

CORONA-TIMES PSAs

Week of 1/4/21 A

BLOOD DRIVES:

Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org to schedule a donation time or to find a drive near you. **NO WALK-INS due to COVID- 19.**

Tues.	1/5	12:00-6:00	First United Church in Little Falls
Tues.	1/5	12:00-6:00	Lakewood Church in Baxter
Wed.	1/6	8:30-2:30	First United Church in Little Falls
Thurs.	1/7	12:00-6:00	Motley United Methodist Church in Motley
Tues.	1/12	12:00-6:00	Hill City Assembly of God in Hill City
Wed.	1/13	12:00-6:00	Crosslake Community Center
Thurs.	1/14	1:00-6:00	Clow Stamping in Merrifield
Thurs.	1/14	12:00-6:00	Our Savior's Lutheran in Pequot Lakes
Fri.	1/14	9:00-3:00	Our Savior's Lutheran in Pequot Lakes
Fri.	1/15	12:00-6:00	Hallett Center in Crosby
Mon.	1/18	12:00-6:00	Vets Club in Onamia
Mon.	1/25	8:00-2:00	VFW in Brainerd
Thurs.	1/28	8:00-2:00	Camp Ripley in Little Falls

1 / 4 – 1/10

How would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? **January is National Mentoring Month** and **Kinship Partners** is always looking for caring adults who would like to become mentors to a number of lakes area children – some of whom have been on a waiting list for quite some time. If you would like to make the difference in the life of one of these children here in our community, please contact Kinship Partners. Mentors can be individuals, couples, or families. It doesn't cost a lot of money, just a little time. Visit KinshipPartners.org for more information. That's KinshipPartners.org. **AND....during the month, Stonehouse Coffee** will make a donation to Kinship when you purchase a Bag of Coffee Beans from any of their three locations (2 in Nisswa, 1 in Baxter)! %5 of their coffee bean sales will go to KP!

Every day, people in our community struggle to get by. Many of our neighbors are barely making it day to day, just one car accident or emergency room visit away from financial crisis. For example, adults working two or three jobs to pay the bills experience more daily stress, have worse health, and spend less time with their kids....then their kids are more likely to go to school hungry, not read at grade level and miss too many days of school, making it difficult to graduate from high school on time. Thus, the cycle starts over again. We can do better. **United Way** is the best way to make the biggest difference in the **Brainerd Lakes Area**. Please help us Fight for those families in our community who need a little support to get out of this cycle. Learn more and give to the Lakes Area United Way at UnitedWayNow.org.

The **Brainerd Lakes Area Women of Today** will host a slightly different **Happy Hour with a Purpose** this year, but it will be a great fundraiser nonetheless! During the **entire month of January** (thru the 31st), lakes area residents are encouraged to purchase a \$25 ticket to the "event" with proceeds going to Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity and Kinship Partners (as Bachelor/ette event in June was cancelled). The \$25 will get you two drink tickets at ANY of the participating sponsor locations (9th Street Social Club, Dunmire's Bar & Grill, Ernie's on Gull, Harpo's, Jack Pine Brewery, Roundhouse Brewery and Shep's on 6th). You can choose your drink tickets! Also, every ticket sold will come with a gift certificate to a lakes area business valued at anywhere from \$10 to \$100! For more information and for tickets, go to the website BrainerdLakesAreaWomenOfToday.com. Prizes and drink tickets will be mailed out in February.

Join the **Chamber in Crosslake** for the next **Explore Crosslake Business Meeting** on **Thurs. Jan. 7th** from 8:00-9:30AM via Zoom. Always the first Thursday of the month, and usually in person, you can join them for a meeting of local business owners, managers and key staff. Network with others, learn more about events, activities and organizations in Crosslake, plus share info about YOUR business. For more info about the link to the events, visit Crosslake.com.

The public is invited to take part in a **COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall** with **Riverwood Health Care** live on **Thurs. Jan. 7th** from 2:30-3:00. Dr. David Taylor, Chief Medical Officer at Riverwood in Aitkin will provide you with real time data and explain ways that you can continue to practice precautions in our community. For the link to the town hall, visit Riverwood Health Care's Facebook page.

The **Paul Bunyan Toastmasters** will hold a **club meeting** on **Fri. Jan 8th** from 7:30-8:30AM at the Brainerd Lakes Chamber Conference Room in Brainerd. You can also join via Zoom, if you prefer. During the meeting, you'll learn how to write and deliver a great speech, lead a meeting, how to make good decisions "on your feet," how to be a leader and how to give and accept evaluations. Your very first one or two events are free! Learn more/register at 922.ToastmastersClub.org.

The **Wild & Scenic Film Festival**, a collection of films which speak to the environmental concerns and celebrations of our planet, is coming virtually to the **Northland Arboretum** on **Sat. Jan. 9th**. Featured at the event will be a series of 10 films which were chosen from the annual festival held in Nevada City, CA. Viewers will be invited to look inward and rediscover their connection with and responsibility to the natural world. They will be taken to the Arctic Coast, Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda, Acadia National Park in Maine and the stunning Oregon Coast. They'll hike with an autistic person through 900 miles of the Great Smoky Mountains and see the Sacramento River as a place of surprising beauty, home to otter, eagle and osprey and endangered salmon. Doors open at 6:30 – the shows begin at 7:00. Tickets are only \$5 and reserved at NorthlandArb.org. Films may be viewed for 24 hours. With questions, call 829-8770.

The **Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen** wants to remind lakes area residents that that if you are in need of a lunch on the weekends, they provide free weekend lunches to anyone regardless of age. If you know anyone who might benefit from a free lunch on the weekends, just stop by the sharing Bread Soup Kitchen at 923 Oak Street in Brainerd on **Sat. Jan 9th** between 12:00 and 12:30. Meals will be given out then.

Crossing Arts in Brainerd will do another **Creativity Kit Distribution** on **Sat. Jan. 9th** from 10:00 to 12:00 to anyone who wants a little bit of creative fun. Kits will be available on tables in the front of Crossing Arts. In case of inclement weather, the distribution will take place indoors. In addition, a selection of kits will be available at MN Makerspace in downtown Brainerd. These kits have two art projects, a coloring sheet, and more. Creativity Kits are free to the public. Kits are limited. First come, first served. For more information contact Crossing Arts at 218-833-0416, info@crossingarts.org. Crossing Arts is a 501c3 nonprofit located in the heart of downtown Brainerd at 711 Laurel St.

1/11 - 1/17

The next **Ruby's Pantry Pop-Up Pantry** will be on **Tues. Jan. 12th** at The Northern Pacific Center - Building #2, 1511 Northern Pacific Rd, Brainerd, MN 56401. Food distribution begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. Ruby's Pantry is a non-profit food ministry serving our community on the second Tuesday of the month. There are no income guidelines to participate; Ruby's Pantry is for everyone who eats. For a \$20 cash donation, participants will receive a "share" with an abundance of groceries. The variety and amount of food varies each month. Contact The Journey North Community Church at 218.824.5617 about volunteer opportunities at Ruby's! ((To comply with COVID-19 guidelines it will be an outdoor, drive-thru distribution. *You must stay in your vehicle.*))

Minnesota dentists are offering free dental care for children in need on February 5 and 6, 2021. Appointments can be booked **now**. **The Minnesota Dental Association** has nearly 1,000 dental professionals volunteering at over 50 clinics across the state for Give Kids a Smile. Finding a clinic with open appointments is as easy as calling United Way 211 (just dial 2-1-1) or by visiting MNDental.org. Appointments can then be scheduled directly with the dental office. No eligibility questions are asked, in an effort to remove any possible barrier to care. Patients must be 18 years or younger and accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Specific services provided at each location will be outlined when an appointment is scheduled. Volunteers speaking multiple languages are also available at many locations to help with language barriers.

The **Brainerd Lakes Chamber** says that area counties will again distribute **COVID relief funds** to hurting businesses and non-profits, this time, through a State of Minnesota allocation of more than \$1.2 million. Crow Wing County has already opened their Economic Assistance Grant Relief Program and will share Cass County details when available. Grants up to \$10,000 will be awarded to nonprofit and small businesses to help offset business interruptions costs associated with COVID-19 from Mar. 1, 2020 through Jan. 12, 2021. To apply, visit BrainerdLakesChamber.com and find the link. **Apply NO LATER than Tues. Jan. 12th.**

Join the **Northland Arboretum** for their **3-part class, "Scat & Tracks,"** which YES, will teach you how to identify wild animals by their scat and tracks! The class is presented by Jill Mertens and Amanda Olson on **Tues. Jan 12th and Thurs. Jan. 14th** at 4:00 and on **Sat. Jan. 16th** at 1:00. It will be held in the Arb's Visitor Center's Main Level and is limited to the first 20 paid students. Advance registration is requested at which tie registration payments are due. \$20 for Arb members... \$25 for non-members. Class fee is non-refundable.

The **27th Annual Antique Snowmobile Rendezvous** will take place in Pequot Lakes' Trailside Park on **Sat. Jan. 16th** starting at 12:00 hosted by the Pequot Lakes Brush Pilots. Details are still being worked out due to COVID restrictions... more TBA.

Sat. Jan. 26th is the final day for you to participate in an **online auction** to support Aitkin County's **Pine Lake Chapel** as they work to raise money to build a new Fellowship Hall Kitchen. To bid on items (like quilts, antiques, collectibles, die-cast model cars and banks, appliances, original art AND MORE,) visit the website 32Auctions.com/PineLakeChapel to view the items and bid! Their goal is to raise \$8,000. The bidding ends on this date at 4:00. If you have questions, call 218-678-3344. (Items that are won will have to be picked up... not shipped).

MISC...

How would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? **January is National Mentoring Month** and **Kinship Partners** is always looking for caring adults who would like to become mentors to a number of lakes area children – some of whom have been on a waiting list for quite some time. If you would like to make the difference in the life of one of these children here in our community, please contact Kinship Partners. Mentors can be individuals, couples, or families. It doesn't cost a lot of money, just a little time. Visit KinshipPartners.org for more information. That's KinshipPartners.org. **AND....during the month, Stonehouse Coffee** will make a donation to Kinship when you purchase a Bag of Coffee Beans from any of their three locations (2 in Nisswa, 1 in Baxter)! %5 of their coffee bean sales will go to KP!

Is your home in need of repairs, but you're unsure of affordable financing options? You may be eligible for a **home repair loan or grant** through **USDA Rural Development**. They offer very-low-income homeowners affordable financing to repair, improve or modernize their homes. Grants are available for elderly homeowners 62 years of age or older to remove health and safety hazards. For more information, contact the Baxter Office at (218) 829-5965 or visit rd.usda.gov/mn. Let us help you make the repairs you need to stay in the home you love, because "Together, America prospers." A message from the USDA Rural Development, an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

The Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Minnesota is scheduled to take place on **Sat. Mar. 6th** at Breezy Point Resort's Marina. Check in will be from 10:00-12:30 with the plunge starting at 1:00. You can register now to take a plunge into the icy waters of Pelican Lake at PlungeMN.org.

The **Brainerd Jaycees Virtual Ice Fishing Extravaganza** will take place on **Sat. Jan. 30th** on ANY lake in Minnesota! If you already purchased a physical ticket, you'll need to convert it to a FishDonkey registration to be eligible to win a contest prize. To participate, you WILL need the FishDonkey app downloaded to your device... find a link to it – along with all other Extravaganza information at IceFishing.org.

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Cuyuna Regional Medical Center is continuing to care for residents of our communities by offering **contact free COVID testing** in a mobile unit on its Crosby campus. The service is offered weekdays by appointment only. Call 218-546-7462 to schedule a test. The mobile unit is located in front of the Business Support Services building in CRMC's staff parking lot across Highway 210 from the hospital and clinic's main entrance. Patients drive up to the unit and remain in their vehicle during the brief test administered by a nurse. Visit CuyunaMed.org for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Put on your creativity hats and get ready to **help name one of eight of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's snow plows!** Yes... you could help name one! To submit your suggestion, visit MnDOT.gov and click on the Name a MnDOT Snowplow. You have **now until Jan. 22nd** to make your submission. In February, MnDOT will share some of the best name ideas and invite the public to vote on favorites. The eight names that get the most votes will soon make their way onto a snow plow near you! Again, www.MnDOT.gov.

Pine Grove Zoo is taking applications for **Zoo Keeping Interns** for the upcoming 2021 season. As a non-profit organization and community partner, Pine Grove Zoo has created an Internship Program to give back and support students interested in the animal field and natural world. Interns gain knowledge and experience with all of Pine Grove Zoo's animal family, not just certain species. Internships allow individuals to learn and discover things about all areas of the Zoo, which can guide students in deciding which part of this field interests them more. Pine Grove Zoo has received high ratings from interns that have been part of the Pine Grove Zoo Team, while some even continue as paid staff during the season. If you are interested in an internship, call 320-616-5595 or email Info@PineGroveZoo.com.

The **Sunrise Sertomans** invite you to go "green" this season and recycle your non-working Christmas lights and extension cords as part of their **10th Annual Bites For Lights** fundraiser! Bring your non-functioning lights and extension cords to participating businesses throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area. With the help of Crow Wing County Land Services, **The Sunrise Sertoma Club of Brainerd** will recycle the lights and cords through Crow Wing Recycling with 100% of the funds raised going back into the Brainerd Lakes Area. Drop off locations are in Brainerd/Baxter, Aitkin, Emily, Crosby, Nisswa, Breezy Point, Crosslake and Pequot Lakes. To find a location near you, visit BitesForLights.org.

Tickets for **Brainerd Public Schools Foundation's Big Event** are on sale now, with the virtual event scheduled for **Fri. Feb. 6th**, 2021. Each ticket holder will receive a "Party in a Box" which includes access to the event, raffles and a \$25 gift card to one of our local restaurants! Visit BPSF.org and reserve your tickets now!

The Crisis Line & Referral Service is looking for compassionate **volunteers** to help answer calls from those in the area who may be experiencing a crisis and need someone to listen. Their volunteers are truly a lifeline for those who call the Crisis Line, with compassion, concern and with the highest level of integrity and confidentiality, the volunteers listen, affirm, encourage and offer hope by connecting with callers to resources that can truly help them. Hours for volunteers are flexible, you can do it from home or wherever! Training will be provided. You must be 18 or older. To learn more, visit CrisisLineAndReferralService.org.

In response to the recent surge of **COVID-19** across our region — and the frequent fluctuations in case rates — **Essentia Health has launched a COVID-19 Regional Projections Dashboard**. This user-friendly dashboard aggregates publicly available data and features an interactive map of Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Users can compare case numbers and projections by state, and drill down further by county. Available metrics include cases per 10,000 people, daily new cases, seven-day positivity rates, etc. It's intended to inform our communities by presenting rich data in a highly visual way. You can access the dashboard by visiting EssentiaHealth.org

Crow Wing County residents can now view county highway department snowplows on county roads during winter snow events, to track where plows are and where they are headed. The **"Where's My Snowplow?" link** is a web based map activated during snow events. It uses GPS to track the 15 county snowplows and show their current locations. The map tracks in near real time and updates every 5 minutes during snow events. To access the link, visit CrowWing.us.

The **Brainerd Public Library** is now offering **no-contact curbside service** for customers to pick up library materials. Library staff is available to help customers request materials over the phone and by email. Curbside pickup times include many hours throughout the week including Tuesday-Thursday evenings until 7:00 as well as Saturdays. You can book curbside appointment by logging on to TinyURL.com/BrainerdCurbside or by calling 218-829-5574.

As you may know, in late July, the **Brainerd Family YMCA** experienced significant structural and cosmetic damage to their facility from heavy rainfall and they found out that the damage is not covered by insurance – with damage estimates at over \$148,000. And before that, the pandemic forced the Y to scale back services, putting more strain on their finances. The Brainerd Family YMCA serves over 725 children and their families every year. They provide after-school programming, host summer camps, promote healthy lifestyles and they change peoples' lives. The Y has stepped up when businesses needed it. **IT'S TIME FOR BUSINESSES TO STEP UP. THE Y NEEDS US.** Both CTC and Digital Horizons have each donated \$1,000 to start the grassroots campaign to raise funds for the Y. If you can do the same or similar, please visit GoCTC.com/ymca.

Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity is in need of volunteers to help them gather items for their restore as they have been inundated with donations and salvages. They need help tearing job sites apart and unloading back at the store. The schedule is flexible and you'll feel good knowing you are helping others. If you are able to volunteer, please call 218-454-7027 or email Restore@LakesAreaHabitat.org.

As the national pandemic continues, **Cuyuna Regional Medical Center** is running low on its supply of masks and is again calling on community members for **donations of hand-sewn cloth face masks** to protect its patients and visitors. Masks may be safely donated Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. at CRMC's main entrance screening station. For answers to any donation questions or an alternative time to make a donation, please contact Jennifer at 218-545-4455.

Crow Wing County Sheriff Scott Goddard has announced the creation of a **"Safe Exchange Zone"** on the campus of Crow Wing County. The designated area not only provides a safe location for child custody and e-commerce exchanges but also allows people feeling the need to meet in an area that offers a sense of safety and security a place to go. Two parking stalls have been marked for this purpose in front of the Crow Wing County Judicial Center and can be used 24 hours a day. The safe zone is monitored 24 hours a day by law enforcement and officers are able to quickly respond if there were to be a problem.

The **Destination Downtown Coalition** wants to **bring Babe the Blue Ox back to downtown Brainerd** but needs your financial help to raise the \$2,400 needed. Nor-Son Construction has donated a Babe the Blue Ox statue that they've had at their Baxter office since 2008. Babe is in need of repairs and a new look. The coalition wants this to be a community project that adds to downtown Brainerd's uniqueness. The Crossing Arts Alliance has agreed to head the artistic side with a call out to local artists. They will be putting together a panel to determine placement, find great artists, and judge who will be doing the honors of creating downtown's latest attraction! If you would like to provide financial support for this project please make a donation by clicking on either link and add to the amount so far! Sponsors of \$500 or more will have their name or business logo on a plaque next to the statue. <https://downtownbrainerd.org/donate/>. ***Submissions DUE BY APRIL 15th!***