



PRACTICAL PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS
Working Together for Our Children

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“YOU GOTTA HAVE HEART”

by Janet Shepard, Director

February is Heart Month sponsored by the American Heart Association to promote cardio vascular health for men, women and children. February is the fitting time to promote healthy hearts since we also celebrate Valentine’s Day during the month. With the abundance of hearts maybe it is also the time to talk about emotionally healthy hearts, supporting one another in tough times and caring for those who cannot care for themselves, our children.

Perhaps some of the most distressing signs of the times are the constant name calling and blaming and other acts of aggression which seem so prevalent in national and state news, in casual conversation, on social networking sites, and even at sporting events. Dr Jim Knight from the Kansas University Research Center on Learning wrote about this in a [recent blog](#) that provides good food for thought about what we have become as a society and the implications for our children.

These are frustrating times with too few jobs, services, resources and funding. No one knows this better than PPP as we face the potential loss of our only remaining major funding source. Yet, we have not given up. We could relate with our president in the state of the union address when he said “We will not quit!” So what takes the place of money and other resources? Passion, ingenuity, prioritizing and heart all go a long way.

The title for this article is also the title of a couple of songs. One song from the 1950’s Broadway musical *Damn Yankees* suggests that having heart can make up for lack of skill. The other a much more recent song speaks to overcoming adversity in life by having heart. How do we help children have heart? How do we teach them caring?

Most importantly perhaps we teach them about heart by caring for them, making them our national and state priority. We teach them by helping them reach out to help others. We teach them by encouraging them and their families to volunteer in their communities, in their places of worship. We teach them by respecting them, by seeing that they have enough to eat, a home, caring adults, and the best education we can provide. We teach them by showing that we have “miles and miles and miles of heart” for them for once we make the world right for children, it will be right for the rest of us, too.

PPP CENTER UPDATE

by Janet Shepard, Director

The proposed federal budget has been revealed and details an overall increase for funding of education. Unfortunately the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) grant monies are not included. This is the only stable source of funding PPP is receiving for 2010. PPP partners with ParentLink, Parents as Teachers, and Literacy Investment for Tomorrow (LIFT) to form Missouri’s oldest statewide PIRC. This partnership applied for funds when they were first made available around 15 years ago and has received them every year since. PTA has an active campaign asking these funds be restored in the 2011 budget. Please take the time to [read and take action](#) on behalf of family involvement in education for Missouri and all other states in our nation.

It was a difficult decision, but we have decided not to host the Partnering for Success Conference in 2010. We hope to offer a conference in 2011. If you had money set aside for professional development on parent involvement, please note we have a regional meeting scheduled for February 10 in Jefferson City or will bring any staff development workshop or training to your school. Please call or e-mail [Shelly](#) for staff development workshops or [Janet](#) for training.



Conference has traditionally been the time for us to give recognition to outstanding individuals and schools. We will not offer as many awards this year, but will continue some. The second annual **Founders Award** for innovation will be presented this spring. The [application](#) may be printed from our website and mailed or faxed to us by March 15. Either Shelly, Janet or Rosalee will present the award to the winning school at an appropriate time such as the end of the year awards assembly. Linda Cato and the team from Lincoln R-II Elementary won the first award last year. You can read about their winning entry on the PPP website under the Annual Conference tab. In addition we will honor one school or district

with the Pearl Award. The [application](#) is on the website.

Moving day has been delayed but we hope to be in office space sometime in March. Thanks for your continued patience!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **February** Black History Month, [Heart Month](#), [Children's Dental Health Month](#), [The Missouri Dental Association](#) has a coloring contest for second graders
- Wednesday, February 10 [PPP Regional Workshop](#) – Jefferson City
- **March** [National Nutrition Month](#) sponsored by the American Dietetic Association
- March 8-12 [School Breakfast Week](#)
- Monday, March 1 [Kindergarten Transition Training](#) – Cape Girardeau
- **April** Child Abuse Prevention Month sponsored by [Prevent Child Abuse America](#) and [Missouri KidsFirst](#)
- Friday, April 16 [Go Blue Day](#)

FACILITATION TIPS

by Janet Shepard, Director

Are your PPP group meetings, family nights and other activities for families heart friendly? Continuing with our theme for the month, there are two general ways to make our events heart friendly. In planning we can consider both physical health and social-emotional health.

Some things we can do to ensure our events are physically healthy for the heart are:

- Offer healthy snacks such as fruit, veggie, or cheese trays or cookies made with more healthy ingredients such as whole grains and peanut butter
- Include some opportunity for movement even with presentations
- Make the gym or track available for a family walk prior to or following the event
- Share handouts for families on nutrition, increasing physical activity and more
- Share the district's wellness policy with families at least once per year and ask how they would like to be involved

- If you have a neighborhood school, encourage families to walk to out of school time events if it is safe to do so
- If offering door prizes, consider prizes which encourage healthy eating or physical activity

Showing that we care boosts the social – emotional health of our participants. We might do this by:

- Greeting each parent and family member by name addressing them in the same way we wish to be addressed only calling parents by first name if you are encouraging them to call you by first name
- Greeting each parent and family member in their native language
- Introducing participants to one another informally based on common interests or introducing new parents to other parents who have a child in their child’s class
- Encouraging but not forcing participation in group discussion
- Using words that are easily understood, speaking in full words rather than school alphabet, and giving simple definitions for education terms
- Making an extra effort with table decorations, providing child care, offering transportation and more
- Thanks parents for participating
- Send a note to parents who do not attend letting them know they were missed

There are many more ways to say, “I care about you and about your physical and mental well being.” Your PPP Implementation facilitators guide will offer additional suggestions.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

by Janet Shepard, Director

Perhaps getting children and their families off to a great start with school is one of the most caring things we can do. If we reach out to children and families before they begin school, they will feel that we care about them and about their school success. This outreach should be planned and carried out for all children whether they are enrolled in community early childhood programs, district provided pre-K classes or at home with their families until they begin school.

All Missouri school districts are to have a written transition to kindergarten plan in place. Head Start programs also have transition plans. Hopefully these two plans are aligned and are implemented in tandem. By meeting in community teams, we can review and update written plans, work toward full implementation of the plans and work together to make children and families feel welcome in the school system.

PPP provides training and support for transition teams. We are scheduled to offer Transition to Kindergarten training on March 1 in Cape Girardeau in partnership with the Southeast Regional Professional Development Center. Registration is available through [*My Learning Plan*](#).

Community Partnership of the Ozarks has also contacted us about offering this training in Springfield. We are looking at a mid-March date with training hosted by the Partnership. If you wish to receive more information, please let me know or call Brenda O’Connor 417-888-2020. We would be pleased to bring this training to your school or community for five or more people.

SITE NEWS

by Janet Shepard, Director

Congratulations to Bowerman Elementary, a PPP site, for being the kick off site for the collection of the Kits 4 Kids. Governor Jay Nixon, Springfield School officials and Convoy of Hope participated in a media session February 3 at Bowerman Elementary.

Students from all over Missouri were invited to participate in preparing hygiene kits to be shipped to Haiti. Convoy of Hope is a Springfield based charitable organization which already had workers in Haiti prior to the earthquake. The Regional Professional Development Centers served as collection points for the kits. An estimated 30,000 kits were assembled by Missouri school children and their families.

We would like to hear stories about your schools participation in this effort and others which are excellent ways to teach our children about caring for others.

HEART MONTH - WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO?

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

Schools play an incredibly important role in shaping the lifelong health and well-being of children and adolescents. February, American Heart Month, reminds of the significance of this role. America faces an epidemic of childhood obesity and concerns that the health problems related to this obesity will lead to this generation of children being the first to not live longer than the previous generation. To combat this growing epidemic, the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation united in 2005 and formed the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The Alliance created the Healthy Schools Program, which is working to improve schools in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and staff wellness. The goal of the Alliance is to stop the nationwide increase in childhood obesity and to take steps to help all children live longer and healthier lives. The Alliance is having a positive impact on the places that can make a difference to a child's health: homes, schools, and communities. The American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics also offer great support to communities for improving children's health. Schools can utilize resources from these and other programs to make heart healthy changes for children.

Schools can consider change in various areas that impact students' health:

- improve the nutritional value of food served in and out of cafeterias
- increase physical activity opportunities during the school day and after school
- implement quality health and physical education programs
- offer programs for staff wellness
- offer support and resources for families
- establish school-wide healthy goals

Schools can also offer professional development for staff and workshops for families to increase knowledge about heart health. CPR training, offered through the American Heart Association or the Red Cross, provides valuable skills and information to staff and parents. Schools can execute a health fair in conjunction with the community, offering resources and support for healthy children. Many schools participate in programs such as Jump Rope for Heart (American Heart Association) to raise awareness and money for heart health.

The following websites offer supportive information to schools:

www.aap.org

www.americanheart.org

www.americanheart.org (Alliance for a Healthier Generation tab)

PPP offers support and resources in helping schools encourage healthy families. The *PPP Wellness Notebook* is filled with family modules and activities that can be done in the classroom on various health topics. PPP also offers on-site family health and wellness workshops. Do your part to promote heart healthy children!

Practical Parenting Partnerships was created in 1992 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with support from the Danforth Foundation.

PPP Is sustained by a fee structure, contracts and grants with major funding from the U. S. Department of Education Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC).

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HEART HEALTHY AND HEART HAPPY

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

February is declared as American Heart Month and is a time for us to focus on heart healthy practices. We often think about diet and exercise and their impact on a healthy heart. Happiness and reducing stress also contributes to our heart health. With Cardiovascular diseases being our nation's number one killer, Heart Month should be a focus for the whole family. Now is the time to establish heart healthy practices for children.

The American Heart Association reminds us that it is important for Americans to be aware of the four most common kinds of cardiovascular disease: heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and heart failure. Your family can become educated on common heart attack warning signs which include pain or uneasiness in the jaw, neck, back, chest, arms, and shoulders; cold sweat; nausea; weakness or lightheadedness; pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder; and shortness of breath. Being ready to recognize the symptoms of heart attack and stroke can lead to timely medical attention and can improve the outcome of the situation. This is a great time for your family to research the family tree and uncover any heart disease in your family history. This is important information for adults to share with their doctors and with their children's doctors.

One of the goals of the American Heart Month is to encourage lifestyle changes for improving quality of life and reducing heart disease risk. Childhood obesity is one of our nation's leading health threats. Today nearly one in three children and teens in the U.S. are overweight or obese. The obesity epidemic is clearly taking its toll, as more and more kids are developing conditions and diseases that likely will lead to heart problems. Families can step up to the plate and make changes that will reduce illnesses associated with poor food choices and lack of physical activity.

It is recommended that children get no more than one to two hours of sedentary TV/computer/video game time per day and increase their physical activity time to at least one hour a day. Here are a few suggestions to limit the sedentary time for your child and increase physical activity time:

- Have a plan for alternative activities to TV or video games available, such as a family game night, shooting some hoops, walking the dog or exploring a nearby park.
- Be active with your children. Children want time with their parents and are more likely to participate in physical activities or go outside if their parents join them.
- Don't position your furniture so the TV is the main focus of the room. Remove televisions from bedrooms.
- Change family TV viewing habits by going through the TV guide and picking the shows you want to watch. Turn the TV on for those shows and turn it off afterwards. Don't just watch whatever comes on next.
- Avoid using TV as a reward or punishment.
- Practice what you preach. Your kids won't accept being restricted to two hours of TV watching if you watch TV for four hours a day. The best way to influence your kids' behavior is through example. Model physical activity for your children instead!

Another contributor to childhood obesity and heart disease that your family can focus on is nutrition. Along with the sedentary practices common in today's youth, many children are not eating a healthy diet. Often, busy family schedules lead to fast, convenient food choices rather than healthy choices. As your family reviews its eating habits and sets goals for improvement, the following guidelines should be kept in mind to support growth and development:

- Choose a variety of foods to get enough carbohydrates, protein and other nutrients.
- Eat foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Keep total fat intake between 25 to 35 percent of calories for children and adolescents 4 to 18 years of age, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils.
- Eat only enough calories to maintain a healthy weight for your height and build.
- Serve whole-grain/high-fiber breads and cereals rather than refined grain products.
- Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables daily, while limiting juice intake.
- Introduce and regularly serve fish as an entrée. Avoid commercially fried fish.
- Serve fat-free and low-fat dairy foods. From ages 1–8, children need 2 cups of milk or its equivalent each day. Children ages 9–18 need 3 cups.
- Don't overfeed children. Estimated calories needed by children range from 900-2200/day, for a 1-year-old 18 year old.

In addition to increased physical activity and improved eating habits, focus your family on heart happiness. Does your family take the time to think about what brings happiness and what adds stress to the family? The following ideas can spark lifestyle changes that may bring more contentment to the family.

- Reflect on the blessings your family has to be thankful for.
- Eat meals together as a family as often as possible.
- Think of ways your family can help others; research shows that when we reach out to others, we feel good about ourselves.
- Celebrate individual family member's accomplishments as a family.
- Discuss with family members what they feel good about in their lives and plan more of the things that bring happiness.
- Discuss with family members the things that bring them stress. Make a plan to deal with the stress.
- Plan family time together to share love and fun.

Incorporating these ideas for activity, nutrition, and happiness can lead to better heart health for your entire family. Changes are not easy but remember that these changes will have a positive effect on your health and your child's health. Let February be the kick-off month for a better heart healthy family lifestyle that continues!