



Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 7
April, 2009

This month's newsletter welcomes a new columnist. Cindy Cervini, Guidance Counselor at Yorktown High School, has written a series of columns that we think you'll find entertaining and interesting. Her first piece starts on page 2.

On our calendar you'll find events for 5th graders on up – we know you'll find something here for you! If you have an event or other item you'd like to see in future newsletters, or have questions about any programs listed here, please let Cathy know at (914) 736-1450 or cadlerask@yahoo.com.

Tricy Cushner, President Cathryn Adler, Director

Calendar

Youth Court

Arraignments TBA

Sunday, April 26th

11am – 1pm, Mitzvah Day

Program to include an ASK presentation at Temple Beth Am

Wednesday, April 29th

4 pm: ASK coalition meeting

Sparkle Lake Community Building

Friday, May 8th

7-9 pm, 5th Grade Social in

Honor of DARE participation

Elks Lodge, Yorktown Heights

Tuesday, May 12

7-9pm, Michael Nerney

Back by popular demand, Nerney

answers parents' questions

Location TBA

Fridays, May 15th, 22nd, 29th

7-10pm, Teen Night for 12-15 yrs

Lakeside at Osceola

Saturday, May 16th

12-5pm, Yorktown Community

Day ASK Presentation

Mildred E. Strang Middle School

Friday, June 12th

6pm-on, Relay for Life

Jack DeVito Memorial Field

ASK teams up with PBA and Leos to

benefit American Cancer Soc.

A Raffle to Benefit the Alliance for Safe Kids

The Trump Organization has generously donated a day at

Trump National Golf Club

in Briarcliff Manor

The day includes

- Breakfast
- Round of golf for four
- Lunch
- Private tour with Yorktown's own Dan Scavino, Executive Vice President and General Manager

Face value: \$2,500

Real value: priceless!

\$25 per ticket, \$50 for 3

For raffle tickets please contact Cathy at the Alliance for Safe Kids, (914) 736-1450 or Alliance_for_Safe_Kids@yahoo.com

Funds raised will help underwrite valuable programs and events for Yorktown kids and community awareness... The real winner will be our kids!

Battle of the Bands

The Recreation Department is hosting a Battle of the Bands on Friday, May 15th starting at 6 PM. The event is sponsored by DARE, and will be held at the gazebo in Jack DeVito Memorial Field.

The Alliance for Safe Kids, Inc., is a not-for profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to keeping our kids out of harm's way. For further information, please email the Alliance at Alliance4SafeKids@yahoo.com, or write to PO Box 106, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. Please visit our website, www.AllianceForSafeKids.org

It Takes a Village to Raise My Child

By Cynthia Cervini

That's no typo and no, the good folks who proofread for me are not asleep at the wheel.

"It takes a village to raise *my* child."

If you saw me around town I would look like the man from the Verizon commercials with the group of people behind him making sure he's 'connected'. Except in my case, I'm followed around by a group of people who have my back in this parenting thing. I'd like to profile some of my people and what they do for me in my continuing effort to raise my fifteen year old while maintaining some semblance of sanity.

First I'd have to name my sister in law, Mary Beth. To some of you she's known as 'my Yorktown sister-in-law'. I name her first since of all the people in the village she's the most likely to read this, and in the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately scheme of things she's definitely at the top of my list. My daughter has reported, on more than one occasion, that she is "afraid" of her aunt. I don't think it's so much a matter of her being afraid, but more a healthy respect she harbors for her aunt that quite frankly she doesn't often pull out for her father and me. Here's an example:

Scenario 1

Mother and daughter are walking outside on a beautiful day, without a cloud in the sky....

Mother: "Look - darling daughter, the very reason for my existence - look at the clear blue sky."

15 year old daughter: (rolling her eyes as she speaks) "You always say that. You think you know everything! It's like, get over it mom the sky is NOT blue. You're always trying to make the sky into something it's not! Maybe the sky was blue when YOU were a kid...."

Scenario 2

Aunt and 15 year old niece are walking outside on a beautiful day, without a cloud in the sky...

Aunt: "What a great day, what a beautiful blue sky"

15 year old niece: "Yeah, you're right, it's so cool. I can't decide if it's a baby blue or an aquamarine blue"

Aunt: "No, neither, I think it's a periwinkle."

15 year old niece: "Yup, you nailed it, periwinkle. You know so much about the sky, different colors, everything like that. I wish I could talk to my mother about the sky but all she wants to do is argue with me...."

Yes indeed, my sister-in-law has it all over me when it comes to everyday normal conversation with my daughter. It's not like she's some cool twenty-five year old aunt either. She's more than twice that age and has raised two incredibly well-adjusted, successful children so I know she knows what she's doing. I'd love to ask her to finish raising our two if something happened to us, but I need her and don't want to scare her off. Anyway, when we were all in a quandary about what to do for my daughter's recent birthday festivities, I pulled out the sister-in-law card. My daughter wanted a party for twenty five and after THE INCIDENT LAST AUGUST (no offense, but I don't know you well enough to disclose that just yet) I frankly did not feel she deserved a party ... in fact, she's lucky that I let her live to see fifteen. When the proposed party threatened to be yet another power struggle of epic proportions, in a flash of brilliance I offered "why not let Aunt Mary Beth take you shopping at Woodbury Commons?" So that Sunday, (coincidentally a beautiful day without a cloud in the sky) my daughter - flush with birthday money from assorted relatives - happily went shopping with her aunt and two friends she brought along for the experience. When they returned two hours later with age-appropriate clothes that offered more coverage than not, I smiled at my good fortune. Not only did I skip the party for twenty five, but I avoided both the shopping-for-clothes struggle and the mind-numbing music they blast at the stores my daughter frequents.

Continued on page 3

Cont'd from page 2

Next in the line up of Village People is my friend Jim From Karate. Before I launch into an explanation of Jim, I can hear people (particularly my husband) asking “gee, why doesn’t she mention her husband?”

It’s simple, actually: one can’t be part of the Village and In the Trenches at the same time. In raising our children my husband is right alongside me in the foxhole; in fact, it’s often hard to tell which one of us is more shell-shocked. We’re usually of one mindset, except when he runs out in the middle of the war to treat the enemy to ice cream. Still, if he keeps quiet when the foxhole gets a bit cluttered, doesn’t defect, go AWOL or to Canada, when its all over I’ll see that there is a medal in it for him.

Jim is the father to six children, three of whom are teenagers, and naturally he’s too busy keeping order among his tribe to visit my village often. He’s like the National Guard, though; you call - he’s there.

Back to Jim From Karate : Jim is the father to six children, three of whom are teenagers, and naturally he’s too busy keeping order among his tribe to visit my village often. He’s like the National Guard, though; you call - he’s there. He has a unique position in the delicate balance of our relationship with the 15 year old daughter. The two of them tested and passed their black belt together and he has let it be known that because of this, he and my daughter will always have a special bond. (He doesn’t know about THE INCIDENT LAST AUGUST either. I don’t think he can handle it).

Now, in my daughter’s eyes this means he thinks she can do no wrong, but since he is her ‘senior’ (it’s a karate thing) what he says goes. Of course, I use this to my advantage (wouldn’t you?). At the same time, Jim and my husband are ‘homies’ and have the whole male bonding piece going on. Our children are friends. Meanwhile, Jim and I have supported each other (mostly via e-mail) through prom drama (known as “Prama”) more than once (“Son of Prama”), shoplifting, two car accidents, and the college admission process with a waiting-for-the-lab-results scare thrown in for good measure. And this is just with his oldest! So when I call him at 6:30 AM (we both have early commutes) there is nothing I can tell him about my daughter that will shock him. And while my daughter is convinced he’s on her side with the special bond thing, my husband and I know that he is the real deal when it comes to great parenting advice and the kind of guy you want in the neighboring foxhole.

Now I’m happy to announce a blessed event; there has been a recent addition to the Village, but curiously it’s someone I’ve yet to meet. Let me explain: last fall my daughter started to go out with a junior from her school. (I just knew getting her braces off before age 25 was a bad idea.) She met him through church youth group and allegedly he’s even an Eagle Scout (so far so good). Early on in the relationship, when I asked my daughter why he wasn’t dropping by she explained that Ian “is in trouble a lot”.

That immediately raised my antenna (yes, I know that stations will soon only broadcast in digital so I’m making plans to replace my antenna with a satellite dish). My daughter was quick to reassure that “Ian is in trouble like I’m in trouble”, which usually means for arguing with his mother. In the first month that they were going out he lost his cell phone privileges and was grounded for a time. As fate would have it, by the time Ian got his cell phone back, she lost her cell phone in gym class. Since weren’t at that point rushing to replace it anytime soon, they had to get to know each other the old fashioned way, seeing each other in school. Best yet, although Ian at that point was sixteen about to turn seventeen, his mother (hold your applause) “**isn’t letting him get his driver’s permit yet**” Yup, I don’t even know this woman but I hereby name Ian’s mother a Villager of the Highest Esteem.

While we’re on the subject of cell phones... another integral member of the village is not a person but a corporation. The Sprint organization has been invaluable to me in my quest to raise my daughter and maintain my sanity. Yes, I pay them money to help me out (in the form of my wireless bill), and they are worth every cent - not necessarily for their wireless services, but by the mere fact that I can hold their

Continued on page 4

Cont'd from page 3

product (said cell phone) over my daughter's head to get her to do things my way for a change. Indeed, the cell phone is an effective parenting tool if used correctly. Sprint customer service is most attentive to my needs in terms of suspending service and blocking or unblocking text messaging as I see fit. They've also helped me out of overage charges, like the time she exceeded her texts by seven hundred (not a typo) to the tune of \$150.00 (which, by the way, she still thinks I paid). My only issue with Sprint is that at the conclusion of the call to customer service, the representative will say something to the effect of "Thank you for calling Sprint - is there anything else I can do to help you today?" Each time I ask the representative if s/he is interested in adopting my daughter (the reason for the call in the first place), and each time they turn me down. Dear Sprint, don't make the offer if you're not willing to follow through. (To be fair, it might have something to do with the fact that I've spent the whole phone call venting about my daughter).

Another tool in the parenting toolbox is the internet, which can be turned on and off as necessary. Being that my daughter needs the internet to breathe it's an effective measure to get her attention.

It takes a village to raise any child. Raising children is something that should never, ever be done alone. Look around and you will find resources everywhere: grandparents, relatives, friends, parents of friends, neighbors, coaches and school personnel anxious to help you as my people help me. Since they don't live with your teen, they probably view them as charming and personable and want to spend some time with them, given the opportunity. It's good for your child and, if they're anything like mine, they'll listen to any opinion that doesn't issue from your mouth. The trick is surrounding yourself with folks of the same mindset and values as your own.

Now, if I could only get my husband to vacuum the foxhole once and a while, I'd have it made.

Teen Nights at Lakeside at Osceola

In cooperation with ASK, Lakeside at Osceola will be holding Teen Nights throughout the summer. Starting on May 15th, they will be held on Fridays through June 26th (except June 5th), and on Tuesdays from July 7th – August 28th (except August 4th). The events will run from 7-10PM, rain or shine, and are for teens 12-15 yrs old. There will be a cover charge of \$8 per person. Music and dancing, basketball, ping pong, game arcade, volleyball and a snack bar are all available. Teen Nights will be supervised by Lakeside staff. For more information, contact Lakeside at Osceola at 914-245-3246, email LakesideOsceola@aol.com. Location: 399 East Main Street, Jefferson Valley.

Guitar Hero or Rock Band Competition!

Are you involved with a teen group who might be interested in organizing these events? There are locations in Yorktown interested in hosting them; just give ASK a call – we'd love to work with you!

The Future of the Yorktown Teen Center

The Teen Center at the Yorktown Community & Cultural Center has been serving the town's teenagers since 1997, providing them with a safe place to congregate during afternoon and evening hours. The Boys & Girls Club has run the Center in recent years, but that financial support will end at the close of June of this year due to funding constraints.

A meeting of town officials, parents, the Yorktown Enrichment Center Director, Teen Center advisory board and any other interested residents will be held on Wednesday, April 15th to discuss ways to fill the pending gap in services to Yorktown youth. The meeting will be held at 6:30 PM in the Teen Center room at the YCCC. All are welcome.