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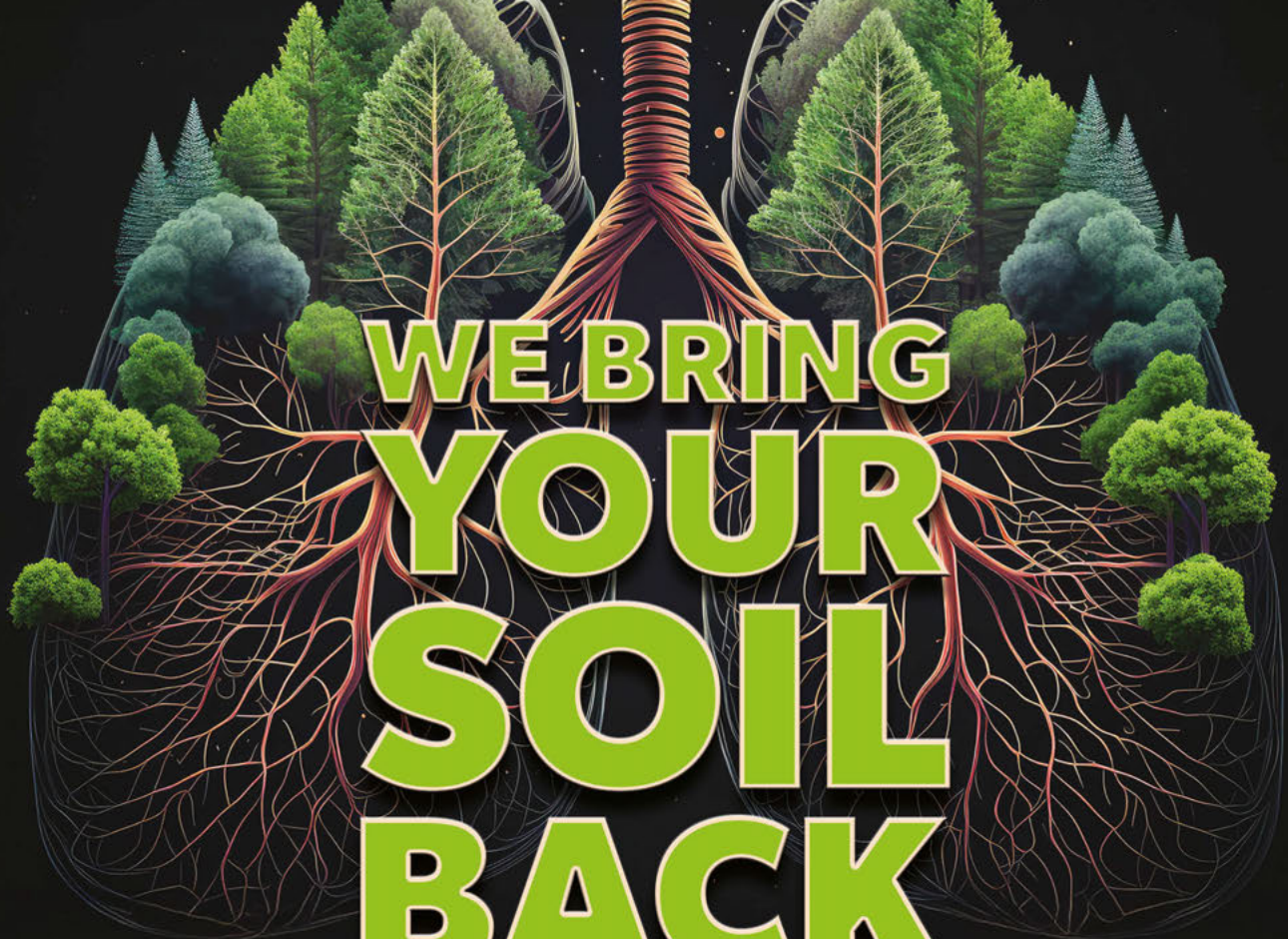


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ON THE COVER

Midlothian
Rotarians bring
the Old Glory
Flag Program
and more
service efforts to
the community.



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LIFT MEDICAL AESTHETICS

Tuesdays at noon, the clinking of silverware at Jalapeño's Lemon Pepper restaurant blends with the exchange of ideas between business leaders, retirees and community advocates. This is the Midlothian Rotary Club — a local chapter of a global movement that has been redefining the meaning of fellowship and service for more than a century.

The story of Rotary began in 1905, when attorney Paul P. Harris convened a small group of professionals in Chicago. His vision was simple: to create a space where people of diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas and build lifelong friendships. The name "Rotary" was born from the group's early practice of rotating their weekly meetings among the offices of each member.

The organization has grown into a global powerhouse with three defining traits: they are problem-solvers, leaders and neighbors. While the organization has evolved — most notably in 1989 when it opened its doors to women — its mission to provide service to others, promote integrity and



Service Above Self

— By Angel Morris



advance world understanding remains the North Star.

For Midlothian's Rotary chapter, the club's motto, "Service Above Self," isn't just a phrase. It's a weekly commitment — from supporting local Scouting programs and youth leadership camps to providing student scholarships.

One of the most visible signs of the club's presence is the Old Glory Flag Program through which Rotary and its volunteer partners set up some 1,600 American flags at participating homes and businesses during seven holidays: Memorial Day, Flag Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, Labor Day, Patriots Day and Veterans Day. For \$50 a year, residents have a flag placed in their yard, with proceeds directly supporting Rotary's local and international missions.

The club also addresses immediate human needs through partnerships with Manna House and the Meals on Wheels program. Members aren't just gathering for a meeting every Tuesday. They are delivering food and a friendly face to neighbors in need.

As the club looks toward the future,



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it prepares to welcome Gayla Johnson as its next president. Having joined the club in 2024, Gayla represents the modern face of Rotary — emphasizing inclusivity and empowerment of the next generation.

“My favorite part of participation in Rotary is the fellowship and knowledge given at each meeting,” Gayla said. “But I also love seeing the joy on the faces as we deliver their meal through Rotary’s Meals on Wheels program.”

A retired bookkeeper and co-pastor, Gayla brings a heart for missionary work — having served on American Indian Reservations in New Mexico — to her leadership role. When she isn’t praying for the growth and fairness of Midlothian, she can be found at the bowling alley, the gun range or in her kitchen. For Gayla, Rotary is more than a civic organization. “Midlothian Rotary Club is not just a club,” she noted, “we are family.”

Passing the gavel to Gayla is John Piper, whose life has been synonymous with Rotary since 1984. A licensed pharmacist who served Texas for 52 years, John originally joined a club in Lancaster to integrate into the community. Since then, he has served as president of the Lancaster club (1993) and the Midlothian club twice (2012 and 2025-2026).

John's commitment is evidenced by his status as a Paul Harris Society member and a Level 1 Major Donor. He has seen the organization weather massive changes, including the shift to allow women and the relaxation of attendance requirements post-COVID.

John's fondest memory serves as a testament to the global Rotary network. "The year I was president in Lancaster, a big tornado hit, destroying part of the town," he recalled. "We immediately started receiving donations from Rotary clubs across the nation to help us rebuild. It was amazing to see."

The Midlothian club's efforts

feed into the broader Rotary Foundation, a world-class charity rated 4 stars by Charity Navigator. With 88 percent of donations going directly to programs, the foundation tackles everything from literacy and economic development to water sanitation and peacebuilding.

The flagship mission remains the eradication of polio. In 1979, Rotary began an ambitious project to immunize 6 million children in the Philippines. Today, with help from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, polio remains endemic in only two countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Back at home, the club focuses heavily on local youth. It sponsors students for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp, where high schoolers learn leadership skills to make a difference in their communities. Rotary also hosts a speech contest, showcasing the debate and ethical reasoning skills of local high school students.

The club's weekly guest speakers

also make an impression on students ... for every speaker, a signed book is donated to a Midlothian elementary school. And when a member passes away, the club honors them with a dedicated bench and plaque in a city park.

Whether it's discussing AI, hearing from the Midlothian Marshalls, or learning from city officials, Tuesday meetings are a hub of information and inspiration. "Anyone is welcome to attend. The friendships and projects are the best part. You meet lifetime friends around the world," John promised.

For those in Midlothian looking to make a difference, the message from the club is clear: There is a seat at the table, a flag to be planted and a neighbor waiting for a meal. In the Midlothian Rotary Club, service is not just a duty — it is a way of life. **NOW**

Editor's Note: Learn more about the flags on display around town this month at www.flagmapper.com/Midlothianrotary.

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FINDING YOUR PATRIOT

Two hundred and fifty years ago, ordinary people across the 13 colonies made the extraordinary choice to declare independence and create a new nation, and many of their descendants are still here. As Americans mark this milestone, millions are quietly wondering the same thing: Was my family part of it?

The good news is that this is one of the most answerable questions in genealogy. Here's how to find out.

Before opening any database, write out everything you know about your family, and talk to older relatives. Family stories aren't evidence, but they are excellent starting points. "Great-grandma always said we had someone at Valley Forge" is absolutely worth following up on.

From there, build a documented chain from yourself back through each generation. Every link needs a record to support it — birth certificates and marriage licenses for recent generations, then census records, church registers, wills and land deeds as you push back into the 1800s and 1700s. FamilySearch.org is free and a great first stop. Your local library may also provide free access to Ancestry.com and Fold3.

Here's something many people don't know: You don't need a soldier in the family to qualify as a Revolutionary War descendant. Both the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) recognize a broad range of qualifying service, including civil service roles, signing loyalty oaths, paying special war taxes and providing material support to the cause. Far more Americans have qualifying ancestors than they realize.

Two federal record collections are your most powerful tools. Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs) are searchable for free on FamilySearch and document roughly 80,000 individual soldiers from muster and pay rolls. But the real treasure is

the Revolutionary War Pension Files, available on Fold3 and Ancestry.com. Veterans applying for pensions decades after the war had to prove their service, so they wrote detailed narratives describing battles, naming comrades and often listing wives and children. A single pension file can answer years' worth of genealogical questions.

Also check the DAR Ancestor Database at dar.org and the SAR Patriot Research System at sar.org before you do anything else. A relative may have already proven part of your lineage, and an approved post-1985 DAR application can count as proof for the generations it covers.

The standard for proving ancestry is higher than just finding a promising name. You need evidence of the parent-child relationship at each generation, not just evidence that someone existed. Keep copies of every document, and note exactly where you found it. Family tradition, no matter how vivid, is not accepted as proof by lineage societies. The records have to do the talking.

Somewhere in the pension files and muster rolls, in old wills and church registers, your family's chapter in this country's founding may be waiting. All it takes is curiosity, patience and a willingness to follow the evidence wherever it leads. Happy hunting! **NOW**

Resources:

1. *Daughters of the American Revolution*. "Using the Genealogical Research System (GRS)." dar.org/research.
2. *National Society Sons of the American Revolution*. "Apply in 4 Easy Steps." sar.org/how-to-apply.
3. *FamilySearch Wiki*. "Revolutionary War Pension Records and Bounty Land Warrants." familysearch.org.
4. *Fold3*. "Revolutionary War Pension Files." blog.fold3.com.

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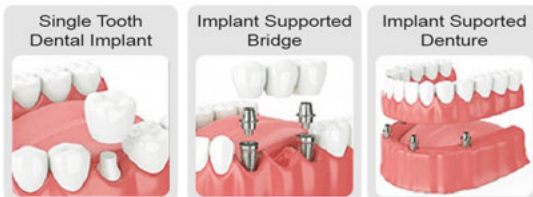
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Zoomed In: Cara Schaefer

By Angel Morris

Cara Schaefer recently graduated from Navarro College with an associate degree in general studies, *magna cum laude*, and as a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She will pursue her bachelor's and master's in social work at the University of North Texas.

Having developed her horsemanship skills by interning with Amy at the Barn, Cara's goal is to work with children and young adults through equine-assisted counseling. "I first learned about this therapy when I had the opportunity to volunteer and ride at Paws for Reflection Ranch while in high school," Cara noted. "There I discovered my passion for horses and realized that I would one day combine this with my desire to work with children who had gone through difficult situations."



Jazzercise Midlothian participants enjoy Friday Mocktails & Muscles to kick off summer.



Deanna Lariz congratulates Nikao Shubin on his Not Just Piano Studio recital performance.



Members of FBC Midlothian's Elevate Student Ministry serve on a recent mission trip.

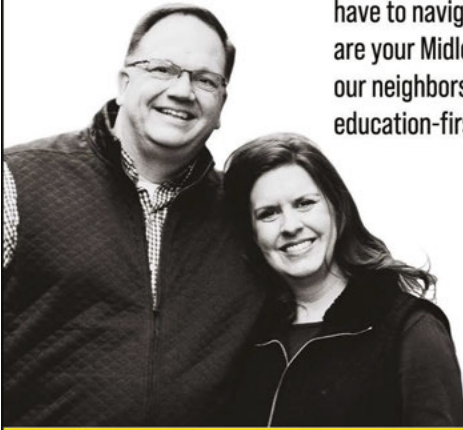


2026 graduates of the Leadership Midlothian program watch a CareFlite helicopter land at a local hospital.



The Trash Pandas go undefeated in the regular season and finish second in the third game of post season with Midlothian Amateur Baseball Association.

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Zoomed In: Elin Whitaker

By Angel Morris

Elin Whitaker recently took the stage at Railport Brewery in Waxahachie. "I've always wanted to be a singer, and when I discovered School of Rock, I thought it would be cool to learn guitar and other instruments like drums and piano," she shared. "School of Rock feels like a community, and that's part of the reason why I'm more comfortable on stage."

Mom Natalie Whitaker said, "She came out showing her vocals and never stopped! We have videos of her on the play microphone over the years."

An incoming freshman at Midlothian Heritage High School, the aspiring musician became interested in performing five years ago. "It officially started in choir back in elementary school," she said, "but I've been singing all my life."



Midlothian Chamber of Commerce Chairman Eric Janszen welcomes crowds to MidloFest.



Renee Cook, Krystal Hughes, Tami Tobey and Cindy Hurst — Team "The Crushers" — complete a 500-piece puzzle in 45 minutes and six seconds in a contest at the Bearded Axe.



Aly Kinsey graduates from Midlothian Heritage High School.



Walnut Grove Middle School mascots "Wanda & Willie," seventh-graders Blakely and Katelyn, receive UCA All-American honors at summer cheer camp.



Midlothian Heritage High School students host spirit night at Midlo Scoops, raising funds to compete at the International Thespian Festival in Indiana.

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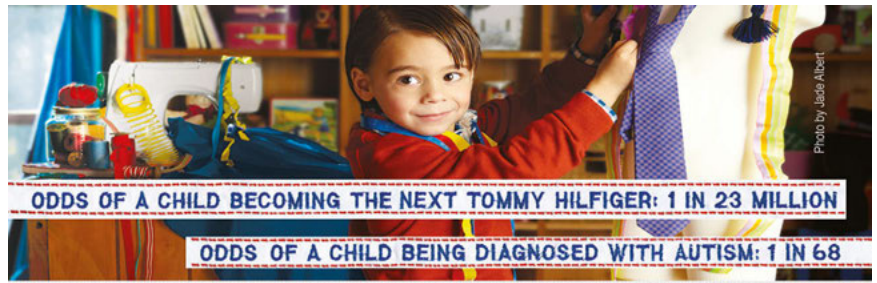


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Serenity Advanced Dentistry

After shadowing different careers in college, Dr. Cristina Allala discovered her calling in dentistry. Ten years later, she brings specialized expertise and a spa-like atmosphere to Cedar Hill through Serenity Advanced Dentistry, a solo, minority, woman-owned private practice.

Dr. Allala graduated from Baylor College of Dentistry in 2016 and completed her Bachelor of Science from The University of Texas at San Antonio in 2012. Since opening her practice, she has built a loyal following of patients who have followed her from her previous office, drawn by her gentle approach and commitment to patient care.

What sets her practice apart is her advanced certification in Level 2 moderate sedation — a qualification most dentists do not have. This certification requires at least 60 hours of specialized instruction and successfully administering sedation to at least 20 patients under supervision. For patients who experience dental anxiety, this option can transform their experience, making procedures like extractions comfortable and stress-free.

"Another thing that sets our practice apart is our skill with dental surgeries," Dr. Allala said. "Here are some of my favorite quotes from patients:

"Regarding implants: 'My implant surgery went smoothly. They explained everything, kept me relaxed, and I had very little discomfort afterward.'

"Regarding tooth extractions: 'I had oral surgery done and was extremely nervous, but the doctor and team made me feel comfortable the entire time. The procedure was painless, and recovery was easy.'

"Regarding tooth fixed dentures: 'My experience with fixed dentures was great. Dr. Allala planned everything digitally, the surgery went smoothly, and I had no complications. I can eat comfortably now, and they feel like my own natural teeth.'"

Serenity Advanced Dentistry offers most dental procedures under one roof, including sedation dentistry, dental crowns, dentures, emergency treatment, oral surgery, dental implants, root canals, teeth whitening, extractions, clear aligners, gum grafts and periodontal therapy. The practice emphasizes privacy and comfort. The office features private treatment rooms that allow honest conversations between doctor and patient without worry of being overheard. The modern facility incorporates the latest dental technology while maintaining a calming, spa-like environment.

"We are not a corporation," Dr. Allala said. Unlike larger corporate dental practices, Serenity Advanced Dentistry remains independent, allowing Dr. Allala to focus on building genuine relationships with patients. All assistants are bilingual, ensuring Spanish-speaking patients feel comfortable and fully understand their treatment options.

Dr. Allala lives in DeSoto, just 10 minutes away from her office, keeping her deeply connected to the community she serves. She gives back by supporting the Friends of Tri-City Animal Shelter through monthly contributions, a cause close to her heart as a devoted pet lover. For families seeking personalized dental care in a welcoming, professional environment, Serenity Advanced Dentistry offers an alternative to corporate dental chains.

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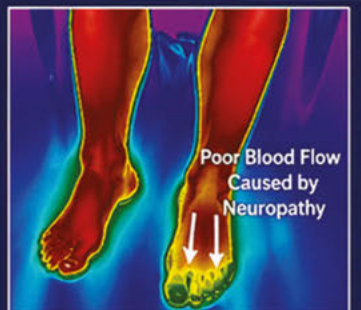
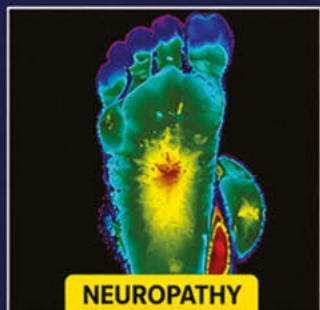
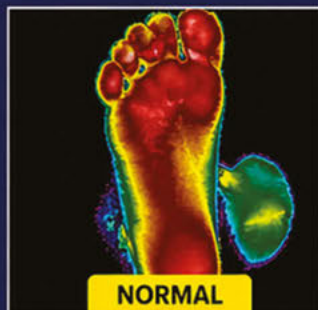
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