

# Adoption Support Newsletter

San Diego Youth Services, Editors: Liz Phillips & Heidi Allingham

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## Holiday Wishes

This year, where did it fly to? It seems impossible that we are already sending out the December newsletter! All of us at SDYS Adoption Support want to wish you and your families a holiday season full of peace, laughter, hope and the simple joy of being together.



With school breaks and a very small chill in the air it's a special time to get cozy and build family traditions that make lasting impressions in the minds and hearts of all of us from kiddos to grandparents.

You have shared some of those traditions with me over the many seasons we've know each other and I thought I'd include some of them in this newsletter:

- Cookie baking and decorating. This is a favorite for many of you. I must say that just thinking about the delicious aroma of freshly baking cookies reminds me of my mom's holiday specialty. Many of you have organized cookie decorating parties and exchanges that have been so much fun. One family also baked cookies and brought them to a nursing home to share with the very appreciative residents!
- Evening walks. Some families have instituted holiday evening walks. Everyone bundles up and strolls outside, looking at the stars and the moon and often singing favorite Christmas carols and seasonal songs.
- A family told me that every year they drive up to the local mountains for such activities and bring thermoses of hot chocolate and fleece blankets to warm them up in the brisk outdoors.
- Spending family time feeding those in need is another favorite holiday event for many of you.
- Family ice skating has become a regular part of the season for some of you. Kids watching their parents take a chance on the ice can be very instructive and provide lots of laughter for everyone!
- Playing seasonal and soothing music on the home sound system throughout the month was something one family shared.
- The blessings game was developed by one family. Each person writes down 3 blessings they are grateful for and puts the 3 slips of paper in a blessings jar. On a designated evening following a family dinner everyone gathers together and takes turns pulling the blessings from the jar. Parents and children guess whose blessing was just read. After each reading the family shares a group hug. This game produces lots of smiles and some heartfelt laughter.



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- Family Secret Santa or Secret Friend was elaborated on by one of your families. Each family member draws a name. For the whole month of December the secret friend gives a small gift each week to the person chosen. The rule is that the gift cannot be something bought for the occasion. It has to be homemade or already purchased. On New Years' Eve, Christmas Eve, the last day of Kwanzaa or on the eighth day of Hanukkah each family member gathers up all the gifts received and displays them for everyone to see. Then one at a time they try to guess who the giver of the presents was. This activity is followed by a thank you ceremony that includes hugs, high fives and a family meal or yummy dessert.

These are just a few of the family unity suggestions you have shared since 1998! I am sure there are many more that could be included next December. Please don't hesitate to email some of your favorite traditions.

From all of us at SDYS Adoption Support we want to wish you and yours a holiday season that warms your hearts and fills you with peace and happiness.

*Ilene*



## Kudos



- Kudos to my son, Isaiah G. He just made the SOL Swim Team at Southwestern College in Chula Vista. I am so proud of him. He accomplished a big goal he set for himself at a young age.
- Kudos to Tristan B. and his soccer team for winning the championship game!! You worked so hard and deserve to be celebrated!
- Kudos to Rachel O. for being a hard worker! Even when you don't want to do extra practice work, you still choose to get it all done and stay focused. That takes a lot of self-control and shows how well you can follow directions. You are doing a great job!
- Kudos to Liam L. for their creativity and sense of humor. You are so funny and can make everyone around you laugh. You inspire joy and laughter in those around you, and that's a unique gift!
- Kudos to Ivan and Elijah for being fun and friendly at movie night! You were kind to everyone in your group, created beautiful crafts, and followed all of the rules. You both showed your gifts of kindness, creativity, and respect!



If you have any Kudos for your family, please send them to Heidi at:  
[hallingham@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:hallingham@sdyouthservices.org)

# Movie Nights

## Combined In-Person Movie Night and Parent Support Groups

Movie nights

**Metro Movie Night— December 1 from 6:00-9:00pm**  
RSVP Vanessa Wasbin at [vwasbin@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:vwasbin@sdyouthservices.org)

**East County—December 8 from 6:00-9:00pm**  
RSVP to Ariana Maaia at [amaaia@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:amaaia@sdyouthservices.org)

**South Bay—no meeting in December due to the holidays**

**North County—no meeting in December due to the holidays**

Pizza provided



School Age Movie:  
**Scrooge: A Christmas Carol**



Tween/Teen Movie:  
**Christmas Chronicles**





# Family News & Resources



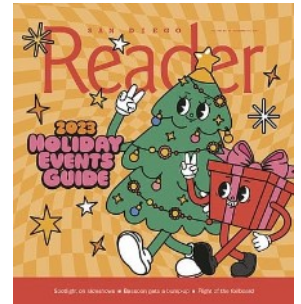
The above crafts are a few fun ideas for holiday family time. Found on the website below

<https://www.countryliving.com/diy-crafts/g5030/christmas-crafts-for-kids/>

## 2023 San Diego Christmas guide to fun

Parade of lights, gingerbread houses, menorah lighting, train from Campo. Follow the link below for a list of San Diego events during the holiday season. Please note: not all events listed are kid friendly, but many are community events for families.

[San Diego Reader](#)



**Here is one event that is free and great for the whole family!**

### San Diego Bay Parade of Lights—The waterfront

This year's theme is Christmas Traditions Around the World, so maybe we'll get a Krampus-themed barge lit up like a bat out of hell! But probably not. The San Diego Bay Parade of Lights is a time-honored holiday tradition brought to San Diego by the boating community. The event brings more than 100,000 San Diego residents and visitors to the shores of San Diego Bay each year to see approximately 80 lavishly decorated boats. Hooray boats! Free. December 10 and 17.

The parade takes approximately one hour to one and a half hours to pass any given point along the parade route. The approximate arrival time of the parade at various locations are:

Shelter Island (start of parade)	5:30 p.m.
Harbor Island	6:15 p.m.
The Embarcadero	6:45 p.m.
Seaport Village	7:15 p.m.
The Pier at Cesar Chavez Park	7:30 p.m.
Ferry Landing on Coronado	7:45 p.m.



## 10 Tips to Enjoy the Holidays with Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma

The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy, family togetherness, and celebration. For those who are parenting kids who have experienced trauma or loss, we know that this season can also be quite stressful to navigate. What are the practical things you can do to help your family enjoy the holiday season with kids who have experienced trauma? The link below will take you to the full article that offers tips on how to handle changes in routine that can trigger your child and/or heighten sensory overload.

<https://creatingafamily.org/adoption-category/adoption-blog/10-tips-to-enjoy-the-holidays-with-kids-who-have-experienced-trauma/>



# Reminder!!

Please be considerate of others during this flu season. If someone in your family is sick, we respectfully ask that you do not attend any groups, outings or in-person therapy or tutoring sessions. This includes in-home visits and at our office.

Thank you!



# Support Groups



## Support Groups—Please RSVP to any group you plan on attending

### Friday Support Group with Lori: Weekly—No group on December 29 due to holidays

Virtual parent support group every Friday except the fourth Friday of the month, from 4-5 pm for a check in with Lori. It will be a time to share how things are going for you at home. This will be an ongoing weekly check-in meeting. You are eligible to receive one hour of training for foster care hours. Contact Lori at [lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org) to be included.

### In-Person Parent Support Group: North County– December 12

Every 2nd Thursday from 10-11:30am at Emmanuel Faith Church in Escondido. We will check-in and have time to discuss various topics related to adoption . This group will be facilitated by Lori Hannigan. To RSVP or for more information contact Lori at 619-629-2870 or [lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org).

**Therapeutic Art Group for Moms: All regions.** Are you wanting to connect with other Moms in a fun, relaxing, creative way? The weekly virtual Therapeutic Art group for Moms is your opportunity. We have a verbal check in time, a brief guided relaxation exercise then time to make art with a given theme and finally an art sharing time. The entire process is to help you de-stress and connect with others. No art experience is necessary because the focus is on the process and not the product. **New Day and Time!** We currently have openings in our Monday group which meets weekly using Microsoft Teams from 1:00-2:30pm. Please contact Lori Hannigan if interested or for more information at 619 -629-2870 or [lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org).

### Spanish Parents Support Group: All Regions—The 3rd Wednesday, 11am-12pm

We will check-in and talk about positive parenting skills. Also, we will have a time to discuss any other needs you may have. This group will be facilitated by Andrea Peña and Ived Ayala. To RSVP or for more information contact Ived at [iayala@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:iayala@sdyouthservices.org) or (619)507-3376.

### El Grupo de Apoyo para Padres en Español– el 3er miércoles, 11am-12pm

Hablaremos sobre las habilidades positivas para los padres. Además, tendremos tiempo para hablar sobre cualquier otra necesidad que pueda tener. Grupo facilitado por Andrea Peña y Ived Ayala. Para reservar su lugar o para más información contacte a Ived Ayala por correo electrónico [iayala@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:iayala@sdyouthservices.org) o por teléfono (619) 507-3376.

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## Nurtured Heart Training

Two of our Family Advocates and Certified Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) Trainers, Ariana Maaia and Lori Hannigan, are offering free NHA virtual parent training groups. If you are interested in attending sessions or receiving more information about NHA, please contact either of them at—[amaaia@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:amaaia@sdyouthservices.org) or [lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org)

# Adoptions Staff Contact Info

## Adoption Staff Contact List

<u>Program Manager:</u>	Liz Phillips	(619) 629-2876
<u>Program Coordinator</u>	Ilene Tibbitts	(619) 629-2928
<u>Administrative Assistant:</u>	Heidi Allingham	<a href="mailto:hallingham@sdyouthservices.org">hallingham@sdyouthservices.org</a>
<u>Clinicians:</u>	Katiana Quintero	(619) 629-2864
	Andrea Peña	(619) 629-2886
	Sena Inukai	(619) 629-2885
<u>Family Advocates:</u>	Ariana Maaia	(619) 629-2888
	Lori Hannigan	(619) 629-2870
	Ived Ayala	(619) 507-3376
	Vanessa Wasbin	(619) 346-1487

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## Adoptions Program Information

- For General Information About Our Program— Liz Phillips at (619) 629-2876 or email her at [lizphillips@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lizphillips@sdyouthservices.org)
- For Program Support—Ilene Tibbitts at (619) 629-2928 or email her at [tibbitts@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:tibbitts@sdyouthservices.org)
- Support Group/Movie Night—See FAC listed for each area under Support Group/Movie Nights calendar
- Mentor/tutoring—Lori Hannigan at (619) 629-2870 or email her at [lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:lhannigan@sdyouthservices.org)
- Special Events, Workshops, Respite Reimbursement & Newsletter—Heidi Allingham at [hallingham@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:hallingham@sdyouthservices.org)
- Mailing Address—  
7364 El Cajon Blvd. Suite 204  
San Diego, CA 92115

### ***En Español***

Hay servicios limitados en español. Por favor Contacten a Ived Ayala (619) 507-3376, [iayala@sdyouthservices.org](mailto:iayala@sdyouthservices.org)