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Two local friends 'pay it forward' as part of a Leukemia & Lymphoma Society campaign

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Two high school friends demonstrate how to Pay It Forward

by MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

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."

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."



Dylan Dean and Sophia Sofia Giordano with Jacob Munoz.

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

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/txg/HoustonSOY20/dsofia> or email Dylan or Sophia at 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. The team is also accepting matching gift opportunities and will

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

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.

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 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 or visit www.fortbendcares.org. To purchase tickets visit one.bidpal.net/fortbendcaresrt. Sponsorships are available ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

The annual Jigsaw Puzzle competition brings awareness to the autism disorder which effects 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

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 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.

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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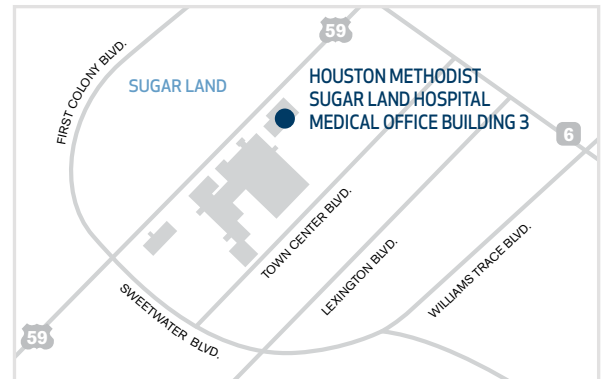
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Elizabeth Mosier, MD
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Rosalyn Miller, DO
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FORT BEND CARES

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.

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.

• **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

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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.

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 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 (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 or log onto www.cafb.org.

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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

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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.”

Learn a new language

Do you desire to be a polyglot? Polyglots are people who can speak and understand multiple languages, and such people are a pretty rare commodity in an increasingly global world. The foreign language information site iLanguages.org says 40 percent of the world’s

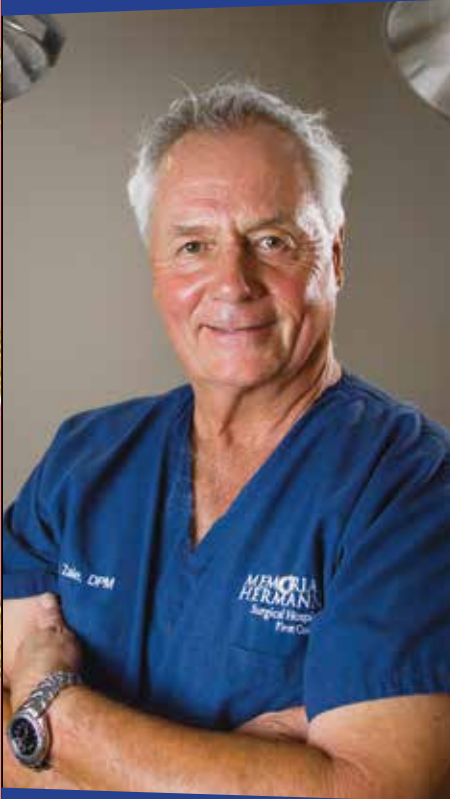
population only knows one language.

Understanding and speaking more than one language can set people apart, particularly in the professional sector. The Eton Institute, which offers language and communication instruction, says learning a foreign language offers many benefits. Among them are: a boost in brain power, memory improvement, proficiency in multitasking, and even improvement in the usage and understanding of one’s first language. It also never hurts to list being bilingual on a résumé, as being able to communicate in various languages is an asset in many different fields. With such incentives, is it any wonder so many people aspire to add a second language to their repertoires?

Learning a new language may seem complicated, but aspiring polyglots can employ various strategies to learn a new language in a relatively short period of time.



• **MAKE IT FUN.** The more you enjoy something, the more likely you are to stick with it. That notion applies to learning a foreign language. Take up the task with a friend. Find an entertaining outlet for your knowledge, such as being able to watch foreign films or listen to opera. Find an activity you enjoy and incorporate language into it.



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Dr. Zale has been chosen four times by Fort Bend Herald readers as Best Podiatrist in the annual Readers Choice poll.



• **USE FLASHCARDS.** Many learners utilize flashcards to improve their memories. This approach can help when learning a language. Write the word on a card and the translation on the other side. Digital versions of the same concept are available on various language-learning apps.

• **PAY ATTENTION TO GRAMMAR.** Grammar and word usage varies for different languages. Having a cursory understanding of tense and how to conjugate verbs can give language learners a leg up. However, the rules are more important when writing a language. As you get started, listening skills are key.

• **MIMIC AND REPEAT.** Listen to the language of choice as much as possible and mimic what you hear. This not only helps to develop your vocabulary, but it also can be a great exercise for your mouth and can help you fine tune any accents you may have.

• **IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE CULTURE.** One way to learn a language is to dive right in without a safety net. Visit a country where they speak the language you're studying and try to converse with the locals.

Read more and reap the benefits

It may be tempting to curl up on the couch and turn on the television to unwind, but research indicates that reading is one of the best workouts for the brain. The World Health Organization says that doctors diagnose nearly 10 million new cases of dementia each year. With so many people understandably concerned about any and all cognitive issues related to aging, the search is continually on to find ways to strengthen the mind's muscle. It may be as simple as picking up a book.

People make New Year's resolutions to improve their lives, and reading more can be a great way to do just that. According to the online health and wellness resource The Healthy (www.thehealthy.com), reading has been associated with language reception in the left temporal cortex of the brain. When this part of the brain processes written material, neurons begin working hard to transmit information. Research conducted by Stanford University indicated that MRI scans of people who are deep into a Jane Austen novel showed an increase in blood flowing to areas of the brain that control both cognitive and executive function.

When the brain is working efficiently, it may be less prone to some of the issues that can cause a decline in memory and brain function. Research published in the journal

Neurology found frequent brain exercise through reading lowered mental decline by 32 percent.

Of course, the benefits of reading extend beyond the physical. Literary fiction can help people be more empathetic. Getting lost in a book and the

characters' stories makes others more relatable. Reading has the potential to help

a person understand what people are thinking, offers research published in the journal Science.

Picking up a good book also can help a person gain knowledge of new cultures, ideas and history and even improve vocabulary. Picking up a newspaper or magazine, joining a book club or reading with children are just a few of the many ways to improve the mind through reading.

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

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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.

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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.

Check out local libraries in the Fort Bend County Libraries system for a score of services from checking out books, watching performances and learning in free classes and presentations. Visit www.fortbend.lib.tx.us

18 children find families on National Adoption Day

by AVERIL GLEASON | agleason@fbherald.com

The Lavallies family just got a whole lot bigger. During National Adoption Day, 18 children were adopted at the Fort Bend County Justice Center in Richmond.

And Janet and Zachary Lavallies of Fort Bend County adopted four children of their own.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend decorated the third floor of the building with balloons, Dr. Seuss slogans, snack stations, and stuffed animals. This year's theme was "Oh, the places you will go."

The nonprofit provides a voice, heals the hurt and breaks the cycle of abuse and neglect for children in Fort Bend County, as well as serving child victims of sexual and physical abuse.

"We started volunteering with the Court Appointed Special Advocates a few years ago," Janet said. "It made me feel like I could take on more responsibility, so I started to foster. Then we took adoption classes and that's when we adopted Princeton in 2017. He's 4 now.

"Last December, we started fostering four sisters. We were told that if they weren't adopted, they would be separated and we couldn't let that happen. So here we are, adopting Natalia, Yasmin, Jaqueline and Sophia and everyone is very excited about it. You

know, people always say we have our hands full. And I say, if you think our hands are full, you should see our hearts."

Natalia, 11, said she was excited to leave her past behind and start her life with her new family.

"We don't have to worry about the past and who we were with before any more," she said. "We're going to have a happy life now."

Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford said that's what the theme was supposed to encompass.

"Oh, the places you will go; is all about putting the past behind you," Mefford said. "It's time to look forward. It's time to break this cycle of abuse.

"This day is all about celebrating children finding loving homes."

The Hays family adopted 7-month-old Isaac.

"We are totally overwhelmed by God's grace," mom April said.

Dad Adam said he was so happy to have his friends and family at the justice center supporting their decision to adopt.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is located at 5403 Ave. N in Rosenberg. For more information, visit www.cafb.org.

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Parents April and Adam Hays adopted 7-month-old Isaac. From left are Rachel, April, Walker, Isaac and Adam Hays.

The Lavallies family just got a little bit bigger. From left are Zachary, Natalia, Yasmin, Sophia, Jaqueline, Princeton and Janet.

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Episcopal Church-Richmond feeds meals to hundreds

One hundred roasted turkeys donated by church members and 25 smoked turkeys donated by Doziers Market helped to complete turkey and all the fixin's delivered to more than 1,000 local residents on Thanksgiving Day by Calvary Episcopal Church.

Once the meals were packed and ready, volunteers loaded the tasty goodies into their vehicles and made deliveries to families in greater Richmond, Rosenberg, Fulshear, Needville, Missouri City and Sugar Land. Meal recipients are identified by Fort Bend County Meals on Wheels, plus suggestions from the local elementary schools and fire departments for families not fortunate enough to have a nice Thanksgiving dinner.

"This ministry has grown every year over the past thirty years. We are so grateful to volunteers from the church, Calvary Episcopal Prep, Scout Pack 1000, St. John XXIII College Prep, the Lighthouse Indian Baptist Church and other local churches. A project of this magnitude could not happen without their help," said Rev. Lecia Brannon, Associate Rector. "It's an amazing process to watch. People arrive at 8 a.m. to cut hundreds of pies, we move into our sanctuary for Thanksgiving worship, and then the meals are prepared, packaged and the drivers are on their way to peoples' homes before noon time."

For more information about Calvary Episcopal Church go to www.calvaryrichmond.org



Calvary volunteers ready to pack meals.

'LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL' AT THE 9TH ANNUAL HOPE FOR THREE LUNCHEON

Hope for Three is inviting the community to "let the good times roll," at the nonprofit's Annual Luncheon set for Feb. 13 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Magnolia Ballroom of Safari Texas Ranch. The afternoon will showcase the exhilarating feels of the Mardi Gras Season thanks to presenting sponsors Mary and Tom Solcher.

The luncheon, in its ninth year, will feature "awesome" kids on the autism spectrum from Launch Academy Band, performing live jazz music and a performance by Cookie Joe's Dance Company, live and silent auctions, and guest speakers/honorary chairs, Sarah and Greg Swindell, who will share their personal autism journey. Greg, a former Major League Baseball player and World Series Winner and, Sarah, an actress and author, of the recently released book, "Rounding Home," will provide a real, raw look at the challenges and rewards of having a son with severe autism.

"The Hope For Three Luncheon is an opportunity to share in a good time with great purpose," said Juliana LaRue, Hope For Three events coordinator. "For a few hours, we invite guests into the world of autism, and in some cases, introduce them to a disorder that now affects one in 59 school-age children. The joys and pains of the autism journey are countless, yet awareness events like the luncheon provide the help and hope needed by so many, right here in our

community."

More than 5,000 students with autism are enrolled in Fort Bend County public-school systems. Organizers note this number does not include those in private schools, facilities or programs. Autism has no cure; it does not discriminate; and the cost can reach more than \$60,000 per child each year.

"Families living with autism, desperately need our help," said Samantha Katchy, Hope For Three Family Assistance Manager. "We are making great strides in bridging the gap between providers and families, as well as bringing resources to the families we serve and the surrounding community. None of this would be possible without the help of our generous sponsors, donors and volunteers."

To purchase tickets, sponsor or underwrite visit hopeforthree.org/ events. For information call 281-245-0640.



Courtesy of Hope For Three | Donning some of the traditions of the Mardi Gras Season are Hope For Three board members, from left, (standing) Larry Lobue, Tyler Stamm, Sandra Stewart, Deon Minor, Julie Noel, Dana Walker, Joe Cunneff and Gayle Kildoyle (Staff), (standing, middle): Kim Overgaard, Robin Houston, Mary Ann Gardner and Darla Farmer (CEO), (seated) Lynn Clouser (Staff), Mary Ann Hibbeler, Brenda Lofton, Stephanie Burns and Elizabeth Chipinski. (Kneeling) Jacque Davis.



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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, Tidy 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, windows/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 Swatton 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 where a downloadable discount coupon for \$2 off admission is available.



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FORT BEND SINGER TO APPEAR IN NATIONALLY TELEVISED SHOW

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

Faith Parle was recently filmed in the redesigned PBS studios in San Bernardino, California as a finalist in the national Celebration of Music Talent Competition, and it was a welcomed surprise for the 11-year-old singer.

Last year Parle was one of 22 contestants in the Celebration of Music, a nationwide talent search series, that came to Houston and was hosted by teenage superstar Ethan Bortnick.

She didn't win, and yet, the producers invited Parle to sing in the nationally televised event.

"It was the experience of a lifetime," Parle said of the California filming. "I enjoyed meeting Ethan and the many talented people there. My goal for 2019 was to be on TV and I was so proud to have accomplished it."

The Celebration of Music, which was inspired by Bortnick, is a talent search that showcases the best in young musical talent — dancers, bands, musicians and singers between 4 and 25 years old — across the nation.

During the filming, Parle sang "Never Enough" from the Greatest Showman and performed "New York State of Mind" with Bortnick and



Faith Parle with Ethan Bortnick.

several other finalists.

The Celebration of Music show will air nationally on PBS in late Spring 2020 or early Summer 2020. Aside from being involved in the filming of Celebration of Music, Parle has made local appearances.

This past summer she sang the National Anthem for the Houston Astros, was selected to participate in the intermediate to advanced songwriting camp at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville — "Where I got to perform my original song 'Anyway,'" — Parle interjected — and she sang the National Anthem for the Meet of Champs.

"We were so proud of Faith," said her parents Joe and Suzan Parle. "She was one of the only contestants selected nationally who did not win a local Celebration competition. When we set our family goals for 2019, Faith said she wanted to perform on TV and we were very pleased that she accomplished that goal."

"We look forward to seeing her when the show is on air. We are thankful that God continues to open doors for her"



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FORT BEND COUNTY LAW LIBRARY CELEBRATES 30 YEARS WITH OPEN HOUSE

Fort Bend County Libraries' Law Library, located in the Fort Bend County Justice Center in Richmond, will celebrate its 30th Anniversary with an Open House on Jan. 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The public is invited to enjoy light refreshments, tour the library, and attend demonstrations of the library's database resources.

The schedule of programs and demonstrations is as follows:

10 a.m.: Westlaw Training and CLE

11 a.m.: Estate-Planning, presented by Kerri Graham

1 p.m.: Re:Search Texas Training

Because seating is limited, registration is required to attend the programs.

Participants may register on the library's online calendar (www.fortbend.lib.tx.us), or by calling the library (281-341-3718). Registration is not required for the open house.

The Fort Bend County Law Library provides support for the research, reference, and educational needs of the legal community - including litigants, attorneys, judges, and county officials - as well as the general public.

The library has a good working collection of basic legal materials, for in-library use only.

Most of the Law Library's print collection consists of reference sources on Texas statutes and case law; U.S. Supreme Court case law and federal statutes; a wide selection of Texas practice guides and forms manuals; and other research materials, including legal

encyclopedias, state case-law digests, and federal practice guides.

In addition to the Law Library's print collection, a number of legal research resources - such as the Westlaw Next, Lexis/Shepard's, and Hein Online databases - can be accessed on the library's computers. Free classes are available on the use of these electronic resources.

The Law Library had its beginnings in 1989, when Fort Bend County Commissioners Court ordered the establishment and maintenance of a County Law Library in Richmond. The Commissioners Court authorized the Fort Bend County Bar Association to contract with Fort Bend County Libraries for the administrative operations of the County Law Library, effective January 1, 1990.

Funding for the Law Library's operations comes from filing fees in civil cases in the district or county courts, as provided by Texas Local Government Code. The Law Library is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a Law Library Committee appointed by the Fort Bend County Bar Association and current officers of the Bar Association.

The open house is free and open to the public. For more information, see the Fort Bend County Libraries website (www.fortbend.lib.tx.us), or call the Law Library (281-341-3718) or the library system's Communications Office (281-633-4734).

The Law Library is located in the Fort Bend County Justice Center at 1422 Eugene Heimann Circle, Room 20714, in Richmond.

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GREAT CAR-CARE OPPORTUNITY

Lamar Consolidated ISD Auto Tech class offers students the skills they need to earn great pay right out of high school

Story & Photos by **SCOTT REESE WILLEY** | swilley@fbherald.com

Albert Davis and his brothers own and operate Davis Brothers Auto Parts in Rosenberg, but his daughter can show him a thing or two about fixing cars. “She knows how to use the automated tire changer and I don’t,” Davis confessed. He and daughter Everette, 16, a junior at Lamar Consolidated High School, were among several dozens parents and students attending the school district’s auto tech program recruitment drive in December.

Everette, a high school cheerleader, is one of the students in the program.

Students from all over Lamar Consolidated ISD campuses are bused to the classes at Lamar Consolidated.

Instructors Deon Wilson and George Dishman said students spend about half the time in a classroom on computers and the



Lamar Consolidated ISD auto tech students pose in front of one of the automobiles showcased during the program’s annual recruitment drive. From left are senior Erick Velasquez, junior Uchenna Ahuna, junior Steve Rivera, junior Elias Acevedo and senior Bryan Trejo.

other half in the two state-of-the-art auto shops learning hands-on skills. Students who put in the effort can become ASE certified by the end of high school. At the very least, they can to repair their own automobiles later in life and save money, the instructors said.

“This program is really a great opportunity for students to see if this is the career for them,” Wilson told students and parents.

Students who enroll in the program learn the basics as freshmen, such as tools and basic automobile design and operations.

The following years the instruction becomes more specific until “students can tear down a vehicle and rebuild it from the ground up,” Dishman explained.

The auto tech program has a classroom with computers and two large mechanic bays with hydraulic lifts and other features

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found in professional mechanic shops.

Several business professionals who work in the automotive industry spoke to students and parents at the recruitment drive.

Victor Hernandez, auto shop foreman for Finnegan Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Finnegan Chevrolet in Rosenberg, told students that highly-skilled mechanics can earn great pay right out of high school.

He said his shops employ about 40 mechanics and auto body technicians.

Daniel McFadden, service director of BMW in Houston, said some of his mechanics earn over \$100,000 per year.

Jon Maxwell, executive director of student programs for LCISD, which includes the auto tech program, invited parents and students to tour the state-of-the-art auto repair facility at Lamar Consolidated.

Kevin Casey of Fulshear, brought his 14-year-old son, Evan, to the recruitment drive and they liked what they saw.

Evan is an eighth-grader at Leaman Junior High in Fulshear, and is considering enrolling in the auto tech program once he is a freshman.

Brian Brasuell and son, Marcus, a junior at Foster High School, inspected a 1978 pickup truck the students are in the process of rebuilding.

Everette Davis said she enjoys learning about repairing cars, and was particularly excited to learn how to change tires.

"I can even patch them," she boasted.

Davis Brothers is among the local businesses that supports the program by offering discount parts.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

'Word of mouth' helping George Junior High School reading program grow by leaps and bounds

Story & Photos by **SCOTT REESE WILLEY** | swilley@fbherald.com

A program to get books into the hands of students at George Junior High School is so popular, organizers ran out of books at the last club meeting. "We were short 50 books so some of the teachers had to make up the difference," said Melinda Cave, chapter leader of Project LIT, short for Project Literacy.

The program, created to inspire the love of reading and community in students, was launched in Nashville several years ago but the George Junior High chapter has only existed since the start of the school year.

Cave said 87 students showed up at the first meeting. In late November, more than 146 showed up.

"The kids really enjoy the program and it's growing mostly by word of mouth," said Cave, who teaches eighth-grade English.

"We're seeing students carrying the books around campus, reading the books between classes and before and after school, and even getting in trouble for reading the books in class. We've even seen teachers reading the books."

The school's English/language arts teachers and librarian are pitching in to make the program a success, she said.

The meetings are held from 7:30-8:10 a.m. one morning each month. Doughnuts are provided.



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Students who attend the meetings receive a book they can keep and add to their home libraries.

The kids discuss the book at the next meeting and are challenged to trivia questions regarding the books' content.

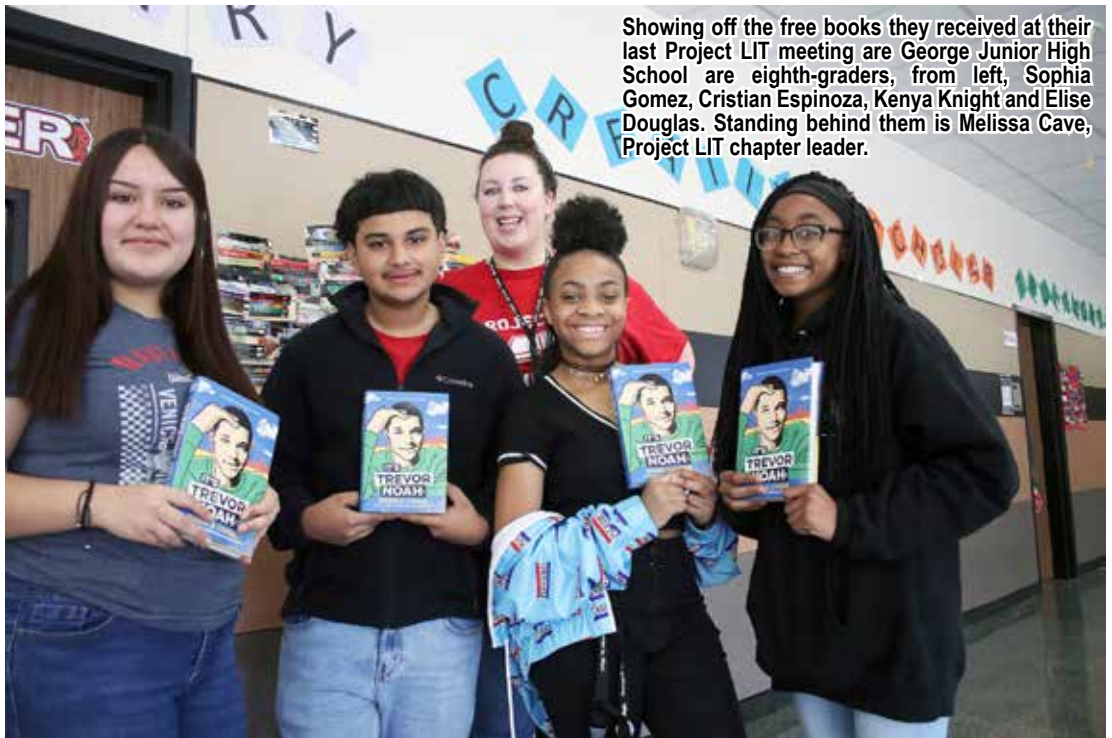
"We try to get culturally relevant books into students' hands," Cave explained. "We're also working to get books on diverse topics in their hands, whether it be racially diverse or books that deal with children with special needs — books that help students empathize with other people of different backgrounds."

Some kids who miss the meetings still want the books, she said.

Most of the books are geared for younger readers.

Students were given copies of "A Good Kind of Trouble" at the first meeting. A month later they were given "Scythe."

Then they received late-night talk show host Noah Trevor's



Showing off the free books they received at their last Project LIT meeting are George Junior High School are eighth-graders, from left, Sophia Gomez, Cristian Espinoza, Kenya Knight and Elise Douglas. Standing behind them is Melissa Cave, Project LIT chapter leader.

autobiography, "Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood."

Students interested in joining Project LIT may contact Cave, librarian Jeannine Hillis, or English teachers Traci Toler or Ivette Menendez.



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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 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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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 a 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.

**January 25
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.



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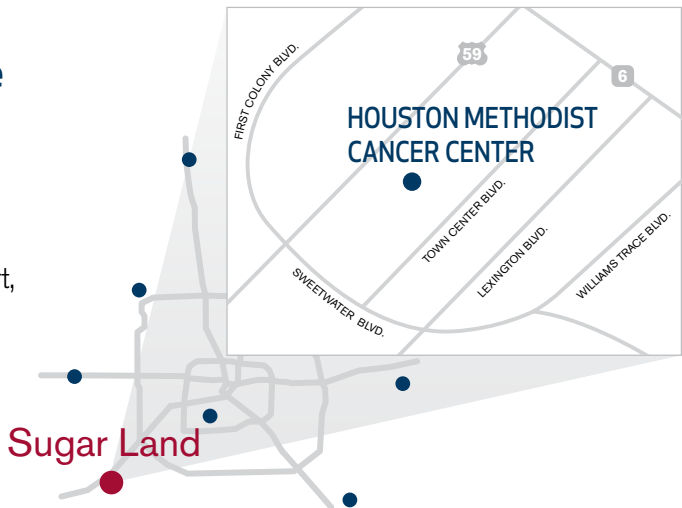


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