

it's Your Life... Are You Ready?



TURN DOWNTIME INTO FUN TIME!

Sure, it's winter, it's cold outside and the days are getting shorter – but there's no reason to be bored. If you're stuck inside trying to stay warm, here are a few ideas to help pass the time in a fun and cost-effective way:

- Have a favorite trilogy or movie series? Invite some friends over, pop some popcorn and host a movie marathon.
- How about a change of pace? Redecorate your room or reorganize your closet – maybe try to harmonize your environment with some feng shui.
- While you're cleaning out the closet and organizing your room, take inventory of things that you're not using anymore and think about selling them on eBay.
- Check out what's going on in the community or at school. Visit your city or town's website for a calendar of events or go support one of your high school's sports teams.
- Index and organize your music library – that should keep you busy for a month or two!
- Donate your time. It's cold outside, and there are people in need. Consider volunteering at a soup kitchen, or help shovel snow or rake leaves.



Let's Talk About Loans

As you get through high school and start to look at the next steps in life, many students will consider college or professional trade school. Getting an education or specialized training is a great step toward a comfortable and fulfilling life, but make sure to think it through. If you need some help with student loans, do yourself a favor and take it slow – know what you're getting yourself into. Here are some good tips when looking at funding your education:



- Do your homework and compare financial aid offers. A difference of just 1% can amount to thousands of dollars over the life of the loan!
- Get a part-time job and don't borrow more than you need. The less you borrow, the more that will stay in your pockets once you graduate.
- Know what you're signing. Is the loan subsidized or unsubsidized? Is your rate fixed or variable? How many months will you be paying? Again, seemingly small differences will often amount to thousands of dollars in the end.
- Beware of lower payments. It's enticing to take reduced or minimum payments, but it might mean that you're just covering interest and not even paying back the original amount you borrowed.

Some Quick Numbers on Student Debt

The most recent statistics available from the U.S. Department of Education:

- 71%: Students graduating from four-year colleges who have student loan debt.
- \$29,400: Average student loan debt for all graduating seniors with student loans.
- \$15,022: Average yearly cost for tuition, fees, and room and board at a public college.

Attention Graduating Seniors

You have a chance to win a \$500 scholarship from HarborLight CU. You can download the application online at www.harborlightcu.org. Four (4) seniors will be awarded \$500 each from a random drawing at our Annual Meeting on May 13, 2016.

Looking ahead – April is National CU Youth Month! We will celebrate for a week with fun games, giveaways and prizes! See our newsletter or visit our website for more details.

