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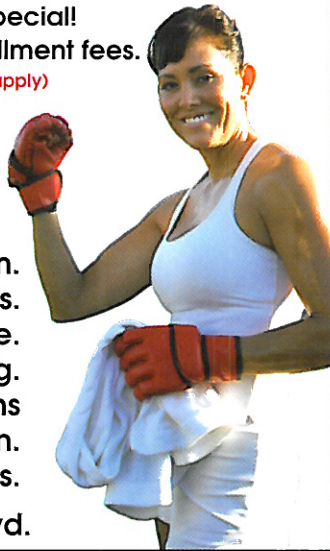
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Raising HEALTHY & HAPPY TEENS



By Heather McLean Wiederhoeft

What about YOUR education?

"Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death."

- Albert Einstein

Ever feel like the homework police? For many parents, summer vacation gives a much-needed break from staying on top of daily school assignments, long-term projects and one test after another. For the parents of high school students, this can be an even more challenging issue as we walk the fine line between being a helicopter parent over every grade versus having our teens learn how to time manage, organize themselves and get ready for college.

This fall, I'd like to suggest a new strategy – make your home an environment that shows how important you think education is for your teen by embracing education for yourself. Lifelong learning isn't a new idea – there's not a career counselor worth her hourly rate who doesn't emphasize the importance of learning new skills or refining existing ones – but our busy days may be taking away from showing our kids by example that learning is a part of all of our lives.

Read any good books lately? If you have, did your teen actually see you reading or did you talk about the book? Every school day, students read everything from the classics to world history to research for a science project and most probably have had a parent encouraging them to take up some outside reading when not doing homework. Would your praise for reading be taken more seriously if you also were reading? Even if you just have time to read a couple of times a week, it can make a difference. You may want to think about reading a novel that your student will be tackling this year – not only would you be walking the reading walk but you'd also have something new to talk about with your teen.

While many educational experts today say teens spend too much time on Facebook, texting or online, which takes away from their academic experience, how many parents are guilty of the same thing? Ever told your teen to stop texting while you're browsing Facebook or to make better use of their free time while you're catching up with the latest on reality TV? Cutting down on your screen time will make you a much more believable advocate of why your teen should do the same.

Another easy change is to talk to your teen about what she's learned in class without asking about grades. Many of our parental conversations about school relate only to the outcome of a project or test. Instead of focusing only on the grade, try and engage your teen in a conversation about what she is learning. Pick a subject that you would feel comfortable talking about and dive in. Make sure to ask questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no" but is actually a one-on-one talk! ●

The Bay Area Has Talent!

LIFE IS GOOD! Magazine is sponsoring an essay contest for budding young writers throughout the Gulf Coast/Bay Area. If you enjoy writing, please submit your 200 – 250 word entry via email to the publisher at gulfcoasthealthylifestyles@comcast.net

Please include "Essay Contest" in your subject line.

Your essay topic is:
"What I love the most about the Christmas Holiday Season and the reasons why."

First place wins a \$50.00 Barnes & Noble Gift Certificate

Second place wins a \$25.00 Barnes & Noble Gift Certificate

The two winning essays will be published in our upcoming holiday issue November/December 2010
It's a Wonderful Life!

(Winners consent to their full name included with essay.)

Good Luck Everyone!