



Parent Communication Network



Edina Parent Communication Network
Quarterly Newsletter

March 2007

PCN Calendar

Kindness and Respect: Bringing the Message Home

Monday, March 19, 2007
7:00-9:00 PM
Normandale Auditorium

Transition to Kindergarten

Monday, April 23, 2007
7:00-9:00 PM
Edina Community Center

EDINA PCN NEEDS YOU!

Edina PCN Committee is recruiting volunteers for the 2007-2008 school year. We have opportunities to serve in a variety of capacities including PCN Liaisons, communications/marketing, operations, national speaker committee and more. If your passion is parenting education, we need you!

Please contact Leah Lindgren, President-Elect, at 952-924-4153 or lindgren_l@msn.com.



KINDNESS AND RESPECT: BRINGING THE MESSAGE HOME Monday, March 19, 2007

Joe Cavanaugh is a nationally known advocate promoting virtues and personal character to audiences of all ages. He is one of the foremost communicators to youth on the topics of respect, integrity, courage and compassion.

As Founder and CEO of [Youth Frontiers](#) and an Edina High School Graduate, Joe will be speaking on the importance of teaching the core values of respect, kindness and courage in our homes as well as our schools. Our children need to feel accepted and safe in their own homes in order to have the courage to stand up for what is right at school and in the community. It is our role as parents, to shape the future of our community by raising kind and respectful children.

Together as parents, school and community we can work to foster children's ability to create and maintain healthy friendships and relationships with both peers and adults. Joe's presentation will focus on:

COURAGE

- It takes courage to stand up for what's right and for your values when you are challenged by your peers.
- How to teach our children to cope with unkind behavior and bullying when they are the target or the bystander.
- Bullying – discussions on types of bullying (verbal, physical and silent) and how to stand up and be a hero for someone

KINDNESS

RESPECT

- We need to challenge kids to be true to themselves and others and to think before they act.

For over 25 years Joe has worked with young people. After graduating with honors from St John's University he founded Youth Frontiers in 1987, a Minnesota-based non-profit organization, whose mission is to help schools build the character of young people.

Join us March 19 to be a part of this important conversation.

Visit our website at www.edinapcn.com

Upcoming Forum

Transition to Kindergarten
April 23, 2007
7:00-9:00 PM
Edina Community Center

Kindergarten is an exciting and sometimes scary and nerve-wracking time for children and their parents. Learn how you can help your child get off to a great start in elementary school.

We will have a panel of three knowledgeable educators from Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and kindergarten to help you and your child prepare for that big transition to "real" school.

The speakers will discuss the social and academic development of kindergartners and how they spend their time at school. Please note that this forum will not focus on whether your child is ready for kindergarten. However, parents who are undecided may gain insight to aid in making that important decision.

Bring your questions and join us for a fun and informative session!

Forum Update

Friendships to Dating
Heather Flies
January 22, 2007

With humor and bubbling energy, Heather Flies engaged us with her view of how teens today view dating and sex. She shared her experiences as a youth minister who hears things teens don't tell their parents and her experiences from her own teenage years. Asking us first to remember what it felt like when we were teens, Heather set out twelve points to build a bridge to our teens to guide them through their changing world of friendship and dating.

1) Recognize what a teen sees as the world's view of sex: everyone's doing it, there are no consequences, and that it is only physical, not mental or emotional.

2) Acknowledge some truths about sex: it's not dirty, bad or icky—it's an amazing thing which has profound mental, emotional and physical consequences. Sex does not confer power, assets or social status. Not everyone is doing it.

(Friendships—continued)

3) Parents still have influence over teens. In fact, kids desperately want parents to set boundaries.

4) Volatility in teens is supposed to happen. Teens have to grow from dependence to independence and have to separate from their parents. This happens at different rates for different children.

5) Take a look back at your own experiences with dating. What were your parents' ideals? Did you have opposite gender friendships? Your past affects how you communicate about and react to dating.

6) Encourage opposite gender friendships (not dating). Having friends of the opposite sex takes a lot of the tension out of dating.

7) When is it time to date? As late as possible. Each relationship packs an emotional bag, and each one affects the next. Rather than setting a specific age or time when dating can start, set tangible goals for the child to meet before he or she can date: Does your child make good choices in friendships? Is he or she responsible in academics? Curfews? Vehicles? Is the child open to your insight? What is your child's perspective on the opposite sex? Using goals like that gives a parent the flexibility to say yes or no to dating based on the personality of the child, not on a magical age or time.

8) Be authentic with your teen. If you share your own experiences, the teen will feel you understand him or her.

9) Communicate again and again about sex. A child changes at least every six months, and can hear different things at different times. A good place to start is with factual, biological information. Don't freak out in front of them, even if they tell you something really upsetting. Let your child know you are open to talking about anything.

10) Help protect teens from themselves. Their brains are still developing.

11) Understand and model grace. We all screw up. Don't stop loving them if they screw up. However, it is okay to show disappointment and to have them earn back your trust.

12) Abstinence works best when you set out a plan for it before you end up in a tempting situation.

Heather then concluded by answering questions from the audience, which can be summarized by saying she encourages parents to continue to be engaged in their teenager's lives by setting boundaries and communicating with love and understanding.

National Speaker Update: James Garbarino, Ph.D.
How We are the Solution Not the Problem in Our Children's Lives

On a frigid Minnesota night at Colonial Church, Edina, the PCN audience was treated to an engaging speaker who addressed the gap between good parental intentions and good outcomes (aka grown children). Dr Garbarino gave powerful scientific and anecdotal evidence on the problems facing today's families, and how we can support our children, and each other, in the efforts of raising healthy families. He has identified seven obstacles that parents will encounter and through intentional parenting may overcome.

Context: Are you a strict or permissive parent? The answer to this is dependent on your society, neighborhood or decade. It is the context that makes the difference in which type of parenting is/was the most effective. Dr Garbarino acclimated the crowd to think "It depends".

Temperament: The child arrives with a certain temperamental makeup. Some temperaments are simply easier to parent than others. Whatever the temperament, it is important to build compensatory skills so that a child will learn self management. Within this, a child's need for acceptance vs. rejection is critical. How to deliver criticism is an important parental skill. Some researchers liken it to a bank account: you need to bank positive statements so criticisms don't drain the account. Other researchers suggest that you need five positive comments to counter each negative comment to confirm acceptance of the child.

Kids; develop secret lives: At some point in childhood, every child learns that his or her thoughts are separate from their parent's. This is the "theory of mind." It is important to teach children to embrace self disclosure when they are young making it more likely they will carry this through their teen years. They need to know that their parents care what they are thinking and feeling. A study of Cornell College freshmen found that a high percentage of them had kept fairly significant secrets (depression, suicidal thoughts and sexual orientation). These "secrets" can have disastrous results. Open communication and non-judgmental listening to our children throughout childhood can inhibit such secret keeping. In helping children deal with sexual orientation issues, Dr. Garbarino stressed that we need to love our child. Children will often "float a balloon" by saying, "my friend.." and see how we react.

Parents are people and therefore imperfect: This came as no surprise to this audience. Dr. Garbarino suggested there is real value in readdressing issues with a child when parents have said and done things in error. Asking for forgiveness is a powerful message for a child.

Erosion in the structure of benevolent adult authority: Adults show decreased respect for societal

institutions (e.g. government). When adults show lack of respect for governmental leadership and societal institutions, this influences our children who may be less respectful to teachers and other authority figures. Television shows adults as buffoons/inept vs. "Father Knows Best". Dr. Garbarino used an example of a neighborhood kid that dumped trash in his yard. His father, dressed in a bathrobe, went to the child's house and told him to pick it up and he did. Today kids may not comply, schools and other institutions fear lawsuits, and parents intervene. The "Okay syndrome" turns declarative sentences into weak questions e.g. "Get into the car, okay? Wear your seatbelt, okay?"

Moralizing is; not moral development: Each person's "circle of caring" is the universe which they care about. It may include your family, friends, and neighborhood and will change and grow with your moral development. Garbarino used an example of people who believe killing is wrong but believe capital punishment is acceptable for murderers because murderer lives outside that person's circle of caring. He suggested that Americans are very good at sentimentality instead of true compassion. Compassion is continuing to care about a person even after they have done something bad (e.g. Gandhi). He proposed that we try not to depersonalize groups of people but try to find true compassion.

Socially toxic environments for families: Studies have proven TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Internet access is validating deviant ideas and depersonalizing relationships. Hypersexualization of teens and tweens, especially girls, is being fed by the media. Violent video games especially those violating human forms are desensitizing people to violence. Be mindful of the media and internet and make decisions for your child that will protect their innocence and childhood.

Children are physical, psychological and spiritual beings: The media will tell your child that they need things NOW and that things and money will make them happy. Studies indicate that children need a spiritual life. A spiritual approach to life may be a religious background, a connection to nature or anything that would give the child a base that there is more to life than things.

Edina PCN is grateful that Dr. Garbarino shared his message: **Parents are the most important influence on children.** We hope that his talk will generate discussion of how to better parent our children and will ultimately benefit our entire community. Dr Garbarino can be reached with questions at: jgarbar@luc.edu

THANK YOU from Edina PCN

Edina PCN would like to thank Edina Public Schools and Our Lady of Grace for their support and commitment to Edina PCN and parent education!

Please support the following businesses who so generously donated to our National Speaker event with Dr James Garbarino.

Holiday Station Store– 5200 Interlachen

Bread&mith– 3939 West 50th St.

Fuddrucker's– 3801 Minnesota Drive

Starbucks Coffee– 5121 Gus Young Lane

Chipotle Mexican Grille– 6801 York Ave. S

Davanni's Pizza– Gus Young Lane

Byerly's– 7171 France

Lund's Market– 3945 W. 50th St

Cub Foods– Southdale

Jerry's Food– 5121 Vernon Ave.

Colonial Church of Edina

Edina Public Schools

Edina Family Center News

FREE BOOK STUDY:

The Mother Dance by Harriet Lerner

March 28, 2007 7:00-9:00 PM

Edina Community Center, Room 351

Facilitated by Laurie Denn, M.A., EFC Coordinator

RSVP by March 23, 2007

EMOTIONAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN

April 16, 2007 7:00-9:00 PM

Edina Community Center, Room 350

Presenter: Jean Breitenbucher L.P.

\$15/individual \$25/twosome

To register call 952-848-3949

Watch for flyers on Beyond ECFE/School Age Parenting Classes for the 2007-2008 school year. Check our website April 2007 for a preview of our offerings: www.edina.k12.mn.us/community/familycenter

PCN School Liaisons

Concord Elementary
Beth Webert 929.4226
Sarah Hall 928.9980

Cornelia Elementary
D'Anne Briggs 935.8333
Michelle Hellickson 915.9941

Countryside Elementary
Jayne Tuttle 920.1329
Carolyn Jackson 836.1770

Creek Valley Elementary
Cathy Groat 829.0099
Kelli von Heydekampf 829.0114

Highlands Elementary
Amy Scott 926.6740
Kim Boisvert 926.7360

Normandale Elementary
Ellen Klos 929.4568
Becky Lindberg 929-0715

Our Lady of Grace
Mary Buska 945.9429
Lori Wagener 922.7611

South View Middle School
Teresa Luterbach 926.1991
Theresa Brunner 925.2685

Valley View Middle School
Barb Hatch 944.1343
Kristi Butterfield 929.8233

Edina High School
Mary Peterson 929.0747
Amy Rich 238.0812

For general questions or feedback, please contact:

Liz Abt Ellenberger
PCN President
952-927-0698

Email:
contact@edinapcn.com

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This newsletter and more information about PCN can be found at www.edinapcn.com