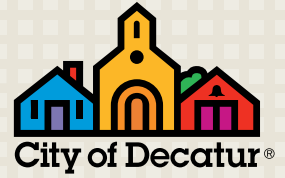


City of Decatur FOCUS



DECEMBER 2025
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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF DECATUR, GEORGIA

From Mayor Patti Garrett: My Thank You Note to Decatur

As I reflect on my ten years as mayor and sixteen as a member of the City Commission, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the residents, business and restaurant owners, other city, county and state officials, the City's incredible staff, my fellow commissioners over the years, and to each of you in our wonderful community for the opportunities I've had working with each of you. It has been an honor to represent you while working collaboratively to make decisions that benefit the city as a whole. Many times, these decisions are difficult and require time and commitment to the values the community embraces and that are reflected in the 2030 Strategic Plan - Equity and Racial Justice; Climate Action; Civic Trust; Affordable Housing; Mobility; Economic Growth. In addition, there has been plenty of fun and celebrations of accomplishments.

continued on page 4



Save Energy This Winter with Electrify Decatur

Winter is just around the corner, bringing colder temperatures and often, higher energy bills. Decatur homeowners have options to stay warm, lower energy costs, and reduce emissions. One of the most efficient solutions is a heat pump HVAC system, which provides both heating and cooling by transferring heat rather than generating it.

In winter, heat pumps pull thermal energy from the outside air and move it indoors. In summer, the process reverses, removing heat from inside your home and releasing it outdoors. The result: comfort year-round with up to three to four times more efficiency than traditional systems. Here are a few tips for getting started:



Consult a qualified contractor for an estimate.

Meet with a contractor to compare heat pumps with traditional systems and learn about brands, timelines, warranties, and potential savings. Connect with local Electrify Decatur contractors at electrifydecatur.com.

Choose the right size and model.

Heat pumps come in ducted and ductless (mini-split) styles. Ask your contractor to complete a load calculation to ensure efficiency and avoid unnecessary energy use.

Plan for proper placement.

Because heat pumps rely on airflow, they should be installed in open, well-ventilated areas. Avoid tight corners or enclosed spaces that can restrict performance and cause moisture buildup.

Explore programs and incentives.

Take advantage of available savings through federal tax credits (through 2025), Georgia’s new rebate programs, Georgia Power incentives, and the City of Decatur’s Community Energy Rebates. Electrify Decatur’s upcoming Home Energy Navigator service will help residents combine these benefits for maximum savings.

About Electrify Decatur

Electrify Decatur is a community program that helps Decatur residents replace aging, inefficient appliances with low-carbon electric systems. A partnership between the City of Decatur, Southface Institute, Georgia Interfaith Power & Light, and Let’s Go Electric; the program features a free online marketplace — LetsGoElectric.com — where homeowners can create an energy profile, receive personalized recommendations, connect with vetted contractors, and access rebates and incentives. Additionally, homeowners can meet with members of the Let’s Go Electric team individually through the Home Energy Navigator program. Appointments are held virtually and consist of answering questions, making referrals to contractors, and assisting with planning home electrification projects.

Electrify Decatur supports the City of Decatur’s Clean Energy Plan, adopted in September 2022, which commits to supplying 100% of community-wide electricity demand with clean, renewable energy by 2035. Learn more at electrifydecatur.com.

Read the Decatur Focus online at decaturga.com/focus.

Limited copies also available at Decatur City Hall, Decatur Visitors Center, and City of Decatur Recreation Centers.

Information for the FOCUS should be submitted by mail to Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, or by email to decaturfocus@decaturga.com, or by using the submission form found at decaturga.com/focus.

The Decatur Focus is a joint publication of the City of Decatur, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority and the Decatur Business Association. It is a newsletter intended to provide announcements and information related to events, activities, and businesses in the city of Decatur. The purpose of the newsletter is to promote the city and encourage the exchange of information among residents, business owners and the school system. Letters to the editor, editorials or other opinion pieces are not published. All press releases, announcements and other information received for publication are subject to editing. Information found in the Focus is also posted on Decatur’s official website at decaturga.com. The deadline for submitting articles, announcements or advertising is the first day of the month preceding publication. Contact: Editor, Decatur Focus, P.O. Box 220, Decatur, GA 30031, 404-371-8386; email: decaturfocus@decaturga.com.



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4th Hometown Habitat Award Recipient: The Harry Family

When the Harry family purchased their property on Ponce de Leon Avenue, they started with a traditional grass lawn and invasive plants such as English ivy and privet. Having transformed the landscape at their previous Decatur residence, they were confident they could once again create something special. Their success has earned them recognition as the final Decatur Hometown Habitat Award recipient for 2025. Congratulations, Harry family!

Amy Harry's love of gardening began with her mother. While tending plants once felt

like a chore, Amy grew to cherish the sense of peace and beauty that surrounded her mother's gardens.

With Amy's vision and her husband Dave's shared passion for the outdoors, the couple transformed their property into a natural retreat for the entire family.

Although the front yard borders a main Decatur corridor, its canopy of mature trees and dense shrubs creates the feel of a hidden oasis. Lawton Harry, a senior at Decatur High, says he and his friends consider the yard as an oasis.

A small lawn tucked behind the trees offers room for games and playtime with the family dog, Fletcher. A cozy firepit sits nearby, surrounded by ferns and hydrangeas rescued from Amy's childhood home. Additionally, a bird bath and feeders provide a welcoming habitat for feathered visitors.

In contrast, the backyard is bright and open, which is ideal for neighborhood gatherings. The Harrys installed raised vegetable beds and an herb garden, making the most of the sunshine.

While much of the work was completed by hand, the family emphasizes the value of partnering with a professional designer to guide large-scale projects. Each season, they take on another project and having the plan helps guide this process. The Harrys have created a space that is lovely, inviting, and inspiring.

Decatur Hometown Habitats is a program sponsored by the Decatur Environmental

Sustainability Board. To nominate a resident for the recognition, scan the QR code. For questions, contact rebecca.bryant@decaturga.com. The committee seeks yards that demonstrate one or more of the following qualities: Native plantings and invasive removal, stormwater solutions, recycled and reused materials, a healthy tree canopy, or eco-friendly maintenance and infrastructure.



Away for the Holidays? Request an Out-of-Town House Check

Traveling this holiday season? Whether you are visiting family for a few days or heading out for a winter getaway, the Decatur Police Department can help keep an eye on your home while you are away.

Go to decaturga.com/maintenance and click the Out-of-Town House Check Request tab, enter your address in the search bar, confirm your location, fill out the form then hit submit. You will receive an automatic confirmation email once your request is received. You can also call the Decatur Police Department at 404-373-6551 to make your request.

Please submit your request no more than one week before your departure, and if your travel plans change, let the department know. With this step, you can enjoy your trip and have peace of mind knowing your home is being checked while you are away.

Holiday Waste & Recycling Schedule

Christmas Holidays

Thurs., Dec. 25, and Fri. Dec. 26, 2025
Collection for both days will be Wednesday, December 24.

New Year's Day

Thursday, Jan. 1
Collection for Thursday, Jan. 1, will be on Wednesday, Dec. 31.
No changes to the regular Friday schedule.

Christmas Tree Recycling

Friday, Dec. 26-Saturday, Jan. 10
Legacy Park, 500 S. Columbia Dr.

Drop off live Christmas trees at Decatur Legacy Park, 500 S. Columbia Dr. Look for signs indicating the drop-off area. Please do not leave Christmas trees anywhere else on the Legacy Park property.

MAYOR PATTI GARRETT'S THANK YOU NOTE TO DECATUR *continued from page 1*

Planters, Paleontologists, Pajamas, Pandemics, Parks, and Praise

There's a headline you don't read too often. Let's start with the **planters**... a simple (temporary, sort of) fix to a traffic-calming issue on a four-lane residential street to install some barriers to slow traffic, reduce car lanes and better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. In an effort to make the community a little safer, 200 or so planters arrived, adding quite a bit of color and controversy, including election debate fodder.

One of my favorite invitations to receive over the years has been to visit schools. From participating in the Talley Street Amazing Shake to receiving follow-up requests such as: can the city try to get more **paleontologists** in Decatur to receiving a life-size poster (made by the students) of the cover of *Llama, Llama, Red Pajama* after reading the book to a group of preschoolers; I always looked forward to the visits and questions. These opportunities are exciting and fun ways to provide students with a touch point for any interest the student has in their own road toward leadership, not just in the classroom today but in the community, long-term.

January 23, 2020 – Opening kickoff for the 2020 Strategic Plan: Destination 2030. Little did we know that the planning process would take almost 18 months and that the majority of the Roundtables would take place on-line. On March 11, COVID-19 was declared to be a world-wide **pandemic**. Five days later, the City Commission approved a Resolution issuing a Public Health State of Emergency for the city. Soon afterwards, on-premise dining would shut down, masks would be required, social distancing would be needed, and I found myself obsessively watching public health news. On-line conversations with other DeKalb County mayors, almost daily conversations with the City Manager and strategizing ways to take care of our community members, businesses, city employees in the presence of so much uncertainty regarding the duration, severity and long-term impact of the pandemic weighed heavily. Reliable COVID tests and vaccines paved the way for a return to a more cautious but definitely more abundant way of living and interacting with one another. I'm so proud of the City's response in protecting employees, residents, and assisting businesses first with loans, then grants. Remember the Decatur United fund that raised \$60,000 in

private donations in just a few months to kick start the business assistance?

And our **parks** offered outdoor gathering spaces for seeing neighbors and providing the social contact we were all craving. Decatur was one of the few communities that had a pandemic emergency plan already in place to provide a framework for response.

The United Methodist Children's home occupied what is now Legacy **Park** for 144 years. After months of conversation with the UM Children's Home (now WellRoot), the City was able to purchase 77 acres to preserve the property and to allow the community to determine the best use of the property. The resulting Legacy Park Master Plan identified areas for active use, passive use, affordable housing, natural conservation, arts and culture and the integration of mission driven non-profits into the fabric of the property for public use and enjoyment. Less than 10 years later, almost 20 non-profits, an 8-lane track with a full-size soccer/multi-purpose field, 66 units of Affordable Housing (with 66 more underway), a renovated gymnasium/field house, a rustically renovated dairy barn event space, a small chapel event space, a cross country track, an arts space, Parks and



Rec and Legacy Decatur office space and additional rental spaces are all now a reality. I have never visited Legacy Park without seeing people of all ages taking advantage of something special they have found there.

Praise in the form of a tribute to the late Congressman John Lewis. In the months following the loss of Congressman Lewis in 2020, DeKalb County Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson reached out to me to co-chair a John Lewis Task Force formed to replace a Confederate obelisk with a tribute to the late Congressman who represented much of Decatur and DeKalb County during his tenure. Entitled “Empathy”, the sculpture embodies the humility, grace and equanimity of Congressman Lewis and inspires us to be our best selves.

In closing, my colleagues and I, throughout my tenure, have been committed to making a difference in our city. At times, there are “really big issues” that require a steady hand, patience, collaboration, listening and working together with disparate groups, each with their own ideas of the best way to move forward, knowing that whatever the decision, there is going to be disappointment, and sometimes anger, on the part of some of our community. This is one of the most difficult parts of the job.

In navigating these challenges, I have

learned the importance of empathy, transparency, and perseverance. Listening to diverse perspectives and encouraging open dialogue have helped foster a sense of trust and community, even when consensus was difficult to achieve. Through these experiences, I have grown not only as a leader but also as a member of this remarkable city. To each of you, I say “thank you.”



WALK & ROLL SUPERSTAR

Meet **Arvon Clemons II**, December's Walk & Roll Superstar. A Decatur resident living on the north side of town, Arvon takes a different approach to getting around. Rather than relying on a car to navigate the city streets, he prefers two wheels, a transit pass, and a good map. He completes nearly all his travel by bicycle or MARTA — a lifestyle that began as an experiment several years ago and has since evolved into a sustainable and rewarding way of life.

Arvon first began reducing his car use in 2018 while living in his hometown of St. Louis. He joined a local bike-share program, purchased a used bicycle, and started participating in social group rides he discovered through online cycling communities. He soon realized that St. Louis was far more bike-accessible than he had expected. When he moved to Pittsburgh in 2019 for graduate school, Arvon left his car behind entirely. That choice sparked a deeper interest in urban design and the ways cities accommodate people who travel on foot or by bike.

After relocating to Decatur in 2021, Arvon found what he considers the most dynamic and socially engaging cycling community yet. The Atlanta

area's network of riders and advocates — from the annual Atlanta Cycling Festival to organizations such as Propel ATL — has made cycling here especially fulfilling. Arvon now rides an estimated 800 miles each year and values the diversity among Atlanta's many biking groups.

Safety, Arvon believes, depends largely on preparation and thoughtful route planning. Before each ride, he studies maps carefully, considering not only bike lanes but also the design and traffic flow of each street. Smaller neighborhood roads often provide safer and more pleasant rides than main thoroughfares. For him, the goal is not speed, but steady, enjoyable, and secure travel.

Beyond serving as transportation, cycling has become Arvon's way of connecting with the city. It allows him to understand how streets link together, discover new local businesses, and encounter festivals or public art that might go unnoticed from behind a windshield. The experience fosters a



spirit of exploration and connection that continues to shape how he experiences urban life.

For Arvon, cycling represents both practicality and possibility. A reminder that navigating the city without a car is not only feasible, but also offers a more intimate and rewarding view of the places where people live, work, and gather.

Do you know a Walk & Roll Superstar? Nominate someone who inspires you by visiting bit.ly/Walk-and-Roll-Decatur.

Teamwork in Action: Chainsaw Safety Training

Decatur Public Works and Decatur Fire Rescue staff recently participated in joint chainsaw safety training to refresh skills and review safety procedures. The training covered proper measuring, cutting, and clearing techniques for removing fallen trees and large tree limbs. This coordinated effort helps ensure that City crews can respond safely and efficiently when storms or severe weather events bring down trees or debris, supporting clear streets and safe access for residents.



LEND A HAND! 2026 MLK Jr. Service Project Seeks Volunteers

The Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project was started in 2003 to provide house maintenance and repair, free of charge, to Decatur senior citizen homeowners during the MLK, Jr. holiday weekend. The next event will be held January 17-19, 2026. If you are interested in volunteering individually or with a group at any skill level, please sign up at mlkserviceproject.com/volunteers. This year organizers are seeking skilled volunteers in the following areas: carpenters, luxury vinyl tile installers, and window sash replacement.

If you have these skills and can volunteer your time, please reach out to Julie Smith at julie@mlkserviceproject.com.



FOCUS COMBINED FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY

City of Decatur will publish a combined January/February issue of the Decatur Focus. It is expected to arrive in mailboxes during the third week of January.

Decorate Decatur: Holiday Decorating Contest

Show off your seasonal spirit and deck the halls of your home or your business and enter this year's Decorate Decatur Holiday contest. Submit a photo of your display (or your neighbor's) with the name and address to jacqueline.moore@decaturga.com by Friday, Dec. 5. Judging begins Tuesday, Dec. 9, with winners announced on the Decorate Decatur Facebook page. Special yard signs will be awarded, and the coveted Commissioners Cup will be presented at the Dec. 15 City Commission meeting.



Questions? Email jacqueline.moore@decaturga.com. Learn more at decaturga.com/decorate.

Commissioners Cauldron Winners Recognized

Congratulations to the Radford Family for winning the Commissioners Cauldron. Their Halloween decorations at 124 Cambridge Ave. made this house a fearsome sight.





HOLIDAYS

in Decatur



Annual Ornament

Only in Decatur: Decatur's ongoing holiday collection continues with a gingerbread-themed ornament by artist Maggie Cruz. See it for yourself at Vivid Boutique where it was unveiled by Mayor Patti Garrett at this season's first Terrific Thursday. You can purchase the limited edition ornament at Vivid Boutique as well as Little Shop of Stories, Homegrown and Odd Bird Gifts.



LETTERS TO SANTA

Have you written to Santa, yet? Send your letter straight to the North Pole! We have three special delivery drop-offs in Decatur:

- Decatur Visitors Center, 113 Clairemont Ave.
- Kelly's Market, 308 E. Howard Ave.
- Oakhurst Market, 650 East Lake Dr.

Parents, make sure your kids include a return address. Santa enjoys writing back!



ALL DECKED OUT

The wreaths are up, the nutcrackers are on the square and the **walk-through ornaments** are lit!

Run, run as fast as you can to find Decatur's

Gingerbread Friends!

Our shops are decorating giant cookie cutouts with their own festive flair. Snap a selfie and tell us your favorite. Tag @VisitDecaturGA.



December



THURSDAY

4

Tree Lighting

Downtown Decatur
6 p.m. | **FREE!**

Light up your week at the annual tree lighting in Downtown Decatur! The fun starts with **holiday carols, hot cocoa, and mini gingerbread cookies** by the tree. The F.AVE Chorus will perform, and we'll have a community sing-along too.

At 7 p.m. sharp, Santa himself flips the switch to light the tree! Afterwards, there'll be **"snow"**!

This year, the tree is in front of the Historic DeKalb Courthouse/DeKalb History Center. Sponsored by the Little Shop of Stories.

THURSDAY

11

Bonfire + Marshmallow Roast

East Court Square
Downtown Decatur
6 p.m. | **FREE!**

Join us for a giant, **roaring bonfire** and roast yourself a marshmallow (or two). **Hot cocoa, marshmallows and roasting sticks** provided while supplies last! (Yes, you can bring your own.)

Decatur Fire Rescue lights the bonfire at 6 p.m. The Talley Street Chorus performs holiday classics at 6:30 p.m. Marshmallow roasting is from 7-8 p.m.

SUNDAY

14

Menorah Lighting

Downtown Decatur
4:30 p.m. | **FREE!**

Enjoy hot drinks, **latkes, music**, photos with **Mr. Dreidel**, and the **gelt drop** by the Decatur Fire Rescue at the Chanukah celebration in downtown Decatur. Hosted by Chabad Intown, chabadintown.org.

THURSDAY

18

Screen on the Green: Happy Feet

Ebster Recreation Center,
105 Electric Ave.
6 p.m. | **FREE!**

Bring your blankets, cozy up under the stars, and immerse yourself in the animated world of toe-tapping Emperor Penguins. Free popcorn, while supplies last. Brought to you by Visit Decatur GA and the Decatur Downtown Development Authority.

Where's Santa?

All Around Downtown Decatur
6-8 p.m. | **FREE!**

Santa returns for another night out in Decatur! Join the Terrific Thursday holiday fun and search for him as he pops into local shops to spread cheer and pick out presents. Santa knows he'll find the perfect gifts for everyone on his list, and you will too! If you spot Santa, snap a selfie with him and tag @VisitDecaturGA.



*Santa sightings and
standout shopping...*

HOLIDAYS

in Decatur

Santa Sightings

Santa made merry throughout downtown during "Where's Santa?"



T.E. WILCOX



ROOFTOP TRAILS
REFILLERY



CLUBHOUSE
KID + CRAFT



VIVID BOUTIQUE

Standout Shopping

Check off that holiday list! Decatur's small businesses are stocked with plenty to peruse. Pick out local art and handcrafts at Wild Oats & Billy Goats, and HomeGrown. Vivid Boutique offers a selection of sweet, classic gifts; Odd Bird has a trove of quirkier treasures; and T.E. Wilcox features vintage and retro-inspired goods. Find toys for all ages at Clubhouse Kid and Craft. Decatur's four book stores have something for every interest: Little Shop of Stories, Brave & Kind, Charis Books & More, and the new Kiss & Tale Books.

Party-goer or party giver? Vine Fine Wine has the perfect bottle. Curate your own holiday gift basket at Kelly's Market or Oakhurst Market. Stay zen with organic beauty and skincare from Olive Branch Wellness, and stock up on eco-friendly cleaning products at new refillery, Rooftop Trails. Step out in swanky party attire or cozy favorites from Boutique Karma, Blue Hanger and Squash Blossom, and collectible kicks from Sole Play. Top it off with something sparkly from Worthmore Jewelers.



ODD BIRD GIFTS



SQUASH BLOSSOM

VisitDecaturGa.com/Holidays ▶
@VisitDecaturGa #HolidaysInDecaturGa #DecaturGA



Decatur Celebrates Huron at Champlain Bioretention Ribbon Cutting

Last month, the City of Decatur hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of the Huron at Champlain Bioretention Project in the Great Lakes neighborhood. This project represents a step forward in sustainable stormwater management and neighborhood safety.

The bioretention basin is designed to capture and filter rainwater, reduce flooding risks and improve water quality before it enters local waterways. In addition to environmental benefits, the project incorporates traffic calming features, creating a safer and more pedestrian-friendly intersection.

City staff, project partners, and community members gathered at the intersection of Huron Street and Champlain Street to mark this milestone. This project underscores Decatur's commitment to integrating green infrastructure into everyday streetscapes and neighborhoods.



Winter-Ready: Decatur Crews Practice Emergency Response

Public Works crews recently conducted a Winter Emergency Simulation to prepare for icy roads and winter weather. The team loaded trucks, attached plows, serviced salt spreaders, and checked priority routes across the city.

This hands-on training helps ensure that Decatur crews are ready to respond quickly and keep streets safe and passable when winter storms arrive.



Senior Events

Mark your calendar for our upcoming events for seniors!

RSVP to xaviea.conover@decaturga.com.

Holiday Party

December 10, 11 a.m., \$5 at the door.
Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.

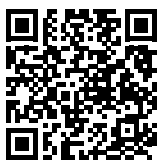
Season's greetings! We're gearing up for this year's Senior Holiday party. Join us and enjoy lots of food, fun, games, gifts and more. Create memories with old friends and make new ones.



Brain Health As We Age: Tips to Stay Sharp

December 17, 2 p.m., Free • Decatur Rec Center
231 Sycamore St.

In this upbeat and informative session, we'll explore practical ways to boost your memory, focus, and mood. Learn how sleep, hydration, movement, social connection, and even laughter impact brain health. We'll cover fun brain games, apps, habits that support cognitive wellness—plus what warning signs to watch for and when to talk to your doctor.



Register

for Parks and Recreation programs at register.communitypass.net/cityofdecatur

Youth Programs & Events

Register on CommunityPass.

Jingle Jam

December 5, 6:30-9 p.m. • \$25 R/\$35 NR
Ebster Rec Center, 105 Electric Ave.

Get ready to rock around the holiday tree at our Jingle Jam! Perfect for kids in grades 3-5, this lively celebration is packed with festive games, creative crafts, sports games, holiday music, and delicious treats. Join us for an evening full of fun, laughter, and holiday cheer!

Oakhurst Meet & Greet with Santa

December 10, 6:30-9 p.m. Oakhurst Rec Center,
450 East Lake Dr.

Join us for an Open House and meet Santa! Tour the facility, meet our staff, and share your ideas for future programs. Don't miss the chance to deliver your wish list to Santa! Attendance is free; Santa photos require separate registration on CommunityPass.



Parents' Night Out – Holiday Pajama Jam

December 12, 5:30-9:30 p.m. • \$35 R/\$45 NR
Oakhurst Rec Center, 450 East Lake Dr.

You deserve a break—let us help! Drop off your kids (ages 5-12) for a fun night of games, activities, and more while you enjoy some time to yourself. Dress the kids in their favorite onesie or holiday PJs. Dinner and a snack are included. Discounts available for siblings.

Breakfast with Santa

December 19, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
\$20 R/\$25 NR

Decatur Rec Center
231 Sycamore St.

Join us for Breakfast with Santa and Rec the Bulldog! Enjoy a festive morning, share your wish list, and snap a photo with our favorite mascot and Santa himself!



Summer Camp 2026 Playbook Release Is Almost Here!

The 2026 Camp Playbook, featuring the City of Decatur's summer camp offerings, will be available online at decaturga.com/playbook on December 8, 2025.

Camp registration for Summer 2026 opens at register.communitypass.net/cityofdecatour on January 3 at 9 a.m.

Our summer camps are incredibly popular, and spaces fill up fast. To ensure a smooth registration process, we recommend setting up your CommunityPass family profile before registration opens.

To prepare for camp registration, please review the Camp Playbook to select the camps you want and complete the two prerequisite forms on CommunityPass in the 2026 Summer Camp Registration season (available Dec. 8). For each camper in your family, you will need to complete the Information and Release Form and the Health History Form to register for camps. Completing these forms ahead of time will ensure a smoother and faster experience on January 3.

You can also check our website for other helpful documents at decaturga.com/parksrec, including the At-A-Glance document with camps by week as a PDF and a Camp Planning Worksheet with next summer's dates to assist in planning your first and second choices for registration day success.

For those seeking financial assistance, please apply no later than Wednesday, December 31, 2025, so we can assist you with camp registration on January 3. You can find the application form on decaturga.com/parksrec under the Forms & Documents page.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at registration@decaturga.com. We can't wait for another unforgettable summer filled with adventure, learning, and fun!



Go to decaturga.com/playbook or scan the QR code to see the latest Playbook, and dozens of programs for active children, youth, adults, and seniors.



Wylde Center Welcomes More than 200 Students for Fall Field Trips

This fall, the Wylde Center welcomed more than 200 students and teachers. Amid colorful leaves and crisp weather, pre-K through fifth-grade students explored hands-on lessons on topics such as Gardens, Farms and Chickens, All About Habitats, The Importance of Healthy Ecosystems, and Soil Health.

Middle school students from Arbor Montessori took a deep dive into the world of bees, discovering their essential role in the food web. Meanwhile, students from Beacon Hill Middle School learned about sheet mulching and helped improve the Center's outdoor learning spaces.

The Wylde Center's spring 2026 field trip calendar is now open. Visit wyldecenter.org/field-trips or contact Sue Ellen Wortzel at sueellen@wyldecenter.org for more information.

Save the Date: Mark your calendars for Wylde Winter Break Camp, happening February 16-20, 2026. Students in grades K-8 will enjoy a week of nature-based activities in the great outdoors at the Oakhurst Garden. More details will be announced soon at wyldecenter.org.



Winter Music Together Indoor Classes for Babies & Toddlers

It's cold outside, and a fun indoor music class for your baby, toddler, or preschooler—already on the calendar each week—can be a lifesaver. Set aside time to play, sing, and make friends with other Decatur families. Music Together of Decatur's 9-week winter session starts January 3. Check out the winter schedule and register today at musictogetherofdecatur.com.



Wylde Wreaths: A Decatur Tradition

The holiday season is just around the corner, and it is time to reserve your spot at the Wylde Center's annual Wylde Wreaths event.

This beloved Decatur tradition invites participants to create a custom wreath and add a personal touch to their seasonal décor. Whether gathering with friends or family, enjoying a solo creative evening, or picking up supplies to craft at home, Wylde Wreaths is a joyful way to welcome the season.

This year's event will take place from Nov. 25–Dec. 13 in the newly renovated Oakhurst Garden building, featuring more than 40 unique adornments to choose from.

Private Parties for Groups of 10 or More

In addition to public sessions, the Wylde Center is offering private weekday workshops for groups of 10 or more. This is a perfect option for festive staff gatherings or client celebrations. For details, contact kristy@wyldecenter.org.

Wylde Holiday Market

The Wylde Holiday Market will run alongside Wylde Wreaths from Nov. 25–Dec. 13 at Oakhurst Garden. Shop locally crafted gifts while supporting this annual fundraiser. The market will be open during Wylde Wreath sessions and weekdays from 9 a.m.–6 p.m. For questions or to reserve your spot, email kristy@wyldecenter.org or visit wyldecenter.org.



Swinging Into Winter with Green Office Golf

Decatur resident and business owner Corinne “CM” Milien invites the community to explore a local way to stay active this season. Green Office, located at 245 E. Trinity Place (next to Dairy Queen), is an indoor golf studio that blends recreation, technology, and community. The space offers simulator play, lessons, leagues, and memberships for all ages and skill levels—helping residents “worry less, golf more” no matter the weather.



As the weather cools and days grow shorter, staying active can feel like more of a challenge. Many Decatur residents trade their outdoor routines for indoor comfort, but keeping your body moving is key to maintaining energy, focus, and overall well-being throughout the winter.

From the Course to the Indoors

When temperatures drop, golf courses often quiet down—but the game doesn’t have to stop. Indoor golf offers a year-round alternative that combines exercise, recreation, and skill-building. Using simulator technology, golfers can play full rounds on virtual courses from around the world, rain or shine. It’s an effective way to keep your swing sharp and your body active this winter.

Benefits Beyond the Swing

Golf is more than a sport—it’s a low-impact activity that improves flexibility, coordination, and balance while supporting mental focus and stress relief. Even a short session can increase mobility and circulation, helping counteract the stiffness that often comes with colder months and less movement. For many, indoor golf has become not just a hobby, but a form of self-care.

Staying Social, Staying Well

Physical activity is only part of the story. Winter can also bring social isolation, and indoor recreation provides a valuable way to stay connected. Whether it’s a friendly competition, learning a new skill, or simply spending time with others, shared activities help keep spirits high during darker days. Finding spaces that foster community as well as activity can make a big difference for both mental and physical health.

Learn more or book a session at greenoffice.golf.

Meaningful Conversations in Decatur

Guild+Journeyman hosts a community event every Saturday from 2–4 p.m. called Meaningful Conversations in Decatur. This free weekly gathering, organized by the Decatur Bahá’í community, is designed to inspire thoughtful dialogue on topics that bring people together. Inspired by writings from the Bahá’í Faith, the event is open to everyone and welcomes all perspectives. Learn more about upcoming discussion topics at facebook.com/MeaningfulConversationsDecatur.



Annual Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 2 | 5:30 pm
 Decatur Conference Center
 130 Clairmont Ave. Decatur 30030

Program begins at 6 pm

- DBA Elections
- DBA Business Awards – NEW!
- Welcoming Business Awards Presented by the Better Together Advisory Board
- Hometown Heroes Awards

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Decatur Business Association presents the

State of the City Address

Tuesday, January 27 | 5:30 pm
 Decatur Conference Center
 130 Clairmont Ave. Decatur 30030

Save the Date!

WELCOME to DECATUR!



Bookstore **Little Shop of Stories** expanded into the adjacent space on East Court Square and is now introducing **Bellwood Coffee**.



Rooftop Trails, a refillery that eliminates plastic waste by reusing and refilling containers with clean, healthy products, has opened at 114 E. Ponce de Leon Ave.

Las Brasas has expanded at its location, 614 Church Street. Stop in for drinks at the bar and traditional Peruvian cuisine.



Decatur Resident Publishes Novel

Ralph Ellis, a resident of Decatur since 2007, has published his first novel.

The Accident Report is a comedy about a rookie newspaper reporter with visions of Watergate swirling through his brain who goes after small-town corruption.

Ellis, 73, is a retired journalist who worked two decades for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. He lives downtown with his wife, former AJC food editor Susan Puckett.



Ralph Ellis



EVENTS CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 1 Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 1 Active Transportation Committee**, 4 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 1 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 2 DBA Annual Holiday Party & Awards Celebration**, 5:30 p.m., Decatur Conference Center, 130 Clairmont Ave., page 15
- 4 Tree Lighting on the Square**, Downtown Decatur, 6 p.m., page 9
- 5 Safe Routes to School Committee**, 9 a.m., Legacy Park, 500 S. Columbia Dr.
- 9 Parks & Recreation Board Meeting**, 6 p.m., Decatur Rec Center, 231 Sycamore St.
- 9 Planning Commission**, 7 p.m., City Hall 509 N. McDonough St.
- 11 Bonfire + Marshmallow Roast**, 6 p.m., E. Court Square, page 9
- 12 Decatur Development Authorities**, 8 a.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.

- 14 Menorah Lighting**, 4:30 p.m., Downtown Decatur, page 9
- 12 Decatur Development Authorities**, 8 a.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 15 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall 509 N. McDonough St.
- 16 Historic Perseveration Commission Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 18 Screen on the Green: Happy Feet**, 6 p.m., Ebster Rec Center, 105 Electric Ave., page 9

JANUARY

- 5 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 19 City Commission Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Hall, 509 N. McDonough St.
- 27 State of the City Address**, 5:30 p.m., Decatur Conference Center, 130 Clairmont Ave., page 15

*Please check decaturga.com/calendar for any meeting changes or cancelations and visitdecaturga.com/events for more event information.

HOLIDAY CONCERTS IN DECATUR

First Baptist Church of Decatur's Annual Christmas on Clairmont Concert

The 8th annual Christmas on Clairmont concert will once again fill the season with music and meaning, featuring a world-class lineup of artists accompanied by full orchestra, organ, piano, and handbells.

Hosted by Daniel Solberg, this free concert will be held on Dec. 21 at 6 p.m. and is free and open to the public. This concert also provides an opportunity for attendees to support a local mission partner through donations.

For the past seven years, Christmas on Clairmont has raised funds for humanitarian causes both locally and globally. This year's offerings will support A Home for Everyone in DeKalb, which provides rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and eviction-prevention services to vulnerable residents.

Learn more at fbcdcatgur.com/christmas-on-clairmont.

Featured performers include:

- The Decatur Avondale Children's Choir
- The Haygood UMC Handbells
- Broadway lead Caroline Bowman
- Operatic soprano Tiffany Uzoije
- Conductor Rolando Salazar
- The Duncan Brothers Band
- Organist Scott Atchison

Decatur Civic Chorus Holiday Concert

The Decatur Civic Chorus has been hard at work preparing for its annual Holiday Concert. On Saturday, December 6, at 4 p.m. at Decatur First Baptist Church, come out to experience warmth, harmony, and holiday cheer from the chorus that has shared music with the Decatur community for more than 75 years.

The chorus will begin its spring season in January. If you have ever wondered what it is like to make music alongside more than 50 singers in a relaxed and welcoming environment, contact kent.colangelo@decaturcivicchorus.org for more information.

This holiday season, please consider becoming a patron of the chorus at any level that is meaningful to you. Your support helps keep choral music thriving in Decatur. To donate or learn more about the patron program, visit decaturcivicchorus.org/donate.

Here We Come a Wassailing

Join Friends of Decatur Cemetery at the Decatur Cemetery Orchard for a traditional wassailing, or blessing of the fruit trees, on Saturday, January 3, 2026, at 3 p.m. This ancient winter celebration involves singing and making joyful noise to encourage the health of orchard trees and support a fruitful harvest in the year ahead.

The Decatur Cemetery is home to a Food Well Alliance Community Orchard, installed in November 2022. The orchard includes apples, pears, plums, figs, and serviceberry trees located in the meadow just east of the pond.

Follow Friends of Decatur Cemetery on Facebook or Instagram for the latest news and event updates.





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www.ScienceofFun.com

Holiday Wreath Sale & Workshops Support the Ability Garden at Legacy Park

Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance invites the community to support its annual holiday wreath fundraiser and participate in creative seasonal workshops this December. Proceeds benefit the Ability Garden at Legacy Park, which provides therapeutic gardening programs for adults with disabilities.

Wreath-Making Workshop Friday, December 5, 6-7:30 p.m. (Ages 21+)

Unwind and get into the holiday spirit while creating a fresh 22-inch Noble Fir wreath adorned with botanicals foraged from nature. Enjoy a seasonal beverage as you learn new skills in a relaxed, creative setting.

Holiday Family Craft Workshop Sunday, December 7, 2-3:30 p.m. (Ages 6+ with an adult)

Create two unique, nature-themed ornaments to take home and enjoy

throughout the season.

Register for workshops at trellishta.org.

Wreath Sale Fundraiser

Purchase a fresh, 22-inch Noble Fir wreath decorated by Trellis staff and volunteers using dried floral accents, berries, and festive ribbon. Wreaths may be purchased online and picked up during one of two Holiday Markets at the Ability Garden at Legacy Park. Enjoy warm cider, explore the garden space, and learn more about Trellis while you pick up your wreath. Order online at: trellishta.org/shop.


About Trellis

Trellis operates both the Ability Garden and the Legacy Park Community Garden, providing inclusive, therapeutic gardening opportunities for adults with disabilities. The Ability Garden helps reduce social isolation and promotes well-being through



meaningful, nature-based activities.

To learn more, contact Rachel Cochran at rachel@trellishta.org.




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Winter at Woodlands Garden

Bundle up and enjoy Woodlands Garden, a peaceful urban sanctuary that is beautiful in every season. Winter is a wonderful time to explore the trails, observe wildlife, and enjoy quiet moments outdoors. Woodlands Garden invites the community to give back with time, talents, or support and to take part in the following free seasonal activities:

Volunteer Project

Saturday, December 6, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Help maintain the health and beauty of the garden by assisting with seasonal projects. Advance registration is encouraged.

Guided Nature Walk

Thursday, December 18, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Enjoy a guided walk through Woodlands Garden and learn about the history of the space, including the Morse family's gift that helped create this public green refuge.

Cards & Cocoa

Saturday, December 20, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Stop by to create handmade cards for neighbors, friends, or anyone who may need a bit of extra cheer this season. Warm cocoa and card-making materials will be provided.

For details and program updates, visit woodlandsgarden.org or follow @woodlandsgarden on social media.



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Success in the Gap: Preparing for Medical School at Agnes Scott College

For some students, the path to medical school includes an intentional pause to gain additional preparation and confidence. Agnes Scott College's Medical Sciences Accelerated master's program supports that transition by offering a focused, one-year academic experience designed for students planning to apply to medical, dental, veterinary, physician assistant, or other health professions programs.

Jamison Darden completed her undergraduate studies in biology with a minor in chemistry at Howard University and enrolled in the Medical Sciences Accelerated master's program to strengthen her preparation before applying to medical school. The program's small class sizes, supportive faculty mentorship, and strong academic foundation helped reinforce

study skills and subject mastery needed for the next step in her professional journey.

The curriculum emphasizes the pace, expectations, and depth of learning students will encounter in their first year of medical school. Faculty work closely with students to develop effective strategies for understanding and retaining complex material, while also offering guidance on the graduate school and medical school application process. Students also benefit from a collaborative learning environment and opportunities to build



community within the cohort.

Agnes Scott's Medical Sciences programs continue to show strong outcomes. Graduates of recent cohorts have secured positions in health care settings, entered additional graduate programs, and proceeded to pursue licensure and advanced

study in their chosen fields.

The Medical Sciences Accelerated master's program is currently accepting applications for the Summer 2026 semester.

Visit agnesscott.edu/forwardthinkers for program details and application information.

Student Vendor Fair at Agnes Scott College

Join Agnes Scott College for its Annual SERENDIPITY Student Vendor Fair at the Alston Campus Center on Thursday, December 4, 2-4:30 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Students will be selling their handmade products including jewelry, crochet animals, artwork, and more! This opportunity is just in time for holiday gift giving or if you want to treat yourself! For more information, email cles@agnesscott.edu.

Stay Connected with City Schools of Decatur

City Schools of Decatur is highly ranked among Georgia schools and at the heart of a supportive community. CSD invites you to be "All In" and subscribe to receive the latest news and information at tinyurl.com/csdschoolnewsletter, or scan the QR code.



Saint Thomas More Catholic School Schedules January Admissions Events

Saint Thomas More Catholic School (STM) has two classes per grade, a single PreK-8 campus, and close parish ties. With consistent faith formation and personalized attention, your child is known, not a number. We offer tuition assistance and parish active family rates to make STM accessible. Looking for a smaller, values-centered, faith-based, tight-knit school experience? Register to attend one of our two January admission events to learn more or schedule a personal tour at stmga.org.



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Dec 14 at 4pm

Service of the Longest Night
Dec 21 at 6pm

Christmas Eve Eve Service
Dec 23 at 6pm in the Chapel

Christmas Eve Services
Dec 24 at 4:30 & 6:30pm

Advent Weekly Worship
at 9 & 11am Sundays

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The Waldorf School Names Interim Executive Director

The Waldorf School of Atlanta (WSA) Board of Trustees recently hired Roslyn Benjamin to serve as their first executive director. Roz joined WSA on October 1 and will serve in an interim capacity for at least two academic years. Roz is a California native who has over 20 years of experience leading progressive and traditional K-8 schools in Georgia and California. Most recently, for 5 years, Roz served as Head of School at The Children's School, in Midtown Atlanta. Before that, she served for 9 years as Assistant Head of School at Live Oak School, in San Francisco, and for 7 years as Assistant Head of School at Katherine Delmar Burke School, also in San Francisco. Roz holds a B.A. from University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. in Secondary Education and Teaching from San Francisco State University. Roz is an avid sports fan, who also loves to read and travel.



The creation of the Executive Director position reflects a significant milestone in the evolution of WSA and a commitment to long-term sustainability, providing additional leadership to support the faculty, staff, and community. It comes at a pivotal time as WSA will soon be celebrating 40 years of Waldorf education in the Atlanta area and looking ahead to its next 40 years. Founded in 1986, The Waldorf School of Atlanta serves children from preschool through eighth grade, providing an education that fosters imagination, intellectual curiosity, and lifelong learning. More information about enrolling at WSA can be found at waldorfatlanta.org.



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