

# THE RIVER REVIEW



April 2014

Volume 8, Issue 4

*Photo by Mia Sanchez*



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## ARTICLE INFO


The River Review is mailed monthly to all River Place residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the River Review please email it to [riverreview@peelinc.com](mailto:riverreview@peelinc.com). The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

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Vandegrift High School .....	512-570-2300
Four Points Middle School .....	512-570-3700
River Place Elementary .....	512-570-6900

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### OTHER NUMBERS

River Place Postal Office .....	512-345-9739
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### NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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Article Submissions .....	<a href="mailto:riverreview@peelinc.com">riverreview@peelinc.com</a>
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## COVER PHOTO

*Do you take great photos?*

Do you take great photos? Would you like to see your photo published? We are looking for great cover photos for upcoming issues of the River Review. All photos submitted must represent River Place or the surround area. Our deadline for submittals is always the 9th of the month prior to the issue. All photos should be submitted electronically by the deadline date in high resolution (300 dpi) to [riverreview@peelinc.com](mailto:riverreview@peelinc.com). Portrait (vertical) photos work best.

To view other photos submitted please visit [www.PEELinc.com/RiverPlace](http://www.PEELinc.com/RiverPlace), and view any of the past newsletters.

By submitting your photo you agree to allow your photo to be published in future issues of the River Review or other Peel, Inc. publications.

If your business is interested in sponsoring the cover call 512-263-9181 to find out how to be featured on the cover of the Lakeway Voice.

## MY HEALING PLACE

My Healing Place is a non-profit organization focused on grief and trauma with the mission to assist children and adults as they move from loss to a full life through therapy, support, education, training and consultation. My Healing Place provides services to individuals and families who have experienced grief or trauma due to the death of a loved one from illness, accident, suicide, or violence; along with those who have experienced loss due to divorce or separation. The agency's mission is to help anyone in need, regardless of their ability to pay. We obtained its 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status in August of 2007.

### OUR MISSION

To assist adults and children as they move from loss to life through support, therapy, education, training and consultation throughout the greater Austin area.

### OUR VISION

The people of Austin will find My Healing Place to be Austin's premier source of transformative healing and help in times of loss and trauma in their lives.

### OUR CORE VALUES

- Compassionate, professional care
- Empowerment of each individual
- Spirituality within the struggle
- Transformative power within loss
- Ongoing connection

### COMMUNITY

Khris Ford is the Founder of My Healing Place. She is also a bereaved parent and it is her personal experience of transformative grief following the death of her son, Stephen, in 1989 that has fueled her passion for work in the field of grief, loss, and trauma.

Khris retired in July and the organization is now lead by Executive Director, Stephanie Sheppard as we continue to provide professional, therapy in complicated grief and traumatic loss with a staff of licensed professional counselors and social workers. During 2013 we have provided counseling for over four hundred children and adults in individual counseling and groups.

In addition My Healing Place has provided training to over 1700 Social Workers, Counselors, nurses, child life specialists, nurses and chaplains during the past 6 years. Workshops, training and other outreach are provided to schools, churches, clinics and other organizations that support the grieving process and have benefitted from our services.

My Healing Place services a niche in the continuum of care for those needing professional therapy for the complicated grief and trauma unmet by other service providers.

Children and adolescents ages 5-17 and adults are served. Please go to our website at [www.myhealingplace.org](http://www.myhealingplace.org) for additional information about our programs, Board and staff.

You are welcome to tour our offices and find out more about our work. Please call Stephanie Sheppard, Executive Director at 512-472-7878 or email her at [ssheppardy@myhealingplace](mailto:ssheppardy@myhealingplace) to arrange a convenient time.

"A Night of Remembrance" is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11 at St. Martin's Lutheran Church to honor and remember loved ones. Please call for more information if you think you might be interested in attending.





RIVER PLACE  
**SPRING FESTIVAL**  
*AND*  
**EASTER EGG HUNT**  
SATURDAY, APRIL 19 3:00-5:00 PM  
@ SUN TREE PARK

The annual River Place Spring Festival and Easter Egg Hunt is around the corner! Join your neighbors for an afternoon of fun for the entire family. The Easter Egg Hunt will start promptly at 3:10 pm with 0-3yr and 4-8yr egg hunts at the park (bring your own basket) followed by activities that include a petting zoo, cookie decorating, train rides, and much more! The Easter Bunny will be there to meet all the egg hunting kiddos. And don't miss the very special live music performance by Austin's own Staci Gray at 4:00 pm. We look forward to seeing all of our neighbors.



# RIVER REVIEW

## CONGRATULATIONS TO VIPERBOTS TEAM #6299 QUAD X!

They are on their way to the FIRST FTC World Championships in St. Louis Missouri, April 22-27, 2014

ViperBots Robotics is an award-winning Robotics program at Vandegrift High School. Their primary focus is to develop and educate the rising generation of entrepreneurs and leaders in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The organization promotes leadership, teamwork, and mentorship through its participation in the FIRST Robotics First Tech Challenge (FTC), supports young women in STEM initiatives, and strives to exemplify a spirit of “gracious professionalism” in all its pursuits.

ViperBots Robotics was established in 2010 with four student participants. Now in its fourth year, the program comprises six teams of 72 Vandegrift students.

Each year, ViperBots participates in the FIRST International high school robotics competition. In it's inaugural 2011-2012 FTC season, a single team of 13 members placed 18th at the FIRST Tech Challenge World Championships.

During its third season, ViperBots comprised of five teams, 71 members. Each team earned multiple awards, including a 3rd place finish for Team 4546 at the World Championships.



### MEET VIPERBOTS TEAM #6299 QUAD X:

1st Row, left to right: Reagan Gibson, Lizzy Patterson, Linnea May  
2nd Row, left to right: Raj Desai, Jacob Greenway, Tyler Roach  
3rd Row, left to right: Joshua Johnson, Sahil Metha, Eddie Bates, Peter Sarkis  
Missing from photo: Nick Morales



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## VANDEGRIFT HIGH SCHOOL HOSTS 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL RELAY FOR LIFE

Vandegrift High School is hosting its 4th Annual Relay for Life benefitting the American Cancer Society on Friday, April 4 at 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. at Monroe Stadium.

Each year, Vandegrift High school students rally the Four Points community join the Vipers in the celebrating cancer survivors, remembering those who we have lost to cancer, and joining those currently fighting back against cancer. The whole community is invited to Relay for Life beginning with honoring the Survivors at 6:00. There will be food, games, and live music throughout the evening. At dusk, we will remember those we have lost to cancer with the Luminaria ceremony. While registered Relay participants continue to relay until

2:00 a.m., the event closes to all others at 10:00 p.m.

If you are a cancer survivor, please let us celebrate you at this year's Relay for Life! Contact the Survivor Committee Leader, VHS Senior Savannah Cavanaugh at [SavannahCavanaugh@me.com](mailto:SavannahCavanaugh@me.com). If you would like to remember a friend or family member at our Luminaria ceremony with a \$5 donation for a personalized luminaria lit at dusk at Monroe Stadium, contact Kirsten.Mulligan@leanderisd.org. If you can join VHS in the fight against cancer by sponsoring at any level, please contact Sponsorship Committee Leader, VHS Senior Christopher Fernandes, at [cfernandes@austin.rr.com](mailto:cfernandes@austin.rr.com). For more information about VHS Relay for Life, visit [www.RelayForLife.org/vandegrifhstx](http://www.RelayForLife.org/vandegrifhstx)

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## Vandegrift High School Band Boosters are Hosting 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mattress Fundraiser

The Vandegrift High School Band Boosters are hosting their 1st Annual Mattress Fundraiser Sale on Sunday April 27, 2014 at Vandegrift High School from 10am – 5pm to raise funds for instruments and travel.

The VHS Band board welcomed the innovative fundraiser, as it eliminates upfront cost for the school and band, while allowing the community to save money. Vandegrift High School will be turned into a showroom where over 20 mattress sets including Simmons®, Restonic®, and Southerland™ brands will be on display to test out. The mattress sets are 30% - 60% off retail price, are brand new, and come complete with factory warranties.

If you are in the Austin/Leander ISD area, please stop by the mattress fundraiser to give yourself the gift of a better nights' sleep, save money, and help VHS Band hit their fundraising goal. You will literally be investing in your own dreams and the dreams of the Vandegrift High School Band and Vision Dance Company.

Support the VHS Band - buy a mattress on April 27, 2014:  
Get a brand name mattress 30 – 60% off retail price

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  - Beautyrest
  - Beautyrest Recharge
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## COMMUNITY RACE EVENT TO BENEFIT LOCAL NONPROFIT JUNE 14

Registration began March 1 for Dash to the Splash, a race event and after-party with competitive 5K and 10K races through a Steiner Ranch neighborhood course. The June 14 program will begin at 8:00 a.m. with a Kids K—0.62 miles—for children ages 12 and younger. The competitive 5K—3.1 miles—and 10K races will start at 8:30 a.m. at Towne Square Park in Steiner Ranch.

A community-wide event is planned after the races and will include live music, waterslides, food and games for children.

The Skills for Enhancing Lifelong Fulfillment program, headquartered at Concordia University Texas, is the beneficiary for this year's inaugural event. S.E.L.F. provides skills and training to transition Leander ISD's special education students into the community and adult life.

To register for a race or become an event sponsor or vendor, see [www.dash2splash.com](http://www.dash2splash.com).



## JOIN US FOR GOLF AND A GREAT CAUSE!

**DATE:** Wednesday, April 30th

**11:00 am Registration - 1:00 pm Start**

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# RIVER REVIEW

## 8 YEAR OLD AUSTIN BOY GOES TO NATIONAL CONTEST

Eight-year-old Austin boy will represent Texas photography in the National contest. Max Whitney, second grader diagnosed with autism, was awarded the Overall Award of Excellence in Photography for Special Artists by the Texas Parent Teacher Association on Saturday. He will represent all Texas Special artists in photography in grades K through 12 in the National PTA Reflections Program.

Max's photograph, titled Lizard InspEyer, was selected from thousands of entries submitted to the 2013-2014 theme: Believe, Dream, Inspire. Each year the contests begin in each grade on school campuses across the state. The school campus winners go to their school district contests. This year 1005 entries in 6 categories (photography, dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, and visual arts) advanced to Texas PTA. Only 30 of these were awarded Overall Award of Excellence and will advance to the National contest. Max, son of Traci and Cameron Whitney, is the only Austin Area winner in all 6 categories in the entire Reflections Program.

Over 100 outstanding student entries are recognized with Honorable Mention, Award of Merit, Award of Excellence, and the Overall Award of Excellence winners. They will be on display for public viewing at the Texas Education Agency, the Legislative Budget Board, and the Texas Commission on the Arts March 10 through



April 30, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

This year's theme, Believe, Dream, Inspire, was submitted from an elementary school student in East Rockway, New York. Next year's theme, Let Your Imagination Fly, was submitted by a student in Northwood, North Dakota. Each year a new theme is selected in the National PTA Reflections Theme Search Contest.

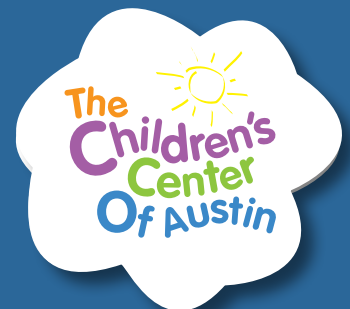


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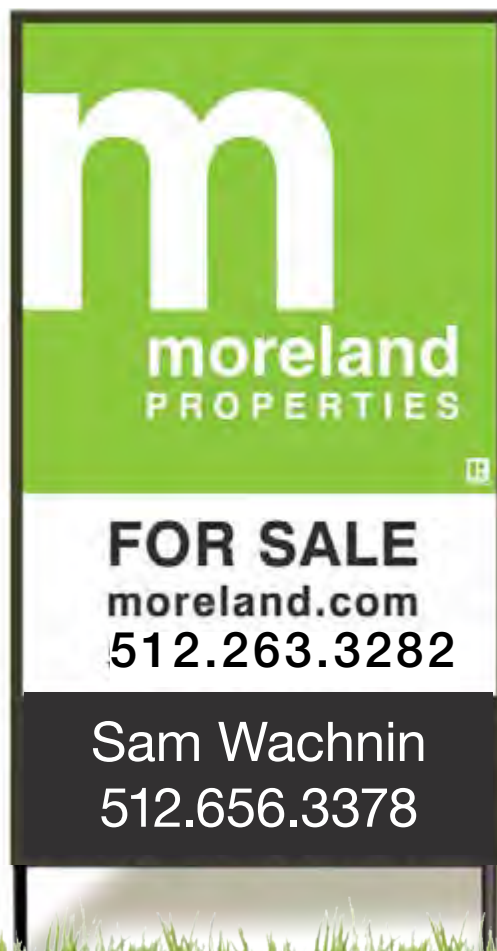
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## A Dynamic Duo That Can Help Your Lawn Weather The Drought

by Brett Briant, LCRA Water Conservation Coordinator

Some things just go together, and mulch and compost are two of them. When used together, this formidable pair not only improves your garden and lawn, but they also use water more efficiently.

The combo is important as many of us move to maximum once-a-week watering during this time of severe drought. The pair can help your landscaping survive the drought because plants will be more disease tolerant and water efficient, thereby better able to defend themselves against the drought.

Using a hardwood mulch/compost blend is the best choice for retaining water and improving your soil. The mix will hold its color longer, and the compost will help break down the mulch, which will become a beneficial nutrient for your soil.

However, if you choose to go with one or the other, keep in mind that you can use compost as mulch, but you can't do the opposite. You can't use straight mulch as compost – it's too hard on its own and takes too long to break down and become a beneficial micro-organism to your soil.

Mulch should smell like a fresh forest floor. A mulch/compost blend should have a carbon-to-nitrogen ratio of about 20-to-1. That's 20 percent carbon to 1 percent nitrogen. When applying this to your existing soil, a soil depth of at least six inches is highly recommended. You can build your soil with the mulch and compost through either core aeration, where you remove approximately 1 inch by 2 inch cores of soil from the ground to improve the infiltration of water/nutrients, or through light scarifying with a rototiller to remove any debris from the lawn.

A good layer of mulch of about two to four inches in your garden will help suppress weeds. It will also hold in moisture in the heat, and help keep the soil warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. If you are using it as a top dressing to improve the soil on your lawn, you will want to apply a layer of compost that is one-fourth of an inch to one-half of an inch deep.

Another benefit of adding compost to most types of soil, including clay, sandy, alkaline or acidic, is that compost has natural pH buffers. That's the microbiology or bacteria in the soil that creates a healthy environment for your plants. The pH level should be close to neutral, which is a pH of 7. If you add compost to your lawn and compost/mulch to your beds, you will build the soil profile to be much more water efficient and increase its capacity to hold water. The soil will be able to drain and breathe.

Using mulch and compost together is a cost-efficient way to build your soil. They're relatively inexpensive and will help cut down on your water bill.

It's a pair you want on your team.





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## BLOOD PRESSURE

### TAKE CONTROL OF THE SILENT KILLER

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is sometimes called the silent killer because there are often no symptoms. That's why keeping track of blood pressure is one of the most important things a person can do to stay healthy, said doctors at Baylor College of Medicine.

Left untreated, hypertension, can cause organ damage over time, leading to heart attack, blindness, kidney failure or stroke, said Dr. Biykem Bozkurt, professor of medicine at BCM.

Some factors that are associated with hypertension are diabetes, family history of hypertension, being overweight, taking in too much sodium, drinking excessive alcohol and smoking. Generally a healthy reading is 120/80, and hypertension diagnosis is made at 140/90. People considered prehypertensive generally have readings that fall between 120/80 and 140/90. Doctors always check blood pressure as part of appointments and there are also many locations where blood pressure machines are available for anyone to have their pressure checked. Bozkurt advises talking to a doctor to determine if your reading is at a healthy level rather than taking the machine's reading at face value.

"For a relatively healthy person not suffering from any other illnesses, only a few lifestyle changes like diet modifications and exercise may be needed," said Bozkurt.



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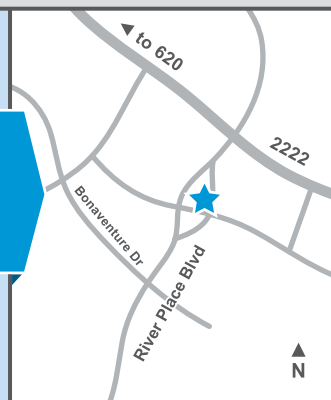
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## Sugar, Heart & Life

A program called Sugar, Heart and Life: A Guide to Living with Diabetes is available for people dealing with the disease. The interactive and fun program developed by Baylor College of Medicine's department of family and community medicine offers information on how individuals with type 2 diabetes can manage their diabetes. The SHL program includes recipes, practical tips and games on diet, exercise, and medication. The program allows users to follow a year in the life of the Gonzalez family as they learn more about managing diabetes and help them make decisions that will keep their family healthy.

All diabetes management recommendations contained in this program are consistent with clinical practice recommendations of the American Diabetes Association and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Recipe Box was adapted from heart healthy recipes from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

*Sugar, Heart and Life can be found at  
[www.bcm.edu/shl](http://www.bcm.edu/shl).*

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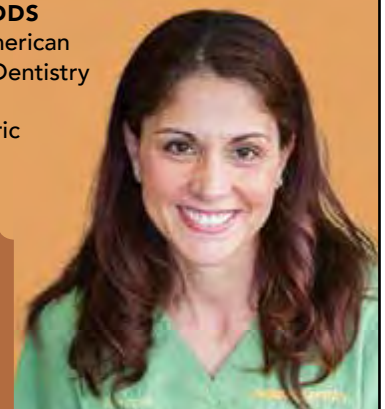
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