

# Attending The Maplewood End of Winter Festival

A Social Narrative of  
Winter Fun, Community, and Belonging  
for Adults and Adolescents

By  
**Together  
We Bloom**

CONNECTION  COMMUNICATION  COMMUNITY

## About Social Stories

Social Stories are first-person narratives written to introduce a new, unexpected, or challenging situation with simple language and pictures. They help the reader know what to expect and provide options for support.

Anyone can benefit from learning about situations ahead of time but social stories are often particularly helpful for neurodivergent individuals including Autistic people or people with anxiety.

Social stories should be used as a tool to empower and support inclusion and access, not to force compliance with social norms.

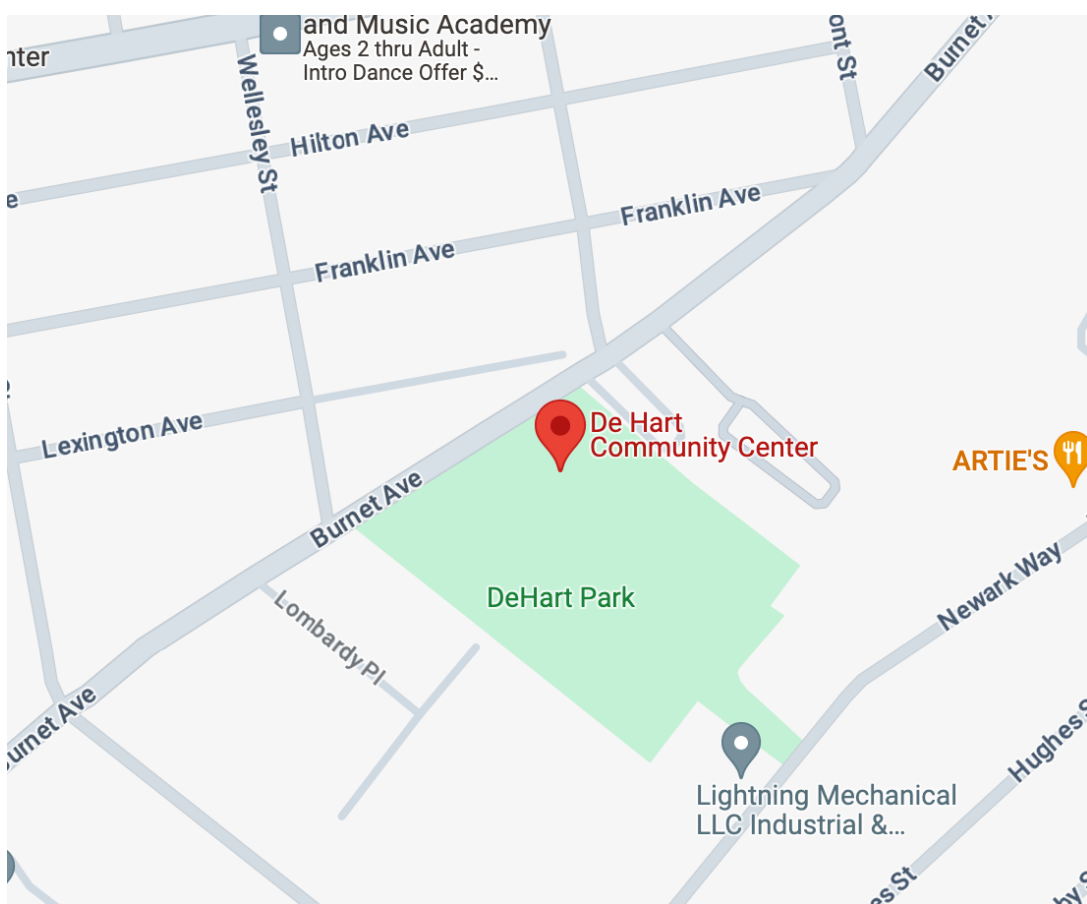
This End of Winter Festival Social Narrative was created by Together We Bloom. We are also hosting the sensory-friendly quiet room located inside DeHart Community Center, 120 Burnett Ave, Maplewood. We believe community celebrations will be better for all of us when we prioritize accessibility and expand inclusivity of our disabled neighbors.

Together We Bloom is a local 501(c)3 nonprofit with a mission to empower young children with disabilities and their families through equitable access to connection, communication, and community. We advance this mission through two vital strategies: sliding-scale, neurodiversity-affirming speech and language therapy and disability justice, equity, and belonging initiatives to make our community a more inclusive place.

To learn more or support our work for inclusion please visit: [www.TogetherWeBloom.org](http://www.TogetherWeBloom.org)

I am going to an event in my community called The End of Winter Festival on February 3, 2024 from 4:00pm to 8:00 pm.

This event is a celebration of wintertime activities and our community. The End of Winter Festival is at DeHart Park and Community Center: 120 Burnett Ave, Maplewood, New Jersey.



A parking lot is available at Dehart park. If the lot is full, additional street parking is available on nearby streets Wellesley or Lexington. Burnett Ave is a busy street so the crosswalks should be used.

There are various activities to choose from both outside in the park and inside the community center.

Outside, there is a DJ playing music, fire pits and ice skating.

If I want to skate, I must sign up online for a 30 minutes time slot before I go at <https://maplewood.recdesk.com>. It's \$5 for skating, everything else is free.



Inside in the DeHart community center, there are tables to do arts and crafts and a face painter.



If I want to get my face or hand painted, I may need to wait. I can pick out whichever design I want.



Hot coccoa and snacks are available for free. I can bring my own drinks and snacks too.



There may be lots of people who come to the End of Winter Celebration.

Some areas might have large crowds around them and others might have a smaller group of people.

Some people chose to stay in one location and other people may walk around to do many activities.

There is no right or wrong way to enjoy this event. I can chose to do whatever feels right for me.



Everybody's experience of the Festival is different. I may need to take a break from the skating or crowds.

If I need a bathroom break, I can find bathrooms inside the DeHart Community Center.

If I need a quiet, calming space, I can take a break at the sensory-friendly quiet room also in DeHart Community Center. In the sensory-friendly room, there is no music. There are soft lights, chairs, and a tent.





If I need to move, walk, or run, away from the crowds, I can take a break at DeHart Park. There is a big grassy field, a playground, a basketball court, and adult-sized exercise equipment.



I can stay at the End of Winter Festival for as long as I want and go home when I feel ready. The event takes place from 4:00pm-8:00pm.



**I am an important part of my community.**

**Winter Fun and Community are for everyone!  
Maplewood is for everyone!**






Special thanks to the Maplewood Township Department of Community Services for partnering with Together We Bloom to increase disability inclusion for this community event.

We believe that our community will be richer and more just by embracing our neurodiversity, celebrating our difference, and prioritizing belonging and equity for individuals with disabilities.



To learn more about our values and our work in the community, please visit:  
[www.TogetherWeBloom.org](http://www.TogetherWeBloom.org)

**Please stay in touch!**

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Together We Bloom is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

# End of Winter Festival Communication Board

