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The BASD Parent

Bethlehem Area School District

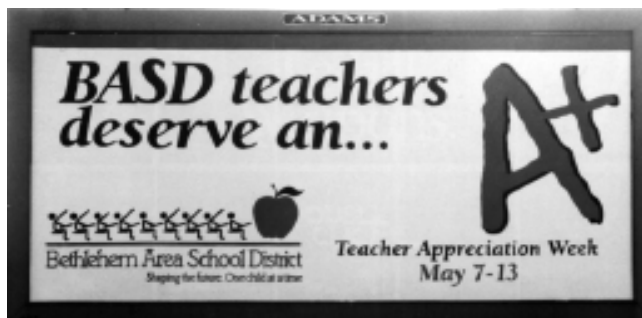
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Meeting the Challenge of Raising Well-Adjusted, Happy Children

Binge drinking. School-aged violence. AIDS...

A parent in the new millennium is likely to face far more serious social issues with their young and teenage children than their own parents faced when they were young. At times, these problems can seem overwhelming. Parents wonder what they can do to help their children, to protect them from the evils that seem to lurk in almost every corner of society, and to prepare them to make good choices when those evils step out from the shadows and seem irresistibly tempting.

Although there is no single perfect way to parent, and even the best of parents will face challenges along the path, there are some common sense guidelines today's parents might want to consider adding to their current game plan.



Billboard located at 2317 Easton Avenue, Bethlehem

■ **Effective parents accentuate the positive.** Instead of focusing exclusively on a “punishment only” strategy, effective parents catch their children doing good work and reward them. They emphasize the idea of “doing your best” rather than comparing their children negatively to other children. So what do you do if your son or daughter is slacking off at school? Try making a plan that includes rewards for incremental improvement. For example, every well-done assignment—tests, quizzes, and homework—could be assigned a point. A child who earns five points might be given the privilege of picking the topping on the pizzas ordered at a special family pizza night!

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Teacher Appreciation Week

In Bethlehem, we think our teachers are the best! —and there is no better time to let them know it than during Teacher Appreciation Week, celebrated from **May 7 through 13, 2000.**

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Teacher Exchange Program with Puerto Rico

The Bethlehem Area School District is participating in a teacher exchange program with the Puerto Rico Department of Education. A joint application with the York City Schools was submitted earlier this year to the Pennsylvania Department of Education requesting Educate America Grant funds for the exchange program. The funding received allowed four BASD teachers to travel to Puerto Rico and teach in a Puerto Rican immersion school where instruction is conducted in the English language for students from all over the island. The exchange teachers will be immersed in the culture but will teach in English in order to serve as an English language role model for the students and, at the same time, learn the Puerto Rican system of education.



Many BASD teachers expressed an interest in the exchange program, but funds only allowed for four BASD teachers to participate. The successful candidates were Alyssa Leib, Donna Gray, Kristin Zavar, and Lisa Dieter. All expenses were paid including housing and meals at the immersion school.

In addition to BASD teachers traveling to Puerto Rico, the BASD in turn hosted four Puerto Rican teachers in our district. These individuals were assigned to schools and the teachers who volunteered to host them for the semester. They were Luis Neváres, Carlos Rodríguez, Jesús Cruz, and José Sánchez. The expectation for the exchange teacher was that he/she be placed with an Anglo teacher so there was an opportunity to expand their English communication skills.

The teacher exchange program received approval from the BASD's school board and teacher association.

Teachers Appreciation Week

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Teachers are professionals who devote their careers to the education, care, and guidance of children. This year, the district found an interesting way to express its respect and appreciation to the teachers of the BASD. Working in cooperation with the Bethlehem Teachers Association, these sentiments are displayed on an outdoor billboard for the whole community to see. It is located adjacent to the Bethlehem Teachers Federal Credit Union at 2317 Easton Avenue. Please drive by to see it for yourself.

Funds were received from a grant acquired by Craig Zieger, president of the Bethlehem Education Association, from the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

It may be a good time for you, too, to let your child's teachers know how much you appreciate their efforts.



School Board Minutes Added to Web Site

In an effort to promote better communications and serve as a resource to parents and the community, the district has been expanding the information available on its home page. Recently, agendas and minutes of school board meetings have been added. We invite you to visit our Web site and learn more about the BASD.

<http://www.beth.k12.pa.us>



Meeting the Challenge... *GUIDELINES FOR BETTER PARENTING*

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- **Effective parents are not afraid to set boundaries and punish when punishment is needed.** Punishment gets a bad rap among a lot of today's parents, but done with love, fairness, and a cool head, punishments like time-outs, early bedtimes, and restricted privileges can be the most wise and loving reaction to poor behavior and poor choices. Of course, effective parents always make the boundaries and expectations clear ahead of time, so children know which choices are right and which are wrong. But if your son or daughter flagrantly breaks the rules, they are probably expecting to be punished, and parents should do the right thing by following through even if it means temporary unpopularity. Remember, parents do not have children to have friends. They have children to raise a happy family.

- **Effective parents practice what they preach.**

There is no better way to influence your child's lifestyle than through your own style of life. Research backs this up. If you want your children to read, then read to them and with them, then talk



about what you are reading. The same is true for other good habits. Parents who take care of their bodies—for example, avoiding cigarettes and excessive alcohol—have more credibility when it comes time to lecture about the

dangers of smoking and drinking.

- **Effective parents reward by doing and sharing rather than just giving.** Most of today's kids are not lacking for material goods. They seem to have a lot of "stuff," but many of them feel that their lives are empty. So instead of rewarding your son or daughter with their own television or the latest videos or computer games, objects that will only take time away from the family—reward them with a family outing of their choice—to a ball game or a concert or the zoo, where everyone celebrates together.
- **Effective parents pay close attention to what their children watch on television, where they go on the Internet, and put serious restrictions on both.** If we can all agree that watching good programming and playing educational games are good for children, then we should also all agree that watching violent and profane television shows and playing violent and profane computer games are bad. This is not easy to monitor if television sets and computers are

located where parents cannot easily monitor them or when children are left at home for long periods unsupervised. But just as most young parents would not allow their small children to stick garbage into their mouths, parents of older children should control the garbage that can easily enter young minds.



- **Effective parents make family dinnertime a top priority.**

Did you know that the most reliable predictor of childhood academic success is not connected to parent education, parent finances, or parent marital status? According to a respected study published a few years back, the most reliable indicator of academic success is whether the child sits down every night to talk and have dinner with his or her parents. This simple habit, one most of us took for granted when we were children, will do more to ensure your child's success in school and life than any of a hundred more complicated strategies.

- **Effective parents believe that family time is the most important time for themselves and their children.**

Today, much more so than when most of us were growing up, children lead scheduled lives with lots of activities pulling them out of the home and into more competitive and peer-oriented arenas. Although these opportunities can be enriching and fun for kids, they are not where kids are truly "raised." Kids are raised by their parents, and most of the really valuable lessons of life are hammered out in the home. Children learn about ethics and relationships and responsibility not from their soccer coach or drama teacher, but by being with their mothers, fathers, grandparents, and siblings, doing fun stuff and hard stuff, together.

- **Effective parents are reflective and forgiving.**

Absolutely no one is perfect. Parenting is hard work, and everyone, old and young, makes mistakes, but when effective parents make mistakes they reflect: What can I—what can we—do better next time? Effective parents recognize that most people—including their children—want to do what is right and so they reward good effort and think about mistakes. When necessary and needed, they forgive themselves and their children, then prepare for the next hard day at work, as a parent.

BASD's Academic Standards Videos Receive National Award

Recently, two videotapes produced by The Acerra Production Group and the BASD won Telly Awards. The videotapes are part of *Becoming Standards Based*, a 25-tape series describing how the BASD is successfully implementing a standards-based curriculum. Funding for the series was acquired from a Statewide Impact Educate America grant.



Video #6, *Elementary English Language Arts*, won a Silver Telly, which showcases the staff at Lincoln Elementary School using standards-based techniques to teach beginning and narrative writing skills to their students. The finalist's Bronze Telly was awarded to Video #12, *An Elementary School Extended Project*, which shows how the staff and students at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School used a visit by children's author James Howe to create a memorable educational experience. Approximately 12,000 entries were submitted. Like the Oscars, the Tellys have no second or third place awards, only winners and finalists.

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Senior Citizens Return to School for a Day—April 6, 2000

The first day back to school had new meaning recently to 233 senior citizens, some of whom had not seen the inside of a school building since their graduation 50 to 60 years earlier. Senior Citizens' Day has become one of the school district's most anticipated events of the year. This event was initiated three years ago by the district's Community Communications Committee, a collaborative effort between the teachers' association and the administration to promote public education, and more specifically, to give a bird's eye view of what today's school environment is all about. This year it was observed on April 6, 2000.

Fifteen retirement groups within our community were extended personal invitations to tour school buildings and observe the instructional programs in those schools, including that of the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School. Using the First Presbyterian Church's parking lot on Center Street as the pick-up site, our guests were greeted by teacher tour guides.

While traveling between schools, the tour guides discussed interesting facts about the BASD, its programs, and how educating children today is a demanding and rewarding challenge unlike any other time in the past. The guides developed a special rapport with their groups which enhanced everyone's experience.



The day highlighted schools that had undergone recent renovations or reconstruction, except for Broughal Middle School which was specially requested by its former graduates to be included. The eight schools that participated this year were James Buchanan, Fountain Hill, Governor Wolf, Hanover, Broughal, East Hills, Freedom, and Liberty.

At each school, the seniors were taken on tours of classrooms and special programs, witnessed the use of the new technology, and had

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New Measles Requirement Effective September 2000



Several thousands of children in both public and nonpublic schools are at risk of not being admitted to school next year due to non-compliance with the new state measles vaccination requirement. Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will be required to have proof of two properly spaced measles vaccinations. School nurses have been communicating to parents throughout this past school year about this change and have scheduled and supported free in-school vaccination clinics in conjunction with the Bethlehem Health Bureau.

The first measles vaccination must have been given on or after your child's first birthday. There must be at least one month between the two vaccinations. The measles vaccination may be given as an individual injection, however, it is most commonly given as a combination MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccination.

Families who have not complied with this requirement by next September can be granted an eight-month provisional enrollment. This means students will be allowed to attend school with only one measles vaccine as long as their parents have a written plan in place to complete the required vaccine. Your school nurse will help you develop your plan. Students, whose parents do not follow their plan or those parents who do not cooperate in setting up a plan, will be excluded from school until they satisfy the new state requirement.

Do not wait until September 2000 before addressing the new measles vaccination requirement for your children. Contact your school nurse today to make arrangements.



Parent Hotline...

The role of parent is perhaps the most important one in our society. Molding the character of children to be happy and responsible adults is a challenging responsibility especially today where predators and negative influences are as close as a computer keyboard or a television set.

In addition, the expectations of children today are far greater than days past, and sometimes families need guidance in coping with the complexities in their children's lives both in and out of school. *The Parent* newsletter will begin a new feature to its publication, a column where parents can ask questions anonymously about drugs, violence, their child's new math program, financial assistance for college, etc. Questions will be addressed by educators, child psychologists, and/or counselors in a subsequent issue of *The Parent*. In some cases, personal contact or response may occur. Direct your concerns to the Parent Hotline, c/o Superintendent of Schools, Bethlehem Area School District, 1516 Sycamore Street, Bethlehem, PA 18017, or e-mail the superintendent at supt@beth.k12.pa.us and look for your response in our next issue.

Pearle Vision Center Provides Children With Free Eyeglasses

While working with the BASD's nursing staff, the Bethlehem Partnership for a Healthy Community discovered that children who needed glasses were not getting the proper eye care because their parents could not afford the expense. They decided to take action. A grant was written to the Pearle Vision Foundation for funds to provide eye examination and glasses for needy children. We elicited the support of Steven Roseman of the Pearle Vision Center on Linden Street in Bethlehem, who has not only supported the program but has become an advocate. The grant provided enough funds to cover 75 children, but through the Marvine Family Center Expansion Grant another 75 children were helped.

Children, who during routine eye exams provided by the school nurse are found to need the professional services of an optometrist, received a voucher this year for the Pearle Vision Center. There, they received a thorough eye examination, and if needed, a free pair of glasses. During the 1999-2000 school year, approximately 155 children received new eyeglasses and now can see the world around them more clearly.

The Bethlehem Area School District would like to extend its sincere appreciation to Mr. Roseman and the Pearle Vision Center for their generosity in providing these needed services to the children of our district.



Area Dentists Donate Services to Needy Children

The Bethlehem Area School District would like to recognize the following area dentists for donating their time and expertise in providing free dental care to more than 200 needy school children from Donegan and Marvine Elementary Schools. These dedicated professionals have unselfishly offered their services to the children of our community since 1997 by participating in a Dental Marathon Day sponsored by the Bethlehem Partnership for a Healthy Community.

We commend these individuals for their commitment to healthy children and our community.

- * Dr. David Burt
- * Dr. Lorri Burt
- * Dr. Sandy Gryzbicki
- * Dr. Richard Hartzell
- * Dr. Julie Hong
- * Dr. Luke Leymeister
- * Dr. Sophia Kladias
- * Dr. John Meci
- * Dr. Cindy Olenwine
- * Dr. Michael Parsons
- * Dr. Lauri Passeri
- * Dr. Susan Pedott
- * Dr. Paul Schwartzbach
- * Dr. John Staivecki
- * Dr. Ron Strisofsky
- * Dr. Joe Travato
- * Dr. Jeanine Wyke

The organizations and businesses that participate in this partnership and assisted in the dental marathon include the Bethlehem Health Bureau, Domino's Pizza, Lehigh Valley Dental Society, Muhlenberg Hospital Dental Clinic, Northampton Community College, St. Luke's Hospital Community Health Department, South Bethlehem Neighborhood Center, VNA of Eastern Pennsylvania, and the Bethlehem Area School District.

Many thanks to Karen Dolan, teacher at Nitschmann Middle School, for her contribution to this publication, especially for the writing of the feature article.



Video Awards *...continued from page 4*

Mario Acerra of The Acerra Production Group worked with Dr. Scott Garrigan, district network coordinator, who wrote the grant and managed the overall project; Terry Martin, principal of Northeast, who conceived the idea and managed the day-to-day operations with the Acerra group; Pamela Hubbard, academic standards administrator, and Anthony Villani, principal of Freedom H.S. and former standards administrator, who supervised the content, reviewed and edited the tapes, and narrated the summaries, and of course, the real stars of the videos were the staff and students of 13 BASD schools who agreed to be interviewed and videotaped as they performed their daily magic.



Oldest Retired BASD Teacher Celebrates 100th Birthday



Birthdays tend to mark milestones in one's life. For Mary Crow, the oldest surviving retired BASD teacher, this birthday held special significance. You see, Ms. Crow celebrated her 100th birthday on January 17, 2000. A former English teacher at Liberty High School, she retired in 1962 after 42 years.

Seemingly taking all the attention in stride, Mary was happy to share the day with family and friends at a small party at the Westminster Village Nursing Home in Allentown. Joining in the festivities were Superintendent Doluisio, school board member William Heske, and the Liberty High School Highland Brass Quartet. A former student, Mr. Heske recalled his days in Ms. Crow's English class and reminded all that she was a no-nonsense teacher who he had gained respect for as a fine person and teacher.

In addition to being the district's most senior retiree, Ms. Crow also holds the distinction of being the oldest living alumni of Moravian College, acquiring her bachelor's degree in 1920 from the Moravian Women's College and later completing her master's degree at Lehigh University. President and Mrs. Ervin Rokke of Moravian College and representatives of the Student Alumni Association presented Ms. Crow with a birthday cake.

Seniors Return to School

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opportunities to interact with the students.

As a culminating experience, the seniors were treated to lunch at the vo-tech school after a tour of their facilities. While they were enjoying the hot meal that was prepared and served by the vo-tech's food service students, a short presentation was given by the superintendent, school board president, and the teachers' association president. There was a question and answer period where the seniors were able to express their impressions of the day.

The seniors commented on how impressed they were with the modern facilities, the complexity and comprehensiveness of the curriculum, and the attitudes of the children. Comments were made like: "I would love to be back in school learning what these children are learning;" "I will never again complain about my school taxes;" and "I had no idea that teaching was so different from when I was in school." Even the bus drivers had a good time and volunteered their services for the seniors' next visit.



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Lehigh Valley Celebrates Children

Mark your calendars now for the *Public Education Celebration 2000* on **May 5, 6, and 7, 2000**. The place to be is the Lehigh Valley Mall, where 21 school districts, vocational-technical schools, and intermediate units from the Greater Lehigh Valley will showcase the successful teaching and learning that's occurring in our public schools.

The showcase will feature up to 86 academic displays, nearly 20 hours of musical and theatrical student performances, the artistic work of 21 poster contest finalists and much more. The accomplishments of educators and children in grades K-12 will be featured throughout the entire weekend. This is an event that you, your family, and your friends do not want to miss. Spread the word about the *Public Education Celebration 2000!*

For additional information, visit www.cliu.org and click on **"Upcoming Events."**

