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New COVID-19 Vaccines and New White House Administration: Hope for a Better Tomorrow

Written by: Erica Rose E. de los Reyes

Every 30 seconds, one person dies of COVID-19 in the United States of America as it reaches 15,582,883 total COVID-19 cases with 293,323 total deaths as of December 8, 2020, according to the *worldometer* website, and it is increasing continuously at a very fast pace. Former Vice President Joe Biden and Incumbent Senator Kamala Harris won the 2020 Presidential Election which means a new leadership and a new beginning to our country. What will the incoming White House administration do to stop the spread of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is infecting more people and causing a substantial number of deaths than anything else in the world. The good news is there are two new vaccines such as Pfizer's COVID-19 mRNA vaccine (BNT162b2) and Moderna's mRNA-1273 vaccine that might be ready for emergency use by the end of this year, when they are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). So each one should consider being vaccinated, when available, to get protection from this virus that is very contagious and cruel. The children might have to wait to get COVID-19 vaccination since further studies will have to be done by medical experts..

Holiday Season

Celebrations on upcoming holidays like Christmas and New Year will be different this year because of strict COVID-19 rules. Families, relatives and friends should practice social distancing, wear masks and quarantine to avoid being sick and to give protection to others. You also cannot invite too many people to your house because of the fear of catching this dreadful virus. Thanksgiving Day 2020 celebration was severely impacted because the medical experts and government recommended that families not invite those that are not part of their immediate family circle or advised against travelling to celebrate with their respective families and friends in order to be safe and protected. We must think of how many families have lost loved ones from this virus, but could not be there physically for their dying moments because of COVID-19 which is really very depressing! But, I am not saying that you cannot have fun. You can celebrate virtually, share pictures and videos on social media, or celebrate only with your close family members and selected friends at the comforts of your home. You cannot just invite anyone anywhere so this way will be much easier, and maybe the safest, since most restaurants and other food establishments are closed for dine in nowadays.

Distance Learning

As of December 8, 2020, 54 of 58 counties in California were put into Purple, or Tier 1, following the state's Blueprint for Safer Economy. Per the *California Department of Public Health (CDPH) COVID-19* website, schools in counties within Tier 1 are not permitted to reopen for in-person instruction, with an exception for waivers granted by local health departments for TK-6 grades, because the virus has spread in more than seven cases per 100,000 residents, or more than 8% of test results reported positive over seven days. I think this is an extremely notable move because

a student or anybody on school campus might have COVID-19 that will cause others to be infected with the virus unknowingly.

Distance Learning is very different from real school, but it is a safer alternative for everyone temporarily. Our teachers, officials and staff in school might not be physically available, or we are not able to associate with our friends and classmates closely, or someone might have internet/WiFi issues and could not really do much, but these are just very trivial matters, as compared to contracting the contagious virus yourself which has the potential of dying from it.

Election Results

By January 20, 2021, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be inaugurated as the 46th President and 49th Vice President of the United States of America. The new White House administration must have well-planned and solid approaches in addressing major issues used by the registered voters in selecting their candidates, as cited in the *Pew Research Center* website, such as Coronavirus outbreak, economy, health care, Supreme Court appointments, violent crime, foreign policy, gun policy, race and ethnic inequality, immigration, economic inequality, climate change, abortion, etc. to make a huge difference in the lives of all Americans and our relationship with the other nations.

If each one of us will contribute in creating a safer environment by wearing masks at every opportunity, practicing social distancing, quarantining when needed and/or required, following the medical experts and government's advice, and participating in the COVID-19 vaccination, we can significantly reduce unnecessary deaths and make our world a better place to live in, and our lives will once again be back to NORMAL, just the way we want it to be.

COVID-19 Vaccines: A Potential Permanent Solution to the Pandemic

Written by: Erica Rose E. de los Reyes

After the first discovery of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Wuhan, China last December 2019 and a total of 72,617,263 COVID-19 cases and 1,618,437 deaths globally, and 16,727,412 cases and 306,429 deaths for the United States of America (USA) later, according to the statistics provided by *worldometers* website as of December 14, 2020, the world is finally getting COVID-19 vaccines that will be a potential solution to this dreadful pandemic.

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these COVID-19 vaccines are, as follows:

- authorized and recommended to prevent COVID-19 - Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine; and
- those in large-scale (Phase 3) clinical trials that are in-progress, or being planned in USA, as of November 24, 2020:
 - AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine;
 - Janssen's COVID-19 vaccine; and
 - Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine.

Since these COVID-19 vaccines are new to us, it is very important to know the following general information, supplied from the *fd.gov* and *cdc.gov* websites, as each one prepares for the much-needed vaccination, when it is already available.

How Vaccines Work

Vaccination will trigger the body's immune system to boost defenses against the infectious bacteria or virus (organism) which are foreign to the body, called antigens, that the vaccine copies without causing the disease.

Vaccines may contain weakened versions of a bacteria or virus, part of the bacteria or virus, or only the genetic material for a specific protein so the body can generate a small amount of that protein where the body's immune system acts protectively upon detecting it.

Upon vaccination, the immune system will be ready to fight the bacteria or virus of the real disease.

Steps in Vaccine Approval Process

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends the steps in the approval process to the vaccine developers such as **Research and Development** (develop vaccine rationale and conduct laboratory research on vaccine candidate idea), **Pre-Clinical** (perform more laboratory research and testing for animals to determine vaccine safety in humans), **Testing the Vaccines in People** (**Phase 1**: 20 to 100 volunteers with emphasis on safety; **Phase 2**: hundreds of volunteers from various demographics with different health conditions in randomized controlled-studies without safety concerns; and **Phase 3**: thousands of volunteers to generate more information on effectiveness, safety data and immune response, and to compare the results to those who received the vaccine and those who received a control, such as placebo); **Biologics License Application (BLA) Submitted to FDA** (pre-clinical and clinical data/information and details on manufacturing process and facility/ies); and **Monitoring of Safety and Effectiveness** (**Phase 4**: conduct post-marketing studies to further assess known or potential serious risks).

Benefits of Being Vaccinated

COVID-19 vaccination will give you protection from getting sick seriously even if you contract the virus. By getting vaccinated, you and the people around you will be safeguarded, especially those who have higher risks of contracting the virus such as older adults (65 years or older), people with medical conditions such as cancer; chronic kidney disease; COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease); heart conditions such as heart failure, coronary heart disease or cardiomyopathies; immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant; obesity (body mass index or BMI greater than or equal to 30 kg/m²); pregnancy; sickle cell disease; smoking; and type 2 diabetes mellitus); and other people who need extra precautions such as those living in rural communities, those with disabilities, those with developmental and behavioral disorders, those experiencing homelessness, etc.

In addition, COVID-19 vaccination will offer you immunity by creating an antibody response without experiencing the illness which has very significant complications resulting in potential death.

Groups Considered for Early Vaccination While Supply is Limited

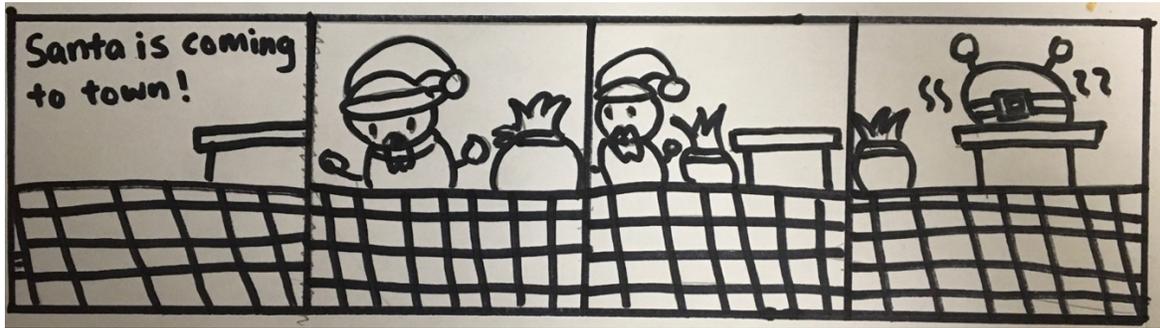
The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is recommending the groups for early vaccination, while supply is limited, such as healthcare personnel, workers in essential and critical industries, people at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions, and people who are 65 years and older.

Best Protection from COVID-19

To help combat the COVID-19 pandemic, you have to continue following the CDC recommendations in protecting yourself and others, aside from getting the COVID-19 vaccination, such as: washing your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands; avoid close contact by practicing social distancing of at least six feet apart; cover your nose and mouth with a mask when around others; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect; and monitor your health daily by being alert for symptoms and taking your temperature when symptoms develop.

COVID-19 is finally getting vaccines that might stop all the deaths and infections in the world. It is up to everyone to be proactive in getting the vaccination safely, as it becomes available, to help, once and for all, end this pandemic which has caused a lot of miseries, uncertainties and griefs, in one way or another, especially to those who have lost their precious family members and friends unexpectedly.

Special thanks to those medical experts, scientists, researchers, government leaders and other entities who have made the possibility of having COVID-19 vaccines a reality. We cannot thank you enough! You can be considered the heroes of today for trying to make this world a better and safer place to live in, once this COVID-19 pandemic is completely eradicated.



USA selects Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as the President-elect and Vice President-elect for 2020 Election

Written by: Erica de los Reyes

Last November 3, 2020, there were 155.5 million voters in the United States of America who selected their 46th president, 49th vice president, 35 of the 100 seats in the United States Senate, 435 seats in the United States House of Representative and 13 governorships through mail-in absentee ballots and in-person at designated polling places nationwide.

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Incumbent Senator Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party became the official President-elect and Vice President-elect, after garnering 81,284,158 votes, or 51.3%, while the Incumbent President Donald J. Trump and Incumbent Vice President Michael R. Pence collected 74,221,816 votes, or 46.9%, of the total 155,505,974 casted votes.

After all the votes were officially counted, President-elect Joe Biden/Vice President-elect Kamala Harris triumphed in 26 states with 306 electoral votes, and Incumbent President Donald J. Trump/Vice President Michael R. Pence won in 25 states with 232 electoral votes, respectively.

Broken down below are the State Name, State Abbreviation, Electoral Votes, Winning Party, % of Votes, Losing Party, % of Votes and Party Flip, acquired by the two major political parties, Democratic Party and Republican Party, for the 2020 Presidential Election Results, as provided by Reuters Graphics (updated as of December 6, 2020):

State Name	State Abbreviation	Electoral Votes	Winning Party	% of Votes	Losing Party	% of Votes	Party Flip
Alabama	AL	9	Republican	62%	Democratic	37%	No
Alaska	AK	3	Republican	53%	Democratic	43%	No
Arizona	AZ	11	Democratic	49%	Republican	49%	Yes
Arkansas	AR	6	Republican	62%	Democratic	35%	No
California	CA	55	Democratic	64%	Republican	34%	No
Colorado	CO	9	Democratic	55%	Republican	42%	No
Connecticut	CT	7	Democratic	59%	Republican	39%	No
Delaware	DE	3	Democratic	59%	Republican	40%	No
District of Columbia	DC	3	Democratic	92%	Republican	5%	No
Florida	FL	29	Republican	51%	Democratic	48%	No
Georgia	GA	16	Democratic	50%	Republican	49%	Yes
Hawaii	HI	4	Democratic	64%	Republican	34%	No
Idaho	ID	4	Republican	64%	Democratic	33%	No
Illinois	IL	20	Democratic	57%	Republican	41%	No
Indiana	IN	11	Republican	57%	Democratic	41%	No
Iowa	IA	6	Republican	53%	Democratic	45%	No
Kansas	KS	6	Republican	56%	Democratic	42%	No
Kentucky	KY	8	Republican	62%	Democratic	36%	No
Louisiana	LA	8	Republican	59%	Democratic	40%	No
Maine	ME	4	Democratic	53%	Republican	44%	No
Maryland	MD	10	Democratic	66%	Republican	32%	No
Massachusetts	MA	11	Democratic	66%	Republican	32%	No
Michigan	MI	16	Democratic	51%	Republican	48%	Yes
Minnesota	MN	10	Democratic	52%	Republican	45%	No
Mississippi	MS	6	Republican	57%	Democratic	41%	No
Missouri	MO	10	Republican	57%	Democratic	41%	No
Montana	MT	3	Republican	57%	Democratic	40%	No
Nebraska	NE	5	Republican	59%	Democratic	39%	No
Nevada	NV	6	Democratic	50%	Republican	48%	No
New Hampshire	NH	4	Democratic	53%	Republican	46%	No
New Jersey	NJ	14	Democratic	57%	Republican	41%	No
New Mexico	NM	5	Democratic	54%	Republican	44%	No
New York	NY	29	Democratic	61%	Republican	38%	No
North Carolina	NC	15	Republican	50%	Democratic	49%	No
North Dakota	ND	3	Republican	65%	Democratic	32%	No
Ohio	OH	18	Republican	53%	Democratic	45%	No
Oklahoma	OK	7	Republican	65%	Democratic	32%	No
Oregon	OR	7	Democratic	56%	Republican	40%	No
Pennsylvania	PA	20	Democratic	50%	Republican	49%	Yes
Rhode Island	RI	4	Democratic	59%	Republican	39%	No
South Carolina	SC	9	Republican	55%	Democratic	43%	No
South Dakota	SD	3	Republican	62%	Democratic	36%	No
Tennessee	TN	11	Republican	61%	Democratic	38%	No
Texas	TX	38	Republican	52%	Democratic	47%	No
Utah	UT	6	Republican	58%	Democratic	38%	No
Vermont	VT	3	Democratic	66%	Republican	31%	No
Virginia	VA	13	Democratic	54%	Republican	44%	No
Washington	WA	12	Democratic	58%	Republican	39%	No
West Virginia	WV	5	Republican	69%	Democratic	30%	No
Wisconsin	WI	10	Democratic	49%	Democratic	49%	Yes
Wyoming	WY	3	Republican	70%	Democratic	27%	No

President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will officially start their four-year term on January 20, 2021, 12:00 noon EST, at the United States Capitol in Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. on Inauguration Day.

For the United States Senate, the Democratic Party won 20 of the 35 available electable seats while the Republican Party grabbed 13 seats, resulting in Democrats losing one Senate seat, while the Republicans gained one Senate seat. As a result of the latest election, there are now 50 total seats belonging to the Republican Party which has the Senate Majority currently, 46 for Democratic Party and two for Other Parties. There will be two runoff elections for the State of Georgia in early January 2021 to decide for two more seats since no candidate did not win the required majority votes in the latest election. Candidates for the special runoff elections are: Rev. Raphael Warnock (Democratic) versus Incumbent Senator Kelly Loeffler (Republican) and Jon Ossoff (Democratic) versus Incumbent Senator David Perdue (Republican). Winners of these special elections will determine which political party will get the Senate Majority.

For the United States House of Representative, the Democratic Party succeeded in getting 222 of the available 435 seats while the Republican Party got 212 seats resulting in Democrats losing 10 seats and Republicans gaining 15 seats. The Democratic Party still retained the House of Representative Majority.

For the 13 governorships (11 states and two territories such as American Samoa and Puerto Rico), the Republican Party won eight seats of the 11 available state gubernatorial seats while the Democratic Party got three, resulting to a net gain and a net loss of one each for the Republic Party and Democratic Party. After the latest election, there are now a total of 27 state gubernatorial seats for the Republican Party and 23 for the Democratic Party.

How to Help Someone This Christmas

Written by: Alison San Pedro

This pandemic has hit many families hard. Most of us are fortunate enough to still be doing well during this holiday season but there are some that aren't as fortunate, and so I have a list of places you can donate to, primarily around the East Bay area. This Christmas, I encourage you to donate to those who don't have as much, if you can, so that everyone can enjoy the holiday season, despite what's going on in the world.

1. **Brighter Beginnings' Adopt A Family Gift Drive**

In this gift drive, you are paired with a family in need and buy gift cards for the family to spend on presents and anything they may need. You then go to one of the Brighter Beginnings centers so that the family can receive the cards you bought for them. I think this is a great way to help a family out if you have nothing you can donate and don't mind spending some money.

<https://www.brighter-beginnings.org/get-involved/adopt-a-family/>

2. **Alameda County Community Food Bank**

The Alameda County Community Food Bank is passionate about not letting anyone go hungry. Though they're currently only accepting food donations from commercial or retail food businesses, they have alternate ways to help. You can donate to a virtual food bank instead or just donate to the organization in general. It's great because you can help feed someone without needing to go out.

<https://www.accfb.org/>

3. **Toys For Tots**

Toys For Tots is really a great organization because they have so many ways to donate. You can donate in person, online, use their new virtual toy box and many more. The organization, as the name says, gives kids who may not be able to get a gift for Christmas, a toy. Donating to this organization could really make a child's Christmas wish come true.

<https://www.toysfortots.org/>

4. **Family Giving Tree's Holiday Wish Drive**

This organization helps to give gifts to low income families and households in the Bay Area. They've helped 1.4 million families since the 1990's and hopefully this continues. If you choose to donate here, you'll help this organization provide those families with gifts for Christmas, and make their holiday season so much better.

<https://familygivingtree.org/holiday-wish-drive>

5. **St. Vincent de Paul Alameda County**

St. Vincent de Paul Alameda County provides help to those who need it most, and in various ways too. They provide access to healthcare, hot meals and support for anyone who may need it. Donations that go here can help someone eat, get job training or a shelter to stay at. I really hope you consider donating here, as they have a wide range of people that they help.

<https://www.svdp-alameda.org/>

6. **Bay Area Rescue Mission**

This organization helps those who unfortunately don't have a home and are in need of a place to stay and eat. Donating here can help someone transition from homelessness to success, as well as providing meals to those in need of it most. They also educate people, in addition to providing many programs to help people reshape their lives and giving them a place to live until they can pick themselves up again.

<https://www.bayarearescue.org/>

7. **San Francisco Compass Family Service's Adopt a Family**

Since physically buying gifts for families might be a bit difficult, due to the pandemic, they've offered another way to help out: donations. Compass Family Service's Adopt a Family program helps to support families who may not have the finances to do so themselves. This organization will really help some families out this Christmas season, so I really hope you consider donating.

<https://www.compass-sf.org/adoptfamily-2020>

8. **Share the Spirit East Bay**

This organization, consisting of the Bay Area News Group, the East Bay times and the Contra Costa Crisis Center, donates to various organizations in the bay, helping out those in the Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Share the Spirit is an amazing organization to donate to because the donations go to various other organizations which help a wide range of people, including those in need of food, places to live and those in unsafe conditions. This is another organization that I would highly recommend you donate to because you can help so many people during this holiday season.

<https://www.sharethespирiteastbay.org/>

9. **SOS Meals on Wheels**

SOS Meals on Wheels provides meals to seniors who can't leave their house. Considering that our seniors are at risk because of the pandemic, this program would really help them get the food they need, without needing to go out and risk their health. I think that this would be another program to consider, as it helps those at risk of covid-19 get the food they need.

<https://www.sosmow.org/>

10. **Christmas for Everyone**

Christmas for Everyone is a wonderful organization in Contra Costa whose goal is that no one spends Christmas alone or in need. They provide people with food, clothing and, of course, a gift for Christmas. They also donate to those who are homebound. Donating here can really help out those here in our community.

<https://www.christmasforeveryone.com/>

We Love our Pets

Written by: Bailey and Bryce Gilmore

Hello fellow Tigers, welcome to the second Tiger Times Pet of the Month! Since we are living through a pandemic, and this is our second publication, we will start off with the pet we know best, the one and only General MacArthur (named after General Douglas MacArthur, he was a Five-Star General in the American Army). As this is a first run, we will tell you all how we got him.

It was late in the month of November and we were looking for a new cat in Ward #6, when we came across an orange cream colored tabby. But the amazing thing was that his cage was unlocked and the lock was hanging perilously loose, ready to fall on the floor. We knew right away that this was the cat we were going to get.

Yet there was a problem, he was very charming and cute, so many people were trying to adopt him, even some staff members were thinking about adopting him. Did I mention VERY CHARMING? In the end, it came so close to somebody else adopting him that right as we were starting on the adoption paperwork another person was getting ready to start on the paperwork, too. Sweat was running down my face! We ended up adopting the orange cream colored tabby that had stolen our hearts from the moment we set eyes on him.

On another note, with the holidays in full swing, it is easy to forget that some of your favorite festive holiday items can be dangerous for our furry friends. These are some of the things that Animal Rescue Foundation, ARF, recommends you do to keep your pet safe over the holidays....

Food: ARF recommends pets avoid chocolate, fruitcake, grapes, raisins, or currants since they are dangerous to animals, especially dogs. Fats, oils and small bones are dangerous as well. ARF says dogs go wild for baby carrots or air popped popcorn. ARF also suggests offering cats live cat grass or live catnip as a holiday treat.

Alcohol: Alcohol can be dangerous if accidentally ingested by your canine. ARF says eggnog, cocktails, desserts containing alcohol, and dough with unbaked yeast can cause vomiting, disorientation, and stomach bloat. ARF says to "Keep your pet the life of the party and completely sober."

Decorations: Decorations can cause problems as well. Lots of cats and dogs have had a little decor mischief, but ARF recommends not to take the risks by limiting access. Decorative lights strung on glass ornaments, tinsel, and candles can pose health risks. To distract pets, try introducing a new fun toy and a room barrier as ARF recommends.

Live Plants: Holiday plants, like poinsettias, hollies, mistletoe, and lilies are dangerous as well. ARF says a quick munch on a lily can cause kidney failure in cats and holly berries can cause severe gastrointestinal issues in ALL animals.

Household Cleaning Products: Cleaning products, as you can imagine, can be just as dangerous. ARF says chemical cleaners can cause the following: stomach discomfort, excess drooling, mouth ulcers, paw burns or more serious complications. Oils, especially the scented oils that are popular in the holidays, cause problems for our sensitive felines, so ARF says to use as little as possible if at all, and keep out of reach of our wonderful pets.

[This information can be found in Tony La Russa's, ARF, the Scoop, Winter edition 2018. ""DROP IT!" - KEEPING YOUR PETS SAFE OVER THE HOLIDAYS. Page 10"](#)

If you have a pet that is lovable and amazing and should be pet of the month, please submit a picture of your pet along with five reasons why they should be Tiger Times Pet of the Month.

Insight on Sports

Written by: Nicholas Gums

Ever since early September, the NFL has had regular season games with minimal to no attendance in the stands. This week, teams are going into week 15 and there have been some surprises and some expected records for teams. These are the leaders in each division as of 12/14 before the Monday Night Football Game, starting off with the AFC.

AFC East: In first are the Bills with a record of 10 and 3 with the Dolphins in second with a 8 and 5 record.

AFC West: In first are the Chiefs with a record of 12 and 1 with the Raiders in second who are 7 and 6.

AFC North: In first are the Steelers with a record of 11 and 2 and with the Browns in second who are 9 and 3.

AFC South: In first are the Titans with a record of 9 and 4 and with the Colts actually having the same record but in second place. Since the Titans have more wins against teams in their division, they get first and the Colts get second with fewer wins against teams in their division.

Clinches in the AFC: The Chiefs have won their Division for the 5th straight time and the Steelers have clinched a spot in this year's Playoffs.

Now with the NFC divisional standing leaders

NFC East: In first is Washington with a record of 6 and 7 and with the Giants in second who are 5 and 8.

NFC West: In first are the Rams with a record of 9 and 4 and with the Seahawks who have the same record in second. As I said before, the Rams have more wins against teams in their division than the Seahawks so that's why the Rams are first.

NFC North: In first are the Packers with a record of 10 and 3 and with the Vikings in second who are 6 and 7 and Bears in third who have the same record as the Vikings. As you can tell, the Vikings have more divisional wins then the Bears.

NFC South: In first we have the Saints with a record of 10 and 3 and with the Buccaneers who are 8 and 5 in second.

Clinches in the NFC: The Packers have won their division and the Saints have clinched a spot in this year's Playoffs as well.

NBA News -

To continue with the topic of basketball from my previous article about it, the 2020-2021 regular season will start on December 22 and the preseason games have already started as well.

And that is all the information on these two sports for now!

Holiday Word Search

T A J T X H J N I R K C S N C S U T I E
 H H F O K Z S O R I V I K L T T Y P Q R
 P M R V S B V Y J W N V F A E H V L Y R
 X F R E G E S U S E J S R S D I E L R E
 Q W V K E S P X T L T C T R O E V W P B
 A K Z A E W Y H U N I A Z B U J A S Z M
 M W T V H Q I T E F B M Q G E N C S I E
 T T L F A X W S I L X F A M Y U W U L C
 F E V R K Q E Q E V K Z E R R A T O Z E
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 T T P N P J O L L Y E T I C C G T O C S
 T O U K J E V N N T B N A H B E N L L S
 D A F I D R E H P E H S R N R L A D X E
 R T K N R J G I V M H I K R X S S H F S
 H Q A C I X T S E W S R N R R I P U W N
 Z Q M E M B A P G T L W R G D N Z K P T
 N B U N U N W F M K N S K Y U R T I F Y
 M Q V S S L C A R O L I N G M H T N O O
 J Z M E Z X S L Y H H A I F W Q E E R T
 C M I L W O E W Z K I R G P W Y Y O I V

Commentary

Written by: Mrs. Lenz-Acuna

Even though as Christians we celebrate Christmas, but many people celebrate different winter holidays. Some of the winter holidays celebrated each year are Christmas, St. Nicolas Day, St. Lucia Day, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the Winter Solstice and the Epiphany. Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus, Hanukkah recalls the rededication of the temple of Jerusalem after the victory of the Maccabees, Kwanzaa is a nonreligious holiday that honors African-American people and their heritage, and the Winter Solstice celebrates the sun and the end of winter.

These holidays revolve around an importance of light – the Christmas lights on a Christmas tree and on our houses, the advent candles we light each week and star who led the Wise Kings to Jesus of whom they honored with gifts of royalty. Children honor St. Lucia by adorning a wreath and candle headpiece honoring the child saint. Jewish people light candles on the menorahs for eight days and nights commemorating the rededication of the holy Temple in Jerusalem. African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa, lighting seven candles of the Kinara while performing and listening to traditional music and discussing African principles and history. The winter solstice celebrates the rebirth of the sun and more light, because days get longer from then on out.

These holidays have a lot in common such as spending time with friends and families gathering around Zoom, making special foods and desserts, giving gifts and cards and decorating with light. All of this we do with the special people in our lives.

All of these holidays have traditions that have been passed down from one generation to another. Hopefully, in the future, we will continue to pass down your family's traditions to the next generation. The winter holidays are a time to be creative, generous, and thankful. It is also a time to look forward to good times ahead. Especially with hope for change in this upcoming new year.

Thank you for reading these articles written by our students. They express their knowledge, passion and commitment to the issues at school and that which have bearing on their lives. They are proud to continue to produce a student newspaper that give students a chance to express their opinion and ideas as well as inform its readers in the discussion of social issues in and outside of school. I continue to be proud of their hard work and insight.