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Shopping is the new family outing

DRIVE AROUND ON a bright and sunny day. Where are the children?

They're not outside playing ball or Frisbee or romping with the dog or climbing trees.

I used to think they were inside playing video games.

That doesn't account for the kids age 5, 6 and 7.

Here's where the littler ones are:

They're shopping.

Work in the store: There were three children in the van next to me in the parking lot of the big all-purpose store, a group of five, all told, with an adult male and an adult female leading the pack.

The woman unloaded all the children from the van and had them stand close to the vehicle to keep them safe from bad drivers. The children knew the drill and joined hands for the walk to the electronic doors.

Once inside the store, the male got a hand basket and took all the children toward the toy and game section. They knew where the store's departments were the way some kids know about playground equipment. The woman went for some groceries.

Wrangling kids in a big store is work.

The smallest boy got a basketball and dribbled it off his foot and across an aisle.

The largest played a video game meant to be tested by shoppers.

The adult male picked up the little girl and went to retrieve the basketball.

The parents appear to get more exercise than their children on these ventures.

Shopping has become a major family outing. Not dumping teens at a mall — taking the whole crew to buy groceries and towels and cleaning goods. Pick up some fast food on the way home, and the typical afternoon adventure is a wrap.

Buying generic: Our outings usually wound up outside. The only time I ever went shopping with a parent was as punishment.

We'd go on picnics, fishing, or to games.

Shopping was an adult activity. One adult shopped. One took care of the children. You have to feel for single parents, trying to make a trip to the store the equal to a trip to the park. What's a single parent to do? Shop during the lunch hour?

We learned how to throw a spiral, how to get a minnow on a fish hook without hurting it so a bass might eat it, and how to clean a fish for eating. Releasing a live minnow that caught a big one, now that's sporting.

Kid shoppers learn how to buy generic.

Here's the good side to fishing for bargains. Shopping can be exhausting. The family that shops together naps together.

Vision aims to put 'water in river'

▪ The \$149 million dam-building plan would help keep the Arkansas mostly full in good conditions.

BY JARREL WADE
World Staff Writer

The term "water in the river" has been tossed around for years — possibly since the 1960s when the Keystone Dam was built, taming the river that often flooded parts of Tulsa.

Recently, a plan to put "water in the river" has taken shape, focusing on using Tulsa's portion of the expiring Vision sales tax to create two low-water dams and lakes to give the appearance of a more consistently filled river.

Arkansas River infrastructure is second only to public safety in the proposed Vision tax package in terms of cost.

The Arkansas River Infrastructure Task Force, led by City Councilor G.T. Bynum, held public meetings for more than two years to research and develop the plan that is coming to voters April 5 in the Vision-renewal package.

The proposal asks Tulsans for about \$149 million to rebuild Zink Dam near 31st Street, build a south Tulsa/Jenks dam, and create parks

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Total package

See more stories about the Vision sales-tax renewal package.

tulsaworld.com/vision2025

Watch a video

See an animated view of what the river would look like after the changes.

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and amenities around both dams.

Millions more is expected to come from funding partners — including Tulsa County, Jenks and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation — along

the river to complete the task force's total plan.

Low-water dams

Two low-water dams are the big-ticket items in the proposed project.

The two lakes they would create would retain water in the parts of the river most used by Tulsans.

They would not, however, keep the river full-to-the-brim all the time.

Bynum has said the dams would help the river remain mostly full during good conditions and that the lakes would retain water during

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FIELD TRIP: STEM SKILLS BOLSTERED



STEM Club member Ashley Urbina, 13, of Will Rogers College Junior High School makes a screen print on a T-shirt while fellow student Aleida Estrada, 14 (center), watches Monday at Fab Lab Tulsa. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

Having a Fab day

Junior high students enjoy learning at Fab Lab Tulsa

BY TIM STANLEY
World Staff Writer

Aleida Estrada was not conflicted at all about how to spend her day off from school.

"Instead of watching TV or being on my phone, I'd rather do something," said the 14-year-old eighth-grader, who spent part of her Presidents Day at Fab Lab Tulsa enjoying a hands-on field trip.

Estrada was joined by fellow members of the Will Rogers College Junior High School STEM Club on Monday's outing, during which they learned the basics of screen printing and how to make T-shirts.

The Rogers club shared the field trip with eighth-grade science students from McLain Junior High.

Angie Bias, STEM center supervisor at Rogers, said students in the club previously submitted several T-shirt designs and then voted on the winner.

The screen printing, like other STEM activities, crosses various disciplines, she said.

It involves "design, engineering, ideas — and working as a team," Bias said. "They take what they're doing at school and apply it."

The activity was part of the Credits Count program, a \$3 million grant-funded effort to promote STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — fields and inspire Tulsa students to pursue related careers.

The AEP Foundation is providing the grant.

Estrada was one of eight Rogers students who submitted T-shirt designs. A fellow STEM Club member, Alexis Gonzalez, was voted the winner by his peers.

The Rogers STEM Club meets every Monday for an hour after school.

Each of the participating students helped create the T-shirt Monday and got to take home one of their own.

Robin Denise Kirk, eighth-grade science teacher at McLain, said she was happy to participate in the field trip.

"There's a sense of empowerment

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With help from eighth-grade teacher Robin Denise Kirk (center), McLain Junior High School students Mathew Nelson, 14 (left), Israel Hernandez, 15, and Michael Walling, 14 (right), cut out strips of vinyl from a template during a screen-printing project Monday at Fab Lab Tulsa. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World



Watch a video

Fab Lab's education manager discusses the importance of hands-on learning.

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Report on boy's death shows history of calls to authorities

▪ DHS offices in three counties received at least 11 calls about him.

BY GINNIE GRAHAM
News Columnist

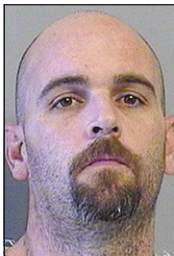
AND ARIANNA PICKARD
World Staff Writer

From the time Camaron Larson was born, his mother had problems keeping up with his disabilities, leading to a string of visits by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services in three counties and ultimately a child-neglect conviction

related to his November 2014 death.

Sarah Amanda McKay, 32, and her husband, Robert James Stewart McKay, 35, were found guilty Feb. 5 of two counts of child neglect. The jury recommended a life sentence for the charge associated with Camaron's death and 27 years for the neglect count pertaining to their other son. Sarah McKay is their biological mother and Robert McKay is their stepfather. A pre-sentencing report has been requested by District Judge Bill LaFortune, and formal sentencing is set for March 18.

A report from the Office of Juvenile System Oversight, which is administered by the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth,



states that DHS offices in Tulsa, Creek and Mayes counties received at least 11 calls with concerns about Camaron's health. The complaints were not substantiated, but workers recommended various supportive services after each instance.

Camaron was born with multiple

CONVICTED OF NEGLECT

Sarah and Robert McKay: They were found guilty of two counts of child neglect on Feb. 5. The jury recommended a life sentence for the charge associated with the death of Camaron Larson and 27 years for the neglect count pertaining to their other son.

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Read the report

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight released details on the case history of Camaron Larson, who died at age 11.

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DHS spokeswoman Sheree Powell said the workers in each investigation over the years interviewed parents, neighbors, medical professionals and other family members to determine the safety of the child.

"There were several prior calls of concern referencing the family, and

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