

FREE MAY 2026
SINCE 1993 VOLUME 33
NO. 5

NORTH STATE
Parent

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NORTH STATE PARENT

calendar

Looking for family-friendly activities and events everyday of the week? Visit our online calendar:
northstateparent.com/calendar



Do You Have Concerns About Your Baby's Development?

Most Babies At...

3 Months Look from one object to another. Hold up their heads. Give eye contact.

6 Months Reach and grasp objects. Look when their name is called. Roll over.

9 Months Sit alone. Imitate gestures. Wave bye-bye.

12 Months Take their first steps. Play with a variety of toys. Begin to say "mama."

18 Months Walk alone. Build a tower of three blocks. Use up to 15 words. Enjoy interacting with caregivers.

24 Months Begin to use two-word phrases to communicate. Eat and drink independently. Walk up and down stairs.



FAR NORTHERN
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Infants and toddlers from birth to age 36 months may be eligible for early intervention services through Far Northern Regional Center.



Call our referral line: (530) 332-1529 www.farnorthernrc.org

Parent

NORTH STATE PARENT

VOLUME 33 ISSUE 5

MAY 2026



ON THE COVER

Shasta County Certified ISR Instructor **Kari Bullan** pictured teaches 3-year-old swim student **Mila Dover** life-saving survival swim skills. These skills can be taught starting as young as 6 months, building confidence and competence in the water.

What are your children doing this summer? There are outdoor adventures, sports, art related activities galore in this issue and we'll have more camps in the June/July issue. Camps fill up quickly so be sure you register early!

SEE SUMMER CAMPS IN THIS ISSUE PLUS MORE TO COME IN OUR JUNE ISSUE!

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Dear Readers

Happy Mother's Day Month to you!

As mothers, aunts and grandmothers, we send you a bouquet of resources to get you connected and engaged in your North State community – farm markets, bike rides, trail walks, parenting classes, rafting adventures, climbing gyms, youth and family camp programs. Our magazine pages are filled with interesting things to do as a family no matter the age of your children.

As summer approaches and many waterways open, water safety is essential. We have plenty of resources – swim lessons, water safety courses and more – to keep you and your family safe around water.

As you plan family activities this spring and summer, don't forget to check our family calendar at northstateparent.com. You'll find a wealth of fun events and activities happening throughout the North State. And, Please help us grow by sharing North State Parent Magazine with friends and colleagues.

Stop by our booth for handcrafting fun at the **Wildflower Music '26 Festival** at Community Park in Chico sponsored by Wildflower Open Classroom. Purchase your tickets now for this fun start-of-summer annual event at wildflowermusicfest.com. I love seeing all the children running free and the parents grooving to some good music. What a fabulous kick-off to summer!

Happy Spring!

Pamela

Pamela and Stacey
and the North State Parent
magazine team

Stacey

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SERVING FAMILIES IN BUTTE, GLENN, SHASTA, SISKIYOU & TEHAMA COUNTIES

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Delcie Mills

SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES OFFER INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Delcie Mills, owner and co-director of AMJaMB, loves helping people with disabilities flourish and thrive. From growing up alongside her brother Jamie, who has autism, to working with a wide range of needs today, Delcie says “being in this community and supporting this community has always been just really natural.”

In 2009, Delcie’s husband, Domenic Console, and his business partner Terry Kozloff created AMJaMB to help people with disabilities in the North State live more independently. Delcie and Domenic’s son Michael has autism and Terry’s son Ben was deaf, blind and quadriplegic.

Because of their children, Jamie, Delcie, Domenic and Terry had special insight into the needs that come with disabilities. They also recognized the wishes and dreams of their loved ones. Like most people, Jamie, Michael and Ben desired personal independence and caring community.

With both these needs and dreams in mind, AMJaMB was launched to provide supported living services – individualized assistance that enables individuals to live in their own homes. Delcie describes this service as “crucial; it gives people an opportunity to be able to live in their own home and not in someone else’s house.”

Expanded services create community and explore job opportunities.

Supported living services include a wide range of daily tasks, such as keeping medical appointments, budgeting or preparing meals. Over the years, AMJaMB has expanded to offer a variety of other services, including day programs that foster a fun, family-like community.

A day at AMJaMB might include karaoke, bingo, yoga, sign language, book club, art, drama, language classes or health and safety education. Delcie emphasizes individual choice rather than imposing a rigorous schedule. She also prioritizes giving back to the community as a key aspect of the day program, so AMJaMB participants regularly volunteer at Salvation Army.

Most recently, AMJaMB has entered the job development field. “Everybody should be able to work if they want to,” Delcie says. This new venture involves helping people push past the labels and limitations their disabilities might impose upon them, leaning into their interests and abilities to find jobs or paid internships that could lead to future employment. AMJaMB helps with building resumes, submitting applications, practicing for interviews and even dressing for interviews. “I’m really excited about this because I want people to feel that just because they were given a diagnosis doesn’t mean they can’t work in whatever fashion they can or want to,” Delcie says.

“When they work or volunteer, it gives them self-confidence and lets them know, ‘Hey, I can do things, I just have to put my mind to it, and if I need help, I have people who support me.’”

AMJaMB recipients can also find niches as AMJaMB employees. In fact, of approximately 70 employees, over half are employed at [Far Northern Regional Center](#). Many people enjoy staffing Call Connection – a program that extends a social connection by checking in via text, email or phone call to provide reminders to take medications or go to appointments. Other offerings include respite care and personal assistance. Delcie and her team constantly look for ways to meet needs in ways that reflect each unique recipient.



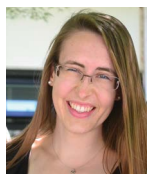
Delcie Mills helped form AMJaMB to assist disabled people in the North State to flourish and live more independently. Photos by Pamela Newman.

A family-run business creates community in the North State

From its inception, AMJaMB has been intentionally family oriented. As an acronym of the founders' children's initials; even the name AMJaMB reflects the value of family. Delcie and Domenic's three sons work for the business in various capacities and Delcie hopes that they may one day take over the business if they desire. Sadly, Domenic died in 2022. As she has grappled with the grief of losing her husband and mother in recent years, Delcie has experienced AMJaMB in a deeper way. "It just feels like a big family," Delcie says, "and just like any other family, we've learned how to work through issues or problems that come up and that makes us stronger."

AMJaMB program manager Heidi Madery has worked for AMJaMB since 2013, working closely with Delcie since 2016. Heidi testifies to Delcie's kindness and commitment to her biological family and to her adopted AMJaMB family. "Delcie is always patient and when we're dealing with serious business matters she has the most level head and calm demeanor," Heidi says. "In some of the most uncomfortable situations, she really is a rock."

AMJaMB welcomes all participants through Far Northern Regional Center, whose assessments help determine which services or vendors will provide the best support. Delcie also welcomes volunteers who would like to share skills with participants. To share your skill or expertise, or to learn how you can support the AMJaMB community, visit amjamb.com/contact.html. ■



Jenna Christophersen is a Chico native who loves her community, living in the North State and writing about remarkable people who build our communities and make them places where families can thrive.

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www.northstateparent.com • May 2026

7



Grace Garden Preschool



LOCAL DAYCARE AND PRESCHOOLS



BUTTE COUNTY

Chico Montessori Children's House Open House May 9, 9:30-11:30am.

814 Glenn St. • (530) 342-5518 chicomontessori.com
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2 years 6 months - 5 years • M-F, 8am-5:30pm
 Montessori-trained teachers for the development of the whole child. Emphasis on inner motivation, using the child's natural curiosity and delight in discovery. Sessions offered: morning, afternoon, and full day. Lic# 045406630

Palermo Union Elementary School District

Call for more info about our three different locations.
 (530) 533-4842 ext.6001 • palermoschools.org
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 18mo-5 yrs • M-F, 7:30am-5:30pm. Our qualified staff works with you and your child to develop the foundation for future academic success, recognizing and valuing each child's unique traits & potential. Lic# 041370378, 041372369, 045407779

SHASTA COUNTY

Columbia's Lion Cubs Preschool

10142 Old Oregon Trail, Redding • (530) 223-4070 x315
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5 yrs • M-F, 7:30am-5:15pm
 Experienced, qualified and nurturing teachers. Full, extended and half-day programs, small class sizes, kindergarten readiness. Lic# 455403185

Enterprise Elementary Preschool

795 Hartnell Avenue, Redding • (530) 224-4178
eesd.net/ourschools/preschool Licensed programs build confidence, skills and school readiness in a safe, nurturing environment. Free options available for qualifying families. Lic# 455403855

Grace Garden Preschool

3591 Adams Lane, Redding • (541) 659-8736
gracegardenpreschool.net. Ⓢ Ages: 3-4 • M-F 8am-3:30pm
 Enrolling Now! Fun Summer program and school-year. Through play exploration and faith-filled teaching. All children must provide their own lunch and be potty-trained. Morning and afternoon snack provided. Lic# 4554088746

Kids Interconnections Preschool & TK

4672 Loch PI • Shasta Lake City • (530) 227-9191
kidsinterconnectionspreschool.com
 Ⓜ Ages: 3-6 yrs • AM class 8:45am-11:45pm • PM class 12-2:45pm. Experienced preschool teacher with a BA in early childhood education; accepts SCOE Alternative Payment. Your child will be prepared for kindergarten and develop social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive skills in a warm, home-like small class. Lic# 455408509

Meadow Lane Preschool

2770 Balls Ferry Rd. Anderson • (530) 378-7030
cuesd.com ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5 yrs • M-F, 7:45am-5:30pm
 Afternoon care available until 5:30pm. Every child deserves a nurturing and engaging environment to learn and grow. Our play-based curriculum encourages creativity and social development, laying a foundation for future success. Lic# 455402120

Anderson Heights Preschool

1530 Spruce St. Anderson • (530) 378-7050
cuesd.com ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-11:30am
 Every child deserves a nurturing and engaging environment to learn and grow. Our play-based curriculum encourages creativity and social development, laying a foundation for future success. Lic# 455408602

Redding Christian Preschool & TK

21945 Old 44 Dr., Palo Cedro • (530) 547-5600
reddingchristian.com.
 Preschool: Ages: 2.5-4 yrs • M-F, 7:30am-4:30pm; mid-Aug to beginning of June. 3-5 half or full days.
 TK: Ages: 4-5 years • M-F AM class 8-11am; PM class 11:45-2:45pm; mid-August to beginning of June.
 Private Christian preschool and pre-kindergarten offers hands-on learning and academic skill-building, focusing on spiritual, academic, social and physical development. Lic# 455406244

Shasta Head Start Child Development, Inc.

375 Lake Blvd. Redding • (530) 241-1036
shastaheadstart.org. ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-4:30pm
 Private, non-profit provides high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families in Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity counties. Lic# 4455406084

Trinity Lutheran Early Learning Center

2440 Hilltop Drive, Redding • (530) 221-6686
reddingtlc.org • crystal@reddingtlc.org. ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs, M-F, 7:30am-5:30pm. A meaningful Christian education. Experienced teachers teach the love of Christ and curriculum to ensure each child is ready for kindergarten and beyond. Lic# 4151373105

West Redding Preschool

3490 Placer Street, Redding • (530) 243-2225
westreddingpreschool.com
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 6wks-12 yrs • M-F, 7am - 5:30pm
 An educationally based curriculum. Our goal is to prepare each child today for the educational challenges that they may face tomorrow. Lic# 455401406

SISKIYOU COUNTY

Shasta Head Start Child Development, Inc.

710 Everitt Memorial Hwy, Mt Shasta • (530) 918-2550
shastaheadstart.org
 ⓓⓈⓂ Ages: 0-5 yrs • M-F, 8am-4:30pm
 Private, non-profit provides high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families. Locations in Mt Shasta, Weed and Yreka. Lic# 445406084

Siskiyou Child Care Council

Fort Jones, McCloud, Dunsmuir, Lane Street (Yreka)
 SisQ Kids (Weed) • (530) 938-2748
tstacher@siskiyouchildcare.org
siskiyouchildcare.org
 We believe that every child is unique and of supreme worth. Our state preschools provide care in a nurturing environment designed to foster development of positive self esteem, emotional well-being, social skills, independence, creativity, and problem solving. Call for more information about any of our schools. Lic # 475403153, 475404269, 475404757, 475408055, 475408138.

TEHAMA COUNTY

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1005 S. Jackson Street, Red Bluff • (530) 527-4516
 Sept-May • M-F, 8:30am-12noon
 Ages: 3-5 yrs
 A Christian preschool whose mission is to equip the whole child in a Christ-centered environment. Our staff works alongside families to help their children have a wholesome educational foundation. Lic# 521300231

Kotasik Daycare

2 Sutter Street, Suite C, Red Bluff • (530) 727-9607
 ⓈⓂ Ages: 2-5yrs • M-F, 7:30am-5:30pm
 All staff are fully qualified, first aid and CPR certified. Drop-ins welcome. Subsidized payment accepted. Breakfast and Lunch served family-style. Lic# 525407977



- ⓓ = Diapers Accepted
- Ⓢ = Snacks Served
- Ⓜ = Meals Served





EPIC CAMPS & FOREVER MEMORIES



Summer camps are an excellent opportunity for kids of all ages to explore their passions, foster their creativity, learn new skills and make new friends. There are camp and class options to fit a wide range of schedules and budgets. Register now as classes fill quickly!

MORE CAMPS TO COME IN THE JUNE MAGAZINE!





Beyond Golf Summer Camp

DAY CAMPS

beyondgolfchico.com

(509) 860-3938 (Grant Hornbeak)

Golf Chico 3400 Esplanade Chico

beyondgolfjuniors@gmail.com

Ages: 5-17

Cost: \$125

Sessions: Mon- Thurs, 9am-12pm

June 15-19 | June 22-26 | July 13-17 | July 27-31 |

Aug 3-7

Friday 9am-1pm | tournament/lunch

Designed for players of all levels. A fun skill

improvement camp. Course play and lunch

provided on Friday.



Chico Area Recreation & Park District (CARD)

DAY CAMPS

chicorec.gov

(530) 895-4711

Ages: 3.5-17

Cost: Varies

Sessions: June 9-August 12 | Times vary | Venue Varies

Your kids will love our summer camps like Camp Chi-Da-Ca, Camp Chico Creek, Summertime Delight and more! 75+ camps where your kids can explore nature, burn energy, discover new talents and create lifelong memories.

Aquatics Programs: When the summer heat's on, cool off in the pool. Rent the whole pool for a birthday splash.



Chico Racquet Club Camps

DAY CAMPS

chicoracquetclub.com

(530) 895-1881

1629 Manzanita Ave, Chico.

CRC Tennis and Pickleball Camps

chicoracquetclub.com/tennis/youth

Ages: 4-16

Cost: \$65/Day \$230/Week | Member discount with weekly purchase.

Session: June 8-Aug 12 | 10:30am-3pm

The ultimate country club experience. Your kids will enjoy tennis in the morning, swimming and relaxing by the pool mid-day and an afternoon of Pickleball.



Campybara Summer Camp

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

wildcampybara.com

(707) 583-9627

1958 Wild Oak Lane, Chico.

Ages: 9-14

Cost: \$700

Sessions:

Sierra Nevada | June 16-23 (Out of Chico)

Cascades | July 27-Aug (Out of Portland, OR)

Sleep away summer camp rooted in nature appreciation, hands-on outdoor skills and creative expression. Build practical abilities, artistic confidence and a strong sense of community and teamwork. Hiking, swimming, whittling, archery, watercolor painting, fire-starting, linoleum carving, singing around the campfire and much more.



Hope Academy Summer Program

DAY CAMPS

chicohopeacademy.org

(530) 518-4092

2869 Cohasset Rd, Chico

Ages: K-8

Cost: \$600 per session for first child | \$540 per additional student

Sessions: M-F | 8:30am-5:30pm

June 8-26 | June 29-July 17 | July 20-Aug 7

Outdoor activities, water play, art, crafts, music, bible lessons and much more. Open to non-Hope Academy students.



CRC Beach Volleyball Academy-Summer Camps

chicoracquetclub.com/volleyball/summer/camp

Ages: 10-17

Cost: \$100.00 per camper each camp

Sessions: M-Th | 9am-12pm

Camp #1 June 8-11 | **Camp #2** June 15-18 |

Camp #3 June 22-25 | **Camp #4** June 29-July 2 |

Camp #5 July 13-16 | **Camp #6** July 20-23

All training sessions will be divided by ability, not age. **Skills:** Passing, Digging, Setting, Hitting, Serving and Blocking **Tactics:** Serve, Receive, Attacking, Transition and Defense Coverage. Match play. Fast double and mini tournaments.



Kinetics Academy of Dance & Gymnastics

DAY CAMPS

kineticsacademyofdance.com/summer-camps-andclasses

(530) 345-2505

627 Broadway Street, Suite 100, Chico
office@KineticsAcademyofDance.com

Cheer Camp | Ages 6-15 | June 15 – 19 | M-Th 12-2:30pm,
Fri 12:30-2:30 | Cost: \$170

TikTok Time Dance Camp | Ages: 6-12 | June 15-18 | M-Th,
12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Gymnastics Camp | Ages 5 – 12 | June 22 -25, M-Th &
Aug. 3-6, M-Th 12:15-2:45pm | 12-2:30pm | Cost: \$170

K-Pop Dance Heroes | Ages 4-14 | June 22-25 | M-Th
12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Aerial Arts & Circus Open Gym | Ages 6-16 | June 26,
Friday 12:30-2pm | Cost: \$55

Aerial Arts & Circus Camp | Ages 6-16 | July 13-16, M-Th,
12:30-2:30pm | Cost: \$175 | Aug. 10, Mon | 11:30-2:30pm |
Cost: \$49. Fly high at this unique circus themed camp.

Ninja Fun Camp | Ages 4-8 | June 29 – July 2 | M-Th
12-2:30pm | Cost: \$165

Musical Theater Camp | Ages: 6-15 | June 29-July 2, M-Th
12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Jumps & Stunts Cheer Clinic | Ages 6-15 | July 3, 12:45-
3:15pm | Cost: \$49

Summer Nutcracker | Ages: 6-17 | July 6-10, M-Fri 10:30am-
12:30pm | Cost: \$175

Dance & Gymnastics Camp | Ages 4 – 12 | July 6-9, M-Th
12:15-2:45pm & July 27-30, M-Th 12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Dance Team Preview | Ages 6-15 | July 13-17, M-Fri
10am-12pm | Cost: \$150

Back Handspring Clinic | Ages 6-16 | July 17, 12:45-2:45pm
& July 24, 12:45-2:45pm | Cost: \$45 each session

A Wickedly Good Time Dance Camp | Ages: 5-12 |
July 20-23, M-Th 12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Gymnastics Beyond Basics Camp | Ages 6-15 | July 20-23,
12-2:30pm | Cost: \$170

Unicorn Fairy Ballet | Ages 4-9 | July 27-30, M-Th
12:15-2:45pm | Cost: \$165

Princess Party | Ages: 4-9 | Aug 3-6, M-Th 12:15-2:45pm |
Cost: \$165

Summer Passes (Dance or Gymnastics) | June 15-Aug 25

Gymnastics – OPEN GYM | Ages 5-12 | Aug.14,
12:45-2:30pm | Cost: \$18

Aerial Arts Summer Class | Ages 6-16 | July 19-Aug. 14,
Fridays 11:30-12:30pm | Cost: \$166

Tumble Warriors | Ages 4-7 | June 20 – Aug. 15, Sat
1:30-2:30pm | Cost: \$156

Cheer and Tumble | Ages: 5-14 | June 18-Aug 14, Thursdays
3:30-4:30pm | Cost: \$135

Mini Movers Playtime | Ages: 6mo – 3 | June 25-July 13 &
July 26 – Aug. 14 | Thurs 9:15 10:15am | Cost: \$50



North State Ballet

DAY CAMPS

northstateballet.com

(530) 774-2364

2400 Notre Dame Blvd, Chico

Ages: 3+

Cost: \$125-\$600

Sessions:

June 8-26 | summer session 1 | **June 29-July 3** summer
dance camps and technique intensive 1 |

July 6-24 summer session 2 | **July 27-31** ballet/con-
temporary intensive. Technique intensives with guest
master teachers, Acro intensives, two 3-week dance
class sessions



Chico Creek Dance

DAY CAMPS

chicocreekdance.com

(530) 829-1832

1144 W 1st Street, Chico

Sessions:

Princess Dance Camp | Ages 3-8 |
June 8-12, 9am-12pm | Cost: \$175

Disney Dance Camp | Ages 5-11
June 22-26, 9am-1pm | Cost: \$175

Recycled Art Camp | Ages 7-12 |
June 8-12, 1pm-4pm | Cost: \$175

Harry Potter Art Camp | Ages 5-12 |
June 15-19, 9am-12pm | Cost: \$175

Art Around the World Art Camp | Ages 5-12 |
June 22-26, 1pm-4pm | Cost: \$175

Magical & Mythical Creatures Art Camp | Ages 7-12 |
June 29-July 3, 9am-12pm | Cost: \$175



Forebay Aquatic Center Summer Camp

DAY CAMPS

forebayaquaticcenter.com/summercamps

(530) 774-7934

930 Garden Drive, Oroville

Ages: 8-14

Cost: half day \$185, full day \$285 with flexible daily or
weekly plans.

Sessions:

All camps are half day 8am-12pm or full day 8am-5pm
June 8-12, 15-19, 22-26

July 6-10, 13-17, 20-24, 27-31

August 3-7

As the only aquatic camp in the North State, we offer
8 weekly camp sessions from June to August. Each
week is filled with boating skills, aquatic activities and
environmental education with an emphasis on water
and boating safety. Games, art and music comple-
ment our aquatic fun. Master crafts in a safe and
exciting environment, including kayaking, orienteer-
ing and stand-up paddle boarding. Learn about local
wildlife, learn lifelong skills and work on team-build-
ing activities. Visiting educators include the local fire
department, state park rangers, bird or fish experts
and more! Family Fun Friday your camper can bring
up to four family members and share what they
learned that week, offering an hour of free rentals to
all from noon - 1:00 pm.



Chico Martial Arts Summer Camp

DAY CAMPS

azadsmartialarts.com/classes/summer-camp

(530) 892-2923

313 Walnut St #150, Chico

Cost: Last Advantage Enrollment: \$255/week
(May 1-May 31) | Open Enrollment: \$285/week (June
1 - July 20)

Sessions: M-F, 8am-12pm

Nerf Camp | June 8-12, July 6-10, June 15-19 &
July 13-17

Gladiator Camp | June 22-25 and July 20-24
Space is limited, and our camps sell out fast. Don't let
your child slip into habits of inactivity and excessive
screen time this summer. Invest in their future success
by enrolling them in Azad's Martial Arts Summer Camp
today!



Terrain Park Climbing Center Youth Summer Camp
DAY CAMPS
terrainparkclimbingcenter.com/youth-programs-chico
 (530) 809-0796
 931 W 5th Street, Chico.
Ages: 8-13.
Cost: \$250 | \$215 each if siblings sign up together
Sessions: June 15 – Aug. 7 | Mon-Thurs, 9am-12pm
 Provides young climbers an environment where they can have fun and grow as a climber. Camp is a great way for young climbers to connect with other climbers on a weekly basis. We also get to utilize our new Adventure Center!



Dance Depot 3-Day Camps & Ballet Intensive
DAY CAMPS
dancedepotfamily.com
 (530) 275-9618
 2225 Larkspur Lane, Redding.
Ages: 18 months (Mommy or daddy & ME) - Adult.
Cost: \$60 - \$130 w/BIG discounts for additional classes
Sessions: Check website in June for times.
3-Day Camps | July 7-9 & 14-16 & 21-23 | (T, W, Th)
3-Week Ballet Intensive | July 7-23 | (T & Th mornings)
August Intensives – Specialty classes TBD
 We offer a variety of dance styles including ballet, lyrical jazz, acrobatics, tap, hip-hop and more, along with Mommy or Daddy and ME classes. Students will be able to jump in and dance with us for just 3 days or for 1-3weeks. Register online starting June 2026 or call (530) 275-9618.



Lassen Volcanic National Park Campout
RESIDENTIAL CAMP
explorecaoutdoors.com/lassen-volcanic-national-park-camping-trip
 (530) 521-1883
 Lassen Volcanic National Park - Lost Creek
Ages: 5-100
Cost: \$225-\$395
Session: June 18-21

Join us for an unforgettable family camping adventure! Relax, enjoy quality time with your family, and make new friends. We'll provide the gear, delicious meals and plenty of fun activities. Explore volcanic geology, swim, kayak, and hike- there's something for everyone. Just show up and let the good times roll!



Grace Garden Preschool Summer Camp
DAY CAMP
gracegardenpreschool.net
 (541) 659-8736
 3591 Adams Lane, Redding.
Ages: 3 - 4
Cost: Full-time M- F \$900 | Part-time M/W/F \$575 | Part-time Tue/Thur \$385.
Session: M-F | 8am - 3:30pm | June 8 - July 31
 Faith based summer camp offers a warm, structured, teacher led environment where young children can grow in confidence, character and early learning skills. Each day includes guided activities, stories, music and simple lessons that help children build routines and learn positive values.



NZone Sports Redding
 Summer Sports Academies & Camps
Nzonesports.com/redding
 (530) 691-1401
Ages: 3-14
Cost: \$155 for Academies. \$165 for Camps. Fee includes a jersey with name & number.
Sessions:
 Soccer Academy | Sat. mornings | 8 x 1-hour sessions | June 13-Aug. 9
 Flag Football Academy | Sat. mornings | 8 x 1-hour sessions | June 13-Aug 9
 Basketball Academy | Sat. mornings | 8 x 1-hour sessions | June 13-Aug 9
 Volleyball Academy | Sat. mornings | 8 x 1-hour sessions | June 13-Aug 9
 Soccer Camp | July 13-17 | 8:30 - 10:30am
 Flag Football Camp | July 13-17 | 8:30 - 10:30am
 Soccer Camp | July 27-31 | 8:30 - 10:30am
 Flag Football Camp | July 27-31 | 8:30 - 10:30am
 Kick off your summer with a sports experience designed to build skills, confidence and fun! It's a dynamic, clinic-style program, focused on helping young athletes grow through structured training & exciting game play.



The Redding Arts Project's Dance and Theatre Camps
DAY CAMPS
thereddingartsproject.com
 (530) 245-1019
 1726 Market Street, Redding.
Ages: 3 - Adult
Cost: \$18-\$475
Session: June 29 – July 3
 Join us for an unforgettable month of dance and theatre featuring a dynamic 3-Week Dance Intensive in ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical and hip-hop for kids through adults, along with a full mainstage production of Peter Pan – inviting adult performers, teens and children in featured roles. Train, perform and grow in a vibrant artistic community where technique meets creativity and stage magic comes to life. Visit our website for full schedules, auditions, tuition and registration details.



Rare Air Fly Camp

DAY CAMPS

rareairpark.com/flycamp

(530) 221-1206

3625 Old 44 Drive, Redding

Ages: 6-12

Cost: \$150-\$175

Sessions: 8am-12pm | June 22 - June 25 & July 6 - July 9

Come jump, flip and play your summer away! Our Fly Camp Dream Team will lead your kids in an interactive camp that includes team building games, crafts, various trampoline games, fun in the sun, rock wall climbing, etc. Your kiddos are sure to have a blast!



Redding City Ballet Summer & Dance Camps

DAY CAMPS

reddingcityballet.org/events/summer-class-schedule

Redding City Ballet, 935 Locust St., Redding.

(530) 709-1205

Ages: 6 - adult

Costs: \$45 - \$250

Summer Tap and Jazz Week

Sessions:

Children's Basic Tap | Age 6-10 | 1:30-2:00pm

Intermediate Tap | Age 8+ | 2:00-2:45pm

Advanced Tap | Age 11+ | 2:45-3:30pm

Children's Basic Jazz | Age 6-10 | 2:00-2:45pm

Intermediate Jazz | Age 8+ | 2:45-3:30

Advanced Jazz | Age 12+ | 3:30-4:30pm.

Ballet and Dance Classes

June Only:

Beg/Int Adult Ballet | Tuesdays 10-11:30am

Pointe Strengthening | Age 12+ | Wednesdays 5-5:45pm

Int/Adv Ballet | Age 10+ | Wednesdays 5:30-7:00pm

Beg/Int Ballet Choreography | Age 8+ | Thursdays 5-6pm

Stretch and Strengthen | Age 10+ | Thursdays 6-7pm

July Only - Wednesdays

Int/Adv Contemporary Ballet | Age 12+ | 4:30-6pm

My First Dance Class | Ages 3-4 | 4:30-5pm

Improvisation for Dancers | Ages 12+ | 6-7pm |

(This class NOT available for Drop-In)

Mondays June 8-Aug 10

Intermediate Ballet | Age 8+ | 4:00-5:00pm

Intro to Ballet | Ages 4-6 | 4:30-5:00pm

Advanced Ballet | Age 12+ | 5:00-6:00pm

Children's Basic Ballet | Ages 6-10 | 5:00-6:00pm

Teen/Adult Basic Ballet | 6:30-8pm



Redding Fashion Alliance Summer Camps

DAY CAMPS

reddingfashionalliance.org

(530) 215-1350

1698 Market Street, Redding

reddingfashion@gmail.com

Age: 7-15

Cost: Early Bird by May 30: \$140, Standard: \$150. Fee includes supplies. We have plenty of donated fabrics. Students are welcome to bring their own fabrics if they wish.

Session:

Make a Summer Beach Outfit | June 16-18 | 9am-12pm

PJ Pants and Carry Bag | June 16-18 or 22-25 | 1-4pm

Beginning Sewing | June 22-25 | 9am-12pm

Breezy Summer Beachwear - Tablecloth Dress | July 6-9 | 9am-12pm

Beginning Sewing - Aprons and Bags | July 6-9 | 1-4pm

Adventures in Upcycling | July 20-23 | 9am-12pm

Beginning Sewing - Tote Bag and Apron Skills | July 20-23 | 1-4pm

Fashion Accessories | July 13-16 | 9am-12pm

Fabric Artistry | July 13-16 or 27-30 | 1-4pm

Mad Hatters and Bag Tatters | July 27-30, 9am-12pm

Campers will learn to operate the sewing machine, understand sewing terms, follow sewing instructions to create projects, sew straight and curved seams, cut out simple pattern. Learn crafting skills in the Fashion Accessories, Fabric Artistry and Mad Hatter and Bag Tatters classes.



Serene Ranch Horse Camp

DAY CAMPS

(530) 440-1808

Serene Ranch, 3871 Rancho Estates Road, Cottonwood.

Ages: 4-18

Cost: \$60-\$400

Sessions: Running all summer long. Day camps and week camps available.

Kids learn horse care, horsemanship and riding, while building confidence, communication and teamwork. Our lessons foster life skills, self-esteem and lasting friendships—all in a safe, supportive and fun-filled ranch environment. Check us out on [Facebook](#).



Shasta Rock Summer Climbing Camp

DAY CAMPS

shastarockclub.com/summer-camps-2026

(530) 691-4505

Shasta Rock Club, 2325 Athens Avenue, Redding

Ages: 5-12

Cost: 1st child - \$300, additional children - \$275/ea

Sessions: 9am - 1pm

June 15 - 19 | July 6 - 10 | July 13 - 17 | July 20 - 24

Play games, make friends and climb a lot! Our goal is to provide campers with a unique experience that is challenging, educative and teaches teamwork. Leave camp more confident, empowered and courageous. Previous climbing experience is NOT required.



Turtle Bay Summer Camp

DAY CAMPS

turtlebay.org/camps

Ages: 7-12

Cost: \$230 per week for members | \$255 per week for non-members | Extended Care (4-5pm) Fees, \$30 per week per child

Sessions: M-F | 9am-4pm

June 15 - 19 & June 22 - 26 | Movies, Makers & Mythbusters

Take a closer look at what kind of tricks and skills are needed to bring fantasy and sci-fi stories to life in this camp that goes together with our summer exhibition, POPnology!

July 6 - 10 & July 13 - 17 | Built for Survival!

Build mini shelters, learn to use a compass and the sun like true adventurers, filter water and discover how animals & people from the past survived in some of the harshest environments on Earth.

July 20 - 24 & July 27 - 31 | Art Around the World

Travel through time and around the globe as you explore how art connects us to history, from prehistoric cave paintings to the bold styles of ancient Egypt and the renaissance.



4th of July MacKerricher State Park

Family Campout

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

explorecaoutdoors.com/mackerricher-state-park-camping-trip

(530) 521-1883

MacKerricher State Park, 24100 MacKerricher Park Rd, Fort Bragg

Ages: 5-100.

Cost: \$225-395

Session: July 2-5

Join us for an awesome 4th of July camp out with other families! While you spend quality time with your family, we'll handle the planning, provide the equipment and serve you tasty meals. Get out and explore the beach, tidepools and more. Celebrate 4th of July on the coast!



Kidder Creek Overnight Adventure Camps

kiddercreek.org

(888) 642-2677

2700 S. Kidder Creek Rd., Etna

Ages: 7-18

Cost: \$679-\$1,079

Session: June 7 – Aug. 8

We offer a wide variety of programs including Ranch Camp, Adventure Camp, White-Water Rafting Camp, Backpacking Camp, Mountain Bike Camp and more.



Regenerative Arts Camp

DAY CAMP

radlearningcenter.org

954 N. Old Stage Road, Mount Shasta

Ages: 3-12

Cost: \$60/day

Session: June 23-Aug 7 | Tues-Fri | 9:30-2:30.

Recycled and natural arts and crafts, kids' garden and nature studies, solar cooking, music, movement & more!



College of the Siskiyous Summer Show Choir & Jazz Camp

DAY CAMP

siskiyous.edu/camps/

(530) 938-5373

College of the Siskiyous, 800 College Avenue, Weed.

Ages: 10-18

Cost: \$42

Sessions:

June 25 | Sunday afternoon | check in and voice/dance placement

June 26 – June 30 | Monday-Friday

9am - 5pm | singing and dancing

July 1 | Saturday morning rehearsal | 12 pm performance.

Spend a full week receiving instruction by the most respected Jazz and Show Choir directors, composers and choreographers in the United States. If you're in middle school, junior high, or high school (5th - 12th grade), come join the fun!



Kids Summer Fun Camp

DAY CAMP

(702) 277-9531

Weed High School & Weed Community Pool, 909 Hillside Drive, Weed

Ages: 3-10

Cost: \$365

Session: June 29 – August 6 | 9am to 4pm

Daily swimming, outdoor games, stem activities, storytelling, nature exploration, arts and crafts, interactive games, reading, hiking, etc. Cost assistance for qualifying families.



Photo provided by Bar 717 Ranch



ScienceWorks Summer Camps

DAY CAMPS

scienceworksmuseum.org

(541) 482-6767

1500 East Main Street, Ashland

Ages: 6-12

Cost: \$310 - \$345 pp per camp

Sessions: All sessions 9am-3pm

June 15-19 | Subterranean Science Camp

June 22-26 | Cosmic Cadets Camp

June 29-July 3 | Curtain Call Academy Camp

July 6-10 | Shark Week Camp

July 13-17 | Minecraft Quest Camp

July 20-24 | Health Heroes Camp

July 27-31 | Sports Camp

August 3-7 | Mythbusters Camp

Give young scientists a chance to explore, create and discover when school is out. With hands-on activities and a focus on curiosity, campers dive into STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), make friends and build new skills in a fun, supportive setting.



Ignite Your Flair

DAY CAMPS

igniteyourflare.com

(530) 255-4180

446 Walnut Street, Red Bluff

Cost: \$40 per camp | Registration closes June 1.

Sessions: 4:30-6:30pm

Emotion Explosion | Age: 4+ | June 5

The FarEras Tour | Age: 6+ | June 6

K-Pop Dance Hunter | Age: 6+ | June 6

Broadway Bound | Age: 6+ | June 27

Build skills, grow confidence and stay active in a fun, encouraging environment. Try something new or keep building your skills. We've got something for everyone.



Six Rivers Rafting Junior River Guide School

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

sixriversrafting.com

(707) 599-4221

Hayden Flat Group Campground, Trinity National Forest, Weaverville

Ages: 11-17

Cost: \$500

Session:

9:30am Thursday, June 25 - 4pm Sunday, June 28.

For youth ages 11-17 looking to have fun and learn the basics of guiding a raft and river rescue/safety techniques. Includes an outdoor "classroom" component each morning, but most of our time will be spent on the river with hands on learning about and practicing whitewater river skills. School will meet the first day at Six Rivers Rafting main office and camping for the families will be provided downriver at Hayden Flat Group Campground free of charge. Families are also welcome to provide their own accommodations.



Camp Trinity on the Bar 717 Ranch

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

<https://bar717.com/>

(530) 628-5992

17197 Hyampom Road, Hayfork

Ages: 7-16

Cost: Two weeks: \$4,585. Four weeks: \$8,920

Session 1: June 14-27,

Session 2: June 28-July 11

Session 3: July 12-25

Session 4: July 26-August 8

Established in 1930, Camp Trinity on the Bar 717 Ranch offers a nature- and community-oriented experience on 450 acres in the beautiful mountains of Trinity County. Campers live, work, and play as part of our big ranch family, and enjoy the independence and creativity of our free-choice programming.



KIDS SUMMER CLIMBING CAMPS

Rock Climbing Builds:

- Confidence & Focus
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Coordination & Strength

SIGN UP NOW...5-DAY CAMPS!
FOR KIDS AGES 6 TO 12 JUNE AND JULY
CHECK WEBSITE FOR DATES • NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED

SHASTAROCKCLUB.COM/NSP

BIRTHDAY PARTIES • FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS • 24-HR CLIMBING GYM
2325 ATHENS AVE, REDDING • 530-691-4505




CAMP TRINITY ON THE Bar 717 Ranch

EST. 1930

An overnight summer camp for kids ages 7 to 16 on our family ranch in the beautiful mountains of Trinity County.

Learn More & Enroll for Summer 2026!

HIKING, RIVER SWIMMING, HORSEMANSHIP, GARDENING, BACKPACKING, WOODSHOP, POTTERY, MUSIC, ARTS & CRAFTS, RANCH PROJECTS, AND MORE



THIS IS TEHAMA



The ancient word “Tehama” once meant a place where rivers could be crossed. With our county’s rich currents of history, happenings and hope, this is our crossing place today – where we meet to celebrate our beautiful Tehama County.

WHAT IS ON YOUR TEEN’S MIND & HOW YOU CAN HELP



Do you ever hear these phrases from your teenager when you try to have a discussion?

- “I don’t know.”
- “My stomach hurts.”
- “I’m tired.”
- “Leave me alone.”
- “I hate you.”

Or they might pose these questions:

- “What if I mess up?”
- “What if something bad happens?”
- “What if they don’t like me?”
- “Can we be done now?”

These are just examples of things teenagers may say to express anxiety, depression, uncertainty or fear. They are less likely to be specific about what is on their minds, for example, “I am worried about current events,” “I am being bullied,” “I don’t like the way I look,” or “What if I turn out to be a failure?”

We spoke with principals and counselors at three different Tehama County schools to help

parents understand where their child’s anxiety may be coming from and how to address it. Three common denominators are screen time, lack of boundaries and a lack of healthy communication.

Excessive Screen Time Leads to Dysregulation and Behavior Issues

“There are so many variables to why a child may be struggling, but I do think in today’s culture there are some broad concerns that are affecting all children,” says Michelle Ackley, educational counselor, Evergreen Unified School District. “One of the main hurdles that is currently affecting behavior and mental health in all grades is the excessive use of screen time.”

She adds, “In younger children, we see a lot of dysregulation and outbursts which can lead to social-emotional issues at school and the common denominator seems to be screen addiction. When children are given screen time starting as babies or toddlers, by the time they get to be school-age, their brains have been rewired to depend on the dopamine-driven

addiction cycle of fast-paced digital media. Because of this, screen-free activities like playing with others or doing an art project feel boring to their brains and cause them to struggle to regulate.

“In teens, the use of screens, cellphones, video games and social media, is causing teens to struggle with in-person relationship skills and mental health issues, such as low self-esteem and depression that can lead to serious concerns of self-harm and suicide.”

Ackley notes, “I hear a lot from all ages that ‘school is boring’ and until we can get back to screen-free childhoods and learn how to enjoy ‘real life’ fun like playing outside and using their imagination, I’m afraid that these issues will continue. The reality is boredom is one of the cures – allowing our children to be bored so it inspires creativity instead of caving in on screen time.

“In school, screen time is naturally limited, but I do think school districts and parents should

be paying attention to the momentum happening around the world with reducing edtech and banning cellphones and tech in schools completely. The research is finally out: screens and social media are harming our children and teens. My plea to parents would be to give your child a screen-free childhood.

"As a school counselor, mindfulness strategies, such as deep breathing and grounding, are one of the best things that I can teach students that will help them for the rest of their lives. It would be wonderful if families practiced these strategies at home as well."

She adds, "When mindfulness is modeled to children by their parents from a young age, they are going to be more able to handle difficult emotions and stressful situations in life. We all need it! It's why I'm a huge proponent of getting kids outside more than inside – being in nature has so many brain and health-boosting benefits."

"Research shows this is the most nature-deficient generation of children, which is truly heartbreaking. We need to get children and teens outside and off screens, both in schools and at home to help their overall well-being."

"One of the best things that has been created in recent years is California's FREE virtual mental health services: [BrightLife](#) [kids 0-12] and [Soluna](#) [13-24] and I highly suggest it to all families."

Consistent Boundaries at Home and School Set Children Up for Success

Sommer Grooms, Tehama County Department of Education administrator of Alternative

Education, observes that "many students are having trouble with emotional regulation and challenges with peer relationships. There is also a noticeable struggle with focus and perseverance, especially when it comes to academics." She says that in some cases, students are coming to school with limited boundaries or inconsistent expectations, which can make it difficult for them to navigate authority and accountability in a school setting.

"At school, we work to provide consistency and clear expectations while building strong relationships with students," Sommer says. "We focus on helping them develop the skills to take accountability for their actions and understand the importance of respect for themselves and others. Restorative practices and consistent follow-through are key components of this work."

"From a parent perspective, one of the most impactful supports is establishing and maintaining clear boundaries at home. Children benefit from hearing 'no' and learning limits in a supportive environment. Additionally, limiting access to phones and social media, especially during school hours and at night, can significantly improve focus and sleep."

"Equally important is supporting educators by reinforcing school expectations at home. We do not see this enough. When students see alignment between home and school,

it creates a sense of stability and helps them be more successful both behaviorally and academically."



Kayley, a student at Tehama eLearning Academy, is a student advocate for the benefits of counseling. "We are bombarded on social media with too many things that are outside of our control. This just creates anxiety. Talking with Mrs. Barnard brings us back to reality and is calming."

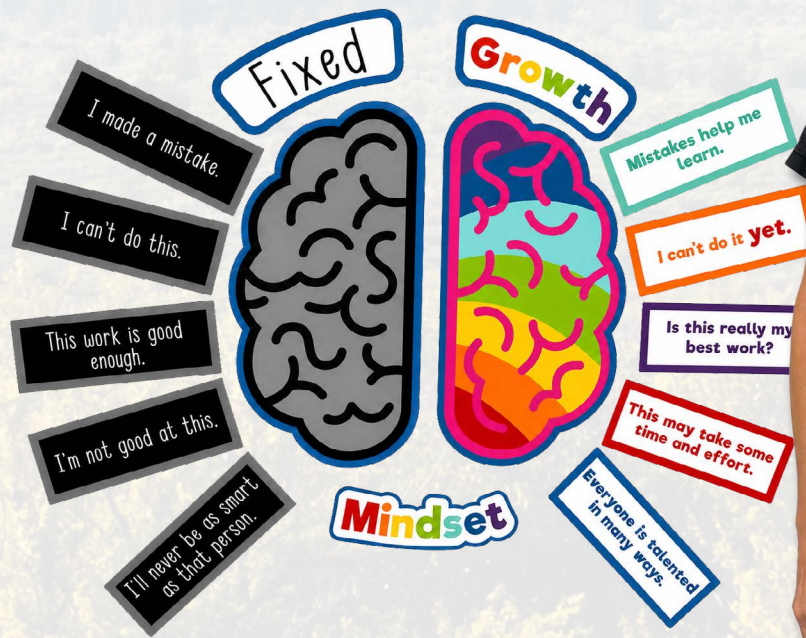
Listening and Mental Health Support Can Help Students Learn to Manage Feelings

Michelle Barnard, principal, Tehama E Learning Academy, encourages parents to talk to their kids about what is going on at school and how their student is managing things.

"Students can feel tremendous pressure to succeed both academically and socially and the pressure can be overwhelming," Michelle says "Sometimes it is helpful just to have someone hear about the struggles and respond with empathy and understanding."

"Sometimes, students need extra support, maybe from a counselor or even a medical professional. Just keep the communication open and acknowledge the feelings and seek help if more help is needed. We have more mental health resources than ever before since I have been working in education and I have seen great progress in many students who have committed to working with a counselor on their challenges."

These professionals all agree that stepping away from screens and getting outside for side-by-side activities can go a long way toward helping your child open up and develop a healthier pattern of communication. You may finally get the chance to hear what is really on your child's mind. ■



Tehama eLearning Academy principal, Michelle Barnard, encourages students with the idea that, "with time, many things are possible—they just may not have happened 'yet.'" Photos by Kate Hiller.



Kate Hiller has noticed that even her adult children open up more when she makes herself available and when engaged in some sort of activity, even taking a long drive.

Home Modifications That Can Transform Life for Families with Disabled Children



Simple steps can modify a home so that it truly works for your child. Every adaptation, no matter how small, is a tangible act of love and advocacy.

For families raising children with disabilities, the instinct is often to think about accessibility in the most traditional sense: ramps, grab bars and wider doorways. But the world of home modification has expanded dramatically, offering solutions that address a wide spectrum of physical, behavioral and sensory needs.

Safety Modifications for Peace of Mind

For parents of children with autism, cognitive disabilities or conditions that affect impulse control, one of the greatest fears is "eloping." Many children slip out of unlocked doors or windows undetected. Door alarms and window lock systems are a simple, affordable solution that can provide enormous peace of mind. Many are available at hardware stores for a low cost. Small doorbell cameras are also an option and several models have settings that alert you when someone opens the door and leaves.

Other budget-friendly safety upgrades include anti-scald devices on faucets and showerheads, which are critical for children who cannot regulate water temperature themselves and impact-absorbing foam or rubber flooring in play areas to cushion falls. The nice thing about many of these modifications is that they are DIY-friendly and can be implemented over a single weekend without professional help.

A Sensory Space for Finding Calm

For families of children with autism, sensory processing disorder or ADHD, sensory spaces can be transformative. These dedicated areas are designed to calm an overwhelmed nervous system through carefully chosen lighting, sound, texture and movement. Think dimmable or color-adjustable lighting, weighted blankets, tactile wall panels and soft, enclosed seating. If you have limited square footage, you can still create an amazing sensory space. A corner of a bedroom outfitted with calming elements that are tailored to your child's needs can be just as effective.

Upgrades That Preserve Dignity and Independence

The bathroom is one of the most important rooms to address, but the options extend well beyond the standard grab bar. Roll-in showers with handheld showerheads, adjustable-height fixtures and non-slip flooring can make bathing safer and more independent for children with a range of physical disabilities.

In the bedroom, specialty enclosed bed systems can prevent nighttime falls for children who roll or move unpredictably during sleep. And for families managing children who require frequent physical transfers from bed to wheelchair to bath, ceiling-mounted lift track systems are residential options many parents simply don't know exist. Though they require professional installation, they can reduce the physical strain on caregivers and preserve the child's dignity during transfers.

Smart Home Tools Already Built for Accessibility

The same smart home devices that millions of households already use for convenience can serve as powerful assistive technology. Voice-controlled lighting, thermostats and door locks through systems like Amazon Alexa or Google Home can

give children with limited mobility meaningful control over their environment – a significant boost to independence and self-confidence.

Video monitoring systems allow parents to keep an eye on children in other rooms, while dedicated charging and docking stations for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices keep critical communication tools organized and ready to use.

Making It Happen Financially

The prospect of home modification can feel overwhelming, especially when budgets are tight, but there are several resources available to families in California who are interested in home modification.

The first step is to get an occupational therapist's written assessment of your child's modification needs. This strengthens any application you pursue, so it's important to request one early in the process.

Step two is calling [Far Northern Regional Center](#). Regional Centers coordinate access to state waivers and connect families to funding for modifications.

The [HCBS-DD Waiver](#) covers home accessibility adaptations for children with a developmental disability diagnosed before age 18 and requires Medi-Cal eligibility.

The [California Home and Community-Based Alternatives \(HCBA\) Waiver](#) is designed for children who are medically fragile or technology-dependent. It covers environmental accessibility adaptations, assistive technology, private duty nursing and family and caregiver training and is available for eligible individuals from birth and up.

The [Self-Determination Program \(SDP\)](#), through the Regional Center, gives families more flexibility in directing services, which can include home modification needs.

Additionally, the California Home Accessibility Program (CHAP) is a state financial assistance program that provides funding for accessibility features such as ramps, lifts and grab bars for eligible homeowners.

Whether it's a low-cost door alarm or a ceiling lift system, every modification is a step toward having a home that truly works for your child. It's easy to focus on what still needs to be done, but every adaptation, no matter how small, is a tangible act of love and advocacy. The journey looks different for every family, but the result is the same: a space where your child can thrive. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a regular basis.

for community **By Pamela Teeter**

Teaching our Future Farmers the Importance of Gardening

"I love it when we are growing snap peas and I am surrounded by a bunch of 3 and 4-year-olds and I ask them who wants a snap pea and they shout ME, ME, ME," says Shelley Miller, who, along with Eric McAnis, serves as primary curriculum developer for The GROWN project, Growing Resilient Optimism With Nature.

A program sponsored by the [Butte County Local Food Network \(BCLFN\)](#), GROWN is a nonprofit with projects to strengthen the local food system through seed, cultivation, distribution, education and policy collaboration. GROWN partners with schools to create age-appropriate curricula, providing hands-on garden experiences for learners of all ages. It focuses on growing, harvesting, cooking, processing food and offers potential career path internships to older youth.

Butte County School Children Learn Where Their Food Comes From

"All of the schools have a garden, they all get to participate in garden upkeep, learning about plants and their development and learning about nature, how humans affect their development and where they get their produce from; the ground not the grocery store!" says Shelley, who specializes in preschool and high school classes. "It amazes me that I have preschoolers that are wanting to try produce with me."

At present, GROWN affects more than three hundred students ranging from preschool to high school, partnering with Chico Achieve Charter School, Ridgeview High School, Chapman Elementary, McManus Elementary, Little Chico Creek Elementary, Mi Esquilita Maya, Little Sprouts, Circles and the Chico Child Development Center.

Gardening and Food Cultivation is Linked to Academic Skills

GROWN provides an opportunity for young people to find a sense of place in their community, instill confidence and offer training in leadership skills. Classes are held one to three times weekly, with groups of 20-175 students at seven schools across eight age categories, and bilingual and multiple classes take place daily. The curriculum is developed for every grade using appropriate vocabulary and terms and sent weekly to school staff so they can prepare the students for the next lesson. "This is the second year that we are teaching certain biweekly subjects that we have been able to develop and improve," says Eric, who focuses on elementary school instruction. "It has been a really awesome trajectory for the quality of our academic program and long level of consistent growth."

At the start of every school year, elementary and high school students receive a questionnaire to help identify areas for improvement. Students who completed the curriculum the previous year demonstrate a 90% retention rate of the material. Desiree Norwood is currently helping develop the garden for students at Circle school. "It is really exciting to see the kids have that interest in the food production and the bugs and what's going on outside and how these processes and concepts seem to really stick with them and really shows that they are interested and that it matters to them."

Additional schools may be considered for inclusion in the future. To express interest, please contact GROWN via their website bcllocalfood.org/grown. Schools that wish to participate will be provided with a questionnaire to evaluate their readiness, available resources and level of staff engagement. "We only have a certain capacity with our teaching and how many hours and schools we can service with the grants and funding we have. We are always looking for more grants and would love more donations to increase our services," says Eric.

Community Support is Crucial

BCLFN is mostly funded by grants. However, local funding with individual donations, sponsors and fundraisers such as their farm-to-table dinners is needed to keep the gardens and food supplies growing. [Grow Chico](#) has been a longtime sponsor that has donated thousands of plant starts not only for the school gardens but for all the kids to take home starts and seeds to teach their parents and really foster the future farmers of America.

Donna Garrison, Administrator, interim President, and Project Manager for the GROWN program, was a founder of BCLFN and maintains strong ties with community farmers. "The mission has always been to diminish food insecurity and support farmers. If you support the farmers, you are supporting local communities. The money stays in the community and teaching children about growing to encourage our next generation of future farmers." ■



GROWN primary curriculum developers Shelley Miller and Eric McAnis love teaching Butte County school students how to be resilient through growing their own delicious vegetables. *Photos provided by BCLFN.*



GROWN teacher Farmer Sam assists students to grow lush vegetable gardens in small school plots. *Photo by Kate Hiller*



Farmer Sam teaches children about the wonders of beet juice. At a recent visit, Mi Esquilita Maya students drank beet juice, ate shredded and roasted beets and even colored with beet juice.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO HELP SUPPORT THIS ORGANIZATION.
TO DONATE GO TO BCLLOCALFOOD.ORG/GROWN.
CLICK TO DONATE AND GO TO THE FUNDRAISERS.
FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM OR FACEBOOK FOR VOLUNTEER DAYS AND
WORKSHOPS THAT YOU CAN HELP OR ATTEND.

👍 Please say you saw it in North State Parent magazine. This helps us grow!



Pawter in the Water Saves Lives by Teaching Kids Water Safety

Drowning is preventable, yet it remains the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of accidental death for children ages 5-14. But how do you teach enthusiastic and excited kids to pay attention to water safety? This is just the question that **Angie Baker**, swim school director at **Sun Oaks Tennis and Fitness** in Redding, and her longtime friend and experienced swim instructor **Calli Brennan** set out to answer.

Keeping Water Safety Lessons Simple

“Every year, Sun Oaks hosts school groups in May for swim and water safety lessons,” says Angie. “We are responsible for teaching water safety to 700-800 children each year and for a lot of these kids it’s their only exposure to the water.” Calli and Angie wanted to pack as much lifesaving knowledge as they could into these lessons. “Every year I was trying to condense the lessons to determine the most important messages we need to teach them and how we can get them to remember,” says Angie.

“We know that children learn through rhyming, repetition, songs and stories,” says Calli. Tapping their experience with the American Red Cross and Swim America programs and information from the National Drowning Alliance, they distilled swim safety principles down to five simple but essential rules kids need to remember to stay safe around water.

“We know that kids love a character, so we introduced Pawter.” Through his curious adventures, Pawter, a lovable puppy, learns the five most important rules of water safety. Angie and Calli called on their musical and innate storytelling skills to write songs and stories about Pawter to teach kids water safety in the way they learn best so they are sure to easily remember these essential rules. “It’s important to make it fun and positive. When kids remember the five rules, it saves lives,” says Calli.

Growing the Pawter in the Water Program Reach

They told the Pawter stories and sang songs to school groups that came to Sun Oaks and at special Week of the Young Child events at Sun Oaks. “Parents loved it and asked if we could come teach in schools.” From this inspirational beginning, Pawter in the Water was born. “Pawter in the Water is a water safety education that teaches kids five lifesaving rules through rhyming stories and songs,” says Angie. “Every rule has a story and a song to go along.”

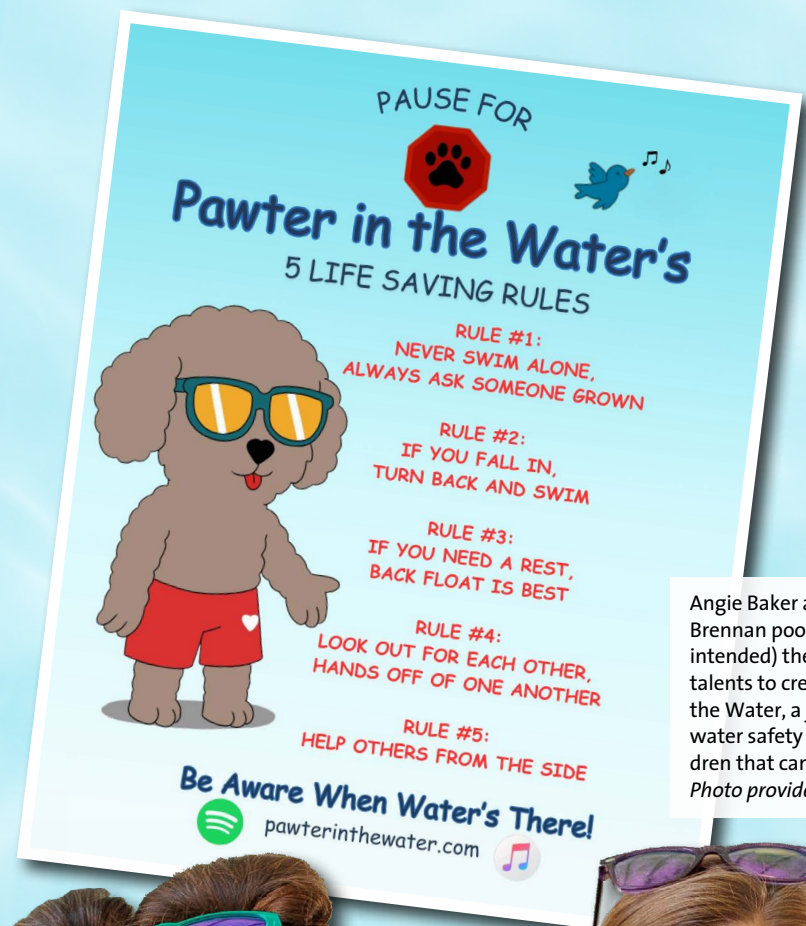
They realized they couldn’t go to every single school. “But it is important that every child hears the message through the book and the songs,” says Calli. The Pawter in the Water website offers videos featuring rhyming songs to help kids remember each of the five water safety rules and a Pawter in the Water musical album. The best part is it’s all free!

Water safety events are sponsored by First 5 Shasta, and Angie and Calli have self-funded the Pawter in the Water videos, website, book, and album. “We believe in this message so much, it’s important to us that it be easily accessible,” says Angie.

“Our ultimate dream is that Pawter becomes the face of water safety like Smokey Bear is for fire safety, so when you see Pawter, he reminds you to be aware when water is there,” says Angie. “And he makes you smile!”

They would like to have Pawter in the Water adapted into a kids show. “Since drowning is the number one cause of death in young children, water safety should be taught in a fun way to all kids,” Angie says. They are seeking an investor that can help them connect to a children’s book publisher, a production company and agent. “Because we want this message to reach every child, we want to be loud and we want to make water safety a priority for children.”

You can access Pawter in the Water free videos and learn where to get their new, beautifully illustrated Pawter in the Water book at pawterinthewater.com. ■



Angie Baker and Calli Brennan pooled (no pun intended) their considerable talents to create Pawter in the Water, a joyful, engaging water safety course for children that can save lives. Photo provided by A. Baker



Stacey gained firsthand awareness of child water safety when her infant son accidentally fell headfirst into a pool. She was able to quickly grab him out of the pool because she was right there and vigilant.

IS YOUR CHILD WATER-SAFE?

Children's swim lessons are available throughout the North State

Butte County

Chico Area Recreation & Park District (CARD); Seasonally offers swim lessons at the Pleasant Valley Pool. 2026 season opens in June. chicorec.com. 2320 North Ave. (530)895-4711.

Chico AquaJets & MiniJets; Ages 4-18. Year-round program. Coaches work with swimmers of all levels and ages on stroke technique and endurance. gomotionapp.com/team/caj/page/home.

Dwight Brinson Swim Center; Durham. Group and private summer swim lessons for a variety of levels. Swim classes for all ages. durhamrecreation.recdesk.com. 9451 Midway. (530)345-1921.

Gridley Pool Swim Lessons: Give your child the confidence to swim this summer! 2-Week Sessions, \$60 per child, 8 thirty-minute lessons. Ages 6 mos – 12 yrs. Registration Opens May 1. Print Registration form at buttecountyfair.org/facility-rentals/swimming-pool 199 Hazel Street. (530) 846-0480

Feather River Recreation & Park District; Oroville. Group and private swim lessons for ages 6mos-17 at Nelson pool. frrpd.com/aquatics. 2290 6th Ave. (530)533-2011.

North Valley Swim School; Chico. Year-round swim programs for ages 6 mos and up Small group or private lessons available. inmotionfitness.com/services/swim-school-nvss. 1293 E. 1st Ave. (530)345-6707.

Butte County

Oroville YMCA Pool. Seasonal swim lessons for all ages. Lifeguard certification course. ymcasuperiorcal.org/OrovilleYMCA. 1200 Myers St. (530)533-9622.

Pleasant Valley Pool; Chico. Private and small group swim lessons for ages 6mos-17 chicorec.com/pleasant-valley-pool. 2320 North Ave. (530)895-4703.

Water Sprites Swim School; Chico. Year-round swim lessons for ages 2 mos and up in a heated indoor. Small class sizes and comfortable parent viewing area. chicowatersprites.com. 2280 Ivy St. (530)428-5031.



Glenn County

Orland City Pool. Group and private swim lessons. orlandrec.recdesk.com. 120 Roosevelt Ave. (530)865-1630.



Kari Bullan, ISR Instructor

Shasta County

Anderson Union High School Pool. Swim lessons for infants and up. ci.anderson.ca.us/departments/programs.php. 1471 Ferry St. (530)378-6654.

Life-Saving Swim Lessons-Redding & Palo Cedro. Customized ISR lessons for infants and children starting at 6 months. One-on-one instruction. Self-rescue swim skills/ Effective for all learners, including special needs. ShastaSelfRescue.com. 530-638-7576

Redding Aquatic Center. Swim lessons for ages 6 mos and up. Search Aquatic Center under Parks & Rec. cityofredding.gov. 44 Quartz Hill Rd. (530)245-7248.

Redding Swim Team. Swim lessons for children ages 4 and up, M-Th afternoons at Shasta College, 11555 Old Oregon trail. reddingswimteam.org (530) 246-2666

Shasta Family YMCA; Redding. Year-round group and private swim lessons 6 mo to adults. Diverse Ability Swim Lessons. Swim Team. Lifeguard training. sfymca.org/swimming. 1155 N. Court St. (530)246-9622.

For children 1-4 years old, drowning is the #1 cause of death, often occurring in home pools or hot tubs.

But drowning is preventable. Children of all ages, including infants, can learn to swim and to "rest float."

Sign your child up for swim lessons this summer or take your baby to Mommy & Me group swim classes.



Sun Oaks Swim School

Shasta County

Sun Oaks Swim School; Redding. Year-round learn-to-swim programs for ages 6 mos & up. Other aquatic programs include: swim team, water polo, junior lifeguard school and mermaid school sunoaks.com/swimschool. 3452 Argyle Rd. (530)221-4405.

Summer Ducks: Summer swim team for swimmers of all skill levels, ages 5 to 18. Practices available M-Th 9:15 to 10:45 at Redding Aquatic Center, 44 Quartz Hill Road or 5:30-6:30 at Shasta College, 11555 Old Oregon Trail. reddingswimteam.org (530) 246-2666.

Siskiyou County

Dotty Olson Community Pool; Etna. Group and private lessons. facebook.com/DottyOlsenPool. 401 Howell Ave. (530)467-5232.

Tehama County

North State Narwhal Swim Team. Ages 6-18. Practices M-Th, 4-5:30pm at Red Bluff High School Pool, 1515 Douglas Street. \$130/mo. (530)200-2692 (Coach Julia)

McGlynn Pool; Red Bluff. Group and private lessons for all ages. facebook.com/redbluffrec. 119 W Sycamore St. (530)527-8177.

Siskiyou County News

HISTORIC McCLOUD: PICTURESQUE MOUNTAIN JEWEL GETAWAY

“McCloud is just the most beautiful little ‘Hallmark’ town,” says Shari Rouiller, executive director of the [McCloud Chamber of Commerce](#). Established in 1895 by George W. Scott and William VanArsdale, founders of the McCloud River Railroad Company and the McCloud River Lumber Company, McCloud has to this day retained much of its historic character and structures.

McCLOUD DANCE HALL RECALLS THE PAST AND WELCOMES THE FUTURE

“This side of the mountain is the coolest side,” says Kristin Cunningham, owner of one of the great treasures of McCloud, the historic Dance Hall, 104 Pine St. Built in 1906 as the McCloud Opera House and Dance Hall, it has a gorgeous 5,000 square foot maple dance floor, sprung for shock absorbing while dancing.

The Free Masons purchased and expanded the building in 1914, but from the 1930s to 1980 it languished until Dave and Suzanna Abbott purchased it and turned it into Dance Country. “It was the square dance capital of Northern California and it was bustling,” says Kristin.

Kristin became the caretaker in 2022 with the goal of making it a welcoming, inclusive community space. Square dancing is back, along with line dancing and roller skating. “I want to keep the building a dance hall, keep it like it is and honor the history of this building,” Kristin says. “It is unique. There might be one other building in Bakersfield this size, but this is one of the largest dance halls in CA.”

Kristin has worked hard to restore the beautiful maple floor and renovate other areas to make it a go-to event space, accommodating up to 500 on the dance floor or 300 seated with room for dancing – perfect for large weddings, retreats, fundraisers, dances (Square, Salsa, Tango, etc.) and yoga groups. Lodging upstairs in two spacious boho-style rooms is included with retreat fees. Further accommodations can be booked at comfy B&Bs and hotels within walking distance of the dance hall.

“Bringing people together makes me happy,” says Kristin. “People come together to feel good and to feel the positive energy of the space and the century of people laughing and dancing. No matter what religion you are, no matter your political beliefs, when you’re dancing or skating on the dance floor, your mind is present when the body is moving, and to me that’s a high form of meditation and healing.”

Kristin relies on community support to help with renovations. “The 2022 major snow caused extensive damage to the roof,” she says. “The roof must be replaced this year.”

To find out the next skating dates and times, learn about upcoming community events at the hall, book your large retreat, wedding or dance workshop, or donate to the roof replacement fund and help restore this true California treasure, go to mcclouddancehall.com.



McCLOUD DANCE HALL



Roller skaters, dancers (square, tango and more) wedding parties and retreat participants come from near and far to enjoy the gorgeous maple floored ballroom, lovingly restored by McCloud Dance Hall caretaker Kristin Cunningham. *Dance Hall photos provided by Kristin Cunningham.*



EXPERIENCE HISTORY, LUXURY AND DELICIOUS FARE AT McCLOUD RIVER BED & BREAKFAST

Originally the headquarters for the McCloud River Lumber Company and home to the town bank and the local telephone switchboard, the lovingly renovated and beautifully appointed McCloud River Bed & Breakfast on 325 Lawndale Court welcomes visitors to step back in history.

Owners Julie and Dan Ponzini came to McCloud to retire in 2019. “But I really wasn’t ready to retire,” says Julie. She had owned a successful cake business and both she and Dan have a background in construction. With these experiences and skills, they decided to purchase the 10,000 sq ft historically registered McCloud River Inn built in 1903 and rechristened it the McCloud River Bed & Breakfast. Julie makes scrumptious baked goods for B&B guests staying in the five beautifully appointed suites, each room with its own history. Dan continues to make historically sensitive renovations and improvements to the building, including upgrading the kitchen to accommodate plans to open a full-service restaurant later this year.

Locals and visitors alike flock to the B&B for the McCloud River Mountain Music series of concerts held throughout the summer, as much for the delicious dinners prepared by Julie and served 4:30-6:30pm as for the foot-tapping music from 7-9pm.

Dan treats guests, upon request, to a personal tour of the historic building, sprinkled with fascinating historical facts and anecdotes about the McCloud River Lumber Company and colorful McCloud history. To book a relaxing stay in this mountain gem or to learn more about its history, go to mccloudriverbnb.com.

McCLOUD RIVER BED & BREAKFAST

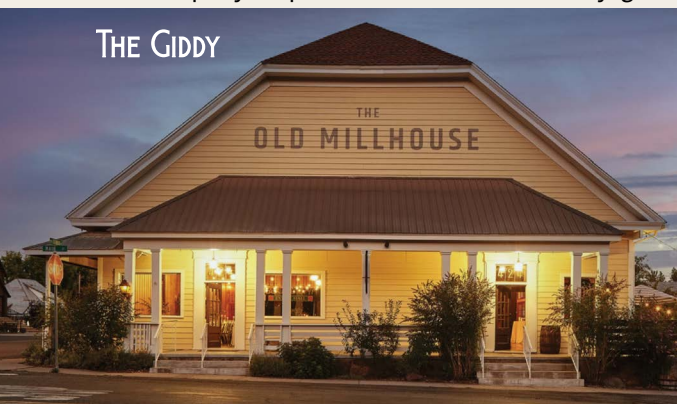


THE GIDDY, UPSCALE HISTORIC EVENT SPACE

Originally the cafeteria for the lumber mill, repurposed as an Italian restaurant and then a pub/bar, the historic building on the corner of Main and W. Columbero has now been beautifully refurbished to become a modern event space for parties up to 200. An upstairs lounge space perfect for a groomsman hangout or children’s play area during events and a full kitchen and bar make for easy entertaining. A modern guest suite and two more luxury guest suites soon to be available provide party hosts and their close friends with comfortable accommodations. A beautiful, welcoming garden with overhanging arbor provides a lovely space for an intimate romantic wedding ceremony.

“We are here to support the McCloud community,” says The Giddy manager and longtime McCloud resident, Linn Tyhurst. “We always recommend local businesses (florists, caterers, etc.) to our event clients.” The Giddy will host a very special fundraiser May 22 for Major’s Place, a unique equine therapy and learning program in McCloud. A FREE family friendly and sensory friendly session with a silent disco, face painting, snacks and fun for all ages runs from 3:30 – 5:30pm and the Major Jam for 21+ is 7-11pm. Go to mccloudisco.com for more info and tickets. To book your next intimate party or special celebration at The Giddy, go to thegiddymccloud.com.

THE GIDDY



THE McCLOUD HOTEL: RELAXED COMFORT AND GOURMET DINING

“Summer in McCloud is about slowing down and reconnecting – whether that’s exploring Mount Shasta, wandering through our historic town or simply gathering together at the end of the day,” says Cindy Rossman, proprietor of the McCloud Hotel, 408 Main Street. “At the McCloud Hotel, we love welcoming families with thoughtful touches like our family king room with bunk beds, breakfast included each morning, and evenings around the fire pits making s’mores. It’s the kind of place where simple moments become lasting memories.”

The McCloud Hotel, built in 1916 and registered on the National Register of Historic Places, is situated in the heart of the historic McCloud district and seamlessly blends modern amenities with historic charm. In-house restaurant, The Sage, offers unparalleled meals prepared with the freshest, most seasonal ingredients, including a delectable selection of nutritious grains, fresh vegetables and sustainably raised meats and seafood.

They also offer a fly-fishing package and indoor and outdoor event venues. Go to mccloudhotel.com to book your stay.



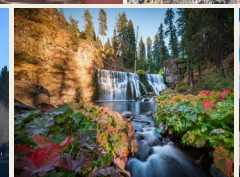
McCloud Hotel is a family-run operation spanning three generations of the Rossman family.

TOWN FESTIVALS, SCENIC WATERFALLS AND MORE

“People know about our falls,” says Shari, “but we also have Pumice Mountain and Glass Mountain nearby, beautiful hiking trails and excellent campgrounds for both tents and RVs.”

Avid fishers come from far and wide to enjoy some of the best fly fishing in California on the McCloud River. Visitors can thread their way over scenic hiking and biking trails following helpful maps available at the McCloud Chamber of Commerce (located in the former Italian Bank office in the McCloud Bed & Breakfast).

The old-fashioned candy store in the historic McCloud Mercantile building offering unique and tempting goodies is not only stocked with a mouthwatering variety of scrumptious sweet treats but boasts custom woodwork by famous local artist Steve Richardson. Steve also created custom signage for the chamber and local businesses that imbue the town with a special charm and grace.

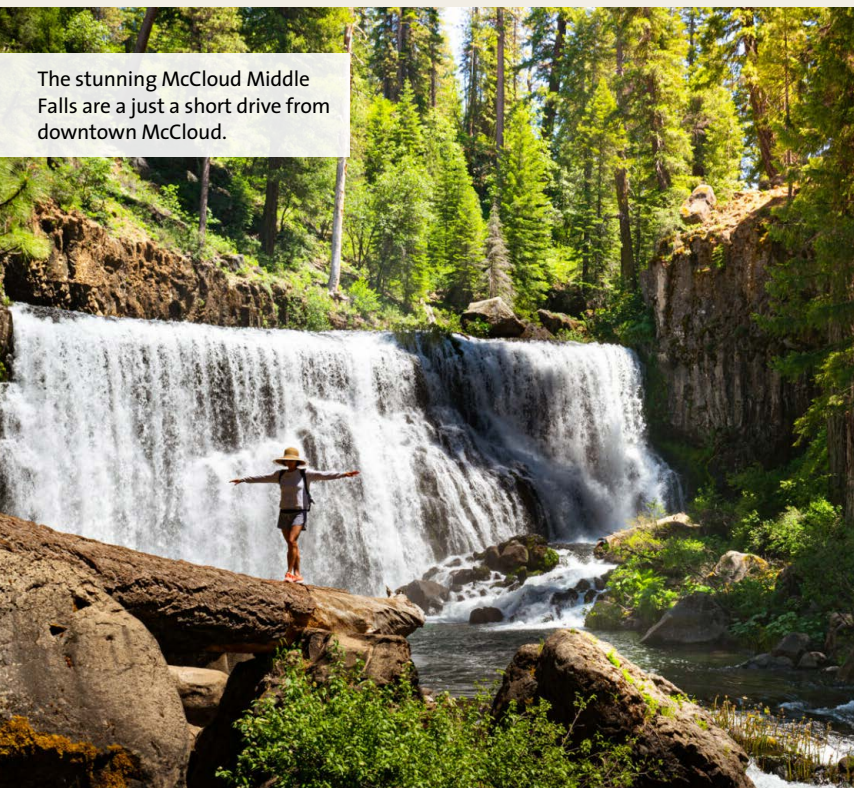


The entire town is fully lit in the summer evenings, with picnic tables on Main Street to enjoy a late snack in the warm mountain air. Hoo Hoo Park on Columbero features gazebos and BBQ pits with a full view of Mt. Shasta and dogs are welcome on a leash. Visitors can find victuals to fit every taste at local eateries like Sojourn Coffee Shop, Butcher Block Grill, Sage inside the McCloud Hotel, Floyds Frosties, Siskiyou Brew Works and Tracy’s White Mountain Café.

The best thing about McCloud? Many say it's the people! "Everyone in town waves to passersby," says Julie. "I love the people," Kristin says. "There's a sense of cohesiveness in the community." Shari tearfully testifies about the sense of community she has experienced in McCloud and how she was welcomed to the town with open arms. "People here are kind and welcoming and helpful and community oriented."

Linn has found that "a lot of people come to McCloud to get out of the city and relax, with its outdoor recreation with small-town charm." Dan adds, "Everyone who stays here sleeps well because it's so quiet and peaceful." ■

The stunning McCloud Middle Falls are a just a short drive from downtown McCloud.



Stacey loves vintage buildings and has owned and renovated a 1927 Craftsman and currently owns a large 1913 Edwardian home.

McCLOUD IS FILLED WITH EXCITING, NOT-TO-BE-MISSED FESTIVALS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

MUSHROOM FESTIVAL MAY 22 & 23

Featuring over 200 vendors, delicious food and live music. Local mushroom-hunting experts will be giving tips and leading foraging hikes.

54TH ANNUAL FLEA MARKET & NEIGHBORHOOD YARD SALE, JUNE 7

The largest in Siskiyou County, it features over 100 booths of collectibles, arts, crafts, antiques, tools, clothing, jewelry, furniture and much more! Enjoy a variety of mouthwatering options from the food trucks and a cold brew at the beer booth.

79TH ANNUAL LUMBERJACK FIESTA, JULY 24-26

A fun-filled weekend for the whole family. Three days of competitions and a variety of events such as horseshoes, logging, watermelon eating and dancing. Music, vendors, a softball tournament, food, ice-cold beer and much more fun in the sun.

McCLOUD RIVER INN SHOW & SHINE, AUG. 15

Don't miss the Motor Mountain Car Show. Enjoy music, refreshing beverages, tasty food and of course cars!

APPLE HARVEST FESTIVAL, OCT. 10

Live music, yummy food, refreshing beverages, family fun, apple dessert contest, homemade apple pies for sale and much more.

SANTA COMES TO TOWN, DEC. 4-5

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES, DEC. 11-12 & 8-19

McCloud transforms into a heartwarming Victorian holiday wonderland each December. Over select weekends throughout the month, the streets and storefronts of downtown McCloud become twinkling backdrops for festive traditions and family-friendly fun. Expect charming carriage rides, festive entertainment and holiday crafts the whole family will enjoy.



To learn more about upcoming McCloud events, go to mccloudchamber.com



UPK Universal PreKindergarten

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THE MOTHER'S DAY TRUTH

What She Wants isn't in a Store

Ask any mom what she wants for Mother's Day and she'll usually offer something small and manageable. Perhaps she'll mention flowers, brunch or maybe a card the kids made at school. The idea is to keep requests reasonable, polite and easy to say out loud. But those options are rarely the whole truth.

Because what many mothers want doesn't fit neatly in a bag or arrive with a receipt. And it doesn't live in the seasonal aisle. What she really wants is harder to package and easier to overlook. But if we listen to the quiet things mothers admit only when they feel safe or let their guards down, we start to see a different picture of Mother's Day, one that's less about celebration and more about understanding. Because what many mothers really want is relief, recognition and restoration this Mother's Day.

THE MYTH OF "FREE TIME"

For many mothers, personal time feels theoretical or aspirational. It's something that's frequently talked about but rarely achieved. According to the American Time Use Survey published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, mothers have less leisure time than any other demographic group. Worse, leisure time for mothers is often interrupted. Psychologists refer to this as "contaminated leisure," or time that technically exists, but is mentally crowded. So while mom might be alone in a room, her mind is tracking appointments, meals, permission slips and the emotional needs of others. Her work break between meetings may be spent ordering groceries. Or her quiet shower may be where she remembers the birthday gift she forgot to buy.

'This isn't just busy-ness. It's a constant cognitive load. And over time, it takes a toll. That's why solitude isn't a selfish luxury for mothers. Many experts believe it's a mental health requirement since real solitude allows the nervous system to downshift. A 2023 qualitative study of postpartum mothers captured this need with painful clarity: Participants described feeling overwhelmed, lonely and "touched-out". Many of the participating moms yearned not for grand gestures, but for sleep, silence and a moment where no one needed anything from them.

WANTING TO BE SEEN, NOT APPLAUDED

Time alone matters, but it's not the only thing mothers crave. Many mothers also carry a deep hunger to be truly seen, so that those they love notice all that they're doing, even when no one else is watching. So much of motherhood happens out of sight. When that work goes unacknowledged, it doesn't just feel unfair; it feels deeply lonely. Recognition matters most when it's specific, when someone notices the systems a mother keeps running every day and chooses to step into them without being asked. That kind of recognition isn't about praise. It's about shared responsibility.

Clinical psychologist Dr. Gabrielle Frackman notes that gifts that acknowledge a mother's workload and actively reduce it can feel more meaningful than anything money can buy.

SOMETIMES WHAT SHE WANTS IS YOU

Not all mothers want solitude above all else. Sometimes, what's missing isn't space, it's connection. Some mothers want moments where logistics fall away and presence takes their place.

Research into mother-child emotional connection shows how powerful intentional connection can be. When mothers and children engage in calm, focused interaction (which is what researchers call "co-regulation"), both experience reduced stress and increased joy. The science backs what many mothers already feel instinctively: connection heals. For some mothers, the deepest gift is time together that doesn't require managing anything. A walk, a shared activity or a conversation that isn't interrupted by tasks can serve as a reminder that relationships aren't just another responsibility. They're nourishment.

RETHINKING MOTHER'S DAY

So what does the ideal Mother's Day actually look like? It looks like time that is truly hers. Not time she has to plan. Not time that leaves more work behind. But time that is protected and complete. It looks like a day where she doesn't answer questions, make decisions or clean up afterward. It looks like recognition that's specific and sustained. Perhaps it's a letter that names what you've noticed. Or better yet, a responsibility you permanently take over. Not as a favor, but as a lasting shift. It looks like a connection, chosen with care.

And it also looks like awareness. Because Mother's Day isn't always celebratory for everyone. Some are grieving lost mothers. Some are longing to become one. Some are struggling inside the role. And some have relationships with mothers that are complicated or painful.

THE TRUTH BENEATH THE CELEBRATION

You can't buy what a mother truly wants. Her wishlist is written in hours of lost sleep, in the weight of silent responsibilities and in the longing to be known as more than just "mom." This year, give her the priceless gifts of time, recognition and connection. That is the truth behind the celebration and it's the one thing she wants most.

As a busy mom who manages the family calendar, and whose love language is Words of Affirmation, this quote from Jenny Jones resonates with me. "As a mom, I can say the most meaningful gifts have never been things – they've been moments when I didn't have to manage anything. Time that's truly off-duty, help that lasts beyond a holiday and words that notice the invisible work – those are the gifts that restore a mother's heart." ■



Shannon M. Dean specializes in writing about families. Her son recently enthusiastically replied "Cool mom!" when she confided her dream of writing fiction.

THOUGHTFUL GIFTS AND GESTURES THAT SAY "I LOVE YOU"

1. Acts That Lighten Her Load

- Take over a recurring chore for good (laundry, meal planning, school packing, dishes).
- A visible act of labor: fold the laundry, organize the pantry, restock self-care items.
- A binder of household routines and passwords so she never has to juggle those in her head again.

2. The Gift of Uninterrupted Time

- A scheduled "do not disturb" block. Phones are off, calendar is clear and the kids are cared for.
- A handwritten voucher good for a day where she doesn't plan, manage or clean up.
- A cozy set-up for solitude: an extra-plush robe, herbal tea and a playlist of peace.

3. Words That Really Matter

- A drawer filled with "Why You Matter" notes from family members.
- A framed quote or snapshot that captures a moment she didn't realize you saw.
- A heartfelt letter about what you've noticed: late nights, emotional labor, unseen efforts.

4. Connection With No To-Do List

- A planned walk with no expectations, no destination and no agenda.
- A shared activity she enjoys (painting, gardening or a café date).
- A quiet evening with music and meaningful conversation.

5. For the Mom Who Wants Calm, Not Presents

- A self-care basket with noise-canceling earbuds, bath salts, comfy socks and a weighted blanket.
- A playful "spa menu" at home (with a foot soak, scalp massage and fancy iced water).
- A scheduled nap session with refreshments waiting when she wakes.

6. Experiences That Feel Personal

- A mini-retreat at home: a phone-free breakfast, a reading session and a sunset porch swing.
- A creative project together: a memory book, craft or planting flowers in the yard.

7. Support Beyond Mother's Day

- A weekly check-in date (a coffee, text or walk) just for her.
- A recurring calendar reminder saying: "Her Time," allowing her to choose the activity.



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