

The Correspondent

Early Intervention Program

Early Head Start

Wise Adult Day Health

Taunton Area School to Career

Volume 24, Issue 1



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Early Head Start had the pleasure of having General Dynamics of Taunton adopt 17 of their families with children, birth to age 3, for the holiday season. This amazing company has given us the opportunity to help some of our neediest families over the last 3 years.

General Dynamics organizes teams to purchase items that the families have specifically asked for, and then some, and several vans/trucks deliver them to our agency. The overwhelming number of gifts and household items (diapers, wipes, laundry detergent, paper products) are breathtaking. They even supply the families with wrapping paper so parents are able to wrap the gifts for their children.

Home visitors deliver gifts to each family and words cannot express the gratitude that these families have. The General Dynamics team are an extremely thoughtful group of people for whom we are very grateful for. Thank you for your generosity!



Weather Advisory

1. A winter advisory means weather is expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. Plan ahead and fill your gas tank to help prevent an ice-clogged line.
2. A frost/freeze warning means to expect below freezing temperatures that may damage unprotected plants. If you must go out to cover the plants or pipes, wear a hat and cover your mouth in addition to your normal winter gear.
3. A winter storm watch means heavy ice and snow are expected in one to two days.
4. A winter storm warning means severe weather is about to begin and you should stay indoors.
5. A blizzard warning means that outdoor conditions could well be life threatening. Time to hunker down and enjoy a good book! Winds above 40 mph are dangerous.

Source: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/14438-winter-safety-tips-for-seniors/>



Wise Adult Day Health

by Nancy Pereira

Check in on Elders

With the cold weather upon us and the first snow having already fallen, it's a good time to keep the health and safety of our elders in mind. While some seniors attend programs like Wise Adult Day Health to help ensure they are safe, warm and well cared for during these cold wintry days, there are others who are living without these vital supports, who may be at risk for serious issues related to the dropping temperatures. Cold, snow and icy conditions can be frightful barriers to the elderly, many of whom are already mobility impaired. Clearing stairs and walkways is not only a dangerous undertaking but can be a terrible hardship, particularly to elders living alone with minimal or no supports. Trying to navigate uneven terrain, with walkers or wheelchairs, put our elders at serious risk of harm and injury causing many elders to stay indoors. The Winter months can be terribly isolating and downright dangerous when an elder is unable to access food, medications, medical appointments or experiences the financial hardships of heating bills.

Wise Adult Day Health program provides daytime socialization, therapeutic activities, medical oversight and nutritious meals in a warm, friendly homelike setting. Certified Nurse's Aides and licensed nursing staff provide any needed personal care assistance, medications and treatments throughout the day at the facility. Service coordination staff can provide information and referral assistance to help the individual or caregiver obtain entitlements like food stamps, fuel assistance and other aging services. Transportation to and from the program is also provided by the facility. From our courteous drivers to our skilled nurses, our participants have the benefit of being seen by professional staff daily in a proactive and preventative care approach that is key to reducing the elders' risks for illness, injury and neglect.

If you have elderly relatives or neighbors living independently in the community, it might be a good idea to take some time to check in on them and see if they may be in need of some additional supports this Winter. Bringing along some pamphlets or information about heating assistance programs or medical day programs like Wise Adult Day Health could really be beneficial for their overall safety, well-being and peace of mind.

For more information about Wise ADH, please contact Nancy Pereira, Program Director, at (508) 880-0202.

Special Visitors



Phil loved his gift from Santa

The North Pole Visitors came to Wise Adult Day Health this December to help us celebrate the season for our annual Wise holiday party. The Singing Monaghans, dressed beautifully in traditional Claus regalia led the Wise participants in acapella holiday caroling. "The Monaghans have become an annual holiday tradition for the participants here at Wise," notes Program Director, Nancy Pereira. "The laughter and smiles they bring to our participants when they are passing out our gifts is priceless. They truly take the time and even pose for a picture individually with each of the folks!" Activity Director, Linda Kerr printed up the pictures for the participants to take home as a wonderful holiday memento for families and caregivers to cherish for years to come!



Lorraine was happy to have her picture taken with Mr. & Mrs. Claus.

Adult Day Health Services

Wise Adult Day Health is a day support service for adults experiencing health care related issues or whose ability to function independently is limited. Wise is designed to provide quality services, including daily leisure, recreational and preventive health activities to aging or disabled individuals. An R.N. oversees all health-related activities, including restorative and maintenance therapies, nutritional consulting, and participant/caregiver training in preventive health. A nutritious breakfast and lunch is served daily along with two snacks. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, AHS will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. For more information or referrals, please call the Wise Program Director, Nancy Pereira, at 508-880-0202, ext. 327.

Early Childhood Programs

Early Intervention

Early Head Start

Staff Spotlight

The January Early Intervention Employee that is being highlighted is Mary Kate Peters. Mary Kate received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Special Education from Bridgewater State University in 1997, and her Master's Degree in Special Education from Lesley University in 2006.



Mary Kate has been with Early Intervention since 2005. She has grown from beginning as a service coordinator to the Teacher Coordinator in 2006 and as a Team Leader in January 2015. Mary Kate brings not only her knowledge of development and love of working with children, but also her passion for growing professionally, and helping families find the opportunities that are available to them. She is responsible now for supervising 8 staff, as well as conducting assessments, intakes and sharing her expertise with staff. We appreciate Mary Kate's excellent work ethic and the enthusiasm she brings to the team!

Be Ready to Play Inside

No matter how well bundled a child is, and no matter how much that new sled wants a workout, children should not play outside during snowstorms. And even if there's no snow on the ground, there may be a point when it's just too cold to go outdoors. You don't want your child to run recklessly through the house, nor do you want him or her to sit in front of the television all day, munching on holiday candy. That's why it's important to have safe but active indoor activities on hand for the winter.

Make an effort to think of ways that your children can safely move around when they can't get outside. Some ideas include playing dress-up, dance parties and bean-bag tosses. Scavenger hunts and obstacle courses can be fun, too, as long as kids are limited to a defined, safe space. If it's safe to drive, take them to a local YMCA or indoor gym for fun and games.

Source: <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/5-winter-safety-tips-kids5.htm>

Bath Safety for Toddlers

January is Bath Safety Month. Here are a few tips to help keep children safe in the bathtub:

Supervision: Children can drown in only a few inches of water, so never leave a young child alone in the bath, even for a moment. If you can't ignore the doorbell or the phone, wrap your child in a towel and take him along when you go to answer them. Bath seats and rings are meant to be bathing aids and will not prevent drowning if the child is left unattended. Never leave water in the bathtub when it is not in use. It's also important to have anything and everything you think you'll need within arm's reach before getting down to business.

Slips and falls: Install no-slip strips on the bottom of the bathtub. Put a cushioned cover over the water faucet so your child won't be hurt if he or she bumps their head against it.

Water temperature: To prevent scalding, adjust your water heater so the hottest temperature at the faucet is no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.9 degrees Celsius). Test the water with your wrist or elbow to check that it feels warm, not hot.

Medicine and toiletry storage: Keep all medicines in containers with safety caps. Remember, however, that these caps are child-resistant, not childproof, so store all medicines and cosmetics high and out of reach in a locked cabinet. Don't keep toothpaste, soaps, shampoos, and other frequently used items in the same cabinet. Instead, store them in a hard-to-reach cabinet equipped with a safety latch or locks.

Electric appliances: If you use electrical appliances in the bathroom, particularly hair dryers and razors, be sure to unplug them and store them in a cabinet with a safety lock when they aren't in use. It is better to use them in another room where there is no water. An electrician can install special bathroom wall sockets (ground-fault circuit interrupters) that can lessen the likelihood of electrical injury when an appliance falls into the sink or bathwater.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Bathroom-Safety.aspx>

Early Childhood Programs ...

Early Head Start Program is a federally funded program that provides comprehensive services to families who are pregnant or have children between the ages of birth to 3 and meet income guidelines. Call Georgianna Ouellette at 508-880-0202, ext. 355 for more information or to make a referral.

Early Intervention Program is an integrated developmental service available to families of children, between birth and three years of age, for whom there are developmental concerns due to identified disabilities, certain birth circumstances, or environmental circumstances (e.g. cerebral palsy, prematurity, homelessness) or show a delay in one or more areas of development. Please call Zulmira Allcock at 508-880-0202, ext. 302 for more information or to make a referral.

Early Childhood Programs

Early Intervention

Early Head Start

Messy Mealtimes

Because it is very important to let your babies (and kids) get messy, read on to find out why and how you can take baby steps into tolerating the mess (and hopefully embracing it).

Powerful Sensory Play

Meal times with babies are about more than eating. Besides learning all sorts of social and cultural norms, it is some of their first active sensory play. Think about it, you can't

put your 7 month old in the sand box or use finger paints because they will eat it. The tactile stimulation you get from playing in messy textures

provides loads of meaningful information to the brain that children process and create more sophisticated responses to. Babies and children will actively seek these experiences out as part of curiosity, discovery, exploration, and the drive to experience sensory input.

Learning How to Self Feed

When babies get their hands messy in the baby food, it will eventually dawn on them that when they put their fingers in their mouth they get some food. A light bulb will go off, "Hey, I can feed myself". It will likely be months before they are spoon feeding themselves, but those early tastes from their own fingers will set the groundwork for this skill and they will likely accomplish it much sooner! If your baby is getting messy and not putting their hand up to their mouth when it's covered in dinner, take your hand and show them how.

Preventing Tactile Defensiveness

When kids aren't exposed to different textures, they can become sensitive to new or different textures over time. If you keep your baby very clean during meals, they may reach a point when getting messy feels uncomfortable because it's such a foreign sensation to them. This is not to say that all tactile defensiveness is taught, mostly it is not. Kids that are born tactile defensive will show signs early on as a baby. The constant wiping with a spoon or napkin to keep the baby clean can actually be more uncomfortable for them.

(continued second column)



Messy Mealtimes (continued)

Making it Positive

Letting babies get messy keeps a more laid back flow to the whole meal and thus is more positive. If you are fighting with your baby so they don't grab the spoon or trying to wipe their face off after each bite, meal time might not be so positive for baby.

If you wipe your baby's face constantly or don't let them help feed themselves, you are depriving them of a wonderful learning and sensory experience. Sorry, I know that sounds harsh. The good news is that it's not too late to let them start to get messy. As they creep into life as a toddler, you do have to start teaching table manners and it may not be a great idea to let them squeeze and slop their food around just for the sake of playing. But, if they are getting messy just from the act of eating than let it go, and while they are younger toddlers a little of the messy play is ok as long as it isn't too distracting. If you notice your toddler is trying to play with their food a lot, provide them with opportunities to finger paint and play in various sensory bins. *Source: yourkidstable.com*

Winter Proof a Child's Skin

Children have soft, tender skin, and that soft skin's mortal enemy is winter weather. There are an array of painful problems that can result without proper care. First up: dryness. Not only will cold air dry out skin, so too will the heat blasting indoors. To fight against breakouts of eczema and other dry skin conditions, put a heavy moisturizer on your child. You may want to consider putting a humidifier in a child's room, particularly if he or she is susceptible to winter nosebleeds. And here's one thing your child will probably love -- in the winter, they should bathe only every few days, as frequent hot baths will further dry out skin. While your kids can spend less time in the shower, remind them that they still have to wash their hands often; it's cold and flu season, after all.

Even though it's winter, you still need to put sunscreen on before they go out to play. That reflection off the fallen snow can burn skin just as easily as a blazing sun. And after children have been playing in the snow, check their skin for possible signs of frostbite. Frostbite, which destroys skin tissue, occurs when the skin turns a light, gray color; the body part in question may also be numb. To treat a mild case, apply something warm to the area. Don't use something extremely hot; even lukewarm water will heat the area adequately. If the frostbitten area doesn't respond, then the child may need medical attention.

Source: <http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family/5-winter-safety-tips-kids2.htm>

Taunton Area School to Career

by Dan LeBrun

Crunch Time for TASC's Career Mentoring Program

As the New Year begins, students at Taunton High School (THS) and Bristol County Agricultural High School (BA) wait to learn if they will have a mentor for TASC's Career Mentoring Program. Without a mentor, a student is not able to participate in the program. The need is urgent! Both programs kick off at the end of January, and currently, only half the students looking for a mentor will actually get one – unless more people step up to mentor.

Student interest in the program skyrocketed with the announcements of new flexible program options. With the dramatic increase in the number of students requesting mentors, came a tremendously increased demand for mentors.

It is a testament to our mentors and to the quality of our program, that many mentors return each year. Almost 75% of last year's mentors have committed themselves to continue mentoring! Some have mentored one year, others for five or ten or even twenty years! Unfortunately, no matter how many of last year's mentors return, it will not be enough! The request for mentors is 50% greater than just last year.

What does it take to be a good mentor for TASC's Career Mentoring Program?

- Dedication
- Caring
- Time
- And the ability and willingness to listen, to enjoy young people and to make a difference in a young person's life.

Do you know anyone who fits that description? Does that sound like you? Don't worry! There is training and plenty of continual support for all our mentors.

You can do this! Please help TASC achieve the goal of not turning away any student who wants a mentor.

Contact Trish O'Brien at Tobrien@ahsinc.org or 508-880-0202x409 for information on becoming a career mentor.



Get Your Business Involved with the TASC Spelling BEE!

The TASC Spelling Bee is an excellent opportunity for local businesses and organizations to form a team or be a sponsor, and showcase their community involvement. An added benefit is that the Bee is broadcast on local access Cable television, and often rebroadcast several times, for even more visibility. A team registration fee is \$400; sponsorship levels are \$1,000, \$500, and \$250. To join the fun and offer community support, contact: TASC Program Director Dan LeBrun, or Development Coordinator Debbie Howland, at 508-880-0202.

TASC Welcomes Kendreia

In late November, TASC welcomed Kendreia Perry as a Career Specialist. She will be working with students at Taunton Alternative High School and Bristol County Agricultural High School. Kendreia brings with her a wealth of experience working with at-risk youth and within the field of college and career readiness. She



has worked for over a decade to help students overcome barriers to achieve post-secondary success. She holds a Bachelor's in Human Services from UMass Boston and a Master's in Education from Cambridge College. Most recently, she worked at Bay State College, where she helped both Boston and Taunton area students as a Financial Aid Counselor. Prior to that, she worked with American Student Assistance serving as a Sr. Education Advisor to young people in the community, mostly at Brockton High School.

Program Director Dan LeBrun is excited about Kendreia joining the TASC Team. "In a short time, she has already shown that her specific background and array of skills are a terrific asset to TASC and the students we serve. I am so pleased and feel fortunate to have her on our team!" Please join Dan and TASC in welcoming Kendreia to the Associates for Human Services' family.

Taunton Area School to Career is aimed at *Empowering Youth to Succeed* - by *Bridging Business and Education to Improve Tomorrow's Workforce*. It is a partnership of employers and school systems in Greater Taunton that offers at-risk teens and other high school students a variety of high-quality, career development experiences. TASC ultimately contributes to the economic and social well-being of the community by affording youth the kinds of opportunities that help them develop the skills necessary for living and working in the 21st century. For more information or referrals, please call Dan LeBrun, at 508-880-0202, ext. 408.

Resource/Information Page

TASC Business-Education Spelling BEE

by Dan LeBrun

The 14th Annual TASC Business-Education Spelling Bee will be held on Wednesday, April 11th, at the Taunton High School Auditorium. This fun and entertaining competition involves up to 24 teams, each consisting of three representatives from area businesses, along with one high school senior and one eighth-grader. The teams are typically broken down into three divisions: Business, Community, and Financial. Each division participates in a round of ten words to spell, with each division winner playing in a Championship round to determine the winner.



2017 Defending champions: Taunton High School

The TASC Spelling Bee includes and benefits students from our three partnership high schools: Bristol County Agricultural, Taunton Alternative, and Taunton High. Proceeds help support TASC's array of career development activities. The Bee also promotes awareness of our program, and how we offer local students many career awareness, exploration and immersion experiences.

Adults from the business or organization vie for bragging rights plus the Spelling Bee trophy that they can show off at their site for a year. For student participants on the winning teams, there are valuable prizes: college scholarships for the high school senior (\$1000, \$500, and \$250 for first thru third place), while the 8th grade students on winning teams each receive a Kindle device and a \$100, \$50, or \$25 Amazon gift card. Carol Sullivan of Carol Sullivan Real Estate is Chairperson of the Bee Planning Team for a fourth year. She and TASC staff are working hard to make this the most fun and successful Business-Education Spelling Bee yet!

Staying Warm in the Cold!

1. Layer up! Wear layers of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Gloves and a hat will help prevent losing your body heat.
2. Don't forget your furry friends. Bring pets indoors. If they can't come inside, make sure they have enough shelter to keep them warm and that they can get to unfrozen water.
3. Remember the three feet rule. If you are using a space heater, place it on a level, hard surface and keep anything flammable at least three feet away – things such as paper, clothing, bedding, curtains or rugs.
4. Requires supervision – Turn off space heaters and make sure fireplace embers are out before leaving the room or going to bed.
5. Don't catch fire! If you are using a fireplace, use a glass or metal fire screen large enough to catch sparks.
6. Protect your pipes. Run water, even at a trickle, to help prevent your pipes from freezing. Open the kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals out of the reach of children. Keep the garage doors closed if there are water lines in the garage.
7. Better safe than sorry. Keep the thermostat at the same temperature day and night. Your heating bill may be a little higher, but you could avoid a more costly repair job if your pipes freeze and burst.
8. The kitchen is for cooking. Never use a stove or oven to heat your home.
9. Use generators outside. Never operate a generator inside the home, including in the basement or garage.
10. Knowledge is power. Don't hook a generator up to the home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator. *Source: The Chief's Report – Volume 3, Number 1*



FREE Children's Tickets are available, on a first come-first serve basis, to the Kids Fun Fair & Zoo at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, January 13th (10:00 am - 7:00 pm) and Jan. 14th (10:00 am - 6:00 pm). Fun for the Whole Family with food, games, 100 animals and lots of attractions.

Please see Debbie Howland, AHS Development Coordinator, or call 508-880-0202 ext. 333 if you are interested in tickets.

Resource/Information Page

It IS Easy Being Green

by Chrissy Collins

Caring for plants can be tricky, especially for me. Below are some basic rules to follow. Plants add oxygen to the air you breathe and during the winter our homes will thrive with green plants in every room.

Know your plant - Sure this seems obvious, but even though most plants come with tags explaining the conditions they most need, we can ignore them in lieu of what we think they need. Read the tag carefully and familiarize yourself with the plant's requirements for sunlight and watering. Some plants don't need as much water as you might guess and some need more.

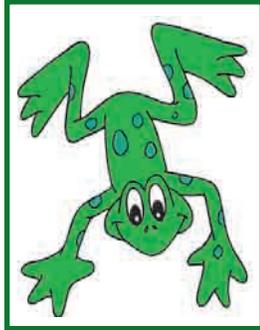
Pay attention to its appearance - First, check the soil. If it's soaking a few days after your last watering, you've overwatered. Let the soil dry out, then water. If the soil is dry and crumbly, water prodigiously until drops emerge from the drainage holes at the plant's bottom. After that initial major watering, only water when you feel dry soil just underneath the topsoil, and then water until soil is moist, not soaking. Is your plant producing leaves and shoots? If not, it probably needs light fertilization to restore growth or repotting to allow room for expanding roots. If there is new growth, but the leaves are thin and stretching toward the sun, your plant obviously needs more even sunlight. If there are brown spots on leaf tips, revisit your watering schedule/levels and the humidity in the area your plant sits. If you over water plants, all that excess water can drown the roots, which rot and die, causing leaves to yellow and brown. However, if you know you're not overwatering and the soil is dry to the touch, under watering may be the issue (it's all so complicated!).

Know your water

If you're not over or under watering, it could be the water itself that's the problem. Tap water can contain excessive levels of chlorine, which is toxic to plants. Try filtered water or collect rainwater in a bucket and use that to hydrate your plants.

Know your location

Keep plants away from very hot, cold or drafty areas in your home. Move your plants away from heating vents or air conditioners. If your plant is in direct sunlight and the leaves look dry, move the plant to a place in your home that receives indirect sun because leaves can get sunburned just like humans.



Treating a Cold by Chrissy Collins

How to treat a cold without drugs

The average adult gets two to five colds a year. Children suffer the worst, with seven to 10 a year. Only the immune system can cure a cold and in most cases, it takes four to seven days. Conventional medicines might provide relief from symptoms, but don't work against the virus or help our immune system throw off the infection. The good news is you can take action to help your cold without even going out.

Inhale steam

Put a towel over your head and inhale steam from a bowl of boiling water, ideally using drops of plant oil such as eucalyptus oil for added relief. Or take a nice hot shower with plenty of steam.

Have a hot drink

Hot drinks work wonders. The hot drink can provide immediate and sustained relief from symptoms of runny nose, cough, sneezing, sore throat, chilliness and tiredness.

Drinks with slightly bitter flavors are particularly beneficial. Many doctors suggest hot water with honey (a mild antiseptic), grated ginger (anti-inflammatory) and fresh lemon.

Eat chicken soup – or some curry

The broth of home-made soup has everything going for it, particularly if it's chicken. It flushes out the nasal passages with its aromatic steaming and offers hydration and comfort.



Take it easy

Take one or preferably two days away from work. You will save others from your germs and a cold can be the body's way of telling us to take a break. Listen to your body. With any virus that involves inflammation, even light exercise can be harmful, especially as we get older.

Drink water

When the body is fighting infection, it becomes dehydrated. You need plenty of fluids. By the time you feel thirsty, dehydration has set in – so drink regularly.

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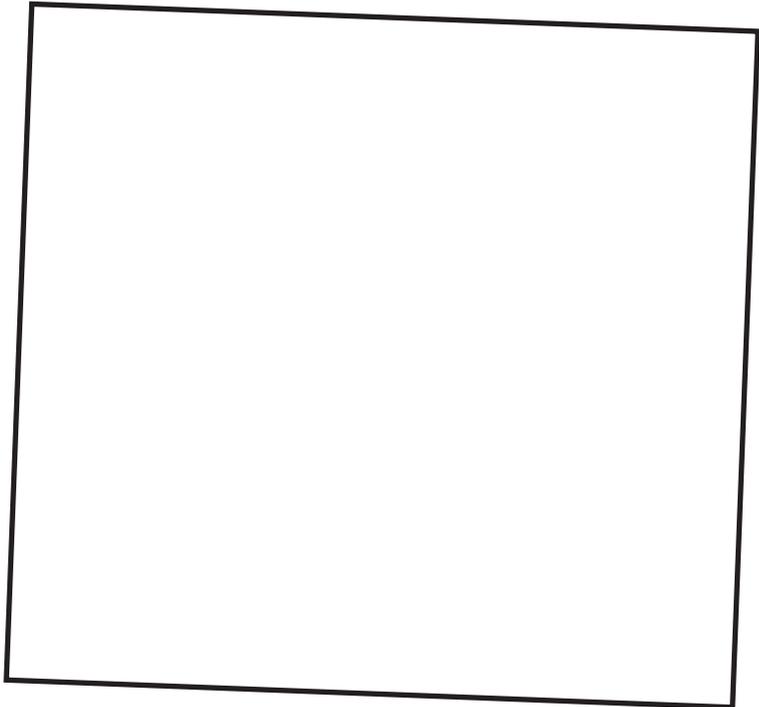
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web site!

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www.facebook.com/AHSInc



Wish List

If you have an item you'd like to donate, please let program staff know, or call 508-880-0202, ext 333.

- * Magazines
- * Soft Tissues

Useless Trivia

- * The ZIP in zip code stands for Zone Improvement Plan.
- * Yoda and Miss Piggy were both voiced by the same person.
- * The longest English word having only a single vowel is *strengths*.
- * Arnold Schwarzenegger was the first civilian to own a Hummer.

Special Days to Celebrate in January

- National bath Safety Month
- National Blood Donor Month
- National Braille Literacy Month
- 1st - New Year's Day
- 3rd - Festival of Sleep Day
- 4th - National Spaghetti Day
- 5th - National Bird Day
- 6th - Cuddle Up Day
- 6th - Fest of the Epiphany
- 10th - Houseplant Appreciation Day
- 13th - National Skeptics Day
- 14th - Dress Up Your Pet Day
- 15th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- 15th - National Hat Day
- 19th - National Popcorn Day
- 20th - Penguin Awareness Day
- 23rd - National Pie Day
- 24th - Compliment Day
- 25th - Opposite Day
- 26th - Spouse's Day
- 27th - Chocolate Cake Day
- 28th - Data Privacy Day
- 28th - Fun at Work Day
- 29th - Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day
- 29th - National Puzzle Day
- 31st - Backward Day
- 31st - Inspire Your Heart with Art Day



(l-r: Maria, Helen, and Joan)
Barn Babies paid a visit to Wise with kittens, puppies, bunnies, chickens, a goat and a restless pig. Barn Babies is a traveling baby animal petting zoo from Lakeville.