



December

Safe Toys and Gifts
Month

Universal Human Rights
Month

12/1 Rosa Parks Day

12/1 World Aids Day

12/2 Special Education
Day

12/3 International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

12/7 National Pearl Har-
bor Remembrance Day

12/10-12/18 Hanukkah

12/21 Winter Solstice Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa

12/31 New Year's Eve

The year was 2020...

Tissue was the hottest and most valuable commodity! Most people quarantined with the people in their households. Many birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, weddings, and other celebrations were cancelled, postponed, or adapted to drive-by events. Facial coverings (masks) became a mandatory accessory to our daily attire. Hand sanitizer and Lysol disinfectant put our perfumes and cologne on the back burner. Businesses and public places shut down that were not “essential”. Hospitals no longer allowed visitors. We dropped off loved ones and prayed that it was not our last good-bye, curbside. We anxiously awaited phone call updates from nurses and doctors until the most cherished call of all came, “Come pick up your family member. They are ready for discharge!” We adapted to family and friends in long term care facilities that were on lock down by having window visits and video calls. As the pandemic started affecting our lives, we became somberly aware that this was real and was not going anywhere soon. We lost family and friends due to this pandemic. Businesses were lost due to this pandemic. Schools shut down and the new school year started with a virtual component that is still a daily challenge.

Yet through it all, we made it to the end of the year with a lot of changes and a new normal. Although a lot was lost, 2020 brought some good things. Families bonded. Co-workers bonded. People in the service industry normally overlooked and underappreciated, were exposed as the HEROES, they always were, but whom we took for granted. They are often underpaid but truly essential to our very existence. Kindness and a general care for mankind normally shown during the winter holiday season, bloomed months earlier. No one knows what 2021 will bring, but 2020 has shown us that we CAN and WILL come together and take care of each other when times are the toughest.



So, grab a cup of pineapple cider wassail (recipe below), a warm throw, and make a list all you still have to be thankful for as we enter the last month of this year and count down to the next year.



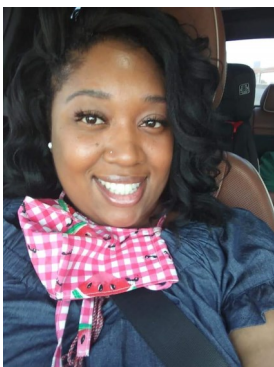
| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 cinnamon stick | 3/4 cup pineapple juice |
| 1-1/2 cups orange juice | 2 quarts apple cider |
| 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice | 1 tablespoon brown sugar |
| Dash cinnamon | Dash ground cloves |

In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Discard cinnamon sticks.

Serve warm! Enjoy!



Meet Arkina Scales, Residential Operations Supervisor



At CHDC, Arkina Scales, Residential Operations Manager (House Supervisor) for 19 Maple is one example of the many dedicated, hard-working staff that are keeping the Conway Human Development Center running through the COVID Pandemic. Ms. Scales is always willing to assist with any need that may arise at CHDC. During the pandemic she has volunteered to adjust her work schedule to work weekends to assist in making coverage. She comes in early and stays late during the week to ensure that the residents in her house have all their needs met. She has also volunteered to manage another residence that is currently without a Residential Operations Manager. Her Supervisor and co-workers report that she not only positively impacts the residents she serves, but also makes the work day more fun with her positive, bubbly personality. Gale Sasser, Program Administrator said “Arkina is always so positive and definitely brightens any room just by walking into it.” I am thankful for committed workers like Arkina that help make CHDC a great place to live and work.

Meet Amanda Thompson, Rehab Instructor Supervisor

Amanda Thompson, Rehab Instructor Supervisor, has been an enormous asset to the Booneville Human Development Center, especially since the beginning of this COVID pandemic. According to Jennifer Bancroft, Residential Services Manager, “Amanda is an ultimate team player. She is the ‘go-to’ person. Always seems to be one step ahead – ready, willing and able.” Amanda has stepped in to be direct care coverage, run direct care operations, assist with other rehabilitation training areas while clients have been out of training, assists with Residential Services Managers and Residential Services Director. She has the skill set that has allowed her to assess a situation, see what needs to be done and jumps in to assist. Amanda is not the type that can just sit there and do nothing, she wants the best for the clients we serve and to assist her fellow co-workers.



Meet Brenda Rhodes, Institutional Services Assistant



Brenda Rhodes is an Institutional Services Assistant at Southeast Arkansas Human Development Center. She has worked with us since January 2015 in that role but is always willing to step in and help wherever she is needed. Before the healthcare crisis, she worked with program services and the psychology department to provide additional support to residents who were struggling with active treatment. During the crisis she has volunteered to provide additional care for our residents. In talking with Brenda, she stated “I keep the word ‘flexible’ in mind so that when I am called on for other duties, I will be ready to roll. I enjoy coming to work caring for the individuals as if they were my own. The changes, the experiences I have gone through is amazing and wonderful. I am always willing to work and learn.” Brenda has always worked hard to contribute to the success of any team she joins. She was recently inducted into the University of Arkansas at Monticello’s Sports Hall of Fame as a point guard for the 1990 UAM Cotton Blossoms basketball team. We are so thankful for dedicated team members like Brenda, many of whom have rearranged their lives to provide excellent care to our residents.

Meet Rosby Summerville, Residential Care Staff



Rosby Summerville recently completed his CNA training at the Arkadelphia Human Development Center's CNA class. Rosby is an awesome residential care staff. He has a great attitude and is willing to work wherever he is needed. He volunteers for extra shifts, even on his weekends off. He engages individuals in outdoor activities, like playing basketball or going on campus walks. He is more than staff, he is a mentor to his clients. Rosby follows the client's programs and does this with a smile and positive attitude. Our clients think of him as a friend, not just a staff member. Rosby invests in his client's well-being and happiness. Rosby has volunteered to become one of AHDC's Certified Red Cross Life Guards and completed Life Guard training on top of working extra shifts, going to CNA class, and working his regular schedule. Rosby is compassionate, kind and a dedicated team member. AHDC is proud to have this caliber of employee, as part of our family.

Meet Paul Gunter, Ada Chestnut, and Tina Bass, Behavioral Health Team

Paul Gunter, Ada Chestnut and Tina Bass are members of our Behavioral Health Team at the Jonesboro Human Development Center. All three of these individuals have gone above and beyond to assist residents on how to learn calming behaviors, but they have also been some of the first employees to step up when we said "we need help" during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year has been, let's just say, challenging. But we are making it through with employees like these three who quickly asked, "Where do you need me?" Diane Keith, Interim Superintendent stated, "I am forever grateful to them, and for the many, many other employees that have graciously given us time away from their families to help in our time of need to provide coverage. This brings "Thanksgiving" to a whole new level."



International Day of Persons with Disabilities



2020 IDPWD THEME: "NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE"

On December 3 this year, during the annual celebration of people with disabilities, the 2020 theme 'Not all Disabilities are Visible' also focuses on spreading awareness and understanding of disabilities that are not immediately apparent, such as mental illness, chronic pain or fatigue, sight or hearing impairments, diabetes, brain injuries, neurological disorders, learning differences and cognitive dysfunctions, among others.

According to the WHO World Report on Disability, 15 per cent of the world's population, or more than 1 billion people, are living with disability. Of this number, it's estimated 450 million are living with a mental or neurological condition—and two-thirds of these people will not seek professional medical help, largely due to stigma, discrimination and neglect.

Another 69 million individuals are estimated to sustain Traumatic Brain Injuries each year world-wide, while one in 160 children are identified as on the autism spectrum.

These are just some examples of the millions of people currently living with a disability that is not immediately apparent, and a reminder of the importance of removing barriers for all people living with disability, both visible and invisible.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, isolation, disconnect, disrupted routines and diminished services have greatly impacted the lives and mental well-being of people with disabilities right around the world. Spreading awareness of invisible disabilities, as well as these potentially detrimental—and not always immediately apparent—impacts to mental health, is crucial as the world continues to fight against the virus.

Holiday Lights around the state

Lights of the Ozarks at Fayetteville Downtown Square— 400,000 light display

Enchanted Land of Lights & Legends at Pine Bluff Regional Park— 250 animated and still light displays that stretches for about 1.3 miles. Entrance located at the intersection of Martha Mitchell Expressway, Convention Center Drive, and Regional Park Drive. Free admission



Winter Garden Festival at Garvan Woodland Gardens, Hot Springs— 2020 edition hosts a daytime winter garden festival. Most activities and family-friendly fun are planned for the daytime. The Evans Tree House, Evans Children's Adventure Garden, and the Perry Wildflower Overlook are some of this year's attractions.

Sherwood's Enchanted Forest Trail of Lights— drive through entrance located near the Sherwood Sports Complex. The trail is 1 mile with thousands of lights, spectacular displays, and holiday scenes.

Searcy Holiday of Lights and Living Nativity— features a skating rink in Spring Park, displays at Berryhill Park, and the grounds of Harding University. More than 1 million lights!

White River Wonderland, Batesville— over one million lights along the picturesque White River. Also available are romantic carriage rides or the magical White River Wonderland Express train ride, and an artificial ice rink.

Bentonville Lighting of the Square— Little Craft show, holiday shopping, possible parade around three sides of downtown Bentonville usually held early in December.





COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS!

Join us live on December 10 at 3PM.
Watch to win giveaways!



700 Main Street, Little Rock AR 72203 Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

blueumbrellaar.org



Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of the month.