

# Lines from Lynn

**Lynn Bush**  
FCE Council Chair

The March Family Community Education (FCE) Council meeting was cancelled because of our wonderful "Spring" snowstorm that dropped 7 plus inches of the white stuff. Of course, it was all gone two



days later!  
I hope all clubs turned their "Tune Out Violence" pledge sheets and Cultural Arts entries into the extension office.

Please discuss at your club meetings ways to bring in new members and ways to keep existing members in FCE. Also, please discuss ideas

for future council meetings. We would like to hear suggestions for programs of interest to all members. We would love to see more FCE members at our council meetings. Each club is responsible for supplying the program for one council meeting. So, get those thinking caps on and bring your wonderful suggestions to the June council meeting.

## Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Prewash soil and stain removers are effective in removing oil-based stains like animal fats, body soils, cooking oils, cosmetics and motor oils.

Liquid or aerosol products work best while they're still wet, so wash garments within a few minutes after they are applied.

Stick and gel prewash stain removers work best when left on the soiled area three to four days before washing.

Before using, check the garment care label. Be aware prewash products can cause color loss in bright or fluorescent colors.

## Making Money Decisions Count

**LaDeane Jha**  
Extension Educator

No two people spend money in exactly the same way. For instance, one person may make sacrifices to have more money for a new car. Another may spend money with little thought of future expenses. Your values exert a powerful influence on your life—especially on how you handle money. Because your values are personal, your spending will differ from others.

Setting priorities is important in developing a spending plan. In the decision-making process some

choices may not be completely satisfying to everyone. You measure the cost of something not only by its price tag, but by what you give up by that choice! With each choice you may lose the opportunity of doing something else with your money. For example, if you have the money for either a down payment on a car or a vacation and you choose the car, you might lose out on the vacation.

If you learn the decision-making process and practice it, you are on your way to making decisions and moving forward! We need to consider and think about the facts that are related to the choice we need to make. In the process we:

- Identify the goal, situation or

opportunity.

- Gather information and list choices—remember to look for alternatives.
- Examine the alternatives—what are the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Make your decision.
- Re-evaluate your choice—while we probably will not always be happy with every decision we make, we can increase our chances of satisfaction by understanding our values; setting clearly defined goals or action plans and carefully following the decision-making process. Would you make the same decision again?

## Risk and Protective Factors for Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Helping our children avoid the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and drugs is an obligation of all parents. Teens are less at risk for drug and alcohol abuse when:

- There is no history of alcoholism in the family.
- Family members disapprove of drugs.

- Family members do not drink heavily or use illegal drugs.
- The teen has a good attitude about school.
- The teen's friends do not use drugs, tobacco or alcohol.
- The teen shares thoughts and feelings with a least one family member. (LJ)

## Ask Kids: Who, What, Where, When?

People who have studied families where kids don't get in trouble have found it really makes a difference when parents keep track of where their son or daughter is and know what he or she is doing and who their friends are. Some questions parents should ask frequently are:

- Who will you be with?
- What will you be doing?
- Where will you be?
- When will you be back?

The idea is to find out who, what, where and when without giving children the third degree. For example:

Julie: You said I could go to Linda's right?

Mother: Yes, you can go. What are you and Julie going to do?

Julie: She got some babysitting money and she's going to buy a new shirt. She's going to try on some of her stuff and she wants me to help her decide what to get.

Mother: That sounds fun. What will you do after that?

Julie: Her mom let her rent a video, we'll watch that.

Mother: (looking at watch) OK. Let's see, trying on clothes and watching a video, sounds like you could be back around, mmm.4 o'clock OK?

Julie: OK, I'll be back by 4. This mother was able to find

out who, what, where and when without making her daughter think she didn't trust her. However, just because you know the answers doesn't mean your child will be where they're supposed to be. Let him or her know you will check up on them from time to time to see they're doing what they said. If you find they are where they're supposed to be, you will gradually trust them more and more. If they aren't, you will give them a penalty and give them less freedom in the future. (LJ)

*Vignette adapted from "Strengthening Families" a program of University of Iowa Cooperative Extension.*

## Character Education: It's the Law

Since 1927, state statutes have outlined an expectation for schools in Nebraska to provide instruction in character education and to give "special emphasis to common honesty, morality, courtesy, obedience to law, respect for the national flag, the United States Constitution, and the Constitution of Nebraska, respect for parents and the home, the dignity and necessity of honest labor and other lessons of steady influence which tend to promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry (Statute 79-725)." Teachers in both parochial and public

schools are to teach character in all grades. Furthermore, the statutes state, "failure to do so is a class III misdemeanor."

As community partners with our schools, it is important we support their efforts to educate children to become productive, honest, responsible citizens. Parents and other adults in public roles need to continually model the behaviors that are reflective of good character, advocate for character and teach the pillars of character at home, church, in youth groups and in sport programs. (LJ)

## Tips for Communicating with Children

When parents listen, children feel respected and loved. Four strategies can help you develop good listening skills.

**Be supportive through words and actions.** Remember not all messages are verbal. Listen with your eyes. Non-verbal communication such as a sullen face, a slammed door and a laugh are real. Be interested—express interest through words and body language.

**Set a good example.** Encourage the child to keep talking by saying things like: "uh-huh," "hmm, I see," "And what happened then?" Nod your head; look interested. Do not cut off the child before he or she is finished. Show empathy—the ability to put yourself in his or her shoes.

**Listen attentively.** Be

available. Children need to feel you're not too busy to share a joyful experience or good news. When you and your child are together, select a quiet spot and unhurried time, if possible. Give the child your undivided attention by stopping what you're doing and turning off distractions.

**Repeat key ideas by restating and clarifying.** This is called reflective listening. Help clarify and relate experiences by: a) paraphrasing: "I hear you saying you are really excited about the new TV show and you would like to watch it."; b) making connections: "Do you think your insomnia could have anything to do with upcoming exams?" c) drawing generalizations and conclusions and summarizing what has been said; d) pointing out inconsistencies:

"I hear you saying you want more freedom and yet you are also saying you want me to make these decisions for you;" and e) checking with the child to make certain you understand him or her correctly.

Remember...there are no "shoulds" in feelings. We all have strong feelings. They are neither right nor wrong; they simply are!

A child finds it difficult to talk reasonably in the heat of anger. Wait for the child to cool down. Sometimes a child will not be in the mood to share problems. An effective listener knows when to back off and say, "if you want to talk later, I'm available." (LJ)

*Building Strong Families, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension.*

## CHARACTER COUNTS! Corner

### Caring

Caring is regard for the well-being of others. Some of the components of caring are:

- Kindness
- Compassion
- Consideration
- Unselfishness
- Charity, altruism and giving

Caring is showing concern for someone or something. It is because we care we model the other five Pillars of Character—trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and citizenship. Caring people look for ways to be considerate, kind, compassionate and generous. They consider how their decisions, words and actions might affect others. They want to make life better for those around them. (AA)

