

## County libraries offer 2019 story times

The Laurens County Public Library begins the new year with fun and educational story times for ages 0 – 5 at the Laurens and Clinton public libraries. Each story time offered has been designed for the specified age group with appropriate stories, songs and activities. Story times take place weekly, starting this upcoming week and going through mid-April.

The weekly story times are scheduled for Tuesdays at Clinton, and Wednesdays and Thursdays at Laurens.

In Clinton, story time is every Tuesday morning, with Toddler Academy (ages 3-5) set for 10 a.m. and Mother Goose Story Time (ages 0-2) at 10:30 a.m.

Every Wednesday the story time will be held in Laurens at the West Main Street branch, with Toddler Academy (ages 3-5) at 10 a.m. and Mother Goose Story Time (ages 0-2) at 10:30 a.m.

On Thursday afternoon, there is another Mother Goose Story Time (ages 0-2) at 4:30 p.m. in Laurens.

Toddler Academy is designed to prepare children for school. Through books, interactive songs, and rhymes this story time helps children develop learning skills in a group environment.

Mother Goose Story Time has been developed for babies and caregivers to interact with each other through hand plays, rhymes and songs.

Through both programs children learn narratives skills, vocabulary, and listening skills – all while having fun at the library.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to attend sessions with their child. For more information about each program, call the Laurens Public Library at 864-681-7323, the Clinton Public Library at 864-833-1853, or visit our website at [www.lcpl.org/youth-services](http://www.lcpl.org/youth-services).

All programs are free of charge.



**LUNCH AND LEARN EVENT** — Eighth grade students at Laurens Middle School enjoyed a recent Lunch and Learn event where they learned about the agriculture program at LDHS. Ag teacher Melanie Birchmore brought along three of her current students: Matthew Brownlee, Lilly Pruitt, and Christian Wilhelm. These high school students informed the L&L attendees of the responsibilities and rewards of being a part of the agriculture program. They even brought along a tiny baby bunny who was being raised in their livestock area on campus. Pictured are, from left, Hannah Reeder, Melanie Birchmore, Jayden Knight, Chantry Little, Bryson Taylor, Desiree Roe, Christian Wilhelm, Lilly Pruitt, Kansas Evans, Matthew Brownlee, Cierra Lambert, Juliette Cedillo, Bryan Hernandez, Sebastian Gunter, Zhyvier Davis, and Jesus Gonzalez-Moreno.

## Who to contact: Social Security or Medicare?

Sometimes it's confusing to know who to contact and for what. Social Security and Medicare offer related services, so people aren't always certain who does what. This "cheat sheet" can help.

- Contact Social Security to:
- See if you're eligible for Medicare;
  - Create a my Social Security account to do things like request a replacement Medicare card and report a change of address, name, or phone number;
  - Sign up for Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance);
  - Apply for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D) costs;
  - Report a death; and
  - Appeal an Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) decision (for people

who pay a higher Part B and/or Part D premium if their income is over a certain amount).

Find information on how to do all of this and more at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and [www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/medicare](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/benefits/medicare).

- Contact Medicare to:
- See what services Medicare covers;
  - Get detailed information about Medicare health and prescription drug plans in your area, including costs and services;
  - Choose and enroll in a Medicare health or prescription drug plan that meets your needs;
  - Find a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy in your area;
  - Find doctors, health care providers, and suppliers who participate in Medicare;

• Get information and forms for filing a Medicare appeal or for letting someone speak with Medicare on your behalf;

• Compare the quality of care provided by plans, nursing homes, hospitals, home health agencies, and dialysis facilities; and view Medicare publications.

Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) for these services.

If you need to find out your claim status, find out deductibles, or get answers to premium payment questions, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY: 1-877-486-2048).

Determining who to contact is the first step in getting the answers you need. Please share these lists with family and friends who need to know more about Social Security and Medicare.

## Pet Talk: A cat's five senses

In the animal kingdom, big cats have developed several adaptations that allow them to be top predators in a variety of ecosystems. While modern house cats may not need to hunt to the same extent as wild cats, our pets have still kept several interesting abilities that enhance their senses.

Dr. Carly Patterson, a clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, shares some interesting facts about cats' senses and unique abilities.

Cats are often seen playing and wandering around at night, leading many to believe cats can see in the dark. While this is not strictly true, Patterson said cats can see in near darkness much better than people and many other animals.

"Cats can dilate their pupils in low-light situations and they have a special reflective layer called the tapetum lucidum that allows them to reflect more light to the back of the eye," she explained.

In addition, cats, like many other animals, have an extra fold on their ears, called Henry's Pocket. According to Patterson, the exact function of this feature is not known, but many believe it helps to enhance high-frequency sounds. Sounds that may be inaudible to people, such as the squeak of a mouse, are easily heard by cats.

"Cats hear sounds of varying frequencies and they are especially adept at hearing high-frequency sounds," Patterson said. "Sounds that humans may perceive as normal background noise could be stressful to the cat."

For example, high-pitched noises that are barely audible to human ears, such as the buzz from an LCD computer screen, can be loud and

annoying to cats. This problem can be greatly reduced by turning electronics off when not in use.

While cats have above average vision and hearing, their ability to taste is comparably weaker than the human sense of taste. Patterson explained that cats lack the sweet taste receptor, so even if they seem attracted to some sweet foods, they are likely detecting only the fat and texture.

On the other hand, cats are able to smell much better than people, but not as well as dogs. While cats have far fewer scent receptors than dogs, recent research has shown that cats may be better at discerning between different smells.

Finally, cats use their whiskers to enhance their senses of touch and balance. Patterson said whiskers are located in several places on a cat's body, though the pattern changes with different cat breeds.

"Whiskers are strategically located on a cat's face to transmit critical sensory information, such as the ability to fit through passageways, potential obstacles, and even a sense of overall balance," she explained.

Although house cats tend to spend more time napping than hunting, their senses give them abilities that are shared with many of the world's top predators. Next time you watch your cat play, you'll know that their dilating pupils, rotating ears, and other characteristics are signs that they are using their keen senses.

Pet Talk is a service of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University. Stories can be viewed on the web at [vetmed.tamu.edu/pet-talk](http://vetmed.tamu.edu/pet-talk). Suggestions for future topics may be directed to [editor@cvm.tamu.edu](mailto:editor@cvm.tamu.edu).

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