

# The Ranch Report

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 5

MAY 2018

## BECOMING A THERAPEUTIC FOSTER PARENT WITH BENCHMARK FAMILY SERVICES



There are Foster Parents, and then there are Professional Therapeutic Foster Parents. Professional Therapeutic Foster Parents understand that a child with a traumatic past needs consistency, nurturing, and above all, someone who will focus on the good and help work through the child's difficulties.

Teenage foster children are among the most underserved population in the foster care system, and Benchmark Family Services needs your help to change that. Fostering a teen is an opportunity that is unique, and can be truly rewarding if you are willing to accept the challenge. There is such great opportunity to instill character and values in their lives that they will be able to take with them as they are becoming an adult. They are in need of something stable in their life, and your home could be just what they need. Are you ready to accept the challenge?

In one month, our agency as a whole received 6,919 referrals for children in foster care who need a home. We were not able to accept and place 4,054 of those referrals because there wasn't a Benchmark home available for them. We currently serve over 2,300 youth across four states, and that number is growing. If you have what it takes to become a Professional Therapeutic Foster Parent, we need you! All that is required is the desire to help those in need, the tenacity to persevere, and to remember that it isn't about you... it's about the children. Help them work through their past and influence strong core values and other aspects of becoming a thriving member of the adult community; help make a difference!

Benchmark's mission is to work alongside referring agencies to provide stable and caring placements for youth in need of out-of-home care. We advocate for children by ensuring reasonable opportunities for healthy physical, psychological and emotional growth and development in the most normal and least restrictive setting possible. To this end, Benchmark will provide and coordinate programs and services in cooperation with referring child welfare agencies. Benchmark is committed to the highest standards of childcare and professionalism.

At Benchmark Family Services, we pride ourselves on our customer service. We provide state of the art training to all of our foster families to prepare them to properly care for the children that will be in their home. We never want our families to feel like they are going through this alone; we understand how tough of a job this can be, and endless support is provided to all of our families 24/7. With Benchmark, you will have the support of a team of professional, caring staff who are working with your family and the children in your home every step of the way. By doing this, they will have the opportunity to understand not only the children and their needs, but your needs as a parent as well.

Our Austin office is located at 1212 E. Anderson Lane, Suite 800. If you are interested in becoming a therapeutic foster parent or would like more information, please call our local office at (512) 383-9001.

Our other Texas locations include Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, League City, Longview, Lubbock, McAllen, and San Antonio. If you would like to contact any of our other offices, you can reach us at 855-5FOSTER (855-536-7837), or visit our website at [www.benchmarkfamilyservices.org](http://www.benchmarkfamilyservices.org) for more information.



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| Fire.....                    | 911          |
| Ambulance.....               | 911          |
| Sheriff – Non-Emergency..... | 512-943-1300 |

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|                                      |                         |
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| Patsy Sommer Elementary .....        | 704-0600                |
| .....                                | 16200 Avery Ranch Blvd. |
| Elsa England Elementary School ..... | 704-1200                |
| .....                                | 8801 Pearson Ranch Road |
| Cedar Valley Middle School.....      | 428-2300                |
| .....                                | 8139 Racine Trail       |
| Pearson Ranch Middle School.....     | 704-1500                |
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| McNeil High School.....              | 464-6300                |
| .....                                | 5720 McNeil Dr.         |

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|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rutledge Elementary.....     | 570-6500                |
| .....                        | 11501 Staked Plains Dr. |
| Stiles Middle School .....   | 570-0000                |
| .....                        | 3250 Barley Rd.         |
| Vista Ridge High School..... | 570-1800                |
| .....                        | 200 S. Vista Ridge Dr.  |

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## GIRLS EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

### **GIRLS EMPOWERMENT NETWORK'S CAMPGEN SUMMER CAMPS INSPIRE CENTRAL TEXAS GIRLS IN GRADES 3 – 8 TO OWN AND USE THEIR POWER**

This summer the Girls Empowerment Network will host a two-part campGEN Summer Camp Series with weeklong summer camp sessions for girls entering grades 3-8.

campGEN girls participate in interactive workshops that are designed to help girls feel more confident as they navigate girlhood. The program engages Girls Empowerment Network's girl experts and female role models as camp counselors. The two-part Summer Camp Series for girls entering grades 3-8 includes:

- campGEN – Part 1, held June 18-22, kicks off with "Own My Power." This camp focuses on building confidence and self-love. Girls will explore stress management, identity, self-compassion and body positivity. Activities include yoga, art and craft projects, writing, talent shows and games.
- campGEN – Part 2, held July 16-20, continues the conversation with "Use My Power." Girls will focus on using their confidence to advocate for themselves and others. Girls will explore and practice confident communication, advocacy, healthy friendships and values. Activities include role playing, skits, a fun community advocacy project, and games.

"Our entire team is excited to invest our time and energy into programming that makes campGEN summer camp fun and an experience to remember," says Caroline Crawford, program director. "This year our summer camps build on one another, and we see girls signing up for both sessions soon once they learn to OWN their power, then they can put it into practice and USE their power. We know they'll walk away with a strong sense of self and be ready for another school year."

Network (GEN) helps girls discover they are powerful people. Through school-based programs and community events for girls, parents and schools, GEN ignites power in girls ages 8 – 18 by teaching them skills to thrive and believe in their ability to be unstoppable. campGEN was created to expand Girls Empowerment Network's services that empower girls to navigate the challenges of girlhood.

Both campGEN summer camp sessions will be held in Downtown Austin at First Baptist Church, located at 901 Trinity Street, Austin, TX 78701, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Drop off begins at 8:00 a.m. and aftercare is available until 5 p.m. for \$50. Each five-day session costs \$330.



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## MOSQUITO REPELLENTS

As mosquito season is ramping up, everyone is (hopefully) aware of possible disease transmission by mosquitoes. It is important that you protect yourself when spending time outside.

Activity times for mosquitoes can vary. Most people are familiar with the four D's- DRAIN (standing water), DEET (wear some repellent), DUSK & DAWN (stay indoors during dusk and dawn to avoid peak populations) and DRESS (wear long sleeves and long pants). While this is still good advice, it may be a good idea to spread the dress and repellent advice for anytime you spend time outdoors.

When outside, wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt in light colors to reduce the number of mosquitoes that can reach your skin. Repellent should only be applied to clothing and exposed skin. Do not apply repellent underneath clothing! If you want to apply repellent to your face, spray your hands with repellent and rub it onto your face. Do not spray repellent directly into your face or near eyes or mouth. Make sure to apply repellent outdoors. Do not allow children to handle repellents. Wash hands before eating, smoking or using the restroom.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using a product registered with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)

containing one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some of the products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus.

DEET, also known N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N,N-dimethylbenzamide, was developed by the U.S. Army in 1946 to protect soldiers in insect-infested areas. Pesticides containing DEET have been used by the general public since 1957. Products containing DEET should not be used on children younger than 2 months of age (read the label and check with your pediatrician if you have questions). DEET has a slight odor and may have a greasy feel to some people. It may damage plastic, rubber, vinyl or synthetic fabrics. DEET may be irritating to the eyes and skin for some people. DEET comes in a wide variety of concentrations, so choose the one that will work best for your situation.

Picaridin was first made in the 1980's and resembles a natural compound called piperine (which is found in plants used to produce black pepper). Picaridin has been used in Europe and Australia for many years, but has only been in the U.S. since 2005. Picaridin is non-greasy and is odorless.

IR-3535, or 3-[N-Butyl-N- acetyl]-aminopropionic acid, ethyl

*(Continued on Page 7)*

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(Continued from Page 6)

ester, was developed in the mid- 1970's and became registered for use in the U.S. in 1999. It is registered as a biopesticide by the EPA because it is functionally identical to a naturally occurring substance (an amino-acid). It may dissolve or damage plastics and may be irritating to the eyes.

Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD (para-menthane-3,8-diol) are essentially the same thing; PMD is the synthesized (lab created) version of oil of lemon eucalyptus. "Pure" or "essential" oil of lemon eucalyptus is not labeled as a repellent and has not undergone testing and should not be used as a repellent product. OLE/PMD has been on the market in the U.S. since 2002. OLE/PMD should not be used on children younger than 3 years of age. The natural product (OLE) has known allergens within it while the synthetic version (PMD) has less of a risk to allergens. This product is classified as a biopesticide. OLE/PMD has a varying range of residual, some offering about 20 minutes of protection while other products may last up to two hours.

Many factors play into how long a repellent will last for a person. Some of these are:

- The concentration (or percent of active ingredient) of the product. You can find the percentage on the product label.
- Person's attractiveness. Some people are more attractive to mosquitoes than others (and no scientific research has proven

that it is because of eating garlic, taking vitamin B, using tobacco products, etc.). A person's genetic code plays a large part on what makes a person so attractive to mosquitoes.

- Frequency and uniformity of application. In other words, how often is the repellent applied and how good of coverage did you get?
- Activity level of the person. The more active the person is, the more sweat they produce which can cause the repellent to wash off the surface of the skin.

As a word of caution, there are products that combine sunscreen and insect repellent. The CDC recommends that if you need sunscreen and repellent, that you choose two separate products. Sunscreen should be applied more often than repellents.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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Sherry Salkhordeh O.D.

# NATURE WATCH

## BLAZING BEETLES

by Jim and Lynne Weber



*'Big Sand Tiger Beetle*

an unusual form of pursuit where they alternatively sprint quickly toward their prey then stop and visually reorient, eventually running down their target. In fact, some tiger beetles can run at a blazing speed of 5 mph, and are considered one of the fastest running land animals for their size!

Tiger beetles are believed to be closely related to ground beetles, but they differ in terms of their proportions. Tiger beetles are about one inch long on average, with a head wider than its thorax, which is located between the head and the abdomen. They also have large bulging eyes, long spindly legs, and oversized sickle-shaped mandibles to grab prey and devour it on the spot. Tiger beetles are important predators in the insect world, feeding on a wide variety of ants, beetles, grasshopper nymphs, flies, and spiders. They are most often found in sandy areas, stream edges, clay banks, and woodland paths. Many are active in the daytime, and the colors and patterns on their oblong elytra (or wing covers) are often iridescent and striking.

Some of the more common tiger beetles in our area include members of the *Cicindela* genus, which comes from the Latin and means 'glowworm', referring to the fact that most of these



*Festive Tiger Beetle*

Over 2500 species and subspecies of tiger beetles are currently described worldwide, with more than 45 species occurring in Texas. Tiger beetles get their name from their cat-like predatory behavior, performing

species have metallic, flashy elytra. In Eastern and Central Texas, the Big Sand Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela formosa*) and Festive Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela scutellaris*) prefer the dry sandy areas of post oak woodlands. The Big Sand Tiger Beetle has luminous reddish-purple elytra with irregular white marks around the edges and the Festive Tiger Beetle's elytra are iridescent reddish-bronze to purple to



*Six-spotted Tiger Beetle*

blue-green or blue-black with reduced or absent spotting. Both species can be sighted late spring into fall. Abundant along water edges, the Ocellated Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela ocellata*) is most active in the summer, and can be identified by its bronze elytra speckled with 8 cream-colored spots (4 on each elytra). Ocellated means having one or more ocelli, or eye-like markings. The Six-spotted Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela sexguttata*) is the probably the most commonly observed species on dirt paths in grassy areas seldom far from woods, and has brilliant green elytra with typically six white spots on the lower half (3 on each elytra).

Tiger beetles are also excellent indicators of environmental quality and are often studied as bioindicators. Many require undisturbed sandy areas and specific microclimates for their burrows. With rapid urbanization and human disturbance of natural areas, these blazing beetles have fewer places to live and survive. They are very sensitive to changes in the environment, and are among the first species to react to pesticides, misuse of natural habitat, and climate change.

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at [naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com).



*Ocellated Tiger Beetle*

## 27TH ANNUAL ALZHEIMER'S WALK OCTOBER 6 - CAMP MABRY

**“WHAT’S RAISED HERE, STAYS HERE! 100% LOCAL!”**

This year marks the 27th Annual Alzheimer’s Walk for support, care, and research hosted by Alzheimer’s Texas. The walk will be held on the morning of October 6 at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. Alzheimer’s Texas, a local nonprofit organization serving Central Texas for 36 years, separated from the National Alzheimer’s Association in January 2016. As a result, 100% of the funds raised will remain local to be used here in Central Texas.

“We are, and always have been, deeply committed to providing families in Central Texas with compassionate services that are relevant to their needs, like our caregiver support groups and great educational programs,” says Christian Wells, President of Alzheimer’s Texas. “When people walk with us on October 6th, they know that they are supporting the services they value and will directly touch the people living with Alzheimer’s in Central Texas.”

The Alzheimer’s Texas Walk is an opportunity for Central Texans’ to get together and celebrate the difference we’re making on a local level, for those affected by Alzheimer’s and to bring the community together. One of the many supporters of Alzheimer’s Texas, Valerie Vogt Sills, Gold Star Walker for Alzheimer’s Texas, walks for her mother who was diagnosed with this terrible disease in her late sixties. Valerie has walked with Alzheimer’s Texas for the past 14 years raising more than \$23,000 to help support programs for the families and caregivers dealing with this disease and to ultimately help find a cure for Alzheimer’s.

“When the Alzheimer’s groups split, I chose to support Alzheimer’s Texas rather than the national organization because I know that the money will go to help out local and state programs,” says Valerie Vogt Sills, Gold Star Walker for Alzheimer’s Texas. “I lost my mom to Alzheimer’s in 2009 and have been walking in her memory since then to help others dealing with this disease.”

The Alzheimer’s Texas Walk will be held Saturday, October 6 at the Camp Mabry, with check-in beginning at 8:15 am. There are two scenic routes for Walkers to enjoy, a 1-mile course and a 2.5-mile course. In addition to the Walk, the event will feature food, live music, activities for kids, prizes, and more. All participants who raise \$50 or more will receive a free event T-shirt.

In addition to joining the cause as an individual walker or starting a team, you can also support through corporate sponsorships at various levels. Corporate Regional support is provided by Westminster, ABC Home and Commercial services, Silverado Memory Care, Arden Courts, Querencia, and many more.

To learn more and register for the 2017 Alzheimer’s Texas Walk and to keep your fundraising dollars for Alzheimer’s local, visit [www.txalz.org/walk](http://www.txalz.org/walk) or call (512) 241-0420.

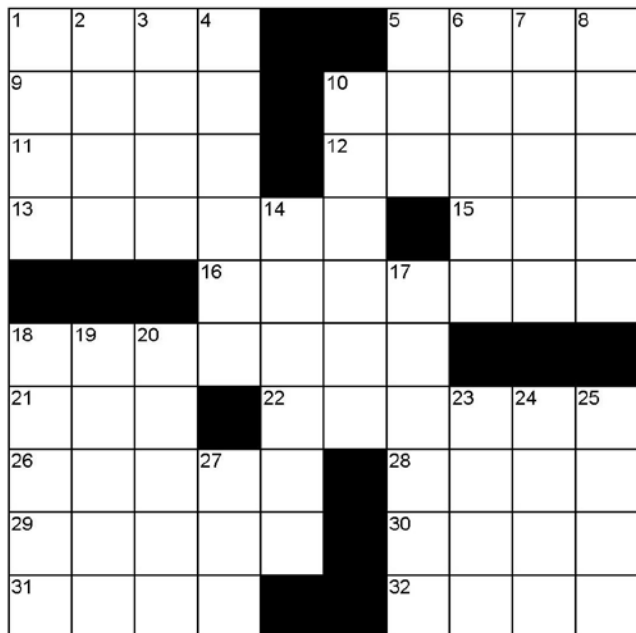
### About Alzheimer’s Texas

Alzheimer’s Texas is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research and to enhancing care and support for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders, their families, and caregivers. The organization provides care consultations, 24-hour help line, support groups, respite care, educational and social engagement programs, and professional training. Alzheimer’s Texas was founded in 1982 and serves Central Texas. For more information, visit [www.txalz.org](http://www.txalz.org).



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5. Welt
9. Factual
10. Raise one's shoulders
11. Gain
12. Making a knot
13. Opposite of cubic
15. Pride
16. Passes
18. Dress up
21. Dined
22. Wagerer
26. \_\_\_ Gras
28. Possess
29. Rock and Roll "King"
30. Spread
31. Flow out slowly
32. Goody two shoes

### DOWN

1. Stair
2. Spoken
3. Nimbus
4. Enclosed
5. Reporter's question
6. Sign of the zodiac
7. Surge
8. Kellogg's waffles
10. Shoot from a plane
14. Excuses
17. Type of snake
18. Ladies
19. Dickens' "\_\_\_ of Two Cities" (2 wds.)
20. Sensitive point
23. Record
24. Above
25. Rip
27. Sink

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## THE HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States of America. Over two dozen cities and towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day.

Regardless of the exact date or location of its origins, one thing is clear – Memorial Day was borne out of the Civil War and a desire to honor our dead. It was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11. "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land," he proclaimed. The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war).

It is now observed in almost every state on the last Monday in May with Congressional passage of the National Holiday Act

of 1971. This helped ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays, though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19th in Texas; April 26th in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10th in South Carolina; and June 3rd (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

*We cherish too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led,  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies.*

She then conceived of an idea to wear red poppies on Memorial day in honor of those who died serving the nation during war. She was the first to wear one, and sold poppies to her friends and co-workers with the money going to benefit servicemen in need. Later a Madam Guerin from France was visiting the United States and learned of this new custom started by Ms. Michael. When she returned to France she made artificial red poppies to raise money for war orphaned children and widowed women. This tradition spread to other countries. In 1921, the Franco-American Children's League sold poppies nationally to benefit war orphans of France and Belgium. The League disbanded a year later and Madam Guerin approached the VFW for help.

Shortly before Memorial Day in 1922 the VFW became the first veterans' organization to nationally sell poppies. Two years later their "Buddy" Poppy program was selling artificial poppies made by disabled veterans. In 1948 the US Post Office honored Ms. Michael for her role in founding the National Poppy movement by issuing a red 3 cent postage stamp with her likeness on it.

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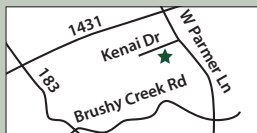
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