

Jean's Journal

Jean Wheelock
FCE Council Chair



Happy Belated Mother's Day to all the moms and I hope everyone took the time to make this a special day for a mom. Your own or someone else who you think is special. They are special people who do so much for us everyday and many times we take them for granted. I think back to the memories of my mother and grandmothers who have left me with so many wonderful and fun memories. They are all gone now, but what a lonely place our mind would be without those special memories.

I'd like to share a few memories of a FCE member

who recently passed away. Dorothy Wiechert belonged to and was a charter member of the Emerald FCE club. For 55 years she shared her talents with many, young and old alike. At our April meeting, we reminisced about our friend. The one underlying theme was her involvement with 4-H and helping her community to be a better place for families. Most of our members had known Dorothy for many years and said her influence on her own children and theirs had helped make them better equipped for their roles in life because of her interest and caring concern. What better legacy could one leave behind than this. I know her family truly missed her this mother's day, but she left them with so many beautiful memories.

Dates to remember:
June 28, 7 p.m., FCE Council Meeting
July 13, 6:30 p.m., Sizzling Summer Sampler

Sizzling Summer Sampler sponsored by FCE Council Tuesday, July 13, 6 to 9 p.m. Light supper at 6 p.m. Learnshops: Watch the June Nebline for details Plan to attend. Invite a friend. Cost: \$7 Make checks payable to: FCE Council. Send reservations to: Joy Kruse, 850 Adams, Lincoln, NE 68521 Mark your calendar today! Join the fun and fellowship. (LB)

Helping children make ethical decisions

LaDeane Jha
Extension Educator

You look younger than you are. You could save \$24 at an amusement park if you lie about your age. Would you do it?

This question was posed to about 180 middle students from various Lancaster and Saunders County schools during Leading with Character Counts! workshops this spring. Students had just participated in a lesson on the "Six Pillars of Character"; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, citizenship and fairness. They understood what is meant by honesty, having integrity and being trustworthy. Yet, in every workshop 50-100% of students indicated that they would lie. Many students didn't seem to make the connection between their knowledge of the pillars and the decisions they make.

When asked about their decision to lie, students said, "It doesn't hurt anyone if I do it."; "They charge too much money to get in."; "If you are poor, you might need your money for other things."; "I'll have more money to spend on rides or on food when I'm in the park."; "My family does it all the time at restaurants."; "If you look younger, why not?—it's a stupid rule". Sometimes students would say, "I think it may be wrong—but I'd do it anyway—everyone does it."

We followed up this question by reading a list of five possible reactions to the questions and asked them which would be good answers if you were being the best person of character you could possibly be. Results were somewhat better then but, even in this instance one-third to one-half of students still gave rationalizations about why it was okay to lie about their age.

Students were then given a decision-making model: Identify an action you are considering. Who will be affected by this action? Will your action help or hurt them? Which pillars are involved? If you did this deed... Are you treating others as you would want to be treated? How would you feel if *Sixty Minutes* did a story on your decision? Are there any laws, regulations or rules that might restrict your choices? If everyone did it, would it be a good thing?

Obviously not every decision is as clear cut as the one mentioned above, sometimes we need to make choices between two things that are right, other times two pillars may be in conflict. It often hurts us too, more than we would like to make a correct decision.

The more we work with the Character Counts! program, the

more obvious it becomes that students need to be challenged to make good decisions even when it is hard to do, even when others may not know you are doing it and when you may actually be hurt in the short term by a decision you make. We need to model making good decisions, we need to give children numerous opportunities to create options and practice making decisions based on sound traits of character. Which answer would you have chosen to the problem posed in the first paragraph?

- Yes, I need the money more than they do.
- Yes, It's unfair to make people pay more just because they're older.
- Yes, if I couldn't afford to pay the full price.
- No, it is unfair to the people who play by the rules.
- No, it is dishonest.

Prominent ethicists say lying about the child's age is unethical (because it is dishonest), unfair (because people who play by the rules are disadvantaged) and it violates fundamental notions of citizenship. A, B and C pose excuses with no moral validity. Both D and E are correct in reasoning and result.

For more information about Character Counts! call LaDeane at 441-7180.

days, June 16, 23 & 30, 7-9 p.m. each evening at the Northeast Family Center, 5903 Walker. Cost for the entire series is \$30 (includes the cost of a manual) and child care will be provided, if needed. Registration deadline is June 9. Please call LaDeane at 441-7180 for additional information and a registration form. (LJ)

Minnesota Extension and delivered by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in collaboration with St. Elizabeth's Regional Medical Center, Northeast Family Center and Lincoln/Lancaster Mediation Center. The program puts parents on the path to minimizing trauma associated with divorce for their children. A series of three 2-hour workshops will be held Wednes-

Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Removing carpet odors
Depending on the source and treatment possibilities, some carpet odors are removable, while others are not.

Treat the carpet as soon as possible, using a cleaning product recommended for carpets and rugs. The longer the source of the odor remains—particularly if it has penetrated the backing of wall-to-wall carpeting—the harder it is to remove the odor. Spilled material must be completely removed. Otherwise, the bacteria will continue to decay and produce odors. Since odors produced by mildew will recur with new mildew growth, it is important to find and eliminate the mildew source. Odors from cat waste are almost impossible to eliminate completely. Generally, the affected part of the carpet and pad will need to be replaced.

New carpets often have an odor that will disappear over time. To dispel it as quickly as possible, open the windows and keep the room well ventilated. If possible, air area rugs outdoors. (LB)

Children & Violence

Children are exposed to numerous accounts of violence against kids, such as abductions, murder and random acts of terrorism. Parents need to be aware that children may react strongly to those events and should be prepared to discuss their child's thoughts and feelings. The following are some guidelines for parents.

*Be honest about the situation. Give your children information at their own level and put it in context. Explain that even though frightening things happen to children every once in awhile, most children go about their day with no harm. Don't describe unlikely scenarios that would unnecessarily frighten your children.

*It helps to know what information your child is getting. Monitor their exposure to television reports and help explain what they see if they do watch television. Ask them what they are hearing at school and, if necessary, give them factual information to dispel rumors they are hearing from others.

*Limit the amount of exposure to violent movies, videos, or computer games. The impact of violence for children is cumulative.

*Understand that children of different ages react differently. Younger children may react by showing more separation anxiety when their parents leave them at daycare or school. Older children may present a rough exterior or act out aggressive behavior.

*Provide extra emotional

support for your children. Review safety precautions and practice routines of going to and from school with them. Teach your children that they should go to an adult that they trust if they feel threatened in any situation.

*Avoid infecting your children's lives with your own anxiety. If you are feeling overwhelmed by anxiety caused by traumatic events, take steps to deal with your own feelings before your children are affected.

*Be aware of other areas of children's lives that may make them especially vulnerable to fears regarding violence against children. Children who have experienced a traumatic incident in the past, children who are grieving a personal tragedy and children who are ill are all more susceptible to anxiety regarding other events.

*Children need personal reassurance. Tell them what you are doing to ensure their safety; tell your children what their daycare provider or teacher is doing to maintain safety; and tell children what they can do to enhance their own safety.

*Don't overdo it. Maintain normal routines for eating, sleeping and play. Keep an eye open for any signs of anxiety.

Source: Family Resource Center at Minneapolis Children's Hospital and Clinics for Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN. (LJ)

Parents Forever

Fewer than half of America's children can expect to live out their childhood with their biological parents. When parents fail to deal constructively with custody, child support, and other difficult divorce issues; the pain, for the children and parents, alike endures long after the divorce is final.

Parents Forever is a research-based curriculum developed by the University of

Minnesota Extension and delivered by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in collaboration with St. Elizabeth's Regional Medical Center, Northeast Family Center and Lincoln/Lancaster Mediation Center. The program puts parents on the path to minimizing trauma associated with divorce for their children. A series of three 2-hour workshops will be held Wednes-

Special State-wide Training For Character Counts!

When: June 16, 1999
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Where: East Campus Union, UNL
Cost: \$25 per person prior to May 15
\$35 after May 15
Presenter: Dr. Mark J. Britzman-trained at the Josephsen Institute. Call 441-7180 for a registration form.