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The 3 Pillars of Giving

One of the most exciting things about giving is that there are countless ways to make a difference in the world. And while there really is no wrong way to be generous, you may find that by tapping into your unique skills and creativity that you walk away with an enriched experience

Time: Time may be the most valuable resource we all have—once it's gone, it's gone. That's why it's universally understood how precious the gift of time truly is. This type of giving is providing someone else with your own time to help others. Your gift of time may be direct, hands-on service such as tutoring children at a homeless shelter or an indirect service, such as stocking shelves at a food pantry.

Talent: Whether you share your unique skills or professional expertise, you can use your own talent to give back to your community, or anywhere there is a need. Examples may include a doctor providing pro bono office hours at a local clinic or an investment advisor who manages the endowment of a charity. It's not only rewarding for philanthropists to donate their talents, but also highly valued because it provides a service or expertise that is often out of reach for the recipients.

Treasure: When many people think of generosity, they think of donating their treasure—a euphemism for money or other items with value. While cash is the most common type of charitable donation, it may also come in the form of real estate, collectibles, and more.

—<https://foundationsource.com/>



'Tis The Season For Christmas Trains in Colorado

What Christmas would be complete without hot cocoa, a trip to the North Pole, or a visit with Santa Claus?! Do all that and more aboard one of these Colorado Christmas holiday train rides.

From the Front Range to the Western Slope, there are a number of historic railroads in Colorado that offer something special for the winter holiday season. While most tourist trains shut down over the winter, a few keep rolling on. Board these unique Christmas themed trains for an unforgettable time with your friends, family, and loved ones. Here are Colorado's best Christmas holiday train rides, in no particular order:

SANTA'S LIGHTED FOREST: Witness the snow-covered mountains in all their glory every evening aboard the Georgetown Loop Railroad for an enchanting experience. The train makes a stop at Santa's Lighted Forest where the spirit of the holidays is on display with thousands of colorful lights that cover the trees and Christmas village at the North Pole.

Passengers can meet Santa himself, enjoy hot cocoa and cookies all while watching the beautiful light show synchronized to selected Christmas carols. Passengers have a choice of the Presidential Car, Parlor Car, or the Coach Car. This train departs only from the Devil's Gate Depot in Georgetown, Colorado. Website: georgetownlooprr.com

SANTA'S ROCKY MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE: Perfect for the entire family, hop aboard the Georgetown Loop train for a ride to the North Pole. Passengers will join up with Santa and his little helpers who help pass out presents, treats, and goodies for the children. Choose from the Presidential Car, Parlor Car, or the Coach Car – each decorated with the festivities of the season. This train departs only from the Devil's Gate Depot location in Georgetown, Colorado. Website: georgetownlooprr.com

SANTA EXPRESS TRAIN: With your pajamas on, catch a ride aboard the Santa Express Train where Santa's helpers offer hot cocoa, cookies, and candy canes and even read Christmas stories to all the passengers. Ride through the Royal Gorge for an unforgettable journey to the North Pole, which shines with all the colors and brilliance of Christmas.

Kids, get your Christmas wish list ready for Santa as he makes his way through each class of service, visiting every child aboard the Royal Gorge Route Railroad. It offers up to four daily departures, one of which includes an early morning train ride that includes breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus. There are a variety of classes of service available, from the Vista Dome and first-class lunch and dinner train to the club and coach class. Website: royalgorgeroute.com

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Christmas Trains, *continued from front page*

THE POLAR EXPRESS TRAIN RIDE

Enjoy the warmth and fun of the season with a trip to the North Pole aboard the Polar Express via the Durango and Silverton Train. Experience the classic book, The Polar Express, come to life with the chefs, conductor, Billy, and of course with Santa and his elves.

Enjoy treats and a bedtime story of The Polar Express as you head to the North Pole to pick up Santa. On your return to Durango, Santa visits each car while your chefs lead all passengers in the singing of Christmas carols. Passengers can choose from three different classes of service; coach, deluxe, and first-class.

—<https://www.uncovercolorado.com/christmas-holiday-train-rides-in-colorado/>



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The deadline for advertisements is the 15th of the month for the next month's issue, except for the Jan. issue which is Dec. 6th.

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This Space Intentionally Left Blank for Teen Services

National Cocoa Day

December 13th ushers in a celebration worthy of the winter holidays with National Cocoa Day. What better way to warm up after a cold day outside?

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Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks

You don't have to hit the slopes to have some cold, wintery fun. Check out these rinks to get your ice skating fix.

RINK AT BELMAR, LAKEWOOD

Admission (skate rental included): \$10 (\$8 for kids 12 and under; seniors and children two and under skate free) or \$6 if you bring your own skates. Park in the lot at Teller Street and West Virginia Avenue. Even in the daytime, the Rink at Belmar can get plenty of shade, so make sure you check the weather and bundle up. Extreme weather may close the rink, so check online or call ahead to make sure the rink is open as planned. Outdoor heaters and fire pits help friends or parents stay toasty.

SKATING IN THE SQUARE, ARVADA

Admission (skate rental included): \$10 (\$7 for kids 12 and under). Take the G Line to Olde Town Arvada, and you'll find a cozy little skating rink in the square on 57th Avenue, between the library and the pedestrian mall. Pick up your skates at the nearby shed and take to the (synthetic) ice.

PARKER ICE TRAIL, PARKER

Admission: \$9 (\$7 for kids 10 and under). **Skate rental:** \$4. The ice circles a center grassy area and is fenced in on both the inside and outside, offering more space for beginners to hold on as they get accustomed to the ice. Located at the edge of downtown Parker in Discovery Park (behind the library), the ice trail offers concessions, skating aids for new skaters, and a handful of fire pits and seating for spectators to keep warm.

DOWNTOWN DENVER RINK, DENVER

Admission: Free. **Skate rental:** \$11 (\$9 for kids 12 and under; fourth graders skate free). The downtown rink sits in Skyline Park, in the shadow of the Daniels & Fisher clocktower between the 16th Street Mall and 17th on Arapahoe Street. Open late on holidays and weekends, the rink offers concessions and locker storage for your belongings. Fourth graders skate free, and double-bladed skates are available in children sizes.

EVERGREEN LAKE, EVERGREEN

Admission: \$14 (children four and under skate free); \$20 with skate rental included. **Skate rental:** \$10. Winning the prize for best views while skating, Evergreen Lake is open throughout the winter as weather permits. Learn to Skate classes are available for children, and athletes can sign up for hockey and broomball online. Regulars or families can purchase 10-punch skate cards for \$120 (\$30 savings). Park at Evergreen Lake House or take the shuttle from Stagecoach Park lower parking lot on weekends and holidays.



– In Part From <https://www.5280.com/best-places-for-ice-skating-in-denver/>



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Homemade Candy Canes

These homemade candy canes are SO much better than store-bought, and so fun to make! Just make sure you have a stick of butter handy to keep your hands buttered for pulling so it doesn't stick to you.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. peppermint extract
- 1 tsp. red food coloring



How To Make:

1. In heavy-bottomed large saucepan or small pot, combine first 4 ingredients and stir until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring to hard-ball stage. (265 degrees.)
2. Remove from heat and add peppermint extract. Divide into 2 portions, and add coloring to one part. Pour out onto buttered cookie sheets. (Pour half onto one sheet, then add coloring to the rest and then pour onto second sheet.) when it's cool enough to handle, start pulling each part separately. (Best done with 2 people, but if doing alone, go back and forth pulling each.)
3. When you feel like you just can't pull anymore, form into ropes and twist them together. Cut into 8" lengths, form into the shape of candy canes, and place on lightly buttered platter til fully hardened.

7 Ways To Make The Holidays Safer For Pets

Nothing can spoil holiday cheer like an emergency visit to a veterinary clinic. These seven tips can help prevent a holiday disaster with your pets.

1. Keep people food out of the reach of your pet, and ask your guests to do the same.
2. Make sure your pet doesn't have any access to treats, especially those containing chocolate, xylitol, grapes/raisins, onions or other toxic foods.
3. Don't leave your pet alone in the room with lit candles, a decorated tree or potpourri.
4. Keep holiday plants (especially holly, mistletoe and lillies) out of reach of pets.
5. Consider leaving the tinsel off your tree if you have a cat.
6. Secure your Christmas tree to keep it from falling over if your dog bumps it or your cat climbs it. Hanging lemon-scented car air fresheners in the tree may deter your cat from climbing it.
7. Provide a safe place for your pet to escape the excitement (such as a kennel, crate, perching place, scratching post shelf or hiding place) if you're entertaining guests. If your pet is excitable or scared, consider putting your pet in another room with some toys and a comfortable bed.

—<https://www.avma.org/resources>

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**Trail of Lights
Chatfield Farms**

Now – Jan. 1, various evenings, 5-8:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Tucked into the foothills under the dark sky, the glow of lights can be seen for miles. Just under a mile of walking trail, the illumination of cottonwoods, boxelders and pine trees line the pathway through the Green Farm, Crossroads, Deer Creek Discovery Children's Play Area and 1880s Hildebrand Ranch homestead. There is the option of an alternative path for those who want to take a shorter stroll.

**Denver Botanic Gardens
Blossoms of Light**

A stroll through the Denver Botanic Gardens is a delightful way to celebrate the holiday season. The Blossoms of Light extravaganza is a twinkling and breathtaking twist on the already beautiful gardens, especially on a December evening.

For over 30 years, lights have transformed this cultural pocket of Denver and become an annual tradition for many local families and friends. From Friday to Sunday, November 17th, 2023 to January 7th, 2024, enjoy warm drinks and holiday treats amongst the most festive lights, blossoms, and pathways in Colorado.

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Christmas Tree Cutting

Cutting down your own Christmas tree can be a memorable and festive experience for the whole family, but it's key to do this activity safely and legally. In Colorado, you typically need a permit to cut down a Christmas tree on public lands. Here are some spots where you can obtain a permit and some tips for doing this activity responsibly. All permits can be purchased online at [recreation.gov](https://www.coloradoparent.com/christmas-tree-cutting/).

1. Plan Ahead: Contact the forest service or visit their website for more information on permit availability, cutting dates, regulations, and designated cutting areas.
2. Choose the Right Tools: Bring a sharp saw for cutting and ropes or straps to secure the tree to your vehicle.
3. Select a Healthy Tree: A healthy tree will have vibrant green needles (avoid trees with brown or dry needles).
4. Dispose of the Tree Properly: Find a recycling program, chip the tree for mulch, or compost it.

–<https://www.coloradoparent.com/christmas-tree-cutting/>

National Thank You Note Day

National Thank-You Note Day on December 26th recognizes the time-honored tradition of thanking people for their gifts, hospitality, and generosity. It is a day to get some note cards, paper, pen, envelopes, and stamps to write those special thank-yous.

How's The Market?

The real estate market is remaining steady. Listings and buyer activity are low, but that is normal for this time of year. All indicators are predicting that 2024 will bring both lower interest rates for Buyers and appreciation for Sellers. Depending on how low rates get, we may see that same sort of frenzy that last few years provided – meaning it will be a great time to Sell or Buy. Contact me with your real estate problems, needs, and questions!

–**Celia Zaharas Your Trusted Realtor**
Colorado Home Realty, 303-949-3107
Celia@ColoradoHomeRealty.com

Holiday's Evening

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 5:30 to 8 p.m.

The Friends of the Littleton Library and Museum and the Littleton Museum present Holiday's Evening Sunday, December 10, 2023 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Littleton Museum.

Bring your family and friends to this popular outdoor evening event on the grounds of the living history farms. Be transported back to the winter holidays of the 1800s by costumed interpreters who bring the past to life by demonstrating what life was like in early Littleton.

Enjoy a wagon ride, snack on cornbread and cookies, enjoy live music, and look up at the stars as you sip hot cider. Dress warmly - it could be quite chilly! All activities and refreshments are included in the ticket cost.

–<https://www.littletonco.gov/Community/City-Calendar>s

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