

# TODAY'S family

Dec 2023/Jan 2024

Lake Geauga

FREE!

## Protect & Serve Tavern event

Drive sober this holiday  
season — and always!!

## Why We Don't Have A Christmas Tree

A Jewish mother reflects on the season

## Scuba Claus Meet & Greet

## Tales of The Elf on The Shelf

Humor essay

## Great Gift Ideas for kids!

## Be a Fitness Role Model to Your Kids This New Year

## Wickliffe man publishes new book

## Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Wild Winter Lights event  
and great gift ideas!



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# TODAY'S family

Lake, Geauga & Cuyahoga Counties

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# 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.*

## The Craft Fair Before Christmas

December 9, 2023 • 10 am–3pm

The Craft Fair Before Christmas, hosted by That Crafty Mama Co. and the Class of 2024 After Prom Committee, will be held on December 9, 2023 at Eastlake North High School (34041 Stevens Blvd.), from 10 am–3 pm.

This local craft fair has free admission and is for all ages. There will be over 60+ local vendors who are excited to showcase their best work and delicious treats — everything

from bakers, metal crafters, candles, luxury bath & body products and much more.

Santa will also be joining in for the day so your kiddos can greet him with their best smile! For only \$5 per family, you can take all your own photos of your kids with Santa!

All proceeds from this event will go to the Class of 2024 After Prom. Email [thatcraftymama.events@gmail.com](mailto:thatcraftymama.events@gmail.com) for more information.

## Small Business Holiday Mixer & Happy Hour

Give appreciation to your team for a year of hard work! Experience a grand holiday event without the grand cost!

**Friday, December 15, 2023**

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- Semi-casual event
- No minimum guest count
- DJ included
- Preferred seating welcome

[eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)



# Family blogs result in a new book

Wickliffe father of five shares over a dozen years of thoughts on family and life

By Donna L. Robinson

Blogging seemed like an easily accessible and highly personal creative outlet when Scott Tennant started it back in 2011, claiming it has always been a nice change of pace from the corporate writing he did every day at work. His blogs about his family eventually turned into a book called “5 Kids, 1 Wife,” which he just published recently.

Tennant’s blog posting cadence has varied widely through the years. There was a nine-month period in 2021 when he blogged every single day, but over time he decided three per week felt like a happy medium for him.

When asked if he ever ran out of ideas to blog about, Tennant replied, “Every writer has times when inspiration is tough to come by. Whenever I start to run out of ideas, I go back to everyday life and the things that make me laugh, make me cry, or make me think. That’s usually a pretty reliable source of blog ideas.

When I started compiling the list of posts for the book, I had more than 850 from which to choose. It took several weeks to narrow the list from an initial 200 candidates to the 51 that eventually made it into the book.”

His favorite blog was as he shared, “I’ve always liked a post I wrote in 2012 called ‘Our New Thousand-Dollar Dishwasher.’ It tells the story of a dishwasher we bought and I think it captures the spirit of the blog and the book: Taking the seemingly mundane and discovering what’s funny and even profound about it.”

Personal family stuff has been a mainstay in his blogs and thankfully no complaints were made by family members. “Any time I question whether something might be embarrassing to anyone in the family, I ask them about it first. Most of the time, the embarrassing stuff I write is about myself,” says Tennant.

He says he grew up on the “mean streets” of Harding Drive in Wick-



Scott Tennant’s family proudly poses with a copy of his book.  
L–R: standing: Chloe, Elissa, Melanie, Jared, and Jack  
L–R: sitting: Terry and Scott Tennant

liffe, a neighborhood with a lot of kids. He is the youngest of four kids and says he was “gloriously spoiled” by his parents and siblings.

Tennant met his wife, Terry, in the band room at Wickliffe High School in 1986. “We dated for six years before we married in 1992—31 years ago. I’ve found that two of the most important things for a successful marriage are to make sure you always communicate and make sure you always laugh together. Do that and the rest will take care of itself.” He continued, saying that the secret to a happy marriage is, “It can’t be about YOU...that extends for life.”

His keys to raising his five children are, “It may be cliché, but one of the most important things you can do as a parent is to give the gift of your time. The time you spend with your kids, individually and as a family, is what they will remember most when they’re older.”

“As far as doing anything differently, it’s easy when you’re married with a large, growing family to always be on the go and checking things off the to-do list. I wish I would have learned to relax more back in my 20s and 30s, because now I’m in my 50s and I’m still trying to figure out how to do it,” he adds.

Tennant has had many past writing experiences, starting his career as a sports journalist for the local daily newspapers. From there he moved into technical writing, trade journalism, and finally into corporate

communications, which is what he’s done since 1999.

He loves his role as a public address announcer and shared why. “I had often been told I had a voice for announcing, so when the opportunity to become the announcer for the Wickliffe Swing Band came up in 2014, I jumped on it. In the years since, I’ve also become the voice of Wickliffe Blue Devil football, soccer, volleyball and basketball, as well as announcing various sports for Cleveland State University, Lake Erie College, University School, Perry, Riverside, Mayfield and Brush high schools,” says Tennant.

He is also a passionate musician as well, saying, “I’ve played the saxophone for more than 40 years and still get to play fairly regularly at our church. In college I was in a two-man band with my Wickliffe High School classmate Nathan Woods, and we recorded an album called ‘Sandlot Tunes.’”

Tennant was asked, speaking straight from the heart, what does marriage/children/family mean to him, and he concluded with, “I thought about this a lot as I was putting the book together. There are lots of directions our lives can go, depending on external circumstances and the decisions we make along the way. I could have ended up in a very different situation, but through the grace of God I have a wonderful wife and amazing children. I’m grateful for it every day.”

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# 28th annual Protect & Serve Tavern event

Reminding people to drive sober this holiday season

This holiday season, the Lake County Crime Prevention Taskforce, the Lake County Association of Chiefs of Police and the Lake County Safe Communities Coalition will team up with the United States Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to host an event to remind all drivers about the dangers of drinking and driving. The 28th Annual Protect & Serve Tavern will take place Saturday, December 9 from noon–3:00 pm at the Great Lakes Mall, located at 7850 Mentor Avenue in Mentor.

## What is the event about?

This event will help remind Lake County residents –and beyond– to drive sober this holiday season. This event is also meant to encourage people at or above the legal drinking age to consider a fun “mocktail” drink instead of drinking alcohol and possibly driving while drunk. Local police chiefs and judges will hand out nonalcoholic drinks with snacks to mall shoppers and, because of many generous donations from local businesses, this event is free to the public. Local police departments will also invite shoppers to try the “fatal vision” goggle activity, which mimics alcohol impairment. This activity is used to raise awareness about the dangers of drunk driving to the public. Free recipes featuring tasty nonalco-

holic beverages created by the Lake County police departments will be available, and there will be a raffle for a chance to win a “mocktail” basket with all the fixings to make your own nonalcoholic beverages.

With the holiday festivities and extra office parties taking place, it is important to plan a sober ride home before the events begin. Here are a few simple tips to ensure that everyone has a fun evening and gets home safely:

- Plan a safe way home before festivities begin.
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver.
- If you are impaired, take a taxi, ride share, or call a sober friend or family member for a ride home.
- If you happen to see an impaired driver on the road, call #667 to reach law enforcement.

## Why is this event important?

According to the Ohio Traffic Safety Office, there were four fatal crashes during the last holiday season (November 2022–January 2023) with two of them being operating a vehicle impaired (OVI)-related. From February 2023 until present day, there have been eight more fatal crashes with four of them being OVI-related. The Protect and Serve Tavern is held to educate the public about driving sober not only during the holidays, but all year long. The goal is to reduce the number of fa-



tal crashes in Lake County with the hope of getting that number down to zero.

## What is the Safe Communities Coalition?

The Lake County General Health District is the lead agency for the Lake County Safe Communities Coalition and the goal is to reduce the number of traffic-related motor vehicle deaths in Lake County by increasing seat belt usage, increasing motorcycle safety awareness, and reducing distracted and impaired driving. The Coalition also participates in national campaigns including “Click It or Ticket” and “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.”

For more events, meeting information and volunteer opportunities, consider joining The Lake County Safe Communities Coalition! There is no county restriction. If you are interested in learning more or joining, contact Emily Kolacz at 440-350-2451.

**FREE**

Drive Safe & Sober This Holiday Season

# 28th Annual

## Protect & Serve Tavern Event

Saturday, December 9 | Great Lakes Mall | Noon - 3 PM

### Games, Snacks *and* Raffle Baskets

(Snacks and drinks while supplies last.)

The Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) is the lead agency of the Lake County Safe Communities Coalition.



# The Twelve Days of Insurance

“on the 12th day of Christmas, insurance covered me...”



- 12 **Twelve trees-a-swaying** – Nearby trees could break and fall due to the weight of the ice and snow. Be sure that your policy covers the cost of the removal of fallen trees and any damage to your home that they may cause.
- 11 **Eleven windshields cracking** – The cold weather can potentially cause cracks in your windshield. More often, it causes smaller chips and cracks to worsen. It is best to get small chips repaired before the temperature drops.
- 10 **Ten pipes-a-leaking** – To avoid frozen pipes, keep a slight trickle of warm water running through your faucets overnight. You should also consider adding insulation to your pipes to prevent them from freezing or leaking.
- 9 **Nine trucks-a-towing** – Your insurance company’s roadside assistance program can be a godsend when you’re stranded. Consider keeping blankets, flashlights, and water in your car in case of an emergency.
- 8 **Eight fires blazing** – As beautiful as a Christmas tree can be, plugging in decorations incorrectly could lead to electrical fires. Read all manufacturer instructions carefully and be sure to turn off the lights while sleeping or away from home.
- 7 **Seven cars-a-crashing** – Between the busier parking lots and the icy roads, car accidents tend to increase during the winter months. Check your auto policy to be sure that you are covered in the event of an accident.
- 6 **Six dogs-a-biting** – If your pup bites a guest or neighbor, you could be liable for their injuries. Bodily injury and liability coverages could come in handy in these cases.
- 5 **Five stolen things!** – We all find ourselves making

more purchases around the holidays. Give your agent a call to make sure that you are covered just in case a Grinch steals items from your home or auto.

- 4 **Four hail storms** – Hail can cause damage to your roof, siding gutters, and other property. Be prepared for the next hail storm by double-checking your policy.
- 3 **Three stray deer** – Seeing a deer dart out into the road is every driver’s nightmare. Instead of swerving to avoid a deer, keep your vehicle on course. This limits both the damage to your vehicle and the chance of being injured.
- 2 **Two slip and falls** – You could be liable if someone slips on stairs, or icy walkways. To avoid slip and fall claims, clear any messes or clutter to make sure that walking areas are well maintained.
- 1 **And a promise to cover me** – At the end of the day, insurance is a promise. It provides peace of mind and security to policyholders, which definitely comes in handy during the holiday season!

Courtesy of the Corsaro Insurance Group and Central Insurance Companies.

*Matthew Corsaro is the president and owner of the Corsaro Insurance Group in Mentor. His company and staff have been providing insurance solutions to families and business owners for over 40 years. Mr. Corsaro has obtained the Accredited Advisor in Insurance and Certified Insurance Counselor designations. Corsaro Insurance Group represents over 20 insurance companies. As well they have expertise in all areas of auto, home and business insurance. They can be reached at 440-946-4950.*



## Sensitive Santa Experience

Willoughby Workspaces will be sponsoring a sensory-inspired experience for kids with autism and other disabilities. This event provides a supportive environment which eliminates bright lights and loud noises that can trigger sensory sensitivities. Each child will have an individual appointment time with Santa to share their Christmas wishes and get their photo taken, if they choose. They can also visit the hot cocoa bar and take home a Christmas cookie.

This will be a unique and memorable event for the entire family! The event takes place Saturday, December 9, 2023 from 9:30–11:00 am.

From 11 am–2:00 pm, there will be additional times slots for photos, but the Christmas lights and music will be on for this time frame.

Scan the QR code to learn more about this event and to purchase your tickets. Questions? Call 440-710-6561. Willoughby Workspaces is located at 37903 Euclid Avenue.



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## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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

## 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 "fish-mas" 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](http://greaterclevelandaquarium.com/event/scuba-claus) or call 216-862-8803.

## Delve into the arts at Rabbit Run

Dance, private music lessons, visual art

Winter is a perfect time to delve into the arts! Registration for winter classes and lessons is now open at Rabbit Run Community Arts Association in Madison. RRCAA is a comprehensive fine arts association offering private and group instruction in all the major disciplines of the fine and performing arts.

Dance classes are available in creative movement, ballet, tap and jazz from preschoolers, who just love to move, to adults looking to get back into shape. Also available are classes in hip hop, modern dance, contemporary and lyrical, and ballroom dancing.

The Winter Dance Session begins Jan. 6 and runs through May 9.

In addition to dance classes, Rabbit Run also offers visual art experiences. Check out their website at [rabbitrun.org](http://rabbitrun.org) to see a complete listing of visual art opportunities.

Some of those opportunities include the very popular Canvas Art Workshops offered throughout the year. In these one-hour virtual sessions, participants enjoy painting a



seasonal acrylic painting using an original as inspiration. Art supplies are provided in handy art-in-a-bag kits.

RRCAA provides a full range of private music instruction from beginner to advanced students in voice, brass, beginning band instruments, acoustic and electric guitar, woodwinds, piano/keyboard, viola/violin/Suzuki violin, cello and fiddle.

The Winter Session for private music lessons begins Jan. 3 with enrollment continuing through the spring.

For specific class information or to register visit [www.rabbitrun.org](http://www.rabbitrun.org) or call 440-428-5913. RRCAA is a nonprofit organization that receives partial funding from the Ohio Arts Council and is located at 49 Park St., Madison.



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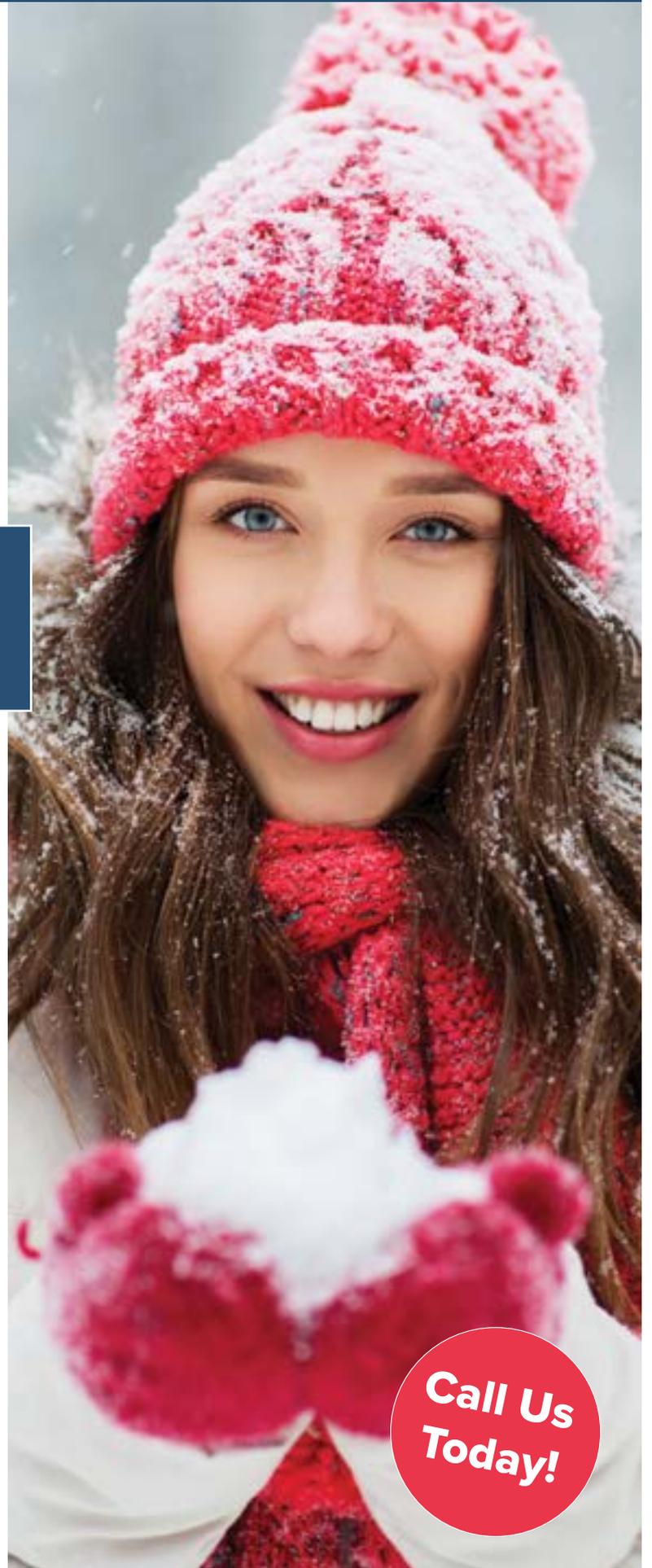
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# The Rink at Wade Oval

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 opened 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.

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.

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. 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 more information on The Rink at Wade Oval, visit [universitycircle.org/rink](http://universitycircle.org/rink).

# Free festive programming Cleveland Museum of Art

Free admission and special events throughout the 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). 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, Gram-



my-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).

The museum is closed Mondays. Visit [www.cma.org](http://www.cma.org) for a full list of hours, exhibits and performances.

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- 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.



## 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.

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](http://www.fairmountcenter.org) or call 440-338-3171.

### 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

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.



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# 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.

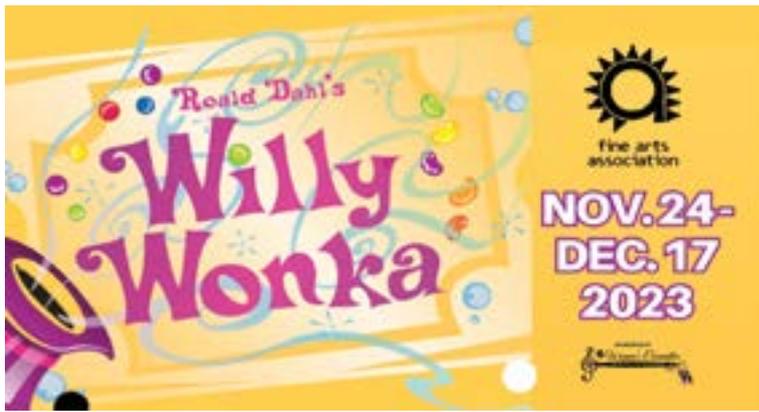


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## The Fine Arts Association presents Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka

Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka is The Fine Arts Association's annual holiday musical production. Based on the book Charlie and The Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl, this production runs through December 17, 2023.

Featuring the enchanting songs from the 1971 film starring Gene Wilder and new songs by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley, Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka is a "scrumdilyumptious" musical guaranteed to delight everyone's sweet tooth.

The story follows enigmatic candy manufacturer, Willy Wonka, as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. Whoever finds these tickets will win a free tour of the Wonka factory as well as a lifetime supply of candy. Four of the five winning children are insufferable brats; the fifth is a likable young lad named Charlie Bucket who takes the tour with his equally amiable grandfather. The children must learn to follow Mr. Wonka's rules in the factory or suffer the consequences. The delicious adventures experienced by Charlie Bucket and his grandfather

at the mysterious chocolate factory light up the stage in this captivating production.

The production runs two hours with one 15-minute intermission, and is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International.

### Production dates and times

- Fri., December 1, 8 • 7:30 pm
  - Sat., December 2, 9, 16 • 2 pm
  - Sat., December 16 • 7:30 pm
  - Sun., December 10, 17\* • 2 pm
- \*Sign interpreted for the hearing-impaired

### Ticket prices

- (not including processing fees)
- Child 10 and under - \$15.00
  - Student 11-18 yrs. - \$25.00
  - Adult - \$27.00
  - Senior - 60+ - \$25.00

The Fine Arts Association is located at 38660 Mentor Avenue in Willoughby. The Corning Auditorium is barrier free. Secure, free on-site parking available.

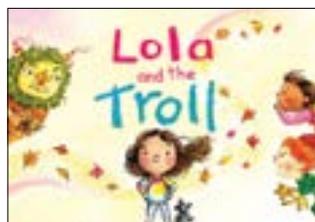
Visit [www.fineartsassociation.org/performance](http://www.fineartsassociation.org/performance) to purchase single tickets.

### 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 Sneez. 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 Rodriguez.



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## 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



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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.*

## 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](http://goto.lakemetroparks.com/candyland).

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# 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

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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.



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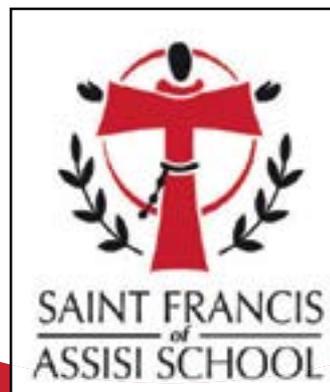
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## Cleveland Orchestra Music Explorers & Family Concert Series

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](http://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.



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# 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*

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Winter Session: December 4 – March 2

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- 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](mailto:pliotta@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

## LIL SLUGGERS



Winter Session: December 4 – March 2

- Introduction to baseball for kids 2–5 years old.
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- 10-week session | \$17/week

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## 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.

## Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience open through Dec. 31



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](http://holdenfg.org). Walk-up tickets will be available.

### Nonmembers Weekday

Adult \$23 / Children (3–12) \$16

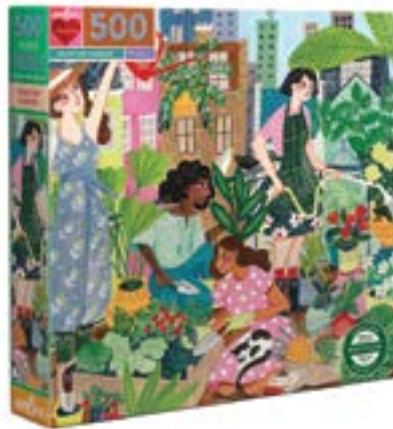
### Nonmembers Weekend

Adult \$26 / Children (3–12) \$18

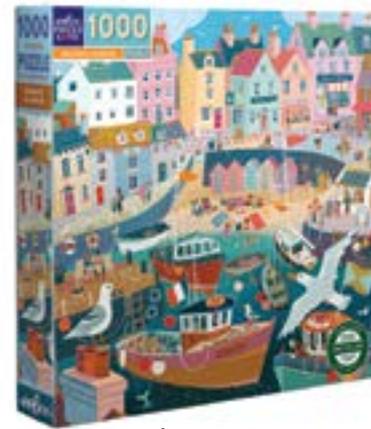
## eeBoo Puzzles

eeBoo has a wide selection of puzzles and other games for the whole family. They are committed to responsible sourcing and manufacturing.

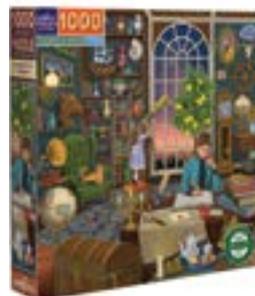
They use 90% recycled board and vegetable inks to make the vast majority of their products. Visit [www.eebo.com](http://www.eebo.com) to see all their great products!



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500-Piece Square Puzzle



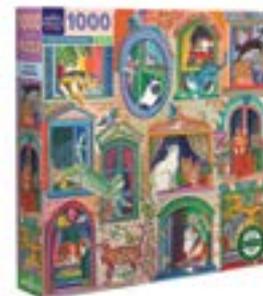
**Seaside Harbor**  
1000-Piece Puzzle



**Alchemist's Library**  
1000-Piece Puzzle



**Cats of the World**  
500-Piece Round Puzzle



**Cats in Windows**  
1000-Piece Puzzle

## Country Lights Drive-Thru

Lake Metroparks Farmpark

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 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 [gotolakemetroparks.com/country-lights-drive-thru](http://gotolakemetroparks.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.



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# TOY & GIFT Ideas



## Playmobil 1.2.3 & Disney: Winnie's & Piglet's Tree House

Item Number: 71316

Age 1+

There is a lot to discover in Winnie's & Piglet's Tree House. Different items can be sorted into the treetop by shape and color to develop fine motor skills and three-dimensional thinking. A hidden slide lets the objects reappear at the bottom of the tree - providing lots of fun. There are also many other details to explore: For example, turn the small group of leaves to make noises or take the second group of leaves and convert it into a spinning top toy. The adorable Disney characters encourage children to tell their own stories during first role play.



## Playmobil Rainbow Castle in the Clouds

Item Number: 71359

Age 4+

High up in the fluffy clouds is the heavenly home of the rainbow princesses. Sheltered by the rainbow and the light of the magical glowing rainbow flower (removable) they enjoy life. Special highlights: Pegasus, sky swing and princesses with feathery skirts to change. Includes cute stickers for decorating and butterfly ring for the child! More clouds can be added to the castle.

Three (3) 1.5 V micro batteries (AAA) required.

## Bumpas (Good Soul Brands)

Age 3+

Bumpas stuffed animals are always by your side to love, hug and protect you. The 3 pounds of distributed weight delivers deep pressure stimulation which helps promote a sense of security, reduce stress & anxiety, improve sleep quality and create a calming effect.



The weighted arms are perfectly sized to give realistic hugs and hold on to you - hands free.

Find your favorite friend - they come in a variety of choices.

## Squinkies Originals Cupcake Surprise Bake Shop (Blip Toys)

Age 5+

Your favorite mini squishy toys are back and better than ever. Endless fun and adventure awaits you in the land of Squinkieville with our soft and squishy friends! Included are 9 different animals and friends for you to collect! The Squinkies Cupcake Surprise is part vending machine, part bake shop. Place a coin in the slot and turn the dial for a Squinkies surprise! Also, you can open the cupcake to find a bake shop inside!



## Bababoo and Friends Wonder Tree Shape Sorter Clock

Age 18 months+

While playing hide and seek on the flower meadow, Bababoo and Pippa come across a wondrous tree that effortlessly teaches you how to solve a mess of numbers correctly. The unique Bababoo and Friends sorting and learning clock teaches children much more than just reading the time.



## Connetix Rainbow Mini Pack 24 pc

Age 3+

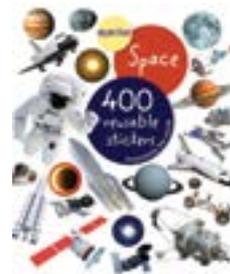
Get a taste for STEAM learning and the Connetix difference with the 24-pc Rainbow Mini Pack. Featuring a selection of shapes in every rainbow color, this pack has been curated to introduce you to magnetic tile play and Connetix.

Explore shapes and colors in both 2D and 3D. Experience the signature bevel design plus stronger magnets as you build taller and enjoy clearer refractions.

## 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.



## Geomag Glitter 60-Piece Set

Age 3+

This super stylish line of magnetic sets is perfect for those who adore sparkly colors.

Set #536

- Infinite 2D/3D constructions
- Magnetic rods, steel spheres and interlocking panels



## Bababoo and Friends us.bababooandfriends.com Tree House Play World

Age 2+

Monkey Yuki and his friends enjoy spending time in their Tree House and often visitors from afar pass by. The set includes 31 pieces and provides a whole range of fun activities for little adventurers! Explorers who desire a "set of wheels" can also enjoy a road trip though the Tree House World with Bababoo and his friends! This wonderful Play World was artistically designed to spark your explorer's creativity while enhancing their concentration, hand-eye coordination, and spatial understanding.

## Scentco

### Candy Cane Gel Smens

Clickable pens that write in black ink. Each Smen® emits its scent through the grip. You will receive two green and two red Candy Cane Smens per four-pack.



### Holiday Smencils Five-Pack

Five of gourmet scented pencils that are made from 100% recycled newspapers. Each Holiday Smencil® is a No.2 graphite pencil and is packaged in its own recyclable plastic freshness tube that includes a collectible character top cap! You will receive one each of the five scents. (Not pictured.)

## GUND

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### Snuffles, Pink, 10 inch

Age 1+

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Contact the LCDJFS to learn more about becoming a foster parent.



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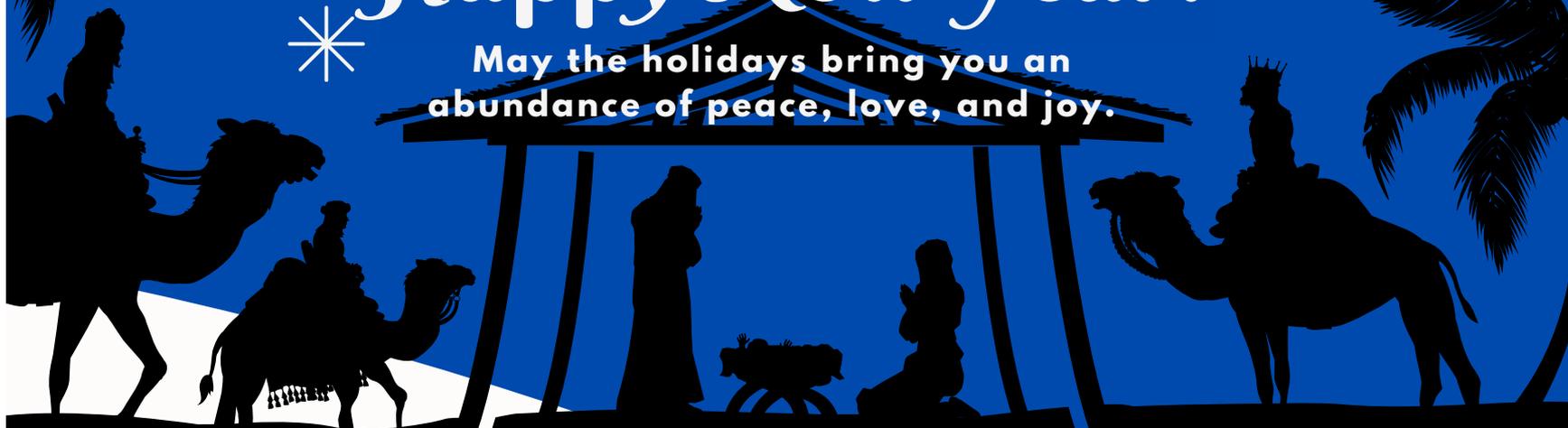
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**Lake County Department of Job and Family Services**

From our family to yours

# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

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abundance of peace, love, and joy.



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