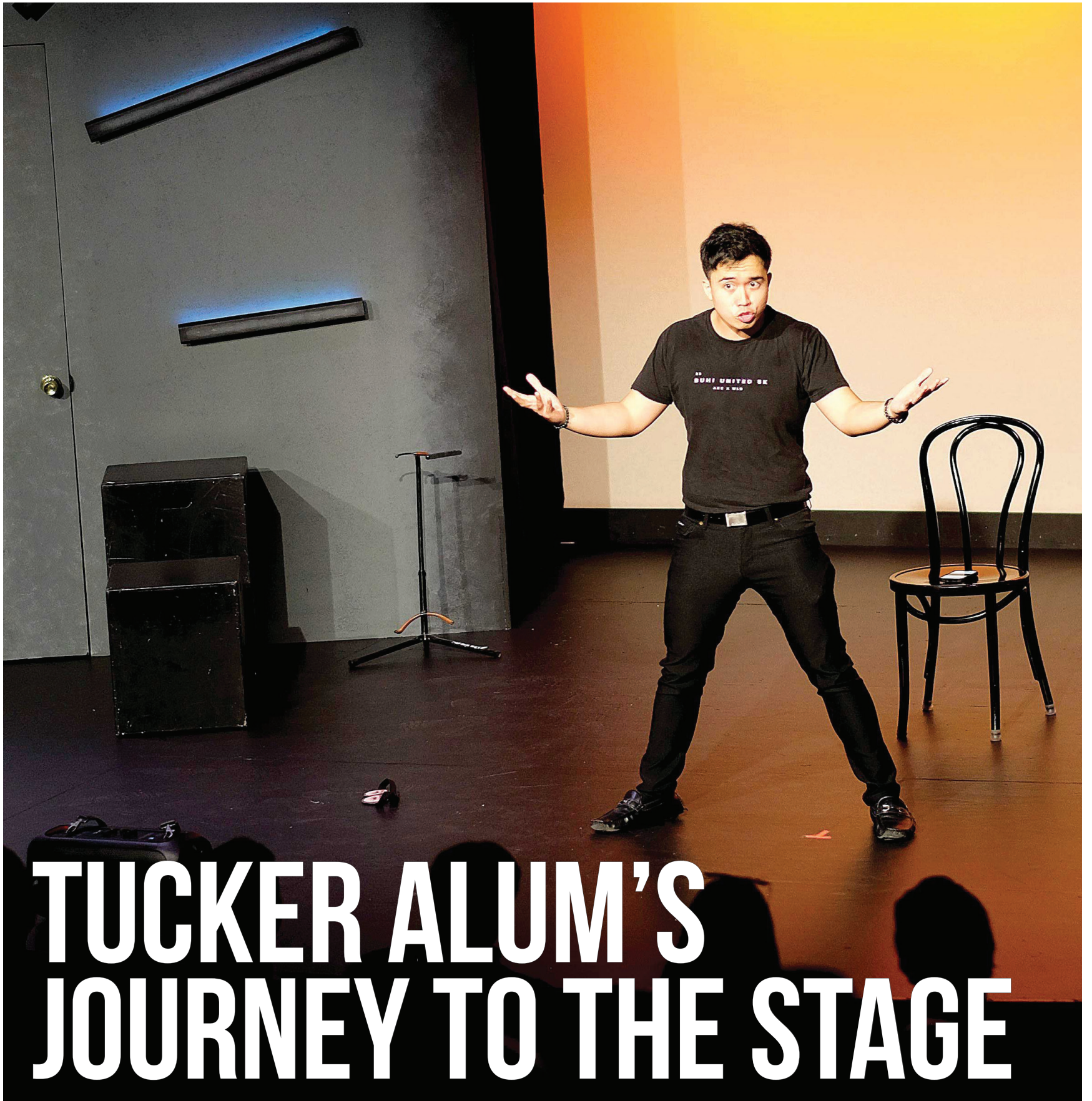




# INTUCKER

MARCH 2025 | VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 3



## TUCKER ALUM'S JOURNEY TO THE STAGE



# ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Frank Auman**  
Mayor

**Roger W. Orlando**  
District 1 - Post 1

**Cara Schroeder**  
District 2 - Post 1

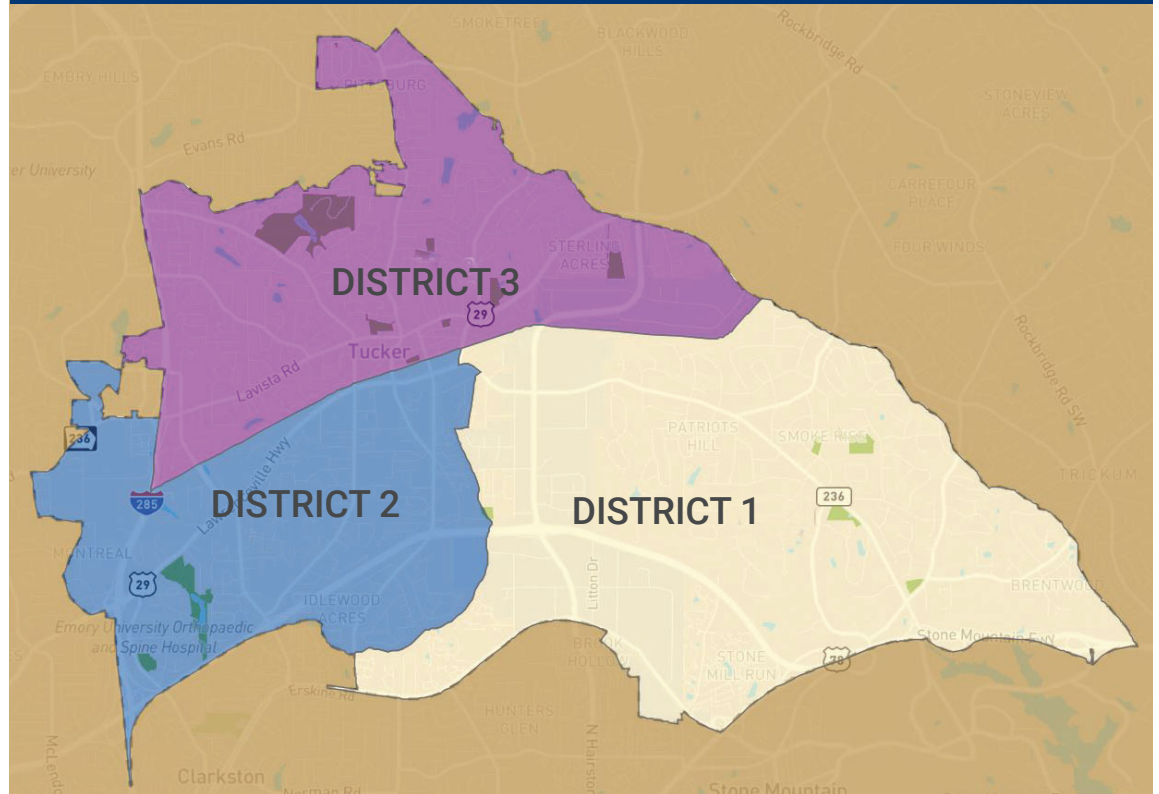
**Alexis Weaver**  
District 3 - Post 1

**Virginia Rece**  
District 1 - Post 2

**Vinh Nguyen**  
District 2 - Post 2

**Amy Trocchi**  
District 3 - Post 2

# DISTRICT MAP



# EDITOR'S NOTE

**SONJA SZUBSKI - COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**



An ongoing discussion over the past nine years has been around the topic of the City's anniversary. Is the birth of our City when we voted as a community to incorporate? Is it when

the quorum of Mayor and

Council was inaugurated? What about the first business meeting of the Mayor and Council? Or was it when the City assumed responsibility of enforcing the code of ordinances? How about all of them?

Each of these events is significant in the formation of our Tucker government, and for those involved in the cityhood effort, the ten year anniversaries started in March of 2023. All this to say, expect some fun and exciting celebrations to start up later this year.

Our feature this month was surprisingly personal to me. Phong Le is a Tucker alumnus that has found success and a passion for entertaining others. I had the pleasure of talking to him, learning that he knows and has performed with my niece. I have enjoyed watching his stand-up in person and am very much looking forward to enjoying watching him once again on stage in his one-person musical comedy later this month.

Our Citizens of the Month are some seriously great up-and-comers that are learning and growing to be our future leaders. This group of Scouts of America Troop 129 serve together throughout all Tucker in a variety of ways. They are in a unique situation of being new leaders in their troop while learning even more from those ahead of them in the scouting journey.

As always there are great and exciting things planned for this next season of the year and I look forward to seeing you around Tucker!

# CITY SOCIALS



**nextdoor**

# INTUCKER STAFF

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Marcus Etienne &  
Robin Stevens



# FROM THE MAYOR

FRANK AUMAN



One of the more visible ways the City serves the community is through our Parks and Recreation department. City staff has created and expanded our lineup of monthly events, grown our sports leagues and fostered relationships with third-party teachers and leaders at the Tucker Recreation Center. In 2019, we entered into a partnership that has turned into one of our largest projects to date. The private organization that owned Fitzgerald Field, home of the Tucker Football League, approached the City and requested a unique partnership via donating their sports complex on Lawrenceville Highway to the City in exchange for a promise to

renovate the park, returning the 18 acre facility to modern standards, and allow TFL first priority for its use. We jumped at the opportunity and have made huge upgrades to the entire facility. It's a promise we've now fulfilled, and we can't wait to share it with all of Tucker!

The Fitzgerald Sports Complex was in dire need of improvement to the fields, buildings and parking, but first, the water and sewer systems needed to be addressed. This required a complete replacement of the water delivery system within the park and tying into the existing sewer system with new lines. We also had to replace and repair the entire stormwater management system in the park. Not only did we face supply chain issues during COVID, but we planned the project in phases to spread it over several fiscal years, so while it may have felt like it was never-ending, this was well planned and well executed despite the many challenges.

Once completed in the summer of 2023, we were able to dig in and have some fun upgrading the fields and facilities.

The final upgrades include repaving the parking and the entrance drive, adding additional parking, athletic fields for football (including an artificial turf main field), baseball and multi-purpose, three concession/bathroom buildings and a new playground area with a walking trail. As I said, our largest project to date.

A project of this magnitude calls for a true celebration once it is completed. We are thrilled to invite the community to join us at the Spring Fling on Saturday March 29 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Fitzgerald Sports Complex to celebrate this major investment in the future of Tucker's sports programming and athletes of all ages.

The Fitzgerald Sports Complex is located at 4877 Lawrenceville Highway and on the web at [tuckerga.gov/parks](http://tuckerga.gov/parks)



## DATES TO KNOW

- **MARCH 5, 9 A.M.**  
Just a Walk in the Park  
@Probst Park
- **MARCH 5, 9 A.M.**  
Municipal Court
- **MARCH 7, 4:30 P.M.**  
Sunset Hike at Stone Mountain  
Tucker Outdoors Club
- **MARCH 8, 2-4 P.M.**  
Rubber Ducky  
Scavenger Hunt  
@Kelley Cofer Park
- **MARCH 10, 7 P.M.**  
City Council Meeting
- **MARCH 12, 9 A.M.**  
Municipal Court
- **MARCH 14, 6 P.M.**  
PI Day, Pie-K  
@Tucker Rec. Center
- **MARCH 15, 1-5 P.M.**  
Tucker Chili Cook-Off  
@Main Street
- **MARCH 19, 9 A.M.**  
Municipal Court
- **MARCH 20, 7 P.M.**  
Planning Commission
- **MARCH 23, 2-4 P.M.**  
Spring into Action Workday  
@Johns Homestead Park
- **MARCH 24, 7 P.M.**  
City Council Meeting
- **MARCH 23, 9:30 A.M.-1 P.M.**  
Spring Fling  
Fitzgerald Park



## FEATURE STORY

# TUCKER ALUM LAUGHS ALL THE WAY TO THE STAGE, AND BEYOND



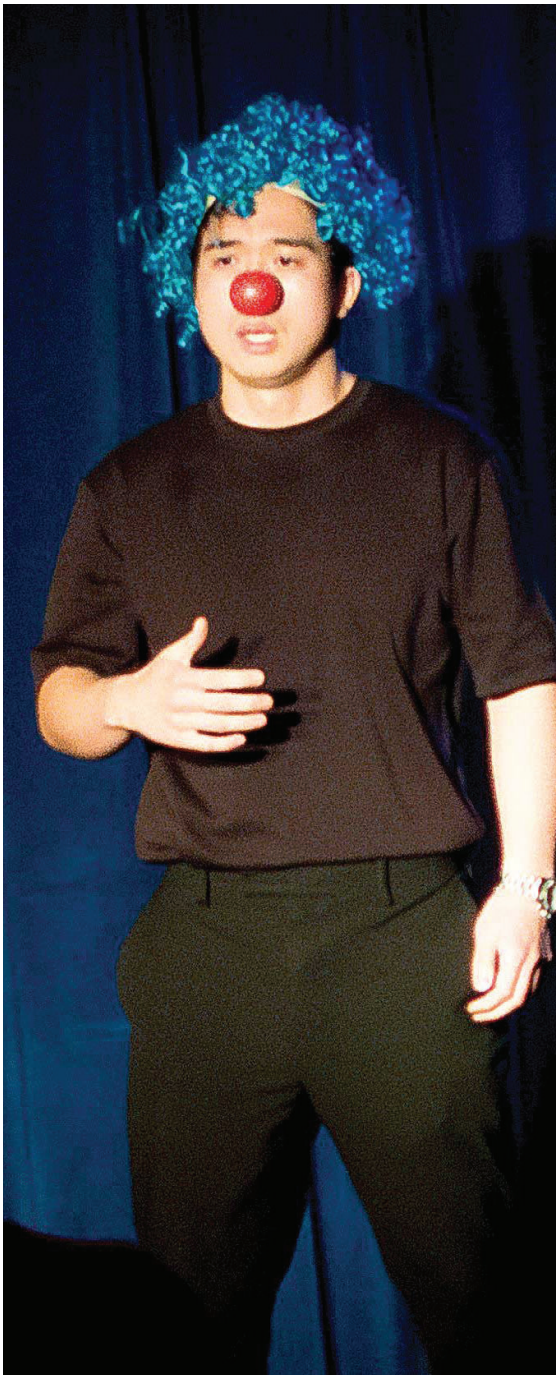
When asked “what do you want to be when you grow up?” children respond with all kinds of answers: a fireman, a teacher or an astronaut. Many parents hope for their children to have better lives and options than what they themselves had and work hard to set them on a path for success. Phong Le was raised with the knowledge that his parents wanted him to become a doctor, and on the path that his parents paved for him, he found his true passion and dream...the comedic stage.

Phong Le was born and raised in Tucker, attended Midvale Elementary, Tucker Middle and graduated from Tucker High. Phong’s parents immigrated from Vietnam and were no strangers to the hardships of life, but they also knew the success that comes from hard work. They instilled the drive to succeed in Phong from an early age and he has always given his very best to all he takes on. While Phong did not want to become a doctor like his parents wanted, he worked hard to be the Valedictorian of his high school graduating class and went on to Emory University for his undergraduate degree and his master’s in public administration. It was on this journey for academic success that Phong found his calling.

Phong spent the summer between his junior and senior years of high school attending the Governor’s Honors Program for Math. The highly competitive program is a four-week-long learning experience that pulls from the best in the state of Georgia. Students apply for a specific subject, like math or science, but are also required to select a minor in a field they would not normally study. Phong chose drama and by doing so changed his life.

As part of his studies, Phong learned stand-up comedy from a professionally trained clown and was inspired to seek further opportunities to hone his new skill. During his six years at Emory, he participated in the improv team and performed as often as possible. After the pandemic, when most live shows were shut down, Phong sought new opportunities with Dad’s Garage, Atlanta’s premier venue for classes and shows in improv.





Phong was quickly noticed at Dad's Garage and invited to join their Conservatory, adding sketch comedy to his growing list of stage talents and joining local showcases. At one of these showcases a seed was planted in the form of a five-minute musical sketch about the Vietnam War.

The performance garnered interest from many, including a local bookstore that curated a selection of books about the war that they gifted to Phong with the encouragement to learn more about the history and to expand the sketch into a show.

Sketch comedy is an inclusive community, full of support in real life that mirrors the comedic support on stage. The leaders of Dad's Garage recognized Phong's comedic chops and handpicked him for a once in a lifetime opportunity in the comedy world. A well-known sketch TV show based out of New York City

had started eyeing Atlanta talent and worked with local comedy leaders to coordinate an audition. Phong, along with 80 other locals, went through the rigors all while keeping the excitement secret from friends and family. Phong made the initial cut to 20 applicants, and again down to the four that were flown to NYC for the semi-finals. Ultimately, it wasn't Phong's time for the Saturday night lights, but the experience helped bolster his confidence and expand his professional network.

In all of his excitement and stress of auditions, learning and honing his stage skills and a full-time job, Phong did not forget the community support of the idea for a full-fledged musical.

Fast forward to the present and Phong has made his dreams a reality. This month, Phong will present a 75-minute comedy musical about the Vietnam War. The show is made up of several sketches inspired by his family's

experiences in the war and after, and it is his way to bring to light the difficulties of many involved, namely President John F. Kennedy. Together, JFK and Phong travel through time and spaces to collect pieces of experiences to stop the war.

Phong shared that he makes it a practice to chase joy. And by doing so he fulfilled his parents' wish for success and his own dream of something more.

"STOP THE VIETNAM WAR (A SOLO MUSICAL COMEDY)" will be showing throughout the month of March and tickets are on sale now.

Shows are at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays, March 12 -19 and at 2:30 p.m. Saturday March 22 at the Balzar Theatre, 84 Luckie Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30303. Tickets can be purchased online by visiting [theatricaloutfit.org/launchpad](http://theatricaloutfit.org/launchpad)



# TOP 5 SAFETY TIPS FOR FAMILIES NAVIGATING GEORGIA'S WALK AND ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY

March marks the celebration of Georgia's Walk and Roll to School Day right here in our Tucker Community! Walking to school can be a great way for children to enjoy the outdoors, stay active, and gain a sense of independence, but safety should always come first. As a proud parent of the Tucker Community, these essential safety tips will help you prepare your child to navigate our neighborhoods confidently and safely.

**1. Buddy Up!** – Encourage your child to walk or bicycle with a sibling, friend, or trusted neighbor for safety in numbers.

**2. Know the Route** – Walk the route or bicycle together before the school event. Tucker elementary schools have chosen the safest, most well-lit path with sidewalks for walkers and bicycle riders. Check with your school for the route details.

**3. Bright & Visible** – Have kids wear bright colors or reflective gear so drivers can see them easily.

**4. Traffic Smarts** – Use this time to teach children to always use crosswalks, look left, right, and left again before crossing the street, make eye contact with drivers, listen to crossing guards, and follow traffic signals; especially when riding a bicycle.

**5. Limit Distractions** – Encourage children to avoid using headphones or texting while walking. Staying alert keeps children aware of their surroundings.

By taking a few simple precautions, Tucker families can help make sure our Georgia Walk and Roll to School Day events are both safe and enjoyable. To learn more, visit Georgia Safe Routes to School at [www.saferoutesga.org](http://www.saferoutesga.org)

*Written by Trinita Patton, MPH, Tucker Resident*



Photo credit: Lyle Collins, Smokerise Elementary School



At the time of publication, these are the known dates of schools in the Tucker Cluster participating in Walk and Roll to School Day:

- **Midvale: March 6**
- **Livsey: March 5 (rain date March 12)**



## CITIZENS OF THE MONTH

# CUB SCOUT PACK 129 - ARROW OF LIGHT DEN



Pack 129 of Tucker has announced the promotion of 16 Cub Scouts to the rank of Arrow of Light. As the highest-ranking Cub Scouts in Pack 129, these young leaders have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to making a positive impact in their community through volunteerism and civic responsibility. Six of the scouts began with the entry rank of Lion in 2019 and most of the graduating den have elected to continue their journey in Scouting America, where they will have the opportunity to pursue the ultimate rank of Eagle Scout. In their new scout troop, scouts will continue their role as stewards of their environment, help others in their community and learn while upholding a legacy of scouting principles founded in 1910.

"It has been so inspiring to see these Cub Scouts grow and mature throughout the program from kindergarten to 5th grade," said Alisha Etheredge, the group's volunteer den leader for the past six years. "Everything we do is guided by the Scout Oath and Law, which instills these values in the Cubs as an ethical and moral compass. Watching them develop into responsible, compassionate and engaged members of our community has been one of the greatest rewards of this journey."

Pack 129 scouts come from all corners of the Tucker community and beyond. While most attend different schools, live in different neighborhoods and pursue a variety of interests, they bond over a spirit of service, leadership and community engagement. At regular meetings they learn and discuss new concepts and practical strategies for caring for themselves and others. Their outdoor adventures are opportunities to enjoy the world they all share and protect together.

Each scout has also growth through service, with a personal promise to "do a good turn daily." As a den team and as their larger pack group, these scouts have shown persistence working together to identify

needs and affect change in the Tucker community. Those activities have included, but were not limited to:

- Regular trash clean-ups at Kelly Cofer Park and surrounding areas
- Participation in Tucker Civic Association's annual Rivers Alive event to help remove waste from local waterways
- Collecting food donations for Tucker Fire House #5
- Packing food donations for the Snax Sax for Kids Program at Embury Hills United Methodist Church, ensuring children in neighboring Dekalb County schools have weekend snacks to combat child hunger
- Participating in food drives for NETWorks Cooperative Ministry, which provides groceries to families in need
- Collecting supplies for Tucker First United Methodist Church's Cold Weather Shelter, offering relief to those experiencing homelessness
- Supporting Dekalb County Animal Services, helping provide for abandoned and rescued animals

The 2025, Pack 129 Arrow of Light den embodies the essence of citizenship—giving back, leading by example, and making a real difference in their community. We are proud to nominate them as Citizen of the Month for their unwavering commitment to service and leadership in the City of Tucker.

For more information about Pack 129, visit [pack129tucker.com](http://pack129tucker.com)

*Nominated by James Taylor*



NEWS FROM CITY HALL

# TRW THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

How many restaurants did you visit this year for Tucker Restaurant Week? Our 5th Annual Tucker Restaurant Week was bigger and better than ever and you came out in droves to support our community. We hope you discovered some new hidden gems and revisited a few of your favorites!

**CAN YOU MATCH EACH PARTICIPATING RESTAURANT ON THE RIGHT TO THE PIECE OF THEIR LOGO SHOWN BELOW?**



- Antico Pizza
- Baraka Shawarma
- Bell Street Burritos
- Books & Brew
- Cakes Castle
- Cococakes by Coco
- Corner Cup Coffee
- El Taco Naco
- Ford's BBQ
- Fluffy Fluffy
- Grecian Gyro
- Jets Pizza
- Kochi Sushi & Grill
- KPot
- La Glorieta
- Las Colinas
- Los Hermanos
- Local 7
- Magnolia Room
- Matthews
- Mint Coffeehouse
- Mokhaport
- Monterrey Mexican
- Nicky's Undefeated
- Perc Coffee
- Pupuseria Carla
- Sabor Centro America
- Shorty's
- Sugar Mex
- Tucker Brewing Company



## BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# TURNING SUN OF TUCKER

Turning Sun of Tucker is driven by a passion for inspiring the next generation, valuing children's interests, and providing an enriching educational experience. Owner Anna Axt, brings 17 years of early childhood education experience, and her staff shares her dedication to nurturing their students. The daycare embraces the Reggio Emilia Philosophy, where educators observe children's interests and incorporate those into the curriculum. This approach, combined with their deep commitment to fostering a love of learning, has made Turning Sun a treasured resource in the Tucker community.

"I think it's that sense of community and philosophy that we have," Axt said. "It's about the whole child. It's not just fitting them into a box. Every child is an individual and can also bring something to the table."

Before opening the Tucker location, Axt worked as an educator at another Turning Sun location owned by Bill Asp, who was looking to expand. Asp believed it would be beneficial to have a franchise owner with childcare experience, someone who could provide a more personal and effective approach to caring for children. Axt saw this as a great opportunity and began searching for a location. She eventually found the perfect spot in Tucker—Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church—which she felt offered both a great physical space and a vibrant community.

"As we were looking, we came across Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church, and they had a whole other education building that

was just really beautiful," Axt said. "There are all these woods nearby. We are across the street from Johns Homestead. We just kind of fell in love with the area and the community. We worked with the church to create a lease and now we've been here for almost seven years."

The location, along with the support of the local community, has been key to the success of Turning Sun. Axt emphasizes that the Tucker community plays a vital role in enhancing the daycare service, with members regularly volunteering their time. Turning Sun offers a variety of hands-on learning experiences, including field trips, gardening, recycling, and arts projects. The children have created art using recyclable materials and visited the DeKalb Farmers Market Recycling Center. Expert guest speakers, including musicians, also visit to introduce the children to different fields of interest. It is this combination of community involvement, a passion for early childhood education, and a commitment to valuing each child that makes Turning Sun stand out as a top choice for childcare.

"I just really love the community," Axt said. "I love that there are a lot of like-minded educators who value the work of children, which is to play and get messy and be valued as members of our community."

Located on the campus of Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church, Turning Sun is at 3142 Lawrenceville Highway right here in Tucker and online at [turningsun.com/campustucker](https://turningsun.com/campustucker)





# WHAT HAPPENED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING? CITY COUNCIL UPDATE



The preschool class of Tucker First United Methodist led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tucker's Mayor and Council met for their first meeting of the month of February with a full attendance. After the preschool class of Tucker First United Methodist led the Pledge of Allegiance, almost all of the 20 minutes of the public comment was filled with residents speaking about the proposed pickleball courts.

Prior to approving the evening's agenda the Mayor added one item to new business and then unanimously approved the evening's agenda and the four items on the consent agenda:

- Regular Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2025
- Regular Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2025
- A contract renewal with Trimble for Cityworks Software
- An amendment to the City Meeting Calendar to change the time of the February 24, 2025 meeting to 6 p.m.

The Mayor and Council then heard a presentation from Nichols Cauley, the external auditors, for the Fiscal Year 2024 that closed in June of last year. The City earned a GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the sixth consecutive year. The first of three public hearings was then held concerning the City's intention to opt-out of the statewide floating homestead exemption as defined in House Bill 581.

Two items were up for second reads and action, the council voted 6-1 to deny a rezoning application from Neighborhood Shopping Character area to C-1, Local Commercial, at 5950 High Howell Road

and unanimously approved an ordinance update in fifteen articles concerning business regulations.

The Council heard a first read on an ordinance to amend the Tucker Code chapter 38 concerning the acquisition of small value property like right-of-way. The Mayor and Council then approved:

- A resolution to amend the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
- A resolution to reappoint Katherine Atteberry and Michael Thoms to the Planning Commission for another term of two years
- A resolution to appoint/reappoint members of the Zoning Board of Appeals: Jason Burton, Bob Espy, Neal Stubblefield, Josh Wallace and Andrea Wahl
- A contract award to AECOM for Construction Engineering and Inspection for the Lake Erin Dam Project
- A contract amendment to Hasbun Construction for the completion of waterline work as a result of incorrect surveys.

The added item from earlier in the evening was a six-month moratorium on new applications for drive-thrus. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Tucker's Mayor and Council meet every second and fourth Monday of each month at Tucker City Hall, 1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B, Tucker, GA 30084. All meetings are streamed and recorded on the website, [tuckerga.gov/agendas](https://www.tuckerga.gov/agendas).



AROUND TOWN

# UPCOMING EVENTS IN TUCKER

TUCKER REC CENTER - 4898 LAVISTA ROAD

3.14.25  
6 P.M. 3.14K



**PI DAY  
PIE-K**



REGISTER IN ADVANCE AT [TUCKERGA.GOV/PARKS/EVENTS](http://TUCKERGA.GOV/PARKS/EVENTS)

ADVENTURE AWAITS



**ZIPLINING  
@ HISTORIC  
BANNING  
MILLS**



Saturday  
March 15  
Fee: \$55  
(Transportation Included)  
[tuckerga.gov/parks/events](http://tuckerga.gov/parks/events)

**MARCH 23, 2-4 p.m.**

**SPRING INTO  
ACTION WORKDAY**



**TRAIL  
MAINTENANCE**  
JOHNS HOMESTEAD PARK

NOTE: This event is the rescheduled MLK Day workday that was postponed due to freezing temperatures.

**MAKE IT A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF**

Saturday,  
March 29



**Spring  
Fling**

FITZGERALD PARK

**SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 12 - SIP-N-STROLL**





**TUCKER** *Community Corner*

**MARCH 15, 2025 | 1-5 P.M.**



**2025**

**TUCKER**

**CHILI**

**COOK OFF**

[tuckerchilicookoff.com](http://tuckerchilicookoff.com)