

DECEMBER 2023 ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Daily Activities

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 Monday Morning Bridge 9:30 Chair Yoga 12:30 Monday Afternoon Bridge 2:00 Chair Yoga 5:00 Monday Night Bingo 5:30 Zumba	9:45 Carolina Line Dancers 10:00 Acrylic Painting 11:00 Tai-Chi 1:00 Chair Volleyball	9:00 The Sewing Circle 9:30 Chair Yoga 11:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Beginner Spanish 11:00 Piedmont Rook 12:30 Knit Pickers 2:00 Chair Yoga Euchre	9:30 Chair Volleyball 1:00 Thursday Bridge 1:00 Mexican Train Dominoes	11:00-12:00 Zumba Gold

Special/Monthly Activities for December 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 Center closes at 12:00 pm
4 Beginning Canasta 12:00-3:30	5	6 Carolina Singers 10:00-11:00	7	8 Center closes at 12:00 pm
11 Beginning Canasta 12:00-3:30	12	13	14 Daytime Friends 10:00	15 Center closes at 12:00 pm
18 Beginning Canasta 12:00-3:30	19 Wreath Making Class 12-3:00	20 Carolina Singers 10:00-11:00	21 CENTER CLOSES AT 3pm	22 CENTER CLOSED
25 <div>Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!</div>	26	27	28	29 CENTER CLOSED



"THE SENIOR INFORMER"

December 2023



Your source of current news and information from The Neal Center, 100 T.R. Harris Drive, Shelby, NC 28150



Just So You'll Know...



The Center will close on December 21 at 3 P.M. and will be closed December 22-26, 2023 in observance of the Christmas holidays. Normal hours will resume on Wednesday, December 27, 2023 at 8:30 A.M.



The Center will close on December 28 at 3 P.M. and will be closed December 29-January 1, 2024 in observance of the New Year's holidays. Normal hours will resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 8:30 A.M.

Did you know...?

Bicycle, the U.S. playing card company, manufactured cards to give all the POW'S in Germany during World War II as Christmas presents. These cards, when soaked in water, revealed an escape route for POWs. The Nazis never knew.



Something to think about

"Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves."

-Eric Sevareid



Neal Center Staff and Contact Information
Have a question? A specific need? Not sure what to do?

Neal Center main number: 704/482-3488

Paulette Putnam, Executive Dir.	Daniel Dedmon, Program Dir.
Teresia Ladd, Administrative Asst.	Dolores Ashworth, Volunteer Coor.
Heather Ledbetter, Nutrition Coor.	Jane Wright, Administrative Sec.
April Wheatley, Bookkeeper	Betsy Lavender, Housing Coor.
Stephanie Baxter, Housekeeping	

What are the hours for the Neal Senior Center?

Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-4:00pm
Friday, 8:30am-12:00pm
Not sure if the center is open? Call our
“Weather Line” at 704/481-7398!



Let's Eat!

HOLIDAY TREATS

AMISH SUGAR COOKIES

- 1 C. Butter, softened (2 sticks)

1 C. Vegetable Oil

1 C. Granulated Sugar

1 C. Confectioner's Sugar

2 Large Eggs
- 4-1/2 C. All-Purpose flour

1 Tsp. Baking Soda

1 Tsp. Cream of Tartar

Additional Sugar for dipping



Cream together the butter, vegetable oil, and both sugars until smooth and evenly blended. Add eggs and vanilla extract, beating well. Combine the flour, baking soda and cream of tartar and gradually add to the creamed mixture, blending well. Roll dough into balls about 1 inch size and place on ungreased baking sheets, about an inch apart. Grease the bottom of a small juice glass and dip in sugar. Press each ball of dough with the glass, dipping in sugar with each cookie. Bake at 375 degrees for about 10 minutes. Let rest on baking sheet briefly then transfer to cooling racks to cool completely. May be decorated with colored sugars or decorator's icings. Yield: 6-8 dozen.

BANANA CRUSH PUNCH

- 4 ripe Bananas

2 C. Sugar

6 C. Water

1 (46 fluid ounce) can Pineapple Juice
- 2 (12 oz.) cans frozen Orange Juice Concentrate

1 (12 oz.) can Frozen Lemonade Concentrate

3 Liters Ginger Ale, chilled

In a blender, combine bananas, sugar, and 3 cups water. Blend until smooth. Pour into a large bowl and stir in pineapple juice. Blend in orange juice concentrate, lemonade concentrate, and remaining 3 cups water. Divide into 3 plastic containers and freeze until solid, 4 hours to overnight. Remove from freezer 3 to 4 hours before serving. Using one portion at a time, place slush in a punch bowl and pour in 1 liter of ginger ale for each.

YOUR HINT PARADE

Christmas Hints

- ♦ To make a roll of tape easier to grab, use a plastic bread-clip to place on the edge of the tape.
- ♦ If your Christmas tree goes in the corner, try stringing your lights in a zig-zag pattern down the front to use fewer strings (nobody will see the back anyway!)
- ♦ When decorating the holiday tree, use two different sizes of bulbs for an extra eye-catching effect!
- ♦ Want some help managing the mess on Christmas? Take a big box and cover it with wrapping paper. This is a pretty spot for all the garbage to go into and your Christmas pictures will look a ton better without those ugly garbage sacks!

Laff-A-Little !



Are you looking for a place to live that's affordable?

Are you at least 62 years of age?

LOOK NO FURTHER!

West Warren Manor
934 West Warren St.
Shelby, NC 28150

**SPONSORED BY THE COUNCIL ON
AGING & THE LIONS CLUB**

PHONE: 704/480-6786



Marion West Housing
110 Philbeck St.
Shelby, NC 28150

**SPONSORED BY THE COUNCIL ON
AGING**

PHONE: 704/482-0030



**For further information, please contact Phyllis Hosch, Site Manager, at
704/480-6786 or 704/482-0030.**

LET'S MEET A NEAL CENTER VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers at the Neal Center come to us with different backgrounds, experiences, careers, and personal challenges. However, there is one thing they all have in common: to be able to help and serve the older population of Cleveland County. That's the way Roger Wuest, a sixteen year volunteer with the Neal Center, looks at his reason for volunteering.



In his sixteen years of volunteering, he has given his time in many areas: the Reception Desk, SHIP counseling, food drives, health fairs, and special events. Yet, his background prepared him for his years as a volunteer. Born and raised in Billings, Montana, he is the oldest four children, including two sisters and a brother. His father worked as a carpenter and his mother as a housekeeper for local families. Because his father was often absent from the family, he was named as "head of the house" at age 12. Roger was 14 when his mother passed away and he and his siblings were sent to live in foster homes. His foster parent, who was a farmer from Baker, Montana, taught Roger how to farm by the time he got to high school. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. One subject he was especially interested in was German, since his ancestry was German. While he could have learned it while living at home, Roger admitted, "I was too stubborn to learn it at home." He completed two German courses, though he had trouble using what he had learned to communicate to his German grandparents. "I tried speaking to my grandparents in German...and they didn't understand a word!" He soon found out that as long as he spoke slowly, others would understand him.

Around 1967, when the Vietnam War was heating up, Roger joined the U.S. Army, serving for a total of four years and eight months. From 1970 to 1972, he had earned the rank of Captain and was stationed in Germany. It was while on leave before going to Germany that he would meet his future wife, Peggy. His foster mother worked at a local JC Penny's department store in Kansas City, Missouri. He asked her, "Do you know any ladies?" She told Roger that she knew of someone, but didn't know if she would be interested. Once they met, each felt that they had found the right one. They dated steadily while he was on leave and wrote letters when he was in active duty. When Roger felt it was time to propose, he did it the old-fashioned way: "I called her Dad from Germany, asking for her hand in marriage. For a three minute call, it was \$48". Her father's response was simple: "Well, when I see the ring". He wanted to take a 30-day leave to return to the states to have the marriage ceremony, but his request was denied. He had Peggy flown to Germany where they were married in a military service. Roger wore his dress blues and she wore a traditional wedding dress. Upon receiving their marriage license, it was a surprise that their license was written in German! He and Peggy later became parents to their son, who was born in Nuremburg, Germany. Upon completing his military service, he returned to the states and returned to Hardin Simmons University to complete his degree program. In 1975, He graduated with a B.A. degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry.

He soon went to work for Robert Hall Men’s Clothiers in San Antonio, Texas and was with the company for two years. “I was offered the position of a store manager, but then received word that Robert Hall was closing down.” Not giving in to defeat, Roger began a career with Red Arrow Freight in San Antonio, staying with them for about nine years. “Carolina Freight eventually bought Red Arrow Freight out, so I was transferred to N.C.”. There, Roger went to work in the company’s Cherryville office. After being employed there for eight years, the company downsized, eliminating Roger’s position. He later joined Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for a brief time, then joined United American Video in their shipping department. Meanwhile, Peggy was attending Gardner-Webb University and graduated with a degree in Accounting and became a CPA. Peggy joined Artee Industries, where she would work for the next two years. She seriously considered joining Duracell Batteries in their South Carolina office, but Artee Industries wanted Peggy to stay with them. To convince her to stay, Artee Industries offered Roger a position in their Cherryville office, which he accepted. Sometime later, Roger would unfortunately face another downsizing. He then joined Fleet Net America and worked there for five years. Sadly, Roger began experiencing health issues and he retired early with a disability in 2007.

Roger was now spending a lot of time at home with not much to do. “I had to decide what I was going to do”, he stated. He then began attending the Neal Center. Over lunch in the center’s dining room, a lady sitting beside him began talking to him and suggested he become a Neal Center volunteer. He was very confident on the phone, having done that regularly throughout his career. Within a two week period, he was assigned to help work the Neal Center Reception Desk, which he continues to do today.

What are his thoughts about the Neal Center? “I feel it is a very helpful service, if people would come take advantage of what’s offered. I encourage others to make use of it!”

SURPRISING FACT: During his first two years as a Neal Center Volunteer, Roger was nominated for WSOC-TV, Channel 9’s “Nine Who Care” Award, winning a \$900 cash prize for the Neal Center.

Interested in being a Neal Center volunteer? Simply contact Dolores Ashworth, Neal Center Volunteer Coordinator, at 704/481-1386.

The Handcrafter

Christmas Aroma

Not to be eaten or drunk, this combination of citrus peels and spices will perfume your home to give it a warm, inviting Christmas fragrance!

- ◆ The rinds of 2 Oranges, 1 Lemon, and 1 Grapefruit
- ◆ 2 sticks Cinnamon
- ◆ 1 Tsp. Cloves
- ◆ 1 Tsp. Allspice
- ◆ 4 Cups Water



Place all ingredients in a kettle or medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and let simmer as long as desired to perfume the house, adding additional water as needed. This may be used more than once.

REMEMBER: THIS IS NOT TO BE EATEN OR DRUNK!—JUST TO SMELL! YOU’LL THINK OF THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS EACH TIME YOU SMELL OF IT!

A Christmas Prayer



“Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks that in your great mercy and compassion you allowed your dear Son to become incarnate and through him redeemed us from sin and eternal death. Enlighten our hearts by your Holy Spirit that we may always be thankful for such grace and be comforted in all trouble and temptation, and at last, obtain eternal salvation; through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.”

Newspaper Nostalgia

*Christmas Newsletters:
Martha Vs. Erma*

For many years, Erma Bombeck wrote a wonderfully humorous newspaper column about her life as a wife, mother, and neighbor. She also commented on the much-hyped Christmas Newsletter. But, what would happen if homemaking expert Martha Stewart sent a Christmas newsletter to Erma? How would she respond to the “queen of domesticity”? Here’s a possible reaction:

Martha Stewart’s Christmas Newsletter to Erma Bombeck

Hi Erma,

This perfectly delightful note is being sent on paper I made myself to tell you what I have been up to. Since it snowed last night, I got up early and made a sled with old barn wood and a glue gun. I hand painted it in gold leaf, got out my loom and made a blanket in peaches and mauves.

Then, to make the sled complete, I made a white horse to pull it from DNA that I had just sitting around in my craft room. By then, it was time to start making the place mats and napkins for my 20 breakfast guests. I'm serving the old standard Stewart twelve-course breakfast, but I'll let you in on a little secret: I didn't have time to make the tables and chairs this morning, so I used the ones I had on hand.

Before I moved the table into the dining room I decided to add just a touch of the holidays. So I repainted the room in pinks and stenciled gold stars on the ceiling.

While the homemade bread was rising, I took antique candle molds and made the dishes (exactly the same shade of pink) to use for breakfast. These were made from Hungarian clay, which you can get at almost any Hungarian craft store.

Well, I must run. I need to finish the hand-sewn buttonholes on the dress I'm wearing for breakfast. I'll get out the sled and drive this note to the post office as soon as the glue dries on the envelope I'll be making.

Hope my breakfast guests don't stay too long. I have 40,000 cranberries to string with bay leaves before my speaking engagement at noon. It's a good thing.

Love, Martha

P.S. When I made the ribbon for this typewriter, I used 1/8-inch gold gauze. I soaked the gauze in a mixture of white grapes and blackberries which I grew, picked, and crushed last week just for fun.

Response from Erma Bombeck

Dear Martha:

I'm writing this on the back of an old shopping list. Pay no attention to the coffee and jelly stains. I'm 20 minutes late getting my daughter off for school, packing a lunch with one hand-on the phone with the dog pound, seems old Ruff needs bailing out again. Burnt my arm on the curling iron when I was trying to make those cute curly fries. How DO they do that? Still can't find the scissors to cut out some snowflakes, tried using an old disposable razor . . . trashed the tablecloth. Tried that cranberry thing; frozen cranberries mushed up after I defrosted them in the microwave. Oh, and don't use Fruity Pebbles as a substitute in that Rice Krispies snowball recipe unless you like food that resembles puke! Smoke alarm is going off, talk to 'ya later.

Love, Erma

SPOTLIGHT ON Foothills Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMEN PROGRAM

Long-Term Care Ombudsmen ensure that long-term care facility residents and their families have a voice. The North Carolina Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Program's mission is to protect resident's rights and improve the quality of care and life for residents in long-term care facilities. An ombudsman advocates when residents and families have concerns about care and services in a nursing home, adult care home (also called assisted living), or family care home. Ombudsmen are trained advocates and mediators. The Ombudsman Program stands with long-term care facility residents and their families to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed. Ombudsmen advocate for long-term care facility residents to uphold their rights and address quality of care and quality of life issues through information, education, and mediation. Ombudsmen work to educate the public, residents, family members, and facility staff regarding long-term care issues and elder abuse prevention, detection, and reporting requirements.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's responsibilities are to:

- Advocate for Residents
- Investigate Concerns made by or on behalf of residents
- Mediate Disputes
- Provide Information about Long-Term Care
- Promote Elder Abuse Awareness
- Monitor Long-Term Care Facilities
- Educate the Public
- Manage the Community Advisory Committee Volunteers

For more information, please contact Mandy Johnson, Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 828-351-2328.



IT'S VERY EASY TO BECOME DEPRESSED AFTER THE HOLIDAYS...



BUT, IT CAN BE PREVENTED!



GET INVOLVED IN SOME ACTIVITIES THIS NEW YEAR AT THE NEAL CENTER!

FOR EXAMPLE:

CHAIR YOGA: MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS AT 9:30 AM –10:30 AM AND FROM 2:00-3:00 PM.

ACRYLIC PAINTING: TUESDAY MORNINGS FROM 10:00 AM– 12 NOON.

BEGINNING CANASTA: MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, AND WEDNESDAYS FROM 12 NOON-3PM

CHAIR VOLLEYBALL: TUESDAY AFTERNOONS, 1:00 PM-2:30 PM; THURSDAY MORNINGS, 9:30 AM– 11:00 AM

AND MANY MORE TO CHOOSE FROM! A FULL LIST OF THE MONTHLY ACTIVITIES IS AVAILABLE ON THE NEAL CENTER WEBPAGE AND FACEBOOK PAGE. HARD COPIES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NEAL CENTER LOBBY AREA. HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE ACTIVITIES? WANT TO SUGGEST AN ACTIVITY? REACH OUT TO DANIEL DEDMON, NEAL CENTER PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AT 704/481-7387.

WINTER WEATHER IS KNOCKING ON OUR DOORS!



In case of snow, ice, sleet, or freezing rain this winter, call the Neal Center’s “Weather Line” to see if we are open, delayed or closed. Call **704/481-7398** and the information will be updated as conditions change. Be prepared! Keep this number handy!

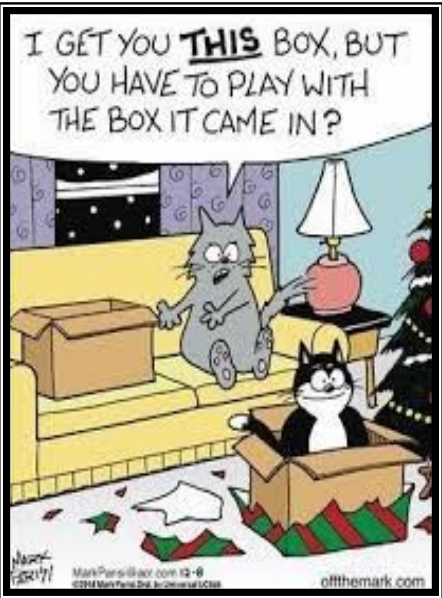


TIME IS ABOUT UP!

If you need to apply for SHIP Open Enrollment 2023 (Medicare & Seniors Health Insurance Information Program), **move fast!** Open enrollment ends **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023**

Questions? Please contact the Neal Senior Center at 704/482-3488

Laff-a-Little!



**FOR MANY ELDERLY CITIZENS, THE BEST
CHRISTMAS GIFT TO GIVE IS.....FOOD.**



**YOU'RE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE NEAL CENTER'S
"CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE"**

The Neal Center has a goal to provide homebound seniors with enough food for this Christmas holiday season. A total of 150 of each of these items are especially requested:

18 oz. jars of creamy peanut butter
Vienna sausage
Christmas "Little Debbie" snack cakes

***(Please make sure the items are well within the expiration dates-
Otherwise, they cannot be distributed)***

Monetary donations are also welcome.

An EXCELLENT mission project for church groups or organizations! Please contact the Neal Center at 704/481-7380 and ask for Paulette Putnam to obtain collection information.

PLEASE BRING YOUR DONATION NO LATER THAN TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12th

Please help make this Christmas merry for 150 homebound seniors!

BEFORE YOUR HOLIDAYS GET VERY BUSY...

LET'S DINE-AROUND!



**JOIN US FOR GOOD FOOD, CONVERSATION,
AND FELLOWSHIP AT
"SMALL TOWN KITCHEN", LOCATED AT
1011 EAST CHURCH STREET, CHERRYVILLE
ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, AT 4:00 PM**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN US, PLEASE CONTACT DANIEL DEDMON,
NEAL CENTER PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AT 704/481-7387 NO LATER
THAN WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6,
AT 12 NOON.**

**(ALL PARTICIPANTS PAY THEIR OWN WAY. A MINIMUM OF NINE
PARTICIPANTS ARE REQUIRED IN ORDER TO HAVE THIS EVENT.)**

ATTENTION NEAL CENTER BINGO PLAYERS!

**THERE WILL BE NO BINGO GAMES ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 25,
2023 AND MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2024.**

BINGO WILL RESUME ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024.



Your Good Health

Should You Change Holiday Traditions?

The holiday season is prime time for family rituals and customs. From baking and decorating to games and gift-giving, many of these traditions can be unifying and bring back fond memories. Often, many of these customs become a standard for the family and are passed down from generation to generation without evaluating their purpose. However, there may come a point when family members who championed certain rituals die, new partners and children enter the fold. Or, long-held customs simply don't serve you any longer and you want to shift the way you celebrate. This can be unsettling for members of your family, so you want to consider their attachments to certain traditions but move forward in a way that feels most authentic for everyone. Here's what to keep in mind:

When a tradition needs an update

Holiday rituals can fall out of favor for any number of reasons, from the painful to the mundane. Coordinating travel with young kids can make gathering at your out-of-state relative's house a pain. Maybe singing songs with the entire family lost its sheen when you were 12. Perhaps the gift exchange game your grandfather loved feels too painful to continue after his passing. This year, inflation is making gifting an expensive and potentially stressful endeavor, so continuing a tradition of buying individual presents for everybody could be unfeasible.

Examine the entire situation

Try looking at your customs and evaluating whether they're both healthy and helpful based on what is considered normal for your family or friend circle (because what one group considers healthy may differ from another's.) Even though it may be inconvenient for you to get to your parents' house for a celebration, their place may be the most helpful place due to its central location for most of the family and the fact that they have a big living room where everyone can fit.

What's causing stress?

When thinking about the upcoming event or tradition, check in with your body and see what feelings and emotions emerge. Are you feeling stressed, anxious, or uncomfortable. Is your heart beating fast? Are you dreading the tradition? This would indicate that you're not really wanting to engage in that activity. The cause of your anxiety could be an issue more complicated than simply "I don't feel like cooking with my family." For those with relatives who don't accept your new spouse or other aspect of your identity, seeing these people or engaging with their old-school customs may harm you. Depending on how safe you feel in the situation, try talking to your relative ahead of time and let them know how you'd like to be treated. Tell them how their words or actions impact you. If you know this conversation wouldn't go over well, then give yourself a time limit of an hour or two of family time and leave.

Think about why the ritual is triggering those bodily reactions — and get specific. It may not be that the potluck-style meal itself upsets you, but the fact that everyone criticizes your cooking after. You could love spending time with family, but get exhausted after only a few hours. Knowing what your exact pain points are can better help you frame a conversation later. Avoid falling into the trap of obligation, too. Just because a holiday has always been done this way doesn't mean everyone is enjoying it. If you're noticing the tradition is causing more stress than it used to and is creating more negative feelings than positive, it's worth reconsidering.

Considering new rituals

As families grow and change, so will the ways you celebrate. If your parents are used to having a big breakfast on holiday mornings but you have your own kids now, take the opportunity to build a new tradition instead of focusing on how things have changed. Acknowledge how it can be hard for parents to experience these new dynamics while still finding ways to fulfill the positive emotions the tradition brought. Maybe you can offer to host the holiday breakfast at your house instead.

When suggesting new holiday rituals, think about your audience, both in terms of logistics and finances. For instance, a lavish warm-weather holiday getaway may not be the best option for a loved one who recently lost their job. Keep any ideas light and fun since people have enough going on in their lives.

Evaluating the results

After the event, you may want to ask for feedback to see if everyone enjoyed the trial tradition. Don't get upset if some family members aren't jazzed about trying something new. Take that feedback and adjust for next year. If you're really dedicated to your idea, make it a tradition of one. For instance, maybe you used to have an ugly Christmas sweater party but now that Grandpa's died, everyone else hated it and doesn't want to have it. Instead, go ahead and wear an ugly Christmas sweater as you think to yourself, "This is a tradition that makes me feel festive."

Because holiday traditions are rooted in family history and fond memories, some may not be too thrilled about the idea of changing them. Expect emotions ranging from anger and blame to sadness and nostalgia. Honor your relatives' reactions and approach a conversation with curiosity. Ask them what the tradition meant to them and then offer what it meant to you.

A change in holiday customs may be sad for you, too. This could be a first holiday without a loved one or after a breakup. Acknowledge those feelings; it's likely you're not the only one feeling them. This can also bring you and your loved ones closer.

The goal of family rituals is to foster closeness and warmth, not obligation and resentment. Remember to keep the lines of communication open, focus on the feelings you hope to achieve with the tradition, and be open to renegotiation.

Source: edited from "How to change holiday traditions"- Vox