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Dear Readers,

It’s the time of year that many of us turn our attention to planning for the next school year. Applications for Duval County Public Schools’ Magnet programs are due on February 29th and schools open their doors for tours and Open Houses. With this in mind, we dedicate this issue to Education.

Start with How to Choose a School (page 18), you may also want to read 15 Benefits of a STEM Education (page 17), find education-related events on page 18 and even more online at Jax4Kids.com. Learn about CPALMS and FloridaStudents.org, how a recent survey can predict traits that may indicate a future in computer science, news from Duval, Clay and St. Johns County Schools and much more beginning on page 12.

Jax4Kids is proud to sponsor the Jacksonville Science Festival. This important event that supports STEM Education takes place February 25th through 27th. Read more about the Jacksonville Science Festival on Page 13.

Do you know someone in need of dentistry but unable to afford it? May I draw your attention to our Community Profile on page 4? Florida Missions of Mercy will be providing FREE dental services for those in greatest need on April 22nd and 23rd at the Prime Osborn Convention Center. An army of volunteers, including 1,100 dentists, are making this possible. A grateful community thanks you Florida Dental Association!

We hope that your parenting and family experiences are enriched by this publication. A heartfelt thank you to all of the community experts and agencies who collaborate and contribute and to the advertisers who support Jax4Kids’ newspaper and other information services.

Happy Valentines Day!

Until next month,

Alison Peters-Carlson
Editor

Follow us...
Belief

I used to think that belief was the first step to success. But now I know that the first step is to take the first step. You have to act even when you don’t believe. You need to have the courage to move forward in spite of your self-doubt and fears.

When I started writing and speaking over ten years ago I had no confidence, no experience and no belief and yet I was willing to take the first step.

Did I fail? You bet.

Did I face ridicule and rejection? You bet.

Did I want to give up many times? You bet.

Yet at some point along the way, something interesting happened. I started to cultivate a belief that I could actually do this. Belief may not be the first step to success, but it is an essential step to building our lives, careers, families and teams. At some point you must believe.

I’ve found the difference between success and failure is often belief. I’ve learned that you win in the mind first and then you win on the field, in the classroom, in the office, in the marketplace and in life. I’ve found that when you believe, the impossible becomes possible.

I’ve also learned that belief doesn’t happen by osmosis. It is something you develop through trials, challenges and experiences. The more you do something, the more you believe you can do it. You also cultivate belief with your thoughts, words, perspective and expectations.

One of the best things I ever did was to recite certain phrases during my morning walks of gratitude and prayer. At the end of each walk I would say the following words that I have since woven into my book, The Carpenter.

I expect great things to happen today.

I trust in God’s plan for my life.

I accept all of the love, joy, abundance and success in my life.

I accept all the people who want to work with me and benefit from my gifts and talents.

Every day I am getting stronger, healthier and better.

I started saying these phrases around 2007 and it was amazing how great things started to happen. Out of the blue people would call and book me to speak at an event. Book ideas popped into my head. My purpose became clearer and clearer. I also said phrases about being of service and making a difference, but that’s a newsletter for another time.

For now I want to encourage you to say these phrases, or make up your own, for 30 days. Don’t take my word for it. Give it a shot. Try it for 30 days. Cultivate belief and great things will happen.

Jon Gordon
www.jongordon.com
www.positiveschool.com

Community Profile: Mission of Mercy
Free Dental Services: Dentists and others volunteer for the FDA’s annual Mission of Mercy

Volunteers from around the state will gather in Jacksonville in April to provide totally free dental care to some of the area’s neediest residents.

About 1,100 dentists, along with their staffs and other volunteers, will provide services ranging from basic cleanings and fillings, to extractions, root canals, X-rays, oral health education, and, in some cases, even partial acrylic dentures.

“As highly trained dental professionals, we have a rare gift to share with people in need,” said Dr. Terry Buckenheimer, a member of the Board of Directors for the Florida Dental Association and a past Board President. “Most of us do so in many small and often unseen ways. But there is also an occasion for showing compassion on a large scale, for attempting to do something together that could never be done alone.”

The Florida Dental Association Foundation event, known as Mission of Mercy (FLA-MOM) will be held April 22-23, from 6 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day, at the Prime Osborn Convention Center in Jacksonville.

FLA-MOM is a two-day clinic held annually to provide much-needed dental care and to raise awareness of the epidemic of untreated dental disease occurring locally and nationally. By raising awareness of the problem, the FDA hopes to create local public and private partnerships that will increase access to oral health care for Florida’s neediest residents.

The first-come, first-served event, held in a different location in the state each year, has a goal of treating 3,000 patients in two days. An estimated 15,000 dental procedures will be performed, providing about $2 million in free dental care, thanks to funding from corporate and private donors and labor provided by dental, medical, and other volunteers. In addition to volunteering out of simple good will, many of the dentists who participate bring their staffs to work with them as a team-building exercise.

“Belief is a great thing to happen today. I trust in God’s plan for my life. I accept all of the love, joy, abundance and success in my life. I accept all the people who want to work with me and benefit from my gifts and talents.

I started saying these phrases around 2007 and it was amazing how great things started to happen. Out of the blue people would call and book me to speak at an event. Book ideas popped into my head. My purpose became clearer and clearer. I also said phrases about being of service and making a difference, but that’s a newsletter for another time.

For now I want to encourage you to say these phrases, or make up your own, for 30 days. Don’t take my word for it. Give it a shot. Try it for 30 days. Cultivate belief and great things will happen.

Jon Gordon
www.jongordon.com
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According to data collected by the National Institute of Health (NIH), 60 percent of American adults have not been to the dentist in the past year with nearly half of all Americans who meet federal poverty definitions have not visited a dentist in at least five years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 40 percent of poor adults have at least one untreated, decayed tooth. Toothaches are the most common pain of the mouth or face reported by adults. This pain can interfere with vital functions such as eating, swallowing, and talking. Almost one of every four adults reports having some form of facial pain in the past six months.

Bone grafts, braces, crowns, extraction of unerupted wisdom teeth, gum surgery, implants, root canals, and teeth whitening services will not be provided. Additionally, no narcotics will be provided to any patients.

The high volume of patients participating in the charitable Mission of Mercy event highlights a clear gap between those with and without good dental health. Considering that oral health is connected to total health, financial barriers to care should be of major concern to the leaders of our state.

“That’s the beauty of FLA-MOM,” Buckenheimer said. “That powerful philosophy is the essence and backbone of membership in the Florida Dental Association.”

For more information or to donate or volunteer, contact Heather Gioia, Director of Foundation Affairs for the Florida Dental Association Foundation: 850.350.7117 or hgioia@floridadental.org. Or visit www.floridadental.org/foundation/programs/mission-of-mercy to read about FLA-MOM and the Foundation’s other efforts.

What to Do:

Recipe courtesy of: www.princesspinkygirl.com

White Chocolate Popcorn

White Chocolate

Ingredients:

2 Regular Size Bags of Microwave Popcorn
16 Ounces of White Melting Chocolate
Pink and Red M&M’s
Pink and Red Sprinkles
Wax Paper

Instructions:

1. Pop both bags of popcorn and place in a large bowl
2. Place M&M’s in a Ziploc bag and lightly break them into small pieces (do not pulverize)
3. Melt the chocolate according to directions on the package and pour over the popcorn and mix thoroughly (pour a little and then mix a little, pour some more and mix some more…and so on)
4. Stir in M&M’s and sprinkles
5. Spread the popcorn on a cookie sheet covered with wax paper and leave until set
6. Break into pieces and serve

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Teaching our Children Manners, Thank you very much

Good manners, social skills and etiquette are as important now as they were years ago when they were not only practiced, but EXPECTED.

We all want our children to grow into charming and respectful young adults who have the confidence needed to interact with people from all walks of life. One of the best ways to achieve this is through etiquette and social skills classes for children. Unfortunately in today's world most values and skills need to be taught as they are not found on the street or on television. We must actually supervise television time today so that so much of the unacceptable behavior that children will see on many programs can be limited. It's a shame, but very true.

I have visited many schools grades K-12 and I always see the same thing, children pushing and shoving in cafeteria food lines, boys cutting in front of the girls, yelling, screaming and many young children using totally inappropriate language.

Our children are being raised in a world today where there are many confusing and mixed messages as to what is “right” and what is “wrong.”

Children are not born with manners. This is something that is taught to them and a perfect way to start is by trying to instill lessons of old fashioned civility and even chivalry to our children. I have even seen nannies take classes to polish up their social skills so they would in turn be able to pass it on to the children they care for.

My classes start by teaching the simple basics. “Polite is Right”. They learn how to greet friends or adults by making eye contact with a friendly handshake. They learn that interrupting is rude, how to set a table properly, wear clean clothes, hold the door for others, pull out a chair for a lady, or give a simple hello to a stranger.

Etiquette is trying to make a small comeback as it is desperately needed. Texting and Instagram have replaced face-to-face conversations. Handwritten thank you notes, have become a lost art. Today’s society has become way to casual. Peer pressure has never been greater, role models are lacking, and reality TV shows present outrageous and obnoxious behavior as being the norm.

We never want our children to feel awkward and uncomfortable when being put into a new situation or meeting new people. Being mannerly makes you a better person, more relaxed, and confident as well as feeling less nervous and insecure. Not only will it make them feel better about themselves, but others will like them more.

An American Association of the University of Women survey found that 60% of Elementary girls were happy with themselves but sadly by Junior High only 29% were happy with themselves. Similar studies found that boys had almost the same results. Studies also show that children with no confidence or self-esteem end up turning down the wrong roads while trying to find acceptance and popularity.

When you treat others with respect it shows you respect yourself and EVERYONE benefits. Recently as I was going into a store a young boy held the door open for me. To my surprise, not only did I forget how lovely it felt, it was even nicer seeing the look on his face of how proud he felt about his first-rate behavior. It seems that we have all forgotten over time how special good manners can make us ALL feel.

Etiquette, good manners and fundamental values will only help children become the young ladies and gentlemen we know they can be. Learning these valuable skills should start as early as possible.

Debbie Shor
Deborah Shor’s School of Etiquette
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Debbie.shor@aol.com

“The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any.”
– Fred Astaire

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Use “ChooseMyPlate” to Get Your Family on a Healthy Track this Year!

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed a family-oriented website to assist families in making healthy food choices and encouraging physical activity. This is a brief overview of some of the information available at www.choosemyplate.gov.

“ChooseMyPlate” or simply “MyPlate” is an increasingly recognizable icon of healthy eating, released to the public in June 2011. MyPlate is a guideline for the five food groups that are the building blocks of a healthy diet utilizing a dinner plate model. It’s a guideline for meal planning and aids in portion control. This works great with kids because they can visually see how much space each food group should take on their plate. Fruit and vegetable intake is poor in many households, and this image raises awareness of how half of our plates should be filled with fruits/vegetables. Overweight and obesity is also becoming more prevalent in our communities, and sticking to MyPlate can help encourage kids/teens/parents to limit portions of carbohydrates (think white bread, rolls, pasta and starchy vegetables such as corn) and instead, increase the amount of non-starchy vegetables (think broccoli, tomatoes or a tossed salad) coupled with a good source of protein at each meal. Soy milk can be substituted in place of cow’s milk if desired.

The ChooseMyPlate.gov website also includes a BMI calculator, a MyPlate daily checklist, information on portion distortion, eating on a budget, food waste, food safety and other topics of nutrition. Take advantage of this very informative and interactive website this year to benefit your entire family! 😊

Aurea Thompson, MSH, RD, CSP LD/N
Board Certified Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition
Wolfson Children’s Hospital

Food needs also depend on how fast your child is growing, genetics and other environmental factors. For additional counseling regarding your child’s specific needs, seek the help of a Registered Dietitian.

For school-age children, there is MyPlate Kid’s Place which has resources to help older children and their parents plan healthy meals. This section also provides tools on how to help kids reach and maintain a healthy weight. The website provides interactive games, videos, songs and activity sheets along with recipes from the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge. Over the last four years, the White House has challenged America’s junior chefs to create original, healthy and affordable lunchtime recipes using MyPlate as a guide and this has become known as the Healthy Lunchtime Challenge. The 2015 Healthy Lunchtime Challenge cookbook contains the most recent group of 55 winning recipes, and the previous 2012 through 2014 year cookbooks are also available to download.

For teenagers, the website provides information on healthy food choices, calories and nutrients needed for growth, and encourages physical activity. SuperTracker is a free, online personalized diet/exercise tracking program which gives teens the opportunity to track their daily calorie and nutrient intake along with the amount of exercise that they get. It helps teens set calorie and exercise goals and provides virtual coaching. It provides a tool for making healthy lifestyle changes to reduce the risk of chronic disease and to promote a healthy weight. If your teen prefers, there is also the MyPlateTracker app that is available for their phone.
Fostering Impulse Control

Kids are great but sometimes we’re all like “Wait, what?!?” Maybe we see them grabbing things that aren’t theirs, invading personal space, interrupting, etc. Why would they do that? Selfish? No, not really. What’s going on is that a lot of young children are excited...the same applies to a child that has ADHD of any age. They’re curious. They want to truly know, experience, or maybe to share...anything...everything. Now, impulse control is an important thing to do, but how can we do it? This article addresses that very question.

Important areas to have self-control include interrupting others, being able to wait for short periods of time, touching or taking things, and personal space. These are all areas that we all run into, since there’s a number of social situations with new things, with other people, or when they cannot seem to get what they want immediately...right now.

One thing that parents or caregivers can consider doing is to make sure that all instructions are very clear and direct. Often caregivers say things like “No.” Or don’t, stop, quit, etc. One of the problems with that approach is that for children, impulse control and abstract thinking are not top strengths. Think about it like this. Let’s say your child is running down a hall. You say, “Don’t run.” Even if they did respond to that, they may think they’re doing right by skipping down the hall. I mean, come on, they aren’t running anymore. Ok, now you say, “Stop skipping.” Fine. Assuming they listen, now they’re rolling on the floor down the hall. Clearly not what you wanted, even though technically the child followed your direction. That’s the point. Say what you want to see. “Walk down the hall.” Other examples—ask nicely before you touch, give personal space, hands to yourself, wait over there and play with something. Skip all of the vague statements—don’t, no, stop, quit. Say what you exactly want to see happen.

Another thing is to make sure that impulsive behavior doesn’t work, while better behavior was instructed by the caregiver does work. Perfect example—interrupting. What is the child looking for? Attention. They interrupt to tell you something or to ask something—when you are mid-sentence, most of the time. Many caregivers say “Hey stop, don’t interrupt me, I’m busy now. I’ve told you before. Seriously?” Sometimes they say it in a frustrated way. They may say several sentences every time that a child interrupts. Alternatively, the caregiver may answer immediately what the child says every time. Either way, if the child was looking for attention, they would have certainly gotten it by either approach. Either the child got what they were after, or they got a big long explanation (aka, attention). Sounds like a catch 22. What can we do? Change our response. Start off at a time when the child is not interrupting. Discuss how waiting is important and it looks like having a quiet mouth and hands to self, and they can look at something else close by. Show them what it looks like for 10 seconds. Let them show you for 10 seconds. Then make sure that they know if you say “One minute” or “Wait” this is what they need to do. We can try to keep them occupied at times when we know it’s hard to wait, such as in doctor’s offices, restaurants, or pharmacies. Give them something to do—a toy, tablet, etc. Also, when they actually interrupt, say “One minute” or “Wait.” At that point, I would expect them to keep trying for awhile. Parents would then have to just ignore...wait until they see that their child is waiting appropriately for at least 15 seconds, then answer. That would mean not looking directly at their child, not talking further, not explaining several times that they are busy, etc. It would look like the parent saying just once “One minute” and then continuing about their business on the phone, or with other adults or kids. Your child may be a bit upset. They may persist for awhile. However, if you are consistent and limit the attention given while they are interrupting, then really answer when the child can actually wait nicely for a short time, then the child will give up and wait nicely.

These 2 steps depend heavily on consistency, and the child actually getting what they are looking for as long as they act appropriately. For example, let’s say the child needs to ask nicely for something before touching. Parents would say “Hands to self.” Or “Give that back” Then, “Ask nicely—can I hold this?” The child would do as they’re told. Parents would then allow the child to touch the object. I get it, some things are fragile. Maybe the child can touch the object while the parent or caregiver decides to hold onto the object the whole time, or maybe the parent holds it and the child can look closely. Similarly, kids can ask to play with objects from their siblings or other people. As long as every time the child is impulsive it doesn’t work, and every time they act appropriately then they are able to get the attention, activities, or objects that they are looking for, then ultimately they will want to do the right thing.

These same steps can be applied to a number of other impulsive behaviors. Impulse control is certainly a challenge, but it can be built up. If you as a parent or caregiver need support, seek out a behavioral psychologist. This is the kind of thing we love to help with!

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**What Does My Child Need a Well Check?**

When your child is coughing or has a fever it makes sense to take time out from your schedule to bring them to the doctor. It's often harder to find that time for a well check, which might not seem as important. However, doctors view well visits as vital to the health of your child. Why are well check ups so important?

Well checks are the time when your doctor has the opportunity to assess speech, learning, and physical milestones. Has your child had difficulty in school? Does your child perform the appropriate tasks for their age group? During the well check up, your doctor is also evaluating the physical body of your child. Have they grown enough? Do they have a heart murmur? Are there any signs of scoliosis?

Well checks are an important time for the parent too. It is your chance to bring up concerns about behavior, speech, and growth. It is also the time to ask questions about vaccinations or refill medications. The well check up is your opportunity to really feel like your concerns are being addressed.

Many times parents want “blood work” for their child to make sure everything is alright. Not every child needs to be screened at each well visit; the American Academy of Pediatrics has a schedule of testing for well check ups that your child to make sure everything is alright. Not every child needs to be screened at each well visit; the American Academy of Pediatrics has a schedule of testing for well check ups that your doctor may want additional tests based on their findings.

Finally, well check ups are a time to review the vaccine history of your child. Do they have all the vaccines they need for school? Have any other vaccines become available since their last visit? Are there any optional vaccines that may be beneficial to your child, such as the flu vaccine? Well visits are the time to discuss and possibly receive them.

Well check ups are an opportunity for your doctor to get to know your child at their best and assess their development and health. Well check ups are an opportunity for you to discuss your concerns and have your questions answered. It is a time to screen your child and ensure they are well vaccinated. We look forward to seeing you for your next well check! 😊

KENNETH S. COHEN, M.D., FAAP is a board-certified pediatrician with Jacksonville Pediatric Associates; Pediatric Associates is Florida’s largest and oldest pediatric practice, with 33 locations from Miami to Jacksonville. He can be reached at Jacksonville Pediatric Associates

**March 2016**

**Baby/Spanish Storytimes**

February 5, 10:15am to 11:00am
February 12, 10:15am to 11:00am
February 19, 10:15am to 11:00am
February 26, 10:15am to 11:00am

This program is for children birth to 5 years with an adult caregiver. The program includes rhymes, songs, fingerplays and books to promote language development, vocabulary building and comprehension. Children are introduced to developmentally appropriate art activities that promote writing by developing fine motor muscles in the hands. Activities focus on building strength, coordination, and control.

Jacksonville Public Library / Webb Wesconnett Regional Library, 6887 103rd Street, Jacksonville, FL 32210 / jpl.coj.net

**Art For Early Literacy**

February 5, 11am to 12noon
February 12, 11am to 12noon
February 19, 11am to 12noon
February 26, 11am to 12noon

This program is for children birth to 5 years with an adult caregiver. The program includes rhymes, songs, fingerplays and books to promote language development, vocabulary building and comprehension. Children are introduced to developmentally appropriate art activities that promote writing by developing fine motor muscles in the hands. Activities focus on building strength, coordination, and control.

Jacksonville Public Library / Webb Wesconnett Regional Library, 6887 103rd Street, Jacksonville, FL 32210 / jpl.coj.net

**Just for Babies Storytime**

February 4, 10:15am to 10:45am
February 11, 10:15am to 10:45am
February 18, 10:15am to 10:45am
February 25, 10:15am to 10:45am

Starting in February 2016, “Just for Babies” will be held every week with Ms. Suzanne, Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library’s Youth Services Assistant. Babies up to 15 months and their caregivers are invited to join her for this infant lapsit program, designed for one-on-one interaction between caregiver and baby. Families with multiple children are encouraged to attend Family Storytime.

Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library / 904-827-6950 / Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 / www.jsclps.org

**Visit Jax4Kids.com for more event listings.**
Are Cavities Contagious?
Tooth decay is transferable!

You're halfway through the grocery store when your toddler drops her pacifier and it hits the ground. The countdown starts.

3...2...1...

If you don’t get that pacifier back into her mouth you know she’s going to scream — and no one around you wants to hear that. So, with no sink or water fountain in sight, you wipe it off on your shirt and pop it into your own mouth for good measure. The thought crosses your mind that you might pass your baby a cold, but that's a chance you'll just have to take.

It never even occurs to you that you might also be passing her … cavities? Yes, believe it or not, cavities are contagious.

According to Dr. Barry Setzer, a dentist in the pediatric dentistry office Setzer, Cochran, Soares and Hubbard in Jacksonville, tooth decay is a bacterial disease. In fact, he said it’s the most common disease known to man and five times more prevalent than asthma.

“When a baby is born the bacteria that causes decay is not in the mouth,” Dr. Setzer said. “It needs teeth to grow on. So, when the baby’s first tooth erupts the bacteria is transferred from caregiver to child.”

Dr. Setzer added that the more decay in the caregiver’s mouth, the more decay they can pass on to the child. So, if your own teeth have lots of fillings and other evidence of dental work, you’ve got more bacteria to share.

Great.

And he said that caregivers can also pass the bacteria to children through tasting food before feeding a child and through kissing.

So what’s a parent to do? You’re certainly not going to stop kissing your baby. How do you keep from passing on cavity-causing bacteria?

“It’s very important that the parents have good oral hygiene, well-repaired dentition and well-controlled gingival health,” Dr. Setzer said.

(Translation: Brush and floss regularly and visit a dentist at least twice a year to make sure your own teeth and gums are healthy.)

As you might imagine, it’s not enough for your child to just dab around her mouth with a My Little Pony toothbrush and some candy-tasting toothpaste. To fight bacteria, some real brushing has to happen. That’s why, Dr. Setzer said, parents should brush and floss their children’s teeth for them until the children have the dexterity to do it for themselves. He says the indicator for that dexterity is when the child is able to handle a knife and fork on their own.

“To make it easier, let the child do it first and then tell the child that mommy or daddy needs to check and help finish,” Dr. Setzer suggested.

“Other tricks are to take the brushing out of the bathroom, lay the child down on the couch with their head in your lap and dry brush. For babies, wipe the teeth off with a gauze or cloth baby diaper when the child is on the changing table. For older children, sit on the toilet seat and have the child at eye level while you do the brushing.”

Dr. Setzer acknowledged that a fidgety child might not stand still long enough for brushing and a full flossing. He said in that case you should “triage” the teeth to floss, focusing on the back ones first because they’re the ones most prone to get decay.

Finally, all is not lost even if you do share some bacteria with your baby. By brushing and flossing regularly, using fluoride mouthwashes when they’re old enough and making early and regular visits to a dentist, your child can stay ahead of tooth decay.

Need some reassurance? Dr. Setzer said that with many fillings, crowns and even root canal treatments, he and his wife were both at high risk for passing on tooth decay — but to this day their 33-year-old daughter has never had a cavity.

The First Dentist Visit
The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Academy of Pediatrics and pediatric dentists all recommend that children see a dentist by their first birthday or when their first tooth erupts, Dr. Setzer said. After the child’s second birthday he or she should typically see a dentist every six months. However, if a child has special needs or is medically compromised, Dr. Setzer says they should begin seeing a dentist at six months of age and every six months thereafter.

Rebekah Sanderlin
E-cigarette Ads Reversing Progress in Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth

About 7 in 10 middle and high school students – more than 18 million young people – see e-cigarette advertising in stores, online, in newspapers and magazines, or on television and in movies, according to a new CDC Vital Signs report.

E-cigarette ads use many of the same themes – independence, rebellion, and sex – used to sell cigarettes and other conventional tobacco products. Advertising of tobacco products has been shown to cause youth to start using those products. The unrestricted marketing of e-cigarettes and dramatic increases in their use by youth could reverse decades of progress in preventing tobacco use among youth.

“The same advertising tactics the tobacco industry used years ago to get kids addicted to nicotine are now being used to entice a new generation of young people to use e-cigarettes,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “I hope all can agree that kids should not use e-cigarettes.”

Data from the 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) show 68.9 percent of middle and high school students see e-cigarettes ads from one or more media sources. More youth see e-cigarette ads in retail stores (54.8 percent) than online (39.8 percent), in TV/movies (36.5 percent), or in newspapers and magazines (30.4 percent).

E-cigarettes typically deliver nicotine, which at a young age may cause lasting harm to brain development, promote addiction, and lead to sustained tobacco use. In 2014, e-cigarettes became the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, surpassing conventional cigarettes. During 2011 to 2014, current e-cigarette use among high school students soared from 1.5 percent to 13.4 percent, and among middle school students from 1.6 percent to 3.9 percent. Spending on e-cigarette advertising rose from $6.4 million in 2011 to an estimated $115 million in 2014.

Strategies to reduce youth access to e-cigarettes could include:

- Restricting the number of stores that sell tobacco and how close they can be to schools, requiring that e-cigarettes be sold only through face-to-face transactions, not on the Internet.
- Requiring age verification to enter e-cigarette vendor’s websites, make purchases, and accept deliveries of e-cigarettes.
- Limiting tobacco product sales to facilities that never admit youth.

“States and communities can also help reduce youth tobacco use by funding tobacco prevention and control programs that address the diversity of tobacco products available on the market, including e-cigarettes,” said Corinne Graftendorf, Dr.P.H., director of CDC’s Office on Smoking and Health. “We know what works to effectively reduce youth tobacco use. If we were to fully invest in these proven strategies, we could significantly reduce the staggering toll that tobacco takes on our families and communities.”

Other key findings in the Vital Signs report show that:

- More than half of high school students (8.3 million) saw e-cigarette ads in retail stores, and more than 6 million saw them on the Internet.
- More than half of middle school students (6 million) saw e-cigarettes ads in retail stores, and more than 4 million saw them on the Internet.
- About 15 percent of all students (4.1 million) saw e-cigarette ads from all four sources: retail stores, the Internet, TV/movies, and magazines/newspapers.

The 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act gave the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate the manufacture, marketing, and sale of certain tobacco products. The FDA has announced its intention to regulate e-cigarettes and other currently unregulated tobacco products as part of this Act. The rulemaking is currently under review at the Office of Management and Budget. Source: CDC.gov

Things to Do

Health Events

Fourth Annual Character Counts! 6 Pillars 6K and 3K Run/Walk • February 6, 9am
Fourth Annual Character Counts! in St. Johns County. There will be a 6K distance and a 3K. The course begins and ends at Palencia Elementary School. The event is open to all ages. Entry fees for the 3K range from $20 to $30; entry fees for the 6K are $25 to $35. Awards will be given for males and females in the 3K and 6K for ages 1-9, 10-14, 15-19, and adult categories. Proceeds benefit the Character Counts! program in St. Johns County Schools.

Palencia Elementary School, 355 Palencia Village Drive St. Augustine, FL 32095 / racesmith.com

Community CPR/AED
February 9, 6pm to 9pm
This course offers certification in Community CPR and includes instruction on how to recognize and perform CPR in adults, children, and infants. Includes AED use and Choking. Cost is $40 plus online fee. Safety First Jax / Babies R Us, Argyle, 6001 Argyle Forest Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32244 / www.safetyfirstjax.com

Donna Marathon Weekend
February 12 – February 14
26.2 with Donna is a private non-profit organization in Northeast Florida producing the only marathon in the U.S. dedicated to breast cancer research and care. Net proceeds of all 26.2 with Donna events go to breast cancer research, care and awareness. Donna Marathon Weekend welcomes thousands of runners and supporters from all over the world. The weekend kicks off with the opening of the Donna Expo on Friday, February 12 at 12noon. The Donna 5K & Family Fun Run presented by Jaguars Foundation and the Donna 10K will be held on Saturday, February 13, followed by marathon races begin at 7:30am on Sunday, February 14 at the Celgene Start Line near The Players Parking Lot off ATP Tour Boulevard in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. 5K participants earn our signature Running Ribbon medal and experience the beautiful downtown Jacksonville has to offer. The marathon course includes the beautiful Marina area and the Historic District. The course finishes at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center. Schedule of Events:
- Friday, February 12 — 12noon to 7pm – Donna Expo
- Saturday, February 13 — 8:30am – 5K Start
- Saturday, February 13 — 9:30am – 10k Run Start
- Saturday, February 13 — 2pm – 10K Fun Run Start
- Saturday, February 13 — 9am to 5pm – Donna Expo Sunday, February 14 — 7:30am – 26.2 Marathon
Prime Osborn Convention Center / 1000 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204 / breastcancermarathon.com

5th Annual Wrigley Ride
February 20, 9am
The 5th Annual Wrigley Ride for bicyclists starts at 9am. The ride starts and ends at Sykes and Cooper Farms in Elkton. This is a fully supported ride with SAG, rest stops every 10-15 miles and activities along the way. There will be local music, food, and more at the end of the ride. Registration starts at $55. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Bryan B. Wrigley Scholarship at Newberry College, his alma mater and scholarship created by his family. There is a fundraising goal with a commemorative jersey to show your support.

Wrigley Ride / Sykes and Cooper Farm, 5985 Brough Rd, Elkton, FL 32033 / wrigleyride.org

St. Augustine YMCA Mardi Gras Beach Run
February 20, 12noon
The St. Augustine YMCA Mardi Gras Beach Run will feature a 5K run and a 1 mile fun run. Fees start at $15. The race will begin on St. Augustine Beach at low tide from the St. Augustine Beach Pier on February 20th 2016 at 12noon. The race will be an out and back course starting at the pier and heading north towards St. Anastasia State Park on the flat beach. This is a fun run so dressing up is encouraged.

Parked will be first come first serve at the Pier. Participants may also park at the St. Augustine YMCA just off of Pope Road about 1/2 a mile from the starting location. Parking is limited, participants are encouraged to ride together if possible.

Ancient City Road Runners / St. Augustine Beach Pier, 350 A1A Beach Blvd, St. Augustine, FL 32080 / www.ancientcityroadrunners.org

6th Annual Walking Tree
February 27, 11am
The 6th Annual Walking Tree will be held on Saturday, February 27, 2016 beginning with registration at 10am. The walk/run will begin at 11am, and lunch and games will follow. The Walking Tree, benefiting North Florida School of Special Education, is a one mile walk/run celebrating fitness and good health. For the second year, The Walking Tree will be held amidst the trails of the beautifully wooded property on Mill Creek Road, adjacent to the school. The five acre tract has become the school’s outdoor classroom, walking trails, special event space, summer camp, parcour, and area for onsite physical therapies.

This event is open to the public with no registration fee. For more information, contact Julie Steinkamp at 904-724-8323 or jsteinkamp@ northfloridascholarship.org.

North Florida School of Special Education / 904-724-8323 / 223 Mill Creek Road Jacksonville, FL 32211 / www.northfloridaschool.org

2016 Summer Crit Series
February 28, 8am
Velobrew Racing hosts a summer crit series for cyclists. Kids under 10 can race for free, and kids 10 and up are $10. Registration is day of, and starts at 7:15am. Participants must have a USA Cycling license to participate. One day licenses are available, or you can purchase an annual license. Participants ride on the FSCJ Cecil Truck Driving Range. Come out for one day, or all the races in the series. Held the last Sunday of the month, from February to July.

Velobrew Racing / FSCJ Cecil Truck Driving Range, 3640 New World Ave, Jacksonville, FL 32211 / www.velobrew.com

Visit Jax4Kids.com for more event listings.
Organizing Study Spaces

The more organized and aesthetically pleasing a study space is, the more productive a student will be. How to organize a study space is very dependent upon the student and his/her environment. Age, learning style and the actual space are very critical in determining how to organize a study space.

1. Select a location – The location may be the kitchen table, a separate room or office or the student’s bedroom. Location can be determined by the age of the student. For example, an elementary school aged student may need to be near the hub of the household (ie: kitchen table) to get the supervision and help that he/she may need. Location also should be determined by the learning style of the student. Some students thrive in an environment with background noise such as music or conversation while others may be easily distracted and need a very quiet space.

2. Select work surface – This may be a table, desk or countertop depending upon the location of the study space. If you opt to work in a dedicated study space, select a table or desk that is large enough to spread out work in progress.

3. Select a good, sturdy chair – Do not skimp on this. A high quality chair promotes good posture and reduces possible injuries. For younger students, opt for a chair that is adjustable in height for growing bodies.

4. Ensure there is adequate lighting – Effective study spaces require both overhead lighting as well as task lighting. If possible, opt for natural light during the daylight. Bright task lighting protects your students’ vision.

5. Determine what supplies are needed in the study space – Typically, students need access to a computer and printer. They also need school and office supplies such as paper, printer, notebooks, and writing instruments – pens, pencils, crayons, markers and other supplies such as calculators, scissors, staplers, paper clips, tape, erasers, rulers, etc.

6. Eliminate the clutter – Remove everything else that is not needed for the study space. Clutter is very distracting.

7. Decorate the space to motivate the student – Use favorite colors and styles that suit the student. When he/she enjoys being the space, he/she will be more likely to want to be in the space and be more productive.

8. Organize the “keepers” – Projects and school related papers can be corralled in folders or binders. Vertical magazine holders or horizontal stacking trays can hold and separate notebook and printer paper. Other supplies such as pencil and pens can be stored in desk drawers or on the work surface in decorative cups. Use a wall mounted bulletin board near the work surface and records when assignments are due to keep on track.

9. Organize time – Plan or estimate how long assignments will take and use a timer to keep on track. Also, use a timer to set the student’s breaks and allow them to rest or play between assignments.

A well organized and aesthetic study space encourages student’s productivity. There is no one single way to organize any space, much less a study space. The key is to tailor the study space to meet the student’s needs while keeping in mind the home’s available space and the household’s budget.

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THE ACROBATS OF CHINA – NEW SHANGHAI CIRCUS
February 22, 10am and 12noon—School Performance
Astonishing athletes defy gravity and exceed their limits of human ability in this spellbinding show. Tickets are $8.50 per person. Study guide available online.
FSCJ Artist Series / 904-442-2929 / Wilson Center for the Arts, 11901 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32246 / www.fscjartistseries.org

THE MATH MANIAC SHOW
April 28, 10am and 12noon
The show that makes math fun! In his fast-paced, up-beat and highly visual demonstrations, The Math Maniac proves that learning math and fun go together naturally. Grades K-4. Cost $8.50 per person. Study guide available online at artistseriesjax.org.
FSCJ Artist Series / 904-442-2929 / Wilson Center for the Arts, 11901 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32246 / www.fscjartistseries.org

THE FROG PRINCE
October 28, 10am and 12noon
When a spoiled princess drops her golden ball into a well, a noble frog retrieves it naturally. Grades K-6. Study guide available online at www.thcenter.org.

“THE beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”
– B.B. King

THE FROZEN
April 8, 10:30am
Disney On Ice presents Frozen will perform one interactive theatre performance for school groups featuring the beloved characters of Frozen. Tickets are on sale now. A special discount is available for school groups. To receive the discount, ask for the Jax4Kids discount when you order tickets by calling 866-246-8740 select Option 3 or visit www.felddirectsales.com

THEACROSS THE SEAM
May 9, 10am and 12noon
FSCJ Artist Series / 904-442-2929 / Wilson Center for the Arts, 11901 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32246 / www.fscjartistseries.org

THE MUSICAL ADVENTURES OF FLAT STANLEY
May 9, 10am and 12noon
Stanley wants to travel the world, do something amazing, and see something no one’s ever seen before. Careful what you wish for! Grades K-4. Cost $8.50 per person. Study guide available online at artistseriesjax.org.
FSCJ Artist Series / 904-442-2929 / Wilson Center for the Arts, 11901 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32246 / www.fscjartistseries.org

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA
May 12, 10am and 12noon
A musical adventure beneath the high seas support the earth science and geography curricula, and introduces young readers to one of the most popular landmarks of world literature. Grades K-5. Study guide available online at theatreworksjax.com. Cost $8 per person. Open to schools, homeschoolers and individuals. Ages 2 and up must have a ticket. Theatreworks Jax / 904-263-3500 / Florida Theatre, 128 East Forsyth Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202 / www.theatreworksjax.com
4th Annual Jacksonville Science Festival

Interactive booths manned by students and focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) activities will be in abundance, as well as STEAM-based vendor booths, STEAM Talks and live arts performances.

BOOTH CRITERIA
Science-based: Clearly grounded in the scientific habits of mind (problem solving, reasoning, communication, and making connections.)
Doable: Deliverable at a high quality within the constraints of time and resources available.
Accessible: Engaging, inclusive, understandable to the audience

Appropriate: Jacksonville Science Festival is a family-friendly celebration and therefore all materials and activities must be appropriate for a family audience.

Wow Factor: Fun, exciting, cool, clever, experiential, and conveying the sense of awe and wonder that is at the heart of scientific discovery and achievement.

GENERAL GUIDELINES
A team of students connected to an “expert”/teacher develop, display, and provide a fun, exciting science activity that has been researched. The science behind the activity and or product is an important purpose for participating in the Jacksonville Science Festival.

TEAMS
Duval County public and private elementary, middle and high schools can have teams apply along with their own experts, as well as groups from other organizations, such as boy or girl scouts, faith based organizations, 4H, or friends and family. Cash prizes totaling $1,000 are available based on popular vote. Prizes are as followed by school level: High School $500, Middle School $300 and Elementary $200. A college scholarship of $1,000 will be awarded to a single participant (high school only).

This student-driven citywide festival showcases the knowledge, research skills & presentation abilities of the student presenters by opening doors (and minds) to STEAM education and engaging students that may believe STEAM-related opportunities are inaccessible to them.
That’s MY Job!
Education Specialist, Dana Edmonds

How long have you been an Education Specialist?
I have been a teacher for thirty years and the owner of the Tutoring Club of Jacksonville for 7 years.

Why did you choose this career?
I chose my career as a teacher because I have always enjoyed working with kids first. I knew teaching was a job that would help me to fulfill my passion. Later in my life, I still loved teaching but wanted to start my own business working in the education field. Tutoring Club was the perfect fit for me because it allowed me to still work with kids and be my own boss at the same time.

What kind of education did you get to become an Education Specialist?
It takes a four year degree to become a teacher. I received a Bachelor’s Degree in Education from the University of North Florida. They have a wonderful education program.

What are some of your responsibilities?
As a teacher and a business owner, my job consists of many things. I am responsible for assessing students to find their strengths and weaknesses. I then meet with parents and show them how their child can be successful. I work on learning plans for students. I work with and schedule tutors and I get to do lots of paperwork.

What do you like most about your job?
What I love most in my job is seeing students change their lives by making themselves better. I love getting to spend time with the students. They always make me smile. Most of all, I love watching students gain the confidence they need to be successful. It is very, very rewarding!

“Grow” Cooks Up a Great Jewish Culinary Arts Experience

The “Grow” After School Enrichment Program is offering a new course, titled “MyPalette: The Torah Edition,” teaching kids about nutrition and food from a Jewish perspective. Students learn how to choose a balanced diet of colorful whole foods, based on the USDA’s “MyPlate” visual concept. They develop a sense of appreciation for their food and its purpose, and practice the Jewish concept of mindfulness by saying blessings of gratitude before eating. They create and prepare their own original recipes that are both healthy and kosher, and treat their parents to a special dinner cooked just for them!

A hallmark of Grow courses is that kids are not simply told what to do; rather, they are given the knowledge and skills to be able to make their own good choices, and then they practice putting their new awareness into action until it comes naturally. Instead of telling kids, “Don’t eat junk food,” the goal is for them to learn to stop, think, and ask themselves, “Is this food good for me? Is this a Superfood that will power up my mitzvoth (good deeds)? Will it give me the energy I need to do more good in the world?” Kids become conscious, mindful eaters who are able to make intentional choices rather than relying on impulse or habit.

The Grow program has been thoughtfully designed by experts in nutrition and Jewish education. It combines modern food science with the timeless guidance of Torah to offer kids a well-rounded perspective on healthy, kosher eating that will benefit them for years to come.

The Grow approach to supplementary education has already produced results. Michael Ben-Avi of the Yale Child Research Center studied Grow’s first curriculum, a course to help kids learn to see another person’s perspective- a foundational skill for building positive relationships. The course was shown to have a measurable, positive influence on its participants.

“They lived what they learned and the lessons were built really well,” said Andrea Z, the parent of a Grow student. “They have become more understanding of others.”

MyPalette, Grow’s second course, continues Chabad of St. Johns County’s mission to provide effective, hands-on learning experiences that promote a message of self-growth based on Torah. For more information about “Grow”, visit www.JewishSJohnsCounty.com/Grow, call Dini Sharfstein at 904-701-4422 or email Dini@JewishSJohnsCounty.com.
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- Duval Charter School at Flagler Center
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  - FlaglerCharter.org
- Duval Charter School at Mandarin
  - K-8
  - MandarinCharter.org
- Duval Charter at Southside
  - K-8
  - SouthsideCharter.org
- Duval Charter Scholars Academy
  - K-8
  - DuvalCharter.org
- Duval Charter at Westside
  - K-8
  - WestsideCharter.org
- Duval Charter School at Baymeadows
  - K-8
  - BaymeadowsCharter.org
- Duval Charter High School at Baymeadows
  - 9-12
  - DuvalCharterHigh.org

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We are tuition-free public charter schools. Accredited by AdvancED, and proud members of the Charter Schools USA family of schools.
Strategies for Reading Non-Fiction

In last month’s column, I shared the importance of teaching your children to use strategies while reading. This month, I’m offering specific reading strategies for non-fiction texts.

Whether your children are great readers, struggling readers or somewhere in between, teaching them specific reading strategies can help them improve their reading skills.

Know Where and How to Start

Teaching your children to differentiate between fiction (imagined) and non-fiction (informative) texts is a good starting point because the two genres possess different characteristics.

Idea: Place several fiction and non-fiction books or magazines on a table. Ask your child to browse through them and then compare and contrast them. Allow your child to come up with a definition for each genre.

Leverage Their Interests

There are most likely non-fiction books written on topics of interest to your kids. Whether it’s skateboarding, crocheting, gaming or art, there are books about it. To help your children read more non-fiction texts, think about their interests. Then, put interesting books in your kids’ hands.

Idea: If your son is interested in robots, consider taking him to the children’s section (or teen section) of your local library. Browse the non-fiction section and let him pick up a few books on robotics and inventions. Then, read the books together and discuss them. You may even start building things together based on what you read.

Preview the Text

Since non-fiction texts are laid out differently than fiction texts, teaching your children to flip through a non-fiction text before reading can aid their comprehension. Previewing a text helps students predict what they will find out by reading it.

Idea: Preview a few non-fiction texts with your children. Ask them questions about what they observe. Here are some questions to get you started:

Does the book have pictures and captions? Does the book have charts or graphs? Is the book organized in chapters? Why?

Read With a Purpose

Whether the goal is to find out how to bake cupcakes from scratch (cookbook) or how old Lady Gaga was when she started playing piano (biography), setting a purpose before reading a non-fiction text is helpful. Generally, people read to either gain information or be entertained, although there are other reasons.

Idea: Read a short non-fiction text to your children. Before you read, state your purpose for reading the book. In the middle of the book, stop and state your purpose again. When you finish, tell your kids whether you feel you met your goal for reading the book. Another option is to pause while you read to share what you’re thinking.

Activate Prior Knowledge

All of the above strategies fold into activating your kids’ prior knowledge about a subject. You can do this by asking your children to make connections between what they already know about a topic and what they’re about to read on that topic. For example, my daughter rode a horse at her cousin’s house in Ocala this summer. Once home, she asked if she could check out several non-fiction books on horses from the library. Before she read the books, I reminded her of her horseback riding adventure.

Idea: Think about your children’s interests. Pick up books or download some titles on those topics. Before you share the books with your kids, ask questions about the topic of the book. Then, ask them to read the book with you. Connect the text to what your children already knows about the topic. When finished, ask your kids to summarize what they read. By doing so, you will help your children comprehend and retain what they read.

Next month, I’ll offer specific strategies for reading fiction.

What conclusions can we draw from how the book is organized?

Nancy Lee Bethea

New Student Web Site Lists Standards

CPALMS, the State of Florida’s official source for standards information and course descriptions for educators, now has a site for students.

FloridaStudents.org promises to be the source for Florida standards and student tutorials with resources from all over the web to support learning in language arts, mathematics, science, and civics. Still under construction, the site currently lists the standards for each grade level from kindergarten to 12. Tutorials designed by Florida educators in each these fields are will be included soon, it says.

CPALMS provides access to thousands of standards-aligned, free, and high-quality instructional/educational resources that have been developed specifically for the standards. It also provides 16 state-of-the-art curriculum planning and professional development apps/tools to help educators effectively implement the standards. CPALMS was built primarily for Florida’s educators but has transformed to a global resource with users from more than 200+ countries and territories around the world.

Kids Say the Funniest Things!

“Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained, and delighted.”

— Dr. Seuss

Kids really do say the funniest things! Please share your favorites with us by e-mailing your story directly to editor@jax4kids.com. One entry each month will be turned into a cartoon to be published in the next issue of Jax4Kids. We’ll send you the original cartoon as a keepsake.
15 Benefits of a STEM Education

STEM, an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math is getting a lot of attention in the world of education. Why?

1. It helps you stay current – In a technology based society, technology is forever changing. It’s also used in almost every aspect of our lives. As work places change with updated software, and office equipment and machinery becomes more touch screen STEM knowledge is vital. Keeping up with technology, not the Kardashians, is highly important.

2. It allows you to be innovative – Someone created an app that allows you to take a picture of a piece of clothing and generates similar looks throughout the web. Just think of the latest device you have in your hand or at the top of your wish list. STEM helps to transform new ideas into the best inventions.

3. You can make a difference – Building that shelter for dozens, finding that cure, inventing the best way for people to communicate, or helping a father let go of financial burdens makes a huge difference and with a STEM education you can make that happen.

4. It helps you exceed with the Arts – According to the New York Times, James Michael Leake, director of engineering graphics at the University of Illinois said that learning to make even rudimentary drawings is critical to development as an engineer. Design can help students understand how to effectively use the space within the structure.

5. Cosmetics industry is huge – Without new innovative products hitting the shelves constantly, brands such as Covergirl and L’Oreal will not stay current and may lose business. This opens a lot of new opportunities for scientists to break into this industry.

6. Promotes equality education – Women today are taking over some of the top paying jobs. STEM education helps to promote diversity and can contribute to gender equality in the workplace.

7. Prepares for college curriculum – Kids with STEM educations scored higher on the SATs.

8. Can land you a better job within the fashion industry – Technology and fashion are merging day to day. You have Google watches and Apple iwatches and with a bit of inspiration you can sell your own designs over the web with blogs. You could even create a fashion app that makes online shopping a click of a button.


10. Gives you a higher income – STEM related jobs can be financially rewarding. It is evident with a look at starting salaries in the STEM careers:
   - Biomedical engineers, $77,400
   - Financial examiners, $70,930
   - Medical scientists, except epidemiologists, $72,590.

11. Better chances at landing a job – STEM occupations are growing at 17% more than any other field, and the unemployment rate for recent graduates are less than those with liberal degrees.

12. Great for writers – Finding a job as a freelancer writer is more difficult than finding a job as a nurse assistant, unless you’re applying for medical and technical writing jobs (which are in high demand).

13. Growing field – 1 in 20 jobs are said to be STEM related by the year 2018. For example, engineering jobs will increase 11%. Besides the healthcare industry, STEM fields are expanding more quickly than any other. And according to publicschoolreview.com, the National science foundation estimates that 80% of jobs available for the years to come will require math and science skills.

14. Shapes a better world – Every election is based on choosing leaders who know how to estimate statistics and how to base decisions on sound economics. And many of the local and state polls depend on both economic and scientific knowledge.

15. Part of our daily lives – Science is the makeup we wear and the fuel that helps with transportation. For us, technology today are the smartphones, smartboards, and tablets. The engineering we benefit from is the building of homes and shelters. We all use mathematics especially when pay-day comes.

stemjobs.com

“A educating the mind without educating the heart is no education.”

- Aristotle
Things to Do

Educations

Youthspark Camp: Minecraft Hour of Code
February 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 23 & 25 at 4:30pm
The Microsoft stores host free, 90-minute camps to explore a Minecraft world through code and to take part in the global Hour of Code movement. Use blocks of code to take Steve or Alex on an adventure through a Minecraft world. You’ll use kid-friendly programming to learn how creativity and problem solving come together to make something all your own. Curriculum designed for ages 8 and older. Register today to reserve your seat. It is recommended that your student bring their own set of headphones for an optimal experience. The parent, legal guardian or authorized adult caregiver of every camp participant under 17 years of age must sign a Participation Agreement upon arrival and remain in the Microsoft store for the duration of the event. Microsoft Store / 904-503-9870 / 4791 River City Drive Suite 113, Unit W13A Jacksonville, FL 32246 / www.microsoft.com

Celebrate Children • February 6, 1pm to 4pm
Celebrate Children is free to all attendees and will consist of educational sessions and a comprehensive resource fair. In addition a KidZoomer will be available throughout the event featuring activities for children of all ages and abilities. The event is devoted to children and families with special needs. Visit website below for complete schedule and to register.
Brooks Rehab / UNF University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224 / www.brooksrehab.org

Dyslexia Affects 1 in 5 • February 11, 6pm to 7pm
Parents and caregivers will gain more insight on how dyslexic students’ minds work, how they learn differently, and strategies to assist them. Held at Jacksonville University in the Davis College of Business, First Floor Conference Room.
The Parent Academy of Duval County Public Schools promotes parental involvement and enhances student achievement. Free Parent Academy courses are offered in schools, libraries, community centers and faith-based institutions. Duval Parent Academy / Jacksonville University, 2800 University Blvd N, Jacksonville, FL 32211 / www.duvalschools.org

Little Keepers Children’s Program
February 16, 9:30am to 10:30am
The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum is starting a monthly children’s program beginning January 19th and running through May. The program will include interactive activities that will focus on science, nature, and history. The Little Keepers Children’s Program is intended for ages 3-5 years. This five part series is based on the Science of Light and inspired by the 2015 International Year of Light as declared by the United Nations. Program will meet in the breezeway next to the gift shop. Free for Lighthouse members; $5 for non-members includes admission for one parent and child. Contact Michelle Adams at 904-829-0745 x212 or madams@staugus-lighthouse.org to register. St. Augustine Lighthouse / 904-829-0745 / 81 Lighthouse Ave St Augustine, FL 32080 / www.staugus-lighthouse.com

Classical Conversations of Ponte Vedra Open House
February 16, 9am to 12noon
Classical Conversations of Ponte Vedra hosts an Open House. Come learn more about Classical Conversations Foundations Program, see a CC Foundations program in action and more. Contact Elizabeth Vandegrift at 757-576-2883 or bettvcc@icloud.com to RSVP.
Classical Conversations of Ponte Vedra / 757-576-2883 / Christ the Redeemer Church, 190 S. Roscoe Boulevard, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082 / www.classicalconversations.com

Classical Conversations of Mandarin Open House
February 19, 9am to 3pm
Classical Conversations is a classical, Christian, community dedicated to equipping parents and students. Classical Conversations of Mandarin hosts an Open House for the Foundations, Essentials, and Challenge A program. Here, you and your child can visit a class, observe the classical model, participate in learning, meet other parents, and ask questions. If interested, please contact Michele Moser by phone or email at moser.mik@gmail.com, the Director of Classical Conversations of Mandarin, for more information. Please include the ages of your children.
Classical Conversations of Mandarin / 904-536-2132 / 10538 Hood Road South, Jacksonville, FL 32257 / www.classicalconversations.com

Duval County Magnet Programs Application Deadline
February 27, 4:30pm
Applications for the 2015/2016 school year are due by February 27, no later than 4:30pm. Signed applications may be either returned by U.S. mail or hand delivered to the Duval County Public Schools Magnet Program Office. Applications are available online.
The Duval County Magnet Programs is one of the nation’s most successful magnet programs, according to the U.S. Department of Education. A wide range of specialized educational programs are available throughout elementary, middle, and high schools.
Duval County Magnet Programs / 904-390-2082 / www.duvalchoice.com

Visit Jax4Kids.com for more event listings.

How to Choose a School

It’s school choice season in Duval County! Did you recently attend the School Choice Expo? Are you researching or applying to a new school for your child?

It can be overwhelming! But there are many tools to help make the process easier.

Research
At the jaxpef.org Learning Center, you can explore up-to-date information on all public and charter schools in Duval County. What school is my child zoned to attend? How many students take and pass Advanced Placement courses at my local high school? Answers to these questions and many more resources are available at jaxpef.org/learn.

Some of the information and tools available include:
• side-by-side Comparison tool
• school grades
• school locator
• FSA and FCAT performance
• graduation rates
• enrollment demographics and contact information
• college readiness rates
• participation in advanced coursework

“This resource goes beyond school grades to give a more holistic picture of school performance,” said Trey Csar, President of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund.

Making a decision
The Jacksonville Public Education Fund and the Duval County Council of PTAs collaborated on a guide to help parents as they make choices for their children.

See below for some helpful tips and resources from the guide that can help you find the best match for you and your child.

• Visit informational websites like www.jaxpef.org/learn to find out what public school your child is zoned for and find information and academic reports on all public schools (including charters).
• Go to www.duvalchoice.com to learn about what other options are available. Every public school has a website that can be accessed through www.duvalschools.org.
• Ask for information about the application process and deadlines for magnet or choice-based public schools, and private or charter schools if they are of interest.
• Talk to your child about their interests and goals, especially rising sixth and ninth graders. Ask other parents, teachers or volunteers about their experiences at different schools too.
• Make sure to ask for a tour of the school or schools you are interested in. Don’t hesitate to ask for the information you need. If you can’t visit, call the school and ask to speak to the principal or other contact to get your questions answered.
• Be aware of application deadlines. For Duval County Public Schools, the magnet application deadline is Monday, February 29 and the choice application deadline is Monday, May 16. Charter and private schools may have different deadlines.
• Make sure you ask about school bell times and transportation options.

If you are visiting a school for a tour, here are a few questions to ask yourself:
• Try to sit in a classroom during a lesson. How are the teachers interacting with students? Are the students engaged?
• Is the administration visible? Are they willing to answer questions?
• What are the extracurricular activities and enrichment programs offered? What do they cost?
• If the school has a theme, how is that evident?
• What communication tools does the school use? How is the website? Is there a newsletter?
• How does the school help children navigate key transitions such as VPK to kindergarten, fifth to sixth grade and eighth to ninth grade?

After the visit, don’t be afraid to ask follow up questions.

If you have any questions or want more information, visit jaxpef.org or dccpta.org.

About the Jacksonville Public Education Fund
The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is an independent nonprofit organization that works to connect research with civic voice to bring about unified action in support of universally high-quality public schools for all children in Duval County. We believe that students and their families should be able to learn and choose from high-quality public education options. We’re committed to providing accurate data research, advocacy, strategic investment and community mobilization to ensure we’re powering the potential of every citizen to get involved with public education. Learn more at jaxpef.org.

Deirdre Conner
Jacksonville Public Education Fund
jaxpef.org
Survey Predicts Traits Of Future Top Coders

A recent Code School survey offers information on traits in youth that may indicate a future in computer science.

Most programmers find their interest in computer science before age 16 and carry this passion into their professional life, according to a recent survey.

A Code School survey of 2,200 coders and developers reveals some specific traits and tendencies that may predict that a youth has a future career in computer science. The survey polled current coders and software developers and asked them to recount personal traits, tendencies and preferences from their younger years.

Code School, an online learn-to-code destination, conducted its survey in July 2015 to explore behaviors in children and teens that correlate to a future in a computer science profession. The results show that most coders and software developers form hobbies and interests in computers before the age of 16, and their interest carries into their college and professional years. The study also looked at coders’ hobbies, work ethic and academic achievement during their formative years.

The Code School survey comes at a period of need in the IT industry, as well as other industries – because every industry has become software intensive.

Indeed, “Students who pursue computer science as a career will notice that 67 percent of software jobs are outside the tech industry,” said Hadi Partovi, founder of Code.org, in a FAQ of sorts about his organization. “These jobs are in every state and country. Silicon Valley struggles to hire software engineers, but so does the rest of America, and the world.”

Partovi estimates that 1.4 million programming jobs will be needed over the next decade, although analysts estimate that only about 400,000 STEM and computer science majors will graduate in the U.S. Yet, studies like the Code School survey provide information to help identify and support future programmers at an early age.

“We conducted this survey to shine a light on what future coders and developers look like at a young age so we can identify budding computer scientists and cultivate their interests and talents early on,” said Gregg Pollack, founder and CEO of Code School, in a statement. “Understanding and identifying these traits and tendencies is important in helping parents, teachers and professionals prepare kids for potential future careers in the rapidly growing computer science and technology fields.”

The study helps to create a picture of what budding coders look like during their formative years. The survey also revealed gender-specific traits that may predict a future in coding. For instance, more than half of the men polled said they go into computers at age 15 or younger, while two-thirds of women became interested in computer science at age 16 or later.

More than 83 percent of men listed computers as their top hobby growing up, with sports (61 percent) and music (59 percent) next in line. For women, music was preferred over computers at 63 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In addition, the study showed that women were less likely to drop out of college than men – 7 percent versus 14 percent. The majority of women (51 percent) received bachelor’s degrees and 30 percent completed graduate degrees, while only 42 percent of men received a bachelor’s degree and 27 percent a graduate degree.

Women also appear to focus on getting work done early, according to the survey. Women were less likely to procrastinate and more likely to turn in work on time with the best quality, while 41 percent of men admitted to waiting until the last minute to do school assignments. Boys tended to be good students – two-thirds had high school GPAs of at least 3.6 – but prone to procrastination. However, girls tended to be excellent students – 81 percent had GPAs of at least 3.6 – and be extremely conscientious about turning in assignments on time and in the best quality.

Women also are more likely to have steady middle-class incomes with 32 percent making between $50,000 and $99,999 per year, yet they are less likely than men (17 percent) to make more than $100,000 annually. Men tend to live at both extremes of the annual income scale, with one in four men earning $100,000 and one in five making less than $25,000.

"Current trends suggest that jobs in the industry will continue to grow at a faster-than-average rate through at least 2022,” Pollack said. “Parents, teachers and community leaders should look for these traits and tendencies in youth and nurture them. The world has never provided more opportunities for kids to get more involved in computers through coding boot camps, online tutorials and gamified training, and now we’re learning more about what kinds of behaviors predict a potential future in these important careers.”

Eweek.com

Seabreeze Elementary Wins National Milk Carton Contest

Jacksonville Beach’s Seabreeze Elementary School has been named the People’s Choice winner of the national “Made by Milk Carton” Construction Contest. Seabreeze won $2,500 for their giant “Whale of a Project” carton sculpture, made out of 1,524 milk cartons. The contest theme was “Animals” – with entries ranging from a life-sized bronco to a complete underwater diorama.

Evergreen Packaging, a beverage paperboard carton manufacturer, awarded prizes to 14 schools from across the country in the contest with an animals theme.

“This semester’s theme inspired some of our most impressive entries yet; the carton animals that these students created really showcased their artistic talent and creativity while encouraging the students to learn about the importance of recycling and the sustainability of cartons,” said Katie Simmons, marketing manager for Evergreen Packaging.

Each of the 156 participating teams was required to write a short essay detailing how their school would use the prize money if they won. Extra consideration was given if the prize money would be used to support eco-friendly practices. Southfield Regional students plan to use their grand prize to spruce up their school’s courtyard and pond by planting flowering trees, spring bulbs and fall blooming flowers.

Since August 2012, Evergreen Packaging has utilized the Made by Milk program to raise awareness among consumers on the benefits of paper cartons.

The next Made By Milk Construction Contest will take place in Fall 2016. For more information and to view all entries, visit www.madebymilkcontest.com.
DCPS Graduation Rates Keep Rising

As the 2015 graduation data was released by the Florida Department of Education, Duval County Public Schools continued to see increases and improvements in its own graduation rates. The district’s growth in its graduation rate outpaced the state’s average, bridging the gap between the district’s and state’s averages.

For the third consecutive year, Duval County Public Schools earned its highest graduation rate as 76.6 percent of the district’s students received diplomas. That percentage is 2.6 points higher than the district’s 2014 rate, and nearly a nine percentage point increase in the last three years (67.7 percent in 2012 to 76.6 in 2015). The district’s percentage increase is also higher than that of the state’s average. The state’s graduation rate improved just 1.7 percent from 2014 to 2015, and has only increased 3.3 percent in the last three years (74.5 percent in 2012 to 77.8 percent in 2015).

Additionally, the gap between the district’s and the state’s averages has significantly shrunk under Superintendent Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti’s leadership. When the 2012 data was released, Duval County Public Schools trailed the state graduation rate average by 6.8 percent. Under Dr. Vitti’s tutelage, the district has made strides to getting closer to the state’s graduation rate average. After being 3.5 percentage points below the state’s average in 2013, the district’s graduation rate is only 1.2 percentage points behind the state’s current average.

“Our improvement in graduation rate, and namely the narrowing of the achievement gap, illustrates the student-centric systems we have developed and implemented to ensure that all students can leave our district better prepared for life no matter what challenges they face,” said Dr. Vitti.

As impressive as the district’s overall performance has been, perhaps one of the most profound improvements was the district’s graduation rates of African-Americans. Duval County Public Schools’ African-American graduation rate of 71.1 percent is the highest among the Big 7 Florida School Districts, overtaking Miami-Dade in that category.

Additionally, that is an increase of 4.3 percentage points from just a year ago.

To get a more in-depth look at Duval County Public Schools’ 2015 graduation rate data, log on to www.duvalschools.org.
Spelling Bee Winner From Fruit Cove

Sreeniketh Vogoti, a seventh-grade student at Fruit Cove Middle School, has won the 2016 St. Johns County School District (SJSCSD) Spelling Bee held at the Fullerwood Learning Center. He won by spelling the word “reprieve” correctly. Sreeniketh is the son of Padamja and Balasubramanyam Vogoti.

It took 49 rounds for the winner to be determined. The participants were congratulated by School Board Members Beverly Slough and Kelly Barrera, Superintendent Joseph Joyner and Assistant Superintendent Martha Mickler.

WAOC 96.5 FM broadcasted the spelling bee live and streamed it on their website. Community Relations also taped the event.

The winner of the regional spelling bee will advance to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee scheduled in May in Washington, D.C.

Laurie Hays, SJSCSD program specialist for Elementary Language Arts, served as the spelling bee coordinator and the pronouncer was Linda Villadoniga, retired SJSCSD teacher. Judges for the event were Tommy Bledsoe, SJSCSD program specialist; Cheryl Freeman, director of retired and senior volunteer program; Sandy Waldeis, community representative; and Laurie Hays.

St. Johns Reads Picks Classic

The St. Johns County Public Library System has chosen Harper Lee’s novel “To Kill a Mockingbird” as the featured book for the February 2016 St. Johns Reads community-wide reading project.

This true classic is sure to be a crowd pleaser for the 11th year of the St. Johns Reads program. Events will include book discussions, films, and presentations that will touch upon the many themes covered in Lee’s classic tale.

The month will culminate with a screening of the 1962 film version of the book and an appearance by Mary Badham, the actress who played Scout in the movie, at 6 p.m. on Feb. 27 at the St. Augustine Amphitheater, 1340C A1A South. She will discuss her on-set experiences, her lifelong friendship with Gregory Peck, and the continuing impact of the novel and film.

For a copy of “To Kill a Mockingbird” and a complete schedule of events contact your local library.

Bartram Trail Stage is “Poppin”

The theater department of Bartram Trail High School will be flying this spring with their production of “Mary Poppins.” Through special arrangements with Music Theatre International, you’ll be singing and dancing in your seat to the music and lyrics by Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman.

When: March 10, 11, and 12 at 7:30 p.m. and March 12 and 13 at 2:30 p.m. A special Mary Poppins Tea Party—photo shoot with Mary and her friends, tea, cookies, and cupcakes is set for 4:30 p.m. March 13.

Where: Bartram Trail High School Auditorium, 7399 Longleaf Pine Parkway, St. Johns, FL.

Ticket Prices: $10.00 for all ages and all performances.

Mary Poppins Tea Party Tickets: $10.00 per child/student. Parents are welcome at no cost.

For advance ticket sales and tea party reservations, call: 904-547-8340, email: ava.fixed@ stjohns.k12.fl.us or go online to the Bartram Trail High School website. Remaining tickets will be sold at the auditorium box office one hour prior to each performance.

A Tribute to Coach Blue

“Give to the world the best you have and the world will give it back to you.” Coach Bernie Blue first heard this while attending a seminar in college. Since that time, he has spent over 30 years giving Allen D. Nease High School, (especially Track & Field) Landrum Middle School and St. John’s County his best. We would like to give him the world, or at least a world-class experience, to mark the occasion of his official retirement from the St. John’s County School District in 2016.

The Nease High School Golden Panther Booster Club is planning a reception and a surprise going away gift for the retiring longtime track and field coach.

A “YouCaring” campaign has been set up to check off an item on Coach Blue’s bucket list – attending the NCAA Division 1 Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon in June. The club’s goal is $3,500. They plan present this gift at the reception in May. Visit youcare.com to donate. Nease Track & Field is part of the Golden Panther Booster Club, a 501(c)3.

In addition, they are inviting friends and former students to pass along well wishes to Coach Blue via 3 avenues: on-line message; video submission; or snail mail card. Regardless of your method, please provide your full name (ladies - include maiden name) and the years you were at Nease and your event(s) if you were on Track. If not Track, then let us know your connection to Coach Blue. (Basically, we’d like a way to identify and thank you. 30 + years is a lot of athletes, colleagues, family, friends, parents, students and fans!) Post messages on YouCaring, our team Facebook page, or send to trackadmin@runnease.com. If you’d like to submit a 30 second video of well wishes, please send to trackadmin@runnease.com. If you’d like to send a card (do not include money), they will hold onto it and present it in May. Cards can be mailed directly to the Nease HS Athletic Department, 10550 Ray Road, Ponte Vedra, FL 32081, please write “FOR BLUE” on the outside of the envelope. All methods of well wishes will be compiled and presented at the reception in May.

runnease.com

Scholarships Winners Named

This year’s St. Johns County Sunshine State Scholar is Zachary Villaverde from Bartram Trail High School. He is the recipient of the annual Elaine Crutchfield Math and Science Scholarship of $100. Elaine Crutchfield worked for the school district for 29 years serving as both a math and science teacher before being named the district curriculum coordinator. Adam Snowden from Ponte Vedra High School was selected as the district alternate and is receiving a $75 scholarship. The other school nominees receiving $50 scholarships include: Jacob Posey from Creekside High School, Malavika Nair from Allen D. Nease High School, Kara Landing from Pedro Menendez High School, Philip Schnotalla from St. Augustine High School and Madalena Marselli from St. Johns Virtual School.

This year, the Elaine Crutchfield Scholarship funds are being sponsored by Matthews Design Group. The Sunshine State Scholars Recognition Program for high school students was initiated in 1997 to recognize excellence in mathematics and science. It has evolved into a program designed to recognize Florida’s top high school science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) students and recruits them to pursue their post-secondary education in Florida.

February and March Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, Feb. 5</td>
<td>Teacher Inservice Day - Student Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, Feb. 15</td>
<td>Presidents Day - Student/Teacher Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Feb. 16</td>
<td>Student /Teacher Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 17</td>
<td>Third Quarter Ends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 18</td>
<td>Teacher Planning Day-Student Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Monday, March 21-28</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday March 29</td>
<td>Classes Resume</td>
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Visit St. Johns County Schools online at http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schools/ for more information.
Volunteer for a Fair Scholarship

The Clay County Agricultural Fair is just around the corner (March 31 to April 9) and with it comes several scholarship opportunities for county students.

The Clay County Fair Association Scholarship Program is open to graduating senior students of a Clay County High School or home-schooled seniors who are associated with the following groups: 4-H, FFA, FCCLA, or Police Explorers. The recipients receive $1,000 that will be paid directly to any college or technical institution.

Graduating seniors who serve 10 hours of community service during the fair and meet the following criteria are eligible:

1. Must be a resident of Clay County or attend a Clay County High School.
2. Must be associated with one of the following Clay County groups: 4-H, FFA, FCCLA or Police Explorers.
3. Must have good school attendance — No more than 5 unexcused absences per year.
4. Must be free from disciplinary action both in school and community.
5. Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 in high school.
6. Must attend the college or technical institution to which the scholarship has been granted in the fall following high school graduation.

All service hours must be scheduled through the fair office. Call (904) 284-1615 or visit the Fair’s website, www.claycountyfair.org, for schedule and an application. Details are available online at www.claycountyfair.org and completed applications must be received at the Clay County Fair Association office by Friday, Feb. 26.

Mail to:
Clay County Fair Association
P.O. Box 1066
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Or Hand Deliver to:
2493 State Road 16 West,
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043.

Also the winner of the Miss Clay County Fair Scholarship Pageant will be awarded a scholarship.

Age Divisions: Miss Clay County Fair – 17 to 22 years old; Teen Miss Clay County Fair – 14 to 16 years old; Pre-Teen Miss Clay County Fair – 11 to 13 years old; and Jr. Miss Clay County Fair – 9 to 10 years old. There is a non-refundable entry fee of $75 for Miss and Teen Miss and $50 for Pre-Teen Miss and Jr. Miss. Application deadline is March 18.

The fair association has awarded over $142,000 in scholarships since the program began. The association will recognize this year’s scholarship winners at the annual Appreciation Luncheon on March 22.

Clay Chamber Foundation Scholarship Funds Available

Scholarship applications are being accepted online for the Clay County Chamber Foundation Scholarship Program.

This year, the Chamber Foundation will award one $2,000 scholarship and six $1,000 scholarships to high school seniors. In addition, the Clay County Bar Association will award one $1,000 scholarship to a high school senior to encourage the pursuit of continuing education in the field of business or law. Students must meet the following requirements to apply for these scholarships:

• Applicants must be United States citizens or legal residents.
• Applicants must live in Clay County.
• Applicants must be high school seniors graduating in 2016.
• Applicants may be home-schooled seniors, or may be seniors attending any public or private high school in Northeast Florida.
• Applicants must be planning to attend an accredited vocational school, community college, or college/university in the Fall/Winter of 2016.

All high school seniors are encouraged to apply regardless of academic merit or financial need status; the scholarship committee will consider all eligible students, and will base award decisions on the entire application, not just test scores, GPA, financial circumstances, etc. All applicants must apply online at http://www.claychamber.com/foundation/scholarships/

The deadline to apply is Monday, Feb. 29. If you have questions regarding the scholarship program, contact Lori Puehler Grandstaff, scholarship committee chair, via email at lorigrandstaff@gmail.com. The Clay County Chamber of Commerce is a business membership organization. Its mission is to lead, advocate and promote opportunity, economic growth and vitality in the community.

Apply for DAR Scholarships

Two graduating county seniors will be awarded a $500 scholarship from the Sophia Fleming Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Applicants must write an essay, provide a list of their awards and recognitions, and submit two letters of recommendation.

Instructions and applications are available at each high school’s guidance office. Applications are due back to Lynda Lewis, Sophia Fleming Scholarship chairman, by Feb. 22. The winners will be notified by March 28.

Students of the Quarter

Fleming Island High School students selected by their teachers in the VyStar Academy of Business and Finance, Academy of Visual and Performing Arts and the Academy of Digital Media were named “Students of the Quarter” and given a certificate of achievement by Fleming Island’s Vice-Principal Rex Knight.

Get Homework Help at Library

The Orange Park Library, 2054 Plainfield Ave., offers free homework help from 2 to 5 p.m. each Tuesday and Wednesday during the school year for Clay County students ages 6 to 12. To schedule an appointment, call the library’s circulation desk at (904) 278-4750.

February and March Calendar

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<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 21</td>
<td>Students Return to School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 25</td>
<td>Good Friday, Student/Teacher Holiday</td>
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SNEEVE: WHAT’S THE SNEEVE?

Kids get between 7 and 10 colds a year, lasting from 7 to 10 days each. That’s a lot of sneezing, sniffing and snorting. You taught your kids to cough and sneeze into their elbows, just like the Centers For Disease Control recommends. But admit it, it’s a little gross. The Sneeve™ is an absorbent, disposable little sleeve that catches the yucky stuff, keeps it from spreading, and prevents clothing from becoming a landing pad. Slightly stretchy, soft, comfortable and safe. With an antimicrobial that kills 99.9% of viruses and bacteria on contact. The Sneeve will fit most kids 3-8. The Sneeve™ sells for $9.99 for a pack of 7 and are currently available online at www.thesneeve.com. Look for Sneeves coming soon to major drug stores and retailers. For bulk orders, call 1-855-SNEEVE-1, or email Nick@TheSneeve.com.

PHONESOAP

Whatever our hands touch, our phones touch – toilet handles, door knobs, money. Those germs are transferred to our phones and phones are warm, making them a breeding ground for bacteria. The PhoneSoap Charger uses UV light to sanitize and clean your cell phone. UV-C utilizes short-wavelength ultraviolet radiation that eliminates pathogens, viruses, bacteria and others. Order online at phonesoap.com.

COZI FAMILY ORGANIZER

Cozi is a FREE, award-winning app and website designed to simplify family life. Calendars help manage the family schedule including sports practices, orthodontic appointments, business trips, carpool, school supply lists, committee meetings – all in one place. Lists help you manage the tasks that need to be done including shopping and gift lists, chores and more. Store all your recipes and quickly add ingredients to your grocery list. The family journal helps you save family milestones and everyday moments to enjoy again and share. Cozi works on any computer, phone or tablet. Get started at Cozi.com.

SIPPY SURE THE MEDICINE DISPENSING SIPPY CUP

Sippy Sure is the world’s first medicine dispensing sippy cup. Its patented design creates a spill and leak proof cup that keeps medicine and a child’s favorite drink separate until they are ready to drink. The medicine is hidden from the child’s view securely under the lid. The medicine bottle is marked with ml and tsp calibrations for easy measuring of medication.

SPORTODY

Sportody™ is the world’s largest online review network for outdoor activities. Through Sportody’s online community, adventure-seekers can find information, post photos and compare ratings for more than 80,000 providers, of 120 sport types, in 100 countries. Sportody connects adventurers directly with outdoor recreation providers.

SCHMOVIE: THE FAMILY EDITION

Come up with funny titles for made-up movies based on a film genre (determined by the roll of a die), combined with an outlandish premise (generated by flipping two cards). Each round, a Schmovie Producer awards one of nineteen different golden Schquid Trophies for his or her favorite title. The first player to collect four Schquids wins!
Alternative and Augmented Communication

All children have the right to express what they want and how they feel. But this is not always easy to do. Some children may not be able to speak clearly enough for everyone to understand them, while others may not be able to speak at all. For these children, telling people how they feel or what they want may be among the most difficult things they have to do.

Through Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) parents and caregivers can help children with communication difficulties find ways to express what they are thinking, wanting, or needing.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication is any strategy that helps a child participate and communicate better at home and at school. Some strategies may be as simple as having a child point to a picture and use a gesture or begin with some basic sign language. For example, a child might point to a picture of juice and then point to herself, telling you she wants a drink of juice. As communication develops, the number, type, and complexity of the picture symbols can be expanded. These picture symbols can be put together on a “communication board” which can begin to allow a child to tell us what they want and need, and how they feel.

Other strategies are considered more “high-tech” and are somewhat more complicated than simple picture symbol communication boards. A child can press a button or picture on a communication device that actually says a pre-programmed word or message. This is called a voice output communication aid (VOCA) and is another way AAC can help a child communicate better at school, home, and in the community. For example, a child can press pictures of herself, drink, and juice, which creates a message spoken by the computer (“I want juice”) and is easily understood by everyone.

This type of computer is used much in the same way as the picture symbol communication board, however the pictures or words are programmed into the computerized communication device. There are many different types of voice output communication aids available, and all provide different options that can meet a child’s physical, cognitive, and communication needs.

Below are examples of communication strategies that children can use. The strategies are listed from easier to more difficult:

- Communication Strategy
- Speaking words or sounds that approximate words
- Using Objects
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Sign Language
- Using photographs or symbols
- Using communication boards
- Using voice output communication aids

A child will communicate using a variety of strategies throughout her day. This is called multi-modal communication. Typically a child will want to use the fastest way to communicate her needs. For example, at home a child may use more gestures, but at school use her communication device, because the school staff does not understand her gestures as well as her parents. Multi-modal communication is always encouraged.

Source: pbs.parents.org

Things to Do

Special Needs

First Coast Autism Support Group – Guardianship and Estate Planning
February 2, 6pm - 7pm
Kris D’Esterhazy presents “Guardianship and Estate Planning” at this month’s meeting. First Coast Autism Support connects families raising youth with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or related disorder to one other so that they can share resources, discuss ideas, and support each other. They aim to be a resource for families to learn about special opportunities for their child and family in the community, the latest innovations in research, and best practices in supporting and educating youth with ASDs. Childcare is provided. Greenland Pines Elementary / 5050 Greenland Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32258 / www.firstcoastautismsupport.com

Tools for Success Family Conference
February 4, 8am - 3:15pm
The 21st Annual Tools For Success Family Conference is held at the University of North Florida’s Adam W. Herbert University Center. This conference is for and about families of children with special needs, ages birth to 22. Visit with community service providers and shop the school based enterprises in the exhibitor hall. Choose from over 30 sessions on topics including: social skills, rights and responsibilities, behavior, technology, ADHD, autism, mental health, post-secondary transition and more. Register online. FDLRS/Crown / 904-346-4601 ext. 119 / UNF Adam W. Herbert University Center, 12000 Alumni Dr, Jacksonville, FL 32224 / www.fdlrs/crown.org

Celebrate Children • February 6, 1pm - 4pm
The vision of Celebrate Children is to increase awareness of resources related to pediatric recreation, wellness, injury prevention, and support services for children with special needs. Celebrate Children is free to all attendees and will consist of two educational panel discussions and a comprehensive resource fair. A KidzKorner will be available throughout the event for youth activities geared towards children of all ages/abilities. Celebrate Children offers a unique opportunity highlighting education, awareness, networking, and community participation to improve the lives of children of all ages and abilities. Brooks YMCA / 904-230-7763 / 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224 / www.brookshealth.org

Gathering of Artists
February 11, 7pm - 9pm
February is Jewish Disability Awareness Month. Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) will be hosting a gathering of artists who will share and explain how they create their art. Student art will be on display and available for purchase. The event will be held at Jewish Family & Community Services and is open to the general public. For more information email Cindy Land at cland@jfcsjax.org.

Jewish Family & Community Services (JFCS) / 904-448-1933 / 3662 Crown Point Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257 / www.jfcsjax.org

Believe Autism Dance/Art Classes
February 13
9:30am - 3 - 4 yrs
10:30am - 5 - 12 yrs
11:30 am - 13 and up
Art rotation of 30 minutes and dance rotation of 30 minutes. Art activities will be new each week or a small art project that will be worked on week to week until complete. The dance rotation will consist of creative movement and social opportunities. Classes are taught by Crystal Thompson, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and ballet, tap, and jazz dancer. Classes cost $10 and are held at The Performers Academy. Space is limited. To RSVP call or email beleiveautism@gmail.com.
The Performers Academy / 704-277-1884 / 3674 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville, 32207 / www.believeautism.com

CARD: Two Feet Forward - ABLE Act
February 15, 5pm - 6:30pm
Presenter: Karen Prewitt, Co-chair of the Area 4 Family Care Council. The ABLE Act amends Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. The bill aims to ease financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing, and transportation. Attend this training to learn more about the ABLE Act and how to plan for your child’s financial future. Registration required. Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) / 904-633-0760 / 6271 St. Augustine Rd, Suite 1, Jacksonville, FL 32217 / www.fscj.ufl.edu/pediatrics/autism

NFSS 6th Annual Walking Tree 1 Mile Fun Walk/Run • February 27, 10am
The Walking Tree, benefitting North Florida School of Special Education, is a one mile walk/run celebrating fitness and good health. For the second year, The Walking Tree will be held amidst the trails of the beautifully wooded property on Mill Creek Road, adjacent to the school. The five acre tract has become the school’s outdoor classroom, walking trails, special event space, summer camp, parcours, and area for onsite physical therapies. The Walking Tree is open to the public with no registration fee. For more information, please contact Julie Steinkamp at jsteinkamp@northfloridaschool.org. North Florida School of Special Education / 904-724-8326 / 223 Mill Creek Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32211 / www.northfloridaschool.org

Visit Jax4Kids.com for more event listings.
Before I explain this fear I will have to introduce myself. I am a 26 year old special education teacher for children with a diversity of special needs. You would not deduct this about me upon first glance. I look like I should be camping on a mountain as opposed to in a classroom. I have not shaved in half a year and take pride in my non-traditional appearance. I would describe myself as a “beach bum”. I spend evenings and weekends playing volleyball and guitar.

My teaching style is anything but traditional yet I have seen extreme success. I have had the same students for three school years and we have become a family. I accept and love each of them. They do the same for me. Due to a combination of acceptance, wackiness and love, these children have welcomed me into their world. We communicate fully and understand one another. There is a mutual feeling of respect and understanding. It is as if we have developed our own language.

This is when the fear sets in. I often recall the thought I had my first day working with these children, “What the heck is going on?” Three years later, I understand each sentence, blink and movement. I have learned their language. Not many individuals who meet these children will have the same benefit of time to establish such a bond. Weird glances are directed at these children during community outings. Like-aged peers do not understand attempts at communication made by my students. Many adults avoid interaction because they fear they will offend somebody and don’t know the “appropriate” way to interact with a special needs child.

My fear is that I am one of the only people who will ever speak their language. My fear is that after they move on from my classroom other educators and individuals will not see the beauty and intelligence each of these children hold.

After reaching out to the parents of eight of my students, it became clear that they shared my anxiety. One father explained his fear of dying and leaving his son with autism to fend for himself. He explained his haunted vision of strangers passing his homeless son by on the street without paying him the slightest bit of attention.

This is when I became inspired to create Special Books by Special Kids. SBSK originated as an idea to create a book series in which my students explain life with a diagnosis.

Publishers did not share the same belief. I was rejected by countless companies because “There is no market for such a venture.”

Instead of becoming detracted I held a meeting with the parents of my students. I shared with them the idea of creating a blog in which we openly discuss each child’s diagnosis and include pictures. This was unprecedented yet all the parents agreed instantly. They sensed the role Special Books by Special Kids would have in erasing the stigma associated with a diagnosis.

In nine short months we have over 170,000 followers from 50 different countries. I have been on the Rachael Ray Show, ABC World News, and Nightline. Ashton Kutcher reached out to give me kudos for my work with Special Books. I have traveled the country interviewing individuals with special needs and sharing their story on our blog. I am planning international trips to collect stories from multiple continents this coming summer.

The reality is that Special Books by Special Kids is still in its infancy. Of the 170,000 only 2500 reside in Jacksonville. We can do better Jacksonville. The special needs community within our city deserves the spotlight. Join the Special Books by Special Kids family and take a few moments each day to learn about an individual with special needs in your community. Together we will build a strong and connected community where all are accepted.

You can view Special Books by Special Kids at www.facebook.com/specialbooksbyspecialkids.

Chris Ulmer
Special Education Teacher
Founder, Special Books by Special Kids
www.facebook.com/specialbooksbyspecialkids
Help for Children with a Parent with Cancer

**KTAC** or Kids Together Against Cancer is a unique nonprofit designed to help children ages 5 to 17 whose parents, grandparents or caregivers are fighting cancer.

The hardest thing to do when you are diagnosed with cancer is talk with members of your family. Especially the children. You don’t want to upset them but you know they will think something is wrong. KTAC can help. Our programs help parents provide children with coping skills needed for the cancer journey.

KTAC programs are free to the public and anyone, no matter where they are being treated, can participate.

On Tuesday February 9th at 6pm, KTAC will host a community symposium on talking with kids about a parent’s cancer. Call 904-742-2916 for more details or visit their facebook page at www.facebook.com/KTACJAX -

Kids Together Against Cancer also invites parents and their children ages 5 to 17 to their art workshops on the 4th Tuesday of each month for a fun art project and to have the opportunity to meet others facing the same challenges. Meetings are 6:00pm to 7:15pm at the Neviaser Educational Institute, 4266 Sunbeam Road, Bldg 100, Jacksonville, FL 32257.

Art workshops are open to all families who have a parent with cancer. KTAC supports children when mom or dad are facing a cancer diagnosis.

Please call 308-KTAC to register for their monthly groups or for more information visit www.ktacjax.com.

Field of Dreams Season Begins February 6th

Field of Dreams is a specially designed baseball field that allows mentally or physically handicap kids the opportunity to play baseball. To wear a uniform and play as a member of a team. A place where all our areas exceptional kids can meet on the field and play ball. What kid does not want to hear the cheering of the crowd? What kid does not want to receive a trophy? And what kid does not want the opportunity to play Americas favorite sport? At the Field of Dreams they can.

Any child that cannot typically play in standard recreational baseball can play in the FOD League. This includes any child, from age 5 up to 18 years of age (21 if still in high school), no matter his or her level of ability, who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. Major life activities as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 include caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Registration is free for the 2016 season. Generous sponsors have made it possible for FOD to purchase uniforms and pay for other league expenses such as field & facility improvements, ensuring the success of the program. Spring season games will begin with Open Day Saturday February 6, 2016.

All bats, balls, helmets and other equipment will be provided by FOD with the exception of gloves. Players will also receive a full uniform. Comfortable tennis or walking shoes are also recommended. Athletic supporters and cups are encouraged for all boys and required for any child wishing to catch. NO METAL CLEATS ARE ALLOWED on the turf field. Any type of athletic footwear, sneakers, baseball/soccer type shoes with rubber soles or medically necessary footwear prescribed by a doctor are permitted. There are no other restrictions.

The Field of Dreams is located at Aberdeen Park, 1401 Shetland Drive, St. Johns, FL 32259. To register, visit www.hometeamsonline.com.
Is Social Media Giving Your Teen a Negative Body Image?

Not too long ago, girls might have stressed about being “bikini-ready” every spring when the bathing suit magazines would hit the stands. And boys might have done a few extra pushups after seeing Wolverine’s abs. But now, thanks to photo-centric social media like Instagram, Snapchat and other messaging apps, kids are exposed to a constant drumbeat of bikini bodies, six-pack abs, and just-right hair 24/7. And it’s not just celebrities pushing idealized images of human perfection. It’s your teens’ friends posting pictures of themselves and one another for all the world to see and comment on. What’s worse, many of these moments are captured seemingly unplanned, increasing kids’ anxiety about looking “perfect” -- but effortlessly so -- at all times.

According to Common Sense Media’s body-image study, Children, Teens, Media, and Body Image, teens who are active online worry a lot about how they’re perceived. In fact, body dissatisfaction appears to be on the rise in the United States. A study by the Keep It Real Campaign found that 80 percent of 10-year-old American girls have been on a diet. Examples of negative teen body image are all over the Web. In YouTube videos, kids ask an Internet audience to tell them if they’re pretty or ugly. They rate each other on Instagram. They bare themselves and beg for feedback on formspring.me. They edit their selfies and drink in advice about how to improve their online image.

Why are teens turning to the Internet for body image validation? Well, because they can. In adolescence, self-consciousness and the need for peer-validation are at their height, and the Internet acts as a kind of “super peer,” providing a quick route to satisfying both concerns. But no one knows how all this criticism and judgment affects teens’ body image. Research on media and body image to date has focused on so-called “traditional” mainstream media -- TV, movies, music, magazines, advertising -- containing unrealistic, idealized, and stereotypical portrayals of body types. But in a world where the feedback is constant, often negative, frequently public, and interactive, it can’t be good.

Body image doesn’t just happen. It’s a complex phenomenon influenced by many factors, including parents, peers, and social contexts. But we know that media messages play a powerful role in shaping gender norms and body satisfaction.

Given that young people today are no longer only passive consumers of media -- they’re also creating and sharing peer-to-peer media messages about boys’ and girls’ appearance -- they have the tools of change in their hands. But they need guidance on how to use them. Parents are in a unique position to help their kids counteract negative messages by encouraging them to use media positively, creatively, and responsibly. And above all, to learn to value themselves as complex individuals -- not just another pretty face.

Caroline Knorr
Senior Parenting Editor
Common Sense Media
www.commonsensemedia.org

“Things to Do”

**Teens**

**SAT/ACT Classes For Teens**

**February 1, 5pm and 6:30pm**

The Friends of the Bartram Trail Library will begin offering ACT and SAT Prep Classes on Monday evenings. The ACT five class series will meet at 5pm and the SAT five class series will meet at 6:30pm. The practice exam for both classes will be Monday, February 29. Please contact the Friends of the Library at fobtl@gmail.com for registration information.

Bartram Trail Branch Library / 904-827-6960 / 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Fruit Cove, FL 32259 / www.sjclps.org

**YouthQuake Live**

**February 5, 8pm to 10pm**

YouthQuake Live features skits, live music, a life-changing message and more. The doors open at 7:30pm and the show begins at 8pm. Admission is free, but a donation is collected during the show to cover production fees, and seats can be reserved for $3 if you want to ensure that your group sits together.

YouthQuake Live / The Potters House Christian Academy, 5310 Lenox Avenue #1, Jacksonville, FL 32205 / youthquakelive.tv

**R.A.D. Nights at Rebounderz**

**February 5 - 6, 7pm to 11pm**

**February 12 - 13, 7pm to 11pm**

**February 19 - 20, 7pm to 11pm**

**February 26 - 27, 7pm to 11pm**

The Rebounderz After Dark party is held every Friday and Saturday night from 7pm to 11pm. For $30 per person, you can get 1 personal pan pizza, 1 fountain drink and your choice of: 3 Hours Black Light Jump OR Extreme Fun Bundle -- 1 Hour of Jump Time / 1 Round of Laser Tag / 1 Round of Archery Tag.

Rebounderz / 904-300-0070 / 14985 Old St. Augustine Road Jacksonville, Florida 32258 / rebounderzjacksonville.com

**Salsa/Ballroom Dancing Workshop For Teens**

**February 10, 5pm to 5:30pm**

Ages 11 and up are invited to come learn some great dancing steps at this free workshop. No advance registration. Dress comfortably. Free.

Flagler County Public Library / 2500 Palm Coast Parkway NW, Palm Coast, FL 32137 / flaglercounty.org

**Audio Explorations**

**February 17, 4pm to 5pm**

Start making your own beats and tracks, using the free web-based software at audiotool.com. Mixers, drum machines, samplers and more. No musical background required. For teens ages 12-18. Feel free to bring your own headphones.

Graham Branch Library / 2304 N. Myrtle Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32209 / jpl.coj.net

**George Crum and the Invention of Potato Chips • February 24, 3:30pm to 4pm**

February is African American History Month. Come celebrate with the library and learn about potato chip inventor George Crum. After learning about this accidental inventor, teens & tweens will get to taste test a variety of potato chips and vote on your favorite.

Jacksonville Public Library / West Regional Branch Library, 1425 Chaffee Road S, Jacksonville, FL 32221 / jpl.coj.net

**Teen Book Club**

**February 26, 3pm to 4pm**

This four week book club discusses the book The Truth, by Christina Benjamin. And, during one of the four meetings, the author will stop by! Be sure to sign up in advance to participate.

St. Johns County Public Library / Anastasia Island Branch, 124 Seagrove Main St St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080 / www.sjclps.org

**Junior Volunteer Program**

**February 29**

Tweens and teens ages 12 to 17 are invited to apply for the Junior Volunteer Program. Applications for 2016 will be available February 29 on the website and at the front desk. All applications will be due March 25. Interviews for new applicants will take place in early April. Tweens and teens work alongside Museum staff throughout the summer, sharing programs and exhibits with visitors and public program participants. A variety of positions are available, including Discovery Cart attendant, Discovery Room assistant, camp teacher’s assistant, collections assistant and more. This is also a great opportunity to learn about the “behind-the-scenes” work required to present programs and events. All junior volunteers are trained and supervised. Contact Florida Museum Volunteer Coordinator Amy Hester, 352-273-2055 or email volunteers@flmnh.ufl.edu with any questions.

Florida Museum of Natural History / 352-273-2055 / 3215 Hull Road, Gainesville, FL 32611 / www.flmnh.ufl.edu

Visit Jax4Kids.com for more event listings.

“A well-educated mind will always have more questions than answers.”
– Helen Keller

“We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn.”
– Mary Catherine Bateson
Cleaning Water Beautifully

You have probably walked right past a bioswale and not even realized that it is providing a valuable service for our community. Typically, stormwater runoff from roads, rooftops, and parking lots flows into storm drains that go directly into the St. Johns River with little or no filtration or cleaning. Bioswales use soil and native plants to remove pollution from stormwater before it enters the storm drains and our river.

In addition to cleaning water, a bioswale also provides habitat for local wildlife and beautiful scenery for the community.

In 2011 St. Johns Riverkeeper, with the help of many partners and a grant from Coca-Cola, installed Jacksonville’s first bioswale along LaSalle Street in front of the San Marco Library. Now that the plants are established, this bioswale is a thriving system, and in order to look as good as the water it cleans, the bioswale needs maintenance a couple of times a year. On February 20th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., St. Johns Riverkeeper will host a River Service Day, an opportunity for teens to earn service hours while caring for their river.

In 2016 St. Johns Riverkeeper will have monthly River Service Days for teens. Check our events page or sign up for our volunteer newsletter at www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.

Jennie Busey
Education Director
St. Johns Riverkeeper
www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org

Go Underground For Adventure

EXPLORE magnificent and beautiful caves. You will find an amazing underground world just beneath your feet!

LEARN about caves and karst systems and the work that cave scientists do.

PROTECT our national parks and the things that make caves and karst areas special.

The National Park Service is looking for young speleologists to become junior rangers. In the Junior Cave Scientist activity book, they will explore the fascinating and fragile underground world of caves, learn about the National Park System, and complete fun educational activities.

Participants who complete the booklet will earn a badge, a certificate, and the rank of Junior Cave Scientist.

The Junior Cave Scientist Program is a part of the National Park Service Junior Ranger Program. The goal of the Junior Ranger Program is to connect young people to their national parks through a variety of in-park activities that are designed to introduce them to the national park system and cultivate future generations of park stewards.

In over 200 National Park Service areas currently have Junior Ranger programs. To learn more about NPS Junior Ranger programs, visit: www.nps.gov/kids/jrRangers.cfm.

Things to Do

Nature Events

Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest
Deadline is March 1st
The Endangered Species Coalition (ESC) hosts the 2016 Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest, which is open to K-12 grade students, including those who are homeschooled or belong to a youth/ranger program. The contest is an integral part of the 11th annual Endangered Species Day on May 20, 2016. To be eligible, students’ artwork must depict a land or ocean dwelling species that either lives in or migrates through the United States and its waters, or a plant/flower that is found in the United States, and has been placed on the threatened or endangered species list. Visit the website below for complete contest rules and details. Endangered Species Coalition / www.endangered.org

Birds of a Feather Fest • February 5 – 7
With more than 125 miles of hiking, biking and walking trails, miles of coastline, varied habitats and more than 200 identified species, Flagler County is a birder’s paradise. The weekend will feature birding, workshops, presentations, kayak trips, family activities and more. Register online. Registration is $10 and will be applied automatically at checkout. Trips, classes and activities range in price; you can choose as many or as few as you’d like. Some activities are free and do not require a registration fee, but you should still register to ensure a spot. Different activities are held in various locations throughout town. City of Palm Coast / Palm Coast Community Center, 305 Palm Coast Parkway NE Palm Coast, FL 32137 / www.palmcoastgov.com

Air Potato Rodeo • February 6, 9am to 1pm
The Air Potato Rodeo is an annual park beautification day and resource management project held to help control the air potato vine (Dioscorea bulbifera) that is widespread at Ravine Gardens. Controlling this pest plant is crucial in maintaining the historic beauty of the formal gardens in the park. Air Potato wranglers will assist park staff and volunteers in the collection of the potato-like tubers in efforts to control the sprouting and spread of the vine. All ages are invited to enjoy a day of resource management fun, refreshments and community involvement. Prizes will be given for the most potatoes collected for individuals and groups. We will also have prizes for the largest potato, smallest potato and weirdest potato, as well as the most golf balls collected. Admission into the park is free to participants and the first 100 volunteers to check-in the day of the event will receive a free t-shirt. Lunch will be provided by the Friends of Ravine Gardens. Gloves, trash bags and tools will be provided. Participants should wear long sleeves and pants, as well as closed-toe shoes. Participants should bring a reusable water bottle, bug repellent and sun screen. Register by calling the park at 358-328-3721. Florida State Parks / 358-328-3721 / Ravine Gardens State Park, 1600 Twigg Street Palatka, FL 32177 / www.floridastateparks.org

Water Education Festival
February 6, 10am to 4pm
Join Jax4Kids.com, the City of Jacksonville, MOSH, and the St. Johns Riverkeeper for this Public Day at MOSH with free admission sponsored by the Environmental Protection Board of the City of Jacksonville. Guests will celebrate one of the most precious resources, the St. Johns River, as they enjoy activities, presentations and guided boat tours along the St. Johns River (first-come, first-served) from 10am to 4pm. MOSH / 904-396-MOSH / 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, FL 32207 / www.themosh.org

The Great Backyard Bird Count
February 12 – 15
The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. Everyone is welcome—beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It’s free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website. The Great Backyard Bird Count / gbbc.birdcount.org

Beach Babies Nature Camp
February 15, 8am to 12noon
Crooked River State Park hosts a Beach Babies Nature Camp for kids in grades K through 8. Children will learn about all the animals that use the local beaches for nesting. Kids will explore the beach habitat while learning about sea turtles and shore birds. Limited space, pre-registration required. Admission: $10 per student for half day or $25 for full day. Parking fee $5. Crooked River State Park / 912-882-5256 / 6222 Charlie Smith Sr. Highway St. Marys, GA 31558 / gastateparks.org
Foster a Pet

The Jacksonville Humane Society is always seeking more volunteer foster homes. Volunteer foster families help care for the animals admitted to their facility by providing temporary, in-home care to Jacksonville Humane Society animals. Fostering is a very rewarding opportunity because you get to prepare an animal for adoption into a permanent home. Plus, by taking in dogs and cats that are not ready for adoption, foster parents also permit JHS to admit more animals, allowing more pets in Jacksonville to find their forever homes.

JHS provides all items needed to care for your foster pet, including food, litter boxes with litter, leashes and collars, bedding, newspaper, food bowls, any prescribed medication and all follow-up care.

What is my responsibility?
We request that you follow all guidelines on feeding and medicating your foster pet as given to you by JHS staff. Alert us about any medical or behavioral changes in your foster pet, and keep your scheduled appointments. A Foster Parent Handbook is available online at jaxhumane.org.

How long can I foster an animal?
The length of foster care varies with the needs of the animal and your availability. Depending on those factors, we will determine which type of foster animal will work best for you. We will make every effort to ensure your foster pet’s checkups fit your schedule.

What if I fall in love with my foster pet? Can I keep it?
This is a wonderful dilemma! Please keep in mind that some of our foster animals have been available for adoption and may already have a family waiting for them. If this is not the case, we would love for your foster pet to find its forever home with a family it already knows… yours.

How do I get started?
Fill out a Foster Parent Profile, available online at jaxhumane.org then return it to JHS. A team member from their foster office will contact you regarding your profile to discuss your interests, which foster animals are currently available and when you can start.

If you have any questions, contact the foster office at foster@jaxhumane.org

FOSTER PARENTS:
 Frequently Asked Questions for New Foster Parents:

Can I be a foster parent?
Any adult with spare time and space can foster animals for JHS. Many of our foster parents are:
- Retired senior citizens
- Families learning about what type of animal they would like to adopt
- People who travel and cannot provide full-time care to a pet
- Animal lovers with extra love to give!

As with all JHS volunteer opportunities, students 16 years and older may receive service hours for foster care. Students under 18 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian’s permission.

What types of animals need foster care?
We are always seeking foster homes for:
- Underage kittens and puppies
- Nursing cats and dogs
- Ill or injured animals that may need regular medication or medical attention
- Animals who are being overlooked at the shelter and need an advocate

What pet care supplies will I need?

The new Promote-A-Pet program, funded in part by the ASPCA, empowers foster parents to serve as Special Agents to their JHS foster pet. The Special Agents will serve as ambassadors for their foster, and use a variety of marketing and networking tools to find the pet a new home. Special Agents keep their Promote-a-Pet fosters happy by sending them care packages from JHS. Promote-A-Pet is a unique event where participants can run or walk with their dog. In addition to the 5K beach run and 1-mile Fun Run, all participants will receive a souvenir tech t-shirt and race packet filled with goodies for people and pups; unlike any other runs, the top race finishers will be awarded one-of-a-kind hand-made ceramic dog bowls. Festival activities will include live music, contests, food trucks, dog demos, dogs available for adoption, activities for kids, massages, a raffle, and a silent auction.

Entry fees range from $15 to $35, and there is no extra fee for running with your dog. Saint Francis Animal Hospital / 904-674-7223 / Sea Walk Pavilion, 111st St N, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250 / www.saintfrancisanimalhospital.org

Jacksonville Pet Food Bank Food Distribution • February 6, 10am to 1pm
The Jacksonville Pet Food Bank provides about a one month supply of cat or dog food for up to 4 dogs and 5 cats per household, for those who qualify. Food will be given out on scheduled distribution days between 10am and 1pm. It is not necessary to come early and stand in line. There will be enough food for each event, and the shortest wait time is after 11am.

Qualifications:
You must meet income qualifications (Details are on the website)
You must provide proof of spay/neuter for each pet. If your pet(s) have not been spayed or neutered, those services can also be provided at no cost to you.
Please provide proof of income qualifications & photo identification
Bring container/bag for each pets food.

Pals N Paws Agility Trial
February 5, 8am to 3pm
February 6, 8am to 4pm
February 7, 8am to 3pm
The Pals N Paws Agility Trial is an AKC Trial Premium. All shows are open and free entry to the public. Show Hours for spectators: Fridays: 8am to 3pm; Saturdays: 8am to 4pm; Sundays: 8am to 3pm. Each show can differ significantly with the number of dogs entered. The show will close when the last dog runs for day. Some shows will end earlier than others; therefore, it’s best to arrive earlier in the day.
Pals and Paws Agility / Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 13611 Normandy Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32221 / www.palsandpawssagility.com

4th Annual Chariots of Fur Beach Run & Festival • February 6, 10am to 2pm
St. Francis Animal Hospital hosts the 4th Annual Chariots of Fur Beach Run. Proceeds raised from the event will benefit nonprofit St. Francis Animal Hospital. The Chariots of Fur Beach Run & Festival is a unique event where participants can run or walk with their dog. In addition to the 5K beach run and 1-mile Fun Run, all participants will receive a souvenir tech t-shirt and race packet filled with goodies for people and pups; unlike any other runs, the top race finishers will be awarded one-of-a-kind hand-made ceramic dog bowls. Festival activities will include live music, contests, food trucks, dog demos, dogs available for adoption, activities for kids, massages, a raffle, and a silent auction.
Entry fees range from $15 to $35, and there is no extra fee for running with your dog.
Saint Francis Animal Hospital / 904-674-7223 / Sea Walk Pavilion, 111st St N, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250 / www.saintfrancisanimalhospital.org

Jax Kids
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Festival • February 6, 10am to 2pm

Vetco Clinics / www.vetcoclinics.com

Things to Do

Pet Events

Please do not bring pets to the distribution
Food will only be given out on designated distribution dates

First Coast No More Homeless Pets / FCNMHP
Clinic, 6817 Norwood Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32208 / www.fcnmhp.org

Animal Reiki Complete Course
February 6, 10am to 7pm or
February 7, 10am to 7pm
Animal Reiki is an energetic connection specially adapted to pets and other animals which offers targeted pain and stress reduction techniques through light touch. Learning Animal Reiki gives you the ability to take a more active role in animal health and wellbeing by being able to understand and work with animals energetically. Your connection with your own animals will strengthen as you learn to understand each other on a deeper level. You must have taken Reiki I or be Reiki trained to take Complete Animal Reiki. This is a full day class that will go in depth into many areas of energetically working with animals. Cost is $125.
Green Lotus Studios / 904-465-0985 / 2642-2 Rosselle St Jacksonville, Fl 32204 / www.localendar.com

Vetco Affordable Vaccination Clinics
February 7
Vetco provides wellness services for dogs and cats at area Petco stores. There is no office visit fee and no appointment is needed.
February 7, 1:30pm to 3:30pm - Petco, 11900 Atlantic Boulevard, Jacksonville FL 32225
February 21, 4pm to 5pm - Petco, 950 Marsh Landing Parkway, Jacksonville, FL 32250
February 21, 1:30pm to 2:30pm - Petco, 11111 San Jose Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32223
February 21, 10:30am to 12noon - Petco, 463713 State Road 200, Yulee, FL 32097
February 7, 5pm to 6pm - Petco, 1514 County Road 220, Fleming Island, FL 32003
February 7, 10am to 12noon - Petco, 430 CBL Road 220, Fleming Island, FL 32003

Pals and Paws Agility / Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 13611 Normandy Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32221 / www.palsandpawssagility.com

Pals N Paws Agility Trial
February 5, 8am to 3pm
February 6, 8am to 4pm
February 7, 8am to 3pm
The Pals N Paws Agility Trial is an AKC Trial Premium. All shows are open and free entry to the public. Show Hours for spectators: Fridays: 8am to 3pm; Saturdays: 8am to 4pm; Sundays: 8am to 3pm. Each show can differ significantly with the number of dogs entered. The show will close when the last dog runs for day. Some shows will end earlier than others; therefore, it’s best to arrive earlier in the day.
Pals and Paws Agility / Jacksonville Equestrian Center, 13611 Normandy Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32221 / www.palsandpawssagility.com

4th Annual Chariots of Fur Beach Run & Festival • February 6, 10am to 2pm
St. Francis Animal Hospital hosts the 4th Annual Chariots of Fur Beach Run. Proceeds raised from the event will benefit nonprofit St. Francis Animal Hospital. The Chariots of Fur Beach Run & Festival is a unique event where participants can run or walk with their dog. In addition to the 5K beach run and 1-mile Fun Run, all participants will receive a souvenir tech t-shirt and race packet filled with goodies for people and pups; unlike any other runs, the top race finishers will be awarded one-of-a-kind hand-made ceramic dog bowls. Festival activities will include live music, contests, food trucks, dog demos, dogs available for adoption, activities for kids, massages, a raffle, and a silent auction.
Entry fees range from $15 to $35, and there is no extra fee for running with your dog.
Saint Francis Animal Hospital / 904-674-7223 / Sea Walk Pavilion, 111st St N, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250 / www.saintfrancisanimalhospital.org

Jax Kids
Page 29 - Jax4Kids.com • FEBRUARY 2016

Vetco Clinics / www.vetcoclinics.com

Potty Training Seminar
February 10, 10am to 10:30am
Petco offers a Potty Training Seminar for puppies or older dogs who potty in the house. The free 30-minute seminar will feature great tips to help prevent accidents.
Petco / 11900 Atlantic Boulevard, Jacksonville, FL 32225 / www.petco.com

Like Jax4Pets.com's Facebook page at facebook.com/jax4pets to find out about other events for pets.

“I feel really grateful to the people who encouraged me and helped me develop. Nobody can succeed on their own.”
– Sheryl Sandberg
#struggles
Following Jesus in a Selfie-Centered World

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Jacksonville, FL 32211
pbjax@gmail.com

Parkwood

Sunday Schedule

9:15am  Coffee/Community
9:30am  Small Group/Bible Study
11am   Worship Service
4pm  Catapult Sunday Night (grades 6-12)

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DisneyLive.com
Jacksonville Harmony Chorus, A Cappella Quartets
February 3, 6:30pm to 7:30pm
The Clay County Public Library hosts the Jacksonville Harmony Chorus, A Cappella Quartets. There will be performing in the barbershop style. No tickets are required.
Clay County Public Library System / 904-278-3722
/ Fleming Island Library Branch, 1885 Town Center Blvd. Fleming Island, FL 32003 / www.claycountygov.com

Annie
February 4, 7pm and February 5, 7pm
The Thrasher-Home Center for the Arts presents a take on the classic show, Annie. Ticket prices start at $54.
Thrasher Home Center for the Arts / 904-276-6750 / 283 College Dr, Orange Park, FL 32073 / www.thcenter.org

30th Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire
February 5, 9:30am to 3pm — School Day
February 6, 10am to 6pm
February 7, 10am to 6pm
The 30th Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire features jousting knights, artisans' booths, fortune tellers, musicians, street performers, armored knights, food and more. The Faire also offers entertainment for children. They can embark on an adventure to the royal pavilion, where they will become lords and ladies of the court of Hoggetowne, or they can enjoy camel and pony rides. Human-powered push rides will also draw crowds. There will also be games like archery and knife throwing. Faire hours are 10am to 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays, and 9:30am to 3pm on Friday. Admission is $17 for adults, $7 for children ages 5 to 17 and free for children younger than 5. School specials on Friday February 5. Tickets may be purchased at the gate.
Alachua County Fairgrounds / 352-393-8536 / 2900 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32609 / www.hoggetowne faire.com

2016 USA Curling National Championships
February 6 – February 13, 8am
The top 10 men's and top 10 women's curling teams in the country will be coming to Jacksonville for the 2016 USA Curling National Championships at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena. Single day admission is $9, plus fees; eight day passes are available for $52, plus fees.
City of Jacksonville / Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena / 300 A. Philip Randolph Blvd, Jacksonville, FL 32202 / www.coj.net

Faith Christian Academy Father Daughter Ball
February 6, 7pm to 10pm
The Annual Father Daughter Ball returns to Faith Christian Academy and is open to the public and fathers and daughters of all ages. The evening will feature live music, professional photography, and heavy hors d'oeuvres. The photos will start at 6pm. Attire is semi-formal with dance shoes. Tickets are $100 per couple and $50 for each additional daughter until Jan. 15, when prices increase to $140 per couple and $65 for each additional child. Cost includes a gift bag and memory book. Tickets are available online.
Faith Christian Academy / 904/321-2137 / The Ritch-Carton Amelia Island, 4750 Amelia Island Parkway Amelia Island, FL 32034 / www.FCAngels.com

School of the 16th Century
February 6, 9am to 4pm
From 9am to 4pm, The Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park steps back in time as the Historic Florida Militia’s Men of Menendez Beach visitors a wide array of 16th century life skills. Learn how to fire crossbows, muskets and cannon. Find out all about clothing, cooking and other domestic tasks. Learn the importance of religion by practicing a small portion of the rosary in Spanish. (Instruction in useful Spanish insults also included.) Plus, soap making, rowing, sword fighting and more. Admission to the 16th century encampment is free. Admission to the park is $15 Adults. $14 seniors. $9 Children 6 – 12. Fountain of Youth / 11 Magnolia Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084 / fypmuseum.org

Town of Orange Park’s Farmers Market
February 7, 10am to 2pm
The Town of Orange Park’s Farmers Market features produce vendors, food, barrel train rides for the kids and more.
Town of Orange Park / 904-264-2635 / Town Hall Park, 2042 Park Avenue Orange Park FL 32723 / www.townoforange park.com

Water Education Festival
Feb 6, 10am - 4pm
Join the City of Jacksonville, MOSH, and the St. Johns Riverkeeper for this Public Day at MOSH with FREE admission sponsored by the Environmental Protection Board of the City of Jacksonville. Guests will celebrate all of their most precious resources, the St. Johns River, as they enjoy activities, presentations and guided boat tours along the St. Johns River (first-come, first-served) from 10am to 4pm.
MOSH / 904-396-MOSH / 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, FL 32207 / www.themosh.org

38th Annual Jacksonville Model Train and Railroadiana Show • February 13, 9am to 5pm
The Jacksonville Model Train and Railroadiana Show returns to the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center. Admission is $8, children under 12 are free. Parking is free in the main lot only.
Prime Osborn Convention Center / 1000 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204 / jaxevents.com

Jacksonville Public Library’s Intermezzo Concert Series
February 14, 3pm
The Jacksonville Public Library hosts an Intermezzo Concert Series. The concerts are free, and reservations are not required. Free parking is available on the street and in the parking garage at Duval and Main streets with ticket validation at the library. Concerts are at 3pm. This month’s concert features Clifford Newton, trumpet, and Friends.
Jacksonville Public Library / 904-630-2353 / Main Branch Library, 303 North Laura Street, Jacksonville, FL 32202 / jaxpubliclibrary.org

Book Warehouse Sale
February 19, 4pm to 8pm — Member Night
February 20, 9am to 5pm
February 21, 12noon to 5pm — Buy two bags for $15 each, get a third bag free
The Friends of Jacksonville Public Library hosts a Book Warehouse Sale at the University Park Library. The sale starts with member-night, open to FJPL members only. Anyone who is not already a member of FJPL can pay the membership fee at the door and shop on opening night. An annual membership is $10. On Member Night, members can buy a bag of books for $12 and get a second bag free.
University Park Branch Library / 904-659-2304 / 3435 University Blvd N, Jacksonville, FL 32277 / fjpl.org

All American Air Youth Table Tennis Championship February 19, 6pm
Enjoy competitive table tennis for ages 10 – 17 at this charitable event benefitting Habitat for Humanity and Home Again St. Johns. Registration is $25 ($30 after January 17). Each player entry includes one parent ticket to event. No drop off allowed. Parent must stay with student the entire time of the Table Tennis event. Additional spectator tickets are $5 in advance ($10 at the door). Event takes place at the River House.
All American Air Charitable Foundation / River House, 179 Marine Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084 / www.aaacharitablefoundation.org

Monster Jam
February 20, 7pm
Monster Jam returns to Everbank Field on February 20. Gates open at 5pm, and the show starts at 7pm. There is a Pit Party from 1:30pm to 5pm; free Pit Passes will be available February 1 – 20, 2016 at participating Southern Ford Dealers while supplies last, or they are available for $10 at the Everbank Field box office and at Ticketmaster.com. Monster Jam ticket ranges from $10 to $150, plus fees. Tickets are $5 more on the day of the show. Everbank Field / 1 Everbank Field Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32202 / www.monster jam.com

Moscow Festival Ballet: Sleeping Beauty
February 21, 3pm
The Moscow Festival Ballet performs Sleeping Beauty at the Thrasher-Home Center for the Arts. Tickets start at $43.
Thrasher Home Center for the Arts / 904-276-6750 / 283 College Dr, Orange Park, FL 32073 / www.thcenter.org

The Acrobats of China – New Shanghai Circus
February 21, 4:30pm
The Acrobats of China – New Shanghai Circus performs on the school grounds. Tickets start at $19.20.

The Jacksonville Symphony hosts Dr. Gerson Yessin Music Series
February 22, 10am and 12noon — School Performance
February 23, 7:30pm
FSCJ Artist Series presents The Acrobats of China – New Shanghai Circus as part of their School Performance series. The show will be presented in two showings, at 10am and at 12noon. Tickets are $8.50 per person. Visit website below to download study guide.
The Jacksonville Symphony / 904-396-MOSH / 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, FL 32207 / www.theglobalsymphony.org

The Adorables of China – New Shanghai Circus
February 22, 10am and 12noon — School Performance
February 23, 7:30pm
FSCJ Artist Series presents The Adorables of China – New Shanghai Circus as part of their School Performance series. The show will be presented in two showings, at 10am and at 12noon. Tickets are $8.50 per person. Visit website below to download study guide.
The Jacksonville Symphony / 904-396-MOSH / 1025 Museum Circle, Jacksonville, FL 32207 / www.theglobalsymphony.org

The St. Augustine Art and Craft Festival is a laid back outdoor art festival. The festival will feature demonstrations, Scottish Dogs, Sheep Herding, Harps & Bodhrans, Scottish Wares, Fencing, Traditional Music, Scottish Country Dancing, Scottish Clans And Societies, Scottish Genealogy, Battle Axe Throwing, Re-Enactors, Scottish Food and more. There will also be two performances by the Disc-Connected K9’s. Tickets are $12 plus fees online in advance, or $15 at the gate. All children 10 years of age and younger are free. Parking is also free.
Northeast Florida Scottish Games / Clay County Fairgrounds, 2497 State Road 16 West, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043 / nefl games.com

Dr. Seuss’ Green Eggs and Ham
February 28, 3pm
The St. Augustine Symphony hosts Dr. Seuss’ Green Eggs and Ham as part of their Family Series. Concert starts at 3pm, with pre-concert activities starting at 2pm. Tickets are available online. Visit Jax4Kids.com for updated information and locations are accurate at time of publication; events and activities listed in this guide are subject to change without notice. Visit Jax4Kids.com for updated information and more events!
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All illustrations are artist’s concept. All dimensions are approximate. Prices, specifications, terms and conditions subject to change without notice. E & O. E. Builder CRC1330987