

JANUARY

2026



January's Chamber Member of the Month

We are proud to recognize **Eel River Bison Ranch** in South Whitley as our January Member of the Month. Their business is a shining example of how innovation, sustainability, and hard work can drive meaningful economic growth in our rural communities. Through their commitment to responsible land stewardship, locally focused agriculture, and high-quality products, Eel River Bison Ranch continues to make a lasting impact on our region.

In addition to being named Member of the Month, Eel River Bison Ranch was also honored at our December awards dinner with the 2025 Rural Economic Impact Award. This recognition celebrates businesses that strengthen our local economy, create opportunity, and help rural areas thrive. Eel River Bison Ranch exemplifies each of those qualities.

We congratulate Eel River Bison Ranch and thank them for their continued investment in our community, our Chamber, and their leadership in rural entrepreneurship.



Celebrating Career & Technical Education at WCCS

We are proud to celebrate Whitley County Consolidated Schools following the recent groundbreaking of their new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center. WCCS continues to empower students through hands-on learning, industry-recognized credentials, and diverse career pathways that prepare students for real-world success — right here in our community.



Reeg's Motor Sales Closes Doors After 70+ Years in Business

After more than 70 years in business, Gene Reeg Motor Sales, Inc. has announced its closure. Since 1949, this family-owned dealership has been a trusted part of Columbia City, built on honesty, hard work, and lasting relationships.

We are grateful for their decades of service to our community. Their legacy will be remembered and greatly missed.



Surf Internet Celebrates 250,000 Fiber-Optic Passings After Record-Breaking Year of Growth

ELKHART, Ind., Dec. 16, 2025 – Surf Internet® has reached 250,000 homes passed with fiber-optic internet across Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, its strongest construction year to date and a defining milestone in the company's 25th anniversary year.

In 2025, Surf brought its fiber-optic service to more than 66,500 additional homes and businesses through November and is on track to exceed 75,000 passings by year-end, driven by construction acceleration, strategic grant funding, and community partnerships across the Great Lakes region. These builds reflect Surf's entry into 40 new markets, expanding fiber access in rural communities and mid-sized towns.

"Every new mile of fiber represents a community gaining access to opportunity, growth, and connection," said Gene Crusie, Founder & CEO of Surf Internet. "Delivering fiber-optic internet to 250,000 homes isn't just a milestone—it's a transformation marker for the Great Lakes region. We're proud of the progress and energized by what this unlocks for the years ahead."

In addition to its network expansion, Surf has continued to invest in local talent, welcoming 90 new employees in 2025 across engineering, construction, customer care, and field service roles. The increased staffing supports Surf's commitment to dependable service, faster installations, and exceptional customer support from people who live in the communities they serve.

"Reaching this milestone took disciplined work across our field teams, contractors, and local partners, especially in communities that had never had fiber infrastructure before," said Brent Williams, Chief Operating Officer at Surf. "Their commitment is a big part of why we were able to deliver at this pace in 2025."

Surf's strong performance this year also earned the company a place on Broadband Communities' national list of Top 100 Fiber Providers, recognizing Surf's expanding impact in bringing reliable fiber connectivity to underserved communities.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Surf will carry its 2025 momentum into the new year, accelerating construction through state and federal broadband grants, including BEAD-funded projects, while expanding into new markets and strengthening partnerships that help small towns and rural neighborhoods take their next step forward.



Member Spotlight

Busco Beans is growing beyond handcrafted coffee with new made-to-order breakfast and lunch options. Guests can now enjoy warm breakfast croissants with bacon, egg, and melty cheese, along with freshly toasted hot melts for lunch. They've also expanded their bakery offerings with locally sourced items – including gluten-free and vegan options like cookies, brownies, muffins, and oatmeal cream pies. As always, Busco Beans continues to be a welcoming place for the community to gather, refuel, and connect. **Thank you for being a member!**



Upcoming Chamber Events

From networking opportunities and ribbon cuttings to educational sessions and special gatherings, these events offer a great way to stay engaged and get the most out of your Chamber membership. We encourage all members to attend, participate, and take advantage of the connections and resources these events provide. We hope to see you at the following events:

**WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 14TH
@ NOON**

Chamber Ambassador Meeting

Held **at the Chamber of Commerce**, our Ambassador Meeting focuses on planning events, working in committees, delegating tasks, and voting on the next Member of the Month. All current and prospective ambassadors are encouraged to attend.

**FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 6TH
@ 8:00AM**

Cafes & Conversations Networking

Held the **first Friday** of every month at **8 a.m.** Cafés & Conversations is a casual networking event where members connect, share ideas, and chat about just about anything. We rotate between local cafés throughout Whitley County, and this month we'll be meeting at **Busco Beans**.

**MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 23RD
@ 10:30AM**

Level Up Seminar Series

Held the **last Monday** of every month at **10 a.m.**, this educational seminar focuses on practical topics like marketing, technology, accounting, and more to help your business grow. Next month's topic and location will be announced soon—mark your calendar and plan to join us.

Upcoming Member Events

Our Chamber members are always hosting exciting events throughout the community, and we love helping spread the word. From grand openings and open houses to workshops, sales, and special celebrations, member events are a great way to support one another and stay connected.

If you'd like your upcoming event featured in a future newsletter, please message or email the Chamber with your event details.



JANUARY 2026

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



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Baby Storytime 10:30 am
Homeschool 1 pm
Create & Connect 5:30 pm

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Baby Storytime 10:30 am
Crafting Connections 11 am
Homeschool 1 pm

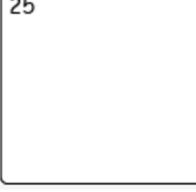
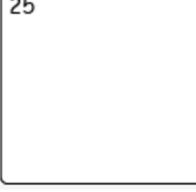
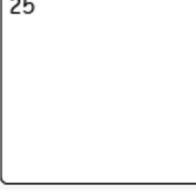
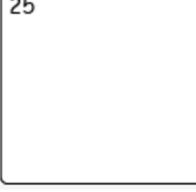
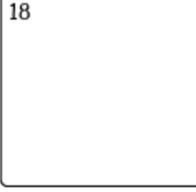
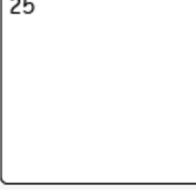
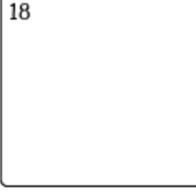
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Baby Storytime 10:30 am
Homeschool 1 pm
Otherworldly Book Club
- 5:30 pm

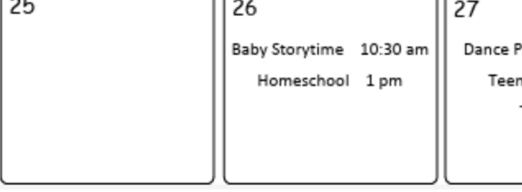
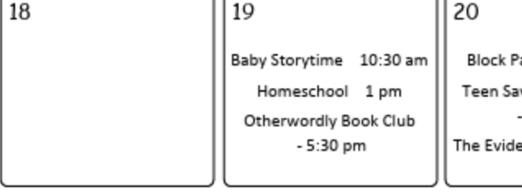
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Baby Storytime 10:30 am
Homeschool 1 pm

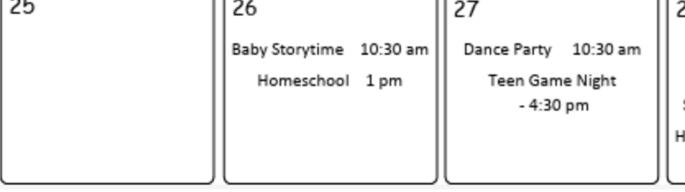
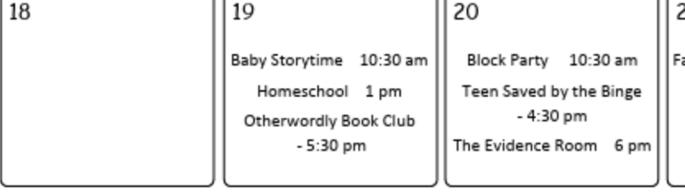
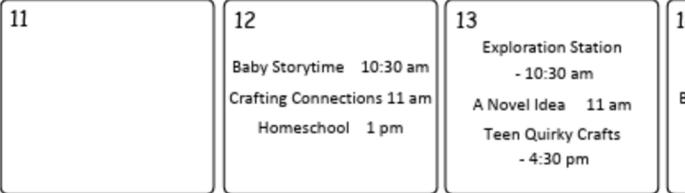
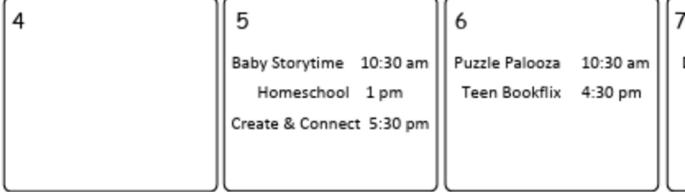
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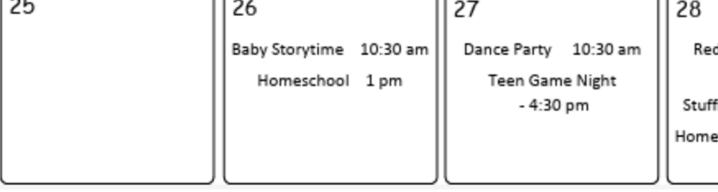
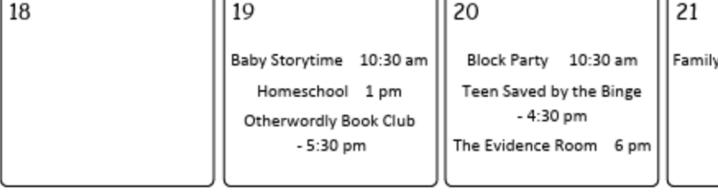
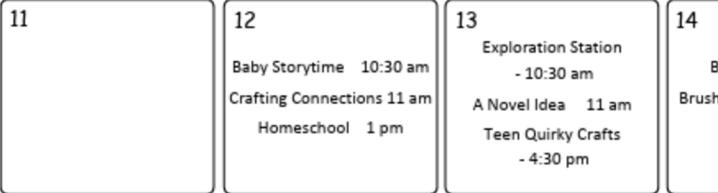
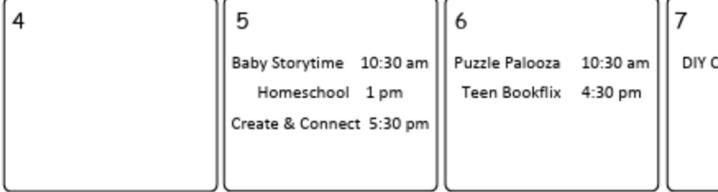
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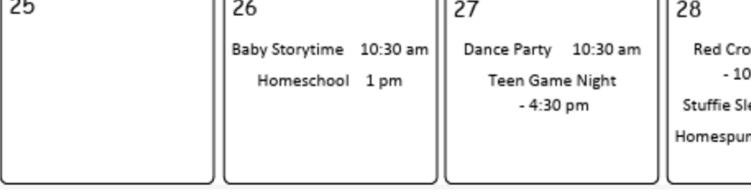
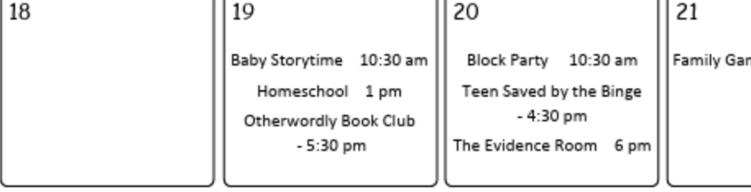
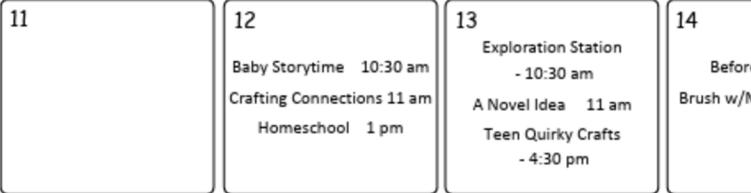
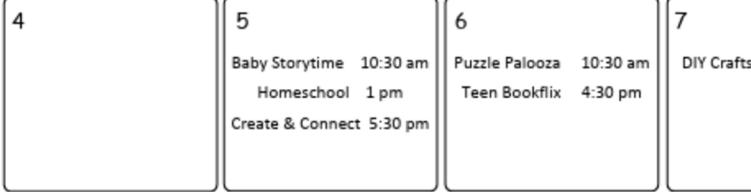
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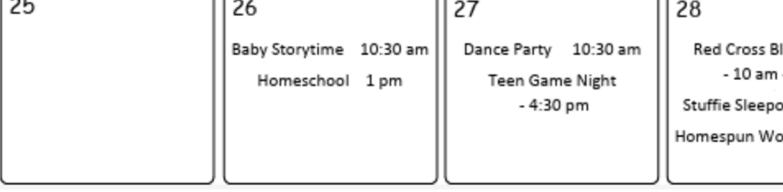
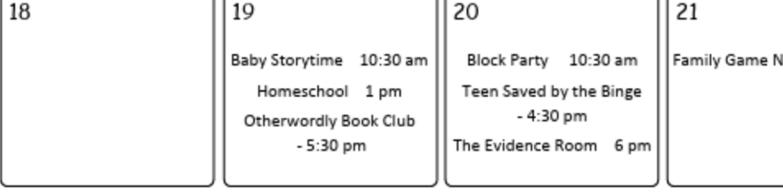
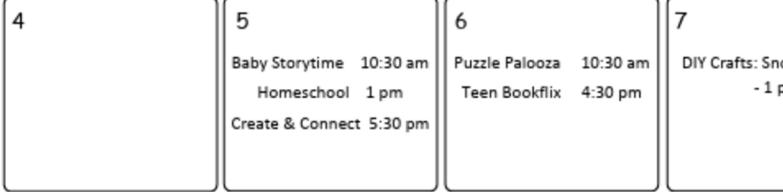
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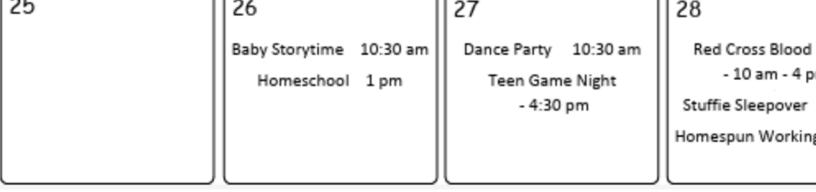
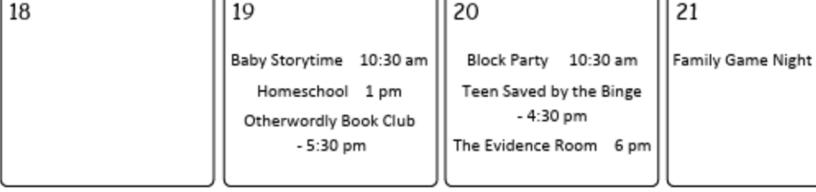
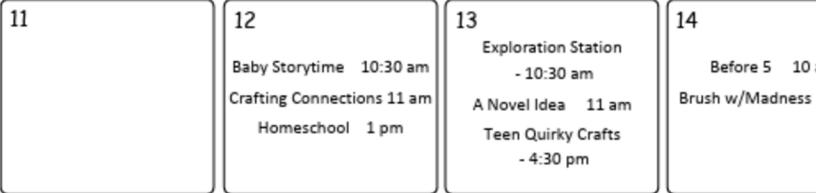
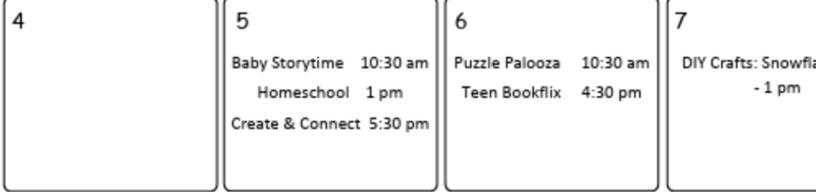
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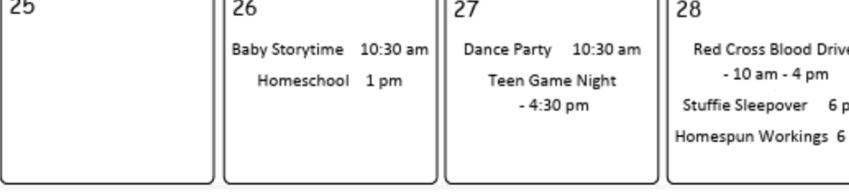
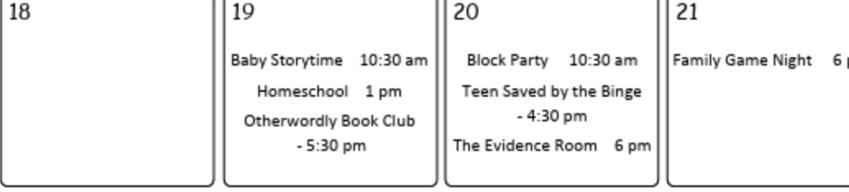
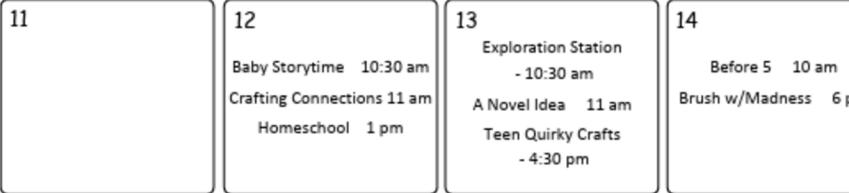
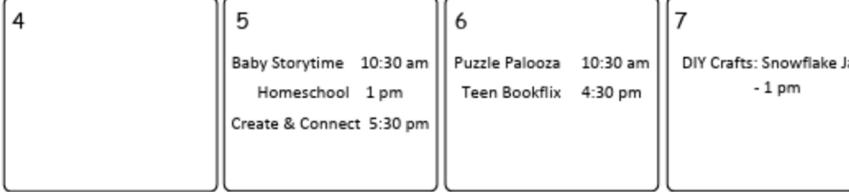
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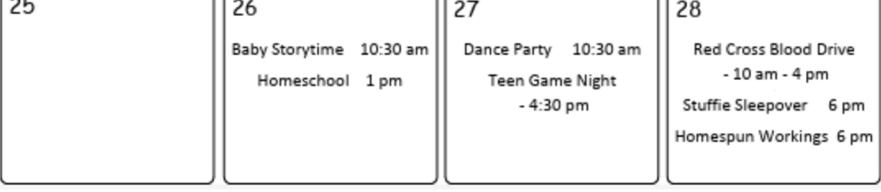
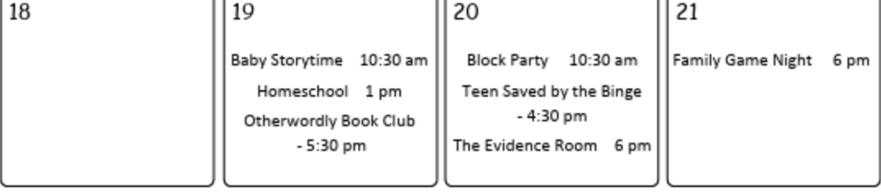
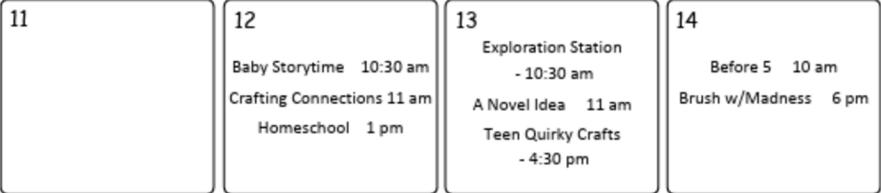
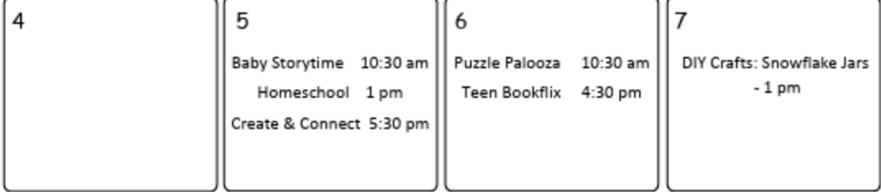
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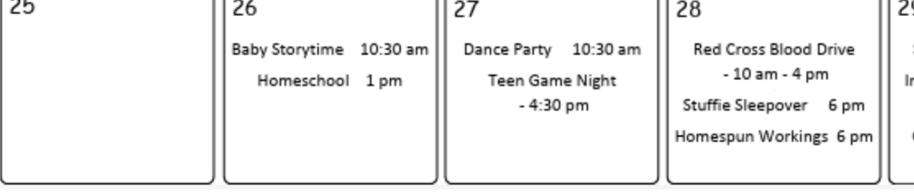
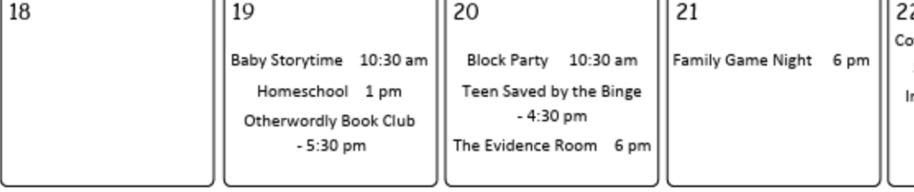
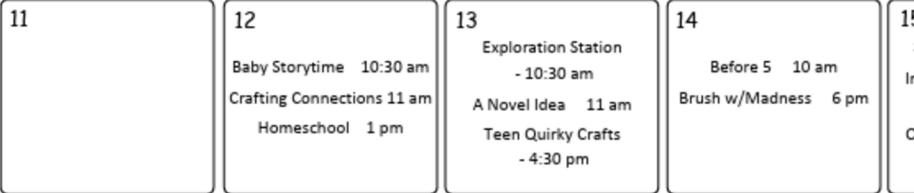
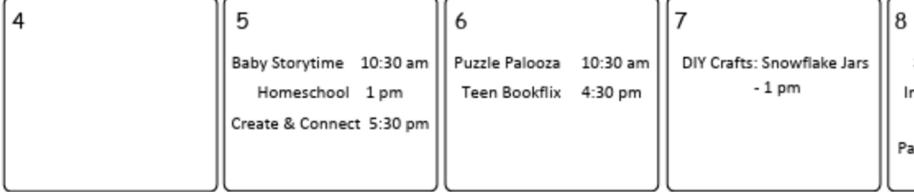
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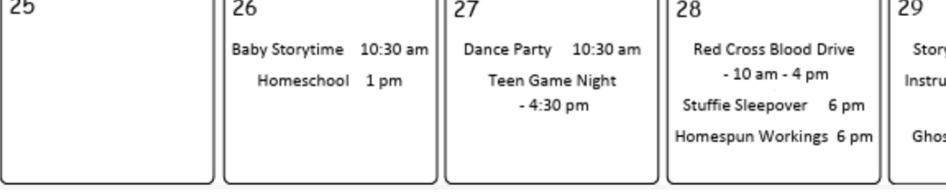
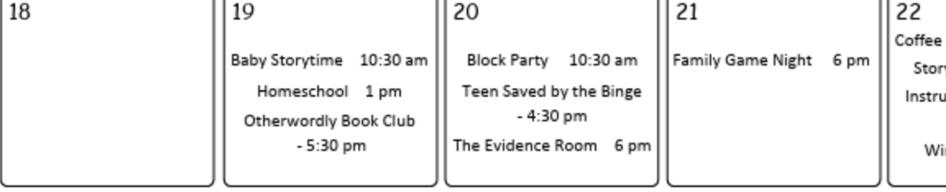
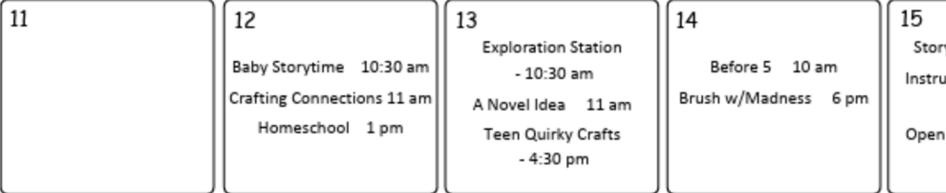
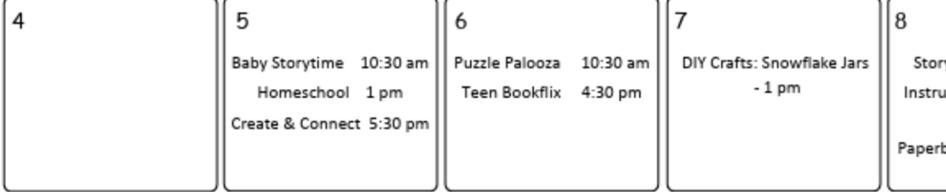
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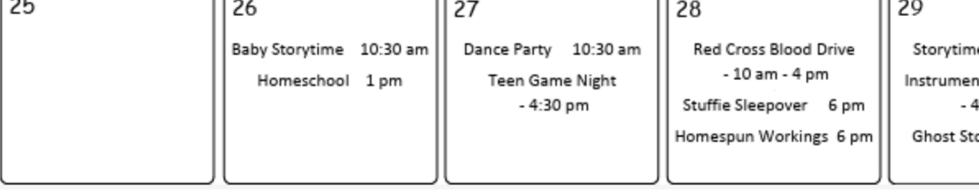
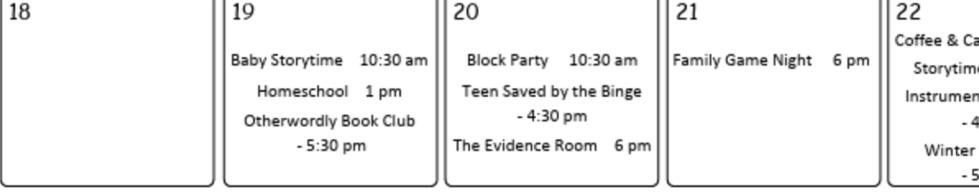
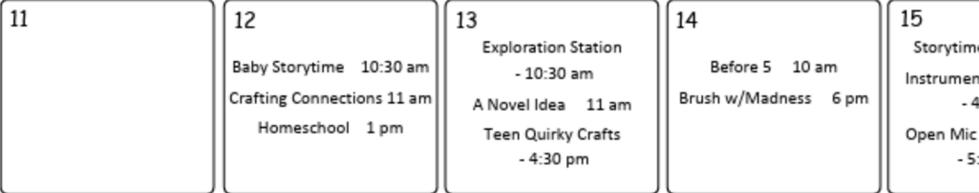
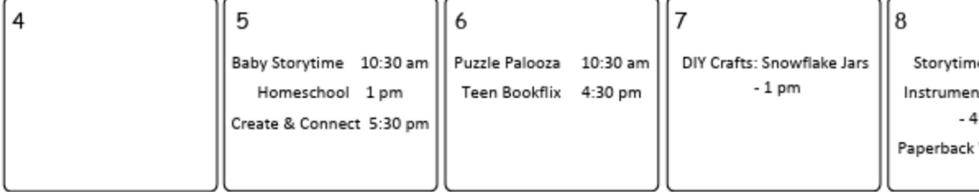
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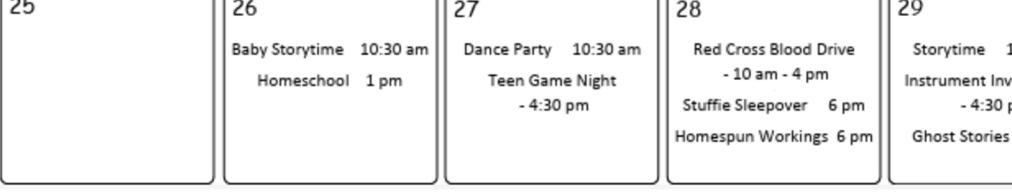
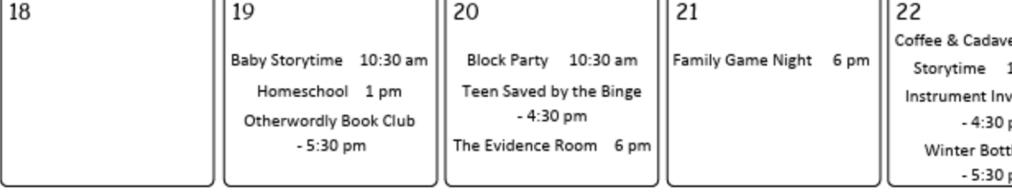
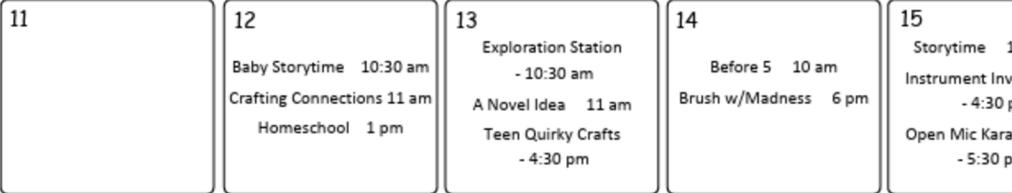
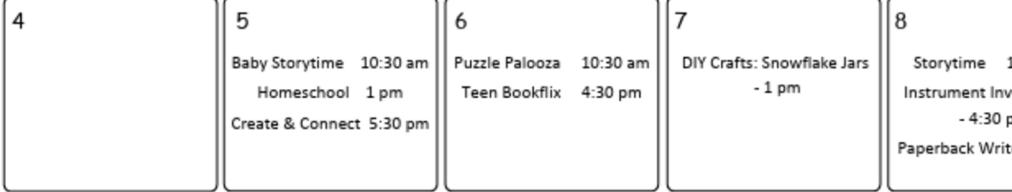
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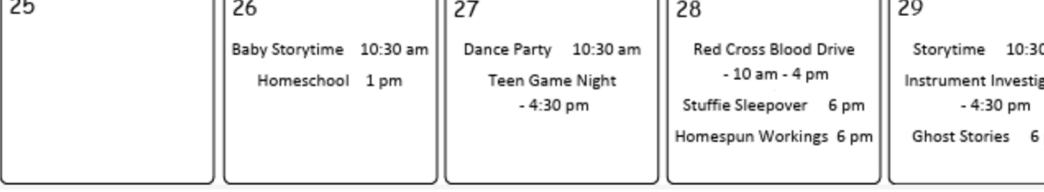
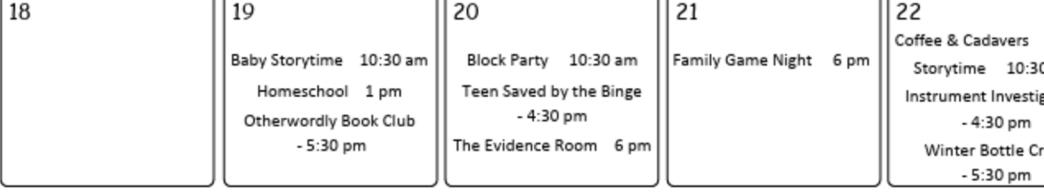
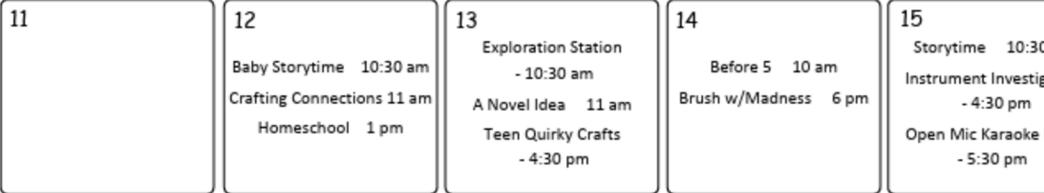
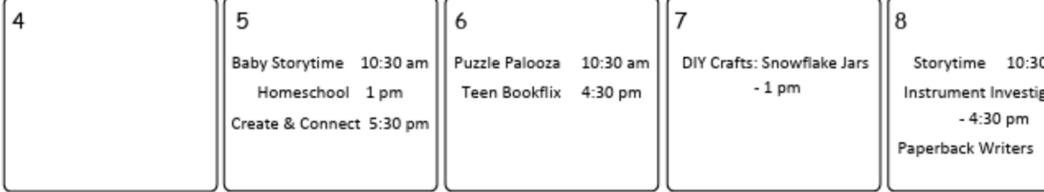
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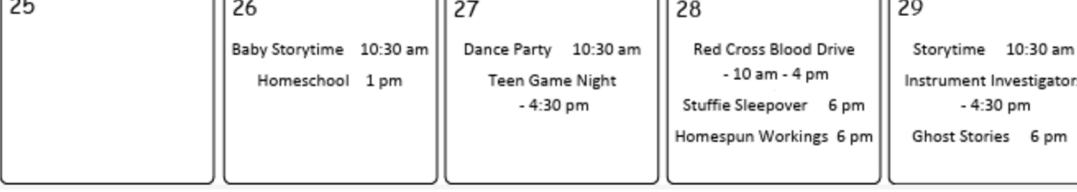
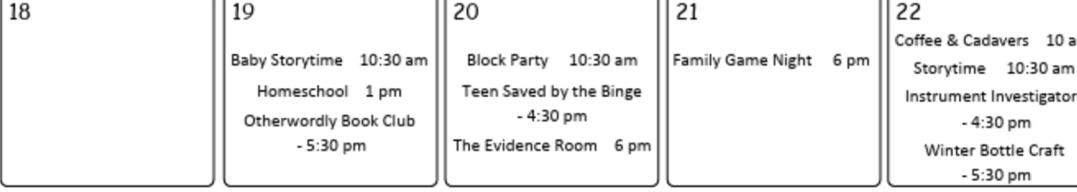
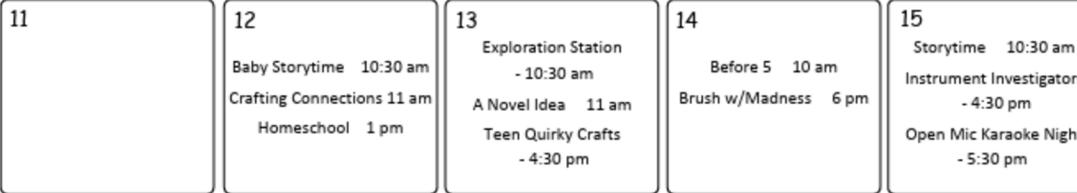
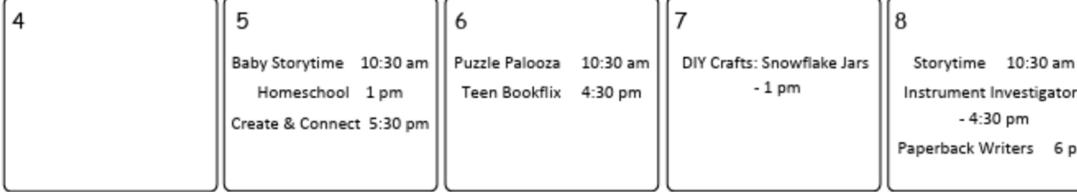
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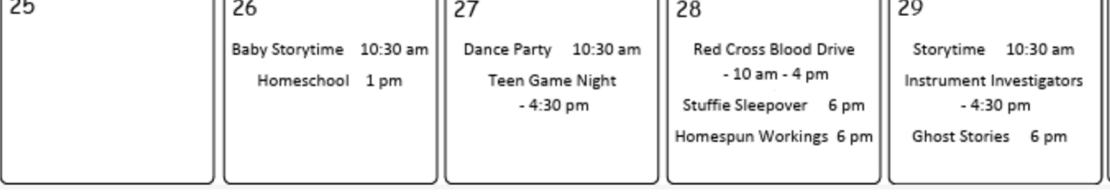
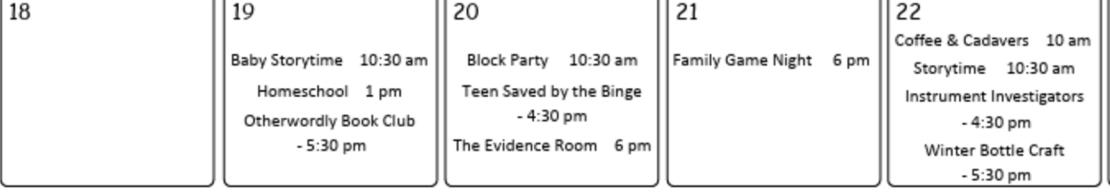
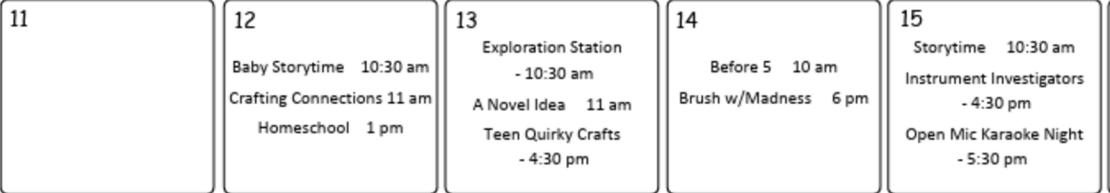
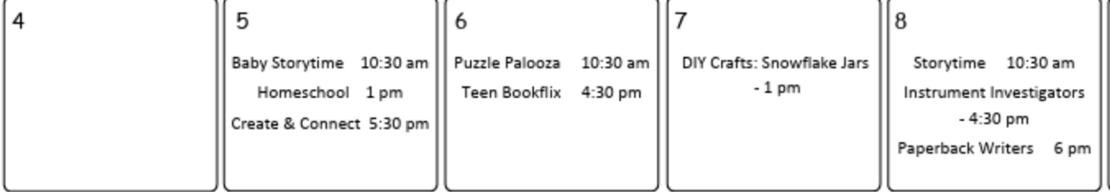
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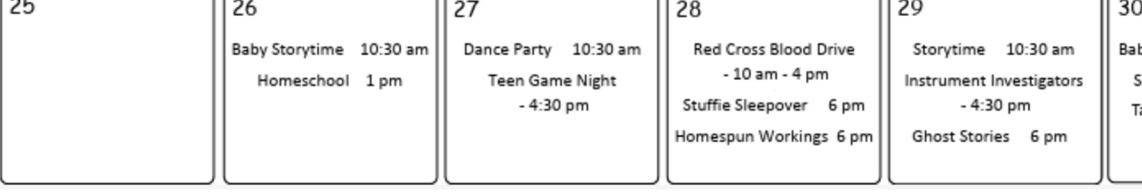
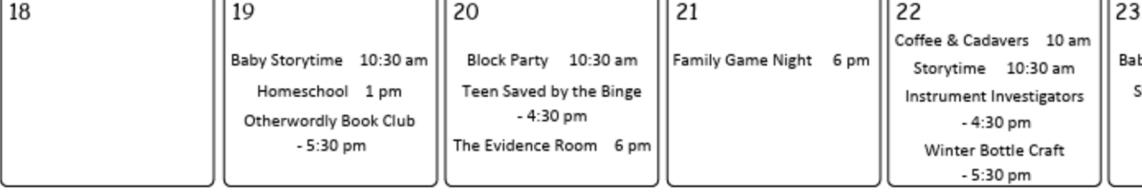
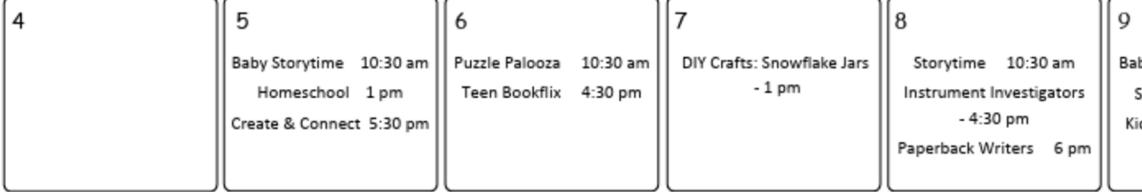
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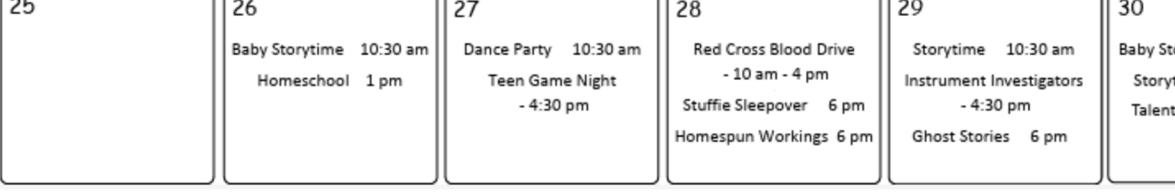
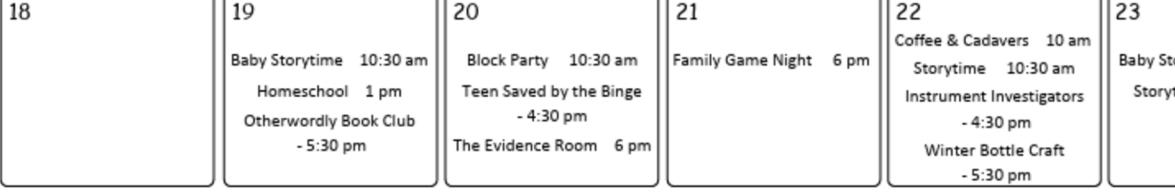
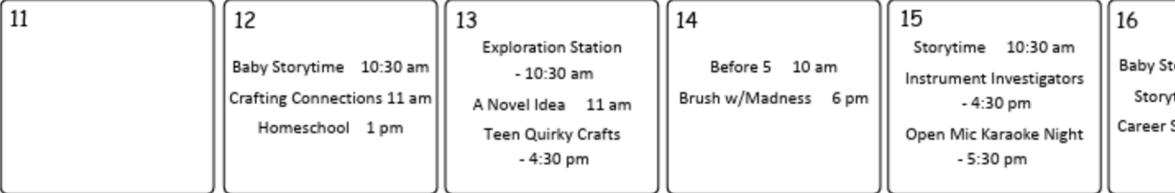
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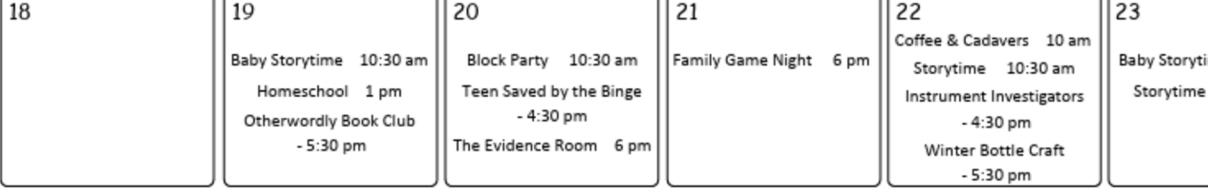
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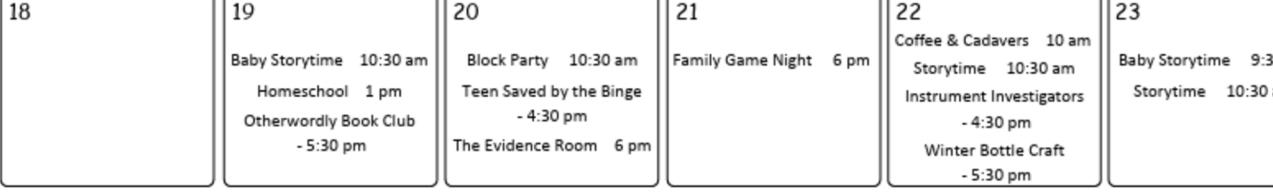
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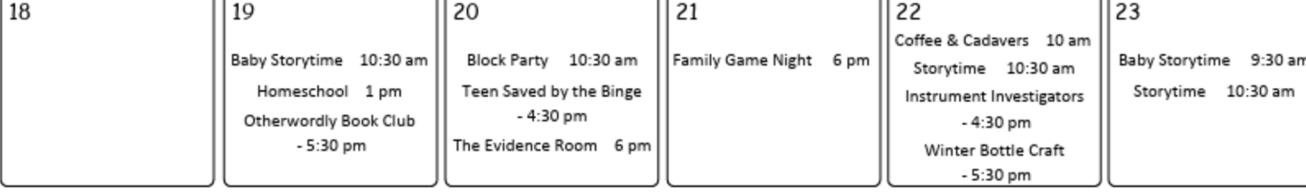
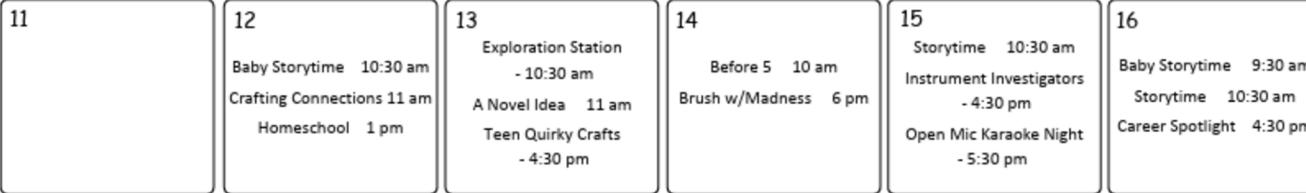
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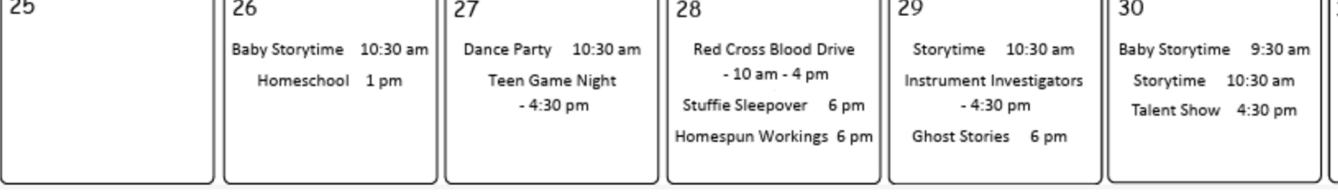
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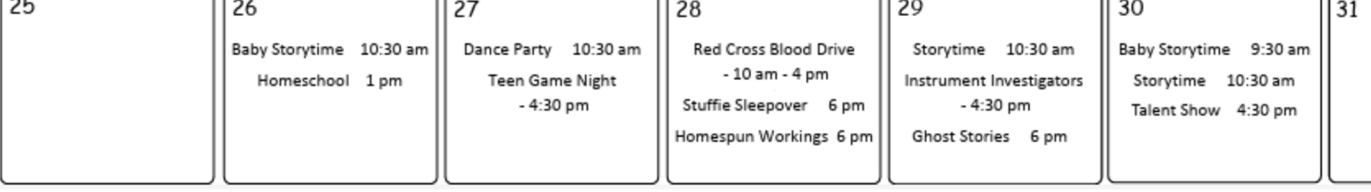
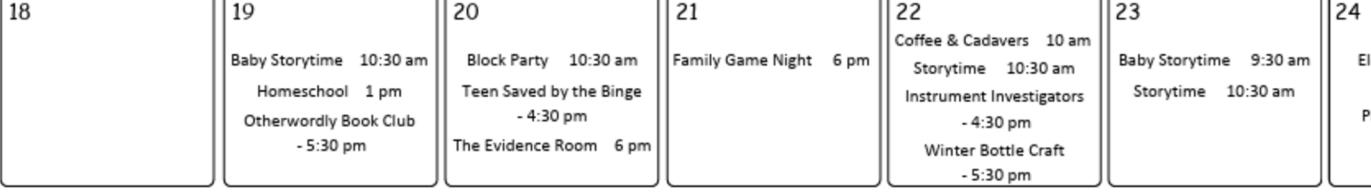
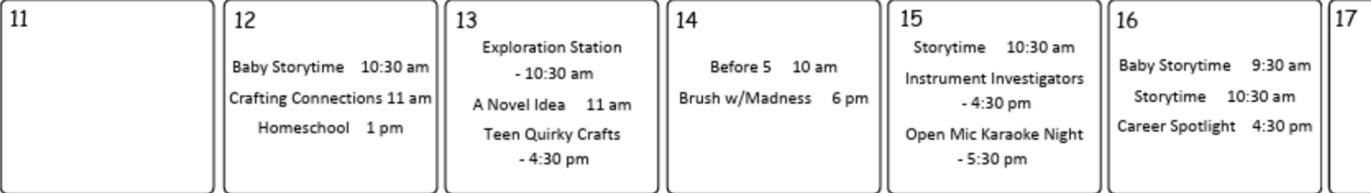
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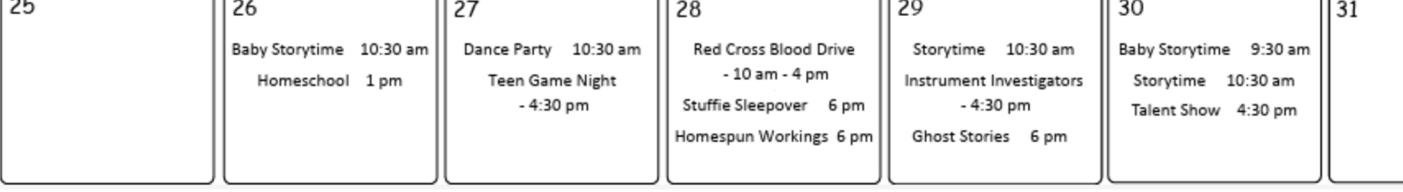
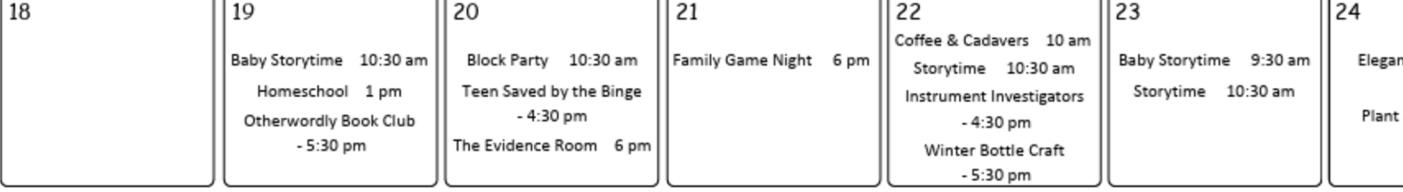
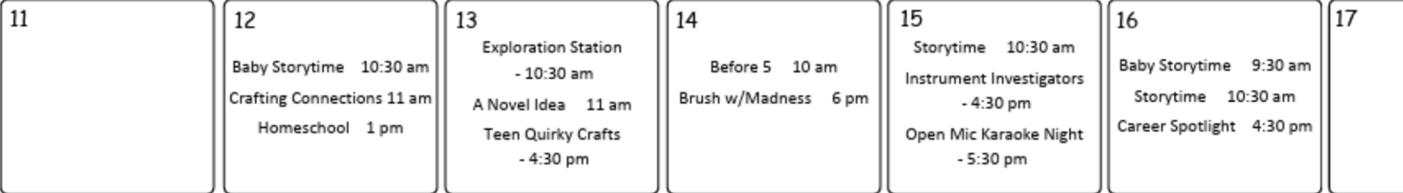
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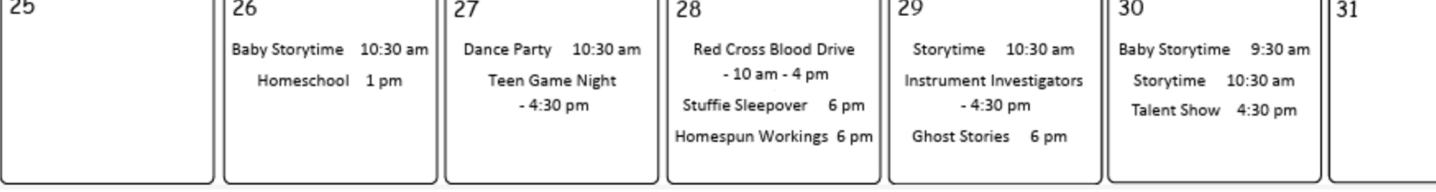
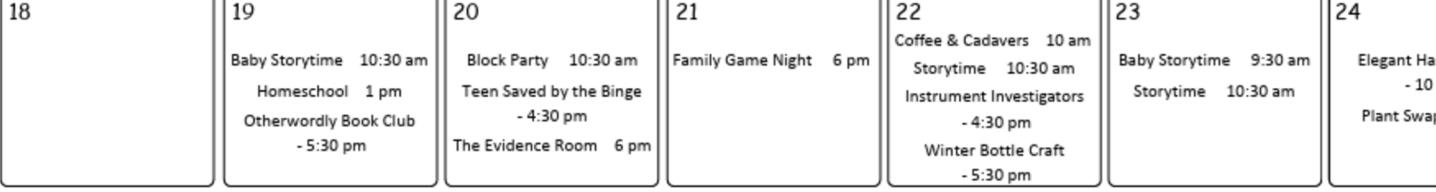
28



29



30



31

Lunch \$7 per person

2026

SOUPEBOWL

WELCOME TO THE SOUPER BOWL—WHERE YOU DECIDE THE BEST SOUP OF ALL TIME! GRAB YOUR BIGGEST POTS, SHARPEST KNIVES, SPOONS AND LADLES! THE TEMPERATURE IS DROPPING AND THAT MEANS IT'S TIME TO MAKE A HEARTY POT OF FRESH, FLAVORFUL, HOME-MADE SOUP. THERE'S A RECIPE FOR EVERYONE, SO GET COOKING! MAKE SURE TO BRING SOME CASH. WE WILL HAVE A 50/50 DRAWING AND A "PEOPLE'S CHOICE" AWARD.

IF YOU BRING A FRIEND WHO HAS NEVER BEEN TO THE WOODLANDS, YOU WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING. ONE LUCKY WINNER WILL RECEIVE A GAS CARD!!

STOP BY THE WOODLANDS TO REGISTER AND PICK UP YOUR COPY OF THE RULES. THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS TUESDAY 1/13/26. MAY THE BEST SOUP WIN!!

Featuring soups from:

Moyer's Cafe

Shelbi Brown

Bill Lewis

Parkview Hospice

New entries added daily!

1st Place \$30 & the
"Golden Ladle"
2nd Place \$20 & the
"Silver Ladle"
3rd Place \$10 & the
"Bronze Ladle"
"People's Choice"

Entry Fee is
\$10 per soup.

Friday January 16th @ 11:30-1:00
The Woodlands Activity Center
710 N. Opportunity Drive Columbia City

Winter Warmth

Our local schools have shared the specific items their students need this winter... and we're inviting YOU to help us make sure every child stays warm.

Claim a slot, shop for the item, and help us fill the exact needs of each school.

We also have a very limited opportunity for donors to Sponsor a Student with specific, high-need items. These sponsorships are few, but incredibly meaningful.

To claim a slot, just scan the QR Code below.





YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO

The Royal Ball

Father Daughter Dance

PRESENTED BY THE COLUMBIA CITY PARKS DEPARTMENT



FEBRUARY 6TH OR FEBRUARY 7TH

6:00PM-10:00PM

WHITLEY COUNTY 4H CENTER

\$25.00 PER PERSON

MUST HAVE A TICKET TO ATTEND

SPACE IS VERY LIMITED GET YOUR TICKETS
BEGINNING JANUARY 2, 2026

FOR SPECIFIC DATE PURCHASE TICKETS EARLY AT THE
PARK OFFICE MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00AM-4:00PM. FOR MORE
INFORMATION CONTACT THE PARK OFFICE 260-248-5180.



SUN KISS SPRITZ & SHOP

- GALENTINE'S -

FEBRUARY 11 4-8PM

107 DIPLOMAT RD
COLUMBIA CITY



♥ DRINK, GRAB A SWEET TREAT ♥

AND SHOP LOCAL VENDORS

♥ PERMANENT JEWELRY WILL AVAILABLE TOO! ♥





Feb 14, 2026
Love is in the Air
♥ Bridal Show ♥

Featuring:

- The Press Room Event Center Bar & Grill
- Eberly Photography & Videography
- Stan's Smokin' BBQ & Catering
- The Copper Cactus Design and Decor
- Mary Carney ~ Wedding Officiant
- Elated Entertainment
- Bridal Hair & Makeup by Zoe Foutz
- Sweet Tooth Confections By Christa Austin
Ellen's Bridal – Roanoke, IN
- Tuxedo Rental by Bravo Florists
- SimplySweet Cake Shop
- Gough Legal Group ~ Estate Planning

More vendors to come!

Contact: Jen | 260-609-8883
12-3pm | 113 South State Street
Downtown South Whitley

2026 STATE OF THE CITY



**FRIDAY
MARCH 13, 2026**

11:30AM CHECK-IN

NOON LUNCH

12:30PM ADDRESS

+ A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MAYOR

FREE TO ATTEND - RSVP REQUESTED

LUNCH PROVIDED BY FOODOLEGY



PEABODY PUBLIC LIBRARY
1160 IN-205 | COLUMBIA CITY, IN 46725

*Kindly RSVP guest count and businesses attending to
jesterline@whitleychamber.org by March 1, 2026.*

SOUTH WHITLEY COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT

Hop on over for some Easter fun!

South Whitley Youth League Ball Fields

Thousands of Eggs!

Saturday, April 4, 2026

Hunt starts at the Noon Whistle!

Bicycle Raffle!



Meet the Easter Bunny!

Candy, Prizes & Bicycles
donated by Whitley County Businesses!

★ Fun for kids of all ages! ★
• Bring your baskets & your Easter spirit! •

Daddy Daughter Dance

Taylor Swift Theme

At

THE PRESS ROOM

EVENT CENTER

113 South State Street • South Whitley, IN 46787

Music • Games • Dancing • More!

• \$30 a couple • \$10 for each additional daughter

• *Each couple receives a take-home photo*

Photo provided by Eberly Photography & Videography LLC

DAD

SWIFTIE

LOVE

DANCE

Saturday, April 18, 2026 • 6-8PM

• TICKETS ARE LIMITED •

Advanced Tickets Required

To Purchase Tickets Email:

jenkridere@outlook.com

Dress up, sing along, and make memories that will last forever!