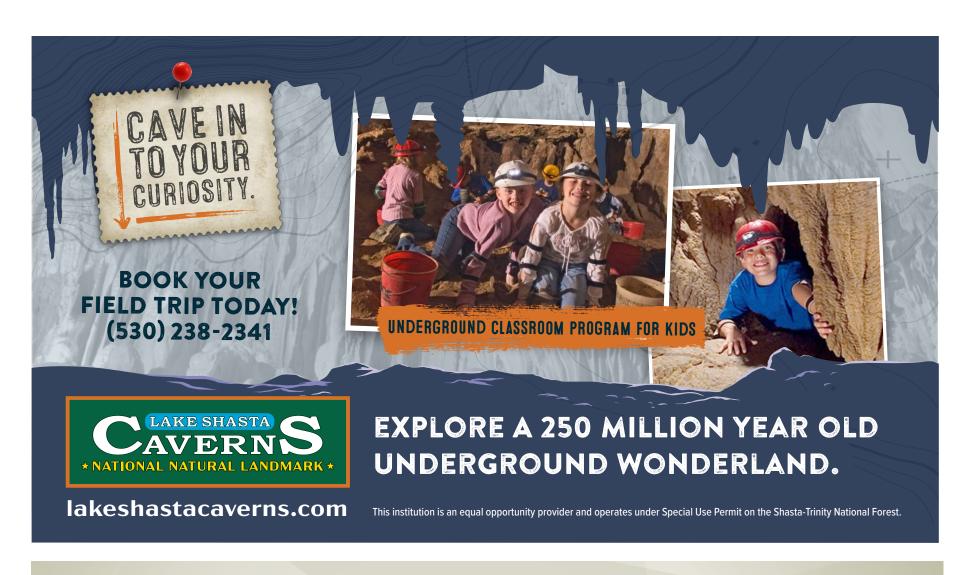


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FEELING STUCK?

Get Unstuck in 2025!

By Simeon Jones, LMFT

e've all been there—feeling stuck, like life is happening to us and we can't do anything about it. Ruts don't show up overnight. They sneak in, step by step. One bad day turns into a bad week. One disappointment becomes proof that things never go your way. Over time, those thoughts get worn into your mind, like grooves in an old dirt road. Before you know it, you're not on a road anymore—you're in a trench so deep you can't see over the edge and your perception becomes distorted.

If I can't be perfect, what's the point? This one mistake is going to ruin everything. They didn't text back. What did I do wrong? These are stories we've told ourselves so many times,

they've started to sound like facts. They create a narrative that keeps us from advancing.

We replay the failures, the rejections, the disappointments, and discount the wins: The moments you laughed so hard your stomach hurt. The times you nailed it when it really mattered. In our insecurity these victories seem fuzzy or completely missing.

But even in the deepest rut, there's a way out. It starts with the cracks. Leonard Cohen wrote: "There is a crack in everything, and that's where the light gets in."

Step one is to notice the distorted thoughts you've been living with. Ask yourself: Is this true? Or is it just what I've gotten used to thinking? Just because it's familiar doesn't mean it's true. That's a crack.

The next step: Let the light in. Replace the distortion with something true: "Yeah, I failed, but that doesn't make me a failure."

"It didn't work the way I wanted it to, but the future is not written."

Then give yourself some grace. You're going to mess up, slip back into the rut. That's normal. But cracks don't close just because you stumble. They're still there, letting the light in, showing you the way forward.

The rut isn't forever. It's just where you are right now. Look for the cracks. Trust the light. And keep moving. You're not buried—you're climbing. There is a wide, open sky waiting for you just over the edge.

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On the Cover: Julia Dedmon, the powerhouse in blue, and Jenna Zent, the dynamo in pink, juggle five kids, countless spin, barre and weight training sessions at the YMCA, and still find time to throw the best parties and dinner events to keep their tight-knit circle going. It's been a decade of sweat, laughs and unforgettable memories.

Photo by: Tracey Hedge Photography creates fresh, vibrant images that allow you and your loved ones to shine. Tracey specializes in weddings, senior portraits and family portraits, serving Northern California. Call Tracey at (530) 209-1116.

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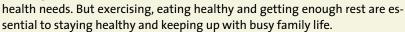
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DEAR READERS

ealth is one of the issues we address in this edition of North State Parent. But it's not just about keeping our children healthy, especially during cold and flu season. Parents, grandparents and others who care for children need to stay healthy and in the game!

With work, after school activities, meal prep and deadlines, our schedules are packed. It can be a challenge to find time for our own



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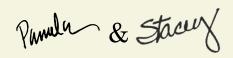
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Put yourself on the priority list, too. A walk at lunchtime or biking or walking with the kids as an afterschool or early evening activity can get that essential daily exercise in. (Experts say just 20 minutes a day can make a significant difference in health outcomes.)

Involving children in meal prep like cutting up vegetables gets them interested in eating a variety of foods and makes sure that plenty of veggies get on the table for lunch and dinner.

Lights out really means lights out. Dark rooms with little or no light lead to better, deeper sleep for kids and adults.

So, here's to taking small steps in 2025 so you can realize big health benefits for you and your family!



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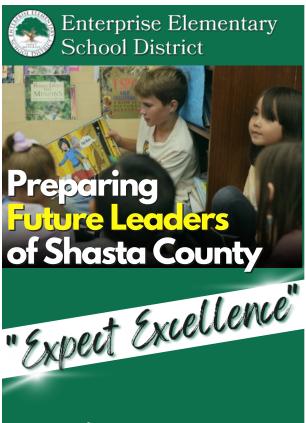




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SEAN WILSON

The mission of our be the change column is to feature community members from the North State who are actively making a difference in community life. If you would like to nominate someone who is making a difference, please write to pn@northstateparent.com.

ean Wilson discovered the magic of music through the piano. Amid an unpredictable and unsettled home life, Sean found that "music just calmed me and let me express my anger, my sadness or my happiness. I could put my hands down on the keyboard and it would say how I felt. And it was instant, you know? I didn't have to work at it; it just came to me."

PRACTICING FAVORITE TUNES SPARKS LOVE OF LEARNING

In his early 20s, Sean picked up a guitar. Although he found it more challenging than the piano, the challenge inspired him. He began to discover simple strategies for teaching himself – and then began to teach others.

What began as passing along tips and tricks became a lifelong passion for teaching music. Sean's approach focuses on hands-on learning driven by interest, jumping straight into teaching students how to play their favorite songs instead of learning through repeated drills of scales and arpeggios. "I teach someone and they say, 'Wait, that's it?' And I say, 'Yeah, isn't that cool?'"

Nine-year-old Brighton has been taking lessons with Sean for over a year. Brighton's mom, Tiffany Gunsauls, loves "watching Sean adapt his teaching methods throughout the lesson to ensure the concepts are understood. He has a knack for making the lessons fun and inspiring, sparking a love for music for both my daughter and me. Sean can step outside of where Brighton's fingers are landing and tune into what she is thinking during each portion of the lesson."

CHILDHOOD SCHOOL STRUGGLES LEAD TO INSPIRED TEACHING

Sean's intuition into his students' minds comes from his love of teaching. Although he struggled in school as a child, he became a schoolteacher,



primarily for junior high. "Teaching was always kind of an interesting juxtaposition from somebody who hated school," Sean admits with a laugh. "But I love seeing the smiles on students' faces when they realize they can do this." When his own children were in their 20s, he returned to college to earn a master's in education and technology. Sean sees teaching as a legacy that passes to future generations. "I tell my students that everything I teach you means that I will live through your hands," Sean says.

FOSTERING A LEGACY OF GIVING AND RECEIVING AT RED BLUFF'S MODERN MUSIC

Having recently retired from nearly 20 years in the classroom, Sean now spends more of his time teaching music – guitar, ukulele, bass, drums and piano. Some of his lessons take place at Tehama E-Learning Academy (TeLA), where he sees music bring students into greater confidence and community. One of his students, after only a few months of lessons with Sean, played the national anthem at his basketball game. "He just killed it!" Sean exclaims with pride.

Sean also teaches at Modern Music, his small music shop in Red Bluff, which he opened in 2023. Sean and his shop have become a networking hub for connecting people with instruments. About a decade ago, Sean decided to give away an extra guitar he had.

"I wasn't using it, but it played beautifully," he

He posted the instrument on Facebook, gave it away for free and ended up receiving two more guitars in return. He found homes for those two instruments, only to begin receiving a steady stream of "pretty much any musical instrument you can think of" to pass along. People have sent Sean instruments from southern California. His sister donated two guitars to give away and a company in Chico

has also contributed. "It's really awesome," Sean says. "So at my shop, whenever I have a student come in who needs an instrument, we can hook them up. I love it when I can put an instrument in someone's hands."

KINDNESS AND KETTLE CORN

Jim Carnes has known Sean since high school but built true friendship with him through playing together in ad hoc bands for events. Jim says Sean is "always asking around to find a way to help someone else," such as when Sean gathered a backup band for local singer Dean Witts. "It was Sean's idea to support him because he has so much talent, so we all came together and supported him," Jim says. "Now Dean has grown quite a bit in his courage. He even auditioned for The Voice and made it through a few rounds."

In addition to teaching and running his music shop, Sean and his wife, Melanie, own a kettle corn business in Red Bluff, known as Wilson and Kettle Corn. "We started doing the farmers market here in town and we've started doing other events too," Sean says. "As my wife says, nobody is angry at kettle corn!"

From his shop clients to his students, to anyone else who crosses his path, Sean's friendly, open kindness encourages his North State community. And, for those lucky enough to know him as a friend or teacher, life has a more positive pop and a sweeter tune. ■



Jenna Christophersen is a Chico native who fell in love with writing as she wrote her first words as a student at McManus Elementary School.



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TEEN FRIENDS AND FRIENDSHIPS:

How to Be Your Kid's Safety Net

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y daughter's middle school years were full of friendship drama and it seemed like her friend groups changed every week. When it was time for high school, I worried she'd be the only lonely kid in the high school crowd.

Social worker and certified parent coach Maria Sanders says learning who your friends are is a normal stage in teenage social development and we shouldn't worry too much if our children go through middle and the early years of high school still searching for friends. It might take some time, but "by the time teens are in 10th or 11th grade," according to Sanders, "Everyone is feeling a lot more grounded in who they are and where they belong."

My daughter found her core group of friends in her senior year of high school and now I don't worry as much about her feeling lonely as I did before. Instead, I have a whole new set of concerns about teens and friends.

Is my teenager spending too much time with her friends and not enough time with family? What is she do-

ing with these friends? Are they driving safely? Are they going to parties? Will someone try to tempt her with alcohol or drugs? Will her friends pressure her into doing something she'll regret later? Have I taught her well enough how to say no?

Here's what experts say about high school friendships and helping your teenager navigate peer pressure, plus a tip for how you can calm your own fears.

OUR TEENS WILL PROBABLY SETTLE INTO A FRIEND GROUP IN HIGH SCHOOL

Remember all that drama that started in seventh grade? Sanders says in about three years, as our children mature and become more independent from us and more comfortable with separation, all that friendship drama will calm down and our children will want to spend more time with their peer group. By this developmental stage, some of them have their driver's license, which means more mobility and freedom to meet up with teen friends and navigate relationships on their own.

TEENS MAY FEEL PEER PRESSURE TO ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIORS

Peer pressure, and the desire to fit in, can nudge our teens to act in ways that they might not choose on their own, including drug and alcohol use. Sanders says some studies suggest "when teens are with their peers, they are much more likely to engage in risky behavior than when they are alone."

Sanders says that it's important to remember that teenage brains are still developing. Teens lack self-control and engage in risky behaviors and they still tend to act on impulse, just like when they were tweens.

PROVIDE OUR OLDER TEENS WITH PARENTAL ADVICE, UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

Even as our teenagers become more independent from us in a variety of ways, experts agree that they still look to us as parents to help them navigate relationships around them. Here are some ways you can help them (and yourself).

9



- Set boundaries and expectations for your teen.
- Discuss possible unsafe situations and how to avoid them
- Remind your teen (and yourself) that it's OK to ask for help.

"The most crucial role for a parent of a teenager is to be a safe and supportive presence who listens and truly hears their teen," advises Siskiyou County marriage and family therapist, Dr. Michael Pautz, PsyD, LMFT. "While it's natural for parents to want to guide and instruct, the teenage years are about recognizing that they have the capability to handle things on their own. It's about instilling confidence in them to trust their inner voice, take risks, practice and improve each day. Teens often feel discouraged when things don't go as planned. Instead of saying 'I told you so,' parents can encourage them to learn from the experience and take new actions based on the lessons learned."

COMMUNICATE YOUR BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Is it OK for your teen to come home past midnight? Can they sleep at a friend's house in the middle of the week? Are they allowed to drive into the city to pick up that new friend they met online? According to Sanders, it's important that parents clearly articulate boundaries and expectations to their teens because that helps them navigate unsafe situations.

Caroline Maguire, a family coach and the author of Why Will No One Play with Me? says teens rarely respond well to parents laying out a list of rules to follow, disciplining them or lecturing them about how they should (or should not) behave or spend their time with friends. She says teens respond better to a more constructive and cooperative approach.

"Teenagers thrive in an environment where they feel heard and supported," says Dr. Pautz. "What this means for the adults in their life is to listen, listen and truly listen to what the teen is saying and find opportunities to support their decisions and use mistakes as teaching opportunities." Dr. Pautz reminds us that "teens are individuals. Treat them with love and respect, always, but especially when they are least likable."

BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS FOR UNSAFE SITUATIONS

Spending more unsupervised time with their peers increases the likelihood that our teens will confront risky situations, like being offered drugs or alcohol. At this stage, Sanders and Maguire agree, it's important to run through risky scenarios with our teenagers.

- Help your teen recognize risky behavior.
- Discuss ways to avoid risky situations and activities they're not ready for.
- Help them brainstorm ways to stop their own risky behavior.
- Ask them how they might stop someone else from taking unnecessary risks.
- Provide ways for them to escape without negative social consequences.

As Sanders reminds us, "Some kids know that it's not in their best interest to take drugs, but they don't know how to get out of those situations." By discussing possible situations ahead of time, you help your child feel more confident in knowing how to respond.

Sanders suggests saying something like this to your teen: "Some kids your age are smoking pot and you may have opportunities to smoke it. Here's where I stand: it's not something I'm OK with."

One way for our teens to get out of a situation that they don't want to be in is to encourage them to use a code word (or a certain emoji) with you. Sanders suggests telling them: "You can send me a text with a code word that lets me know you want my help in getting out of the situation." Maguire agrees with this approach, adding that when they text you the safe word, "you will come pick them up with no questions asked."

"The more you can become your child's guide, helping them to look at those peer relationships and understand their choices, the better prepared they will be to handle risky situations on their own," Maguire says.

BE CURIOUS ABOUT WHY YOU FEEL ANXIOUS ABOUT YOUR TEEN GROWING UP

Some parents use tracking devices on their teen's phone or car to add a measure of security as their teens become more independent and spend time away from home. But Sanders cautions that if you're a parent who is

very concerned about your teen's safety and whereabouts and you're using those devices to track them, it's important to have a conversation with your teen about that.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself if you're feeling anxious about your teen's growing independence:

- Why am I so concerned?
- What needs to change so I don't feel so anxious?
- Are we, as parents and child, communicating?
- Would more communication help?
- Do I need to let go a little?
- What would happen if I let go a little?

Sanders says that figuring out the origin of your anxiety can help you take the next steps to decrease it. You're providing your teen with tools they can use to handle stressful situations and make good choices. Trust that your efforts will pay off.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE WORRYING ABOUT YOUR TEENAGER

When our children were younger, it was fairly easy to find support among other parents at playgroups and classes. But now that our kids are older and more independent, it may be more challenging to find other parents for advice and support.

You might not even know the parents of your teen's friends. Or maybe you know them, but you're worried that if you reveal your struggles, they'll think your kid is bad or judge you for poor parenting. You could also fall into a pit of comparison if you gather your courage to be vulnerable with someone and they respond with no empathy or worse, they tell you everything is perfect in their house.

Even though it's a risk to be vulnerable, Sanders says it's still worth the effort to reach out to other parents. "As a parent, having our own community of other parents can be really helpful, because what you'll find, for the most part, is that you're not alone in your worries and in your concerns and they're all totally legitimate."



Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter. Her writing has been published in *The New York Times*, National Geographic, Washington Post, Parents Magazine, AARP, Healthline, Your Teen Magazine and many other publications.







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For questions or more information contact Adrianne Martin at ammartin@shastacoe.org

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COTTONWOOD CREEK CHARTER

GRADES K-8



Cottonwood Creek Charter School is a California Distinguished School that features a hybrid educational program which combines site-based classes with homeschool. Parents have the option of homeschooling their students or sending them to our site-based classrooms for a more traditional classroom education. Our site-based classes have a class size of 24 students or less and they are held four days week (Mon-Thurs). Friday is a homeschool day for all students.





3425 Brush Street, Cottonwood ● (530) 347-7200 www.cottonwoodcreekcharter.com

EVERGREEN INSTITUTE OF EXCELLENCE

WASC ACCREDITED • GRADES K-12



EIE would like to partner with your family to help your student be college and career ready through our personalized learning model. We offer enrichment classes, community partnerships, High School 2 College option and more. The teamwork that is built among families, community, staff and students exemplifies our exceptional program.



Serving Butte, Glenn, Mendocino, Plumas, Shasta, Tehama & Trinity Counties 19500 Learning Way Cottonwood • (530) 377-7850 https://eie.evergreenusd.org

FOREST RANCH CHARTER SCHOOL

GRADES TK-8



We offer a caring, small school solution for Chico and Forest Ranch families that strikes a balance between high academic expectations and positive social/emotional development. We promote a growth mindset in a multidisciplinary, technology-rich environment that supports differentiated learning, mindfulness and student leadership. Take our FREE bus and elevate your child's education today!



15815 Cedar Creek Road Forest Ranch • (530) 891-3154 www.forestranchcharter.org

GOLDEN EAGLE CHARTER SCHOOL

GRADES TK-12



Golden Eagle Charter School (TK-12) offers flexible, personalized learning through homebased learning, online courses, in-person classes in Mt. Shasta and Yreka, diverse curriculum options, exciting field trips, Career Technical Education (CTE), and dual enrollment with College of the Siskiyous, including our Early College High School Program.



Golden Eagle Charter School

Serving Siskiyou County & Castella • (530) 926-5800 www.gecs.org

HEARTHSTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

GRADES K-12



Parents are invited to choose between a program that is 100% Independent Study (home learning) or our Hybrid program which offers a few days of on-campus classes per week. With an average enrollment of 190 students school-wide, we are a perfect alternative for families who are dedicated to home schooling and seeking small class sizes and a personalized learning experience.



2280 6th Street, Oroville (530) 532-5848 www.HearthstoneSchool.net

HOMETECH CHARTER SCHOOL

GRADES TK-12



HomeTech is a WASC accredited, personalized learning program serving TK-12. In TK-6, our homeschool model supports parents by providing curriculum and regular meetings with the teacher. Our hybrid program in grades 7-12 integrates classroom learning with independent study. Home study options without weekly classes are also available. Support classes, tutoring and fun enrichment opportunities are available to all students. HomeTech provides a unique and personalized alternative learning environment!



6249 Skyway Paradise • (530) 872-1171 www.hometech.org

INSPIRE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

GRADES 9-12



At Inspire School of Arts & Sciences, we are known for our innovative block schedule, wide range of elective coursework that allows students to explore their passions and develop their interests, and career technical education pathways that build students' skills in the arts and sciences. Our approach to learning challenges students to aim for excellence, while our small-school environment, advisory program, and staff of master teachers allow for the support needed to get them there. Visit Inspirechico.org to learn more, or request a tour of our tuition-free, public charter high school. This is learning, inspired.

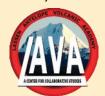


335 W. Sacramento Avenue Chico • (530) 891-3090 www.inspirechico.org

LASSEN ANTELOPE **VOLCANIC ACADEMY**

GRADES 5-8

LAVA Charter, a small 5th to 8th grade school in Red Bluff, offers a rigorous program with small class sizes. Our unique partnership with Lassen Volcanic National Park provides students with more than 10 ranger-led field trips to Lassen National Park every year. In addition to our flexible on campus scheduling we also have an at-home independent study program available for our students. Call today for more information.



1660 Monroe Street Red Bluff • (530) 727-9495 lava.antelopeschools.org

LINCOLN STREET **SCHOOL**

GRADES K-8



Lincoln Street School is committed to helping families connect, learn, and grow. Our independent study follows a homeschooling model where we partner with parents to teach their child at home under the guidance of a credentialed teacher. We meet students where they are at, build character skills, and foster a culture of care. We create an environment where success is personalized and achievable.



Serving 7 North State Counties 1125 Lincoln Street Red Bluff • (530) 528-7301 www.lincolnstreetschool.org

NORTHERN SUMMIT ACADEMY

GRADES TK-12



We provide a personalized approach to providing a standards-based education and career awareness and preparation to students who need the flexibility of independent study combined with the support of classroom teachers, classes, and an academic environment. Our personalized approach and delivery utilizes traditional and innovative materials, equipment, techniques, and community resources with an emphasis on collaborative relationships.



2301 Balls Ferry Road Anderson • (530) 338-1399 www.ns-academy.org

NORTHERN UNITED CHARTER SCHOOLS

GRADES K-12



NUCS believes in honoring individual education choices and is committed to providing an innovative public education environment for students, their parents, and teachers, through independent study facilitation, small group instruction,

facilitation, small group instruction, tutoring, online and blended learning, as well as community college co-enrollment.



Serving Siskiyou & Humboldt Counties (530) 842-4509 or (707) 629-3634 www.nucharters.org

OAK BRIDGE ACADEMY

GRADES K-12



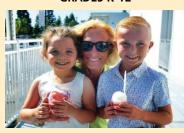
Oak Bridge is an independent study school within Chico Unified. The K-5 families partner with CUSD teachers weekly in their comprehensive grade-level education of students. Enrichment opportunities include field trips, learning labs, and art classes. Our award-winning secondary 6th -12th grade program is WASC accredited, college-preparatory and NCAA approved. Students can take classes, play sports and engage in other extra-curricular activities at their school of residence in CUSD.



Serving Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Sutter, Tehama & Yuba Counties (530) 897-8877 oakbridge.chicousd.org

PHOENIX CHARTER ACADEMY COLLEGE VIEW

GRADES K-12



A California Distinguished School

Phoenix Charter Academy
College View offers a
chance for students to
rise. Our K-12 site-based/
independent study
homeschool charter in Redding provides
educational choice for families who wish
to educate their children in a blended
educational model.



145 Shasta View Drive, Redding ● (530) 222-9275 www.ourpca.org

PIVOT NORTH VALLEY

GRADES 6-12



Pivot North Valley is a tuition-free, public charter school. Pivot uses a blended learning model, giving students the flexibility to learn on-site and online.

Teachers provide daily oversight, motivation and academic guidance that is customized to each student based on learning style and progress. Field trips, events, clubs and other social activities are available. Call or visit Pivot North Valley to enroll today!



1350 E. 9th Street, Ste. 150 Chico • (530) 636-4479 www.pivotnorthvalley.com

REDDING SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

GRADES K-12



At Redding School of the Arts, we believe in the power of art to shape young minds in the most amazing ways. Our students have unique opportunities to build confidence, resourcefulness, and adaptability for a bright future. With academic rigor, diverse arts, and character education, we prepare them for successful lives now and beyond high school. Plus, our Early College program lets high school students earn college credits while finishing their diploma. Come explore the unique opportunities at Redding School of the Arts — Where Education and the Arts Connect!



955 Inspiration Place Redding ● (530) 247-6933 www.rsarts.org

SHASTA CHARTER ACADEMY

GRADES 9-12



Join us for amazing on-site classes, Shasta College enrollment, traditional home schooling, high-quality tutoring, and more. We are SUHSD sponsored and WASC accredited. Let's have a great school year together!



307 Park Marina Circle Redding • (530) 245-2600 www.sca-edu.org

SHASTA VIEW ACADEMY

GRADES TK-12



SVA offers a personalized learning/ independent study program dedicated to serving families who make the choice to school their children at home. We provide credentialed staff, a wide array of curriculum choices, small group classes, one-on-one tutoring, field trips, and extracurricular enrichment opportunities.



Serving Shasta, Modoc, Lassen, Tehama, Siskiyou, and Trinity Counties 675 Shasta View Dr., Redding (530) 233-3861 • shastaview.org

SHERWOOD MONTESSORI

GRADES TK-8



Every child is a unique person with their own interests, skills, abilities and personality. The Montessori approach facilitates individualized instruction with multi-age groupings in an environment that naturally fosters a love for learning. Sherwood Montessori is a tuition-free charter school with beautiful classrooms, engaging hands-on materials, on-site, high-quality child care before and after school, as well as music, art, cooking and gardening instruction. Call for a school tour!

SHERWOOD MONTESSORI

1010 Cleveland Ave., Chico • (530) 345-6600 www.sherwoodmontessori.org

TEHAMA eLEARNING ACADEMY

GRADES 7-12



Tehama eLearning Academy is a WASC accredited independent online charter school, with a 7-12 program, that serves Tehama and the adjacent counties. Students at TeLA complete their coursework online or at the Red Bluff Campus. The school has accredited teachers, a-g programs, credit recovery classes, individual education coursework and onsite electives. We also have an adult education school where adults can earn their High School Diploma or GED.



979 Douglass Street Red Bluff • (530) 527-0188 www.telacademy.org

WILDFLOWER OPEN CLASSROOM

GRADES TK-8



Dirty Hands and Belly Laughs! Wildflower makes education fun! A fully accredited public charter school, grades TK-8, Wildflower's thematic integrated curriculum offers a unique model of learning for children & adolescents who thrive in hands-on, experiential learning to build individuality, confidence, and a love of learning through creative and meaningful, research-based curriculum. WOC's TK Forest School encapsulates this hands-on learning experience.



2414 Cohasset Road Chico • (530) 892-1676 www.wildflowerschool.com

SUCCESS ONE! CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

AGES 18 & UP



Success One! is a WASC accredited Charter High School for adults 18 years old and above who want a high school diploma or equivalency (GED/HiSET) and live in Glenn, Butte, Tehama, Colusa, Lake or Mendocino County. You can register anytime through our open registration. Instruction is individualized and available through Independent Study and Online Courses that meet your educational needs. It's never too late - Expect Success!



129 E. Walker St., Orland 451 S. Villa Ave., Willows (530) 936-6980 • success1charter.org







SUMMER THEATRE CAMPS 2025

Get ready for an unforgettable summer of creativity, growth, and fun at Redding Performing Arts Center! Our 2025 Summer Theatre Camps offer young performers the chance to shine on stage, build confidence, and develop lifelong skills in a supportive and inspiring environment.



Seussical Kids (Grades 1-5)

Dive into the whimsical world of Dr. Seuss! This camp is perfect for our youngest stars, introducing them to the magic of theatre through vibrant characters and catchy songs.



Shrek Jr. (Grades 3-8):

Join Shrek, Fiona, Donkey, and the hilarious fairytale misfits on a journey to Far Far Away. This camp helps kids explore storytelling, teamwork, and selfexpression.



SpongeBob The Musical (Grades 5-12)

Bring Bikini Bottom to life in this dynamic camp designed for older students. With high-energy songs and colorful characters, this experience will challenge and inspire budding performers.

Each camp culminates in a live performance, giving participants the chance to showcase their hard work and talent in front of an audience. Beyond the stage, these camps foster personal growth, teamwork, and confidence, empowering kids to express themselves creatively and make lasting friendships.

Space is limited, so don't miss out! Register today reddingpac.com and let your child embark on a summer of discovery and joy at Redding Performing Arts Center.



hat does constant exposure to media mean for today's youth who must navigate the barrage of media in almost every aspect of their lives? What are the implications for parents, teachers and mentors who are relatively new to this media environment constantly vying for our attention? How can we help our children be media literate, which, according to the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), means they possess the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and act using all forms of communication.

In 2009, only about half of teens used social media

every day, according to Dr. Jean Twenge, professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and author of four books focusing on how young Americans have changed and what that means for our future. In 2017, 85% of young Americans used social media daily, according to Dr. Twenge. A 2022 Pew Research Center poll found that 95% of teens said they used some social media and about a third say they used it constantly.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO CLEARLY EVALUATE INFORMATION IS CRUCIAL

Social media is created by a wide breadth of people

and organizations, some of which have appropriate background knowledge and academic credentials, although many do not. A 2024 UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization) international study published in collaboration with Bowling Green State University revealed that 62% of surveyed creators said they don't vet the accuracy of content before sharing it with their followers. Roughly one-third of influencers said they shared information without checking its validity or if it originated from a trusted source. In contrast, 37% said they verified information with a fact-checking site before circulation.





Specializing In Child & Adolescent Counseling For Ages 2 & Up Personal & Family Counseling/ Psychotherapy

Marriage & Family Therapists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Psychologists.

We Offer Telehealth

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RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org): A widely respected platform that offers reviews, recommendations and advice on how to navigate media and technology in healthy and constructive ways. Provides a wide range of guides on media literacy, digital citizenship and managing screen time for children of all ages.

<u>National Association for Media Literacy Education</u> (namle.net): Provides resources and research for educators and parents looking to foster media literacy, including an array of tools, workshops and curriculum guides aimed at improving students' media literacy skills.

<u>National Public Radio</u> (npr.org): Offers insightful articles and podcasts related to media literacy and the impact of digital media. The organization's coverage of media issues can help parents stay informed on trends and developments in the digital landscape.

In the face of this barrage of information and misinformation through social media channels, teaching our children to analyze and evaluate the information they receive is crucial to their ability to make informed decisions, form positive self-images and interact effectively with their world. They must learn to become critical consumers of the overabundance of media within their reach.

DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy in our current tech-savvy world is the grounding of our democracy. "It's true that media literacy is often linked to detecting and flagging fake news," says the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro. But there's much more to it than that. "It's about empowering citizens to navigate the digital landscape with discernment and critical thinking, ensuring informed democratic participation," Ribeiro says.

If we have a conversation about "news" gleaned from the media, what are the questions we can ask to learn about the viability of the content? Although the ways we search for and receive information have changed substantially over time, the core questions of who, what, when, where, why and how can still apply.

WHO IS REPORTING THE NEWS YOU ARE CONSUMING?

What are the credentials of the author or group presenting this information? Internet domains such as .org (organization), .gov (government), .edu (education) or .com (commercial) identify the type of organization that hosts information or has agreed to have it hosted on their site. Despite these official domains, these websites are not always unbiased sources of information. Keep in mind that humans publish this information and both humans and AI can and do make errors.

WHAT WAS REPORTED?

Check the facts! There are several reliable fact-checking sources such as Snopes.com, FactCheck.org, and fact checker searches at WashingtonPost.com, NPR.org and Politifact.com. Content on Wikipedia is another online place to start. While information on Wikipedia is not held to any publishing standards, it is often open source reviewed. Pay close attention to opinions and the source(s) supporting them versus facts. Internet search engine results are based on popularity rather than validity.

WHEN WAS THIS INFORMATION FIRST PUBLISHED?

How current is the information? When was the information published or posted? The timing of news can be critical, particularly for current events such as recent natural disasters. Broken links can indicate a topic is older and, in some contexts, no longer relevant.

Consider a Christian Education

It is an investment in your child's education & eternity.

The Christian school educates the whole child – intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and, of course, spiritually. Your children will learn strong Christian and moral values while being educated through a Christ-centered curriculum. Christian schools are affordable!

Hope Academy for Personalized Education

At Hope Academy, we recognize every child is uniquely created by God, and we address learning needs and learning differences through personalized education. Our TK-8 non-denominational Christian program includes small class sizes, enrichment courses in the arts and sciences, and daily Bible and physical education. We also offer after school and summer programs.







1888 Springfield Dr., Chico • (530) 518-4092 • chicohopeacademy.com

Paradise Adventist Elementary

Our school focuses on providing K-8 education that is Christ centered, book smart and experience rich. Our students benefit from learning that is more engaging and memorable through hands-on activities, simulations, outdoor experiences, gardening, and projects that integrate different subject areas, while keeping Christ at the center of all we do. Our school is fully accredited and has been teaching students since 1908. Call to schedule a visit and see us in action.



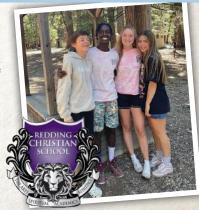
Paradise Adventist Elementary

5699 Academy Dr., Paradise • (530) 872-1576 • office@mypae.net

Redding Christian School

Redding Christian School is an independent, nondenominational Christian school serving all of Shasta County. Its families, qualified staff and faculty, and governing board represent Bible believing churches throughout the Redding area. RCS is a member of and fully accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Preschool through high school, located in the beautiful neighborhood community of Palo Cedro



Redding Christian School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance programs, athletic and other school administered programs, not in the hirring of faculty or administrative staff.

21945 Old 44 Dr., Palo Cedro • (530) 547-5600 • www.reddingchristian.com



- Tracey Hedge



530.209.1116 • www.traceyhedgephotography.com



WHERE WAS A MEDIA STORY SOURCED?

When we read online content, we typically read vertically - top to bottom. Media consumers need to learn to read laterally. Lateral reading means as content is read, you leave open another tab and do some fact-checking as you are reading the content. Look beyond the first page of the sites listed that relate to that topic. Lateral checking is critical to the deeper dive to determine the validity of a source, such as who funds and potentially influences the content. This is a job that is traditionally performed by trustworthy authors and editors but is not currently part of social media content posting. An excellent example of lateral reading can be found in John Green's YouTube post "Check Yourself with Lateral Reading: Crash Course Navigating Digital Information #3."

WHY IS A PARTICULAR MEDIA PIECE PUBLISHED?

What are possible angles and emotional appeals of a media piece? Could a particular group or individual influencer have an ulterior motive (profit, power) for you to believe and act on the information they present?

HOW HAS THE MEDIA PIECE BEEN PRESENTED?

What production choices such as framing, lighting, camera position and music have been used? All these factors plus word choice for the piece can influence media consumers' perception of the subject. For instance when articles that report a group of protesters composed largely of BIPOC individuals describe this group as "a mob" and protesters who are mostly white are described simply as protesters, or persons of color are lit with dark or low lighting in interviews or media clips while white people are brightly or flatteringly lit in comparison, this can subtly influences media consumers to feel a certain way about article subjects that is not objective.

In the modern world, media literacy is an essential skill for children to thrive both academically and socially. By taking an active role in their media consumption, you are helping them to develop the skills to critically evaluate the content they encounter. Using the questions outlined here and providing trusted fact-checking and media resources, having conversations with your child and demonstrating appropriate modeling of healthy media habits, you can help ensure your child is a thoughtful, responsible, informed media consumer.



Catherine Paine is an educator who has taught 20+ subjects at the high school level. She has worked extensively in both public and charter schools, K-12. She has an M.Ed. and an MBA and is nationally board certified. She is a proud mom of two college students.

North State Parent.

A GATEWAY TO HEALTH CARE:

Glenn County Medical Assistant Program Is a Game-Changer

CLICK HERE FOR ENLARGED ARTICLE

ealth care careers are more than jobs they're opportunities to make a difference. As health care continues to be a cornerstone of our communities, the need for skilled professionals is more critical than ever. For anyone looking to enter this essential and rewarding field, Glenn County's Medical Assistant Program offers a unique opportunity to gain the skills, certifications and experience required to thrive in today's medical environment. This comprehensive, affordable, nine-month program is designed to prepare students with the skills, knowledge and hands-on experience needed to thrive in various health care settings.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MEDICAL TRAINING

This program isn't just about learning—it's about transforming lives. With a combination of 360 classroom hours and up to 200 clinical hours, students are immersed in a curriculum designed to prepare them for real-world success. From taking vital signs to managing medical records and learning phlebotomy, the program provides a comprehensive education that covers both the front and back-office duties essential to the efficient operation of a medical practice.

But what truly sets this program apart is its commitment to hands-on experience. Students don't just learn the theory—they practice it in real medical settings through internships, giving them the confidence and skills to seamlessly transition into a professional role. By the time they graduate,

they're not just ready for the workforce—they're Certified Medical Assistant Exam-ready, positioning them for immediate employment opportuni-

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL CREDENTIAL PROGRAM

The Glenn County's Medical Assistant Program is designed with accessibility in mind. The cost is competitive at \$6,000, with financial assistance options available and class schedules flexible enough to accommodate working adults. Glenn County has ensured that this program is open to a diverse range of students, from recent graduates to those reentering the workforce or considering a career change.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE AND NURTURING COMMUNITY

The enrollment process itself serves as a preview of the professional world students will be entering. Applicants must complete a Medical Terminology course, submit a thoughtful letter of intent and prepare for an interview, all of which mirror the expectations they'll encounter in their future careers.

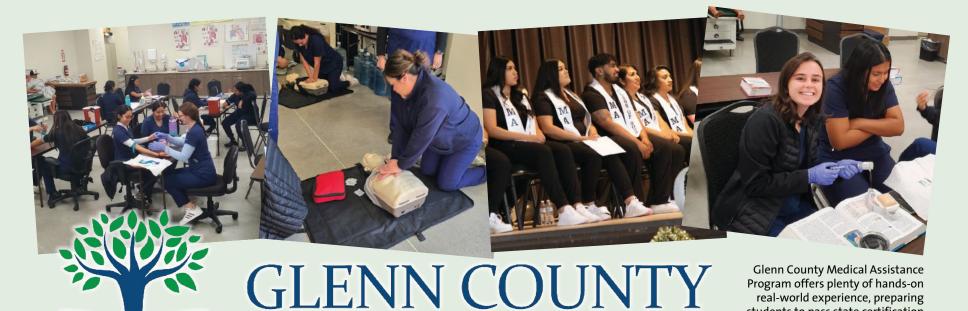
Beyond the education and skills, this program builds community. Students join a network of peers, mentors and instructors who are as invested in their success as they are. Glenn County's commitment to nurturing talent and empowering individuals shines through in every aspect of the

"It's incredible how being in the medical assistant program has shaped who I am today," says Glenn County Medical Program graduate, Michelea Ponce. "The experiences and knowledge gained from studying medicine really do have a profound impact on our lives. We get to help people when they're at their most vulnerable, which is incredibly rewarding. Plus, we learn so much about compassion, teamwork and resilience along the way. It's amazing to see how our efforts can improve someone's day or even their health! I am grateful to Glenn County Office of Education for providing me with the knowledge and skills to pursue a rewarding career in health care."

Whether you're a parent encouraging your child to explore a stable and rewarding career or considering a step into the health care field yourself, this program is worth a closer look. Applications for the 2025-2026 cohort open February 3 and close April 4. Space is limited. Visit www.glenncoe.org or pick up an application at the Orland or Willows campuses. For questions, Glenn Adult Education staff are ready to assist at (530) 936-6980 or via email at mtuma@glenncoe.org. =



Elena Jones is the principle of Glenn Adult Education, Glenn County Office of Education,



OFFICE OF EDUCATION

real-world experience, preparing students to pass state certification

> exams and be immediately employable upon graduation.



FILE YOUR TAXES FOR FREE! Get your taxes done with VITA in 2025 and maximize your returns!

For **in-person** appointments in Redding Call 211 or text "Taxes" to 211-211

Virtual appointment: Email us at VITA@norcalunitedway.org



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Submit documents virtually by visiting *getyourrefund.org/en* or by scanning the QR code



Drop off copies of your tax documents at any of our locations (Addresses available on 211)



A program of



{ UNIQUELYUS }

REFLECTIONS OF A SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT BY JENNIFER ARNOLD

Navigating the Process of

CONSERVATORSHIP

for Developmentally Disabled Adults

liling for conservatorship is a long, often complex journey that many parents and caregivers of disabled children embark on as their child approaches the age of 18. Like many parents, we wanted to ensure that our daughter had the support she needed to thrive as an adult while still respecting her independence and individuality.

The most common reason for pursuing conservatorship for developmentally disabled adults, as it was in our case, is the need for ongoing support to help manage their health, safety and finances. Individuals like our daughter, who is nonverbal, are particularly vulnerable, and conservatorship allows us to continue advocating for her and serving as her voice. Here is what we learned from our experience about the process of applying for conservatorship.

Gathering all the required forms for conservatorship

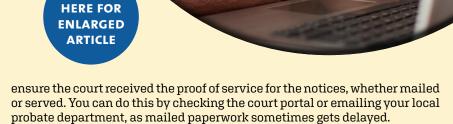
Filing for conservatorship involves forms - and lots of them! This selfhelp guide is a good place to start. While many forms are standard, some courts require county-specific versions, so check with your local probate court for their requirements. It's also crucial to start the process early, before your child turns 18, to give you plenty of time to handle the paperwork and ensure you're ready to step in as soon as your child legally becomes an adult.

Filling out forms for conservatorship can feel overwhelming, especially if you're unfamiliar with legal documents. Fortunately, document preparation services are available in most areas to help with forms and answer questions, though they typically charge a fee. There is also a cost to file the documents with the court, but fee waivers may be available if you meet specific criteria.

Serving notices to the conservatee and relatives

After filing the paperwork and receiving a hearing date, the next step is serving the notice of hearing and a copy of the petition for conservatorship. The proposed conservatee must be served in person by someone who is not a familial relation, while notices must be mailed to any living immediate family members and the regional center providing services to the conservatee. Serving the notices is an important piece of the process and must be done correctly and on time or else the hearing will be postponed and you will have to have new notices mailed and served.

You can hire a local process server or to save money, ask a friend to serve the papers if they're over 18 and live in the same county as the proposed conservatee. If you qualify for a court fee waiver, the sheriff's office might serve the papers for free, but plan ahead since it can take a few weeks. Follow up to



Attending the court investigation and regional center assessments

A court investigation sounds a lot scarier than it is. A court-appointed investigator will meet with the proposed conservatee and conservator to make sure that conservatorship is appropriate for the situation. In our case, the court investigator came to our home and interviewed us, got to know about our daughter and why we were pursuing conservatorship so they could put together a report and make a recommendation to the court. We also had our local regional center - Far Northern Regional Center- do a referral for a psychological evaluation of our daughter. This is required when filing for a limited conservatorship and is vital to assess if a conservatorship is necessary. This assessment is also submitted to the court with a recommendation.

Preparing for the conservatorship hearing

CLICK

Check with your local court website regarding tentative rulings or updates as your conservatorship hearing date approaches, as in-person attendance may not always be required. For our daughter's hearing, we only needed to pick up conservatorship orders after the hearing date. If attendance is necessary, come prepared to explain why the conservatorship is needed and why you are the right person for the role. Make sure to bring copies of all filed court documents with you.

One thing I was surprised to learn is that the conservatorship process doesn't end when the judge signs off on it. There are additional forms to mail and file regarding the conservatee's rights and plan of care, and annual reviews of the case, so being proactive and organized with your paperwork before AND after conservatorship is granted is essential. While the process can be long and daunting, it offers families peace of mind and a way to provide continued support and advocacy for their loved ones. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a

THIS IS TEHAMA

The ancient word "Tehama" once meant a place where rivers could be crossed. With our county's rich currents of history, happenings and hope, this is our crossing place today — where we meet to celebrate our beautiful Tehama County.



CLICK **HERE FOR ENLARGED**

REGENERATIVE EDUCATION IN MANTON

ultivating a culture of learning is much like cultivating soil. With the right season and tools, you dig in, refine and enrich. There are no limits to the possibilities when a new ecosystem is born and regeneration begins.

In 2017, the Manton community was faced with the question of whether they would dig in or walk away when they heard that the Manton Elementary School doors would soon close. A group of people decided to get their hands dirty and eventually two nonprofits were formed-the Manton Educational Council (MEC) in 2017 and Manton Parks in 2022. This budding culture of learning rejuvenated Manton, but you could argue that the soil was prepped long before the school closure.

Small town schools provide community hubs

Nestled against the base of Mount Lassen on ancient Yana lands. Manton's volcanic soil has attracted many people over the years with their fingers itching to sink into the rich possibilities. Marlo Meyer, an Education Administrator for the University of Virginia, moved back to California in 2015 to fulfill her dreams of owning a family farm. Marlo continues to telecommute while she and her family run Meyerhof Farm. Marlo never could have imagined just how deeply she would become planted into the bedrock of the community but she "wouldn't have it any other way."

The impending school closure was full of red flags for Marlo. "Schools have traditionally served as community hubs, especially in small communities like Manton whose main center had been the school since 1921," Marlo says. "Starting in 2019, our kids were being bussed to larger schools 40 minutes away, with after school care provided in town for a fee and no transportation back to Manton."

Loss of community school inspires action, garners local support

Marlo decided to form the MEC to create local educational opportunities involving community members. While working to buy the Manton Elementary School property, the MEC leased the school and launched an afterschool program, Club Mustang. Marlo began garnering support through writing not only grants but also catchy signs to hang at the annual Manton Apple Festival. One sign, "If not you, then who? If not now, then when? Save our school," planted just the right seeds for one new Manton resident.

Gerard Minikawa, a world-renowned industrial engineer and founder of Bamboo DNA, had chosen Manton to grow bamboo, but then he couldn't get Marlo's sign out of his head. Gerard says that he and other community members began "working to restore some of the basic organs of a thriving town, like our community 23



center and the general store called Sweet Shoots."

After tremendous support from the community through donations and fundraisers and a generous grant from the McConnell Foundation, Manton Parks was able to purchase the Manton Elementary School in 2022. "Manton Parks was created to be the administrator or 'brain', of our community center while the MEC remains as the beating 'heart' for most of the area activities" says Gerard. "Our various nonprofits and business entities need each other to thrive, like a mini ecosystem."

Another vital member of the ecosystem has been Kalan Redwood, a founding board member of MEC, who helped put Manton on the map with her organic seed farm, Redwood Seeds. Kalan is thrilled that MEC has made it possible for her children to attend Acorn to Oaks, a homeschooling program held three days a week at the school campus. "I am so grateful for the programming MEC provides at Manton Parks. When my kids were young, we had to go to Redding for activities but with Club Mustang and Acorn to Oaks, my kids are engaged in their local community and peers. We hope to continue growing and expanding programming at Manton Parks over the coming years with more and more offerings for youth and adults. This year the kids are starting a seed library and we have expansion plans for the campus garden as well."

Revitalized Manton Elementary offers unique, integrated education

Like some of Gerard's bamboo varieties, (Sweetshoots, Spectabilis and Incense), and Kalan's seeds, (Cosmonaut Volkav tomato, Dragon Tongue Bush bean and Waltham Butternut), the Manton children's education is anything but garden variety.

Teacher Catherine Mancino taught at Manton Elementary before it closed. She said, "I feel privileged to be out of retirement and working again with the local families as the director of Club Mustang. We have anywhere from 18 to 22 kids and it is a joy to challenge them to try new things and per-

haps discover something they enjoy. We have fused glass classes, pottery, archery training, mask-making and soap-making-just to name a few. The kids also love time to run around with their friends and have downtime after school."

Manton Parks connects community, builds bridge to the future

The adults in the community have also benefited from the ability to gather at Manton Parks for things like free ukulele lessons and Tai Chi. "Besides the Manton Apple Festival, the next best community bonding has come through pickle ball at Manton Parks every Wednesday and Saturday," says Manton Community Church pastor, Paul Crabtree.

Marlo says with emotion, "70-year-olds playing pickleball with 17-year-olds are going to be the bridge that saves this town. This is regenerating—when we know that these kids will one day be the future leaders who will give back to their communities."

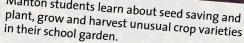
A favorite memory at Club Mustang was when Marlo taught a unit on the book "Stone Soup," culminating with a performance that completely packed the school gym. Marlo says, "when people bring what they can, even if they think it is small, the whole community benefits. We all need each other."

Visit mantonedcouncil.org for more information. ■



Kate Hiller vividly remembers the taste of the soup and the important lesson taught by her own grammar school teacher while reading









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SNIP: HOPE AND COMPASSION FOR SISKIYOU COUNTY PETS AND STRAYS

HERE FOR ENLARGED ARTICLE

"We have animals dropped on our doorstep in the middle of the night. We get calls about animals out on the street and I go see if I can HELP," SAYS SISKIYOU SPAY NEUTER PROGRAM (SNIP) PRESIDENT ALISA FRASER. A NONPROFIT, VOLUNTEER-ONLY ORGANIZATION, SNIP'S MISSION IS TO HELP END DOG AND CAT OVERPOPULATION IN SISKIYOU COUNTY THROUGH EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND NEED-BASED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PET OWNERS.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, SNIP EXPANDED TO MEET PET OWNERS' **CRUCIAL NEEDS**

Founded in 2002 by Cheryl and Tim Webber, SNIP mainly handed out spay and neuter vouchers and worked to find homes for animals from shelters that at that time were euthanizing animals. After becoming president in 2017, Alisa expanded SNIP's mission to include emergency rescue of cats and dogs and boarding pets of victims of domestic violence so their owners can seek help at shelters that do not permit pets.

the fertile feral cat problem in areas with high feral cat populations in Siskiyou County, establishing spay/neuter clinics in Ft. Jones, Yreka and Happy Camp. SNIP helps those experiencing homelessness by arranging for their pets to be fixed and vaccinated and providing them with collars and leashes. They have even checked on animals for owners who are staying at the hospital and helped owners with fencing so they can keep their dogs. For dog owners who do not have transportation, SNIP will transport their dogs to a vet in Klamath Falls to be spayed or neutered.

Dr. Essex and his wife Jamie, of Essex Veterinary Services, provide a competitively priced spay and neuter service at the SNIP rescue center in a "mobile" surgery van. "It doesn't actually go anywhere," says Dr. Essex. "It gets 6 miles to the gallon, so it's cheaper for us to come here to use the unit then to drive it anywhere." Dr Essex provides surgery services for both feral and housed cats, allowing them to live a much longer and healthier lives.

veterinary surgical suite. All animals are anesthetized and provided with supportive care after surgery per veterinary ordinary standards of care. Incisions are laser treated to help with recovery. Feral cat 25





ears are clipped to easily identify them from afar as having been fixed. Both male and female cats get tattooed with a small blue line on their bellies to indicate they have been fixed. In addition to altering cats, SNIP and Essex also offer rabies vaccines, FVRCP vaccines and microchips for owners that request those services.

To assure the comfort of the animals and to keep the clinic running smoothly takes many hands. Internships helping prep animals for surgery are available to high school students who, like current intern Saige Risner, might be interested in a career in veterinary medicine. "I had animals all my life and it seems like working with animals would be fun," says Saige, who volunteered to intern to see if she would like to work in veterinary medicine. Longtime dedicated adult volunteer Leslie Blankenship supervises surgery prep.

SNIP'S COMPASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS MEET THE MOMENT, CREATE FAMILY

SNIP not only provides spay/neuter coupons and surgeries, they also do emergency cat and dog rescue and assist the county in emergency evacuations. In response to increasing wildfires in the region, SNIP started a program to house evacuees' animals at no cost to those who have been displaced. The assistance of many dedicated volunteers and community members and donations from the community have made it possible for SNIP to provide this vital service.

SNIP's 10 compassionate, devoted volunteers, seven of whom are SNIP board members, work hard to care for animals and provide community support. "Caring for the animals gives me a reason to get up in the morning," says SNIP volunteer Becca Gutierrez, a wildfire evacuee who wanted to give back. She became a driver for SNIP and then, as she says, "just started doing whatever was needed." She now helps in the office and kennels, filling many roles. "Since my mother passed away" she says, "I have found the volunteers at SNIP to be my family."

In 2024, SNIP facilitated over 1,000 cat surgeries, transported more than 100 dogs to Oregon for spay/neuter services and assisted over 1,500 Siskiyou County residents with spay/neuter coupons. SNIP uses grants and donations to help supplement the cost of providing community services and to make surgeries more affordable. "We are grateful to UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program for a three-year grant award," says Alisa. "With this grant we are able to cover some of the costs for the spays and neuters."

If you would like to be part of this remarkable organization making a positive, loving impact on Siskiyou County animals and pet owners by volunteering or fostering a cat or dog, call Alisa at (541)531-1086. They encourage anyone who wants to support this vital work to reduce the suffering of animals in Siskiyou County to become a monthly donor. Donations can be made at <u>siskiyousnip.org</u>. To receive a spay/neuter discount coupon for a dog, fill out the form on the website. Registration for the SNIP/ Essex Cat Spay and Neuter Clinics is also available on the website. ■



A photo of Stacey as a toddler hugging the family dog is proof of her love of animals practically from birth. She has a great deal of trouble not taking home a cat or dog when she visits local animal rescues to research and interview for articles.



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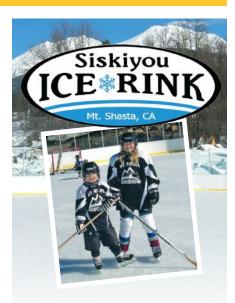


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The greatest gift we can give our children is not protection from the world, but the confidence and tools to cope and grow

My Mother Hid Her Cancer Diagnosis from Me-

I Made a Different Choice with My Own Children

CLICK
HERE FOR
ENLARGED
ARTICLE

n the summer of 1998, I returned home after a yearlong college study abroad program. One day as my mother and I were catching up, the conversation took an odd shift. "I need to tell you about a little medical problem I had while you were away," she said.

"What problem?" I asked. I hadn't noticed anything amiss with her health.

"Well," she said, sounding sheepish. "Breast cancer."

Over the next few days, the truth dribbled out. My mother had been diagnosed shortly after the holidays.

She'd undergone two surgeries and radiation. And everyone else — from my younger siblings to the cantor at our church — had known for months.

My mom was no helicopter parent. But this decision was different: She wanted to protect me from worry and all its ramifications. As she put it, "We were afraid if we told you, you'd freak out and fly home."

After learning the truth, I thought back to my time abroad, now shaded with the reality of my mom's illness. While I was hopping on trains and practicing my Austri-

an dialect, my mother had been recovering from surgeries and meeting with a small army of doctors. I imagined her sitting up in bed, bandages across her chest as she composed cheerful emails to me on the laptop my father had brought to the hospital. I remembered calling home one random spring day and feeling surprised to hear my grandmother's voice. Why was she in California, not home in Illinois?

"Is everything OK?" I asked.

"Of course! Everything is fine," she told me.

27

Montessori Schools in Upper California

"Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society" ~Maria Montessori

BUTTE COUNTY

Chico Montessori Children's House

Director: Sarah Livingston Preschool, ages 2 1/2 - 6 814 Glenn St., Chico chicomontessori.com (530) 342-5518 Lic# 0454406630

Sherwood Montessori

Director: Michelle Yezbick TK-8th grade, public charter school 1010 Cleveland Ave., Chico sherwoodmontessori.org (530) 345-6600

SHASTA COUNTY Montessori Children's

Montessori Children's House of Shady Oaks

Director: Julie Helart
Private learning environment
for PreK-6th grade
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shadyoaksmontessori.com
(530) 222-0355 Lic# 455405949

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northstateparent.com/ calendar



I felt angry and betrayed when I realized my parents — and even my extended family - had lied to me. And I couldn't shake the thought that my parents had decided I wasn't mature or stable enough to cope.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR CHILDREN FROM THE BEGINNING

When parents lie, the underlying message is, "You can't handle the truth," says Wendy S. Harpham, M.D., author of "When a Parent has Cancer: A Guide to Caring for Your Children." Diagnosed with cancer when her children were 1, 3 and 5 years old, Harpham says her perspective as an internal medicine physician guided her decision to be honest from the beginning. "I had patients who, as children, had been lied to and some reacted in very maladaptive ways to signs of illness or having illness," she says.

While there is a powerful instinct to protect children from upsetting news and the pain it causes, hiding a diagnosis can backfire. "Children's brains are wired to draw conclusions based on what they see, hear and know," Harpham says. "If they're seeing stuff without context, without explanation, they are going to draw conclusions which may be worse than what is the truth."

In the years following my mother's illness, I worried constantly about her prognosis, even when she told me everything was going well. And while I've always struggled with generalized anxiety, as an adult I've found health anxiety is my biggest challenge.

HOW TO TELL CHILDREN ABOUT A PARENT'S CANCER DIAGNOSIS

Since her diagnosis, Harpham has worked to raise awareness among clinicians and patients about the challenges of survivorship, including caring for children when a parent has cancer. When telling children about a serious illness, Harpham advises two steps: First, accept that the illness has entered your life. Second, choose to use the unwanted experience positively.

By being honest, "parents can shape the child's understanding of what is going on, of what to do. They can guide the child to healthy responses, to a healthy perspective," she says.

When breaking the news, offer compassion rather than pity. "Compassion is when you help children feel heard and help them through, whereas pity disempowers them," Harpham says.

CHILDREN'S REACTION TO CANCER NEWS CAN VARY WIDELY

Be prepared for any reaction, from an emotional outburst to apparent indifference. On one occasion, Harpham's daughter stormed out the door after hearing bad news. While painful to witness, such reactions represent a normal, healthy response, Harpham says. They indicate the child understands the significance of what's happening and feels safe enough to show you they need comfort. Keep in mind that a child who reacts calmly at first may need support later.

CARE FOR CHILDREN'S NEEDS THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING

Harpham encourages parents to focus on children's fundamental needs, whether they are toddlers or teenagers. Do children have transportation to school, soccer practice and piano lessons? Do they know they'll be cared for amid the crisis, even though some household routines are changing?

It's also important for children to have a basic understanding of the parent's treatment plan, though the amount of detail will vary depending on the child. If the parent is undergoing chemotherapy, for example, a teenager may want to know more than a first grader, who may just need to understand why mom or dad will be more tired than usual. Harpham recalls that her middle child was fascinated by the X-rays she brought home, while her oldest only wanted to know when her mother would be away for treatment.

Regular communication is critical, not only when parents share a diagnosis, but also later as children continue to cope with its impact. "If there's open communication, you can see how they're processing," Harpham says. Children whose parents have faced cancer are acutely aware that life is fragile, she adds. "If you don't talk about it, if they just experience the uncertainty and the fragility, it's a recipe for anxiety." 28





Even if adults didn't tell the truth about an illness from the start, it's possible to rebuild trust. Harpham suggests that parents explain why they kept the information a secret. Maybe they did what they felt was best in a difficult situation or a spouse or doctor advised them not to share the news. Offering an apology for the harm this caused and asking what children need to move forward, is also a good idea. While nothing can change the past, parents can commit to keeping children in the loop going forward.

CHOOSING A DIFFERENT PATH LEADS TO GROWTH, ADAPTABILITY, CONFIDENCE

My mother passed away in 2004. While we didn't discuss the impact of her decision, I've never doubted that she loved me and wanted the best for me. But in 2022, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I wanted to

handle things differently. A few days after my diagnosis, my husband and I sat down to tell our daughters, then 13 and 11 years old. There were tears and hugs as each reacted in her own way.

In that moment, I knew I'd stolen a piece of my children's innocence, changing their worlds irrevocably. But over time, my daughters have learned to cope with the reality of cancer in their family. My oldest has volunteered for the same breast cancer support organization where I serve as a board member and peer mentor. She talks about becoming a mentor herself one day so she can be a resource for other kids. My youngest raises awareness with her friends about how peer support helps breast cancer survivors.

Today, when my daughters share their fears about developing breast cancer, I tell them I hope they'll never be diagnosed, but that I understand their worries.

We talk about the options they'll have if needed, from earlier screenings to treatments that we can't even fathom today.

"The greatest gift we can give our children is not protection from the world, but the confidence and tools to cope and grow," Harpham says. To the adage, "the truth sets you free," she adds this caveat, "Even if it hurts when you learn it. Even if it hurts when you share it."



Gina Rich is a writer in Wisconsin focusing on parenting, health, and the natural world. Her work appears in the Washington Post, Notre Dame Magazine, Next Avenue, and other outlets.

Cancer Support Resources

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS FACING A CANCER DIAGNOSIS, THERE IS HELP AND SUPPORT ONLINE AND NEAR YOU.

PEER SUPPORT

The American Cancer Society Cancer Survivors Network is a peer support community for cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, families and friends. CSN is a safe place to connect with others who share your interests and experiences. Discussion groups are divided into the types of cancer survivors and their families are facing, plus a lifestyles discussion board that includes topics like caregiving and lifestyle related topics.

The <u>UCSF Ida and Joseph Friend Patient</u> and Family Cancer Support Center offers numerous support groups for cancer patients and families. The support groups are free and available to all patients, whether or not they get their health care at UCSF. Most groups require participants be in the state of California during the meeting.

Support groups include support groups for different cancers and groups for:

- All Cancer All Stages
- All Cancer Family and Friends
- All Cancer Husbands and Significant Others
- Peer Support by Phone
- Serious Illness Support Group
- · Young Women's Support Group

The American Cancer Society (ACS) can help you find a support group near you. It runs thousands of cancer support groups nationwide. It also maintains a list of organizations that offer support groups. If you don't want to search online, you can contact the ACS toll free at 1-800-ACS-2345. Cancer information specialists are available 24 hours a day.

FINANCIAL HELP AND RESOURCES

Cancer survivors and their families can find resources near them for food, housing, goods, transportation, care and education by searching by their zip code on <u>Support Near Me</u>.

<u>FamilyReach.org</u> provides grants to help with food, housing and transportation.

The maker of your cancer treatment may offer a program or there may be another program that may help you lower the amount you have to pay yourself. Most programs will have you fill out an application and will require information from your doctor. Ask your doctor or health care team about what programs may be available to you and who on your health care team can help you apply. This application will help to determine if you are eligible for financial assistance.



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30 minutes, 5 days a week is recommended. Include balance activities.

Make your home safer

Remove things you can trip over and improve or update lighting.

ShastaHealthyBrain.com





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