

Caution: The kids are back in school

Sisters' schoolchildren are back in class — and that means that drivers have to exercise some extra caution.

Drivers need to slow down around the schools, particularly in the morning hours from about 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and when school lets out between 2:30 and 3 p.m., and watch for pedestrians.

Speed zones on Highway 242 and McKinney Butte Road near Sisters middle and high schools are in force, meaning that speeds should be reduced to 20 mph through those areas. Drivers have a particular tendency to speed along McKinney Butte. Many children live in the adjoining subdivision and cross the street on foot and on bikes. Extra caution is due there.

Drivers should also be alert for school busses and obey the flashing signals. Do not pass a school bus when red lights are flashing, which means students are getting on or off the bus.

Young drivers should mind their speed as they enter the parking lot at Sisters High School.

Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies will be out enforcing traffic safety during the start of school.

Cancer and parenting

By Katy Yoder
Columnist

Cancer is a big, unrelenting reality check. It's one thing to consider the deaths of one's parents and quite another to face the possibility of not being there to see our children grow up. Having my daughter has been the most profound, rewarding and challenging decision I made in this lifetime. Her presence offered me the opportunity to focus on the needs of another and made the future so much more important.

In all honesty, I allowed parenting to overtake my own needs to the point that I let myself go. Everything was funneled into what was best for her, which took the pressure off of me ... until I realized I wasn't doing her any favors by losing myself. I'm the first to admit that my default when challenged has often been to believe the criticism of others and back down. My fragile self-confidence was easily torn and difficult to repair.

My strategy for avoiding pain kept me safe from failure; if I didn't try, I couldn't fail. When Amy was fourteen, I knew it was time to re-engage with the working world. An opportunity with Sisters Folk Festival opened up and I held my breath and jumped. That decision turned out to be a good one. The job challenged me and created opportunities for me to face

past relationship dynamics and react differently.

Not being quite so available for our daughter was also good for us. Amy learned that I wasn't always going to be able to "save" her when she needed it. Her independence grew and so did mine. Fast-forward to 2013 when I finally went to the doctor and found out my worst fears were realized: I had breast cancer.

During earlier health challenges, Gary and I had chosen to shield Amy from the severity of the situation. We thought that was best for her and allowed her to focus on school. But I also saw the drawbacks to that decision. We hadn't provided her with an opportunity to show compassion and caregiving. When my cancer diagnosis happened, I knew I had the choice of sugar-coating it or being real. With her away at college, we could have kept things from her, but we knew she was old enough and ready to face the truth.

I don't remember calling her in Montana and telling her I had breast cancer. Just thinking about it makes me feel sorry for anyone who has to do it. Having to talk to her about it helped me decide how I was going to handle my illness. I had to be strong for her and behave as if I would survive. But deep down, the shock of hearing those words, "You have cancer," still translated

to "you're going to die." It would take time to shift my mental state and begin to truly believe it wasn't my time to go.

It was so much easier being honest with Amy. When she asked me questions I answered them without any filters. The truth was the truth, no holding back, no protecting my child. Amy and I have always been close, but she was busy living her college life which didn't include much thinking about her parents ... unless she ran out of money. My feelings weren't hurt by her behavior, I knew she was doing exactly what she needed to do as she transitioned into adulthood.

My diagnosis happened a month before she was scheduled to move to Iceland to do a study abroad. The thought of her being so far away was heart-wrenching, and frankly the thought of me dying while she was overseas kept creeping into my mind. But I couldn't let her know that. She asked me if she should stay home and put off her trip. My reaction was immediate and straight from the deepest part of me, "We raised you to go out into the world and experience life. Go to Iceland. All I ask is that you keep in touch and tell me all about it. That's the

best medicine I could possibly have." She went and in a way I went with her.

While she was gone, I underwent two surgeries and countless grueling trips back and forth to OHSU. I sent her photographs of me being wheeled through the corridors of the old hospital, countless hours in waiting rooms and Gary and our dear friend Susan as they helped me through it all. We made funny faces, goofed around and smiled when we were almost too exhausted to raise the corners of our mouths.

Amy came home from Iceland after her four-month stay. Her homecoming was beyond wonderful. After that she made the 700-mile trip home from Montana whenever she could. She came with me to chemo treatments and radiation therapy. She was strong, supportive and kept things light. I couldn't have asked for more. We still communicate on a daily basis, and I know my experience has strengthened our relationship. We appreciate each other that much more. Cancer helped us both remember how precious our time together is, and we no longer take it for granted. It's another gift cancer has given me, and I am grateful.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

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Monthly Potluck | Bereaved are invited to attend our monthly potluck gatherings for support, fellowship, and connection with others. *Tuesday, September 8, Noon-1:30pm.*

Bob and the Boys | Sharing is important for everyone dealing with a loss. This special morning grief support group is designed for men only. Coffee and donuts provided. *Fridays, September 11 & 25, 9:30-10:30am.*

Caring for a Loved One with Memory Challenges | Presented by Todd and Lori Sensenbach, Franchise Owners, Home Instead Senior Care. No cost. A light lunch is provided. *Friday, September 18, 10am-1:30pm.* RSVP to lisamh@partnersbend.org or call (541) 382-5882.

All events are held at Partners In Care, 2075 NE Wyatt Court, Bend.

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