



Parent Communication Network



Edina Parent Communication Network
Quarterly Newsletter

November 2003

PCN Calendar

Girls and the Power of Cliques

January 12, 2004

NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM

Overindulgence: Too Much of a Good Thing with Dan Kindlon

Edina High School
February 2, 2004

Tickets on sale now.
Available at
www.edinapcn.org

Sex: Preteens and Teens

March 1, 2004

Transition to Kindergarten

April 12, 2004

Girls and the Power of Cliques

Monday, January 12, 2004 7:00—9:00 PM

South View Middle School

Last year, PCN's national speaker forum focused on the problem of bullying. Many of our schools have started initiatives to address this painful situation which can have dramatic, and tragic, outcomes. This year, we have invited a panel of educators to talk with us about the way girls use power negatively.

The speakers will help us understand what our role as parents should be, what the school's role should be and the long-term implications for this behavior. They will provide examples of harmful behavior and offer guidance for us to help our daughters deal with jealousy, exclusivity, and hurtful politics. Additionally, they will help us see how we can help our girls develop a strong enough sense of self worth to withstand these common situations.

Our speakers include Cindie Trudell, Wayzata Elementary Social Worker; Becky Halvorson, Wayzata High School Social Worker; Kathie Wojtkiewicz, middle school psychologist; and Patty Carney-Bradley, licensed parent educator, currently working with Gifted and Talented students in the Edina Public Schools.

Some resources on this topic include *Girl Stuff: Survival Guide to Growing Up* by Blackstone and Guest, *Girls Will Be Girls: Raising Confident and Courageous Daughters* by Deak and Barker, *The Secret Lives of Girls: What Good Girls Really Do – Sex Play, Aggression, and Their Guilt* by Lamb, *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap* by Orenstein, and *Odd Girl Out* by Simmons.

Visit our website at www.edinapcn.org

Forum Highlights

HOMework HASSLES Held September 29, 2003

Dr. Ada Alden, Director of the Eden Prairie Family Center, and Gerry Lukaska, Dean of Students at Valley View Middle School, presented at PCN's September Forum entitled *Homework Hassles*.

Dr. Alden began by stressing the importance of the home/school connection. Parents and teachers must communicate, problem solve and make decisions. She encouraged us to tolerate repeated errors and to celebrate the kids we have. The most important thing the family provides is emotional support

Ms. Lukaska said that the general Edina guideline is 10 minutes of homework per grade per night. Of students whose homework is done independently, 70% do well in school. If a student is not doing homework, it means he or she doesn't understand, or is afraid to ask for further instruction or explanation.

The purpose of homework is to teach students to work independently. Specific advice included:

- Have a set time and place each day to do homework.
- Provide a quiet environment during homework time; no phone calls, television or music.
- Let students do homework by themselves. Teachers praise students who do their own work.
- Practice friendly help. Don't micromanage. Ask "what is your plan to get your homework done?"
- Help them to understand, get organized, and set up steps and timelines.
- Avoid tying grades for academic performance to a punishment/reward system.
- Ask teachers about their homework policies regarding time spent and parent involvement.
- Set a good example: go through the mail, read, write letters while they are doing homework.

For additional resources, see our website at www.edinapcn.org.

Book Review

Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends & Other Realities of Adolescence By Rosalind Wiseman

In *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, author Rosalind Wiseman examines the important part friendships and cliques play in the "girl world", particularly during the turbulent adolescent years when peers begin to replace parents as the center of the universe. She believes that girls are under tremendous pressure to fit in, particularly in the middle school years.

Girls tend to process adverse media messages as a group and that group becomes the enforcer of its own laws regarding appearance, interest in boys, and popularity. Cliques per se are natural and can be positive as girls bond together, but when they become a source of cruel competition for popularity and social status, cliques can do very real harm.

The first step to help your daughter is to try to understand the girl world, which should never be trivialized or discounted. Communication with your daughter is key, even when silence is her most ready response. Ms Wiseman's suggestions include the following:

- Don't use the word "clique." They will assume you are accusing them of being exclusive.
- Don't use the slang your daughter uses. It looks like you are trying too hard.
- Share your own experiences and stories from when you were her age, especially when you made mistakes.
- Don't try to fix all her problems, but instead empower her with tools to solve her own problems, supported by your help and guidance.
- Let her make mistakes, and give her ownership of what she does (both good and bad).
- Don't make fun of her, even when the drama level is high. Ask questions and be supportive.
- Always listen, and affirm her feelings
- Find an ally who shares your values to whom your daughter can turn for help and advice when your communication with her shuts down.



National Speaker Forum

Dr. Dan Kindlon

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o o u h o o o h i g

Monday, February 2, 2004

7:00p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Edina High School Auditorium

**Tickets on sale
now! \$12 each**

You may purchase tickets to PCN's National Speaker Forum in one of four ways:

1. Log on to our website www.edinapcn.org and order tickets online.
2. Mail a ticket request to:
Edina PCN Tickets
5701 Normandale Road
Edina, MN 55424-1530.
Include:
Name
Address
Phone number
Email address
Number of tickets required
Check Payable to: Edina
PCN for \$12 per ticket
3. Purchase tickets from a PCN member.
4. Purchase tickets for \$15 the evening of the event.

Limited seating available!
Order early!

PCN will host Dr. Daniel J. Kindlon, Assistant Professor of Maternal and Child Health, Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Kindlon is the author of *Too Much of a Good Thing—Raising Children of Character in an Indulgent Age*. He is also the co-author of the 1998 bestseller *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*. His latest book, *Tough Times, Strong Children: Lessons from the Past for your Child's Future*, was published last March.

Dr. Kindlon identifies seven syndromes that afflict today's overindulged children:

- Self-centeredness
- Anger
- Being overly driven
- Lack of motivation
- Eating problems
- Self-control problems
- Being spoiled

Dr. Kindlon believes that these behaviors are caused by parents who want to protect their children from hardship and pain. By so doing, they take away the opportunity for children to develop emotional maturity.

Learn how to make children feel secure and happy, while helping them to build strong moral character and gain perspective on the world and their appropriate place within it.

Community News

We'd like to recognize the following schools for their continuing efforts to help our students develop strong values.

At **Countryside Elementary School**, the Site Council, with support from the PTO, implemented a school wide value program beginning this school year. The Countryside PRIDE program was developed incorporating values from Responsive Classroom, Edina ICCAR values and Kids for Character. The purpose of the program is to provide a common language of values for adoption by the staff and students of Countryside and to emphasize their importance in our day-to-day life. Each grade level has an assigned value, including respect, trustworthiness, caring, citizenship, fairness and responsibility.

Countryside will have seven assemblies during the year to introduce each value to the students. The values will be presented to parents by the students each month during breakfast meetings. Staff members will give special tokens of recognition to students who are caught using the values.

Highlands Elementary School's Connect with Respect program is an initiative focusing on the core value of respect. It is designed to help students learn and build friendship skills, recognize and prevent bullying, and enable kids, parents and school staff to deal with bullying behavior when it occurs. Last April, staff and parents read Barbara Coloroso's book on bullying and held a book talk.

The school has purchased a program called "Steps to Respect" from Committee for Children. The program uses the terminology of "The 3 R's - Recognize, Refuse, and Report Bullying". Highlands is also conducting a parent and student survey of 3rd - 5th graders, asking specific questions about respect and bullying. They hope that the survey will help raise awareness of bullying among students and generate some questions for parents to consider as well.

Edina PCNewsline is published in September, November, January and March. This newsletter and more information about PCN can be found at www.edinapcn.org.

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South View Middle School

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