

INTUCKER

FEBRUARY 2026 | VOLUME 10 | ISSUE 2



LOCAL
LEGEND
SHINES

ELECTED OFFICIALS

ANNE LERNER
Mayor

ROGER W. ORLANDO
District 1 - Post 1

CARA SCHROEDER
District 2 - Post 1

ALEXIS WEAVER
District 3 - Post 1

VIRGINIA RECE
District 1 - Post 2

VINH NGUYEN
District 2 - Post 2

AMY TROCCHI
District 3 - Post 2

CITY SOCIALS



nextdoor

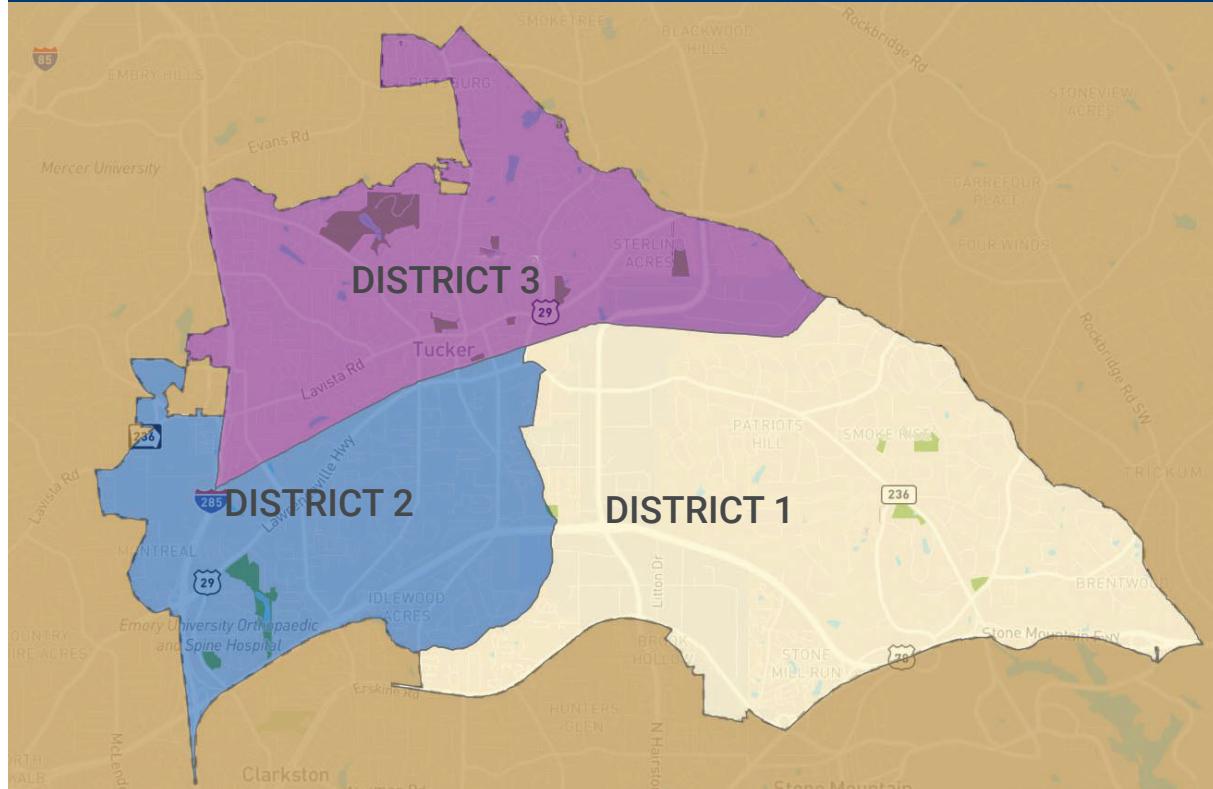
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DISTRICT MAP



EDITOR'S NOTE

SONJA SZUBSKI - COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



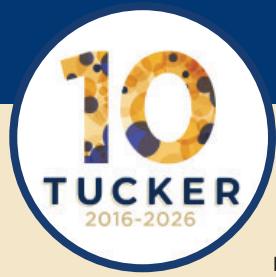
Is January actually done?! January always feels like it is years long, maybe it is the recovery from all of the holiday "joy" or feeling like a new year expects a new definition for ourselves. Either way, I am happy to be in February, the month of love and also, Black History Month.

Tucker would not be the strong and diverse community it is today without the backbone and influence of the historically black neighborhood of Peters Park. For the full story of the small but mighty neighborhood check out the City's

documentary from 2020, Four Streets on YouTube.com/cityoftucker.

Since Tucker incorporated, the neighbors of Peters Park, which includes many of the original founding families, created a civic association to work in tandem with the City for various improvements. The streets of Peters Park have been transformed with landscaping, street sign toppers, renovated park playground equipment and just last month the addition of bathrooms at William McKinley Peters Park was celebrated. This neighborhood and all of the improvements are a testimony to the power of partnership between the City, the neighbors and the County.





TEN YEARS IN ONE

Every month of this year we will be celebrating the major milestones and those that have supported the growth of the City of Tucker.

This month we are honoring our numerous volunteer groups. As an extension of the celebration, the public is welcome to come to City Hall and pick up a special gift starting February 15.

Since the nineteenth century, when Tucker was first established as a railroad stop, volunteers were relied upon to establish a community center, create a sense of place and steer the future of the community.

Every year, the City of Tucker celebrates the sweat equity of those that dedicate their time to serving the community with a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. The format, venue and guest list have evolved over the years,

ranging from a formal dinner to the State of the City address, to the current event that is a little more laid back but still warm and full of gratitude.

The guest list is driven by the organizations that have requested to be added to the City website, are a registered 501(c) 3 and/or have a presence on the web and offer volunteer opportunities to the community. The list is impressively larger for a city the size of Tucker and speaks to the warm hearts that have made Tucker their home. Any given week there are opportunities to serve the less fortunate at the local food banks, gather at an art show, Tucker Day, clean up a park or trail, or show support for the LGBTQ+ community. Tucker is a wonderfully diverse population that has grown and expanded in every way. I imagine the founding families would be very proud of the foundation they laid and the way Tucker has grown from it, strong yet warm, close-knit but welcoming.



LOCAL VOLUNTEER GROUPS

- ARTUCKER
- CITIZENS FOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES IN TUCKER
- FRIENDS OF TUCKER PARKS
- FODAC
- LA VISTA LIONS CLUB
- MAIN STREET ALLIANCE
- MAIN STREET THEATRE TUCKER
- NETWORKS COOPERATIVE MINISTRY
- OMEGA SUPPORT SERVICES
- SMOKE RISE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

- SMOKE SIGNAL
- TUCKER ART ALLIANCE
- TUCKER BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
- TUCKER CIVIC ASSOCIATION
- TUCKER CLUSTER COUNCIL
- TUCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- TUCKER MASONIC LODGE NO. 42
- TUCKER OPTIMIST CLUB
- TUCKER PRIDE
- TUCKER ROTARY

DATES TO KNOW

**FEBRUARY 2
4:30 P.M.**
Downtown Development Authority Meeting

FEBRUARY 2, 7 P.M.
City Council Work Session

FEBRUARY 3, 7 P.M.
Zoning Board of Appeals

FEBRUARY 6, 7 P.M.
Winter Concert Series
Bourbon Brothers Band
Tucker Recreation Center

FEBRUARY 7, 7 P.M.
Special Called Council Strategic Planning Session

Clarkston City Hall
736 Park North Boulevard
Clarkston, GA 30021

FEBRUARY 9, 7 P.M.
City Council Meeting

FEBRUARY 19, 7 P.M.
Planning Commission

FEBRUARY 16
All City Buildings will be closed in observance of Presidents Day

FEBRUARY 20, 7 P.M.
Winter Concert Series
Atomic Lush
Tucker Recreation Center

FEBRUARY 23, 7 P.M.
City Council Work Session

THE ADDAMS FAMILY COMES TO TUCKER



This is not your average middle school play.

Unlike most middle school shows, TMS's cast is full of both experienced students and new performers bringing their talent to the stage. Their production standards are high. They work to ensure a high value entertainment experience, and they have even found the need to create VIP sections for their shows. Even though the cast members are middle school students, they conduct themselves professionally.

TMS productions are a big deal at the school and in the Tucker community. "It's not a middle school production for us," said TMS drama teacher and the show's director, Artanza Denson. "It is the Super Bowl for us."

The cast has worked on the show for months. The production team met in August to begin planning the show. This was followed by auditions in October, and since November, the cast has rehearsed dance routines with choreographer and

assistant director Lauren Tally. Cast members can be seen walking the halls of TMS with scripts in hand, studying their lines with color-coded tabs. Many even practiced during the winter break.

Several cast members have appeared in musicals such as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*. Some have even performed in Main Street Theatre productions.

Director Denson is impressed by the level of talent she sees and feels fortunate that the Tucker community helps nurture these young performers. "Our students are now auditioning to leave here to go to the DeKalb School of the Arts," Denson said. "We're getting some really good talent, and now they are choosing to pursue it a little bit further... Livsey has a theatre program, so now we're getting talent from one of the elementary schools."

In addition to talent, Denson is grateful for the strong community support the program

receives. There are always volunteers who help to construct sets during build days and prepare for performances. Local businesses support the department by hosting fundraising events.

Denson appreciates the parents of TMS students. They help with makeup and even provide meals for the students. In one instance, art director Brittany Ranew shared a sketch of her vision for set design with a parent, who listened and used his skills to create a 3D model rendering within hours. That same parent then connected the production team with the Cofer Brothers, and TMS now works with them for supplies.

"It would not be possible without the support," said Denson. "This community has embraced what we are doing."

Denson hopes that audiences will enjoy the show's dark humor and leave with a message about the importance of truth, family and love.



Tucker Middle Schools' arts program will perform *The Addams Family* Musical March 4 and March 5 at 6:30 p.m. at Tucker Middle School. General admission tickets are \$10, while VIP tickets are \$15 and include programs and reserved front row seating.



The Addams Family

CAST LIST

GOMEZ ADDAMS

Noel Head

MORTICIA ADDAMS

Arya Macisco

PUGSLEY ADDAMS

Ariel Mcinnis

WEDNESDAY ADDAMS

Isabelle Holland

Madeline Westbrook

UNCLE FESTER

Cameron Lopez

GRANDMA

Charlotte Zatezalo

LURCH

Liam Brown

LUCAS BEINEKE

Landon Millican

ALICE BEINEKE

SunRah Gaspard

MAL BEINEKE

J'hmier Ross

ANCESTORS

Anesushe Moyo

Ariam Teweldebrahn

Eden Fowler

Essence Adams

Eleanor Cullifer

Francylla Kayembe

Harper Lovett

Janelle Ragin

Lynden Collins

Mariah Hardman

Max Lopez

Summyr Bryant

Vivienne Hillyer



THS ALUM JOSIAH LAWSON EXCELS ON AND OFF THE COURT

Same colors, same mascot, same confidence and the same signature roar.

Josiah Lawson still wears the same maroon and gold, represents the same mascot, and unleashes the same signature roar. From the hardwood courts of Tucker High School to Morehouse College, his journey has shifted locations without altering his identity. The former Tiger carries the spirit of Tucker wherever he goes. Although he now competes at the collegiate level, the image remains familiar: he plays with unshakable confidence and punctuates big plays with his trademark celebration, screaming with his arms flexed at his sides.

Lawson's love for the game ignited at a young age under the tutelage of his father, who trained both Josiah and his older brother, Asaad. Josiah credits those early sessions and the constant sibling rivalry for sharpening his competitive edge.

"The one-on-one games really helped my competitive edge," Lawson said. "He was always better than me. Just seeing him do the things he did just inspired me to be good. It was really great just having a workout partner, too, all these years."

The tables have turned recently, as the Morehouse sophomore joked that Asaad can no longer beat him in a matchup. The brothers previously shared the court at both Druid Hills and Tucker High School. Josiah's transition to Tucker after his freshman year was seamless, aided by deep roots in the local basketball community.

"It was great," Lawson said. "There were a lot of familiar faces on the team that I already played AAU with growing up. It was not like a new experience for me. I already had some comradery with the players there."

During his tenure at THS, Lawson became a local legend. He led the team to a regional championship and earned All-State honors for three consecutive years. By the time he graduated, he had amassed over 1,500 points and 700 rebounds, cementing his place as one of the top three scorers in school history and top

20 in DeKalb County history. His favorite memory remains the electric atmosphere of his sophomore year region title win, played before a sold-out home crowd.

"It was the greatest feeling especially winning and seeing all of the hard work paying off," Lawson said. "That was one of the top moments for me."

Beyond the court, Lawson excelled as a scholar. He utilized dual enrollment at Georgia State University during his junior and senior years to earn college credit while freeing up time for training. He finished high school with a staggering 4.5 GPA, balancing elite athleticism with academic rigor.

When it came time to choose a college, Lawson was a high-commodity recruit with offers from Harvard University, Yale, Princeton, and the University of Georgia. However, the choice was deeply personal. As a third-generation legacy student whose father and grandfather both attended Morehouse, the decision to head to the Morehouse was a "no-brainer." Joining the ranks of the Maroon Tigers was not just a basketball decision; it was a commitment to the lineage of "Morehouse Men" who came before him, ensuring the family name remains synonymous with the institution's prestigious history.

Now in his second season with the program, Lawson is hungry for more. After contributing valuable minutes as a true freshman, an injury forced him to redshirt. He has returned this season with a professional mindset and lofty ambitions: a NCAA Division II National Championship and individual honors as Conference Player of the Year and All-American.

Because of his early start with college credits, Lawson is on track to graduate next year with a degree in Computer Science while maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA. His long-term blueprint is a calculated climb. He plans to graduate early, use his remaining eligibility to showcase his talents at the Division I level, and ultimately launch a professional career. Whether he is dominating the courts or mastering code, Josiah Lawson is building a future as storied as his family's past.

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

ONPOINT INSTITUTE

After the birth of her second child, Sandra Thompson drifted in and out of consciousness. Everything felt like a blurred haze until a nurse entered the room to check her vitals. In her vulnerable state, Thompson heard the nurse say, 'This woman is sick.' She was immediately rushed to ICU. Following her recovery, Thompson felt a profound sense of gratitude for the nurse who took decisive action. That "angel" became her inspiration, sparking a journey into the medical field that eventually led Thompson to establish the OnPoint Institute, an organization dedicated to preparing individuals for careers in nursing.

"We are a non-profit community based educational organization," Thompson said. "So what we do is we provide several services for those who are underserved."

The institute offers an extensive range of medical training and certifications, including Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) programs, phlebotomy, caregiver training, and CPR certification. As executive director and owner, Thompson ensures that financial barriers never prevent a student from learning.

"If we don't have grants for you, we offer discounts and do everything we can to help," Thompson said. "We don't ever turn anyone away."

Thompson's dedication is rooted in her own history. She grew up in a New York neighborhood struggling with violence and drugs, where addicts frequently occupied the roof of her apartment building.

"It was so bad. It was gang infested and that kind of thing," Thompson said. "At this point we lived on the fifth floor that led to the roof. The drug addicts would sit on the roof and shoot up drugs."

To escape that environment, her mother moved the family to Georgia. Thompson began her career as a nursing assistant and was encouraged by a neighbor to pursue higher education. Though she initially struggled with the entrance exams, her determination never wavered.

"Originally I could not get into nursing school," Thompson said. "I could not pass the test to get into nursing school but I kept trying and trying."

Eventually, she entered nursing school, graduated, and began working as a Registered Nurse. This career shift brought her financial freedom, a luxury she realized when she was finally able to purchase a sweater she had once considered an impossible waste of money.

Through OnPoint Institute, Thompson helps others achieve that same independence.



She has been a nurse for over 30 years and continues to work in the field to fund the school, often investing her own savings to keep the doors open. Her reward is witnessing success stories like that of Rosa Amezquita, who overcame a language barrier to graduate with the highest scores in her class.

"It feels wonderful because what I find is that many times we don't have the same opportunity as those that are of a lighter color," Thompson said.

Reflecting on her growth from an introverted girl in a difficult environment to the leader of an educational facility to the leader of an educational facility, Thompson remains humbled by her mission.

"My favorite part about all of this is being able to come into this facility and look at it and think about where I came from and to be honest with you, I just praise God because of where I came from and to have this is a blessing," Thompson said. Located at 2295 Park Lake Drive, the OnPoint Institute continues to provide scholarships and grants to those ready to change their lives. For more information visit onpointinstitute.org

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

BARBARA LUTON

Barbara Luton is a quiet force who gets things done in Tucker and the surrounding areas. Barbara and her husband Frank moved to the Smoke Rise area in 1987, long before it became part of Tucker. Never seeking the spotlight, she is always one of the first to volunteer or take a leadership role when something needs to be done, but she never seeks the spotlight.

A retired schoolteacher, her current involvement in local schools includes reading to children at Smoke Rise Elementary, heading up the "Take a Veteran to School" program, and various other projects.

Within the Stone Mountain Woman's Club, a local service organization, Barbara has held nearly every leadership position. Many in the community will recognize her efforts on The Art of Nature Garden Tour, which takes place in May. The Garden Tour features gardens

in Tucker, Smoke Rise, and Stone Mountain, and raises funds to support the club's many charitable projects. Barbara is always on the lookout for interesting and amazing gardens and would love to hear of some new gardens to feature. She can often be seen in the Stone Mountain Woman's Club tent at Tucker Days.

Barbara also serves on The Smoke Signal News as a writer and a manager of the flyer inserts. She loves reading and encourages others to read with an active book club. She is also active in Smoke Rise Baptist Church and the Mountain Mums Garden Club. Recently, she helped organize a fundraiser/alliance with Wine and Whimseys, a Tucker Main Street business, to help support the community.

Barbara's style of leadership in getting people involved in their community is uniquely hers. She is never the loudest voice, but the most



direct, getting immediately to the point. It usually ends with "Will you do it?" There are very few who can say "no" to Barbara. With her many years of contributions to our community, we all know that we can count on her. Barbara has proven herself over and over again and is truly deserving of the Citizen of the Month recognition.

Nominated by Pat Soltys

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE LAST CITY COUNCIL MEETING? JANUARY 2026 CITY COUNCIL RECAP

In a special called meeting the hour before the first Tucker City Council meeting of 2026, the ten-year-old City welcomed Mayor Anne Lerner in an official oath of office and a ceremonial passing of the gavel from Mayor Auman.

The oath of office was also administered to the three councilmembers that were re-elected for Seat 1 of each District. Councilmembers Roger Orlando (D1), Cara Schroeder (D2) and Alexis Weaver (D3) re-avowed their commitment to the City of Tucker surrounded by their families and warmly cheered by their community.

Following a small celebration the new mayor and council held their first meeting together as a Council.

The Tucker High School JROTC Color Guard presented the colors and led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Council approved the agenda for the evening then elected District One Councilmember Virginia Rece to serve as Mayor Pro-Tempore in the event the Mayor is temporarily unable to serve.

As her first order of business as Mayor, Mayor Lerner introduced a resolution to declare the City of Tucker a certified "City of Civility" as recognized by the Georgia Municipal Association.

The consent agenda was then approved unanimously and contained the minutes from the December meeting, a resolution for an application for funding for the Greenway Connector, the same for the Tucker-Northlake Trail, an amendment to the pay structure to add seasonal part time

positions for the summer. The consent agenda also had two contract amendments for stormwater repairs and Richardson Street Construction.

Item J.1, an ordinance for a SLUP at 3892 Lavista Road was withdrawn by the applicant and the Council voted unanimously to accept the withdrawal.

Item J.2 was approved unanimously to allow for a massage establishment at 3983 Lavista Road.

Item K.1 passed unanimously for a contract with CSX Transportation for a preliminary engineering agreement for grader crossing at Brockett Road.

Item K.2 passed unanimously for a contract for stormwater repairs at four locations.

Item K.3 passed 6-1 for the amendment to the OPTECH contract for park maintenance.

Item K.4 passed unanimously for a contract with LOWE for the preparation of bid documents, construction engineering and inspections services and testing for Rosenfeld park improvements.

Item K.5 passed unanimously an agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for construction funding at Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard.

The Mayor and Council then recessed for executive session with no action after.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR PARKS ?

PARKS & RECREATION PROGRAM UPDATES

EVENTS

WINTER CONCERT SERIES

Feb. 6 - The Bourbon Brothers Band

Feb 20 - Atomic Lush

Time: 6-9 p.m. Live music starts at 7 p.m.

Location: Tucker Recreation Center

Warm up your winter weekends with live music at the Tucker Winter Concert Series! Enjoy performances from talented local artists covering a variety of genres. Bring your friends, family, and a cozy blanket as you unwind and enjoy great music in a festive, relaxed atmosphere.

INTERNATIONAL BOOK GIVING DAY

February 14, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Location: Tucker Recreation Center

Celebrate the joy of reading with our Book Swap Day at the Tucker Recreation Center! Drop in anytime, leave a book you've enjoyed, and pick up a new one to explore. It's a fun and simple way to share stories and connect with fellow book lovers in the community.

PERK UP WITH PARKS

Date: February 21 (third Saturday of each month) at 9 a.m.

Location: Tucker Recreation Center

Join the Parks and Recreation leadership team for an open and engaging conversation about the future of our parks, programs, and community spaces! This gathering is designed to be a collaborative space where residents can connect directly with department leaders to discuss the heartbeat of our city. We believe that the best way to grow is by listening to the people who use our facilities every day, and we want to hear your unique perspective on how we are doing.

Please bring your questions, creative ideas, and honest feedback. Whether you want to highlight a program that is working well, discuss areas that need improvement, or pitch a brand-new concept for our green spaces, your input is invaluable. This is your chance to play an active role in the decision-making process and help us ensure that our recreational offerings continue to meet the diverse needs of the Tucker community. Together, we can shape a vibrant future for our parks that we can all be proud of.



SPORTS

YOUTH BASEBALL REGISTRATION

Registration now open

Ages: 3-13

Cost: - 3&4 - \$50 | 5&6 - \$110 | 8U - \$125 | 10U & Up - \$150

Season runs March through May

Locations: Kelley Cofer Park & Fitzgerald Park

Contact: Chris Satterfield

chrissatterfield@tuckerga.gov

ADULT SPORTS LEAGUE (MEN'S BASKETBALL, CORNHOLE, KICKBALL, & VOLLEYBALL)

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Cost: \$550 per team

Registration now open

Season starts in March

CORNHOLE

Cost: \$50 per team

Registration opens February 2

Season starts in March

KICKBALL

Cost: \$300 per team

Registration now open

Season starts in March

VOLLEYBALL

Cost: \$300 per team

Registration now open

Season starts in March

GOLF

Cost: \$50 per player (weekly greens fee paid to Heritage Golf Course)

Registration opens February 2

Seven week league starts March 9

Ages: 18+

CLASSES

AMERICAN RED CROSS

ADULT PEDIATRIC CPR/FIRST AID/ AED

February 5, February 19, March 5, March 19

Time: 5:30-8 p.m.

Cost: \$95

BABYSITTERS TRAINER WITH PEDIATRIC CPR

February 28

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT -

February 3, February 17, March 3, March 17

Time: 5:30-8 p.m.

Cost: \$85 per class

WILDERNESS & REMOTE FIRST AID

Saturday, March 3, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. and

Sunday, March 8, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

Cost: \$180

ARTS

PAINT LIKE BOB ROSS

Date: Saturday, February 21

Time: 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Location: Tucker Recreation Center

Cost: \$95 per person (includes all supplies)

Complete a Bob Ross-style winter landscape painting in just one class...even if you've never painted before! Experience the magic of techniques made famous by Bob Ross in The Joy of Painting ®. Bob Ross Certified Instructor, Jeremy Rogers will guide you step-by-step through creating a beautiful snowy scene. This fun, light-hearted class is all about enjoying the process and creating something you're proud of. (Only official Bob Ross supplies are used for an authentic experience.) All painting supplies are included! Please bring a roll of paper towels, a small pack of baby wipes, and a cardboard box large enough to carry home a 12"x16" wet canvas.

PROGRAMS BY AGE OR INTEREST

ADVENTURES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

KIDS

SPRING BREAK CAMP

Registration opens March 2 at 8 a.m.
Dates: April 6-10 Get ready for a week of adventure at Spring Break Camp! Kids ages 5-12 will enjoy playing outside like they are at the beach, creative crafts, and hands-on STEAM activities all led by our energetic staff. It's the perfect way to explore, make friends, and celebrate springtime fun!

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Date: March 20, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Registration opens February 28
Location: Tucker Recreation Center
Ages: 4-10
Cost: \$20 per child

March Madness Fun! Parents, take your shot at a night off while the kids enjoy their own slam dunk evening! We'll keep the little ones busy with games, crafts, and plenty of high-energy fun with no brackets required. You'll score some kid-free time, and they'll have fun!

TEENS

VOLUNTEER & OUTING: LIFELINE ANIMAL SHELTER & MAIN EVENT

Saturday, March 7, 9:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Registration now open
Cost: \$20
Ages: 12-18

VOLUNTEER: SPRING FLING

Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Registration now open
Cost: Free
Location: Fitzgerald Park
Ages: 15-18

TEEN SUMMER OVERNIGHT TRIP

June 14 through June 19
Registration now open
Ages: 15-18

Join us for an unforgettable outdoor adventure. This trip features an incredible lineup of activities, including white water rafting, zip lining, horseback riding, and a sunset cruise. Teens will explore the beauty of the Smoky Mountains and Mammoth Cave National Parks while making stops in Chattanooga, Cave City, and Asheville. In addition to the adventure activities, teens will also earn service hours throughout the week.



SENIORS

SENIOR VALENTINE'S LUNCH

Date: Friday, February 13
Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Location: Tucker Recreation Center

Celebrate love and friendship at our annual Senior Valentine's Lunch! Enjoy a delicious catered meal from Bambinelli's complete with fresh salad and dinner rolls, savory lunch entree, dessert, and coffee. Bring your appetite and your Valentine spirit for an afternoon of great food, good company, and warm memories.

Registration now open

OUTDOORS

TUCKER OUTDOORS CLUB

The Tucker Outdoors Club is a free-to-join adult hiking group that explores the great outdoors together! Registration is required. Transportation is available for \$5 per trip for our hikes, or you can drive yourself for free. Whether you're a seasoned hiker or just getting started, join us for fresh air, great company, and unforgettable outdoor experiences.

February 21 - Sweetwater Creek
March 28 - Lula Land Trust

AROUND TOWN

UPCOMING EVENTS IN TUCKER



TuckerRestaurantWeek.com

Our 6th Annual Tucker Restaurant Week is just around the corner and promises to be our best one yet! From Latin American dishes to BBQ, sweet treats to Asian cuisine, Southern cooking and more, you're sure to discover some new hidden gems and enjoy revisiting a few of your favorites!



TUCKERGA.GOV/PARKS/EVENTS



TUCKER



Tucker Town Green sparkled with icicles due to Ice Storm Fern.