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On the Cover: Egg Tree Photo: iStock photographer "ftwitty"

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Just for fun, find the butterfly!



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The Connection is published bi-monthly by the Wylie Chamber of Commerce. The Connection is mailed free of charge to over 24,000 households in the Wylie/Sachse/Murphy area and more than 1,000 copies are distributed to local businesses. Contents of this magazine may not be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. Advertisers and advertising agencies assume liability for content of all advertisements. Information published in The Connection is the opinion of the sourced authors. The Wylie Chamber of Commerce does not necessarily share the editorial opinions expressed in The Connection magazine. Personal decisions regarding health, finance and other matters should be made after consultation with the reader's

Corrections: We apologize for not crediting the photos that complemented the garage organizing article to The Container Store! If you've never shopped there, stop by, they have great stuff! Also, it was brought to our attention that the Murphy Farms subdivision which is located between Maxwell Creek and Murphy Roads attends WISD schools. Thank you for keeping us honest!





"The local's choice!"

endell & Natalie Daniel, owners of All Pest Solutions, have lived in Wylie over 20 years and have been described by the locals as the pest control experts who have their finger on the pulse of the pest issues in this market. Their family values, everyday low pricing and all inclusive pest control options, surrounded by their unwavering commitment to the community explains why they are one of the fastest growing pest control companies in Collin County. Although they service the Eastern metroplex it stands to reason that 50% of their customers live in the Wylie, Sachse and Murphy area. Wendell and Natalie are strong advocates of "Shop Wylie First" and are active members in the Wylie Chamber of Commerce.

All Pest Solutions' commitment to being here tomorrow makes them unique. Unlike other independent family owned and operated pest control companies who grow their businesses then sell out to the national companies, the Daniel's are here to stay. Their three children: Jacob, 16; Amber, 13; and Halie, 9 are all involved in the family business. Jacob, a sophomore at Wylie High, is licensed with the state and his knowledge of this industry is already far and above most out there. "He is a sharp young man," says Dad "he's not afraid to talk termites with anyone."



Last May, Wendell and his team made the local news and history when they found Formosan termites in Wylie. Texas A&M Entomologists confirmed the discovery was the largest finding of these destructive critters outside the coastal region ever. With a tinge of pride Wendell says "We ain't skeered."

The family draws strength from their faith to run a quality driven business. "Our CEO from inception of this company has been our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If He is for us, who or what shall be against us?" said Wendell. You owe it to yourself to "experience the ultimate in value, integrity and trust."

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Spring is in the air!

et off that couch! Time to break out the cleaning supplies and get busy! After we finish scrubbing the house from top to bottom we can begin celebrating this new warmer season. OK, maybe we should celebrate first – then clean the house – which ever works best for you. Or, we can just skip cleaning all together. That's our vote!

But seriously, all cleaning aside, it's a fabulous time of year to enjoy our family and friends. Some of our families' favorite spring outings include visiting the Dallas Arboretum and Dallas Zoo, hiking at the The Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney, and exploring the art work at the Nasher Sculpture Garden, just to name a few. Or, you can stay close to home and take the kids to play at Pirate Cove Playground in Founders Park behind Wylie High School. We're sure you have some favorites too. How about a bike ride around the neighborhood, a friendly game of frisbee in the park, a picnic at the lake or any number of other activities that are just waiting for us to turn off the TV and get outside. Being active doesn't require being involved in an organized activity. Even a simple stroll around the block can be refreshing.

However you choose to spend your leisure time, we hope that some of it takes you out into the community.

While you are out and about, stop by the businesses you see within our pages and be sure to tell them you saw their ads. They like to hear that their advertising dollars are working. Don't hesitate to drop us an e-mail to tell us what you think of the Connection. We like to hear from you too. Happy Spring! •



It's a date? . . . Send it in!

To submit your special event to the May/June community calendar send an e-mail to theconnection.anne@mac.com
no later than April 1st. Please include contact name, date(s),
time(s), location, a publishable phone number, e-mail and/or web
site for information. Only events that are open to the public (no
"members only" events) are eligible, as space permits. THANKS!

InSync Exotics Wildlife Rescue & Educational Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rescue of exotic felines. Visit www.insyncexotics.com for more info. Open Saturdays and Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (972)442-6888.

Trinity Trail Preservation Association (TTPA) is an all-volunteer equestrian organization that maintains the 9-mile long trail on the Corps of Engineers land along Lake Lavon, networks with other trail riders, sponsors trail rides and cookouts, hosts quarterly meetings with speakers on horse-related issues, holds family type activities such as scavenger hunts on horseback, fun poker rides, and educational clinics. The group is truly regional with over 130 member families. Riders and hikers from all over the Metroplex come to enjoy the beauty and peacefulness of the trail. The trail runs from Brockdale Park in Lucas through Collin Park in St. Paul to East Fork Park in Wylie. For information, call Membership Chairman Betty Van Houten at (214)864-4066. To join and get regular delivery of the monthly newsletter filled with upcoming events, send \$25 (yearly dues) to Trinity Trail Preservation Association, c/o Pat Martin, 4040 Avion Drive, Wylie, TX 75098. www.trinitytrailriders.org.



Tennessee Walker Moonshine explores the daffodils at East Fork Park.

Moms & More All caretakers, whether you are a Mom, Dad, Aunt, Uncle, Grandparent or Nanny, are welcome. We accept members from Wylie and the surrounding communities and have many activities for children and their caretakers. We meet on the first Thursday of each month. Headhunter, Grady Sisco: (972) 941-8597 and Diva, Kris Sands: (214) 236-4037.

Sachse Historical Society meets the third Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m., Sachse Historical Museum, 3033 6th St. in Sachse. Museum is open for visitors Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and by appointment. (972)495-1231.

Wylie Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursday of the month at Napoli's Pizza & Restaurant at 701 N. Hwy. 78 at Noon. Anyone interested in becoming a Lion is welcome to join us for lunch. (972)771-5551

Wylie Evening Lions Club meets the third Wednesday of the month at Steak Country in Sachse at 6:30 p.m. Contact Ronni Fetzer at (972)442-1387.

Wylie Friends of the Library meet the third Thursday of each month, 6 p.m., at the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library, 800 Thomas, in the Bluebonnet Room. (972)442-7566.

Sachse Pet Pals is a volunteer organization working with Sachse Animal Control to enhance adoption rates and help with pet medical expenses on a financial need basis. Contact Peggy Strong at (972)495-9645 for more information.

MOMS Club of Wylie, a non-profit, non-religious affiliated, support group for stay at home moms, meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Brown Street Baptist Fellowship. For more information, please contact: Susan Lefort at (972)542-4175.

MOMS Club of Murphy/Sachse is a non-profit support group for at-home moms providing monthly meetings and activities for moms and their children. Activities include monthly meetings with guest speakers, play groups, park days, MOMS Night Out, field trips and more fun stuff. They also participate in service projects to benefit children in the community. Contact Jennifer at (972)578-9317 or thebergmanfamily@hotmail.com for meeting times.

Going On Around Town

Every Tuesday in March thru April 10 - AARP offers free tax preparation/assistance at the Laurie Schwenk Senior Activity Center in Sachse each Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. First Come, First Serve. 3815 Sachse Road, Suite B, located at the corner of Sachse Road and Bryan Street behind the Sachse Police Station. Center opens at 8:00 a.m. (972)495-6282

Each Friday - Wylie Seniors Bingo at the Peddicord Community Center at Noon, 100 W. Oak St. (972)442-2841

Each Monday - Wylie Seniors Baked Goods Bingo at the Peddicord Community Center, held at 11 a.m. on the first Monday, then at 1 p.m. the rest of the month, 100 W. Oak St. (972)442-2841

March 1-3 - Tanya Jo Memorial Softball Tournament

March 5-6 - "55 ALIVE" Safe driving classes will be held through the Laurie Schwenk Senior Activity Center of Sachse, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. \$10 per person. You must attend both days to get the certification to reduce your auto insurance. (972)495-6282.

March 6 - The Sachse Library will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday with cake, ice cream and lots of fun games. 3815 Sachse Road, (972) 530-8966

March 6 - Wylie Seniors Dessert Day, 11:30 a.m., Peddicord Community Center, 100 W. Oak St. (972)442-2841

March 10 - The Plano Symphony Orchestra presents "An Evening of Rising Stars" at 8:15 p.m. in the Eisemann Center. www.planosymphony.org

March 11 - Daylight Savings Time begins.

March 16 - Wylie Seniors Celebration Luncheon; 11:30 a.m., Peddicord Community Center, 100 W. Oak St., cost is \$3.00 per person. (972)442-2841

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 3 - Trinity Trail Preservation Assn. (TTPA) Trail ride at Brockdale Park trail head, Lucas, TX, 1:00 p.m. Bring your own lunch. Rain date March 10th. www.trinitytrailriders.org.

March 17 - TTPA Work Party, call Charlie Gaines for time and place, (972)824-3369. www.trinitytrailriders.org.

March 22 - Wylie Seniors Movies & Popcorn; Noon at the Peddicord Community Center, 100 W. Oak St. (972)442-2841

March 24 - TTPA Liberty & Trick Training - Donna DeYoung and her Andalusian horses - Brockdale Park Trail head, Lucas, TX. Lunch at noon; Demo at 1:00 p.m. www.trinitytrailriders.org.

March 31 - Wylie ISD Education Foundation Boots 'n Barbecue Gala at 6:30 p.m. at Southfork Ranch, Parker, TX. Tickets \$45 each - Contact Jenna Lawson, (972)429-3025 for details.

March 31 - In-Sync Exotics Easter Egg Hunt with the Big Cats! 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is a donation of \$10 for adults, \$7 for kids ages 6-15, 5 & under free. www.insyncexotics.com

March 31 - Wylie Women's League Easter Egg Hunt at Wylie High School. 10 a.m. to Noon. Arrive Early! For children up to age 6. Bring your camera and take photos with the Easter Bunny. Visit www.wwltx.org for info about the Women's League.

April - National Garden Month

April 8 - Easter Sunday

April 9-14 - Wylie's Clean Up - Green Up www.wylietexas.gov

April 14 - TTPA Obstacle Course and Poker Ride - Brockdale Park Trail head, Lucas, TX, Registration 9:30-10:30 a.m. Lunch 12:30-1:30 p.m. Winners announced 2 p.m. Entry fee \$10 per rider. www.trinitytrailriders.org.

April 14 - The Plano Symphony Orchestra presents "Hector and Friends - The Four Seasons" at 8:15 p.m. at St. Andrew United Methodist Church. www.planosymphony.org

April 16 - Taste of Wylie benefiting the Wylie Christian Care Center. 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Wylie. Tickets: \$10. Contact Sandy Nelson for more info at (972)742-8999.

April 21 - TTPA Work Party, call Charlie Gaines for time and place, (972)824-3369. www.trinitytrailriders.org.

April 22 - Earth Day

APRIL 25 - Baylor-Garland will present a health seminar on "Nutrition & Fitness" at 11:00 a.m. at Sachse's Laurie Schwenk Senior Activity Center. This is a sack luncheon (provided by Baylor,) so you will need to sign-up by April 20th. (972)495-6282

April 27-28 - Wylie ISD will host the 2007 Area 10 Special Olympics Spring Games on April 27 and 28 at Wylie High School. Besides being a fun-filled and exciting event, the games will draw many visitors and and competitors to Wylie from across the state. Numerous adult and student (age 14 and above) voluteers are needed to make the games memorable for all of the student athletes. Adult volunteers and student volunteers from districts other than Wylie ISD should contact Robin Martin at sotx-dallasvolunteers@ mail.com or at 214-696-0152. Wylie ISD students wishing to volunteer should contact Michele Vieira at michele.vieira@wylieisd.net or at 972-429-3000 ext. 6526. The time to process volunteers takes several weeks, so interested persons should apply as soon as possible.

Wylie's Smith Public Library Story Time

800 Thomas Street (972)442-7566, www.wylietexas.gov/Library/ Wee Read Story Time Wednesdays at 10 a.m., 20 min. Preschool Story Time Wednesdays at 9 and 11 a.m., 30 min.

Sachse Library Events: Paws and Read programs for children who are reluctant or embarrassed to read aloud may come to the Library and read to Remie, a very special dog from The

Delta Society. This is a wonderful program that helps children feel comfortable reading held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., 3815 Sachse Road, Building C (972)530-8966.



Randi is reading to Remie at the Sachse Library Paws and Read program.

From Bluegrass to Bluebonnets:

One Teacher's Curious Journey

by Sadie Byboth of Wylie

Terom an early age. I liked taking things apart to see how they

hen driving down the alley behind Wylie's downtown area, you might notice a few things. A few old homes, the Birmingham house, a log cabin...You turn around quickly, doing a double take to make sure you saw that correctly. You did. Yes, right behind the old pink gingerbread, there sits a little log cabin, reminiscent of Dorothy's flight from Kansas to Oz, except this one was driven from Kentucky to Texas. The man responsible: Allen Morris.

Allen Morris and Christopher Columbus discovered America on the same day, October 12, but as Morris likes to say, "Columbus gets all the credit." He was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri in 1962, but was raised in Kentucky. Known as "Moose" by friends



"Moose" with his sister Margaret.

and students alike since grade school, Allen Morris first became interested in engineering, carpentry, and just general craftsmanship when he was just a child.

"I saw a need as a preschooler to build a log foot-bridge over the creek, so I made one. This quickly turned into tree house building and an early attempt to make an airplane that never got off the ground, but I learned a great deal from the latter experience," said Morris. "I recall doing a great many experi-

ments that included umbrellas and balconies, springs and weights, chemicals and trips to the hospital. I have the scars to prove it, too."

Morris was a curious and inquisitive boy. He enjoyed reading the encyclopedia set and going on adventures, like the time he set out to find the beginning of a local creek. He started a great many businesses such as "haircuts-for-a-quarter" and a toll booth. Unfortunately, those just didn't quite pan out: he had to give the money back after the haircuts, and the police didn't appreciate the tollbooth idea like Morris and his friends did. Morris liked the technical aspect of things as well.

"From an early age, I liked taking things apart to see how they worked. When the Rubik's Cube first came out, I was far more interested in how it worked than how to work it. I saved my money to buy one so that I could take it apart," said Morris. "The Apollo Program was in full swing when I was a youngster, and scientists were my heroes. Since then I have been interested in people that have accomplished great things with both their hands and minds."

History, and it's connections to science, has been a lifelong fascination of Morris' as well. This passion came from the stories and information shared with him by his elders. Since that time, he has been compelled to share such experiences with others, old and young.

"I share the ideas that others have shared with me. There must be a great many lessons, thoughts and ideas that have directly been passed to me by well-known great minds and not-so-well-known great minds," said Morris. "I respect the fact that everyone knows things that I don't, and I want to know what they know. The exchange of ideas is something that I wish everyone would do."

In junior high, he was a show producer. He rented local venues and



Morris and friends made and sold these photo boards as one of many fund-raising endeavors.

hired young musicians (mainly garage bands), and charged admission into the concert or show. Morris continued producing shows throughout high school, but of a different sort. He co-produced summer-run musicals, sometimes before 300 or 400 people per night. He learned the important lesson of finding ways to fund your enterprises through his theatrical endeavors by using other skills he had.

"It took more money on the front end to stage the shows, so I published a newspaper about the shows to raise the money," said Morris. "Folks supported the paper since it supported the shows that were produced. In short, the show broke even and the paper made money, so the overall project made money. I do not view money as the end, but as a means to the end. It is a tool for producing the next thing."

Other high school projects include creating a Haunted Forest and several Haunted Houses, and producing science demonstrations for the elementary schools. It was in high school that Morris set his life goal: "to be actively engaged in the research and development of artistic and technical innovations." It is a mission that he feels he can achieve, but never fulfill.

Following high school, Morris studied at several colleges and universities. He has a Bachelor of Science in Applied Science with an area in Physics and Chemistry and a minor in English from Murray State University. From the University of Texas at San Antonio he studied Physics and Calculus "for the fun of it." Morris also studied



Morris with Anders Fagerstöm in Sweden at a "moose' crossing.

in Sweden, where he went to the Landskrona Technical School in Landskrona Sweden. He attended the Marshall County Vocational School for Machine Shop Training, and Texas A&M-Commerce in order to receive his Masters Degree in Science.

The farthest reaching experience during his college years was his time in Sweden. While there, he lived, worked and went to school.

"Mainly the Swedish experience was just a great life adventure that has had far and great reaching dividends and several even reach into Wylie," said Morris. "Our foreign exchange student from Sweden this year, Louise, is the daughter of the Swedish exchange student that was at my high school. I in turn lived with him in Sweden. I was very glad that she got to come to Texas to experience it, and share her culture with our students."

After college, Gaylord Entertainment asked Morris to work with the group that was building a theme park in San Antonio: the very group that designed and built Fiesta Texas Theme Park. He stayed post-construction to help operate the park for four years. As a result of installing the Laser and Fireworks show there, Morris received his Special Effects license. This came in handy when he started working on effects for movies and television, including Bob Hope's last Christmas special. The skills he developed from these projects



At the request of the Birminghams, flowers are placed annually at the grave of F.O. Birmingham by Wylie High School students.

resulted in his being asked to participate with a US team that competed in a city-wide special effects demonstration located in Stockholm, Sweden.

- continued on page 10

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Professor "Thomas Edison" with students after a staged demonstration in his "laboratory".

"They [my careers] all follow a main theme. I produce experiences for other people," said Morris.

Once he moved to Greenville, Texas, the hometown of his wife, Leah Morris, he became a plant manager for a plastics

injection factory, where he "learned it's no fun being the boss." He switched jobs to become a teacher at an orphanage, which he enjoyed immensely. It was while he worked here that he received a call from Dr. H. John Fuller, superintendent of Wylie ISD.

"I didn't want to come at first," said Morris, "but John Fuller told me that he wanted folks on his team that would "plow new ground" and that had "fire in their bellies." It seemed to me that with the aid of the Birmingham Land Trust, I could produce even greater experiences for other people."

2001 The Young Eagles Fly-In at the McKinney Airport.

The Birmingham Lecture Series Scholars accept the invitation

of Nobel Laureate Dr. Leon Lederman to come to Fermilab in

His half-hour interview quickly became several hours long, and at the end, he was hired. Morris has been with Wylie since the mid-1990's. During that time, he became involved with the Birmingham Trust Fund, and Mr. Bill Lewis, the Executive Director of the Fund.

"Allen Morris has the students at the focal point of his teaching. He doesn't teach a subject. He teaches students. He uses his subject lesson plans in a way to prepare the students for life after high school," said Lewis. "Morris teaches about being a

contributing adult in society and as a working member of society. He makes sure the students have opportunities that they would not necessarily have experienced if he had not presented these opportunities to them."

Through the use of the Fund, Morris created the Birmingham Lecture Series with Dr. Eric Best nine years ago. The Series introduces students at Wylie High School to people, places, and experiences they ordinarily wouldn't have access to. Over the years, Morris has introduced students to Nobel Laureates like Dr. Russell Hulse and Dr. Peter Agre, the discoverer of the Titanic Dr. Robert Ballard, Dr. Story Musgrave, NASA's most senior and most experienced astronaut, Jane Goodall, Bob Dole, General Colin Powell, and Michael Dell. He's taken students to Williamsburg, Virginia and the McDonald Observatory. Morris' students have designed and created inventions that have actually been used in the "real" world, such as the DNA Combs they made for Dr. Harry Tibbals of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

"I have worked with Allen and his students on a number of actual design problems for medical devices and equipment, which he has made into projects for his classes. In many cases the students have made actual usable prototypes that were applied at the Medical Center," said Dr. Tibbals. "Some of these were then fabricated by Wylie Solutions and other local Wylie engineering companies. This benefited the educational program, the local Wylie businesses, and the UT Southwestern Medical Center. This has given the students an opportunity to work with real biomedical related projects, which Allen informs me has been greatly motivating."

Morris has projects already in line for the future. He has received an invitation to bring students to the International Particle Accelerator in Switzerland. He wants to take kids to see Berkeley National Labs in California, and would like to build a Foucault Pendulum to place at the South Pole Research Station. But the main ability he wants his students to gain from their experiences isn't necessarily a

bio-chemical know-how. He likens his ultimate goals to a funnel.

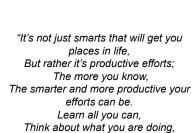
"First to think; to think for themselves. To consider that each has a funnel atop his or her head and that each should allow whomever to dump whatever in his or her head. Each should consider these thoughts and decide for him or herself what is right and what is wrong. Too many either go through life wearing their funnel like the Tin Man or they are only interested in the spout," said Morris. "Second, each should better understand that he or she is the author of

his own script and the star of her own show. I would hope that each could find what makes him or her smile and then find a way to work that smile into a quality life."

Despite all of his schooling, experiences, and prestigious awards (He's been named to Who's Who among American Teachers three times, in addition to two Presidential Commendations),

Morris still insists his title is simply a high school science teacher, or "The Chief in Charge of Silly Things: Cabbages and Kings." Perhaps his favorite quote summarizes his life's work best:

Batavia, Illinois.

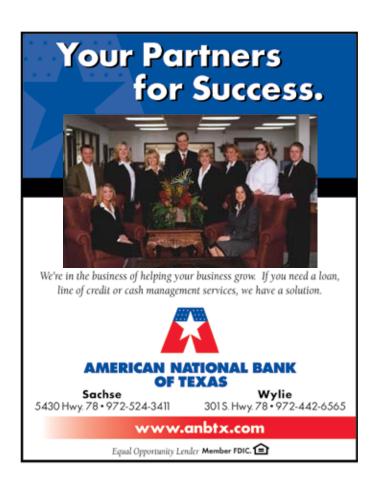


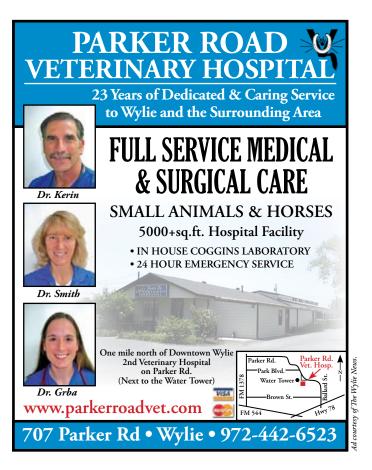
Put forth determined efforts, and Always be curious..."

-Col. Allen M. Morris •



Allen "Moose" Morris







Pioneer Days give kids a hands-on history lesson.



Pioneer Days take place at the Birmingham House in downtown Wylie.



Kids get hands-on experience with various activities during the week long event being held the first week of May this year.

"The Pioneer Days Project is a multifaceted project that involves elementary and high school students as well as the community. It grew out of two common themes that I saw at the high school: many students did not feel that Wylie was their hometown and many have never really experienced touching things or taking things apart. First, I polled 111 students as they got off the bus at the high school. I asked if each was from Wylie and 64 said something akin to "I am from somewhere else." I further pushed and found that only a few had just moved here and that most had been here for at least a few years. Still, they did not consider Wylie to be their home. What a shame. This is a great place to be and two-thirds do not see it that way. This point connected with the fact that I realized that high school students were not getting the hands-on experience

that goes with taking things apart and building things. Yes, they get to put their hands on computer mice and see a great deal, but they are not getting to touch much. The object of Pioneer Days is to have the high school students design and build tactile exhibits that have a local historic connection. Then the high school students man the exhibits to help the younger students touch and experience nature more."

- Allen Morris



Wylie High School student teaching 3rd graders about how an old fashion water pump works.



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Introducing the Mighty Diggers

Akin Elementary Junior Master Gardeners

by Janet McMillan of Wylie

pring is the time for digging in the soil, planning and planting a vegetable garden. At P.M. Akin Elementary the Junior Master Gardeners are busy tending their raised bed garden of snow peas, lettuce, and cabbage. This is an afternoon group of third and forth grade students that meet once a week to learn more about growing plants, insects and healthy soil. Their leader, Mrs. McMillen, is an avid gardener



Mighty Diggers planting a bed at Hillcrest Manor.

and a teacher at Akin. In the spring, second graders have an opportunity to fill out an application, and those who are selected may join. This two year program enables these students an opportunity to earn their Junior Master Gardening Certificate.

The origins of this group began several years ago with a grant from the Captain Planet Foundation. Upon receipt of the grant monies, Mr. and Mrs. McMillen braved the summer heat to build five raised beds and a wooden storage shed on the terraces east of the school building. The young gardeners raised a bumper crop of snow peas and lettuce that was donated to the Christian Care Center as part of the program's service project requirements. When Akin had to be expanded due to Wylie's fast growing stu-

dent population, the five raised beds were bulldozed and the outside garden had to wait a year to be rebuilt. Using remnants from the bulldozed beds Mr. and Mrs. McMillen built another 10'x10' raised bed near the southeast corner of the building. Fantastic support by PTA and dedicated volunteers, Marie Holifield and Karen Long, enabled the sec-

ond raised bed to be filled with soil. Living Earth Technology of Plano, Texas donated several yards to completely fill the bed with rich, organic soil, so great learning experiences could continue.

The Junior Master Gardening Group is registered every year, and the members get to choose a name for their group. A few years ago, the students selected to call themselves the Mighty Diggers, and the name stuck. These children love digging in the dirt, examining insects, and working on long term projects.

Long term projects build character and foresight. One past group spent many afternoons at the Hillcrest Nursing Home in Wylie planting pansies and petunias in the front planter and flowering bulbs in a side bed. They also decorated the nursing home's flag pole with white stone and brick and held a Veteran's Day ceremony with the help of the Wylie High School's ROTC. This ceremony honored the resident veterans and dedicated a flag and plaque to the nursing home. Sharon Dowdy contacted businesses, and generous donations were made by Home Depot, Paul Roth of Ribbons, Awards and Engraving, and JC Ornamental Iron Works, Inc. Other projects through the years have included growing and donating fresh produce, planting flowers in front of Burnett Junior High, and planting flow-



Mighty Diggers checking the growth of cabbage plants.

ers in front of Akin. Student enthusiasm, parental involvement and community support made these projects possible.

Learning activities continue throughout each meeting. During the last two years the Mighty Diggers have learned about water conservation. They have learned that the use of soaker hoses in the raised bed conserves valuable water. This year's group is growing cabbage from seed in containers, and will be transplanting baby cabbage plants into the Akin garden. Future learning activities and projects include building a worm compost bin from scratch, preparing another front flower bed for Akin, and inviting an expert to talk to the group about native Texas plants. Students are also encouraged to do activities at home from our JMG Youth Handbook (graciously purchased by our Akin PTA). Mrs. McMillen uses the Junior Master Gardener curriculum that is provided by the Texas Agricultural Extension Program. (More info can be found at their website, www.jmgkids.us.)

Through the years the Mighty Diggers have developed responsibility and taken on a deep appreciation for the work involved in growing produce, flowers and trees. Some who have never eaten anything green on their plate at home have picked snow peas right off the vine and gobbled them down. We learn that good things take time and dedication.

Photos provided by Janet McMillen.

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WISD Education Foundation

Boots 'n Barbecue Gala is a "Fun Packed Fund Raiser!"

by Susan Dacus of Wylie



The Derailers provide great country music entertainment for the evening!

or the fourth consecutive year a hardworking band of volunteers and dedicated education supporters have started the round of planning sessions, meetings, envelope stuffings and other activities necessary to pull off one of the most anticipated and fun filled events of the year. The Wylie ISD Education Foundation Boots 'n Barbecue Gala rolls around a little early this spring, on Saturday, March 31, and the preparation activities have been in high gear for weeks.

Last year's run on tickets and a capacity crowd have led to a larger venue at Southfork Ranch where guests can dance, dress western, listen to great music, eat barbecue, bid on raffle or silent auction items or participate in the live auction. Peoplewatching has become an art form at the gala, and all levels of participation in the event guarantee a good time. Once again the music of the Derailers should offer plenty of listening and dancing entertainment.

The Boots 'n Barbecue Gala is the foundation's largest fund raising activity, and last year's event earned more than \$123,000 through event sponsorships, donations and in-kind gifts. Funds are used for the organization's

grant program which last year funded almost \$55,000 in educational grants to Wylie ISD educators, project teams and campuses.

"We are all here to promote quality educational opportunities and enhancements through innovative programs and initiatives in the Wylie ISD," explains Lymari Ames, WISD parent and education foundation advisory board member. "The annual gala

helps us to achieve our financial goal in an exciting and fun-packed fund-raiser. My friends and I can't wait to kick up our heels for a great cause."

Individual tickets for the gala go quickly, so if you plan to attend, contact Jenna Lawson, executive director at 972-429-3025 or at jenna.lawson@wylieisd.net. Tickets are \$45 each; table sponsorships are also available. Levels of sponsorships up to \$20,000 are available for individuals, families and companies wishing to support the event. Last year

more than 40 sponsors participated along with 55 in-kind and silent auction donors.

Most of last year's proceeds came from these generous sponsorships and live auction donations that included items such as vacation packages, a plasma television, fabulous jewelry, a Dallas Stars package and western art.

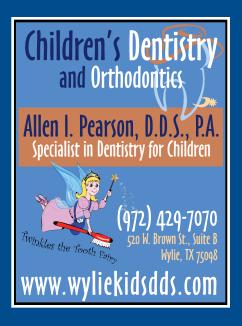
Since it was founded in 2003 by a group of dedicated and enthusiastic community members in conjunction with the Wylie ISD, the foundation has grown dramatically in the number and amount of donations and endowments received and grants and gifts made to school district students and staff members. Although the Wylie ISD Education Foundation is young when compared to many foundations across the state and North Texas area, it is successful and has grown quickly. The foundation can provide enrichment to programs and enhancement activities and training not available through tax dollars. The foundation offers additional support to the school system and its students through the programs and projects that it funds.

"Our work and focus are the children and students of this community," said Michael "Red" Byboth, the foundation's vice-president of development. "Through the Boots 'n Barbecue event, foundation board members and volunteer committees throw a wonderful evening for the attendees and raise significant funds to positively impact the educational programs of the Wylie ISD." •



Bidding during the live auction is an exciting part of the Boots 'n Barbeque Gala fund-raising event.

Photos courtesy of WISD.













Wylie's Clean Up-Green Up

The City of Wylie will hold it's spring Clean Up – Green Up, a city-wide recycling effort, from April 9 - 14 at the Wylie Service Center. This program is for Wylie citizens only and identification is required for use.

Days and Hours

Monday – Friday 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday 8 am to 7 p.m.

* All collections are weather and site conditions permitting.

Location

Clean Up – Green Up is located at the Wylie Service Center, 949 Hensley Lane. Citizens are to enter the site on Hensley from Sanden Blvd.

Items must be placed inside the dumpster. Dumping of items outside fenced area is subject to city prosecution.

- No tires.
- No commercial construction debris.
- No paint cans, oil, batteries or other household hazardous waste materials.

At this time, the City of Wylie does not offer a service for hazardous waste disposal. However, Utilities Billing does have information for companies that do offer this service. Call (972)442-8130 for information.

More Information

Wylie Parks & Recreation Dept.

Phone: (972)442-7588

E-mail: parks@wylietexas.gov



Is Family Mealtime Really Important?

Yes! - Bring the family back to the table

By Leah Davies, M. Ed.



ccording to recent surveys, less than half of the families in the United States actually sit down to a meal on a regular basis. Yet, studies report that family meals are strongly related to the development of adolescent mental health and stability. A Harvard Medical School study found that there are nutritional, as well as social, emotional and academic advantages that occur in children when families share meals together.

Why are family mealtimes important?

A sense of belonging and mutual trust is fostered when adults and children eat together and enjoy each other's company.

Family meals provide opportunities for adults to model table manners and nutritious food choices.

Eating together encourages adult-child communication skills such as listening patiently to each other and expressing one's opinion in a respectful manner.

Mealtimes provide a setting for moral and intellectual discussion where family values are shared.

Since children thrive on routines, family meals foster a sense of security and stability.

When children help with meals, they learn skills such as shopping, setting the table, preparing food, serving food, and cleaning up.

Family meals can foster family traditions and enhance cultural heritages.

What can families do to improve mealtime enjoyment?

Keep in mind that if you think you are too busy to have family meals, you may be too busy. Plan ahead, think creatively, and make adjustments to fit your family's schedule. For example, you may want to change the time of day you eat together or have a picnic on a blanket before or after a ball game. Or bring home take-out when you know time is tight.

Have mealtimes without television. If your family usually watches TV during dinner, decrease the habit slowly. Begin with one or two TV-free meals a week and gradually increase the number. Limit other distractions as well.

Keep food simple and varied. Elaborate meals are not necessary for quality family time. Serve the same favorite food on a certain day of the week or month. To save time and effort, plan for and use leftovers.

Serve family members the same food at the same time. Provide a variety of food choices and refrain from forcing children to eat certain foods. If your children are not hungry at mealtime, cut back on snacks between meals.

Limit the table discussion to agreeable or neutral topics. Focus on the positive by asking questions such as, "Tell something good that happened today." Listen attentively and make sure the speaker feels respected. Mealtime is not the place for criticism or rude behaviors.

Involve the children in planning, preparing, and serving meals, thus building teamwork and cooperation. Listen to their meal suggestions and try to make eating together fun. Invite them to help create memorable holiday foods and decorations.

Try playing soft music, lighting candles or using flowers to create a pleasing atmosphere. For a special treat, have a family dinner in a quiet restaurant.

Teach by showing, not by telling. When you make pleasant family mealtimes a priority, your child or children will more likely be healthy, well-mannered and well-adjusted. •



Used by permission of the author, Leah Davies, and selected from the Kelly Bear website [www.kellybear.com].





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Panda Cup USA 2007

International soccer tournament returns to Wylie

by Mark Witter

anda Cup USA, organized by the Zen Sports Group, has selected Wylie as one of its game venues for 2007. In addition to serving as a game site, Wylie will host the Opening Ceremonies for the two-week event.

Panda Cup features top women's national, professional, college and club teams from across the world, U.S. and State of Texas who will play at various venues throughout Texas and Oklahoma.

"I am excited for us to have the opportunity to again serve as a venue for Panda Cup as it provides our soccer enthusiasts and youth "Panda Cup is on the leading edge of sports competitions promoting the platforms of education, arts and cultural openness through soccer. This unusual support of compassion, foresight, and fostering international competition is a unique quality unparalleled in cities today."

The main draw of the event will be threegames to be played on Saturday, April 21, at Pirate Stadium. The marquee game will feature the Jamaica National Team against Notre Dame University, the 2005 NCAA Champions. As of early February, other teams that have showed an interest of playing in Wylie include Shanghai Professional



Players and dignitaries pose for a group photo following last year's Panda Cup event in Wylie.

with the opportunity to experience worldclass soccer," Wylie Mayor John Mondy said.

This year's event will be a true "community" enterprise as the City of Wylie, Wylie Independent School District, Wylie Youth Soccer Association, Wylie Chamber of Commerce and Wylie Economic Development Corporation are working together to make the games and opening ceremony festivities a success.

"We are grateful for Wylie's participation," Panda Cup Founder Alex Schindler said. "Wylie has demonstrated to be a city on the rise with a vision to embrace the world." Team (China), Southwest United Soccer Club (Canada), Nike IMG (Florida), Southern Methodist University and FC Dallas Youth Teams.

Along with the games scheduled in Pirate Stadium, Panda Cup officials are organizing a soccer clinic for the Texas Special Olympics and Wylie Youth Soccer Association that will feature instruction from the visiting coaches and players. The clinic will take place in Founders Park as teams from the Youth Soccer Association play their regular season games.



Vice Consul Fang Li of the Chinese General Consulate in Houston greets players from FC Texas prior to last year's Panda Cup games in Wylie

With players of all ages and skills of all levels on display, Wylie will be home to a true soccer festival. As part of the day's festivities, there will also be a procession of flags and post-event fireworks show.

"We welcome everyone to 'come play soccer with us and we will bring you the world," Schindler added.

On Friday, April 20, Wylie will host a special dinner for foreign dignitaries, team officials, event sponsors and other special guests. As a welcome to Wylie, the dinner provides community leaders the opportunity to open channels of communication on a cultural, political and economic level.

"By hosting Panda Cup, we have the opportunity to develop relationships that many cities our size do not have;" Mayor Mondy stated. "And, as we continue to grow, the doors that these relationships could open are immeasurable."

In 2006, Wylie served as a venue site for the inaugural Panda Cup, which featured a Chinese National Select Team. Vice Consul Fang Li of the Chinese General Consulate in Houston attended the event. In September 2006, Vice Consul Fang Li invited Mayor Mondy to attend the International Symposium on Development of Small and Medium-Sized Cities, which was held in China. •

Panda Cup Game & Ticket Information www.wylietexas.gov





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South Collin County Habitat for Humanity®

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Habitat for Humanity plans Women Build in Wylie



Stacie Gooch and Kathy Spillyards with Keller Williams Realty in Wylie are coordinating local efforts for the upcoming Habitat for Humanity Women Build in Wylie. Stop by L&L's Restaurant in Downtown Wylie to purchase your pink tool belt, work gloves and tool bag to show your support (proceeds benefit our project) and while you're there sign up to help with this great project.

abitat for Humanity of South Collin County is promoting a Women Build project to be completed in 2007. Women Build promotes the involvement of women in the construction of Habitat houses. Women Build provides an opportunity for women to learn about construction in a supportive environment. It also empowers women as they address the problem of substandard housing. This is not about excluding men – it's about including women and opening a door of opportunity so they can discover their capacity to build homes to move children out of poverty.

The first Habitat house built by women was in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1991. The Women Build Department of Habitat for Humanity International was officially opened in 1998. As of this year, over 800 Habitat houses have been built by women crews around the world. Each year 150 or more homes are added as affiliates, donors and sponsors discover the impact of women volunteers and their resources.

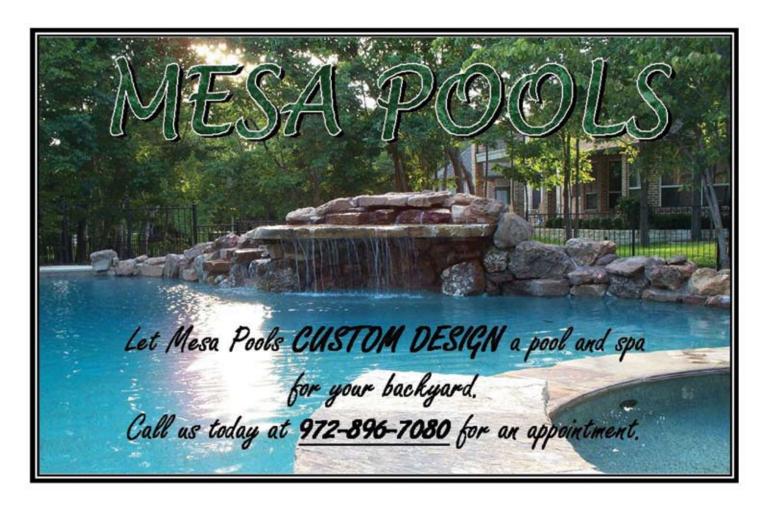
In 2005 and 2006 the Women Build team completed and dedicated houses in the historic Douglass Community of Plano. This year's project will be constructed in Wylie beginning 2007. Habitat for Humanity of South Collin County has a long-term goal to sponsor a Women Build program that will dedicate a new Habitat home every year.

Habitat for Humanity of South Collin County is currently organizing and soliciting sponsors for its 2007 build. Sponsors receive a number of opportunities to expose their name and image through signage, publicity, and other media, including our website and our quarterly Building Foundations Newsletter which reaches over 10,000 Habitat supporters in our community. By participating in the 2007 Women Build, you are taking a positive step toward addressing the problem of substandard housing in Southern Collin County. You can be a part of this experience. If your organization or company is interested in being a sponsor either monetarily



or by supplying material, expertise, or food and drink for volunteers working on this build please contact Patti Fisk at patti.fisk@hp.com or (972.567.8447) or Jill Smola at jsmola@habitat-scc.org or (972-398-0634).

You can also find out more information on this project at www. habitat-scc.org. •







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