

# HOME *on the* RANCH



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Overlook • Parkside • Reserve • Waters Edge • Westchester



May 2011

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AVERY RANCH HOA

Volume 5, Issue 5

## DON'T MISS THE AVERY RANCH GARDEN TOUR!

Mark it on your calendar for Saturday, May 21st between 10 A.M and 2 P.M. and be prepared for a leisurely day enjoying the beauty of the garden, meeting our neighbors, and having fun. You could win a gardening related door prize and get helpful advice from Master Gardener experts who will be on site to answer your toughest questions. You can also talk with gardeners at each location, share and get new ideas for your own garden, and make new gardening friends. Late May is a beautiful time to just take a day off and stroll through the natural beauty of the garden and we have a nice variety of gardens for you to enjoy. Recyclable bottles of water will be available for each Tour visitor at the host table, Main Activity Center picnic grounds at Morgan Creek and Avery Ranch Blvd. Maps to the Tour locations will be provided at the Garden Tour host table.

We notice that ideas featured in previous Tours are showing up throughout Avery Ranch such as xeriscaping the “nuisance” strips between sidewalk and



curb, complying with the HOA guidelines. You will see some examples of this on the Tour. To preview gardens on the Tour, go to [www.centraltexasgardening.info/artour.html](http://www.centraltexasgardening.info/artour.html). There you will find a picture and brief description of gardens already committed.

We will have 10 gardens in total allowing for a half hour for each garden on average. Based on the first come basis for signing up to be on the Tour, most of the gardens this year will be clustered

in Morningside and the Enclave, making it easy to visit all of them. Several locations have beautiful backyard vegetable gardens in addition to native and adaptive landscaping from xeriphytic to artistic garden areas. This goes with this year's theme of “The Joy and Diversity of Home Gardening”. Most yards have recovered well from the harsh winter we encountered and it is refreshing to see our gardens looking beautiful again. Many gardens included in this year's

tour are first time participants.

This is the fifth year that the Avery Ranch Social Committee has sponsored this event and it has been very popular. It is free and open to all residents and their guests. We hope to meet you on the Tour this year. Don't miss this opportunity!

For more information about the Garden Tour or if you have questions, please contact Bob Beyer, Garden Tour coordinator at (512) 238-6732, or E-mail: [txbeyer@austin.rr.com](mailto:txbeyer@austin.rr.com).

# HOME ON THE RANCH

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## AVERY RANCH HOA WEBSITE

Visit the Avery Ranch HOA website at  
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## FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Contact our Property Manager & HOA Board for any  
questions/concerns about your neighborhood at

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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## HOA MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

***Next meeting - Monday, May 9th***

Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7pm, except for holidays. Board members will meet on these dates to discuss issues related to Avery Ranch. If you have an item you would like discussed during one of these meetings, please contact Alliance Association Management, Inc. at 347-2888. The location for meetings is at the Glenfield Amenity Center.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### ***Avery Ranch Garden Tour***

***Saturday, May 21st from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.***

See article in this issue for details

### ***Avery Ranch Swim & Water Aerobics Lessons***

Start of Registration for Avery Ranch residents who are NOT members of the YMCA: April 16th

- June 6, Monday: Start of 1st Swim Lesson Session at MAC Pool
- June 7, Tuesday: Start of 1st Water Aerobics Swim Session at MAC Pool

### **SWIM LESSONS: EARLY EVENING SESSIONS ADDED!!!**

- Swim Lesson Schedule & Registration Form URL: <http://bit.ly/eAqTM>
- Water Aerobics Schedule & Registration Form URL: <http://bit.ly/flm4MO>

### ***Family Social***

***Saturday, June 11th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.***

Meet your friends and neighbors at Waterloo Icehouse! Appetizers will be provided, but it will be a Cash Bar. A Live Band will be providing music. Avery Ranch resident families are welcome.

*We want to hear from you....what events would you like to have in Avery Ranch? Let us know. Contact our Avery Ranch Social Committee Chairperson Jean Mayo at [jmayo002@austin.rr.com](mailto:jmayo002@austin.rr.com)*

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- Many of our clients were previously paying for "personal injury protection" on their auto insurance while at the same time paying for / having a good health insurance policy in place. This is usually duplicate / unnecessary coverage that is wasting your money....
- In today's litigious world it never hurts to have increased personal liability limits on your household. Homeowner, Personal Liability Insurance, pays for most things for which you could be found liable, short of work and auto related incidents. We have helped many of our clients protect their hard earned assets by increasing their liability coverage. For example, on an average home, the cost of increasing your liability coverage from \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 can be as low as \$1.25 a month....
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# HOME ON THE RANCH

## GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

*WE HAVE COMMUNITY EVENTS BECAUSE AR RESIDENTS MAKE IT HAPPEN!*

*Are you an organizer? Maybe a person who has an eye for detail? Do you like creating checklists? Are you an arts & crafts person? Your community needs you. Join the Avery Ranch Social Committee! Contact our Avery Ranch Social Committee Chairperson Jean Mayo at [jmayo002@austin.rr.com](mailto:jmayo002@austin.rr.com)*



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Austin-TX/Avery-Ranch-Neighborhood-Events/132212366794767>

The Social Committee meets every 1st Thursday at 7p.m. at the Meeting Room located by the pool of the Main Activity Center (Morningside).

The Event Calendar is posted on the HOA website under the Social Committee Forum and at the Avery Ranch Neighborhood Events Page on FaceBook

Playtime for kids... Adult time for parents! Become a part of the Avery Ranch Playgroup! To know more about it, contact April Aguren at [april.aguren@averyranchhoa.com](mailto:april.aguren@averyranchhoa.com)



## Caring for **children** is her specialty.

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For more information on Dr. Keegan or any of the Cedar Park Regional Medical Center physicians, visit us online at [CedarParkDoctors.com](http://CedarParkDoctors.com).



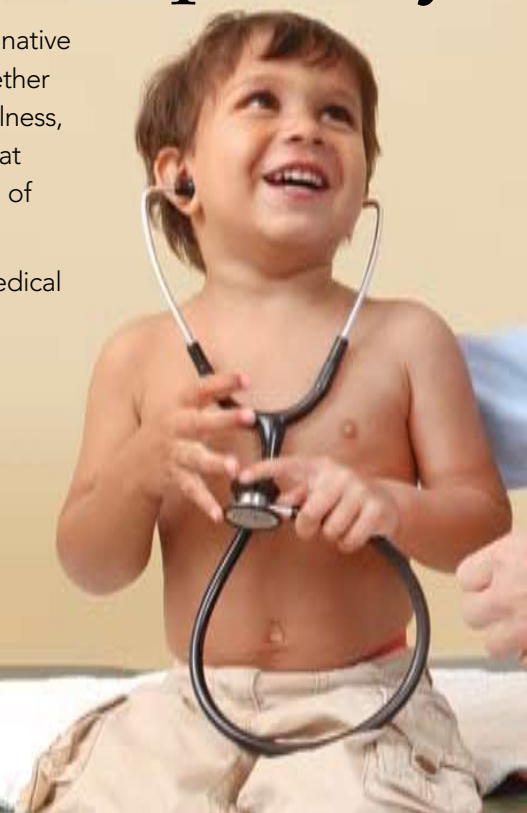
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## HOA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS

### ADRC Definition

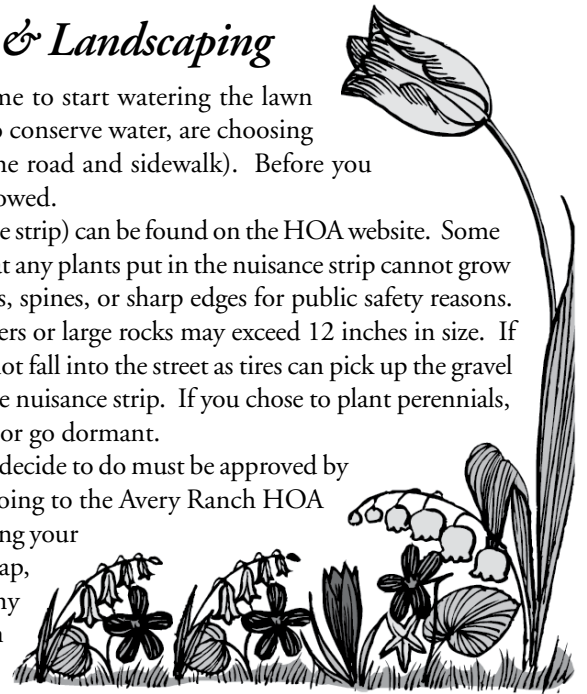
The Architectural Design and Review Committee (ADRC; aka Architectural Control Committee - ACC) is your neighborhood committee responsible for approving all exterior property modifications. The committee is comprised of three volunteer members who work to conserve the natural beauty of our neighborhood while helping to maintain property values.

### ADRC Article - Xeriscaping & Landscaping

The weather is warming up which means it's time to start watering the lawn and flowerbeds. Many homeowners, in an effort to conserve water, are choosing to xeriscape the nuisance strip (the area between the road and sidewalk). Before you do, there are rules and guidelines that must be followed.

The guideline for xeriscaping (both yard & nuisance strip) can be found on the HOA website. Some of the guidelines to be aware of for xeriscaping are that any plants put in the nuisance strip cannot grow taller than 18 inches. Plants cannot have any thorns, spines, or sharp edges for public safety reasons. You may use hardscapes like boulders, but no boulders or large rocks may exceed 12 inches in size. If you are putting in pea gravel, make sure that it does not fall into the street as tires can pick up the gravel and throw it out. Potted plants are not allowed in the nuisance strip. If you chose to plant perennials, they must be removed or cut back once they die off or go dormant.

Any landscaping (including planting of trees) you decide to do must be approved by the ACC. The ACC application can be found by going to the Avery Ranch HOA website ([www.averyranchhoa.com](http://www.averyranchhoa.com)). When submitting your application, include the location marked on a plat map, the types of plants & materials to be used, and any other pertinent information so that your application can be handled in a timely manner.



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Source: Harris Interactive, November 2005.



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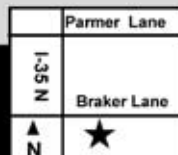
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# HOME ON THE RANCH

## HOA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS *cont.*

### *Complete Quiz to Win a Prize*

COURTESY OF YOUR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE (ADRC)

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS ISSUE OF "HOME ON THE RANCH"

1. What day and time is the HOA monthly board meeting?
2. What is the theme of the May garden tour?
3. What is the name of the Avery Ranch management company?
4. What day is the Neighborhood Watch program series offered?
5. Who is handling the sale of the old granite street signs and letter "A" that are currently being replaced?

The first three residents with accounts in good standing who submit correct answers via email to ContestAvery@gmail.com will win a gift chosen by the ADRC and funded by Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union. Answers must include your Name, Address, and Phone in the email. Board Members or Committee Officers are not eligible.

Winners are limited to once every twelve months.

*Congratulations to our April quiz winners: Pamela Vance, Kevin Bordelon, and Mike Wong.*

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# HOME ON THE RANCH

## HOA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS *cont.*

VIOLATION SUMMARY	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010	Aug 2010	Sep 2010	Oct 2010	Nov 2010	Dec 2010	Jan 2011	Feb 2011	Mar 2011
Landscaping	80	64	62	62	31	33	35	18	23	5	76
Vehicle Parking	10	9	17	17	13	19	11	19	18	15	28
Rubbish & Debris	34	26	32	32	34	46	47	13	43	13	59
Noise	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Animal & Pets	4	1	1	2	0	1	2	7	2	2	8
Decorations	1	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	16	17
Fencing	0	2	4	0	5	5	5	6	3	3	12
Improper Use	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Maintenance	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Signs	14	6	9	9	4	7	6	6	4	1	3
Sports Equipment	1	2	3	3	4	1	7	3	11	4	7
Unightly	13	2	5	5	6	7	13	7	13	8	10
Architectural	6	2	2	2	1	7	13	12	26	12	45
	163	116	137	139	99	127	140	92	144	79	267



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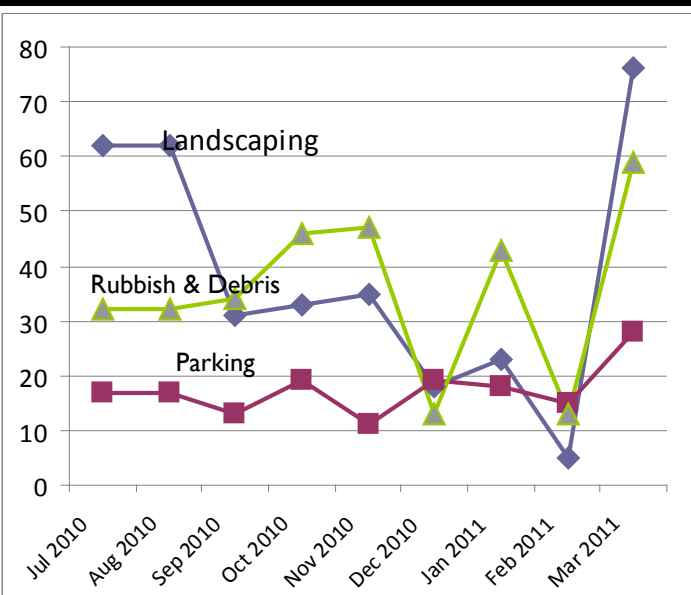
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\*Some restrictions apply on programs. If your property is currently listed by a licensed Real Estate Agent, please disregard this ad.



# HOME ON THE RANCH

## HOA ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN & REVIEW COMMITTEE NEWS *cont.*



**GRAPH OF VIOLATION SUMMARY, ON PAGE 7**

## OWN A PIECE OF AVERY RANCH HISTORY!

As the heavy granite street signs are being removed and replaced by city approved signs, they are not going away. You can own one for your street name or the Avery Ranch logo. The Social Committee will be handling sale of these mementos with proceeds benefiting your Social Committee activities. Here's how it works.

There are two kinds of signs, the rectangular section with the street name, and a square section with the attractive Avery Ranch "A" logo. They will be available for sale at a bargain rate of \$30 for the street names, and \$15 for the logo. As they are being removed, they will be stored and inventoried. Be aware that the street name signs weight about 40 lbs. and the logo signs about 20 lbs. All sales will be cash and carry and final.

Bob Beyer, Social Committee Treasurer will be coordinating the sale of available signs so if you are interested in owning a piece of Avery Ranch history, contact Bob by e-mail: [txbeyer@austin.rr.com](mailto:txbeyer@austin.rr.com), or by phone 238-6732. He will maintain a list of inventory and if available will schedule an appointment for you to purchase and pick up your sign(s). Availability will vary as the signs are removed so don't hesitate or you may miss out on getting the sign you want. The sale will be on a 'first come, first served' basis - no reservations.

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# HOME ON THE RANCH

## CHATTER

BY RONA QUEJADA, NEWSLETTER EDITOR

IF HOME MAINTENANCE IS PART OF YOUR SPRING CLEANING TO-DO LIST, HERE'S A LETTER FROM OUR NEIGHBOR, SHARING LESSONS HE LEARNED REGARDING HIS WATER HEATER. THANK YOU AL!

### *Letter from Alfred S. Lewandowski:*

Hello! We have been residents at Avery Ranch for about 3 ½ years. Recently, my gas-fired water heater that's around 7 years old started to leak into my garage. I'd like to share the lessons I learned to my neighbors through this article.

My expensive adventure was interesting to say the least. I thought repairing/replacing a water heater will be a no brainer, I could just purchase a new Energy Star rated, gas-fired water heater like those sold in places like Home Depot or such. But that was not my case.

In other cities, the water heater tank is usually located in the basement. But by architectural design and/or considering the limited space, one's water heater tank in Avery Ranch is probably installed in the attic. [Gratefully, the builders of my house installed the water heater unit above my garage and not over a living area where the leak could have caused extensive damage and could have entailed some serious home remodeling.]

I thought that a replacement unit will cost me around \$600. My heart palpitated when I received an estimate of \$1,850 for a "direct vented, through-the-wall" unit, the kind of unit that is installed in most of the houses here in Avery Ranch.

So like any good engineer, I studied and researched other possibilities and they were:

*Maybe a direct vent straight up through the roof?* However, that would mean creating a chase in an already small closet space and creating another hole in the roof which would be an additional expense.

*Maybe one of the tankless gas water heaters everyone is talking about would be a good solution?* Since they are smaller, one would gain some closet space. But you would have to add the cost of the required electric line for the igniter, more elaborate plumbing, mixing valves, and side wall venting. The cost estimate was \$2,700 installed!

*How about changing from gas-fired water heater into an electric water heater?* But the cost of the equivalent local electrical energy versus natural gas translates to a serious electric bill increase. In addition, a dedicated circuit breaker and 277V line would have to be installed to operate the heater. Additional cost will add up to just under a grand. Upon checking with our HOA, I was informed that in terms of energy efficiency, one's home may not be allowed to convert to an electric water heater by the City. Important lesson learned: check with the HOA first, they could give you helpful notes.

Then I thought, *"I could do this myself"*. From my younger days, I've gained the skill-set and know-how to wire and plumb. I learned it's not a good idea to DIY unless you're properly licensed for the task. When the time comes to sell your home, you must be able to reply "Yes!" to the Texan home inspector when he asks if a licensed plumber and/or electrician installed your new water heater. It's a building code requirement. Using an unlicensed contractor could delay or prevent your home sale.

*"Why is it so expensive to replace a simple water heater?"* Well folks, many of those water heaters we have right now are made by A.O. Smith and they can only be bought in a plumbing supply store – not Home Depot or such.

*"What if I use an alternate brand of the same type of water heater unit, say Rudd?"* I learned that they are not stocked in Austin and the unit has to be shipped from Dallas. It was also a challenge to ensure that the replacement unit can fit through my attic's tiny door.

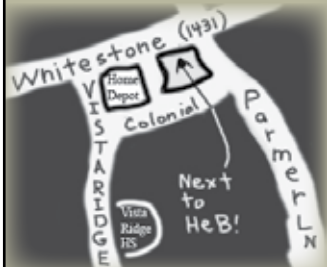
*"Well, can the average Joe Plumber just plumb it in?"* Most likely not, unless he is as thin as a rail and able to crawl into small spaces that only a 10 year old can fit. I even considered tearing down the closet walls, re-sheetrock and frame the closet – but this will launch my budget sky-high! If I had gone with a Rudd unit, I would have

*(Continued on Page 12)*

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# HOME ON THE RANCH

**Chatter** - (Continued from Page 10)

had to add an electric line to run the power-vent, and this means enduring a fan noise for as long as I have such a unit.

So I finally decided to bite the bullet and spend that \$1,850 for a replacement tank with installation and forget that mini-vacation. I requested a drain pan to be installed with the new tank, which is now required by the building code.

*Oh no - the height of the new tank was wider and taller!* Our house's side wall exhaust was about six inches too low. We had to cut a new hole in our interior wall, patch the sheetrock, cut a new hole in the exterior stone/brick wall and then fix all the walls that were cut. The existing exhaust cap did not work with the replacement unit, so that was replaced and some paint job was involved too. Thank goodness that the plumbing company I contracted felt responsible that they didn't foresee the additional major work and related expenses. So yes, it could cost you even more than what I paid for. So when someone tells you that they can inexpensively install a water heater in an Avery Ranch home, smile and walk away because you may end up crying over your beer afterwards.

**From my own experience, I suggest two things:**

1. **Flush out your water heater tank annually.** If there's only one thing you'll take out from this article, this should be it. Austin's water has a high concentration of calcium. When hard water is heated, the calcium carbonate settles at the bottom of the tank, creating lime scale. Flush out your tank annually by connecting a garden hose to the drain valve located at the bottom of the tank. Fully open the valve and allow a few gallons of water to run out.
2. Consider getting your water heater tank replaced before it develops a major leak and cause extensive water damage to you interior. Historically, an average water heater will last about 7 years unless one is diligent with maintenance.

*Like the commercial says:*

*"Either pay now or pay much more later."*

## CEDAR PARK SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

**Are you looking for sports  
to play in the Cedar Park/  
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## Rainwater Harvesting is Topic at Garden Club Meeting

By Patty Hoenigman & Dr. Hari Krishna



Dr. Hari Krishna, a Morningside resident, addressed the Avery Garden Rancheros on April 1st to talk about his favorite topic, Rainwater Harvesting. As the founder of the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association, a national and international association, Dr. Krishna found his passion when he and his wife, Laxmi, lived in St. Thomas. There, the primary source of water is rainwater that is collected from roof surfaces. Rainwater can be stored in rain barrels and cisterns ranging in size from 50 gallons to over 10,000 gallons. "Rainwater is available to us free of cost, so we might as well make use of it", he said. Also, the quality is so pure, because rainwater has no added salts or chemicals. For a small investment in a rain barrel or two, you can decrease your water bills and take the edge off Austin's consumption of water, particularly in the hot summer season.

Texas population is increasing by a million people every two years, and is projected to double in the next 50 years. Austin is growing very rapidly and adding more population will put a severe strain on existing water supplies. "Rainwater harvesting is a very useful tool in meeting our future water needs", Krishna said. The City of Austin continues to provide rebates for rainwater harvesting that can lower the costs for purchasing and installing rain barrels and cisterns. You can find out more information on these rebates at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon>. More information on rainwater harvesting can be found on the ARCSA website [www.arcsa.org](http://www.arcsa.org)

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*Avery Ranch residents and guests are invited to come to our monthly garden meetings and field trips by contacting Patty Hoenigman, [patty@thetaxcenter.us](mailto:patty@thetaxcenter.us) or by calling 512-608-8883.*

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## POLICE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

My name is Officer Tanya Normand and I am your District Representative for your area. A District Representative is a liaison between the community and the police department to assist the community in solving neighborhood problems. The District Representatives are called upon to do a myriad of activities which include, but are not limited to: enhancing patrol efforts, attending neighborhood association meetings to provide input or answers, and to attend school functions to educate children about safety and crime.

The police department has a wide selection of resources we would like the community to utilize. If you had a Neighborhood Watch and it has not been active or your neighborhood has never started a watch program you can come to a three part series called "Train the Trainer". The first training will emphasize on "Introduction to Neighborhood Watch", the second training will be "Physical Security", and the third training will be "James the burglar video" and the Commander's Forum. The Commander's Forum will give crime statistics in your area and will let you know how the police are combating crime in your area. The training occurs the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We have changed locations to 12429 Scofield Farms Drive (Parmer Woods) to accommodate our growing attendance.

Another resource we have is the Citizen Observer. The Citizen Observer is an alert network that allows APD to instantly update you about crimes, emergencies, and other important information such as missing persons; descriptions of crime suspects, etc. The information is received via email, or text message. To register go to: [www.citizenobserver.com/registration.isp](http://www.citizenobserver.com/registration.isp)

Do you want to know what crime is occurring in your neighborhood? You can go to the Austin Police Crime Viewer at: [www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/crimeinformation.htm](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/crimeinformation.htm)

Would you like an officer to come out to your house and do a security survey of your residence? An officer will identify features in your home or daily routines of your family that might make your home an easy target for a burglar. Call me or email me today!

**SPO Tanya Normand #4531**  
**Region 2 (ADAM) District Representatives**  
**Austin Police Department**  
**512-974-5556 Fax 512-974-1280**  
**[tanya.normand@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:tanya.normand@ci.austin.tx.us)**

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## Recipe of the Month

### Jogger's Delight Chicken Salad

It's a beautiful time of the year to go out and jog/walk the Brushy Creek Trail at the north part of Avery Ranch. As the weather gets warmer, most people start trying to eat lighter & healthier. For our Entrée of the Month, Chef Robert Roddy, Head Chef of Sunset Grill of the Clubhouse at Avery Ranch Golf Club, created a new salad for this feature article called the "Jogger's Delight" Chicken Salad. You can go ask Chef Roddy and his staff to dish this up for you or, if you're inclined to do it at home, here's the recipe:

#### Ingredients (yields 4 servings)

- 5 oz. Raspberry Vinaigrette
- 20 oz. Grilled Chicken Breast
- 20 oz. Baby Spinach
- 2 Pink Lady or Fuji Apples
- 10 oz. Red Seedless Grapes, sliced in half lengthwise
- ¼ cup Candied Walnuts
- ¼ cup Roquefort Cheese

#### Preparation

1. Place the spinach on a plate and top with sliced apples & grapes,
2. Drizzle with Raspberry Vinaigrette,
3. Top with sliced Chicken Breast, Walnuts & Roquefort Cheese

## PERSONAL CLASSIFIED

**SCHWINN TANDEM AND PEUGEOT TOURING BICYCLES FOR SALE.** Call Ed or Jan Colinsky at (512) 310-8061 for information or arrange a date and time to see the fun to ride bicycles.

## LOCAL GIRL

### *Raises Funds for Japan*

Granite Shoals resident, Anna Tingelstad, put the neighborhood garage sale traffic to good use on Saturday, April 2nd. She wanted to help raise funds for the people affected by the tsunami and earthquake in Japan. After brainstorming ideas with her family, she came up with the idea of a lemonade/bake sale during the Avery Ranch garage sale and encouraged other families to set-up similar fundraising stands. She netted \$110 to be given to the local Red Cross office. Thanks Anna for being an inspiration on how we can all make a difference.



*What's on your  
to-do list this  
month?*



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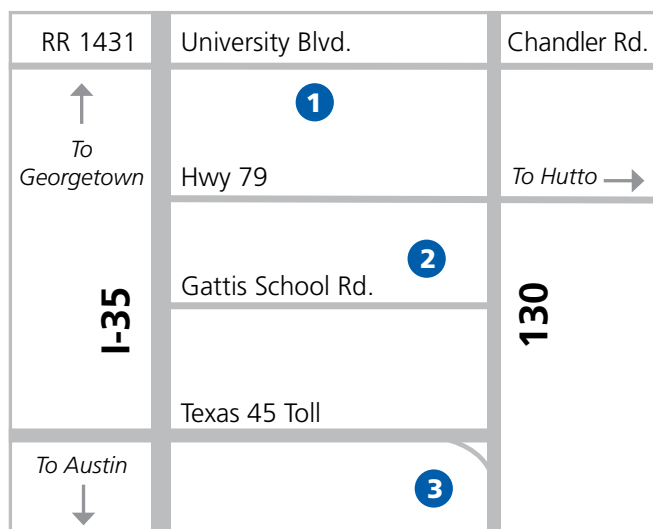


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## Fun Family Activities :Teach Patterns

By Sugandha Jain

We are surrounded by patterns – the squares in a tile floor, the stripes on a shirt, birds flying in formation. Encouraging children to observe patterns is an important, pre-math skill that helps them make sense of what they see, hear and learn.

Patterns teach children how things work together and allow them to predict what comes next. These skills, in turn, can help children become problem solvers.

These family ideas for patterning activities will help your child develop skills, strategies and attitudes of a problem-solver:

### Patterning Activities for Babies

*Here are some ways to help the child recognize sound patterns:*



- **Clap out syllables in a child's name.** Clap out 'Jen-ni-fer' (Clap-clap-clap). Then clap out other name patterns. Let the child imitate you. Play name patterns with back-to-back spoons or sticks on a board.
- **Start babbling to the child in a pattern,** such as, ba ba ba. Let the child imitate you. Have fun repeating the babbles over and over. Try out new patterns in babbling like baba-ba-baba. Allow the child to lead and you can follow.
- **Sing nursery rhymes** that have repeated lyrics and movements to the child. Clap to the rhymes in a rhythm: Row, row, row your boat; there was an old lady who swallowed a fly. You can also use songs that have repeated lyrics, such as: The wheels of the bus go round and round.

### Patterning Activities for Toddlers

Give the child a string. Also give her Cheerios and Froot Loops. Have her count and thread the cereals onto the string in different patterns: Cheerios, Froot Loops, Cheerios, Froot Loops. Or Cheerios, Cheerios, Froot Loops, Froot Loops.

Ask the child, "What comes next?" This question helps the child to arrange the cereal in her own patterns. Encourage her to use mathematical words. Say, "I will repeat this with the second Cheerio."

Let the child use words such as "in front of," "bigger than," "smaller" and "more." Help her notice similarities and differences in patterns on her string. Ask her to tell the colors and shapes of the string and cereals.

### Patterning Activities for Preschoolers

Introduce this activity by talking to the child about a "pattern." A pattern is something that happens again and again. Relate it to the patterns their bodies make. For instance, have children lie in the snow and move their arms and legs back and forth.

When they see how their body movements make snow angels, they will remember the concept of a pattern better. You can also print the route of a toy on the sand. Make the child notice how her body movements make patterns while dancing.

Play a guessing game "I spy a pattern" to teach the child to observe and create patterns. Take her for a walk in the garden. Start by saying, "I spy with my eye a (pattern)." Choose a pattern that is easily visible, such as petals in flowers, rings on a caterpillar, snowflakes, waves of water, two peanuts in a shell and the arrangement of bricks or blocks on buildings.

Let your child take a guess. Then, help narrow the choices by offering another clue: "I spy a pattern with stripes." Continue to give clues until your child guesses correctly.

This game can also be played at home using tiles on the ceiling, bricks on the wall, a group of shelves, patterns in quilts, fabrics, wood trim, wallpaper, and flooring.

.....  
*Sugandha Jain is a Master Registered Texas Trainer and an internally published journalist. She works as part of the management team at a local preschool.*



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# HOME ON THE RANCH

## ABOUT PLANT NURSERIES & GARDEN CENTERS

by Bob Beyer, Travis County Master Gardener

"Let the buyer beware" is often appropriate to describe the marketing of plants at your local nursery and garden center. Overall, plants are purchased based on consumer impulse and visual appeal rather than real knowledge of their characteristics, growing requirements, and potential. This article was inspired by a recent visit to one of our nearby nurseries that has been noted for carrying native and adaptive plants recommended to grow well and be environmentally friendly in central Texas. I was shocked to see Rhododendron (yes the kind that thrives in the wet, cool, acidic soils in northern parts of the country), Dogwood, Lilacs, Hostas, and several other plants that absolutely won't make it here. Plants like these are "dead upon arrival" in central Texas gardens! The uninformed gardener may buy this based on seeing pretty pictures of them in bloom in magazines or books not appropriate for our region, or remembering them from a past experience, but are unaware of how they are wasting their time and money to even attempt to grow them in central TX.


I have also noticed the retail prices of nursery plants have gone up significantly in 2011, probably due to increased fuel and transportation costs. At the same time, most average consumers

in difficult economic times are having to make their dollars stretch further. This is all the more reason you may want to become better informed about smart plant selections beforehand so what you purchase will be a lasting, enduring, and environmentally wise investment rather than a waste of time and money.


We are blessed in the Austin area to have outstanding sources of information to help you select the right plants, save money by not having to replace them or use expensive and valuable water to keep them alive. The Austin Grow Green program is a good place to start looking. The City of Austin Grow Green book free at any nursery or garden center is a must for every gardener in the Austin area.

Here's another warning about Nursery and Garden Center products. They market products that are harmful to your plants, your health, and the environment. The #1 product to avoid is "Weed and Feed" as they may contain a toxic herbicide called atrazine which if used around your shrubs and trees will kill them! It should not be used on residential property at all because, the roots of trees cover the entire property of most lots. Atrazine is also poisoning our clean water sources which directly affect human health. Furthermore, the

(Continued on Page 19)



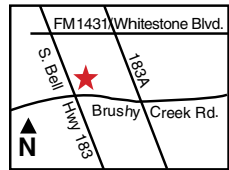
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## About Plant Nurseries - (Continued from Page 18)

two ingredients in these products aren't suitable to be applied at the same time. The pre-emergent herbicide part of the products needs to be applied about 2 months earlier than the soluble fertilizer part of the products. Avoid any product labeled Weed and Feed and/or contains atrazine.

And as if that isn't bad enough, let's add the marketing of introduced, invasive plants like Ligustrum/Privet, and berry producing Nandina when it is known that these plants are proliferating, threatening and overtaking our native plants. Our natural environment is fragile and can easily be irreparably damaged by using invasive plants in the landscape.

So, shame on any local nursery or garden center who markets bad product choices and try to pass them on to the unwary consumers. The nursery business is a tough one, but it also needs to be ethical. It seems like it's all about the dollar and making sales regardless of the consequences. Plants are more than just an item of merchandise, they are living things that you want to keep alive and cherish. If the consumer won't bother to educate themselves before plant shopping, then the nursery business should have an ethical responsibility to sell appropriate plant materials. I am disappointed by the lack of quality, reputable and ethical nurseries in our neck of

the woods but recommend a trip south of the river to the Natural Gardener or Barton Springs Nursery for your plant shopping. They get kudos from this Master Gardener. Let us all become more environmentally conscience by the purchases we make at our local nurseries and plant centers and in our gardening practices.

## Round Rock

Fred Burton, author of *Chasing Shadows*, a special agent's lifelong hunt to bring a cold war assassin to justice, will be the guest speaker at the May 11th Round Rock New Neighbors monthly gathering to be held at the Fern Bluff Community Center, 7320 Wyoming Springs Drive, Round Rock. The meeting will begin at 10:15 A.M. followed by a catered lunch and program. For lunch reservations (\$12) call Jackie Waldecker, 255-7519 by Friday May 8th. You are welcome to join us. For more information visit our website: [www.rrnewneighbors.org](http://www.rrnewneighbors.org).



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# HOME ON THE RANCH



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*Nature Nights—Butterflies*  
6 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 20  
\$1 admission

### *Silk Paintings*

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Catherine Flowers in the McDermott Learning Center.

### *Memorial Day*

**Monday, May 30**  
The Wildflower Center is open.

### *National Public Gardens Day*

**9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, May 6**  
Special wildflower and ecology tours

### *Gardens on Tour*

**9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 7**  
A special self-guided tour to secret garden treasures featuring  
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## FINANCIAL FOCUS

### *"Munis" Can Still Work for You — Even in Tough Times*

No matter where you live, the chances are good that a state or local government near you may be having some difficulty in balancing its budget. As a citizen, you're probably concerned about how this situation will affect your life and your community. But as an investor, you may also wonder how this might affect any municipal bonds you own. Fortunately, the outlook might be brighter than you think.

Of course, taken to the extreme, the financial challenges of some state and local governments could conceivably affect their ability to fulfill the payment obligations on their municipal bonds. But investment-grade quality municipal bond default rates historically have been very low, especially when compared to those of corporate bonds. And municipalities are cutting spending, eliminating nonessential programs and, in some cases, raising taxes or fees. In short, they are taking steps that, while potentially painful to residents, are likely to help them continue making timely payments of interest and principal on their municipal bond obligations. Furthermore,



municipalities must still fund various projects, and even one bond payment default could impact their future ability to borrow money in the form of new municipal bonds.

So are munis right for you? The answer depends on your situation — your goals, need for investment income, current investment mix, risk tolerance and so on. But if you want to receive interest payments that are exempt from federal taxes, you may well be interested

in exploring municipal bonds. Keep in mind, though, that municipal bonds may be subject to state and local taxes and the alternative minimum tax (AMT).

In addition, you'll want to be familiar with "taxable-equivalent yield." Typically, municipal bonds pay an interest rate that's lower than those paid by taxable bonds. Since this interest is free from federal taxes, however, the rate may not be as low as it appears. The taxable-equivalent yield measures the rate you'd have to earn on a taxable bond to match the income from a tax-exempt municipal

*(Continued on Page 23)*

# Avery Ranch HOA Members, You Can Join!



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## Financial Focus - (Continued from Page 22)

bond. And the higher your tax bracket, the higher your taxable-equivalent yield.

Suppose that you're in the 35% marginal tax bracket, and you are considering a tax-exempt municipal bond with a 3.33% yield. You simply divide 3.33% (0.0333 in decimal form) by 1 minus 0.35 (your tax bracket), which would give you 0.0512, or 5.12%. In this tax bracket, a muni with a 3.33% yield is equivalent to a taxable bond with a 5.12% yield. (This example is for illustration purposes only.)

Keep in mind that, before investing in bonds, you should understand the risks involved, including interest rate risk, credit risk and market risk. Bond investments are subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of bonds can decrease, and you can lose principal value if the investment is sold prior to maturity. So it's best to discuss municipal bonds with your financial and tax advisors.

By adding quality municipal bonds to your portfolio, you can show faith in your municipality, your investment dollars can help support worthwhile projects in your area, and you receive a steady source of tax-exempt income.

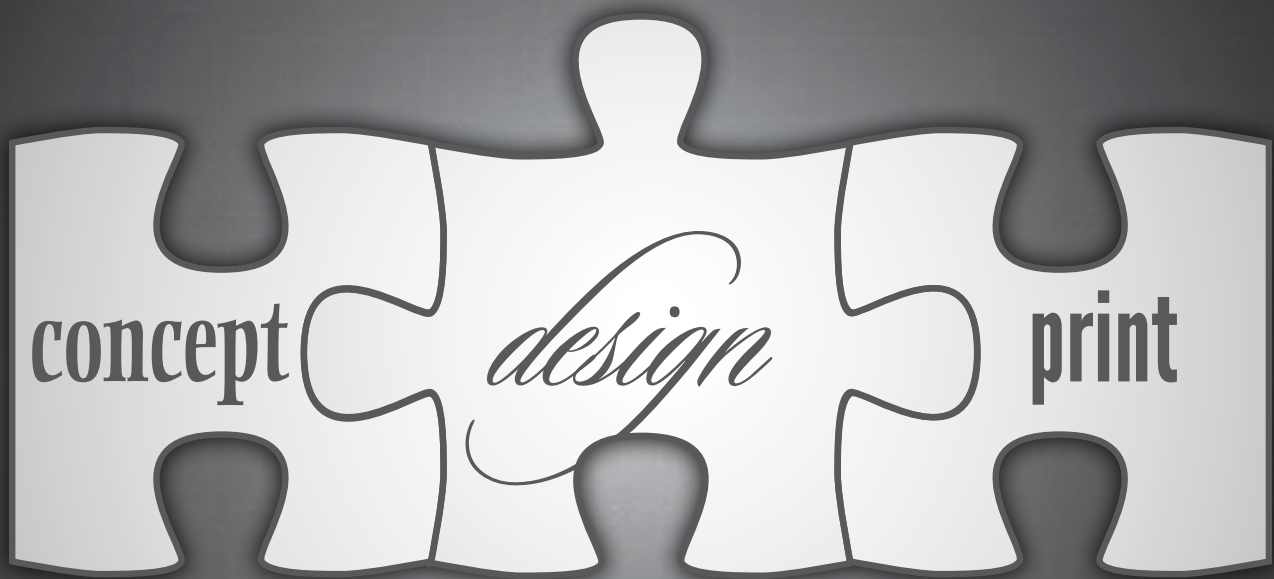
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## AUTISM ROBS YOU OF YOUR CHILD!

BY CONNIE RIPLEY

Light It Up Blue in April. April is Autism Awareness Month. Autism Speaks is asking buildings around the world to turn their lights blue and people to wear blue on April 1 & 2.

One out of 110 children is diagnosed with autism (1 out of 70 boys). More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined.

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that impacts communication, behavior and social relationships. Currently no effective means to prevent autism, no fully effective treatments and no cure exists for this disorder that robs families and children of smiles, eye contact, communication, hugs and even the ability to eat in a restaurant.

**Know the Signs.** These “absolute indicators” or “red flags” indicate your child should be evaluated.

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months.
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months.
- No babbling by 12 months.
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching or waving by 12 months.
- No words by 16 months.
- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months.
- Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age.

Does your child make eye contact with you? Does he/she enter into meaningful exchanges? Does he/she “tantrum” in the grocery store or when transitioning from one thing to another? Instead of “racing” toy cars, does your child flip them over and roll the wheels or stack them in a line? If any of these things exist, insist on an immediate evaluation. Early intervention may be your child’s best hope. Since this disease has accelerated so much recently, many pediatricians just do not recognize the signs.

The prevalence of the disorder rose 57% between 2002 and 2005. In 1975, autism effected 1 in 5,000. Today it affects 1 in

110 children. Autism is the fastest-growing serious development disability in the U.S. It costs the nation \$35 billion a year, and that figure is sure to rise.

In order to raise awareness of this escalating disorder, landmarks, iconic buildings, schools, universities, hospitals, airports, businesses and people in Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cypress, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kenya, Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Sri Lanka and the United States from Los Angeles to Savannah and from Minneapolis to Houston will be changing their light bulbs, clothing themselves, and eating and drinking blue for the month of April.

Texas State Senator Florence Shapiro will read a proclamation of Autism Awareness Month on the Texas State Senate floor on April 4th.

To commemorate the fourth annual United Nations World Autism Awareness Day and Autism Awareness Month, change your light bulbs to blue and wear blue on April 1 and 2.

It’s easy! Just change your light bulbs from white to blue! To make things even easier, Home Depot will carry a complete supply of blue blubs for the event.

Toys R Us has a month long Autism Speaks campaign. Pump It Up has scheduled The Great Jump for April 7.

Even as autism escalates at alarming rates, it receives only 0.5% of the National Institutes of Health funding. Autism Speaks is North America’s largest autism science and advocacy organization.

Autism Speaks is funded primarily by local walks. The Greater Austin Walk Now for Autism Speaks committees are being formed for the fall walk. Your help is needed! Please contact Walk Manager Traci Whitney at [traci.whitney@autismspeaks.org](mailto:traci.whitney@autismspeaks.org)

*Watch for the 12 diagnostic markers  
and the possible causes of autism  
in the following issues of your  
neighborhood newsletter.*

## OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EXERCISE

### *Enjoyment, Time, & Know How*

By Sarah S. Jordan, MS

We live in a busy world where creating and sticking with a regular exercise routine can be challenging. Many obstacles can stand in the way of our routine, including the enjoyment factor, time, and exercise know-how. But with a little creativity, planning, and dedication, the rewards can be oh so sweet! (Not to mention life changing.)

#### **1st Barrier**

##### **I don't enjoy exercise.**

For some people, exercise is simply not enjoyable. Think about what you did as a child as "play." Most likely, you enjoyed doing it. See if you can weave that into your workouts to make them more fun. Or make it social by exercising with a workout buddy or in a group setting.

Whenever I have people tell me that they just don't find exercise enjoyable, I work hard to find a mode of exercise that they do enjoy in order to get them started. Once they are moving more, eating smarter, and feel their hard work and activity paying off, it is much easier to find other modes of exercise to challenge them and help them see results. And I love watching exercise become fun for them and the thing that they look forward to in their day!

#### **2nd Barrier**

##### **I just can't find the time.**

If there is one thing that I have learned about my workouts since becoming a mother, it is that they will not happen if I wait for the time to open up in my day. I have to create, devote, and stick to the time I make for them. Here are some tips for making more time for exercise:

- ANY exercise is better than none. Even if you just have 15 minutes, take it. Your body and mind will be glad you did, and 15 minutes a day can add up to great things over time!
- Put exercise on your calendar and treat it like you would a mandatory meeting.
- Find a reliable workout partner. This not only makes workouts more fun, but it holds you accountable to show up.
- Invest in a personal trainer. They can create an individualized workout plan that

fits your lifestyle and goals, and equip you with an incredible amount of education on healthy living.

- Make use of the early hours. Getting workouts in before the busy day kicks off ensures that they happen, and the entire day will be so much better because of it!
- Make it a family tradition. What a cool thing to expose our kids to - families moving together!
- Find what works for YOU. For some people, joining a gym is the most convenient option. If that is not realistic for you, find other activities, classes, and opportunities in your area.
- Don't give up. If you are not reaching your goals, determine what is not working and create a roadmap to resolve it. Remember that fitness is a lifestyle and it goes through ups and downs, but always benefits us if we persevere.

The other important thing is to make the time we do have count in the biggest ways possible. If we have just thirty minutes three days a week to exercise, it is essential that we step up the intensity of those workouts to get the most we can for our time. If duration is short, we need to increase intensity. Add intervals and hills to your routine, or find a fitness class or DVD that offers a combination of cardio and strength training.

#### **3rd Barrier**

##### **I don't know how to exercise.**

In today's world, exercise videos and how-to's are literally at our fingertips online. We also have options for FitTV, DVDs, and opportunities at gyms, studios, and parks around town. Finding what works for your schedule and lifestyle is essential, so test a few things out before you commit.

Here are some options for gaining exercise know-how:

- Talk to your doctor to get recommendations and approval when starting an exercise program.
- Use credible online resources. One that I use often is the "ACE Get Fit <sup>TM</sup>" section at [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org).
- Put it in the hands of a professional and take out the guesswork by hiring an experienced personal trainer, or get involved in some group fitness classes.
- If you have a friend that is very fit and knows a lot about exercise, ask him/her if you can join them for their next exercise session.

***We all know that it is not easy to make time to exercise. But we have the power to make choices that can shape our future based on how much we move now. Sometimes all it takes is one step in the right direction.***





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## GET READY FOR A SUMMER OF AMAZEMENT!



### Unique Summer Themes

What do healthy food, the arts, sports, inventions, and adventures have in common? YOU! Get ready for the ultimate in ten weeks of exhilarating fun as you discover the incredible talents and interests of the Amazing Kid within you!

#### Taking the Food Challenge

During these two extraordinary weeks, campers will have exciting, hands-on fun with food and proper nutrition in amazingly unique ways!

#### The Creative Advantage

Campers will stretch their imaginations as they explore intriguing aspects of the arts including drama, composing music, painting, architecture, literary writing, choreography, and more! They will be encouraged to discover their amazing, hidden, creative talents and develop them with pizzazz while participating in spectacular adventures.

#### Going for the Goal!

From diving and dunking to winning the race, campers will learn all about being part of a cooperative team while sparkling as amazing kids!

#### To Inventions and Beyond!

Have you ever wondered what makes a light bulb come on? Come see for yourself! Campers will look at successful, young entrepreneurs and inventors and learn the latest in what is involved in starting their own innovative businesses. What will be your amazing business or invention?

#### Wondrous Explorers and Adventurers

During these two awesome weeks, campers will explore many of earth's amazing natural wonders. They will learn about young sailors who circumnavigate the earth and young climbers who scale the world's most challenging mountains as they explore and experience wondrous adventures at Camp Amazing Kids!





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**LEARN TO SWIM**



**WEAR LIFE JACKETS**



**MULTIPLE BARRIERS ON  
ALL POOLS & SPAS**



**KEEP BACKYARDS &  
BATHROOMS SAFE**



**ALWAYS CHECK POOL/SPA  
FIRST FOR MISSING CHILD**



**LEARN CPR**



## COLIN'S HOPE

*Increasing water safety awareness and standards*

*Drowning is a leading cause of  
unintentional injury-related death  
for children ages 1-14.*

***May is National Water Safety Month.***

*NO ONE is "drownproof",  
but drowning is PREVENTABLE.*



**Join us in getting ready for a safe summer in the water!**

**Colin's Hope Night at Eastside Movies in the Park  
Tuesday, May 3rd, Doors open at 6PM, Movie at sundown**

Join us at The Expedition School Lagoon (On Lady Bird Lake in East Austin next to Fiesta Gardens) for a screening of Whale Rider. Bring your family and friends to enjoy the movie under the stars.

**Colin's Hope Day at Schlitterbahn-New Braunfels  
Saturday, May 21st**

Join us for a day to promote Water Safety and Drowning Prevention at Schlitterbahn-New Braunfels! Special tickets are available from Colin's Hope. Email [alissa.magrum@colinshope.org](mailto:alissa.magrum@colinshope.org) for more information.

**For more information, visit our website at [www.colinshope.org](http://www.colinshope.org)**

**BE SAFE IN THE WATER  
& HAVE THE  
BEST SUMMER EVER!**