



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
*A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition*  
*Supported By Centre County Drug and Alcohol*



**December 9, 2009 – Grandparenting Traditions: The Ties That Bind**

Linda Domin is a grandmother, retired kindergarten teacher, and Smart Start volunteer. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care* serving the State College Area School District.

Holiday traditions are family activities that have become customs. They are beliefs and customs that are passed from one generation to the other by word of mouth or example. Traditions bind families together.

Grandparents, through their love, support, tolerance and caring, nurture family members to be good human beings and then look beyond themselves to be good citizens. It's up to us to share our memories and customs, not just at the holidays but throughout the year, in order to give our grandchildren a stronger sense of identity which is especially important for those whose grandparents do not live nearby.

All of us have some memories of childhood times that we hold dear. One of the best ways to keep the generations close is to continue these activities so future generations will associate them with family fun. Family traditions don't have to be big, showy events. Some of the most meaningful are often the simplest. Each year around the holidays my granddaughter, Sarah, and I make a gingerbread house together. We use a kit but add our own candies and decorations. Ten years of shared fun and tasting!

The love that is shared by family members is something to celebrate. Grandparents can help their families stay closely bonded by taking time with each of their children and grandchildren, letting them know they are valued. A series of small memories when added up create a rich family tapestry.

There are many ways to do this: gathering family members for a weekend breakfast, planning a get-together for a specific week each summer, introducing grandkids to hobbies, playing a sport together, riding rides together at a fair, baking cakes together. Sharing holidays and birthdays help children feel connected. Volunteering together reinforces the bonds that you share but also the importance of giving back and establishing social values in younger family members.

Grandparents may want to pass down a treasured family heirloom such as a set of dishes, jewelry, a recipe book, or an old photograph. A treasured childhood toy can be even more meaningful when it has a family history attached. Those with sentimental value are usually the most treasured.

We grandparents are the collectors of memories and builders of family traditions. This is what we do one snapshot, one story, and one holiday at a time.

Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care*  
*Serving State College Area School District*  
Dawn Taylor, Community Mobilizer, 814-237-6191  
dtaylor105@gmail.com  
Web address: carecentreregion.org

Centre County *Communities That Care*  
*Serving the School Districts of Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and*  
*Philipsburg-Osceola*  
Elizabeth Eckley, Community Mobilizer, 814-404-9511  
centrecountyctc@yahoo.com  
Web address: centrecountyctc.org

