

Lines from Lynn

Lynn Bush
FCE Council Chair

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. The weather is finally acting like summer. Just a few dates to put on your calendar.

Aug. 18 and 19, FCE State Convention in Syracuse.
Sept. 22, FCE Council Meeting hosted by Emerald and

Home Service Clubs.
Oct. 20, FCE Achievement Night hosted by Busy Bees and Helpful Homemakers Clubs.

Reorganizational materials will be ready in late August for the 2004 club year.

While you're gardening, vacationing or just trying to stay cool, think about ways to involve more people in the FCE program.



Troy Stauffer, a student nurse, received the 2003 Lancaster County FCE scholarship.



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Stay Cool This Summer While Saving Energy

Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be. If you use an air conditioner, don't set your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn it on. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense. If you're shopping for an air conditioner, look for the Energy Star and EnergyGuide labels. (LB)

FAMILY COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) NEWS

FCE Leader Training Date Change

The FCE and community leader training, "The 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)" originally scheduled for Sept. 23 has been **rescheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 30** at 1 p.m. (LB)

When Times are Tough: Do We Need to Make Things Worse With a Poor Attitude?

Things are difficult today for many families, whether urban or rural, and yet many families are doing OK. What makes the difference between families who are hardly functioning and others who seem to thrive? Well there are no easy answers to explain human behavior because it is so complex. However, what we do know is 'attitude' is often the key to whether a person will survive and thrive.

What is your general attitude towards your life? Are you basically happy and content with who you are? Are you happy with your work, your home and your relationships? Do you believe you have control over many things in your life? Do you

believe you can change some things to make life better? Do you have hope for the future?

Attitude, your manner or disposition, is a critical factor in determining how you perceive things that happen to you during your day, your week and ultimately your life. It isn't that we must be 'happy-go-lucky' all the time, nor live as though we have no cares, because it simply isn't practical. With economic hardships, drought conditions and war in the middle east, families are experiencing difficult times. These difficult times are not to be ignored because they are a reality. But it is how we deal with our reality that makes a difference to how we handle life.

Take a few moments to do

an attitude check on yourself. It may be you need to make some changes. Are you taking care of yourself? Are you taking care of your intimate partner relationship? Are you nurturing relationships with family and friends you love? Are you around other people who are a positive influence on you? Do you need to see a professional counselor who can help you work through some things hurting you and affecting your attitude toward life?

You are your own best asset. Take care of yourself and your attitude!

Source: Kathy Bosch, Extension Specialist, Family Life Education (LB)

Put Laughter and Humor in Your Life

Laughter is very powerful medicine. It can lower stress, dissolve anger and unite families in their resolve to overcome troubled times.

The Benefits of Laughter

Everyone enjoys a good hearty laugh. It makes us feel good, and that good feeling can stay with us even after the laughter subsides. Laughter helps us see small things are not the earth-shaking events they sometimes seem to be. It enables us to look at a problem from a different point of view, make it seem less serious and realize opportunities for increased objectivity and insight.

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. It binds us together, lightens our burdens and helps us keep things in perspective. Our work, marriage and family all need humor, celebrations, play and ritual as much as record-keeping

and problem-solving. We should ask the questions, "Do we laugh together?" as well as, "Can we get through this hardship together?" Laughter can help us see the *silver lining* instead of just storm clouds.

Humor unites us, especially when we laugh together. One of the things that divides humans is the energy we put into coping with life's problems or concentrating on each other's limitations. Our friends and neighbors are not perfect, and neither is our marriage or family life. When we laugh together, it can bind us closer together instead of putting us in opposite camps.

Laughter heals. Laughter activates the chemistry of the will to live and increases our capacity to fight disease. The chest expands when laughing, respiration increases and forces exhausted air from the lungs. Laughing relaxes the body and problems associated with high blood pressure, strokes, arthritis,

ulcers and heart disease are sometimes, reduced.

Here's how can you add laughter and humor to your everyday life:

- Hang around funny friends, or better yet, marry a funny partner.
- Start looking for the absurd, silly, incongruous activities that go on around you each day.
- Take a 5-10 minute humor break each day. Read jokes, add to a humor notebook, listen to a funny tape.
- Rent comedy videos, go to a funny movie, watch humorous programs on television.
- If you hear a joke you really like, write it down, or tell it to someone else to help you remember it.

Try to remember that even in the most difficult of times, a laugh, or even simply a smile, can go a long way in helping you feel better. Laughs and smiles are enjoyed best when shared with others. To laugh or not to laugh is your choice. (LB)

Parenting in Public

Summertime finds families at the swimming pool, ball games, county fair and other public activities. This is a time when parenting can be stressful. How do you handle a child who doesn't want to listen or misbehaves? What are other people going to say about the way you deal with a difficult situation?

Parents can set standards in the home for disciplining a misbehaving child, but these standards often are forgotten when the child is disruptive in public.

Dealing with a complaining child is difficult for parents when in the public eye, because they feel others are watching and judging their parental skills.

Parents want to solve the disruption as quickly as possible, but don't want to be inconsistent with family rules. This can lead parents to be overly angry or overly compliant with the child.

Children often act up because they are tired or are doing something they don't want to do and don't know how to behave rationally in public settings.

Being too punitive can be perceived by those watching as both physically and emotionally abusive to the child. Often, the more upset the parent gets, the more disruptive the child gets.

However, if parents constantly give in, children learn

they can have their way if they make a big enough fuss.

To ease this dilemma, parents must have rules for children and stick to them. But they also must pick their battles carefully. Too many rules and too many demands make life for parents and children difficult.

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Maintaining a positive attitude is important because, in general, when the parent's happy, the child's happy.

Your summer activities can be enjoyed by both parents and children if there is an understanding of expectations and the consequences if those expectations are not met.

Adapted from article by John DeFrain, Ph.D., family and community development specialist, NU/LANR (LB)

CHARACTER COUNTS! CORNER

A Person of Character...

- Is a good person, someone to look up to and admire.
- Knows the difference between right and wrong and always tries to do what is right.
- Sets a good example for everyone.
- Makes the world a better place.
- Lives according to the "Six Pillars of Character":

Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.
(LB)

