



ALPINE *Threads*

Community and Family Life in the California Alps Winter 2025

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Masthead photo courtesy of
Alpine County photographer
Todd Branscombe.



December, 21st 1:00 pm

MARKLEEVILLE COURTHOUSE STEPS

Christmas

CAROLING



Come and join us for singing Christmas carols and songs.

We don't mind how you sing; we just want happy volume! Music sheets provided.

Come snow, rain, or shine. Dress warmly. Looking forward to seeing you all!

There'll be refreshments!

For more details, please call (619) 866 5022.



Establishing Routines

Building and maintaining consistency and routine can help you and your child get through each day and week smoothly.

Routines and structure help children know what to expect, learn from their environment, and feel safe. They also help boost independence. Clear expectations and routines can also minimize the chances of a child misbehaving or acting out and prevent parents from having to repeat themselves over and over because the child will learn what to do, when to do it, and how to do it through the process of the routine.

Here are a few examples of when routines may help in your day:

1. **Have a child-friendly weekly schedule.** Make a visual, easy-to-read chart that tells your child what will happen every day. The chart can be as simple as one or two pictures a day to remind your child of what is generally happening that day. For example, if your child goes to preschool on Mondays and Wednesdays, draw a picture that represents preschool on the Monday and Wednesday boxes on the chart. Put the chart somewhere where your child can easily see it. Talk about the schedule in preparation for the day or week ahead.
2. **Make a routine for your everyday activities.** Even if you have different activities throughout the week, some of them will always be the same – like getting up in the morning, going to bed, and cleaning up. For those parts of the day, make a routine of it, or a clear expected pattern. For example, your child will wake up every morning, brush his teeth, comb his hair, get dressed, and eat breakfast. Having the same pattern of expected behavior and tasks will allow your child to learn what to do more independently.
3. **Put reminders up.** Your child's everyday routines will go much smoother if you have clear reminders of what is expected of them every time. For example, please put your child's shoes or a picture of shoes next to the door to help your child remember to put on his shoes before leaving the house. Take or draw a picture of your child at each step of brushing their teeth – putting the toothpaste on the brush, brushing their teeth, rinsing and spitting, and cleaning up. Then, put those pictures together and hang them up by the sink in the bathroom. Not only is this an effective approach, but it can also be a fun DIY activity for your kids!



QUICK TIP: Kids like to do things on their own, so let them check off what they have completed on their schedules or routine charts. When all the boxes are checked off, you can talk about everything they have done and how proud you are of them. It's a perfect moment to bond and connect – whether it's throughout the day or at bedtime.

<https://www.first5california.com/en-us/articles/establishing-routines-toddler-preschooler/>

For more information from First 5 Alpine, check out www.first5alpine.org or contact Executive Director Amy Broadhurst at 530-694-2230 ext. 224, email abroadhurst@alpinecountyca.gov, or stop by the office located on Diamond Valley Elementary School campus in the District Office (brown building).



Alpine County Public Health is now on Facebook



Like us and follow us for up to date information and tips about healthy living and emergency preparedness in beautiful Alpine County!

Staying Active in the Winter

Staying active during the winter can be challenging, with colder temperatures, slippery conditions, and fewer daylight hours. However, staying physically active is one of the best ways to improve mental and physical health.

1. **Physical Health:** Consistent physical activity helps maintain cardiovascular health, strengthen muscles, and support immune function, especially during cold and flu season.
2. **Mental Health:** Winter can bring seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and feelings of isolation. Regular exercise boosts endorphins, helping to improve mood and reduce anxiety.
3. **Energy Levels:** Exercise increases energy and combats winter fatigue, helping individuals feel more alert and engaged.
4. **Adaptability:** Engaging in different forms of exercise during winter—like indoor workouts, snow sports, or even brisk walking—can keep routines interesting and motivate individuals to stay active.

There are many ways to stay active in the winter. Here are a few ideas to help you stay active:

- **Take a walk** in nature (weather permitting)
- **Indoor Yoga:** Behavioral Health Services offers free yoga on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
- Go to the **Carson Valley Swim Center** and get a few laps in.
- Senior Soak every Thursday at Grover Hot Springs.
- Take up a **new winter activity**, such as cross-country skiing and/or snowshoeing.

Alpine Kids Ministry Family Outings

Saturday, January 11th: **Bowling** at Sierra View Lanes 12:30 - 2:30; a buffet lunch will be available.

February will be our yearly celebration of **Chinese New Year**. Date and Times to be announced. This will be a potluck.

Sunday, March 9th: The **Tahoe Knight Monsters Hockey** at Tahoe Blue Event Center game starts at 3. You need to be there around 2:00.

2025 New and Renewing Memberships are due in January. The cost is \$40 per year. Alpine Kids pays for all admission and most food on all family and young adult outings.

For more information, contact Edie Veatch at (775) 781-1416.



Alpine Kids' Ministry | Carson Valley United Methodist Church
1375 Centerville Lane, Gardnerville, NV 89410





Fall Restoration in the Upper Carson River Watershed

By Kaitlyn Garber and Bella Kurtz, Climate Resiliency Fellows with California Climate Action Corps serving at Alpine Watershed Group

Alpine Watershed Group (AWG) has had a busy fall, with our annual Creek Day community workday on September 21 and a fall planting event on October 26, led in partnership with other Forest Health Community Working Group members. Between the two events, 68 volunteers took part in watershed restoration throughout the Upper Carson River watershed. For updates on upcoming events, sign up for the Alpine Watershed Group newsletter at www.alpinewatershedgroup.org/.



This year's Creek Day was held with the help of six partners leading sites and 30 volunteers. Volunteers had smiling faces as they gathered at Markleeville Library Park for registration to select a specific project site and receive further workday instructions. There were 48 miles of land covered across five different trash cleanup sites, resulting in 66 bags of trash being removed from the landscape. Sites included Faith Valley dispersed camping area, Woodfords Canyon, and three Adopt-A-Highway segments from south of Markleeville to out through Hope Valley.



Also, in Faith Valley, volunteers reinforced three existing beaver dam analog (BDA) structures, part of American River's Faith Valley Meadow Restoration Project. Volunteers at this site added approximately 500 willow trimmings to the BDA structures, which should make them more resilient to the winter and subsequent snowmelt and high flows.

Thank you to all our Creek Day 2024 participants. We hope to see everyone again next year for Creek Day 2025! Please see the 2024 Creek Day Outcomes (www.alpinewatershedgroup.org/creek-day) for a list of sponsors and partners who helped make this event happen.

On Saturday, October 26, the Forest Health Community Working Group (FHCWG) hosted a tree planting event on US Forest Service land within the burn scar of the 2021 Tamarack Fire. The opportunity to volunteer gave community members and those affected by the fire a chance to be an active part of the reforestation process.



This marks the third event of its kind hosted by the FHCWG, and much like the others, the atmosphere was cheery and hopeful. Thanks to the hard work of the 37 volunteers who participated, 320 Jeffrey pine seedlings were planted over about two acres of the burn scar. AWG staff tagged 38 of the planted seedlings and recorded the tagged trees and planting area boundary to add to our GIS database. The FHCWG intends to use data collected on seedling survivability to contribute to the growing research on reforestation, with the hope to keep improving the process and increasing the success of seedlings planted in burned areas.

Events like this inspire us with their spirit of collaboration. We are thankful to the Sugar Pine Foundation for donating the seedlings, to the US Forest Service for their presence and collaboration, and to all the members of the FHCWG collaborative for their support. You can learn more about the Forest Health Community Working Group at www.alpinecountyca.gov/699/Forest-Health-Community-Working-Group.

You can reach Kaitlyn Garber at awg.kaitlyn@gmail.com and Bella Kurtz at awg.isabella@gmail.com. or call AWG's office at (530) 694-2327.

PHOTOS - Top right: Enthusiastic Creek Day 2024 volunteers are ready to begin the workday. (bottom) The Woodfords Canyon Great Sierra River Cleanup site group poses with their cleanup haul. **Bottom left:** A family smiles while preparing a hole for a Jeffrey pine seedling. (bottom) Tree planting volunteers and partners gather for a group photo.



Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that typically occurs during the fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. It is characterized by symptoms such as persistent sadness, fatigue, changes in sleep patterns, and difficulty concentrating. While many people may experience a mild “winter blues,” SAD is a more severe form that can significantly impact daily functioning. According to Mental Health America, “In a given year, about 5 percent of the U.S. population experiences seasonal depression.”

Individuals with SAD may experience a variety of symptoms, including:

- Low energy and fatigue
- Difficulty waking up in the morning
- Changes in appetite or weight (often increased cravings for carbohydrates)
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

These symptoms usually resolve with the arrival of spring and longer daylight hours, but for those affected, the winter months can be challenging. The exact cause of SAD is not fully understood, but several factors may contribute to its development:

1. **Light Exposure:** “Reduced sunlight in winter may disrupt circadian rhythms and affect the body’s production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to mood regulation.” (American Psychiatric Association, 2020).
2. **Melatonin Production:** “Shorter days can lead to increased melatonin production, a hormone that regulates sleep. This can potentially contribute to feelings of lethargy and depression.” (Lam, 2009).
3. **Genetic Factors:** A family history of depression or SAD may increase the risk of developing the disorder.
4. **Geographic Location:** “People living in northern latitudes, where winter days are significantly shorter, are more likely to experience SAD.” (Rosenthal et al., 1984).

Fortunately, there are effective treatments for SAD:

- Light Therapy, “exposure to bright artificial light for about 20 to 60 minutes daily can significantly alleviate symptoms.” (Terman et al., 2006). Light therapy mimics natural sunlight and can help regulate melatonin and serotonin levels.
- Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and exposure to natural light when possible can also help mitigate symptoms.
- Go for a walk for at least 10 minutes a day.
- Eat nutritious meals/snacks.
- Spend time with family and friends.



SAD is a serious condition that affects many individuals during the winter months. Awareness and understanding of its symptoms, causes, and treatment options are crucial for those who may be suffering. If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of SAD, it is important to seek professional help.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2020). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Lam, R. W. (2009). Seasonal Affective Disorder: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 117(3), 265-275.
- Rosenthal, N. E., et al. (1984). Seasonal Affective Disorder. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 41(1), 72-80.
- Rohan, K. J., et al. (2009). Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy as a Treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 115(1-2), 115-122.
- Terman, M., et al. (2006). Light Therapy for Seasonal Affective Disorder: A Review of the Evidence. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 163(5), 846-853.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD AVOID ALCOHOL-RELATED PROBLEMS?

Build trust with your child on the topic of alcohol and have ongoing conversations. It's normal to feel nervous about discussing substance use with your child, but the more you empower yourself with information, the better equipped you'll be to support your child to make positive choices.



1. Talk early and often about alcohol, its health impacts, and why it's only for adults aged 21 and over.
2. Set a good example by not binge drinking if you choose to consume.
3. Send a clear message that underage drinking is not allowed. Never provide alcohol to anyone under 21.
4. Be approachable so your child can come to you with questions.
5. Be judgment-free if your child tells you about using substances.
6. Keep conversations light by avoiding scare tactics and lectures.
7. Provide tools so your child can learn how to refuse alcohol, avoid peer pressure, and develop healthy coping mechanisms.
8. Make sure there's no alcohol at your child's social gatherings.
9. Get to know your child's friends and their parents or guardians.
10. Get involved using CDC's proven community strategies to reduce underage drinking.



WHAT ARE POTENTIAL SIGNS MY CHILD MAY BE DRINKING?

Some of these signs may be due to other challenges or struggles that require conversation and support, and some may reflect normal youth behavior. Keep an eye out for these signs, especially if you notice several at the same time, if they occur suddenly, or if some of them are extreme.

Flare-ups of temper, irritability or defensiveness, Bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination, sudden weight loss, unexplained injuries, Memory lapses, poor concentration or slurred speech, "Careless" appearance, a lack of involvement in former interests, or low energy. Poor school attendance, low grades, or disciplinary issues Switching friends and a reluctance to let you get to know new friends Finding alcohol in your child's room or backpack, smelling alcohol on their breath, breaking family rules. If you believe your child is drinking alcohol or using other substances, it's important to address the matter promptly and with care and honesty.

It's never too early or too late to start talking with your child about not drinking alcohol.

If you need resources or would like assistance from a trained counselor, please get in touch with Alpine County BHS for more assistance. 530-694-1816



**HERE'S TO A HOLIDAY
SEASON WHERE THE
ONLY SMOKE IS COMING
FROM YOUR CHIMNEY.**

**Call Alpine County
Public Health to start
your quit journey.**

530-694-2235

or text Kick It CA
Text "Quit Smoking" or
"Quit Vaping" to 66819.



Be Tobacco Free ~ Alpine County



Family Boundaries During Holidays or Year-Round!

Boundaries are limits that we set with others and ourselves. They ensure that we take care of ourselves and provide physical and emotional safety. Setting boundaries protects our mental health, encourages healthy relationships, prevents conflict, and promotes independence.

Setting boundaries is not usually a one-time occurrence; we frequently need to restate them multiple times to maintain them. Since the holidays often require giving to others and making others happy, it can be more difficult to set limits at this time of the year.

Examples of family boundaries during the holidays or year-round:

1. Communicating that you will skip, arrive late, leave early, or drive your own car to holiday gatherings.
2. Sticking to the budget.
3. Asking guests not to discuss inflammatory topics (politics, religion, asking personal relationship questions, etc.)
4. Choosing not to participate in some holiday traditions or to create your own traditions.
5. Limiting how much alcohol/food you consume.
6. Not checking work emails, taking phone calls, etc., on your days off.
7. Saying “yes” to things because you want to, not out of obligation.



How to communicate boundaries:

1. Be clear and specific to avoid misunderstandings (for example, instead of saying: “Please, call before you stop by at my house,” say: “Please, call at least two hours in advance before you stop by at my house.”)
2. Stay consistent with your behavior to reinforce boundaries.
3. Use “I” statements to avoid blaming others (for example, instead of saying: “You stress me out,” say: “I am stressed out when multiple people are talking to me at once.”)
4. Prepare for pushback and kindly yet firmly reinforce your boundary.
5. Cope with potential feelings of guilt by reminding yourself that boundaries are meant to improve family dynamics.

These tips are brought to you by Live Violence Free’s therapy team. Live Violence Free offers free therapy to people who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse.

Call 530-694-1853 to talk to a trauma-informed advocate and learn more about resources and services.



Alpine County is Hiring!

Please visit alpinecountyca.gov to view positions and to apply.



The Health and Wellness Coalition is seeking new members

The Health and Wellness Coalition’s vision is that Alpine County is a healthy community, by focusing on nutrition education, outdoor recreation and prevention. To learn more contact Alpine County Public Health at 530-694-2146



Healthy Eating, in a SNAP!

One Pot Vegetarian Stew



Serves: 8

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons Vegetable Oil
- 1 Onion Medium, chopped
- 1 Bell Pepper Green, Medium, chopped
- 3 cloves Garlic Chopped
- 14 1/2 ounces Tomatoes Canned diced
- 2 cups Corn Fresh or frozen
- 14 1/2 ounces Vegetable Broth low-sodium
- 2 teaspoons Chili Powder
- 2 teaspoons Oregano Dried
- 15 ounces Black Beans canned, drained and rinsed
- 15 ounces Red Beans canned, drained and rinsed
- 8 tablespoons Sour Cream Fat free, optional

Directions:

In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onion, bell pepper, and garlic until tender, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, corn, vegetable broth, chili powder, oregano, and beans. Stir well.

Cover and simmer until thoroughly heated, about 15 minutes. Spoon into 8 bowls. If desired, top each bowl with one tablespoon of fat free sour cream and serve with whole grain rolls.



For more recipes, borrow SNAP-Ed cookbooks from the Library and the Woodfords Indian Education Center.

ALPINE THREADS EDITORIAL BOARD

First 5 Alpine

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www.alpinecountyca.gov/523/First-5-Alpine

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PH: 530-694-2146
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The Learning Center and Local Child Care Planning Council

100 Foothill Rd.
PH: 530-694-1148

WEBSITE LINKS

www.alpinecountyca.gov/calendar
www.alpinecountyca.gov/523/First-5-Alpine
www.alpinecounty.com
www.alpinewatershedgroup.org
www.alpinebiomasscommittee.wordpress.com
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