

Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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Issue 114 • March 2025



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HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS FREAKY FRIDAY MARCH 13 - 16

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Repertory Theatre is proud to present this year's musical production: Freaky Friday. Based on the beloved novel by Mary Rodgers and the hit Disney films, Freaky Friday follows an overworked mother and her teenage daughter who magically swap bodies and have just one day to put things right again.

Performances of Freaky Friday will take place on Thursday, March 13 at 7:00 pm, Friday, March 14 at 7:00 pm, Saturday, March 15 at 7:00 pm, and Sunday, March 16 at 2:00 pm. Freaky Friday will be presented in the Manya Ungar Memorial Auditorium at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (667 Westfield Road, Scotch Plains, NJ). Freaky Friday is a spunky, contemporary musical for all ages that will have something for adults and kids alike!

Freaky Friday is a heartfelt, comedic, and unexpectedly emotional update on an American classic. By spending a day in each other's shoes, Katherine and Ellie come to appreciate one another's struggles, learn self-acceptance, and realize the immeasurable love and mutual respect that bond a mother and daughter.

When asked about the production, director Morgan Knight said, "Every generation has their own Freaky Friday. As a teen, my mom enjoyed the classic 1976 film with Jodie Foster and Barbara Harris; my fellow millennials and I were practically raised on the 2003 remake with Lindsay Lohan and Jamie Lee Curtis, and the younger generation has enjoyed the 2018 musical and Disney Channel original movie adaptation. The timeless appeal of Freaky Friday is its universal themes— the journeys of growing up and

parenthood. I am thrilled for our students to put their own SPFHS spin on this American classic."

The Freaky Friday production involves almost 100 students, including the cast, crew, and live student orchestra. The production is under the artful direction and creative supervision of Morgan Knight (Director), Jan Allen (Producer and Music Director), Courtney Nemece (Producer and Assistant Director), Kyra Robinson (Choreographer), Trey Shore (Pit Orchestra Conductor), Joseph Napolitano (Set Designer), Evan Perrotta (Technical Director and Crew Supervisor), Christian Confalone (Lighting Designer), and Joanne Sprague (Costume Designer).

Tickets for Freaky Friday are on sale now! They may be purchased in advance online at www.spfhsrep.com and are \$18 for adults and \$16 for students and senior citizens. Seniors may contact Rosa Estevez via email at SPFHSPayTickets@gmail.com or 908-935-7796 to make arrangements for discounted tickets. Tickets may also be purchased at the door, but they tend to sell fast and the shows often sell out.

SPFHS Repertory Theatre strives to make its performances accessible to our audiences. Accessible seating is available for those with mobility challenges; contact Rosa Estevez at SPFHSPayTickets@gmail.com or 908-935-7796 to request special seating. Handicap parking spaces are located near Door 1 and are available on a first-come, first-served basis to those displaying official license plates or placards. Based on individual needs, efforts will be made to provide early seating prior to general admission.



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Scotch Plains NJ

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MICHAEL DOHN SWORN IN TO POLICE DEPT



(above) Michael Dohn, the newest member of the Scotch Plains Police Department, took the oath of office during the January 21, 2025, Town Council meeting Township Council meeting.

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SCOTCH PLAINS MUSEUM PASS PROGRAM

CARRIAGE HOUSE POETRY SCHEDULE

The Carriage House: in the Kuran Arts Center,
Watson Road, Fanwood, NJ,
on the Fanwood Borough Hall grounds
For updates visit

carriagehousepoetryseries.blogspot.com.
Readings are free and open to the public.

"Irish Poets Night"

March 13th, 7:30 PM

in observance of St. Patrick's Day,
featuring John McDermott reading
William Butler Yeats and His Own Work

National Poetry Month

"A Wandering Poet"

April 24th, 7:30 PM

featuring Edmund Baranowski

Featuring Catherine Doty

May 15th, 7:30 PM

Featuring Rogan Kelly

June 19th, 7:30 PM

SUMMER HIATUS: JULY AND AUGUST

Featuring Jane Ebihara and Elaine Koplow

September 18th 7:30 PM

Halloween Special Event:

October 20th, 7:30 PM

"Haunted Hippies & Groovy Ghouls,"

featuring Robin Rosen Chang,
Nancy Lubarsky, Bob Rosenbloom,
Gary Szalc, and Cheryl Vargas
(and maybe a surprise poet or two)

Featuring Martin Jude Farawell

November 20th, 7:30 PM

December & January

Winter Recess, Happy Holidays to All

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library, in collaboration with the Scotch Plains Public Library, are excited to announce that the Metropolitan Museum of Art is the latest addition to the museum pass program that launched last month.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library and the unwavering support of the Scotch Plains Public Library Board and the Scotch Plains community, Scotch Plains Public Library adult resident cardholders will have the opportunity to reserve passes for both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cloisters.

This complements the various museums already available to Scotch Plains residents, including: The Guggenheim, The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and more.

"We are thrilled to be offering passes to The Met alongside the other museum pass options,"

said Amanda Malool, President of the Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library. "The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library are so thankful to all of the generous donors who helped make this happen and look forward to the community enjoying their trip to the museum."

For more information and to access the full list of museums included in this program, please visit the Scotch Plains Public Library website at <https://www.scotlib.org/museum-passes>.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF THE SCOTCH PLAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY:

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the Scotch Plains Public Library through fundraising, volunteering, and advocacy efforts. Their mission is to enhance library programs and services, ensuring the library continues to be a vibrant resource for the community.

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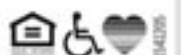
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MARCH 30 AT 3 PM: RE-LIVE THE BEATLES

Step into a time machine and relive the magic of the Fab Four's illustrious career. This isn't just a concert—it's a nostalgic voyage that captures the essence of an era and celebrates the music that changed the world! Experience iconic moments like The Ed Sullivan Show, Shea Stadium, the Sgt. Pepper era, and Abbey Road. Enjoy timeless hits like "I Want to Hold Your Hand," "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," and "Come Together." This immersive performance features dazzling costume changes, exquisite musicianship, powerful vocals, and a stunning multimedia backdrop, transporting you straight back to the 60s.

APRIL 6 AT 3 PM: MICHAEL PATRICK'S RING OF FIRE BAND: A JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE

Prepare to be captivated by Michael Patrick's heartfelt tribute to the legendary Johnny Cash. Over a decade ago, Michael Patrick fell in love with Johnny Cash's music—the simplicity, sincerity, and deep, expressive voice. Enjoy classics like "Ring of Fire," "Walk the Line," and "Folsom Prison Blues." Jenni Bee performs the songs of June Carter Cash, including "Jackson" and "Wildwood Flower." The Ring of Fire Band has shared the stage with Cash Family members and legends like Randy Travis and Clint Black. With annual tours in the South and sold-out shows from NYC to Boston, the Ring of Fire Band keeps Johnny Cash's legacy burning bright.

Don't miss these spectacular performances by New Jersey's best bands! These talented local

musicians bring their passion, energy, and unique sound to every performance. Experience the vibrant music scene of New Jersey and support your local artists. Whether you're a fan of rock, pop, doo-wop, or tribute bands, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Join us for an unforgettable musical journey and be part of the excitement!

Tickets are \$30-45 Get your tickets before they sell out! Visit GDPresents.simplertix.com or call 917-567-5842. For group rates and phone orders, email us at GDPresentstix@gmail.com.

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'PAINTING IT FORWARD' EVENT – MARCH 27

The Student Movement Against Cancer (SMAC) invites the community to unleash their creativity for a cause at our upcoming Painting it Forward night, a fundraising event dedicated to supporting our organization's central operations. This special evening of art, fun, and philanthropy will take place on March 27, 2025, from 6:30 – 9 p.m. at Pinot's Palette in Summit, NJ.

Attendees can expect a guided painting session led by a skilled instructor while connecting with other SMAC supporters and enjoying refreshments. Whether you are an experienced artist or picking up a paintbrush for the first time, this event is designed for all skill levels. More than just an evening of fun, every dollar raised

will help strengthen SMAC's scholarship program, expand our student-led network, and enhance resources for young cancer advocates.

SMAC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering students in the fight against cancer through education, fundraising, and leadership development opportunities. Community events like this one ensure that our programs continue to grow, providing young leaders with the tools they need to make a lasting impact.

Tickets are limited. Reserve your spot today by visiting pinotpalette.com/summit/event/820371. For sponsorship opportunities or more information, please contact Danielle Delavaux at Danielle@supportsmac.org.

ABOUT SMAC

Student Movement Against Cancer (SMAC), Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to empowering the next generation of cancer fighters. Created in 2001, SMAC began when a small group of friends at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School banded together to help their friend, Rob Mattar, as he battled cancer. Since then, SMAC has become a network of student-led chapters around New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana who raise funds for cancer causes, launch awareness campaigns, and support their communities. SMAC has raised over two million dollars for cancer causes since its founding.

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The College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains is hosting the event: Literacy New Jersey (LNJ) presented by Barbara Bagger on March 17th at 7:30 p.m. at Mira Vie located at 295 South Avenue in Fanwood, NJ. The event is free and open to the public.



Barbara Bagger is the Regional Program Director at LNJ and responsible for the literacy programs in both Union and Middlesex Counties. She began her work at LNJ as an ESL volunteer tutor in 2016. In 2017, she was asked to join the LNJ staff as a Literacy Specialist. She became the ESL Coordinator in 2018, then Program Director for Union County in 2020 and finally Regional Program Director in 2022.

non-profit organization, Global Volunteers. Her volunteer work also includes being a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) supporting children in foster care.

Barbara is a retired lawyer and was a Senior Vice President and in house counsel for litigation with Summit Bank and Bank of America. She currently lives in Westfield with her husband, Rich and her dog, Nova.

Please join us for this informative presentation and bring a guest!

Refreshments will also be offered.

She also has experience teaching conversational English in Romania with the

ONLINE DOG LICENSING

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The Township Clerk's office is partnering with GovPilot to offer online dog licensing. Residents can navigate here to access these functions under "Dog Licenses" and pay by credit card.

Late fees are being waived while the new system is fully implemented. Late fees are always waived if your dog is waiting for a current rabies vaccination.

Dogs cannot be registered per state guideline if the current year rabies vaccination is not valid through October 31.

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ANNUAL SHARING THE QUILTS SHOW – MARCH 22

Harvest Quilters of Central New Jersey
Harvest Quilters of Central NJ will present their 41st annual quilt show on Saturday, March 22, 2025. The 41st Sharing the Quilts will be held at the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, 1961 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ from 9 a.m. to 5

p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults and \$3 for children under twelve.

At 10:30 a.m., Elsa Hahn of Edison will show her work and speak on “Surface Design – Making it Personal.” The award-winning quilter and retired Westfield music teacher will share her

firsthand knowledge of various art quilting techniques, including the pros and cons of popular methods.

Janice M. Tellier of Mountainside will be recognized as 2025’s Featured Quilter. The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) graduate and lifelong creative spirit will display 20 plus works of original art. Of her 14 vibrant bed-sized quilts Tellier quipped, “I often think my beds are better dressed than I am.”

Tellier’s whimsical fiber art will be featured alongside her acrylic paintings, crochet, examples of bobbin lace making and a fascinating diorama of a miniature modern quilting studio. “My hope is to have the quilts speak to the viewer, with a sense of humor or play on words,” Tellier said.

As is tradition, local charities will benefit from drawings for a modern lap-sized quilt, a traditional queen-sized bed quilt, gift cards and craft themed gift baskets.

In addition to viewing a full array of modern, traditional, art and wall-hanging quilts, attendees can participate in viewer’s choice awards, kid’s crafting table and vendor sales area.

A tearoom offering lunch, snacks, homemade baked goods, and beverages will benefit Willow Grove Church programs.

For additional information, please visit harvestquilters.com, or email: harvestquiltersnj@gmail.com.



(above) Janice M. Tellier will be recognized as 2025’s Featured Quilter.

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JUDGE SWEARS IN RESIDENTS TO ADVOCATE FOR FOSTER CAR CHILDREN

Child Focus

On Thursday, Feb. 13, Union County Superior Court Judge Gavin I. Handwerker presided over the swearing-in of 12 volunteers who trained with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Passaic and Union Counties to advocate for vulnerable children in foster care. Among them are Scotch Plains residents Juliette Abadir and James Pritchett.

Classmates include Michelle Conway of Cranford; Patricia Joffe of Mountainside; Byron Ruales-Correa of Orange; and Sharon Dorry, Mary Louise Kandigian, Tara McGroddy, Cecilia Nicholas, and Dalida Nigro, all of Westfield. Now equipped to champion the best interests of child victims of abuse and neglect, the volunteers join a team of hundreds of devoted advocates with CASA of Passaic and Union Counties who provide life-changing advocacy and support services to each of the more than 350 children across both counties living in foster care through no fault of their own.

When asked about their goals as a CASA volunteer, Abadir said, "I was inspired by a heart for children in the foster system and am eager to begin advocating for the children in my case." Pritchett shared, "I wanted to find a meaningful way to help and improve the lives of children who need someone capable of advocating on their behalf." He added, "I'm excited to begin!" Abadir described her training experience as informative, noting that court observation was "eye-opening." For Pritchett, training "was excellent; on point with the subject materials and the manner in which a CASA volunteer can

impact a child positively."

"These 12 community members have made an invaluable commitment to ensure every child's voice is heard and valued. We are proud to welcome them as Court Appointed Special Advocates," said Erica Fischer-Kaslander, Executive Director of Child Focus, the nonprofit organization that oversees the CASA program.

"Each volunteer brings unique perspectives and strengths that will impact the lives of those who need it most. I encourage anyone interested in supporting vulnerable children to attend an information session to learn how they, too, can make a difference as a child advocate."

No prior knowledge of child welfare is required to become a CASA volunteer; comprehensive training equips volunteers with the skills necessary to advocate effectively. Volunteer advocates visit their assigned child at least once monthly and communicate with caregivers, educators, caseworkers, and others in the child's life to make informed recommendations to the judge.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties is a program of Child Focus, which prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children, and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. For details about the CASA program, call 973-832-4002, e-mail info@casapassaicunion.org, or visit www.casapassaicunion.org.



(above, l-r) James Pritchett, Juliette Abadir



(above) Union County Superior Court Judge Gavin I. Handwerker presided over the swearing-in of 12 volunteers who trained with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Passaic and Union Counties to advocate for vulnerable children in foster care.

Courtesy photos

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RESIDENTS RETURNING FROM MILITARY DEPLOYMENT WELCOMED HOME

Scotch Plains Township

Scotch Plains warmly welcomed home residents returning from military deployment during the January 21, 2025 Town Council meeting.

Sergeant First Class Richard Sopko of the NJ Army National Guard was deployed with the 3-112th Field Artillery to Al-Asad Air Base, Iraq, where he served as the Medical Platoon Sergeant and Battalion Medical Officer. Sopko oversaw the treatment of more than 200 patients and assisted in the treatment of casualties following attacks on the base. He is a graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and is currently a Scotch Plains police officer.

Chief Warrant Officer Sri Reddy has served in the Army for almost 19 years. He recently returned from a year-long deployment. He served on the Brigade Staff and supported operations in Iraq and Syria as part of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Captain Jeff Noonan of the NJ Army National Guard was deployed to the Middle East (Syria and Iraq) with the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. He was assigned to the 1-114th Infantry Regiment as the Battalion Judge Advocate. Noonan currently serves on the Veterans Advisory for the Township.

Not in attendance were Petty Officer Second

Class Ted Spera and Petty Officer Second Class Joe Blaes.

Spera returned from his Naval deployment in the Pacific. He was deployed on the USS T. Roosevelt Aircraft Carrier as a hull technician. The boat was stationed in the Strait of Hormuz near the United Arab Emirates and Iran.

Blaes was stationed as a member of the US Naval Forces in Bahrain and Qatar for 6 months. He is based out of San Diego and is a graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

An indebted Scotch Plains thanks these local heroes for their service.



(above, right) Chief Warrant Officer Sri Reddy and his family

Courtesy photos



(above) Captain Jeff Noonan and his family with the Scotch Plains Township Council.



(above, left) Sergeant First Class Richard Sopko



(above) Petty Officer Second Class Joe Blaes



(above) Officer Ted Spera with his daughter, Hazel Grace.

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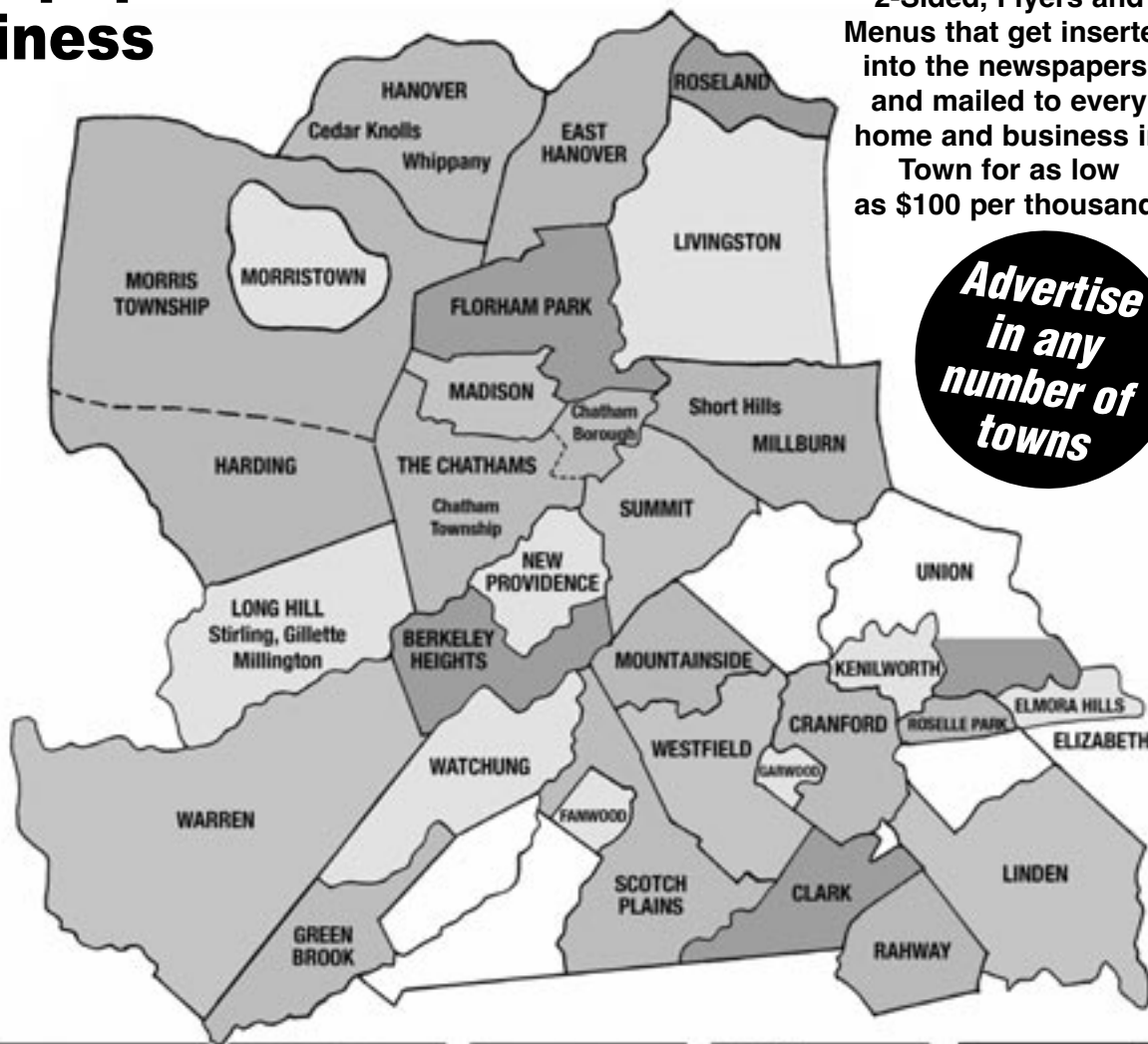
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6 Units	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 Units	6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
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Scotch Plains Police Department

Scotch Plains is focused on the safety of its residents. Here are some important safety reminders:

Report Suspicious Activity Immediately: If you see a suspicious person or vehicle, contact the Police Department without delay at (908) 322-7100. Even if you think it might not be significant, it's better to report it to police, rather than just posting it on social media or a community page.

- **Illuminate Your Home:** Beginning at sunset, leave both interior and exterior lights on when your home is unoccupied.
- **Secure Your Vehicle:** Always remove key fobs and garage door openers from your vehicle, and ensure the doors are locked. If possible, park your vehicle in the garage overnight.
- **Activate Your Alarms:** Always set your home

and vehicle alarms.

- **Don't Leave Vehicles Running Unattended:** Never leave a running vehicle unattended, and avoid leaving valuable items visible inside.
- **Protect Valuables:** Avoid keeping large sums of cash at home, and secure jewelry or other valuables not in use.
- **Check Your Security Cameras:** Ensure your security cameras are functional and properly positioned to monitor key areas.
- **Join the Ring Neighbors Platform:** You don't need a Ring product to participate. This platform helps neighbors share information about local incidents.
- **Keep Your Cell Phone Nearby:** Having your phone within reach ensures you can quickly contact police if needed.
- **Spread Awareness:** Share this information with friends, family, and neighbors

REGISTRATION FOR REC PROGRAMS

Fanwood Recreation

For more information about all these programs and to register, please go to fanwoodrecreation.org.

Spring programs for children include:

Parent & Me Multi Sports Squirts, Squirts Multi Sports, CreateArt Workshop, Parent & Me Soccer Squirts, Soccer Squirts, Senior Skills, T-Ball Squirts, Basketball Skills, TGA Premier Junior Golf, Skateboarding Lessons, Fashion Design, STEM Python Coding, Tennis Lessons, Babysitting Certification, Youth Hip Hop Dance, Kids Music Round, Mad Science After-School program.

Spring programs for adults include:

Every Now and Zen - Yoga and Meditation, Tennis Lessons, Beginner & Intermediate Pickleball.

Summer camps and programs for children include:

TGA Premier Junior Golf Camp, Applause Musical Theater Camp, CreateArt Workshop, Summer Park Program, Babysitting Certification, Junior First Responders Program, Junior Tennis Lessons, Middle School Reading Club, Young Rembrandts Drawing Camp, STEM Python Coding Bootcamp, Eureka: The Inventors' Camp, Red Hot Robotics! SAT Boot Camp, Clues and the Cosmos Camp, Camp, Codes, Aeronautics Flight Lab, Brixology Camp, Science on the Move Camp, Golf Camp, Hip Hop Experience Dance Camp, Fashion Design Camp, Basketball Camp, Parent & Me Soccer Squirts, Soccer Squirts, Parent & Me Multi Sports Squirts, Squirts Multi Sports, T-Ball Squirts, T-Ball Skills, Multi Sports Camp, NFL Football Camp, Skateboarding Camp.

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