

IT'S A NEW DAY

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

We are standing on the threshold of a New Year. How exciting! 2013, here we come! We can be in control of what happens to us this year or we can be wafted about by the winds that blow us this way or that way. A new day or New Year is like a blank canvas. We hold the paintbrush. We can color it bright or we can let others paint it for us. I am not naïve enough to say that we are in total control of everything because 'stuff happens' and sometimes we even have to put our own goals aside for the greater good of others. However, It is our beliefs, values and personal qualities that help us to ride through the tough times and stay on top. If we are Christians, we should allow God to point us in the right direction according to the purpose he has for us.

So, how can we prepare our families for an exciting year ahead? Rather than look at what wasn't so good last year, let's look at what would be optimum this year. Think of a family you really admire. Who are they and what makes them a 'standout' family? Some of their attributes might be that they do lots of things together as a family; they get along well together; they are respectful to each other; they are industrious; successful at school or are thoughtful of those in need and do kind deeds. Get to know them and ask how they have created such a great, harmonious family.

Make yourself a list of attributes you want to introduce into your family life and concentrate on possibly introducing one a month. (Don't be tempted to compare this list with what is not happening in your home. You may become immediately downhearted and want to give up). Explain to your children that you are all going to work on creating the best New Year ever and that you need their help!

Here are some examples of attributes and how to develop them. Take creating a peaceful, happy home environment, for example. Explain to your kids what peacefulness would look like in your home and how unproductive chaos would compare. Work together on how to be peaceful e.g. using an 'inside' voice, talking through issues rather than fighting, asking and not taking, working to routines and helping one another with chores so there is plenty of fun family time together. With every little improvement, offer praise and help the kids see just how much better it feels to be in a calm, happy environment.

Perhaps you want your family to be more industrious. Sit them down and let them tell you their wildest dreams. Perhaps you can't achieve the really big ones immediately, but you can certainly set your children on a course that will take them there as they get older. Include yourselves in the brain storming ideas. There are many great things you can do...like building a playhouse in the back yard, learning to play guitar, running a particular race, making new friends, acting

in a play or singing in front of others, building a rocket ship, learning to paint, becoming a boy/girl scout or doing projects to save money to go to Disneyworld.

As you work through each attribute you are equipping your family with the ability to take control of their own lives and not be so easily influenced as those with time on their hands and with negative feelings about themselves. Your family will become that standout family that others will want to know.

Enjoy the challenges of the New Year ahead. Paint brightly on your canvas and enjoy the results.

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