

Jean's Journal

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FCE Council Chair



Happy St. Pat's to all.

Spring is just around the corner and I, for one, can hardly wait. It's a beautiful time when everything starts to turn green, trees burst forth and flowers begin to pop up.

We had a good turnout and great time at our last council meeting with old and new friends. Everyone had a good lunch and it was decided at the business meeting to contribute a monetary amount to the Cedars Home's SOS program. We have so many wonderful organizations in Lincoln, it's hard to choose. But because this group

helps the homeless youth of our community, we selected them.

Remember, if anyone has a student in their midst who qualifies for our scholarship program, applications are due April 1.

Also, our program of collecting embroidery threads is due at the March council meeting, as well as any items for the cultural arts contest.

And don't forget—the *earth wellness festival* needs good volunteers March 25 and FCE has the best.

Hope you all enjoyed some shamrock cookies, irish stew or whatever is your favorite St. Pat custom.

Happy spring.

FCE leader training

The April FCE leader training program is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 1 or 7 p.m. "Don't Let Stress Get You Down" will be presented by Lorene Bartos, extension educator. Participants will examine how stress overload affects your body, mind and relationships. Stress management and strategies for reducing the effects of stress in your life will be discussed.

Non-FCE club leaders are welcome to attend this training. We ask that you call, 441-7180, to sign up so materials can be prepared. (LB)



Family Living



HOUSEHOLD HINTS



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

To clean glass cooktops, the best cleaning instructions are given in the cooktop use and care manual. Read and follow those instructions.

Glass cooktop surfaces can be scratched and can discolor, so treat them with care. Always wait until the cooktop has cooled before cleaning it. Use a cleaner formulated for ceramic glass or a paste of baking soda and water. Rinse and dry thoroughly.

Do not use abrasive sponges, scouring pads or cleansers on the surface. And, avoid cleaners that contain ammonia or bleach as they may discolor the glass cooktop. (LB)

Celebrating builds family unity

Celebrating together as a family helps build unity and strengthens the bonds among members.

Family unity and feeling part of the family are especially important in times of stress and trouble.

Celebrate together major accomplishments, successes and marker events in the lives of all family members. Examples of events to celebrate include: finishing planting or harvest, the last cow finally calved, a new job, first driver's license, good grades in school, loss of the first tooth, birthdays, anniversaries, religious ceremonies or anything else that is important to a family member. It is important to celebrate with all members of the family, not just the children.

Celebrations don't have to cost a lot of money. They can be simple little remembrances that make someone feel special.

Setting the table with candles or different dishes will make even macaroni and cheese seem special. A red plastic plate can be designated the "You Are Special Today" plate. Put it at Johnny's place when he passes a level in swimming lessons that he has struggled with. Or put it at Dad's place when he gets the combine fixed. A special note of encouragement can be added to the backpack or lunch box on days of a big test or when things seem bleak. Even a "high five" and smile when a teen shares with you a test grade or other school accomplishment is a

celebration that is appreciated by the teen.

Make a family goal to celebrate something every week with simple, inexpensive recognitions. If your family is not accustomed to celebrating you will have to work at it at first, but the more you celebrate, the more all family members will get into it and be enriched by the family recognizing their accomplishments. Remember to celebrate Mom's accomplishments as well.

Be generous with hugs and kisses and other signs of affection. All family members need love and understanding more than ever during troubled times. (LB)

Making TV work for you

If you are concerned..

About the values that your child sees portrayed on TV

- * Discuss with your child what is real and what is make-believe on TV

- * Explain to your child the values you hold about sex, alcohol and drugs

- * Ask your child to compare what is shown on the screen with the people, places and events he or she knows, has read about or studies in school.

- * Encourage your child to read newspapers, listen to the radio, talk to adults about their work and meet people from different ethnic or social backgrounds.

- * Begin a selective videotape library specifically for children.

- * Before subscribing to cable television, be aware of the variety and types of programming seen on it.

About the quality of children's programs

- * Look for programs that are designed for your child's particular age group.

- * Ask yourself what the main message is of a particular program.

- * Talk to your child's teacher or the children's librarian in the public library about their recommendations of programs.

- * Remember that a balanced "diet" of entertaining and informative television programs is like a balanced diet of food—both help your child's development.

About limiting the effects of violence

- * View TV together and discuss the violence.

- * Judge the amount of violence in the shows.

- * Explain to your child how violence on an entertainment program is "faked."

- * Watch programs with characters that cooperate, help and care for each other.

- * Read to your child rather than watch television.

About reducing the amount of TV viewing

- * Work together to keep a time chart of your child's activities

- * Set a weekly viewing limit

- * Rule out TV at certain times.

- * Make a list of alternative activities.

- * Encourage planned viewing.

- * Don't locate a television set in your child's room

- * If you watch a lot of TV, chances are your child will also

About the effects of advertising

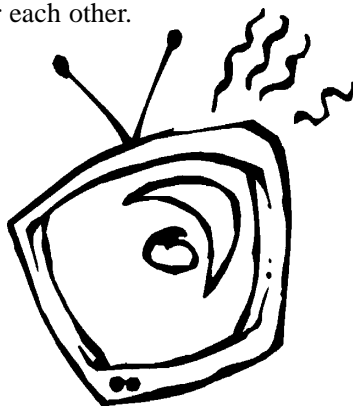
- * Talk to your child about the purpose of advertising.

- * Put advertising disclaimers into words children understand.

- * Teach your child a few facts about nutrition

- * On shopping trips, let your child see that advertising claims are often exaggerated.

Adapted from "Making Television Work for Your Family" Pat Steffans, Extension Family Life Specialist. (LJ)



Is it okay to leave my child home alone?

When to leave your child home alone is a difficult decision. Unfortunately, in many cases, family circumstances force a choice before parents have a chance to consider the issues.

First ask yourself, how mature is my child? Children vary widely in their ability to follow directions, occupy themselves, cope with unexpected situations and handle emergencies.

Second how safe is your neighborhood? Is a neighbor willing to check on the child or be available to help with problems?

After you have determined if your child is ready to stay home alone, set some ground rules. Discuss with your child: telephone rules and snacks. Discuss who is allowed in the house and if they are allowed to go outside. Review some safety rules and post important phone numbers.

Begin building your child's comfort in staying home alone by being gone for short intervals, like an errand to the neighbor. You can gradually increase the frequency and length of your absences. (LJ)

Being responsible for your kids

Being a parent is a hard job. You're tired from work and have many things to think about. But there isn't anything else in your life as important as your kids. No matter what else is happening, kids need help, encouragement and love.

Responsible parents do these things:

- * Know where their kids are and that where they are is a safe place.

- * Make sure they have enough to eat, and that their food is good for them and safe to eat.

- * Make time to talk to them and find out what they think and do.

- * Be sure they are to school on time.

- * Provide clean clothes that are in good repair.

- * Have them take baths and wash their hair.

- * Make sure they are around people who don't mistreat them.

That includes friends, relatives and others.

- * Make sure they don't get harmful things such as alcohol, lead paint, cigarettes, knives and guns.

- * Take care of them when they are sick.

- * Give them a hug and tell them you love them. (LJ)

Raising responsible kids

Today there is widespread recognition that many of our children are not learning to act responsibly while they are young. Studies show that many children see nothing wrong with cheating on tests. Some see nothing wrong in taking things that don't belong to them.

If proper attitudes and behavior are not learned early, problems can mushroom with even worse consequences when children are older. As crime has increased, teen-age offenders have shown less and less feeling for their victims. But even for the youngsters who