologist Dr. Joan Munson, "because it helps normalize any difficult feelings they're experiencing." She explains that you can also help them normalize their feelings simply by reminding them "that all children have these fears and they're not alone."

Practice School-day Routines

You can help ease your kids' anxieties by having them practice their school-day routines, like waking up in the morning at a specific time, getting dressed, packing the school bag, eating breakfast and traveling to school.

According to Dr. Lynn Bufka, a clinical psychologist, practicing these routines will instill in your kids "a sense of mastery over the situation" and "will help them feel like it's more under their control." Indeed, research shows that kids who prepare in advance for the upcoming school year are less anxious and do better academically.

Engage Them in Role Play

It's helpful to role play the school-related situations that make your kids the most anxious. "The best way to gain mastery over worries," says Katie Hurley, a licensed social worker, "is to practice taking control over worrisome situations." This can be anything from riding the school bus to participating in class discussions. For example, if your child is scared about riding the bus to school, Dr. Munson suggests setting up a "pretend" bus in your living room to practice the experience. If your child is apprehensive to ask the teacher questions, role play different ways to speak up in class.

Arrange Play Dates With Classmates

It's a good idea to arrange play dates with your kids' friends, especially if you know that those friends are likely to be their classmates during the upcoming school year. Dr. Hollman notes that getting together with others can help prepare them socially in an unpressured setting. Dr. Munson agrees: "If your child hasn't seen school friends over the summer, it isn't too late to invite them over to help your child get re-acquainted with them and excited for school. Visits to the park, pool or movies with old friends - and new ones, too - can make your child feel more comfortable when they encounter their peers at school."

Make the First School Day Special

The first day of school should be treated like a special occasion. "Letting them choose what clothes to wear or breakfast to have," says Dr. John Piacentini, a child psychiatrist, "can provide a sense of control and excitement about school." But don't assume that this will magically reduce all of your kids' anxieties. Dr. Munson emphasizes that parents ought to "set aside a time in the evening to discuss how their child's day went and to listen to any concerns."

Don't Be Anxious Yourself

Try to control any worries that you may experience yourself. Nervousness can be contagious, so if you're anxious, your kids can get anxious, too. As Ms. Hurley puts it, "if you appear overwhelmed and anxious on the first day of school, your child is likely to follow your lead." Instead, Dr. Julia Burch, a child psychologist, suggests that you "try to model the calm behavior you'd like to see in your child." If you stay calm and focus on all the great things your kids are about to experience, they'll end up getting more excited than worried about the upcoming school year.



Perks of Volunteering in Schools



THE Learning curve

ALISON BOGLE

Bogle is a writer living in Austin with her husband and three children. A former fourth grade teacher, she now enjoys writing about children and education. You can also catch her talking about articles from Austin Family magazine each Thursday morning on FOX 7 Austin.

When my oldest was in elementary school, I loved volunteering at her school. If my volunteer duties were in the classroom, I could sneak in a hug or two and could listen in on her lessons. If I was in the copy room, I felt pleased to be supporting the teachers and I could also get a peek at projects to come. I truly felt like I'd struck gold, though, when I did a shift at the middle school store. My co-volunteer and I set up at the edge of the cafeteria where we blended into the background. We got to observe the middle schoolers at their most relaxed and, let me tell you, it was better than watching reality TV!

Volunteering provides so many benefits for everyone involved. It feels wonderful to help the hard-working teachers and staff and to get to know them better.

It's also fun to have extra time with your child during the day and to hear what he or she is learning. As with my middle school experience, you can observe the dynamics of your child's day, too, which helps you to be more supportive should the need arise.

Many parents would love to volunteer, but don't know how to get connected with opportunities and end up missing out. Here are some ways you can be involved at your child's school:

Classroom-level

There are so many ways to help in an elementary classroom – especially in the younger grades. You can help with classroom projects, be a classroom reader, assist at workstations (also known as centers), help stuff take-home folders and more. Many younger elementary classrooms offer regular roles, allowing you to schedule volunteering into your routine. If a set time does not work well for you, there are also many single-task volunteer opportunities.

When students move into upper elementary grades, the classroom volunteer opportunities drop off sharply by design as teachers work to build students' independence in preparation

for middle school. Even so, there may be special projects that require parental help in the classroom and chaperones are almost always needed for field trips.

Once your child reaches middle or high school, the general classroom volunteer opportunities are essentially non-existent. However, if your child is involved in a special class, group or club, there are often many opportunities to help. For example, student band groups need help with chaperoning, fundraising, and loading equipment, among other things.

Reach out to your child's teacher – ideally at the start of school if you are interested in a recurring position – to find out which volunteer opportunities are available.

Other school opportunities

Most schools count on and welcome parent help in a variety of ways and at all grade levels. Librarians need help with book check-in and checkout, sorting and shelving. The front office may welcome help with phone answering, mail sorting or photocopying. Specials (art, music and P.E.) teachers often need help with special events or projects too. Contact the appropriate staff position or sign up through the school parent organization (below) to offer your volunteer services.

PTA/PTO/Booster Club

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and Booster Clubs are all names for the same thing – groups of parents who join together to support their children's school. While the responsibilities and authorities of these groups may vary by school district, most operate similarly, raising funds at the campus level through membership and other fundraising activities. Those funds are then used to benefit the individual campus. Examples include purchasing new playground equipment or classroom supplies, funding field trips or guest speakers and providing support for staff development.

Parent organizations are run by a board. If you would like to be involved in your child's school at a top-level, you might consider volunteering for a board position such as secretary, treasurer or president. Typically, elections are held annually, and your service commitment is one year. Parent organizations also rely on numerous committees to achieve their goals, so volunteer opportunities abound there as well. You could volunteer to lead a committee or to be a committee member. Your time commitment will vary depending upon whether you are a chair or a member, as well as upon the type of committee and the number of total committee members.

One of the larger committees at my daughter's school is that for staff appreciation. While the chairs of that committee are responsible for approximately 100 hours of work during the school year, committee members can do as little as drop off paper plates or a dessert for an event.

You should receive information from your school on how to join your school's parent organization. If you do not, don't hesitate to contact someone in the front office.

Educational foundation

Many school districts now have educational foundations. These organizations work to raise funds to cover the gap between tax monies, needed funding and the amount the schools receive after the state "recaptures" a certain percentage that is funneled to other school districts. Educational foundations offer many ways to volunteer in their various

fundraising campaigns. Those who are not interested in fundraising can also be connected to a role that will be a better fit. Contact your district's educational foundation directly to learn about volunteer opportunities.

That phrase often used in relation to parenting – the days may be long, but the years are short – is true for

volunteering as well. If you have the desire to help, reach out to the appropriate person and make it happen, or just like with many things in life, the opportunities will slip by. You'll be glad you reached out as you'll feel more connected to your child's school experience, and you'll be providing much appreciated help to your child's teacher and other school staff.



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St. Louis Catholic School
St. Mary's Catholic School
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See Charter School listings for:

Harmony School of Innovation



FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

Richardson, PhD, RN, CS, LPC, LMFT, is an Austin-based psychotherapist.

Q My daughters, ages 4 and 7, have two pets who are both very old: a cat named Ping Pong and a dog named Bubba. The dog has been diagnosed with cancer and given a prognosis of three months or less to live. These pets are like members of the family. I have no idea how to help the girls deal with the death of a pet. What advice do you have for me?

VISIT austinfamily.com

¿Cómo puedo ayudar a mis hijas con la muerte de una mascota?

A Any readers who have pets will understand the idea of a pet being a family member and how sad one can become at even the thought of a pet's death. Pets sleep with many of us. They provide comfort and enjoyment. They let us know we are loved when others reject us. We spend a lot of time and money caring for our pets.

I commend you for wanting to have a plan in mind when one of your pets dies, so you will be more prepared to handle the situation, especially with your girls. Here are some suggestions for helping your children deal with a pet that is sick or has passed on:

1. Help your children identify their feelings and talk about these feelings. Kids will likely experience sadness, of course. They may also experience anger, denial, fear, guilt and any number of other feelings. You can be a role model by sharing your feelings too.



How Do I Help My Kids With the Death of a Pet?

2. Provide support and affection.

Use a soothing, comfortable voice.

3. Whenever possible, help your child say goodbye to the pet while it is still alive.

4. Be honest in explaining death.

Young children often see death as temporary and even reversible. They may ask, "What if I am a really good boy or girl, will the pet come back?" From six to eight years of age, children start to develop a somewhat better idea of death, however, it's often not until they are around nine that they understand that death is permanent. You can explain to young children that the pet won't wake up again. Explain the death as you would the death of a person. You might explain that they have gone to a better place where there is no pain or sickness.

5. If you are religious, avoid saying God took your pet. The child might worry who else God will decide to take.

6. Inform your children's teachers about the death of your pet so they will better understand any feelings of sadness or loss that your daughters may experience at school.

7. Children will need time to remember the pet and to do things like write poems or stories about it, make a scrapbook, help plan a memorial service or participate in the burial with your help. You might want to have flowers or candles to add to the ceremony and mark it as special.

8. If your child doesn't want to talk, wait until she is ready. Everyone deals with death in an individual way.

Realize that helping your child deal with the death of a pet may help her learn how to cope with other losses that come throughout life too.

Additional Resources

Online

National Alliance for Children's Grief (NAGC) www.childrengrieve.org

Books

- "The Goodbye Book" by Todd Parr
- "When a Pet Dies" by Fred Rogers
- "Dog Heaven" by Cynthia Rylant
- "Sammy in the Sky" by Barbara Walsh



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LIFELINES

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

Lucksinger is a mom of two, editor of Austin Family magazine and author of "Exploring Austin with Kids."



An email recently appeared in my inbox that mentioned college education plans that can help pay for kindergarten through high school, ahead of college. As a mom of two school-age kids, I was curious to learn more. So, I asked lawyer and tax expert Molly Morris to clear up some of the details about the 529 Education Savings Plan. Her answers may interest many Texas families.

What is a 529 Education Savings Plan?

A 529 plan is a tax-advantaged savings account for higher education expenses. Earnings in 529 accounts grow tax-free from state and federal taxes and are never taxed when used for qualified education expenses.

In 1996, Congress enacted Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, establishing federal tax rules for 529

plans, which allow families to save in advance for the costs associated with higher education.

While 529 plans were originally designed with college use in mind, in 2017, Congress approved the expansion of the qualified education expenses to include certain public, private or religious K-12 tuition expenses. Withdrawals of up to \$10,000 per beneficiary (student) per year for tuition may be taken as a qualified expense from a 529 plan.

Can it be used in elementary school through high school as well as college?

Yes! Withdrawals from a 529 account of up to \$10,000 per student per year for tuition are considered a qualified education expense. The costs of textbooks, room and board, supplies and other expenses for K-12 education, however, are not covered.

If you wait until college to use these funds, can they only be used to pay for school tuition, or can a 529 plan help with other costs related to education?

529 accounts can be used at public and private colleges and universities worldwide, including community colleges, as well as for technical, continuing education and advanced degree programs. Qualified education expenses include tuition, fees, books, computers and related technology, and some room and board costs for students attending an eligible college or university.

Tuition is the only approved qualified education expense when used for K-12 education.

Can anyone sign up for this or do you have to meet certain requirements?

529 plans are for learners of all ages, whether that be a child attending a private K-12 school, a teen preparing for college, or adults returning to school to upgrade their career skills.

Are there age limits or income limits for applying?

Whether your child was just born or has just started high school, there's no time like the present to put away money for education. The sooner you start, the more time your investment will have to grow.

Can only parents apply for a savings plan, or can someone else apply for one for my child?

Anyone can open a 529 plan for a child, although only the account owner will receive the tax benefits if the account is in a state with state-level benefits. To open an account, an individual must be 18 years of age or older and a U.S. citizen or legal U.S. resident. The student must also be a U.S. citizen or legal U.S. resident. The account owner may also be a U.S. trust, corporation, partnership, nonprofit organization, custodian, guardian or other entity.

What if you save now but don't end up needing the funds after all, or you find yourself needing the funds for a non-education related, emergency expense?

You will never lose control of your money! The money put into the account is always yours. If plans change, withdraw the money and you'll only pay taxes on the interest earned. Earnings that are not used for qualified education expenses, however, are subject to a 10% federal tax penalty (with certain exceptions for death, disability and scholarships).

Is this different from the Texas College Savings Plan? If so, can you apply for both?

The Texas College Savings Plan is also a 529 plan, and yes, individuals may participate in either or both plans. In general, families should look first to their state plan to see if there are tax or other advantages that are

available to you if you participate in your state's program. Because Texas does not have a state income tax, they do not offer what many states do, which is a state income tax deduction for contributions. All 529 accounts and programs grow free of state and federal income taxes – but contributions are after-tax contributions.

Texas does have two types of programs. The Texas College Savings Plan is a savings program, and the Texas Tuition Promise Fund is a

prepaid tuition program that has certain defined benefits from participation. Not every state offers these types of programs. Texans should explore all their options to make an informed decision on which program is right for them.

To learn more, visit texascollagesavings.com.

Mary Morris, CEO of Virginia 529, brings decades of experience as an authority with expertise in timely issues including higher education, education finances and disability savings.

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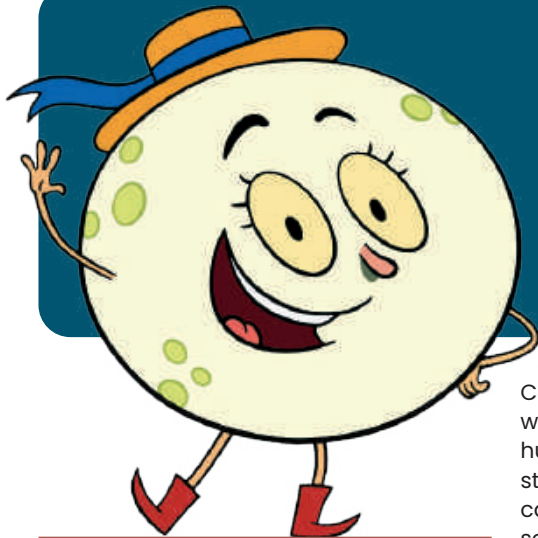
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Nighttime and Screen Time



SMART SCREEN TIME

BENJAMIN KRAMER

Kramer, PhD, is the director of education for Austin PBS.

Can you remember the last time you were in a place that had absolutely no human-made light? Perhaps you were stunned by how dark “real” darkness can be, or perhaps you had a chance to see our nighttime sky the way it looked to us about a hundred years ago, before the advent of streetlights, headlights, billboards and the rest of the modern perpetual light show.

If you’re like me, moments away from artificial light are both rare and exciting. New research is also telling us that trying to replicate the natural cycles of light in our lives is actually good for our health. Sleep studies note disruptions even for things as minor as streetlights

outside of our windows. Imagine what sleep is like when we leave a TV on in the room, or the small lights that now appear in every corner of our lives.

As we head back to school, it’s a good time to get bedrooms sleep-ready. Set your kids on a mission to tape over all those pesky power lights, and to close curtains and blinds. Perhaps the biggest challenge, but one with immediate benefits, is to institute a screen-free block of time before bedtime. Yes, the kids may complain, but experience tells me this: they will fall asleep faster, sleep more deeply and wake more refreshed. One more thing - it works for adults, too.

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calendar



Go to austinfamily.com for expanded listings.

Any family-friendly events can be posted at austinfamily.com and will be made live once approved. Certain restrictions apply.

Mon 1

Splash Mob Fountain Fun Event (all ages). 11-11:30 a.m. The Round Rock Public Library will be hosting a Splash Mob Fountain Fun Event. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Magic Class. 1:30-4 p.m. Join the fun with Monday classes for children ages 6-8 years old. Learn about sleight of hand and other fantastic magic tricks at the library. Buda Library. budalibrary.org.

Tue 2

2022 National Night Out. 6-9 p.m. National Night Out promoted by Cedar Park Police Department. visitcedarparktexas.com.

Skate Night. All wheels are welcome. Come skate, bike, roller blade and scooter safely. Elgin Recreation Center, 361 N. Highway 95, Elgin. FREE. elgintx.com.

Wed 3

High Noon Talk: The Mexican American Experience in Texas. Noon to 1 p.m. Discover the stories of Texas through this collection of key moments and personalities. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

Learn To Juggle. 1:30-3 p.m. Join the fun with Wednesday classes for children ages 12-18 years old. Buda Library. budalibrary.org.

Wild Wednesdays: Ecology. 10 a.m. to noon. Join us for a hands-on, kid-friendly program that combines science, nature and STEM to learn more about the local ecology. Waterloo Greenway, 1111 Red River St. FREE. waterloogreenway.org.

Thu 4

Family Storytime. 6-6:45 p.m. Family storytime offers children opportunities to interact with the library experience through songs, rhymes, movement and stories. Buda Library. budalibrary.org.

Green Screen Film Series: The Fifth Element (rated PG-13). 7:30 p.m. Austin's warm summer nights are back, and so is our Green Screen Film Series. Laguna Gloria, 3809 W. 35th Street. \$5 - \$10. thecontemporaryaustin.org.

Zilker Summer Musical. 8:30 p.m. Bring your blanket and enjoy this summer's free musical, Disney's "Newsies." Zilker Hillside Theatre, 2206 William Barton Drive. FREE. zilker.org.

Fri 5

Read to Maeby. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Meet Maeby. This certified therapy dog loves to listen to children read. Buda Library. budalibrary.org.

Rhythm and Reels. 6 p.m. A music and movie summer series. Lakeway City Park, 1102 Lohman's Crossing Road. FREE. lakeway-tx.gov.

Back-to-school Block Party and Movie Night. 6:30-10 p.m. Bring your blankets and chairs to enjoy games, food, music and an outdoor movie. YMCA Austin, 1000 W. Rundberg Lane. FREE. austinyymca.org.

Friday Flicks "Selena" (rated PG). 7:30 p.m. Spend a night under the stars enjoying beloved movies and exploring the beauty of Waterloo Park. Moody Amphitheater, 1401 Trinity St. waterloogreenway.org.

Shark Week. Join Lakeway Parks & Recreation for a week of shark-filled fun. lakeway-tx.gov.

First Friday Event: Hula Dancers. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

CONTINUED: Zilker Summer Musical, see Thu 4.

Sat 6

Texas Farmers Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Texas Farmers Market at Lakeline is open every Saturday, rain or shine. Lakeline Mall, 11200 Lakeline Mall Drive. visitcedarparktexas.com.

Back-to-school Celebration. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us in kicking off the 2022-2023 school year with live entertainment, bouncy houses, police and fire vehicles on display and more. Stoney Point High School, 1801 Tiger Trail. FREE. news.roundrockisd.org.

12th Annual R.O.S.E.S. Back-to-school Drive. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. 1,000 backpacks will be given away and there will be food and fun activities. George Washington Carver Museum, 1165 Angelina St. FREE. austintexas.gov.



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Back-to-school Bash. 1-5 p.m. Get ready for back to school. There will be food, games, water slide, barber, braider and school supplies. Mission Possible Austin, 1190 Chicon St. FREE. mpaustin.org.

CONTINUED: Zilker Summer Musical, see Thu 4; Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Sun 7

"To Kill a Mockingbird." 1 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

CONTINUED: Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Mon 8

August Aquatic Family Adventure Day. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join us for our August Aquatic Adventure Day to cool off from the summer heat. YMCA Camp Moody, 1220 Old San Antonio Road, Buda. austinyymca.org.

CONTINUED: Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Tue 9

CONTINUED: Skate Night, see Tue 2; Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Wed 10

Dungeons and Dragons. 6-7 p.m. Join the adventure with the library's D&D campaign. New members are welcome at any time. Buda Library. budalibrary.org.

CONTINUED: Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Thu 11

Family Craft Night. 5-5:30 p.m. Stories and songs, followed by a themed craft activity for all ages. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Story & Play. 6-6:30 p.m. Stories and songs, followed by social play time with blocks and educational toys. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

"Dirty Dancing" (rated PG-13). 7:30 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

CONTINUED: Family Storytime, see Thu 4; see Zilker Summer Musical, see Thu 4; Shark Week, see Fri 5.

Fri 12

"Alphabuddies." 10:30-11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Austin Fall Home & Garden Show. Noon to 8 p.m. Austin Convention Center, 500 E. Cesar Chavez St. \$10. austinfallhomeandgardenshow.com.

Family Skate Nights. 7 p.m. Awesome opportunity to get the family out together as you skate to music. Ash Pavilion at Gregg Clarke Park, 1231 W. Center St., Kyle. \$4 resident adults, \$3 kids. cityofkyle.com.

Movies in the Park. 8 p.m. Bring the whole family for "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (rated PG). The movie will begin at sundown. Gregg Park Clark, 1301 Center St. FREE. cityofkyle.com.

Mendez Movies Under the Stars. 8 to 10 p.m. Join us for another free outdoor movie at Metz Park. Rodolfo "Rudy" Mendez Recreation Center, 2407 Canterbury St., FREE. austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Zilker Summer Musical, see Thu 4.

Sat 13

Story & Play. 10:30-11 a.m. Stories and songs, followed by social play time with blocks and educational toys. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

"The Goonies" (rated PG). 4 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

Pop Up Play Day – Lake Creek Park & Pool. 5-7 p.m. Join us in the park for free family activities. Lake Creek Park, 800 Deerfoot Drive. roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Zilker Summer Musical, see Thu 4; Texas Farmers Market, see Sat 6; Austin Fall Home & Garden Show, see Fri 12.

Sun 14

"The Princess Bride" (rated PG). 1 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

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Sunflower: The Musical. 2 p.m. "Sunflower" is the story of Amalie and Vincent, starring Guy Forsyth as Vincent van Gogh. Fridays and Saturdays 7 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Austin Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W. 18th St. \$15 - \$25. scottishritetheater.org.

CONTINUED: Austin Fall H&G Show, see Fri 12.

Mon 15

CONTINUED: Austin Fall H&G Show, see Fri 12.

Tue 16

CONTINUED: Skate Night, see Tue 2.

Wed 17

Texas Focus: Facing Nolan. 5 p.m. Join us for the origin story of a true Texas superhero, baseball legend Nolan Ryan. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. \$8 - \$12. thestoryoftexas.com.

Thu 18

Story & Play. 6-6:30 p.m. Stories and songs, followed by social play time with blocks and educational toys. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

CONTINUED: Family Storytime, see Thu 4.

Fri 19

"Grease" (rated PG). 7:30 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

CONTINUED: "Alphabuddies," see Fri 12.

Sat 20

Cedar Park Market Days. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Head out for music, yummy food trucks and over 70 local artisans. 11066 Pecan Park Blvd., Cedar Park. visitcedarparktexas.com.

Nerf Wars (ages 10+). 10 a.m. to noon. Join us at Heritage Park as we play some Nerf. Basic blasters and darts will be provided. Heritage Park, 901 Old Austin Hutto Road, Pflugerville. parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

August Aquatic Family Adventure Day. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join us to cool off from the summer heat. YMCA Camp Moody, 1220 Old San Antonio Road, Buda. austinymca.org.

National Honey Bee Day. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hays Master Naturalists will be present with beekeeping equipment and honeybee education. 101 S. Burleson St., Kyle. cityofkyle.com.

Founders Day Celebration. 2 p.m. Booker T. Washington Gymnasium, 510 Martin Luther King Blvd., Elgin. elgintx.com.

"Oliver" (rated G). 3:15 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

"The Sound of Music" (rated G). 7 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. tickets.austintheatre.org.

CONTINUED: Texas Farmers Market, see Sat 6; Story & Play, see Sat 13.



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Tue 23

Mario Kart 8 Tournament. 6-8 p.m. Test your racing skills in the game room at the Rec Center. Win a Pf-Esports t-shirt and bragging rights. Pflugerville Recreation Center, 400 Immanuel Road. parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Skate Night, see Tue 2.

Wed 24

CONTINUED: Dungeons & Dragons, see Wed 10.

Thu 25

CONTINUED: Family Storytime, see Thu 4.

Fri 26

National Dog Day Event. 5-7 p.m. First 20 dogs get a free treat goodie bag. 135 Hallie Drive, Kyle. cityofkyle.com.

CONTINUED: "Alphabuddies," see Fri 12.

Sat 27

Austin PBS Back-to-school Open House. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Come to our new location for a grand opening event. Among our celebrity guests will be Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittycat. ACC Highland Mall, Airport Blvd. FREE. austinpbs.org.

Cardboard Boat Race - Adult and Youth Competitions. 10 a.m. to noon. Get your team together and start designing. Morris Memorial Park, 802 N. Ave. C. elgintx.com.

Batfest Austin 2022. 3-11:30 p.m. General admission gets you access to all stages, bats, arts and crafts booths, the statesman parking lot event, the bridge and more. Congress Avenue Bridge. \$25. austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Texas Farmers Market, see Sat 6; Story & Play, see Sat 13.

Tue 30

CONTINUED: Skate Night, see Tue 2.

Wed 31

"The Star of Destiny." 10:30 a.m. Historic events such as the Galveston Hurricane of 1900 come to life with sets, special lighting and amazing sound effects. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

"Shipwrecked." 12:30 p.m. Experience the story of the shipwreck La Belle, a ship in French explorer La Salle's 1684 North American colonial expedition. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

"Superpower Dogs." 1 p.m. Join an immersive IMAX adventure to experience the life-saving superpowers and extraordinary bravery of some of the world's most amazing dogs. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.



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Wilted Dreams



JUST FOR GRINS
NETTIE REYNOLDS

Nettie Reynolds is a writer, published playwright and proud mom of two. Her writing has been featured in national magazines including PerContra, Forbes for Women, Entrepreneur and Yes! magazine. Find her on Twitter or Instagram @netreynolds.

This summer, I planted my very own tomatoes. In June, they were doing great. The watering, sun and my incessant singing of “Walking on Sunshine” was working!

Were my genteel neighbors tiring of hearing music blast from our back deck twice daily while I watered? Did my family glance outside more than once with worried looks as I danced around my container tomatoes wearing a bedraggled, tomato themed-swimsuit? They sure did.

Did my family consider a tomato plant intervention when I announced the names of each of my tomato plants and asked that they greet them with their respective monikers – Ellen, Emily, Ethan

and Eddie – that I etched on their hand-painted clay pots? Absolutely!

Did my husband follow a mesmerizing electric toothbrush vibrato sound to the back deck one morning to find me brushing tomato flowers? Yes, he did! (Brushing the flowers helps get pollination going.)

I dreamed of homemade caprese salad and a nice, chilled glass of sauvignon Blanc. Yet, to my horror, these dreams began to wilt as I watched leaves shrivel and drop.

Salvaging hope, I placed mini plastic lucky Buddha statues in each pot. I tried to keep what was left of my tomato plants well-fed, vibrationally inspired

and musically happy.

But, by the end of July, my plants had officially bought the farm. Okay, if truth be told, there was one tiny baby fruit, but it was nowhere big enough to fit on even the smallest Cheese Nip, let alone on top of a caprese salad.

Desperate for what I could have done wrong, I consulted my dog-eared “Southern Living Garden Book” and found the answer to my tomato failure. It turns out, if you have trouble with tomato plants setting fruit, the heat is to blame.

Next year I’m investing in a hot house, a brand-new electric toothbrush and a snazzy bell pepper-themed swimsuit. Hashtag #bellpeppersummer2023



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SUPER SOAKED!

Water Play Activities

Each month, topics in this column alternate between cool, new places to go and family-friendly activities to do at home. This month, we have super fun games to get your kids super soaked. Stay cool, Austin!

We get it. It's hot. And there doesn't appear to be any relief in sight. But that doesn't mean you have to hide out inside until the temperatures drop. You don't need a swimming pool. All you need is a hose or access to water, and you can enjoy hours of fun in the sun. Here are a few water-based play ideas to get you going.

Water Balloon Toss: Everybody loves this one. You can find small balloons designed just for this purpose at your local party supply or big box store. Smaller kids might need help tying knots. Once you have a supply of balloons, you can pair up. If you have an odd number, form a triangle. Start close to make it easy. Then have each person take a step back with each successful catch. As the distance grows, so does the difficulty, and when a balloon bursts, the 'loser' becomes a 'winner' and is rewarded with a cool splash of water. Everybody wins!

Water Bucket Race: This is a favorite at YMCA Summer Day Camp. Add a water bucket race to your next backyard party or play date. Line up the kids into teams. Fill two buckets with water and place two empty ones 20-30 feet away. Every person gets a cup. Have each player fill a cup and run carefully to dump the liquid into an empty one, trying not to spill any. Then run back to the full bucket for another turn. The team that empties their bucket first wins.

Water Blaster Tag: Equip your kids with their favorite water blaster and let them have at each other



Photos courtesy of Austin YMCA.

for a water battle royale. You can designate areas or zones for a team (like dodge ball), or you can let them find hiding spots or run free. Bottom line is that you're out when your shirt is wet, and the clothes don't lie! If you want a water-based version of paint ball, have everyone wear white t-shirts and add two different food colors to the water to create two teams. Last color standing, wins. As a variation for smaller kids, you can use small spray bottles.

Sprinkler Freeze Tag: Sprinklers are another fun way to play in the water. Have the kids run and dance around the turned-off sprinkler while you

stand by the faucet. Turn the water on, and players must freeze (yes, in the spray) until you turn it back off again. Any player that moves while the water is on (no matter how cold the water) is out!

YMCA

Families can enjoy free water fun at all YMCA of Austin locations throughout August by taking advantage of Sunday Family Fundays on Saturdays at the North Austin YMCA. The Y is open for the entire community to splash in the pool, play in the air-conditioned gymnasium or enjoy a variety of special activities. Find more information at austinyymca.org/summer-fun.



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