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JANUARY 2023

Building Opportunity

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Featured Business: Infinite Infusion Bar and Wellness Clinic



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January 2023 Volume 17, Issue 1

ON THE COVER



Janet and Joe Veracruz serve the students and citizens of Duncanville.

Photo by Shane Kirkpatrick.

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Adam

Adam Walker SouthwestNOW Editor adam.walker@nowmagazines.com (469) 285-2008

EDITOR'S NOTE

On a pillar of fire ...

I stayed up to the wee hours to watch history. I was too young when the last Apollo mission launched to have any memory of it. It took most of five decades, but we're back to working on manned spaceflight, beyond low Earth orbit.

I followed the Space Shuttle faithfully, all through my teen years, receiving the paper STS briefings from NASA in the mail as each was printed. I followed all the unmanned missions to the outer planets. I stayed generally informed about the ISS. I watched missions by the Europeans, Russians, Chinese, Indians, Israelis and Japanese. I rejoiced over the beginnings of private space flight.

But there was something special about watching a column of flame propel an American rocket into space — one capable of returning American feet to the Lunar surface. Artemis is a new page in spaceflight. Sure, this flight was unmanned, but the next will orbit the moon, and the third will land the first woman on the moon, and the first person of color. The plan is to spend six-and-a-half days on the moon, about twice as long as any Apollo mission. And then to go back several more times, probably building a permanent base, and prospecting for water ice. And this puts us a giant leap closer to landing on Mars.

You probably aren't as excited about this as I am, but it's going to be an exciting few years — the stuff of childhood dreams that last a lifetime. A whole new generation will learn to dream big and reach for the stars.

Ad astra!

P.S. I'm always looking for story ideas and good cooks to feature. Send your recommendations to adam.walker@nowmagazines.com.

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BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

— Adam Walker

Janet Veracruz is a trailblazer. She is the first Latina member of the Duncanville ISD school board. But then, trailblazing is sort of a family affair. Her husband, Joe, was previously the first Latino on the school board and is now the first Latino on the Duncanville city council.

A native of Victoria, Janet and her husband both grew up in Oak Cliff. They knew each other growing up, but once they got engaged, their lives really started to move quickly. "We married in July of 1990," Joe revealed. Then Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August, and I was deployed. We were married for one week, and then I didn't see Janet for one year!"

Joe was gone most of the time for three years, while Janet stayed home and raised their kids. Despite the hardship, Janet is a first-generation college graduate. "Joe put me through college while he was in Afghanistan. I got a job at Trinity Christian School, because my kids were going to school there, and I wanted to be close to my kids. A principal at Hyman Elementary told me I was great at what I was doing and that I needed to go back to school. I went to UNT-Dallas, course by course, and finished my degree, debt free. I got three awards as teacher of the year in I2 years of teaching at Trinity. I like hands-on teaching and promoting STEM thinking, which sparked 'Invention Convention' for my fourth grade."

In an ISD that is 54 percent Hispanic, Joe was the first Latino to represent that population on the ISD's board. When he decided to step down in order to run for city council, he suggested that Janet ought to run to replace him. "He strongly encouraged me to go for it. I was in my 13th year of teaching. I just looked at him, like, *How?* But then I realized, *Why not?* I don't ever want to have regrets, looking back,







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thinking *Shoulda, coulda, woulda.* When I decided to try, I was all in. I was still teaching, and I would have students come to class saying, 'Ms. Veracruz, I saw your sign! I'm going to vote for you!' I realized that I had a duty to step into the arena and fight for the future of our kids. This is about legacy, not regrets." Now she's in her second term on the board.

Running two political campaigns in the same household, at the same time, got a little bit hectic, but Janet and Joe made it work, and they both won their seats. "I was a first-generation college student, and now I'm a first-generation politician. I don't believe you can have too many firsts. I want to pull people up, to encourage them to rise up and come sit at the table. I'm devoting my time to creating healthy spaces for participation. Now I have a hand in shaping the future, a hand in molding and shaping and speaking change into the future. And I'll have a hand in hiring other firsts. Prayer got us through the tough times. Now our children can look at us and see, 'Wow, mom and dad did that!""

Janet got to take her seat at the table during difficult times. "COVID-19 was challenging for the school district. We had to stand in the gap and continue feeding our students. We had to supply tablets and internet connections to continue teaching. We had the mindset to seek solutions."

"Fortunately, we had decided to upgrade our district bandwidth, back before the pandemic hit," Joe added. "That decision, made during my time on the board, meant the district was able to meet the challenge."

"Where there's a setback, there's a comeback," Janet agreed. "We're looking to the future. We need to rise





up and prepare for the next challenge. We need to always be looking at what the new generation needs. We just introduced a JROTC program. It's an opportunity to offer exposure to students considering a career path my husband chose. We had over 100 applicants. We have so many paths to choose from now. We didn't have this when I was a student. Duncanville has the collegiate academy where students graduate with an associate degree. There are the P-TECH tracks for architecture, education, automotive and engineering. We have the culinary arts program. There are so many pathways to opportunity for students today in Duncanville ISD. They can be exposed to so many programs that suit them, as early as middle school. The future looks bright. It's a great time to be a Duncanville student. Opportunities are overflowing. And we have a robust, young group of talented students for this next generation."

Janet is also focused on getting past generations more engaged. "We need to build better connections with our alumni, so they will come back and show our kids today what they can achieve as Duncanville graduates.

"God gave me the opportunity to sit at the table. When I took my seat, people started congratulating me. It was then when I began to understand what an honor it is to be here, to make history. I'm glad to be the first, but I don't want to be the last. It's a pleasure to work with the rest of the board members and be a part of the conversation. Reformation is happening right here and right now in Duncanville ISD. It's time to reconnect, rebuild, renew community after COVID-19."



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— By Adam Walker

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Valarie Crawford, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, is an advanced practice registered nurse and a family nurse practitioner who started Infinite Infusion Bar and Wellness Clinic to help people in DeSoto and the surrounding communities feel better. "Infusions deliver nutrients directly into the blood stream, so they offer immediate benefits. If you take a vitamin or supplement pill, you have to wait for it to digest, and you lose half of the benefits through your GI tract, where it's never absorbed. With an infusion, it's right there in your blood, helping you," Nurse Practitioner Valarie explained.

CLIN

WELLNESS

"The Myers' Cocktail is an intravenous vitamin therapy infusion that helps with vitamin depletion, hangovers and boosting your immune system. Extreme exercise or alcohol consumption can leave you dehydrated, but the Myers' infusion helps rehydrate you, so you can feel better. It can also help with asthma, seasonal allergies and muscle spasms. It boosts your energy levels, even if you suffer from chronic fatigue. There are a number of other conditions that can also be helped with the Myers' infusions. I also offer infusions that help with weight loss, which is a problem for so many people. The infusions use a small butterfly needle, so with the numbing cream, patients usually don't even feel it."

Vitamins B-12, C and biotin, to help with skin and nails, are some of the nutrients that can also be replaced by injection. Testosterone injections help men, who suffer from

low testosterone levels as they age, maintain their health by replacing what they are missing. And weight-loss injections, like Semaglutide (also known as Wegovy), help both men and women. "One of my patients lost 20 pounds in only a couple of weeks," Nurse Practitioner Valarie revealed. "I've seen very good success with the weight-loss injections, but we also offer pills for weight loss." Infinite Infusion Bar and Wellness Clinic also offers BOTOX as a cosmetic procedure.

"Infusions deliver nutrients directly into the blood stream, so they offer immediate benefits."

Nurse Practitioner Valarie maintains the highest standards for all the infusions she administers. "I mix everything here. Nothing is prepared until the customer shows up. And I am the only one who ever touches the infusions. I make sure that everything is formulated correctly."

In addition to these services mentioned above, Infinite Infusion Bar and Wellness Clinic offers urgent care and other clinic services. "I can refill prescriptions for patients who have run out of their medication. I treat hypertension, diabetes, hyperthyroid and other chronic conditions here in the office. And I see sick patients and injured patients who need care urgently. If you need labs done, I can order those. I also provide birth control." Nurse Practitioner Valarie is even able to offer TeleVisits to patients who may not be able to get out.

Infinite Infusion Bar and Wellness Clinic has cash prices for non-medical procedures and for those without insurance. But they also accept all types of PPO insurance, Medicare and Medicaid. They can also take some HMOs. DALLAS AREA PATROL AND PROTECTION SERVICES Protection With Dignity and Pride FOCUS DAILY NEWS READERS CHOICE AWARD BEST SECURITY COMPANY 2017 - 2022 Main Number 972-224-0920 Texas License Number: B09406001 Chief M. Jones 1229 E. Pleasant Run Rd * Suite 222 DeSoto, TX 75115

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CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.

The LakeRidge Charitable foundation has been helping local charities close their funding gaps now for the last 14 years. The LakeRidge Charitable Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization. The Foundation began as a community golf event to bring neighbors together and evolved into a formal nonprofit supporting local worthy charitable causes. On November 5th of this year we held our 14th annual golf tournament. The board of the LakeRidge Foundation is comprised of LakeRidge residents: Chad McCurdy, Candice McCurdy, Kay Davidson, Lynn Davidson, Bill Pierce, John Marinos, Mary Tengra and Denise Canales. We have many more volunteers, like John Monroe, that donate their time and money to help make the tournament a huge success each year.

Every year following the tournament we gather together just before Christmas in appreciation of the sponsors and volunteers that make our tournament possible. We invite our sponsors to attend as we hand out the checks to local charities, made possible by their generous support. We would like to offer a special note of gratitude to our title sponsor Baylor Scott and White Orthopedic and Spine Hospital of Arlington. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Trancasa for attending this years Christmas event as one of our newest silver level sponsors. Here is a full list of our sponsors for 2022: Gold sponsor LaFarge Holcim; Silver sponsors Grand Manor, United Real Estate, Bedrock Homes, Chad McCurdy and Trancasa USA; Breakfast sponsor Hillwood Development; Cart sponsor Hillco; Longest drive sponsors Gun Barrel Development and Joshua Homes; Putting contest sponsor Dial One Johnson; Closest to the pin sponsors John and Sharyn Monroe, Winston Homes, and 1 First United Mortgage Chipping contest sponsor Mprinted.com; Hole sponsors Clark-Patton Insurance, Method828, OLM inc., A&A Real Estate, Orion Access Control, and Benjamin Franklin Plumbing. Thanks to our sponsors and tournament players we were able to donate almost \$30,000 to local charities this year.

Here is some additional information about the local charities we assisted this year:

Cedar Hill All Pro Dads states their mission as "Building relationships that inspire academic excellence, character, and success in our students, families, and community." All Pro Dads was started by Tony Dungee nationally to encourage fathers to be more active in the lives of their children. The Cedar Hill Chapter is the only district in the country with representation at every campus in the ISD. You may see these dads open car doors in the morning at any school in the district. The Dads host a free breakfast at every campus inviting dads to join their children for words of encouragement and family building. They help families in the district that might be struggling and students that might need life coaching. You can find out more at https://cedarhilldads.org/

Bridges Safehouse is committed to connecting mothers in crisis to help, hope and home. They help with parenting support to try and curb homelessness among single mom households. They help moms make healthy babies by ensuring pregnant moms are receiving adequate prenatal care. Bridges offers safe shelter to mothers and children experiencing a crisis. They provide counseling since 90% of homeless mothers have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse. In summary, Bridges provides a pathway for these homeless mothers and children to break the cycle of abuse and homelessness. You can find out more at https://bridgescanhelp.org/

The Cedar Hill Action Team (CHAT) is an initiative formed by service-hearted citizens of Cedar Hill, Texas and its surrounding communities. Cedar Hill Action Team (C.H.A.T) is committed to determining and providing for the needs of the citizens of Cedar Hill by partnering with the city, police department, school district, local, state, and national service organizations to help strengthen families, and impact lives, young and old, by fostering growth, creating leaders, and empowering people. One of the programs we are able to specifically help with is their summer camp program. The camp is provided at no cost to children allowing families that wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a summer camp to have a place for their children. You can learn more about CHAT at https://www.cedarhillactionteam.org/

Cedar Hill Shares Food Pantry is a community-wide effort to alleviate hunger in our city. They pledge to provide food and other assistance, without discrimination, to eligible needy families living in the 75104 zip code and within the Cedar Hill Independent School District boundaries. You can learn more about Cedar Hill Shares at https://cedarhillshares.org/ **Mission Cedar Hill** is now in its 20th year. Mission Cedar Hill is a joint effort made up solely of volunteers from churches, the city, nonprofits and individuals who wish to bless struggling home owners, especially the elderly, disabled, veterans, and nonprofit properties by beautifying those properties and bringing them into code compliance. You can learn more about Mission Cedar Hill at https://missioncedarhill.org/

It is truly our honor to be able to organize this event on an annual basis to bless these much worthy charities as well as the community as a whole. We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's tournament at the Tangle Ridge Golf Course on Nov. 4th.



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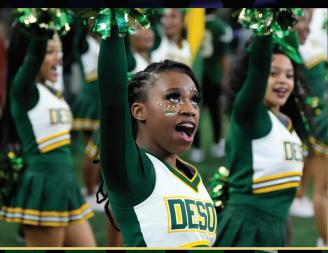


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Photos courtesy of Shane Kirkpatrick.























Zoomed In: By Adam Walker Sienna, Shyloh and Skylar Walker

On a brisk afternoon, these three young sisters stopped by Hillcrest Baptist Church in Cedar Hill to drop off their Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes at the collection point. "We picked out toys we liked that we thought other kids would like," Skylar explained.

"We went shopping with Granna and Aunt Becky," Sienna revealed. "We wanted to get something for someone our age who never got a Christmas present before."

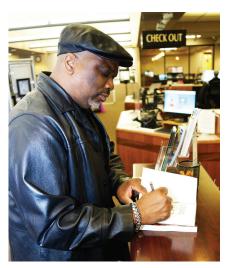
Their boxes included dollies and diaries. "And rings!" little Shyloh declared, sharing the one detail important enough to overcome her bashfulness.

"We gave the people the boxes, and they gave us candy canes and Christmas tree ornaments!" Skylar exclaimed. All three girls remembered their shopping trip and the experience of giving fondly — and recognized the importance of helping others.



Charles Williams and Brent English win a free heating and air conditioning system from HVAC/R Finest.

Around Town



Crime fiction author Omar Scott signs his books for the DeSoto Public Library's local author collection.



Sue Clark and Councilman Greg Contreras are Duncanville's Woman and Man of the Year.



Renew at Ease Wellness holds a ribbon cutting.

NOW



Mayor Rachel Proctor presents a proclamation to Marylynne Henry celebrating Friends Place Adult Day Services' 10 years in DeSoto.



DHS band members march in their pj's to kick off the Christmas season.



Dads serve breakfast at High Pointé Elementary School.





106 S. Main St., Duncanville 972.780.5707 boxoffice@dctheatre.org www.dctheatre.org







Ronnita Couch likes to put on some smooth music and cook to destress. "Cooking takes me back to good memories of family and friends. The sounds and smells remind me of family functions and cookouts. I never studied cooking formally. My mama, who was actually my grandmother, raised me. She suffered from arthritis in her knees, and she'd often say, 'If you kids wanna eat, you better come and help me cook!' She had problems standing long periods of time, so she'd sit on her stool in the kitchen and give directions, like, 'Cut those potatoes a little smaller. Add more water to that pot. Turn the fire down under that skillet.' As she gave directions, I was inadvertently learning her recipes and techniques."

Avocado Tacos

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 large eggs, whites only
- 1 1/4 cups panko breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil, plus more for misting or brushing
- 2 avocados, peeled and halved
- 1 lime
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 small red cabbage, thinly sliced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced

I jalapeño, seeded and thinly sliced I/2 cup cilantro leaves Flour tortillas, warmed Lime wedges (optional) Sour cream (optional)

I. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and pepper.

2. In a second small bowl, lightly beat the egg whites.

3. In a third small bowl, combine the panko breadcrumbs with the oil.

4. Cut the avocados into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Working with one slice at a time, coat

the avocado slices lightly in the flour, then in the egg, letting any excess drip off. Finally coat them in the panko, pressing gently to help it adhere.

5. Spray or brush an air fryer basket with oil. Spray or brush the avocados with oil. In batches, place the avocado slices in the basket, in a single layer; air-fry at 400 F until golden brown, about 6 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, zest the lime into a large bowl; squeeze in 2 Tbsp. of juice. Whisk in the mayonnaise and a pinch of salt. Add the cabbage, scallions and jalapeño; toss to coat. Fold in the cilantro.

7 Serve the avocados and slaw in the tortillas, with lime wedges and sour cream, if desired.

Crunchy French Toast

- 3 cups Cinnamon Toast Crunch cereal, crushed
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- I tsp. ground cinnamon
- Splash of vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. butter

6 slices Hawaiian bread, cut into thirds Powdered sugar, to taste

 Place the crushed cereal in a shallow bowl.
 In a separate shallow dish, whisk the next 4 ingredients together until well mixed.
 Heat a griddle or skillet over medium heat and butter it. Dip the bread, one piece at a time, into the wet mixture; then dip them into the cereal, coating on both sides. Once fully coated, fry about 4 minutes on each side.

4. Dust with powdered sugar; serve hot.

Butter Fried Chicken

2 eggs
3 cloves garlic, grated
1/2 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. salt (divided use)
1 tsp. black pepper
1 lb. chicken wings (or other cut)
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup breadcrumbs
1/2 tsp. oregano
1/3 cup unsalted butter

 In a mixing bowl, combine the eggs, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Add the chicken; mix well. Marinate for 30 minutes.
 In another bowl, add the flour, breadcrumbs, oregano and salt. Mix well until incorporated. Take a chicken piece; dredge it in the flour mixture. Then dip it in the egg mixture. Dredge it again in the flour mixture; set aside. Repeat for the remaining chicken pieces.

3. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Shallow fry the chicken on all sides, until well-cooked and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Do not burn.

4. Remove to paper towels to drain excess oil.

Flatter Crab Pasta Salad

- I cup olive oil 1/2 cup red wine vinegar 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, shaved 2 tsp. dried oregano 2 cloves garlic, finely minced 1/2 tsp. celery salt 1/4 tsp. pepper, or to taste 4 gts. water I Tbsp. salt I lb. spaghetti 2 zucchini, chopped 2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped 2 cucumbers, coarsely chopped I green bell pepper, coarsely chopped I red bell pepper, coarsely chopped I yellow bell pepper, coarsely chopped
- I purple onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 2-oz. can black olives
- 2 cups imitation crab
- I tsp. paprika



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I. In a small bowl with a whisk, or in a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the first 7 ingredients. Mix well; allow the flavors to blend while preparing the salad.

2. Bring the water and salt to a boil. Add the spaghetti; cook according to package directions, about 9 minutes. Drain well; rinse in cold water.

3. In a large bowl, add the zucchini and the next 8 ingredients. Add the rinsed pasta;

toss and drizzle with the salad dressing to taste. Sprinkle with paprika.

Salmon Croquettes

- 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper, chopped



1/2 purple onion, chopped 3 green onions, chopped

- 1 3.5-oz. can salmon
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- I large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 Tbsp. liquid smoke

side or until golden brown.

2 Tbsp. oil

 Add the panko and flour to a bowl; mix. Add the remaining ingredients, except for the oil; mix until incorporated.
 Shape into 6-8 patties; heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the patties; cook for 2-3 minutes on each

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Dear Suffering Friend:

Tens of millions Americans have nerve damage — a condition known as "neuropathy."

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But many OTHER people with these symptoms — pain, burning, and tingling — are NOT diabetic, yet also suffer from nerve damage.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the many diseases and conditions that can destroy the nerves in your extremities and limbs include:

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- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- ✓ Vitamin deficiencies
- ✓ Liver disease
- ✓ Underactive thyroid
- ✓ Repetitive motions such as typing
- \checkmark Bone marrow disorders
- Certain prescription medications
- ✓ Falls, sports injuries, and other trauma
- ✓ Wearing a cast or using crutches

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9						10			11	12
13						14				
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28			29	30		31				32
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Across

- 1 Mediterranean island
- 6 To be unwell
- 9 Beginning of a clarification
- 10 Trial printing impression
- 13 Priestess in "The Pearl Fishers"
- 14 Portuguese saint
- 15 Arrests
- 17 Bachelor's last words?
- 18 Went around
- 21 Warlike woman
- 23 Talk radio staple
- 24 It replaced the Pan-American Union
- 25 Diminish
- 28 Wall recess
- 31 Dogma
- 33 Oversalivate
- 34 Overused
- 35 Grp. with panda logo
- 36 Lake Placid's county

- Down
- 1 Artillery angular measure
- 2 So be it
- 3 Metal bikini wearer
- 4 Afghanistan faction
- 5 Study critically
- 6 Computer prog
- 7 "The Ballad of --- Hayes" (Peter La Farge)
- 8 "Little Women" author --- May Alcott
- 11 Ancient
- 12 Every living thing needs it
- 16 Plunder
- 19 "The Kids Are All Right" actress ---Benina
- 20 Chekhov trio
- 21 "--- past a freckle"
- 22 --- mule, a cocktail
- 23 Doctor Who's Amy
- 26 "Les Etats---- "
- 27 Safe
- 29 Modus operandi
- 30 "Lord of the Rings" character
- 32 Country singer Ritter

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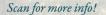
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THE LOCAL TABLE

One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.

- Virginia Woolf



Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press. Check with individual organizations or your city or Chamber websites to verify dates and times.

lappy

1/1

First Day Hike: Start your year off connecting with nature. Free. Noon-6:00 p.m., Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, 1206 W. FM 1387, Cedar Hill.

1/3-1/6

Winter Break Camp: Come with your kids for Science and Seuss Fun. Free. Noon-4:00 p.m., DeSoto Public Library, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.

1/13

Downtown Celebration: Join the ribbon cutting for the newly repaired streets and the kick-off of the Lake-Moreno project. Free. 4:00-5:30 p.m., 1846 Coffee, 610 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

MLK Performing Arts Show:

Join the DeSoto High School Choir and Dallas Black Dance Theatre for a night of celebration. \$10, \$5 for students and seniors. 7:00-10:00 p.m., Fred Nichols Auditorium, DeSoto High School, 600 Eagle Dr.

1/14

Book Feast:

Show up for the first meeting of this book club to discuss *Klara* and the Sun. Free. 2:00-3:00

p.m., Duncanville Public Library, 201 James Collins Blvd.

1/17

Family Fun Night Winter Challenge: Bust the winter blahs with a fun challenge, snacks and other activities. Free. 6:30-7:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Library, 225 Cedar St., Cedar Hill.

1/19

Celebrate Duncanville: The mayor's state of the city address and the Chamber of Commerce's presentation of the man and woman of the year. Black tie optional. RSVP at (972) 780-4990. \$50. 6:00-9:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn,

JANUARY

800 N. Main St.

1/25

Faith Leaders' Quarterly Breakfast Meeting:

8:30-10:00 a.m., Civic Center, Bluebonnet Room, 211 E. Peasant Run Rd., DeSoto.

1/26

Cedar Hill State of the City: Join the mayor and city council to hear where the city stands. Free. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Sims Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to adam.walker@nowmagazines.com.



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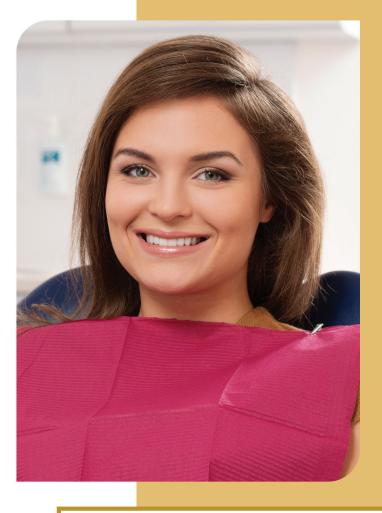
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