

Lifestyle

Help teens thrive in trying times

Adolescence has become increasingly tumultuous in our modern age. The pandemic clearly exacerbated the difficulties. I have worked with at-risk teens for the last seven years, helping them to overcome obstacles to a healthy life. My work exploded when COVID hit. The usual teen challenges were magnified, new problems were added on, and many social supports the teens relied upon were curtailed.

Now after two years of COVID, I was curious to know how teens and their parents have adapted to our transformed culture. Thus, I conducted a very informal survey asking them: What are the major challenges facing you currently? And what strategies, resources, or encouragement can

you suggest to others who are struggling? The results of my research were intriguing, revealing surprising agreement between the generations.

For both teens and parents, the top issue mentioned is feeling overwhelmed by both the flood and the negativity of information in our culture. A principal task in adolescence is to individuate oneself and define bedrock values to guide their adult life. Our society's rampant conflicts and the frequent use of hateful speech can greatly damage teens' formation process. Meanwhile parents are struggling to set appropriate limits to protect and nurture their kids into a healthy adulthood. Social media magnifies negative behavior and can threaten the quest for healthy growth.

MENTAL WELLNESS

Dodie Huete

The chaos caused by the pandemic is the second issue for both groups. When schools were abruptly shut down kids were sent home with parents suddenly in charge of their education. Resources were limited and some even lost access to basics like jobs and food. This was difficult enough for adults who have developed some resiliency, but it felt catastrophic for teens who lacked the skills to deal with the rampant disruptions. The future is very uncertain, and

the world seems a much scarier place now. Adult anxiety was high while teen anxiety became crippling for some. One teen said, "It's gotten better, but there are still constant crises from the lack of basics in the cafeteria". At the same time major milestone experiences have been lost. The teen went on to note, "There's no way for teens or adults to prepare for the unknown."

The past two years have been difficult but there have been positives in adapting to the crisis. Many have displayed surprising creativity, developing a team mentality, and appreciating moments of joy despite the obstacles. Several participants highlighted crucial increases in patience and respect for themselves and others, giving space to make mistakes

and try new things in this admittedly messy process. Both teens and parents expressed optimism about their transformed family life. Perhaps because of facing a common enemy, families are learning to cooperate better for the good of all, developing new strengths and resiliency, transforming them from survivors to thrivers.

I encourage you to have an open family discussion about this. What are the biggest challenges you are facing? What strategies or encouragement can you share with others? Work together to help achieve individual and family goals for a happier and healthier life for all.

Dodie Huete, M.A., counselor, is a member of the Healthy Adams County Behavioral Health Task Force.

Celebrating 50th anniversary serving the town

This year is Gettysburg Area Retail Merchants Association's (GARMA) 50th anniversary. I'm only a year younger than GARMA (yes, I own my age and am not afraid to admit it). I think back about all the shops and restaurants that have come and gone and there are a lot of good memories I have of this town. So here's my 50 years of memories, minus a year.

My first job was with the Gettysburg Travel Council when it was in the Lincoln Train Station at the railroad tracks on Carlisle Street. I walked to work after school and would regularly stop at Hartzell's Luncheonette to buy sticks of Jolly Rancher candy. It was the only place in town you could find them. Another favorite stop would be

for a quick slice of pizza at Mamma Ventura when they were on the square.

My mom and I would stop at Ernie's Texas Lunch for "2 with" to take home. We'd usually call the order in ahead of time because my mom knew their phone number by heart (the last four digits are the year she graduated high school). Our other spot to hit was Tommy's Pizza, but back when it was at the railroad tracks on North Washington Street. I loved waiting for our food to come out because I could play the jukebox for a quarter.

Growing up my dad would always take me and my stepsisters to the movies at the Majestic Theater. Back then it was still only one large theater and we'd usually see something my dad

GARMA

Jennie Dillon



wanted to see (more so then what we girls were interested in). We'd go to People's Drug Store when it was on the square, in the David Wills House, and buy all kinds of candy and sodas so we didn't pay the movie theater prices. Sorry Majestic for doing that.

Is that creek safe for wading?

When my kids were little, we spent many spring and summer afternoons wading in the shallows of Marsh Creek below the dam at Sachs Covered Bridge. We'd poke around the water line, flipping over rocks to get a look at all the little salamanders and underwater bugs, then eventually head home for supper, dirty but happy to have spent an afternoon outside in the natural world.

I'd pat myself on the back for getting my kids outside to play, but it never occurred to this lackadaisical young mother to wonder whether our beautiful rural stream was actually safe for the kids to be playing in.

Happily for us, it turns out that the presence of all those little water critters (more correctly known as macroinvertebrates) was a sign that the water was actually pretty clean—phew! But dangerous water-borne bacteria can lurk

in even the cleanest-looking water, as volunteers with the Watershed Alliance of Adams County learned last fall. These volunteers sampled water at five sites around the county to test for water-borne pathogens that can make us humans pretty sick. As it happens, Marsh Creek was not among those sites, but other sites showed that some of our beautiful rural waters contained levels of e. coli well over state-defined limits for safe swimming.

As a result of that pilot testing program, the watershed alliance was awarded a grant from the South Mountain Partnership to test for water-borne pathogens at up to 30 sites around the county this summer. We'll share the results here in the community and with the state so that you can make informed decisions about where to play in Adams County waters, and in hopes that our

WAAC

Chris Little



findings will inform future water-quality improvement efforts.

It's an ambitious project, and we're going to need some help from folks in the community who can suggest testing sites and help us gather water samples.

If you're interested in helping out, or just want to know more about the health of our waters here in Adams County, I hope you'll join us at the watershed alli-

ance's annual meeting on Wednesday, April 13. We'll gather in person at the Adams County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center (670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg) from 7 to 8 p.m. to share some refreshments, catch up on the past year's activities, and look forward to what we'll be doing this year, which includes some water testing.

So if you're at all interested in water, and you should be, I hope you'll attend.

The nonprofit Watershed Alliance of Adams County is dedicated to enhancing and protecting the water resources of Adams County. For more information about the Watershed Alliance, its upcoming annual meeting, and this summer's water-borne pathogen-testing program, please visit AdamsWatersheds.org.

Just a note: Our water-borne pathogen-testing project was financed in

part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. The grant was awarded through the South Mountain Partnership, with management oversight by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

The watershed alliance is a partner of the South Mountain Partnership, an alliance of organizations working to preserve and enhance the cultural and natural assets of the South Mountain Landscape in Central Pennsylvania. To learn more about the Partnership, please visit SouthMountainPartnership.org.

Chris Little serves on the board of directors at the Watershed Alliance of Adams County (WAAC).

Free ways to get fit this spring in Adams

Spring is almost here! With the promise of warm weather and sunshine come opportunities to get back outside and active after a long cold winter inside. However, when it comes to getting back outside you may have some concerns about being able to keep up with different activities; or perhaps digging the swim suits and shorts back out of the closet.

But great news; there are several free opportunities currently being offered in Adams County to work on your fitness. The first are virtual fitness classes being led by the WellSpan WellFit team. These classes are sponsored by the Gettysburg Hospital Foundation, and are being held virtually via Zoom. Each class is seven weeks long, and led by a WellSpan WellFit instructor.

The classes offered will cover a wide range of fitness categories, including cardio, stretching and strength training. Any necessary equipment will be provided via funding by the Gettysburg Hospital Foundation.

Any and all ability levels are welcome, and modifications will be shown as needed. To sign up go to WellSpan's website, www.wellspan.org, and click "Attend a Class or Event" on the right hand side of the main page. Upon registration, you will be sent an email with the Zoom information to enter the class. The next class coming up is Low Impact Full Body Interval Training, started Monday March 28 at 1 p.m. for 45 minutes. But it is fine to join in week two. At the conclusion of the seventh week

PHYSICAL FITNESS TASK FORCE

Katie Groomes



of this class, a new class will begin.

In addition to the virtual fitness classes, the Healthy Adams Physical Fitness Task Force group is offering free walks to the community. These walks take place once a week from April 20 through June 14, and are set in a designated location. The walks are

free to attend, upon arrival you will be given a map and sent on your way. The task force is trying to organize a guide to lead a group, if volunteer guides can be found.

In addition to wonderful exercise, this is a fantastic way to get out and explore your home town, and meet new friends. The first walk coming up is taking place on April 20, 1-6:00 p.m., around the new Amblebrook development. This walk will be about two miles in length, but you are welcome to stop and turn back if needed at any time.

The key to weight loss and improving overall fitness is consistent exercise. Walking is a phenomenal low impact cardio activity to increase your cardiovascular fitness and muscle endurance. The fitness classes will

focus on muscle strength and stretching, and more cardiovascular fitness. The American Heart Association suggests 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

By taking the fitness class and attending the walk, you will be meeting the first fitness goal. And as you start to feel stronger and healthier and settle in to a fitness regime, the 150 minutes of activity will be within reach. So get your sneakers out to walk, and hop on WellSpan.org to register for classes. We will see you soon.

Katie Groomes is an exercise specialist and wellness instructor at Herr's Ridge Rehabilitation Center, and a member of the Physical Fitness Task Force.

Financial literacy

AT THE LIBRARY

Bryn Jarusewski

If knowledge is power, then money is power to pursue your dreams and achieve your goals. Money gives us security and freedom. But how can you become financially literate? How does your local library help with financial literacy?

The Pennsylvania Library Association created a literacy initiative known as PA Forward to give a voice to the community with libraries being a community's center for

information. PA Forward notes that the key to fueling knowledge is essential to success which includes financial literacy. What is financial literacy? According to PA Forward, financial literacy is defined as "having the knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed fiscal/economic decisions ... including responsible budgeting, spending, and saving skills."

As the month of April continues,

everyone can take these steps to financial literacy: be a role-model for children, plan and budget your spending and savings, set a defined money goal for yourself and your

family, and the list goes on. The libraries will always be there to help the community build solid foundations for long-term financial and economic well-being because learning and literacy is a lifelong process. Keep an eye out for future children, teen, and adult programs dedicated to financial literacy.

Submitted by Bryn Jarusewski, branch manager, New Oxford Area Library.

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