

FROM THE HEART

Winter 2022

Keeping safe this
festive season

Christmas stories

Festive feasts

Crafts and puzzles

Chest
Heart &
Stroke

A warm welcome to this Christmas edition of From the Heart.

By now, we will have pulled out our winter woollies ready for the stretch of cold days and dark nights ahead. The streets are lined with bright lights and Christmas trees, and Christmas carols are on repeat as we shop for gifts for our loved ones.

As 2022 comes to an end, we reflect on how NICHHS services have adapted since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. We were delighted to return to face to face services which continue to expand with the support of our committed staff and brilliant clients. We have been out and about delivering PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Programme) and Wellness Sessions which have seen the return of some wonderfully dedicated volunteers.

The return of home visits has allowed us to connect and build rapport with clients whilst our walking groups have provided the opportunity to step into nature. Meanwhile, our Carers Education Programme, Return to Work Programme and Taking Control continue to run online; a great option for those who cannot meet with us face to face. It is lovely to see the peer support naturally develop within each of our groups and services – the inspiration, determination, tenacity and encouragement from service users highlights the importance of staying connected with each other.

As you flick through the pages of this edition of From the Heart, you will come across some warming winter recipes and tips to stay active and safe this Christmas. Take a look at our client stories as they reminisce about Christmases past and hopefully you will also take some inspiration from our festive decorations guide.

Thank you all for your continued support. From everyone at NICHHS, we hope you have a lovely, happy, safe Christmas and New Year.

Until 2023,

Care Services Team

Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke

A Big Thank You To All The People Who Have Supported Us In Little Ways

Our 2022 Christmas appeal is once again all about the little things that people living with a chest, heart or stroke illness may no longer be able to do and how NICHHS is here to support them.

Here we highlight some of the stories of the 'little' ways people have supported our charity this year. All these 'little' fundraisers add up to something big- helping us raise the more than £3 million we need every year to provide our services and continue helping local people affected by chest, heart and stroke illness. Thank you to everyone for all their hard work and support!

LISA DEVINE-CALDWELL

Lisa had a stroke at the age of just 46 and joined our PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Programme) and Taking Control Self-Management online courses. In February this year, on the first anniversary of having a stroke, Lisa organised a sponsored walk which saw her, and 30 family and friends complete a 5-mile walk in support of our charity. The walk raised an amazing £2,202.



CHRISTOPHER BRANNIGAN

Twelve-year-old Christopher raised a brilliant £1,300 for our work by organising a raffle and the first prize was a cake he baked himself. Christopher's fundraiser was in tribute to his late uncle, John Brannigan.



LATASHA HUMPHRIES

Latasha organised a Valentine's Quiz fundraiser at The Ballymore Inn which raised an incredible £540 for our work.



ROY KIRKWOOD

Roy took on the challenge to write 100 poems in 100 days. He took requests from family and friends in return for a small donation to our charity. Roy chose to support NICHS as his daughter Melissa suffered a stroke in 2020 at only 33. Roy raised a fantastic £700.



BERNIE GALBRAITH

Bernie took on the challenge of walking 10,000 steps every day for a month. Bernie raised an amazing £450 for NICHS.



STEVE FARLOW

After surviving a stroke in April 2019, Steve attended our Stroke Activity Group in Coleraine. Steve wanted to give something back to NICHS and decided to organise a charity concert which raised a fantastic £1,437.



THOMASINA CONNOLLY

Thomasina raised a brilliant £300 for our work through her 'Walking the Miles Challenge'. Thomasina took on the challenge of walking as many miles as possible throughout the month of March and managed to rack up an incredible 230 miles.



ESTHER GIBBONS

Esther started knitting white cotton dishcloths during lockdown and sold them in her local convenience store for £1. At the last count Esther had raised an amazing £200 for our work.



TOMMY FERGUSON

Tommy suffered a stroke in November 2020 and joined one of our PREP groups as well as our Stroke Walking Group in Botanic Gardens. He wanted to give something back and decided to fundraise for us through his retirement party, raising an amazing £459.22.



As a local charity, almost 90% of our care and prevention services and research are funded exclusively by public donations and these funds are essential to our work.

We understand everyone is finding it tough at the moment with the cost of living crisis but without donations we would not be able to continue to help the thousands of local people who need us. We really appreciate any support people can give us. From a £1 donation, which may seem so small, to thousands of pounds from a fundraising event, every pound is important and really helps us to make a difference.

If you would like to support our 2022 Christmas appeal, you can use the response form and pre-paid envelope we've enclosed, or if you prefer, you can go online to our website and donate there - nichs.org.uk/littlethings

You can also make a text donation - to donate £5 or £10, text LITTLE5 or LITTLE10 to 70450. Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message and you'll be opting into hearing more from us. If you'd like to donate without opting in, use LITTLENOINFO when texting. Thank you in advance for any support you may be able to give.

**Chest
Heart &
Stroke**

Keeping Safe At Christmas

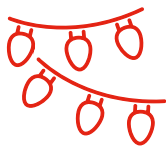
Christmas is an exciting time of year, however, studies by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) show that we need to be careful over the festive season.

RoSPA have shared the following advice to help keep you and your family safe this Christmas.



Kitchen

Hot food, boiling water and sharp knives can make the kitchen particularly hazardous. Try to keep everyone other than the cook out of the kitchen, especially pets and children. Refrain from drinking alcohol until the cooking is finished and wipe up any spills as soon as they happen to avoid slips.



Fairy lights

A staggering 350 people a year are injured by Christmas tree lights, including falls while they are being put up, children swallowing bulbs, and electric shocks and burns from faulty lights.

RoSPA advise that you test your lights and the wiring before putting them up. If you have old lights, buy new ones that meet higher safety standards. Don't overload sockets due to fire risk.



Stairs

The stairs are often an accident hotspot over Christmas. If you have guests staying who may be unfamiliar with the layout of your house leave a light on at night and keep stairs free of any clutter.



Decorations

RoSPA have revealed that over 1000 people each year are hurt while decorating their homes, with children biting into glass baubles and adults falling whilst using unstable chairs instead of ladders to put up decorations.

RoSPA's advice is that glass decorations should be placed out of the reach of toddlers and pets. Novelty decorations such as stuffed



Candles

Never put candles on or near a Christmas tree and never leave an open flame unattended. Always place tea lights inside an appropriate container.



Christmas plants

Mistletoe is highly poisonous as the berries contain toxic proteins that slow the heart rate and can cause hallucinations. The orange berries of the Christmas cherry can cause stomach pains and similarly, the Christmas rose can cause violent diarrhoea.

RoSPA's advice is to check whether the plants you're buying are toxic and if they are, either don't buy them, or keep them out of the reach of children.



Indigestion and food poisoning

If you are cooking turkey make sure you read the instructions carefully and never risk taking short cuts as it takes hours to cook a turkey properly.



Alcohol

Alcohol can reduce one's risk awareness. Ensure any residual alcohol is emptied out of glasses as children could drink the remains if they are up before the adults the next morning. Never drink and drive.



A final tip is to make sure you have a good quality, in-date First Aid Kit to hand, just in case.

NICHS Friends Share Their Christmas Stories



For our Christmas edition, we wanted to explore Christmas from a different perspective, looking at how it has changed, learning from others, and appreciating the little celebrations that make this festive time special to us. Whether we are reminiscing of times gone by, reflecting on family memories new and old, or celebrating a different kind of Christmas, we all have special traditions and memories that we carry on each year.

Christmas Greetings from Slovakia

Many of our NICHS family, like Valeria, who attends our Dungannon Wellness Session, come from different countries where the festive season is celebrated with unique traditions.

Valeria comes from a small village in Slovakia where Christmas is celebrated quite differently to here. In Slovakia, Christmas Day is celebrated on the 24th December and the day begins with families gathering together to start the celebrations. The table is set with the finest cloth and cutlery ready for several courses to be enjoyed. The host will always set one extra place at the table in case a lost soul or stranger will appear, seeking help.

Dinner is normally served in the evening as during the day a fast is often observed. Meat is not consumed on Christmas Day and dinner will consist of fish and a potato salad, followed by plenty of sweet treats or 'zakusky'. Once seated for dinner, the only person allowed to leave the table is the host, usually the mother or grandmother of the family, in order to serve. It is considered bad luck for a guest to leave the table once seated.

A Slovakian Christmas tradition is to throw four unpeeled walnuts into the four corners of the room. The host then says, "Dear corners of this house- I have no gifts to give you, so I offer you these walnuts". Valeria explains that this offering is given to bring good luck for the next year. In hopes of a more prosperous new year, the host will place money under a plate once the meal is finished. The guests will check under their plates for forthcoming fortune and prosperity.



Once dinner is finished an older guest will ring a bell. This tells the children that Santa has arrived, and their presents are ready to be opened! It is very important that children are on their best behaviour that morning- no sweets or meat are allowed as this will ensure they see 'the golden pig', which is an old Slovakian saying.

Valeria arrived in Ireland in 2007 and continues her Slovakian traditions here with her family. Valeria is amazing at crafts and makes her own Christmas decorations from paper. Many at the Dungannon Wellness Session have been gifted wonderful creations by Valeria and have been able to try Slovakian chocolate! We are thankful that Valeria has shared her Christmas traditions with us.

Chest
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Christmas in Drumcullion

Kieran and Kathleen are brother and sister who grew up on a farm in Drumcullion, Kinawley in County Fermanagh along with their 8 siblings, mother and father. Their memories of Christmas growing up differ slightly based on a 10-year age gap, but both remember a happy, special family time which they share here.

Kieran recalls how routines had to be maintained throughout the year and the Christmas holiday was no different. The farm and animals needed to be attended to despite the festivities. There was no electric so often work was done by the light of a tilly lamp.

Christmas Eve was a day spent giving the house its Christmas clean and preparing all the vegetables for dinner, which were cooked over a hearth fire. Coloured paper decorations were hung from the ceiling and Kathleen remembers paper stars being hung in the windows. Kieran has memories of the Christmas tree being adorned with candles instead of lights like nowadays.

Letters to Santa were placed up the chimney on Christmas Eve – there was no such thing as posting them weeks in advance! Clean socks were hung by the chimney in readiness for Santa's gifts. Kathleen has vivid memories of receiving an apple or an orange, a bar of chocolate and a hankie with Santa Claus on it. She remembers playing games in the evening like snakes and ladders or cards, when neighbours might join them.

Kieran remembers getting a carpentry set one year and a blue and red wooden wheelbarrow another. He believed the wheelbarrow to be from Santa but later learnt that his granny had bought it for him before she died earlier in the year.

The siblings remember going to Mass on Christmas morning. Kathleen remembers sometimes attending the 'early' Mass alone with her mother, with the others following on to a later celebration at 7am! Kathleen talks about the happy atmosphere amongst the community, with shouts of "Happy



Christmas" from everyone. She recalls people out in their new coats and shoes. Kieran reflects on the sight it must have been to see him and his brothers and sisters in the chapel – all red heads in a row!

At the time the tradition was to light 2 candles and place them in each window of the home before heading out to Mass. The candles were placed behind net curtains and looking back, Kieran and Kathleen are astonished at how nobody thought of this as a fire hazard!

Christmas dinner was usually 3 courses similar to today's traditional fare, however every morsel served was home produced from the vegetables for the soup to the turkey. On the second day of Christmas Drumcullion observed a tradition where no meat was eaten as it was believed that this would keep disease away from cattle. Kieran remembers a clergyman who was new to the area came to visit on St. Stephen's Day and requested turkey be served, stating that the fasting was done on the lead up to Christmas, not after. Kieran recalls how his family sat and watched him eat their turkey while they continued their fast!



Interview with a Storyteller



Stephen Garry has bittersweet memories of Christmas as a child. His father died when Stephen was only 10 years old meaning he had to grow up fast to help his mother work the farm in Dromore, County Tyrone and care for his 4 younger siblings.

Stephen recalls having to milk the cows on Christmas morning with his mother before the Christmas Day feast of goose with all the trimmings. A dinner Stephen would love to taste again!

Stephen remembers the old dresser laid out with three big plates on it all year round. These plates were never touched until Christmas Day when one would be taken down and the goose would be brought to the table on it.

Stephen has memories of Christmas Eve when the family would hang stockings or socks on the bar of the cooker in anticipation of Santa's visit. Gifts would be things like new socks, a cardigan or a jumper and some chocolate sweets. Toys were a rarity but on occasion Stephen remembers getting tin toy cars which the children would play with for no time before a row would ensue and the cars would be put away on top of the old dresser!

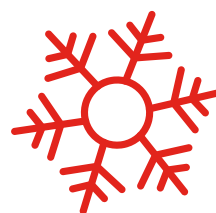
Stephen has had major health issues since he was 42 years old, and he started writing and storytelling then. Stephen has not only shared his Christmas memories for this edition of From the Heart but below he has also shared a poem he wrote about his childhood school as a gift to us all:

Curley School

*Now Curley school it was the place
As a boy I used to go
To learn my A B Cs and Ds
And the things I had to know
I walked the road most every day
In hail and rain and shine
Until the present day
It comes back to my mind.*

*They were there from Mulninney,
Legatiggle and Maghagart
And from Coya and Shaneragh
It doesn't matter where you start
Out teachers came on bicycles
From the village of Dromore
No matter how much you would learn
They always looked for more.*

*But oh how the things were different then
Few tractors you would see
The horses and carts were in full swing
And everybody happy as could be
Now to round off my story
On quite a few points I have hit
They always said there were brains to burn
But I have yet to see them lit!*



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Festive Feasts!

Lotus Biscoff Tear and Share Christmas Tree

This quick and simple tear and share dessert is ideal for get-togethers over the festive period. It can also be made with chocolate spread instead of Lotus Biscoff spread. This recipe serves 10.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan oven.
2. Lay pastry sheets on top of each other and cut a Christmas tree shape.
3. Remove one sheet of pastry and set aside. Gently warm half the Biscoff spread and spread over one pastry tree. Place the other pastry tree evenly on top. Cut two star shapes out of the excess pastry. Fill one with warm Biscoff spread, then place the other star on top and pinch to seal the edges. Place the star at the top of the tree.
4. Cut the branches of the tree in 1-2 inch sections, leaving the centre of the tree uncut.
5. Twist each branch 2-3 times.
6. Egg wash the whole surface.
7. Bake on a grease lined baking tray for 15-18 minutes or until the pastry has puffed up and turned golden brown.
8. Remove from the oven and brush with melted butter. Combine the sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the Christmas tree.
9. Gently heat the remaining Biscoff spread in a dish to use as a dipping sauce. Tear the branches off, dip and enjoy!



Ingredients

- 2 sheets of ready-rolled puff pastry
- 6 tbsp Lotus Biscoff spread
- 1 egg (beaten)
- 1 tbsp butter (melted)
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Lentil Soup

This warming soup is perfect to take out and about with you on colder days. This recipe can be doubled or tripled and kept in portions in the freezer. It makes a great easy lunch idea.

Method

1. In a saucepan, brown off the chopped onion.
2. Add water, then add carrots, lentils and stock cubes.
3. Simmer until the carrots and lentils are fully cooked.
4. Allow to cool, then blend until smooth. Add more water if you like a thinner consistency.



Ingredients

- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 cup red lentils
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 ham stock cubes
- 1 ½ pints water



Ham, Turkey and Vegetable Bake

This dish is an easy and delicious way to use up all the leftovers from Christmas Day. The ingredients listed below are a guide but you can include any leftovers.

Ingredients

- 4 slices of wholemeal bread
- 300-400g leftover vegetables
- 200g chopped turkey
- 200g chopped gammon or ham
- ½ cup torn basil leaves
- 4 eggs
- 100g mozzarella
- 150ml skimmed milk
- Fresh black pepper
- 100g reduced fat cheese



Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan oven and grease a baking dish.
2. Remove the crust from the bread and cut into large cubes.
3. Mix the bread with turkey, ham, vegetables and half the basil leaves.
4. Place the mixture into baking dish evenly and scatter the remaining basil leaves and mozzarella cheese on top.
5. Whisk together eggs and milk and season with pepper.
6. Pour the egg mixture over the mixture and leave to stand for 5 minutes.
7. Top with the remaining cheese and bake for 35-40 minutes or until the egg is set. Serve hot.

Pear and Vanilla Holiday Punch



Ingredients

- 600ml pear juice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200ml sparkling water
- 2 tbsp honey syrup
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- 1-2 tbsp lemon juice
- Ice to serve

Method

1. Place the cinnamon and a splash of pear juice in a pitcher and whisk until the cinnamon is mixed into the liquid.
2. Make the honey syrup by mixing equal parts of honey and hot water and stir.
3. Pour in remaining pear juice, sparkling water, 1 tbsp of honey syrup, 1 tbsp of lemon juice and vanilla extract. Gently stir to combine. Taste and add remaining honey syrup and lemon juice if you prefer a sweeter or more mellow drink.
4. Garnish as desired, pour into individual serving glasses with ice. Cheers!

Delightful Decorations

Why not celebrate the season by taking inspiration from nature and creating your own personalised decorations? Here are some great ideas on how to make your own place settings and name cards.



Use fresh or dried foliage, glue on a small pinecone and finish with a toning ribbon.



Fold a white napkin into a cone shape, add some ivy and include a place name card.



Dip a large pinecone in white paint and add a place name card.



Glue ribbon and fake fir needles and berries to a large pinecone to create this festive place setting or tree decoration.



Make cards and gift wrapping special with handmade details. You can use plain luggage tags and cut out shapes or glue on buttons, ribbons, twine or whatever else you like.



This place setting uses small pinecones dipped in white paint, glued together to make a small wreath. A twine bow can also be glued to the wreath.



A Christmas tree with a mix and match of decorations which have special, personal meanings always looks great.



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Mini Christmas Stockings

Thanks to Joanna, one of our volunteers, for sharing the pattern to make these mini Christmas stockings which would make a lovely gift!

You can use any colour of DK (double knitting) yarn. To make stripes, use a different colour for each row.

What you will need

A pair of 3.75mm knitting needles, a darning needle to sew up and a crochet hook.

Abbreviations

K = Knit

P = Purl

RS = Right side

WS = Wrong side

K2tog = Knit two stitches together (makes you decrease by 1)

Kfb = Knit into the front and back (increases by 1)

st(s) = Stitch (es)



The stockings are knitted flat. Each is approx. 8 cm tall.



Cast on 18 sts in any coloured yarn.

Row 1, (WS) Purl, Row 2, (RS) (Kfb) 18 times makes 36 sts remain

Row 3, Purl, Row 4, Knit

Repeat, Row 3, and Row 4, to Row 8, Knit

Row 9, Purl, Row 10, Knit 10 (K2tog) 8 times, K10, 28 sts remain

Row 11, Purl, Row 12, K10, (K2tog) 4 times, K10, 24 sts remain

Row 13, Purl, Row 14, K10, (K2tog) (K2tog), K10, 22 sts remain

Row 15, Purl, Row 16, Knit, repeat to Row 23, Purl.

Top of stocking rib top:

Work Row 24, and Row 25, Knit

Row, 26,27,28, Purl

Row, 29, (K1, P1) to end

Row, 30 to 34, Rep row 29, five more times

Cast off.



If you want to do the seed sts topping instead of the rib top complete the following:

Row 24, 25, Knit

Row 26, 27,28, Purl

Row 29, (K1, P1) Row 30, (P1, K1)

Row 31, rep row 29

Row 32, rep row 30

Row 33, rep row 29

Row 34, rep row 30

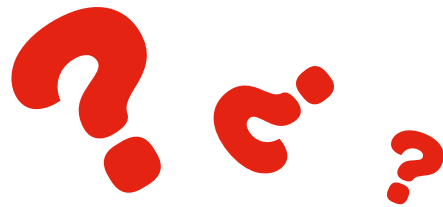
Cast off

To make up:

Fold the knitted piece in half lengthwise and sew the side edges together. Sew the cast on edge together along the bottom. Fold over the top edge to finish the stocking.

For the loop, using a crochet hook, crochet a single chain 9cm long and bind off. Sew the ends of the chain to the top of the stocking to make a loop. Or simply use 9cm of wool.

Christmas Puzzles



Word Scramble

1. Dnorewadnitrewln

2. Escrogo

3. Asnat lacsu

4. Teesrnsp

5. Uhrdplo

6. Ejssu

7. Mashcrist eert

8. Bwos

9. Enol

10. Wnmosan

11. Rwehat

12. Dnyca acne

13. Yohll

14. Tfgjs

15. Nrigch

16. Ermyr

17. Ntgsoick

18. Gnwriapp

19. Tooiecardsn

20. Lelbs

Word Search

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

CARDS
CELEBRATE
FROSTY
GREETINGS
HOLIDAY
JUBILEE
MERRY
NOEL
SCROOGE
SEASON
SPIRIT
STOCKING STUFFERS
STOCKINGS
TIDINGS
CANDY
CANES
EGGNOG
FRUITCAKE
HAM
SWEET POTATO

MISTLETOE
POINSETTIA
WREATH
CHRISTMAS TREE
CHIMNEY
ELVES
FAIRIES
JOLLY
NORTH POLE
REINDEER
SLED
SLEIGH
SANTA CLAUS
BLITZEN
COMET
CUPID
DANCER
DONNER
PRANCER
VIXEN



Chest
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Christmas Gifts For Staying Active!



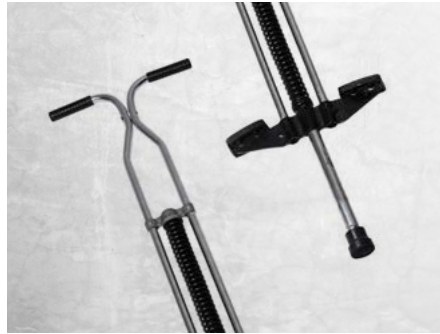
At this time of year it can be harder to stay motivated and be active, but we must remember the importance of exercise. Exercising over the winter months can help with stress and anxiety, reduce our chances of gaining weight and help us feel more energised over the festive period!

We thought we would close this edition of From the Heart with a trip down memory lane, remembering the toys which helped us stay physically active and have lots of fun at the same time!



Space Hopper

The space hopper was released in 1969. Who remembers hours of bouncing up and down the hallway or seeing how high we could bounce? Or maybe you challenged your friends to a race between lampposts.



Pogo Stick

The two-handled pogo stick was designed in 1957 and became a very popular gift in the 1970s providing hours of springy, jumping fun.



Skipping Rope

The skipping rope has always been a firm playground favourite with lots of different styles and rhymes to learn, teach and play with your friends!



Bikes

A bike was and still is a classic Christmas gift. Racing your friends up and down the street, jumping the kerbs and getting a few grazed knees and scuffed shoes along the way!



Hula Hoop

Popular in the late 1950s, the hula hoop got us active by swinging those hips! Hula hooping is not only great fun, it also boosts cardiovascular fitness, challenges the core muscles and improves balance.



Roller Skates

Upbeat music, gliding across the floor, the lights flashing, and your best Saturday Night Fever moves! Roller skating exploded during the disco era but tapered off in the 1980s and 1990s but saw a revival in the late 2010s and early 2020s.

Word Scramble Answers:

1. Winter wonderland
2. Scrooge
3. Santa Claus
4. Presents
5. Rudolph
6. Jesus
7. Christmas tree
8. Bows
9. Noel
10. Snowman
11. Wreath
12. Candy cane
13. Holly
14. Gifts
15. Grinch
16. Merry
17. Stocking
18. Wrapping
19. Decorations
20. Bells



We Want To Hear From You

Speaking up for patients and carers is an important part of NICHs's role as a health charity. A chest or respiratory condition is not always obvious to other people – it is often referred to as an 'invisible illness.' People do not always realise the impact respiratory conditions can have on a person's life and the lives of their families and carers. This means they don't always receive the necessary support and understanding.

We therefore recently launched a respiratory survey for people experiencing respiratory conditions such as asthma and COPD. We also want to hear from people who help to care for those with long term respiratory issues. If you have a respiratory condition we would greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the survey which should only take 5 to 10 minutes to fill in and can be found at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/nichsresp

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Almost 90% of our care and prevention services and research are funded exclusively by public donations.

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