



# kern county Family magazine

AUGUST 2024

## It's Dog Month!

Tails of Wags & Wiggles

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HMM

## Dess Perkins

She's an overcomer!

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Back-to-School  
Guide

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# WELCOME

*back to*

# CLASS

TIPS FOR BTS SUCCESS



# More new bundles of joy start here



At Adventist Health, we prioritize your little ones' care from conception to delivery. That's why we're proud to work with some of the most remarkable OBGYN providers in Kern County.

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**MEMBERS OF**



**ON THE COVER:** Austin, 4, and his buddy, Happy, the Bernese Mountain dog, are getting ready for back-to-school with his sisters, Samantha, 3 (left) and Ella, 7 (right). **STACEYLEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY, STACEYLEIGHPHOTOGRAPHY.COM**

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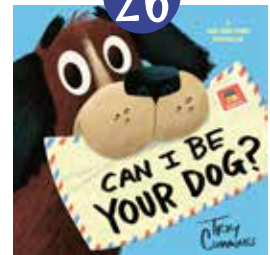
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**Woof!**

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# Helping families stay healthy

## Five reasons to vaccinate those you love.

1

Getting vaccinated protects your child from severe yet preventable diseases like meningitis, rubella and diphtheria.

2

Once-deadly diseases, like smallpox and polio, have been eradicated thanks to widespread immunization.

3

Many vaccine-preventable diseases, like measles, mumps and whooping cough, are most severe in young children. Waiting until they're older to vaccinate puts them at risk of lifelong medical complications.

4

Less sick days for your child means more days in the classroom — which saves you from missing work or arranging child care.

5

Immunizing your child benefits everyone around you, including older adults with weakened immune systems, or newborn babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated.





# More healthy days **start here**

## **New medical office in Southwest Bakersfield now open.**

We are delighted to announce the opening of Adventist Health Buena Vista, our newest medical office in Southwest Bakersfield. With decades of combined 5-star patient experience, our primary care providers are here for your family. From annual checkups and routine screenings to specialty care for whatever life may bring, we provide quality care that helps your loved ones achieve all that they were made for.



## **Meet our local provider team:**



**Claudia Carranza**  
MD



**Enrique DeLeon**  
PA



**Iain Gallego**  
FNP, PA-C

**Now accepting new patients.**  
**To schedule an appointment, call 661-241-6700.**  
4531 Buena Vista Road, Suite 100, Bakersfield





**Vaun Thygerson**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL** is such a fun time of year in part due to the anticipation for the new year. Some of my favorite parts of this tradition were the moments leading up to the first day: buying new clothes and school supplies, finding your class list, and meeting the teacher. Over the years, I have loved getting to know my children's teachers and learning their teaching styles.

My kids have hit the jackpot with most of their teachers. When my youngest son, who just recently graduated Liberty High School, went back to American Elementary to take his picture with fellow seniors who attended this school, he saw his fourth-grade teacher Mrs. Rogers waiting to reconnect with them with a fun surprise. She kept her students' handprints from their fourth grade year to give to them as seniors. These seniors thoroughly enjoyed finding their little handprints they had colored and cut out and comparing them to their now grown-up hands. My son's hand had more than doubled in size. I am thankful for teachers like her that care that much about their students.

Special thanks to one local teacher, Odessa "Dess" Perkins, who is changing many lives using her own experiences to help others. In this month's article, **"HELLO, HAPPY RESILIENT MAMA: DESS PERKINS'S JOURNEY OF OVERCOMING ADVERSITY TO ADVOCACY,"** on page 14, Callie Collins writes about Dess's resilience and perseverance to create a beautiful life. With her bachelor's and master's degrees under her belt, she just finished her first year as a teacher and counselor at Ridgeview.

Teaching doesn't only happen in the classroom; teachers are

everywhere from the field to the stage to the swimming pool. In the article, **"OLYMPIAN GABE WOODWARD: INSPIRING LOCAL YOUTH THROUGH SWIMMING,"** by Callie Collins, on page 22, she writes about how the owner of Bakersfield Swim Academy is teaching a new generation of swimmers to love the sport and be safe. Woodward, an Olympic athlete, won the Bronze medal at the 2004 Athens swim competition 4x100-meter freestyle relay, continues his legacy with his passion for swimming, his family, and commitment to the community.

As the classrooms start to fill up again, kids want to make friends in their class. KCFM wanted to give you tools to help your kids succeed in this area. In the article, **"FIVE WAYS TO HELP KIDS OF ANY AGE MAKE FRIENDS,"** written by Callie Collins on page 24, she offers tips like role playing, making connections with parents, and building confidence.

In this month's Humor at Home, Julie Willis's article, **"HOW MY KIDS COMPLETE ME: AND ALSO MY HUSBAND IS PRETTY OK TO HAVE AROUND, TOO,"** on page 30, details the moment that she realized she wanted to be a mom, even before she was married. Now, years later, she feels complete.

As this time of year has routines, carpools, and practice schedules, take a minute to thank your children's teachers for all they do. There are so many behind-the-scenes moments where these men and women are planning and thinking about your children. I mean how much forethought and planning did Mrs. Rogers coordinate to remember to keep those tiny little handprints safe for eight years? She gave so many of the seniors and their parents a fun trip down memory lane!

**HAPPY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!**

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KERN COUNTY**

**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**  
24/25 SCHOOL YEAR

**HOMESCHOOL ASSISTANCE - PERFORMING ARTS - FINE ARTS - SPORTS**  
**TECH CENTER - SNACKS - FIELD TRIPS - TEEN PROGRAMS - & MORE**

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**BGCKC.ORG/AFTERSCHOOL**

# Are you ready for **Back to School**

Make sure **vaccinations** are  
at the top of your checklist!



Use the QR code to make an  
appointment with MyTurn for our

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Immunization clinic**

If you need assistance call 661-321-3000  
Kern County Public Health • 1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue

**August 8 - 9**

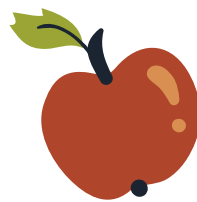
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

**August 10**

9:30 am - 1:00 pm

**August 12 - 14**

8:00 am - 3:30 pm



Walk-Ins are subject to availability

Bring your child's shot record • Parent or guardian must be present



In Your Wildest Dreams: Gabe and Tina Ulloa, owners with publisher LJ Radon at the grand opening on July 13.

## Wildest Dreams Consignment & Antiques Under New Ownership

Bakersfield’s iconic Wildest Dreams Consignment & Antiques recently held a re-grand opening event to signify an ownership transition from long-time owner Dixie Brewer to friends and colleagues, Tina and Gabe Ulloa. Brewer, who started the business 24 years ago in a modest 1,500-square-foot house on H Street, expanded the store over the years, eventually moving it to a 29,000-square-foot retail space on F Street nearly three years ago.

“I wanted to downsize and simplify,” Brewer says of her decision to sell the business. Tina and Gabe Ulloa, both deeply involved with the store for years, are now poised to continue and expand on Brewer’s legacy. Tina has been a vendor with In Your Wildest Dreams for eight years and an employee for the past five years. Gabe, whose professional background spans 15 years in marketing, communications, and PR, started a vendor booth specializing in Pokémon cards, vintage video games, and other gaming collectibles.

The Ulloas are excited to uphold the store’s legacy while bringing in fresh ideas and energy. In Your Wildest Dreams will remain a place where customers can find unique treasures, enjoy a cup of coffee, and feel a sense of community. The store will continue to maintain its family-friendly, pet-friendly atmosphere that customers have come to love.

## Return of KWAC 1940 as Luz Divina Radio

Lotus Bakersfield Corp announces the return of KWAC 1490 AM to the airwaves as Luz Divina Radio, a vibrant Spanish Christian music station dedicated to uplifting and inspiring listeners. This transformation marks a new chapter for the station, as it now fills the air with a blend of contemporary Christian hits, timeless classics, and heartfelt worship anthems, available 24/7.



Luz Divina Radio promises to be a sanctuary of sound that celebrates faith, hope, and love, reaching out to the hearts of the faithful in our community. The station will feature both well-known artists and emerging talents in the Christian music industry, providing a platform for a diverse range of voices to be heard.

“Our new station, Luz Divina, aims to be a beacon of positivity, connecting believers and spreading the message of God’s love through the power of music, uplifting melodies of both established and new Christian artists,” says Daisy Ortiz, the General Manager of Lotus Bakersfield Corp.

## Do The Math Wins Beautiful Bakersfield Award

The Beautiful Bakersfield Awards, presented by the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, recently honored the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) for its Do the Math television program in the education category. For more than 20 years, Do the Math has supported math education for 4th to 12-grade students with free tutoring and encompassing all aspects of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).



With diverse educational content and two innovative segments: Let’s Talk Math and Manipulatives

of Math, Do the Math plans to kick off its 23rd season in September. “We are deeply grateful to KCSOS and the Chamber of Commerce for their unwavering support and recognition of Do the Math as an educational pillar for math students of all needs,” says host Mike Cushine. “This acknowledgment by our community members reinforces our mission of providing students with the support they need to realize how mathematics is in everything.”

**For more information and time and dates for showtimes, turn to dothemathonline.net.**





## Kern Dance's Books in Motion Program Inspires Children to Read

As the summer 2024 season for Kern Dance's Books in Motion (BIM) wraps up, there are still a few showtimes available for August. This program combines dance and literacy to encourage children to get excited about reading when their favorite books come to life.

Geared for children in the early literacy stages (K-3rd grade), a typical performance includes storytelling, dance, choreography, and small group crafting. Books in Motion has reached over 10,000

children and has given away nearly 6,300 free books since 2016.

In August, the following dates and times are open and free to the public. August 1st at 12pm, Northeast Branch, "Cat in the Hat," performed by McLaughlin Dance Collective; August 1st at 3pm, Beale Memorial, "Cat in the Hat," performed by McLaughlin Dance Collective; August 2nd at 11:30am, Boron Branch, "Oh, The Places You'll Go," performed by Heather Benes and the East Kern Ragtag Revels;

August 2nd at 2:30pm, Boron Branch, "Oh, The Places You'll Go," performed by Heather Benes and the East Kern Ragtag Revels; August 3 at 10:30am, Lamont Branch, "B is for Ballet: A Dance Alphabet," performed by Bakersfield City Ballet; August 3 at 2:30pm, Beale Memorial "Pepe And The Parade performed by Ballet Folklorico Huastecalli.

**For more information, please visit [www.kerndance.org/bim](http://www.kerndance.org/bim). #inspireachildtoreadthroughdance**



## Kern Medical's Largest Graduating Class of Physician Trainees

Kern Medical recently graduated over 35 physician residents, its largest class in its 67 years of training doctors, and its largest incoming class of 40 new residents just started. Kern Medical is affiliated with the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and many of its faculty have teaching appointments there.

The hospital recently started three new teaching programs for physician residents in training, going from six to nine specialty training programs. These new programs are in the specialties of infectious disease, general surgery, and addiction medicine. Kern Medical already had teaching programs in internal medicine, emergency medicine, obstetrics-gynecology, general psychiatry as well as sub-specialty training in child & adolescent psychiatry and addiction psychiatry.

Dr. Amir Berjis, who is responsible for leading the graduate medical education teaching programs at Kern Medical says, "We plan to continue to increase the size of our graduate medical education teaching programs as well as create pathways for students from the Central Valley to become physicians with the aim to grow our own doctors that will care for our communities."

**For more information, please visit [www.kernmedical.com](http://www.kernmedical.com).**

# Be Wary of Viral Nutrition Advice



“Nutrition advice needs to be scientifically based and should come from those who have been formally trained in the field,” says Dr. Li.

An alarming number of people — especially Millennials and Gen Z — are looking to social media for nutrition advice. TikTok is an especially popular platform for diet ideas.

But while TikTok influencers are masters at creating catchy content, most are not nutrition experts. Dr. Zhaoping Li, Director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition says getting diet advice from viral online trends may not yield your desired results. And in some cases, misinformation on social media can even be dangerous.

“Nutrition advice needs to be scientifically based and should come from those who have been formally trained in the field. The foods we eat play an important role in disease prevention and treatment,

so it should be considered medicine.”

Steer clear of unverified diet advice that recommends extreme measures such as fasting or cleanses, eating only certain foods, or claims that wacky food combinations will magically melt away pounds.

Instead, seek out scientifically sound diet advice from a clinical nutritionist or other medical professional. They’ll be able to guide you away from ineffective trends and toward proven approaches to healthy eating.

“Most of what ‘influencers’ post on the internet should be considered entertainment, not medical advice,” says Dr. Li. “Only people with educational credentials can give nutrition advice, so check multiple resources and ask your doctor or a registered dietitian.”



## Surprising Ways Peaches Can Boost your Health

August is National Peach month, and who doesn’t love fresh peaches! Peaches are typically viewed as a sweet treat, particularly in summertime. But peaches also provide a host of health benefits, which can make anyone who enjoys a peach-based sweet treat feel a little better about their indulgence.

Peaches are rich in vitamins and minerals, including potassium. The American Heart Association notes that potassium plays an important role in the management of high blood pressure.

Peaches also do not contain any saturated fats, making them a good low-calorie snacking option that can help people maintain a healthy weight. A single large peach contains just 68 calories.

Peaches are rich in free radical-fighting vitamin C. That could explain their link to reducing cancer risk, as free radicals are unstable atoms that often contribute to cell damage that is a hallmark of cancer. In addition, MedicineNet reports that peaches are high in polyphenols, which studies have found prevent the formation and spread of cancer cells in lab tests.

## Enhance Academic Performance with Healthy Eyes

Many variables affect students’ academic performance, but one thing that is often overlooked is eyesight. Academic performance is directly linked to the ability to see clearly, as vision affects reading, writing, comprehension, and classroom participation.

Experts at Clarendon Vision Development Center of Illinois say that a substantial part of a child’s education is acquired through visual processing. When that

vision is impaired, it can hinder the ability to learn and absorb information effectively. That’s why it’s important for your child to have routine eye exams.

Infants often get their first comprehensive eye exams around zero to six months of age. By age three, children should have a second eye exam. Around age five or six, children should receive a third comprehensive eye exam, just before entering school. Eye exams should then



be scheduled at least every two years. These guidelines can be adjusted if any vision problems are detected, and more frequent exams are needed.



## Look before you lock: Prevent hot car emergencies

Every year, tragic headlines remind us that hot car deaths can happen to anyone. According to The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration about 40 children a year die from heatstroke after being left or stuck in a hot car. When a child remains in a vehicle without ample ventilation, that child's body temperature can rise quickly. Heatstroke begins

when the core body temperature reaches about 104 F.

Parents and caregivers that experience hot car tragedies often report a change in routine or a distraction that led to their child accidentally being left in the car.

Here are three essential tips to ensure the safety of children during hot weather:

### Put an essential item in the backseat

Leave your purse, wallet or another item in the back seat so you are forced to go in the back to retrieve it. This is an added security measure to check the back seat and ensure the car seat is empty.

### Leave a visual reminder

Keep a stuffed animal in your child's car seat when it is not in use. Anytime you travel with your child, move the stuffed animal to the front seat to remind yourself that your child is back there.

### Keep your car doors locked

Unfortunately, some hot car deaths occur when children "play" in or around car doors and get stuck inside. Eliminate this risk by always locking your car doors. Teach your children that cars are not places to play and show them how to honk the horn and/or unlock the doors if they are ever stuck in a vehicle.

If you ever see a child left alone in a vehicle, especially during the summer, act fast to quickly remove them from the hot vehicle. If the car is locked, break the window. Call emergency services immediately.

# You + Us = a better day!



**KEEP  
YOUR  
MEDI-CAL.  
RENEW  
TODAY!**

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PHOTO CITY OF BAKERSFIELD

# Q. What is the #1 reason you love Bakersfield/Kern County?

We recently asked our readers to share the main reason they love the community we share. A selection of their answers is featured here but we're always interested in good news in and around Kern County. If you know about something great in our community, tell us about it! Email [lj@kerncountyfamily.com](mailto:lj@kerncountyfamily.com) with your answer and we might include it in a future article or social media post.



The community feels tight knit and we support everyone  
- *Breanna Giles*



Bakersfield has many community sponsored activities and events. Just do the research and participate and take ownership of your community, city and county!  
- *Bobbie Bishop*



The homeschooling community!  
- *Carrie Wright*

No matter how much Kern County grows, the community remains connected and it always feels like home.

- *Lisa Keosouphanh*

Great central location for any adventure. Mountains, beach, lake, amusement parks, you name it, it's all a day trip!

- *Jami Higgins*

Great neighbors. Short ride to the beach or the mountains and awesome shopping.

- *Andrea Jackson*



All the events around town.

- *Carlianne Hodges*

It's grown considerably over the last 40 years but still has that small town feel, a very giving community.

- *Cassie Deras-Coker*



# Hello, neighbor.

Close enough to be your neighbor, caring enough to be your family.



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Dess Perkins receives the Beautiful Bakersfield Humanitarian Award in June. APRIL AND CO.

# HELLO, HAPPY RESILIENT MAMA

Dess Perkins's Journey of Overcoming Adversity to Advocacy

**A**gainst all odds, Odessa “Dess” Perkins has not only survived but discovered how to thrive and help others overcome their circumstances. She was recently named the 2024 Humanitarian Individual of the Year at the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce’s Beautiful Bakersfield Awards. Her story, though, reflects a lifetime of struggle and progress. “Statistically, I should not be where I am. According to my statistics, I should be addicted, in jail or dead. I am a survivor,” said Perkins. “When I meet people, I tell them I am a survivor of all the things I

work with now in my nonprofit. I am a survivor of human trafficking, sexual assault, domestic violence and rape. There is often a gasp when I tell people that. My goal is to help people become the best versions of themselves, get through whatever it is and become the best version humanly possible.”

A native of Hawthorne, California, Perkins has made her life in Bakersfield. She was named for her grandmother, a relative she credits with being active in the community and setting an example of service to others, who owned a restaurant and a store. Born to a teenage

addict, Perkins would eventually have six siblings.

“After my grandmother was murdered, the family started separating and moving to different areas. We lived in San Francisco, then Los Angeles and then Bakersfield,” said Perkins.

Drug addiction and sex work often go hand-in-hand, which was the case for Perkins’ mother. The family had their own apartment at 713 I Street but unsavory company became regular fixtures at the residence. She witnessed domestic violence and one of her mother’s boyfriends began to molest her, which progressed to rape around age 7 or 8. By the time Perkins was 13, clients also took notice of her presence and made trafficking arrangements with Perkins’ mother.

“They started propositioning me, so she would have me meet in the alley. They would take me to different hotels in Bakersfield and do whatever they wanted with me,” she explained “They would also take me to the mall and steal for their girlfriends or for them. I did it all in the interest of helping the family, supporting the household.”

Perkins’ mother’s home was raided and the siblings bounced in and out of the foster care system. Quality varied in each of the foster homes, with the children often running away and experiencing systemic issues inherent to problematic foster homes. A good foster home did not come her way until Perkins was 15 or 16.

“My foster parents showed me love for the first time. I experienced someone who cared but by the time I got to those foster parents, I had already been through so much. We stayed in touch all their lives,” said Perkins.

She went on to meet someone in high school who would add to that critical cycle of generational trauma. The couple had three children together but gang affiliation and domestic violence became part of their story. She eventually left the relationship 11 years later.

Perkins credits counseling and education as two key aspects to changing her life’s trajectory.

“Life didn’t just start changing for the better; it definitely takes time,” said

Perkins. "You as a person have to do the work."

A quest for self-worth helped motivate her college pathway.

"Someone told me at one point that I would never be anything more than a mattress for men to lay on," she said. "In my mind, though, I thought 'Well, though, if I get this degree, I won't just be a mattress for men to lay on. If I get this master's degree, I won't just be a mattress for men to lay on. If I get this other degree, I'm not a mattress. It's just me trying to prove to myself that I am worthy. I wanted to be more than what people said I would be. I felt I was dumb. I started and stopped with school. I was afraid I was going to look stupid in the classroom because I was a drug baby and at the end I'd have to go back and ask the teacher for help because I really didn't understand - but I had to get out of my head to get ahead."

Perkins holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Child Development, a Master's in Business and a Master's in Educational Counseling with a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential. She started counseling as part of her course requirements but was skeptical about the process.

"I was not going to be on the couch for anyone. In fact, I went in and was determined to make the counselor work for it to figure me out. I asked to sit in the counselor's chair and they let me," she said. "Then, I cried the whole session and that's how I knew I needed counseling. I did those 10 sessions plus a year and a half."

She credits trauma therapy with being able to write her first book, which she drafted during COVID through a series of virtual meetings.

"Everything was over Zoom. I had panic attacks telling her about my life story because it was so heavy. She would help me breathe. We stopped talking, she walked me through it," said Perkins.

Her book, "Warrior" was published in 2021. She has also published "I Am (A-Z) Affirmations for Kids" and a related coloring book.

Perkins has five children and is a grandmother to 10. She is currently raising two of her grandchildren, ages 8 and 9.

"Anything that happens is part of your DNA, part of your makeup now. I think about these things that happened to me and I look around and I'm sitting on my couch right now," said Perkins. "Growing up, we didn't have furniture or food or money to be able to turn on the air conditioner.

I Have to give the honor and the thanks to God. Now, it's my job to bring someone along with me. I didn't always believe in God but what I realized when I got older was that He was there protecting me the whole time. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do."

Perkins finished her first year as a teacher and counselor at Ridgeview this year. She also started a nonprofit, EmPOWERment, in 2022, which engages at-risk youth and survivors in the Kern County community. Events, workshops and continued services characterize its work, along with collaboration with other nonprofits like The Open Door Network.

### Fill-in-the-blank questions

**I'm always laughing at:** My grandkids.

**The first thing I do when I wake up in the morning is:** Scroll Facebook.

**Today, the strangest thing in my purse is:** A battery charger for my phone.

**My favorite food is:** Tacos.

**My favorite dessert is:** I am a chocolate lover. I love cookies, cake, ice cream and donuts. I am a foodie

**In my pantry, you will always find:** Snacks. I tell my kids all the time, you're supposed to have a snack after breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Before I go out, I always make sure I have:** Hand sanitizer and my glasses.

**My favorite music group is:** Mary J. Blige.

**The best book I've read lately is:** "The Fifth Agreement" by Don Miguel Ruiz

**So far, my best life advice is:** Always hold your head up no matter what life throws at you.

"I want the absolute best for you because I didn't have it. I want young people to absolutely experience it. This is a healing journey for me as well as I have these events and help people," said Perkins.

Alongside Senator Shannon Grove, helping shape legislation to combat human trafficking has also been part of her legacy. Perkins continues to work on state proposals targeting those who buy, sell and prey upon children.

"Go to my website to see the things

SEE HELLO HAPPY MAMA, PAGE 25

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STACEYLEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY

# THE GIFTED CHILD

By ANDREA ROSE & MARGE EBERTS

If you believe your child is smart, you're probably right.

From a young age, you've likely observed their special abilities and noticed their superior grades in school.

But it's not just parents who recognize a child's intelligence—children themselves are aware of their own capabilities. Whether it's their rapid learning or exceptional performance, children can

sense their own intelligence.

So how gifted is the child? The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) defines giftedness as students who perform—or have the potential to perform—at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment across various domains.”

But there are different levels of giftedness.

Doctor Deborah Ruf, who has a doctorate in Tests and Measurement and

is an acknowledged expert on levels of giftedness, has described giftedness as being divided into five levels:

## LEVEL ONE GIFTED: MODERATELY GIFTED

- IQ scores of about 117 to 129
- Start kindergarten with end-of-year skills already mastered

## LEVEL TWO GIFTED: HIGHLY GIFTED

- IQ scores of about 125–135
- Master most kindergarten skills one to two years before kindergarten by age 4

## LEVEL THREE GIFTED: HIGHLY TO EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED

- IQ scores of about 130 to 140
- Master majority of kindergarten skills by age 3 or 4
- Question Santa or Tooth Fairy by age 3 to 5
- Most spontaneously read with or without previous instruction before kindergarten
- Most read simple chapter books by age 5–6
- Most intuitively use numbers for all operations before kindergarten

## LEVEL FOUR GIFTED: EXCEPTIONALLY TO PROFOUNDLY GIFTED

- Full scale IQ scores of about 135 to 141+
- Majority of kindergarten skills by age 3
- Question such concepts as Santa or Tooth Fairy by age 3 to 4
- Majority at 2nd-3rd grade equivalency in academic subjects by early kindergarten
- Majority at upper high school grade equivalencies by 4th-5th grades
- Show concern for existential topics and life's purpose by early elementary school age

## LEVEL FIVE GIFTED: EXCEPTIONALLY TO PROFOUNDLY GIFTED

- Full scale and domain scores at 145+ (slightly lower if tested after mid-teenage years)
- High intellectual profile across all ability domains, great inner drive to learn across domains (although not





necessarily demonstrated in the regular classroom)

- Majority have kindergarten skills by about 2½ years or sooner
- Question concept of Santa or Tooth Fairy by age 2 to 3
- Majority spontaneously read, understand fairly complex math, have existential concerns by age 4–5 with or without any instruction
- Majority have high school level grade equivalencies by age 7 or 8 years old, mostly through their own reading and question asking.

### HOW TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S IQ

IQ tests start being reliable for children between the ages of 6 and 9. Testing before a child is enrolled in school may not provide reliable results. Typically, schools give group IQ tests about three times during your child's schooling which should give you a good picture of his or her IQ. Do remember that on any given day, a test result may not be accurate for such reasons as illness, lack of effort, or unclear instructions.

### WHY HAVE YOUR CHILD TESTED FOR GIFTEDNESS?

Knowing a child's level of giftedness can help parents and educators fully develop the child's abilities. Most parents have their children tested to advocate for their inclusion in a gifted program at a school. Private testing can be expensive and before you select a tester, make sure it is one whose results the school will accept.



# GEAR UP FOR GLORY

## Preparing for the School Sports Season

Students have plenty of reasons to participate in school sports and many of them confirm what the experts say regarding the benefits of such pursuits. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) indicates some of the main benefits include:

- Building relationships through the team
- Developing care and empathy
- Maintaining strong physical fitness
- Understanding limitations and how to push past them
- Listening to and learning from coaches

Millions of children participate in scholastic sports and recreational leagues across the country. Young athletes can take certain steps to prepare for the upcoming season.

### GET A SPORTS PHYSICAL

Most sports programs will not enroll participants without a recent sports physical. Physicals typically must be updated every year. Students and parents should check the date on athletes' most recent physical examination and be sure that they schedule one prior to the start of the season. Remember to bring along any athletic forms that will need to be filled out and officially signed by health care professionals.

### CREATE A PORTAL ACCOUNT

Schools now rely primarily on technology to organize the acquisition of health records and other pertinent informa-

tion so that students can participate in play. Services like Student Central and GoToMySportsPhysical enable schools to aggregate forms and sports clearance information in one place. Usage of these systems typically requires setting up both parent and student accounts and then populating the information and digitally signing as needed. In addition to uploading sports physical forms, the portal may ask users to sign waivers and to confirm that they have read information regarding injury risk.

### CHECK GEAR

Student athletes should confirm which gear they may need for the upcoming season. Check last season's gear to ensure it still fits and remains in good working order.

### GET IN SHAPE

Some athletes continue with their training regimens all year long. Others may take breaks between seasons. It may be necessary to create a new exercise plan so athletes can start acclimating their bodies to the demands of the sport.

### UNDERGO A CONCUSSION BASELINE TEST

Some schools require a concussion baseline test prior to sports participation. It is a specific questionnaire for each player that will create baseline data regarding processing speed, symptoms, pain levels, balance, and physical abilities, according to CognitiveFx.



# GET BACK TO CLASS!

It's that time of year when reading, writing and arithmetic become a daily focus for families. Get to the head of the class with these education options in our 2024-25 Back to School Guide. We provide the facts, you do the math—it all adds up to a great education! >>



# SMART START: TIPS FOR BTS SUCCESS

By SARAH LYONS

Summer is coming to an end and it is time to prepare for the kids to go back to school. The start of a new school year is exciting, but it can also be overwhelming for parents. Here are five steps to ensure a smoother transition from summer days to school days.

### TAKE A LOOK AHEAD

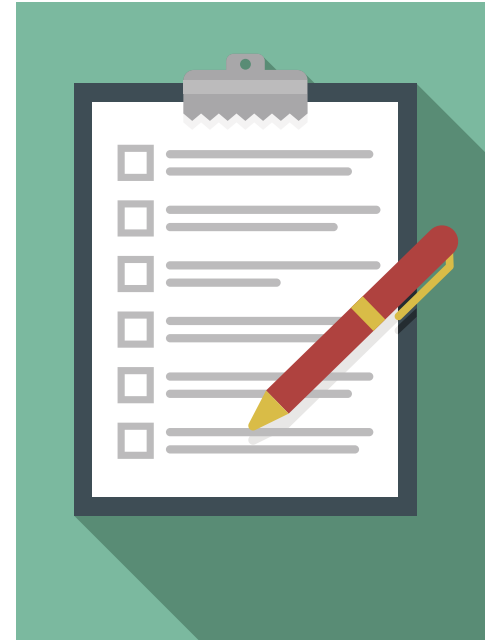
Start by taking a look at your upcoming schedule. Make sure you know what time school starts and ends, where to go, and how long it takes to get there. If you have children in more than one school make sure that you address any possible conflicts in your pick up and drop off schedule. Look through the school calendar and take note of important dates and mark them on your family calendar. Make sure older kids know what their day will look like. Will the kids take the bus, walk home, or will you pick them up? Do you need to set up after school care? Having a plan makes parents and kids feel much more at ease as the first day of school approaches.

### ADJUST BEDTIME

Many families become more relaxed over the summer. The kids may have adjusted to staying up later and sleeping in during the summer months and adjusting to a school routine can be difficult. Several weeks before school starts it is wise to start adjusting bedtime and wake up times so that when school begins, they are rested and ready for their new schedule. Easing into it by moving bedtime back just 15 minutes a week makes the adjustment easier.

### GET THE SUPPLIES

Acquire a list of school supplies your child will need from your school. Check the house to see if you have any items on hand and make a list of what you need. Head to the store early to assure



the best selection and that the supplies are not already picked over. Many stores sell school supplies at deep discounts before school starts and it may be wise to grab a few extra items to save for later.

### TRY ON CLOTHES AND SHOES

When school begins the weather often feels like summer but temperatures can quickly drop as fall approaches. Have your kids try on their fall and winter clothes to see if new items are needed. Often kids spend most of the summer barefoot or in sandals so don't forget to make sure their athletic shoes still fit before it's time for the first P.E. class.

### CHECKUPS

Many schools require forms to be filled out by the parent or by your doctor. They may also need sports physical or immunization records. Consult your school district to see what is required in advance so you can have these items handy for when your child starts school. With these items taken care of, your child will be all set for a successful start of the school year.

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stjohnvianneyacademy.com



### What is Classical Education?

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At St. John Vianney Academy, we are a homeschool enrichment program that strives to empower children by giving them the gifts of faith, reason, and virtue. We believe this is best done by working alongside parents to implement the classical method of education. The beauty of this is that children learn how to think, and not what to think. Our teachers are trained to approach learning by recognizing that there are natural and progressive stages in child development. Our children will understand how to apply the tools of learning to any subject -mastering new information in sometimes half



the time of their peers. This develops confidence and ultimately, this creates a life-long desire and love for learning.

“Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ” (Ephesians 4:32). SJVA provides a rich environment that forms good conscience and a moral compass through the virtues. Our teachers are not only classically trained, but also, are themselves, people of the Catholic faith. They themselves are seekers of truth, virtue, and joy. Our community supports families as God intended. With this strong foundation, our children are on the path to becoming responsible adults with passion and ability for glorifying our Creator.

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## Community Action Partnership of Kern

Head Start Programs  
1300 18th St. Suite #200, 93301  
661-336-5236  
[capk.org/head-start-programs/](http://capk.org/head-start-programs/)

Are you looking for a nurturing, educational environment for your little one? Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) is excited to announce that our Head Start program is now enrolling children ages 0-5! With a strong commitment to early childhood education, CAPK's Head Start program offers a comprehensive approach to preparing your child for kindergarten and beyond.

From as early as six weeks old, your child can join our program and benefit from our holistic curriculum designed to foster growth in every aspect of their development. At CAPK, we understand that the early years are crucial for setting the foundation for future success. That's why our Head Start program focuses on providing high-quality early education that meets the unique needs of each child.

Our dedicated and experienced educators create a safe and stimulating environment where children can explore, learn, and grow. We offer a variety of activities that promote cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Through hands-on learning experiences, interactive play, and individualized attention, we ensure that every child receives the support they need to thrive.



In addition to our exceptional educational services, CAPK's Head Start program also provides essential health and nutrition services. We prioritize the well-being of our children by offering healthy meals and snacks, quality early childhood education, and family engagement initiatives to support your household. Our goal is to ensure that every child is healthy, happy, and ready to learn.

Enrolling your child in CAPK's Head Start program means giving them the best possible start in life. Our program is designed to prepare children for kindergarten, setting them on a path to academic and social success. By joining our Head Start family, you are investing in your child's future and providing them with the tools they need to reach their full potential.

**Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity! Enroll now by calling 800-701-7060. Let CAPK's Head Start program be the stepping stone to a bright and successful future for your child. We look forward to welcoming you and your little one to our community!**



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Head Start is a comprehensive child development program for low-income families and children with disabilities. We are focused on supporting all areas of development and working with families every step of the way to ensure children are ready to enter kindergarten.

Your child can qualify for Head Start as early as **6 weeks old**, and we offer healthy and nutritious food made in house, as well as plenty of family engagement activities to help you in your journey of parenthood, including services for pregnant women.

**We take ages 0 to 5**



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[www.trinitybakersfield.com/trinity-preschool](http://www.trinitybakersfield.com/trinity-preschool)



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# Olympian Gabe Woodward

Inspiring Local Youth Through Swimming



The Woodward family are all students of the sport of swimming. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BECCA MITCHELL



Gabe and his wife Staci.

**A**s the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games loom large, the world holds its collective breath while athletes vie for international honors.

Gabe Woodward is best known in Kern County as the owner of Bakersfield Swim Academy but he is internationally recognized as an Olympic athlete, Bronze medal winner of the 2004 Athens swim competition 4x100-meter freestyle relay.

The Stockdale High School graduate, class of '97, also took silver in the 400-meter and the bronze 100-meter freestyle at the 2007 Pan American Games.

"Between 2003 and 2008, Woodward ranked in the top 50 [swimmers] in the world in the 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle events," according to The

Bob Elias Kern County Sports Hall of Fame website. A fraction of a second was the only thing that held him back from qualifying for the 2008 Olympics but Woodward's fated swimming experiences had already been well established on the world scale, far above and beyond anything he could have dreamed of as a young person.

That incredible legacy continues through an undeniable love of sport and an enthusiasm for swimming in particular still evident in his daily life now giving back to his community in personal and professional ways.

"I love doing things with my heart, including having a wife and kids," said Woodward. "I also really want to say that I love the Lord and my faith is at the center of my life. I started Bakersfield

SEE **GABE WOODWARD** PAGE 27



### Sports and family: Wise words from Woodward

#### **Q. What advice do you have for parents when it comes to children's participation in swimming and other sports?**

Since starting Bakersfield Swim Academy, parents would come to ask me if their child should be in year-round swimming because they're 6 and really good, for example, so there's that question: What's next? What else should I do? My answer is always to diversify: I'd say to sign them up for soccer. Have your kids play lots of sports when they're young. I think it's really helpful for them to try lots of different things and not get stuck in one category of sport. Also, be careful on the performance side. Remember to enjoy the sport, whatever it might be, allow the child to do their best to just enjoy it and not take it too seriously.

#### **Q. What should families in the Kern County area know more about in their community?**

Kern County actually has a pretty thriving swim community and now water polo is really starting to be known. I love to see that and more parents should definitely be aware. Participating in a summer rec team is a great way for kids to be introduced to the sport. With any of our swim teams at Bakersfield Swim Academy, there are a lot of practice opportunities and we can point them to their local teams. Getting together on Saturdays for a swim meet makes for some great summer memories of doing something active and enjoying the sport together.

#### **Q. What is your parenting PSA?**

Childhood goes by fast. Just enjoy the time with your family and not only being in front of screens.

# How to Help Kids of Any Age Make Friends

**CAMARADERIE, PEER APPROVAL,** comparison and support: Friends serve so many roles throughout childhood and lay the foundation for other relationships throughout the lifespan. Making friends, however, can be difficult for children and teens. Here are five tips to help forge friendships throughout the early years.

1

## Practice dialogue at home

Knowing what to say and when is key in any relationship but children are relatively new at conversation even into adolescence. Knowing how to listen is just as important as what to say. Take turns practicing common phrases, polite responses and how to structure appropriate pauses.

2

## Make introductions

Try to find like-minded children who share your child's interests. Host a playdate, encourage a meet-up or allow children to share contact information.

3

## Give children space

Micromanaging children's friendships may be tempting for concerned parents and caregivers. However, allowing relationships to flourish or wane on their own encourages genuine connections and independence.

4

## Help build confidence

Increasing your child's confidence in other areas of life can help build social skills. Develop abilities through extracurricular activities and finding what they are good at in other areas of life.

5

## Reach out to parents

You are not the only parent or caregiver seeking connections for their child. Kids of all ages struggle with social skills. Leverage your own connections in social media forums and community groups.





we have done and read my impact report. We can always use financial help and a building is the next step, with space for students to learn and relax, have access to a clothes closet and so much more," said Perkins.

**Q&A WITH DESS PERKINS**

**Q. Oftentimes when it comes to changing their lives, people simply don't know where to start. What would you recommend as a first step?**

The first thing I would recommend is to start saying affirmations. People can tell you what you need to do but until you are tired, you're not going to leave whatever the situation is. Start telling yourself what you know you need and believe it. The second thing is to pray, even if you don't know what to say. Pray doesn't always sound like praise. It's just a conversation.

**Q. We often talk with mothers in phases of life that can seem lonely or isolating, especially as they raise young children. Now from a different vantage point as the mother of adult children, what advice do you have for respite and renewal for women going through that phase of life?**

My youngest child is 33 and my youngest is 26 but I am now a grandparent raising grandchildren while trying to navigate work and running a nonprofit. Sunup to sundown, you just have to keep pushing and pushing and pushing. As women, we are some of the strongest individuals on this planet. Know that but also know you don't always have to be strong. You have to have a village, a tribe. I have a village of people who are absolutely amazing.

When I can do something for myself, I sneak out and I do it . Recently, I took myself to a movie and I was literally the only person in that movie theater. I needed that; I just enjoyed the movie. My advice is to find what grounds you. Maybe go sit by a pool or in a park under a tree. Walk on the grass with your feet. Drive to the beach or some water. Find what grounds you. Go sit in the mall. Go somewhere and buy yourself an ice cream and sit. You need that peace away from everything. Doing something doesn't have to cost money. We want to do those things that do cost money but if you can't afford that, do the simple things in life. Go to the library, go read a book, go have an ice cream. Go to the spray parks; even though there are kids there, they aren't your kids. Close your eyes and soak up everything around you.

**Q. What should families in the Kern County area know more about in their community?**

A. Kern County is a unique place. We have a lot of giving people and community leaders, people who care about everyone. When we see a need in Kern County, that's something different about us: the community comes together

**Q. What is your parenting PSA?**

A. Speak your truth and don't let anyone ever diminish your story. Always be able to speak your truth. When you do, you silence those who have tried for so long to keep you quiet.

**Find more information about Perkins and her life's work at <https://empowermentdp.org/>.**

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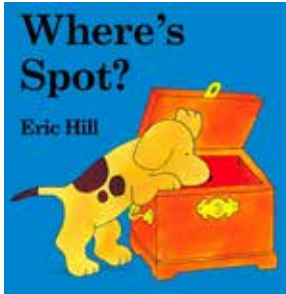


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# Celebrate National Dog Month with a Story

**DID YOU KNOW AUGUST IS NATIONAL DOG MONTH?** As we wrap up summertime, let's take a moment to celebrate the most popular pet on the planet — our dogs! Studies show our pooches make us happy and keep us healthy. And did you know most dogs love to hear children read to them? Grab your favorite dog (or visit a local shelter) and read to a four-legged friend!



**Where's Spot?**  
By Eric Hill  
\$14.42; Ages 0-5  
Warne  
Amazon.com  
Author Eric Hill's beloved puppy,

Spot, has been winning the hearts of children since the 1980s. This lift-a-flap book follows the tale of Spot's mother who has to search the house to find her pup in time for dinner.



**Go Dog Go!**  
By P.D. Eastman  
\$5.98; Ages: 1-4  
Random House  
Books for Young Readers  
Amazon.com  
This classic edited by Dr. Seuss features all kinds of dogs doing all

kinds of things on their way to a treetop party. The story uses only 75 different words, so new learners and readers can page their way to literacy.

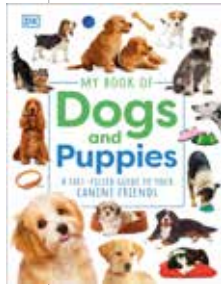


**PAW Patrol First Words Sound Book**  
By Editors of Phoenix International Publications  
\$13.49; Ages 2-4  
Publisher: PI Kids  
Amazon.com

The favorite pups from Paw Patrol—Marshall, Rubble, Skye, Chase, Rubble, Rocky and Zuma—help kids match sight words and sounds with just the push of 30 sound buttons.



**Can I Be Your Dog?**  
By Troy Cummings  
\$8.69; Ages 3-7  
Dragonfly Books  
Amazon.com  
Arfy is a homeless mutt who is desperately seeking his furever home. But who will open their hearts and homes to him?



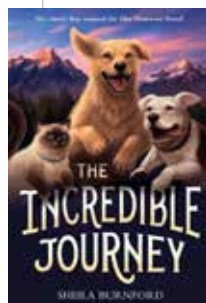
**My Book of Dogs & Puppies: A Fact-Filled Guide to Your Canine Friends**  
By DK  
\$14.59; Ages 5-9  
DK Children  
Amazon.com

Kids can get to know more than 50 breeds of dogs and their key characteristics, including origin, size, character and colors, as well as how to care for them.



**The Good Dog: The Book Collection**  
By Cam Higgins and Ariel Landy  
\$50.89; Ages 5-9  
Little Simon (boxed set edition)  
Amazon.com

This set includes 10 books in the Good Dog series that follows the adventures of a loveable puppy. The easy-to-read chapter books are ideal for new readers.



**The Incredible Journey**  
By Sheila Burnford and Carl Burger  
\$7.19; Ages 8-11  
Publisher: Yearling  
Amazon.com  
A curious Labrador retriever, affable bull terrier and brave Siamese cat set out into the Canadian wilderness to find their owner—and find adventure along the way. This book inspired the film, "Homeward Bound."



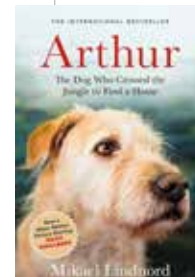
**How to Speak Dog: A Guide to Decoding Dog Language**  
By Gary Weitzman  
\$8.91; Ages 8-11  
National Geographic for Kids  
Amazon.com

Kids can learn about their pets and how to interpret their language.



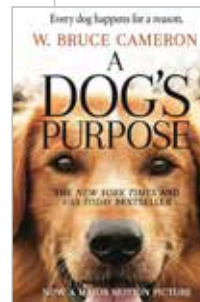
**Good Dogs on a Bad Day**  
By Rachel Wenitsky and David Sidorov  
\$8.68; Ages 7-10  
GP Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers  
Amazon.com

A few dogs get together and get into trouble along the way.



**Arthur: The Dog Who Crossed the Jungle to Find a Home**  
By Mikael Lindnord  
\$14.99; Ages 14 to adult  
Publisher: Graystone Books  
Amazon.com

The true story tells the tale of a stray dog and an extreme athlete and how they found each other. The book was turned into a major motion picture starring Mark Wahlberg and Simu Liu.



**A Dog's Purpose: A Novel for Humans**  
By W. Bruce Cameron  
\$6.99; Ages 12-adult  
Forge Books  
Amazon.com

This heart-warming story shares a dog's take on relationship between man and man's best friend and teaches us that every creature on earth is born with a purpose.

**GABE WOODWARD** FROM PAGE 23

Swim Academy in 2012 but I've been teaching lessons since I was 13 or 14 years old and it is a privilege to teach locally. I live with my heart and we have greatly loved the last dozen years of teaching Bakersfield's kids how to swim. My philosophy is to teach the staff how to serve the community, just as learning to serve comes from the Lord."

Gabe and Staci are the proud parents of four children, ages 12 to 19. Gabe's parents are from Taft and Gabe started swimming at age 4, along with his older and younger brothers.

"Our Mom signed us up for a recreation department swim team. She noticed we fell asleep early on days we had been swimming and decided that was the sport for us. As the parent of active, young boys, she was all for having us get those wiggles out and going to bed early was a real plus," said Woodward. "Swimming is a great activity for children of all ages. I am so grateful for those early experiences, which have shaped my life and career."

Swimming is particularly good for brain development because it uses so much of the body in coordinated motion, Woodward noted.

"When you teach a child to swim, you are also teaching them something to enjoy for the rest of their life and to be active. Swimming engages the whole person, with a sense of independence, because even if there is team participation, when a person is swimming, they're in their own world, excited to participate and using their own imagination in the water," he explained. "Kids will have times they have to sit still and be on screens but the mental and physical health benefits of being active in a sport that is low impact and presents less risk of head injury than other youth sports are numerous. Plus, the lifesaving techniques of swimming can be important at any age."

In addition to the often touted benefits of physical activity, swimming is an excellent way to prepare children for life experiences around water.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report drowning is the leading cause of accidental death in children under age 4. Swim skills offer lifelong benefits, including the ability to minimize risk while visiting the beach, lakes or even just summer pools for fun. Even if outdoor activities like fishing, surfing or water skiing are not part of every family's hobbies, equipping children with the knowledge to respond calmly to falling into water can be lifesaving.

Woodward sees Bakersfield Swim Academy as an outlet to help change local statistics and reduce the number of drownings not only in Kern County but in the communities where the children who learn essential swim skills visit and make their lives for decades to come.

When not in the water or at the swim school, Woodward also works in private equity investment but family remains the center of it all.

"I love family activities and watching my kids thrive," he said. "My biggest wins will always be at home."

**Find out more about Bakersfield Swim Academy at [www.bakersfieldswimacademy.com](http://www.bakersfieldswimacademy.com).**



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KERN COUNTY FAMILY MAGAZINE'S

# CUTEST PET PHOTO CONTEST



**THANK YOU FOR ENTERING AND VOTING!**

WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED VIA SOCIAL MEDIA THE WEEK OF AUGUST 5TH!



## Waffles can be breakfast, lunch or dinner

FEW PEOPLE CAN RESIST the appeal of waffles. They're tasty in the morning for breakfast, and equally at home in the afternoons or evening with chicken or ice cream accompanying them. Indeed, few foods can be enjoyed any time of day as easily as waffles. Waffles can be made from gluten-free and alternative ingredients, making them available to people who have different types of food limitations. Such is the case with this recipe for "Belgian Waffles" courtesy of "Plant-Based Gourmet" (Apollo Publishers) by Chef Suzi Gerber. This recipe features ingredients that fit into a plant-based lifestyle.



### Belgian Waffles

(Makes 3 or 4 waffles)

#### INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 1/4 cups gluten-free flour<br>(conventional all-purpose flour<br>may be substituted; reduced by<br>2 tablespoons) | 1 cup room temperature oat milk<br>or flax milk        |
| 1 teaspoon sugar  | 1 1/2 tablespoons melted butter<br>or non-dairy butter |
| 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder   | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract                             |
| 1/4 tablespoon salt   | 1/2 teaspoon apple cider vinegar                       |

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the oat milk, butter, vanilla, and apple cider vinegar, then slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, whisking to combine.
2. Grease a waffle iron and preheat. Pour about 1/2 cup of the batter into the waffle iron and let stand for 30 to 45 seconds, then close and cook approximately 3 to 5 minutes. Gently open to check, adding an additional 1 to 2 minutes if needed. Repeat with the remaining batter.

Tip: Add freeze-dried berries, whole or powdered, or even blue spirulina or pitaya powder to get colorful waffles with fruity flavors and even a bit of crunch. Alternating colors of waffles is fun, nutritious, and festive.

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## Read Us ONLINE!

kerncountyfamily.com

# How My Kids Complete Me

And Also My Husband Is Pretty OK to Have Around, Too



I knew I wanted kids before I knew I wanted to be married.

It all started in college. There I was, minding my own business, thinking I did not even like children. And pursuing my teaching credential (because teaching made a lot of sense as a career choice for someone who did not like children). So, there I was, taking classes, living in the dorm, listening to CNN while I got ready for my day when I was blindsided one morning by an American Airlines commercial.

In the commercial, a dad is leaving for a business trip. He says goodbye to his son who is about four years old. He

boards his flight and opens his briefcase to find a hand drawn picture from his son. He smiles.

My heart melted, and unsolicited tears pushed at the back of my eyes. I did not know what hormones were at work there, but that was a defining moment for me: I now had an ache in my heart that left a hole the size of a four-year-old boy.

So, unlike my peers—who were watching “You’ve Got Mail” and looking for love in the local clubs—I was watching CNN every morning hoping my American Airlines ad would come on.

At that point in my life, I was not thinking of marriage.

Well, OK, so there were times when I could see the point in being married. Mostly to have someone around to pick me up when I needed to leave my car with the mechanic.

That’s what I thought marriage was good for.

But children? Children were good for pulling at your heartstrings.

I had everything all mixed up.

And yet, here I am all these years later, finding that my husband is indeed handy to have around for rides when I leave my car at the shop. Also, when I have had a dead battery or a flat tire. Or when the cat vomits on the rug. Or I need IT help. Or to open pickle jars. To go out at night to pick up a pint of ice cream. Do all of the driving on road trips. All the things.

I don’t think that boy from the American Airlines ad was real, though. My kids don’t send me to work with drawings in my briefcase.

But when I would go to work when she was little, Ashley had a thirty-minute routine that had to be completed before I could get in the car: She would say, “Mommy, Mommy. Wait. I have to tell you some-ping.” And then she would think hard and start listing all the things she loved: “The cats and the horses,” she would start. Then it would be something like, “And the rainbows and the sprinkles. And... and the doughnuts.” And when she would run out of things she loved, she would start over: “No, no, Mommy. Wait. I have to tell you something. The cats and the horses...” And in my mind, it was poetry. It was like she was saying she loved me as much as the cats and the horses and the sprinkles.

And oh, how that melted my heart.

And I decided that having a real child beat that adorable little actor who probably did not even draw that picture for his not-real commercial dad.

And I know now: I have it all.

# WE LOVE IT!

By Leslie Carroll

**THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR** brings with it a host of new things ... friends, teachers and more! Your kids might also need some new gear! Whether they are starting a new grade with a clean slate or simply replacing a few missing essentials, we've compiled some back-to-school supplies you'll love.



## Herschel Classic™ Backpack

Room for an adventure-filled semester. Sized for everything you love doing whether you're in class or not. Made with 100% recycled EcoSystem™ fabrics and updated with features like a water-bottle pocket, laptop sleeve, this backpack has enough volume to pack in all your school essentials and more. \$65, [herschel.com](http://herschel.com)



## Packit Classic Soft Sided Lunch Box

The Classic Freezable Lunch Box is the only horizontal lunch box with Packit's patented ECOFREEZE® TECHNOLOGY: freezable gel built into the walls of the lunch box. The smart design eliminates the need for separate ice packs or gel packs. It's freezable, it's reusable, and it actually cools. \$24.99. [packit.com](http://packit.com)

## Bentgo® Classic Bento Box Lunch Box

The stackable design of this bento box is perfect for kids headed to school! The multiple layers add versatility to separate warm and cold foods – or use one layer for smaller meals. The containers easily nest together for space-saving storage! \$14.99, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## Yoobi Llama Pencil Case

With fun, fuzzy sherpa material and colorful fun pom poms, this stand-up llama pencil case is a special pouch that's sure to catch some eyes and keep your pens, pencils, crayons, colored pencils and more organized. \$11.99, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## Marvy Le Pen, 12 Color Set, (Micro Fine Point)

Nothing beats writing on paper with a smooth ballpoint pen. These colorful pens have a sleek barrel design, micro-fine plastic point, and non-toxic acid free ink. \$16.75, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



## AUGUST 1-3

### Books in Motion

Books in Motion® is a FREE summer reading program that encourages literacy through dancing. Enjoy live dance performances, classes, and crafting while collecting FREE books!

For a complete list of performances go to [kerncountylibrary.org](http://kerncountylibrary.org)



BOOKS IN MOTION: DANCE + LITERACY officially kicks off the summer season with, Disney's classic Little Golden version of Peter Pan, performed by the Civic Dance Center. PHOTO COURTESY KERN COUNTY LIBRARY

## AUGUST 2

### Ozomatli & Mento Buru Concert

Grammy award-winning band, Ozomatli, returns to Bakersfield for a long-awaited reunion with Mento Buru. This is an all-ages show. Admission \$35

7 - 11 p.m.

The Nile Theater  
1721 19th Street  
Bakersfield, CA  
323-603-9935  
[ruben@numbskullshows.com](mailto:ruben@numbskullshows.com)

## AUGUST 2, 9, 23 & 30

### Movies in the Park

Join us under the stars for an unforgettable cinematic experience at Movies in the Park! From timeless classic films to blockbuster hits, enjoy outdoor cinema suitable for all ages. Movies begin at sunset. Events will be canceled if the temperature reaches 104° or higher.

Polo Park  
11801 Noriega Rd.  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-392-2000  
[norfun.org/movies-in-the-park](http://norfun.org/movies-in-the-park)



## AUGUST 3

### Mobile Rec Summer Tour

Kids in grade K-8 can come and enjoy free summer fun! The tour includes arts & crafts, ping pong, inflatable games and more.

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Grissom Park  
5400 White Lane  
Bakersfield, CA  
[bakersfieldparks.us](http://bakersfieldparks.us)

### Craft and Vendor Show

Come shop local vendors and crafters

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

The Villas at Scenic River  
4015 Scenic River Lane  
Bakersfield, CA

## AUGUST 4

### Sensory Friendly Autism Family Swim Day

Enjoy socializing with other autism families while enjoying the water in this warm weather. This event requires registration and is only open to autism families.

10 a.m.- 12 p.m.

McMurtrey Aquatic Center  
1325 Q Street  
Bakersfield, CA  
[kernautism.org](http://kernautism.org)

## AUGUST 6

### Bluey's Big Play

Bluey's Big Play is a brand-new theatrical adaptation of the Emmy® award-winning children's television series.

6 - 8 p.m.

Mechanics Bank Theater  
1001 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-852-7301  
[axs.com](http://axs.com)



# THE BEST LOCAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS!

This calendar is edited for space. For details about these events or other activities, please visit [kerncountyfamily.com](http://kerncountyfamily.com)

## AUGUST 8

### 15th Annual Ready-Set Back to School Health & Wellness Fair

Receive a free backpack with school supplies for children in Kindergarten through 12th grade (must be present with an adult, limit of 1 backpack per child, while supplies last).

**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Kern County Museum  
3801 Chester Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
[kerncountychildsupportservices.com](http://kerncountychildsupportservices.com)

## AUGUST 9

### Family Fun Night

Children and adults can play games, swim and zip down water slides for \$5 per person. Spin the wheel at water safety booths to win prizes.

**6 - 9 p.m.**

McMurtrey Aquatic Center  
1325 Q Street  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-852-7430

## AUGUST 9 & 24

### Night Hike

Enjoy a guided night hike at Wind Wolves Preserve. Reservations are required. This event is free.

**8 - 1 p.m.**

Wind Wolves Preserve  
16019 Maricopa Hwy  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-858-1115  
[wildlandconservancy.org](http://wildlandconservancy.org)

## AUGUST 10

### National Farmers Market Week Celebration

To celebrate National Farmers Week 2024 CalFresh Healthy Living and the F Street Farmers Market will host a special resource fair that will include free food box giveaways, fun activities and more!

**7:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

F Street Farmers Market  
2819 F Street  
Bakersfield, CA

## Tucanes Time

Los Tucanes De Tijuana are a Mexican Norteño band led by Mario Quintero Lara. Admission: \$49 to \$249

**6:30 - 9 p.m.**

Mechanics Bank Arena  
1001 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-852-7301  
[axs.com](http://axs.com)

## AUGUST 10 & 11

### Free Back-to-School Haircuts

Free haircuts for kids heading back to school.

**9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

500 Cascade Pl.  
Taft, CA

## AUGUST 11

### Summer Movie Series

Get out of the heat and watch Disney's Princess and the Frog on the big screen for just \$5. Sponsored by Bakersfield Hyundai.

**1 p.m.**

The Historic Bakersfield Fox Theater  
2001 H Street  
Bakersfield, CA  
[thebakersfieldfox.com](http://thebakersfieldfox.com)

## AUGUST 16

### Movies in the Canyon

Bring the family for a fun, free movie night and come watch the animated favorite Migration.

**8:30 p.m.**

Wind Wolves Preserve  
16019 Maricopa Hwy  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-858-1115  
[wildlandsconservancy.org](http://wildlandsconservancy.org)

### Movies in the Park

Join us under the stars for an unforgettable cinematic experience at Movies in the Park! From timeless classic films to blockbuster hits, enjoy outdoor cinema suitable for all ages. Movies begin at sunset. Events will be canceled if the temperature reaches 104° or higher.



# Back-to-School HAPPENINGS



## AUGUST 1

### Ready-Set Back 2 School

Limit one backpack per child, Kindergarten-12th grade. Child must be present. While supplies last.

KCDHS & The Blessing Corner \*Drive-Tru Distribution Only

**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Leroy Jackson Park  
300 E. French Ave.  
Ridgecrest, CA

## AUGUST 3

### Ready-Set Back 2 School

Limit one backpack per child, Kindergarten-12th grade. Child must be present. While supplies last.

**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Dollar General Market (Parking Lot)  
337 E. Lerdo Hwy.  
Shafter, CA

## AUGUST 8

### Ready-Set Back 2 School

Limit one backpack per child, Kindergarten-12th grade. Child must be present. While supplies last.

**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Kern County Museum  
3801 Chester Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA

## AUGUST 2

### Over the Top-Back 2 School

For school-aged children in attendance only (Ages 3-17). 1st Come; 1st Served.

**9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

The Blessing Corner Church  
101 Union Ave.  
Bakersfield, CA

For more Back-to-School events, visit [kerncountyfamily.com](http://kerncountyfamily.com)

August 9 is Family Fun Night at the McMurtrey Aquatic Center.



Madison Grove Park  
10115 Norris Rd.  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-392-2000  
norfun.org/movies-in-the-park

## AUGUST 16-18

### 61st Annual Tehachapi Mountain Festival

The annual festival includes live entertainment, a parade, a carnival, a rodeo, and so much more!

For a complete schedule of events visit [www.tehachapimountainfestival.com/schedule](http://www.tehachapimountainfestival.com/schedule)

### Summer Nights Truck Show

Whether you're a truck enthusiast or just looking for a fun night out, this event is perfect for everyone. Get ready to see some of the coolest trucks around, chat with fellow truck lovers, and enjoy the summer night vibes.

**12 p.m.**  
Kern County Fairgrounds  
1142 South P Street  
Bakersfield, CA



The Water Lantern Festival comes to The Park at River Walk August 17.

## AUGUST 17

### Water Lantern Festival

This unforgettable evening will be filled with tasty food trucks, fun music, activities, and thousands of lanterns lighting up the night with love, hope, and happiness.

**5 - 9 p.m.**  
The Park at River Walk  
11298 Stockdale Hwy  
Bakersfield, CA 93311  
[WaterLanternFestival.com](http://WaterLanternFestival.com)

## AUGUST 17 & 18

### Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live Glow Party

Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live Glow Party brings fans' favorite Hot Wheels Monster Trucks to life! The Glow Party production features spectacular lasers, dance parties, and Hot Wheels toy giveaways.

**Saturday 12:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.**  
**Sunday 2:30 p.m.**  
Mechanics Bank Arena  
1001 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
[axs.com](http://axs.com)



### Bakersfield Collector-Con

Bring the entire family to this two-day toy and comic convention. Come dressed as your favorite superhero or villain for a chance to win prizes.

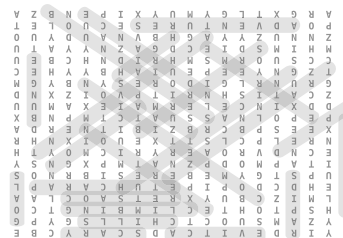
**Saturday 11a.m.-6 p.m.**  
**Sunday 11 a.m. -5 p.m.**  
Mechanics Bank Theater  
1001 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
[bakersfieldcollector@gmail.com](mailto:bakersfieldcollector@gmail.com)

# ACTIVITY CORNER ANSWERS

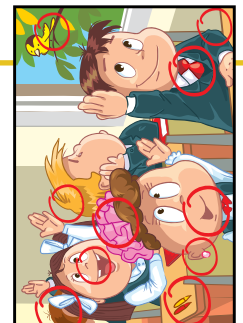
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## AUGUST 22

### KC Public Health Mobile Clinic

Access child and adult immunizations, tuberculosis testing, family planning services, health screenings, and more. No appointments necessary and walk-ins are welcome

**9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Riverview Park  
401 Willow Dr  
Bakersfield, CA  
kernpublichealth.com

## AUGUST 24

### 5th Annual Tejano Music Festival

Headlining Tejano Giants "De Parranda" and Local Bands: Conjunto Califas, Revoluzion & Grupo Riezzgo.

**4 p.m.**

Stramler Park  
3805 Chester Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA

### 3rd Annual Ohana Koa Luau Fundraiser

Hosted by Public Safety Professionals Retreat this event raises money for scholarships for people struggling with the stress of public safety careers.

**6 - 10 p.m.**

Stockdale Country Club  
7001 Stockdale Hwy  
Bakersfield, CA  
prosperetreat.com/ohana-koaluau-2024

## AUGUST 25

### Los Temerarios

The band combines elements of traditional Mexican music with modern stylings to create a rich blend of youthful pop and romanticism, while retaining the smoldering Latin feel. Admission: \$65 to \$199

**8 - 10 p.m.**

Mechanics Bank Arena  
1001 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA  
axs.com

## ONGOING EVENTS

### TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY MORNINGS

#### Regal Summer Movie Express

\$1 Family Movies all summer

**11 a.m.**

Edwards Cinema  
Bakersfield  
9000 Ming Ave.  
Bakersfield, CA

### SATURDAYS

#### RiverLakes Farmers Market

Join a vibrant community of small farmers, producers, and artists with locally-sourced goods, fresh produce, and handcrafted treasures for sale. Seasonal features vary by week.

**9 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Riverlakes Community Center  
3825 Riverlakes Dr.  
Bakersfield, CA

## AUGUST 26

### NOR Children's Mobile Immunization Clinic

Access FREE vaccines for children ages 0-5 regardless of health insurance and ages 6-18 under certain criteria. Child's immunization cards are required and registration ends 30 minutes before closing time.

**9 - 11 a.m. and 12-2 p.m.**

Riverview Park  
401 Willow Dr  
Bakersfield, CA  
661-869-6740  
first5kern.org

# Worship Guide

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88.3 Life FM  
KAXL

## The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want *Psalm 23:1*

**T**he Lord is my Shepherd"... words that have comforted hearts and minds since the day David wrote them. Words so simple that David probably wouldn't have had to say more... but he did.

The truth is, we are all being shepherded by something. We all have influences that we allow to give us insight and direction. Sometimes friends, politics or even finances are given permission to be our life guides. As easy as it is to follow those things they give nothing back except "want". They bring no comfort, they bring no hope, they bring no lasting joy.

However, if the Lord is our shepherd, if we listen to His Spirit, if we follow His words, if we are guided by His truth, he will replace that empty hole of want with fulfillment, peace and purpose.

David knew what he was talking about. As the King of Israel he lacked nothing. His riches and power were endless... but he knew he needed more. He needed something or someone that could guide him to a place of hope. He knew exactly where to turn. He made the Lord his shepherd. Praise God! That same shepherd is ready to lead you!

— By Jon Engen, KAXL 88.3 Life FM



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[www.autism-vac.org](http://www.autism-vac.org)

**K-A-N KERN AUTISM NETWORK, INC.**  
"Kern Autism Network Inc. provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"

**It's Summertime**

Autism Sensory Art Hour@ the Bakersfield Museum of Art- August 10th Register via: [www.kernautism.org](http://www.kernautism.org)  
Autism Family Sensory Swim Day @ McMurtrey Aquatic Center Sunday, August 4th @ 10:00 a.m. Register via: [www.kernautism.org](http://www.kernautism.org)  
Female Support Group: Contact us for summer hours

The office is closed for the summer and available via appointment only or by email at [kernautism@gmail.com](mailto:kernautism@gmail.com)

**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:**

- Monthly Parent Support Groups
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- Local Resources, Community Projects
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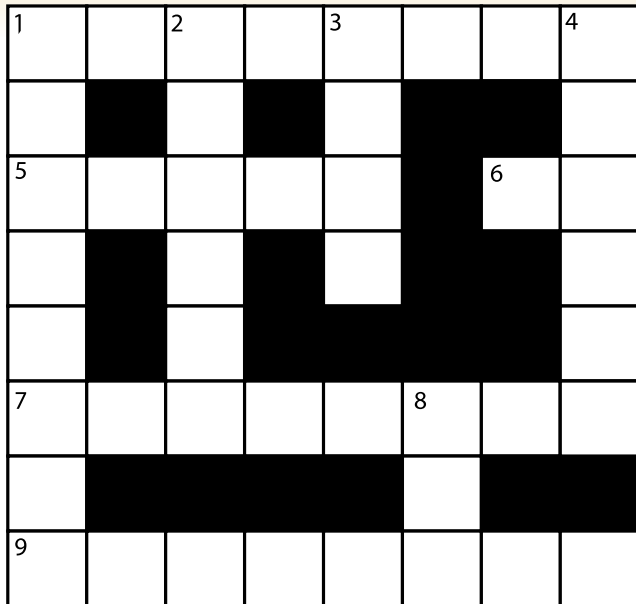
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# AUGUST ACTIVITY CORNER

## Crossword



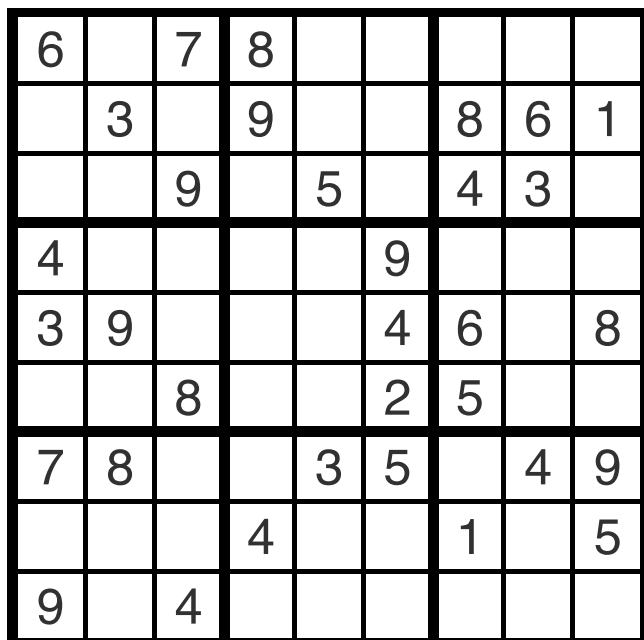
### ACROSS

1. Makes up an idea
5. Measured worth
6. Southeastern state (abbr.)
7. Little samples
9. Fixed

### DOWN

1. A person who creates a product or idea
2. Enables
3. Concept or vision
4. Figures out the answer
8. Neither \_\_\_\_\_

## Sudoku



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



## DID YOU KNOW?

### History of School

Did you know that not everyone was allowed to go to school? It's true! Thomas Jefferson promoted a free public education for all students; however, it wasn't until 1840 that public schools opened to all children in the United States. Before that, only wealthy children got to attend school.



[kidsplayandcreate.com/fun-back-to-school-facts-for-kids/](http://kidsplayandcreate.com/fun-back-to-school-facts-for-kids/)

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!

# AUGUST ACTIVITY CORNER

**PUZZLE ANSWERS**  
PAGE 34

## ADVENTUROUS WORD SEARCH

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H Y I R D E V I T C A D S C A R Y C B E  
 S Y Z A M S U O C T C H I L L S G Y P G  
 G H S P T O H T E C L I M B I N G T C O  
 N L M I Z C B U Y X R E T S A O C L A A  
 I E H D C D O P I P E T U H C A R A P L  
 L U P S T G Y M E B E R E S I B R N O S  
 L I T A P M O D P Z N A T M P X G N S Y  
 I E C N D V R O A E R Y R I C M O Y T H  
 R N R E L P C L S T T X E U O I X N H R  
 H X E E S P B C R B Z I B I T N E R D A  
 T P E P O L N A S S U A T C T M P N B X  
 S D D X I N C E L E R M A I E X A M U U  
 G Z C A T I S H N R I T P V O I Z X N D  
 Z G R U N R L G I D O R E S Y N B Y G M  
 N T Z G N Y E E P E U I A H B Y Y H E C  
 E C C S U O R M S M H R I D N H C B E U  
 G M H I M S D I E C D G A Z N Y Y A T U  
 N Z N N U Z Y Y A G H B V N A U D Y U O  
 M P O A D V E N T U R E S E C U O L E T  
 D A R G X T L G Y M U Y X I P E N B Z A

ACHIEVEMENT

ACTION

ACTIVE

ADVENTURES

BARRIERS

BOUNDARIES

BUMPS

BUNGEE

CHILLS

CLIMBING

COASTER

COMPETITION

ENDURANCE

EXERTION

EXTREME

GOALS

HEART-RACING

HIGH

PARACHUTE

RAPIDS

SCARY

SPEED

THRILLING

TRAIL BLAZE





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