

# SUMMER

2010

# GREAT CHOICES

**Great Choices quote of the month:**

**“Many fine things can be done in a day if you don’t always make that day tomorrow.”**

**UNKNOWN**

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## SEASON OF GROWTH

Summer - break from school, a time for fun, and yes, a time for meaningful effort! While you launch into the long days of summer, it is worth remembering that the “life clock” keeps ticking. Packed full of opportunities to gain experience, develop new skills, refine existing skills, develop interests, earn and save for the future, and be helpful to those around you (especially your family), summer is a season for growing.

**Great Choices™  
Summer Size Up**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL:

While you're working, playing and enjoying the long days of summer, don't get bitten by the “do-nothing bug!” Video games, movies, television, and hanging out can be fun, but they can also be a great way to watch your summer disappear without doing anything at all! Whether you spend your summer improving your reading speed or your free throws, commit yourself to practicing hard, improving your skill and preparing to do your best in the days ahead.

## HIGH SCHOOL:

While it's best to visit colleges when school is in session, summer offers a great opportunity to make some headway in the college search. Ask your parents to make a visit to nearby colleges, universities or technical programs or to add a school visit to your family vacation. These visits can be motivating and informative and help you discern the college characteristics that are most and least important to you.

# GREAT CHOICES

**Great Choices™**  
**Summer Size Up**  
**(continued)**

## ■ INCOMING FRESHMEN

The summer before your first year in high school is a great time to think about life beyond high school. While you are likely to change, revise, and rethink your plans in the years ahead, having an idea of where you want to go will help you begin to chart your path through high school. Take this time to think, investigate, interview and consider your goals. If you have no idea where to start, use this summer to volunteer, try a new activity, or become involved in a club or service organization.

## ■ INCOMING SOPHOMORES

Your activity record provides a snapshot of the you behind your transcript of courses and grades. Look objectively at your track record of courses, activities, and volunteerism, and be sure you are creating the picture you want others to see. Use your summer to begin to fill in any gaps in your overall record and to add important highlights to your personal portrait. More than just making you look good on paper, activities will help you develop important skills for success. Your effort to catch-up now will help you avoid having to try to cover-up later.

## ■ INCOMING JUNIORS

By next summer, the looming question, of what you are going to do after high school is going to take on a whole new tone. You will be standing on the doorstep of deadlines and decisions that will compel you to begin answering that question, and before you know it, you will be living out that answer as an independent young adult. As you enjoy your growing freedom and a break from school, think about how you want to answer the question of life beyond high school and be sure that you use your summer to help you be ready to make your dreams become a reality.



## Important SUMMER DATES!

**Test Dates:** 6/5/10 SAT, 6/12/10 ACT

**Registration Dates:** 8/6/10 for 9/11/10 ACT;  
9/10/10 for 10/9/10 SAT

## ■ INCOMING SENIORS

When school starts, you will be buried in courses, deadlines, tests and activities. Do what you can now to minimize the stress and maximize your use of time. Unfortunately, many students find that the end of the senior year forces them to step out into the abyss – a vast darkness of uncertainty. Plan now to make sure that your road beyond high school is a clearly lit path. Set up user-friendly files for college information, register for SAT and ACT tests, stay focused on your job and/or activities, and if you haven't yet done so, begin contacting the colleges and programs in which you are interested. Those schools and programs will be most helpful to you in the transition process if they know you are interested in them and are anticipating your needs.

Summer is often a time when middle and high school students find great opportunities to earn money. From periodic work, like mowing your neighbor's lawn or on-call babysitting, to regular employment, summer offers most teens a chance to turn their hard work into hard cash. Before you start making use of that first paycheck, take a few minutes to consider some of the actions you can take this summer to become MONEY SMART!

Read the following list of MONEY SMART summer activities below and choose one or more to pursue this summer!

## MONEY SMART ACTIVITIES FOR SUMMER

### Budgeting

Set a budget. Budgeting helps you manage your money in a way that keeps your expenses in line with your resources and your goals. A summer budget provides a short-term money management plan and includes estimates and actual numbers. Whether you are going off to college this fall or juggling an allowance and looking for a few odd jobs, a summer budget puts you in the financial driver's seat.

### Spending

Track your spending. If a budget seems a little overwhelming, make this the summer that you learn where your money goes. This activity lays the foundation for budgeting. Over the summer, keep track of what you spend. At the end of that time, evaluate your spending and consider how you might want to adjust your choices to better use your money.

### Banking

Open a bank account. Visit a local bank or credit union with an adult family member and open a checking or savings account or both. From making deposits, earning interest, using debit cards and checks, to managing online banking, an early real world experience supervised by a responsible adult prepares you for the banking responsibilities every young adult faces.

### Saving

Develop a savings goal. A savings goal can be the simplest activity in learning to manage your money. A savings goal can also be set in conjunction with all of the activities described above. So whether you will be budgeting, banking, or tracking your expenses or not, be sure to set a savings goal.

## THE ABCs OF BUDGETING

Money has a way of being spent faster than you expect. Many "free" activities can quickly become high cost experiences if you don't have a plan. There will be two major categories in your budget: income (the money you earn or receive from allowance, gifts, or other sources) and expenses (the way in which you spend or save your money). Your income and expenses should be less than or equal to your expenses.

## MONEY TERMS

### Savings:

Short term savings – money you set aside for expenses you may have in the next several months

Long term savings – money you set aside for those expenses that will occur over the next several years

**Fixed Expenses:** Fixed expenses are those which are not going to change from month to month or week to week. If you pay for your car insurance, clothes, or athletic fees, those costs should be divided over each budget period.

**Flexible Expenses:** Your flexible expenses are those that change depending on your choices. To begin planning for these expenses, spend one week keeping a journal of your expenses. Don't change what you do; just keep track of what you do. At the end of that time, evaluate your spending and consider how you might want to adjust your choices.

## BUDGET TIPS

- Create a monthly budget for summer. If the first or last month in your budget is only a partial month, that's okay. Simply include only the specific days and weeks for which you are planning.
- Review your budget at the end of each month, adjusting the estimates for the next month.
- Begin with a list of all amounts for income sources, fixed and flexible expenses, and savings goals.
- Use a pencil and a calculator.
- Your first budget is a learning experience. At the end of the summer, write about or discuss with an adult what you learned about money, savings, and spending.

## BUDGETING FOR THE FUTURE

As you consider the path through high school and the financial responsibilities that await you at each step along the way, discuss with your family what personal expenses you will meet and which your parents will provide. On your list of expenses to consider, be sure to include

|           |                    |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Education | Entertainment      | Music Lessons      |
| Tuition   | Movies             | Camps/ Retreats    |
| Fees      | Eating out         | Other hobbies      |
| Books     | Events             | Transportation     |
| Housing   | Activities         | Driver's Education |
| Meals     | Athletic Fees      | Car Insurance      |
| Clothing  | Athletic Equipment | Gas                |

# GREAT CHOICES

## EVERYDAY HEROES

In one horrifying moment, 16-year-old Jordan Thomas went from an active teen to the victim of a terrible accident. As he jumped into the warm Florida waters to go scuba diving with his family, Jordan was sucked into the propeller of the boat, and almost instantly, his lower legs were gone. Jordan's parents, both of whom are physicians, rushed him to shore and to the treatment that would save his life. The days ahead would be full of surgery, pain, and the long road to recovery. They were also full of discovery. Jordan spent time visiting other patients who had lost limbs, some through accidents, some through illness or genetic defect. While Jordan wrestled to find the pathway to his own future without his natural legs, he quickly realized that he was far more fortunate than many. Jordan had the benefit of a loving family that had the financial resources to ensure that he got the prosthetic devices he would need to return to an active life. Many of those that he met, were not so fortunate.

Right there, Jordan looked beyond his own struggles and decided to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than himself. From his hospital room, Jordan formed the Jordan Thomas Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing prosthetic limbs to children in need. Depending on the complexity of the limbs, effective prosthetics can cost many tens of thousands of dollars, and may need to be replaced every 12 – 18 months. The costs are rarely covered by insurance. The Jordan Thomas Foundation is changing lives. Those children that the foundation selects receive the assurance that the foundation will provide them with the prosthetics they need throughout childhood.

Jordan faced tragedy in his own life, and quickly found that his loss offered him a window into an opportunity to change his world. Each of us faces difficulties in our lives, most not nearly as devastating as Jordan's. Jordan's story reminds us that the measure of our circumstances is not in the challenges we face, but in the way that we choose to respond to those challenges.

You can learn more about Jordan's story and the Jordan Thomas Foundation at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4WwYMwKWf0>.

## INSIDE GUIDES

Can be purchased individually or as a set at [www.greatchoicesonline.com](http://www.greatchoicesonline.com).

- Choosing High School Courses
- Choosing Winning Activities
- Developing Strong Study Skills
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Standardized Testing
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