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September 2021

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plus: hello, happy mama: April Verhoef on health, faith, and love pg 16
four no-stress dinner ideas pg 22 why students should play sports pg 8

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Hello, Happy Mama:
April Verhoef of F Street Farmers Market



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Cover: Care, Consistency, Art, and Philanthropy: The Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County

(Cover) Bakersfield Boys and Girls Clubs of Kern County member Daisy, 12, and Efen, 13 (left) show their artwork. Charlotte Smith and Andrew Lopez transform into living art for Farm to Table(aux) (far left).

Photos by Orlando Trevino



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11 Things: How to Support Faculty and Staff this School Year

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dear reader



Vaun Thygerson,
Contributing Writer

As September rolls around, we are settling back into the routine of in-person school, sports, piano lessons, and everything - a complete 180 from this time last year. I am SO happy to be back in the Liberty High School (LHS) football stadium cheering for my Sophomore son, who plays on their JV team. In fact, I even took him to the new SoFi stadium to cheer for his favorite team, the Los Angeles Chargers.

It's funny how life comes full circle, because the reason my son is a Chargers fan is thanks to his LHS running back and linebacker coach's wife, who was his preschool teacher, and will now be his high school history teacher (confused yet?) When he went to preschool in their home, they were such big Chargers fans that even their adorably sweet golden retriever was named Charger. The die was cast, and at that young of age of four years old, my son became hooked on the Chargers and has stayed loyal to this day. His favorite players have changed from Phillip Rivers, now retired, to Keenan Allen, to rookie QB Justin Herbert, but the franchise remains his unwavering number one. And, thanks to his passion for the team, I have a Chargers bolt on my car, so I guess I'm a fan, too!

In order to support your child's teachers, you don't have to become super fans of their favorite teams, but you can help them in a lot of other ways. In the article, **11 Ways to Support Your Faculty and Staff This School Year**, Callie Collins gives many examples to help the school year be more successful. She suggests everything from speaking a kind word to donating school supplies. To find out the other ways you can help, please turn to page 14.

Special thanks to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County for this month's amazing cover photo. To read more about their upcoming fundraiser, Farm

to Table(aux), check out the article, **Care and Consistency: The Vital Work of Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County**, on page 10. This premier event, featuring living art (tableaux vivants) inspired by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, is one that you will not want to miss, so make sure to mark your calendar for Friday, October 8, at 6 p.m.



This month's Hello Happy Mama, **April Verhoef on Health, Faith, and Love**, starting on page 16, features a local music teacher and market manager for F Street Farmers Market. She is happy to share her love of music and helps to educate people on locally sourced farm-fresh nutrition with support from vendors and agrarians.

For your monthly dose of humor, check out the Humor at Home's article, **Mommy, Tell Me a Story: Lessons for Mother and Child**, on page 20. Julie Willis writes about how her fantastical dragon story became a little too much of a real-life scenario for her daughter. Her daughter even used her own tactics against her. It's a hoot!

Life is crazy and moves so fast, but it's so important to thank your children's mentors! You never know who or what is going to make an influential impact on them that sticks. I never dreamed that my son's lifelong passion for a football team would have started in preschool, but it really has given him a lot of memories and fun experiences. I am thankful for the people who are good influences and have enriched his life: From preschool to high school, they are still the ones who show up all the time, and they deserve a big, giant thank you! As John F. Kennedy once said, "We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives." For all teachers, coaches, volunteers, and parents, a kind word really does go a long way!

Happy back-to-an-in-person-routine way of life!



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Readers Respond:

What our community is looking forward to this school year

Back-to-school season is here. Returning to school this year has stirred a variety of emotions in our community. Here at Kern County Family Magazine, we have chosen to focus on the positive. We recently asked readers to share what they're looking forward to for the 2021-2022 school year. Here are some of their answers.

Voices and laughter on the schoolgrounds by children.

- Rose Hicks



Educating students on substance abuse prevention.

- Elizabeth Gutierrez

I hope my kids enjoy being back in the classroom and seeing their friends.

- Luz Garcia



Watching my daughter's reading improve. It's been a struggle so it's nice to watch the growth.

- Tanya George



Live school musical and theatrical productions.

- Jennifer Resolme

Getting out of the house every day.

- Jayla Gonzales

Watching my kids learn, grow and thrive!

- Regina Galvez



Getting to know all of my new students!

- Cheyanne Rigsby

A great and healthy year. - Rubi Perales



I am looking forward to sharing the joy and excitement my granddaughter has about starting school for the first time. I am looking forward to picking her up from school sometimes and hearing the details of her day learning and experiencing new friendships and relationships. I am looking forward to encouraging her in the joy of learning and education. Those are the things I look forward to these days. - Dawn Miller

NEW

BACK TO SCHOOL STUFF WE LOVE

By Elena Epstein, Director of the National Parenting Product Awards | For more product reviews, visit nappaawards.com

Hot Dots Let's Learn Reading & Math

The perfect way to practice critical math and reading skills at home and on the go. Let your kids learn on their own at their own pace and build confidence with this set. \$24.99, ages 3 years +, amazon.com



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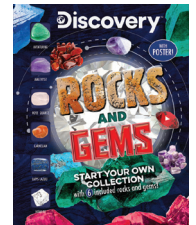
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5 great reasons students should play sports

Many kids are introduced to sports at an early age. Though young children may enjoy the recreational aspect of playing sports, a serious passion for a particular sport may develop as children reach high school. Such passions can be encouraged, as participating in sports can be highly beneficial for young people.

- 1. Learn resilience:** Compared to generations past, when children may have had jobs during the school year, today's children do not have many demands placed on them beyond schoolwork and maybe some light chores around the house. The average student may use sports as a way to learn about and overcome challenges. Participating in sports can teach kids how to recover from setbacks (being the losing team) or dealing with adverse situations (sports-related injuries).
- 2. Improve fitness:** School sports require ongoing physical activity, which is advantageous to children in an age when lifestyles are increasingly sedentary. A report from the National Federation of State High School Associations found that when female students are given more opportunity to engage in athletics in high school, their weight and body mass improve. School sports can help students overcome the negatives of sedentary lifestyles.
- 3. Relieve stress:** Exercise in any shape or form can help relieve stress. The camaraderie that develops within a team setting also can boost self-esteem and help some students overcome any feelings of isolation they may confront during adolescence.
- 4. Boost brainpower:** School sports may work the body but they also benefit the brain. A report from the Institute of Medicine indicates children who are physically active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed and perform better on academic tests than those who are sedentary.
- 5. Develop confidence and leadership skills:** A study from Cornell University says teens who played sports developed stronger leadership skills and developed better confidence. That can work in a team or solitary setting, and translate into skills that serve a person well throughout life.

Q Does childhood obesity present health risks in adulthood?



A A recent study found that overweight and obese children who achieved a normal weight by their 20s had the same risk for high blood pressure and high cholesterol as those who were never overweight. However, the study, published in 2018 in the European Heart Journal, found that patients who lost weight still faced increased risk for unhealthy arteries and type 2 diabetes later in life.

Signs of ADHD in people of all ages

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder affects millions of people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that a 2016 survey of parents found that 6.1 million children, which equated to roughly 9.4 percent of the childhood population that year, had been diagnosed with ADHD.

ADHD does not just affect children. A 10-year study published in JAMA Network Open found that ADHD diagnoses among adults have been growing four times faster than those among children in the United States.

The health and wellness information site Healthline says ADHD is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that can affect various components of daily life. The Mayo Clinic reports that ADHD can cause persistent problems, such as difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior, in both adults and children. ADHD can affect relationships, academic performance and even people's careers.

People concerned about ADHD should know that there is no single test to diagnose it. Furthermore, other psychiatric conditions or learning disabilities can produce similar symptoms as ADHD. Health care providers use the guidelines in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Fifth edition (DSM-5) to help diagnose ADHD. Key criteria for the condition include six or more symptoms for children and five or more for those ages 17 and older. Some of those symptoms include:

- **Inattention**, which includes not holding attention on tasks or play activities. Failure to pay close attention to details or making careless mistakes. Often the person has trouble organizing tasks and activities.
- **Hyperactivity** that can affect the ability to take part in activities quietly. One may act as if driven by a motor, and often squirms or fidgets. A person may have trouble waiting turns or keeping emotions in check.
- **Impulsivity** which can mean talking excessively or blurting out an answer before a question has been completed. Adults may have a hot temper or low frustration tolerance. Impulsivity can lead to risky behavior or substance and alcohol misuse.
- **Daydreaming** can occur as well, as not all symptoms of ADHD include loudness and being rambunctious. Some people may disappear into themselves and be quieter and less involved than they once were.

ADHD is a medical condition that is being diagnosed more readily, helping adults and children get treatment that can help them lead full lives.

Over 1/3 of child injuries occur at home

According to KidsHealth.org, more than one-third of child injuries and deaths happen at home. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that most incidents at home occur where there is water, such as in the bathroom or kitchen; heat or flame, like in the kitchen or around the grill; toxic substances, like those found in medicine cabinets or beneath kitchen sinks; and in places where kids can fall, such as on staircases.





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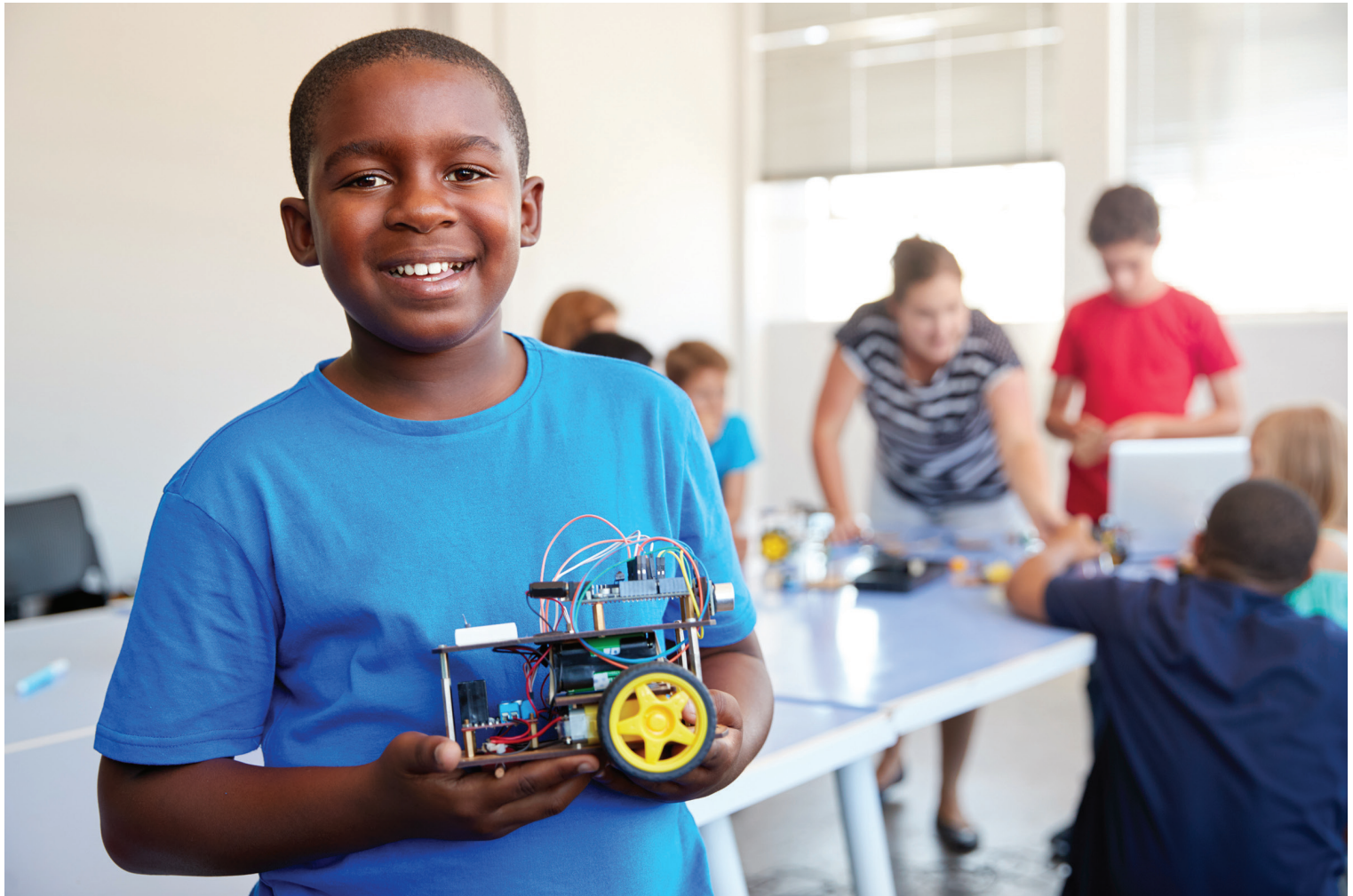
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Care and Consistency:

The Vital Work of Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County

Preparing tomorrow's professionals, community leaders, artists, engineers and engaged parents is happening now in Kern County. Guidance, opportunity and caring supervision are all part of the learning process, and they are available to local children in purposeful ways through Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County.

"My favorite quote when people find out about our services is 'I had no idea,' as related to the depth and the intentional creation of our youth development culture," said Zane Smith, executive director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County. "We are connecting to them as humans. The Club is for everyone. There is no poor kid, bad kid, that kid; we are here for everyone."

When children do better and become productive adults, the entire community benefits.

Life skills every child needs, from character lessons and wise counsel to academic help, art lessons, sports participation, and more, are

available through the organization open to all children. Some participants will be the first person in their families to attend college; others simply need supervision, a mentor, or a positive place to spend time.

Investing in our children's future and, ultimately, our community's wellbeing, is what takes place on a daily basis at the 68 Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County locations each day for about 10,000 local students. A hearts and minds outreach program, its mission is "to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens."

Boys & Girls Clubs of America received national attention during the pandemic for its steadfast care of children. Advocates continued to keep chapters open, show up for children, offer media interviews commenting on what they were seeing as schools closed and coordinate resources at a time when few agencies had the ability to do so.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KERN COUNTY

Kern County's locations did exactly that, too. They never closed, even during quarantine's weariest days.

"As far as our children were concerned, everything kept changing on them but we never did," said Zane. "We donned masks, we learned about PPE, but with open hearts, open minds and open doors, we pivoted to provide certainty in children's lives while so much was uncertain."

Participation is not limited to household income thresholds or other demographic factors. Any school-age child, defined as 5 to 18, can take part in activities and more.

Safer childhoods, life-enhancing programs and access to consistent, qualified mentors are three major areas the organization identifies as part of its services across the nation and on the local

level at more than 4,700 locations. School-based clubs, locations on military bases and dedicated centers are available to families for after-school care, school break programs, tutoring, access to child nutrition, and more.

“A lot of our kids do come from very humble circumstances,” said Zane, although he is always quick to point out that Boys & Girls Clubs both in Kern County and throughout the country serve children from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Mentorship is a strategy that gives children a consistent, caring adult role model.

As a non-profit, funding is made possible by corporate support, public and private grants, and the incredible generosity of local donors. Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County employ more than 700 residents, with internships for young professionals. Scholarships cover the majority of the cost of attendance for approximately 92% of attendee expenses, which makes funding critical. There are no specific dollars allocated for attendance by children living in foster care, living in shelters, or experiencing homelessness.

Mentorship is a strategy that gives children a consistent, caring adult role model. Whether or not home is also a source of positivity and support, participants’ Boys & Girls Club location is something they can count on, with staff who express sincere care and interest in the child as an individual.

“Our goal is to make every kid feel like the most popular kid on campus,” said Zane. “We have all these protective factors built in through their participation experience. Resiliency and real grit will come to serve them later on. Later on, when our youth are at a crossroads, we hope they will reflect upon the love they felt. Our goal is to help them find a niche in our community, to be able to make positive decisions.”

Zane described seeing former participants return to serve as employees, often in mentorship roles, as a fulfilling aspect of his career, which spans more than three decades with the organization, 25 of which have been in Bakersfield. That longevity is particularly long for any career professional in the non-profit sector, which averages a national stint of just four years.

“You get to see the outcomes of your work,” said Zane about the renewed sense of hope he feels

Article continues on page 12

Cultivating Art & Philanthropy

Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County’s proud tradition of cultivating student art culminates with Farm to Table(aux).

“The event gives our kids a voice and a perspective to share and influence the community we share,” said Executive Director Zane Smith. “They work year-round on their featured pieces and become philanthropists by investing in their own programs.”

Participants study the event’s featured artist and their movement. Presenting their own work at the work allows the community to see their work firsthand and bid to own it.

“We want to show off what kids can accomplish when given the right tools,” said Zane. “Kids can fund their own programs through the sale of the pieces.”

What started as ArtFest, a small show, more than two decades ago at Marketplace Shopping Center has become an important part of the organization’s ability to provide art and attendance possibilities for children. The original event took place around Mother’s Day each year and mostly served as a way for children to give their mothers a present. While most of what was produced at that time was refrigerator art, the amateur works parents know and love, it was still dear to families.

When a local resident offered to purchase a child’s watercolor of a koi fish, Zane recalled telling Jacquie Diaz, the young artist, “Don’t worry, I would never sell your Mom’s Mother’s Day Gift.” The interested buyer continued to offer more money but the organization refused to sell her artwork. However, Jacquie painted another piece for Mother’s Day and the work of art was eventually offered to a donor who collected art and had admired the piece for some time. A copy of the original koi fish painted ended up in Zane’s office.

The incident helped to elevate the concept of participants’ art being desirable and something children could sell to fund programming that gives back to their own community, peers and future generations. People also began collecting their artwork.

“Kids were growing up and becoming amazing, sensational artists,” said Zane. “About six years ago, someone came and said, ‘We think we can take it to the next level.’”

The Farm to Table(aux) event is eagerly anticipated each year. Learn more on page 12.



Photo: Orlando Trevino for Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County



watching participants' progress. "You see them grow up, see a child who may have struggled to gain equilibrium find a sense of self and watch them spread their wings. When that happens, you can reimagine the possibilities for their kids."

Zane's arrival in Bakersfield took place in July 1996. He and his wife, Amy, moved with their young son from Long Beach. They later welcomed a new daughter; both children are now grown. Amy is Bakersfield Museum of Art's executive director.

When the Smiths were new in town, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County consisted of one club and one van. Zane saw the potential for partnerships, especially in school settings already safe for children.

"Where there are kids, there's always possibility," said Zane. "We work with 14 school districts now. We are here for every child who needs us. Character, leadership, and social dynamics are part of our everyday experience. Every part of our DNA as an organization has disguised learning as part of it. I have learned so much from working with kids in school and non-school hours and I am so grateful to the afterschool program for extending learning during their day. We offer enrichment plus a sense of fun."

Zane recalled a recent kitchen safety demonstration in which participants learned how to make healthy, nutritious snacks. They learned the basic skill of cooking for themselves and possibly siblings. Along with cooking safety, however, a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) activity helped make the lesson more tangible by the simple act of making painted toast part of the day, with margarine and food coloring.

"It wasn't Einstein but it was memorable," said Zane.

Making real-world impressions is key. Geology majors, for example, helped formulate a Geology Rocks program. Leveraging relationships helps children see possibilities in the world of work.

"Every child has to have a plan when they leave us," said Zane, who considers himself fortunate to see participants move on to college, the military and other horizons. Some even return as mentors or employees at their former Boys & Girls Club location.

Regular attendance also results in better grades. Nationally, the organization reports 97% of its participants expect to graduate from high school, compared with 83% in the state of California.

Mental health benefits are also notable, but the pandemic's full effects in that area remain yet to be seen. Zane, however, believes the results will be positive, just as they are with participants year in and year out.

"We made a difference in their education and social dynamic. As they go forward, our participants will be standing strong because they were with us and we were with them and we provided a support system where everything will be okay," said Zane. "They will recognize how strong they are as human beings moving forward into adulthood."

Zane always circles back to the work that takes place in impactful ways that is simply not known about as much as it should be in Kern County. He invites anyone who wants to see to come take a tour. What visitors see is surprising, but the results will continue to influence Kern County in public and private ways for generations to come.

Schedule a tour or find out more about the phenomenal work the organization leads at <https://www.bgclubsofkernecounty.org/>.

Bringing Art to Life

By Vaun Thygerson, Photography by Orlando Trevino

This year's Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County's Farm to Table(aux) fundraising event on Friday, October 8 will bring Paris artist, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings to life in Tableaux Vivants (living art) with a combination of artwork, performances, and actors. Famous for *At the Moulin Rouge* and *Moulin Rouge: La Goulue*, Toulouse-Lautrec was one of the first painters to blur the lines between the worlds of fine art and advertisement. A frequent VIP guest at *Moulin Rouge*, he loved to paint the theatrical and absinthe side of Paris nightlife in the 19th Century. As he stated, "I have tried to do what is true and not ideal."



Above: *At the Moulin Rouge*, 1892/95, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *The Art Institute of Chicago*

Below: Charlotte Smith and Andrew Lopez, transformed





"The process of creating a Tableaux for our Farm to Table(aux) event involves multiple artists, a clear plan of action, and execution," says Zane Smith, Executive Director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County. "Everyone plays an important role in creating the amazing result intended to inspire and challenge the imaginations of our guests."

Charlotte Smith, Club alumna (left), transformed into a character inspired by Toulouse-Lautrec's painting *At the Moulin Rouge*, a post-impressionist oil on canvas, which is currently on display at the Art Institute of Chicago. Andrew Lopez, Area Program Director for the Boys & Girls Club, personifies the artist Toulouse-Lautrec himself.



Andrew Lopez & Charlotte Smith in character

Zane Smith says creating these living art installations from inception to reality is complex and takes a lot of planning. The concept for a Tableaux starts with identifying an original piece, by the Artist that is recognizable to most people. Then he studies the piece for potential of scale and interest and finds a local professional artist, who supports the Club, to paint the backdrop. Once the details are in place, they look for an actor and/or actors that can portray a character or characters in the piece.

With the help of local stylist and Club alumna Cat Webb, owner and provider of Blissful Retreat Intimate Day Spa and Salon in Bakersfield and Arroyo Grande, she and Zane Smith begin assembling the costume and accessories to complete the vision. Using a combination of on-line purchases, thrift store finds, pieces from personal closets, and a lot of makeup, the characters are styled to look identical to the famous figures.

"I believe it is important to create living art for this fundraiser because it helps the guests of the event to be able to step inside and be a part of the artist's vision," Cat says. "This experience is what makes the event, the people are blown away by it every year! That's the most satisfying part for me."

Charlotte Smith's three-hour transformation started with a dress purchased on-line and her hat was created by merging two hats that her mother, Amy, had in her closet. Cat used makeup to create a painterly look that mimics how the color of the character's face is created in the painting. Cat says this was the hardest part of the process. "Matching and blending the colors just like the artist wasn't easy. This is also the longest process," she says. "It took me about an hour and a half, but I think I'll have it down to 45 minutes on the day of the event."

Using contours and shadows on Charlotte's face, Cat made her nose smaller and more turned up; she also hollowed out her eyes using light and shadows. Her curly updo was pinned into place and colored golden yellow with spray-in hair paint. Charlotte will perform in a Tableaux painted by Marj Dow throughout the night.

Andrew Lopez, who will become the living Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, used items from Club staff's personal closets and some pieces from Encore Boutique. Cat created his look with foundation and a human hair beard and mustache applied with spirit gum. During the event, he will roam the audience and interact with guests spouting popular quotes by Toulouse-Lautrec. Once such quote he could articulate is the following: "Love is when the desire to be desired takes you so badly, that you feel you could die of it!"



11 Ways to Support Your Local Faculty and Staff This School Year



Back-to-school season's rush and new routines may seem like old hat for families by now. While each morning gets smoother for parents, needs at your school site for teachers and support staff will continue throughout the year. Every family can rise to the challenge, with the ability to share time, talent or material resources. All ways are meaningful and valid.

Here are 11 ways to support your school in ways large and small this year.

Offer a kind word

Praise your child's teacher. Thank instructors for their commitment to every child. Sharing a kind word with a quick email or handwritten note can make a tremendous difference in the life of an educator.

Send supplies



Extra hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, glue sticks and sharpened pencils are consistent classroom needs that tend to run out. Send extra with your child for everyone's use.

Lead a community effort

Help your school make connections with outside organizations. From grants to field trips, making opportunities possible takes a village. Share your network.

Volunteer at school

Sign up for a committee, host a party, read aloud, make copies or coordinate as needed — and something is always needed. Lend a hand and you'll see how schools operate, what could be done differently and where to concentrate additional effort.

Plan a surprise



Whether it's setting up a coffee bar for all faculty or just bringing your teacher a favorite cup of coffee, a surprise can help bring unexpected joy to the school week. A sweet treat is enough to improve someone else's day.

Try a gift card

A bookstore or another gift card can offset expenses teachers may otherwise assume themselves.

Help others find ways to get involved

Bring friends and family. Ask if your Rotary club, church, or volunteer organization can help support a school event.

Consider donating for those who cannot pay

Extras like socks, snacks, and items for purchase throughout the school year are simply out of the question for some families. Consider filling out an extra order form if you are able to cover the cost of additional items.

Add to library materials

If you have materials in great condition, donate them to your school library. Talk with your school librarian about what is needed and how to add to the school's collection.



Be an advocate

Choose to take the high road when it comes to school gossip. Stick up for your school, talk through issues with your school administration, listen, and advocate for change where needed.

Don't forget about special class teachers and support staff

Music, language and gym teachers, librarians, speech therapists, receptionists, and administrators are all part of making a school community successful. Keep their services in mind, too, when it comes to helping out at school.

Farming
Hello, Happy^Mama:
April Verhoef on
Health, Faith, & Love

Photography by Stacey Leigh Photography



April Verhoef is a teacher by trade but also someone who is always learning. Her gentle way of being makes for easy conversation. She has taught music part-time in public schools for more than 30 years. Many Kern County residents may also know her as market manager for F Street Farmers Market, where she talks with passersby in her kind way about good health and better nutrition.

“You know, throughout the past year, I have noticed a lot of single people or people who just need to talk with someone,” said April. “Sometimes, they stop by my booth and we talk and then they say, ‘It was really nice just talking to you. I guess I just needed to talk with someone.’ They may not buy anything, and that is okay. I think sometimes they might need to realize there are other people, and we all just have that need.”

April’s social nature comes through in all that she does.

“I love people and being around people and helping people out,” she said. “I love teaching; teaching kids how to make something or do something or put something together. At the farmers market, I can share health information or how to cook something. I want people to be healthy and have a positive outlook.”

Her sunny perspective is undoubtedly an asset in her day job: teaching children in kindergarten through eighth grade at rural schools and in some private lessons. She will teach two days per week, one at McKittrick Elementary and one at Maple Elementary, outside of Shafter. COVID interrupted her plans, including preschool instruction, and led her to be furloughed last year, but she looks forward to trying again for the 2021-2022 school year.

April holds a degree in music from California State University, Long Beach. Her main instrument is the piano, but she teaches a little bit of everything: voice, guitar, violin, xylophone, and folk dancing.

“Folk dancing is great, because it teaches them patterns,” she explained. “It’s like square dancing, but it’s done in lines, so they have to learn how to work in pairs. Sometimes, it’s pretty chaotic and sometimes pretty organized.”

In calm tones, she recalled always wanting to be a teacher and beginning piano lessons at age 6, facts that came together for her life plan.

“My Mom was a singer. I always played for her, and our family sang together. It started with playing piano at church, but my Mom always needed someone to accompany her,” she said.

“It was a challenge. I didn’t want other people to play for her. I wanted to play for her. Later, our church needed an organist, so my parents paid for lessons. and I became the organist. I can sight read anything.”

Originally from South Dakota, April's father moved to California with the U.S. Navy but continued to send April home to the family farm three months out of the year so she would develop the work ethic that characterizes her life.

At the farmers market, I can share health information or how to cook something. I want people to be healthy and have a positive outlook."

-April Verhoef

"Cows and pigs aren't going to be fed unless you get out there and do it. On a farm, you just don't have a choice about not sitting around," she said. "I learned a lot from my grandmother. We picked chokecherries, wild plums, and crabapples. I've been making jams and jellies for over 40 years."

April passed along key skills to her children, who know how to can, sew and cook. She has also taught eighth grade life skills classes, often called "home economics," and helped with 4-H when her children were young. She and her husband now raise chickens, goats and pigs on

two-and-a-half acres east of Highway 43, while her son lives nearby with sheep, chickens, and geese. They have lived in Bakersfield for more than 20 years and love their friendly community of neighbors.

As for future plans, April says she takes life one day at a time, especially as COVID-19 was so disruptive to teachers last year.

"There really wasn't time to teach music properly," she said. "Reading and writing took precedent, so I basically put it all on hold... Sometimes, I do think about retiring, but when you do something you haven't done in a long time, you remember how much you love it and, with teaching, how much you love the kids."

Functional medicine is also an interest for April, in part because she has celiac disease, a diagnosis 19 years in the making. She pays attention to her family's diet and vitamin intake, and will be glad to talk about health and nutrition with anyone who asks.

April takes comfort in the Bible and welcomes others who come up to her with verses to share. Fellow Kern County residents know they can find her at F Street Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. Whether you need food, conversation, or music, life's joys shine through her person, sure as the sun rises on a Saturday morning.

HELLO, HAPPY MAMA

September Giveaway

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hello, happy mama

Food, Family and the F Street Farmers Market:

April Verhoef Shares How Farmers Markets Help Bridge the Nutrition Gap

Community comes to life each Saturday morning on F Street at Kern County's longest-running farmers market. Residents know they can count on F Street Farmers Market for access to fresh, quality produce and more.

April Verhoef, market manager, is proud of the role of F Street Farmers Market in bringing together both local vendors and customers. She has been involved with the effort since 2007 and has served in her current role for the past two years.

"I am always looking to include a variety of items, but the market is more quality than quantity," said April. "I want my vendors to be successful and for shopping to be a positive experience for both vendor and shopper. Whatever they provide, I want it to be a quality product."

Currently, the variety of products at F Street Farmers Market includes fruits and vegetables, flowers, honey, eggs, barbecue and bakery products, soaps made from natural products, dog treats and a beloved vendor with a variety of other items.

"Lois has reinvented herself so many times," said April, speaking of a familiar figure she admires. "She hand paints on glass crystal, and I have no idea how she does it. Lois sells jewelry, she sells fish water [for houseplants] and compost."

F Street Farmers Market has served Kern County for more than three decades. The open air experience of a farmers market can bring together friends and neighbors as families meet on both sides of the table. Unifying qualities inherent to community life like food and family have a way of meeting in similar settings throughout the country, with tangible benefits, with healthy food and a more personable experience.

"Farmers markets provide a healthy alternative to what consumers might otherwise buy. They are a good alternative to junk food you might find at the supermarket and give people a way to buy healthy food, especially since we accept EBT and SNAP benefits," said April. "With our farmers and vendors, they're not big businesses. They are hardworking families. For some, this is their only income and for others, it's a supplemental income to help provide for their family."

April first got involved with F Street Farmers Market in 2007 to help further her daughter and sons' related interests. More than just a pastime, involvement in 4-H and FFA inspired careers for two of the Verhoef Family's three children.

April accepts applications for prospective vendors, interested makers, sellers and agricultural producers who have unique products to offer. As a certified farmers market, agricultural producers present undergo an additional application process that the Kern County Department of Agriculture oversees as extensions of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

"What they sell is what they grow," said April. "The Ag Department checks on it, with visits to their operations, and anytime they add a product, they have to get recertified. What's on your table has to match what's on your list."

Inspections of the market overall also take place and non-certified vendors must also have permits. Vendors also need a tent, table, certified scale and insurance, in addition to other state requirements. Interested applicants can pick up an application at the market or reach out via Facebook for more information to begin the process. Approved vendors turn over 7% of the day's sales but there is no flat fee or minimum required.

The F Street Farmers Market is open every Saturday, year round, from 7:45 a.m. to noon.



Photography by Stacey Leigh Photography



A recent grant made possible by The Ecology Center and in partnership with Communication Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) actually increases EBT and SNAP participant benefits by giving every recipient an additional \$10 to spend at the market. An EBT booth on-site offers wooden coins as a form of currency to be spent at individual vendor booths.

Tents are spaced with three to four feet between each booth space, with sunshine and optimal conditions for social distancing. Mask use is up to the individual.

April provides a consistent and joyful presence at F Street Farmers Market, where all life's colors come together for happy Saturday mornings filled with new sights and tastes for family memories.



Around the Table: Q&A with April Verhoef

April Verhoef shared her insight as both a Kern County mother of grown children and as market manager of F Street Farmers Market. She answered three key questions about shopping with children and involving them in food and nature-based learning.

Q. Supporting local vendors is important. We always want to support Kern County's small businesses and agrarians. How can our readers and their families better support local shopping?

A. It is so nice when I see families shopping with their kids at F Street Farmers Market. My suggestion is to give your kid \$5 and let them choose something they want to make. Let your child decide what to cook, where to buy the ingredients, choose which vendor has what they need and let them really do it. Involving them and helping them learn to eat healthy happens when they can take part in the process.

For every day a fruit or vegetable sits on the shelf, it loses nutritional value. As farmers, we try to provide the freshest food we can to help enhance your health. The fruits and vegetables for sale are often picked the night before.

Eggs are, at most, a week old. Sometimes at the farmers market, we don't have what people want because it's not in season, but that tells you there's an order to things and to get it while it's there. You know it's locally grown and available because of what's in season in Kern County, not brought from a different place in the world. Teaching children about those differences matters.

Q. As a parent in the area, what do you recommend other parents do to educate their families about agricultural resources and life skills associated with cooking and eating?

A. I think my children really benefited from having life on the farm for information but that's not every family or child has access to. I would say to get involved in 4-H, FFA, call the Ag Department and ask, where are my local clubs. Children who live in more urban areas could still have rabbits, maybe chickens. Even growing vegetables in a pot could help children know more about the process. Anyone can grow beans. Take a milk jug and get potting soil or dirt from outside to see how the growing process works.

Q. Do you have any recipes we should share with our readers?

A. Yes, I always tell people at the market this one because we sell sausage and my suggestion is to make a sheet pan supper. It's the easiest meal you can make. Go get some sweet potatoes and onions, any vegetable you like, take a little bit of olive oil and put it on parchment paper with the sausage links. All the juices from the meat will go on top and flavor the meal. It'll be delicious.

Farmers Market Sheet Pan Dinner

Ingredients

- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 to 1 inch pieces (You can use russet potatoes, if you prefer)
- 2 yellow, brown, or red onions, quartered or thickly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2-3 cups veggie(s) of your choice: i.e. baby carrots, broccoli, brussels sprouts, green beans or mushrooms
- 1 package sausage links or ground sausage
- 2 tbsp Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375.
2. Combine all veggies in a large bowl. Toss with olive oil and a heavy pinch of salt and pepper.
3. Spread across large cooking sheet, and place sausage links or crumble ground sausage across top.
4. Bake for 45 minutes. Slice cooked links before serving, or serve as is.





"Mommy, tell me a Dragon story," Ashley begged me. She asks me this nightly. I have completely adopted the Dragon character from Dav Pilkey's books with the same name. My kids have always loved Pilkey's dragon books. There just aren't enough of them. (Note to Mr. Pilkey: Enough Dogman books; can you please write more Dragon books? I am getting really tired of having to create all my own adventures for your character.)

All of my stories start the same: "Once there was a dragon named Dragon." But this particular night, after my standard opening line, I took a controversial tack: "One day, Dragon got dressed. He came out into the living room, but about two minutes later, he decided his shirt was too itchy. So do you know what he did?"

Ashley looked at me with wide, hopeful, trusting eyes. Sincere eyes. As a parent, you should never crush those sincere eyes.

But I plowed ahead. "He went into his room, took off that shirt, put it in the laundry, and put on a new shirt."

More nodding. Poor kid had no idea yet where I was going with this. "So Dragon came out laughing and skipping, proud of his new shirt. But then... after a few minutes, he noticed that this shirt was too tight for him. He was a growing dragon, after all. So what do you think he did?"

Big, sincere eyes full of hope met my gaze. "I don't know, Mom. What did he do?"

"He took that shirt off, put it in the laundry—even though he had only worn it for less than five minutes--and got another shirt.

At this point my darling daughter's expression turned to one of suspicion. But the hope was still there. It was definitely time to turn this into a happy Dragon story before I crushed my innocent little love bug.

I continued: "He wore that shirt for less than one minute because it was too hot. Then, Dragon put that hot, long-sleeved shirt in the laundry and changed into a short-sleeved shirt."

Now my child's expression turned downright sour. "Mom! That's the worst, absolute WORST, Dragon story ever!"

"Well, they can't all be masterpieces. I'm just an amateur. Why do you think I told you this story?"

I needn't have asked. I could see in her eyes that she knew. I was starting to worry that maybe I had done some permanent damage when she said, "I think you need to make better Dragon stories."

"Oh yeah? Hm. OK, maybe you're right. I'll work on my story-telling techniques. Will you work on putting clean clothes back in your dresser?" She did not answer that.

But she did come up with her own Dragon story, a sweet piece about how Dragon's mom did not allow him to help with the laundry because he was too small, but Dragon's dad did let him help wash the dishes—even though he kept making mistakes and doing silly things like climbing into the crock pot instead of washing it. (He was a very small dragon.)

I cannot be sure, but I feel like she may have used my Dragon storytelling techniques against me there.

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you can do it

Back to School No-Stress Dinners!

Intro by Pam Huber

As summer winds down, the days start getting shorter, and the school-day shuffle gets into full swing—which means you're likely ready for comforting dinners you don't really need to think about.

Try the Farmers Market Sheet Pan Dinner on page 19, spice up an always-quick grilled cheese or frittata, or pull out the crock pot and let Mac & Cheese bubble away all afternoon. Sloppy Joes are a family favorite that can cook all day and will be ready when you are. Plus, these recipes serve up to eight, which means plenty for leftovers (and one less meal to worry about tomorrow!)



Roasted Red Pepper & Pesto Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Prep time: 5 minutes | Cook time: 10 minutes | Servings: 2

Ingredients

- 4 slices French or Italian bread
- 3 tablespoons prepared pesto
- 2 large roasted red peppers
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened

Directions

1. Preheat skillet or grill pan over medium-low heat.
2. Spread insides of bread slices evenly with pesto. Stack red peppers and mozzarella cheese.
3. Spread outer sides of bread with softened butter and grill until toasted and cheese is melted, about 5 minutes per side.
4. Rest 1 minute before cutting.



Sustainable Frittata

Prep time: 5 minutes | Cook time: 20 minutes | Servings: 8

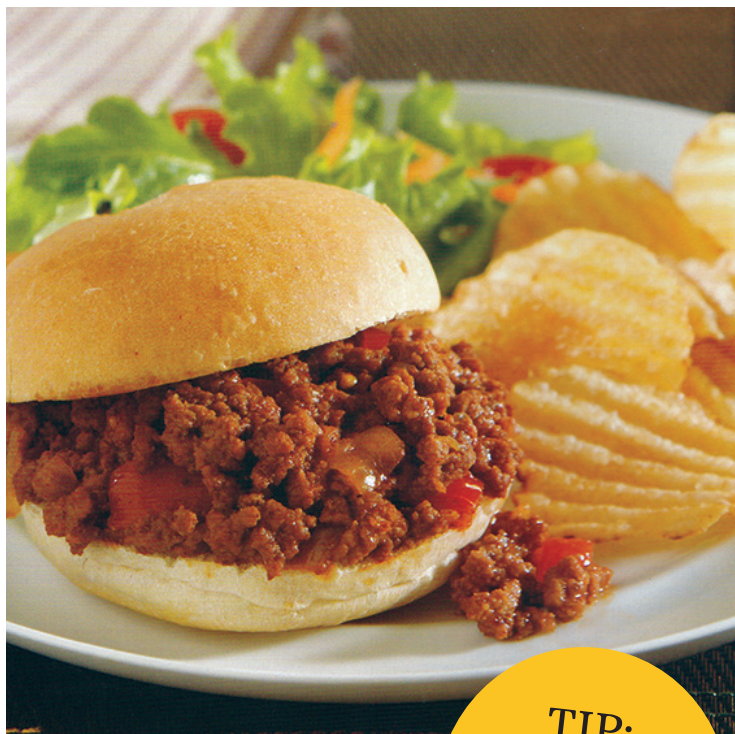
Ingredients

- 12 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup whole milk, half and half or heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups shredded cheese, any variety
- 3 cups assorted cooked vegetables and pre-cooked meats
- fresh herbs, for garnish (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. Preheat cast-iron pan or oven-safe skillet over medium heat.
3. In large bowl, mix eggs, milk and salt then add shredded cheese.
4. Add cooked vegetables and meats to pan to reheat. Once vegetables have softened, add egg mixture to pan and scramble. Let sit over medium heat 1 minute.
5. Carefully transfer to oven and bake 10-15 minutes. Frittata is done when eggs have set. Remove from oven and top with fresh herbs.

What's your go-to No Stress Dinner?
Share it with us on Facebook and tag it with
#KCFMnostressdinner



TIP:
To make Sloppy Joes slightly less sloppy, serve on bite-sized slider rolls.

Suzie's Sloppy Joes

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

- 3 pounds 95 percent lean ground beef
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/4 cups ketchup
- 1 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- Toasted hamburger buns

Directions

1. Cook and stir ground beef, onion and garlic in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until beef is browned and onion is tender. Drain and discard fat.
2. Combine ketchup, bell pepper, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, mustard, vinegar and chili powder in a slow cooker. Stir in beef mixture.
3. Cover; cook on low 6 to 8 hours. To serve, spoon mixture onto hamburger buns.

Save even more time!

You can get all the ingredients chopped and ready the night before, then refrigerate over night. Toss it all in the crock pot before you leave in the morning—just don't forget to turn it on!



Slow Cooker Macaroni & Cheese

Prep time: 20 minutes | Cook time: 2 hours | Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 16 ounces elbow pasta
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 3 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese
- 2 cups whole milk
- 12 ounces evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 3/4 teaspoon ground mustard
- pepper, to taste
- 8 ounces shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces grated provolone cheese

Directions

1. Cook pasta al dente according to package directions. Drain and pour into large slow cooker.
2. In small saucepan over medium heat, whisk butter and cream cheese until melted. Stir in milk, evaporated milk and sour cream; whisk until combined.
3. Remove from heat; whisk in eggs, ground mustard and pepper, to taste. Stir in cheeses. Pour mixture over cooked macaroni and stir to combine cheese and pasta.
4. Cover and cook 2 hours on low. Switch to warm until ready to serve.

Recipe courtesy of Rachel Gurk of "Rachel Cooks" on behalf of Milk Means More/"Crock-Pot® 365 Year-Round Recipes" (Publications International, Ltd.)



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KERN COUNTY FAMILY MAGAZINE *daily happenings* THE **BEST** LOCAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

Our printed version of the calendar has been edited for space. For more details about these events or activities not listed please visit www.kerncountyfamily.com

Saturdays in September

F St Farmers Market

City Center: 3201 F St. – Parking Lot
Bakersfield, CA
(661) 342-4671
Time: 7:45am – 12pm
www.visitbakersfield.com/events-calendar/valley-farmers-market/

Bakersfield's Longest Running Certified Farmer's Market featuring Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Pork, Honey, Handmade Soaps, Baked Goods, Jams, Jellies & More!! Accepts cash, card & EBT. Social distancing practiced throughout the market.

Come and meet your local Farmers and Craftsmen and buy local, buy fresh! Chat with the people who grow your food and the craftsmen who hand make their products while supporting local businesses.

Lakeshore Farmer's Market- Wofford Heights

7466 Wofford Blvd. Wofford Heights CA 93285
(760) 417-9575
Time: 9am – 1pm

We have some great farmer's markets in Kern County, and this is another one. Give your whole family the gift of fresh fruits, vegetables, and home-made goodies. Drive up the hill for some amazing finds on Saturdays.

Ongoing Each Monday

Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support

Mondays via ZOOM (online group)
Bakersfield, CA
(661) 410-1010
Time: 5:30-6:30pm
<https://www.hoffmannhospice.org/grief-support-groups/>

HEALING HEARTS (Parents that have lost children). This is a particularly difficult time to experience the death of a loved one. Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support groups are led by trained grief counselors. The meetings are free and open to all. You do not need to have a loved one on our service to attend.

Space is limited, reservation required for all groups. Please call (661) 410-1010 to schedule.



September 11 Second Saturday

Bakersfield, CA
Time: 9am – 8pm
Email: hello@bakersfieldsecondsaturday.com
<https://www.bakersfieldsecondsaturday.com/>



If you're looking for a fun and walkable weekend on the town, look no further — Second Saturday's monthly weekend gathering brings businesses and the community together in Downtown Bakersfield to explore fun new opportunities! From yoga & art to deals & popups to good eats & coffee, there's something for everyone.

September 15 & 29

MAKE Bakersfield's Kids Fall Workshops

Bakersfield Racquet Club
1660 Pine St. Bakersfield, CA
(661) 204-1098
Time: 3:15pm – 5:15pm
<https://makebakersfield.com/kids-fall-art-classes-bakersfield>

Fall workshops for ages 6-12 take place on select-Wednesday afternoons at Bakersfield Racquet Club. Each session presents a material and/or process that encourages students to explore, experiment and form their outcomes into a finished work of art. Enrollment is limited to 8 students per session. Pre-registration is required as class-size is limited. Classes are held upstairs in the Lovelace Room at Bakersfield Racquet Club. Contact info@makebakersfield.com for questions regarding workshops.

September 18 Pyles Kern County BBQ

Lake Ming Recreation Area
13375 Lake Ming Rd. Bakersfield, CA
(661) 294-1394
Time: 12 – 5pm
<https://www.pylescamp.org/bbq>

Join us at the Pyles Kern County BBQ for a Family friendly event which includes bounce house, face painting, balloon art, and more. Exciting raffle prizes including kids' bicycles (tickets will be sold at the event) and a Super raffle prize TBD. Enjoy an outstanding tri-tip dinner by Jim Roberts and his gang of cooks. \$15/person. Tickets available for purchase at the event! Kids 12 and under eat free!



September 15-16, 2021



A closer look at the autumnal equinox

Each September, the Northern Hemisphere experiences the autumnal equinox, which marks the official beginning of fall. In the Southern Hemisphere, spring is arriving at this time.

Each year there are two equinoxes, the vernal and the autumnal (March and September, respectively). Shortly after the autumnal equinox, days begin getting shorter and the nights get longer. The autumnal equinox always occurs between September 21 and September 24. In 2021, the autumnal equinox takes place on September 22.

The word equinox is from the Latin "aequi," meaning "equal," and "nox" or "night." That means that during each equinox the hours of day and night are nearly equal in length across the planet. During the equinox, the part of the Earth that is closest to the sun is the equator, explains History.com. That helps make night and day equal in length.

According to the Farmer's Almanac, the Autumnal Equinox on September 22, 2021, arrives at 3:21 p.m. EDT, 2:21 p.m. CDT, 1:21 p.m. MDT, and 12:21 p.m. PDT.



September 18
**12th Annual Farewell to Sickle Cell
5k/10k Run/Walk & Blood Drive**
The Park at River Walk
11200 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA
(661) 477-5476
Time: 6:30-11am
<https://www.farewelltosicklecell.com>



Join us for the annual Farewell to Sickle Cell 5k/10k Run Walk. This "live" 5k/10k run takes place at the Bakersfield Riverwalk with food, music, fun activities, and medals awarded to age group winners.

Our Mission is to increase public awareness about Sickle Cell Disease through education, and to provide support through medical research, accessible services, and intervention for suffering individuals, with an ultimate goal of enhancing the well-being of those affected by Sickle Cell Disease locally and globally.

September 18
**Hoffmann Hospice's Run To Remember
10k, 5k, and 1-mile Run and Walk**
Hoffmann Hospice Home
4401 Buena Vista Rd, Bakersfield CA
(661) 410-1010
Time: 8am - 12pm
<https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/Bakersfield/HHRunToRemember>

First time runners to accomplished athletes will enjoy the 10k, 5k, or 1 mile routes available at Run To Remember. Participants come from all walks of life to honor the memory of a loved one at Run To Remember. This is a day to come together to keep the memory of a loved one alive and help sustain the services of Hoffmann Hospice.

Can't attend the event on September 18th? No problem! Register for the virtual category. You can run or walk at your own pace wherever, whenever is best for you. Submit your time to run@hoffmannhospice.org by September 17, 2021 and receive the event shirt, bib, and finisher's medal.

September 19
Import Face-Off
Famoso Raceway
33559 Famoso Rd, Bakersfield, CA
(661) 399-2210
Time: 10:00 am - 8:00 pm
www.famosoraceway.com



The IMPORT FACE-OFF national car show and drag racing series will be at Autoclub Famoso Raceway on September 19. Event Activities: Car/truck/bike show, 1/4 mile drag racing, Usaci stereo crank it up contest, dyno contest, burnout contest (time permitting), low car limbo, 2 step competition, vendors, DJ, models. Gates open 7am, racing starts at 10, eliminations around 1, event ends around 6pm. Car show and stereo registration from 9am to noon, absolute latest 2pm. Awards ceremony around 5pm.

September 22 - October 3

Kern County Fair

Kern County Fairgrounds

1142 South P Street, Bakersfield, CA 93307

Phone: 661-833-4900

<https://www.kerncountyfair.com>

HOURS Wednesday - Thursday • 3:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Friday (9/24) • 10:30 AM - 11:00 PM

Friday (10/1) • 3:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Saturdays • Noon - 11:00 PM

Sundays • Noon - 10:00 PM

CLOSED

Monday, September 27 and Tuesday, September 28



the fun
STARTS HERE.

KERN COUNTY FAIR • SEPTEMBER 22 - OCTOBER 3, 2021

September 23

Read for Success Breakfast-

A fundraiser for Kern Literacy Council

September 23, 7:30 a.m.

Hodel's Country Dining

Tickets are \$50

<https://readforsuccess2021.eventbrite.com>

Featuring "A Conversation with Ryan Alsop & Dr. Lynnette Zelezny"



September 25

Bakersfield Walk Like MADD & MADD Dash 5K

The Park at River Walk

11200 Stockdale Hwy, Bakersfield, CA

(661) 203-3996

Time: 7-10am

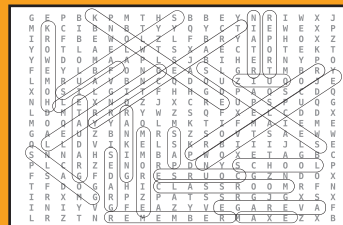
www.walklikemadd.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=1241

The Bakersfield Walk Like MADD + Dash 2021 -- presented by Chain | Cohn | Stiles -- is MADD's signature fundraising event to help us raise both awareness and funds to eliminate drunk and drugged driving. We hope that you will rally with us in Bakersfield, CA to help create a future of No More Victims®. Register and donate TODAY to help us save more lives! You can help by signing up as a walker or 5K runner, donating or helping gather donations, or volunteering.



ACTIVITY CORNER ANSWERS

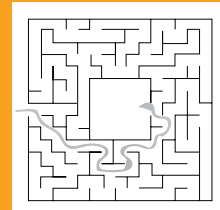
WORD SEARCH



SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 1 |
| 2 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| 4 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 9 |
| 8 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 7 |
| 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| 9 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 |

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CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1. Wafted 4. Taper 5. Neat 6. Obama 7. Storms
DOWN 1. Warnings 2. Tattooer 3. Prepare

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Kern Autism Network

"Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"

NEW OFFICE LOCATION now accepting appointments!

Parent Support Group Meeting- Wednesday 9/15/21 6-7:30 p.m. at 2200 Oak Street, Suite A. Please RSVP 661-489-3335

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter on our website www.kernautism.org to see other events and activities.

EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM:

- Delayed language development
- Repetitive language
- Little or no eye contact
- Repetitive mannerisms
- Inflexible routines or rituals
- Preoccupation with object parts
- Little interest in friendships

SERVICES OFFERED:

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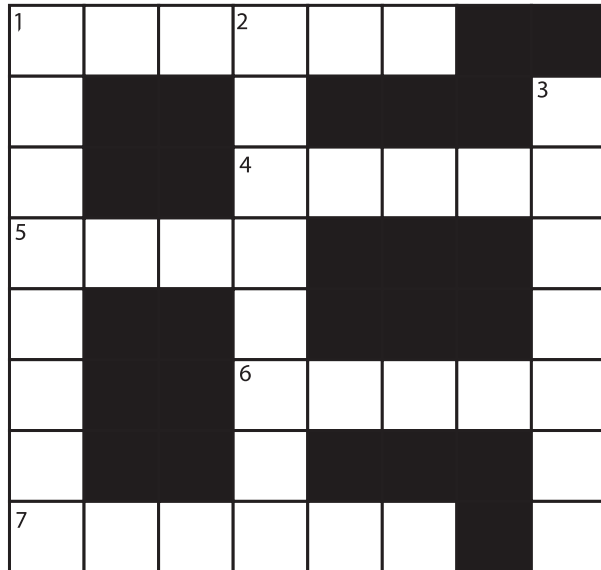
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Crossword



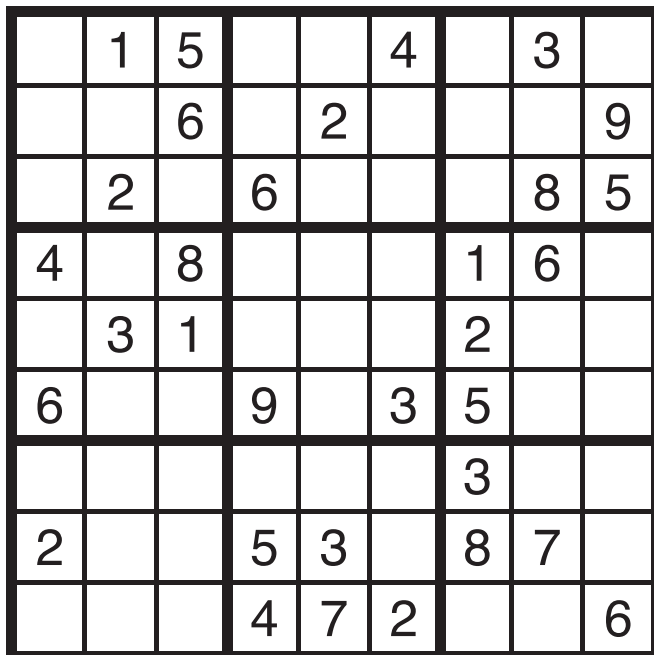
ACROSS

1. Passed easily or gently through
4. Gradually lessen
5. Orderly, tidy
6. Former U.S. President
7. Weather events

DOWN

1. Statements telling of potential problems
2. Tattoo artist
3. Plan ahead for something

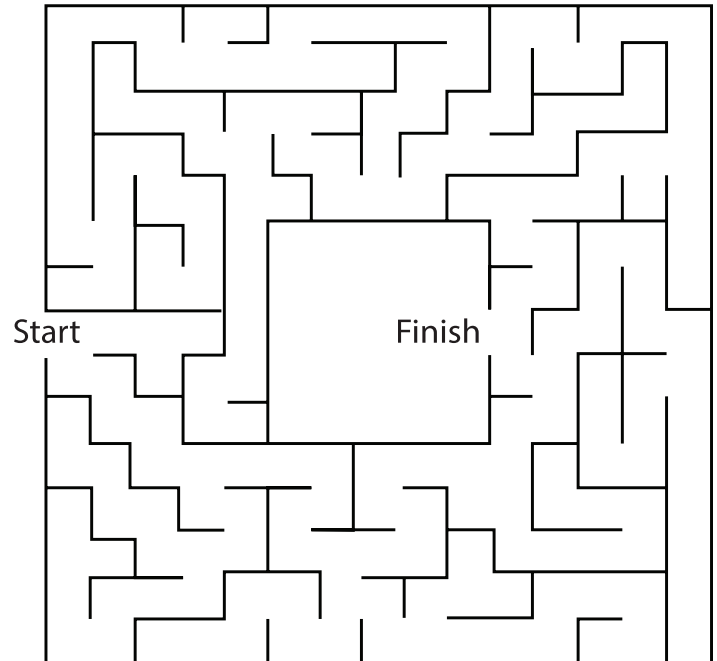
Sudoku



Level: Beginner

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve: the number 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. Figure out the order the numbers will appear by using the clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets!

Maze Craze



Word Scramble

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | E | P | B | K | P | M | T | H | S | B | B | E | Y | N | R | I | W | X | J |
| M | K | C | I | B | N | B | T | Y | Y | Q | Y | C | T | I | E | W | E | X | P |
| I | R | F | B | E | W | O | L | Z | L | F | B | R | Y | A | P | H | O | X | Z |
| Y | O | T | L | A | E | L | W | T | S | X | A | E | C | T | O | T | E | K | T |
| Y | W | D | O | M | A | A | P | L | S | J | B | I | H | E | R | N | Y | P | O |
| F | E | Y | L | B | F | O | N | G | E | A | S | L | G | R | T | M | B | R | Y |
| L | M | R | U | A | V | B | N | C | Q | D | O | U | Z | I | U | Q | O | J | E |
| X | O | S | I | L | G | I | T | F | H | H | G | D | P | A | Q | S | C | D | Q |
| N | H | L | E | X | N | O | Z | J | X | C | R | E | U | P | S | P | U | Q | G |
| L | D | M | T | R | R | R | Y | W | Z | S | Q | F | X | E | L | C | D | D | X |
| M | O | Q | A | Y | Y | A | O | L | M | K | T | I | F | M | A | I | E | M | E |
| G | A | E | U | Z | B | N | M | R | S | Z | S | O | V | T | S | A | E | W | W |
| Q | L | L | D | V | I | K | E | L | S | K | R | B | I | I | I | J | L | S | E |
| S | N | N | A | H | S | I | M | B | A | P | W | O | X | E | T | A | G | B | C |
| P | L | C | R | Z | E | N | O | R | P | D | N | Y | S | C | H | O | O | L | P |
| F | S | A | G | F | D | G | R | E | S | R | U | O | C | G | Z | N | D | O | X |
| T | F | D | O | G | A | H | I | C | L | A | S | S | R | O | O | M | R | F | N |
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