

## CORONA-TIMES PSAs

### Week of 1/18/21 A

#### BLOOD DRIVES:

Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) to schedule a donation time or to find a drive near you. **NO WALK-INS due to COVID- 19.**

Thurs. 1/28 8:00-2:00 Camp Ripley in Little Falls

## 1/18 – 1/25

**Essentia Health** will provide a **COVID-19 virtual vaccine update** during an hour-long **webinar** on **Fri. Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>** for people within all of the communities they serve. The live webinar will be hosted on Zoom and run from 12:00-1:00pm. This is a chance to learn more about the current status of vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. They'll discuss the prevalence of COVID-19 across our region, the new variants, the distribution process, safety, effectiveness and more. All are welcome to attend.

Put on your creativity hats and get ready to **help name one of eight of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's snow plows!** Yes... you could help name one! To submit your suggestion, visit [MnDOT.gov](http://MnDOT.gov) and click on the Name a MnDOT Snowplow. You have **now until Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>** to make your submission. In February, MnDOT will share some of the best name ideas and invite the public to vote on favorites. The eight names that get the most votes will soon make their way onto a snow plow near you! Again, [www.MnDOT.gov](http://www.MnDOT.gov).

The **Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen** wants to remind lakes area residents that that if you are in need of a lunch on the weekends, they provide free weekend lunches to anyone regardless of age. If you know anyone who might benefit from a free lunch on the weekends, just stop by the sharing Bread Soup Kitchen at 923 Oak Street in Brainerd on **Sat. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>** between 12:00 and 12:30. Meals will be given out then.

The **Lakes Area Music Festival** presents "**Beauty in Chaos, Hope in Order**"... a streamed performance on **Sat. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>** at 7:00pm. This is the next concert in their Winter Series and features 17<sup>th</sup> Century music! The show will be available on Facebook Live, at the concert's LAMF Event page. The show is free to watch, however donations to The Lakes Area Music Festival are appreciated.

**Minnesota School Choice week** is happening **Sun. Jan. 24 through Sat. 30** which allows families to evaluate all of their kids' education options and choose schools that meet their children's needs. The offer free state-by-state guides to every type of school available, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, online public schools, private schools and homeschooling. This is a great way for parents to discover all the k-12 options. To learn more, visit the website [SchoolChoiceWeek.com/Minnesota](http://SchoolChoiceWeek.com/Minnesota).

# 1/25 – 1/31

How would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? **January is National Mentoring Month** and **Kinship Partners** is always looking for caring adults who would like to become mentors to a number of lakes area children – some of whom have been on a waiting list for quite some time. If you would like to make the difference in the life of one of these children here in our community, please contact Kinship Partners. Mentors can be individuals, couples, or families. It doesn't cost a lot of money, just a little time. Visit [KinshipPartners.org](http://KinshipPartners.org) for more information. That's [KinshipPartners.org](http://KinshipPartners.org). **AND....during the month, Stonehouse Coffee** will make a donation to Kinship when you purchase a Bag of Coffee Beans from any of their three locations (2 in Nisswa, 1 in Baxter)! %5 of their coffee bean sales will go to KP!

The **Brainerd Lakes Area Women of Today** will host a slightly different **Happy Hour with a Purpose** this year, but it will be a great fundraiser nonetheless! During the **entire month of January** (thru the 31<sup>st</sup>), lakes area residents are encouraged to purchase a \$25 ticket to the "event" with proceeds going to Jamie's Purse and Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity. The \$25 will get you two drink tickets at ANY of the participating sponsor locations (9<sup>th</sup> Street Social Club, Dunmire's Bar & Grill, Ernie's on Gull, Harpo's, Jack Pine Brewery, Roundhouse Brewery and Shep's on 6<sup>th</sup>). You can choose your drink tickets! Also, every ticket sold will come with a gift certificate to a lakes area business valued at anywhere from \$10 to \$100! For more information and for tickets, go to the website [BrainerdLakesAreaWomenOfToday.com](http://BrainerdLakesAreaWomenOfToday.com) or stop by the Habitat ReStore in Brainerd. Prizes and drink tickets will be mailed out in February.

(BD/EML/PSA) January is **National Radon Action Month** and Crow Wing County and the Minnesota Department of Health recommend all homes be tested for radon. The department says a home should be tested at least every five years. Radon is an odorless, colorless and tasteless radioactive gas occurring naturally in the soil that can enter homes through cracks and openings in basements or foundation floors and walls. They say it is important to perform a radon test after buying a new heating system or adding central air conditioning, authorities reported. Radon is the largest environmental cancer risk and leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. **Free radon test kits are available** at the Land Services Building by appointment only, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at 322 Laurel St., Suite 15, in Brainerd. Appointments can be made by calling 218-824-1010. There is a limit of one radon kit per household.

**Minnesota School Choice week** is happening **Jan. 24-30** which allows families to evaluate all of their kids' education options and choose schools that meet their children's needs. The offer free state-by-state guides to every type of school available, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, online public schools, private schools and homeschooling. This is a great way for parents to discover all the k-12 options. To learn more, visit the website [SchoolChoiceWeek.com/Minnesota](http://SchoolChoiceWeek.com/Minnesota).

In preparation for “the Big Game”, the public is invited to join **Essentia Health** for a **Heart Healthy Pizza & Soup Virtual Cooking Demonstration** on **Tues. Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>** from 6:00-7:00pm. The recipes that will be shared include Italian Pizza, Margarita Pizza, Italian Sausage made with Ground Turkey, Pizza Sauce, Pizza Pasta Soup, Lower sodium potato chips, a Hummus Dip, a Fruit Tray and Low Sodium Nuts. Register for the FREE virtual event at [EssentiaHealth.org/HeartHealthyCooking](https://EssentiaHealth.org/HeartHealthyCooking).

Attention youth ages 16 to 24.... How would you like to Earn (\$) while you Learn? **BICAP Youth Build** is recruiting youth participants for 2021. You can earn an hourly wage while working toward your Diploma, GED or Adult Diploma. You'll participate in on-site construction work experience day, one on-site school day and two distance learning days per week, for a minimum of 6 months. You'll not only be helping to build a home for a low-income community member, but you'll earn certifications to build a resume and learn other skills to make yourself more employable! Eligibility forms, applications and information can be found online at [BICAP.org](https://BICAP.org). Applications are **due NO LATER than Fri. Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>**. With questions, call 218-333-9836.

It's time for another **Full Moon Snowshoe Hike** at the **Northland Arboretum** on **Fri. Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>** from 7:30-8:30 where guests will enjoy a guided hike by the light of the full moon. Bring snowshoes or winter boots and plan for an hour hike. If it's cloudy, bring a headlamp. You can warm up after the hike with hot chocolate and cookies. The cost is \$10 for Arb members ...\$20 for non-members.... Class size is limited. To register, stop by the Northland Arboretum in Brainerd or call 829-8770.

The **Brainerd Jaycees Virtual Ice Fishing Extravaganza** will take place on **Sat. Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>** on ANY lake in Minnesota! If you already purchased a physical ticket, you'll need to convert it to a FishDonkey registration to be eligible to win a contest prize. To participate, you WILL need the FishDonkey app downloaded to your device... find a link to it – along with all other Extravaganza information at [IceFishing.org](https://IceFishing.org).

## 2/1 – 2/7

The **Nisswa Chamber** wants your help **in filling the town with love for Valentine's Day!** They have launched the Nisswa Love Local Project. Here's how it works: 1. Stop in to the Chamber office for a heart. (or two. or ten.) 2. Write something you love about Nisswa on the heart. 3. They will fill our windows with love for Nisswa! If you're not able to stop into the office, send them a message and we'd be happy to fill a heart out for you. [#NisswaLoveLocalProject](https://NisswaLoveLocalProject). Learn more at [Nisswa.com](https://Nisswa.com).

Join the **Chamber in Crosslake** for the next **Explore Crosslake Business Meeting** on **Thurs. Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>** from 8:00-9:30AM via Zoom. Always the first Thursday of the month, and usually in person, you can join them for a meeting of local business owners, managers and key staff. Network with others, learn more about events, activities and organizations in Crosslake, plus share info about YOUR business. For more info about the link to the events, visit [Crosslake.com](https://Crosslake.com).

It's time for **Crosslake Winterfest** and it's all happening in Crosslake **Thurs. Feb. 4 – Sat. Feb. 6**, with good old fashioned winter fun for the entire family! It all begins Thurs., Feb 4th as the first of three daily clues is released to guide you and your friends or family to the Hidden WinterFest Medallion! Find it and cash in on a prize basket valued at hundreds courtesy of Crosslake Chamber Member businesses. On Friday evening, it's time for outdoor activities at the Crosslake Community Center including ice skating, sledding, and a fabulous fireworks display! Rise and shine Saturday morning, Feb. 6 for a full day of activities including Kite Flying, Ice skating, Helicopter Rides, shopping, food and drink specials all over town and of course SOUPFEST tasting begins at noon! For the entire rundown of the weekend's events and specials (get those Winterfest masks or gators!), visit [Crosslake.com](http://Crosslake.com) or download the Crosslake Chamber app.

Minnesota dentists are offering free dental care for children in need on **Fri. 5 and Sat. 6**. Appointments can be booked **now**. **The Minnesota Dental Association** has nearly 1,000 dental professionals volunteering at over 50 clinics across the state for Give Kids a Smile. Finding a clinic with open appointments is as easy as calling United Way 211 (just dial 2-1-1) or by visiting [MNDental.org](http://MNDental.org). Appointments can then be scheduled directly with the dental office. No eligibility questions are asked, in an effort to remove any possible barrier to care. Patients must be 18 years or younger and accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Specific services provided at each location will be outlined when an appointment is scheduled. Volunteers speaking multiple languages are also available at many locations to help with language barriers.

The **17<sup>th</sup> Annual Cuyuna Lakes Chamber's Ice Fishing Contest** will take place on **Sat. Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>** from 12:00-3:00 on any public lake in Minnesota! \$20 to enter (you MUST register with the FishDonkey app)...and over \$4,000 in prizes will be awarded! Catch a fish, win cash and gift cards to Cuyuna Lakes bars, restaurants and more! Raffle tickets are also being sold but are NOT acting as entry into the fishing contest. To learn about the contest, the huge prizes and for more info, visit [CuyunaLakes.com](http://CuyunaLakes.com).

Tickets for **Brainerd Public Schools Foundation's Big Event** are on sale now, with the virtual event scheduled for **Fri. Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>**, 2021. Each ticket holder will receive a "Party in a Box" which includes access to the event, raffles and a \$25 gift card to one of our local restaurants! Visit [BPSF.org](http://BPSF.org) and reserve your tickets now!

## 2/8 – 2/14

The next **Ruby's Pantry Pop-Up Pantry** will be on **Tues. Feb. 9th** at The Northern Pacific Center - Building #2, 1511 Northern Pacific Rd, Brainerd, MN 56401. Food distribution begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. Ruby's Pantry is a non-profit food ministry serving our community on the second Tuesday of the month. There are no income guidelines to participate; Ruby's Pantry is for everyone who eats. For a \$20 cash donation, participants will receive a "share" with an abundance of groceries. The variety and amount of food varies each month. Contact The Journey North Community Church at 218.824.5617 about volunteer opportunities at Ruby's! ((To comply with COVID-19 guidelines it will be an outdoor, drive-thru distribution. *You must stay in your vehicle.*))

The **Nisswa Chamber** wants your help in **filling the town with love for (before) Valentine's Day (Sun. Feb. 14).**! They have launched the Nisswa Love Local Project. Here's how it works: 1. Stop in to the Chamber office for a heart. (or two. or ten.) 2. Write something you love about Nisswa on the heart. 3. They will fill our windows with love for Nisswa! If you're not able to stop into the office, send them a message and we'd be happy to fill a heart out for you. [#NisswaLoveLocalProject](#)

Get ready for fun at the **Nisswa Fire Department's Annual Fishing Derby!** The event will be held on **Sun. Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>** from 12:00-2:00. \$5 per hole for fishing....plus enjoy prizes, food and fun!

## MISC...

(BD/EML/PSA) **January is National Radon Action Month** and Crow Wing County and the Minnesota Department of Health recommend all homes be tested for radon. The department says a home should be tested at least every five years. Radon is an odorless, colorless and tasteless radioactive gas occurring naturally in the soil that can enter homes through cracks and openings in basements or foundation floors and walls. They say it is important to perform a radon test after buying a new heating system or adding central air conditioning, authorities reported. Radon is the largest environmental cancer risk and leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. **Free radon test kits are available** at the Land Services Building by appointment only, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at 322 Laurel St., Suite 15, in Brainerd. Appointments can be made by calling 218-824-1010. There is a limit of one radon kit per household.

The **Brainerd Public Library** presents **Book Buddies** in the **month of January**!! During the month of January, the library encourages kids to get a photo of them reading to your buddies--whether they're stuffies, toys, blankets, or something else--and share it with the library! The library will post them on their Facebook page and print them out to hang in our front window. They want to show our community how many great readers we have! When you email it to us at [BRAINERD@KRLS.ORG](mailto:BRAINERD@KRLS.ORG), please include the child's first name and names of the 'buddies.' (Please note that they will never share last names or other identifying information, but by sending a photo you are giving us permission to use the image on our social media and in the library.)

How would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? **January is National Mentoring Month** and **Kinship Partners** is always looking for caring adults who would like to become mentors to a number of lakes area children – some of whom have been on a waiting list for quite some time. If you would like to make the difference in the life of one of these children here in our community, please contact Kinship Partners. Mentors can be individuals, couples, or families. It doesn't cost a lot of money, just a little time. Visit [KinshipPartners.org](http://KinshipPartners.org) for more information. That's [KinshipPartners.org](http://KinshipPartners.org). **AND....during the month, Stonehouse Coffee** will make a donation to Kinship when you purchase a Bag of Coffee Beans from any of their three locations (2 in Nisswa, 1 in Baxter)! %5 of their coffee bean sales will go to KP!

Every day, people in our community struggle to get by. Many of our neighbors are barely making it day to day, just one car accident or emergency room visit away from financial crisis. For example, adults working two or three jobs to pay the bills experience more daily stress, have worse health, and spend less time with their kids....then their kids are more likely to go to school hungry, not read at grade level and miss too many days of school, making it difficult to graduate from high school on time. Thus, the cycle starts over again. We can do better. **United Way** is the best way to make the biggest difference in the **Brainerd Lakes Area**. Please help us Fight for those families in our community who need a little support to get out of this cycle. Learn more and give to the Lakes Area United Way at [UnitedWayNow.org](http://UnitedWayNow.org).

**Cass County** businesses, nonprofit organizations and self-employed entrepreneurs may now apply for **COVID relief grants** on a first come, first served basis. Applications will be **accepted through Tues. Feb. 16** at 4:30 p.m. unless funds are exhausted earlier. Priority will be given to businesses and nonprofits that did NOT receive COVID-19 grant funding from Cass County in the past. (*If you received relief funds from Cass County last year, you are still encouraged to apply in case surplus funds are available.*) To see the criteria, learn more and apply, visit [co.cass.mn.us](http://co.cass.mn.us).

**The Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Minnesota** is scheduled to take place on **Sat. Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>** at Breezy Point Resort's Marina. Check in will be from 10:00-12:30 with the plunge starting at 1:00. You can register now to take a plunge into the icy waters of Pelican Lake at [PlungeMN.org](http://PlungeMN.org).

Is your home in need of repairs, but you're unsure of affordable financing options? You may be eligible for a **home repair loan or grant** through **USDA Rural Development**. They offer very-low-income homeowners affordable financing to repair, improve or modernize their homes. Grants are available for elderly homeowners 62 years of age or older to remove health and safety hazards. For more information, contact the Baxter Office at (218) 829-5965 or visit [rd.usda.gov/mn](http://rd.usda.gov/mn). Let us help you make the repairs you need to stay in the home you love, because "Together, America prospers." A message from the USDA Rural Development, an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**University of Minnesota Extension** is excited to be partnering with North Dakota State University Extension to offer a series of **farm safety webinars** this winter. Each of us has been impacted in some way by an accident, injury, or fatality that has occurred on the farm. These events are devastating to communities and impact the livelihoods of those we know and love dearly. The purpose of these webinars is to empower communities and individuals to prioritize safety on the farm. **The webinar series will be January-March on Thursdays** at 11:00am. Each webinar will last one hour. The Farm Safety Webinar Series is offered free of charge. Participants must pre-register by visiting [z.umn.edu/FarmSafetyWebinars](http://z.umn.edu/FarmSafetyWebinars). When registering for the webinar series, participants will have access to join each of the five webinar sessions. Questions can be sent to Emily Krekelberg at [krek0033@umn.edu](mailto:krek0033@umn.edu)

**Cuyuna Regional Medical Center** is continuing to care for residents of our communities by offering **contact free COVID testing** in a mobile unit on its Crosby campus. The service is offered weekdays by appointment only. Call 218-546-7462 to schedule a test. The mobile unit is located in front of the Business Support Services building in CRMC's staff parking lot across Highway 210 from the hospital and clinic's main entrance. Patients drive up to the unit and remain in their vehicle during the brief test administered by a nurse. Visit [CuyunaMed.org](http://CuyunaMed.org) for more information and to schedule an appointment.

**Crow Wing County** residents can now view county highway department snowplows on county roads during winter snow events, to track where plows are and where they are headed. The **"Where's My Snowplow?" link** is a web based map activated during snow events. It uses GPS to track the 15 county snowplows and show their current locations. The map tracks in near real time and updates every 5 minutes during snow events. To access the link, visit [CrowWing.us](http://CrowWing.us).

**Pine Grove Zoo** is taking applications for **Zoo Keeping Interns** for the upcoming 2021 season. As a non-profit organization and community partner, Pine Grove Zoo has created an Internship Program to give back and support students interested in the animal field and natural world. Interns gain knowledge and experience with all of Pine Grove Zoo's animal family, not just certain species. Internships allow individuals to learn and discover things about all areas of the Zoo, which can guide students in deciding which part of this field interests them more. Pine Grove Zoo has received high ratings from interns that have been part of the Pine Grove Zoo Team, while some even continue as paid staff during the season. If you are interested in an internship, call 320-616-5595 or email [Info@PineGroveZoo.com](mailto:Info@PineGroveZoo.com).

The **Sunrise Sertomans** invite you to go "green" this season and recycle your non-working Christmas lights and extension cords as part of their **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bites For Lights** fundraiser! Bring your non-functioning lights and extension cords to participating businesses throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area. With the help of Crow Wing County Land Services, **The Sunrise Sertoma Club of Brainerd** will recycle the lights and cords through Crow Wing Recycling with 100% of the funds raised going back into the Brainerd Lakes Area. Drop off locations are in Brainerd/Baxter, Aitkin, Emily, Crosby, Nisswa, Breezy Point, Crosslake and Pequot Lakes. To find a location near you, visit [BitesForLights.org](http://BitesForLights.org).

**The Crisis Line & Referral Service** is looking for compassionate **volunteers** to help answer calls from those in the area who may be experiencing a crisis and need someone to listen. Their volunteers are truly a lifeline for those who call the Crisis Line, with compassion, concern and with the highest level of integrity and confidentiality, the volunteers listen, affirm, encourage and offer hope by connecting with callers to resources that can truly help them. Hours for volunteers are flexible, you can do it from home or wherever! Training will be provided. You must be 18 or older. To learn more, visit [CrisisLineAndReferralService.org](http://CrisisLineAndReferralService.org).

In response to the recent surge of **COVID-19** across our region — and the frequent fluctuations in case rates — **Essentia Health has launched a COVID-19 Regional Projections Dashboard**. This user-friendly dashboard aggregates publicly available data and features an interactive map of Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Users can compare case numbers and projections by state, and drill down further by county. Available metrics include cases per 10,000 people, daily new cases, seven-day positivity rates, etc. It's intended to inform our communities by presenting rich data in a highly visual way. You can access the dashboard by visiting [EssentiaHealth.org](http://EssentiaHealth.org)

The **Brainerd Public Library** is now offering **no-contact curbside service** for customers to pick up library materials. Library staff is available to help customers request materials over the phone and by email. Curbside pickup times include many hours throughout the week including Tuesday-Thursday evenings until 7:00 as well as Saturdays. You can book curbside appointment by logging on to [TinyURL.com/BrainerdCurbside](http://TinyURL.com/BrainerdCurbside) or by calling 218-829-5574.

As you may know, in late July, the **Brainerd Family YMCA** experienced significant structural and cosmetic damage to their facility from heavy rainfall and they found out that the damage is not covered by insurance – with damage estimates at over \$148,000. And before that, the pandemic forced the Y to scale back services, putting more strain on their finances. The Brainerd Family YMCA serves over 725 children and their families every year. They provide after-school programming, host summer camps, promote healthy lifestyles and they change peoples' lives. The Y has stepped up when businesses needed it. **IT'S TIME FOR BUSINESSES TO STEP UP. THE Y NEEDS US.** Both CTC and Digital Horizons have each donated \$1,000 to start the grassroots campaign to raise funds for the Y. If you can do the same or similar, please visit [GoCTC.com/ymca](http://GoCTC.com/ymca).

**Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity** is in need of volunteers to help them gather items for their restore as they have been inundated with donations and salvages. They need help tearing job sites apart and unloading back at the store. The schedule is flexible and you'll feel good knowing you are helping others. If you are able to volunteer, please call 218-454-7027 or email [Restore@LakesAreaHabitat.org](mailto:Restore@LakesAreaHabitat.org).

**Crow Wing County** Sheriff Scott Goddard has announced the creation of a "**Safe Exchange Zone**" on the campus of Crow Wing County. The designated area not only provides a safe location for child custody and e-commerce exchanges but also allows people feeling the need to meet in an area that offers a sense of safety and security a place to go. Two parking stalls have been marked for this purpose in front of the Crow Wing County Judicial Center and can be used 24 hours a day. The safe zone is monitored 24 hours a day by law enforcement and officers are able to quickly respond if there were to be a problem.

The **Destination Downtown Coalition** wants to **bring Babe the Blue Ox back to downtown Brainerd** but needs your financial help to raise the \$2,400 needed. Nor-Son Construction has donated a Babe the Blue Ox statue that they've had at their Baxter office since 2008. Babe is in need of repairs and a new look. The coalition wants this to be a community project that adds to downtown Brainerd's uniqueness. The Crossing Arts Alliance has agreed to head the artistic side with a call out to local artists. They will be putting together a panel to determine placement, find great artists, and judge who will be doing the honors of creating downtown's latest attraction! If you would like to provide financial support for this project please make a donation by clicking on either link and add to the amount so far! Sponsors of \$500 or more will have their name or business logo on a plaque next to the statue. <https://downtownbrainerd.org/donate/>. ***Submissions DUE BY APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>!***