

## **You Don't Need (Much) Money for Fun!**

By Derreka Walton M.S.E., NCC

It is winter and here in Wisconsin, that means snow and probably sub-zero temperatures. It also means restless kids with a lot of energy and possibly irritated parents wondering what to do. Here are ten low-cost or free ideas to go out and beat cabin fever:

- Check out your local library. Many libraries have free concerts, children's programs, movie nights, and various other activities. There are a few libraries that offer classes, such as knitting, that are free or inexpensive.
- Create a movie night at home. Want to avoid paying for a movie or late fees? Many libraries offer DVD's to check out for longer than one or two days. Oftentimes, the late fee is less expensive than at a video rental store. Make sure to include popcorn or a favorite snack, turn all the lights off, get comfortable, and enjoy the show!
- Go camping. Alright, if you do not own a cabin with heat, it may be a bit cold outside for camping, so why not do it inside? Set up blankets or sleeping bags in a room that is not normally slept in, such as the living or family room. Make a special snack, tell stories, and pretend you are outside. If you are willing and have a fireplace, make s'mores or roasted hot dogs.
- Is there a concert that you want to see and can't afford? Volunteer! Contact whoever is hosting the concert and see if volunteers are needed. Oftentimes, volunteers are able to see a majority, if not all, of the concert for free in exchange for the help.
- Is there a cause the whole family is passionate about? There are many organizations that are dependent on their volunteers in order to survive. Have the whole family volunteer. Ask what opportunities are available for younger children, so they too can be involved.
- Check out what activities or events are happening at the local high school or college. The local high school play production is going to be less expensive than the professional theater. Local colleges have many events and activities that are free or low-cost for the general public.
- Go to the YMCA or someplace similar if there is not a YMCA in your neighborhood. If you are not a member, there are usually free family days or one-day passes that can be utilized.

- Check out your local museum. Many museum's have free days scattered throughout the year. Can't make it to a free day and want a low-cost or free alternative? Volunteer!
- Think your local nature center is closed for the winter? Think again! Call and find out what winter activities are available, often free or low-cost. If your nature center is closed for the winter, create your own nature center (inside or outside) and do not forget a nature hike!
- Check out the local community calendar page online or in the newspaper. The events calendar lists what events are happening and if there is a cost involved.

There are many more fun and creative ways to beat cabin fever. The main point is to go out (or stay in) and do something-- something different.

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*P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920*

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