



THE MUELLER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

# the FRONT PORCH FLYER

## National Night Out: A Mueller Tradition

*By Cynthia Cammack*

National Night Out (NNO) grew out of the efforts of one man in the Philadelphia suburbs. As a community volunteer working to coordinate neighborhood watch and police efforts, he realized the many neighborhoods struggling to do the same thing needed a way to unite their efforts. In 1981, the National Association of Town Watch (NATW) was founded to provide community watch groups the necessary information, resources, and assets to stay informed, interested, involved, and motivated within the community. In 1984, NATW introduced NNO. The first annual National Night Out involved 2.5 million neighbors across 400 communities in 23 states.

NNO enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while encouraging a true sense of community. It provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.

Over the past 36 years, NNO has grown to become a celebration beyond just front porch vigils and symbolic efforts amongst neighbors to send a message of neighborhood camaraderie. Neighborhoods across the nation host block parties, festivals, parades, cookouts, and various other community events with safety demonstrations, seminars, youth events, visits from emergency personnel, exhibits and more. NNO takes place the first Tuesday in October each year and now involves over 38 million people across 16,000 communities.

Last year in Austin, over 450 neighborhood parties took place. Police officers, firefighters and EMS visited many of these, sharing and learning from neighbors. In Mueller, several blocks get together each year for NNO block parties. These have ranged from intimate front yard gatherings, dessert parties, and potlucks with a few neighbors to this year's event at the Overture with lions, tigers, unicorns, a bouncy house - and Elvis. Austin fire and police department staff have dropped by, including the police chief. Neighbors still talk about stronger connections they made, and neighborhood kids will remember these gatherings as happy traditions to carry on. MNA block captains often play a big role in organizing these parties - contact your block captain to be part of the fun next year.



*Garden Court 2 Plus Camacho NNO by Dan McAtee*



*National Night Out with AFD by Troy Robertson*



*Threadgill National Night Out by Troy Robertson*

the FRONT PORCH FLYER

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## Letter from the Co-Chairs

Hi Neighbors,

Election time is already upon us. No, we aren't referencing the Presidential, Congressional, or State Legislative elections taking place this time next year. We're talking about the state, county, and city propositions that will be on the ballot for the November 5, 2019 election and the MNA Steering Committee elections scheduled to take place at our November General Meeting.

There will be ten proposed Texas constitutional amendments, a county proposition, and two City of Austin propositions that will be on the ballot for the November 5, 2019 election. To view the language of all of the items on the ballot and to see what your ballot will look like, head on over to the Travis County Clerk's website at [traviscountyclerk.org](http://traviscountyclerk.org).

Be sure to attend our General Membership Meeting on November 16, 2019, to vote for the members of next year's Steering Committee. We hope to have the biographies of each candidate online by the time you are reading this letter.

On a separate note, we want to encourage all of you to attend the Fall Festival on Saturday, November 9, 2019. There will be plenty of great food, activities, and fun for the entire family.

Happy voting and we hope to see you around the community!

Sincerely,  
John and Preston

## Life in Mueller's Mixed-Use Neighborhood

*By Robert Sotolar*

I'm a relatively recent arrival to the Mueller neighborhood, but the more time I spend here, the more I come to appreciate the unique blend of livability, amenities, and proximity to downtown that the area offers, as well as the genuine sense of community I feel here.

As a renter in Austin, I've sometimes felt disconnected from the neighborhoods in which I live. Renters and homeowners living in the same neighborhoods do not always share the same public space or communicate regularly. Here in Mueller, though, I feel like the neighborhood itself has been designed in a way to encourage meaningful everyday interactions among residents of all backgrounds and visitors.

The mixture of residential, retail, and office spaces in Mueller means I have an incredible array of options for entertainment and food within walking distance of my apartment, and it also ensures that there is a sense of vitality and a human presence in the neighborhood at pretty much any time of day. A typical week for me, for instance, might involve studying or working remotely at Halcyon, grabbing a beer at WhichCraft or a pastry at Quack's, and catching a movie at the Alamo Drafthouse. The energy at the heart of Mueller and the sheer array of options of things to do immediately made an impression on me when I first visited the neighborhood.

A fundamental part of Mueller's vibrancy and its sense of place – something around which all the life of the neighborhood revolves – is the amazing infrastructure of public parks that the neighborhood boasts. First and foremost, there is Mueller Lake Park, which is the shared gathering space of residents of all stripes and visitors alike and home to regular farmers markets and concerts.

*(Continued on Page 4)*



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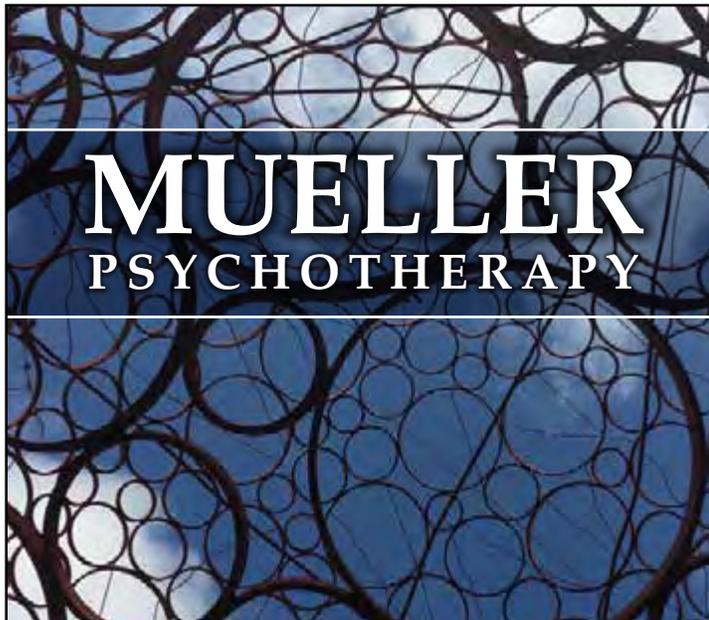
# FRONT PORCH FLYER

*(Continued from Page 2)*

On pretty much any given evening, you'll see parents out strolling with their children after a visit to the Thinkery, couples enjoying a quiet moment overlooking the lake, teenagers taking photos to commemorate a quinceañera or their prom, and Austinites of all ages playing sports or exercising. This focus on welcoming, well designed public spaces is echoed in the wealth of smaller parks and public squares that dot the Mueller area, as well as the extensive Mueller greenbelt trail, and it's one of my favorite things about living here.

These sorts of enriching human interactions are all made possible by the neighborhood's embrace of a diverse array of housing types that make it possible for Austinites of different means and backgrounds to share a life together in this community. Walking block to block in Mueller, you'll see apartments next to modern single-family homes next to duplexes and townhouses. This diversity of housing stock and an emphasis on density contribute to a dynamic urban fabric that makes Mueller feel at once energetic yet human in scale, modern yet still unmistakably part of Austin.

There's no reason why the rest of Austin can't be more like Mueller if we get the current Land Development Code rewrite right. By focusing on applying the kind of density, diversity in housing, mixed-use zoning, and public amenities that I see here in Mueller in all parts of Austin, all Austin residents will be able to enjoy the kinds of benefits open to the residents of Mueller today.



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## MNA Kicks Off 2020 Candidate Series

*by Suzanne O'Malley*

Mueller Neighborhood Association kicked off September 2019 with the first in its three candidate Q & A series. The nonpartisan series will feature every candidate who hopes to win the job of representing Mueller in the U.S. House of Representatives [TX-25] in 2020. The seat is currently held by Roger Williams [R].

Democratic candidate Julie Oliver, who recently moved to Cherrywood with her family, engaged in a thoughtful exchange with Muellerites at the September General meeting.



*Julie Oliver conversing with neighbors, by John Wooding*



Next up, at the November 16, 2019 General Meeting, is Austinite Heidi Sloan [D], a strong supporter of the Green New Deal.

*Heidi Sloan D-TX-25 challenger, official campaign photo*



Republican incumbent, Rep. Roger Williams of Weatherford, TX will visit the MNA following the March 2020 primary outcome.

*Roger Williams R-TX-25 Current Office Holder, official campaign photo*

## What Does the American Flag Mean to You?

by Shawn Collins

I fly the American flag from my front porch. I've had it up there since I moved into my house in spring 2017. It's something I've done for many years on many front porches.

As I walk, and run, and bike and scoot around the neighborhood, I see that it's somewhat of a rarity to see others also flying "Old Glory." About the only time that I've noticed folks around here flying the flag is on the 4th of July or if I'm over at Haymaker for a US soccer match.

I get it that lots of folks have their Texas flag up. I grew up in Maryland, and while we had a pretty cool flag design, you didn't really see it flying much except at government buildings and car dealerships.

But some comments from friends and articles I've read got me thinking that maybe some see the American flag as a political statement.

Do my neighbors think this is a low-key banner in support of President Trump or the GOP or anti-immigration or something else?

I hope not.

In my case, I started flying the American flag in front of my house shortly after 9/11. I was working in New York City that day and living in New Jersey. American flags went up all over in that region and they're still very common now.

It's not a jingoistic or divisive statement for me. Rather it's plainly national pride, and I love that it was a symbol of unity when I started flying it. The same holds true for me today.



Shawn and the World Trade Center



## MUELLER'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019

**November 9, 3 - 5 PM:** Mueller Neighborhood Association's Fall Festival - John Gaines Park

**November 12, 6 - 8 PM:** Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission, 1183 Chestnut Avenue

**November 14, 6 PM:** Annual POA Meeting - AISD Performing Arts Center

November 15, 6:15 PM: KUTX Rock the Park - Mueller Lake Park

**November 16, 10 AM:** Mueller Neighborhood Association meeting - Seton Administration Offices, 1345 Philomena St

**November 16, 9 AM:** Thinkery's Gingerbread Run, Thinkery, 1830 Simond Ave

### Mueller Community Singers Schedule

**December 5, 6:30 PM:** Wildflower Terrace, Terrace Room

**December 12, 6:30 PM:** Outside the Thinkery, 1830 Simond Ave.

**December 13, 6:30 PM:** Catellus Holiday Event on the Paseo

**December 14, 10:00 AM:** Mueller Neighborhood Association Meeting, Seton Admin. Building, 1345 Philomena

**December 19, 6:30 PM:** Mattie Median, Between Zach Scott and McCloskey

### Events at Mueller Farmers' Market on Wednesday:

- **November 6, 5:30 - 7:30pm:** Season's Best Chef Demo w/ Maggie Perkins

- **November 20, 6 - 8pm:** Movie Night

- **Voter Registration at the market every Wednesday 5-8pm**

### Events at Mueller Farmers' Market on Sunday:

- **November 3, 11am - 1 pm:** Season's Best Chef Demo w/ Maggie Perkins

- **November 17, 11am - 1 pm:** Season's Best Chef Demo w/ Maggie Perkins

## Newly-Formed MNA Schools and Education Committee Issues Statement on AISD School Changes

By Dusty Harshman

In early September Austin ISD proposed a slate of 'School Changes' that would fundamentally alter the Northeast Austin education landscape. In response, the Mueller Neighborhood Association formed a Schools and Education Committee to formally advise the MNA, share information with the neighborhood, and address broad education issues in Northeast Austin. If you wish to join the MNA Schools and Education Committee, please send an email to [schools@muellerneighborhood.org](mailto:schools@muellerneighborhood.org).

The following informational letter to Austin ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Paul Cruz is the first of potentially several the committee intends to share with the district about the proposed School Changes.

Austin ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent Cruz,

Thank you for your leadership of the Austin Independent School District. We members of the Mueller Neighborhood Association Schools and Education Committee reach out to you today to share our thoughts and concerns about the proposed School Changes scenarios and their impact on Northeast Austin.

Studying the proposed AISD School Changes in Northeast Austin, we looked for potential. We believed there would be a balance of shared benefits and shared sacrifices in an effort to achieve an equitable "right-sizing" of Austin ISD. We see the shared benefits. Lengthening the learning and enrichment day from 6:00 am-6:30 pm, sharpening the AISD's culturally-responsive and multicultural tools, and approaching

a more equitable funding formula for campuses all show potential for district progress.

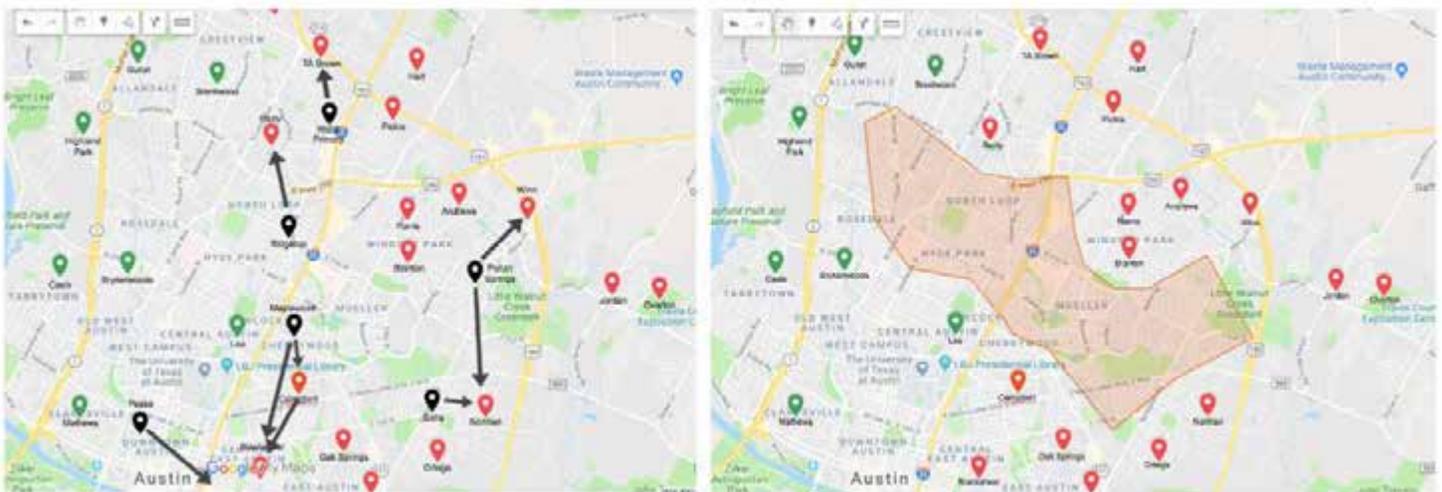
That said, after reading the entirety of the School Changes proposals, it is difficult to see how the sacrifices are shared fairly. We were concerned to learn that Austin ISD proposed to close four of the nearest six elementary schools to the Mueller neighborhood. Worse yet, all four elementary schools, Pecan Springs, Sims, Maplewood, and Ridgetop, share a school boundary. **If all four schools were approved for closure, their absence would create a vacuum, or as some have said an elementary school desert, as shown in the accompanying image.**

We are concerned that non-AISD options, primarily charter schools, will emerge to educate the children that AISD abandons in Northeast Austin. **We don't believe AISD can abandon that much geography and expect to retain the hearts and minds of families in Northeast Austin.**

As an analogue from the recent past, we can look at the AISD middle school landscape in Northeast Austin. We fear that these proposed school closures would be as destabilizing to AISD in Northeast Austin as the conversion of Pearce and Garcia middle schools to single-gender academies in 2014. Prior to their conversion, Garcia and Pearce educated approximately 1000 students combined (2013-2014 school year). Unfortunately, after the conversion, enrollment between the two

*(Continued on Page 7)*

*The left map image shows student movement from proposed elementary school closures and the right map image reveals the resulting elementary school vacuum.*



Census Tract Data for the Vacuum (2.03, 3.02, 3.04, 3.05, 3.06, 3.07, 3.08, 21.05, 21.07, 21.08, 21.09):

- Population 37,000 (6,000 under age 18)
- Median Family Income \$53,000 (\$20,000 less than than Austin's 2017 MFI of \$73,000)
- 10% at or below poverty level
- Airport Blvd. corridor has added thousands of new households of residential since 2017.

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey for US Census Bureau.

(Continued from Page 6)

schools dropped to 779 for the 2017-2018 school year.

Meanwhile, charter middle schools added significant enrollment. One of six charter middle schools in the northeast, Austin Achieve, opened a co-ed middle school halfway between Garcia YMLA and Sadler-Means YWLA and grew its enrollment from 278 to 809 in the same timeframe.

**This is considered by many to be the slow ceding of East Austin AISD schoolchildren to non-AISD schools. Is that the district's intention? If not, then repeating another destabilizing facility decision would seem a strategic mistake.**

While an AISD elementary school had been proposed for the school site at Mueller from the earliest days of the massive public/private redevelopment of Austin's former airport, that school did not manifest over several AISD bond cycles. Meanwhile, Mueller schoolchildren left the neighborhood and happily attended nearby Maplewood, Ridgetop, and Blanton elementary schools. While the Facility Master Plan suggested that a regional middle school at Mueller would better serve Northeast Austin, that requires that our nearby elementary schools remain relatively nearby. **In all four closure scenarios, students and parents would be asked to travel farther from the Mueller neighborhood, making Mueller an epicenter of AISD school closures.**

While we feel it is urgent to inform you of the impending elementary school vacuum further destabilizing the AISD school landscape in Northeast Austin, we also have other reservations about School Changes. Chief among them is the speed with which these proposals are being vetted while the community often feels left behind without clear answers to important questions. We are also witnessing many strategic academic proposals suggested and folded into what is ostensibly a facilities plan. **Perhaps the district could take the proper approach and slow the process for facility recommendations, incorporating them and other academic proposals into a more holistic process like the development of AISD's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.**

Thank you for reading and addressing our concerns. We believe AISD schools in Northeast Austin are a source of community pride, and we stand ready to support equitable policies for AISD students and the schools that educate them.

Wishing you calm in the days and months ahead,

Members of the Mueller Neighborhood Association Schools and Education Committee

## Mueller Updates

*By Rick Krivoniak, Vice Chair, Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission*

Construction will soon start on Mueller's eighth park, located one block off of Tilley on Philomena Street. Scheduled to open late in 2020, landscape architecture firm RVI's plans call for a multipurpose open space, nature-inspired playscape area, game tables, an outdoor dining area with space for a few food trucks, a live performance space, bike racks, restrooms, a shaded strolling path and a large octopus art feature by Dixie Friend Gay, who created "Nessy" across from the Thinkery.

Breaking ground later this year at the corner of Aldrich & McBee (adjacent to the Thinkery) is the 5-story, 128-room boutique Origin Hotel Mueller. Designed by San Antonio's renown Lake Flato Architects, the hotel will have a restaurant & patio, and 5,000 square feet of retail at street level, made possible by the hotel's parking being provided at the McBee Street Garage.

East of the McBee Garage and crossing Robert Browning Street, AMLI will soon break ground on a 406-unit apartment project, twenty percent of which will be affordable, or twice the number usually found in market-rate complexes. Rising up to seven stories, it will include two parking garages and a number of amenities.

On Oct. 7, 2019 Mueller residents and surrounding neighborhoods were mailed a Notice of Filing, which provides notification that an application for a zoning amendment has been filed with the City for Mueller's Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district. The Mueller Team is seeking to update the PUD to increase the "cap" on the total number of residential dwelling units and the total square footage of the commercial/civic uses that can be developed within the PUD zoning district. For more info, a FAQ can be found here: <https://bit.ly/35Clj1G>.

One other item of note is the art project that is part of the Austin Studios bond is in place. It is visible off of Tilley near their new entrance.

The Robert Mueller Municipal Airport Plan Implementation Advisory Commission will next meet at 6:00PM on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at the Britton, Durst, Howard & Spence Building (Chestnut Community Center), 1183 Chestnut Avenue. For RMMA PIAC agendas, minutes, meeting recordings and other documents, visit [austintexas.gov/rmmapiac](http://austintexas.gov/rmmapiac)

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## Upcoming Mueller Music Events

By Penny Brandt

### The Singing Guitar | how little you are

On November 2 at 8pm at the AISD Performing Arts Center, the Grammy-award winning Austin-based choral group Conspirare, led by Artistic Director Craig Hella Johnson, will join with 12 guitarists to perform “How Little You Are.” This piece, by composer Nico Muhly, includes heartfelt stories written by 19th-century pioneer women and set to music. The performance will feature the Los Angeles, Texas, and Austin Guitar quartets and is Conspirare’s only performance scheduled to be held in the Mueller neighborhood this season. The program will also feature the world premiere of “The Dawn’s Early Light,” by American composer Kile Smith, and “When the Guitar” by Indian-American composer Reena Esmail.

### Collage Series at Wildflower

On Wednesday, November 13 at 6:00pm, the Butler Collage Series will visit Wildflower Terrace Senior Apartments. The University of Texas Butler School of Music Collage Series, led by Artistic Director Elizabeth Kilpatrick, includes an outreach program that brings high-quality solo performances off campus and into the community. Open to the public, this free concert will last about an hour and will feature some of the school’s most talented students and faculty.

## Mueller Community Yard Sale Hits Cold Spell

The fall Mueller Community-Wide Yard Sale hit a surprise fall cold front, causing a lower turnout than usual. With temperatures in the 50s, there were both fewer sellers and buyers. If your sale didn’t receive much traffic, don’t worry - there will be another event in the spring! Keep an eye on Mueller Neighborhood Association communications for more information.



Camacho Street Yard Sale, by Mike Sears

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# 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.

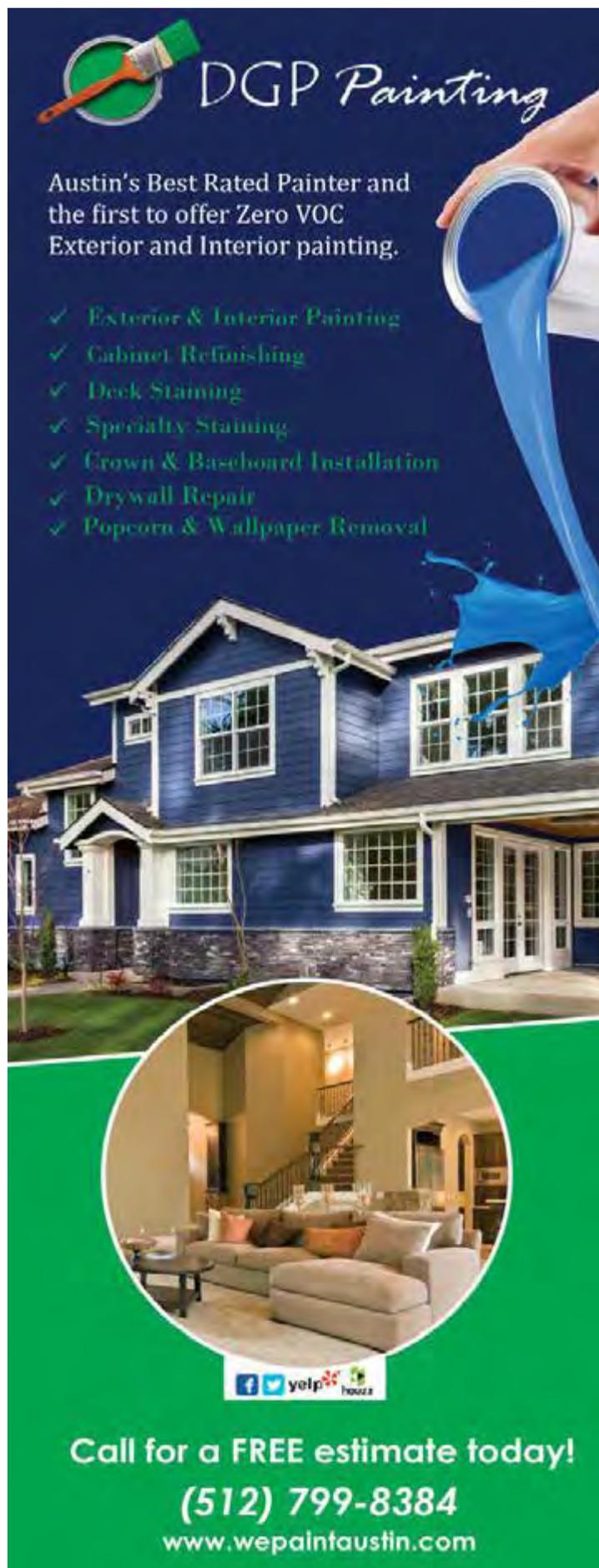
6. Do not share information about working or school hours. Teach family members to avoid telling people about schedules and routines. Do not put personal information online and never respond to voicemails.

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.

10. 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.



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## A Focus on Influenza: What You Should Know About the Flu

By Concentra Urgent Care

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year. Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu
- More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications
- About 36,000 people die from flu

Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

### Complications of flu

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

### How flu spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Apparently healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

### Key facts about seasonal flu vaccine

The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. There are two types of vaccines:

The “flu shot”: an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

The nasal-spray flu vaccine: a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for “Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine”). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people two to 49 years of age who are not pregnant. The viruses in the vaccine change each year based on international surveillance and scientists’ estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year. About two weeks after vaccination, enough antibodies

build up to provide protection against the influenza virus.

### Symptoms of the flu

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Fatigue (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting (more common among children than adults)

Having these symptoms does not always mean that you have the flu. Many different illnesses, including the common cold, can have similar symptoms.

### Diagnosing the flu

It is very difficult to distinguish the flu from other infections on the basis of symptoms alone. A doctor’s exam may be needed to tell whether you have developed the flu or a complication of the flu. There are tests that can determine if you have the flu as long as you are tested within the first two or three days of illness.

If you develop flu-like symptoms and are concerned about your illness, especially if you are at high risk for complications of the flu, you should consult your health care provider. Those at high risk for complications include people 65 years or older, people with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and young children.

### Good health habits for flu prevention

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good health habits like covering your mouth when you cough and washing your hands often can help prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are flu antiviral drugs that can be used to treat and prevent the flu.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth due to the spread of germs.
- Practice other good health habits:
- Get plenty of sleep
- Be physically active
- Manage your stress
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat nutritious food

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## Mueller Neighborhood Association Membership Form

To become a voting MNA member, a Mueller resident must complete this form and submit annual dues. New members must then wait 14 days before they may vote. Annual dues are \$5.00 per resident, 18 years or older. These funds are used to help pay for the Front Porch Flyer, MNA Grants, funding neighborhood events, and operating costs such as printing, record-keeping, and the MNA P.O. Box. You may give your dues to your Block Captain, bring it to an MNA meeting, or mail it to MNA, PO Box 49123, Austin, TX 78765. Checks may be written to "Mueller Neighborhood Association."

NAME:

DATE:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

(Your email will only be used for official MNA communications.)



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