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January 2020

# GREATWOOD

monthly™

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# Two Greatwood friends demonstrate how to Pay It Forward

by MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

**G**reatwood friends Dylan Dean and Sofia Giordano both say they don't take their good health for granted and want to do all they can to help those whose health is not at its best. They want to "pay it forward," said the girls. And so that phrase became the name of the team they're leading to raise \$75,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the world's largest nonprofit health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research. "We chose this name because we feel that the health we get to enjoy every day is a gift and if you are blessed with such a great gift you should use it to help those who are not," said Giordano, 15. "It is our responsibility to pay it forward."

Starting Jan. 8 team Pay It Forward will participate in the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Student of the Year campaign which will conclude Feb. 28. The Student of the Year campaign is an initiative in which nominated high school students participate in a fundraising challenge to benefit the society.

Participants raise money in honor of a young, local patient hero who is battling, or is in remission, from a blood cancer. The candidate or team who raises the most money at the end of the program is named Student of the Year for their local chapter.

Dean and Giordano, both of whom are George Ranch High School students, were nominated for this year's campaign for the Houston chapter. It is an opportunity they feel honored and excited to take.

"This program not only gives the students an opportunity to develop leadership, project management, communication and marketing skills, it also develops their character," said Giordano's mother, Toni. "I hope through this experience she learns the true value in helping others and that one person can make a difference."

**I have been blessed to not have any connections with a blood cell cancer and I feel I should pass on my blessing to those in need.**

**Dylan Dean**

### Meeting a hero

The two friends are also grateful this opportunity provided them with the chance to meet Jacob Munoz, the chapter's 2020 Honored Hero.

"Heroes are chosen for their inspiring stories and winning attitudes," Giordano said. "I can see why LLS calls them 'heroes' — his courage and attitude was amazing. What he and his family went through was so difficult, but when we spoke with them they seemed so positive and motivating to me that it made me

feel even more excited to be part of this amazing campaign."

Munoz, an Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia survivor, is a spokesperson for the thousands of patients who have benefited from LLS resources.

"[Meeting Jacob] gave me a sense of what it really looks like to live, or have lived, with a blood cancer and it justified in my heart why I am doing this," said Dean, 17, who called Jacob sweet and genuine. "Jacob was such a down-to-earth and grateful person who I genuinely had a good conversation with. He is now doing amazing and seeing his growth motivated me to work harder in life and with the campaign."



Friends and George Ranch High School students Dylan Dean and Sofia Giordano with Jacob Munoz.

## Team Pay It Forward

**LEADERS** | Dylan Dean & Sofia Giordano

**MEMBERS** | George Ranch Students Isa Storer, Cami Garcia, Bailey Stephenson, Sydney Velez, Savannah Felan, Cade Quattlebaum, Trace Walton, Alexandra Tennon and Coy Cook.

## Get involved!

To be a sponsor, donate or to learn more visit the Pay It Forward team page at <https://events.lls.org/tgx/HoustonSOY20/dsofia> or email Dylan or Sophia at [ylan\\_sofiasoy@yahoo.com](mailto:ylan_sofiasoy@yahoo.com).

## Want to mail your donation?

If you would prefer to mail your donation, you can mail to: The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society 5433 Westheimer Rd #300, Houston, TX 77056. Please make your check payable to: The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and print "Team Pay it Forward" in the "Memo" section. The deadline for receiving contributions in the mail is Feb. 27.

## Understanding the impact

Giordano listed off the facts: Blood cancers are the third leading cancer killers of Americans. Every three minutes, someone is diagnosed with a blood cancer. More than 1.3 million are living with or in remission from Leukemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma. And more than one-third of the blood cancer patients do not survive five years after diagnosis.

"I think that it is important for people to learn about blood cancer and how much it affects our community," Giordano said recounting the impact Jacob Munoz had on her. "Meeting Jacob personally made this more a reality. You can read facts and statistics to understand it, but I don't think you can truly grasp the severity and how it affects people until you've had a personal conversation with someone who has battled with this type of disease."

And this is why team Pay It Forward is hoping the community will champion their efforts. "Please help us raise money for the over one million people who are affected by these horrible diseases," Giordano said enthusiastically. "Let's be part of the cure."

The team has already started seeking donors and sponsors to reach its \$75,000 goal. The team is offering online fundraising, restaurant percentage nights, special events and company sponsorships, the details of which will be found on the team's website.

**Hearing the stories of the debilitating effects that blood cancers can have on those who suffer from these blood diseases has strengthened my commitment to helping.**

**Sofia Giordano**

The team is also accepting matching gift opportunities and will even sell T-shirts at school.

"I feel it is extremely important to give back especially in my community," Dean said of why this campaign is important to her. She also stressed that the money raised is put to use locally. "No matter what age or who you are, you can help out — big or small — and it is important to do so."

Dean's mother, Josalyn, said she hopes her daughter develops into a leader while learning why it's important to help others. "I am proud of Dylan for taking on the challenge and pursuing it whole-heartedly," Josalyn said. "It is important for them to be aware of the cause because an average of 3,679 people are diagnosed with Leukemia each year."



## About The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is the largest nonprofit dedicated to creating a world without blood cancers. Since 1949, the society has invested nearly \$1.3 billion in groundbreaking research, pioneering many of today's most innovative approaches. Visit [www.lls.org](http://www.lls.org).

# 2020

## A New Year, another opportunity to...

### Get involved with a community cause

One of the most common resolutions at the start of a new year is volunteering, and there is no shortage of opportunities in Fort Bend County. For those who have never volunteered, or who are unfamiliar with the works of local nonprofits, there will be a couple of events at the opening of the new year where a person could get a gist of some of the beneficial efforts around the county.

The first event worth saving the date for is Hope for Three's Annual Jigsaw Puzzle competition.

**"We take the puzzle piece symbolism a little bit further,"** said Darla Farmer, Hope For Three founder and CEO. "Since 2011, Hope For Three continues to join autism advocates around the world in efforts to connect. The cause of autism is unknown and there is no cure. Because of this, we will continue to connect autism families with providers and therapies they desperately need.



"We will continue educating our entire community and surrounding areas about autism, acceptance and the many ways they can assist the families we serve," she continued. "We recognize this is a small part in making the puzzle pieces fit, but we are making life-changing connections."

**DETAILS |** When: Jan. 18, 2019 from 9:30 a.m. to noon; Where: Gallery Furniture, 7227 Grand Parkway South in Richmond; Cost: \$125 per team. For more information visit [hopeforthree.org/events](http://hopeforthree.org/events) or call 281-245-0640.

Then, just as January ends Fort Bend Cares 15th Annual Road Trip to South America will step into the spotlight with all the Latin sights, sounds and tastes one could imagine.

**"Road Trip is different from your typical sit-down galas,"** said event chair Gail McClendon. "We have a cocktail party atmosphere with lots to see and do."

**DETAILS |** When: Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m. Where: Fluor, 1 Fluor Daniel Drive in Sugar Land; Cost: \$75 and \$50 for professionals 30 years old and younger. For more information call -281- 725-8287, email [info@fortbendcares.org](mailto:info@fortbendcares.org) or visit [www.fortbendcares.org](http://www.fortbendcares.org). To purchase tickets visit [one.bidpal.net/fortbendcaresrt](http://one.bidpal.net/fortbendcaresrt). Sponsorships are available ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

### Try new experiences by starting a club

Shared interests are often the foundation of lasting relationships. Clubs can be a great way for people of all ages to connect with those who share their passions.

Clubs are organizations that are dedicated to a particular interest

The annual Jigsaw Puzzle competition brings awareness to the autism disorder which affects one in 59 children and raises funds for families and children living with autism.

**WHAT TO EXPECT**  
Teams of four members will have two hours to complete a 500-piece puzzle. Competitors 10 years old and older are eligible to participate. A prestigious awards ceremony immediately follows the contest.

## HOPE FOR THREE

The 3rd Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

or activity. Clubs can be academic-based, hobby-based, faith-based, or rooted in any subject that people share a passion for. While clubs are often associated with school-aged children, they're also widely accessible and positive outlets for adults.

Adults interested in clubs can see if there are any in or around where they live, work or go to school. If nothing seems to fit the bill, adults can start a club. In fact, for people who resolve to try new activities and interests or meet new people, beginning a club can be an ideal outlet. Here's how to get the ball rolling.

#### • PICK AN INTEREST

Anything from sports to culinary arts can work. Even activities that people do on their own, like reading, can be turned into activities for clubs. For example, book clubs encourage discussing a book together as opposed to reading the book together.

#### • INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

Post flyers and information in places where potential club members are likely to see it, e.g. posting information near popular trail or bike shops if you want to start a cycling club. Social media also can be a great way to get the word out.

#### • CONSIDER A SPONSOR?

Campus-based clubs may require supervision of a faculty member. Sponsors are good ideas for private clubs, and they may provide a meeting space. Reach out to local businesses or houses of worship to see if they can sponsor a potential club.

#### • ESTABLISH A MISSION STATEMENT

Put your goals for the club in writing. The mission statement needn't be lengthy, but it can help set the tone for the club. For example, book clubs may aim to read and analyze one book per month. A club's mission statement also can be as simple as having fun.

The autism puzzle piece, ribbon or pattern reflects the complexity of an autism spectrum disorder. The different colors and shapes represent the diversity of the people and families living with the disorder.



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# FORT BEND CARES

*The 15th Annual Road Trip to South America*

**WHAT TO EXPECT**  
An enchanting night filled with beautiful décor, delicious international cuisine and an interactive atmosphere. The event space will transport guests to the fun fiesta sounds, vibrant colors and flavors of South America.

Enjoy a delightful choice of dishes from more than a dozen popular restaurants, an incredible variety of entertainment including a raffle and wine pull. Colorful costumes, music by Shark Bait and the Arthur Murray Dance Studio and some special items in the live and silent auctions will be featured.

This event will raise funds to support non-profit organizations through grants that improve the lives of disadvantaged children in the county. Fort Bend Cares has given over \$2.2 million in donations to local non-profits.

## • GROW THE CLUB

Once the club is established, encourage members to bring friends. This will help with recruitment and can further spread the word about your club.

## Advocate for local children

Child Advocates of Fort Bend announced it has launched an \$8 million capital campaign — **The Children’s Sake Capital Campaign** — to completely remodel and expand its building.

CAFB has experienced 53 percent growth in the past five years in the number of children who have been abused or neglected receiving services. At CAFB, a team of highly-trained forensic interviewers conduct 1,500 to 2,000 interviews of children annually and coordinate a joint investigation with a team of professionals including Children’s Protective Services (CPS) and Law Enforcement. Following an interview, children receive a variety of services including medical exams, therapy and case management. With this huge influx, many children have been forced to wait six to eight weeks to receive the services they desperately need for healing, including therapy.



“We have been challenged by this increase in children and after careful consideration, we are responding with the largest initiative in our history – the remodel and expansion of our building and creation of a new 10,000 square foot Children’s Advocacy Center with double the space, an expanded CASA Wing and new Training and Volunteer Learning center,” said Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford.

“The increase in growth is attributable to several factors. Fort Bend is one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S. It is estimated that one in four girls and one in six boys has been sexually abused by the age of 18 so with an increase in population, you would expect to have more children being impacted,” Mefford explained. “Other contributing factors include social media and online solicitation of children, the fact that the greater Houston area is the top area in the nation for sex trafficking of minors and the Me Too movement which is giving children the courage to speak up.”

CAFB also launched its most aggressive public awareness campaign in 2018 and reached more than 17,000 students and 1,000 educators. As a result, more children are coming forward and disclosing. Additionally, State Bill 1806 which passed in 2018 requires that all children who have made an outcry of abuse must be referred for services at an accredited Children’s Advocacy Center, and CAFB is the only such center in Fort Bend County.

“The combination of all of these factors has resulted in a dramatic uptick in the number of children we are seeing and is causing a strain on our ability to deliver services, which is why we decided to launch the campaign.”

The new campus will include 9,000 additional square feet to double the space needed for forensic interview rooms and therapy rooms. It will completely renovate its current 18,000 sq. feet and provide room for 25 additional staff members and many more volunteer advocates.

“We are here so that no child falls through the cracks in Fort Bend County,” said Mefford. “This newly remodeled and expanded building will double the number of children we can serve over the next five years to over 5,000 children annually.”

To date, CAFB has raised \$6.9 million toward the campaign’s goal of \$8 million. One hundred percent of its board of directors and 100 percent of staff have made a financial commitment. In late 2018, The



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George Foundation quietly kicked off the campaign with a \$2 million grant commitment.

Additional supporters include Houston Endowment, Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation, BGE, Madison Charitable Foundation, Inc., Sprint Waste, OCuSOFT and Gulf Coast Medical Foundation.

"We need the community to step up now more than ever. While we have had some very significant gifts, every dollar counts," said Olson. "We are all collectively trying to reach this goal and this new facility and the expansion of our services will only make our entire community stronger."

Naming opportunities for rooms, building wings and outdoor spaces are available.

**BE AN ADVOCATE | Contact Jessica Jubin, Development Officer & Campaign Manager [jjubin@cafb.org](mailto:jjubin@cafb.org) (281) 344-5136. For more information on how individuals can become a Voice for Children Ambassador and get involved with Child Advocates of Fort Bend, contact Dana Mersiovsky for an introductory tour at 281-344-5106 or [dmersiovsky@cafb.org](mailto:dmersiovsky@cafb.org) or log onto [www.cafb.org](http://www.cafb.org).**

To fund construction and expanded operations, CAFB launched a Capital Campaign called For The Children's Sake chaired by Nancy Olson with counsel from Dini Spheris.

## Learn the ways to beat bad habits

The start of a new year can be a rejuvenating time when people take inventory of their lives and make positive changes. In a quest for personal growth, many people resolve to reduce or eliminate bad habits.

Habits are one of the ways in which the brain establishes patterns for neurons to follow. Habits help people work on autopilot some of the time, which can save time and energy, according to Medium.com, an information site educating the public on a wide array of timely topics. Good habits, like showing up to work on time, are worth maintaining. But bad habits can be problematic and potentially unhealthy.

Strategies to break bad habits might work for some but not for others. Perseverance is essential to kicking bad habits, and the following are some additional tips that can help people as they try to ditch certain behaviors once and for all.

- **RECOGNIZE THE HABIT.** No person is perfect, and each of us has our strengths and weaknesses. Recognizing a bad habit is the first step toward breaking it.
- **BREAK THE PATTERN BY OFFERING A NEW ONE.** As noted, when a habit is established, neurons form a pattern. Establishing a new, better habit, rather than just trying to quit the bad habit cold turkey, can be an effective way to help the brain adjust to a new pattern, advises neuroscientist Elliot Berkman. He says the brain

finds it easier to do something new than to simply stop doing something it's accustomed to. So if you're a nail-biter, do something else with your hands, like play a musical instrument, to create a new pattern.

- **PENALIZE YOURSELF WITHIN REASON.** Making a habit painful in one way or another may make it easier to quit. Penalizing yourself by paying a dollar each time you say a curse word, or extending a workout for an extra 30 minutes for each one you miss are some examples of simple punishments.
- **REWARD YOURSELF FOR BEATING HABITS.** Rewards for kicking bad habits can be just as effective as penalizing bad behavior. Reward yourself with something unusual and meaningful after you kick a bad habit.
- **LEARN YOUR TRIGGERS AND AVOID THEM.** The self-improvement blog Pick the Brain indicates that every bad habit has a cue that can trigger it. Triggers fall into these categories: location, time, emotional state, other people, and an immediately preceding action. By learning your triggers, you can work to avoid them. If eating junk food comes on the tails of a stressful commute, try a different way home. If you smoke when you're around a particular person who eggs you on, take a break from hanging out with this person.

## Support local senior citizens

One of the most active proponents of senior citizens in the county is Fort Bend Seniors Meals on Wheels. The organization provides more than 380,000 hot, home-delivered and congregate meals to more than 2,100 seniors each year throughout Fort Bend and Waller Counties. The local nonprofit, with a staff of 37, provides meals and services for seniors in Fort Bend and Waller Counties to support their independence.

And just last month the organization announced Leah Ghobrial's as deputy executive director.

"Leah has proven to be a capable leader, with an eye for the future," said FBS Board Chairman Ray Aguilar. "As the deputy executive director of Fort Bend Seniors, we are confident that she will provide the leadership and creative solutions needed to prepare for a future where the demand for our services will continue to grow."

After serving as FBS' Director of Development for more than two years, Ghobrial will work alongside Interim CEO Bob Hebert and the Board of Directors to grow community awareness and support of the organization's programs and services to seniors throughout the region.

Appointed as Interim CEO in July 2017, Hebert will remain in his position through December 2020.

**"I am humbled and honored to continue serving our community's older adults by stepping into this new role with Fort Bend Seniors,"** Ghobrial said. "We have an incredibly talented and dedicated team at FBS, and I look forward to working together as we move into a new chapter of the organization's legacy of improving the quality of life of our most vulnerable seniors."



For more information on current programs and ways to get involved at FBS, visit [www.fortbendseniors.org](http://www.fortbendseniors.org) or call 281-633-7049

## Go ahead and get organized

Becoming more organized is a popular resolution each new year. However, like many resolutions, people's commitment to being more organized tends to wane as February draws near.

Being unorganized can adversely affect productivity, state of mind, motivation, and even happiness. Sixty-seven percent of people surveyed in an Alpha Phi Quarterly study believed they could save up to 30 minutes a day if they were more organized. And a Huffington Post survey determined worrying a home isn't clean enough or organized enough is the fifth most common stress trigger for Americans.

Getting and staying organized requires commitment. Having some handy tips at the ready to facilitate the process can make things go more smoothly.

**1.** Determine what organization means to you. Being organized might mean one thing to you and something else entirely to someone else. Some may put form before function. Others may be interested in the aesthetics of a neat-looking space. Once you have a handle on what being organized entails to you, you can get to work.

**2.** Start with what motivates you most. Perhaps this is a room in the home that has become overrun with clutter. Or maybe it's getting finances organized so you can save for a dream vacation. When you accomplish your biggest goal, the seemingly smaller ones may seem less difficult.

**3.** Declutter your mind. Think of a busy mind as a computer that has that turning hourglass or spinning color wheel icon when it's stuck on a process. Every application stalls because the computer cannot do everything at once. The same thing can happen in the brain. Sit down and make a to-do list of what's on your mind. Then start prioritizing tasks. This will do wonders to clear your head.

**4.** Create deadlines for yourself. An open-ended timeline to get things done may promote procrastination. Deadlines may provide motivation.

**5.** Avoid distractions. Try to remove as many distractions as possible. When working on a chore, hire a babysitter to look after the children or step away from social media so you can focus on the task at hand. Interruptions only slow you down.

**6.** Think before you acquire. Once you are organized you may have challenges fitting new items into the mix. If you're getting ready to purchase something new, carefully consider its usefulness and determine in advance where it will go, and whether or not you have the space.

**7.** Be accountable to another. Having help getting organized can mean delegating certain tasks or enlisting someone to check in with you to see if you're on target. Embrace this system of checks and balances.

## WHO'S IN THE PHOTOS

**Page 10** 2020 ROAD TRIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS | Front Row: Cheryl Brown, Julie Honefenger and Lisa Murphy; Second Row: Terri Nieser, Josie Beecroft, Lisa Short, Allison Haun; Third Row: Mary Sloan, Sandra Lowe, Colleen Flint, Gail McClendon; Back Row: Melanie Anbarci, Karen Nemesi, Ann Edgar, Ali Burrows and Marissa Groeneveld.

**Page 12** Breaking ground on Child Advocates of Fort Bend's new Davis George Campus are Capital Campaign Chair Nancy Olson, Building Campaign Chair Jim Lockwood, Board President Pat Somers and Child Advocates of Fort Bend Board CEO Ruthanne Mefford.



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Pearlie Fordcye, Director of Sales and Marketing

## Amy Jones gets second chance to 'walk down the aisle' with father she never knew

by DENISE ADAMS | dadams@fbherald.com

Amy Jones believes dreams come true. She also believes in miracles, even if they take over 40 years to become reality.

Her story begins when she was put up for adoption. Her birth parents were young and unmarried, and they thought they were giving their daughter a better start in life with a married couple.

Her adoptive mother passed away when she was in elementary school, and her adoptive father later remarried a woman who did not want children.

Amy spent her early teenage years living with family friends until she left high school. There was always something missing, but she made the best of each situation.

As soon as she could, Amy struck out on her own and put herself through college to become an educator. She wanted to help children who needed what she'd needed but seldom received - encouragement and a reason to believe life could get better.

She met Greg Jones, and they fell in love and married. She gained a daughter, and then their son came along.

Amy's life was following a predictable path, except there was always a giant hole — what about her birth parents?

One evening, for her birthday, some friends gave her a DNA ancestry kit, and Amy submitted it.

She was stunned when the results led her to a person who narrowed the possible number of couples that could be her parents to five.

Amy was even more stunned when she found out the truth.

Her birth parents had subsequently married and had two sons, one of whom had passed away. She now knew who her birth parents were and where they lived.

Amy gathered her courage and contacted her birth father, Paul. Instead of the rebuff she expected, Paul was overjoyed he'd finally found his daughter. He told Amy he'd thought about her every single day, and grieved for the holidays, birthdays and special occasions they'd missed sharing over the years.

However, her birth mother wanted nothing to do with the daughter she'd given away. But Paul said he had 42 years of catching up to do, and he meant to do just that.

Since they found each other a year ago, he regularly sends Amy white roses and gifts that he would have given her for birthdays or Christmas. Paul calls her every day to see how she is doing and shares photos and thoughts about life with his daughter.

Of all the events in her life he'd missed, Paul said the biggest was not walking his only daughter down the aisle on her wedding day.

A couple of months ago, Paul told Amy he might have an opportunity to meet his grandson and son-in-law in person. Amy started thinking that the biggest event he missed could be re-created with a vow renewal.

Amy and Greg had already thought of a good way to celebrate their upcoming 20-year wedding anniversary, and making her father's dream - and hers - come true seemed perfect.

Without telling her father, and only having a few days before the visit was confirmed, she ordered a wedding dress on Amazon, lined up her team, a minister, and reserved the football field where Greg coaches.

With football being such a large part of the Jones family, Amy knew this was the "Game Day" God had planned for all of them. The field was the perfect aisle for her to walk "down the aisle" with her father.

Football represented the wins, losses, fumbles, and touchdowns in their lives, ending with Paul giving her away to Greg with an emotional embrace in the end zone almost 20 years after they first said, "I do."

If she could pull the festivities off, Amy could make her father's dream of walking his daughter down the aisle come true.

On the night of the ceremony, Paul thought they were going out to eat. When he walked in the door and saw his daughter in her full-length white wedding gown, he was speechless.

Amy was thrilled - she'd pulled off surprising Dad. Both were trying to understand they would finally share the one walk so many fathers and daughters dream about.

On a chilly fall evening, a small group of family and friends walked onto the football field at George Ranch High School. To the sound of the song that was playing when Amy first found Paul, a small group of friends walked down the field first.

They were followed by everyone's children who were all holding hands and giggling as they made the walk down the middle of the field to where Greg, their son and the minister were waiting.

Lastly, as Amy and Paul, father and daughter, made their way down the field, there wasn't a dry eye anywhere. Greg and Amy exchanged vows underneath the goal posts, as everyone laughed and cried.

Amy holds no animosity toward her birth mother. In fact, she's grateful.

"She gave me life, and I thank God that I'm here because of her," Amy said.

There are family members who don't know about her yet, but Amy's in no hurry. She trusts God's timing and believes in miracles.

She waited over 40 years to find her father, and he waited over 40 years for his daughter to find him.

The wait, they both believe, was worth it.



Photo courtesy of Denise Adams | Greg and Amy Jones renew their vows on a football field with friends and family looking on. The moment was made more special because Amy's father, who had given her up for adoption, was on hand to walk her down "the aisle."



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# Bring your ideas to the 10th Annual Sugar Land Home and Outdoor Living Show

The 10th Annual Sugar Land Home and Outdoor Living Show returns to Fort Bend County Jan. 25 and 26.

Appearances by the top names in the home improvement industry will be featured along with more than 200 exhibitors showcasing their products and services. This year will also introduce DIY workshops.

The show hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Jan. 25 and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Jan. 26. at the Stafford Centre, 1050 Cash Road in Stafford.

Attendees will have fun making a floral arrangement with Ashley Wallace of The Tallest Tulip, and AR Workshop of Pearland will work with attendees to build a unique wood home décor project, which they can take home.

Ashley Barber, Houston's first certified KonMari Professional Organizer with Simply Maven, will answer questions one on one with ways to minimize your home to create simplicity. Get rid of the clutter and keep items that bring joy to your life.

The KonMari Method is created by Marie Kondo, bestselling author and star of Netflix's hit show, Tidying Up With Marie Kondo, and founder of KonMari Media, Inc.

Outdoor Perfection, the featured landscape exhibitor, will display the newest ways to remodel your yard with 20 percent off during the show to celebrate 20 years of business.

Talk to experts from landscaping, outdoor living, kitchen and bath remodeling, pools, attics, painters, flooring, bathtubs, skylights, pest/mosquito control, kitchen accessories, hot tubs, win-

dows/window treatments, roofing, garages, furniture, mattresses and more.

Light up your home year-round for Christmas and all the seasons by the touch of an app with Trimlight Houston.

Have some fun between exhibitors sampling some of the finest Texas wines or craft beer from our exclusive food caterer, Clancy's Public House.

Visit the Sugar Land Home and Outdoor Living Show charity partner, Fort Bend History Association booth and explore vintage clothing, furniture and items from their archive.

Additional Professional Speakers appearing at show:

- Michael Garfield, the "High Tech Texan"
- Diane Cowen, Houston Chronicle architecture/design writer
- Lisa Geisler, professional organizer and author
- Randy Lemmon from GardenLine at KTRH 740
- Tom Tynan, longtime Radio host of HomeShow Radio on KTRH 740

- Dany Millikin, HomeShow Garden Pro
- Fort Bend Master Gardeners
- Meet Swatson from the Sugar Land Skeeters (Saturday only)
- Sherwin Williams Color Snap Color Consultants

**Tickets for the show are \$10 for adults, \$9 for seniors and free for children 12 years and younger. Visit [www.TexwoodShows.com](http://www.TexwoodShows.com) where a downloadable discount coupon for \$2 off admission is available.**

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Stafford Centre

January 25 & 26

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## LONGHORN PLAYERS QUALIFY FOR NATIONALS

by JENNIFER PHILLIPS

George Ranch High School Thespian Troupe 7888 recently returned from the Texas Thespian Festival held in November in Grapevine, Texas. The Texas State Festival had more than 8,000 students attend with 1,900 participants performing to qualify for advancement to Nationals.

This is the largest Thespian Festival held in the U.S.

When not performing or presenting, students participated in a variety of workshops with topics as diverse as Shakespeare, Scottish accents, stage make-up, dance and lighting design.

Troupe 7888 had 24 students competing in six IE events and four Tech events.

Seniors Paige Klase and Reagan Scott each earned a superior rating with a perfect score for their individual performances in Solo Musical.

Also earning a superior rating and advancing to Thespian Nationals were seniors Tate Mangum and Adam Murand in Duet Acting. Sophomores Lanae Buie, Ashley Johnson, Clairra Mangum and juniors Madi Jones, Ainsley McGee, Caitlin Wilson qualified in Group Musical with a performance from "Six."

In Tech events, four students achieved superior ratings and were each only one point from a perfect score.

Qualifying for National Thespians were seniors Charis Christy in Stage Management and Riley Halford in Lighting Design, and juniors Andrew Phillips for Theatre Marketing and Julia Yelvington in Scenic Design.

All the Tech entries were from the work these students displayed during the Longhorn Players' October musical, *Mamma Mia!*

In addition, two talented seniors were offered Thespian Scholarships. Congratulations to recipients Paige Klase and Trinity Moody!

The Thespian Festival culminated with the outstanding performance by Reagan Scott in her Main Stage closing ceremony performance of "All Falls Down" from *Chaplin*. Only two musical soloists were chosen to perform on the Main Stage and Reagan is the first performer ever selected to represent LCISD on the Texas Thespian Festival main stage. She represented us beautifully.

Jennifer Phillips is the Director of Communications for the Longhorn Players. Reach her at [communications@georgeranchtheatre.com](mailto:communications@georgeranchtheatre.com).



Thespian Troupe 7888 participants.



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## MAKING HISTORY REAGAN SCOTT REPRESENTS HER SCHOOL AND LCISD AT THE TEXAS THESPIANS STATE FESTIVAL

by ALISHA MCMILLEN

More than 8,000 thespian delegates. Almost 2,000 performances. Only six were selected to perform.

Greatwood resident, 17-year-old George Ranch senior Reagan Scott, was one of the chosen six thespians to perform on the Main Stage during the Texas Thespians State Festival's closing

Tamara S. Osina-Felinski, D.D.S.  
Lauren Eichblatt, D.M.D.  
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ceremonies.

“Reagan has been consistently honing her craft and working hard to represent herself, this troupe and GRHS in an incredible way,” said George Ranch High School’s theatre director, L Jay Edemeyer. “To be chosen to perform in the Main Stage closing ceremonies is an incredible honor. It is rare for that to happen to anyone, and for Reagan to be recognized for her dedication and talent speaks volumes for her and the incredible troupe who continue to support and guide each other.”

Scott was also one of two George Ranch students to receive a perfect score.

After earning her perfect score in Solo Musical for “All Falls Down,” Scott then auditioned to potentially perform on the Main Stage. With her song from the musical *Chaplin*, Scott was one of only two musical soloists chosen for the Main Stage. She became the first performer in any category to participate in the Main Stage closing ceremonies in the entire school district’s history.

“This was my first time performing this particular song. It was the most fun, and most challenging in regard to my vocal and acting performance, of anything I have performed at Texas Thespians before,” Scott said. “Performing it on Main Stage was one of the highlights of my life and I will cherish it forever, along with the many other memories made at Texas Thespians this year.”

Scott has attended three Texas Thespians festivals representing George Ranch High School. She fell in love with this year’s song because it showcased her singing in a very big way.

“My favorite part of this piece is getting to explore character choices and sing to my fullest capability. While I worked on this song, I focused on my acting choices and had so much fun experimenting with how I would act in the song, and how ostentatious I

would be,” she said. “The song itself requires the actress to be flamboyant, and I always have the most fun acting in that way while portraying a character.”

Of the 14 George Ranch performances that received superior rankings (the highest rating category at the convention), two received perfect scores: Reagan and Paige Klase. Of the more than 1,900 festival entries, only 92 received perfect scores.

“When I saw that Paige and I got perfect scores, I couldn’t believe it. Nothing hit me until I was on the bus ride home. I thought that receiving a perfect score was already the perfect end to the festival, but performing on Main Stage was surreal,” she said. “I dreamed about having this opportunity when I was a freshman, but I told myself that the chance of it happening was extremely slim. I worked hard for this opportunity, and I couldn’t have done it without the immense amount of support I have, and without the relationship with Jesus that has been guiding me throughout my entire life.”

Reagan’s superior score qualified her to attend and perform at the International Thespian Festival in Indiana next June.

“I would say that my experience at the International Thespian Festival this past year was one of the highlights of my summer and year as a whole. I had the opportunity to attend workshops, watch incredible shows — my troupe’s personal favorite to watch was Xanadu — and grow in my relationships with my troupe,” Scott said. “I made too many memories to count, which makes me ecstatic about the International Thespian Festival in 2020. I expect to have just as great of a time as I did this past year, as it will be my last trip with my troupe before I head to college.”

Scott also excels in school and has received several academic awards, is in all AP classes, and in the top 12 percent of her class.

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Reagan Scott



She has been able to shine academically, all while singing and performing since first grade. Some highlights for Reagan include her roles as Cinderella (*Cinderella*), Fiona (*Shrek*), Little Red (*Into the Woods*) and Tanya (*Mamma Mia!*) — her most recent show, and last musical at George Ranch.

Perhaps her absolute favorite performance was “Don’t Rain On My Parade” for the Sugar Land Junior Superstar competition, when she won the competition and was named Sugar Land Junior Superstar 2014.

“There are simply no words to express how much theatre and performing have changed my life,” she said. “It has given me the ability to use my God-given talent to create memories and to shape me as an individual. I couldn’t have done it without all of my teachers and mentors who have helped me to grow as an actress, vocalist and musician over the years. My parents have endlessly supported me and my dreams. I would not be the person I am today without all of their love, support and encouragement, especially my mom, who pushes me to achieve my fullest potential and offers continuous help.”

“Performing has had a profound influence on my confidence and strength, which will help carry me through the rest of my life,” Scott said.

“Reagan will definitely be missed as she graduates, moves and takes her determination and drive into the collegiate world,” Edenmeyer said.

“I have met such amazing people through my performances in singing and theatre. My childhood thought — ‘I want to sing’ — has since helped me develop into a songwriter, musician, and actress.” Scott concluded. “When I discovered that I could sing, I never wanted to stop.”

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## GRHS students learn how to lead

George Ranch High School hosted a Fall Leadership Workshop for FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America) at Texas State Technical College in Rosenberg.

Students from seven high school and junior high chapters across the region attended the workshop. Students participated in breakout sessions learning more about FCCLA, service learning projects, competitive events, running for officer and ways to spread kindness.



Photo Courtesy of Traci Gregory | From left are Traci Gregory, FCCLA advisor, Isabella Dawson, George Ranch High School FCCLA president, Selena Rogel, FCCLA Region IV vice president of correspondence, Andrea Rodriguez, TSTC custodian, and Joshua Phelps, TSTC internet technology technician.

## FCCLA students visit George Ranch Historical Park

Traci Gregory, Interior Design teacher at George Ranch High School, took 35 students on a field trip to the George Ranch Historical Park for the 36th Annual Texian Market Days Festival.

Students toured the historic houses to get a taste of how the design was in the early 1800 to the 1900s. Accompanying the George Ranch students were Teena Caldwell, owner, and Cindy Berg, Senior Interior Designer, for Twenty-Two Fifty Interiors located in Sugar

Land Town Center. Twenty-Two Fifty Interiors is on the CTE Advisory Council for Lamar CISD encouraging students to continue their education and preparation for a career beyond high school.



Photo Courtesy of Traci Gregory | Top row, from left, are Isabella Dawson, Selena Rogel, Victoria Romero, Allison Reams, Sara Morrison, Addison Prushing, Chelcy Ortega, Skylar Evans and Keyla Fortoul. Bottom row, from left, are Ridhni Mazumder, Sophia Rahaian, Keren Villatoro, Makayla Hall, Ezzah Din, Diya Verma and Liya Shibu.



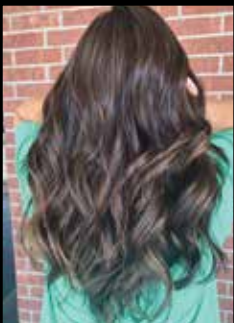
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# Campbell Elementary News

by ALEINI LACOMBE

Save the Date for the Campbell Boot Scootin' Boogie Chili Cook-Off and Carnival on Feb. 21 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m..

We are so excited about this year's award-winning spring fundraiser which will feature the following events:

- Chili Cook-Off Competition: cook-off results and awards announced during the event; and
- Boot Scootin' Boogie: music, carnival games, cake walk, silent and online auction and more.

## BOOT SCOOTIN' BOOGIE SPONSORSHIPS

Are you, or someone you know, interested in sponsoring or donating auction items to our Boot Scootin' Boogie Carnival and Auction Event?

Email Meredith Tichenor at [thetichenorfamily@gmail.com](mailto:thetichenorfamily@gmail.com) if you are interested or if you have any questions.



## Dates to put on the calendar!

### January 6th

School Resumes

### January 14th

PTO Board Meeting @7:45am

### January 17th

2nd Nine Weeks Ends

### January 20th

No School-MLK Day

### January 21st

3rd Nine Weeks Begins

### January 22nd

Class Pictures

### January 23rd

Report Cards Go Home

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## County gets its own medical examiner

by CHAD WASHINGTON | cwashington@fbherald.com

Fort Bend County government has created a medical examiner's office and hired a medical examiner, which County Judge KP George called a "historic event."

George, Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales and Precinct 2 Commissioner Grady Prestage approved the creation of the office a December commissioner's court meeting. Precinct 3 Commissioner Andy Meyers and Precinct 4 Commissioner Ken DeMerchant were absent from the meeting.

The office officially opened with a budget of under \$2 million in the fiscal year 2020.

The commissioners also approved Dr. Stephen Pustilnik as the county's first-ever chief medical examiner. Pustilnik was a contract senior forensic pathologist for Lubbock County from 2015 to 2018. He also worked for the University of Texas Medical Branch, which contracted with Galveston County to run its medical examiner's office.

In 2014, Pustilnik was fired by UTMB after the Galveston County District Attorney's Office said its medical examiner's office misplaced crucial pieces of evidence in a case involving the death of a 4-year-old girl in 2013. The girl's accused killer was set free.

Texas law says that counties with over 1 million in population must have a medical examiner's office. George says the county is not there yet, but setting the office up now puts the county

ahead of the curve.

"This is a historic event because we are now getting onto the map," George said. "Not a lot of counties have one, so this is a proud moment for Fort Bend County."

George also said that the office will work with other counties in the area that need assistance and that the office's budget is still under development.

"We are hoping some of our revenues are going to be subsidized by the work that we're going to do for others," George said.

## Pitfalls to avoid as you try to lose weight

New Year's resolutions run the gamut from the simple to the complex. Some people resolve to make small changes that don't affect their daily lives all that much, while others aim to make significant changes in the hopes of dramatically improving their quality of life. Resolving to lose weight, which often tops annual lists of the most popular resolutions, falls into the latter category.

A 2018 survey from Cision and Varo Money found that 45 percent of respondents resolved to lose weight or get in shape in 2018. Unfortunately, various studies have found that resolutions often fall by the wayside long before people achieve their goals. In fact, a 2015 report from U.S. News indicated that

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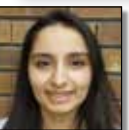
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80 percent of resolutions fail by the second week of February. Such success rates, or lack thereof, might not be too big a deal for people who make silly resolutions that, successful or not, would not have too big an impact on their lives. But many people resolve to lose weight for serious reasons, such as lowering their risk for disease or improving their quality of life. In such instances, success can be a matter of life or death.

After resolving to lose weight, people might be derailed by some common pitfalls. Recognizing these pitfalls and learning how to avoid them can help people achieve their weight loss goals.

• **YOU'RE NOT SPECIFIC ENOUGH.** Try not to be vague when setting your weight loss goals. Simply saying "I want to lose weight" likely won't provide the motivation you need to achieve your goal. Speak with your physician and ask about how much weight you need to lose. Once you learn that number, work with your doctor and a personal trainer to set realistic goals. For example, if you need to lose 10 lbs., resolving to lose one pound per week for 10 weeks is a specific, realistic and healthy approach to weight loss. And by the end of that 10-week period, you likely will have grown accustomed to your new health routine, increasing the likelihood that you will keep it up even after you achieved your goal.

• **YOU TRY TO SAVE UP YOUR CALORIES.** The experts at Northwestern Medicine® note that many people think skipping a few meals per day will decrease their overall calorie intake. However, such an approach typically leads to overeating when you sit down for a meal or increased snacking throughout the day. In addition, skipping meals slows down your metabolism, adversely affecting how your body approaches burning calories.

• **YOU EMBRACE A FAD DIET.** Various studies examining an assortment of fad diets have indicated that such diets typically only produce short-term results, if any. Any weight lost while adhering to a fad diet is typically regained once dieters go off the diet. Instead of adopting a fad diet, work with your physician to devise a healthy, long-term eating plan.

• **YOU EAT MORE THAN YOU THINK.** Audra Wilson, RD, a clinical dietitian, notes that people typically underestimate their calorie intake by 30 percent. Chances are, you're consuming more calories than you think, even while you attempt to lose weight. Track the calories you consume each day so you can stay the course in regard to what your physician recommends.

Avoiding some common weight loss pitfalls can help people turn their resolution to drop some weight into a reality.

## Local hospital offers weight loss options

Hermann Memorial Sugar Land Hospital — which is recognized as a fully accredited Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program Center by the American College of Surgeons — offers a comprehensive weight loss surgery program, complete with specially trained affiliated surgeons and a staff attuned to your specific needs. The program also provides a nurse navigator designed to be with you each step, answering any questions and addressing any concerns you may have during your weight loss journey.

The hospital also offers free, informative weight loss surgery support groups on a quarterly basis. These groups provide ongoing support and information to help you as you continue your weight loss journey. All events are free, but seating is limited with registration required. For more information or to register, please call 713-222-2273.

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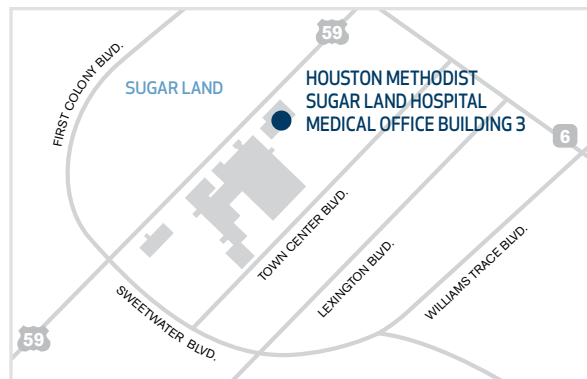
Backed by the advanced technology of Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, both doctors are committed to providing comprehensive care to women of all ages so they can live full and healthy lives.

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# JANUARY

## January 2

### Revision-uary: A January Novel-Revision Workshop

Held on Jan. 2 and 30, this 2-part, hands-on workshop for aspiring novelists will cover tips and tricks for pruning a draft into a polished novel. An extension of the George Memorial Library's monthly Story Spinner's Writing Club, this workshop will include a round-table discussion where participants can ask questions and bounce ideas off each other. The workshop is suitable for adults and teens aged 14 and up. The series will run from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in Room 2C.

### Wildscape Your Yard

As part of a Master Naturalist Program, Lauren Simpson will present "Wildscape Your Yard" at 6 p.m. at the Rosenberg Convention Center.

## January 3

### Craft Squad: Folded-Book Hearts

The University Branch Library's Craft Squad is encouraging people to join, starting with its Folded-Book Hearts craft at 1 p.m. in Meeting Room 1. Registration required.

## January 4

### Digital Photography 101

Get tips on composition and design elements, digital-camera operation,

basic digital-image editing, and digital-photography resources on the internet at the George Memorial Library in the Meeting Room from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

## January 6

### Tax Expo

The 2020 Tax Expo on Jan. 6-7 will take place at the Houston Marriott Sugar Land. The expo provides practitioners with the updates and resources needed to prepare for tax season. With over 500 CPAs, top national speakers and vendors who have products to help a business succeed this is the must-attend conference of the year for CPAs, EAs and other tax practitioners.

## January 7

### Meet someone new

Meet new people and make new friends at "Connections: Meet Someone New," a casual, come-and-go social hour at the George Memorial Library at 7 p.m. Jan. 7 and 10 a.m. Jan. 16 in Room 2A. Enjoy music while getting to know one another over a game of cards, chess, checkers, or other board games the library has on hand. Suitable for adults aged 18 and up.

## January 8

### Bird Hike

Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter will host a bird hike at 8 a.m. at Seabourne Creek Nature Park in Rosenberg. All ages and levels of birders are welcome. Meet in the parking lot before 8 a.m. Binoculars and weather-appropriate clothing and footwear are recommended. Members of the Coastal Prairie Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists lead the hikes.

### Learn Origami

Learn how to make an elegant decoration or gift from a simple piece of paper at the George Memorial Library from 5:30-7 p.m. in Room 2C.

## January 10

### Craft Squad meet-ups

The University Branch Library's Craft Squad will meet weekly starting in 2020. The meetings will take place on Fridays, Jan 10, 17, 24, and 31. Registration is not required for the meet-ups. Badges can be earned.

## January 11

### Meet the Author

Award-winning historical novelist Ann Weisgarber will read from and talk about her latest novel, "The Glovemaker," released in February 2019 at 2 p.m. in Meeting Room 1 of the George Memorial Library.

### Meet the Artists

The 310 Gallery in Richmond will host a Meet the Artists event from 4 - 7 p.m. Artists will be on hand to meet and mingle. Live music by Frank Matta III Music.

### Trip Report on 2019 Ireland

Genealogy and Local History Department manager Daniel Sample will share information from his recent research trip to Dublin and County Donegal, Ireland

from 10 to 11 a.m. at the George Memorial Library in Room 2A.

## January 15

### Open-Mic Night

The George Memorial will hold its Open-Mic Night 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room. Performances are limited to five minutes or less, and they must not contain any profanity or other insensitive topics. Registration is only required to perform.

### Culinary Book Club

The University Branch Library's Culinary Book Club will meet at 1:30 p.m. in Meeting Room 1. This month, the theme is "Soul Food."

## January 16

### Story Spinners Writing Club

This month's topic at the George Memorial Library's Story Spinner Writing Club meeting will be "Ambiance." The meeting runs from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. in Room 2C.

## January 17

### Investment in Real Estate

SCORE mentor and commercial real-estate broker Lewis Faraclas will provide an overview of real-estate investing from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in Meeting Room 1 of the University Branch Library. Learn about the different types of real estate, the return on real-estate investments, and the economic cycle for real estate.

## January 18

### Wedding and Quinceañera Expo

The Rosenberg EDC and City of Rosenberg will host this expo from noon to 3 p.m. at Rosenberg EDC, 3825 Highway 36 S. Guests can visit the expo to discover local vendors that specialize in event planning necessities from photography to floral arrangements. The expo is



free to attend and will feature over 25 vendors for catering, venues, desserts, photography, beauty treatments, and jewelry.

**District First Aid Meet**

Brazos District, Sam Houston Area Council's First Aid Meet is an event that challenges Scouts in troops to perform first aid in simulated real-life situations. The event runs from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1512 Louise Street in Rosenberg.

**Steps to Become a Better You**

Certified life coach Niedra Hill Gardner will share tips on how to enhance one's life and the lives of others through motivation and inspiration from 1 - 2:30 p.m. in Meeting Room 2 of the University Branch Library.

**January 24**

**The Montessori Method**

The Montessori Method of Education is a child-centered educational approach based on

scientific observations of children. In an interactive workshop from 10:15-11:30 a.m. at the University Branch Library in Meeting Room 2, parent educator Corine Noronha will teach parents how to incorporate the Montessori Method at home. Parents are encouraged to bring their children (aged 14 months to 3 years). Registration is required. Registration is per family, not individuals. One or both parents are encouraged to attend with their toddlers. Please do not bring older children, as space is limited. Registration opens Jan 10.

**Senior Series: Transportation Challenges**

Liz McNeel, a senior real-estate specialist and certified senior-housing professional, will talk about transportation challenges faced by senior citizens at the University Branch Library from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Meeting Room 1.

**Vintage Ride**

This non-competitive bicycle ride is 28 miles. The ride starts at 7:30 a.m. Open exclusively to participants with vintage bikes and if possible historically appropriate clothing. Participants must have road racing bikes (no cyclo-cross or time trial bikes) built before 1987, with a steel frame, and the gear lever on the down tube of the frame. Visit Handlebar Cyclery on Facebook. Coin Collecting 101 & Silver Dollars Numismatist T.L. Smith will provide a basic overview of the different types of coins minted in the U.S., the history of coin-collecting, and how to go about starting a coin collection. from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 2A.

**Chinese New Year Celebration**

The University Branch Library will have a lively festival celebrating the Year of the Rat, featuring a special Chinese New Year Story Time, traditional Chinese riddles, prizes, and craft activities from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. in Meeting Room 1.

**January 27**

**Health Screening**

Life Line Screening Southwest and Mamie George Community Center will host a one-day community health screening at the Mamie George Community Center in Richmond from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call for an appointment 800-690-6495.

**LEGO® Club**

Families with kids of all ages will have an opportunity to get creative with LEGO building blocks at the University Branch Library from 4:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Meeting Room 1. Different-sized LEGO pieces will be available for the varying ages in attendance.

**January 25**



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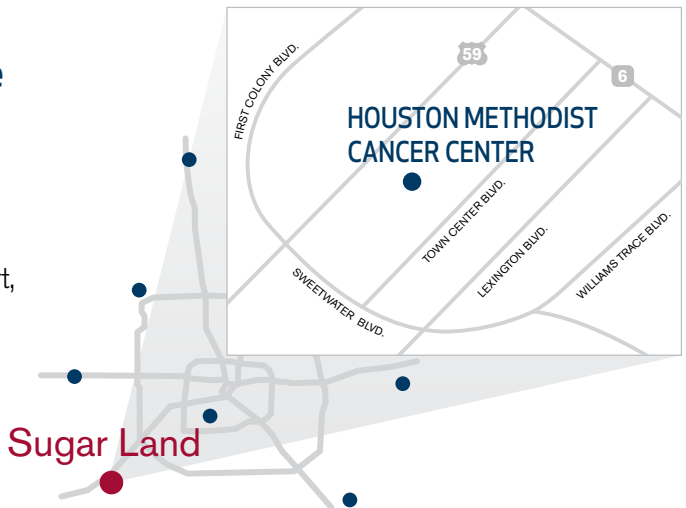


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