

TODAY'S family

November 2024

Cuyahoga

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Humor Essay

A letter of apology to my teenage daughter who has to share a bathroom with her older brother

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Plus holiday fun facts!

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arts can help
combat bullying**

National Adoption Month

**Kids in need don't
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—PLUS—

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Dogs! A Science Tail exhibit to open November 8, 2024

This richly interactive exhibition for humans opens Friday, November 8 at Great Lakes Science Center. Experience the extraordinary way a dog sees, hears and smells the world through fun and unique hands-on exhibits.



From lovable companions to loyal protectors, dogs have evolved over thousands of years from ancient wolves into the cuddly canines that live and work alongside us today. They can rescue us from peril, provide help to people in need, or offer a furry shoulder to lean on. Dig deeper into these incredible animals and how they communicate with each other – and with us!

walking an invisible dog through a neighborhood maze, listening to hidden sounds that dogs can hear but humans can't, playing a special game of "pup culture" Jeopardy, and exploring the various careers that involve these intelligent animals.

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Don't miss this chance to discover how dogs have nuzzled their way into human society and into our hearts to become our loyal sidekicks and life-saving heroes.

Dogs! A Science Tail is included with a general admission ticket to Great Lakes Science Center. Tickets are \$19.95 per adult and \$14.95 per youth (2–12). For tickets and more info visit www.greatscience.com.

TODAY'S family

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A letter of apology to my teenage daughter..

who has to share a bathroom with her older brother

By Katy M. Clark

Dear Teenage Daughter,

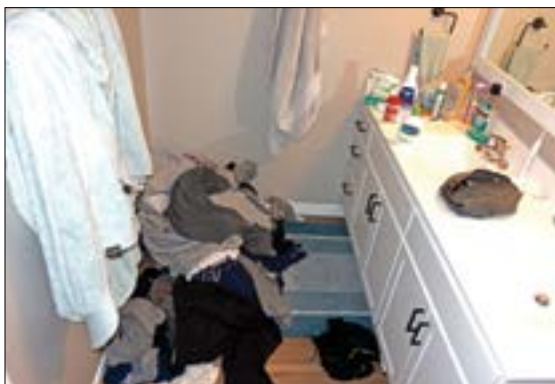
Your father and I would like to extend our sincerest apologies for the negative experience you have had sharing a bathroom with your older brother. In this household it is our main goal to provide an exemplary lavatorial experience for family members and we realize that your experience has fallen short.

I understand that he hangs his towels haphazardly or leaves them lumped on the floor. I am truly sorry that his personal care items spill over his side of the vanity and that the pungent alpine scent of his body spray makes it feel like you reside in a Mariah Carey Christmas video every minute of every day.

I realize that he never draws the shower curtain closed to dry, which leads to increased mildew growth, and that he balks at cleaning the mildew that formed on it due to the fact that he never draws the shower curtain closed to dry.

I acknowledge that he neglects to empty the bathroom trash. I understand your frustration over how long he takes in the bathroom and I'm sorry he refuses to use the Poo-Pourri spray because, ironically, he doesn't like the way it smells.

Finally, I apologize that he's just there, in the



bathroom at the same time you want to be there. Or as you so eloquently put it, "Like, always."

To address your inconvenience, we have ordered you a private bathroom, which should be available next year when your brother leaves for college. Once he has relocated, the towels in your bathroom will be hung neatly, the vanity will be spotless, and the only trash to take out will be your own, by you, as you are the only child left at home to do so.

As well, the washroom should start smelling like your preferred body spray, the one I believe should be titled "Tournament of Roses Parade" that features bergamot bottom notes.

Please note that next year we will not be re-

sponsible for any slippery spots in your private bathroom caused by your tears because your only brother has left for college and you miss him, even if you didn't want to share a bathroom with him.

We hope you recognize the small benefits to be gleaned from your trying experience. Namely, you have increased your immunity to mess, mildew, and men in general. Your olfactory sense has heightened. You are also better prepared to share a bathroom in the coming years with slovenly college roommates and an ever-present spouse.

We thank you for your patience and truly regret that we were unable to procure a home with copious commodes or produce a sibling with the same cleanliness standards for your bathroom sharing convenience.

Thanks again for bringing your experience sharing a bathroom with your older brother to our attention, over and over and over. Should you need further assistance with this issue, feel free to speak directly with your father.

I hope that you consider us for your future bathroom needs.

Sincerely,

Mom / Customer Service Agent Intermediate

Katy M. Clark is a writer and mom of two who celebrates her imperfections on her blog Experienced Bad Mom.

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How martial arts can help combat bullying

By Kerrie McLoughlin

According to StopBullying.gov, a study found that approximately 49% of kids in 4th through 12th grade said they had been bullied at least one time in the previous month. Bullying can lead to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, poor performance in school and, in some extreme cases, even suicide.

Where is bullying happening? It's happening most often at school, including at recess and on the school bus, but school isn't the only place. It also occurs where kids are gathering in large groups, like at amusement parks, block parties, campgrounds and swimming pools. And of course we can't forget about cyberbullying, which includes using cell phones and computers as ways to bully with words and spread untrue words and embarrassing photos.

So what can we, as parents, do about this widespread problem? Well, it turns out martial arts is a great place to start. Of course, martial arts can't necessarily tackle the cyberbullying issue, but it can

give our kids the self-confidence they need to handle people who are not treating them well in a specific situation.

Lindsey Watts, mom of a daughter who has been in martial arts for four years, says, "Martial arts gives kids discipline and teaches them respect. They learn self-control, perseverance and integrity. They learn to help build a more peaceful world."

Dave Kovar, founder of Martial Arts Against Bullying (MAAB) and life-long martial arts professional, shares on his website DoneWithBullying.com, "I believe that no other industry is in a better position to do something about bullying than the martial arts industry. The mere act of training in martial arts and having children develop a higher level of confidence decreases their chances of being bullied in the first place."

Robyn Morrow, mom of a Tae Kwon Do student, says, "I was teased and called four eyes as a child and had a hard time feeling connected to people, but that pales in comparison to the stories I've heard happening



nowadays. My oldest child is skinny and tall but holds his head high and walks tall. I think his confidence is in large part due to his years at Tae Kwon Do. He knows he has the power to break boards, so I would guess that gives him more confidence too. I am so glad we made the choice to enroll him in Tae Kwon Do classes before he reached the awkward teenage age he's entering now."

Martial arts comes with other benefits as well. Jody Jones, mom of three, says, "I think martial arts helps form a great foundation for understanding the benefits of structure, discipline and hard work. Attaining a black belt, or any higher belt rank, is a manifestation of what you can gain through the physical and mental discipline of martial arts. It's an experience that's hard to duplicate for your children, and the concept of working extremely hard to attain your goals is one that you carry into your adult life and work."

Getting Started

Before beginning any martial arts program, visit your pediatrician to ensure your child is physically able to participate. Then, it's time to investigate local options and attend a test class or two. Talk to the instructors and then watch carefully how they interact with students the same age as your child. Are the students responding to the instructions eagerly? Are they attentive and enjoying the class? If possible, talk to parents for a first-hand account of the program.

If your child enjoys the sample class, find out what the minimum commitment for the studio will be.

Even if your child enjoys the introduction class, there's no guarantee that interest will remain long term. Before making a long-term commitment, try a six-week session and give your child the option of renewing.

Pick and choose

There are myriad types of martial arts from which to choose. Some of the more popular class options include:

- **Karate:** A Japanese self-development system that involves punches and kicks.
- **Tae Kwon Do:** A Korean form of a military art, it involves punching and kicking, as well as meditation and breathing techniques.
- **Judo:** A Japanese competitive sport that helps children learn self-control and respect for opponents. Students learn how to throw a partner, using leverage and balance.
- **Jujitsu:** A competitive Japanese self-defense method that focuses on using the opponent's strength and weight against him.
- **Aikido:** A Japanese method that is similar to Jujitsu, but not as competitive and uses gentler movements.
- **Thai Chi:** A Chinese form that focuses on weight-bearing moves, stretching and balance. It is very gentle and helps with flexibility and improving concentration.
- **Capoeira:** A unique Afro-Brazilian art form that combines martial arts with dance, music and gymnastics.

Kerrie McLoughlin is the homeschooling mom of five, author on Amazon.com and blogger at TheKerrieShow.com.



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Winter Break: Sun., Dec 22, 2024 – Sat. January 4, 2025

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

2024 Christmas Connection is coming to I-X Center Nov. 22–24

Get ready to deck the halls with bags of goodies as you kick-off the holiday season at this year's Christmas Connection happening Nov. 22–24 at the I-X Center. Northeast Ohio's largest holiday market has been a seasonal tradition for decades and features artisan gifts and décor from more than 550 vendors.

2024 Christmas Connection features and attractions include:

- NEW! Tinseltown Train Area features a large-scale garden train from the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and model train displays from Olmsted Falls Depot and MRRM Trains.

NEW! Flower Entertainment will provide face painting and balloon creations throughout the weekend in SantaLand.

- NEW! On Friday, November 22 support The Greater Cleveland Food Bank by bringing two cans of vegetables to Christmas Connection and receive \$4 off the general admission price.

- The spirit of Christmas will envelop guests as they walk down

the decorated entryway to the tallest Santa in Cleveland – 30 foot – waiting to greet them!

- The holiday spirit comes to life with live entertainment on the stage where guests can relax and kick up their feet and sing along to festive entertainment.

- Visit with Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the Elves in SantaLand. Kids can also bring their letters to Santa to mail in the Santa Mailbox.

- Kids can shop in the Sugar Plum Shoppe featuring over 3,000 pre-wrapped gifts (under \$9.00 each), perfect for pint-sized wallets.

- Convenient Shop & Drop lets guests leave their purchases and pick them up when they are ready to leave. And when you pick up your purchases, make life easier and take advantage of gift wrapping for a donation. Donations to Prayers From Maria Foundation appreciated.

General admission for ages 13+ is \$12 per person. Valid one day only.

The latest show information will be posted at www.ClevelandChristmasConnection.com.

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The linguistic adventure

Kids, swearing, and parental panic

By Justin Daniels

Ah, the joys of parenthood: sleepless nights, endless diaper changes, and the heart-stopping moment when your darling child drops an F-bomb at Grandma's dinner table. It's a rite of passage, really—a charming milestone on the road to raising a well-rounded individual. But how do we, as responsible adults, navigate this treacherous territory? Spoiler: it involves a lot of awkward laughs, careful rephrasing, and the classic “Where did you hear that?” interrogation.

The moment of truth

Let's set the stage. You're enjoying a peaceful afternoon when suddenly, from the other room, you hear your three-year-old, little Timmy, enthusiastically shouting, “What the *#&%!?” You drop your coffee mug in horror. Not because of the mess, but because it's like a tiny, adorable grenade just went off in your household. Where did he even learn that? Was it the playground? The TV? Your husband's questionable taste in comedy?

Your mind races through potential sources. The cartoon? The neighbor's dog? (Did that mutt teach him to swear? That would be quite the scandal!)

The approach: a balancing act

Once the shock wears off, you have two choices: correct him immediately or let it slide while you frantically look for a paper bag to breathe into. Most parents opt for the “calm but slightly panicked” approach. You take a deep breath and say, “Timmy, we don't say that word. It's not a good word.”

Ah, but here's the kicker—Timmy, with his big, innocent eyes, looks up at you and replies, “Why not? It's funny!” And in that moment, you realize you've just opened a Pandora's box of curiosity. He's not just swearing; he's testing the boundaries of language, and oh boy, is he enjoying it.

The art of redirection

Now, this is where your skills as a parent really come into play. Instead of launching into a long, dry lecture about the morality of swearing—let's be honest, no one listens to those—you decide to be creative. “You know what's fun? Making up silly words! How about ‘flibberflop’ or ‘snickerdoodle’? Those are way cooler than any bad word!”

Timmy thinks for a moment and shouts, “flibberflop!” with the enthusiasm of a tiny comedian. Success! You've turned a potential disaster into a comedy show. However, deep down, you know he'll probably throw



“flibberflop” into a conversation with his preschool teacher, leaving you to explain later why he wasn't using standard English.

The long-term strategy

You may think that one redirect solves the problem, but kids are persistent. Days later, you're at the grocery store when Timmy shouts, “Look, Mommy! That lady is such a flibberflop!” You can feel the heat rising to your cheeks as the lady in question shoots you a quizzical look. It's time for damage control.

With all the grace of a ballet dancer in a minefield, you swoop down to Timmy's level. “We can call people ‘flibberflops’ in our house, but outside, we call them nice names, okay?” You smile sweetly, while inside you're screaming, “Please don't let this go viral on social media!”

The final showdown

Eventually, the day will come when your little angel attempts to use swear words in the right context. You know the moment: he's playing with his

action figures, and suddenly, one of them falls over. “Aw, *#&%!?” he shouts, echoing the very sentiments you tried so hard to quash.

In that moment, you'll have to decide: laugh or correct? You choose a middle ground. “Well, it's more like ‘oh no!’ but I admire your passion!” You then take a moment to thank the universe that you're not dealing with full-on tantrums or teenage angst just yet.

The swear word chronicles

So, as your child navigates the wonderful world of language—sometimes with expletives and sometimes with creative alternatives—remember that these moments are not just about correcting behavior. They're about fostering a love for language, creativity, and humor. And while you may find yourself facepalming more than once, you'll also be crafting a tapestry of memories filled with laughter and the occasional “flibberflop” that makes parenting an unpredictable but delightful adventure. After all, isn't that what it's all about?



“I have a great outside shot. Too bad we were playing inside.”

What's the best way to fix a broken pumpkin?

Use a pumpkin patch.

Why did the cranberry blush?

It saw the turkey dressing.

What do you need to make Thanksgiving s'mores?

Pil-grahams.

Why do pilgrims' pants always fall down?

Because they wear their buckles on their hats!

Knock, knock! Who's there? Norma Lee.

Norma Lee who? Norma Lee I don't eat this much.



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Gratitude and apple cider vinegar

By Stacy Turner

November is a season of change. Perhaps this is why our thoughts tend to focus on gratitude as we spend more time gathering with our loved ones. As the year winds down, warmer autumn days transition to less sunlight, more rain, and lower temperatures. And while the special time of gratitude kicks off the holiday season, it's also when the cold and flu season begins in earnest.

When my kids were younger, it seemed like they brought home every germ and bug from school. We all dutifully took our vitamins, ate healthily, and tried to get enough sleep. We'd wash and disinfect around the house but still, my kids would catch a bug that would take them down. And while they'd sneeze and snifle for a day or two, we were fortunate that it was never serious. Thankfully, with vitamin C, chicken soup, and some extra sleep, they'd soon recover.

Unfortunately, I seemed to catch every bug that came my way from late fall through early spring-time. And because moms can't call in sick, I'd usually spend the next week or so at half-capacity, slogging my way back to normalcy, only to catch another pesky germ a month or two later and repeat the process. Vitamins, exercise, flu shots or disinfecting the house didn't seem to make a difference.



One year, I decided that apple cider vinegar (ACV) would help us all stay healthy. But since no one else would willingly consume it, I tried to come up with ways to sneak it into our diet. "Why does this orange juice taste weird?" my husband or kids would ask. I began adding it to smoothies, since the sweet frozen fruit and yogurt

would dilute the ACV tang. I had them fooled for a bit. One day, however, I didn't realize that one of my kids was watching my smoothie-making process. She ratted me out to the others, so that whenever they heard the blender, they'd come running to make sure I didn't add in any "questionable" ingredients.

Later, I overheard my youngest telling a friend about all the weird, gross, "healthy" things I made them eat, like tofu, sweet potatoes, and kale. "Remember when you made us drink bleach?" she asked. "It was vinegar. Please don't tell people I made you drink bleach. Vinegar is supposed to help keep you from getting sick," I explained. "Well, it tastes gross," she countered. Luckily, no one from Child Protective Services was notified.

I'm grateful not only for that, but because we've all stayed relatively healthy over the years, including during the crazy COVID times. And since November is when we take time to count our blessings, that one tops my list. And as a bonus, everyone has come to like some of those weird, healthy foods I made them try.

It's ironic that these days, that same daughter who considered it a disinfectant now takes a bit of apple cider vinegar by choice when she feels on the edge of the seasonal ick. And as always, the bleach remains in the laundry room.

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Kids waiting to be adopted don't need superheroes

By Rebecca Hastings

The first time my parents decided to adopt was on a beach. A friend was telling them about a little boy she works with that no one wants. Without missing a beat my mom said, "We'll take him." And they did.

Sure there were things to do, classes to take, visits, and paperwork (so much paperwork). But the first step was what mattered most. They were willing. They were willing to open their heart wider and do more of what they do best: love.

My parents have adopted five kids over the last twelve years. And perhaps you should know, not all the adoptions have been easy. There were social work visits and court dates.

Waiting for parental right termination and ensuring everything was ready. It took work and time.

Just like parenting.

My mom and dad are parents. That's what they do. They parent. Instead of the two kids they had, they parent seven kids.

The five kids they adopted all have

special needs. I could give you the list of diagnoses but it really doesn't matter. Their needs mean more appointments, more accommodations, and more sleepless nights. But those things are no different than if you birth a baby with special needs.

You show up. You do the work. You parent.

When people see what they do on a daily basis they look at my parents like a living museum exhibit claiming they are amazing. In many ways they are. Adoption is not what made them amazing — good parenting and loving completely is what makes them amazing.

They will be the first to tell you they are not anything special, they are ordinary just like you and me. They just love big. They treat each of my brothers and sisters like me and my other brother who were born of my mother's womb. They are not superheroes, they are just parents, walking through life, loving big and full on

the easy days and the hard days. It sounds so simple, but we all know parenthood is anything but simple.

It's easy to keep the idea of adoption on a pedestal, to think it is reserved for people with special skills. Adoption is special but it is not unreachable. It takes real, everyday people.



In Ohio alone there are 3,000 kids waiting to be adopted. Nationally there are over 400,000 kids in foster care with over 100,000 of those kids ready to be adopted. Every one of these kids needs someone who will say yes.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month, with the Sunday before Thanksgiving providing a special day to highlight the importance of adoption. With approximately 1 in 50 kids in the United States being adopted and 6 in 10 people having a personal experience with adoption in their family or social circle it is clear that adoption is not just for a small group of people with a superhuman

skillset. We need more than that.

Adoption is special. It is beautiful and hard and will require more of you than you know, but that's parenting. We can recognize the beauty of adoption without making it seem unattainable for everyday people.

Maybe you don't feel like adopting is part of your parenting journey. But it is part of our world. Sometimes we don't know how to handle things that seem different from what we know, and admiring them from afar seems easier. We can learn how to help families connected to adoption, we can take away the stigmas of adoption in the way we interact and talk about it, and we can stop distancing ourselves from what seems different and remember that adoption is simply parenting.

Kids waiting to be adopted don't need superheroes. They need people willing to say yes. People willing to open their hearts and their homes to love and parent well.

This month may we all think about how we can directly help the children waiting for someone to say yes.



There's more than one way to become a family.



More than 250 children in Cuyahoga County need a forever family. Teens, sibling groups and special needs children are waiting for you to welcome them into your family. For more information call 216-881-5775 or visit EveryChildNeedsFamily.com



Cuyahoga County
Division of Children and Family Services

Adoption: An Alternate Path to Parenthood

The perception of adoptive parents may be of a loving wife and husband who are unable to have children of their own. The couple go to a private adoption agency, shell out tens of thousands of dollars and, after what could be a years-long waiting period, bring home the newborn son or daughter they've always dreamed about raising.

Working with a private adoption agency with the goal of adopting an infant is an admirable approach to offering a home to a child in need. But some folks—married or not—find the process to be too costly and drawn out. Fortunately, there are other avenues for adoption, especially if prospective parents are open to providing forever homes for youngsters with special needs, older children, sibling groups or children of different races or ethnicities.

November is National Adoption Month, a 30-day platform for raising awareness and bringing attention to the need for permanent families for minors in foster care. It is an initiative of the Children's Bureau, which is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

"National Adoption Month is a celebration of those members in our community who have taken a chance on children and made them a member of their family," says Eugene Tetrick, supervisor of the Substitute Care Unit (foster care/adoption) for the Lake County Department of Jobs and Family Services. "These people had the courage and determination to 'change their normal' by bringing a child in need into their home."

Beverly Torres, deputy director at the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services, says many children are in county custody because of abuse, neglect, a parent's mental health issues and other reasons. "When they can't be safely reunified with their caregivers and when parental rights are terminated, we owe these kids a family. November highlights foster care, and especially adoptive care, for our families and children."

In honor of National Adoption Month, Today's Family answers questions about adopting youngsters currently in the foster care system.

What is the difference between fostering and adopting?

Foster parents are state-certified caregivers, who provide a temporary home for children while social service agencies attempt to reunify youngsters with their families. If reunification with birth parents does not happen, the public agency holding temporary custody of the child receives permanent custody of them, matches them with an adoptive family (most often in the dually licensed foster/adoptive home they are currently in) and works with the adoptive family to finalize an adoption through probate court.

Who is eligible to adopt children in foster care in Ohio?

Prospective adoptive parents must be at least 18 years old, have sufficient income to meet the child's



Cameron is an ambitious young man with big dreams of owning a Tesla dealership one day. He's always excited to visit car dealerships and, when he's not focused on cars, he enjoys reading, playing with Legos, and talking about Pokémon.

Cameron is looking for a forever home where he can pursue his passions in a caring and supportive environment. For more info about Cameron, please contact Gohnnie Jackson at 216-881-3073 or Maureen Byrdsong-Fritz at 216-881-4695.

basic needs and be in good physical, emotional and mental health. They may be single, married, part of a same-sex couple or the child's older sibling. If part of a couple, they must be in a stable relationship for at least one year. Education level, religion and home ownership are not factors.

How great is the need?

Every day, children throughout Ohio enter the custody of children services. This results in 2,000 to 3,000 children at any given moment waiting to be adopted in Ohio. The need for adoptive families is great and every child deserves a forever family.

According to Torres, Cuyahoga County has permanent custody of 900 children. The county has a permanency plan, whether it's through adoption, legal custody, or some other arrangement, for about two-thirds (slightly more than 600) of them; the remainder are still in need of forever families.

Tetrick adds, "From 2020–2024 we finalized adoptions for 35 children. With those adoptions, our foster homes close as their families are now 'complete' when the adoption is finalized. Therefore we are continuously trying to recruit new families to replace the ones that left after they completed their families."

And the need is definitely very real as Lake County has nearly 100 children in their custody in 2024.

So many people wish to adopt. Why haven't these children found forever families?

It's important to match youngsters with families who are committed to meeting the children's specific needs for the long term. Many children in foster care deal with physical, psychological or behavioral concerns as they all have been exposed to abuse and/or neglect.

"Any time a child moves from one home to another, it's a traumatic experience," Torres ex-

plains. "When kids come into our custody, they are experiencing a trauma in their life, a separation, a loss. That comes out in different ways for different children. Sometimes they've been removed from their home because of mental-health issues within the family that are not being managed in a healthy way, and that child is experiencing the same mental health issue. The specific needs of our children dictate the kind of families we're looking for."

Placing older children, such as teenagers, can be challenging because some people prefer to adopt infants or toddlers. Keeping siblings together can also be difficult if families wish to adopt one child at a time.

What is the cost?

"Oftentimes, those who become licensed as foster and adoptive parents through the county are looking to grow their family through adoption as the costs of private adoptions are too expensive," Tetrick says. "Some costs involved in the adoption process are court costs for the adoption and paying for updated birth certificates, which are minimal comparatively to private adoptions. Adoption of a child in the custody of Lake County costs less than \$200."

Cuyahoga County's Torres says a required fire inspection may run \$30-\$100. If the compulsory home study visit reveals the need for making home improvements to meet Ohio mandates, there may be costs associated with those upgrades.

By comparison, voluntary adoption of a newborn at a nonprofit organization in Ohio typically costs \$10,000-\$25,000, according to the Franklin County Law Library website.

I want to adopt a child currently in foster care. Now what?

Start with contacting the county agency. Cuyahoga residents may call 216-881-5775 or visit <https://hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/programs/detail/foster-care-and-adoption>. Those in Lake County may dial 440-350-4218 and those in Geauga County may call 440-285-9141.

According to Torres, prospective adoptive parents are required to attend preservice training to become licensed as a foster or adoptive parent. Once licensed, they will complete an application and undergo a home study, which includes a fire inspection. Following approval, the county agency will work to match the potential adoptive family with a child or sibling group. After a match is made, an adoption assessor and the child's social worker will present the prospective adoptive parent with the child's social, medical, and educational records, photographs and other pertinent information. The adult and child will then have preplacement visits in the adoptive home and the child's current home. After the child lives with the potential adoptive family for a trial period, a judge or magistrate can finalize the adoption. Classes, support groups and referrals to community agencies will then be available to the new family.



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Recognizing depression in children

A guide for parents and caregivers

Depression is often thought of as an adult issue, but children can experience it, too. Unfortunately, recognizing depression in children can be challenging. Children may not have the vocabulary to express their feelings, and their behaviors can manifest in ways that parents might misinterpret. Understanding the signs and symptoms is crucial for early intervention and support.

Understanding childhood depression

Children can experience various types of depression, including major depressive disorder, persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), and even seasonal affective disorder. While it's normal for children to feel sad or moody from time to time, persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or irritability can be signs of something more serious.

Common signs of depression in children

Changes in mood: One of the most noticeable signs of depression is a change in mood. If your child seems consistently sad, irritable, or withdrawn, it's worth paying attention to. They may cry easily or express feelings of hopelessness.

Loss of interest: Children typically have activities they enjoy. A significant decline in interest in those activities—be it sports, hobbies, or social interactions—can be a red flag. If your child suddenly loses interest in playing with friends or engaging in favorite activities, it may indicate depression.

Changes in appetite or sleep patterns: Depression can affect physical well-being. You might notice your child overeating or not eating enough, as well as changes in their sleep patterns—insomnia or sleeping excessively. These changes can be indicators that something is wrong.

Difficulty concentrating: If your child struggles to focus on schoolwork or everyday tasks, it may signal emotional distress. This difficulty can manifest as poor academic performance, trouble completing assignments, or forgetfulness.

Physical complaints: Children may express emotional pain through physical symptoms. Complaints of stomachaches, headaches, or other unexplained physical issues can be a way of manifesting their emotional state. If medical evaluations find no physical causes, consider the possibility of depression.

Social withdrawal: A child who once thrived in social settings may begin to isolate themselves. They might avoid friends, family gatherings, or even classroom interactions. This withdrawal can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and hopelessness.

Low energy or fatigue: If your child seems consistently tired or lacks the energy to engage in daily activities, it could be a sign of depression. They may appear sluggish or find it hard to get out of bed.

Feelings of worthlessness or guilt: Children may express feelings of inadequacy or guilt over small mistakes. Comments like “I’m no good at anything” or “I always mess

See **DEPRESSION** page 13

**Back In Time
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Friday, November 29

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Saturday, November 30 & Sunday, December 1

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- Visit our craft show where you can find *unique gifts* and holiday decorations. **9 AM–4 PM**
- Take advantage of the *wrapping station* to beautifully package your Christmas presents. **Noon–3 PM**
- Visit the Crossroads Store for one-of-a-kind *holiday gifts* for your loved ones. **10 AM–5 PM**
- Experience a step back in time with *five house tours* showcasing Christmas decor from years past. **11:30 AM–4:30 PM**
- Enjoy delicious *snacks & lunch* for sale. **11:30 AM–4:30 PM**
- Enjoy a beautiful *holiday music* performance at the Auburn church on the green. **6–7 PM**

PLUS! Discover the enchanting scavenger hunt-themed tree at the Crossroads Store, available for viewing from November 29 to December 23, 2024.



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Beary Merry Craft Show Handcrafted Market returns December 4 & 5

It's holiday shopping time at the 38th annual Beary Merry Christmas Show Handcrafted Market on Wednesday, December 4 and Thursday, December 5, 2024 at LaVera Party Center, 32200 Chardon Road, in Willoughby Hills. Hours are 11AM-9 PM both days.

Beary Merry showcases over 60 talented artisans from Ohio and Pennsylvania, displaying unique, handmade/crafted holiday gifts for your shopping pleasure, with a raffle extravaganza to benefit Susan G. Komen. The raffle consists of over 60 baskets for everyone on your holiday shopping list. The raffle gift baskets include baskets of lottery tickets, spa packages, dinners, toys, family fun, sports, holiday decor and so much more.

Delicious lunch and dinner prepared by LaVera will be available for purchase. As a corporate sponsor, Monreal Srnick Funerals & Cremations of Eastlake is sponsoring an hourly door prize drawing of a \$25 Beary Merry Show gift certificate.



In addition, LaVera will be catering family takeout dinners on Wednesday December 4. The pre-ordered dinners will cost \$55 with \$10 donated to Susan G. Komen. The dinner serves 4-6 people, and must be ordered in advance at la-vera.com/bearymerry. The delicious menu consists of chicken parmesan, tossed salad with house dressing, cavatelli, with LaVera signature red sauce, Italian meatballs, and garlic bread.

The Beary Merry Show, is a drop-off location for a toy drive for kids, an annual program for families in need during the holidays. Last year, 15,707 toys were distributed. The goal is "to make all children smile on Christmas morning" and we are here to help achieve this goal!

Bring a toy or a cash donation to the show to make a child happy this Christmas.

If you have questions, please contact Delene Wojtla 440-487-0661, or email Thebearymerryshow@gmail.com.

Depression from page 12

up" should not be dismissed, as they can indicate deeper emotional struggles.

Increased anger or irritability: Some children may express depression through anger. If your child is frequently frustrated or angry, it could be a sign of underlying emotional issues rather than just typical childhood rebellion.

Thoughts of death or suicide: This is the most obvious and concerning sign. If your child expresses thoughts about wanting to die or discusses suicide, it is crucial to take these statements seriously. Seek immediate professional help.

What to do if you suspect depression

If you notice several of these signs persisting for more than two weeks, it's essential to take action:

Open a dialogue: Create a safe space for your child to talk about their feelings. Use open-ended questions and encourage them to express themselves without judgment.

Seek professional help: Consult a pediatrician or mental health

professional specializing in children. They can provide a proper assessment and recommend treatment options, which may include therapy or medication.

Educate yourself: Learn more about childhood depression to understand what your child is experiencing. This knowledge can empower you to support them effectively.

Encourage healthy habits: Promote regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep. These can all contribute to improved mental health.

Stay involved: Monitor your child's mood and behaviors. Continue to engage with them and provide the support they need.

Recognizing depression in children requires vigilance, empathy, and a willingness to address the issue. By understanding the signs and taking proactive steps, you can provide the necessary support for your child to navigate their feelings and seek help when needed. Remember, early intervention can make a significant difference in a child's mental health journey.



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Preschool - 8



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History of Thanksgiving – A celebration of gratitude

Thanksgiving is a cherished holiday in the United States, celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. Its origins are rooted in the early 17th century, when English Pilgrims, seeking religious freedom, sailed to the New World aboard the Mayflower. The journey was perilous, and upon their arrival in 1620, the Pilgrims faced a harsh winter in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Many perished due to cold, hunger, and disease.

In the spring of 1621, the surviving Pilgrims were aided by the indigenous Wampanoag people, who taught them essential agricultural techniques and helped them establish a sustainable food source. This collaboration between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag laid the foundation for what would later be celebrated as Thanksgiving.

The first Thanksgiving feast took place in the autumn of 1621, marking the Pilgrims' successful harvest. It was a three-day event attended by 53 Pilgrims and around 90 Native Americans. The meal likely included wild fowl, venison, corn, beans, squash, and other seasonal foods. The menu was quite different from today's traditional turkey dinners. This gathering was a time of thanksgiving for the Pilgrims' survival and the bountiful harvest, embodying a spirit of cooperation and gratitude.

However, the relationship between European settlers and Native Americans grew increasingly strained over the following decades. As more



settlers arrived, land disputes and cultural conflicts became prevalent, leading to a series of wars and the displacement of many indigenous peoples. The historical context of Thanksgiving thus carries complex narratives, blending themes of gratitude and cooperation with those of conflict and loss.

As years went by, various colonies and states celebrated days of thanksgiving sporadically. However, it was not until the mid-19th century that Thanksgiving began to take on a more formalized role as a national holiday. Sarah Josepha Hale, a prominent writer and editor, played a crucial role in this movement. For over 17 years, she campaigned through her writings to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday. Her efforts caught the attention of President Abraham Lincoln, who, amid the Civil War, proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving in 1863. Lincoln's declaration aimed to unify the nation and encourage gratitude amidst

turmoil, setting the date for the final Thursday in November.

Thanksgiving continued to evolve throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1941, Congress officially established Thanksgiving as the fourth Thursday in November, where it has remained ever since.

Over the years, Thanksgiving has transformed into a day characterized by family gatherings, feasting, and traditions like the turkey dinner, parades, and football games. This festive occasion promotes themes of gratitude, togetherness, and reflection on the year's blessings.

However, it's essential to acknowledge the complex legacy of Thanksgiving, particularly concerning Native American history. For many indigenous peoples, this holiday represents a painful reminder of the colonization, displacement, and cultural erasure they experienced. Efforts to recognize and honor these perspectives have led to movements like "National Day of Mourning," observed on the same day as Thanksgiving, which seeks to raise awareness about the historical and ongoing struggles faced by Native American communities.

In conclusion, Thanksgiving is a multifaceted holiday that encapsulates themes of gratitude and reflection, while also inviting deeper conversations about history and cultural heritage. As we gather to celebrate, it's vital to remember the stories and experiences of all people connected to this day.



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Fun Thanksgiving Facts



Pumpkin pie was not served at the first Thanksgiving meal.

The Pilgrims didn't have ovens for baking and they lacked the butter and flour necessary for pie crust. Culinary historians believe the first Thanksgiving meal consisted largely of seafood, like mussels, lobster, and clams. Diners almost certainly ate venison and likely some assortment of wild fowl—turkey, duck, goose and swan.

An estimated 240 million turkeys will be raised in the U.S. this year.

Of the 240 million turkeys raised this year, 45 million—or 18 percent—will be baked, grilled, and fried this Thanksgiving.

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621, but it wasn't observed as a national holiday until 1863.

Sarah Josepha Hale, the woman who wrote "Mary Had a Little Lamb," wrote letters for 17 years campaigning to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. Finally, President Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday 240 years after the tradition started in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The TV dinner was invented thanks to Thanksgiving.

In 1953, a Swanson employee accidentally

ordered too much turkey—260 tons too much! The frozen turkeys were taking up space in 10 refrigerated train cars when a company salesman suggested preparing and packaging the turkey with sides in compartmentalized aluminum trays. Swanson sold 5,000 TV dinners in 1953. The following year, they sold 10 million!

There weren't any balloons at the first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 1924.

The first parade featured Macy's employees, floats, and animals from the Central Park Zoo. Large animal shaped balloons made their first appearance in the parade in 1927.

Cranberries aren't just for eating.

Native Americans used cranberries to treat wounds and dye arrows. You can also find them in many holiday crafts including creative center pieces, wreaths and garlands.

Big Bird's costume on Sesame Street is made of turkey feathers that have been dyed yellow.

The American Plume & Fancy Feather company is responsible for making Big Bird's suit which includes 4,000 turkey feathers.



Wild Winter Lights at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is transforming into a winter wonderland for the sixth 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 beginning Nov. 12.

Wild Winter Lights features over 1.5 million lights across holiday-themed areas including Enchanted Forest and Santa's North Pole Lodge, where guests can take photos with Santa Claus. Enjoy a dynamic musical light show featuring an enchanting 50-foot tree. As part of the event, be sure to get your Golden Ticket with the purchase of a ride around Waterfowl Lake on Cleveland Metroparks Railroad.

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.

Wild Winter Lights as well as the Wild Winter Lights Drive-Thru Experience runs from 5:30–10:30 PM on select dates from Tue., Nov. 12 through Mon., Dec. 30.

Tickets are limited, and advance online reservations are strongly encouraged. Reserve your spot at FutureForWildlife.org/lights.



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ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday

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Cleveland Zoological Society
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Greater Cleveland Aquarium hosts Hunger Network Drive

Seven-day event offers a \$7 discount on admission when you donate a non-perishable food item or necessity.

This holiday season, take the opportunity to fight food insecurity as you dive into an aquatic adventure.

Back for its 10th year, Greater Cleveland Aquarium is partnering with Hunger Network for Nourish Our Neighbors, a seven-day drive collecting canned vegetables, dry beans, nut butter, whole grain cereals and other urgently needed items like toilet paper, deodorant and tampons.

Guests who drop off an item from Hunger Network's wish list at the Aquarium ticket counter between Wednesday, November 13 – Tuesday, November 19, 10am – 4pm, receive \$7 off same-day admission to the Flats West Bank family destination.

"We're honored to once again be able to spotlight an organization focused on building a healthier community, and we can't wait to once again load up the truck with team and guest donations," says Greater Cleveland Aquarium General Manager Stephanie White.

In Ohio, 11.5% of households face food insecurity—significantly higher

than the national average.

To combat that statistic, Hunger Network goes beyond traditional food banks—with its food rescue program, Midtown Market and strategically placed hunger centers—utilizing innovative collaboration to build a healthy, hunger-free community.

As one of Cuyahoga County's largest emergency food providers, the organization serves more than 45,000 individuals each month, paying for 95% of the food directly. This makes donations, volunteers and partnerships critical to expanding their efforts.

Ready to spend quality time with friends and family while making a difference for others? Each donation of a healthy staple or common necessary equals one discount per guest—limited to one adult or child. The offer is valid for same-day admission only and cannot be used in conjunction with any other rate or offer. For details, visit greaterclevelandaquarium.com/event/nourish-our-neighbors.

Country Lights Drive-Thru

Lake Metroparks Farmpark

Nov. 30–Dec. 1 and Dec. 6–8, 13–15, 20–22, 27–29

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 Nov. 30–Dec. 1, Dec. 6–8, 13–15, 20–22 and 27–29 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.

See website for more info.

Candy Land It's Wild in Ohio November 23–January 1

Fun for the whole family, the indoor holiday tradition continues as the Candy Land game comes to life, but with a natural twist, taking you on a colorful adventure as you discover what's wild in Ohio.

In addition, enjoy a themed craft, scavenger hunts, hands-on exhibits and much more! Shop at The Nature Store for unique nature-themed gifts and enjoy hot chocolate in Snowshoe Lodge.

Wild Weekends

Each Saturday, enjoy an outdoor campfire with s'mores from noon to 3 PM and animal chats at 1, 2 and 3 PM. On Sundays, experience meet-the-keeper chats in the Wildlife Yard at 1, 2 and 3 PM.

Candy Land It's Wild in Ohio begins November 23 and is open 10



AM–5 PM daily through January 1. The exhibit will be closed on Thanksgiving, 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 www.lakemetroparks.com.

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

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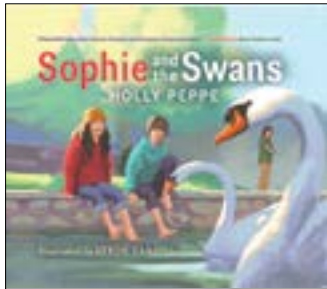
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Today's Family BOOK — CLUB —

From kindness tales to question-able smells, these fall Kidlit book picks will have readers smiling, laughing, and reveling in the ambience of autumn.



Sophie and the Swans

By Holly Peppe

Sophie is a little girl who lives beside a lake and makes friends with a pair of swans who visit her every day. One day, when a bully starts to torment the swans, Sophie rushes to defend them not by attacking the bully, but by showing him kindness when he gets into trouble on the lake. A heartwarming children's book that tackles important themes of kindness, empathy, and bullying prevention. Ages 3-8.



Adventures at Lake Omigosh

By Scott Sollers

Legend has it that there is a mysterious creature that lurks in the depths of the lake at Camp Horizon. One day, when campers Harry and Felix decide to go canoeing, a bad storm arrives, putting the two in danger. Who will come to their rescue when their canoe flips over and the boys are left stranded in the middle of the lake? Young readers will love the sense of adventure and wonder in this book. Ages 3-8.

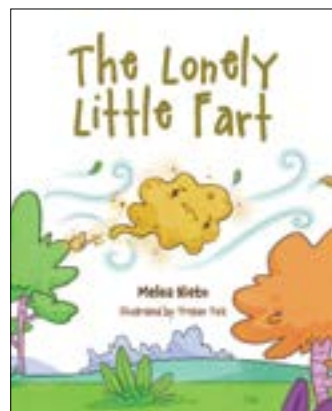
This list was compiled by Alysson Bourque, an award-winning, bestselling children's author and industry expert. All these books are available at Amazon.com.



Kloe's New Start

By K.M. Selvidge

Kloe can't wait to get started at her new school... but when her brother Wreny starts acting out, will she end up stuck in his shadow? Or will she be able to make her own way and make others see her for who she truly is? A heartwarming tale that teaches kids about making friends, feeling included and learning to be your own person. Ages 8-12.



The Lonely Little Fart

By Melea Nieto

Being too stinky, Little Fart is out of place in a world where everyone else seems to fit in. Despite facing rejection at every turn, the lonely Little Fart does not give up, because even the smelliest among us can have the biggest hearts. A lesson in perseverance, "The Lonely Little Fart" teaches young readers that no matter how different, everyone can find a place where they belong. Through the power of friendship, laughter, and acceptance, this tale will show children that sometimes the best of friends come in the most unexpected forms. Ages 4-8.



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- Novelty Ice Pop Marker: A playful addition to the set, that is not just fun to use, but also perfect for adding bold, vibrant strokes to their artwork.



CONNETIX 50 Piece Pastel Transport Pack

www.connetixtiles.com

Ages 3+

Designed with vehicle enthusiasts in mind, this pack takes magnetic tile play up a gear! Featuring an iconic REVERSIBLE transport base in light grey, two clear motion bases with REAL rubber wheels, plus a range of magnetic tile shapes, the CONNETIX 50 Piece Pastel Transport Pack allows you to imagine and create endless vehicle designs. It also expands the range of colors children can explore with eight pastel colors in hues of pink, berry, peach, mint, emerald, lemon, violet and sapphire. All tiles are made using non-toxic ABS plastic that is BPA and Phthalate free, ultrasonically sealed and riveted for extra safety.



Pretendables School Set

www.FatBrainToys.com

Ages 3+

Class is in session with this portable school desk. Open it up and you'll find a magnetic whiteboard, two lidded storage spaces, plus plenty of supplies including chalk, magnetic letters and numbers, magnetic tangram shapes, sight word cards, math cards, and more!

LEGO Stationery 10 Pack Gel Pens

Ages 6+

The LEGO Gel Pen 10-pack offers the rainbow of colors you need to take your writing to the next level. Each pen measures approximately 6.25" long and comes with 2-1x4 genuine LEGO plates. The unique square design won't roll away from you.



Tech Deck Sk8 Crew Ultra Sk8 Bus (Tech Deck)

Ages 5+

Fingerboard in style with this 2-in-1 transforming bus playset that folds out into a fully-fledged skate park with rails & ramps! Grind, master tricks & catch big air on various bus parts with the included Sk8 Crew figure & Tech Deck fingerboard. When you're done skating, fold up the ramps & place everything inside for easy storage & on-the-go fun. Compatible with all Sk8 Crew figures (sold separately).



My Little Artist Playset (GUND)

Ages 0+

This whimsical five-piece playset inspires future artists through tactile play with different sounds and textures! It includes an orange paint tube squeaker toy, a red crayon sound toy, a crinkling paintbrush and a mini painter bear. When playtime's over, everything stores inside the included 7.5" paint palette carrying case for fun on the go. Machine washable.

Solana the Giraffe (GUND)

Ages 1+

Solana is a graceful & gentle giraffe that brings a loving touch to every snuggle session. This 10" giraffe lovingly stretches her neck down while her little 6" calf reaches upward for a nuzzle. She brings safari play to life with realistic details that are great for play and display in any budding explorer's nursery or room. Surface washable.



Nex Playground

www.nexplayground.com

There's something for everyone! These video games are a perfect combination of dance, sports and fitness that the whole family can enjoy. Great for promoting movement, focus and coordination. Just play like you were born to play. The video game console features an AI-powered camera & motion

learning system. With simple, natural gestures and no extra sensors or clunky wearables, everyone can jump right in. Playground is the life of the party. Nex Playground comes with five games including Fruit Ninja. A separate purchase of a Quarterly (\$49) or Annual Play Pass (\$89) subscription is required to access the full catalog of 20+ games. New games added to Play Pass in monthly drops.

eeboo

Learn to Draw Wild Animals

www.eeboo.com • Age 5+

A thoughtfully designed introduction to drawing wild animals in sequential steps. Lessons are divided into four sections are organized by habitat, each part ending with a two-page landscape spread for you to populate with the creatures and plants you have learned to draw!



32 pages of instructions teach one how to draw characters, animals or environments. Also includes a fold-out page of 50 colorful stickers. Book is 8.5" x 11".

Other titles available include Learn to Draw Magical Creatures and Learn to Draw Dinosaurs, and more!

eeboo

Sharks & Friends Shiny Stickers

www.eeboo.com • Ages 3+

This generous collection of Sharks and Rays will inspire imaginative sticker-play for all ages, featuring vivid artwork by Linda Bleck enhanced with beautiful holographic foil. Over 200 stickers!



- Develops fine-motor skills, confidence, and imagination.
- Includes 12 pages of over 200 shiny stickers in three different sizes; 8"x8" sticker book has die-cut handle for on-the-go fun; Sharks are identified on sticker sheet.

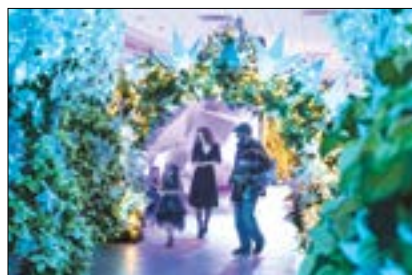
Other titles include Love Stickers, Dinosaur Stickers, Magical Creature Stickers and more!

Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience opens November 23

Year two of northeast Ohio's most exciting winter show, Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience, at the Cleveland Botanical Garden is just around the corner! This year, expect even more from this winter spectacular, including an expanded outdoor lighting display and decorated glasshouse biomes. Frost will transform the indoor and outdoor gardens creating an immersive new world for the holiday season.

New this year, in the glasshouses, visitors will meet Raine and Shine, spirits of the wet and dry seasons celebrating winter in other parts of the world. New displays and lights will guide people into the Spiny Desert of Madagascar and through the Costa Rica Cloud Forest, allowing them to meet plenty of new friends along the way.

In the outdoor gardens, an expanded holiday light trail will take visitors into more areas of the garden than even before, including the newly renovated Hershey Children's Garden. Visitors will make their way through a dazzling moving light



tunnel, a rainbow-lit rose garden, and other over-the-top light displays and photo-ops.

In addition to these exciting new elements, visitors can expect returning favorites, such as dozens of creative gingerbread houses and festive trees and wreaths.

Wintery activities, interactive displays, an oversized slide, storybook trail and marshmallow roasting in the evenings are just the beginning. Kids of all ages will be immersed in the joy and wonder of the winter season!

Frost will open to the public November 23–January 5. Advance online ticket purchase is required. Prices vary by day of the week and entry time. Tickets now on sale at holdenfg.org.

Auburn Arts District hosts Holiday Market at Reithoffer's

Reithoffer's Holiday Market is taking place on Friday and Saturday, November 8 and 9. Hours on Friday are 5–10 PM and Saturday 11 AM–9 PM. These markets are an expansion of Cleveland Art's maker's markets at the Reithoffer Gallery (17711 Ravena Rd. Chagrin Falls, OH 44023) where vendors will sell their wares, local musicians perform & live glass blowing demos take place at Cleveland Art, located a short walk from Reithoffer's. There is no admission fee!

Cleveland Art and the team at Reithoffer's are excited to bring talented artisans together once again, further strengthening Auburn's artistic community and providing unique, local shopping opportunities for guests. This market is a fantastic opportunity to pick up holiday gifts

for everyone on your list!

From eclectic sculptures, jewelry and home decor to locally-produced maple syrup, baked items, soaps/beauty products, candles and unique vintage/antique goods, there will be no shortage of unique shopping opportunities at Reithoffer's.

In addition to talented local vendors and artisans, this event will feature Island City food truck during market hours and musical performances by David Wolfhope on Friday evening starting at 8 PM. and Jack Fiorille on Saturday evening starting at 8 PM.

For more information follow Reithoffer's and Auburn Arts District on Instagram. For any other questions please email events@clevelandart.com.

www.TodaysFamilyMagazine.com

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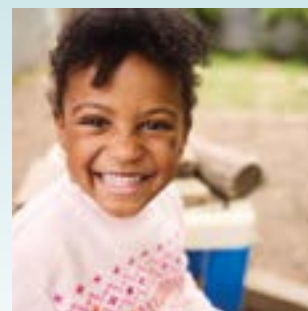
Visit ruffingmontessori.net or call the Admissions Office at 216.321.7571 to schedule a personal tour or register for Ruffing's Fall Open House.

Admissions Open House

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