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On The Cover



Local students showcase their many artistic skills in this year's production of *Grease*.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

May is for mothers!

When my son was born, I looked into his tiny face and knew I'd never do anything more important than be his mom. It's easy to lose sight of this amid the hassles of everyday life, but with each challenge faced and milestone achieved, I'm reminded my chief responsibility is to train up this child in the way he should go. I'm blessed by the opportunity to do so.

Red Oakians can mother their own neighbors by participating in Food Fest, May 7, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the city's municipal center. Benefiting North Ellis County Outreach (NECO), the festival features food from local eateries, live music and performances, cooking demonstrations and art exhibits. Guests eat for a small fee and enjoy activities for free; a silent auction and children's area round out the event. Feed yourself and your soul by helping NECO continue to serve locals in need. What a great way to make your mama proud!



Angel

Angel Morris
Red OakNOW Editor
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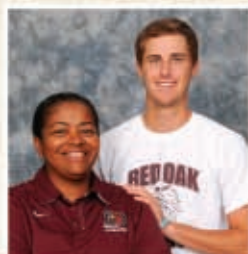


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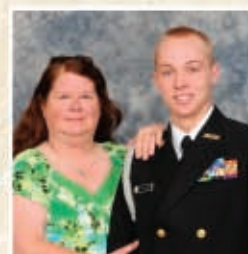
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Hitting HER Mark

— By Jeremy Agor

It had been a long time since there was a musical production at Red Oak High School (ROHS), and Choir Director Mechelle Foster set out to change that. Mechelle, along with several other teachers, administrators and community members, successfully staged a production of the hit musical Grease this year, bringing musical theater back to Red Oak for the first time in a long time. In fact, most people she talked to knew there had been a musical at some point in the past, but no one remembered when, much less which plays had been performed.



Mechelle, a vocalist since about second grade, sang in church at first and then became very involved in choir programs in junior high and high school. She aspired to a professional singing career and entered college as a vocal performance major but, after starting her family while still an undergraduate, Mechelle changed her focus to music education. She began her career a few years later teaching elementary and junior high, and now has found her niche in high school.

"I got into directing when the position at Red Oak Junior High School came open. They had not done a classic choir program, and I jumped at the chance to start one because I wanted to grow a program that would be known in the Dallas area," Mechelle explained. "I teach because I think everyone should have an opportunity to learn how to sing. Every year, I have a student who wants to join choir but is hesitant because they don't think they're good enough. My students just look at them and repeat what they've heard me say dozens of times before, 'Everyone can sing. If you think you can't, Mrs. Foster will teach you how.'"

While she was teaching junior high, Mechelle and her colleague, Katrina Keener, began producing musicals, which were condensed for younger students. Audiences enjoyed them, and their students looked forward to the annual production, even badgering the teachers about which musical they were going to do next. Once students moved up to high school, however, there was

no longer an opportunity to participate. That changed quickly when Mechelle was hired. "I sat down with Richard Thomas, the high school band director, and Angee Hallmark, the assistant theater teacher, and we started talking about what we might want to do. We decided that *Grease* would be a good option for the first year and sat down with the script to figure out what we needed to do to ensure it was family friendly," Mechelle explained. Once the play was chosen, the three teachers worked through the planning process to figure out how to make the production work, from instrumentation and set design to staying within their budget. They also asked Laura Kelly, who works with the ROHS drill team, to help with choreography.

Armed with a plan, Mechelle and her



Mechelle Foster poses with ROHS junior Justin Day.



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team held auditions and had 67 students try out. Of those, 29 were awarded parts in the musical. "The cast and chorus were kids from freshmen to seniors. I don't agree that lead roles should be limited to upperclassmen, so the best person for each role got it," Mechelle said. "About 90 percent of the kids were also choir students, so it was nice to see them in a different environment."

Rehearsals began about 13 weeks prior to the performance and were broken down into three phases, the first being music. "You can't have a



musical if the kids can't sing," Mechelle laughed. Choreography and blocking (assigning characters' placement on the stage during each scene) followed, and the final phase incorporated all the parts together on stage. As with everything in the production, rehearsals were a team effort. Mechelle taught the music and did the blocking, while Angee, who specializes in technical theater, worked on set design, costumes, lighting and sound. The students rehearsed about seven hours each week and learned valuable lessons about time management and organization along the way.

While the students were learning lines and notes, many other people joined in preparing for the show. Burl Sloan and some of his art students helped with sets. Some band students got to use their instruments in a setting other than the usual marching band and orchestra. Mechelle's husband, Brian, and District Superintendent Scott Niven, designed the set and built it with the assistance of ROHS Principal Kevin Freels and

Red Oak Independent School District (ROISD) School Board President John Hawkins. Stacy Stockdale and her graphic design classes created T-shirts, and Angee's husband, Adam, who is a graphic designer, created posters and programs. Richard recruited a former Red Oak student and that student's friend, along with an elementary school principal and two current students, to provide the music for the show.

Another benefit of the show was that *Grease* was the first major production in the school's performing arts center, so school staff learned a lot about lighting and sound. Because of the high-tech nature of the audio/visual controls, students gained valuable experience in technical theater as they learned how to use them. Mechelle and her team hope to include even more students in the future, including using home economics students for costume design and graphic design students for publicity.

Mechelle believes it was everyone's combined efforts that paid off in a great show. In fact, many are already asking what show they will do next year. No decisions have been made, but since students are aware of current musicals like *Rent*, *Hairspray* and others, Mechelle would like to introduce them to the classics. "A lot of recent musicals focus on a certain voice type and range, especially the alto and tenor lines, and I want to give other voice types a chance to show what they can do. Also, I want the students to understand how the older musicals built the foundation for today's musical theater," Mechelle explained.

The show's success was rewarding, but Mechelle pointed to other important benefits of students' participation, too. "The experience the students gained extends far beyond fine arts. These kids can grow beyond sitting in classes and actually see what it's all about," she said. "My biggest goal is to put tools out there for my students, teach them how to use them, give them the opportunity to use them, and then let them decide what they want to do." It is always exciting for Mechelle when students want to major in music. If she can give them a love of music, confidence and stage presence, "it will carry over and be a positive influence on other parts of their lives." And that, she believes, is truly hitting her mark. **NOW**

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THE COMPUTER ICON

— By Angel Morris

Embracing the ever-evolving world of technology, Red Oak is introducing some of the most state-of-the-art schools around. And when it comes to keeping up with technological change, one group of Red Oak ISD (ROISD) employees is charged with bringing local schools to the cutting edge. Kevin Cox, executive director of technology and support services, explains how ROISD became so tech savvy.

“Increasingly, more of the things we do in education are done with the assistance of technology — be it recording grades, teaching a lesson in class or generating payroll for the district. As such, we have to maintain a reliable system with little to no downtime,” Kevin said. “When I joined the district, it had recently chosen to bring its technology support department in-house and only employed two full-time technology support staff. At that time, I set forth to build a team.”

When first developing the technology department, Kevin faced outdated computers, an unreliable network and poor tech support of teachers and staff. “The challenges we faced were obvious. The campuses knew it, and district leadership knew it. We had amazing support from both, as well as the school board, and were provided with the time and funding necessary to resolve the issues,” Kevin said.

ROISD hired desktop support techs for the campuses, a network administrator to keep the foundation operating and put systems and procedures in place to properly support the district. “We first addressed the underlying network, knowing it



was the foundation on which to build a successful technology infrastructure. We upgraded old equipment in the campuses and replaced their unreliable wireless connections with high-speed fiber optics,” Kevin said.

The next steps were replacing teacher computers with newer equipment, implementing a helpdesk system to track and resolve requests and developing a “customer first” culture in the technology department. “Historically, teachers and staff had been told one thing, and another thing would happen. They’d been subjected to a level of customer service that gives information technology (IT) support a bad name. We had a new team and several obstacles to overcome,” Kevin said.

The tech team has since opened two campuses with state-of-the-art technology and multimedia in the classrooms. “Last summer, we outfitted all of our campuses with multimedia projectors and sound in the classrooms. We also unveiled Safari Montage, an educational video distribution system which allows teachers to access educational videos on demand,” Kevin noted.

Over the last year-and-a-half, the Technology Department has begun working closely with the Curriculum Department to enhance technology in the classrooms. “We are working to integrate more interactive learning technologies in the classroom — such as SMART Boards, Flip Video cameras and netbooks,” Kevin said. “We are also working to make more of our educational resources available to students at home. Some of the progress we’ve made so far is making our school library catalogs available from home and providing students with Gale (an online periodical and reference library). This spring we will make our Safari Montage library of education videos available to students at home.”

In the data center, the Tech Department is virtualizing a number of its systems, thereby decreasing the number of physical computers needed to operate the district systems and utilizing less energy. While Kevin describes it all matter-of-factly, the skills to manage such an involved department were not developed overnight. Kevin has actually worked in



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Back row, left to right: Kevin Cox, Executive Director of Technology Support Technician; Ben Bridges, Desktop Support Technician; Jess Rucker, Systems Administrator. **Front row, left to right:** Jess Rucker, Desktop Support Technician; Morgan Wilks, Communications Technician.

education technology for the better part of 12 years.

"I developed an interest in computers and technology during my teenage years, after my family purchased a personal computer. In my senior year of high school, I helped support the local school district's computers by doing simple tech support for them," Kevin recalled. "I continued to work at the school district while in college and received my BBA in management information systems. I worked for the school district as systems administrator, responsible for maintaining the district systems and coordinating the desktop support staff, until I moved to Red Oak."

A former colleague of Kevin's came to work for Red Oak, and after reviewing the district's technology needs, he felt the district could benefit from in-house tech support. "He knew my wife and I had been interested in relocating and felt that I could bring the skill set needed to move the district toward the superintendent's vision, so he contacted me. My wife and I visited and chose to pursue this opportunity of working for the district," Kevin said.

In July 2007, Kevin joined ROISD and embraced the district's technology challenges with his new department. "We have a great tech team now. As the use of technology grows and our network becomes more complex, providing the same level of service and support can prove to be challenging," Kevin said. "We address this by closely monitoring



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Technology and Support Services; Joey Horn, Desktop Technician; Mike Little, Desktop Support Technician; Alex Sica Card, Support Services Coordinator; Joseph Schick, IT Specialist.

our helpdesk system and encouraging communication with campuses. We are utilizing more on-site campus support for quicker response times and campus technology committees to provide us feedback and guidance.”

The ever-changing nature of technology will continue to challenge Kevin and the staff. “It’s a constantly moving target. We operate a revolving cycle of installing new equipment, maintaining what we have and replacing the old equipment when it’s no longer viable. As such, we constantly research and train, and try to purchase technologies that will last longer and provide a greater return,” Kevin said.

For Kevin, the job itself is a great return. “I enjoy using technology to enable people to be more creative or more productive or more efficient. I love that ‘aha’ moment when I’m helping people with technology and realize they ‘get’ it. I love to see people take what they’ve learned and become empowered and run with it.”

Ultimately, Kevin said the Technology Department’s complex job boils down to something simple. “When technology works, you don’t even realize it’s there. You take it for granted,” he said. “We feel our staff should never have to worry or think about the computers and that they should be able to focus on teaching or keeping the district operating.”

With its tech team operating behind the scenes, it seems ROISD can do just that. **NOW**

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At Home With Shelia Straughan

A New Dynamic

— By Sydni Thomas



After almost 20 years of marriage, Shelia Straughan became a single parent to three boys. Many years earlier, she and her husband had moved away from their West Texas roots to pursue new careers. In a quiet Red Oak neighborhood, they found a home with an acre of land — big enough for the boys to romp and run as they grew up. After the divorce, maintaining the house and land alone, rearing her sons and working a full-time career was




going to be a challenge for Sheila. The one piece of advice she kept hearing was that, after a divorce, it was best to start completely over in a new place and create a new home for her boys. "I gave it some thought," she remembered;




however, "I was determined to keep my sons in the house they had grown up in, while finding a way to create a new family dynamic."

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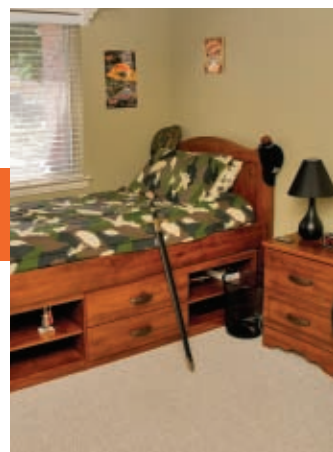
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Shelia had taught for 11 years in West Texas before her journey to Red Oak. When she found the job posting for an assistant principal position, the application deadline was 24 hours away. Those were the days prior to e-applications when human resources received the information instantly and could set up an interview the same afternoon. Shelia had to rush to the post office to overnight her résumé and application. Red Oak Independent School District (ROISD) was interested, called her in for an interview and offered her the job before her plane touched down on her return trip. There was no doubt in her mind that Red Oak was the place for her family. Since that position, Shelia went on to serve as a principal and currently serves as director of human resources. “We thought Red Oak was the perfect little town,” Shelia said. “It wasn’t too big or small, and there were still so many opportunities being close to the Metroplex. The boys have been able to do a lot here.”

The Straughan boys are three brothers with distinct personalities. Caleb, 20, is the family handyman and helps Shelia wrangle the two younger brothers when she has to work late. Since graduating from Red Oak High School, Caleb has not gone far away and chose to work for ROISD as an event specialist, until he could attend flight school. This spring, he started his pilot training at Arlington Flight School. Hunter, 14, is the middle brother and has a more serious personality. A sports enthusiast, when he is not at school, Hunter is usually practicing with one of his many teams. The entire family loves sports, but Hunter is the one who can quote just about any player and game statistic — and has a cell phone texting history with ESPN to prove it. Finally, there is Brady, 12. He keeps the family laughing with his quick wit and sarcasm. Shelia claimed



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Once again Red Oak Drug is proud to present a Seminar for people interested in finding out more about Diabetes. The Seminar will be Tuesday May 10 at 7pm in the new Education/Seminar Room at Red Oak Drug.

This informational Seminar will be hosted by Red Oak Drug and presented by Lourdes Pruneda of U.T. Southwestern Hospital. Mrs. Pruneda is a research RN working very closely with Doctor Phillip Raskin. They are currently doing a Clinical Research Study to evaluate and track the effectiveness of a new investigational medication that possibly can slow or stop the progression of Type 1 Diabetes. This seminar is open to anyone with either Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes. Mrs. Pruneda will share some very beneficial information to patients with either type.



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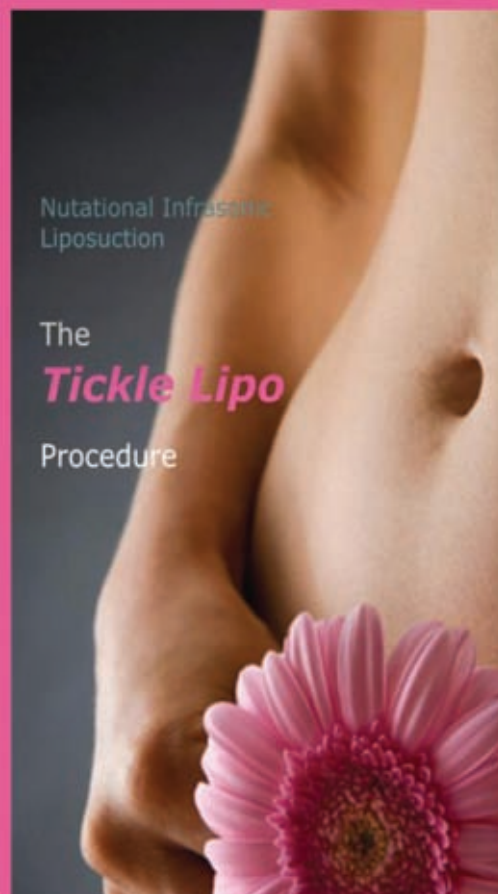
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that he came out at birth with a complete understanding of sarcasm.

Like most brothers, the Straughan boys roughhouse, but are always there for each other and for their mother. They help Shelia with the weekly grocery shopping, maintain the property and do the laundry (without turning a white load of clothes pink). Each Saturday, Shelia and Brady eat breakfast at Panera and then go to Walmart to do the grocery shopping. On their way home, they call Hunter, and he is waiting for them when they arrive so he can sort and put everything away. Caleb mows the lawn and fixes everything from plumbing to the cars when Shelia cannot do it. "We are like the phrase, 'It takes a village,'" Shelia said. "I have great friends that step in when I'm out of town on business. For the most part, the boys are self-sufficient."

As human resources director, Shelia has a busy schedule between meetings and trips to Austin. When the boys' schedules are added in, things could quickly get out of hand, if she were not organized. Shelia keeps a color-coordinated calendar for herself, Hunter and Brady on her computer. Each morning, she looks it over and determines who needs to be where and at what time. Then she sends a text message to the corresponding boy to let him know what his afternoon is going to be like and who is going to pick him up. "I've decided it is too crazy to plan too far in advance, and most of the time, they don't know what is going on until the day of," Shelia said. "I can't imagine what life was like before kids had cell phones. They never leave the house without them. I will ground them from them if they abuse them, but when they leave the house, I make sure they have some way of contacting me."

On a spring weekend not dictated by



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schedules, it is not unusual to see the Straughan boys outside working in the yard alongside their mother. After her divorce, gardening became Shelia's way of giving the house a new dynamic, and it gave her an opportunity to spend extra time with the boys. The transformation began with a small flower bed in the backyard. She was so pleased with the results that she worked her way around the entire house. Each time she made a trip to Home Depot or The Greenery in Waxahachie, the boys would moan because they knew their afternoon would be filled with digging holes, watering and pulling weeds. Yet, they dug the holes each time she came home with a carload of plants and, sometimes, re-dug the



holes when she decided a plant needed to be moved to the left six more inches.

The Straughan family is not all work and no play. Even though they had not been on a family vacation since Brady was 2 years old, they took little family outings on the weekends. Shelia had not taken more than a week off since she started working in Red Oak. This past summer, they loaded up the car and drove to a resort in Florida. They were dreading the 18-hour drive, but once it was underway, they realized it was a fun opportunity for family bonding.

On the return trip, Shelia decided the family could not wait that long again before the next vacation and went ahead and booked one for this year. She tries to plan many local family outings to give the family breaks from their busy weekly schedules. Their favorite family time is Sunday afternoons, when they are in their sports garb, watching the Dallas Cowboys and grilling. "I've always said there was a reason why I had three boys," Shelia said. "Sports are just another way for us to be together. I love Sundays and having everyone in the living room together." **NOW**

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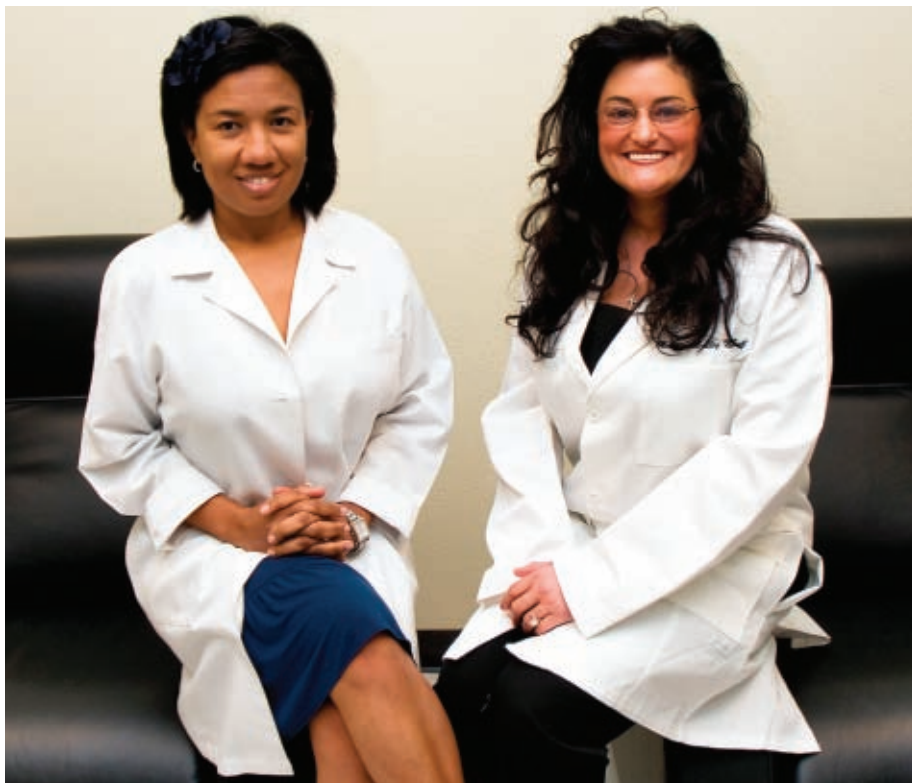
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From left:

Lorraine Rudder, M. D. and Melissa Malley.



A Definitive Difference

This local rehab and pain management clinic addresses the root of patient pain. — By Angel Morris

definitive REHAB & pain management is not the typical pain management clinic. Dr. Lorraine Rudder, founder and medical director, said, “We don’t treat pain. We treat patients who are in pain. Rather than trying to mask patients’ pain with medication and/or injections alone, we strive to find a definitive diagnosis and treatment plan to meet each patient’s individual needs. As a result, we are able to obtain the best possible results for patients.”

definitive REHAB & pain management provides consults with a board-certified physiatrist; i.e., a medical doctor who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation, physical therapy consults and treatment with a licensed therapist, and pain injections with a board-certified anesthesiologist, just to name a few services.

In addition, *definitive REHAB*’s providers are specially trained to treat everyone interested in losing weight. The clinic is now an affiliate of the Center for Medical Weight Loss, which is a non-invasive, physician-directed weight-loss program. The goal is to offer patients as many options as possible to treat their pain and to provide resources to all area residents that could prevent them from becoming pain patients.

The ailments and disorders treated at *definitive REHAB* include the fairly typical back, neck, joint and muscle pain. In addition, *definitive REHAB* treats carpal tunnel, arthritis, degenerative joints, osteoporosis and fibromyalgia. Also, it treats issues related to post-orthopedic surgery, frequent falls, walking difficulties, trauma injuries, stroke and paraplegia.

definitive REHAB & pain management is expanding. This spring, *definitive Physical Therapy and Wellness Center* will open — a 4,000-square-foot facility neighboring Baylor Family Medical Center at Red Oak. The center will be better equipped and provide more space for physical therapy. It will house a pool for patients needing aquatic therapy, a wellness program with an exercise physiologist, and a hot yoga studio, Mai Town Yoga.

Dr. Rudder founded *definitive REHAB & pain management* in January 2005. “After more than a decade of working as a physiatrist in hospitals and with physicians of various specialties, I set out to establish a clinic of my own,” Dr. Rudder said. That dream brought her to Red Oak.

In 2006, Dr. Rudder hired Marcy Maines to direct *definitive REHAB's* physical therapy program. Marcy has been a great addition to the team. “I am thrilled to be serving patients in the community in which I live,” Marcy said.



Marcy Maines, PT, MPT
(Physical Therapist).

She went on to say, “To obtain the best results from physical therapy, you have to start with a good diagnosis, a thorough evaluation and an effective, individualized treatment plan. Equally important, [the] physical therapist must be hands-on and patients must feel that the therapist is genuinely vested in their overall health and wellness. Patients get this type of individualized care here.”

To learn more about *definitive REHAB & pain management* and its providers, visit www.definitiverehab.com. **NOW**

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RO Firefighters Lance Wilkinson, Andrew Jakubik, Tim Birdwell, Gabriel Guerrero, Kirk Markgraf and Adam Hubbard are honored at the annual awards banquet.



On behalf of the Red Oak Police Officers Association, Detective Gary Dollar and Officer John Epps present Nancy Spigener with a check to purchase local athletes' Special Olympics uniforms.



Amy and Jennifer Hedtke enjoy the Red Oak library's Mosaic Madness event.

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— By *Andrea Walton*

When you are trying to choose just the right gift for your grandchildren, you can have a tough time sifting through the newest trends and fads. Last week it was this pop star, next week it may be a new cartoon character. On top of that, you don't want to get something that won't last 10 minutes out of the package. One gift that will last for many years is a life insurance policy. There are many reasons why it can be an excellent gift for your grandchild.

• **Affordability** — The younger the child's age, the lower the premiums.

• **Protection** — Illness or injury may affect a child's ability to purchase life insurance coverage later in life. Coverage purchased now will continue to provide protection, even if a child's health changes, provided premiums are paid as required by the policy.

• **Financial Security** — Life insurance can be the foundation for a strong financial plan. The child may be able to borrow against the accumulated cash value (with interest charged) to pay for future expenses. While loans decrease death benefits and cash surrender values, the proceeds can be used for important



expenses such as a college education or the purchase of a home.

Giving a gift of life insurance to your grandchild can be one of the most significant things you do during your lifetime. He or she may not understand at the time how important the gift is, but should grow to appreciate it in the future. Take the guesswork out of your gift shopping. Life insurance is a gift that will last a lifetime. **NOW**

Andrea Walton is a State Farm agent based in Red Oak.

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May 2

Red Oak Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Tournament: 7:00 a.m. sign-in; 8:00 a.m. shotgun start. Countryview Golf Course, 240 West Belt Line Road, Lancaster. Call (972) 617-0906.

Caring About Grief meeting: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Acorn Academy, 101 Live Oak Street, Red Oak. Free dinner: 6:30 p.m. Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Contact Donna Knight at (972) 617-5895 or donna.knight@redoakisd.org.

May 6-8

Waxahachie Community Theatre presents *Annie*: 7:30 p.m., May 6 and 7; 2:30 p.m., May 8, Getzendaner Park Chautauqua Auditorium, 400 South Grand Ave., Waxahachie. Call (972) 646-1050 or visit www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com.

May 7

Food Fest: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Free admission. Food Cost: Adults, \$5; seniors/children 5-12, \$3; children 4 and under, free. Contact (469) 218-1202 or lfindley@redoaktx.org.

Red Oak Public Library Book Sale: 5:00-8:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Books sold during Food Fest to benefit ongoing library programs.

May 7, 14, 21, 28

Saturday Tennis League: 9:00 a.m., ROHS courts, 122 North S.H. 342. Junior- and adult-level free play.

E-mail Dainta.Calhoun@redoakisd.org or call (469) 337-8738.

May 10, 17, 24, 31

Free Kids Tennis: 4:15-5:30 p.m., ROHS courts, 122 North S.H. 342. Kindergarten-sixth grade. E-mail Dainta.Calhoun@redoakisd.org or call (469) 337-8738.

May 14

Free Carnival and Open House: 4:00-7:00 p.m., Eastridge Baptist Church, 732 East Ovilla Rd., Ovilla. Call (972) 617-2338 or visit www.eastridgebc.com.

Red Oak Opry: 7:00 p.m., Lone Star Cowboy Church, 1011 East Ovilla Rd., Ovilla. Visit www.RedOakOpry.com.

May 15

The Canterbury Episcopal School (CES) Enrollment Open House: 2:00-4:00 p.m., 1708 N. Westmoreland Rd., DeSoto. Contact Libby Tadlock at (972) 572-7200, ext. 106 or visit TadlockL@TheCanterburySchool.org.

May 20

Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Zula's Coffee House, 1804 W. Hwy. 287 Business, Waxahachie. Call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378 or visit vetsnetgrp@att.net.

Godspell: 7:00 p.m., The Canterbury Episcopal School's Bishops Hall, 1708 N. Westmoreland Rd.,

DeSoto. Free admission. Call (972) 572-7200, ext. 145 or visit www.TheCanterburySchool.org.

May 20-21

Relay For Life of Central Ellis County: 7:00 p.m. May 20 to 7:00 a.m. May 21. Waxahachie Sports Complex, 1101 Broadhead Rd., Waxahachie. Contact Jennifer Buckhannon (214) 458-1911.

May 21

Red Oak Lions Club Charity Golf Classic: 7:00 a.m. registration; 8:30 a.m. shotgun start. Old Brickyard Golf Course, 605 N. I-45, Ferris. Call (214) 864-8014.

May 24

Breastfeeding 101: 6:30-8:00 p.m., WEE RESALE, 113 W. Ovilla Rd., Glenn Heights. Certified lactation consultant instructs participants and partners. Reservation and \$30 payment required. Call (972) 768-5177.

May 25

Red Oak Chamber of Commerce Luncheon: Noon, Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Cost: \$12, with reservation; \$15 at door. Contact admin@redoakareachamber.org.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.



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In The Kitchen With Wrenda and Abbey Freeman

— *By Angel Morris*

The Freeman family enjoys meals at home. “We try to sit down and eat together. Even if it’s only a 10-minute meal before we’re out the door,” Wrenda Freeman said.

Wrenda favors casseroles, soups and salads rather than the meat and potatoes she grew up on. “Who says it has to take a lot of time to be really good? Each of my three kids has a simple favorite they like me to make,” she said.

Having a helper makes preparation even easier. “My daughter, Abbey, loves helping. Her specialty is baking,” Wrenda said. “I just mention cooking, and she’s got her apron on. She’s made wonderful cakes and cookies with very little help from me. Now, if only she liked the cleaning up part as much as the cooking ...” **NOW**

Sausage Bread

1 lb. ground sausage
16 oz. Monterey Jack Cheese
1 3-loaf pkg. frozen bread dough,
thawed overnight in refrigerator

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large skillet, brown sausage. Rinse, drain and set aside.
2. Grate cheese, set aside.
3. Set a single loaf on a sheet of waxed paper. Knead it and press it out to about 8 x 10 inches.
4. Put 1/3 of browned sausage down 1/2 of dough. Cover sausage with 1/3 of cheese.
5. Take the unfilled side of dough and fold it over the sausage and cheese. Pinch edges to seal.
6. Repeat with remaining 2 loaves.

7. Bake on foil-lined cookie sheets (2 on 1 sheet, 1 on another) for 20 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting.

Hunter’s Stew

1 lb. smoked sausage, sliced
2 cans cut green beans, reserve liquid
4 large potatoes, peeled and cut into
1/2-inch chunks
1/2 stick of butter or margarine
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

1. Combine all ingredients in a large pot, adding water to reserved liquid from green beans to make 2 full cans.
2. Cover and cook on medium heat for 30 minutes.
3. Simmer on low another 30 minutes before serving.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

1/2 cup onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 4-oz. can diced green chilies
2 Tbsp. oil
1 cup cooked chicken, chopped
1 8-oz. can diced tomatoes
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup beef bouillon (or 1 beef bouillon cube dissolved in 1 cup hot water)
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
8 oz. grated Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese, for garnish

1. In a medium saucepan, sauté onion, garlic and green chilies in oil, until soft.
2. Add remaining ingredients, except cheese. Simmer one hour.
3. Pour into bowls. Top with cheese.

Fluffy Fruit Salad

2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
16 oz. frozen whipped topping, thawed
3 15.25-oz. cans fruit cocktail,
drained well
1 5-oz. can mandarin oranges,
drained well
1 cup pecan pieces

1. In a large bowl, mix together cream cheese and whipped topping.
2. Fold in fruit cocktail, mandarin oranges and pecans. Refrigerate.

Corn Dip

2 cans white corn, drained
2 cups real mayonnaise (I use Hellmann’s.)
1 cup sour cream
1 small onion, chopped
1-2 jalapeños, seeded and chopped
8-oz. mild cheddar cheese, freshly
grated from cheese block

1. Mix all ingredients. Refrigerate.
2. Serve with Fritos.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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“Since knee replacement at Baylor, I’m hard to keep up with.”

“When I was 15, I was sliding into home plate, and the catcher fell on my knee,” says Ron Brown. “It gradually got worse, and as I got older, I couldn’t walk very well. And I enjoy walking.” At Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie, Ron underwent knee replacement surgery followed by one-on-one physical therapy. “Everything about the procedure and rehab was explained to me. It was just very informative, and gave me a lot of confidence in my doctor and the staff. They took great care of me.” Today, Ron is able to walk without pain. “That’s key for me. I don’t like to sit around very much.”

Join us for a free Joint Replacement Seminar

When: Tuesday, May 17, 2011
Registration 6:15 p.m. Program 6:30 p.m.
A light dinner will be served.

Where: Red Oak Municipal Center
200 Lakeview Parkway
Red Oak, TX 75154

To register for the joint replacement seminar visit

BaylorHealth.com/WaxOrtho

or call **1.800.4BAYLOR**.

 **BAYLOR**
Medical Center
at Waxahachie

1405 W. Jefferson, Waxahachie, TX 75165

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