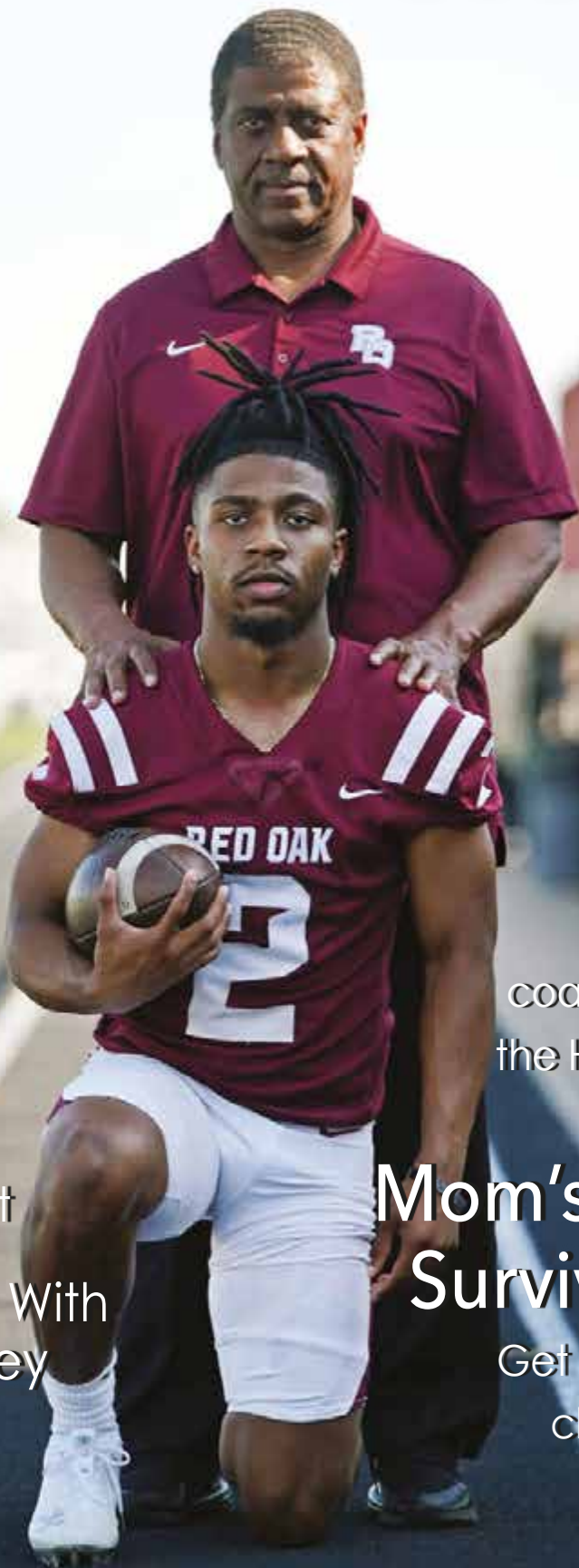


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M A G A Z I N E

JUNE 2024



Father Figure

Melvin Robinson coaches his son and the Hawks to success

Mom's Summer Survival Guide

Get creative to keep children engaged

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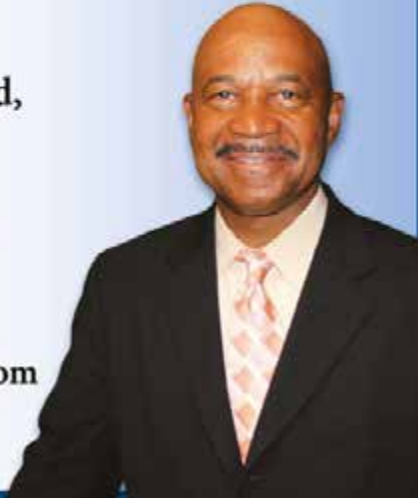
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ON THE COVER



Melvin and Brayden Robinson share a bond for Father's Day and beyond.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris
North Ellis Co. NOW Editor
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What is Juneteenth?

I saw a woman wearing a T-shirt that read, “Free(ish) since 1865.” It sparked a conversation about the Emancipation Proclamation made by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, and how long it took for word to make it to enslaved Texans. It was June 19, 1865, in Galveston, when Union Major General Gordon Granger arrived with news of the Civil War’s end. Called Emancipation Day, Freedom Day and Juneteenth, the holiday has been celebrated by African Americans in different ways since then.

The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery and involuntary servitude (except as punishment for a crime) December 6, 1865, but June 19 is still considered a significant date for celebration and reflection. Fittingly, Texas was the first state to adopt it as an official holiday, but not until 1980. In 2016, 89-year-old Texan Opal Lee staged a walk from her home in Fort Worth to Washington, D.C., traveling 2.5 miles per day symbolizing the two-and-a-half years it took for word of freedom to reach Texas slaves. She also initiated an online petition advocating for a federal holiday that drew 1.6 million signatures. “The Grandmother of Juneteenth” saw it become official in 2021.

The website, Juneteenth.com, notes the holiday’s “growing popularity signifies a level of maturity and dignity in America long overdue. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in history that shaped and continues to influence our society today.” It calls for us to celebrate, “not the horrific institution our country embraced, but rather as a showcase of the strength in the American spirit to recognize wrong and set about making it right.”

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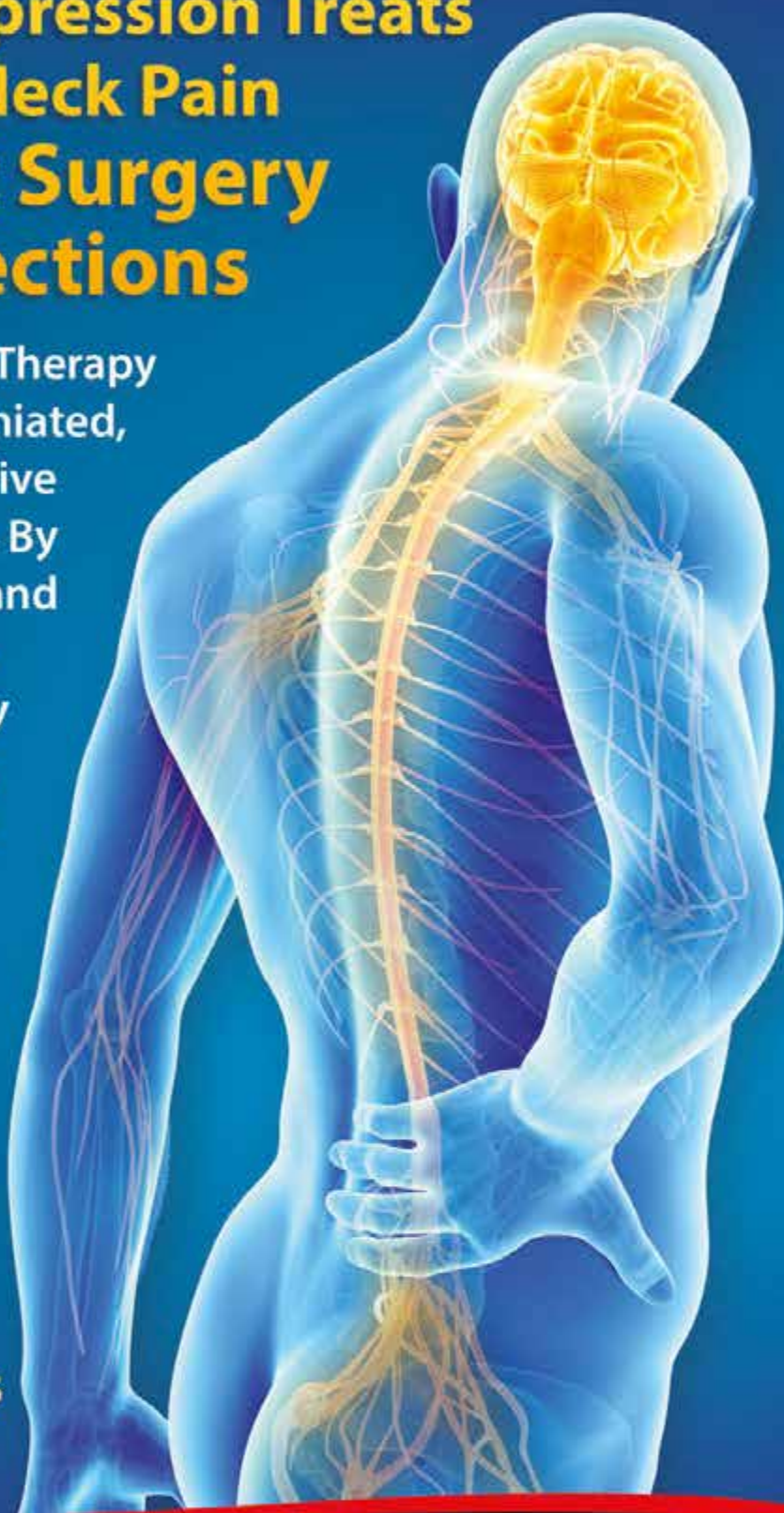
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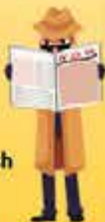
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FATHER FIGURE

— By Angel Morris



Celebrating Father's Day is extra special for Melvin and Brayden Robinson, who spend more time together than the average father-son duo. "My dad has always motivated me to excel in sports. He played football in college and professionally, which has inspired me to want to do the same," Brayden noted.

Melvin, who has been coaching for 30-plus years, is in his third year at Red Oak High School, where he became head football coach in January after previously serving as pass game coordinator. "When Brayden was about 5 years old, I used to take him with me to track practice with my high school athletes. Once he started participating in sports, I would volunteer to help his Little League football teams and his summer track clubs," Melvin recalled.

Red Oak residents for 16 years, the Robinson family has invested much time in area sports. Brayden grew up in ROISD, attending Shields Elementary, Schupmann Elementary, Red Oak Middle School, and he is now a junior at Red Oak High School, where he plays wide receiver under Melvin's direction. "I've always wanted my dad to be my coach. People think it might be challenging, but for me, it is a dream come true," Brayden shared.

Brayden recognizes his father's wealth of experience, which began at Garland High School, where he played football, basketball and ran track (just as Brayden does today). Melvin received his bachelor's degree from Rice



University, where he played football on scholarship and was a four-year starter, three-year captain and two-time MVP. Before ROHS, Melvin was offensive coordinator and boys head track coach at South Garland High School, and he also coached in Sachse and DeSoto.

Last season, Melvin coached the Hawks to a 12-1 record and into the second round of playoffs, and he already has his eye on the ball this fall. "My goal is to advance deep into the playoffs next year and one day bring home a state football championship," he predicted.

Melvin and Brayden are credited with moving ROHS into the limelight as one of the best teams in District 5A. Both

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father and son have special memories of participating in sports together. "Winning the state championship in the 4X1 relay last year, where Brayden was the anchor. This year winning District, Area and Bi-District in football," Melvin outlined.

For Brayden, the track state championship stands out, but he can't help but highlight a moment on the field with his dad. "Catching the game-winning ball against Denton Ryan my freshman year on varsity football has to be the best moment," said Brayden, who is a two-time First Team All-District player.

In his freshman year, Brayden led the team in touchdowns (nine), averaging 15.8 yards per catch. As a sophomore, he had 46 catches, 1,038 all-purpose yards and nine touchdowns, averaging 14.9 yards per catch. Now considered a four-star recruit and one of the top receivers for the Class of 2026, he is already fielding offers from universities like Auburn, Baylor, Louisiana State, Southern Methodist, Texas A&M and UT Austin. "My dad sets a great example for me," Brayden credited. "I want to play



football and run track on the college level, but more importantly, to be the best version of myself every day."

Melvin — who played professional football for the NFL's New England Patriots and CFL's Edmonton Eskimos

— credits sports with "teaching discipline and building character." "There's no doubt that sports are good for youth. It gives them an outlet, teaches life lessons and creates a lot of long-term relationships," he described.

With his wife, La Toya, Melvin enjoys seeing his other children — David, Kiona and Kashara — excel. David and Kiona are ROHS graduates, where David was in theater arts, and Kiona played basketball. Kashara graduated from Mesquite High School and now is a proud Hawks supporter.

Off the field, Brayden said he likes to listen to music and finds art peaceful. While he will recognize his dad on Father's Day this month, Brayden said his dad is a father figure for his teammates year-round. "The difference between a successful coach and a great coach is the ability to inspire and empower their players," he said of his dad's coaching style.

Melvin said it is just part of the job. "My advice to my players is practice winning every day, never give up, never back down and never lose faith," he said. "Then you'll finish strong." **NOW**

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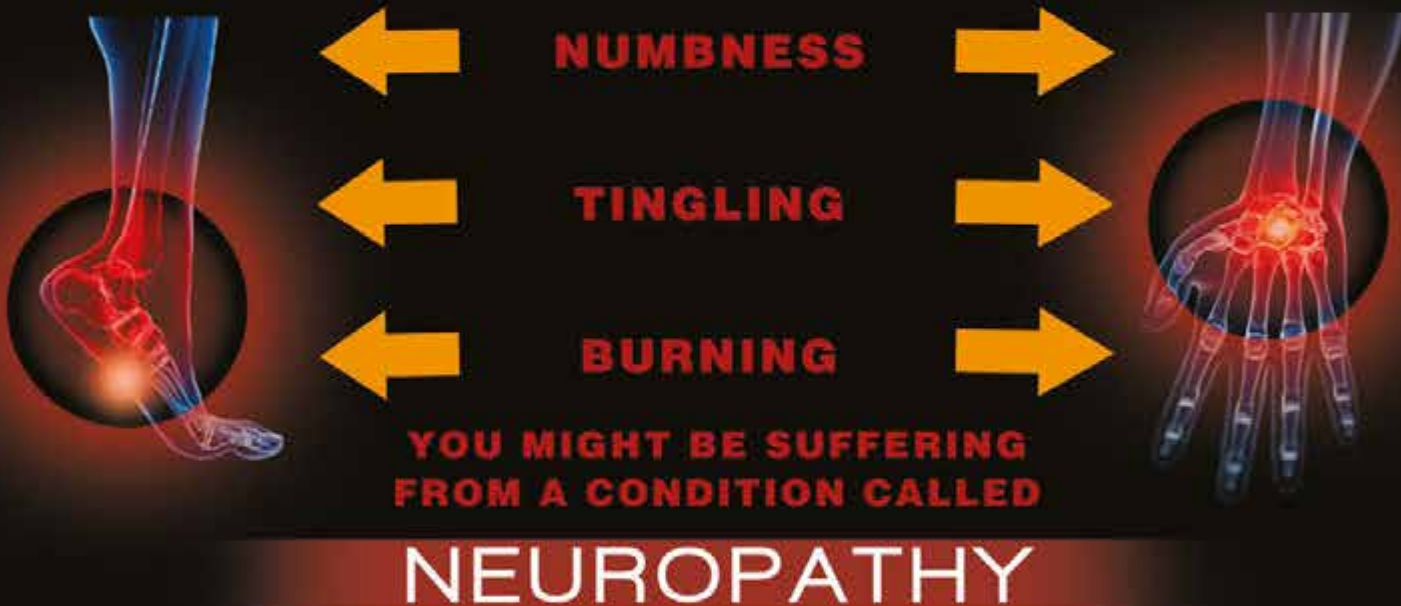
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Mom's Summer Survival Guide

— By Amber D. Browne

Summertime with children at home is a blessing — as long as the little ones stay engaged and happy! Regardless of a child's age, engaging activities are a must when those long summer days crave activities. Many moms are often in pursuit of fun adventures for their children to enjoy. So, why not try making a healthy snack or planning a themed movie night? The sky's the limit when it involves memorable occasions with the littles.

Kitchen Time With the Kiddos

Snack time is an absolute must when children are home from school in the summer. Simple recipes found on Pinterest or your favorite cookbook offer great options. When in the kitchen, provide the child with a specific job. This not only engages them, so they are more inclined to eat the food, it also teaches them responsibility and provides cooking experience.

Build Ants on a Log

Ants on a Log is a simple and fun recipe that provides a dose of protein. The ingredients are simple: celery sticks, peanut butter or your favorite nut butter and raisins or chocolate chips. After cleaning and cutting the celery into 3- to 4-inch pieces, spread the peanut butter onto each piece. Add raisins or chocolate chips, depending on your preference, and voila! You can have the child do one or all of these steps, depending on their age.

Bake Cookies

Find your favorite cookie recipe and purchase the ingredients. A grocery store outing with your child is another activity that can serve as a lesson in shopping etiquette, how to locate ingredients and budgeting. When back in the kitchen, have the child participate in as many steps as possible. If age-appropriate, teach the child how to work the oven and mixer. Familiarize them with different kitchen utensils and tools, as well as measuring spoons and cups for a quick math lesson. At the end of the activity, freshly baked cookies await!

Pot a Plant

Adding a potted plant to any room in the home brings nature indoors. They add a pop of color, and studies show live plants can boost mood, increase focus and improve air quality.

To pot a plant, head to your local nursery to purchase small decorative receptacles or terracotta pots. (Another fun activity might be to

paint the terracotta pots before potting the plants.) Peruse the aisles for some of your favorite succulents, aloe or indoor plants. Remember to grab potting soil, small spades and gloves for you and your child.

Once home, place the items outside or on an indoor table covered with butcher paper or newspapers before getting to work. Potting a plant is a simple activity that may get little hands dirty, but the end product will brighten the home and provide other benefits.

Themed Movie Night

Spending time with loved ones curled up on the couch is always a fun treat. For a themed movie, choose the movie first, and then add in themed food and drink items, plates and napkins, a few questions related to the movie's message and an activity. The children can participate in voting on which movie to watch, as well as in the planning process for all things involved.

When choosing a theme for movie night, incorporate the culture of the main character, color choices seen throughout the film or the genre. For example, if Disney's *Coco* is the movie selection for the evening, incorporate traditional Mexican fare and beverages. Plates and napkins can display bright colors, or you can add Day of the Dead decor. Questions might be about the Mexican culture or simply, "What do you think is the message from the movie?" These can vary from person to person, and the answers might be great conversation starters. For an activity, a family member might play a tune on a guitar, or everyone can dance around the living room to a popular Spanish song on YouTube or Spotify. With so many movie options and an endless supply of ideas online, themed movie night is always a great choice.

The summer can be a fun and engaging time of making memories as a family. To find other suggestions, search online or simply sit and chat with your children. Scavenger hunts, DIY obstacles courses, picnics and s'mores are other options. Moms might have to put in a little effort to create a fun activity for the children, but it will be worth it! **NOW**

Editor's Note: Tag NOW Magazines when you post photos of your at-home summer adventures on social media!

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Zoomed In: Ellis Register

By Angel Morris

Police Sergeant Ellis Register enjoyed a hot dog during a city of Glenn Heights Community Connect event. "I encourage citizens to attend these events to meet those who work for and serve the city and live in the community," Sergeant Register said.

With a dozen years in law enforcement, Sergeant Register initially worked in the funeral service industry. "As a mortician, I saw firsthand the number of people who were dying at a young age," he recalled. "I felt the need to be part of the solution for change and bridging the gap between citizens and the police, especially by creating positive interactions."

Sergeant Register said he looks forward to the next Community Connect. "I enjoy being part of a city that is growing and changing!"



Mark Dunn and Terrance Suber earn second and first place in the Lions Club Charity Bowling event.



Taylor Mendoza and her uncle, Martin Morado, celebrate her acceptance to The University of Texas at Austin at last month's ROHS Academic Signing Day.



Ovilla Fire and Police departments receive \$25,500 raised through fundraising efforts of the Ovilla Service League.



Lynn Sawyer and Jerry McClung volunteer for the Ovilla United Methodist Church Annual Garage Sale.



Red Oak Friends of the Library volunteers celebrate a successful bunco fundraiser hosted on behalf of the library.



Glenn Heights Parks & Recreation Superintendent Barrett Albright plants mulch at Heritage Park during the City-wide Community Clean Up Day.



Blessed Home Renovations representatives Magan Wood, Cory Anderson and Patrick Smith attend the North Ellis County Business Expo hosted by the Red Oak Area Chamber.

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CookingNOW In the Kitchen With ROBBYN HENSLEY

— By Angel Morris



Robbyn Hensley began cooking as a child, inspired by her father. “We enjoyed cooking and tasting things that were, at that time, out of the ordinary,” Robbyn recalled. “We would explore epicurean shops, ethnic grocers, diverse restaurants and food all around the DFW area and when on vacations. I’m so happy that even though Daddy is gone, I have those memories.”

Robbyn, who lives in Waxahachie with her husband, Chris, and daughter, Zoey, teaches in early education at Ovilla Christian School. “When Chris and I started dating, we enjoyed cooking meals and listening to music. To this day, we enjoy our time together the same,” Robbyn noted. “Cooking is an act of service for me. It fills my heart to seek out the items, prepare the items and serve them.” **NOW**

Sour Cream Chicken Enchiladas

Yummy budget meal!

1/2 cup vegetable oil
Corn tortillas
2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
1 onion, chopped
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup flour
1 cup chicken broth

1 cup sour cream
1-2 12-oz. cans of chicken
Pickled jalapeños, to taste
1 4-oz. can green chiles, drained

1. Heat the oil in a skillet; cook the tortillas, one and a time, in the oil for about 5 seconds per side. Do not overcook, or they will not roll.
2. Place cheese and onions on each tortilla;

roll them up. Place the rolled tortillas seam side down in an 11x7-inch baking dish.

3. In a pan, melt the butter; blend in the flour. Add the chicken broth; cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and bubbles.

4. Stir in the sour cream, chicken, jalapeños and green chiles. Cook until heated but do not boil. Pour over the tortillas; bake at 375 F for 15 minutes.

5. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese; return to the oven until melted.

Mexican Corn Bread

1 cup yellow cornmeal
2 eggs, well beaten
1 cup sweet milk
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 14-oz. can cream style corn
1/2 lb. ground meat
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 lb. (or less) cheddar cheese, grated
1 12-oz. jar jalapeño peppers (reserve juice)
3/4 tsp. salt
Cilantro, to taste

1. Mix the cornmeal, eggs, milk, baking soda and corn.
2. Sauté the ground meat. Drain; set aside.
3. Grease a large iron skillet or bread pan; sprinkle with a thin layer of cornmeal.
4. Mix the ground meat with the cornmeal mixture. Add the onions, cheese and peppers. Add the salt and cilantro with a little juice from the peppers.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared iron skillet; bake at 350 F for 45 minutes. Do not overcook. Bread should be softer than regular cornbread.

Corn Dip

- 2 11-oz. cans Mexican corn, drained
- 1 4-oz. can chopped chiles
- Diced jalapeños, to taste
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 cups shredded cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 green onions

1. In a bowl, blend together all the ingredients.
2. Serve with raw veggies, chips, crackers, etc.

Power Pancakes

- 10 extra-large egg whites
- 1 cup oatmeal
- Splenda, to taste (begin with 1/8 to 1/4 cup)
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. cinnamon
- 1 medium banana (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. sliced almonds or walnuts (optional)
- 3/4 cup blueberries (optional)
- 1/4 cup protein powder (optional)

1. Preheat a skillet over medium-high heat. Blend all the ingredients together.
2. Spray a pan with nonstick cooking spray; pour the mixture into the pan to form pancakes. Cook until the edges are firm; flip and cook the other side.
3. Store prepared pancakes with a paper towel between each one in a Ziploc bag or airtight container for up to 3 days.
4. Reheat in the microwave with a slightly damp paper towel on top. May be served warm or cold.

To search for more great recipes from any of the 9 NOW Magazines publications, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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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.

JUNE

6/1

Take-A-Kid Fishing:

Free fishing for children up to age 16. 8:00-10:00 a.m., Pearson Park, 200 Lakeview Pkwy.

6/10

Blood Drive:

Ovilla Police Department in conjunction with Carter BloodCare. 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 105 S. Cockrell Hill Rd., Ovilla. For registration information, contact Jessica Price at jprice@cityofovilla.org or call (972) 617-7262, ext. 3.

6/10-6/14

Bricks for Kidz:

LEGO® model building camps. 9:00 a.m.-noon (ages 5-13) and 1:00-4:00 p.m. (ages 8-14). Red Oak First United Methodist Church, 600 Daubitz Dr. Register at bricks4kidz.us/texas-elliscounty/camps/.

6/29

Red Oak White & Blue:

Food trucks, inflatables, obstacle course, mechanical rides for kids of all ages, giveaways and fireworks show. New this year is the Give Back to Soldiers Initiative: Bring items and letters for care packages to be sent to soldiers overseas. Event begins: 7:00 p.m.; fireworks: 9:30 p.m., Oaks Church, 777 S. I-35. More details at

www.redoaktx.org/rowb.

Wednesdays

Summer Cinema:

Free family-friendly event showing the movie, *Trolls Band Together* (June 5), *Elemental* (June 12) and *Super Pets* (June 19). Drinks and snacks provided while supplies last. 12:30-2:30 p.m., Red Oak Community Room, 101 S. Live Oak.

First Thursdays

Red Oak Lion's Club Meeting:

Joining Lions Club is a way to network with other businesses, community leaders and civic-minded people while helping

your community. 6:30-7:30 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. To learn more, call (469) 571-7265.

Third Saturdays

Mobile Food Pantry:

Please remain in your car. Food will be brought to you. 10:00 a.m.-noon, Red Oak Discipleship Ministries, 507 I-35E South. To volunteer, email communityoutreach@dminc.org.

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

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