

SPRING TRAILS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SPRING TRAILS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

VOL 1

ISSUE 1

Volunteer Recognition

At the Annual Meeting of the Members in November, a handful of members were recognized for their volunteer efforts and contributions to Spring Trails' initiatives throughout the year. Certificates and beautiful plant arrangements, donated by Silver Sands Services, were presented as tokens of appreciation to these outstanding volunteers:

Ruth Hutyra and Malinda Seger work year-round planning and coordinating all the many events offered to members and residents of Spring Trails. Spring Trails events continue to grow in popularity and attendance and Ruth and Malinda are the driving force behind this success.

Al and Mary Nowak, and Delores and Ralph Jones, rarely miss an opportunity to lend a hand at Spring Trails events. Rain or shine, hot or cold, Al, Mary, Delores and Ralph work tirelessly to fill any need, and always with a warm and welcoming smile.

Roger Olsen serves on the Beautification Committee and worked hand-in-hand with the Board of Directors and Property Manager to plan and coordinate the months-long effort to replace the inner perimeter capped fence.

Genette Wilbanks and Ian Grain were recognized for their continuous service, above and beyond, ensuring the Spring Trails website is updated with the information and tools Members of the Association rely upon.

Jerry Rueschhoff was instrumental in bringing identity back to Spring Trails with the beautiful monument at the main entrance, and the two markers at the Tara Springs and Anthony Trails entrances. Jerry's persistence and patience navigating the political red tape is commendable and for that Spring Trails is grateful.

Volunteerism is at the heart of any thriving community. Spring Trails is blessed to have members and residents who so freely and willingly give of their time. More good things are on the horizon, and members and residents are encouraged and welcome to get involved. Contact the Board of Directors or visit the Spring Trails website Resident tab to learn about the wide range of volunteer opportunities.



Al and Mary Nowak



Delores and Ralph Jones



Jerry Rueschhoff



Roger Olsen



Genette Wilbanks & Ian Grain



Ruth Hutyra & Malinda Seger

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Communications Committee

Starting January 2019, residents can expect to receive the Spring Trails newsletter on a monthly basis. Spring Trails has contracted with Peel Inc. to produce and mail the newsletters. Residents may opt to receive the newsletter online at <https://peelinc.com/index.php/resident-subscriptions/>.

Residents interested in submitting articles for inclusion in the newsletter can do so online at <https://peelinc.com/index.php/submit-an-article/>. Articles are due by the 10th day of the preceding month.

Residents interested in serving on the Communications Committee can sign up through the Spring Trails website, under the Residents tab, Boards & Committees link.

Mark Your Calendars

January 4th - MUD 94 Board Meeting

January 10th – Spring Trails HOA Board Meeting

January 11th – Heavy Trash Day

February 5th - MUD 94 Board Meeting

February 8th – Heavy Trash Day

February 14th – Spring Trails HOA Board Meeting

Visit the Spring Trails Website, Events tab for details on these and future events. www.springtrails.com

Annual Assessment

Annual Spring Trails Community Association maintenance assessments are due. Payments can be mailed with the payment coupon to Spring Trails Community, c/o Lockbox, P.O. Box 219, Richmond, TX 77406-0006. Alternately, credit card or e-check payments can be processed through the Spring Trails website, under the Residents tab, Pay Association Fees link.

Payment plans are being offered through January 31, 2019. Members with questions regarding payment options or who are interested in establishing a payment plan, can contact Inframark at 281-870-0585 or by email at customer@inframark.com.

Community

January is a good month to reset. Clear out the clutter. Organize all the new treasures received from family and friends. Tackle the closets and cupboards. But before you throw away, consider donating your gently used clothing and household items to local shelters and crisis centers, charities, ministries, and resale shops. Type “Donate Montgomery County Texas” in your search engine to find dozens of organizations willing to accept your gifts and use them to better someone’s life. Another useful resource is The Woodlands Donation Guide. Continue the giving spirit of the holidays throughout the year by donating to those in need.

Beautification Committee

Pollinator (Butterfly) Garden (Eagle Scout Service Project)

Update by Christian Hansen, Scout Troop 876

"I got the idea for my project when I saw a flyer from Mercer Arboretum about pollinator gardens. First I wanted to do the garden in my backyard, but for the Eagle Project I decided to put it in the neighborhood. Butterflies contribute to our ecosystem. Unfortunately, butterflies face barriers to survival. Their habitat is destroyed by human development. Butterfly gardens help reestablish habitats and promote nature. The HOA Board approved the idea in September and said they would fund the garden. The District Roundtable approved in September.

When I researched I found the Monarch Way Registry. I want this garden to be on the registered migration pathway for Monarch Butterflies. I chose plants that will fit the checklist on the Monarch Way Registry. I also got Information from Mrs. Ruggerio who is a Master Gardener in my neighborhood. I looked up a lot of things she recommended on the internet and made notes. My mom and I went to nurseries to learn about pollinator gardens too. At Buchanan's Native Plants, Persephone told me to plant the native shrubs in the Fall so the roots of the plants can grow through the Winter. At The Woodlands Wildflower Festival on 10/20/18, my mom and I were given over 100 seed packets. These seeds will be ready to plant as flowers in late February along with many other plants that need to be planted in the spring. Some of these are Coreopsis, Zinnia, lemon mint, variety of Cosmos, Mallow, Alyssum, Phlox, Catchfly, Cornflower, Garland, Babys breath, and Black eyed susan. We will plant milk weed from seed too.

I looked up all the plants for Fall and how far apart to plant them. I made maps on graph paper and put the taller plants on the border with a small walking path like the Butterfly Garden at Dennis Johnston Park. I labeled all the seed packets and collected containers for the seeds. The flowers that are called annuals, the ones from seeds, will be planted along the pathway. All plants are native.

The day of the project I was in charge. About 30 people were present at the Eagle Project. We started with donuts and later had pizza at lunch. We didn't have much food left because everyone was hungry from working so hard. It was a little funny to have some men like my Dad asking me to give them a job to do, but I felt like, "Oh, ok. I should give you a job." Digging out the grass was the hardest part. The sod in the bags was extremely heavy to lift too. One boy was allergic to grass so he along with 4 little girls planted seeds in pots with potting soil. After the sod was cut out, the soil was tilled. The delivery came with compost and mulch. Then compost was tilled into the soil. This adds nutrients to the soil to help the plants grow. It was sort of like a maze finding all the plants and lining them up with the map I made on graph paper. Everyone did a good job planting the plants where they were meant to go. We have fennel, rue, parsley, pipevine, Zexmenia, Moss Verbena, Black Eyed Susan, Daylily, Mexican Honeysuckle, Salvia, Baptisia Decadence, Lantana, Fragrant Mistflower, Gregg's Mistflower, Buddleia (butterfly bush), Plumbago, Texas Silverado Sage, Turks Cap (hummingbird bush), and two Vitex trees.

We built a pathway to walk through the center of the garden like I had planned to be like DJ Park. After all the mulch we could shovel around the garden was shoveled, we cleaned up and took the pots of seeds to my house. I thanked each person for coming to help with my project. Because we had so many people working and putting in energy, we were able to get this done!"



SPRING TRAILS EVENTS

On behalf of Spring Trails Community Association, the Board of Directors would like to thank Inframark, Silver Sand Services, Gregg & Gregg, Lisa Carnley with Texas United Realty, and Chase Bank for their generous donations and support of Spring Trails 2018 events and meetings.

Family Bingo Night

Nearly 150 guests attended the Family Bingo Night at Broadway Elementary on November 29th. Guests enjoyed chatting with family and friends as they ate pizza before the bingo games started. A big Spring Trails thank you to Lisa Carnley with Texas United Realty, and her son. In addition to donating several Bingo prizes and cookies for dessert, Lisa and her son served pizza and made all the guests feel welcome.

The super awesome volunteers of Spring Trails made the evening possible! Many thanks to Al and Mary Nowak, and Ralph and Dolores Jones, who served at every Spring Trails event this year! The



events could not happen without the help of resident volunteers! Residents interested in helping with future events are encouraged to visit the Spring Trails website Residents tab to learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Christmas with Santa

Despite the weather, around 500 people enjoyed the Christmas Party with Santa December 7th. A very special shout out to all our neighbors who volunteered their time to help with the event: Ruth Hutyra, Malinda Seger, Delores and Ralph Jones, Mary and Al Nowak, Jessica Hansen, Genette Willbanks and Ian Grain, Matt Call, Jerry Rueschhoff, Gabe Hoke, Renata Kharko, Kaitlyn McQuade, Abigail Hall, Janet Young, John Rigsdell, Lisa Carnley Benoit and son Dylan, Jana Cerda and son Carter.



(Continued on Page 5)

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And in the true spirit of Christmas, and responding to a last-minute cancelation, Jennafer Howard stepped in as photographer for the evening. Jennafer took 600 photos throughout the evening, capturing precious memories for hundreds of children and their parents.

Uncropped and unedited photos of the Christmas Party with Santa are available for download from the Spring Trails website. See below for general how-to instructions for downloading photos:

1. Go to the Residents menu and click Photo Albums.
2. Find the approximate time slot in the album titles called Santa Photos 2018.
3. On an iPhone or iPad, hold a thumbnail until you get the option to "Open in New Tab" to get a larger view. Then "Save Photo".

4. On a Windows computer, right click the thumbnail to open the larger view in a new window, then Save.

The Spring Trails Board of Directors sends a heart-felt thank you to the Spring Trails Events Committee members and volunteers for their outstanding and tireless work planning and coordinating the many fun-filled and successful events. Spring Trails stands apart from other local communities, due in part to these events and the residents who make them extraordinary. Spring Trails is truly blessed!



By Sylvia Sudeth

While some children are busy playing video games or hanging out on House Party, Matthew Reel decided to look for ways to feed other children who are at risk of going hungry. "When you have what you need...you give to those in need," states Matthew on his website matthewsbirthdaywish.com.

As an 8-year old boy soon to turn 9 in 2015, Matthew had an idea. Instead of giving his parents a list of presents he wanted for his birthday, he came up with an idea that became the impetus for Matthew's Birthday Wish. He filled ziplock bags with food such as snack bags, pop-top lid consumables, water, hard candy, and plastic flatware. His goal was to create 50 bags, but the idea sparked community excitement and Matthew ended up collecting enough provisions to make 338 bags to give to the homeless AND he received enough additional food donations to fill 10 boxes with items that wouldn't fit in the bags but could still be donated to help feed those who came to the Star of Hope Mission in Houston. He delivered his donation and received a tour of their facility. Matthew's imagination caught a glimpse of how his desire to do something for someone else could burgeon into what has now become a full-fledged 501c3 to help others, particularly children.

Matthew partners with a variety of organizations, including local boy and girl scout troops, and he has also partnered with Conroe Independent School District. Providing meals to an underserved population, like the children in the district who are food insecure when not at school, is paramount to meeting a critical need, for example, during the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.

Matthew's excitement for serving others is energizing. Matthew's 2018 goal was to adopt 14 families in need, with plans to add another 16 before Christmas!

At a time when we count our blessings and are looking for ways to help our children understand the beauty of sharing our bounty and helping humanity, Matthew's Birthday Wish is a wonderful, local option. More information about Matthew's charitable organization can be found by visiting www.matthewsbirthdaywish.com

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Energy Savers

With all the holiday decorations safely stored away, here's a few quick and easy tips on how to save a few dollars on energy use. Without all those extra lights and blow up yard decorations, energy bills should return to normal rather quickly. But with a few little adjustments, you could lower your energy bill even more.

Pull the Plug - Appliances draw power even when not in use. Unplugging devices (laptops and cell phone chargers) and small appliances (coffee pots and toasters), could add up to hundreds of dollars in savings per year.

Turn down the Thermostat - Lowering the thermostat on your water heater can save 3%-5% in energy costs for every 10°F decrease. Many manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140°F, but acknowledge 120°F is more than adequate for most households.

Change those Filters - Regularly replacing filters on your furnace and AC can save 5%-15% on heating and cooling costs.

Fill it Up - Load up that dishwasher. Experts claim, a load of dishes cleaned in a dishwasher requires approximately 35% less water than washing dishes by hand. Additionally, opening the door after final rinse to air dry dishes, and running the dishwasher during off-peak hours will reduce your energy costs even more.

Choose Cold - Much of the energy used to launder clothes is for heating the water for hot and warm water cycles. Many laundry detergents available today are formulated to clean using cooler water temperatures. When possible, choose "Cold" to wash your clothes.

Put it in Reverse - Ceiling fans are a great way to cool your house in the summer. But did you know you can use those same fans to warm your house in the winter. Simply reverse the direction of the fan blades to recirculate the warm air collecting near the ceiling, throughout the room.

Adopting even one of these money saving ideas could add up to a little extra spending cash within a few short months. Happy new year Spring Trails!



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Spring Trails Board of Directors

Board President Jessica Hansen resigned from the Board of Directors effective December 13th, to pursue a career as a Nurse Practitioner. Jessica served the community selflessly and with grace, and her passion and dedication to Spring Trails was apparent in every decision she made. On behalf of Spring Trails, the Board of Directors thanks Jessica for her service, and wishes her and her family much happiness and success.



At the annual meeting in November, Mr. Ian Grain was elected to the Board of Directors, for a 3 year term. Ian and his wife Genette Willbanks moved from the Texas coastal area to Spring Trails in October of 2009. Originally from Oxford, England, Ian has two grown children and a grandson living in the United Kingdom and two

step-daughters in the Houston/Spring area. Ian has been an active volunteer in the community for many years and administers the Spring Trails website. He is a semi-retired IT consultant.



Jerry Rueschhoff was appointed to the Board of Directors December 13th, to fill the position vacated by Jessica Hansen. Jerry will serve the balance of Jessica's term through 2020. Jerry and his wife of 49 years Marcia moved to Spring Trails 4 years ago. Jerry and Marcia have 2 married sons and 5 grandchildren.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Jerry served in the U.S. Air Force from 1966-70, and attended St. Louis Community College and University of Texas at Dallas. He joined Mobil Oil (later ExxonMobil) in 1974 and served in various field management position in St. Louis, Dallas and the Upper Midwest Plains states. Jerry dedicated 40+ years to ExxonMobil before retiring and transitioning to Spring Trails to live near his family.

Since moving to Spring Trails, Jerry has been actively attending and participating in both MUD 94 and HOA meetings, and served in a lead role on the HOA Monument Committee.

Thank you Jessica, Ian and Jerry for your willingness to serve and dedication to Spring Trails.

10 Easy Ways to Make Your Home Safe

A home should be a sanctuary and a safe haven. You can ensure that you and your loved ones remain out of harm's way in the precincts of your homestead.

To avoid all kinds of accidents you should make it an accident-proof dwelling. It's really simple if you observe specific steps to keep mishaps at bay.

Here are 10 easy ways to make your home safe and secure. These will help you take care and protect yourself, family members and house-guests. Employ these effective tips:

1. Keep interiors and exteriors well lit. This is important at nighttime and also in winters when daylight is not very effective. Critical areas that need to be illuminated are the stairs, outdoors and foyers.

2. Never leave electrical problems pending at any point. The slightest fluctuation should be attended immediately. Make it a cardinal rule to switch off appliances after use.

3. Smoke alarms are a necessity and you must have the very best. Practice regular safety drills with your family to ensure awareness of procedures.

4. Keep ordinary appliances safely as they could be dangerous. Especially with kids around. Make electrical outlets safe by safety plugging and child proofing them. Keep sharp objects like scissors, knives, weapons and match boxes out of reach.

5. Ensure locks and bolts on doors and windows are in order and tamper-proof. Keep an eye out for suspicious characters and never invite strangers into your home. Teach your children not to entertain queries from strangers.

6. Do not share information about working or school hours. Teach family members to avoid telling people about schedules and routines. Do not put personal information online and never respond to voicemails.

7. The risk of accidents goes up when you are getting maintenance or repair work done. Ensure safety and precaution and be prepared to react quickly to accidents or injuries.

8. Do not attempt repair work of appliances involving undue risk. Many home accidents are the result of improper tampering with tools like lawnmowers and trimmers.

9. Maintain caution when driving vehicles in or out of your home. If you are backing the car up, watch out for children and pets on the road.

Make sure you don't leave stuff on stairs that may cause people to trip and fall. Be watchful when clearing snow from pathways that you do not heap it up in areas where people might walk.

Tips for Safe Night Time Driving

Driving at night can be tricky—especially through neighborhoods or dimly lit landscapes—so it's important to keep in mind a few basic guidelines to make sure you and your vehicle both are well-prepared for the trip. Consider the following suggestions to help get you to your destination safely.

Ensure headlights are aimed properly. If you think your headlights are casting light too far above or below your line of vision on the road, you may need to adjust their aim. You can do this either by following instructions in your vehicle owner's manual or seeking help from a vehicle maintenance professional.

Dim dashboard lights. Most vehicle makes and models come with a dimmer for the instrument panel. Make sure it's set to the lowest brightness to limit distraction. Also remember to turn off overhead or visor lights while driving, which also can limit visibility at night.

Don't wear tinted glasses. Yellow lenses sold to enhance nighttime driving could actually decrease visibility instead of amplify colors and objects. If you wear prescription lenses, opt for an anti-reflective coating, and clean them thoroughly and frequently to optimize effectiveness at night.

Learn how to spot animals and objects. While driving at night, be on the lookout for wildlife creatures' eyes, which can easily be spotted as pairs of glowing retinas. Any animals' eyes—like raccoons or deer—

typically will reflect the light from your headlights long before their true shapes come into view.

Don't focus on headlights in oncoming traffic. Keep your eyes on the road in front of you and avoid looking into the headlights of oncoming traffic—especially if you notice a car using the high-beam headlight setting. If the headlights on the car behind you cause a glare in your rearview mirror, adjust the mirror.

Clean your windshield. Use a clean microfiber cloth or newspaper to clean the windshield—inside and out. Make sure the windshield is streak- and smudge-free before driving at night, and try to avoid wiping window condensation with your hands. Fingerprints and oils from your skin can cause streaks that limit visibility in the dark.

Know when to use your fog lights. Many vehicles come equipped with fog lights, which typically are located underneath the front headlights and are aimed low, where fog usually appears on the road. Fog lights also can be useful on a particularly dark road to further illuminate your path.

Adjust your exterior mirrors. Pointing your side-view mirrors down slightly can help reduce glare from other drivers' headlights and still allow you to see by tipping your head forward a few inches.

Have your eyes checked. Your eyes' ability to keep moving and scan the landscape rather than solely focus on one spot is imperative for successful nighttime driving. Visit your eye doctor for regular checkups to determine whether prescription lenses could help you see better at night.



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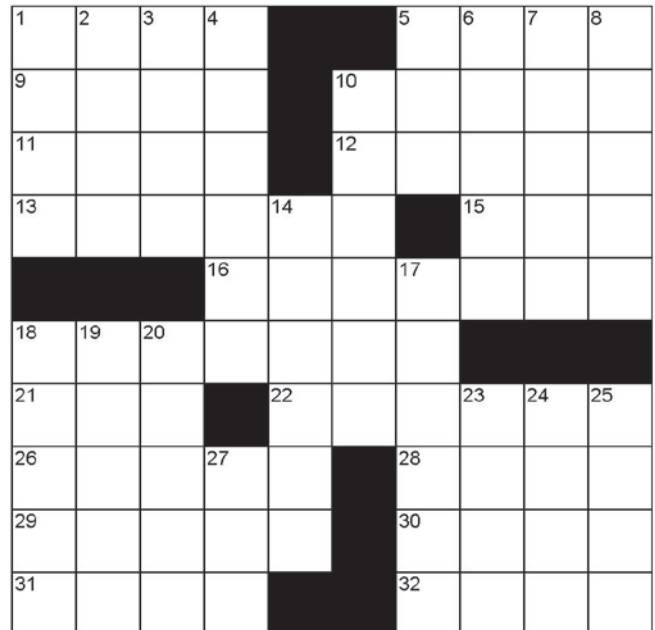
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Tips for Packing a Healthy School Lunch

by Stephany Pando, cooksarts.com, edited for space

Packing lunches for your back-to-schoolers is no easy task. It takes time and planning. Plus, every parent knows that just because you pack it, doesn't guarantee your kids will actually eat it.

However, this doesn't mean you have to fill your kids' lunchboxes with pizza and cookies everyday. Below we offer 5 tips for how to pack a nutritious lunch that your kids will look forward to eating and you'll feel good about giving them.

Tip #1: Get Your Kids Involved

- Give your kids healthy food options from each food group and let them make the final decisions on what goes in their lunch.
- Take your child grocery shopping with you and let them have a say (to a certain extent) in what goes into the cart. This promotes feelings of responsibility and empowerment.
- Designate a part of your kitchen as the "lunch packing station" and spend some time there with your kids the night before to get lunch ready for the next day.

Tip #2: Turn Healthy Foods into Fun Foods

- Use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, deli meat, cheese, or a melon-baller for fruit.
- Use kid-friendly skewers to make colorful food kebabs.
- Create a theme for the day and have all of the foods in their lunch relate to the theme

Tip #3: Make Your Own Snacks – and limit processed ones

Kids rely on snacks to keep their energy up, but the type of snack is important to consider. Packaged snacks tend to lack important nutrients and can be high in sugar, sodium and saturated fats. Take control of what is in your kids' snacks by making them yourself!

Tip #4: Incorporate All Food Groups

A balanced diet includes all of the food groups. Luckily, there are so many different ways to enjoy each food group:

- Fruits: fresh, frozen, dried, canned, baked (think apple chips!) or pureed.
- Vegetables: fresh, frozen, or baked (think kale chips!)
- Lean protein: baked chicken, deli meats, hard boiled eggs, beans or nuts (be aware of nut allergy regulations at your child's school).

- Low-fat dairy: milk, cheese or yogurt
- Whole Grains: pita, sandwich bread, tortillas, wraps, and pastas

Tip#5: Encourage Hydration

It's recommended that school-aged kids drink between 6-8 cups of water a day (even more in hot weather or if their activity level is high).

- Let your child pick out their favorite water bottle and encourage them to drink the whole thing at least twice at school. They'll be more inclined to do it if they feel like they are completing a challenge!
- If the "flavor" of water is too boring for them, throw in a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up – and keep it cooler.

With these tips in mind, you and your child are ready to start out the school year on the right foot. Good luck – and happy packing!





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