

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 6

JUNE 2016

Happy Father's Day STEINER RANCH DADS!





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COMMUNITY INFO

STEINER RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS OFFICE

12550 Country Trails Lane Austin, Texas 78732 512-266-7553 – Telephone 512-266-9312 – Facsimile www.steinerranchhoa.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday	1:00pm - 5:00pm
Friday	
Saturday & Sunday	

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

STEINER RANCH CONTACTS

Steiner Ranch Community Association Office.....512-266-7553

SCHOOLS

Leander ISD	
Vandegrift High School	
Canyon Ridge Middle School	
Laura Welch Bush Elementary	
Steiner Ranch Elementary	
River Ridge Elementary	

UTILITIES

Travis County WCID # 17	
City of Austin Electric	
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies	512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig	
AT&T	
New Service	1-800-464-7928
Repair	1-800-246-8464
Billing	1-800-858-7928
Time Warner Cable	
Customer Service	512-485-5555
Repairs	512-485-5080
TDS (Trash & Recycle)	
Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste	512-974-4343

OTHER NUMBERS

Lake Travis Postal Office	
Coyote Sightings	

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc	
Advertising	advertising@peelinc.com

GO GREEN! GO PAPERLESS!

Sign up to receive the Ranch Record directly to your inbox. Visit PEELinc.com for details.

ARTICLE INFO

The Ranch Record is mailed monthly to all Steiner Ranch residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to submit 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 consideration please email it to communications@steinerranchhoa.org. The deadline is the 8th of the month prior to the issue.

COVER PHOTO

In honor of Father's Day, this month's cover photo features Steiner Ranch dad, Chris Zinda, and his children Sidney and Nicholas. Thank you Tracie Zinda for sharing your photo!

Have a photo you would like to see published? We are always looking for pictures that capture Steiner Ranch and the folks who live here. So grab your camera, get creative, and send your pictures our way! Who know, your picture may be featured on next month's cover.

For cover photo consideration, the submittal deadline is on the 8th of the month prior to publication. Photos should be submitted electronically by the deadline date to communications@steinerranchhoa.org.

By submitting your photo you agree to allow your photo to be published in future issues of the Ranch Record and/ or other Steiner Ranch communications.



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2016 STEINER RANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars Now For These Upcoming Steiner Ranch Social Events!

JULY

7/3 Decorate Your Ride7/4 July 4th Celebration

AUGUST

8/13 Concert In The Park8/20 Movie in the Park

SEPTEMBER

9/17 Father Daughter Dance9/17 Fall Community Garage Sale

OCTOBER

10/6 New Homeowners Social10/7 Fall Scrap-A-Thon10/23 Pumpkin Patch10/30 Trunk or Treat

NOVEMBER

11/5 Camping On The Ranch11/12 Holiday Sale Shopping Event

DECEMBER

12/8 Volunteer Appreciation Party12/10 Breakfast With Santa

Want to get involved? Join the Event Planning Committee! The Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00am at Cups & Cones. Contact Desirre Ghebremicael, Lifestyle Coordinator at desirre@steinerranchhoa.org for more information.

All Events are tentative and subject to change or cancel. For the most up to date information, follow us at: Facebook.com/SteinerRanchHOAevents or visit the Steiner Ranch HOA website at www.steinerranchhoa.org Paving the way to successful real estate transactions in Steiner Ranch



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Hours of Operation: Monday - Thursday: 8:00am - 5:00pm

Located in the Shops at Steiner Ranch overlooking the UT Golf Course

Dr. Hawthorne and Associates are all General Dentists

RANCH REPORT

The Association has made conscious efforts to improve and maintain community facilities. I would like to share some of these efforts with the community:

- One of the biggest changes we've made is the Association is now overseeing and maintaining all Steiner Ranch pools, including maintaining pool cleaning and chemistry. By doing so, we have been able to improve water clarity and quality. In years past, the Association hired pool service companies to maintain pools; the results did not always meet expectations. Many residents are taking note of the change, and have contacted the office to give thanks. I recently received the following from a resident who lives on Palisades Parkway, via the HOA website Report A Problem link: "No problem. Pool looks great. Temperature very nice--84 degrees. Chemicals just right too. Thanks so much." It's nice to know residents are noticing our efforts.
- The Association has hired a new and improved lifeguard company; one that will be held accountable for supervising activity at the community pools.
- · Sod at Bella Mar, Westridge and Towne Square fields was installed in May. As a result, residents are now able to enjoy lush, green athletic fields, and the Association is able to provide fields that meet homeowner expectations.
- Tennis courts at Bella Mar and Towne Square have been resurfaced. Courts at John Simpson are planned to be resurfaced later this year.
- The Association has been working tirelessly to maintain facilities at the Lake Club. Continued vandalism is an issue. To dissuade destructive activity, various measures have been put in place. In order to further aide in maintaining the Lake Club facility, we ask residents to help us by reporting issues to our office, or by reporting suspicious activity to the Sherriff's Department.

Under the supervision of our new Facilities Manager, Luke Spoonts, Steiner Ranch maintenance staff are being charged with the following: accountability, responsibility, and performance. It shows! Further, my staff is committed to serving all Steiner Ranch homeowners, and to partnering with community Board of Directors to enforce rules which have been put in place for the purpose of maintaining homeowner property values.

Randy Schmaltz Executive Director Steiner Ranch Homeowners' Association

New Board of Directors Elected at Annual Meetings

Annual Meetings and elections for the Steiner Ranch Master Association (SRMA) and Steiner Ranch Residential Association (SRROA) took place in April 2016. As a result of elections, Steiner Ranch is now governed solely by homeowners. Prior to this, community developer Taylor Morrison held two seats on the SRMA Board.

SRMA and SRROA Boards are charged with representing and protecting the interests of the community, while maintaining the

value of jointly owned assets and enforcing Steiner Ranch governing documents. Please consider attending the next:

SRMA Board meeting on June 28, 2016 at 6:00pm at Towne Square Community Center

OR

SRROA Board meeting on June 30, 2016 at 6:00pm at Towne Square Community Center

Thank you to all homeowners who participated in elections.



Newly elected SRMA Board of Directors, pictured left to right:

Bill Menzies	President
Dave Doman	Director
Aden Allen	Director
Sarah Doolittle	Director
Ron Levin	Secretary
Robby Roberts	Treasurer
Naren Chilukuri	Vice President

Welcome back, Bill Menzies, previous and newly elected SRMA Board President.



SRROA Board of Directors, pictured left to right: David McAfee Karl McArthur David Marks Rob Carruthers Derrick Jones

The SRROA Board elected officers at the May Board meeting. Results were unavailable at time of press.

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From the Association Office

Steiner Ranch HOA Welcomes New Facilities Asset Manager & Controller

The Steiner Ranch Homeowners' Association is pleased to introduce two new members to our team. Luke Spoonts has taken on the role of Steiner Ranch Facilities Asset Manager, and Jennifer Rys is our new Controller.

While not a native Austinite, Luke has lived in Austin for the most part since the mid 1980's, leaving Texas for only three years to enjoy the great outdoors of Northern Colorado and to manage facilities at Colorado State University. Luke has a business degree from LeTourneau University and has been in the construction & facilities management industry for over 20 years. He is excited to be part of the Steiner Ranch Association team and looks forward to developing strong relationships with homeowners.

Jennifer Rys will fill the role as Association Controller. Jennifer is a resident of Steiner Ranch and holds a degree in Business Administration from American University. Further, she holds certifications in public accounting, fraud examination, and financial forensics. Jennifer worked most recently at Dell Computer Corporation where she was a senior advisor. Jennifer will bring a high level of accountability to the Association's finance management, so that Steiner Ranch will be positioned to address future financial needs.

FACT:

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Maintenance News: New Chairs & Sunshade at Bella Mar Pool

To gear up for the summer season, all chairs (approximately 160) were replaced at the Bella Mar pool and community center in May. The sunshade over the baby pool was also replaced. Stop by and enjoy!



Oak Wilt Prevention

To prevent Oak Wilt infection, please follow the below guidelines from the Texas A&M Forest Service:

- Do not prune oak trees from February through June.
- Use paint on all cuts or wounds to oak trees.
- Destroy all dead or dying Red Oaks near a tree with Oak Wilt.
- Do not move any firewood until it is well-seasoned.
- Plant native, non-oak tree species.

For more information visit the following websites: http://texasoakwilt.org www.dontmovefirewood.org/ texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/



Post Office Complaints

The Community Associations Office continually receives complaints about the quality of mail delivery service in Steiner Ranch. If you experience a problem related to your mail, (mis-delivered mail, lost packages, etc.) and are not satisfied after contacting the Lakeway Post Office (512-263-2458), you may make a complaint by calling the Consumer Affairs Division of the United States Postal Service at 1-800-ASK-USPS or mail a written complaint to:

Consumer Affairs United States Postal Service 1 Post Office Drive San Antonio, TX. 78284-9631

Association Assessment Payments Due July 1st

Semi-annual assessments for July - December 2016 are due on July 1, 2016. Statements will be mailed to each homeowner at the mailing address on file in mid-June. If you do not receive a statement, please contact the Community Associations Office at 512-266-7553. Homeowners are not exempt from paying assessments or late fees in the event a statement is not delivered. Payments received after July 31, 2016 are subject to an initial \$25.00 late fee per association and a \$25.00 late fee for each additional month that the assessment remains unpaid. Please note that the assessment must be received by July 31st, not simply postmarked by July 31st. Escrow accounts do not pay assessments.

Online Assessment payments can be made at www.steinerranchhoa. org, by clicking on the "Online Assessment Payments" link. You can also sign up to receive your statements online.

Payments may be mailed to the address listed on your statement, or brought to the Association office at 12550 Country Trails Lane to avoid an on-line fee.

Please note, you may lose resident privileges such as pool access, facility rental, and attendance at, or registration for, social functions and programs, if you have delinquent assessment.



From the Association Office

Overnight Parking, Boats & Watercraft Storage Reminders

Summer is here, kids are home, many of us are lake bound. All of these things often mean extra cars and watercraft at homes and the dilemma of where to store them. Please adhere to Steiner Ranch rules relating to parking and watercraft storage.

Per Steiner Ranch governing documents, no automobile or other vehicle may be parked overnight on any roadway within the community. Boats and watercraft must be stored in an enclosed space at all times. Storing watercraft in driveways or on the street is not allowed.

To report overnight street parking or watercraft violations, visit www.steinerranchoa.org and click "report a problem".

Thank you for helping the Association uphold Steiner Ranch rules which serve to protect and maintain the appearance and safety of the neighborhood.

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Quinlan Crossing (512) 298-3400

FIREWORKS / FIRECRACKERS PROHIBITED

Steiner Ranch Fireworks Policy

When planning your Fourth of July festivities, please keep in mind fireworks within Steiner Ranch, unless prior written Board approval has been granted, are prohibited. There are a number of reasons for this:

1) The use of fireworks places homes at serious risk of fire.

2) The topography and green space of Steiner Ranch is conducive to fires.

3) Federal rules regarding management of the Balcones Canyonlands (which borders Steiner Ranch) impose significant restrictions on activities that may affect wildlife therein. Serious penalties for violation can be imposed by federal officials.

4) Homeowners are entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their property.

Steiner Ranch HOA Communications -BE IN THE KNOW

Facebook:

Stay in the know about community events by following the official Steiner Ranch HOA Events Facebook page- the only Facebook page affiliated with the HOA. The page is an excellent resource for the most up to date HOA events, programs, and activities. Visit www.Facebook.com/SteinerRanchHOAevents and set your feed to follow our page.

Email Alerts:

Receive HOA activity and safety alerts, and stay in the know about what's going on in Steiner Ranch. You must register to receive alerts. To do so, visit the HOA website www.steinerranchhoa.org and click on login. If you've never requested a login before, then now is the time to do so. Once logged in, follow these steps:

1. Click on the menu item "My Profile".

2. Then click "Subscriptions".

3. Check off the email alerts you'd like to receive. It's that simple! While you are in "my profile", go to "user profile" and update your information.

Website:

The website enables residents to view facility availability, report a problem, obtain homeowner documents, rules and regulations and the latest budgets. Events and the most current program guide are also posted on the website.

Ranch Record:

The community newsletter is mailed to homeowners monthly. If you are not receiving the newsletter and would like to, visit peelinc.com and follow the prompts to sign up for delivery via mail or email.



Happy Graduation Steiner Ranch Seniors! The Steiner Ranch HOA wishes you all the best!

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Ranch Record - June 2016 11

<u>Steiner Activities & Events</u> Happy Father's Day Steiner Ranch Dads!

Several residents submitted these pictures in honor of Father's Day. Thank you for sharing. Happy Father's Day, Steiner Ranch dads!



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Join Us For Our Greatest Fourth Of July Celebration Yet!

Monday, July 4th 9am-1pm Towne Square Community Center

Make plans to celebrate Independence Day bright and early at the annual Steiner Ranch 4th of July celebration! All Steiner Ranch residents, families and friends are invited to attend this fun, festive, family-focused event, organized by the Steiner Ranch Event Planning Committee/HOA.

This year's celebration will take place on Monday, July 4th from 9am—1pm at Town Square Community Center. As in years past, our community parade will kick off the celebration at 9am. Please arrive on time to participate. Children are invited to bring their decorated bikes, wagons and scooters. Moms and dads are invited to bring their decorated strollers and wagons and participate on foot. In addition to the parade, we've added water slides, carnival games, a rock wall, kiddie train, bungie jumping, carnival swing, balloons, face painting, and music. Get ready for a Steiner Ranch Fourth Of July celebration unlike any other! Kona Ice will also be on hand, so be sure to bring cash if you would like to enjoy a snow cone.

Decorate Your Ride!

Get ready for the Steiner Ranch Fourth of July parade, and come decorate your bikes, wagons, scooters and strollers. The HOA will supply streamers, stickers and other decor to help kiddos deck out their ride in patriotic fashion!

> When: Sunday, July 3, 2015, 5 - 7PM Where: Towne Square Pavilion



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Steiner Activities & Events

Save The Date For Our Most Attended Event Of The Year -

Concert In The Park!

Saturday, August 13th 7:00pm - 10:00pm Towne Square Fields

The Steiner Ranch summer Concert in the Park returns on Saturday, August 13th with performances by the Vandegrift High School State Champion Band, followed by the one and only "Suede"!

Activities for the entire family will include water inflatables, bungie jumping, interactive games, and more.

Food and beverages from local restaurants will be available for purchase, with the exception of alcohol, and attendees are welcome to bring their own refreshments. It is recommended residents bring lawn chairs and blankets. Join your neighbors and friends for a great time of music, dancing and family fun!

Thank you to the following sponsors who have already registered to support this fantastic community event!

Flagship Sponsor: The Steiner Ranch Homeowners' Association

Nonprofit Sponsors: Vandegrift High School Band Longhorn Village Steiner Ranch Hill Country Bible Church

> Silver Sponsors: Randalls Steiner Ranch RBFCU

Dr. James Waters, Steiner Ranch Orthodontics Austin Diagnostic Clinic Steiner Ranch

Bronze Sponsors: Allan Greigo Real Estate Services Steiner Ranch Goddard School Shannon Kramer, Keller Williams Bartlett Real Estate Four Points Family Chiropractic Craig Smyser, RE/ MAX Capital City Austin Regional Clinic

Concert In The Park benefits Leander ISD's program to purchase school supplies for the district's less fortunate. For more information and how to donate or sponsor the event, visit www.steinerranchconcerts.com.





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August 13th @ Towne Square, 7pm-10pm

To sponsor this huge community event visit: www.SteinerRanchConcerts.com Various sponsorship levels available

Flagship Sponsor: The Steiner Ranch HOA

Promote your business and support the community! All proceeds benefit LISD.

Questions, Contact Desirre Ghebremicael, Steiner Ranch Lifestyle Coordinator: desirre@steinerranchhoa.org

Steiner Activities & Events

2016 SUMMER GUIDE

There's still time to register your kiddos for summer camps here on the Ranch! Visit the HOA Events Facebook page, website or stop by the HOA office for our Summer Guide. Camps and programs offered include:

KIDS PROGRAMS & CAMPS

Lonestar Soccer Soccer Shots Sportball Neighborhood Sports Steiner Tennis Kidventure Mad Science Lake Bridge Sports Gymnastics Developmental Swimming & Lessons

ADULT PROGRAMS

Water Aerobics Camp Gladiator Free Yoga Free Run Lab Free Tai Chi Free Aikido



The Goddard School Steiner Ranch is offering Steiner Ranch residents CPR classes through CPR Resources (http://www.cpr-resources.com/).

When: Thursday, June 23, 2016 Where: Goddard School Steiner Ranch, 5145 North FM 620, Building H Cost: \$25 per person Registration & class information: http://www.cpr-resources.com/

Combined CPR & First Aid class covers all requirements for Childcare Provider Certification, and is approved by the State of Texas Childcare Licensing, Foster and Adoption services as well as Child Protective Services. This class is appropriate for daycare staff, nannies, foster parents, babysitters, moms and dads. Upon class completion, students will receive CPR certification and First Aid cards which are valid for 2 years.

FREE HEALTH WORKSHOPS

The following free workshops are offered by Steiner Ranch resident and physician, Dr. Benjamin Rosin:

June 23rd at 7:00pm Towne Square: Diabetes: What You Need To Know

> July 14th at 7:00pm Towne Square: The Value of Sunscreen



FREE ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS

The following activities are offered to Steiner Ranch residents at no charge:					
Aikido Meets at Bella Mar Community Center Tuesday evenings at 8:30pm					
Cycling Group Meets at Cups & Cones Saturday & Sunday Mornings at 7:30am					
Run Lab	Coach-led run meets at John Simpson Park Friday mornings at 9:30am				
Tai Chi	Meets at Towne Square Community Center Monday through Friday at 8:15am				
Yoga Provided by Lake Austin Spa instructor. Meets at Towne Square Mondays at 6:30pm					
Vinyasa Y	Oga Tuesdays, through June 7 at Bella Mar Community Center from 9:30am – 10:30am				

Steiner Ranch Cycling News

The Steiner Ranch Cycling (SRC) is a group of fun loving cyclist that enjoy the outdoors, burning calories, and meeting new people. Cycling is easy on your body, good for your health and a great way to build community. There is no cost to ride, and we welcome new riders. You probably see us riding around the neighborhood in our Steiner Ranch-themed red white and blue kits. Give us a wave but please don't honk!

SATURDAY RIDES

On Saturdays we host an open group ride, starting at Cups & Cones at 7:30 AM. Our Saturday rides include advanced and intermediate groups.

The advanced group will have average speeds from 18 - 20 mph and the intermediate group will average between 15 - 17 mph. While each group will be travelling at different speeds, each group will be tackling the same course with a typical distance ranging from 45 up to 60+ miles. The turnout is typically between 10 - 20 riders depending on weather. Come on out and have some fun, everyone is welcome. Ride details are posted each week to our website at http://www.steinerranchcycling.com, on our Facebook page http:// facebook.com/SteinerRanchCycling, and to our email list (sign up on our website).

The advanced and intermediate groups require a higher level of fitness and experience and there is no designated sweeper.

Steiner Ranch Cycling is powered by Lakeside's awesome burgers (such as their Bacon Avocado Burger) and refreshed by their beer (we prefer Austin's own Independence Brewing Stash IPA which is on tap now). Join us there after the ride on Saturdays to refuel and recover!

SUNDAY COFFEE SHOP RIDE

On Sundays we host a mostly mellow ride to a local coffee shop outside Steiner.

The group will leave Cups & Cones at 7:30 AM, and will target some not-too-far coffee shop for some espresso, pastries, and socializing. The ride will average around 17 mph and should be perfect for those looking for an easier and more relaxed alternative to our Saturday rides. Our destination is typically Red Horn Coffee House and Brewing Company at 1431 and Parmer which is 18 miles from Cups & Cones. Although this is technically a 'drop ride', we will make great efforts to keep the group together. Note that you should be able to ride the 38-50 miles at a 16-17 mph average pace for the whole ride.

Please visit our website at http://www.steinerranchcycling.com to check out what is going on in the Steiner Ranch cycling community.

Upcoming Organized Rides in the Area

There are lots of great organized rides in the area that cater to



cyclists of all abilities (beginner to expert). Even if you don't ride with SRC, you should consider participating in some of these. Big group rides are fun!

- July 24-30 RAGBRAI (http://ragbrai.com) A bucket list ride. SRC is doing it this year.
- Aug 27 Hotter'N Hell 100 (http://hh100.org) Maybe the easiest century ever. Some folks die.
- Sept 17/18 Tour de Cure (http://tour.diabetes.org) A great ride for a great cause. One of our favorites.
- Sep 17 Conquer the Coast (http://www.conquerthecoast.org) We live where there are hills. This ride has no hills. Pancake flat, man.
- Oct 16 Livestrong Challenge (http://www.livestrong.org) Love him or hate him (probably the latter), this is still a great ride for a great cause.
- Nov 5/6 Tour de Gruene (http://www.tourdegruene.com) Some of the best of the Texas Hill Country.

SPONSORS

Austin City Living Patten Law Firm Dream Smiles Dental Cyclist Law Lakeside Pizza & Grill

RIDE DISCLAIMER: Each rider is responsible for his or her own safety on our rides. Please join us at your own risk. Our weekly rides are open to public participation but ride leaders do NOT assume any liability for your participation. We require that all participants follow traffic laws and wear a helmet while on our rides.

Steiner Activities & Events YOUNG OF HEART

Young at Heart gives Steiner Ranch residents- mostly in the 50+ age group- opportunities to meet other people with similar interests. Our organized activities are planned to give everyone a chance to get to know each other in casual social settings. Many friendships have been formed while playing cards and games, walking, hiking and participating in more than a dozen other interest groups. If you live in Steiner Ranch full time or part time, you are welcome to join us. To become a member, just send your contact information including name(s), address, phone number and e-mail address to youngatheartaustin@gmail.com.

Among our many activities are Book Club, Canasta, Euchre, Mah Jongg, Mexican Train (Dominoes), Bunco, Walking, Hiking, Biking, Spanish Conversation, Technology, Painting, Card Making (creating unique greeting cards), and Ladies CLEO Luncheons (Classy Ladies Eating Out). We also get together for happy hours, wine socials, International Dining, dinner groups, and our very popular ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out). New groups are added when there is interest.

Steiner Ranch Writers Group

The Steiner Ranch Writers group is taking a hiatus this summer. Not to fret – the group will resume meetings in September. Look for meeting times in the August Ranch Record or activities calendar on the HOA website: www.steinerranchhoa.org.

Steiner Ranch Camera Club

The Steiner Ranch Camera Club provides an informal, friendly, and supportive environment for photographers at all levels of experience, and with interests in all genres of photography.

The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Bella Mar Community Center at 7:00pm. The easiest way to get involved is to "Join" us on "Facebook" at "Steiner Ranch Camera Club". Here, you can chat with other club members, post pics, ask technical questions, and keep up with our event schedule.

If you have questions, contact Jeff Wagner at jeffamy3@mac.com.



Register Online Today!

sportball.us | 512.407.8814 | austin_info@sportball.us



FREE TAI CHI WORKSHOP

Monday - Friday 8:15 am - 9 am Towne Square Community Center 12400 Country Trails Ln, Austin, TX 78732 Come learn and practice Basic Forms of Chen Style Tai Chi Benefits of Tai Chi : - Relieve Stress on the body and mind - Improve Health and Physical Fitness - Enhance Self Defense capability Questions : contact 512-470-6978 or rosaliachiu@gmail.com



Carol Sue Witt



Mary B. Gregory



Susan Tyler



Kim Foster

Flora Fauna and Fun!

Visit the Steiner Paint

Group Art Display

Cups and Cones

May 1 - June 15



Carol Kneisley



Emaly Green



Stan Murff



Mary Palmer





Saria Sami



Marci Nichols



Sue Lipien



Chuck Russell



Remember the 90's?



In 1997, Invisalign was created by an adult orthodontic patient with *no orthodontic training...*



...and was marketed as the new alternative to braces. It has changed little in 19 years and continues to be an outsourced product where scans are sent to a third-world country for digital tooth movement as well as production of aligners. These aligners are mailed to offices and given to patients with few options to make adjustments when the jaws shift or when teeth do no move as anticipated. Patients are often given months of aligners to switch out with little supervision or guidance essentially removing the doctor's expertise from the treatment.

Welcome to 2016

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The outcome is a handcrafted and customized smile designed start to finish by your specialist.



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Ranch Record - June 2016 21

JUNE						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
\$			8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:00pm - Facilities CMTE Mtg (TSCC)	2 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	3 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	4 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)
5 7:30am – SRCC Ride (Cups & Cones)	6 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm – Yoga (TSCC)	8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 7 9:30am - Vinyasa Yoga (BMCC) 6:30pm - Trails CMTE Mtg (BMCC) 8:30pm –Aikido (BMCC)	8 8:15am - Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm - Steiner Ranch Camera Club (BMCC)	9 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 5:00pm - Landscape CMTE Mtg (BMCC) 6:00pm - Fairways Board Mtg (TSCC)	LO 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones) 5:30am - 2:00pm - Stars Swim Meet (BMCC)
7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)	I 3 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm – Yoga (TSCC)	I 4 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:00am - Event Planning CMTE Mtg (Cups & Cones) 7:00pm - SRNA Mtg (TSCC) 8:30pm - Aikido (BMCC)	I 5 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	l 6 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	17 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	l 8 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)
19 Father's Day 7:30am-SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)	20 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm – Yoga (TSCC)	2 I 8:15am -Tai Chi (TSCC) 8:30pm - Aikido (BMCC)	22 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	23 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 7:00pm - Free Workshop with Dr. Rosin: Diabetes - What You Need to Know (TSCC)	24 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	25 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones) 5:30am - 2:00pm - Stars Swim Meet (BMCC)
26 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)	27 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm – Yoga (TSCC)	28 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:00pm - SRMA Board Mtg (TSCC) 8:30pm – Aikido (BMCC)	29 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	30 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 12:00pm - 10:00pm Stars Swim Meet (BMCC) 6:00pm - SRROA Board Mtg (TSCC)		

YOUR ADVERTISING DOLL



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4					8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	2 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)
3 7:30am - SRCC Ride (Cups & Cones) 5:00pm - 7:00pm - Decorate Your Ride (TSCC)	4 Happy Fourth of July!! HOA OFFICE CLOSED 9:00am - 1:00pm - July 4th Parade & Celebration	5 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm - Trails CMTE Mtg (BMCC) 8:30pm – Aikido (BMCC)	6 8:15am Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:00pm - Facilities CMTE Mtg (TSCC)	7 8:15am –Tai Chi (TSCC)	8 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	9 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)
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24/3 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)	25 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:30pm - Yoga (TSCC)	26 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:00pm - SRMA Board Mtg (TSCC) 8:30pm – Aikido (BMCC)	27 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC)	28 8:15am –Tai Chi (TSCC) 6:00pm - SRROA Board MTG (TSCC)	29 8:15am – Tai Chi (TSCC) 9:30am - Run Lab (JS Park)	30 7:30am – SRC Ride (Cups & Cones)



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A Message from Our Lifeguard Service Provider

Dear Steiner Ranch Residents,

The summer season is here and we are happy to be the new lifeguard provider at your Steiner Ranch pools. This is our first year here at Steiner Ranch and at the University of Texas Golf Club, and we are confident that our tremendous group of staff members are going to provide a highly successful, fun, and safe year, this year and beyond.

We have outlined a few basic rules and reminders that will help us accomplish this goal for you:

1. Lifeguards are here to watch for the telltale signs of a potential drowning and act appropriately if needed - they are not babysitters. Our guards are trained to be scanning the entire pool area, so they are not keeping an eye on only your child. Please do not leave the pool area with your child left unattended in the water.

2. Do not think your 7 year old child can watch your 3 year old child. The same kid that was playing astronaut in the back yard yesterday does not have the patience, knowledge, or skill to be responsible for the life of a young child.

3. A drowning can happen within an arm's length of you and only takes seconds. Make it a point to focus on your child while they are in the water.

4. Drownings don't always appear as a struggle. Many times a child simply turns over and takes in water without making sudden, rapid movements. In many cases, the drowning person is not able to call out for help, because the priority to a drowning person is breathing, and not speech.

5. Gates should always be kept shut! One of the rules we are here to enforce is ensuring the gates are accessed by residents with the appropriate key fobs so start making it a habit to bring them along. Gates from the pavilions to the pool deck are a major safety concern and a child can make it into the water faster than you may be able to react – keep them shut!

Drownings are the #1 cause of unintentional deaths for kids aged 1-4 and according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, drownings and close calls are eight times more likely to occur in children who don't know how to swim. Make sure that you teach your children how to swim or enroll them in lessons very early in life.

Reid Griffith Equipt Aquatics, President

Steiner Ranch Pool Rules

Swim season is upon us! Please remember the below pool rules when visiting neighborhood pools. To ensure Steiner Ranch pools remain fun, safe and sanitary for all residents, keep the below rules in mind. Complete pool rules and regulations are posted on the HOA website, under documents at www. steinerranchhoa.org.

1. Pools are for residents of the Steiner Ranch Master Association and the Steiner Ranch Residential Owners Associations and up to 4 guest per household without a reservation.

2. Pool gates must remain closed and locked at all times. A facility fob is to be used to access locked facilities during hours of operation.

3. The Association may deny access to the pools at any time due to occupancy limits, weather, pool conditions, or if maintenance is required.

4. At the discretion of the Association, and as approved by the Board of Directors of the SRROA and/or SRMA, certain periods of the normal open swim hours may be set aside for specialized activities.

5. Use of the pool facilities is at the resident and/or guest's own risk.

6. Lifeguards, when present, have full authority and are responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of all rules.

7. Only lifeguards are permitted on the lifeguard stand.

8. An adult must accompany children 14 years old and under at all times.

9. Proper swim wear is required. Swim diaper and plastic pants must be worn by children who are not completely toilet trained.

10. No diving. Dive blocks are for use by Swim Teams and/ or private lessons approved by the Association.

11. No Smoking.

12. No glass containers of any type are allowed in the pool facility.

13. No pets in pool area.

14. Residents are responsible for any damage they, their guests, or their children cause and for cleaning up any mess or trash created by them prior to leaving the pool facility.

15. Violation of these rules may result in suspension of pool privileges, fines or other charges, and/or legal action.

Don't Prop Pool Gates

Propping a gate open is a serious safety issue. It only takes a second for a child to wander into an unsupervised pool area and drown. Help us eliminate this unthinkable possibility by not propping pool gates. If you see a pool gate propped open, please close it.

Swimming News

Summer Pool Hours

Bella Mar - (lap pool heated) Closed Monday until 2:00pm Open Tuesday - Sunday 7:00am 10:00pm

The following programs will be using the lap pool:

Master's Swim Program – Wednesday & Friday 5:30am – 6:45am; Sunday 6:30am – 7:45am

Stars Red - Tuesday - Friday 7:30am - 12:30pm Stars Blue - Monday - Thursday 1:30pm - 6:30pm Gold Star Lessons - Sunday 8am - 12pm

Towne Square - (unheated)

Closed Monday until 12:00pm Open Tuesday – Sunday 8:00am – 10:00pm

The following programs will be using the lap pool:

Water Aerobics Monday & Wednesday 6:45pm - 7:35pm Tuesday & Thursday 9:00am - 9:50am

John Simpson - (unheated)

Closed Monday until 2:00pm Open Tuesday – Sunday 8:00am – 10:00pm

The following programs will be using the lap pool:

Gold Stars Swimming Monday - Thursday 5:45pm - 7:15pm Tuesday - Thursday 8:00am - 12:00pm

Boot Camp Tuesday & Thursday 3:45pm - 5:45pm

Lap lane calendars are online at: www.steinerranchhoa.org under the amenity tab Please note**When lifeguards are not on duty, swim at your own risk.

YEAR ROUND SWIMMING PROGRAM FOR ADULTS

Come join the Masters Swim Program! The workouts are adjusted for everyone from beginners all the way to advanced -- no swim experience needed!! No intimidation allowed!! If you can swim one length of the pool, then you are ready to join in on the fun. Currently, we have "newbies" who haven't ever participated in organized adult swim classes, new and experienced triathletes who want to improve the swim part of their triathlons, and experienced master's swimmers looking to enjoy an organized swim workout. Regardless of your skill level, you will find a lane with swimmers who match your ability and enthusiasm.

Our swim schedule is as follows:

- Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:30 a.m. until 6:45 a.m.
- Sundays at 6:30 a.m. until 7:45 a.m.
- \$55 per month for Residents
- Come on and give it a try! It's easy to sign up:
- 1. You must be 18 yrs. and older.

2. Join U. S. Masters Swimming! To be eligible to compete in masters' meets, to get a great magazine, and for HOA insurance purposes, go to the United States Masters swimming website, www.usms.org/reg and join our team Red Giants Masters swimming. You can print your card immediately and take a copy to the HOA office.

3. Fill out the Program Registration form at the HOA office, provide a copy of your USMS card and submit payment!

As this is a Year Round Program, it's a great way to meet new friends and be a part of a fun community of swimmers and neighbors!



Gold Stars Swimming Developmental Swim Team

(For Ages 5-8)

Gold Stars Swimming replaces the former Shooting Stars Program. Coached by Hollie Kenney and her team, swimmers will work on the development of freestyle and backstroke for ages 5-8 years-olds. At the end of the 4 weeks, swimmers will be able to measure their improvement by participating in a mock trial meet. The program begins on July 12th and ends on August 4th. Practices are every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at John Simpson pool.

To participate, swimmers need a practice style swim suit (one piece for girls and jammers for boys), goggles, and rubber swim fins (not ankle strap).

When: July 12 – August 4 | Where: John Simpson Pool Practice Times: T/W/Th 8:30-9:30 am 5-6 year olds T/W/Th 9:30-10:30 am 7-8 year olds *Cost per swimmer: \$165* Contact Information: www.goldstarsswimming.com (Click Developmental Swim tab) E-mail: goldstarsswimming@austin.rr.com

Planning a Pool Party?

If you are on inviting more than 25 guests to use one of the community pools, you are required to hire additional lifeguards, at your expense, through the lifeguard company approved by the HOA. Please contact Equipt Aquatics directly for scheduling: 512-969-1405.



Water Aerobics Start In May: Register Now

Want to exercise, but can't get motivated? Perhaps the pavement plays havoc on your knees, legs or hips. Or maybe you just don't want to exercise by yourself. Try water aerobics! Classes start in May and will go through September at the Towne Square Pool.

WHEN:

COST:

REGISTRATION:

Monday/Wednesday, 6:45 pm Tuesday/Thursday, 9:00 am 8 classes per month: \$48 16 classes per month: \$96 Call Ann @ 512-266-4780 or email askennedy@austin.rr.com.

Sign up will take place prior to the first class of every month. Classes are 50 minutes long, will incorporate a full body workout in the water and are led by a certified water aerobics instructor. Some of the benefits of water aerobics fitness are:

*strengthens & improves muscle tone

- *enhances muscular flexibility
- *increases range of motion
- *improves posture & physical appearance
- *relieves tension & stress
- *increases energy levels & stamina
- *burns calories
- *strengthens the cardiorespiratory system

Join us for lots of fun and great workouts to music. It's an opportunity to meet your neighbors and make new friends, while getting/staying in shape. Adult men and women welcome. This program is available to Steiner Ranch residents only.

Around Steiner

Steiner Ranch Student Athletes Help Team Place 2nd In State Championships



Submitted by Shaylah Enge

Strong Bodies. Strong Minds. Strong Characters. These words are in the motto of the Texas Interscholastic Mountain Bike League and these are the qualities that seven Steiner Ranch student athletes exhibited while riding and racing this past season. Caroline Burslem (not pictured), Miles Davies, Lukas Enge, Logan Howard, Brandon Landry, Austin Mutter and Brandon Stelling joined the Hudson Bend/Lake Travis Mountain Bike Team for the 2016 racing season. They displayed the commitment, skill and courage needed to achieve some amazing personal results and rankings. Their hard work also helped take their team to a 2nd place finish in the state championships in Glen Rose, TX. We extend these riders a well-deserved congratulations, and look forward to seeing them ride next season!

The Texas Interscholastic Mountain Bike League (www. texasmtb.org) works to establish and maintain safe, quality high school and middle school mountain bike programs. The season runs from December through May, with five races, including a state championship race. A new Steiner Ranch team is currently being developed. If you have a middle school or high school child (boys and girls!) who is interested in mountain biking in the league or if you are a parent/resident who would like to help with the new team, please contact Erik Enge at erik.enge@gmail.com for more information.

Three Scouts from Steiner Ranch Reach Eagle Scout Rank



Pictured Left to Right: Connor Vann, Jack Rosas, Will Kimbell

Submitted by Jenny Rosas

Three Boy Scouts from Steiner Ranch Troop 208 were honored in an Eagle Scout Court of Honor Ceremony on April 30, 2016 at Riverplace Country Club. Connor Vann (freshman at Vandegrift HS), Jack Rosas (sophomore at Vandegrift HS), and Will Kimbell (sophomore at Summit Christian Academy) reached the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest achievement attainable in the Boy Scouting program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

Guest of Honor, Capital Area Council's Scout Executive, Mr. Jon Yates, spoke to the scouts and audience about the importance of leadership and service to others, two of the basic tenets of Scouting.

In addition, Jack Rosas and Connor Van are members of The Order of the Arrow, Scouting's national honor society. It recognizes Scouts selected by their peers as best exemplifying the ideals of Scouting.

Troop 208 is led by Scout Master Brian Birdwell of Steiner Ranch and Assistant Scout Masters, Nick Nichols and Trey Vann.



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Around Steiner

Summer Library Dates Announced for River Ridge Elementary

Leander ISD and Hill Country Education Foundation are once again teaming up this summer at River Ridge Elementary to provide support and access to books, Makerspace stations and programming. River Ridge Elementary will be open in the morning on Mondays and Wednesdays June, July and August.

"Students who keep reading over the summer avoid losing gains they've achieved in reading during the school year," said Becky Calzada, LISD library coordinator. "By keeping the library open in this part of district where no library is available, we hope to provide opportunities to avoid the summer slide, while also giving students a chance to participate in enrichment activities like Makerspace stations."

HCEF will host two programs at River Ridge Elementary. On Monday, June 13 at 10:00 am, children's music recording artist Joe McDermott will get kids jumping and dancing to his award-winning tunes. On Wednesday, August 3 at 10:00 am, Nancy Simpson will showcase Japanese storytelling. Mrs. Simpson is a retired school teacher and local Longhorn Village resident.

Makerspace Workstations allow students to design, build, and create all sorts of different things with different materials. These

activities promote learning through play. Activities will center on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math skills or STEAM.

"This is our sixth year to work with Leander ISD on keeping the River Ridge library open," said Michelle Beck, HCEF's executive director. "Many thanks goes to the librarians who spend part of their summer vacation keeping those doors open for us, as well as the young volunteers we recruit from the community to help them."

Please note that restrooms are not available at the library, and non-registered LISD students are unable to check out books. Kindergarten students registered for the 2015-2016 school year can check out books. For more information, please contact info@ HillCountryEdFoundation.org.

River Ridge Elementary

Mondays & Wednesdays - 9 am to 12 noon Joe McDermott, June 13, 10 am Nancy Simpson, August 3, 10 am **Library Dates**

June 13 - June 29 Closed week of July 4 July 11 - Aug 3 (last day)



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What:

Informational meeting for parents and their children to find out more about this exciting opportunity to learn mountain biking skills, race in the Texas Interscholastic Mountain Bike League, make friends and have fun!

When:

June 15, 2016 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Where:

Bella Mar Community Center



Contact Erik Enge with any questions: 512-576-9415 | erik.enge@gmail.com



Traffic Improvements Planned For RM 620 and Steiner Ranch Blvd.

Submitted by the Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association



The intersection of Steiner Ranch Blvd. and RM 620 is due for a safety improvement with the addition of a full service traffic light according to TXDoT and Travis County. With the development of the business park adjacent to the intersection, and the continued growth of traffic volume transiting the intersection on RM 620, it became apparent that safety and efficiency considerations necessitated the installation of controls.

TXDoT and the County have placed this project on a fast track for completion. The diagram below depicts the changes to the intersection when completed. Highlights to the project include:

- A dedicated left turn lane and signal from RM 620 into Steiner Ranch Blvd.
- A signal controlled left turn out of Steiner Ranch Blvd. onto southbound RM 620.
- A new protected right turn lane out of Steiner Ranch Blvd. onto a new 3rd auxiliary lane heading northbound RM 620
- Concrete dividers prohibiting left turns into or out of the new dedicated business park entrance north of the intersection onto RM 620.
- Coordinated signaling between the light at Commanche Trail and the new light at Steiner Ranch Blvd.

This project will be completed in two phases. The initial phase of the intersection improvement will include signal enhancement and appropriate restriping. It will not include access to the new auxiliary lane on RM 620, nor the concrete dividers emplaced on RM 620. Those will be emplaced once the designs are finalized for other improvements on RM 620 related to the RM 620 / FM 2222 intersection bypass.

This project mirrors projects originally proposed to TXDoT and Travis County by the Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association in 2012, which focused on adding an additional lane for northbound RM 620 to alleviate the congestion of morning and afternoon rush traffic and the addition of the light at Steiner Ranch Blvd. which was one of the options proposed to address community safety concerns for those who needed to turn left into Steiner Ranch, given the limited sight distance for oncoming traffic. Visit http://www.steinerranchna. org for more information or to provide feedback.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL CLASS OF 2016



Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association Traffic Update

Submitted by the Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association

A little over 4 years ago when the Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association (SRNA) was formed, it was already apparent that traffic congestion in the Four Points area was a worsening problem. SRNA began the process of elevating this problem to TXDoT, our County Commissioner, the City of Austin and the CAMPO Commissioners, in an effort to gain recognition of the problem, and then begin to develop possible solutions. Along the way, SRNA has coordinated with community leadership in Lakeway, Four Points and surrounding neighborhoods along the RM 620 and FM 2222 corridors as it was apparent that traffic concerns along both routes had to be addressed in tandem to facilitate both near and long term solutions.

It now appears that community efforts are beginning to pay off. TXDoT agreed to fund a traffic study for the corridor from SR 71 to US 183 that has been completed. The results showed that the RM 620 corridor in West Austin has become one of the most congested roadways in the Austin metropolitan area due to the topographically constrained nature of the corridor and significant growth in residential and business development. Significant growth in the NW and SW areas of Austin add to the traffic congestion because of RM 620's status as the only major north-south connector in West Austin. The RM 620 / FM 2222 intersection has become a particular bottleneck due to its similar status as the only major eastwest corridor tying together RM 620 with the city center.

TXDoT projects that traffic grades of service along the corridor which are already in a "failing" state will continue to worsen – along with wasted hours and reduced mobility within a few short years along major stretches of RM 620 and the adjoining FM 2222.

TXDoT has proposed a solution to provide near term relief by expanding FM 2222 through a critical section between the top of the hill at McNeal Drive and a new intersection to be located in the current vicinity of the Cooke's Automotive. Additionally, a new bypass road between south RM 620 and easterly FM 2222 will allow traffic ultimately headed south on RM 620 or east on FM 2222 to bypass the current RM 620 / FM 2222 intersection. The combination of these improvements is expected to provide significant relief to the RM 620 corridor and is the most critical near term project along the corridor. The project is currently in the environmental phase of study and may be ready for construction by 2018.

Today, the RM 620 / FM 2222 project is unfunded and funding constraints risk sliding the implementation of the project out several years.

Additional TXDoT studies have been conducted to identify additional solutions for RM 620 to address the dire congestion forecast along other segments of the corridor, and to provide a longerterm solution for the RM 620 / FM 2222 and RM 620 / Anderson Mill intersections. This study has proposed a two-part solution which includes expanding RM 620 by one lane in each direction to a 6-lane divided highway with a second (and possibly concurrently built) phase to include elevated express lanes. Combined, these two solutions would provide necessary relief for the corridor looking toward the 20-year horizon. Without these two changes, corridor conditions will continue to deteriorate.

Next month, we will cover the ongoing effort being made by your Association to secure the political support from various stakeholders as the necessary precursor to securing funding to bring these road improvements to fruition. Anyone interested in helping with this effort is encouraged to contact the Association on its website at http:// www.steinerranchna.org.



News You Can Use

Lake Travis Looks Full - Why Residents Should Still Conserve Water

Submitted by WCID #17

Doesn't that mean we have plenty of water and don't need to conserve? Why should I be concerned about my water use?

- Because your water is a precious, limited resource. Central Texas is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. To ensure water supplies will be sufficient to serve future needs, water conservation needs to be a way of life for us, and not simply a response to periodic droughts.
- Because conservation saves you money and saves energy. Conserving water saves on both your water and sewer bills; you use less water, and put less down the drain. Less water use means less pumping and lower energy costs for the utility.
- Because conservation reduces excessive runoff into your rivers and streams. Watering less means less water running down streets and into storm drains where it can pollute your environment with fertilizers and insecticides.
- Because conservation saves you tax dollars and fees by delaying the construction of new treatment facilities.
- Because the state requires it. All water utilities are required by state law to prepare water conservation plans and implement specific control measures triggered by preset conditions such as water usage levels or drought duration. Utilities are also required to report usage levels and actions that are being taken to reduce per capita consumption. The regional water planning authorities and Texas Water Development Board have set the District's objective to reach a .24% reduction in per capita consumption over the next five (5) years.
- Because it is the ethical and responsible thing to do. Central Texas has a hot dry climate in the summer, and is subject to occasional drought periods. As summer temperatures rise and rainfall decreases, much more of our water system's supplies are used for outside purposes such as watering lawns and trees, refilling swimming pool and washing cars. In the summer, many customers use over 5 times what their average use is during the year, and

(Continued on Page 35)



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(Continued from Page 34)

about 60 percent of this water is used on landscaping. If the demand for outside use is greater than the District's ability to treat that water, there may not be enough water for all uses. For example, even though everyone still has enough water, tank levels (our reserves) become much lower, and fire protection could be jeopardized. When pumping and treatment is overworked, mechanical failures can occur creating water outages for everyone. When tank levels are lower, your water pressure will be lower.
Because adequate supply does not mean

unlimited use. The water treatment plant is designed for a maximum peak day production of 1 gallon per minute per living unit equivalent (single family home) or about 35,000 gallons per month for a 5/8 inch meter in a hot summer month. This is 30 percent greater capacity than the state requires.





No Coaches, No Umpires, and No Rule Books; The value of Unstructured Play

Submitted by Shelley Coleman MA, LPC-S

Depending on your age, your memories of play will vary. Some will recall games of kick the can or red rover. Others, myself included, can recall racing down sidewalks on our big wheels and green machines. In my neighborhood, you could easily create a game of hide and seek or capture the flag by rounding up a few friends. Our imaginative games were limited only by curfew times when our parents called us in. In my childhood, unstructured free play filled the hours between dinner and bedtime every weekday night. Most weekends brought more of the same, aside from the occasional team sport or church activity.

As a parent, I can see the value of this type of play for my own children. Some of the most creative games and storytelling occurs with my children when they are forced to turn off the television, put away their devices, and play. When given time and play space, exploring and creative problem solving become the agenda. It is evident that through play, children can gain mastery over their environment, express themselves, and learn new ways to interact with the world. Free play encourages social and emotional intelligence and builds empathy and self awareness. Children must work together to decide what game to play and what agreeable rules there are. For younger children, play builds gross and fine motor skills.

In fact, the benefits of free play were recently affirmed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Specifically, the AAP reported that free and unstructured play is essential for helping children to manage stress and to reach social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones. Furthermore, play has been indicated in brain development. Sergio Pellis, a researcher at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada recently affirmed that, "The experience of play changes the connections of the neurons at the front end of your brain." Furthermore, he maintains that "Without play experience, those neurons aren't changed."

It is these changes in the prefrontal cortex during childhood that help wire the brain's executive control center which is primarily responsible for regulating emotions, making plans, and solving problems.

As the parent of "overscheduled children", I recognize all too clearly that unstructured play time is a rare treasure. For many children in our area, the non school time hours include club or recreation sports, academic support programs such as tutoring, and a host of *(Continued on Page 38)*



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News You Can Use

(Continued from Page 36)

additional extracurricular activities such as performing arts, visual arts, and various social clubs. In addition, our children's free play time is impacted by increasingly competitive college admissions and state education policies that reduce physical education in schools.

So how can we increase the opportunities for our children to have access to this important commodity?

- Emphasize the benefits of "true toys" (think toys of your own childhood) such as blocks and dolls. These type of toys encourage children to fully use their imagination.
- Support an appropriately challenging academic schedule dependant on the abilities and needs of the child vs competitive community standards or the need to gain college admissions.
- Recognize that every child does not need to excel in multiple areas to be considered successful or prepared to compete in the world.
- Re-evaluate the number of extracurricular activities. There is no right or wrong number, but consider the amount of free time your child has in a given week and how this is impacted by structured activities.
- Let your child go a little out of your comfort zone. Allowing children to take calculated risk in natural environments may improve their judgement and flexible thinking.

• Practice letting your child be bored. Instead of handing your bored child a screen, encourage them to use their imagination to find something to do.

Free and unstructured play is defined as a set of activities that children create on their own without adult guidance. It breeds flexibility and creativity which allow children to adapt to their ever changing environments. And, when left to their own devices, children will take initiative and create activities and stories in the world around them. As parents, we are instrumental in creating the space and time for this to occur.

Shelley Coleman is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Supervisor in Lakeway. She provides play therapy, child and adolescent counseling, family therapy, and parent education. www. shelleybcolemanlpc.com



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