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District of Innovation pursued

DeSoto ISD Board approved a resolution, held a public hearing, and now a committee will consider possible exemptions from Texas Education Code that will benefit student learning in the district. The designation as a District of Innovation provides for specific exemptions that could include school day or year modifications, teacher certifications, student/teacher ratios, fiscal management, and much more. The DoI Committee will meet in February and March to consider the options, develop a plan, present it to the community, and then seek Board approval. The transparent process includes a web page on the district site (www.desotoisd.org) outlining the process, committee, timeline, and documents. There are also numerous links to additional resources including the Texas Education Agency and Texas Association of School Boards web sites that include all Texas ISDs that have filed for exemptions

Pre-K & Kinder Round Up

DeSoto ISD will host a Pre-K & Kinder Round Up for new students to register on April 3-5 and May 1-3 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the DeSoto Town Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. All DeSoto ISD Pre-K students attend full-day programming at the **Amber Terrace Discovery & Design Early Childhood Academy**, which also houses the district's Eagle Advantage Child Development Center for students age 18 months to three years. Kinder students attend their neighborhood school. A child is eligible for free Pre-K if the child is age 4 on or before Sept. 1 and any of the following: on free- or reduced-meals; non-English speaking; homeless; a military child; or under state conservatorship. DeSoto ISD also offers a tuition-based Pre-K program. Check the district website for registration materials needed for student enrollment!

PREK ROUNDUP

- STEP 1 - REGISTER ONLINE**
Register at desotoisd.org
- STEP 2 - CARNIVAL**
April 3-5, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or
May 1-3, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
DeSoto Town Center
207 E. Pleasant Run Rd.
What to bring:
Parent photo ID AND proof of residency
Student social security card, birth certificate, shot record

Calendar

- March 13-17 - Spring Break
- March 28 - 30 - STAAR testing
- April 13 - Coffee Talk at Ruby Young Elementary
- April 22 - Male Leadership Symposium
- April 22 - Education Foundation Gala

NEWS TO KNOW

HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations will be accepted January 30 through March 31 for the DeSoto ISD Hall of Honor. Forms are online for both the DHS Alumni Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award categories. The Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony will take place Friday, May 5 at DeSoto High School. For more information, visit www.desotoisd.org.

BOARD MEMBER ELECTION

The following individuals have filed as candidates in the May 6, 2017 Board Election:

Place 3

Karen Daniel (i)
Van Stripling

Jeremy Woods
Demetric 'Dee' Brown

Place 4

Jerry Hall (i)
DeAndrea Fleming

Tiffany M. Clark
Krystal Denise Sams

Place 5

Aubrey C. Hooper (i)
A'Londa L. Barber

Darrell W. Porter
Laneshia Jordan

MALE LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM APRIL 22

The 3rd annual DeSoto ISD Male Leadership Symposium will be held Saturday, April 22 from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at DeSoto High School, 600 Eagle Dr. The event, for young men in grades 6-12, will help develop leadership skills, provide positive role models, and offer exposure to experiences and career fields including STEM. The day includes free breakfast and lunch, special keynote speakers, workshops, and an athletics panel. Registration will open in March for this amazing event.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION GALA APRIL 22

Join the DeSoto ISD Education Foundation as they honor the top 25 seniors of DeSoto High School and raise funds for future innovative instruction through grants to our teachers at the Emerald Gala on Saturday, April 22 at 6 p.m. at the DeSoto Civic Center. For tickets contact Foundation office at 972-223-6666.



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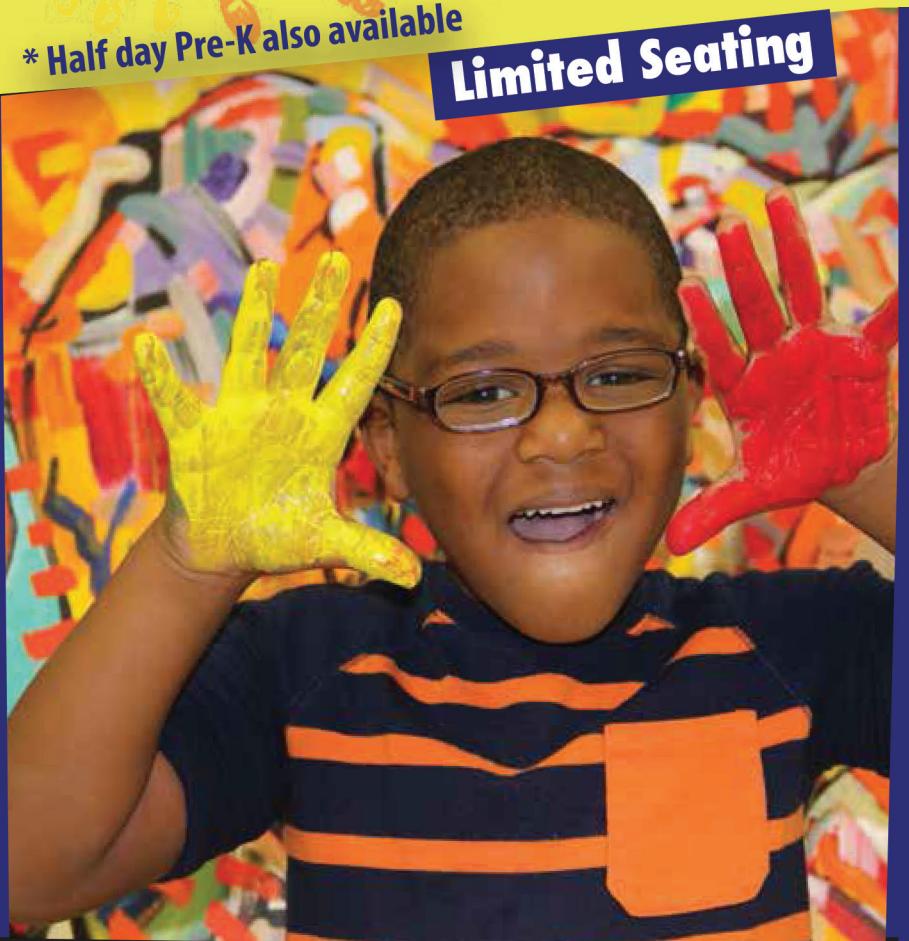
duncanvilleisd.org/Pre-K

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ON THE COVER



June Hairston courts success with her love of the game.

Photo by Shane Kirkpatrick.

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Editor's Note

Spring brings new beginnings.

First, I should introduce myself. Several years back, I was a writer for NOW Magazines, so I've already met some of you and had the privilege of telling your stories, celebrating your triumphs and letting your neighbors and communities know what cool, interesting people you are. Now, after a few world travels and other adventures, I'm back with *SouthwestNOW* as your new community editor. I'm really looking forward to getting to know even more

of you, telling even more of your stories and celebrating all of your triumphs! So, if you know someone doing great things for the community; have a really cool hobby; bake a cake like nobody's business; have a house you're proud of; know an excellent teacher; your child just won their black belt, made the Olympic team or has a science fair project that will change the world, send me an email to tell me all about it. We just might want to tell that story to the whole community!

Let's celebrate our community together!

Adam

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SouthwestNOW Editor
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40-Lo

Over 40 years of playing together, the ladies in the Duncanville Women's Tennis League have volleyed quite a few stories. June Hairston took over leadership of the newly formed group of players in 1976, and four decades later she and several other inaugural players are still meeting on a weekly basis.



WUE

— By Rick Mauch

June, like many other women, had her interest in tennis piqued following Billie Jean King's victory against Bobby Riggs in the Battle of the Sexes in 1973. Bobby, once a top-ranked player in the 1940s, had bragged that at age 55 he could still beat any woman in the world, and he did defeat Margaret Court, the top female in the world at that time. However, he was humbled on national television when Billie Jean swept their best-of-five match in Houston: 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

"That raised the popularity of women's tennis everywhere," said June, now 84. "This just kind of fell into my lap, and I ran with it."

And she and her friends have been running with it ever since. Though the number of members has declined over the years — once five days a week with 24 players each day and now once a week with 12 — they are still having a blast and are still very competitive.

The league, which has been playing at Duncanville High School for three decades after bouncing around for a decade, consists of four teams of three players each. They play doubles on a weekly basis, rotating partners and receiving points for wins. At the end of the season, the three players with the most points are crowned the champions.

But they all win when it comes to having a good time. And that, they all agree, is the main reason they continue to play. "June and I still live in the same houses we had back when we started," Shirley Lindsay said. "We play for fun, food, fellowship and exercise. We're family."





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And, just like family, they have plenty of stories and memories throughout their history. Barbara York, 71, recalled taking her young daughter with her to matches. "I'd set my daughter up by the gates with her dolls, and she'd play with them while I played tennis," Barbara said. "You'd never do that today."

Barbara's daughter is now 46 and began playing tennis herself as an adult. Barbara's son played on the Duncanville High tennis team. "I guess they were paying some kind of attention," Barbara said with a laugh.

"One player had a pacemaker put in, but she kept on playing," Shirley said. "She'd say, 'Hold it, my pacemaker's kickin' in,'" Shirley added with a chuckle.

To which Barbara interjected, "I think she played right up to the day before she died."

Which is indicative of their love for the sport and for each other. In fact, the group recently held a 40th anniversary luncheon. It brought together current members and many former members. "We had a great time renewing old friendships," Shirley Berta, 83, stated. "The kind of friendship we all have, it never goes away?"

Just like Shirley Berta never really went away, even though she played in a more competitive league for a little while when she was younger. Barbara also stepped away for several years while she was focusing on work and playing in a night league. However, both returned to their friends and the Wednesday league.

"These are the girls I enjoyed playing with, so when I was able to play during the day again, I knew exactly where I wanted to go," Barbara said.

Jan Hart is 65 and joined the league 11 years ago. She's considered a "baby" by many other members, but nonetheless it didn't take her long to capture her



own special memory. "I was playing with Nora Motley. She was in her early 80s, and I was running all over the court," Jan said. "Then, she stopped and said to me, 'Honey, I'll take care of my part of the court.'"

Barbara added, "We laugh at each other, but also with each other. That's what friendship is about."

But make no mistake, they are still competitive. After all, one reason they all began playing in the league hinges on their competitive natures. "We want to win, but we're not knocking people down," Jan said.

"You always want to boost your partners," Shirley Berta said.

"Because next week you'll be playing with them," Jan added.

The league still has most of the same bylaws it did when it began. However, they are more relaxed on their enforcement these days. For example, Shirley Lindsay recalled a severe penalty she incurred for being late to a match. "It was very intense. One time I got a ticket on the way to tennis, and I got there 16 minutes late," she said. "They said, 'Sorry, you forfeit.'"

The rules allowed for being 15 minutes late to an appointed match time. Friends or not, there was no room for leniency. Well, that has somewhat changed as the years have passed. "We revised it from you lose a set if you're late, to just play when you get there," June said with a smile.

Another reason the league has been around so long is June's ability to juggle so many things, including finances. Over the years, the dues have changed very little. Once they paid \$10, and each player was given two tennis balls to use during play. Now, they pay \$15 and are given a complete can of three tennis balls. "If we'd known that's all it would have

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taken, we'd have gone to \$15 years ago," Barbara said, smiling.

The club is also generous with its used tennis balls. Instead of throwing them away, they donate them to a nearby charter school for its program, and they give them to a local senior citizens' center to be put on walkers. "It keeps the walker from sticking on the floor when they try to roll it," Barbara said. "This way they can push it instead of having to pick it up with every step."

June said she has never considered stepping aside as director even once over four decades. It's easier now with email and cell phones, but it still keeps her very busy. However, she loves the work, and the members love her. She also loves the memories she's accumulated, including keeping every schedule from every season since the league started. "I just filed them away year after year, and the next thing you know, it's been 40 years," she said. "I can go back to anybody and see when they started and how long they've been playing. It's all there. I sometimes pull them out when I see someone, and it helps me remember who they are."

The league is always looking for new members/friends. Barbara said she recently recruited a couple of ladies. "We don't worry about age," Shirley Berta stated. "If you like to play and know how to have fun, come on." **NOW**

Editor's Note: Anyone interested in participating should contact June Hairston at (972) 298-2472.



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— By Rick Manch



AT HOME WITH HOPE STEVENS

Where there is hope, there is a positive energy. Nowhere is that more true than the home of Hope Stevens. "This house had been built for a year and had not sold," Hope said of the home she bought in DeSoto in 2010. "I just have to believe the Lord had this house set aside for me."

With two stories, four bedrooms and 2,660-square-feet, her home is large enough to hold all her memories, along with the family when they come to visit. Hope considers her home a family place. "I could see my family in this house before I moved in," she shared. "We can have adults downstairs, and the kids can play upstairs."

Actually, Hope was about to close on a one-story home just down the block and across the street. It was comfortable enough, but then she





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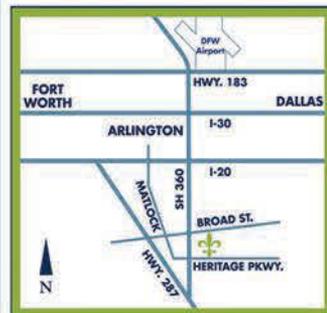


LIVE



noticed this special beauty. "I was coming to get the keys, and then I noticed this house," she said. "I asked if it was possible to switch houses. I was so thrilled when I was told, 'Yes.'"

The dining room has her mother's influence, with a formal table 10 feet long by 4 feet wide that seats six. Purple and silver ornaments highlight its decor. A curio cabinet houses memorabilia from the Tuskegee Airmen, her most beloved cause, and family history. Among these treasured mementoes is an item commemorating the involvement of Joseph Montgomery, her grandmother's baby brother. "We didn't even know he was an Airman," Hope said.



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An item in honor of her mother's 75th birthday is also on display. Another honors her own 50th birthday. "I hold on to things," Hope said with a smile. "These things made an impression in my life, just like the people associated with them."

On the wall of the dining room is a program from a Tuskegee Airmen event. It has the signatures of 10 of the Airmen. Included is the signature of Airman Claude Platte, after whom her local chapter is named, along with that of her dear friend, Airman Ted Lumpkin. "I dance with him every year at our banquet," she said. "You can't help but be humbled by what these men did."

On the way to the living room is a memorial space. It is small, but it is perhaps the most special area in the house, with photos and special items from the likes of her late father, John L. Ferguson, and her brother, Ernest. They passed away within 11 days of each other in 2010.

There's also a special lantern that was once her brother's. Sometimes on a tough day, she'll hold it as a reminder of how he still lights up her life. "This is where I honor my family," she said, almost shedding a tear.

The living room features a collection of record albums, most of which once belonged to Ernest. An antique porcelain



pitcher once belonged to her 98-year-old great-aunt. Next to it are some antique wooden hope chests. A variety of artwork includes her brother's favorite metal sculpture — a figure playing a cello. "When Ernest died, I said, 'No one gets the music, but me,'" Hope remembered. "He had pretty eclectic tastes. My son came to appreciate art through my brother."

At the top of the stairs is what Hope calls the "chillax area." This is where she and the family can simply kick back, watch movies, listen to music, read, etc. The video collection includes a variety of VHS tapes because, well, Hope keeps anything that has memories. "That was

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my brother's chair," she said, pointing to a leather chair that shouts comfort. "My mother was the only one who could tell him to get up. This blanket belonged to my aunt," she continued as she pointed. The angels on the nearby shelf also belonged to her aunt, and the old-timey clock with Roman numerals was once her brother's.

Also, upstairs are three bedrooms, a study/exercise room and the grandchildren's play room. A bookshelf is home to a variety of publications, again, many passed down by her family.

On the way back downstairs, one can't help but see the large photo of Jesus hanging above the stairway. She's had it for three decades. "A pastor of mine gave that to me," Hope said. "That's been with me through moves to Georgia and back to Texas, and at least eight apartments."

Outside is a large backyard about half a football field long, with a driveway the same length. It allows ample playing room for her grandchildren, along with lots of parking space. "We do hopscotch back here. They ride bikes. It's grandbaby space," she said.

Among Hope's favorite things to do is spend time in the kitchen with her granddaughters, 7-year-old Danae and 4-year-old Asoni. She also has an 8-year-old grandson, Channing, and her daughter, Eva Danielle, is expecting. "Me and my girls cook all the time. I've had them cooking since age 2," Hope said. "It teaches them hand-eye coordination and decision-making."

Hope also has a son, Stacy Stephens II, and her mother, Eva Dell, is still very much alive at age 80. So is her grandmother, 102-year-old Maureen Day, who was recently recognized by the city of DeSoto. "Granny's mind is a steel trap. She's the comedy show of the family," Hope said. "I have the most awesome family. When we get together, it's the greatest time, and we all cook."

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Theresa Grayson	June 23 @ 8:00 pm	DeSoto Outdoor Amphitheater

DESOTO ARTS COMMISSION

Hope also cooks at least once a year for the members of the Claude R. Platte DFW Tuskegee Chapter, of which she is vice president. She joined eight years ago, after volunteering to help through her job on the technology team at Southwest Airlines when the national convention came to Dallas.

She has also served as chaplain for the organization. This year, for the first time, she is a regional representative for the national organization. She has done some public speaking, including being the emcee for a luncheon at the Southwest Youth Summit. She also facilitated a Q and A session between some Tuskegee Airmen and the public. "I would love to do more speaking. I'm in the process of learning all the history of the Airmen," she said.



Among her prized possessions are two Tuskegee Airmen jackets. One is filled with signatures. The other she wears regularly to help strike up conversations. "People see the jacket and ask about it, allowing me to open up the conversation," she said.

She's also president of the DeSoto Ranch Homeowners' Association. Under her direction, it is more than just another neighborhood. They have a block party each year in May. The fire department and police department get involved and even take kids on a tour. The children's park has new equipment. There's also a community Christmas tree. "I am so proud to serve in this community," she said. "You have to create a village, and that's what we've done. I find it a personal responsibility to up the marketability of our community."

And Hope loves to encourage others through life experiences. She does so with her blog, godsbouquetofword.wordpress.com, which she's had for a decade. "I have a lot to tell and a lot to share with others," she said. "It's my way." **NOW**

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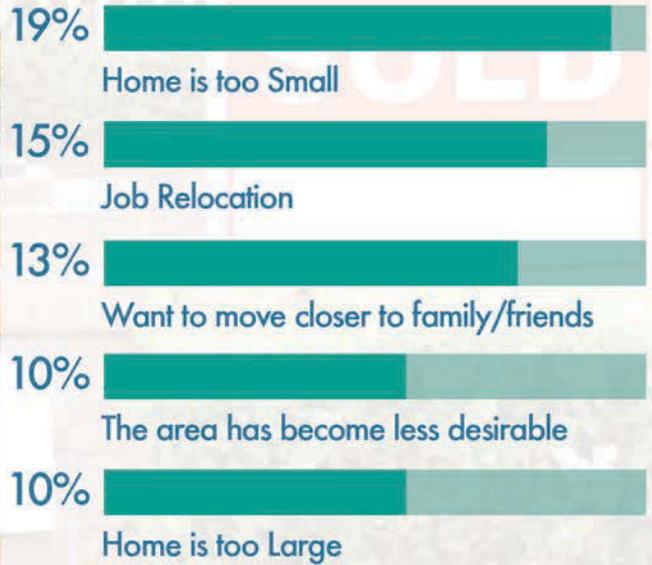


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INVEST IN THE FUTURE

— By Jill Martinez

Many moons ago, people graduated from high school, got on-the-job training and worked for the same company until they retired. Today's world is much different for young people preparing to enter the workforce. More education and training are needed to get good jobs these days. DeSoto High School is helping their students get a jump-start on college and career preparation through their Student Teller Education Program.

“The goal of the STEP program is to expose our finance students to the world of banking and finance through real-world work experience,” Melinda Pugh, the Career and Technical Education/STEM program coordinator, said. “The program was developed as a partnership between DeSoto ISD and Texas Trust Credit Union.” Senior students who are enrolled in the Business Management Practicum course are eligible to apply to intern at the credit union branch located in DeSoto High School near the Advanced Academics entrance.

This partnership has existed since 2013. Financial literacy workshops are continually offered throughout the district in an effort to help students and their families make fiscally sound decisions. In early 2016, Texas Trust developed the STEP program and placed it



under the direction of Michelle Carter-Pope, senior business and community engagement partner. The credit union already had some students involved in paid internships at its Cedar Hill location, but placing student interns at the high school branch meant that more students would be interested in visiting the credit union and learning about financial matters. "The partnership is a great way for Texas Trust Credit Union to fulfill our mission of 'building brighter financial futures,'" Michelle said.

The STEP program allows DeSoto

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senior finance students to get hands-on experience working as tellers. To be selected, students must submit an application and go through the interview process. Final selections for the positions are made by the Texas Trust branch manager. Interns then receive three weeks of intense training, which mirrors the training regular employees receive. "It includes training on our computer network, customer service expectations, product training, dress code and conduct, as well as transactional training on processing deposits, withdrawals, payments and other related transactions," Michelle said. Student tellers work alongside credit union employees until they feel confident. Then they are released to work more independently.

Mikkal Young is one of this year's student tellers. Mikkal plans to attend the University of Texas at Dallas and major in actuarial science, a discipline that assesses risk in insurance or financial fields by applying mathematical and statistical methods. "This internship gives me exposure to the world of finance. It's a great step in the right direction for me. I know it will help me as I make my career choices," he said.

Mikkal works four to five hours per week at the credit union, since his internship is done during one of his class times. While interns in the STEP program are not paid, they do receive school credit for their business class.

While he is learning about programs the credit union offers to members, he is also learning how to make his own financial decisions. "I get expert advice on how to build my credit score and how to safely invest to grow my money exponentially," Mikkal commented.

In addition to learning about banking, he has gained other job-related skills that he feels will better prepare him for his



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future. "I have learned to communicate with members, so they feel comfortable banking with Texas Trust even though I am just a student. I have also learned how to remain calm and patiently help members when they become frustrated or confused," Mikkal explained.

Quinton Robichaux is another of this year's interns. He plans to major in business management and stock markets when he enters a university. "I enjoy everything about the internship. It's the best experience I've ever had. At a young age, I get to do something millions of kids dream of doing. Hopefully, I will work at a credit union when I graduate or when I complete my schooling. It will help me achieve my real estate plans," Quinton commented.

Many people are involved in making the STEP program a success. Debra Downs is the instructor for the Business Finance Practicum course. Her role is to monitor the students as they work in the credit union and ensure their work ethic is on point. She then assigns student grades for the course.

Dr. Tracy Tolbert is the director of the CTE Program for DeSoto ISD. "The STEP program has benefited our students by giving them hands-on industry experience. Our staff and community members have also enjoyed



Mikkal Young takes his internship as a student teller seriously.



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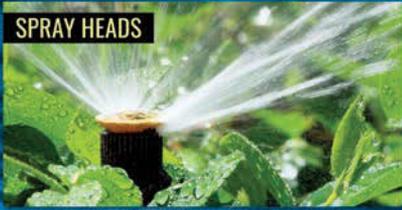
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Christalyn Foster and Quinton Robichaux look over banking materials.

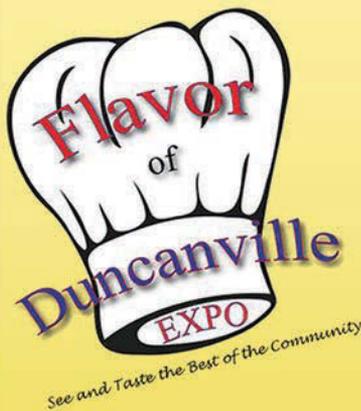
the convenience of banking at the high school,” Tracy said. Tracy works closely with Melinda Pugh, the CTE coordinator, to ensure that students in the program have all the resources and support they need.

One terrific program offered at the Texas Trust Credit Union is the Spirit Debit Rewards Program. Members can request a DeSoto Eagles Spirit Debit Card. Every time they use it, the credit union gives 10 cents back to DeSoto ISD. “As of December 2016, we have given over \$35,000 to DeSoto ISD through the Spirit Debit Rewards program,” Michelle noted.

One survey conducted in 2015 revealed that nearly half of college freshmen didn’t really understand how to maintain a checking account or budget their spending. With college expenses costing anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year, students need the kind of training being offered through the STEP program and the financial classes offered in DeSoto ISD. “I’ve been advising my classmates to begin saving early, so they won’t learn the hard way about how money actually works,” Mikkal said.

The STEP program is an innovative program offered by very few schools in the area. Everyone involved in this program wins. Students learn fiscal responsibility and gain knowledge they can use to help themselves, their family and their friends. The DeSoto ISD enjoys watching the growth and success of its students and benefits through the financial gains of the Spirit Debit Rewards Program. Finally, the Texas Trust Credit Union gains wonderful employees who help their business run smoothly. **NOW**

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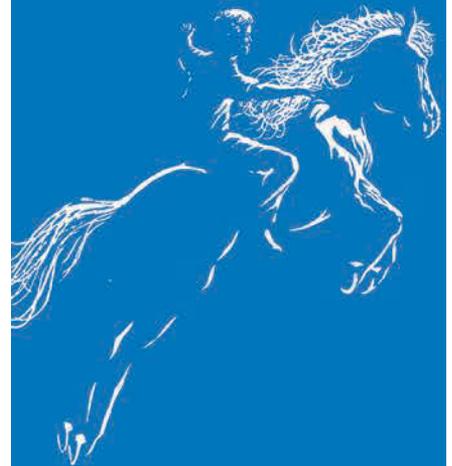
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Time Is Ripe

— By Zachary R. Urquhart

The winter is thawing, the sun is shining and the birds are starting to chirp again. Though the cold season in North Texas is not severe compared to places farther north, March still welcomes warmer temperatures, as well as the perfect time to start working on projects in your lawn and garden. Use these guidelines to make your landscaping the talk of the neighborhood this year.

What to Prune¹

- *Get rid of problem areas.* On any trees, ornamental plants and other shrubs, you should cut off dead limbs and any other areas that show damage from the cold. Taking off dead or dying areas will lead to better long-term health for your plants.
- *Trim growth to promote growth.* When it comes to ground cover like ivy and jasmine, you should cut down to your desired height before spring growth starts. The same is true for ornamental grasses, but this is not the case for flowering shrubs, vines or bulbs.



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What to Plant²

- *It is time for ornamentals.* There are several things that are ideally planted in the first weeks of March. Ornamental trees and shrubs should be planted while temperatures are still cool. Also, this is the time to replant fall blooms like chrysanthemums.

- *Some things need to wait.* You will want to wait until the end of the month, or later, to plant flowers and vegetables meant for the warm season. Though the danger of late season freezes is not great, warm weather annuals and perennials need to be planted past the last freeze. The same goes for popular Texas grasses, like Bermuda and St. Augustine.

- *Do not miss the "ripe" time.* The first few weeks of April are the time for tomatoes, snap beans and squash, while you should wait until the end of April for melons, okra and pumpkins. And if you are trying to transplant trees or woody plants, make sure to complete the process before buds begin breaking, which will happen sometime in March or April.

What to Put on the Ground³

- *Know what you need, if anything.* Before you go to the store to grab the first fertilizer you see, you may want to test your soil to make sure you know exactly what you need. Some people use household items like vinegar for testing, but simple and inexpensive pH kits are available at

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most big box stores. Fertilizers typically offer some combination of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, but lawns often only need the nitrogen. After a quick test, you will know exactly what nutrients your soil needs, and you can apply correctly.

- *Know how much you need.* Another common mistake is using the wrong amount of the right product. Most fertilizers are sold based on how many square feet they will cover when properly distributed, so you need to measure before you head to the store. While a smaller lot might only need one large bag, people who live on an acre or more will almost certainly need multiple bags of fertilizer. Remember: spreading the fertilizer too thin might save you money in your original purchase, but you are probably not getting nearly the nutrients you need.



- *Know when to apply it.* You want to lay your fertilizer when the lawn is in an active growing period. That means applying it soon after the last frost, which is typically mid-March in this part of the state. Be sure to apply evenly and all at once. If it takes several weeks to cover your lot, you will end up with various growth and different colors as the fertilizer takes hold. In addition to the early spring application, it is recommended to add nitrogen again shortly before the first frost. If your soil test showed a lawn particularly lacking in nutrients, you may add a third application in the middle of summer, and in that case, slow-release will be best.

What to Put Under the Ground⁴

- *Think about your water.* Whether you just need to water your flowers, or you decide to commit to keeping your lawn

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green, this is the time to add a watering system. There are several options, ranging in complexity, cost and efficiency. For flower beds and landscaping near your house, one simple choice is soaker hoses. These allow water to trickle slowly and can be buried under beds to remain out of sight.

- *Think about sprinklers.* When it comes to keeping a whole yard wet, sprinklers are your best bet. Traditional spray systems are the most common, but they also tend to waste water. Rotor sprayers are great for large areas. While they will lose water to evaporation, they are less wasteful when it comes to oversaturating an area, as compared to spray sprinklers. For a permanent system, you will either have to dig into your yard or hire someone to lay the pipes for you. Consider getting a few estimates, and weigh the cost of your time, as well as any tools you will have to buy if you decide to tackle the project yourself.

With these projects, as with anything else you do in the yard, make sure you have a solid plan that you can accomplish within your timetable. With this guidance, you can make this the year your yard becomes the best on the block. **NOW**

Sources:

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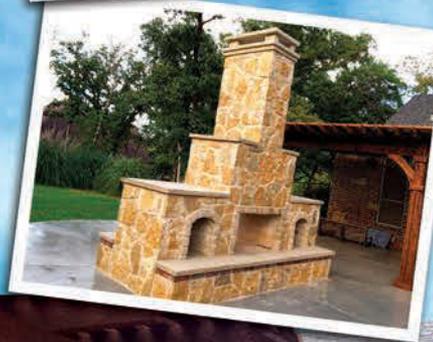
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Renegade Silver Language Center offers Spanish classes for seniors over 50 to help keep minds sharp and open the way to new adventures.

Continuing a Passion for Teaching

Antonio Suhuba-Baruti is one of those good teachers who will never stop teaching. — By Abby Rich

“The mind is a terrible thing to waste. At any age.” This is the motto of Antonio Suhuba-Baruti, founder of the nonprofit language center, Renegade Silver Language Center. Located inside the DeSoto ISD Wings campus, classes enhance and prolong cognitive skills of seniors over 50 and delay the ravages that plague seniors, such as dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, according to Antonio.

After 34 years of teaching Spanish in low-income schools in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona and Louisiana, Antonio finished his last few years in Texas. He wanted to continue to utilize his skills and resume his passion for teaching. “The idea to teach people aged 50 and older came to me through watching a lot of family members experience their own memory loss and slowing of their cognitive skills,”

he explained. “I love people and teaching, so opening the center was a natural progression.”

He also noticed that after retirement people don’t do much to help their minds continue to learn and work, and the result is slow loss of memory and eventually cognitive skills. Antonio himself was worried about forgetting a lot of his Spanish after he retired because he wasn’t using it.

“I opened the center, so people can actually afford to take care of their minds,” Antonio said. Classes at Renegade Silver Language Center are free, but the center accepts student donations, since it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. He’s also invested a sizeable amount of his own money in this endeavor because he wants people to be able to afford it.

Classes at the center focus on enhancing cognitive skills,

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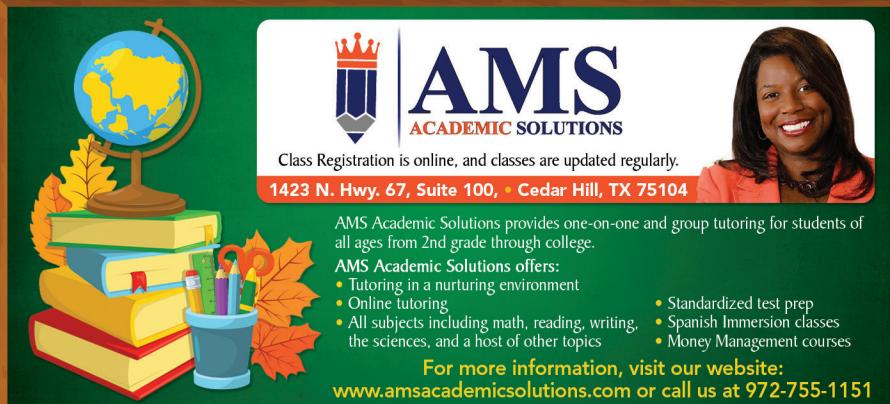
and students are taught to practice speaking with proper grammar in Spanish and English. “Even though some of the students have never taken a Spanish class in their life, they are eager to learn a new language,” Antonio stated. There are two beginner classes and two advanced classes. The one-hour classes run in eight-week sessions, Monday through Thursday. Students can attend a total of two sessions and must be 50 years or older to participate.

“When new students walk into class, they’re not convinced they’ll see a difference, and they want to know if the classes can really improve memory and sharpness,” Antonio said. “I let the classes do the convincing.” He, in turn, takes a serious approach to his teaching and even has a sign in his room that says, *If you don’t want to learn, no one can help you, but if you’re determined to learn, no one can stop you.*

Antonio is used to asking his students for feedback. “When I taught in the school system, I started asking for kids to tell me what they thought of my class at the end of the year,” he explained. “Other teachers didn’t like the idea, but it made the kids feel like they were actually heard. I also believe teachers can always learn more and improve upon teaching no matter how long they’ve been at it.” He has since continued the end-of-year survey with his Renegade Silver students, so he can learn what to do better in the future.

He gets great, anonymous feedback like, “The class is a challenge, and it pushes me to learn as much as possible. Antonio is an excellent teacher, and the class is a wonderful opportunity to learn a second language,” the former student explained. “It has taken me out of my comfort zone, and it definitely makes you think about what you’re doing. The home assignments along with class participation are a big push to try and absorb what is being presented.”

For those interested in joining a new session, call Antonio about sign-ups for the upcoming class schedule. **NOW**



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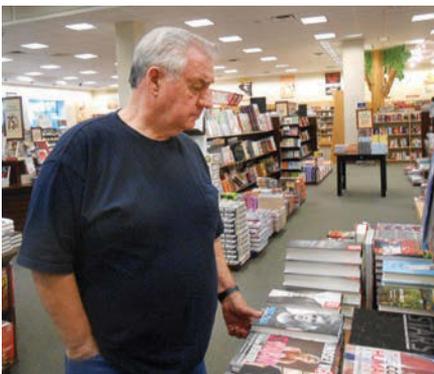
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Avoid Emotional Investment Decisions

What's the biggest obstacle to your ability to invest successfully? Is it the ups and downs of the financial markets? Political events? The fact that you weren't born rich? Actually, the chief hurdle you face is something over which you have control — your own emotions.

Your emotions can lead to a variety of ill-advised investment behaviors, such as these:

- **Cutting losses.** Declines in the financial markets can lead some investors to try to “cut their losses” by selling investments whose prices have declined. Yet, when prices have dropped, it may actually be a good time to buy investments, not sell them, especially when the investments are still fundamentally sound.
- **Chasing performance.** In the investment world, the flip side of “fear” is “greed.” Just as some investors are propelled by fear of loss, others are motivated by quick, big gains. They may pursue “hot” investments, only to be disappointed when the sizzle quickly fizzles. Instead of trying to “score” that one big winner, you may be better off spreading your investment dollars among a range of vehicles — stocks, bonds, government securities, certificates of deposit (CDs) and so on. While diversification can't guarantee a profit or protect against loss, it may help reduce the impact of market volatility on your portfolio.
- **Focusing on the short term.** When the market is down, you might get somewhat upset when you view your monthly investment statements. But any individual statement is just a snapshot in time. If you were to chart your investment results over a period of 10, 15 or 20 years, you'd see the true picture of how your portfolio is doing — and, in all likelihood, that picture would look better than a statement or

two you received during a down market. In any case, don't overreact to short-term downturns by making hasty “buy” or “sell” decisions. Instead, stick with a long-term strategy that's appropriate for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon.

• **Heading to the investment “sidelines.”** Some people get so frustrated over market volatility that they throw up their hands and head to the investment “sidelines” until “things calm down.” And it's certainly true that, when owning stocks, there are no guarantees. You do risk losing some, or all, of your investment. But if you jump in and out of the market to “escape” volatility, you may take on an even bigger risk — the risk of losing some of the growth you'll need to reach your goals. Consider this: If you had invested \$10,000 in a package of stocks mimicking the S&P 500 in December 1979, your investment would have grown to more than \$426,000 by December 2013. But if you had missed just the 10 best days of the market during that time, your \$10,000 would only have grown to less than \$206,000 — a difference of about \$220,000, according to Ned Davis Research, a leading investment research organization. The bottom line? Staying invested over the long term can pay off. (Keep in mind, though, that the S&P 500 is an unmanaged index and isn't meant to depict an actual investment. Also, as you've no doubt heard, past performance is not a guarantee of future results.)

Our emotions are useful in guiding us through many aspects of our lives, but when you invest, you're better off using your head — not your heart. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Vernon Folks is an Edward Jones representative based in Cedar Hill.



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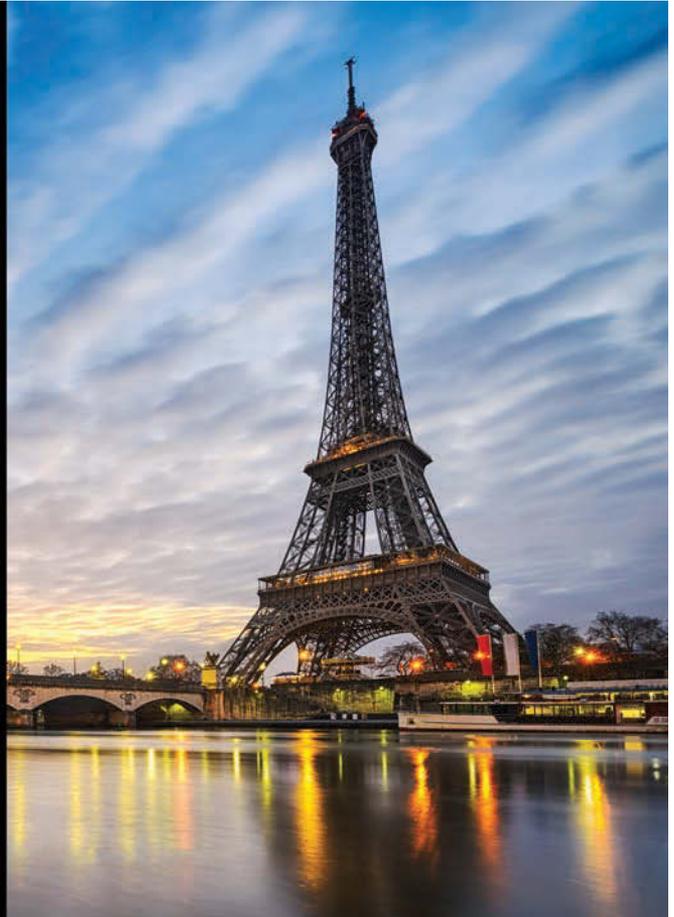
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March 1 — April 12

AARP Tax-Aide help for seniors: **Tuesdays** only, Zula B. Wylie Public Library, Cedar Hill; **Wednesdays** only, DeSoto Public Library & Duncanville Public Library. Call your library for times. Volunteers from the AARP Tax-Aide service will be in the library assisting seniors with tax returns. No appointments are necessary. Bring last year's tax return, your social security card, and any records needed.

March 4

Neighborhood Block Party: 10:00 a.m., Alan E. Sims Recreation Center. Celebrate the 12th anniversary of the Alan E. Sims Recreation Center and see all the services your community has to offer at the Citywide Neighborhood Block Party. Enjoy children's activities (including a petting zoo and bounce houses).

March 13

Family Fun Night Women's History Month Celebration: 6:30 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library. Celebrate Women's History Month. Discover the stories of women who have soared and are making a difference in our community.

March 18

St. Paddy's Pickle Parade & Palooza: 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., downtown Mansfield. Run

the 5K, 10K or KidsK. Meet the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. Watch a shootout. Food, playground, live bands. Don't miss the Pickle Parade.

March 21

CareVan Immunization Clinic: 5:00-7:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville. Clinic will provide free vaccines for children with immunization records. For more information, call (972) 296-2155.

March 24

An Evening of Gospel Music: 7:30 p.m., DeSoto Civic Center. Drea Randle performing.

April 1

Dollars for Scholars: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 1533 High Pointe Ln., Cedar Hill. Rummage sale benefiting Collegiate High School & Academy. All proceeds support programs and scholarships of Collegiate PTSA.

Ongoing:

Second Tuesdays

Dallas Area Writers Group (DAWG), 7:00 p.m., Zula B. Wylie Public Library, Cedar Hill. DAWG meetings are open to all writers who want to improve writing skills, meet other

writers and get published. Free to attend. www.dallaswriters.org

Thursdays

Tiempo de Historias en Espanol: 5:30 p.m., Duncanville Public Library, 201 James Collins Blvd. For more information, call (972) 780-5050.

Texas Hold'Em Tournament: Noon., Senior Citizen Center, 204 Lion St., DeSoto. For more information, call (972) 230-5825.

Line Dance Classes: 12:15 and 1:00 p.m. Senior Citizen Center, 204 Lion St., DeSoto. Free. For more information, call (972) 230-5825.

Third Fridays

Senior Dances: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins, Duncanville. Cost \$5. For more information, call (972) 298-0667.

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



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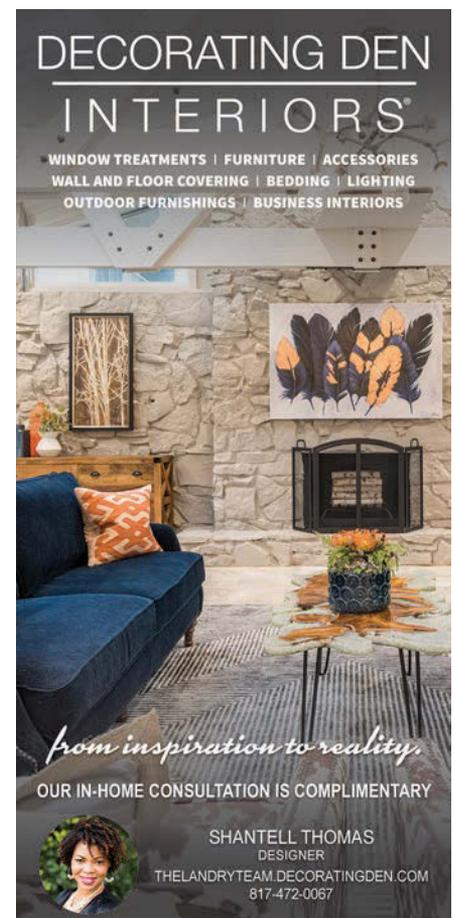
PETER RABBIT TRAIL April 1 - 15
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Easter Egg Hunt April 8 11am

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PORCELAIN TILE SALE!



In the Kitchen With Diane Hood

— By Rachel Smith

With three gorgeous daughters, Devyn, Maddison and Grayce, and a loving husband, Vince, Diane Hood found a fondness for cooking and baking. “I enjoy tweaking recipes, discovering different ingredients and just making food my own,” she shared. Whether giving them as gifts or setting them out as everyday tummy treasures, she finds joy in her baked goods and treats.

Her Hispanic heritage spices up her food creations. “My mom is Hispanic, and I always felt proud to have that flair as part of my background,” she smiled. Growing up, her maternal grandparents and parents grew a huge garden for better tasting food. “I always enjoyed seeing the fresh food and helping them pick the vegetables and fruits,” she said. “We’d cook amazing meals after harvests.” **NOW**

Thai Chicken Chopped Salad With Peanut Dressing

Dressing:

- 1 large garlic clove**
- 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter**
- 3 Tbsp. honey**
- 2 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce**
- 2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lime juice**
- 2 Tbsp. rice vinegar**
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil (or another light vegetable oil)**
- 1 tsp. sesame oil (regular or toasted)**
- 1/4 tsp. Sriracha sauce**
- 1 tsp. water at a time, to taste (optional, to thin dressing)**

Salad:

- 16 oz. Napa cabbage, chopped (or hearts of romaine, or a combo of the two)**
- 3-4 cups cooked chicken, shredded or chopped**
- 1 1/2 cups red bell peppers, thinly**

sliced (or multicolored mini sweet peppers)

Carrot shavings, to taste

Garnish:

- Cilantro leaves, chopped or torn, to taste**
- Chopped salted peanuts, to taste**
- Sesame seeds, to taste**
- Lime juice from one lime, to taste**

1. For dressing: Place garlic clove in a small food processor or blender; pulse until finely minced. Add next 8 ingredients. Process or blend until completely smooth and combined. If dressing is too thick, add water and blend again. Repeat until desired consistency is reached. Taste the dressing and adjust to taste by adding soy sauce (salty), honey (sweet) or Sriracha (spicy). Alternatively, you can finely mince garlic by hand and combine all ingredients in a large bowl, briskly whisking until dressing is smooth.

2. For Salad: Place Napa cabbage in a large bowl. Arrange chicken, peppers and carrots

on top. Drizzle with desired amount of dressing; toss to combine.

3. For garnish: Top salad with cilantro leaves, peanuts, sesame seeds and freshly squeezed lime juice. Serve immediately.

Pineapple Muffins

Makes 12 muffins.

Coconut Crumble:

- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. self-rising flour**
- 1 Tbsp. butter, room temperature**
- 1/2 cup sweetened flaked coconut**

Muffins:

- 6 Tbsp. (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature**
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar**
- 1 large egg**
- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract**
- 2 cups self-rising flour**

1. Place rack in the center of the oven; preheat to 400 F. Mist the bottom of a 12-muffin-cup baking sheet with vegetable oil spray or line cups with liners; set pan aside.

2. For crumble: Place sugar, flour and butter in a small bowl. Work butter into mixture using a fork; stir in coconut and set crumble aside.

3. For muffins: Place the first 6 ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Blend with an electric mixer on medium-high about 30 seconds until mixture is creamy. Stop machine and scrape down sides of bowl. Fold in flour with about 25 strokes; batter will still be a bit lumpy.

4. Spoon or scoop 1/4 cup batter into each muffin cup, filling it two-thirds of the way up. Sprinkle a heaping teaspoon of crumble topping on each muffin and gently press the topping into the batter; place in oven.

5. Bake until muffins are lightly golden and spring back when lightly pressed, about 18-20 minutes. Remove from oven; place pan on wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. If not using cupcake/muffin liners, run a dinner knife around edges of the muffins; lift them out of the cups carefully. Place them on a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes; serve.

6. Note: Store muffins at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 5 days, or freeze them, wrapped in aluminum foil or in a cake server, for up to 6 months. Thaw muffins overnight in refrigerator before serving.

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