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## Chair-ity

Organization helps young adults who have aged out of the foster care system

## Christmas around the world

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Organization helps fulfill dreams of children dealing with adversity





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**TODAY'S**  
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# Local organization helps young adults who have aged out of the foster care system

## Chair-ity helps provide furniture and mattresses to help get them started

By Sophia Filipiak

Many of us have spent a night or two lounging on an old hand-me-down couch. It might have a few mystery stains here and there—maybe some unsightly scratches from an ornery cat, but it’s comfortable, sturdy and, most importantly, reliable. This chair, couch or other possibly outdated heirloom furniture was probably passed down from a parent, aunt or other family member who decided to upgrade to something more fashionable. This is a classic story familiar to college students and newlyweds, but for many, the simple necessity of functional furniture is out of reach. Countless young adults in northeast Ohio find themselves struggling to acquire basic home-furnishing necessities after aging out of the foster care system. One organization is on a mission to furnish the homes of these recent foster graduates.

Maria Paparella, the founder and executive director of Chair-ity, saw the struggle aged-out youth face once they are no longer financially supported by the foster care system. While some foster graduates are invited to remain with their foster family after the state of Ohio revokes its



A young mother and her daughter enjoying a sofa provided to them by Chair-ity.

financial support, others are very suddenly forced to find an apartment at 18 years old. Paparella’s goal is to ease the burden young people face when they are abruptly uprooted from their home and

forced to move into an unfurnished apartment. Many foster graduates do not even have the means to purchase a mattress to sleep on when they leave the system. Chair-ity acquires and redistributes furniture to foster graduates in need. Paparella and her team have been able to fully furnish many Ohio homes and apartments for those who are struggling. “We’re making a really big impact in areas that are overlooked and underserved,” says Paparella.

Jaz Robinson, Chair-ity’s program manager, explains that “this specific population of young adults kind of slips through the cracks.” While many programs exist to help children in foster care, few programs are actively working to solve the problems these same young people face when they have aged out of the system. “At 18, you are technically an adult,” says Robinson, “but the world is not that easy and straightforward.” While most people still rely on the support of their relatives as they gradually transition into adulthood, those who grew up in foster care may be very suddenly expected to take on the personal responsibilities of being an adult. “We try to fill

*Continued on page 5*



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# Believe in Dreams celebrates 10 years of helping children to realize dreams

By Deanna Adams

We all have a story, and we all have a dream. And there is one organization based out of Beachwood whose mission it is to turn a negative into a positive.

Believe in Dreams is a nonprofit that fulfills the dreams of children who are economically disadvantaged and/or have survived a nonmedical adversity. For the past 10 years, it has been their mission to bring smiles to kids, ages 1–18, by providing them access to enriching opportunities and experiences, a connection with community, and hope for the future for them and their families.

The idea was born out of tragedy. In 2009, Cleveland entrepreneur and owner of the John Roberts Salons, John DiJulius III, lost his wife, Stacy, mother of his three sons. Faced with raising his three young sons, DiJulius thought of ways to make a difference in other children dealing with hardship and how he might bring joy

back to their lives. And so, he created Believe in Dreams in 2014.

“I started out as a volunteer because John needed help,” says executive director Katie Eichenauer, who is a social worker. “I was happy to help build on the program, and it grew pretty fast.” Their staff consists of other social workers and professionals, along with interns.

Some of the struggles the children may go through include the loss of a parent or another loved one, abuse, poverty, and homelessness. If a child is eligible, the only other requirement is that someone other than a family member must nominate them, which includes teachers or other professionals.

Eichenauer adds that the organization is not in competition with other agencies like them but rather works in collaboration with them. “We complement those other amazing works out there because we all share the same goals. To give children more opportunities that they



wouldn't have otherwise.”

Much of what they do develops through word of mouth and help from the community. When Kelly, mother of five, lost her husband four years ago, her children's ages were 11, 10, 7, 5 and 2. She hadn't heard of Believe in Dreams until one of her children's teachers called saying that each of her kids had been nominated to receive a dream.

“We live in such a great community,” says Kelly, who resides in Thompson. “When word got out about their dreams, the whole school decided to get involved.”

This meant a big surprise for the kids. “We live in a small house, so when it came time for the dreams to be announced, they ended up having it in the school cafeteria,” she says. “All the teachers rounded up the entire school, and when the kids walked in and they saw everyone there, including their dad's best friends, their eyes got so big. They were just shocked. It was particularly special because it was to be their first Christmas without their father.”

Among the things Kelly's children received included winter jackets and boots, gift cards for Peek 'n Peak Ski Resort and Busy Bees Pottery & Art Studio, much-needed dressers for the girls, a power wheels Jeep for the only boy, and a weekend at Kalahari Resorts in Sandusky.

“I was completely amazed at how much they did for my kids. It was a very emotional day for everyone. There were tears of joy and it gave them some good memories of that sad time in their lives.”

Best of all, the children learned

a life lesson that will last long after the dreams were completed. “They learned how good it feels when people do kind things, and that there are still reasons to smile. They now love giving back and doing things for others. They are very active with the alumni events, such as the annual BID 5K Race at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.”

Today, Kelly says her children, Makenna, 15, Aliza, 13, Alaina, 11, Stella, 9 and Lars, 6, are all doing well, and they now have some wonderful memories of that time, thanks to everyone involved with Believe in Dreams.

Lettie, who lives in Cleveland, is raising her granddaughter, along with her husband, after their daughter's death eight years ago when the girl was just 5. “Believe in Dreams is just a wonderful organization. I will say that when they contacted me, I was hesitant. We don't get outside help and didn't want anything extra or to take advantage, so when they asked I said, ‘let's keep it simple. A need instead of a want.’ So my granddaughter, who is now 12, received a laptop and she got a dance lessons package, which she really enjoys.”

Lettie noted several things that she likes about the agency. “There are no political or religions tied in, they help those from all walks of life. And it doesn't have to be an immediate tragedy, either, just something that altered a child's day-to-day life. Plus, they don't forget you afterward. They have an alumni program, which allows us opportunities to participate

*Continued on page 5*

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## Believe in Dreams

from page 4

in their future events and give back to others in a tough spot.”

So far, the organization has fulfilled 775 dreams and hopes to keep moving forward. “We’re excited about our 10th anniversary,” Eichenauer says. “But we always need a little help from the community.”

In celebrating this milestone, they are currently asking those who can to help them turn 10 new “dreamers into believers” by donating \$10 or more, then share why they “believe in dreams” on social media. Their goal is to raise \$15,000 to fulfill 10 new dreams by the end of 2024.

For more information, see their website at [www.believeindreams.org](http://www.believeindreams.org). Or call 440-484-2376. Believe in Dreams is located at 26300 Cedar Road, Suite 1105, Beachwood, Ohio 44122.

*Photo provided by Believe in Dreams*



## Chair-ity from page 3

the gap that’s missing for these kids,” says Robinson, who explains that Chair-ity steps in to emulate a family member who would normally provide hand-me-down furniture.

Robinson highlights that there are layers to the issue of foster graduates lacking financial resources to reliably support themselves. “Seventy percent of women who age out of foster care are pregnant by 21,” explains Robinson. “This year alone, 50% of the young adults we served have children.” This means that the children of foster graduates are also being negatively impacted by a lack of financial support the foster care system once provided them as minors.

One particular family from eastern Cuyahoga County that was helped by Chair-ity was a young, single mother and her hearing-impaired daughter. With a lack of support from the government, this mother and daughter spent many nights couch surfing (staying with a series of different friends or relatives, sleeping somewhere temporary such as a couch, because you do not have your own place to live) before they



finally found stability in their very own apartment. One major problem foster graduates who are under 21 run into is being denied living space rentals because they do not have a co-signer. Luckily, the mother and her child were able to find an apartment complex that did not require a co-signer. This is where Chair-ity steps in to help and, through generous community donations, was able to fully furnish the family’s apartment.

This past week, a pregnant foster graduate from Lake County did not even have a mattress to sleep on. Chair-ity accommodated the young mother by ensuring she had a bed after her move-in date changed to a much earlier time. They were

desperate to give her this simple necessity many take for granted so she did not have to sleep on the floor before giving birth. The rest of the apartment was later furnished by Chair-ity. Robinson explains that owning a bed to sleep on is the basis of human dignity. For this reason, mattresses and bed frames are the only items that Chair-ity does not accept in used donations and instead are purchased brand new.

Chair-ity has pickup sites in Summit and Cuyahoga County. Most of the redistributed furniture is donated directly by members of the community. Monetary donations and donor purchases through Chair-ity’s Amazon wish list help the organization acquire additional furniture for those in need. “It takes a team effort,” exclaims Robinson. Everyone faces their own set of struggles as they come of age. Having limited access to basic home furnishings should not be one of them. Chair-ity is working to change that.

For more information or to inquire about donating, please visit <https://www.chair-ity.org>.

*Photos provided by Chair-ity*



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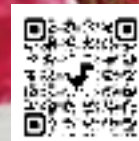
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# Winter tips for seniors: stay safe and ready

Winter can present unique challenges for seniors, especially with issues like icy sidewalks, cold temperatures, and seasonal illnesses. Here are some important tips for ensuring winter safety for seniors:

### Stay warm

- Wear multiple layers of clothing, including thermal, to stay extra warm. Don't forget hats, gloves, and scarves.
- Ensure your heating systems are working properly.

### Prevent falls

- Wear nonslip, insulated, and waterproof shoes or boots with good traction.
- Keep walkways and entryways clear of ice and snow. Use salt or sand to provide traction.
- Consider using a cane or walker that is equipped for winter conditions or use trekking poles for added stability.

### Stay active

- Participate in indoor physical activities tailored to you, like chair

yoga, indoor cycling, or light stretching, to maintain mobility and balance.

- Consider joining a balance or fitness class designed for older adults, if available.

### Stay connected

- Encourage family or friends to check in with you regularly, especially during times of extreme weather.
- Keep a list of emergency contacts handy, including your neighbors, friends, and family members who are key to your well-being.

### Nutrition

- Remember to drink water even though you might not feel thirsty in colder weather.
- Keep a balanced diet to help boost your immune system.
- Consider setting up Meals on Wheels through the Lake County Council on Aging.

### Protect against illness

- Schedule flu shots and any other vaccinations as recommended.

- Wash and sanitize your hands as often as needed to keep your hands clean and prevent the spread of germs.

### Driving safely

- Avoid driving during severe weather conditions and use public transportation or arrange for rides with people you trust when you need it.
- If you have to travel, keep an emergency kit in your car with blankets, food, water, a flashlight, and a first aid kit.

### Manage health conditions

- If the weather gets so bad that you can't get to the pharmacy, make sure you have enough of your medications on hand.
- Make regular visits to your healthcare providers to manage existing health issues and monitor seasonal sicknesses.

### Emergency preparedness

- Keep up to date with weather forecasts and prepare for storms or severe cold weather.



- Develop a clear emergency plan which outlines what to do in case of severe weather or power outages.

### Local services

- Know and use your county and local resource providers such as: the Council on Aging, Lifeline, senior centers, churches and emergency shelter facilities.
- Follow weather notifications and take heed of local advisories.

You can use these strategies and lean on your communities to help navigate the winter months with greater safety and comfort.

~Submitted by  
Lake County General Health District



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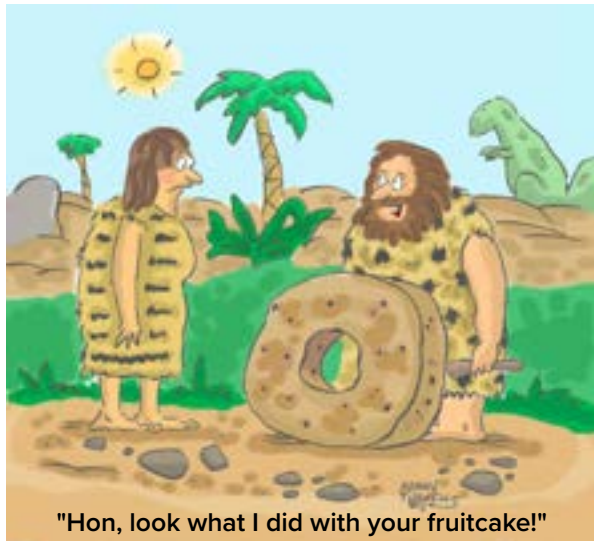


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# Just For Laughs



"Hon, look what I did with your fruitcake!"

### DAD JOKES – SANTA EDITION

- Why does Santa collect magazines? He's got issues.
- Why does Santa use GPS? He doesn't want to be a lost Claus.
- Where does Santa store his suit? In his Claus-et.
- Which reindeer has bad manners? Rude-olph.
- What do you call someone afraid of Santa? Claus-trophic.
- What did Santa Claus say to the Christmas tree? You need to lighten up.

## Winter fun at Geauga Parks!

We know it can be hard to get out during a northeast Ohio winter, but we've got you covered when it comes to motivation! There's no shortage of great activities to enjoy in your Geauga Park District.

**Winter programs** – Treat yourself by scheduling some time to take a park adventure with a naturalist! Registration is required for some programs, but not most hikes. Visit [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org) to sign yourself up and/or mark your calendars.

**Cleared trails for walking** – Park operations crews regularly clear snow from paved trails in seven popular parks. Please note, however, that staff always prioritizes clearing roadways before they begin to clear trails.

- Claridon Woodlands, Claridon Township
- Orchard Hills Park, Chesterland
- Sunnybrook Preserve, Chesterland
- Bessie Benner Metzenbaum Park, Chesterland
- Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve, Chardon
- Frohring Meadows, Bainbridge
- The Maple Highlands Trail-North from Fifth Avenue in Chardon to the Lake County line

**Sledding** – Sledding hills can be found at Orchard Hills Park (big) and Beartown Lakes Reservation (smaller).

**Bird-in-the-hand feeding station** – Head to The West Woods for the magical experience of having birds eat right out of your hand.

### Snowshoe Borrowing – COMING SOON!

Don't have snowshoes of your own? Borrow some from The West Woods Nature Center! Visit [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org) for details and days we know availability will be limited.

**Cross country skiing** – Did you know we groom at Orchard Hills Park and along the central section of The Maple Highlands Trail from South Street to Claridon Troy? Watch social media for updates.

**Snowmobiling** – Get a permit to ride your snowmobile from Observatory Park or along The Maple Highlands Trail.

**Ice fishing** – Anyone with proper equipment can fish in the wintertime in the same places you fish during warm weather. Please note, however, that a boating permit is still required to fish at Bass Lake Preserve.

**Snow-related closures** – Should extreme weather close our buildings or cancel our programs, please refer to our social media/website, WKYC or WEWS for notice.

## Celebrate the Season!



at the  
**Lake County History Center**

### Deck the Halls

- December 5-6 • 10 am-4 pm
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## Outdoor Winter Activities in Your Geauga Park District

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- Try Bird in the Hand
- Go x-country skiing

• Go snowshoeing  
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• Peruse our list of  
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[www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org)



# Take time to appreciate the good things in your life

By Stacy Turner

As the year ends, I've been making a conscious effort to slow down and notice. Taking time to be outside, I've noticed the subtle changes. The smell of the newly fallen autumn leaves, the organized chaos of a flock of starlings as the multitude move together like a current through the air, the warm sunshine on my face. More days pass by as leaves blanket the ground to prepare for the cold weather ahead. There's more dark nighttime, providing a better view of the stars. In the early morning hours, light illuminates bare trees in golds and pinks. Each day is different, with its mix of sunshine or clouds, frost or snowflakes. When viewed with fresh eyes, each day we're given is a gift. That's precisely why some wise soul called it the present.

With a little thought, it doesn't take much effort to incorporate little pockets of time to appreciate the beauty around us. It can be as simple as bundling up to drink a morning coffee or tea on the porch, fingers wrapped around the soothing warmth. Or taking a quick walk outside later to clear your head after a long day. These little breaks don't take a huge amount of time and can be squeezed into even the most hectic of days. And they can help recharge your battery, giving you the energy to tackle the rest of your day.

Being outside may not fix a problem you've been



dealing with but taking a break from it may help provide a different perspective. Sometimes it's helpful to talk through it with someone you trust. Talking about problems with people you trust is necessary and helpful. But studies have shown that the process of hanging on to and continually venting about the same issues or problems again and again may only serve to internalize those "poor me" feelings. That negativity running on a continuous loop in our heads can poison the way we see life.

Studies have shown that our minds seek out what we tell them is important. That's why when you've purchased a car of a certain make or model,

suddenly you see them everywhere. Basically, the brain is wired to look for what we tell it to see. If I continue to complain about that negative situation or person my brain will seek out evidence to support those negative thoughts and feelings, and to ignore anything that doesn't support those pitiful views. In the process, my brain won't notice the positive things. Unless I decide to make a change in what I decide is important.

It's suggested that we seek out and notice the positive experiences in our days no matter how small, instead of obsessing about the things that didn't go our way. Instead of keeping a running list of what went wrong, why not start a list of what went right? To help remind myself, I started a note in my phone entitled, "Good Things Are Always Happening to Me."

Each time I experience something that makes me feel good or brings me peace, I add it to my list. It seemed a little silly at first, but like any new practice, it soon became a habit. And eventually, scrolling through the list, those little moments of joy spread out like bright stars across a clear night sky, making me look up in awe and wonder. This simple practice has made a big difference in the short time I've been doing it. I encourage you to give it a try; I'd love to hear if it does the same for you.

~Photo: Adobe Stock / By may1985

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# Why I stopped explaining my daughter's size

By Gina Rich

My 5-year-old daughter is starting kindergarten this year. This fact elicits plenty of responses from people who don't know her well.

"Really? Kindergarten?"

"But she's so tiny!"

"Wow, she is small for her age. My son/daughter/cousin/grandchild starting 4K is at least a few inches taller than her!!"

I know these statements aren't meant to be malicious. But the words make me squirm like a nervous creature being examined under a bright light.

Yes, my daughter is tiny—she always has been, and likely always will be. Her size is due not only to genetics (our family is on the petite side) but also to some serious complications while she was in utero. In a nutshell, I got pretty sick during the pregnancy and my little girl had to subsist on a lot less nutrition than she needed. Fortunately, despite arriving nine weeks early, my daughter was healthy. After a battery of tests and visits with fancy-sounding doctors over the years, we recently received this super formal medical diagnosis: She's probably just meant to be very small.

But knowing my child is healthy doesn't make me any less uncomfortable when people comment on her size. So I do what comes naturally when I feel defensive: I babble, almost apologetically, describing her precarious start to life and how she's never made it onto a normal growth chart. I emphasize how our family is short in general. And, even though I know that petiteness and strength are not mutually exclusive, sometimes I'll even slip in, "She's small, but tough!"

For some reason, I feel compelled to justify my child's size to a world in which virtually 100% of kids her age are taller than her. Maybe it's my way of dealing with the doubts

and insecurities that these conversations bring up for me. Maybe I'm hoping my long-winded explanations can somehow distract me from the icky, unsettling mixture of guilt and worry that swims beneath my skin. A feeling that's always there, constantly churning, fueled by an endless supply of unknowns and "what-ifs."

Could I have done more to prevent my daughter's prematurity? Will she face future health challenges that the doctors didn't predict? Will the fact that she's so much smaller than her peers create limitations in her life, her relationships, her career?

My daughter seems to sense that size could be a thorny issue in her life. She proudly tells anyone who will listen, "I am 5 now." She bristles with indignation when her older sister calls her "baby." She's fully aware when someone is talking about her, and she's started to quiz me on these conversations. At the park one day, she scowled at me and asked, "What were you telling that lady, when you said I looked small for my age?"

She's caught me in my own bad habit.

This, more than anything, is why I have decided to just stop. I know I can't control what other people say, nor can I change my daughter's DNA or the course of events that compromised her early growth. But I can be mindful of my own attitude and help my daughter recognize that her intrinsic value and potential as a person have nothing to do with physical size.

Among many other things, this means my daughter should never hear me discussing her appearance in a manner that suggests something needs to be apologized for, rationalized or explained away. As if there would ever be a reason to imply she doesn't measure up, that she's somehow not enough, just as she is. Admittedly, I'll always have concerns



about my child's small stature—after all, worrying is practically part of my job description as a mom—but I'm realizing that I need to do whatever I can to avoid instilling these fears in my daughter. Because deep down, I know that size will only be a limitation if we treat it as one.

I want my daughter to know that I will always believe in her, and that it really doesn't matter one smidge whether she's in the first or

the 100th percentile on the growth chart—she is strong, capable, and amazing. She isn't "small but tough;" she IS a tough, tenacious girl who also happens to be little.

So, these days, when the topic of kindergarten comes up, I try to keep my response simple. "Yes, it will be a big adjustment! We're all looking forward to it." I smile.

And my daughter smiles too.

*Photo: Adobe Stock / The Little Hut*

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# 20 reasons why Christmas with teens rocks

By Katy M. Clark

“Ugh, I’m out of food coloring!” I cried, peering into the cupboard. It was the last thing I needed to finish the Christmas cookies.

Sigh. I’d already made enough runs to the store that I was on a first name basis with Sue, the cashier from checkout lane 6.

That’s when I turned to my teenage son, 17, sitting on the couch looking at his phone.

“Heeeeeey,” I said. “Could you go get me some food coloring?”

“Sure,” he replied. He sprang up, grabbed the car keys, and took off.

It was like I had my own Christmas elf! Which was a pretty awesome perk of celebrating the holiday season with older kids.

Indeed, as my teenage son and his sister have shown me as they’ve grown older, there are plenty of reasons why Christmas with teens rocks. Here are 20 of them:

**1** A little bit of financial independence. You know what my son said when I offered him \$5 to pay for the food coloring? “That’s okay, Mom. I have money.” Now that’s a Christmas miracle!

**2** Teens are sturdier. I no longer fear that my kids will break the heirloom ornaments, topple over while helping with the outdoor lights, or drop the china when setting the table for Christmas dinner.

**3** Their palates have matured. Gone are the days of picky eating, like the Christmas dinner when my preschooler ate nothing but rolls and brown sugar meant for the sweet potatoes. As a teen he’ll eat almost anything. (Okay, he still loathes onions!)

**4** Teens are more helpful with cooking and baking. They can chop the veggies and make the gravy. They can whip up extravagant dishes and desserts, whether because they are taking culinary classes or just want to emulate something they saw on TikTok.

**5** Better yet, teens can clean the kitchen all by themselves when they are done. They don’t need supervision or nagging. Well, maybe a little bit of nagging.

**6** I am no longer in charge of dressing them for the weather. Yup, gone are the days of wrangling them into winter gear a la Randy’s mom in

A Christmas Story. Of course, I hope my teenage son wears a coat, but if he doesn’t, that’s on him, not me.

**7** Big kids care about tradition. Whether it’s putting out the sock snowman they made in first grade or using Grandma’s recipe to make molasses cookies, teens genuinely appreciate tradition and connection with loved ones and holidays in the past.

**8** Teenagers are still kids at heart, just bigger. They want to leave a plate of cookies out for Santa. They pile in the car when it’s time for our family to drive around and admire holiday lights. Their faces still light up with joy when opening gifts.

**9** We have retired the Elf on the Shelf. We had a good run, but nowadays I can sit back (a little bit!) and relish the real magic of the season, which is simply being together.

**10** And I love being together with them. This is in stark contrast to the days when they were younger, we’d all be stir crazy by New Year’s and I couldn’t wait for school to start again. With teens I wish time would slow down so I could linger in these special days with them.

**11** Christmas with teens rocks because I no longer fret so much about the gifts. I don’t stress about hiding presents or scramble to obtain that deeply desired yet widely unavailable toy. (Do not ask me about the lengths to which I went to get my kids Zhou Zhou pets one year!)

**12** Teens are happy to receive clothes as gifts, too. Remember the pouty faces or whiny voices as youngsters when they opened gifts and discovered clothes? Now my son is stoked to get a hoodie and my daughter is giddy to see duds from her favorite store.

**13** And if by chance my teens are disappointed by a gift? They are mature enough to handle it. It’s not like that time my three-year-old ran from the room crying when a toy did not work. I think that year’s very vocal disappointment still lingers in the ether.

**14** Teens give better gifts, too. I know, I know, gifts are not the real meaning of the season. But while I treasure the drawings and painted rocks from yesteryear, it touches my heart when my teens give me a book they knew I wanted to read or a scarf they saw me admire.



**15** They can wrap gifts themselves. My teenage daughter is masterful when it comes to using paper, tissue, and ribbon. She’s a big help with all the wrapping if I’m busy or just plain tired of doing it all myself. Plus, I don’t worry about her running with scissors anymore!

**16** Their taste in holiday shows and movies is more palatable. Sure, I enjoyed watching classics like *Frosty the Snowman* when they were little. But not thirteen times in a row. Now my teenagers are just as excited as I am to watch grown-up movies like *The Holiday* or *Die Hard* that they never would have sat through as tots.

**17** Teens can stay up late. Whether it’s watching our favorite movies together or going to the midnight Christmas Eve service at church, gone are the years when I had to hustle them to bed by a certain hour.

**18** Teens sleep in on Christmas

morning. They no longer rouse the entire household at the crack of dawn to open gifts. Christmas morning with big kids has a decadent, tranquil feel.

**19** Teens grasp the meaning of Christmas in a deeper way. I love that we have profound talks about faith this time of year. It touches my heart, too, when I see them donate jackets to the homeless or put their own money in the red kettles.

**20** And the 20th reason why Christmas with teens rocks?

Because it is still the most wonderful time of year, no matter if they are five or fifteen years old. And it’s an amazing gift every day, but especially at Christmas, to be the one that my teens call Mom.

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

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## University Circle Inc. debuts Illuminate the Circle event

University Circle Inc. has announced the launch of Illuminate the Circle, powered by PNC, a new holiday tradition running now through January 26. Visitors can enjoy the vibrant, synchronized light displays until New Year's Eve, followed by tranquil white lights through January 26.

This inaugural program kicked off with a tree lighting ceremony on November 23. The ceremony, featured a 30-foot-high Christmas tree, live performances and activities for all ages.

"This is a milestone moment for University Circle," said Heidi Hudak, chief marketing and experience officer at University Circle Inc. "Our goal is to create a space that's warm, welcoming, and filled with holiday cheer, a place where visitors of all ages can come together and make memories."

Illuminate the Circle ties into the larger University Circle holiday programming, encouraging visitors to experience the lights while visiting the museums, galleries and other



attractions around the area. Whether attending a performance, visiting the renowned museums or simply strolling through Wade Oval, guests can extend their stay and immerse themselves in the holiday spirit.

"It's not just about the lights - it's about creating an atmosphere that brings people together," said Kate Borders, president of University Circle Inc. "Illuminate the Circle is designed to be a place for families and friends to connect and celebrate."

For more information about Illuminate the Circle, visit [universitycircle.org/illuminatecircle](http://universitycircle.org/illuminatecircle).

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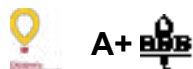
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# Keep those home fires burning safely

For many of us, a crackling fire in the fireplace is an indispensable part of the season. Who doesn't enjoy the warmth and cheer that emanates from the fireplace on a cold winter evening?

Unfortunately, fireplaces also contribute to needless injuries, loss of life, and property damage annually. The U.S. Fire Administration estimates heating fires account for 36 percent of all rural home fires each year. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that the leading factor contributing to home heating fires is failure to clean the chimneys of solid-fueled heating equipment such as wood stoves and fireplaces. A highly combustible, sooty residue known as creosote that accumulates inside a chimney can be ignited by hot gases rising from the fireplace, resulting in a chimney fire that can spread to the surrounding structure.

Other home fires related to the use of fireplaces and wood stoves are attributable to improper disposal of ashes, the use of flammable liquids

to start or accelerate a fire, poor separation of combustibles from the fireplace opening, and failure to place a metal screen across the fireplace opening while the fire is burning.

Follow these tips to help ensure your fireplace or wood stove is operating safely:

- Have the chimney inspected and cleaned at least annually by a qualified contractor or chimney sweep.
- Burn only seasoned hardwoods. Soft wood with higher moisture content produces more creosote.
- Do not restrict the fire's air supply by closing the glass doors of a fireplace. This can lead to incomplete combustion and higher levels of creosote.
- Never use gasoline to start or accelerate a fire.
- Keep combustibles such as newspapers, cloth decorations and artificial flowers at least three feet away from the fireplace opening.
- Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Allow the ashes to cool completely



before cleaning the fireplace. Place ashes in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid and store them outside, at least 10 feet away from the house. Never dump ashes directly into a trash can.

- Install a metal mesh screen atop the chimney to prevent sparks from landing on the roof. Regularly remove leaves, pine needles, and other combustible debris from the roof surface and gutters.

A fire or wood stove can be a wonderful source of comfort and warmth in one's home as long as they are used safely and responsibly.

*Matthew Corsaro is the president and owner of the Corsaro Insurance Group in Mentor, Ohio. 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.*

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'Tis the season to give! The holiday season is a time that we are often asked to contribute financially to a variety of causes. At Goodwill, there is a tremendous need for donations, not necessarily money, but STUFF! One of the easiest ways to contribute to your community, while cleaning out those overflowing closets this season, is to consider a gift of clothing or housewares to your local Goodwill.

Cleaning out your closet and donating those items to Goodwill is also a way to demonstrate to your children the spirit of giving. Involving all members of the family in the giving process can create new traditions and introduce the kids to charitable giving.

What to give? Seasonal décor you won't be using. Clothes that don't fit any longer. And housewares you no longer use are all valuable donations to Goodwill stores. The stores will sell those donations and use the revenue from those products to support a network of 30 different mission programs. Goodwill mission programs include job training and



placement for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment, family strengthening programs, emergency services and more. Last year, donations to your local Goodwill provided support to more than 17,000 individuals in our community.

Locally, you can donate at Mayfield Heights, University Heights, Willowick, Painesville, and Chardon area locations. Have a lot to donate? Consider reserving a Mobile Donation Center. The 7' x 16' unit saves you multiple trips to the donor doors and can be reserved for up to seven days, free of charge!

For more information, log onto [GoodwillGoodSkills.org](http://GoodwillGoodSkills.org) or email [donations@goodwillgoodskills.org](mailto:donations@goodwillgoodskills.org).

## Frost: An Ice-Capped Garden Experience open through Jan 5

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 ever 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.

Wintry 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](http://holdenfg.org).



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# Understanding tummy aches in kids

## Causes, symptoms, and remedies

Tummy aches are a common concern among parents, often causing worry and confusion. For children, experiencing stomach pain can be unsettling, both for them and for their caregivers. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and potential remedies can help manage these discomforts effectively.

### Common causes of tummy aches

**Dietary issues:** One of the most frequent reasons for tummy aches in kids is related to their diet. Overeating, consuming too many sugary or fatty foods, or eating spicy meals can lead to discomfort. Food allergies or intolerances, such as lactose intolerance or gluten sensitivity, may also trigger stomach pain.

**Gastrointestinal infections:** Viral and bacterial infections can result in tummy aches, often accompanied by diarrhea and vomiting. Common culprits include rotavirus and norovirus, which are particularly prevalent in children.

**Constipation:** This is a widespread issue among children and can cause significant abdominal pain. Factors such as inadequate fiber intake, dehydration, or changes in routine can contribute to constipation.

**Stress and anxiety:** Children can experience tummy aches due to emotional factors as well. Stress from school, friendships, or family situations can manifest physically, resulting in stomach pain.

**Appendicitis:** While less common, appendicitis is a serious condition that can cause severe abdominal pain, often starting around the belly button and moving to the lower right side. It requires immediate medical attention.

**Infections and other conditions:** Other infections, such as urinary tract infections, or conditions like gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) can also lead to tummy aches.

### Recognizing symptoms

Parents should observe the accompanying symptoms of a tummy ache. Common signs include:

- Cramping or sharp pain in the abdomen
- Bloating or a swollen stomach
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Fever
- Loss of appetite

While most tummy aches are benign, a child should see a doctor if the pain is severe, persistent, or accompanied by other concerning symptoms like high fever, blood in stool, or inability to keep food down.

### Home remedies and relief

Many tummy aches can be managed at home with simple remedies:

**Rest:** Encourage your child to lie down in a comfortable position. Sometimes, resting can alleviate the pain.

**Warm compress:** Applying a warm compress or heating pad to the stomach can help relax the muscles and reduce pain.

**Hydration:** Ensure your child stays hydrated, especially if they are experiencing diarrhea or vomiting. Clear fluids like water or diluted electrolyte drinks can be beneficial.

**Dietary adjustments:** If the tummy ache is related to diet, consider adjusting what your child eats. Offer bland foods such as bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast (the BRAT diet) until they feel better.

**Ginger or peppermint:** Ginger tea or peppermint tea can help soothe an upset stomach. They have natural properties that can ease nausea and discomfort.

**Encouraging fiber:** If constipation is the issue, increasing fiber intake with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help. It's also essential to encourage regular bathroom habits.

**Addressing stress:** If emotional factors contribute to tummy aches, talk to your child about their



feelings. Encouraging relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or engaging in calming activities, can be helpful.

### When to seek medical attention

If home remedies do not alleviate the pain or if your child exhibits severe symptoms, it is crucial to consult a healthcare professional. They can provide an accurate diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatments.

Tummy aches in children can stem from various causes, ranging from dietary indiscretions to emotional stress. By being aware of the symptoms and knowing when to seek help, parents can provide the right support to their children. With the right approach, most tummy aches can be managed effectively, allowing kids to return to their playful, energetic selves.

~Article by Justin Daniels

Photo: Adobe Stock / By peopleimages.com

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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 runs through 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.

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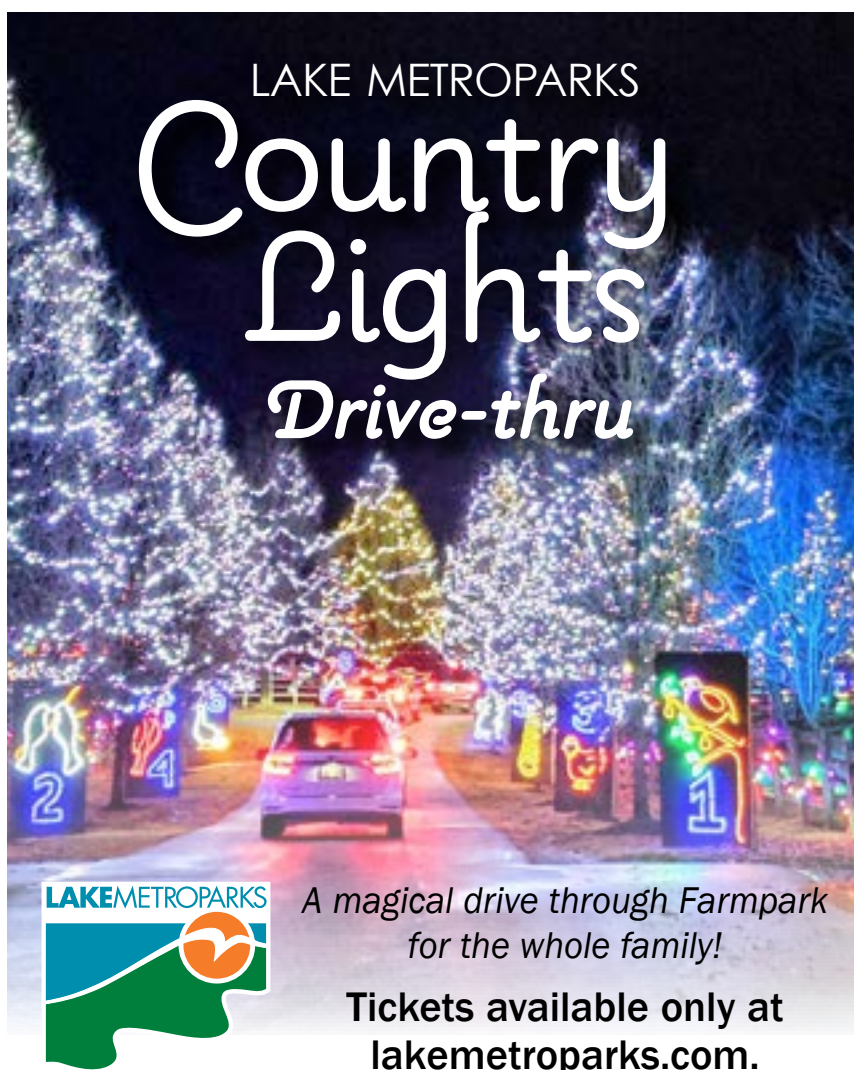
Candy Land It's Wild in Ohio begins November 23 and is open 10



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](http://www.lakemetroparks.com).

Penitentiary Glen Reservation is located at 8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd. in Kirtland. For park info, visit [lakemetroparks.com](http://lakemetroparks.com).

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# Christmas Around the World

## A global celebration of tradition and joy

Christmas is one of the most widely celebrated holidays around the globe, and while the spirit of goodwill, generosity, and family bonds unites people, the way Christmas is celebrated varies greatly across cultures. From religious customs to festive meals, unique decorations, and even the timing of festivities, every country brings its own flair to this joyous occasion. Let's explore how Christmas is celebrated in different corners of the world.

### United States and Canada: A Mix of Traditions

In North America, Christmas is marked by a blend of traditions from various cultural backgrounds. In the U.S. and Canada, Christmas is celebrated on December 25, with homes decorated with Christmas trees, lights, and wreaths. Santa Claus, a figure inspired by St. Nicholas, plays a central role in the festivities, with children eagerly awaiting his arrival on Christmas Eve. Families often exchange gifts, enjoy festive meals,

and partake in seasonal activities like ice skating and attending holiday parades. A traditional meal might include roast turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie.

In Canada, especially in Quebec, Christmas traditions are influenced by French culture. The "Réveillon," a late-night feast on Christmas Eve, is a significant tradition, and it's common to attend midnight Mass beforehand. The "Christmas log," or "bûche de Noël," a yule log-shaped cake, is a beloved dessert.

### Mexico: Las Posadas & Family Celebrations

In Mexico, Christmas celebrations begin on December 16 with Las Posadas, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Over nine nights, families and communities gather to participate in processions, singing carols, and asking for shelter at various homes. The event culminates in a celebration with food, piñatas, and the exchange of gifts on Christmas



A family enjoys a colorful Mexican posada.

Eve, known as Nochebuena. The meal often features dishes like tamales, bacalao (salted cod), and ponche (a warm fruit punch).

Mass on Christmas Eve is followed by fireworks and music, and the festivities continue through the New Year with additional celebrations such as Día de los Reyes (Epiphany), when children receive gifts to commemorate the arrival of the Three Kings.

### Germany:

### Christmas Markets and Advent

Germany is often considered the birthplace of many Christmas traditions, and the Christmas season kicks off with the start of Advent. German towns and cities are famous for their Weihnachtsmärkte (Christmas markets), which offer handmade goods, mulled wine (Glühwein), and delicious treats like gingerbread

*Continued on page 18*

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## Christmas around the world from page 17

cookies (Lebkuchen) and stollen (fruit bread). On Christmas Eve, families gather for a festive meal, which often includes roasted meats, potatoes, and various side dishes, followed by the opening of gifts.

In Germany, the Christkind (Christ Child) delivers presents, a tradition that is still present in many parts of the country, where children leave out their shoes to be filled with treats. Christmas Day is typically a quieter time for reflection, often spent with close family.

### Italy:

#### La Vigilia and La Befana

In Italy, Christmas is celebrated with deep religious and family traditions. Christmas Eve, known as La Vigilia, is a time for a festive family meal, which traditionally involves eating fish and other seafood. After the meal, many Italians attend midnight Mass. On Christmas Day, families come together to share a hearty meal, often consisting of roast meats, pastas, and decadent desserts like panettone and torrone.

In southern Italy, the figure of La Befana, a kindly old witch, is a key

part of the Christmas season. According to legend, she visits children on the night of January 5, filling their stockings with sweets or coal depending on their behavior. This marks the celebration of Epiphany, which is a national holiday in Italy and officially closes the Christmas season.

### Australia: A Summer Christmas

In Australia, Christmas occurs during the summer months, so the traditional cold weather festivities associated with the holiday are often swapped for outdoor barbecues and beach outings. While Christmas trees are still common, some families opt for Christmas celebrations on the beach, where they can enjoy Christmas ham, seafood, and salads in the sun. Christmas carols are popular, and in larger cities, there are annual events like the Carols by Candlelight concerts.

In many parts of Australia, Santa Claus is depicted in lighter attire suited for warm weather, and some areas even have "Christmas in July" celebrations to mimic the traditional cold-weather Christmas experience.

### Japan: A Christmas for Couples

In Japan, Christmas is not a public holiday, but it has become a widely celebrated occasion, though with a unique twist. The holiday is primarily seen as a time for couples to celebrate their relationship, rather than a family-centered event. In cities like Tokyo, you'll find elaborate Christmas light displays and decorations in shopping districts. One popular tradition is to enjoy a meal of KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) on Christmas Eve, a custom that began in the 1970s due to an advertising campaign. Additionally, many people in Japan exchange gifts, though the holiday is more secular than religious.

### Ethiopia: A Religious and Spiritual Celebration

In Ethiopia, Christmas is celebrated on January 7 according to the Eastern Orthodox Church calendar. The holiday is deeply religious, with a focus on church services, prayer, and fasting. On Christmas Eve, families attend midnight Mass, and the celebration continues with a large feast. Traditional Ethiopian dishes

such as doro wat (spicy chicken stew) and injera (flatbread) are commonly served. While gifts are exchanged in some families, the emphasis remains on the religious observances and community gatherings.

• • • • •  
Christmas is a global celebration, yet it reflects the unique customs and cultural values of each country. From the warmth of family gatherings in Germany to the festive spirit of Mexico's Las Posadas and the sun-soaked barbecues of Australia, Christmas is a time when diverse traditions come together to celebrate love, joy, and community. No matter where or how it is celebrated, the essence of Christmas remains the same: bringing people together in the spirit of goodwill and celebration.

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## Sign up today for classes at Fairmount Center for the Arts

Children and families will find many ways to explore their creative side at Fairmount Center for the Arts during the winter/spring 2025 session. With offerings at both its Novelty main campus and its new space on Chardon Square, there's never been a better time to sign up.

Starting in January, Fairmount will offer a new Creative Arts Preschool for ages 3–5. Held Tuesday through Thursday mornings, the preschool will focus on a whole-child approach to learning literacy, visual arts, and dance. Families can sign up for a single seven-week session or multiple sessions, depending on their needs.

Fairmount's award-winning dance, music, theatre, and visual arts programs remain at the heart of its program schedule. In dance, students aged 3–18 can explore ballet, hip hop, contemporary, jazz, and tap. The Pop Choreography and Pop Chorus classes will focus on Disney favorites. Students can also explore music through a parent-and-child Itty Bitty Music class, or through private lessons in a variety



of instruments.

The growing theatre and visual arts programs offer a wide range of experiences, including productions and teen art classes. Homeschoolers can explore multiple arts through specialized fine arts programming on Mondays (Novelty) and Fridays (Chardon).

Registration is open now at [fairmountcenter.org](http://fairmountcenter.org) or by calling 440-338-3171.

## Great gift ideas for the animal lover on your list

Seeking inventive gift ideas for the animal lovers on your list? Look no further. The Cleveland Zoological Society has you covered with these easy gifts that also give back.

Click [ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday](http://ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday) and cross a few people off your "nice" list!

### 2025 ZOO SOCIETY CALENDAR

When you give a gift of \$100 or more to the ZooFund, you'll also receive a 2025 commemorative calendar featuring favorite animals from The RainForest. Available while supplies last.

### GIFT A ZOO MEMBERSHIP

Give the gift of memorable Zoo adventures all year long! Use the code TROOP24TF online for a 15% discount.

### SUPPORT A SPECIES — SNOW LEOPARD

What to get for that someone who has everything? Donate to the Support a Species program on their behalf and help support world-class



care for the animals at the Zoo. All donors receive a fillable certificate and animal care fact sheet PDF; exclusive enamel pins and/or plushes with some gift levels.

### SHOP AT THE ZOO GIFT SHOP

From cuddly plush versions of beloved species to sustainable jewelry and exclusive Zoo apparel, you'll find a unique array of gifts and stocking stuffers for loved ones of all ages at the Zoo's gift shop. Members always receive a 15% discount!

For more info on any of these holiday ideas, visit [ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday](http://ClevelandZooSociety.org/holiday).



Hand in Hand,  
Together,  
We Are One  
in Christ

Preschool – 8th grade



## OPEN HOUSE

All-School Open House  
Sunday, February 2, 2025  
11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Join us for Mass followed by the open house and see what makes our school a family!

If unable to attend, please call to schedule a tour.

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Saturday, November 23 to Tuesday, December 31  
Daily light show with holiday music runs every 20 minutes from  
5:00 to 8:00 PM

Wednesday, January 1 to Sunday, January 26  
Warm white lights on daily from 5:00 to 11:00 PM

Enjoy the Forest of Lights, an immersive light show, holiday vignettes, and iconic seasonal traditions around Wade Oval this winter!

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[universitycircle.org/illuminate-thecircle](http://universitycircle.org/illuminate-thecircle)





## Deck The House event raises money to support children in crisis

Providence House is excited to welcome the community to our 29th annual Deck the House benefit auction on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the City View Lounge at Huntington Bank Field.

This festive event is our largest fundraiser of the year to support our mission of keeping kids safe and families together by supporting them through crisis. In the last five years, 99% of our families have stayed together!

This year's Deck the House will be extra special:

- We're excited to welcome Bloomdaddy from iHeartMedia's WTAM as our celebrity host!
- We're celebrating the 25th anniversary of our Ed Block Courage Award honoring a Cleveland Browns Player selected by his teammates as an outstanding community role model with a ceremony sponsored by The Albert M. Higley Co.!
- We have an exciting selection of specially curated live and silent



Presentation of the Ed Block Courage Award in 2023.

auction packages and experiences available for bidding, including beautiful professionally decorated trees!

Tickets are on sale at provhouse.org/deckthehouse and all tickets include a delicious dinner, two drink tickets, valet parking, a guest gift, and a donation to Providence House!

Those who can't make it to our event can still participate in the silent auction online at the address above.

There are also various ways to support the children and families of Providence House this holiday season at provhouse.org/holiday!



## Cleveland Museum of Natural History to celebrate grand opening

For more than a century, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has encouraged visitors to look outward at the magnificent nature that surrounds them and inward at the connections that bind them to it. And this December, the Museum will reveal the most sweeping transformation in its history.

Their grand opening will take place from Friday, December 13, through Sunday, December 15, welcoming you to discover new galleries and completely re-imagined exhibits for the first time. The Museum's transformation features more than 375,000 square feet of new and expanded spaces and more than two acres of outdoor visitor areas. (If you consider the size of the average T.Rex, more than 900 of them would fit in the new and expanded spaces!)

The Museum's new Visitor Hall showcases some of their most iconic objects and specimens, including

Haplocanthosaurus (Happy), Balto, Dunkleosteus (Dunk), Lucy, the Moon rock, and more. This community space is free to all.

In addition, a general admission ticket will give you access to:

- Smead Discovery Center – a hands-on space for young learners
- 3D movies, now playing in Murch Auditorium
- The Thelma and Kent H. Smith Environmental Courtyard
- The live animal ambassadors in the Ralph Perkins II Wildlife Center & Woods Garden
- All current exhibits

### Advance ticket reservations:

Both members and nonmembers can reserve or purchase tickets online at cmnh.org or by calling 216-231-4600. Advance ticket purchases are highly encouraged to ensure a smooth arrival experience.



# Deck THE House

## Providence House Benefit Auction

Join Us for the Best Holiday Party in Town!

Tuesday December 10	Cleveland Browns Stadium City View Lounge	From 5:30 to 9:30 PM
------------------------	--	-------------------------

Help Providence House give the gift of care to children and families in crisis this upcoming year during an evening filled with holiday cheer!

<p style="color: #c08040; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">EXPERIENCE THE EXCITEMENT</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Of the 25th Anniversary of the Ed Block Courage Award Ceremony honoring a Cleveland Browns Player</p>	<p style="color: #c08040; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">BROWSE &amp; BID</p> <p style="margin: 0;">On our specially curated selection of unique live and silent auction packages</p>	<p style="color: #c08040; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">CELEBRATE THE SEASON</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Surrounded by gorgeous, professionally decorated trees while enjoying delicious food &amp; cocktails</p>
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Purchase Tickets at [provhouse.org/deckthehouse](http://provhouse.org/deckthehouse)

Tickets include dinner, 2 drink tickets, valet parking, a guest gift & donation to Providence House!



## 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.

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 through Monday, December 30.

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

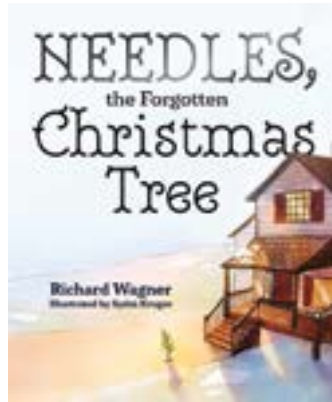


# Today's Family BOOK — CLUB —



### Minty the Mischievous Elf By Tara Lala

Peppermint is the naughtiest elf in the South Pole. This Christmas, she wants to make sure Angela, a girl at the top of the nice list, gets no presents from Santa. Will Peppermint's pranks put Angela on the naughty list, or will Angela change Peppermint into a good elf before it's too late? A holiday story that reminds children that good always triumphs over evil, and that it's important for us to be kind to each other. Ages 3–8.



### Needles, The Forgotten Christmas Tree By Richard Wagner

Needles looks different from the other Christmas trees. He's smaller with fewer branches and is made fun of by the other trees on the Christmas tree farm. Will Needles ever be chosen to become someone's beautiful Christmas tree, or will he be left out in the cold?

See [TodaysFamilyMagazine.com](http://TodaysFamilyMagazine.com) for more book previews!

## Sign up today for winter dance classes at Rabbit Run

Registration for winter dance classes is now open at Rabbit Run Community Arts Association in Madison. RRCAA is a comprehensive fine arts association offering instruction in the major disciplines of the fine and performing arts.

Dance classes are available for little ones starting at age three in creative movement, pre-ballet and pre-tap. School-aged youth, whether just starting in dance or with some dance experience, may register for classes in ballet (including pointe), jazz/tap or hip hop.

Also available are modern dance,

contemporary/lyrical dance, ballet strengthening/kinesiology, ballroom dancing and adult tap fitness.

New this winter is a sculpture class for school-age youth as well as canvas art workshops.

They also offer private music lessons in most musical instruments from beginner to advanced.

For specific class information or to register, visit [www.rabbitrun.org](http://www.rabbitrun.org) or call RRCAA at 440-428-5913.

RRCAA, 49 Park St., Madison, is a nonprofit organization that receives partial funding from the Ohio Arts Council.



## TodaysFamilyMagazine.com

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



# Indoor Sports and Fun at LNSP East!

## Lil Kickers & Skills Institute



### WINTER SESSION

December 3–March 8 (12 weeks)

- Youth soccer development program
- 50-minute classes, one day a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Saturdays)

Try a class for FREE or register today online!

- Ages 18 months–12 years old
- Payment plan available!
- Register anytime



Contact Paul Liotta | [PLIOTTA@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:PLIOTTA@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

ALMOST FULL!

## Lil Sluggers



### WINTER SESSION

December 3–March 8 (12 weeks)

- Nationally franchised youth baseball development program
- 50-minute classes, one day a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Saturdays)
- Ages 2–6 years old • Payment plan available! • Register anytime

Contact Noah Koscho | [NKOSCHO@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:NKOSCHO@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

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## Indoor Links



Monday–Friday, 9 am–4 pm • \$28/hour | \$15/half hour

Monday–Friday pm–close \$38/hour | \$20/half hour

Saturday & Sunday \$38/hour | \$20/half hour

Contact Bob Dame for tee times or any questions.

440-602-4000 ext. 229 | [BDAME@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:BDAME@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

## Batting Cages

M–F 3:30–9 pm; Sat/Sun 9 am–9 pm

State-of-the-art batting cages available for personal or party use.

\$1.50 per token • \$10 for 7 • \$20 for 15

Batting cages may be closed during private parties. Call for availability.

## Court & Field Rentals

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

Contact Ed Strauss | [ESTRAUSS@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:ESTRAUSS@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

## Birthday Parties

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## Dogs! A Science Tail exhibit now open at Science Center

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!

Explore how science is helping us better understand our tail-wagging companions and what makes our relationship one of the most successful interspecies partnerships of all time. Train a virtual dog to heed your commands, clock your running speed against the world's fastest dogs, and unearth replica fossils of wolves and dogs to reveal their surprising similarities. Guests will also enjoy



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.

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](http://www.greatscience.com).

## Great Puzzle Ideas!

### Eurographics Puzzles

[www.eurographicspuzzles.com](http://www.eurographicspuzzles.com)

Eurographics is a world-leading art publisher and puzzle manufacturer. The company is known for its wide selection of quality products and outstanding customer service. Their puzzles are made with strong high-quality puzzle pieces from recycled board and printed with vegetable based ink. Visit their website to see the huge selection they offer!



**Beetle Love** | 1000 Pieces



**Funny Birds** | 1000 pieces



**Honey for Sale**  
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**Downtown Holiday Festival**  
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January 26 - 11am

January 29 - 6pm

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# Holiday Toy Ideas



**Super Wings**  
Ages 3+

The hit preschool series Super Wings returns for an eighth season and Alpha Toys is unveiling a new lineup of products showcasing favorite characters from the show, which currently airs on its YouTube channel, on Peacock and Prime Video.

Each episode follows the Super Wings team on a delivery to a new locale, offering a positive and educational first impression of far away or unfamiliar places to young viewers. The series focuses on collaboration, cooperation and celebrating differences.

This five-inch classic character four-pack includes Jett, Donnie, Astra and Paul. Each figure has a simple, yet satisfying transformation moving the character from vehicle mode to robot mode. In robot mode, each figure's limbs have articulation. Plus, each character stands on its own adding a play-and-display option.



**PLAYMOBIL JUNIOR**  
**Advent Calendar**

This Advent calendar is designed especially for toddlers and preschoolers with larger pieces, and activities that support a child's educational development and first role play. Fly the plane with Santa and deliver presents. Contains 24 surprise items for each day leading up to Christmas, revealing a winter wonderland playset!

Available on Amazon.



**Wise Block Radio Control RC Building Set - 2.4GHz - Fire Truck**  
Ages 8+

Small brick format, compatible with LEGO and other leading brands

Build your emergency vehicle and enjoy the full function remote control experience.

Includes 296 bricks. 5 AAA batteries required, not included.

It's super fun for kids, they just need to build the blocks and then they can use the remote control to drive the cars that they make.

Available at Walmart.com.



**Smartivity Pinball Machine**  
Ages 6-12

Why visit an arcade when your kid can make their own wooden pinball machine in the playroom by following the easy step-by-step instructions? From learning about STEM concepts like levers and momentum, it is everything science and everything fun! No glue, no tools needed - elastic bands are used for joining mechanisms to design fun, learning games for kids. Easy to assemble, dismantle and reassemble with age-appropriate instructional manuals and videos. Available on Amazon.

Find more great toy ideas at [TodaysFamilyMagazine.com](http://TodaysFamilyMagazine.com).

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Call the Foster Care line at:

**(440) 350-4218**

or email:

**[Eugene.Tetrick@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Eugene.Tetrick@jfs.ohio.gov)**

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