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December 2018

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Austin is 4 years old, and he's never naughty, always nice. Photo by Carrie Taylor.

How is it already time to say good-bye to 2018? What a nifty trick of time that it passes by so swiftly as we traipse through our routine trivialities. As the saying goes, "The days are long, but the years are short." That utterance was made in reference to raising children, but I think it's just as applicable to other pursuits – say, to crafting the contents of a magazine.

So to me, the key is in finding a way to hold those everyday moments dear. To mindfully cherish the commonplace, before I look up to find another year is gone. I plan to spend my last month of 2018 in reflection and gratitude.

I hope you each find time to luxuriate in your family's holiday traditions. Savor the time off from work and school. Revel in lively celebrations. Hug your loved ones tight. Eat a little too much. And allow me to extend an earnest thanks to you, our



## EDITOR'S NOTE

SHERIDA MOCK

*Mock is an award-winning writer and the mother of two daughters.*

esteemed readers. We see you, and we're here to listen. Your feedback and suggestions – whether through email, social media or phone calls – are deeply appreciated and highly regarded. Please reach out and let us know how we can serve you better.

Happy Holidays!

# austinFAMILY®

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# Play it product recalls **SAFE**

## Government Recalls Infant Carriers, Electric Skateboards and Slap Bracelets



Gold, Inc. is recalling about 22,000 **infant carriers** because the buckles on the infant carriers can break, posing a fall hazard to children. The recall involves Eddie Bauer brand fabric infant carriers. Affected units were sold at Target stores nationwide and online between December 2017 and August

2018 for about \$70. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled carriers and contact Gold, Inc. to verify that the product is subject to this recall. Once the product is verified, consumers will receive replacement products of comparable value or a full refund.

Yvolve Sports is recalling about 10,000 **electric skateboards** because the tire on the skateboard can deflate, posing a fall hazard to the user. The recall involves the Neon Nitro 8, a self-balancing, single-wheeled, battery-powered electric skateboard. Affected units were sold nationwide at Walmart and Toys "R" Us and online at amazon.com between October 2017 and September 2018 for about \$500.

Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled skateboards and contact Yvolve Sports to receive a new, permanent warning label and updated instructions on how to properly inflate the tire.



Fantasia Accessories is recalling about 22,500 **slap bracelets** because the bracelet's metal wristband can pierce the protective fabric around it and expose sharp edges, posing a laceration hazard to young children. The recall involves children's plush critter slap bracelets in panda, unicorn and heart designs. Affected units were sold at Target stores nationwide and

online in July 2018 for about \$5. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled bracelets, take them away from young children and contact Fantasia Accessories to receive a free replacement product.

*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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## Shopping for Art



The Cherrywood Art Fair runs Dec. 8 - 9. Photo courtesy of the Chula League.

This month, several seasonal venues are offering a uniquely Austin shopping experience, with handmade products from artists and live music.

Blue Genie Art Bazaar, open Nov. 23 – Dec. 24, showcases the work of over 200 artists and artisans. Now in its 18th year, the Bazaar runs seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (except Dec. 24, when it closes at 6 p.m.). Admission and parking are free. For more information, visit [bluegenieartbazaar.com](http://bluegenieartbazaar.com).

The Cherrywood Art Fair, open Dec. 8 – 9, features local artists, live music and kids' activities. A tradition since 2002, the fair is open both days from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission and parking are free. Proceeds benefit the Little Artist BIG ARTIST program. For more information, visit [chulaleague.org](http://chulaleague.org).

The Armadillo Christmas Bazaar, open Dec. 13 – 24, features fine art and live music from more than 37 acts. Now in its 43rd year, the bazaar is open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is \$10 for anyone over 12. Paid parking is available. For more information, visit [armadillobazaar.com](http://armadillobazaar.com).

All three venues are participating in the Passport to Art. Pick up a passport at any venue and visit all three to enter a drawing for a prize.

## Must-Do This

# December

3

**Holiday Stroll**  
along Congress Ave.

10-23

**Trail of Lights**  
at Zilker Park

31

**Austin's New Year**  
at Vic Mathias Shores



Stepping Stone School has a new location in the Mueller community. Photo courtesy of Stepping Stone School.

## Childcare Opening

Stepping Stone School has announced the opening of its newest early care and education campus in Austin's Mueller community. The campus opened on Oct. 29 and highlights "The Pioneers of Flight," giving children a glimpse into the history of how flight shaped civilization. Serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 years, the campus offers naturally-lit classrooms, shaded outdoor play areas and enhanced security.

"Research has demonstrated that children enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs continue to reap the benefits long into their educational careers," says Rhonda Paver, founder and executive director of Stepping Stone School. "We look forward to a wonderful partnership with each and every family."



Bank of America's Student Leaders Program culminates in a leadership summit in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of Bank of America.



## Student Leaders

The application period for Bank of America's Student Leaders Program is open now through Feb. 1, 2019. The program connects community-minded high school juniors and seniors to employment, skills development and service. Awardees receive paid summer internships with local nonprofits and participate in a national leadership summit in Washington, D.C.

Del Valle High School senior Aaron Allen participated in the 2018 program, which included an internship with Communities in Schools. As a person with autism, Allen says the program taught him lots of skills, one of which was to function independently. "The Leadership Summit was the first time I have been away from home, my parents and my service dog, Roxi," says Allen, whose leadership classmates elected him to deliver closing remarks at the summit.

Bank of America focuses on selecting a diverse group for the program, says Nikki Graham, Austin Market President for Bank of America. "It's important we pull together a group of students diverse not only in gender, race, ethnicity and religion, but also in their way of thinking," Graham says. For more information, visit [bankofamerica.com/studentleaders](http://bankofamerica.com/studentleaders).

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## Substance Abuse

Texans Standing Tall has updated the app that connects communities with underage alcohol prevention programs in their areas. The interactive tool identifies programs by region, community size and substance focus, such as alcohol or prescription drugs. Initially, the app listed 50 coalitions

across Texas. The update adds more than 20 more coalitions to the tool.

“Texas leads the nation in the number of drunk driving crashes,” says Nicole Holt, CEO of Texans Standing Tall. “We hope people will use the tool to connect with a local coalition doing work in their community.”

The online, searchable tool was made possible in large part through a traffic safety grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. For more information, visit [texansstandingtall.org](http://texansstandingtall.org).

## School Expansion

Redeemer Lutheran School has opened a new cafeteria building to seat 300 students for lunch. The expansion also includes a nurse’s office and a nursery for the adjacent Redeemer Lutheran Church. The existing cafeteria has been renovated to house pre-K and Kinder Bridge classrooms. The new building also provides state-of-the-art sound and lighting to accommodate 500 guests for performances. The school’s first production will be Mary Poppins this month.



Performing student groups have new room to show off their talents at Redeemer Lutheran School. Photo courtesy of Redeemer Lutheran School.

# by the numbers



**\$35,000**

Cost of gifts in the 12 Days of Christmas song

Source: PNC Financial Services



**1967**

Year of first holiday tree lighting in Zilker Park

Source: City of Austin



**2 million**

Lights in the Trail of Lights displays

Source: [Austintrailoflights.org](http://Austintrailoflights.org)



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Latinitas's Startup Chica conference serves girls ages 9 to 18. Photo by Daniela Lastra.

## Young Entrepreneurs

Latinitas, an Austin-based nonprofit, held its annual Startup Chica conference in October. The conference teaches girls ages 9 to 18 how to solve social issues with innovative ideas and how to turn those ideas into products and apps they then pitch to a panel of judges. The full-day conference took place at the McCombs School of Business at UT Austin.

"Startup Chica 2018 is about recognizing that Austin's startup ecosystem is bigger than just the incubators and venture capitalists," says Laura Donnelly, Latinitas founder and CEO. "It's about channeling the support of individual founders, community volunteers and corporate partners like eBay to inspire the next generation of innovators."

The organization also recently opened a new headquarters with a move to east Austin's Springdale General development. Latinitas launched 16 years ago at UT Austin and has expanded to include chapters in Dallas, Houston, El Paso, McAllen, San Antonio and Las Cruces, NM.



A new splash pad feature at Pease Park will be about three times larger than the existing one. Rendering courtesy of Pease Park Conservancy.

## Park Transformation

The southern end of Pease Park will receive a major overhaul starting in 2020. Pease Park Conservancy has announced the design plans for the 13 southernmost acres, labeled Kingsbury Commons. The conservancy, in partnership with the City of Austin and Austin-based Ten Eyck Landscape Architects, plan to create a recreational hub for park goers.

"This project will transform the lower 13 acres of the park, while maintaining its natural integrity and historic character," says Heath Riddles, Pease Park Conservancy CEO. Highlights of the renovation include new children's play areas, a larger splash pad, restored picnic tables, new benches, new basketball and volleyball courts, improved accessibility and a new multi-use facility. The project is made possible in part by a \$9.7 million gift from the Moody Foundation. For more information, visit [peasepark.org](http://peasepark.org).

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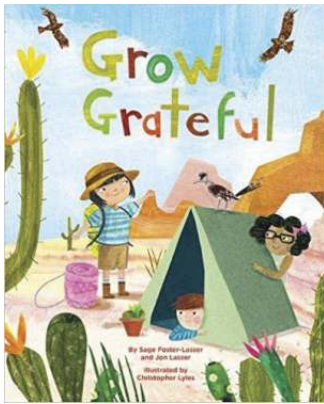
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## Career Exploration

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has announced a statewide career exploration campaign and website called “Jobs Y’all: Your Career. Your Story.” The campaign hopes to inspire young Texans to discover and explore the state’s in-demand industries and learn about skills needed to enter the workforce. The website introduces users to eight growth industries, a career explorer app and online resources.

“There are a range of education and training pathways that lead to high-growth, high-wage opportunities,” says Julian Alvarez, TWC Commissioner Representing Labor. “Jobs Y’all will emphasize that young adults can make informed choices about whether to pursue a high school diploma, industry-recognized certification or a degree from a post-secondary institution.” For more information, visit [jobsyall.com](http://jobsyall.com).



## Local Reads

A father and daughter have teamed up to write a book about gratitude. *Grow Grateful*, released in October, is a picture book that takes readers on a camping trip with main character Kiko. Co-author Jon Lasser, PhD, is a psychologist, school psychologist, professor and associate dean for research at Texas State University in San Marcos. His daughter, Sage, is an undergraduate psychology student at UT Austin.

*Who Stole My Child? Parenting Through the Four Stages of Adolescence*, released in November, offers insight and actionable advice for bewildered parents seeking to cope with development in children ages 8 to 18. Author Carl Pickhardt is an Austin-based psychologist who has spent over 30 years counseling parents.

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## Fundraising for Children

COVER 3 hosted its annual golf classic benefiting Partnerships for Children in October at Avery Ranch Golf Club. The event raised over \$400,000 to benefit the local nonprofit, which provides critical resources to abused and neglected Central Texas children. Participants included former NFL players Quan Cosby and Kenny Sims, former Travis County Sheriff Greg Hamilton and 1300 The Zone personalities Chip Brown and Michael Hardge.

All proceeds will directly support the core programs, including the Rainbow Room of essential items for children in crisis, the Holiday Wishes program, the YES mentorship program and the Heart Gallery exhibit that raises awareness of older children, sibling groups and children with special needs waiting to be adopted.



Golfers participating in the COVER 3 Golf Classic raised over \$400,000 for Partnerships for Children. Photo by Natalie Hefner.

## Moving Up

Creative Action, a group that provides art programs for children, has announced it will move location in late December from its current site on MLK Blvd. to a facility on the Springdale General campus. The new space will be nearly one-third larger and allow space for a visual arts studio, digital media lab and teaching artist workroom. The site will also be home base for future community events.

“Our programming and budget has more than doubled in the last four years,” says Karen LaShelle, executive director of Creative Action. “Due to the additional square footage and strong community partners already housed at Springdale General, we are confident the relocation will allow us to serve more of the Greater Austin area.” For more information, visit [creativeaction.org](http://creativeaction.org).



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# S-T-R-E-T-C-H Your Holiday Dollar and Survive the Season with Your Finances Intact

BY KIMBERLY BLAKER



The average American spends roughly \$900 on gifts during the holiday season, according to a 2016 study by American Research Group, Inc. Add to this the holiday cards, decorating, baking and holiday dinners, and it can add up to a big chunk of change.

For many families, holiday spending sets them back financially for months to follow, if not longer. Credit cards make it easy to overspend, leaving families to suffer the consequences later. The problem with credit cards isn't just the monthly payments. It's the long-term cost from accrued interest.

So, what can you do to ensure you start the new year without new debt? Here are a few tips to help you hang on to more dough while still spreading cheer.

**Craft a holiday budget.** Include in your budget not only gifts, food and

decorations, but also holiday cards, postage for those cards, charitable donations, wrapping supplies and babysitters for parties and shopping trips. Once you've listed all your expenses, review them and decide where you can cut some costs.

**Reduce gift expenses.** Most people can spend less on gifts than they envision. Gifts to extended family and friends are an excellent place to start. Talk to those with whom you exchange gifts, and see if they'll agree to set a dollar limit or even forgo the gift exchange altogether. Another option that works well for families and groups is to reduce the number of gifts purchased by drawing names, organizing a Secret Santa or holding a white elephant exchange.

**Wrap up savings.** Pass over the expensive wrapping paper and go for simple kraft paper or white butcher paper in economical jumbo rolls. Use simple,

affordable baker's twine rather than fancy satin ribbon. Or reuse gift bags from last year. And this year, take advantage of post-holiday sales to stock up on next year's wrapping supplies.

### **Think value, not dollars spent.**

Decide in advance on a gift value for each recipient. For example, let's say you've decided to spend \$50 on a gift for your sister. Now, rather than buying her something that's on sale for \$50 but actually worth \$75, stick to the value. Buy something that's worth \$50 but on sale for \$35. This is a good strategy for shaving a lot of expense.

### **Shell out less on postage.**

Do you usually send out more holiday cards than you receive? Opt instead for a phone call during the holiday season for those you don't talk to often. It will cost you nothing and have more meaning. Then, mail cards only to those who send you a card.

**Cut back on the baking.** When was the last time you heard someone complain of a shortage of holiday goodies? Probably never. Most of us eat far more than we'd like, just because it's there. If you find yourself irresistibly drawn to the kitchen, go ahead and scratch that creative itch, and then divide the batches into smaller amounts to hand out as gifts. A small stack of cookies wrapped lovingly can convey your holiday sentiments as easily as a giant tin.

**Pinch pennies with a potluck.** Rather than playing head chef when you host a party, let your guests contribute to the bounty. Offer to provide one or two main dishes, and ask everyone to bring a specific type of appetizer, side dish or dessert to avoid duplicates.

**Save on sitters.** To eliminate the cost of a babysitter, offer to exchange babysitting with a neighbor or friend, so each of you can attend a holiday party or do some efficient holiday shopping without the kids.

**Scale back on extras.** Now is the time to scour your personal and family habits to pare down the unnecessary perks to which you've become accustomed, like lattes at the coffee shop and eating out instead of cooking at home.

**Plan your shopping before you head out.** Do research online to find the best deals on the items on your shopping list. If you can't find a good deal on something, consider an alternative. Also, keep an eye out for sale ads and check the "coupon" page of the store websites you plan to shop.

**Avoid buying on credit.** If possible, leave credit cards at home when you go shopping, to avoid impulse purchases. Many people spend far more than they plan on by purchasing unnecessary "bargains" they just can't resist. But if you do use your credit card, try to make a serious effort to double or even triple the monthly payments when that first bill arrives, so you can reduce the interest you'll pay; this will get the debt off your books more quickly.

Ultimately, the holiday season is not about how much you spend. It's about cherishing your loved ones and showing them you care. Keep that in mind, and your bank account will thank you well into 2019.

---

*Kimberly Blaker is a freelance writer and the author of a kid's STEM book, Horoscopes: Reality or Trickery?*



# Drunk Driving Accidents: Is Your Teen at Risk?

BY BRITTANY COTTON

Being the parent of a teen driver may be a big source of daily stress and worry. While having a teen driver can free up some of the drive time you used to devote to shuttling kids to and from events, it can be difficult to hand over the keys and let your teen out on his or her own.

For one thing, you can't control the behavior of others on the road. Even when your newly licensed driver is safe, responsible and has an impeccable driving record, they're not immune from common roadway hazards, like bad weather, distracted drivers and impaired drivers.

While your teen may know the serious consequences and dangers of underage drinking, he or she may still fall victim to the irresponsible choices made by another driver. As a parent of a teen driver, here's what you should know about teens and drunk driving accidents in Texas.

## Stats In Central Texas

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, in 2017, there were a total of 62 drivers in the state who were under the age of 21, were alcohol-impaired and caused a fatal crash. Out of that total, 26 of the drivers were in rural areas, and 36 were in urban areas.

See the sidebar to this article for a list of DUI-related fatalities of individuals under the age of 21, broken down by counties in central Texas. As you take a look at the statistics for each county, you may feel a bit of relief, knowing there were no teens involved in a fatal drunk driving accident in many of the counties (perhaps where you live).

Although the central counties in Texas have fewer casualties than other areas of the state, your teen is always at risk of being in an alcohol-related accident, even if he or she doesn't drive under the influence.

### Drunk-Driving Fatalities Caused by Teens Under Age 21

# Fatalities ....	Central Texas Counties
0.....	Bastrop, Bandera, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Bosque, Brazos, Burleson, Coryell, Caldwell, Comal, Comanche, Falls, Fayette, Freestone, Gillespie, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays, Hill, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Lampasas, Lee, Leon, Limestone, Llano, Madison, Mason, Mills, Robertson, San Saba, Wilson
1 each.....	Burnet, McLennan, Washington, Williamson
3.....	Travis

Source: Texas Department of Transportation, 2017 statistics.





## How Can You Prevent Your Teen From Becoming a Statistic?

Authorities say accidents involving an impaired driver are some of the most preventable types of accidents, yet they continue to be a significant issue throughout the state. As a parent, you may feel powerless and worried about your teen's safety. Here are some ways you can help your teen stay safer on the road.

**Have an open and honest discussion.** It's never too late to start a discussion with your teen driver about the dangers of underage drinking and driving. Express your concerns and make your expectations clear. It's also important to let your teen talk about his or her thoughts and concerns about drinking and driving. What are his or her expectations?

Once you have both shared your expectations and other thoughts, you should come up with reasonable

consequences for breaking the rules. Not only should you talk to your teen about what you expect, but you should also talk about "real world" consequences, such as losing a license or paying a hefty fine.

**Know the odds.** According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver happen more often over holidays when people gather to celebrate, such as Christmas and New Year's Eve. In fact, the average number of fatalities involving an alcohol-impaired driver rose 34 percent nationwide in the Christmas-to-New-Year period. And for many teen drivers, "The 100 Deadliest Days" occur during the weeks between Memorial Day and Labor Day, summer vacation for most students.

**Sign a pledge together.** Many families with teen drivers sign a pledge to commit to safer driving habits, like avoiding distractions. While you're signing the pledge as a family, why not sign a pledge and commit to driving sober?

**Share your experiences and the stories of others.** Have you ever decided to drive after having one too many alcoholic drinks? Were you ever involved in an alcohol-related accident? Did you lose a friend or family member because of a drunk driver?

**Personal stories can make an impact.** Even if you don't have a personal experience to share, you can share the stories of other innocent lives that are lost every year in alcohol-related crashes. One place online that shares personal stories is [flemingattorneys.com/lost-lives](http://flemingattorneys.com/lost-lives).

**Be a good role model.** If you expect your teen to be a safe and responsible driver, you should model the same behavior. As parents, it's easy to make mistakes, and it's good to show your child that you are "human," but don't make the mistake of drunk driving. Be a good role model who abides by the law and values safety.

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*Brittany Cotton is a writer who enjoys informing people of everyday health issues and methods for preventing them.*

# Nature RX

## Lift Your Spirits with a Walk in the Woods

BY SHERIDA MOCK  
PHOTOS COURTESY  
OF SARAH IVENS



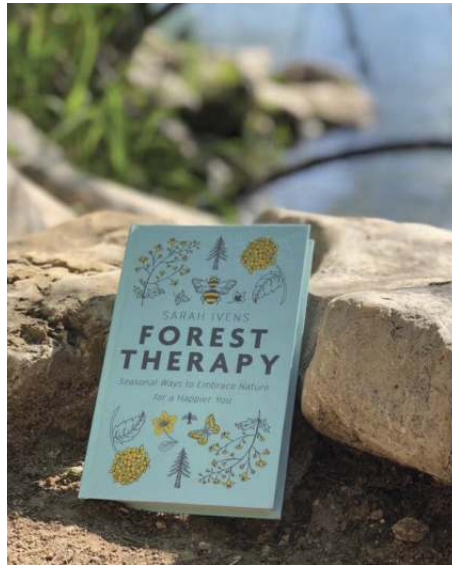
**W**e're lucky enough here in Austin to have mild winters. That means if the hustle and bustle of the holiday season has you feeling worn thin, a bit of time outside might be all the therapy you – and your family – need. Sarah Ivens, author of *Forest Therapy: Seasonal Ways to Embrace Nature for a Happier You*, spoke with us recently about how a simple walk in the woods can improve your life.

### AFM: Tell us about your family.

**Ivens:** My husband Russell and I are both from London, and we have two children: William and Matilda. We moved to America from England 12 years ago. We started out in New York, then we moved to Louisville, Kentucky. And then we went to Los Angeles for two years and lived on the beach. We've been in Austin for two years. We love Austin. It has a great mix of the friendliness and the warmth and the comfort of Louisville with the outdoorsy, healthy nature vibe of L.A.

### AFM: What is forest bathing?

**Ivens:** It first came about in Japan in 1982, when the government realized that even though Japan was financially doing



*Ivens's favorite spot in Austin is the hike and bike trail around Lady Bird Lake.*

well, there was a major, national health crisis going on. Depression rates were soaring. Suicide rates were going up. People were getting more diseases, feeling ill, feeling stressed. The government plowed millions into investigating what was going wrong, and they found there was a real lack of connection with nature and with each other. This new lifestyle of being in offices, working hard, making money, was not doing anyone any favors. So, they set up a program of 50 nature walks, and they labeled this idea shinrin-yoku. It means literally to bathe your senses in nature.

### AFM: How did you get into forest therapy?

**Ivens:** In 2009, the whole forest bathing thing had been going on for 25 years, and I went to Japan because my husband had just lost his dad to cancer. We had been trying to get pregnant for two years and hadn't been able. So, we were both at a low point in our lives and realized we needed to change scenery, relax, think about life in a different way. I had read about forest bathing. So, we went to some of the trails, and I could see that it made sense. And when I came back to America after that trip, I did have my son shortly afterward. The advice I give in the book is to treat forest therapy as a health practice, like you might go to a yoga class once a week or decide to eat healthily or join a book club because they know it will help your brain. If we could introduce a prescription for a better life, it would be just spending an hour without your phone, in a park.

### AFM: What benefits did the Japanese government find?

**Ivens:** They found so many. They worked out that trees emit chemicals called phytoncides. They're naturally



A family trip to Sweet Berry Farm in Marble Falls was "breathtaking," says Ivens.

## AFM: What are some of your favorite places in Austin for forest therapy?

**Ivens:** My favorite place is the Lady Bird Lake hike and bike trail, just for the families of turtles. You just sit on that bank and see these multi-generational interactions. The granddad with the kid on his back. The brave teenagers jumping off. I love it. This weekend, we went to Sweet Berry Farm in Marble Falls. It was breathtaking, with the wildflower fields. And Mount Bonnell. We have a lot of friends come and visit from England, and the first thing we do is see the sunset. It really sets the scene of how beautiful Austin is. McKinney Falls is fun. My son's into fossils and geodes, so he loves it there.

anti-fungal, anti-bacterial chemicals. By ingesting these phytoncides, we're boosting our immunity, lowering cortisol levels, increasing melatonin. There's evidence that cases of cancer go down for people who walk in the woods or live near a forest. Spending time in nature increases your ability to think creatively. Following the track of a stream lets your mind wander. You can daydream. They've even done studies that show forest therapy makes you a nicer person. There are studies that show eyesight improves because you're looking at a rock, and then you're looking out in the distance. Also, you're not spending time looking at screens.

I heard that Americans spend more time in cars per day than outside. And American children spend less time outdoors than chickens and prisoners. I appreciate that in Austin there's so much: the Austin Parks Foundation, the Children and Nature Network and the Get Outside: Austin movement. I feel like schools are getting more aware. My son's school fought hard to have two recesses for their kinder and first graders. When children are outside, the kids travel twice the distance and use twice the amount of energy as when they're inside.

We're very lucky that our house backs onto a park. My children are in there every day, rain, shine, injured knees, climbing trees, using sticks as wands or swords. We find the wildlife exciting. This week we found four baby raccoons in our back garden. My son's bedroom window overlooks the park, and he often sees families of deer walking along. And fireflies. We don't have them in England, so I'm still like a child whenever I see a firefly. It's wonderful, isn't it?



Originally from London, Ivens and her family moved to Austin two years ago.



Ivens and her family lived on the beach for two years.

## AFM: Any tips for forest therapy with children?

**Ivens:** You will meet some resistance, because children are increasingly addicted to screens. Most children crave time with their parents. So, don't just think, "I'm taking the kids out and they can run around while I'm going through my phone." You should all go out and all look for new flowers or all watch how the clouds are changing and if you're seeing faces in them. All of you connect as a family.

And then secondly, bribe them. Take a little picnic, make it fun. Take toys outside. Legos are fun in a bedroom, but imagine when it's outside in the roots of trees. You can make a whole forest land. My daughter takes her cuddly toys, and we have a teddy bear's picnic outside. Don't worry about being neat and tidy. All of you can be mucky. Other bribes I've bought my children are magnifying glasses and binoculars, so they can get a close look at the worms. They can spot a mother bird and her babies. And I'm like the Pied Piper. "Does anyone else want to come? We'll all do this together."



## LIFELINES

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

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

# Now Is the Time to Gather Your Family Health History

**T**he holiday season is the perfect time to collect information from relatives about your family health history.

“Knowing your family health history can help identify your child’s risk of developing certain serious diseases and health conditions,” says Dr. Lisa Gaw, pediatrician at Texas Children’s Urgent Care Westgate. Although most people understand the importance of knowing their family health history, only about 30 percent have tried to collect and organize the information.

### What Is a Family Health History?

The family health history includes information about diseases and health conditions that run in your family. “For example, certain types of cancer and heart disease can be inherited through genetic traits,” says Dr. Gaw. In addition to genes, other factors that influence health are environment, behaviors and lifestyles.

### How Do I Get Started?

The US Surgeon General suggests taking time to prepare before beginning health history discussions with relatives. For more details, see the US Surgeon General’s Family History Initiative.

1. Make a list of relatives to include in your family health history. The most important family members are your parents, followed by your brothers, sisters and children. Other family members to include are grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and half-brothers or half-sisters. You also may want to talk to great uncles, great aunts and cousins. And don’t forget yourself.

2. Write questions beforehand. Consider what you already know and what details are missing. For example, you may know that your uncle died of a heart attack, but not know how old he was. Ask about environment, behaviors and lifestyles that could affect health. See the sidebar for example questions.

3. Make a family health history tree. Dr. Gaw recommends including the following basic information for each person:

- Date of birth
- Physical medical conditions and age at diagnosis
- Mental health conditions, including any substance abuse issues and age at diagnosis
- Age and cause of death for deceased relatives

4. Decide where and how to collect the information. Try to anticipate how specific relatives will respond to these questions. Some may be comfortable talking in a group setting, while others may prefer a private conversation. Contact distant relatives by phone or email.

### Tips for Gathering Information

Before you start asking questions, ensure your relatives understand the importance of a family health history. Dr. Gaw says, “Knowing your family health history can help you and your doctor create a proactive, preventative healthcare plan.” Being aware of risks and taking action can save lives. Offer to share your completed family health history so everyone in the family can benefit.

Take notes or record the conversations to make sure you capture everything. Don’t be surprised if some relatives are reluctant to share information.

### What to Do with the Information You Gather

Organize the health history information into a useable format. The American Medical Association recommends using My Family Health Portrait, an online tool found at

familyhistory.hhs.gov. Don't forget to update your family health history as new information becomes available.

Discuss your family health history with your own doctor, as well as your child's pediatrician. If you identify any diseases or health conditions that run in your family, discuss options to decrease risk. "Knowing your family medical history can give you and your doctor a great foundation for creating a preventative health plan. Knowing what conditions to screen for can help catch and cure disease early," says Dr. Gaw.

### Sample Questions for Gathering Your Family Health History

#### Health Problems

- Tell me about any health problems, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease or stroke. What about high blood pressure, asthma, allergies, or vision or hearing loss? What surgeries have you had?
- How old were you when you developed this illness or condition?
- What health problems did your parents have? Your grandparents? Other relatives?
- How old were they when they died? What caused their deaths?

#### Pregnancy

- Have you or your partner had any problems with pregnancy, such as miscarriages?
- Were any of your children born with problems or birth defects?

#### Learning/Developmental Problems

- Does anyone in your family have a learning problem, such as dyslexia or ADHD?
- Does anyone in your family have developmental disabilities or conditions known to be associated with developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome or cerebral palsy?

#### Mental Health Problems

- Has anyone in the family had mental health problems, such as depression or anxiety?
- What about substance abuse issues with alcohol or drugs?
- What relatives have experienced dementia or Alzheimer's disease?

#### Environmental Issues

- Were you exposed to any environmental hazards, such as asbestos or lead?
- Were there any environmental issues in your work, home or community that had a negative impact on your family's health?

#### Behaviors and Lifestyle

- What is your occupation?
- What are your typical activities? For example, do you have a desk job or an active job? Do you spend your free time watching TV or exercising?
- Tell me about your diet. Describe a typical breakfast and dinner.
- Do you get medical and dental care on a regular basis?



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- Family Cookie Event**  
Sunday, Dec 16th • 2:30-4:30pm • \$65
- Holiday Break Camp for Kids January 3-4**  
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## THE Learning Curve

ALISON BOGLE

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

# Modern Classrooms Let Kids Move All Day Long

Our childhood classrooms, with their long rows of stationary desks, are gradually disappearing. They're being replaced by rooms thoughtfully designed to incorporate more movement into the daily student experience. Teachers are also working to include kinesthetic activities into their lessons, as research is proving a powerful connection between movement and learning.

The special education community has long known the benefits of allowing varied movement options. Modifications were implemented for special education students who had trouble sitting, focusing or shifting into learning mode. While these alterations helped special education students, they often helped many other students as well. That anecdotal evidence, along with proven research, has led to a shift as schools are recognizing the health and learning benefits for all students.

### Brain-Body Connection

Movement has been found to activate multiple areas of the brain, and stimulating those varied neural networks can lead to increased learning, focus and attention. For some students, increased blood flow to the body and brain leads to better recall. Not all movement is created equal, however. While vigorous movement might help one student expel excess energy, for another student that type of movement could be overstimulating. The latest in classroom design and instruction provides for differentiated movement options to address students' varied needs.



**Some students struggle to learn while sitting at a traditional desk.**

### Flexible Seating

Many school districts are working to give students control over how comfortable they feel when working, often through the use of adapted seating, also called flexible seating. The most common types of flexible seating options found in Austin area schools are wobble stools, ball chairs, floor or cushion seating, bouncy bands and standing desks.

Wobble stools allow active children to wiggle the lower halves of their bodies while keeping the upper halves mostly steady. Picture a regular stool that can sway from side-to-side or back-to-front, and you have the idea. Other classrooms use yoga balls for similar reasons. Another option is the bouncy band: a flexible band that attaches to traditional chair legs. Students can push against the band with their feet to release anxiety and tension while working. Allowing a child to dispel nervous energy through the lower half of her body enables her to stay seated and focus on her work, instead of regularly

popping out of her seat or tipping it back and forth. We all remember when a classmate — or maybe it was us — tipped just a little too far!

Some students struggle to learn while sitting at a traditional desk. To meet the needs of these learners, classrooms are offering soft cushions on the floor for laying down or bean bag chairs for more relaxed sitting. A pricier option is the standing desk, which can be placed at the back of the room so as not to block the view of other students.

**Fidgets**

Fidgets are another way to bring movement into a classroom. A fidget is a small object that students can manipulate with one hand to release tension. Simple fidgets are best, and the occupational therapist’s (OT) rule of thumb is, “the more boring, the better.” Pipe cleaners that can be folded back and forth, stress balls or even two

paper clips clipped together fit the bill. The best fidgets don’t require the user to pay attention to them, so they’re not a hindrance to learning. Many teachers will set out a basket of approved fidgets for students to self-select.

**Movement Breaks**

School districts are also working to include breaks in the day to tap into the link between movement and increased learning. Teachers are asked to consider how long their students have been sitting and to implement a "state change," such as going from sitting to standing. These movement breaks can be incorporated into a lesson or can be a standalone break between lessons.

**End Results**

As with many things in life, there is no one-size-fits-all. Districts are recognizing the need to maintain quiet spaces with traditional desk seating, even as they

introduce alternatives. Effective teachers learn which arrangement works best for each student and modify appropriately. The ultimate goal is that students will eventually learn to tune into their needs and self-select their optimal arrangement.

Some parents have raised concerns: How can children learn to sit still in a college classroom if they never have to practice? Certainly, you can’t bring a beanbag chair to your first job! This is absolutely true, and OTs are quick to reassure – it’s all about balance. Students will learn to identify what their bodies need when they’re in a more restrictive seating arrangement. As adults, we do this all the time. We expel our excess energy by crossing and uncrossing our legs, chewing gum, shaking our foot or visiting the water cooler. Our kids will get there in the end, but in the meantime, admit it – don’t you wish you could bring a beanbag chair to the office?

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Holiday Giveaway and submit your photo!** (All photos will be posted on Austin Family's Website)

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# holiday bucket list

## events and destinations

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL

**Nov. 21 to Dec. 30**

Austin's most rockin' holiday tradition returns to make merry with new music and surprises to get the party started. ZACH's inspired adaptation of the Dickens classic is a musical sleigh ride through rhythm and time, infusing the traditional Victorian story with a score that spans all genres and eras. Topfer stage at ZACH Theatre

202 S. Lamar, Austin  
512-476-0541

[www.zachtheatre.org](http://www.zachtheatre.org)



### BULLOCK TEXAS STATE HISTORY MUSEUM

**Dec. 1 and 13**

On Dec. 1, the Texas Spirit Theater hosts two special holiday screenings (1:30 and 4 p.m.) of the Charles Dickens classic "The Muppet Christmas Carol," featuring Jim Henson's beloved Muppet characters and enhanced effects. On Dec. 13 at 10 a.m., "Mi Casa Es Tu Casa" offers a music class that introduces and reinforces Spanish for you and your child. Also, visit the IMAX theater for screenings of "Pandas" and "Jerusalem," and don't miss the museum store for holiday shopping.

1800 N. Congress Ave., Austin  
512-936-8746

[www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)

### CAFE MONET FAMILY COOKIE EVENT

**Dec. 16 2:30 - 4:30 p.m., \$65**

Paint a large cookie platter for Santa and learn to decorate Christmas cookies from a professional baker! Price includes platter, glazing, firing, cookie decorating and eating! Plus lots of fun.

Ages 6 - 12

Westgate Shopping Center, Austin  
512-892-3200

Triangle Shopping Center, Austin  
512-906-2200

[www.cafemonet.org](http://www.cafemonet.org)



### CAFE MONET KID'S NIGHT OUT

**Dec. 7, 6 - 8 p.m. \$35**

Bring your kids to a fun night out while you take care of holiday errands. They'll enjoy treats and have the opportunity to create their own holiday-themed craft.

Ages 6 - 12

Westgate Shopping Center, Austin  
512-892-3200

Triangle Shopping Center, Austin  
512-906-2200

[www.cafemonet.org](http://www.cafemonet.org)



### GAYLORD TEXAN RESORT

**Nov. 9 - Jan. 1**

Experience a true Lone Star Christmas, with unique events such as ICE! featuring Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Build-a-Bear Workshop, Gingerbread Decorating Corner and Rudolph's Holly Jolly Breakfast. There are plenty of offerings to get you in the holiday spirit. It's everything Christmas in one extraordinary place.

1501 Gaylord Tr., Grapevine, TX  
817-778-1000

[www.gaylordtexas.com](http://www.gaylordtexas.com)



### HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS IN ELGIN

**Dec. 1:** Hot Cocoa Stroll & Lighted Parade

**Dec. 13:** Sip Shop

**Dec. 15:** Art of Giving

Pictures with Santa, lighted parade, arts and crafts, music and more. Located 19 miles east of Austin on Hwy. 290.

Downtown Elgin  
512-281-5724

[www.elgintx.com](http://www.elgintx.com)



## MAIN EVENT

Eat. Bowl. Play.

Sunday through Friday \$7 per activity play all day special!

Get your game on with family and friends.

Main Event features state-of-the-art bowling, multi-level laser tag, over 100 games plus handcrafted food and a full bar under one roof. Main Event is the destination for FUN.

13301 Hwy. 183 N, Austin

512-401-0000

[www.mainevent.com](http://www.mainevent.com)



## MISTLETOE MAGIC

Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m.

Senior Access presents its 24th Choral Concert, a community tradition since 1995. Enjoy a free concert featuring the talents of choirs from Round Rock, Pflugerville and East Austin. All donations benefit Senior Access and help keep its clients independent.

First United Methodist Church, 1004 N Mays St, Round Rock

512-310-1060

[www.senioraccessstx.org/events/mistletoe-magic/form](http://www.senioraccessstx.org/events/mistletoe-magic/form)



## NOCHE NAVIDEÑA

Dec. 8, 4 p.m.

Univision and ESB-MACC present a Christmas event with posadas, ornament making and musical performances featuring Latin American music traditions, folkloric ballet and mariachis. This event will be videotaped, and portions will be aired on Christmas Eve on Univision TV.

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

600 River St., Austin

[facebook.com/events/1024857107573585/](https://facebook.com/events/1024857107573585/)

[www.univision.net](http://www.univision.net)



## PLAYLAND SKATE CENTER

Dec. 21 - 31

With extended hours during the holidays, this venue offers the finest in roller 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 a whopping 27,500 sq. ft.

8822 McCann Dr.

512-452-1901

[www.playlandskatecenter.net](http://www.playlandskatecenter.net)



## TOM'S DIVE & SWIM PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Dec. 7, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., \$50

Kids will enjoy a 30-minute group swim lesson, dinner, games, arts and crafts, and a family-friendly movie.

Tom's Dive & Swim, 5909 Burnet Road, Austin  
512-451-3425

[www.austinswim.com](http://www.austinswim.com)



## camps

### CAFE MONET HOLIDAY KID'S CAMP

Jan. 3 and 4

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. \$119

Kids will get three projects in two days which include

1. Pottery painting techniques
2. Canvas Art with acrylic paint
3. Clay Sculpture

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And we always help with handprints on pottery free of charge!

Ages 6 - 12

Westgate Shopping Center, Austin

512-892-3200

Triangle Shopping Center, Austin

512-906-2200

[www.cafemonet.org](http://www.cafemonet.org)



## 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

13120 US Hwy 183 N, Austin

512-288-8220, 512-331-1441

[www.countryhomelearningcenter.com](http://www.countryhomelearningcenter.com)



## FANTASTIC MAGIC CAMP

Dec. 26 to Jan. 4

Teaching life skills and confidence through magic, juggling and puppets to kids ages 5 - 12. Register now for an amazing and unusual day camp filled with fun, laughter and lots of surprises. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Rehearsal time available from 3 to 6 p.m. for an additional fee.

Ages 5 - 12

7500 Woodrow Ave., Austin

512-850-4677

[www.magiccamp.com](http://www.magiccamp.com)



## FUN 2 LEARN CODE

Dec. 20, 21

Offering day camps for children and teens.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Coding with Scratch Day Camp for beginner to intermediate level coders ages 7 - 12. Coding Day Camp for beginner to intermediate level coders ages 8-16.

Ages 7 - 16

420 Chisholm Valley Dr., Round Rock

512-900-8380

[www.fun2learncode.com](http://www.fun2learncode.com)



## KIDSACTING

WINTER BREAK 1: Dec. 26, 27, 28

WINTER BREAK 2: Jan. 2, 3, 4

When school is OUT, KidsActing is IN with fun-filled camps to satisfy any kid. Campers will sing, dance, act, play theatre games, paint faces and have a blast with crafts and the performing arts. Over Winter break 1, Center Stage Theatre offers "Moana" for ages 5 - 13 and Cedar Park offers "Tangled" for ages 5 - 13. Over Winter break 2, Center Stage Theatre offers "Sound of Music" for ages 5 - 13, and Cedar Park offers "Peter Pan" for ages 5 - 13.

Ages 5 - 13

Locations throughout Austin area

512-836-5437

[www.kidsactingstudio.com](http://www.kidsactingstudio.com)

## RIO VISTA FARM WINTER BREAK CAMP

Session I: Dec. 26, 27, 28

Session II: Jan. 2, 3, 4

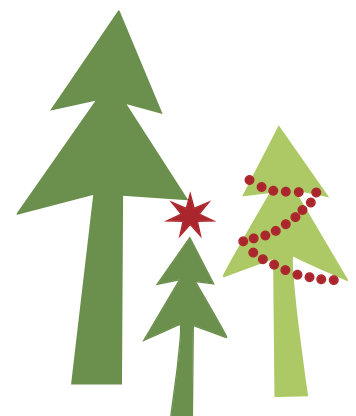
Instruction in English riding lessons and horse care. Campers leave with a respect for the hard work, dedication and fun involved in working with horses. With van service from Westlake Hills, Rio Vista is located 10 miles from downtown Austin. Camps run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$250 plus van fee.

Ages 7 - 16

10000 Fallwell Ln., Del Valle

512-247-2303

[www.riovistafarm.net](http://www.riovistafarm.net)



### STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS

At the Brain Games winter camp, students will participate in a series of challenging and engaging brain building activities, field journeys and so much more. Open until noon Dec. 24 and closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

20 locations in Central Texas

Ages 5 - 11

512-459-0258

[www.steppingstoneschool.com](http://www.steppingstoneschool.com)



### SUGAR & SPICE GIRLS' CAMP

Dec. 26 - Jan 1

Is your daughter interested in spending part of her Christmas break at a girls-only horseback riding camp? This Christmas camp session is all-inclusive (lodging, all meals, tack, horses, lessons, etc.) and charges \$1,149 for the week.

Ages 8 - 16

884 Rikki Dr., Bandera

830-460-8487

[www.texashorsecamps.com](http://www.texashorsecamps.com)



### 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, 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](http://www.switchwillostable.com)



### VICTORIAN TEA HOUSE HOLIDAY

Dec. 20 to Dec. 21

Good manners and social etiquette are soft skills our children can learn early and will continue through their adult lives. These progressive and interactive classes will help the students gain self-confidence and a positive attitude while having fun.

Ages 5 - 12 (two groups, 5 - 7 and 8 - 12)

Merrell Plantation, 1517 E. Palm Valley, Round Rock

512-831-6707

[www.victoriasteahouse.com/etiquette-classes/](http://www.victoriasteahouse.com/etiquette-classes/)



### YMCA WINTER HOLIDAY CAMP AUSTIN

Dec. 26, 27, 28 & Jan. 2, 3, 4

7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

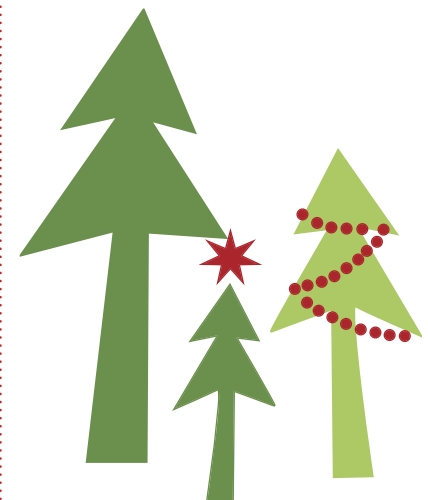
Taking a cue from the Arctic, this camp's theme is "Polar Expeditions." Campers will enjoy making igloos and snowstorms, and creating friendships with some furry friends. They'll also be taking a polar plunge for indoor swim days and embarking on field trips to the north and south poles of Austin.

Ages 5 - 12

5 locations across Travis & Hays counties, including Buda and Manor

512-236-9622

[www.austinyymca.org/programs/holiday-camps](http://www.austinyymca.org/programs/holiday-camps)





## FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

# My Toddler's Tantrums Are Getting Worse

**Q** My 2-year-old son is having trouble giving up playtime. A while ago, I noticed when I ask him to stop playing so we can leave the house or eat or go to bed, he throws a tantrum. So, I was just letting him tire himself out. But recently, he started banging his head during his tantrums. I'm worried he'll hurt himself. What should I do?

**A.** We often expect our kids to switch quickly from one activity to another. This "quickly" expectation is very hard for toddlers. Your son is communicating the way he knows, by actions and not words. His tantrums say, "I can't do this 'quickly' thing." When you ignore that, he gets frustrated and resorts to banging his head.

While it's common for 2-year-olds to struggle with transitions, lots of older kids and even adults also struggle (for example, stopping work on the computer or stopping in the middle of a video game). We don't generally bang our heads, because we have words. We can say, "Give me 10 minutes." So, what should you do? Here are some suggestions:

1. Give a warning. Some parents use a clock and say, "When the big hand gets to the top, you need to stop playing and get in

the car." Some use a countdown, with warnings at 10 minutes, then five minutes, then two minutes. Adjust the timing to what works for your child. Warnings are one of the best ways to get a smoother transition.

2. Offer help. You could make a game of putting away the toys, for example, "Let's see which of us can put away five toys faster."
3. Let your child take something to his next activity. It could be what T. Berry Brazelton, a renowned pediatrician and child expert, called a "lovey." A lovey is that stuffed animal or blanket the child wants with him much of the time, and especially when stressed. Or it could be a small toy from the activity he's leaving behind.
4. Reward good behavior. This can be tangible, like a smiley-face sticker, a small treat given (ideally) immediately after good behavior and with verbal approval such as, "You got ready to go really fast this time." Don't overuse phrases like "good job," which quickly becomes meaningless.
5. Squat down close to your child. When giving warnings, being at the child's level and close by feels less threatening and works better than yelling from across the room.

6. Offer choices. This works to give the child a feeling of control, such as, "Which do you want to put away first, your cars or your other toys?"
7. Establish rituals. Posting a daily schedule with pictures can help. Every morning, you can talk about the activities of the day and even role-play what transitions will look like. Bedtime rituals work well to entice kids to drop what they're doing and get in bed for a story.
8. Tell a cautionary tale. Make up a story about a boy who bangs his head and has to wear a helmet to avoid having dents in his head. Ask your child to contribute ideas for getting the boy to stop banging his head. If the head banging continues, you can resort to putting a helmet on your son to protect his head. You can explain that when the head banging stops, he won't have to wear it. He'll soon be ready to give it up.

Your 2-year-old is trying to gain some control over his life. The reason you hear "No" so often from a 2-year-old is to tell you that you can't control everything. It says, "I'm a separate person with ideas of my own." Eventually, your child will start using more words to tell you what he wants and how he feels.



“If kids ruled the world...”



# Young Writers Contest Winners

We are happy to congratulate the following young writers for submitting the winning entries in our annual Young Writers Contest. This year’s theme was “If Kids Ruled the World,” and we received a flurry of richly creative and diverse pieces. Our judges faced the tough job of naming a winner and runner-up for each grade. The two winners each received a plaque and a party for 10 at Dave & Buster’s. The two runners-up each received a plaque. It’s our pleasure to publish those submissions here.

## 4TH GRADE WINNER



**Agastya Sista,**  
**Linda Herrington**  
**Elementary**

If kids ruled the world, we would make it so there is NO violence. Do you think that getting yourself and other people hurt is good? So, NO violence. We would also make it so that everybody is equal, because in a lot of places, men and women (but mostly women) are treated unfairly. People are not treated equal because of their race, religion, gender and

many other attributes. Some people get paid less, get bad schooling or do not eat nutritious food all around the world. This is why we kids are going to make sure that everyone is equal in all possible ways. My last topic if kids ruled the world is NO littering/polluting, hunting and cutting down trees unless there is a real need, because people sometimes kill animals and cut down trees just for fun. Littering/polluting is destroying the environment! It is putting toxins in the atmosphere and killing a lot of living beings due to lack of clean air and water. Animals provide us with a lot of important

## Meet the Judges



**Carmen Oliver** is author of the picture books *Bears Make the Best Reading* and *A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How One Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal*. 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 at the Writing Barn and the Highlights Foundation and loves speaking at schools, conferences and festivals.

things and trees give us oxygen. So, if kids rule the world, we will make a law that states, if you cut down a tree you will have to plant two more. Littering is making our planet dirtier, and we do not want a dirty planet, hence we would outlaw littering. Animals are living creatures, just like us. How would it feel if you are eating and suddenly there was a bullet shot at you? It is cruel to the animals and making a lot of them go extinct. If kids ruled the world these are some of the things we will do.

#### 4TH GRADE RUNNER-UP



**Kallen Smith, Serene Hills Elementary**

Vroom! The airplanes land at the front of the elementary

school. Excited children run up the steps and board the 7:30 2nd grade train to their classrooms. If kids ruled the world, kids would have planes instead of buses and trains instead of walking. I think electric planes would help because they are quicker than bus. You would take off and then land and you would basically never be late.

It would be safe for the environment. I think that there is a little too much pollution in the world. It is important that we don't pollute the world. It would cause less traffic when you need to get to work/school you can fly right over the traffic and think "I'm glad I'm not in that traffic". It would just be cool.

Everyone would know how to drive a plane. It would be just like riding a bike,

but easier. The electric train would help because it is quick because sometimes I am late to specials and other events. It would get you there earlier and it wouldn't cost a buck because there would be solar panel chargers. They would collect electricity and at night charge up the train to be fully powered up. The train would be cool and unique.

A train would drive in the school. Each class would have a button to signal the train to come. The train would start coming, and you would get in the train and say in the train's speaker, "5th grade hall," and it would quickly take you there. I think the electric train and plane would help the school community and save a lot of animals involved in global warming. I think it could improve the traffic and it is a fun way to get to places!

#### 5TH GRADE WINNER



**Kiran Baburajdran, Serene Hills Elementary**

If I were in charge of the world

I would cancel bad hair days, sports injuries, those mornings when there's toilet paper sticking out of your pants and also alarms that go off before 10:00 a.m.

If I were in charge of the world there would be lower shelves (where the cookie jar is) so that short people (specifically me) could reach them, there would be more dogs (just generally), and more days of summer vacation

If I were in charge of the world  
You wouldn't have ads (for stuff you have no interest in or cannot afford)  
You wouldn't have rules  
You wouldn't have stains  
Or "You can't have this"  
You wouldn't even have "No"

If I were in charge of the world  
Tiramisu with whipped cream and raspberry syrup would be a vegetable  
All movies would be G  
And a person who sometimes forgot her lines or  
Bluffed her speech would still be allowed to be in charge of the world

#### 5TH GRADE RUNNER-UP



**Isaac Orf, Barton Hills Elementary**

My Schedule:

- 8:00 am Wake up
- 8:10 am Drive Mom to school
- 8:30 am Take race car out for a spin
- 9:30 am Ice cream party!!!
- 10:00 am Video game time
- 12:00 pm Get Dad to make me lunch
- 1:00 pm Grab some cookies
- 1:10 pm Go over to friend's house
- 3:00 pm Pick Mom up from school
- 3:30 pm Yell at Mom for getting in trouble at school. Even if she didn't.
- 3:40 pm More video game time
- 5:30 pm Get parents to make dinner
- 6:10 pm Watch a movie with HUGE bowl of popcorn (yum)
- 8:00 pm Late night swim
- 9:00 pm Late night ice cream party
- 10:00 pm Climb into bed with comfy blanket



**Bethany Hegedus** is co-author of *Grandfather Gandhi* and *Be the Change: A Grandfather Gandhi Story* and author of *Alabama Spitfire: The Story of Harper Lee* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (a Junior Library Guild 2018 selection), *Truth with a Capital T* and *Between Us Baxters*. Hegedus is owner and creative director of The Writing Barn, a writing retreat, workshop and event space in Austin. She also speaks and teaches across the country.



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

RICHARD SINGLETON

Singleton, MACE, MAMFC, LPC, is the president of STARRY in Round Rock.

# Letters to Santa in the Digital Age

Recently, a friend of mine heard her kindergartener praying. She tip-toed to the door and eavesdropped. As she quietly listened in she realized, hilariously, that her daughter was praying to Santa. I smiled so hard it almost broke my face. Jelly Belly vs. Jesus for the win!

When I was a kid, we always had at least one gift “from Santa.” I’m 44 years old, and my mom still makes sure that the sleigh arrives right on time.

The genuine heart of children during the holidays is so refreshing, guileless and sweetly dispositioned. Other than “praying” to Santa, there may be no better proof of this than letters to the Jolly Old Elf himself.

Take these hilarious examples as evidence:

*“Dear Santa, you better bring my pony this year or there will be consequences!”*

*“Dear Santa, if you can’t buy what I want, take it easy on yourself. Just give me tens and ones of money.”*

*“Dear Santa, please leave before 6:00. My alarm goes off at 6:00. P.S., my stocking is on the left.”*

*“Dear Santa, it’s Claire again. But I’m writing for my 9-year-old brother named Mitch. He wants a binder, a binder hole punch (I want a hole punch too), and a skateboard (but don’t give the skateboard to him). Mitch is very kind-hearted but has a bad temper. He also writes messy and doesn’t like to read. Bye, signed Mitch. P.S., this is not his signature.”*

“

**The age-old tradition of Christmas correspondence is changing. High tech is swooping in faster than the fat man himself.**

You can’t improve on the joyful transparency of a child reaching out across the porous boundaries of cosmic reality to express her heart’s deepest wishes – and, you can’t beat the way she’ll throw her little brother under the bus to get there. Priceless!

Long live the letter to Santa.

The age-old tradition of Christmas correspondence, however, is changing. High tech is swooping in faster than the fat man himself.

One can imagine a day when Artificial Intelligence will read and respond to these letters. Just this past week, I shared a YouTube video with my staff. Maybe you’ve seen it. It’s a demonstration – a real call – of the Google Assistant making a salon appointment. Crazy! Santa hasn’t been uploaded into the cloud just yet, though. He’s still living in the mostly analog world of reindeer, sleigh rides and chimneys. Even so, the digital world is changing faster than a midnight tour around the globe, so be ready.



And while you can't beat crayons, thick lined paper and frayed edges left tantalizing close to real milk and cookies – not digital ones – why not explore the fantastic array of ways to bring joy to every child, no matter the medium?

Both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store have the Letters to Santa app and many more. These apps may even be able to bail you out in the midst of a Christmas crisis. One year, my wife and I started putting together a gift for my daughter – her first bike. It was missing a crucial part. We darted around town trying desperately to find a replacement. No app for that! It sure would have been nice to have an air-tight, digital explanation from the gravity-defying toy toter himself.

Want a personalized video from Santa? There's an app for that too. It's appropriately – if not very creatively – named Personalized Video from Santa. Hey, the elves are making handcrafted toys; cut 'em a break on their bland brand nomenclature.

Okay, don't forget the Santa Tracker. What use is a letter to Santa if you can't ensure that there's been a liftoff and a landing? Terri Peters, writing for Today, lists "7 Santa Tracker" apps that might just be the secret sauce to keeping the Christmas magic alive.

If you still want to expand your options, the LA Times' Bonnie McCarthy wrote "5 Ways to Send Letters to the North Pole." She reminds that email is an option. That just doesn't get the jingle juices flowing for me. If, like me, quill and paper is still your shtick, the USPS has your back. Admittedly, I like the leave-the-letter-on-the-counter approach, but if you want something a little more authentic than trying to hide the evidentiary paper trail, the postal service has an entire process for you. Just go to [about.usps.com/holidaynews/letters-from-santa.htm](http://about.usps.com/holidaynews/letters-from-santa.htm) to find detailed

instructions of how to get your proof that the King in the North isn't residing at Winterfell. How fun!

You know, the more you think about it, perhaps we all could use a little more "prayer" to Santa. I don't mean that

sacrilegiously. Just a reminder that it's okay to dream, to hope and to believe that the day on the horizon is full of good gifts, blissful laughter, loving smiles and inexpressible joy.

*Dear, Santa...*



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**Avery Ranch** 15101 Avery Ranch Boulevard, Austin (512) 341-8000

**Round Rock** 1521 Joyce Lane, Round Rock (512) 255-8844

**Spicewood Springs** 13015 Pond Springs Road, Austin (512) 258-1299



**CHALLENGER**  
SCHOOL

An independent private school offering preschool through eighth grade

© 2018, Challenger Schools Challenger School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.



## ASUNTOS FAMILIARES

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

# Los berrinches de mi niño están empeorando

**P** Mi hijo de 2 años de edad tiene problemas para dejar de jugar. Hace un tiempo, me di cuenta que cuando le pido que deje de jugar para que podamos salir de la casa o comer o ir a la cama, él hace un berrinche. Así que, lo dejaba hasta que se cansara. Pero recientemente, comenzó a golpearse la cabeza durante sus berrinches. Me preocupa que se lastime. ¿Qué debo hacer?

**R.** A menudo esperamos que nuestros hijos cambien rápidamente de una actividad a otra. Esta expectativa “rápida” es muy difícil para los niños pequeños. Su hijo se está comunicando de la manera que sabe, por acciones y no por palabras. Sus berrinches dicen: “No puedo hacer esto rápidamente”. Cuando ignora eso, él se frustra y recurre a golpearse la cabeza.

Si bien es común que los niños de 2 años de edad batallen con las transiciones, muchos niños mayores e incluso adultos también batallan (por ejemplo, dejar de trabajar en la computadora o detenerse en medio de un videojuego). Generalmente no nos golpeamos la cabeza, porque tenemos palabras. Podemos decir: “Dame 10 minutos”. Entonces, ¿qué debe hacer? Estas son algunas sugerencias:

**1. Dar una advertencia.** Algunos padres usan un reloj y dicen, “cuando la mano grande llegue hasta arriba, tienes que dejar de jugar y subir

al auto.” Algunos usan una cuenta regresiva, con advertencias a los 10 minutos, luego a los cinco minutos, luego a los dos minutos. Ajuste el tiempo a lo que funciona para su hijo. Las advertencias son una de las mejores maneras de lograr una transición más fluida.

**2. Ofrecer ayuda.** Usted podría hacer un juego de guardar los juguetes, por ejemplo, “vamos a ver quién de nosotros puede guardar cinco juguetes más rápido.”

**3. Dejar que su hijo se lleve algo a su siguiente actividad.** Podría llevarse lo que T. Berry Brazelton, un reconocido pediatra y experto en niños, llama “lovey”. Un lovey es ese animal de peluche o cobija que el niño quiere con él la mayor parte del tiempo, y especialmente cuando está estresado. O podría llevarse un pequeño juguete de la actividad que está dejando atrás.

**4. Recompensar el buen comportamiento.** Esto puede ser tangible, como una calcomanía de una carita sonriente, un pequeño detalle que se da (idealmente) inmediatamente después del un buen comportamiento y con la aprobación verbal como, por ejemplo, te preparaste para irnos muy rápido esta vez.” No abuse de frases como, “buen trabajo,” que rápidamente se vuelve sin sentido.

**5. Agacharse cerca de su hijo.** Al dar advertencias, estar al nivel del niño y cerca

se siente menos amenazante y funciona mejor que gritar desde el otro lado de la habitación.

**6. Ofrecer opciones.** Esto funciona para darle al niño una sensación de control, como, “¿cuál quieres guardar primero, tus coches o tus otros juguetes?”

**7. Establecer rituales.** Publicar un horario diario con imágenes puede ayudar. Cada mañana, puede hablar sobre las actividades del día e incluso jugar el papel de cómo serían las transiciones. Los rituales para la hora de acostarse funcionan mejor animando a los niños a que dejen lo que están haciendo y se metan en la cama para leerles o contarles un cuento.

**8. Contar un cuento con moraleja.** Invente una historia sobre un niño que se golpea la cabeza y tiene que usar un casco para evitar tener abolladuras en la cabeza. Pídale a su hijo que aporte con ideas para que el niño de la historia deje de golpearse la cabeza. Si su hijo continúa golpeándose la cabeza, puede recurrir a ponerle un casco para proteger su cabeza. Puede explicar que cuando deje de golpearse la cabeza, no tendrá que usarlo. Pronto estará listo para dejarlo.

Su hijo de 2 años de edad está tratando de ganar algo de control sobre su vida. La razón por la que escucha “No” con tanta frecuencia en un niño de 2 años de edad es para decirle que no puede controlar todo. Dice, “soy una persona separada con ideas propias.” Eventualmente, su hijo comenzará a usar más palabras para decirle lo que quiere y cómo se siente.



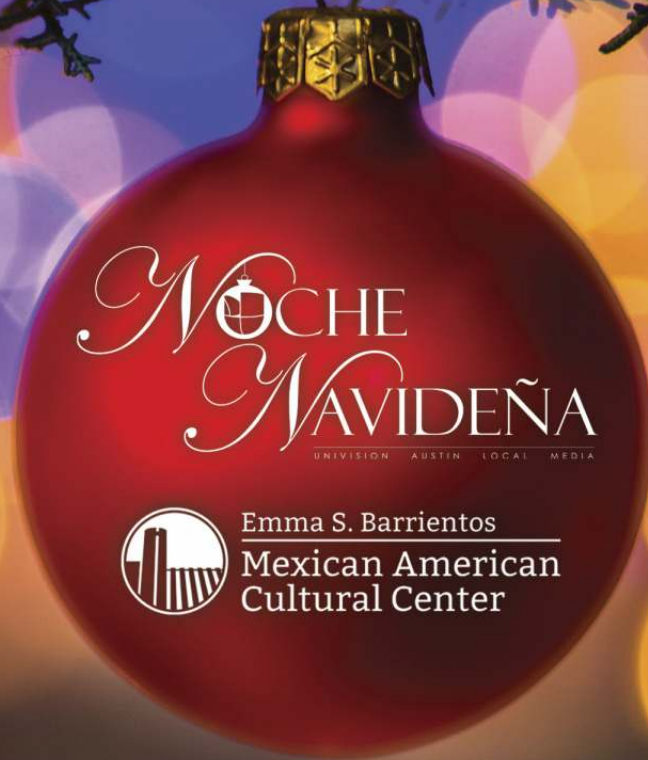
**UNIVISION**  
**AUSTIN**

*Sábado, 8 de  
diciembre*

*Entrada Gratis  
5pm - 9pm*

*600 River Street  
Austin, TX*

*¡Trae un donativo de comida enlatada para participar en  
nuestros regalos de premios y juguetes!*



# December

2018  
calendar

COMPILED BY BETTY KEMPER

Multi-Day Events Page 34 • Family Events Page 34 • Parenting Events Page 42 • Story Times Page 42

## Multi-Day Events

**A Christmas Carol.** Nov. 21 – Dec. 30. A traditional story with modern music for ages 6 and up. 7:30 Wednesdays through Saturdays; 2:30 Saturday and Sunday. Zach Theater's Topfer Stage, 202 S. Lamar Blvd. From \$25. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Blue Genie Art Bazaar.** Nov. 23 – Dec. 24. Holiday shopping with original works by over 200 artists. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (closes at 6 p.m. on Dec. 24) 6100 Airport Blvd. FREE. bluegenieartbazaar.com or 512-222-7303.

**Ice Skating on the Plaza.** Nov. 23 – Jan. 21. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Whole Foods Market, 525 N. Lamar Blvd. \$10 includes skates. wholefoodsmarket.com.

**Bastrop River of Lights.** Nov. 23 – Dec. 31. Walking trail along the Colorado River. 6 to 9 p.m. Fisherman's Park, 1200 Willow St., Bastrop. FREE. bastrop.tx.us/chamber.com.

**Wimberley Trail of Lights.** Nov. 24 – Dec. 28. Entertainment and photos with Santa. 6 to 10 p.m. Emily Ann Theatre and Gardens, 1101 FM 2325, Wimberley. FREE; donations appreciated. emilyann.org or 512-847-6969.

**A Christmas Carol Classic Radiocast.** Nov. 29 – Dec. 28. A 90-minute twist on the Dickens classic for ages 5 and up. 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Old Settlers Park Pavilion, 3300 E. Palm Valley Blvd., Round Rock. From \$15. penfoldtheatre.org.

**The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.** A play about a family of delinquent children who participate in a church Christmas pageant, lured by the promise of free snacks. Dec. 6 – 15. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Cross Walk Church, 8650 County Rd. 110, Round Rock. \$15. madproductionsrr.org.

**Austin Trail of Lights.** Dec. 10 – 23. 7 to 10 p.m. Entertainment, lighted displays and food trucks. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. FREE on Dec. 10 – 13. From \$3 on Dec. 14 – 23. austintrailoflights.org.

**Armadillo Christmas Bazaar.** Dec. 13 – 24. Fine art shopping and live music. 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. \$10, under 12 FREE. armadillobazaar.com.

## Family Events

### Sat 1

**Madrone Canyon Hike.** A guided hike through the five-acre natural area next to the library. 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Laura's Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. FREE. westbanklibrary.com or 512-327-3045.

**Hot Cocoa Stroll and Home for the Holidays.** Shopping, photos with Santa and a lighted parade. All day. Downtown Elgin. FREE. elgintx.com.

**Santa on the Terrace.** Holiday treats, activities and photos with Santa. 9 a.m. The Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Dr. FREE. thelongcenter.org.

**A Christmas Carol Wimberley.** A 40-minute show for all ages. 10 a.m. Burdine Johnson Studio, 1101 FM 235, Wimberley. \$10 adults, \$8 children. emilyann.org or 512-847-6969.

**Blair Woods Family Nature Day.** A morning of educational activities. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Blair Woods Sanctuary, 5401 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. FREE. travisaudubon.org.

**Christmas Traditions.** A come-and-go event with kids' activities. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Williamson Museum, 8 Chisolm Tr., Round Rock. FREE. williamsonmuseum.org or 512-943-1670.

**German Christmas Market.** 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. German Free School, 507 E. 10th St. FREE. germantexans.org.

**Old Town Christmas Festival.** 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Old Town Leander, 100 N. Brushy St., Leander. FREE (some attractions may have fees). visitleandertx.com or 512-259-1907.

**Santa in the Garden.** Rain or shine. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. FREE. austintexas.gov or 512-477-8672.



**What's the Story Steve?** Improv shows for kids. 10 a.m. ColdTowne Theater, 4803 Airport Blvd. \$5. moveyourtale.com.

**Come and Go Crafts.** 10:30 a.m. Lake Travis Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing, Lake Travis. FREE. laketravislibrary.org.

**Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party.** A 40-minute show with live music and lots of action. 11 a.m. Austin Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W. 18th St. \$15 adult, \$10 child. scottishritetheater.org or 512-472-5436.

**Tortoise and Hare.** A re-imagining of the ancient fable as a play with modern music. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Zach Theatre, Kleberg Stage, 1421 W. Riverside Dr. From \$18. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

### SUBMIT YOUR EVENT

Visit [austinfamily.com](http://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](mailto:kaye2003@austinfamily.com) for approval.

**First Saturday at the Carver.** A family-friendly, diverse event with activities, music, discussions and more. 12 p.m. Carver Museum and Cultural Center, 1165 Angelina St. FREE. [austintexas.gov](http://austintexas.gov) or 512-974-4926.

**Holiday Bazaar Open House.** Live music and holiday specials. 12 to 6 p.m. Recycled Reads Bookstore, 5335 Burnet Rd. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-7460.

**Holiday in the Park and Craft Fair.** Photos with Santa, train rides, inflatables and activities. 12 to 3 p.m. Cat Hollow Park, 8600 O'Connor Dr. Round Rock. FREE. [bcmud.org](http://bcmud.org).

**Magic: The Gathering.** Casual game play for all skill levels. 1 p.m. Kyle Public Library, 550 Scott Ave., Kyle. FREE. [cityofkyle.com](http://cityofkyle.com).

**The Muppet Christmas Carol (G).** Shows at 1 and 3 p.m. Bullock Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. \$5 members, \$8 nonmembers. [thestoryoftexas.com](http://thestoryoftexas.com).

**Mesoamerican.** A cultural program of stories, puppetry, arts and crafts for all ages. 1:30 p.m. Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-8700.

**Movie Matinee: Crazy Rich Asians (PG-13).** 2 to 4 p.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St., Pflugerville. FREE. [pflugervilletx.gov](http://pflugervilletx.gov).

**Saturday Matinee - The Incredibles II (PG).** 2 p.m. Windsor Park Branch Library, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-9840.

**Holiday Stroll.** Tree lighting, sing-along and activities. 5 to 10 p.m. Downtown Austin, 7th and Neches St. FREE. [downtownaustin.com](http://downtownaustin.com).

**Pfestival of Lights and Christmas Parade.** Hot cocoa, yule log, carolers and photos with Santa. 5 p.m. Downtown Pflugerville, 100 E. Main St., Pflugerville. FREE. [pflugervilletx.gov](http://pflugervilletx.gov).

**Lake Travis Lighted Boat Parade.** 5:30 p.m. Emerald Point Marina, 5973 Hilene Rd., Lake Travis. [laketravis.com](http://laketravis.com).



**Christmas Stroll Cocoa with Cowboys.** Visit with your favorite cowboy character. 6 to 8 p.m. The Williamson Museum, 716 S. Austin Ave, Georgetown. FREE. [williamsonmuseum.org](http://williamsonmuseum.org).

## Sun 2

### Hanukah Begins

**Happily Ever After.** An improvised musical fairy tale for kids. 11 a.m. Hideout Theatre, 617 Congress Ave. \$5. [hideouttheatre.com](http://hideouttheatre.com).

**Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Free First Sunday: Giving.** Create, sing, and enjoy activities that focus on the joy of giving and receiving. 12 to 5 p.m. Bullock Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. FREE. [thestoryoftexas.com](http://thestoryoftexas.com).

**Christmas Open House.** Learn about local history. 1 p.m. Heritage House Museum, 901 Old Austin-Hutto Rd., Pflugerville. FREE. [pflugervilletx.gov](http://pflugervilletx.gov).

**A Christmas Carol Wimberley.** 2 p.m. See Sat 1 for details.

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## Mon 2

### Music and Movement @ Westbank.

Develop gross motor skills and social skills using rhythm instruments and other props. All ages. 10:30 a.m. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** Enhanced by Tchaikovsky's much-loved score, the tale comes to life with puppets. 3:30 p.m. Pleasant Hill Branch Library, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-3940.

## Tue 4

**Kids Club @ The Domain.** Snacks, crafts and story time. 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Whole Foods, 11920 Domain Dr. FREE. wholefoodsmarket.com.

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** Theater for the very young uses music, art and hands-on sensory experiences to connect children to literature. 10 a.m. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Wake Up Brother Bear.** 12 p.m. Zach Theatre, Topfer Stage, 202 S. Lamar. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Mueller Tower Lighting.** An annual tradition. 5:30 p.m. John Gaines Park, 2708 Sorin St. FREE.

**Dickens Day Celebration.** 5:45 to 7:45 p.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St., Pflugerville. FREE. pflugervilletx.gov.

## Wed 5

**Kids Club @ Lamar.** Snacks, crafts and story time. 9:30 to 11 a.m. Whole Foods Market, 525 N. Lamar Blvd. FREE. wholefoodsmarket.com.

**Northside Kids.** Guided activities and crafts. 10 a.m. The Domain Northside Lawn, 11700 Domain Blvd. FREE. domainnorthside.com.

**Mesoamerican.** A cultural program of stories, puppetry, arts and crafts for all ages. 10:30 a.m. Willie Mae Kirk Branch Library, 3101 Oak Springs Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9920.



**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 3:30 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. North Village Branch Library, 2505 Steck Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9960.

**Holiday Celebration.** Make greeting cards to share with friends and family and learn about holidays from around the world. Supplies provided. 7 p.m. Milwood Branch Library, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9880.

## Thu 6

**Living History Days.** Meet costumed volunteers interpreting a character from Texas history. 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Bullock Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. FREE for pre-registered groups. thestoryoftexas.com or 512-936-8746.

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4 for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 10:15 a.m. See Mon 3 for description. Cepeda Branch Library, 651 N. Pleasant Valley Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7372.

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**Mesoamerican.** A cultural program of stories, puppetry, arts and crafts for all ages. 3:30 p.m. Milwood Branch Library, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9880.

**Farm Street Opry.** Family-friendly musical entertainment featuring local Texas musicians and special guests. 5:30 p.m. Bastrop Convention and Exhibit Center, 1408 Chestnut St., Bastrop. \$7.50, kids under 10 FREE. bastropconventioncenter.com or 512-332-8984.

**Starry Night.** Families with kids of all ages explore astronomy and hands-on activities. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Girlstart, 1400 W. Anderson Ln. FREE. girlstart.org or 512-916-4775.

**Luminations.** Aerial dancing performances and gardens illuminated by thousands of luminarias. 6 p.m. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. From \$10. wildflower.org.



## Fri 7

**Music and Movement.** Recommended for ages 3 to 5. Stretch, sing, dance and explore music with rhythm instruments. 11 a.m. Old Quarry Branch Library, 7051 Village Center Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-8860.

**First Friday Films.** 4 p.m. Hutto Library, 205 West St., Hutto. FREE. huttotx.org or 512-759-4008.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 6 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. Southeast Branch Library, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-8840.

**Tree Lighting and Santa's Workshop.** Live music, carriage rides, visit with Santa and inflatables. 6:30 to 9 p.m. Heritage Oak Park, 875 Quest Pkwy., Cedar Park. FREE. cedarparkfun.com.

**Christmas Puppet Show.** Recommended for ages 1 to 7. Performances at 7, 7:45 and 8:30 p.m. Round Rock Library, 216 E. Main St., Round Rock. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

## Sat 8

**Breakfast with Santa.** 9 to 11 a.m. Dittmar Rec Center, 1009 W. Dittmar Rd. FREE. austintexas.gov or 512-974-6090.

**Guided Hikes at Bright Leaf.** 9 a.m. Bright Leaf Preserve, 2222 and Creek Mountain Rd. FREE. brightleaf.org.

**Holiday Family Event and Craft Fair.** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Summit Christian Academy, 2121 Cypress Creek Rd, Cedar Park. FREE. 512-250-1369.

**Cherrywood Art Fair.** Live music and holiday shopping. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Maplewood Elementary, E. 38th and Maplewood Ave. FREE. chulaleague.org.



**A Christmas Carol Wimberley.** 10 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Holiday Marketplace.** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. East Communities YMCA, 5315 Ed Bluestein Blvd. FREE. austinymca.org or 512-933-9622.

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**Holiday Sweater Weekend.** 10 a.m.  
Downtown Elgin. FREE. [elgintx.com](http://elgintx.com).

**Second Saturdays are for Families.** Make your own gingerbread villa. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Laguna Gloria, 3809 W. 35th St. FREE with registration. [contemporaryaustin.org](http://contemporaryaustin.org) or 512-458-8191.

**What's the Story Steve?** 10 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Christmas Traditions.** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Christmas Stories from Japan.** 10:30 a.m. Lake Travis Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing, Lake Travis. FREE. [laketravislibrary.org](http://laketravislibrary.org).

**Elf (PG).** Don't be a cotton-headed ninnymuggins. See this movie! 1 p.m. Laura's Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. FREE. [westbanklibrary.com](http://westbanklibrary.com).

**Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Tortoise and Hare.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 1 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. Recycled Reads Bookstore, 5335 Burnet Rd. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-7460.

**An Afternoon with Santa.** 2 to 4 p.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St., Pflugerville. FREE. [pflugervilletx.gov](http://pflugervilletx.gov).



**Saturday Matinee - The Star (PG).** 2 p.m. Southeast Branch Library, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-8840.

**Sembrando Herencia.** An original musical tribute to the communities who survived the devastation of Hurricane Maria. 6:30 p.m. The Boyd Vance Theater, 1165 Angelina St. Donations welcomed. [prfdance.org](http://prfdance.org) or 512-251-8122.

## Sun 9

**Guided Hikes at Bright Leaf.** 9 a.m. Bright Leaf Preserve, 2222 and Creek Mountain Rd. FREE. [brightleaf.org](http://brightleaf.org).

**Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Happily Ever After.** 11 a.m. See Sun 2 for details.

**Family Day at Umlauf.** Make art, play games and explore themes. 12 to 4 p.m. Umlauf Sculpture Garden, 605 Azie Morton Rd. FREE. [umlaufsculpture.org](http://umlaufsculpture.org) or 512-445-5582.

**History Lab Sunday Funday.** 1 to 4 p.m. Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. FREE. [nchmuseum.org](http://nchmuseum.org).

## Mon 10

### Hanukkah Ends

**Music and Movement @ Westbank.** 10:30 a.m. See Mon 3 for details.

**Music and Movement.** Recommended for ages 3 to 5. Stretch, sing, dance and explore music with rhythm instruments. 11 a.m. Pleasant Hill Branch Library, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-3940.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 3:45 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. Old Quarry Branch Library, 7051 Village Center Dr. FREE. [library.austintexas.gov](http://library.austintexas.gov) or 512-974-8860.

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## Tue 11

**Kids Club @ The Domain.** 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. See Tue 4 for details.

**Wake Up, Brother Bear.** 10 a.m. See Tue 4 for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.



**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 11 a.m. See Mon 3 for description. University Hills Branch Library, 4721 Loyola Ln. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9940.

**Mesoamerican.** A cultural program of stories, puppetry, arts and crafts for all ages. 3:30 p.m. St. John Branch Library, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7570.

**Family Night: Seed Bead Ornaments.** 6 to 7 p.m. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. FREE. westbanklibrary.com.

**Holiday Celebration at Lake Travis Library.** Make crafts, sing, eat cookies and play games. 6:30 p.m. Lake Travis Library, 1938 Lohman's Crossing, Lake Travis. FREE. laketravislibrary.org.

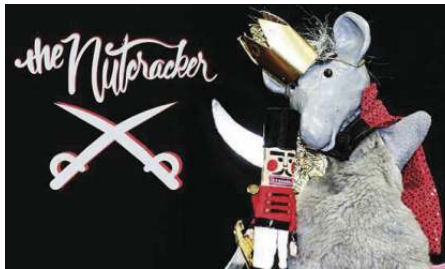
## Wed 12

**Christmas Puppet Show.** Recommended for ages 1 to 7. Performances at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St., Round Rock. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

A colorful advertisement for Creative Brick Builders. The top features a row of colorful LEGO bricks. Below is the text "We're Built for LEGO® Enthusiasts" in large blue letters. Underneath, it lists "Birthday Parties · Classes", "Kid Night Out · Playtime", and "creative brick builders" with a logo. It also states "Specialists in LEGO® sets, parts &amp; minifigures since 2012" and "Shop our collection in store or online". At the bottom, it provides the address "12 Chisholm Trail, Round Rock 78681", the phone number "(512) 388-9003", and the website "CreativeBrickBuilders.com". A small disclaimer at the very bottom reads "LEGO® is a registered trademark of the LEGO® Group of companies which does not sponsor, authorize, or endorse these programs." The background of the ad shows a child's hands playing with a large pile of colorful LEGO bricks.

**Kids Club @ Lamar.** 9:30 to 11 a.m. See Wed 5 for details.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 11 a.m. See Mon 3 for description. University Hills Branch Library, 4721 Loyola Ln. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9940.



**Tween Holiday Hangout.** 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St., Pflugerville. FREE. pflugervilletx.gov.

## Thu 13

**Christmas Puppet Show.** Recommended for ages 1 to 7. Performances at 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Public Library, 216 E. Main St., Round Rock. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Little Texans.** Monthly hands-on program with movement, play and tactile learning for ages 2 to 5. 10 to 11 a.m. Bullock Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. FREE with admission. thestoryoftexas.com or 512-936-8746.

**Science Thursday.** 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Bullock Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. FREE to pre-registered groups. thestoryoftexas.com.

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4 for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 6 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. Spicewood Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-3800.

**Peter Pan Jr.** A kid-friendly musical production of Disney's Peter Pan. 7 p.m. Burdine Johnson Studio, 1101 FM 235, Wimberley. \$15 adults, \$10 children. emilyann.org or 512-847-6969.

## Fri 14

**Mesoamerican.** A cultural program of stories, puppetry, arts and crafts for all ages. 10:30 a.m. Austin Central Library, 710 W. Cesar Chavez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7400.

**Friday Matinee - The Incredibles II (PG).** 2 p.m. Ruiz Branch Library, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7500.

**Arbor Day Celebration.** 3 to 5 p.m. Brushy Creek Community Center, 16318 Great Oaks Drive, Round Rock. FREE. bcmud.org or 512-255-7871 x405.

**Friday Matinee - The Lego Batman Movie (PG).** 3:30 p.m. Ruiz Branch Library, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7500.

**Peter Pan Jr.** 7 p.m. See Thu 13 for details.

## Sat 15

**Mary Poppins.** All Day. Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, 1500 W. Anderson Ln. FREE. redeemerschool.net or 512-451-6478.



**The Art of Giving.** 10 a.m. Downtown Elgin. FREE. elgintx.com.

**A Christmas Carol Wimberley.** 10 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**What's the Story Steve?** 10 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Christmas Traditions.** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Staci Gray at The Hive.** Live musical performance. 10:30 a.m. The Hive, 10415 Old Manchaca Rd. FREE.

**Pippi Longstocking's After-Christmas Party.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**Tortoise and Hare.** 11 a.m. See Sat 1 for details.

**The Carver's Santa Special.** Photos with Santa. 1 p.m. George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, 1165 Angelina St. FREE. austintexas.gov or 512-974-4926 to RSVP.

**Peter Pan Jr.** 7 p.m. See Thu 13 for details.

## Sun 16

**Happily Ever After.** 11 a.m. See Sun 2 for details.

**Platform Nine and Teen Quarters.** Mingle with fellow Harry Potter fans. For teens 13 to 18 only. 2 p.m. Austin Central Library, 710 W. Cesar Chavez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7400.

**Wassail 2018: A Solstice Christmas Celebration.** Music, songs, puppets, magic and mummings. 2:30 p.m. short version just for children. 5:30 big show for all ages. Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W. 18th St. \$15 adults, \$5 for 12 and under. scottishritetheater.org or 512-472-5436.



**Peter Pan Jr.** 5 p.m. See Thu 13 for details.

## Mon 17

**Music and Movement @ Westbank.** 10:30 a.m. See Mon 3 for details.

## Tue 18

**Kids Club @ The Domain.** 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. See Tue 4 for details.



**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4 for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 3:30 p.m. See Mon 3 for description. St. John Branch Library, 7500 Blessing Ave. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7570.

## Wed 19

**Kids Club @ Lamar.** 9:30 to 11 a.m. See Wed 5 for details.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 11 a.m. See Mon 3 for description. Terrazas Branch Library, 1105 E. Cesar Chavez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-3625.



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## Thu 20

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4 for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or 512-476-0541.

**Literature Live: The Nutcracker.** 10:30 a.m. See Mon 3 for description. Windsor Park Branch Library, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-9840.

**Ugly Sweater Contest.** 7 to 10 p.m. Playland Skate Center, 8822 McCann Dr. \$9. playlandskatecenter.com or 512-452-1901.

## Sat 22

**What's the Story Steve? 10 a.m.** See Sat 1 for details.

**Christmas Traditions.** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. See Sat 1 for details.

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**AFS Presents: It's A Wonderful Life.** 4 p.m.  
Austin Film Society Cinemas, 6406 N I-35  
Frontage Rd. \$9, \$5 for kids under 18.  
austinfilm.org or 512-322-0145.

**Victorian Candlelight Christmas.** Music,  
hayride and more. 6 to 10 p.m.  
Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms, 10621  
Pioneer Farms Dr. pioneerfarms.org or  
512-837-1215.

### Sun 23

**Victorian Christmas.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. See  
Sat 22 for details.

**Happily Ever After.** 11 a.m. See Sun 2 for  
details.

**AFS Presents: Little Women (PG).** 12 p.m.  
AFS Cinema, 6259 Middle Fiskville Rd. \$9, \$5  
for kids under 18. austinfilm.org or  
512-322-0145.

### Mon 24

#### Christmas Eve

**AFS Presents: It's A Wonderful Life.** 6 p.m.  
See Sat 22 for details.

### Tue 25

#### Christmas Day

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4  
for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch  
Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or  
512-476-0541.

**AFS Presents: Little Women (PG).** 2 p.m.  
See Sun 23 for details.

**AFS Presents: It's A Wonderful Life.** 7 p.m.  
See Sat 22 for details.

### Wed 26

**Kids Club @ Lamar.** 9:30 to 11 a.m. See  
Wed 5 for details.

### Thu 27

**Wake Up, Brother Bear!** 10 a.m. See Tue 4  
for description. Zach North, 12129 N Ranch  
Rd 620 N. \$12. zachtheatre.org or  
512-476-0541.

### Sat 29

**What's the Story Steve?** 10 a.m. See Sat 1  
for details.

### Sun 30

**Happily Ever After.** 11 a.m. See Sun 2 for  
details.

### Mon 31

**Noon Year's Eve Party.** Recommended for  
ages 4 to 12. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Pflugerville  
Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St., Pflugerville.  
FREE. pflugervilletx.gov.

**New Year's Eve Party.** Dancing and live  
music by Joe McDermott. 11 a.m. Laura's  
Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. FREE.  
westbanklibrary.com.

**New Year's Eve Party.** A family-friendly  
party with live music by Songs for Seeds.  
11 a.m. Lake Travis Library, 1938 Lohman's  
Crossing, Lake Travis. FREE.  
laketravislibrary.org.

## Parenting Events

### Wed 5

**Welcome Wednesday.** 8:30 to 10 a.m. Hill  
Country Christian School, 12124 RR 620  
North. FREE. hillcountrychristianschool.org  
or 512-331-7036.

### Fri 7

**Parent's Night Out.** 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. Tom's  
Dive and Swim, 5909 Burnet Rd. \$50.  
austinswim.com or 512-451-3425.

### Sat 15

**Breastfeeding Support Group.** 11 a.m. to  
12 p.m. Baylor Scott & White Pediatric  
Clinic, 425 University Blvd, Round Rock.  
FREE. www.tinyurl.com/yc2dg3z7 or  
512-509-6455.

## Story Times

**Programs subject to change.** Please  
contact the hosting library before  
attending.

Austin Public Library story times are too  
numerous for our calendar, but include  
story times for infants, toddlers,  
preschoolers and all ages. In addition,  
there are dual language and Spanish

## Winter Break Camp



**Session I:** Wed-Fri, Dec 26-28, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Session II:** Wed-Fri, Jan 2-4, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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language story times. Visit the Austin Public Library website for dates, locations, age groups and times.  
library.austintexas.gov or 512-974-7400.

## MONDAYS

**Libraries closed Dec. 24**

**Some libraries closed Dec. 31**

**Baby Time for 3 – 12 mos.** 10 a.m.  
Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St.,  
Pflugerville. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Infant Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Westbank  
Library, 1309 Westbank Dr.  
westbanklibrary.com.

**Baby Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Wells Branch  
Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

**Baby Time for 12 – 18 mos.** 11 a.m.  
Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St.,  
Pflugerville. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 11:15 a.m. Wells Branch  
Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

**Evening Story Time.** 6:30 p.m. Round Rock  
Library, 221 E. Main St., Round Rock.  
roundrocktexas.gov.

## TUESDAYS

**Libraries closed Dec. 25**

**Baby Story Time.** 9:30 a.m. Georgetown  
Library, 402 W. 8th St., Georgetown.  
library.georgetown.org.

**Lapsit Story Time.** 9:45 a.m. Cedar Park  
Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park.  
cedarparktexas.gov.

**Bilingual Story Time.** 10 a.m. Pflugerville  
Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St.  
library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Books and Babies.** 10 a.m. North Village  
Branch Library, 2505 Steck Ave.  
library.austintexas.gov.

**All Ages Story Time.** 10:15 a.m. Pleasant Hill  
Branch Library, 211 E. William Cannon Dr.  
library.austintexas.gov.

**All Ages Story Time.** 10:15 a.m. Carver  
Branch Library, 1161 Angelina St.  
library.austintexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 10:15 a.m. Spicewood  
Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood  
Springs Rd. library.austintexas.gov.

**Music and Movement.** 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr.  
westbanklibrary.com.

**Spanish Circle Time.** 10:30 a.m. Wells  
Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr.  
wblibrary.org.

**Toddler Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Cedar Park  
Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park.  
cedarparktexas.gov.

**Bilingual Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock  
Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Spanish Dual Language Story Time.** 10:30  
a.m. Terrazas Branch Library, 1105 E. Cesar  
Chavez St. library.austintexas.gov.

**Music & Movement.** 11 a.m. Ruiz Branch  
Library, 1600 Grove Blvd.  
library.austintexas.gov.

**Bilingual Story Time.** 11 a.m. Pflugerville  
Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St.  
library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Spanish Dual Language Story Time.** 11 a.m.  
North Village Branch Library, 2505 Steck  
Ave. library.austintexas.gov.

**Preschool Story Time.** 11 a.m. Spicewood  
Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood  
Springs Rd. library.austintexas.gov.

**Preschool Story Time.** 11 a.m. Cedar Park  
Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park.  
cedarparktexas.gov.

**Books and Babies.** 2 p.m. Howson Branch  
Library, 2500 Exposition Blvd.  
library.austintexas.gov.

**Story Time and Craft.** 6:30 p.m. Wells  
Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr.  
wblibrary.org.

## WEDNESDAYS

**Babytime.** 9:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221  
E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 9:30 a.m. Georgetown  
Library, 402 W. 8th St., Georgetown.  
library.georgetown.org.

**Toddler time.** 9:30 a.m. Round Rock Library,  
221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

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**Lapsit Story Time.** 9:45 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Story Time.** 10 a.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Circle Time.** 10:30 a.m. Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

**Preschool Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Preschool Express.** 10:30 a.m. Kyle Library, 550 Scott St. cityofkyle.com.

**Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

**Toddler Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Story Time.** 11 a.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Preschool Story Time.** 11 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Bow Wow Reading.** 4:30 p.m. Little Walnut Creek Branch Library, 853 W. Rundberg Ln. library.austintexas.gov.

## THURSDAYS

**Preschool Story Time.** 9:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Babytime.** 9:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 9:30 a.m. Georgetown Library, 402 W. 8th St., Georgetown. library.georgetown.org.

**Lapsit Story Time.** 9:45 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Story Time.** 10 a.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Baby Lapsit.** 10 a.m. Kyle Library, 550 Scott St. cityofkyle.com.

**Spanish Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

**Preschool Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Preschool Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Georgetown Library, 402 W. 8th St., Georgetown. library.georgetown.org.

**Toddler Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Laura's Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. westbanklibrary.com.

**Story Time.** 11 a.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Toddler Time.** 10 a.m. Kyle Library, 550 Scott St. cityofkyle.com.

**Preschool Story Time.** 11 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Sign Language Story Time.** 11:15 a.m. Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

## FRIDAYS

**Babytime.** 9:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**All Ages Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Central Library, 710 W. Cesar Chavez St. library.austintexas.gov.

**Family Fun Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Georgetown Library, 402 W. 8th St., Georgetown. library.georgetown.org.

**Los Cuentos Dual Language Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Kyle Library, 550 Scott St. cityofkyle.com.

**Toddler Time.** 10:30 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Toddler Story Time.** 10:30 a.m. Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr, Austin. wblibrary.org.

**Preschool Story Time.** 11:15 a.m. Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

## SATURDAYS

**Family Story Time.** 10 a.m. Cedar Park Library, 550 Discovery Blvd., Cedar Park. cedarparktexas.gov.

**Baby Time.** 10:30 a.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

**Family Story Time.** 11 a.m. Round Rock Library, 221 E. Main St. roundrocktexas.gov.

**Story Time and Craft.** 11 a.m. Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

**Family Story Time.** 12:30 p.m. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. westbanklibrary.com.

**Saturday Story Time.** 1 p.m. Pflugerville Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. library.pflugervilletx.gov.



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# PIENSA POSITIVO



by Leslie Montoya, life coach and host of Despierta Austin

## EMOCIONES NEGATIVAS

El regalo de expresar nuestras emociones tales como la felicidad, el enojo, el júbilo, la tristeza y más, es lo que enriquece nuestra experiencia humana. Y aunque hay emociones más placenteras que otras, como el enojo, estas no se pueden evitar. Lo que se si se puede evitar es la manera negativa en cómo las expresamos. Si lo consideras necesario, analiza la importancia de controlar la manera en cómo expresas tus emociones. Una vez tomes la decisión de cambiar, detecta las emociones que tienes antes de llegar al nivel del enojo. Y una vez detectadas, aprende a expresarlas de manera constructiva. No ocultes tus emociones, aprende a expresarlas. ¡Piensa Positivo!

## NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

The gift of expressing our emotions such as happiness, anger, joy, sadness and more is what enriches our human experience. And although there are some more pleasant emotions than others — such as anger — these can't be avoided. What is possible to avoid is the negative behavior in which they are expressed. First, create awareness about the importance of controlling the way you express your emotions. Second, once you make the decision to change, discover the emotions you have before you reach the level of anger. Once you discover them, learn to express them constructively. Don't hide your emotions, learn to express them well. Think Positive!





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# KID ZONE

## Jolly Gingerbread House DIY



The countdown to Christmas is underway, but there's still plenty of time get into the holiday spirit. We've got the scoop on how to make a festive classic: the gingerbread house. Gather family and friends

to build this iconic holiday craft. You can even create a friendly competition to see who can build the jolliest home of them all!


### What You Need

- graham crackers
- white icing
- quart-sized plastic bag
- scissors
- paper plate or cardboard
- assorted candy (chocolate chips, sprinkles, gumdrops, peppermints, marshmallows and candy canes)
- powdered sugar

### What You Do

1. Scoop the icing into the quart-sized plastic bag and seal it tightly. Squeeze all the icing into one of the bottom corners and, using scissors, cut a small hole at the tip of the corner. This will be your piping bag!
2. Create the base foundation of your home by placing an even number of graham cracker sheets in a square or rectangular shape flat on the paper plate. Use frosting as "glue" to stick the graham crackers together.
3. Build the walls of your home using large graham cracker sheets and icing "glue."
4. Place two full graham cracker sheets at angles on the top edge of the walls to make the roof. Secure the roof with icing.
5. Use your imagination and creativity to decorate the outside of your gingerbread home with assorted candies. Add finishing touches by sprinkling powdered sugar on top to give your home a snowy look.

Enjoy your masterpiece, and eat it, too!

 The YMCA of Austin is a dynamic association of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility.



## SMART SCREEN TIME

Back in the era before DVRs and video-on-demand, even before VHS – you know, the real olden days – there used to be just one shot to view holiday specials. As a devoted

aficionado of Charlie Brown and Linus,

Rudolph, the Heat and Cold Misers and the Grinch, I would mark my calendar for the evenings when they aired. Not only can I revisit those programs in my mind, I can also recall the commercials that ran with them, and that was no accident. Advertisers knew their audiences well, and through a combination of repetition and the heightened anticipation of the season, their messages were seared into my brain.

I still love those holiday specials, along with a whole host of new ones that illuminate other traditions and customs, and I try to gather my family for the actual TV broadcasts; I want to capture that just-once-a-year spirit for my kids and to humor my own nostalgia. As an adult, I can appreciate even more the quiet pace of a Charlie Brown Christmas and the hand-made aesthetic of the stop-motion animation specials, and how these elements are rarities in our lives. They are a perfect fit for the holiday season we aspire to have.

The commercials provide opportunities to unpack with kids some of the desire they are working to create. Is the item for indoor or outdoor use? Is it a one-time purchase or are there additional costs? Can it "grow" with the child or is it for a specific moment in time? And since we parents know our kids best, and they know themselves pretty well, too, we can always ask: How well will it hold up with your style of play?

For a full list of non-commercial holiday offerings, check out the KLRU lineup at [klru.org/holidays](http://klru.org/holidays)

*Benjamin Kramer, PhD, is the director of education for KLRU-TV, Austin PBS.*

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## JUST FOR GRINS

CARRIE TAYLOR

Taylor is a freelance writer, editor and mother of two boys.



# My Ultimate Guide to Holiday Cheer

As a child, my holidays were a red and green blur of pure, unadulterated joy. As a young adult, I spent my holidays fielding questions about hairstyles and love interests. As a married adult, the holidays meant declaring a side of the family to spend Christmas Day with (thus enduring a year of angry eyes from the forsaken grandmother) and fielding questions about when I'd finally start having kids.

Now that I have kids, it's a whole new ballgame. Sure, I want my holidays to look like a real-life Hallmark movie, but we all know that's a sham. Here are my tips for making through the most wonderful time of the year:

1. Take the DIY approach with Christmas cards. Choose a favorite photo of yourself and let your kids draw in themselves and your spouse.
2. Got a picky eater? Bust out the blender and flex your smoothie making skills. (I hear you can add kale to these.) You'll

need it after a steady stream of holiday meals in which your child only eats the rolls.

3. For the stubborn baby who won't go to sleep, give him a candy cane and then a Kleenex for clean-up. You can thank my grandfather for that one.
4. Steel yourself for the moment when your kids dismissively toss aside the present you visited four stores to find because it was sold out online. (Also: don't shop the week before Christmas.)
5. Visualize your perfect holiday gathering, activity, photo shoot, etc. — but add tears, a few thrown punches and a blowout diaper. This way, you won't be disappointed.

At the end of the day, cut yourself and your family some slack. And next year, book an escape to a sandy beach in the Caribbean.

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