

December 2023

The Art of Caregiver & Kinship Connections



Merry Christmas!

Christmas is celebrated on December 25 and is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two millennia, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religion. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. December 25, Christmas Day, has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1870. As Americans began to embrace Christmas as a perfect family holiday, old customs were unearthed. People looked toward recent immigrants and Catholic and Episcopalian churches to see how the day should be celebrated. In the next 100 years, Americans built a Christmas tradition all their own that included pieces of many other customs, including decorating trees, sending holiday cards and gift-giving. The legend of Santa Claus can be traced back to a monk named St. Nicholas who was born in Turkey around A. D. 280. St. Nicholas gave away all of his inherited wealth and traveled the countryside helping the poor and sick, becoming known as the protector of children and sailors. In 1822, Episcopal minister Clement Clarke Moore wrote a Christmas poem called "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," more popularly known today by its first line: "'Twas The Night Before Christmas." The poem depicted Santa Claus as a jolly man who flies from home to home on a sled driven by reindeer to deliver toys. The iconic version of Santa Claus as a jolly man in red with a white beard and a sack of toys was immortalized in 1881, when political cartoonist Thomas Nast drew on Moore's poem to create the image of Old Saint Nick we know today.

PROGRAM UPDATES



A new change to the Caregiver Advocacy Program came into effect. April Hutchinson is now the direct supervisor of the Caregiver Advocacy Program staff. April is a familiar face within the agency as she serves as the Senior Services Case Manager and you might recognize her from in home visits to complete assessments for the home delivered meals program. April has been with the agency for three years and lives in Caro with her husband of 22 years, four dogs, and four children. In her free time April enjoys spending time with her granddaughter, traveling and learning new things, and being with family. For the last 15 years, April has worked with seniors to help them stay independent in their home, she has also worked hands-on with those who have been diagnosed with dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and who were on hospice as a certified nursing assistant. April is very passionate about providing help and care to seniors and providing resources to their caregivers so they are able to stay in their home. She is very excited about this new opportunity and cannot wait to meet everyone in the program .



April Hutchinson

Kim Reynero is still the Caregiver Advocate for both programs, however, if Kim is not available, you may reach April for any questions you have.



2023 Caregiver Holiday Party

Human Development Commission
Community Action Agency

FIRST ANNUAL CAREGIVER HOLIDAY PARTY

For Caregivers and their family

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

Holiday Meal, Pictures With Santa,
Cookie Decorating, Ornament Making,
Prizes and More!

HAM | MASHED POTATOES | CORN | ROLLS | PUMPKIN PIE

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

CASS CITY JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA
4868 SEEGER STREET

RSVP no later than Wednesday, November 29, 2023
by calling 989-673-4121

If you haven't RSVP'd to the Caregiver Holiday Party and you would like to attend, please call Kim at 989-673-4121 to RSVP for yourself and others who will be attending with you.

This is a fun event for everyone who is caring for an individual as long as they meet program requirements, and their family and care recipient can attend.

There will be an assortment of beverages, activities, food and fun for all ages!

Santa will be making his grand arrival for kids to give him their Christmas list and take a photo with the man in red! All others are welcome to take a photo with Santa and it is a great family photo opportunity!

We cannot wait to see you all at the party!

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES



FOR ALL AGES

Christmas is a time to be with family and friends, enjoy the Christmas spirit, and celebrate the holiday. There are so many ways to celebrate the holiday and it is fun to find new ways to get involved. From silly games that will have all your guests laughing until their face hurts to simple Christmas games to play at home with your kids or older loved ones.

There are games for all ages and something to suit everyone. These fun Christmas activities are sure to be a hit and it is the perfect time to get up and move!

1. DIY Christmas Cards
2. Family Christmas Photos
3. Go to a Christmas Tree Farm
4. Visit Bronner's Christmas Wonderland
5. Attend Church Service
6. Sledding
7. Build a Snowman
8. Bake Christmas Desserts
9. Volunteer at a Food Drive or Soup Kitchen
10. Decorate a Christmas Tree
11. Go Caroling
12. Have a Christmas Movie Marathon
13. Adopt a Family in Need
14. Look at Christmas Lights
15. Play in the Snow





Christmas Gift Ideas



FOR SENIORS AND CHILDREN

SENIORS

Finding good Christmas gifts for seniors can sometimes be a considerable challenge. After all, many seniors have very particular tastes or more stuff than they know what to do with. How do you find a gift they'll appreciate? It can be even harder if they insist they don't need anything. Below are ten ideas to help you decide what to get your loved one.

1. Brain games - jigsaw puzzles, word searches, crossword puzzles
2. Organization Bins - medicine, supplies, etc.
3. Gift Baskets
4. Throw Blanket
5. Large Wall Clock
6. Memory Cell Phone RAZ - Location tracking, reminders, and more
7. Automatic Jar Opener
8. Photos
9. Cooked Meals
10. Gift Certificates - housecleaning, cooking, etc.

CHILDREN

Finding good Christmas gifts for kids can sometimes be a considerable challenge since they all have different interests. How do on wanting the newest hot item that can be quite expensive. Below are ten ideas to help you decide what to get your little one that won't cost a fortune.

Five Gift Rule:

1. Something to Wear
 2. Something they Need
 3. Something they Want
 4. Something to Read
 5. Something they don't know they want
-
1. Gift Cards
 2. Coloring Sets
 3. Stuffed Animals
 4. Headphones
 5. Senses Gift Basket - Smell, Taste, Sight, Touch and Sound



Caring For Someone With Dementia at Christmas



Millions of families across the U.S. will have someone with dementia join their Christmas celebrations. Caring for someone with dementia can often be a challenging experience, but there's no reason this should add any further pressure.

Christmas is an incredibly important time of year for everyone. It's understandable to feel anxious about making sure everyone is happy especially someone who has dementia, but there are lots of ways to make your festive fun dementia-friendly.

Often, the best part of your loved one's day is spending time with you. Although it can be a challenge and feel overwhelming, it's so important to spend time together. Feelings evoked from relaxing and having fun together can shape the rest of their day. Your family visits have more lasting power than you think and can influence how they feel.

Remember: even if it's a slower pace than what you're used to, you're making memories together. It's equally important to support yourself, as looking after someone with dementia can feel overwhelming. Open up to your close friends and family if you're struggling, as doing this can prove to be a huge relief.

If you need support, please reach out to us! We are happy to listen!



Holiday Home Safety Tips



Holiday decorations, such as Christmas trees, lights, or menorahs, should be secured so that they do not fall or catch on fire. Anything flammable should be monitored at all times, and extra precautions should be taken so that lights or anything breakable are fixed firmly, correctly, and out of the way of those with Alzheimer's disease. Candles should never be lit without supervision. When not in use, they should be put away. Also, try to avoid clutter, especially in walkways, during the holidays.

CHRISTMAS FACTS

- Christmas is believed to date back to December 25, 336 A.D.
- Each year, 25-30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States alone. There are about 15,000 Christmas tree farms in the United States, and trees usually grow for between four and 15 years before they are sold.
- When Christmas was cancelled: From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and law-breakers were fined five shillings.
- Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870.
- The first eggnog made in the United States was consumed in Captain John Smith's 1607 Jamestown settlement.



IMPORTANT DATES

12/6/23 - Sandusky Library Senior Services Education Fair

12/07/23 - Caregiver Holiday Party - Cass City Jr./Sr. High School

12/12/23 - Bad Axe Support Group

12/13/23 - Sandusky Support Group

12/19/23 - Parkinson's Support Group

12/20/23 - Caro Support Group

12/21/23 - OFFICE CLOSED - Christmas Eve Observed

12/25/23 - OFFICE CLOSED - Christmas Day

12/28/23 - OFFICE CLOSED - New Year's Eve Observed

[Kim Reynero](#)

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