

December 2025

# The Empowered Life Magazine

EMPOWERED  
**LIFE** PROGRAM   
Live Out Loud!



Dear Residents and Families,

As December unfolds, we find ourselves surrounded by a season filled with joy, love, and celebration. This month brings a wonderful tapestry of festivities that reflect the diverse traditions within our community. Whether it's Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or any other holiday, we want to take a moment to celebrate all that makes this time of year so special. We encourage everyone to share their traditions, stories, and recipes as a way to foster understanding and appreciation for one another's backgrounds.

During this joyful time, let's also take a moment to extend our support and kindness to those who may be struggling or feeling lonely. Together, we can create a sense of belonging that echoes the true spirit of the season.

We wish you and your loved ones a month filled with happiness, cherished moments, and traditions that bring you all closer together.

Warm Wishes from our Family to Yours.

## Join Us for Special Events

Dec 8 - Resident Council Meeting

Dec 8 - Christmas Carols and Cookies with the Boy Scouts!

Dec 10 - The Senior Shop

Dec 11 - Health Chat with Erin

Dec 17 - Menu Chat with Brittany

Dec 19 - Photos with Santa!

Dec 22 - Activity Committee

Dec 24 - Ask Anthony Anything

Dec 30 - Lunch Outing: Outback Steakhouse

Dec 31 - New Year's Celebration



## Our Executive Team

Executive Director- Anthony Geiser

Wellness Director- Charice Shackelford

Resident Care Coordinator- Alexis Bade

Business Office Director- Alexa White

Community Liaison Director- Kaitlin Brown

Maintenance Director- Rudy Murphy

Housekeeping Manager- Rhonda Dotson

Dietary Director- Brittany Gray

Engagement Director- Sarah Covey

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## Holiday Traditions Around the World

December is a month filled with vibrant celebrations and rich traditions as cultures across the globe come together to mark the end of the year. From religious observances to festive entertainment, December is a time of joy, reflection, and connection.

### Christmas Celebrations

One of the most widely recognized holidays in December is Christmas, celebrated on December 25th. In many countries, families gather to decorate Christmas trees, exchange gifts, and share festive meals. In the United States and Canada, families often hang stockings by the fireplace for Santa Claus to fill. In Italy, the Christmas feast includes a feast known as the "Feast of the Seven Fishes," while in Mexico, Las Posadas is celebrated, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

### Hanukkah Traditions

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, often falls in December. This eight-day holiday commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Families light the menorah, adding one candle each night, and engage in activities such as playing dreidel, a spinning top game, and enjoying traditional foods like latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts).

**Kwanzaa** is celebrated from December 26 to January 1, honoring African heritage and culture. Created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966, this week-long celebration involves lighting the kinara (a candle holder) and discussing principles like unity, self-determination, and creativity. Families often engage in cultural activities, share stories, and enjoy traditional meals.

In many cultures, the winter solstice is a time of celebration. In Scandinavian countries, Yule is celebrated with feasts, bonfires, and the decoration of Yule logs. Similarly, in ancient cultures, this time marked the rebirth of the sun, and rituals were performed to encourage longer days ahead.

The various traditions celebrated around the world and here in our community showcase the beauty of diversity and the shared spirit of festivity that connects us all!

## Eugenia's Favorite Cranberry Sauce Recipe (great at Thanksgiving and Christmas!)



### Ingredients

- 1 package of cranberries
- 1 cup of unrefined sugar
- 1 cup fresh-squeezed orange juice
- Zest of 1/2 and orange

### Directions

Combine sugar, the juice, and the cranberries in a pot.

Wait and listen (MY FAVORITE PART IS THE LISTENING) to the cranberries as they pop.

Once they are popped, remove from the heat and add your zest

Place the sauce in the fridge and serve it cold  
I will share with you all my Grandma's cranberry sauce recipe great at Thanksgiving and Christmas!







## Potato Latkes

Trishia Grace, Family Holiday Recipe



As all Latkologists know, the test of a good latke is the returnability factor - are they so good you want to return for more? Although latkes are eaten year-round, serious, competitive latke-fressing reaches its peak at Hanukkah. The irony, however, is that the potato was unknown in ancient Israel at the time of the oil miracle in the Temple, so the essence of the festival is in the frying, not the potato. Latkes, therefore, can be made with any variety of vegetable, but for most people, the potato will always be at the heart of things. A latke without a potato would be, well, like fancy without the schmancy.

Serves 4-5 (about 2-3 latkes per person)

### Ingredients:

2.4 lbs baking potatoes, peeled and soaked in cold water until needed  
1 onion, grated or finely chopped  
¼ cup all-purpose flour or fine matzo meal  
1 egg, beaten  
Oil for frying

## Finding Light in the Darkness

As the days grow shorter and the nights stretch longer, December reminds us that even the smallest light can chase away great darkness. The glow of a menorah, a candle in a window, or the twinkle of a Christmas tree all speak the same quiet truth: hope still burns bright, even in the coldest seasons.

We each carry our own light - kindness, faith, laughter, and love - that can brighten someone else's day. Whether it's sharing a warm smile, a helping hand, or a cherished memory, our light multiplies when given away. In this season of reflection and renewal, may we all find comfort knowing that no matter how dark the night, the promise of dawn is always near.

## Directions

**FINELY** (or not so finely), grate the potatoes and onion together. (You don't have to go back in time and do this by hand, although there are those who swear by the taste of grated knuckle.)

**PUT** the grated potato and onion into a colander and squeeze out as much moisture as you can. Or "roll in a clean dish towel and wring well to extract the liquid.

**MIX** the potato and onion with the flour, egg, and seasonings.

**HEAT** the oil until moderately hot, then shallow-fry large tablespoons of the mixture. Lower the heat to medium, flatten each latke with the back of a spoon and fry for about 5 minutes on each side, flipping over when the edges turn brown. If the heat is too high, the latkes will become dark brown on the outside before they're cooked inside.

**DRAIN** on brown paper bags (they absorb the oil. leave the latkes crispier and won't stick to the paper).

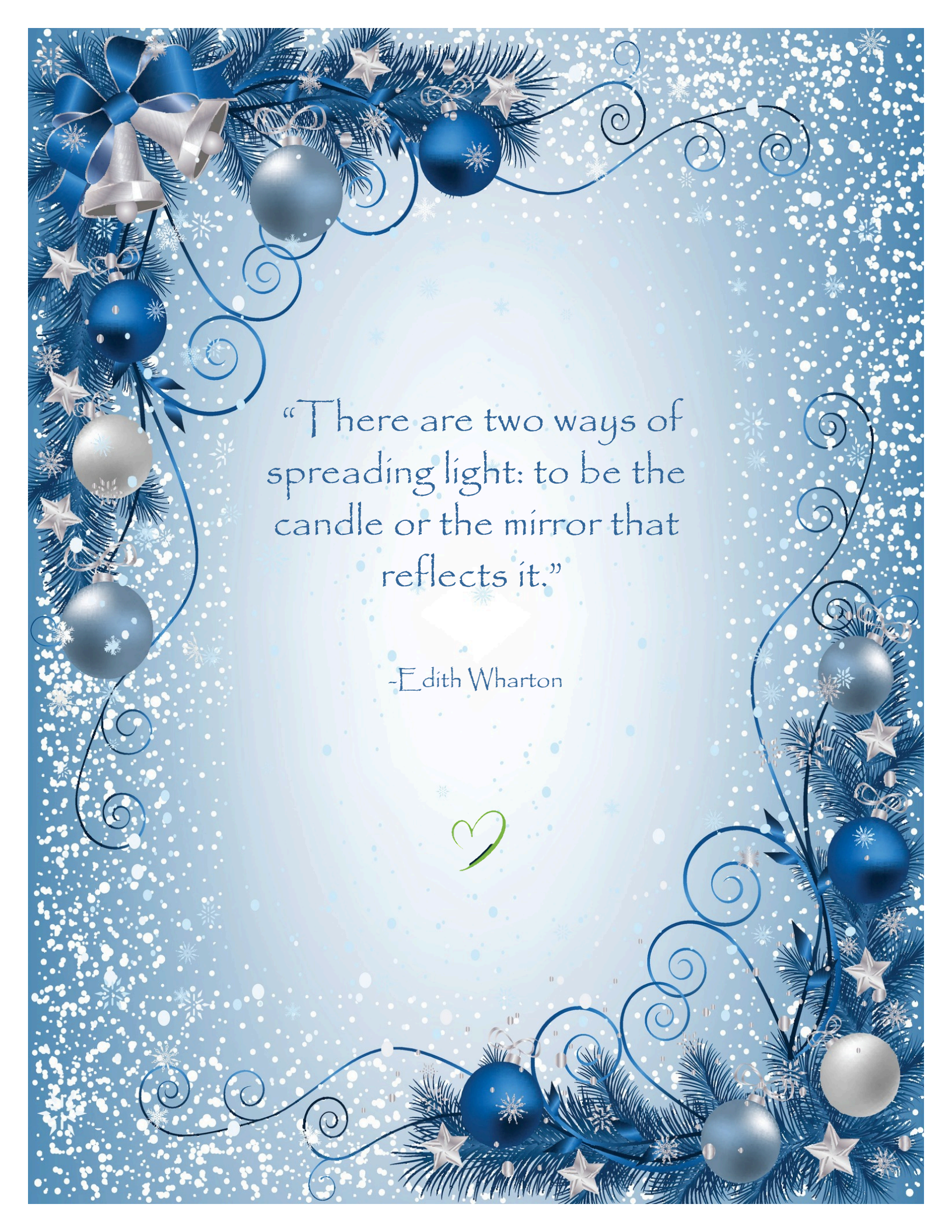
**SERVE** hot with sour cream and applesauce, or with corned beef and a sour pickle. The only drawback to latke-making is you have to keep tasting, to see if you've got them right. You can't eat anything else.

## Happy Birthday!

Linda T.	12/1
Patty K.	12/3
Kent R.	12/10
Virginia W.	12/12
Herbert W.	12/29
Tomas C.	12/29







“There are two ways of  
spreading light: to be the  
candle or the mirror that  
reflects it.”

-Edith Wharton

