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M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER 2014

# NOW

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## Choose to BE in DeSoto ISD!

### Phase 2 of DeSoto ISD technology rollout

In 2012-13, DeSoto ISD launched an aggressive plan to update student technology in two years. Beginning last year, hundreds of laptops and desktop computers replaced outdated desktops on all secondary campuses.

This year, elementary students in every classroom will have access to smaller network-ready Chrome Books. Approximately 850 are for elementary students - placing around five in every classroom for use in research, creation, design, presentation and much more. DeSoto High School will also add 350 Chrome Books for students in select programs to use at school.



The Chrome Books are a lighter, less expensive option at the elementary level, while secondary students typically need more advanced software and memory/storage capabilities for projects.

"Just like textbooks, technology devices are a resource and while many students have a smartphone or device for research, laptops and Chrome Books are needed in classrooms for additional class work," said Dr. David Harris, superintendent of schools. "The bottom line is teachers provide instruction. They design lesson plans and use a variety of teaching methods and resources including textbooks, workbooks, online instruction and much more."

The district infrastructure has also been enhanced and there will be some access changes to the guest wi-fi for security.

### NEWS TO KNOW

#### Parent Conferences

All DeSoto ISD parents are invited to attend parent conferences with your children's teachers on Monday, October 13. Conferences are scheduled in the afternoons after early release into the evening. Teachers can also accommodate parents before school or another day if needed.

#### 1st Tuesday Town Hall Meetings - 6:30 p.m.

Join for an open conversation about DeSoto ISD.

- Tuesday, October 7 - Ruby Young Elementary
- Tuesday, November 4 - East Middle School
- Tuesday, December 2 - DeSoto High School

#### Are you ready for football?

Join the Eagles this season for another exciting year. Home games:

- Oct. 10 v. Mansfield
- Oct. 23 v. Cedar Hill
- Nov. 6 v. Duncanville

#### Volleyball Home District Games

- Oct. 7 v. Midlothian
- Oct. 10 v. Mansfield
- Oct. 21 v. Grand Prairie
- Oct. 24 v. Cedar Hill

Check the web for away games as well as the remaining fall sports schedules.

#### DeSoto ISD Senior Citizen's Spa & 'Happy Hour' - Nov. 20

DeSoto ISD is hosting a special Senior Citizen's Spa and 'Happy Hour' at DeSoto High School on Thursday, Nov. 20 from 4-6 p.m. The event is for DeSoto ISD residents age 60 and up and will include special spa rates by the Cosmetology students and refreshments by the Culinary Arts program. Check the web site for details at [www.desotoisd.org](http://www.desotoisd.org)

## Coffee & Conversations

Join Superintendent David Harris for candid conversations about your campus and DeSoto ISD.

DATE	CAMPUS
Oct. 21	Frank Moates ES
Nov. 18	Amber Terrace ES
Dec. 16	Woodridge ES



## Calendar

- Mon., Oct. 6 - State Fair Day for students; Staff Professional Development Day
- Wed., Oct. 8, 6 p.m. - DHS Homecoming Parade
- Fri., Oct. 10, 7:30 p.m. - DHS v. Mansfield Homecoming Game, Eagle Stadium
- Mon., Oct. 13 - Early Release and Parent Conferences
- Mon., Oct. 13, 6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting, Board Room
- Oct. 23-31 - Drug-Free Schools / Red Ribbon Week



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**ON THE COVER**



Dr. Kenneth Greene has a true pastor's heart for people of all backgrounds.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

# CONTENTS

October 2014 • Volume 8, Issue 10



## 8 A Life Transformed

Dr. Greene shares his story of triumph over adversity.

## 44 To Prune or Not to Prune

Prepare for fall with NOW's quick guide to lawn care.

## 18 Called to Care

Ivory Pleasant heads a Duncanville foster agency with love.



## 28 The Last House Left

At Home With Chad and Kate Tucker.

## 36 Passion With Purpose

As an agent of change, Rachel Proctor is making a difference.

52 BusinessNOW

54 Around TownNOW

56 FinanceNOW

60 CookingNOW

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## Editor's Note

*Hello, Southwest Friends!*

I have mixed feelings about October, for a number of reasons. But I want to tell you I just discovered the very first day of October is World Vegetarian Day. Personally, I really like vegetables and fruits — I think every day should be a vegetable day. Maybe my love for vegetables stems from my daddy's garden: nothing hit the spot more than a ripe, sun-warmed tomato fresh off the vine every day after school — or eating radishes and squiggly carrots from my own garden. In reality, I crave vegetables continuously, and eating them makes me happy!

Well, all that verbiage about vegetables and World Vegetarian Day makes me feel better about October. I don't know about you, but I am definitely going to bring October in and out with as many healthy doses of vegetables as I can.

Enjoy a veggie good month!

### Beverly

Beverly Shay  
SouthwestNOW Editor  
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- **Live Auction 1<sub>PM</sub>**
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# A Life Transformed

— By Sara Edgell

*Former gang leader and church pastor, thug ruffian and military chaplain, misguided youth and college divinity instructor — these pairings are polar opposites and have seemingly nothing in common with one another except for the fact they all describe one remarkable man. Each of these roles embody the life of an extraordinary individual, who over the span of several crucial years, completely transformed his life from something hopeless and desolate to something meaningful and robust.*

So how in the world did Kenneth Greene go from street thug to church pastor? Simple — he wanted more for himself. He has a vivid memory of sitting in a church pew at the age of 4 listening to the very tall Reverend Grant at Belleview Baptist Church deliver a sermon. In this moment, he heard a voice in his head say, “You’re going to be a preacher.” Lo, and behold, that’s exactly what he became. This truth may have taken him some years and hardships to realize, but by the grace of God, Kenneth came full circle.

But somewhere along the way, Kenneth first became lost. At the formidable age of 19, Kenneth was a young man in great turmoil. He was on a dark and troublesome path in life. As the leader of a local street gang in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Kenneth was feared by community members and other gangs in the area. In the 1970s, this particular area was rampant with gang-related crime and violence. Gangs became a prominent means of survival and financial gain. Having been





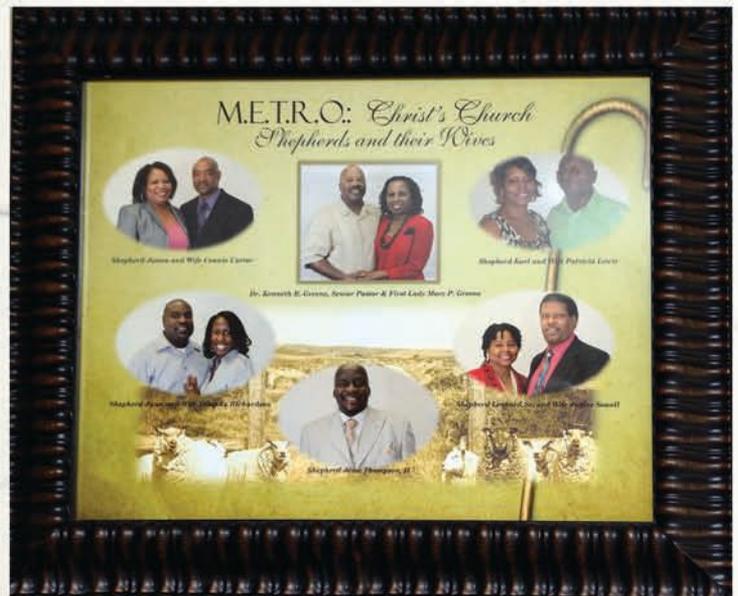
**“It was a rough year. But I knew I needed to make a change. I gave my life to Christ, and I never looked back.”**

somewhat abandoned by his father at the age of 4, Kenneth experienced both confusion and anger in addition to the longing to be somebody.

While his mother, stepfather and siblings were actively involved in his life, Kenneth chose a life of crime and drugs to fill the void within him. Despite the sense of family he gained from the gang and the eventful lifestyle he led, the void remained. He began to realize his life was severely lacking something. What exactly that something was, he wasn't quite sure.

One afternoon, the vast emptiness he felt within was so overwhelming he just couldn't sit still. After getting high to try to escape the feeling, with no success, he elected to make the 8-mile walk to his current girlfriend's home. "On my way, I had to cross a bridge, and when I got there I just stopped and watched the clear water flowing underneath me, and I just broke down," he recalled. "I started crying uncontrollably and just laid there in the middle of that bridge in the fetal position. Not one person would help me, because they were scared of me. At that point, I knew I had to make a change."

One might expect his epiphany moment to be the catalyst or the pivotal point in which Kenneth's life changed directions. However, it took a little footwork on



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**“You have to show people who you are and how much you care, and then they’ll listen to you. People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”**





his part before his life was truly changed. Because his nefarious reputation preceded him, no one reached out to the young man during his tumultuous, emotional breakdown, so he had to seek and find his solution on his own. Therefore, young Kenneth went to the only place he knew to go — church.

After many visits to many different churches, Kenneth found what he was looking for in the Church of Christ where he willingly and obediently became a Christian in August 1972. His entire family followed suit just weeks later, and Kenneth's life began to brighten. "It was a rough year," Kenneth admitted, "but I knew I needed to make a change. I gave my life to Christ, and I never looked back."

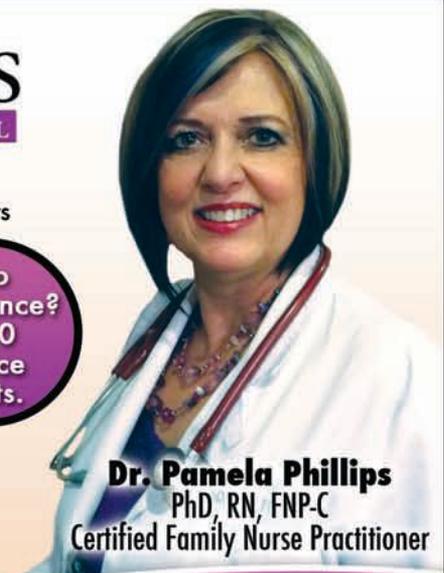
Eugene Lee, a pastor who helped Kenneth escape the gang lifestyle, was an instrumental player in the life now forever changed. Eugene encouraged Kenneth to pursue a new path in order to have a better future. "He told me, 'I know where they won't know you — Terrell, Texas!'" Kenneth remembered.

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“So that’s where I went. I didn’t know anyone. I was scared to death.”

When Kenneth arrived in the great state of Texas, he immediately went to the Southwestern Christian College. He took the entrance exam and tested so low the dean told him point-blank he wasn’t college material. Unwilling to take no for an answer, Kenneth was persistent and practically begged his way into college. His determination and faith were strong, and the powers that be relented, which led to his graduation, with honors, from SWCC two years later.

But he wasn’t done yet. Kenneth was on the move and enrolled in Abilene Christian University, where he earned his bachelor’s and a Master of Divinity. In fact, he was the first black male to graduate from ACU with a Master of Divinity. “I believe God places people in your life to cover you, and that’s what happened for me there.”

During his time in Abilene, he met and married his wife, Mary, in 1977. They had two children before he entered the military in 1984. He retired in 2006 as colonel. While in the service, he returned to SWCC to help develop a four-year Bible program with the same administration that once considered him not to be college material. In the end, he taught for several years for SWCC,

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In January 1989, he formed the M.E.T.R.O.: Christ's Church in Cedar Hill. M.E.T.R.O. is an acronym for Magnification of God, Edification, Training, Reaching Out and Organizing. Their motto is: "The church where no one is left behind." All of these are things Kenneth embodies and practices on a daily basis.

Over the years, he received his doctorate in ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1990, and he has developed a number of mentoring and outreach programs through M.E.T.R.O. to specifically help the community of Cedar Hill. One of Kenneth's most influential mentors, Dr. Stuart Love, taught him what it was to be a servant leader, and that's exactly what he's doing. From anger management and family therapy intervention programs to back-to-school fairs and citywide health seminars, he has a focused goal in mind. Kenneth strives to be a bridge in the community to reach and serve families, but most importantly, the youth.

Had God not intervened on that bridge on that fateful day, Kenneth's life would have turned out very differently. But it didn't, because he listened. "You have to show people who you are and how much you care, and then they'll listen to you," he said. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." **NOW**

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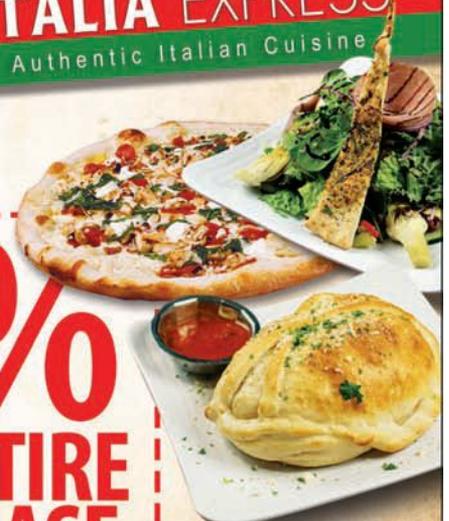


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# DUNCANVILLE ISD BOND

N O V E M B E R 4, 2 0 1 4

The Duncanville ISD Board of Trustees voted unanimously to call a bond election that will be held November 4, 2014. The Duncanville ISD bond was studied and recommended by a diverse group of the district's community members, who studied more than \$200 million worth of needs and worked to prioritize a final bond package. The proposal, totaling \$102.545 million, addresses educational facility needs and touches every DISD campus.



## GROWTH

These projects will significantly reduce the use of portable buildings, accommodate future growth and create feeder patterns that allow for community and neighborhood schools.

- Replacement Acton Elementary School
- Replacement Hastings Elementary School
- Repurpose Brandenburg Intermediate to an Elementary School
- Hyman Elementary School Expansion
- Kennemer Middle School Expansion



## SAFETY

These projects will increase safety and security at every campus.

- Upgrades to campus surveillance and access control systems
- Additional security cameras and exterior lighting
- Classroom intruder function door hardware
- Intrusion alarm systems
- Emergency phone systems
- Exterior door numbering



## TECHNOLOGY

This bond will provide new technology for students and teachers throughout the district.

- New and emerging classroom technology
- Campus data cabling replacements
- District-wide network infrastructure upgrades
- Community Wi-Fi kiosks to provide internet access to families



## AGING FACILITIES

This bond invests in existing DISD campuses through improvements to aging facilities.

- Fire alarm system replacements and sprinkler system installation
- Upgrades and repairs to building code and handicap accessibility deficiencies
- Replace aging electrical equipment
- Campus repairs and interior finish upgrades

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Since the passage of the last bond program in 2001, the student population has grown by 2,600 students and reports indicate that the school district will continue to grow an additional 10 percent in the next decade.
- The district does not receive any money from the state for the construction of new school buildings or improvements. This bond would allow the district to finance improvements and new schools without needing to cut regular budget items like school programs, teachers and staff.

Early Voting: OCTOBER 20-31, 2014



Election Day Voting: NOVEMBER 4, 2014

[www.DUNCANVILLEISDBOND.org](http://www.DUNCANVILLEISDBOND.org)

# Called to Care

— By Angel Morris

*“This is what I want to do.  
I want to impact lives.”*

*Protecting and inspiring children isn't just a career for Ivory Pleasant. It's a calling. What was once a volunteer effort — playing basketball on weekends with at-risk youth — has become a way of life for the executive director of a local*





organization that helps find homes for children placed in foster care. "I noticed the children gravitated toward me, and I quickly began to look forward to the visits as much as they did," Ivory recalled. Over time, Ivory worked his way through the ranks of various group home centers, an experience that led to his founding *Amazing Grace Child and Family Services* in Duncanville.

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  - **5K Run/Walk** 10/25, 1403 Red Oak Creek Rd, Ovilla (Register ovillaumc.org)
  - **BBQ Dinner/Dance** 10/31, 6:30 p.m. Ovilla @ Westmoreland Roads, Ovilla
  - **Fall Festival** 11/01 Ovilla @ Westmoreland Roads, Ovilla, 9 a.m.
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of Christ by embracing all God's children — one child, one family at a time," Ivory explained.

Amazing Grace came about when Ivory's sister, Volela Pleasant, asked him about his vision. "I shared how I wanted to develop an organization to provide services for multiple areas of social work — a community where children in foster care, battered women and the elderly community could all be



served," Ivory recalled. "When she asked what I would call it, I instinctively replied, 'Amazing Grace.'"

The agency is licensed and contracted by the Department of Family and Protective Services for child placement. Amazing Grace recruits and trains foster parents, so as children enter foster care they can find the best match homes for them. In addition, the agency provides free parenting training to the public. "We believe a positive and nurturing environment will help a child grow to his or her full maturity level. Working together with our families, as a team toward a common goal, we can provide services that will enable the children to



obtain their full potential,” Ivory said.

To support foster parents and candidates, Amazing Grace holds monthly training and fellowship sessions. As a former foster parent himself, Ivory knows firsthand the challenges of meeting children where they are. “People would be shocked to learn how some children have been traumatized and how different the effects of abuse and neglect can be on different children.

One of the hardest things about fostering is realizing you cannot just tell these children how to behave and expect it will happen. You may have to try many different approaches to reach them, but it all starts with love,” Ivory said.

Ivory and his wife, Tamica, had just moved to a home in DeSoto with their 6-month-old daughter, when they were called to take in six boys. The children were from three different ethnicities ranging in ages from 9 to 14. “We really had to pray about whether it

was right for our family at the time, but these were sibling groups that we did not want to see separated into different foster homes,” Ivory said.

As a result, Ivory learned from those he fostered as much as he hopes he taught them. “Being a foster parent definitely made me a better dad to my biological children. It made me appreciate my own upbringing more and gave clarity to what kind of dad I wanted to be,” Ivory said. “It made me reflect on my own family tree and look at how different traits are passed down from generation to generation.”

Abusive patterns are typical in the foster care system — alcoholism, drug



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abuse, physical and mental abuse can be cyclical. Since it is the only way of life a foster child may have known, showing them there is a better way can be challenging. "Being taken out of their home isn't always seen as a positive thing to a child. They may still prefer the known to the unknown, and starting over with a complete stranger is very scary," Ivory said. "They may act out or shut down out of fear. We want to lead our foster parents in working through those defense mechanisms with the children placed in their care."

To that end, Amazing Grace is founded on several principles: integrity, passion, collaboration, awareness, respect and professionalism. "We uphold the highest ethical standards and realize that we have the ability to make a



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significant difference in others' lives. It's a responsibility we don't take lightly," Ivory said.

In fact, seeing the impact of his job on others solidified Ivory's interest in social work. "When I was direct care staff at a residential treatment center, there was one kid who was always getting in trouble at school. When I visited, I'd talk through

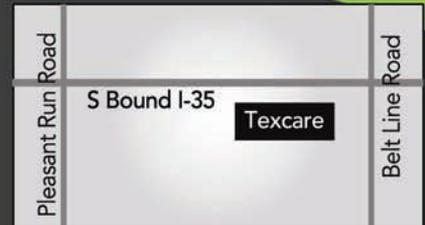
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**Charles Leach, M.D.**, specializes in internal medicine and accepts Medicare patients. He enjoys working with patients on a wide range of their healthcare needs. Dr. Leach is a founding member of the former Medical Clinics of North Texas (MCNT), where he practiced for 14 years. He and his wife live in Arlington, and enjoy movies, books and traveling. They have two sons.

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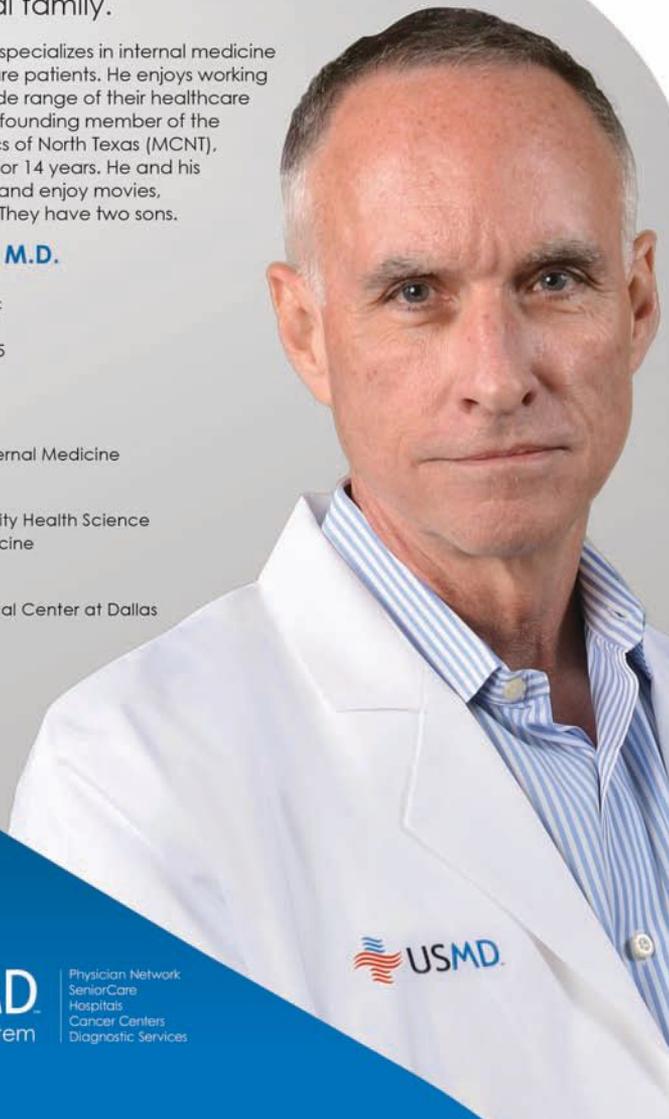
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the school reports with him to find out what was going on, and then he and I would talk about ways he could have handled situations better,” Ivory said. “One day I got a phone call from this kid. He was so excited he was shouting, ‘Mr. P! I did it! I did what you suggested, and it worked!’ Before I knew it I was crying, and that’s when it registered with me: This is what I want to do. I want to impact lives.”

Coordinating cases is time-consuming, and Ivory relies on his sister, who manages the office, and several case workers. His wife is not just mom to daughter, Madison, and twin boys, Chase and Chance, but the president of Amazing Grace, overseeing it with the same love and care she gave foster children of their own for eight years.

“This field can be very demanding, but I do not believe it was an accident that I became involved in social work. As a child growing up, I saw my parents were surrogate parents to many, and we often housed other children from our community,” Ivory recalled. “My most distinguished title is husband and father, but I am a man of God, and it was put in my heart to help children. I am blessed that my wife and family support this mission, and that I can truly say my job has made me a better dad, a better friend, a better brother, a better minister — a better everything. What job is cooler than that?” **NOW**

*Editor’s Note: To learn more about foster care training and services, visit [www.amazinggracecfs.com](http://www.amazinggracecfs.com).*

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# The Last House Left

— By Callie Revell



*“When I moved in, there was blue and green shag carpet. It looked like Earth from outer space.”*

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Although Chad's family has lived on the property for over 90 years, the current house wasn't built until the early

**h Chad and Kate Tucker**



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1950s. “When my grandfather built this house, it was a very nice house at the time,” he shared. “My grandfather gave my grandmother everything she could ever want in a home. She loved pink, and he made sure she got what she loved.”

The house still has many original features, which have been preserved throughout the years, including the hardwood floors and the Italian tile. “When I moved in, there was blue and green shag carpet. It looked like Earth from outer space,” Chad laughed. “One day, I decided to tear it out and put in new carpet. I pulled the corner back, and there were these beautiful



hardwood floors.” One bathroom has brown tile, and the other has pink. “We refer to them as the men’s and women’s bathrooms.” The house also boasts large living areas and spacious bedrooms. “For a home built in the ’50s, the rooms are very large.”

However, the house has certainly changed since his childhood. “We lost some of the front yard when they expanded Wheatland Road,” Chad explained. “It used to be a two-lane dirt road.” Chad and Kate have also

converted the front parlor and dining room into an entertainment room (aka man cave) with a pool table. They have turned a living room closet into a wine cabinet. Above the door in the man cave leading to the living room, Chad hung an antique airplane propeller. “My dad found that in a field close by here,” Chad said. “I believe it came off a crop duster that had crashed.”

Kate appreciates the way the house, while old, doesn’t feel dark or cramped. “I like the amount of space we have,”

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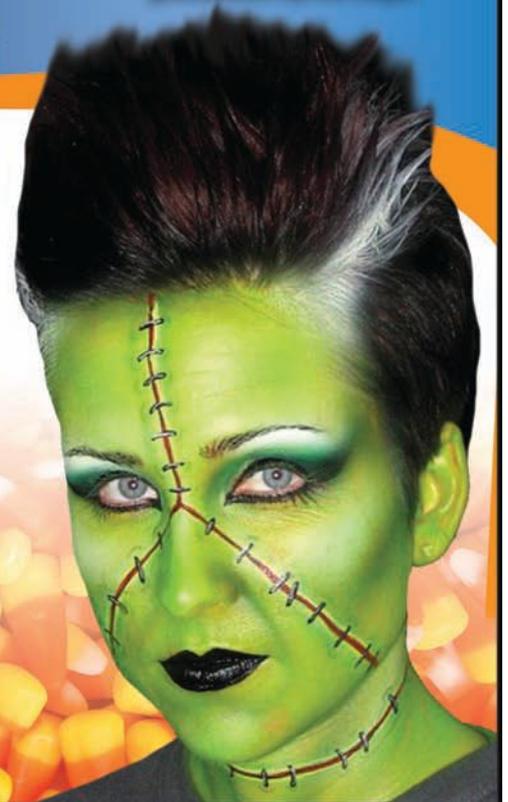
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Kate said. "We have a big front room, living room and master bedroom." The ranch-style home, has more doors than a normal house, which provide easier access to the back of the house and the bedrooms. Kate and Chad enjoy entertaining, so they love all the available indoor space and their huge backyard.

The home sits on 3 acres of wooded land. "I feel like I'm in the country, but I still have all the amenities of being in the city," Chad added. "Another thing we love about this house is the location. We're centered right here between I-20, I-35 and 67. Anywhere we want to go, only takes 20 minutes." Because of this, the property value of the land has just continued to rise each year.

"I love the property. I'm not so crazy about the area," Chad admitted, referring to the surrounding urbanization and development. "Over the past 10 years since I've been here, the growth in the area has actually improved the quality of life around here," he added. "There is a lot less crime and a lot more restaurants available. Unfortunately, there is also a lot more traffic. When you step into the backyard, it feels like you're in the woods," Chad said. "But you can always hear the sounds of the highway."

Along with the house, Chad has stepped up to take care of his grandfather's 1968 Ford pickup truck. "My dad and I restored it, just the two of us. We took the whole thing apart and put it back together. My brother, sister and I were all taught to drive using that



truck. It means a lot to me to have it all restored again.”

Chad has many memories of visiting the home as a child. “My grandfather had a hard time believing in the banking system after going through the Great Depression, so he buried a lot of money. We would get metal detectors and go around the yard and find jars full of money. We had a lot of fun doing that.” He also remembers fishing for crawfish in the creek in the backyard using only a piece of string and bacon.

Perhaps it is the memories the house holds that motivated Chad to take the house into his own hands as an adult. “I moved back from Colorado 10 years ago,” he said. “When I moved back, there was no one living in the house. I moved in here just to take care of it.”

Kate moved into the house just before they got married four years ago. They have since had a daughter, Lily, who is 1. Kate works as a lease analysis assistant for an oil and gas company in Dallas, and Chad is the owner of Tucker Chiropractic in DeSoto. Chad serves as the current president of the DeSoto Rotary Club and is on the board of directors for the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce.

Chad’s family history lies in every brick of the house, and he appreciates the efforts his family made to build a life there. “I really love the house,” Chad said. “Lily is the fifth generation to live here. It’s nice my grandparents were able to build something that has survived for so many generations.” **NOW**

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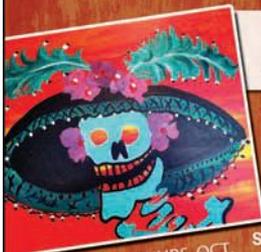
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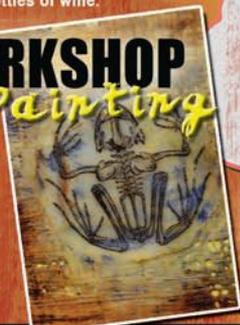
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# Passion With Purpose



— By Sara Edgell

*Rachel Proctor spends her days focusing on the betterment of the greater good. She is a facilitator of success and truly wants to make a lasting impact in the community of DeSoto. She holds strong to the words of author Ben Sweetland: “We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own.” For Rachel, this is not just an inspirational quote, but a mantra for life. Through volunteer and government work, Rachel is creating a blindingly bright future.*

Her interest in helping others began at an early age, because her family has owned and operated a school, Neighborhood Christian Learning Center of Dallas, for the past 25 years. Being directly involved with education is what laid a strong foundation for Rachel’s life work. Essentially, it is the platform for all the change she strives to create. Additionally, Rachel has always been active in church, helping with outreach and



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youth-related endeavors. She focuses her efforts there and continues to work with youth and education-related matters through Bible studies, discussions and seminars.

Through this work, she was inspired to create a nonprofit organization, eMErge Leadership, Inc. The organization targets teenage girls as they transition from high school to college life. Through focusing on leadership, education and sisterhood, ELI aims to help participants grow into mature and professional women. Over the years, she has worked with troubled and at-risk young ladies in the juvenile justice system, local school districts and various churches. One way Rachel has made and continues to make an impact is to mentor these teen girls by relating to their feelings. "I didn't experience many of the things these young girls did," Rachel admitted. "But I could relate to their emotions. Sometimes, they just needed someone to listen, to say they understood. I was able to do that."

Rachel steadfastly believes everyone is blessed with God-given talents and gifts, and these talents and gifts are meant to be shared with others. "We all have to realize what our gifts are and acknowledge those gifts aren't just ours," she stated. "Giving of oneself makes the world a better place."

With that mentality, Rachel decided to try her hand at making a change by

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running for the DeSoto City Council. Presently, she is in the midst of her second year, and she takes great pride in being the voice of the constituents she represents in District 4. In 2013, there was a seat opening mid-year, and through a special election, Rachel was uncontested and gained the opportunity to serve. In 2014, her full-blown campaign led to her re-election through traditional campaigning, such as yard signs, speeches and a lot of footwork on her part. "I went door to door to meet people. I sat at family tables and just talked about my passion and my mission as a council member." For her, it's all about getting personal and forming relationships, because that's when the vision for change and improvement can be realized, formed and shared. "I have always gravitated to volunteering, leadership and government," Rachel shared. "I have always been fascinated with being an agent of change. I believe those are my gifts to share."

City council members are assigned to one of six districts. However, they are elected and serve the city at large. The council meets monthly to deliberate over and discuss a slew of city-related matters, such as zoning proposals, construction projects, budget planning and ordinance considerations. Each council member is assigned to work with district-specific homeowner's associations (HOA), as

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well as specific committees. Essentially, each member is expected to engage in and maintain a significant level of community involvement. For Rachel, this role is all about being involved, building relationships and staying connected with the members of the community. Her ultimate goal is to create programs to accommodate the needs of DeSoto residents of all ages and stages of life. “Staying connected with all levels and ages of the community is the goal. Being proactive and reaching out to the people of the community is what it is all about,” Rachel stated.

As a 1999 DeSoto High School graduate, Rachel is deeply invested in her hometown community. When she graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington and returned to her home turf, she took on the challenge of helping to spur business development and economic growth that will in turn encourage homeowner and employment opportunities for residents.

While her personal area of interest and expertise is education and youth, Rachel strives to be not only a catalyst of change, but also one of progression and innovation. Through her role within the community, Rachel is able to perpetuate change in these ways. “A lot of people talk about change, but they never actually do anything to make that change,” she said.

Part of Rachel’s responsibilities as a city council member is to work with the city’s Comprehensive Plan Committee, which is largely responsible for the future development of the city including land use, urban design, transportation and vision projects. Furthermore, she serves as a board member on the Dallas County Child Welfare Board, the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Southwest.

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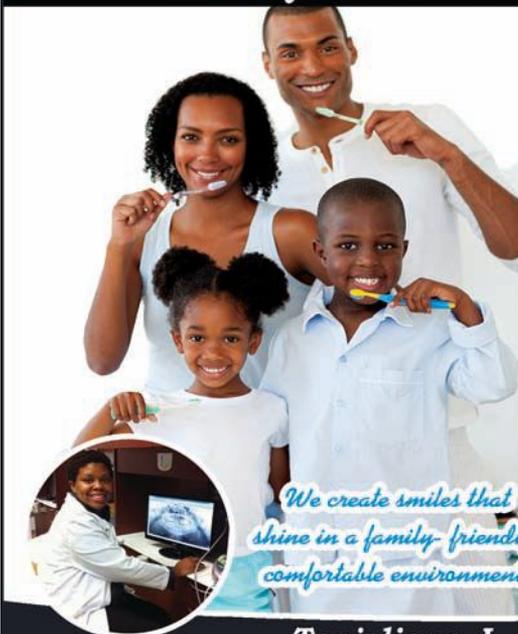
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She also has volunteered with The Bridge, a homeless shelter in Dallas. Additionally, she is involved with a plethora of early childhood organizations and programs in the Metroplex. Rachel is passionate about reaching out to help area youth realize their potential and to motivate and help them to envision and pursue their dreams. "What I do isn't about notoriety, power or gaining a title," she said. "It's about being a conduit for change and leaving a positive legacy."

Rachel leads her life with three simple words: emerge, inspire and serve. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Rachel strives to embody this belief and continues to blaze her own trail with unwavering dedication to the betterment of others and her community. **NOW**

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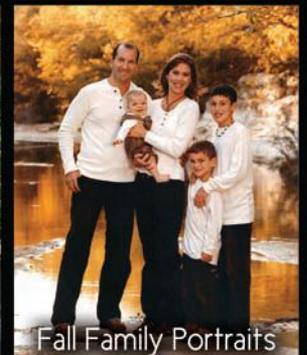
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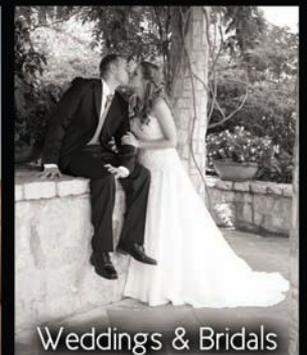
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# TO PRUNE OR NOT TO PRUNE



— By Randy Bigham

*The onset of harvest time brings more than the turning of the leaves. For most of us, it means raking them up after their inevitable descent, transforming lawns and driveways everywhere into a crunchy nuisance. Autumn's inception also inspires well-meaning homeowners to prune branches and hedges while the weather is still nice. But increasingly, the word from lawn care specialists and gardeners is to hold off on pruning until winter. Resisting the urge to prune in the fall is the advice of*



famous green thumb Paul James, host of HGTV's Gardening by the Yard. "The tender new growth that would result may not have a chance to harden sufficiently before cold weather arrives," Paul explained, "and that can lead to damage."

Horticulturalist Deborah Brown agreed. "Pruning in late winter, just before spring growth starts," she said, "leaves fresh wounds exposed for only a short time before new growth begins the wound-sealing process."

Gardening author Mike McGrath is more adamant in his advice. "The rules of fall pruning are simple," he maintained. "Prune nothing in the fall! Nada! Zilch! Ladies, hide the pruners from helpful husbands!"

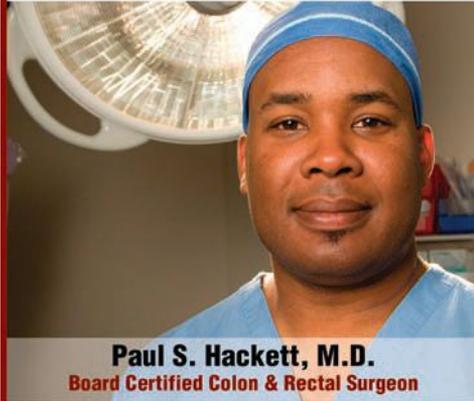
But we yard lovers needn't fret. There's plenty of lawn and garden maintenance for us to accomplish long before winter wields its icy claws.



## Lawn cleanup and maintenance

Keeping lawns free of leaves is the main objective in the fall, so let the raking begin. And we may as well do it the right way. Yes, there's a method to leaf-free madness, as Barbara Pleasant outlines in her book *Compost Gardening*. She recommends raking with the wind (and downhill when possible). Matching your rake to the kind of leaves in your yard and to your body type is also suggested. Your favorite mom-and-pop garden

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centers, as well as your local big box stores, offer a range of sizes and weights.

Most importantly, use your shredded leaves as mulch. "Leaves contain some of the nutrients that trees and shrubs have taken out of the soil," Barbara wrote, "and it's in keeping with nature's plan that you should give back some of those purloined nutrients by mowing over part of your annual leaf fall, thus returning organic matter to the soil." Ellis County Master Gardeners are in favor of this form of organic recycling, advising a 3- to 6-inch layer of leaves as mulch in vegetable and flower beds and around trees and bushes.

Writer and avid gardener Lisa Kaplan Gordon suggests patching bare or thin spots of grass during the fall. Remove dead grass and replace with an inch of compost and an appropriate grass seed suited to shade or sun. "You'll want to keep the patch moist," Lisa said, "so lightly water once a day until the seed germinates, and the new grass gets about 1-inch tall."

## Planting and transplanting

Fall is a good time for planting vines and ground covers from containers. Cool-season annuals like pansies, daffodils, dianthus and ornamental kale or cabbage are ripe for autumnal planting,

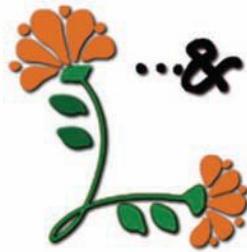


as are leeks, garlic and onions, especially those “from bulbs in soil enriched with organic matter.”

Paul James believes container plants deserve more attention from fall gardeners than they receive. “You can take cuttings of various annuals and root them in either water or a potting medium such as vermiculite, perlite or soil-less potting mix,” he instructed. Paul also recommends transplanting potted perennials into the garden.

## Fertilizing

Roger Cook of *This Old House* magazine reminds his readers fall is the optimum time for fertilizing their lawns. “Taking the time to fertilize in the fall will strengthen your plants’ and lawn’s roots, giving them a strong base on which to thrive next spring,” he pointed out. He recommends a formula of 20-8-8



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(nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) for the best blade, foliage and root growth and trace element absorption. Check with your local Master Gardeners for the ideal time for lawn fertilization. Roger also suggests fertilizing shrubs and trees in the fall. "I recommend applying one to three pounds of slow-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of bed and cultivating lightly," he shared.

## Pruning

While fall pruning isn't advocated by most professionals, there are some basics to remember and apply to the task when trimming is safer for the plants.

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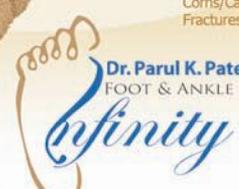
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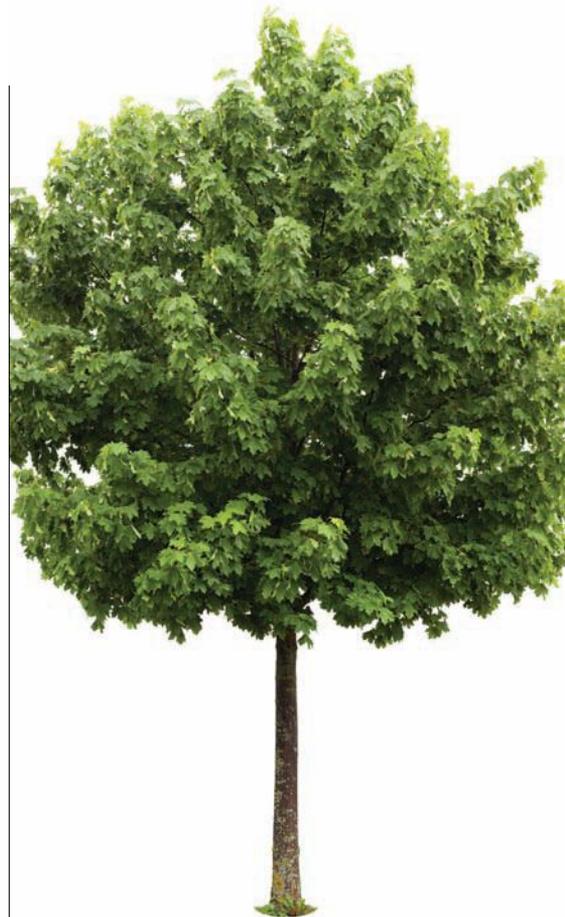
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Mike McGrath expounded on why it's advisable not to prune until winter. "As I try to stress every year at this time, pruning now stimulates new growth just when the plants are trying to go dormant, and this severely weakens the plants."

Once winter has arrived, pruning is recommended to promote overall plant health, encourage flower and fruit development, control size and eliminate broken, hazardous branches. For large, established trees, pruning is best left to qualified professionals. A number of knowledgeable, reputable tree trimming services provide care programs and fertilization. Some employ certified arborists to assist clients and offer tree trimming along with traditional lawn and garden packages.

Among shrubs to prune in winter are hydrangeas and camellias. Trees to be pruned at the same time include: juniper, spruce, Bradford pear, honey locust and poplar. Trees *not* to prune in winter are maple, birch, dogwood, walnut and elm.

Whether raking and mulching or planting and fertilizing, remember to pace yourself. As Barbara Pleasant wrote in *Compost Gardening*, "Leaf season will last for several weeks, so you have plenty of time to let yourself enjoy the weather and the work?" **NOW**



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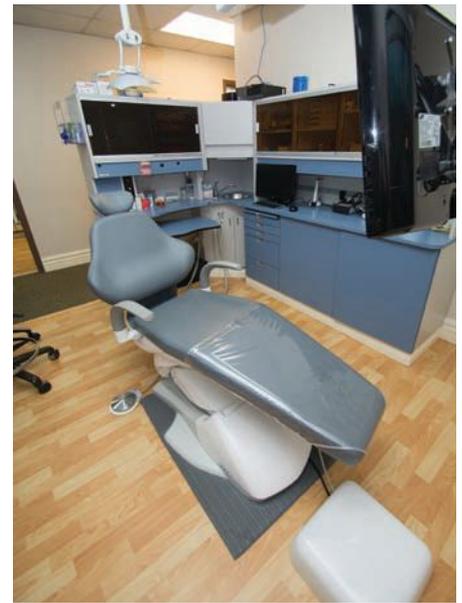


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# Solving Dental Challenges

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— By Beverly Shay

Dr. Emilio López was born in Cuba, but grew up in New York, Spain and Australia. Now he calls Cedar Hill, Texas, home. “Dentistry is both an art and a science that makes a difference in people’s lives,” shared Dr. López regarding his lifelong desire to be a dentist.

Dr. López graduated from dental school at Columbia University in Manhattan in 2002. He served as a captain in the U.S. Army. He was chief officer of a dental clinic in Fort Drum, New York, responsible for thousands of overseas deployments. “I saw many honorable men and women go overseas to fight for our freedom and future,” Dr. López said. One of his assignments was Fort Sam Houston in San

Antonio, Texas, where Emilio developed a real love for the Lone Star State. “Texas is a huge state populated by people with big hearts, and I absolutely love it here,” he confessed.

In 2008, he bought this practice. “I inherited a lot of long-term patients and offer the same traditional, friendly, personal care they were used to receiving,” Dr. López emphasized. “Our goal is to provide all the care our patients need, so we tell them to call any time with any issue or concern. I think about my patients all the time, and when they call in, I know exactly who they are,” he added. “I always have time to see each and every one!” Emergencies are cared for as quickly as possible, usually the same day.

Dr. López is a general dentist, which means he and his caring employees provide oral hygiene, fillings, crowns, dentures and bridges and deep cleanings, as needed. “One thing I am seeing more of is stress-related grinding or clenching of teeth. This can cause neck/shoulder pain or migraines. Frequently, people are unaware their pain is caused by nighttime grinding. This problem is usually easily relieved through use of a guard or apparatus worn at night,” he added.

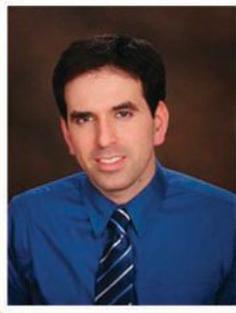
By far the most common issue is improper oral hygiene. “Sugary beverages and acidic energy drinks are hard on teeth. Another compounding factor is insufficient water intake. Dry mouth can lead to rampant cavities pretty quickly. Flossing, using mouthwash, brushing as often as you can, especially before sleeping will considerably help eliminate bacteria,” Dr. López advised. “Changing your toothbrush at least every three months is wise, as toothbrushes harbor bacteria. Coffee, smoking and drinking wine can stain teeth, but rinsing your mouth with water afterward helps reduce the staining.” Besides oral hygiene and cavity care, Dr. López provides oral cancer screenings at each exam by checking the tongue and soft tissue in the mouth.

“My goal is to get patients to the place where all they need is cleanings,” Dr. López stated. “We do this by measuring periodontal probing depths and creating a dental plan which involves regular cleaning and deep cleaning only as necessary.

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Shane Smith, manager of Camp El Har, is delighted with the welcome from Duncanville Chamber.



Several children catch some excitement at DeSoto ISD's Back-to-School Fair.



Xi Rho Beta President Sandra McMullen (right) presents the Seena Meglino Scholarship to Itsel Uloa, graduate of PACE School of Duncanville, who plans to pursue nursing.



Two-Wins hosted B.I.G. a back-to-school event at Uptown Village in partnership with Maverick ManiAACs, the Mars' magical big man dance troupe.



Two DeSoto ladies, Pajbe Danielle and Ryann Campbell, join keynote speaker Pat Smith at the 21st Annual Emmett Conrad Leadership Luncheon.



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# How Aggressive Should I be When I Invest for Retirement?

It depends. The right answer in your case will depend on a number of key factors. These include, among others, your income and assets, your attitude toward risk, whether you have access to an employer-sponsored plan at work, the age at which you plan to retire and your projected expenses during retirement. But it's possible to lay down some guidelines that may be of help to you.

The conventional wisdom has traditionally been that you should invest aggressively when you're young and then move gradually toward a more conservative approach. By the time you retired, you would probably end up with a portfolio made up mostly of high-grade bonds and other low-risk investments. However the retirement landscape has changed dramatically in the last 20 years or so. As a result, many of our basic assumptions about retirement planning have been overturned.

The dwindling number of traditional pension plans and concerns about Social Security have led people to take greater responsibility for their own retirement. Investing more aggressively over the long term has become common as people realize that, without anyone else to take care of them, they need to build the largest retirement nest egg they possibly can. In fact, many people these days primarily use growth vehicles (e.g., certain stocks and mutual funds) for their investment portfolios and tax-deferred retirement plans (e.g., 401(k)s and IRAs), though the proportion of stocks may still be reduced as they near retirement.

Other factors have changed the way we think about and invest for retirement as well. People tend to retire younger, live longer and do more during retirement than

they used to. With the likelihood that you will have well over 20 years of activity to fund, it may be a good idea to invest more aggressively for retirement than previous generations did. And there's no reason to switch over to fixed-income securities completely upon reaching retirement, especially with interest rates at historic lows. Because bond prices typically fall when interest rates go up, a period of rising interest rates can affect the value of your bond holdings. Many financial planners suggest that you keep a suitably balanced portfolio, including some of your assets in growth-oriented investments, even after you retire.

Don't forget to carefully consider a mutual fund's investment objectives, risks, fees and expenses, which can be found in the prospectus available from the fund. Read it carefully before investing. **NOW**

*This information was developed by Broadridge, an independent third party. It is general in nature, is not a complete statement of all information necessary for making an investment decision, and is not a recommendation or a solicitation to buy or sell any security. Investments and strategies mentioned may not be suitable for all investors. Past performance may not be indicative of future results. Raymond James & Associates, Inc. member New York Stock Exchange/SIPC does not provide advice on tax, legal or mortgage issues. These matters should be discussed with an appropriate professional.*

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## October 2

College Family Financial Planning Workshop: 7:00 p.m., CH library.

## October 4

13th Annual Celebrating Life Foundation Sister to Sister Festival and 5K Run/Walk: 6:30 a.m.-noon, CH Rec. Ctr., Register: celebratinglife.org or (972) 501-9981.

DeSoto Arts Commission Walk & Roll for Breast Cancer Awareness 5K/1Mile Fun Run: 7:30 a.m.-noon, Outdoor Amphitheater. \$15/person includes T-shirt.

## October 8

Learn to stretch your budget via websites/apps: 2:00-3:30 p.m., CH library.

## October 10

Old Settler's Reunion: 5:00-8:00 p.m., historic downtown Cedar Hill. All "pioneers" invited for reminiscing, bingo and food. (214) 789-8165.

## October 11

77th Annual Country Day on the Hill: 10:00 a.m. parade, breakfast, fun run, pet/

style shows, chili cook-off, arts/crafts, games, train, pageants/talent show, petting zoo and tons of booths and food. (214) 789-8165.

## October 12

Charity Motorcycle and Car Show: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Annice Antiques. \$10 vehicle fee benefits Duncanville Outreach Center. Register: (972) 365-8663.

## October 13

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Family Fun Night: 6:30 p.m., CH library.

## October 16

Marshmallow Madness @ DeSoto library: 5:00 p.m. Ages 13-18 (creation food); ages 7-12 (arts and crafts). Get tickets by checking out five books. (972) 230-9666.

## October 17

Citizenship Class: Noon-1:00 p.m., DV library: 30 student limit.

## October 25

Do-it-Yourself Cake Decorating: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., CH library. Register: (972) 291-7323 ext. 1311.

## October 26

Lecture Luncheon Club: 11:00 a.m., 106 E. Freeman St. Hear about WWII civilian woman pilots assisting the U.S. Army/Air Force. Lunch: \$21.00: (817) 417-0476.

## October 28

Business 101: 6:30 p.m., CH library. Learn tips/strategies for small businesses.

## October 30

Scare on the Square: 6:30 p.m., Pioneer Park in historic downtown Cedar Hill. Free kid-friendly event: storytelling, costume parade and trick-or-treating.

## October 31

Southwest Regional Com. Ctr. Emergency 911 "It's Spooky Not to Know Your Address!": 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 200 S. Parks Dr., DS. CH/DV/DS elementary children/teachers: proper use of 9-1-1 and emergency services; refreshments, gifts and a spooky house. **RSVP by Oct. 7:** (972) 230-5662 or (972) 223-6111.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [beverly.shay@nowmagazines.com](mailto:beverly.shay@nowmagazines.com).*

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## In the Kitchen With James Hernandez

— *By Beverly Shay*

“As a young boy, I enjoyed watching my mother cook. She made it look effortless,” James Hernandez recalled. James remembers his dad experimenting with various styles of smokers. “He designed and built a very nice smoker with a side firebox he still has today. I learned you take your time and enjoy the day with cold beverages on summer and spring days, cooking low and slow.”

Although James has traveled extensively and tried many different foods, he always comes back to Southern and Mexican dishes, with grilling being his favorite cooking medium. One family tradition is sharing Buanelos (a fried dough fritter, sprinkled with cinnamon sugar) and Canela (a cinnamon tea) to bring in the New Year. **NOW**

### Buanelos

*James’ original recipe.*

- 4 cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten**
- 3/4-1 cup milk**
- 1/4 cup butter, melted**
- 1 cup vegetable oil, heated to 365 F**

#### *Topping:*

- 3-4 Tbsp. sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. cinnamon**

- 1.** Sift first 4 ingredients. Combine eggs, 3/4 cup milk and butter. Mix wet and dry ingredients to form a dough ball. If too dry, add remaining milk.
- 2.** Place dough on a lightly floured board; knead about 30 seconds. Cut dough into 4 equal sections. Roll dough, 1 section at a time, to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut dough into strips, triangles or use favorite cookie

cutter. Carefully drop into hot oil and fry until golden brown (45-60 seconds per side).

- 3.** For topping: Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle on hot Buanelos immediately. Serve with honey or maple syrup, if desired.

### Cajun Seasoning

- 2 Tbsp. each salt and garlic powder**
- 1 Tbsp. each black pepper, onion powder, cayenne pepper, dried oregano and dried thyme**

- 1.** Combine all ingredients thoroughly.

### James’ Beef Stew

- 2 lbs. stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 1/4 tsp. seasoning salt (divided use)**
- 1 1/4 tsp. cracked black pepper (divided use)**
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 tsp. Cajun seasoning**

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 2 tsp. dried onion**
- 2 14-oz. cans beef broth (divided use)**
- 1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1/8 tsp. each dried parsley, dried oregano, dried basil**
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- 2 large potatoes, cut into 2-inch cubes**
- 1 small bag frozen mixed vegetables**

- 1.** Season beef with 1/2 tsp. seasoning salt and 1/2 tsp. cracked pepper. Dredge meat in flour mixed with Cajun seasoning. Set 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tsp. oil. Sear beef in 2 batches for about 2-3 minutes per side. Use remaining tsp. of oil for searing second batch of beef.
- 2.** Transfer meat to Dutch oven or slow cooker. Add onions to skillet; deglaze skillet with 1/2 can broth. Add broth from skillet to meat.
- 3.** Add tomatoes, herbs, spices, Worcestershire sauce and remaining broth to meat. Cover Dutch oven; cook for 30 minutes. (If using slow cooker, cover and set at medium-high; cook 1 hour.)
- 4.** Add potatoes and vegetables; continue to cook on medium-low for 2 hours. (For slow cooker, cook on high for 6 hours.) Add more seasoning salt and pepper if desired. Serve immediately.

### Grilled Chicken Breasts

- 4 chicken breasts**
- 1/4 cup Wishbone Italian Dressing**
- 1/2 tsp. seasoning salt**
- 1/2 tsp. coarsely ground black pepper**
- 1/2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- 1/2 tsp. liquid smoke**
- 1 tsp. chicken base**
- 1/2 tsp. Cholula Hot Sauce**
- 1/2 tsp. paprika**

- 1.** Pound chicken breasts to uniform thickness to cook evenly. With a fork, pierce each chicken piece several times on one side.
- 2.** Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl; whisk thoroughly. Place chicken in Ziploc bag; coat completely with marinade. Refrigerate for 6 hours.
- 3.** Remove chicken from the bag. Grill at 400 F, cooking 6-8 minutes on each side. When internal temperature has reached 165 F, chicken is ready to eat.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**

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