

## A Holiday Message

From: Dr. Valerie N. Williams, Director, and the Faculty and Staff of the Center for Learning and Leadership | Oklahoma's UCEDD. Scan the wreath with your smart phone to hear the holiday message that is written below.



Dear Friends, Neighbors and Partners,

As we approach the holidays of this season, the Center for Learning and Leadership faculty and staff send you our warm greetings and best wishes for a Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, and Peace in the New Year. If you are celebrating other remembrances during this season, we wish you well.

Reflecting on the year soon to be behind us we are grateful for those whose tireless work helped keep our communities moving forward. Many dedicated people risked their own health and safety to keep food in our stores and shelves stocked. We are grateful for them. Many kind people offered words of kindness or a helping hand to others who were struggling or suffering. We are grateful for all of those with kind words, deeds, or thoughts shared. Many hard working people worked so much harder as our communities navigated the local impact of a global pandemic. We are grateful for their hard work, often done without recognition because they work to help others, and not to be praised for what they do.

For all of our community members who have supported someone or is holding out the hand of generosity for some one of us who needs a steadying hand, we are so grateful for you.

As we enter this holiday season, please hold in your hearts, and set in your minds, that we are a community of neighbors, across the cities, suburbs, towns and frontier of Oklahoma. We are no more and no less than what we show one another of our care and compassion. We are the person we see in the mirror, and the person reflected in the eyes of those who hear or read our words, see our actions, and touch our lives as we touch theirs. In this season of light we hope the reflection you see of yourself, and that others see in you, shines brightly and you know without doubt, that you are a blessing in the world.

We are grateful for you. We are grateful for your care and advocacy with and for people with intellectual developmental disabilities, and with and for the families with children with disabilities and special health care needs, and for the people who provide supportive resources for life in the community. We wish you, as the heart and hands and best examples of Oklahoma as a great state, all the joy life will offer in the new year!

Take care, be well, peace and joy to you and yours! Valerie and the Faculty and Staff of the Center for Learning and Leadership/Oklahoma's UCEDD.

*Ellen Wanda*  
*Jarah Tania Valeri Angela*  
*Miranda Laura Erica Shellee*  
*Jose*

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## DHS DDS (Developmental Disability Services) Waiver and State Waiting List for Services

Tulsa Kids recently interviewed Wanda Felty, Community Leadership and Advocacy Coordinator at Center for Learning and Leadership, Oklahoma's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), and RoseAnn Duplan, Policy and Planning Specialist at the Oklahoma Disability Law Center, regarding the Development Disability Services waiting list. There are currently over 5,000 Oklahoma adults and children waiting for community-based and in-home services. Some on the waiting list have waited for 12+ years. [This interview](#) provides a breakdown on some of the questions that people have about the waiting list and how to get started with the application process.

## International Persons with Disabilities Day - December 3rd

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by The United Nations General Assembly. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all areas of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. This day was celebrated locally in Norman, with the city's Mayor issuing a Proclamation for the day. Mayor Breea Clark, proclaimed "the city of Norman encourages understanding of disability issues and driving awareness to the meaningful strides people with disabilities and their advocates have made to improve legislation, services, economic viability, and way of life". On hand to accept the Proclamation was Miranda Hooper, CLL Covid Community Education Coordinator; Cleveland County disability Coalition Chair; Norman ADA Citizen's Advisory Committee Chair and Victor Long, Self-Advocate and member of the Coalition and Advisory Committee.



## COVID 19 Vaccine – Ages 5 - 11

The FDA has officially granted Emergency Use Authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. [This video link](#) from Boston's Children's Hospital will answer many questions that you have regarding vaccine availability to this new age range. The dosage for kids in ages 5-11 is one third of the dosage that teens and adults receive. Learn more about the newest authorization study and other facts in the video link.

The University of Oklahoma advances a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community by embracing each person's unique contributions, background, and perspectives. OU Norman, OU Tulsa, and the Health Sciences Center recognize that fostering an inclusive environment for all, with particular attention to the needs of the historically marginalized populations, is vital to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of our institutional mission and enhances the OU experience for all students, faculty, and staff.

*focus facts* is published for the University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network members. Its purpose is to highlight specific information and data items relevant to developing and sustaining positive community environments. Individual information items are provided for use in this form, or for further circulation. When re-printing information please reference *focus facts* and the month of issue noted below the banner at the top of this page. The name of a contact person for additional information on items referenced in the newsletter is provided for your convenience. If you have data, information or a story to report relevant to community living, please send it to *focus facts* Editor at the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD OU Health Sciences Center, PO Box 2690, Oklahoma City, OK 73126.

Please include the information source, by title, a one paragraph (or less) description or story, a contact name who can provide additional information on the subject, and a daytime or evening telephone number for the contact. If you have other questions regarding the format for submissions, please call the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Headquarters Office at (405) 271-4500.

The University Affiliated Developmental Disabilities Network is open to membership by any organization or individual who shares the interests of Network members. The Network is dedicated to identifying opportunities for collaboration and information exchange among its participating members, which leads to improving our statewide, regional or local capacity to provide a better living environment in Oklahoma for people with developmental and other disabilities and their families. The Network is partially supported through a grant from the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Offices of the Designated Representatives of the Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD Collaborating Partners.

If you have a disability (Deaf/hard-of-hearing, Blind/low-vision, mobility, cognitive, etc.), and require accommodations, please reach out to [Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Learn2Lead@ouhsc.edu). It is helpful if you share what type of accommodations will be needed to ensure that you are able to use the resource materials.