

# THE VALUE OF PARENT SUPPORT

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

We are currently involved in a pilot project, working with troubled families within a selected school district. Our role is to run sessions for parents as well as their children. Each family is being given a mentor and life coach for a year, and the children are being supported by mentors until they are 30 years of age. The training sessions for parents include parenting, financial, dietary and career advice. Families are all scheduled to go away on a fun camp together, run by an outdoor adventure organization.

This is a vital FREE opportunity for parents to learn how to more successfully manage their children and for children to learn respect and responsibility, trust and teamwork, leadership, effective anger management the value of education. All in all, it is a huge step in creating a great quality of life for the family and ongoing generations. However, there is one problem and that is getting parents to attend the sessions. I would have imagined that with households in disarray and constant reports of child misbehavior at school, that parents would be grateful for all the help they could get. NOT.

Parent support comes in many forms. It might be teaching them skills like riding a bike or building a hut. It could be watching them play sport or teaching them to swim. It might be taking them out hiking or spending the day with them at the beach. Sharing these activities with your kids is fun and makes them feel valued. There are other forms of support that are equally important in helping your prepare children for a successful future. Things like helping them with their homework, taking time to listen to their worries and struggles, explaining how to react to bullies and failure, how to meet other's expectations and how to manage to success. By preparing pre-teens by explaining potential teen issues, you are supplying them with the information they need to make wise choices. By creating strong family values and clear boundaries and consequences, you are teaching them the kind discipline and behavior that will carry successfully through school and work years. All of these proactive measures give a clear message to a child that you love and support them and want them to be successful in life.

The parents in the pilot project we are working in are giving a clear message to their children also. The ones who attend are saying they want their families to be successful and will do what it takes to create a happy, peaceful home. Those who promise to attend and then do not are also giving their children and the organizers a clear message. By their actions they are saying, "I don't care", or, "I don't believe that anyone else cares and there has to be a kick back somewhere", or, "I don't need all that stuff. I know it already." They may not even realize there is any hope for them. They may not want to admit they are not coping and hope that if they hold out for 15 years, the problem will then be

someone else's. This is a very sad situation especially when so much free help is being offered.

There are many help organizations that are willing to help families who are struggling in different ways. Lists of resources may be found through schools, churches, service organizations or on line. The important thing is it recognize help is needed and seek what you need to create a happy, peaceful and productive family.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.