

# Valentine activities you'll love

by Megan Salch, contributing writer

To help you prepare for the month of love, we've pulled together some great activities to enjoy. You're sure to fall in love with these excursions.

1. Sponsored by the American Heart Association, February 6 is **Go Red For Women Day** and focuses on preventing heart disease. Mark your calendars for the **2009 Go Red For Women National Casting Call** February 6, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Macy's in the Galleria. Participating women will inspire others with their stories of lifesaving choices. Casting call participants may be selected to appear in a TV special about living healthily. Dress the kids in red and teach them about heart-healthy choices at this event. For details, contact 713-610-5000 or visit [www.goredforwomen.org](http://www.goredforwomen.org).

2. Get cooking this Valentine's with **Rice Epicurean's cooking class**. Chefs of all ages can decorate gingerbread Valentine candleholders February 12, 5-7 p.m. The culinary adventure is led by Elaine Small, director of the Rice Epicurean Cooking School, at the Fountainview and San Felipe location. Admission is \$27.95 with a Rice Experience card and \$37.95 without the card. For details and reservations, visit [www.riceepicurean.com](http://www.riceepicurean.com) or call 713-954-2152.

3. Love is in the air at the **Children's Museum of Houston** February 12-15. In addition to the regular exhibits, Valentine activities include creating homemade cards and making rose colored glasses to see how views change. On February 14 at 2 p.m., enjoy *Beautiful*, a special performance of an African American trio of a cappella music celebrating heroes through storytelling. For details, visit [www.cmhouston.org](http://www.cmhouston.org).

4. **Head to the George Observatory at Brazos Bend State Park**, about an hour south of Houston, to discover the beauties of the night sky and wish upon a star February 14, 3-10 p.m. View the constellations through the telescopes. Nonmember tickets are \$3 for the 36-inch telescope and \$2 for the 14- and 18-inch telescope. Discounts apply for members. For details, visit [www.hmns.org](http://www.hmns.org) or call 713-639-4708.

5. Love your kids at the **Valentine Skate** at the Dairy Ashford Roller Rink. Not sure about your youngster's skating abilities? Younger children can enjoy the rink noon-5 p.m. for a \$6 admission fee. Toss a few balls onto the skate area and jam to preschool tunes like the *Hokey Pokey*. Big kids are

encouraged to roll 5-10:30 p.m. for a \$7 admission fee. For details, visit [www.skatedarr.com](http://www.skatedarr.com) or call 281-493-5651.

6. Children ages 5 and up celebrate the holiday at **Valentine Kids Night Out at Young at Art** on 19th Street in the Heights. On February 14, 6-9:30 p.m., parents can drop off their kids and head out. Young artists will dine on pizza and paint ceramic heart plaques. Admission is \$60 per child. To register, visit [www.youngatartstudio.net](http://www.youngatartstudio.net) or call 713-862-0900.

7. Ahoy! Take your Valentine to the **Second Saturday Boat Rides** down the bayou 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in conjunction with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Climb aboard a pontoon boat for a 30-minute tour on the city's waterways. As the cool breeze brushes past, you'll see graceful herons, jumping fish, and sunning turtles. Admission is \$5 per child (age 4-12) and \$7 per adult. Visit [www.buffalobayou.org](http://www.buffalobayou.org) or call 713-752-0314, ext. 3 for details.

8. The Health Museum plays cupid 9 a.m.-5 p.m. February 14 with its **Have a Heart** family festival. Make heart-healthy snacks and Valentine cards. Engage in hands-on learning at the Discovery Carts, including how to use a stethoscope to hear a resting versus exercising

heartbeat. The heart is the featured organ dissection of the month, giving attendees a chance to learn various parts of this vital organ. Adult admission is \$8. Child admission is \$6. For details, visit [www.thehealthmuseum.org](http://www.thehealthmuseum.org) or call 713-521-1515.

9. Everyone loves flowers in February. On February 15, 1-5 p.m. surround yourself with beauty at **Bayou Bend's Glorious Gardens** and learn about nature, too. Among the spectacular blooming trees and azaleas, enjoy the nature-inspired crafts from local groups. Visit with the many animals in the petting zoo and create your own flowers and crawling creatures. Giggle to the humorous *Go Wild!* show by Julian Franklin. Admission is free. For details, visit [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org) or call 713-639-7759.

10. Celebrate at **Celtic Festival** February 15 at St. Andrews Church noon-5:30 p.m. at 19th Street and Heights Boulevard. Musical routines from bagpipes to traditional Irish dancing will be performed on two stages. Houstonians will soak up the heritage with loads of crafts, games, food, and drinks. A family ticket is \$10, while single tickets are \$3. For details, call 713-861-5596 or visit [www.saintandrewsepisopal.org](http://www.saintandrewsepisopal.org).



Kylie Salch paints a Valentine dish for her parents at Young at Art.