

WINTER ISSUE 2024 • DECEMBER/JANUARY/FEBRUARY

THE MAINSTREAM

The official publication of
Mainstreet Community Services Association, Inc.



*Photo courtesy of
Melissa Rieck-Johnson*

5001 MAINSTREET PARK DRIVE, STONE MTN., GA 30088
WWW.MAINSTREETCOMMUNITY.ORG



Message from the President



Greetings fellow Mainstreet Community neighbors! I would like to thank the community for the vote of confidence given to the board during our recent election for two open director positions.

This board will continue to strive to ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the beautification as well as maintenance of our common areas for all to enjoy. In the 2025 Budget, we've included capital improvement to the playground areas and pruning of our treescapes.

Hopefully, everyone has plans to enjoy the holiday season. Being with friends, family and extended loved ones is always good for the soul and a time to reflect on the positive things going on in our lives or within the family unit. Always take time to enjoy one another, visit with friends and family and most importantly take time to take care of yourself.

As we go forward as a community into 2025, let us strive to be kind to each other, respectful of our differences and - if you are so blessed - give to someone that is less fortunate. That could be your time with an elderly, lonely parent or grandparent or sharing your resources by donating to one of the many programs that benefit seniors, children, or veterans, just to name a few. Visit someone that is not able to get out and is housebound or in the hospital. Just a few acts of kindness can go a long way in someone's day or life. We say we are a "caring community," so let us strive to do so in deed and not just words throughout the coming year. From the entire Mainstreet Community Board of Directors, we hope you have a wonderful and blessed New Year!

Yours in service,

Patrice Diamond
Board President



Happy Holidays

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Message from Association Manager Nadine Rivers-Johnson

Planning for a *New Year*



The holidays are just around the corner, and for many people, that means lots of festivities with friends and loved ones. With all of the merriment that's sure to ensue, it's important that residents who are hosting celebrations are not only considerate of their neighbors, but also take note of Association and DeKalb County rules. We hope you all have plenty of chances to eat, drink and be merry this holiday season. If you plan on hosting a large get-together or party, there are a few things you'll want to keep in mind. First, keep the revelry and noise to a minimum, and wind the party down at a reasonable time—you don't want your celebration to interfere with your neighbors' attempts to get visions of sugar plums dancing in their heads.

Moving into the new year, consider starting a new budget or modifying your existing spending habits. The best way to spend wisely and plan for new home or personal projects, is to take a candid look at what income you bring in, and what your financial monthly or annual obligations are. This will allow you to plan for do-it-yourself projects or home improvements.

The New Year is always a time to focus on you. As we think of New Year's resolutions, we naturally reflect on how we can better ourselves and contemplate changes to make that happen. Typically, this means focusing on self-improvement - losing weight, exercising more, or learning a new skill or hobby. These resolutions can fill us with excitement in anticipation of the possibilities of achieving goals or weigh us down with dread and apprehension of not living up to our expectations.

Here are a few quick tips to jumpstart the year: (1) Pick a goal that motivates you; (2) Break down your big goals into smaller, more manageable goals; (3) Focus on progress, not perfection and stay positive; (4) Lean on others for support and motivation; (5) Practice self-compassion and be easy on yourself; (6) Don't compare yourself to others, and don't get too caught up in the New Year's resolutions of others. Set goals with only you in mind; and finally, (7) Know when to ask for help!

No matter how big or small your New Year's resolutions are for 2025, remember to show yourself some grace and forgiveness during the times when you may struggle as you work to reach your goals. Please take time over the course of this new year to engage in something meaningful to you, but more importantly, be kind to yourself. You deserve it!



GOAL, PLAN Action

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

REMINDER

PAYMENTS ARE DUE ON THE 1ST OF THE MONTH, LATE AFTER THE 15TH. A 10% LATE FEE OF \$7 APPLIES AND 10% INTEREST ACCRUES ON PAYMENTS NOT POSTED BY THE 16TH. CONTACT THE CLUBHOUSE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE TO UPDATE BILLING, EMAIL OR TELEPHONE NUMBER INFORMATION TO YOUR HOMEOWNER ACCOUNT.

OFFICE HOURS:
TUE —FRI 9:00AM—6:00PM
SATURDAY 9:00AM—3:00PM
PHONE NUMBER: (770) 469-7238
www.mainstreetcommunity.org

Mail Payments to:
Mainstreet Community
c/o CMA
P. O. Box 65851
Phoenix, AZ 85082-5851



GEORGIA MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Georgia received Homeowner Assistance Funds (HAF) from the U.S. Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The funds serve to provide relief to homeowners who suffered financial hardships due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs administers the funds through the Georgia Mortgage Assistance program. Assistance comes in the form of a Grant, up to **\$50,000** for eligible homeowners.



TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

- **Mortgage Reinstatement:** a one-time payment to the lender to catch up or reduce delinquent payments or payments currently in forbearance. The applicant must owe three or more mortgage payments to be considered for assistance.
- **Principal Curtailment:** a one-time payment to the lender to reduce the total mortgage loan balance for the following:
 - Permanent Loss of Income
 - Loan Modifications, Deferrals, and Partial Claims
 - Down Payment Assistance Payoff
- **Housing Related Expenses:**
 - Delinquent Association Fees
 - Delinquent Non-Escrowed Property Taxes
 - Due or Delinquent Non-Escrowed Property Insurance
 - Delinquent Water, Gas, and Electric Utility Bills
(only In conjunction with mortgage assistance)



BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ The homeowner, the borrower, or the homeowner's spouse (living with the homeowner) had a hardship caused by the pandemic after January 21, 2020.
- ✓ The pandemic hardship resulted in a significant loss of income or a significant increase in expenses.
- ✓ All applicants (homeowner, borrower, spouse residing in home) meet Georgia legal residency requirements.
- ✓ The home being considered for assistance must be in Georgia and the homeowner's primary residence.
- ✓ The mortgage loan (if there is a loan) met conforming limits at the time of origination.
- ✓ Applicants' total household income meets Area Median Income (AMI) limits at the time of the hardship or at the time of the application: 150% AMI or less if socially disadvantaged, 100% AMI or less for all other applicants.

(Additional Criteria May Apply)



1-877-519-4443



GMA@DCA.GA.GOV

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



GeorgiaMortgageAssistance.ga.gov

TIPS BEFORE & DURING A WINTER FREEZE.

BEFORE

- **Water Shut-Off Savvy:** Know where it is and how to use it—just in case!
- **Outdoor Faucets:** Shut off their water supply to avoid freezing.
- **Pipe Insulation:** Get creative with blankets, styrofoam, or even pool noodles.
- **Heating System Check:** Get that furnace or fireplace ready for the big chill.
- **Detector Double-Check:** Smoke and CO detectors are your best friends.
- **Emergency Kit Prep:** Stock up on essentials – food, meds, flashlights.

DURING

- **Seal It Up:** Close all doors and windows, garage included.
- **Keep It Toasty:** Maintain indoor temps at 55°F or higher.
- **Drip-Drop:** Let faucets drip to keep pipes from freezing.
- **Cabinet Care:** Open up under-sink cabinets for warm airflow.
- **Thawing Tactics:** Use a hairdryer or space heater for frozen pipes.
- **Never Leave Heat Sources Alone:** Unattended space heaters are a no-go.
- **Circuit Wisdom:** Avoid overloading those circuits with heaters.



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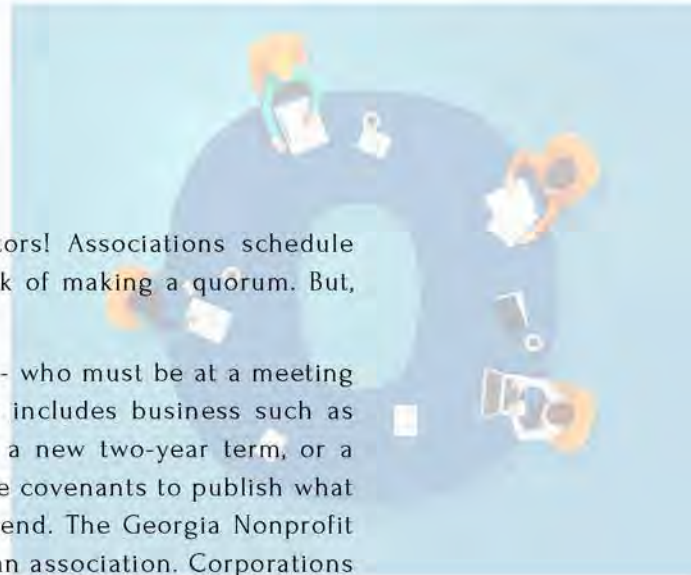


What is a Quorum?

Why is it Important to a POA Board

Congratulations to the 2025 Mainstreet Community Board of Directors! Associations schedule their annual homeowners meeting each year, and there is always talk of making a quorum. But, what exactly does that really mean?

A quorum is the minimum number of owners - in-person or by proxy - who must be at a meeting before business can be transacted. Annual Meeting of the Members includes business such as passing a new budget for the upcoming year, electing directors for a new two-year term, or a special vote to modify any amendments or bylaws. It is required by the covenants to publish what is on the agenda at the board meeting and why it is important to attend. The Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code State law tells us what the minimum number is for an association. Corporations formed before July 1, 2023 have a default quorum of 10% of the votes entitled to be cast by members in good standing. While that number seems relatively low, it is often difficult to obtain the required quorum without adequate planning. It's a common problem in many associations. Meetings that don't have a quorum must be adjourned and rescheduled at a later date. This costs the association money and creates more work.



Because proxies are so important to achieving a quorum, you may find us knocking on your door, calling on the phone, or even when you stop by the onsite administrative office, asking you to sign a proxy form. Without it, we can't do business, and eventually that affects you as a homeowner.

Owners have a responsibility to vote on community issues as members in good standing. Understanding the significance of a quorum helps all homeowners be better neighbors, and ensures that the business of the association can be accomplished.

The board is legally obligated to conduct an annual meeting. It's an important part of conducting association business as a corporation. During the annual meeting, new board members are elected, and the coming year's budget is presented to the homeowners for approval. No quorum—no election, no budget. This means the current directors will have to continue serving until an election can be conducted. It also means that last year's budget will remain in effect until a valid meeting (one with a quorum) can be held to approve a new budget.

The good news is that you can be "at" a meeting by signing a proxy. That's how you assign your vote, in writing, to another person. The association's governing documents outline who the proxy can be. Typically, it is a homeowner attending the annual meeting, the board, or community association manager. Proxies count toward the quorum, so they're very important to the association. We ask you to complete a proxy form, even if you plan to attend the meeting. That's just in case something comes up that prevents you from attending. If you do attend the meeting, your proxy is discarded or shredded.



Are Home Warranties Worth It?



Buying a home warranty for expensive or big-ticket items is usually designed to give you peace of mind if repairs are needed some time in the future. But what about a warranty on your home? From refrigerators to HVAC units and hot water tanks, there are a lot of things that can go wrong in the life expectancy of a home and its contents. But is a warranty a good idea? Or would you be better off without one? It's all in the fine print!

What Is a Home Warranty?

When big things in your home break — like your dishwasher, air conditioning system, furnace or hot water tank — they can cost lots of money to fix. Some people buy “home warranties” (which are really service contracts) to help cover these costs. But what exactly is a so-called home warranty? There are different types and options depending on the company and amount you pay, but home warranties typically cover replacements and repairs for things like appliances or air conditioning systems. They last for a set amount of time and, they cost extra.

After looking at the details, you may find that a home warranty duplicates coverage you already have. It may cover only part of a product or make it nearly impossible to get repairs done when you need them.

So here are some things to think about before committing to a home warranty:

- Is it likely to save you money? Consider both the upfront cost and costs that may be hidden, like deductibles or fees you need to pay each time products are serviced.
- What are the limitations? Are there limits on the amounts you can be reimbursed? Is accidental damage covered? Are certain appliances or systems not included? Are there restrictions or fees for cancellation?

Home warranties can be purchased with an annual or monthly premium, which can vary in cost from \$300 - \$1,500 per year. The higher priced home warranties include additional coverage options. The price varies depending on the type of property you live in and the level of coverage you're looking for.

In summary, know the difference and make a decision based on a clear understanding of the coverage terms. Read the fine print and check online reviews before committing. Be a wise and informed consumer.

- Does the claims process seem difficult or slow? Waiting a long time to get a repair or placement – or getting reimbursed - can reduce the value of having coverage.
- Does the company have a good reputation? A home warranty is only as good as the company responsible for coverage. Search for the name of the company and words like “review” or “complaint” to see if people have had issues in the past.



Invest some time in getting your lawn ready for winter and you'll be rewarded by healthy green grass in spring.

Clear away fallen leaves

Start preparing your lawn for winter by tidying up! Let your grass make the most of low winter light levels and short days by raking it regularly in autumn to clear fallen leaves and other debris. Move toys and summer garden furniture off the lawn and store them somewhere dry ready for next spring.

Mow your lawn before winter

As the grass starts to grow more slowly, cut your lawn less often and on a high mower setting. Traditionally, the last date for mowing is usually October or early November, but don't put your mower away completely! In cold winters the grass will stop growing altogether and you won't need to mow, but in mild weather you may need to give it an occasional trim just to keep it tidy.



Scarify to remove thatch

The next step in pre-winter lawn care is to scarify the lawn. This gets rid of thatch, which is a layer of dead grass and other plant debris that builds up around grass roots over time. Removing thatch improves air circulation, reducing the risk of fungal diseases, and also makes it easier for water to reach the roots of the grass.

Aerate the soil

Our lawns get a lot of foot traffic over summer, and this results in compacted soil. Aerating the lawn in autumn is an important part of winter lawn preparation, breaking up the compacted soil, improving drainage and getting oxygen back into the soil so that roots can grow strong.

The simplest way to aerate your lawn is with a garden fork. Press the tines of the fork as far into the soil as possible – at least 3-4in deep. Lean gently on the handle of the fork so that the soil around the tines lifts very slightly, then remove the fork. Move a short distance away and repeat. For heavy clay soils, use a hollow tine aerator rather than a garden fork. This removes small plugs of soil from the lawn, leaving holes which can then be filled with top dressing.

Top dress the lawn

Lawn top dressing is a mixture of organic materials, sand and fertilizer, ideal for improving soil structure and boosting lawn health. Top dressing also helps fill in any small dips in a lawn. After aerating your lawn, spread top dressing over the area and work it into the holes with a soft brush or a rubber rake.

Overseed and fix bare patches

If a summer of hard wear has left your lawn looking sparse, overseed it in autumn so the grass has time to germinate and develop roots before winter. You can either sow the grass seed before top dressing, or mix it into the top dressing and apply them together.

Fix any bare patches by raking the soil surface lightly to break it up and then scattering lawn seed.

Apply an autumn lawn feed

Give tired lawns a boost before winter with an autumn lawn feed. Autumn lawn fertilizers are high in phosphates and potassium to prepare the grass for winter temperatures and promote strong root growth. To make sure you cover all areas of your lawn evenly, use a lawn spreader and spread the fertilizer in two passes at right angles to each other.

KNOWLEDGE IN THIS ARTICLE WAS PARTIALLY OBTAINED FROM
LOVEE THE GARDEN WEBSITE



ON
Crime

Defensive Strategies For Winter Safety

One of the most significant impacts of cold weather on crime rates is increased property crimes such as thefts and burglaries. With fewer people out on the streets due to inclement weather, criminals may see this as an opportunity to break into homes or vehicles without being detected. To help prevent becoming a victim of property crime during the winter months, secure your home with sturdy locks, install dusk-to-dawn LED lights outside your property, and avoid leaving valuables in plain sight.

In addition to increased property crimes, cold weather can also lead to changes in criminal behavior overall. For example, some individuals may turn to drug-related offenses or other illegal activities to cope with the stressors brought on by winter weather. By understanding these shifts in criminal behavior patterns, law enforcement agencies can better allocate resources and work towards preventing these types of crimes from occurring.

To protect yourself from falling victim to crime during the colder months, consider implementing some defense strategies tailored specifically for winter weather conditions. This might include avoiding walking alone at night when it's dark out, staying vigilant while shopping or running errands, and investing in your home's surveillance cameras or security systems. Taking proactive measures now can reduce your risk of becoming a target for criminals when temperatures drop.

Finally, remember that staying safe during cold weather doesn't have to be a solo effort – reach out to your community for support! Neighborhood watch programs, local law enforcement partnerships, and community outreach initiatives can all play a role in keeping everyone safe during the winter months. By working with those around you, you can create a stronger defense against potential threats and ensure everyone stays protected throughout the season.

*KNOWLEDGE IN THIS ARTICLE WAS PARTIALLY OBTAINED FROM
NORWOOD & NORWOOD, PA WEBSITE

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

16 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME DURING THE HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY THEFT

Thieves overall tends to rise in the months of November and December. Best thing to do is to make sure you secure everything that you can. Lock up cars, trucks, and homes.

LEAVE THE LIGHTS ON

Thieves usually don't approach homes that appear to be occupied. Leave on outside lights at night (or set them with a timer) and when you leave the house during the day, leave on some of the lights inside the home to give the appearance that someone is home.

PACKAGE DELIVERY

More and more people are purchasing gifts online and having them shipped to their home. With this trend, more people are having packages stolen right off their front porch. If you're expecting packages, request signature confirmation or have a trusted neighbor hold on to it for you.

COOKING HAZARDS

A fried turkey is delicious. A fried house due to a deep fryer accident is not. Make sure you read the instructions on how to prepare your turkey safely and please, use the deep fryer OUTSIDE of the house.

DECORATION HAZARDS

Speaking of fires, Christmas tree fires can be devastating for what is normally such a beacon of happiness. If you have a live tree, make sure that it has water every day, and ensure that any lights you use are checked for breaks or exposed wires.

CREATIVE DISPOSAL

Dispose of your presents boxes creatively – placing that 60" TV box outside on trash day after Christmas is just asking for trouble. Try and break down boxes and other packaging as to not give away the wonderful gifts your family received.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In today's inter-connected age, it's important to be very careful about what you share on social media. Be very careful about what you post and if you do decide to share your gifts, please make sure you don't have your location tagged to the post.

TRAVEL

If you're traveling to visit family or going on a holiday vacation, wait until after your trip to post about it. Have a good friend or neighbor check on your house every couple of days to give you an update.

DECORATIONS & LIGHTING

Make sure not to run extension cords through windows or garage doors. Just the littlest crack can expose a home to thieves.

WHO'S AT THE DOOR

Criminals can try and scope at your home posing as a delivery person or someone looking for charitable donations. Be cautious when talking to people you're unfamiliar with and don't let them in your home.

Combatting Holiday Depression



The Holidays. Just the phrase conjures up visions of turkey, Christmas trees, presents, parties, and seasonal joy and goodwill. Unfortunately, for many people, the holidays are a time to reflect on past defeats, mistakes, rejections, and to experience anxiety and despair. But with a little awareness, we can recognize and combat holiday depression.

Many factors contribute to holiday depression, including increasingly hectic holiday schedules; financial stress caused by holiday shopping and entertaining; feelings of sadness caused by failures, real or perceived, over the past year; feelings of loneliness, especially for people who are unable to be with loved ones; and unrealistic expectations. Even individuals who do not usually experience symptoms of depression may fall prey to symptoms such as fatigue, poor sleep, headaches, anxiety, and excessive drinking. For individuals who do have depression, symptoms can be intensified. People may be embarrassed to admit they are depressed during what “should” be “the most wonderful time of the year” and often suffer in silence.

There are ways to combat holiday depression, however. Some suggestions include:

- Set realistic expectations for yourself. Resist the urge to accept more duties or responsibilities than you can handle.
- Prioritize activities and be willing to let a few of the lower ones go undone.
- Don't focus strictly on one day, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas. Spread holiday cheer from one occasion to the next.
- Don't compare this year with past years. Every year has its ups and downs, and current woes are more likely to feel serious than those that have had a few years to fade in your memory, while former good times may magnify themselves in retrospect.
- If you are lonely or unable to be with loved ones, volunteer.
- Limit alcohol consumption. Alcohol will only intensify feelings of sadness and depression.
- Try to maintain a balanced diet. Although overeating has become an accepted part of the holiday season, it may be both a symptom of and a contributing factor to holiday depression.
- Try to maintain an exercise routine. The endorphins generated by exercise help battle depression and help prevent unwanted holiday pounds. Try seasonal activities, such as ice skating, that provide training and help keep you in the holiday spirit.
- If budget is a concern, try participating in free activities such as driving through neighborhoods to see holiday lights and decorations.
- Remember that you don't HAVE to always be happy, despite what marketers would have you believe.
- If depression becomes overwhelming or unmanageable, don't be afraid to seek help.
- Finally, don't feel that your holiday cheer must go to others. Be sure to take time to take care of yourself.



*KNOWLEDGE IN THIS ARTICLE WAS PARTIALLY OBTAINED FROM
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE'S OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WEBSITE

HA HA
HA!

Make Your Day Winterful with
these Un-brr-lieveable Jokes

HA HA
HA!

What is the best
breakfast cereal
to eat in the winter?

Frosted flakes.



How do mountains
stay warm in winter?

They put on
their snowcaps.



What do snowmen call
their kids?

HA HA
HA!



CHILL-DREN

© CONFESSIONS OF PARENTING

Why did the snowman
go to the doctor?

He was getting chills.



Message from Office Associate Velvet Loyal

*Supercharge Your Charitable Impact
THIS WINTER SEASON*

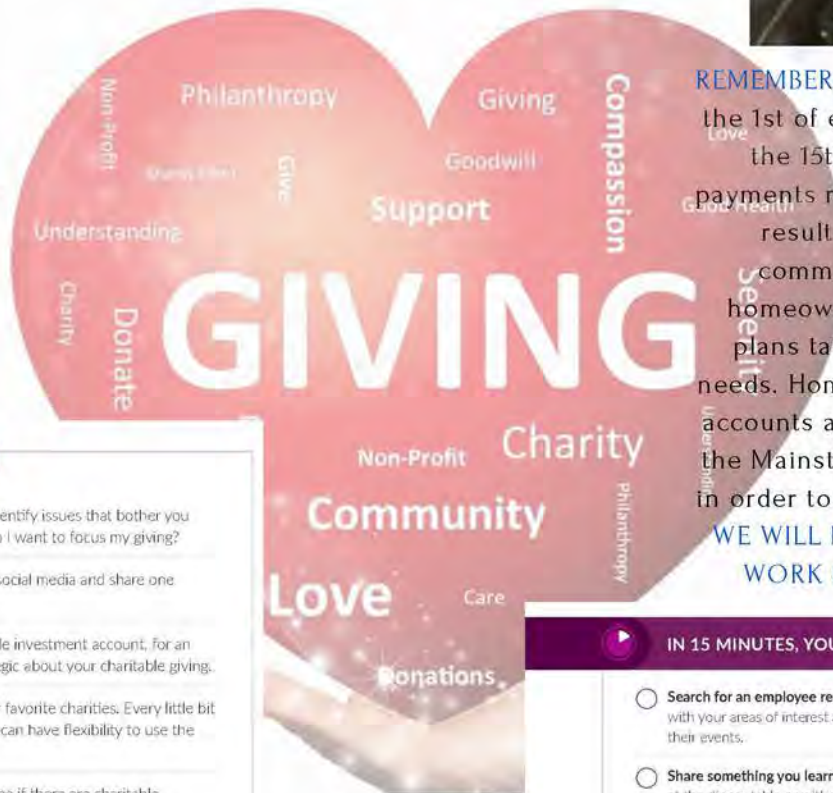


When you give back, you want to do the most good you can with what you have—especially when inflation and the markets could impact your financial plans. Try one (or more!) of these ideas to supercharge your impact with your time, talent, or money during this season of giving.

DECEMBER

Plan for charitable giving

Consider what impact you want to make this year—and budget for it now. The tips below can help you make a difference in 15 minutes or less.



REMEMBER: Association fees are due the 1st of each month and late after the 15th of each month. Any payments received after the 15th will result in a late fee. We are committed to working with homeowners and offer payment plans tailored to your financial needs. Homeowners with delinquent accounts are encouraged to contact the Mainstreet administrative office in order to discuss payment options. **WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO WORK OUT SUITABLE TERMS.**

IN 5 MINUTES, YOU CAN...

- Start reflecting** on what inspires you and identify issues that bother you the most to answer the question: Where do I want to focus my giving?
- Follow an organization** you care about on social media and share one of their posts.
- Open a donor-advised fund**, like a charitable investment account, for an easy and inexpensive way to be more strategic about your charitable giving.
- Make a donation of any size** to one of your favorite charities. Every little bit helps. Consider an unrestricted gift so they can have flexibility to use the funds where they're needed most.
- Send an email** to your financial advisor to see if there are charitable strategies you should consider such as "bunching" or donating stock.
- Sign up to volunteer** in your community or email an organization to ask about their volunteering opportunities, such as serving on their board.

IN 15 MINUTES, YOU CAN...

- Search for an employee resource group** at your company that aligns with your areas of interest and sign up to receive email updates about their events.
- Share something you learned** about a cause or organization at the dinner table or with your family.
- Have a phone call** with a nonprofit representative to learn more about its programs or volunteer opportunities.
- Write and revise** a draft charitable mission statement to focus your giving.
- Invite your family or friends** to commit to a shared giving tradition, such as a volunteer day or pooling funds for a shared donation.
- Name a charity as a full or partial beneficiary** on your financial accounts, or explore how to incorporate your donor-advised fund. This is an easy way to create a lasting legacy.

IN 10 MINUTES, YOU CAN...

- Check your company's benefits package** to see if they offer any donation matches or incentives for volunteering.
- Set a target budget for your charitable giving**, and make sure you stick to it by scheduling automatic, recurring donations (i.e., automatic transfer to a separate bank account, donor-advised fund, or your favorite charity).
- Host a social media fundraiser** for an organization you care about.
- Research one charity** on Candid, Charity Navigator, or another online research tool.
- Search an organization's website** or social media pages for a wishlist of their most critical donation items.
- Participate** in a Day of Service or charity drive at work by bringing canned food, toys, books, or other goods for collection.



If you plan on donating money, you could potentially reduce your tax bill for this calendar year if you contribute to an eligible organization before December 31, 2024. Also, check if your workplace matches donations, which could make your gift go even further.

*KNOWLEDGE IN THIS ARTICLE WAS PARTIALLY OBTAINED FROM FIDELITY'S SMART MONEY.



What is Kwanzaa & Hanukkah?



This particular holiday isn't actually a religious one, but a rather a cultural celebration that begins on December 26th and runs until January 1st. As of 2016, Kwanzaa is **only 50 years old**. Surprised? It's also explicitly an African American holiday, not an African one. Created by Dr. Maulana Karenga, it celebrates community, family, culture and reconnecting with African roots. While it draws inspiration from African harvest celebrations, it is fundamentally an American holiday. A secular celebration unrelated to religion, it really isn't a substitute for Christmas either. Roughly 18 million African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa, and many of them do it immediately following their Christmas festivities.

You've probably picked up on it, but the number "seven" comes up a lot when discussing Kwanzaa. There are seven days, seven candles and seven principles. Each one of these days, represented by a candle, takes its holiday name from the specific guiding principle of that day. Umoja means unity. Kujichagulia means self-determination. Ujima means working together. Ujamaa means supporting each other. Nia means purpose. Kuumba means creativity. Imani means faith - specifically, faith in oneself. Additionally, there are the seven symbols used in Kwanzaa celebrations: the seven candles, the candleholder, a mat, corn, a unity cup, and gifts. As far Kwanzaa is concerned... good things come in sevens, not threes.

This Jewish Holiday celebrates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Maccabees in 165 BC and the miracle that took place therein. It's also the most publicly celebrated Jewish holiday in popular culture. From a religious standpoint, Hanukkah is a relatively minor occasion on the Hebrew calendar. Nonetheless, Hanukkah has arguably become the most recognizable Jewish holiday. Its religious significance has remained the same, but since the 19th century, its cultural significance, especially amongst American Jewish families, has grown exponentially. It's now often treated as the Jewish equivalent of Christmas. While that's a gross oversimplification, its position in the western "holiday season" has certainly influenced its cultural evolution. Traditionally, Jewish children received small sums of money (or "gelt") over Hanukkah to encourage their Torah studies. Nowadays, children usually receive a variety of presents more in line with modern Christmas gift-giving practices.

Before the Maccabees took back the temple, the Jewish people were persecuted in the region. King Antiochus IV Epiphanes had passed various laws prohibiting a great number of Jewish practices. Unable to observe their faith in public, the Jewish people began to study the Torah in secret. They would congregate wherever possible in small groups, to discuss and learn. If and when soldiers came to investigate, they would pull out the dreidels they kept close at hand and pretend to have been playing games. The dreidel was the perfect tool to help them in their covert fight for their right to practice their faith. To this day, the dreidel is inseparably intertwined with the history of Hanukkah, inscribed with characters that mean: "a great miracle happened there".

Sweeten Up Your Holiday!

Try This Recipe!



Finally catch that Elf on the Shelf in the midst of his crazy antics with this no-bake mischief munch. Trust me—he won't be able to resist this sweet mischief munch with marshmallows, candy, chocolate, and three types of crunchy cereal. Once he has a bite though, your place on the good list will be guaranteed. This Christmas snack is the perfect no-bake treat to whip up when you need a quick snack that takes very little time to whip up, but will still be a festive eye-catcher.



Make this snack mix exactly as you please. Use only a couple of cereals if you don't want to buy another box, and experiment with whatever Christmas-themed candy you desire. Ask your Elf on the Shelf what his favorite candy is, then throw that in.

Step 1

In a large bowl, combine all cereals, mini marshmallows, and M&Ms.

Step 2

Melt white chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl in 30-second intervals, stirring in between. Pour over cereal mixture, stirring to coat everything.

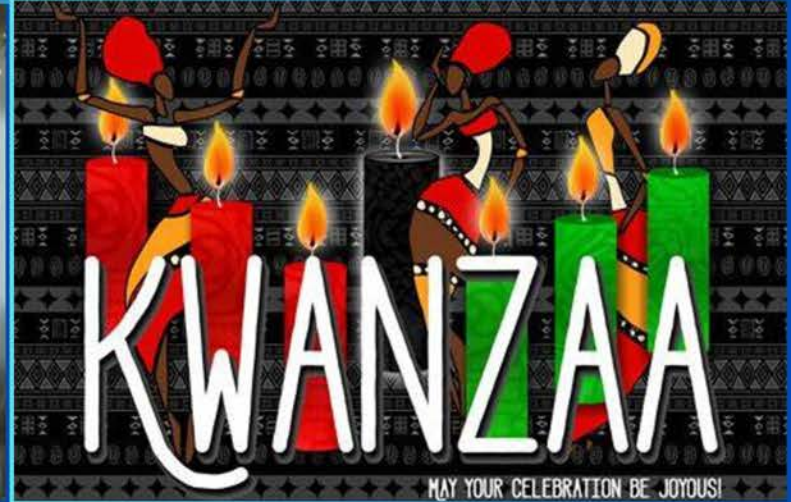
Step 3

Transfer mixture to a parchment-lined baking sheet, top with holiday sprinkles and mini chocolate chips, and refrigerate until firm, about 25 minutes.

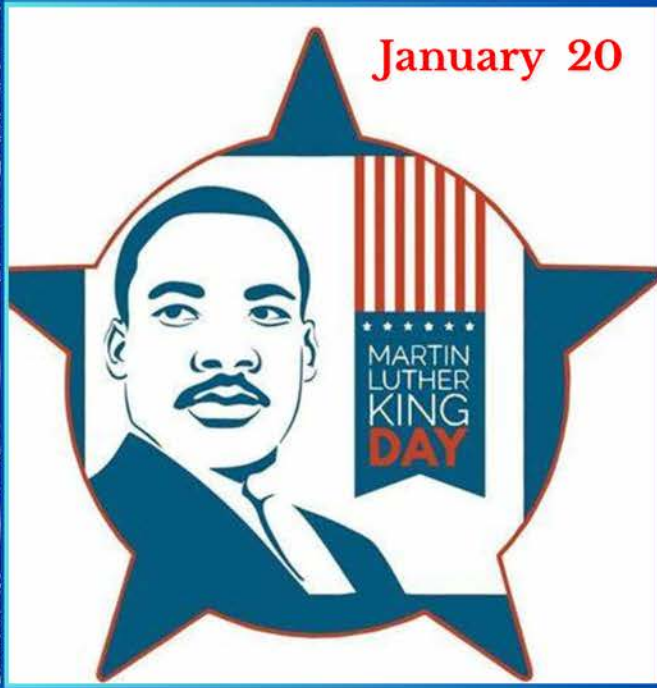
INGREDIENTS
2 C. FRENCH TOAST CRUNCH CEREAL
1 C. COOKIE CRISP CEREAL
2 2/3 C. LIFE CEREAL
1 C. MINI MARSHMALLOWS
1/2 C. RED AND GREEN M&MS
12 OZ. WHITE CHOCOLATE
2 TBSP. HOLIDAY SPRINKLES
1/4 C. MINI CHOCOLATE CHIPS



Community Calendar of Events for December



• DECEMBER IS •
UNIVERSAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
MONTH



— FINANCIAL —
WELLNESS MONTH
— JANUARY —

Community Calendar of Events for February



FEBRUARY

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**



Mainstreet...A Caring Community

Phone: 770-469-7238
Fax: 770-498-5138

The Mainstream
The Voice of Mainstreet
Community Services
Association, Inc.

To place an ad, call 770-469-7238 or email
nadine@mainstreetcommunity.org

THE MAINSTREAM NEWSLETTER Winter 2024 Edition.
Homeowners are encouraged to submit articles of interest to the editor of The Mainstream.
Nadine Rivers-Johnson at nadine@mainstreetcommunity.org.

(Editorial licensing strictly enforced.)

The Mainstream is the quarterly newsletter for Mainstreet Community Services Association. Comments are always welcome.



*PHOTOGRAPH BY
NADINE RIVERS-JOHNSON*

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