All of us here at the Integrated Health Program at Families First would like to wish you and your family a very special holiday season filled with gratitude, giving, and joy. This time of year can get pretty hectic, so make sure you take the time to slow down and enjoy the moments that make the holiday season special for our children and for ourselves. This newsletter offers you some ideas and tips for things to do with your kids over winter break (and the inevitable snow days ahead) and for ways to keep eating healthy during the holiday season. You will also find a Random Acts of Kindness calendar to use with your kids during the month of December and since time and attention is the most important gift we can offer to our family members, you will also find suggestions for homemade gift coupons. We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and that you all have a wonderful season! Happy Holidays!

Your IHP Team
What do I do with the kids during breaks from school?
Heather Smith, Family Support Specialist for Howard, Winneshiek, and Fayette Counties

Keeping the kids busy can help prevent some of the shenanigans they can come up with when left time to fill on their own. Volunteering with the family is a free activity that can leave your family with a sense of pride and being an active part of the community.

I used community resources as my children were growing up. I couldn't give back financially but I could give my time. My kids still talk about times we helped others and continue to do so as adults.

Family volunteering strengthens families. When you decide to become a family volunteer, you are not only contributing to an important cause, but you are also helping your family and children in ways you never thought possible.

* Involving your child in the decision-making process will help them feel appreciated and respected, but the volunteer activity may also enable them to acquire new skills or find a new interest.

*Parents can help others while spending time with their kids, passing on important values and sharing meaningful conversations in a positive environment. However, sometimes it's hard to talk to our kids so working side by side may be a good solution - kids often learn more by example.

*Nonprofits are often understaffed and overstressed and need additional help. Family volunteering helps them tremendously. This is a two-way street, though, as this can also help your child’s standing in the community and is great for your child’s first job application. Volunteering is a win-win all the way around.

Idea's for Volunteering:

✓ Animal shelters
✓ Food shelves
✓ Adopt a grandparent
✓ Nursing homes
✓ Holiday lights set up
✓ Shovel the walk for a neighbor
✓ Babysit so a parent can go shopping
✓ Visiting people in the hospital
✓ Helping military personnel or families
✓ River clean up

There are endless opportunities to help. Please feel free to call me - I would love to help you find an opportunity that will work for your family!

Integrated Health is on Facebook!
Shannon Brown, Family Support Specialist for Allamakee and Clayton Counties

For those of you that have Facebook check out our page that we have created just for you! We named it the Integrated Health Program at Families First Counseling Services. Along with inspiration and support we also offer encouragement, fun facts and resources. We also post about fun family activities and events that are happening in your area. So check us out for parenting tips and ideas that will help with your child’s overall health and wellbeing. This is just one more way to get the support and services that you and your child deserve from us.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send a paper hug to someone you love</td>
<td>Tell a silly joke to make someone laugh</td>
<td>Give a compliment to a friend</td>
<td>Leave an uplifting note on a stranger's car</td>
<td>Make a card for a soldier</td>
<td>Pick up litter</td>
<td>Leave a thank you note for your mail carrier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read a book aloud at a local library</td>
<td>Make a card for a stranger</td>
<td>Donate a book to the library or hospital</td>
<td>Leave a happy note for someone to find</td>
<td>Shovel snow for a neighbor</td>
<td>Donate toys to your favorite charity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take supplies to the animal shelter</td>
<td>Tape quarters to a vending machine</td>
<td>Write a thank you note to your teacher</td>
<td>Bake and share with neighbors</td>
<td>Write a note for a family member</td>
<td>Put screens away for the day and spend time with your family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave a thank you note for your trash collector</td>
<td>Take baked goods to your local firehouse</td>
<td>Write an inspirational message &amp; leave it in your community</td>
<td>Offer to help carry in groceries for a neighbor</td>
<td>Brainstorm kindness/service ideas to try next year!</td>
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The holiday season is a time of giving. This could be as simple as your time or a smile. This calendar shows how simple it can be to make someone else's day extra special. This can be contagious and encourage others to give back as well, so be the good you want to see others continue on!
**Holiday Gift Coupons**

While money can be tight this time of year, gifts from the heart are free. Gift coupons are a great way to show our kids that they are important without breaking the bank. You can copy these onto cardstock and cut them up or grab some index cards and make your own. This is also a great way to show your love for your partner, too, but we’ll leave those selections up to you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spend the day in your pajamas!</th>
<th>Stay up an extra half hour at bedtime!</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family fun night – your choice of game or puzzle!</td>
<td>Build a snowman together!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a drive around town to look at the Christmas lights!</td>
<td>Family sledding or skating party!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make paper snowflakes together!</td>
<td>Have an indoor picnic!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chore free day!</td>
<td>Family fun night – popcorn and your choice of movie!</td>
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A Big Change is coming for Medicaid!
Bethany Ellingson, Program Director Integrated Health

Iowa is working to change the way that Medicaid benefits are managed. This new program (IA Health Link) will give you the same health coverage you know and use, but will be covered by a Managed Care Organization (MCO) that you get to choose. Watch for the enrollment packet from the State of Iowa that should be mailed to your home that will give you further details about which MCO you are assigned to, how to change your MCO, and a brief introduction to each MCO. If you have any questions, please contact Medicaid Member Services at 1-800-338-8366 or any IHP team member.

Healthy Eating During the Holidays
Brita Carbonell, RN, Nurse Care Manager

The holidays are upon us, which in my Scandinavian family means it's time for lefse, sandbakkels, and krumkake. Regardless of your cultural traditions, chances are at the holidays you will be gathering with family, friends...and food! Not only do our families connect through food customs, but we also tend to use food as a tool to deal with stress and social anxiety (anyone else ever spend time hanging out by the party buffet?). It's easy to gain weight this time of year with all the temptations around, so here are some tips to try to stay healthy through the holidays.

- **Enjoy the treats, but in moderation.** There's nothing wrong with having a piece of pie or a cookie, but that doesn't mean you need to have two pieces of pie or five cookies. This goes for our kids, too. Also, trying to limit treats to one per day will help.
- **Use a small plate.** It's all about presentation, and this is a good way to trick our brains into knowing that we have had enough food by filling a small plate instead of having a big plate that looks half empty with the same amount of food.
- **Drink lots of water.** Soda, juice, flavored milk, and alcohol pack a lot of calories into a small amount of liquid so these extra calories add up very, very quickly. Again, moderation is important.
- **Stay active.** Instead of plopping down on the sofa in front of the television after a big meal, the whole family can grab their coats and head outside for a while. Take a walk, go sledding, head to the ice rink, whatever – just go play!
- **Eat only if you are hungry – part 1.** Stressful family gathering have you going back for seconds or thirds? While eating (or drinking) may make you feel more comfortable temporarily, it is not a healthy way to deal with stress. Step away for a few minutes, take some deep breaths, and know that the situation will pass.
- **Eat only if you are hungry – part 2.** The Clean Plate Club may sound cute, but it can really lead to bad eating habits for our kids, not to mention ourselves. As parents, we are in charge of what foods our kids eat, but they need to be in charge of how much they eat. Forcing a child to eat more than they want will only end up teaching them to ignore the signals their body is sending that they are full. Instead, make sure their portions are small so that food isn't being wasted, and if it's an issue of picky eating where they say they are full because they really don't want to eat their green beans but then ask for dessert or seconds of mashed potatoes, it's okay to say no.
- **Healthy snacking can curb overeating.** Keeping fresh fruits and vegetables on hand make for easy, healthy snacks for you and your kids and can help you eat less during those big holiday meals.
We know that it’s hard to find the time to make sure all of our children get to their yearly preventative health appointments, so we would like to sweeten the deal for you. We are offering our member families who get their enrolled kids in for a yearly check up with their doctor and dentist and receive their yearly flu vaccine a **$20 gift card** for the first enrolled child and a **$10 gift card** for each additional enrolled sibling to either Walmart or Kwik Star. All visits need to be completed between July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 and kids must do all three in order for the family to receive the gift card. Flu vaccine is only available through the fall and early winter months and since sites tend to run out, plan ahead and get your kids in early! When all three are completed, let your IHP team know. We will verify with the clinics and get you your reward!

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Brita Carbonell, Nurse Care Manager  319-505-3814

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Shannon Brown, Family Support  319-505-7802  
Brita Carbonell, Nurse Care Manager  319-505-3814

**IHP Crisis Line  844-225-7444**  
24-hour Crisis Line available to all IHP Families

www.facebook.com/integratedhealthprogram