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November 2010



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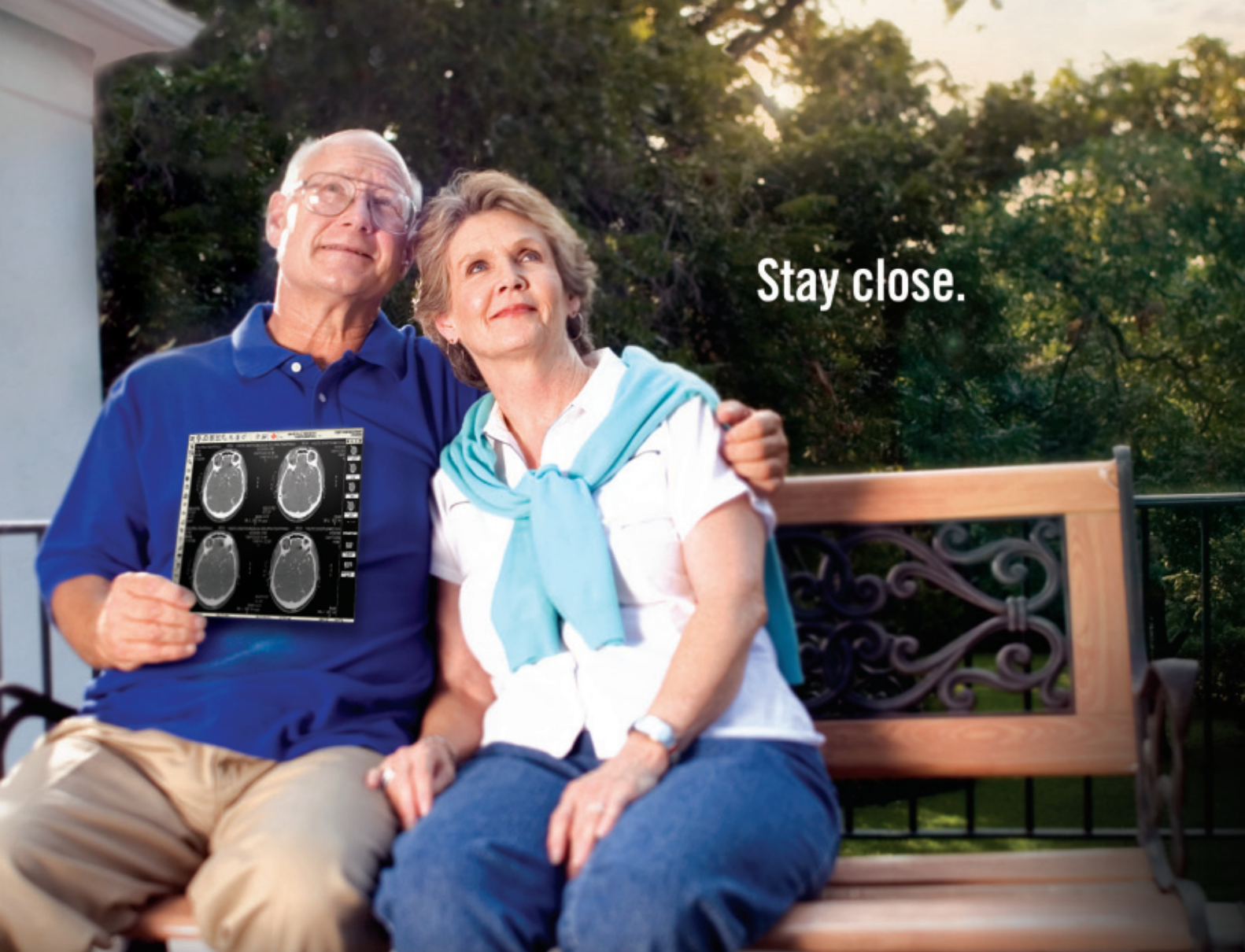
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On The Cover

In grappling, Jaren Powell is a champ!

Photo by John Riley.

Editor's Note

Hello, Midlothian!

Thanksgiving is such an incredible time. It is incredible because of the significance of what it represents. Americans spend an entire month anticipating this one great day to give thanks together. There is much for which to be thankful. As a country, we may be going through economic hardship, but famine and disease does not blanket our land. We can still worship where we want and when we want in safety. The majority of us have someone in our life who loves and cares about us. Life does not have to be perfect for us to be thankful. Taking stock can remind us of how blessed we really are.

On November 7, Daylight Saving Time ends. Do not forget to set your clock back one hour. Remember our wonderful veterans on Veterans Day, November 11. They deserve our deepest thanks and support.

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
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Back Pain is Behind Her

Regular exercise is a big part of Debra Moody's life. So when increasing back pain threatened the certified public accountant's fitness routine, she set out to see why something just wasn't adding up.

Originally diagnosed with a bulging disk, the 46-year-old Mansfield resident recalls, "I was doing squats with too much weight about five years ago. I felt something was wrong, but managed to keep it under control with regular workouts and core strengthening."

"That seemed to work," she says. Until 2009 when the pain got progressively worse. "It was a herniated disk that had compressed a nerve root in my back. I was losing feeling in my leg. It was really crippling. Even the pain medicine wasn't helping," Moody painfully recalls.

After months of chiropractic therapy, steroid treatments, strength training, and even decompression therapy, "nothing helped because the disk was so damaged," she explains. Surgery was the next step, so Moody went to Methodist Mansfield Medical Center for her procedure.

"After surgery, I experienced immediate pain relief and didn't even finish my pain medication."

"The surgery was a very pleasant and trouble-free experience all the way around," she confides. "Plus, the nurses were great and very attentive." Afterward, Moody was advised to take it easy.

"No bending, twisting, or housework," she says. Admittedly a tidy housekeeper, "Not cleaning my house was the most difficult part after surgery!" Thanks to her successful discectomy, Moody resumed her fitness regimen—and housecleaning—in record time. "I'm back in the gym five to six days a week, although I'm more careful now," she smiles.

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Debra Moody
Local resident and
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back and spine patient



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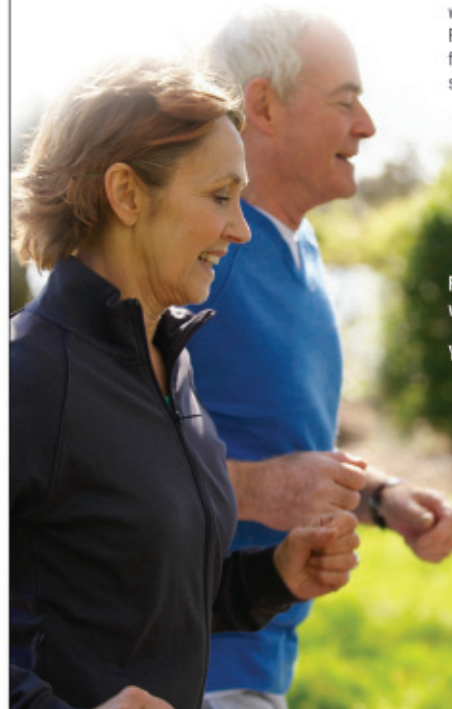
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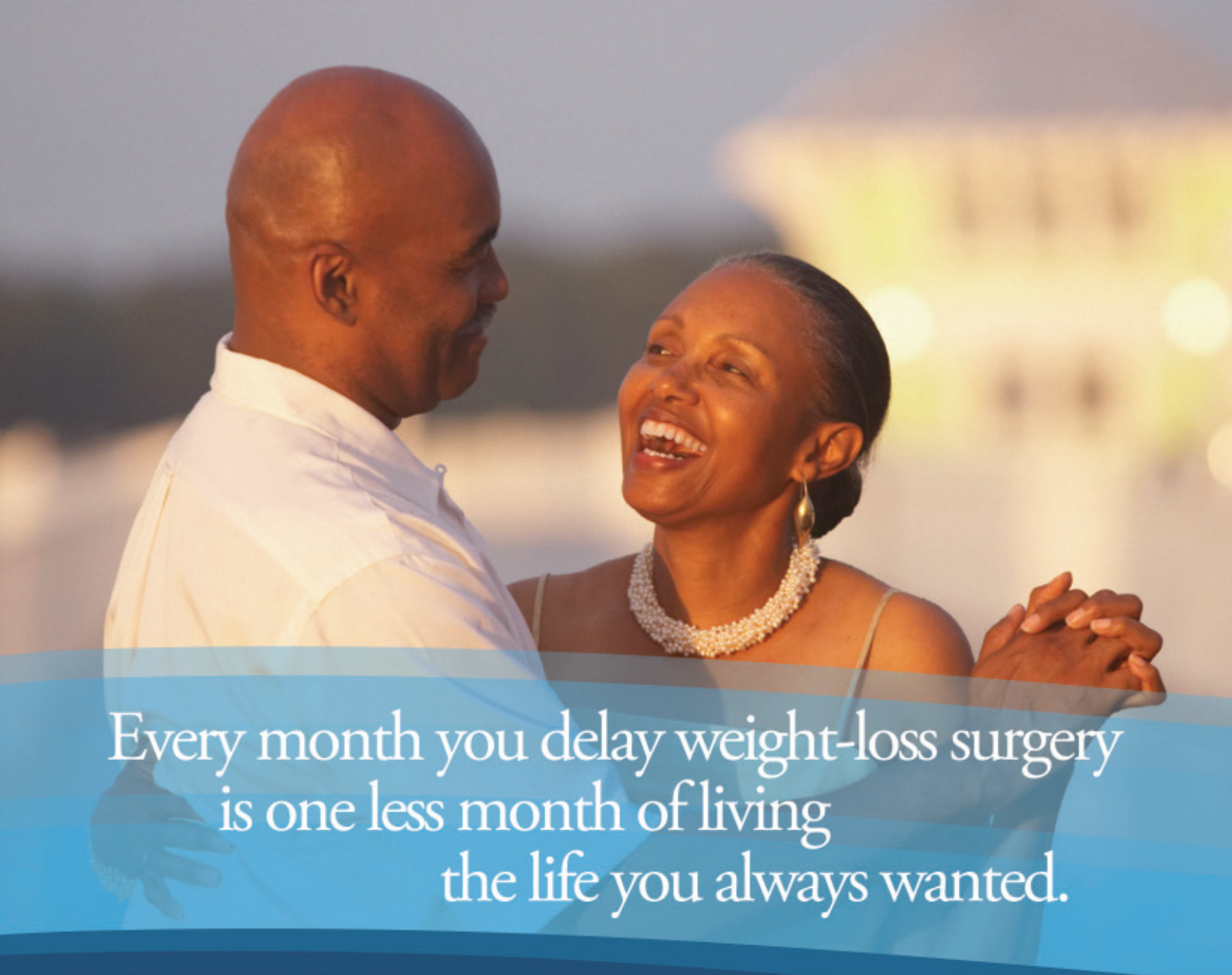


From left to right: Marilyn Jones,
Rhodie Rawls (Executive Director),
Christa Popham (CASA Supervisor)

A Voice *for* Children

— By Betty Tryon

Sometimes, in the vast cacophony and complexity of our court system, it can be difficult to have your voice heard. If you are a child, having someone gather the facts from all sides who is free to speak his or her opinion in a court of law, without penalty, can literally change your life. That is where CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children) makes such a significant difference. Marilyn Jones, a board member and volunteer for CASA, explained, "In the 1970s, a judge in Seattle realized there needed to be ears and eyes for children in the court system. Of course, you have your paid attorneys for parents, probably one each for the mom and the dad, and an attorney for the child. But, you don't have someone



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who is not being paid that is going to be very honest and truthful. They are the person who will speak on behalf of the child in the courtroom. That is why we call CASA the voice of the child."

Becoming a voice for CASA was something Marilyn felt led to do. She explained, "My CPA [certified public accountant] happened to be in our office one day and told me he was going to a CASA board meeting. I had no idea what CASA was, and asked him about it. That evening we went to a Midlothian High School football game and happened to meet the director of CASA, Rhodie Rawls. She told me all about it, and I said, "That's for me!" I went through the training as soon as the next session opened and became a volunteer. I immediately got a case and just fell in love with it."

CASA volunteers do not present themselves as legal representation for the children. They have the freedom and blessings of the court to pursue crucial background investigations involving the case that an attorney might not have the time to gather. Marilyn stated, "When given a case, we become almost like a private investigator because we are given legal access to records at school — the child's medical records and the CPS [Child Protective Services] records. We are given copies of evaluations by any court-ordered psychological evaluations of the parents or the children."

Because CASA volunteers have access to the same legal documents the lawyers on all sides have, their advantage in bringing something different and



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significant to the court is their willingness to spend time with the parents, the child or the foster parents, if they are in foster care. According to Marilyn, "When a child is first removed, there is a family meeting where we all meet to decide what is in the best interest of the child. If they can put them in kinship placement, they will do that. You try to meet as much of the family as you can because that is what is best for the children. That is what we are there for. We get closer to the child and get to know things about the family that the court didn't know."

This is serious and necessary work and the training is crucial for the volunteers to meet the expectations of the court with professionalism and efficiency. Marilyn explained, "In training, there are guidelines that we go by that say this is very important that we get all the facts. We understand about the relationship of the children to their parents. We stay in touch with the parents' attorneys. We find out if the parents are doing their services. Usually the court will order services for the parents, whether it is parenting classes, anger management or drug addiction. They offer so many services.

"We realize what a trauma this is for a parent who gets in this situation, and probably drugs are the biggest thing. It could be stress or marital problems, whatever. We really want that child to get back with their parent if the parent does the services and makes the effort to be a better parent and have better parenting skills. If we don't believe the child should be back with the parent, then we are going to speak up for the child. At the same time, if we believe a parent is really trying, then we will stand up in court and say we are proud of them, and they are making the effort to learn how to be a better parent and learn

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from their mistakes.”

Marilyn’s most difficult case to date involved a household of five children with three different fathers. The children, who had been living in a mobile home with 21 people, were removed from the home. Their living conditions still horrify Marilyn. “This was an awakening for me. When you have a case like this, you find out if you can handle the emotional trauma and everything involved in child abuse and neglect. As a CASA volunteer you want to see where the children live because it gives you a better idea of what the situation is. I went over there with the mother’s attorney. It was in June, no air conditioning and the temperature was

**“We get closer to the child
and get to know things
about the family that the
court didn’t know.”**

close to 100 degrees. When I got there and stepped inside, I still remember what it looked like, how it smelled and what a terrible situation it was. The attorney and I couldn’t stand still because there were roaches running up our legs. It was the worst situation I could imagine. Right then, I realized, I’m here for these children. I’ll do anything in this world not to let these children get back into this home.” It was a long, drawn-out case that was finally settled with four of the children finding different permanent homes. Only a 7-year-old girl now waits for adoption.

It is difficult to believe there are cases such as these in Ellis County, but in the last 12 months, there were 600 referrals that were investigated cases for abuse or neglect, with 106 children being removed. In every case CASA has, so far, none has gone to trial, thus saving taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars. Marilyn likes the aspect of volunteering that allows her to have a free voice in court. “We can be a stronger voice, and we can have feelings,” she laughed. “I’ve never heard an attorney say, ‘I feel.’ It’s all fact. We get to say how we feel looking at it through a child’s eyes. You may think you aren’t strong enough, and you’ve got to be the police woman type; you don’t. You have a heart, and that is all you have to have.” **NOW**



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At Home With
Robert and Cheryl Bell

When Robert and Cheryl Bell built their house, where they live with their son, Justin, daughter, Nicole, and two dogs, Maya and Cocoa, they wanted some modern conveniences, but they wanted old-fashioned style. So 17 years ago, they built a home with Victorian charm. “We are both from Oak Cliff, and our first house was in the Winnetka Heights district,” Cheryl said. “We wanted some of the character of an old house inside, but we wanted it more open and up to date.”

It's a Wonderful Life

— By Adam Walker

The living room is a perfect example of this philosophy at work. It is an airy room that is open to the entry and dining room at one end and flows into the kitchen and breakfast nook at the other, but it features Craftsman-style windows and a fireplace built of Chicago antique brick. “When we built, we couldn’t afford a real antique mantel,” Robert confided, “so we had the carpenter build one in an old style. We didn’t want a contemporary or new look.” And yet, the fireplace is open on three sides to be visible from the kitchen and breakfast nook in addition to the living room, again blending “old-timey class” with modern function.

Antiques and family heirlooms figure prominently in the decor. Robert and Cheryl have been collecting for years, and now they are helping their children start on the same path. For example, Nicole is marrying soon, so shopping for furniture is a big expense right now. But four antique barley twist chairs purchased for only \$25 from one of their garage sale trips, which are a family tradition, will help her out. Robert bought most of the light fixtures, which include treasures from old train stations and Victorian gaslights converted to electric, on his many trips back and forth to San Diego.





Cheryl has her great-grandfather's rocking chair and dining room table, though she is still looking for a bench to replace the one that used to go with it.

Windows looking out onto the front porch from high above the living room couch, feature stained glass panels from Ireland. "We had looked at every stained glass panel they had at this shop, and had almost settled on these four panels that weren't quite what we wanted," Robert remembered. "They didn't quite match. Then we found these, and they were two sets of identical panes that just match perfectly."

Decorative glass is seen in the entry area as well, where visitors will find leaded glass in the front door, which features a manual twist-to-ring door bell, and in the transom above it. A large, round window in the wall joining the entry to the dining room was designed by a close friend of the family to match the wallpaper in the dining area.

Also in the dining area, on the other



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side of the antique table, is a giant out-sized mirror which Cheryl bought at a yard sale for only \$5. It serves as the perfect complement to the first piece of antique furniture the couple bought back when they were in Oak Cliff — an old sideboard. The dining room also houses Cheryl's collection of crystal which includes her grandmother's Fostoria, pieces that belonged to Robert's great-

aunt Bill and Waterford they bought on a trip to Ireland.

The wainscoted butler's pantry serves as a bar and displays Cheryl's china while carrying visitors through to the kitchen where blue and white dominate, accented with gleaming brass. The faucets, cabinet drawer pulls and light fixtures all add a metallic yellow spark to the already bright and airy room. The triangular granite-



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Many of the family meals are taken in the adjoining breakfast nook from which you can sit and watch the hummingbirds feed or view Cocoa, their chocolate-spotted Dalmatian, engage in her favorite sport of “bugging” or hunting insects. This room includes an antique ladies’ writing desk with a built-in mirror



topped island, center stage in the room, is a hub of activity in a family where the fights are over who *gets* to cook dinner each night rather than who *has* to. Nicole found a solution to this problem when collaborating with her older brother resulted in more instruction than she wanted. “He makes the meal,” she said, “and I make the dessert.”

above the writing surface and a corner bookshelf which houses cookbooks. “I love collecting them, especially old church cookbooks,” she confessed. Robert was







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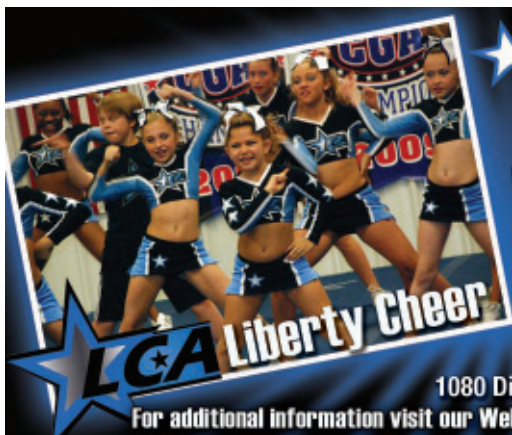
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Midlothian, Texas — July 7, 2010 — Community Health Accreditation Program, Inc., (CHAP) announced today that Approved Home Health Care has been awarded CHAP accreditation under the CHAP Core & Home Health Standards of Excellence. This is the beginning of the fourth year CHAP accreditation has been awarded to Approved Home Health Care.

Approved Home Health Care provides a variety of nursing and therapy services to patients and their families in Ellis, Johnson, Tarrant and Dallas counties, and surrounding areas. They are locally owned and operated by hometown folks with over 50 years combined home health experience.




For additional agency information, contact
Kelly Kavanaugh, RN, HCS-D, COS-C,
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quick to emphasize that those on display “are only part of what she has. There are many more.”

The stairway to the second floor provides space for the display of family photos, bringing you up to Justin’s living room. Here glass doors lead out to the balcony which provides another outdoor seating area in addition to the numerous arrangements scattered about the yard and porches. Most of the furnishings are Justin’s which came back with him and Maya, his brown and white, blue-eyed Siberian husky, after college. The furnishings are the remnants left him after a break-in at his Austin apartment. The masculine furniture sits under a vaulted ceiling and is complemented with Cheryl’s great-uncle’s clock which she inherited in seventh grade and her grandmother’s wedding quilt. Commenting on the open, airy feeling of the room as the light streamed through the windows and doors, Cheryl said, “We have 48 windows in the house, but they are triple paned with a thermal break so they are energy efficient.” Robert agreed that the windows are one of the great things about the house. Justin’s bedroom is done in shades of rust and tan to achieve a “lodge look” and features window seats and trunks of bare wood to match his bed, dresser and end tables.

Nicole has the turret bedroom with an octagonal recess in the ceiling that rises up the tower and houses the ceiling fan above the bed. The walls display some of Nicole’s best photography including images from her semester in Europe. Part of her collection of Barbie dolls,



one from every Christmas, is on display in the bookshelf. Another family antique is housed in this room, an ancient steamer trunk, which is currently serving as Nicole's hope chest. Much to her disappointment, however, the trunk will not be going with her after the wedding.



Back downstairs, the master suite opens to a gabled ceiling above the door, pale blue walls and a sleigh bed in the sleeping area, while an old washstand and pitcher sit in the passage to the bath. There the amenities include a claw-footed



tub on a raised platform with an arched window high above set in the peaked ceiling.

With so many wonderful treasures found in this home, perhaps the one item that says it best is the plaque hanging above the sofa in the living room. It simply states, "It's a wonderful life." **NOW**

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Panther Spirit at the Midlothian Fall Festival 2010

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BUILDINGS and BONDS

The MISD Buildings and Bonds Web site is dedicated to the district facility needs and upcoming bond election information.

The School Board of Trustees unanimously called for a bond election to be held on May 14, 2011. The bond projects will be one proposition in the amount of \$97.3 million consisting of an elementary school #7, Frank Seale Middle School addition and high school #2.

Visit the Buildings and Bonds Web site at www.midlothian-isd.net. Send questions and comments to communications@midlothian-isd.net.

Five MISD Schools Receive Exxon Mobil Grants

The Exxon Mobil Alliance program offers Exxon and Mobil retailers the opportunity to obtain a \$750 grant to support local schools. Valid Alameddine with Victron in Waxahachie worked with Midlothian school officials to secure five grants awarding \$750 to each of the following campuses: Baxter Elementary, LaRue Miller Elementary, Longbranch Elementary, Mt. Peak Elementary and Vitovsky Elementary.



The grant money will be used to purchase educational support materials for math and science to expand and enhance learning opportunities for students.

International Teachers Visit MHS



A team of six international educators visited Midlothian High School in October as part of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program to gain insight into American education primarily focusing on the math, science and technology fields. Countries represented by the visitors

are Albania, Chad, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia and Uganda. The educators observed methodologies, curriculum and policy approaches to attract and support the interest of young people. They were impressed with the use of technology — from the teachers using technology tools in the classroom to students in the radio/TV studio and engineering classes. The visitors were also complimentary of the MHS students' good behavior and the cleanliness of the school.

One particular teacher named Ms. Matovu from Uganda said that their education mindset is more "teacher centered" rather than "student centered." She now understands the concept of engaging students in the learning process.



Cheer on the Fall Sports

Fall is full of competitive sports. Panther fans — come support the MHS students who are involved in cross country, football, golf, tennis and volleyball. Continuing a great tradition on a strong foundation is the Athletic Department's motto.

Follow the Games with Text Alerts

Get instant up-to-date scores, game changes and important information on athletic games and events sent to your mobile phone. Learn how to set up your phone via a Twitter account. Visit the Athletic Web site for more information www.midlothian-isd.net/athletics.

**MISD will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday.
November 22-26, 2010 and closed December 20-31, 2010 for Winter break**

A Wonderful Thanksgiving.



MHS Senior Named Outstanding Participant in the National Achievement Program



Senior, Chris Schultz, has been recognized along with 3,100 Outstanding Participants in the National Achievement Scholarship Program (NASP), who are being referred to U.S. colleges and universities. Chris scored in the top 3 percent of more than 160,000 Black Americans, who requested consideration in the 2011 National Achievement Program when they took the 2009 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Chris' plans are to attend a

college of his choice and study to become an aerospace engineer. The NASP was initiated in 1964 specifically to honor academically promising Black American high school students. This is the same organization that recognizes National Merit Semi-finalists and Commended Students.

For more information visit www.nationalmerit.org/nasp.php.

Inclement Weather: Our Commitment to Safety



Photo of tornado in front of MISD Administration Bldg. May 2010

Midlothian ISD is committed to providing a quality educational experience everyday for our students. Occasionally, the weather becomes a factor beyond our control and can cause changes in the daily schedule. Weather conditions are carefully reviewed before classes are canceled, started late or dismissed early. School personnel and transportation plans are in place to assure the well-being of students affected by the decision to dismiss students early.

Informing Students

If weather conditions exist or should develop during the course of the day that will have an effect upon driving conditions and/or school facilities, it may become necessary to close school or dismiss students early. Parents should discuss with their children what to do if school is dismissed and buses run early.

Informing Parents & Community

In the event schools are to be closed or the daily schedule is altered due to a severe weather change, information will be posted on the Midlothian ISD Web site, Twitter, Facebook, FlashAlert, Parent Link, MISD E-News and selected radio and television stations. Every attempt will be made to decide the closure of school prior to 6:30 a.m. of the day of closure. In situations where school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, please listen to local media stations for possible school or activity schedule changes.

On days following a school closure or early dismissal, regular schedules will resume the next school day unless announced otherwise.

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 - Meet our Local Heroes
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The Midlothian Chamber Fall Festival hosted many activities. From left: Members of O'Flaherty Irish Music entertain the crowds; Dianne Lankford smokes tasty meats.

Mayor Whatley visits Baxter Elementary second-graders during their study of local government.



The Midlothian Chamber of Commerce welcomes new businesses to the area with ribbon cutting ceremonies. From left: Second Chance Appliances and Electronics; Swink Color Bar, L.L.C.



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AND THE WORLD LAUGHS WITH YOU

— By Betty Tryon

In the dignified and whisper-quiet historical room of Meadows Library, the comedian was asked to be funny to an audience with a grand total of one. Harsh odds? No doubt, but Michael Fincher delivered. As with most comedians, the really funny part is all in the way he says it. Michael acknowledged, “Some of my friends tell me that I am funny. I told them, ‘You guys can tell the same stories

I tell.’ They said, ‘It’s not just stories, but it’s how *you* tell it.’ They said I should do stand up. So, I did some research on it and told my friends to find me a comedy club with an open mike night, and I’d do it. They did.”

Graduating from The University of Texas at Arlington three years ago, Michael’s goal was not comedy but creative writing. Currently, he is making



plans to attend grad school to earn a master’s degree in creative writing. He explained, “I want to take creative writing classes because writing stand-up is essentially the same thing as writing a story, except there’s a punch line to it and you present it, as opposed to letting people read it.”

Michael’s first foray into stand-up comedy was akin to a profile in courage. He stated, “At first I was too scared to do it, and they pushed me to do it. That first night was great because I had all of my family and friends come out. It was really good. I was afraid that I would go up there and stumble around my words. But, once I got up there and got the first laugh, that’s really all that it took. It was just that first laugh of the crowd to

get me going, and then it was like ‘word vomit.’ Everything I memorized just came out like I wasn’t even thinking it.”

Michael performed his comedy routine at Backdoor Comedy Club in the Doubletree Hotel. Thursdays are open mike night, but Friday and Saturday nights are by invitation. Michael did such a good job his first few times that he received an invitation to perform on Friday nights. It also helped that he brought in increased revenue from his fans. He stated, “The great thing that I

‘It’s not just stories, but it’s how *you* tell it.’

am so appreciative for is my loyal friends and my family. They just kept spending money to come see me. I don’t get paid, but the benefits are I get an outlet to do it, and it’s fun. Yeah, it would be amazing if it’s something I could pursue, but the main thing is it’s just really fun.”

Although being a stand-up comedian is a natural fit for Michael, he did not think about it until a year ago when his friends started encouraging him. “When I’m hanging out with my friends, I just enjoy making people laugh — anyway, I try to,” he said. “A lot of stuff I’ve done is about me being an albino. I’ll play off that and tell stories of things that have actually happened but seemed ridiculous. I’ll over dramatize about how some react when they see an albino.”

Michael gets to play that role many times during the normal course of life. When reading, he has to place the object about a couple of inches from his face. He joked, “I can’t hide that I’m legally blind.” Once on a plane, he watched the lady in the seat next to him inch further away in her seat as if he had some horrible disease she could catch. Finally, he looked at her, laughed, and asked incredulously, “Really? Are you serious?” It isn’t as funny when I say it now. It’s easier when I get in that groove



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of doing it, and it doesn't sound as sad," he laughed.

"I know I turned to humor and joke around about it so people do feel comfortable, because I know albinism isn't common. I mean, there are no other albinos in Midlothian. I joke about it to say it's not that big of a deal. It's not necessarily a defense mechanism; it's so people feel comfortable. But that can backfire, because then people feel like



they can joke constantly about it, too. That's not how it works! Those are people who don't have filters," he smiled. When asked about his albinism, Michael does not always crack a joke. He explained, "I taught Sunday school at the Bible Church for a long time, and the kids would always ask, 'Why do your eyes move like that?' or 'Why is your hair white?' I would say, 'Because that's how God made me.'"

Michael wants to teach at the college level some day because, "I don't think I would be good at high school or junior-high level. I don't think I could handle them. Also, I don't want to have to follow that exact curriculum, such as having them read *The Scarlet Letter*." Whispering he said, "Overrated."

Like many artists, fear of rejection is always there, but Michael counters it by saying, "It's what I do. I know that if you don't take a chance, opportunity will never happen." **NOW**

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Quest to be the BEST

— Alana Williamson

Jaren Powell proves size does not always matter. At the end of the 2009-2010 grappling season, he was ranked the third-best grappler in the United States under the age of 14 in the sport of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and he is only 8 years old. “Size doesn’t mean anything,” Jaren said. “It doesn’t matter how old you are or big you are.”

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu incorporates grappling, ground fighting and submission holds to protect against much larger opponents. It allows individuals to focus on techniques, instead of strength, size and strikes, to subdue their opponents. Gi and No Gi refers to whether or not competitors wear traditional fighting attire, which can also be incorporated into fighting techniques.

The Powell family travels all over the country to tournaments in places such as New Jersey, Florida, Georgia and Nevada. At an early age, Jaren successfully competed in tournaments throughout Texas. But in the summer of 2009, he was ready to test his skills at one of the largest grappling tournaments in the country, The Battle at The Beach in Wildwood, New Jersey. Jaren did not disappoint. After defeating all opposition in the intermediate division by submission, he was asked to move up to the advanced/expert division to compete. Jaren did not know at the time that he would face his biggest challenge yet. He competed against the No. 1 ranked boy in the country, who just so happened to be from New Jersey — the toughest division against the toughest opponent. The match was exciting, and Jaren went on to defeat his opponent proving himself to be a nationally ranked contender.

When asked to name his favorite places to compete, “I like going to California,” Jaren replied, referring to the first grappling tournament of the summer, the 2010 International World Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Championships for Kids and Teens in Riverside, California. This was a two-day tournament with the best young grapplers in the country. Jaren placed first in the No Gi competition with nine competitors in his bracket and second place in the Gi competition. While in California, Jaren had the unique opportunity to visit the Gracie Jiu Jitsu Academy



in Torrance, California, and meet and grapple with a member of the Gracie family, pioneers of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

As this summer progressed, Jaren continued to stay busy competing in tournaments. Next, he participated in the Texas State Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Championships where he placed first in both Gi and No Gi for children ages 8-10. He then won two championship belts in the Gi and No Gi advanced division at the 2010 Grapplers Quest Tournament at the Dallas Convention Center. Jaren avenged his loss to the boy from Riverside, California, by submission in both Gi and No Gi at this tournament. He quickly added, "I learned from my mistakes in California and had to show them how we do it here in Texas."

Jaren excels in other sports, too,

"I learned from my mistakes in California and had to show them how we do it here in Texas."

including: football, soccer, wrestling and Kenpo karate. In his spare time, he enjoys playing video games, swimming, having fun with his friends, and playing with his little sister, Keily, who has also competed in Jiu Jitsu tournaments and makes for a perfect training partner.

His family makes sure Jaren understands what his priorities should be. They put great emphasis on church attendance and activities at First United Methodist Church in Mansfield and on his schoolwork as a third-grader at Longbranch Elementary School in Midlothian. Jaren's favorite subject is math, and he must complete all his homework before attending Jiu Jitsu practice.

Jaren trains at Alvarez Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in Arlington three times a week. There he receives group instruction and one-on-one training. He has a natural ability for this sport and his instructors are amazed at how quickly he learns



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new techniques. Jaren has just earned his yellow belt with black stripe, but he must wait until he turns 10 in order to move up in the belt system. "I like Jiu Jitsu because it's fun, and it shows you self-respect, discipline and how to be kind to other people," Jaren stated.

Jaren loves to compete and enjoys doing so in front of an audience. He said before a match many of his competitors will beat their chest and jump up and down to try and intimidate him, but



he prefers to remain calm. "I don't get nervous," he said. "I stay relaxed and don't need to jump around." He reassures his family of his confidence before each match, by saying, "I've got this. I've got this."

"We're proud of him," his father, John, said. "Jaren knows what hard work is, and he knows what it takes to be the best no matter what challenge it might be in life." **NOW**

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Ministering to Kids

The Midlothian Bible Church Child Care and Preschool is ministry-minded in caring for the children entrusted to them. — By Betty Tryon

“When we first moved here, everyone said you have to get your kids in Midlothian Bible Church Preschool,” said Kim Carpenter. Needing child care services for her little one, she made inquiries for enrollment. “I didn’t realize they had a waiting list and being number 13 meant I wasn’t getting in!” she laughed. Kim ultimately took a job with the child care agency and got her son enrolled. With her supervisory experience from another job, she eventually became the director of Midlothian Bible Church (MBC) Child Care.

One of the most impressive aspects of the child care is the staff. Kim

acknowledged, “For the last three years I’ve been the director, what has made it so easy is we have a ministry-minded staff. They are phenomenal, and there is hardly any turnover. We recently celebrated one of the staff for being here for 13 years. It is a fun group of people.”

Taking care of little ones for hours on end can try anyone’s level of endurance. We all need a break! Kim is very much aware of this inevitability. “We offer such a great curriculum, structure and enough interaction that if we do have a teacher strained, we will run and give that teacher a break because we don’t want anyone to ever get burnt out. We are constantly in

From left:

Kim Whitson, Kim Carpenter, Jennifer Reeher and Lynn Patten find joy in caring for children.

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that mode. I think that speaks for why we really don't have the turnovers. Not only do we consider it a ministry to work with these little kids and diligently focus on them, we do it to each other."

Midlothian Bible Church Child Care and Preschool offers several extra activities. One is the option of taking piano lessons every Friday. Another is having Jackie Cooper from Classic Cuts come twice a month to give the kids \$10 haircuts. Kim stated, "We will hold them in our lap or pull out a lollipop — anything to make sure that child's hair looks perfect by the time mom gets here. It's a fun day."

A computer company comes in and teaches the children computer skills once a week. "They teach basic computer skills and can go as advanced as the kids can handle," Kim said. "The youngest

**"We are state regulated,
and there are many policies
we have to follow."**

students are 3, and they are so cute. It helps them with their numbers and letters." Another weekly activity at the child care is dance class offered by On the Move Dance with Kari May.

Workers are CPR trained and there is an AED (automated external defibrillator) unit on site. They also receive training from the local fire department and from an in-house counselor. The preschool teachers are certified. Everything is done with the goal of caring for the needs of the children. Even discipline is approached as an opportunity to minister. Kim stated, "We are state regulated, and there are many policies we have to follow. If you just look at that, you would think it is so cold and calculated and these little kids are just numbers going through. But, because we are an extension of the church and we are so careful whom we hire, it is so much more of a ministry. We look at these kids individually, and they are not just a number. We know them so well; we can hear a kid crying down the hall, and we instantly know who it is. It's not just coming in and babysitting kids. We are diligent about making it a ministry." **NOW**

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To Open a School

— By Betty Tryon

Brian Blackwell received the offer of a lifetime — the opportunity to open a brand new school as the first principal of Walnut Grove Middle School (WGMS). He acknowledged, “It was the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done professionally. It was eye-opening to see what’s involved in the opening of a school, the staffing of a school and the furnishings of a school. It was kind of like building a house times 100. It was very enjoyable to be able to work with our staff here to establish things like the school motto — You Belong Here. Those are some of the things I hope to leave here as a legacy when I retire or move on.”

When Brian went to college, it was not his intention to become a teacher or principal. “I started as a business major,” he said. “I was one year away from a business degree but did not enjoy the classes. For me, going to college was more about getting a career in which I could make money.” Needing a job, he found one at Arlington Boys & Girls Club gym as a part-time instructor. He

noted, “As soon as I started working with kids, I knew that was what I was supposed to be doing. I was encouraged to consider education. I had no idea I wanted to teach until I was 20. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I made the right decision, and it’s been great.”

Brian finished at The University of Texas at Arlington with a bachelor’s degree in exercise science and a minor in history. He received his master’s degree in education administration at the same institution. When he was ready to start his student teaching experience, he got his second choice, which was Midlothian. He stated, “After I got here, I quickly figured out this is exactly where I needed to be. When I walked into Midlothian Middle School (MMS), I was blown away by the climate, the structure, how caring the staff was toward students and just how well the kids conducted themselves. I knew that first week that was where I wanted to work. There was something special about Midlothian that set it apart from the other schools.”

After student teaching, Brian was hired the following year and was able to teach and coach at MMS for five years. He became assistant principal at Venus Middle School for two years and acknowledged, “It was a good learning opportunity for me. Probably the biggest struggle I had there was I was homesick for Midlothian.” He did make it back to Midlothian and became the assistant principal for MMS. Midlothian was growing and another middle school, WGMS, was in the works. Brian was hired to be the new principal at the same time Al Hemmle, principal at MMS, became the new assistant superintendent. Brian was asked to stay one more year at MMS, which was now named Frank Seale Middle School. So, during the 2004-05 school year, he was principal at one school while building another.

Brian acknowledged, “It was a busy year! I would wake up at 3:00 a.m. and think, *We don’t have a school song or school motto! or Do I have enough weights in the weight room?* We started from scratch. There were no school colors and no

mascot. I tried to give people as much of a say as possible. We took suggestions from every campus and the board chose from those recommendations. The way we came up with the mascot was really neat. I still have all the votes. The student council from MMS met with me; we brainstormed and decided on Wildcats. It has a ring to it — Walnut Grove Wildcats!”

Brian still remembers that feeling of bliss on the first day the school opened. “I just remember the feeling of you died and had gone to heaven that first day. So much work and planning had gone into it, and to see it kick off well made all of that work worthwhile.” Now that the school was built, his full attention could now go to the students. “Of course our number one focus is academics. Our core business is teaching and learning. I really believe that a big part of making kids want to come to school and learn is letting them know you care about them and [for them to] have a positive relationship with at least one adult, hopefully more. Our goal is to reach every student. Our strengths are



engaging kids in meaningful learning and helping them get involved in clubs and organizations and making them feel like they are special. Students do well here because they are taught well and they are cared for. We let them know we value and respect them, have a genuine concern for their well-being and want them to be successful. And, we will be there for them. I’m not embarrassed to tell you that we love our students. I am proud to be in Midlothian. It is a neat place to work. I wouldn’t want to be any place else. What’s going on in this district is powerful and special. It is impacting kid’s lives in a great way.” **NOW**

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In The Kitchen With Patricia Hobbs

— By Adam Walker

Patricia Hobbs likes to cook different styles of food to give her family and friends a chance to try new things. "I grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, in the far northeastern part of the state near Virginia," Patricia explained. The style of cooking is slightly different there — in terms of what kinds of meats are cooked (a lot of pork) and the sauces that go on them. I've brought a lot of

this style with me and blended it with what I've found here."

She collects recipes from family, friends and television programs. "I like down-home cooking the best. I learned this type of cooking at an early age. It makes people feel at home." She enjoys cooking for "family, friends and the kids at T. E. Baxter Elementary." **NOW**



HERBED CUCUMBER DIP

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
1/3 cup basil, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1. Mix all ingredients and blend thoroughly. Refrigerate until cooled.

PEANUT BUTTER FUDGE

3 cups sugar
1 cup evaporated milk
6 Tbsp. peanut butter
1 tsp. vanilla

1. Boil sugar, evaporated milk and peanut butter together until soft ball stage (240 F).
2. Add vanilla. Remove from heat.
3. Pour into buttered dish. Let cool.
4. Cut and eat.

EASY LASAGNA CASSEROLE

3 cups uncooked egg noodles
1 lb. ground beef
1/2 cup chopped onions
1 large can spaghetti sauce
1 4-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 cup evaporated milk
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Cook noodles in boiling, salted water until tender. Drain noodles.
2. Cook ground beef and onions until beef is done. Drain meat.
3. Stir in spaghetti sauce.
4. Combine cream cheese and evaporated milk in warm saucepan until smooth.
5. Stir in noodles and garlic salt.

6. Pour into 9-inch baking dish. Top with the meat mixture. Then top with the cheese.

7. Bake at 350 F for 20 minutes.

BANANA PUDDING

1 cup sugar
1/3 cup flour
1 cup evaporated milk
1 cup water
3 eggs, separated
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Vanilla wafers
3 bananas
6 Tbsp. sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. In a double boiler, bring water to a rapid boil. Combine 1 cup of sugar and flour in the top of double boiler. Add milk and water; stir occasionally.
3. When slightly thickened, beat three egg yolks in a cup and add 1/2 cup custard to yolks.
4. Return mixture to boiler; cook until medium thick. Add vanilla extract.
5. Put a layer of vanilla wafers and a layer of bananas in baking dish. Pour half of mixture over them. Repeat with bananas, wafers and remaining mixture.
6. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually add 6 Tbsp. sugar. Beat well. Top pudding, wafers and bananas with egg white mixture; bake in oven until lightly brown.

POTATO SALAD

6 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
1/2 cup chopped onion
3/4 cup chopped pickles
1 to 2 Tbsp. brown mustard
1/2 cup mayonnaise

Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste

1. Cook potatoes until soft. Drain potatoes and add onions, pickles, mustard and mayonnaise.
2. Salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4 to 6 people.

CORN BREAD DRESSING

1/2 cup butter, melted
1 cup chopped celery
1 small chopped onion
1/2 cup water
4 cups of corn bread
4 cups of white bread
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. sage
1 cup chicken stock
1 egg

1. Simmer butter, celery, onions and water together until tender.
2. Crumble corn bread and white bread together. Combine all ingredients; mix together thoroughly.
3. Bake at 350 F for 30 to 40 minutes.

BAKED CHICKEN

8 pieces of cut up chicken (in the skin)
Pepper, to taste
Paprika, to taste
Parsley, to taste

1. Sprinkle chicken with pepper, paprika and parsley.
2. Bake chicken at 350 F for 45 minutes or until 165 F interior temperature is achieved.

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IS IT AN Emergency?

It could be a headache that's worse than others, a cough that won't quit or a cut that keeps bleeding. At some point, you've likely had to decide whether a trip to the emergency department is in order.

For many symptoms, it can be tough to tell. The tips below may help you decide if a trip to the emergency department is in order.

Symptoms that warrant an emergency department visit include:

- ⇒ Any trouble breathing
- ⇒ Pain or pressure in your chest
- ⇒ Feeling faint, dizzy or weak
- ⇒ Severe pain that comes on suddenly
- ⇒ Bleeding that doesn't stop
- ⇒ Excessive vomiting or diarrhea
- ⇒ Vomiting or coughing blood
- ⇒ Feeling suicidal
- ⇒ Having trouble speaking
- ⇒ Vision changes
- ⇒ Mental status changes
- ⇒ Unusual abdominal pain

It's important not to panic if you or someone else experiences these symptoms. While these signs can warn of serious medical problems such as heart attack or stroke, they could also result from other, less serious conditions.

Sometimes the answer isn't so clear-cut. While it is true the emergency department often sees individuals who do not have true emergencies, it's always best to err on the side of caution. But how do you know whether to call 9-1-1? If you think the medical condition seems life-threatening or might worsen before

you get to the hospital, if you're worried about moving someone who has hurt their back or neck or if you live far away and may confront serious traffic congestion or a construction delay, go ahead and call 9-1-1.

Children may display additional symptoms that require immediate attention, such as high fever combined with a stiff neck, confusion, headache or difficulty breathing; a bad choking episode for infants; or ingestion of household cleaning products or medications — even a single dose of a grandparent's high blood pressure medicine can be extremely dangerous.

For other conditions, call your primary care physician. Many doctors will return your call even after hours, and he or she can let you know whether a home treatment, an office visit or a trip to the ER is the best choice.

Since most minor accidents and injuries happen close to home, it's important to keep a well-stocked first-aid kit within easy reach. The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) recommends including the following supplies:

- ⇒ First-aid manual and local emergency phone numbers
- ⇒ Acetaminophen, ibuprofen and aspirin
- ⇒ Assorted bandages and gauze pads
- ⇒ Adhesive tape
- ⇒ Antibiotic ointment
- ⇒ Antihistamine
- ⇒ Antiseptic wipes
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Second Monday

ABWA Great Visions Chapter, American Business Women's Association Great Visions Charter Chapter — Midlothian meeting: 6:30 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Cost: \$15. Our program will be "Business Budgeting" by Debi Choate. Guests are welcome! For ABWA membership information and to RSVP, contact abwainfo@yahoo.com or (972) 723-0017.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. For more information, visit www.elliscountyaggie moms.org.

Fourth Monday

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Waxahachie Bible Church, 621 Grand Ave. Annual Christmas party will be held in lieu of guest speaker.

First Tuesday

The Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room at Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th St., Midlothian. For information, please e-mail us at midlothianhistory@hotmail.com.

Every Tuesday

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon at Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. Call (972) 775-7118 for more information.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Meadows Library, located at Midlothian High School.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Midlothian City Council meeting: 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 104 West Avenue E.

Third Wednesday

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). Cost is \$13, inclusive. Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com, or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 or pmestep@yahoo.com no later than Sunday, November 14

First Thursday

ABWA — Empowering Women Express Network monthly meeting: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Circle, Midlothian. Please RSVP at www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org for more information.

First and Third Thursday

Midlothian Lions Club meeting: 7:00 p.m., Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th Street. For more information, call (972) 775-7118 or to RSVP call (972) 723-0017 or e-mail julia_mainplace@sbcglobal.net.

November and December

Waxahachie Faith Family Academy is enrolling for a new 3-year-old Pre-K program, 701 Ovilla Road.

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Contact the school office at (972) 938-3996 for more information.

November 2

Election Day. Do not forget to vote!

November 4

The Navarro College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers a free seminar "How to Start a Small Business": 10:00 a.m.-noon, at Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th Street, Midlothian. This seminar is free but pre-registration is required. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 923-6425 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

November 5

Midlothian High School football vs. Mansfield High: 7:30 p.m. at MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium.

November 7

Daylight Saving Time Ends.

November 11

Veterans Day.

November 13

Citywide clean-up day: 9:00 a.m.-noon 1150 N. Highway 67, Midlothian. There will be dumpsters in place for small to large items. The Fort Worth Environmental Control Center will bring their mobile Crud Cruiser for hazardous household waste. A voucher must be purchased at the Utility Billing department in order to participate in the hazardous waste collection. There will also be a document shredder truck on site. This is the perfect time to clean-up around the house and yard. Get there fast — when the dumpsters are full, collections will stop.

November 18

Navarro College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) sponsors a session on "Writing a Winning Business Plan": 10:00 a.m.-noon, at Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th Street, Midlothian. Cost of the workshop is \$20 and is for anyone wishing to start a business or already in business. Pre-registration is required, as seating is limited. To register, call the Navarro College SBDC at (972) 923-6425 or e-mail sbdc@navarrocollege.edu.

November 22

Methodist Health System's mobile mammography van will be at Methodist Charlton Midlothian Imaging Center, 2210 Bryan Place. Payment is due at time; payable by cash, check, Visa or MasterCard. Appointment required: (972) 775-7410.

November 22-26

Midlothian Independent School District Thanksgiving Break.

November 25

Happy Thanksgiving!

Submissions are welcome and are published as space allows. Send your event details to btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net

**For more community events,
visit our online calendar at
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