

Keeping you
"in THE"
know.



12/18/20

Wishing You Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!

-Happy Holidays to all CSC staff members, board trustees, donors, volunteers, clients and friends! As we reflect on the past year, we are thankful to all who have worked with us...in person or remotely...or served our agency in any capacity. Thank you for your support and dedication; best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year!

As a reminder, CSC will be closed on Christmas Day (Friday, December 25th) and New Year's Day (Friday, January 1st). The agency will be open normal business hours on December 24th, December 31st and January 4th.

The weekly "In The Know" will not publish the next few weeks and will resume on Friday, January 8th, 2021.

What's Happening at CSC:

-Cleveland Sight Center's Board of Trustees held their final meeting of 2020 on Monday, December 14th. The Board reviewed, voted on and approved the agency's operating and capital budgets for the 2021 year. Thanks to the Fiscal team and all departments for their hard work in forecasting the upcoming 12 months and preparing the 2021 budgets.

-Susie Meles, Jennifer Dean, Nicole Kahn and Kristen Callahan met with educators from a local school district this week. Jennifer gave a demonstration of JAWS over Zoom. Nicole and Jennifer explained different types of assistive technology available for students of all ages. The educators said they were excited to tell families about the different options. A follow-up meeting is expected in January.

-CSC Case Manager in Social Work Anthony Griffin, MSSA presented a workshop to staff members on the topic "Client Crisis" this week. Topics covered included "What is a crisis?" and "What to do when talking with a client in crisis." Different scenarios of people in crisis were role-played and talked through. For those unable to attend a recording will be made available. A few tips from the training include: remember to remain calm even if you have to say to yourself stay calm; remember you have people who can help; use the street card distributed or call "First Call for Help" (211) for resources. For more information please contact Jim Hlavaty (x4678 or jhlavaty@clevelandsightcenter.org) or Anthony Griffin (x4675 or agriffin@clevelandsightcenter.org).

-Students in Bright Futures Preschool this week enjoyed their Virtual Polar Express experience! Drivers from the CSC Transportation team and Preschool Teacher Melissa Kraus delivered pre-packed "Polar Express Sets" to students and families that included cookies, frosting, sprinkles and chocolate milk gathered by a team of CSC Volunteers, as well as train tickets, bells, train whistles, which were used by children during the event. In addition, children received presents which were purchased courtesy of the recent donation by "Mr. Rick" and a frozen meal for the entire family courtesy of the CSC Leisure and Lifestyles Department and provided by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Mothers of students who have been partners in daily class meetings and routines also received a present - a beautiful holiday mug with cookies and chocolate, donated by Alicia Howerton.

The Polar Express started as guest conductor Miss Sophie checked all tickets and admitted the group aboard. During the trip families and students listened to an adapted version of the Polar Express, which was shortened and accompanied by sound effects and picture descriptions. Next, the group listened to some recorded messages from Santa Claus (thank you, Melissa Mauk) and sang some carols while enjoying chocolate milk and cookies. Even though the internet everyone could feel the holidays are coming! Additionally, the class had a visit from volunteer Elf Ally, as she led the kids in song and asked if they are on naughty or nice list. Students then made a train out of various shapes they are learning.

Many staff members and volunteers have worked hard these last few weeks to make sure that our Preschoolers - even while at home - still experienced the same magical atmosphere as when they are in the classroom. A huge thank you to everyone who has helped!

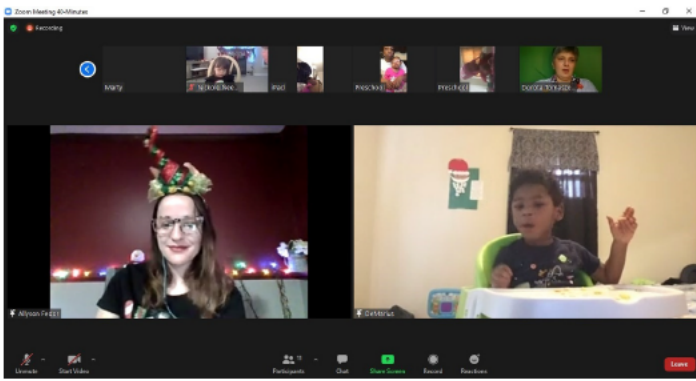


Image of a screen shot of a preschool student waving to Elf Ally during their Zoom session

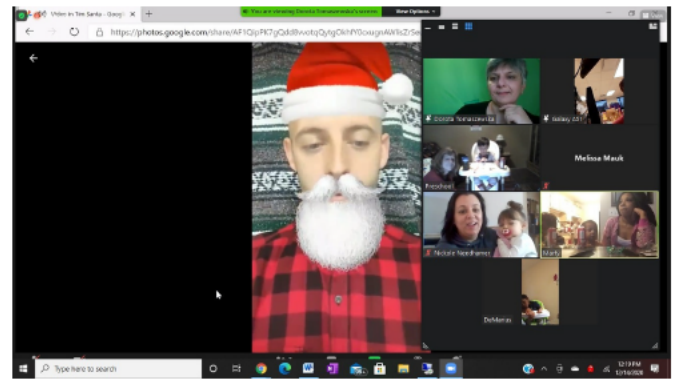


Image of a screen shot of Santa's recordings to the preschool class

-Last week, the Leisure and Lifestyle Services team offered clients a one-day poetry workshop, where they created a poem titled "Blankets of Snow":

Blankets of Snow

Bears hibernate.

Do you think they are dreaming? If they did, they would dream about springtime, eating, and fresh honey.

Speaking of the bees, what are they doing in the winter?

They have to survive on the honey they keep. The beekeeper needs to leave some behind for survival.

Skunks are sleeping.

Fluffy tails wrapped around their noses. Dreaming of peanuts, grubs, and digging with their sharp little claws.

What about the bats?

Hanging upside down, sleeping, tiny breath fogging their cave. Wings wrapped around themselves like a personal fuzzy blanket.

Ssssssnakes.

All coiled up, under a rock or a log, weaving their own communal blanket with their bodies.

Wood frogs.

Breathing and heartbeat stops. Frogcicles.

Groundhogs.

Slowly doing math in their heads, waiting for February 2nd, over and over and over again.

Opossums don't hibernate, but they do slow down.

They don't go out shopping every day, or digging for bugs, and they don't go to parties.

Let's talk about the turtles.

Dig into the mud, make a blanket with the mud, houses wrapped around their backs. Not completely dormant, it's like hibernation but not quite. Brumation.

The chipmunks are sleeping.

Burrowed into the ground, snoozing away, curled up in a little ball.

I wish humans hibernated.

Give the earth a break from us. Give us time to rest, regenerate, renew. Emerge in spring with a new perspective.

-The Leisure and Lifestyles Department hosts a Winter Solstice party tonight, during which Kristen Callahan's (CYAS team) daughter is going to give a cello performance for attendees! The group is also going to play a compliment game and reflect upon the past year. For more information, contact Bobbie Szabo (x4597). Recreation programming Monday through Wednesday of next week is the usual, but things change in between Christmas and New Year's; the department will only be offering Ballroom Dance and Creative Writing on December 29th and Improv on December 30th. Be sure to check the calendar of events here.

Image of a screen shot of a recent Improv session led by Volunteer Tim



-Cleveland Sight Center's Young Professionals group, the Visionaries, are holding a virtual recruitment event as we turn the calendar to 2021. Thursday, January 14th from 7-8pm, young professionals are invited to ring in the New Year virtually with the Visionaries while enjoying a complimentary glass of champagne/sparkling cider, meet the group, hear what is planned for 2021, and learn a bit of braille with a sweet treat! RSVP here: <http://bit.ly/34kJym3> by January 10th to receive your box of goodies for this event.

If you know of someone that might be interested in attending and joining the Visionaries, please send them this information. For more information about the Visionaries, please click here:

<https://www.clevelandsightcenter.org/content/visionaries>.

-The Marketing team recently worked with the Rehabilitation Services team to create short videos on types of magnification, pouring/using a liquid level indicator and using Siri. Thanks to Katie Lepis, Megan Sigler and Glenn Wickline for creating and producing. To view the videos, click here:

<https://www.clevelandsightcenter.org/resources/video-and-audio>.

Items of Note:

-The BlindShell Classic is an accessible cell phone for people who are blind or visually impaired. With physical keyboard and more than 30 applications and functions, the creators have integrated the most useful functions of a smartphone into a phone that is simple and user-friendly!

Overview of the BlindShell Classic Smartphone:

- Accessible mobile phone for individuals who are blind or have visual impairments
- There is a large LCD screen with a keypad below it consisting of large, tactile buttons
- Basic phone functions include calling, one-touch speed dials, SMS texts, email, notes, alarm, timer, and a calendar
- Other available functions include:
 - o Object tagging
 - o MP3 player
 - o FM radio
 - o YouTube
 - o SOS Button
- And much more
- Users can press the physical SOS button (for 3 seconds) if they need help from their emergency contact
 - o This emergency contact is customizable
- More than 30 applications and functions built-in to the smartphone
- Users can control the phone with their voice using simple commands
 - o Please note this feature requires an internet connection
 - o Users can dictate texts, emails, notes, and more
- Feedback is provided by a built-in synthetic voice, vibrations, and additional signals
- Instead of charging the phone with a standard charging cable, this phone comes with a Charging Cradle (dock) which you simply place your phone on to charge
- Available in red or black

To learn more, click here: <https://www.blindshell.com/eshop/blindshell-classic-free-flip-case>

-The Human Language and Accessibility Technologies (HULAT) research group at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) has developed and validated a mobile application that allows people with visual impairments to enjoy Christmas lights in the city of Madrid. The free "Accessible Christmas" app is available for Android and iOS and uses a system of audio descriptions assigned to different streets which tells you what you are looking at each time. It starts to work automatically when the user activates the app's geolocation system. Once the system is activated, the audio description plays, sharing information about the scenes represented in the lights, colors, and the feelings transmitted, as well as additional information about how it was created. To read more, click here:
https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-12/ucid-ca121020.php

-The agency's building operating hours have changed to 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Moving the building opening back a half hour will allow our colleagues in Facilities and the snow plowing contractor to prepare the building and grounds to be as safe as possible.

-Remember the main building will not be open to staff, clients or walk-ins on Fridays through the end of January. The Eyedea Shop will be available through phone orders and online orders.

Did You Know?:

-The basenji is a breed of dog known for its inability to bark and is thus nicknamed the barkless dog. The basenji does produce a unique yodeling-like sound, due to the unusual shape of its larynx.