

VOLUME 39 DECEMBER 2024

# *Scoops of Information & Inspiration!*



DURHAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



## **TAKE A PEEK!**

Check out our final edition of the year, of our Information & Inspiration news bulletin created with YOU in mind. We hope it has provided you with updates on our numerous programs, while providing you with practical living tips with a healthy dose of INSPIRATION



To get your SCOOPS delivered to your inbox, email:

[DCCoDSSPublicInformation@dconc.gov](mailto:DCCoDSSPublicInformation@dconc.gov)

*Make Memories This Holiday Season*



There is no better gift than the gift of your PRESENCE. Enjoy your loved ones and develop holiday traditions together!



## **No Bake Oreo Ornament Cookies**

Compliments from: Sugar Hero!

**VISIT: [SUGARHERO.COM](http://SUGARHERO.COM)**

After melting the white candy coating see the tips. It's time to dip the cookies!

Dip the Oreos

- Using a fork or candy dipping tool, dip a cookie in the melted coating until it's completely covered.
- Remove it from the coating and let it drip back into the bowl.
- Gently scrape the bottom of the cookie against the lip of the bowl to remove any excess, then place it on the baking sheet.

## **The 4 Ingredients Needed**



### **Tips on Using White Candy Coating vs. White Chocolate**

The white candy coating will remain hard and glossy at room temperature, unlike white chocolate.

- Place the candy coating in a medium microwave-safe bowl.
- Microwave at 50% power in 45-second increments, stirring after every 45 seconds to prevent overheating, until the coating is melted and smooth.





## OREO COOKIE ORNAMENT COOKIES (CONTIN)

### Add Decorations

- While the coating is still wet, press a mini peanut butter cup onto the side of the cookie to represent the ornament top.

- If you want, you can trim the side of the PB cup so it sits flat.
- Add sprinkles and candies to the top of your Oreo ornaments in a decorative pattern.

### Storage Information

- These are a great make-ahead option. None of the components have a short shelf life, and as long as you keep them in an airtight container at reasonable room temperature, you're good to make these 1-2 weeks in advance.

- Mini peanut butter cups: Look for the small unwrapped peanut butter cups that are sold in bags — those are the perfect size and shape. Mini Rolos are also a great choice. Failing that, swap in another similarly-sized candy to serve as the top of the ornament.
- Candy and sprinkles: Here's where you can go crazy! Pick whatever colorful sprinkles or candies you want to decorate these ornaments. I find mini M&Ms and chocolate-dipped sunflower seeds are easy to work with and add lots of color. Holiday candies are also fun, like candy cane bits, peppermints, and holiday-shaped sprinkles.

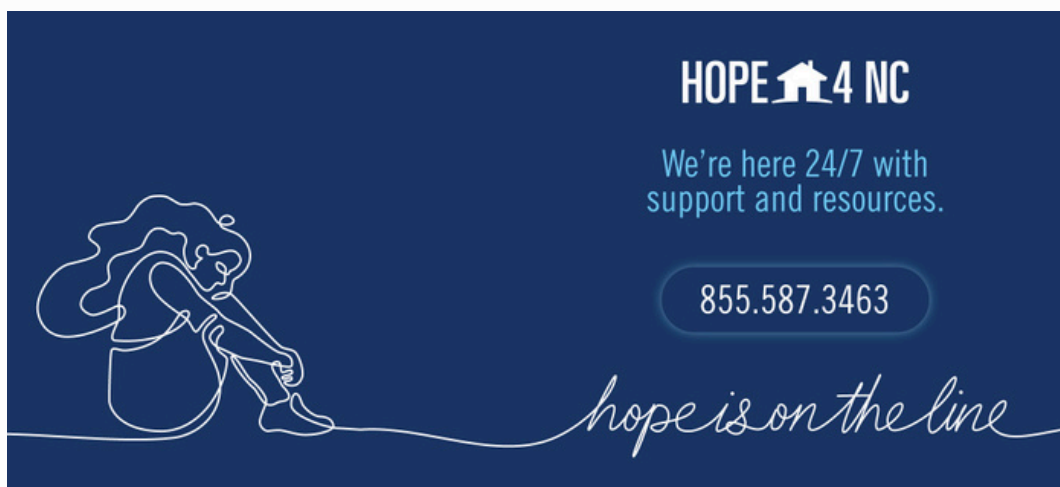
### Do You Like this Recipe?

Please share with us pictures of ANY recipe that you make from SCOOPS! Include your name and contact information so that we can highlight you here. If YOU have any great life hacks, recipes or celebrations, send them to:

[DcoDSSPublicInformation@dconc.gov](mailto:DcoDSSPublicInformation@dconc.gov)

## Your Mental Health Matters

At this time of year, many people suffer with loneliness and depression. Fortunately, our state provides the HOPE 4 NC hotline for FREE. Providing 24/7 support and resources to North Carolinians in need of mental health assistance.



### The Best Mental Health Apps of 2023

- **Best Overall:** Moodfit
- **Best for Therapy:** BetterHelp
- **Best for Learning Coping Skills:** MoodMission
- **Best for Stress Relief:** Sanvello
- **Best for Meditation:** Calm
- **Best To Boost Mood App:** Happify
- **Best for Depression:** Depression
- **Best for BIPOC:** Shine
- **Best for Bipolar Disorder:** eMoods
- **Best for Symptom Tracking:** Bearable
- **Best for ADHD:** Todoist
- **Best for PTSD:** PTSD Coach

### Give of Yourself

One way to immediately lift your mood is to volunteer!

Love the theater?  
Volunteer at the Carolina Theater  
Love history?  
Volunteer at NC historic sites, and museums. The Triangle Volunteer Center in Durham has lots of opportunities too! Get connected to others by volunteering!





## Nine Ways to Lift Your Spirits

1. **Give the gift of your time** – Giving to others can be an effective way to feel happy and giving of your time and/or skills can be the most rewarding. You might, for example, drop off food at a local food bank, send care packages to soldiers in the military or donate blood. If you love animals, volunteer at the animal shelter or donate food.
2. **Participate in a toy drive** – Participate in one of the toys for children programs available in your area. This is a great way to help a child who is underprivileged or whose family is struggling financially receive a holiday gift or gifts.
3. **Treat a good friend to a meal** – Make plans to dine with a friend via a Zoom call and then, prior to the call, surprise them by having their meal delivered. You can still enjoy their company—especially if you haven't seen them in a while. You'll not only feel good about treating them to dinner, but you'll get the added joy of having fun and spending quality video-conference time with a friend.
4. **Get plenty of rest** – Too many of us let our day-to-day lives get in the way of our sleep. It can be even more of a challenge during the holidays. Making sure you get an adequate amount of quality sleep can make a huge difference in improving or maintaining your mood.
5. **Donate holiday treats to the elderly** – Check with a local nursing home to see if it would be okay to give each resident a token holiday-themed gift or baked treat. They'll be happily surprised at the gesture and you'll feel good about helping make someone's day a little brighter.
6. **Get physical** – Follow an exercise video, go for a walk or run, ride a stationary bike or clean the house from top to bottom. Physical activity releases feel-good endorphins that will brighten your mood and reinvigorate you.
7. **Take a yoga class and/or meditate** – Practicing yoga can be a great low-impact way to increase your flexibility, increase muscle strength and tone and improve your breathing, but it can also have significant benefits in reducing stress and improving your mental well-being. Free online videos offer a variety from beginner to advanced. Taking time to meditate can also help reduce stress by making you clear your head, concentrate on your breathing and focus on being present.
8. **Make a list of people and things you are thankful for** – Write down the names of people you are grateful to have in your life and all things you are thankful for. By focusing on your blessings, you can put yourself in a position to appreciate and enjoy what you have, helping you feel more fulfilled.
9. **Learn something new** – Pick a subject that you know very little about or a skill you would like to have and start researching on YouTube. You could learn a new software program, learn to play an instrument, practice basic carpentry, fix minor issues on your car, take dance lessons, learn to knit...the list is endless. Learning keeps your mind sharp, boosts your mood and gives you a sense of accomplishment.

*From Tenethealth.com*



# Clarity & Focus In 2025

## I AM ENOUGH

I don't have to be perfect

I'm still growing

I have weaknesses

I can't please everyone

I don't have to know everything

I can say "NO"

I'm doing what's best for me

I make mistakes

It's safe for me to be unapologetically me

@Businessbrainy

## Comparison is the thief of JOY



## DURING THE HOLIDAYS IT'S OKAY...

If you can't afford expensive gifts for loved ones

To miss loved ones who are no longer with us and to take time to honor their memory

If you need to be alone and have some me-time

To say no to certain events or gatherings to maintain your mental health

To decline alcohol or to leave a party early if you're not feeling up to it

To opt for homemade gifts or experiences over store-bought items

To feel sad or nostalgic; the holidays can be an emotional time

To not have a festive feast—sometimes pizza and pajamas are just fine

To ask for help with holiday preparations or choose easier options

To have a quiet Christmas if that's what brings you peace

To prioritize your own family's needs over others' expectations

To break from tradition and start new holiday customs that better fit your current life

We are all special!



## Protect your mental health



Make 2025 Great!

May you receive the energy and strength to finish your projects, bring your idea to life, and accomplish your goals. May your path be cleared and all blocks be removed. May your creativity be multiplied and your imagination be filled with inspiration to make a difference.



# DCo Honors

**Congratulations  
Everyone!**

Ask any Durham County employee, and most would say that it is a wonderful organization to work for. Several of our DSS staff were recognized for retirements and landmark years of service, starting at 5 years of service all the way up to 40+! There were plenty of smiles, and laughter! Great food too!





## Share Your Holiday

Every year our social workers in conjunction with the Triangle Nonprofit & Volunteer Center provide holiday cheer to both young people who are clients and our seniors. The social workers are real life elves making deliveries all around town! The agency is decorated beautifully and many offices are overflowing with gifts! Cookies and special treats are plentiful to give the busy elves energy!

Happy Holidays Everyone!





## The More You Know



Don't miss the Kwanzaa Fest at the Durham Armory on New Year's Day! It's a great time for the entire family!

### DO YOU NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?



Starting December 1, 2024 DCoDSS will begin taking applications for LIEAP-The Low Income Energy Assistance Program. Applicants aged 60+ who receive services through DCoDSS' Aging & Adult Services are eligible to apply. Also, those with disabilities and who receive Food & Nutrition Services may apply. **Call (919) 560-8192** to make a virtual appointment with our LIEAP Specialists. On January 2, 2025, all Durham residents may apply online as well at: <https://epass.nc.gov>. Paper applications are available at our offices as well, 414 E. Main St. in downtown Durham. The LIEAP Program ends March 31, 2025.



Social Services

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DurhamDepartmentOfSocialServices

## Happy Holidays from Your Friends at DCoDSS!