

## FAMILY &amp; COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

## President's Notes — Janet's Jargon

**Janet Broer**  
FCE Council Chair

Is your New Year's resolution history by now? I am trying something different — a resolution for each month of 2005. First on the calendar I decided to do chocolate eclairs (from scratch and made with real whipping cream) for Erich's late January birthday. Thank goodness I still have a couple of weeks left to accomplish this task. For February, a day trip is planned to visit an elderly relative. In March, I will try to find a good clean old classic movie for an evening's entertainment —



maybe the 1952 John Wayne "A Quiet Man." April, I'll try to add 20 minutes exercise time to my weekly total—wouldn't want to try this before the weather gets a little nicer! By then you should check with me to see if I am still on track. As you can see, I haven't been overly tough on myself!

Our first Council meeting will be Jan. 24, 12:30 p.m. at Stauffer's Café and Pie Shoppe. This is open to the public and any members may attend, but I particularly think all club presidents should try to come. Yearbooks need to be picked up

and materials for Creative Writing and Environmental Poster contests need to be distributed. Pledge sheets for Tune Out Violence will also be available. All of these need to be turned in at the March 28 Council meeting.

It is not too soon for the Scholarship Committee to get applications out. An April 1 deadline has

been set for applications to be judged. It is definitely a busy time of year for FCE projects.

I hope this finds each of you warm and well during our winter weather.



## FCE News &amp; Events

## January Council Meeting Jan. 24

The first 2005 FCE Council meeting will be Monday, January 24 starting at 12:30 p.m. with lunch at Stauffer's Café & Pie Shoppe. After lunch we will have our business meeting and then journey to Lowery Organ Center, 5930 South 58 Street for a concert/demonstration and dessert. All FCE

members are invited to attend. Call Pam at 441-7180 to register by Friday, Jan. 21. (LB)

## February Leader Training Jan. 25

The February FCE & Community Lesson will be presented Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 1 p.m. "One of Rural America's Greatest Challenges" will be presented by Lorene Bartos and a guest speaker.

The drug epidemic, espe-

cially methamphetamine, is a great challenge. Everyone needs to be more aware of the magnitude of the problem and how it relates to public safety and rural economic development. This lesson will help individuals and communities with simple strategies to help combat this growing problem.

Non-FCE members should call Pam at 441-7180 to register. (LB)

## What Has Happened to Family Time?

Does it seem you have no time for family time any more? If so, research will confirm those thoughts. A national study completed six years ago found children had a 12-hour per week DECLINE in the free time they had, their play time had DECREASED by three hours per week and unstructured outdoor activities FELL by 50 percent.

In addition, household conversations dropped by 100 percent between 1981 and 1997. Children spent only 45 minutes per week in conversation with anyone in the family. Family dinners saw a 33 percent decrease; there was a 28 percent decrease in families taking a vacation; and religious participation declined 40 percent in hours per week for children ages 3 to 12 and 24

percent for high school students with weekly religious attendance.

Where is the time going? It is no surprise many of the hours are going to sports. Structured sports has more than doubled. Passive, spectator sports has increased five times. (This includes time children watch their siblings play structured sports.) Studying has also increased by nearly 50 percent.

What is the concern? Several national studies have found regular family meals were the strongest predictor of academic success, avoidance of undesirable behavior and better nutrition than any other factor. Teens have even identified not having enough time with their parents as a top concern.

What does this mean for you? Where are you spending your family time? On a bleacher watching someone play ball? Eating meals together? Talking together? Attending religious activities together? Taking a vacation together?

This week, take time to assess what your family priorities are. How are you spending your time? Are your children in too many extracurricular activities? Do you eat meals together, at least once a day? It may be time to say "no" to some good things in order to enjoy the "best" with your family time together.

Source: "Overscheduled Kids, Underconnected Families: the Research Evidence" by William J. Doherty, PhD., University of Minnesota. Written by Jeanette Friesen, UN Extension Educator. (LB)

## Caring Activities for Families

Involve all family members in activities that teach caring. Remember, friends and family by doing a special "caring" activity during February.

- Having pets is an excellent way to teach both caring and responsibility.
- Have children make a list of people they care about and people who care about them. List ways these people show they care about each other.
- Have children list caring behaviors they observe and send thank you letters.

- Have children list caring things they can do for their families, friends and/or classmates. Compile these into a "Caring Coupon Book," add a colorful cover and give as presents.
- Make up "caring prescriptions" for those who are sad, lonely, ill, hungry, cold, frightened, etc.
- Create weekly calendars, listing caring things to do in the home, school, community and environment. Give stars or some other agreed upon

reward to accomplishing the set goals.

- Let children help sort through their unused toys and clothes they have outgrown. Include them in deciding which charity to give them to.
- Play a game of "Caring Charades" showing caring behaviors.
- Create puppet shows illustrating the difference between caring and uncaring behavior.
- Have children collect food for the homeless or clothing for victims of fires, floods, etc.



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

## Beat Bathroom Clutter

1. **CLEAR THE CLUTTER** — Empty the medicine chest and clear off countertops. Throw away items that are no longer needed.
2. **ZAP DIRT** — Clean medicine chest and countertops with an all-purpose cleaner. Then, clean and replace only those items that you use every day.
3. **CLEAN EASY** — Use flushable bathroom wipes to clean sinks, faucets, basins, toilet rims and tanks. They're safe for plumbing and septic tanks.
4. **MIRROR ON THE WALL** — Spray a small amount of glass cleaner on the mirror. Wipe until it's completely dry to avoid streaks.
5. **SPRAY IT ON** — Spray the bathtub, tile and shower walls and doors with an all-purpose cleaner. Then, wipe clean.
6. **BRUSH & FLUSH** — Clean stains in the toilet bowl with the drop of a tablet or squirt of a gel. These new forms of toilet bowl cleaners keep your toilet clean and fresh!
7. **STOP & MOP** — An all-in-one mopping unit is a rinse-free way to remove dirt from floors. The disposable, electrostatic cloths contain a cleaning solution that dissolves soils.

## Tips for Helping Your Child Learn Math

Parents can help children develop confidence in their math abilities by helping them to understand the following concepts:

## Problems can be solved in different ways.

Learning math is more than finding the correct answer; it's also a process of solving problems and applying what you've learned to new problems.

## Wrong answers can sometimes be useful.

Ask your child to explain how they solved a math problem. Their explanation might help you to discover if they need help with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division or with the concepts involved in solving the problem.

## Don't be afraid to take risks.

Give your child time to explore different approaches to solving a difficult problem. As they work, encourage them to talk about what they are

thinking. This will help them to strengthen math skills and to become an independent thinker and problem solver.

## Being able to do mental math is important.

Do math "in your head" (mental math) is a valuable skill that comes in handy as we make quick calculations of costs in stores, restaurants or gas stations. Let your child know that by using mental math, their math skills will become stronger.

## It's sometimes OK to use a calculator to solve mathematics problems.

Let your child know that to use calculators correctly and efficiently, they will need a strong grounding in math operations; otherwise, how will they know whether the answer they see displayed is reasonable.

Source: Adapted from Helping Your Child Learn Mathematics, U.S. Department of Education, 2004. (LB)

## The Heart of the Matter: Healthy Relationships

February is a good month to give the heart of your relationships a check-up. There are many healthy characteristics in a loving relationship: You have the right to:

- ♥ be treated with respect, kindness and trust.
- ♥ be accepted as you are, and appreciated, encouraged and loved.
- ♥ feel all of your feelings.
- ♥ think freely and to voice thoughts and opinions.
- ♥ be listened to, with attention, caring and openness.
- ♥ say no, to disagree, to change your mind, to be confused.
- ♥ make mistakes, to be forgiven, to make fresh starts.
- ♥ face problems, resolve conflict, to learn and to grow.
- ♥ quiet time, privacy, friends and activities of your own.
- ♥ trust your inner sense of what is best, to make your own decisions and to have and follow your dreams.
- ♥ warmth and affection.
- ♥ be playful, enthusiastic, creative, childlike and joyful.

Source: Sam Quick, Ph.D., University of Kentucky (LB)