

Kinship Care Chronicle

CATHOLIC CHARITIES
 CAREGIVERS SUPPORT SERVICES
 KINSHIP CARE PROGRAM

CATHOLIC CHARITIES-CAREGIVERS SUPPORT SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Hello all! Welcome to the April edition of the Kinship Care Chronicle. To me, April represents the month of rebirth and renewal. What a great topic to write about ... I thought. However, as I thought about writing this message, nothing came out. The light bulb refused to go on, zilch. The more I racked my brain, the worse it became. I tried giving myself a break, and tried again later....again and again, still nothing. I really started to become stressed. Can you imagine the internal dialogue I was having with myself? And then I stopped myself and said "What am I doing? Why am I beating myself up about this?"

So this started me thinking about "self esteem" and the lack of which I was obviously experiencing at the moment. I'm sure we would all agree how important it is for our children to have a good self esteem. Krista outlines this beautifully in her section on 40 Developmental Assets. My question is, why, as adults, do some of us find this such a difficult quality to master? How can we teach this valuable lesson to the children,

when we ourselves struggle to model this for them?

If we abuse ourselves by failing to eat right and exercise, if we don't stand up for ourselves in the face of injustice, if we do not pursue our own interests and pleasures, not only are we doing ourselves a terrible disservice but also a disservice to our children. Through my own personal struggles, I have come to learn, that everyone has troubles. Self esteem is not about being perfect and living a trouble free life. Self-esteem is about accepting and loving ourselves for who we are and believing that we can face whatever challenges come our way.

Admit it; life is not always wonderful and joyous. But, it is **most important** at difficult times to be *kind and forgiving* to ourselves and discover what it is we need in order to deal with the bumps in the road.

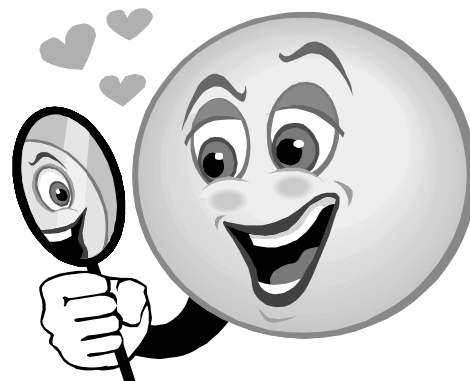
I'm certain that as kinship caregivers, you may find that your lives often feel out of balance. It is important to take care of yourselves, not just for you, but the children too.

Happy April.

—Jodi Rosa

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Focus on 4: Positive Identity Assets | 2-5 |
| Summer Camp Scholarship Assistance Program | 6 |
| Massage Therapy Workshop | 6 |
| Program Calendar | 7 |
| News & Notes | 8 |



THE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS: FOCUS ON 4

Our journey through the 40 Developmental Assets continues! This month we explore those assets relating to Positive Identity (#37-40). They focus on ones sense of self. They are:

Personal Power: Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”

Self-Esteem: Young person reports having a high self-esteem.

Sense of Purpose: Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”

Positive View of Personal Future: Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Raising a child to become a strong, confident and capable adult requires a delicate balance of meaningful, positive praise and constructive encouragement. You may wonder, “How?” To put it simply: **Give praise when it is earned and deserved!** This might sound like, “WOW! You studied so hard and earned this grade! I am so proud because I know how much effort you put into this!” OR “Look at how

gorgeous/handsome you are! It makes such a difference when you put time and effort into taking care of yourself!”

When a child doesn't meet expectations, it's okay to KINDLY say so. This might sound like, “This grade is okay, but I wonder what grade you could have gotten if you had studied.” OR “I am disappointed in the way you cleaned your room. Shoving everything into the closet isn't really cleaning, now is it?! Try again!”

Let your child experience disappointments, but support them through it. This might sound like, “I am sorry you didn't win the spelling bee. Next time, let's study together for it!” OR “I know you wish you could see your mother more! I know how important she is to you. Do you want to draw her a picture or write her a story telling her how you feel?”

A child that is aware of their strengths and can compensate for their weaknesses is very likely to grow up to be a happy and successful adult!

ASSET BUILDING ... WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Step One: Take Inventory...What assets do the kids already have?

Use the Positive Identity Asset Checklist for Caregivers located on the next page. Find the age group of the child or children in your household. Check the boxes that are **true** for each child.

Step 2: Identify What's Missing

Take note of areas in need of attention –that is, the boxes that are NOT checked. For example, if you were unable to check the box about positive feelings of the future, you may want to help your child map out a 5 year plan.

- Beginning with the end, ask where do you want to be in 5 years?
- Then back out from there. Identify the

steps/actions that need to be taken to get to “the destination.”

Step 3: Start Building Assets

It is important to remember that building assets in children and youth is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Every child is unique and will respond differently to various strategies. If your first attempt doesn't work, don't give up—try another approach.

While building assets may require much time, energy and effort, the rewards will be great—for the child, for you, for the world!!!! Hang in there and don't give up. Always keep in mind, we are always here to help!

—Krista Gallup

Positive Identity Asset Checklist for Caregivers

Infants & Toddlers



- I feel I have control over things that happen in my own life, and I model coping skills, demonstrating healthy ways to deal with frustrations and challenges. I respond to the infant/toddler so that the he/she begins to learn that he/she has influence over immediate surroundings. (#37)
- I create an environment where the infant/toddler can develop positive self-esteem, giving the infant/toddler appropriate, positive feedback and reinforcement about skills and competencies. (#38)
- My life has purpose and I demonstrate this belief through my behaviors. The infant/toddler is curious about the world around him/her. (#39)
- I am hopeful and positive about my personal future and I work to provide a positive future for the infant/toddler. (#40)

Preschoolers



- I feel I have control over things that happen in my own life, and I model coping skills, demonstrating healthy ways to deal with frustrations and challenges. I respond to the preschooler so the child begins to learn that she or he has influence over immediate surroundings. (#37)
- I create an environment where the preschooler can develop positive self-esteem, giving the child appropriate positive feedback and reinforcement about skills and competencies. (#38)
- My life has purpose and I demonstrate this belief through my behaviors. The preschooler is curious and explores the world around him or her. (#39)
- I am hopeful and positive about my personal future, and I work to provide a positive future for the preschooler. (#40)

Elementary



- The child begins to feel a sense of control over things that happen to him or her. The child is beginning to manage frustrations and challenges in ways that have positive results for the child and others.
- The child reports having high self-esteem.
- The child reports that "my life has a purpose" and actively engages her or his skills.
- The child is hopeful and positive about his or her personal future.

Teenagers



- My teenager feels that he/she has control over many things that happen to him/her.
- My teenager feels good about herself/himself.
- My teenager believes that her/his life has a purpose.
- My teenager feels positive about her/his future.

Children and teens who possess many assets are more likely to exhibit thriving behaviors like: getting good grades, staying out of trouble and exhibiting leadership!

WHAT'S MY PURPOSE?

Often times we ask this question as we are trying to work through yet another day that can appear to be the same as those that came before it. Yet, as cliché as these words sound – “*Everything and everyone has a purpose.*”

Why do we need to feel a sense of purpose?

A sense of purpose gives you a feeling of accomplishment, knowing that you are achieving something and getting somewhere. It can give you something to look forward to; a reason for you to get out of bed in the morning. Recognizing a ‘sense of purpose’ will lead to a positive view of one’s personal future. On a broader level, it is difficult to give children what you, yourself, do not possess.

What can I do to discover my purpose in life?

A purposeful life needs to be developed. You have to work it. However, at times skepticism and uncertainty can set in, and your ‘sense of purpose’ in life may have been put on the back burner. You may not feel like you have any purpose while out of a job, sick in bed, or dealing with yet another of life’s dilemmas. Letting these thoughts rule you will serve no positive purpose. They will only drain you of energy and in the end the problem will still exist.

So, how do you create your purpose? Ask yourself the following questions:

"Who Am I?"

What kind of person are you? What's been true of you since you were younger? Write down all the qualities that you can think of that are truly you. List the things you naturally have learned and developed over the years. You probably take these things for granted, not recognizing them for the special, significant and unique gifts they actually are.

"What Do I Love To Do?"

What do you absolutely, truly enjoy doing in your professional life? In your personal life? For each answer, consider the gifts that have helped make doing these things possible. Your purpose will involve doing something that you love.

"What Experiences In Life Were Really Fulfilling For Me?"

Look for the times in your life that were fulfilling for you. These were times when you were just being yourself. Consider, What was it like for me while I was going through it? What was I feeling? What was important, special or meaningful for me? These answers hold the key to

what you should be doing with your life.

"What Am I Afraid Of?"

Once you know what your purpose in life is, what will keep you from living it? Fear is the number one thing that stops people from being who they were meant to be. Do you want to be fulfilled? Then feel the fear, and do it anyway.

"Who Can I Tell?"

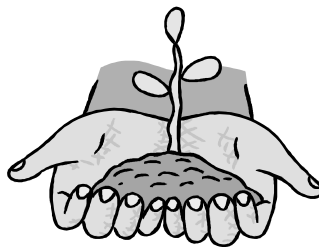
Speaking your purpose will bring it into reality; and once you tell people, it becomes real. Plus, you'll have the support of those around you who want to encourage you to be who you really are.

"What Is My Purpose Proclamation?"

Once your purpose becomes clearer, create a purpose statement. A purpose statement contains an action, a focus, and an intended destination. Once you write it down, you have a road map to follow.

"How Do I Put My Purpose In Place?"

Your life is moving forward whether you are working towards your purpose or not. So, wouldn't it be better to take one action each day that will get you closer to who you were meant to be? Your purpose will be realized one step at a time until one day you find that you are living it.



—Susie Fennell

PERSONAL POWER OF CAREGIVERS

The idea of a committee made up of Kinship Caregivers was presented to each support group during the month of March. This idea was initiated to involve caregivers in the decision making on the activities offered through their program. I understand that many caregivers have their schedules full and for that reason, I was initially reluctant to present this idea. Well, I am happy that we spoke! I was touched to see and hear about how this idea was embraced and supported by you!

The **following baselines** were created and agreed upon in groups:

- Committee members will not have titles. They will each be equal participants.
- Committee members will have been a part of the program for at least two years so as to understand the workings of the program. In order to incorporate all families, some committee members will make their contact information available for suggestions to put on the next meeting's agenda.
- Fund raising and utilizing personal contacts as well as speaking with decision makers is of great importance. (garage sale, grant opportunities, advocacy...)

Some **suggested topics**:

- The importance of get-togethers is to see one another and not to necessarily have a big ticket event. Pot lucks, cookouts and brown bag lunches in which each family provides for themselves were suggested. Meeting together at a public site is an inexpensive event that is of interest for the warm months ahead.
- Understanding what events are important to families and the age range of children attending selected events.
- Creating a system to use when members

register for activities but do not attend so as to maintain good relations with contributors.

We will need the committee to present the ideas discussed to Jodi and Krista. (Of course, Susie and I will be involved in the needed tasks, but neither one of us has completed our two years yet!)

A letter has been sent out to those who met at group and created the above baselines. The next step is to agree upon a time and date for your first meeting. If you are interested in being a part of this opportunity, please contact us so that we may include you in the invitation to the first meeting and you can be a part of this unique opportunity.

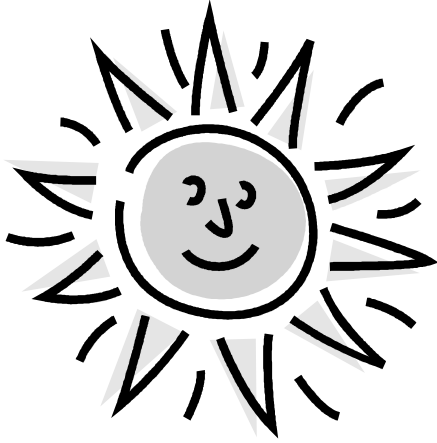
—Chris Schaffner



*“Knowing is not enough;
we must apply. Willing is not enough;
we must do.”*

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



"Being a child at home alone in the summer is a high-risk occupation. If you call your mother at work thirteen times an hour, she can hurt you." —Erma Bombeck

NOW is the time to start thinking about what you are going to do with the kids once school lets out for the summer. Over the course of the next couple of weeks be on the look out for flyers and publications on the topic of summer camps for kids. The Times Union and the Capital District Parent Pages both produce comprehensive listings of the many offerings available throughout our region. Your child's backpack may begin to fill with flyers for local opportunities. Don't forget to check your church bulletins!!! Many local churches offer Vacation Bible Schools and youth retreats. Be prepared for some "sticker shock." Summer camps are not cheap! Keep in mind though that our program offers many scholarships each summer to a variety of types of camps – day, overnight, sports, art, etc. These scholarships are coordinated through Krista Gallup, with preference given to families active in our program. For more information or to request scholarship assistance, give Krista a call at 449-2001 ext. 117.

MESSAGE THERAPY WORKSHOP

Tuesday, April 28, 2009
Conference Room
100 Slingerland Street, Albany
12:00—2:00 p.m.

Through rhythmic hand movements and applied pressure, massage can promote increased circulation, joint mobility and elasticity, reduce muscle tension, balance the nervous system, remove toxins, improve digestion and intestinal function, enhance skin conditions and decrease pain, anxiety and stress levels. Learn how!

This is a FREE workshop. Reservations required.

Call 449-2001 and ask for Chris Schaffner at ext. 116.

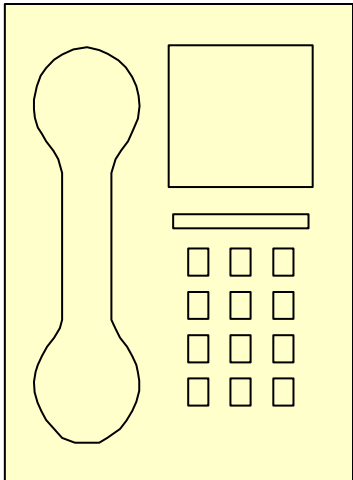


APRIL 2009

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 7 – Support Group @ Trinity, 6:30–8:00 p.m. Concurrent Youth Program
 - 8 – Passover begins at sundown.
 - 9 & 10 – OFFICE CLOSED for Easter Holiday
 - 12 – Happy Easter
 - 13-17 – School Break
 - 14 – Support Group @ 100 Slingerland St., 11–12:30 p.m.
 - 15 – Youth Event – To Be Announced! Check SourceLine for details.
 - 21 – Support Group at Sunnyside, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Concurrent Youth Program
 - 22 – Support Group @ St. Luke's, 11:00–12:30 p.m.
 - CCCSS Annual Fundraiser, The Crossings in Colonie 5:30–7:30 p.m.
 - 28– Support Group @ East Greenbush Public Library, ****CANCELLED****
 - 28–Massage Therapy Workshop – see related article on Page 6.
- WOW! Busy month!*

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
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NEWS & NOTES

FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

Alex Rosa of Boy Scout Troop #75 of Delmar presented to Albany Trinity Support Group and Troy Sunny View Support Group on Fire Safety. He has been working with other Boy Scouts in his troop and they will be contacting caregivers who signed up by the end of April! Thank you to all of the 28 families who signed up for this opportunity to learn and help future Eagle Scouts!

4/5 11:00 am -3:00 pm

Annual Maple Syrup Festival and Pancake Breakfast—Also, drive it yourself tours of three local farms who produce maple syrup. Pick up a map of driving directions to Sugar Bush Farm, Malachi Farm, and Lounsbury Farm.

Knox Fire House

4/25 11:00 am -4:00 pm

Earth Day—Join the CCE Master Gardeners at the New York State Museum to celebrate Earth Day with child friendly activities and ideas to inspire your youngsters to be good stewards of the earth.

NYS Museum Albany

/29 6:30 -8:00 pm

Spring into Lighter Eating: Get some help in focusing your goals and brainstorming solutions in this interactive program, then create and sample some delicious summer salads. Pre-registration is required by calling Janet at 765-3500. Class fee: \$5.

CCE Albany County
24 Martin Rd, Voorheesville

WANTED

Are you willing to share your experience as a Kinship Caregiver? The Life Span Respite Summit is being held on May 19th. The panel has invited a Kinship Caregiver to speak in order to explain how critical respite is for the caregiver and the ease or difficulties involved in obtaining respite services. Please call us for more details if you would be willing to share your experience to aid in the quest to increase New York State respite services. This summit is by invitation only.
