While you’re on break over the holidays, it’s easy to get into a lazy mode where you sit around doing nothing with your days, letting them mesh into one long continual nap fest.

While there is some value in getting shut-eye, there’s only so much rest necessary and, to be fair, you do have other more important things to do.

Like what, you ask? Don’t worry! We’ve compiled a handy list of helpful suggestions of things you could, should, and will likely want to do, over your holiday break.

So, make the most of every moment – you’ll be happy you did once you’re back into the swing of second semester!

1. **Apply for scholarships and internships**
   If there was ever a time to apply, it’s now! You don’t have to spend the entire break applying for scholarships, but even if you devote a few hours to your scholarship applications it will make a world of difference in your search. After all, it only takes one to win!

2. **Bake**
   What better way to get you in the holiday spirit than baking a pie? Your home will be filled with a delicious aroma and you’ll have a great gift to take to a holiday party, or share with any house guests that stop by.

3. **Catch up with old friends (and stay in touch with new ones)**
   Everyone you go to school with will be out of school for the holidays. You can use this time to catch up, relive old times, and get the gang together to reminisce about the good old days.

4. **Exercise**
   Stay healthy and combat the holiday bulge by keeping up with a regular exercise regimen. You’ll look – and, more importantly, feel – better.

*Continued on page 2*
5. **Plan next semester’s schedule**
   It’s time to get a jump start on planning next semester while you have time, and there’s no time like the present! Additionally, you should start creating a game plan for next semester now, before you get too busy to do so later.

6. **Revamp your resume, cover letter and/or essays**
   Whether it’s a job, internship or college application resume, cover letter or essay, updated documents are always good to keep on hand at all times – after all, you never know when you might need them! Opportunity knocks the moment you’re least expecting it so it’s always best to be prepared at a moment’s notice. As a result, take the extra time during your break to work on all your important documents, adding any extra information you have had since you last updated them.

7. **Catch up on your reading**
   What we’re suggesting here is the kind of reading you actually enjoy – not your required reading for school. Seriously, when was the last time you read a book that you didn’t have to? Pick up a book because it looks interesting and cozy up and get lost in it. Enjoy – you’ll be happy you did!

8. **Spend quality time with family**
   You love them and they love you. No matter how much you hate to admit it, you miss them terribly. Why wait until the holidays to catch up with family?

9. **See a movie**
   Some of the best films of the year are released during the holiday season and, since you have a lot of free time on your hands, it’s a great opportunity to take advantage! Ask a friend, family member or longtime crush to join and, perhaps, splurge on sharing that jumbo popcorn.

10. **Volunteer**
    The holidays are a great time to volunteer. There are so many options out there, with something suited to everyone.

*Article courtesy of: fastweb.com/student-life/articles/the-10-things-you-should-do-over-holiday-break*
FEWER LOWER-INCOME STUDENTS

Life is not easy when you have very little money. Poverty is not just about money. It is about all the other advantages that better-off families can give to their children.

A recent study looked at rich and poor children who had equal skills in math and reading. The study found that children of poor families who go to college have lower graduation rates than the children of families with more money.

It seems clear that money still counts. What is it about money that makes the difference?

The culture of affluence is a factor in the expectations of youngsters and parents. It is a great thing to be the first college student from a poor family. Parents and students feel pride in their success stories.

Students from poor families, however, may have to work while in college. They may be losing ground to those students with more time and resources to hone their academic skills.

GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE

The study shows that by the time financially poor students are age 25 about one out of three of those college students graduate. About two out of three of the rich students graduate by that age.

The gap between going to college and finishing college is growing larger. That is bad news. In this economy, success comes by graduating from college, not by just attending college.

One observer noted that smaller colleges nurture their students, and that students are more likely to get lost in bigger colleges.

For the complete article see: The New York Times, June 2, 2015, “For the Poor the Graduation Gap is Even Wider Than the Enrollment Gap,” by Susan Dynarski.

FROM RAY’S CUPBOARD

Chunky Cheesecake Brownies

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square baking pan.

2. Combine cream cheese with 1/4 cup sugar and 1 egg in a mixing bowl; beat until smooth. Stir 1 cup chocolate chips into the cream cheese mixture. Set aside.

3. Fill a saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Turn the heat off, and set a heatproof mixing bowl over the water. In the mixing bowl, combine butter with the remaining cup of chocolate chips; stir until just melted and blended together. Stir in the remaining 1/2 cup sugar and 2 eggs, then sift together flour, baking powder, and salt; stir into chocolate until evenly blended.

4. Pour half of the batter into the prepared baking pan. Spread the cream cheese mixture over the chocolate layer. Top with remaining chocolate mixture (this doesn’t need to completely cover the cream cheese layer). Using a knife, swirl the top chocolate layer into the cream cheese to make a marble pattern.

5. Bake in oven for 25 to 30 minutes, or until top is crinkled and edges pull away from sides of the pan. Cool thoroughly. Cut into 12 to 16 squares. Store in the refrigerator or freeze.
BIRTHDAY BOX

December

Clarence Corson, Dec. 2
Jade Fuller, Dec. 3
Corbin Murphy, Dec. 3
Emily Smith, Dec. 9
Seraiah Dobbins, Dec. 10
Colton Rickett, Dec. 11
Dallas Bates, Dec. 12
Desiree O’Malley Wright, Dec. 12

Colton Mann, Dec. 13
Dylan Ellingson, Dec. 14
Victoria Gould, Dec. 14
Anastasia Kountz, Dec. 15
Shaylena Dreiling, Dec. 17
Logan Orr, Dec. 17
Rebecca Raphial, Dec. 19
Taylor Bourquin, Dec. 23

Damon Underwood, Dec. 23
Alden Triplett, Dec. 25
Jason Robles, Dec. 28
Michaela Eveland, Dec. 29
Reagan Gustafson, Dec. 29
Anthony Ray, Dec. 29

STEPH’S FITSPOT

FESTIVE FAMILY FITNESS 2015*

SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT
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1 | Do jumping jacks to a Holiday Song. | 2 | Make a Healthy Dinner together. | 3 | Take turns doing squats. | 4 | Dance to your favorite Holiday Songs! | 5 | REST DAY. Watch a Seasonal film. |
6 | Push Up Contest! | 7 | Give something to the less fortunate. | 8 | DIp Contest! | 9 | Make a Holiday Craft. | 10 | Race (run) to a desired location. | 11 | Bundle up and go for a walk! | 12 | REST DAY. Road/Tell Holiday Stories. |
13 | Make a green smoothie. | 14 | Play a game of balloon volleyball | 15 | Sit Up Contest! | 16 | Stretch Together! | 17 | Burpee Contest! | 18 | Make hot cocoa. | 19 | REST DAY. Drive around looking at lights. |
20 | Holiday themed WordSearch! Crossword! | 21 | Make a Grinch inspired meal. | 22 | Tricep Dip Contest! | 23 | Tree Pose Contest! | 24 | Make Santa a healthy snack. | 25 | Push Up or Sit Up after every gift! | 26 | REST DAY. Snowball fight or improvised |
27 | Make a Healthy Breakfast together. | 28 | Write thank-yous for gifts, etc. | 29 | Plank Contest! | 30 | Lounge walk through the house. | 31 | Crank some music and DANCE! |

* Calendar idea courtesy of: kimzampogna/christmas-family-challenge.
GAME ON ANSWER:

Congratulations to September’s winner - Tabitha Piper.
Please stop by the GEAR UP office Room 221 to pick up your prize!

TIPS, TRICKS, AND TIDBITS

As the winter season is upon us, I hope you are having plenty of opportunities to enjoy the cold weather, hot chocolate, and the good company of friends and family. This month I would like to challenge you to get creative! Because snowmen are one of my favorite winter subjects, I challenge you to make the best snowman you can from supplies around your house, yard or locker! You can share these with us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/caspercollegegearup. To get you started I have also shared a few photo ideas from how-to-recycle.blogspot.com/2012/12/recycled-snowman-christmas-decor.html.
PARENT’S PIECE 30 TIPS TO RAISING A MIDDLE-SCHOOLER

In the next couple of newsletters, the Parents Corner will be sharing 30 tips to raising a middle-schooler, from the Family Life website by Brenda Hunter and Kristen Blair. We hope you get some great advice and ideas. Enjoy!

**Tips 1-10:**

1. **Become a student of your child.** Because early adolescence brings so many maturational changes, learn all you can about your child from his teachers, pediatrician, youth director, and other parents.

2. **Insist on respect and show respect.** Remember that love and respect fit together like a hand and glove. Give it and insist that your kids speak to others politely as well. It may be tough going, as this age can be mouthy and naturally rude. But insist anyway.

**Friendships**

3. **Use straight talk.** Talk to your child about her friendships openly. Make sure you know where she fits in. Remind her that having friends – not being popular – will make her happiest over the long haul.

4. **Speak early.** Let kids know it’s easiest to speak up quickly in defense of a friend. Good intentions fade fast as the gossip express picks up speed.

5. **Pay attention.** Look at what your child loves to do. Ask him questions about what makes him happy, and find ways for him to do these activities with other kids.

**Learning**

6. **Protect sleep.** Pediatricians indicate that children in the middle school age range need nine to nine and a half hours of sleep per night. Try to make sure your child hits this mark most of the time.

7. **Create a quiet zone.** Establish a quiet workplace without noise or other distractions so children can complete homework undisturbed.

8. **Safeguard weeknights.** Protect evening time during the week so children can be home, completing homework and studying for tests.

9. **Take time for 25.** Make sure your child has regular access to books, reading at least 25 per year.

10. **ID intelligence.** Identify what your child is good at, and give him many chances to hone skills in this area.

*Article taken from: familylife.com/articles/topics/parenting/ages-and-stages/tweens/30-tips-for-raising-middle-schoolers*

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COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

**Location:** Rock Springs, Wyoming

**Degrees:** 60+ associate degrees including education, technology and industry, social sciences, health sciences, humanities and communication, visual and performing arts, math and science, business and computing, and 26 certificate programs

**Population/Class Size:** Population of Rock Springs, 24,138. Population of students at WWCC, 2,617

**Cost of Attendance (for semester, 12-21 credits):**
- Tuition and fees: $2,400
- Books and supplies: $1,500
- Room (suite unit): $2,204
- Board (10 meal/wk plan): $1,992
- Total: $8,096

**Website:** westernwyoming.edu

**Fun Fact:** Receive $1,000 for graduating on time; ranked number 7 in the nation by Washington Monthly College Guide in September 2013; close to fun places and recreational activities including Flaming Gorge, bike trails, fishing, skiing, snowboarding, backpacking, rock climbing, Denver, Salt Lake City, Yellowstone National Park, Grand Tetons, and Jackson Hole.
GEAR UP FOCUS EVENT

GEAR UP offers FREE tutoring 3-5 p.m. Monday-Thursday on school days, or other times by appointment.

Call 307-268-2047 to set up a time.

GEAR UP is located on the Casper College campus, Strausner Hall, Room 221.

MEET THE GEAR UP STAFF

From Left to right: Anna Skimbova (GEAR UP Assistant), Stephanie Marker (Student Success Advisor), Rodney Oster (Student Success Advisor), Ray Pacheco (GEAR UP Regional Director), and Andrea Covert (Student Success Team Lead).

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GAME ON! - A JOYFUL HOLIDAY TOAST

Across
1. Jazz singer Calloway
4. Louisville Slugger
7. Perlman of “Cheers”
9. Cut, as a log
10. Blue hue
11. Kind of fall
12. Embalm in ancient Egypt
14. 30-day mo.
15. Dance in a line
19. Body
20. Prima donna problems
22. Cast-of-thousands film
23. Japanese aborigines
24. Vietnamese New Year
25. Bishopric

Down
1. Computer monitor, for short
2. Don’t forget about me
3. Steady
4. Throw up
5. Kind of game, with “keep”
6. Explosive units
8. Farmer’s calendar
9. Ornamental plant in temperate climates
13. It’s higher on the highway
15. Deal with problems
16. Leave out
17. Sponsorship
18. Exhausted with “in”
19. Put in rollers
21. “So ___ me!”

The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.