



## Virtual Program Newsletter December 2021



Welcome to the Alzheimer Society Peel's Weekly Virtual Program Newsletter. All content is designed to create opportunities for engaging in purposeful and fun activities. We hope you enjoy!

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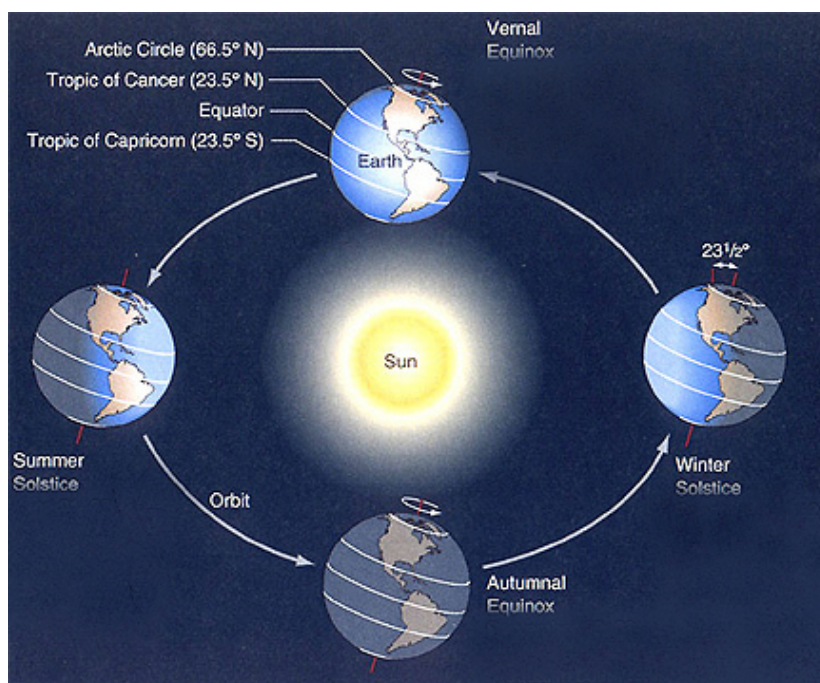
Special  
Days  
*Finding  
celebration in  
the little  
things*


### Winter Solstice: The First Day of Winter

This year the winter solstice will occur on December 21 at 10:59 AM, this will be the “shortest” day of the year and mark the first official day of winter. Now, when it is said that it is the “shortest” day of the year, it means that there are the fewest numbers of sunlight that day. On the bright side, after the winter solstice that means the days will soon be getting brighter!

The solstice only lasts for a few moments when the Earth's hemisphere is tilted as far away from the Sun as it can be, as shown in the diagram.

See for yourself! On the day of the solstice, stand outside at noon and look at your shadow. It's the longest



	<p>shadow that you'll cast all year! Do this again on the day of the summer solstice and you'll see almost no shadow.</p> <p><a href="#">Winter Solstice 2021</a></p>
<p>Reading Nook</p>	<p><b>Winter-Time</b> Robert Louis Stevenson</p> <p>Late lies the wintry sun a-bed, A frosty, fiery sleepy-head; Blinks but an hour or two; and then, A blood-red orange, sets again.</p> <p>Before the stars have left the skies, At morning in the dark I rise; And shivering in my nakedness, By the cold candle, bathe and dress.</p> <p>Close by the jolly fire I sit To warm my frozen bones a bit; Or with a reindeer-sled, explore The colder countries round the door.</p> <p>When to go out, my nurse doth wrap Me in my comforter and cap; The cold wind burns my face, and blows It's frosty pepper up my nose.</p> <p>Black are my steps on silver sod; Thick blows my frosty breath abroad; And tree and house, and hill and lake, Are frosted like a wedding cake.</p>
<p>Music Corner <i>Featuring Ruth</i></p>	<p><b>Holidays Around the World</b></p> <p>Let's celebrate some of the fabulous music accompanying the various December holidays around the world:</p> <p><b>Las Posadas</b> Las Posadas is an extended devotional prayer. It is celebrated chiefly in Latin America, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Spain, and by Hispanics in the United States. It is typically celebrated each year between December 16 and December 24.</p> <p><a href="#">Las Posadas - A Mexican Christmas Hymn</a></p> 

### **Kwanzaa**

Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture which is held from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually held on the 6th day.

[It's Kwanzaa Time](#)



### **Hanukkah**

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire. It is also known as the Festival of Lights.

[I Have a Little Dreidel](#)

### **Omisoka**

Omisoka is a Japanese traditional celebration on the last day of the year. It is held on December 31.

[Japanese Folk Song #2: New Year's Day \(お正月/Oshōgatsu\)](#)

### **Three Kings Day**

For many Christians in Spain and Latin America, the Epiphany, or Three Kings Day is celebrated as the day the three wise men first saw baby Jesus and brought him gifts. On this day in Spain, many children get their Christmas presents.

[Mi Burrito Sabanero](#)



### **St Lucia Day**

St. Lucia Day is a Christian feast day observed in Sweden on 13 December. The observance commemorates Lucia of Syracuse, who according to legend brought food and aid to Christians hiding in the Roman catacombs..

[Saint Lucia in Sweden](#)



### **Bodhi Day**

Bodhi Day is the Buddhist celebration of the Day of Enlightenment, celebrating the day that the historical Buddha experienced enlightenment.

[Bodhi Day Service](#)

### **Yaldā Night**

Yaldā Night or Chelleh Night is an Iranian Northern Hemisphere's winter solstice festival celebrated on the "longest and darkest night of the year."

[Yalda night, Shabe Yalda, Yalda ceremony at winter solstice](#)

### **Pancha Ganapati**

Pancha Ganapati is a modern five-day Hindu festival originating in Hawaii and celebrated from 21 through 25 December in honor of Ganesha.

[Ganesh Mantra - Om Gan Ganapataye Namah](#)



### **Hogmanay**

Hogmanay is the Scottish word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year in the Scottish manner.

[Scottish Bagpipes Music On Hogmanay in Scotland](#)



### **Christmas**

Christmas is the annual Christian festival celebrating of the birth of Christ, it is held on December 25th in the Western Church and January 7th in the Orthodox Church

Check out the [Alzheimer Society Peel YouTube Channel](#) and singalong with our Music Therapist, Ruth:

- [Brief History of Holiday Music: Part 1](#) The Earliest Christmas Songs
- [Brief History of Holiday Music: Part 2](#) The 1800s and the Re-Invention of Christmas
- [Brief History of Holiday Music: Part 3](#) Crooners, Movies, and Novelty Songs

**To listen to all this music from around the world, see this YouTube link:**  
[Holidays Around the World](#)

## **Health & Wellness**

This year instead of a traditional Advent Calendar filled with sweet treats or knick knacks, here is an activity to prompt our discussion or reflection about gratitude, each day with a different topic.

### **24 Days of Gratitude**

#### **December 1**

**Today's gratitude:** Thankfulness

It might seem strange to be grateful for thankfulness, but consider how you feel inside when you are thankful for something. Consider how your mood changes. As we journey through this month with gratitude on our minds, we can remember how good it is to have that feeling of thankfulness and let it bring us joy as well. What is it like for you when you feel thankful? Does it lift your mood? What are you thankful for today?

#### **December 2**

**Today's gratitude:** Learning

We have been learning all our lives, from the time we were infants learning the very basics, to our school years of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and even in our adult years. Maybe you have felt the thrill—or the relief—of mastering a new subject. It can give us a great sense of accomplishment. Many people strive for lifelong learning, always eager to discover a new fact or solve a puzzle. Learning can be fun, but it also gives us the tools we need to be successful and happy in life. Do you like to learn new things? Did you have a favorite subject in school?

**December 3**

**Today's gratitude:** Technology

Yes, we complain about technology sometimes, and it doesn't always work perfectly, but there's a lot to be thankful for. Between phone calls and video calls, we can keep in touch with friends and family. We can send pictures by email, watch movies every night, or heat up water in two minutes. What technology are you thankful for? Are there things you could do without?

**December 4**

**Today's gratitude:** Books, stories, and writers

Whether you prefer classic literature, a good mystery, or a history book, you might know what it's like to lose yourself in a book. And whether you read from the real thing, use an e-reader, or listen to audiobooks, it's wonderful to have access to the varied stories and ideas that we can find in books. We owe gratitude to the writers who work so hard to create them. Do you have a favorite book or type of book? Have you tried listening to audiobooks? Have you been a writer?

**December 5**

**Today's gratitude:** Humor

They say that laughter is the best medicine, but even if you don't need medicine, a good chuckle can brighten your day. More than that, humor can make us feel better about difficult situations or mistakes we've made, even if it takes a little while before we're ready to laugh about them. Do you enjoy humor or comedy? Can you tell a joke? Do you look back on any events of your past and laugh about them?

**December 6**

**Today's gratitude:** Resilience

Everyone experiences good times and hard times in life. No one seems to escape that reality. But even when bad things happen to us, it's possible to recover, to

bounce back. That's resilience, and it lets us find our joy again. What helps you bounce back from a bad day or a bad experience?

### **December 7**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Courage

We sometimes imagine that courageous people aren't afraid of anything, and that might be true for some. But most people have their fears and worries—and they carry on in life anyway. They take chances and get things done. They have the hard conversation. They run their first marathon or jump out of an airplane. They face illness without giving up at the first sign of difficulty. Are there people who seem especially courageous to you? When have you needed courage in your life?

### **December 8**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Patience

Have you noticed that we don't always get what we want exactly when we want it? Sometimes we have to be patient and wait for simple things, like a ride, or a cup of coffee. Sometimes bigger things require patience, like waiting for a broken limb to heal. Without patience, we might hate the waiting and begrudge every moment of limitation. With patience, we can be a bit more comfortable through all those experiences. When do you need extra patience? Are there things that make it hard to have patience?

### **December 9**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Kindness

Kindness is one of the great gifts that makes the world a better place. Of course, when others are kind to us, it warms our hearts and makes our lives easier. But being kind to others brings its own reward. When we are kind to others, we actually feel happier ourselves! Do you know people who are experts in being kind? Are there people to whom you could show a little extra kindness today—or every day?

### **December 10**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Beauty

Beauty around us can make our hearts light and lift our spirits. It comes in many different forms: there is the beauty of a gorgeous summer garden, the beauty of a face lined from laughter, the beauty of a work of art on canvas, the beauty of the sky at sunset. What do you find beautiful in the world around you? Barbara Cooney wrote a wonderful children's book called *Miss Rumphius*, about a woman who was determined to make the world more beautiful. How can you make the world more beautiful?



**December 11**

**Today's gratitude:** The ocean

Sitting on the beach watching the waves ebb and flow can be a wonderful and calming experience. The sight, the sound, and even the smell of the water crashing on the shore is like nothing else. Even if you can't get to the ocean in person, you might be able to watch videos or listen to the sound of the waves. But the ocean is even more: it is filled with life; it is a playground for families; it calls to the adventurous to explore its depths as well as what might lie beyond it. Have you spent any time near the ocean? What appeals to you about the shore or the sea?

**December 12**

**Today's gratitude:** Mountains

Mountains offer unmatched beauty and majesty. Even photographs can be stunning. They can also be a place of silence and solitude, and a challenge for those who try to scale or ski them. Have you ever spent time in the mountains? Would you rather climb a mountain or sit quietly and enjoy the view?

**December 13**

**Today's gratitude:** Sunshine

There are few things that are so likely to raise our spirits as a dose of sunshine and blue skies on a beautiful day. We might feel like we have more energy when the sun is shining. And of course, the sun is a necessity to life on Earth. What a blessing! Do you feel more cheerful on a sunny day? What can we do to raise our spirits during a spell of cloudy weather?

**December 14**

**Today's gratitude:** Morning dew

The morning dew brings a freshness to mornings, a fresh start to a new day. Sleep in too long and you will miss it, but if you have a chance to enjoy the lingering dew, you might even notice the tracks of early-morning visitors in the grass. Are you an early riser who often sees the morning dew? How do you feel when the dew becomes frost as winter approaches?

**December 15**

**Today's gratitude:** The wind

The weather can bring us anything from a sultry breeze to brisk gusts to hurricane-force winds. The wind even helps us mark the seasons: In spring the wind might carry pollen and petals from the trees, while the fall wind carries leaves with it. Have you ever been to a windy place, such as the Windy City or the Cliffs of Moher?

**December 16****Today's gratitude:** The rain

Rain is life! It sustains all living things on the planet, nourishes our crops, and washes clean everything it touches. You might sometimes look upon a rainy day with disfavor. Yet, in times of drought, we watch the weather forecast and pray for rain. Have you ever prayed for rain? Have you ever taken a walk in the rain? Have you ever sung in the rain (think Gene Kelly!)?

**December 17****Today's gratitude:** Snow

Reactions vary greatly to a snowy day. We might love to watch the silent beauty of the snowfall, the gradual whitening of the world around us. While children are eager to go out and play, drivers and snow shovelers grumble at the inconvenience. Does it snow where you live? What are your memories of snowy days in your youth? Do you lie in the snow today?

**December 18****Today's gratitude:** Freedom

Most of us have responsibilities and limitations, but we still want to have some control over our lives. We might love the sense of freedom that comes from an unscheduled day, or the chance to do just as we please. Or we might think back to the days of childhood, when many of us were free to run and play without the responsibilities we shouldered in later years. But the truth is that freedom—for adults—comes with responsibilities. What gives you a sense of freedom? What made you feel especially free when you were quite young? What responsibilities do we have if we live in a “free” country?

**December 19****Today's gratitude:** Playfulness

Children have a gift for play, but sometimes we take on so much seriousness and respectability that we lose the knack. We might even look at more playful people around us. But play can lighten our mood and lead to some healthy laughter. Do you have playfulness in your life? How can we add more play to our lives as adults?

**December 20****Today's gratitude:** Warmth

We might think of warmth merely in terms of temperature, but warmth is a quality that some individuals possess. They are welcoming and kind and make the people around them feel cared for, and, well, warm! We might also get a sense of warmth



from watching a movie with kind-hearted characters. What brings you a sense of warmth? Do you treat others with warmth and kindness?

### **December 21**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Curiosity

Curiosity is a wonderful gift. It wards off boredom, and it leads to understanding. Scientists, for instance, are curious about the world and want to understand it. They are always eager to learn new things. And some of us might be curious about other people, always willing to hear their life stories. What a wonderful thing it is to be a listening ear! What are you curious about? Do you think you can develop curiosity?

### **December 22**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Peace

We might never know a time when the entire world is completely at peace, and the news certainly informs us of every unpeaceful event that takes place. Yet we might have peace in our own community, and there are moments of peace in our lives. In these peaceful moments, we can really take a deep breath and rest. Do you enjoy peaceful days, or do you prefer adventurous days?

### **December 23**

#### **Today's gratitude:** Wonder

Children might be the true experts on wonder. Everything is new to them, and they have so much to learn. To a child, there can be a wonderful surprise around every corner! It doesn't take a trip to Disney World when there are things to discover right at home, like the chemical reaction of dropping a roll of Mentos into a two-liter bottle of Diet Coke. During the winter holidays, many people experience wonder every year, lighting candles for eight nights, decorating a tree, or just admiring light displays on lawns. What has the power to make you feel wonder today?

### **December 24**

#### **Today's gratitude:** The holy

Peter Mayer wrote a song called "Holy Now," which sheds light on the many things in life that seem holy or miraculous. He begins with the teachings of his childhood faith tradition, then expands the idea. As an adult, he recognizes the holy in all the beauty and goodness of life—from the dawn of a new day to a child's face. Others have a sense of the holy in special places. What gives you a sense of spirit or the holy?

## Explore Winter through Snowshoeing

When we think of trails around the Toronto area, what is the first thing you think of? Lush greenery, butterflies fluttering in the wind? Or do you envision bright snow banks and snowflakes landing on your nose? If you imagined the second image then you're in for an exciting adventure!

Around Toronto you can experience winter wonderland through snowshoeing on the many lovely trails. Check these trails out:

### 1) High Park

High Park is undoubtedly known for its gorgeous cherry blossoms in the Springtime. When winter arrives, this huge park becomes an adventure to many. With its expansive trails and forests, you can explore it's 161 hectares.



### 2) Cedarvale Ravine and the Beltline

Heard of Ernest Hemingway? He used to walk these trails, presumably looking for inspiration to hit. View the growth of a young forest, which has been replanted years after it was cleared for the subway. At the Beltline, you can snowshoe across Midtown Toronto from Mount Pleasant Cemetery to Allen Road. Additionally, you can also view the Evergreen Brickworks on your journey.

### 3) King's Mill Park Trail

This smooth trail is 1.6 kilometers and is on the west bank of Humber River in Toronto.

### 4) Albion Hills Conservation Area

The snowshoe trail is 2 kilometers, it begins at the chalet and winds through forests. Not only can you snowshoe, you can cross country ski, and toboggan!

[\[Source\]](#)

## Sock Snowman Delight!

There is never too much holiday decor! When I was younger, one of my favourite parts about the holidays (besides eating) was bringing home crafts. It was always so magical for me to see my art on display. Nowadays, why not do a craft instead of buying new winter decor?

Check out these chic Sock Snowmans. I made one when I was younger so I wonder how fashionable mine might look today!

### Supplies Needed For Making a Sock Snowman

- Socks
- Stuffing
- Marbles, rice, or anything else to weight the bottom
- Twine
- Yarn
- Felt
- Scissors
- Hot glue and glue gun
- Black buttons
- Small snowman nose

### How to Make a DIY Sock Snowman

This craft is so cute that I love having little DIY sock snowmen all around the house! Follow this step-by-step guide to make your own.

#### Step 1

Start by cutting the top off of your sock. This piece will become the hat later, so just set it aside for now.



#### Step 2

- Add something to the bottom of your sock to



weigh it down. This will help your sock snowman stand up.

- Marbles or rice works! Basically, anything that will add some weight to the bottom is perfect.
- Then add a bunch of stuffing to fill the sock up completely.

### Step 3

- You should have something that looks like the image below once you have stuffed the sock full.



### Step 4

- Tie off the top as well as a portion in the center with twine. This step makes the head and body portion of your snowman.



### Step 5

- Then use that top piece that you cut off earlier to add a hat to the snowman. Use any coloured string to tie off the top.



### Step 6

- Time to add a scarf! You will need a thin strip of felt cut from the long side of a felt sheet. Use your scissors on both ends to create some fringe.
- Tie the scarf around the neck!





### Step 7

- Add buttons and a snowman nose with hot glue.
- Your little sock snowman is now ready to display anywhere in your home!





[\[Source\]](#)

### Spotlight

Hello everyone! My name is Ashlee, and I am the Acting Client Services Assistant Manager at Evelyn's Place Day Program.

I have been employed at ASP for about 3 years, starting as an Client Service Facilitator at Brunel Day Program. My favourite part about working at ASP is how person centred each staff is when supporting an individual with dementia. I like how



	<p>ASP advocates for our older adult population with dementia related diseases and how we are always striving to improve our organization to better support our clients.</p> <p>Some of my hobbies include reading Shakespeare plays and watching the performances in theatre. I also enjoy exploring unique restaurants located in the GTA, I guess you can call me a foodie. An interesting fact about me is that I love animals and I would love to add a golden retriever to my family.</p> 
<p>Care Partner Corner</p>	<p>Even though we are closed for “in person” sessions, our education team is working diligently to connect with care partners virtually. If you are interested in attending any of the upcoming virtual sessions, please contact our Public Education Coordinator Danielle Farrell <a href="mailto:d.farrell@alzheimerpeel.com">d.farrell@alzheimerpeel.com</a>.</p> <p><i>Please note a 24 hour notice is needed to save your place.</i></p> <p><b>December Education</b></p> <p><i>Wednesday December 1, 2021 10:00-11:30 AM: <b>Getting Started</b> - covers what is Dementia, The 8 Common symptoms in Dementia, and how to communicate effectively with someone living with dementia.</i></p> <p><i>Monday December 6, 2021 6:30-8:00 PM &amp; Wednesday December 8, 2021 10:00-11:30 AM: <b>Understanding Behaviour</b>- covers what the meaning behind behaviours is, common behavioural triggers, and management strategies.</i></p> <p>For the full education calendar please visit our website: <a href="http://www.alzheimerpeel.ca">www.alzheimerpeel.ca</a></p> 
<p><b>Enjoy!</b></p>	