

**Welcome to the January 2009 edition  
of the Family Resource Newsletter!**

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**Survival of the...**

Surviving the winter doldrums can be a real challenge! Once all the excitement of the holidays and the novelty of the presents have worn off, parents will once again hear the dreaded "I'm bored" refrain. Here are a few ideas to help you engage your kids of all ages while building family ties.

Figure out ways to include the best parts of the holidays into your everyday life. For example, if your family enjoys entertaining, find an event to invite people over for dinner, such as a Super Bowl party or a Martin Luther King Jr. birthday party where everyone talks about their dreams for themselves, their families and their country.

- Use this less busy time to engage in a family service project together. Look for a project that lets you work together as a family, rather than in separate groups. You might only have to look as far as your neighborhood to find an elderly person who would appreciate having their sidewalk shoveled or a meal shared.
- On cold, snowy afternoons, turn off the TV and bring out the old board games or a deck of cards for a few hours of family

fun. Then go for a walk together and come home form some hot chocolate.

- Elementary aged children might enjoy creating a "favorite things" collage. Photos of people she loves, favorite activities, book characters and pets can all be a part of the display.
- Tweens may put a "tough guy" face on their holiday memories and poke fun at holiday traditions or talk about how glad they are that the holidays are over. Allow kids to have their own opinions, but watch out for any button pushing they may be doing to try to upset you or other family members.
- With the semester ending in January, coming back to school can be especially stressful for teens. The transition from a long, relaxing winter break to preparing for finals and writing papers can put teens on edge. Help your teen set priorities and study schedules and encourage him to schedule some time to relax as well.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Health Trip 2009!**

Exercise your own way and have fun with friends! Health Trip is a wonderful opportunity to make exercise a healthy part of your everyday life. This unique 14-week program is based on a team model, which provides participants a built-in motivational boost. Build your team with family, friends or co-workers. Team members DO NOT have to live in the Oregon School District! Support from teammates increases the likelihood that you'll continue exercising! Register through January 21 by picking up a form at the District Office or at

[www.oregonsd.org/community/community\\_education.cfm](http://www.oregonsd.org/community/community_education.cfm). For more information, check out our flyer:

[http://www.oregonsd.org/site\\_uploads/news/newsfile2618\\_1.pdf](http://www.oregonsd.org/site_uploads/news/newsfile2618_1.pdf) or contact Scott at 835-4097 or [srl@oregonsd.org](mailto:srl@oregonsd.org)

### **Start talking....**

Parents are the best defense against kids using and abusing alcohol. Kids who start drinking before the age of 15 are considerably more likely to abuse alcohol. In case you haven't seen it, here's a link to a 30 second public service announcement that drives home this message:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwBO\\_DcqlnE&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwBO_DcqlnE&feature=channel). Want more information? Check out <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>.

## Parenting Tweens

This is an age when kids typically begin to withdraw from their parents and become obsessed with their friends. But a recent study shows that just because kids think parents are obsolete, parents still have an important role to play. Kids with warm, nurturing parents were less likely to have problem and kids who have parents who are good communicators are more likely to be socially inclusive. This is encouraging news for parents to hang in there when their tweens are being negative with the knowledge that they're doing vital work and that things WILL get better. For a US News article on 5 ways to be a positive parent, look here:

<http://health.usnews.com/articles/health/brain-and-behavior/2008/08/04/5-ways-to-be-a-positive-parent.html>

## Graduating... from the pediatrician

During the teen years, it's important to continue annual checkups, but your teen might not feel comfortable with the doctor they've been seeing. Teens need a doctor that they trust and that they can build rapport with. You can help your teen find a doctor that's a good fit for them. Here are some things to look for:

- Is the practice teen-friendly? Some offices have separate waiting areas with age-appropriate reading and health information for younger and older patients.
- Am I being eased out? As a parent, you should expect to get kicked out of the exam room sometime during your child's teen years. Teens need privacy with their doctor, just like adults do.
- Is my teen comfortable with this doctor? Over the years, the doctor should have been talking to your child as well as to you. Now as a teen, that bond can help them both develop a better doctor-patient relationship.

If you and your teen decide it's time to move on, or if your pediatrician has an upper age limit for patients, you'll need to look for a new doctor. Some doctors have a sub-specialty in adolescent medicine, with overall training in family medicine or internal medicine. There are also specialists in teen sports medicine. For more information, check [www.adolescenthealth.org](http://www.adolescenthealth.org)

**Sign up for Community Ed classes NOW!**

Here's a list of classes starting SOON!

Latin/Salsa/Mamba	Adults	6:45-7:45 PM	1/15/2009 - 2/5/2009	\$23
Beginning Spanish	All ages	6:30-8:30 PM	1/19/2009 - 3/23/2009	\$67
One, 2-D, 3-D Art	Grades 2-4	4:00-5:30 PM	1/20/2009 - 2/24/2009	\$67
One, 2-D, 3-D Art	Grades 5-8	6:00-7:30 PM	1/20/2009 - 2/24/2009	\$67
Winter Fit Kids	Grades K-4	3:00-4:00 PM	1/20/2009 - 2/24/2009	\$27
Movin' Girls	Grades K-4	3:00-4:00 PM	1/22/2009 - 2/26/2009	\$27

Lots more classes start later in January! For more information, or to register, contact Scott at 835-4097 or [srl@oregonsd.org](mailto:srl@oregonsd.org). To see a complete list of Winter into Spring Community Education classes, look for your catalog in the mail or look here:

[http://www.oregonsd.org/site\\_uploads/news/newsfile2617\\_1.pdf](http://www.oregonsd.org/site_uploads/news/newsfile2617_1.pdf)

### Parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Online Safety

It seems like children of all ages are part of social networks, chat rooms and have email accounts. We work hard to protect our kids from dangerous situations, but the online world can have some dangers too. Netsmartz offers a great web site (<http://www.netsmartz.org/index.aspx>) that parents and kids can visit together and watch videos, get information and begin a conversation. The web site includes a separate tab for teens and another for younger kids, plus a page for parents. Here are a few links to get you started

<http://www.netsmartz.org/stories/teresa.htm> Interesting demonstration of how easy it is to accumulate information about teens and tweens from various website postings.

<http://www.netsmartz.org/stories/friendship.htm> How sharing an email account password with a friend led to cyberbullying

<http://www.netsmartz.org/stories/canttake.htm> A seemingly innocent participation in a joke among friends leads to inadvertent cyberbullying  
<http://www.nsteens.org/videos/offline-consequences/> What's appropriate to post for teens? A look at off-line consequences to bad online choices

### Shooting Stars?

The local chapter of the Knights of Columbus is sponsoring a Free Throw contest on Sunday, January 18th from 1-3 PM at RCI for all Boys and Girls age 10 through 14 as of 1/1/09. If you need more information, please contact Scott Kelbel at [s\\_kelbel@hotmail.com](mailto:s_kelbel@hotmail.com)

### **Madrigal Time**

Make plans now to attend the annual OMS Madrigal Dinner! Performances will be on Feb 12, 13 and 14 (what a great way to celebrate Valentine's Day!), beginning at 6:30 pm. Tickets go on sale January 21 from the Oregon Choral Boosters: [www.oregonchoralboosters.com](http://www.oregonchoralboosters.com). Adults \$14, Seniors and students \$11 for a 5 course meal and an evening of fabulous entertainment!

### **Outdoor Fun!**

Join "Snowshoeing 101" at Aldo Leopold Nature Center! Learn the Native American history of snowshoeing and try out snowshoes for yourself in this winter exploration. We'll practice some snowshoe "calisthenics", have a snowshoe race and take a hike by snowshoe to observe winter animal activity. If no snow is present, we'll hike to observe animal signs. This program is presented in partnership with REI; all snowshoes will be provided.

Appropriate for children ages 5 and older (Please specify child's weight when registering). Register through the Community Education office at 835-4097 or [http://www.oregonsd.org/community/community\\_education.cfm](http://www.oregonsd.org/community/community_education.cfm)

Fee: \$13

Dates: January 19

Times: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Location: ALNC, 300 Femrite Drive, Monona

### **Quirky Link of the Month**

As if we don't already have enough snow on the ground... Here's a fun web site that lets you and your children explore how atmospheric conditions affect the kind and amount of snow we get. You'll need a Flash Plug-In - download it free from the link at the bottom of the page. Here's the link: [http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/wwatch/investigate/weather\\_make\\_r.htm?eml=TNL/20090106/TNL](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/wwatch/investigate/weather_make_r.htm?eml=TNL/20090106/TNL)