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December 2019

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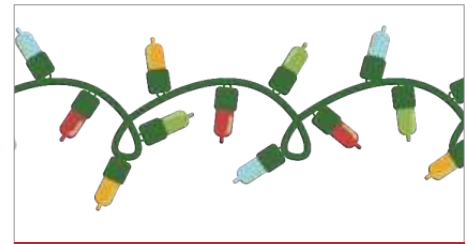
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FILM REVIEW

By Jack Kyser

It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood

Read online at:
www.austinfamily.com/films



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Catch *Austin Family Magazine* live on "Good Day Austin" every Thursday morning and "Despierta Austin" monthly.



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Braxton is 2 ½ years old and loves getting his picture taken. Photo by Jordan Ashley Photography.

Happy Holidays!

As we were exploring the theme for this issue, a common thread that emerged among traditions celebrated this time of year was... light. This is the "Season of Light" for those who celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Bodhi Day, Winter Solstice, New Year's Day, Yule, or virtually any holiday tradition. Light is about hope, illumination, clarity, and warmth. We see it in holiday lights, candles, and the smiles of children. As the darkness of winter descends, light instills in us feelings of peace, comfort, and joy.

As a family, one of our favorite holiday traditions is to spin under the Zilker Christmas Tree and watch the swirling lights. For the last 52 years, families have traveled to Zilker Park to soak up the Christmas spirit and marvel at Austin's tallest light display. It is magical. For me, Zilker Park plays another important role. On January 1, I drag my family to Barton Springs Pool for its annual "Polar Bear Splash." Yes, the water is always 68 degrees, so it's usually warmer in the pool than it is out of it. It's a perfect way to shed the previous year and start 2020 with a light heart.



EDITOR'S NOTE

JENNIFER HILL ROBENALT

Robenalt is an editor, content creator, creative writer, and mother

In this issue, we even explore the idea of "Keeping it Light" with ways to simplify your holiday season. And if you're looking for brilliant and beautiful light displays around Austin, check out the many options our fair city has to offer in our "Around Austin" and "Out and About" sections.

We wish you a holiday season filled with "Goodness and Light."

austinfamily®

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Government Recalls Craft Glue and Keychains Nestle Voluntarily Recalls Ready-Made Cookie Dough



New Port Sales is recalling about 46,000 bottles of **All-Gloo Craft Glue**. The glue contains methanol and poses a poisoning hazard to young children if ingested. The packaging is not child-resistant as required by the Poisoning Prevention Packaging Act. This recall involves bottles of All-Gloo Craft Glue in 2-, 4-, and 8-ounce sizes. The size of each translucent white plastic bottle of recalled glue is printed at the bottom of an orange, white, and black label that includes a UPC number unique to that size. No incidents or injuries have been reported. The glue was sold at La Casa de los Botones and New Port Sales Inc. in Puerto Rico from April 2019 through June 2019 for between \$2 and \$7. Consumers should

immediately remove the recalled glue from the reach of children and return it to the store where purchased for a full refund. For more information, contact New Port Sales collect at 787-793-6201 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Mon. through Fri., e-mail info@newportsales.com, or go online at www.newportsales.com and click on "Recall."



Michaels is recalling about 14,000 keychains. This recall involves Michaels private brand **Bead Landing™ tassel keychain** mobile power banks which can be used to charge smart phones and other devices. The lithium ion battery in the keychain's mobile power bank can overheat, posing fire and burn hazards. The tassel keychain mobile power banks measure about 7 inches long by 1.5 inches wide with USB and micro USB charging cables, as well as a lightning adapter for the micro USB cable. Only tassel keychain mobile power banks sold in black, cream, blush pink, and iridescent blue colors are included in this recall. There have been two reports of tassel keychain mobile power banks overheating when charging and catching on fire. No injuries have been reported. The keychains were sold at Michaels stores nationwide from March 2018 through August 2019 for about \$20. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled Bead Landing™ tassel keychains with mobile power banks and return them to any Michaels store for a full refund. For more information, consumers may contact Michaels at 800-642-4235 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT, Mon. through Fri., or online at www.michaels.com and click on "Product Recalls" at the bottom of the page.



Nestlé USA is recalling various ready-to-bake refrigerated **Nestlé Toll House Cookie Dough** products. The products may be contaminated with foreign material, specifically food-grade rubber pieces. No illnesses or injuries requiring medical treatment have been reported. Products with batch codes that begin with 9189 through 9295 are being

recalled. The recalled products were sold in the continental U.S. and Puerto Rico. Customers who purchased the recalled products should not prepare or consume them. Discard them, retain their proof of purchase, and contact Nestlé Consumer Services at nestleproductinquiry@casupport.com. Consumers with questions may contact the company 24/7 at (800) 681-1676 or by email. For a full list of recalled products, visit www.nestleusa.com.

The US Consumer Products Safety Commission works to protect the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products.

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AROUND

Austin

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Trail of Lights



Since it began in 1965, the Austin Trail of Lights has grown to be a can't miss tradition and community-wide event that celebrates the spirit and the people that make Austin special. Starting as a small community gathering around a yule log in 1965, the Austin Trail of Lights now features more than 2 million lights illuminating the park, 90 lighted holiday trees, and more than 70 other holiday displays and lighted tunnels. Visitors will see local merchants, as well as new modernized displays and interactive spaces.

Considered the gold standard for celebrating holidays in Austin, the official public grand opening of the Austin Trail of Lights is set for Tues., Dec. 10. Admission for that evening is free. The Trail will remain open until Dec. 23 with general admission gates open at 7 p.m. every evening. General admission for children under 12 is always free. There will be a general admission fee on seven of the 14 nights of the Trail. Early entry ZIP Fast Pass, Platinum passes, parking, and shuttle tickets are also available for purchase on select nights. The Trail will feature local Austin entertainment with nightly acts by community and professional performers, and nightly story times by local celebrity readers.

Calendars for ticket availability and online ticket purchases are available at www.AustinTrailofLights.org.

Must-Do This December

7

Yule Ball
in Austin

10-23

Austin Trail of Lights
Zilker Park

13-24

Armadillo Christmas Bazaar
Palmer Events Center



Capitol Holidays

Celebrate the start of your holiday season in downtown Austin at the 25th annual Downtown Holiday Stroll and KUT / KUTX Holiday Sing-Along on Sat., Dec. 7. The free festivities kick off at 5 p.m. with live music, a holiday market, photos with Santa, kids play area, food trucks, special anniversary photo-ops, and more! Gather on the Texas Capitol steps to sing carols at 6 p.m., followed by a countdown to the lighting of the Capitol Christmas Tree at 7 p.m.



Community Playground

In less than six hours, several organizations and many individuals came together to build a new playground in Wooten Neighborhood Park. On Nov. 6, more than 200 volunteers from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and the community, with support from Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) and Austin Parks Foundation (APF), joined the non-profit KaBOOM! to transform an empty site into a new kid-designed, state-of-the-art playground.

The Wooten Neighborhood Park was without a playscape because the previous equipment received failing grades from PAR's conditional assessment. In September, kids from the surrounding community met to draw their dream playground. The playground is based on their drawings and will provide thousands of kids in Austin with a beautiful and safe place to play in Wooten Neighborhood Park located at 1500 Dale Dr. in Austin.



Hanukkah Virtual 8K

This year, Hanukkah takes place Dec. 22-30. To celebrate, take part in the 1st Annual Happy Hanukkah 8K – Eight Crazy Nights! Participants complete a virtual race to represent each night of Hanukkah. Because this is a virtual race, it can be run, walked, or jogged from any location including roads, trails, treadmills, at the gym, or on the track. Racers can finish in one day or 1K at a time. Even better, complete 1K on each day of Hanukkah. Racers then report finishing times to organizers at VirtualRunEvents.com.

This year, Universal Human Rights is also in December and organizers will be donating 15% of each registration to the Human Rights Initiative, which provides legal and support services to refugees and immigrants who have suffered human rights abuses.

Registration for *Happy Hanukkah 8K – Eight Crazy Nights!* on Eventbrite is \$9 to participate and \$20 for a medal, bib, and shipping.



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Yule Ball

The 4th Annual Worthwich School of Wizardry's Yule Ball will take place on Sat., Dec. 7. Inspired by the enchanting world of Harry Potter, Worthwich welcomes all magical beings, witches, wizards, students, and the school's esteemed professors for a night of music, dancing, cosplay, and holiday merriment. Free ballroom dance lessons and holiday portraits will be available, as well as new magical friends to meet. The "Family Edition" of the ball runs from 3-6 p.m. and children under two get in free. Grownups 18 and older have their own party from 7 p.m. to midnight. Tickets are \$15 for the family event, and \$20 for the adult event. Food and drinks are not included in the ticket price but will be available for purchase. The Yule Ball will take place at Sterling Events Center located at 6134 E. Highway 290. For more information, or to reserve tickets, visit www.worthwich.com/yuleball.

by the numbers



3,309
Number of lights on the Zilker Holiday Tree
Source: AustinTexas.gov



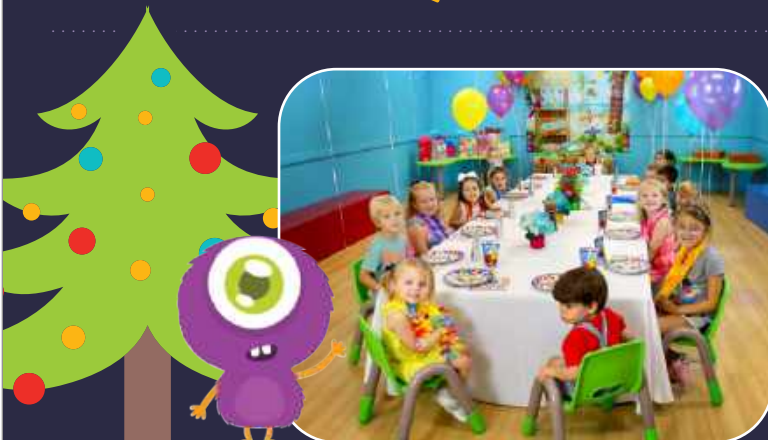
62%
Percentage of Americans who will buy their gifts the week before Christmas
Source: Fortunly.com



68° F
Temperature of the water in Barton Springs Pool on New Year's Day
Source: TexasHighways.com

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Armadillo Christmas Bazaar

The 44th Armadillo Christmas Bazaar will take place Dec. 13-24 at the Palmer Events Center. This Austin holiday shopping staple features nearly 200 curated local and touring artists and makers, live music, and local food. Attendees will find gifts in all price ranges as well as fine art for their collections. Shoppers can learn stories about the artists and their works, support local and traveling artists, and buy exclusive gifts. The 2019 music lineup is filled with 36 bands ranging from breakout musicians, touring singer-songwriters, and Austin legends over the 12-day event. The intimate Armadillo stage is known for bringing out special performances in high-quality sound unique to the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar experience. For ticket information, performance schedules, and more, visit www.armadillobazaar.com.

Cherrywood Art Fair

Chula League's 18th Annual Cherrywood Art Fair will take place Dec. 7-8 at Maplewood Elementary located at 3808 Maplewood Ave. The art-filled two-day event will showcase local artists, live music, kids' activities, and great food in a free, family-friendly environment. Since its 2002 inception, the Cherrywood Art Fair has served as a destination for discerning holiday shoppers seeking unique, hand-crafted items from Texas artists and makers. Proceeds benefit Little Artist BIG ARTIST, a free after-school arts mentorship program in six East Austin elementary schools. This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department. For more information, visit www.chulaleague.org.



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PlayMazing

Indoor Play, LLC has renamed Catch Air Austin and Catch Air Round Rock to PlayMazing Austin and PlayMazing Round Rock. Along with the name change, changes include a new focus on expanding edutainment (education entertainment), interactive platforms, in-store events, and the customer experience. PlayMazing will also be launching a new website along with a quicker check-in process, unique party packages, new pricing, expanded concessions, and much more.

“We’re so excited to become PlayMazing and have some incredible changes in store for the community, customers, and all of the fantastic kiddos who have been coming for years,” says Trey Ikard, Managing Partner for Indoor Play, LLC.

PlayMazing will stay open during the name change with a full transformation scheduled for February 2020. A grand opening party will also be scheduled around that time. Until the official grand opening date, both stores will gradually transform and continue to provide progress updates to customers through social media channels and newsletters.

PlayMazing Austin and PlayMazing Round Rock attractions include 12,500 and 15,000 square feet of play, respectively; over 1,000 square feet designated for kids ages 3 and under; three-story obstacle courses/adventure fun structures with multiple interactive screens; ball pits; multiple slides; climbing towers and walls; light up dance floors and hourly dance parties playing kid-friendly music; and much more.

PlayMazing Austin is located at 13450 US-183, #107. PlayMazing Round Rock is located at 1401 S. IH-35, Suite 130. Both locations are open Mon.–Thurs. from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Fri.–Sat. from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sun. from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.playmazing.fun.



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BY JILL SAYRE

Season of Light

What is lovelier at the holidays than lights—white, multi-colored or solid-hued – reflected off the faces of those you care about? Lights, lovely gathering places, and inspiring music can be found at three Austin classic venues this holiday season. Any or all of these light displays could become a new holiday tradition for your family.



The Driskill Hotel will hold its annual tree lighting to kick off the holiday season on Dec. 3 from 5-7 p.m. Sip a hot chocolate or glass of champagne and listen to holiday music in the Driskill’s historic Grand Lobby. Then, get your photo taken in front of the stately 15’ Christmas tree. If you are a transplant to Austin in need of a holiday tradition with history behind it, the Driskill may be for you. The Driskill, located at 604 Brazos Street, opened in 1886 and has had an important place in Austin’s history, including being the place Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson had their first date—in the Driskill Dining Room for breakfast. The hotel was named to the National Historic Registry in 1969 and is here to stay. Each year’s Driskill tree drips with clear bulbs that reflect off the marble patterned floor below and the glowing backlit stained glass above. Holiday photo card backdrop, anyone? Dec. 3 festivities include music by the Arundel Ensemble from 5-6 p.m., tree lighting at 6 p.m., and caroling from 6-7 p.m. Free of charge. Questions? Call 512-439-1234.

Luminations is a yearly celebration at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, located 9 miles from downtown Austin. The 284-acre property is referred to as the Botanic Garden of Texas. Luminations endeavors to showcase the gorgeous property and sustainable gardens with thousands of lights and small, paper luminaria lanterns. Stroll lighted paths and gardens of this natural wonderland. There will be live music, displays, festival foods, and more. This year’s event features newly lit trails and an exclusive performance by Blue Lapis Light’s “Oneness of Being” aerial dance choreography, which was inspired by the Wildflower Center. Luminations is the yearly frosting on the cake of the Center’s mission to inspire conservation of native plants through sustainable gardens and education of Americans of all ages. Luminations is held December 5-8 and 12-15, 6 -10 p.m. at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center located at 4801 LaCrosse Ave. Ages 0-4 are free, and ages 5 and up are \$18. Parking is available at the University of St. Augustine, 5401 LaCrosse Ave. Visit wildflower.org for tickets and shuttle details or call 512-232 0100 for more information.



After taking a holiday card photo in front of the most beautiful tree in town, and walking in a lighted natural wonderland, you may be ready for an evening of rest and reflection with a cup of something warm in your hand. **The Christmas Light Show at Mozart’s Coffee Roasters** occurs surprisingly close to downtown. There is a “get-away” vibe at Mozart’s. Take a seat on their deck, decorated with over one million LED lights, and glimpse the sweep of Lake Austin just below you. The lights are set up to cycle with familiar holiday tunes, and the iconic blue piano, played by one of Austin’s talented musicians, is like something from a festive, hip film scene. Mozart’s is an Austin original, opened in 1993, and was the first to roast coffee beans in-house. They have desserts, sandwiches, and bakery

items to compliment the many drinks, which range from basic coffee to more exotic cups (iced oat milk latte with honey? Yum!). There is parking in front, or find a spot along Lake Austin Blvd. and stroll up in time to the holiday melody of that blue piano, like you are arriving at the coolest lake party in town. Mozart’s is located at 3825 Lake Austin Blvd. Light shows begin nightly on Nov. 21 from 6-11 p.m. until Jan. 2 (except for Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day). Free admission. For more information, call 512-477-2900.

If you are looking for a new holiday tradition, this season of light in Austin definitely has something memorable and special for you and those you care about.



Lost Pines: A Holiday Wonderland

BY JILL SAYRE

Hyatt Regency Lost Pines was a favorite trip with my children when they were one, three and five years old. But how would it be to visit this iconic resort now that some of us were teenagers, and didn't want to leave home and friends? What would we find to do, and what was there to do for families of all ages? Much more, as it turns out, than I ever knew. And as a family with older children, we are more discerning than when our day was centered on the kiddie pool and tethered to our room for naptime. We need and expect more from our vacation experience. Could Hyatt Regency Lost Pines meet our expectations?

Hyatt Regency Lost Pines (HRLP) is located along the banks of the Lower Colorado River, 25 miles from Austin, near Bastrop. After driving through the secure gates of the property the eye rests on acres of green forests and fields, blue rippling Colorado River, and scans up to endless cerulean Texas skies. The architecture is stacked stone and clean clapboard. Though the resort opened in 2006, it is fresh and updated. Buildings and even the resort pool area blend with the landscape and salute the history of the region, while remaining a luxurious wilderness escape. Families will find that function—and action—follow form

on this thoughtfully designed property. It would be a challenge to find a family member who couldn't find something enjoyable to do at HRLP. With a spa, tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, hiking, biking, jogging, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, a video arcade, Camp Hyatt children's camp, a water park with lazy river and water slide, a dedicated adult pool, a splash pool, stores and retail, live weekly entertainment, bird watching, Hooves and Horns animal mascot program, archery, trap shooting, stargazing, and bird watching, the biggest challenge is finding time for a long enough stay in which to do it all. Simply listing all that makes me tired and reminds me to mention the many nooks and crannies where folks can sit and read a book or watch the family busy bodies recreate.

My favorite spot along these lines is the Firewheel Café—named after a Texas Wildflower. It's a bright and airy restaurant illuminated by stained glass and handmade chandeliers. It is a place to congregate, rest, or dine. Like the activity menu, the breakfast buffet menu we sampled is extensive. Stations placed around the restaurant ensure that diners aren't forced to queue up in one spot. Teens and adults find themselves patiently flowing around sticky-

fingered children, rather than resentfully lining up to take one maple-syrup drenched ladle at a time. Artistically arranged and delicious food is placed at a level where kids can see it and serve themselves. We sampled hash browns, French toast sticks, grits with bacon and cheese, lovely ripe fruit, pastries, pancakes, ham, muffins with decorative wrap, and an omelet station where I met a lady from Phoenix. She held a plate while she watched her omelet-to-order sizzling on the griddle, and I heard her murmur to Chef Brian, "You were the main reason I was excited to get up this morning." Yes, Phoenix Lady, yes.

Hyatt Regency Lost Pines seems to be a lingering kind of place. I saw adults sipping coffee in a climate-controlled room with plenty of comfy chairs and benches, while looking out Firewheel's wall of square-paned windows at kids and grandkids meeting real Longhorn cows or playing badminton on the lawn outside. Just down the hill the Colorado River flowed and happy shouts of canoeists could be heard by those close enough. In the evening this outdoor space hosted s'mores cooking. Diners included one brave raccoon who I'm told makes nightly appearances, deftly cleaning up crumbs from the perimeter. Down the way, casual outdoor

movies with popcorn and a come-and-go feel allowed families with younger kids to snuggle up and wind down before bed. There were HRLP staff supervising events, so it felt safe for kids to play even when parents and grandparents weren't right on their heels.

The resort's holiday and winter events include a trail of lights that is breathtaking in the wooded setting. The Holiday Experience featured fun family things, like a breakfast and photos with Santa, a holiday treat light show, cookie decorating, and Elf-on-the-Shelf readings. There will also be a special Christmas Market with local vendors.

My family's take on HRLP? My teen daughter liked that they thought of nice details like a mirror outside the bathroom for makeup and grooming. She saw five small deer which were, "soooo cuuute!" She'd like to bring a group to play volleyball on the sand court at HRLP. My 14-year-old son commented that the waterpark is not big, but he likes the fishing, kayaking, the s'mores raccoon, whitetail deer, and the white bird he saw at the fishing pond. Also, he really wants to try 3D Archery (we didn't this time). My hubby had an astute observation that I have repeated to a number of friends since we returned home. "Hyatt Regency Lost Pines is a great Austin getaway. Compared to Watersound or Rosemary Beach (in Florida), you get two more days with your family instead of wasting time traveling to get there. And there are more activities. It's not 'just' a golf resort or a 'just' a pool resort."

For families young and old and all their members, Hyatt Regency Lost Pines has lots to offer. And for the holidays, it couldn't be brighter or more joyful.

Jill Sayre is an Austin-based freelance writer and mother of four.

Merry and Bright

Hyatt Regency Lost Pines will officially kick off the holiday season immediately following Thanksgiving. Overnight, the resort will transform into a winter wonderland complete with an oversized decorated tree in the lobby and extravagant decorations throughout the property.

Pick us up at HEB, Whole Foods, and Central Market.

• **Holiday Night Stroll**

Enjoy the resort's "Holiday Light Stroll"—a magical forest of colors with more than 150 LED floodlights programmed to create a specific color and effect, blue and green laser lights creating sparkling firefly-like visuals, and more than 3,000 twinkling holiday lights spanning through the resort's grounds.

• **Holiday Parade**

Every Friday at 7:00 p.m. the resort will showcase a holiday parade featuring its animal mascots showing off their best holiday gear. Guests can join the resort's four Texas longhorns, two alpacas, two miniature horses, four pygmy goats, and Beans the potbelly pig as they help to kick off each weekend's holiday festivities.

• **Santa's Workshop**

Following Santa's arrival on November 29, Santa's Workshop will be open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday throughout the season. Guests can meet some of their favorite holiday characters while they enjoy activities including cookie decorating, ornament making, gingerbread house construction, and a letter station where children can write and send letters to the North Pole.

• **Holiday Photos and Stories**

Each Saturday, Jolly Old St. Nicholas will visit Santa's Workshop to greet families and take holiday photos. Additionally, Mrs. Claus will visit Santa's Workshop every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. to meet families and read holiday stories. Visits with Santa can be made through resort reservations.

• **Holiday Feasts**

Guests will be able to enjoy holiday feasts throughout the season with breakfast buffets in the resort's Firewheel Café every Saturday and Sunday and dinner every Friday and Saturday between Nov. 30 and Jan. 1.

• **New Year's Eve**

The resort's holiday festivities will conclude with the New Year's Eve celebration on Tues., Dec. 31. Guests will be able to ring in 2020 with a holiday dinner buffet in the resort's ballroom, a family DJ dance party, and the property's signature fireworks display, and a champagne or apple cider toast at 9:00 p.m.



THE DAY I FOUND A MAGIC HAT...

-2019-
YOUNG WRITERS
CONTEST

WINNERS

BY JENNIFER HILL ROBENALT

Each August, we put out a call to all 4th and 5th graders in Austin and surrounding areas to submit an original piece of writing based on a prompt. This year, kids were asked to contemplate the scenario, "The Day I Found a Magic Hat." Imaginations ran wild, and we received entries from young writers from all over the city. Our judges looked for use of language, characters, setting, and, above all, imagination! We named winners and runners-up in each grade who all received plaques and signed copies of judge Carmen Oliver's picture book, *A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How One Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animals*. The winners in each grade also received a party for ten from Austin's Park n' Pizza. We thoroughly enjoyed reading each entry and marveled at the creativity that emerged.

4TH GRADE WINNER



Gavin Hoffmeyer
Serene Hills Elementary

Once upon a time there were two kids named Jake and Mike who were best friends. Jake was at Mike's house when

something surprising happened. Jake heard a thud outside. PLOW! They rushed down the stairs to see what had happened.

Outside, they saw a black hat on the ground. As they looked more closely, they spotted a snowman! Jake and Mike thought the hat probably belonged to it, so they put the hat back on him.

Suddenly the snowman turned and said, "Hello, my name is Frosty. Thanks for getting my magic hat." They were shocked to see a snowman that could talk and move. Frosty said he was headed north to see his family but got lost. They decided to help Frosty find his way.

They walked on a trail through the woods. As they traveled farther, it got hotter and hotter. Frosty felt the heat on his body and told them that he would melt if it got too hot. Jake said, "Don't worry, Frosty. You are fine."

Mike was not happy at all. He tried to convince Jake that they were going the wrong way. As they are walking, they saw a hunter and asked for directions. The hunter told them they were going south. By this time, Frosty had almost completely melted. It was too late for Frosty. His last words were, "Take care of my magic hat. You can bring me back to life when you return to the snow."

Mike and Jake finished the journey north and found Frosty's family. They built a snowman and placed the hat back on him. Frosty came to life and was thankful to be back with his family. Jake and Mike were his heroes.

4TH GRADE RUNNER-UP



Sofia Ladogana
Cactus Ranch Elementary

I am riding the bus from school. When I get home I am going to...Ding ding! It's time for me to get out of the bus! I get out of the

bus and start walking home. Soon I am at my doorstep. I open the door and start doing my pile of homework. One hour later, I get ready to go for a walk. I start walking into the woods. While walking, I find a glittery hat that smells like cotton candy! I look at it and put it on. All

of a sudden, I open my eyes into a whole different place! I gasp! It's so pretty. Suddenly a fairy with a yellow dress zooms down from the sky! She lands on the ground in front of me!

"Where am I?" I ask.

"You are in the magical land of Unitopia!" she answers. "And my name is Daffodil!"

"Can I explore?"

"Yes."

So, I start running until I am standing in front of a beautiful, big, white and lavender-colored pegasus!

"What's her name?" I ask.

"Stormflash."

I walk about twelve yards and see mermaids in the water! I watch them for some time.

"You probably need to get home soon. You can always come back."

"How will I get home?" I ask.

"Stormflash!" At the call, the pegasus I saw earlier lands in front of Daffodil and me!

"She will get you home. Get on," Daffodil says.

So, I get on and she takes flight! As we rise higher, a big rainbow-colored portal opens in the sky!

"Bye!" I call.

Then I open my eyes and see the forest again. I know I will go back soon, and then I head home.

5TH GRADE WINNER



Zachary Borja
Barton Hills Elementary

It was an uneventful Sunday, so I decided to explore the forest. As I ventured deeper into the forest, I encountered a dead end.

Disappointed, I started to turn around until a wall of vines got my attention. I moved them out of the way, and it revealed a secret path! Walking through I found another dead end. However, this time there was a single tree stump laying there. When I walked closer, I found a snazzy looking top hat resting on the stump. Grinning, I snatched the hat and placed it on my head when I started to feel queasy. I closed my eyes for a second and when I opened them you wouldn't believe what I saw. I was in an old timey town. I ran to an older looking gentleman asking him, "What year is this?" "Why, it's 1843!" The words echo through my head. "1843." I frantically began to race down the street until I found a hat shop. I

rushed in looking for a modern hat. The best I could find was a baseball cap, so I snatched it up and placed it on my head. The next thing I knew, I'm at the bat of a Chicago Cubs game. Panicking, I dashed out of the stadium with mobs of people following me. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a man with a sombrero. I dashed up to him yelling "I'm sorry for this!" I grabbed his hat and put it on my head. Then I groaned when I realized I was in Mexico! Then, I had an idea. I put my hands on the hat and lifted off it off and closed my eyes. When I opened them, I was relieved at the fact that I was home.

5TH GRADE RUNNER-UP



Athena Metzger
Sunset Valley Elementary

I hate pasta. Every Friday, the school serves pasta for breakfast and lunch. One Friday, while I was looking at my tray of pasta in disgust, the "mysterious girl" dropped a note on my tray. You see, I'm kind of weird and also new, so I give everyone labels. I label Ryan "crazy," Maddie "weird," and Sally "eccentric." I also labeled Jack a "genius." Not that that means anything though.

Anyway, the letter M.G. (Mysterious Girl) gave me, said: "Anne, you are in great danger of pasta! Find the magic hat. You'll be safe. - Unknown" I don't know why she put unknown. I guess the answer is unknown... Heh.

I started looking for that hat right away. I assumed it to be a top hat, but no, it was a drop-dead gorgeous Coco Chanel original hat! Nestled between earth and sky, I picked it up and placed it upon my head and shrunk into it.

Inside, it was a parallel dimension, the exact same, except everyone was more cheerful and the school NEVER served pasta. But everything was so strange. Every day, my desk was covered in cards that said things like:

"Your eyes are toadstools
Your ears are spores
I know you snore!"

It was so embarrassing! Also, my mom always said, "dear." I can't stand that. Finally, I thought it'd suffocate me, so I jumped out of the sky and learned to love pasta.

Meet the Judges



Carmen Oliver is the author of picture books *A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How One Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal*, a Junior Library Guild spring 2019 pick, *Bears Make the Best Reading Buddies*, *Bears Make the Best Math Buddies* and *Bears Make the Best Writing Buddies* (Jan, 2020). She's also the author of the forthcoming picture books *Bears Make the Best Science Buddies* (Fall 2020), *The Twilight Library* (NorthSouth Books,

2022) and *The Favio Chavez Story* (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers).

Carmen's work has been shortlisted for the Rainforest of Reading Award, The Writers' League of Texas Awards and the CLEL Bell Picture Book Awards for Early Literacy. In 2014, she founded the Booking Biz, a boutique style agency that brings award-winning children's authors and illustrators to schools, libraries, and special events. She also teaches writing at the Writing Barn and The Highlights Foundation and loves speaking at schools, conferences, and festivals.

To connect or learn more about Carmen and her books, visit www.carmenoliver.com.



Bethany Hegedus picture books include the award-winning *Grandfather Gandhi* and *Be the Change: A Grandfather Gandhi Story*, both co-written with Arun Gandhi (grandson of Mahatma Gandhi), as well as *Alabama Spitfire: The Story of Harper Lee* and *To Kill a Mockingbird, Rise!: From Caged Bird to Poet of the People: Dr. Maya Angelou*, and the forthcoming *Hard Work But It's Worth It: The Life of Jimmy Carter*. Her books have been included in

numerous "best of" lists such as A Mighty Girl's Best Books of 2018 and Kirkus' Best Books of the Year. A former educator, Bethany is an in-demand speaker and mentor who speaks and teaches across the country about writing, creativity, resilience, and privilege. She is also the Founder and Creative Director of The Writing Barn in Austin, TX and host of *The Porchlight* podcast, which includes writing craft and creativity interviews, as well as the popular *Courage to Create* series. She graduated from the Vermont College of Fine Arts with an MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults.

Out of Nowhere: A Family's Story of Surviving Drunk Driving

Rachael Crawford hospitalized after her car was hit by a drunk driver in 2014.

Julia Cavanagh, Rachael Crawford, and Ashley Rogans in recovery after the accident.



Bowie High School friends Rachael Crawford, Madison Brandes, Ashley Rogans, and Julia Cavanagh survived a catastrophic car crash caused by a drunk driver on June 22, 2014 in South Austin. In the five years since the accident, the four girls have slowly recovered through painstaking therapies. They have been working hard to achieve their dreams of going to college and beginning their careers. But the tragedy of that night lingers. As a way to find hope and purpose, Rachael teamed up with her father, Tom Crawford, to tell their family's story of healing to high school students across Texas.

RC: I actually don't have much memory of the day. I don't remember leaving work that evening. I don't remember going to my friend Madison's house, picking all of them up, changing, talking to her parents, going to the bank. We went to Slaughter and MoPac and I don't remember being at the light. I have no memory of getting hit. My brain blocked all of that out. The next thing I remember is waking up after surgery the next day. I didn't remember anything, and I had to be told what was happening.

AF: Tom, can you tell me when you learned about what happened to Rachael and her friends?

TC: We were actually at a swim team event. It was kind of ironic because we were getting ready to do an award presentation when a

bunch of paramedics and fire trucks went by. It was really loud. We had to wait until they passed by and we didn't really think anything of it. We came home with my son and were getting ready to watch some shows. We got that phone call that no parent wants to get. Madison's dad called us saying the girls were in an accident and we need to get to the hospital. He couldn't tell us anything about Rachael. We pretty much panicked and grabbed our son, got in the car. We passed the intersection where it happened and saw all the cars and debris. My wife was in tears and panicking because when they shut down an intersection, that usually means somebody has died. Then we got a call from the hospital. They said Rachael was in the ER in critical condition, but alive. We got to the hospital and saw her in the emergency room, and it was very, very bad. That was harrowing and horrible.



We still stick by each other, which has been great. We have a bond that no one else has." – Rachael Crawford

"They're hearing from the kid who actually got hit by a drunk driver, and then the parent who got the phone call. That's a powerful combination of perspectives in one presentation." – Tom Crawford

AF: What did the police tell you about what happened?

TC: They gave me information in pieces. We learned that the driver had run the red light. We learned later that he was speeding through the intersection at about 70 or 80 miles an hour. Then we learned that he'd hit another car. But a couple of days later, we found out from detectives that it was definitely a drunk driving incident.

AF: When you learned that drunk driving was the cause of this, what did you feel?

TC: Anger. Anger was probably the first reaction. Trying to understand why somebody would be so selfish as to get so drunk. I mean, this person was over 0.3 BAC. The legal limit is 0.08. I was hurt and just trying to understand why somebody would do this. I found out this was something that had occurred before but did not result in a DWI. But he was arrested for this and he's in prison now.

AF: As a result of this horrible experience, the two of you decided to tell your story to help teens and parents. Why did you decide to speak out?

RC: A couple of months after my accident, someone I was really close with in middle school texted me and said, "I haven't driven drunk since your accident." I thought that was amazing. If what I went through could change someone's mindset and save a life, it's so awesome.

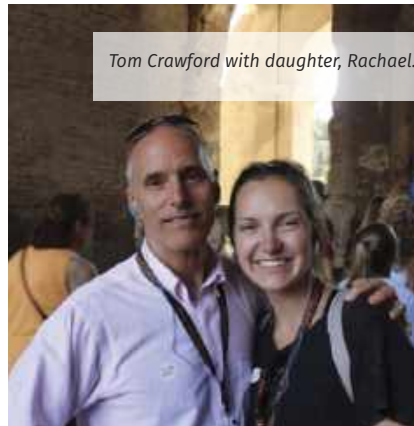
The first time we spoke at a high school, it was all four of us. Me and my friends. My thought was, "Oh, these kids aren't going to care." But we had kids coming up to us afterwards and they shook our hands like we were adults— and it was so cool. I think someone my age is going to get to the students more than someone who is a lot older, or a police officer. You can hear about how much it costs to get a DWI and how much jail time you'll get. But to hear about how it's personally affected someone's life, who was their age when this happened— that's what I think is different about me and my dad speaking to students.

AF: Tom, what has been the reaction of audiences to your story from a parent's perspective?

TC: The parents who come to the presentations can relate. Rachael and I came to an epiphany at the same time. I started thinking about doing presentations when, every time we would go to the courthouse, a Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) person would be there with us. I ended up talking to the director of MADD, and we're now friends. He's the one who encouraged me to start going to high schools with Rachael on our own. And the reaction from the staff and the parents has just been phenomenal. I think it's more to Rachael's side than my side. But the staff and parents are thrilled that we're able to tell our story from both points of view. They're hearing from the kid who actually got hit by a drunk driver, and then the parent who got the phone call. That's a powerful combination of perspectives in one presentation.

AF: Rachael, what have been some of the physical effects of this experience on you and your friends?

RC: Some days are better than others. I would like to say that I haven't had pain in my legs for probably a month, but it randomly happens. I have days when my leg is just



Tom Crawford with daughter, Rachael.



Madison Brandes, Rachael Crawford, Julia Cavanagh, and Ashley Rogans before the incident.

killing me because I have damage to my S1 nerve. I had surgery two years ago to fix the problem that I was having with my nerve in my back. It worked. I had been in pain every single day for three years. Now it's about once a month. I am so blessed that I'm not in pain every day anymore.

Madison had a brain injury. She just graduated from Texas Tech and she is doing her pre-required courses for occupational therapy school. Because of the accident she wanted to go into occupational therapy. She struggles with school and remembering things. It's hard for her. But she gets help from Texas Tech. Ashley had a broken vertebra in her neck, but she is doing well. Like me, she has random days when her neck will hurt and cause tingling in her arm. Julia just graduated from Texas Tech also and she's doing well. She had no physical injuries besides some cuts— a deep cut in her leg. But she remembers everything from the accident. She's the only one that remembers getting hit. Madison doesn't remember anything. Ashley remembers getting pulled out of the car. We're all doing well. We still stick by each other, which has been great. We have a bond that no one else has. We're all alive, thank God.

STAYING SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Rachael Crawford and Tom Crawford have some advice for teens and parents about making sober choices this holiday season.

Tom

- **Drive Defensively:** Even if you're not drinking and driving, other people may be— especially around the holidays. Teach your kids to be aware of the road at all times.
- **Set Up Ride Share Accounts:** We set up our Uber and Lyft accounts with our credit card. The kids would never have to worry about having enough money to get a ride. We also authorized them to use the card for friends if necessary.
- **Build Your Parent Network:** Get to know the other parents in your child's friend group. Make sure they know that any kid can call any parent, at any time, for any reason.

Rachael

- **Have a Ride Plan:** The reality is that high school students do drink during the holidays. Talk about drinking and driving with your friends that includes plans for getting home. With Uber, Lyft, and other ride share companies, there's no excuse to drink and drive.
- **Don't Be Afraid to Confront a Friend:** Give them options if they've had too much to drink. Offer to pay for their ride share, call their parents or another adult to pick them up, or drive her home yourself if you are 100% sober.
- **Get a Code Phrase:** My parents gave me a code phrase in case I needed to call them to pick me up, but I didn't want people to know. They had a "no questions asked" policy which I really appreciated.

For more information about MADD, visit www.madd.org/texas.



THE Learning Curve

ALISON BOGLE

Bogle is an Austin-based freelance writer and mom of three.

Does My Child Have a Learning Disability?

A learning disability is a neurological condition that interferes with a child's ability to store, process, or produce information. Its effects can be seen in a wide variety of areas, including reading, writing, speaking, spelling, math computation, reasoning, attention, memory, coordination, social skills, and emotional maturity.

What a learning disability is NOT, is a sign that a child is lazy or unintelligent. In fact, most children with learning disabilities are of average or above intelligence. Their brains simply learn differently, and they need to be taught in ways that are best suited for how they process information.

Learning disabilities are sometimes referred to as "hidden disabilities," as they are not physical disabilities, which are more easily seen. Chances are, though, that you know at least one child with a learning disability. According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, 2.3 million students are diagnosed with specific learning disabilities and receive services under IDEA,

Individual with Disabilities Education Act. This means that approximately 35% of all students receive special education services for a learning disability.

The following are classified as specific learning disabilities:

Auditory Processing Disorder

Children with this condition may have trouble hearing the differences between sounds, understanding the order of sounds, recognizing where sounds are coming from, or filtering sounds from background noise.

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia affects a child's ability to understand numbers, learn math facts, and develop math skills. Some children with dyscalculia find it difficult to memorize numbers, tell time, count, and organize numbers.

Dysgraphia

Children with dysgraphia have difficulty with their handwriting and other fine motor skills. They might also have trouble with spelling,

inconsistent spacing, writing composition, spatial planning on paper, and thinking and writing at the same time.

Dyslexia

Dyslexic children may have difficulty learning to read and may be slower readers once they do learn. They also may have trouble with vocabulary, spelling, and/or comprehension. In addition, they may exhibit organizational problems with both written and spoken language, and may also demonstrate difficulty learning their left from their right.

Language Processing Disorder

Language Processing Disorder is a specific type of Auditory Processing Disorder and relates only to the processing of language. This disorder can affect what a child says or how he understands what others say. He might have trouble expressing thoughts, comprehending what he reads, labeling objects, and understanding jokes.

Non-Verbal Learning Disability

This form of learning disability usually

presents itself with a significant discrepancy between higher verbal skills and weaker motor, visual-spatial, and social skills. Signs include trouble interpreting non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expression, and the nuances of conversation. Despite verbal proficiency, a child with a non-verbal learning disability often exhibits poor reading comprehension.

Visual Perceptual/ Visual Motor Deficit

These disabilities can cause children to have difficulty observing the differences between numbers, colors, shapes, objects, patterns, and letters. Children can also struggle with cutting and with holding a writing utensil too tightly. They may also lose their place frequently when reading and writing.

What should I do if I suspect that my child has a learning disability?

You are wise to trust your intuition. Parents are often the first to sense that “something isn’t right.”

If your child is school-aged, the best place to start is with his or her teacher. If the teacher is similarly concerned, he or she can initiate an evaluation. Next, a support team will meet to decide if an evaluation is warranted based on academic impact. The school system is required by federal and state law to evaluate your child at no cost. If your child is preschool aged, you can still reach out to your school district to request an evaluation, or your preschool may be able to make private testing recommendations.

You can also have your child privately tested. A mental health professional, ideally a neuropsychologist, is the best person to evaluate and diagnose your child. Your pediatrician can often recommend a professional who specializes in learning disability evaluations.

If testing does determine the presence of a learning disability, your child’s school will work with you to devise a plan of in-school services to address your child’s specific

needs. Depending upon the specific disability, your child may qualify for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or accommodations through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Early Intervention is Key

Learning disabilities cannot be cured; however, with the right intervention, children

can absolutely be successful in school and in life! Children who don’t receive the support they need typically suffer from lower self-esteem and may become frustrated. Those who are identified early, and who receive appropriate care, can avoid many of the struggles of being undiagnosed, and can be taught that they are not alone. They are smart and capable learners, who simply need to process information differently.

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LIFELINES

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

Schoolfield is a freelance medical writer who splits her time between Austin and Seattle.

Give Your Child the Gift of Sleep During the Holidays

Holiday festivities, parties, and overnight guests can interfere with your child's normal sleep routine. Many parents aren't aware of the negative impact of an irregular bedtime on a child's health and behavior.

5 Reasons Your Child Needs a Regular Sleep Schedule

Here are 5 reasons your child needs to maintain a regular sleep schedule, even during the holidays.

#1. Irregular bedtimes disrupt the body's natural sleep/wake cycle. A study published in the journal *Pediatrics* found that irregular bedtimes disrupt a child's circadian rhythm. *Circadian rhythm* is your body's internal clock that regulates the sleep/wake cycle. This rhythm is controlled by the hypothalamus, a part of your brain. When it's dark, your eyes signal the hypothalamus to start making melatonin, which makes you drowsy. When it's light, the hypothalamus responds by waking you up. The sleep/wake cycle works best when you go to bed at the same time every night and get up at the same

time every morning. Irregular sleep times and wake up times can result in sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation can affect a child's developing brain.

#2. Irregular bedtimes can cause behavioral problems in younger children.

The disruption of circadian rhythms and resulting sleep deprivation impact the areas of the brain that regulate behavior. Studies have shown a dose response related to sleep schedule—children with irregular bedtimes exhibit more behavioral challenges; when bedtimes become more regular, behaviors improve. A few behavioral problems are oppositional behavior, acting out, and temper tantrums. Some children have wetting accidents when sleep deprived.

#3. Sleep deprivation in teens can lead to serious health and behavioral consequences.

About 70% of teens do not get the recommended eight to ten hours of sleep. This puts them at risk for irritability, depression, poor impulse control, and violent behavior. Thinking and decision-

making functions may be impaired. "Sleep-deprived teens have lower overall performance in everything from academics to athletics," cautions the National Sleep Foundation. When teens try to catch up on sleep by sleeping later and longer on the weekend, the circadian sleep/wake cycle is disrupted. It can take three or four nights for the body to readjust, and by that time the cycle starts all over again.

#4. Not enough sleep is linked to weight problems in children. Children who do not get enough sleep may be at risk for being overweight or obese.

#5. Disrupted sleep can make your child more susceptible to getting sick. When a child is sleep deprived, the body is not as well equipped to fight off illnesses when exposed to them.

Help Your Child by Supporting Good Sleep Habits

Parents play a key role in helping their child avoid sleep deprivation. You may be aware that your child should get the recommended

number of hours of sleep. But don't overlook the importance of a regular bedtime—even during the holidays and on weekends. If you are having trouble managing your child's behavior at bedtime, talk to your pediatrician or other health professional.

Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for helping your child establish habits that support good sleep:

- Know how many hours of sleep your child needs. Go to aapublications.org/news/2016/06/13/Sleep061316 for the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Talk to your child about the importance of getting enough sleep.
- Help your child keep a consistent sleep schedule during the school week, on weekends, and during holiday breaks. Set bedtimes, even for adolescents.
- Limit your child's use of electronic devices by setting a media curfew (turn devices off by a specific time) and place (not in his bedroom). Enforce no electronics or TV within two hours of bedtime. The light waves from TV and electronic devices are the same frequency that the body uses to reset the internal clock. This light basically tells the child that it is time to wake up.
- Be sure your child gets exercise during the day. Physical activity can help a child fall asleep more easily.
- Don't allow your child to eat or drink food or beverages that contain caffeine. Caffeine can interfere with sleep and cause nervousness. American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that children younger than 12 years old not consume caffeine.
- Maintain the same bedtime routine every night. This may include dinner, homework, a bath or shower, some reading, and going to bed. A routine primes the subconscious that sleep is imminent.

Sleep Facts

Sleep Deprivation is a Problem for Kids

6 out of 10 middle school kids don't get enough sleep.

7 out of 10 high schoolers don't get enough sleep.

Source: MMWR, cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6703a1.htm

How Much Sleep is Enough?

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that kids 6 to 12 years old sleep 9 - 12 hours per night and teens 13 to 18 years sleep 8 - 10 hours per night.

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events and destinations

53RD ANNUAL ZILKER HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

Dec. 1, 5 - 6 p.m.

Bring the entire family to the annual lighting of the holiday tree to kick off the season. Free public transportation.

Zilker Metropolitan Park
2100 Barton Springs Rd., Austin

<http://austintexas.gov/event/zilker-holiday-tree-lighting-ceremony-0>

55TH ANNUAL AUSTIN TRAIL OF LIGHTS

Dec. 10 - 23, 7 - 10 p.m.

Austin's largest holiday tradition and the 2nd largest event in the city, the Austin Trail of Lights, in the heart of Zilker Park, celebrates the unique spirit and people that make Austin, Austin. Fun activities for people of all ages and the entry is free for Dec. 10 - 12 and Dec. 15 - 18 to ensure that everyone can enjoy it. Dec. 11 is Hero Night, Dec. 12 is Movie Night, and Dec. 15 is UT night. Other nights, tickets starting at \$5 general admission. Every event is sure to make long-lasting memories with friends, family and neighbors from near and far.

2100 Barton Springs Rd., Austin

www.austrailoflights.org

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1120 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin 512-861-7040

2700 W. Anderson Ln., Austin 512-861-7030

www.drafthouse.com/family



GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT

Nov. 15 - Jan. 5

Don't miss all of the fun holiday events and activities offered at Gaylord Texan Resort.

There's no better way to celebrate the season than experiencing Lone Star Christmas in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Snow tubing, ice skating, gingerbread house making, breakfast with Charlie Brown, and more.

1501 Gaylord Tr., Grapevine, TX

817-778-1000

www.grapevinetexasusa.com/christmas-capital-of-texas/ice-lone-star-christmas/



HOLIDAY BAZAAR AT TREASURES CHARITY

Dec. 3, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

This upscale charity resale shop has furniture, books, appliances, decorations, trees, clothing and more benefitting the Round Rock Serving Center. Round Rock Serving Center offers much needed services to the community. Volunteer opportunities available.

1099 E. Main St., Round Rock

512-244-2431

www.rrasc.org

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN ELGIN

Dec. 7 Home For The Holidays and Hot Cocoa Stroll

Dec. 12 Sip Shop

Dec. 14 Art of Giving and Photos With Santa

Enjoy the Hot Cocoa Stroll, pictures with Santa, shopping, and more in historic Downtown Elgin. Stay late and watch the lighted Christmas Parade on Main Street, hosted by the Elgin Fire Department. Then visit the Live Nativity in Veterans' Memorial Park performed by St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Located 19 miles east of Austin on Hwy. 290.

Downtown Elgin

512-281-5724

www.elgintx.com

holiday camps and Fun Guide

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NOCHE NAVIDENA

Dec. 6, 5 - 9 p.m.

Free entertainment and fun for the entire family. Lots of giveaways! Christmas-themed activities and free photos with Santa.

2233 W. North Loop, Austin

www.univision.net

PLAYLAND SKATE CENTER

Dec. 20 - Jan. 6

(closed Christmas Eve and Day)

Playland provides family-oriented entertainment that entices customers to enjoy our affordable, safe skating environment. With extended hours during the holidays, this venue offers the finest in skating entertainment with an impressive light show, fog machine, and state-of-the-art sound system playing a wide variety of music. Austin's largest skating facility is 27,500 sq. ft.

8822 McCann Dr.

512-452-1901

www.playlandskatecenter.net



SANTA'S COMING TO PLAYMAZING

(Formerly Catch Air)

Dec. 13, 6 - 8 p.m., Round Rock

Dec. 20, 6 - 8 p.m., Austin

Santa will be visiting for photo opportunities during a fun "meet and greet" with the kiddos! We'll have some other special holiday things happening at both locations. This is included in the price of admission.

1401 S. Interstate 35 Hwy #130, Round Rock

737-444-2992

13450 N. Hwy 183, Ste. 107, Austin

512-697-8800

www.PlayMazing.fun

SUGAR AND SPICE RANCH

Nov. 1 - Dec 15

Experience what it's like to own your own horses and ranch for the weekend with your family! Book your family for a two- or three-day weekend packages. Their all-inclusive packages include lodging, all meals and snacks, tack, horses, lessons, and more.

Everyone gets to bunk together as a group in their beautiful bunk room.

884 Rikki Dr., Bandera, TX

830-460-8487

www.texashorsecamp.com



winter camps

BE MERRY & BRIGHT AT JUMP! GYMNASTICS

Dec. 30 – 31, Jan. 2, 3, 6, 7

Jump! Gymnastics is proud that we go the extra mile to keep your children safe. We take the time to research the latest and best ways to cater to your little's emotional needs.

Ages 3 - 10

2117 W. Anderson Ln., Austin

512-593-6226

6800 West Gate Blvd., Austin

512-593-6226

www.jump-austin.com



CODE GALAXY WINTER CAMPS

Dec. 23, 26, 27, 30, Jan. 2 - 3

Code Galaxy (formerly Launch Code After School) is offering Winter Break Day Camps in Robotics, App Development, Hacking Minecraft, and Junior Coding! Check out camp descriptions online at thecodegalaxy.com/camps/winter-camp.

Ages 5 - 14

3801 N. Capital of Texas Hwy Bldg. D-Ste 130, Austin

807 Rio Grande St., Austin

512-337-6624

www.thecodegalaxy.com



CORDOVAN ART SCHOOL'S FALL & WINTER ART CAMPS

Dec. and Jan. vary depending on location. Check website.

Cordovan is celebrating 10 years of creating artists! Our faculty of skilled artists and educators inspires creativity in painting, drawing, 3D art, watercolor, and other media. Enroll in a camp today!

Ages 5 - 12

200 Buttercup Creek Blvd. #122, Cedar Park
512-284-9874

3810 Gattis School Rd., #108, Round Rock
512-275-4040

8108 Mesa Dr., #B-102, Austin
737-300-1200

816 S. Main St., Georgetown
512-275-4040

www.cordovanartschool.com



COUNTRY HOME LEARNING CENTERS WINTER PROGRAM

Open during public school holidays except Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Throughout the holiday season, Country Home provides planned field trips for its school-age students.

Ages 5 - 13

6900 Escarpment Blvd., Austin

512-288-8220

13120 US Hwy 183 N, Austin

512-331-1441

www.countryhomelearningcenter.com

FANTASTIC MAGIC CAMP WINTER CAMP

Dec. 30 – Jan. 3

Every day at Fantastic Magic Camp is filled with magic, juggling, and puppetry. We open at 8 a.m. and the program starts at 9 a.m. Our day ends at 4 p.m. with pick up between 4 - 4:30 p.m. We offer an optional "rehearsal time" from 4-6 p.m. for an additional fee.

Ages 5 - 12

7500 Woodrow Ave, Austin

512-988-3045

www.magiccamp.com

KIDSACTING

Dec. 23, 24, 26, 27

Sound of Music

Dec. 30 – Jan. 3

Wizard of Oz

When School is OUT, we are IN with fun-filled camps! Sing, dance, act, play theatre games, enjoy face painting, and have a blast with crafts and the performing arts!

Ages 5 - 12

Center Theatre Stage, 2826 Real St., Austin
512-836-5437

www.kidsactingstudio.com

RIO VISTA FARM WINTER BREAK CAMP

Session I: Dec. 23, 24, 26, 27

Session II: Dec. 30, 31, Jan. 2, 3, 9

Instruction in English riding lessons and horse care. Campers leave with a respect for the hard work, dedication, and fun involved in working with horses. With van service from Westlake Hills, Rio Vista is located 10 miles from downtown Austin. Van fee.

Camps run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ages 7 - 16

10000 Fallwell Ln., Del Valle

512-247-2303

www.riovistafarm.net



STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS – AT THE MOVIES

Dec. 23 – Jan. 3

This Winter Break we will be investigating the many types of movies as well as the history of cinema. Each day, the children will discover a different type of movie through a variety of cooking, art, science, math, and literacy activities. From animation and westerns, to musicals and silent film, the campers will discover what makes each genre unique, as well as the similarities all types of cinema share. Join us this Winter Break at The Brainery™ as we take this trip into one of the most diverse and exciting forms of entertainment!

Ages 5 - 13

Locations may vary. Families can talk to their campus principal for more information.

512-459-0258

www.steppingstoneschool.com



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SWITCH WILLO HOLIDAY CAMP

Dec. 26 to Jan. 1

Teaching all skill levels with daily riding instruction, horse care lessons, proper barn safety and etiquette, horse shows, and arts and crafts. The camp culminates with a horse show and ribbon ceremony so parents can see what their children have learned and accomplished. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an option to extend to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ages 6 - 13
 4829 Switch Willo, Austin
 512-920-0554
www.switchwillostable.com



YMCA OF AUSTIN HOLIDAY CAMP — AMAZING RACE: WINTER EDITION

Dec. 23, 26, 27
Dec. 30, Jan. 2-3

Join us this winter break from Hays all the way to Round Rock on this AMAZING RACE: WINTER EDITION! From team building to “minute to win it,” your camper will “race” around the world’s mountain ranges engaging in different challenges facilitated by our amazing staff who will be the tour guides throughout this adventure!

Ages 5 - 12
 Locations in Hays, South Austin, East Austin, North Austin and Manor
 512-236-9622
www.austinyymca.org/programs/holiday-camps



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Ages 9 - 18
 5214 Burseson Rd. Suite 204, Austin
www.between-the-pages.org/camp

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 2430 Highway 39, Hunt, TX - girls
 830-238-4650
 612 FM 1340, Hunt, TX - boys
 830-238-4670

www.hohcamp.com
www.campstewart.com



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 320 Iwo Jima Blvd., Harlingen, TX
 956-423-6006

www.mma-tx.org



FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

Dealing with Holiday Stress

Q The holidays will be here soon. Every year I get stressed out before and during the holidays. I worry about who's coming to our house, what to cook, or how to get where we're going. I also worry about buying and wrapping presents, finances, and ongoing family issues. If something can be worried about regarding the holidays, I worry about it. What concerns me most is whether or not my stress will affect my children ages 17, 15, and 12. What can I do to better manage my anxiety during the holidays?

A. You're not alone. Most of our readers, and myself included, will need to work on reducing our holiday stressors. When we're stressed out, we tend to act in ways that negatively affect our children, family, and friends. It even affects strangers. Maybe we impatiently honk our car horn more. We listen less and react negatively more quickly. We problem solve less. We're not calm and approachable by others. The kids may whisper to each other, "Don't bother mom (or dad) now because she (or he) is stressed out." Here are some suggestions to help you keep stress in check:

1. Get enough sleep and rest – Staying up late so you can fit in more chores during the holidays means you don't function so well the next day. Plan some rest breaks during the day and have a regular bedtime, so you can get the amount of sleep you need to function at a maximum level. Your brain needs adequate rest to deal with things that tend to stress you.

2. Eat a healthy diet – Your body will fight off colds and flu and give you a better immune defense if you're eating good food including

protein, fruits, and vegetables. Cut back on alcohol, drink more water, eat less salt, sugar, and fat, and avoid a diet heavy in carbohydrates. Eating right is a way to help keep your gut microbes healthy. It's been found that our gut microbes talk to our brain. Let's keep that conversation working for us.

3. Plan ahead – Try eating healthy snacks before going to a party in order to minimize your need to indulge. Ahead of time, make a plan regarding what and how much you'll eat and drink. Could a sip or two of punch and a tiny bit of chocolate satisfy cravings or curiosity? During the holidays, there are many opportunities to plan ahead, including travel. If you are traveling during the holidays, planning far in advance helps reduce last minute stressors. If you're expecting people to stop by during the holidays, baking and freezing cookies or casseroles ahead of time also helps. Set the time and place early for celebrations with family and friends so you can plan for travel or prepare for visitors at home.

4. Keep your expectations realistic – Not everything will go as planned or as you want it to go. Realize you can focus on relationships and fun without everything being perfect.

5. Ask for and accept help – In your case, you have three children who can help you. Asking kids, friends, family, and others to help you provides an opportunity for bonding with them.

6. Budget – Create a budget for the holidays. Give some thought as to what you can afford. Find out what others would like as presents in your price range. Come up with gift guidelines, like buying three presents for kids: one to read,

one to wear, and one to satisfy a want. In addition to presents, food is another big budget item. I tend to want to cook three meats, meat substitutes for vegans, six kinds of vegetables, four kinds of desserts, and more. This gets expensive. Ask others to bring a dish and serve fewer choices. This also means less leftovers!

7. Take a time out and breathe deeply – When tempted to lash out or have a meltdown, just take time out and breathe deeply until you are ready to interact with others. You can take a moment to close your eyes and breathe deeply several times each day to keep yourself more relaxed.

8. Do something to help someone who really needs your help – You could enlist your kids to go to a nursing home and visit someone who has no one to visit them. Set this visit up with the home management before the visit. I'm sure you can identify many other ways to help someone else and involve your children in good holiday season deeds. Your children can also come up with ideas for good deeds.

You can also try some of the following activities when you want to prevent stress or feeling anxious: hug more, laugh more (even at things you do), listen to music, take walks, journal, squeeze a rubber ball, or do positive affirmations. You don't have to do all of these activities. Choose activities you think will help you.

As a parent, you are the role model for your children in how to deal successfully with stress. Hopefully the suggestions above will help you. If you just can't get your stress level and anxiety down, a visit to a mental health professional could be just what you need.



Keep It Light: 10 Tips To Simplify The Season

BY JANEEN LEWIS

It's supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year, full of friends, family, and festivities. But research confirms a different reality. Most Americans have elevated stress levels during the holiday season. Instead of being full of good tidings and cheer, families often feel drained of time, energy, and peace. Stressors such as crowds and lines, party planning, financial concerns, and trying to make the holidays perfect can make the end of the year hectic and overwhelming. These ten tips will simplify the season and make it merry and bright.

1. Focus on your reason for the season.

Why are you celebrating? Is it for spiritual reasons? Maybe you want to spend time with friends and family or enjoy the spirit of giving during the holidays. Keep what is most important about the holidays at the center of your celebration. Reconsider any task or commitment that takes your time, energy, enjoyment, or finances away from your reason for celebrating in the first place.

2. Set firm boundaries around your time.

With all the holiday volunteering, office parties, and family gatherings, it's easy to overcommit yourself. This year pick one

project you with which you want to volunteer your time. Pick a variety of simple acts of kindness you can do with your family.

3. Let go of Martha.

One of the most stress-relieving things you can do at the holidays is set the bar a little lower. Martha Stewart is an elegant hostess, but you don't have to do everything the way Martha would to have a beautiful season. Embrace simpler decorations, meals, and gift giving than you have in the past. Try quick shortcuts or holiday hacks. If you let go of expectations, you may be pleasantly surprised to find yourself content with a celebration you hadn't even envisioned.

4. Farm out your to-do list.

At the beginning of the season make a to-do list of what you want to accomplish. If you find that it is too long for the amount of time that you have, consider delegating some of the items. If you contribute to a Christmas club at your bank, you might even consider setting aside some of the money specifically so you can hire others to help with your holiday tasks. Have groceries delivered and buy gifts online to avoid the holiday rush. Grocery stores also have a plethora of pre-packaged holiday foods that make delicious sides, cutting down on your time in the kitchen. Buy desserts from your local bakery, and shop at stores that provide wrapping stations. No time to clean the house? Hire a cleaning service just for the holiday season or ask for this service as a gift.

5. Gift others with experiences.

Shopping at the holidays can be time-consuming and nerve-wracking with crowds and traffic. If you don't start early, coveted items sell out, leaving you scrambling for another gift. Ask those you give gifts to if there is an experience they would like to have. Tickets to the theatre? Family passes to an amusement park or aquarium? A relaxing day at the spa? Experiences give friends and family the opportunity to make memories and pamper themselves. They are unique gifts that are much-appreciated.

6. Set a holiday "tea" time.

Recent research shows that drinking green and black tea has many health benefits, including promoting relaxation. Herbal teas, while not true tea, still help with anxiety and stress. In keeping with the holiday spirit, sip some calming peppermint tea, or try chamomile, lemon balm, or passion flower.

7. Take a hike.

One way to tell your stress to take a hike might be to actually take one yourself. When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins that trigger a happier, more relaxed mood. Aerobic exercise outdoors away from screens, phones, and to-do lists can clear your mind and help you keep what's important in perspective.

8. Reconnect with long lost friends and relatives.

Meet with an old friend you haven't talked to for years and catch up. Take some time off and visit relatives you miss seeing on a regular basis. Surrounding yourself with people you enjoy is powerful when you want to combat holiday stress.

9. Do something kind for someone else.

You don't have to overcommit yourself to a charity or fundraiser to be kind. Small random acts of kindness can make someone's day. Let someone in front of you at the supermarket line or let someone drive their car in front of yours in the parking lot. Send an anonymous Christmas card with cash or a gift card to a college student or elderly person that you know is struggling financially. Throw change in Salvation Army buckets when you pass them. Having a kind spirit chases away stress and keeps the season warm and filled with hope.

10. Celebrate memories more than material possessions.

Material gifts are nice, but most of us quickly forget gifts we have received in past years. The thing that we remember the most are the memories we make with friends and family. Make some happy memories this holiday season and bid stress "goodbye."

Janeen Lewis is a freelance journalist, teacher and mom to Andrew and Gracie. She has been published in several parenting publications across the country and in Chicken Soup for the Soul: Christmas Magic.

10 Holiday Hacks to Make the Season Bright

1. If you have an artificial tree, wrap the center pole with a strand of lights before you add the branches. This will make the tree shine brighter from the inside.
2. Use a wastebasket to hold rolls of wrapping paper.
3. Use egg cartons to store small ornaments and ornament hooks. Use wine boxes to store larger, fragile ornaments.
4. Spread a thick layer of whipped cream on a cookie sheet. Freeze it for several hours and remove. Cut hearts out of the whipped cream with a cookie cutter and serve in hot cocoa.
5. Put a ball of sugar cookie dough between two sheets of wax paper. Roll it out between the papers so the dough doesn't stick to the pin. While it's still in the wax paper, put the flattened cookie dough in the refrigerator until you are ready to cut cookies out.
6. Store cookies in an airtight tin with flour tortillas between layers to keep cookies from drying out. You can also use a slice of bread.
7. If you don't want to put nail holes in your fireplace mantel, fit a tension rod in the wood frame and hang your stockings with shower hooks. You can also purchase nail free stocking holder hooks.
8. Hang lightweight ornaments on long ribbons from your light fixture or chandelier to make elegant holiday decorations.
9. Skip expensive candles and potpourri. Add water and natural ingredients like apples, oranges, cinnamon sticks, or cloves to a crockpot and heat. Enjoy holiday scents that aren't overpowering.
10. To keep Christmas lights from getting tangled, wrap them around a clothes hanger or power cord holder.



ASUNTOS FAMILIARES

BETTY RICHARDSON

Richardson, PhD, RNC, LPC, LMFT, es una psicoterapeuta situada en Austin.

Lidiar con el estrés de los días festivos

PLCada año me estreso antes y durante las festividades. Me preocupa quién viene a nuestra casa, qué cocinar o cómo llegar a dónde vamos. También me preocupo por comprar y envolver regalos, las finanzas y los problemas familiares en curso. Lo que me concierne más es si mi estrés afectará o no a mis hijos más jóvenes de 17, 15 y 12 años de edad. ¿Qué puedo hacer para controlar mejor mi ansiedad durante los días festivos?

R. Cuando estamos estresados, tendemos a actuar de maneras que afectan negativamente a nuestros hijos, familiares y amigos. Incluso afecta a extraños. Tal vez impacientemente toquemos más la bocina de nuestro auto. Escuchamos menos y reaccionamos negativamente más rápido. Resolvemos menos los problemas. No somos tranquilos y accesibles para los demás. Los niños pueden susurrar unos a otros: "No molesten a mamá (o papá) ahora porque ella (o él) está estresada". Entonces, ¿qué podemos hacer para reducir nuestros niveles de estrés y hacer que los días festivos sean más agradables o al menos factible para nosotros y nuestras familias y amigos? Aquí hay algunas sugerencias para ayudarle a controlar el estrés:

1. Duerma y descansa lo suficiente – Planee algunos descansos durante el día y tenga una hora regular para irse a dormir, para que pueda obtener la cantidad de sueño que necesita para funcionar al día siguiente a un nivel máximo. Quedarse despierta hasta tarde para poder realizar más tareas durante los días festivos significa que no funcionará muy bien al día siguiente.

2. Consuma una dieta saludable – Su cuerpo combatirá los resfriados y la gripe y le dará una mejor defensa inmunológica si está comiendo alimentos buenos, que incluye proteínas, frutas y verduras. Reduzca el consumo de alcohol, beba más agua, coma menos sal, azúcar y grasa, y evite una dieta rica en carbohidratos. Comer bien es una manera de ayudar a mantener saludables los microbios intestinales. Se ha descubierto que nuestros microbios intestinales hablan con nuestro cerebro.

3. Planee con anticipación – Intente comer bocadillos saludables antes de ir a una fiesta para minimizar su necesidad de disfrutar demasiado la comida. Con tiempo, haga un plan sobre qué y cuánto comerá y beberá. ¿Podría un sorbo o dos de ponche y un poco de chocolate satisfacer los antojos o la curiosidad? Durante los días festivos, hay muchas oportunidades para planificar con tiempo, incluyendo los viajes. Si viaja durante los días festivos, planificar con mucha anticipación ayuda a reducir los factores de estrés de última hora. Si espera tener gente en su casa durante los días festivos, hornear y congelar galletas o comida por adelantado también ayuda. Establezca la hora y el lugar con tiempo para las celebraciones con la familia y los amigos para que pueda planificar el viaje o prepararse para las visitas en casa.

4. Mantenga sus expectativas realistas – No todo saldrá según lo planeado o como usted quiere que suceda. Dese cuenta de que puede concentrarse en la convivencia y la diversión sin que todo sea perfecto.

5. Pida y acepte ayuda – En su caso, tiene tres hijos que pueden ayudarle. Pedirles a los niños, amigos, familiares y otras personas que le ayuden, proporciona una oportunidad para convivir con ellos.

6. Presupuesto – Realice un presupuesto para los días festivos. Piense en lo que puede pagar. Entérese lo que otros desean como regalos pero que este en su margen de precios. Yo he llevado a personas conmigo para andar y mirar en las tiendas. Cuando escucho algo como "Me encanta eso". Tomo nota de ello si está en mi margen de precios y vuelvo más tarde para comprarlo. Además de los regalos, la comida es otro elemento de gran presupuesto. Esto se vuelve caro. Pedir ayuda a otros para que traigan un platillo y servir menos opciones puede ayudar. También significa menos sobras.

7. Tómese un tiempo y respire profundamente – Cuando tenga la tentación de arremeter o tener una crisis, solo tómese un tiempo y respire profundamente hasta que esté lista para interactuar con los demás. Puede tomarse un momento para cerrar los ojos y respirar profundamente varias veces al día para mantenerse más relajada.

8. Haga algo para ayudar a alguien que realmente necesita su ayuda – Usted puede pedirles a sus hijos que se arreglen para que vayan a un hogar de ancianos y visitar a una persona que no tiene a nadie que lo visite. Programe esta visita con la administración del hogar antes de llevar a sus hijos. Estoy segura de que puede pensar en muchas otras formas de ayudar a otras personas e involucrar a sus hijos en las buenas acciones de la temporada festiva. Sus hijos también pueden proponer ideas para hacer buenas obras.

También puede intentar algunas de las siguientes actividades cuando desee evitar el estrés o sentirse ansiosa: abrazar más, reír más (incluso por las cosas que hace), escuchar música, caminar, escribir un diario, presionar una pelota antiestrés o hacer afirmaciones positivas. No tiene que hacer todas estas actividades. Elija actividades que crea que le ayudarán.



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TEXAS CENTRAL | 5AM - 7AM

EDICIÓN DIGITAL: AUSTIN | 11:30AM

NOTICIAS UNIVISION 62 | 5PM

**LIVE NEWS
MONDAY - SUNDAY**

NOTICIAS UNIVISION 62 | 10PM

NOTICIAS UNIVISION 62:
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December

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On Stage

A Christmas Carol: Reduced, Recycled & Reused. Dec. 7-15. School's out for the holidays, but Timmy Cratchit is stuck at Scrooge's Plastic Emporium where his mom labors overtime on a last-minute deadline. Tim and his cousins work on a school project while Mr. Scrooge eavesdrops and learns about the serious environmental problems caused by the plastics his company produces. This new family musical combines the suspense and tradition of the beloved Dickens tale with new hope for the future. All ages will groove to Laura Freeman's original live music, dance, puppets, and more! Who knows? It may even snow! Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W. 18th St. From \$10. scottishritetheater.org or 512-472-5436.

Jungalbook. Through Dec. 14. Adventure awaits in a jungle where danger lurks in every tree and only the brave dare to enter! This energetic and creative reimagining of the timeless tale propels the audience through a world ruled by the wild. ZACH Theatre, 202 S. Lamar Blvd. From \$19. tickets.zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

Wake Up, Brother Bear. Through Dec. 21. A unique, intimate production geared toward children ages 6 and under. Watch Brother Bear and Sister Bear experience a full year of glorious seasons: together we see a waterfall melt, meet a butterfly, chase an elusive fish and skate on an icy pond. Children are invited to join the action to help create magical moments. ZACH Theatre, 202 S. Lamar Blvd. From \$13. tickets.zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

Museum Exhibits

Nacimiento Popular. Dec. 13 to Jan. 7, 2020. A striking Mexican nativity scene donated by Edwin R. Jordan. It is the largest museum display in Texas, with over 400 pieces that reflect the way in which nacimiento-making has transformed within Mexico to integrate uniquely Mexican motifs, styles, and iconography. Mexic-Arte Museum, 419 Congress Ave. mexic-artemuseum.org.

Medieval Monsters: Terrors, Aliens, Wonders. Through Jan. 12, 2020. From griffins and giants to demons and dragons, monsters have enthralled people throughout time. In medieval art and literature, these fanciful creatures give form to fears, curiosities, and fantasies of the unfamiliar and the unknown. Blanton Museum of Art, 200 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. blantonmuseum.org. Free with regular museum admission.

Motown: The Sound of Young America. Through Jan. 2020. Explore the music, culture and politics of 1960s soul and how it still influences us today. LBJ Presidential Library, 2313 Red River St. Adult admission is \$10. Youth admission (13-18) is \$3. Child admission (12 and under) is free. lbjlibrary.org or 512-721-0200.

Modernist Networks. Through Jan. 5, 2020. A rare opportunity to see letters, books, and manuscripts by Modernist writers such as T. S. Eliot, Stéphane Mallarmé, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Joseph Conrad, and others from a private collection. Free. Harry Ransom Center, 300 West 21st St. hrc.utexas.edu or 512-471-8944.

Family Events

Sun 1

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. A daily holiday market featuring and supporting local artists. 6100 Airport Blvd. FREE. bluegeniebazaar.com.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. A must-do for locals and visitors alike. 525 N. Lamar Blvd. \$10. wholefoodsmarket.com.

Christmas Bash 2019. 10 a.m. Lively Middle School, 201 E. Mary St. FREE. www.facebook.com/events/1381472765344430/.

Playland Skate Center Skate Lessons. 11 to 11:45 a.m. Playland Skate Center offers FREE skate lessons every Sunday morning at 8822 McCann Dr. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

Heritage House Open-First Sunday. 1 to 4 p.m. Visit the Heritage House Museum and learn about local history! Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

The Muppet Christmas Carol. 1:30 p.m. Join the Bullock Museum for a special multi-sensory holiday screening of The Muppet Christmas Carol. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. \$5-8. thistoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746.

Kids Chess Open Play. 1:30 to 3 p.m. Learn the basics of how to play chess, or just meet up with other chess fans to play a few games. Cedar Park Public Library, 550 Discovery Blvd. cedarparktexas.gov. 512-401-5600.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 2 to 4:30 p.m. Written by Jean Shepherd. Georgetown Palace Theater, 810 South Austin Avenue. visit.georgetown.org.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 2 to 6 p.m. Hill Country Galleria will host a Holiday Village on the lawn at 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE. hillcountrygalleria.com. 512-382-9017.

Chess Club. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Ages 5-18 Learn to play chess! Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT

Visit austinfamily.com and click "Submit your event." The deadline is the 5th of the month preceding the month of the event. If your event charges more than \$15, send details to kaye2003@austinfamily.com for approval.

53rd Annual Zilker Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. 5:30 p.m. Austin's annual Zilker Holiday Tree Lighting kicks off the season of festivities in Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. FREE. austintexas.gov.

A Christmas Story: The Musical at The Palace. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 at 2 p.m. for details.

Frozen 2. Screenings at 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, Olaf and Sven leave Arendelle to travel to an ancient, autumn-bound forest. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. thestoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746.

Mon 2

The Nutcracker. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Metamorphosis Dance. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Baby Bloomers - Winter Wonderland. 9 a.m. Winter is here, and we're ready to celebrate! Thinkery, 1830 Simond Avenue. thinkeryaustin.org.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

STEM Club. 3:30 to 4 p.m. STEM at the library offers opportunities for kids 5 to 8 to creatively explore science, technology,

engineering, and math. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. FREE. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 3:30 p.m. A Literature Live! Production. Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

LEGO Lab. 4 to 5 p.m. LEGO free-play and WeDo 2.0 Robotics for ages 5+. Sign up for a Robot Kit starting at 3:30pm. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Free Play @ Laura's. 4 to 7 p.m. Make Mondays fun days! Meet up with your friends at the world's best play date. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. FREE. westbanklibrary.com.

Rockin' Kids Club: LEGO(R) free-build (ages 5+). 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. It's LEGO® week at the Round Rock Public Library. We invite elementary students to come build and share. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Frozen 2. Screenings at 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Tue 3

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 10 a.m. A Literature Live! Production. Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Spanish Circle Time. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Ages 0-3. Learn basic concepts and Spanish vocabulary through songs and play followed by social time. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Music Class. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Children ages 0-5 will love this interactive music class presented by Armstrong Community Music. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Homeschool Happenings. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Enrichment activities and social time for homeschoolers of all ages. Georgetown Public Library, 402 W 8th St. visit.georgetown.org.

Teen Social Hour. 3 to 5 p.m. Tweens and teens ages 10-17 are invited to hang out with their friends. Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Board with Books. 6 to 8:45 p.m. Do you love playing board games? Then come to Board with Books! Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Gingerbread House Gift Boxes @ Westbank. 6 p.m. Today we'll be making adorable gift boxes that look like gingerbread



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houses. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Frozen 2. Screenings at 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Wed 4

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Circle Time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Ages 0-3. Wednesdays at 10:30am. Learn through song and play in a first classroom experience. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Dance a Story with Ballet Austin. 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Dance a Story with Ballet Austin. Ages 3-5. Preregistration Required. Introduce your child to the joy of ballet. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. 5th St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Crafternoon. 4 p.m. All ages welcome. Drop by the library and make a craft while you search for books. Ruiz Branch, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. 3 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Switch It Up Teen Gaming. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Meet in the Teen Space to play Nintendo Switch and tabletop games. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

STEAM Studio. 6 to 7 p.m. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math activities with a creative twist. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Dickens Day Celebration. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Celebrate author Charles Dickens with a retelling of A Christmas Carol by storyteller Gary Whitaker. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Frozen 2. Screenings at 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Thu 5

Living History Days. 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. You never know who you'll meet around the next corner! Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Play Time. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Children up to 5 years of age with an adult are welcome to

attend. Free play. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Kids Crafternoon. 3:30 to 4 p.m. Fun activities that encompass a variety of art forms. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 3:30 p.m. A Literature Live! Production. Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Chess Club. 4 to 5 p.m. Come join the St. John's Chess Club! Learn to play or improve your game. St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 4 to 7 p.m. Hill Country Galleria will host a Holiday Village on the lawn at 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE. hillcountrygalleria.com. 512-382-9017.

Starry Nights at Girlstart. 5:30 p.m. Girlstart STEM Center. FREE. Girlstart.org.

Cookie Decorating. 6 to 8 p.m. 'Tis the season! Elgin Recreational Center, 361 North Hwy 95. elgintx.com.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. Luminations, our naturally magical winter event, is back! Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. wildflower.org. 512-232-0200

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Frozen 2. Screenings at 1:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Fri 6

Christmas Family Night. 6:30 to 10 p.m. Join us for the annual Christmas Family Night, Round Rock's annual holiday tradition. Prete Main Street Plaza, 221 East Main Street. roundrocktexas.gov.

Cowboy Christmas Breakfast. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Join us for a free community event and don't forget your unwrapped toy! SouthStar Bank in Leander, 10737 East Crystal Falls Parkway. cedarparkchamber.org.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Music & Movement. 11 a.m. Recommended for ages 3-5. Bring your favorite little one to stretch, sing, dance & more. Old Quarry Branch, 7051 Village Center Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

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Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop.

4 to 8 p.m. Hill Country Galleria will host a Holiday Village on the lawn at 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE. hillcountrygalleria.com. 512-382-9017.

Polar Express 3D. 4 p.m. On Christmas Eve, a young boy embarks on a magical adventure to the North Pole on the Polar Express. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746.

Georgetown's 39th Annual Christmas Stroll. 5 to 9 p.m. 116 W. 8th Street, Georgetown, TX 78626. FREE. visit.georgetown.org.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Tree Lighting & Santa's Workshop. 6:30 to 9 p.m. Heritage Oak Park, Cedar Park. cedarparkfun.com.

30th Annual A Dickens Christmas in Lockhart. 7 to 9 p.m. At the courthouse, Dr. Eugene Clark Library, 217 S. Main St. FREE. lockhartchamber.com.

Puppet Show: The Year Santa Almost Forgot Christmas. 7 to 7:30 p.m. Visit the library for free performances. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sat 7

Junior Ranger Session: Bluebird House Maintenance. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. It's time to check on the bluebird house. FREE. Rabb House, 151 N.A.W. Grimes Blvd, Round Rock. roundrocktexas.gov.

Round Rock Area Pokemon Club. 9 to 10:30 a.m. Pokemon players, make new friends, and share your love of Pokemon. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Austin ISD Middle School Fair. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Families of current and future middle school students are invited. Webb Middle School, 601 E. St. Johns Ave. FREE. austinisd.org.

Breakfast with Santa. 9 to 11 a.m. Join us for a fun morning with Santa. Calvary Baptist Church, 3005 TX 150 Loop Bastrop, FREE. business.bastropchamber.com.

30th Annual A Dickens Christmas. 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Dr. Eugene Clark Library, 217 S. Main St. and Downtown Square, Lockhart. FREE. lockhartchamber.com.

DeSTEMber Extravaganza. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Join Girlstart for free, frosty hands-on STEM fun for the whole family. Girlstart, 1400 W Anderson Ln. FREE. girlstart.org. 512-916-4775.

The 7th Annual Future Stars Day. 9:30 a.m. Spark Learning is hosting their 7th annual Future Stars Sports Day. St. Louis Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Road. FREE.

Music & Movement. 10 a.m. Dance, sing, and play with your family at Creative Action. Creative Action, 1023 Springdale Road. FREE. creativeaction.org.

Georgetown's 39th Annual Christmas Stroll. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. 116 W. 8th Street. FREE. visit.georgetown.org.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

24th Annual German Texan Christmas Market. 10 a.m. It's the most wonderful time of the year. Join us for kids' activities and more. German Texan Heritage Society, 507 E. 10th St. FREE. germantexans.org.

Wholesome Generation Winter Fair and Market. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Our holistic schoolhouse is inviting the public for a super fun Winter Fair at 12251 Running Bird Ln., Austin. FREE. wholesomegeneration.org. 512-368-3885.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 12 to 8 p.m. Hill Country Galleria will host a Holiday Village on the




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lawn at 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE.
hillcountrygalleria.com. 512-382-9017.

Capital Area Halal Festival. 12 p.m. A family friendly festival featuring local vendors and artisans to celebrate diversity. Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Rd. FREE.
austintexas.org.

Board with Books. 1 to 4 p.m. All ages welcome. Do you love playing board games? Then come to Board with Books. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. 5th St. FREE.
library.austintexas.gov.

Yule Ball. 3 to 6 p.m. Come celebrate the "family edition" of the Worthwich School of Wizardry's 4th Annual Yule Ball inspired by the world of Harry Potter. Sterling Events Center, 6134 E Hwy 290. \$15.
worthwich.com/yuleball.

Brush Square Holiday Candlelight Celebration. 3 p.m. Bring the whole family (pets too) and join Brush Square Museums to usher in the holiday season. Brush Square Park, 5th St. and Neches. FREE.
austintexas.gov.

Koo Koo Kanga Roo. 3 p.m. Koo Koo Kanga Roo is playing live! The Domain Stage, 11410 Century Oaks Terrace. FREE.
kookookangaroo.com.

The Nutcracker Ballet. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Presented by Round Rock Repertory Dance Centre and Emerge Dance Company. St

Michael's Catholic Academy, 3000 Barton Creek Blvd. \$14-25. brownpapertickets.com.

2019 Austin Trail of Lights Fun Run. 6 to 10 p.m. Walk or Run. Then Have Some Fun! Zilker Metropolitan Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road. eventbrite.com.

Elgin VFD Lighted Christmas Parade. 6 to 7 p.m. Parade starts at dusk. elgintx.com.

Austin Trail of Lights Fun Run. 6 to 10 p.m. The Fun Run includes a 2.1-mile course that starts at the iconic Zilker Holiday Tree. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. \$15-75.
eventbrite.com.

Cocoa with Cowboys. 6 to 8 p.m. Join us for hot cocoa and ginger cookies served by authentic-looking cowboys. Williamson Museum, 716 S. Austin Ave., Georgetown. FREE.
williamsonmuseum.org.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sun 8

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Free Skate Lessons at Playland Skate Center. 11 to 11:45 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Family Day. 12 p.m. Join us for Family Day at Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum, 605 Azie Morton Road. umlaufsculpture.org.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Center Stage. 1 to 3 p.m. This scrumdiddlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18.
brownpapertickets.com.

Kids Chess Open Play. 1:30 to 3 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

A Christmas Story - The Musical at The Palace. See Sun. 1 for details.

In-School Collaborative Concert. 2 p.m. McCallum Fine Arts Academy, 5600 Sunshine Dr. FREE. austinchambermusic.org.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 2 to 6 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Toon Tunes - Free Symphony Concert. 3 to 4 p.m. Live performance from Cinematic Symphony of some of your favorite music from animated films. Klett Performing Arts Center, 2211 N. Austin Ave., Georgetown. FREE.
cinematicsymphony.com. 512-922-9054.

Inclusive Board Game Group. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Join us for Wells Branch Community Library's inclusive Board Game Group. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

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HOHCamp.com CampStewart.com

Chess Club. 4 to 5:30 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Cedar Park. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. This scumdidlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18. brownpapertickets.com.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Dance Discovery and Avery Ranch Dance & Music 2019 Nutcracker Suite. 7 to 8 p.m. Austin Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W 18th St. \$10-15. brownpapertickets.com.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Mon 9

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Early Literacy Playgroup. 11 a.m. Recommended for ages 3-5. Playing is learning! Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 11 a.m. A Literature Live! Production. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

STEM Club. 3:30 to 4 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Crafternoon. 3:30 p.m. Drop by the library and make a craft while you search for books, movies and music. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

LEGO Lab. 4 to 5 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Free Play @ Laura's. 4 to 7 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Rockin' Kids Club: Gingerbread House Art (ages 5+). 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. It's art week at Round Rock Public Library's Rockin' Kids Club! Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Tue 10

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Spanish Circle Time. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Storytime: A Pirate's Holiday. 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. Children up to age 5 with an adult are welcome. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pflugerville Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Music Class. See Tues. 3 for details.

Homeschool Teens. 2 to 3 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Teen Social Hour. 3 to 5 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Lego Lab. 3:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Tween Hangout Night. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Each month tweens can drop in for a different activity. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pflugerville Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Dance Discovery and Avery Ranch Dance & Music 2019 Nutcracker Suite. 6:30-7:30 p.m. See Sun. 8 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. Austin's largest holiday tradition and the second largest event in the city. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. FREE. austintrailoflights.org.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Westlake/SOH Tuesday. 7 to 9 p.m. This scumdidlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18. brownpapertickets.com.



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VILLAGE 2700 W. ANDERSON LN. STE. #701

Wed 11

Puppet Show: The Year Santa Almost Forgot Christmas. 9:30 to 10 a.m. Visit the Library for free performances. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Circle Time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Ages 0-3. Learn through song and play in a first classroom experience. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Homeschool Social. 11:30 a.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up The Carver Branch invites all families who homeschool. Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

STEM Builder Lab. 3:30 p.m. STEM Builder Lab Get on your problem-solving hat as you engineer unique structures using a variety Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 3:30 p.m. A Literature Live! Production. North Village Branch, 2505 Steck Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. 4 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! tell Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Switch It Up Teen Gaming. 4:30-5:30 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

STEAM Studio. 6-7 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Dance Discovery and Avery Ranch Dance & Music 2019 Nutcracker Suite. 6:30-7:30 p.m. See Sun. 8 for details.

Tween Holiday Hangout. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tweens 8-12 can create holiday crafts while enjoying refreshments. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

Austin Trail of Lights 2019: Heroes Night. 7 p.m. Join us as we honor veterans, active military, and first responders (police, fire, EMS). Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. austintrailoflights.org.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Thu 12

Puppet Show: The Year Santa Almost Forgot Christmas. 9:30 to 10 a.m. See Wed. 11 for details.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Little Texans: Home Away From Home. 10 a.m. Imagine making your home on a faraway planet. What will you take and who will you meet? Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746.

Play Time. 10:30-11:30 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Music Class. See Tues. 3 for details.

Early Literacy Playgroup. 11 a.m. Recommended for ages 3-5. Playing is learning! Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckolls Crossing Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Let's All Play - Board Game Day. 3 to 5 p.m. St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Teen Social Hour. 3 to 5 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Kids Crafternoon. 3:30-4 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Chess Club. 4 to 5 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 4 to 7 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

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Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 6:30 p.m. A Literature Live! Production. Manchaca Road Branch, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 512-974-8700. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Movies in the Park at the Trail of Lights. 7:30 p.m. We've partnered again with Austin Parks Foundation. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. austinparks.org. FREE

Fri 13

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Early Literacy Playgroup. 11 a.m. Recommended for ages 3-5. Playing is learning! North Village Branch, 2505 Steck Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Perler Bead Palooza. 3 p.m. Make amazing pixelated creations using fusible beads. St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Animanga Club. 3 p.m. Recommended for ages 13-18. Do you like reading manga or

watching anime? Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. 3:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! Manchaca Road Branch, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 512-974-8700. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Holiday Crafts and Cocoa. 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. All ages welcome. Enjoy making a variety of holiday crafts while sipping cocoa. Ruiz Branch, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 4 to 8 p.m. See Fri. 6 for details.

Swim with Santa. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Dive into the holiday season with Santa at the Georgetown Recreation Center Indoor Pool, 1003 N Austin Ave. visit.georgetown.org.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 12 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Shoal Creek. 7 to 9 p.m. This scrumdiddlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18. brownpapertickets.com.

Movie In The Park Series. 7:30 p.m. Elf (PG). Popcorn and lemonade will be provided. Dottie Jordan Recreation Center, 2803 Loyola Lane. FREE. austintexas.gov.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sat 14

Photos with Santa. 8 to 10 a.m. Enjoy Christmas carols and a custom hot cocoa bar, write your letter to Santa and mail it to the North Pole. Elgin Parks and Recreation Center, 361 North Hwy 95. elgintx.com.

Round Rock Area Pokemon Club. 9 to 10:30 a.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

Blair Woods Family Nature Day: Celebrate Urban Birds. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Join Travis Audubon for a morning of educational activities. travisaudubon.org.

Kidz Korner. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Looking for a fun activity for the entire family? Williamson Museum, 716 S. Austin Ave. visit.georgetown.org.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Stories from Japan. 10:30 a.m. Experienced educator Nancy Simpson will share Japanese tales told in English with puppets,



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toys, and more. Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 11 a.m. A Literature Live! Production. Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Snow Day. 12 to 5 p.m. Whatever the weather, there's SNOW in the forecast! Downtown Bastrop. Cityofbastrop.org.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 12 to 8 p.m. See Sat. 12 for details.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Center Stage Saturday. 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. This scrumdiddlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18. brownpapertickets.com.

Discovery! @ Westbank. 1 to 3 p.m. The Discovery program offers hands-on exploring for young learners in many different topics. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Holiday Open House. 1 to 4 p.m. Celebrate the holiday season with music, crafts, and more. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

5th Annual Holiday Screening of Elf @ Laura's. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Don't be a "cotton-headed ninnny muggins"! Laura Bush

Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. westbanklibrary.com.

Holiday Celebration. 2 to 3:30 p.m. All ages welcome. Ready to decorate gift bags and gift boxes or create holiday cards? Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Hooves and Read. 2 to 3 p.m. Kids can practice their reading skills with miniature therapy horses from Northwind Farm. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Holiday Slime Saturday. 2 p.m. All ages welcome. Drop by the library and make some holiday-themed slime. Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Afternoon with Santa. 2 to 4 p.m. Come spend an afternoon with Santa. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Willy Wonka Young Children's Oak Hill. 6 to 8 p.m. This scrumdiddlyumptious musical is guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth. Center Stage, 2826 Real Street. \$0-18. brownpapertickets.com.

Polar Express Pajamarama. 6 to 6:30 p.m. Cocoa, cookies, crafts, a visit from Santa, and a bedtime reading of The Polar Express. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 12 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sun 15

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Free Skate Lessons at Playland Skate Center. 11 to 11:45 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Kids Chess Open Play. 1:30 to 3 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

A Christmas Story - The Musical at The Palace. 2 to 4:30 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 2 to 6 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Chess Club. 4 to 5:30 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Luminations at the Wildflower Center. 6 p.m. See Thurs. 12 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.



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Mon 16

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Homeschool Show & Tell. 12:45 p.m. Share your hobby or superpower! Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Teen Council. 3 to 4:30 p.m. Reserved for tweens and teens ages 10-14. Help your librarians choose the best events. Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. 3:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! Little Walnut Creek Branch, 835 W. Rundberg Ln. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

STEM Club. 3:30 to 4 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

LEGO Lab (ages 5+). 4 to 5 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Free Play @ Laura's. 4 to 7 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

Tue 17

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Spanish Circle Time. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Music Class. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Music & Movement. 11 a.m. Recommended for ages 3-5. Bring your favorite little one to stretch, sing, dance, and more. Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Homeschool Happenings. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Homeschool Teens. 2 to 3 p.m. The Homeschool Teen group meets once a week to socialize, play games, make crafts, and more. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pflugger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Teen Social Hour. 3 to 5 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Lego Lab. 3:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! Pleasant Hill Branch, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Crafternoon. 4 p.m. All ages welcome. Drop by the library and make a craft while you

search for books. Manchaca Road Branch, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 512-974-8700. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Snowflake Crafts. 6 to 8 p.m. Join us for some more craft fun! Fleming Community Center, 802 N Ave C. elgintexas.com.

Board with Books. 6 to 8:45 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

Wed 18

Santa Visits the Library. 9:30 to 11 a.m. Santa is visiting the library! 221 E. Main Street. roundrocktexas.gov.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Play Day. 11 a.m. Early Literacy Play for Story Time. All ages welcome. Playing is learning! University Hills Branch, 4721 Loyola Ln. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. 2 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. With Legos, you can build anything you can imagine! St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Crafternoon. 3 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

The Elves and the Shoemaker. 3:30 p.m. A Literature Live! Production. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. 5th St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Switch It Up Teen Gaming. 4:30-5:30 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Tween Scene. 4:30-5:15 p.m. Monthly activity for tweens ages 8-12. Materials will be provided while supplies last. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pflugger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

STEAM Studio. 6-7 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Thu 19

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Play Time. 10:30-11:30 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Let's All Play - Board Game Day. 3 to 5 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Teen Social Hour. 3 to 5 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Kids Crafternoon. 3:30 to 4 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Crafternoon. 3:30 p.m. All ages welcome. Drop by the library and make a craft while you search for books. Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Chess Club. 4 to 5 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 4 to 7 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details. Perler Bead Palooza. 6 to 8 p.m. Recommended for ages 5+. Make amazing pixelated creations using fusible beads. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse. 6 to 9 p.m. Happy Holidays! Austin School of Film, 2200 Tillery Street. FREE. eventbrite.com.

Happy Holiday Movie. 6:30 p.m. Santa Claus Conquers the Martians (1964). All ages welcome. Do you love bad cinema? Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Harry Potter Holiday Party. (ages 8-18) 6:30 to 8 p.m. Recommended for ages 8-18. Pre-registration required. The Round Rock Public Library meeting room will transform into Hogwarts at 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.org.

Stargazing at Garey Park. 7 to 9 p.m. Come enjoy the stars at Garey Park! 6450 RM 2243. facebook.com.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A 17th-Century Venetian Christmas. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. St. Louis Catholic Church Chapel, 7601 Burnet Road. \$10-45. brownpapertickets.com.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Science Thursday. Discover the science of the Story of Texas! Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com. 512-936-8746

Fri 20

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 12 to 11 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9-13. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

TGIF Movie with Popcorn. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Family-friendly classic movie with popcorn. Bring a drink! Elgin Public Library, 404 N. Main St. elgintx.com.

Maker Movie Matinee. 3:30 to 5 p.m. Nightmare Before Christmas (PG). Recommended for ages 5 and up. Get crafty! St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Movie Matinee. 3:30 p.m. Movie Matinee: The Secret Life of Pets 2 (PG) All ages welcome. Ruiz Branch, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Club. 4 p.m. Do you love Legos? Join us for a free play session. Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. FREE. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 4 to 8 p.m. See Fri. 6 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A 17th-Century Venetian Christmas. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. O Magnum Mysterium: A 17th Century Venetian Christmas. St. Louis Catholic Church Chapel, 7601 Burnet Road. \$10-45. brownpapertickets.com.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sat 21

Round Rock Area Pokemon Club. 9 to 10:30 a.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

Lego Lab. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Lego Fun in the 3rd Floor Atrium. You can build anything you can imagine! Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Holiday Sweater Saturday. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wear your holiday sweater while you shop in historic downtown Elgin and you may win prizes and special discounts. elgin.tx.com.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 12 to 8 p.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 1 to 11 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9-13. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sun 22

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Free Skate Lessons at Playland Skate Center. 11 to 11:45 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Lego Lab. 12 to 6 p.m. Lego Fun in the 3rd Floor Atrium. You can build anything you can imagine! Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Winter Break Skate. 12 to 5 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9-13. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

Kids Chess Open Play. 1:30 to 3 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 2 to 6 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Inclusive Board Game Group. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Join us for Wells Branch Community Library's inclusive board game group. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Chess Club. 4 to 5:30 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Mon 23

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 12 to 6 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9-13. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 12 to 8 p.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

55th Annual Austin Trail of Lights. 7 to 10 p.m. See Tues. 10 for details.

Tue 24

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Hill Country Galleria Holiday Village and Santa's Workshop. 12 to 4 p.m. Hill Country Galleria will host a Holiday Village on the lawn at 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE. hillcountrygalleria.com. 512-382-9017.

Wed 25

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Thu 26

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 12 to 9 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9-13. playlandskatecenter.net. 512-452-1901.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Fri 27

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

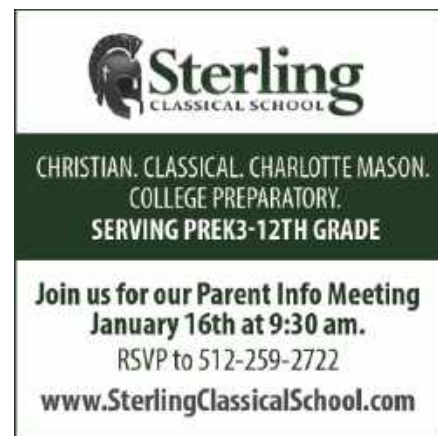
Winter Break Skate. 12-11 p.m. See Fri. 20 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sat 28

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 1 to 11 p.m. See Sat. 21 for details.



A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Sun 29

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Free Skate Lessons at Playland Skate Center. 11 to 11:45 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 1 to 11 p.m. See Sat. 21 for details.

Kids Chess Open Play. 1:30 to 3 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 2 to 4:30 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

A Christmas Story: The Musical. 7:30 to 10 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Mon 30

New Year's Swim Challenge. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Bring your friends and kick start your New Year's fitness resolution with a fun swim challenge! Swim Center, 3103 Lakeway Blvd.

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Winter Break Skate. 12-9 p.m. See Thurs. 26 for details.

LEGO Lab. 4 to 5 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Tue 31

Ice Skating on the Plaza. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Spanish Circle Time. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Homeschool Happenings. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Noon Year's Party. 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Something for everyone! Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Winter Break Skate. 12 to 6 p.m. See Mon. 23 for details.

Story Times

Sun 1

Sensory Sundays @ Laura's. 11 a.m. Sensory Storytime is now Sensory Sundays. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. westbanklibrary.com.

Bow Wow Reading. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. With The Dog Alliance, Bow Wow Reading allows children to practice reading to a dog! Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885.

Mon 2

Baby Time for babies 3 - 12 months old. 10 to 10:30 a.m. This program is for babies 3 to 12 months old, and their siblings, with an adult. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Preschool Story Time. 10:30 a.m. Preschoolers are invited to enjoy stories, fingerplays, poems, songs and crafts on Mondays at Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885.

Infant Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 a.m. You're never too young for storytime! Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. FREE. westbanklibrary.com.

Baby Time for babies 12 - 18 months old. 11 to 11:30 a.m. This program is for babies 12 to 18 months old, and their siblings, with an adult. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Toddler Storytime. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Interactive story times for babies and toddlers who aren't quite ready for a traditional story time. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Bow Wow Readers. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Kids in grades K-3 are invited to read to a certified Bow Wow Reading Dog. Registration required. Cedar Park Public Library, 550 Discovery Blvd. cedarparktexas.gov. 512-401-5600.

Paws & Read. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Recommended for children in grades K to 2. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Pajama Storytime. 6:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and under. Feel free to wear pajamas to this family event. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Nutcracker Ballet Storytime at the Library (ages 3-6). 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. Metamorphosis dancers perform The Nutcracker Suite. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Tues 3

Bilingual Storytime. 10 to 10:30 a.m. Children up to age 5 with an adult are welcome. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Toddler Story Time. 10:30 a.m. Toddlers are invited to attend story time with books, finger plays, flannel board stories and Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. FREE. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885.

Pajama Storytime. 6:30 to 7 p.m. Young children and their caregivers can enjoy an evening story time followed by a snack. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Wed 4

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. The Round Rock Public Library presents Babytime, a storytime program for babies and their Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Toddler time. 9:30 to 10 a.m. A reading activity for children ages 18 months. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Storytime with a Friendly Witch. 10 to 10:30 a.m. Children build early literacy and social skills through books, music, rhymes, and movement. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.



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Preschool Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Baby Story Time. 10:30 a.m. Bounce, sing, and clap with your child in their first library experience. Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohmans Crossing. laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885.

Bow Wow Reading with Quintana Roo. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. Certified Austin Dog Alliance. Little Walnut Creek Branch, 835 W. Rundberg Ln. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Thu 5

Babytime (birth - 12 months). 9:30 to 10 a.m. The Round Rock Public Library presents a storytime program for babies and their caregivers. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Preschool Storytime. 9:30 to 10 a.m. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Storytime @ Laura's. 10:30 a.m. Join Ms. Leah for storytime every Thursday. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. westbanklibrary.com.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. A reading activity for children ages 18 months. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

¡Hola, Hola! Spanish Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Toddler Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Songs, stories, and social time for toddlers ages 18-36 months. No registration. FREE. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Dog Storytime @ Laura's. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Join us for Dog Storytime every Thursday, when sweet service dog Blossom will visit Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. westbanklibrary.com.

Fri 6

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Baby Sign Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Using sign language helps both parents to bond earlier with their baby and reduces tears. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Sat 7

Bow Wow. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. A program that allows new readers to practice their reading with a dog. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Baby Time: Saturdays. 10:30 to 11 a.m. This program is for babies 3-18 months old, and their siblings, with an adult. Pflugerville

Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Fur-Ever Friends R.E.A.D Dogs. 12 to 2 p.m. The R.E.A.D. Georgetown Public Library, 402 W 8th St. visit.georgetown.org.

Paws & Read. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Sun 8

Sensory Sundays @ Laura's. 11 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Mon 9

Baby Time for babies 3 - 12 months old. 10 to 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Preschool Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Infant Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Baby Time for babies 12 - 18 months old. See Mon. 2 for details.

Toddler Storytime. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Bow Wow Readers. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Paws & Read. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Pajama Storytime. 6:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Evening Storytime. 6:30 to 7 p.m. The Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St., Room A. roundrocktexas.gov.

Tues 10

Bilingual Storytime. 10 to 10:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Spanish Bilingual Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. The second Tuesday of each month. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

Toddler Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for details.

Wed 11

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Toddler time. 9:30 to 10 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Storytime with a Friendly Witch. 10 to 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 a.m. Join Ms. Maureen for Storytime every Wednesday. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Baby Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Bow Wow Reading with Quintana Roo. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Reading Unleashed. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Recommended for ages 5 and up. Practice

your reading skills with a furry friend! Manchaca Road Branch, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 512-974-8700. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Thu 12

Babytime (birth - 12 months). 9:30 to 10 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Preschool Storytime. 9:30 to 10 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Yoga Storytime. 10:30 a.m. Recommended for ages 5 and under. Practice your mindfulness, hear a story, and learn. St. John Branch, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

¡Hola, Hola! Spanish Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Toddler Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Dog Storytime @ Laura's. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Fri 13

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for details.

Baby Sign Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Fri. 6 for details.

Bow Wow Reading with Wrangler the Dog. 4 to 5 p.m. Bow Wow Reading with Wrangler the Dog Recommended for ages 5 and up. Certified Austin Dog Alliance Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Sat 14

Baby Time: Saturdays. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

Fur-Ever Friends R.E.A.D Dogs. 12 to 2 p.m. See Sat. 7 for details.

Reading Mini-Horse. 12 to 1 p.m. Children can gain confidence in reading through sessions with a therapy mini-horse. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Storytime with Jingles the Elf. 1 to 1:30 p.m. Children up to age 8 with an adult are welcome to attend. Have you ever heard an elf tell a story? Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Paws & Read. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Sun 15

Sensory Sundays @ Laura's. 11 a.m. See Sun. 1 for details.

Mon 16

Baby Time for babies 3 - 12 months old. 10 to 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Preschool Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2 for details.

Infant Storytime @ Westbank. 10:30 a.m.

See Mon. 2 for details.

Baby Time for babies 12 - 18 months old.

See Mon. 2 for details.

Toddler Storytime. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. See

Mon. 2 for details.

Bow Wow Readers. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon.

2 for details.

Paws & Read. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon. 2 for

details.

Tues 17

Bilingual Storytime. 10 to 10:30 a.m. See

Tues. 3 for details.

Toddler Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for

details.

Bow Wow Reading with Aussie. 3:30 p.m.

Recommended for ages 5 and up. Certified Austin Dog Alliance. North Village Branch, 2505 Steck Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Pajamas & Cocoa Storytime @ Westbank.

6 to 6:45 p.m. A storytime for a parliament of night owls of all ages, along with their night owl caregivers! Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

PJ Story Time. 6:15 p.m. Wear your pajamas,

have some milk and cookies, and snuggle in for a bedtime story. Lake Travis Community Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing. FREE.

laketravislibrary.org. 512-263-2885

Pajama Storytime. 6:30 to 7 p.m. See Tues. 3

for details.

Wed 18

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to

10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Toddler time. 9:30 to 10 a.m. See Wed. 4 for

details.

Storytime with a Friendly Witch. 10 to 10:30

a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See

Wed. 4 for details.

Baby Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for

details.

American Sign Language Storytime @

Westbank. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. An American Sign Language interpreter will be joining our regularly scheduled storytime. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

Bow Wow Reading with Quintana Roo.

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Thu 19

Babytime (birth - 12 months). 9:30 to 10 a.m.

See Thurs. 5 for details.

Preschool Storytime. 9:30 to 10 a.m. See

Thurs. 5 for details.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for

details.

Toddler Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs.

5 for details.

Fri 20

Babytime (ages 12 - 18 months). 9:30 to

10:30 a.m. See Wed. 4 for details.

Toddler time. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Thurs. 5 for

details.

Baby Sign Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Fri.

6 for details.

Sat 21

Bow Wow. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. See Sat. 7 for

details.

Fur-Ever Friends R.E.A.D Dogs. 12 to 2 p.m.

See Sat. 7 for details.

Reading Dog. 12 to 1 p.m. One-on-one

reading practice time with a therapy dog. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Mon 23

Preschool Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2

for details.

Special Storytime: Mr. Willoughby's

Christmas Tree. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Bow Wow Readers. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon.

2 for details.

Tues 24

Toddler Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for

details.

Fri 27

Baby Sign Storytime. 10:30 to 11 a.m. See Fri.

6 for details.

Sat 28

Fur-Ever Friends R.E.A.D Dogs. 12 to 2 p.m.

See Sat. 7 for details.

Reading Dog. 12 to 1 p.m. See Sat. 21 for

details.

Mon 30

Preschool Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Mon. 2

for details.

Toddler Storytime. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. See

Mon. 2 for details.

Bow Wow Readers. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. See Mon.

2 for details.

Tues 31

Toddler Story Time. 10:30 a.m. See Tues. 3 for

details.



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PIENSA POSITIVO



by Leslie Montoya, life coach and host of Despierta Austin. See *Austin Family* monthly on Despierta Austin.

MANEJO MENTAL

De acuerdo a expertos en el comportamiento humano, el ser humano tiene aproximadamente 50,000 pensamientos al día. Reflexiona, ¿cuántos de estos pensamientos, que tienes al día, eliges conscientemente? Es en la mente donde inicia la planeación de un día productivo. En cierta ocasión se acercó una madre muy afligida platicandome lo mala madre que sentía ser porque nunca sentía que el tiempo que pasaba con sus hijos era suficiente. Después de revisar sus actividades y la manera en cómo repartía su tiempo física y mentalmente durante el día, se dio cuenta que al llegar a casa después del trabajo dedicaba aproximadamente 30 minutos pensando en los pendientes del trabajo que tenía que hacer para el día siguiente, en lugar de disfrutar en cuerpo y mente ese tiempo con sus hijos. Se dio cuenta que esos 30 minutos de trabajo mental en organizar su agenda para el día siguiente, podía hacerlo durante las mañanas. La mujer manejaba todos los días por 45 minutos aproximadamente para llegar al trabajo. Así que se dio cuenta que podía usar su enfoque total para planear su día de actividades labores, mientras manejaba al trabajo, en vez de hacerlo durante el tiempo con sus hijos. Es necesario estar consciente del manejo de nuestros pensamientos de otra manera viviremos en la falsa ilusión de estar fuera de control y faltos de tiempo. ¡Piensa con proposito!

MENTAL MANAGEMENT

According to experts, human beings have approximately 50,000 thoughts a day. Reflect on the following: How many of your daily thoughts are consciously chosen? It is in our minds where the planning of a productive day starts. On one occasion, a very distressed mother approached me telling me how bad a mother she was because she never felt that the time she spent with her children was enough. After a detailed review of the way she distributed her time physically and mentally throughout the day, she surprisingly realized that she spent at least 30 minutes thinking about planning her activities for the next day, instead of enjoying that time with her kids. She realized that those 30 minutes of mental work could be done in the mornings while driving to work. She would spend approximately 45 minutes every morning commuting to work. Therefore, she discovered that she could plan her work activities while driving to work instead of doing it while she was with her kids. It is important to be aware of the way we manage our thoughts. Otherwise, we live in the fake illusion of being out of control and lacking quality time. Think with purpose!

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KID ZONE

Advent Calendar

This December make a cute Advent calendar you and your loved ones can use to count down the days to Christmas by reading sweet messages hidden behind paper. You can also adapt this project for other favorite holidays.

Materials:

- Glue or tape
- Two sheets of card stock or construction paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons, or markers
- Scissors
- Stickers (optional)



Instructions:

- Using your crayon or marker, make a numbered calendar on the top sheet of construction paper, counting five or six days across.
- Using the scissors, cut little squares around each number. But be sure to leave one edge uncut so it can fold open to reveal the message underneath.
- Next, lay the calendar on top of the second sheet of paper and glue or tape down alongside the outside edges, connecting the sheets together.
- Under each flap for each day, write something sweet— from a compliment to something you love to do with them. Ideas may include your favorite meal they make, bedtime stories, or how much they mean to you in various ways.



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SMART SCREEN TIME

I have few memories more evocative of the winter holidays than gatherings around the television to watch holiday specials. And those ads! They were sending messages straight to my pleasure zones of holiday anticipation. Hot Wheels. Lone Ranger action figures. Dolly Madison snack cakes. Two of those items still exist, so I'm not that old.

It's different in this era of streaming abundance where you can call up your favorites on demand, instead of tuning in on a specific night or it's gone until the following year. Savvy producers have seen ratings (and advertising) gold in holiday specials, so now there is a supersaturation of options, including some not-so-great updates to the classics. On the plus side, we can now access programming for Eid, Chanukah, and other special winter events. And new gems do pop up every now and then.

This year, we'll whittle down a reasonable list of favorites, then schedule family viewing nights, complete with popcorn and hot chocolate, and hope for weather cold enough to light the fireplace. We'll save time to browse for new titles. And I'll let down my guard long enough to sprinkle in a few ads.

Austin PBS has a wonderful lineup of (ad-free) holiday programs for the entire family at austinpbs.org/holiday.

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

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CARRIE TAYLOR

Carrie Taylor is a freelance writer, editor, and mother of three.



A Tale of Christmas Decorations

You know you have a problem with Christmas decorations when a deciding factor in buying a new house is whether or not it has the appropriate yard space to display your decorations. Before my husband and I purchased our new home several months ago, he agonized over this detail. He'd say, "How will I choose what to put up each year? It's such a waste. SUCH a waste to not be able to show them all off... especially the bear."

Yes, The Bear. More on that later.

When we finally did buy a house, our new three-car-garage was stuffed to the brim with boxes of Christmas decorations, including our growing wood piece collection. The collection is so large, our new neighbors even commented, "Wow – we thought y'all moved here for more space!" What a great first impression. Our toddler was running and screaming through their yard as they likely concluded we were hoarders.

Alas, there is not room this year to set up all of our decorations. Including the more than

30-piece wood set. And it shames me to say I contributed to our hoard. Ever since I met my husband, a Baylor alumnus and certified Baylor "super fan," he has fantasized about buying a wood piece decoration depicting Santa Clause riding a giant brown bear. The brown bear would be raised up on its haunches, and Santa's hand would be in the shape of the Baylor bear claw, the university's hand signal.

My response? Ab.so.lute.ly.NOT. I always thought it was an antic to get me riled up. Until Christmas 2018. He had worn me down enough to get me through the doors of that small, south Texas shop owned by a particularly skilled artisan capable of realizing this horrible Santa-bear monstrosity. I went in with my mind made up.

But it turns out I can be bought. After purchasing an 11-piece wooden nativity set, we ordered The Bear. And even though our new yard is small, chances are The Bear will find a spot every year.



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