

# YSCC News



Kids Become Leaders

December 2012

## Did you know?

- The key to raising a smarter, happier child is loving interaction with parents for a lifetime. Spend time together in positive ways, engaging in a variety of activities with the child. Most importantly, model the kind of responsible, intelligent, and moral behavior you want your child to emulate, since children learn most through the example we set, rather than the specific teaching we attempt. - from *Your Child's Brain: The Crucial Years, a study from the OSU Extension*

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Help make Christmas dreams come true! Check out our Christmas Wish List on our website. Look under the Get Involved tab! Or give a gift that lasts; donate your time and talents through volunteer service.	

Youth Services of Creek County is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) tax exempt agency and a member of the Tulsa Area United Way. We are proud to be the only non-billing agency in the area that provides services to all Creek County residents free of charge. Contact us at [www.yscc.net](http://www.yscc.net) or 918-227-2622

## Giving Need in the Spirit of Christmas

This time of year, we focus a lot of time, attention and resources on wants.

Christmas lists overflow with the biggest, flashiest desires of our hearts. At times, we buy items that we aren't sure anyone wants just to say that we have gotten a gift; a material way of showing our remembrance and fondness for another person. In this way, we use monetary items as a currency for love. As I look in shop windows for "the" gift and contemplate last Christmas, I can't really recall what my children received last year, from me or anyone else. Most likely

toys and games that are broken or missing pieces, clothes and shoes that have been outgrown and given away. And as I watch the other shoppers doing exactly as I am, I can't help but wonder what a gift of need would look like. Like many parents, I explain to my children the difference between a want and a need, but when do I show them? When do I put aside my own desires to reach out to others who so desperately need – not just food, medicine and clothing, but time, attention and love? So this year instead of buying



one more want from a list, I am going to give of myself. I will go without, donate my time, give from my heart to someone who needs an ear to listen, a hand to hold, a shoulder to cry on. And I will show my children what giving a gift from the heart looks like. And in the end, I know I will be the one who receives the present.

## Holiday Health and Safety Tips

Holiday stress and busyness can turn a fun-filled season into headache and hassle. Follow these instructions for a safe and healthy holiday:

**Manage stress.** The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep a check on overcommitment and overspending. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep

**Handle and prepare food safely.** As you prepare holiday meals, and any

meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

**Travel safely.** Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride

in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his/her height, weight, and age.

**Eat healthy, and be active.** With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy. Select just one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.



## Parenting the Child You Have

When you have kids (or adopt or foster them) you have this picture in your mind of what that child's going to be like when they get bigger. Months and, in some cases, years of daydreaming has produced the image of your individualized, perfect child. When the child arrives, you learn quickly that even babies have their own quirks, personalities and likes and dislikes that may or may not fit our own. What I've found is it's very hard to get that image out of your mind when you find out what the child is actually like. This can be disappointing. An example is sports – Dad dreams of having a son that plays football, basketball, and baseball like he did when he was a kid. He enrolls his child in t-ball, little league football, and so

forth, faithfully attending all the games and encouraging him all along the way. But the kid wants to be in band and debate. It can be hard for dad to drop his dreams and encourage the child in the child's dreams. Letting go of your own dreams can be scary as well. If you and your child don't like the same things it can be hard to connect and bond. Naturally people look for commonalities and similarities when choosing others to have a relationship with. Not having those with your own child causes panic and discouragement. Likewise, children want their parent to encourage and support their dreams. Children can feel like they are disappointing their parent when there are limited shared interests, but often

the children won't know or understand why they are disappointing their parent. The time spent dreaming your perfect prince or princess into life set up expectations. We may not recognize or be fully aware of these expectations; after all we expect, or anticipate, them. As the parent it is important to perform a self-check and recognize those expectations. If need be, acknowledge the feelings associated with not having a child just like you imagined. Finally celebrate and build a relationship with the child you have. Encourage their adventurous spirit by becoming adventurous yourself and delving into their world. Being a parent is full of complicated and stressful decisions. Choosing to accept, love and support your child in their dreams is not one of them.

“Your children need your presence more than your presents”.  
~Jesse Jackson

## Cooking With Kids: Peppermint Bark



The hardest part about this recipe is waiting for it to be ready to eat. Licking the chocolate out of the double boiler helps to pass the time until it is ready.

Ingredients:  
8 ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces  
2 teaspoons canola oil, divided  
1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract, divided  
8 ounces white chocolate, broken into pieces  
25 peppermint candies, crushed

Directions:  
Lightly grease a 9x9 inch.

pan and line with waxed paper, smoothing out wrinkles; set aside Place the semisweet chocolate and 1 teaspoon of the canola oil in the top of a double boiler over simmering water, stirring frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. When the chocolate is melted, stir in 1/4 teaspoon of the peppermint extract. Pour the melted chocolate into the prepared pan, and spread evenly over the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle half of the crushed peppermints over

the chocolate layer. Refrigerate until completely hardened, about 1 hour. Repeat process with white chocolate. Pour the white chocolate directly over the semisweet chocolate layer; spread evenly. Sprinkle the remaining crushed candy over the top and gently press in Refrigerate until completely hardened. Remove from pan; break into small pieces to serve.

Children and adults alike enjoy this sweet treat. Tastes like Christmas!