

TODAY'S family

Dec 2023/Jan 2024

Cuyahoga

FREE!

The Rink at Wade Oval

New programming debuts

Why We Don't Have A Christmas Tree

A Jewish mother reflects on the season

Be a Fitness Role Model to Your Kids This New Year

Tales of The Elf on The Shelf

Humor essay

Scuba Claus Meet & Greet

**Great
Gift Ideas
for grown-ups
and kids!**

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Wild Winter Lights event
and great gift ideas!



SAINT PASCHAL BAYLON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence



Preschool Open House

Thursday, January 25, 2024 | 6:30 p.m.

Catholic Schools Week Open House

Sunday, January 28, 2024 | 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Kindergarten Sneak Peek and Gr. 1-8 Q & A

Thursday, February 1, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.

Education Fair

Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.



Governor's Award for Excellence in STEM Education 11 years in a row!



Enriching Minds...Nourishing Souls
Preschool through 8th Grade



To register, contact us at 440-442-6766 or office@saintpaschal.com
5360 Wilson Mills Road, Highland Heights, OH 44143 • www.saintpaschal.com



TODAY'S family

Lake, Geauga & Cuyahoga Counties

P.O. Box 7316, Eastlake, Ohio 44097

www.TodaysFamilyMagazine.com
info@todaysfamilymagazine.com
440-799-8882

Publisher/Advertising

Kim Miller

General Manager/Editor

Dan Miller

Writers

Deanna Adams
Ante Logarusic
Stacy Turner

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not constitute an endorsement by the Today's Family Magazine® staff or our advertisers. All contributors and advertisers assume responsibility and liability for the accuracy of statements and claims in advertisements and press releases. **All readers assume responsibility for actions or decisions they may make as a result of reading this publication.** We reserve the right to refuse any advertising. Submission of articles does not guarantee publication.

Copyright 2023,
Direct Market Publishing, LLC
All rights reserved.

Today's Family Magazine is distributed free of charge for families living in and around Cuyahoga County.



Like us on Facebook!

Photo/image credits:

Cover: Shutterstock / In Green
Page 3: Shutterstock / Dean Clarke
Page 12: Shutterstock / Oksana Kuzmina
Page 14: Shutterstock / Drazen Zigic
Page 16: Shutterstock / SeventyFour
Page 19: Shutterstock / Evgeny Atamanenko
Page 19: Shutterstock / Anneka

Happy
HOLIDAYS

inside



Scuba Claus

Page 4



Rink at Wade Oval

Page 6



No Christmas tree

Page 14



Be a fitness role model

Page 16

PLUS

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Page 7

Mommy Chronicles

Page 12

Christmas symbol origins

Page 19

Gift Ideas

Pages 21–23

Subscribe to our monthly email newsletter!



Featuring, updates, announcements, featured events, articles, and more! Visit TodaysFamilyMagazine.com and sign up today! The link is in the upper left corner of the home page.

Tales of our Elf on the Shelf

By Cheryl Maguire

“When is the elf coming to our house?”

My 2-year-old daughter asked me this question and I had no idea what she was referring to at the time.

“Elves don’t come to our house, sweetie. They make toys at Santa’s workshop.”

“Ella said her elf came to her house yesterday and then goes to back to Santa at night.”

I responded with a platitude like “that’s nice” and redirected her attention elsewhere. I thought or rather hoped that was the end of the conversation, but I soon learned I was merely at the beginning.

This was in 2007 when Elf on the Shelf was making his grand debut and I was a naïve parent who thought that the elf was cute in a colorful see-through box. But looks can be deceiving. The package should contain a large warning label stating:

“I may look cute, but I require an immense amount of time and creativity that will last for the next ten years or so. I also come with a lot of specific rules that must be followed. If you are not up for the challenge, take your hands off the box and go buy a stuffed animal that only requires some occasional washing.” Trust me, I’m not joking.

Although even if that warning was listed, let’s be honest, I would have bought it anyway because who would believe that a stuffed animal elf would be more work than caring for a hermit crab or a newborn baby??

When my kids first met their elf like any pet requiring oodles of time and money (yes money—I’ll get

to that later), you have to choose a name.

I rattled off some suggestions of boy names that my husband had negated when we were pondering baby names. I was excited that I might finally have the chance to have my choice name selected.

“How about Gavin, Reese or Aiden?”

They responded the same as their dad did.

“No way!”

After much deliberation they settled on an extremely creative one—Elfie. Yeah, I wasn’t too impressed either. I’m guessing that probably ranks in the top five for elf names.

After the naming ceremony, I was about to remove Elfie from the box only to hear my daughter scream in terror.

“NNNNOOOO, you can’t touch him mom or he will lose his magic.”

I wonder how I could create the same rule for my phone.

So Elfie sat in the box, untouched waiting to fly back to Santa to report on my children’s behaviors.

Now that is something that sounded good to me. A tattletale elf who held a lot of power in the gift giving department.

What didn’t sound so great and ended up becoming an enormous amount of work (just what I needed during the holiday season) is that the elf needs to be moved every night when I’m at my lowest functioning abilities. But not just moved, he needed to be posed in some funny or interesting manner like ziplining across the living room on a candy cane or inside a snowman made of toilet paper rolls (your welcome if

those ideas are new to you).

And then my kids wanted to buy Elfie accessories like clothes, sleeping bags and cooking utensils. By the time we were done, Elfie had nicer PJs than I did.

It was all getting a little out of hand. I felt the need to outdo myself with Elfie’s hijinks since I didn’t want my kids to be disappointed.

Every year my kids wanted Elfie to return earlier. I would roll my eyes and think of the extra work but like most mothers I did it anyway.

Just like our pet hermit crab, Elfie grew on me over the years despite the extra time commitment. I tried to focus on my kid’s excitement when they searched for him instead of how I spent hours scouring the Internet for “Elf on the Shelf Ideas.”

Last year my older kids barely uttered hello to Elfie and they didn’t dare search for him. It was then that I realized how much I’m going to miss the guy when my youngest outgrows him.

I still think he should come with



a warning label about the huge time commitment, but I would be willing to add a disclaimer saying, “Okay I’ll admit it — it’s totally worth it.”

Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter.

MR. MOVER
Celebrating Over 27 Years of Excellent Service!

Home
Office
Apartment

FREE ESTIMATES

ineedamover.com 440.951.4979

Add a SPLASH OF WONDER to your holidays @CLEAaquarium

DECEMBER 14 – 23 WITH ADVANCE REGISTRATION

SCUBA CLAUS MERRY MEET & GREETs

216.862.8803 | greaterclevelandaquarium.com

Country Lights Drive-Thru

Lake Metroparks Farmpark

Nov. 30, Dec. 1–3, 7–10 & 14–22 • 6–8:30 pm

A magical evening is in store at Lake Metroparks Farmpark! Enjoy the spectacular beauty of lighted displays from the warmth of your own vehicle during Country Lights Drive-thru.

Country Lights Drive-thru runs November 30, December 1–3, 7–10 & 14–22, with time slots at 6, 6:30, 7, 7:30, 8 and 8:30 pm. Advance tickets are required and sold online only at goto.lakemetroparks.com/country-lights-drive-thru.

Ticket cost is \$27.50 per carload (maximum of three drive-thru tickets per family or Farmpark membership). Visa, Mastercard and Discover payment only; Lake Metroparks gift cards are not accepted for ticketed events. All ticket sales are final. No refunds, exchanges or adjustments. Lake Metroparks is not responsible for lost or stolen tickets.

Wooden toy kits will be available for prepurchase for \$5 each during purchase of carload ticket. Kits will be picked up at the event and taken home to assemble. Kits do not



include paint or glue.

Tickets purchased online will be emailed to you. Tickets can be scanned directly from your mobile device at the event or you may print them out and bring them with you. Please remember to arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to your ticket time.

This event runs rain, snow or shine. In the rare occurrence of extreme weather on your event date, follow Lake Metroparks on Facebook and Twitter for an event cancellation announcement.



Scuba Claus Merry Meet & Greet at Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Add a splash of wonder to your holidays with a Scuba Claus Merry Meet & Greet! Talk to the magical man in red while he's underwater with his dive buddy elves and the sharks, stingrays and angelfish on his "nice list." Discuss cookie preferences, ask diving questions or share what you ho-ho-hope to see under your tree on select dates — Fridays, December 15 & 22, 5–7:30 pm; Saturdays, December 16 & 23, 8:30–10 am; and Sunday, December 17, 8:30–10 am. The Aquarium has two additional Thursday evening sessions (December 14 & 21, 5 – 7:30 pm) exclusively for its annual passholders.

All Scuba Claus Merry Meet & Greets include full Aquarium access, a seasonal I-Spy activity, an "I Saw Scuba Claus" sticker or pin, the unique opportunity to share "fishmas" wishes with a Christmas icon and a digital photo of the memorable experience.

"If there's someone in your circle who has been reluctant to visit St. Nick, Scuba Claus could be an alternative," says Stephanie White, general manager, noting that although the interaction is live and in real time, the novelty of a jolly old elf submerged in a 230,000-gallon shark

habitat and a wall of clear acrylic between the scuba-certified old pro and guests changes the dynamic, often putting young fans at ease.

Scuba Claus Merry Meet & Greets are limited capacity and only available with advance purchase. Tickets are \$24.95 for guests ages 13+, \$18.95 for children ages 2-12. Adult and child annual passholders ages 2+ can reserve tickets for \$5 each. Admission is always free for children younger than 2. For tickets or details, visit greaterclevelandaquarium.com/event/scuba-claus/.

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is located at 2000 Sycamore Street on the west bank of The Flats. Call 216-862-8803 or visit them online at greaterclevelandaquarium.com for more info.

Greater Cleveland Aquarium

With immersive galleries, fresh and saltwater habitats, daily interactive opportunities and a rotating array of programs, Greater Cleveland Aquarium energizes curiosity about aquatic life and the environment to inspire positive action. Save 10–20% on one-year memberships purchased November 24–December 31, 2023 in-person or online at www.greaterclevelandaquarium.com.

Our Lady of the Lake School

Could be the BEST choice for YOUR child!

Now accepting registration for kindergarten through 8th grade



- Engaged, caring environment.
- Personal attention.
- Quality curriculum that meets state standards and challenges children to excel.
- STEM programs for all grades.
- State-of-the art technology, including iPads, Chromebooks, and Clever Touch Boards.
- 1:1 devices for students, advanced safety protocols.
- Accepting EdChoice and Cleveland Scholarships

Open House

Wednesday, January 31
6:00–7:30pm



For more info email:
JMillett@OLLEuclid.org

East 200th Street • Euclid, OH 44119 • 216-481-6824
www.OLLEuclidSchool.org



Today'sFamilyMagazine.com

- Archive of all our articles
- Calendar of events
- Searchable listings of family-oriented businesses and organizations
- Family-related news
- PDF copies of previous issues
- Preschool Guide
- Private School Guide
- Dance Guide
- Lots More!



GYMNASTICS

FOR KIDS & ADULTS!

Now in Our 20th Year of Helping Gymnasts Reach their Goals!

Six-Week Sessions

- 1-hour class, 1x per week = \$140 per session
- 1.25-hour class, 1x per week = \$165 per session

Winter Session 2: January 14–February 24, 2024

Open Gyms

Now through May 17, 2024

Youth Open Gym

Fridays 11:15 am–12:30 pm

- All ages, members, & non-members are welcome!
- All participants must be escorted to enter and exit the building.
- A legal aged guardian for all participants under the age of 7 and a current account in the Parent Portal is required.

Adult Open Gym

Tuesdays 7:15–8:30 pm &
Thursdays 7:45–9:00 pm

- Led by coaches excited to help you accomplish your fitness goals.
- For beginners or advanced gymnasts/athletes.
- No long-term commitment -- drop in and pay as you go!

Birthday Parties



Jump Start is a great place to celebrate that special occasion! Our coaches will tailor the party activities to the age of the birthday child. All of the guests are sure to enjoy our gymnastic games and equipment, including our 50 feet of trampoline and

in-ground foam pit! Party guests will enjoy organized and loosely-structured instruction on the gymnastic equipment.

TWO OPTIONS!

A full hour-and-a-half of gym time

\$195 for 10 children & \$15 for each additional child

An hour of gym time and a half-hour of celebration time

\$195 for 10 children & \$20 for each additional child. JSG provides white paper plates, forks, tablecloths, napkins, and clean-up.

Private Lessons

Jump Start is offering:

- Individual private lessons
- Semi-private lessons
- Small group lessons

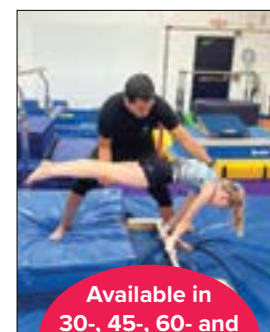
Perfect for gymnasts, cheerleaders, dancers, Gymkata ice skaters, and Gymnastic Strong conditioning training.

Saturdays 12:30–6:00 pm

Sundays 2:30–6:00 pm

Email your requested day & time to:

jsgymnastics@jsgymnastics.com



Available in
30-, 45-, 60- and
90-minute
sessions!

60-minute lesson for 1 gymnast = \$65

2-6 gymnasts = \$35 per gymnast

45-minute lesson for 1 gymnast = \$55

2-6 gymnasts = \$30 per gymnast

30-minute lesson for 1 gymnast = \$45

2-6 gymnasts = \$25 per gymnast

The Jump Start Difference

- USAG Excel & Optional Teams
- Twister Program
- Flip Stars and Jump Start Teams
- Youth & Adult Open Gyms

Call to learn more about these great programs!

Jump Start

Gymnastics

23700 Mercantile Road, Beachwood

Rear of National Biological Building

(216) 896-0295

Website: jsgymnastics.com

Email: jsgymnastics@jsgymnastics.com

The Rink at Wade Oval

New programming debuts this season

New experiences, and new food and beverage offerings highlight a full season of fun at The Rink at Wade Oval, which opens Friday, December 1. The Rink is presented by University Circle Inc. (UCI) with the help of sponsor PNC Bank.

The Rink's season runs through February 25. Admission is \$5 before 5 pm. and \$10 after 5 pm. Skaters will experience a new all-inclusive ticket package, complete with skates, a wide array of immersive activities and exclusive discounts to explore the wonders of Wade Oval's museums.

"We're transforming the Rink at Wade Oval into the neighborhood's central hub for outdoor winter entertainment," said David Robinson, UCI's director of events & engagement. "With new season-long programming, expanded food and beverage offerings and unique experiences for all ages, we invite the community to embrace the magic of winter."

Programming highlights will

include winter-time favorites such as visits from Santa, horse-drawn carriage rides and live carolers. Ugly sweater nights, stand-up comedy and other unique elements have been added to elevate The Rink at Wade Oval total experience.

"PNC has a longtime relationship with University Circle and we share their commitment to supporting the economic vitality of the communities where we live and work," said Pat Pastore, PNC regional president for Cleveland. "In addition to skating, many visit the museums and restaurants in the University Circle area, which provides a boost to the neighborhood economy."

In January, UCI will offer free admission on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Student nights will be offered for Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Institute of Art and Cleveland Institute of Music as well as neighborhood nights where residents can receive reduced admission.

In February, a familiar favorite, Pink the Rink, returns with a twist.



Programming includes visits from Santa, horse-drawn carriage rides, live carolers, ugly sweater nights, stand-up comedy and more.

In addition to pink illuminated ice, February 10 and 17 will feature fun and festive Galentine's and Valentine's Day celebrations, respectively.

The Wade Oval Information Center will host an expanded menu of café and beverage offerings including warm desserts and baked goods,

specialty winter-themed cocktails and hot cocoa bombs with expanded coffee offerings.

For hours of operation, ticket reservations, special events, private event rentals and more information on The Rink at Wade Oval, visit universitycircle.org/rink.



PROUDLY SPONSORED BY PNC

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

UNIVERSITYCIRCLE.ORG/RINK
\$5 before 5:00 PM | \$10 after 5:00 PM

TAG US IN YOUR PICTURES! #INTHECIRCLE
 /universitycircle @inthecircle @universitycircle



Great gift ideas for the animal lover on your list

If you're looking for great giving ideas for the animal lover on your list, look no further. The Cleveland Zoological Society suggests these five easy ways to give a gift that also gives back.

Visit ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday and cross a few people off your nice list!

2024 ZOO SOCIETY CALENDAR

When you give a gift of \$100 to the ZooFund, you'll also receive a 2024 calendar featuring your favorite animals. It's a great holiday gift for that special animal lover in your life. Available while supplies last.

ZOO GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Give them a gift they can use all year long. Use the code BEAR23TF online for a 15% discount.

SUPPORT A SPECIES — CAPYBARA

Hard to find a gift for someone who has everything? Donate to the Support a Species program! Learn



The Zoo's group of capybaras can all be seen on exhibit together on the second floor of The RainForest.

more how you can help and your loved one will love the gesture of supporting our mission.

SHOP AT THE ZOO GIFT SHOP

From plush to sustainably grown coffee, you can find an array of gifts and stocking stuffers for friends and family of any age. Members always receive a 15% discount!

For more information on any of these holiday ideas, visit ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday.

Wild Winter Lights

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's biggest holiday celebration

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is transforming into a winter wonderland for the fifth consecutive holiday season with the return of Wild Winter Lights. This year's event features hundreds of dazzling displays along the holiday trail through Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

Wild Winter Lights features over 1.5 million lights across holiday-themed areas including Enchanted Forest and Santa's Workshop, where guests can take photos with Santa Claus. For the first time ever, Wild Winter Lights will also feature two dynamic musical light shows featuring an enchanting 50-foot tree as well as a show on Waterfowl Lake.

Guests can again experience this year's Wild Winter Lights on foot or in their personal vehicle on select dates at the Wild Winter Lights Drive-Thru Experience.

Additional highlights of this year's event include carousel rides, costumed characters, model train displays and ice carvers. Guests can also enjoy holiday treat offerings from Jack Frost Donuts, Kernels by



Chrissie and hot chocolate as they experience the festival.

Wild Winter Lights as well as the Wild Winter Lights Drive-Thru Experience runs from 5:30–10:30 pm on select dates from now through Saturday, December 30.

Tickets are limited, and advance online reservations are strongly encouraged. Tickets purchased in advance are \$19 for members and \$22 for nonmembers, or a four-pack for \$60 for members and \$70 for nonmembers. Children under two are admitted for free. Tickets for the drive-through experience must be purchased in advance and are \$45 per car for Zoo members and \$55 per car for nonmembers. Reserve your spot at FutureForWildlife.org/lights.



Cleveland Zoological Society
CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO

GIVE A ZOO MEMBERSHIP

Buy online and save 15%

Give a gift they can enjoy all year long! Visit ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday to view membership benefits and to purchase your gift membership today! Use the code **BEAR23TF** when checking out to receive your discount!

ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday

*Valid for NEW memberships and NEW gifts only. Not valid on Senior Plus memberships or Total Experience Membership Package. Offer Expires 12/31/23. May not be applied to previously purchased memberships.

The membership program is presented by PNC

Make your spirits bright with free festive programming at the Cleveland Museum of Art

Free daily admission and more than a dozen special events throughout the holiday season

From exhibitions that can only be seen in Cleveland, world-class art and holiday music, to family activities and holiday-themed nightlife, there's something for everyone this holiday season at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA). Create warm memories with your family, friends, and loved ones with our full calendar of events, sure to make spirits bright all season long. With free daily admission, it's the ideal place for people of all ages and groups of all sizes.

Founded in 1916 "for the benefit of all the people forever," the CMA will host a performance by Grammy-winning artists, a play day full of art making for families, and awe-inspiring exhibitions about animals in Japanese art and the profound impact ancient Egypt has had on fashion designers—all free of charge.

Highlights include:

- A CMA! Play Day celebrating the lantern festival, with family-friendly crafting exercises focused on the mesmerizing beauty

of light (Saturday, December 9).

- Two concerts by Cleveland's own internationally acclaimed, Grammy-winning ensemble Apollo's Fire, bringing to life the music of the past for contemporary audiences (Sundays, December 10 and 17).
- A delightful exhibition looking at depictions of animals in Japanese art across 1,500 years (through Tuesday, December 12, 2023)
- A revelatory exhibition looking at how fashion designers have interpreted ancient Egyptian dress, funerary process, and religion (through Sunday, January 28, 2024).

Audiences eager to dig deeper into their programming can purchase tickets to two exhibitions that will only be on view in Cleveland: Degas and the Laundress: Women, Work, and Impressionism (through January 15, 2024); and China's Southern Paradise: Treasures from the Lower Yangzi Delta, featuring dozens of



treasures borrowed from China that are rarely seen in the US (through January 7, 2024).

A discounted combination ticket for China's Southern Paradise and Degas and the Laundress is available through January 7; save \$5 total off regular prices for both exhibitions.

And for anyone looking to spread the joy, the CMA offers gift memberships. You can also visit the beloved Museum Store for a variety of gifts by local artists and global fair-trade

companies, books and exhibitions catalogues, and Van Gogh-inspired merchandise—something for everyone on your list.

The CMA's current hours of operation are Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Wednesday and Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays. Updated hours will be announced as decided.

Visit www.cma.org for a full list of exhibits and performances.

CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

FALL 2024

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS STARTS IN DECEMBER

At CMSD, parents and students choose from among 30 unique high schools to find the one that fits their child's interests and passions.



216.838.3675 • ChooseCMSD.org

Three
"5-star"
High Schools

State
Championship
Athletics

College Prep
& Early
College

17 Different
Career-Tech
Programs

FREE college and trade school
Say Yes! tuition scholarships for
four-year CMSD grads!



Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience now open



Get ready, northeast Ohio's newest winter show is opening this November at the Cleveland Botanical Garden and it is going to be cool.

Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience will completely transform indoor and outdoor gardens creating an ethereal wonderland of towering ice arches, dazzling light installations, a tunnel of flowers, larger-than-life animals, more than 500 poinsettias, seasonal soundscapes and much more to create a completely immersive new world for the holiday season.

Frost will run through Sunday, December 31.

Frost invites you to explore a dozen different themes including Jingle Jungle, Solstice Stroll, and Lake

Effect Lodge while Icicle Alleys connect the entire wonderland experience. Then enter Blizzard Ballroom, a winter storm of lights and weather before moving to the Frost Portal — a tunnel of illuminated flowers that leads to the Realm of the Winter Spirit, an enchanting world glistening with ice.

Kids can test out an icicle xylophone, weave through a tunnel of mirrors and frozen arches, roast marshmallows, listen to stories and enjoy a variety of wintry activities and interactive displays.

Special nighttime hours will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday until 9 pm. Frost will incorporate classic favorites like the gingerbread house competition and evergreen trees decorated by local garden clubs.

Tickets go on sale Tuesday, October 3. Advance tickets are recommended at holdenfg.org. Walk-up tickets will be available.

Nonmembers Weekday

Adult \$23 / Children (3-12) \$16

Nonmembers Weekend

Adult \$26 / Children (3-12) \$18



OPEN HOUSE

January 28, 2024

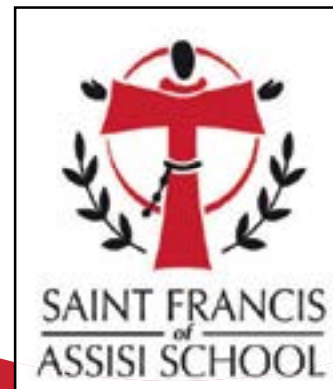
11:00 am – 1:30 pm

Personalized Tours

Preschool - Grade Eight

Our school is committed to academic excellence through the Three Pillars of St. Francis of Assisi School: Faith, Education, and Community.

- Faith-based lessons, service projects, and community outreach
- Showing compassion and respect for others
- Student-led initiatives
- Academic competitions and clubs
- Families come from 21 cities
- STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, Math) integrated throughout the curriculum



6850 Mayfield Road, Gates Mills 44040

440-442-7450

www.sfaschoolgm.org



Register for winter/spring classes at Fairmount Center for the Arts

Fairmount Center for the Arts has announced their winter/spring '24 classes for youth and adults. Classes include visual arts, theater, dance, homeschool programs, music lessons and more. Registration for classes will open on November 13. Patrons can use the code "EarlyReg" to save 5% on classes before December 4.

About Fairmount Center for the Arts

The mission of Fairmount Center for the Arts is to enrich lives through the arts. For more than 50 years, Fairmount Center for the Arts has provided a space for individual expression and the opportunity for all

to explore the arts through classes, workshops, community performances and cultural programs. For more information or to register for classes, music lessons and special events visit www.fairmountcenter.org or call 440-338-3171.

The Fairmount Center for the Arts is supported in part by the Figgie Foundation and Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receive support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically.

White Rabbit Kids Toy Store

A place where kids can play, shop, learn,
and enjoy a sense of community

By Deanna Adams

Like many of us during the pandemic, Lauren Dannemiller had some time to rethink her future. A longtime manager at a Cleveland design studio, she wanted to use her organizational skills and work experience to start a business she could call her own.

“Being a mom of two small children, I noticed that I had difficulty finding good, educational toys for them so that they could learn as well as have fun doing it,” says Dannemiller, 39. “Parents are always seeking new and different places to take their kids so I thought if I had a place where I could sell these fun, educational toys, and offer space where they can enjoy learning through play, that would be ideal.”

That idea became reality in 2022 when Dannemiller found the perfect spot for her new business. In the heart of Lake County’s cultural hub—Downtown Willoughby. “I definitely wanted a place where kids can play, shop, learn, and enjoy a sense of community. I knew I’d found the right place when I found this space.”

The store, located off Erie Street near the post office, sells products that encourage education and imagination. What Dannemiller calls “mindful

learning.” Next, she had to think about just the right name that would fit her vision. She recalled her time with the 4-H programs and her joy of raising rabbits there. She also recalled her love for the story of Alice in Wonderland that fueled her imagination. She decided her new store would be called White Rabbit Kids.

From the start, her focus is centered around the mindfulness of what she’s presenting to the children. She hand chooses all the toys, along with having a variety of play activities that keep the children entertained and yet have educational value.

A toy store with scholastic programs and activities? That’s the difference between this Willoughby toy store and the big box retailers. White Rabbit Kids has an array of toys that encourage learning and creativity, such as drawing books, word cards, craft and design kits for kids, along with a selection of fun costumes for kids to play dress-up. Dannemiller stresses that if customers are not in the market for toys, children are still welcome to stop in and participate in the activities.

Aside from weekly story times, programs include various workshops celebrating upcoming holidays and events. The store also offers yoga for kids classes. The sessions (that can include the



caregivers) run various days and times for children ages 4 and up. All programs and workshops have a small fee and require registration which you can do in-store or on the website.

And what would a store for children be without play dates and parties? “We welcome birthday parties, and craft and STEAM parties,” she says. “There are different packages for any budget and age groups.”

Dannemiller also understands, and appreciates, the importance of supporting local businesses. “I love my store and the great sense of community here. We’re going to keep our finger on the pulse of what’s going on so we always stay interesting, fun and of course, educational.”

White Rabbit Kids is located at 4041 Erie Street in Willoughby. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10 am–6 pm, Saturday 10 am–4 pm, and Sunday 10 am–2 pm.

For more information, call 440-567-9727 or see their website at www.whiterabbitkids.com.

Proudly Accepting EdChoice Scholarships!



**Excellence in
Catholic Education.**

(Pre-K - 8th)

5655 Mayfield Road

Lyndhurst

(440) 449-4244

corpuschristiacad.org



Tours Available - Register Now!

Holiday events at Maltz Museum

Friends of the Maltz Museum Chanukah Lighting

Tuesday, December 12 • 5 pm

Free to attend



Join The Friends of the Maltz Museum in celebrating the Festival of Lights. Hear the story of Chanukah told by Maltz Museum docent Michelle Stern, sing Chanukah songs led by Cantor Kathy Sebo of the Temple-Tifereth Israel, and join in lighting the menorah. Kids of all ages are welcome. There will be children's crafts and goodie bags for the kids to take home.

Maltz Museum Christmas Day Can-Can!

Monday, December 25, 11 am – 5 pm

Bring a canned good donation as museum admission.

Get into the giving spirit of the holiday season! Make a donation to explore the inspiring stories in the Museum's newest exhibition—The Girl in the Diary: Searching for Rywka from the Łódź Ghetto. See the treasures and ritual objects in The Temple-Tifereth Israel Gallery and share in the Jewish immigrant experience that makes up An American Story. The day also includes a chance to craft greeting cards to welcome new refugee and immigrant families coming to Cleveland. Canned goods will be donated to the Kosher Food Bank and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.



Register for these events at
www.maltzmuseum.org/events.

2929 Richmond Road
Beachwood

Just For Laughs!



“No, it's not time to redefine naughtiness.”

“Dad Jokes” Holiday Edition

- How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?** Nothing. It was on the house.
- What's every parent's favorite Christmas Carol?** Silent Night.
- Why can't penguins fly?** They're not tall enough to be pilots.
- Which hand is best to light the menorah with?** Neither, it's best to light it with a candle.
- Why was the broom late to the Hanukkah party?** It over-swept.



OPEN HOUSE

Meet Ruffing's exceptional faculty, talk with our Head of School, explore our beautiful and spacious classrooms, and discover for yourself why so many of your friends, neighbors, and colleagues have fallen in love with Ruffing and made it the school of choice for their children.

Admissions Open House
Saturday, January 20
12 noon to 2 PM
18 months to 8th Grade

Register today: Visit ruffingmontessori.net



Ruffing
Montessori School

3380 Fairmount Boulevard, Cleveland Heights • 216.321.7571

From counting down the days to making the days count

By Stacy Turner

Often, especially during the holiday season, we can slip into the pitfall of viewing time as something to be counted down, like kids counting down the days until Santa arrives. As a child I remember the anticipation as each day dawned closer to “the big day.” Now that my kids are older, I’m feeling like the opposite is true. These days, it feels more like time shrinks in opposition to the many priorities and activities necessary to squeeze into hectic days. And in the back of my mind, I wonder how many more holidays we’ll spend together like this, as our kids begin to find their places in the world. With that mindset, it’s easy to miss out on what’s happening in the present moment.

As parents, it’s common to record all the “firsts” of our growing children, but not so common to make note of the “lasts.” We may not realize it will be the last time they hold our hand while walking to the park, or that when they start reading, they no longer ask us to share a bedtime story. It can be difficult to know when that last time will be THE last time.

In ordinary times, but especially during the busy holiday season, it’s easy to focus on getting ready for the next thing as we count down our days. This year, my goal is to try and make the days count. My goal is to be present and appreciate what’s right



It is difficult to know when it will be THE last time you engage in a particular activity with your child — like playing a game. So make each time count!

in front of me.

When my girls were tiny, many seasoned parents shared that although the days of having small children can seem endless and exhausting, those years will fly by before we know it. And as the days, weeks, months, and years began flying by, I’m learning firsthand what those well-meaning parents meant. And I realize that we tend to remember the big things, like the first step, first tooth, and first haircut. But what happens to all the other smaller moments, as we move forward to the next big thing?

In looking back in my phone’s camera roll, I see snapshots of some of those moments of this soon-to-be-ending year. Big events and small trips meld together with unfiltered shots of everyday

life, scattered over the last 12 months. Without the presence of those images, some of those details would surely be forgotten. I wonder how much of our lives have passed by, unnoticed and unphotographed as we moved ahead?

From a hands-on mom of little ones to the mom of young adults, each successive year my kids have needed a bit less of my help and a bit more space to grow. This, I think, is how our role as parents is meant to be. We slowly work ourselves out of a job, or at least transition into more remote work as our children learn to stretch their wings. It’s a bitter-sweet transition to watch, let alone participate in.

In the meantime, though, I’m trying to enjoy the time we still have together. I’m making the effort to be more present in these moments, and I encourage you to do the same. Because I’m usually better with words, I’ll be keeping track of special memories throughout the coming year on slips of paper. That compliment I received, the hard-earned grade on a test, a silly “dad” joke that made us groan. Tickets from movies and concerts, a seashell from the day at the beach. All of these artifacts will be collected in a jar we’ll make a point to open and enjoy at this time next year.

And while there’s no way to preserve every minute, it’s my hope that with this intention, we’ll remember and appreciate more of those small moments that made up another wonderful year.

AN ENVIRONMENT FOR ACTIVE AND ENGAGING LEARNING.



Visit US! Families of boys entering Junior Kindergarten through grade 12 are invited to schedule a personal tour or attend an upcoming event.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

www.us.edu



Why it's important for young children to get excited about reading

Give the gift of reading this holiday season

Giving a book as a gift is always a good choice to help young readers get excited about reading. There are many hidden benefits to introducing books at an early age and fostering a love of reading throughout their childhood. Dr. Elizabeth Adams, co-founder and chief experience officer of Ello, (the first AI reading coach that works with real books to support readers with evidence-based instruction and motivation) shares some key reasons why giving children books as holiday gifts and encouraging a love for reading at a young age is important:

Reading supports early literacy.

Reading for pleasure is at its lowest among children today. Fourteen percent of students say they read for fun daily, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report recently published, down 3 percentage points from 2020 and 13 since 2012. The report shows 31 percent of students never or hardly ever read for fun. Reading for pleasure has many other benefits and can lead to better writing, math and vocabulary skills. As adults, we can make reading more enjoyable for children by selecting books based on their personal interests and hobbies, rather than our own. For example, rather than pushing a book we liked as a child, we should be finding age-appropriate books that match subjects they are excited about.

Reading expands a child's imagination. It helps them develop empathy by reading stories about others. Reading books about

fiction and history has never been more important. Research suggests that fictional books may effectively be empathy-building tools, offering us the closest we can get to first-hand knowledge of someone else's experience. In other words, you're not just giving a book, you're giving your kids access to knowledge and helping them with their storytelling skills. Not only can books entertain children but can also help them grow into a better person or teach a valuable lesson.

Improves mental health. Children who read for pleasure 12 hours per week perform better on cognitive tests and have better mental health, according to a recently published study in Psychological Medicine. Reading also helps reduce stress and relaxes your body and mind.

Explore new ways to enjoy reading. Today a child can experience reading in a variety of creative ways such as via a Kindle and various reading apps. Also, comic books and picture books can offer many benefits to young readers through imagery and can help build reader confidence. You can also help kids expand their reading by visiting the library regularly, joining a book club for kids and making it a social activity or by creating a book nook in your home. Giving a book as a present also fits perfectly into the popular gift-giving strategy for kids called Want, Need, Wear, Read. The idea is that you only give four gifts to each child: a gift they want, something they need, an item to wear, and something to read.

TODAY'S FAMILY BOOK CLUB

Lola and the Troll

Lola enjoys her days at school. She has so much fun reading, writing, learning, and playing at recess with her imaginary dog, Tank. This changes when a fellow classmate dressed as a troll decides to become one and bullies all who pass his house. On her way to school, Lola becomes the troll's next target. Mean comments get hurled at Lola and she begins to feel sad and change her appearance. Her mother notices and brings her to her favorite place, a local bookstore called The Bee's Sneeze. This visit is magical and encouraging for Lola as she feels inspired to confront the troll with kindness and empathy. This changes everything! The troll stops bullying and after a sincere apology, becomes her friend.

By Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, New York Times bestselling author and Cleveland Connie Schultz. Illustrations by Sandy Rodríguez.



FAIRMOUNT

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



Fairmount Early Childhood Center is a private, district-sponsored learning center within the Beachwood City Schools.

• Classes For 3- and 4-Year-Olds Available • Young 5's Class

for students turning 5 years old by December 31, 2024.

Learn how Fairmount is preparing students for the kindergarten and Ohio third-grade reading guarantee.



Fairmount Early Childhood Center is open to residents and nonresidents of Beachwood.



Email Karen Leeds for more info • KML@beachwoodschoools.org

216.464.2600

Fairmount Early Childhood Center • 24601 Fairmount Boulevard
www.beachwoodschoools.org/fairmount.aspx



En Pointe Danse

Celebrating 24 Years!

Gift cards available in any denomination.

**Register Now
For Winter/
Spring Classes!**

January 2–
June 1, 2024

**Call for more
information:
440-247-5747**



Offering classes in Ballet, Tap, Creative Movement, and Modern Dance for ages 3 through adult.

516 E. Washington Street, Chagrin Falls • In The Gallery

440-247-5747

www.enpointedanse.com

Why we don't have a Christmas tree

By Pam Moore

I am Jewish. My husband was raised Presbyterian, considers himself atheist, and until he met me, had never known a Jewish person. So it was with some trepidation and a few drinks that I told him if he was serious about me, he would have to let me raise our possible children Jewish. Never mind that I wasn't positive I wanted kids and we'd known each other all of two weeks. I was sure of two things: Dan was awesome and I had no time to date a guy I'd never marry.

He asked me what having Jewish children would look like. I wasn't sure. Eleven years and two children later, I'm still winging it. But I had to answer the question, so I started with the one thing I was sure of.

We would not have a Christmas tree.

It's hard for me to articulate what it means to be a Jew. It's much easier to say what being a Jew is not. For me, being Jewish is not celebrating Christmas. As a kid, being Jewish at Christmas time meant feeling the pain of being different.

In the second grade, my well-meaning teacher handed my homework back with a sticker, a symbol of a job well done. I don't remember what the sticker was, only that it was different than the red and green Christmas stickers that adorned my friends' papers. I wanted a candy cane, an elf, or a



Santa hat, too. My sticker was no doubt cute, but to me, it was an ugly stamp of my otherness.

I used to dread holiday season small talk. I remember being 10 years old, lying on my dentist's mustard yellow chair for a cleaning, sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Inevitably, my friendly dentist asked the dreaded question, "What are you asking Santa for this year?" When he removed his instruments from my mouth, I replied, "Nothing." I did not care to elaborate, and my tone conveyed that. Above his mask, his eyes betrayed shock. After an awkward pause, my mom looked up from her magazine and explained with an apologetic smile, "We're Jewish."

In high school I attended an all-girls Quaker prep school. Although none of the students were Quaker, practically none were Jewish, either.

Aside from being the only one in my class to miss school on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, my Jewishness was a non-issue. Until the school replaced the time-honored Christmas Vespers pageant with the politically correct Lumina celebration. I was thrilled. I wouldn't have to sing about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ anymore. No longer would I feign excitement over the tradition I secretly loathed. I never told my classmates I was invited to be one of few student representatives on the Lumina advisory committee. When talk at the lunch table turned to the tragic loss of the beloved ritual, I kept my mouth shut. I don't blame 17 year-old me for prioritizing fitting in over defending my identity.

As a kid, I wanted a Christmas tree, badly. I was thrilled when a friend's family invited me to help decorate their tree. I would daydream about what kind of tree I'd get if I were Christian (real, not fake) and how I'd decorate it (with rainbow lights, no tinsel). Even now, when we go to my in-laws for Christmas, I selfishly wish their tree were more festive.

Now that I'm an adult, I can have a tree. I can have any kind of tree I want. I can dress it up as fancy as a prom queen if I feel like it. But like I tell myself before taking a bite of my daughter's leftover chicken nuggets, "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should." Because for me, the



We provide choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home.

AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE NETWORK:
The starting point for community services and support.

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM:
Information, community support, respite, counseling and other services for family caregivers.

For more information, call 216.621.0303 or 800.626.7277
Visit www.areaagingsolutions.org

Serving Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake,
Lorain and Medina counties.



Western Reserve

Area Agency on Aging

1700 E. 13th Street, Suite 114
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

presence, or absence, of a Christmas tree in my living room is about much more than home décor. It's a public declaration of who I am and what matters to me.

I am a Jew. I am the great-granddaughter of Jews who fled Pogroms in Eastern Europe and came to this country with nothing, hoping for a better life.

As a kid, I have fond memories of sneaking out of services with my brother and my friends for epic games of hide-and-seek spanning our entire synagogue and its grounds. I remember breaking the Yom Kippur fast at my grandmother's house, the dining room table covered with food; a heaping bowl of warm, fresh bagels alongside platters of lox and cream cheese, my great-aunt's noodle kugel with corn flakes cereal topping, and my mother's chopped liver. I remember three generations of grandparents, great-aunts, great uncles, and cousins, taking turns reading the Haggadah at the Passover Seder, while my brother

and I joked in whispers at the kids' table. I remember getting together with Jewish family friends who were as much family as blood relatives, every Christmas Eve for Chinese food and ice cream sundaes. I remember going on a teen tour to Israel and feeling totally at home with 40 teenagers I'd never met before, an ocean away from my parents.

I also remember the deep longing I felt for a Christmas tree and a stocking full of Lip Smackers and scrunchies every December.

But if I had the chance, I wouldn't trade that longing for the fulfillment of my childhood wishes, because the sum of all these experiences have shaped my values. I believe it's more important to be who I am than to be like everyone else, even when it's uncomfortable. If I can pass that belief on to my daughters, I will have given them a greater gift than anything I could put under a Christmas tree.

Pam Moore is an award-winning freelance writer, intuitive eating coach, and host of the Real Fit podcast.



Ride In Style!

With Cleveland's award-winning choice for luxury transportation



Book Now!

- ◆ Holiday Light Tours
- ◆ Weddings
- ◆ Bachelor Parties
- ◆ Winery Tours
- ◆ Bar Crawls
- ◆ Airport Service
- ◆ Sporting Events
- ◆ Bachelorette Parties
- ◆ Proms / Dances
- ◆ Corporate



(440) 749-6090

lakeerielimo.com

'tis the season to



GoodwillGoodSkills.org    



CHARDON | WILLOWICK | PAINESVILLE | MAYFIELD HEIGHTS | UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

How to be a fitness role model to your children



By Sandi Schwartz

As we all know, being a parent is the most important job in the world. Our children look up to us for guidance on everything in life, even if we don't realize it. One way that you can be a positive role model to your kids is in the area of fitness. Staying fit is critical to our health and well-being—including our mental health and happiness. We can help shape our children's views on exer-

cise by modeling healthy behavior and making fitness a fun part of our family's daily routine. And no better time to start than for the new year!

Why exercise is important for managing stress and anxiety

Experts have found a clear link between exercise and stress reduction. Harvard scientists concluded that "Regular aerobic exercise has a unique capacity to exhilarate and relax, to provide stimulation and

calm, to counter depression and dissipate stress." According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, some studies show that consistent exercise can be just as effective as medication for some people to reduce symptoms of anxiety. Other research shows that physically active people have lower rates of anxiety than those who do not exercise. In one study, researchers found that those who got regular vigorous exercise were 25 percent less likely to develop depression or an anxiety disorder over the next five years.

Here are several ways in which exercise helps reduce stress and anxiety:

Produces endorphins. When we exercise, our body releases feel-good neurotransmitters called endorphins. These chemicals in our brain act as natural painkillers, making us feel better and less stressed. Endorphins are responsible for the natural high we get from a hard workout.

Reduces stress hormones. Exercise reduces the level of stress hormones in our body like adrenaline

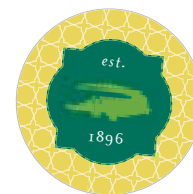
and cortisol, helping us feel calmer.

Minimizes fatigue. Exercise improves blood flow and our body's ability to use oxygen efficiently. These changes in our brain then reduce fatigue and improve alertness, concentration, and cognitive function. This helps us when we are stressed out because we are depleted and need to return to a more balanced level of energy. When we are stressed, many nerves in our brain and throughout our body are impacted. Scientists conclude, therefore, that if our body feels better, then our mind will also feel better.

Improves self-esteem. Behavioral factors also contribute to the emotional benefits of exercise. When we gain strength and begin to see a difference in our body, we feel better about ourselves and become happier and more confident. Feeling better about ourselves shifts our focus to positive thoughts and away from fear and anxiety.

Provides a fun distraction. One of the best parts about exercise is that it gives us a time to take a fun break

Start small. Dream big.



#1 ALL-GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL IN OHIO!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR
18 months-PreK Open House
Saturday, January 6, 9:00-11:00 am

RSVP today! Call 216.464.0946 or visit
LaurelSchool.org/OpenHouse



LAUREL
LaurelSchool.org

Families choose our Early Childhood program because it fosters a child's sense of wonder, encourages curiosity and inspires a desire to learn. Spend your Saturday morning with us to understand the benefits of a Laurel education for your young daughter or son.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

SHAKER HEIGHTS, OHIO | est. 1896

from the stresses in our daily lives. Whether you are jogging to your favorite upbeat music or socializing with friends on the tennis court, your mind is distracted and you can just have a good time.

Makes sleeping easier. According to Mayo Clinic, exercise can also improve how we sleep. This is great news for those suffering from insomnia due to stress and anxiety.

Encourages mindfulness. A great bonus of exercise is that it provides the perfect opportunity to enjoy a mindful moment. While we work out, we can fully engage in the present moment instead of letting our mind run wild with worries. To get the best result, experts suggest doing rhythmic activities that engage the whole body like running, walking, swimming, dancing, rowing, or climbing. Helpguide.org suggests that “as you move, instead of continuing to focus on your thoughts, focus on the sensations in your limbs and how your breathing complements your movement. If your mind wanders to other thoughts, gently return to focusing on your breathing and movement. If walking or running, for example, focus on each step—the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the rhythm of your breath while moving, and the feeling of the wind against your face.”

How to be a good fitness role model

It’s so important that we play actively with our kids from a young age and that we consistently exercise in front of them (and sometimes with them) to show them how important physical fitness is. From going on family bike rides to coaching one of their sports teams, there are so many helpful ways for you to be a fitness role model to your children throughout their lives. Here are some more ideas to get you moving:

Go for a hike outdoors. Not only are walks and hikes wonderful, safe exercise that the entire family can enjoy, they are also an opportunity to connect to the beauty of nature to bring you a sense of calm. Try adding some fun to your family hikes by turning them into a race or scavenger hunt, and by venturing to new parks and trails in your area and while on vacation.

Take a yoga class together. Yoga offers so many incredible benefits to both you and your children including balance, strength training, time for inner focus, and an opportunity to connect with our bodies in ways we aren’t used to. Sign up for a yoga class that you can take together or pop in a video or load an app so you can do some yoga together in your living room, or better, yet in your backyard.

Make exercise a priority even in bad weather. Show your kids that you still go on your morning run even if it’s not sunny outside. On days when it’s cold or rainy, set up your fitness routine indoors and get your kids involved. Put on a workout video and have them join in. There are also lots of fun ways to use your indoor space to get everyone moving. Some of the easiest exercises to perform indoors include jumping rope and calisthenics like push-ups, sit-ups, and jumping jacks. Or put on some peppy music and play freeze dance or have a hula hoop contest. Before you know it, you will all be working up a sweat!

Give sports-related gifts. Another way to make fitness a priority in your home is to choose gifts like workout clothes, sports equipment, and how to books about sports during birthday and holiday time. You can also choose some tickets for a sporting event and make it a fun family outing to cheer on your team together.

Warm up with the arts this winter!

Registration is OPEN NOW

Art | Dance | Fitness | Music | Theatre



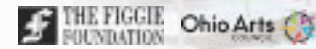
Winter Session begins January 8!

Classes & workshops for all ages and skill levels.

Register by December 4 to save 5%!
Use code “EarlyReg” at checkout.



Book today at FairmountCenter.org or call (440) 338-3171.



Great Gift Idea!

Available at the box office in any value above \$10.

Atlas Cinemas gift cards can be used for ticket purchases, concession purchases, and can be reused and reloaded to any value after activation. Bulk orders are also available.

Call for details!



www.AtlasCinemas.net

- Great Lakes Stadium 16, Mentor • (440) 974-4372
- Diamond Center 16, Mentor • (440) 352-8846
- Eastgate 10, Mayfield Heights • (440) 460-0399
- Lakeshore 7, Euclid • (216) 731-1701
- Atlas Cinemas at Shaker Square • (216) 331-6825

Call today to schedule your own private screening. Please allow a minimum of 24-48 hours to schedule.



Help us feed our community’s hungry children.

One dollar can help provide four nutritious meals.



Donate today at GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org

Candy Land Gone to the Birds exhibit runs through January 1

Join in for a whimsical holiday adventure: Candy Land Gone to the Birds presented by Dollar Bank at Penitentiary Glen Reservation! Relive your childhood memories with a bird-themed twist on the popular board game. Experience the magic as you become the playing piece, moving from space to space on a life-sized game board and explore enchanting displays of familiar feathered friends in colorful habitats at every turn.

Enter the make-believe Wild Bird Clinic on your adventure and lend a helping hand to wildlife. As you near the end of your journey, climb up the tower for a bird's-eye view of the game board and spot some amazing wildlife. Then slide down the spiral slide and play all over again!

While at Penitentiary Glen Reservation, discover a world of nature-themed adventure at the Nature Center. Enjoy scavenger hunts, crafts, special activities, wildlife programs on weekends, and more. Plus, receive a keepsake holiday key.

Wild Weekends feature an outdoor campfire with s'mores from noon to 3 pm on Saturdays (Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30). During the campfires, staff from the Lake Metroparks Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center will present live animals at 1, 2 and 3 pm near the shelter. On Sundays (Dec. 3, 10 and 17), meet-the-keeper chats will be held in the Wildlife Center Yard at 1, 2 and 3 pm.

Candy Land Gone to the Birds! is open 10 am–5



pm daily through January 1. The exhibit will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Admission is free for all ages. Registration is not required. Additional information can be found at goto.lakemetroparks.com/candyland.

Other activities at Penitentiary Glen Reservation

Snowshoe rentals are available for the whole family, weather permitting. Hike more than eight miles of scenic trails, go birding or interact with nature in Nature Play, a children's outdoor play space. Inside the Nature Center, discover interactive exhibits including Life Cycle Secrets and Come and Play plus watch for birds, squirrels and more through the Window on Wildlife.

Penitentiary Glen Reservation is located at 8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd. in Kirtland. For park info, visit goto.lakemetroparks.com/penitentiary-glen.

Cleveland Orchestra Family Concert & Music Explorers Series

The Music Explorers Series is an ideal way for children and families to learn about the orchestra's instruments, one by one. Programs feature Cleveland Orchestra musicians, special guests, and an engaging host who encourages audiences to sing, clap, and move to the music. Each half-hour adventure features brief musical selections and instrument demonstrations created to inspire and entertain young children, ages 3 to 6.

The Christmas Brass Quintet will be presented on December 15 and 16, with Cleveland Orchestra brass musicians in the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Concert Hall.

Visit clevelandorchestra.com for dates for all the shows in each series.

The Family Concert Series each have a different theme with performances designed to engage and entertain children ages 7 and up, and all last under an hour.

Next up in the Family Concert series is "Around the World with The Cleveland Orchestra," on Sunday, March 3, 2024, at 2:00 pm. Cleveland is home to more than 120 ethnic groups, each bringing their own traditions, religions, art, food, and, of course, music. This concert celebrates that rich cultural diversity through music—a language that unites us all.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE SEASON IN CLEVELAND!

BROWSE HIGH SCHOOLS IN CLEVELAND



CMSD PORTAL OPENS ON DECEMBER 4, 2023

- WORK WITH A SCHOOL CHOICE NAVIGATOR
- EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS ON MYCLESCHOOL.ORG
- DECIDE YOUR TOP CHOICES
- APPLY TO YOUR BEST-FIT SCHOOL

PORTAL CLOSES ON JANUARY 12, 2024



Cleveland Transformation Alliance
Quality Schools for All Children

INFO@CLEVELANDTA.ORG
 (216) 592-2303

MYCLESCHOOL.ORG



The origin and significance of beloved Christmas symbols

By Jan Pierce

Not too long after leaves begin to turn color in the fall, our thoughts turn to the holidays. We love our community and family holiday traditions and enjoy the special events that busy up our schedules this time of year.

One of the ways we get into the spirit of Christmas is enjoying the many symbols that grace our decorations during the Christmas season. Have you ever wondered about the origins of some of these familiar symbols and shapes?

Many of our current Christmas traditions and symbols were borrowed over time from pre-Christian celebrations. They originated most often in Europe and were associated with feasts, harvest celebrations and beliefs related to overcoming evil in many forms.

Christmas tree

Long before the birth of Jesus, evergreen trees were used as an anti-

dote to evil spirits and disease. Our modern day Christmas tree tradition began in Germany where families constructed wooden pyramids and decorated them with branches of evergreen. Martin Luther is credited with introducing the decoration of these trees using candles which represented stars in winter. In 1841 Prince Albert and Queen Victoria decorated the first true Christmas tree using candles, gingerbread, sweets and fruits.

Candy canes

Christmas candy canes also originated in Germany. According to folklore, a minister provided white straight sticks of sugar to children to enable them to sit through the service quietly. Later the sticks were made into a J shape to represent a shepherd's crook. In the 1900s the red stripes were added: white for purity and red for the blood of Jesus. Peppermint was said to represent the hyssop which was used in ancient times for purification.



Holly

Holly is another plant thought in ancient times to protect against all kinds of evil, including destructive storms. Many stories have been told about this shiny green plant with thorny leaves and bright, red berries. For example, some believe a sprig of holly tied to the bedpost will bring sweet dreams. In Rome the plant was used to honor Saturn during the Saturnalia Festival. Later, Christians used it to protect against persecution and finally it has become a beautiful part of our Christmas celebrations.

Bells

Bells have been used throughout history to communicate important messages to the people. They call people to gather for pronouncements, worship services and celebrations of all kinds. On a broader level they invite mankind to worship God.

Christmas star

The familiar shape of the Christmas star represents the star of Bethlehem which guided the three kings (wise men) to find the baby Jesus. It

Continued on page 20



"Now that we have experienced your hospice care, we wish we would have called sooner."

We frequently hear this from our family caregivers.

Our purpose is to improve the quality of life for your loved one.

Our dedicated staff will work with you to make sure each moment is filled with comfort and care.

Your family. Our purpose. **Together.**



800.707.8922 | hospicewr.org





Stay Active This Winter at LNSP East!

LIL KICKERS



Winter Session: December 4 – March 2

- Class days/times will be Monday 5 pm, Tuesday & Thursday 5 pm, 6 pm, and Saturday 9 am, 10 am and 11 am.
- Innovative child development program based on soccer.
- Ages 18 months – 7 years old.
- Classes run 50 minutes per session, once a week.
- 10- to 11-week session; class fee of \$17/week

Contact: Paul Liotta at pliotta@LNSPORTSPARK.COM

LIL SLUGGERS



Winter Session: December 4 – March 2

- Introduction to baseball for kids 2–5 years old.
- Class days/times will be Monday 5 pm and Saturday 9 am, 10am, and 11am
- Nationally franchised child development program.
- 10-week session | \$17/week

Contact: Noah Koscho at nkoscho@LNSPORTSPARK.COM

BATTING CAGES



M–F 3:30–9 pm; Sat/Sun 9 am–9 pm

- State-of-the-art batting cages available for personal or party use.
- \$1.50 per token; \$10 for 7; \$20 for 15
- Batting cages may be closed during private parties. Call for availability.

COURT & FIELD RENTALS



Soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, baseball, more!

Contact: Ed Strauss at EStrauss@LNSPORTSPARK.COM

BIRTHDAY PARTIES



Custom design your own birthday party package!

- Includes your choice of sports activities, plus exclusive use of our party room.
- Sports include soccer, baseball, batting cages, basketball, volleyball and much more!

Contact Marilyn for pricing options and more info.

marilyn@LNSPORTSPARK.COM or 440-602-4000 ext. 223

INDOOR LINKS GOLF



- Features seven full-swing golf simulators with 40+ world-famous courses.
- Indoor two-person golf leagues.

Contact: Contact Bob Dame at ext. 229 or email BDame@LNSPORTSPARK.COM



38630 Jet Center Dr., Willoughby
North of Rt. 2 off Lost Nation Road
440-602-4000
www.LostNationSports.com

Christmas symbols Continued from page 19

represents fulfillment and hope.

Angel

The term angel literally means messenger. Thus, the angel symbol represents the angel who spoke words of encouragement to Mary when she found herself with child and to Joseph to tell him the child was of God. It also represents the host of angels proclaiming Jesus's birth. Contrary to popular thought, biblical angels are represented as strong, masculine figures with great power and authority.

Nativity scene

The Christmas creche (nativity scene) is a much-loved symbol of the Christmas season. Tradition tells us that St. Francis of Assisi created the first crèche in 1223 when he created a living nativity scene in a cave near the town of Greccio, Italy. Using a live ox and donkey he depicted the birth of Christ during a Christmas Eve Mass. Such scenes depicting stories from the Bible were popular during those times as regular Catholic services were conducted only in Latin.

Today the crèche is a depiction of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus who was born in a manger among the animals as there was no room for the couple in local inns.

Wreaths

Wreaths are another beautiful Christmas tradition. Lovely, green Christmas wreaths are circular, representing a never-ending symbol of love and rebirth. At Christmas time it symbolizes generosity and gathering together with loved ones.

Stockings

The tradition of hanging stockings

comes from a Dutch legend. A poor man had three daughters and not enough money to provide them wedding dowries. St. Nicholas dropped a bag of coins down the man's chimney and some fell into stockings drying by the fire. The man's worries were over and now we hang stockings on our mantels hoping for small gifts.

Christmas music

The Christmas season wouldn't be complete without all the various kinds of music written just for this time of year. Music associated with Christmas has its earliest origins in 4th century Rome where Latin hymns were written. These were most likely in the form of chants. In the 1200s, St. Francis of Assisi was responsible for introducing Christmas songs in regional native languages. The first Christmas carols appeared in English in 1426 when a chaplain named John Awdlay listed 25 Caroles of Cristemas which were most likely sung by "wassailers" as they traveled house to house singing and toasting good health to the inhabitants.

In the 1500s we find carols still sung today including The Twelve Days of Christmas, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen and O Christmas Tree.

Classical Christmas music is also a special treasure of the holiday season. Major classical works include Bach's Christmas Oratorio written in 1734, Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker written in 1892 and Handel's Messiah, written in 1741. The Messiah was originally intended for performance at Easter, but is now a beloved Christmas offering.

May the symbols of Christmas bring great joy to you and yours this holiday season.



Tradition tells us that St. Francis of Assisi created the first crèche in 1223 when he created a living nativity scene in a cave near the town of Greccio, Italy.

Editor's note: Sorry, but this is not an actual photo of that event.

TOY & GIFT Ideas



KAI: The Artificial Intelligence Robot from Thames & Kosmos

Age 10+

Explore the future of advanced computing technology with KAI — short for Kosmos Artificial Intelligence! Build and program an intelligent, six-legged, app-enabled robot that uses machine learning to react to the gestures and sounds that you make. Using the app and your smart device's camera and microphone, record physical gestures and sounds, assigning them to KAI's five functions: walk forward and backward, turn left and right, and stop. Mechanically, KAI is a fascinating robot that can walk on six legs and rotate its upper body around 360 degrees, allowing it to turn toward any direction on the spot. Composed of 25 red LEDs, its face display can be programmed via the app to show different expressions and scrolling messages.



Plus-Plus Puzzle by Number Map of the United States

Age 7+

Follow the enclosed pattern by placing each color on its matching number to create all 50 states.

Flip the poster over to discover over 700 interesting state facts—flags, mottos, state capitals, and more. Then, display your map on the wall at home or in the classroom - no glue or ironing required!

Wild Republic Snugglelufs Alpaca

Age 0+

Snugglelufs are meant to be snuggled and loved. These soft and whimsical stuffed animals are oversized and super fun with long fluffy hair.



They are specifically designed to provide comfort and ease anxiety. With their added weight, extra softness, and optimal cuddling size, they are a stress-relieving companion for all ages. Comes in a variety of animals to choose from.



Scentco

Washable Smarkers 14 Pack

14 colorful scented markers, each with their own yummy scent. Each Smarker® emits its scent from the scented ink core. You will receive one each of the 14 scents.



My Recordable Storytime

www.sourcebooks.com

Featuring 40 recordable pages, these books allow readers to express the love they have for the little one in their life through storytelling. Especially perfect for long-distance grandparents, this innovative read-aloud format creates a heartfelt keepsake that families will cherish forever.

Titles include:

- WELCOME LITTLE ONE
- MIRACLE ON 34th STREET
- SWEET DREAMS, NIGHT NIGHT
- I LOVE YOU SO



GUND

The oldest manufacturer of soft toys in America, GUND was one of the first ever companies to produce a teddy bear in the early 1900s.

Sustainably Soft Dolls

Age 0+

Introduce baby's first friend with our first sustainable collection of baby dolls. Each 12" doll is sourced from 100% recycled materials, crafted with luxe, ultra-soft recycled plush, fill & sustainable packaging. Choose from six dolls, each with embroidered facial details, different hair and skin tones, encouraging inclusive, safe & eco-friendly play. Machine washable.

Kian Spaniel

Age 1+

Kian is a cute & cuddly spaniel puppy ready to become your best friend. This 10" plush pup will melt in your arms with its shaggy copper-colored fur and long, floppy ears! The pup poses in an adorable upright sitting position that's perfect for display! Surface washable.



Kids Preferred Disney "We Hold Hands" 6 Plush Doll Set

Age 0+

This set features not one or two but six of the most iconic and beloved Disney characters — Mickey, Minnie, Daisy, Donald, Pluto and Goofy! All six soft plush characters can hold hands with themselves and each other, thanks to the unique hook-and-loop fasteners on each doll's palm — a feature you will not find on any other Mickey and Friends Plush Sets!



Geomag Glow 60-Piece Set

Age 3+

Watch your Geomag models light up at night thanks to the GLOW effect of natural materials that capture and return the sunlight. Set #338. More sets available!

- Infinite 2d/3d constructions
- Magnetic rods, steel spheres and interlocking panel



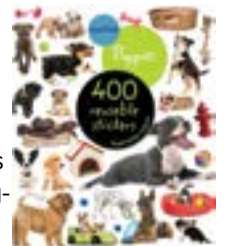
Pix Brix Farmland Set

Age 6+

Blue skies and green pastures on the old Pix Brix Farm. Fill your Farm with playful chickens, ducks, sheep, horses and many other pixelated farm friends. 1,844 pcs. Build 15 animals and Farmland Playscene.

Eyelike Stickers

Each book contains 400 full-color stickers that are amazingly detailed and lifelike in quality



and are designed to be stuck on, peeled off, and stuck on again without tearing or losing their "stick." The books' inside covers are glossy illustrated backgrounds on which kids can create lively and original sticker scenes—and then change them whenever they like.

The sticker book series that kids love: Dinosaurs, Kittens, Puppies, Trains, Animals, Space, and many, many more titles available.



Grown-up Gift Ideas!

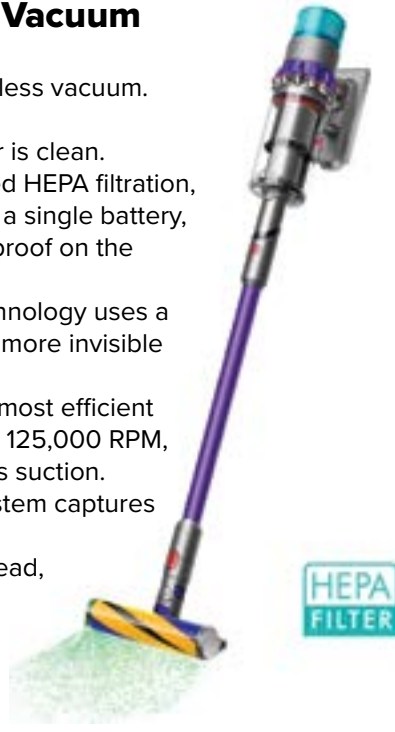


Dyson Gen5detect™ Vacuum

www.dyson.com

The most powerful HEPA cordless vacuum.

- Reveals invisible dust.
- Screen shows you when your floor is clean.
- Advanced suction power, advanced HEPA filtration, and their longest runtime yet from a single battery, with dust detection and scientific proof on the screen.
- Dyson's improved illumination technology uses a precisely angled light to reveal 2x more invisible dust.
- This vacuum has their fastest and most efficient cordless motor – spinning at up to 125,000 RPM, generating their best ever cordless suction.
- The fully sealed HEPA filtration system captures 99.99% of microscopic particles.
- Comes with Fluffy Optic cleaner head, Hair screw tool, combination tool, charger, Digital Motorbar cleaner head, built-in dusting and crevice tool, wall-mounted dock.



HEPA FILTER

Hamilton Beach Professional Cordless Hand Mixer

with Infinite Speed Control
MODEL: 62673



- Cordless flexibility — enjoy powerful mixing anywhere
- Maximum control with infinite speed dial
- Quick recharging
- Powerful DC motor
- Less splatter with Slow Start™ technology
- No more lost beaters — all attachments store inside snap-on case
- Messy drips stay off your counter
- Easily remove attachments with convenient eject trigger
- #1 brand in mixers

Hamilton Beach FlexBrew Trio Coffee Maker

Black Stainless
MODEL: 49958



- Brew up to 12 cups using your favorite ground coffee on the carafe side or brew a single serving with a pod or coffee grounds on the other. You can brew up to 10 oz. cup of coffee using a pod, or fill a 14 oz., 7" tall travel mug when you use coffee grounds.
- Wake up to hot coffee every morning by using Easy-Touch programming. After brewing, coffee stays warm in the carafe for two hours and the power automatically shuts off.
- Each brewing side has its own water reservoir that's easy to fill and features a water window, so you always know exactly how much water to add.

Dyson Airwrap™ Multi-Styler Complete Long

www.dyson.com



- Re-engineered attachments for faster and easier styling
- For multiple hair types and hair that's chest-length or longer
- With new barrels to curl and wave in both directions, brushes to control and shape, and the multi-functional Coanda smoothing dryer to dry, smooth, and hide flyaways
- Airflow speed - Three airflow speeds, to suit your styling.
- Temperature control - Three precise heat settings.
- Cold shot - Immediately deactivates the heating element, for cooler air to set your style.
- Presentation case in Blue Blush protects and neatly stores your Dyson Airwrap™ multi-styler and attachments.

Haden Dorchester Matte Black Toaster

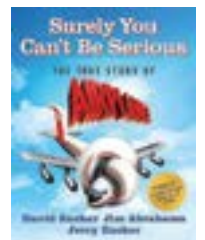
Haden brings warmth and charm to a kitchen essential with a matte black finish, faux bois detailing, clean curves, and stainless steel accents. The four-slice toaster features extra-wide slots, convenient cancel, bagel, and defrost settings, six digital browning controls, and a removable crumb tray for easy cleaning. Pair the matte black toaster with the matching electric kettle, drip coffee maker, and microwave for a coordinated kitchen with plenty of retro styles.



Surely You Can't Be Serious The True Story of Airplane!

An in-depth and hysterical look at the making of 1980's comedy classic "Airplane!" by the legendary writers and directors of the hit film.

Airplane! premiered in July 1980 with a budget of \$3.5 million and went on to make nearly \$200 million in sales and has influenced a multitude of comedians on both sides of the camera. Also features testimonials and personal anecdotes from well-known faces in the film, television, and comedy sphere – proving how influential Airplane! has been from day one.



Where the Crawdads Sing 1000-Piece Puzzle

Escape to Kya's world with a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle.

You loved the novel. Now immerse yourself even further into the breathtakingly beautiful world of "Where the Crawdads Sing." The waterways, the wetlands, the birds and animals, and the light, that amazing light—piece by piece, and image by image, recreate this magical corner of North Carolina's Outer Banks that the Marsh Girl calls home.



Brooklinen Lightweight Quilt Set

www.brooklinen.com

Lightweight Quilt Set is exactly what you need to make your bed the ultimate comfort haven. These incredibly soft and remarkably light sets are 100% cotton

and include the quilt and two shams. Each piece is hand-stitched by skilled artisans and the quilt alone takes six days to make. This set can be the perfect bedding refresh for summer or extra cozy layers in the winter. 100% long-staple cotton.





experience GIFT IDEAS

Experience gifts are a great way to give an easy and memorable gift that will last a lifetime! Experience gifts are easy to transport, take up less space and give the recipient something to look forward to after the holidays are over. Whether it's a one-day adventure or a series of classes, you are virtually guaranteed to "get it right" and have no returns!



En Pointe Danse

Chagrin Falls

Our goal is to provide a nurturing environment for beginner through adult dancers, inspiring the joy and passion of dance by fostering creative expression. Classes are available for ages 3 through adult in creative movement, ballet, pointe, tap, and modern dance. Gift cards available.

enpointedanse.com

440-247-5747



Funny Bus
COMEDY CITY TOUR

Downtown Cleveland

Join us on this hilarious 90-minute tour of downtown Cleveland and some of its cool, hip neighborhoods with a comedian as your host. You can bring your own beer and wine too! Great for company outings, wedding parties, or anytime you want to laugh with family and friends. Gift cards available.

funnybus.net/cleveland

216-404-7786



Chagrin Falls

Valley Art Center is the hub of the visual arts in the Chagrin Valley, providing art classes for over 50 years. Each year, we offer over 400 classes, one-time workshops, and summer camps for students of all ages and experience levels. Give the gift of lessons in drawing, painting, ceramics, jewelry, and more! Gift certificates & memberships available.

www.valleyartcenter.org

440-247-7507



**CLEVELAND
MONTESSORI**

PreK-Grade 8

*Authentic Montessori in
the heart of Little Italy*



OPEN HOUSE:
January 17: 5:00-7:00

CLEVELANDMONTESSORI.ORG



Students utilize the culturally-rich University Circle area to enhance their classroom experience.

216.421.0700

MONTESSORI

SCHOOL OF
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

FOUNDED 1968

WWW.MS-UH.ORG

23599 CEDAR ROAD | BEACHWOOD, OH

CALL FOR A PERSONAL TOUR

216-381-8388



**Now accepting
applications for
3- and 4-year-olds
for fall of 2024**

THREE YEAR PROGRAM
BEGINNING AT AGE THREE

