



**Homeless for the Holidays**  
By Megan G.

While you were probably having a great time with family and friends over the holidays, approximately 750,000 people were not having fun. These men, women and children are the 35% of the U.S. population that are homeless. There are many homeless people who have to stay in shelters at times. About 56% of the homeless stay in shelters or transitional housing and about 44% live on the streets. 23 to 40% of homeless adults are veterans. About 1.5 million children are homeless each year. In Illinois, about 17,133 people are homeless every night. 70% of them live in shelters and 30% live on the streets.

The main causes of homelessness are mental illness, job loss, family disputes, and divorce. Some mental illnesses that cause homelessness are depression, post traumatic stress disorder, and physical disabilities. The rough economy has made millions of people lose their jobs and has caused some people to become homeless. Some people end up on the streets because their families do not help them with costs of taxes, mortgages, and other things. Natural disasters, like hurricanes and tornadoes, cause homelessness too.

Though it may seem hard, there are some ways to help the homeless. One way to help is to donate clothes, especially warm coats and hats in the winter. Some other ways are to donate to a food pantry, give money to a well known organization, and volunteer to work at a PADS shelter. One of the best and easiest ways is to pray for the homeless.

There are many shelters but there are still millions of homeless people. Just imagine sleeping outside on one of Illinois freezing winter nights. Its cold enough waiting outside for a ride home, just imagine being that chilled all night. We should all be thankful that we were blessed with a house for the holidays.



*These are pictures of homelessness in Chicago.*

**Happy Saving!**  
by: Catherine P.

Christmas is a crazy season. There are decorations, baking, and a ton of shopping. So how can you give great gifts without over spending?

One of the best things you can do is hit the sales. Blow out sales are a super opportunity to load up on gifts, so take advantage of them. Most stores tend to have their best discounts during the Holiday season. When most people hear "Black Friday" they think of crowded malls, parking lots stuffed with cars, and an exhausting day. But remember that even though it's the busiest shopping day of the year, shops have some of their best prices of the year. It is definitely worth getting up an extra hour earlier. I mean, stores don't open up at 4:00am for nothing!

The second thing you can do is collect coupons. Take the few seconds to clip them out the newspaper or print them off of the computer. If you have trouble remembering them, make a special compartment in your car called the "Coupon Box". That way, wherever you go, you will have your coupons with you. An employee at Party City says,

"I save during the Christmas season by collecting holiday coupons and making the sales."

Another great way to pinch your pennies is to make home-made presents. Bake a batch of sugar cookies and put them in a jam jar. Then decorate the jar with paint, stickers, or sparkles. Home-made gifts always come from the heart. Use your creativity to make the perfect holiday gift.

Use these three rules, and you are guaranteed to get a bang for your buck. Even if the economy is down, it doesn't mean that you have to be down too. Happy saving!



*This is a picture of someone really saving money!*

**Trimester Trip**  
**By Stephanie S.**

For the Junior High, at the end of each trimester, we go on a special trip if we didn't get any failing grades or a certain amount of demerits. This was our first trip for the year, so many of us were excited about it and we started to guess what it was. I interviewed many people starting with a friend, Jacey. She stated that she wanted to go to a fancy restaurant. A few days later, I interviewed Gaby, a 6th grader who wanted to go to the Museum of Science and Industry. Then, I interviewed Caylee, another 6th grader. She thought that even if it was cold, it'd be fun to go down to Navy Pier.

When it was getting closer to the Trimester Trip, the teachers told us about the trip. Before this however, Emma told me that it'd be cool if we went down to the Cave of the Mounds in Wisconsin, and Shannon wanted to go to Gurnee Mills and then go to the food court for lunch. Out of them all, she was the closest.

It was the end of the Trimester when our teacher told us what trip we would go on. Like Shannon said, we were going to Gurnee Mills, but we were going to play at the arcade, ice skate, and do laser tag at Rink Side. It ended up being a good trip, and some of us wonder what we're going to do next trimester...

*This a picture of what Rink Side has to offer: Ice Skating, Laser Tag, Arcade, and Mini Golf.*



**A Star Was Born**  
**by Jenna W.**

On March 25th, over two thousand years ago, the angel Gabriel came to Mary Magdalen and told her she would have a baby, and that his name would be Jesus. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, who was unsure about this when Mary told him. God sent an angel to Joseph in one of his dreams, to assure him that Jesus was conceived in Mary through the Holy Spirit. Joseph then understood and wanted to help Mary. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem because there was a census there. When they were there, they tried to find an inn but no one let them stay that night. Eventually they found a stable, where Mary had baby Jesus. She then wrapped him in swaddling clothing and set him in a horse's trough that acted like a manger. They were very afraid, but Lo, an angel, came upon them and told them not to be afraid. That day, a star was born, and every year on December 25th we celebrate the great birth of Christ.



*This is a picture of the Toys for Tots logo.*

**Toys for Tots Foundation**  
**Gina L.**

Now we all have heard about Toys for Tots and know that all you have to do is donate toys to kids who can't get any for Christmas, but there is so much more than that. At Toys for Tots, they have one mission and that is to give toys to children that are poor and whose parents can't afford to buy them presents for Christmas. This organization was founded by men and women in the U.S Marine Corps in 1991. Throughout the year, they hold fundraisers such as golf tournaments and bicycle races to help get more people involved in the program. The more people involved makes a better society and more children that can trust other people, become more productive, responsible, and patriotic citizens.

Toys for Tots does not only give toys to needy children, but they also give educational programs to the public. What this means is that the Marines hold an annual education campaign to tell citizens how badly we need to help people so that they can survive. They also talk about how much it means to a person who doesn't have anything, to get a gift from someone they don't even know, no matter how big or small it is. Toys for Tots has won many awards over the years. Some of the most important ones to them are Charity Navigator's Highest 4-Star Rating for Sound Fiscal Management and Average Program to Support Service Expense Ratio. I think more importantly, and closer to their hearts than awards, is helping people in need.

So, if you have been inspired by either this article or by anything or anyone else to help people in need, you can go to [toysfortots.com](http://toysfortots.com) and look for a local place to donate toys. You can also visit the website to look at more information about the organization.

Donations are down this year and your help would be greatly appreciated.



## Chef of the Holidays

**By: Kevin O.**

Around the holidays, people have a lot of traditional recipes that they prepare for their families. Sometimes, they are traditional and everyone looks forward to them each year. Other times, they are family secrets that are passed down. Whatever the case, the holidays would not be complete without special recipes. Here are some of good ones that I found.

“Christmas Wreaths” is the first. This is a recipe from my grandma. To make this you will need  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Margarine or butter, 1 package of regular marshmallows, 6 cups toasted rice cereal, green food coloring, and red cinnamon candies. First melt the margarine in a large saucepan over low heat. Then, add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat. After that, add several drops of green food coloring to hot marshmallow mixture and stir. Then, add cereal and stir until well-coated. Next, divide into portions, using buttered  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup measure. Lastly, shape into wreaths and decorate with small cinnamon candies.

For another holiday recipe I found, you will need sugar cookie dough, raspberry jam, and white chocolate. First, press a hole in the middle of the raw dough then bake. Next, fill the hole with raspberry jam. Finally, drizzle melted white chocolate over the top of the cookie.

To make the final recipe you will need small pretzel rings, chocolate, and some red and green M&Ms. The first thing you need to do is melt the chocolate. Then, put the pretzel rings on some wax paper on a cookie sheet. Next, pour the melted chocolate in the center of the pretzel rings. After that, put 1 M&M in the center. Finally, let them harden for a few hours in the refrigerator.

Tasty recipes make the holidays even more enjoyable. Even if you don't have a holiday recipe yourself, ask around! Who knows, one of your friends or family members might have a recipe that they will share with you to make your holiday season even more special. So find a recipe and make sure to have a very happy holiday season.



*Cookies such as these can make the holiday season even more delightful.*



*Here is a little New Year's spirit!*

## New Years

**By: Haley L.**

New Year's Eve is on December 31st, the final day of the year. New Year's Eve is a separate observance from the observance of New Year's Day. In modern practice, New Year's Eve is celebrated with parties and social gatherings spanning the transition of the year at midnight. Many traditions involve fireworks and other noise making objects in part of the celebration. Many people celebrating New Year's Eve often have large parties and stay awake until midnight to celebrate the transition into the new year. Most adults and children have New Year's Eve and New Year's Day off of their jobs and school.

New Year's Day is January 1st, the 1st day of the year. New Year's Day comes right after New Year's Eve on December 31st. This day is traditionally a religious feast, but since the 1900's it has become an occasion to celebrate the night of December 31st, called New Year's Eve. There are often a lot of fireworks exploding in the night sky at midnight. Some countries, like Germany for an example, permit individual people to burn fireworks, even if it is usually outlawed for the rest of the year. It is also a custom to make new Year's resolutions, which some people hope to fulfill in the coming year. The most popular resolutions in the Western world include trying to quit tobacco smoking, stop excessively drinking alcohol, to get physically fit, to loose weight, and to save money. On New Year's Day, people in certain countries gather on beaches and run into the water to celebrate the new year. These events are sometimes known as "Polar bear plunges" and are sometimes organized by groups to raise money for charities. People born on New Year's Day are commonly called New Year babies. Hospitals, such as the Dyersburg Regional Medical Center in the U.S., give out prizes to the first baby born in that hospital in the new year. These prizes are often donated by local businesses. Prizes may include various baby related items such as baby formula, baby blankets, diapers, and gift cards to stores which specialize in baby related merchandise. Overall, celebrations of New Year's are activities to learn about and participate in. New Year's is a pretty exciting holiday to celebrate!

**Christmas Carols**  
**By Annalisa A.**

This year's Christmas band concert depended all on the hard work, teamwork, and endless sheet music that the band conductor, Mr. Sobaki, somehow manages to keep together. Thanks to Mr. Sobaki and Mrs. Bosnak, each band concert is nearly perfect every time (Besides some missed notes and music sheets that sometimes falls off stands). Every band player has worked for about 2-3 months blowing or pounding on their instruments, keeping up with each other.

There are three bands, more experienced than one another. The first band, the Beginning band, mostly is formed of 4-5th graders who played Hot Cross Buns, Au Claire de la Lune, Jingle Bells, Good King Wenceslas, Donkey Round, and Dreydl, Dreydl.

The second band, the intermediate band played Our Director March, A Good King's Christmas, Up on the Housetop, First Chorale, and We Wish you a Merry Christmas.

Lastly, the last band, the Advanced Band, played Christmas Moods, Coventry Carol, Ring Christmas Bells/Carol of the Bells, and Jingle Bell Rock.

The full band concert was on December 8. The full concert first started with the 8th – 3rd graders that watched the afternoon concert at the end of the school day. Later, after school, there was another full concert for all the parents of the school.

The entire band was playing loudly, but not as loud as the percussion was playing. Each percussion player tried to be as loud as they can to regain the crowd's attention. While I, the cymbal's player, smashed the Crash Cymbals so loudly every time that I think even the people from the office could hear perfectly!

Everyone in the band and the audience had fun, mostly the band. I'm happy to say that this last concert of the year 2010 was a roaring success!



Good Job to all the bands! You did Great!



**Severe and Cold**  
**By: Will A.**

Blizzards! The first thing that comes to the adult mind is WORK, WORK, WORK. For kids, it means having fun, building a snowman, and maybe even a snowball fight. But, if it's a blizzard, then you're in trouble.

The national weather center says a blizzard is characterized by low temperatures below 20 degrees fahrenheit accompanied by winds that are at least 35 mph or greater. There must also be sufficient falling and/or blowing snow in the air that will frequently reduce visibility to 1/4 mile or less for at least 3 hours. A severe blizzard is considered to have temperatures near or below 10 degrees fahrenheit with winds exceeding 45 mph, and visibility reduced by snow to near zero.

That is what blizzards are.

**There are other types of snow storms and blizzards:**

1. Lake effect-when cold air passes over warm water. This is common in Indiana and Michigan, around Lake Michigan.
2. Ice storms-when rain reaches freezing temperatures, it changes into ice.
3. Nor'easter-Nor'easters are among winter's most ferocious storms. A nor'easter gets its name from its continuously strong northeasterly winds blowing in from the ocean ahead of the storm and over coastal areas.

**Famous area blizzards:**

Blizzards in Chicago, 1967 and 1976. I see something unique about the dates. '67 and '76 are opposite. I wonder if Mother Nature planned it that way? Just a little off topic, but each snowflake is never the same. How unique?



This is Chicago during the winter months! Brrr!

**First Step to High School**  
**Angela**

There are many steps to get into high school. The Constitution test and graduation are two of them, but another important step in high school entrance/placement is the entrance exam. The 2 main high schools that Saint Patrick's students are going to are Warren and Carmel.

The Warren Township test was on December 11th, with the MAP test. (Measure of Academic Progress.) The test was taken on a computer in individual testing rooms. It was multiple choice with 4 or 5 answers. The 2 main sections were literature, then math. About 20 students from Saint Pat's took the Warren test. The results were received at the end of the exam. The class selections were sent out on the 12th. One 8th grader recalls the test as "unnerving" because she wanted to do well and get a good score, but also can't wait for high school.

The Zion test, unlike usual placement/entrance exams, was mailed and taken at Saint Pats. Zion uses the EXPLORE exam, a test from the same company who created the ACT and SAT. The test was a fill-in-the-bubble format (like the terra nova). Four kids from St. Pats took the Zion test, and received the results with recommended classes included. Sabrina H said the test was both nerve-racking and exciting because it's a huge test and you feel a little pressure, because it's just one more step until high school.

The Carmel test was taken on January 8th, 2011. It was the first year prospecting students were permitted to use calculators on the exam. The test was taken at about 8 to 12, with a bus route to pick up all the kids from various parochial schools around Lake and surrounding counties. During the test, parents were invited to view a presentation about Carmel Catholic in the auditorium. Students were also gifted with a calculator, mint candy, and a Carmel Catholic pencil. Carmel also uses the EXPLORE exam.

Whether you're going to Carmel, Warren, Zion, St. Joe's, Grayslake, or any other high school, the entrance/placement exam is one of the first steps of the high school journey.



**Santa Claus is Coming to Town!**

**By: Izzy C**

Who checks his list and does it twice? Who knows if you're naughty or nice? That's right, Santa. Santa has been to every house this year. He gave the nice kids what they want and gave the bad kids coal or nothing.

This year Willow Smith got the most exhilarating present. It was a Droid. His brother Jaen Smith got a bunch of PS3 games which was a huge surprise. Will Smith got his whole family around. He was very happy. Jada Pinkett Smith got clothes. When she laid her eyes on it she felt excited to wear them. If you don't know who these people are they are all actors and or singers.

Santa Claus came to our house this year and left me with a zebra iPod cover that I've been longing for. He also gave my sister, Gabby, an iPod cover that was the deep blue color of the ocean. Santa also filled my brother's and cousins stocking with candy.

My cousins Alyssa didn't want anything for herself this year. So when she wrote her list, she asked to receive gifts for her adorable dog, Cuddles. Robert is her brother and he wanted so much, Santa couldn't get it all. So he got the present that he's been wanting forever since it came out. He got an Xbox 360. He was so happy that nothing in the world can get him to be sad.

The present that was mostly given out to teens this year was the 4g iPod Touch. Both my sister Gabby and my cousin Julia received the iPod. The Fisher Price Dance Star Mickey was the gift that most parents choose to give to their children. Santa Claus was very giving this year and we should all be very thankful.