



DECEMBER

Safe Toys and Gifts
Month

Universal Human Rights
Month

12/25-1/2 Hanukkah

12/1 Rosa Parks Day

12/1 World AIDS Day

12/2 Special Education
Day

12/3 International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

12/21 Winter Solstice
Day

12/25 Christmas

12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa

12/31 New Year's Eve

2024 Highlights from the Editor

*Melissa Weatherton is promoted from DDS Director to Medicaid Specialty Populations Director

*DDS welcomes Jennifer Brezee as new DDS Director

*First Connections officially transfers from DDS to Department of Education

*Joneboro HDC celebrates 50 year Anniversary

*Lots of retirements...Lots of new hires

*Illnesses, deaths...weddings, family additions

*Arkansas elects its 1st female Governor

2024 has been one of the most eventful years in DDS history! The changes have been major yet at its core, the spirit of DDS thrives. We serve our fellow Arkansans with dignity, compassion, empathy, and grace. Whether you meet one of us who's been here 50 years or 5 days, you will find that what has made DDS one of the top tier places to work still remains. That carries on through how each of us serve families seeking assistance and support our colleagues. As we enter this holiday season and prepare for a new year, let's keep a grateful heart. Grateful for what was and grateful for what is to come.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays!

~Yvette Swift, Program Administrator, Special Projects & Community Outreach

Congratulations on milestone Years of Service!



Regina Davenport~ 35 Years of Service

Yalanda Jones~ 30 Years of Service



Portland Gilbert~ 20 Years of Service

Meet Mr. Roy Eldridge



Roy with colleague
Liz McNeal

Roy is the oldest employee at the Jonesboro Human Development Center (JHDC)! Roy will turn 81 this year. He retired from American Greetings in Osceola after 45 years of service. After being home for about 2 years, Roy decided he needed something to do, so he got a part time job in the Maintenance Department at JHDC. His job duties include: push mowing, raking leaves, pulling weeds, taking care of the sensory garden, and anything else his supervisor needs him to do. Roy has worked at JHDC for 10 years. Roy shares, "Work is all I've ever known. I couldn't just sit at home and get old. So, I got another job." He loves his job at JHDC and looks forward to coming to work every day. He also enjoys talking with the residents and staff as he completes his duties throughout the day. Whenever you see Roy, he always has a smile on his face. Roy has been married for 62 years to his wife Bonnie. Together they have 3 grown children, 6 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren. In Roy's spare time, he enjoys golfing and fishing.



~Submitted by: Ashleigh King, Administrative Analyst and his daughter, Marta Henson. Marta also works at JHDC.

DDS Staff in Jefferson County 10 days of Christmas



Patricia Jenkins (middle) and Sheena Burton (right) pictured with Jefferson County staff ready to serve!

DDS and Jefferson County Staff kicked off the 10 days of Christmas, "Brrrr! It's Cold Outside!" They invited all to join them for hot chocolate and cookies. Great job for Day 1.



Save the Date

December

Candyland Jamboree 2024

CES Staff Open House Tour

12/5

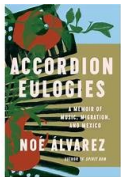
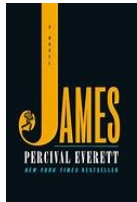
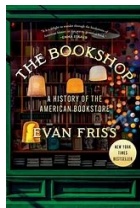
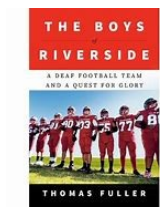
DDS Holiday Potluck

12/13

DDS Director's conference room

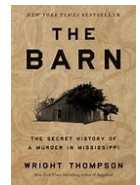
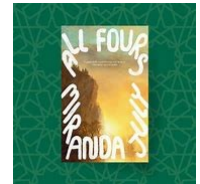
Noon

The Reader's Nook returns



Grab a book and relax over the holidays. Here a few top suggestions:

1. The Boys of Riverside by Thomas Fuller
2. James by Percival Everett
3. The Familiar by Leigh Bardugo
4. All Fours by Miranda July
5. Connie by Connie Chung
6. Lies and Weddings by Kevin Kwan
7. Accordion Eulogies by Noe Alvarez
8. The Barn by Wright Thompson
9. The Bookshop by Evan Friss
10. The Bright Sword by Lev Grossman



Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of the month.