

# WINS Family Holiday Newsletter

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## Happy Holidays!

Dear WINS family,

Hello! We wanted to send Happy Holidays and New Year's wishes!

Hopefully the season went smoothly and brought joy to you and your family!

This is a time when families and friends gather together and celebrate their relationships. However, it is easy to become busy again once the holidays are over, and, unfortunately, family together time can seem impossible. *Please note: all the information contained in the main articles consists of general, simple, helpful ideas for navigating the teen years—not meant at all to be specific instructions for parenting your child. Please accept them as “gentle reminders” of issues that you have probably already considered.* Therefore, this issue deals with **What's Your Direction?**

Reminder—If you have things that you want to share, or ideas about the topic, please drop it in the mail or give us a call..

Working with you to ensure the girls' triumphs -

## 25 Years!

As fresh as WINS feels, it is hard to imagine that next year will be its 25th year anniversary! We are SO excited that the program has been such a success and able to touch so many lives. WINS has had slight design shifts over the years, but it has held steadfast to the concept of developing a love

for nature and understanding of the scientific fields in girls from all over Philadelphia. Programs can come and go, but WINS has kept its values for **25 years**; that is amazing!

Furthermore, who doesn't love a party? This anniversary certainly calls for a celebration!

We have various events for next year in the works and want to give the WINS program the praise that it deserves. Thus, keep in mind, that we will be calling on you to help us prepare for everything and definitely plan to show off all your accomplishments!



Philadelphia 2005 - Scott McNulty

## Assets:

*What are assets?*

**Assets are key building blocks that help kids succeed.**

*Each newsletter will feature a different asset.*

*This month's asset:*

*What's Your Direction?*

## Time at Home

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they spend unscripted time with their families a few times a week.



## College Tour!

So, the plans have been made, hotels booked, and buses chartered; we are headed to New England!

WINS II (assuming that you have not missed more than two previous outings) will meet at the Academy on Wednesday, Jan 31st at 4:00 pm. We will then pile onto the bus and drive to Connecticut, stopping for dinner along the way. (Anyone needing to store bags at the Academy ahead of time, call us beforehand to make arrangements.)

Thursday morning we will go to the University of Connecticut (UConn). This is a highly respected state school that has been pouring out money to make the campus buildings into state of the art facilities. We will have lunch on campus and then continue on to Wesleyan University. This small private college

has a long standing reputation for developing students into well-rounded, socially conscious adults.

Thursday evening we will travel farther north to Boston.

Friday morning we will visit Simmons College. This small private women's college has a diverse female student body, and was recently named one of the best colleges for African Americans by Black Enterprise magazine. The curricula at Simmons integrate professional experiences into a liberal arts education.

After lunch, we will travel on to Boston University. BU has traditionally been an inclusive institute of higher learning. They have admitted women from their beginning, and have graduated many outstanding historical figures, including Martin Luther

King, Jr. Furthermore, BU is a world-renowned research institute.

Friday night we head west to Amherst, Massachusetts.

On Saturday morning, we have our final destination - University of Massachusetts Amherst. This state school has an intricate relationship with many other schools. They are a member of Five-College, Inc, so you get the benefit of four other respected schools and have a domestic exchange program where you take a semester or year to study at another school.

After UMass Amherst, we will head home. We should get back to Philadelphia at about 7 pm.



*If interested in the A.I.A. Black College Tour from April 2-6, the deadline is December 27, 2006.*



Boston University

## The American Museum of Natural History



Shanaya, Shahna, and Somaya - hard at work

The WINS I December trip was to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City! Our travel arrangements hit a few snags, but fortunately Miss Najwa took charge and drove us to NYC and once we were there, it was all worth it.

The first thing we did was put a little sustenance in our bodies. Then we saw "Cosmic Collisions" in the Hayden Planetarium! The

show dealt with the effects of celestial bodies impacting each other, from the creation of our moon to the extinction of dinosaurs to the impending combination of the Milky Way and Andromeda galaxies. (No need to panic and run to the store for supplies, the two galaxies will not meet for several billion more years.)

Next we went to the Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth.

The topics in this hall focus on why our planet looks the way it presently does, how natural systems function, and why life can live on earth. The girls had questions to answer about these topics, and then were able to explore the museum.

Finally, after a wonderful (but tiring) day, we snuggled back into Najwa's car with knowledge in our heads and a hunger to learn more.

## What's Your Direction?

**Life isn't easy to navigate.** Work, school, activities, people, and other things seem to pull family members apart rather than bring them together. Too often, we feel like everyone is traveling on a different road.

But we don't necessarily have to change our road maps in order to find family time. All we need to do is to get together and ask these questions.

- How do we feel about our schedules? Our time together?
- How can we better balance our individual commitments and our family time?
- Is anyone having their time use

determined by others? (For example, sometimes a child may have lots of time alone because others are busy.)

- How can we make home time more appealing?
- How can we steer our family more in the same direction rather than opposite directions?



Picture taken by Scott McNutly

## Time Together

Three ways to improve time at home with your daughter:

1. Together examine how everyone spent their time last week. Set a weekly goal of having a balance of work, fun, family time, creative time.
2. Choose an activity that the family can do for fun and recreation together at home one evening.
3. Grade your family time based on the fun factor. How often do you laugh together? Have fun together? Enjoy being with each other?

## Tried and True

**It's an old idea but a good one: a great way for families to spend time at home together is to gather around the table for a meal.** Asked how many times a week all the people in their household ate dinner together, 21% of surveyed youth said none or one, 34% said two to four times, and 45% said five to seven times. But the picture changes as youth grow older: 60% of 6th graders have meals with the whole household five to seven times a week, but only 27% of 12th graders do the same. It can be very difficult in our hectic schedules to find a common time. (Growing up, we always ate dinner together, but between my activities and my mother's church meetings, we sometimes wouldn't eat until almost ten!) How often do you gather the whole household at supertime? Ask your daughters for ideas about making meals worth staying home for, or that you can make together.



### Quick tip:

**Remember those fun board games from our childhood? They, along with card games, are a great way to spend a chilly winter night.**

The articles focusing on What's Your Direction are taken, with permission, from:

Search Institute

700 South Third Street, Suite 210 Minneapolis, MN 55415

WINS Family

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ACADEMY OF  
NATURAL SCIENCES

ACADEMY OF NATURAL  
SCIENCES

1900 Ben Franklin Parkway

Phone: 215-299-1064

Cell: 215-219-3905

Fax: 215-405-1551

Email:

[nsmith@ansp.org](mailto:nsmith@ansp.org)

[hopkinsdoerr@ansp.org](mailto:hopkinsdoerr@ansp.org)

## Talk Together

Discuss with your daughter:

- How much time should be spent at home? Doing extracurricular activities? Doing other special things? Why?
  - What kind of outcomes could result from spending time together (in particular, with siblings)
- What sorts of games did you play with your parents? Do you know of games they played with their parents?

## 10 Ideas for Fun Times at Home

1. Rent a funny movie one weekday night. Make popcorn.
2. Have a family snowball, leaf, or soap suds fight.
3. List leftovers on paper like a menu. Let everyone order.
4. Listen to the music that each family member likes and learn about the performer.
5. "Camp out" together in the living room. (Try outside, when the weather warms up)
6. Play hide and seek. (The older you are, the more clever you are.)
7. Surprise one family member by treating him or her like royalty for a day.
8. Hide fun notes for others to find.
9. Have a family breakfast in the sleepest member's bed.
10. Cook a special dinner together. Let each family member pick one dish to pre-



## Final Word

**“While we may, in fact, have fewer hours to spend together as a family than was true a generation or so ago, there are so many small ways to make loving, nurturing connections.”**

- Dr. Lee Salk, psychologist and author of *Familyhood*