

## Family Living Connection

### New Family Living Educator for Eau Claire County

Julie Keown-Bomar has recently been hired as the new Family Living Educator for UW-Extension in Eau Claire County. She has Ph.D. in anthropology and women's studies, and much of her research and professional experience has focused on refugee families, social problems, and the ways families and communities can effectively manage change. She can be reached at 839-4717.



### Nurturing Healthy Girls--Workshop Series 2006

Have you seen the movie *Mean Girls* or noticed the current fascination with reality TV shows? They highlight fixing “problem” female bodies and vicious competition among women for male affection and attention. People may feel like it’s a harsh and toxic world out there for girls. Research shows girls may find it difficult to resist pressures, be comfortable in their bodies, delay sexual activity, or reject media messages that foster body-dissatisfaction. These are critical years with high stake consequences: girls are seriously at-risk for physical abuse or sexual abuse in high school relationships; over 80% of teenage girls believe they should be dieting; and girls who are trying to cope with stress or changes in their life may turn to harmful substances.<sup>1</sup> How adult caregivers confront these issues and communicate with their daughter during her transition to adulthood can make all the difference. Kids need good communication with their parents and clear strategies to help them know what to do instead of giving in to negative pressures.

The good news is there are a number of evidence-based resources and strategies families can mobilize. The Family Resource Center and UW-Extension in Eau Claire County have teamed up to offer a series of interactive, positive workshops focusing on nurturing healthy girls ages 10-18.

Workshop topics include:

#### **Talk and Talk Again— 6 pm January 17<sup>th</sup> (for parents and concerned adults)**

Youth who have had meaningful discussions with their parents about topics such as drug use and sexual activity are less likely to abuse drugs and may be more likely to delay the onset of sexual activity. The long, preplanned lecture is not as effective as continual contact and dialogue in everyday family routines. For example, cooking together is a great opportunity to talk about good health or the dangers of fad diets. Rehearse effective communication techniques that can help improve dialogue with your teen.

#### **Get the Facts—6 pm February 21st (for parents and concerned adults)**

Unreliable sources abound---don’t let your daughter’s peers or magazines be her main sources for information about dieting, healthy relationships, and drugs. “Tween” marketing, methamphetamine, raves, tattooing/body piercing, technology, and the upsurge of sexually transmitted diseases do set this generation apart. The challenges you dealt with as a teen might be perceived by your teen as “old school,” but that shouldn’t stop you from instilling values. Learn strategies for communicating your values in a way that is relevant to your teen.

#### **Modeling Healthy Family Behavior—6pm March 7<sup>th</sup> (for adults and girls)**

Be aware of the messages your child might absorb from your own behaviors and attitudes. Parents’ feelings about their bodies and the ways they manage their diet and lifestyle will be communicated to their

## Family Living Connection

children. Share ways families can “walk the talk” for health’s sake.

### **Combating Cultural Messages—6 pm April 11<sup>th</sup> (for adults and girls)**

Tired of messages that undermine positive self-esteem, healthy eating, self-confidence and discipline? What can parents and daughters do to bolster self-determination and resist the alluring power of advertising, media, and popular culture?

These workshops are designed to help each family acquire knowledge and skills that they want and/or need. The emphasis will be on evidence-based approaches that work to help develop strong families and healthy young women. Call the Family Resource Center for registration 833-1735.

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<sup>1</sup> CASA Finds Differences in Why Girls vs. Boys Use Cigarettes, Alcohol and Other Drugs 2/5/2003.  
<http://www.jointogether.org/sa/news/alerts/readr/0,1854,556468,00.html>

### **Traveling With Kids**



Dreading traveling with kids during the holidays? Some travel tips might come in handy for those long car rides or airport delays.

#### **Amusement Bag**

In addition to having children pack their own things to do, an amusement bag of inexpensive but novel items that can help when the next road stop is miles away, the restaurant wait is too long, or as a time/mile marker. It’s worth the time and extra effort in the long run and it is a great way to keep children entertained on long trips.

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Items to consider packing:

Toy gadgets purchased for next to nothing from the thrift store that are new to the kids. Wrap the novelties in the cartoon section of the newspaper for extra entertainment value.

- Children’s books on tape.
- Temporary tattoos they can put on in the car or plane with a wet napkin.
- Watercolor Pencils—wet the tips and you are ready for face painting in the car or in the airport. Easy cleanup with diaper wipes.
- Bubbles—great for babies and toddlers.
- String for Cat’s Cradle, Jacob’s ladder and other fun hand games for older kids.
- Folded sheets of aluminum foil for molding helmets, glasses, jewelry, animals, etc.

#### **Food and Drinks**

Finger foods like unsweetened cereal, baby carrots, dried fruit, crackers and peanut butter, and granola bars are great choices. Provide plenty of water and fluids to avoid dehydration that can accompany long travel days.

#### **Are you looking for FUN and learning for your entire family? Consider 4-H!**

Many people think that 4-H is just for youth who live in the country or who work with farm animals. If that is what you were thinking, **please** think again!

4-H is for **ALL** boys and girls from Kindergarten – high school in cities, suburbs, towns and in the country. 4-H offers more than 50 projects, such as, photography, foods, nature, pets, computers, arts & crafts, gardening, and many, many more. Plus, all kinds of fun, exciting activities like the county fair, camp, drama, and music.

Call (715) 839-4712 or email [katy.forsythe@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:katy.forsythe@ces.uwex.edu) to learn more.