

# Turning a New Leaf



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## When There's No Joy at The Holidays - Ways to Help



While many people are happily humming along with Christmas Carols and merrily shopping for gifts, the holidays can be an especially difficult time for some. According to New Leaf Resources' Marriage & Family Therapist Norm LeClerc, because the holidays are so closely associated with family, there are pros and cons.

"If there is estrangement, unresolved conflict or even if a family cannot gather because of distance, it can be a difficult time," LeClerc says. "It can be especially painful if it's the first holiday since the loss of a loved one or a divorce. It's difficult to feel joy because the loss is fresh and the person's absence becomes more real."

For many, something like a holiday song can bring back positive memories, but then the cold hollowness of missing a loved one creeps in. "It is the nature of grief to work through multiple layers of our knowing and being," explains LeClerc. "When we think we have finally come to terms with the loss, another pocket of awareness made accessible by the sea-

son's sights and sounds causes us to experience the sting of unyielding facts. As we allow ourselves to go through our grief, it gradually dissipates, the intense pain passes, we survive and know joy again."

For some, the holidays were never warm and joyful. Instead they were opportunities to experience disappointment, abuse, shame, neglect and/or exploitation. The loss of those who caused the pain brings a different kind of pain; a hurt that exists because there was never a loving relationship with that person. LeClerc says "accepting this cold truth frees us from the undying hope that things 'could' change. We then can invest our energies fully into relationships that are and can be genuinely loving."

In cases of divorce, where children are involved, there is an added stress of who has the children and for how long. Previous family traditions are no longer workable and the already hectic schedule suffers further fragmentation. LeClerc adds, "as frustrations, added financial limitations, inconveniences, and disappointments abound, ho, ho, ho becomes no, no No!"

LeClerc points out that with any divorce, the whole extended family is faced with uncomfortable decisions. "How do we relate to our

family member's ex? What if we see them at a social event? Is the divorce something we are free to acknowledge or will that stir up hurt feelings?"

Because women often have the responsibility of choreographing the holidays, on top of their regular responsibilities, it can be especially stressful for them. Typically, they have to be concerned about the financial piece; the shopping, cooking and wrapping; they are often the ones more in tune with the family politics and emotions as the nurturers.

"The more plates you get spinning, the more you need a routine," says LeClerc. "But the problem with routine is you get into a trance like state. You are efficient, yet disconnected with yourself, others and God. The agenda becomes the most important thing and our inner resources become depleted."

LeClerc goes on to explain that routines can be great stress reducers, but if self-care is not part of the routine, we lose sight of what's important.

"There's an old analogy of the guitar string. If there is not enough tension, the sound is off key," describes LeClerc. "But if there is too much tension, it snaps. A certain amount of tension in life is healthy. But when there are so many demands

and so little renewal, we wear out, we're tired, have no energy and we're irritable. When a song used to lift your spirits is now irritating, there is too much stress/tension happening."

There are many things you can do to reduce stress at the holidays including setting limits, scheduling time for yourself and letting go of the "picture-perfect" Christmas.

### Practical Ways to Alleviate Stress at the Holidays

1. **Limit your commitments.** There is only so much you can do in 24 hours. You might disappoint others in the process, but for good reason.
2. **Schedule time for rest and replenishment.** This is just as important as the other tasks on the "to do" list. Remember the Sabbath.
3. **Give yourself permission to not be perfect.** Perfection doesn't matter. What really matters is the time with others, not a spotless house or that the perfectly decorated tree.

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## Our Mission

**New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.**

## What's "New" at New Leaf...

**C**ongratulations to Therapist **Debi DallaCosta** and her husband **Ken** on the birth of a baby daughter, **Grace Addison**. Born into a die-hard "Cubs family," little Grace weighed 7 lbs, 2 oz and was 20 inches long.

Welcome aboard part-time administrative and billing support staff member **Kate Capuano**. With a background working in a medical office, Kate will be handling insurance benefits. In her spare time, she enjoys riding and caring for her horses,

volunteering with the pro-life movement, cooking and shopping garage sales.

Recently, New Leaf and Chicago Christian Counseling Center conducted a joint educational workshop on the topic of law in the practice of mental health services. Led by attorney Jonathan Nye, who specializes in mental health law, the topics of confidentiality, duty to warn, record keeping, responding to subpoenas and many other issues were covered.

## Student Services

New Leaf Resources provides:

- Psychological Testing for students struggling with depression, anxiety, behavioral problems, ADHD, learning disabilities, developmental disorders (Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, etc.).
- Assessment for SAT/ACT Test Accommodations.

For more information, call Angie Valente, Ph.D., HSSP (219) 226-1810

## Year-end Giving – Important Points to Remember

**A**s we close the end of another year, we are thankful the support of our donors. Your generosity allows New Leaf to make a difference in the lives of so many people. As you consider your plans for year-end giving, Barnabas Foundation has provided a few keys to ensure that your gifts are made properly and in the most tax-efficient manner.

To receive a deduction on this year's tax return for gifts of cash, be sure your gift is delivered in person or mailed in an envelope postmarked no later than Dec. 31. For gifts of other assets, be sure documents transferring the gift are also delivered and the gift is accepted by Dec. 31.

### What you can give

**Cash:** If you itemize your deductions, you can deduct cash gifts up to 50% of your adjusted gross income.

**Appreciated Assets:** If you have publicly traded stock, bonds or mutual funds that have grown in value, it may provide you with extra tax savings to give those assets rather than cash. You can receive a deduction for fair market value on assets owned over a year as well as bypassing the capital gain that would have been due if the asset had been sold. Appreciated property gifts can be deducted up to 30% of your adjusted gross income.

**Real Estate:** Real estate that has increased in value may be an excellent asset to use for charitable giving. Many people give a portion of their real estate prior to a sale. By giving a percentage of the land, they can bypass the capital gain on that portion of the property and receive a charitable deduction for the portion gifted.

**Other assets:** Assets such as vehicles, grain, collections, machinery or life insurance policies may provide tax savings for you depending on your situation.

### Matching Gift Programs

Many corporations offer matching gift programs for their employees. For every dollar given by an employee, the corporation will make a matching contribution. Check with your employer to see if your company has a matching gift program.

### Streamline your giving

If you make year-end gifts to several organizations, you may be able to streamline your giving with the help of Barnabas Foundation. You can give your appreciated assets to Barnabas Foundation, have them sell those assets and then distribute the proceeds to your favorite charities. We partner with

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## Gaining New Perspective Helps with Depression

**A** client, being treated for depression, recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has helped get a better perspective on life by challenging her way of thinking.

"I have gained a different perspective on life, on myself and others. (Therapy) has helped me to reflect and

challenge my thinking and the way I do life.

I have gone through my depression and come out the other side enjoying life even more. Do I regress? At times, but I don't stay as long nor as deep because I have tools now...the ability to question my thinking and find out what the real TRUTH is. I have learned not to be

so hard on myself. To weigh my thinking and see if it is correct. I now believe that I am valuable not because of what I do but because of who I am.

I look forward to life—the good, the bad and the ugly. I can be a better listener, show compassion and allow others to discover their own answers."



"I now believe that I am valuable not because of what I do but because of who I am."

- a New Leaf Resources client

## Great Lakes Foundation Grant



New Leaf Resources was recently awarded a grant from the Great Lakes Bank Foundation. On hand for the presentation were from left: Great Lakes Bank Vice President, Senior Banker and New Leaf Resources Treasurer Tim Eriks, New Leaf Resources Executive Director Terry Top, Great Lake Bank President Ron Shropshire and Commercial Banking Officer Mike Reagan.

**G**reat Lakes Bank Foundation recently awarded a \$6,500 grant to New Leaf Resources. The grant will be used to purchase psychological testing materials and replace a copier machine in the Lansing office. Established in 1993, the Great Lakes Bank Foundation seeks to assist the needs of small and medium not-profit organizations that

contribute to the health and educational development of children and disadvantaged people within the Bank's market area.

"We are truly grateful for the partnership with Great Lakes," said Executive Director Terry Top. "The grant will pay for needed items not included in our annual budget."



## Easy ways to Help

1. **Pray** for the work at New Leaf Resources.
2. Use **GoodSearch.com** & **GoodShop.com** - this search engine donates a .01 per search & up to 37% of every purchase to New Leaf Resources.
3. Host a **Fundraiser** for New Leaf - from garage sales to golf outings to penny wars, you, your organization or school could partner with us.
4. Be a **Corporate Sponsor** - for CARE 360° or the Celebration Banquet.
5. **Grant Writing & Research:** provide assistance with inquiries and proposal writing.
6. **Spread the word** - tell a friend, your pastor, your club members about New Leaf Resources
7. **Be our fan on Facebook** - stay connected with New Leaf and share our resources with family and friends.

For more ideas, call Terri Kasper at 708-895-7310.

## Year-end Giving

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Barnabas Foundation to assist you in giving efficiently.

### Planning for the future

Many people want to make sure that they are able to make a final gift upon their death to the charities they support. While providing for loved ones often is the highest priority in estate planning, you may also wish to remember our organization and others you support.

For information on any of these giving options, please call our office at 708-895-7310 or contact Barnabas Foundation at 888-448-3040.

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## Save a tree

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## Save the Date for Annual Banquet



### New Leaf Resources' Annual Celebration Banquet

Friday, April 30, 2010  
Villa de Bruno ~ Lynwood  
Featuring Christian Comedian  
**David Dean**  
Dinner ~ Fellowship ~ Laughter

## Special Thanks to...

**Raymond & Betty Lerrar**  
for the gift in honor of  
Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Vos'  
50th Wedding Anniversary

**For more information on honorary or memorial gifts, please contact Terri Kasper at 708-895-7310.**

## Not on Our Mailing List?

Sign up today to receive New Leaf Resources quarterly Newsletter - helpful information, informative articles and stories of hope and healing. Call (708) 895-7310 or email your request to [info@newleafresources.org](mailto:info@newleafresources.org).



 **new leaf resources**  
hope. help. healing.

### New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.