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February 2023



BE HEART
AWARE 
4 Conditions
to Know About pg 9

PLANT THE SEEDS
of *Greatness*: 2023
pg 14

plus

cookie-in-a-mug sweet treat pg 23 tooth fairy misadventures pg 19
hello, happy mama: Katherine Wolf pg 12 Valentine's books for kids pg 16

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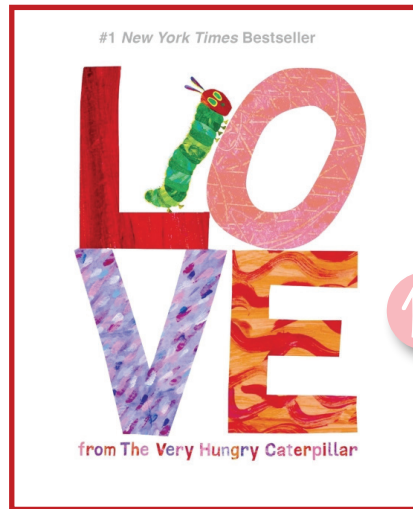
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LOVE! February Cover

Emmie Mitchell, Age 3
Photography by Tessa Warner Photography



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Hello, Happy Mama

Katherine Wolf with children Everett & Rebekah

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**Spread the Love:
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to Share with
Your Kids**

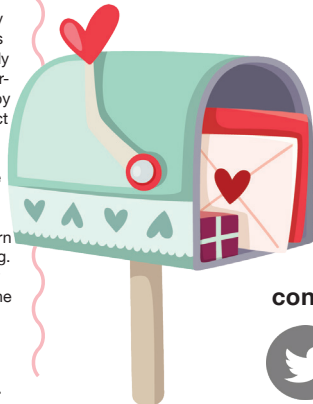


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**February is
National Children's
Dental Health Month**

PLUS

**Don't miss
the FUN, the
FEATURES,
and the
FACTS!**



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dear reader by Vaun Thygerson



Vaun Thygerson, Contributing Writer

when looking for the right fit. It's not just black tuxedos, white shirts, and black ties.

For the Liberty High School formal, my son's date is wearing royal blue, so we looked at black, dark gray, light gray, and royal blue tuxedos. With the help of a very knowledgeable tailor, he chose a royal blue, velvet tuxedo with a white shirt and black bow tie. His friend's date is wearing pink, but pink is not just pink, there are many varieties of this color from mauve to rose to light pink. He ended up choosing a dark gray tuxedo with a mauve tie. Then, the tailor asked if they wanted vests under their jackets, which sparked a whole new debate. After that, they had to decide on the length of their pants: cropped, no break, slight break, medium break, or full break. Next came the shoes: brown, black, matte, shiny, loafers, etc. Who knew there were so many decisions for this special day?

My daughter and middle son always wanted to eat fancy dinners for their dances like Kan Pai or the Belvedere Room at the Padre Hotel. As for my youngest son, he and his friends decided to have it catered by Chick-fil-A. I love that they are breaking with tradition and just eating

During this time of year, life is so fun not only because of all the hearts, roses, and Valentines, but because it's also high school formal season. I loved helping my oldest daughter get ready for her formal dances with elegant dresses, make-up, flowers, photos, and all that goes along with this milestone. When my two boys' turn for these dances came along, I thought I would have less to do, but you really don't. I have thoroughly enjoyed helping them with their tuxedo fittings, haircuts, flowers, and photos. Recently, I took my son and a friend to pick out their tuxedos, and trust me when I say, there are a lot of options



what they love. I do know this though, no matter what these friends end up wearing or eating, they are going to have a night to remember. Someone else who is a fan of Chick-fil-A is Julie Willis' daughter. In the article, "Samantha's Love Affair with Chick-fil-A Not Quite Love at First Sight," on page 22, she writes about how her daughter was a picky eater and the first time they went to the restaurant, she was disinterested in both the food and the play area. As she grew older, the tides turned and it became one of her favorite places. Now, even at age 12, she still loves the grilled chicken nuggets and fries and her mom becomes nostalgic at all the fun they use to have playing there.

Love is in the air this month, but it's also National Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month. In the article, "11 Ways to Plant the Seeds of Greatness in 2023," Callie Collins writes about 11 ways you can improve your quality of life. She says, if you plant the seeds early in the year, you can watch them grow all year long. Some of her suggestions include being mindful and analytical about your life while setting commitments along the way. To see all 11 ways, check out page 14.

February is also Heart Health Awareness month, and the article, "Hello, Happy (Tenacious) Mama: Katherine Wolf Shares her Story as a Stroke Survivor," on page 12, Callie Collins features an inspirational woman who is a fighter. Katherine has survived multiple strokes and the rehabilitation process and now works at Encompass Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital. She recently moved to Bakersfield with her husband and two children to be closer to family. Through her experiences, she has learned that her family motivates her and gives her a reason to fight. She encourages her patients to find their "WHY?"

With all the red, pink, and white décor everywhere, and high school formal season in full swing, it's easy to think about hearts and relationships. No matter what you wear, what you eat, or where you go, you can always find time to be appreciative of those who are special to you in your life.

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A Better Bakersfield

An annual event or project that enhances the quality of life in the community.

Architecture & Design

The completion of a brand new interior and/or exterior building design integrating the environment with space and materials.

Arts & Culture

Efforts by a group or individual to improve and/or enhance the arts and culture within our community.

Business Person of the Year

A local business owner/manager whose efforts truly impact and enhance the quality of life in the community.

Education

Efforts by an educator, project or school/college that promotes or benefits education in our city at all levels.

Harvey L. Hall Lifetime Achievement

A local long-time community leader, age 55 and over, who has made a lasting impact to Bakersfield and its residents.

Health

An individual, group or organization impacting healthy living - above and beyond their normal scope of activities - through education, prevention or medical services.

Humanitarian Group

A group whose personal volunteer efforts have made a significant impact in the community.

Humanitarian Individual

An individual whose personal volunteer efforts have made a significant impact in the community.

Large Business/Corporation of the Year

The recognition of a large business (26 employees or more) whose volunteer hours and/or financial donations have made a meaningful difference.

Next Gen

An individual or group in grades K-12 that, through personal involvement and endeavors, has answered the challenge of good citizenship.

Nonprofit of the Year

Efforts of a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that impacts the community.

Renovation & Tenant Improvement

The completion of a renovated design that upgrades an existing structure and/or incorporates the use of landscaping to enhance the aesthetic value of the property.

Small Business of the Year

A small business (25 employees or less) whose contributions and/or products and services instill community pride.

Urban Revitalization

An individual, business or organization that has made a meaningful contribution in the past year to placemaking, reimagining how we live, work and play.

Young Professional

An Individual, age 18-40, whose efforts truly impact and enhance the quality of life in the community.

PLEASE NOTE:

Nominations must be for work completed in 2022 to be eligible for consideration. No more than two nominations per individual, business or organization will be considered.

Nomination Deadline: Friday, February 3, 2023

Presented by



Girl Scouts Have a New **Raspberry Cookie** Available Only Online



Girl Scouts have a new raspberry cookie to try this cookie season. Meet Raspberry Rally, the “sister cookie” to thin mints, as they’re dipped in the same chocolaty coating, but infused with raspberry flavor rather than mint.

Raspberry Rally is an online-exclusive cookie that can only be purchased online and shipped directly to your home. You can still order them from your favorite Girl Scout. This new online-only method will teach the Girl Scouts new skills and help to build their e-commerce business.

Girl Scout Cookie season runs from January through April. You can order this new and exciting product along with your favorite varieties.

To place your order, please contact a local Girl Scout or troop, visit www.girlscouts.org, or text COOKIES to 59618.

National Women Physicians Day is in February



The National Women Physician Day celebrated on February 3 honors the path paved by female doctors over the last 172 years since 1849. This day marks the milestone of the first woman in history to earn her medical degree, Dr. Elizabeth

Blackwell. On this day, you can show your support to honor her and the women who made the remarkable decision to pursue individual medical degrees.

The most important way to observe National Women Physician Day is to appreciate and recognize all the women in your life, especially those taking medical courses or already practicing medicine. You can also encourage more women to pursue their dreams in medicine by posting on social media using the hashtags #NationalWomenPhysicianDay or #WomenPhysiciansDay.

For more information, please visit [www.https://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-women-physicians-day/](http://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-women-physicians-day/).

Bakersfield’s Congressman Kevin McCarthy Wins Speaker of the House



Bakersfield’s own Congressman Kevin McCarthy became the Speaker of the House after he won a majority of the votes on the 15th ballot. The Republican leader was able to swear-in the 434 members of the House and formally open the 118th Congress. In his acceptance speech, he paid homage to his hometown and quoted lyrics from Buck Owens’ famous song, “The Streets of Bakersfield.” Congressman McCarthy serves California’s 20th District and was first elected to Congress in 2006. He is a fourth-generation Kern County resident, the grandson of a cattle rancher, and the son of a firefighter. When he is not working in Washington, he resides in Bakersfield with his wife Judy.

For more information, please visit <https://kevinmccarthy.house.gov>.

Three Kern County Schools Awarded 2023 California Distinguished Schools Program



State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, recently announced that three Kern County schools have been selected for the prestigious 2023 California Distinguished Schools Program. Local schools, Bakersfield City’s Downtown Elementary, Norris’ Veterans Elementary, and Rosedale Union’s American Elementary, join more than 350 elementary schools with this same distinction statewide.

“It is my pleasure to honor and recognize these 356 elementary schools for providing outstanding public education and opportunities to students. Their innovation and hard work have helped to ensure their students can heal, recover, and thrive—even in the toughest times,” Thurmond says. “California Distinguished Schools represent examples of not just excellent teaching, learning, and collaboration, but also highly successful, data-driven school efforts ranging from professional development for educators to mental health and social-emotional wellness strategies to address the needs of students and families.”

The exceptional elementary schools recognized this year are illustrative of the hard work, dedication, and resilience shown by educators and schools across the state after communities struggled for multiple years with urgent effects to physical and mental health and unprecedented challenges to delivering education. To select California Distinguished Schools, the California Department of Education (CDE) uses multiple measures to identify eligible schools based on their performance on the state indicators as specified on the California School Dashboard (Dashboard).

Information regarding the 2022 Dashboard is provided on its website, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/index.asp>.

Brighter Bites Partners with Sunkist Citrus Growers to Improve Health in Bakersfield

Brighter Bites, a national nonprofit organization that delivers fresh fruits and vegetables directly into families' hands, recently partnered with Sunkist, the longest standing agricultural co-operative in the nation, to help improve the health of students and families in the Bakersfield area. In early December, Sunkist began providing monthly donations of citrus to the Brighter Bites Bakersfield locations, helping to provide families with weekly access to fresh produce at no cost. Bakersfield serves as Brighter Bites' third California location, following Salinas in 2021, and Los Angeles in 2022.



Since launching in 2012, Brighter Bites has distributed more than 50 million pounds of produce.



"We are excited to grow our ongoing support of Brighter Bites mission by providing fresh, California-grown citrus to students across the Bakersfield community," says Christina Ward, Senior Director, Global Marketing at Sunkist Growers. "As Sunkist celebrates its 130th anniversary as a farmer-owned cooperative, our family of citrus growers understands the importance of nutritious and delicious foods. Through the Brighter Bites

program, there are many opportunities to educate families on the health benefits of citrus and the many fun ways to snack, drink and cook with oranges, lemons, mandarins and more."

Since launching in 2012, Brighter Bites has distributed more than 50 million pounds of produce and hundreds of thousands of nutrition education materials to over 500,000 individuals through schools, after school programs and summer camps in the cities in which it serves. Brighter Bites uses a simple formula for introducing healthy lifestyles to families: produce distribution, nutrition education, and a fun food experience that helps to demystify produce and show just how great it can taste. For more information, please visit www.brighterbites.org.



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More Exercise Linked to Less-Severe COVID-19 Outcomes

A study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, of nearly 200,000 adults showed an association between physical activity and improved COVID-19 outcomes across major demographic groups regardless of whether patients had

chronic medical conditions. Black, Hispanic, and Asian patients had a greater risk of adverse outcomes compared with white patients, in line with prior research. However, within each racial and ethnic group, more exercise was still associated with less severe COVID-19 outcomes.

“The main message is that every little bit of physical activity counts,” said the study’s lead author, Deborah Rohm Young, PhD, the director of the Division of Behavioral Research for the Kaiser Permanente Southern California Department of Research & Evaluation. “The more exercise the better, no matter a person’s race, ethnicity, age, sex, or chronic conditions.”

A Benefit to Stay Socially Engaged





According to a study published in the journal Experimental Aging Research, seniors who have high levels of social engagement also have a better cognitive function. Getting together with friends, participating in a club, attending religious studies, and any other activity that gets you out with other people can help maintain or improve cognitive function.


February is National Children's Dental Health Month





Dental hygiene is an important component of a healthy lifestyle, but it’s an element youngsters rarely embrace with open arms. Parents know that getting kids, especially young children, to brush their teeth is not always so easy. In recognition of that, the American Dental Association suggests the following strategies to make brushing teeth something kids will look forward to.

1.  Make it fun. Brushing teeth may not be considered a fun activity, but who’s to say it can’t benefit from a little levity? The ADA recommends turning tooth brushing sessions into dance parties and/or sing-alongs. Youngsters might be so busy cutting a rug or listening to mom and dad belt out a few hits that they don’t even realize they’re cleaning their teeth at the same time. If singing and dancing aren’t cutting it, then try reading a child his or her favorite story, into daily brushing sessions. The ADA advises adults and children to brush their teeth for two minutes twice a day, so activities need not be too advanced. But a fun activity that allows kids to do something other than brush their teeth can be a great way to help them meet the “two minutes, two times” guideline.

2.  Reward good behavior. Parents can reward youngsters who brush their teeth without incident by offering praise or allowing them to pick a bedtime book when brushing at night.

3.  Put kids’ favorite characters to work. The ADA notes that many popular children’s television shows and books have stories about brushing teeth. Watch these stories with your children, then reference the stories and characters if kids are reluctant to brush their teeth. Parents also can find toothbrushes and/or toothpaste that feature kids’ favorite characters to get youngsters more excited to brush.

4.  Become a storyteller. Parents also can make up their own stories, explaining to kids how they can be superheroes who brush away the bad guys that cause cavities.

5.  Brush alongside your children. Kids love to mimic their parents, so moms and dads can brush alongside their youngsters in the hopes they’ll follow suit.

Many children may never jump at the chance to brush their teeth. But parents can employ a few savvy strategies to make daily brushing sessions more fun for youngsters.

4 Common Heart Conditions

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 17.9 million people die each year from cardiovascular diseases, which are a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels.



The sheer volume of deaths caused by heart disease each year suggest there's little people can do to avoid it. However, the Canadian organization Heart & Stroke notes that healthy behaviors like eating a heart-healthy diet and exercising regularly can help individuals delay the onset of heart disease by as much as 14 years.

Education is another valuable asset in the fight against heart disease. Individuals who are aware of common heart illnesses can discuss them with their physicians and take measures to reduce their risk.

1. Angina

Heart & Stroke notes that angina is another word for chest pain. The discomfort associated with angina, which can feel like squeezing, suffocating or burning, is caused by a temporary disruption in the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart. Though angina symptoms typically do not last long, they are considered warning signs for heart attack and should be discussed with a physician immediately after they appear.

2. Atherosclerosis

Atherosclerosis is characterized by the buildup of plaque on the interior wall of an artery. That buildup makes the walls of the artery thick and hard, thus restricting

the flow of blood, and can potentially contribute to a blockage. The experts at Johns Hopkins Medicine note that risk factors for atherosclerosis include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, and a poor diet that includes lots of saturated fats. Atherosclerosis can cause angina, though many individuals with the condition experience no symptoms until it has reached an advanced stage. Blockages in the leg may cause cramping when exercising or walking, while those in the arteries of the heart can cause heart attack. Blockages that develop in the brain can cause stroke.

3. Cardiomyopathy

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that cardiomyopathy often goes undiagnosed, making it hard to determine just how common the condition is. But the CDC estimates that as many as one in 500 adults have cardiomyopathy. Cardiomyopathy is a disease of the heart muscle that makes it harder for the heart to pump oxygen-rich blood to the body at optimal capacity. Heart & Stroke notes that cardiomyopathy can lead to heart failure. Early stages of cardiomyopathy may not produce any symptoms, but as the disease gets worse individuals may experience fainting, irregular or rapid heartbeats, light-headedness, and swelling of the hands and feet, among other things.

4. Coronary artery disease

Heart & Stroke notes that coronary artery disease (CAD) is the most common form of heart disease. CAD occurs when one or more of the coronary arteries narrows or becomes blocked. CAD causes damage or disease to major blood vessels that supply blood, oxygen and nutrients to the heart. Certain risk factors for CAD, such as age, are beyond individuals' control. However, many risk factors are within a person's control. Individuals can speak to their physicians about how to maintain a healthy blood pressure and a healthy weight, limit stress, and reduce their cholesterol, all of which can lower risk for CAD.

Heart disease claims the lives of millions of people each year. Recognizing common heart conditions and how to prevent them can help individuals lower their risk for this deadly, yet often preventable disease.



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Environmental care and prevention of drug addiction in our children.

- Anabel Reynoso

“

Adoption of children. There are so many children that need loving forever homes. Foster care takes a big heart and lots of love.



- Valerie Gonzalez

“ Kern County residents should be mindful when considering the homelessness in our area. While it does need to be addressed and resolved, those suffering are our fellow human beings and I think that gets overlooked more often than not. That's somebody's child out there.

- Johnnie Lisuk

WHAT ISSUE SHOULD KERN COUNTY RESIDENTS BE MORE

Aware OF IN

2023?

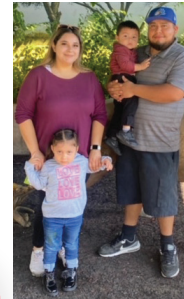
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None. Get out and hug someone!

- Mindy Munoz

• Kids ordering vapes, smokes and other things off of Snapchat and other social media sites.

- Amanda Landon



Bullying in schools! Many moms are unaware that their children are bullies. More parents need to teach their children to be kind.

- Evelyn Chavarin

“

Respect for others is something I always love to see, like opening the door for others and being polite to retail workers. I wish there were less reports of shoplifting, dangerous driving and illegal substance use and more instances of courtesy. I also think overuse of social media and electronic communications. We need more human interaction in the real world with kindness in the mix.

- Kristen Foster

”

Valley fever in the Valley.

- Janey Maress

• A social issue that residents should be aware of is the simplicity of greeting strangers with hello. Just a little kindness and smile makes their day. I know it does mine, so I make it a point if I make eye contact, I say a warm greeting.

- Marietta Mahinan



Mental health.

- Shawna Shelton

Lack of affordable extracurricular activities for children. Most are out of budget for many parents.

- Luz Garcia

”

Hunger among school aged students.

- Andrea Montalvo



Economic insecurity.

- Emily Cross

” Those in need and how we can serve them, from the homeless and children in foster care to lonely seniors and everyone in-between.

- Trina Jernigan



People need to be more friendly and understanding.

- Anna Bonilla



Preparing our teens to be responsible adults.

- Kathy Gillis



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Tenacious

Hello, Happy Mama: Katherine Wolf Shares her Story as a Stroke Survivor



Katherine Wolf, Photograph by Tanner Grenko

Katherine Wolf's life has included some surprising turns but one thing is clear: she knows what motivates her and how to push through adversity. A mom of two, she has survived multiple strokes and the rehabilitation process needed to continue not only surviving but thriving as a wife, mother and speech language pathologist, a major career shift.

February is Heart Health Awareness Month, an observance dedicated to raising awareness of cardiovascular health, including stroke and heart attack.

So far, my best life advice is...

Find something to fight for.

Katherine's first stroke happened in 2018 when she was 24, only seven weeks after giving birth to her son, Everett, in Fort Worth, Texas. Although Katherine experienced pre-eclampsia that led to months of bedrest during her pregnancy, the stroke came as a shock that confused even her medical team at first.

"My son was in the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] for three weeks and we were excited to come home. Four weeks later, my arm went numb. My shoulder was locked and initially, doctors thought it might be a problem related to insulin. They didn't recognize it as a stroke," said Katherine. "I couldn't raise my arm past my clavicle area."

By the time Katherine returned from getting an x-ray, of which she has no recollection, she could barely walk. The treating physician sent her home with the hope a good night of sleep would help. She woke up screaming in pain a few hours later. Katherine's husband, Steven, rushed her to the hospital, where staff agreed her symptoms pointed to a stroke but it wasn't showing up in related imaging. She went by ambulance to Dallas to access better imaging machines.

Katherine's diagnosis is Moyamoya Disease, a condition that causes brain vessels to become smaller and stenose, becoming so narrow that blood can-

not flow through, causing an ischemic stroke. The pre-eclampsia, with its characteristic high blood pressure, actually saved her life because it kept the blood vessels from getting too small, thereby preventing a hemorrhagic stroke.

"I couldn't walk, talk, read or write but I had the best possible motivation to work through the issues one day at a time, literally one step at a time, and relearn everything," she said, recalling how much she worked to gain life skills that would allow her to care for herself and her son. "I started reading my baby's board books. Then, I moved on to children's books and chapter books."

My favorite food is...
Hibachi.

Intensive therapies filled her life, which even included practicing holding her son by working up from a five-pound weighted blanket to a 10-pound weighted blanket and eventually having her baby as part of certain sessions to ensure she would be able to carry and care for him.

"The time from being unable to do those things to being functional again was about a year and a half," said Katherine. "I was in and out of the hospital for about 100 days."

Certain deficits continue for Katherine, such as mild aphasia, or loss of language, in certain situations, mild information processing issues and mild multitasking issues.

When Katherine's neuropsychologist told her she could not return to a career in teaching, she listened to the many professionals in her life who suggested she would be an excellent speech language pathologist. After regaining basic life skills, Katherine decided to pursue a new and unexpected path in life. She completed her bachelor of science degree in communication disorders and deaf education at Utah State University



L to R: Everett, Katherine, Steven, Rebekah

before his family moved to northern California. The couple, who met in Texas, agreed to move closer to family to raise their children, now ages 3 and 5, who live in Orange County. Through field connections, Katherine was offered a job at Encompass Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital. Her husband teaches English at Ridgeview High School. The move was complete just this past August, making their dreams of family connections come true.

Life has changed so much for Katherine over the past few years but she continues to learn from every experience. April will mark the fifth anniversary of her first stroke and she plans to celebrate it as a survivor.

I'm always laughing at...

My kids.

"Looking back, having a stroke while being a new mom was the best reason to heal. I had something to fight for. I encourage all my patients to find their

and master of science degree in medical speech language pathology at the Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions.

Over the past four years, Katherine has since had two brain surgeries and nine more strokes, including one the day after her second child, daughter Rebekah was born in 2019.

"The grief of motherhood or the lack of it hadn't set in yet," said Katherine. "I felt very afraid the day after my daughter was born because I knew all of the things that would come with it. Through it all, I had to learn to advocate for myself and take breaks. I also had to learn to allow myself to know that every day I have to fight for myself and my kids and my family."

Katherine is originally from Georgia and Steven was actually born in Bakersfield



Katherine's new job first day at Encompass Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital

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something to fight for. I always ask my patients 'What is your goal of what you want to be able to do when you leave this hospital?' That's what will make the difference in their recovery."

2

Recommendations from Katherine Wolf

Q. What do you wish the general public better understood about health conditions like the stroke you experienced?

A. I wish the general public didn't assume people who struggle with heart and stroke eat fried food all the time or are unhealthy people.

Heart attacks and strokes don't discriminate. Yes, heart health is a big part of it but a stroke can happen to anyone.

Q. Motherhood can be a lonely and isolating phase of life, especially when children are young. What advice do you have for respite and renewal for moms?

A. It's okay not to be okay and it is also important not to listen to the world and social media about what kind of mom we should be. They don't know us. They don't know our stories and all that we're going through postpartum, whether or not that includes depression. Finally, seek out community. Research has proven community changes people.

11 WAYS TO plant the seeds of greatness in 2023

February is National Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month. Its focus is improving quality of life by encouraging reflection on aspects of everyday living that make an important personal difference. Plant your seeds of greatness now to watch them bloom all year long.

01 ASSESS YOUR SITUATION

Set aside time with a clear mind to reflect on any desired changes. Make a list of short-term objectives and long-term goals.



02 EXAMINE KEY AREAS OF YOUR LIFE

Whether an issue is personal, such as health, finances, relationships, emotional wellbeing or whether an issue is professional, take time to reflect on how you feel. Write out your thoughts without self-judgment and remember that you don't need to tackle everything all at once.



03 IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO HAPPINESS

What is upsetting you currently? Write down what is standing in the way of optimal living. Some things you will have direct control over, others you will not. Focus on what you CAN do.



06 MAP OUT THE COMMITMENT

Does your choice require money, time or both? Create a budget and a time line with a margin of flexibility in both, the soil for your seeds of greatness to grow.

04 BE MINDFUL

Consider your emotions throughout the day. Where can you make positive changes that will result in a higher number of positive moments? You have tremendous capacity to bring a positive outlook into your own life!



05 DECIDE WHERE TO FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS

Although many items may make your list, prioritize which life issues are worth investing in now to resolve from a financial and time management perspective.



07 OUTLINE THREE WAYS TO HAPPINESS

Set your intention then make it tangible so you can put theory into practice immediately.

08

LOOK AHEAD TO WATER YOUR SEEDS

Decide on next steps and schedule them into your 2023 calendar.



09

CREATE MINI-REWARDS

Every seed needs sunshine to grow. Add small rewards to your plan. Having something to look forward to is essential to stay motivated.



10

GIVE YOURSELF TIME

All plants bloom at different times and seasons. Add in grace for days when you cannot nurture the seeds of change.



11

RECOGNIZE YOUR GROWTH

When you see change, give yourself credit. Never underestimate the power of a determined mindset. Choose to see your own beauty, even if the growing process has less elegant phases.

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THE ORIGINAL


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2023

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Harlem Globetrotters in Bakersfield
Friday, February 17, 2023 7pm
Mechanics Bank Arena

For tickets: www.mechanicsbank.arenabakersfield.org

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6720 Schirra Ct. Bakersfield, CA 93313

John 14:6

KCFM Recommends Sponsored by Kern Literacy Council

Spread the Love: Valentine Books to Share with Your Kids

by Leslie Carroll

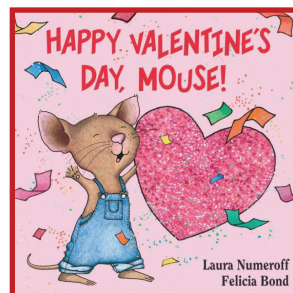
Taking time to share a book is one of the sweetest ways to show you care. This Valentine's Day, spend some time together, snuggle up and share a great story. Here are a few sweet, funny, and loving tales to enjoy.



Love from The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle
Publisher: World of Eric Carle
\$6.46, Ages 1-3 years
www.amazon.com

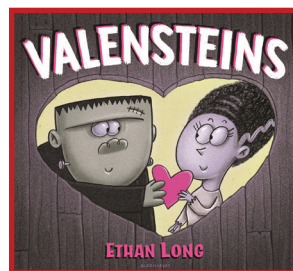
It's another delicious tale with our favorite storybook caterpillar. A great way to share how someone brightens your day or is special in your life, this familiar friend is a Valentine's treasure!



Happy Valentine's Day, Mouse!

by Laura Numeroff & Felicia Bond
Publisher: Harper Festival
\$7.18, Ages 1-3 years
www.amazon.com

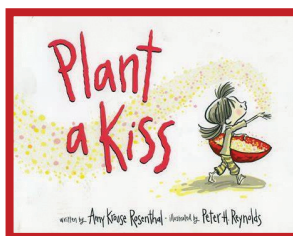
Follow mouse as he creates one-of-a-kind valentines for all of his friends. This great read-aloud has a fun story and great ideas for crafting with kids!



Valensteins

by Ethan Long
Publisher: Bloomsbury USA Children's
\$11.99, Ages 3-6 years
www.amazon.com

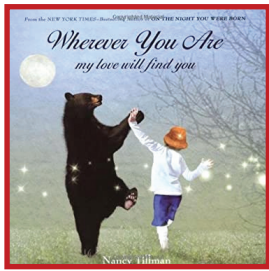
What happens when frightful monsters abandon their frightful ways for hearts and flowers? Could it mean love? Valensteins shows that the tender feelings of even the most frightful monsters matter.



Plant a Kiss

by Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Peter H. Reynolds
Publisher: Harper Festival
\$7.18, Ages 1-5 years
www.amazon.com

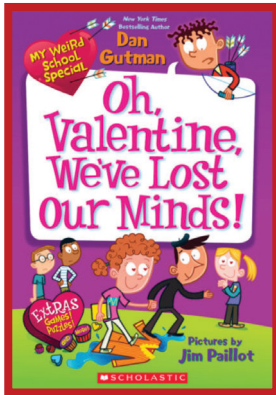
What happens when you plant one small seed of kindness? This sweet journey follows Little Miss as she sees the power of small acts as they bloom and spread to others.



Wherever You Are My Love Will Find You

by Nancy Tillman
Publisher: Feiwel & Friends
\$10.99, Ages 1-7 years
www.amazon.com

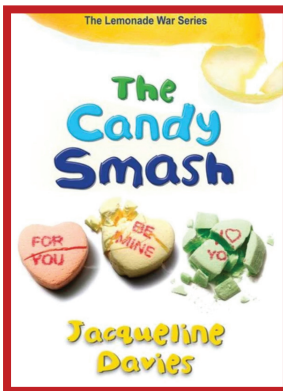
A tender-hearted treasure, this book will remind each of us how special we are, and the lengths love will go to. This sweet tale is a tribute to the deepest love we have.



Oh, Valentine, We've Lost Our Minds!

by Dan Gutman
Publisher: HarperCollins
\$11, Ages 6-10 years
www.amazon.com

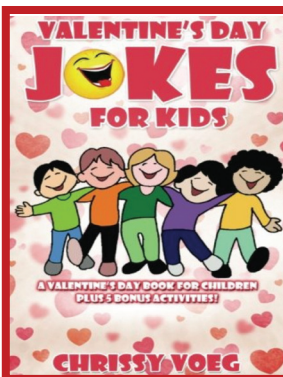
In typical My Weird School fashion, this book is anything but the usual Valentine's story. The kids discover all sorts of strange, silly happenings when a foreign exchange student from France comes and challenges AJ. This Valentine's Day is unlike any other!



The Candy Smash

by Jacqueline Davies
Publisher: Clarion Books
\$8.99, Ages 8-10 years
www.amazon.com

The Lemonade War crew is bound to find some adventure in book 4 of the series. Mysterious candy hearts, secret crushes, and threatening scandal in the fourth grade will keep readers turning pages to get to the bottom of this mystery.



Valentine's Day Jokes for Kids

by Chrissy Voeg
Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform
\$4.99
www.amazon.com

A silly book for the whole family, you will be entertained by the jokes, puns, and riddles all about Valentine's Day. For kids of all ages!

For more information on Kern Literacy Council, call us at 661-324-3213, or check out our website at www.kernliteracy.org.



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www.MyKidsHappyTeeth.com

feature by Katy M. Clark



10 Reasons Why The Tooth Fairy Did Not Come Last Night

It glistened in the soft morning light, the single tear that fell from my eight-year-old daughter's eye as she stood in our bedroom doorway.

"Mommy, she didn't come!" she breathed despondently. Then that single tear turned into a torrent.

Oh, fudge. The Tooth Fairy didn't come last night.

"Uh," I stammered in reply, elbowing my husband awake.

"What happened?" he mumbled.

"The Tooth Fairy didn't come last night," I replied.

"Oh, fudge," he said. Only he didn't say fudge.

How did we let this happen? Quickly I reviewed the night before. Exhausted by my first Girls' Night Out in three months, I had gone to bed at 10pm (don't judge) and left the money with my husband. He simply fell asleep before remembering his Tooth Fairy duties.

There were more extenuating circumstances, too. Our daughter's tooth had been wiggly for just a day. That was extremely short notice vs. those teeth that hang on by a (nasty!) thread for weeks. Plus, it had been months since she'd lost her last tooth. Our son, 12, had long since finished losing his baby teeth. My husband and I were definitely rusty in our duties as well as in the twilight of our Tooth Fairy career. Still, the plain, hard truth was that we blew it. The Tooth Fairy didn't come.

We sprang out of bed, soothing our daughter (and each other) with hugs and reassuring words. There HAD to be a good

reason she didn't come, we told our daughter. In fact, my husband and I, along with friends, family, and the internet, came up with **10 Reasons Why the Tooth Fairy Did Not Come Last Night**:

1. The dew was too heavy. Her wings got wet and she couldn't fly.
2. The Tooth Fairy was on vacation and the substitute Tooth Fairy didn't know what she was doing.
3. She couldn't get to your pillow due to your messy room.
4. Too much traffic. She'll leave earlier tonight!
5. She was sick.
6. Spreadsheet error. Your tooth was projected to come out on Friday so she wasn't ready when it came out on Monday.
7. Some Tooth Fairies like snacks. Leave one out tonight and she'll probably come.
8. Oh, look, she dropped the money on the floor over there. She must want you to keep your tooth as a souvenir.
9. You probably woke up and scared her away, even if you don't remember doing that.
10. She ran out of money and will be back tonight. She's a tiny fairy so she can only carry so much.

My daughter seemed to calm down after she spent the day listening to our reasons why the Tooth Fairy did not come. All was made right with the world the following morning when, hallelujah, the Tooth Fairy DID come.

Moms and Dads, may your Tooth Fairy always remember to come. In case she doesn't, may you find these reasons to be a lifesaver!

stuff we love

WE LOVE IT!

FEBRUARY

By Leslie Carroll

Disney Resorts Home Collection by Sobel Westex



Adult Disney fans can now bring home the chic sophistication and whimsy of Disney Resorts - without hopping on a plane. Sobel Westex introduces luxurious yet affordable, hotel quality linens, pillows, bedding, and towels to the home. The collections are inspired by: The Grand Floridian, The Contemporary, The Animal Kingdom Lodge and The Polynesian Village Disney Resorts. \$30-\$299, www.SobelatHome.com

Connetix Tiles - 40 pc Pastel Geometry Pack



Connetix offers a variety of beautiful magnetic tile sets that encourage open-ended play and help develop a child's imagination and creativity. \$65.95, ages 5 & up, www.amazon.com

Oribel Cocoon Z High Chair



The iconic shell shape of Oribel's Cocoon Z keeps your baby comfortable at every stage! The Cocoon Z is easy to assemble with a dishwasher-safe tray, and 360-degree gliders

that won't leave scratch marks on the floor. \$249, Ages 0-3, www.LoveOribel.com

Little Unicorn Citywalk Tote



From morning diaper changes to mid-day meetings, with the Citywalk tote in hand, you're covered. This Citywalk tote features 5 interior storage pockets, a protective tablet pocket, a vegan leather changing pad, and a sturdy base with protective feet. \$54.95-\$99.95, www.amazon.com

Old World Christmas - Valentine's Day Ornaments



Specializing in glass-blown, hand-crafted ornaments for every holiday, Old World Christmas is here this Valentine's Day to help you celebrate love. \$22.49, www.amazon.com

iPlay, iLearn Wrist Pals



Wrist Pals is a perfect combination of slap bracelets and plush toys. Two built-in Slap bracelets prevent the stuffed animals from falling off. The plush covers make the

bracelets comfortable. \$16.99, ages 2-8, www.amazon.com

you can do it

CHOCOLATE!

Nut Cookie in a Mug



Easy, Fast, Delicious

Craving chocolate? Satisfy your sweet tooth in no time at all with this one-minute no-sugar-added treat. February is American Heart Month and this recipe is a healthy version of an indulgent treat!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon trans-fat-free tub margarine
- 10 drops chocolate-flavored liquid stevia sweetener
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon egg white
- 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts or pecans

DIRECTIONS

Put the margarine in a small microwaveable mug, ramekin, or custard cup. Microwave on 100 percent power (high) for 10 seconds, or just until the margarine is melted. Stir in the liquid stevia sweetener and the cocoa powder. Gradually stir in the flour until well blended. Stir in the egg white and nuts until well blended.

Microwave on 100 percent power (high) for 45 seconds, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Let cool for 5 minutes. Serving size 1 cookie cup.
Recipe courtesy American Heart Association



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www.BakersfieldClassical.com



Samantha's Love Affair with Chick-fil-A

Not Quite Love at First Sight

"The first time we took Samantha to Chick-fil-A, she was a toddler, and she wanted nothing to do with any of the food. Or the playland. She just grumped until we stopped trying to strap her into a high chair and just let her wriggle on our laps and make it impossible for us to eat.

I don't remember what I ordered that day, but I do remember pointing out to Samantha all the calm toddlers eating happily in high chairs. There were at least... well... one or two. We also looked at the pictures of the "moo, ow" (aka cows) on the walls.

In all fairness, neither the lack of ability to sit still, nor the disinterest in food, nor the disinterest in the playland had anything to do with Chick-fil-A itself. It was not like we had any success at McDonald's, either. Or at home.

Or anywhere.

At age 1 and age 2, that kid liked milk and nothing but milk.

There was a brief period of time when she would condescend to eat a banana or a feta spinach wrap from Starbucks. And another brief streak when she ate peas and cottage cheese three times a day, but once she'd had her fill of those, all food was equally ... how shall I say it?... beneath her dignity to eat.

She had no patience for actual food.

I would try to distract her, so I could spoon food into her mouth. She was way too smart for the airplane on the spoon trick, but she would sometimes let me read a book. I told her I couldn't turn the page till she took a bite.

It was all, "Take a bite, and let's see what's on the next page," all the time.

By the time she was 4, it was just, "Sam, take a bite," every time I paused between my own bites. I became known as "Take-a-bite Mom" instead of, you know, just Mom.

I will never forget the first meal we got through when she ate all her food and did not have to be reminded to take a bite.

She was six years old.

I wrote down the milestone in her baby book. "Today Sam ate." Like it was a miracle. And it was.

So around that time, we tried Chick-fil-A again. And she loved it. She gobbled down the chicken nuggets and fries kid's meal and played in the playground. The playground was fine as long as other kids did not bother her—or if they did, they had to be willing to play dog with her.

"How about pony?" a four-year old asked her one day.

"No. I dog. You be pony. I dog."

And then she proceeded to ignore the preschooler and play dog by herself, running around the play structure on all fours and barking at anyone who dared get too close.

The pandemic, of course, put an end to our days of playing at Chick-fil-A, but by then we had already enjoyed a couple of really good years of getting our exercise for the day from the Chick-fil-A playland (or rather, the kids did. I wasn't doing much

exercise, just downing my lemonade and market salad in between helping my two small children with things like spills and lids and removing shoes for the play area).

Samantha is twelve now. We don't do the playland any more. Now we do the drive-thru and order the 12-piece grilled nuggets with fries. And she will sometimes also sneak a few extra nuggets from her sister's meal.

I imagine many more memories will be made at Chick-fil-A in the future. Maybe someday Samantha and I will be there with her babies in the playland, watching them play dogs and ponies.



SAMANTHA'S FOOD PYRAMID

Omni Family Health Offers High-Quality Healthcare Under Exceptional Leadership

Omni Family Health Chief Executive Officer Francisco L. Castillon, MPA, is the proud recipient of the 2022 National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Lifetime Achievement Award. NACHC was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high-quality, comprehensive healthcare accessible to all.

The Lifetime Achievement Award honors Mr. Castillon for more than 30 years of service, dedication, and contributions to the community health center movement. In addition, U.S. Congressman David G. Valadao recently honored Castillon with a Congressional Record for his NACHC Lifetime Achievement Award presented in the United States House of Representatives.

Following receipt of these honors, Francisco Castillon shared, *"I am deeply appreciative of the recognition from NACHC and Congressman Valadao, and look forward to many more years of serving our communities with high-quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare."*



Castillon with NACHC Lifetime Achievement Award.



Congressman David G. Valadao presents Congressional Record plaque to Castillon.



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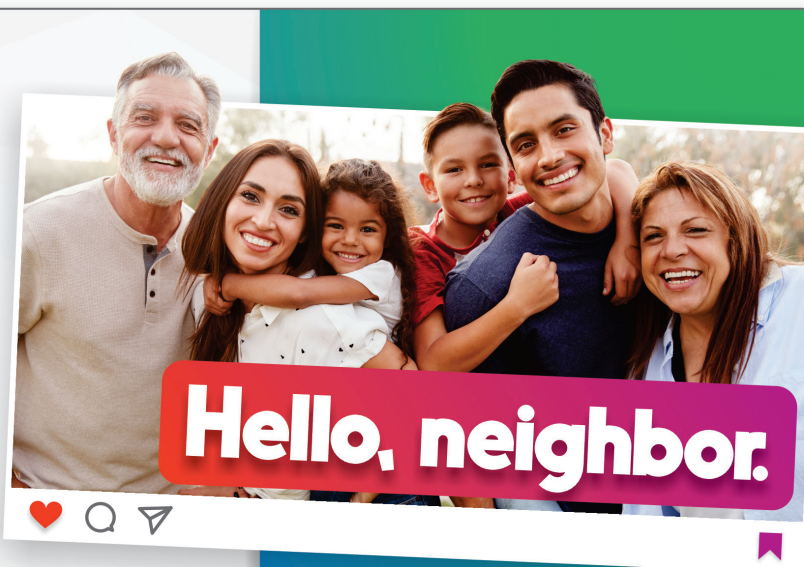
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AA2304B-CT-0123

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



February 2

Bakersfield Veteran Breakfast

Free breakfast for local veterans hosted by Honor Flight Kern County.

9:00 AM
Bakersfield Elks Lodge #266
1616 30th St. Bakersfield, CA
(661) 527-3838

www.honorflightkerncounty.org/



February 3

Aviation Career Day

Discover careers in aviation and aerospace.

9am to 12pm
California Aeronautical University
1450 Boughton Drive Bakersfield, CA
(661) 615-5915

February 3

26th Annual Father-Daughter Dance

Girls of all ages are encouraged to bring their dad, grand-dad, uncle, or other significant male in their life to celebrate this special relationship.

Tickets: \$10 per person in advance or \$20 at the door
First Presbyterian Church
1705 17th St.
Bakersfield
6pm-9pm
(661) 325-9419

www.fpbchurch.com/father-daughter-dance/



February 3

First Friday Art Walk

On the first Friday of each month, come enjoy a family-friendly arts event that showcases Kern County's best artists.

5pm to 9pm
Downtown Bakersfield- Intersection of 19th St. & Eye St.

<http://kernarts.org/artwalk>



BAKERSFIELD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

February 4

Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra Concert - The Magical Instruments of Harry

Special matinee performance.

Audience members are welcome to dress in Harry Potter themed costumes! Admission: \$10 Children, \$20 Adults.

2:00 PM
Mechanics Bank Theater
1001 Truxtun Avenue Bakersfield, CA
(661) 323-7928

www.bsonow.org/

February 4

Buena Vista Museum of Natural History: Family Day

2 Adults and up-to 6 kids only \$20

10am-4pm
Buena Vista Museum of Natural History and Science
2018 Chester Ave Bakersfield, CA

info@buenavistamuseum.org

February 4

Low-Cost Dog Vaccination & Licensing Clinic

The City of Bakersfield is hosting a low-cost, drive-through dog vaccination and licensing clinic. The line may be cut off early due to limited supplies. Plan to get there early.

9am to 12pm
Beach Park
3400 21ST Street Bakersfield, CA

www.bakersfieldcity.us/520/clinics

February 4

Children's Story Time

Bring your kids and listen to author Kim Warren read "The Adventures of Gus". All ages are welcome to this free family event.

Sandstone Goods & Trading
1403 Allen Rd Ste 100 Bakersfield, CA
2:00 PM
(661) 829-6811

www.sandstonegoods.com

February 4

Teacher Recruitment Fair

Hosted by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Larry E. Reider Education Center
2000 K Street Bakersfield, CA
661-636-4000

<https://kern.org/>

February 4

OUR story: The Black History Musical Experience

Historic Bakersfield Fox Theater
2001 H Street Bakersfield, CA
7:00 pm | Doors 6:00 pm

www.thebakersfieldfox.com



February 11

Kinder Konzerts

10am-11am
Lori Brock Museum- Applause Theater
3801 Chester Ave. Bakersfield, CA
661-437-3330

www.kerncountymuseum.org



February 11

Wizard Night - Bakersfield Condors Hockey Game

Calling all Potterheads! Dress up as your favorite character from the wizarding world of Harry Potter.

Mechanics Bank Arena
1001 Truxtun Ave. Bakersfield, CA
7 PM

www.bakersfieldcondors.com



February 14 Valentine's Day

February 16

\$2 Day - Buena Vista Museum of Natural History

All day, All ages, \$2 admission per person.

10am-4pm
Buena Vista Museum of Natural History
and Science
2018 Chester Ave Bakersfield, CA

info@buenavistamuseum.org

February 17

Random Acts of Kindness Day



February 17

The Harlem Globetrotters 2023 World Tour

Your favorite stars are bringing out their amazing basketball skill, outrageous athleticism and a non-stop good time. Join the Globetrotters as they go head-to-head against the Washington Generals!



7pm
Mechanics Bank Arena
1001 Truxtun Avenue Bakersfield, CA

www.harlemglobetrotters.com

February 17-20

66th Annual Whiskey Flat Days

Whiskey Flat Days is a leap back to the good ol' Wild West Days when the area was settled by gold miners, cattle ranchers and trappers. You're invited to four nostalgic days of fun for the entire family.

Downtown Kernville
11021 Kernville Road Kernville, CA
Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 9am-6pm, Mon 9am-1pm

www.whiskeyflatdays.com

February 20

President's Day!



February 24

National Tortilla Chip Day

National Tortilla Chip Day celebrates this versatile food that can be used to scoop dips, be topped with cheese for nachos and even be part of desserts.



February 24

NOR Daddy- Daughter Dance

Bring your favorite girl(s) for a "Noche de Encanto" themed evening. Enjoy dinner, dessert and dancing. \$50 for Dad and first daughter & \$20 for each additional daughter(s). Registration ends February 17th. No tickets will be sold at the door.

6pm to 8pm
Riverlakes Community Center
3825 Riverlakes Dr. Bakersfield, CA

www.norfun.org

February 24-26

36th Annual Bakersfield Home & Garden Show

10am-5pm
Kern County Fair-
grounds
1142 S. P Street
Bakersfield, CA



ONGOING HAPPENINGS

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

Every Weekday through May 26

Snacks in the Stacks

Free dinner and snack for children ages 2-18, plus a place to hang out and study.
3pm to 5pm
Beale Memorial Branch Library
701 Truxtun Ave Bakersfield, CA
info@kernlibrary.org

Starting February 12

Free Mental Health Education Class

This is an 8 week recovery-focused course for adults with mental health conditions.
10am-12pm
To register email: namikern@yahoo.com

Second Tuesday of Every Month

Smitten Kids

Come listen to songs and stories on the patio. Free for families.
Smitten Café
909 18th Street Bakersfield, CA
9am

Third Thursday of Every Month

Kern River Astronomy Club

Kernville Museum
49 Big Blue Rd. Kernville, CA
<https://kern-river-valley-astronomy.weebly.com/>

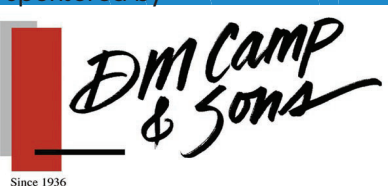
Fourth Thursday of Every Month

Chat Group for individuals with early stage Dementia or Alzheimer's


ADAKC Campus
4203 Buena Vista Dr. Bakersfield, CA
www.adakc.org


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PAGE 29

ACTIVITY CORNER ANSWERS

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

CROSSWORD

Across


1. Lava lamp
1. Leaders
2. Laundry
4. Dozen
5. Date
3. Pottery
6. Security
7. ER

Down

1. Lava lamp
1. Leaders
2. Laundry
4. Dozen
5. Date
3. Pottery
6. Security
7. ER

Crossword

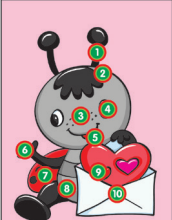
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"Kern Autism Network Inc. provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"

Happy Valentine's Day from the Kern Autism Network Board of Directors
Parent Support Group: Wednesday, February 8th - 6pm
2200 Oak Street, register via Eventbrite
Females Autism Support Group: Thursday, February 16th call or email to register
Autism Car Show "For the Love of Autism" Saturday, February 18th email for details

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

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FEBRUARY ACTIVITY CORNER

puzzle answers on page 26

Sudoku

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

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!

Crossword



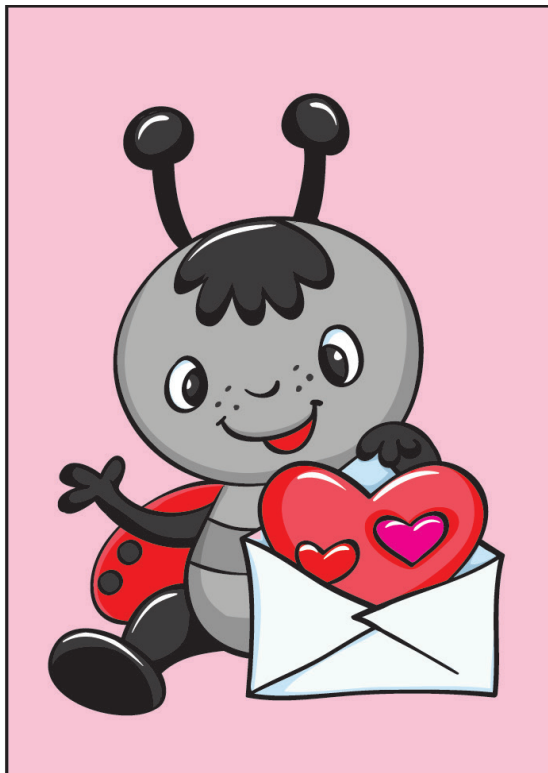
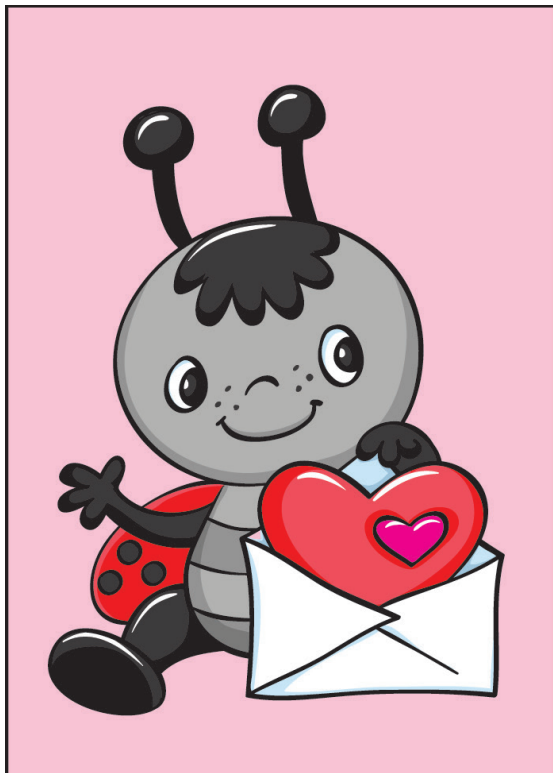
ACROSS

1. Decorative light
4. Twelve
5. Number on calendar
6. Feeling safe

DOWN

1. People in charge
2. To clean clothes
3. Ceramics
7. Emergency room (abbr.)
8. Towards

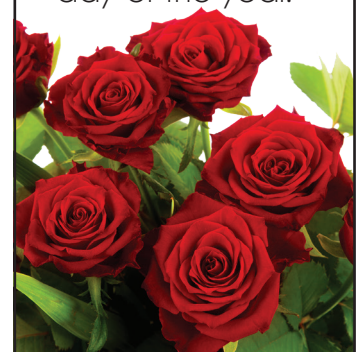
There are 10 differences in the pictures below. Can you find them all?



DID YOU KNOW?

250 million roses are grown just for Valentine's Day!

Florists sell 25% more flowers on Valentine's Day than any other day of the year.





FEBRUARY ACTIVITY CORNER

Library Lovers' Word Search

Presented by Pacific Ag Rentals

puzzle answers on page 26

I	R	E	S	E	A	R	C	H	U	I	I	L	S	P	F	N	S	U	B
S	U	K	P	L	E	W	T	D	Q	U	G	E	N	R	E	N	A	E	W
L	Q	L	S	U	D	C	W	E	D	B	A	I	N	H	D	S	R	R	U
A	T	F	U	L	D	B	C	A	T	A	L	O	G	L	T	Y	L	S	I
C	F	L	P	G	Y	I	N	H	W	Q	C	R	E	T	U	R	N	E	Y
I	P	N	M	K	B	L	P	O	C	O	M	P	U	T	E	R	S	L	T
D	U	Q	A	L	P	H	A	B	E	T	I	C	A	L	B	B	G	L	I
O	O	L	C	F	I	N	M	H	P	E	K	K	Q	O	K	E	N	O	Y
I	N	A	I	D	M	Q	C	H	E	C	K	O	U	T	I	U	I	R	D
R	K	H	S	W	M	E	M	B	E	R	P	L	L	O	B	B	D	P	U
E	M	T	D	R	A	C	C	D	D	T	O	L	P	B	F	K	N	O	T
P	E	A	T	T	I	O	H	O	O	O	E	R	E	L	N	K	I	A	S
P	E	R	E	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	G	L	I	A	F	C	B	L	Y
Q	T	A	Y	S	U	B	G	D	P	W	I	B	H	L	R	M	C	Q	K
E	I	P	N	T	O	B	N	E	M	B	R	Q	Y	D	O	N	K	L	M
L	N	N	F	O	O	S	C	K	R	A	T	K	U	K	P	O	I	E	T
R	G	H	K	R	H	I	O	A	R	R	F	Y	T	I	U	M	H	N	O
R	G	S	R	O	L	R	R	I	L	Y	Q	S	H	N	E	C	W	C	G
G	N	O	H	L	H	Y	A	I	B	B	U	D	N	B	M	T	R	G	S
L	W	E	Q	G	Y	N	W	Q	M	I	T	D	Q	L	G	W	M	O	S

ALPHABETICAL
BINDING
BOOKS
BORROW
CAMPUS

CARD
CATALOG
CHECKOUT
COMPUTERS
GENRE

LEARNING
LIBRARIAN
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MEMBER

PERIODICALS
QUIET
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RESEARCH
RETURN

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Q&A: Get to Know Clinica Sierra Vista's new Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Olga Meave

Q: Please us about your background.

I was born and raised Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. I am the only child of my amazing parents—my mother is a Family Medicine Physician, and my dad is an Agricultural Engineer. I lived in Hermosillo for 15 years and then moved to Upstate New York to finish high school. After graduating high school, I started college in Rochester, NY. Unfortunately, after the 9/11 attack on our nation, my parents brought me back to Mexico and I attended Medical School at Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara (UAG).

Q: What made you want to be a doctor?

I literally grew up in a doctor's office. Since my mom was a physician, naturally I had the opportunity to be mentored by her through my early childhood and adolescent years. After school, I would go to my mother's medical office to do my homework there and would daydream about becoming a doctor one day. I have been surrounded by healthcare professionals my entire life and had the opportunity to see the compassion that my mother and her colleagues had for their patients. It inspired me to help people and strive to have a positive impact on health outcomes for those who need it the most.



Dr. Olga Meave
CEO, Clinica Sierra Vista

Q: You started your career in Clinica Sierra Vista's residency program. Why were you interested in coming to Kern County?

Applying for Residency Training in the US is very competitive, especially for International Medical Graduates like myself. When I first moved to California, I moved to Long Beach and volunteered at a hospital before joining UCLA's International Medical Graduate Program (IMG). This program helped me prepare for "The Match", which is the interview and selection process for medical residency candidates.

I applied for residency programs located in California only and ranked Rio Bravo Family Medicine Residency, which is sponsored and housed by Clinica Sierra Vista, and affiliated with UCLA, as my number one option. I loved the clinical and hospital environment that Clinica Sierra Vista has and felt that I could fit in to meet the needs of the community. Luckily, I got in, and honestly felt that I was home here!

Shortly after starting my medical training, I decided I wanted to stay in the Central Valley and explore the opportunities here. During my year as Chief Resident, I decided to stay with Clinica Sierra Vista permanently and continue caring for my patients. After I graduated, I transitioned from a Family Physician to Associate Medical Director for Kern County, to Interim Chief Medical Officer, to Chief Medical Officer during the COVID-19 pandemic and was recently appointed to Chief Executive Officer of Clinica Sierra Vista. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our community, and call Kern County my home.

Q: You're the poster child for healthcare in Kern County, moving from a local residency program to practicing and now running one of our largest healthcare providers. What made you want to stay?

Honestly, I love living in Bakersfield. I have heard negative things about our city on television and on the internet, but until those people have experienced the culture, beautiful landscape, and how diverse our economy is, they really shouldn't judge. We feed the world, power our nation, and have exceptional healthcare professionals in the community who genuinely care and want to make a difference. I'm honored to call Bakersfield my home, where I can grow professionally and give back to my community. It's a great place to raise a family, while still being close to recreational amenities. I'm humbled that the Clinica Sierra Vista's Board of Directors chose me to serve as their permanent CEO to help improve health outcomes for our patients. I am grateful to lead my compassionate team of physicians, healthcare providers, organizational support staff and am proud that together, we provide quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare to over 150,000 patients annually.

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