

SMOKE EXESIGNAL

VOLUME 57, ISSUE 9

Serving the Smoke Rise Community since 1968

December, 2024

www.smokesignalnews.com

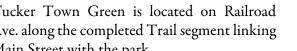


Look inside for... Holiday Events.....pgs. 3-4 It Takes a Village: Caring for Neighbors....pg. 5 Little Free Pantry in Tuckerpg. 6 Creative Gift Givingpg. 10

Tucker Town Green Groundbreaking

The City of Tucker recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Tucker Town Green. This new park is underway and expected to be in use by next year. The new space will include additional parking, an amphitheater, terraced seating with shade kites, a water feature, bench swings and restrooms.







Smoke Rise Civic Association

By Michael J. Huerkamp, SRCA President

Christmas to all!

On behalf of your all-volunteer SRCA board, we wish our neighbors, friends and benefactors the happiest of holidays. We are especially grateful for the families who donate yearly to support our landscaping and other initiatives, from our community garden property anonymous donor, and our partners at the Smoke Signal, to the Mar Thoma Church, and Smoke Rise Baptist Church for providing financial or physical plant resources to assist us in our mission to promote the Smoke Rise community and its quality of life. As we pivot into 2025, we hope you will be on alert for our annual membership appeal to fund our many projects including the emerging one of medallions beginning to show the effects of age.

Happy Winter Solstice!



The Smoke Rise Civic Association invites you to celebrate the changing of the seasons with a S'mores Roast at the Smoke Rise Community Garden. The event will take place on Sunday, December 15, starting at 5:00 p.m. Hot cider and all the s'mores fixins' will be supplied by the SRCA. Come out and enjoy the fire and mingling with your neighbors! Email srcommunitygarden@gmail.com.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go! That sentiment is definitely true at 1833

Smokerise Summit. Santa and Mrs. Claus have even

called to confirm they will stop by on weekends

(Thanksgiving weekend - Christmas Eve) to sit in the

sleigh for pictures. As in years past, donations will be collected for Make-A-Wish Georgia with 100% of collected donations going directly to this worthy charity. Since 2012, a total of \$87,421.97 has been collected for charity. This year we are hoping to surpass last year's total of \$12,756.24. Please be sure to come by and enjoy the lights this year with your family and friends. Merry

A Whole Lot of Christmas

By Victor Economy, Smoke Rise Resident



Smoke Signal

P.O. Box 1038, Tucker, GA 30085

A non-profit service organization devoted to furthering neighborhood cooperation with the aid of good neighborhood

Cheri Schneider staff@smokesignalnews.com **Editorial Committee:** *AvivA Hoffmann.staff@smokesignalnews.com Gia Anderson.....staff@smokesignalnews.com * This Issue's Editor of the Month

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Health NotesCheri Schneider MD, Pat Baumann MD

Recipes and Home.....Joyce Ray

Social and Digital Media.Pat Soltys, Amber Voss

News You Can Use.....AvivA Hoffmann Tech TalkSusan Gilbert Out the Window.....Beth Henson

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DID YOUR PAPER GET WET?

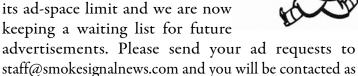
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DECEMBER 13

Please e-mail articles to: staff@smokesignalnews.com

Articles and photos should be sent in .doc or .docx format. Articles sent in .pdf format cannot be edited. Photos and graphics should be submitted in .jpg or .pdf format.

Deadline for classified ads is DECEMBER 10

SMOKE SIGNAL FLYER INSERT POLICY

Cost: \$150 by check to Smoke Signal Deadline to Receive: 6:00 p.m. on 19th of month Flyer inserts should be 8 1/2" x 11" (flat, not folded) Please provide 2,300 copies Reservation Required: Contact Barbara Luton, (770) 491-6711 by 15th of month.

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You can also visit our Facebook page to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.

Over One Hundred Years of History -Update

By Linda Karr, Staff Writer

For those of you who read my article in last month's Smoke Signal, here is an update.

On November 7, the Clarkston City Council voted to reject the bid to demolish the historic farmhouse that is part of the Forty Oaks property. The farmhouse, built circa 1890, was donated to DeKalb County by the family in 1972 and subsequently to the City of Clarkston in 2017. For now, the farmhouse will remain standing and as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. More work needs to be done to preserve/restore the farmhouse. I will keep the community posted.



Looking for a way to give back to your community? The SMOKE SIGNAL is looking for a few more writers or people with a passion for storytelling. SEND YOUR INQUIRY TO:

staff@smokesignalnews.com

Smoke Rise Baptist Church

5901 Hugh Howell Road

Senior Pastor: Dr. Chris George, cgeorge@smokerisebaptist.org Phone: 770-469-5856 SmokeRiseBaptist.org

SUNDAY

 $9{:}45\ a.m.$ - Attend Sunday School through Zoom or In-Person 11:00 a.m. - Attend Worship via Live Stream or In-Person

5:00 p.m. - Attend our Wednesday Dinner

6:00 p.m. - Followed by activities and Bible Study for all ages

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

5801 Hugh Howell Road Rev. Jeanine Fulton, Pastor, 678-481-4052 Phone: 770-469-4881 Website: Eastminster.us

SUNDAY

Adult & Children's Sunday School

9:15 a.m. 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Live streaming of Worship service

First Moravian Church

Pastor: Reverend Elroy Christopher (770) 491-7250 Website: Gamoravian.org

SUNDAY 10:00 a.m. Sunday School-Adults & Children

> 11:00 a.m. Worship 12:00 p.m. Fellowship Time

Incarnate Word Lutheran Church

4950 Hugh Howell Road pastor@incword.org Phone: 404-936-0628 Website: Incword.org/

8:45 a.m. Worship **SUNDAY**

Mountain West Church

4818 Hugh Howell Road Pastor: Mo Huggins 770-491-0228 Mwchurch.com

SUNDAY 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 11:30 a.m. Worship

THURSDAY 10:00 a.m. Neighborhood Bible Study

In-person and streaming online on Facebook and mwchurch.com

Digital copies of the Smoke Signal Digital copies can be requested at Staff@smokesignalnews.com.

You can also visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SmokeSignalNews to view postings of newsletter pictures and stories throughout the month.

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December, 2024 let's go!



Celebrate the Holidays at Stone Mountain Village's

Pop-Up Market

Saturday, December 7 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church 5312 West Mountain Street Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Enjoy shopping from local artisans, sweet treats, live music, and drop off new toys for "Toys for Tots."

Visit www.smvpopup.com for details.





The 27th annual Santa at Rhodes Hall takes place on weekends through December 15. This beloved holiday tradition serves as a fundraiser for the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, bringing the magic of Christmas to thousands of families through personalized appointments and photos with Santa at Atlanta's iconic "Castle on Peachtree."

Pet Nights on Dec. 3 and Dec. 12. To reserve your spot or to get on Santa's schedule, visit www. GeorgiaTrust.org or call (404) 885-7812. Spaces are limited and tend to sell out, so reservations are strongly recommended.

Rhodes Hall is located at 1516 Peachtree St NW, Atlanta.



An Old-Fashioned Christmas Eve Pageant at St. Andrews

By LaVerne Byas-Smith, Church Staff Member

"The Pageant is back, and we are so excited," exclaims Phyllis Bearden, about the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (SAPC), 4882 Lavista Road, in Tucker. Since Covid, church members have longed to present a traditional Christmas Pageant as they had done in the past.

In this year's production, "The Nativity," children costumed as biblical characters progressively build the iconic manger scene. "We have angels, shepherds, wise men and even toddler animals, and of course Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus!" exclaims Bernadette Angelo, one of the coordinators. Their action is narrated by scripture readings and punctuated by the children's musical selections, complete with hand movements.

This year, the church is collaborating with its preschool, St. Andrew's School, to present a meaningful telling of the Christmas Story. We're building community across generations. The pageant is one of several efforts to welcome school families into the church's ministries and activities, even if not necessarily church membership. As our church membership has grown older, we're proactively seeking opportunities to invite young families into our community. Like our annual free Back to School Carnival, held each August, the pageant is a way to extend love and hospitality to the community around us, and a means to get to know our neighbors, and to be known. We've got lots to offer families seeking a service-oriented, multi-generational, faith-based community.

All are welcome and invited to attend the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service and presentation of "The Nativity," at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. Join us and come back later for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 11:00 p.m. We're easily located at Lavista and Henderson Mill Roads. For more information call our church office at (770) 938-2833.



Winter Wonderettes at ART Station in Stone Mountain

By David Thomas, Founder/Artistic Director, ART Station

ART Station presents Winter Wonderettes, by Roger Bean. This seasonal celebration finds the girls entertaining at the annual Harper's Hardware Holiday Party. When Santa turns up missing, the girls use their talent and

creative ingenuity to save the holiday party! Featuring great '60s versions of holiday classics such as "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," "Jingle Bell Rock," "Run, Rudolph, Run," and "Winter Wonderland," the result is, of course, marvelous! This energetic and glittering holiday package is guaranteed to delight audiences of all ages.

This production stars Broadway's Kate Fahrner, Chelcy Cutwright, Avani Lesane, and Molly Ann Tucker. Directed by Liza Jaine. Music Direction by Lerell Ross. Costumes by Hollis Smith.

Performances run December 12 - 22. Thursday and Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday and

Sunday at 3:00 p.m., with one 10:30 a.m. matinee on Wednesday December 18. All performances will be in the ART Station Theatre located at 5384 Manor Drive in the historic village of Stone Mountain.

Tickets are required. For more information, visit artstation.org or call (770) 469-1105.







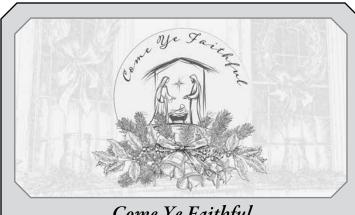
Wishing you and yours all the best this holiday season!

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Come Ye Faithful
A Service of Lessons and Carols
Presented by the Sanctuary Choir with Chamber Orchestra
Smoke Rise Baptist Church
December 22, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church Holiday Season Services

By Christina Wetzel Sizemore, Office Coordinator

The holiday season can be challenging, but you don't have to spend it alone. Eastminster Presbyterian Church offers a welcoming and family-friendly community, filled with opportunities for fellowship and growth. Throughout the season, Eastminster will host several cherished services, open to all:

- Advent Services Sundays, December 1 and December 8 at 10:30 a.m. Join us as we reflect on the meaning of Advent, lighting the Advent wreath, singing carols, and hearing scriptures that foretell the coming of Christ.
- Lessons and Carols Service Sunday, December 15 at 10:30 a.m. This Advent service includes dramatic scripture readings, instrumental music, songs, and carols celebrating the anticipation of Christ's arrival.
- Christmas Eve Service Tuesday, December 24 at 5:00 p.m. Come together as we await the birth of Christ, with Chrismon ornament distribution, congregational singing, holy communion, and a candlelight carol to close.
- Year End Service Sunday, December 29 at 10:30 a.m. Join us for a celebratory service with inspiring organ and piano duets from musicians Carole Mitchell and Susan Ray.

In addition, our Eastminster School Age Program will provide childcare for children aged 3 through 5th grade from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on December 23 and 24, December 30 and 31, and January 2 and 3. To register, call (770) 469-9489.

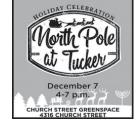
We would be delighted to have you and your loved ones join us in celebrating the true meaning of Christmas.

City of Tucker

DECEMBER TUCKER CITY HALL EVENTS

Happy Holidays, Tucker!

- 2 Downtown Development Authority 6:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.
- 3 Zoning Board of Appeals, 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.
- 7 North Pole at Tucker Church St. Greenspace (or TRC if inclement weather) 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.



9 Mayor & City Council Meeting,7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

19 Planning Commission, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

24-25 City Buildings Closed

Unless otherwise notes, all meetings are held at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Tucker GA.

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2024 Lilburn Holiday Parade

Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 a.m.

Santa and all of his helpers will participate in this annual Lilburn tradition.

The parade will travel down Main Street, ending in Lilburn City Park!



First Moravian Church of Georgia Christmas Eve Services

11:00 a.m. Children's Service



4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Family Candlelight Service

Bridgerton Tea at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

By Victoria Crosby, Staff Writer

The staff at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta held a costume event called Halloween Cube and Treat. The administrative team chose a Bridgerton theme. Bridgerton is a popular Netflix TV series set in England during the Regency era.

Laura Beth Veal, an Administrative Coordinator within the Foundation at



Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, who grew up in Smoke Rise, asked me if she could borrow some of my English China for the contest. She needed a teapot, three cups and saucers, and a sugar bowl from my Royal Albert, Old English Roses for the display, which won first prize.









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Photo Courtesy JandDimages

Hike, Carve, and Explore: Hiking Stick Workshop

The DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs will host a Hiking Stick Workshop on Saturday, December 15, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center, located at 3787 Klondike Rd., Stonecrest, GA.

This hands-on workshop, led by Ranger Rick, invites participants ages 13 and up to learn how to carve their very own hiking stick—perfect for their next adventure at the preserve. All necessary tools and materials will be provided, available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information, please contact LaShanda Davis, Public Relations Specialist for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs, at (404) 710-6331 or via email at lsdavis@dekalbcountyga.gov.





It Takes a Village: Caring for Our Neighbors

By Amber Voss, Staff Writer

As we enter the Christmas season, there are many opportunities to help support local organizations doing great work for those in our city and surrounding communities.

Children's Restoration Network (CRN) is an Atlanta 501c3 organization that was founded in 1993 by Cliff Kinsey and Jim Cox as a small non-profit dedicated to helping local children's shelters. Today, they support group homes across 19 metro counties. CRN provides

many services to homes including scholarships for high school seniors, Thanksgiving meals, and the 12 Days of Caring Christmas Drive, to name a few. I have been a volunteer and proud supporter of this great organization for more than a decade now. Cliff and his team rely on volunteers and donations to help support the homes across the metro area.

I reached out to Cliff to ask him if he could share a local facility close to Smoke Rise. He was quick to reply with a Clarkston organization, Positive Growth Inc., along with a prompt introduction to the facility's Director, Mrs. Rose Arnold.

Mrs. Arnold is doing her life's work at Positive Growth. She has been the facility director for 25 years, the same amount of time that she has worked with CRN. The facility houses male youths ages 12-21, with the ability to house up to 31 children. She has a large staff of 19, which consists of social workers and direct care staff. Since Covid, volunteers have dropped off significantly. She mentioned that she needs volunteers to help with the birthday committee, tutoring, and more.

I asked Mrs. Arnold what her greatest needs are right now. She replied that it's the upcoming Christmas holiday. She tries to make the holiday as special as possible by ensuring that every child has gifts and food on Christmas Day. CRN directly assists Positive Growth and many other homes through their 12 Days of Caring campaign. You can learn more at https://www.childrn.org/?page_id=1296.

Additionally, Mrs. Arnold does an angel tree at the facility. Each child shares their wish list and needs. Folks can adopt an angel from the tree and shop directly for them. The gifts are donated anonymously in order to protect the identity of the children. Mrs. Arnold shared that seeing the kid's smiles and allowing them to be kids brings her the greatest joy.

I asked Mrs. Arnold if she had one message to share on behalf of the organization. Mrs. Arnold stated, "I'd like the public to know that we are deeply committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment where each young man can grow and prepare for a brighter future. Our facility is more than just a place to stay – it's a place where youth gain essential life skills,

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Serving the Atlanta area since 1980 References Available Licensed & Insured build positive habits, and receive guidance they need to thrive. However, we cannot do this alone. The support of others is crucial to fulfilling our mission. By donating to CRN, they are directly helping us continue this work and empower young lives."

If you are interested in adopting a child for the holiday, or for future volunteer opportunities at Positive Growth, please contact Mrs. Rose Arnold at (404) 292.6420 or by email at rarnold@positivegrowthinc.org.





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Smoke Rise Baptist Church Choir & Orchestra

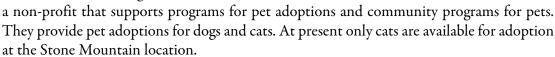


The Smoke Rise Baptist Choir and Orchestra, featuring soloist Scott Roark and Smoke Signal staff writer Joel Gilbert on bassoon.



Atlanta Animal Rescue Friends

AARF is a local business located on Main Street in Stone Mountain Village. It is



AARF provides medical care, spaying and neutering, nutrition and socialization for the



pets that come to them. AARF also has a community Pet Food Pantry to help pets stay with their families.

The store has all the supplies that a pet owner needs to buy from food to toys to leashes. Profits from the store support the programs. A recent bake sale in front of the store was manned by volunteers and raised money to help sustain these programs.

If you would like more information about the pet adoptions and programs, you can go to aarfatlanta.org. Volunteers are always needed to help socialize the cats, if you are interested in that.







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The Little Free Pantry in Tucker

By Joyce Ray, Staff Writer

It's a small box, the size of the Little Free Libraries we are all familiar with, but it brings members of the community together to help meet a need for many local people who are not sure where their next meal is coming from. Some are homeless.

It's called "The Little Free Pantry," and it is located on the grounds of the Tucker Recreation Center. In 2021, it was the inspiration of Sirianna Blanck, a Chamblee High School senior and lifetime Girl Scout who was working on her Girl Scout Gold Award. Sirianna volunteered at the Atlanta Food Bank, and she wanted to make a difference in local

communities. She built and installed boxes in Clarkston and Tucker throughout the summer of 2021. She also put one at the student center at Oglethorpe University. Her ultimate fulfillment was stocking them with food and then coming back the next day to find them empty and knowing that someone had food to eat. The boxes are



stocked by local volunteers and filled with non-perishable foods and mostly canned goods. There are a variety of products, including personal care products, baby supplies, fresh produce and easy-to-prepare items.

Anyone can donate. There is a Facebook group (The Little Free Kitchen In Tucker) which allows donors to get and give information about what is needed. They are invited to take pictures of the box after supplying it, so other donors can step up and fill in a gap if needed.

When dropping off items, I have had opportunities to meet some of the people who are helped by it. Some have told me which foods or other items they would like to see added. One woman stopped while I was there and told me how much the extra food has meant to her while her family has been going through an unexpected trial. Both of her parents had become ill, and she had to quit her job to care for them. She has two children, and the donations have helped to stretch the money available for food.

One member of the Facebook group gave some good suggestions about what to provide.

- Boxed milk is a favorite for all ages and is needed to cook boxed mac and cheese.
- Pasta sauce and spaghetti noodles, cooking oil is also needed for a lot of boxed rice and pasta.
- Canned items: veggies, soup, canned meat, chili, beef stew and tuna are wonderful, but please put in a can opener or buy cans with pop top.
- Spices, sugar, flour, salt, pepper, tea bags, coffee.
- Water or Gatorade.
- Fresh produce in season: baking potatoes, corn on cob, tomatoes, grapes, bananas and other fruit.
- Tuna and crackers, peanut butter and jelly, sliced bread.
- Eggs, cake mix and frosting,
- Pancake mix that just needs water to mix and syrup.
- Hygiene and personal care items: Toothbrushes, toothpaste, body lotion, shampoo, tampons, toilet tissue, deodorant, Chap-stick. Ziplock bags.
- Baby products: There is not enough space for a big box of diapers, so I package about 10 in a gallon zip lock bag. Baby wipes.

If you would like to make donations, just fill a couple of grocery bags and take them over and place items in the box. From Tucker on LaVista, take the first driveway on the right into the Recreation Center and you will see it on your left. Like Sirianna, you will be blessed to know that you helped feed a hungry person or family.

December, 2024 Schools



From left to right: Amy Yang, Darian Wright, Felecia Eure, Sherrie Adams, Dr. Krystye Tatum, Anita Klinner, and Bernardette Cummings

Partnership Breakfast at Smoke Rise Elementary School

In the early morning on October 23, teachers and staff of Smoke Rise Elementary School hosted an elegant and delicious breakfast for members of the community. The *Smoke Signal* staff were encouraged to send a representative along with local pastors, community leaders, Garden Club members, Tucker City Council and all who have played a part in the success of SRES. Attendees got a chance to see and hear firsthand from students, leaders and the new principle, Dr. Krystye Tatum, who shared her vision of excellence in education and the valuable role the community leaders and parents play in the educational development of the students. After the meeting, the visitors were treated to a tour of the lovely building.







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Smoke Rise Elementary School

By Tonna Jones, SRES Teacher

Latalia Robbins, Ed.D., is a dedicated leader and compassionate educator with 15 years of teaching experience. For the past decade, Dr. Robbins has been the Pre-Kindergarten Teacher at Smoke Rise Elementary School, where she has made significant contributions as the Prekindergarten Chair, Network Facilitator for the DeKalb County Public Schools Prekindergarten and Early Learning Department, Mentor for DCSD Pre-K Teachers, President of the Sunshine Committee, and Girl Scouts Assistant Leader. Early in her career, Dr. Robbins developed a teaching philosophy rooted in nurturing the kind of compassionate, self-advocating individuals she wanted to see in the world. She realized that her mission aligned best with guiding the youngest



Dr. Latalia Robbins District Teacher of the Year – 2024-2025 DeKalb County School District

elementary learners—prekindergartners. Dr. Robbins' achievements and accolades reflect her singular focus on early childhood education, with an emphasis on social and emotional development and the impact of a supportive environment. Dr. Robbins is widely recognized

for her unwavering commitment and inspiring leadership. We are thrilled to announce her as the Teacher of the Year and the 2024-2025 DeKalb County School District's District Teacher of the Year. Dr. Robbins is truly honored and grateful to be recognized and selected for such a distinguished award.

Mrs. Phoebe Thomas has proudly served as a cafeteria manager for 30 years, beginning her career at Brockett Elementary and dedicating the past 10 years to Smoke Rise Elementary School. Throughout this time, she has shown unwavering dedication and has been instrumental in fostering a nurturing and supportive environment for faculty, parents, and students. Mrs. Thomas' commitment goes far beyond managing daily operations; she is cherished for her warm interactions, attention to detail, and genuine care for the well-being of the entire school community. Her efforts have consistently contributed to creating a welcoming atmosphere where everyone feels valued and appreciated. In recognition of her tireless dedication and steadfast service, we are proud to honor Mrs. Thomas as Smoke Rise Elementary



Mrs. Phoebe Thomas Educational Support Professional I of the Year – 2024-2025 DeKalb County School District

School's 2023-2024 Educational Support Professional I of the Year. Her hard work and passion have left a lasting impact, making her an indispensable member of our team.



features December, 2024

HEALTH NOTES:

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING: A HEALTHY YOU

By Cheri Schneider, M.D.

Christmas is nearing, and I have a few ideas on how to give a gift to yourself and your family that could last decades. This gift may even be paid for by a stranger (your insurance company), and the cost may just be the time you take to put your plan into action. My idea? Get caught up on your preventive health care. Being up-to-date on immunizations can prevent costly diseases and may even save your life. Catching up on the mammogram you didn't get done this year or double checking on when your colonoscopy is due may also save your life. The next few paragraphs will give you the "how" and the "what" of getting it done.

I know, I know, you were "going to." My message to you is this: It is never too late to catch up. Many people stall out due to fear, misinformation about a screening procedure or excuses about the time needed to complete preventive care. What are some strategies to end the procrastination and move forward? I often tell my patients to set an artificial timeline. For instance: decide to send the at-home colon cancer screening test within one week after receiving it in the mail. Set up a yearly physical on your birthday month, or a month you will remember. During this visit, find out what is needed for your age group and risk status and set up a plan to reach this goal.

Here are some recommendations for disease prevention: Keep up-to-date on your immunizations.

- Get all childhood immunizations and have boosters for Tetanus and Pertussis every 10 years. Many modern "antivaxxers" have never seen measles, tetanus and polio devastation, so they do not believe it is real. Sadly, I have seen all three, and diseases like measles and whooping cough are on the rise.
- For preteens through age 45: Get the HPV vaccine. This vaccine has resulted in a massive decrease in rates of cervical cancer in women.
- For adults and children: stay up to date on influenza and covid and pneumonia vaccines. The shingles shot is available, if you are over 50.
- Adults over 60 with risk factors may need RSV vaccination.

Colon cancer screening.

Colon cancer is on the increase, especially in younger age groups. Many times, it is advanced when found. For this reason, screening should now begin in all individuals older than the age of 45. Consider screening, if you are a younger adult with a change in your bowel habits. Colonoscopy with follow up screening every 10 years is the "Gold standard" and most accurate method. If polyps (the cause of cancer) are seen or you have a higher-than-average risk, you may need colonoscopy more often. Your GI doctor will guide you. An at-home colon cancer stool test is a good alternative and should be done every three years to have near equivalent screening potential. It is about 90% accurate for detection of "early cancer." It cannot tell you if you have a polyp.

For women only:

- Although recommendations vary some, average risk women should have yearly mammograms between ages 40-80. High risk individuals may start mammography earlier and continue screening longer.
- Cervical cancer screens known as a pap smear should occur at the age of 21 in all women. At the age of 30 women should be screened every three years with pap alone or every five years if HPV testing is done-- until the age of 65. Pap testing can then be discontinued.
- Bone Density screening: after the age of 65 for average risk women and perhaps some high-risk men.

For men only:

 Prostate cancer screening in asymptomatic men has been controversial and should be discussed with your doctor. Several scientific academies recommend against screening. Others recommend screening between ages 50-69. Everyother-year screening may decrease potentially harmful interventions.

...Continued on page 12

Should You Answer That Doorbell?

By Linda Karr, Staff Writer

It was a chilly day in February 2023. The doorbell rang and my husband, John, answered it thinking that he would once again be turning away another salesperson. A young woman, toting a camera, presented her credentials and asked if he would be willing to let her take pictures in the house. She represented people who were working on "a project" who were looking for a house such as ours from the 1980s to use for filming. His interest was peaked, so he let her in.



Meetings happened quickly after that with the location manager, the art department, and others to determine whether the house would really fit what they were looking for. By the end of May and into June they were certain that it was a fit. They thought they would need the house for a couple of weeks with the filming starting in July or August. Then the Writers Guild of America strike, followed by the SAF-AFTRA strike, changed all the plans. Filming was put on hold.

By December, the strikes had ended, and we heard back from the location manager. They were gearing back up and could be filming by April or May. Oops – things changed again with activity gaining quick momentum. Terms had changed since they had approached us in 2023. They needed more interior space and more time for pre/postproduction and filming. Now they were talking about us being out of our house for two months. An agreement was signed including a non-disclosure. Yes, there was some financial renumeration. Neighbors were also approached about the filming.

Two weeks before they took over the house, there was a caravan of more than 50 people including the art crew, electricians, sound engineers, construction crews, set designers, production managers, and all sorts of helpers to look over the house again. We moved out of our house into an Airbnb on February 25. The crew took over on February 26. They rechecked the interior measurements, checked the colors of the walls and floor. Very intense!

Since we were staying close by, we were over at the house every day. It was fun to watch the process and get a glimpse into what it takes to produce this kind of show. On the day filming started, there were a couple of hundred people there. The crew was great to work with. They were very respectful of the house and gardens. Police kept the "lookers" under

control.

We were finally able to move back in on April 21. It was good to be back home! Would we answer the doorbell again? Yes - It was something new and it was an adventure! And we met some great people who are dedicated to their craft. We look forward to seeing if we can recognize "our house" on this Netflix series coming out sometime in 2025.







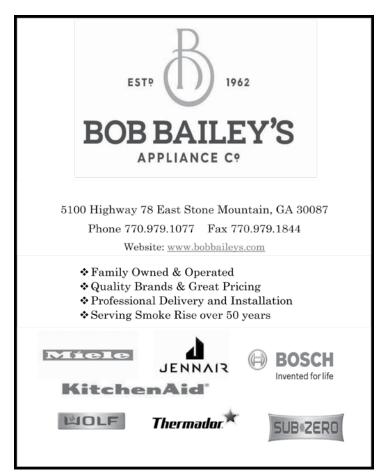
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Disaster Relief Boxes

The GFWC Stone Mountain Woman's Club partnered with the Brookhaven Bible Study to fill 93 boxes for Samaritan's Purse. The boxes were filled with toys, school supplies, and personal care items for 3-year-olds to teenagers. The boxes this year will go to disaster victims in the United States.

Out the Window Article and illustration by Beth Henson, Staff Writer

Christmas Cactus

Glancing out the living room window, I surveyed the now mostly bare gardens surrounding my patio. All that remained were a few tall, thin stalks, topped with crusty clusters of spiky seed pods (the sad remains of earlier glorious, golden blackeyed Susans). The nearby angel-winged begonias and sprawling day lilies had completely vanished back into the mulch-covered, rich brown soil. On the garden wall, a few pots of herbs were still thriving even with the cooler temperatures, the warm brick acting as a cozy on the cooler nights. Nearby, a few pots of happy pansies and two large, frilly cabbages were in their full



glory. The purple, yellow, and orange pansy faces definitely brightened the otherwise gloomy scene.

Suddenly, I noticed an unruly and not-too-attractive potted plant almost completely hidden in the corner of the garden. Walking outside to further inspect, I spied my completely forgotten Christmas cactus! Lifting the pot from its secluded location, I noticed the delicate watermelon-colored buds emerging from the tips of the gangly, dark-green pointy leaves. I quickly dusted off the dirt-splattered terracotta and proudly carried it inside to a holiday place of honor; my tinsel-strung bay window.

I'm sorry I nearly forgot you my beautiful, festive friend. Soon your spectacular, showy blooms will be the most treasured holiday decoration in my home!

We Need You!

Smoke Rise - this is YOUR paper! The Smoke Signal began more than 50 years ago and remains, to this day, a community newspaper created, written and produced by volunteer, Smoke Rise neighbors for the entire neighborhood.

PLEASE consider becoming a contributor, editor or joining our staff. It's a rewarding way to give back to your Smoke Rise community! Contact us today. staff@smokesignalnews.com



features December, 2024

NEWS YOU CAN USE

By AvivA Hoffmann, Staff Writer

Don't Let Scammers Steal Your Holiday Cheer!

The holiday season brings out the giving spirit in many of us, but it also attracts scammers eager to take advantage of our generosity. One common rip-off to watch out for involves requests for gift cards — often posing as urgent pleas from religious or community leaders.

Imagine getting an email from someone in "authority" or someone familiar to you - like your place of worship asking you to buy gift cards for a worthy cause. It might look legit - but hold on. Some scammers are known to impersonate trusted figures to trick you into handing over your hardearned money.

They will email, text, or call, claiming to need your help purchasing gift cards for a mission project or a surprise appreciation gift. They might even use real names and email addresses to make their message seem authentic. The request often includes urgent language like "act quickly" or "keep this confidential."

They'll ask you to buy gift cards — Apple, Google Play, or Target are common examples — and then share the numbers and PINs from the back of the cards. That's a scam. No real business or government agency will ever tell you to buy a gift card to pay them.

Always keep a copy of your gift card and store receipt. Use them to report gift card scams to the gift card company and ask for your money back. Although, once you share all the gift card information, it's like handing over cash. The money is almost impossible to recover.

These theives don't want to give you time to check out what they're saying. But don't let anyone rush you. Slow down and consider these steps:

- Talk to someone you trust. Don't trust the name on an email address or what the message says. Verify the request by contacting the "sender" directly using a phone number or email you know is legit, never one that's in the suspicious message. Ask if it's a real request.
- Recognize the red flags! Remember, a trusted leader or organization will never ask you to purchase gift cards and share the codes. Any request to do so is almost certainly a scam.
- Know what to do. If you've already purchased gift cards and shared the codes, immediately contact the company that issued the card. Report the scam and ask if a refund is possible. While there's no guarantee, it's worth trying.

If you've shared any of your personal information, like your social security number or bank account details, visit IdentityTheft.gov to see what steps to take, including credit monitoring.

Scammers count on their victims staying quiet, but sharing your experience can help others avoid falling into the same trap. If you encounter a gift card scam, report it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Let's keep the season of giving joyful by staying alert and protecting ourselves and our communities from fraud. Happy Holidays!





Creative Gift Giving

Before making your Christmas shopping list and heading out to the stores, take some time to think outside-the-traditional box for some clever gift ideas. Many of these ideas can

be found right here in the Smoke Signal by reviewing the respected local businesses who advertise in our Classified Ads on the back page or in the Display Ads throughout the paper. Here are few suggestions to get you started:

• Ladder Climbing. There comes a time in everyone's life when they should no longer be climbing ladders. For your friends and family in that situation, give the gift of climbing. This could include gutter cleaning, replacing smoke detector batteries, or changing lightbulbs.



- Gardening. Anyone with a lawn or garden might appreciate the services of a nurseryman or landscaper visiting, walking the property, and providing some advice. Not knowing what to get my sister one year, I called the nursery down the street from her Alabama home and asked if they would have a landscaper visit and give her some ideas of what to put in, take out, or move.
- Pet Grooming. Friends with pets may enjoy a pre-paid trip to a groomer.
- Nail Salon Visit or Spa Day. This might encourage your friend to experience a service or business they would otherwise not try.
- Windows. The sparkle of freshly cleaned windows is a welcome sight. Anyone who does their own knows how difficult it is to get them without streaks or cobwebs in the corners. Professionals make it look easy and are quite efficient at getting the job done.
- Clean House. Giving the gift of a clean home is something most people would enjoy receiving. Even if they have a regular cleaning service, having someone specialized in deep cleaning will amaze you to see how much dirt they can find on floors, fans, fixtures.
- Housesitting. For your friends who travel, providing housesitting may be the perfect gift.
- Picture Framing. Giving a nicely-framed special picture is a thoughtful gift that will remain visible for many years to come.
- Lessons of all sorts are available here in Smoke Rise. Outside of the Smoke Rise Baptist Church Academy of Arts that has a comprehensive offering, there are individuals who provide various kinds of lessons including piano, voice, and most any instrument.
- Training. For a computer-challenged friend, see about hiring an IT consultant for a few hours to visit, check out the hardware and software set-up, and share some tips and traps on using email, videos, spreadsheets, presentations, etc.
- Special Meal at Home. We have chefs in Smoke Rise who will come to your home and prepare, serve, and clean up after a special meal in the home of your gift recipient. A variation on that theme is having Uber Eats deliver a favorite meal to your friend's home.

If you don't know where to find some of these services, check out the Smoke Signal Classified ads on the back page of the paper and flip through the paper to see what the display advertisers offer. We have some terrific companies shown here, and many have been with us for more than a

decade and get good reviews.

Some advantages of taking time to think this through is it may save you some time and money. No driving around to stores, no shopping, no gift wrapping, no shipping. Could be as simple as a note in a holiday card announcing the gift. This is my gift to our readers – Enjoy shopping!



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the National Garden Club.



Sharon Brewer with Wellroot

Morning Glories Welcomes Wellroot

By Quill Duncan, Morning Glories Member

With headquarters in Tucker, GA, Wellroot Family Services provide foster care, youth services and community training designed to keep families together whenever possible. Sharon Brewer the Community Cultivator with Wellroot gave an inspiring talk to our club at the November meeting. Sharon informed us that 743 children, young adults and families were served in 2023. We have supported this organization for four years now by annual monetary donations and our donations of toys and clothing each November. This year was a bonanza of toys and gifts for the children in foster care within that organization. More than 100 unwrapped toys and clothing items and even wrapping paper were purchased by club members to be distributed Saturday December 14 at a fun-filled celebration for foster parents and children at the Tucker headquarters.

Several of our members volunteer with Wellroot, and there are many ways to contribute time and energy to this dynamic agency right in our own city. Volunteers sort donations, stuff envelopes, help with the holiday party and other seasonal activities.

Wellroot evolved from the United Methodist Children's Home which was founded in 1869 for orphans after the Civil War. Today the organization offers family services in the form of family housing, transitional housing, scholarships, functional family therapy, positive parenting and home visitation programs. In Georgia, there are 10-12K children in state welfare each year. Wellroot is one of the many organizations that helps these foster children in need. To learn more about this group, volunteer, or to have Sharon Brewer speak to your organization, go to www.wellroot.org.

On December 5, the club will decorate the historic Wells Brown house in Stone Mountain Village. Our club began this tradition in 2013. This fun seasonal activity adds holiday charm to the home built in 1870. Members decorate the four mantles, add fresh greenery swags to the banister and to the Juliet balcony, add a wreath to the front door and other period appropriate greenery from our gardens. And, we always include clove studded oranges to add that special fresh scent to the home. All are welcome to join us. Contact Glenndolyn Hallman if you would like to participate at (770) 491-7398.

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Smoke Rise Garden Club Update

By Gina Dilley, Smoke Rise Garden Club Member

The Smoke Rise Garden Club's most recent meeting was on Monday November 4. It was held at the lovely home of member Deb Halley. Co-hostesses were Peggy Clegg and Gina Dilley. Our annual activity at our November meeting was to pack decorated Santa boxes for The Arthur M. Blank Hospital Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Members filled 80 boxes to be distributed for the holidays. Our December activity will be a member, partners and friends' brunch as we kick off the holiday Season together. In January, we will have our speakers start again.

This month's tip: Bird feeders bring lots of colorful activity to a yard in cold weather. Most bird experts recommend black oil sunflower seed for general feeding. Thistle seed and suet cakes attract birds you might not have seen before.

If you are interested in coming to a meeting or con- 80 boxes sidering membership, please contact Gina Dilley at gina-dilley@gmail.com. Smoke Rise Garden Club is a member of The DeKalb Federation of Garden Clubs, Redbud District, Garden Club of Georgia and



Victoria Crosby President of Smoke Rise Garden Club with some of the 80 boxes

Mountain Mums are Full of Gratitude

By Maureen Fraser, Publicity Chair and Newsletter Co-Editor

Gratitude was the topic of the day at the November Mountain Mums meeting, in honor of the Thanksgiving holidays. President Sally Young opened the meeting by asking Kate Graham to provide an inspiration. Keeping with the theme, she shared that gratitude is when

you feel thankful for the good things in your life. She reminded us that everyone should take a moment to reflect on how lucky they are when something good happens, whether it is small or big. We also demonstrate gratitude when we show appreciation for something done or received.



Fifteen Mountain Mums members attended the Leading Lights Luncheon and Fashion show at Callanwolde

The Mountain Mums are grateful for the opportunity to support foster families in our community. At the meeting, unwrapped toys were collected for children of all ages, which were subsequently delivered to WellRoot Family Services. WellRoot Family Services is a foster care program focused on addressing the needs of the entire family. They provide support while equipping parents and caregivers with the tools and resources they need to strengthen their families and better navigate through the challenges they might be facing.

Upcoming Mountain Mums programs include providing horticultural therapy for residents of Atria Assisted Living – they will be making pinecone Christmas trees. Plans are also in place for a workday on the triangle at the Hugh Howell/Lilburn-Stone Mountain Roads intersection, as well as planting around the Tucker police precinct.

In early November, 15 members of the club attended the Leading Lights Luncheon, Fashion Show and Raffle sponsored by the DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Rita Maloof and Ann Purr modeled fashions by Carolee's and several members won door prizes and opportunity drawings!



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The Garden of the Month award for November was presented to John and Linda Karr, who live in the Smoke Rise community. Linda has been a master gardener since 2005.

The next Mountain Mums meeting will be a holiday celebration on Wednesday, December 11, at Smoke Rise Country Club. Contact Mary Jacobson at mjacob1010@gmail.com for more information on joining.

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS: All ad submissions and advertising inquiries should be directed to: Classified and Display ads: Staff@smokesignalnews.com

Flyers: Barbara Luton at barluton@aol.com.

All classified ads are limited to 20 words, with the *Smoke Signal* reserving the right to edit any copy. Ads are \$240 per year. Please submit a copy of ad to staff@smokesignalnews.com with your full name, address and phone number. Make checks out to *Smoke Signal* and mail to P.O. Box 1038, Tucker, GA 30085. We require full payment prior to ad placement.

For information on display (box) advertisements or flyer inserts, see contact information on page 2.

Classified Ads

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The purpose of the Smoke Signal classifieds is to advertise goods and services to the community.



Santa returns with presents and breakfast at FODAC's annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 7.

WSB Chief Meteorologist Glenn Burns is hosting the event from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Rehoboth Baptist Church, where proceeds will support FODAC's Pediatric Home Medical Equipment Program. More than 300 children with mobility challenges benefit each year from the proceeds of these fun family breakfasts with everyone's favorite jolly elf.

Tickets are required. Learn more about the event, or how you can help this great organization online at https://fodac.org/

Health Notes...continued from page 8

Is a yearly physical needed? If you are a child younger than 18 or are older than 50 and on medication, the answer is yes. If you are not on any medication, you may be seen less often. Other benefits of a yearly physical: Diabetes screening, cholesterol screening, blood pressure screening, immunizations, refill medications, and screenings for dementia, depression and anxiety as well as assessing your fall risk.

For smokers or previous smokers: Yearly low dose CT scanning is recommended for those at risk. Note: lung cancer rates are increasing in non-smokers.

Give the gift that keeps on giving-- a healthy you!

Food & Home Fixin'

By Joyce Ray, Staff Writer

I am sure many of our readers remember the experience of eating or serving small bits of food skewered on a long thin fork and dipped into a communal hot pot with delicious cheese/ wine sauce. You can still find those difficult-to-store fondue pots in flea markets and estate sales. Fondue became a symbol of Swiss unity after it was popularized as a Swiss national dish by the Swiss Cheese Union in the 1930s, although its history began more than a century before that. Widely revered as a cold weather meal, fondue was later promoted alongside slogans like "fondue creates a good mood" by the cheese industry to encourage people to enjoy eating more cheese. The USA heyday of Fondue was in the 1960s for about a decade until we started to lose the forks of our fondue sets. It was messy, festive, delicious, dangerous and provided a unique experience with friends without much preparation of the meal. If you preferred no preparation and a fun night out, there were restaurants that served only fondue. Who remembers "Dante's Down The Hatch," the pirate ship restaurant in Buckhead that served only fondue with jazz on the side? Fondue probably lost popularity with the invention of the crock pot where every ingredient could be added to an electric pot and slowly and safely cooked all day.

This dip recipe reminded me of that experience and combines the slow cooker with the fun of dipping chosen bites into a pot of cheese. Be sure to serve this for Christmas parties using your favorite dry breads, bite size veggies or chips. Remember the first rule of sharing fondue...NO Double Dipping!

Ultimate Fondue

Use freshly shredded cheese

1 (8 oz) pkg freshly shredded Swiss cheese

1 (8 oz pkg) freshly shredded mozzarella cheese

2 (3oz) containers garlic/herb spreadable cheese

½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

½ cup heavy cream

½ cup mayonnaise

1 (10) oz pkg frozen chopped spinach, thawed & pressed dry

1 (12) oz jar quartered marinated artichoke hearts, drained

1 (8 oz) can sliced water chestnuts, drained

1 (7 0z) jar sliced pimiento, drained

Combine the first 6 ingredients in lightly greased 3 or 4 qt. slow cooker. Drain spinach well, pressing between paper towels. Stir spinach, artichokes and remaining 2 ingredients into the cheese mixture. Cover and cook on LOW 1½ hours or until cheese melts, stirring after 45 minutes.



Mini-Macadamia-Coconut Cream Pies

This clever take on coconut cream pie has a coconut cookie crust and a silky filling made with coconut milk. Serve them on a dessert tray with an array of cookies, bars and other festive treats.

1 (10 oz) packages soft coconut macaroon cookies

1 egg white, beaten

½ cup finely chopped macadamia nuts

1/3 cup sugar

2 ½ Tbs. cornstarch

1 (13.5 oz) can coconut milk

2 egg yolks

½ tsp. Vanilla extract

1/8 tsp of salt

½ cup sweetened flaked coconut

Preheat oven to 350°. Carefully press cookies into the bottom of lightly greased mini muffin pans. Brush with beaten egg white, sprinkle evenly with nuts, pressing into cookies. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes. Remove from the rack and cool completely, (about 20 minutes).

Combine sugar and cornstarch in a heavy saucepan. Whisk together coconut milk and egg yolks. Gradually whisk egg mixture into sugar mixture, bring to a simmer over med. Heat, whisking constantly. Cook 3 minutes, whisking constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and salt.

Place pan in ice water for 10 minutes. Whisk occasionally, until cool. Spoon custard filling into prepared crusts. Place plastic wrap on surface of custard to prevent film from forming. Chill for at least 2 hours. Sprinkle with toasted coconut before serving. *Southern Living* tested with Archway Coconut Macaroon Cookies.