

AROUND OAKLAND

Wanted: TV studio audience

WKBD Fox 50, with studios in Southfield, needs interested people to be part of its studio audience for its program "Straight Talk."

This week's session is on breast cancer awareness and will be taped at 5 p.m. Friday for airing at 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

It is hosted by Amyr McKuspen, the station's 10 O'Clock News anchor. Questions will be taken from the audience.

For reservations, call James Gloux at 355-7080. Studios are at 26905 W. 11 Mile, between Inkster and Franklin roads.

Expecting? Listen up

The Oakland County Health Division is offering six expectant parent classes beginning 7-9 p.m. April 14, in the health division office at 27725 Greenfield Road in Southfield.

Classes will be taught by public health nurses. The fee is \$10. Pre-registration is suggested. Registration deadline is April 7. Call 424-7042.

Topics will include maternal physical changes, nutrition, growth and development of the fetus and the baby, labor and delivery, infant care and parenting.

OCC hosts college night

High school seniors and their parents are invited to attend a free college information night 7 p.m. April 8, in the student center of Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus, 7350 Cooley Lake Road in Waterford.

OCC counselors, instructors, financial aid and admissions representatives will be on hand. For more data, call 360-3135.

Power of words: They can hurt, heal

MORAL PERSPECTIVES

REV. KATE THORESEN

"If you can't say something nice about someone," Oscar Wilde cooed, "then come right over here and sit here by me!"

There is something invitingly delicious when we start to hear derogatory words about someone else. We feel a little better or smugger or self-righteous when we hear all about the foibles and failings of another. It does something for our egos to tell "what's wrong" with another person.

We feel we are exercising our prowess in intelligence when we can stand back and critically analyze where another has gone wrong — either in their personal life or in a professional capacity. Or we think we are being humorous when we ridicule another or make fun of another's shortcomings or characteristics.

Words wound people everyday — heated words, belittling words, dishonest words, thoughtless words. Words are weapons.

Undisciplined, unexamined speech surrounds us. According to the insights of theologian Lee Phillips, we find that there are heated words that accuse, unwarranted words that blame, belittling words that blame, mean words that sour, dishonest words that deny, timid words that hide, cheap words that disgrace, thoughtless words that sear and nasty words that harm.

Most of us have experienced the destructive effects of undisciplined speech. A grown-up called us "stupid" or "lazy" or "a bad kid" when we were little. Somehow it can stick with us all these years. One friend has spent her last 30 years trying to prove to her fourth grade teacher that she could achieve something in her life after being told how hopeless a case she was.

This friend has spent much of her adolescent and adult life pursuing academic degrees and professional excellence to distraction to compensate for the wounded feelings of inferiority that those probably unintentional, careless words etched into her.

Misspoken words have been likened to a "blow torch from hell" which can cause destruction.

It takes moral maturity to exercise disciplined speech.

What a difference a few encouraging words can make. "You can do it," "Good for you," "Thanks a lot," "You've made a big difference in my life" are effective tools. Each phrase can effectively build up a healthy community of people living and working together.

Our words can carry with them the amazing power to heal, to lift up, to bless, to build up, and to help re-create. We each have the power to discipline our speech so that as Lee Phillips also portrays, we can use "kind words that cheer, uplifting words that inspire, words that comfort, wise words that guide, affirming words that build, forgiving words that heal, encouraging words that challenge, thoughtful words that redirect and appropriate words that explain."

When we read the words in our headlines, we may often wonder what we can do to help change the world for the better. What can just one individual personally do about Angola? Or the mayor's race in Detroit? The "sandwich" and its devastation? Major health care issues?

But we do know that disciplined speech in our everyday lives can help significant transformation take place in the world right around us.

Rev. Kate Thoresen is with the Partnership Ministries of the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham. If you have a question or comment for her, call her at 953-2047, mailbox number 1882, on a touch tone phone.

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