

# December 2024



# ***PIECING IT TOGETHER***

The Official Newsletter of WVPTI, Inc.

## **In this issue:**

- ❖ Tips for the Holidays
- ❖ Guiding the Journey
- ❖ Greetings from the Director
- ❖ Holiday books and activities suggestions with Liz Garton
- ❖ New OCR Resources

## **Value**

WV PTI, Inc. affirms the rights of all individuals, with or without disabilities - to have an appropriate education and other needed services. In doing so, we value the intersectionality of diversity and equity of all.

## ***Tips for the Holidays with Children and Youth with Disabilities***



- ❖ **Maintain routines** as much as possible during the holiday season. Some children have special sensory activities to prevent meltdowns.
- ❖ **Safe Space:** whenever you visit a person's house or have company at your house, establish a 'safe zone' for your child so that the child can retreat and be alone if desired. It may be a room in the house or even a small space.

Source: Pediatric Therapies, 2021

## GUIDING THE JOURNEY

*A Transition Training Program  
For Parents*



In partnership with the West Virginia Department of Education, Guideposts to Graduation, Guiding the Journey, A Transition Training Program for Parents, and WV Parent Training and Information will begin its second year in August 2024. This year, we will invite parents and caregivers of children and youth with disabilities between the ages of nine and twenty-one to attend.

The transition from school to adulthood for youth with unique needs can be challenging. It can be stressful to know where to begin or what the priorities should be. The training sessions, which include using Life course Tools, will provide you with the support you need to navigate this process. We invite you to be part of this Transition Training Program for Parents.

You may register at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FXZWGJ6> or reach out to us at 304-472-5697.



**Brenda Lamkin, M.Ed.**  
WV PTI, Executive Director  
Infant Family Specialist, IMH-E®

## ***Mission Statement***

Our mission is to enhance education, inclusion, and transition opportunities for children and youth (birth – 26) with disabilities by empowering parents and caregivers to be effective self-advocates for their children and youth through training, information, resources, and building leadership skills.



## ***Season Greetings from the Director***

Happy Holidays!

May your days be filled with joy, love, and peace this holiday season. We hope you find moments of respite, laughter, and connection with your loved ones.

Remember, you are not alone. We see your strength, resilience, and unwavering dedication. Your love and support make a world of difference.

To stay updated with the latest news and training in the new year, please follow the WV PTI website and social media accounts (links on our website): [wvpti-inc.org](http://wvpti-inc.org).

Also, contact us at our main number, 304-472-5697, if you need services or information.





# MERRY *Christmas*

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“It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” according to the song sung by Andy Williams. However, for a lot of our children, this time of year can be stressful and overwhelming. The loud noises, lights, and chaos of the season can be issues for children and adults as well. Our children pick up on our stressful situations, and the merry moments may not be so merry. Taking the time to make sure to do some meaningful, fun activities with our children can help alleviate some of the stress of the season and also make some core memories for our children.

One of the greatest activities we can do with our children is reading to them. Studies have shown that reading aloud to and with our children is incredibly valuable in fostering and enhancing language skills and imagination, creativity, and most importantly, building a strong bond between the parent and the child. So many wonderful books are available at your local library, bookstores, and for purchase online. If you have not gotten a library card from your local library, I would suggest that you get one. It is free, allows you to read books online, and there are free downloads, and parent information that are readily available.

Some wonderful holiday books to read aloud to your children that also afford the opportunity to incorporate some fun learning activities are listed below.

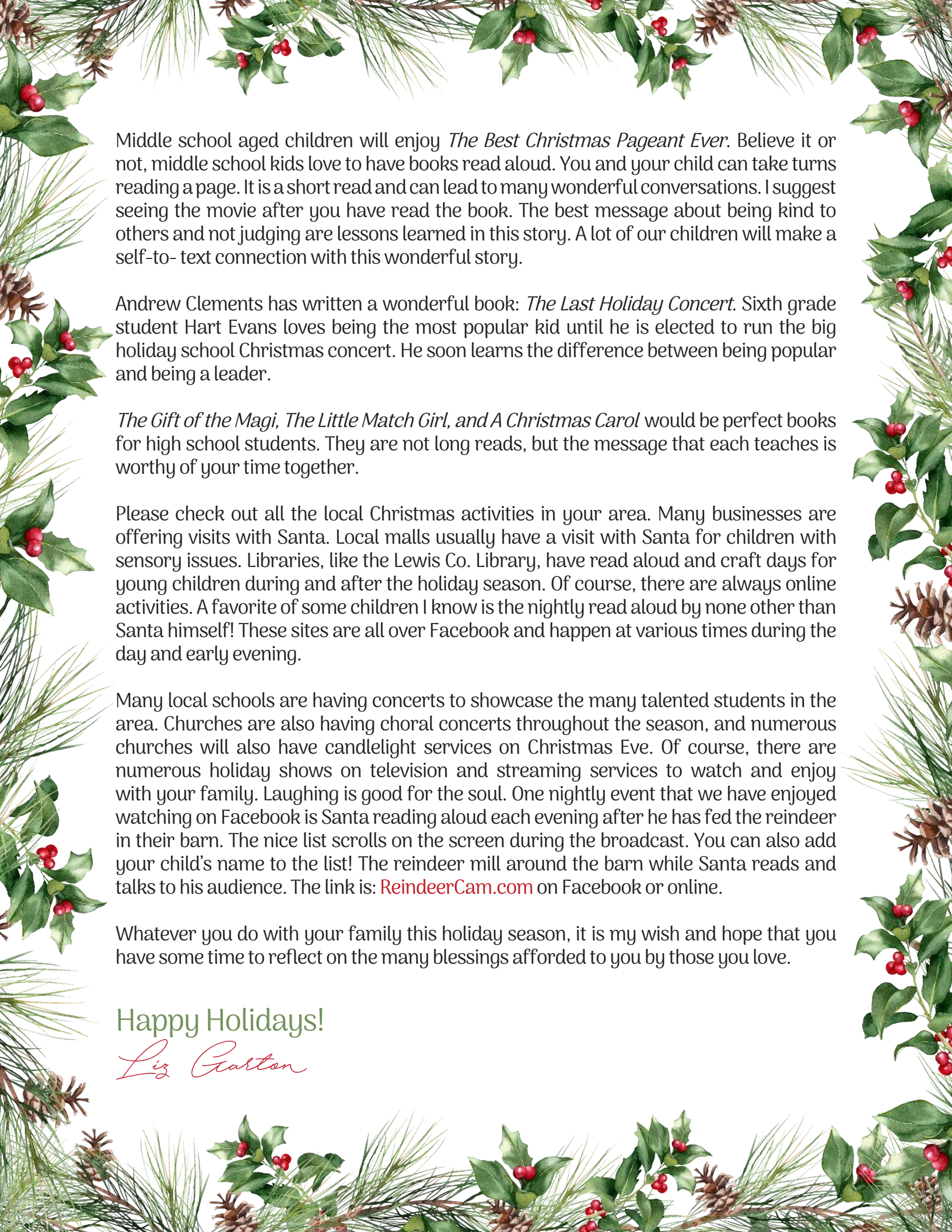
*Tough Cookie* by Edward Hemingway is an adorable book with a message about being yourself. There are recipes at the end of the book for you and your child to make. Baking together also affords the opportunities to teach your child about measuring and fractions, telling time, chemistry (changing solids to liquids and back to solids), problem solving skills, and how cooking together can be a fun activity.

An all-time favorite of course is *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg. Children and adults will enjoy this magical ride to the North Pole. Read this story with your child. You can also make some bell necklaces, as well as some cookies and hot chocolate and snuggle in to watch the movie after reading the book. Your child may be able to tell you things that were in the book that were not in the movie, and vice versa.

*Great Joy* by Kate DiCamillo is beautifully illustrated and written. You and your children will enjoy the heartwarming message of the true spirit of Christmas.

The numerous Gingerbread books and “*There was an Old Lady...*” books are always winners with children. Making gingerbread ornaments and cookies (recipes online) are always fun bonding activities.





Middle school aged children will enjoy *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Believe it or not, middle school kids love to have books read aloud. You and your child can take turns reading a page. It is a short read and can lead to many wonderful conversations. I suggest seeing the movie after you have read the book. The best message about being kind to others and not judging are lessons learned in this story. A lot of our children will make a self-to-text connection with this wonderful story.

Andrew Clements has written a wonderful book: *The Last Holiday Concert*. Sixth grade student Hart Evans loves being the most popular kid until he is elected to run the big holiday school Christmas concert. He soon learns the difference between being popular and being a leader.

*The Gift of the Magi, The Little Match Girl, and A Christmas Carol* would be perfect books for high school students. They are not long reads, but the message that each teaches is worthy of your time together.

Please check out all the local Christmas activities in your area. Many businesses are offering visits with Santa. Local malls usually have a visit with Santa for children with sensory issues. Libraries, like the Lewis Co. Library, have read aloud and craft days for young children during and after the holiday season. Of course, there are always online activities. A favorite of some children I know is the nightly read aloud by none other than Santa himself! These sites are all over Facebook and happen at various times during the day and early evening.

Many local schools are having concerts to showcase the many talented students in the area. Churches are also having choral concerts throughout the season, and numerous churches will also have candlelight services on Christmas Eve. Of course, there are numerous holiday shows on television and streaming services to watch and enjoy with your family. Laughing is good for the soul. One nightly event that we have enjoyed watching on Facebook is Santa reading aloud each evening after he has fed the reindeer in their barn. The nice list scrolls on the screen during the broadcast. You can also add your child's name to the list! The reindeer mill around the barn while Santa reads and talks to his audience. The link is: [ReindeerCam.com](https://www.facebook.com/ReindeerCam) on Facebook or online.

Whatever you do with your family this holiday season, it is my wish and hope that you have some time to reflect on the many blessings afforded to you by those you love.

Happy Holidays!

*Liz Garton*

# ***New OCR Resources***

The U.S. Department of Education is at the forefront of providing new resources to support students with disabilities.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities by institutions that accept federal financial assistance, which includes public schools and almost all public and private institutions of higher education. These new resources, which apply to all levels of education, explain the application of Section 504 to students with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), migraine, or narcolepsy and to students who stutter. The resources detail when these medical conditions trigger protections under Section 504, what kind of modifications an educational institution may need to take to avoid unlawful discrimination, and what an institution may need to do to remedy discrimination.

- [Fact Sheet](#): Section 504 Protections for Students with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- [Fact Sheet](#): Section 504 Protections for Students with Migraine



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