

AAA to help child-proof Farmington YMCA

A unique public service project designed to protect young-sters from injury at metro-area non-profit day care centers will start with work undertaken by AAA Michigan employee volunteers from 8 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Farmington Family YMCA.

Nearly two-dozen volunteers from AAA Michigan's Dearborn administrative headquarters and its Farmington branch will spend the morning child-proofing the YMCA's day care facility. This is a first of a number of projects to help safeguard children at nonprofit, area day care centers. The program, directed primarily at protecting day care facilities from weather related disasters, also provides a safer environment for children in general, according to Jerry Fisher, senior consultant in underwriting at AAA Michigan, who is heading the project.

The work is part of a program developed by the Institute for Safety and Home Safety titled *Protecting Our Kids from Disasters*, and has been introduced across the nation to make day care centers safer for children. The Institute's Board of Governors is chaired by AAA Michigan Vice President and Chief Underwriting Officer Larry Lange.

Safety improvements to be made at the Farmington Family Y include covering fluorescent tubes with plastic sleeves to protect children in the event of breakage and anchoring bookcases, appliances, bulletin boards, pictures, etc. to walls to prevent them from falling and hurting children.

In addition, the team will put edging on shelves so books and other items can't easily slide off, install child-proof latches on cabinet doors and drawers, and secure items like computers and printers to prevent them from falling off counters and tables. Other non-profit day care centers will be included in future projects, Fisher said.

RELIGION CALENDAR

If you want to submit an item for the religion calendar, fax it to (248) 477-9722 or write: Religion Calendar, Farmington Observer, 3341 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335. The deadline for an announcement to appear in the Thursday edition is noon Monday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Christian/Atheist Debate
Farmington Hills Church of God at 2577 Power Road will host a live satellite simulcast at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8. *The Great Debate: Atheism vs. Christianity*, a discussion between a Christian and the atheist who chose to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Michael Newdow, who filed the controversial lawsuit over the pledge, will face off against Christian author and speaker Cliff Knechtle. For more information, call (248) 477-9144.

Live Christmas Scenes
Members of Orchard United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills will portray scenes from the Christmas story along the outer edges of the church parking lot 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16. All are welcome to drive the road to Bethlehem and experience the Christmas story with music, performances, and live animals. Call (248) 626-3222.

Christmas at Mardia Park
Hardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills presents Christmas at Hardin Park Concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8. Call (248) 476-8860. The ten choirs of Hardin Park will perform new and traditional holiday music along with bell ringers and dancers. Tickets are \$5. The church is located at 2987 W. 11 Mile. Call (248) 476-8860.

OKING

Widow/Widower Support
New Hope Center for Grief Support, a Christian-based bereavement outreach center, offers support for widows and widowers with children on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The group meets at 7 p.m. at St. Kenneth's Parish offices, 1495 Haggerty, Plymouth. New Hope for Kids meets at the same time and place and is aimed at ages 4-11. (248) 348-0115.

Aglow
Aglow International, a communityighthouse for women, meets for dinner and discussion at 6 p.m. the second Monday of each month at Best Western Executive Hotel, 31525 W. 12 Mile in Farmington. For information or reservations, call (248) 476-1033.

Parents can help kids stay successful

Kids want instant success. The effort it takes to accomplish big tasks can be overwhelming. Does the idea of memorizing a poem, cleaning a messy room, or learning to ice skate, lead to frustration and tears? What can a parent do to help kids persist when success seems far away?

With a few specific skills, kids can take small action steps toward big accomplishments. Big accomplishments require persistent effort over time. You get to help kids stay on course, by breaking large tasks into a series of short-term actions.

MUSIC LESSONS

It was the first day of band practice. Steven held his new alto saxophone. He blew into the instrument expecting to hear beautiful music. Instead, he produced shrill squeaks. Disappointed, he said, "I can't do it." His spirits raised when the teacher said, "Today, if you make any sound at all, you have succeeded."

By focusing on short-term actions, Steven began feeling successful. First, he learned to blow through the mouthpiece. Success. Next, he learned how to position his fingers. Success. Soon after, he was reading notes. Success. Over time, he could perform a song. As the saying goes, "Yard by yard it's hard, but inch by inch it's a cinch."

TIME AND EFFORT

What does it take to learn something new? Time and effort.

"Effort" is a word parents often overuse. Kids cringe when they hear, "You need to put in more effort." Action, is a more kid-friendly word. You have to "put in" effort. Action heroes save the day.

At first, it seems impossible to learn to fold origami animals, flip over the balance beam, or climb over tables. When kids take short-term actions toward big goals, the inconceivable becomes achievable.

Let's say, your daughter wants to get a good grade on her book report. Encourage her to break down the large task into a series of short-term actions. She will need to read her book, write her report, and draw illustrations. Take out a

calendar and let her decide when she will accomplish each short-term action. Each day, inch by inch, she gets to feel successful, as she takes her action steps.

What happens when her book report is complete? Praising only on the end result, ignores the actions that caused success. Go ahead and say, "Congratulations, You finished it!" Then, describe the actions she took to achieve her success.

You took the time to read your book. You followed your schedule and wrote a complete summary of the book, including your opinions, and added three colorful illustrations. You must be so proud of yourself!

Focusing on the path toward success, empowers kids to set goals for future accomplishments.

OVERCOMING FEAR

Five-year-old, Shannon, wants to take ballet with her best friend. When its time to sign up for classes, she changes her mind. What stops her? Shannon is afraid.

It's risky to take on something new. A series of what-ifs goes on in her head. What if the other kids are better than me? What if I make a mistake? What if I don't know what to do? Fear of failing stops kids

from taking actions to achieve their goals.

Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly, at first. Your encouragement as they fumble the ball or miscalculate long division, helps shift the focus from failing to finding solutions. The world does not come to an end when we make mistakes.

Kids who see mistakes as learning opportunities, are more likely to reach their goals. Kids need to know that their self-worth is not dependent on their accomplishments. If they misunderstand this fundamental truth, they are headed for trouble. Everybody fails, makes mistakes, and faces setbacks along the way to big achievements. Kids who see themselves as worthwhile, regardless of the results they produce, are more likely to bounce back from setbacks and try again.

ACCIDENTAL SUCCESS

Jack Welch spent two decades increasing GE's market value by more than \$400 billion. Three years into his career, his experiments accidentally blew up a GE building.

It was a huge mistake, but his career did not end. His mother's words always played in his head, "If you don't know how to lose, you'll never win." Her

words helped him to become resilient during difficult times.

Have you ever noticed the little dents on the surface of golf balls? Originally, golf balls were manufactured with a smooth surface. When it was discovered that the older, bumped and dented balls, flew farther and truer.

When kids get bumps along their way toward success, don't despair. The lessons they learn from mistakes will help redirect their actions, so they can go farther toward achieving success.

Help your kids develop habits for long-term success:

1. Break large goals into a series of short-term actions.

2. Take short-term actions regularly

and over time they lead to long-term accomplishments.

3. Practice the actions that lead to their success.

4. View mistakes as opportunities to learn and become solution oriented.

5. Kids gain resilience when their self-worth is not tied to their accomplishments. By developing these concepts, kids will gain inner strength and go further than they ever imagined they could.

Marilyn Suttle energizes corporate and educational groups with personal and professional growth presentations. Email her at MsSuttle@aol.com or visit her web site: [Http://Members.aol.com/MsSuttle](http://Members.aol.com/MsSuttle)

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