



# Watertown Family Network

Helping people be the best parents they can be

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2005 NEWSLETTER

## Touch the Trucks Grows Bigger This Year

We hope that the weather will cooperate this year and we and the Watertown Public Library will be able to host the ever popular Touch the Trucks program on Saturday, November 12th at 10:00 am at the parking lot of the temporary home of the library on Marshall Street. This is an opportunity for you and your children to see and climb on all sorts of construction and safety vehicles. It is a wonderful "up close" learning experience for your child, as well as a photo opportunity like no other. Trucks and tractors will be available thanks to Waverly Landscaping as well as vehicles from the Watertown Police and Fire Department. New this year will be the addition of a school bus on loan from Local Motion and a truck from the Massachusetts State Police. There will be a special TRUCK story time inside the library as well as refreshments. Drop on by and learn more about the rigs that are responsible for construction and safety.

## Fundraiser - great success thanks to the volunteer efforts of many.

It could not of rained more on Saturday October 15th for our annual Fall Family Fundraiser. But all of that rain did not dampen the spirits of the Family Network volunteers or the audience who attended this family event. Parents and children were treated to a great musical performance by Fran Friedman, Parent's Choice winner, as well as refreshments, door prizes, craft activities, a fabulous silent auction and surprise goody bags. Many parents worked hard to make this fundraiser a success and because of their efforts we realized a profit of about \$2300.00. Many thanks to all who donated, worked at the events and attended. You are helping the Network continue its mission to serve young families.

## Collection of small toys for the Red Cross

During the month of November we will be collecting small toys for young children that can fit into a holiday stocking for distribution by the Red Cross. As you well know with all of the hurricanes and disasters this past season the Red Crosses resources have been spread pretty thin. This year let us try to ease their burden by each donating a small toy or baby item that can fit into a stocking that will be distributed by the Red Cross. Small boxes of crayons, matchbox cars, small dolls, baby bottles, bibs etc would be appreciated. Please look for the blue box near the nametags to deposit your donation.

## The Parental Stress Line

The Parental Stress Line, 800-632-8188, is answered 24 hours a day every day of the year. This has been true from its inception on October 2nd, 1979 to the present.

We encourage all parents to use the service when they need an unbiased, empathetic listener, or when they are seeking resources. The holiday months can be especially difficult, but the Parental Stress Line is always available.

The Parental Stress Line has merged with Parents Helping Parents, an organization that runs parent support groups all over the state, amplifying the safety net for families in Massachusetts. Both organizations share the same philosophy: their services are free, anonymous and confidential.

The Parental Stress Line operates in much the same way today as it did 25 years ago. Trained volunteers, some parents themselves, take the time to listen to the individual and brainstorm ideas about their situation. A key component is to respect the individual's strengths and their ability to create solutions for themselves. Claudia Euler, Director of the Parental Stress Line states "Our volunteers are what really make the Parental

StressLine run. They are some of the most kind and caring people I have ever worked with. We welcome volunteer inquiries; just call 617-926-5008 x106. Extensive training and supervision are provided."

## Dealing With the Holidays - and How to Make It a Happy One

The holiday season is supposed to be filled with joy, love, and family gatherings. However, more often than not, the holidays are stressful, expensive, and filled with potential family feuds. Once parenthood arrives, these problems intensify and create panic among many new parents. The most common questions are:

- Whose houses are we going to and when?
- How can we host a holiday if we're barely making through a normal day?
- How can we tell family not to overdo the holiday gifts for the kids?

### Whose houses are we going to & when?

This is a difficult one for many families. With 2 sets of families, trying to visit everyone can be a logistical nightmare, especially with children in tow. Both sets of families might live in the local area, making you feel obligated to visit both families. Or, if your families live out of town or if you have moved to this area from another region of the country, traveling during the holiday season is difficult and expensive. If you chose one family over the other, will someone be upset and offended? Will you and your spouse disagree on where to go?

Here are some suggestions on how to deal. First of all, act early with your spouse or significant other to decide where you will be going BEFORE anyone in your family asks you. Next, decide if your kids can handle going to more than one place. Remember that napping routines are typically disrupted, and it's no fun trying to eat turkey with a cranky toddler! If you decide to go to only

1 house, you can head off potential disappointment from other family members by offering to get together a few days later to celebrate the holiday. If a family member seems to be upset, remind them that you want to spend quality time with everyone but it is difficult to fit everything into one day when traveling with the kids.

### **How can we host a holiday if we're barely making it through a normal day?**

One word: Potluck! Take advantage of your guests asking what they can bring - a salad, side dish or dessert goes a long way. Organization and planning ahead will make the day go smoothly. Don't feel like you have to make a gourmet meal to make an impression. Keep things simple and focus on having a good time with your guests. If you want to use paper plates, go ahead!

### **How to tell family not to overdo holiday gifts to the kids?**

Be upfront well before the holiday season gets into full swing. Explain how much you and your child appreciate the gifts but that it is not necessary to overindulge. You do not want to create unrealistic expectations of gifts year round and you want your children to understand the true meaning of the holidays - sharing love with one another.

In summary, get out your pen and paper, make your lists, but above all else, enjoy the season as a time to love one another. Teach your children the special magic of the holidays by doing things that celebrate the joys of the season, not the craziness!

### **Check Out Our Web Site!!**

Check out our website that has been updated by Angelica Vlahos, WFN parent and mother of two young girls. You will love to see the pictures of the children. Plus you will be able to check our calendar on line. [www.watertown.k12.ma.us/wfn/](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/wfn/)



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