



MIRA LAGOS

Messenger



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Association Information and Neighborly News

@GrandPrairiePD

Grand Prairie Police Department



@gp_tx

City of Grand Prairie, Texas



@GrandFunGP

City Parks, Arts and Recreation Department

@mansfieldisd

Mansfield Independent School District

@Gpscanner

Grand Prairie Scanner, local Police, Fire, EMS

@DFWscanner

DFW Scanner, area Fire, Police, EMS

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for more information:

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8:30 am-4:30 pm
Closed Sunday and Monday
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Customer Service
(877) 378-2388

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Mira Lagos Homeowners
Association Inc.
c/o FirstService Residential
PO Box 678065
Dallas, TX 75267-8065

Committee Chairs

Chair Meetings: Bi-monthly

Communications

Rebecca Newton
communications@miralagoshoa.com
Meetings: monthly

Social

Deirdre Garrett
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Meetings: 2nd Wednesday monthly

Landscape

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Meetings: electronically

Welcome

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Meetings: monthly/electronically

Pool and Sports

Mike Joffrion
poolsandsports@miralagoshoa.com
3rd Tuesday (Apr-Sept)

**New Members welcome
on all committees!**

Board of Directors

Dick LeBlanc, President
Walter Damon, Vice President
Ben Luedtke, Board Member
Joshua Spare, Resident Member
Jessica Cafferata, Resident Member
board@miralagoshoa.com

Safety

J. Hughes, Chairman
Robert McLain, Co-Chairman
safety@miralagoshoa.com
Meetings: 1st Tuesday monthly



Mira Lagos Messenger

Is the only authorized and official monthly publication for the residents of the Mira Lagos Community with news and calendar of community events endorsed by the Mira Lagos HOA & its members.

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Spring in Texas

By: Pam Downs

You know Spring has arrived in Texas, when the wildflowers burst forth in a spectacular display along the highways and byways across the state, starting in April each year. There are many wildflowers growing in Texas, but perhaps the most famous is the Bluebonnet. Bluebonnets have been loved and revered since the earliest Indian settlers discovered them in the vast prairies. Early Spanish Priests gathered seeds and planted them around their missions, and generations of Texans have looked forward to the annual spring bloom of the Bluebonnets. Bluebonnets earned their name due to their resemblance to colonial sunbonnets worn by women of the time.

In the Spring of 1901, the Texas Legislature presided over the serious business of selecting a state flower. The National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Texas campaigned



for the Bluebonnet (*Lupinus subcarneus*) while another legislator spoke in favor of the cotton boll, and John Nance Garner extolled the virtues of the prickly pear cactus flower. On March 7, 1901 the law naming the Bluebonnet the State Flower of Texas was passed.

It soon became apparent that there was more than one species of Bluebonnet growing across this great state and so started "The Bluebonnet War" which lasted for 70 years. There was much controversy over which Bluebonnet should be the State Flower. Finally in 1971, the Texas Legislature side-stepped the controversy by adding the other two known species together with "any other variety of bluebonnet not heretofore recorded", and lumped them all into one state flower.

Today, there are 5 known species of Bluebon-

nets, the most loved being (*Lupinus Texensis*) which is the one most cultivated currently. Starting in the 1930's the Highway Department began sowing Bluebonnet seeds along with other native wildflowers along the sides of the roads to preserve the natural species in Texas. Texas is famous among other things, for the most beautiful wildflower display anywhere.

The Ennis Bluebonnet Trails, just a short 30-minute drive from Mira Lagos, has 40 miles of mapped Bluebonnet Trails. For more information, and to download a map visit: <http://www.visitennis.org/bluebonnet.htm>.

Another wildflower point of interest is the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX: <http://www.wildflower.org/trails/>.

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Mira Lagos Expert



"Christina is by far the best agent I have ever worked with. I will recommend her to everyone I know and use her in all my future needs."

— R. Roerick

FREE MARKET ANALYSIS
Christina Kang 817.739.7433

What is the Public Improvement District?

We are in both a PID and an HOA. I am often asked what the difference is between them. The HOA was established by the developer and enforces the rules that the residents agreed to. It also maintains the common areas owned by Mira Lagos, such as the pools. The PID was established by the city and is a special tax district which collects a special assessment through your tax bill each year. It maintains areas along our major roads including the ponds, fountains, and some of our walls. The assessment is \$0.12 per \$100 of your home's value.

Market Statistics: This Month vs. Same Month 1 Year Ago

- ▲ The average sales price increased by 5.0% to \$277,632
- ▲ The average list price increased by 7.1% to \$303,906
- ▲ The average price per sq. foot of all homes sold increased by 2.3% to \$88 per sq. foot
- ▲ The average days on market for homes for sale has increased by 35.3% to 69 days
- ▲ The percent of list price that homes are selling for is up 0.3% to 97.9% of the list price
- ▼ The number of months' supply of homes for sale is down by 15.4% to a 2.2 months' supply
- ▼ The number of homes for sale in the area has decreased by 13.6% to 51 homes
- ▲ The number of homes listed last month for sale increased by 78.9% to 34 new listings
- ▼ The number of pending sales has decreased by 33.3% to just 16 homes
- ▼ The number of existing homes sold in the last month decreased by 60.0% to 8 homes

Average		60	3/14 to 2/15
Days on		56	3/13 to 2/14
Market		79	3/12 to 2/13

Realtor & State Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser Cert. # TX-1336180-R

Get Fit GP

RUN FOR SHELTER 5K & CHASE THE CHIEFS 1-MILE FUN RUN

Get Fit Run for Shelter 5K and 1-Mile "Chase the Chiefs" Fun Run

The Get Fit Run for Shelter 5K and 1-Mile "Chase the Chiefs" Fun Run is the merging of two downtown runs: Run For Shelter 5K and the Get Fit GP 5K. Proceeds from the run will benefit LifeLine Shelter for Families Inc. and Get Fit GP health initiatives.

The event will be the kick-off to Saturday's downtown festivities for Farmers Market and Main Street Fest. Get in your run/walk and then enjoy activities in downtown Grand Prairie.

Schedule

8:00 a.m.: Get Fit GP Run For Shelter will kick off with kids and adults running with Grand Prairie Police Chief Steve Dye and Fire Chief Robert Fite during the Chase the Chiefs 1-Mile Fun Run.

8:30 a.m.: The 5K will start with Get Fit GP health/sponsor booths, music and awards after the run.

Registration

- \$20/person postmarked by April 17.
- \$15/person for group of 10 or more by April 15 (there will be a Corporate Division, School Challenge or it can be an individual team of friends)
- \$25/person April 20-24
- \$30/person race day

Unlimited Landfill Visits at Trash Off

Clean house and get rid of your junk during the next Trash Off at the Grand Prairie Landfill, 1102 MacArthur Blvd., on Saturday, April 4, 2015. Residents are allowed an unlimited number of trips to the landfill on this special day from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Proof of residence in the form of a current water bill or driver's license is required.

Trash Off is a great way to dispose of all those bulky items that won't fit in the garbage.

Special Fee Information: Automobile tires from residential households are a \$1 disposal fee; up to 4 tires per visit. Disposal fees of \$5 or \$10 are required for larger tractor/trailer tires

Computers, printers and fax machines are also accepted

Construction and roofing material will be accepted from commercial businesses for a fee of \$32 per ton. (Contractors may not use this day to avoid paying Landfill fees)

**Call 972-237-8330
for more information.**

Bring the kids for an Easter egg hunt in the heated indoor pool **1-3 p.m. on Saturday, April 4, 2015**, at Kirby Creek Natatorium, 3201 Corn Valley Dr.



The event also includes face painting and a bounce house. Cost is \$3 per person (children younger than 2 are free). Parents may swim with their children. **For more information, call the Kirby Creek Natatorium at 972-263-8174.**

18th Big Mamou Cajun Festival



A pinch of Zydeco, a bit of swamp pop and a whole lot of Cajun music, and you've got the ingredients for...The Big Mamou Cajun Festival at Traders Village in Grand Prairie. Get ready to party hearty, creole-style, as the 18th Annual Cajun Festival cooks up big fun at Traders Village

and has been expanded to two weekends on Saturday and Sunday, April 11,12,18 & 19, 2015.

Enjoy free toe-tapping Cajun music each day from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.. The band will make you jump out of your seat and you won't be able to stop your feet from dancing to the crazy Cajun beat. Authentic Cajun foods, featuring traditional Louisiana favorites such as: red beans & rice, gumbo and hundreds of pounds of spicy boiled crawfish.

**For more information, call 972-647-2331 or visit
www.tradersvillage.com/grand-prairie**

It's an event that can't be missed. Live music, dancing, Cajun foods, and bodacious bargains guarantee there'll be 'Big Fun on the Bayou'. Admission is free and parking is only \$4.00. The market is located at 2602 Mayfield Road in Grand Prairie, five miles south of Six Flags Over Texas, just off State Highway 360 near I-20 and is open every weekend.



What's Happening



Main Street Fest

The City of Grand Prairie Parks, Arts and Recreation Department is hosting the 4th Annual Main Street Fest powered by Texas Trust Credit Union. This free community event is scheduled for April 24-25th on the 200 block of W. Main Street and surrounding areas.

Along with selected performers, the festival will celebrate the fun, festive, family atmosphere of Grand Prairie with LIVE! music featuring Grammy Award Winning Artists Max Baca & The Los Tex-Maniacs with Rick Trevino, Augie Meyers, Flaco Jimenez and Joe Ely, Texas Country Singer-Songwriter Jerry Jeff Walker, the Tejas Brothers, Matt Kimbrow Band and so much more!

While at the festival, enjoy spectacular BMX/Skate Street Shows, Novelty Entertainment, Carnival Rides, an Arts & Crafts Area, Business Expo, Food and Beer Gardens, a KIDZONE and plenty of fun for all!

Last year's Main Street Fest, attracted over 12,000 visitors. With great weather and the success from last year, the 2015 festival is projected to bring an expected attendance of 16,000 visitors.

The improved access to the event with the opening of Main Street in the heart of Grand Prairie will make traveling to the festival and leaving after the event much easier and quicker for all.



Dear Fellow Neighbors;

I wanted to introduce myself to you personally, as your new Communications Committee Chair. However, I am currently serving on an active duty military assignment, and will not return until next month.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to put together the Mira Lagos Messenger each month. I hope everyone is reading and enjoying this useful publication, as it is a tangible resource for community information. I recently interviewed Dee Garrett, our Social Committee Chair, Elissa Sherlock, our Welcome Committee Chair, Tammy Jones and the Collier family. I hope you will take the time to learn more about your neighbors through this monthly publication.

In a Community with such terrific diversity, I welcome ideas from residents on how we can bridge communication gaps, strengthen our network with one another and promote a positive environment where everyone can feel welcome and appreciated. I have some ideas for interesting community-gathering events, in hopes that homeowners will get out from behind their computers and meet people in person. One of the upcoming events will be a community Amazing Race, complete with brain-busting clues and awesome prizes.

Please email me at communications@miralagoshoa.com to discuss how you can get involved.

SAVE THE DATE!! Mira Lagos Community Garage Sale



Date: Saturday, April 11, 2014
Time: Varies per Resident

Register: Go to www.gptx.org and search garage sales for details
Flyer: To have your address included on the Community Flyer, send registration information to: social@miralagoshoa.com before April 4th, 2015. Participants are asked to drive carefully through our community and be mindful of our neighbor's driveways and mailboxes. Enjoy the day! Thank You!

PENINSULA TRASH OFF

SATURDAY, APRIL 18
9 A.M. - NOON

Bring your trash to
the dumpster located at
3025 S. Camino Lagos
South Pool Parking Lot



The Collier Family

Living on 884 acres, within several beautifully manicured entrances, amongst three pristine swimming pools with waterfalls, top-notch playgrounds and schools, liberating walking trails, stocked ponds with gentle streams and surrounded by stunning one and two-story brick homes, doesn't really matter to the Collier family.

They moved to Mira Lagos in 2005, for the opportunity to launch a church in a growing and diverse community. Marty and Stephanie, married for sixteen years, are originally from Arkansas, and have three children. Davis, 8, Cole, 10 and Anna-Kate, 11 all love their home, and the friends they have made here.

Pastor Marty loves ministering to this community as the Pastor of "The Church on Rush Creek at Mira Lagos." The church originally began in Danny Jones Middle School, but now that construction is complete, they are expanding rapidly.

The Colliers agree that Mira Lagos is a place where neighbors of all backgrounds look to one another, and have built strong relationships as a result. "We reach out to each other,



and have a family-like support system", says Marty. They also appreciate qualities like the very athletic environment, camaraderie and block parties.

While Marty likes everything exercise; triathlon, ironman races and running, Stephanie, an occupational therapist, likes to spend her free time decorating the family's home and helping her friends decorate. She also gets involved in helping women, and wants to one day introduce an outreach to this area. They both enjoy time with the kids.

The Collier family, and the church also look forward to strengthening the Mira Lagos family through its schools. The church recently hosted a principal's luncheon with thirteen principals as guests. They are addressing current, and relevant issues that will help our area's youth.

The Colliers look forward to the future of this community, and both desire their church to have a lasting impact on everyone here.

Written by: Rebecca Newton

Mira Lagos HOA Spring Fling 2015! April 25 • 12pm-3 pm At the South Pool

The Social Committee is looking forward seeing our friends, families, and neighbors at the 2015 **Spring Fling** on **Saturday, April 25, 2015 from 12 pm to 3 pm at the South Pool**. With winter behind us, it's time to get back outside, stretch our legs and have some fun! Bring the family and enjoy activities for all ages including a spring scavenger hunt. Mark your calendars now and we will see you at the Spring Fling!



Mira Lagos March Welcome Reception



I want to thank those that attended our March Welcome Reception. The Welcome Committee looks forward to hosting the event, which continues to grow. It is so pleasant to meet and greet new homeowners that have joined our Mira Lagos family.

Thank you to Valente Martinez & Staff, 1st Texas for allowing us to host the event at the new model home. A special thanks to the volunteers and Committee Chairs who helped organize the event along with the volunteers who showed their talent by creating beautiful prizes and for our new homeowners.

If you are new to Mira Lagos and could not attend, we will host another Reception in August. While the weather may not be as cool, the greetings will be as warm as they were for our March gathering!

Elissa Sherlock
Welcome Chair

The Mira Lagos HOA Safety Committee presents a free seminar for Mira Lagos residents and their guests!

WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE Thursday, April 23, 2015

Doors Open 6:45 PM

Class 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Daulton Elementary

607 N. Grand Peninsula Dr.

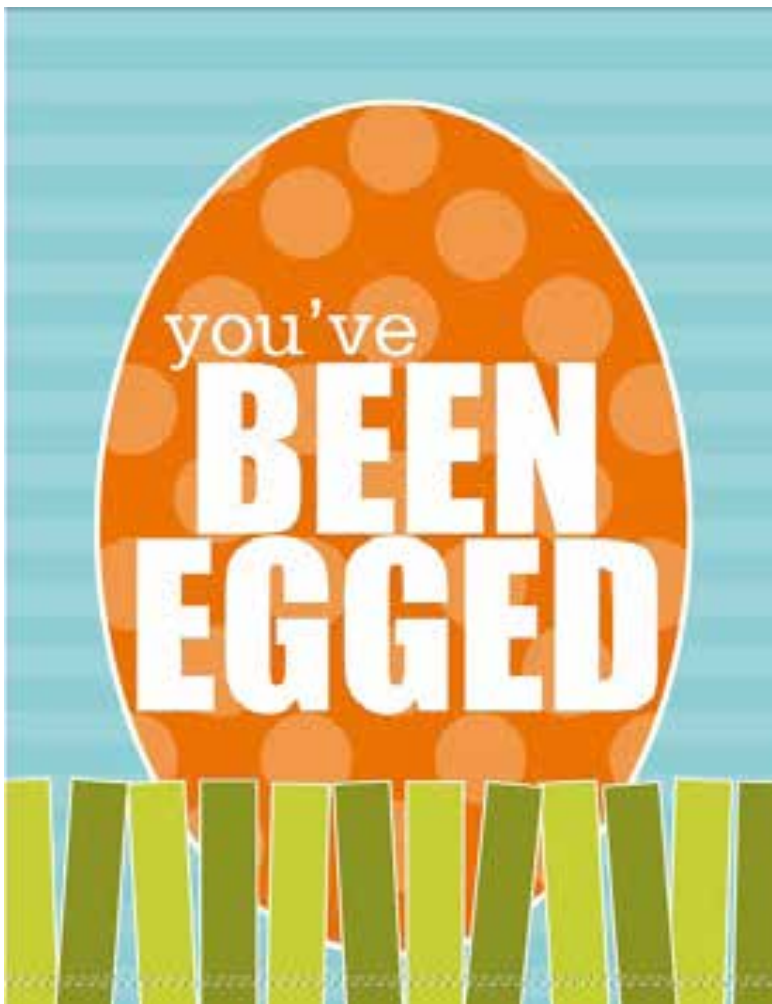
Grand Prairie, TX 75054



Class will cover the ABC's of self-defense and applied in hands-on physical drills that can be reviewed at home. Attendees should wear comfortable workout clothing and athletic shoes.

R.S.V.P. to safety@miralagoshoa.com

Please provide a name, address and phone number for each participant.



Have an egg-cellent neighbor?

Show your Mira Lagos neighbor, or neighbors how much you appreciate them. Take this cut-out to their home along with a sweet treat and a note encouraging them to pay it forward. Enjoy!

Arbor Day

The Arbor Day Foundation is a non-profit conservation and education organization of nearly one million members, with a mission to inspire people to plant, celebrate and nurture trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation: Began in 1972 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Arbor Day.

Is one of the world's largest nonprofit conservation organizations dedicated to planting trees. The Foundation plants and distributes more than 10 million trees each year.

Works with the U.S. Forest Service to plant trees in America's national forests and the National Association of State Foresters to plant trees in

state forests. Through the generous donations of our members and partners, the Foundation has helped the Forest Service plant more than 20 million forestland trees since 1990.

Recognizes more than 3,300 communities through the Tree City USA program, which honors cities and towns that are committed to planting and nurturing trees.

Helps to preserve rain forest land through the Rain Forest Rescue program. So far, more than 48,000 acres of rain forest land have been preserved through the Foundation's efforts.

Provides resources for childcare centers, elementary schools, preschools and parks to connect children with nature through the Foundation's comprehensive Nature Explore Program.



Earth Day... How it All Started

The idea came to Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, then a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, after witnessing the ravages of the 1969 massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Inspired by the student anti-war movement, he realized that if he could infuse that energy with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution, it would force environmental protection onto the national political agenda. Senator Nelson announced the idea for a "national teach-in on the environment" to the national media; persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservation-minded Republican Congressman, to serve as his co-chair; and recruited Denis Hayes as national coordinator. Hayes built a national staff of 85 to promote events across the land.

As a result, on the 22nd of April, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment. Groups that had been fighting against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness, and the extinction of wildlife suddenly realized they shared common values.

Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, city slickers and farmers, tycoons and labor leaders. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. "It was a gamble," Gaylord recalled, "but it worked."

As 1990 approached, a group of environmental leaders asked Denis Hayes to organize another big campaign. This time, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage. Earth Day 1990 gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. It also prompted President Bill Clinton to award Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1995) -- the highest honor given to civilians in the United States -- for his role as Earth Day founder.

www.earthday.org



Attention All Incoming Kindergarten Families

Early registration for the 2015-16 school year is at your child's home campus during Kindergarten Roundup on **Thursday, April 16**. Incoming kindergarten families will be able to tour the campus, participate in scheduled activities and gather valuable information to prepare for the start of the year.

The Roundup will be held at your home elementary campus during the following two time slots. **Parents, feel free to come during either time:**

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

OR

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

WHAT TO BRING - To enroll your child you will need the following documents:

1. Parent/Legal Guardian's Government Issued Photo Identification
2. Proof of Residency in the form of a current (*within last 30 days*) electric, gas,
3. water bill or lease agreement. (*No other documents will be accepted*).
4. Student's Social Security Card
5. Student's Shot Record
6. Student's Certified Birth Certificate

See complete information on the MISD website.

Kindergarten today is different in many ways than when you attended school. Many children come to Kindergarten with previous preschool or day care experience. Even though your child won't begin school until the fall, there are many things you can do now to prepare him/her for kindergarten. Here are some ideas:

- Make sure your child knows as many alphabet letters as possible,

both upper and lower case. Practice them in random order.

- Help your child learn the sound for each of the letters. You can visit www.havefunteaching.com.
- Read with your child on a regular basis. Point out the title, author, front cover, back cover, capital letters.
- Help your child to learn the difference between a letter, a word, and a sentence. Use books, newspapers, and magazines to find letters, words, and sentences. Count the words on a page, the words in the title, etc.
- Be sure your child can write his/her name using a capital letter to start and all lower case for the rest, using a continuous movement.
- Help your child learn his/her shapes and colors.
- Let your child use scissors and practice cutting both on plain paper and on lines.
- Write to your child. Encourage your child to write back even if what he/she writes is just one letter. Let him/her try to sound out words. Try not to spell everything for him/her.
- Please work with your child on self help skills: Help him/her learn to use tissues alone and to practice good hygiene. Work on tying shoes, buckling a belt, buttoning/snapping clothes and zipping a coat.
- Talk about what is more, less, or the same. Use vocabulary such as smaller, larger, longer, shorter, etc.
- Introduce your child to the difference between letters and numbers.
- Help your child learn to recognize numerals at least to 10.

Knowing how to do some or all of these things will help your child be prepared for Kindergarten.

www.mansfieldisd.org

BUNNY PAPER CRAFT

Two paper plates, cotton balls, stapler (or glue for making the final craft safer for young children,) pink ribbon, pencil, scissors, white and pink paper pieces and pink paint are all you need for making this funny and friendly Easter Bunny gifts.

A bunny basket with sweet treats can be used for preparing inexpensive decorations for dining chairs and unique gifts for neighbors and friends.

These craft ideas will help small children to develop their gross motor, and creative skills. If using glue instead of staples, these bunny baskets are safe for small hands.

www.lushome.com

This simple craft idea for kids, is one easy way of creating a stress-free spring holiday, and save money on decorations and gifts. Making bunny baskets from paper plates or thick paper pieces is a quick and inexpensive project.



Snowy Days in Mira Lagos – February 2015 Courtesy of Pam Downs





Every day, the millions of Americans living with autism and their families face unique and daunting challenges that many of us will never fully appreciate. During National Autism Awareness Month, we renew our commitment to better understand autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and improve the lives of individuals living with it.

A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 68 children in the United States has been identified with ASD. This latest estimate makes it clear that autism affects the lives of millions of Americans – our friends, neighbors, colleagues and family members.

ASD is a developmental disability characterized, in varying degrees, by persistent difficulties in social communication and restrictive and repetitive behaviors, interests, or activities. We know that early screening and intervention at younger ages helps children get the most effective treatments earlier in life. Yet the CDC found that most children with autism are diagnosed after age 4, even though autism can be diagnosed as early as age 2.

Catching potential developmental delays like ASD early can make a big difference in the lives of those children. Parents can track their child's development with milestone checklists (find them at www.cdc.gov/Milestones), and health care providers now have easy-to-use resources for screening children through the new Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! initiative (www.hhs.gov/WatchMeThrive). Uncovering developmental concerns and acting early is the best way for families to access the services and supports they and their children need.

There is also a growing understanding of the significant needs that individuals with autism have across their lifespan, including education, employment, housing, and other supports that would allow them to fully participate in community life. The Administration for Community Living has bolstered our commitment to promoting the health, well-being, and independence for those with autism and their families and caregivers.

This April, let us recommit ourselves to making advances through research and effective services and supports that will enhance the lives of the individuals and families—our children, friends, and neighbors—who live every day with autism.

For more information on resources available for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, their families, and caregivers, see:

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/watch-me-thrive>. More on CDC resources and data at <http://www.cdc.gov/autism>.

www.hhs.gov

LAST MINUTE TAX TIPS



Last Minute Tips: With Tax Day just around the corner, it's go time for taxpayers.

Get some free help. Free help is still available for qualifying taxpayers. If you have a simple return and income less than \$50,000, contact IRS VITA at 1.800.906.9887 for site locations and hours.

File timely. This year, Tax Day falls on April 15. It is not being pushed back because of the sequestration and it does not fall on a holiday this year. Your return is considered timely filed if it's postmarked or electronically submitted on April 15, 2015.

File even if you can't pay. Don't make a bad situation worse by racking up extra penalties: the IRS can impose a failure to file penalty for returns that aren't filed timely. So file even if you can't pay. You can enter into an agreement to pay what you owe over time (or try one of these strategies).

Put some money into your individual retirement account (IRA). You still have time to contribute to your IRA and make it count for the 2014 tax year. You can claim a tax deduction – above the line, so you don't need to itemize in order to take the deduction – for contributions made to your traditional IRA (but not a Roth IRA). You can make those deductions all the way up to April 15; be sure to tell your financial advisor that the contribution is for 2014 so that it's coded properly. For 2014, you can contribute up to \$5,000 or the amount of your taxable compensation (whichever is smaller) to your traditional and Roth IRAs. And don't forget about a spousal IRA: if you file a joint return, you and your spouse can each make IRA contributions even if only one of you has taxable compensation.

Pay attention to the details. Many schedules and forms have additional questions and checkboxes that are

easy to overlook. For example, if you have interest and dividends of more than \$1,500 to report on a Schedule B, you have to answer the questions at Part III even if you don't have any foreign interests. Be sure to read to the bottom of each form and if you're using tax software, use the long form interview (it only takes a few more minutes).

Don't forget about mileage and other "small" things. Numbers add up. When you're double-checking your return one more time (see the next tip), don't forget to include deductions for mileage (for business, charity, medical and moving), donations to Goodwill and other relatively small numbers. It's easy to remember the big ticket items but keep in mind that, if you itemize, those dollars can add up quickly.

Double-check your return. Even if you file electronically or use a paid tax preparer, look your return over before you sign it to make sure that you don't have silly errors that could slow down processing times. Transposed numbers, names spelled wrong and bad math are all errors that taxpayers make all of the time – but you could catch them before you submit those returns.

Attach the proper documentation. These days, IRS has most of the information they need from you already – especially if you file electronically. But in some instances, you might need to attach forms, schedules and other information (such as appraisals for certain charitable gifts). Make sure you package your return properly – leaving out information will just cause confusion.

Mail your forms to the right place. You can find a listing "where to file addresses" for individual tax forms, organized by state, on the IRS website. If you're using a private delivery service, be aware that those addresses are different and you can find a list of those delivery addresses on the IRS website.

File electronically. Returns that are filed electronically tend to be processed faster and have fewer mistakes (no pesky math errors). Bonus? No waiting in line at the Post Office.

Household Hazardous Waste Events



**CAUTION
HAZARDOUS
WASTE**

Grand Prairie residents have the option of bringing household hazardous wastes to a local HHW collection event here in Grand Prairie or taking household hazardous waste to the Environmental Collection Center (ECC) in Fort Worth, 6400 Bridge St. near I-30 and Loop 820. The ECC is open on Thursday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. A current water bill or driver's license is required as proof of residency. For more information call the ECC at (817) 392-3279.

The next Grand Prairie HHW event will take place at the Development Center located at 206 West Church Street from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on April 11, 2015.

Registration is required and space is limited, so please register early. Register online or call (972) 237-8055 to register for the next Household Hazardous Waste collection event.

Accepted Items

- Acids
- Aerosol cans
- Auto fluids - antifreeze, brake,

transmission, etc.

- Batteries - household and automotive
- Cleaning supplies and household chemicals
- Cooking Oil
- Craft and hobby chemicals
- Degreasers and drain cleaners
- Fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Gasoline (MUST BE IN APPROVED CONTAINER)
- Motor oil and filters
- Paints and stains (30 gallons max)
- Photo chemicals
- Pool chemicals
- Solvents and thinners

NOT Accepted Items

- COMMERCIAL WASTE NOT ACCEPTED
- Ammunition
- Appliances
- Asbestos
- Brush
- Building materials
- Bulky waste
- Computers and electronics
- Explosives and fire works
- Narcotics/Controlled substances
- PCB oil
- Printer cartridges
- Radioactive materials (smoke detectors)
- Syringes
- Televisions
- Tires
- Trash
- Bring old medicines to GPPD



10 STAAR TESTING TIPS

Whether we agree with standardized testing or not is a non-issue when it comes to our children in the classroom. They have to take the test, regardless of our personal opinions. If you want to know more about STAAR and how it compares to TAKS, there are some great resources on the Texas Education Agency website. Here are some tips to help your child through STAAR testing week.

1. What they should expect. Talk to your kids about what to expect and how the STAAR test is not that different from regular tests and exams. When I pointed out to my daughter that she was already doing well in Language Arts and making good grades on her writing projects, she relaxed. Sometimes just reminding them that they already have the skills and a record of success can build their confidence.

2. Sample tests. If they are feeling stressed, you can see example of the types of questions and problems kids can expect at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/>. When I reviewed one of the 4th grade reading tests, I knew my daughter would be fine. It's very similar to the type of work she has been doing in class already. Let them take a sample test and see how well they do. Talk through some of the problems that may be challenging them.

3. Get plenty of sleep. A tired child cannot stay focused for hours on end.

4. Eat a healthy breakfast. Minimize sugar and carbohydrates and make sure your child has some protein to help keep their energy stable for a longer period of time. In many cases, schools are providing hot breakfast for kids this week. Check with your local school. Sometimes getting to school early to have breakfast with friends can help relax your child and take their mind off the test.

5. Make sure they get plenty of exercise and free play time after school. The test is stressful and the kids' normal routine at school is different this week. Their minds need a mental break and after sitting all day, your younger ones will have excess energy to burn off. Physical activity is also great for helping kids to relax and sleep better!

6. Support and praise them. It may sound simple, but just tell them you are proud of them and know they will do a great job. Knowing you are rooting for them can help boost confidence.

7. Eat Healthy. Send a healthy lunch or talk to your kids about choosing a healthy lunch at the school cafeteria. Explain how healthy food supports their brains, kind of like Popeye and his spinach! My son's middle school has required us to bring a sack lunch for the two days of testing. Kids will be eating in their testing rooms, so check your school's regulations today.

8. Surprise them with a special note. Put a note in their lunch box to just say hi and you hope they are having a great day. Nothing fancy, just a sticky note saying "I love you" will lift tired spirit. Got older kids? Send them a quick lunchtime text showing your support. Don't ask how it's going, just say, "I am thinking about you, have a great day." Whether they admit it in public or not, our kids need our love and support on a daily basis.

9. Go to the dollar store and buy a couple of fun, colorful pencils. Even something this small brightens their day and gets them excited. As we near the end of the school year, pencils tend to be worn down and erasers nearly gone, make sure your kids are prepared.

10. Celebrate when the testing is complete and again when you get the scores. Acknowledge your child for their effort and their success. It might help to tell them that you will go out for ice cream or for a movie or a walk in the park at the end of the week. The key here is to keep their spirits up throughout the week!

www.northtexaskids.com

Mira Lagos Area Events



April is Celebrate Diversity Month

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 April Fools Day STAAR testing	2 Bad weather make-up day	3 Good Friday Spring holiday	4 Trash Off Easter Egg Swim Egg-straveganza 7:00 Ladies Poker
5 Easter	6 Spring holiday 6:30 LRHS Eagles Basketball banquet Zoning Commission 7:00 Ladies LCR	7 6:30 Council Meeting DJMS 8th grade high school registration mtg	8 10:30 Commission on Aging Meeting Daulton first grade field trip	9 Lone Star Park Season Opener	10 National Siblings Day 7:00 Concert in the Park	11 Garage Sale 2:00 Financial Aid 101 Household Hazardous Waste Collection
12 Big Mamou Cajun Festival	13 7:00 Ladies BunKo 6:00 Building Advisory Board	14 Uptown Theatre Cabaret 6:30 Keep Grand Prairie Beautiful Commission mtg	15 4:15 Cool After School Last day for free tax help, Conover Library	16 Kindergarten Roundup 6:30 Working with Paint, Warmack	17 7:00 Free Concert in the Park	18 10:00 Java n' Painting 7:30 Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Verizon
19 12:00 Big Mamou Cajun Festival	20 STAAR testing 6:30 Meeting Housing/Community Involvement Board	21 STAAR testing 5:00 Friends of the Library Book Sale, Conover	22 STAAR testing Earth Day 6:30 Park Board meeting	23 6:30 Kitchen remodeling, Warmack 7:00 Women's Self Defense	24 Arbor Day Main Street Festival 4/24-25 7:00 Chris Tomlin, Verizon	25 Spring Fling Amazing Race LRHS Senior Prom 7:00 Doobie Bros
26 1:00 Friends of the Library sale Half Price Day, Conover	27 6:00 Library Board 7:00 Ladies LCR Wild	28 7:00 School Board Meeting, Center for the Performing Arts	29 4:30 Lillard 5th grade instrument try-outs 7:00 Need to Breathe, Verizon	30 1:00 Assistance with Federal Agencies and Issues		

Bold: Mira Lagos Events

Blue: City Meetings

Gray: City Events

Red: Recognized Holidays

Green: MISD School Events