



# PARC NEWSLETTER

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## Understanding Music Therapy & Our Brains On Music

 **By Karyna Sitkowski** 

Do you have a favorite song? Do you often play your favorite songs on repeat? Science has proven that listening to music can benefit overall brain health. When our mind processes music, it activates all parts of our brain at once. This can be whether you are playing an instrument or listening to music. Music has proved to help people in numerous different ways. One way we can assist people is through music therapy. Music therapy is defined as “a clinical & evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship” according to The American Music Therapy Association. Music therapists help people process emotions through music by playing an instrument, singing, writing lyrics, and more. Music therapy has been shown to help with a range of health issues such as promoting wellness, managing stress, reduce pain, elicit emotions, enhance memory, improve communication skills, improve self-esteem and more. It can help all ages from the time of the neonatal period to the end of one’s life.

Music therapy can also greatly help people who struggle with other mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, as well as other neurological issues such as Alzheimer’s or Dementia. Research has found that therapy via music can help reduce symptoms of PTSD such as a decrease of anxiety, improved depressive symptoms and better functioning of people with depression compared to treatment as usual (Aalbers et al., 2017).

In conclusion, music is in our everyday lives even if we are not aware. Music therapy is wonderful for all ages and helps us connect deeper with others as well as ourselves. Whether it is playing an instrument or just listening to music, you are engaging your brain in a healthy way that helps you emotionally, physically, and even spiritually. With new research being done every day, we are able to understand the ties between overall wellbeing and music therapy. As research continues, our knowledge of the power of music will continue to grow and impact our lives forever.

# Winter Holidays Around The World

By Karyna Sitkowski

## Diwali - Between the months of October to November

Diwali is the most important holiday celebrated in India by those who practice Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. The festival gets its name from the row (avali) of clay lamps (deepa) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness. The celebration lasts for five days with different dates every year based off the Lunar calendar. Each day of Diwali, a different tradition is practiced.



## Christmas - December 25th

Christmas is the day people all around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Christianity is the most practiced religion in the world estimating 2.4 billion followers. Christmas was first celebrated by the Romans on December 25th, in the year AD 336. Celebrating can look very different in each country, but most people often have a Christmas meal, give gifts, decorate Christmas trees, and go to church.



## Hanukkah - December 7th - December 15th

Hanukkah or also known as the Festival of Lights - is the most widely celebrated Jewish holidays. Often, Hanukkah is celebrated during the time of the darkest and coolest season of the year for eight days. For each night, a candle is lit on the menorah. Families spend Hanukkah by singing songs, playing dreidel, and eating food prepared in oil such as latkes.



## Kwanzaa December 26th - January 1st

The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza" which means "first fruits" in Swahili. The holiday is often celebrated by song, dance, and having an African feast, called a Karamu, that is held on December 31. For each night, a candle is lit to represent one of the seven principles and families discuss the importance of the principles.

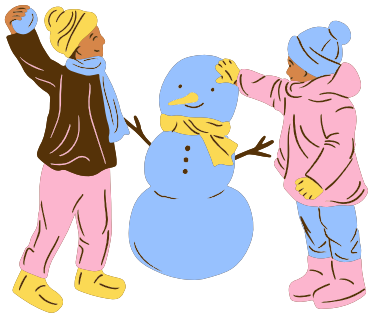


## Chinese New Year - January 21st between February 20th

Chinese New Year, also called Lunar New Year, annual 15-day festival in China and Chinese communities around the world that begins with the new moon that occurs sometime between January 21st and February 20th. The dates of celebration follow the phases of the moon and each year a new animal on the Chinese zodiac calendar is celebrated. Celebrations to usher out the old year and bring forth the luck and prosperity of the new one, therefore, often include firecrackers, fireworks, and red clothes and decorations. Young people are given money in colorful red envelopes. This year, the year of the dragon will be celebrated.



# winter Bucket list



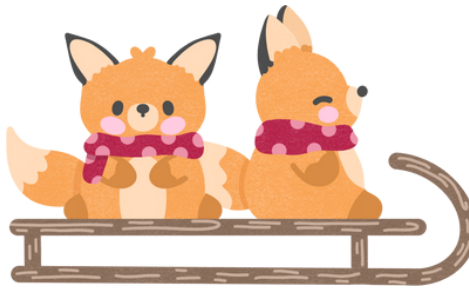
**Build a snowman**



**Relax in front of a  
fireplace**



**Go Ice Skating**



**Go sledding**



**Read a book**



**Go to an ice festival**



**Go to a hockey game**

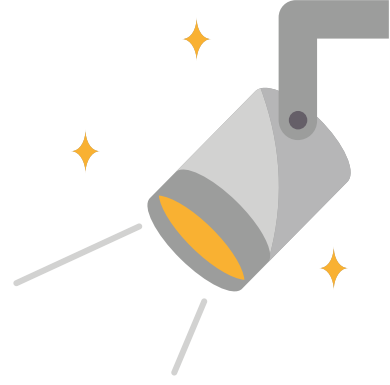
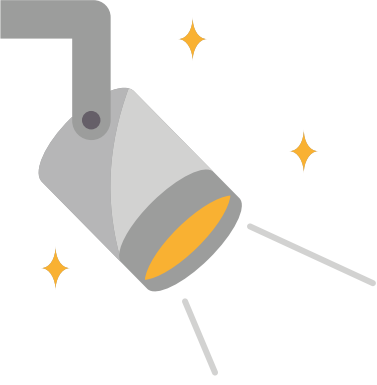


**Watch a movie at  
home or at the  
theater**



**Visit a museum**





## **Adoptee Spotlight**

### **Batman**

Batman first appeared in 1939 in a comic published by Detective Comics (DC). The comic was created by writer Bill Finger and artist Bob Kane. Since then, Batman has become a household name with comic books, graphic novels, films, video games, and more.

After the tragic passing of his parents, Bruce Wayne spent his youth training his body and mind to one day be able to keep innocent people safe in the City of Gotham. He was adopted by his butler, Alfred Pennyworth, who became the most influential person to Bruce's life that helped him become Batman. Bruce gave back to his people and city through philanthropy, but at night he kept the citizens of Gotham safe as Batman. Because of this, Bruce hid his identity from the world to keep himself and others safe from villains in the city. Within a year of the comic debut writers introduced Dick Grayson, who would also be known as Robin, also an orphan. This dynamic duo would go on to fight the first villains of the comics, The Joker and Catwoman. As the comic went on, other villains were introduced such as Penguin, Scarecrow, and Riddler.

In 1966, ABC premiered the television show Batman, starring Adam West and Burt Ward. Due to the popularity of the show, new comics continued to be produced and gave rise to new media. In 1989, director Tim Burton put Batman onto the silver screen starring Michael Keaton as Batman and Jack Nicholson as Joker. With the box office success, a second film (also directed by Burton) premiered in 1992 with Keaton reprising his role and introducing Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman and Danny DeVito as Penguin. In the same year, Batman: The Animated Series appeared on tv giving new life to Gotham City by creating new iconic characters such as Harley Quinn. Since then, Batman has many more animated films as well as blockbuster hits such as Batman Begins and The Dark Knight, winning Heath Ledger an Oscar for his portrayal of the Joker. While Batman is popular, the villains of Gotham have also taken their own step into the spotlight without the help of Batman. Famous characters such as Joker, Harley Quinn, and Catwoman have had their success with their own popular films, tv shows, and comic books.

Batman continues to entertain the masses, but most importantly inspiring audiences all around the world to stand up for what they believe in and do all they can to help their own cities, communities, and even strangers. Batman shows that even if you have lost something that has left you alone, you can find power within you to overcome obstacles and help people along the way.

# PARC Events

Build connections with and get support from others who truly understand!

## Monthly Online Support Groups:

Fabulous Foster and Adoptive Parents

First Monday of Each Month  
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Adoptive Family Connections

First Thursday of Each Month  
7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

## What are people saying about PARC?

"It [the Dads group] was a great way for dads to connect and see they are not the only dads out there."

"Love the people and the help I receive here!"

"These people are my tribe. This [support] group has helped me get through so many things."

"[PARC Worker] helped to keep me from jumping off the ledge many times. I never felt judged, only supported."

"My experience was wonderful, [worker] was a huge help to us. We truly appreciate all of the support!"

"[Worker] has been a true blessing to our family. Their kindred spirit helped me through a difficult time."

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[www.parc-judson.org](http://www.parc-judson.org)

[www.facebook.com/MIPARC5.6](https://www.facebook.com/MIPARC5.6)

For a complete list of events, visit the calendar page on our website. Additional activities and resources are listed there as well!

[www.parc-judson.org/calendar](http://www.parc-judson.org/calendar)

For questions or to register for support groups or events, contact:  
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or 734-794-2988.



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**MDHHS**

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