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ACTRESS

LIZZIE TYER

says her recent
performance
was
'exhilarating'



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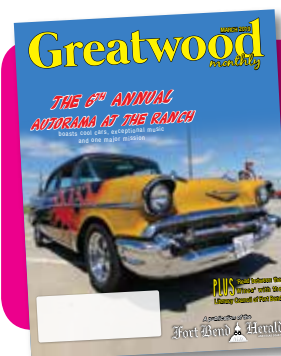
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Photo by | Erika Waldorf

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LIZZIE TYER SAYS THE THEATRE WORLD IS ENRICHING

by MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Photo by James Barker, JW Barker Photography



Lizzie Tyer as Elsa in Inspiration Stage's "Frozen, JR." performed at Junior Theatre Festival West in Sacramento.



What Lizzie Tyer most enjoys about her work is developing characters.

For the past six years, the 15-year-old Greatwood resident has performed in 23 productions both as a member of the George Ranch Longhorn Theatre Department and as an actor with the theatre company Inspiration Stage.

"It's fun diving into their personality and getting to be someone else," she said. Like the time director Richard Gomez encourage her to "make the character larger than life" when she played the role of Mrs. Cartero in "The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley JR."

"I ran with it, creating a goofy, yet lovable mail carrier," she said. Tyer was awarded Best Actor for the part.

"The role even encouraged some younger students to become regulars at Inspiration Stage because they liked it so much."

Acting awards, however, aren't the only things appealing to Tyer.

"I love the friendships I've made at theatre with people of all different ages. There is something about being around people that have the same passions - it brings out the best in each of us. We become a family and consider the theatre our home away from home," she said. "I also love singing and dancing and performing for an audience. There is nothing better than working hard on a production, performing your heart out and then feeling the audience's energy and knowing they enjoyed it."

AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE

In February Tyer made headlines at the Junior Theatre Festival West in Sacramento as an actor for Inspiration Stage performing a three-song set from "Frozen, JR." to a 1,700 member audience. The performance was the finale in the New Works Showcase, which introduces new junior titles to attendees. Tyer played the role of Elsa and "punctuated the showcase with a rousing standing ovation and sing-along from the excited crowd," the theatre

company said.

"I was thrilled to have the opportunity to portray Elsa and sing 'Let it Go,'" Tyer said. "I have always related to the character, so it was an amazing experience getting to be Elsa for a few minutes. Everyone - my castmates, other students, parents and JTF staff - was so supportive and kind, making [that day] one of the best days of my life."

She thanked Mandy Seymore-Senat and Sarah Patterson for "their guidance and encouragement."

Inspiration Stage's company of 38 musical theatre students participated in both the showcase, and a 15-minute cut of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang JR.", performed for festival adjudicators. Forty-two companies competed in one of six pods, with each company performing its own 15-minute cut of a different musical for adjudicators.

The "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang JR." cut received an Excellence in Music award, and the panel of professional adjudicators selected Inspiration Stage's Emily Adams (Baroness) as the recipient for the pod's Award for Excellent Performance. Adams and Andrew Sackett (Caractacus Potts) were also selected as the Inspiration Stage company All-Stars by the adjudicators, and Sackett was chosen to perform a solo in the All-Stars Performance at the Freddie G Awards.

Eight Inspiration Stage youth also received Golden Tickets - special invitations to audition for the opportunity to

appear in MTI instructional guide choreography DVDs distributed with its Broadway Jr. series of shows.

Seven iStagers received callbacks for the second round of auditions, including Adams (Baroness/company), Patrick Cashion (Boris/company), Mia delaGarza (company), Isabella Fish (company), Holden Hagelberger (Jeremy/Olaf), Nate Sarlls (Grandpa Potts/King Agnatha) and Madison Willett (Truly Scrumptious/Queen Iduna).

Final winners will be contacted this month if they are invited to film in New York City.

"Since Inspiration Stage's inception, annual JTF participation has become an integral high point of every season for our students, parents, and staff. Being surrounded, supported, and challenged by thousands of like-minded peers and professionals during JTF's immersive theatre-centric celebration is rewarding

and exhilarating," said Mandy Seymore-Sensat, Inspiration Stage's artistic director. "Our initial involvement, which began as attendees-only, has blossomed into treasured invitations to perform in special JTF events, rare opportunities to pilot new shows under development, and professional networking that frequently allows iStage to offer its family unique possibilities."

Although the Junior Theatre Festival West in Sacramento experience was a first for Tyer, she has attended JTF Atlanta for the past five years and has participated the Texas Nonprofit Theatres Youth Conference and Texas Thespian Festival.

"We were extra busy with rehearsals because of the "Frozen JR." showcase. I also got to assist Inspiration Stage Artistic Director, Mandy Seymore-Sensat, with teaching a dance workshop, which was new and fun for me," Tyer said of JTF West in Sacramento.

"Overall, the experience was a whirlwind, time-wise and emotionally. It is always satisfying getting feedback that all our hard work is acknowledged and appreciated."

PASSIONATE FOR THEATRE

As much as it was exciting, performing such "an iconic, pop-culture figure" such as Elsa, was a bit intimidating, Tyer admits. Not only was she going to play a beloved character, but the audience she was set to perform for what was the largest in her experience. But, interjected the young actor, the more she practiced, the more comfortable she became.

For several months she worked with a vocal instructor, and like athletes who review the games of their opponents, Tyer analyzed videos of Caissie Levy, who plays Elsa in "Frozen" on Broadway.

"I broke down the song ['Let it Go'] so I could understand the words and feelings so I'd be able to invoke the right emotions," Tyer said. "I've always loved both Elsa and Anna, but it's Elsa's character I relate to the most. I strongly feel Elsa's fear of her power and then the joy she experiences when she lets her fear go."

"I've been working hard for years for a part like that, and all that work paid off," she continued enthusiastically. "Whenever I re-watch the video of [my] performance, I get the same feeling of nervous excitement that I felt as I was waiting to go on stage."

"To put it simply, it was exhilarating."

Photo by | Erika Waldorf



"There is nothing better than working hard on a production, performing your heart out and then feeling the audience's energy and knowing they enjoyed it."

& Lizzie Tyer, 15



Photo by | Erika Waldorf

It's been amazing watching Lizzie's skill develop since she began performing and I love that she has this passion. She's always been fearless on stage and her work ethic has paid off as she gets new opportunities and continues to improve," said Lizzie's mother, Leslie Tyer. "There's nothing I enjoy more than watching Lizzie and her sister, Alex (who is in band), perform. I can't wait to see what develops for Lizzie over the next few years."

Tyer's work and dedication isn't limited to Inspiration Stage, though. She's studied at Humphreys School of Musical Theatre, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles, and numerous summer camps and workshops locally and in New York City. In addition to required rehearsals for both Inspiration Stage and the George Ranch Theatre Department, Tyer also takes private voice and dance lessons.

"Theatre takes up most of my free time," she said with a laugh.

Tyer is currently preparing to travel with the George Ranch Longhorn Players to the International Thespian Festival in Nebraska in June to perform the department's six-person group musical, "It Doesn't Take a Genius," and then to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland later this summer.

"It has been wonderful to get to know Lizzie this year," said George Ranch theatre director L.Jay Endenmeyer. "I worked with her when she was very young in a musical theatre workshop. It was clear she had an amazing talent, even at that age. Then, I saw her do 'The Lion King' at Polly Ryon and she blew me away. She continues to be exemplary in her work ethic and drive. She has been a joy to work with and I can't wait to see where she will go from here."

Tyer said she'll follow the path that keeps her in theatre. She plans to earn a musical theatre degree in college "and hopefully have a professional career in the theatre world."

"Wish me: 'Break a leg,'" she said with a laugh.

FINDING A BALANCE

When not in rehearsal, lessons or at school, Tyer is usually spending time with friends, learning new songs for future auditions, playing her ukulele, shopping and sketching.

She's also focused on keeping a steady balance of her theatre work and school work.

"It is a tough challenge," she admitted. "Theatre is my passion so I always want to be working on that rather than school work. I fit in homework and studying during rehearsal breaks, late nights after rehearsal and any free time I have at school. I've become a good time-manager when it comes to school work."

In other words: she'll never stop acting. It's too enriching.

"I feel like it's a great way to loosen up and be yourself without feeling judged. Theatre is not only fun, but teaches important life lessons such as teamwork, memorization, confidence and seeing something through from start to finish. It's been proven that music education creates more successful students," she said.

And to that note, she takes a moment to kick some myths to the curb.

"Theatre can be perceived as not a cool thing to do. We like to joke about being 'theatre nerds,' but the industry is thriving," she said. "Broadway alone is currently producing \$1.5 billion in revenue annually. Many of your favorite actors started their careers in their high school theatre department, like Jim Parsons and Lady Gaga."

So to those interested in theatre, but haven't taken the plunge, Tyer says jump in.

"Don't be afraid to go for it. Be yourself. It's not about being the most talented person there, it's about having a good attitude and being a team-player," she said. "Remember, at an audition that the director is on your side and wants you to do well."

Alisha McMillen contributed to this story.

See more photos of Inspiration Stage at JTF West in Sacramento on page 27.

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Volunteers praise the works of Reining Strength Therapeutic Horsemanship

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Mandy Pike may have had some experiences with horses in her past, but her current comfort with Reining Strength Therapeutic Horsemanship has more to do with the atmosphere of the organization than her time in the horse world when she was a teenager.

“I’ve been away from the horse world for 25 years,” Pike said with a laugh. “So there was a lot I had forgotten, but this place is a most welcoming organization that teaches you what you need to know. Every single day I learn something new.”

For the past year Pike has volunteered, two to three times a week, with Reining Strength, a nonprofit in Richmond that provides programs for adults and children with physical, cognitive, social and emotional disabilities.

Through equine-assisted activities and therapies Reining Strength helps its clients reach milestones, overcome obstacles, and find a means to heal.

When she was first introduced to the organization through the Fort Bend Junior Service League, Pike didn’t know one thing about it.

“But I was immediately taken by its purpose and mission,” said Pike, who fondly recalled assisting a young girl with her first lesson at Reining Strength.

“She was so afraid,” Pike said. “She didn’t even want to touch the horse.”

During that first lesson, Pike just introduced the girl to the horse. There was no riding, no pushing, just a sweet conversation that allowed the girl to see how gentle the horse was. Two months later Pike happened to be scheduled to work with the girl again.

“And she was sitting so tall and confident on that horse,” Pike said, emotion creeping into her voice. “That just got me. To see how her level of confidence grew to see how she changed,

changed me.”

As a volunteer Pike handles several tasks — “anything that is asked of me,” she said with a laugh — from assisting with lessons as a sidewalker or leading the horse, but she is also enthusiastic about handling paperwork or cleaning.

“I respect the integrity [Reining Strength] gives to its clients,” she said. “And I’m happy to do whatever they need me to do. I would tell anyone who wants to volunteer that their heart will be filled with joy because there is nothing but joy in this place.”

A Positive Experience for Everyone

Reining Strength employs a small full-time and part-time staff and is supported by nearly 60 active volunteers.

All of the instructors at Reining Strength who provide the adaptive riding lessons are PATH — Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International— certified riding instructors as well as Equine Specialists in Mental Health. The nonprofit’s equine staff consists of various breeds, and each one has completed three to four months of training.

The volunteers, who are considered the backbone to the organization, are also trained to work with the horses and the clients, said Reining Strength co-founder and Executive Director Heather Hernandez-Sedillo.

“We have retired individuals, stay-at-home moms who help out while their children are in school, high school and college students looking for experience in helping professionals and [earning] service hours,” she said, explaining the volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds.

To assist in lessons a volunteer must be at least 14 years old and complete volunteer orientation.

Reining Strength also draws working people as volunteers “who like to come after work or on Saturday mornings.”




Volunteers, from left, Debbie Singer, Mandy Pike, Phyllis Wolfe, Karen Harrell, Danielle Biermann, Jared Biermann and Heather Hernandez-Sedillo at the HLSR Top Hands Horse Show.



From left Verity Vonberg, Andres Cortez, Annalise MacKenzie, Lisa Rhodes, Alex Lovell and Sarah Brhlik showing off their ribbons at The Old 300 Horse Show.

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Conner Cancino rides Whinny in The Old 300 Horse Show, lead by Fran Zwick, while Barbara Katsenes sidewalks.

“They sidewalk alongside the clients during their lessons and assist them with balance and support what the instructor is teaching,” she said. “We also have volunteers lead horses during lessons and assist in class set up and break down.”

Then there are the volunteers who help with the upkeep of the barn — cleaning tack, filling waters and sweeping.

“There is always something to do around here,” Hernandez-Sedillo said with a smile.

“Individuals do not need to have any horse experience, we will teach them what they need to know,” she stressed.

Volunteer Fran Zwick agrees.

“I find that a lot of the volunteers have never worked with horses,” said Zwick, who was one of the first volunteers when Reining Strength opened in 2014. “But the staff and the other volunteers here are always so willing to help you learn. Everyone is always sharing knowledge on how to advance and you will never be asked to do something you’re not comfortable with.”

“They want everyone — the individuals, the staff, the volunteers, everyone — to have a positive experience.”

Volunteers are respected and revered at Reining Strength because it takes as many hands as possible for clients to reach goals. Hernandez-Sedillo stressed if the nonprofit had to hire leaders and sidewalkers for each class, “there is no way we could do what we do.” Some classes, she notes, requires a dozen people to complete the lesson.

“That’s an incredible amount of help the volunteers provide,” Hernandez-Sedillo said.

“Our volunteers play such a vital role in the day-to-day operations of our programs,” said continued. “They enable us to serve more individuals [and] without them we could not operate.”

Reining Strength is hosting four upcoming volunteer training sessions: April 9 at 4:30 p.m.; April 26 at 10 a.m.; May 15 at 4:30 p.m. and May 28 at 9:30 a.m.

Zwick, who retired from the oil industry, said she had volunteered with other charities while working in the industry and when she was retiring an opportunity arose for her at Reining Strength. The nonprofit was much smaller back then, she recalled. There were two riders and two horses.

“But that’s not the case anymore,” she said with a laugh.

As a volunteer Zwick is a leader and a side walker, grooms the



Riders Verity Vonberg and Maddy Fleak learn about the parts of the horse from instructor Jessica Reyes.

horses and will help with special events, including the upcoming Derby Day Party set for May 4.

“I helped with the very first one,” she said of the nonprofit’s only fundraiser. “It started out small, 40 or 50 people were there. Now it’s up to 400.”

It’s a clear indication about how well-known and respected Reining Strength is in the community, Zwick said.

“There is just pure joy here,” she continued. “The volunteers give their heart and soul to help these individuals. It’s like [Reining Strength] gives people wings they didn’t have before.”

Being Valued and Celebrated

Just like its volunteers, Reining Strength continues to strive to make the community and the clients it serves proud, Hernandez-Sedillo said.

For the third year Reining Strength participated in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Top Hands Horse Show, which offers physically-challenged riders of all ages the opportunity to compete in six events.

Although the event does not name an overall winner, Reining Strength did win a saddle for its program.

“Which we’re so excited to have because it is a size we have really been needing,” Hernandez-Sedillo said.

“Our riders did so well, many [first place] belt buckles were brought home as well as trophies, but even more importantly, Top Hands allowed each of them to achieve something,” Hernandez-Sedillo said. “They set goals, they competed, their skills were improved which in turn was translated into improved skills of daily living.”

Hernandez-Sedillo went on to say that competing in an event like this goes far beyond awards. It’s confirmation that every single rider is “valued and celebrated by our community.”

“They get to compete just like everyone else, and just like everyone they had to earn what was received. They did not get first place ribbon just for showing up,” she said. “Our hats are off to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Special Children’s Committee’s many volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this show so amazing.”

“They really rolled the red carpet out for all the riders who participated, and we are truly grateful,” she said the pride and respect clear in her words.



Reining Strength is equally excited about the Fort Bend County Fair Old 300 Horse Show, which like Top Hands, is a show for equestrians with disabilities.

Last year was the inaugural year for the show and Hernandez-Sedillo said she, and Co-Chair Noell Myska “are thrilled that the Fort Bend County Fair readily opened their arms to welcome us to do it again.”

The show is run by a committee of volunteers called The Old Three Hundred Committee. Held in the Tucker Arena, Reining Strength offers classes in Western & English Equitation and Trail.

“Noell and I were full of gratitude for all our friends and community members who stepped up to be on the committee and sponsor the show,” Hernandez-Sedillo said.

“These events allow our clients to be included in major events in their community. Both the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and the Fort Bend County Fair are large events [and] our clients are able to see that the community supports, welcomes, and accepts them as they are,” she continued. “By working hard to compete in a horse show, our clients reach milestones without even realizing they are doing the work because it is fun.”

Examples of such progress include: increased core strength so that individuals walk unassisted for greater distances, improved communication, better posture, improved fine and gross motor skills. Plus, having to memorize a trail pattern helps with sequencing and memory.

“The community has the chance to learn more about people with disabilities, see their strengths and support them as fellow citizens,” she added. “It is a win-win for all.”

Support is Paramount

Reining Strength is truly a community organization, said Hernandez-Sedillo. And it encourages people, those in search for such services as well as those looking to support the organization to “call and schedule a 15 minute tour.”

“Come see us and witness first-hand the impact of our programs.”

Goals vary from client to client at Reining Strength. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to the adults and children who are in need of equine assisted activities.

Some parents are looking to have their child’s muscles strengthened, others want to provide their child with a form of therapy that is not only physically beneficial but also provides them with a sense of community.

People, from those suffering from PTSD or depression to those diagnosed with Down syndrome and traumatic brain injuries, come looking to find a peace from emotional turmoil and a means to readjust to society.

To accomplish these important goals, Hernandez-Sedillo said the organization needs support.

Already, Reining Strength is a core placement for the Fort Bend Junior Service League, with its members volunteering time regularly. The nonprofit also received a grant from Fort Bend Cares, and was a beneficiary of a FBJS Sugar Plum Market funded grant.

“This grant funded the purchase of two new horse stalls, a new saddle and other equipment,” she said, her gratefulness clear in her words. “Additionally, the FBJS grant covered some client



Jamie Chapman Shows off his First Place Ribbon from the Old Three Hundred Horse Show.

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assistance funds for riders in need.

“We need their support in many ways,” said Hernandez-Sedillo. “Whether it be sharing their time and talent as volunteer, or coming out Derby Day and being a financial support, or being a spokesperson and telling others we are here.”



Richard “RD” Sedillo and Heather Hernandez-Sedillo. RD, is a PATH Intl. Registered Instructor and Equine Specialist in Metal Health and Learning. Additionally, he trains riders as a Special Olympics Equestrian Coach. Heather, the co-founder and executive director of Reining Strength, she served as Co-Director at Texas Tech University’s Therapeutic Riding Center where she was on faculty in the Animal Science Department prior to Reining Strength.

Details On The 5th Annual Derby Day Party



Once again Reining Strength is seeking volunteers, sponsors and guests at its annual Derby Day Party.

The 5th Annual Derby Day Party will be held from 3:30 - 7:30 p.m., May 4 in the Infinity Room at Safari Texas Ranch, 11627 FM 1464 in Richmond.

Individual tickets are \$125 and sponsorships are available.

“All the excitement of the Kentucky Derby will be right here in Fort Bend County,” said Hernandez-Sedillo.

The Kentucky Derby race will be live-streamed during the event and with a guest’s entry, he or she will be able to get a horse to root for and if the horse wins, the guest will win a prize.

The evening will also feature a Lady’s Hat Contest, a Gentleman’s Boots-n-Bowties Contest, a live and silent auction and a wine pull. During the post parade guests will sing “My Old Kentucky Home” with a mint julep toast, just like what is done in Churchill Downs in Kentucky where the race is held.

“This event is Reining Strength’s only annual fundraiser to help fund therapeutic horsemanship programs for children and adults with physical, cognitive, social, and emotional needs – including veterans,” Hernandez-Sedillo said, adding that last year’s event raised \$184,000.

“Those funds covered the costs of therapeutic horsemanship for our clients, including: caring for and managing our equine staff, all the components of a lesson such as equipment, volunteer training and management, instruction, and the cost of maintaining our facility.

“100 percent of our clients are on some form of rider assistance to make these services affordable to everyone – meaning they only pay 30 percent or less of the actual cost of a session.”

For more information about Reining Strength Therapeutic Horsemanship is located AT 7126 FM 359 in Richmond. Contact the organization at 832-451-6874, www.reiningstrength.org or on Facebook at @reiningstrength.



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Whinny at sunrise at Reining Strength.



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Support an amazing little girl named Annabelle

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

The van Deursen family is seeking community support during a fundraiser for their daughter Annabelle van Deursen who was diagnosed in 2017 with a GNAO1 mutation, a rare mutation of the Protein Coding gene with about only 70 reported cases in children worldwide.

Individuals diagnosed with mutations on the GNAO1 gene suffer from seizures, mild to severe movement disorders, and developmental delay. About 100 people worldwide have been identified as having a mutation on the GNAO1 gene.

“There is currently no cure for this GNAO1 mutation, but our goal is to change that through fundraising to give money to research to try to cure her,” said Annabelle’s mother Shelley, who added that her family is working closely with The Bow Foundation, which is dedicated to supporting GNAO1 families through enhanced research and increased awareness.

The organization is also raises funds to support research to benefit those with GNAO1 disabilities and other similar rare diseases and neurological conditions.

The van Deursen family is hosting Annabelle’s Benefit — a 5K Run/1Mile Walk, raffle, and family fun morning to raise money for research for children affected by a GNAO1 mutation on April 13 at 7:30 a.m. at No Label Brewery, 5351 1st Street in Katy, Texas.

The benefit goal is to raise \$20,000, which will be donated to The Bow Foundation.

“By giving to Annabelle’s Amazing Graces, you’ll be able to help us host a successful benefit for people in the community

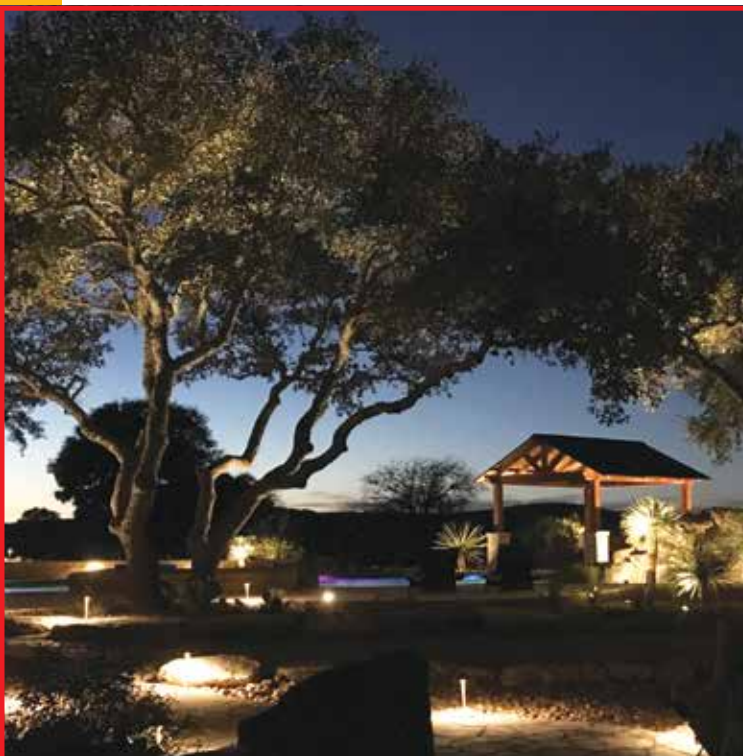
and ultimately raise awareness about the GNAO1 mutation, and help us to raise money for research to cure this mutation which has affected our daughter and other children in the world,” Shelley said.

Donation can be made through the Annabelle’s Amazing Graces foundation by emailing shelley@annabellesamazinggraces.org or call at 281-814-7984.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for the event. More information about Annabelle’s Amazing Graces, Annabelle and the upcoming benefit visit annabellesamazinggraces.org



Daniel and Shelley van Deursen with their children Annabelle and James.



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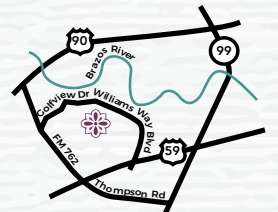
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7th Annual "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day is the 'grand slam' event of the year

The excitement is brewing as the planning and preparation begins for Hope For Three's Seventh Annual "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day. The event is slated for Sugar Land Skeeters opening weekend, April 28 at Constellation Field.

The sports anthem song "All I Do is Win" is on the playlist of the 2019 "Strike Out" Autism Team, which plans on winning not just on the field, but off the field, too. On opening weekend, there will be more than a battle on the diamond between the Sugar Land Skeeters and Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. One that day "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day will allow more than 7,000 fans to witness an experience for families living with autism.

During Strike Out, around 400 family members living with autism are treated to mid-afternoon fun and partake in one of America's greatest past times — baseball. It is also an opportu-

nity to educate thousands of spectators about autism spectrum disorders and its affect.

"I have served as a volunteer and staff member for "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day, and to see the impact it has on the families we serve, never gets old, said Samantha Katchy, Hope For Three Family Assistance Coordinator. "I get so excited to see the joy on the faces of the children and families, I cry happy tears every year."

Returning as Skipper of the event is presenting sponsor Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation. Joining the Parks Foundation, are hundreds of volunteers, sponsors and underwriters, including the 18 Fort Bend County mayors, who, together with County Judge KP George will proclaim April Autism Awareness Month.

Autism families are treated to various pre-game festivities, food,



Signing up to ensure it is a "winning" afternoon for local autism families are several members of the "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day Committee. From left, standing: Pam Collins, Hope Collins Montgomery, Emily Gardner, Joan Soland and Mary Dorn; and seated: Mary Ann Gardner, Elizabeth Chipinski, Samantha Katchy and Darla Farmer.

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fun and fellowship. There will also be a live and silent auction for all in attendance, including a custom designed autism Skeeters' jersey worn by players event day. Fans will have a chance to win their favorite players jersey.

Game Day Tickets are \$12 each with half of the ticket price donated to Hope For Three. Fans must notate "H43" when purchasing tickets on Skeeters' web site. Ticket sales and registration to volunteer, become a sponsor or attend as a guest family for "Strike Out" Autism Family Fun Day is now open, visit hopeforthree.org/events/strike-out-autism-2019. More than 300 volunteers are needed event day. Family registration is on a first come-first serve basis. Additional information on Hope For Three can be found at hopeforthree.org or call 281-245-0640.



The 7th Annual Family Fun Day is an afternoon full of autism awareness, smiles, laughter and acceptance for over 100 Fort Bend families living with autism.

Rosenberg Lions Club announce vital projects

The Rosenberg Lions Club, which donates to several charities in Fort Bend and supplies eyeglasses and contacts for local children, has announced it is accepting applications for the Texas Lions Camp.

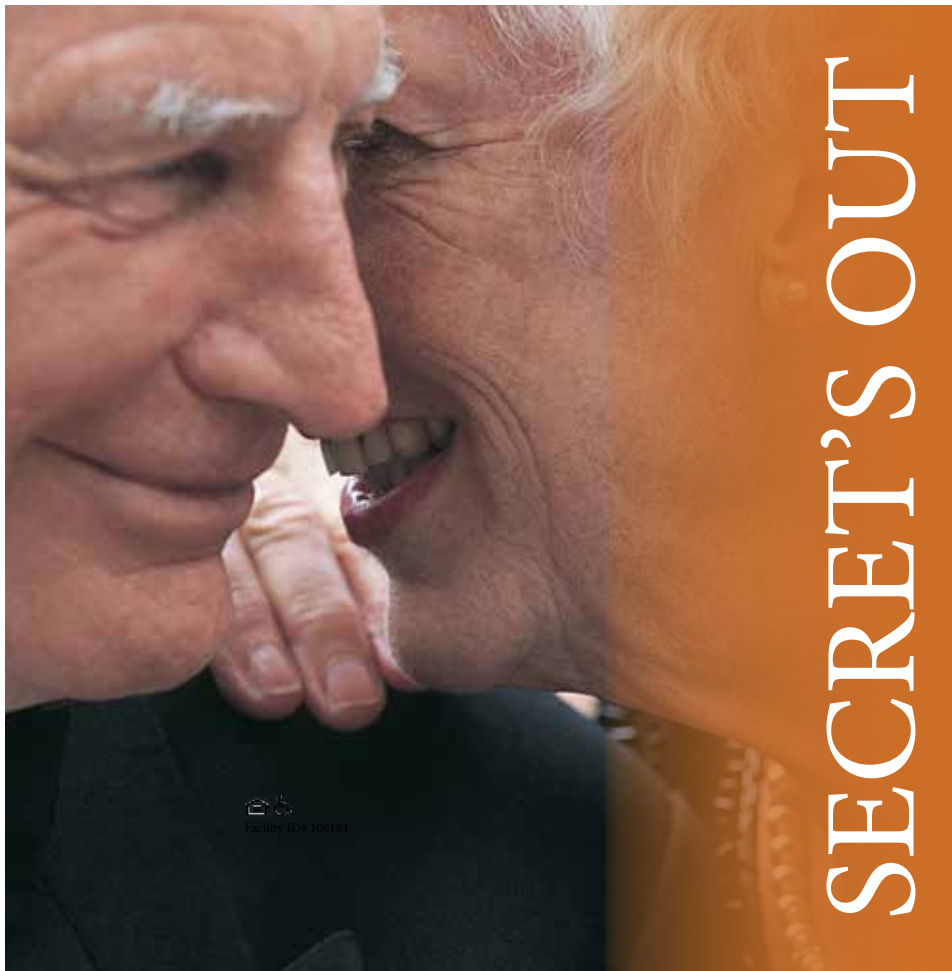
This camp, made available to handicapped and diabetic children, provides a week of camp in Kerrville, Texas, with no cost to the family of these children.

Applications are currently being accepted for the various nine camps which begin in June and end in August. Camp sessions include children with physical disabilities, children with Down Syndrome and children with Type 1 diabetes. For more information contact Lion Chair Eugene Aufdembrink at eaufdembrink@comcast.net or visit the Texas Lions Camp website at www.lionscamp.com.

Another major contribution Rosenberg Lions' makes to the community is in the form of scholarships to Lamar Consolidated ISD graduating seniors.

The scholarship is need-based and forms can be obtained from the school career facilitators at each of the schools or on the web site. The deadline for submission is Monday, April 15.

For more information contact the chairs for this program, Lion board member Judge Mary Ward and Lion President Vickie Lynn Tonn at marymsw100@aol.com or vickietonn@yahoo.com, respectively.



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Child Advocates of Fort Bend announces gala theme

Exchange Club of Sugar Land will be the Moonlight Presenting Sponsor for Child Advocates of Fort Bend's 19th Annual Gala: "Up Up And Away" on Saturday, May 4 at 6 p.m.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is a nonprofit agency dedicated to ending child abuse by providing a voice, healing the hurt, and breaking the cycle of child abuse in Fort Bend County. Through its Court Appointed Special Advocates Program, Children's Advocacy Center and more than 200 trained community volunteer advocates, Child Advocates improves the lives of more than 400 children each month and has served more than 16,565 children since opening its doors in 1991.

The gala — a fun adult event — will take place at the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square and will feature a live and silent auc-



From left, front row: National Exchange Club President Scot Warren, Exchange Club of Sugar Land President David Lanagan and President Elect Vernon Hunt; back row row: Treasurer Duyen Le, Cookie Joe Arthur, Nora Sim, Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford, Brad Porter and Secretary Vita Goodell.

tion, raffle, wine and jewelry pulls, dinner and dancing. Michele Fisher will emcee for the eighth year. Johnny Bravo is joining her as auctioneer for a second time. Attire for the evening is elegant, colorful and festive. Black tie is optional.

Other early sponsors include: Blue Sky Sponsors OcuSOFT, Inc.; NOV; Sysco and Phoenix Sponsors Manmeet & Paul Likhari; Nalco Champion, An Ecolab Company; Next Level Urgent Care; The Design Firm; Rangeland Energy and many other companies and individuals. Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available ranging from \$2,000 to \$15,000. Individual seats are available for \$150. To attend

the gala, become a sponsor, donate an auction item or for more information, visit www.cafb.org/events/gala/sponsorship-opportunities/ or contact Lisa Moore at 281-344-5108 or lmoore@cafb.org.

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Light of Hope to kick off Pinwheel Project

Child Advocates of Fort Bend, Exchange Club of Sugar Land and the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office are collaborating to bring awareness about Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Hosted by the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, The Pinwheel Project will be held at Homestead Park at 1422 Eugene Heimann Circle in Richmond - directly across from the Justice Center.

This free community event is fun for the whole family. There will be food, games, inflatable bounce houses, face painting, a train, a petting zoo, music, prize giveaways and more.

The Pinwheel Project will be Saturday, April 13 and it will open with Light of Hope. This will be the sixth year for the Sheriff's Office to host the Pinwheel Project.

"For sixteen years, Child Advocates of Fort Bend and Exchange Club of Sugar Land have partnered to bring awareness to April Child Abuse Awareness Month with Light of Hope," said Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford. "We work very closely with the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and have supported The Pinwheel Project since its inception by hosting a booth, running games and providing materials and child abuse awareness information and we were absolutely thrilled when they offered us the opportunity to open their annual Pinwheel Project again this year."

This community event is the brainchild of Lesley Vaught, a detective with the Special Crimes Unit at the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office.

Detective Vaught, who has been with the Sheriff's Office for 13

years, developed the project with her unit five years ago.

When they determined that they needed to do more to raise awareness of child abuse in Fort Bend County, the Special Crimes Unit created the Pinwheel Project in observance of Child Abuse Awareness month.

"The Pinwheel Project is so important to me because it brings our community together and lets others know that we are here and we do care," said Vaught. "It gives people the opportunity to learn the signs of child abuse and how to report."

Fort Bend Cares Moroccan Nights deemed a hit

Nearly 600 supporters enjoyed Fort Bend Cares' Moroccan Nights.

The non-profit's 14th Annual Road Trip gala was held at Fluor in Sugar Land. The crowd enjoyed an enchanting evening with jaw-dropping sword dancing, belly dancing and live music by Shark Bait. Party-goers also indulged in an incredible variety of delicious dishes from more than a dozen popular area restaurants.

Fort Bend Cares is thankful to Presenting sponsor Covia, Platinum Sponsors Fluor and Silver Eagle Distributors and Gold Sponsors Art Attack, Billy & Tammy Brown, Rice & Gardner Consultants, Inc, Gregg Engineering, and Don & Ellie Knauss.

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The nonprofit also thanks the other generous sponsors, restaurants and attendees who helped ensure countless children will receive much-needed services.

A silent auction, live auction, raffle, wine pull and Kendra Scott jewelry pull helped increase the fundraising total. Organizers were thrilled that the event raised more than \$150,000 that will be granted to Fort Bend non-profits serving disadvantaged children.

For more information, visit www.fortbendcares.org or call 832-819-2005.



Performers from Sahira Professional Bellydancers with Vera, the Sword Dancer. See more photos on page 30.

Magic was made at GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land's 4th annual fashion show

by **ROBIN BEATTIE**

GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land 4th annual fashion show, "Make Your Own Magic" and luncheon took place March 1 at the Sugar Creek Country Club. GiGi's participants, friends, and volunteers strutted the runway in fashions provided by cabi, Tea Collection and Lululemon, and Jewels by Kendra Scott Sugar Land.

GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land continues to receive outpouring of community support.

This year's sold-out event was a huge success, raising more than \$50,000 in contributions.

"Today's fashion show and luncheon was really inspiring. It was amazing to see all our beautiful GiGi's participants and volunteers shine. We are extremely thankful for our generous supporters who make GiGi's Playhouse possible," said Sarah Stanfield, GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land Board President.

Funding will be used for GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land's free programming, education, therapies, GiGi's University, and year-round support for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

For more information about GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land visit igisplayhouse.org.



Photo courtesy of Saba Design Studio | Models and attendees alike, made magic happen at this year's GiGi's Playhouse Sugar Land 4th annual fashion show and luncheon. See more photos on page 30.

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100 trees planted at Seabourne Creek Nature Park

by MARGO JOHNSON

As the year opened the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter planted trees in Seabourne Creek Nature Park in Rosenberg.

Everyone enjoyed being outdoors in nice weather and good company while improving this city park and doing something good for future generations, wildlife and the earth.

The many volunteers who made this happen included 16 Texas Master Naturalists, 11 scouts, their families and leaders from Rosenberg Troops 801 and 1630 and Fulshear Troop 941, 6 LDS young men and women and six other community volunteers. Thanks to rain earlier in the week the soil was wet and soft so they quickly planted around 100 large containers.

There are now many more native trees and shrubs in different areas of the park for all to enjoy including: 14 along the lake, consisting of a variety of oaks (white, water, red, shumard, overcup, willow), pecans, eastern red cedars, a green ash and an American sycamore; four in the edible garden (red mulberry, wax myrtle, dewberry, candlestick); one by the purple recycled water pipe

at the marsh (wax myrtle); five in the bird sanctuary (American beautyberry, button bushes and a red mulberry); 70 in the forested areas (pecans, wax myrtles, possum haws, button bushes, mayhaws, flowering dogwoods, Chickasaw plums, black gum tupelos, green ashes, a river birch, a white oak and a laurel oak); and eight along Seabourne creek (bald cypress).

Apache Corporation donated 85 of the smaller 5-gallon trees while the Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter bought 16 larger 15-gallon trees for along the lake area.

Chapter member Linda Rippert, and son JD donated one oak tree grown in a pot from an acorn, which is already around 8 feet tall. It

was planted near the butterfly garden. The Arboretum is also a work in progress.

The Coastal Prairie Chapter Texas Master Naturalists are sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For additional information call 281-633-7033 or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu. People can also visit txmn.org/coastal.



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SINGIN' IN THE RAIN JR. OPENS APRIL 26

by ALISHA McMILLEN

Inspiration Stage presents *Singin' in the Rain JR.* at the historic Sugar Land Auditorium with four shows April 26 - 28. With a cast of young actors, ages 10 through 18, *Singin' in the Rain JR.* offers two evening shows and two matinees.

Singin' in the Rain JR. has the starlet, the leading man and a love affair that could change lives and make or break careers! In silent movies, Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont are a hot item, but behind the scenes, things aren't always as they appear on the big screen! Meanwhile, Lina's squeaky voice might be the end of her career in "talking pictures" without the help of a talented young actress to do the talking and singing for her.

Inspiration Stage is excited to announce a special guest director/choreographer, Michael Tapley, for this musical. Tapley is excited to work with this youth cast on one of his all-time favorite shows. He's played the role of *Singin' in the Rain*'s Cosmo Brown three times — at the Maine State Music Theatre, Galveston Outdoor Musicals, and the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia.

"We are ecstatic to welcome Michael Tapley to our artistic team for this toe-tapping journey to old Hollywood," said Inspiration Stage's artistic director, Mandy Seymore-Sensat. "*Singin' in the Rain* holds a special place in my heart and childhood as I watched it dozens of times as an aspiring

dancer. I know Michael loves this show too and will inspire a new generation to adore this fabulous piece of theatre."



Guest director/choreographer Michael Tapley joins the Inspiration Stage team to lead *Singin' in the Rain JR.*

Tapley began his professional career in 1973 at the age of 10 in *Kismet* starring MGM film actor Howard Keel at Theater Under The Stars (TUTS). Later he would work with other MGM greats like Eddie Bracken in HGO's *Showboat* in Chiro, Yvonne DeCarlo in *Gypsy* at The Windmill Dinner Theater, Deloris Grey in the first national tour of 42nd Street, Juliet Prowse in the National Tour of *Mame*, and Debbie Reynolds in the National Tour of *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. Other national tours are *Evita* and *The Who's Tommy* playing the title role at DC's Kennedy Center and then on Broadway.

As a director/choreographer his work has been seen at Goodspeed Opera House, Seattle's 5th Ave., Theatre, The North Carolina Theatre, Kansas City Starlight, Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, American Musical Theatre of San Jose, Galveston Outdoor Musicals and TUTS. Some of Tapley's favorite roles include Riff, Action, Arab and Baby John in *West Side Story*, Mike in *A Chorus Line*, Judge Turpin in *Sweeney Todd*, Jud Fry and Will Parker in *Oklahoma*, Tommy in *Tommy* and Alfred P Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

Tickets available for advance purchase at inspirationstage.com, or at the door before showtime. Shows run Fri. and Sat. night at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. afternoon at 3:30, April 26 - 28.

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OPEN AUDITIONS AND SPRING CONCERT FOR THE FORT BEND BOYS CHOIR OF TEXAS

by **TIANA MORTIMER**

Singing in a boys choir is not only a time-honored ancient tradition, it is also one of the most effective ways to develop life skills in young boys.

If you know of a boy at least eight years of age or going into the third grade (with an unchanged voice) for the new 2019-2020 school year, he is eligible to audition for the Fort Bend Boys Choir.

Choristers learn many life lessons including responsibility, leadership, etiquette, citizenship, confidence and so much more. Open auditions will be held on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. - noon at the First United Methodist Church-Missouri City, 3900 Lexington Blvd. in Missouri City.

Scholarships and payment plans are available in addition to car-pool assistance.

Additionally, the Fort Bend Boys Choir will conclude its 37th concert season with a Spring Concert on Saturday, May 11 at 7 p.m. This event will be at Grace Presbyterian Church in Houston - just off the beltway at Westheimer. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 12 years old and younger.

Four ensembles - Training, Town and Tour Choirs and Music Magic (the music enrichment class of six and seven year olds) - will be showcased as they celebrate "Boy ... can they sing!" their 37th concert season's theme.

Call the Fort Bend Boys Choir office to schedule an audition at (281) 240-3800. Find out more about the audition process or how to purchase Spring Concert tickets online by visiting www.fbbctx.org.



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3RD ANNUAL ART WALK & MOTOR MADNESS

Historic Richmond Association is announced it is partnering with the downtown merchants to bring the 3rd Annual ART WALK & Motor Madness, to historic downtown Richmond on May 4 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Both events will take place along the stretch of Morton Street between 2nd and 5th Streets. Classical car enthusiasts will be able to participate in the Motor Madness car show housed at City Hall, on Morton St. between 4th and 5th Streets.

Attendees will also find some of Houston's Art Cars on display, a community arts project for all ages to contribute, artisan vendors, food trucks and music throughout the day.

Morton Street merchants will open their stores for artists to showcase their works while working live and art lovers/ attendees are invited to shop and sip wine while engaging with artists on the Art Walk.

Plein air painters and sidewalk chalk art competition will complete the unique experiences.

For more information, call 832-920-6769 or check us out on Facebook #artwalkrichmondtx.



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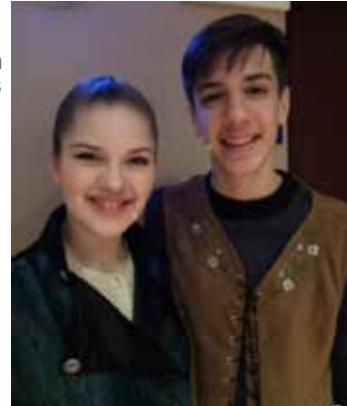
Isabella Fish, Mia dela Garza, Patrick Cashion, Nate Sarlls, Holden Hagelberger, Madison Willett and Emily Adams received callbacks for the opportunity to appear in MTI instructional guide choreography DVDs distributed with its Broadway Jr. series of shows.



Photo by Erika Waldorf | Inspiration Stage's JTF West company performed Frozen JR. in the New Works Showcase and a 15-minute cut of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang JR. for festival adjudicators.



Inspiration Stage students with their trophies — one for performing Frozen JR. in the New Works Showcase, and one for Excellence in Music for their cut of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang JR.



Emily Adams received the Excellent Individual Performance by a Female Award and All-Star Award for her role as Baroness in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang JR., while Andrew Sackett received the All-Star Award for his role as Caractacus Potts.



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MORE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT HAPPENINGS

FOCUS ON LATINX ZINESTERS MINI-EXHIBIT

This mini-exhibit at the George Memorial Library features a display of zines (self-published magazines) from the collection of Anastasia Kirages, one of the organizers of Zine Fest Houston. The exhibit will be on display through May 31 in the second floor display case. Zines can provide a way to preserve personal narratives or provide a platform for marginalized voices and communities. This collection of zines portrays the extreme diversity of the Latinx community, challenging common stereotypes and illustrating true experiences and stories. Topics include activism, photography, gender, self-care, music, art, community, poetry and short stories.

CREATING & MAINTAINING A SUCCULENT GARDEN

On April 4 at 2 p.m. in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, Fort Bend County Master Gardener Kathy Gilmore will talk about different varieties of succulents — ornamental, drought-resistant plants that have the ability to thrive on limited water sources. Get tips on picking and choosing succulents, planting them in pots, and taking care of them. Those attending this workshop will have an opportunity to create their own succulent mini-garden to take home with them.

SPRING BOOK SALE

Friends of University Branch Library will host a Spring Book Sale, April 13 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., in Meeting Room 1. Prices range from .25 cents to \$3. Numerous items will be available for sale, such as DVDs, CDs, magazines, and a variety of books, including children's, teens', mystery, computer, special interest, and romance.

OPEN-MIC NIGHT

On April 17 from 7 - 8 p.m. in the meeting room, the George Memorial Library will host Open-Mic Night, a casual event for amateur performers to take the stage and express themselves! Step into the limelight to share original poetry, music, comedy, or one-act plays, or to showcase any other unique talents. Performances are limited to five minutes or less, and they must not contain any profanity or other insensitive topics. This event is for adults and teens aged 14 and above. Registration is required to perform only.

FULSHEAR NIGHT READERS GUILD

Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library's reader's guild will meet Apr 22, 6:30 pm, Meeting Room. The book to be discussed is "The Ha-Ha," a novel written by Dave King.

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR

Sharing a cup of coffee, exchange news or a corny joke, and chat with friends on April 29 during the George Memorial Library's monthly social hour — at 9 a.m. in the meeting room — celebrating the multitude of diverse cultures found in Fort Bend County. People of all nationalities are invited to this informal gathering to get to know one another, share cultural experiences, and learn something new and fascinating about each other in a casual and comfortable environment. The International Coffee Hour will take place on the last Monday of every month.



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Fort Bend Cares Moroccan Nights a Hit



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

1 Shane Hudson, Taft McWhorter, Jim Rice and Mary Favre.

Charles Dupre (who was born in Casablanca, Morocco) and his wife Seeju.

8 Caroline and Derek Cardno, and Sarah and Steve Webb.

2 Fort Bend Cares Board Member Lisa Cohen and Board President Mary Joyce.

5 Melanie Jackson and Amanda Heidemann

9 Kitee Valentz and Brooke Hudson.

3 Donna Croft, Road Trip Emcee Khambrel Marshall of KPRC and Alicia Klosowsky.

6 Scott and Denise McKee

10 James Murray, Jen Murray, Maddy Maples and Alex Hohn

4 Party-goers with Fort Bend Cares Board Member and FBISD Superintendent Dr.

7 Dr. Stephen and LeAnn Cyr.

11 Bridge Lavey, Natalie Gonzales, Chris Wilson, Val Wooters, Nick Ruiz, Dariana Soto and Brandan Spriggs of Audi Sugar Land.

Gigi's Playhouse Sugar Land 4TH Annual Fashion Show



Lily Stanfield



Alexis Villarreal



Kaleigh and Avery McDonald (right)



Sarah Brhlik

April

SIXTH RAILFEST 2019

The Rosenberg Railroad Museum's spring fundraiser — RailFest 2019 — will be held at 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the museum. Model trains, exhibits, food and games will be featured. Admission is \$8 with children 2 years and younger being admitted for free. Visit www.rosenbergmuseum.org

SEVENTH CAR WASH FOR KIDS

Teen volunteers from across the county "clean for a cause" to raise autism awareness for their peers. The annual Hope for Three event kicks off Autism Awareness month at C&C Dental Center, 17003 SWE Sugar Land (behind Olive Garden on Sweetwater) from 10 a.m. - 2p.m. Visit www.hopeforthree.org/events

TWELVETH 10TH ANNUAL FORT BEND EMPTY BOWLS

Guests of the event will be served a delicious meal of soup and bread in recognition and support of our neighbors who don't have enough to eat. Fort Bend Empty Bowls will feature hand-painted bowls which have been donated by local professional artist, Albert Goldreich and other amateur artists in the area. These bowls will be available for purchase. There will also be bowl, silent and live auctions, a Wine Pull, Whiskey Pull and a Kendra Scott Jewelry Pull. Commissioner Patterson is serving as the event auctioneer. The event takes place from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. at 1 Fluor Daniel Drive in Sugar Land.

THIRTEENTH EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

The George Memorial Library will host an Earth Day Celebration from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Learn about ways to help the planet by reducing waste, and discover how to save money as well. Electric and hybrid vehicles from different automobile manufacturers will be on display in the south parking lot. Representatives from the North Fort Bend Water Authority will have their Mobile Teaching Lab on site. Representatives from METRO Star Vanpool will be in Room 2A to share information about their commuter services. Children are invited to stop by the Youth Services department for an "Earth Daisy" craft activity.

EASTER EGG HUNT

The City of Rosenberg will host an Easter Egg Hunt from 10-11 a.m. at Seabourne Creek Park, 3831 Highway 36 South. For children up to 12 years of age and kicks off with the arrival of the Easter Bunny, who has hidden thousands of plastic, candy and trinket-filled, colored eggs at the park. The egg hunt will be divided into four age groups: babies, children ages 4 and under, 5-8, and 9-12.

NINETEENTH MAGIC IN THE PLAZA

From 7 - 9p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square Plaza, Ted Schwank is pulling out all the stops with a brand new show called Pure Energy. This is Houston's most popular magical variety show featuring magic, juggling, illusions, balancing, singing, dancing, special effects, comedy and more. Plus celebrity DJ from 104 KRBE, face painting, games and prizes.

TWENTY-SECOND EARTH DAY

The Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter will celebrate Earth Day at Seabourne Creek Nature Park from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. will all-day activities that include prairie restoration planting and walking tours with a Texas Master Naturalist. For additional information call 281-633-7033 or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu.

TWENTY-FOURTH ARABIA SHRINE CIRCUS 2019

With three rings of affordable family fun, "The Shrine Circus" will thrill fans of all ages. Come see the death-defying aerial acts, animal attractions including tigers and elephants. In addition to the performing acts, kids will have the unique opportunity to ride and pet different types of animals. The circus runs April 24 through April 28 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds.

TWENTY-SIXTH AROUND THE WORLD ADVENTURE

St. Mark's Episcopal School will hold its annual gala "Around the World Adventure" from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Call 281-545-1296 or email schooloffice@stmarksfortbend.org for ticket information. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. at the school, 7615 FM 762 in Richmond. Food, a silent, live and dessert auction will be featured. Proceeds benefit the school's curriculum.

TWENTY-SEVENTH AUTISM SPEAKS 8K AND 1K KID'S FUN RUN

With autism becoming the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the US with 1 in 68 children diagnosed, Autism Speaks is looking to raise awareness while having a great time during the annual Houston 8K and 1K Kid's Fun Run in Sugar Land Town Square, from 7-11 a.m. Visit act.autismspeaks.org.

SUGAR LAND JR. SUPERSTAR FINALE

Junior Superstar is back for its 14th summer from 7-9 p.m. in Sugar Land Town Square. Bring your lawn chairs to the Plaza and enjoy Sugar Land's American Idol-like competition for ages 9-13. The vocal battle is the Finale and one lucky winner will be named the 2019 Jr Sugar Land Superstar.

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Campbell Elementary School

by **ALEINI LACOMBE**

Campbell Elementary is honored to name Judy Matusek and Amanda Wolgamott Volunteers of the Year.

Judy Matusek and Amanda Wolgamott were named volunteers of the year for the remarkable number of hours they both have spent at Campbell helping in the many school activities throughout the year.

You've most likely seen them working in the front office, assisting at the book fair, volunteering for Grandparent's Day, or cheering the kids on during Field Day activities. Fortunately for Campbell Elementary, when they act together, they are the "Dream Team of 2019."

Thank You Judy and Amanda for the time and hard work you've provided our kids, staff and the school.

For information about Campbell please visit us www.campbellpto.org.

CALENDAR

- April 1: 4th 9 weeks begins
- April 4: Spring Picture Day
- April 5: Wear blue for Autism Awareness
- April 9: 4th grade STAAR Writing/5th grade STAAR Math (No Visitors)
- April 10: 5th grade STAAR Reading (No Visitors)
- April 16: PTO Meeting @ 7:45am
- April 18: Teacher Luncheon
- April 22: No School Easter Holiday
- April 25: 1st grade program @ 8:30am & 6:00pm
- April 26: Progress Reports go home

Dickinson Elementary

by **ALLISON OLIVER**

We had a marvelous March with our terrific Tag Sale, two successful Spirit Nights, and a fun Family Movie Night. Thanks for joining us and supporting our Dolphins.

PTO BOARD NOMINATIONS

Looking to get more involved at our school or know someone who would like to? The Dickinson PTO wants you! Nominate yourself and/or another great candidate by April 5. Check out dickinsonpto.com for more details.

BINGO FOR BOOKS

Bingo for Books is coming back! Join us on Thursday, April 11 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Dickinson cafeteria. The kids will have fun playing bingo and winning books while the adults attend the PTO meeting. Donations of children's books will be accepted.

PTO MEETINGS

Join us for our meeting on May 6 at 3 p.m. in the Science Room.

CALENDAR

- April 1: PTO Meeting, 3pm in the Science Room*
- April 3: AR Free Dress (if goal met)
- April 4: Report Cards go home + 4th Grade Program, 6pm in the Gym
- April 5: PTO Board Nominations due*
- April 5: 3rd Grade Field Trip - Crocodile Encounter
- April 8-12: School Librarian Week



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M-Th	Fri	Sat	Sun
5:00 AM	5:00 AM	7:00 AM	CLOSED
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7:30 AM	7:30 AM	9:30 AM	
8:30 AM	8:30 AM		
9:30 AM	9:30 AM		
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- April 9-10: STAAR Testing
- April 11: Bingo for Books + PTO Mtg, 6:30-7:30pm in the Gym/Cafeteria*
- April 15-26: Read-a-Thon
- April 19: Student Holiday
- April 22: Student & Staff Holiday
- April 25: 1st Grade Field Trip - Houston Museum of Natural Science
- May 1: Last day to purchase yearbooks!
- May 2: Progress Reports go home
- May 6: PTO Meeting, 3pm in the Science Room
- May 8: AR Free Dress (if goal met)
- May 13-15: STAAR Testing
- May 23: 5th Grade Scholar Dollar Day
- May 27: Student Holiday
- May 28: 5th Grade Program
- May 29: AR Free Dress (if goal met)
- May 30: AR Celebration

*Items with an * are PTO-sponsored events. Questions about all other events should be directed to the front office.*

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory opens new pre-kindergarten program

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory has announced the opening of a new prek3 program for the 2019-2020 school year and just like with every one of the school's programs, the private school "will ensure that the pk3 class is staffed with quali-

fied and certified personnel, in a safe, loving and nurturing Christian environment," said Headmaster Malcolm Smith.

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory continues to top the lists for parents looking for core enrichment classes taught by dedicated, highly trained teachers and for good reason, said Machele Delange, a CEP board member who helped research and approve the curriculum for the new prek3 program.

"Immersing children in an educational program at an early age has proven to be important," she said.

"Early childhood education is an important aspect of a child's social and academic development. So many PK3 programs are glorified babysitting and do not have a structure that prepares a child for school," Headmaster Smith added. "We can assure that the curriculum and instruction is aligned with all of the prerequisites necessary to be successful in future years."

And this is why Calvary is offering parents the prek3 program. Not only does its curriculum bridge prek3 to prek4 and then to kindergarten, it provides a smooth transition academically and spiritually.

As a parent of three children who attend Calvary and a dedicated Episcopalian, Delange remains heavily involved in the school — from helping in the classroom and leading chapel services to hosting events — so she knows first-hand the nurturing and encouraging environment of Calvary.

"Our enrichment programs at Calvary are amazing and our children have a true love for one another," she said. "The bond across all our grade levels is something truly special."

The curriculum for the prek3 program was designed to be developmentally appropriate to provide social interaction and academic challenge and engagement. Plus, the program's student-to-teacher ratio is low, with eight students to one teacher, and teacher's aids will be in the classrooms.

"The most important objective [of the program] is placing children in a school setting where they are challenged with an accelerated curriculum, build a daily routine and surrounded by a spiritual and loving environment," Delange added.

Since 1956 Calvary Episcopal Preparatory has been known as a school that provides a strong academic program in a Christian learning environment and its newest program will be an "addition to this reputation," said Headmaster Smith.

"Our hopes for the prek3 program are the same as that with all of our children at all grade levels: to dedicate ourselves to higher learning, provide superior education and instill pillars of faith.

"All encompassed with a love for learning and love for growing."

For more information about Calvary's prek3 program or the 2019-2020 Prospective Family Preview, visit www.ces-richmond.org or call 281-342-3161.

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6 reasons your back hurts

Your back is a feat of biological engineering. More than 33 vertebrae form the column that runs from your skull to your tailbone and between each is a cushiony disk, all held together by a web of ligaments and muscles. With all those moving parts, plenty can go wrong.

“Back pain is incredibly common, especially as we age,” said Jeffrey B. Wood, M.D., board-certified orthopedic spine surgeon with the Houston Methodist Neuroscience & Spine Center at Sugar Land. “Fortunately, we can treat most cases of back pain without surgery.”

Below are some of the most common causes of back pain:

- Heavy lifting or improper sports or exercise techniques. Repeated lifting or simply an awkward movement could cause a muscle or ligament strain.
- Bad posture. Sit at a desk all day? If you’re hunched over papers or using a chair with little support, your back bears the brunt of it.
- Herniated disk. The vertebrae in your spine are cushioned by disks between each bone. When the soft material inside bulges or ruptures, it can cause pain by pressing on a nerve.
- Scoliosis. Adults experience pain from scoliosis (a sideways curve in the spine) when an existing curve worsens with age or a new curve develops.
- Arthritis. In its most common form, osteoarthritis, the cartilage breaks down around joints, making movement painful.
- Osteoporosis. Thinning of the bones, predisposes a person to fractures. Compression fractures may cause pain when bones become brittle and porous.

FINDING RELIEF

Minor back problems — primarily those associated with strains or spasms — can be successfully treated at home with a combination of hot and cold compresses, rest and anti-inflammatory medications.

“Although you may be tempted to spend a few days recuperating in bed, movement is actually better for your pain,” Wood said. “Try to keep up with your regular activities.”

If your pain is debilitating, a spine specialist can perform an exam to help determine the source of your discomfort and prescribe a treatment plan that may include medications, physical therapy or injections to relieve pain. In severe cases, surgery may be needed.

“At our Neuroscience & Spine Center, our specialists work together to get you back to a productive life,” Wood said. We offer expedited appointments, including second opinions, with our renowned specialists.

To schedule an appointment with Jeffrey B. Wood, M.D., or another specialist at the Houston Methodist Neuroscience & Spine Center at Sugar Land, go to houstonmethodist.org/neuro-sl and fill out the online form or call 281.274.7979.

BACK AND NECK PAIN SEMINAR

Join Jeffrey B. Wood, M.D., and Christian Pecorra, M.D., as they discuss causes, latest treatment options and prevention on Wednesday, April 17 at 6 p.m. in the Brazos Pavilion Conference Center. Registration is required. To register or find out more information, go to events.houstonmethodist.org/backpain-sl or call 281.274.7500.

MOVIES ON MORTON

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- March 1st The Sandlot
- April 5th Apollo 13
- May 3rd Selena
- June 7th The Princess Bride
- July 5th Independence Day
- August 2nd The Goonies
- September 6th Singin' in the Rain
- October 4th Hocus Pocus
- November 1st Coco
- December 6th The Grinch

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 Search 'City of Richmond, Texas' on Facebook to like our page for future Movies on Morton updates.

Houston Methodist Sugar Land offers 'Beat the Pack' program to help people quit smoking

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital continues to offer the community a proven program to help people quit smoking.

The complimentary program, called Beat the Pack®, was developed by Pfizer Inc. and is sponsored by Houston Methodist Cancer Center and Respiratory Therapy Department at Sugar Land.

Participants will meet once a week for four weeks with a trained facilitator from Houston Methodist Sugar Land who will provide tools, tips and support to help smokers create and follow through with a personalized “quit plan.”

“Studies show that close to 70 percent of smokers in the U.S. want to quit,” said Amy Sebastian-Deutsch, director of oncology and infusion therapy services. “But it typically takes a smoker between six and 11 attempts at quitting to finally succeed. Beat the Pack is a proven program that can greatly increase those odds and make it easier to give up cigarettes for good.”

Even long-term smokers can benefit from quitting. “The health benefits of quitting begin almost immediately and continue indefinitely,” said Sindhu Nair, M.D., board-certified hematologist oncologist with Houston Methodist Oncology Partners at Sugar Land. “Within months, former smokers will have improved circulation and reduced blood pressure, enhanced oxygen flow, the return of taste and smell and less coughing and colds. After a year, their risk of heart disease will be reduced by half. And after 10 years of living without cigarettes, the risk of heart attack or cancer is similar to that of someone who never smoked.”

In 2015, a thorough compilation of more than 50 smoking cessation studies that included more than 25,000 participants found that combining behavior support in a group setting with medication provides the best results.

"It isn't easy to quit, and certainly it is even more difficult to do so by yourself," said Sebastian-Deutsch. "Beat the Pack provides all the tools and support needed, and it does so in an informative, friendly atmosphere that offers encouragement and camaraderie."

The next four-week series is scheduled to start on April 2, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Houston Methodist Sugar Land's Main Pavilion Conference Rooms A & D. Sessions will also be offered beginning in July and November. Registration is required and space is limited. For more information or to register, visit houstonmethodist.org/events and search for Beat the Pack, or call 281.205.4514.

Visit the Facebook page at fb.com/methodistsugarland for the latest news, events and information.

"WHAT IS GRIEF, REALLY?" —Grief support group series—

Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital is offering a four-part series for Fort Bend and surrounding area residents who are coping with the loss of a loved one.

The series titled "What is Grief, Really? The Nuts and Bolts of Grieving" is designed to help participants learn about grief and understand the impact that grief has on survivors. Facilitated by the Department of Spiritual Care and Values Integration, these sessions are open to people of all faiths and provide a safe, welcoming environment where individuals can find support and share experiences.

The sessions are scheduled on four consecutive Tuesdays in April, beginning April 9, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the hospital's Main Pavilion Conference Rooms A and D. Dinner will be provided.

"Learning about grief - and hearing from others' experiences - can be a valuable part of healing for many people," said Tim Madison, director of spiritual care and values integration at Houston Methodist Sugar Land. "Too often people try to get past the loss of a loved one without fully exploring their feelings or understanding how grief can affect them both emotionally and even physi-

cally. These sessions give participants the opportunity to interact with others who have been through similar experiences and who share many of the same emotions."

The hospital's Grief Support Group series meets each fall and spring, offering participants a safe space to tell their stories, interact with each other or just sit and listen.

"Our goal is to provide an avenue for comfort and healing, recognizing that each person is different and has different needs," said Madison. "The Grief Support Group series can be beneficial to anyone who has lost a loved one - whether it was a recent loss or even one many years ago."

To reserve a place in the spring series, or to learn more about the Grief Support Group series, contact the hospital's Spiritual Care and Values Integration Department at 281.274.7164.

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

2019 Stroke Walk

OakBend Medical Center will hold its annual "Stepping Out Against Stroke" walk on Saturday, April 13 with check-in and T-shirt pick up beginning at 8 a.m. and the festivities beginning at 8:30 a.m. Registration must be done online at bit.ly/strokewalk2019. Registration is free and participants are encouraged to wear their superhero best. The event will include activities for children, music and information on stroke prevention and awareness.

This year, the walk will be held at George Park, 2155 Collins Road, Richmond. The route will wind through the park with opening and closing activities at the pavilion.

Fort Bend County businesses, organization and individuals are invited to partner with OakBend on this event.

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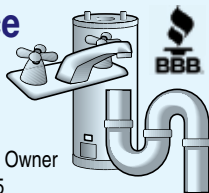
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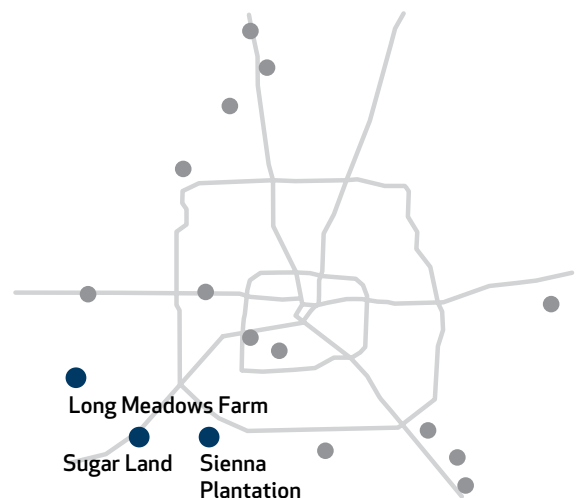
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