

SOUTH SIDE VOICE

Presented by United Way of Central Ohio and the City of Columbus

360 SOUTH 3RD STREET,
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
DECEMBER 2014, | VOL. 1, NO. 11

Southern GATEWAY
Rich in Heritage. Rich in Promise.

United Way
United Way of Central Ohio



STILL IN THE PICTURE

Native American Center struggling; aims to help local First Peoples reconnect with their cultures *By Kamari Stevens*

Right in the heart of Reeb-Hosack/Steelton Village there exists an organization dedicated to the future of an ancient people, a center dedicated to preserving the stories and cultural traditions of the American Indian, as well as advocating for their social and individual health and well-being.

For now, at least. Nestled on the corner of Innis and South Fourth St. is the Native American Indian Center of

Central Ohio (NAICCO), whose origins date back almost three decades when it was founded by Selma Walker. NAICCO is a non-profit organization that “proudly exists to improve the lives of American Indian and Alaska Native people throughout Ohio.” Walker, a member of the Yankton Dakota tribe, started NAICCO in a grassroots fashion in 1975. The seed planted, the one-person operation later blossomed, becoming a safe place where many American Indians and Alas-

kan Natives would gather to celebrate their heritage – until recently.

The Circle of Care grant NAICCO had been receiving expired in September, cutting off a lot funding for the small staff.

“(The grant) was a substantial amount of money -- we did a lot of good with it,” said NAICCO’s Circle of Care Project

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MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

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Reigniting the flame of a chilly Christmas heart: Nationwide Children’s Third annual Toy Drive returns to lift spirits: *page 7*

AND MUCH MORE!

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SOUTHERN GATEWAY
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FROM THE EDITOR



Photo by Megan Leigh Barnard

HOLIDAYS ARE FOR EVERYONE

As we move into the holiday season, we are about to be bombarded with the weird stuff that always seems to come with them.

We'll hear from Christians who feel as though too much Christmas has been removed from the season. We'll hear from atheists who feel bullied by all the Christmas-oriented cheer, from public manger displays to the ever-present Christmas music. We'll hear the usual little bit about Hanukkah, and leave December knowing little more about menorahs and dreidels than we did last December. We'll hear vaguely about Kwanzaa. We'll hear from the Festivus folks, people who are still somehow invested in Seinfeld, 16 years after the last episode aired.

We'll hear some the "Happy Holidays" crowd, and we'll hear plenty from the talking heads on television, all vying to make the "war on Christmas" into a newsworthy event. We'll hear the most from toy companies, car dealerships, and diamond sellers, all trying to convince us to spend an obscene amount of money on costly gifts. (Sometimes, they even try and convince us that we need to get *ourselves* an expensive present, too, just to de-stress from all the lavish gift-buying we've been doing for other people.)

All of it exhausts me, and I bet it exhausts lots of you, too. There's pressure for normal people to spend too much, and the silent notion that, if we don't go beyond our means or deeply into debt, we either don't

care about our loved ones, don't have enough holiday spirit or, worst, that our miserly gift-giving will ruin someone's Christmas.

I'm exhausted by people telling me that there's a war on Christmas. I'm exhausted by people telling me that I should've said 'Happy Holidays' instead, too.

In short, I'm tired of people taking the fun out of this time of year. Let's get real: we do all this stuff at this time every year because winter sucks. We do this because winter is a time where our surroundings appear lifeless, and we want to remind ourselves of how wonderfully alive our friends and family are, and how alive they make us feel. We do our level best (those of us who are lucky enough) to keep the winter and snow and the grayness and muck outside, while we sit warm inside with those we care about.

This year, try to see the world through someone else's faith. Learn how your brother's holidays are celebrated...hold high the differences, and seek out the commonalities. Most of all, when you're with your people, be *with* them. Keep all the silly pressure outside where it belongs...with the snow and the muck.

Have peace, safety, and enjoy your people. We'll see you next year.

Regards,

David S. Lewis
Editor, The South Side Voice

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Director Tyrone Smith. Smith added that the three-year grant, received through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), allowed the center to operate on a daily basis and perform community outreach in hopes of determining needs within it. NAICCO has been forced to scale down the operating hours for the center due to loss of funding, and lacks funding for the organization's website. That doesn't mean the group's work has come to a total standstill: NAICCO still maintains active use of their Facebook page and recently came together, sadly to hold a funeral for community leader and trustee, Kenneth Irwin.

According to Smith, all employees are working on a volunteer basis.

"We're short staffed, we're spread thin and we're trying to get as much done with every step and move that we make. Everything that we are doing is multi-folded planning," he said. A big part of that planning is "Staying Indian in Ohio," a 30-minute documentary featuring local American Indians and Alaskan Natives recounting the struggles of moving to the city from reservations and acknowledging the role NAICCO played in making that life adjustment. The documentary shows NAICCO as a place where American Indians and Alaskan Natives are able to reconnect with their cultural identities. Smith wants the short film to be a source of pride for American Indians and Alaskan Natives in Ohio, and raise awareness of their situation.

"We're not completely out of the picture yet," he said.

The documentary has yet to be released, but the plan is to spread it to all the connections NAICCO has, as well as using social media sites like YouTube and Facebook in hopes that it generates some momentum. Smith said they hope to release it officially by the end of November.

"We're trying to get that spark, get more of a flame, and then hopefully get a fire and create a light that is a beacon of hope," he said. "There are a few circles of people that we know, that feel that they could pass it on further to

foundations and other funding sources that, hopefully if we got [Staying Indian in Ohio] in front of them, it could help make our case. Or at least open the door for conversation."

For now, thanks to an anonymous annual endowment, NAICCO is able to at least keep the lights on. Still, they must search for increased funding and find ways to make NAICCO self-sustaining. Prior to losing the grant, NAICCO provided a daily food and clothing pantry and hosted the White Bison program, a healing group focused on achieving sobriety. Fund-raising business pursuits have been discussed, but acquiring necessary funding is the primary goal, according to Smith.

"(The American Indians) are such a small population, so the volume of our voice is minuscule," said Smith. "We don't have the representation of our people at the right tables. I sit on a few different boards, but I'm only one person."

Smith, a part-Wasco, part-Walla Walla, who originates from Warm Springs, Oregon, moved to Columbus in the early '90s and got involved with NAICCO in 1996, when it was located on Parsons.

"It was a bit hit-or-miss, at first," he said. "Once my wife and I started bringing our kids [to NAICCO], we started meeting people and gravitated to the community."

In 2010, however, NAICCO was facing foreclosure.

"We really came out of the ashes," said Smith. "This place was shut down."

Smith, who holds a degree in social work from

Ohio State University, his wife Masami and several others took over management for NAICCO in 2011. That restructuring, coupled with the Circle of Care grant, extended the lifeline NAICCO needed.

Diligently seeking aid, NAICCO waits patiently for the chance for the volume of their voices to register louder. Smith and the rest of NAICCO remain confident in the cause.

"This isn't my place, [my wife's] place... it's *our* place, it's our home and unfortunately, it's what little we have, but we do have something," he said. "Our mission is to be here, to be that foundation, that rock, that home, for them to come to." ♦

"(The American Indians) are such a small population, so the volume of our voice is minuscule. We don't have the representation of our people at the right tables. I sit on a few different boards, but I'm only one person."

DECEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS

★
We've put
the calendar on
two connected pages
so you can hang it up
to remember all
of these great
events!



DECEMBER 5

GRASSININE CONCERT TO BENEFIT SSL&DC

8-10pm at Woodlands Tavern, 1200 W.
Third Ave., Grandview

Grassinine, the great blue grass band that entertained everyone at the first Steel & Glass Festival this year will be playing to benefit South Side Learning & Development Center. There is a cover charge (ranging from \$6 to \$20) and there will be a live auction (including

Donato's pizza for a year!) and a 50/50 raffle. Come out & help support this long-standing, great South Side organization. For tickets or more information, call Shiloh Todorov at (614) 787-7129 or e-mail at todorov@germanvillage.com

DECEMBER 17

SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE CENTER TEAM

1:30-2:30pm at Barack Recreation
Center, 580 E Woodrow Ave.

Come be a part of the South Side Neighborhood Pride Center Team. We meet at 1:30pm for the first 3 Wednesdays of each month. The fourth Wednesday of each month we meet at 3pm. (There are no meetings on the fifth Wednesday of each month.)

DECEMBER 23

COLUMBUS SOUTH SIDE AREA COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday Dec. 23 7-8:30 p.m. at Barack
Recreation Center, 580 E. Woodrow

JANUARY 4

MINISTRIES 4 MOVEMENT MARCH

3-4pm at Family Missionary Baptist
Church, 996 Oakwood Ave.

All are welcome as we discuss ways to change the conditions and improve the quality of life in our community. The event will be with a 30 minute march, followed with a short program with a different theme each month.

JANUARY 7

PAMA MEETING

12-1:30pm at Scrambler Marie's,
567 E. Livingston Ave.

All who are interested in the development of Parsons Ave. are welcome to attend are monthly meeting of the Parsons Ave Merchants Association (PAMA). Come learn about the future improvements in development for Parsons Ave and get involved!

DECEMBER 7

MINISTRIES 4 MOVEMENT MARCH

3-4pm at Family Missionary Baptist
Church, 996 Oakwood Ave.

FREE 30 minute awareness march, followed by a short program focusing on a monthly theme, held the first Sunday of each month. ALL ARE WELCOME! Learn how to change the conditions and improve the quality of life in our communities. Call (614) 253-8865 or (614) 252-7488 for more information.

DECEMBER 10

NEW LIBRARY MEETING

7 p.m. at St. Paul's UCC, 225 E. Gates

Columbus Metro Library staff to meet with Merion Village residents regarding zoning for the new library which is expected to open April 2016.

DECEMBER 11

WOMEN TO WOMEN LISTENING CIRCLE

11:30am - 1pm Corpus Christi Center of
Peace 1111 E. Stewart Ave.

FREE EVENT; LUNCH PROVIDED AT 11:30 - 2nd Thursday of each month. All women of any age or life circumstances are invited. Women to Women is a safe,

non-judgmental, confidential place where we can be who we are. No pre-registration is necessary. Just come as you are. No childcare available, so please make other arrangements for your little ones. For information, call Corpus Christi Center of Peace at 614-512-3731 or email corpuschristicenterofpeace@gmail.com

DECEMBER 13

GANTHERS PLACE LIGHTING OF THE LUMINARIES

6-8pm at Park For All People,
566 Reinhard Ave

Come join us for the adorning of our community and parks with lights and decorations in recognition of the year-end holidays and the beginning of the new year.

DECEMBER 18, JANUARY 21

KROGER GROCERY STORE TOURS AND FOOD GIVEAWAY

6-8 pm at Kroger, 1441 Parsons Ave.

Kroger grocery aims to reduce hunger and to benefit nutrition in the neighborhood by offering free groceries AND a free two-hour seminar, designed to teach neighborhood residents how to cook healthy meals on any budget. The event is free, but in order to qualify, attendees must be present

for the entire two-hour Grocery Store Tour. There is no registration but attendance is first come, first served, and there are limited seats available, so show up a little early and learn how to stretch those food dollars and still make nutritious (and delicious!) meals for your family.



CIVIC ASSOCIATION LEADERS & MEETING TIMES

Schumacher Place

Kathy Green, President
kathryngreen@yahoo.com
 Meetings held third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Planks Cafe on Parsons
www.schumacherplace.org

Hungarian Village

Paula Copeland, President
hvsociety@yahoo.com
 614-222-2145, Meetings held second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., Hungarian Reform Church, 365 Woodrow Ave.

SouthSide C.A.N.

Debera Diggs, President
 614-598-2237. Meetings held second Mondays of the month at 7:00 p.m. at South High School, 1160 Ann St.. For more information contact President Debera Diggs.

Reeb-Hosack/ Steelton Village

Linda Henry, Co-chair
lhshenry4@gmail.com
 Lillie Banner, Co-chair
 Meetings held second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at Resurrection Missionary Baptist Church, 280 Hosack, Social/food 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Merion Village

Tony Roell, President
anthonyroell@gmail.com
 January 7, 7-8:30 p.m. at Merion Village Information Center, 1330 S. Fourth St. Come hear about exciting neighborhood developments coming in 2015, give your input on all aspects of your neighborhood and get to know your neighbors. For more information visit www.merionvillage.org

Vassor Village

Kelly Coate, President
remaxpkellycoate@aol.com
 Meetings held first Wednesday of each month at Barack Recreation Center 580 Woodrow Ave., Block Watch at 6:30 p.m. Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. www.vassorvillage.webs.com

Innis Gardens Village

Brenda Cummings, President
bndbhealthy@yahoo.com
 December 18, 6-8 p.m. at 1402 Smith Rd. Come join us for our local Block Watch and Civic Association meetings. The Block Watch meeting runs from 6-6:45pm, with the Civic Association meeting following afterward. Come get involved!

Deshler Park

Earl Littlefield, President
earlittfield@sbcglobal.net
 614-329-5294
 December 18, 6-7pm at Alvis House, 1791 Alum Creek Dr. Everyone is welcome to join us at our Civic Association meeting. Attend and hear about the great things taking place in our neighborhood!

Southern Orchards Southside United Neighbors

Richard Shaffer, President
southernorchards.1982@gmail.com, Meetings held first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m., Stowe Mission, 888 Parson Ave.

Stambaugh-Elwood

For more information, contact Luddie Hatten 614-443-7219

JANUARY 8

WOMEN TO WOMEN LISTENING CIRCLE

11:30- 1:30pm at Corpus Christi Center of Peace, 1111 E. Stewart Ave.

All women of any age or life circumstance are welcomed to this free event. Women to Women is a safe, non-judgmental, confidential place where you can be who you are. There are no requirements. This is simply a place where you can step away, breathe, and share with other women.

For more information call Corpus Christi Center of Peace at 614-512-3731 or email us at corpuschristicenterofpeace@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY JANUARY 31, 2015

SOUTHERN GATEWAY CELEBRATION

10am-12pm at Barack Recreation Center, 580 Woodrow

Join in the celebration to thank all residents, the City of Columbus, businesses and others who have helped create and have begun implementing the revitalization plan to return the Columbus South Side to a vibrant, thriving area that attracts, retains, involves and provides opportunities for success of residents and businesses and that invites, entertains, informs and delights visitors. Light refreshments will be provided.

BE FEATURED ON THIS PAGE

To have your meeting or event listed, send us a short description, date, time, location and web link (if any).

paper@southsidevoice.org


**MANDY'S
HEALTH
CORNER**


WINTER WELLNESS TIPS

Staying healthy in winter can be a challenge; luckily, there are many inexpensive ways to keep your health (and spirits!) high in the cold season *By Mandy Fowler*

WEAR SUNSCREEN- EVEN IN THE SNOW!

Snow reflects more than 75-percent of the sun's damaging rays. UVA damage penetrates the skin, causing the body's immune system to breakdown making it more susceptible to sickness during the winter. Also, over-exposure to the sun's winter reflection can speed up the aging process and raise the risk of skin cancer. Treating your skin with sunscreen and moisturizer will protect you from harmful radiation, protect you from painful windburn, and help prevent sensitive skin from chapping.

DO NOT:

Use sunscreen powders, sprays or towels. They pose a risk of inhalation, and don't cover as thoroughly as lotion

Rely exclusively on a high SPF. Using a high SPF does not guarantee coverage against UVA and UVB rays.

DO:

Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside

Use on areas such as ears, neck, the underside of your chin, the backs of your hands and, in some circumstances, the scalp.

Use lip balm with an SPF of 15

COMBAT CONGESTION - NATURALLY

With the changes in the seasons, comes the yearly fight with chest congestion. Tightness in the chest, wheezing, and coughing all go hand in hand with seasonal allergies, bronchitis, and the common cold. While you are at the store looking through the many products promising relief, remember that, sometimes natural is better. These "home remedies" are not only much cheaper, but also won't interact negatively with other medications.

Did you know grapes are a delicious and healthy natural expectorant? Eating 5-10 grapes can help natu-

rally break up mucus and help relieve congestion.

If the grapes aren't working, here's an easy recipe for a congestion aid:

NATURAL MUCUS EXPECTORANT

Cut one medium white onion in half; place into a glass dish, cut sides up.

Pour one tablespoon of honey over each cut side of the onion and cover the dish.

Place into the refrigerator until moisture collects in the bottom of the covered dish.

Remove from refrigerator and drain the juice into a glass and drink. (Discard the onion.)

OTHER TIPS AND TRICKS:

Indoor plants boost moisture levels and increase the oxygen levels. Try easy to grow vines, such as pathos, or colorful orchids, which keep the blooms throughout the winter.

Staying hydrated keeps the body's moisture level up. Drinking eight glasses of water a day can improve dry, itchy skin. (Try water infused with in-season fruit; such as cranberries or pomegranates; it adds a little flair to the humble water and provides vitamins and nutrients!)

Increase your vitamin A and C intake to boost immunity and your energy. Winter's draining effect can keep you drowsy and down. Asparagus and Swiss chard are in season and a great source of these essential vitamins.

Potassium levels can also decrease during the winter, leading to problems such as painful joint and leg pain. Eating a banana a day at breakfast, however, is a tasty and inexpensive way to increase the body's potassium levels while also getting a fruit serving in for the day.

PARENT'S CORNER

PARENT POWER!

Parents gathered at the South Side Boys and Girls Club at 1702 Parsons Avenue for a meeting to discuss the Thanksgiving potluck, student grades, and other details about club happenings. These parents consistently support the club in many ways, showing that they are invested in their children's success. Research shows that parents who are engaged in their child's education give their children an advantage. Daniel Custer hosted

Research shows that parents who are engaged in their child's education give their children an advantage.

the meeting to get parent input, give information and build a sense of community with club members and their families. The Parent Connection was present, bringing healthy snacks and information about holiday resources. The club boasts having 50 members after originally opening in the spring of this year, and looks forward to moving into their new location on Reeb Avenue next fall. ♦

If you are interested in supporting the South Side Boys and Girls Club or have an interested teen between the ages of 12 and 19, contact Daniel Custer at (614) 221-8830, or e-mail him at dcuster@bgccolumbus.org.

BECOME A SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Want a chance to make a difference in your community and get paid to do it?

Columbus Public Health's South Side Network for Healthy Families & Babies, in partnership with The Ohio State University College of Nursing, is recruiting South Side residents to become Certified Community Health Workers. Come

be a part of a new program in your own neighborhood and earn an employment certification!

The South Side Community Connectors Program is a paid training program. After completion, you will be eligible to become a Certified Community Health Worker. Applicants must be a resident of zip codes 43206 or 43207, have a high school diploma or equivalent or a GED, and be able to pass a background check and drug test.

This is a great way for you to get involved with your neighbors in a positive and powerful way. If you are interested, please contact Tiffani Scales (614) 645-1478

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL HOSTS 3RD ANNUAL

TOY DRIVE

Drive to help hospitalized
children maintain good spirits

The third annual Every Gift Matters Great Toy Drop-Off to benefit patients at Nationwide Children's Hospital will be held Saturday, December 6, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Interested persons should follow the signage to the Outpatient Care loop located at 555 S. 18th St., where staff will accept toy donations for patients while donors remain in their cars.

Each year during the holidays, Nationwide Children's receives countless phone calls and e-mails from the community asking about donating toys to patients. A gift of toys, games or activity supplies can make a big difference to children and families spending time in the hospital, especially during the holidays. While donations of food or clothing cannot be accepted, the following items are ideal:

- Legos
- Decks of Uno cards
- Decks of regular playing cards
- Infant soothers that attach to crib rail
(all plastic please)
- Toddler toys - Especially those that are musical and/or light-up (all plastic please)
- Toy medical kits
- CD players
- Teen DVD's (PG-13, no R please)
- Craft kits for 'twens' and teens
- Play-Doh

All donated items should be unwrapped. Because of concerns regarding infection control and allergies, the hospital cannot accept used toys or used stuffed animals, including toys or stuffed animals that have never been played with, but have been in a home as part of a collection.

For more information on the appropriate types of toys and gifts Nationwide Children's can accept, please visit us at www.nationwidechildrens.org/wish-list-for-donations ♦



EDITORIAL:



FROM YOUR REPRESENTATIVE:

THANKS, AND MOVING FORWARD

By Ohio Representative Michael Stinziano

Thank you!

Many thanks for supporting my re-election to the Ohio House.

I am proud to continue representing people living and working in the best 22 square miles in Ohio, including the great neighborhoods of the South Side, and am committed to representing you with practical, innovative, and effective leadership at the Statehouse to find common-sense solutions that overcome the problems we face today to build a better, brighter future for us all.

As your State Representative, I will work across the aisle to champion legislation to create more and better jobs in our community, improve neighborhood safety, and fight for hardworking taxpayers, for our seniors, and for our kids.

Make no mistake about it: now, more than ever before, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents need to work together to support programs that create jobs in our community and improve neighborhood safety.

During the campaign, people throughout our community offered common sense suggestions for making Ohio a better place to live, work, raise a family, and grow a business. I look forward to pursuing legislation to enact these ideas into law.

One of those ideas is establishing so-called "Start Up Zones," in neighborhoods that would exempt new companies and their employees from paying state taxes for 10 years if the company is located in a university or community-college community and creates new jobs.

Businesses locating in these zones affiliated with public and private universities, colleges, and community colleges, can operate 100-percent tax free for 10 years, paying no income tax, no business or corporate state or local taxes, no sales tax, no property tax, and no franchise fees.

My legislation, specifically aimed at creating and attracting technologically-sophisticated companies to Ohio while also keeping Ohio college graduates in Ohio, is modeled after New York Gov. Andrew Cuo-

mo's successful "Start-Up New York" initiative, which you may see running TV ads attempting to encourage Ohio companies to relocate to New York.

"Start-Up New York" has transformed SUNY campuses and other university communities across the state into tax-free communities for new and expanding businesses. This summer, New York officials announced that twelve businesses are opening or relocating to New York because of the program. Governor Cuomo's office expects these new businesses to bring in \$50 million and as many as 400 new jobs, all as a direct result of "Start-Up New York."

With 135 colleges and universities located throughout Ohio, I am confident that we have the ideal environment for this program. In my district alone there are seven college campuses. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage growth and investment for companies that may not be eligible for other incentives the State of Ohio offers to businesses. I anticipate that campuses and companies will be able to foster a positive, mutual relationship in these new communities based on training and degree planning opportunities for students and a skilled, work-ready pool of job candidates for the companies. Ohioans throughout the state will reap the benefits of this program.

When my legislation becomes law, Ohio will join New York in this tax-free zone initiative for companies locating businesses near campuses. Rhode Island is currently considering similar legislation.

Remember, when you have an idea, problem, question, or concern or anytime that I can be of service, call me at (614) 466-1896 or email me at rep18@ohiohouse.gov and I will do everything I can to help.

I'm at the Statehouse, working for you.

(Also, please visit my official Statehouse Website often to learn more about my work at improving our community: www.ohiohouse.gov/michael-stinziano) ♦

Rep. Michael Stinziano represents the 18th House District, including the great neighborhoods and businesses of the South Side.



Spicing Up Christmas

By Kamari Stevens

I will be celebrating my 26th holiday season in a couple of weeks and I think I might be bored with Christmas. Like most children raised in Christian households, I grew up looking forward to the Christmas season – mainly because of the gifts – but I also loved watching all the Christmas movies and listening to the music. I was a Christmas fiend. Even as I got older, I still maintained a good bit of Christmas spirit. I remember, as

a 19-year-old, watching copious amounts of ABC Family's *25 Days of Christmas* programming...600 hours of every type of Christmas anything you could ask for. And that may have been what sapped it out of me.

But when a thing grows dull, taking action to reignite the flames of passion is necessary. So I have developed an almost foolproof method to make me (and perhaps you) fall in love with Christmas again.

Make a Christmas mixtape

Music is great for setting a mood. And while there's tons of Christmas music available, a lot of it is terrible. How many versions of "The Christmas Song" can you make? An *ignorant* amount, according to the Internet.

Still, what makes for good Christmas music is a good artist, and, if not an original song, at least a fresh take on a classic. So here's my Christmas mixtape, which you may certainly use as your own.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

by *The Drifters*:
Classic tune from classic Christmas movie *Home Alone*

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

by *The Temptations*:
I believe Motown holds the championship belt of Christmas song renditions

SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN

by *The Jackson 5*:
See? I wasn't kidding.

THIS CHRISTMAS

by *Donny Hathaway*:
I could probably listen to this song all year long. It transcends the holidays.

JINGLE BELL ROCK

by *Bobby Helms*:
Classic Christmas song, but a version you can groove to.

CHRISTMAS IN HOLLIS

by *Run-DMC*:
Has to be the first Christmas song you could head-nod to.

CHRISTMAS IN HARLEM

by *Kanye West*:
I'MA LET YOU FINISH BUT KANYE WEST HAD THE BEST CHRISTMAS SONG OF ALL TIME!!! (Not really, but it's a fun thing to write)

PLAYER'S BALL

by *Outkast*:
Bet you didn't know there was more than one hip-hop Christmas song?

THE CHRISTMAS SONG

by *Nat King Cole*:
It has been sung many times, many ways, but Mr. Cole has the hand's-down best version of The Christmas Song.

The Perfect Christmas Movie

I've seen a bunch of Christmas movies. "A Christmas Story," "Elf," every terrible Christmas movie with Melissa Joan Hart. I am very familiar with the genre. But there has been one particular Christmas movie I have avoided for some time. "The Nightmare Before Christmas." Never saw it. It was re-

leased in 1993 and I haven't so much as caught a glimpse of it on cable. My reason for not seeing it: fear. I remember seeing commercials for the movie and being terrified of it. And so, I have avoided a movie that I hear is great for almost 21 years due to a simple lack of courage. That ends this year. The perfect Christmas movie for me is the one that I haven't yet experienced.

Giving Back

Most of this has been about things I'm going to do for myself to make for a better Christmas season. I admit that, while I may have grown a little tired of Christmas, it has always been a wonderful time that I get to share with my family. That's not the case for everybody. I feel like I've given a decent amount during the Christmas season, but

one thing I have never given is my time. That's the most valuable gift you can give...so, I'm going to do some volunteering. And I know you're busy, too, and that we're all so busy with our own holiday preparations...but, if even only for a few hours, try and do something for someone else with less. It might be the best Christmas present they get this year.