

## *From Your Ridgecrest Counselors*

“December” can hold different meanings for people. It is the last month of the year. It is considered the first month of winter. It means holidays. For a lot of students it screams WINTER BREAK. December is a time to reflect, look back on the year that was, create moments, and look ahead at new beginnings.

Much of our time is spent going through the motions of our busy, daily lives. For many, time goes by without even realizing it. It is easy to take for granted moments that are special. The common phrase, “slow down and smell the roses” can put things into perspective. Taking the time to slow down and cherish the moments we often don’t take the time to appreciate is a wonderful way to welcome the holiday season. This is an opportunity to create time to spend with family and friends, unplug from the technological world, and organize priorities. Winter break offers the perfect chance to accomplish this.

With school in recess, take the opportunity to step back from the demands of school and work and shift focus toward other activities to keep your family engaged throughout vacation. Start the day by taking in the winter air with a family hike or walk (we recommend leaving cell phones at home – or bring one to capture a creative family photo at the top of Del Cerro Trail). Grab a group of family friends and enjoy a picnic or fly a kite at the beach or park if the sun is out. Spend the afternoon organizing, de-cluttering, or donating clothes, toys, or other items. Cook a family meal and finish the night off with an interactive game night. Ring in the New Year with a dance-off in the living room. The activity will come secondary to the company you are with. Make the most of your time spent together; those are the moments you will treasure. (For a list of additional family Winter Break activities, read last year’s Winter Break edition [here](#)).

While 2014 may be coming to an end, the school year is certainly still going strong and promises to be a great 2015. We hope you and your families enjoy a wonderful, fun, and safe Winter Break.

Happy Holidays!

*Heidi Shulman & Jesse Allen*

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