

# WHISTLER

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## The Christmas Miracle

by Susan Morton Leonard

A few years ago, a little boy and his grandmother came to see Santa at Mayfair Mall in Wisconsin. The child climbed up on his lap, holding a picture of a little girl.

"Who is this?" asked Santa, smiling. "Your friend? Your sister?"

"Yes, Santa," he replied. "My sister, Sarah, who is very sick," he said sadly.

Santa glanced over at the grandmother who was waiting nearby, and saw her dabbing her eyes with a tissue.

"She wanted to come with me to see you, oh, so very much, Santa!" the child exclaimed.

"She misses you," he added softly.

Santa tried to be cheerful and encouraged a smile to the boy's face, asking him what he wanted Santa to bring him for Christmas.

When they finished their visit, the Grandmother came over to help the child off his lap, and started to say something to Santa, but halted.

"What is it?" Santa asked warmly.

"Well, I know it's really too much to ask you, Santa, but..." the old woman began, shooing her grandson over to one of Santa's elves to collect the little gift which Santa gave all his young visitors.

"...The girl in the photograph... my granddaughter... well, you see she has leukemia and isn't expected to make it even through the holidays," she said through tear-filled eyes. "Is there any way, Santa, any possible way that you could come see Sarah? That's all she's asked for Christmas, is to see Santa."

Santa blinked and swallowed hard and told the woman to leave information with his elves as to where Sarah was, and he would see what he could do.

Santa thought of little else the rest of that afternoon. He knew what he had to do. "What if it were MY child lying in that hospital bed, dying," he thought with a sinking heart, "this is the least I can do."

When Santa finished visiting with all the boys and girls that evening, he retrieved from his helper the name of the hospital where Sarah was staying. He then asked the assistant location manager how to get to Children's Hospital.

"Why?" Rick asked, with a puzzled look on his face.



Santa relayed to him the conversation with Sarah's grandmother earlier that day.

"C'mon... I'll take you there," Rick said softly.

Rick drove them to the hospital and came inside with Santa. They found out which room Sarah was in. A pale Rick said he would wait out in the hall. Santa quietly peeked into the room through the half-closed door and saw little Sarah on the bed.

The room was full of what appeared to be her family; there was the Grandmother and the girl's brother he had met earlier that day. A woman whom he guessed was Sarah's mother stood by the bed, gently pushing Sarah's thin hair off her forehead. And another woman who he discovered later was Sarah's aunt, sat in a chair near the bed with weary, sad look on her face. They were talking quietly, and Santa could sense the warmth and closeness of the family, and their love and concern for Sarah.

Taking a deep breath, and forcing a smile on his face, Santa entered the room, bellowing a hearty, "Ho, Ho, Ho!"

"Santa!" shrieked little Sarah weakly, as she tried to escape her bed to run to him, IV tubes intact.

Santa rushed to her side and gave her a warm hug. A child the tender age of his own son - 9 years old - gazed up at him with wonder and excitement.

Her skin was pale and her short tresses bore telltale bald patches from the effects of chemotherapy. But all he saw when he looked at her was a pair of huge, blue eyes. His heart melted, and he had to force himself to choke back tears. Though his eyes were riveted upon Sarah's face, he could hear the gasps and quiet sobbing of the women in the room.

As he and Sarah began talking, the family crept quietly to the bedside one by one, squeezing Santa's shoulder or his hand gratefully, whispering "thank you" as they gazed sincerely at him with shining eyes.

Santa and Sarah talked and talked, and she told him excitedly all the toys she wanted for Christmas, assuring him she'd been a very good girl that year.

As their time together dwindled, Santa felt led in his spirit to pray for Sarah, and asked for permission from the girl's mother. She nodded in agreement and the entire family circled around Sarah's bed, holding hands.

Santa looked intensely at Sarah and asked her if she believed in Angels.

"Oh, yes, Santa. I do!" she exclaimed.

"Well, I'm going to ask that Angels watch over you," he said. Laying one hand on the child's head, Santa closed his eyes and prayed. He asked that God touch little Sarah, and heal her body from this disease. He asked that Angels minister to her, watch and keep her. And when he finished praying, still with eyes closed, he started singing softly, "Silent Night, Holy Night... all is calm, all is bright."

The family joined in, still holding hands, smiling at Sarah, and crying tears of hope, tears of joy for this moment, as Sarah beamed at them all. When the song ended, Santa sat on the side of the bed again and held Sarah's frail, small hands in his own.

"Now, Sarah," he said authoritatively, "you have a job to do, and that is to concentrate on getting well. I want you to have fun playing with your friends this summer, and I expect to see you at my house at Mayfair Mall this time next year!"

He knew it was risky proclaiming that, to this little girl who had terminal cancer, but he "had" to. He had to give her the greatest gift he could - not dolls or games or toys - but the gift of HOPE.

"Yes, Santa!" Sarah exclaimed, her eyes bright.

He leaned down and kissed her on the forehead and left the room.

Out in the hall, the minute Santa's eyes met Rick's, a look passed between them and they wept unashamed.

Sarah's mother and grandmother slipped out of the room quickly and rushed to Santa's side to thank him.

"My only child is the same age as Sarah," he explained quietly. "This is the least I could do."

They nodded with understanding and hugged him.

One year later, Santa Mark was again back on the set in Milwaukee for his six-week, seasonal job which he so loves to do. Several weeks went by and then one day a child came up to sit on his lap.

"Hi, Santa! Remember me?!" "Of course, I do," Santa proclaimed (as he always does), smiling down at her. After all, the secret to being a "good" Santa is to always make each child feel as if they are the "only" child in the world at that moment.

"You came to see me in the hospital last year!"

Santa's jaw dropped. Tears immediately sprang in his eyes, and he grabbed this little miracle and held her to his chest.

"Sarah!" he exclaimed. He scarcely recognized her, for her hair was long and silky and her cheeks were rosy - much different from the little girl he had visited just a year before.

He looked over and saw Sarah's mother and grandmother in the sidelines smiling and waving and wiping their eyes.

That was the best Christmas ever for Santa Claus. He had witnessed - and been blessed to be instrumental in bringing about - this miracle of hope. This precious little child was healed. Cancer-free. Alive and well. He silently looked up to Heaven and humbly whispered, "Thank you, Father.'Tis a very, Merry Christmas!"

*Christmas, you see, is not about what you get, it is about love and giving. Even something simple, like a prayer, a kind word, or kind deed can have a tremendous impact on someone's life. It is not the size or the cost of a gift rather, it is the spirit and intent in which the gift is given that counts. Miracles can happen if we can just take a little time out of our busy lives and just do a simple kindness for someone. We never know just how much that kindness will be blessed and multiplied.*

*- Chaplain Jeff*

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## THE DENTAL CORNER

### Interesting Uses For Toothpaste

Dr. Kristi Collins

Dental Clinic

I found this article and I thought it was quite interesting. I have tried a few of these tricks and had success; I am not sure as to how well they all may work. Toothpaste isn't just for cleaning teeth apparently!!

#### **1- Remove scuffs from shoes**

A little toothpaste can remove scuffs from leather shoes. Just squirt a little on the scuffed area and rub with a soft cloth. Wipe clean with a damp cloth and the leather will look like new.

#### **2- Clean your piano keys**

The ivory keys on a piano can begin to look dingy over time. Clean them with toothpaste and a toothbrush and then wipe them down with a damp cloth. This completely makes sense, since ivory is basically elephant tooth structure. However, toothpaste will work on modern pianos that may have plastic covering the keys.

#### **3-Spiff up your sneakers**

If you want to clean and whiten the rubber part of your sneakers, just use non-gel toothpaste and an old toothbrush. After scrubbing, just wipe off the toothpaste with a damp cloth.

#### **4-Clean your clothes iron**

The mild abrasive in non-gel toothpaste is just the trick for scrubbing the buildup from the bottom plate of your clothes iron. Apply the toothpaste to a cool iron, scrub with a rag and wipe clean.

#### **5-Polish a diamond ring**

Put a little toothpaste on an old toothbrush and use it to make your diamond ring sparkle. Clean the residue with the same old toothbrush after rinsing the toothpaste off of it.

#### **6-Deodorize baby bottles**

Baby bottles that may have a sour-milk smell can be cleaned up using a little toothpaste. Put some on a bottle brush and scrub away....just make sure to rinse thoroughly.

#### **7- Prevent fogged goggles**

Prevent this from happening by coating goggles with toothpaste and then wiping them off.

#### **8-Prevent bathroom mirrors from fogging**

Same as the goggles mentioned above; coat the mirror with the non-gel toothpaste and wipe it off before you get in the shower. When you get out of the shower, the mirror won't be fogged.

#### **9-Shine bathroom and kitchen chrome**

Commercial cleaners work so well for this task due to a fine abrasive they contain. If you don't have any handy, toothpaste will do the trick. The fine abrasive in non-gel toothpaste works wonderfully. Just smear the toothpaste on the chrome and polish with a soft, dry cloth.

#### **10-Clean the bathroom sink**

Non-gel toothpaste works as well as anything else to clean the bathroom sink. Squirt some toothpaste, scrub with a sponge, and rinse it out. A bonus: The toothpaste will kill any odors coming from the drain trap.

#### **11-Remove crayons from walls**

Crayon on the walls is no fun for anyone....Just grab non-gel toothpaste and a rag or better yet, a scrub brush. Squirt the toothpaste on the wall and start scrubbing. The fine abrasive in the toothpaste will rub away the crayon every time. Rinse the wall with water or a damp cloth.

#### **12-Remove ink or lipstick stains from fabric**

This may or may not work, depending on the fabric and the ink, but it is worth a try before trashing your favorite shirt! Put non-gel toothpaste on the stain and rub the fabric vigorously together. Rinse with water. If some of the ink comes out, repeat the process a few more times until all the ink is gone. The same process works for lipstick.

#### **13-Remove water marks from furniture**

Doesn't it drive you crazy when you have coasters sitting around and people refuse to use them? To get rid of those water marks left from cups sitting on furniture and sweating, gently rub some non-gel toothpaste on the wood with a soft cloth. Wipe it off with a damp cloth and let it dry before applying furniture polish.

#### **14-Clear up pimples**

Any of you with teenagers know a pimple can be equivalent to a national emergency. Dab a bit of non-gel, non-whitening toothpaste on the spot, preferably at night. By morning, the pimple should be dry. The toothpaste dehydrates the pimple and absorbs the oil. This remedy works best on pimples that have come to a head. Caution: this remedy may be irritating to sensitive skin.

#### **15- Clean smells from hands**

The ingredients that deodorize your mouth will work on your hands as well. If you have gotten into something smelly, just wash your hands with toothpaste and they will smell great!!

Good luck with any of these, and I would love to know if any of these work for you!!!

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## **NEWS FROM YOUR BENEFITS ADMINISTRATOR**

Angie Cunningham

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT CHANGES**

If you made changes during Open Enrollment, they will be effective January 1, 2017. When you receive your first paycheck in 2017, please check to be sure the correct premiums are coming out.

### **PEBA offers the following value-based benefits at no cost to you:**

**Diabetes education:** Living with diabetes can be challenging. Learn ways to manage the disease through a consultation with a health professional.

**Preventive screening:** By getting screened for health risks—with a blood pressure check, cholesterol check and other assessments—you might identify potential health problems. Screenings are worth more than \$300 and can be done right at your workplace or at a nearby screening location.

**Colonoscopy:** This procedure can find and remove colon growths before they develop into cancer. This benefit covers not only the colonoscopy but also associated services.

**Adult vaccinations:** Vaccines save lives and improve the quality of life by preventing serious infectious diseases and their consequences. Following recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), this benefit covers vaccines for adults, such as shingles, pneumonia and HPV.

**Flu-vaccine:** Health providers encourage virtually everyone to receive the flu vaccine. It helps protect you from influenza, or lessen your symptoms if you do contract the flu.

**No-pay copay:** Receive a year's worth of free generic drugs for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, congestive heart failure or diabetes. Many diabetic supplies are also covered at network pharmacies.

**Tobacco cessation:** Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. A Quit for Life health coach can help you make a plan and guide you through the steps to becoming tobacco-free. Medications for tobacco cessation are available at no cost to you.

**For more information, visit [PEBAperks.com](http://PEBAperks.com).**

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## **LEISURE SERVICES LEISURE HAPPENINGS**

As always, Leisure staff would like to say thank you to everyone who has assisted in all of our activities. We appreciate all of the support we are given to make these activities happen.

### **September 2016**

In September, residents and staff enjoyed adventures to the Gaffney outlets, the Barnyard Flea Market, Metro Flea Market, and Laurens Park. Other outings and activities that were enjoyed included shopping, going to the movies, and going out to eat at KFC, Shealy's, Wendy's, Smoke House, and the Golden Corral. The Bocce Team and the Disc Golf Team competed in Rock Hill in the Area 11 Annual Invitational, and did very well, bringing home 2 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 8 bronze medals. .

### **October 2016**

Whew! October was busy!!! Approximately 160 residents and staff enjoyed a trip to the State Fair again this year. Other fun outings included: trips to football games, Blue Ocean, shopping at local businesses, Shealy's, Squealin' on the Square, Jockey Lots, Golden Corral, Green Tomato Buffet, and KFC. Several residents and staff attended the Buddy Walk for Down Syndrome in Anderson, where they played games and walked as part of a local young lady's buddy team. Several other residents and staff were able to go uptown to the square to represent Whitten Center at the Bub Lollis Fall Ride. They enjoyed looking at all of the motorcycles, talking with the bikers, and listening to music. Donnie played the drums with the *Radio Band*, and all returned to Whitten Center in time to see all of the bikers ride through Whitten. The month ended with the annual Halloween Carnival and Costume Contest. Unit 106 won the contest hands down with their Ghostbusters costumes and act. Congratulations to all who won awards, and thank you to all staff who assisted in making this a perfect Halloween for our residents.

### **November 2016**

The Bowling Team enjoyed an awards banquet afterward at Red Lobster, where they received trophies, certificates, and a new bowling towel with their name on it. The following weekend, the athletes attended Special Olympics Fall Games in Greenville. Our athletes competed in Bowling and Disc Golf, bringing home 1 gold medal, 1 silver medal, 2 bronze medals, and two 5<sup>th</sup> place ribbons. They were able to spend the night this year, something they haven't been able to do in recent years. Everyone was excited about the hotel, and enjoyed all of the festivities and competition that is Special Olympics Fall Games. Leisure Services would like to thank all staff who accompanied the residents so that they could participate in this awesome event.

Also, Whitten will have a new Christmas float this year! Be on the lookout for it – it will be entered into 5 parades this year. Our residents always look forward to being able to ride on it. Thank you to Transportation and Maintenance staff who have helped with the rebuilding. You are greatly appreciated.

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## CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND SONGS

In the following puzzle, the words are alternate titles for 20 well known Christmas carols and songs. See if you can get them all. 100% assures you a full Christmas stocking!!!

Quadruped with Crimson Proboscis: \_\_\_\_\_

Eight PM to Six AM Without Noise: \_\_\_\_\_

Miniscule Hamlet in the Near East: \_\_\_\_\_

Young Performing Percussionist: \_\_\_\_\_

Adorn the Vestibule: \_\_\_\_\_

Exuberance Directed to the Planet: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen, Ariel Spirits Announcing: \_\_\_\_\_

Trio of Monarchs: \_\_\_\_\_

Yonder in the Hay Rack: \_\_\_\_\_

Cherubim Audited from Aloft: \_\_\_\_\_

Assemble Everyone who Believes: \_\_\_\_\_

Hallowed Post Meridian: \_\_\_\_\_

Fantasies of a Colorless Dec. 25th: \_\_\_\_\_

Tin Tintinnabulations: \_\_\_\_\_

Befell During the Transparent Bewitching Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

Homo Sapiens of Crystallized Vapor: \_\_\_\_\_

Desire a Pair of Incisors on Dec. 25th: \_\_\_\_\_

I Spied my Maternal Parent Osculating: \_\_\_\_\_

Perambulating Through a Dec. Solstice Fantasy: \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Desires for a Joyous Dec 25th: \_\_\_\_\_

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The answer key for this puzzle is available from Chaplain Jeff if you wish to see it.

### UPCOMING EVENTS AND DATES

Saturday December 3 – Clinton Christmas Parade  
Saturday December 3 – Whitten Center Christmas Parade  
Area Christmas Parades - TBA

Tuesday December 13 - Swamp Rabbits Hockey Game  
Thursday December 15 - Christmas Concert  
Friday December 16 - Santa Social  
Thursday December 22 - Movie Day  
Friday December 23 – Christmas Eve Holiday  
Monday December 26 – Christmas Day  
Tuesday December 27 – Day after Christmas Holiday  
Monday January 2 – New Year’s Day Holiday  
January TBA – Greenville Swamp Rabbits Hockey Trip  
Monday January 16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday  
Monday February 13 - President’s Day  
Tuesday February 14 – Valentine’s Day  
Sunday March 5 – Daylight Savings Time Begins

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Thank You! To all who submitted articles for the *Whistler*. Your effort and cooperation are greatly appreciated!

The Whistler is posted on the L-Drive for your convenience.

The deadline for articles for the next issue of the Whistler (March 1 issue) is February 15.