

## Beating Holiday Stress

**Christmas can be hectic. Remember you are a human being, not human doing.**

The holiday season, despite all of its chaos, offers many opportunities. Opportunities to spend time with those we love, opportunities to show others we care. Though this time of year is hectic, it does give us time. Three national holidays fall within 40 days: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. You may have planned on filling every waking moment with events, obligations, and activities, but there are three extra days available that you would otherwise not have. How will you spend your time? How will your college student be spending their time? You have an opportunity to discuss that with your child and you could utilize this time for two things: planning and sharing.

### Planning

With the cancelation of the Michigan Promise this year, we at the Counseling Center are speaking to many students who are feeling the burden of financial concerns. Money is tight everywhere and is a stressful topic. To reduce the anxiety, try to have a calm discussion with your child about money. The loss of the Michigan Promise money is a lesson about the ups and downs of the economy and how it can closely affect a person. Help your child understand how their college is paid; whether you are paying for their tuition, loans are part of the plan, a combination, or another scenario. This is an opportunity for a teachable moment. You can help them comprehend how finances work and how to navigate through this process. Come up with a plan together about how to handle sticky situations like this and anticipate how future problems can be dealt with.

### Sharing

At the Counseling Center, we find that Aquinas students are hard workers, to the point where they overwhelm themselves with activities and involvement. Give them and yourselves permission to breath during the holidays. Plan some down time. Just because your kids are home with you does not mean you have to jam pack activities. We are human beings, not human doings, though it often seems the opposite. When your child sees you giving yourself the opportunity to relax, it models for them how to care for themselves.

Also, keep in mind that not everyone has a welcoming home for the holidays. If you know that one of your kids' friends does not have people to spend the holiday with, consider inviting them to join in on your family traditions. Think of the students who live far away or may be from another country. Sharing your family is a great gift to give this holiday season.