



**GANG**ALTERNATIVE, INC.  
BUILDING CHARACTER THAT LASTS

# December 2025 NEWSLETTER



# A Gentle Guide to Keeping Our Youth Supported During the Holiday Break

Now that the holiday season is here, there is the temporary pause of school. We understand this period can introduce new challenges for our families. The shift from consistent structure to unstructured time means our youth may be spending more time at home, online, or with peers, potentially navigating environments that require extra guidance.

At GA, we witness daily how profoundly our participants thrive within the framework of routine and caring supervision. When this framework pauses, we want to empower our families with key strategies to continue the spirit of enrichment and protection we foster.

Here are a few gentle steps, inspired by the positive principles of our programs, to help your child feel safe, engaged, and grounded:

- **Establish a Predictable Rhythm:** Just as our GA programs offer structure, create a simple daily flow at home. Include time for learning, safe creative projects, and physical movement. Clear expectations and knowing which trusted adult to call are essential points of connection.
- **Prioritize Digital Wellness:** With increased screen time likely, apply the principles of our youth development work to online safety. Monitor activity, set healthy limits, and foster open dialogue about safe digital boundaries.
- **Fuel Positive Engagement:** Reduce risks by encouraging activities similar to those enjoyed in our centers, like reading challenges, family-based connection activities, or positive community projects.

Our afterschool programs are designed to provide structure, support, enrichment, and protection. During the holiday break, you as parents can reinforce many of the same principles to keep your children grounded, engaged, and safe until programs resume.



## Supporting Stability and Success in Re-Entry Services

The holiday season often brings heightened expectations around giving and receiving gifts, which can be a source of joy for many. However, for justice-involved individuals, this time of year can be particularly challenging. Emotional triggers such as grief, anxiety, and stress are often intensified, especially when combined with significant financial strain and unresolved trauma.

Specific pressures can increase the risk of returning to the justice system, as individuals may feel compelled to provide for their loved ones in ways that jeopardize their freedom and progress.

At GA, our mission is to support individuals during reentry by helping them maintain their freedom and promoting successful reintegration into the community.

We suggest finding thoughtful, low-cost ways to show love to family members to ease these burdens. Encourage honest conversations with loved ones about financial limits and the importance of staying on a stable path. Reinforce that children and family members value presence, safety, and consistency more than gifts.

We are committed to providing proactive support by identifying early warning signs, fostering open communication, and offering resources and guidance. We encourage regular check-ins and remind participants that their time, presence, and positive engagement with family are often more meaningful than material gifts.

Stay engaged with GA, use available resources, and encourage them to reach out to their case managers for guidance if they are struggling.

## Building Men of Character: The Power of Parental Leadership and Mentoring



The holiday season can intensify domestic stress. Increased financial pressure, disrupted routines, and fuller homes often cause emotions to run high. During this time, parents may notice concerning behaviors in their sons, such as disrespectful language toward women, attempts to control peers, or rigid ideas about dominance.

These are not merely "seasonal frustrations"; they are early warning signs connected to learned beliefs about gender and power.

Boys absorb what they see. Holiday stress can amplify exposure to unhealthy dynamics that normalize dominance over empathy. Without intervention, these moments reinforce toxic masculinity. This is why early, intentional action matters. Parents play a critical role by initiating calm, non-blaming conversations. They must set firm expectations that strength is shown through self-control and responsibility, not intimidation.

To address this, GA created the **Molding Male Minds (M3) Program** because violence against women and girls is preventable when boys are guided early. M3 helps boys recognize unhealthy behaviors, manage emotions, and develop respectful relationships before harmful beliefs escalate into violence. The program helps boys

recognize unhealthy behaviors, manage emotions, resist negative peer pressure, and develop respectful relationships with women and girls.

GA is currently seeking positive male role models to join the M3 Program. Men willing to challenge harmful norms and model healthy masculinity can help shape a generation committed to ending violence against women. To learn more or get involved, visit [here](#).



## **Supporting Your Child's Emotional Well-Being During the Holiday Season**

The holiday season can bring joy, but it may also create stress for children. Changes in routine, time away from school, increased family gatherings, and sensory overload can feel overwhelming. It's important for families to remember that these reactions are normal.

Through GA's **Circle of Strength** and **Circle of Strength Parenting** programs, we give practical guidance for supporting your children's emotional well-being.

For parents and caregivers, certain strategies can ease stress. Start by noticing negative thoughts and gently reframing them; for example, shifting "I can't handle this" to "I'm doing my best." Allow yourself breaks, even brief moments away from busy environments.

Validate emotions rather than dismiss them. Consistency and reassurance are especially powerful during the holidays. Caregivers may also feel pressure or stress

during the holidays. When parents regulate their own emotions, children benefit.

Practice self-care, seek support when needed, and use the same skills taught in our programs. Connect with GA's **Circle of Strength team** for additional support, resources, or information about enrolling in services.



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