



Christmas Traditions - Part 2

Some of you may recall from my column that around this time last year, I was preparing for the trip of a lifetime to Peru over Christmas to visit our daughter. Though we had a fabulous time, spending Christmas sipping pisco sours on the beach felt a little off to me. I missed our Christmas traditions- special things our family has done every year since our kids were little, like purchasing our Christmas tree, decorating our house with wattage on par with Clark Griswold in National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, making our favorite Christmas cookies, preparing the usual menu for our Christmas feast, and hanging our stockings for Santa. These traditions help make Christmas feel like Christmas to me.

Well, this year both of our children will be home for Christmas and they are in for an extra dose of Christmas Traditions. I am making my list and checking it twice in an attempt to make this year's Christmas celebration the best ever. Each year, I envision a Norman Rockwell Christmas gathering with everyone cheerfully helping to decorate the Christmas tree, interesting conversation at a perfect dinner, and maybe a group hug or two. But the trouble with high expectations is that they often are unrealistic. For whatever reason, my type-A personality tends to rear its ugly head during the decorating of the Christmas tree each year. In past years, we've had some, shall we say...tense... moments when my children decide to taunt me by hanging the gaudiest musical ornaments front and center on our tree, or decide they want to throw the icicle garland on the tree by handfuls instead of carefully placing each strand.

This year I am trying my best to reign in my expectations of perfection and working to remember what's important. Tom and I have great, fulfilling jobs and live in a nurturing community. Our adult children love what they do and are healthy and happy. The fact that they live on the East Coast and don't make it home often will make our time together even sweeter.

Sadly, not all families in the area can look forward to a warm and cozy holiday season. Our Vital Signs report that 20% of students in our schools report they don't have enough to eat on weekends. About 20% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported feeling depressed and 6% have tried to commit suicide. MACF has given out over 300 warm coats to school aged children through the Keep Kids Warm Program. The Marshfield High School is reporting more homeless youth. Local food pantries report their shelves are very empty. But we live in a thoughtful, generous community. Our community, local decision makers, and non-profits will help find new interventions to help with these issues. Please consider supporting a local-nonprofit this holiday

season. Here's a hint if you are unsure of which non-profit to help: MACF is a tax deductible non-profit that offers personalized service, local expertise, and community leadership.

The Marshfield Area Community Foundation wishes you and your loved ones a joyful and wonderful holiday season!



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