

Parenting classes can help find answers to problems

ALL ABOUT FAMILIES



ALICE MCCARTHY

Alice McCarthy has called on **Julie Stitt**, prevention service director at Common Ground in Pontiac to answer a series of questions from a reader.

Q. What should I do when Jimmy throws a tantrum? What should I do when my son isn't turning in his homework? What is an effective way to teach my daughter not to be rude?

A. Knowing what will work the best in raising children is a struggle for most parents. There is no one strategy that will work for the many challenges of parenting. Loving and valuing youngsters provides the foundation for parenting choices. Flexibility, creativity and limiting are other characteristics of positive parenting.

The State Legislature in Michigan has declared March Parenting Awareness Month. Parents and educators appreciate this support. Across the state, special events for parents and children, and parenting classes are being offered. The month is filled with numerous opportunities for parents and caregivers to hear from human service professionals and interact with others who are responsible for raising children. A valued outcome of parenting education is the opportunity to understand how others work with their chil-

children to provide loving support and guidance, yet set the necessary limits.

Another benefit from attending parenting fairs, symposiums, and workshops is discovering how much support there is in the community to help adults who are raising kids. Coming together with other parents and with professionals sometimes gives adults who have the awesome task of guiding the next generation, a real lift in spirit and an opportunity to step back a bit and think about their own parenting styles.

Many of the workshops families attend will address issues such as how to give careful consideration to the encouragement of certain skills and attitudes in youngsters. Other professionals will discuss children's need for nurturing and how to change behavior if youngsters have begun using negative behaviors to get attention. Some classes will be in a series, others will last just one evening or be a part of a day-long parenting fair. You will meet other parents and make connections with caring professionals and community resources.

Professionals are fully aware that parents and other adults in children's lives are the most important teachers of children. These professionals will reinforce how behavior is modeled for the child—this includes teaching kids to be safe, to make decisions and to problem-solve.

Hundreds of parents and caregivers will take advantage of the opportunity to grow and learn during March 1997 Parenting

Awareness Month. Child care is available at many of the events. Why not join in and get a refresher on parenting? You can find out about parenting events across Oakland County by reading a free calendar distributed by Oakland County Youth Assistance.

Common Ground is Oakland County's 24-hour crisis intervention and prevention service center dedicated to helping people, families and communities prevent and cope with crisis. In conjunction with Sinai Health System, it also provides emergency psychiatric screening. Common Ground's crisis, information, and referral line is 1-800-231-1127.

Julie Stitt is the author of "The Parenting Tightrope: A Flexible Approach to Building Self-Esteem" (Momentum Books, 1994, \$9.95). Stitt bases her book on experience with teens. Her work at **Common Ground** includes facilitating many parenting classes. She may be reached at (810) 456-8150.

All About Families runs every other week in *The Eccentric Newspapers*. Birmingham resident **Alice McCarthy, Ph.D.**, is a nationally known parent educator, writer and editor. She is the mother of five children and grandmother to eight young children. To leave a message for McCarthy, from a touch-tone phone, call (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1694, or write her at *The Eccentric*, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Proclamation stresses parenting

(See Alice McCarthy's All About Families column on this page).

Oakland County executive **L. Brooks Patterson** recently issued a proclamation designating March as Parenting Awareness Month in Oakland County.

Patterson presented the proclamation to **Stewart Mandell** of Beverly Hills, who originated the parenting awareness program.

The proclamation stresses that "parents need to provide their children with the love, support, guidance, understanding and discipline which will instill in them the kind of values necessary to succeed in life."

It points out that "parents have an obligation to assist their children in preparing for the competitive challenges which they will encounter in the adult world." It reminds us that "children are the hope of the future because they will become the doctors, lawyers, teachers and community leaders of tomorrow."

Many parenting programs are being offered throughout Oakland County during Parenting Awareness Month and beyond. A listing of these events has been prepared by Oakland County Youth Assistance, in cooperation with the Oakland County Parenting Awareness Month Coalition.

"Successful Single Parenting" continues 7-8:30 p.m. through Thursday, March 20, at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2226 E. 14 Mile Road, Birmingham. "Getting to Know You: Parenting in Two Cultures" continues 6:15-7:15 p.m. through March 26 at St. Ephram Chaldean Center, 25695 Berg Road, Southfield.

"Effective Black Parenting" continues 6-8:30 p.m. through May 1 at Brace-Ledorie Elementary School, 18575 W. Nine Mile Road, Southfield. "Family Day" will be presented 8:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 15, at Thompson Middle School, 16300 Lincoln Drive, Southfield.

Oakland Family Services will offer "Ready Let's Grow!" 1-3 p.m. April 8 through May 27, at West Maple Elementary School in Bloomfield Township. "Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Grief," a seminar for school-based helpers, with speaker **Dr. Alan Wolfelt**, will be presented 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. April 24 at the Brother Rice High School gymnasium, 7101 Lahser Road, Bloomfield Township. Cost is \$50 a person including materials and lunch.

"Understanding Grief: Helping Yourself and Others Heal," with **Dr. Alan Wolfelt**, will be held 7-9 p.m. April 24 at St. Regis Church, 3695 Lincoln Drive, Birmingham. "Prayer

and Parenting" is coming up 8-9 p.m. April 26 at the First Church of Christ, Scientist, 191 N. Chestnut, Birmingham.

A "Clergy & Community Parenting Information Exchange" breakfast will be held 8-9:30 a.m. April 25 at The Community House, 380 S. Bates, Birmingham. "A.D. Block Buster Video Specials" is at 7:30 p.m. May 14 (register at 7 p.m.) at Eastover Elementary School in Bloomfield Hills (\$35 family annual membership in CADD of Eastern Oakland County).

The Oakland Family Services program "Ready Let's Grow" also will be offered this summer in Birmingham. A private, nonprofit human service agency, Oakland Family Services has been serving the community for 75 years. It served 17,556 families and individuals in 1995 (the year for which its most recent figures are available). Programs available pertain to behavioral health, family preservation, family support, education, and employee assistance.

Offices for Oakland Family Services are in Walled Lake, Rochester Hills, Farmington Hills, Pontiac and Berkley.

St. Hugo parents offer fashion show

Parents of St. Hugo of the Hills School in Bloomfield Hills will present their annual Spring Luncheon and Fashion Show on Wednesday, April 16.

This year's theme is "With Boots and Wings—Let's Do Great Things." Fashions by

Kathryn Scott and **Kiddywinks**, both of Birmingham, will be modeled by children enrolled in the school and their parents. Hair and make-up will be by **Hair One**, also of Birmingham.

The gymnasium will be transformed into a festive environ-

ment for the luncheon and fashion show. Cost for the event is \$18, or \$15 for senior citizens. Reservations must be made by Friday, April 11.

For more information call the school at (810) 642-6131.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

Holly Harp

The entire **Holly Harp** collection of cocktail dresses, party dresses and evening wear for spring '97 with representative **Jim Harp** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Saturday, March 15, at **Roz & Sherm** at Bloomfield Plaza in Bloomfield Township.

Trunk show

Lee Brevard Trunk Show 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Fashion Jewel-

FASHION CALENDAR

ry at **Neiman Marcus** at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Neiman Marcus

Tadashi Spring Trunk Show 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Galleria Collections at **Neiman Marcus** at the Somerset Collections in Troy.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Players Shop

Golf-inspired fashions—outfits for business dress and the links—informally modeled 12:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday, March 16, at **Hudson's** at Oakland Mall in Troy and 12:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday, March 23, at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

Swim Week

Preview swim wear of favorites such as **Gottex** and **Calvin Klein**, as well as new European collections from **Herve Leger**, **Missoni** and many others, through Sunday, March 23, at **Neiman Marcus** at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Roz & Sherm

The **Merk Heister** Trunk Show for spring/summer with representative **Ruth Vogel** through Saturday, March 22, at **Roz & Sherm** at Bloomfield Plaza in Bloomfield Township.

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