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M A G A Z I N E

JANUARY 2026



Goals

David Sullivan
wants Cedar Hill
soccer to score

Also inside:

Scavenger Hunt
Crossword

Best of In the Kitchen:
Chili Recipes



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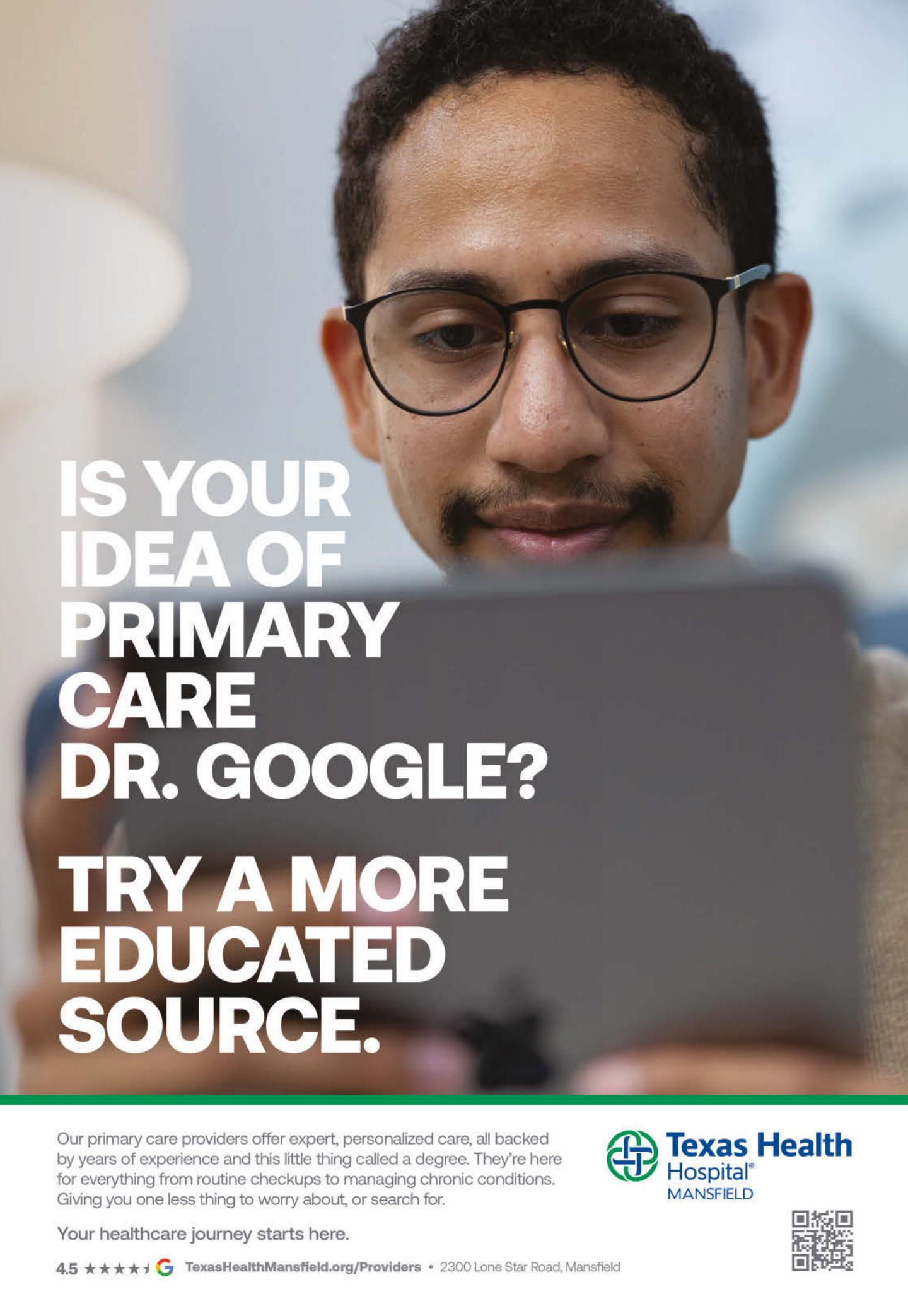
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Winter is coming ...

January can be unpredictable, chaotic even. You never know if it's going to be warm, cool or frigid. If we get any snow — or more likely, ice — it's going to be this month or next.

My brother was born in late January. His first birthday was one of those cold years. We had an ice storm come right before his birthday. I remember clipping pictures out of *The Dallas Morning News*, of water fountains transformed into alien ice sculptures, for my scrapbook. We measured the icicles on the front porch a couple of times a day. The tree in the front yard broke and fell across the lawn.

My brother's big day fell right in the middle of that. We lived in Oak Cliff, one of the hillier parts of Dallas. Mom really wanted to get Tim something for his birthday, so we drove toward the store. Target was at the top of a hill. We started up, but less than halfway to our goal, the car started sliding back down the hill. We got safely to the bottom, and everyone agreed that a 1-year-old wouldn't know the difference if his party was delayed by a week.

Adam
Adam Walker
SouthwestNOW Editor
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Stay warm!

January 2026
Volume 20, Issue 1

ON THE COVER



Coach Sullivan wants to inspire his players to greatness.

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IT'S IMPORTANT TO BUILD
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GOALS

— By Adam Walker

David Sullivan, III is the new head boys soccer coach at Cedar Hill High School. Growing up, football was his first sport, but soccer became an integral part of his adult life. “I played soccer until middle school. Then I focused on football, and soccer became my second sport,” he said. “I played football and was an assistant student coach at Baylor. While attending graduate school, my brother convinced me I should get into education. I took a job at Kimball High School as an assistant football coach. Their head soccer coach asked me to help with the team. I’ve been coaching soccer for 12 years now.”

He coached soccer at Midlothian and Red Oak before coming to Cedar Hill eight years ago. “When I started at Midlothian, I was coaching the JV2 team. The parents saw this big African-American man coaching, and a couple of them came up to me telling me they were going to help me make adjustments at halftime. Afterwards, they came back, ‘Oh, you really do know soccer!’” He may be built like a football linebacker, but he continued playing soccer, too. “I played mostly defender, but at times, I played wing or striker because I have quick feet, and I’m good at dribbling. But mostly I played defender,” he said.

He must have done something right with those freshmen at Midlothian, because even though he had since moved on to Red Oak, those players invited him to come back for their senior night and gave him a shout out at the game. “It’s important to build relationships with your players. I enjoy coaching. I think soccer players are some of the best athletes there are. Their abilities are truly impressive. They have to do everything with their feet. It’s a little challenging here, because the majority of my players are students at Collegiate, but I’m at the main high school, so I don’t see them in the off season. That’s a big challenge to building team chemistry and camaraderie. I can’t officially meet with the team until after Thanksgiving break, so



I entered them in fall league this year. Fall league plays five games, but it gave the team some time together.

"This is an exciting and unpredictable game," Coach Sullivan said. "On any given day, the team that is not the best can win. One goal changes everything. You don't want to get in that position. You have to stay on your toes. The fine little details matter. I coach my players to notice the transitions of the game. I want my players to be able to read the game as it's happening."

The team just had its first scrimmage, preparing for the new season. "The regular season runs until March 6. Then the playoffs go until mid-April. The last time Cedar Hill won playoffs was in 1999. I took the team into the gym to show them the banner. I challenged them to do that again. I really want to change



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the culture of this program, and help these seniors create a legacy. Our division includes Duncanville, DeSoto, Lancaster, Waxahachie, Skyline, Mesquite and Mesquite Horn. We'll be starting the season off on January 1, with a tournament in Grapevine-Colleyville, playing against South Grand Prairie.

"We have a lot of returning seniors this year, eight of them. Four of those seniors are three-year lettermen. One of our juniors is a two-year letterman. We have a solid team. In the off season, we lift weights on Mondays



and Wednesdays, work on skills and technique on Tuesdays and Thursdays and scrimmage on Fridays. During the season, we practice at 5:45 a.m., in the cold, Mondays and Thursdays, play on Tuesdays and Fridays and Wednesdays are for recovery and film, to see what we did well and what needs improvement."

Coach Sullivan wants to get the community behind his team. "One thing I want to do is connect with the

Cedar Hill youth soccer rec league. I want to have a youth night where the rec teams all come in their jerseys to watch a game and get excited about Cedar Hill soccer," he said.

Coach Sullivan is not the only sports fan at his home. "My wife coaches our son's Miracle League baseball team and helps with Special Olympics. She walks in the house and asks, 'Why's football not on TV?' Our son is a multi-sport athlete. He competes in bowling, basketball, football and track. Our daughter, who was a heart baby who needed surgery at 8 months old, plays softball and basketball. She's tried soccer and ice hockey. She'll play anything."

Despite the added load of administrative work that accompanies his new job as the head soccer coach and his continued duties as a special teams and linebacker coach for the football team, Coach Sullivan is excited to see where this year's team can go, and he's looking forward to great things in the seasons ahead. Cedar Hill soccer is looking up. **NOW**

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David is proud of his team's years of experience in the industry. "Together, we

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David looks at his business differently. "We're a small business with Christian values. I set out to always do the right thing. I have given free roofs to people in real need, like an elderly lady who had holes in her roof. She didn't have the money to fix it, so she just wanted us to tarp it. I decided to re-roof her house for free. We're a business, and we're about making money, but we're also here to help. I want to help my family, but also the community."

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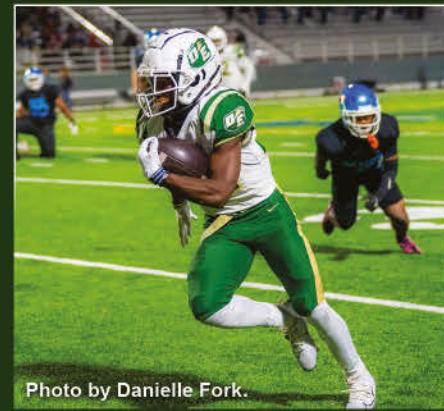
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Photo by Danielle Fork.



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Zoomed In: Karen Contreras

By Adam Walker

Karen Contreras, wife of Duncanville's mayor, Greg Contreras, finished her term as Duncanville's Woman of the Year for 2025 by participating in the Christmas parade. "I love the parade," she said. "I'm the world's worst candy thrower. I get cautioned every year, either for throwing too hard and hitting the kids, or not hard enough and hitting the curb, so the kids run into the street! But I look forward to it every year."

"I don't like attention, but as the mayor's wife, I already go to a lot of events. I enjoyed being Woman of the Year. People have been very kind and encouraging. Now, I'm looking forward to passing the title on to the new Woman of the Year for 2026."



First Methodist School students and teachers dress up as community helpers.



Samara Serrano and Emily and Natalie Rodrigues stop for selfies at the Hillside Village Christmas tree.



Nia Thompkins helps customers, with a smile, at You Can Live Again Sea Moss Store.



Pamela Simon shows why the DeSoto Library won second place for the best decorated city department.

NOW



Jaidyn Hartfield of DeSoto High School signs with Ole Miss to play college volleyball.



Alyiah McGrew participates in the National Association of Black Storytellers Festival in Atlanta.



Morgan Ruth Johnson, a student at Katherine Johnson Technology Magnet Academy, publishes a collection of short stories, Morgan's Marvelous Memories.



Saija Neal and Michelle Ayeni pose with the world's tallest elf, Andony Ybarra, at Holiday on the Hill.



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Old-fashioned Slow Cooker Chili

CookingNOW

NOW MAGAZINES' BEST OF ...

CHILI RECIPES

What could be better than a big bowl of homemade chili on a cold winter's day? Here are some of the many chili recipes we've published through the years. If you need something to keep you warm, give one of them a try! **NOW**

Old-fashioned Slow Cooker Chili

Provided by Elyse Morris for the March 2018 issue of SouthwestNOW Magazine.

2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 lb. ground beef
1 28-oz. can chopped tomatoes, with liquid
1 16-oz. can chili beans in sauce, with liquid
1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
2 Tbsp. chili powder
1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper, or more to taste (optional)
Fritos and shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic; sauté until golden (about 5 minutes). Reduce to medium heat. Add ground beef; cook until brown, stirring occasionally. Drain excess liquid from pan.

2. In a 4-to 5-quart slow cooker, combine

beef and onion mixture with remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on low heat setting for 6-8 hours. Serve hot over Fritos; top with cheddar cheese.

Healthy Vegetarian Chili

Provided by Myriam Barona for the September 2010 issue of MansfieldNOW Magazine.

Serves 14.

2 Tbsp. canola or olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium celery stalk, sliced
1 medium carrot, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 cups whole kernel corn
3 15-oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 15-oz. can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
2 14-oz. cans diced tomatoes
1 10-oz. can diced tomatoes with green chilies, undrained
1 cup medium salsa
1/2 cup ketchup
1 14-oz. can reduced sodium vegetable broth
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 1-oz. pkg. chili seasoning

1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 tsp. paprika

1. Heat the oil in a stockpot over medium heat. Add the onions, celery, carrots and garlic; cook until the onions are translucent, about 4 minutes. Stirring frequently, increase the heat to high; add the remaining ingredients.
2. Bring to a boil; reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are tender and the flavors are blended, about 40 minutes. Top with sour cream or cheese, if desired.

Great White Chili

Provided by Randi Stratmeyer for the March 2024 issue of WeatherfordNOW Magazine.

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 tsp. olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
3 cups great northern beans
1/2 cup Ken's Steak House Zesty Italian Dressing
2 qts. half-and-half
1 4-oz. can diced green chili peppers
Dash of chili powder
Dash of cumin
Dash of cayenne pepper
White organic tortilla chips or your preferred tortilla chip, to taste
Monterey Jack or Pepper Jack cheese, grated, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a baking dish. Add the chicken breasts; bake at 350 F for 35 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 F. Remove and cool before cutting into bite-size pieces.

2. Add the olive oil to a skillet. On medium heat, sauté the onions.
3. To a large soup pot, add the cooked chicken, sautéed onions, beans and the next 6 ingredients. Cook on low heat until fully heated. Do not boil. Add more spices to taste.
4. Serve with crushed tortilla chips and grated cheese.



Email us at
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SouthwestNOW Scavenger Hunt



Find 5 hidden
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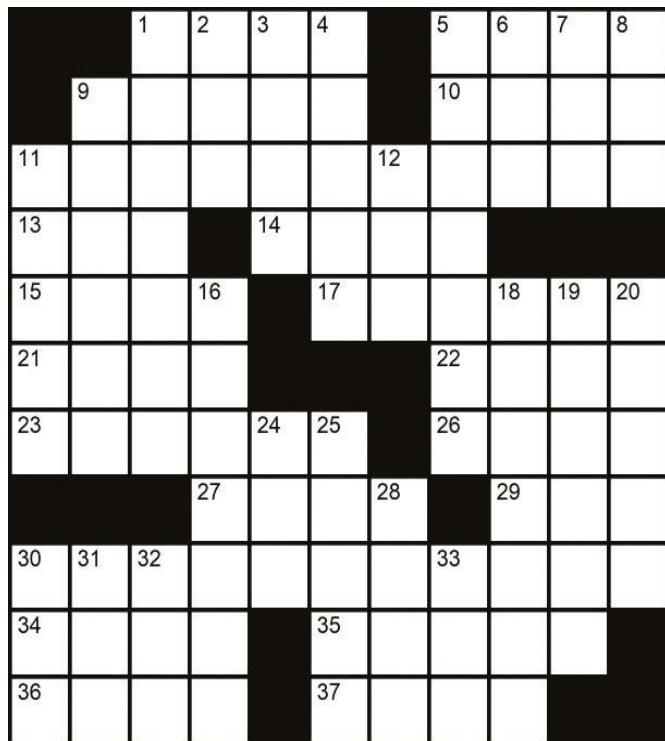
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Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Soften
- 5 Voucher
- 9 Riyadhan resident
- 10 Tex-Mex munchie
- 11 US mends toys haphazardly, producing a racket-maker
- 13 Finish first
- 14 Blueprint detail, briefly
- 15 Garfunkel and Malik, for example
- 17 Involuntary movements
- 21 Encounter

Down

- 22 Diamond record-maker?
- 23 Powers a bicycle
- 26 Clear-thinking
- 27 Easily split mineral
- 29 Gymrat's pride
- 30 Fin
- 34 Related by blood
- 35 Heed the dentist's advice
- 36 Agents, for short
- 37 Seizures
- 41 Mock
- 42 Cover
- 43 "And --- ask is a tall ship ..." (John Masefield)
- 44 At a great distance
- 45 He separated Harry and Jack
- 46 Big wheel
- 47 His wife looked back in the end

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Happy New Year

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.

JANUARY

1/1

Christmas Bird Count:
Help count birds for National Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count, the longest running community science project in U.S. history. Free. 8:00 a.m., Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, 1206 W. FM 1382, Cedar Hill. For more information, visit dogwood.audubon.org.

1/3

Family Movie Night:
All ages. Featuring *Anastasia*. Popcorn provided. No registration required. 2:00-3:30 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library Storytelling Room, 450 Pioneer Trail, Cedar Hill.

1/9

Carter BloodCare Blood Drive:
Give blood and save a life. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd., Cedar Hill. Schedule an appointment by visiting https://ww2.greatpartners.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/159426.

1/16

Celebrate Duncanville:
Black tie, optional. \$65 per guest; reserved table for 8: \$550. 6:30-9:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 800 N. Main St., Duncanville. For more

information, visit <http://www.duncanvillechamber.org>.

MLK Holiday Performing Arts Show:

Presented by the city of DeSoto. Student performances and contest winners. Performances by the DeSoto High School Choir, McCowan Middle School Dance Group and Choir, Woodridge Elementary Choir and the African Village Drummers. Admission is free with the donation of one **canned good** as we honor Dr. King's message of service, hope and togetherness. 7:00 p.m., DeSoto High School Auditorium, 600 Eagle Dr., DeSoto.

1/25

Polar Plunge Fun Run:

Take part in Cedar Hill's first ever Torch Run! Are you brave enough? This event is a unique opportunity for individuals, businesses and organizations to support Special Olympics Texas athletes. The Torch Run ends at the Lagoon for the Polar Plunge. Registration comes with a 2026 Torch Run shirt. If you choose to run and take the plunge, your registration fee will come with a 2026 Torch Run shirt and a 2026 Polar Plunge towel! Fees vary. 1:00-3:00 p.m., Virginia Weaver Park, 631 Somerset Dr., Cedar Hill. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.classy.org/event/cedar-hill-polar-plunge-2026/e734372>.

1/29

Family Heritage Cooking Class:

Celebrate culture and connection through food! Join us for a hands-on cooking class where families explore fun and healthy heritage recipes together. Maximum of six participants per family unit. Participants must be at least 5 years old. Registration required. 6:00-8:00 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library Multipurpose Room, 450 Pioneer Trail, Cedar Hill.

1/31

Talk of the Town Toastmasters Open House Event:

Join Toastmasters' open house to boost your speaking skills and meet new friends. Free. 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., DeSoto Civic Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd.

First Mondays

The Rotary Club of Cedar Hill Meeting:

6:00 p.m., High Pointe Baptist Church, 101 High Pointe Ln.

Tuesdays

DeSoto Senior Center Golden Voices Choir:

9:00 a.m., Senior Citizen Center, 204 Lion St., DeSoto. For more information, call (972) 230-5825.

Duncanville Rotary Club:
7:00-8:00 a.m., D.L. Hopkins

Jr. Center, 206 James Collins Blvd., located across from Duncanville Public Library.

Second and Fourth Tuesdays

Caregiver Support Group:
2:00-3:30 p.m., Friends Place Adult Day Services, 1232 W. Belt Line Rd., DeSoto. For more information, call (972) 274-2484.

Wednesdays

You Up Next:

Musicians of all levels come together for performances, jams and connection. Free, but registration is required. 5:00-7:00 p.m., Cedar Hill Recreation Center, 310 E. Parkerville Rd., Cedar Hill. Register at bit.ly/chrcr.

Third Saturdays

Duncan Switch

Saturday Street Market:
The event includes vendors, food and fun. 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Main and Center streets, Duncanville.

Read to Dogs:

Practice your reading with therapy dogs. Free. 2:00 p.m., Duncanville Library, 201 James Collins Blvd.

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

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Family Practice and Primary Care Are **FINALLY** Here!



Hey friends! We're beyond excited to share some *big news* with you — Family Practice and Primary Care has officially launched right here at our clinic!

Please help us give a warm welcome to **Tammy Head, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, FAAMFM**, who has joined the team and is now accepting new patients ages 10 and up.

Meet Tammy:

Tammy is a caring, experienced, and passionate provider who truly believes that great health care starts with *listening* and *empowering* patients.

Her journey in health care began in 2016, after earning her Nursing degree from Gulf Coast State College. Over the next several years, she worked in **Emergency Medicine, Wound Care, and Long-Term Acute Care**, gaining a wealth of hands-on experience caring for patients in critical moments.

In 2022, Tammy earned her Master of Science in Nursing from The University of Texas at Arlington and later completed a fellowship with A&M, where she began her exciting journey into **Functional and**

Integrative Medicine, blending the best of traditional care with a deeper, whole-body approach to healing.

Tammy's heart for medicine began in high school, inspired by her family members who worked as ER nurses. That early spark grew into a true calling — helping people understand their health; take charge of their wellness; and live vibrant, fulfilling lives.

When she's not caring for patients, Tammy loves spending time with her wonderful husband and four amazing kids. She brings the same warmth, compassion, and dedication to her patients that she does to her family.

We couldn't be more thrilled to have Tammy on our team — and we know you'll love her too!

Tammy is now accepting new patients!

Call us today to schedule your appointment, and join us in welcoming her to the family!

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newest techniques and technology. I'm also a native Spanish speaker. I grew up speaking both languages. Our YouTube videos explaining procedures are available in both English and Spanish."

Dr. Allala is proud of the service they provide at Serenity Advanced Dentistry. "I think we give five-star service. And I know my staff is five-star. We know what works and what doesn't. I know it sounds corny, but this is my life's work. Most of my staff have been with me for years, at different locations around DFW, before I came to Cedar Hill. I met Mariela seven years ago, in Pleasant Grove. It was my first job out of school. Racine has been with me four years, and Jazmine three years, both in Red Oak. Our newest team member is Jessica. She found us three months ago when she emailed me looking for an opportunity to shadow a dentist."

Serenity Advanced Dentistry

If you are an adult who is afraid of going to the dentist, or even just a little extra anxious, Serenity Advanced Dentistry may be just what you are looking for. "We do a lot of sedation dentistry, mostly for adults," Dr. Allala explained. "It's kind of my niche. Many adults may have some pretty serious anxiety about going to the dentist. They may not even seek care. They'd rather be in pain. I provide a place to take care of these people. When patients elect to get treatment, we lower the statistics of people living in pain. I like being able to contribute to improving people's lives."

"Coincidentally, a lot of people who are anxious about going to the dentist are also people who don't have good insurance. That's a bad combination. I have membership plans for patients without insurance, and really good discounts on implants and dentures. A membership might not be necessary if you only need one simple procedure, but if you need sedation and a lot of work, it really pays for itself."

Dr. Allala is a graduate of the Texas A&M School of Dentistry. "When I started there, it was still Baylor. My diploma has both names on it," she recalled. "I specialize in oral surgery, and we're really good at it. I'm nothing without my team. We do everything in dentistry. I like being well rounded. I enjoy being an overachiever, so I'm constantly taking continuing education, keeping up with all the

"I LIKE BEING WELL ROUNDED. I ENJOY BEING AN OVERACHIEVER, SO I'M CONSTANTLY TAKING CONTINUING EDUCATION, KEEPING UP WITH ALL THE NEWEST TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY."

Serenity Advanced Dentistry has all the newest technology to make your experience convenient. "We have hospital-grade blood pressure machines, so we can do sedation. We also have intraoral scanners, so I can see inside your mouth, from every angle, before I ever go in for your procedure. We print dentures and place implants right here in the office. With our skills and strategies, most patients don't even feel our injections. We have TVs in every room to keep you entertained while we work. It's all about efficiency — working smarter, not harder. That's why I designed the floor plan of the office myself. And we're really big on sanitation and sterilization. It's important to maintain a sterile environment, which is why we're closed every Friday for deep cleaning the office and training."

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Dr. Cristina Allala

605 E. Belt Line Rd., Suite 101, Cedar Hill

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