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## On The Cover



Don Shields made a career  
of improving education in  
Red Oak.

*Photo by Amy Ramirez.*

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# Editor's Note

*Volunteers lead the way!*

As the first quarter of 2012 ends, I'm feeling wilted. What better way to rejuvenate than a new mission? In the nick of time, April is National Volunteer Month.

North Ellis County Outreach supports local families with needs from food and clothing to assistance with bills and educational courses. There are any number of ways to volunteer, from giving your time and talent to simply cleaning out your closet. Headquartered at 404 S. Hwy. 324, it's close to home, too.

For animal lovers, Ellis County SPCA is down the road in Waxahachie, but they can use help with adoption events here in town. As always, churches and schools can point you in the right direction for volunteering, as well.

This month's featured folks show how going the extra mile benefits others, but also comes back to them tenfold. What a great month to follow their lead!



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*Born in a logging camp in 1928, Donald "Don" Shields got used to moving very early on. As the seasons changed and the availability of lumber shifted, his father, who supported the family by driving an eight-wheeled log wagon up and down the hills, moved with the work. During the time they lived in Alikchi, Oklahoma, Don developed his work ethic and drive for a financial stability not readily available at that time.*

While he worked on his bachelor's degree at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, in Durant, Oklahoma, he worked as the only teacher in the only

Shields Elementary School Principal Tina North with the school's namesake, Donald Shields.

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# A LASTING IMPACT

— By *Cindy Malone*

school in Jack Creek, Oklahoma. There were 12-14 students total.

In 1951, Don was drafted into the Army to fight in the Korean War. He trained for and was certified as a master mechanic. However, thanks to a high school typing class, he was soon reassigned to an “office” in Seoul, Korea, checking soldier’s orders, assigning them to their posts and requisitioning supplies. “Years later, I thanked that high school typing teacher for probably saving my life by keeping me off the front lines,” Don laughed.

After the war, Don returned to Oklahoma, and using the GI bill, finished his degree in speech and industrial education. During his last college years, he met and married his wife, Gloria. After college, he began teaching in Eagletown, Oklahoma. However, teaching and coaching was still not providing for his family. So, after luckily

coming across an open invitation for people with a degree like his, he moved to Amarillo, Texas, to be a civilian jet fighter auxiliary systems instructor. With that job, he made twice as much money as he had been making, almost \$3,600 a year. To increase his salary by \$165 a month, he began taking classes at night to earn his master’s degree. In Amarillo, Karla, his first daughter, was born.

After his systems instructor role ended, Don moved several times. He taught in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and in Artesia, New Mexico. During this time, he had two other children, Jim and Julie. He loved teaching, but his goal was always to move into school administration. He wanted to make a real impact on the educational system.

His first opportunity to be a principal came at a high school in Springer, Oklahoma. Then Don set his sights even higher. He wanted to

be a district superintendent. The first opportunity that presented itself was in Thackerville, also in Oklahoma. “The reputation of Thackerville was such that the superintendent of the school district I was in begged me not to go,” Don explained.

But against all advice, Don took the job. He knew he had to get their respect early on. “I held a meeting the first day of school. I told those kids there would be corporal punishment for anyone caught smoking,” he explained. “And on day one, someone tested me.” After two years, Don had made some real changes to Thackerville’s school district. He managed to save them money, buy them what they needed and work with the teachers to better manage the students and their classrooms.

Then, the opportunity opened that he had been working toward since that first job teaching in Jack Creek. In 1966,





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Don Shields and his wife, Martha.

Red Oak Independent School District (ROISD) was advertising for a new superintendent of schools. He went in for the interview, able to lean on extensive life experience, although he was just 38 years old. When asked his educational philosophy, Don told the hiring board, "I'll teach your kids how to be ready for college and how to be able to care for their families. I'll do it with love and discipline."

That answer earned him the superintendent job he would keep for 14 years. "During those 14 years, Red Oak grew rapidly. We went from 300 kids to 1,500 kids, but today Red Oak is approaching the 6,000 mark. Red Oak Elementary tripled in size," Don explained. "We were using churches to hold some classes. We were only running three buses." During his years there, ROISD passed several bond issues and built many of the school buildings still in use today. He helped implement a better bussing system and added much-needed technology to the classrooms. Don is most proud of leaving the school district in 1980 with a large rainy day fund and no debt.

Don next became superintendent of Dallas County Schools. After his wife passed in 1988 of ovarian cancer, Don took care of his ailing mother until she passed away in 2005. Then he moved home to Red Oak. Although he was retired, Don was called on by the school board president, John Hawkins, to help pass a bond issue in 2008. "My longtime friend, Vernon Coffey, and I made it our full-time jobs to get votes for that bond issue." Vernon's late wife, Marjorie, was Don's secretary in Red Oak, and also at Dallas County Schools.



Living back in Red Oak allows Don to be closer to family. Karla remembered, "I graduated from Red Oak schools, and so did my sons. I love that dad was so passionate about making them great."

Red Oak honored Don in 1980 by renaming West Red Oak Elementary as D.T. Shields Elementary. A new Shields Elementary was built in 2008. "I was at the groundbreaking ceremony.



Don's daughter, Karla with Don and Martha

The wind was blowing 60 miles an hour, and dirt was flying. It was one of the proudest days in my life."

To Don's children, having him honored is beyond special. "My mom was honored posthumously for her work in journalism. It is so nice to have dad honored like this while he is alive to see it," Karla admitted. "I well up with tears when I drive by that beautiful school with his name on it."

Now Don lives part time in Red Oak and part time in Lufkin with his new wife, Martha. Of her, Don said, "I have been blessed in my life to marry the two most wonderful women in the world." Although Martha has only been married to Don for a few years, she is wonderfully proud of what Don has done and continues to do even at 83.

Don has high hopes for Red Oak's future. "I visit often with current superintendent, Scott Niven. He's a great friend, and I'm proud of the job he and the school board are doing." Don would like to see Red Oak keep growing and doing all the right things for the kids to continue to learn. "We shouldn't be scared of progress," he said. "We should embrace it and use it." **NOW**

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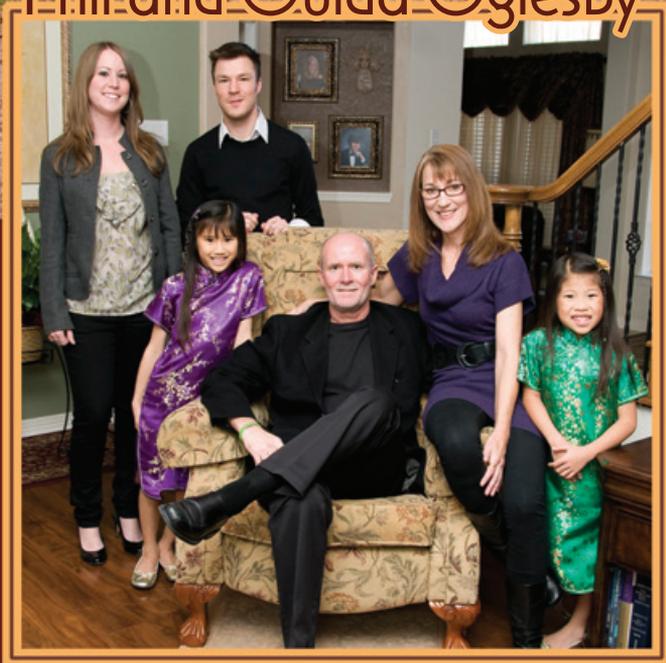


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# finding GRACE — By Angel Morris and hope

## AT HOME WITH Phil and Ouida Oglesby



*At a time when others begin contemplating how to redecorate their empty nest, Phil and Ouida Oglesby instead decided to fill theirs up again. The couple moved to Red Oak in 1986 and reared their biological children. Then they were refocusing on their careers when life took an unexpected turn.*

*“In 2003, we felt the Lord leading us to adopt a child from China. This seemed like a crazy idea at the time. We had just bought a new home, and our children were almost grown,” Ouida recalled. “I was serving as the principal of a school*

in Cedar Hill and had just received my superintendent certification. My husband was vice president of claims of an international insurance company headquartered in Switzerland.”

During a Switzerland trip, Phil and Ouida were first introduced to the idea of international adoption. A couple they were traveling with had no biological children, and they were considering adopting a Chinese orphan. “We were happy for them, but felt no calling to do the same at the time,” Phil recalled.

But after meeting a girl adopted from India, the daughter of one of Ouida’s teachers, they began to feel God working in their lives. “Our decision to adopt came at a time when thousands of female babies were being aborted or abandoned in China due to China’s One-Child Policy,” Phil said.

Because of the policy, families with more than one child were fined or punished. A high poverty level meant many families could not afford to care for more than one child, much less pay a fine for having more.

Another factor impacting children born in China is that male children are expected to care for their parents when they become unable to care for themselves. As a result, abandoning female children with the hope of having a male child in the future is not an uncommon practice.

“After much thought and prayer, we proceeded with the long trail of paperwork that led to the adoption of our first Chinese daughter, Grace Nian Dan, 21 months old at the time,” Ouida said. According to documentation, Grace had spent the previous 19 months in an



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overcrowded orphanage, where food was scarce and care was at a bare minimum with the ratio of caretakers to babies at about 15:1.

“We traveled to China in October 2004 and spent two weeks in the country completing the adoption process. After being home about six months, we decided to go back,” Phil said. “We felt strongly we had another daughter waiting for us to return for her.”

The Oglesbys brought home their

new 2-year-old daughter, Hope Ao Ling, in August 2007. She, too, had been placed in an understaffed, overcrowded orphanage at the age of 2 months.

Since becoming American citizens, the girls have adjusted well. Grace, 9, loves reading, going to church, violin and spending time with friends. Hope, 6, also plays violin. She loves being a princess and going to church. Her favorite subject is math. “The girls enjoy spending countless hours together with their Barbies and playing Wii — just typical little girls!” Ouida noted.

The Oglesbys strive to provide opportunities for Grace and Hope to learn about their birth country and the Chinese way of life. When they were younger, the family



met weekly with a playgroup of around 10 children, all adopted from China.

Today, they make a point to celebrate Chinese New Year in January, and the girls attend Chinese Culture Camp in June. “We also celebrate Gotcha Day, making a special day out of the day that we got the girls,” Phil said. “They love it, and it makes them feel special.”

All of the Oglesbys feel special when they are together in their Red Oak home, including Katie, now 28, and J.P., 26, who live away from home but visit often. At the corner entry of a quiet, one-street neighborhood, the Oglesby home is upscale but family-friendly. An open foyer leads to what was once a formal dining room — now dubbed the music room — where a piano and the girls’ violins are displayed between regular practice sessions.



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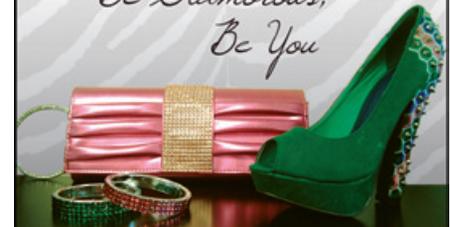
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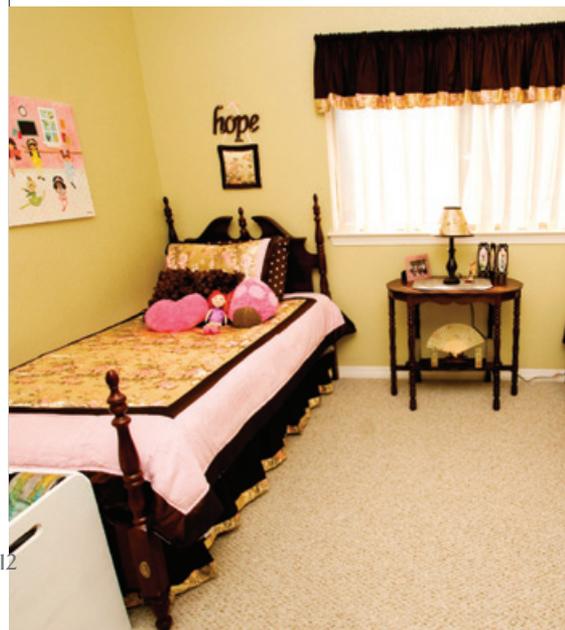
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Opposite this room is Phil's office-turned-classroom. "We moved his office upstairs and turned this into a schoolroom for the girls," Ouida said. Just like traditional schools, the room houses small desks for each student, a computer, dry erase board and essential learning supplies. Built-in bookshelves were perfect for the manuals and readers needed for homeschooling. "Having a designated classroom is nice, but some of our most interesting lessons take place while working together in the kitchen, snuggled up on the couch or on subject-related field trips. Accompanying Phil on business trips to explore different states is not uncommon," Ouida added.

Beyond the study is a staircase leading to a playroom full of Barbies, dollhouses — one modern and one traditional — and treasures from the girls' homeland, including colorful Chinese art and hand-chiseled images of Grace and Hope obtained on their adoption trips.

Chinese artifacts find their way back downstairs, as well, where Grace and Hope share a room near their parents' master bedroom. "Although we have



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more rooms, we wanted them to room together, and they like it that way. We also wanted everyone on the same floor for now," Ouida said, noting once they are teens, the girls will likely want their own spaces upstairs.

For now, their shared pink-and-brown bedroom

showcases bedding with Chinese-patterned fabric inlays and two floor-to-ceiling bookshelves housing each girl's favorite reads. Atop one shelf are the Barbies made especially for Chinese adoptees. Each girl was presented one as a souvenir from the White Swan Hotel in Guangzhou, China. Beneath the bedside table are Chinese carvings made of jade representing each girl's name. The girls also have beautiful handmade quilts with Chinese designs made especially for them by their grandmother and aunts.

Hardwood floors and earth tones ground the rest of the comfortable, open living spaces of the home. "We probably should do some updating, but that's just not our focus right now," Ouida said. "We are here all day every day. It's our home. It's our school. It's not so much a showplace — we really live in this house."

And while the family is perfectly content at home, the Oglesbys promise not to forget their youngest children's roots. "We plan to return to China when the girls are older. We would like for them to visit the cities where they were born and possibly visit the orphanages where they spent the first two years of their lives," Phil said.

"These girls have been a tremendous blessing to our entire family. We can't imagine our lives without them," Ouida added. "Not only are they now sisters, they are best friends. Adoption is a wonderful thing!" **NOW**



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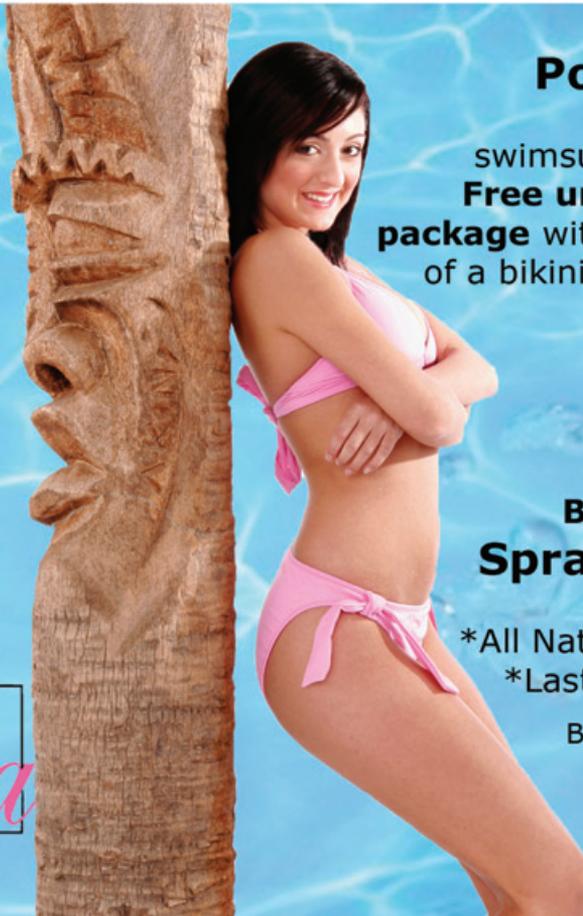
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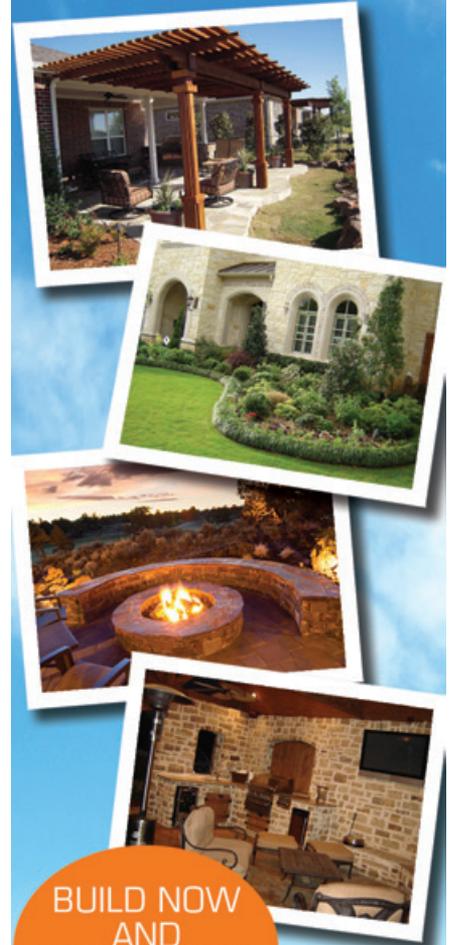
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# Uncrossing the WIRES

— By Adam Walker

*Red Oak may not be able to claim Brandi Bray as a native daughter, but after moving to Red Oak as a high school freshman and teaching for 17 years in Red Oak Independent School District, Brandi is deeply invested in the community. “My family moved here from Lancaster after I finished eighth grade,” she remembered, “and I still love the small-town feel. We’re like a family at the school. All together there are 90 staff members. We vacation together, do Bible studies together and even had a zip line adventure together.”*

Brandi went away to college at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, later returning to Red Oak to begin her career as a teacher, all of which has been at Red Oak Elementary. She taught lower elementary grades for eight years. She then decided she wanted more of a challenge, just to keep things fresh. Brandi realized the part of teaching she loved best was helping children learn to read, so she decided to go back to school at The University of Texas at Arlington where she got a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, focusing on reading. Armed with her new degree, she began helping Red Oak’s students succeed with this critical skill.

For the last nine years, Brandi has been teaching language science, which is Red Oak ISD’s program to help students with dyslexia. “We don’t test students for dyslexia until the end of first grade,”



From left to right: Fourth graders, Maegan Fullerton, Sean Chaney, Mrs. Bray, J.J. Overton Johnson and MacKenzie Fullerton.

Brandi explained. “There is a whole process before a student comes to me. First, the classroom teacher notices a student is struggling with reading and makes modifications for the student. Then, if the student is continuing to struggle, a reading specialist takes over. If progress is slow, the student is referred to me.”

Brandi tests the students who come to her and screens them to see if they belong in language science. “What I do is an educational assessment for dyslexic tendencies. It’s not a medical diagnosis,

and we only test after we have parental permission,” she explained. “My program deals with mild to moderate cases of dyslexia. The really severe cases are referred on to special education.”

Dyslexia is a condition everyone has heard of, but Brandi still finds what a lot of people think they know about it is misinformation. One myth is that dyslexia is not a real condition. “Dyslexia is a learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is a medical issue. People think if a child reverses some letters they have dyslexia, but it’s much more complicated than that. Students with dyslexia have



difficulty with phonemic awareness. They don’t associate letters with sounds. They have trouble with decoding single words, with fluency in reading and with spelling.”

Brandi’s job is to help her students overcome this condition. “Dyslexia is a neurological disorder which means the ‘wires’ in the brain aren’t working right. My job is trying to get the ‘wires’ straightened out.”

Another myth is that dyslexic children are not intelligent. “Many people don’t realize that many dyslexics have a high IQ. They don’t expect a child to be bright when they have trouble reading. Comprehension is not a problem, only recognizing words, especially in isolation



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where there are no context clues to depend upon."

Brandi remembered "one student who was unmistakably GT (gifted/talented), but had severe dyslexia. If you read instructions to him, he could do anything, but to read for himself, he needed



multiple breaks. When he took the TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) test, he would read for 10 minutes, take a break and then read some more because it was so hard for him." People find the combination of high intelligence and trouble reading difficult to believe, but it is not uncommon. "Albert Einstein was dyslexic," Brandi said. "So are Tom Cruise, Whoopi Goldberg and Orlando Bloom."

Actor, director and producer, Henry Winkler, is another dyslexic Brandi mentions. "He has written a series of books about a character named Hank Zipzer who has dyslexia. He based the character on his own experiences growing up."

Brandi has an interesting way of explaining the frustration students with dyslexia feel trying so hard to do something that is very difficult for them. "If you made me play golf, which I don't like and am not good at, and you made me do it over and over again, I would get very frustrated, too," she explained. "That's what these students experience with reading. These students really struggle, and I'm trying to provide them with opportunities to be successful."

In the quest for finding better ways to serve the children of the community, ROISD is piloting a new program developed at Scottish Rite Hospital

called Dyslexia Training Program (DTP). Brandi sees her students for 45 minutes each day to give them intensive help with reading. “I teach them the rules of reading and spelling. In DTP, we always start at the beginning no matter where a child is when they come to us. We do a



targeted alphabet activity every day. Then we use reading and spelling decks to review letters, sounds and keywords we have learned,” she said. “Next, we learn a new concept or letter sound. Then we practice cursive handwriting, which helps with fewer reversals of letters. After that, we have a specific type of reading practice where we decode and read words in isolation or sometimes in context.

Then we do a spelling activity having to do with a specific spelling rule.” That is a lot to fit into just 45 minutes of teaching, which is why this kind of instruction cannot be done in the regular classroom. Without special programs like DTP, these intelligent but challenged students may fall through the



cracks and never get the help they need to succeed in life.

The success of her students truly motivates Brandi. “It’s very rewarding when the light bulb goes off, and you can see in their faces that they get it. Then once a student has shown they can keep up on their own, they exit the program,” Brandi said. “When you see this same student, who struggled and hated reading, walking around with a book in their hand all the time — that’s wonderful.” **NOW**

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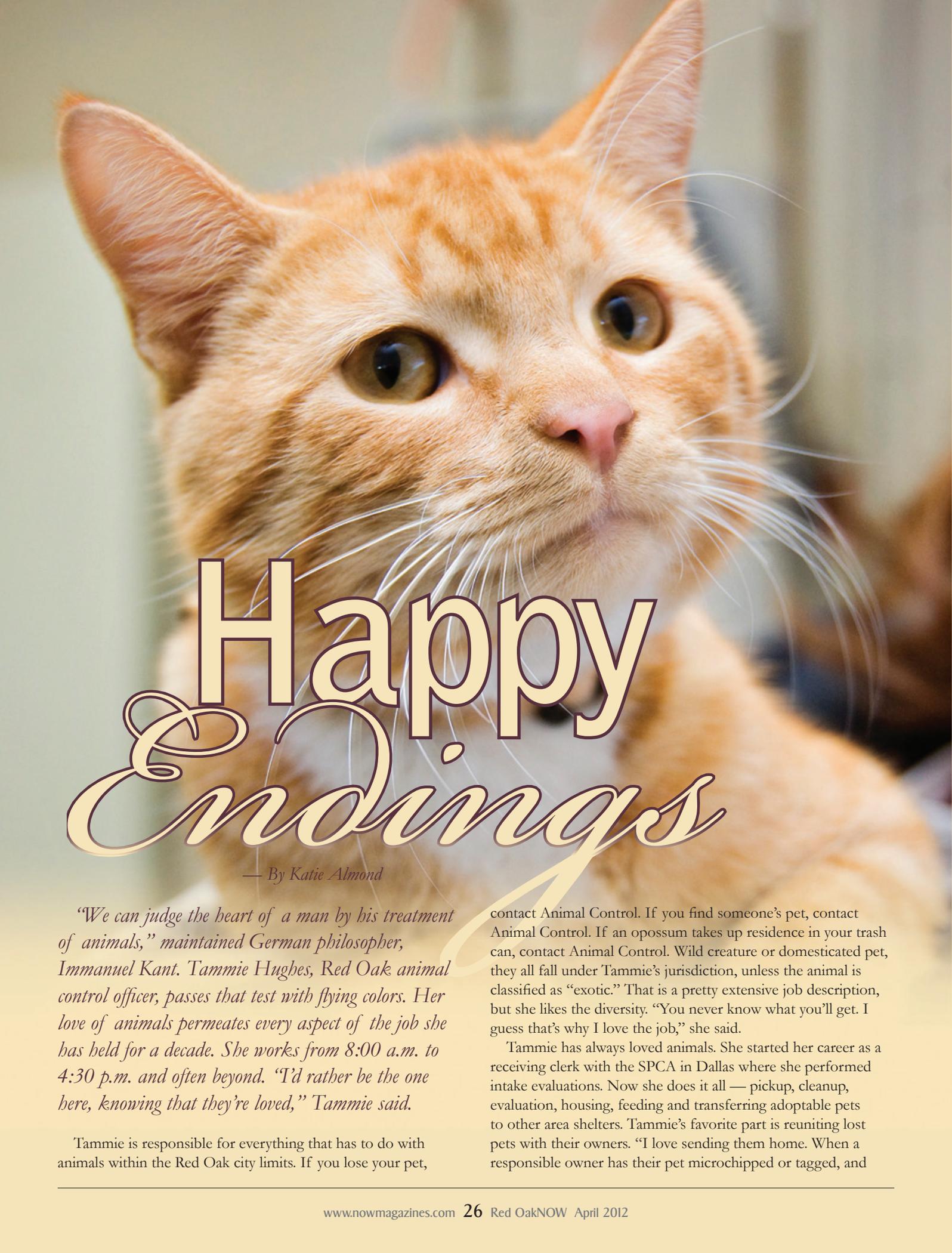
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# Happy Endings

— By Katie Almond

*“We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals,” maintained German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Tammie Hughes, Red Oak animal control officer, passes that test with flying colors. Her love of animals permeates every aspect of the job she has held for a decade. She works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and often beyond. “I’d rather be the one here, knowing that they’re loved,” Tammie said.*

Tammie is responsible for everything that has to do with animals within the Red Oak city limits. If you lose your pet,

contact Animal Control. If you find someone’s pet, contact Animal Control. If an opossum takes up residence in your trash can, contact Animal Control. Wild creature or domesticated pet, they all fall under Tammie’s jurisdiction, unless the animal is classified as “exotic.” That is a pretty extensive job description, but she likes the diversity. “You never know what you’ll get. I guess that’s why I love the job,” she said.

Tammie has always loved animals. She started her career as a receiving clerk with the SPCA in Dallas where she performed intake evaluations. Now she does it all — pickup, cleanup, evaluation, housing, feeding and transferring adoptable pets to other area shelters. Tammie’s favorite part is reuniting lost pets with their owners. “I love sending them home. When a responsible owner has their pet microchipped or tagged, and

I can send them back home, that's awesome," she declared. Tammie calls that a happy ending.

Another happy ending is adoption. That's what happened to Ivey, a stray dog who was run over, dragged and left for dead. She had extensive road burn and a broken leg — not your usual candidate for adoption. "Ivey broke my heart," Tammie revealed. "I took her to the vet because she licked me in the face."

Even with life-threatening injuries, Ivey was a jewel. She never growled or snapped. Tammie took Ivey to the vet and then back to her own home for wound care and daily hydrotherapy sessions. She believed in Ivey to the extent of paying a portion of the veterinary bills herself. The city reimbursed her for the total amount she spent before taking on the remainder of the bill themselves. That belief paid off as Ivey began to improve. Tammie kept her at home until the healing process was well-advanced. Ivey then went to Operation Kindness in Carrollton where a private donor covered the cost of the remaining medical treatment. Today, Ivey is completely healed. She is now part of a family where she romps and plays with a fur-buddy.

Tammie is all about happy endings. That's why she has worked tirelessly to start an animal adoption program



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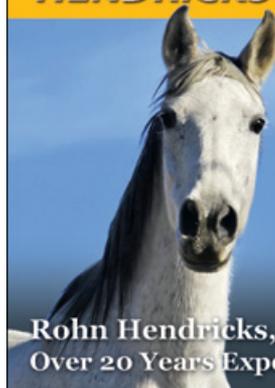
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in Red Oak. "I made a sign and hung it in the shelter six years ago that said, 'BELIEVE,' and now it's coming true," she said. Work has begun to expand the current shelter facility to accommodate the adoption program. Construction is expected to be complete, and the program operational some time in the fall. There will be an area with five runs for adoptable dogs and a separate area for up to 12 adoptable cats. The new expansion will house the adoption program exclusively, and the original shelter will continue its current usage.

This is a dream come true for Tammie. Currently, she is only able to keep an adoptable dog or cat for 72 hours before she must find them a place at a surrounding shelter or with a breed rescue program. Unfortunately, shelters and rescue programs do not always have openings. The new Red Oak Adoption Program will offer another alternative to euthanasia. The current economic downturn has resulted in record numbers of strays and owner surrenders, with some people dropping animals off at shelters because they simply cannot afford to feed and care for pets any longer.

Tammie admitted that spring is a particularly hairy time. "It's puppy and kitten season. Many owners don't spay or neuter, so female dogs come into the shelters and have litters." Once the Red Oak Adoption program is up and running, Tammie knows she will be able to help more animals find homes.

The adoption process is simple, and Tammie will oversee it. A prospective adopter will meet the available dogs or cats then fill out an application. Tammie will review the application to make sure the chosen animal is a good fit. "We have




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to do everything we can to make sure that when these guys leave here, they're going to a forever home," she emphasized. Once the adoption fee is paid, and the animal has been spayed or neutered, they can begin life in their new home. Tammie calls this a really happy ending.

The new adoption program will add to Tammie's workday, but she doesn't mind. "To know I did something good today for a dog or cat — that's what keeps me going," she said.

Tammie's day begins at the shelter building where she cleans the cages, gives the animals food and water, and checks them over to make sure they are in good condition. When all her furry charges are comfy, she returns phone calls, makes pickups and empties traps. At the end of the day, she returns to the shelter to make sure everyone has food, clean water and a clean cage.

"I don't like my animals sitting in cages. It's sad that they have to sit there, anyway, so I want to make it as comfortable as I possibly can," she stated. "We do have a fenced-in area [for exercising animals], but we can't use it until we get the money to concrete it all the way across."

She offered some advice for pet owners on keeping their four-legged best friends safe and secure: "Make sure your pets have a collar and tags, or have them microchipped. I don't know how many times I've heard an owner say they lost their pet because they took the collar off to give them a bath and forgot to put it back on. Put the collar back on immediately after the bath. And always, always, always spay or neuter your pet." Tammie is always working to assure there will be happy endings. **NOW**

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Owner, Rebeca Ihde, and manager, Josh Williams, keep the newly expanded Snap Fitness in top shape.



# Getting Fit is a Snap!

*Round-the-clock access and digital instructors eliminate excuses.*

— *By Angel Morris*

Snap Fitness is designed so you can get your workout done fast and avoid wandering around a big box gym. But for owner Rebeca Ihde, her business is about more than just convenience.

“My goal is to raise awareness and assist Red Oak with becoming healthier. Working out is not only good for weight loss or gain and muscle gain, but good for your body in general — to have a healthy cardiovascular system and bone density, as well as flexibility — just to name a few,” she said.

To that end, Snap Fitness is always changing with the times. “It has been exciting to grow and expand through the years. We first opened in December 2006. We added our second location in 2007. We have now expanded our first location to 5,000 square

feet, added more equipment and the dance floor for classes,” Rebecca noted.

Snap franchise owners pride themselves on progressive, member-friendly policies including the elimination of contracts (members pay month to month), the ability to freeze memberships for up to three months annually and freedom to use any Snap Fitness club in North America.

With the local club’s expansion completed in February, Rebecca implemented a concept called Fitness On Demand. A variety of classes are programmed into the system: Pilates, yoga, cycling, aerobics, kick boxing and more. When a member selects a class an instructor appears on a big screen TV. “It’s a really

cool concept, which has set us apart from our competition in the area,” Rebecca said.

In a nutshell, Snap Fitness is a 24-hour facility featuring cardio machines, free weights and belted weights. The center is key card accessed with video surveillance, and a manager is typically on site from 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Friday. Saturday manager hours are 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Guests can join the facility during manager hours or by appointment via voicemail, Facebook or Web site.

Josh Williams is Snap Fitness’s manager, a personal trainer and runs Snap bootcamps. Alma Kelty and Rita Lopez instruct the Zumba classes. “We try to be our customers’ advocate and support them in whatever their fitness goals are. Josh, Alma, Rita and I try to provide them with the tools and enthusiasm to reach their goals,” Rebecca

**“My goal is to raise awareness and assist Red Oak with becoming healthier.”**

said. “Truly, we welcome everybody and every body. We have all ages and all sizes that work out at Snap and who are comfortable here.”

Rebecca and her husband Glenn, a surgeon, have been comfortable in Red Oak for 10 years. They participate in the local chamber and school district education foundation. Their children, Glenn, 7, and Anne, 6, attend Red Oak schools.

“I moved here when I married my husband, and we like that Red Oak is a small and friendly town. You can really get to know people and feel like you are part of a community. That’s something special,” Rebecca said.

Also special is being part of making people’s lives healthier. “I enjoy working with people and seeing them transform, not only their bodies, but their confidence and their attitude,” Rebecca said. “It’s just an exciting time to be an owner and a member of Snap Fitness!” **NOW**



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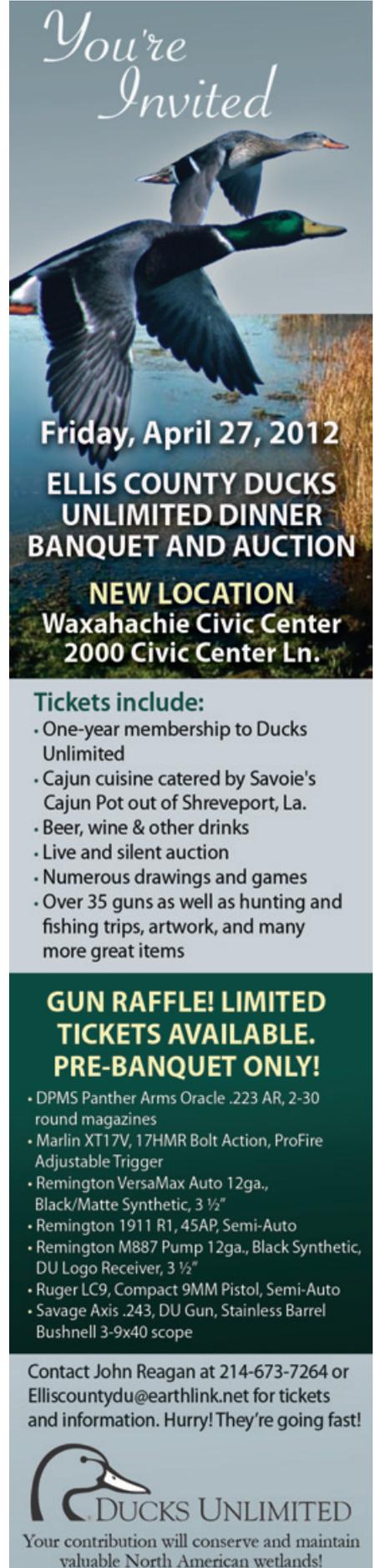
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Jade Flores, far right, is named Rural American Idol, awarded by the People Organizing Ideal Neighborhoods Today organization of Point, Texas. Pictured with other division winners.



Twins Emily and Victoria Barrientos count and add with the help of iPod Touches, which their teacher, Angie Guidry, received last spring with grant money from the Red Oak ISD Education Foundation.



Gracie Henry earned top votes in the Shawna Mathis Photography Cute Kid's Contest, ages 11-16 division. The contest recognizes interior as well as exterior beauty.



Life School Red Oak fourth-graders study table manners and performance etiquette in preparation for a formal dinner and symphony field trip.



Linda Frazier (fourth from left) leads a group of her favorite ladies in exercise.

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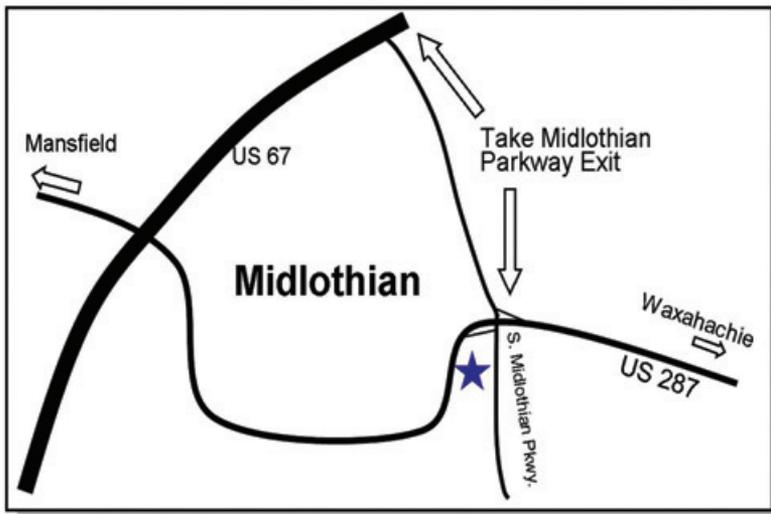
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# Calendar

APRIL 2012

## All Month

Dallas Veterans Hospital Book Drive. Wee Resale, 113 W. Ovilla Rd., Glenn Heights, is the drop-off site for donations of books, magazines and other reading material for veterans. Call (972) 230-8101 for details.

Stuffed Animal Collection: His Loving Arms prayer ministry is accepting stuffed animals, toys and baby items in good condition to distribute in local nursing homes, crisis pregnancy centers and shelters. Contact hislovingarmsministry@yahoo.com.

## April 3

PrimeTimers Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 East. Open to all seniors. Fun, food and fellowship the first Tuesday of each month. RSVP (214) 376-8208.

## April 5

Easter Egg Hunt: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Old Town Park, crossroads of Live Oak and Waller. Parks and Recreation Commission and Red Oak Lions will provide more than 6,000 toy- and candy-filled eggs for children divided into four hunting age groups. Call (972) 576-3414.

## April 6 and 8

Eastridge Baptist Church presents "Bow The Knee." **Friday** at 7:30 p.m. and **Sunday** at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. at Eastridge Baptist Church, 732 East Ovilla Rd.

The adult, 50-plus member choir will present the fully costumed pageant. Admission is free and child care is provided. Call (972) 617-2338.

## April 10

Free yoga/zumba: 7:00 p.m., Old Town Park. In honor of Tom's A Day Without Shoes and Red Oak High School's If You Dare Go Bare event. Visit Yoga4love.net for more details.

## April 12

Teen Club: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Red Oak Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Join the free monthly craft/game hour for teens run by library staff. Open to all teens aged 13-19. Nonresidents welcome. Contact (469) 218-1230.

## April 13-14

City-wide Spring Clean Up: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 2118 S. Uhl Rd., Glenn Heights. Containers will be available for residents to dispose of household trash and debris at no charge. A brush chipper and secure, sensitive document paper shredder will be onsite Saturday, from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Call (972) 223-3478 for info and details.

## April 14

Don't Mess With Texas Trash-off: 7:30 a.m.-noon, Heritage Community Park, 400 E. Bear Creek, Glenn Heights. Keep Glenn Heights Beautiful Board invites residents to volunteer cleaning litter from city thoroughfares. Call (972) 223-1690, ext. 215 to preregister or visit www.glennheights.com.

Hill/Stokes Memorial Youth Scholarship Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. For full details and copy of the application, go to www.metrobekeepers.net or e-mail Colleen Shorrock at cs4316@yahoo.com.

## April 21

Annual Clean Up: 8:00 a.m.-noon, vacant area at Cockrell Hill Road and Westlawn (beside police department), Ovilla. Ovilla residents are invited to dispose of household waste and debris. Call (972) 617-7262 about disposal and recycling opportunities available.

## April 22

Red Oak Bridal Show: 1:00-5:00 p.m., Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Wedding vendors showcase goods and services and assist local brides in planning their perfect wedding. Contact lfindley@redoaktx.org or (469) 218-1202.

## April 25

Red Oak Chamber Luncheon: Noon-1:00 p.m., Red Oak Municipal Center, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. Cost: members with reservations/\$12; members without reservations/\$15; Nonmembers/\$20. This is a catered event. RSVP to katherine@redoakareachamber.org.

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## In The Kitchen With Jennifer Ware

— *By Angel Morris*

Jennifer Ware believes, no matter the race, religion or culture, cooking brings families together. “Whether we are eating Thanksgiving dinner or just having sandwiches, we eat together at the kitchen table! Our days are so busy, and that’s such an important time for us to all be together, visit with one another and decompress from the stresses of the day.” She credits favorite recipes to friends, magazines and cooking blogs, but also her grandmother and mom.

Today Jennifer cooks for her husband and daughter, and also makes baby food for her twin sons. “I love to see them enjoy something I’ve made, and I experiment with ingredients to make recipes my own,” Jennifer said. “With every new dish I give the ‘It’s new, sorry if you dislike it’ disclaimer, but you never know until you try!” **NOW**

### Best Banana Bread

*Wheat flour and organic sugar cane crystals make all the difference!*

- 3 medium or 2 large bananas**
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 3/4 cup wheat flour**
- 1 1/4 tsp. baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 1/8 tsp. salt**
- 2 egg whites, slightly beaten**
- 3/4 cup organic sugar cane crystals**
- 1/4 cup canola oil**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F
- 2.** Mash bananas; set aside.
- 3.** In medium bowl, combine flours, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt.

- 4.** In a large bowl, combine egg whites, banana, sugar and oil; mix well.
- 5.** Add flour mixture to banana mixture (batter should be lumpy).
- 6.** Pour into an 8x4x2-inch greased loaf pan.
- 7.** Bake for 45-50 minutes.

### Squash Boats on the Grill

- 2 large yellow squash**
- 1 cup bread crumbs**
- 1/2 cup bacon bits**
- 1 large jalapeño pepper, finely diced**
- 1/4 cup tomato, chopped**
- 3/4 cup cheddar cheese, shredded**
- 1 pinch dried basil**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

- 1.** Place squash in a pot with enough water

to cover them.

- 2.** Bring to boil and cook for 5 minutes. Drain and let cool.
- 3.** Cut squash in half lengthwise and scoop out pulp, about 1/4” from skin. Chop pulp.
- 4.** In a bowl, combine pulp, bread crumbs, bacon bits, jalapeño, tomato and cheese.
- 5.** Season with basil, salt and pepper.
- 6.** Stuff squash halves with mixture and wrap each “boat” in foil.
- 7.** Place foil packets on prepared grill over indirect heat.
- 8.** Cook 15-20 minutes or until tender.

### Catalina Salad

- 1 lb. ground beef**
- 1 head of lettuce, shredded**
- 1 large tomato, diced**
- 1 can Ranch style beans, drained and rinsed**
- 1 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded**
- Catalina dressing**
- Fritos**

- 1.** Brown ground beef and drain.
- 2.** In large bowl, combine meat, lettuce, tomato, beans and cheese.
- 3.** After putting into individual bowls for serving, top with Fritos and Catalina dressing.

### Individual Fruit Pizza Trifles

- 4 8-oz. packages reduced-fat cream cheese, softened**
- 2 cups brown sugar**
- 4 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 1 lb. strawberries, sliced**
- 1 fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and chopped**
- 1 lb. seedless red grapes, halved**
- 1 pint fresh blueberries**
- 12 sugar cookies, crushed**
- 2 kiwis, peeled and sliced**
- 25 plastic (10 oz.) cups**

- 1.** Mix cream cheese, brown sugar and vanilla extract in a bowl until smooth. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
- 2.** In separate bowl, lightly mix together strawberries, pineapple, grapes and blueberries.
- 3.** Scoop 1/4 cup cream cheese mixture into bottom of each cup.
- 4.** Spoon about 1/3 cup fruit mixture atop cream cheese.
- 5.** Top fruit with about 1 Tbsp. of crumbled sugar cookies.
- 6.** Garnish each trifle with a kiwi slice. Refrigerate until serving.

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