



# The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

December 2024

## 'Tis the Season: Making Spirits Bright in Long-Term Care

As the calendar flips to December, forget the shorter days and cold temperatures that are on the way. Let's not harp on flu season, either, because December is meant to be festive — the most wonderful time of the year, as the song goes.

People of almost every culture and faith tradition celebrate holidays or special occasions in December when they gather with family and friends.

Nursing home residents can get in the spirit, too, and you have every right to celebrate as you choose. During the day, residents are free to leave the nursing home for holiday gatherings, and you may coordinate with your facility to venture out for overnight stays with family or friends.

If you are staying in, nursing homes must accommodate visits from loved ones, even amid outbreaks of the flu, COVID, or other infectious diseases.

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care recommends that you prepare for the holiday season by ensuring that you and any visitors are fully vaccinated. Any unvaccinated individuals should wear a mask to help protect themselves and others.

If you are ever denied visitation, call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) at 1-877-582-6992.

For the latest on outbreaks, vaccination, and other long-term care concerns, visit the New Jersey Department of Health website at <https://www.nj.gov/health/ltc/>.

### Notable Days:

Dec. 21: The winter solstice

Dec. 25: Christmas

Dec. 25-Jan. 2: Hanukkah

Dec. 26-Jan. 1:  
Kwanzaa





## Sharing Stories

### NEW LTCO WEBPAGE SPOTLIGHTS RESIDENTS



Every resident has a unique story, and the Community Engagement Program will tell some of those tales via a new page on the LTCO website. New resident profiles will be posted each month at <https://www.nj.gov/ooie/residentprofiles.shtml>.

The web page launched this fall with an article about Stacy Moore, a resident of Preakness Healthcare Center who has been a leader in the resident-led effort to increase the personal needs allowance (PNA) from \$50 to \$140 a month.

To get involved in the PNA effort, please contact Community Engagement at [community@ltco.nj.gov](mailto:community@ltco.nj.gov) or 609-690-4740.



**FEEDBACK:** If you have comments, questions, or ideas for future stories, please email them to [outreach@ltco.nj.gov](mailto:outreach@ltco.nj.gov).



## Put Your Holiday Knowledge to the Test

1. Christmas was first officially celebrated in Rome in 336 A.D. Today, the holiday is celebrated in how many countries?  
A. 10 or so    B. 60    C. 100    D. More than 160
2. Americans consume how many candy canes each year?  
A. 500,000    B. 1 million    C. 1 billion    D. Nearly 2 billion
3. The classic carol "Jingle Bells" was not written as a Christmas song. First titled "One Horse Open Sleigh," the song was initially published in...?  
A. 1857    B. 1865    C. 1895    D. 1917
4. Who was the first U.S. President to officially recognize Hanukkah with a menorah lighting?  
A. Nixon    B. Carter    C. Reagan    D. Clinton
5. Kwanzaa, a weeklong holiday modeled on traditional African harvest festivals, was first introduced in...?  
A. 1906    B. 1936    C. 1966    D. 1996

**BONUS QUESTION: True or False — On Dec. 21, the winter solstice, most of New Jersey will experience only nine hours and 15 minutes of daylight.**

Answers: 1) D; 2) D; 3) A; 4) B; 5) C; BONUS) True

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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[www.NJ.GOV/LTCO](http://www.NJ.GOV/LTCO)

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