

W I N T E R

N E E D S

N E W S L E T T E R



# Update From The President

Hi all. 2020 is nearly over – and in a lot of ways it cannot end too soon. This year has presented us at The NEEDS Center (and everyone else for that matter) with a number of challenges. We have had a number of positives come out of this year and that is what we will focus on as we move forward into 2021. Just a few of these positive examples include:

- The outstanding and selfless work that our staff members have done over the past year. We knew we had a great group of staff members and this year really demonstrated that. Our Program Specialists, Assistant Program Coordinators and Program Coordinators in particular have routinely gone above and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis. We couldn't be happier with the fine group of professionals we have here at The NEEDS Center.
- The Parents and Guardians of the people we support have been a major source of support to all of us at The NEEDS Center throughout these challenging times. This support and appreciation shown to the homes and day programs and to our staff members has been one of the most positive things that has come out of this year. Even when we have had to roll out some changes to how we provide our services and supports – restricting visits etc., people have been very understanding despite the disappointment.
- Our Administrative team has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to be sure that everyone at the NEEDS Center has what they need to do their jobs effectively and safely, and to keep the people we support healthy, happy and safe.

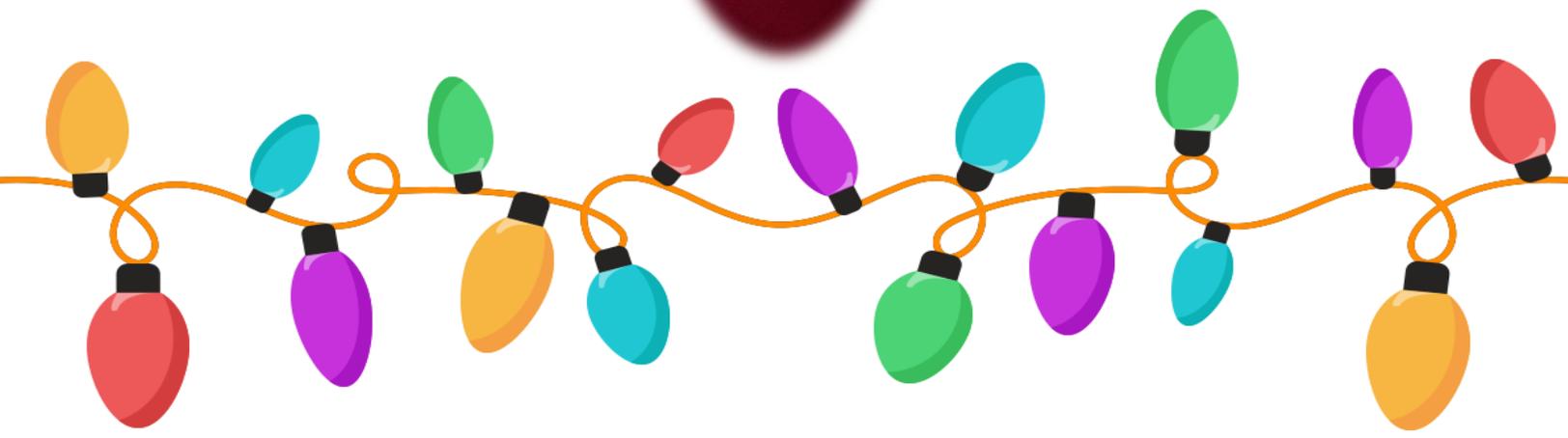
So while it has been a challenging year, in the ways that everyone at The NEEDS Center has met the challenges has been very inspirational to me. As we move into 2021 we are hoping for a return to a more normal way of life for all of us, but in the meantime to everyone who has chipped in throughout the year – Thank You !

Jim Sperry, President and CEO

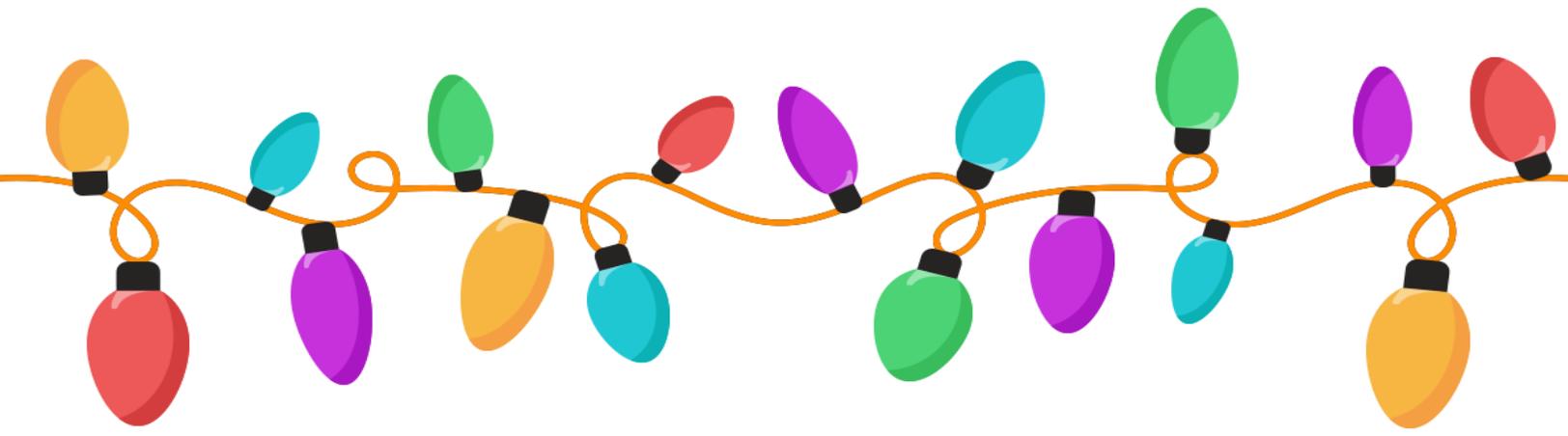
The NEEDS Center

[jsperry@needsctr.org](mailto:jsperry@needsctr.org)

978-216-0315

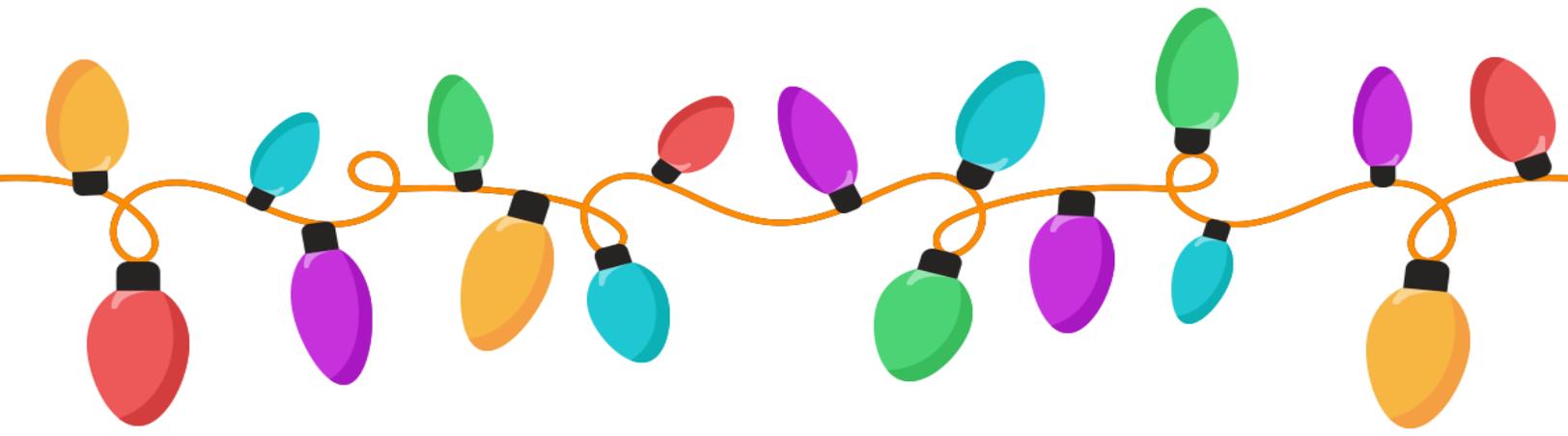


# Happy Halloween!



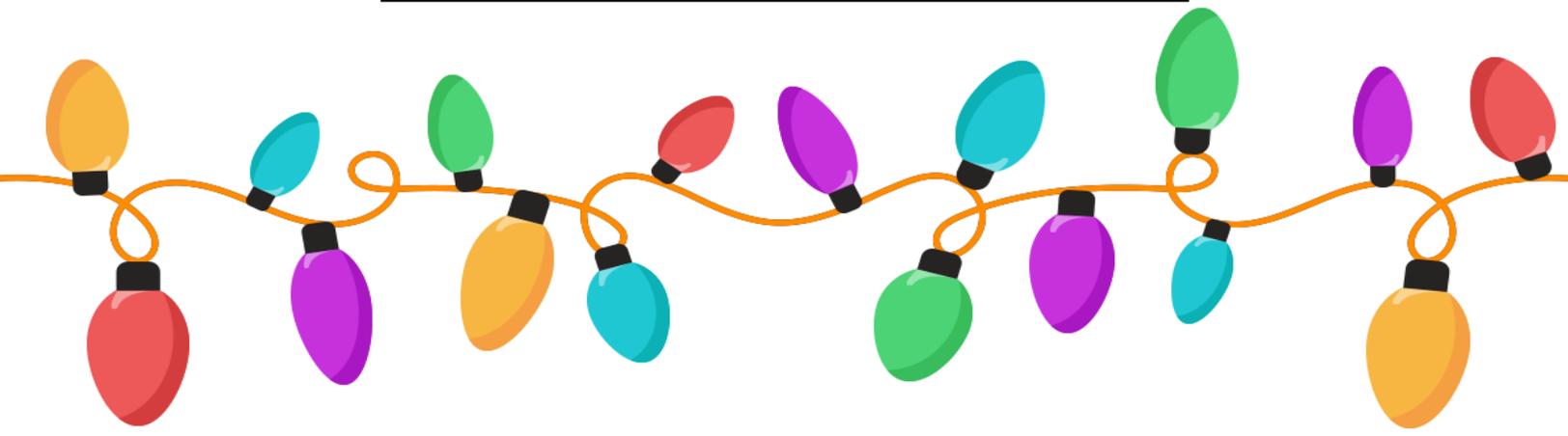
# Crafting For Virtual Auction

The NEEDS Center recently held our first virtual silent auction. Our first silent auction was a success! It featured several highly sought after items including autographed sports and entertainment memorabilia, beautiful paintings, patriots tickets, and homemade Christmas decorations made by the ladies from Oakridge!



# Virtual 5K

Thank you to everyone who joined or donated to Team NEEDS Center in the Flutie Virtual 5K! The Virtual 5K was a great success for everyone involved! We had set a goal of raising \$10,000 and in the end we finished with a total of \$14,039.79! With the generous contributions we saw we can continue our mission of supporting developmentally delayed individuals here at the NEEDS Center!





North East Educational and  
Developmental Support Center

## DDS Direct Support Certificate Program

|Now Accepting Students|

To obtain an application:  
please contact the community college closest to you  
or

Come to our main office in Tewksbury

Course fees and book costs are **FULLY REIMBURSED** by the NEEDS Center

Resulting in **NO COST** for NEEDS Center Staff!

Upon successful completion of program  
employees (who are benefit eligible) will **RECEIVE A \$1,000 BONUS**

# APPLY TODAY!

The Certificate consists of 21-22 college level credits.

It is an educational program especially designed to enhance the  
knowledge and skills of direct support workers

The Certificate is designed to strengthen writing,  
problem-solving, and critical thinking skills by including  
readings, assignments and discussion of the daily experiences,  
challenges, and concerns of direct support workers.

Middlesex Community College:  
Julia Mirras

Middlesex Community College—Lowell  
33 Keane Square  
Lowell, MA 01852  
Tel: (978) 656-3189

Email: [mirrasj@middlesex.mass.edu](mailto:mirrasj@middlesex.mass.edu)

Northern Essex Community College:  
Donna Johnson

Northern Essex Community College  
Elliot Way  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
Tel: (978) 556-3303  
Fax: (978) 556-7713

Email: [DJohnson1@necc.mass.edu](mailto:DJohnson1@necc.mass.edu)

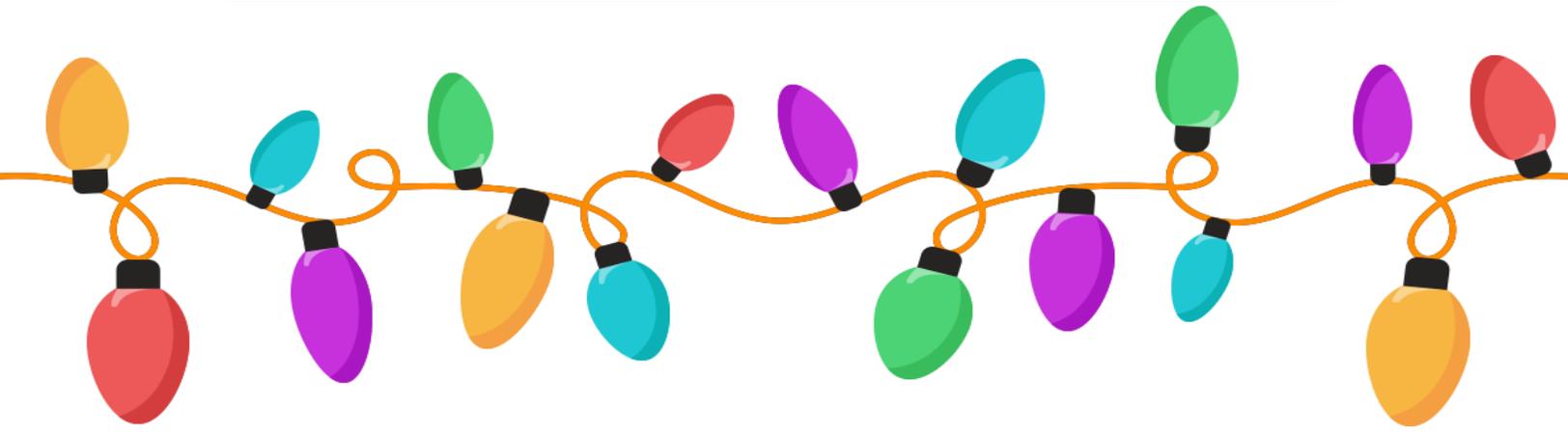
North Shore Community College:  
Erinn Gilmore

North Shore Community College  
One Ferncroft Road  
Danvers, MA 01923  
Tel: (978) 762-4000, ext 6671  
Fax: (781) 477-2146

Email: [egilmore@northshore.edu](mailto:egilmore@northshore.edu)

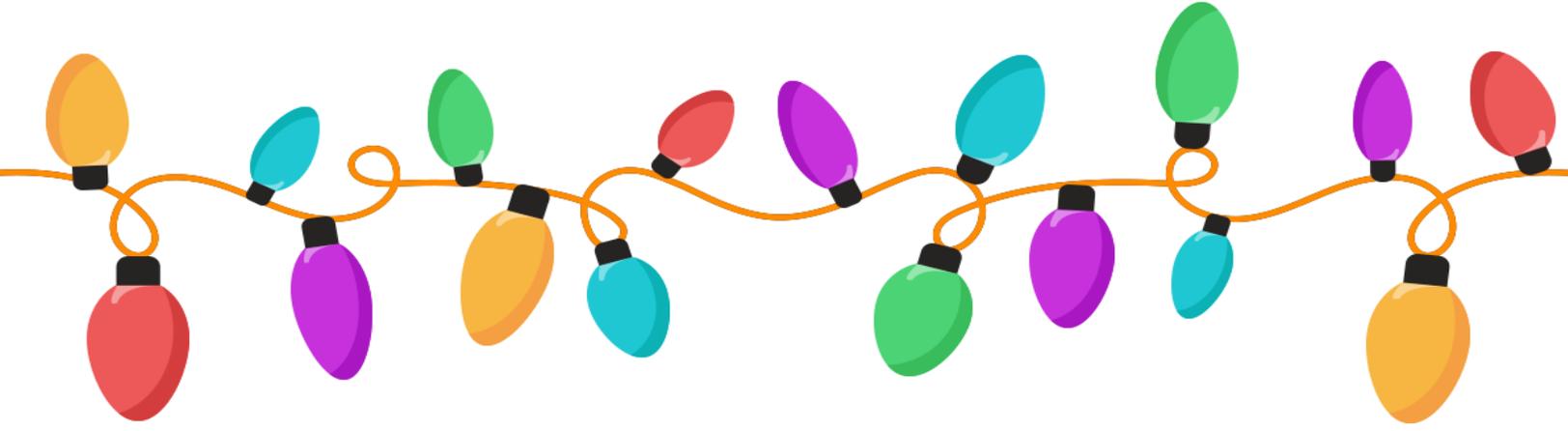
# Thank You To Our Staff

As 2020 draws to a close, we look back on the challenging year we have faced here at The NEEDS Center and we want to acknowledge and recognize our incredibly dedicated staff members for their continued hard work. Thank you to all of our Program Specialists and Assistant Program Coordinators! You are all truly unsung heroes for the work you do everyday!



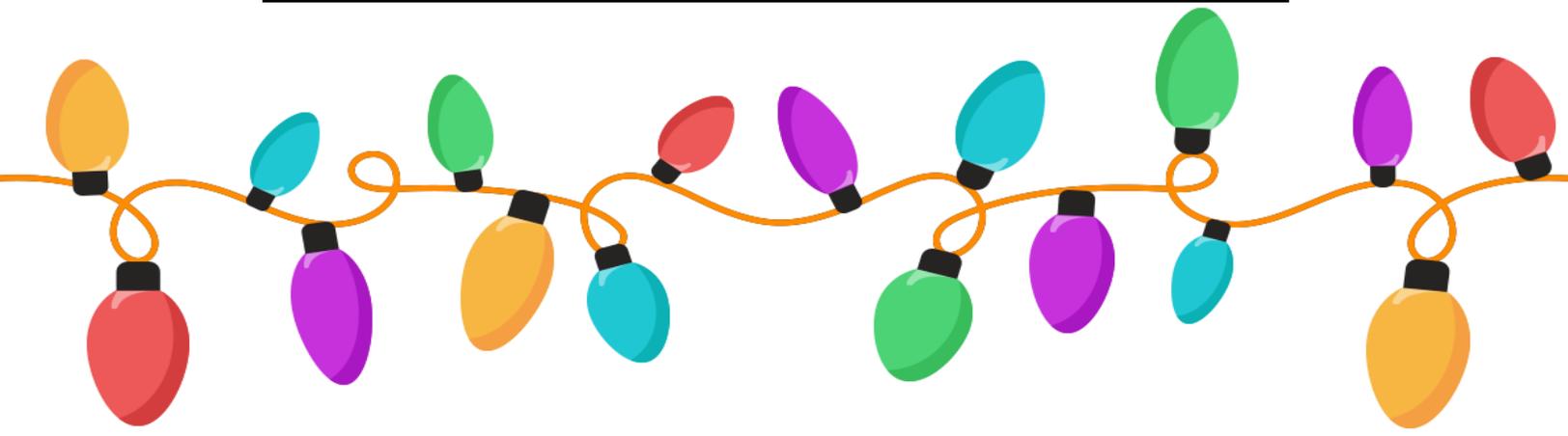
# Thank you Program Coordinators!

We would also like to recognize our Program Coordinators for their hard work, dedication, and leadership. This year has been a true challenge but through it all you continued to provide the best support possible for the program, your staff, and the individuals. Thank you to all of our Program Coordinators for being unsung heroes!



# Happy Thanksgiving!

With Covid-19 cases rising in Massachusetts, the people we support celebrated turkey day by enjoying a delicious Thanksgiving meal while maintaining safety precautions set forth by the CDC. It certainly isn't the norm but that did not stop the people we support from enjoying their holiday!



# Diversity & Inclusion Committee

The committee would like to recognize Kwanzaa as an annual celebration of African American culture which is held from December 26 to January 1, culminating in gift-giving and a feast of faith, called Karamu Ya Imani. It was created by Maulana Karenga and first celebrated in 1966.

At the last D&I meeting, the committee had discussed a variety of topics including, International affairs (SARS movement in Nigeria), coping with COVID, Domestic violence awareness month, sexual harassment, police brutality and injustice in the country. We covered all these topics in detail. Every month the committee will bring awareness to issues that are going on internationally, as well as recognizing nationally celebrated holidays for different countries around the world.

For our next meeting, the committee's agenda will include **Haiti's Independence Day, Martin Luther King day, COVID-19 /International affairs (traveling to Australia), Home Schooling, COVID-19 vaccine, President-Elect Joe Biden's diverse cabinet picks.** The committee encourages others to send contents to discuss during our meetings, you can do so by emailing us with the topics you would like us to discuss. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will meet next on Tuesday, January 5th at 8pm through Zoom. If you are interested in attending please reach out to Sophie or Patcheco!

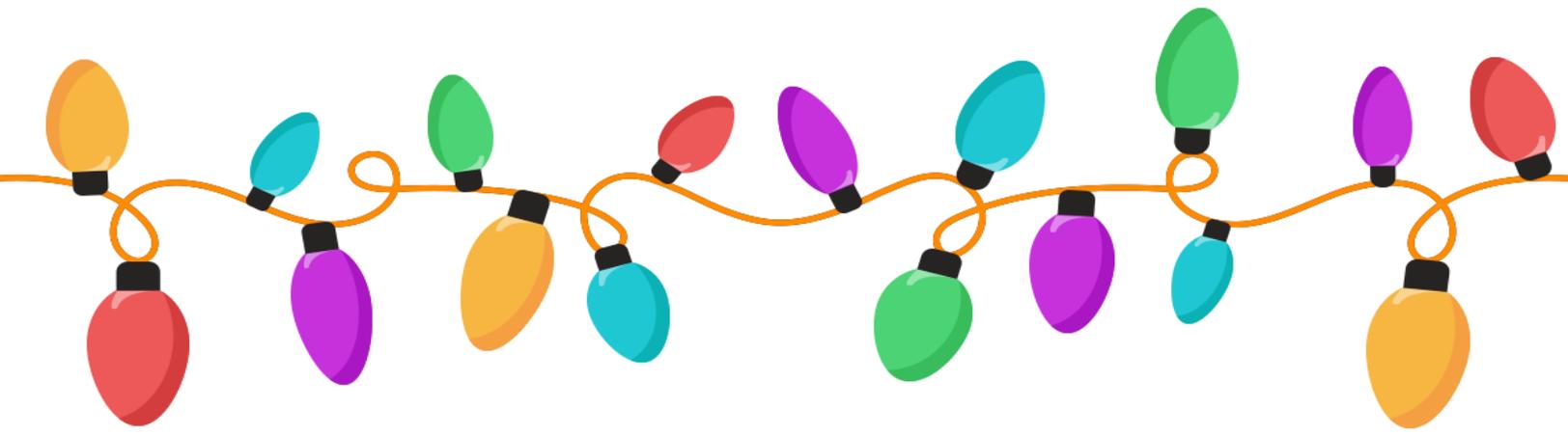
- Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs

**Patcheco Vincent**

[pvincent@needsctr.org](mailto:pvincent@needsctr.org)

**Sopheaklizabeth So**

[sso@needsctr.org](mailto:sso@needsctr.org)



# + Healthcare Corner +

## FIVE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINE

### **FACT 1: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19**

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it is possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.

### **FACT 2: COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests**

Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States will not cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.

If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.

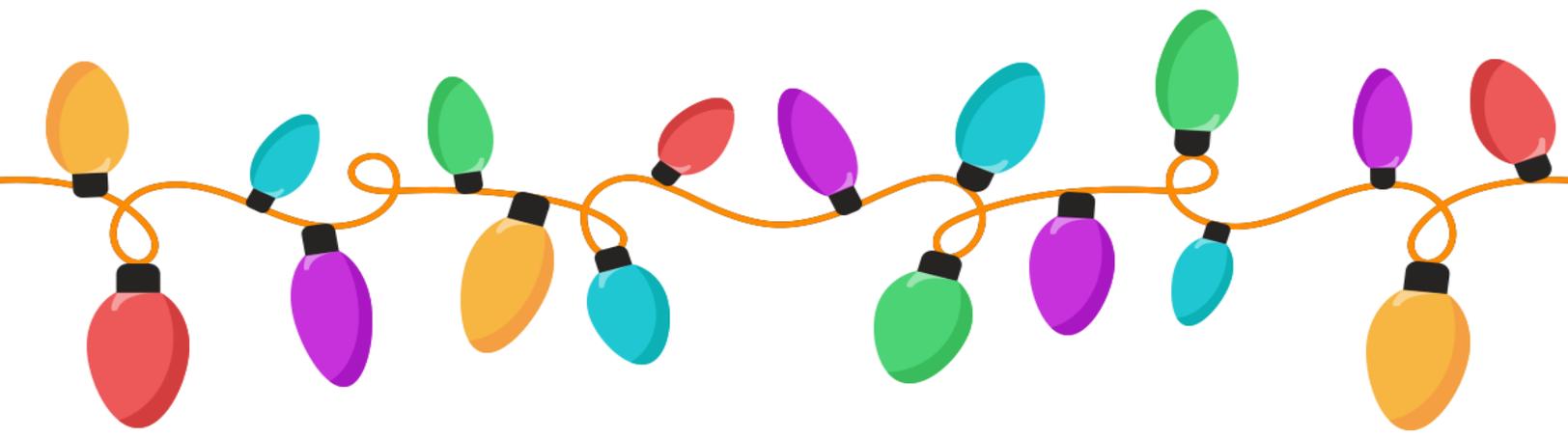
### **FACT 3: People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 should still receive the vaccine**

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people maybe advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.

At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. We will not know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have a vaccine and more data on how well it works.

Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about.

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# + Healthcare Corner +

## FIVE FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINE CONTINUED

### **FACT 4: Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19**

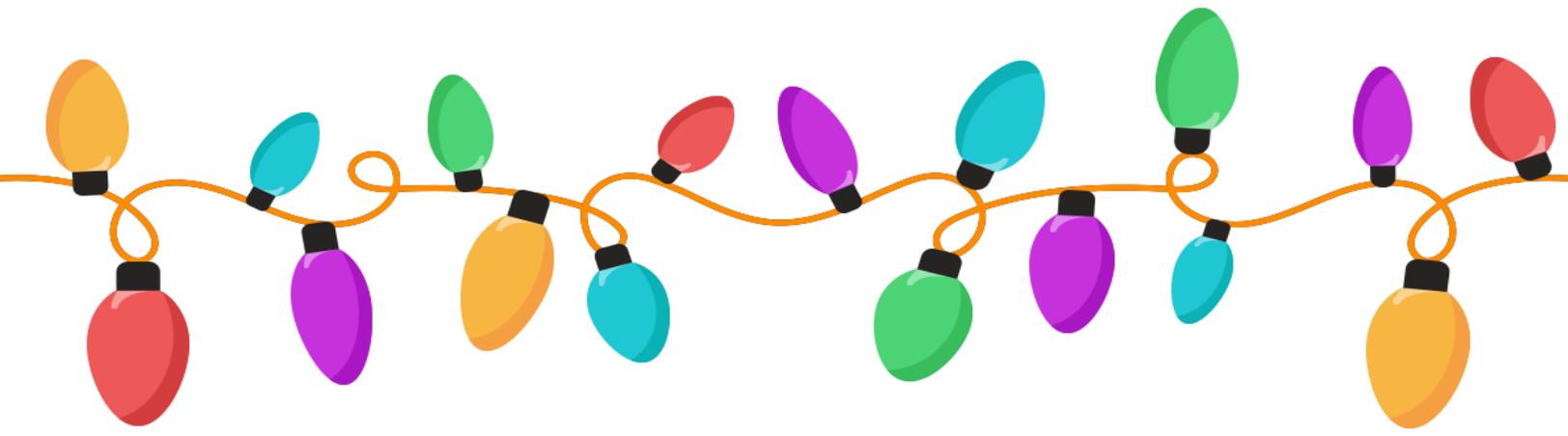
While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness or they may even die. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will effect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness.

### **FACT 5: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA**

mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease.

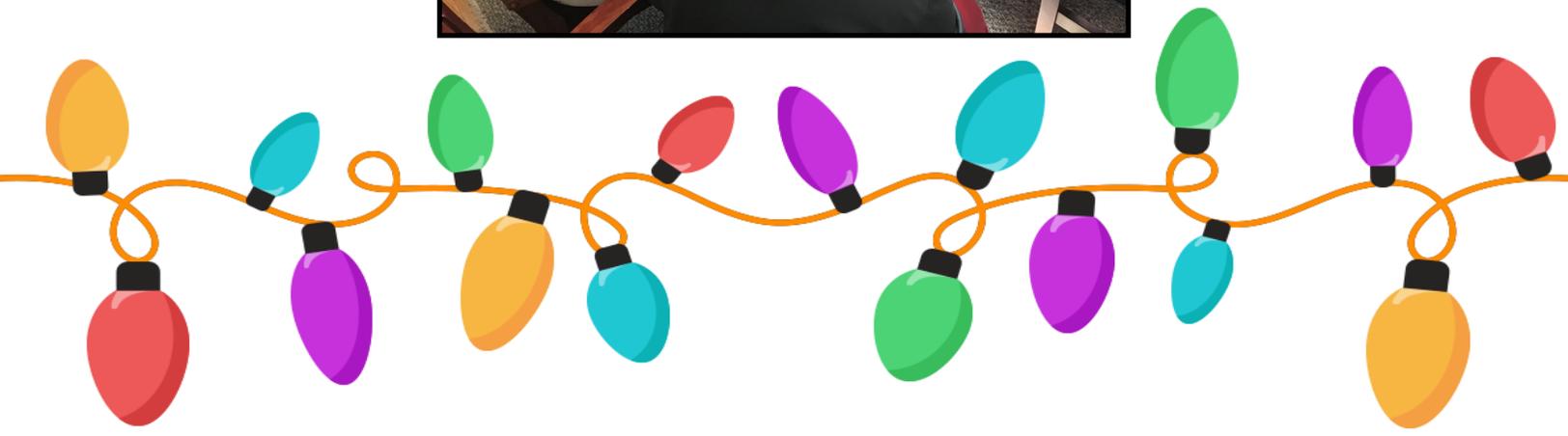
For more information about the COVID-19 virus and vaccine please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html>

Source: CDC.GOV/coronavirus



# Remote Day Program

Back in August, we had resumed day program operations in Tewksbury and Rowley but with a lower census. In October, when Covid-19 cases started to rise again the decision was made to suspend in-person day program operations to keep our staff and the people we support safe. Although we miss seeing everyone in person, we continue to provide day program enrichment remotely for the people we support.





North East Educational and  
Developmental Support Center

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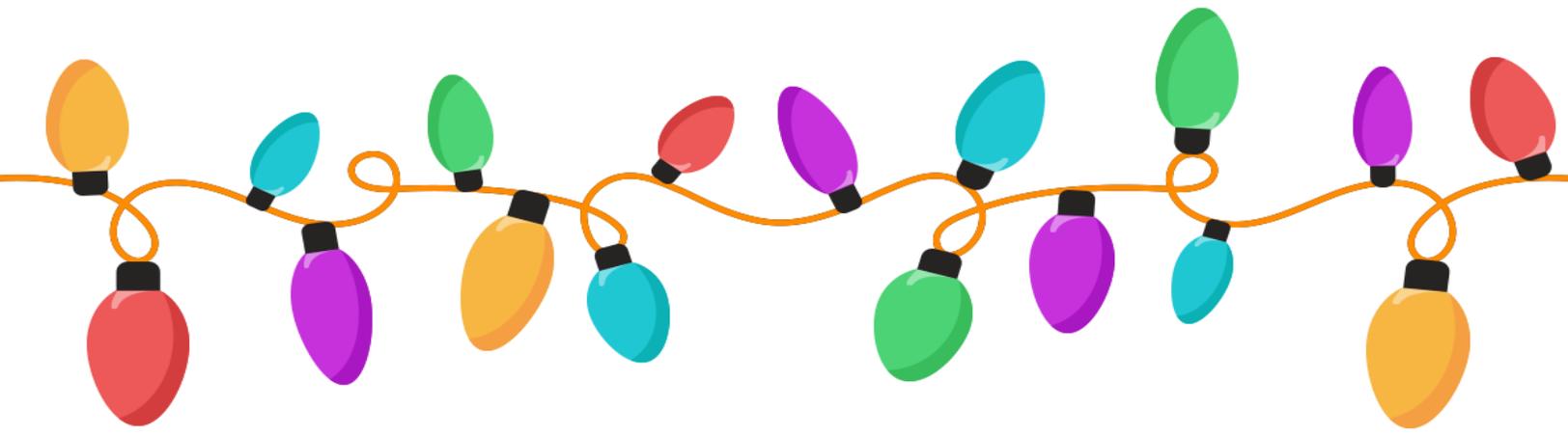
**You can now help The NEEDS Center when you shop eligible items online at Amazon!**

When you shop for eligible items at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

### **How to sign up:**

- 1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)**
- 2. Sign in using your existing Amazon account**
- 3. Search for a charity**  
"North East Educational and Developmental Support Center Inc"
- 4. Select your charity**
- 5. Check off acceptance box**
- 6. IOS or Android, start Amazon app**
- 7. Go to ☰, Select Settings**
- 8. Select AmazonSmile, Turn on AmazonSmile**

# Socially Distanced Fun!



# Stakeholders Meeting

Over the past few months we have moved away from our regularly scheduled Stakeholder meetings, and these have been replaced by regular on-going virtual meetings that have been open to all parents and guardians. These meetings have been an opportunity to share information, and to address any concerns from both the Parent/Guardian Perspective as well as those from The NEEDS Center. These meetings are currently happening every other week, and have been a good forum to share information (in both directions). We will continue to hold these meetings regularly moving forward.

## Summary

We hope you have enjoyed the Winter 2020-2021 edition of the NEEDS Center Newsletter. In closing, thank you to all of the people we support, their staff members, and their family members. We are fortunate to be working with such a great group of people! If you have any suggestions for making improvements to the newsletter, please contact Matthew Seidell via email at [mseidell@needsctr.org](mailto:mseidell@needsctr.org).

