

FAMILY COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

President's Notes — Janet's Jargon

Janet Broer
2004 FCE Council Chair

Greetings FCE members and families. January plunged us into the cold. I'm glad the calendar makers gave us February 14 for a sweet little break from winter monotony. And chocolate immediately comes to mind as a way to mark the special day.

Hot chocolate is one of my favorite comfort foods; it can be shared with young and old alike and often sets the



mood for warm idea exchanges. This year I plan to package some in an attractive container and visit a special person whose life has crossed mine. Each of us has some of those very unique and wonderful people in our lives who always make us feel happier for being alive.

I've included the recipe for hot chocolate to get you started if you would like to do the same.

Hot Chocolate Mix
8 quart Carnation instant milk
1½ cups Coffeemate

1 (15 ounce) can Nestle's Quick
2 cups sifted powdered sugar

Mix all the ingredients well. Store in an airtight container. For serving, fill cup, glass, etc. half full and finish filling with hot water. A couple of good cookies could be an added bonus!

I hope this idea is a beginning for each of you to enjoy a special time with a relative, friend or grandchild. How often the best present is simply your presence.

Happy Valentine's Day.

FCE News & Events

Council Meeting
Jan. 26

The first 2004 Council meeting will be Monday, Jan. 26, 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Each person will be making a greeting card with Iris Paper Folding presented by Margie Smith. Two dollars will be collected to cover the cost of materials. Please bring scissors and a small cutting board (for taping strips too). Call Pam at 441-7180 to register. (LB)

February Leader
Training —
"Don't Be A Victim"

The February FCE & Community Leader Training Lesson will be presented

Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 1 p.m. "Don't be a Victim" will be given by Lorene Bartos, extension educator.

Identity theft and fraud has become a major concern. This lesson will cover how it can occur; what you can do about it; and how to guard your privacy. You will learn:

- What, when and why personal information should be given and to whom.
- To recognize the warning signs of fraud.
- How to protect yourself from these "crafty" thieves.

Non-FCE members should call Pam at 441-7180 to register so materials can be prepared.

March Leader
Training Lesson

"Fit and Healthy Kids," the

March leader training lesson will be presented, Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 1 p.m. Lorene Bartos, extension educator, will give the lesson.

In the last 20 years the proportion of overweight children between the ages of 6 and 19 has tripled to nearly one of every three kids. The goal of this program is to understand the values of healthy food choices and physical activities for children. This program will help explore ways parents, caregivers and communities can help children become healthy and fit.

Non-FCE members should call Pam at 441-7180 to register so materials can be prepared. (LB)

Ease Parenting During Teen Years With
Communication, Involvement

Teen years can be stressful for parents and children. However, this is an important time for teens as they develop into adults. Although parents need to be in control, many feel their teens control them. Communication, understanding and involvement are key in coping during teen years.

Part of growing up is learning to make decisions. Often, as children enter adolescence, they begin to push parents away. Although teens need to do some things for themselves, they still need their parents. It's important to provide support and guidance without being overbearing.

When conflicts arise, it's important to practice respect. Children are expected to respect their parents, but parents need to remember to respect their children. Teens often are faced with dangers such as drugs and alcohol. Respect and guidance are important in helping children learn to resist these pressures.

At the same time, it's important to set limits and provide structure. Set reasonable rules and be specific so teens

understand what constitutes rule-breaking. If possible, set rules and talk about consequences ahead of time. This is important in maintaining the teen's respect for his or her parents.

Many parents communicate with teens for an average of only 30 seconds a day. The rest is giving orders.

When rules are broken, discipline should teach teens what they should do differently next time — not just punish them for what they did wrong. Be reasonable according to the offense and the difficulty in enforcing the discipline. For example, it may not be a good idea to ground a teen for a month since this takes extensive effort to enforce. Parents may need to take time to think through a situation to determine appropriate discipline.

It's also important to talk to children instead of just ordering

them to complete homework, chores or other tasks. Many parents communicate with teens for an average of only 30 seconds a day. The rest is giving orders. In developing dialogue, ask questions that allow teens to elaborate on their responses not just give yes or no answers. Parents can express their concerns by using statements with "I" instead of "you," such as "I'm concerned" or "I'm happy." Saying things such as "You make me so mad" only puts more pressure on teens and builds resentment.

Parents also should try to be involved and interested in their children's activities. When children are young, parents often are very involved, but participation can drop off during teen years. Teens may tell parents it's not necessary to attend their activities, but they also need to know their parents care. Little things, like making eye contact at events or going to parent-teacher conferences, help teens realize their parents really care. Remember, teens still need hugs and love, even when they don't seem very lovable. (LB)



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Keep Heating & Cooling Costs Under Control

Heating and cooling your home typically accounts for about 44 percent of your utility bill. What's more, U.S. heating and cooling systems emit more than half a billion tons of carbon dioxide each year, contributing to global warming, and they generate large amounts of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, chief ingredients of acid rain. You can significantly cut energy costs and use by setting your thermostat low in the winter and high in the summer, but it's also important to maintain your heating and cooling systems. Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as needed, and clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators periodically, making sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes. Also, use kitchen and bathroom fans wisely; in just one hour, these fans can pull out a houseful of warmed or cooled air.

Sharing Meals Important
to Building Family Unity

Family meals can be difficult to squeeze into busy days, but their importance for building strong families is crucial.

Most families are caught in a time crunch between jobs, school, chores, homework, sports, music lessons or other commitments. This doesn't leave much time for family meals. Research shows families are more emotionally healthy when they spend time together and there's no better time to talk and enjoy each other's company than dinner time. Family meals also can build strong family traditions, improve nutrition and reduce stress. If families aren't used to eating together nightly, start slow with one meal together a week. Find out what works for an individual family and go from there.

It's important to make the most of family meal time. Don't concentrate too much on what kinds of food are prepared but how they are served. For example, a meal doesn't have to be hot to be healthy. A simple meal of sandwiches and salad served with love and laughter is just as healthy as something cooked on the stove for hours. For more information on putting together healthy meals in a hurry, visit UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County's "Cook it Quick" Web site at

lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.htm.

Just because a meal is prepared quickly doesn't mean it needs to be eaten quickly. Meal time is a great chance for families to catch up and share daily events. If families have trouble creating conversation they could create topics such as describing a different time and place each family member would like to live, picking a famous person who they'd most like to spend a day with or describing how they'd spend \$1,000.

If there are problems with too many people talking at once, use a talking stick or other special item that gets passed around the table. Only the person holding the item is allowed to talk. Avoid distractions during meal time by ignoring the phone and turning off the television. If there's a show that a family member wants to watch, tape it for later viewing.

Young children can be difficult at meal times, but allowing them to choose from a variety of healthy foods can help develop positive eating habits and attitudes while making meal time more enjoyable. Younger children tend to tune in more to meals they help cook so try letting them do simple cooking tasks during meal preparation. (LB)

CHARACTER COUNTS! CORNER

A Caring Person Is

- Compassionate and empathetic.
- Kind, loving and considerate.
- Thankful and expresses gratitude.
- Forgiving of others.

Caring means more than a concern for the well-being of others. It is a form of passion that generates commitment and conviction that allows us to endure, persevere and persist until we overcome whatever obstacles may be in our way. (LB)

