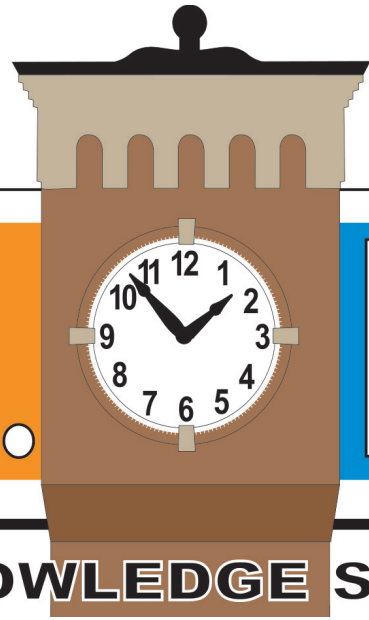


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JACKSON AREA COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE SOURCE

Sandhill Crane Vineyards Celebrates Autumn with Cranes Fest

- page 2



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Jackson Area Collaborative Knowledge Source. This community resource guide is designed to improve the lives of children and strengthen families in the Jackson community by providing fun and useful information.

**Learn more at
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Stefanie Riggs
Publisher
jacksfamilyguide@gmail.com

Morgan Riggs
Managing Editor

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Vineyard to Host Cranes Fest

Contributed by Sandhill Crane Vineyards
Once again Sandhill Crane Vineyards celebrates autumn with their annual Cranes Fest, October 26, 2019.

The Sandhill Crane is celebrated with this fun festival. Sandhill Crane Vineyards sets among The Big 400, a tourism area surrounding the Waterloo and Pickney Recreation Areas. In the fall, Sandhill Cranes gather in staging areas to begin the migration process. During the height of the staging period thousands of Cranes can be seen in the area. Sandhill Crane Vineyards sits just miles away from the Haehnle Bird Sanctuary which is home to numerous cranes throughout the season.

Cranes Fest will run from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. The



winery's cafe will be open all day with live music from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. In addition to tasting, wine for purchase by the bottle or glass is available. They will also be

offering a descent on their Cabernet Sauvignon.

Admission is free with wine tasting available for \$6 per person. For more information call 517.764.0679.



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Learn to be a Tourist in Your Hometown

Fall Color Tours Right in Our Own Backyards!

By Val Herr



Fall has officially arrived! While I do love every season (winter the least) I especially love fall. I'm all about apples, pumpkins, bon fires and fall colors.

You don't have to drive up north to experience the wonder of fall colors. The Brooklyn-Irish Hills Chamber provides an amazing suggested fall color tour:

- Begin your fall color tour on M-50 at Hidden Lake Gardens
- Go West on M-50
- North (right) on US-12
- North (right) on Wamplers Lake Rd/M124/Hayes State Park Entrance
- South (left) on Pink St

- East (left) on US-12
- South (right) on Springville Hwy.
- West (right) on M-50
- West (left) on Laird Rd. turns into Prospect Hill Hwy.
- West (right) on Round Lake Hwy.
- North (right) on Round Lake Hwy.
- East (right) on US-12
- North (left) on Brooklyn Rd
- North (left) on M-50 to the Village of Brooklyn

To see other ideas for fall tours check out this link: <http://www.irishhill-srecreation.com/#>

As always, break out of your routine and learn to be a tourist in your own hometown.

It Still Takes a Village to Live Your Best Life

By Wendy Clow
Executive Director,
Habitat for Humanity



We've all heard the phrase, "It takes a village..." It's one of the many ideas from the beginning of civilization

that worked well. Back then, it was a phrase that literally described how families and villages functioned. Generations of families often lived together their entire lives. Everyone in the household had a role in the daily life of the family: hunting and gathering food, cooking, childcare, healing, fixing, building... One person couldn't do it all, but it all had to be done, so each person did what they could, based on age, gender, skills, size, etc., and it worked. There was a similar dynamic in the village, between households. Families with different needs and different strengths looked after each other.

Sometimes it feels like we've moved away from the idea of the "village" in modern life. But really, it's still there; it's just evolved over time to look a bit different. Yesterday's "villages" are today's "communities".

What are communities, and why are they important?

Communities come in all different shapes and sizes. A city is a community, as is the county it sits in. There are communities of race, communities of churches, communities around hobbies, and communities of income levels. Different industries of work create communities. And your community could be the block, apartment building, condominium, or mobile home park you live in.

Communities are important, because every person, in different stages of life, contribute certain necessary functions. Common roles in

every community are:

- People who have lived longer (elders), with experience and wisdom
- People who have specific skills to do necessary work
- People who have experience and knowledge who can teach
- People who need care (children and senior citizens)
- People who need to learn (children and people new to the community)

Generally, we move through the different stages and fill various roles as we grow in our lives. The elderly woman who provides childcare for her grandkids was once the parent, who was once the child, who relied on a different elder (perhaps) for childcare. The teacher was once the student. The experienced manager responsible for keeping the company moving forward and mentoring the new worker was once the new worker who came to the community (company) with fresh energy and ideas, who was once the student learning the trade...

Young families' lives are so hectic that sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the busy-ness and never get to know neighbors, co-workers, classmates, etc. But even in this busy world, we find ourselves organically developing communities where people naturally fall into roles and fill needs. It's how humans are designed. We're 'pack animals'. We need others, and society works best when we live and work together.

If we didn't have communities, there would be large gaps of needs not being met. For example, it would be difficult for a family to do everything required for daily life without the help of its community. The stay-at-home parent that lives next door can get neighbor kids off the bus and watch them until parents come home from work. The man

across the street who works as a mechanic can mentor the teenage boy who is interested in cars. The retired couple down the street can babysit young children while mom runs errands. A young man with a snowblower clears driveways for his neighbors, especially the elderly or disabled. The examples are endless.

The important message is that it still does "take a village...". In order to live your best life:

- Get to know your neighbors.
- Create a support network for people similar to you.
- Make the effort to bring people together.
- Participate in neighborhood activities.
- Look out for and help each other.

Your community is your extended family, full of pieces of different sizes and shapes that all fit together to create a whole. It's who we are. It's what we do.

Wendy Clow is the Executive Director of Greater Jackson Habitat for Humanity. She lives in Jackson with husband, Scott Clow, two step children and two fur children: a beagle named Cletus and a mixed Beagle/Rottweiler named Harley. Wendy also has two adult children: Shelby, who is a CT tech at Henry Ford Allegiance Health, and Jake, who is a Michigan State Trooper in the Ludington area.



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Revitalized Downtown Jackson Alley Named for Woman Who Escaped Slavery

By Aaron Dimick,
Public Information Officer,
City of Jackson



A revitalized alley in Downtown Jackson has been named for a woman who came to Jackson seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad. At their meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019, the Jackson City Council approved the renaming of Victory Lane on W. Michigan Avenue for Emma Nichols. The alley will now be known as Emma Nichols Garden.

The alley between 159 W. Michigan Ave. and 151 W. Michigan Ave. was named Victory Lane in 2004 in honor of Jackson's connections to the Michigan International Speedway. In recent years, Victory Lane underwent several structural changes due to building improvements to the two neighboring buildings, along with infrastructure changes because of a collapsed sewer underneath the pavement. Signage in the alley also had to be removed due to vandalism.

Once just a concrete alley, Victory Lane has undergone major changes this year. A new walking path has been added that connects W. Michigan Avenue to an improved parking lot behind Jackson City Hall. This path is surrounded by trees and other landscaping. A patio has been added to the alley that can be utilized by the building on the east side of the alley, which will soon feature a new restaurant. New murals from the Bright Walls Mural Festival were recently painted along the alley. An effort to rename the area was launched by City Manager's Office staff to better reflect the new and improved area. Naming the alley for Emma Nichols was determined after discussions with other City staff.

Emma Nichols, an African-American woman, was born a slave in Virginia in 1830. Historic research indicates she escaped slavery in Virginia, and came to the City of Jackson on the Underground Railroad seeking freedom. Jackson has since been identified as an active stop on the Underground Railroad, with white residents aiding



Photo contributed by The City of Jackson

escaped slaves. Nichols and her husband, Richard, made Jackson their home, living in a house on Biddle Street for their remaining years. Emma Nichols died in 1916, and is buried in Mt. Evergreen Cemetery. Her descendants are still living in the Jackson community. Also buried in the cemetery are white residents who assisted in the Underground

Railroad in Jackson.

The renaming initiative received unanimous support from the Jackson City Council. Councilmember Kelsey Heck, who represents the downtown area, says renaming the alley for Emma Nichols reflects the diversity of the community and further promotes inclusivity in the City's public spaces. "This renaming honors the

bravery and legacy of Nichols, and other people who sought freedom in our community. It also honors Jackson residents who assisted the Underground Railroad and helped others achieve freedom," Heck said.

City staff are now working on getting new signage for the alley to reflect the new name. An unveiling is planned later this fall.




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Parenting: When to Hold On and When to Let Go

By Kristin Klug
Children's Programs Manager
Community Action Agency

Parenting is the most rewarding and sometimes challenging thing you can experience.

I am a new, empty nester and learning the ropes of military life, as my youngest is currently at Navy boot camp. I am an introverted person but I find myself reaching out through social media to support groups to learn from others with similar experiences to get through this time of transition.

I realize the journey of parenting is supposed to lead to this place. Raising confident, competent young adults who leave to follow their own path. Knowing that and processing the feelings associated with letting them go are two very different things.

Parenting is all about holding on and letting go. Reflect on how many times this happens throughout your child's life:

- New parents learning about how to care for a newborn and being so consumed but leaving them with someone for the first time.

- Holding your toddlers hand and letting it go so they can creep along the couch, looking back at you for reassurance.

- Supporting your child through first days of preschool, elementary, middle and high school and then on to college, the military, trade school or work.

- Play dates, sleep overs, first dates, learning to drive...all of these experiences gaining confidence with letting them go little by little.

- Giving your young adult space to try new things and make their own decisions but being there for support and advice when needed.

During your parenting journey, take advantage of the wisdom of others to learn from their successes and mistakes. It truly does take a village to raise

a child. One great resource I have used in my personal and professional life is the National Parent Helpline at 1.855.4A.PARENT (855) 427-2736. This free, confidential helpline provides emotional support, resources and advice about many parenting related topics. Remember you are not in this alone.

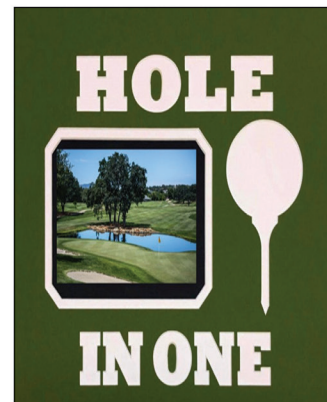


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Jackson Public Schools Bring all Communities Together

Contributed By
Jackson Public Schools

With a multitude of course offerings already available, ranging from early college, to AP chemistry, AP Literature, band, newspaper, Spanish, French and German, the school district introduced Mandarin Chinese to Jackson High School in 2017 as a way to provide more learning opportunities for students.

"We are the only school in the county that offers Mandarin to their high school students," said Dr. William Patterson, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Curriculum. "I love that we continue to expose our JPS students to a variety of different learning opportunities. These learning experiences will serve our students well as they enter the workforce or college.

Mandarin Chinese is offered through the Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP). This program brings one new exchange teacher to Jackson High School every year to teach students Mandarin Chinese and continue building the program.

"This will be the third consecutive year for Jackson High School offering Mandarin through the Teachers of Critical Language Program," Dr. Patterson said. "Our first Mandarin exchange teacher helped us establish our curriculum. Last year, our next teacher continued to build on the curriculum and

increased the number of students who took Mandarin as a World Language offering. Jinsong Chen, our new Mandarin exchange teacher, I feel will be equally as great. She is already off to an outstanding beginning."

Chen arrived at Jackson High School with years of experience under her belt. After graduating from Liaoning Normal University in Liaoning Province, China, she went on to teach high school English for 26 years in China before deciding to apply for the TCLP.

"When I knew about this program, I felt very excited because this is a completely new chance for me to experience a different culture and teach Mandarin to different students," Chen said.

Besides her excitement for this new opportunity, Chen is eager to experience American culture and learn about the education system, one that is completely different from China's education system.

In America, there is often a balance between lecture-based teaching and hands-on learning. There is also an emphasis on exposing students to the arts and other extracurricular activities at an early age as well as offering them a multitude of courses and electives to choose from. In China, however, it is the complete opposite.

Chen is used to teaching a lecture without any hands-on learning due to

the fact that China's education system focuses on standardized-testing and places an importance on passing the college entrance exam to get into college. Students have little to no time for extracurricular activities because they often attend school and study for more than 12 hours a day.

"The teaching methods are different," Chen said. "In [America], you have more activities to engage students in your lessons. But in China, we don't have that much time to do this because students are eager to find the quickest way to improve their scores, so the teachers must satisfy their demands."

With almost 26 years of teaching experience behind her, Chen is excited to finally have her own classroom.

In China, "teachers don't have such a classroom," Chen said. "The whole class is always in the same classroom, and every teacher of different subjects comes to this class to teach."

Since arriving in America, Chen has done her best to adjust to the new culture and appreciates Jackson High School teacher Jonell Hasselback-Zenker, parent liaisons Kristy Dillon and Erin Slater, and many other people in the community who have helped her make the transition. She is excited to spend the next year of her life in Jackson, Mich.



and has many goals she hopes to accomplish.

"I hope I can become somewhat of a culture ambassador and let myself also experience American culture, and when I come back to China, I can communicate these things to my colleagues, to my students," Chen said. "I think it's really good, a bridge for them to know more about the American society, American students, American life. I think it's really beneficial for me to do this."

With a busy year ahead and plans to improve students' competency and knowledge of Mandarin Chinese and the Chinese culture, Chen also hopes to set aside some time to check a few things off her bucket list.

"Too many places I want to visit," Chen said. "Time is limited. I want to go to a NBA game because one of my hobbies is to watch

NBA games, and also I want to watch a figure skating competition. I want to go to the West Coast [and] lots of museums."

As Jackson High School heads into its third year offering Mandarin Chinese and continues bridging the gap between two different cultures, it's evident why people should "Believe the Hype!"

"During my work with American Councils over the last three years, I came across a quote from Leon Panetta, 'America's leadership in a global world depends on our ability to understand that world. And there is no better way to understand others than to speak their language.' I believe we are preparing our Jackson High students to compete in a global society," Dr. Patterson said. "This is just one of the many reasons why Jackson Public Schools is so great!"

It's a Great Day to be a Viking!

ENROLL TODAY!

jpsk12.org



October is a Month to Sparkle & Shine at JSA

By Amy Fracker,
Assistant Director

October is a month to SPARKLE and SHINE and I'm not kidding. Jackson School of the Arts has some events that you won't want to miss. Sparkle & Shine Day



A Special Free Event for Kids to Discover the Arts. Saturday, October 12 from 2:00 to 3:30PM

Sometimes we need to help introduce our children to new things. Our Sparkle & Shine Day is a perfect opportunity for this. Free to try. Fun and supportive atmosphere for kids. All you need to do is go to Jacksonarts.org and register for this free event. It's funny how many times I think I'm not going to like something and then I try and it's so much fun! I recently tried clogging, a class we teach here at JSA. It was so much more than I thought! I kind of mocked clogging, but now that I know - watch out! It is high energy and a fantastic workout.

JoJo Siwa Dance Camp Friday, October 11th from 5:00 to 7:30 PM

This kids night out is con-

veniently scheduled for a Friday night and lasts for 2 1/2 hours so parents can sneak off for a night on the town. Our Dance Camp attendees will not only enjoy a dinner of pizza and fruit, but will learn some dance moves to JoJo Siwa's up-beat music (which will then lead to a performance for parents when it's time to pick them up). We also have some fun art projects planned for them as well. Cost: \$25 for 2 1/2 hour party with dinner and supplies included!

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Saturday, October 19 from 1 to 2PM Ages 7 to 18

Presented by Wendi Dubois, Artistic Director at Ballet Chelsea

In this one-hour session, Ms. Dubois will help you develop your own skill set in a non-competitive and fun environment. This is a great choice for students who wish to learn about or refine the fundamentals of ballet or those who are looking to refresh or recharge their technique. For those that have some ballet experience, this is a great way to challenge your ballerina and expose them to new material.

Just a few of the things happening at Jackson School of the Arts this Oc-

tober and I didn't even mention Halloween. It isn't too late to register for classes

so you can join in on the fun. I'm a huge fan of the autumn season and I love seeing all

the wonderful events that our community partners are doing for the fall.

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Bids 'N' Stuff Annual Auction to Take Place on October 12

By Kids 'N' Stuff

Bids 'N' Stuff invitations have been mailed for the annual Kids 'N' Stuff auction Oct. 12. The event from 6 to 9 PM at the children's museum located at 301 S. Superior St, features silent and live auction items that will benefit the downtown museum.

Tickets are also available online at the KNS website or at the museum for \$30 per attendee. At the door tickets are \$35. Tables for 8 are also available for \$250 sponsorship. Seating will be limited due to space constraints so sponsorship guarantees seating for auction guests.

Proceeds from the auction themed "Just Add Wa-

ter" will help fund a new water table to replace the aging exhibit. Guests will be able to bid at a select few items at the live auction and on desirable silent auction items. An on-catalog of items from the live and silent auctions will be posted to help guests decide on items before the event. Items are only available at the auction. No pre-bidding or on-line is allowed.

During the casual evening auction-goers will experience the museum exhibits while sipping wine, enjoying selections from the Malleable brewery and sampling appetizers donated by local venues.

A raffle with three items, 1/5 carat diamond ear-

rings donated by Petersen Jewelers, a wine cabinet restock contributed by the KNS board of directors and a FitBit donated by Mae Ola and Robert Dunklin will be a highlight of the evening. Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$10 each at the auction or sent in with reservations.

A few of the auction items include a two-night stay at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, an American Girl doll, Brass Band of Battle Creek tickets, a hand-blown glass pumpkin from Boyer Glassworks and consignment travel packages to New York City, Colorado and Great Britain. There will be many more experiences and items for




guests to bid on during the annual auction which is the KNS major fundraiser.

Auction attendees will also have free valet parking staffed by Albion College students. Optional donations for parking will go to a charity of the students'

choice.

Invitees are urged to send in responses by Oct. 1 to the Bids 'N' Stuff Auction to help support KNS, "win" wonderful experiences and items and possibly be the lucky bidders for fantastic trips.

If your business or organization would like to submit an article for FREE publication, please do so by the 3rd Friday of each month.



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The 12 Do's & Don'ts of Wearing Halloween Makeup

By Victoria Beaman
Owner, The V Spa



#1. Do look gory and weird! If there is one occasion when you can look gruesome and monstrous without getting any violent reaction, this is it. So dress up and create your makeup based on the Halloween character that you prefer.

#2. Don't use makeup from a Halloween store! Though you'd probably think that it will just be good for one use, you have to know that these products can cause break-outs and clog pores even with single use.

#3. Do wear loose clothing when applying makeup. Unless you want your clothes to look hideous after your makeup is done, you have to choose clothes that you can easily pull over your head. Before getting your makeup on, make sure to be in button-up shirts or dresses that you can easily remove.

#4. Don't put your best clothes on. While you still want to look your best on Halloween, you should keep in mind that after the day is over, you will end up with messy clothes especially with all the face and body makeup that you will use.

#5. Do use a professional-grade barrier cream. This is to ensure that your skin will be protected from the heaps of makeup that you will be applying. Likewise, you will find this necessary if you want to make sure that the Halloween colours that you'll put on your face won't stain your skin until the next day

#6. Don't disregard labels! There are certain cosmetics with ingredients that can cause acne and other skin problems. It is best to avoid those that contain isopropyl myristate which is commonly found in eye-liners. Although it makes it easier for products to glide onto the skin, this ingredient is also known to cause acne.

#7. Do apply a primer before makeup application. Choose a primer that contains dimethicone to ensure skin protection when creating your Halloween look. By doing so, you will be able to create a barrier that will

protect your skin from irritating ingredients. Furthermore, it will help keep your makeup in place.

#9. Do refer to images when copying a look. If you want to recreate an iconic Halloween character, it is best to bring an image that will help your makeup artist achieve the look you want. Even if you're wearing large glasses, porcelain veneers, or even braces, you have nothing to worry about. Your transformation can be achieved easily with the expertise of a pro!

#10. Don't skip using cold cream when removing makeup. Make sure that before wetting your skin, you will apply a cold cream and wipe it off with a washcloth. A face wash and moisturiser should complete your cleansing routine.

#11. Do avoid pore-clogging oils. The usual face cleanser that you're using may not be enough to get rid of your Halloween makeup. It is best to use oils prior to using your cleanser. Choose the ones that can dissolve makeup such as argan oil, jojoba oil, and almond oil. However, there are also those that you must avoid including safflower and olive oils which can clog your pores.

#12. Don't go to bed with your makeup on. While on usual days, it is not advised to go to sleep wearing your makeup, you have more reason to be strict about this when it comes to your Halloween makeup.

Now that you already know what to do and what to avoid when creating your Halloween makeup, the next thing that you'd probably want to know are the best Halloween makeup looks to copy so you can become the star of the night.

Utilize You Tube, Instagram and Pinterest for finding your Halloween Makeup Tutorial.

And remember to have fun with it, no stress.

Happy Haunting
Victoria XXOO

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Who Qualifies:

- Children age 3 or 4 by December 1
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- Children with disabilities
- Families experiencing homelessness



Community Action Agency's Head Start

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Meet Our Staff

From Deserts to Drylands, Beardies are Everywhere!

Contributed by Imagine Planet

This month's animal ambassadors of the month are Tank and Goldilocks, our bearded dragons. Bearded dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*) are native to Australia and occupy a large range of habitats, from desert to dry forests and scrublands. They are named after their characteristic "beards", expandable throat pouches with spiny scales, which turn black when the lizard is agitated.

Beardies are opportunistic feeders, eating just about anything. That doesn't mean that they should eat anything. They need crickets or other insects dusted with reptile calcium powder and can eat greens daily (no iceberg lettuce) and fruit as treats. The two main requirements for keeping healthy bearded dragons are heat and UVB light.

Bearded dragons can grow to 24 inches long and their average lifespan is 6 to 10 years, although there are reports of some living twice as long. Tank is definitely over 10 years old,



although we are not exactly sure of his age. He is sandy brown colored and is very used to being handled. Goldilocks is younger and female. She has a golden color which is an adaptation found in the wild based on the color of the soil found in some areas. Red is another color that breeders have been breeding for.

Beardies make great beginner lizard pets as long as you are able to provide the heat and

special lighting they require. We use special desert lights found at a pet store to provide UVB and brooder lamps to provide heat. It is important to use fixtures with ceramic bases made for the wattages you are using. They will not grow correctly and their bones will be deformed if the UV radiation is not supplied. The UV lights will still give off light, but will not give off the necessary wavelengths after 6 months or so. It is better to change it too soon than too late. The larger the enclosure for adult beardies, the better. They need a range of temperatures with a high of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and a low of 80. At night it can go down to 65. They should also have things to climb on, as they are semi-arboreal in the wild.

Come visit Tank and Goldie here at Imagine Planet and learn more about these Australian beauties. We continue to be open Monday through Thursday and Saturday from 11 am to 6 pm. Check out our Facebook page for events coming up!

Jackson's YMCA Warm for the Winter & Trunk or Treat

By Bonnie Gretzner, Jackson YMCA

The Jackson YMCA Trunk or Treat free community event has been a downtown staple for years. Nearly 1,000 kids line up to collect candy and Halloween goodies from the decorated trunks filling the YMCA parking lot. Along with giving kids a safe alternative to trick or treating, the YMCA Trunk or Treat serves another purpose – making sure kids have mittens, hats and other warm clothing for the winter.

Last year, the Jackson YMCA handed out more than 500 pairs of mittens to children in the community. Peggy Calderone, who coordinates the YMCA group exercise schedule and organizes the collection of mittens and hats, says this fills a community need.

"Trunk or Treat isn't about the candy anymore – it's about the mittens," she said. "The mitten drive started when we would see kids come through the trick or treat line in short sleeves, shivering. Many of them didn't have anything warm to wear, and I knew we had to do something about it."

Peggy began by asking attendees in the various YMCA group exercise classes for donations. The response was overwhelming, and the donations poured in. That soon snowballed into many community groups offering to supply mittens, hats and even coats.

"There is such a need in Jackson for this," Peggy said. "Last year, a grandmother thanked me and



asked if she could have two pairs of mittens because they were going to be the only mittens her child had all year. It has been amazing how generous the people are in our community by bringing in so many donations. Every year we receive more– and every year we give away everything we receive."

Mitten Drive

When: Now through Oct. 31; donations received after that time may be used for winter break camp or saved for next year.

What: Donations of mittens, hats, scarves or cash to purchase items for com-

munity children

Where: Donations can be dropped off to the front desk at either branch.

For more information: Contact Peggy Calderone at 517.937.2232.

Trunk or Treat

When: Thursday, Oct. 31; 6-8 p.m.

What: Free community event; offers a safe alternative to trick or treating

Where: Downtown Jackson YMCA parking lot

How to help: Donate candy, host a trunk or volunteer at the event

For more information: Contact the YMCA Front Desk at 517.782.0537

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Montessori Education

Peace Education Program

By Barb Barnes
North Star Montessori
Founder, Director, and
Montessori Educator



Education & Peace

Children have a unique perspective on life. As they grow and learn from their experiences they form who they will become. Each interaction is an opportunity to build problem solving, social emotional and intrapersonal skills. Children look to the adults in their lives as guides and role models. How we resolve conflict and handle our emotions shows children a template on how to handle theirs. That is why we have a deep respect for the special nature of children at North Star Montessori and we are intentional with the words we use to guide them. This respect for children touches all parts of their learning and is interwoven into the careful preparation of the Montessori educator who will be their guide and the Montessori classroom that will be their learning environment.

Peace Education We create a space in each one of North Star Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms for a Peace Area. This area is a quiet space where the child can go to relax, and choose activities on their own. It is one of the most popular spaces in the classroom and is used everyday. Children go and peacefully look at books, do yoga, hold our stuffed animal peace frog, play a tiny music box, or just sit/ lie down for a moment. When the child is finished relaxing they can choose to work in another area of the classroom.

In addition to being a quiet space for activities, our Peace Areas are used by children to work out their emotions. Sometimes children come into school tired or out of sorts because things haven't gone their way. During play time they get upset with one of their friends and they are sad and frustrated. Sometimes children feel nervous about change. They use the Peace Area to take a moment to express their emotions and work through their feelings. It is a safe space to just be. While observing children's interactions, our teachers approach children and talk to them about their feelings and guide them in conversations with their



classmates about their feelings and possible solutions. Other children will also approach and try to comfort and encourage a friend in need.

This week during Peace Week we shared stories about what it means to be peaceful and how children around the world go to school, play with their friends, and spend time with their families and that even though we make speak other languages, or eat different foods we are more alike than different. We learned that the dove is a symbol of peace and cre-

ated a bulletin board filled with mini peace doves that said what peace it to us. We decided that we wanted to bake little peace dove cookies and share them with our families the next morning at our welcoming drop off circle. Gathered together at circle, hand in hand, we sang March for Peace, by Frank Leto, Musician and Montessori Edu-

cator. <https://soundcloud.com/frankleto/march-for-peace-ukulele-vocals>,

It was a positive reminder in a rough week in our community where two local schools were closed due to threats of violence and one other on lockdown because of a fatal shooting, that peace starts with us and the children are the future peacemakers.

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Connection & Suicide: Finding One's Hope & Belongingness

By Gregory Monroe, BA, CPSS



As a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) with the University of Michigan, and a suicide survivor, I use my lived experience to support people at a high risk of suicide.

Each week I meet with people who are struggling with despair, lost hope and a lack of belonging. Part of my job is to listen to their stories. The other part of my job is to share my own story. The reciprocal relationship between a peer specialist and their peer is uniquely different from other, more traditional, mental health treatment. That's why researchers have begun looking at how peer support can be used to prevent suicide.

The rate of suicide in the U.S. has increased in the past few decades in spite of the current availability and effectiveness of mental health treatments. Suicide is a lead-

ing cause of death, particularly for premature deaths that occur before someone reaches full life expectancy. Two main causes of suicide and suicidal thoughts appear to be a lack of hope and lack of belongingness. These observations have lead scientists and researchers to search for the causes of suicide and to develop new methods of preventing it.

One of these researchers is Dr. Paul Pfeiffer, University of Michigan. Dr. Pfeiffer's idea was to study the effects of peer support for people at high risk of suicide. I was fortunate to be one of the first Peer Specialists hired for the PREVAIL study in 2015.

Working with people who are at their lowest can be very difficult. The stories my peers have shared with me have been heavy, sad, and broken. At first, I wasn't prepared for the toll that sharing their burdens took on my own mental health. I would drive home with the weight of their stories on my shoulders. I would think about their despair, their hopelessness, their inability to see

the sun through the storm...and keep it to myself.

Working for the PREVAIL study has reinforced the importance of connection for me in two ways. First, the people I work with need connection in their lives. Through peer support, people can connect with another person who understands their pain. The second thing I learned is that I cannot shoulder the burden of peoples' pain without connection in my own life. I have learned to rely on my PREVAIL team for support...peer support. I realized that even though I'm a CPSS, that doesn't mean I can't talk with my own. This helped repair the initial damage. Self-care is essential when working with people at high risk. I have learned that if you're not functioning on all cylinders yourself, it can affect the people you're working with. It can have a toll not only with your professional life, but your personal life as well.

Being there for someone is a great feeling. I have the joy of knowing that people are still alive

because of a nudge from me. I believe in the work that myself and fellow peers are doing, I believe in the long-term and short-term effects that we have on struggling people. Becoming a CPSS has been one of my greatest accomplishments. Through helping others to find their own hope, belongingness and opportunities to grow, I found my place in life.

Gregory Monroe, BA, CPSS is a current contractor with the University of Michigan's Prevail Research Study and a former employee of ARE, Inc.

ARE, Inc. (Activities Recovery Empowerment) is a peer-run organization operated for and by people with mental health diagnoses in Jackson and Hillsdale Counties. ARE runs two Drop-In Centers, and offers certified peer support, certified parent support and various support & recovery groups. For more information, go to our website at www.dropinceneters.org or check out our Facebook page: ARE Drop-In Centers.

Protect Yourself this Flu Season By Getting Your Shot Today

Contributed By Center for Family Health

The message is simple: Protect yourself. Get a flu shot.

The reason is equally as simple: "In America, the flu is the most infectious, deadly, preventable disease right now," said Dr. Max Chen, a pediatrician at the Center for Family Health.

Everyone—from 6 months of age on up — should get a flu shot, he said. One shot

can make the difference. It will prevent you from getting the flu or lessen its effects. Either way, it is a smart, life-saving move, he said. Even healthy kids can be infected — not just 1 to 5-year-olds. Teenagers also get the flu, he said, and adults are not immune from the disease.

Dr. Chen said there are people who are especially susceptible to the flu: older adults; and anyone with asthma, cardiovascular is-

sues or diabetes. If a child or an adult with asthma gets the flu, they could get complications, including pneumonia and meningitis.

But everyone is at risk, he said. Here is a particularly scary statistic: More than 134 children in the U.S. died of the flu during the 2018-19 flu season. Most of the children who died of the flu did not receive the vaccine.

Anyone who works with

children, in health care or as a caregiver definitely should get it to avoid infecting the most vulnerable, Dr. Chen said.

Flu season lasts from late September/early October to May. Every year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention works to figure out what strains of flu are likely to strike. The flu shot for the upcoming year is based on the CDC research and is aimed at

preventing those strains of the flu. The flu shot is safe for everyone, he said. It can cause mild aches or cold-like symptoms for a couple of days, but that is because it is trying to awaken your immune system.

Research has confirmed that the vaccine does not cause autism or other adverse effects in children, and it is safe even for people who have egg allergies, Dr. Chen said.

If your business or organization would like to submit an article for FREE publication, please do so by the 3rd Friday of each month.

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