



December 2014 ✦ Volume 11 ✦ Issue 3

*People making lists, buying special gifts.  
It's a time to be kind to one and all.  
It's that time of year when good friends are dear.  
And you wish you could give more than just presents from a store.*

*Why don't you give love on Christmas day.  
Oh, even the man who has everything  
Would be so happy if you would bring him love on Christmas day.  
No greater gift is there than love.*

*People you don't know smiling out hello.  
Everywhere there's an air of Christmas joy.  
It's that once a year when the world's sincere.  
And you'd like to find a way  
To show the things that words can't say.*

*Why don't you give love on Christmas day.  
The man on the street and the couple upstairs  
All need to know that there's one who cares.  
Give love on Christmas day.  
No greater gift is there than love.  
What the world needs is love.  
Yes, the world needs your love.*



"Give Love on Christmas Day"

HikingArtist.com

-by Berry Gordy, Alphonzo Mizell, Christine Perren, Freddie Perren and Deke Richards

—INSIDE THIS ISSUE—

- Page 2 Self Care: HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Managing Holiday Stress
- Page 3 Self Care: HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: When Your Grandchildren Visit Their Parents
- Page 4 Useful News: HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Fun Kid's Activities
- Page 5 Health & Nutrition: Cold & Flu Season
- Page 6 Finances: Montana \$aves \$cavenger Hunt
- Page 7 Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana



## Self Care

### HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Managing Holiday Stress

For most people the holidays are happy times, but for many grandparents raising grandchildren, these special days can bring on strong feelings of sadness, anger, loss, or guilt related to the family situation, especially if the situation is new and this is your first holiday season. **The following are tips for helping your family manage holiday stress.**

- Talk to a **support group** member, a friend, or counselor to help you work through your feelings.
- Keep **holidays simple**. Avoid the temptation to compensate for the losses grandchildren have endured.
- Keep **realistic expectations** in planning. The holiday does not need to be perfect in order for your grandchild to feel loved. You **CAN** feel good knowing that you are able to support, protect, provide for, and love your grandchildren.
- Include the **child's parent** when appropriate. Whether or not children have regular or infrequent visits with their parents, maintaining contact is important. It helps your child feel loved and connected. Even if a parent is in a long term drug treatment or in prison, your child can have a holiday visit. Many children imagine the worst about their parents, and seeing them healthy and safe can be a relief.
- Review your **visitation rules** with the child's parent. Rules may include no visiting if the parent shows up drunk or high. It is tempting to let rules slide on special occasions, but if you stick to them, you'll have a more pleasant visit and create a good family memory.
- **Anticipate problem** situations. Parents who can't take care of their children often feel guilty and ashamed. They may make promises they can't keep, try to provide gifts they can't afford, or fail to show up for a scheduled visit. They might pick fights with family members to cover their feelings of shame and sadness. They might get drunk before a visit because they're nervous or feeling bad and don't know how else to cope.
- Plan a **relaxed visit** in a location you feel comfortable with that is within the rules of any court ordered visitation. If possible, plan low-key activities for the parent and child to do together (for example, cooking or making decorations). Tell the parent what the child has been doing lately, some of his favorite foods, TV shows, activities, etc. Encourage the parent to bring a small gift for each child. A handmade card or something from a dollar store can be a child's most cherished gift when it is given by their parent.
- **Talk to children** in advance about the visits. Ask them what activities they would like to do. Help them be realistic about what to expect. If you think the parent may not show up, or if you expect trouble, talk about that with the child. You might say something like, "Your mom is excited about the visit and I want you two to have a great time, but we know that sometimes in the past, she hasn't always been able to make it to visits. Why don't we plan something to do just in case your mom isn't able to make it?"
- Expect your child to have **mixed feelings** at times during the holidays - excitement, nervousness, sadness, and anger. They may show these feelings by acting out or becoming withdrawn. Help them put words to their feelings. You can't shield your child from life experiences, but you can be there for them. Be accepting and help them work through their negative feelings.
- **Take care of yourself**. Pay attention to your own feelings and needs during this time. To help your grandchildren, you need to take care of yourself.

*Adapted from Holiday Tips for Grandparent Caregivers by Kim Sumner-Mayer, Kinship Children of Alcoholics Foundation, an affiliate of Phoenix House. Keeping In Touch, Issue VII, Winter 2002, Brooklyn Grandparents' Coalition newsletter*

*Find more articles like this one at <http://www.extension.org/>*



## Self Care

### HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: When Your Grandchildren Visit Their Parents

For children being raised by grandparents, visits with parents can be confusing and stressful, especially around the holidays, when expectations are high for both the parents and the children. **To help make your grandchild's visit with his or her parents as smooth as possible, consider the following:**

- Encourage your grandchild's parent(s) to maintain consistency in terms of your grandchild's schedule and expectations for behavior.
- Prepare your grandchild for visits by explaining what will happen and when.
- Make sure your grandchild knows what to do if s/he feels scared or unsafe.
- Have your grandchild take an object (for example, stuffed animal, favorite toy, blanket, photo album) that is familiar and comforting along for visits.
- Have a back-up plan in case the parent cancels or does not show up for a visit.
- Create an activity bag (games, coloring books, toys) for your grandchild to take along on visits.
- Don't put your grandchild in the middle of arguments or disagreements with his or her parents.
- Support your grandchild's desire to spend time with his or her parents.

#### When your grandchild returns home, it may be important to:

- Review the household rules when your grandchild returns from a visit.
- Reassure your grandchild that s/he will be returning to your home after the visit.
- Create a routine for when your grandchild returns home and be consistent in following this routine.
- Give your grandchild some "down time" after s/he returns from a visit. Don't jump right into chores, errands, or other activities.
- Without being too pushy, encourage your grandchild to tell you about how the visit went and how they felt about it.

For additional information about helping grandchildren maintain relationships with their parents, download the University of Wisconsin-Extension publication *Children's Contact With Their Parents* from <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/B3786-7.pdf>.

Find more articles like this one at <http://www.extension.org/>



By HikingArtist

#### Need more ideas on how to effectively communicate with your adult children and the parents of your grandchildren?

Download your free copies of these MSU Extension MontGuides:

##### Positive Family Communication

- Making time for conversation
- Learning skills for meaningful conversation
- Non-verbal communication
- Family meetings

##### Managing Anger for Better Health and Relationships

- Causes of anger
- Anger in relationships
- Expressing Anger
- Managing Anger

[http://www.msuextension.org/health/msu\\_montguides.html](http://www.msuextension.org/health/msu_montguides.html)



Useful News

HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS:  
Fun Kid's Activities

Need some help coming up with activities to keep kids happy and occupied during cold days inside or during family get-togethers? **Check out these websites for lots of great ideas.**

“Top 36 Simple & Affordable DIY Christmas Decorations”

<http://www.woohome.com/diy-2/top-36-simple-and-affordable-diy-christmas-decorations>

“30 Homemade Ornaments for the Kids”

<http://handsonaswegrow.com/30-homemade-ornaments-for-the-kids/>

“Think Out of the Box with Creative Activities for Hands-On Learning”

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/crafts>

“Giant List of Indoor Activities for Kids”

<http://www.whatdowedoallday.com/indoor-activities-for-kids>

The kids can also have fun helping out in the kitchen and preparing these easy and festive recipes!

Edible Snowmen

This is a great recipe for the kids to help with!

- 1 box Ritz crackers
- 1 container low-fat cream cheese
- tiny slices of carrots, apples
- Box of raisins



Each child should get 3 Ritz crackers, approximately 2 tbsp of cream cheese, and a small pile of sliced fruits, veggies, and raisins. Spread cream cheese over all 3 crackers. Decorate using available foods.

Reindeer Chow

- 1 jar creamy peanut butter
- 3 cups rice cereal
- 3 cups corn cereal
- 3 cups round oat cereal
- 2 cups pretzel sticks
- 2 cups peanuts
- 1 bag Christmas M&Ms (optional)



Slowly melt peanut butter in double broiler. Combine remaining ingredients together in large bowl then pour peanut butter over mixture and mix well.

Holiday Jigglers

- 2 8oz boxes of regular or sugar-free green and red gelatin mix
- 2 ½ C boiling water
- Holiday-themed cookie cutters



Mix gelatin and water and pour into a 13x9 Pyrex dish. Chill. Once it is completely firm (approx 3 hours), cut into shapes with the holiday cookie cutters. Keep chilled until ready to serve. Makes 24.

Santa Claus Punch

- 1 pk 3oz cherry regular or sugar free gelatin
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 can frozen lemonade
- 3 cups water
- 1 qt 100% cranberry juice
- 12 oz club soda



Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Wait to cool then combine remaining ingredients. Lime slices or cherries may be added to the mixture for festive Christmas colors.

-Recipes courtesy of eXtension; <http://www.extension.org>



**Health & Nutrition**

**It's Cold & Flu Season—Know the Difference!**

This is the time of year when it seems like there is at least one person in the house is not feeling well. By knowing if someone has a cold or the flu, you will be able to make the best and most timely treatment decisions. Use this information from

<http://www.flu.gov>:

**What are the symptoms of the flu?**

Flu symptoms include:

- A 100-degree or higher fever or feeling feverish (not everyone with the flu has a fever)
- A cough and/or sore throat
- A runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches and/or body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea (most common in children)

**Do I have the flu or a cold?**

The flu and the common cold have similar symptoms. It can be difficult to tell the difference between them. Your health care provider can give you a test within the first few days of your illness to determine whether or not you have the flu. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold. Symptoms such as fever, body aches, tiredness, and cough are more common and intense with the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

**When should I seek emergency medical attention?**

Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Seizures
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**One of the easiest ways to stay healthy during cold and flu season is to wash your hands often. It's easy to teach your grandchildren how to do this.**

**Use this information from <http://www.cdc.gov>:**

**You should wash your hands after:**

- Going to the bathroom
- Helping change your younger sister's or brother's diapers
- Blowing or wiping your nose with a tissue
- Covering your mouth/nose when you cough or sneeze
- Preparing food
- Touching burns, cuts, or sores
- Playing with pets and animals
- Handling dirty dishes, utensils, or touching cabinet tops where food is prepared
- Being around someone who is sick
- Being physically active
- Taking out the garbage

**You should always wash your hands before:**

- Handling food
- Setting the table
- Eating
- Treating a scrape, cut, or wound
- Tending to someone who is sick
- Putting in or taking out contact lenses
- Wash your hands more often when a family member or friend you spend a lot of time around is sick. This will cut down on your chances of catching whatever nasty germ they have.



**Finances**

**A FUN Way for Montana Youth to Learn About Saving Money:  
MONTANA SAVES \$CAVENGER HUNT**

Montana State University Extension is offering two **Montana Saves \$cavenger Hunts** as a part of the America Saves program during 2014-2015. The hunts are specifically designed for two age groups: 11-14 and 15-19. Youth will learn about the benefits saving and investing, how credit can be a friend for foe, and how to be in control of their money.

Youth who complete the **Montana Saves \$cavenger Hunt** are eligible for a drawing for one of 33 cash awards of \$100 in each age group during America Saves week February 23-27, 2015.

The 66 cash awards for Montana students are courtesy of:

- First Interstate BancSystem Foundation
- Montana Credit Unions for Community Development
- Montana Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General
- Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance
- Montana Society of Certified Public Accountants (MSCPA) Legacy Foundation
- Montana Bankers Association Education Endowment Fund of the Montana Community Foundation
- Montana 4-H Foundation

The **Montana Saves \$cavenger Hunt** can be used by grandparents who want to incorporate learning about finances during their interactions with their grandchildren. The nine hunts do not have to be completed all at one time; youth have until February 20, 2015 to complete the hunts.

Enrollment directions for your grandchild can be found at the Montana Saves website:

<http://www.montanasaves.org/>

Or you can go directly to the site for his/her age group:

Ages 11-14 (as of September 1, 2014):

[www.msuextension.org/montanasavesscavengerhunt1](http://www.msuextension.org/montanasavesscavengerhunt1)

Ages 15-19 (as of September 1, 2014):

[www.msuextension.org/montanasavesscavengerhunt2](http://www.msuextension.org/montanasavesscavengerhunt2)

*If your grandchildren have difficulties with registering or questions about the software of the hunts contact, Keri Hayes, MSU Publications/Extension Economics Administrative Assistant, [khaves@montana.edu](mailto:khaves@montana.edu), 406-994-5695. If you have questions about course content, contact Marsha Goetting, MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist, [goetting@montana.edu](mailto:goetting@montana.edu), 406-995-5695.*

**Do you know someone who will enjoy this newsletter?**

Pass it on and encourage them to sign up for their own copy.

<http://www.montanagrandparents.org/newsletters.html>



By HikingArtist

## Grandfamily Support Contacts Across Montana—By County

**Blaine County—Harlem & Fort Belknap Indian Reservation**  
Liz Werk  
MSU Extension  
(406) 353-2656

**Big Horn County—Wyola**  
Kristy Old Coyote  
LBHC Extension  
(406) 638-3114  
Jacinta Stewart  
(406) 679-2259

**Big Horn County—Hardin**  
Janice Eckman  
Hardin Parent Center  
(406) 665-4151

**Big Horn & Rosebud Counties—Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation**  
Ryhal Rowland  
MSU Extension  
(406) 477-6498

**Cascade County—Great Falls**  
Jona McNamee  
MSU Extension  
(406) 454-6980  
Mariellen Ritts  
(406) 453-3554

**Custer County—Miles City**  
Don & Vivian Westall  
(406) 234-6727

**Dawson County—Glendive**  
Pete Bruno  
Family Life Institute  
(406) 939-5591

**Fergus County—Lewistown**  
Denise Seilstad  
MSU Extension  
(406) 535-3919

**Flathead County—Kalispell**  
Nikki Roth  
The Nurturing Center, Inc.  
(406) 756-1414

**Gallatin County—Bozeman**  
MSU Extension Family & Human Development  
(406) 994-3395  
grg@montana.edu

**Glacier County—Browning & Blackfeet Indian Reservation**  
Carrie Bear Chief-Evans/  
Connie Bremner  
Eagle Shield Center  
(406) 338-7257

**Hill County—Havre**  
Lea Ann Larson  
MSU Extension  
(406) 265-5481

**Hill County—Rocky Boy Indian Reservation**  
Mary St. Pierre  
Stone Child College & MSU Extension  
(406) 395-4875

**Lake County—Ronan**  
Nori Pearce  
MSU Extension  
(406) 676-4271

**Lewis & Clark County—Helena**  
Candi Standall  
(406) 202-1668

Jackie Stoeckel  
DPHHS, Child & Family Services - Program Bureau  
(406) 841-2402

**Madison/Jefferson Counties—Whitehall**  
MSU Extension  
(406) 287-3282

**Missoula County—Missoula**  
Kelly Moore  
MSU Extension  
(406) 258-4206

Erin Crabtree  
(406) 552-9779

**Ravalli County—Bitterroot Valley**  
AnnaMarie White  
La Paloma Agency  
(406) 396-1937

**Richland County—Sidney**  
MSU Extension  
(406) 433-1206

**Roosevelt County—Culbertson**  
Ardis Oelkers  
MSU Extension  
(406) 787-5312

**Roosevelt County—Fort Peck Indian Reservation**  
Carol Bemer  
(406) 768-2430

**Rosebud County—Forsyth**  
Jennifer Anderson  
MSU Extension  
(406) 346-7320

**Rosebud County—Lame Deer & Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation**  
Kay Medicine Bull  
Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Cheyenne Nation  
(406) 477-6654

**Silver Bow County—Butte**  
Brenda Hergott  
Butte 4-C's  
(406) 723-4019  
1-800-794-4061

**Stillwater County—Columbus**  
Lisa Terry  
MSU Extension  
(406) 322-8035

**Teton County—Choteau**  
Jane Wolery  
MSU Extension  
(406) 466-2491

**Valley County—Glasgow**  
Roubie Younkin  
MSU Extension  
(406) 228-6239

**Yellowstone County—Billings**  
Jackie Rumph  
MSU Extension  
(406) 256-2828



Family & Human Development  
316 Herrick Hall  
PO Box 173540  
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

Non-Profit  
Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #69  
Bozeman, MT  
59715

## Contact Us

316 Herrick Hall  
PO Box 173540  
Bozeman, MT 59717-3540  
grg@montana.edu  
(406) 994-3395  
[www.montanagrandparents.org](http://www.montanagrandparents.org)



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/  
EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and  
provider of educational outreach.

# Montana Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Project

*Call it a clan, call it a network,  
call it a tribe, call it a family.  
Whatever you are, whoever you are,  
you need one.*  
~Jane Howard