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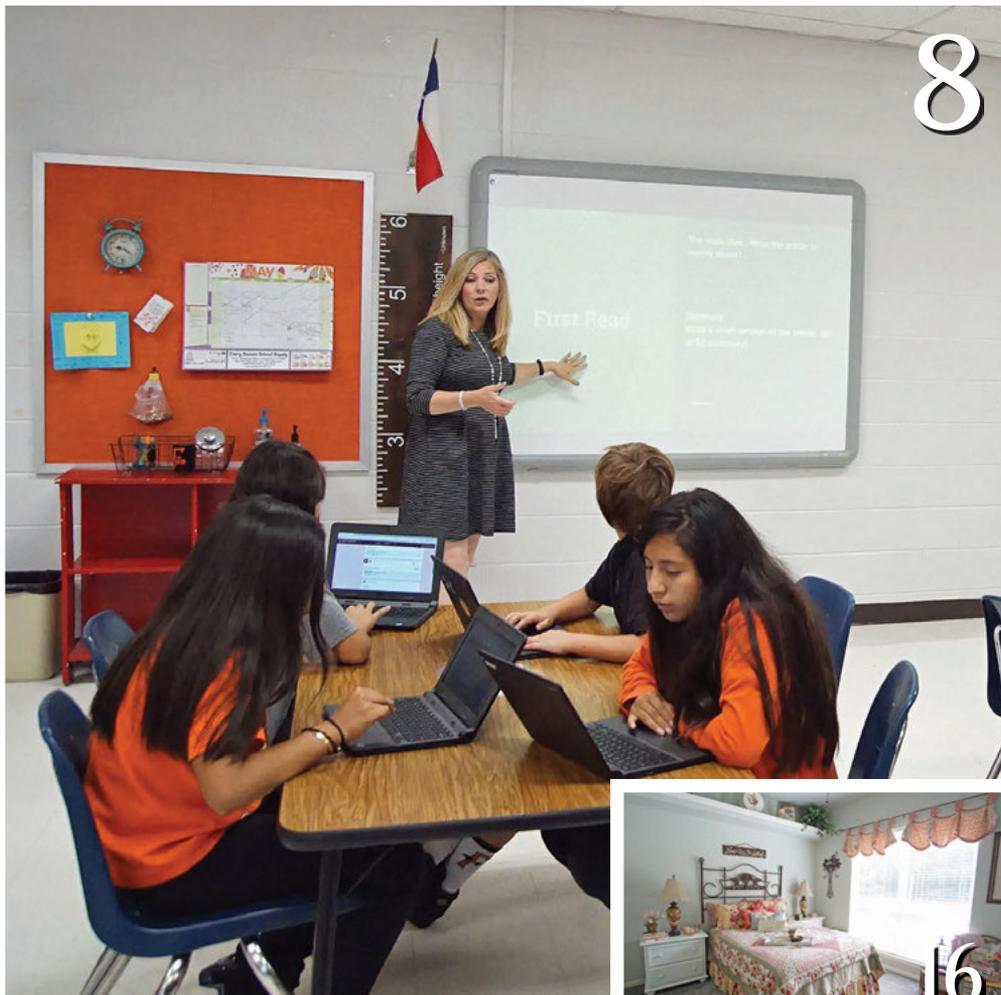
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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

What kinds of things clutter up your life and steal away your time? The first week of August is National Simplify Your Life week. I love this because I am always looking for ways to make life easier. The times I have felt the best have been when I have purged my possessions and cleared my calendar.

We tend to fill our homes and schedules with so many things that we feel like life is drowning us. The good news is it doesn't have to be this way. We can be in control of how we spend our money and our time.

Make sure to carve out enough time to read the entire magazine this month. We've got some great stories for you!

Happy decluttering!

Jill

Jill Martinez
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P.S. If you or someone you know has a cool home or an interesting hobby, contact me! I'd love to hear about it!

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Harnessing the Power of *Technology*

— By Jill Martinez



Rebecca Strickland was the recipient of the first annual Technology Innovation Award in the Ferris Independent School District in 2015. She has received honors in the past for her outstanding work in the classroom, including being named Teacher of the Year in 2007 for Red Oak ISD, where she got her start.

Rebecca is commencing her fifth year with Ferris ISD, and she absolutely loves it. “I wasn’t sure I would like teaching fifth grade at first, but I love my kids,” Rebecca said with a big smile. Her class sizes range between 18-20 students, most of whom deal with the effects of poverty and struggle with language barriers.

“My biggest goal is to make school a safe, happy place where students can come and have experiences they haven’t had before,” Rebecca explained. She wants her pupils to go home and share with their parents and grandparents what they learn each day because if they can tell someone about it, then they have gotten it.

Education has changed so much since Rebecca started teaching in 2000, the beginning of the 21st century. She couldn’t have anticipated the journey on which she was about to embark. “You have to continually grow and change, or you get left behind, so I told myself I would try anything,” Rebecca shared. Perhaps her willingness to take risks inspires her students to reach for new heights in their learning.



In Rebecca's second year in Ferris ISD, all the teachers at her school received iPads, and her campus was given iPad carts. Eventually, she got to keep a few devices in her classroom. She worked with her grade-level teaching team to do activity stations with the kids, so everyone had a chance to work with the technology.

The 2016-17 school year saw Ferris ISD become a one-to-one device district. This means that every student in first-12th grade has access to an electronic device every day. Elementary students use iPads, while secondary students use Chromebooks. It was a huge undertaking. In the beginning, teachers and students weren't sure



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how to harness the power of technology for learning.

Rebecca had the typical fears that most digital immigrants have. She worried that she would make plans that would go south or not know how to use the technology well enough to lead her students through it. "Now, I love the flexibility that technology brings. If something doesn't work properly, I can change it easily part way through the day."



Rebecca attended conferences to learn new ways of using technology for learning. "I wanted to bring something back from every conference I attended and try it. If it flopped, I learned from it, and my students learned how to analyze their steps and problem solve."

Ferris ISD Director of Technology, Mr. Daniel Domain, enjoys Rebecca's eagerness to incorporate technology into her classroom. "When she got here five years ago, she was afraid to use technology. After being coached a little bit and learning what she could do with her students, she made a complete turnaround. She is now leading the charge for instructional technology on her campus!" Mr. Domain said proudly.

A couple of reasons for incorporating technology into the classroom was to increase student engagement and close learning gaps. Wednesday became "no worksheet Wednesday." Rebecca's team used websites to help kids investigate things they wondered about. They would find articles, pictures, videos, vocabulary words, etc. Through this, students sharpened their digital fluency skills, as well as their content knowledge.

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Rebecca is now a strong believer in Google Apps for Education. She uses Google Docs, so students can type things they learn during their online activity. They have the opportunity to give details and draw conclusions. "It gives kids a voice when they share these things with the class, and kids light up when others ask questions and show interest in their work," Rebecca explained.

Students don't always get excited about research projects, but with Rebecca's integration of technology, the kids didn't want to stop learning. In past years, students did a project on a famous Texan. The students thought the project went by so fast because they had so much fun. For another project, students selected an animal to learn about and report on. They loved the freedom they had to choose their topic and find information. Other research topics were the Dust Bowl era and Christmas around the world. The presentations got better each year.



Lynsey Odom Green, Rebecca Strickland and Cindy Johnson believe learning should be fun and engaging.

Rebecca learned that being resourceful is a key to being successful. She discovered that the campus music teacher, Mr. Absolom, was more knowledgeable about technology than she was, so she recruited his help. He often recorded her students giving book talks and helped them post them on a YouTube channel Ms. Bell set up. "I know just enough about technology to be dangerous," she said with a chuckle. There are things that she is still unsure of, but she has learned to ask her students for help. She's ready to learn from her students if they are the "expert" on something. One student put lots of videos on YouTube, so he helped her the first time she did it.

Rebecca attributes much of her success to the administrators who



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Julio Morales enjoys using technology in Rebecca Strickland's class.

encouraged the teachers to keep learning and taking risks. "Principal Kendra Gajdica has been an awesome cheerleader and motivator. Superintendent Hartman, as well," Rebecca added.

Now that Rebecca has learned so much, she acts as a mentor for her teaching team. She encourages them and leads them in using a variety of technological tools. "It is great when the teachers work together to teach various tools to the students. One time, I was going to teach a tech tool to my students, but they said the science teacher had already taught them. It was fantastic!" Rebecca exclaimed. "We just dove right into the task."

Thanks to all she has learned and implemented, Rebecca says she is a very different teacher now than she was 10 years ago or even one year ago. "Last school year was a whirlwind of experience," she reflected. But she isn't ready to stop learning. This year, she hopes to extend her digital proficiency, so she can make more connections to the learning standards as well as engage kids in the joy of learning. "I want to make my classroom so engaging that kids don't want to get off task." **NOW**

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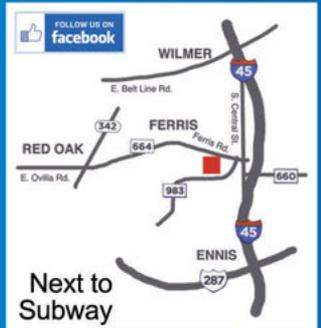
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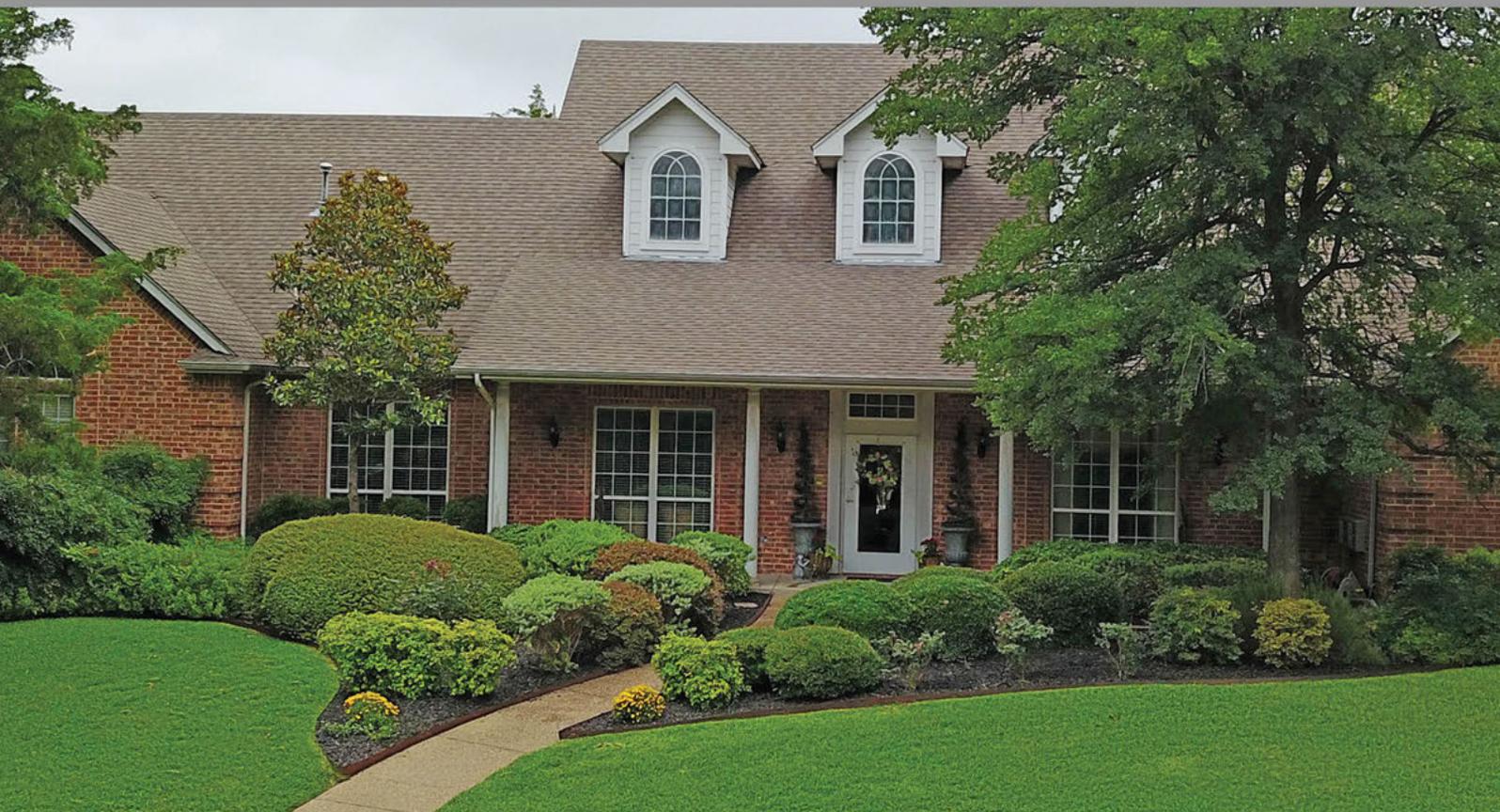
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— By *Alexandra Allred*

SAFE HAVEN

At Home With Loreen Silva



Loreen Silva is the consummate hostess, but she is also a woman of many contradictions. Professionally, she owns a Landstar Agency. "I've been in the logistics [trucking] industry for 36 years," Loreen said with a smile. Yet, the petite blonde with a penchant for "girly" things appears to be anything but a trucker. She is small in stature with a big personality. Her style is both elegant and grand, yet she cannot wait to tell anyone who admires the decor what a bargain each purchase was. She is both private and unabashed. She is an extrovert. She is an introvert. The woodwork of her furniture is solid, yet the prints and patterns are floral and breezy. While the main rooms serve as treasure troves of small ceramic and porcelain collectables, vintage artwork, designer pillows and shams, all littered with evidence of Loreen's love of reading, the hallways of the home are bare. With nary a picture or pattern on any walls, the contrast is brilliant, making each room all-inviting.



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She has had plenty of experience in decorating as she is the owner of The Villas of Ovilla, a quaint bed-and-breakfast that has served locals, as well as both U.S. and international travelers



for overnight retreats or weeklong gatherings. Although the Victorian-style B&B is run by her son, the decor and style is all Loreen.

Upon entry to her home, visitors are struck by the variety of thematic decor. The dining room is both industrial, with a magnificent iron wine rack and collectable-free area, and French country, offering softer colors and a beautiful table setting that Loreen is proud to share “is a re-sale.”

Prior to her move to Ovilla, she gave seminars on how to shop on a shoestring budget. The mother of two grown sons and two grandsons finds quality furniture, frames, mirrors and decorative items in



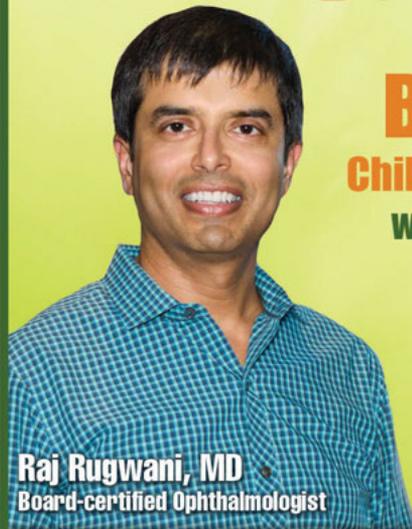
consignment shops, outlets stores and at garage and estate sales. “It’s just fun,” she said.

Her living room is a feast for the eyes. It has an eclectic feel with piles of magazines and books illustrating her varying interests. All this, along with gifts from friends, blends with a very warm, Old World aesthetic that manages rustic, re-sale and refurbished items with elegance and charm. The color of choice is red. “Red is passion, but I had the walls painted yellow because that depicts happiness,” she said.

Loreen is a woman of emotions, many of which are depicted on the walls of her home. A plaque that hangs high on a wall between the living room and kitchen reads: *Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.* It is in the breakfast nook, however, that Loreen truly showcases her own style. A 3-foot statue of St. Francis,

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typically an outdoors ornament, is boldly displayed. “How could I keep him outside?” Loreen asked. With her admission that the statue is meant for the garden, Loreen maintains that the “Prayer for Peace” by St. Francis of Assisi “should be shared because he brings such peace.” The beginning of that prayer is a favorite for Loreen: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.”

“I want this to be a peaceful haven for people,” she said. In fact, Loreen’s friends often refer to her home as “the retreat.” It is the reason her cross wall means so much to her. Every day, the wall reminds her that she would have nothing if it weren’t for her faith. And just as it is with everything else in her home, friends and family have gifted her crosses from around the world, including rosary beads from the Vatican. She also has a cross she brought back from Israel.

Of the four bedrooms in the home, it is her guest room that pays greatest tribute to who Loreen is as a decorator, a friend, a grandmother, a mother and a daughter. Before it was a haven for friends, it was a room for her mother who visited frequently and brought her tremendous healing and peace. Even as Loreen speaks of her mother now, three years after she succumbed to Alzheimer’s disease, her tone is wistful, but tender as she says the words, “My precious mother.” In tribute to her loved ones, here and gone, Loreen’s style hinges on treasured knickknacks, floral patterns and earth tone colors that promise tranquility and peace. Centered on the bed is a plaque, nestled against the pillows that reads: *Come away to a secret place and rest for a while.*

In great contrast to the Sanctuary Room is the Peacock Room. On the opposite side of



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the dining room, mere steps from the front door, is a sitting area lavished in all things peacock. Teal and turquoise are featured in the upholstery, pictures and statues. Again, Loreen points out all the deals represented in the decor. "I would say 95 percent of this room came from outlet and resale stores," including two plush chairs from Pier One Imports. A peacock lamp was a gift from someone special in her life, while the peacock tapestry was an incredible find at a garage sale. But when asked why she created such a room, Loreen only shrugged and smiled. "I just love peacocks," she said.

The truth, however, is in the feathers. While the peacock got its own room, two more birds are displayed prominently in and around the house. Cardinal statues, figurines and pictures are a common theme in the home. Outside, flamingos adorn the garden, the patio, bar and grill areas.

Loreen, however unwittingly, is all of these birds. Like the cardinal, she is strong, confident, thriving on hard work and persistence. The flamingo is highly social. According to animal symbolism, the flamingo is most expressive and grateful. It is a bird of great emotion and compassion. But the peacock, in history, legend and lore is the bird of nobility, holiness, guidance and protection. "Home is a safe haven to all who enter," Loreen said, and she dedicated an entire room to this bird.

Unexplainably smitten with the peacock, symbolic for offering hope, Loreen has affixed yet two more quotes to her front door for guests to see as they leave. *May all who enter as guests leave our home as friends,* and *It will cost nothing to dream and everything not to.* These are her personal mantras, evident in her decor, in her eagerness to share, and even in the feathers of her chosen flock. **NOW**

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Claiming Their Identities

— By Carolyn Wills





For Larry and Nikeesia Ranson, any moment to help a child is a moment that matters. Always exuberant, these two know no strangers. Their hope is about faith, relationship, activities and a place where every child has choices and self-esteem. Their actions are about strength, commitment and hard work. What Larry and Nikeesia do for foster kids is vitally important, and, as they quickly added, they don't do it alone. "Our mission is to serve," Nikeesia said with a smile. "That's why God brought us together."

In 2014, they founded a nonprofit organization known as SWAGG Programs. What SWAGG is, how it came to be, the many children's and families' lives it's touched and what its future might be is truly a remarkable story.

The goal for SWAGG is for every child to experience Serenity, Wisdom, Agility, Grace and Guidance. It is, on one hand, a glorious store filled with every item of necessity and joy and, on the other hand, a place of self-affirming programs with names like SWAGG Bag, Art and Recreations, The Beauty in Me, The Man



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Its beginnings likely started even before Larry and Nikeesia met and fell in love, weathered Larry's six-year commitment to the United States Air Force, raised three sons and devoted countless resources to helping others. "We both grew up with mothers deeply rooted in the will to serve," Nikeesia shared.

Throughout their 25-year marriage, and largely as a result of Nikeesia's 17 years as an educator and school principal, she and Larry often had an opportunity to assist children, including providing their home as a temporary shelter. Five years ago, they were called to do more.

With sons Larry, Kameron and Nikolas, ages 18, 15 and 14 at the time, Larry and Nikeesia agreed it was time to become a foster family. "We applied for a group of siblings in hopes of alleviating some of the fears of separation that often occur with foster children," Nikeesia explained.

The day they welcomed three brothers, ages 12, 8 and 5, was a happy day at the Ransons' house. The combination of three brothers was familiar and seemed ideal for everyone. As it happened, though, there was more to know. "The boys were essentially nonverbal at first, and then the oldest began asking about their two sisters and two more brothers," Larry said. Sure enough, Larry and Nikeesia would learn of four younger siblings who were also in foster care.

"We sprang into full-help mode," she said with a grin. Not only did the four younger siblings eventually join their older brothers, but in 2014, and at a moment that definitely mattered, Larry and Nikeesia decided to adopt all seven children. "It hurt our hearts to think these kids might be separated again," she shared. "They are our seven from heaven, and in the end, the decision to adopt wasn't even a long conversation — but more of a realization."

It was life-changing. Nikeesia transitioned from educational administrator to a stay-at-home mom. Larry focused on working from home as a telecommunications specialist. The office became a girl's bedroom. The media room became the 12-year-old's bedroom. "His own so he could be young again," Nikeesia said with a smile. Life became filled with Hello Kitty toothbrushes and rubber



duckies, meals served in phases, medical and dental issues, emergency room visits and, of course, trading the family car for a 12-seater van.

All of this and, yet, there was an overriding question. “We kept asking ourselves, ‘Once we adopt, then what?’” Nikeesia said. “We didn’t know how we would continue our mission to bless others.” As always, the answer was revealed in family prayer, as they considered some important questions: “What was God telling us to do? What did we want our kids to have? And, then,” Nikeesia shared, “we asked the children, ‘What do other foster kids need?’”

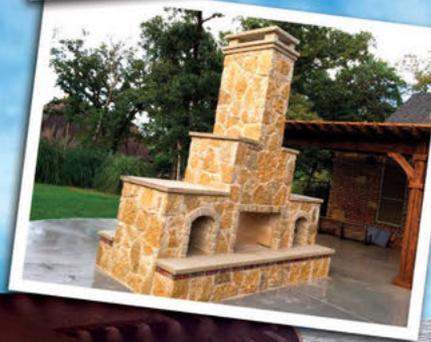
In that moment, SWAGG was born. “Foster children need our help,” Nikeesia said. “That’s the reality.” With their savings and lots of labor from Nikeesia’s parents and all of the Ransons’ family, friends and volunteers, Larry and Nikeesia created a place and a way for the community to take care of the community. Since Thanksgiving 2014, a leased, stand-alone building on Waxahachie’s Ovilla Road has served children from as many as nine counties.

Children entering foster care or a new home often have little or nothing of their own, and most arrive with their belongings in a trash bag. On top of that, they’re understandably frightened and confused. “At the SWAGG store, we serve one family at a time every 30 minutes,” Nikeesia explained. “By having their own time, there’s no shame. They can come in, relax, shop and try on clothes. It’s also a good time for foster parents to learn about and bond with their child.”

The store carries everything from hygiene items, medicine and cosmetic items to clothing, uniforms, diapers, shoes, socks, underwear, purses, jewelry, school supplies and SWAGG bags — duffel bags they get to fill with items they choose. The bags become theirs to keep through any transitions they may have. “We want

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children to have choices and opportunities to claim their own identity,” she added.

Misty Mitchell is a foster parent who visits monthly from Decatur. “I make the long drive to SWAGG because, in addition to getting help with physical items, I’m given invaluable advice, prayers and encouragement,” she said.

Whitney Urquhart from Midlothian heard about SWAGG through Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services and her foster care community. “There really is no program like it near Midlothian or the south Dallas areas,” she commented. “Not only did we shop for clothes, diapers and essentials during those first few months of a new child placement, but Mrs. Ranson was a wealth of knowledge and support.”



“If it weren’t for SWAGG, I don’t know what we would do,” Julie Gonzales, from Red Oak shared. “These are awesome people, and I thank God every day for bringing them into our lives.”

Nikeesia’s hope is for every county to have their own version of SWAGG, and they would be thrilled to share resources and experiences. “SWAGG relies on volunteers, partners, sponsors and everyone who donates time and items,” she said. “We are so grateful. At this point, our prayer is to receive help with expenses and, ideally, a donated location.”

“The minute our family stepped into the SWAGG home, we felt the love,” Maria Miller from Waxahachie shared.

Larry and Nikeesia know that helping children matters. They live it, and, in awareness of the special challenges of children who are homeless or in foster care, they were moved to create this nonprofit organization to meet the needs. That’s what SWAGG is all about. **NOW**

Editor’s Note: For more information, visit www.swaggprograms.com.

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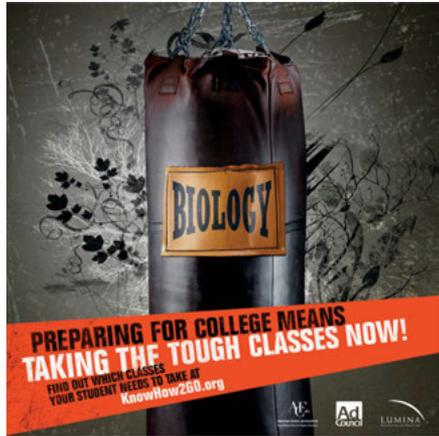
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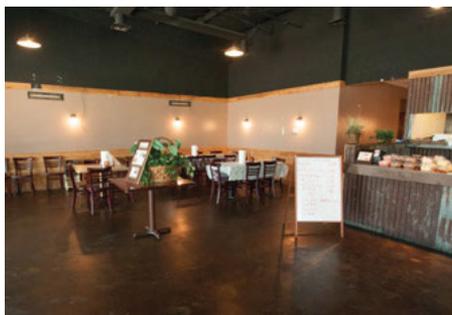
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Feeding the Soul

The Medlocks provide friendly service, delicious food and a family-like atmosphere. — By Jill Martinez

Ursula and Brian Medlock have owned and operated restaurants since 2003. They were originally located in Pleasant Grove. Three years later, they moved to Lancaster and then again to Glenn Heights.

In 2015, Ursula lost her grandmother and her father, two very important people in her life. This caused her and Brian to postpone the Red Oak restaurant's opening. "Finally, my dad came to me in a dream and said I needed to move on," Ursula explained.

They wanted to honor the lady who inspired Ursula to learn to cook in the first place, so they opened in January of 2016 under her grandmother's nickname. After being open for a little over a year, Gran Gran's Catfish and Soul Food became a member of the Red Oak Area Chamber of Commerce. Just last month, they

relocated the restaurant to a larger location in Red Oak's Main Street Plaza. "We will be able to fit everyone at this location. God answers prayers," Ursula exclaimed.

Several of the dishes which are served at the restaurant were Gran Gran's recipes. Ursula watched her grandmother make them as she was growing up. Other recipes are the result of Brian and Ursula's experimentation with different seasonings. "When we first started, we would mix up different seasonings for the fish batter and marinades for the ribs. Then we invited our family and friends over to see what they would say about the flavor. We had a lot of parties back in the day trying different foods!" Brian reminisced.

A glance at their menu is sure to make your mouth water. Customer favorites are Brian's fried catfish and fried pork chops,

but there are plenty of other delicious items to choose from, such as meatloaf and baked chicken. Add a delicious side item. Your tummy will thank you for it.

Everyone who works at Gran Gran's has a role to play. "In addition to preparing all the soul food and setting the menus, I work the counter and provide customer service," Ursula said.

"I cook the fried foods, shop and unload the groceries. I am also the muscle of the restaurant in case there is an irate customer, employee or owner," Brian said with a chuckle, tongue in cheek, as he glanced at Ursula.

Customers find the restaurant to be a friendly, relaxing place.

The restaurant is a tight-knit family affair for both employees and customers. Carmen, with whom Brian grew up, is like a sister. She runs the front area and focuses on keeping the customers happy. Debra, another family friend, helps in the kitchen and wherever she is needed.

Customers find the restaurant to be a friendly, relaxing place. "It has an at-home feeling. The customers are so nice, and sometimes they peek their heads through the little window just to say hello," Ursula said. Some of her younger customers call her "momma," and others talk about her being their "aunt." She just laughs and enjoys her big, happy family.

Brian and Ursula were elementary, junior high and high school classmates, though Brian didn't know Ursula back then. He just knew that one of his high school teachers had a daughter. After being out of high school for 17 years, they reconnected. Now, here they are in 2017 with seven children and 17 grandchildren. It looks like seven is their lucky number. They feel very fortunate to have such a wonderful life together with their friends and family. **NOW**

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School's in Session

— By Zachary R. Urquhart



Whether your summer has flown by or you are counting down the days until the hot months come to an end, the fact remains that summer is almost over. And with the end of summer comes the start of a new school year! If you are getting your first child ready for kindergarten, or you are a recent graduate headed away for college, follow these tips to get a great start for a great school year.

Be Ready for the First Day

- *Dot your I's.* One of the biggest jobs for parents getting ready to send kids to school is finishing paperwork. When you are starting, be ready with shot records, birth certificates and proof of residency, so that you can enroll without a problem. If your children are in sports, get the school's physical form and head to your doctor or a nearby clinic, so they are ready on day one. There is also a mountain of surveys, financial forms and demographic sheets that will take time to complete, so do not wait until the night before the first day of school.

- *Get the gear you need.* No matter which school your child attends, supplies will be needed. Most large stores will have copies of lists from the local schools, so you can head there ready to shop. If your young student is apprehensive about starting, let him or her have fun picking out colors and characters, but be sure you know which supplies are shared by the class. This will help you avoid your son happily picking a themed box of tissues only to find out that the class uses each other's boxes communally. And if you are running short on

time, most elementary schools use fundraising companies that will package a complete set of needed supplies for a small fee.

- *Older kids need stuff, too.* Though your high-schooler may not take the same pleasure in picking out school supplies, you cannot neglect that part of his or her year. Some teachers at that level will have specific requirements for their class. So while you may not be able to get an exhaustive list until your student comes home the first week, you know that they will need paper, pen and pencil and a notebook or two.

Look the Part

- *Find a style.* Unless your school has a dress code, there are endless options when it comes to dressing for the day. These days, kids can wear almost anything and fit into some style category. Whether they want to have a common theme in their dress, or they want to change it up each day, they can shop anywhere from a thrift store to the fanciest boutiques to come up with great looks for the year.

- *Function matters.* High school students normally have a regulated schedule, complete with time to change for athletics or other special activities. But in elementary school, kids often have a different activity every day of the week. Be sure to include a variety of clothes and shoes, so your daughter does not overheat trying to run in wooly leggings or ruin a fancy dress painting in art class.

Get in Rhythm

- *Start a routine now.* Summer nights are great for staying up, enjoying sunsets and going on late night excursions. With school fast

approaching, though, it is time to get your little ones back into a bedtime routine. The first few weeks might be tough regardless, but making sure they are getting to bed early now should help ensure a better start to the year.

- *Routines are good for everyone.* While it may seem like a losing battle to ask your teenagers to go to bed early with several weeks left of summer, encourage them to start waking up when they will need to be up for the school year. After a few weeks of being forced out of bed before noon, they will naturally get to sleep at a more reasonable hour. And if your high-schoolers drive themselves in the morning, spend the week before school helping them get the timing of waking up, getting ready and heading out the door in time to get to school before the bell rings.

College Is Not Just a Party

- *Take care of the little things.* If you are a college student, on your own for the first time, you may be overwhelmed with your new responsibilities. It is a good idea to make a monthly and quarterly checklist to ensure you pay your rent and bills, keep your car maintained and do things like changing air filters and taking care of the yard.

- *Make a budget.* One of the biggest changes for many college students is budgeting money. Figure out how much money you need for utilities, housing, basic grocery purchases and any regular bills you will be paying like insurance or phone service. Compare that to your sources of income, and be sure not to spend more than you have.

- *Be careful with credit.* College students are easy targets for cards with ridiculously high rates. Their free shirt is not worth opening a high interest credit card where a pair of jeans paid for over time can cost you hundreds in fees. On the other hand, you might consider getting a card with good rates and making one or two purchases that you pay off immediately. That can help establish good credit that will help you buy a car or a home down the road.

For anyone sending a child off for the first time, or shipping a graduate into the borderline adulthood that is college, using these tips will ensure a successful start to school. **NOW**

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A Mind on the Run

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

“I can’t sit still.” Those words come from an online blogger, who just needed to vent about ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. She went on to chronicle her struggle with her thought patterns. “Like, I should have one thought that’s supposed to do its thing. Instead, it feels like there’s hundreds, all darting in different directions and confusing the others.” ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that begins in childhood and can last into adulthood.

There are three types of this condition: inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. It is possible to have only one or a combination of the types. All of these behaviors can occur in anyone, but when they reach a level that causes everyday routines to be disrupted on a frequent basis, it is characteristic of ADHD disorder. Behaviors will differ from one person to another. Some will exhibit a combination of symptoms of this condition. Whatever symptoms are most predominant determine the diagnosis. Males are more likely to have this disorder than females. ADHD often coexists with other behaviors, such as anxiety disorders, learning disabilities and depression.

Inattention is characterized by someone having difficulty with organizational skills. They have problems keeping things in order and manage their time poorly. They make careless mistakes performing important tasks and are constantly losing items. There is difficulty in focusing and staying on task. When it comes to performing tasks that require mental focus, those with inattention may completely avoid them.

Hyperactivity and impulsivity are often seen in combination. When a person is hyperactive, that behavior will often be seen in very unhealthy ways, and being impulsive is a part of that. An example of the predominantly hyperactivity-impulsivity presentation is a person who fidgets constantly and can’t seem to sit still. Engaging in quiet activities is difficult. This patient seems to be the type of person who has to go, go, go all the time, is impatient, has trouble standing in line and engages in nonstop talking.

The cause of ADHD is still unknown. Environmental toxins have been blamed, possible brain injury, genetic factors and even cigarettes and alcohol are all suggested causes of ADHD.

The goal of treatment for ADHD is to reduce symptoms for better function. The treatment has to be patient specific and age appropriate. What works for children might not work for adults and vice versa.

When helping children with ADHD, it’s important not to label them as “bad” kids. Their behavior is not meant to disrupt and with treatment can improve. Managing this disorder gives the person a chance to live a more normal and calmer life. **NOW**

This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.

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August 11

Summer Moonlight Movies: 9:00-11:00 p.m., Franklin Street (between College and Jackson) in downtown Waxahachie. The City of Waxahachie Main Street program brings free outdoor movies to downtown. Bring your blankets and lawn chairs and join us for *Hairspray* (2007). Lions Club will have concessions on site. Call Anita Brown at (469) 309-4111 for more information.

August 12

Back to School Bash and Family Festival: Noon-6:00 p.m., Heritage Community Park, Glenn Heights. Bring your family to the park for food, music, kids activities and free school supplies. For more information, contact Kemi at the City of Glenn Heights by emailing lakemi.osoba@glennheightstx.gov.

Dodge for a Cause: 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Claxton Gym, SAGU, Waxahachie. Register as an individual or a team to play in this dodge ball competition, or you can watch. A DJ, concessions and T-shirt sales will be available in support of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Ellis County. Contact Susan Smith at (469) 644-9876 for more information on registering a team. Spectator tickets are \$5.

August 26

Ellis County SPCA Paws for the Cause Tailgate Party: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Dr., Midlothian. The event will include dinner and a silent and live auction. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Tickets are \$40. Reserved tables are \$500 and up. Tickets may be purchased online at ecspca.ejoinme.org/2017ECSPCA. For more information, email director@elliscountyspca.org.

September 9

Red Oak's 39th Annual Founder's Day: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Watkins Park, Red Oak. Free admission. Events will include a parade, food and entertainment. For more information, contact the Red Oak Area Chamber of Commerce at (972) 617-0906.

Ongoing:

Tuesdays

Writing for Enjoyment Group meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr. For more information, call (469) 383-5365 or email joanpomero@att.net.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Story Time: 11:00 a.m., Ferris Public Library. Pre-school children and their caregivers are invited for stories. For more information, call (972) 544-3699.

Wednesdays

Toddler Story Time: 10:00-10:45 a.m., crafts/story time for children 18 months-4 years and their parents. Call the library at (469) 218-1230 for more information on all library events.

Second Saturdays

Red Oak Opry: 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Lone Star Cowboy Church, 1011 E. Ovilla Rd., Red Oak. Tickets sold at the door. \$12 for adults; \$5 for children.

Fourth Sundays

Prayer Shawl Circle: 10:00 a.m.-noon, First United Methodist Church of Red Oak, 600 Daubitz Dr. Circle of Hope and Healing ministry. For more information, call Beth Norris at (214) 392-0732.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to jill.martinez@nowmagazines.com.



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In the Kitchen With Beth Kaemmerling

— *By Jill Martinez*

For Beth Kaemmerling, learning to cook was a process. Her first baking attempt with her sister didn't turn out as planned. "We were trying to make a white birthday cake for my mom, but it came out brown and hard, and the frosting was soupy." She persisted, however, and got better with time.

She and her friends participate in "cookbook nights" where everyone brings a few recipes, and they cook them together. Once Beth has made a recipe by the book, she begins to personalize it. She loves to share her creations with others. "Cooking is a stress reliever. It's also a way that I show love. A cupcake can perk up a friend's day. A meal can meet a need in times of sickness or sorrow," she said. **NOW**

Carrot Casserole

- 2 lbs. baby carrots**
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 yellow onion, minced**
- 1 stick butter**
- Grated cheese**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F Boil carrots in salted water until tender.
- 2.** Sauté bell pepper and onion in butter until soft.
- 3.** Mash drained carrots with onion and bell pepper.
- 4.** Pour into a greased 9x13-inch pan and sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake until cheese melts.

King Ranch Casserole

- 1/4 cup margarine**
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 medium onion, chopped**

- 1 10.75-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- 2 10-oz. cans Ro-Tel tomatoes**
- 2 cups cooked chicken cut in bite-size pieces**
- 12 corn tortillas, cut in strips**
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325 F Melt margarine in a large skillet. Add bell pepper and onion; cook until tender over medium heat.
- 2.** Stir in soups, tomatoes and chicken; heat through.
- 3.** Place a layer of tortillas in the bottom of a greased 9x13-inch pan. Top with 1/3 of chicken mixture and 1/3 of shredded cheese. Repeat two more times.
- 4.** Bake for 40 minutes, or until bubbling.

Cornbread Casserole

- 2 8.5-oz. pkgs. Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix**
- 2 eggs**
- 2/3 cup milk**

- 1 14.75-oz. can cream-style corn**
- 8 oz. sour cream**
- Grated cheese**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400 F Mix Jiffy mix eggs and milk according to package directions for Johnny Cake. Add cream-style corn.
- 2.** Pour batter into a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until cornbread is almost done.
- 3.** Remove from oven and spread sour cream in a thin layer on top of the cornbread. Top with grated cheese.
- 4.** Place cornbread back in the oven; bake until cheese is melted. Serve immediately.

Pork Chops and Rice

Serves 4.

- Nonstick cooking spray**
- 1 cup uncooked rice**
- 1 10.5-oz. can French Onion soup**
- 1 can beef broth**
- 4 pork chops**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 325 F Spray a 9-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2.** Spread rice in the bottom of the baking dish. Add the soup and beef broth. Place pork chops on top of rice.
- 3.** Bake for 90 minutes, or until all liquid is absorbed.

Chocolate Chip Pound Cake

- 1 box yellow cake mix**
- 1 small box instant French vanilla pudding mix**
- 1 small box instant Devil's Food (chocolate) pudding mix**
- 1 1/2 cups water**
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil**
- 4 eggs**
- 6 oz. chocolate chips**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F In a mixer, beat the yellow cake mix, pudding mixes, water and vegetable oil for 2 minutes on medium speed. Add the eggs all at once and continue to beat for 1 minute. Fold in chocolate chips.
- 2.** Pour into a greased Bundt pan; bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.

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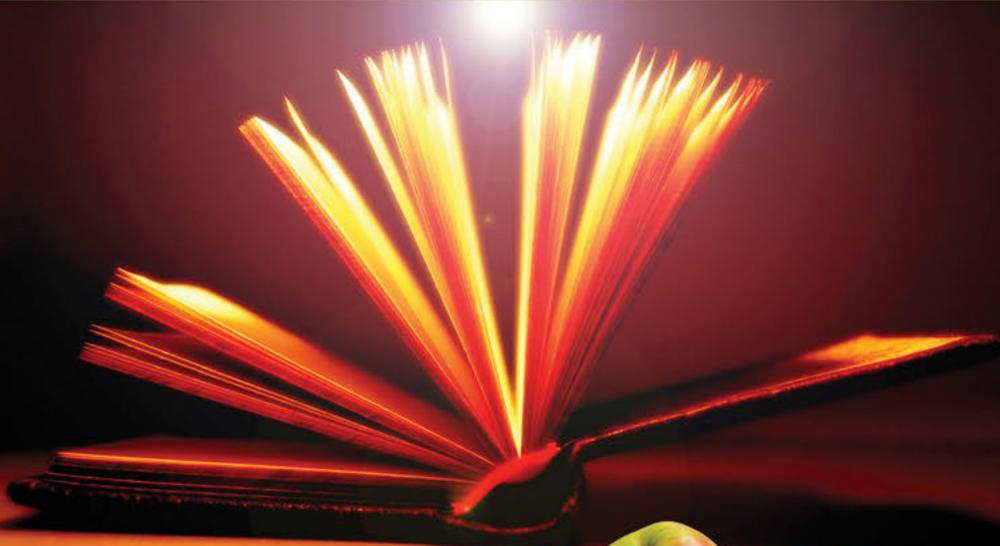
New students in grades Pre-K through 12th grade will need to register at the Central Registration Office at 301 E. 5th Street from 8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on the following dates by the student's last name:

Last Name A-G, Mondays, July 31st, August 7th & 21st

Last Name H-M, Tuesdays, August 1st, 8th & 15th

Last Name N-R, Wednesdays, August 2nd, 9th & 16th

Last Name S-Z, Thursdays, August 3rd, 10th & 17th



BACK TO SCHOOL

Ferris ISD Meet the Teacher Nights

Please make plans to bring your child to meet their teacher before school starts. We have lots of new things happening at our campuses that we would love to show you. Be involved in your child's education. Together we can make this school year the best ever.

Thursday, August 17th - Ferris High School (5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.)

Thursday, August 17th - McDonald Elementary (5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.)

Monday, August 21st - Ferris JH (5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.) & Ferris Intermediate (5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, August 22nd - Ingram Elementary (5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.)



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