

# El Mirage News

[www.cityofelmirage.org](http://www.cityofelmirage.org)

Vol. 2, No. 12

623-972-8116

## Bond for police station and recreational facility passes

On Nov. 16, the Maricopa County Board of Commissioners certified City voters' passage of the \$8.5 million bond for a new El Mirage police station and recreational facility. That same day, the El Mirage City Council held a special meeting to formally accept the Board's decision. In their comments concerning the bond, City Council members felt strongly that El Mirage would benefit immensely from the new facilities. Members also expressed their understanding of voters who may not have approved of the bond, with Mayor Mook stating, "The Council is very mindful that the bond is a big commitment for the people of El Mirage. It is my hope that every resident will come to recognize their financial investment as essential to the future safety and health of our entire community."



With passage of the bond confirmed, the City's immediate attention now turns to formation of an internal project team to spearhead the police station's construction. The new station, to be located just south of Gateway Park, will have the caliber of physical infrastructure and equipment needed to maximize the department's law enforcement and crime reduction capabilities.

"The police department is very grateful to El Mirage citizens who

believed in our mission of community-based policing. We want to ensure them that the new station will be as much theirs as ours," said Chief Steve Campbell, referring to plans to make station facilities available to the community when possible for trainings, meetings, and other uses.

In the coming months, City management also plans to hold a series of discussions concerning construction of the recreational facility. Discussions will focus on both the physical structure and the mix of services possible for such a facility in El Mirage. More importantly, the City wants to ensure residents are provided recreational activities currently not available in El Mirage, as well as activities that foster more opportunities for residents of all ages to connect with each other as a community.



## City seeks volunteers to collect documents, photos, and personal recollections of El Mirage history

El Mirage officials are calling on residents and others to volunteer for the first ever El Mirage "History Drive." Throughout the City's history, there has not been an organized effort to accurately chronicle the community's past through photos, documents, and personal recollections,

and officials want that to change. According to Mayor Lana Mook, "The goal here is to create a database of information that will preserve the rich history of El Mirage, as well as educate the public about the pivotal role our

**MORE HISTORY ON 6**

## El Mirage installs new City entrance signs



From left, City Manager Spencer Isom, Councilman Roy Delgado, Mayor Lana Mook, Councilman Lynn Selby, and City Engineer Lance Calvert.

For travelers along Grand Avenue, El Mirage City limits may have been a matter for speculation, at least until recently when installation was completed on the City's new entrance signs. As part of a \$300,000 federal stimulus grant, El Mirage and the Arizona Department of Transportation partnered to install the signs, including landscaping on Grand Avenue just west of the Agua Fria Riverbed and at the Grand Avenue/Greenway Road intersection. Council approval to proceed with the project came last May when members were assured no local funds would be used for construction.

The signs, each with the message - "Welcome to El Mirage, Inc. 1951" - depict area themes including the mountains, the river, and the essential shape of the City itself.

Since energy conservation is a primary consideration with every capital project going forward, the City Council wanted the signs to be solar powered. "Energy savings and safety remain our priorities," said Mayor Lana Mook, referring also to the Council's decision that the signs must be the breakaway type, intended to protect drivers who may come in contact with them.

### IMPORTANT CITY ANNOUNCEMENTS: EL MIRAGE OFFICE CLOSURE NOTICE

City Hall, 12145 NW Grand Ave., will be closed in recognition of the following holidays:

Christmas Holiday – Dec. 26 through 30  
New Year's Day – Jan. 2, 2012

\*The Municipal Court at 14010 N. El Mirage Road will remain open Dec. 27 through 30.

The El Mirage Senior Center will be open between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. for the purpose of serving meals Dec. 27 through 30.

Fire and Police Emergency and Non-Emergency Services are fully operational during the holiday closures.

Utility Payments: Residents wishing to make payments for utility bills can utilize the drop box in the City Hall parking lot, or by using the [www.XpressBillPay.com](http://www.XpressBillPay.com) feature on the City's website at [www.cityofelmirage.org](http://www.cityofelmirage.org).

The trash holiday schedule can be seen by visiting [http://parksandsons.com/EIMirage\\_HolidaySchedule.html](http://parksandsons.com/EIMirage_HolidaySchedule.html).

For any questions, call 623-972-8116.

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## Mayor's Message: Making the case for casting your vote

This past year as your Mayor has been one of listening and learning. When I campaigned more than a year ago, I knocked on hundreds and hundreds of doors here in El Mirage. I was able to speak personally with many of you and listen to your concerns. I learned a lot.

I learned many of you were still struggling to make it week-to-week, month-to-month. I learned many of

you really, really wanted to see more businesses and jobs come to El Mirage. I learned many of you were concerned about the lack of amenities in our small community and the lack of opportunity for our young children.

In response to the overwhelming feedback we received during the 2010 campaign, the entire City Council voted unanimously to make a community recreational facility with a swimming pool and a new police station a priority for El Mirage residents. We did this because we believed offering a major community amenity such as a YMCA with a swimming pool would enhance the property values of our existing homes. We believed it would give our families, seniors, and young children multiple outlets for fun and healthy community-building activities. We believed it would help keep our crime rates low and our citizen satisfaction high. And with record-low construction costs and the fact that an outside organization (such as a YMCA) would oper-



Mayor Lana Mook

that bringing these facilities to our City was extremely important, we thought the ultimate decision should rest with you, the voter.

What did YOU want? On Nov. 8, all El Mirage voters were asked to let their voices be heard on this important issue. In this case, the City Council made voting as easy as possible by agreeing to an all-mail bond election. After all 2,323 votes were counted, the bond passed by 3 votes, tipping the scales in favor of bringing a new police station and YMCA-type recreational facility to our City. Many of you have since contacted me to tell me you didn't vote because you thought your vote wasn't essential. The results of this election should tell you that every vote counts, whether you approved or disapproved of the ballot measure.

Next year, I hope to see many, many more of you voting to chart El Mirage's future. In the meantime, the Council and I will continue to represent your voice the best we can, working for the best interest of the residents of El Mirage.

ate the facility, the risk and overhead to the City would be low while the savings to residents would be high.

We also believed the hardworking men and women of our El Mirage Police Department desperately needed adequate working conditions in a more permanent, secure facility instead of the trailers and modular buildings in which they currently operate.

We anticipated the cost of the two key facilities to be approximately \$24 per year to the average El Mirage homeowner. Nearly everyone I spoke with said it was a small price to pay to improve our community and make it a safer, more attractive place to live. Even though we felt very strongly

### Cactus Wren Training Program

2011- 5th Anniversary

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Phoenix Dec. 15	Mesa Dec. 1						
1:30pm - 4:30pm							
FREE CPR & First Aid Classes for First 20 people							

<b>Locations</b>	<b>NEW</b>	<b>Nursing Assistants Class Schedule</b>								
10640 N 28th Dr. Bldg C-107 and A-103 Phoenix, AZ 85029	1833 W Main St. #138 Mesa, AZ 85201	<table border="0" style="width: 100%; font-size: x-small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"><b>Morning Class</b> (9:00 am to 1:15pm)</td> <td style="width: 50%;"><b>Evening Class</b> (4 pm to 8:15 pm)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dec 12, 2011</td> <td>Dec 5, 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan 9, 2012</td> <td>Jan 2, 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feb. 13, 2012</td> <td>Feb. 6, 2012</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Morning Class</b> (9:00 am to 1:15pm)	<b>Evening Class</b> (4 pm to 8:15 pm)	Dec 12, 2011	Dec 5, 2011	Jan 9, 2012	Jan 2, 2012	Feb. 13, 2012	Feb. 6, 2012
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Dec 12, 2011	Dec 5, 2011									
Jan 9, 2012	Jan 2, 2012									
Feb. 13, 2012	Feb. 6, 2012									

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church and want to play a role in the  
preparation and launch of this new  
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# El Mirage News

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## Council Corner: Citywide capital improvements on track

In recent weeks, the City Council approved a Capital Improvements Plan for Fiscal Years 2013 – 2017. The plan, also known as the CIP, was based on a series of goals established by the Council in February of this year and subsequently prioritized based on input from senior staff. The CIP contains a list of the most significant needs in El Mirage related to public

safety, street improvements, waterline replacements, recreational facility renovations, and a host of other projects designed to improve the quality of life for City residents. The CIP was formally approved by the Council at its Oct. 27 meeting.

To the left is a chart detailing the considerable progress made on many of the CIP projects to date:

Project	Status
<b>Gentry Park:</b> Improvements include enlarging dugouts, reconfiguring the ball diamond to Little League standards, and construction of a new concession building/restroom.	
Gentry Park Improvements – Ball Field Modifications and Fencing	Pre-construction meeting completed.
Gentry Park Improvements – Concession Building	Construction bids under review.
<b>Fire Station:</b> Construction of a new fire station directly adjacent to the existing station. Costs include design, construction, site improvements, furnishings, and a fire engine.	
New Fire Station - Construction	Under construction – Site electrical and communications systems in process; preparing for masonry.
<b>Grand Avenue:</b> Reconfiguration including the intersection of Thunderbird Road and Thompson Road. Costs include design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of new configuration.	
Grand Avenue Improvements – Thunderbird Road and Thompson Ranch Road	Project assessment and environmental review in process.
Grand Avenue Improvements – Irrigation and Landscaping	Landscaping being maintained; signage installation to begin December.
<b>Court House:</b> Improvements include addition of a conference room, modification to the lobby area, and enlargement of the administration/office area.	
Court House Remodel – Phase 1	Under construction
Court House Remodel – Phase 2	Out to bid

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# FOCUS ON THE FIRE DEPARTMENT



*News from the El Mirage Fire Department*

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Operations and administration open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday



## Keep families safe this holiday season

December is undoubtedly the "holiday month" of the year. All of the hustle and bustle, the decorations, the parties, and family gatherings are a time of hope and happiness.

Unfortunately, holiday celebrations can also have unhappy endings. U.S. Fire Departments respond to an average of 250 home fires per year that started in the Christmas tree resulting in at least 14 deaths. Well-watered trees are not a problem. Dry and neglected trees can be.

Typically, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters, or matches start tree fires. Also, among the causes of holiday fires are candles causing more than 3,800 fires each year.

Take the time this holiday season to keep your family and guests safe by following these 12 safety tips:

- Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wire, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear.

- Use only lighting evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

- Do not overload outlets. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Connect no more than three strands of push-in bulbs and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.

- Do not leave lit holiday lights unattended.

- Install a smoke alarm

on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.

- Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree and cause it to more easily ignite by heat, flame, or sparks.

- Never put Christmas tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove.

- When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is to take it to a recycling center or have it collected by a community pick-up



service.

- Avoid using lit candles. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked over.

- Never leave the house with candles burning.

- When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range.

- After a party, always check between, around, and under upholstery and cushions, as well as inside trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering.

As much as the Fire Department cares for the community and its neighbors, firefighters don't want to come to your home this holiday season...unless it's for milk and cookies.

**Fire Department Monthly Report: October 2011**  
El Mirage Fire Units responded to the following incidents during October 2011:

Structure fires.....2  
Other fires.....9  
EMS calls.....203  
False Alarms.....12  
Other calls.....30  
**TOTAL CALLS....282**  
**Total Fire Loss = \$13,000**

### Significant incidents and activities:

**Oct. 17 – Crews responded to an air conditioner fire at 11833 W. Ester that extended to some debris causing exterior damage to the house. Estimated damage was \$3,000.**

**Oct. 23 – Crews responded to a fire in a vacant house at 12502 W. Columbine. The fire was contained to the stairway leading to second floor.**

**The fire was classified as INCIDARY and has been turned over to the El Mirage Police Department for further investigation. Estimated damage was \$10,000.**



## THE BLUE BYLINE

*News from the El Mirage Police Department*

14405 N. Palm St. • 623-933-1341 • [www.cityofelmirage.org/police](http://www.cityofelmirage.org/police)

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## Holiday shopping safety tips

With the holidays right around the corner, the El Mirage Police Department urges shoppers to start thinking about steps to ensure a safe holiday shopping experience.

The El Mirage Police Department recommends the following steps:

### Vehicle/parking lot safety

- Secure personal belongings and valuables out of sight or in the trunk of your vehicle. Items such as cellular phones, laptop computers and handbags should be kept out of sight.

- Lock car doors and secure the windows and trunk.

- Hide items such as gifts in the trunk of your vehicle and cover with a blanket if viewable through a back window.

- Park in a well-lit area and be aware of your surroundings.

- Have your keys out and ready before you get to your vehicle.

- Remember where you parked your vehicle, espe-

cially at the mall, so you can directly walk back to your vehicle and not have to wander the parking lot with your arms full of gifts or groceries.

### Shopping safety

- Never set packages, purse, or wallet down and unattended in a shopping cart or other location.

- Anyone carrying a purse should carry it tucked tightly under their arm and wallets should be carried in a front pocket.



- Try not to carry a large amount of cash in a purse or wallet.

- Shopping in pairs will minimize the risk of being a victim.

- Secure credit card receipts. Someone gaining

access to your credit card number could be the first step in having your identity stolen.

- Don't throw away receipts. Keep them in a folder or file them away in a safe place.

- Use ATM machines located in a well-lit and safe environment.

- Avoid using ATM's that are located in malls. Pickpockets normally work these areas looking for people withdrawing large

amounts of money.

- Educate your children about what to do if they get separated from you while shopping.

- If you see suspicious activity or become a victim of a crime, report it immediately to the store manager or the police.

The men and women of the El Mirage Police Department would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.



Bill Criteser with Lt. John Heffelfinger.

## Police department bids farewell to Bill Criteser

Since July 2008, police volunteer Bill Criteser has contributed 1,155 volunteer hours to the El Mirage Police Department. He was involved in many events including the Police Community Picnic, Neighborhood Watch events, DUI Task Force events, the National Take Back Initiative, and a VIN Etching event. Criteser was also extremely valuable to the department in the office. He worked on various projects for the Investigations Unit, and took charge of many duties involving management of the department's vehicle fleet. In 2010, Criteser received the El Mirage Police Department Volunteer of the Year Award. Criteser is relocating to Oregon and will be greatly missed by all department personnel.

## Police awarded Traffic Enforcement Grants

The El Mirage Police Department was awarded a grant through the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) to fund traffic-related enforcement projects. The department received \$5,000 to pay for El Mirage Officers to participate in DUI Task

Force events during the next year. Police agencies from around metro Phoenix participate in a joint effort to provide saturated DUI patrols in specific areas, often during holiday periods.

Another \$5,000 grant was received from GOHS for Selective Traffic En-

forcement efforts within the City of El Mirage. Using collision and traffic data, the police department will determine when and where collisions are most often occurring and focus enforcement efforts in those areas. The grant will also allow officers

to work additional traffic projects such as school zone enforcement.

The El Mirage Police Department is thankful to the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety for awarding the grants. Such funding is crucial in allowing officers the opportunity to devote efforts specifically to traffic-related issues.

## Police department hosts toy drive

The El Mirage Police Department is sponsoring a Christmas toy drive to benefit the children of El Mirage. Individuals can

help by donating new, unwrapped toys.

Donations will be accepted Nov. 14 to Dec. 12 at the following locations:

- El Mirage Police Department, 11405 N. Palm Street

- El Mirage City Hall, 12145 N.W. Grand Ave.

- Pueblo El Mirage, Main Office, 11201 N. El Mirage Road



For more information, contact Officer Monica Rios by e-mail, mrios@cityofelmirage.org, or by calling 623-433-9536

## National Take Back Day nets 28 pounds of drugs

On Oct. 29, the El Mirage Police Department participated in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) National Take Back Ini-

tiative Day.

The national program provides a method for citizens to properly dispose of expired and/or unwanted prescription

and over-the-counter medications.

DEA and City police staff collected 28 pounds of drugs during the El Mirage event.

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# City's community garden taking shape

Lately, residents may have noticed a lot of activity at the southeast corner of El Mirage and Thunderbird Roads. What is happening is the beginning of the new El Mirage community garden, a City project that sprang from residents' ideas to grow healthy food for themselves and their neighbors. Public Works staff has installed much of the garden's irrigation system, thanks to donated supplies from Lowe's Home Improvement in Surprise. Most recently, 28 non-fruit bearing olive trees were installed as well, an extraordinary contribution from Swan Hill Nurseries



in Waddell. In the coming weeks, the City is expecting donations of additional trees, as well as material for as-

sembling garden boxes.

Individuals, families, businesses, and other groups in and around El Mirage are

encouraged to become part of the garden project. Those interested in growing their own fruits, vegetables, and

herbs can lease a garden box at a nominal annual fee. The fee will help cover the costs of water and maintenance

supplies. Many volunteers are also needed to assemble garden boxes and seating, build pathways, teach gardening, help with maintenance, and perform a myriad of other tasks to keep the garden vibrant year-round.

The garden's continued progress depends on donations, and the City will recognize each contributor with signs at the garden site, as well as a special mention in the El Mirage News.

For more information about the Community Garden, contact Pat Gregan at 623-876-2973, or e-mail [pgregan@cityofelmirage.org](mailto:pgregan@cityofelmirage.org).

## Make a Difference Day in El Mirage

On Oct. 22, volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) were out in force in El Mirage as part of Make a Difference Day. This day, celebrated each year on the fourth Saturday in October, was created by *USA WEEKEND Magazine*. It is the nation's largest day of volunteering thanks to the passion of millions of people who want to make a difference and help change the world.



Volunteers from the Latter Day Saints Church were helping during Make-a-Difference Day in El Mirage.

The LDS church had all their members 14 years and older involved with numerous projects across El Mirage. Several empty lots filled with trash, debris, and dead vegetation were completely cleaned by church members. Dead tree trunks were removed, cut into smaller sizes and neatly stacked by the road. Trash

was bagged and left for pick up by City crews, except City crews never had to pick up the stacks. Three men were seen carefully stacking the debris into their landscaping trucks on the following Monday morning and carrying it off to the landfill without

anyone knowing or without these volunteers wanting any recognition.

Another project completed by the LDS Church made a huge difference in the life of an El Mirage woman. Her house had been severely vandalized. The home was

stripped of bathroom and kitchen cabinets, as well as light fixtures, and the walls were covered in graffiti making the house unlivable.

LDS Church members installed new cabinets and light fixtures, repaired windows and plumbing prob-

lems, cleaned up the yards, trimmed bushes, removed dead trees, painted walls, and even hung new curtains in the home. The homeowner was very grateful to the church members who continue to assist in making her home safe to live in.

In the next several weeks, other groups will be doing community service projects throughout El Mirage. Street numbers will be painted on the curbs by Reveal Church of the Vineyard in the older sections of town, making it easier for emergency personnel to reach the right house. They will also continue helping Pueblo Futuro in making improvements to their community park. Boy Scouts will be out in force helping to make the new community garden a reality. El Mirage is fortunate to have so many volunteers that care.

## Council members honor veterans

On Veterans Day, Nov. 11, City Council Members marked the occasion by participating in the Pueblo El Mirage Veterans Day Parade. Mayor Mook, along with Councilmen Delgado and Palladino – both veterans themselves – rode in the parade that included more than 30 golf carts decorated in red, white, and blue. Many Pueblo residents lined the streets to watch the parade, waving flags, and shouting 'thank you' to veterans for their service.

Earlier in the week, the Mayor was part of the activities honoring 35 veterans at the Sun City Elks Lodge. The Elks performed a USO-style show. Throughout the year, the Elks also provide meals and treat veterans to several outings.

Right, Councilman Roy Delgado (driving), Councilman Jack Palladino (l), Mayor Lana Mook (c), and Jerry Jorve, U.S. Navy Ret. (r) participate in the Pueblo El Mirage Veterans Day Parade.



## Citizen Committees offer opportunities to work with Council members

Citizen input is essential to the success of El Mirage. And one of the City Council's most important challenges is finding successful ways to obtain such input from a broader base of citizens, even beyond periodic public hearings, community surveys, or individual contacts. To expand opportunities for residents to share their views, as well as propose

solutions to some of the City's most important issues, the council invites residents to participate in the five Citizen Committees listed below:

1. Home Improvement/Revitalization – A committee working with homeowners to repair, re-condition, and clean up their homes and surrounding properties.

2. Parks and Recreation – A

committee to assist in organizing community events at Gentry Park, Gateway Park, and other areas in the City.

3. Public Safety – A committee to assist the Police and Fire Departments, as well as the El Mirage City Court with solutions to graffiti and other types of vandalism, community education, and crime

prevention.

4. Senior Services – A committee to assist with activities for El Mirage seniors including serving as teachers, transportation aids, and event organizers.

5. Water and Energy Conservation – A committee to identify energy-efficient alternatives such as solar that would provide residents

both cost savings and a greater awareness of the importance of energy conservation.

To volunteer for any of the five committees, visit [www.cityofelmirage.org](http://www.cityofelmirage.org) and click on the link "Boards and Committees."

For information, contact Sharon Antes at [santes@cityofelmirage.org](mailto:santes@cityofelmirage.org).

## HISTORY, From 1

City has played in shaping the future of the West Valley."

The "History Drive" cannot succeed without a solid volunteer base. Individuals who wish to take part in the project are asked to review the following list of volunteer opportunities and select a work assignment that aligns with their skills and interests. All work assignments are year-round and volunteers' schedules may be flexible.

**Researcher** – Use research, writing, and computer skills to investigate, verify, and organize historic items, events, and individual perspectives.

**Oral History Interviewer** – Interview longtime residents and others to capture perspectives on past events and activities.

**Videographer** – Video tapes interviewees. Must have experience with all aspects of videography.

**General Office Help** – Respond to public inquiries about the project via e-mail and phone, maintain a list of volunteers and coordinate their assignments, and provide other office-related assistance as needed.

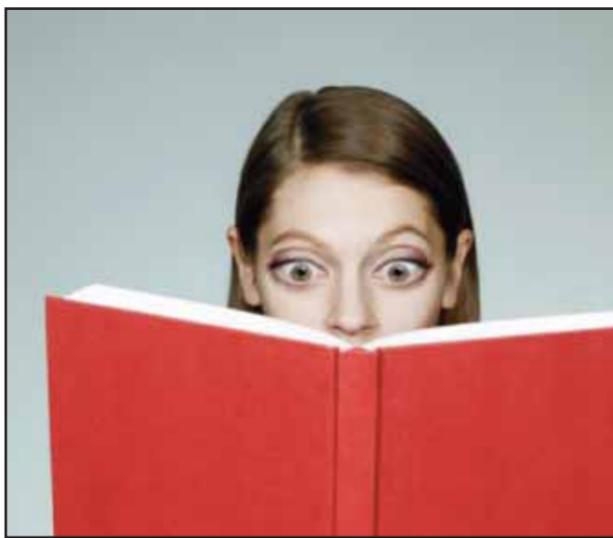
# Books for kids

By MARK L. SMITH

As the holidays approach and kids have more free time, parents will want to have something for them to do so they are not under foot or tying up the television, phone, or computer. Here are a few suggestions regarding fun kids' books that they can read or parents can read to them:

The Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling is full of magical fun and excitement and has taught kids a lot of new vocabulary. The movie versions of this series are very close to the books. John Bellairs also wrote several books years ago on magically gifted children that are well worth reading.

Lemony Snicket's Series of Unfortunate Events is enjoyable for kids of all ages. His repeated warnings to the reader not turn the page if they were squeamish kept me reading all thirteen of the books in this series. [Actually I listened to most of them on CD.] The movie version only covered the first



three books, so there's plenty more unfortunate events to peek kids' interests. The series' moral lesson, if there is one, is that life doesn't always go as planned. That can be a hard lesson for all of us.

The Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan is good for tweens and teens and includes the kind of sarcasm and adventure they relish. The author appears to be well versed in classic mythology. Again, the movie only covered the first book, so there's a lot more twists and turns to enjoy.

The 39 Clues mystery series by multiple authors kept my wife looking for the next one to come out. The Shannara and other fantasy series by Terry Brooks keeps my 30-year-old son reading despite his busy schedule. The Pendragon series by D.J. MacHale interests his younger brother who reads little else. My daughters prefer romance novels. There's something for everyone.

Of course, there are always the old standbys like the Boxcar Children, Hardy Boys, and Nancy

Drew. My wife still enjoys reading them over and over. The paperback covers have been updated to make them more appealing to today's kids. Even C.S. Lewis's Narnia Christian adventure series is making a comeback in print and the movies. Whatever you and your kids like to read or listen to or watch, it's all waiting for you at your local library. Come and see.

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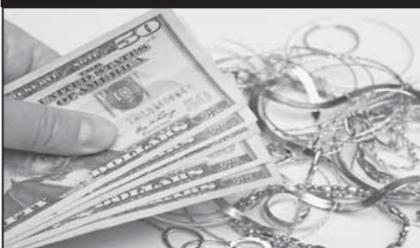
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# Santa is coming to Walmart

Santa (Charles Gibson) will be making his first, official appearance at the El Mirage Walmart Super Store, 12900 W. Thunderbird Road, on Saturday Nov. 26. He and Mrs. Claus (Gracie Yanes) will be walking through the store,

greeting parents and kids beginning at 9:45 a.m., with Santa listening to children's Christmas lists from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus are free. Parents may also bring their own cameras to take photos. Santa will also be at Walmart 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Nov. 27, Dec. 3 and 4.



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**Christmas tree drop off schedule**

The City will be accepting Christmas trees for disposal beginning Monday, Dec. 26 through Sunday, Jan. 8. Residents can drop off trees at the El Mirage City Yard, 12000 W. Peoria Ave.

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# City holiday festivities for the whole family

It's beginning to feel a lot like winter, and with the change of seasons comes the joy and traditions of the holidays. El Mirage will be celebrating the Christmas holiday with a number of activities, beginning with a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony 5 to 9 p.m. Dec. 9 at the El Mirage City Plaza, 14010 N. El Mirage Road.

The tree lighting ceremony will include music, a community sing-along, food, drinks, and a very special appearance by Santa Claus. Another special guest will be reading "The Night Before Christmas," and the children will have a chance to write their

letters to Santa.

The Christmas fun continues Saturday, Dec. 17 with a Holiday Pancake Breakfast at the El Mirage Fire Station from 8 a.m. to noon. Cost for breakfast is a donation to the El Mirage Fire-fighter Association Charity. The event will feature photo opportunities with Santa, a gingerbread house decorating contest, and lots of holiday music.

For more information about all of the festivities, or to participate as a vendor or performer, contact Angela Serda, Special Event Coordinator at 623-876-2942, or e-mail at aserda@cityofelmirage.org.

For more information about all the festivities, or to participate as a vendor or performer, call Angela Serda, Special Event Coordinator at 623-876-2942.



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\*For it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer" Matthew 21:13

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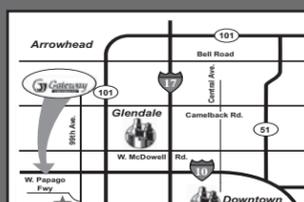
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All Maricopa County Library District libraries will close 1 p.m. Dec. 24 and 5 p.m. Dec. 31. All Maricopa County Library District Libraries will be closed Dec. 25, and 26 for Christmas Day; and Jan. 1 and 2 for New Year's Day.

**CHILDREN - SNOW-**

**FLAKE STORY TIME:** 10 a.m. Dec. 6, 13, 20 (Tuesdays). Participate in fun stories and silly songs for children ages 1 to 5 and their caregivers.

**MRS. SANTA CLAUS** - 11 a.m. Dec. 6 (Tuesday). Gather for a special holiday story time. You'll be treated to a lively reading of a wintry book. Jan Sandwich has delighted tens of thousands of children with her special style of storytelling, Christmas magic, and songs.

**TWEENS & TEENS - MAKE AN ORNAMENT:** 3:30 p.m. Dec. 8 (Thursday). Kids and teens ages 8 and up can gather to make a holiday ornament. All supplies provided. Registration required.

**ALL AGES - FRIENDS 25¢ BOOK SALE:** Members can come 9 to 10 a.m., while the public can attend 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 3 (Saturday) for Friend's huge book sale and clearance event. All books 25¢. The event is located in the Senior Center next door to the library.

**FAMILY HOLIDAY MOVIE** - 3:30 p.m. Dec. 15 (Thursday). Take a break from the December rush and enjoy a family holiday movie. Get gift book suggestions too.

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623-974-4156

**COMPUTER BASICS** - 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. Learn computer basic skills: Microsoft Word, Internet, and creating an e-mail account all for \$25.

**GED** - 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday; and 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday to Tuesday. Take a course preparing you for the GED exam. Cost is \$30.

**ROSETTA STONE** - Date and times vary. Cost is \$25. Learn basic English vocabulary via computer.

**E.S.L.** - (English as a Second Language) Classes - Dates and times vary. Cost is \$60 for a 9-month program. Participate in one-on-one basic English language lessons tailored to individual needs. To register, contact Susie at susier@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or call 623-974-4156.

**AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM** - Kindergarten through high school youth and teens can meet 1 to 7 p.m. Mondays; or 3 to 7 p.m. Tues-

day through Fridays. There is a \$1 per day drop off rate, or a \$20 per month rate. Contact Priscilla Pena at priscillap@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-583-2137 for more information.

**WE NEED YOU** - Volunteers needed to teach English as a Second Language. Volunteers are needed at least two hours per week, have patience, and willingness to teach others. Contact Susie Ratley at susier@dysartcommunitycenter.org, or 623-974-4156.

**FREE PLAYGROUP (age 0 to 5)** - Meet 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. every Wednesday at Dysart Community Center. Bring your young children, meet some neighbors, and enjoy a fun time. This is hosted by Phoenix Children's Hospital supported by First Things First.

**YOUTH & ADULT SPORTS COED, MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SLOW-PITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE** - El Mirage and NSA are seeking coed teams for play during upcoming seasons for Friday and Sunday nights. The adult softball leagues play games at El Mirage Gateway Park. Each team will be guaranteed eight regular season games with a single elimination tournament at the end of each season. NSA rules apply for all leagues. Teams interested can contact Chris Franciscus by e-mail at chris@playsnaaz.com, or by phone at 412-874-0474.

**OVER 30 - COED ADULT SOCCER LEAGUE** - West Valley's premier Adult Coed Soccer League. Enjoy a league where you can get fit without the usual hustle and bustle of a traditional fitness center. Games played at El Mirage Gateway Park with children's playgrounds nearby. For information go to www.azcoedsoccer.com, or call 1-800-BSA-0886.

**WHITE TANKS LITTLE LEAGUE** - The City's Home League - For information regarding spring and fall baseball seasons, visit www.eteamz.com/whitetanksl. Volunteer Board members are also needed each season.

MORE CALENDAR ON 11

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Gilbert	Hodjati, Ali	480-307-3939	Phoenix	Hughes, Ed	602-882-1531
Glendale	Cerreta, Jonathan	602-617-8939	Phoenix	Joseph Profeta	602-540-1020
Glendale	Hawkins, Mindy	623-533-4302	Phoenix	Noble, John	602-722-9309
Glendale	Cook, Phil	623-385-9070	Scottsdale	DeWitt, Linda	480-201-6259
Glendale	Harrison, Virginia	480-334-1115	Scottsdale	Drummond, Ian	480-748-1375
Glendale	Platt, Thomas	602-615-8470	Scottsdale	Hilton, Pamela	602-481-4006
Goodyear	Nissalke, Tabitha	623-606-3378	Scottsdale	Jones, LeMar	602-318-8672
Lake Havasu	Cheon, Judy	928-486-0793	Scottsdale	Washington, Bill	602-550-3880
Litchfield Park	Rasmussen, Ashley	623-203-8770	Surprise	Zillmer, Ed	602-410-9242
Mesa	DiQuattro, Stefanie	623-687-4915	Tempe	Dishman, Robert	480-217-9507
Mesa	Lanterman, Rob	602-550-4813	Tucson	Reisig, Gerry	520-990-7653
Peoria	Hall, Kory	602-743-6073	Yuma	Erlenback, Peter	928-503-0263
Peoria	Johnson, Erik	623-533-4302			

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# CALENDAR: City events for December, From 9

If you are interested and able to be part of the established White Tanks Little League Board, contact WTLL directly at 623-241-4602, or whitetanksl@msn.com.

**BENFICA YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE** - Benfica is proud to provide year-round developmental soccer in a fun environment. Registered participants in the Monday through Thursday (6 to 8:30 p.m.) academy will be taught the sport of soccer by professional trainers and coaches. Youth will develop discipline while learning soccer skills to improve precision and technique. For information on soccer programs, call 1-800-BSA-0886, or go to [www.azbenfica.org](http://www.azbenfica.org).

**EL MIRAGE MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY** - The City of El Mirage Martial Arts Academy is enrolling for Okinawa Karate classes for all ages at El Mirage Senior Center.

Kids ages 6 to 12 are taught in a traditional, structured setting. Students learn effective self-defense skills through diligent training. Students routinely learn important life skills - honesty, integrity, courtesy, respect, and work ethic, with special emphasis on "stranger danger." The program is available for a \$45 monthly fee. Ages 6 to 12 will meet 6 to 7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday evenings.

Adults ages 13 and up will train at their own speed. Students work to develop into healthy, well-conditioned individuals, both physically and mentally. They train to master the art of weapon-less defense. Ages 13 and up meet 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday evenings.

For more information, call Martial Arts Instructor Richard Gutkosay at 623-628-6725, or 602-721-4587.

**LADIES FITNESS BOOT CAMP** - Participants can join classes on any Monday. The classes run three days a week for four weeks from 1 to 1.5 hours each. Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes take place 5 to 6:10 a.m.

All El Mirage residents get 50 percent off for their first month. This is a \$100 value. To get started, go to [www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com](http://www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com) and fill out the registration form: For information, go to [www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com](http://www.ladiesfitnessbootcamp.com), or call 623-252-1FIT (1348).

**EL MIRAGE SENIOR CENTER**  
14010 N. El Mirage Road  
623-876-4232

The El Mirage Senior Center offers a warm and welcoming environment

for all El Mirage seniors. Hot meals are served 11:30 a.m. daily for \$2.50. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Seniors 55 and older are welcome. Monthly On-going Activities:

Mondays, First of each month, 9 a.m. - Blood Pressure Checks

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. - Arts and Crafts

Mondays, Wednesdays

and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. - Exercise

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. - BINGO for prizes

Wednesdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. - Wii Bowling

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. - Texas Hold'em

Fridays, 10:30 a.m. - Loteria

Fridays first and third of each month, 9:30 a.m. - Rummage Sale

Every third Wednesday,

10 a.m. - Monthly Birthday Celebration

Once to twice a month - Field trips to various locations

The Senior Center accepts donations for monthly rummage sales. All proceeds go to the Senior Committee Group for events and activities. The center is seeking volunteer instructors for dance, exercise, arts and crafts, quilting, sewing, knitting and other fun activities.

## Buying Pre-1965 Coins

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El Mirage News Dec 2011

**Come & Play Champion II Electronic Bingo**

**Riverboat will be CLOSED Christmas Eve & Christmas Day**

Proceeds and donations benefit the families in A New Leaf's Homeless and Domestic Violence Shelters, Youth and Community Programs Valley wide.  
[www.TurnANewLeaf.org](http://www.TurnANewLeaf.org) [www.RiverboatBingo.org](http://www.RiverboatBingo.org)

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### EVENTS

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- Li'l Buckaroo Rodeos
- Junior Livestock Shows
- Breeding Sheep Shows
- Chuck Wagon Cook Off
- Dutch Oven Cook Off
- Open Breeding Cattle Shows
- Junior Market Livestock Auction
- Farm Experience Activities for Children
- Feeder Steer & Sun Classic Heifer Shows
- Cowboy Classics Western Art & Gear Show

**\$10**  
per car  
admission &  
parking

## FARM EXPERIENCE

- Petting Zoo
- Pony Rides
- Ag Magic Show
- Cow Milking Game
- Grocery Store Game

- Li'l Buckaroo Rodeo
- Livestock Product Games
- Youth Pedal Tractor Pull
- Pick N' Pluck Harvest Time and much more.....

For a complete schedule of events visit [www.anls.org](http://www.anls.org)

1826 W. McDowell Road - Phoenix, AZ 85007  
602-258-8568



## Dysart Community Center: Calling all holiday helpers

If you are seeking to donate your time, talents, or resources this holiday season, look no further than Dysart Community Center. Dysart Community Center is a non-profit organization, separate from the Dysart School District, established in 1962 by a group of 12 determined volunteers to provide basic resources to struggling local families on the verge of poverty. From its founding nearly 50 years ago, Dysart Community Center has expanded its services to provide a variety of educational programs for thousands of West Valley residents in local communities.

The mission of the Valley of the Sun United Way Partner 501(c)(3) organization is to provide educational and developmental opportunities for low-income children and adults in the community. Today, the center is the only place in the West Valley that provides one-on-one ESL (English as a Second Language)

and GED (General Educational Development) programming to low-income families at low, or no cost. The center also offers after-school and summer programs for youth ages 5 to 17 for \$1 per day.

With the holidays around the corner, Dysart Community Center wants to remind the public to think about volunteering at the center this season. The center will be hosting a holiday party Dec. 22 for the after school participants and would love any support. Opportunities include helping to provide presents to all of the youth, wrapping gifts, decorating, and providing some memories that will last a lifetime. Of course, throughout the year the center is always seeking new volunteers to teach English, mentor youth, and individuals with diverse talents to support the center's efforts.

Dysart Community Center wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

## Enjoy the rewards of helping Dysart Community Center with an Arizona Tax Credit

Under the Arizona charitable Tax Credit law (ARS 43-1088) for charities focusing on help for the working poor, you can now contribute up to \$400 for couples filing jointly (\$200 for individuals) to support Dysart Community Center in its important mission, and your generous gift will normally cost you nothing. All donations received will be used to underwrite essential services for low income children and adults.

### How it Works

Your donation to Dysart Community Center	- \$400
Your Arizona, \$ for \$, tax credit received	+ \$400
<b>Your Arizona net cost of support</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Federal tax deduction received (at 25%)	+ \$100
<b>Your net combined tax result</b>	<b>+ \$100</b>

### How to Participate:

1. Donate up to \$400 for couples filing jointly (\$200 for individuals) by December 31. **Importantly, this can be in addition to any donation you may give to Arizona Public Schools.**
2. Submit the simple tax form (which we will send you) when you file your Arizona Income Tax Return. This tax form is also available online at AZ Tax Credit Form 321. For most, your state income tax will be reduced by the amount of your donation up to \$400.
3. In addition, you can include your donation among your charitable contributions in filing your Federal Tax Return. Your Federal tax may be reduced by up to another \$100 (in a 25% tax bracket).

To take advantage of this program, simply complete the enclosed form. You will receive a charitable donation acknowledgement for tax purposes.

*Dysart Community Center is a 501(c)(3) certified charity... AZ Tax creditable and Federal Tax Deductible. Please consult your tax advisor for details about how this tax credit may apply to you.*

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