



Wards Creek Elementary 6555 SR 16, St. Augustine, FL 32092 December/January 16-17

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**OUR VISION IS TO:** Be a school Where Children Excel by developing leaders with character and a passion for lifelong learning.

**OUR MISSION IS TO:** Engage Learners to Excel in Life and Embrace Leadership to Enhance our Local and global society.

## OUR CORE VALUES

We believe that:

- The Character Counts Pillars of Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship are essential qualities to model and instill in our students.
- The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People are the foundation for developing leaders.
- All individuals are valuable and can make meaningful contributions.
- A caring and compassionate learning environment will support the needs of the whole child and inspire all to reach their full potential.
- Leaders are life-long learners.

## THE SEVEN HABITS OF HAPPY KIDS

1. Be Proactive – I am in charge!
  2. Begin with the end in mind – Have a plan!
  3. Put first things first – Work first, then play!
  4. Think win/win – There's plenty for all!
  5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood – Listen before you speak!
  6. Synergize – Together is better!
  7. Sharpen the saw – Balance feels best!
- BONUS:
8. Find your voice, and inspire others to find theirs – I'm on a mission!

## Jarrell's Journal

Greetings to our Warrior Families! Thank you for supporting and participating in our school activities. There have been so many special holiday events and we could not provide these without our parents and volunteers. It is great to partner with you to make long-lasting memories for our children.

The Holiday Break signals the middle of the school year. This is the end of the first semester of school and as we shift to the last half, we begin to look closely at the progress of each of our students. We examine the data dashboards we have for all classes to determine areas of concern. Our goal is for all our students to acquire grade level standards and prepare them for the next year. If we see that your child is struggling or experiencing academic challenges, we will be working closely with you and the student to implement a customized plan to close the learning gap. You may receive a letter describing this process. If you have any concerns about your child's progress, please contact the teacher. We are eager to work together to provide strong support for success.

As we break for the Holiday Season, we wish you peace, joy, and love. We look forward to seeing your students return on Thursday, January, 5th.



## Gifts We Can Give Our Children this Holiday Season

By: Christa Ritchie, Instructional Literacy Coach

Do you ever wonder what would be the best present to give your child this year? I have a few ideas. Time, Books and finally a journal. These are gifts that give for a lifetime. A journal is a way to have your child document all of the things they are thinking, dreaming, and feeling. This year every child should receive a journal! Read below to find out more about gifts that mean more than toys for this holiday season.

These are all gifts we can give our children.



### 11 Ways to Encourage Young Writers and Readers this Holiday Season

1. Give them a special journal or notebook
2. Have them document favorite moments and memories
3. Keep writing elements within reach- Pencils, Pens, Crayons
4. Practice telling stories and/or swapping stories
5. Take frequent trips to the library and book store
6. Keep books everywhere
7. Practice good handwriting
8. Let them see you reading ... and writing
9. Start a blog
10. Let them write reviews!
11. Get involved with the local community - book fairs, newspapers, current events



This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get an education is in school. It's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days, but remember, those days count as absences. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time. So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning.

School will release **ONE** hour early for Winter Break on Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>.

Students return to class on **Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>**.

**Report Cards for grades 3-5 available online on 1/20/2017**

To view your child's progress you will need to access Home Access Center (HAC).

Click the link below to create an account or sign in.

If you need assistance please email

[Christina.King@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Christina.King@stjohns.k12.fl.us).

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/hac/>



## Winter Public Library Events

### [Cookies and Carols With Elf! -- Anastasia Island Branch](#)

*Wednesday, December 14 @ 2:30 pm*

Kids can come into the library to meet our very own Elf on the Shelf, watch and sing along with our shadow puppet caroling show and decorate their own holiday cookie!

### [Teen Craft Hour Holiday Wreath Project -- Bartram Trail Branch](#)

*Wednesday, December 14 @ 4:00 pm*

Join us for a teen craft on Early Release Wednesday. During the month of December, we are creating a holiday wreath. Space is limited. Please visit the Reference Desk or call 827-6960 to register.

### [Polar Express Bedtime Storytime -- Ponte Vedra Beach Branch](#)

*Wednesday, December 14 @ 6:00 pm*

All aboard! The whole family is invited to our Library for Ms. Suzanne's special Readers Theatre presentation of the ever-popular holiday favorite: The Polar Express! Children are encouraged to wear their jammies, and their caregivers may as well! This special Bedtime Storytime, sponsored by the Friends of the Library, will be held in our FOL Community Room and milk and cookies will be provided. Please join us!

### [Holly Jolly Storytime With Santa -- Southeast Library](#)

*Wednesday, December 21 @ 11:15 am*

Ho ho ho! Get ready for a visit from the big guy in red at our holliest, jolliest storytime of the year! We'll be reading Christmas stories and singing carols before Santa's big entrance. Make sure to bring your camera for a shot of your little one on Santa's lap!



## Safety Leader Spotlight

Each month we feature students who are nominated for outstanding performance. These students arrive to school early, leave late, and have additional jobs around school during the day in addition to their regular duties as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.



Safety Leaders proudly standing from left to right Taryn Ray, Abby Hagan, Emily Andrade, & Alyson Neal.  
You ROCK!

Wards Creek Elementary School

# The Giving Tree

Helping Those  
in Need



The Holiday Season is upon us and there are families in our community that need our help.  
Many WCES classrooms have adopted a child for the holiday.  
If your class has adopted a student a wish list was sent home.  
Gift cards are also accepted.

All gifts should be unwrapped and in new condition.

All donations are due by: Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>

## Nurse Boyd's Reasons to Keep My Child Home Today

Parents,

Please help keep the spread of illness at a minimum by following the bottom St. John's County Illness Guidelines.

- Fever greater than 100. Student must be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT any medication to help reduce fever including Tylenol or Motrin.
- Vomiting and diarrhea more than once. Must be vomit and diarrhea free for 24 hours to return to school.
- Many children may wake up with an upset stomach, which may not always lead to illness, but if they are lethargic and do not have an appetite, keep them home for observation. If they feel better, you can bring them in with an excused tardy.
- Rash accompanied by fever or rash that is oozy or weeping. Please seek medical advice from your physician. Many rashes can be viral or bacterial in source of may be an allergic reaction. Your physician can diagnose which and help you seek the best treatment.
- Many sore throats are from seasonal reactions to pollen. However sore throats may be from other contagious sources. If a sore throat is accompanied by fever or rash, please seek medical attention and do not bring to school.
- Coughing is common as cold season approaches. If you child has a cough that is not eased by over the counter or home remedies and is preventing your child from having a productive school day, please keep them home for observation. If the cough is preventing from sleeping, please keep home.
- Discuss hand hygiene with your child. Many children do not know how to properly wash hands. Have your child sing a short song lasting about 20 seconds while rubbing soap between fingers and all of hand surface and palm. Then rinse after.





# Technology Bytes – Dec 2016

By Mrs. Battaglino and Ms. D. Smith

## Digital Footprint

Technology has truly changed our world. It's put endless amounts of copious information at our finger tips. Through technology we can visually explore the world. Learning can become both engaging and entertaining. We can shop in the comfort of our home or wherever we have an internet connection. Technology has simplified and enhanced almost every aspect of our daily lives.

Technology has also changed other landscapes of our existence. There once was a time when a letter was handed over to a trusted mail carrier to share news with a family or friend – one letter for one person. Now, an internet post has the potential to reach hundreds of friends, *or millions of strangers in seconds*. Errors in judgement, once righted with an apology, *are now engraved forever in our digital footprint*.

Our children – raised in this technology-rich environment of social media - are learning that expressing one's thoughts, feelings, *and pictures*, have consequences. And those consequences can be negative – and long-lasting - in the unforgiving digital world. Those negative consequences may be immediate, and/or can occur in the future.

Fast forward to college or military applications, scholarships or grant submissions, internship programs, or even employment opportunities. Their future may depend on the decisions they make with the technology they hold in their hands today. One post may have life altering consequences.

**It is never too early to establish good digital habits with your children.**

## Warrior Highlights!

### Cool Kindergarten

Congratulations to our Leader with Character November recipients – Laela Wengert, Sierra Jones, Danielle Priester, Tyler Brownnett, Bear Farris and Shreyaj Dasari. They were chosen for demonstrating the Character Counts trait of Citizenship. Great job!

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the entire Kindergarten performed our annual Poems and Pies performance. We decorated head bands and made colored necklaces. Mrs. Fanning's 4<sup>th</sup> grade leaders helped stamp our Native American shirts. We recited poems, performed sign language and sang songs. Afterwards, we enjoyed pies and cookies with our families. It was a great success!

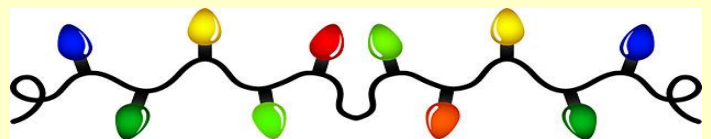
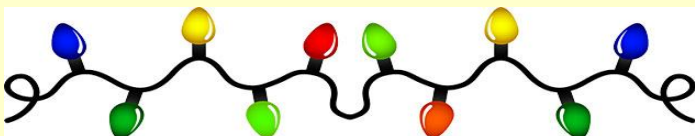
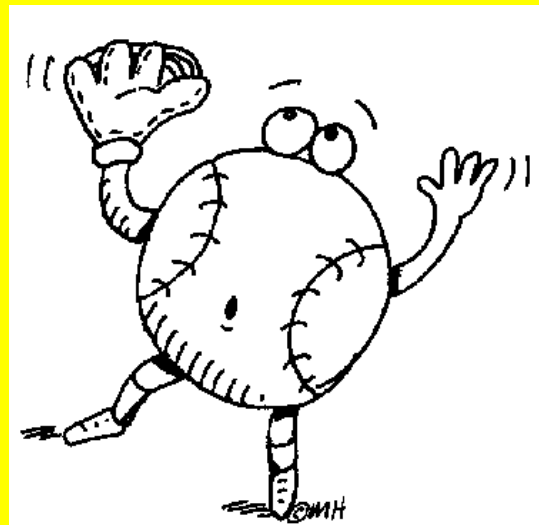


### Excellent ESE!

#### Meet Viviana Velazquez, one of our new Speech Language Pathologists!

I've landed at Ward's Creek direct from Connecticut where I served as a school speech language pathologist for 11 years. Long before my career in education, I studied marine biology at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. The warm weather called me back permanently.

More warm weather means more time for me to enjoy some favorites: hiking, baseball, and the beach. I've published my own baseball fan blog for the past three seasons; although, it may be time to retire since my team is back in CT. At the end of January, I will be taking part in the New York Yankee's Women's Fantasy Baseball Camp. Wish me luck!



## News from the PE Hut!

I look forward to training your students again this year! Remember Junior River Run practice starts on Monday, January 9th 2017. Please be sure to pick your student up at 3:20 on Monday afternoons and 2:20 on Wednesday afternoons. Please be sure to remind your student to come ready to do their best, wear tennis shoes and comfortable close. At dismissal please have your student report to the P.E. Hut. If your student is in extended day they should check in with extended day first. See you next year!

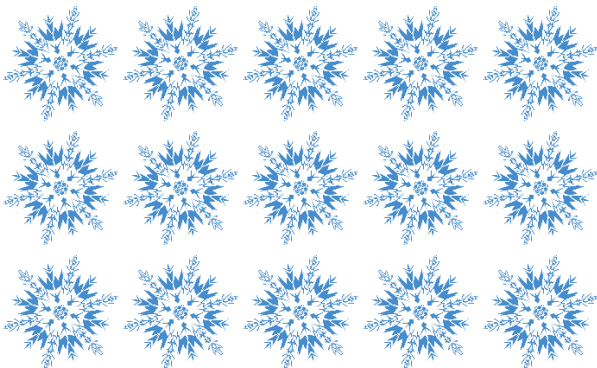


## Warrior Highlights!

### Frosty Fourth Grade

Fourth grade is ready for the holiday season. Classrooms are decorated and our breeze way is frosty!

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> grade will be working on two COOL STEM projects. One project the students will be tasked with slowing down holiday packages on the conveyer belt to Santa's sleigh. Then, they will create, build, and synergize to make a holiday tree! Parents, Thank you for volunteering on this COOL STEM DAY!



## Warrior Highlights!

### Super Second Grade

2<sup>nd</sup> grade is extremely thankful for the parents who came out to help us make our in-school field trip a success. On the day before Thanksgiving, we had a special visitor who taught us all about the customs of the Timucua Clan Native Americans. Our students rotated through 10 stations that included crafts and games that were inspired by the everyday activities of the Timucua Clan. The parents had a great time running each of the stations. They got to help the students make necklaces, braid ropes, mash corn, decorate shells, get tattoos, and so much more. This field trip would not be successful without the participation and support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents and various staff members who came to help. We are extremely grateful for all of our volunteers!



### Phenomenal Fifth Grade



We are so proud to have had the following finalist participate last month in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Wards Creek Spelling Bee.

Emma Wettlaufer    Sienna Kasper  
 Danielle Reynolds  
 Isabella Edge    Lillie Proffitt  
 Annaliese Seidel  
 Matthew Morgan  
 Sydney Bouthillier    Taryn Ray  
 Elizabeth Turner    Grace Kennedy  
 Deirdre McCarthy

Deirdre McCarthy is our 5<sup>th</sup> grade winner. She will be representing our school in the St Johns County 5<sup>th</sup> grade spelling bee in January. Our runner-up is Sydney Bouthillier.



Congratulations!



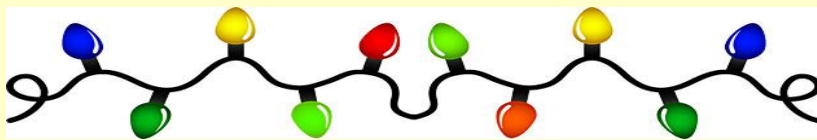
## Warrior Highlights!

### Fantastic First Grade

First grade is eagerly anticipating the upcoming winter and holiday season. We will be hosting our first student-led conferences during Data and Donuts on Tuesday, December 20. The students are very excited to show off their Leadership Notebooks to their parents and families; we have been working very hard toward earning Reading and Math Warrior status, and we also have worked on 7 Habits activities, which are included in our notebooks. On that same day, first grade will have its annual Polar Express Pancake Breakfast. We gather as a grade level and eat breakfast in our pajamas that morning, after which we will watch The Polar Express in our classrooms.

The last day of school before winter break will be our school wide Winter Wonderland. We will be completing 2 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities as a grade level. We will be designing elf traps as well as igloos in cooperative groups. We will work on one project in our own classrooms, and then switch to another classroom to complete the second project.

In the weeks leading up to winter break, we will also be learning about how other countries celebrate the holidays. We will be "travelling" around the world with our passport, checking into different countries to learn about their customs and celebrations. We are looking forward to seeing how many countries we can visit.

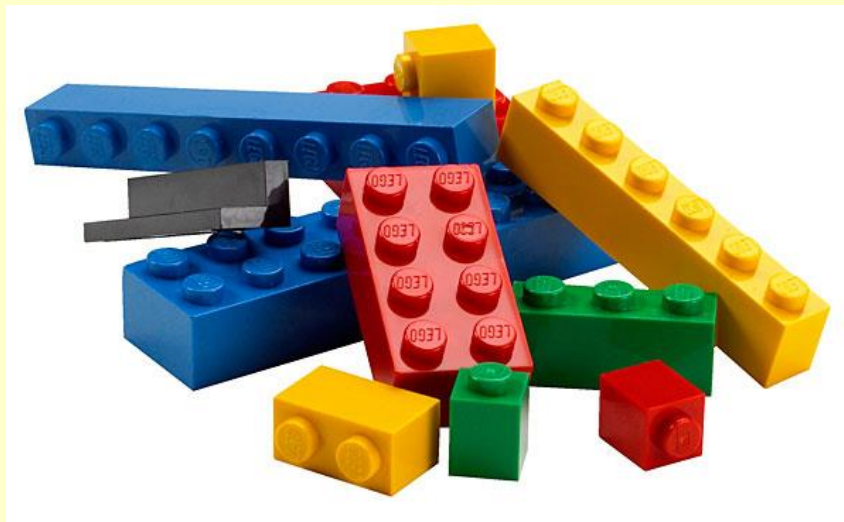


*Happy Holidays from  
the Third Grade Team!*

## Media Center News

Hello, Warrior leaders and families! My name is Kimberly Hinman and I am the new media specialist at Wards Creek. I have only been here a short while, but everyone has made me feel so welcome and at home. Now that I am settled in, I have started to create goals and visions for our media center. It is the mission of the media center to promote a lifelong love of reading and build a community of readers, both within and outside library walls. Our first activity is in full swing! Students are encouraged to snap and print a book selfie. The book can be open or closed, but it should be visible. We already have several on the board and would love to see it filled! Our spring book fair will take place February 10 - February 21. We would love to have volunteers for this event! Look for more information on our website and in the upcoming editions of the Torch. If you are on campus, feel free to stop by and introduce yourself! I look forward to us creating a community of readers together!

P.S. Hey, parents! Are Legos taking over your house? If you need help finding a new home for these super fun bricks, then you are in luck! The media center needs Legos! If you have Legos that are needing new friends to play with them, please consider donating them to the Media Center. Thank you!



# Continue the Conversation



## Computer Class Happenings With Mrs. Battaglino

We continue to learn and grow in the computer classroom!

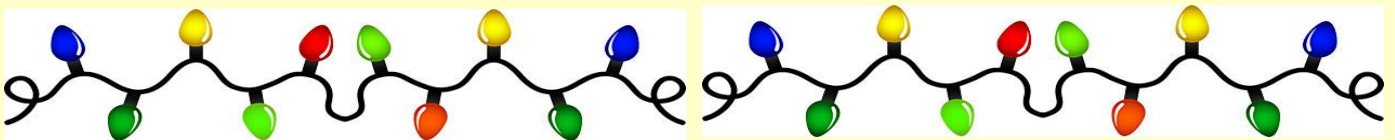
In Kindergarten we continue to work on computer mouse and reading skills with *Teach Your Monster To Read*. We are also learning digital writing and typing as we type our name into Microsoft Word.

In **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade** we had fun creating a visual display of our digital footprint in **PowerPoint**.

In **3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades** we continued the learning in PowerPoint as we created images that represented their digital footprint. The students explored the impact of their online choices and the importance of being online leaders with character.

**All students** continue to remain mindful of their digital decisions and proper care of technology.

Thank you for your support at home. Enjoy *continuing the conversation!*



# Platinum Business Partners



**KEN BERRY, B.S.N., D.C.**

- SHORT TERM CARE FOR PAIN
- WALK INS WELCOME
- NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
- PAIN RELIEF IS OUR GOAL

**904-940-0361**

[WWW.THEVILLAGECHIROPRACTOR.COM](http://WWW.THEVILLAGECHIROPRACTOR.COM)



Two missed days a month adds up to being a half a year behind by the time your child reaches 4th grade.

And once a child falls behind, they rarely catch up.

It is important that your child arrive at school between 8:00 am and 8:25 am. Please make sure your child arrives at school by **8:25 am** so that they can be in their classroom ready to learn by 8:30 am. If you child is absent please send a note or email within 48 hours of returning to school.



*\*Research shows that attendance is an important factor in student achievement.*



**Help Your Child Succeed in School:  
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**  
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

**Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.**

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

### **When Do Absences Become a Problem?**



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

**For more on school readiness, visit [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org) and [reachoutandread.org](http://reachoutandread.org)**

This Year We

GO

BIG

WE ARE RECYCLING BIG  
TO EARN BIG!

DONATE LASER PRINTER CARTRIDGES  
TO HELP US EARN TOWARDS OUR GOAL!



FOR MORE INFO VISIT [RECYCLINGFACTORY.COM](http://RECYCLINGFACTORY.COM)



*Restore a sense of hope for the upcoming season.*

#### **Jacksonville**

**Arlington/Beaches**  
**Anne and Donald McGraw Center**  
**for Caring of Community Hospice**  
 4715 Worrall Way  
 Jacksonville, FL 32224  
 Saturday, Nov. 5, 2016  
 10 – 11:30 a.m.  
 Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.

**Westside/Baker County**  
**Dr. Gaston J. Acosta-Rua Center**  
**for Caring of Community Hospice**  
 5450 Ramona Boulevard  
 Jacksonville, FL 32205  
 Saturday, Nov. 12, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon  
 Thursday, Dec. 8, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.

**Northside**  
**Northside Administrative Office**  
**of Community Hospice**  
 13453 North Main Street, Suite 403  
 Jacksonville, FL 32218  
 Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.  
 Saturday, Dec. 10, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon

**Mandarin/Southside**  
**Charles M. Newlaser Educational**  
**Institute of Community Hospice**  
 4266 Sunbeam Road, Building 100  
 Jacksonville, FL 32257  
 Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon  
 Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.

#### **St. Augustine**

**St. Johns County Administrative Office**  
**of Community Hospice**  
 525 State Road 16, Suite 112  
 St. Augustine, FL 32084  
 Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.  
 Saturday, Dec. 3, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon

#### **Nassau County** **Council on Aging**

1367 South 18th Street  
 Fernandina Beach, FL 32034  
 Friday, Nov. 18, 2016  
 9 – 10:30 a.m.  
 Saturday, Dec. 3, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon

#### **Orange Park**

**Clay County Administrative Office**  
**of Community Hospice**  
 728 Blanding Boulevard, Suite 1  
 Orange Park, FL 32065  
 Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016  
 10:30 a.m. – noon  
 Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016  
 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Visit [CommunityHospice.com](http://CommunityHospice.com) for  
 information about the Community  
 Hospice Tree of Life and Candlelight  
 Service of Remembrance scheduled  
 for Thursday, Dec. 1, 2016 at the  
 Earl B. Hadlow Center for Caring  
 in Jacksonville.

Hope for the Holidays is supported through a generous donation from the Carl S. Swisher Foundation, Inc.

## HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

### A Community Hospice program for the bereaved

The festive holiday season can be challenging for those experiencing the death of a loved one. They may find themselves torn between the need to grieve and pressure to get into the holiday spirit. Regardless of when the death took place, a loss can be felt more acutely at this time.

Community Hospice of Northeast Florida invites you to attend *Hope for the Holidays*, a workshop created for family, friends and caregivers who have experienced the death of a loved one. The workshop will help attendees reflect on their loss, learn ways to cope with grief during the holiday season, and to determine what is right for them and their families. They will learn how to refocus energy on positive activities that honor and remember their loved ones and will leave with a renewed sense of hope for the upcoming season.

*Hope for the Holidays* is open to the public. There is no charge to attend, but attendees should RSVP by calling 904.407.7001.



904.407.6500 • 866.253.6681 toll free • [CommunityHospice.com](http://CommunityHospice.com) • 4266 Sunbeam Road • Jacksonville, Florida 32257

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**A program just for brothers and sisters of children with special needs.**

Brothers and sisters, ages 8 - 13, of kids with developmental disabilities in St. Johns County now have a program that's just for them called Sibshops. They'll have a chance to meet other kids whose brothers and sisters have special needs and talk about the good and not-so-good parts of having a sibling with a disability. Most important, they'll have fun! This wonderful program is at no cost to your family.

**February 17, 2016**

(9:00-12:00 P.M.) @ Palencia Elementary, 355 Palencia Village, St. Augustine, 32095. Registration is required. Register online at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sibshops-a-program-just-for-brothers-and-sisters-of-kids-with-special-needs-this-program-is-brought-tickets-29053298197>

**March 20, 2016**

(9:00-12:00 P.M.) @ Fullerwood Training Center, 10 Hildreth Drive, St. Augustine, 32084. Registration is required. Register online at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sibshops-a-program-just-for-brothers-and-sisters-of-kids-with-special-needs-this-program-is-brought-tickets-29054244026>