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Dec2020/Jan2021

Lake & Geauga

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contents



SMART Recovery can help you during these difficult times

Page 4



The origins of Christmas symbols

Page 17

plus

Nutcracker at Home

Page 6

GLOW event at Cleveland Botanical Garden

Page 8

Teaching children how to take turns

Page 9

Local support to help you quit smoking

Page 12

Mommy Chronicles

Page 19

Girl Scout wins philanthropy award

Page 22

GIFT IDEAS

Grown-ups Page 21

Toys Page 23

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Holidays + COVID-19 = The Best and Worst of Times

In his book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens tells the story of politics and a romantic competition against the backdrop of the French Revolution. He writes about opposite conditions existing simultaneously: wisdom and foolishness, hope and despair, light and darkness. Dickens concludes that “it was the best of times; it was the worst of times.” And with the holidays fast approaching, combined with COVID-19, many of us can relate to this sentiment.

During the holidays, stress can affect all of us, but it is especially stressful for those in recovery from addiction and those who love them. The holidays in these instances can truly be a time of foolishness, despair, and darkness.

Fortunately, the holidays can also be filled with wisdom, hope, and light for all, including those who are struggling with substance use disorders and other addictive or problematic behaviors. And a new initiative in Ohio intends to make the holidays more like the best of times for all.

In partnership with Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and other Peer Recovery Organizations (PROs), Mentor-based SMART Recovery received funding to help reduce social isolation for Ohioans with mental health, substance use disorders and other addictive or problematic behavior. The resources are provided through the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) funding for use during the holiday season. SMART Recovery is the world’s largest community of mutual support meetings that use science and self-empowerment to help people overcome addictions of all kinds.

To help Ohioans, SMART Recovery created a Holiday Outreach Helping Others (HOHO) initiative using their online platforms to help individuals and families grappling underneath the weight of addiction.

A newly created HOHO webpage (www.hoho-ohio.org) offers immediate access to an increased number of free online meetings, a chat room,



numerous message board forums, along with support videos featuring Tips and Tools for recovery, links to OhioMHAS resources, and more. The CARES funding also allows SMART to offer no-cost training to addiction professionals who will then offer SMART as one of the alternative pathways to recovery.

As SMART’s executive director, Mark Ruth, points out, “The holidays are typically a time that challenges those battling addictions in a normal year. There are powerful temptations to overindulge, emotional stressors due to family reunions, loneliness for those without strong family or social connections, opportunities to overspend, and even boredom due to being off of a regular routine that can create the urge to overuse substances or increase negative behaviors. When you add COVID to that mix, it can create tremendous problems for individuals and families, creating social isolation and lack of access to their traditional support resources.”

OhioMHAS, already familiar with SMART’s effective work, identified the organization as a natural partner for Ohioans in need of recovery support during the holidays. According to Lori Criss, OhioMHAS director, SMART Recovery’s approach is unique and has the potential to positively affect many Ohioans struggling with addictions. Criss says,

“The process of recovery is highly personal. Having support is crucial to each person’s success. Through this investment, we are providing additional options to help Ohioans achieve lasting recovery and wellness.”

SMART has been providing recovery services across the country (and throughout the world via SMART Recovery International) for over twenty-five years. In that time there have been hundreds of thousands of individuals and families who have used SMART’s practical tools and mutual support meetings to successfully address addiction. Individuals have been restored to lives that are meaningful and positive.

As Christi Alicea, SMART’s assistant executive director puts it, “We have seen incredible transformations among people and families who attend our meetings and take advantage of the practical tools we offer to help them achieve independence from their addictive and problematic behaviors. Harmful addictive behaviors and substance use disorders can cause a downward spiral during the holiday season and impact families. We are proud to be working closely with OhioMHAS in a variety of ways that will benefit all Ohioans.”

As part of the HOHO effort, accountability and impact metrics will be put in place so that successful activities can be extended into 2021 and beyond. This means while the HOHO partnership is concerned with these upcoming holidays, the plan is to continue effectively helping Ohioans for years to come—holiday season or not.

To connect with a variety of free resources, please visit hoho-ohio.org.



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The Holidays: The Best of Times & The Worst of Times

During the holidays, stress affects us all, but especially those in recovery from addiction and those who love them. The combination of COVID isolation, anxiety, and powerful temptations could well make this holiday season feel like the worst of times.

Recognizing this immediate threat to many Ohioans, Mentor-based SMART Recovery, in partnership with the State of Ohio, has created the initiative, ***Holiday Outreach Helping Others (HOHO).***

HOHO offers access to free online meetings, chat room, message board forums, recovery support videos, links to OhioMHAS resources, and more.



To connect with a variety of free resources visit:

www.hoho-ohio.org

Together, let's make these holidays better times for all.

Made possible by generous support from the Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services and the Federal CARES Program (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security).



Exciting STEM adventures are in the winter break forecast at Great Lakes Science Center

Is your child burned out from too many days in front of a computer screen? Is being in a hands-on science class with other kids one of the things they miss most about school? Pry them off the couch and get them down to a Winter Break Camp at Great Lakes Science Center for an interactive day of STEM adventure!



Kicking off on Monday, December 21, the Science Center has eight brand new camps for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade to choose from, featuring everything from engineering to chemistry and physics to robots!

Campers can program robots, uncover scientific mysteries, learn about NASA's plans to return to the moon, mix up chemical concoctions, re-engineer toys and get creative with LEGOs! Camp activities are tailored to suit each age group.

This year's camps include:

STEM HQ Takeover
Monday, December 21

Take-Apart
Tuesday, December 22

PPG Chemistry Lab
Wednesday, December 23

NASA Clean Room
Monday, December 28

NASA Artemis Day
Tuesday, December 29

Dissection Lab
Wednesday, December 30

Destination Earth!
Thursday, December 31

Science Sleuth
Friday, January 1

All camp sessions have been designed with your child's health and safety in mind. All campers and staff are required to wear face masks and undergo a daily health screening including a temperature check. All materials and work spaces are sanitized before and after each use and classes use a dedicated space with access to hand-washing and sanitizer stations. Social distancing measures are followed with small class sizes separated by age group. Your camper can choose one day of adventure, or multiple days for a STEM-filled journey over their winter school break.

Winter break camps are \$55 per day (\$50 for Science Center members) and run from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., with options for before-care starting at 7:30 a.m. and after-care from 4-5:30 p.m. for an additional fee. Sign up for all eight days of camp and receive a \$40 discount. Siblings signed up the same day of camp receive a \$2 discount. Boxed lunches are available for pre-order as well for \$7.50 each day, with vegetarian, gluten-free and dairy-free options available. Register at GreatScience.com or by calling (216) 621-2400.

Schedules are subject to change. Visit GreatScience.com for info.



Kate Webb, Fairmount dance faculty, and Verb Ballets dancers will perform as part of the Fairmount Center for the Arts FREE live-stream program.

Fairmount Center offers safe and magical holiday fun with Nutcracker at Home

Fairmount Center for the Arts in Novelty will present Nutcracker at Home, a safe and magical way to celebrate and connect this holiday season, on December 6 from 3-4pm EST. This event is free to the public but donations are strongly encouraged.

Nutcracker at Home is a live-streamed event that includes dance, music, and fun. Fairmount faculty and dancers will perform scenes from The Nutcracker and professional musicians will lead a family sing-along. Plus, the program will end with a visit from a special guest from the North Pole! Families and friends are encouraged to stream from their own homes but share in the magic by connecting during the performance via FaceTime, text, or other methods.

While the streamed event is free, two special packages are being offered to help enhance your holiday fun. The Sugar Plum Fun package

(\$50) includes a custom decorate-your-own Nutcracker cookie kit by D is for Delicious, including links to a cookie decorating lesson. It also includes a 30-minute live Zoom with Nutcracker ballerinas after the performance where they will greet you and your family and share some secrets of performing this beloved show.

The Dance of the Toy Soldier package (\$75) includes the cookies and cast Zoom mentioned above, as well as a holiday ornament craft kit designed by Fairmount artists that can be done from home. The kit will yield two one-of-a-kind Nutcracker ornaments; one to share and one to keep.

The event is free to the public but donations are strongly encouraged as are the purchase of special packages. The link to the live performance will be posted at www.fairmountcenter.org starting December 1.

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University Circle will "Glow" over the holidays

Cleveland Botanical Garden's annual event features a celebration of lights

Glow at the Cleveland Botanical Garden will delight the senses and transport visitors into a safe holiday wonderland outside and in, all season-long, running through Sunday, January 3, 2021.

"This year, the botanical garden is embracing the outdoor beauty of the winter holidays...twinkle lights in snow-covered trees and other outdoor elements expanding on traditional favorites of Glow," said Jill Koski, president and CEO. "We are delighted to provide a celebration that will capture the benefits of getting outside in a safe, yet magical way."

Glow will feature plants that we use to celebrate the holiday season –

whether conifer trees, poinsettias and holly, the herbs we use in cooking, the fruits and vegetables we feast on. Our holiday traditions are filled with plants and trees and this year they will take center stage throughout the botanical garden's holiday season.

Timed entry tickets must be reserved in advance. Please note that members must also preregister. Registrations can be made up to three weeks in advance of your visit.

Glow is a socially-distanced, one-way guided path through indoor and outdoor visual experiences with plenty of photo opportunities and self-guided engagement for all ages. Visitors will be inspired by botanical holiday décor on front doors, in table settings as well as on trees and



wreaths decorated by members of more than 30 affiliate garden clubs. Stroll through the Glasshouse to spot the holiday gnome homes – how many can you find? Clark Hall features a beautifully decorated 16-foot tall live white fir (*Abies concolor*) and community decorated gingerbread houses – vote for your favorites!

Be sure to get outside this year to witness a festive display on the terrace complete with giant GLOW letters emblazoned with botanical décor in the reflecting pool. Dynamic lighting and a self-guided story trail that connects four different winter garden vignettes. The story trail leads guests out to the Hershey Children's Garden, which will remain open through January 3 until sunset and contains holiday lights. For seasoned winter explorers of all ages, an evergreen tree identification activity that will surprise and delight you is in the Inspiration Gardens.

New this year are Glow Nights with special evening hours and unique experiences for the whole family or a fun date night. All times are to be determined. Glow Nights programming includes:

- Krampusnacht with the Ohio Krampus Society and DJ Kris Koch on Saturday, December 5.
- Ice sculpting by Elegant Ice Creations, Inc. on Terrace on Saturday, December 12.
- Live music from Diana Chittester on Terrace – Saturday, December 19.
- New Year's Dance Party on the

Terrace with DJ Kris Koch on Saturday, January 2.

Marigold Catering will serve a fresh, grab-and-go menu of soups, salads and café sandwiches in the Garden Café. They are also the exclusive event caterer.

And don't forget the nature lovers on your holiday gift list! Avoid the lines and find hundreds of one-of-a-kind gifts in the Garden Store.

Glow hours are Wednesday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday 12 noon to 8:30 p.m., Friday 12 noon to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday 12 noon to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday noon to 6 p.m. The Botanical Garden will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays except for Dec. 21, 22, 28 and 29 when Glow will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please note that these hours are subject to change. Please check cbgarden.org for updated information. The Botanical Garden is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Glow admission is \$15 per adult, \$10 per child age 3 to 12 (free for children 2 and under). Admission is free for Holden Forests & Gardens members. Glow tickets are available online, at cbgarden.org or by calling (216) 721-1600, ext. 110. Advance reservations are required to control capacity for the safety of our members and guests. The Botanical Garden is located at 11030 East Blvd. in Cleveland's University Circle. Indoor parking is available for a fee based on availability. For complete details about Glow, visit cbgarden.org.

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Taking turns

Tips for teaching kids how to wait until it's their turn

By Dr. Colleen Russo Johnson

Taking turns can be a tough skill to master, but it's an important part of life and a good skill to practice during the upcoming holidays. From waiting for your turn to play a board game to waiting for your turn at the grocery store, this kind of patience can be a struggle for kids and adults.

The logistics of taking turns — I go, then you go, then I go again — are relatively simple, but they require a lot of communication and control. Yes, this is easier said than done when dealing with little ones, but it's a worthy goal to accomplish. When we step back to allow another person to take their turn, or when we step forward to advocate for ourselves, we're all acting in alignment with a larger idea of fairness and equality. As children develop these important turn-taking skills

alongside emotion regulation and cooperative play, we help set them up for future success.

Remember, modeling taking turns with children is also a great way to strengthen your parent-child bonds and facilitate language development. So get ready to flex your patience because you'll want to show how it looks to wait your turn.

What does taking turns look like?

3–4 years

- **Have a chat.** A great way to practice turn-taking with children is to just have a conversation with them. Children naturally look for reactions when they speak. Will you laugh at their joke? Are you listening to their story? They also react based on what they're hearing and the comments of others. Help point things out like verbal comments or a change in body



- language as you take turns talking.
- **Wait in line.** Waiting is hard, especially when there's a line involved, but children can learn how to do it. Talk to them about waiting in line at the slide or at the sink to wash their hands. The longer the line, the harder it is to wait! Start with small lines to help them feel more successful and confident before tackling long ones.
- **Play games.** All children learn to take turns with toys. They also learn this in games like hide-and-go-seek, catch, and board games.

Play a game with your child. When they do take turns successfully, praise them to reinforce the behavior.

4–5 years

- **Play a multi-person game.** Games with multiple players sets up a default structure of positive turn-taking behavior. As they get into the game, they'll require fewer prompts or reminders to take turns.
- **Encourage problem-solving.** Children often identify turn-

Continued on page 10



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Taking turns Continued from page 9

taking as a way to solve a social problem. This is a great skill for them to practice on their own. When both children want a turn with a toy, children might solve the problem by assigning turns or creating a waiting list for the prized object.

5-6 years

- **Let kids be the experts.** Children are typically fully cooperative players at this stage. They can incorporate a partner's input into their play with regularity, negotiate rules and roles in their play, and work together to solve problems. Encourage them to take on this expert role, and you might be surprised at how much they excel.
- **Encourage kids to plan ahead.** At this age, children are better able to think ahead, make plans, and reason about fairness. Their turn-taking may focus less on material objects and more on friendship and social understanding: "They helped me when I fell, so I will get them a bandage the next time they're hurt."

Encourage taking turns at home

- **Play games!** Want to be active? Tag, soccer, and hide-and-seek are all great ways to practice taking turns while moving around. Board games and card games are excellent, too. Start with games that require two-three players, and then build up as your child becomes more successful with turn-taking. Playing together with toys is also a great way to take turns with prized toys.
- **Get social with role-play.** Act out situations that involve pairs (e.g. doctor and patient, waiter and diner, singer and audience, caregiver and baby). This is a good way to promote social turn-taking.
- **Practice storytelling.** Have fun and encourage imagination by telling stories together. Take turns making up parts of a story, and see how silly it can get!
- **Talk about your day.** Model effective talking and listening skills in your daily conversations. Remember some silence is OK

because we all need that space for processing and responding.

- **Practice patience.** Play games that help build inhibitory control (e.g. stopping and starting games like red-light, green-light or Simon Says) at home, and while you're out and about.
- **Bring turn-taking into daily activities.** Think of ways you can incorporate taking turns into everyday situations, from cooking dinner (I'll add a tomato into the salad, then you add one), to enjoying a snack (I eat a cracker, now you eat one), to cleaning up toys (I pick up a toy, then you pick up a toy).

This can be a challenging skill for kids to master, but it's worth the effort. If your child doesn't succeed right away or you're met with resistance, don't give up. Little by little, they'll get the hang of it, and you'll see the many social and emotional rewards.

Dr. Colleen Russo Johnson is a nationally recognized developmental psychologist with an expertise in children's media and technology and the co-founder of OK Play, an app built for families to create, bond and grow together every day through play (available on iOS or Android). She holds a PhD from Vanderbilt University.



Register for winter/spring classes, live and virtual, at Rabbit Run

Celebrate the arts this winter and enroll in a fine arts class or music lesson at Rabbit Run Community Arts Association in Madison. Regardless of age or ability RRCAA has arts opportunities for everyone.

Registration for winter/spring classes and lessons is now open with many exciting class offerings. RRCAA is a comprehensive fine arts association offering private and group instruction in all the major disciplines of the fine and performing arts.

Dance classes are available in creative movement, ballet, tap and jazz from preschoolers, who just love to move, to adults looking to get back into shape. Also available are classes in hip hop, modern dance and ZUMBA®. Our dance classes are both live and live virtual this year.

Always wanted to learn to paint or draw? School-aged children may sign up for workshops throughout the winter and spring. Kids will have a great time exploring various mediums while creating one-of-a-kind masterpieces. These live, virtual workshops are scheduled on school vacation days to give youth a fun

activity on their day off.

All new Canvas Art Workshops are planned throughout the year. In these one-hour virtual sessions, participants will enjoy painting a seasonal acrylic painting using an original as inspiration. Art supplies are provided in handy art-in-a-bag kits.

RRCAA provides a full range of private music instruction from beginner to advanced students in voice, brass, guitar, bass guitar, mandolin, ukulele, percussion, woodwinds, piano/keyboard, recorder, viola/violin/Suzuki violin, cello and fiddle. Lessons are being offered both live and live virtual.

RRCAA is following current state-recommended policies and procedures for live classes and lessons including social distancing and facial masks.

For specific class information or to register visit www.rabbitrunonline.org or call RRCAA at (440) 428-5913. Rabbit Run Community Arts Association is a nonprofit organization that receives partial funding from the Ohio Arts Council and is located at 49 Park Street in Madison.



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



The Rink at Wade Oval opens December 4 with new health and safety protocols in place



The Rink at Wade Oval, University Circle's picturesque outdoor ice rink, will open for the season on Friday, Dec. 4. The Rink at Wade Oval is proudly sponsored by PNC Bank.

New health and safety protocols will be in place throughout this season. Although The Rink has a capacity of 100 skaters, a maximum of 30 will be allowed on the ice, and tickets must be reserved in advance. Face masks must be worn at all times. Staff at The Rink will spray rental skates with sanitizer after each use. All public areas will be continuously cleaned, and benches will be spaced to allow for social distancing.

Concessions will be limited to pre-packaged items and coffee.

Seasonal programming at The Rink will include the popular "Pink the Rink" during Valentine's Day weekend, and special open skate hours during opening weekend, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Presidents Day. Guests of The Rink may show their admission wristbands at The Cleveland Orchestra gift shop to receive a special discount or use the code "WadeOval" to shop online. The Cleveland Museum of Art's Café is offering a 10% discount to guests who have timed museum tickets and plan to skate on the same day.

The Rink will be open through Monday, Feb. 15, 2021. Admission is \$2 and skate rentals are \$3, making this a fun and affordable winter experience.

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



Local support to help you quit smoking!

Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers knows that it may take many tries before you're able to quit for good, but we also know that it can be done! Currently, there are more former smokers than current smokers in the United States! Even so, tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death and disease, claiming more than half a million lives each year. In Ohio alone, tobacco use claims the lives of around 20,000 individuals each year — which can correlate to 52 lives lost each day.

Quitting can be a challenge, but you can now find LOCAL support for your quit journey — where and when you need it! This year, make a New Year's resolution to quit smoking for good by contacting Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers.

Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers (LGRC) is a leader in the fight against tobacco use in Lake and Geauga counties! We work with various community partners to prevent tobacco use and protect people from second-hand smoke by facilitating policy change and youth education. We also provide one-on-one tobacco cessation counseling services. Unlike other cessation programs, LGRC offers a one-on-one, judgment-free experience, supporting you. You will start your tobacco-free journey by meeting with an independently licensed counselor who will guide your journey by creating a personalized plan, helping you every step of the way. At Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers, we

strive "to promote lifelong recovery from addiction through education, prevention, and treatment regardless of ability to pay."

The steps in your plan will include the following:

- Picking a quit date. (Choose a date only a week or two away and highlight that day in your calendar or phone.)
- Telling loved ones and friends that you're quitting. (Let them know how they can help you quit.)
- Your list of reasons to quit.
- Rid cigarettes and anything that reminds you of smoking.
- Categorize feelings, places, and situations that make you want to smoke. (It's easier to avoid them if you've identified them!)
- Stress reduction strategies.
- Healthy approaches to fight cravings.
- Resources, support, and/or co-ordination of a nicotine replacement therapy.

We understand the burden of COVID-19, and quitting tobacco may be the last thing on your mind. There is no better time than the present because the health benefits of quitting begin in the first hour and increase as time passes on. Start 2021 on a positive note by giving us a call today at (440) 255-0678!

Or, you can call the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line — another great resource to accompany your journey!

1-800-QUIT-NOW
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Your parenting companion: Notes from the Backpack: A PTA podcast

This is a school year like no other. How do you keep track of everything that's going on? How do you best support your children's learning, development and success in and out of school? Notes from the Backpack: A PTA Podcast is your parenting companion and guide.

Launched in 2019 by National PTA, Notes from the Backpack helps parents support their children's education and development every step of the way. The podcast features 30-minute episodes that offer frank advice and ideas from researchers, parents, educators and other experts. Each episode answers questions parents are wondering about but aren't sure who to ask.

Season 3 of the podcast launched this fall and tackles questions like...

- How do I choose online resources that will actually support my kids during school closures?
- How can I help my child with learning differences thrive right now?
- How do I talk with my kids about current events and hot topics, like



racial justice and the election?

This season features nationally acclaimed guests including Congresswoman Jahana Hayes, award-winning children's book author Kwame Alexander, and filmmaker and TikTok sensation Julian Bass.

Notes from the Backpack provides you with the practical information you need to best support your children's success and make the most of their school experience—especially this year.

Visit PTA.org/BackpackNotes for a full list of the episodes and start listening today on all major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

You can also join in our conversations around the topics of each episode and share your thoughts, advice and parenting anecdotes on social media using #BackpackNotes.



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Scuba Claus is coming to town

Visit him in December at the
Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Knowing that many divers say their time underwater has a calming effect, it shouldn't be too much of a surprise that one jolly old elf escapes the hustle and bustle of toy making by getting into a 230,000-gallon shark exhibit. Scuba Claus returns to the Greater Cleveland Aquarium in December to dive, relax and spread some holiday cheer.

Guests of all ages are invited to explore the aquatic attraction on the West Bank of the Flats and make merry with the man in red during special Scuba Claus Meet & Greet Days:

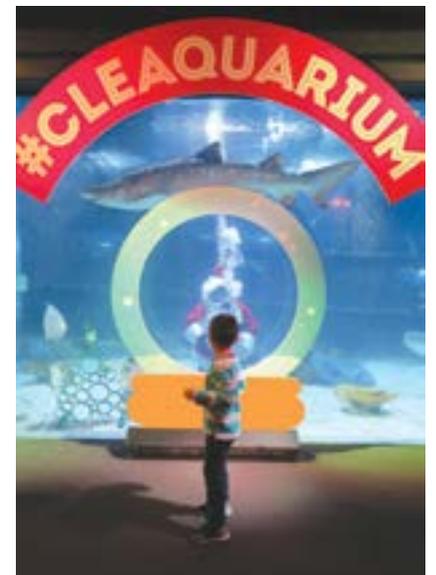
Thursdays, Dec. 10 & 17, 4:30-7pm

Fridays, Dec. 11 & 18 4:30-7pm

Saturdays, Dec. 12 & 19, 8:30-10am

Tickets include full Aquarium access and are available by advance purchase only and are \$24.95 for guests ages 13+, \$18.95 for children ages 2-12. Adult and child annual passholders ages 2+ can reserve tickets for \$5 each. Admission is always free for children younger than 2.

"After guests tour the Aquarium and complete an animal spotting activity, they can stop to talk to Scuba Claus while he's underwater," says Aquarium General Manager Stephanie White. "It's an opportunity to share a special wish for the holidays, discuss cookie preferences



or ask questions about diving." An Aquarium team member will be on hand to snap a complimentary digital photo with Scuba Claus. All children will receive an "I Saw Scuba Claus" sticker, temporary tattoo, activity book and craft.

Aquarium capacity will be limited and entry timed to ensure social distancing. All Clean Committed protocols will remain in place.

The Aquarium is located at 2000 Sycamore Street, Cleveland. Call (216) 862-8803 or visit them online at greaterclevelandaquarium.com for more information.

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Just For Laughs!

Some holiday-themed jokes to start your season off with a smile.

To all those who received a book from me as a Christmas present... they're due back at the library tomorrow.

Q: What's a parent's favorite Christmas carol?

A: Silent night!

The Hanukkah miracle is that the menorah oil lasted eight extra days. I re-create this miracle with every tube of toothpaste.

Q: Did you hear about the man who stole an Advent calendar?

A: He got 25 days.

Q: What do you call a bankrupt Santa?

A: Saint Nickel-less.

Q: What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?

A: A rebel without a Claus.

Three buildings in town were overrun by squirrels—the town hall, the hardware store, and the church. The town hall brought in some cats. But after they tore up all the files, the mayor got rid of the predators, and soon the squirrels were back.

The hardware store humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free outside town. But three days later, the squirrels climbed back in.

Only the church came up with an effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and made them members. Now they see them only on Christmas and Easter.

Keep those home fires burning safely

Corsaro Insurance Group offers tips to ensure your home and family stay safe

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.

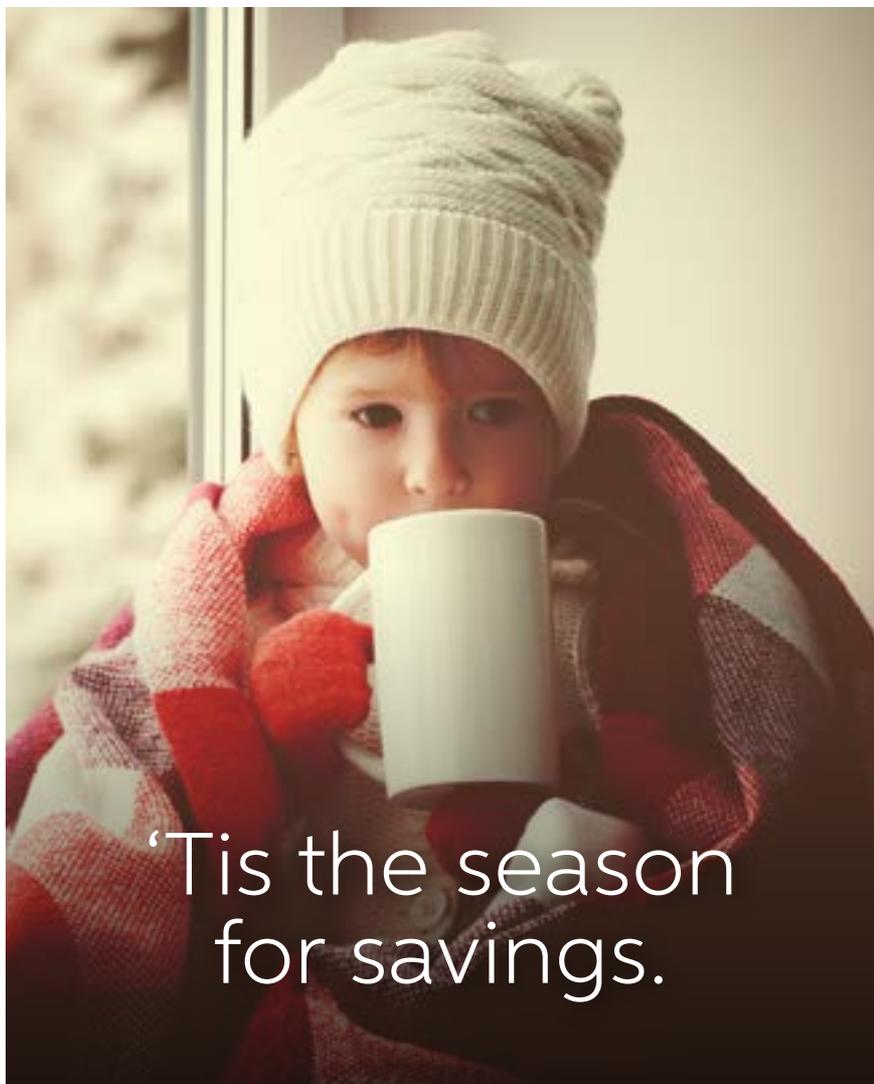
- Burn only seasoned hardwoods. Soft wood with higher moisture content produces more creosote.
- Do not restrict the fire's air supply by closing the glass doors of a fireplace. This can lead to incomplete combustion and higher levels of creosote.
- Never use gasoline to start or accelerate a fire.
- 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.

Article courtesy of the Corsaro Insurance Group and Central Insurance Companies.

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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Wild Winter Lights returns to Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo is again transforming into a winter wonderland this holiday season with Wild Winter Lights.

Experience this year's all-new lighting display, with more than one million individual lights & unique twists on holiday traditions. This year's event features hundreds of lighting displays across holiday-themed areas including Candyland, Enchanted Forest, Conservation Trail & Santa's Workshop.

Highlights of this year's event include dazzling walk-through displays, carousel rides, costume characters, model train displays, ice carvers, live music from festive choirs including the Singing Angels and an all-new dynamic light show featuring a massive 50-foot tall tree. Guests can also take photos with Santa at his workshop during the walk-through event.

To allow for proper social distancing, attendance to this year's Wild Winter Lights will be limited and guests are strongly encouraged to purchase their tickets in advance.

Additionally, the Zoo has imple-



Photo by Kyle Lanzer

mented several safety measures throughout the event, including frequent sanitation of Zoo grounds. Guests are required to wear facial coverings during their visit, unless under 6 years of age, or because of an existing condition.

The discounted cost for Zoo members is \$18 and \$20 for nonmembers, or a four-pack for \$54 for members and \$60 for nonmembers. Children under 2 are admitted for free.

Tickets for the drive-through experience are \$54 per car for Zoo members and \$60 per car for nonmembers.

Wild Winter Lights runs through December 30. Call (216) 661-6500 or visit www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo to reserve your tickets.

Coats For Kids delivers 7,500+ coats to area schools

Despite the many challenges this year in an all-consuming pandemic, Coats for Kids was still able to deliver brand new winter coats to public school children in need throughout northeast Ohio. During the first two weeks of November, coat deliveries went to:

- 7,507 K-8 public school students
- Four northeast Ohio counties
- 53 school buildings
- 13 school districts

Coats for Kids was able to accomplish this amid a 25% organization-wide budget cut to compensate for the loss of fundraising events and decreased monetary donations resulting from COVID-19.

It is critical to understand, though, that even though we were able to provide more than 7,500 brand new coats to schools, and are in the pro-



cess of conducting our annual coat collection campaign, we still need financial donations to ensure that Coats for Kids remains viable and to continue our mission in the future.

Please visit coatsforkidscleveland.org to make your donation today.

Local author releases new children's book, "SymFUNNY"

Many years ago, Jeannie Fleming-Gifford, a Willoughby resident, and Anna J. Magnusson connected in Columbus, OH, both having a mutual love for the arts and writing. Together, the two began creating and collaborating on a variety of stories. Their children's book SymFUNNY was inspired by watching young children enter the orchestra hall, many for the first time, to experience a live performance of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra where Fleming-Gifford worked as the education director for several years.

The concept came to life as Anna and Jeannie captured the viewpoint of young children and their expectations of going to the symphony versus their actual experience. The manuscript sat waiting to be shared until Fleming-Gifford connected with artist Kira Weber.

Weber, who resides in Chagrin Falls, had an interest in art before she could talk. As soon as she could hold a crayon, she began creating intricately detailed art. Her autism has helped her focus for extended periods as she paints and draws.

SymFUNNY is a playful children's story and is shared as an introduction to symphonic music, the orchestra, and to support literacy development.

"SymFUNNY is charming, imaginative, educational and, most importantly, fun! It captures the way a child thinks to introduce kids (and

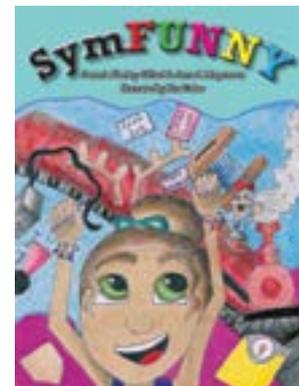
adults) to the concert-going experience with delightful pictures and prose that blend together in perfect harmony," said Joan Katz, education director, The Cleveland Orchestra.

Fleming-Gifford has a master's degree in child development and is the executive director at Fairmount

Center for the Arts, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enrich lives through the arts.

Anna J. Magnusson serves as the executive director of the Iowa Able Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain independence.

For more information or to obtain a copy of "SymFUNNY" and support Fairmount Center for the Arts and I Am Able IOWA, visit www.atoriginals.net.



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The origin and significance of beloved Christmas symbols

By Jan Pierce

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

Granted, many of us will be celebrating at home in smaller groups this year. Still, we'll soak in the love and good will that the season brings.

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

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

Christmas tree

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

Holly

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



Saturnalia Festival. Later, Christians used it to protect against persecution and finally it has become a beautiful part of our Christmas celebrations.

Candy canes

Christmas candy canes also originated in Germany. According to folklore, a minister provided white straight sticks of sugar to children to enable them to sit through the service quietly. Later the sticks were made into a J shape to represent a shepherd's crook. In the 1900s the red stripes were added: white for

purity and red for the blood of Jesus. Peppermint was said to represent the hyssop which was used in ancient times for purification.

Bells

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

Continued on page 18



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International Women's Air & Space Museum unveils new exhibits

20th anniversary of the International Space Station

The International Women's Air & Space Museum (IWASM) has two new exhibits celebrating the 20th anniversary of the International Space Station (ISS).

To celebrate this anniversary, the museum recently unveiled two new exhibits highlighting the women who have lived and worked on the ISS for long-duration expeditions. These missions can last from 48 to 340 days, with most ranging between five to seven months. The exhibits include various items, such as the all-female spacewalk patch, the Peggy Whitson "Wonder Woman" patch (an IWASM exclusive), Sunita Williams' shirt she wore in space, photographs of numerous women on the ISS, and the LEGO ISS set.

The museum offers free admission. Exhibit hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. Office, gift shop, and research center hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Guided tours are available by calling (216) 623-1111. Tour group size will be limited to eight guests to



comply with current social distancing guidelines. Masks are required.

The International Women's Air & Space Museum is located in the terminal of Burke Lakefront Airport. Exhibits are in the lobby at Burke, as well as the west concourse.

For additional information please visit www.iwasm.org.

Christmas symbols Continued from page 17

Christmas star

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

Angel

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

Nativity scene

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

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

Wreaths

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

Stockings

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

Christmas music

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

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

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

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

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

Sorry, but this is not an actual photo of that event.



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2020: Cops, tollbooths, tears & hope

By Stacy Turner

I don't know about you, but I'm so **L**over 2020. This trying year has tested the resolve of even the most positive among us. I'm definitely more than ready to move forward into the new year, and I don't seem to be alone in that sentiment. The voice of logic says that on January 1, 2021 we'll still be dealing with the same issues we had in 2020, but it doesn't feel that way to me. With the clean slate of 2021 stretching out ahead of us, it feels like we're on the road to better times. Let me explain what I mean.

When my girls were small, one under a year old and the other around three, I took them on a solo road trip to Columbus to visit my ailing father-in-law. Due to his work schedule, my husband couldn't join us. And we couldn't leave behind the dog, our protector and self-appointed nanny. I planned to leave in the early afternoon so the kids would nap most of the nearly three-hour trip. But wrangling two-under-threes into car seats, along with all the gear we'd need for several nights away, had all of us feeling crabby and frazzled. I just kept telling myself that once I made the 20-minute drive to the turnpike, it would be better. The wide-open road would lull the girls to sleep, the drive would be peaceful, and their doting grandparents would be thrilled to see us. But with the sounds of the Wiggles reverberating at top volume to soothe the youngest, and just minutes from the tollbooth, I was stopped for speeding.

When my oldest saw the flashing lights of the police car, she started wailing, certain that mommy was going to jail. Her anguish made the youngest cry even louder, which set the dog to barking in an effort to protect us from the presumed "villain" in dark sunglasses approaching my window. When I rolled it down, I could almost visualize the chaos oozing from my vehicle. I could tell the young officer wanted absolutely no part of our hot mess. After pausing a few seconds to fully take it in, he gave me a warning and shakily waved me on, past his jurisdiction, telling me to drive safely and to have a good day (somewhere else was implied). I

counted my blessings for not getting a ticket, got my crazy train to the turnpike, and within minutes, my three passengers were napping contentedly, the stereo blissfully silent. I just needed to make it through the worst of the chaos, and then the rest of the trip was uneventful and calm. And when I finally reached my destination and shared the story, we laughed until tears streamed down our faces.

This, my friends, is what 2020 has felt like to me. We all started out the year with the best of intentions. We each loaded up what we thought we'd need for the long haul, and in spite of the chaos and tears, we stayed the course. Now, we can see the end off in the distance like the shiny tollbooth, signifying a return to peace and time of hope. We've had some rough times this year, for sure but we're almost there. And when we finally arrive, we'll have quite a story to share.

The fresh new year brings the opportunity to reflect on what we've accomplished and where we'll go next. I know I'm not alone in hoping that next year will be better than the last. But in the midst of a challenging year, hope and faith have helped us see the good in the midst of the not-so-good. We have had more time to spend with our families, as outside activities, concerts, and schooling have been canceled or altered. Some of us have had time to try new hobbies, and many have spent more time outside enjoying nature than ever before. Lots of folks have learned how to better use technology, not just for work and school, but to keep in touch with far away family and friends. And we've all learned resiliency as we adapt our plans and traditions based on recommendations and mandates from the "experts." As the year has progressed, we've all come up with different ways to do things, and have cast off what no longer serves us. Those valuable lessons will be helpful, no matter what 2021 brings.

So as we celebrate the end of a seemingly endless year, we get the opportunity to begin a fresh new one. And in this shiny new year, hold your loved ones close, count your blessings and embrace hope. And don't forget to laugh.

Santa Claus is coming to Great Lakes Mall



Even in the midst of this uncertain time, nothing can stop the magic of the holidays and one of the season's most cherished traditions – a visit with Santa Claus. Now through Thursday, Dec. 24, families can safely meet and greet Santa at Great Lakes Mall in the Dillard's Concourse.

Children will have the opportunity to engage in a socially distant conversation and safely pose for a picture with Santa during their visit to Great Lakes Mall's North Pole. Advance registration is strongly encouraged in order to promote social distancing and contactless payment for photo packages. Walk-up visits will be permitted as space allows.

In addition to in-person Santa visits, Great Lakes Mall will also offer a variety of exciting digital experiences with Santa this year. These virtual options will bring the magic of Santa Claus to life remotely while allowing families to enjoy holiday traditions.

Now through Dec. 24, Santa will be on site to visit with families from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on

Sundays. Santa will have special hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 24. Guests can book their reservation time in advance.

Great Lakes Mall remains focused on providing a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. In the continued need to address COVID-19, the town center has proactively implemented additions to the code of conduct, effective until further notice.

Great Lakes Mall's already rigorous disinfectant and cleaning practices will also continue many times per day, including periodically disinfecting areas most susceptible to the spread of germs. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers are located in highly trafficked areas and walkways for public use. Specifically, social distancing guidelines will be in place around the Santa set, as well as in all queue lines.

For additional information on Great Lakes Mall and visits with Santa, visit shopgreatlakesmall.com.

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Fine Arts Association continues hybrid arts education for spring 2021

The Fine Arts Association (FAA) began their hybrid arts education instruction at the beginning of the shutdown in March. Today, FAA continues to offer in-person classes, private lessons, and creative arts therapy sessions with the option to attend virtually— apart from theatre and ceramics. With COVID-19 guidelines in place, parents and students continue to feel safe at FAA.

Their spring session registration opened on November 23 and they are offering an early registration discount until January 9, 2021. Spring classes begin on January 25. Consider giving the gift of the arts this holiday by purchasing a gift certificate to go towards any class, lesson, session, or performance. Gift certificates can be purchased by calling (440) 951-7500 x100. With COVID-19 having a financial impact on funding sources, The Fine Arts Association is focusing on ramping up scholarship donations this season to ensure the arts are both accessible and affordable for all. FAA's "Giving from the heART" scholarship campaign runs from December 1, 2020 (Giving Tuesday) through January 5, 2021. FAA proudly offers scholarships for qualifying students in areas such as financial need and creative arts therapies.

Your donation to the Giving from the heART campaign benefits FAA scholarships. When donating online, you may choose which scholarship you would like to donate to. Some examples of what giving from



A ballet class at The Fine Arts Association with students wearing masks as required. Photo by Howard Washington.

the heART can do for FAA students:

- \$25 pays for two children to enjoy an inspiring theatre experience
- \$50 provides five weeks of engaging arts and music instruction for a senior citizen
- \$100 provides a young person 14 weeks of participation in a string ensemble
- \$250 allows a class of elementary students a day of creative arts instruction at their school
- \$500 pays for a young person to attend 18 weeks of private instruction on any instrument

To register for a class, lesson, or session, please visit fineartsassociation.org/education or call (440) 951-7500 x100.

To donate to the Giving from the heART scholarship campaign, visit fineartsassociation.org/donate.

The Fine Arts Association is located at 38660 Mentor Avenue in Willoughby.

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Dowdle Wooden Puzzles are a great gift for the puzzle fanatic and lover of folk art. They feature



a high quality giclée print that is mounted on wood. You have several options to choose from including a classic Dowdle box or a keepsake wood box; existing die-cut or a specialized unique die-cut; you can even be painted into a Dowdle painting! Discover the world through the eyes of folk artist Eric Dowdle, known for his gift of capturing the character and traditions of each place he visits. dowdlefolkart.com

Grow Buddha 8 Herb Starter Kit

This herb starter kit contains all the items you would ever need to grow your own organic herbs from seeds. Their hand selected and tested seeds will allow you to grow 8 types of the most sought-after herb plants yourself (mint, basil, chive, sage, fennel, thyme, coriander, and parsley). They offer a risk-free 30 day guarantee.



Dyson Airwrap Volume+Shape



Engineered for fine, flat hair, with brushes to add body and shape, and barrels to curl and wave. Select from three airflow speeds and four heat settings, including constant cold shot for your hair type and style. Includes 1.2 inch Airwrap barrels, soft smoothing brush, round volumizing brush, pre-styling dryer, storage case, non-slip mat, and filter cleaning brush.

Cuisinel Pre-Seasoned Cast Iron 2-in-1 Multi Cooker 3-Quart Dutch Oven & Skillet Lid Set



This oven safe cookware can be used as a dutch oven and frying pan both indoors and outdoors. It is grill, stovetop, and induction safe.

It is truly versatile and can be used for frying, baking, grilling, broiling, braising, and sautéing meats, vegetables and more!

The superior craftsmanship will make it outlast years of regular cooking and washing for long-term reliability. It is easy to clean and maintain, just hand wash with warm water, no soap or dishwasher use. Every Cuisinel product is backed by a 1-year, no-hassle guarantee to ensure your total satisfaction. Purchase risk free!

JBL Pulse 4 - Waterproof Portable Bluetooth Speaker with Light Show



Kick start your party with JBL signature sound and a dazzling LED light show all in 360 degrees. Our bold, IPX7 waterproof design shines bright and will keep the tunes flowing for up to

12 hours on a single charge. Tap the JBL Connect App to change the sound-responsive colors and patterns and connect with other JBL PartyBoost compatible speakers to make your party epic.

Cabinet Caddy



The Cabinet Caddy provides an opportunity to reclaim cluttered spaces. Perfect for spices, medicine cabinet, bathroom vanity, workbench hardware and more. The Cabinet Caddy fits standard cabinets and also looks great on countertops. It holds 30% larger bottles than competitors. Just pull and rotate the device for easy access to organized items. Complete with stick-on labels and foam stability inserts to keep smaller bottles from tipping. No assembly required.

Dyson V7 Motorhead



This vacuum is engineered for powerful suction on carpets and hard floors. It has up to 30 minutes of fade-free power in powerful mode and up to 20 minutes with motorized cleaner-head (time may vary based on power mode and/or attachments used).

- No-touch dirt emptying – just pull the lever to release it into the bin.
- Changes to a handheld vacuum and back again, in just one click.
- Lightweight and ergonomic, to clean high-up places.
- Comes with a variety of tools.
- 15 small cyclones create strong centrifugal forces, to capture microscopic dirt.

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON SHOP IN MENTOR

With over 325 stores to choose from, you'll find everything on your list.

You probably already know that Mentor is one of Northeast Ohio's leading shopping destinations. But, it may surprise you to learn that Mentor is also home to over 135 *independent* retailers and restaurants.

68¢ of every dollar spent local stays local.

Shop small. Shop local. Shop Mentor.

Learn more about what Mentor has to offer at www.shopinmentor.com



Stocking stuffers for every sports enthusiast!



LNSP Gift Cards!

Just in time for the holidays!

- No expiration dates.
- Available in any denomination.
- Good at The Players Club restaurant, Indoor Links golf, batting cages, and for youth sports programs!

Batting Cages

Baseball or softball, fast-pitch or slow-pitch, LNSP has the area's best indoor batting cages open year round.

For more info: EStrauss@LNSportspark.com

Virtual Reality Golf

- State-of-the-art Full Swing simulators.
- Phenomenal graphics.
- 37 different world-famous courses. (St. Andrews, Pebble Beach & more)

For more info: buckeyebdame@gmail.com

The Players Club at LNSP

Offers a great blend of fun, friends, food and drink. Expanded menu includes wraps, pizza, wings, fresh-cut fries, salads and sandwiches in a lively, fun setting.

Now open for lunch 7 days a week!

For more info: DBartulovic@LNSportspark.com

Lil' Kickers (Gift cards available!)

We are happy to announce that Lil' Kickers is under new management! Please visit our website to meet our new director, Sarah Bals.

For more info: Sarah@LNSportspark.com



38630 Jet Center Drive • Willoughby
North of Route 2 off Lost Nation Road
(440) 602-4000
www.LNSportsPark.com

Girl Scouts of North East Ohio Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award Recipient

Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO) congratulates Gold Award Girl Scout and Girl Scout Ambassador, Elisabeth Lendal, for receiving the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award from The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), Greater Cleveland Chapter. Elisabeth received this award for her dedication to service and philanthropic support in her community and was honored at AFP's 2020 National Philanthropy Day ceremony, which was held virtually on November 6.



Elisabeth Lendal

Elisabeth was nominated for this award by Julie Weagraff, vice president, fund development at GSNEO, who recognized Elisabeth as a role model for youth who want to make a philanthropic impact and for her commitment to giving back to her community.

"Elisabeth is one of our girls of courage, confidence, and character, and is a great representative of the 23,000 girls we have in the Girl Scout program in northeast Ohio," said Jane Christyson, GSNEO chief executive officer. "She's the kind of person who sees a need in the community, figures out the solution, and goes in and makes that happen. She is a shining example of what a Girl Scout can do."

Elisabeth has provided unwavering service and philanthropic support to the nonprofit organization Community Resource Services (CRS), whose mission is to diminish the effects of poverty in her area. For her Gold Award project, the highest award a Girl Scout can earn, Elisabeth collected spice bottles and created a cookbook for CRS clients featuring commonly donated food items. She also improved the CRS website by developing a "client page" and, with volunteers recruited from her French class, Elisabeth made 24 soup-in-a-jars for CRS clients. Elisabeth has made her cookbook available to more than 100 food banks in the US and Canada for their clients to enjoy. Even after earning her Gold Award, she has continued her involvement with CRS fundraisers including collecting and donating over 5,000 hygiene products for clients.

Elisabeth was elected as the youngest board member of the CRS

board of directors in recognition of her outstanding commitment. In the last year alone, she has helped organize and support several fundraising events for CRS, from their largest fundraiser (the Pearl Gala), which raised over \$75,000, to several local races (Homeruns for Hunger), and a food collection event (SOUPER Bowl).

Elisabeth has been a Girl Scout for 10 years and has always enjoyed giving back to the community.

"What I did not realize when I started volunteering was the impact it would have back on me," said Elisabeth in her recipient speech at AFP's 2020 Philanthropy Day event. "My sole purpose is to help others in my community. I'm only 17 years old, yet I know that I have bettered my community. I don't know what my future will hold, but I know that I will continue to change the world one hygiene product and spice bottle at a time."

Elisabeth was previously recognized for her ongoing commitment to the community by GSNEO in May 2019, when she was awarded the Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship at our annual Women of Distinction event. In September 2020, the Lorain County Section of the National Council of Negro Women awarded Elisabeth the Trailblazer's Award for her perseverance in improving the lives of families in her community.

Elisabeth closed her acceptance speech with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

To watch the AFP Virtual Philanthropy Day event, visit <https://youtu.be/EPF8KDe7HNc>.

TOY & GIFT Ideas

Playmobil 1.2.3 My First Train Set

(Ages 18 months+)



The imagination of little engineers will chug along with this fun set. This 2020 National Parenting Product Awards Winner includes one train driver, woman, man, and girl. It includes one bird, sheep, goat, dog, and squirrel. It has one of each of these accessories: locomotive, passenger car, goods wagon, straight, level crossing, tunnel, railway signal, bag, parcel, postbag, nest, green area with flowers, and eight curves and two ramps.

It includes one bird, sheep, goat, dog, and squirrel. It has one of each of these accessories: locomotive, passenger car, goods wagon, straight, level crossing, tunnel, railway signal, bag, parcel, postbag, nest, green area with flowers, and eight curves and two ramps.

Playmobil 1.2.3 Dump Truck

(Ages 18 months+)



Kids will love to learn to identify shapes and match objects through the sorting function on the roof with this bright and colorful set. Set includes one construction worker, sorting garage, truck, sandbag, box, and barrel.

Set includes one construction worker, sorting garage, truck, sandbag, box, and barrel.

Playmobil Viona - Comic World

(Ages 7+)



Viona is the mysterious daydreamer of the group. She likes to express her feelings through poems and paintings, preferably in purple. Her artistic talent saves the girls from many difficult situations.

Includes a silicone

bracelet, jewelry beads and brush charm, collector's card, sticker and many accessories.

The enclosed stickers can be painted on with the new PLAYMOBIL water pen.

Playmobil Surprise Box - Comic World

(Ages 7+)



Unpack, discover and collect! The 12 extraordinary characters from the candy world promise endless fun! Who will find the limited edition balloon lady with the golden muffin charm? Includes individual muffin charm, trading card, sticker and accessories.

BUILDZI

(Ages 6+)



The fast-stacking, nerve-racking, block-building game! Quick, grab a BUILDZI block and start building. Be the first to build your tower, but — careful — don't let it tumble.

32 BUILDZI blocks, 32 tower cards, 32 block cards and lots of ways to play!

BRIO Builder Light Set

(Ages 3+)



This 120-piece construction toy set is perfect for budding engineers and fosters STEM learning. Preschoolers can now illuminate their creations with the easy-to-use light components. Builder encourages kids to use their creativity to build their own toys every day. The Light Set is perfect as a stand-alone set, but can also be added to other Builder sets to open the door to even more building possibilities. Crafted with durable beech wood and impact-resistant plastic. Battery powered light components that turn on, off, blink, and pulsate.

Schleich Veterinarian Practice with Pets

(Ages 3-8)



In the veterinary practice from the Schleich® Farm World all the animal patients are lovingly treated and nursed back to health. The vet makes sure of it. She always has the right equipment ready. With the help of the X-ray image hanging on the wall, the vet can treat her patients on the examination table and quickly takes the right medication out of her doctor's case. She can also check the weight of the rabbits using her scale, and they recover quickly out on the field. Then it's time for the next patient!

Whatsitsface

(Ages 3+)



If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it. That's now true for stuffed animals with the Whatsitsface line of plush pals. Feeling happy, sad, surprised, amused, angry or sleepy can all happen with a twist of a knob or a flip of a face. Little ones can change the face of Puppy Dog, Kitty Cat or Teddy Bear to reveal six emotional expressions — building their empathy skills while extending creative playtime! Visit whatsitsface.com.

iPlay, iLearn Hopping Horse

Ages 18 months +



Time to let the animals out! Your kids will absolutely love this inflatable ride on pal! Just hop on, grab the long ears, and off you go! Suitable for indoor & outdoor play. Take out the inserted white air stopper from the air

hole; insert the tip of the air pump and inflate the hopper till the cover is taut around the toy, then quickly insert the air stopper back into the air hole.

SmartMax My First Animal Train

Ages 18 months – 5 years



This 22-piece set is a STEM focused magnetic discovery toy.

The extra-large SMARTMAX parts help young kids safely discover the magic of magnetism. Build a moving train

and three coaches, conductor, lion and elephant. A TOTY finalist.

West Paw Treat Toys



Just like humans, dogs need mental stimulation—it keeps their brains sharp and their days interesting. Pop a nutritious treat in a West Paw treat toy for a challenge AND a reward. Toys are top rack dishwasher safe, latex free and FDA compliant. Best day ever for your furry friend! [Shop westpaw.com](http://Shopwestpaw.com).

For Your Furry Friend!



*Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year*

from

Our Shepherd Lutheran School!

Our Shepherd Lutheran School is now in our 41st year! We are a kindergarten through eighth grade private, faith-based school joyfully serving the communities of Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula.

Our staff is committed to providing academic excellence built on the foundation of Christ.



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