



INTUCKER

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ANOTHER CHAPTER IS COMING TO A CLOSE

EDITOR'S NOTE



Closing the door on another year is always exciting but this year we are saying goodbye to the last two of the original Tucker Council (we still have

the Mayor for another two years, though. Whew!).

Anne and I became friends during the three-year-long process of becoming a city and I cherish her as a dear friend. Noelle was new to the scene after her election but quickly made herself integral in the formation of our City and our brand. I have learned many photography skills from her, and I am thankful for her willingness to share her knowledge and gifts.

In this issue, both Anne and Noelle have an opportunity to pen their goodbyes as councilmembers and express their gratitude to the community for years of support. We will be saying thank you and until next time to them both at a reception on December 11 before the regular City Council Meeting.

Our second feature focuses on the winners of this year's Teacher of the Year and Support Staff Member of the Year for each of our Tucker Cluster schools. These awards are voted on by their peers and are a testament to their dedication not only to teaching but to their students and their co-workers.

Looking forward to 2024 we are preparing for our new council members, a new city manager and other possible changes and updates, including this little magazine. We are also planning a new City coloring and activity book and launching our new website! Our goal as a Communications Department is to create an ease to our transparency and this website will make finding important information MUCH easier, is more ADA accessible and is just so pretty.

Happy Holidays, Tucker! Here's to a great year!

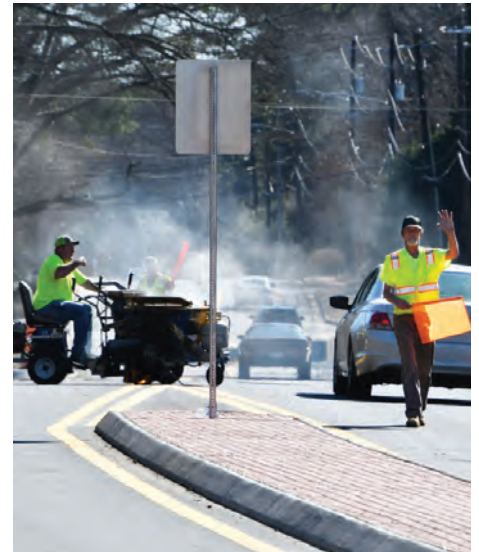
SONJA SZUBSKI
INTUCKER EDITOR

IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER

Our term-limited Councilmembers reflect on their time serving the City and the Tucker community. Read more on page 6.



YEAR IN PICTURES

The year was jam packed with fun and events. Take a walk down memory lane with us on page 10.



ON THE BEAT

Scams are on the rise. Learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones from bad people trying to steal your money on page 5.



BUSINESS BOOM

Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday are behind us but shopping local is cool all year. Learn more on page 11.



INTUCKER

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From the Mayor

It's so cliché that it usually goes without saying, but sometimes you have to say it anyway: Change is hard. Whatever form it takes, it comes with difficulties. And during these last months of 2023, we find ourselves facing change as a city.

For better or worse, the state legislature provided in our charter that our councilmembers would have limited terms they were allowed to serve in office. Change is built into our city's DNA, and so in this issue of *InTucker*, we reflect on the service of two of our founding members, Noelle Monferdini and Anne Lerner, with gratitude and respect.

Noelle and Anne are the last two members of our original Council to complete their service and reach those limits. Since 2016, they have given of themselves and served, as they affirmed in their oaths of office, "...in the best interests of the City of Tucker, to the best of my ability, without fear, favor, affection, reward, or expectation thereof." They have been instrumental in an amazing string of successes and suffered fair and unfair criticisms along the way. They have stood their ground or compromised, as their wisdom and their constituents' and colleagues' input guided them, always with grace and empathy. They have conducted themselves as we all hoped the Council would during the days when a City of Tucker was only a dream we were working toward. The loss of their deep experience and understanding of what makes Tucker a great community will be felt profoundly.



Next month, we'll celebrate the installation of our two newest councilmembers, Vinh Nguyen and Amy Trocchi. They'll take the same oath of office, and we eagerly anticipate their fresh energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to their community.

It all reminds me that in more than one language, the concepts of "Crisis" and "Opportunity" are combined into a single, interchangeable word or character. This construction rightly conveys that both are present at the same time whenever change comes. It's

up to us to decide and work toward the outcome we desire. I'm confident not only that Tucker has chosen well in the past, but that we have a bright future ahead, navigating difficulties, and converting every opportunity into success.

Thank you Anne and Noelle, on behalf of your City.

**FRANK AUMAN
MAYOR**

City Council Update



DATES TO KNOW

December 4

Downtown Development Authority

December 5

Zoning Board of Appeals

December 6

Traffic Court

December 11

City Council Meeting

December 13

Traffic Court

December 20

Environmental Court

December 25-26

City Buildings closed in Observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Tucker's Mayor and Council held two regular meetings in the month of November. The following items were approved:

The consent agenda consisting of the previous month's minutes, a lighting agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation and the adoption of the DeKalb County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Details can be found in the packet online.

An ordinance to amend the official zoning map for the City relating to identified properties along Lawrenceville Highway between Cooledge and Brockett Roads.

A text amendment to Chapter 46 Zoning to the City code, including changes to adult entertainment establishment regulations.

Approval of six contracts for landscaping, design projects and stormwater issues, the most exciting being the creation of a new part-time position in partnership with the DeKalb Community Service Board for a caseworker to serve as a dedicated

resource to the City and to address the needs of unhoused individuals.

Contract approval for the Juliette Road Resurfacing and Safety Improvements Project.

Contract approval for the E. Ponce de Leon Avenue Sidewalk Project.

A resolution of the City Council of Tucker to authorize the city attorney to acquire one part of one parcel of commercial property to redesign Richardson Street.

During the meeting on November 27, the Mayor announced his nomination of John McHenry as the City's second city manager. John has been a member of Team Tucker since the City's inception and is delighted to be considered. Council will vote confirmation at the December 11 meeting.

The City of Tucker Mayor and Council meet on the second and fourth Mondays of each month at Tucker City Hall located at 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, GA 30084.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIALS



nextdoor



ON THE BEAT with Lt. Obester

Lt. J. Ridling is Tucker's liaison to the DeKalb County Police Department and can be contacted by email at jridling@dekalbcountyga.gov or by phone at (678) 597-9040.

If you are reading this article, I need you to **immediately** send me your bank account information. Your finances have been analyzed and it was discovered that you have an excessive amount of money in your bank. Please send me your account number, password, and location of your bank **right away!** If you do not provide this information, a warrant will be drawn up for your arrest. If you want to avoid going to jail, you can go to any Walmart, Target, or my personal favorite, Costco, and purchase gift cards with all your excess money.

Does this sound ridiculous to you? Sadly, a good number of individuals - including smart people like you - are falling for this type of scam. These scams often start off with a telephone call from someone claiming to be an official with the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the FBI, and even state and local law enforcement agencies. The scam callers start off polite but assertive - stating that you have failed to pay your taxes, failed to answer a jury summons, or perhaps failed to pay your power bill. While the variations of these pretextual calls are too numerous to list, most of these scam calls have one thing in common - the need to send money to the caller or a third party as soon as possible.

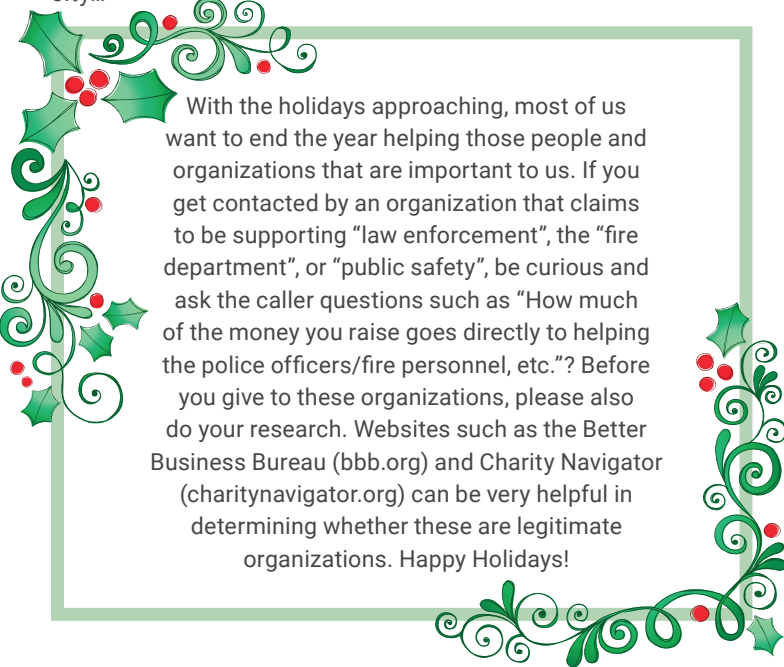
Oftentimes, the calls come with a threat of some type. If you don't provide your financial information or a gift card number immediately, the caller threatens to have your electricity shut off or worse, have you arrested and thrown in jail. These criminal scammers, which is what they are, are good at convincing individuals that the reason they are calling is legitimate and extremely urgent. However, when questioned, these callers will refuse to send you any written documentation or provide any credible proof of who they are or the "agency" they are representing.

Perhaps you have received a different type of call, one that begins with the news that you have won the "lottery" or some type of cash prize. The caller, polite but authoritative, tells you that he or she will help you get your fortune if you immediately go to a local store and purchase gift cards for them or provide the caller with your banking information. Just recently, I was flagged down by "Jim" as I was patrolling his neighborhood. Jim - aged 91 - asked if I would meet him nearby and on standby as he delivered some gift cards to an individual he had met over the phone. According to Jim, the individual had contacted him a few weeks prior letting him know that he had won a great amount of money. Sadly,

Jim had already purchased thousands of dollars in gift cards and provided the card numbers to the scammer. Later that morning, I called the scammer and introduced myself. After I began asking a few questions, the scammer said something about my mother (may she rest in peace!) and hung up.

What can you do to avoid these scams? First, add your name to the Do Not Call Registry (www.donotcall.gov). Second, educate yourself about the various types of telephone scams that are out there. There are many websites that offer great advice on how to recognize and avoid these scammers (www.consumer.georgia.gov and www.ftc.gov). A simple internet search on "scam calls" can also be helpful. I particularly liked this article on the Georgia Attorney General's website: "Carr Warns of Bogus Spoofed Phone Calls from Scammers Posing as Law Enforcement Officials".

In the end, I am a genuine law enforcement officer, I would never ask for your bank account number, direct payment for a traffic ticket or any other type of remuneration on-the-spot, nor would I ever threaten to take you to jail if you didn't immediately pay a fine. **Please be very careful when giving out your financial or other personal information, especially over the telephone.** If you have a senior citizen in your family, also remind them of the dangers that are out there. Finally, if you are still feeling charitable after reading this article, come join us for coffee at one of the various restaurants around the city...



With the holidays approaching, most of us want to end the year helping those people and organizations that are important to us. If you get contacted by an organization that claims to be supporting "law enforcement", the "fire department", or "public safety", be curious and ask the caller questions such as "How much of the money you raise goes directly to helping the police officers/fire personnel, etc.?" Before you give to these organizations, please also do your research. Websites such as the Better Business Bureau (bbb.org) and Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org) can be very helpful in determining whether these are legitimate organizations. Happy Holidays!

NOELLE MONFERDINI

CITY OF TUCKER COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 2, SEAT 2



Since 2016, it has been my greatest honor to serve as one of the founding council members for the vibrant community of District 2 and the wonderful citizens of the City of Tucker. This journey, filled with dedication, challenges, and triumphs, has allowed me to witness the remarkable growth and unity within our district and our city.

As I reflect on my time spent as your representative, I am reminded of the countless individuals I have had the privilege to work alongside. The strength of our community lies not just in its infrastructure, but in the spirit of its people. Together, we have built a new city that brings its community together in unity, resilience, and progress.

As my term comes to an end, I find myself humbled by the trust and support bestowed upon me by this community. If circumstances allow, I would eagerly run again, driven by the deep-rooted passion to continue serving the people who make our district and city great. I am always at the ready to support your ideas, work with you collaboratively, and support your initiatives that will further elevate our city.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to every citizen of District 2 and the City of Tucker. Your trust, engagement, and support have been the driving force behind our accomplishments. As I step back from my current role, I do so with immense gratitude for the memories shared, the challenges overcome, and the dreams we have collectively pursued. I'd also like to thank the current

and past council and mayor for their dedication and service to our community, the parks friends groups for their tireless efforts to improve our parks, both CID's for participation and collaboration with our road and sidewalk projects, the DeKalb County Commissioners for their efforts and donations to our special projects, our staff for their efforts to serve the community, and lastly our volunteers that dedicate their time to run athletics programs, assist in special service days and pour themselves into what we proudly call Tucker.

While this chapter for me may be drawing to a close, the story of Tucker's growth and prosperity is far from over. I eagerly anticipate the next phase of our community's journey, where new leaders will step forward, and fresh perspectives will shape our future. As I bid farewell to my current position, I do so with optimism, knowing that the foundations we have laid will continue to flourish, guided by the passion and dedication of our citizens.

Thank you, District 2, and thank you, City of Tucker, for allowing me the privilege of serving you. Our shared experiences will forever hold a special place in my heart, and I longingly await the day when I can return to contribute once more to the community that has become my home, my inspiration, and my purpose.

Noelle Monferdini



ANNE LERNER

CITY OF TUCKER COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 3, SEAT 2



Grateful. Hopeful. These two words describe how I feel as my service to you on Tucker's City Council comes to a close. Do not be mistaken though, my service to Tucker is not coming to an end, because it did not begin as a city council member. For nearly 27 years, I've served in many roles throughout our community and alongside so many of you. From concerned citizen, dedicated volunteer, board member, planning commissioner, cityhood advocate, founder, and council member. My roles and titles change but my focus remains the same – serving the people of Tucker. This commitment should not and will not end when I am no longer on the city council. It's just another step in my Tucker journey.

Whether it was picking up trash and planting trees at the Lavista Road/I-285 exit and entrance ramps (so much so

that during my years as a teacher my Stone Mountain Middle School students thought I was doing mandated community service), coordinating the Winding Woods Neighborhood Watch program or spending time in living rooms and backyards across Tucker listening to your concerns, my mission and vision has always been about service.

There is so much to be grateful and hopeful for here in Tucker! I'll mention a few in the space allotted, but know I hold so many more in my heart.

I am grateful for your trust in allowing me to serve you on our inaugural city council and for an additional term. I am grateful for your praise and your criticism. You can't expect to make decisions as a leader and not encounter both. I am even more grateful for those of you who were always

willing to sit and have a real conversation about your concerns, coming together as we sought common ground for sensible solutions.

I am confident that we will continue to sit and have real conversations with new and old friends and our neighbors. Let's look for even more ways to come together as Tucker!

I am grateful for all our community volunteers past and present who built Tucker on a solid foundation and paved the way for a smooth transition to cityhood. There are too many groups to mention by name, but each one serves a need in Tucker and brings value to the community.

I am hopeful to see so many new faces at volunteer events. May that spirit of coming together and rolling up our sleeves to get things done in Tucker never end.



I am grateful for partners across Tucker, like the Tucker-Northlake and Tucker Summit CIDs, our companies and business owners, our philanthropies, our diverse faith communities, and all who choose to invest in our city with their time, talent, and treasure.

I am hopeful the City of Tucker always remembers the power of partnerships and continues to be a good partner locally and regionally.

I am grateful to city staff, who I affectionately call Team Tucker, and their families. Starting a new city, even one with such a groundswell of support, is not easy, and their dedication to our success is a testament to Tucker.

I am confident as the city evolves Team Tucker will continue to go above and beyond in their service to you.

I am grateful for the volunteers who serve on city boards and commissions. We have a wealth of knowledgeable and experienced citizens who give freely of their time to help guide important decisions.

I am hopeful our city boards and commissions will continue to attract citizens willing to share their expertise with us. I've always said Tucker's biggest asset is our people.

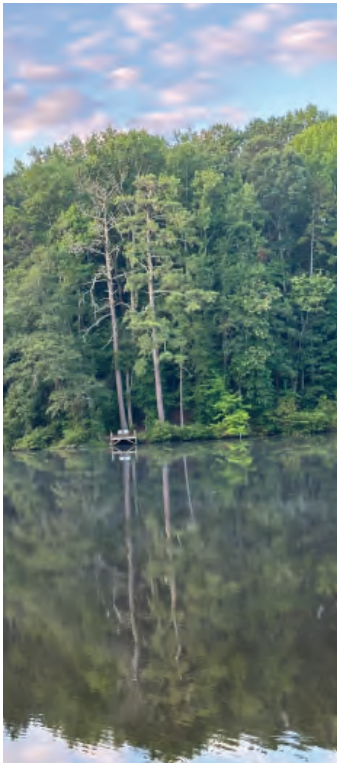
I am grateful for our mayor and our council members, past and present, as we've learned to work together for all of Tucker. Through the years we have shared some of life's greatest joys and greatest sorrows. Not a day goes by that I do not think of Bill Rosenfeld who left us too soon. I am also grateful for our families, and their support and sacrifice.

I am hopeful for Amy and Vinh as they start their journey as your new council members. Please show them patience and grace as they learn the ins and outs of their new role. May they rely on you as I did for support and guidance.

Never did I imagine back in 1997 when I moved to Tucker how much I would come to love this community and how much you have become a part of my life. We have celebrated great accomplishments together, faced great challenges together and will continue to work toward a bright future together.

Anne Lerner

YEAR IN PICTURES



BUSINESS BOOM

by Angela Brooks, Business Outreach Specialist



Even before the Halloween candy is on clearance, scads of marketing and advertising campaigns have hit the media, and retailers have put out the decorations for the next big sales rush. Yes, it's that time again: The holiday shopping season is upon us.

According to the National Retail Federation, November and December can make up as much as 40 percent of a small business's annual revenue. Yet, many small businesses are still struggling to bring operations and earnings back to pre-pandemic levels as they reopen.

In 2010, American Express (AE) launched the Shop Small® marketing initiative to bring attention to and to encourage people to shop small and locally- owned/operated businesses year-round and particularly during the holidays.

"We want shoppers to support the small businesses we know and love that are the backbone of this community. It's important for businesses in Tucker and all around the country," said Tucker Mayor Frank Auman.

Small business in Tucker offers so much more than retail in the conventional sense. It's home to a variety of products and services such as nail and hair salons, spas, antiques, furniture, vintage clothing, custom engraving, dining, and so much more.

During the November 13 City Council meeting, the mayor issued a formal proclamation recognizing November 25, 2023 as Small Business Saturday® -- another component of the AE marketing initiative -- and he encouraged support for Tucker's businesses this holiday season and beyond.

"It's time when the residents can make a concerted effort to come out and intentionally support Tucker's small business community," said Auman.

Sure, it's easy and convenient to click your way through Amazon.com or big box e-commerce site, but there's no denying you're not going to get an environmental experience as you would going to a mom-and-pop store or small retail store. If you still prefer online shopping, many local merchants offer e-commerce shopping as well. Check it out before heading to you know where dot com.

And, according to the United States Small Business Administration, when shoppers spend \$100 at a small business approximately \$48 of that stays within the community, spend the same \$100 at a big box store or a national retailer and only \$14 stays local. Small businesses also bring new jobs and generally hire local talent.

Admittedly, shopping local and small may require more thought for most of us. But the reward may be finding some hidden gems right in our own backyard and gift-giving ideas that you may not have even considered.

Supporting local small businesses for most of us requires an intentional act; one that small businesses in our Tucker community need to stay afloat.

So, plan ahead and shop intentionally at locally owned small businesses. "And supporting local doesn't need to end after the holiday season. Let's keep doing so all year long," said Auman.

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF THE YEAR



DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL II OF THE YEAR
SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DR. SYREETA MCTIER

BROCKETT ELEMENTARY

- Teacher of the Year: Shirley Applewhite
- Educational Support Professional of the Year: Verlincia Zachery

IDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

- Teacher of the Year: Raven Sanders
- Educational Support Professional of the Year: Juanita Kelly and Thea Hall

LIVSEY ELEMENTARY

- Teacher of the Year: Ms. Pamela Banks
- Educational Support Professional of the Year I: Ms. Tamika Kemp

MIDVALE ELEMENTARY

- Teacher of the Year: Thomas Jones
- Educational Support Professional: Vickie Huddleston

SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY

- Teacher of the Year: Amy Yang
- Educational Support Professional II: Dr. Syreeta McTier
- Educational Support Professional I: Carmecia Askew



TUCKER MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Teacher of the Year: Shakira Bates
- Educational Support Professional: Mark Jeffery and Dane Watson

TUCKER HIGH SCHOOL

- Teacher of the Year: Chasity Hughes
- Educational Support Professional: Deven Currie and Stephanie McDonald

TUCKER CLUSTER *Updates & News*

IMPORTANT DATES

December 15
Last Day of First Semester

December 18
Start of Winter Break
(schools closed)

BRAG SHEET

MIDVALE ELEMENTARY will host two holiday concerts this season. First, third and fifth grades will perform on December 7, and preschool, kindergarten, second and fourth will perform on December 12.

TUCKER MIDDLE is collecting wish list items for families in need until December 8 for their Angel Tree. Participants may select an ornament with a wish list item written on it and bring the wrapped gift to school.

FIT & FUN INTUCKER

contributed by Tucker Parks and Recreation



In an effort to keep our minds and bodies healthy, the

City of Tucker Parks and Recreation offers many ways to help with the winter blues and bulge at bay. All our parks are open until sunset for you to enjoy an early afternoon walk or hike on our miles and miles of trails. If you are looking for something a bit more physically challenging, head over to our Fit Court located in the Church Street Greenspace. This is a self-led workout where you can follow the prompt on the signage or scan the QR code for further guidance. There are a total of six playgrounds in our parks which are a great way to involve the young children in some fresh air and activities. Another

great activity is Pickleball, have you heard of it? Rosenfeld has open play during the day, just show up and there is always someone there eager to show you the way. If you are looking for more coordinated activities, you can come to Tucker Recreation Center for a list of daily activities including senior dance classes, yoga classes, pottery, aerobics, and more!

A great way to beat the winter blues is engaging in some of our community events, such as the upcoming North Pole Event on December 2. This will kick off the official holiday season with the lighting of the City's holiday tree and menorah, live holiday music, performances from our local dance and theatre groups and the opportunity to see Santa and Mrs. Claus. There will also be food vendors, crafts for kids of all ages,

a giant snow globe, and bounce houses. This is going to be a magical night for sure!

Main Street Tucker is bedecked in holiday cheer and welcoming you to stay a while and enjoy the festive sights, grab a bite to eat or do some shopping for your family and friends.

Whatever you decide to do to keep your mind and body healthy remember connection is a key part of mental and physical wellbeing; talk to each other, hike with each other, play and break bread. We need one another and this is a great time to reconnect.

Be sure to follow us on the website, Facebook and Instagram for updates on events and department information.

Have a safe and happy holiday!

JANUARY 15
MILK DAY

Join us in honoring
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
with a Day of Service
at Johns Homestead

TRAIL
MAINTENANCE

MAKE IT A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF



Teen volunteers give their time and love at Furkids Animal Rescue



Fall Pickleball Champions



[TUCKERGA.GOV/PARKS/EVENTS](https://tuckerga.gov/parks/events)



TUCKER Community Corner



Harold Smith and Handy Ace Hardware staff were this year's recipient of the Mayor's Business Award.

12/7, 12/14 & 12/21 – Tucker Farmers Market Online

4-6 p.m.

4882 Lavista Road
TFMOnlineStore.com

The Tucker Farmers Market continues online throughout the winter season. Be sure to complete your orders by the Wednesday morning before market day.

12/9 – FODAC's Breakfast with Santa

9:30 a.m.-Noon

2997 Lawrenceville Highway

Friends of Disabled Adults and Children is hosting Breakfast with Santa to raise funds to provide essential mobility equipment to children in need. Enjoy a family breakfast and musical entertainment! Tickets available at fodac.org/breakfast-with-santa.

12/14-16 – NETWorks Cooperative Ministry's Good Neighbor Christmas Shop

Hours Vary

4259 North Park Drive

Christmas gifts will be offered at low cost to families who qualify for services. Donations accepted until December 5. Visit networkscoop.org/christmas for hours and more information.

12/16 – Community Christmas Concert

5 p.m.

4532 Lavista Road

Join the Tucker Community Singers at First Christian Church of Atlanta for your holiday favorites featuring Tucker Handbell Players, guest musicians and a Hallelujah Chorus sing-along.