

TEXARKANA parent

SEPT/OCT 2024



FALL IS FOR FOOTBALL

Texarkana Gameday's impact on the sports community along with football schedules.

LOCAL CHILDREN FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES

Martti Blankenship & Sam Prewitt talk about childhood cancer.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Ledwell has created an environment for teenagers and young adults to grow and thrive within their community.



The TISD Experience



What's Missing?



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TEXARKANA

Independent School District

Highlighting Images by
Texas High Student Photographer Anna Haley
@anna.haley.photo



The fall weather is coming soon, and I am so excited for all that it brings! Sophie and I are ready for football nights, walking in the park on a cool day, and seeing all the leaves change colors. Sophie is already changing so much right before my eyes. She has grown so tall and will likely tower over me soon! It can be hard to watch our little ones grow up and become their own person, but it can also be also very rewarding. Sometimes it takes something like a leaf changing its colors, falling to the

ground, then regrowing in the spring to remind us that change can be good. I am choosing to accept flexibility in these coming months as things begin to change all around me.

This issue was truly a labor of love. I absolutely love how much of it is all about the Texarkana and surrounding communities. People are what make a community with their experiences, stories, helping hands, and open hearts. I am proud to bring you those incredible stories in every issue.

- Katie Stone, Co-Publisher

As the excitement of a new school year kicks off, we celebrate the dedication and spirit of our local teams. Extracurricular activities are such an important part of the fabric of our schools' cultures, and that culture is on full display under the "Friday Night Lights" throughout our area and the great state of Texas! At the same time, we're raising awareness about Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, highlighting the strength and resilience of young warriors battling this disease. In this issue, we're proud to bring you stories that capture the heart of our community—from the fierce competition on the football field to the courageous battles being fought by children and their families. Join us as we honor the heroes, both on the field and in the fight for health, and remind ourselves of the importance of coming together as a community in times of celebration and challenge.

-Ben King, Co-Publisher

ON THE COVER: The Smith Family

L-R Back: Stella, Jennifer, Morgan
L-R Front: Will, Walker

Publisher's Page

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**Have a story suggestion? Email us at
publisher@texarkanaparent.com**

September/October Events

EVERY SUNDAY

Board Game Sunday presented by MeepleCity Games

2 pm-5 pm | 1835 Robison Rd.,
Texarkana, TX.

Get ready for a unique night of meeting new friends, community, and lots of game fun! Feel free to bring your own favorite games from home or choose from their ever-growing boardgame library! No registration required!

SEPTEMBER 20

Lunch Fundraiser benefitting HandsON Texarkana

\$10 per plate
11 am-1 pm

Asher Point Independent Living | 5414
Cownhorn Creek Rd.

Asher Point Independent Living & Concho Hearts Hospice are teaming up to raise money for HandsOn Texarkana. This organization serves as Texarkana's Volunteer Hub while providing meaningful services to their local community. Programs include: youth volunteerism, parenting classes, senior transportation & pantry delivery, and disaster preparedness. This fundraiser will help provide needed resources for these programs. To donate directly to HandsON Texarkana, visit their website at www.handsontexarkana.org.

SEPTEMBER 24- OCTOBER 29

Blacksmithing with Jerome LeGrand- Session 1

612 S. Leila Street, Texarkana, TX

Texarkana Regional Arts & Humanities Council will be hosting a class for blacksmithing lessons. Registration is required for this course and has a

six-person limit. For more information about adult classes, please email marcusz@trahc.org or call 903-792-8681. Learn more and register at trahc.org.

SEPTEMBER 28

Walnut Church of Christ presents Arts & Crafts Market

9 am-3pm | 2720 Moores Lane, Texarkana, TX.

Get ready for the 2nd Annual Arts & Crafts Market. There is something for everyone! Farmer's Market, Man Cave, Decor n More, Pampered Pets, Christmas Corner, and so much more. Come see the free car show. Grab a bite to eat at the cafe or a coffee/tea from the Brew Hut. All proceeds benefit local outreach ministries.

SEPTEMBER 29

Healthy Kids Running Series

6 pm-10 pm | Spring Lake Park, Texarkana, TX.

A national, inclusive, fun youth running program led by dedicated, local Coordinators, where all kids celebrate their success and develop an active healthy lifestyle.

Register online at www.runsignup.com.

OCTOBER 1

National Night Out

National Night Out (NNO) enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a true sense of community. Find your city's NNO below! Don't see your community listed? Call City Hall to find your NNO!

> **Texarkana, TX:** Host your own NNO in your neighborhood. Visit

www.texarkanapolice.net to register your event!

> **Texarkana, AR:** Host your own NNO in your neighborhood. Contact Kristen Schultz at kristen.schultz@txkusa.org to share the details!

> **Wake Village, TX:** Hosted at King Park from 5:30 pm- 8 :00pm

OCTOBER 5

Pink Out Sneaker Ball

\$60

6 pm-10 pm

Silvermoon on Broad | 217 W. Broad St.
Texarkana, TX.

This fundraiser benefits The Tough Kookie Foundation. Wear your best ballroom attire, but ditch those heels and wear your favorite sneakers! Tickets can be purchased online at www.toughkookie.org.

OCTOBER 5

Jeans & Bling 2024

7 p.m. | Texarkana Convention Center,
Texarkana, Texas.

This event will feature a STUDIO 54 disco theme and will include a Celebrity Lip Sync Contest, Live Dance Music, Buffet Dinner, Live & Silent Auctions, and Trip and Room Makeover Raffles. All money raised will benefit the Hospice of Texarkana Inpatient Care Center, the area's only free-standing hospice inpatient care center. For more information about sponsorships, donating auction items, or tickets please contact Leigh Davis at 903-794-4263. Learn more at hospiceoftexarkana.com/jeans-and-bling.

OCTOBER 6

Rhea Lana's of Texarkana Family Shopping Event

12 p.m. | 2400 Richamond Rd, Texarkana, Texas.

Rhea Lana's of Texarkana is hosting a Family Shopping Event! The key to scoring the BEST deals is shopping early! This event will have all the things you need to get your children and teens set for the Fall and Winter! Shop 40,000 items all at once and save 60-90% off retail prices! Since each item is inspected you can rely on us for HIGH-QUALITY children's clothing and items at unbeatable prices! We accept Cash and Credit (Master-Card and Visa). Kids are expensive and life is hectic! Rhea Lana's of Texarkana is the answer for busy and savvy moms like you!

OCTOBER 12

Pickeball Fundraiser benefiting 2025 Texas High Prom

8:30 am | Ages 13-39 | \$40 per team
Southwest Center, 3222 W 7th St, Texarkana, Texas.

This event is being hosted by the Texas High Seniors will take place on October 12, 2024. Check in starts at 8:30 am and tourney begins at 9:00 am. Players must bring their own paddles and outside balls. Register online at: www.mycheddarup.com/c/pickle-ball-tournament-34037

OCTOBER 25

Beetlejuice: A Strange & Unusual Dinner

presented by Cafe Lucille
7:00 pm | 306 Main St, Texarkana, TX
Cafe Lucille is turning their courtyard into a Tim Burton-inspired oasis.

Their team is building life-size props & making sure that customers experience only the best in Texarkana. There will be incredible photo opportunities and the dinner menu will be announced soon. You're not going to want to miss this so SAVE THE DATE! Visit www.cafelucilletxk.com for more information.

OCTOBER 26

Perot Theatre presents Jay Leno

Tickets start at \$77 | VIP \$297
7:30 pm | 221 Main St, Texarkana, TX

The Perot Theatre is pleased to announce the engagement of acclaimed TV late night show host, admired stand-up comedian, best-selling children's book author, much-in-demand corporate speaker, TV and movie voice-over artist, pioneering car builder, collector, and mechanic, and philanthropist...Jay Leno for one show only on Saturday, October 26, 2024. This event is in conjunction with the Four States Auto Museum's Fall Car Show being held on Friday and Saturday, October 25th and 26th, 2024. This is a charity event benefitting the Perot Theatre renovation efforts. Purchase tickets online at www.perottheatre.org.

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KEEPING THE GAME CLOSE TO HOME

BY: KATIE STONE

Texarkana Gameday has become a household name in our community. I remember when I first heard that the local football games were being broadcasted live. Seems like it was yesterday! It was such a new and innovative connection from high school football fields to families sitting at home. Then the pandemic hit and the whole world stopped.

Entrepreneur Morgan Smith has always had a love of sports. Being involved in local games had become a hobby for him. He never thought it would one day turn into the small business he operates today. In July of 2019, Morgan had this idea so he made a few calls and asked "Is this a stupid idea?" He was met with an abundance of positivity and support.

Red River Lumber partnered with Morgan in creating a set for Texarkana Gameday. "They just gave it to us. That's when I knew I had to see this through," he said during an interview with entrepreneur and podcaster, Joseph Peel. "Looking back on it now, the pre-game shows weren't that great but it wasn't about us. It was about the kids. It was about getting them on the show to talk and be heard."

Morgan credits Dr. Matt Young with Texarkana Emergency Center & Hospital and Joe Nichols with State Bank for a great deal of support during this start up. "They

have been the pillars for us and really helped us grow," Morgan said. "We would not be here today if not for them." He has a great deal of pride when he talks about his team and the hard work it has taken to get to this point. Morgan's family has played a huge role in this endeavor. His wife, Jennifer, and children, Stella, Walker, and Will have been a great help in supporting this from day one.

When the pandemic hit, no one knew what would come of the daily things that made up a life. It was a challenging time for everyone, but the Texarkana Gameday team knew this had to keep going. They worked even harder to stay safe and bring live updates to families back home who couldn't be at games. They worked closely with local school administration leaders to ensure that every game, live stream, and interview was a success. Texarkana Gameday had set the standard for commitment to their community and created unity for all local families during a truly unpredictable time in history.

However this isn't the only endeavor that Morgan, his

family, and his team operate for their surrounding communities. Texarkana Marketing, Longview Gameday, and Phone Pros of Texarkana are also successful. Texarkana Marketing teams up with Texarkana Gameday with a great deal of time and talent to getting incredible photos in the studio and on the field. "We share those photos with everyone in the community and we don't charge the athletes for them either," Morgan said. The schools also involve their Audio & Visual classes to be a part of Texarkana Gameday. Students in Liberty- Eylau TV, Tiger Vision, and PGTV, and Rabbit TV help make the videography for Texarkana Gameday.

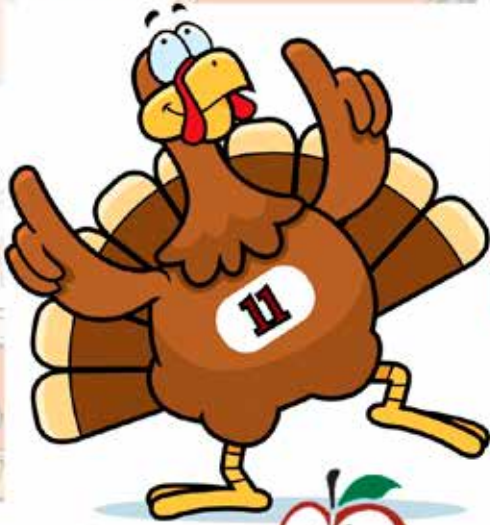
"So many people think we are a big company," Morgan said. "But it is just a few paid staff members, dedicated interns, and local community members coming together to make this happen."



August 20, 2019- THE BEGINNING OF TEXARKANA GAMEDAY AND THE FIRST SET RED RIVER LUMBER BUILT FOR THEM. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

11TH ANNUAL TURKEY TROT 5K

"WILL RUN FOR PIE!"



THANKSGIVING DAY
NOVEMBER 28, 2024
SPRING LAKE PARK

COMMUNITY
HealthCORE
FOUNDATION

REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 7:30 AM
RACE BEGINS AT 8:30AM

[HTTPS://RUNSIGNUP.COM/RACE/TX/TEXARKANA/THANKSGIVINGDAYTURKEYTROTTEXARKANA](https://runsignup.com/race/tx/TEXARKANA/THANKSGIVINGDAYTURKEYTROTTEXARKANA)

MORE THAN A GAME

TEXARKANA



GAME DAY

MORE THAN A GAME



Texarkana, TX.
6004 Richmond Rd.

Fouke, AR.
204 Attaway Ln.

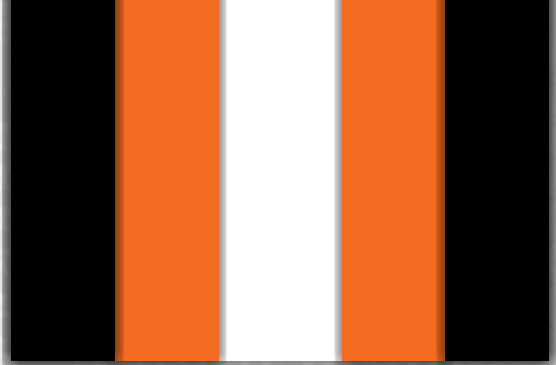
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Amanda Gainey, Owner





TEXAS HIGH TIGERS

8/29	Tyler Legacy	Home	7:00
9/6	Liberty Christian	Away	7:00
9/13	Midlothian Heritage	Away	7:00
9/20	Fayetteville	Away	7:00
9/27	Hallsville	Home	7:30
10/4	Whitehouse	Away	7:30
10/11	Marshall	Home	7:30
10/18	Mt. Pleasant	Away	7:30
11/1	Jacksonville	Home	7:30
11/8	Nacogdoches	Away	7:30

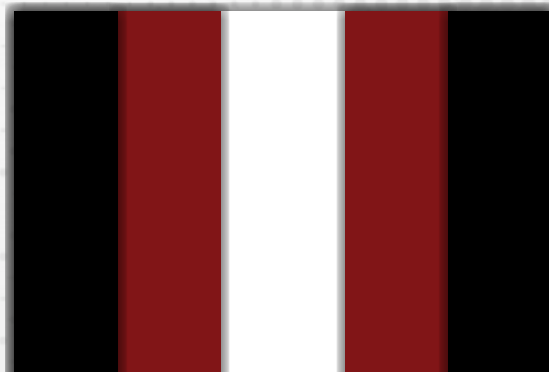


2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

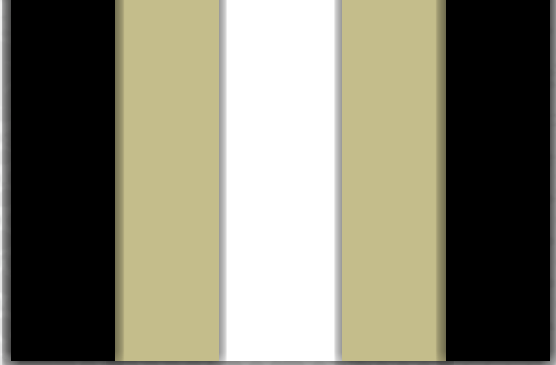


8/30	Pittsburg	Away	6:00
9/6	Henderson	Away	7:30
9/13	Carthage	Home	7:30
9/20	Bullard	Home	7:00
10/4	Tatum	Home	7:00
10/11	Gladewater	Away	7:00
10/18	Atlanta	Home	7:00
10/25	White Oak	Away	7:00
11/1	Jefferson	Home	7:00
11/8	Sabine	Away	7:30

LIBERTY EYLAU LEOPARDS



DESIGNED BY TXK GAMEDAY



PLEASANT GROVE HAWKS

8/30	Atlanta	Away	7:30
9/6	Paris	Away	7:30
9/13	Daingerfield	Home	7:30
9/20	Kilgore	Away	7:30
9/27	Sunnyvale	Home	7:00
10/11	North Lamar	Away	7:00
10/18	Spring Hill	Away	7:30
10/25	Gilmer	Home	7:30
11/1	Pittsburg	Away	7:00
11/8	Van	Home	7:30

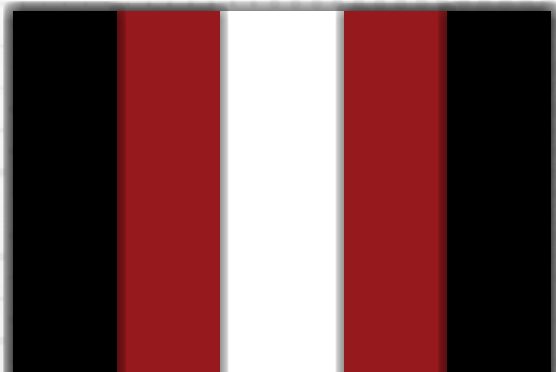


2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



8/13	Red/White	Home	6:00
8/20	Ashdown	Away	7:30
8/30	Catholic	Home	7:00
9/6	Morrilton	Away	7:00
9/13	El Dorado	Home	7:00
9/27	Magnolia	Away	7:00
10/4	Camden	Home	7:00
10/11	Lakeside	Away	7:00
10/18	Parkview	Home	7:00
10/25	Hot Springs	Home	7:00
11/1	Hope	Away	7:00
11/7	DeQueen	Home	7:00

ARKANSAS HIGH RAZORBACKS



2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



MAUD HIGH CARDINALS

09/06	WINNSBORO	HOME	7:30
09/13	PEWITT	AWAY	7:30
09/20	NEW DIANA	HOME	7:30
09/27	DAINGERFIELD	HOME	7:30
10/04	NEW BOSTON	AWAY	7:30
10/18	DEKALB	HOME	7:30
10/25	QUEEN CITY	AWAY	7:30
11/01	HOOKS	HOME	7:30
11/08	HUGHES SPRINGS	AWAY	7:30

REDWATER HIGH DRAGONS



09/06	ELYSIAN FIELDS	AWAY	7:30
09/13	MT. ENTERPRISE	HOME	7:30
09/20	OVERTON	AWAY	7:00
09/27	DETROIT	AWAY	7:00
10/04	CARKSVILLE	HOME	7:30
10/11	BOWIE	AWAY	7:00
10/25	CELESTE	HOME	7:30
11/01	CUMBY	AWAY	7:00
11/08	LINDEN KILDARE	HOME	7:30

2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/06	SHELBYVILLE	AWAY	7:00
09/13	ATLANTA	AWAY	7:00
09/20	GCHS	AWAY	7:00
09/27	LCCHS	HOME	7:00
10/04	REDWATER	HOME	7:30
10/11	DEKALB	AWAY	7:30
10/18	QUEEN CITY	HOME	7:30
10/25	HOOKS	AWAY	7:30
11/01	HUGHES SPRINGS	HOME	7:30
11/08	DAINGERFIELD	AWAY	7:30



HOOKS HIGH HORNETS

NEW BOSTON HIGH LIONS



09/06	ATLANTA	HOME	7:30
09/20	WINNSBORO	AWAY	7:30
09/27	QUEEN CITY	AWAY	7:30
10/04	OCPHS	HOME	7:00
10/11	HUGHES SPRINGS	HOME	7:30
10/18	DAINGERFIELD	HOME	7:30
10/25	NEW BOSTON	HOME	7:30
11/01	REDWATER	AWAY	7:30
11/08	DEKALB	HOME	7:30

2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE



QUEEN CITY HIGH BULLDOGS

09/06	HOOKS	AWAY	7:30
09/13	NEW BOSTON	HOME	7:00
09/20	MT. VERNON	AWAY	7:00
09/27	WHITE OAK	HOME	7:30
10/04	JEFFERSON	AWAY	7:00
10/11	SABINE	HOME	7:00
10/18	LIBERTY EYLAU	AWAY	7:00
10/25	TATUM	HOME	7:00
11/01	GLADEWATER	AWAY	7:00

09/06	HARLETON	AWAY	7:30
09/13	ELYSIAN FIELDS	HOME	7:30
09/20	WHITE OAK	HOME	7:30
09/27	HOOKS	HOME	7:30
10/04	HUGHES SPRINGS	AWAY	7:30
10/11	DAINGERFIELD	HOME	7:30
10/18	NEW BOSTON	AWAY	7:30
10/25	REDWATER	HOME	7:30
11/01	DEKALB	AWAY	7:30

ATLANTA HIGH RABBITS



2024 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

09/06	MILLS UNIV. STUDIES	AWAY	7:00
09/13	HOPE	AWAY	7:30
09/20	IDABEL	AWAY	7:30
09/27	HARMONY GROVE	HOME	7:00
10/04	GENOA CENTRAL	AWAY	7:00
10/11	MALVERN	AWAY	7:00
10/18	NASHVILLE	HOME	7:00
10/25	ARKADELPHIA	HOME	7:00
11/01	BAUXITE	AWAY	7:00
11/08	FOUNTAIN LAKE	AWAY	7:00



HOPE HIGH BOBCATS

ASHDOWN HIGH PANTHERS



09/06	NASHVILLE	HOME	7:30
09/13	ASHDOWN	HOME	7:30
09/20	PRESCOTT	AWAY	7:00
09/27	DE QUEEN	AWAY	7:00
10/04	HOT SPRINGS	HOME	7:00
10/11	PARKVIEW	AWAY	7:00
10/18	LAKESIDE	HOME	7:00
10/25	CAMDEN FAIRVIEW	HOME	7:00
11/01	ARKANSAS	HOME	7:00
11/08	MAGNOLIA	HOME	7:00

Fun Fall Activities for Seniors

BY: BEN KING



Parents and kids spending quality time together isn't just for young kids and young parents. Older kids and their senior parents can get just as much enjoyment out of quality time together. As the summer and the heat winds down, the crispness of the fall air makes it a perfect time to find opportunities to do some activities with your senior parents. Here are some ideas for some fun activities to spend some time together and keep your parents active.

Take time to enjoy the beauty of fall.

Fall is such a beautiful time of year! Consider a drive from Texarkana to Hot Springs to Petit Jean State Park to look at the beautiful fall colors. The drive is beautiful, the stops along the way great, and the time together will be priceless. If something like that is a little too ambitious or not possible with your aging parent, consider a shorter trip to the city park or nearby state park. If your loved one is homebound and cannot get out, take some pictures of local spots where the foliage is beautiful and share those. Maybe it will bring back some great memories. Or perhaps go outside and bring some leaves to them to share the joy of the season.

Pumpkin Carving

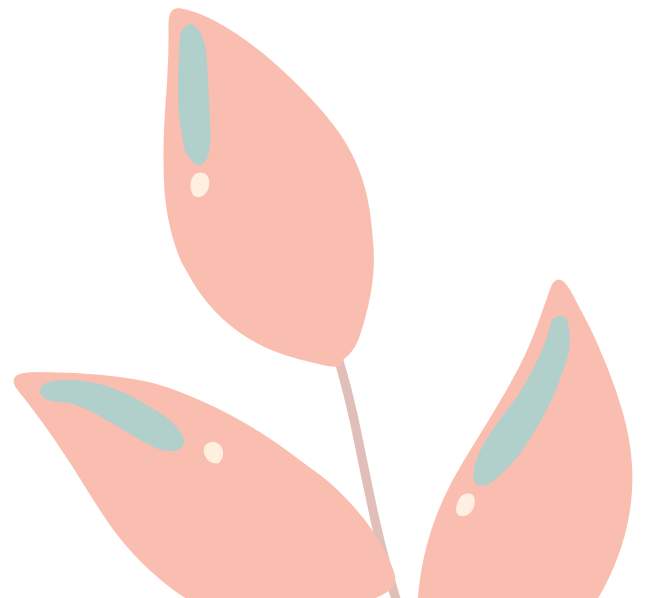
A great family tradition is pumpkin carving! If your parent can get out, go to a pumpkin patch or store to pick out the perfect pumpkin. Breaking out the knives to start carving up pumpkins and getting all of the seeds out may be more than our parents can handle in some circumstances. If so, decorating with paint, ribbon, beads, and other things from a craft store might be the perfect solution – and the pumpkin will last

longer as well. The main thing is to find a way for your parent to participate!

Cooking up some fun

Who doesn't love sweets and yummy food? Getting in the kitchen to bake some cookies, brownies, or cupcakes might be just the right thing. Mixing up ingredients can get your parents moving. Decorating those treats can be fun too! Who cares what the final result looks like. None of my cookies ever turn out looking the way I envisioned. Other fall recipes are great as well if sweets are not your thing. Seasonal fruits and vegetables can be used to make some great meals. Maybe it tastes great, or maybe the recipe needs to be tweaked for the next time.

No matter what you decide to do, the goal is time together! A fun activity is always an added bonus that will bring a smile to everyone's face! These types of small things certainly help keep our parents active and engaged. Physical, mental, and emotional health are so important to keep at the forefront of our minds for our parents.





Class of '24

GO
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Ben King

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** Ben is not available to meet on Friday nights due to a scheduling conflict*

Martti (McMurry)

Blankenship was first diagnosed with cancer on October 3, 2009, at the age of 15. She had stage III fibrolamellar hepatocellular carcinoma, which is a rare form of liver cancer according to www.cancer.gov because it forms in healthy livers. It often forms in teenagers and adults under 40 years old.

After a devastating phone call from her doctor, Martti's dad, Tony McMurry, delivered the news. "Surprisingly I did not cry. I remember saying something like, 'Okay, so now what do we do?'" Martti remembered being more worried about missing school than the events that would soon take place. As a sophomore at Texas High, she was involved with marching band and the dance/drill team. She didn't want to miss any games or practices, but it was best for her to stay home during her treatments.

Shortly after her diagnosis, she had surgery to remove her gall bladder and 60% of her liver. She began chemotherapy which made her feel sick a lot, but she looked at the time in the hospital with her dad by her side as a silver lining. "My dad and I spent a lot of the time in the hospital watching our favorite TV show, Friends." She struggled with retaining friends from school during this time, too. She felt like it may have been hard for other kids to understand what

she was going through. "Maybe they just did not know how to interact with me. However, the amount of people I gained support from during that time grew tenfold," Martti remembered. She went into remission in February 2010.

Shortly after that, Martti moved to Killeen, Texas to live with her mother, Kristen Edwards. She continued to live cancer free. In September 2010, she started dating Zach Blankenship not knowing that in just one short month she would receive another heartbreaking diagnosis.

Her cancer had relapsed, but this time it was stage IV. She knew what the road ahead had in store for her. She underwent more chemo, and another surgery to remove the tumors located in her abdomen followed by chemo again. The treatment during her second diagnosis was more difficult

than the first. It took a toll on her mentally, emotionally, and physically in a completely different way than the first time. "I was scared because I knew what I had to go through again. I had just grown my hair out long enough to not have to wear a hat or a wig," Martti said. And this time I had a boyfriend, so I did not know how he would react."

At 16 years old, Zach stood by Martti's side through it all. During this round of treatment, she received a portable chemo pump that she kept in a little purse. I was able to spend more time with Zach outside of a hospital. In July of the following year, Martti was once again in remission. She has been cancer free ever since.

Two years ago Martti decided to give back to the cancer

community by volunteering at Camp Dream Catcher, a camp through Baylor Scott & White Hospital in Temple, TX. "It is a week-long camp for kids with cancer and

their siblings. The kids can just be kids," Martti said. "They get to do things they would not usually be able to do like a high-ropes course, horseback riding, and zip lining." Martti's knows first hand how those kids at Camp Dream Catcher feel and that makes being their



advocate a truly rewarding experience.

Although it has been 13 years since she had cancer, Martti continues to have yearly scans for her own peace of mind. "Even though it was the toughest time of my life, I would not change anything because it has made me the fighter and hard worker that I am today."

Martti has a little advice for any child going through cancer and the parents who stand beside them. "Talk about your hopes and fears, whether it is with your parents or close friends. Find humor in whatever you can because laughter really is the best medicine. Hug your parents often because even though they might not show it, they are scared too. Always remember you are not alone, so lean on your loved ones during the times you are not able to stand on your own. Always keep fighting. You are strong."

And for the parents: "You will be focused on your child's health and doctor's appointments, but remember they are kids and they want to feel as normal as possible. Let their little fingers get dirty and let them paint or play in

the makeup, even if you just disinfected the counters 50 times. Let them eat whatever they feel like eating because a lot of the time, they may not be able to keep anything down, so let them enjoy it. If they are homebound, let them call their friends on the phone because they might be missing out on big moments like a homecoming dance, games, dance competitions, or their senior prom. Let them enjoy as many of the big and little moments as possible. But most importantly, take care of yourselves too."



Photo Left: Martti & Zach when they were 16 years old.

Photo Bottom: Martti & Zach Blankenship with their son, Luka in 2024. (Submitted Photos)



Photo Bottom; front left: Martti and other volunteers welcome kids onto the bus for Camp Dreamcatcher in Summer 2024! (Submitted Photo)



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BY: KATIE STONE

Senior year of high school is always an exciting adventure, but for Sam Prewitt it is truly a celebration.

Sam was only 14 years old when he was diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia or ALL for short. His form of leukemia was specific to the t-cells, known as T-ALL. According to www.healthline.com T-ALL is a subcategory of ALL. "It primarily affects early forms of cells that become T-cells. T cells are a type of white blood cell that attacks foreign invaders and produces cytokines that activate other parts of your immune system." The bone marrow and thymus make blood stem cells (immature cells) that become mature blood cells over time. A blood stem cell may become a myeloid stem cell or a lymphoid stem cell. In Sam's case, the t-cells did not mature correctly and collected in the thymus which caused swelling in his thymus. This caused the thymus to push on the heart.

Sam's pediatrician, Annie Baker, recognized there was a problem and recommended they go immediately to Dallas for a specialized diagnosis at Children's Medical Center. That is when Sam received his diagnosis and started treatment. Sam and his family did not let this diagnosis define his future. "I wasn't worried at first. I didn't really know much about leukemia, so it was easy to stay positive as I was learning," Sam said. His parents, Cliff & Lindsey, credit their faith in knowing that everything will be okay to having a strong faith in God.

His first treatment consisted of steroid injections and was immediately followed by chemotherapy.

The steroids shrunk the mass considerably. Lindsey and her son lived at the hospital for a month. Sam finished his 8th grade year as a Red Lick student remotely as well as his freshman year of high school at Texas High. It was important that he started the intense chemotherapy as soon as possible and continued for 25 days.



Sam during the first few months of therapy at Children's Medical Center in Dallas, TX.
(Submitted Photo)

Once the treatment was complete, he received a report of complete remission. However, Sam wasn't out of the woods just yet. He would require maintenance chemotherapy for 3 years.

Staying in the hospital for a month can really take a toll on a kid's life, but Sam was able to stay in touch with a lot of his friends by playing Xbox. "My friends didn't really understand what was going on with me, but they were always asking me how I was doing," Sam said. "Plus I got to play Xbox with them while I was at the hospital so that was nice." The Prewitt family received a lot of support from their friends, family, and community alike. "It means a lot to know that people were asking about me, and even donating money to help with the costs of everything," Sam said.

Sam recently rang the bell signifying the



Sam rings the bell after finishing his 3 year long chemotherapy regime in August 2024.
(Submitted Photo)

end of his chemotherapy and he is so excited to see what the next chapter holds. "I am so excited to not have to worry about my port anymore," Sam said. "Now I can get into the water without worrying about my port." Now that the chemotherapy is finished, Sam will have a different treatment plan for maintenance which includes monthly lab draws for a year and a half, then every two months. He will also start seeing an Oncologist that specializes in his type of cancer in adults instead of pediatrics, followed by an echo cardiogram of his heart every five years to ensure that the chemotherapy hasn't caused any long term damage.

Recently Sam and his family participated in the Tough Kookie Foundation's First Annual Yellow Pedal Out Childhood Cancer. Participants could ride their bikes on a specific course to bring awareness and raise funds for a world without cancer. Sam's friends and family supported him during his bike ride of about one mile. Sam is set to graduate high school in May of 2025. He plans to pursue a career in engineering.

Lindsey and Cliff consider themselves incredibly blessed for both of their sons and how their last few years have played out. "God has been so good to us," Lindsey said.



Above Photo: The Prewitt Family spending time together hunting. Cliff, Carter, and Sam with mom, Lindsey in the front. (Submitted Photo)

Below Photo: Carter, Lindsey, Cliff, and Sam pose for a family snapshot.



TOUGH KOOKIE FOUNDATION

CHILDHOOD CANCER

- FREE CARE PACKAGES
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- FOOD ASSISTANCE
- FREE SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS
- FREE GRADUATION SCHOLARSHIP
- CONNECTIONS WITH ANGEL FLIGHT



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JIMMY "JD" SMITH

A cool kid making a difference one foot at a time.

By: JD & mom, Kenda Watson



HOW OLD ARE YOU, JD?

7 years old

HAVE YOU LIKED HAVING LONG HAIR?

Kind of.

IT IS HARD TO TAKE CARE OF?

Yes!

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GETTING IT CUT?

I feel amazing, great, and awesome, and excited.

DO YOU THINK YOU WILL TRY TO GROW IT OUT AGAIN?

Yes!

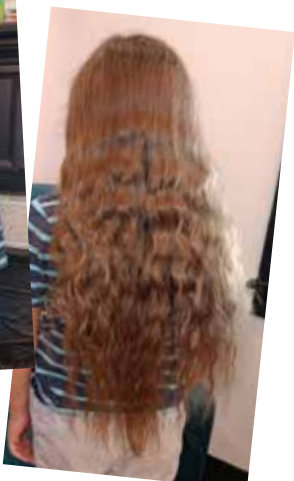
yes!

WHY DO YOU WANT TO DONATE YOUR HAIR?

So, I could help families in need.

WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA TO DONATE IT?

I got the idea from..... I am not sure. I saw a YouTube video about a fundraiser for cancer and it inspired me to continue growing my hair out to donate.



WAS THERE ANY PARTICULAR REASON FOR LETTING HIS HAIR GROW, KENDA?

No. He has gorgeous hair, so is dad and I decided to let it grow out when he was little.

HOW DOES JD LIKE HAVING LONG HAIR?

JD has loved his long hair and always enjoyed talking to people about it.

WHAT MADE YOU THINK TO DONATE IT?

It was completely his idea to donate it. He wanted to ensure that it would go to someone it would benefit and he was adamant that he didn't want the child that received it to have to pay for it.

WHERE DID YOU DECIDE TO DONATE IT?

After talking with friend and family we went with Wigs for Kids.

JD Smith donated 12 inches of hair to Wigs for Kids with the help of his family and Haylee Mudford at Fringe Salon and Beauty House In Texarkana, TX.

DOES HE HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CARING FOR HIS HAIR?

Yes, he washes it and tries to brush it, but it has really gotten too long for him to brush on his own.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE IT WAS TIME TO CUT IT?

He decided it was time to cut it. We have always told him it was his decision to make and talked about it off and on the last few years.

WOW



GREAT JOB!

For more information about donating your hair to Wigs for Kids, visit www.wigsforkids.org.



Boot Stompin. Good Time for
Penguin Cold Caps

THE 3RD ANNUAL
**SINGO FOR
A CAUSE**

Musical Bag Bingo Event

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH, 2024

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 PM / SINGO STARTS AT 7:00 PM

CROSSTIES EVENT VENUE

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MANUFACTURING A BETTER COMMUNITY

By Katie Stone

LEDWELL & Sons started in Texarkana, Texas in 1946. After starting in the lumber industry, they began building pickup racks and livestock trailers. Close to 80 years later, they have grown into the most well known name in the manufacturing, truck and trailer, and office supply industries. However, Ledwell offers even more. Part of Ledwell's mission in providing their customers with quality products, is to provide their community with the promise to do what is right, "because that's what family does." They have opened their doors to the community with scheduled tours and helping the local youth understand what manufacturing really means.

Ledwell's commitment to inspiring future innovators is shown through several of their current programs that help educate young women on their role in the manufacturing fields, promote high school juniors and seniors to work toward a rewarding career in manufacturing through internships, and partnering with local agencies to continue to educate the surrounding communities.

Brad Stringer has worked for Ledwell for 30 years serving as a welder and floor supervisor. He is also connecting Ledwell with the youth of the Texarkana and surrounding communities in an effort to educate them on the benefits of the manufacturing industry. "We are helping the students see what we do and what manufacturing really is," Brad said. "This type of education gives them a choice when it comes to going into the

workforce after high school." Brad participates in speaking directly to the students as well as career fairs at high schools and colleges. "Not everyone plans to go to college right after high school, so it is important to educate the students on what our community has to offer," Brad said. He schedules tours with the school's administration to aide in the endeavor. They also help the students with mock job interviews so that the students feel more comfortable with job interviews as an adult. Brad takes personal pride in speaking with every student. "I tell everyone that life is about the choices you make. When you find what you really want to do, jump in with both feet!" he said.

Ledwell also offers summer internship programs for specific roles in their manufacturing industries. They give the student a first hand look at what their future could look like in a specific manufacturing role. They educate on safety, work load, specific requirements and more. Completing an internship can open that student to the potential of a full time job with Ledwell. So, the Education Outreach Team at Ledwell began hosting "Signing Days" in order to provide a truly memorable experience for those who choose to work for Ledwell. This can be held at the school or Ledwell's office. They allow the student to invite friends and family to be a part of this as well as their educators. They want this to be a wonderful experience for all.

The first Friday of October of every year is Manufacturing Day. It is the kick off of





The hope is that "Signing Day" sends a powerful message to young individuals that they can build a fulfilling and prosperous career in manufacturing, utilizing their unique talents and skills.



Local students accept positions at Ledwell & Sons Manufacturing. They pose for a photo during their 2024 Signing Day. (Submitted Photo)

Manufacturing Week. This is a dedicated time used by communities all over the United States to educate on how important manufacturing industries are to the fabric of our country. It is a time set aside to celebrate the advancements made and the innovation of the people who drive technology forward.

For more information about how you or your student can be a part of the forward thinking at Ledwell & Sons Enterprises, please contact Brad Stringer at bstringer@ledwell.com.

Photo left, middle: Students take a tour of Ledwell & Sons Manufacturing company.

Photo left, bottom: The Texarkana Chamber of Commerce hosted an event during Manufacturing Week in 2023 where representatives from the manufacturing industry could speak directly to students.



MANUFACTURING THE FUTURE



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