Ah, those lazy days of summer. Fort Bend parents cherish the free time beyond the hustle and bustle of the school year, and kids love the long summer days...until you hear, “I’m boooooored!” That’s where our summer boredom busters come in. With a little planning and creativity, you can banish boredom and enjoy some summer fun in Fort Bend.

**Brazos Bend State Park**
If you like the great outdoors, this is the place to be. Hike, bike, fish, ride horses, or just bask in the sun in this enclave, just off Highway 59 South in Needville. Learn about species of plants and animals as you explore Brazos River, Big Creek, and the park’s six lakes. Alligators are numerous, and information on “alligator etiquette” is posted on maps and signs throughout the park. Don’t bother them, and they won’t bother you. At night, stargaze at the George Observatory, open on Saturdays. [tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/brazos-bend](tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/brazos-bend)

**Local Libraries**
Libraries throughout Fort Bend offer loads of fun activities for kids and families to enjoy during the summer months. Spend your time at creative events such as Asian and African dance troupes, magic and puppet shows, plays, and more. In addition to the classics, Nooks and Kindles can be checked out for your tech-savvy sweetie. Play on computers, borrow videos, watch movies, learn crafts, and attend book clubs all in the glorious air conditioning. Check the Fort Bend library website for information on branches close to your home. [fortbend.lib.tx.us](fortbend.lib.tx.us)
George Ranch Historical Park
Step back in time at George Ranch Historical Park in Richmond to see what life was like for four generations of a Texas family. Historic home tours, cattle working demonstrations, views of pioneer and sharecropper’s farms, and a working blacksmith shop are all fun ways to learn about being a Texan in the old days. George Ranch is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. georgeranch.org

Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land
The Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land has added some cool exhibits just in time for summer. View butterfly fish, live coral, sea urchins, hermit crabs, and other aquatic life in the museum's new 2,000-gallon saltwater aquarium. Learn about the physics behind your favorite carnival rides at the interactive amusement park science exhibit, which will be open from June 14 to September 15. There is also the T-Rex, the ever popular dig pit, the digital dome theater, and many other exhibits. Education and enjoyment are all in one place. hmns.org

The Ice Barn
Cool off on a humid summer's day at Sugar Land's Ice Barn. With over 100 flavors to choose from, this is a shaved ice, snow cone lover’s paradise. With their low prices and assorted flavors, these tasty treats are sure to please. The Ice Barn offers sugar-free and natural flavors. Try the chamoyadas, a snow cone made with a spicy kick. Then top off your snow cone with cream or ice cream. Snacks like banana splits, sundaes, chili cheese nachos, and corn in a cup are also served. theicebarn.net
Painting Fun with Family
Express your inner Van Gogh with do-it-yourself painting parties at Painting with a Twist or Pinot’s Palette in Sugar Land. Reproduce your own famous painting, with a trained artist guiding the class. Kid-friendly designs and family sessions are also available. Prices range from $25 to $35 per person. Call ahead to confirm times and fees.
paintingwithatwist.com/sugarland | pinotspalette.com/sugarland

Sugar Land Fire Station
Do your sweeties want to be a firefighter when they grow up? Take a tour at a local fire station where you can talk to firefighters and hear what a typical day is like, and maybe even get to sit on a real fire truck! Learn about fire and rescue, medical equipment, fire safety, and basic life safety skills. You’ll have a blast! To schedule a tour call 281-275-2859. sugarlandtx.gov

Sugar Land Ice & Sports Center
Beat the heat and lace up your skates at the Sugar Land Ice & Sports Center. The rink offers open skating to the public, seven days a week. Friday mornings they offer a $10 special which includes your public skate fee, rental skates, and a group lesson with one of their skating coaches. Patrons can bring their own skates or rent skates at the facility. Hockey and figure skating lessons are also available. Check the schedule online or call 281-265-7499. sugarlandice.com

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16535 Southwest Freeway, Sugar Land, TX 77479
Get up close with T-Rex at the Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land.

Tour a fire station and learn what a typical day is like for Sugar Land firefighters.

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One Stop Entertainment Complex
There’s something for everyone at Santikos Palladium in Richmond. This mega-Greek style entertainment center features 22 movie auditoriums with stadium seating, 80-foot movie screens, and 3-D sound. Feel like you’re part of the show with motion seats synchronized with the on-screen action in two of the theatres. Reserve your seats in advance and you can take your time enjoying the arcade or 16-lane bowling center. If you feel hungry from all the activities, Santikos offers four restaurants with food from pizza and popcorn to sushi and salads. If you’re out on a summer date night, five bars offer adult-friendly concoctions. Families can enjoy free opportunities to watch titles such as The Lorax or Hotel Transylvania on select Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. this summer. santikos.com

9

Sugar Land Skeeters
Take your clan out to a Sugar Land Skeeters ball game. Watch a great game played by Sugar Land’s own minor league team in a first-class stadium. Mascots Swatson and Moe are on hand to keep the energy level high. In between innings, kids can cool off in Memorial Hermann play land, located left of center field. It features a splash pad, carousel, and playground equipment. Sounds like a home run for the entire family! sugarlandskeeters.com

10

TONYA ELLIS looks forward to trying out some of these fun boredom buster activities with her family this summer.