

River Valley & Ozark V

A Supplement of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

COVERING: Faulkner • Perry • Conway • Van Buren • Cleburne • Pope • Yell counties • City of Maumelle

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021

this week's EVENTS

Editor's note: Many events have been canceled or postponed due to concern about the coronavirus.

WEDNESDAY

John C. Maxwell Lecture
RUSSELLVILLE — New York Times bestselling author John C. Maxwell will offer the Arkansas Tech University College of Business Distinguished Lecture Series address for the spring semester at 11 a.m. He will appear virtually, and his remarks will focus on the topic of ethics. ATU students and guests may attend the lecture online at <http://bit.ly/jcmaxwell>. The event is part of a month-long focus on ethics in the ATU College of Business. ATU business students will participate in a competition testing their knowledge of ethics on Feb. 24.

'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You'

CONWAY — The University of Central Arkansas will offer a free virtual seminar, *Conversations: 'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You,'* at noon. Participants will discuss this No. 1 New York Times bestseller, by Jason Reynolds. The book reimagines Ibram X. Kendi's award-winning "Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America" to provide a concise and energizing exploration of the history of racism in America, the source of anti-racist ideas and feelings, and tools for stamping out racism in one's daily life, accessible to a wide variety of readers.

THURSDAY

Using Emotional Intelligence to Improve Relationships
CONWAY — The University of Central Arkansas will offer a free virtual event, the Women's Leadership Network Using Emotional Intelligence to Improve Relationships, at 6 p.m. on Facebook Live. Nicole McZeal Walters of the University of St. Thomas will lead a frank, interactive discussion on how to understand and nurture emotional intelligence to better influence women's behavior and improve their relationships.

FRIDAY

Virtual Voyage through Arkansas Black History
The Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, a division of the Arkansas Department of Education, will present *Virtual Voyage Through Arkansas Black History* at noon, narrated by DJ M.C. Lyte and spoken-word poet and rapper Malik Yusef. The session highlights notable events and Arkansas in the areas of law enforcement, government, law, education and entertainment. The program will stream on the following platforms: Facebook @AMLKCA and @ArkansasED; Twitter: @AMLKCA and @ArkansasED; Instagram: @AMLKCA and @Arkansas_ED; and YouTube: AMLKC www.ARKINGDream.org and Arkansas Department of Education ADE.Arkansas.gov.

ONGOING

Food Pantry and Thrift Store
MORRILLTON — The Conway County Care Center's food pantry, at 108 W. Broadway, is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Residents of Conway County may visit the pantry once a month to take home free supplemental food, regardless of household income. The center also operates a thrift store, where clothes and household items are available at a low cost, or free when there is an immediate need. For more information, to volunteer or to make donations, visit www.conwaycountycarecenter.com.

Generational Ties Exhibit

CONWAY — The third annual Black History Month exhibition — *Generational Ties, Who I Am, Who We Were* — is on display at UCA Downtown, 1105 Oak St., through March 5. Gallery hours are 2-5 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and noon to 5 p.m. Fridays. The exhibitions are curated by the artists in union with the University of Central Arkansas College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences — the art department and the Division of Outreach and Community Engagement. Social distancing must be practiced in the gallery, and a face covering is required to enter. For more information, call (501) 852-UCAD or (501) 450-3118.

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Gift to the community

Musical park trail honors bank courier; more phases planned

BY TAMMY KEITH
Contributing Writer

Clark Horton, 3, smiled as he made music on the big colorful xylophone in Laurel Park in Conway. "Can you hit the red one?" Leah Horton asked her son, as she held his 7-month-old sister, Clara. Next, Clark and his mother played the drums before he spun a wheel full of beads.

To them, it was just another fun activity to enjoy on a sunny, but chilly, winter day. To First Security Bank, the outdoor instruments are a memorial to a longtime employee and a gift to the community.

Phase 1 of the Jerry Cooper Sensory Play Trail includes three musical stations designed to be used by children with disabilities, as well as people of all ages.

Johnny Adams, president of First Security Bank Conway, which sponsored the trail, said Cooper was a bank courier for 20 years. Cooper, 70, of Morrilton, died in 2019. Adams said Cooper, who had a special-needs son, James, volunteered on the boards of the Conway Human Development Center and Milestones Services Inc., formerly the Faulkner County Day School, in Conway.

Adams said Cooper had "a big heart" for developmentally delayed children.

"This was a way for us to remember him," Adams said. "The idea actually came

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Clark Horton, 3, with his mother, Leah, and sister, Clara, 7 months, plays the xylophone on the Jerry Cooper Sensory Play Trail at Laurel Park in Conway. The trail, sponsored by First Security Bank in Conway, is designed for all ages and abilities.

TAMMY KEITH/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Plunges set to raise funds for Special Olympics

BY HANNAH BUTLER
Contributing Writer

Arkansas residents will have an opportunity to "experience the thrill of the chill" with annual Polar Plunges happening across the state to support Special Olympics.

Despite COVID-19 concerns, plunges in the River Valley & Ozark Edition coverage area will still occur in Maumelle and Greenbrier.

Polar Plunges will take place at 11 a.m. Feb. 20 at Woolly Hollow State Park and at 10:30 a.m. March 6 at the Maumelle Community Center. The Russellville plunge occurred Feb. 6.

"We debated on whether or not to cancel, but we figured people would want to come out and do something crazy," said Darla Jones, coordinator for the Russellville Polar Plunge. "We've worked with the health department, of course, and we are doing all of the guidelines. We are going to check [participants'] temps, and they will be distancing and wearing masks."

It is recommended that all Polar Plunge teams wear face masks. Team members will stay together, and the teams' plunges will be spaced out in an effort to distance everyone.

"We have very detailed COVID-19



lan Emerson, 12, leads members of Team Friendship into Lake Dardanelle for their turn to take the plunge during the Russellville Polar Plunge on Feb. 6. He was followed by his dad, Dustin, from left, and fellow teammates Marty Duane (green shirt) and Carly Nehus.

AMBER QUAID/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

safety measures to make sure the community feels safe to come out and participate," said Camie Powell, director of marketing and partnerships for Special Olympics Arkansas. "We're also going to design the plunge to make sure there's space and that plungers are more spaced out than in years past."

Law enforcement and emergency-

management squads will be present for the Polar Plunges.

If plungers are uncomfortable with coming in person to plunge, Special Olympics Arkansas is also offering the Polar Plunge virtually. To participate, local residents of a Polar Plunge may send in or post photos or a video on social media.

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Porter's House blesses families, children with necessities

BY SAM PIERCE
Staff Writer

YELL COUNTY — Kristy Poteete and her husband, Dan, were foster parents from August 2017 until June 2019, and during that time, they fostered — and later adopted — two children.

"They came with a few items that their foster home had collected," Kristy Poteete said. "At

that time, we had no local resource or help to supply what was needed for an 8-month-old girl and a 2-year-old boy.

"We gathered what we could before they came, and we were referred to The CALL Mall, and they helped us in the beginning."

She said Rebecca Barton, the founder and president of Joseph's House in Russellville, allowed Poteete and her husband to

access the organization's closet.

"We started to understand that children are usually removed from their homes with basically the clothes they have on," Poteete said. "A few, but not many, children are able to take a few items, but that is on a rare occasion."

Poteete and her husband started Porter's House a little more than a year ago. It is a local private closet that is open to foster families and

foster children in Yell County. She said Porter's House offers clothing, shoes and hygiene products to foster and adoptive homes in the county.

She said foster parents and children can come in and shop for whatever they need for free.

"We provide encouragement and support to foster families as

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