

## The Gift of Time



For those of you who have read my monthly messages over the years, this month's may seem familiar. I don't usually recycle messages but this one is particularly important to me as we start another holiday season. Adapted some from December 2011, please consider the following message.

Many of us will be giving considerable time and thought to the perfect gifts for the special people in our lives. It's natural to want to show our love and appreciation for the people who mean the most to us. This year, as you consider your gifts to the young people in your life, I hope you'll give thought to providing the greatest gift of all - your time.

In this age of distractions from video games, smart phones and social media, it's easy to assume children and adolescents aren't looking for adult involvement in their lives, that they're happiest when left to pursue their own interests among their own friends. But we know that when adults take the time to connect with children around their interests, it has a powerful impact.

This holiday season, consider giving the young people in your life the gift of your time and attention. Take an interest in the books they like to read - perhaps read one with them and share a the joy of getting lost in a book. Watch a movie together and ask questions about what it is that appeals to them in the movie and why. Spend time putting a puzzle together or play a board game. However you spend your time, make sure they know they have your undivided attention and that you're interested in what they think and have to say.

When adults take an interest, young people believe they are important and that they matter. Spending time with young people helps build their confidence and self-esteem and those are gifts that last a lifetime.

I wish you and your family a wonderful and memorable holiday season.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Diane DeBacker  
Kansas Commissioner of Education