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Big “thank yous” go out to Concord Christian School, JCPenney in Turkey Creek and Kohl’s in Farragut for their cooperation with farragutpress in this Back to School issue. Concord Christian School graciously allowed the use of their campus for our photo shoot. JCPenney and Kohl’s made available their back to school clothing lines for local models, who served as enthusiastically, as demonstrated on the pages of this Back to School issue. Kohl’s and JCPenney went above and beyond with their time and effort, lending their back-to-school styles to make these young models look ready for the 2021-22 school year.

**Top picture – Back row, from left:** Tegan Brown, Jaliyah Hemphill-Koch, Audrey Enger, Daniel Unthank  
**Middle row, from left:** Cora Gruidl, Jordan Hemphill, Bentley Qualkenbush, Chandler Jestice, Lydia Enger, Evelyn Unthank  
**Front row, from left:** Jack Ooten, Isabella Hemphill, Willa Brown, Conner Austin

# Prepare kids to go back to school

The end of summer can be a bittersweet time for students. While many students look forward to seeing their friends, few want to say goodbye to the relaxing days of summer. Parents know that getting their children back in the school day swing of things can be a challenge. The following are some ways to make that transition go smoothly.

- Introduce more structure as summer vacation winds down. The chance to unwind in a structure-free setting can benefit students at the onset of summer vacation. Many parents grapple with the notion that their children’s lives are overscheduled, and the Cleveland Clinic notes that limiting organized activities clears up down time for kids to play and relax and spend time with their families. So it’s important that parents afford their children this down time during summer vacation, only gradually introducing more structure as the school year draws closer. In the weeks before the school year is slated to begin, start waking kids up a little earlier and reintroducing bedtimes for younger children who may have been staying up later over the last couple of months. This can be an effective way to begin slowly preparing youngsters for the structure of the school year.
- Encourage children to read throughout the summer. A report from the education publishing company Scholastic found that 47 percent of parents are unaware of the “summer slide,” which refers to the loss of academic skills



See **PREPARE** on Page 8C

Cora Gruidl and Jack Ooten



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From left, Jaliyah Hemphill-Kron, Tegan Brown and Bentley Qualkenbush

# The importance of free play

The National Education Association notes that recess and free play are critical to the development of students in grades pre-K through eighth grade. According to the NEA, recess and free play during the school day encourages interpersonal interactions and problem-solving skills, and such opportunities also can prove beneficial for older students. Despite these benefits, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 40 percent of schools have reduced or eliminated recess over the last 20 years in an attempt to increase instructional time for students. While that may be understandable, it ignores the many benefits of recess and free play, which the American Acad-

emy of Pediatrics says are crucial to students' mental, emotional, physical, and social development. In addition, the AAP notes that research has shown a connection between recess/free play and improved performance in the classroom. This is true even for older students, including high schoolers. Regular breaks from the rigors of the classroom provide adolescent students with opportunities to mentally decompress, potentially improving their focus when classroom sessions resume. Such benefits highlight the important role of free play in the development of students, including older students whose school schedules may no longer include time for free play or recess.



Evelyn Unthank, left, and Lydia Enger



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From left, Lydia Enger, Evelyn Unthank, Audrey Enger, Bentley Qualkenbush, Daniel Unthank, Conner Austin, Chandler Jestice, Tegan Brown, Jaliyah Hemphill-Koch, Isabella Hemphill and Jordan Hemphill

# Help students improve focus on their studies

Teachers strive to create supportive and challenging classroom environments for their students. Such settings can bring out the best in students and help them overcome obstacles, including an inability to focus.

The struggles students can have with focusing on their studies was apparent during the pandemic. A 2020 survey of

more than 400 college students found that 64 percent were concerned about their ability to maintain their focus and discipline in remote instructional environments. Though educators, students and parents are hopeful that remote learning will soon be a thing of the past, no one is certain about what lies ahead in regard to the 2021-22 school year. Ideally, students will be back in school time full-time five days per week by the start of the new academic year. However, there's no guarantee that will be the case, and students may need help focusing on their studies.

- Emphasize one activity at a time. Various studies have shown that multitasking adversely affects performance and makes it hard to concentrate. A recent study from researchers at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that performing two or three activities simultaneously puts significantly more demand on the brain than simply doing those tasks one after another. All students, and especially those who are struggling with focus, should be encouraged to take on one task at a time.

- Take breaks. The Cleveland Clinic notes that various studies have found that periodic breaks improve mood, boost performance and increase a person's ability to concentrate and pay attention. Many students are well acquainted with lengthy cramming sessions on the eve of a big exam, which can feel like a rite of passage for high schoolers and college students. Parents and educators can emphasize the

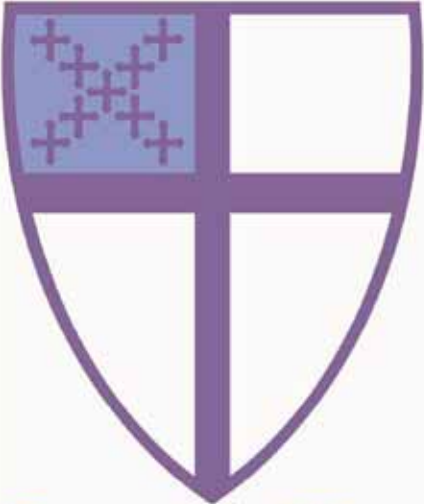
importance of taking breaks during such sessions and how periodic rest can help improve performance.

- Take a piecemeal approach to big tasks. The Child Mind Institute notes that breaking big tasks down into smaller, more manageable pieces can help kids effectively tackle more challenging tasks. The piecemeal approach can make big tasks seem less daunting, and the success kids have at each smaller task can provide some needed momentum as they draw closer to solving the problem.

Many students struggle to focus on their studies. Some simple strategies can help students overcome such challenges and fulfill their academic potential.

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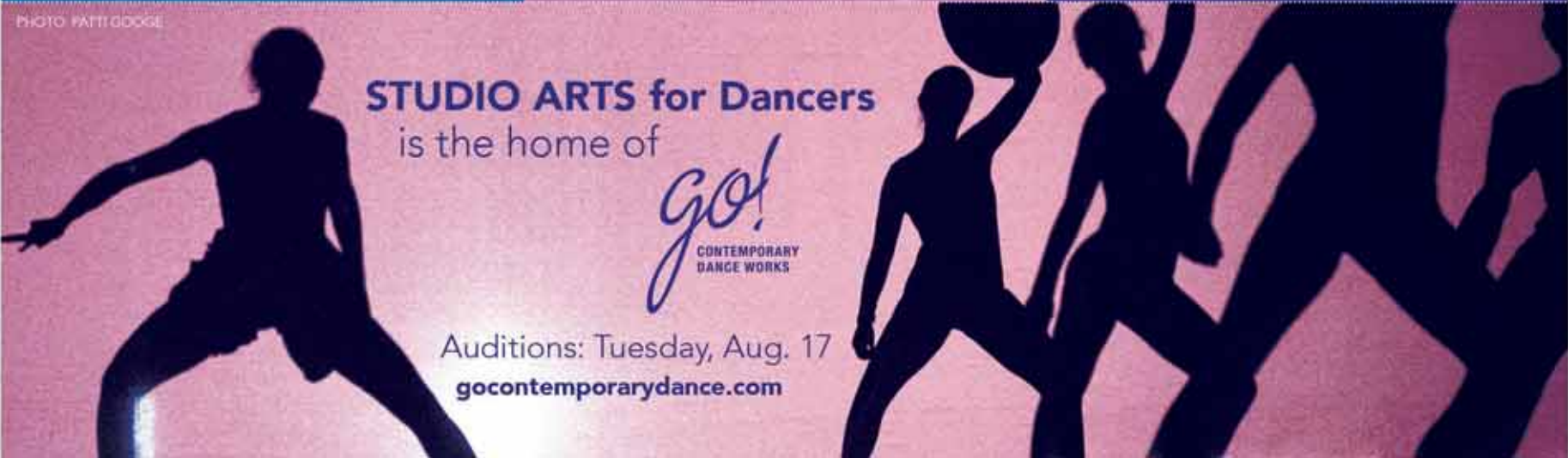


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# How to clean and sanitize a backpack

Backpacks are useful tools for students and adults alike. From hiking supplies to school books to sports equipment, backpacks can store just about anything. As veritable workhorses, they’re bound to get dirty and can benefit from periodic cleaning.

While it may be tempting to simply throw a backpack into the washing machine, it is important to check the care instructions first. Some canvas, nylon and fabric backpacks can go in the wash, but those made of leather or those with intricate details should not. Backpack manufacturers also advise against putting backpacks in a dryer.

Here are steps to cleaning a backpack.

1. To get started, begin by removing any items from the backpack, including all of the pockets. If necessary, use a vacuum to get crumbs out of the backpack.

2. Check the care label to see if there are washing instructions. This will determine if you should wash it by hand or if it can be put in the machine.
3. If the bag can be machine-washed, turn it inside out first or place it in a pillowcase so that the straps and zippers will not be caught. Then wash it on a gentle setting with a mild detergent and lukewarm water. If the bag should be hand-washed, use lukewarm water and a soft sponge or a gentle bristle brush. The outdoor retailer REI says you do not want to harm any protective coatings on the pack.
4. Zippers need occasional cleaning

to remove dirt, sand or crumbs. Many zippers have water-resistant coatings so do not scrub them. Use a lubricant made for zippers to help them slide smoothly.

5. Hang the bag to air dry upside down. It likely will dry more quickly outdoors, but avoid direct sunlight, which can compromise the integrity of the fabric or discolor the backpack.
6. Do not store or use the backpack until it is completely dry.
7. Sometimes a backpack may need to be disinfected to prevent the growth of fungus or bacteria. Athlete’s foot fungus can easily transfer from socks and

shoes to the backpack if gym clothes are left in the bag. The Spruce says to skip chlorine bleach and use a pine oil or phenolic disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe, such as Pine Sol or Spic-n-Span. Lysol brand disinfectant also can be used and is available in liquid formula or spray.

If a backpack is waterproof, only wash it once or twice per year; otherwise, you may reduce the pack’s ability to repel water. Use cleansing wipes to spot clean when necessary.

Backpacks can get grimy quickly. Routine washing can freshen them right up.



Cora Gruidl, left, and Audrey Enger with Daniel Unthank

## Prepare

From page 1C

that occurs when school is not in session. Scholastic notes that the slide is largely attributed to a lack of reading when school is not in session. By encouraging kids to read during their summer vacations, parents can make

sure youngsters’ brains stay sharp and are ready to learn once the school year begins.

- Focus on the positive. Even kids who love school may be apprehensive about returning to the classroom. After all, summer vacation is fun. Parents can confront that apprehension by focusing on the positives of returning to school.

Emphasize the chance to see friends every day or participate in a beloved extracurricular activity, like sports, band or a favorite academic club.

- Let kids do some of their own back-to-school shopping. The items that constitute back to school supplies may have changed since parents were in school. But many parents still take their chil-

dren on back-to-school clothes shopping excursions. Let kids choose their own clothes, as an opportunity to wear clothes they picked themselves might make them excited for the new school year.

Parents can take various steps to make the transition back to school a successful one for their young students.

PROFILE

## Tate Insurance Group

Tate Insurance Group aims to provide a local, personal experience for customers while also giving back to the Knoxville community.

The company was at the forefront when COVID-19 struck Knoxville and local businesses rallied around one another to make sure local money stays in the city, Scott Tate, owner of Tate Insurance Group, said.

At TIG, no employees were laid off even during the height of the pandemic and doors stayed open to make sure clients had the best service possible. Tate Insurance made sure to refer and promote other local companies to help the Knoxville area businesses stay afloat and “keep things rolling,” Tate said.

Giving back to our community is one of Tate’s biggest priorities. When other companies restricted charitable donations, Tate’s partners increased their sponsorships and contributions to youth organizations throughout the city which Tate feels are vital to Knoxville’s growth and success.

To find out more about Tate Insurance Group, visit [www.tateinsurancegroup.com](http://www.tateinsurancegroup.com).

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PROFILE

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Top: Daniel Unthank and Audrey Enger  
Above: Bentley Qualkenbush

# Community giving starts at school

When people want to give back, many look to support national charities and other causes that they hold near and dear. Certainly these are worthwhile causes. However, giving back on a local level is a great way to help the people you see every day.

Schools are the heart of many communities. School buildings may serve as gathering spaces for sports practices or meetings for various organizations. Even though schools are likely to receive municipal funding for certain operations, budgets are frequently being cut and schools may need all the help they can get. This year the boundaries of the budget may be pushed even further as schools revamp their spaces and implement certain safety protocols to confront the pandemic. Now more than ever schools may need help. Here's how to do just that.

- Volunteer your time. Find out ways you can volunteer time at school. This may be helping teachers make copies of assignments, supervising children at recess or lunch hours, serving as a chaperone at school functions, or being a coach or mentor for afterschool activities.
- Attend and participate in fundraisers. Fundraisers are essential to help offset costs for many special events and services for students. Whenever possible, give wisely through fundraisers.
- Provide supplies for classrooms. Teachers often have to supplement their classrooms with supplies bought out of pocket. Reach out to teachers to see which items they need and do your best to supply them.
- Join the PTA or a similar school-sanctioned organization. Many groups perform functions that facilitate strong connections between home and school. Joining and working with such organizations can improve the school experience for everyone.
- Buy "Box Tops"-affiliated products. The Box Tops for Education program donates \$0.10 per box top label collected and submitted by schools back to that school. More than 80,000 elementary schools have earned money through the program to buy equipment and supplies. Box Tops can be found on many different food packages.
- Treat the teacher. In addition to supporting Teacher Appreciation Days and other school events, send in an uplifting note, snack or another way of showing you appreciate his or her efforts.

Schools play integral roles in many communities, and efforts to give back can begin on campus or through school-sponsored programs.

## Fresh Start for 2021 School Year

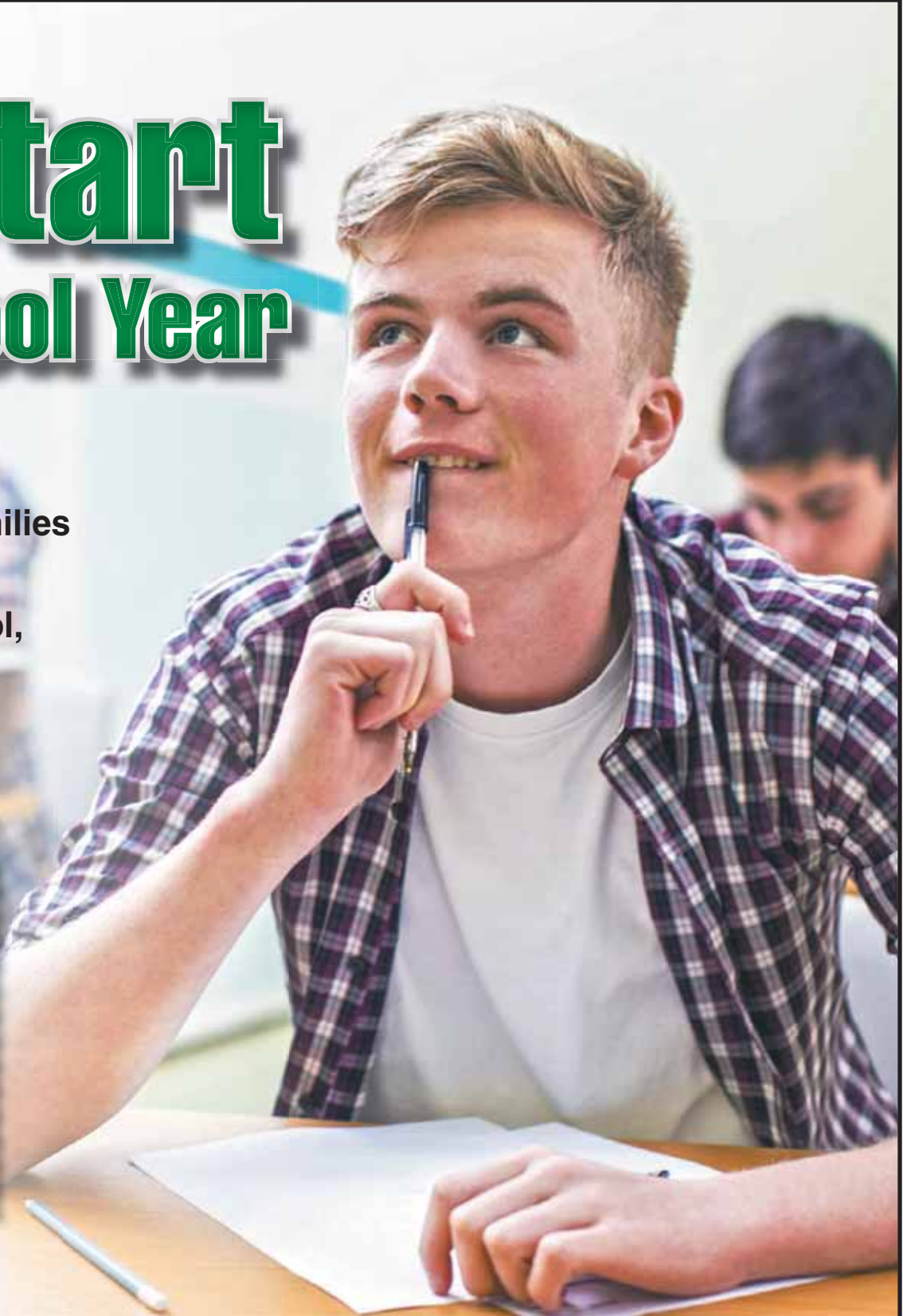
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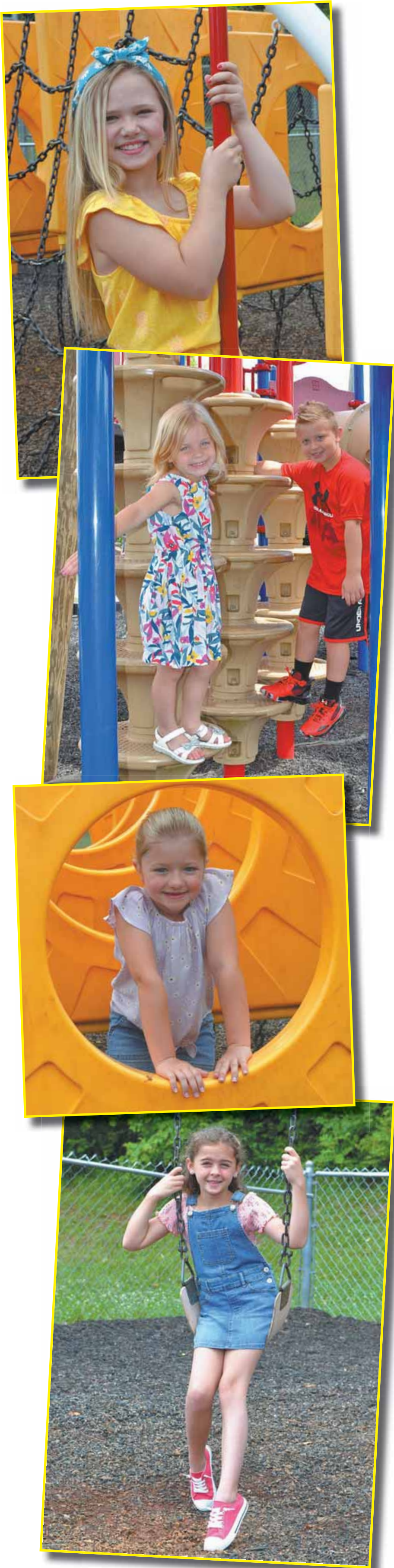
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**From top:** Chandler Jestice; Isabella Hemphill and Jordan Hemphill; Willa Brown; Lydia Enger



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**Clockwise from top left:**  
Evelyn Unthank on the swings; the whole group gathered in the Concord Christian School gym; Conner Austin on the stairs; Audrey Enger, Conner Austin and Bentley Qaulkenbush at the computers; Tegan, left, and Willa Brown on the playground.

PROFILE

## Flour Power Kids Cooking Studio

Flour Power Kids Cooking Studio offers a hands-on approach for learning the basics of cooking in a safe and exciting environment.

“We’re teaching kids that cooking is fun and how to read and follow a recipe,” explained Kelly Longmire, owner and operator of the Knoxville location at 117 Lovell Road. “It’s very, very hands-on.”

In addition to weekly classes for ages 2.5 to adult, Flour Power hosts summer camps and other special events like Kids Night Out programs on Fridays, private birthday parties and even etiquette classes.

Longmire said each session will have its own theme. For example, during “A Taste of Italy,” participants will make homemade pasta, marinara and alfredo sauce.

“We have something for everybody,” she added. “We’re called a kids cooking studio, but we have something for age 2.5 all the way to senior citizens.”

For a full list of Flour Power’s available classes and events, call the studio at 865-437-6488 or visit [flourpowerstudios.com/knoxville](http://flourpowerstudios.com/knoxville).

Kelly Longmire, Owner

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# The threat of anxiety and depression among college students

The moment young people arrive on college campuses and begin their lives as college students marks a significant milestone. College provides many young people with their first taste of independence, and that newfound freedom can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially when it's coupled with academic challenges that are much more rigorous than they were in high school.

According to data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 80 percent of college students feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities as a student. NAMI data also indicates that 50 percent of college students rate their mental health as below average or poor. Anxiety and depression are two mental health issues that affect many college students as they try to juggle the various demands associated with being students. Anyone who suspects they or a student they know is experiencing either of these issues should reach out to a mental health professional immediately.

### Depression

Depression among college students may have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2020 survey conducted by the Healthy Minds Network in collaboration with the American College Health Association found that the rate of depression among college students has increased since the onset of the pandemic. Though students typically have readily available access to mental health professionals on campus, that access has been compromised during the pandemic as students, counselors and educators learn and work remotely. College mental health counselors were available via video conferencing during the pandemic, but students may not be aware of that, while others might be uncomfortable discussing their mental health in dorm rooms or apartments they share with fellow students. Symptoms of depression include feelings of sadness or hopelessness, loss of motivation, sleeplessness, trouble concentrating, changes in appetite and body weight, and loss of interest in social activities.

### Anxiety

A 2017 report from Penn State University's Center for Collegiate Mental Health found that anxiety is one of the two most common reasons college students seek mental health services (the other is depression). In fact, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that 13 percent of college students have been diagnosed with a mental health condition linked to anxiety. Anxiety among college students can be triggered by social and/or academic pressures. Being in constant fear, experiencing frequent headaches, exhibiting shortness of breath, difficulty concentrating, constant feelings of stress or irritability, irregular heartbeat, and muscle pain or tension are some symptoms associated with anxiety.

Help is available to students dealing with depression or anxiety. Mental health professionals on campus can be invaluable resources as students try to overcome issues that can affect their quality of life while on campus.



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In addition to fun exhibits and pop-up programs, the museum also hosts a full-dome planetarium! Take your play from outer space, to the outdoors, with an expansive playground, blooming Science Garden, melodic Music Garden, and the brand-new Outdoor Space PLAYce. Make even more memories with a membership or birthday party.

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# Volunteering benefits students

Volunteering is often seen through the lens of how volunteers help to improve their communities. Though there’s no denying the valuable role volunteers play in strengthening their communities, it’s worth noting just how much volunteers can benefit from donating their time and effort to worthy causes.

A 2020 study published in the Journal of Happiness asked 70,000 participants about their volunteering habits and mental health. The study found that, when compared to those who did not volunteer, people who had volunteered in the previous 12 months were more satisfied with their lives and gave their overall health higher ratings.

Volunteering can benefit anyone, and can be especially valuable to students, benefitting their overall health and helping in myriad other ways as well.

- Volunteering can get a foot in the door. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reports that employers expect to hire 7.2 percent more new college graduates from the class of 2021 than they did from the class of 2020. That’s encouraging news, but recent graduates will still face stiff competition as they look for their first job. Volunteering with an organization in their field can be a great way for current students and recent graduates to get their foot in the door. Even if a volunteering opportunity does not ultimately lead to a job offer, the experience students gain can help them stand out in a crowded pool of job applicants down the road.

- Volunteering can help students find a career path. A 2017 report from the U.S. Department of Education found that about 30 percent of undergraduates in associate’s and bachelor’s degree programs who had declared majors changed their majors at least once within three years of their initial enrollment. The same report noted that roughly one in 10 changed majors more than once. Those statistics suggest that many students are uncertain about what they want to study at the onset of their college careers. Volunteering before and during college can help students explore their interests and see where their skills are applicable. They can then rely on that experience as they choose a major.

- Volunteering expands students’ social horizons. Volunteers serve and work alongside people from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. That’s a great way to see the world through a new perspective, and it also can positively affect students’ eventual careers. Professionals who have worked with people of various backgrounds are in better position to effectively communicate with a wider array of people, which can help them build a more diverse set of business relationships. Organizations recognize that value and often prioritize hiring candidates with the kind of strong interpersonal skills students develop through volunteering.

Volunteering can be a great way for students to develop an array of skills that can benefit their personal and professional lives for years to come.



Isabella Hemphill with Jordan Hemphill


PROFILE

## Webb School of Knoxville

In 1955, Webb School of Knoxville founder, Robert Webb, said, “I want to start a school that educates young people in extraordinary ways.” Today, Webb School continues to carry on Mr. Webb’s vision with extraordinary teaching and facilities, so that each student is supported and prepared for academic success.

Through the generosity of Spartan families, alumni, grandparents, and friends to Webb’s Reimagining Extraordinary campaign, the school added dynamic learning spaces this past year, including a Middle School Innovation Center, housing a vibrant, spacious library, state-of-the-art science lab, Innovation Lab, and robotics and broadcasting studios. Additionally, a new wing to Webb’s Upper School offers a research library, learning resource center, writing center, and a one-of-a-kind visualization lab.

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# Returning to school as an adult

Education opens many doors. Sometimes life throws a person a curveball and education gets put on the back burner. Even if school plans have been derailed for several years, one can explore how to return to school as an adult.

Adult students are often described as nontraditional students, while traditional students are those who enroll in a college or university or go on to trade school immediately after graduating from high school. Nontraditional students are those who return to get their degrees as adult learners. According to a 2013 National Study of Prospective Adult Students by the higher education marketing group STAMATS, students over the age of 25 are the fastest-growing segment in higher education.


For those people resolving to return to school this year, these tips can help them confront any uncertainty they may have about cracking the books after a long layoff.

- Recognize you're never too old. If you have the time and the means to attend school, you can likely find a program that can benefit you regardless of how old you may be.
- Remember that education can help you get out of a rut. No matter your age or experience, it's easy to get stuck in

a rut. Going back to school can help a person get out of that rut and on a path to something new. A return to school can help professionals earn more money, update their skills or learn a new trade.


- Ask for the support of friends and family. Students' success often depends on a strong support network. Be sure to discuss plans to return to school with a spouse, family members or others who can lend a helping hand. Schooling will take time out of a schedule and certain responsibilities you handled may have to be taken on by family members.
- Explore accessibility. Now more than ever schools are adapting to the changing times by offering an abundance of classes online. Remote learning became a necessity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it may be an increasingly popular method of conducting classes in the future. For adult learners who worry about juggling time inside of the actual classroom with work and home responsibilities, virtual programs can be the perfect fit.

Goals for the new year may include returning to school. Whether a person is completing a diploma program, finishing a degree or learning new skills, there's no wrong time to continue your education.



## Studio Arts for Dancers

Located off Northshore Drive in the Rocky Hill Community, Studio Arts for Dancers offers Knoxville world-class dance instruction for everyone from preschoolers to professionals. Founded 30 years ago by its Artistic Director, Lisa Hall McKee, SAFD offers classes in classical ballet, pointe, modern, contemporary, tap, jazz and open level adult ballet. With a time proven syllabus, state of the art facilities and a professional and engaged teaching faculty that are active members of the national dance community, SAFD is a hub for dance education and performance in Knoxville. SAFD's mission is to not only develop technical excellence within each child but also nurture their creativity and individuality. SAFD is the home of GO! Contemporary Dance Works, a non-profit contemporary dance company that has provided Knoxville with over 150 performances since 2004. For more information visit [studioartsfordancers.com](http://studioartsfordancers.com) or call our office at 865-539-2475 and schedule a tour. Classes begin August 23.



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# Back to School CALENDAR

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## Knox County Schools Calendar 2021-2022

### August

August 2 (Monday) First Day for Teachers –  
In-service (Building)  
August 3 (Tuesday) In-service Day (PreK-12 System-wide)  
August 4 (Wednesday) Administrative Day (Teacher Workday)  
August 5 (Thursday) In-service Day (1/2 day–School-based;  
Administrative Day (1/2 day–Teacher  
Workday)); Orientation for 6th and 9th  
graders

August 6 (Friday) Administrative Day (Teacher Workday)  
August 9 (Monday) First Day for Students  
(1/2 day for students)

### September

September 6 (Monday) Labor Day – Holiday  
September 8 (Wednesday) End 4½ weeks Grading Period  
September 17 (Tuesday) Constitution Day (Students in school)

### October

October 8 (Friday) End First 9-weeks Grading Period  
(44 days)  
October 11-15 (Mon-Fri) Fall Break

### November

November 2 (Tuesday) In-service Day (PreK-12 System-wide)  
(Student Holiday)  
November 16 (Tuesday) End 4½ weeks Grading Period  
Nov. 24-26 (Wed-Fri) Thanksgiving Holidays

### December

December 17 (Friday) 1/2 day for students  
End Second 9-weeks Grading Period  
(41 days) End First Semester (85 days)  
Winter Holidays

### January

January 3 (Monday) In-service Day (1/2 day–School-based);  
Administrative Day (1/2 day–Teacher  
Workday) (Student Holiday)  
January 4 (Tuesday) First Day for Students after Winter Holidays  
January 17 (Monday) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Holiday

### February

February 4 (Friday) End 4½ weeks Grading Period  
February 21 (Monday) Presidents Day (1/2 Day for students--  
School-based) (Student Holiday)

### March

March 11 (Friday) End First 9-weeks Grading Period  
(Third 9-weeks Grading Period) (47 days)  
March 14-18 (Mon-Fri) Spring Break

### April

April 15 (Friday) Holiday  
April 18 (Monday) Holiday  
April 22 (Friday) End 4½ weeks Grading Period

### May

May 3 (Tuesday) In-service (School Based) (Student  
Holiday)  
May 25 (Wednesday) Last Day for Students (1/2 day for  
students), End Second 9-weeks  
Grading Period (Fourth 9-weeks  
Grading Period) (45 days)  
End Second Semester (92 days)  
Administrative Day (Teacher Workday)  
– Last Day for Teachers  
May 26 (Thursday)

177 Instructional Days (excludes days earned through  
extended hours), 4 Scheduled Administrative Days,  
2 Unscheduled In-service Days, 1 Unscheduled Parent-  
Teacher Contact Hours (formerly Teacher-Parent Conference Day),  
6 Scheduled In-service Days, 10 Vacation Days  
200 Days Total  
Under this calendar the Knox County Schools may cancel up  
to five (5) instructional days due to inclement weather before  
any makeup days will be required

**Clip & Save**  
Check the Knox County  
Schools site for the  
earliest news on school  
closings due  
to weather.

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