



FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Family Appreciation Dinner

The annual VEFC Family Appreciation Dinner will be held on Thursday, June 26 at 5:30 pm

The Outback Steakhouse will provide and serve the meal as it did last year. And what a wonderful meal that was!

It will be held again at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stephens City.

Please call Pat Spory *NOW* if you have not already made your reservations. Her telephone number is 540 636-9858, or e-mail her at pspory@vefc.org. You must make your reservations and specify the number of people in your party by **JUNE 12** so that the exact number of steaks may be ordered.

We will gather at 5:30 for conversation, crafts, and our traditional ice-breaker. Dinner will be at 6:00. Afterward, door prizes will be distributed: a gift basket for each family attending and Rubbermaid donations galore.

RSVP now – it is a dinner you won't want to miss!

Thank You!

Thanks to all VEFC Council members and parents who helped with the book sale on March 7, 8 and 9. VEFC made \$1,120.25.

Also, thanks to Calvary Church of the Brethren for hosting the book sale and to the Moms' Club of Winchester who provided baked goods and coffee as well as helping with the sale.

Placements

February: 8 requests for placements; 4 were placed

March: 5 requests for placements; 3 were placed, 2 went into long-term care

April: 6 requests for placements; all 6 were placed

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Helping Your Children Become Readers

By Stephanie Tracy, LCSW

Do you like to read? Have you had problems with reading when you were in school? Do you want your children to have a better experience than you did? Reading is a necessary skill for everyone. A child will learn language as innately as breathing. But learning to read is a skill that takes time and has to be taught. Each of us has learned to read with good and bad experiences. I remember as a young child my mother taking all five of us children to the library once a week to check out any books we wanted. I was allowed to read anything I could get my hands on. I believe this has contributed to my love of reading and education.

If you want to help your child as a beginner reader, improve his or her reading skills, or learn to love reading as you might, here are some suggestions.

First, the best way to introduce your child, of any age, to reading is to do it yourself. Take the time to turn off the TV and read a newspaper, magazine, or book. This is one of the best methods to demonstrate to your child a behavior you'd love to see. Read what interests you. Talk about what you've read with your family. Listen to books on CD on a long drive. No matter what age, when a child sees his or her parent doing something, it has a strong impact.

Second, read out loud to your child. No matter how old or young, your voice is comforting and reassures your child that he or she has your attention. Reading helps a child improve skills of listening, writing and speaking, in addition reading. Leave your child hanging by not completing the story and then discuss what he or she thinks will happen next. Ask your child to draw pictures of the story. Programs in schools in Virginia and West Virginia emphasize reading aloud to children and use volunteers to do this. I have observed a teacher in a university ESL class read out loud to a group of college age students who were far from their homes and families. They listened, enraptured.

Next, allow your child to read whatever he or she wants: comic books, recipes, signs, the sports page or a wrestling magazine. Anything that encourages a child to become interested in reading will help. Books are not the only form of reading material. Very young children will delight in picking out letters in signs, even if they cannot yet read.

Be a "guide on the side" for reading (King, 1993). You are not your child's classroom teacher, and you don't have to be. The concept of "guide on the side"

is contrary to the usual idea, "sage on the stage," of the student being an empty container into which the teacher pours learning. If you are the "guide on the side," you facilitate reading. This puts your child in the center of the process of participating in ideas that are meaningful to him or her.

You can help your child pick out reading material. Go to the library. Get a library card. Go to used bookstores. Ask your child what kind of reading and books he or she would like. This is especially important for the school break this summer. Find reading that appeals to your child and allow his or her independence in choices.

Another suggestion is to pair books with CDs or iPod downloads. Many of these are free or low cost for children's books. Children who cannot yet read, or who are slow or unsure readers, can look at the printed book while listening to the story. This encourages the reader to feel more competent. Listening skills are usually ahead of reading skills in children. This is also helpful for a reader of any age. Sometimes we're not sure how to pronounce a word, and hearing it helps in understanding. A few summers ago, I listened to the first half of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* on CD and then read the second half. It really helped me to hear how the Russian names were pronounced and helped me to sort out the multitude of characters.

Pairing reading with action is another way to encourage your child to use reading in everyday life. Have your child pick out a recipe and prepare it while you assist. If your child participates in sports, he or she can listen to a book while training. Travel books and walking and museum tours help you and your child to participate in the world and see new sights and learn new ideas.

The last suggestion may be surprising. Having your child read out loud as a performance or test is *not* helpful. This only creates anxiety and tension, even in a good reader. It does little to improve reading skills. Silent reading for pleasure, being read to and listening to a story all help readers much more. Reading to your child is much more productive.

The following are websites that give you great resources for reading:

- A blog that presents updated information on children's books: <http://childrensbooks.about.com/b/2004/08/16/good-read-alouds-for-the-classroom-or-home.html>

Helping Your Children (cont's)

- A US-Department of Education site that gives you suggestions for summer reading:
<http://www.readingrockets.org/>
- A bilingual site for families and educators of English language learners:<http://www.colorincolorado.org>
- Resources for parents of children in grades 4-12:
<http://www.adlit.org>
- Two sites for reading aloud in Virginia and West Virginia schools: <http://elearn.wvu.edu/Continuing/Education/ReadingSkills.html>

http://www.readaloudva.org/partnerschools/res_classtips.html

- An article on why reading aloud to children is useful:

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr081.shtml

King, A. (1993), *From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side*, College Teaching, Vol. 41

A Little Girl in Need of a Little Help

The names of the little girl and her VEFC parents have been changed. The dentist's name has not. We are very grateful for Dr. King's services.

Joan, age 5, was placed with the Andrews family on April 7. The placement has been punctuated by other stays with another VEFC family.

Joan had been living with her mother in Maryland when her mother lost her job and her place to live. She sent Joan to live with her father, who was known to have a problem with alcohol. Joan's mother and her family are well known to the Maryland DSS.

Dad and Joan came to live with his aunt and uncle in Virginia, but they asked him to leave because of problems caused by his alcoholism. The same thing happened at the local shelter, and Joan became homeless and in need of VEFC.

Joan thrived on having a routine and, in fact, clung to it. At the Andrews, she learned to brush her teeth, to push her chair in at the end of a meal, to say grace before eating, was encouraged to pray for her parents, and loved having stories before bed. She enjoyed having tasks to do such as helping to set the table and to stir the juice.

Joan wanted to take control and would sometimes have massive outbursts over small things. She would scream, cry, and clench her fists. Mrs. Andrews tried to give her choices as much as she could. She would sometimes make a choice and then want to change her mind just to exert control. When she found out she couldn't suddenly switch, she would have a tantrum.

Mrs. Andrews weathered these storms by waiting them out. She found it was often best just to drop a subject rather than continue a discussion that would lead to an outburst on Joan's part. Joan would snub Mrs. Andrews when angry, but then would change her mind and want to be cuddled.

Joan needed dental work during her placement with the Andrews. It was provided by Dr. Robert King, who, with his wife, had attended training some years earlier to become a VEFC family. Rather than activating as a host family, the Kings decided that the best way they could serve VEFC children was to provide dental care for them. They have served a number of children over the last several years.

Joan needed three fillings and the tips of her front teeth were blackened from bottle mouth. She was a bit apprehensive about the dental visit, but she came through with flying colors. It is very difficult to find dentists who will accept Medicaid patients, and the local DSS agencies are very grateful for Dr. King's services.

Joan attended school while with her VEFC families and was excited to show her work to her VEFC moms.

Mrs. Andrews said that, in general, this has been one of her most enjoyable placements. Joan's case is in court at this time and it will be decided whether she is to return to her mother in Maryland or will live with her aunt and uncle in Virginia. Local DSS officials are hoping that she will be placed with her aunt and uncle where she can have a stable home with relatives and be able to continue in her same school.

A Little Humor

Five Riddles

1. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in three years. Which room is safest for him?
2. A woman shoots her husband. Then she holds him under water for over five minutes. Finally, she hangs him. But five minutes later they both go out together and enjoy a wonderful dinner together. How can this be?
3. What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and gray when you throw it away?
4. Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday?
5. This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual, though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

A man had 50-yard-line tickets for the Super Bowl. As he sat down, another man came down and asked if anyone was sitting in the seat next to him. "No," he said, "the seat is empty."

"This is incredible," said the man. "Who in his right mind would have a seat like this for the Super Bowl, the biggest sporting event in the world, and not use it?"

Somberly, the man said, "Well, the seat actually belongs to me. My wife was supposed to come here with me, but she passed away. This is the first Super Bowl we have not been to together since we got married in 1967."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. That's terrible. But couldn't you find someone else—a friend or relative or even a neighbor – to take the seat?"

The man shook his head. "No, they are all at the funeral."

Your Age by Eating Out

1. Pick the number of times a week that you would like to go out to eat. (more than 1 but less than 10)
2. Multiply this number by 2 (just to be bold).
3. Add 5.
4. Multiply it by 50.
5. If you have already had your birthday this year, add 1758. If you haven't, add 1757.
6. Now subtract the four digit year that you were born.

You should have a three digit number. The first digit of this was your original number (how many times you want to go out to eat in a week).

The next two numbers are YOUR-AGE.

This is the only year (2008) it will ever work.

Pastor's Business Card

A new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. Therefore, he took out a business card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message: "Genesis 3:10."

Reaching for his Bible to check out the citation, he broke up in gales of laughter. Revelation 3:20 reads, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Genesis 3:10 reads, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked."

Answers to Riddles

1. The Third Room. Lions that haven't eaten in three years are dead. That one was easy, right?
2. The woman was a photographer. She shot a picture of her husband, developed it, and hung it up to dry (shot, held under water, and hung).
3. Charcoal, as it is used in barbecuing.
4. Sure you can name three consecutive days: yesterday, today, and tomorrow!
5. The letter "e," which is the most common letter used in the English language, does not appear even once in the paragraph.