

October 2007

WILLIAMSBURG'S

Next Door Neighbors

VOL. 1, ISSUE 7

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

Meals on Wheels' Foodapalooza!

Catherine Upton,
Executive Director

What are your
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Writing stories about family values is like trying to describe the color of the ocean. The ocean is many colors and the way you describe it from the shore might not be the same as someone else describing it from the water. It all depends upon where you are standing.



Meredith Collins, Publisher

The same might be said about family values. Our values are based on our own vantage point – how we grew up, what we experienced, what we were taught and how we look back on those years and assimilate those learning experiences into our present lives.

In this issue, our writers talked to locals from all walks of life to get their thoughts about different subjects relating to family values. We spoke with parents, teenagers, directors of local organizations, religious leaders, counselors, and people we met along the way. We bring you these stories to enjoy and to share. If they serve as a catalyst for some reflection, well, that's ok too.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Next Door Neighbors*.

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Hey Neighbor!

cover photography by
 Monica Sigmon

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 www.monicasigmon.com

MEAL TIME ISN'T ALWAYS FAMILY TIME SOMETIMES IT'S MEALS ON WHEELS

By Meredith Collins

Catherine Upton is responsible for feeding a lot of people in Williamsburg. Over a hundred people a day, in fact.

Catherine is the Executive Director of Meals on Wheels in Williamsburg and has spent the past fourteen years working to make sure that locals who need a nourishing meal receive one at least once a day. Most Meals on Wheels programs in other cities offer meals to people who are 65 years or older, and who have no other means of providing a hot meal for themselves. The organization's services in this area are much broader.

"We are very unique because in James City County and in Williamsburg we can deliver to age 18 and older," Catherine explained. "The way someone qualifies for Meals on Wheels is to have the inability to prepare a meal because of a physical or mental impairment. We can deliver to somebody who just had knee surgery, maybe 43 years old, living alone who just needs the service for a couple of weeks. We've delivered meals to pregnant moms who have been put on bed rest and their husbands are overseas serving in Iraq. We can serve AIDS patients, young terminal cancer patients – anybody who wants to remain in their home."

Think of the meals you share in your own home. Eating together at the dinner table has traditionally been one of the ways we share as a family. Food is a gift of love in many homes and time around the table is one of sharing and good conversation. For those in poor health who lack an adequate support

Catherine Upton,
Executive Director
Meals on Wheels



system, mealtime can be a struggle and a time of isolation. That is where Meals on Wheels steps in.

Meals are prepared in the kitchen at William & Mary by dedicated Aramark employees. Sharon Scott has been working in William & Mary's food service for 30 years and is now giving to people in need by helping to prepare the agency's meals. There is always a hot tray with plentiful portions and a cold food bag containing milk, salad, dessert and a big piece of bread from the bakery for each recipient.

"They do a fabulous job," Catherine said. "The crew they have overseeing Meals on Wheels is handpicked and absolutely committed to Meals on Wheels as a project. They give special touches. If they know it's somebody's birthday they'll sneak a cupcake in with their meal. They're great with the volunteers as well."

Eighteen volunteers pick up the meals to deliver to those in need. "We like two people in a car," Catherine explained. "That way if they get to someone's home and we have a distress situation there is someone else to help." Many of these volunteers are people in your neighborhood who quietly disappear for a few hours during the day and then return home after giving to others by delivering the hot meals; these volunteers are the backbone of the organization and yet they often go about their work quietly and unrecognized for their efforts.

The crew they have overseeing Meals on Wheels is handpicked, absolutely committed to Meals on Wheels as a project.

Many people don't realize that Meals on Wheels in Williamsburg is available to people of almost all ages

because they are familiar with the organization from communities where they lived previously and typically those agencies only served older people.

"The assumption is that we are like everybody else and we're not," Catherine added.

There are even times when Meals on Wheels assists couples where the wife may be recovering from an operation and the husband is unable to prepare much more than a cold sandwich. "Is that the best nutrition for somebody who is recovering from surgery and who is also a diabetic?" Catherine questioned. "That person is going to get better nutrition by us bringing a meal in. He technically cannot prepare the food she needs."

Decisions about whether a situation qualifies for Meals on Wheels assistance are made on a case by case basis. In Williamsburg, under Catherine's watch, if you have a legitimate need Meals and Wheels will take care of you.

"I know I could never stay here and turn people away," she said. "So the best way is to be creative enough to find the money out there to do it."

Meals on Wheels in Williamsburg is funded in several ways. Five hundred to six hundred meals are served each week, but less than 10% of the expenses associated with them are funded through United Way. The majority of the organization's funds for continuous operation come through their own

fundraising efforts, grant writing and foundations. They also receive reimbursements from the Peninsula Agency on Aging, a “big brother” to their organization located in Newport News. A very small percentage of people who receive meals can cover the costs of their meals.

“We sat down and we said ‘how are we going to be able to achieve the goals?’” Catherine recounted. “If we know right now we’re paying for 70% of the meals, how are we going to keep up with those? So we decided to do an annual mailing campaign which has been successful. The amount of giving has increased over

the years but not at the same rate that the number of subsidized meals have. So how are we going to do that? This is when we came up with doing a year-long fundraising theme, Foodapalooza, where we developed three different fundraisers for the year.”

Foodapalooza is a creative name for a series of innovative fund raising events for Meals on Wheels. The first event, Fine Art of Living, was held at Towne Bank this past March and featured a live auction.

Catherine said, “I was so blessed that night because the auctioneer, Sally Moore, stopped everything after the first four or five auction items and said ‘Who will give me \$1,000 to feed one person for a year?’ \$7,500 was brought in by her doing that. I was amazed at the generosity of the audience for nothing – they weren’t taking home anything in their arms! What an awesome thing. I was so touched by that.”

A second event, Culinary Kids Cooking Contest, will be held October 13th in Legacy Hall. Any child 9 to 18 years of age can enter a category and bring a dish in to have it judged. This event is designed to educate youth and generate awareness for Meals on Wheels.

But the main event for Foodapalooza

will be held that same evening at a black tie gala at the Williamsburg Winery. This event is appropriately named Art in the Kitchen and will feature a demonstration by the renowned

Art Smith as the evening’s centerpiece. Art Smith is best known for his role as Oprah Winfrey’s personal chef and for his books, *Back to the Table: The Reunion of Food and Family* and *Kitchen Life: Real Food for Real Families*. A tented dining room will be constructed for the evening with a center stage for Art where he will have his own kitchen to prepare the evening’s dishes for the audience; Good Seasons catering

company will also prepare the same items to serve attendees.

“I have such a love for this program,” Catherine said with a genuine seriousness. “There are Meals on Wheels programs that have waiting lists. Williamsburg’s does not. We live in a great place where there are lots of people willing to help. We just have to get the word out there. And to turn somebody away – I just couldn’t do it here.” NDN

Want to go to Foodapalooza on October 13th?

Tickets go on sale Sept. 20th. They may be purchased at Towne Bank at 5216 Monticello Avenue or from Top Flight Productions (757) 566-3637 Ext. 2. \$175 Single, \$300 Couple. Tax Deductible. Proceeds go to Meals on Wheels.

Sponsors of Foodapalooza events are:

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Sharon Scott prepares a meal for Meals on Wheels. She has been with William & Mary’s food service for 30 years.

Next Door Neighbors’ Q&A with

Art Smith

When did your passion for becoming a chef begin? Who were the influences in your life?



Art Smith

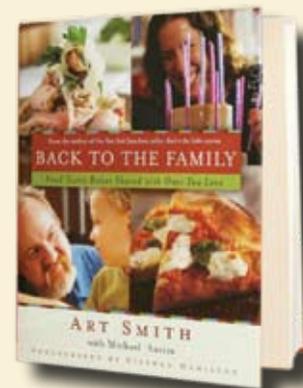
I was raised by wonderful women. I think we emulate in life through the people who are in our lives. My mother and grandmother were big influences. When you cook for people they love you and cooking for others is a way of showing that you love people.

What motivated you to become an author?

After twenty years of working for very powerful and famous people, I saw how our society looks upon these leaders and entertainers as mentors. But everyone is a mentor. It doesn’t matter who you are, we all want to be loved. Food is one of the simplest ways to show your appreciation.

Your newest book is *Back to the Family*. What do you hope readers will take away from it?

The gift of my book is that it has stories with the recipes. You have to have the time for the stories and hopefully be inspired to spend more time with family and cook for them.





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What are your Family Values?

Peggy Rudnick and Tim Stambaugh of Beacon Counseling share their professional insight.

By Suzanne S. Lanier

If you google 'family values' you'll find links to traditional family values, universal family values, family values as a political concept, raising moral children, raising feminist daughters and a nudist resort that heralds family values (sunscreen recommended). You can click on the Simpson family values, French family values and stores that sell books on family values. You can read about Republican family values, Democrat family values, Giuliani family values, Murdoch family values and the Soprano family values, and learn what happens when you abandon family values and/or restore family values.

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary lists the following definitions of the words 'family' and 'value':

fam•i•ly

- A group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head
- The basic unit in society tradition-

ally consisting of two parents rearing their children; also, any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family

val•ue

- Something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable

fam•i•ly val•ues has its own entry:

- Values, especially of a traditional or conservative kind, which are held to promote the sound functioning of the family and to strengthen the fabric of society

Wikipedia's definition of 'family values' is more encompassing:

- The concept of 'family values' is rooted in each individual culture thus making the values different for different societies. In addition, cultures change over time in response to economic, political, and cultural developments. Therefore, 'family values' vary from household to household, from country to country, and from generation to generation.

So...what are your family values? What are they based on and why did you choose them? Or do you figure them out as issues arise? Do your kids know them? Can they defend them?



Peggy Reines Rudnick, LCSW, BCD

Peggy Rudnick and Tim Stambaugh are therapists with Beacon Counseling, a multidisciplinary practice which was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles. Rudnick is a board certified counselor in clinical social work with almost 24 years of experience in counseling and psychotherapy.

When asked how to instill strong values in young children, she answered, "Living what you value and being an example for your children on a daily basis is a way to instill these values. For example, speaking about loving one's neighbor at home, church or synagogue is a beginning, but this becomes a heart value when the "doing" is seen in our daily lives, even in simple ways such as taking time to talk with neighbors or remembering to ask about ill family members. Modeling by behavior is a powerful witness of our beliefs and values."

Stambaugh, a counselor with a mas-

ter's degree from Asbury Seminary and 13 years experience, agrees.

"Actions speak louder than words," he said. "You are always teaching your values to your children, more by what you do than what you tell them. Of course, it is good to talk about what you believe and the rationale behind your value system, but children see how you act and react to situations. Modeling positive values is the best way for kids to learn positive values."

The path to learning can be a crooked one. "There is no new thing under the sun," says Rudnick. "The underlying problems that bring a person in for counseling today are similar to what they were 25 years ago, though

I do believe that today's problems are more widespread. The sophistication of information systems today makes

everything easily accessible in a very short time. People making bad choices can now buy drugs online, view pornography whenever they want, spend time "intimately" chatting with strangers online and then take dangerous risks to

meet these people without knowing whether anything they've been told is true."

Bad impulses are not easily ignored in this day and age. With such readily available access, impulses can quickly become habitual behaviors.

"Disengagement, addictions (alcohol, drugs, food, sex, money), and

"You are always teaching your values to your children, more by what you do than what you tell them."

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abuse (physical, psychological, sexual) are extremely prevalent in our culture today,” Rudnick continued. “Many people with a deep internal hunger are looking to feed that hunger with something physical, when this internal longing can only be filled spiritually.”

Stambaugh is encouraged that the number of individuals, couples and families seeking help with the difficulties in their lives has increased. “It seems that we are beginning to get over the negative stigma that has long been attached to any form of therapy,” he commented. “In the past, men have sought therapy less than women, but men are discovering that therapy is helpful and many are consistently coming to counseling and sharing this with their friends.”

Rudnick has also seen an increase in her client base. “Along with the negatives about increased information in our culture, there are positives, and one of those is the globalization of counseling and psychotherapy.”

Think of how often we find ourselves not really listening to someone. Most people want to be heard, understood, and truly *seen* by another human being.

“Even though people are seeking help a little sooner, it is still difficult to open oneself, become vulnerable, and ask for help when you are in pain,” Rudnick said. “As a trusting relationship evolves in counseling, and guidance is offered that is rooted in funda-

mental concepts, people can receive or discard whatever they choose within a relationship of acceptance. Our culture places a high value on independence and self-sufficiency. ‘Need’ is not looked upon favorably.”

Generally, it is during people’s early years in life that they begin to form the foundation of their beliefs about themselves and the world around them. “Core values are usually developing early in life,” Stambaugh explained. “Good modeling of the truth about life and what is reasonable and healthy will have a positive influence over time. Josh McDowell, in his book *The Disconnected Generation*, says ‘rules without relationship lead to rebellion.’ It is helpful to connect students

with mentors, positive role models, and activities in church and service organizations where positive peer pressure is prevalent and leaders model healthy relationships,” he said.

The best models for relationships should start at home. How parents live their lives greatly impacts how their children will live theirs. On your next family night, instead of watching a movie or playing a game together, try discussing your family’s values. Ask your children what they believe to be your family values and see if their words reflect the lives you have been living. NDN

Tim Stambaugh, MA, LPC





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what makes a **happy** family?

By Linda Landreth Phelps

A happy family has been said to be a foretaste of heaven. Thomas Jefferson wrote that 'The happiest moments of my life have been the few which I have passed at home in the bosom of my family.' The desire for an idyllic family transcends all religious boundaries. Whatever our religious persuasion or personal beliefs are, we may define family differently, but we all hold some basic, fundamental principles in common.

A family begins with two people and can remain at that size, but most couples who marry hope to have children. Sometimes a

new marriage includes children from a previous relationship (an instant, blended family!) In other cases families grow through adoption. The much-loved Pope John Paul II declared that 'To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children.'

A 'joyful family', as the late Pope John Paul II urged us to strive for, is just what Bishop Douglas Bowman, leader of the Jamestown Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, feels that his faith will provide. He also believes that the Mormon

church functions admirably as a service organization for the building of an ideal happy family. Doug lives in Williamsburg with his wife, Caroline, and their three small children, eight, five and two.

'As Mormons, we believe that God's intent is for our families here on earth to be eternal in heaven. Mormon doctrine holds that establishing the family is central to the purpose of our time here since personal and spiritual lessons are learned through the process that wouldn't be possible otherwise. One

- continued on page 21

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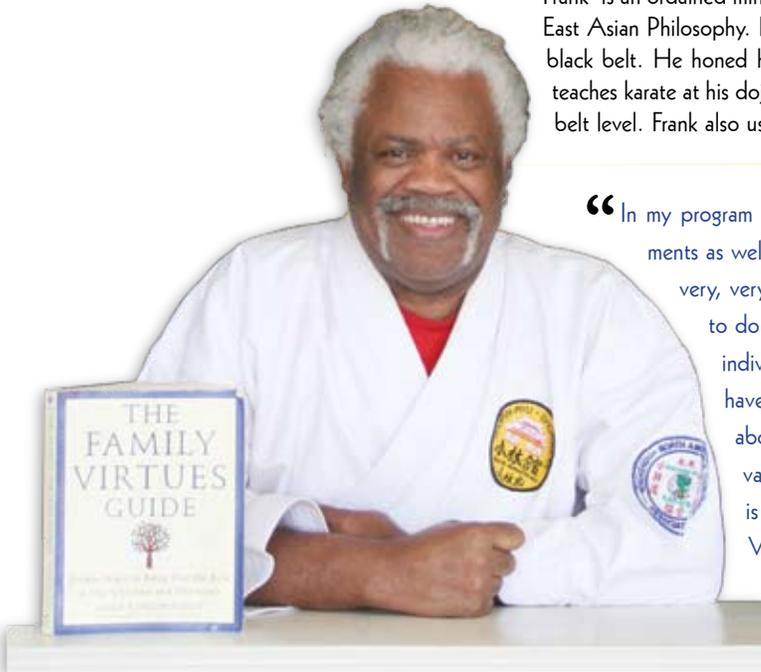
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Dr. Frank Hargrove

gets a kick out of teaching kids

Frank is an ordained minister and a graduate of Regent University Divinity School with a doctorate in East Asian Philosophy. He also happens to be pretty good at karate. In fact, Frank is an 8 degree black belt. He honed his karate skills while living in the orient and attending college. Frank now teaches karate at his dojo in Lee Hall, but he does more than show kids how they can earn the next belt level. Frank also uses his classes to teach them life skills and virtues.



“ In my program I teach not only the physical requirements, but mental and social requirements as well. Karate is something that helps develop self-discipline and kids develop a very, very positive attitude about themselves because everything they do, they have to do it. Each goal they reach, they have to reach it individually. Reaching those individual goals gives you self-confidence. And it's like building blocks. If you have a goal then you know how to shoot for it. That's what the belt levels are about. We don't just give them goals on kicking and punching, but on family values too. They have to show self-discipline, consideration, happiness. What is happiness? We sit down and we talk to them. We sit down with our Family Virtues Guide and we talk about those things before we start to kick and punch. ” - Dr. Frank Hargrove

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Christiana Hoff

learns about giving, by giving

Twice a year King of Glory Lutheran Church holds a large consignment sale and Kay Hoff uses this event, along with everyday opportunities, to teach her 11 year old daughter, Christiana, about the importance of giving. Like many mothers, Kay believes that the best teacher is modeling. She teaches her about giving "things" and about giving "time". Christiana works at the church sale just like her mother. At the last sale, she helped with checkout and organizing the items for sale.



Christiana Hoff with her mother, Kay

“ I know we sometimes go through our rooms and look on our shelves and in our closet and we say, 'Does this really give us joy? Do we really need it?' And if not, we put them in different bags and we either give them to Disabled Vets or give them to the consignment sale. ” - Christiana Hoff

Next Door Neighbors

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Giving Hope & Changing Lives

By Meredith Collins

Avalon's motto is "Giving Hope, Changing Lives". Erin Pitre takes that motto seriously. She is one of a handful of caring employees and volunteers who devote many hours to improving the lives of others by giving women and their children a place to escape from abusive or violent domestic situations. Equally important is the organization's transitional resources that enable some of these women to learn and hopefully attain a better way of life.

"Our mission is to intervene and reduce the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault," Erin said. "In order to do that we offer support, advocacy, and education to raise awareness throughout the community."

Erin is the Resource Development Coordinator for the organization and she wants you to know all about Avalon. While her job is to get the word out about the services Avalon provides it is not merely her job. It is Erin's mission to put at risk women in touch with Avalon's services and it is her passion to see these women's lives affected by her outreach and that of others

who provide counseling, guidance and volunteer services to women in need.

Many people have heard of Avalon and think of it as a 'shelter for battered women' – a place where women with black eyes and split lips

can find refuge to escape an unhealthy relationship that has escalated to violence. But Avalon is much more than that.

In fact, Avalon wants to be a resource before the abuse escalates to violence. According to the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, phys-



Erin Pitre

ical violence is really the most extreme and apparent form of domestic violence. Patterns of behavior that lead to physical violence may have started long before and center on one person's need for power and control over another. Anything from intimidation to isolation to coercion and threats might be considered a part of that cycle. People who are affected by this may have the same values as you, hold a good paying job, pay their bills on time and seemingly live very ordinary lives. But inside the home very unhealthy and sometimes frightening behaviors may be taking place.

"The premise of domestic violence is that one person wants to have power and control over another," Erin explained. "That person might be a spouse, that person could be a parent, that person could be a child. Domestic violence is not just between a husband and wife. In fact, elder abuse is becoming more and more common where the children abuse their parents."

Avalon provides a safe place for women to go when they are victims of abuse at home. These women might be victims of emotional abuse, sexual abuse or violence. What's more, they could be someone you know right in your neighborhood...or, you may be a victim yourself. While people like to think of domestic violence as something that occurs only in 'bad neighborhoods' the reality is that it crosses all socioeconomic boundaries.

"Alcohol, drug abuse, finances contribute to it," Erin pointed out. "But it transcends demographics."

How does domestic violence touch the lives of women living in the Williamsburg area?

"Statistically, one in three women experience some type of abuse in their lives," Erin said. This accounts for a much greater number than those who actually seek help. "Last year, Avalon alone served 135 women and children through the emergency shelter and 30 through the transitional apartments."

While some women go to Avalon only as a way of coping with a situation that has escalated out of control, others seek more than refuge. Some women choose a course of action that will help put them on a different road. Instead of returning to their husband or boyfriend after a few days at Avalon, they choose to move into a transitional lifestyle where they stay for up to 45 days and

receive counseling, education, guidance and life skills that will help them break the cycle. Their children can stay there with them as long as there are no males over the age of 11. The next step is moving into a transitional apartment where they could live for up to two years while they are making life changing progress – working, saving money and preparing for life on their own.

Normally Erin is not on the front line when women seek shelter at Avalon. But because she is the only person there who speaks Spanish, she recalled an episode where she worked directly with a Spanish-speaking woman who sought refuge.

"I had direct contact with the client," Erin remembered. "She just kept telling me over and over again, 'It's for the kids. The kids are very sad. They want to go back to their dad but I know I want to stay here. I want help.' And she was so torn because she wanted to stay here. She knew that we could help her. Her daughter in particular, who was seven years old, really wanted to go back home. And she ultimately did because of the kids. I had to support the decision she made regardless of whether I agreed with it or not. And that was hard."

While situations such as these are difficult, there are success stories that keep Erin and others going. There is the success of the organization itself that began in 1979 as a small focus group of local women who were interested in the safety of their neighbors. Within a year they had set up a 24-hour hotline in the basement of a church. Today, there are case managers, a residence counselor, volunteers and other employees serving the cause, a community outreach program and more. There is the success of the grants, many of which Erin helps write, that have kept the facility operating over the years thus enabling them to affect the lives of so many more women and children. There is the success of the individual donors who graciously provide Avalon with funds that make up the shortfall from grants and enable them to continue serving others.

And then there are the success stories of the women themselves, those who turn their lives to a new direction that is free from abuse. It is these women, like Carmen Blair, that make all of the efforts and the occasional disappointments more than just worthwhile. They make them invaluable. NDN

Carmen's Story

Carmen first came to Avalon in 1994 seeking help from a challenging marriage.

How long did you stay?

I stayed for about a year. I stayed four months, then went and stayed in a motel for about two months, and then came back into the shelter. I was pregnant.

Did you have the baby while you were at Avalon?

Yes, I had the baby here.

And you transitioned here?

I transitioned to one of the apartments.

Did you stay the full time allowed here?

No. When my son was five months old I found public housing in Yorktown. I secured it and didn't want to lose it so I moved. I didn't stay the whole two years here that they wanted to give me.

Your life has moved forward. How old is your son now?

My son will be thirteen in October.

You actually work here now as the Volunteer Coordinator. What happened in those years in between? How did you get to this point?

While I was at Avalon, I got the counseling that I needed. I had budgeting classes, they showed me ways to strengthen my credit,

they covered first-time home buying situations. While I was here I secured a job at a local hotel. I cleaned rooms while I was pregnant and after the baby was born I went back. So then I got two jobs and I worked toward buying my own home which I bought five years after leaving Avalon. I went back to Key Business College and did a computer office application course and worked odd jobs. Then I applied to Avalon and I got the job.

How long have you worked here?

Since 2004.

Have you raised your son on your own?

My mother has been living with me. I'm originally from Jamaica and going through what I was going through I was still fighting immigration issues because my ex-husband wouldn't sign papers and stuff like that. So the law that was passed in 1994 about a woman being married to an American citizen and who can prove abuse can get her legal status, so I went that route. But when I went in we found out that he was already married so in reality he wasn't legally married to me so they threw out those papers and I had to start all over again. But I am now an American citizen, I can proudly say. Last October I became an American citizen.

When you look back, what were those early days at Avalon like?

It was scary. When I came into Avalon it was my first time in a shelter setting. I was scared. Miserable. Sick with my pregnancy. But the staff here at the time, especially my case manager, worked with me. Being from another country, the culture - you wouldn't open up. You wouldn't tell some things because of trust issues or you didn't know how they would take it. But when they finished showing me that it wasn't my fault - what I went through, and that there was another way, I said, 'Hey, this kind of looks like it can work out.' Eventually when I started seeing things come into place then I realized that these people knew what they were talking about and I just followed what they said. It worked.

And now? What does your future hold?

Now I'm going back to school. I'm at Thomas Nelson Community College taking business administration courses. I'm trying to get back to my 3.5 grade point average so I can transfer to William & Mary. I'm working hard at that.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AVALON VISIT:

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Carmen Blair turned to Avalon for help in 1994. Now, she works for Avalon as the Volunteer Coordinator.

Strengthen the Ties that Bind

by Linda Landreth Phelps

Owning a television was an exciting novelty not so many years ago; the little round screen with black and white images flickered in the dark, lighting the faces of children and their parents mesmerized by the new medium. Those were the days when technology served as a facilitator for family closeness.

Compare that scene to today: Dad's alone

in the family room watching his TiVo'd football game; Mom is on the Internet, researching soccer camps for the kids who are upstairs in their separate bedrooms. Brother's doing homework to the tunes on his iPod and Sis is texting friends on her cell phone. How's a family supposed to be close when the 21st century seems to conspire to isolate us? The answer is apparent - it takes time and we've got to work at it.

One way to build intentional closeness

is to get involved together in a recreational activity such as camping, a sport, or an organization such as the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts of America. Here parents and children can share in wholesome activities that build character and develop leadership, strong values, social conscience, and conviction about their own potential and self-worth.

For the last twelve years, Shelia and Dennis Crawford of Jamestown made sure that their 17 year old son, Cameron, was involved in scouting wherever they lived. During Cameron's early teens his father and he went to every meeting and on all the camping trips together. Dennis says, "Cameron is about to earn his Eagle Scout ranking with a project that will give his neighborhood a trail that affords access to the creek that runs beside it. It's been a long, complicated process that involved getting many permits and securing wetlands protection approval."

Dennis' investment of time in scouting

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with his son has helped form a close relationship with Cameron. It has also encouraged Cameron to be involved with his community. He is already an entrepreneur, earning enough with his year-round lawn maintenance customers and full time summer job on the grounds crew of the golf course at Ford's Colony to pay for gas for his truck, an active social life, and still put away a significant amount towards anticipated school expenses. His parents are understandably proud. "We don't just love Cameron," Dennis says with a smile. "We actually LIKE him!"

Elizabeth Chisolm, with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Williamsburg, an agency that matches adults willing to invest time to build

Cameron shows off one of the bird houses that will be a part of the natural neighborhood trail he is developing.

a relationship with a child living in an at-risk environment, says that one of the challenges of their organization is to help children engage in activities that they may not be exposed to in their own families. Elizabeth says, "One of our 'Littles' loves to cook, so they go over to their 'Big's' house, cook a meal, and sit down together to eat. That's something that has often been lost - the time for a family meal together." Even though the pace of modern living has brought with it dual incomes, twelve-hour shifts, and Happy Meals devoured in the car on the way to somewhere, a regularly scheduled time to sit down together and break bread - even if it's just a toaster waffle on Sunday mornings - goes a long way towards establishing unity and strengthening family ties. Turning off the phone and TV for an uninterrupted meal puts the fam-

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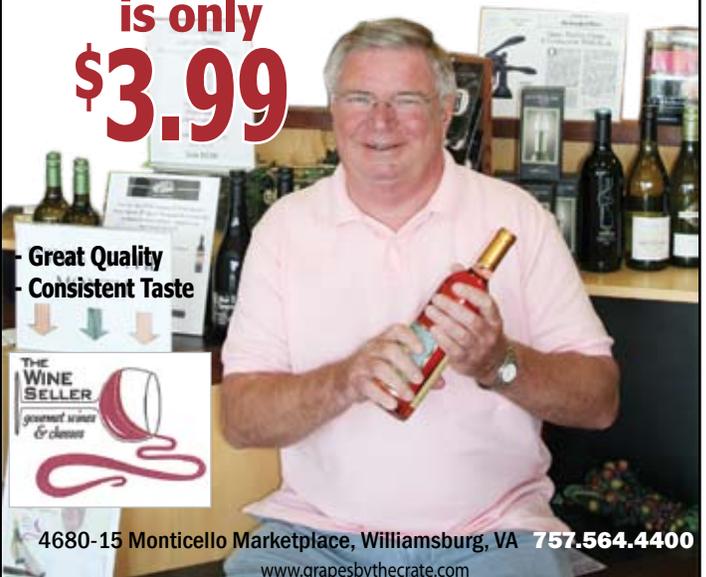
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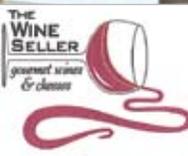
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ily first and reminds everyone that they're an essential part of it.

Prioritizing time together is crucial, but sometimes the option to be heavily involved or at home with our children or elderly parents just isn't there. Families are often headed by a single working parent, and even in traditional two-parent families having that choice can seem more and more like a luxury...or even a fantasy.

If you have the freedom to spend time with your small children during the day, you might consider a playgroup where you can be together in a fun, upbeat atmosphere, making friends while learning the ropes of parenting. Family Focus, a program of the Colonial Services Board, works to strengthen the bonds of families with young children by offering an array of supportive and educational services to anyone who is interested.

Sheree Press, Program Manager for Family Focus - Williamsburg, says, "Families with children ranging in age from birth to six

are welcome to attend adult/child interactive playgroups held at Family Focus - Williamsburg in the York River Baptist Church on Croaker Road, or Family Focus - Graf-ton, located at St Mark Lutheran Church. For Spanish-speaking families, groups are held at Wellsprings United Methodist Church at 4871 Longhill Road. The Hispanic groups, along with a wide variety of parenting classes, are grant funded by the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation."

Maybe the best a time-challenged parent can do is make sure their children have a good place to hang out in the free time that they're not able to share

with them. Francie Teer, the Director of Development for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula says, "At Boys & Girls Clubs we want to give young people between the ages of 6 and 15 the tools to become mature, responsible adults. Boys & Girls Clubs is opening a new school-based program in Queens Lake Middle School this fall. It's our first Williamsburg area Club and we're so excited about the ability to serve kids in that area! This new location is the result of collaboration between the York County School System, Boys & Girls Clubs and concerned citizens and parents."



Elizabeth Chisolm, Executive Director of Big Brothers & Sisters of Williamsburg

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Occasionally it's good to remind ourselves that we're part of an ongoing dynamic flow of relationships. Is the dust pretty thick on the old family album? An evening spent together perusing the pages and laughing at how thin and young we used to be and how cute they were as babies can bring about a fresh appreciation of family history and secure our roots to the past.

Families have their roots in the past, they bloom in the present, and they'll continue to grow throughout the future if we take time to nurture them now.

Plain photo albums seem pretty tame, however, since scrapbooking became a popular art form. Preserving and sharing your history through cherished photos, documents, memorabilia and stories helps strengthen family ties, particularly when the younger generation can be involved with the project's

creation.

Crystal Davis of Charles City County was shopping recently in Stamp N Memories, a store in the Monticello Marketplace crammed with supplies and beautiful examples of paper craftsmanship. Crystal was picking up a stencil to use for a special project in her own scrapbook album.

"We buried my mother last Wednesday," Crystal said. "She loved flowers and the color red, so I'm going to do a page for her using red flowers. I've got pictures of when my mom was in high school and from when my mom and dad first got together." Crystal and her mother, Nancy Christian, spent precious hours together during her last illness, digging out old pictures and identifying the people in them, reminiscing about the years when Nancy and her husband were raising their children. Crystal and her five siblings.

are now collaborating on a genealogy. Crystal says she'll incorporate the genealogy along with recipes such as macaroni and cheese and ribs that her mother was famous for in the scrapbook. "Now my sisters say they all want copies!" she laughed. "My boys are in their twenties and I'm hoping to have grandchildren one day that I can pass these things down to," she said, crossing her fingers. "I don't want it to die with me; I'd sure hate for our family history to be lost."

However challenging it might be, it's important to do whatever we can to create, strengthen, and maintain family bonds. Families have their roots in the past, they bloom in the present, and they'll continue to grow throughout the future if we take time to nurture them now. NDN

Sheree Press is the Program Manager for Family Focus. Behind her, Jennifer Rubin spends time with her daughters, Maya and Hannah.



What local teens
say about

PEER PRESSURE

By Karen Haywood Queen

Peer pressure. We hear so much about teens and their 20-something older brothers and sisters blaming their friends for their bad behavior. After talking with local teens, it's obvious that peer pressure is present in their lives. But for these teens, peer pressure is a positive - not a negative - influence. They haven't closed their eyes to what's out there. They know when and where the wild parties are. They know other kids are having sex. But they'll pass, thank you. They don't really feel tempted.



Casey Holmes

"There's definitely the whole party thing," says Casey Holmes, a senior at Bruton High School. "You get invited to parties, but I don't go because I'm not into all that stuff."

Yes, parents, these are exactly the kind of parties you worry about. But kids like Casey, who is active in her church youth group and vice president of the band at Bruton, and the others we interviewed are hanging out with their friends or staying home instead of going to parties where they'll feel pressure. "Most of the parties are by word of mouth and you can tell (what kind of party it is) by who is inviting you," Casey says.

The key to resisting peer pressure, the teens say, is surrounding themselves with friends who are good influences, keeping busy and spending time with family.

In fact, these factors are linked. "Although it is often assumed that parents and peers are opposing forces, our research shows that teenagers who have close relationships with their parents often have friends who are positive influences on their behavior - who encourage them to do well in school and stay out of trouble," says Laurence Steinberg, distinguished professor of psychology at Temple University and author of *The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting*.

It's a simple formula:

"Stay out of trouble by staying away from the party crowd," says Adrienne Stewart, a senior at Williamsburg Christian Academy, who has a close relationship with her family. "There's just a small group of people who party so it's easy to be free of them," she says. "There's always a party, but it's not as hard for me because I just decided I didn't want to do that."

Other local teens echo her thoughts. "I don't even get peer pressure," says Landis Gardner, a freshman at Bruton High School. "The people I hang out with - we don't even think about doing stuff like that."

Logan Jones, a junior at the new Warhill High School, mainly hangs out with her boyfriend and a few close friends. "I'm just never at a place where I would get peer pressured into doing anything," Logan says. "I'm never really around the wrong crowd."

For Casey and Landis, their main peer group is the band - and band keeps them pretty busy. "It's fun," Landis says of band. "The people who are in the band are nice people. Everyone works hard and that's nice. We all have something in common because we all know how to play music."

In addition to band, Casey plays field hockey. Adrienne plays volleyball, basketball and soccer and is vice president of the Student Council Association. Logan is one of the yearbook editors.

These busy teens also value time with their families. Our discussions with local

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teenagers reflect results of an extensive survey conducted by the Associated Press and MTV where young people responded that spending time with family was what made them happiest.

"I look at my family time as my down time," Adrienne says. "I don't need to be by myself as long as I'm with my family."

Even though her sisters are older, 20 and 24, Adrienne's family still has dinner together at least once a week. "We always sit at the table together for a long time and talk," Adrienne says. "We love to play cards and watch movies."



Logan Jones

We talked to Logan while she was on vacation with her family at Wrightsville Beach, N.C. "I like going on vacation with my friends," Logan said. "But I like going with my family too."

Now that school's back in session and the family is back in a routine, Logan's family has dinner together nearly every night. "During the school year, we all have dinner together," Logan says. "I think it's important. We used to play games every weekend. Now, we'll watch a movie together."

Like the Gardner family, the Jones fam-

ily also gets together with grandparents and other extended family. "We go visit my grandparents who live in the Northern Neck," she says.

Logan has brothers, ages 13 and 8, and says that despite the age difference they are close because of the time they spend together. "A lot of people think family isn't important because your family is always going to be there," she says. "I think family is important. The more time you spend together, the closer you get."

For Casey, the fact that her family is always there is one of the reasons they're so important. "Your family is

like your core that you can always fall back on," she says. "At least in my case, they're always there for me. I know I can count on them."

Sometimes the line between friends and family is blurred. The Stewart family grew especially close while living in Taiwan for seven years. They went through culture shock upon arriving and again on their return to the United States. Adrienne counts her sisters among her closest friends.

"My older sisters and I got a lot closer,"

Adrienne says. "We had only each other for a long time before we adjusted to the culture."

Now that they're home, her sisters, who came back earlier for college, can understand what she's going through. "My sisters had been through everything I had and knew all the same people," Adrienne says. "I could talk to them and relate to them."

So parents, get to know your teens' friends and make sure they, like your teen, are good kids. Keep your teen busy with worthwhile activities and be involved in their lives. Grab him or her for a big hug, prepare a nice dinner and set aside time from activities to talk. The more quality time you spend with your teens, the more you will impact their lives in a positive way.

Karen Queen and her husband, Eric, have a daughter, 10, and a son, 14, who pretends he'd rather not be hugged. They eat together several nights a week and have a family games night at least once a week. NDN

Publisher's Note:

The teens interviewed for this story had very positive things to say about peer pressure, and clearly model the behaviors of their parents and other adult mentors.

However, as we all know, there are teens who do get into trouble. It would be challenging to interview young people who do engage in activities that are not healthy, readily accepted or perhaps even illegal. While we don't have first-hand interviews, we do know there are surveys that provide data on local teens who do exhibit negative behavior.

In an August 2006 Study conducted by the Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition, a number of statistics emerged that point to areas of concern regarding behavior among some teens in the Williamsburg area:

Among 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders at WJCC schools 17.5% of students reported Attacking Someone with Intent to Harm in the past year. Getting Suspended is the second most prevalent antisocial behavior, with 13.6% of WJCC students reporting having been suspended in the past year. 10.8% admitted to being drunk or high at school and 6.1% said they sold drugs.

For more information about this survey, contact Gina Thorne, Coalition Director, at 757-476-5070. Email: gthorne@tni.net

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- continued from page 9

of our prophets said that 'No other success can compensate for failure in the home' so you can see that this belief is foundational. Latter Day Saints (LDS) families receive a lot of instruction as part of our three hours of Sunday services. These lessons are designed to help men and women (who meet separately during this part of the service) learn how to be effective husbands, wives, and parents. In addition, Monday nights are set aside all over the world as Family Home Evening."

On a typical Monday night in an LDS home, there are no church meetings scheduled, no ballet lessons or soccer games, no television, nothing to interfere or conflict with the chance to get together to share a time of worship and fun with family.

"The evening can start with scripture," Doug says, "or a short lesson by anyone, perhaps sharing a talent, some singing, followed by a snack. The church places primary importance on a mother or father training their children. The late President Harold B. Lee, declared, 'The greatest work we will ever do will be between the walls of our own home.'

Billy Graham, the beloved iconic figure sometimes referred to fondly and half-facetiously as 'The Protestant Pope', had this to say in his

syndicated newspaper column:

'The family should be a closely knit group. The home should be a self-contained shelter of security; a kind of school where life's basic lessons are taught; and a kind of church where God is honored; a place where wholesome recreation and simple pleasures are enjoyed.'

Rev. Graham's recipe for a happy family is being followed in homes of all faiths. Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky, who has served as the rabbi at Temple Beth El for just two months,

says, "Family is really important for Jews. It's a tradition among the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe that children be named after relatives who have passed away. It keeps the name or spirit of the relative alive.



Rabbi Me'irah Iliinsky holding her Tzedekah box.

My mother named me for her late mother whose name was Helen, which means 'Light' in Greek. My Hebrew name, Me'irah, means 'to light up, or illuminate'. How fitting a name for a new rabbi whose job it is to bring meaning to scripture, teach and serve her first congregation.

Me'irah recently made a career shift after years of being a clinical social worker. She didn't have a Jewish education when she was a child, but became interested in her spiritual heritage as a high school and college student. When she became an adult she joined a synagogue and became quite active. In midlife, with her sons grown, she decided that she wanted to be a rabbi. "You only have one life and that's what I wanted to do," she said. Me'irah put into practice the words of the famous first century scholar, Rabbi Hillel: 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am not for others, what am I? And if not now, when?'

Rabbi Iliinsky did some "illuminating" about what a family would experience on Shabbat, or the Jewish Sabbath. Shabbat begins on Friday, twenty minutes before the sun sets, with prayers and the lighting of candles.

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rusalem in A.D. 70, the focus of our religion has become the home. The Shabbat table is the altar, the priest is the head of the house, and the bread we break and prayers we say are the sacrifices. Families gather for Shabbat to cease from their work and acknowledge God and to be together. Even in Israel where

half the people are non-religious, Jews go home for Shabbat to spend time together," she said.

Traditionally, as the sunset candles are lit, the husband sings a blessing to his wife, praising her with words from Proverbs 31, extolling her as a woman of valor whose worth is far above rubies. Some couples remove their wedding rings while performing the weekly ritual of handwashing, renew their marriage commitment, and return the rings to their fingers.

"During Shabbat we teach our children the three pillars of Judaism - Torah, Tefillah, and Tzedekah. Torah is the study of

scripture and tradition, Tefillah is prayer, and Tzedekah is righteous living. As part of the study of Judaism in the home, we teach them that life on earth is a gift and you owe back, so we need to perform acts of righteousness and charity."

"Here, see this?" The rabbi took down from her mantle a small box with a slot in the top, painted with purple flowers, including irises, and Hebrew characters. "My mother's name was Iris, so when I saw this Tzedekah

box, I just had to have it," she smiled. "We put coins in this box before prayers to remind us life is not just for our own pleasure, but that we must improve the world in some way, either large or small. After it's full, the money must be spent for charitable things - support of a favorite charity or food for the poor, whatever the family decides."

A very meaningful part of the Shabbat service in Me'irah's home was always the

blessings she bestowed on her sons as they grew. "My boys are grown men now and live thousands of miles away, but on Friday night the phone will ring and it's likely to be one of my sons, asking for his blessing.

"I would place my hands on their heads, like this..." she demonstrated how she covered their heads with her hands. "...and pronounce the benediction on them." Here she repeated a prayer which was given to Moses and is familiar to Jew and Gentile alike.

"May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you His peace."

Peace - that truly would be a foretaste of heaven. Heaven on earth would be a world where the children we're raising in the families of today, whatever their faith, would all follow the words of Rabbi Hillel.

"What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow; that is the whole Law: the rest is commentary." NDN

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Judy Henley

Hey Neighbor!

The 2nd Annual Cut Out Breast Cancer Cut-A-Thon will be held on September 29, 2007 from 10 am to 2 pm at the Williamsburg Outlet Mall. Local salons will cut hair between those hours with all proceeds being donated to the American Cancer Society for Breast Cancer Awareness. There will also be mystery box raffles containing lots of wonderful prizes with all proceeds being donated as well. Look good with a new cut and feel good knowing that you have helped in the fight against breast cancer.

Mandy Madden
757-259-7444

Hey Neighbor!

DONATE TO THE DREAM! First Annual Yard Sale Fundraiser for Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center. Saturday, October 27th, 2007, 7:30 am - 2:00 pm. All proceeds will go towards developing and enhancing our programs that provide equine-assisted therapy to special needs individuals.

Items Needed: Furniture, Working Electronics, Toys, Books, Sporting Equipment, Household Items, Clothing on Hangers
Drop Off: At the Riding Center: 10120 Fire Tower Road, Toano, VA

When: Anytime between now and October 26th. Tax deductible donation forms are available. Thank you in advance for your support. Hope to see you at the sale on the 27th!

Sue Pearce, President

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center
757-566-1775

Hey Neighbor!

The Heritage Humane Society Auxiliary is presenting its 7th annual "Puttin' on the Dog" Fashion Show and Luncheon on Monday, October 8, 2007. Jim Fields, of Lili's of Ghent, will be presenting his fashions once again! Named "Best in Norfolk" for the 14th year in a row, Lili's of Ghent offers fashions which are innovative and unique in design. Plan to do your holiday shopping in October - Jim's boutique will feature a variety of merchandise including fashions, jewelry,

our "Shelter Animal All Stars" modeling the latest in pet fashions! We will be returning to the Crowne Plaza Williamsburg at Fort Magruder for this special fashion show. So make your reservations early for what promises to be a fantastic afternoon! You may download the sign-up sheet from the Heritage Humane Society's web site: www.heritagehumanesociety.org or for more information please call Diane Kelly at 229-8023 or Karen Cossman at 253-8718. Tables of 10 are available if desired.

Christie L. Chipps

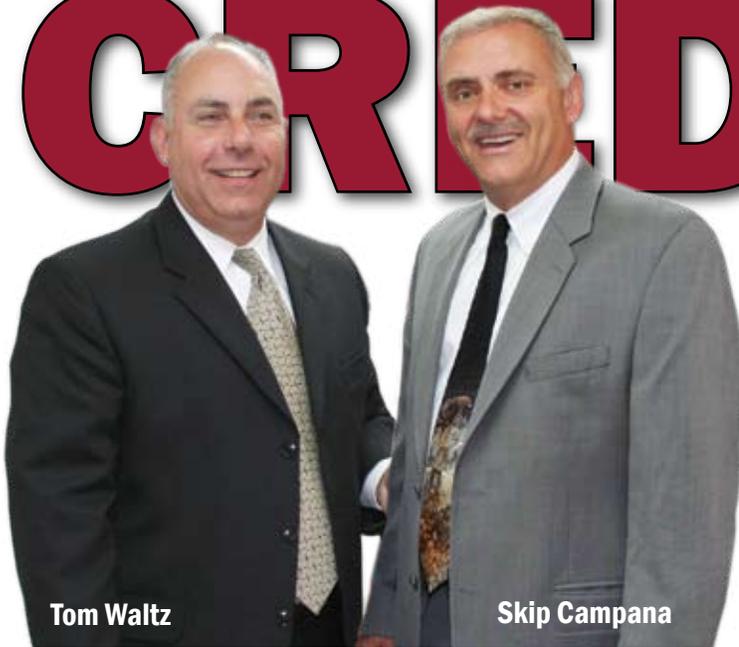
Director of Development
Heritage Humane Society

Want to know more about Hey Neighbor!?

Hey Neighbor! is a way of communicating good things happening in Williamsburg. It is primarily for individuals and non-profit organizations to have a forum for sharing information that will benefit others - similar to chatting with your neighbor over the fence about something you think your neighbors would want to know.

Inclusion in the Hey Neighbor! feature requires the full name of the person submitting the information and a telephone number. (Phone numbers do not have to be published.) Space and relevancy of content are considerations for publishing. *Next Door Neighbors* reserves the right to edit as necessary.

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