

FREE

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JACKSON AREA COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE SOURCE

Happy Holidays

- pages 2, 3, & 4



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Jackson Area Collaborative Knowledge Source. Our mission is to inspire community unification and promote the voices of organizations and individuals in Jackson County through a collaborative monthly publication.

**Learn more at
www.jacksfamilyguide.org**

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EST. 2015

Happy Holidays in Jackson

By Morgan Riggs

There is no better way to spend your December than with wonderful holiday events held right here in Jackson! While there are innumerable options to choose from, here are a few to get you and your family started this season:

1. Christmas in the City

Downtown Jackson is hosting an exciting Holiday Shopping Event with over 18 festive activities planned. As you shop for special gifts, enjoy crafting, meet Santa and his elves, and even Mrs. Claus. Take a horse-drawn wagon ride, visit llamas at Bucky Harris Park, and savor hot cocoa at Gilbert Chocolates. Embrace the holiday cheer, shop small, and relish the downtown community experience from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 9!

2. Mistletoe and Mischief Holiday Market at Ironbark Brewing Co.

Kickstart your holiday celebrations with the Mistletoe and Mischief Holiday Market, a music and art show featuring live performances from local talents. Oddkin, Sir Richard, G2Pad, DJ Ceech, and Dadbod will grace the stage at Ironbark Brewing Co., located at 2610 Kibby Rd, Jackson, MI 49203. The event will take place on Saturday, December 9, from noon to 6 p.m.

3. 'A Christmas Carol' - A Timeless Tale at the Potter Center

Later on the same day, immerse yourself in the magic of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' on Saturday, December 9, from 7 pm to 9 p.m. This heartfelt production tells the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and the true spirit of Christmas. Tickets start at \$25, with \$10 tickets available for children 12 years and under (must be purchased with a minimum of one adult/full-price ticket). A perfect family event, this timeless story of redemption is sure to warm hearts.

4. Holiday Cookie Class at For Goodness Cakes LLC

Following the weekend festivities, unleash your inner decorator at the Holiday Cookie Class hosted by For Goodness

Cakes LLC in Michigan Center. Learn the art of creating beautifully decorated holiday cookies on Monday, December 11, from 5 pm to 6:30 p.m. Perfect for beginners and baking enthusiasts, this in-person event is a delightful way to add a sweet touch to your holiday season.

5. Holiday House Tour at Ella Sharp's Hillside Farmhouse

As mid-December approaches, step back in time with the Holiday House Tour at Ella Sharp's Hillside Farmhouse. Revel in the beauty of traditional Victorian trimmings while exploring the historical site. The tour runs from December 18-23 and December 26-30, starting at 1 p.m. Admission is \$5 per person (free for members). Gather in the main museum lobby for check-in before your enchanting journey.

6. Cosmic Christmas at ART 634

For those embracing the spirit of last-minute shopping, Cosmic Christmas at ART 634 is the place to be. Avoid the generic and overpriced at big box stores and discover unique gifts crafted by local artisans. The event, located at 634 N. Mechanic Street, Jackson, MI 49202, promises quirky fun daily. To become a vendor, contact art634jackson@gmail.com.

7. Nite Lights at MIS

Experience the enchantment of the holiday season at the Nite Lites Christmas Lights Show, a magical five-mile-long drive-through display. Running from November 17 to January 7, the show dazzles visitors from Sunday to Thursday, 5:30 PM to 9 PM, and extends the magic on Fridays and Saturdays until 10 PM. Located at the Michigan International Speedway US-12 Entrances only, at 12626 US-12, Brooklyn, Michigan 49230, this festive event promises a spectacular journey through illuminated landscapes, bringing joy and wonder to all who attend.

Create lasting memories and spread holiday cheer throughout the community at these events and so many more. Don't miss out on these exciting events that promise joy, laughter, and the magic of the season!

Jackson YMCA
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the Y
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A new or gently used coat to help warm those in need this winter season.

Our goal is to collect 100+ new or gently used coats, hats and gloves for those in need in our community.

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Christmas in the City Saturday December 9th 12 - 6

Map labels include: Gilbert Chocolates, D&D Bicycles, Windy Hill Creations, Jackson Antique Mall, Collins Brothers - Abbey Carpet, Grand River Brewery, Christoff & Sons, Farmers Market Fri & Sat 9-2, June - Oct, The Book Exchange, CK Barrymore, Geneo Beef Shop, Wilt's Health Foods, The Blue July, Murphy's Bistro, Bella Motta, Man's House of Pancakes, Ave Play, Miller Shoes, Challenge's Bar, Healthies 101, The Cheese Shop, Olympia, Metropolitan Sports Bar/Brewing Co. Ice Cream, Nite Lites, Found Church, Ninescore Marketplace, Dear, Manna, Bands To Live By, Jackson Coffee Co., Crazy Cowboy, Candle 628 Cafe, Farm Sale, Cotton Tails Text, Across Washington, Jackson Candle Co. Front Porch JON, Cotton Tails Text, Across Washington.

JACKSON DDA
Community Development Authority

Learn to Love Your Hometown

Nurture Your Soul: Self-Care and Meaningful Celebrations

By Val Herr

In the previous month, I explored unconventional gift-giving ideas to alleviate holiday stress. This month, I urge each of you to prioritize self-care. Nurture your soul and resist allowing the holidays to consume you.

For many people, the holidays are not a time filled with joy. Some are dealing with the loss of loved ones, unrealistic expectations, or financial worries. It's entirely acceptable to say no and reject the pressure to buy gifts for everyone. Instead, suggest doing something together. Maybe have a craft night where everyone comes together and makes ornaments, or have a baking event and bake your favorite holiday treats. The gift of your time is the most precious gift of all.

Does attending all the holiday events leave you feeling drained?

Suggest one large group gathering focused on volunteering. Whether it's serving meals at the Aware Shelter, assisting at food pantries, or supporting non-profits providing Christmas aid, contributing to those in need can be profoundly rewarding. It does not matter if it's a work, friend, or family get-together; challenge the notion that holiday gatherings must follow traditional patterns. If the usual approach doesn't feel right, it's likely others share the sentiment. Take this year as your opportunity to change and do something that fills your soul, not empties it or your wallet.

Do something creative! Attend a concert, join a sing-along, make decorations, or bake up some sweet treats. By doing something creative, you are utilizing different parts of your brain, and it has proven to be a mood lifter and bring down blood pressure.

If you don't schedule time for yourself and things that you love,

your schedule will inevitably fill with the things you feel obliged to do. Remember, you are in charge!

My wish for all of you is that

you make time for whatever nurtures your soul, that you know you are loved and valued, and that you have a Merry Christmas.



Photo by Mara Ket on Unsplash

**SWIM WITH SANTA
AT THE YMCA**

**FREE Community Event
Saturday December 9, 2023
12:30-3:30 pm
Christmas-themed swimming,
games, and more!**

127 W. Wesley St. Jackson, MI 49201
JacksonYMCA.org 517.782.0537

Jackson County Animal Shelter's Adoptable Pets: Muffin and Hercules

Contributed by the
Jackson County
Animal Shelter

Muffin

Meet Muffin, the charming Australian Shepherd mix who arrived as a stray. This handsome guy, at 2 years old, exudes pure joy and friendliness. Muffin welcomes everyone with a wagging tail, showcasing his cheerful disposition. Australian Shepherds are known for their intelligence, good-natured temperament, active lifestyle, and affectionate nature. Muffin embodies all these qualities and is not only a delightful companion but also a beautiful pup. Dog adoptions require an application that can be found at co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/8193/Dog-Adoption-Application-PDF. Availability date is when the dog becomes JCAS property; any necessary medical procedures may delay an adop-

tion. A meet & greet with your dog is mandatory, and a cat room walk-through is available to test reaction. Dogs will go to approved applicants; the adoption fee is \$150 for medium/large dogs and \$250 for puppies/small dogs, which includes vaccinations, microchips, and sterilization.



Hercules

Meet Hercules, a sleek, solid black male domestic shorthair who is five years old. Unfortunately, he found himself in our care after being surrendered by his owner due to health issues. He is extremely relaxed in nature, even taking a catnap during his photo session. His most striking feature is undoubtedly his large golden eyes that you simply can't

overlook. You also cannot deny his sweetness, kindly sharing his living space with many feline roommates. Meet him today at the Jackson County Animal Shelter at 3370 Spring Arbor Road. The adoption fee is \$60 for one cat and \$80 for two, including applicable tests, vaccines, and spaying/neutering. Any necessary medical procedures may slightly postpone an adoption. Visiting the shelter is always best, but you can complete an online application at co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/8194/Cat-Adoption-Application-PDF. Completed applications can be faxed to 517-780-4750 or emailed to animalshelter@mijackson.org. See our website for more information at jacksoncountyanimalshelter.org, and stay up to date by following us on Facebook. Current shelter hours are M, Tu, W, F, 10:00-4:30, Thu 10-7, Sat 10-4.



Navigating the Festive Season with Your Furry Friends

As the holiday season envelops us in a whirlwind of decorations, delectable aromas, and joyful gatherings, it's crucial for pet owners to be vigilant about the potential hazards that can accompany the festivities. While the season is brimming with cheer, it's important to ensure our four-legged friends remain safe and content amidst the holiday hustle and bustle.

Decking the Halls with Pet Safety in Mind

Decorating our homes is a beloved holiday tradition, but it comes with potential dangers for our furry companions. Tinsel, with its sparkling allure, may be tempting for pets, but it poses a serious choking risk if ingested. Placing fragile ornaments higher on the tree helps prevent curious paws from causing accidental mishaps. Additionally, anchoring the Christmas tree securely prevents any unwanted tipping, ensuring the safety of both pets and decorations.



Photo by Jakob Owens on Unsplash

Safe Haven: Providing a Calm Retreat

Tempering Temptation: Foods to Avoid
The irresistible smells of holiday treats can be tantalizing for pets, but not all festive foods are safe for them. It's crucial for pet owners to be aware of potential toxicities. Chocolate, commonly found in holiday sweets, can be harmful, causing adverse effects such as vomiting and, in severe cases, even death. Alcohol is another hazard to keep away from pets, as it can lead to

intoxication and other complications. Rich, spicy foods can also upset a pet's stomach. To avoid emergencies, pet owners should store treats securely out of reach and kindly remind well-meaning guests not to share potentially harmful snacks with their furry friends.

way to cater to their needs, acknowledging that not all pets thrive in the midst of bustling celebrations.

Chilly Winds and Frosty Paws: Winter Weather Considerations

As temperatures drop during the winter season, it's essential to be mindful of the impact on our pets. Just as we bundle up in cozy layers, our furry friends also need protection from the cold. Ensure pets have a warm and comfortable place to rest indoors. Limit their time outdoors in chilly weather, and when they do venture out, consider a pet-friendly sweater or coat to shield them from the cold. Additionally, pet owners should be cautious of antifreeze, a common substance during winter, as it is highly toxic to animals. Wiping pets' paws after outdoor excursions helps prevent them from ingesting any harmful substances they may encounter.

Amidst the joyous chaos of holiday gatherings, pets can feel overwhelmed by loud noises, unfamiliar faces, and exuberant festivities. To ensure their well-being, create a quiet and secure retreat where pets can escape the hustle. Equipping this space with familiar toys, a cozy bed, and a bowl of water provides a safe haven for pets to retreat when the holiday excitement becomes too much. It's a simple yet effective

By adopting these precautionary measures, pet owners can embrace the festive season with confidence, knowing they've created a safe environment for their cherished companions. The holidays are a time of joy, and with a little foresight, pet owners can ensure their furry friends partake in the merriment while safeguarding them from potential hazards that may arise during this special time of year.

New Surface, Lighting for Jackson's Main Pedestrian Trail

By Aaron Dimick,
City of Jackson

Public Information Officer



A new surface and lighting are improving the experience of using the MLK Equality Trail. Construction wrapped up in November on the city's main pedestrian trail.

The trail section from W. Prospect Street to S. West Avenue received a new 12-foot wide concrete path, re-

placing an aging asphalt surface. The path was widened to allow for safer sharing but also bring it up to modern standards and make it more accessible to people with disabilities. Intersections with W. Prospect Street, Fourth Street, and S. West Avenue were made safer by installing new sidewalk ramps and warning lights to alert drivers.

The Parks and Recreation Department has currently secured State and Federal funds to reconstruct 2 miles of the 2.8-mile trail. In 2024, trail sections from

S. MLK Drive to W. Prospect Street and S. West Avenue to the Optimist Rest Shelter will see construction.

Light installations along the trail were completed in the summer of 2023. Also funded by a State grant, 62 LED lights were placed along the path from W. Prospect Street to Weatherwax Drive. The entire length of the trail now has lighting. This improves safety and allows residents to use the path more frequently during the darker months of the year.



Photo courtesy of the City of Jackson

Residents Evan Hendershot and Ian Wilson enjoy the new trail with dog Lleyton.

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Jackson YMCA Celebrates Overwhelming Response in

*Contributed by the
Jackson YMCA*

The Jackson YMCA is thrilled to announce an extraordinary response from subcontractors during the recently concluded bidding process for its transformative facility project. The bidding, which closed on November 21, saw an unprecedented level of engagement from subcontractors eager to contribute to the YMCA's vision.

Initiating this pivotal phase on November 3, the YMCA hosted a pre-bid meeting at the downtown YMCA, drawing nearly 50 subcontractors. The meeting marked the commencement of preparations for the transformative work scheduled to commence in early 2024. Jeff Havranek, Senior Project Manager at Granger Construction, provided insights into the bid process, followed by Buddy Huyler of Colliers Engineering & Design firm, who delved into the design aspects of the project.

Collaborating with esteemed contractors like Granger Construction, GRO, and Colliers Engineering & Design firm, the Jackson YMCA dedicated the summer to streamlining the building project to align with its \$25 million budget. This meticulous effort resulted in significant cost savings, preserving \$5 million while ensuring the continuation of crucial member benefits.

The reimagined Jackson YMCA boasts a new 13,000 square foot addi-

tion, featuring a new entry and commons area, Kid's Zone, wellness space, and improved access to all levels of the building. Renovations will enhance the track, currently accessed by a spiral staircase and elevator, along with upgrades to the HVAC system, lighting, finishes, overall accessibility, and the ability to provide state-licensed childcare.

Inviting over 200 subcontractors to participate across 19 trade categories, the YMCA received an overwhelming response. A total of 72 bids were initially received through the dedicated bidding portal, with additional submissions via email, showcasing the widespread interest in contributing to the revitalization of the Jackson YMCA.

The average number of bids per category was an impressive 3.7, demonstrating the competitive spirit and engagement of subcontractors eager to be part of this significant community project.

"We are thrilled with the overwhelming response from the subcontractor community. It reflects the shared commitment to our mission of transforming the Jackson YMCA into a state-of-the-art facility that will benefit our community for years to come," said Shawna Tello, CEO at the Jackson YMCA.

The YMCA extends its gratitude to all participating subcontractors and expresses appreciation for their dedication to the success of this transformative project.



"We are thrilled with the overwhelming response from the subcontractor community. It reflects the shared commitment to our mission of transforming the Jackson YMCA into a state-of-the-art facility that will benefit our community for years to come."
- Shawna Tello, CEO

November's Successful Subcontractor Bidding Process



About the Jackson YMCA

The Jackson YMCA is a community-focused organization dedicated to promoting health and wellness through programs and services that nurture the potential of every individual and family in the greater Jackson area. For more information, visit www.jacksonymca.org.

National Apprenticeship Week Highlights Vital Pathway To Rewarding Careers, Economic Growth

Contributed by the Workforce Development Institute

The Michigan AFL-CIO Workforce Development Institute is spotlighting their skilled-trades apprenticeships readiness programs on the heels of a study showing union construction apprenticeships far outpacing non-union ones, a key to tackling industry labor shortages.

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) prompts employers, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, workforce partners, education providers, and government leaders to showcase the successes and value of Registered Apprenticeships. The U.S. Department of Labor declared the first NAW in 2015. With the theme, "Registered Apprenticeship: Superhighway to Good Jobs," this year's NAW runs Nov. 13-19.

Chong-Anna Canfora, Executive Director of the Michigan AFL-CIO Workforce Development Institute (WDI), said apprenticeships drive economic growth by building a pipeline of skilled talent.

"Apprenticeships help turbo-charge our local, state, and national economies," said Canfora. "They make sure we have a steady flow of well-trained, quality workers across manufacturing, construction, skilled trades, energy, and many other industries."

"Even more, apprenticeships offer a debt-free, earn-while-you-learn pathway to rewarding, good-paying careers. These opportunities are accessible to populations who are often underrepresented in these industries," she added. "It's exciting to see the powerful impact of union apprenticeships in diversifying the industry."

WDI Builds Pathways to Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer career development to future workers across many different industries, from construction and skilled trades to health care and cybersecurity. Apprentices gain paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentoring, and a credential in their field.

According to apprenticeship.gov, there are 12,632 active apprenticeships in union settings in Michigan, an increase of 120% over the past decade and paying

16% more per hour on average than non-union apprenticeships. WDI's Access for All program has an 81% employment rate, with 56% of its completers going into apprenticeships. They have also exceeded statewide benchmarks for new and active apprenticeships among women, people of color, and youth.

WDI offers training and resources to people pursuing skilled-trades careers. According to Canfora, WDI's training programs prepare students for apprenticeships in construction through class lectures, mentoring, hands-on labs, and onsite industry experience. There is no cost to participants, and all receive case management and a variety of supportive services.

WDI's programs include Access For All, involving 300 hours of construction trades training; Women In Skilled Trades, a 16-week program aimed at equipping women for apprenticeships; and Fast Track, a four-month plan that gives hands-on experience to students through subcontractors.

Canfora said 2023's NAW observance is especially important in light of a recent study showing the strength of union construction apprenticeships. The study, released in August by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, noted the following:

- Apprenticeships led jointly by unions and signatory contractors enroll more than 75% of Michigan's construction apprentices.
- Union-based apprenticeships see completion rates that are 15 percentage points higher than employer-only, non-union programs.
- Union apprenticeships deliver more workers and a more diverse workforce, including higher Black and Hispanic participation compared to other post-secondary programs.
- Union apprenticeships deliver more training hours for participants than programs at the college level. They also leave participants free of student debt and lead to higher-than-average post-secondary wages.

The full study is available at tinyurl.com/MEPIapprenticeshipstudy.

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College & Career Access Center, December Scholarships

Science Ambassador Scholarship

Eligibility:

- Open to women in science, technology, engineering or math.
- Must attend college (or plan to attend college) in the United States or a United States Territory.
- Only open to undergraduate students and high school seniors.
- All fields within science, technology, engineering, and math are eligible.

Description:

To apply, film a three-minute educational video of yourself explaining a STEM topic you're passionate about. To apply, you must be a high school senior or an undergraduate college student. Your video should be:

- A mini-lecture, not a personal statement. Pretend you're a lecturer speaking to a class. Teach us something.

- Clear, creative, accurate, and a demonstration of your passion for the subject. We value novel, memorable approaches to topics. Your video doesn't need to be fancy or high-tech. Production value is not a factor.

- Three minutes or less in length. Videos longer than this will not be considered. No exceptions!

- About any STEM topic, not necessarily your field of study. Pick a topic that excites and fascinates you. We don't need to hear about the latest thing in science news (unless that's your jam).

- Scientifically accurate. We encourage you to cite the sources used to research your topic. Ideally, this would be in a slide or frame at the end of your video. You can use any citation format you'd like.

- Uploaded to YouTube and marked 'public.' No exceptions!

Award: \$1,000 - Full tuition for four years

Deadline: December 13, 2023

Application: <https://www.scienceambassadorscholarship.org/>

Burger King Scholarship

Eligibility:

- Be living in the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico
- Be graduating high school seniors (U.S. and Puerto Rico), graduating from grade 12 (Canada), or graduating from home-

school education in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or Canada

- Have a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent
- Plan to enroll full-time, without interruption, for the entire 2022-23 academic year at an accredited two- or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school in the U.S., Canada, or Puerto Rico

Description:

The BURGER KING McLAMORE Foundation is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) public nonprofit that believes without education you limit your potential to be your own way. It is our mission to create brighter futures by empowering individuals and feeding potential through education and emergency relief.

Deadline: December 15, 2023

Award: Range from \$1,000 to \$50,000

Application: <https://scholarshipamerica.org/scholarship/burger-king-scholars-program/>

Eastern Michigan University Presidential Scholarship Competition

Details: Eastern Michigan's Presidential Scholarships are awarded competitively using the application process detailed below. Qualified students apply to receive our largest academic award. In addition to completing the application process, interested prospective students will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be officially admitted to EMU as a traditional incoming Freshman for Fall 2023
- Applicants must have at least a 3.5** cumulative GPA and 25 composite ACT or 1200 SAT
- Complete application information (detailed below) by December 15, 2023.
- Students must register for the Presidential Scholarship by December 15, 2023. * Registration will become available in August 2023.
- Once registered, you will receive an email with our required supplemental application.

Award: Full Ride (valued at approximately \$73,600 over four years.)

Deadline: December 15, 2023 - Early Application Suggested!

Application: <https://www.emich.edu/admissions/undergraduate/psc.php>

The Top Ten List Scholarship

Eligibility:

- Must be at least 14 years of age.
- Must be a legal United States resident.
- Must be a resident of one of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia.
- Must be enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution of higher education by Fall 2024.

Description:

There are many scholarships and colleges that want to know the number one thing you want people to know about you. Just one? That's it? "But, I'm amazing," you say. We hear you, and we know that it's tough to narrow down your awesomeness into one measly reason.

So, inspired by David Letterman and his top ten lists, we created the Top Ten List Scholarship. With so many awards based on grades and extracurricular activities, this unique scholarship gives you the chance to show us what's truly special and different about you. Get creative, be serious, or tug at our heart strings. Whatever you do, you only have ten reasons to convince us, so make each one count.

Award: \$1,500

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Application: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/top-ten-list-scholarship>

Gen and Kelly Tanabe Scholarship

Eligibility:

- 9th-12th grade high school students, college students, or graduate school students who are legal U.S. residents.
- Students not currently in school must plan to enroll in a higher education program within 12 months.
- A brief personal statement is required.

Description:

The Gen and Kelly Tanabe Scholarship is a merit-based program which means financial need is not considered. The selection of the winner is made by an independent panel of judges and is based primarily on the quality of the submitted personal statement. Past academic performance (e.g., grades and standardized test scores) are not considered. The goal is to create a level field where students have complete control over their applications and are not given an

advantage or disadvantage based on financial or academic circumstances.

Award: \$1,000

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Application: <https://www.genkellyscholarship.com/apply>

Society for Technical Communication Student Scholarships

Eligibility:

- Applicants must have completed at least one year of post-secondary education.
- Applicants must be working toward a bachelor's degree, graduate degree, or a graduate certificate in communication of information about technical subjects.
- Applicants must have at least one full year of academic work remaining to complete their degree program, although under exceptional circumstances an award may be granted to a student for the final half-year.

Description:

The Student Scholarship assists students who are pursuing an accredited undergraduate or graduate degree or graduate certificate program in some aspect of technical communication.

Award:

\$500

Deadline:

December 31, 2023

Application: <https://www.stc.org/honors-awards-and-recognition/scholarship/>

Single Parent Scholarships

Eligibility:

- Have primary physical custody of one or more minor children
- Be enrolled full or part-time as an undergraduate at an accredited college or university
- Have a GPA of 3.0 or higher or be a first-semester student

* The scholarship is open to single parent students around the world. If you're outside the US, you should have the equivalent of 3.0 GPA or higher on your university's grading scale.

Description:

To apply, email us at scholarships@custodyexchange.com with your contact details, and attach the following:

- A 400 - 500-word essay: "How will you use your education to improve your family?" (Please include a brief explanation of your parenting situation).

• Your unofficial college transcript — or your admissions letter, if you're in your first semester

Award: \$1,000

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Application: <https://www.custodyexchange.com/scholarships/>

NRA Civil Rights Defense Fund Youth Essay Contest

Eligibility:

The contest is open to all students enrolled, or who will be enrolled, in an elementary, junior high, or high school during that academic year, including homeschooled students in an equivalent grade level, who have not previously received a prize in their category. For example, a previous winner in the junior category, who is now eligible for the senior category, may submit an entry.

Description:

The NRA Civil Rights Defense Fund sponsors a scholarly writing contest for grades K-12. The theme for the essay is "What does the Second Amendment mean to you?" Essays will be judged in two categories: Senior (grades 9-12) and junior (grades 8 and below).

Award: \$1,000, \$600, \$200, \$100

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Application: <https://www.nradefensefund.org/essay-contest/>

Undergraduate Scholarship for Veterans

Eligibility:

- The legal child (natural or adoptive) of a veteran of any branch of U.S. military service (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Coast Guard) who is either a:

- High school senior with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or
- Student currently attending or enrolled in an accredited community college or undergraduate degree program with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

Description:

The law firm of Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick LTD awards an annual \$1,500 scholarship to the child of a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

Award: \$1,500

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Application: <https://studentscholarships.org/scholarship/24407/undergraduate-scholarship-for-veterans>

Meet Mo, the Tegu

By Jean McKim,
Imagine Planet

Our Space Exploration Theme Day in November was a success, and we have many activities planned for December. For your holiday shopping needs, consider our gift shop, where everything is priced under \$15!

This month's featured animal ambassador is Mo, the tegu. Tegus are a group of lizards native to South America and have become an invasive species in Florida and other southeastern states. They are a distant relative of monitor lizards - such as the Komodo Dragon - and are an example of convergent evolution, much like dolphins and sharks. However, unlike monitor lizards they are known for their good natures.

There are several species of tegu found in the pet trade. Mo, who is likely a red tegu (*Salvator rufescens*), is believed to be a female and can grow to be 4 to 5 ft. She may be slightly smaller due to being a rescue from her previous owner. Although she requires a spacious cage, once settled, she will be able to roam and play freely. Currently, Mo seems to be brumating, a form of hibernation that is natural but not necessary. A thermostat, bought with funds from a grant from the Youth Action Committee of the Jackson Community Foundation, will help regulate the tempera-

ture which has to be 82-86 degrees Fahrenheit, with a basking temp of 100-115 degrees Fahrenheit. Tegus also need UVB light bulbs to stay healthy and calcium supplements. Mo loves to eat our button quail eggs, as well as frozen/thawed mice and fruit.

Due to their temperament compared to the monitor lizard group, these large lizards are popular as pets. Their care needs and large size, however, lead to them being released in southern states where they are now an invasive species. It's crucial never to release a pet animal into the wild, as it poses severe risks to both the animal and the ecosystem. Most released pets suffer a tragic fate, particularly in Michigan's harsh environment.

Like many of our animal ambassadors, Mo the tegu will be teaching visitors about the challenges, time, and money involved in exotic animal care. This holiday season, resist impulsive purchases, conduct thorough research on care requirements, and invest in a spacious cage for any caged animal. Happy Holidays!

Imagine Planet is open from 12 pm to 5 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, including holiday break weeks. Come in and meet Mo!



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Does Clean Up Mean Chaos?

By Trista Rink,
Community Action Agency

Children acquire various skills through play, encompassing social-emotional, artistic, literacy, language, and mathematical abilities. Convincing a child to transition to clean-up time can sometimes lead to heightened frustration for both the child and the caregiver.

Let's explore a few effective transition support strategies to navigate the potential chaos during clean-up time. Introducing enjoyable transitions, such as playing music and aiming to complete the clean-up before the song concludes, can infuse some fun into the process, eliciting laughter from both the child and caregiver. Another engaging method involves playing "Stop and Go," prompting the child to clean on "Go" and freeze on "Stop." Utilizing a timer serves multiple purposes: it provides a 5-minute playing extension or creates a

sense of urgency to finish cleaning before the timer runs out.

Communication is key; talk to your child about upcoming clean-up time, explain that it is time to transition, and outline what activities may follow after things are tidied. Children, absorbed in their learning and play, might find it challenging to understand why it's time to conclude. Additionally, establish clear expectations for item placement by labeling bins, drawers, or boxes with pictures, aiding young children in matching items with their designated locations. Each of these transitioning techniques offers valuable learning opportunities.

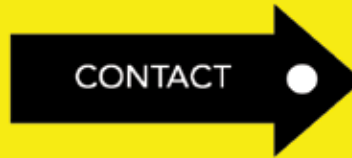
If clean-up time becomes a significant challenge and ideas are elusive in the moment, take a brief break to play with the child. Sometimes, you may need a break yourself!

Revised from the December 2021 edition.



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7 Tips to Prep Your Vehicle for Safe Winter Travel

Family Features - While snow may be one of the highlights of winter, wet roads and ice can make for dangerous driving conditions. Cold temperatures and slick roads can wreak havoc on vehicles, making even a short commute across town a hazardous trip.

Before you step into the driver's seat this winter, pay special attention to the safety of your vehicle and consider these tips from the experts at your local Discount Tire to ensure you're ready to hit the road.

Install Winter Tires

Built for the cold and designed for better traction in winter conditions when temperatures drop below 45 F, winter tires can provide better traction on slippery, wet and icy roads, which can lead to striking curbs and other objects that scratch, dent and scuff wheels. Changing wheels and tires each season can ensure you have the best traction possible and protect summer or all-season wheels from the harsh effects of snow, ice and road-clearing chemicals like salt.

Keep Traction on Winter Roads

Tread depth determines a vehicle's safe stopping distance, which is vital during winter weather when all-season tires can take an average of 110 feet to stop at 30 miles per hour compared to 81 feet in the same conditions for winter tires. You can check the tread depth by sticking a penny upside-

down in a tread groove – it's time to replace your tires if President Lincoln's head is visible.

Check Tire Pressure

Tires lose air due to impacts and pressure of bumps and turns. Colder temperatures can also impact air pressure. For every 10-degree drop in ambient temperature, tires lose one pound of pressure (PSI). At least once a month, especially before long trips, check the pressure in your tires or stop by a Discount Tire location. Low pressure can lead to poor handling and gas mileage, excessive wear and overloading. Keep a tire pressure gauge in your vehicle to ensure

each tire is filled to the manufacturer's recommended inflation level and add air as necessary.

Update Your Wiper Blades

In cold and icy winter weather, wiper blades can stiffen and become damaged. While your wiper blades' lifespan will vary based on where you live and the weather you deal with, experts recommend replacing them every six months. If your wiper blades squeak or leave streaks on your windshield, it's time to replace them.

Know the Age of Your Tires

The older a tire, the

higher its risk for failure. As tires age, the rubber becomes harder and brittle, losing elasticity and strength. Check the DOT number stamped on your tires' sidewalls to see if it's time for replacement. If you're not sure what tires are right for your vehicle, a tool like Treadwell allows you to easily input vehicle information and driving habits to receive a personalized recommendation.

Rotate Tires Often

Regular tire rotations help ensure proper traction. Tires should be rotated every 6,000 miles, or earlier if uneven wear develops. One easy way to remember: Have your tires rotated

every other time you have your oil changed.

Check for a Spare Tire

Many newer vehicles have replaced spare tires with tire inflation kits that include puncture-coating sealants and air compressors or run-flat tires. Check to see what your vehicle has and consider adding a roadside assistance plan in case you experience any issues during inclement weather.

To locate a store near you, or search for winter tires specific to your vehicle and driving habits, visit discounttire.com, where you can save up to 30% on wait times in-store, or use the mobile app.



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