## Southwest

## Composing a uture

Aureus Morel's talent shines at the piano and beyond

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Featured Business: Otise Reed Law Group, PLLC

In the Kitchen With Nakia McGuire

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## Academic Calendar

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Independence Day July 4
First Day of SchoolAugust 13
Labor DaySeptember 2
Fall BreakOctober 14-18
Thanksgiving BreakNovember 25- 29
Winter BreakDecember 23-January 2
MLK Jr. HolidayJanuary 20
Presidents DayFebruary 17
Spring BreakMarch 11-14
Good FridayApril 18
Last Day of SchoolMay 22
Memorial DayMay 26

## MEET THE TEACHER (6:00 - 8:00 p.m.)

Elementary: August 8 Intermediate: August 15 Middle: August 22 DHS/PACE: August 29

## SCHOOL HOURS

Elementary 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Intermediate 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Middle School 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. High School

7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## LEGEND

- Holiday, No Classes
- First/Last Day of School
- Meet-the-Teacher Night
- 🦲 Professional Development, No Classes
- Teacher Work Day, No Classes
- PD Exchange Day, No Classes
- Bad Weather Day
- Nine Weeks Begins
- Nine Weeks Ends

\*Calendar Revised 7.15.2024

## ON THE COVER



Aureus Morel lives and breathes music.

## **Photo by** Shane Kirkpatrick.

Publisher, Connie Poirier General Manager, Rick Hensley

### **EDITORIAL**

Managing Editor, Becky Walker Southwest Editor, Adam Walker Office Assistant, Kristin Bato Editors/Proofreaders, Rachel Rich Virginia Riddle

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# Adam Walker SouthwestNOW Editor adam.walker@nowmagazines.com (469) 285-2008

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

My head is full of weird stuff ...

There are movie quotes, Muppet quotes and song lyrics. There's the color of a particular set of pans Mom had when I was a little kid and that spot on the wall that looked like a German Shepherd when I had a high fever and the poster my kindergarten teacher gave me when she left six weeks into the year.

But the dumbest thing crowding my brain has to be old phone numbers. In 1983, we lived in Garland and had the phone number 530-1212. It had previously belonged to an all-night glass repair place. When we moved to Dallas the next year, our phone number was 333-2455. That one was one digit different from a call-in prayer line. Both of them were *fun* numbers to have late at night!

At least those were my own phone numbers. For many years, you could call 844 plus any four more numbers to get the time and temperature. I called that number a lot during the summer of 1980. *The Dallas Times Herald* classifieds number was 748-1414. That newspaper went bankrupt in the early '90s. But I still remember how to call to "get results like you've never seen before!"

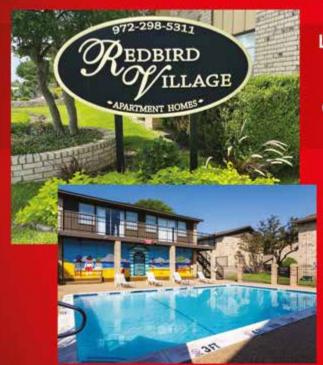
When I lived in Taiwan the phone number for Pizza Hut was 2393-9889, followed by the exclamation *ah!* Domino's number was 2882-5252, which was mispronounced to sound like the phrase, "I'm hungry, Daddy! I'm hungry! I'm hungry!" I never used either number and rarely ate at either establishment. There are still a few numbers for floor repair places and law practices that are stuck in my head.

What's in your head?





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# Composing a Future By Adam Walker



Music is the air that Aureus Morel breathes. A lot of people say stuff like that, but it's true of this 17-year-old student at Booker T. Washington HSPVA on a whole other level.

"I vividly remember third grade Music Memory competition. I put in a lot of effort and won the first trophy for William M. Anderson Elementary. You're required to listen to music and memorize the titles and composers," Aureus explained.

"It's a UIL-sanctioned event," his mother. Kesha Calicutt.

added. "As a high school student, Aureus and his classmates perform the pieces for the younger students to identify. I probably should have gotten a clue from third grade."

"Then in middle school, at Harry Stone Montessori, they had piano as an elective. It came pretty naturally. I

had a great teacher in sixth grade, Miss Strayley. She suggested I should go to Booker T."

His mother was a violinist in college, so she's a competent musician herself. "During COVID, I started helping him with his music. I taught him the circle of fourths and the circle of fifths. But I didn't learn music. I learned violin. He learned everything I knew in a matter of months. I decided I had to get him some books!"

Aureus started composing 8-bit music for video games. Like many artists, he's shy about sharing his early work, but there were already hints of what was to come. "I love classical music, especially the Baroque period. I enjoy performing polyphony. It's deceptively simple. But my favorite composers are all from the Romantic period — Chopin, Liszt and Brahms." That makes sense for a pianist. The piano didn't even exist during the Baroque period, and really came into its own during the Romantic period. "Some of the most challenging pieces are by contemporary composers. I'm learning a piece by Margaret Bonds. It uses a lot of chordal harmony that sounds like the Romantic period, combined with jazz progressions and hints of Black church music. It changes keys quickly."

But music is not all serious stuff at home. They have some of those appliances that play tunes instead of buzzing to let you know they're through. "Sometimes, I have a washing machine rap battle with my mom!"

"He's always walked around the house humming. That also should have clued me in," Kesha added. "He's amazing. He can just listen and say, 'That's a B-sharp."

"If I'm saying B-sharp, we're in a weird key!" he quipped.

Performing and composing are both fascinating to Aureus. "The part I like about performing music is that it's ephemeral. The best way to enjoy music is at a live performance. You can't really preserve that — as a performer or as a listener. When I'm composing, I want to be stylistically consistent with myself. Right now, I'm working on an 11-part piece for school." Aureus has done arrangements and commissions for other people. "I'm part of an awardwinning group at school. We were

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recognized by DownBeat Magazine. It's a jazz fusion group. If I could play only one genre for the rest of my life, that would be jazz, because you can do anything you want. It's a Sisyphean struggle." Someone pays as much attention to vocabulary lessons as he does to music. He's already played at the 449 LA SCAT club in Harlem, at age 15. He performed "All the Things You Are."

Literary pursuits inform more than just his vocabulary. He has composed



a piece titled "Ozymandias," after the poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley. The poem describes a ruined statue in the desert that proclaims the eternal greatness of some forgotten ruler. Aureus' piece soars with energy and hints at Middle Eastern rhythms and then fizzles to an unresolved ending, like the poem's ending that speaks of the ruins in "The lone and level sands [that] stretch far away." It's a perfect musical interpretation of the poem.

"He composes for instruments he doesn't even play," his mother informed. "He won a competition with a string quartet. He plays piano!"

The state of Texas has recognized

the genius of this young man. The Texas Commission on the Arts has awarded him a Young Masters grant of \$10,000 dispersed over two years, to further his growth as a musical artist. "This year, I'm using the money to go to a summer program at the Boston Conservatory. I'm hoping to learn more ways to compose for more instruments. I went there last year and learned about woodwinds and mallet percussion. Next year, I won't be eligible for that program, so I'm not sure how I'll use the second part of the grant, but it will be something college related, I'm sure. I want to major in composing and minor in music business. I'm not sure where I'll go to college. I'll go where the money goes. I want to produce records, but learning to record is horribly irritating. Everything's a trade-off. To get one setting perfect, you have to give up something else. There is no best way."

There might be no best way to handle the technicalities of recording, but Aureus has a golden future in his art. This is a young man who will be doing things with a symphony that you won't soon forget. Mark his name. NOW

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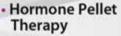
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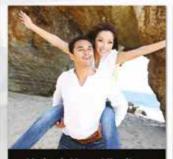


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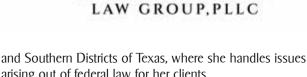
## Otise Reed Law Group, PLLC

1700 N. Hampton Rd., Ste. 104 DeSoto, TX 75115 (945) 446-6400 attorney@otisereedlaw.com

Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Closed weekends

Otise Reed, new to the Dallas area, but not the practice of law, enjoys the practice of law and focuses on family, criminal and civil law matters. Otise graduated with honors from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. In addition to being licensed in Texas, Ms. Reed is also licensed on the federal level in the Northern. Eastern



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arising out of federal law for her clients.

The practice of law requires the use of many skill sets, and one that Ms. Reed has found invaluable in her practice is negotiation. "While I was in law school, I took a negotiations course, and that really helped me with developing my skills. Negotiation is an integral part of my practice, and it touches every aspect of my practice areas. Practicing various areas of law requires executing different roles. For instance, in family law, I am often a counselor as I guide my clients through divorces, conservatorships, pre-marital agreements and child support cases. In my criminal law practice, I also utilize my counseling skills to assist my clients. With their life and liberty in jeopardy, it's important to me to treat them as human beings and protect their rights along the way. And, lastly, in my civil law practice, I'm negotiating settlements in breach of contract and personal injury cases."

Overcoming obstacles from her upbringing, she knows how it feels to be overlooked and undervalued. Therefore, Otise Reed is dedicated to helping clients feel reassured

"Practicing various areas of law requires executing different roles. For instance. in family law, Lam often a counselor as I guide my clients through divorces, conservatorships, pre-marital agreements and child support cases. In my criminal law practice, I also utilize my counseling skills to assist my clients"

and respected, whether through settlements like a recent \$300,000 personal injury case, simple matters like drafting a will or more complex matters like changing conservatorship from one parent to another or getting charges either reduced or dismissed from felonies to misdemeanors.

As her practice grows in the Best Southwest area of Dallas, Ms. Reed remains committed to maintaining a personal touch, ensuring clients always have a reliable lawyer they can contact directly. NOW







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9/27 AT SKYLINE

10/4 BYE WEEK

10/11 AT DESOTO

10/18 LANCASTER

10/25 AT MESQUITE HORN

11/1 MESQUITE HIGH

11/7 AT CEDAR HILL

8/31 CREEKSIDE

9/6 NORTH CROWLEY

9/13 MILLER

9/20 MESQUITE

9/27 AT WAXAHACHIE

10/11 DUNCANVILLE

10/18 HORN

10/25 AT CEDAR HILL

11/1 SKYLINE

11/8 AT LANCASTER



















## HTLIGHTS TBALL SCHEDULES

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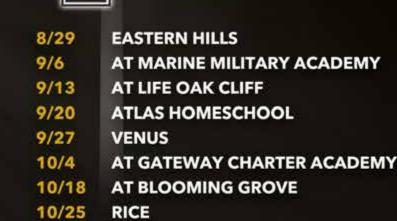






8/30	AT MIDLOTHIAN
9/6	AT ALLEN
9/13	AT RED OAK
9/20	DALLAS SKYLINE
9/27	AT LANCASTER
10/11	MESQUITE
10/18	AT WAXAHACHIE
10/25	DESOTO

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AT	<b>MESQUITE HORN</b>



11/1 AT SCURRY-ROSSER 11/8 INSPIRED VISION



11/1

11/7

















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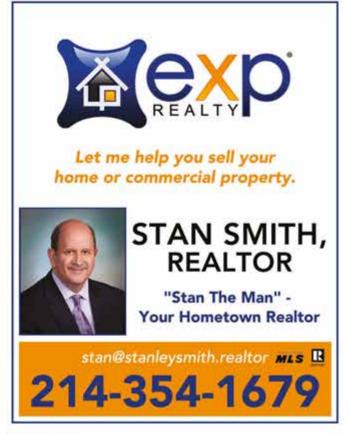


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## Around Town



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Raiden, Raine and Raia Close smile for the camera in Cedar Hill.



Residents at Champions Cove play pool noodle volleyball.

## Zoomed In:

## Tom Gaubert and Shelonda Weaver

Shelonda Weaver, the current president of the DeSoto High School Parent Teacher Student Association, presented a blanket to Tom Gaubert of the Wildwood Foundation. "Mr. Gaubert and the Wildwood Foundation were sponsors for our Project Graduation initiative," Shelonda reported. "Mr. Gaubert sponsored 500 personalized blankets to give to our DeSoto High School seniors. We wanted every senior to graduate with a gift. We got these blankets embroidered with their class theme '2024 — Ready for More!'

"We presented Mr. Gaubert with one of the blankets to thank him for his generous support," she said. "Many other community groups, including the Police Department and the PTA, also contributed to make sure all our seniors received their gifts. We're really thankful for all the support from the community."



DeSoto's Chargris Hightower recieves the Outstanding Technology Alumni award from Perdue.



Fire trucks are always a hit with young and old alike.

By Adam Walker



Barimah Amoo Asante is STEM Teacher of the Year.



Former American Airlines CEO Doug Parker speaks to the Aviation Collaboration Working Session about training future aviators at Cedar Hill High School.



Carol Conkleton, Carolyn Campbell, Felicia Wright and Phyllis Stevenson enjoy water aerobics at the Natatorium.







When Nakia McGuire relocated to DFW from her native D.C., her relationship with food consisted of making reservations at great restaurants. "My kitchen was an extension of my closet!" She found a group of friends who met for weekly Sunday potlucks, but they let her be in charge of paper plates. Eventually, one of the women insisted Nakia bring a dish to the next meal. "I didn't want to show up with something awful. After several calls to my grandmother, I landed on spaghetti. While this pot of spaghetti was mediocre, at best, my friends insisted it was the best pot of spaghetti ever."

That encouragement set Nakia on the road to owning her own catering business and mobile produce market, J. Alice Marketplace, and writing a children's cookbook. "I love watching people enjoy a meal I prepared, and I enjoy traveling the world and learning about the native dishes of the countries I visit." Now

## Ol' School Mac & Cheese

1 cup Colby cheese, shredded

1 cup Monterrey Jack cheese, shredded

I cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

4 Tbsp. salted butter, diced

8 oz. Velveeta, diced

8 oz. elbow macaroni 12 oz. evaporated milk 1/3 cup heavy cream 2 Tbsp. sour cream

1 egg

1/2 tsp. granulated sugar

1/2 Tbsp. seasoned salt

1/2 tsp. ground mustard

1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

1/2 tsp. onion powder

1 tsp. garlic powder I tsp. white pepper

1/2 Tbsp. cracked black pepper

1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/2 tsp. paprika

1. Grease an 8×8-inch square dish; preheat the oven to 350 F.

2. In a large bowl, combine the Colby, Monterey Jack and cheddar cheeses.

3. Add the butter, Velveeta and half of the shredded cheeses to the prepared dish.

**4.** On the stovetop, cook the macaroni according to the package directions, just past al dente.

5. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together the evaporated milk, cream, sour cream, egg, sugar and all seasonings, except the paprika. Beat until totally combined, with no streaks of egg.

6. Immediately after draining the noodles, dump them into the baking dish. Stir together, letting the noodles start to melt the cheeses. Spread everything around as

evenly as possible. Sprinkle on a thin layer of cheese, then pour the custard over it. The liquid should come just to the top of the noodles. Sprinkle on another layer of cheese, then the paprika.

**7.** Bake for 40-45 minutes, or until browned to your liking. Let sit for at least 10 minutes before serving.

## **Tater Tot Casserole**

1 lb. lean ground beef

1/2 white onion, diced

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/3 cup sour cream

1 10-oz. can condensed cheddar cheese soup

1 10-oz. can cream of mushroom or cream of chicken soup

1 15.2-oz. can corn, drained

1 14.5-oz. can green beans, drained

2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded (divided use)

1 32-oz. pkg. frozen tater tots

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.

**2.** Grease a 9x 13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

3. In a large skillet, fry the ground beef, onion, garlic powder, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce until the beef is no longer pink. Drain the grease, if necessary.

4. In a large bowl, combine the beef mixture with the sour cream, soups, corn, green beans and 1 cup of the shredded cheese. Spread the mixture into the prepared pan.

5. Top with an even layer of tater tots; bake for 50 minutes, until the tater tots are brown and the casserole is bubbling. Top with the remaining cheese: bake for 5 minutes longer, until the cheese is melted.







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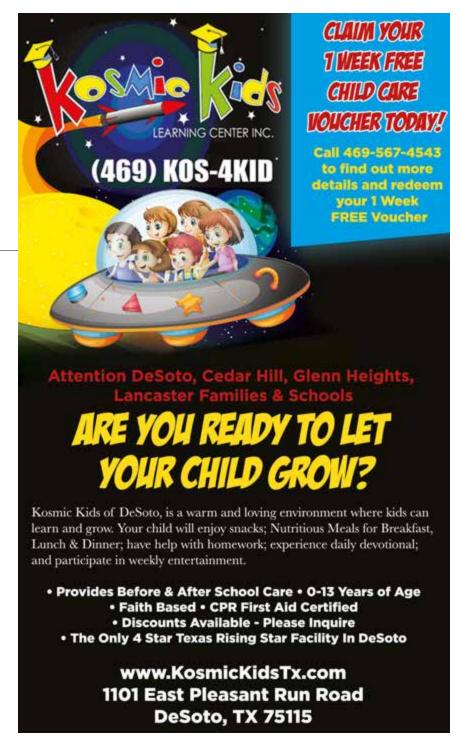
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## **Crossword Puzzle**

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	
10	T	T	$\vdash$		11	+			T	12
13	$\vdash$	T	$\vdash$	14		T	$\vdash$	T	T	T
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			21	T	T	22				
23	24	25			26	T		27	28	29
30	T	T		31		T		32	T	T
33	T	T	34		T	T	35			T
36		T			T		37			
	38	+	+	$\vdash$	+		39	+	+	+

Across

- 1 Dance movement
- 5 Galley drudge
- 10 Libya neighbor 11 "Stranger
- Things\* actress ---Ryder
- 13 Constraining
- 15 Ingested
- 16 Seek to know
- 17 --- bono (who profits?)
- 18 French aperitif
- 20 Football Hall of Famer, \*Old Indestructible\* Mel ---
- 21 They built Machu Picchu
- 23 Honshu seaport hit by earthquake in 1995

### Down

26 For a while,

part of the

30 Stock market

launch

31 Dart board

section

drunken ---

(Johnny Cash)

disorganized

dancers rely

for their

clothes

dinner

38 Equivocate

39 Consecrated

36 They're

37 Above

Hayes ...

33 On which

32 "Call him

world revolved

round his Axis

- 1 Fragment 2 8th letter of the Greek
- alphabet 3 Relaxes
- 4 San Fran setting
- 5 Food renowned for its holes
- 6 Attack a poosicle
- 7 Hill dweller
- 8 Express
- 9 Boredom
- 12 Opposed, in dressed for Dogpatch
  - 14 Drops from the sky
  - 19 Railroad track element
  - 20 Atomic bomber. briefly?

- 22 Opera set in Memphis
- 23 Young goats
- 24 Kosciusko's most famous daughter?
- 25 Gas law pioneer Robert
- 27 Remain stationary at sea
- 28 Elderly Harry Potter owl
- 29 Hoarse
- 31 Edifice, briefly
- 34 Scoundrel
- 35 Pass

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Online versions and solutions available at www.nowmagazines.com. From our Homepage, click on the Crossword-Sudoku tab. Click on a puzzle. Click on the See All button to view solutions.







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## Pack to School 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.

8/3

## Chess in the Park:

Come learn a new gambit. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Pyburn Park, 915 Astair Ave., Duncanville.

## 8/6

### Ctrl+Alt+Learn:

YouTube for Beginners: Adults, learn how to make the most of YouTube. Limited number of laptops available or bring your own device. Free. 6:30-7:30 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library, 450 Pioneer Trl., Cedar Hill.

8/8

## **Foraging Workshop:**

Adults, learn to identify the

edible plants growing wild in your community. Free. 6:30-8:30 p.m., Traphene Hickman Library, 450 Pioneer Trl., Cedar Hill.

## 8/14

## **Creative Writing With DAL Artist Kas Iones:**

Join other seniors in creating an original literary work that becomes art on the walls of the Senior Center. DeSoto Senior Center, 204 Lion St.

## 8/17

## Games Day:

Come for a fun afternoon of favorite games. 2:00-4:00 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 1302 S. Clark Rd., Duncanville.

## 8/22

## Clases de Tecnología:

Youtube Para Principiantes Free. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Traphene Hickman Library, 450 Pioneer Trl., Cedar Hill.

## **Coffee With the Mayor:**

Come meet the new mayor of Duncanville, Greg Contreras, in a friendly, casual setting. Noon-1:00 p.m., Hopkins Senior Center, 206 James Collins Blvd.

10/12

## 4th Annual Pink Diamonds **Community Bike Ride:**

Benefits Pink Diamonds

Survivors of Cancer Inc. The event will include a community health fair and screenings. \$15-\$35. Ride starts: 8:00 a.m., D.L. Hopkins Jr. Senior Center, 206 James Collins Blvd., Duncanville, For more information, visit https://www. pinkdiamondbikeride.com/.

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

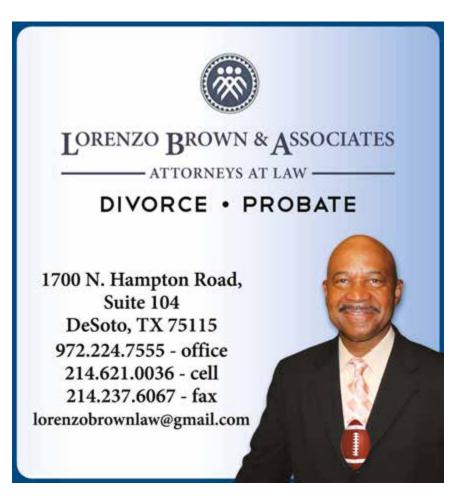








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If you are an adult who is afraid of going to the dentist, or even just a little extra anxious, Serenity Advanced Dentistry may be just what you are looking for. "We do a lot of sedation dentistry, mostly for adults," Dr. Allala explained. "It's kind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

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

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

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

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

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

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

theserenitydentist.com | 972-634-1434 Dr. Cristina Allala 605 E. Belt Line Rd., Suite 101, Cedar Hill



