

SAC NEWSLETTER

December 2022

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CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN DECEMBER

During this time of the year, it's important to recognize the diverse variety of cultural and religious holidays. Let's explore them!



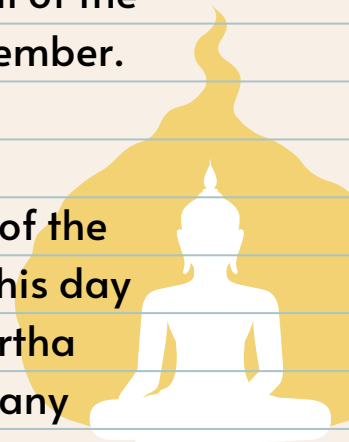
Christmas: Dec 25

Most of us have heard of Christmas. For Christians, the day is seen as a celebration of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Many Christians begin their Christmas day with a midnight service, known as Midnight Mass. Some also take part in church events on Christmas morning. Christmas is also largely celebrated as a cultural holiday: Many families put up Christmas trees, decorate their homes with lights, ornaments, and stockings, and exchange gifts with friends and family.

But Christmas isn't the only holiday this time of year, nor should it be treated as such. Here at the SAC, we want to celebrate all of the diverse holidays and cultural events taking place in December.

Bodhi Day: Dec 8

Bodhi Day is a religious holiday celebrated by followers of the Buddhist faith on the 8th day of the 12th lunar month. This day celebrates the achievement of enlightenment by Siddhartha Gautama, also known as the Buddha. On Bodhi Day, many Buddhist families remember the Buddha by taking part in meditation, eating a meal of rice and milk, which Gautama was said to have eaten following his enlightenment, lighting candles for a month, decorating a ficus tree with beads and colored lights, and putting up ornaments to represent the Three Jewels of Buddhism. Many Buddhist communities will also come together for celebrations and prayers during the night of Bodhi day.



(Continued on next page)



Hanukkah: Dec 18-26

Hanukkah, or Chanukah, is a Jewish holiday which celebrates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem during the second century B.C.. During the eight days of Hanukkah, which fall on December 10th to 18th of 2020, Jewish families may take part in celebratory activities such as giving a prayer and lighting one candle on a menorah for each day of celebration. For the Jewish community, the menorah has an important history. According to Jewish teachings, following the reclamation of the Second Temple, the Temple's Menorah was lit, and by miracle, the one-day supply of oil was able to last for eight days. Some other celebratory activities include playing with a dreidel, eating traditional foods, and exchanging gifts.

Hmong New Year: Dec 26-31

Hmong New Year is a cultural holiday that takes place at the end of the twelfth lunar month. This year, celebrations will be carried out towards the end of December, around the 26th through the 31st. Hmong New Year acts as a traditional period of thanksgiving for a successful harvest season, as well as a time to honor one's ancestors and spirits and welcome in a new year. All across the country, Hmong communities come together to celebrate the new year through festivals, where traditional music is played, traditional clothes are worn, and games such as "pov pob," a ball-throwing game, are played. Some families may even participate in ancestral worship during this period.

(Continued on next page)

SACRAMENTO
HMONG NEW YEAR
Festival

HAPPY KWANZAA!

Kwanzaa: Dec 26–Jan 1

Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday celebrated by many members of the African American community. This festival was first introduced by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 as a way to give thanksgiving and welcome the first harvests of the year. Many of the symbols used during celebration, such as “mzao” or “crops,” represent the foundational roots of African Americans as contributors to agriculture. During Kwanzaa, some families light seven traditional candles to honor their ancestors, in the colors red (3), black (1), and green (3), which represent the colors of historical African liberation movements. Some other festivities include pouring libations to your ancestors from the “Kkimbe cha Umoja” or “unity cup,” exchanging gifts, and eating traditional African dishes at a banquet.

We here at the SAC want to remind you to stay safe this holiday season and try to find fun activities to do at home with your families. Enjoy, we'll see you next year!

Sources:

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/hanukkah> ;

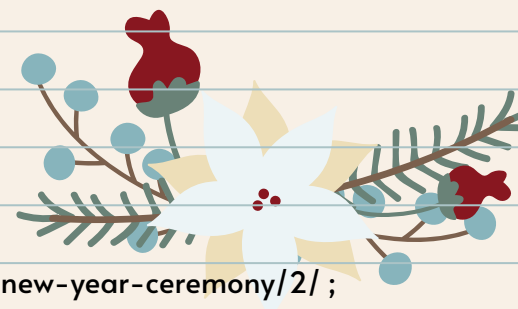
<https://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah> ;

<https://maptia.com/cyriberle/stories/hmong-new-year> ;

<http://hmonglessons.com/the-hmong/hmong-traditions/hmong-new-year-ceremony/2/> ;

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/K-12/Kwanzaa_What_16661.html ;

<http://aglobalworld.com/holidays-around-the-world/bodhi-day-buddhist/>



HAPPY
Holidays

DECEMBER RECOGNITION

LET'S CELEBRATE

Monthly Observances
in December 2022



In addition to the wonderful cultural and religious holiday we traditionally celebrate in December, we'd like you to learn about and recognize some other important observances from the United Nations.

- 01 Dec International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 02 Dec International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 03 Dec International Day of Banks
- 04 Dec International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
- 05 Dec World Soil Day
- 05 Dec International Civil Aviation Day
- 07 Dec International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide
- 09 Dec International Anti-Corruption Day
- 09 Dec Human Rights Day
- 10 Dec International Mountain Day
- 11 Dec International Day of Neutrality
- 12 Dec International Universal Health Coverage Day
- 12 Dec Arabic Language Day
- 18 Dec International Migrants Day
- 18 Dec International Human Solidarity Day
- 20 Dec International Day of Epidemic Preparedness



KODAK PORTA 400





DID YOU KNOW?

The cuetlaxochitl flower is native to Mexico.

This is a sacred flower that was colonized and written off in history as a "discovery" of Joel Poinsett in the 1800's.

Joel Poinsett was an enslaver who promoted white supremacy in his political career and displaced Indigenous people from their ancestral lands.

The flower had nothing to do with Christianity or Christmas.

It is a sacred plant used in ceremonies and as medicine to cure sicknesses and aid the flow of breast milk.

Reverse the harm by calling it by its original name, Cuetlaxochitl, and correcting those around you.

Pronunciation: Kwe • tla • so • cheetl



COLLEGE DEADLINES

The information below highlights all of the important dates that you should be aware of as you continue planning for your college journey. Good luck to everyone that is pursuing their dreams of attending college!



March 2, 2023

- many state financial aid programs (date postmarked)
- Cal Grant also requires submission of a school-certified GPA

September 2, 2023

- additional community college Cal Grants (date postmarked)



January 1, 2023

- Regular Admissions

Some schools have different deadlines - make sure to check the school you're applying to!



Scholarships

Community and district scholarships are posted when they are made available. Available community scholarships can be viewed at scusd.edu/community-scholarships.

For questions or additional information call (916) 643-9293 or email us at scholarships@scusd.edu

STUDENT VOICES ACROSS SCUSD

This month we are featuring a new column created from the perspective of our SCUSD Student Ambassadors.

The Student Ambassador program is a youth employment program ran by Youth Development Support Services. Student Ambassadors provide support to after school expanded learning programs across SCUSD, mentor younger students, offer tutoring services and help lead enrichment activities. If you'd like to learn more about being a student ambassador email our lead YDSS youth employment specialist:

david-troung@scusd.edu

This month, we asked student ambassadors three simple questions:

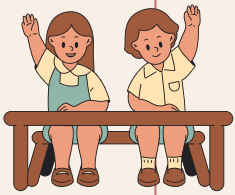
What can you tell us about your role as an ambassador?

What are some concerns that you have at your school sites and/or

What are some things that are going well at your school site?

Their stories and narratives are shared in the pages ahead:





REFLECTING ON MY WORK AS A YDSS STUDENT AMBASSADOR

Everyday I look forward to working with our kids. I think the program is great, I love that we work together as a community to help teach kids and different things they might not have been taught. The staff is amazing, I would say we all get along very well. Having the opportunity to work with kids is amazing, being so young and still being in high school and already being able to work with kids is really cool. It encourages me to go to school and get good grades so I can keep the job. All of the staff treat each and every student with respect and fairness. They are all able to keep the kids engaged and do well.

One thing I think we can fix is the number of staff we have. I do love the staff but I feel as if they are under staff and are working twice as hard as they should be. We could also get more activities that will grab the kids attention., maybe even just little things like outside activities, just something to not only help the kids lose energy but also kinda give staffing a break from the hyper kids they deal with for 3 hours.

All in all I think this is an amazing opportunity and I think all high schools should offer this to every kid. It helps build leadership skills as well as responsibility because you are looking after little kids who don't know that something they do is dangerous and that they need to be careful. It also helps kids with financial stuff. They have to learn that earning money isn't easy and it comes with lots of responsibilities.

I look forward to doing this job the next 2 years I have left in high school and I can't wait to see some of these kids grow up to be amazing human beings!

-Jonissa Montejano - Health Professions





THE SENIOR STRUGGLE - IS COLLEGE FOR ME?

One of the many school issues is transitioning to college for senior high school students. Facing the fact that we only have a few months of high school before we go to college. As they feel pressured to make premature decisions in their future life. For me I can say that this is very challenging since I don't have enough time to think about what I want to do in college or if I want to go to college. Thinking about this is stressful and difficult. I know a lot of seniors are struggling about this too. Some are procrastinating or just didn't have enough time to do so. This is why it's very important to have someone to talk to. They can give students advice and solutions to their problems. I'm planning to attend a four year university.

College advisors and counselors are very helpful. An academic advisor will assist students in choosing the right courses of study based on their majors and will give them information and options to help them complete their degree requirements without spending time and money on pointless courses. Financial problems are also one of the main reasons why college is very tough. Depending on their various demographic backgrounds, high school students' top concerns were the cost of continuing their education. This is also my problem but my counselor helped me out. Like filling out my college application and fixing the mistakes I made. She's really supportive about my decisions and guided me through this. I really appreciate her. The only thing I want to say for some seniors who are still deciding what they want to do in their life or in the future is talk to your counselor. Maybe they can help you out about the thing you still have questions about. And take time to think this through.

-Djuliene Mercado - Rosemont HS





DO YOUR PART TO KEEP OUR CAMPUSES CLEAN!

A school issue I would like to propose to fix would be school littering and vandalism. From my experience, Luther Burbank High School is generally a great school. Our students are provided with excellent teachers, reliable college resources, a good learning environment, and a beautiful campus. However, I believe our students take advantage of these great qualities. Everyday at lunch, I always see our campus littered with food trash outside or even in the cafeteria. There's trash not only in the quad where most students eat but also in the hallways where we walk to class. It's especially frustrating when I see trays of food scattered all over the tables outside after the lunch bell rings, as if it's a restaurant waiting for someone to clean it up. How hard is it to pick up your trash and throw it away? One time, I even witnessed someone aggressively throwing an apple on the ground in the cafeteria. Honestly, it shocked me how disrespectful students can be. I never thought I would witness something like that in front of my very own eyes. Vandalism is also an issue at our school, especially in the bathrooms. Seeing inappropriate and ridiculous writing on the walls is disturbing and disrespectful to the students, teachers, and to the people who work to keep our bathrooms and campus clean. I find it displeasing that these acts are being carried out at our school. I believe these issues are not just occurring at my high school, but also at other schools. I would like to address these problems to our students in the Sacramento City Unified School District. I think it's important to keep our schools clean for the sake of our students, teachers, school staff, and most importantly the people who work hard everyday to keep our campus clean, our janitors and so many more.

- Jolene Va - Luther Burbank HS





RELIGIOUS INCLUSION DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON




With the Christmas season running through the heads of the children, one of the issues I have seen repeatedly along with some effective solutions is the Inclusion of the other religious beliefs that have their own special meaning for this or any other holidays. Christianity and Catholicism reign supreme while Judaism has been but a second thought this year, with even the older kids only recently being introduced to the alternate religious system. As an atheist myself I still find the need to introduce kids to these other types of religions earlier in their life, not as a way to promote or demote, but as a way that lets kids be aware of their importance and impact on the world. Earlier introduction will not only help kids find their own ideas, if any, about religion, but will also counter any racial biases that they may have been subjected to in the country. With America being introduced in a new age of acceptance, religion should not be ignored as it is a prominent figure in around 76% of American families (PewResearch). The best way to be inclusive for all religions is to be very neutral with their ideas and holidays. Although Christmas, no matter if it's Christianity-influenced or not, is an important holiday for American Culture, we should at least give some acknowledgement to those who aren't as prominent. It helps with bringing the community together and allowing kids who maybe are feeling left out to have more representation during the holidays. This idea won't just benefit these communities now, but in the future as these future voters will now be able to create a better America without the biases of any past ideas that were created throughout history. From what I have witnessed in the program, this issue has been handled very well by the instructors but I feel as if there is still more we could be doing.

-Salvatorre Taraya - West Campus



LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM



In the Sacramento Unified School District lack of diversity and inclusion has always been a highly seen issue but never talked about openly or fixed. I would like to focus on the issue of a lack of representation at schools. From teachers and administrators to lesson plans, there is a certain lack of diversity and representation in lesson plans about the history of the achievements of different minority groups and cultures throughout the school system. Going forward in my education I learn either about the horrors that minority groups have had to suffer or a whitewashed version that downplayed the terrifying events that took place in their history. Never have I been able to learn in school the amazing achievements made by minorities or the beauty of the culture.

The history about America specifically taught in the school system is suppressed by the need to control the narrative about the United States and the backwoods way that we came to be. It hides the fact that the country was built off the backs of the cultures they have oppressed and blamed for the horrible attributes that are presented by the country itself. I've been taught about the same three people every black history month, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Harriet Tubman. I cannot name a single achievement made by an individual in the Hispanic community nor the Asian community that I have learned in school that hasn't been taught to a sixth grader. I am a junior. I go to the number one school in Sacramento, I should know about the achievements made by these amazing communities that have contributed towards so many things. This is why I express the need for further representation in our school district, the lesson plans are getting repetitive and lazy at this point.

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LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM

There is no excuse for the lack of knowledge or initiative taken to further educate children about the different cultures that make up the place that they live in. We are called the “Melting Pot” for a reason.

When I go to school I would like to see more people like me teaching my lessons, talking about college, or even counseling me. As a younger child I was presented with more diversity than I get now and that's saying something from a person who has only had six non-white teachers educate her in the span of thirteen years. I propose a push for recruiting teachers, counselors, and administrators that are people of color. There are so many people of color who have pursued education but have been put to the side, even in a teacher shortage.

I propose better lesson plans that aren't repetitive when it comes to learning the history of different cultures and minorities. There are so many people who have walked this earth who have done extraordinary things who were minorities, it is possible to not use the same three people (even though it is important to learn about them) every time we speak of a minority in the classroom.

-Kaila Gooch, West Campus





LOVE AND APPRECIATION FOR MY SCHOOL

I am a student at Health Professions high school. There are so many things that I love about the school. The whole four years that I've been there the teachers and staff have been amazing. I thought being at a small school would be very different but I like the school environment.

Even though the school is understaffed, I know I can always go to any teacher or staff for anything. I feel comfortable going to most of the staff when I need help or just someone to talk to. Our counselor is super helpful. He started at our school this year and he made a connection with so many students and became someone everyone is comfortable talking to. The teachers are amazing. They have so much going on with the shortage of teachers and having to take extra classes but they still care about all of their students.

I really like that almost everyone gets along. We go to a small school so most people have the same classes or the same friends so everyone sees and sometimes talks to each other. I hear that a lot of schools have drama or so and so don't like each other but we don't really have any of that at our school. I really like it because it also helps people stay focused on their work instead of drama. The environment of the school overall is really nice, almost everyone has a good relationship with everyone else in their grade at least.

I know every school has their good and bad things to talk about, but I'm very happy to be able to talk about more good than bad about the school I go to. I hope there are more schools like mine but if not hopefully more schools become better for the students.

-Nevaeh Belardi - Health Professions





FOOD DRIVE TOOLKIT

ABOUT US

River City Food Bank's (RCFB) mission is to alleviate hunger in Sacramento County by providing healthy, emergency food and other assistance, offering referrals and promoting self-sufficiency through a variety of support services.

Our programs serve low-income families, children, seniors, individuals who are medically fragile, refugees/asylum-seekers, individuals experiencing homelessness, low-income households and individuals with disabilities. RCFB serves all people experiencing food insecurity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and background in Sacramento County (no zip code restrictions). **In 2021, RCFB served more than 2.2 million pounds of food to 206,523 people facing hunger.**

MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Canned Fruit
- Canned Tuna
- Peanut Butter
- Granola Bars
- Canned Soup
- Cereal
- Oatmeal
- Pasta
- Rice
- Chili/Ravioli
- Canned Veggies
- Crackers
- Protein Shakes
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Formula
- Pet Food
- Bottles of water
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Tampons/Pads

SHARE ON SOCIAL

Facebook: @RiverCityFoodBank
Twitter: @RCFoodBank
Linked-In: @River City Food Bank
Instagram: @rivercityfoodbank

Take a photo of your food drive and tag us!

#neighborshelpingneighbors
#RiverCityFoodBank





RIVER CITY
FOOD BANK

DONATE FOOD HERE



Scan here
to learn
more!

www.rivercityfoodbank.org



WAYS TO VOLUNTEER IN SAC DURING THE HOLIDAY BREAK

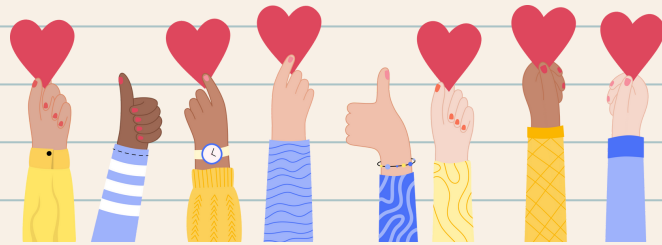
Holiday and Seasonal

The holidays can intensify feelings of loneliness for those away from their family. Many volunteer opportunities are available to help remind people that they are not forgotten and they are special during these sensitive times. With many organizations ready to serve, sign-up as a volunteer for this holiday season.

Gifts from the Heart

This is a large volunteer holiday gift drive that provides thousands of gifts to foster children, seniors and disabled adults served by the Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services system of care. This program is run by volunteers and relies completely upon donations from the community. Clients must be referred by their social workers for gifts. Opportunities to help include:

- Volunteering
- Donating



Meals on Wheels

The mission of Senior Nutrition Services and its Meals on Wheels program is to support and maintain the independence and dignity of older persons in their homes and communities and to prevent their premature institutionalization through the provision of a nutritious noon meal five days per week. Find out how you can get started.

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VOLUNTEERS

Helping animals during the holidays and winter months

The County Animal Shelter is hosting several holiday-themed events aimed to educate the public on smart adoptions and to help support the many needs of animals at the shelter and in the community. Learn about our holiday events and how you can get involved.

Volunteers of America – One of the area's largest providers of human services, they minister to the needs of homeless and hungry in our community. Services in Greater Sacramento and Northern Nevada include shelter and comfort, counseling, independent living and parenting skills, substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation, job training and much more. Learn more about Volunteers of America Greater Sacramento & Northern Nevada.

Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services (SFBFS) – SFBFS assists families and individuals in need through eight unique programs, all free to Sacramento area residents. Volunteers are needed in all eight programs: Food Assistance, Clothing, Mother-Baby, Youth Academy, Computer Clubhouse, PlayCare, Women's Wisdom Art, and Adult Education. Become a volunteer today! Attendance at an SFBFS volunteer orientation is required. To sign up for a volunteer orientation, please visit the Sacramento Food Bank website.



MONTHLY RECIPE

Holiday Tree Brownies

Ingredients:

Deselect All

Brownies:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted and cooled, plus more for greasing the pans
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (see Cook's Note)
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- Sixteen 1 1/2-inch pieces candy cane
- White and gold sanding sugar and small non-pareil candy-covered chocolates, such as Sno-Caps, for decorating

American Buttercream Frosting:

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- Pinch of fine salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 to 1/2 tablespoon whole milk
- 24 drops green food coloring
- 1 drop red food coloring

1 For the brownies: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter the bottom and sides of two 8-inch round cake pans. Cut two 8-inch circles out of parchment and line the bottoms of the cake pans with the parchment.

2 Stir together the butter, granulated sugar, vanilla and eggs in a medium bowl. In another bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, salt and baking powder. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir until just combined. Stir in the chocolate chips and divide the batter between the prepared pans, smoothing the tops. Bake until the brownies begin to gain a crust around the edges, pull away from the edge and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes.

3 Let the brownies cool fully in the pans on cooling racks, about 1 hour. Cut each circle into 8 equal triangles with a knife. Use a small offset spatula or pie server to lift each triangle out of the pan.

4 For the American buttercream frosting: Combine the confectioners' sugar, butter and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment (or in a large bowl if using a handheld electric mixer). Mix on low speed until mostly incorporated. Add the vanilla, increase the speed to medium-high and mix until smooth. Loosen the consistency with milk as desired. Add 24 drops green food coloring and 1 drop red food coloring and mix on medium speed for 1 minute. Set aside.

5 To assemble: Using the tip of a paring knife or a skewer, poke a small hole along the bottom edge of each brownie. Insert a candy cane "trunk" into each hole.

6 Fill the piping bag with the frosting and cut 1/4 inch off the tip. Using a zig-zag motion, pipe the frosting from the base to the tip of each tree. Decorate the trees with the sanding sugars and candy-covered chocolate, as desired.



BRAIN BREAK!

$$2 + \text{ornament} = 8 \quad \text{ornament} = \square$$

$$\text{ornament} - \text{mitten} = 4 \quad \text{mitten} = \square$$

$$\text{mitten} + 5 = \text{tree} \quad \text{tree} = \square$$

$$\text{mitten} + \text{tree} + \text{ornament} = \square$$

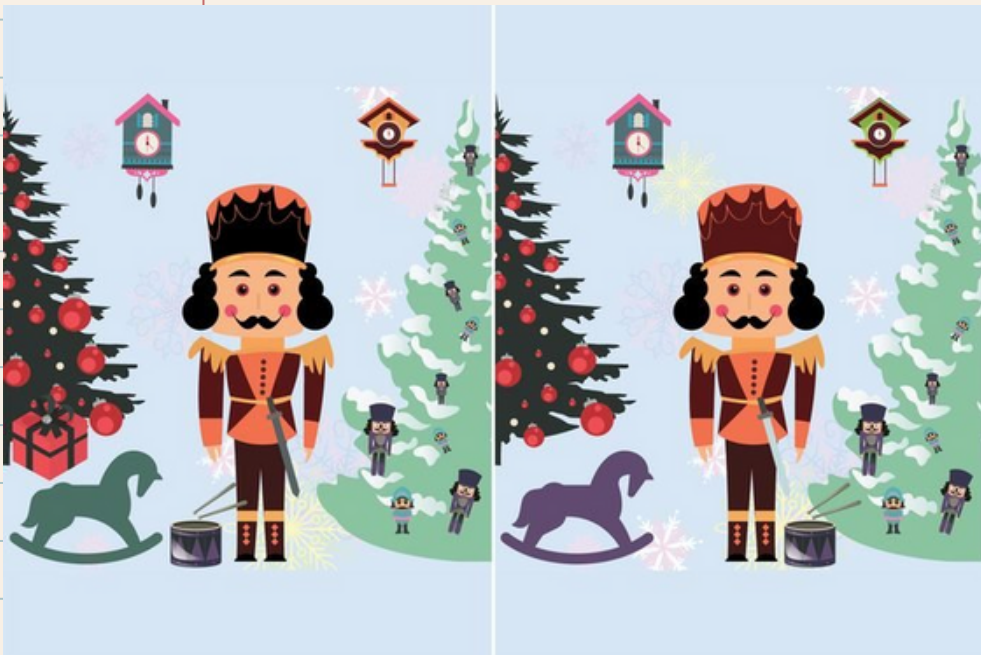
$$3 \text{ lanterns} = 45$$

$$2 \text{ snowmen} + 1 \text{ lantern} = 23$$

$$2 \text{ trees} + 1 \text{ snowman} = 10$$

$$1 \text{ lantern} + 1 \text{ tree} \times 1 \text{ snowman} - 1 \text{ lantern} = ?$$

There are 10 differences between these 2 photos, can you spot them?



Try this mini maze.



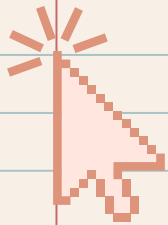


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Do you have an idea you'd like to see mentioned? Do you want to write your own article? Is there a riddle you're desperate to share?

We want to hear your voice in future volumes! Feel free to contact us :

studentadvisorycouncil.scusd@gmail.com



Or DM us on Instagram
using the QR code here:

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