



Our Journey

Meaningful, relevant information for our community, published monthly.

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Welcome to *Our Journey*. We hope you will find the articles informative and helpful. Your ideas and submissions are welcome! Please also take time to check out the Northern Lakes Community Mental Health (NLCMH) website, the flat screen monitor, information tower, and monthly calendar (in the tower) for more information on topics in this newsletter and more. Join us in the ongoing creation of this newsletter to best serve you!



SSDI and SSI Increase 2018

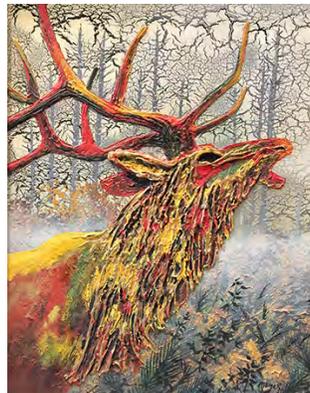


The 2.0 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 61 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2018. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 29, 2017. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits.) The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The increase for SSI recipients will be 15 dollars, from \$735 to \$750.

11th Annual Art Show



The Artist Reception was held November 8 and was well attended. This year the art show was held at the Traverse Area District Library, allowing it to be viewed by a different audience than from past years, with several hundred people viewing the show each day. The venue is beautiful, well lit and provides a professional backdrop for this wonderful show. Several pieces of art were purchased. TV 9&10 interviewed a couple of the artists to help promote the art show. You may view the interview at: <http://www.9and10news.com/2017/11/08/11th-annual-art-recovery-traverse-city-raises-awareness-mental-illness/>.



Understanding Autism

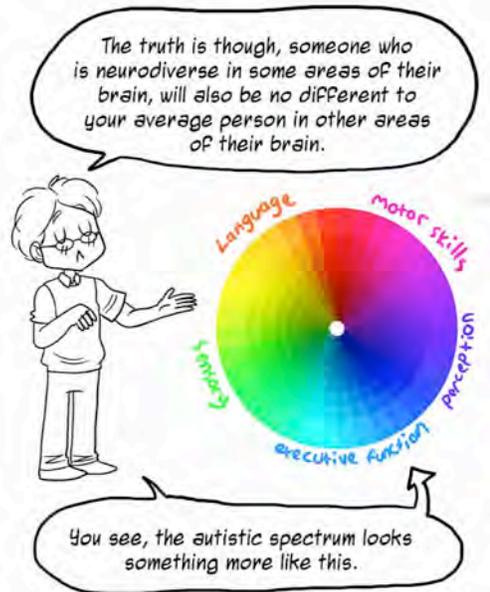
#Activate4Autism

*"It's time to activate for **understanding**.*

*It's time to activate for **acceptance**.*

*It's time to activate for **inclusion** and speak out against bullying.*

It's time to activate our voices for autism.



Too often people look at the autism spectrum as linear. As in, not autistic to very autistic. If you are seen at the low end of the spectrum they believe you can handle more because you are not that autistic. You become overstimulated in too many areas and then they need to relabel you, often with the idea that you can't do anything at all. The spectrum consists of many different 'traits' or ways in which the brain processes information. Some traits create difficulties in everyday life. But also many traits are useful in everyday life. Read more about autism and this comic at:

<https://geekclubbooks.com/understanding-autism/>



Winter Solstice

December Solstice in Northern Michigan is on Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 11:28 am EST. The shortest day of the year brings in the winter season. The days will begin to get longer as we progress through winter. The Sun is directly overhead of the Tropic of Capricorn in the Southern Hemisphere during the December Solstice. The December Solstice occurs when the Sun reaches its most southerly declination of -23.4 degrees; in other words, when the North Pole is tilted furthest away from the Sun. **Midnight Sun or Polar Night:** Being the longest day of the year, also means that people in the areas south of the Antarctic Circle towards the South Pole will see the Midnight Sun, i.e. have 24 hours of daylight, during this time of the year. **Why Do the Dates Vary?** As with the June solstice, the December solstice's varying dates are mainly due to the calendar system. The Gregorian calendar, which is used in most western countries, has 365 days in a common year and 366 days in a leap year. **December solstice and seasons:** It is important to note that Earth does not move at a constant speed in its elliptical orbit. Therefore, the seasons are not of equal length: the times taken for the sun to move from the vernal equinox to the summer solstice, to the autumnal equinox, to the winter solstice, and back to the vernal equinox are roughly 92.8, 93.6, 89.8 and 89.0 days respectively. The consolation in the Northern Hemisphere is that spring and summer last longer than autumn and winter (when the December solstice occurs).*

*<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/december-solstice.html>



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to receive
Our Journey
electronically.
Submissions may also
be accepted, space
permitting.

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National Influenza Vaccination Week

December 3-9

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and above should get a flu vaccine annually. This is the first and most important step when it comes to protecting yourself from seasonal flu viruses.