

LINCOLN'S MAGAZINE OF CHOICE  
FOR THE SEASONED READER

Winter 2023

# Making a Difference

*Learn about one couple's mission to support early  
childhood care in Lincoln today and beyond.*

**PAGE 2**



**Mastering the Art of  
Chocolate Crafting**

**PAGE 12**

**Cheers to a  
Red Holiday**

**PAGE 18**

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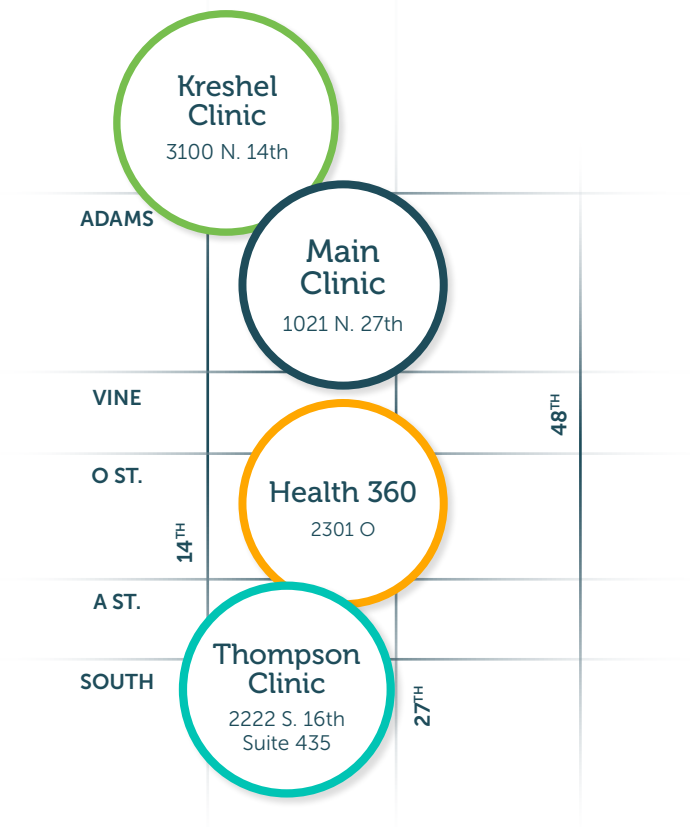
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# WINTER 2023

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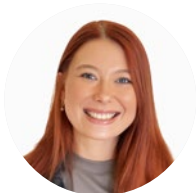
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As 2023 comes to a close, I am reminded of all the wonderful stories we have been able to bring to our readers this year. We were motivated by people who find purpose in giving back to our community, like Craig and Devon Ames. We were inspired by Randy Bretz to take time to make lifetime connections with individuals. And, our hearts were lifted by learning how organizations like St. Monica's and The Malone Center are changing lives. It's been a wonderful year!

In our Winter edition, we're bringing you more interesting stories. Learn why Kile and Virginia Johnson are invested in creating an endowment that will prioritize early childhood education and care in Lincoln in *Making A Difference* on page 2. If it's passion you're searching for, find out how a love of chocolates turned into a life's work in *Mastering the Art of Chocolate Crafting* on page 12. You'll also find articles on pairing wines for holiday get-togethers, gift ideas when shopping for grandkids, and much more.

On a personal note, my long-awaited wish to travel to Italy to discover my heritage and meet relatives for the first time happened. It turned out to be the trip of a lifetime that I will cherish forever and I wanted to share some of it with you. Maybe it will spur you to discover your family's history.

From all of us at 55+ Magazine, may the holidays and 2024 bring you much happiness and inspiration!

With gratitude,

Jacque Genovese  
Executive Editor

## IN THIS EDITION

- 2 **Making a Difference** — *Lincoln Community Foundation*
- 4 **Winter Crossword** — *Fred Ohles*
- 5 **Donors Drive Deliveries** — *Tabitha*
- 6 **Connecting with My Italian Roots** — *Jacque Genovese*
- 8 **Eat, Drink, and Be Mindful** — *Karla Jensen, PhD*
- 11 **Calendar of Events**
- 12 **Mastering the Art of Chocolate Crafting** — *A Conversation with Gaylene Steinbach*
- 14 **Word Search**
- 15 **Cold Weather Promises and Ice-Skating Dreams** — *Julie Thomas, PhD*
- 16 **If Wishes Were Horses** — *Jo Ann Wagner*
- 18 **Cheers to a Red Holiday** — *Wanda Haynes*
- 20 **Being Mortal: Let's Talk About It** — *Book Review by Sheena Rancourt*
- 22 **'Tis the Season to Recycle** — *Lincoln Transportation and Utilities*
- 24 **Irresistible Holiday Appetizers**
- 26 **Gifting Memories** — *Jodi Richey*



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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## KILE AND VIRGINIA "CUZ" JOHNSON CREATE ENDOWMENT SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Sitting across from Kile and Cuz Johnson, you can feel their great affection for our community. The couple met during their junior year at Lincoln Southeast High School, married, and began and grew their family and their businesses, all in Lincoln. Their fondness for one another and for the place they call home is a 'forever' kind of love – so much so that they've made an extraordinary investment supporting Lincoln's youngest residents beyond their lifetimes.

Kile and Cuz worked with Lincoln Community Foundation to create an endowment that will prioritize early childhood education and care. The mission behind the Lincoln Early Childhood Education Support Fund is to support the work of Lincoln Littles as the organization tackles the

complexities surrounding early childhood.

The forever nature of an endowment fund made sense to Cuz. "It was my parents who influenced my thinking on endowments," she said.



"When you're interested in making a difference, an endowment gives back much more than the initial investment, and it's there in perpetuity."

– CUZ JOHNSON

Kile agreed. "Endowments guarantee that your gift will continue and grow over time," he said.

The Johnsons' philanthropic passion for early childhood peaked when they learned more about the work of Lincoln Littles. With three children and seven grandchildren of their own, they understand the difference that quality early education and care can make in a person's life.

"It is so important that everyone has that opportunity," said Cuz.





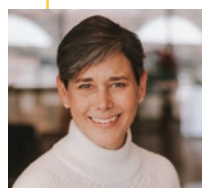
“The early years are critical for future success,” continued Kile. “One of the things we hope to do is help these kids and their parents and make a true difference in their lives.”

The mission of Lincoln Littles is to provide opportunities for all children to have access to high quality early care and education ensuring they are ready for school and a life of learning. Lincoln Littles is transforming the landscape of early childhood by expanding high-quality choices and supporting families, early childhood providers, teachers, businesses, and our community.

Both Kile and Cuz hope that their endowment will inspire others to contribute and support Lincoln Littles or start their own fund that is meaningful to them.

Anne Brandt, Executive Director of Lincoln Littles, reflected on the Johnsons’ generosity and what it means for children and families in Lincoln.

“We are so fortunate that Kile and Cuz see why this work is vital to our community,” said Anne. “They understand the return on this type of investment. Their gifts will have the power to change lives now and into the future.”



*Are you interested in a Forever gift to Lincoln? Contact Vice President for Philanthropy Services, Tracy Edgerton, at 402-474-2345 or [tracye@lcf.org](mailto:tracye@lcf.org).*



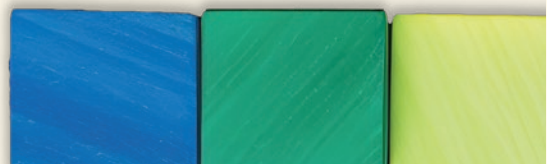
## Give to Our Littles. Help a Lot.



This February, Lincoln Community Foundation is raising awareness and funds for the important work of Lincoln Littles.

An investment in Lincoln Littles means more children in our great community will receive the high-quality early care and education they deserve. It means a more available workforce today and a smarter workforce tomorrow. It means elevating opportunities for all families in Lincoln to thrive.

To learn more about Lincoln Littles and donate, visit [www.LincolnLittles.org](http://www.LincolnLittles.org).

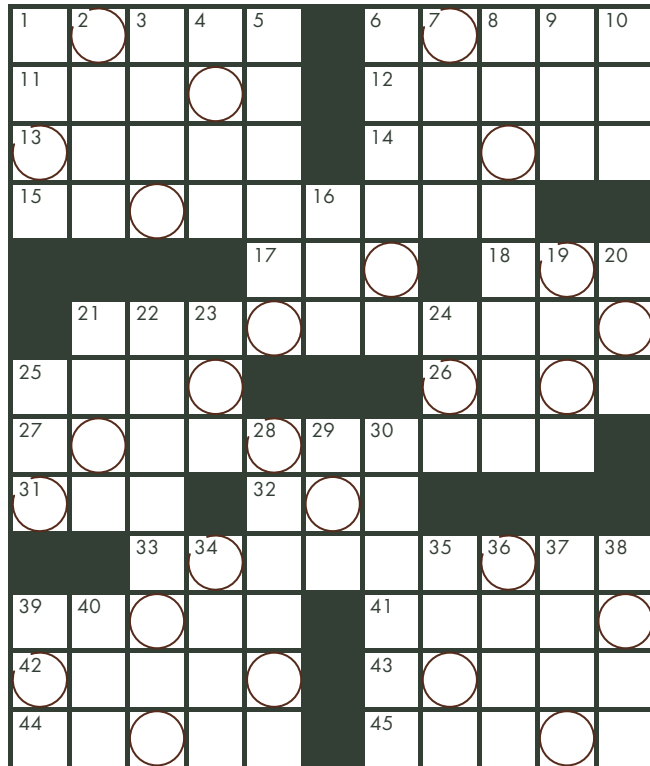


# A WINTER CHALLENGE



## CROSSWORD PUZZLE BY FRED OHLES

Theme clues are starred. When the puzzle is finished, every letter from A to Z will appear in one of the 26 circles. **Crossword solution can be found on page 16.**



### ACROSS

- 1 In 2000 they were hanging in Florida
- 6 Slang for "I messed up"
- 11 Transmission franchise firm
- 12 Eskimo dwelling
- 13 With nothing fancy
- 14 Generous source, as of knowledge
- 15 \*When you are the only card player
- 17 Verb modifier: Abbr.
- 18 Edgar Award grp.
- 21 \*Where you don't have to share living space

- 45 Alaska city 11 hours from Juneau by ferry

### DOWN

- 1 THESE LETTERS
- 2 Floating saintly crown
- 3 Barrister wife of George Clooney
- 4 602 in old Rome
- 5 Sunday in Saxony
- 6 Britain's counter-intel. agency
- 7 Frankenstein movies character (var.)
- 8 Once in a \_\_\_ (rarely)

- 25 Go out with
- 26 Drill into
- 27 \*What you are when there is no other quite like you
- 31 McKee, Lincoln historian
- 32 Kanga's kid
- 33 \*Where nobody else can come into contact with you
- 39 Egg count
- 41 Sri \_\_\_
- 42 Letters above ASDFG
- 43 Dish soap brand
- 44 Pick \_\_\_ (choose teams)

- 9 Risk/insurance company
- 10 Top of i
- 16 B'nai Brith part battling hate, by the letters
- 19 Any fifth of this clue
- 20 \_\_\_ Zion (Afr.-Am. church)
- 21 Health/disease avoidance prefix
- 22 Type of deduction on Schedule A
- 23 -natal (NICU part)
- 24 Hitting stat
- 25 Attorney Gen.'s office
- 28 Cold weather harbingers
- 29 MSN rival
- 30 Bears that are not bears
- 34 Shriveled and dry
- 35 Hired car
- 36 \_\_\_ for the long haul
- 37 "Yes, yes!"
- 38 Granny
- 39 Ice cream shops, in short
- 40 DUI in parked car, engine running





# DONORS DRIVE *Deliveries*

As you gear up for the season, get ready to gather with loved ones to share a special meal, and travel across the country or across town—think of **Lincoln's Seniors and GIVE**.

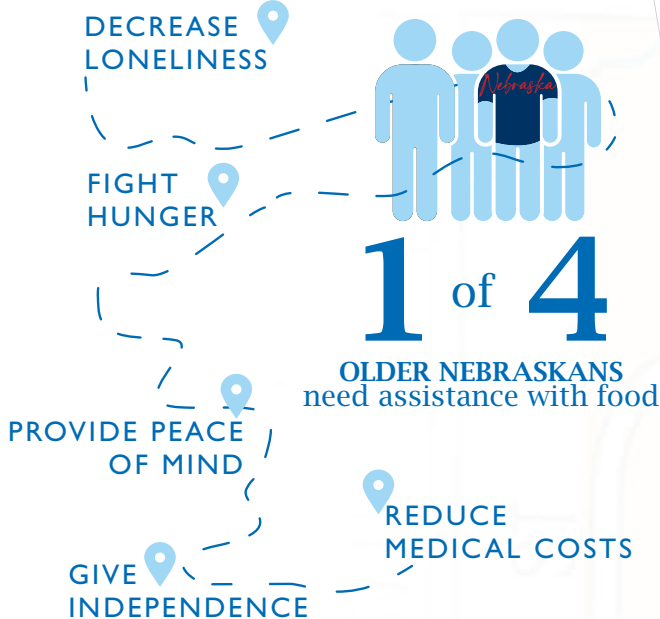
Some older adults are not fortunate enough to have family or friends nearby. Many spend the colder fall and winter months alone and hunkered down in the safety and comfort of home.

This is when **Tabitha Meals on Wheels'** donations make all the difference. Without your gift, a hot noon meal, safety check and friendly visit are not possible.

Many of your neighbors cannot shop for groceries, prepare food or cover the \$7.50 cost of a meal. Instead, they rely on **YOU** to support Tabitha Meals on Wheels for their weekday dinners.

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# Connecting with My Italian Roots

BY JACQUE GENOVESE

As a young girl, I remember most Sundays were reserved for spending time with my Italian grandfather which always included his delicious, homemade pasta sauce with spaghetti. Most likely, these dinners and brief conversations with him (he was a quiet man who spoke very broken English) sparked my love for all things Italian. This fall, my daughter, Kristine, and I traveled to Italy to connect with our Italian relatives, whom we had never met, and learn more about the country that my grandfather left behind at a very young age.

Giovanni Luigi Genovese arrived alone in the U.S. on June 14, 1905, at only 15 years old. Born in Tiriolo, a tiny mountain community in Calabria, southern Italy, he had been sponsored by a family in Des Moines, Iowa, where he stayed, became a well-respected tailor, married, and had six children—my father fifth in the order. Giovanni died when I was just 14 years old, too young to hear his full story.

Traveling to Italy was a journey that had been mapped out in my head for years but I never knew if it would actually happen. Fast forward to September when my daughter and I flew to Milan to launch our history-seeking trek, going first south to Naples, Catanzaro, Tiriolo, then back north to Rome and Florence, finally returning to Milan.

Italy is a beautiful country steeped in traditions, ancient history, and friendly people – everyone we met was so welcoming and seemed destined to play a role in our journey.

From ancient ruins to top fashion designer boutiques, from the bluest coastal waters to countryside dotted with olive and lemon groves, and sprinkled with restaurants featuring exceptional food and wine. For most, that would be a trip in and of itself, right? However, we still had to learn more about the Genovese family and why it was so connected to us.

Catanzaro was first on our journey to meet family. We knew that my grandfather had a much younger half-brother who had raised a family here—his son, Egidio, would have been my father's first cousin, so I was looking to find my second cousins – Sabina, Simona, and Stefano. Sabina was the only one that still lived in Catanzaro. Kristine had occasionally emailed and texted with Sabina over the past 10 years, but because she doesn't speak English, they relied on translation apps. And, so did we when we met her.

Our first encounter found us lost amid Catanzaro's winding streets. Like something scripted right out of a movie, upon finding us, Sabina ran towards Kristine, arms stretched wide and each screaming loving words as they embraced. As I videotaped it, I silently thanked my grandfather for bringing us together. We spent the next few days getting to know as much as we could about her family and where our grandfather had grown up. It was bittersweet to say goodbye but we vowed to do a better job of staying in touch, and that we would learn to speak more than just a few words of Italian.

One of my goals during this part of the trip was to secure a copy of my grandfather's birth certificate. I would need it to apply for dual citizenship. Before our trip, Kristine had emailed the Commune di Tiriolo office of records but they found no record of him. We opted to take the white-knuckle drive up the mountainside to Tiriolo to search in person. At the top, the picturesque village of Tiriolo welcomed us.

When we entered the city hall office, we explained that we had been given the wrong birth year and they immediately grabbed a huge registry book (like something from the middle ages) and started searching for his name. They came across the Genovese family but not Giovanni Luigi. The birth record listed his name as Luigi Giovanni Genovese! Apparently, when he came through Ellis Island, they transposed the names, and he was probably too young and scared to correct anyone. I was shocked because I had been told growing up that I was named after my grandfather's initials.



*My grandfather, Luigi Giovanni Genovese*      *Myself, Sabina, and Kristine*

The last leg of our family quest was in Rome, where Stefano and Simona both live, cousins with whom we had no prior contact.



*Kristine and myself with Stefano and Alessandra (left) in Rome*

Our Airbnb host also owned a restaurant in Rome and while giving us a pasta-making class, he asked about our trip and we explained the family tree adventure. He said he only knew one Genovese in Rome and that he lived across the street from his restaurant, and frequented there. As we talked more, we discovered that it was, in fact, our cousin, Stefano! What are the odds?

We reached out to Stefano and he immediately agreed to meet us for dinner that night. So we had the pleasure of meeting Stefano and his wife, Alessandra, and learning everything about them, which included a private tour of some of Rome's attractions after dinner. It was more than any of us could have expected!

I could go on and on about all of the coincidences throughout our trip, but the most important aspect was learning why we felt so connected to this country and our family having just met them all for the first time. It's like our souls had come home and that Luigi Giovanni was there watching over us the entire time. A magical trip that we will never forget!



# EAT, DRINK, AND BE MINDFUL

BY KARLA JENSEN, PhD

If you were to enroll in a mindfulness course, you'd probably engage in an exercise where you'd eat a single raisin. The instructor would first ask you to consider all the environmental and human energy necessary to get that raisin to you. You'd then be invited to smell, feel, and visually examine the raisin. Finally, you'd s-l-o-w-l-y eat the raisin, paying careful attention to all aspects of your experience. The purpose of this exercise is to bring awareness to how something so ordinary can be extraordinary if we note it.

Reading a description about eating a raisin may cause your mouth to water or your stomach to gurgle with digestive juices because the mind and body are inextricably connected. Eating can have a profound impact on our overall health and

well-being which is why it is wise to pause and consider our eating habits. Practicing mindfulness while eating – just like bringing present-moment awareness to any aspect of life – is simply paying attention to the full experience of eating without judgment. Rather than mindlessly gobbling up what's in front of us (and then being subsequently shocked by the empty plate or chip bag!), adding a bit of mindfulness can help us more fully enjoy our food, make healthier choices, and encourage a sense of presence and gratitude.

With all of life's obligations, for most of us, eating at a snail's pace may not be realistic. Still, a diverse set of practices can be useful as we strive to pay more attention to how we eat. Several studies published by respected health-related organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, share how such strategies can improve digestion, in part because we are less likely to overeat or eat something which doesn't agree with us. By noticing each bite and chewing food thoroughly, nutrients can be more easily broken down and absorbed by the body. This in turn improves our vitality, mood, and the overall enjoyment of what we consume.

Especially during that Halloween to New Year stretch when we may be more likely to eat and drink more mindlessly, here are a few reminders to support a mindful mindset.



## **SLOW DOWN AND SAVOR.**

Putting your utensils down between bites is a time-tested technique for intentional eating. Slowing down not only helps you find more pleasure in your food, it also gives your body time to register that it is satisfied. Paying attention to your hunger and fullness cues can help limit overindulging.



**ENGAGE ALL YOUR SENSES.** Notice the colors, textures, and aromas of your food.

Take the time to really look at and smell your food before you take that first bite and throughout a meal.



**INVITE OTHERS TO THE TABLE.**

Enjoying the company of others nourishes us emotionally, and the conversations we share can help us eat and drink at a slower pace.



**CAREFULLY CONSIDER YOUR SCREEN CHOICES.**

Since the invention of the TV-tray, screens have been a mealtime distraction. While pizza and movie nights may bring us together on occasion, take note how habitual screen use (including your phone) steals attention from the experience of eating and drinking.



**DON'T JUDGE YOURSELF.**

If you are making a concerted effort to focus on what you are eating or drinking and then your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the present moment. If you find yourself overeating or making unhealthy choices, don't beat yourself up about it; simply acknowledge what happened and move on. Mindful eating is a valuable tool in bringing present-moment awareness to life. Whether it's the once-a-year indulgence or your daily go-to treat, allow yourself the mind-body awareness to appreciate it. Bon Appetite!

*Karla Jensen, PhD, is a professor of Communication Studies and Contemplative Practices and a certified meditation and yoga teacher. She invites readers to investigate mindfulness by checking out reputable organizations and authors who support this practice.*



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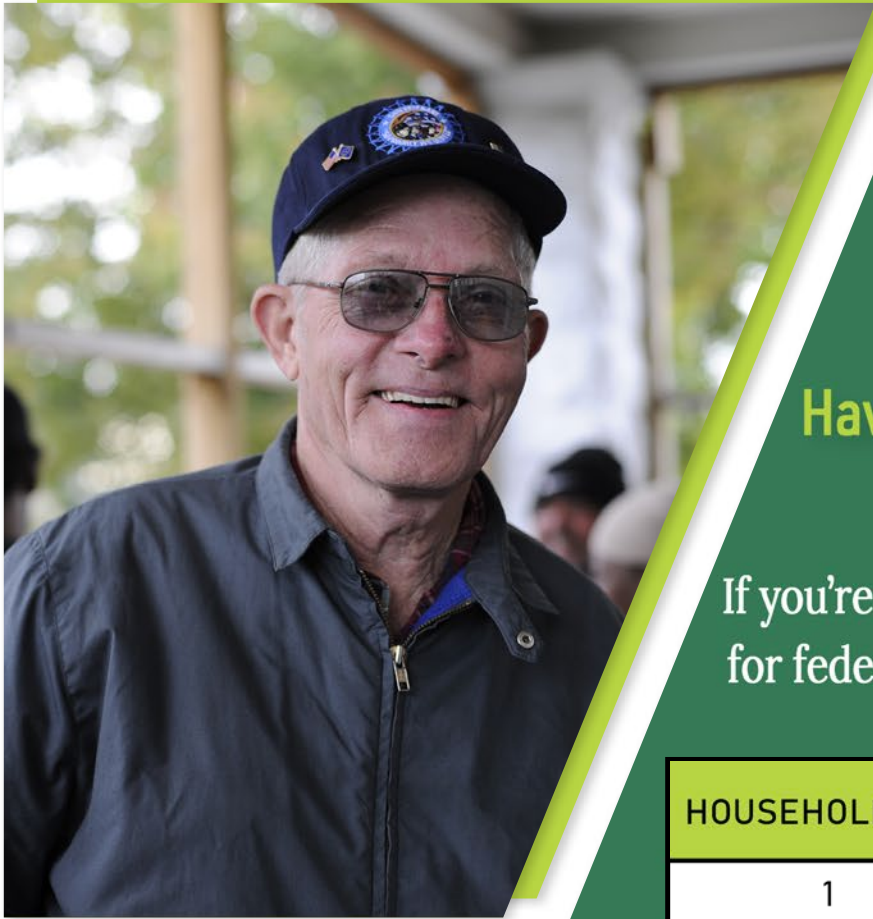
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# MUST 'SEE'SONAL EVENTS



Savor the season with these winter events and find more at [55lnk.com](http://55lnk.com) or [facebook.com/55pluslnk](https://facebook.com/55pluslnk).

→ **NOW - DECEMBER 31**

*Magical Lights of Lincoln, Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds, [lancastereventcenter.org](http://lancastereventcenter.org)*

→ **DECEMBER 26**

*Twilight Hike, Pioneers Park Nature Center [lincoln.org/event/twilight-hike-\(winter-solstice\)/2709](http://lincoln.org/event/twilight-hike-(winter-solstice)/2709)*

→ **JANUARY 6**

*Harlem Globetrotters, Pinnacle Arena [pinnaclebankarena.com](http://pinnaclebankarena.com)*

→ **JANUARY 6**

*Winter Walkabout, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center [springcreek.audubon.org/events](http://springcreek.audubon.org/events)*

→ **JANUARY 11**

*Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel, [artsincorporated.org/njo/](http://artsincorporated.org/njo/)*

→ **JANUARY 12-13**

*Cabin Fever Antique Show, Lancaster Event Center [lancastereventcenter.org/](http://lancastereventcenter.org/)*

→ **FEBRUARY 3**

*Frosty Bike Ride, [facebook.com/frostybikeride](https://facebook.com/frostybikeride)*

→ **FEBRUARY 16**

*Lincoln Symphony Orchestra Presents Star Wars: The Orchestra Strikes Back, Lied Center for the Performing Arts, [lincolnsymphony.com](http://lincolnsymphony.com)*

Scan for more events and details!



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**Wordsearch (page 14) Solution**

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 B E N O I A A Z S P O S S I D J D M A J L X J N C W W L F W  
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# MASTERING THE ART OF CHOCOLATE CRAFTING

## A CONVERSATION WITH GAYLENE STEINBACH AND 55+ MAGAZINE

*From her earliest memories, Gaylene Steinbach, owner of Lulubee Artisanal Chocolates in Lincoln, appreciated the sweet smells and tastes of handmade chocolates. Every Christmas her mother would make chocolates for family and friends. The process was a labor of love as she took out a large marble slab and placed it in a room, making sure the window was cracked just enough to get the temperature right. Then she'd go about preparing the chocolate: heating it, pouring it on the slab, letting it cool, then mixing it until it got into the right temper. The insides were like a delicate fondant filling, with all sorts of marvelous flavors. She would carefully dip each piece by hand, then add a beautifully-drawn cursive letter on top to suggest the flavor inside. Her mother's love and artistry stayed with Gaylene over the years.*

*It's no surprise that Gaylene found that same passion years later. We sat down with her to learn about her journey to becoming a chocolatier.*

### **When did your journey to becoming a chocolatier begin?**

I've always been a lover of chocolate. After returning back to the States from living in the Philippines, my mom gifted me a beautiful box of chocolates. I'd never seen such beauty, and the bonbons left me speechless. I couldn't imagine how they punched so much flavor into these tiny morsels. It really piqued my interest so I started reading everything I could find on chocolate crafting and flavors, then I started experimenting.



In 2013, I realized my desire and passion for this craft and that led me to experiment at home, sharing my creations with family and friends. They all encouraged me to turn my passion into a business. I attended a couple of workshops and even met the woman who had made those beautiful chocolates that my mother had given me years before. (She has become a mentor and a very important part of my life.) I also took a Food Industry class at UNL's Innovation Campus. I knew I needed a professional kitchen to sell products and they helped guide me on packaging, running the business, etc. I leased my first retail space in Lincoln in 2014. By 2020, I had outgrown that space and moved to our current location at 5720 Hidcote Drive in Lincoln.



### What inspires you to create these delicate masterpieces?

My daughter Lauren has been my right-hand since the very beginning, even before I started the business. It's a joy to get to work with her every day. She's the one who comes up with the design concepts. We look for inspiration all around us and we create our own unique designs.

### Have there been triumphs with certain flavors?

My mint leaf bonbon was one of my first flavors and I still go, "Yeah!" Lemon was another one. I am a citrus person and it took me a long time to tweak it and then it was, "Yep. Done, Done!" Sea Salt Caramel was another, "Done, Done!"

### You've won some awards. How does that feel?

This past spring, we submitted a couple of vegan bonbons in an international

competition and did quite well. Our Strawberry Rhubarb won Gold and our Almond Caramel Crunch received Silver, both in the vegan category. We are super proud of our chocolates and of the recognition!

### How do you experience fine chocolate?

My intention is to create a mindful, really beautiful tasting experience. Tasting fine chocolate is very similar to tasting a fine wine. You want to smell it, then taste it.

Give yourself time to enjoy it. There will be different flavors if you let it rest on the roof of your mouth with your tongue pressed up against it. Breathing out is when you will experience most of the chocolate's flavors. These are adult experiences to enjoy, so do that for yourself!

*It's been a delicious journey for Gaylene. What started as a passion and love of the craft has evolved from a hobby to a life's work. Creating divine chocolates that bring joy to others is her gift year round.*

Stop by the store or order online at [lulubeechocolates.com](http://lulubeechocolates.com)

## Gaylene's Picks for Holiday Gifts

Lulubee Artisanal Chocolates is best known for their bonbons. A box of beautifully designed bonbons with flavors that excite your senses makes a fantastic gift. Special holiday bonbons this year include:

**Hot Chocolate • Cherry Pistachio  
Fig & Port • Gingerbread Caramel  
Peppermint Crunch**

If you're looking for something uniquely different, go for the **Cocoa Bomb** (milk, dark, and gold chocolate), **Salted Caramel Cocoa Bomb**, **Cinnamon Bears** or **Candied Ginger Dipped in Chocolate**.

For the person who loves Advent calendars, they've created one that is filled with all of their holiday pieces!

**Sea Salt Caramels** and **Pecan Turtles** both make fabulous gifts. And, their toffee should come with a warning label: Addictive!

Cocoa Bomb and Chocolate Covered Marshmallows



# SEARCHING FOR THE 70s

Enjoy the nostalgia and have fun finding these 70s music-related words! The grid includes 30 words related to iconic 70s songs, artists, and music terms. The words can be found in any direction: left to right, right to left, up and down, down and up, and diagonally.

**Word search solution can be found on page 11.**

X Q H M B Q R F R E E B I R D Z L E T I T B E M P K X Y S Z  
 B E N O I A A Z S P O S S I D J D M A J L X J N C W W L F W  
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 F Y F B R R I C I A X G E J W P X E K B V O N P E J T B W H  
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 O H J S U D E F T K S K B O R N S X T J V N O L M B Z D Z D  
 C L R R S B L J H N L V T O I H X E Y D M G E Q C K X E E J  
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 E J V E Q V M Q T V N D C U I S G M Q A A U C H G F W O W G  
 J A V I F S A E I G J O K B S U K W P J H D M R Z O Y O G Z  
 H O P H Y G V Y A C N F R Z W M W H D J G Q Y I W V O H N D  
 N G Y Z G I H M M K P R V K K E H T A B B A S K C A L B E B  
 M B K M J A W I N X N B I F A X R P Q I C L D V K N N T G H

DISCO NIGHTS

GOOD VIBRATIONS

ROCK LOBSTER

NOVEMBER RAIN

DREAM ON

WALK THIS WAY

TAKE A CHANCE ON ME

MAGNETO

BOOGIE NIGHTS

STAYIN ALIVE

FOXY LADY

IMAGINE

PHOTOGRAPH

JIVE TALKIN

YMCA

AMERICAN PIE

LET IT BE

HOOKED ON A FEELING

SUPER TROUPER

KNOCKIN ON HEAVEN'S DOOR

SUNSHINE ON MY SHOULDERS

LAYLA

BLACK SABBATH

CARPENTERS

DANCE TO THE MUSIC

FREE BIRD



# COLD WEATHER PROMISES AND ICE-SKATING DREAMS

BY JULIE THOMAS, PhD

There, out the window, I watch my ginkgo tree advising me to worry about winter weather — put away the garden tools, find the snow shovels, and stock-up on ice melt. As a child, I imagined no such winter worries. Rather, late fall was a time to tuck away the bicycles, dust off the winter toys (sleds, toboggans, and skates), and pray for a "snow day" (school cancellation)!

Since I lived within walking distance of a sledding hill and an ice pond, Mom didn't need to push her kids outside. Once she knew we were warmly dressed and the ice on the golf course pond was sufficiently frozen — out we went! I have great memories of those snowy winter activities.

In a recent conversation with friends, Cheryl and Gerry Frieberg, I realized our shared love of ice skating. Gerry (from Wisconsin) smiled as he remembered "skating with classmates on a flooded field during recess." Cheryl (from Minnesota) dreamily recalled a "favorite skating experience on glassy, perfect ice one moonlit night" at her family's lake cabin. We were pleased to note our children and grandchildren (three generations later) continue to skate. This aerobic exercise "chases the cold away" and encourages joyful play for children of all ages (3 to adult).

Fortunately, the Lincoln area provides many opportunities to help families create happy memories and dream of winter play days.



Photo credit: Nebraskaland Magazine/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

This list of destinations can help you plan ahead. Do call or check websites to confirm ice rink access.

## John Breslow Ice Hockey Center

433 V Street, Lincoln, 402-472-2758  
[breslowhockeycenter.com](http://breslowhockeycenter.com)

- Year-round, indoor ice rink near Haymarket
- Classes, youth hockey, warming lobby, skate rental, concessions, party rooms

## Mahoney State Park Skating Pavilion

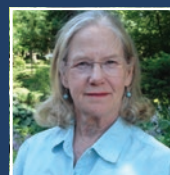
28500 West Park Highway, Ashland, 402-944-2523  
Eugene T. Mahoney State Park, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, [outdoornebraska.gov](http://outdoornebraska.gov)

- Seasonal, outdoor skating, skate rental available, activity center (indoor play/climbing wall), toboggan run nearby

## Holmes Lake

South 70th & Normal Boulevard, Lincoln  
402-441-7847, [parks@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:parks@lincoln.ne.gov)

- Seasonal, outdoor skating, ice fishing
- Signage will be posted at park when it is safe to skate; bring your own skates



Julie Thomas, PhD, is a retired Science Educator and a Research Professor Emerita from the University of Nebraska and a contributing writer for 55+.



# IF WISHES WERE HORSES

BY JOANN WAGNER

I remember when stores began playing Christmas music the day after Thanksgiving. That was also when radio stations began playing songs like “Here Comes Santa Claus,” “Jingle Bells,” and “Winter Wonderland.” Joy was in the air as the days grew shorter and colder.

About the same time, the Sears Wish Book arrived. My mother always said, “If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride.” I ignored her words and spent hours looking through the catalog, knowing there would be one present from Santa and one from my parents. Those were the days before we had television, so our only exposure to the latest and greatest toys was this magical catalog. For all the time I spent dreaming, I knew that just because I requested something, that didn’t mean I would receive it. But with childlike naivete, I always hoped my wishes would become reality.

One of the most welcome presents I remember receiving was a record player and some records with songs and fairy tales for kids. I remember “The Teddy Bears’ Picnic,” “The Big Rock Candy Mountain,” and other songs that provided pictures in my mind

that took me to incredible places. I could see the soda water fountains, lemonade springs, and hear the blue birds singing. I wondered if the hens really could lay soft-boiled eggs?

Another opportunity to wish came with the Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys. My brother and I made our wishes as we pulled on the wishbone. At Thanksgiving I wished for a special gift for Christmas. At Christmas I wished for a birthday present which is in January. With practice, we learned that how one held the wishbone made a difference in the leverage. The person who got the top piece was supposed to have their wish come true. My brother was older and probably figured out the secret to winning before I did. But I think we both knew that our wishes were probably like the horses that didn’t appear for beggars.

**Jo Ann Wagner is a contributing writer for Lincoln 55+ magazine.**

## Crossword (page 4) Solution

1	C	2	H	3	A	4	D	5	S		6	M	7	Y	8	B	9	A	10	D
11	A	A	M	12	C	O					12	I	G	L	O	O				
13	P	L	A	I	N						14	F	O	U	N	T				
15	S	O	L	I	T	16	A	I	R	E										
						17	A	D	V			18	M	19	W	20	A			
		21	S	22	I	23	N	G	L	E	24	R	O	O	M					
25	D	A	T	E							26	B	O	R	E					
27	O	N	E	O	28	F	A	K	I	N	D									
31	J	I	M		32	R	O	O												
			33	I	34	S	O	L	A	35	T	36	I	37	O	38	N			
39	D	O	40	Z	E	N				41	L	A	N	K	42	A				
42	Q	W	E	R	T					43	A	X	I	O	N					
44	S	I	D	E	S					45	S	I	T	K	A					



## Be aware of scams

**LES will not contact you via phone,** threatening to disconnect service or asking for immediate payment. LES uses disconnect notices and reminders on bills for delinquent accounts, door hangers for service terminations and email/text alerts for those who opt in.

**LES will only ask for account information to confirm your identity** when you call LES Customer Care at **402.475.4211**. Never give your financial or account information to someone who calls or emails you.

**Maintain good cyber hygiene** by avoiding suspicious emails, especially ones that ask you to do something right away or require personal information. Avoid using public Wi-Fi when conducting sensitive activities online.

**LES does not use automated “robo” calls** requesting that customers call back to make a payment.

**No legitimate utility will ask** for gift cards, prepaid cards or money transfers as forms of payment.



[LES.com/scams](https://www.les.com/scams)

**Questions or concerns?** Contact LES at 402.475.4211 or [customerservice@les.com](mailto:customerservice@les.com) | Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.






# CHEERS TO A RED HOLIDAY

BY WANDA HAYNES, CERTIFIED SOMMELIER

Happy holidays to all the wine lovers and cheers to a great glass of red wine.

 **Cabernet sauvignon** is one of the world's most widely recognized dry red wines. It is grown in every major wine producing country. Cabernet sauvignon is full-bodied with medium acidity, tight structure, and a dark garnet color. A cabernet will taste slightly different depending on the country where it was grown and produced. Also, it is sold in half bottles and produced as a rosé.

California cabernet sauvignon has tastes of tobacco, cassis, currants, blackberry, and sage. Be sure the bottle reads 100% cabernet sauvignon, and it isn't a blend of several other varietals. Cabernet sauvignon is known for having assertive tannins that mellow with age.


This wine is a true partner for a rib eye steak dinner with all the trimmings this holiday season. Be sure to have several bottles on hand this year for drop-in guests that love a glass of Cab.

 **Pinot noir** is the world's most popular light-bodied, dry red wine. It's one of the noble grapes of France and is prized for its high acidity and low tannins.


However, the Willamette Valley in Oregon has over 800 wineries and produces exceptional Pinot noir, with earthy, cranberry tastes that embrace elegance and style. Pinot noir is a safe choice to take to a holiday dinner party when unsure of

the menu, and it is also produced in rosé and Pinot blanc.

Many companies are producing Pinot noir in half bottles; this offers more options, a chance to try a new wine, and makes a charming gift for co-workers and loved ones.

 **Merlot** is a dry, medium-bodied red wine with tastes of black cherry, baking spices, cocoa powder, and cassis. The most planted wine grape in Bordeaux, France, the name merlot roughly translates "little blackbird" and is one of the noble grapes of France.

Merlot pairs beautifully with double-cut pork chops, lasagna, and homemade vegetable stew. Be sure to purchase a bottle that is 100% merlot and not a blend. Merlot is also produced in Chile and Washington State at a fair price. A white merlot is a rosé with a pretty pink color and tastes of strawberries, watermelon, and bright citrus.

 **Zinfandel** is a low tannin, dry red wine made from zinfandel grapes. The individual grapes don't all ripen at the same time and the cluster isn't harvested until all the grapes are fully ripened. This harvesting practice gives the wine a "fruit forward" taste. It pairs well with honey and savory baked ham.

Some zinfandels are blended with other grape varietals; be sure the bottle reads 100% zinfandel. A white zinfandel is simply a rosé, and tastes of raspberries, ripened strawberries, watermelon,

rhubarb, and fresh-cut lemons. Pair it with barbecue-glazed chicken or shrimp with grits for a more rustic holiday meal.

California has made zinfandel a household name, and over 10% of the vineyards are zinfandel grapes. Lodi, California produces a fine zinfandel for a value price. The late harvest version of zinfandel is a sweet rich red wine generally sold in half bottles and tastes amazing with time-honored family dessert recipes.



**Tannins** are an important factor of a red wine, and no red wine conversation should be held without mentioning tannins. Polyphenols is the scientific word for the compounds of tannins.

The seeds, skins, and stems are soaked in the grape juice just after the grapes have been pressed which, along with the oak barrels, create tannins. Tannins provide a “wine’s pucker power,” and generally are more dominant in younger red wines. This is why red wines shouldn’t be consumed too young.

Tannins provide texture and mouthfeel to wine as well as a sense of weight. Hold a small puddle of red wine on the middle of the tongue and decide if the wine is light, medium, or full bodied. Permitting red wine to breathe adequately and swirling the wine in the glass will help tame wild tannins. Dry red wines with low tannins pair beautifully with milk and dark chocolate.



*Wanda Haynes is a Sommelier and wine educator living her best life in Ohio. She loves parties, fine dining, gourmet chocolate, and a great glass of wine.*



Give the gift of wine to adult loved ones this holiday season and wish everyone a happy New Year!

# Being Mortal: Let's Talk About It

## BOOK REVIEW BY A 39+ GRANDDAUGHTER

I have been fortunate in life, as of yet, to have been spared situations where I would need to grapple with mortality and end-of-life care –specifically pertaining to loved ones. For those of you not in my shoes, my heart goes out to you.

After a recent trip to care for my grandparents ages 83 and 85 – grandma with moderate-to-severe dementia, and grandpa who recently fell and was recovering in a skilled nursing facility – I found myself thinking a lot about death and dying and back to a time when I read the book *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande.

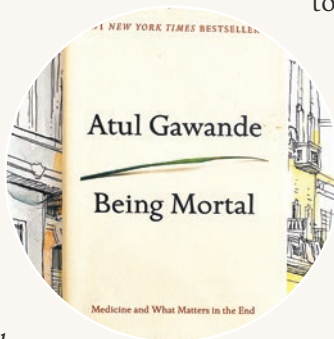
At that point in my life I had lost my thirty-seven-year-old uncle and twenty-seven-year-old friend to sudden cardiomyopathy and melanoma, respectively. As with any passing of a loved one, I was shaken, hence needing to bury myself into a book that might make sense of things. And it did. But not in the preach and give-me-answers way.

*Being Mortal* is a thought-provoking and insightful book written by a prominent surgeon and author, published in 2014. The book delves into complex and often uncomfortable topics in a very approachable, accessible way. It explores the challenges and limitations of modern medicine, particularly in how it deals with the aging population and individuals facing terminal illnesses.

The book introduces several compelling real-life stories and case studies to illustrate the difficulties patients and their families encounter when making decisions about end-of-life care.

*Being Mortal* also discusses advocating for a more person-centered approach that allows individuals to be involved in the conversation and maintain their independence and dignity for as long as possible. Gawande argues that improving the quality of life for those facing mortality is just as crucial as extending life.

*Being Mortal* encourages readers to contemplate their own values and wishes regarding aging and to consider the importance of empowering individuals to make choices that align with their personal goals and desires as they face the inevitable journey toward the end of life.



Fast forward to when I first arrived in Arizona to care for my grandparents, I was determined to move them to Washington near family who could care for them and keep them safe. After caretaking in their home and observing, while also re-reading this book, I realized that my grandfather found his purpose living independently with my grandmother and also serving in his church in Arizona. In my hopes of "protecting" them, I was also going to be reducing the quality of their remaining years, strip them of the independence they have left, and go against their wishes. Fortunately for us, with seven children and numerous grand and great-grandchildren, we were able to find a balance of care as well as honor their desires.

I know that not everyone has the luxury of options in this situation, but I encourage anyone who is faced with death or terminal illness to read this book and ask themselves some difficult questions. It just may matter in the end.



*Sheena Rancourt, an esteemed member of our 55+ editing team, brings her expertise as a former Reading Specialist with a Master's Degree in Teaching to offer this insightful book review.*





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2601 N 70<sup>th</sup> St

For more information on Pickleball, Disease Prevention & Management Classes, and more, visit [ymcalincoln.org](http://ymcalincoln.org).

# 'Tis the Season to Recycle

## Give our recycling workers the holiday gift of recycling right!

During the holidays, we see a dramatic increase in material recycled here in Lincoln. This is great! We love to see the community showing love for the planet. BUT— we also know that recycling can be confusing, so we want to make sure the items you put in the bins are actually recyclable!

### These items can be recycled:



#### Plain Gift Paper and Paper Gift Bags

No glitter, lamination, or other embellishments.



#### Holiday Cards + Envelopes



#### Cardboard, you know it!

Clean corrugated cardboard is banned from the Lincoln Landfill. Be sure to flatten your boxes to save room for others and please remove any Styrofoam or other packing materials.

### These Items should NEVER be placed in the recycling bin:

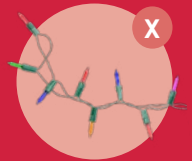


#### Bows + Ribbons

While some parts of gift wrapping are recyclable, please do not include bows, ribbons, or embellished wrapping papers. These items should all be placed in the trash.

#### String Lights

Holiday lights are a hazard to recycling equipment because of the way they easily get caught and tangled in the machines. Luckily, Lincoln holds an annual collection of lights for recycling to benefit Eastridge Elementary PTO. The Holiday Lights drive begins on November 15. Collection totes will be at all the Lincoln Fire Stations (excluding Station 8 - South 17th & Van Dorn, due to renovations). Totes will also be at Eastridge Elementary School, the Science Focus Program, and the parking lot south of A Street, Lincoln Children's Zoo overflow lot.



#### Plastic Bags

Bags also tangle in recycling machinery. Do not put them in by themselves and please do not bag your other recyclables. If you are looking to recycle plastic bags, take them to the collection bins at the front of most grocery stores.

#### Electronics

Batteries and electronics are dangerous and can cause fires when placed in the recycling bin or trash. Batteries contain hazardous materials inside that can easily catch fire if they are punctured or overheat. Please use our 'What Bin Does It Go In?' app at [Lincoln.ne.gov/recycle](http://Lincoln.ne.gov/recycle) to determine where to take your old electronics.





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[bryanhealth.org/vaccinations](http://bryanhealth.org/vaccinations)

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# Nebraska Family Caregiver Support

## LIFESPAN RESPITE NETWORK

*Are you in need of temporary  
relief from ongoing caregiving?*

**Respite can help.**

Respite allows the family  
caregiver time away to:

- Have a cup of coffee
- Take a nap
- Spend time with friends
- Go shopping
- Run errands or go to personal appointments
- Read a book

The family caregiver provides emotional support and companionship, as well as, assistance with daily activities of living. The caregiver provides ongoing care for a loved one who is unable to care for themselves. Caregiving is rewarding but also challenging. Nebraska Lifespan Respite Network offers information, education, and most importantly support.

For more information about the Lifespan Respite Services Program, becoming a respite provider, or any other respite-related questions, please call: **866-RESPITE (737-7483) or (402) 471-9188** or visit the Nebraska Lifespan Respite Network website at [respite.ne.gov](http://respite.ne.gov).

# NEBRASKA

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# Irresistible Holiday Appetizers to Delight Your Guests

The holiday season is synonymous with gatherings, joy, and, of course, delectable food. One of the highlights of any festive get-together is the array of appetizers that grace the table, setting the tone for a memorable feast. From classic favorites to innovative bites, here are some of the best-liked holiday appetizers that are sure to leave your guests craving for more.

**Caprese Skewers.** Simple yet sophisticated, Caprese skewers are a crowd-pleaser that captures the essence of the season. Thread cherry tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, and basil leaves onto cocktail picks, drizzle with balsamic glaze, and watch as these bites disappear in no time.

**Bacon-Wrapped Dates.** The sweet and savory combination of dates wrapped in crispy bacon is an irresistible treat. The contrast in flavors and textures creates a mouthwatering experience that perfectly complements the festive atmosphere.



**Spinach and Artichoke Dip.** A classic that never goes out of style, spinach and artichoke dip is a creamy, cheesy delight that pairs perfectly with crackers, bread, or vegetable sticks. The warm, gooey goodness is sure to be a hit at any holiday gathering.

**Stuffed Mushrooms.** Mushrooms stuffed with a savory mixture of breadcrumbs, herbs, and cheese make for an elegant and satisfying appetizer. These bite-sized wonders are bursting with flavor and are a delightful addition to any holiday menu.

**Cranberry Brie Bites.** For a touch of sweetness and sophistication, try cranberry Brie bites. These mini pastry cups filled with creamy Brie and tart cranberry sauce are a delightful blend of flavors that will leave a lasting impression.

**Shrimp Cocktail.** A timeless favorite, shrimp cocktail is a refreshing and light option that adds a touch of elegance to your holiday spread. Serve with a zesty cocktail sauce for an extra burst of flavor.

**Mini Cheesecake Bites.** You'll find a balance between elegance, flavor, and ease of serving with mini cheesecake bites. Offer festive toppings for a delightful and crowd-pleasing option.

Whether you're hosting a large gathering or an intimate family dinner, these best-liked holiday appetizers add a festive flair to your celebrations. This season, treat your guests to a culinary journey of flavors that will leave them eagerly anticipating your next gathering.



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\*Talk to us about how to share your gifts.

# GIFTING MEMORIES

## HELPFUL GIFT IDEAS FOR KIDS



Holiday gift-giving can be magical for all ages but we can attest that as a child, it is especially exciting. However, when I think back, the actual gifts I remember less and the experiences surrounding them I remember more. One of my most memorable Christmas gifts was a pink scooter. My brother, and each of my two cousins also received one but in different colors. I fondly remember spending Christmas morning riding them indoors around the circular “track” we created in my Grandma's house because there was too much snow on the ground to ride outside!

Other memorable holidays involved playing board, trivia, and card games of all kinds. Getting the adults and kids together in silly and interactive ways made for really great fun.

The point is, when gift-giving for the kids in your life, don't forget that it's the opportunities to connect that can really make a gift special. With that in mind, here are a few ideas to help create your own magical and memorable gift-giving experiences!

**Lessons, Classes, and Camps.** This gives a child an opportunity to try something new or enjoy an experience while helping ease the budget for parents. Maybe it's sport-related such as karate, dance, or gymnastics. Or maybe it's focused on theater, learning a musical instrument, or something hands-on and creative!

**Board and Card Games.** Sometimes oldies are goodies so classics are great starts but there are so many options to consider and they are all set with the built-in opportunity to play right away. I know my kids are always ready to learn a new game!

**Event Tickets.** Tickets to concerts, performances, sporting events, and even movies can create excitement beyond the unwrapping. Plus, they allow you to be a part of the fun and create another way to be together beyond the holidays.

**Memberships and Passes.** From the zoo to a children's museum, to a club membership, these don't take up space and allow another opportunity to spend time together outside of the season.

**Sports Equipment.** This can include expanding on a sport that a child is already interested in or something that encourages them to get outside and be active. A new jersey, leotard, or specialty footwear is both useful and a fun, flashy gift to give as well as receive.

**Subscriptions.** Magazines or activity box subscriptions that cater to a child's special interest help keep the fun going all-year round and can help spark conversation between the two of you.

**Pro-tip:** Unwrapping a brightly colored package is exciting so if you are concerned a gift card or an "experience" like an annual pass to the zoo for your main present may fall flat, pair it with an inexpensive smaller gift with the same theme so they have something more tangible to open that not only complements the larger gift but reminds them of you.

Remember, it's not about the amount spent or the latest and greatest toy, it's about showing generosity, and sharing love and time together!



*Jodi Richey, 55+ designer and mother of two kids age 8 and under, shares her ideas to help bridge the connections between kids, grandparents, and gift-giving.*



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