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Kindergarten Registration is Open!

Kindergarten Registration is Open in the Douglas County School District! If your child will be 5-years-old by October 1, 2026, now is the time to register them for Kindergarten.

Simply visit www.dcsdk12.org/kindergarten to get started. If your child currently attends a DCSD preschool, they will automatically be registered for Kindergarten.

DCSD Kindergarten Offers:

- Structured, Rigorous, Play-Based Curriculum
- Small Class Sizes
- Authentic Learning Experiences
- Balanced Beginnings
(staggered transition which builds stronger teacher/student relationships and eases the transition into school for students)

For more information: www.dcsdk12.org/kindergarten

Douglas County School District
Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow



CONTENTS



12 Athletes to Watch

A season-long feature highlighting some of the best high school athletes in the area.
BY SEARCH PARKER STAFF

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ON THE COVER

Winter Sunrise in Douglas County




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COMING EVENTS

PHOTOS: TOWN OF PARKER



Tree Recycling Program

December 25 - January 25 | 11920 Motsenbocker Rd.

Find the drop-off site at the west paved Salisbury Park ballfields (field #1) parking lot. Please remember to remove all ornaments, tinsel or other decorations. NO trash, artificial trees, garland or wreathes with wire backing. The trees collected by the program will be chipped into mulch, which is available at the same site at no charge to residents.



Discovery Ice Trail Open

All Winter | 20115 E. Mainstreet

The Ice Trail at Discovery Park kicked off the season Nov. 24. Tickets can be purchased on-site or early at the Recreation Center or Fieldhouse. Now offering season passes which includes skate rental and child/adult admission all season long! Find more information at www.ParkerRec.com/IceTrail



Sweetheart Ball

February 6 | 20000 Pikes Peak Ave. | 6:15 - 7:45 pm

Get gussied up and enjoy a lovely evening with your little sweethearts! The Kids' Zone Sweetheart Ball will feature a memorable night of dancing, games, crafts, and refreshments that the entire family will adore. Get more information and purchase tickets online at www.parkerrec.com/Kids-Zone-Events



Love 'em or Leave 'em 5K/10K

February 14 | 11920 Motsenbocker | 10:00 am

Will you embrace the holiday full of heart or run from Cupid? Either way, you're going to LOVE this fun and festive workout with family and friends...oh, and those pancakes! Registered participants will receive a race shirt, custom bib, and a delicious post-race pancake breakfast. Purchase at ParkerRec.com/RunSeries.

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AROUND TOWN

PHOTOS: TOWN OF PARKER



Hometown Holidays

The Holidays wrapped up with several great celebrations and events. Decoration displays in and around O'Brien Park and Discovery Park, Parker Ice Trail at Discovery Park, Holidays Home Decorating Contest, and the Hometown Holiday experiences downtown were just some of the great opportunities for locals to celebrate the holiday season.



Swim With Santa

Santa took a break from the cold and was ready to swim in the heated indoor pool! Locals swam with the jolly ol' man, enjoyed holiday music, festive giveaways, and joyful crafts at the annual Swim with Santa event.



Home Decorating Contest Winners

Congratulations to the 2025 Holidays Home Decorating Contest winners! Thank you once again to all of this year's participants, everyone who voted for the People's Choice Award. A full list of the winning homes can be found on the Town's Facebook page for Light Up The Town, Deck The Yard, Elected Choice, Best Decorated Porch, Patio or Balcony, and People's Choice Award.



Town Is Hiring

The Town of Parker is hiring for several full-time and part-time job openings posted at ParkerOnline.org/JOBS. Listings are updated regularly and applications are accepted through the website. Latest positions include - Parks Technician, Victim Advocate, Specialized Aquatics Instructor-Private Lessons, Recreation Instructor/Coach, Fitness Instructor/Trainer and more.

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Strong Enough for the Chaos

by Jamyn Wilson

*Jamyn is a mother
of four children
and Upbeat Barre
instructor at the Parker
Recreation Center*



I didn't start exercising to get my body "back." I started because I needed myself back.

After having my third baby, postpartum depression didn't arrive loudly. It crept in quietly – through exhaustion, foggy head space and a version of myself I didn't recognize. I felt distant from the mom and wife I wanted to be, or rather, I needed to be. I love my family deeply, but I didn't feel like I was fully there. I knew something had to change, but the idea of intense workouts or strict diets and routines felt overwhelming.

Then I found Upbeat Barre.

Upbeat, music-filled, low impact barre classes became a lifeline. Not because they were easy – but because they were joyful. For an hour, I could move, sweat, and breathe freely, without pressure, without kids hanging on my legs, in a room full of others, maybe more similar to me than I think. I didn't need to be perfect. I just had to show up. That small act of showing up turned into momentum. Momentum turned into confidence. And confidence slowly pulled me out of the fog.

Exercise didn't "fix" everything – but it gave me something powerful: a way to reconnect with my body and my mind.

Over time, my "why" shifted. I wasn't working out for a number on the scale or a mirror reflection. I was working out for my kids.

I exercise so I can jump on the trampoline without getting winded, or yes, peeing my pants. Or so I can scoop up my heavy toddler and place him in his high bunk bed, or so I can carry laundry baskets upon laundry baskets that never seem to end up and down the stairs, so we can play tag, go on walks, hold my baby on my hip and not think twice about it. My health journey isn't only for me, it's for them.

I train for real life – the messy, loud, beautiful chaos of motherhood.

Being strong means being present. It means saying yes more often. Yes to piggyback rides, yes to dance parties in the kitchen, yes to kickball at the park, yes to being the "fun mom" who isn't watching from the sidelines.

I've learned that health doesn't have to be extreme or all-consuming. It can look like consistent movement you actually enjoy. It can look like choosing strength over exhaustion. It can look like taking care of yourself so you can take care of others better.

Motherhood asks so much of our bodies. Choosing to move – whether it's barre, lifting, walking, yoga, stretching – isn't selfish. It's an act of love. Love for ourselves, and love for the little people who depend on us.

For 2026, I may not always feel put-together. But I feel capable. And strong enough for the chaos.

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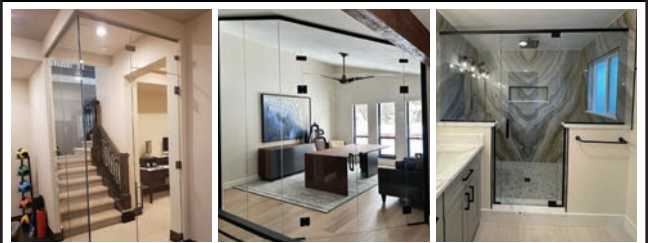
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Doctor Morrison's Prescription for a Healthier 2026

As a physician, my perspective on health goals transcends quick fixes and temporary resolutions. We are entering 2026 armed with more data and a deeper understanding of chronic disease prevention than ever before. My prescription for the coming year is rooted in the philosophy that longevity and vitality are built on consistent, proactive lifestyle choices, not just reacting to illness.



Pillar 1:

Embrace Proactive Metrics, Not Just Symptoms

Your health journey in 2026 should start with a comprehensive personal assessment. I urge you to move beyond simply tracking weight. We need to focus on **biomarkers**—measurable indicators of biological processes—that predict future health risks.

- **Know Your Core Numbers:** Beyond annual physicals, track your key metrics quarterly. This includes not just your **Blood Pressure** and **BMI/Weight**, but also your **Fasting Glucose** and **HbA1c** (a measure of average blood sugar over three months), and a detailed **Lipid Panel** (LDL, HDL, Triglycerides).
- **Prioritize Muscle Mass:** Emerging research increasingly highlights muscle as a metabolic health marker. Make a goal to engage in **resistance or strength training** at least two to three times a week. This is foundational for metabolic resilience, bone density, and fall prevention as you age.
- **Screening is Your Shield:** Be compliant with age-appropriate cancer screenings, such as **mammograms**, **colonoscopies (starting at age 45 or as recommended)**, and **lung cancer screenings** for high-risk smokers. Early detection remains our most potent weapon against these diseases.

Pillar 2:

The Lifestyle Trio: Movement, Sleep, and Nutrition

The vast majority of chronic conditions are driven by lifestyle factors. My goal for you is not perfection, but **consistency** in three critical areas:

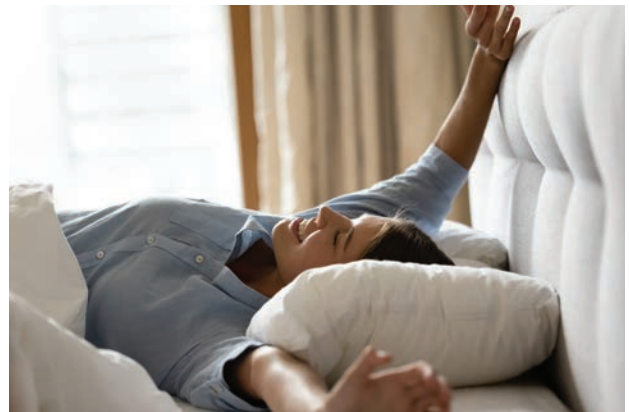
- **Functional Movement:** Aim for a balance of **Zone 2 Cardio** (low-intensity exercise where you can hold a conversation) for cardiovascular fitness and fat burning, coupled with the aforementioned **Strength Training**. Think of movement as medicine, not punishment. Incorporate "exercise snacking"—short, frequent bursts of movement—throughout your day to combat sedentary behavior.
- **Sleep Optimization:** Sleep is when the body and brain perform essential cellular repair and memory consolidation. Your goal for 2026 is to treat sleep as non-negotiable. Establish a strict, **tech-free nighttime routine**, aim for **7-9 hours of quality sleep**, and utilize sunlight timing (getting outside early) to help reset your natural **circadian rhythm**.
- **"Bioharmony" Nutrition:** Focus on a diet rich in **whole, unprocessed foods**, with an emphasis on **nutrient density** and **anti-inflammatory** components. Prioritize high-quality protein to support muscle maintenance, and feed your **gut microbiome** with diverse fibers and fermented foods. Personalize your eating window to align with your schedule and metabolic needs.



For 2026, my professional advice is to be your own chief health officer. Partner with your healthcare team, gather your data, and make small, incremental, and **sustainable** changes in these pillars. This shift from passive recipient of care to **proactive steward of your well-being** is the single most important step you can take.

Wishing all of you a healthy and happy 2026!

Dr. Steve Morrison
20 Mile Urgent Care & Family Medicine



Pillar 3:

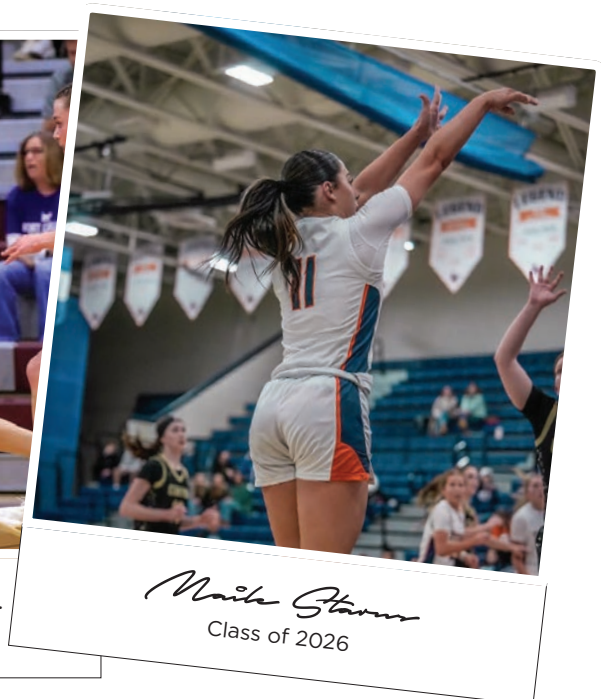
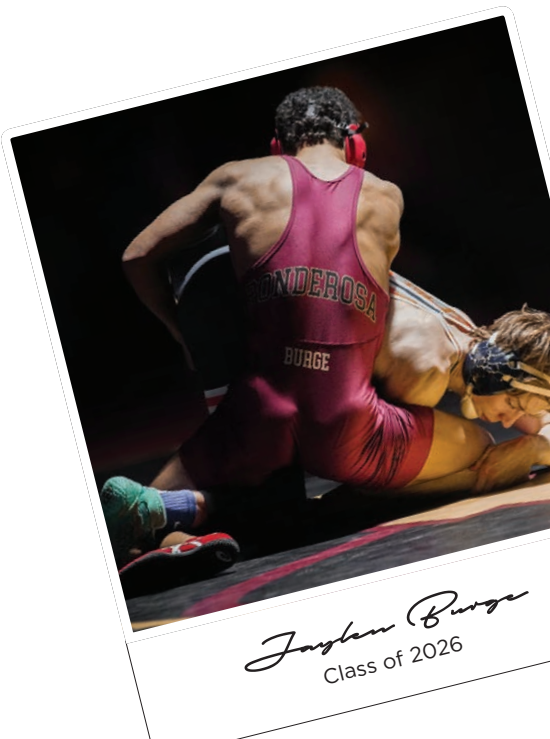
Cultivating Emotional and Nervous System Resilience

The mind-body connection is undeniable. Chronic, unmanaged stress is a systemic inflammatory trigger that increases the risk for virtually all chronic diseases.

- **Regulate Your Nervous System:** Instead of just "managing" stress, focus on **nervous system regulation**. Explore practices like **mindfulness**, **deep diaphragmatic breathwork (such as 4-7-8 breathing)**, or **somatic movement** to shift your body out of a constant "fight-or-flight" state.
- **Foster Connection:** Loneliness is a public health epidemic. Make a deliberate effort to strengthen your **social ties**—join a community, schedule regular time with loved ones, and engage in activities that bring a sense of belonging. Social well-being is a core pillar of health.

ATHLETES TO WATCH

Douglas County has some of the best athletes in the country. Many enter their senior seasons with multiple D1 offers to some of the best universities. During this school year, we will highlight some of those athletes, their accomplishments, and their promising futures.



A portrait of Lauren Thompson, a young woman with long blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue basketball jersey with "Chap" and the number 1 in white and red lettering. The background features a pattern of blue and red hexagons.

LAUREN THOMPSON

CHAPARRAL WOLVERINES
BASKETBALL

Lauren has been on varsity all four years and been named captain for her last three. She was voted First Team All-Conference the past two seasons and Honorable Mention for state those same two years. Lauren was named Academic All-State First Team her freshman, sophomore, and junior years. She is committed to play for Colorado School of Mines; she will study business engineering.

A portrait of Maile Starns, a young woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with "LEGEND" and the number 11 in orange and white lettering. The background features a pattern of blue hexagons.

MAILE STARNIS

LEGEND TITANS
BASKETBALL

Maile is a senior guard and team captain at Legend. She was a U15 EYBL Nike National runner-up, earned All-League Honorable Mention, was a scholastic showcase standout, and was named Second Team All-Select 40 on the club circuit. Maile helped lead Legend to the Final Four in 2024 and the State Championship game her junior season.

A portrait of Jaylen Burge, a young man with short dark hair, looking off to the side. He is wearing a white tank top and a chain necklace. The background features a pattern of red and gold hexagons.

JAYLEN BURGE

PONDEROSA MUSTANGS
WRESTLING

Jaylen is ranked #1 in the state in his weight class coming into his senior season. Among his many awards and tournament wins, Jaylen is also a three-time state finalist, three-time region champion, four-time letter winner, and carries a 4.75 GPA. Jaylen is currently uncommitted but is in talks with School of Mines, UNC, Michigan, Virginia Tech, Nebraska, Princeton, Cornell, Stanford, and Columbia.

THE GUIDE

THE BEST PLACES TO DINE IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

In the interest of providing the 50 best dining options in Douglas County, we must be able to personally recommend each listing. The guide is subject to change. If you have a suggestion for inclusion on the list, email us at contribute@tuellers.com.

KEY

Based on a typical dinner for one person, excluding drinks, tax or tip.

\$ Under \$20
\$\$ \$20-\$30
\$\$\$ Over \$35
(EC) Editors Choice
(N) New

ASIAN FUSION

DANCING NOODLE

A small, family owned, dine-in and take-out restaurant that serves authentic homestyle Thai food.
10841 S. Crossroads Dr., Suite 10, Parker
303-805-3880 \$\$

INDOCHINE

A local go-to for quality home-style cuisine. This Parker fixture is known for a fresh, creative menu.
19751 E Mainstreet, Parker
720-851-8559 \$\$

ITO SUSHI ASIAN BISTRO

Asian fusion restaurant known for quality ingredients and fresh fish daily.
2240 Mercantile St #100, Castle Rock
720-749-6777 \$\$ (N)

JOHN HOLLY'S

Chinese and Thai dishes that are nothing less than the culinary equivalent of an exotic adventure.
9232 Park Meadows Dr., Lone Tree
303-768-9088 \$\$



FOGO DE CHÃO

Located in the Park Meadows Mall, off a beautiful outdoor courtyard setting. This Brazilian steakhouse is more than a restaurant; it's an experience. Try the full churrasco (shoo-hah-sko) to enjoy delicious meat cuts brought right to your table! And don't forget the guarana!

JUNZ

A favorite sushi place in town with a unique blend of Japanese and French at its very best.
11211 S. Dransfeldt Rd., Parker
720-851-1005 \$\$

BAKERY/DESSERTS

LA PETITE CREPERIE

The locals favorite spot to grab made-to-order crepes. Sweet or savory, you can't go wrong. Proudly serving farm to table fresh.
19751 Mainstreet, Parker
720-638-9722 \$ (EC)

PARIS BAGUETTE

Popular Korean chain that brings expertly crafted baked goods through a warm and welcoming bakery cafe' experience that delivers joy to everyone.
18374 Cottonwood Dr., Parker
720-500-5555 \$ (N)

POULETTE BAKESHOP

New artisan bakers taking Parker by storm. Order early, they sell out every day!
19585 Hess Road, Parker
303-955-5647 \$ (N)

BARBEQUE

BIG JIMS

Don't be fooled by this being a food truck; if you like southern BBQ, this is your place.
10685 S Parker Rd, Parker \$\$\$

GQUE BBQ

Award-winning food. Try the wood-smoked ribs, brisket, pork, or garlic potatoes.
8433 Park Meadows Center Dr., Suite 143B, Lone Tree
303-729-2506 \$\$

HICKORY HOUSE

The Parker tradition. Known for their baby back ribs, but don't miss the pulled pork and barbeque chicken.
10335 S Parker Rd, Parker
303-805-9742 \$\$

OLD WEST BBQ

A hidden gem with family-friendly pricing. Don't miss out on their breakfast burritos.
107 Wolfensberger Rd., Castle Rock
303-660-6340 \$

BREW PUB

20 MILE TAP HOUSE

Best known for their burgers and wings. Make sure to catch Trivia Tuesdays.
12543 N Hwy 83, Parker
303-841-6782 \$\$

GREAT DIVIDE BREWERY & ROADHOUSE

Destination locale with an informal ambiance offering hearty comfort classics
215 Wilcox St Suite G, Castle Rock
303-955-5788 \$\$ - \$\$\$ (N)

ROCKYARD BREWING CO.

Douglas County's longest running brew pub. Steaks, burgers, pizza and soup!
880 Castleton Rd, Castle Rock
303-814-9273 \$\$

TAILGATE TAVERN & GRILL

Your neighborhood tavern for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Sports bar with live music not to miss on the weekends. **19552 E. Mainstreet, Parker** 303-841-7179 \$\$

THE LIBRARY CO. BAR & KITCHEN

Offering great food & amazing drinks in a relaxed and warm atmosphere. Clear and simple menu options. **3911 Ambrosia St., Suite 101, Castle Rock** 720-389-5986 \$\$

ITALIAN

CRANELLI'S

Comfort Italian food in a rustic, cozy, casual family-oriented format. **10047 Park Meadows Dr., Lone Tree** 303-799-3661 \$\$

DANIELLE'S SCRATCH KITCHEN

Stylish, energetic eatery offering elevated Italian fare with an emphasis on great customer service. **872 Happy Canyon Rd. Suite 100, Castle Rock** 303-524-9788 \$\$\$

PORTOFINO

Authentic Italian eatery featuring pizza, pasta, calzones and heros. The local "go-to" for fresh Italian. **10920 S Parker Rd, Parker** 303-841-9900 \$\$

SCILEPPI'S

A modern Italian restaurant focused on family recipes and premium ingredients. **210 Third St., Castle Rock** 303-688-9000 \$\$

VIA BACI

Neapolitan pizzas join modern Italian fare at this casual eatery featuring a full bar & patio. **10005 Commons St, Lone Tree** 303-790-0828 \$\$

MEXICAN

ADRIANNA'S

Intimate Mexican eatery for authentic cuisine in a relaxed ambiance. Great for parties. **7272 E Hwy 86, Franktown** 303-663-7800 \$\$

CASA MARIACHI

Unassuming local joint serving up straight-forward Mexican plates. **9771 S Parker Rd, Parker** 720-842-5105 \$\$

LA LOMA

Upscale-rustic atmosphere known for traditional Mexican meals. **6361 Promenade Pkw, Castle Rock** 303-632-9900 \$\$ (N)

LAS POTRANCES

Casual Mexican restaurant full of real Mexican culture, Mexican Food, Fresh Drinks, and Friendly Hospitality. **19600 Solar Cir, Parker** 303-840-0325 \$\$ (N)

LOS DOS POTRILLOS

Elegant family-owned eatery. There's a combo dish to please everyone. **6370 Promenade Pkwy., Castle Rock** 720-769-5474 \$\$

LOS VOLCANES

Don't miss the Carnitas! And bring your appetite for the large portions. **10471 S. Parker Rd., Parker** 303-841-0160 \$\$

NEW AMERICAN

CASTLE CAFE

Set in a former 1890s hotel. Plating hearty American fare like pan-fried chicken & burgers. **403 Wilcox St, Castle Rock** 303-814-2233 \$\$

VALERIE'S BREWHOUSE

Uniquely fun sports bar with a creative menu of brats and dogs. **971 Park St., Castle Rock** 303-660-2399 \$

CRAVE

A favorite gourmet burger joint. Imaginative menu with amazing handcrafted shakes. **3982 Limelight Ave, Castle Rock** 303-814-2829 \$\$

DOUG'S DAY DINER

American breakfast cafe where everything is made from scratch. **18595 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-476-7162 \$\$

MANNA

A casual sit-down destination with a menu that reflects Colorado's growing season. **2350 Meadows Blvd., Castle Rock** 720-455-3664 \$

PARKER GARAGE

The Parker landmark located right downtown offers a locally-sourced menu. Great service and large portions. **19420 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-389-8105 \$\$ (EC)

PEGASUS

A local favorite for breakfast or lunch. American, Greek or Mexican dishes. **313 Jerry St., Castle Rock** 303-688-6746 \$\$

RORY'S

Comfort food and baked goods at their finest. Don't see it on the menu? Ask for it! **11020 S Pikes Peak Dr., Parker** 720-708-2889 \$\$

SIERRA

High-end, wood-fired kitchen with a warm ambiance, preparing select American dishes. **10680 Cabela Dr., Lone Tree** 303-662-8800 \$\$

TRIBE AT RIVERWALK

Upscale, yet casual dining experience with a one-of-a-kind menu. Don't miss the brunch. **115 Wilcox Street, Castle Rock** 303-362-0904 \$\$\$ (N)

WEST MAIN TAPROOM

A modern and open venue that boasts thoughtful and honest cuisine. A haven for the gluten-free crowd. **18595 Mainstreet, Parker** 720-826-3689 \$\$

PIZZA

ANTONIO'S

A traditional family-style Italian pizza restaurant with a Brooklyn flair. **12947 S Parker Rd., Parker** 720-851-5300 \$

ARTISAN

Delicious Neapolitan-style pizza that makes each dish an individual work of art! And don't forget dessert. **12311 Pine Bluffs Way, Parker** 303-840-0518 \$

COLORADOUGH

A refreshing take on made-from-scratch pizza. So fresh they don't even have a freezer! **17860 Cottonwood Dr., Parker** 303-386-3333 \$\$

LIL' RICCI'S

New York pizzas & other red sauce staples in a low-key setting. Can't miss the garlic knots. **16526 Keystone Blvd, Parker** 303-220-7422 \$\$

PARRY'S

NY-style pizza, wings, & casual Italian eats, in kid-friendly quarters. **5650 Allen Way, Castle Rock** 303-814-8686 \$\$





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