



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: J. Kip Matthews, PhD
Licensed Psychologist
(706) 613-5290
drkip@akconline.com

Amy Dietrich
Manager of Communications and Continuing Education
(404) 634-6272, ext. 208
amydietrich@gapsychology.org

TIME AND MONEY WORRIES GIVE WAY TO HOLIDAY STRESS

APA and GPA Offer Strategies to Minimize Holiday Stress

Georgia, November 12, 2013 — The holiday season can bring added stress to the many Americans who already experience high stress throughout the year. Money, in particular, can be a cause of stress, as people feel demands to purchase gifts, prepare decadent meals and spend money entertaining or traveling to visit family. The American Psychological Association's (APA) Stress in America™ survey has repeatedly found that money is a significant stressor for many Americans. In fact, 73% of people in Metro Atlanta report money as a significant source of stress. Consequently, it is important to recognize its heightened effect during the holidays.

"The holidays can be a stressful time for everyone, but there are some steps you can take to help manage your stress," Athens-based psychologist J. Kip Matthews said. "You can begin by developing a simple approach that helps you set realistic goals. Then, be sure to make time to relax and enjoy low-key celebrations with good friends and family."

APA and the Georgia Psychological Association suggest the following strategies to help manage your holiday stress:

- **Reframe.** Refocus the holiday season on spending time with loved ones by creating a realistic budget for gifts and reminding your children that the holidays aren't about expensive toys. This reframing can help you better manage your spending stress and redefine the celebration around what's truly important.
- **Volunteer.** Make the primary focal point of the holiday about helping others in need. Go to a local charity, such as a soup kitchen or a shelter, where you and your loved ones can volunteer together during the holidays and throughout the year. Helping others can put your challenges in perspective and build stronger community relationships.
- **Be active.** No matter where you live or the weather, going for a family walk will help manage your stress and perhaps start a free and fun holiday tradition. In Georgia, the weather can vary from week to week. Identify activities in which you can engage, regardless of the weather such as building a snowman or taking a walk on sunny day. Many local parks and community centers have holiday activities for the family, which can keep your family active and away from the constant temptations of fattening foods and expensive gifts that appear around the holidays.
- **Take time for yourself.** Taking care of yourself helps you to take better care of others in your life. Go for a long walk, take a needed nap, relax by reading something that interests you or listen to your favorite

music. By slowing down you may find you have a better outlook on the season and more energy to accomplish your holiday goals.

- **Seek support.** Talk about stress related to money and the holidays with your friends and family whom you trust. Getting things out in the open can help you navigate your feelings and work toward a solution. If you continue to feel overwhelmed, consider talking with a psychologist, who can help you develop strategies to better manage your stress. A psychologist has the skills and professional training to help people learn to manage stress and cope more effectively with life's problems.

For additional information on stress and lifestyle and behavior, visit www.apa.org/helpcenter, read the blog www.yourmindyourbody.org and follow @apahelpcenter on Twitter. To find out more about the Georgia Psychological Association visit www.gapsychology.org and like us on Facebook.

###

Since 1946, the Georgia Psychological Association, a 501(c)(6) organization, has been heralded as a leader in advocacy, a pacesetter for public education programming, a provider of quality continuing education opportunities and a proponent for the livelihood of psychology. Our referral network not only assists members, but provides the public-at-large the opportunity to connect with psychologists. The membership of the Association is comprised of clinical psychologists, academicians, industrial and organizational psychologists, graduate and undergraduate students across the state of Georgia.

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. APA's membership includes more than 134,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.