

Duo forms marital education center

By CAROLYN NELSON
Of the Emerald

"How does an 18-year-old kid relate to his girlfriend? What is their behavior and what is appropriate and how are they going to make it in this world together as a couple?"

These are some of the concerns of Lyn Balster-Lontos and Demetri Lontos, co-founders of

the new Marriage Education Center, a non-profit educational organization.

The Lontosos received their M.A. degrees in subjects which they said have "nothing to do with us now." They came to Eugene last spring from Montreal with backgrounds in education, years of independent study in marriage education and experience in

teaching at the community college level.

"You see, you can't get a degree in marriage education, said Lontos. "You can get a degree in marriage counseling. This is different."

Balster-Lontos added, "We're really sensitive about that because people don't seem to distinguish between us and coun-

selors. We're in education, not counseling. We're doing education, not therapy."

They are the authors of several books and curriculum materials on marriage including "Marriage Means Burnt Toast," "What Your Kids Think of Marriage," and "How to Organize and Teach a Marriage Education Course." The Lontosos taught a marriage course at Lane Community College last summer and are currently teaching classes at Edison/Eastside Community School, 1328 E. 22nd Ave.

The couple lived together for a number of years before they got married. "We define marriage much broader than the legal sense," Lontos said. "We were married because we made the commitment to be a couple. When children and property enter the picture, then you'd best be married the way society is set up today."

They said they both came from strong and supportive families. Lontos pointed out that his parents married on the day they met — an arranged marriage. "I come from an old European family and that was the done thing and that's commitment," he said.

"When you have that kind of setting or structure where it's the norm to do it that way and you don't have any other kind of expectations, I think it probably does work," said Balster-Lontos. "But now we have all sorts of other expectations."

One of the problems that people run into with marriage, according to the Lontosos, is self-esteem. "That's 'public enemy number one'. If you're able to communicate with yourself and have a sense of who you are and a sense of self-worth, from that will flow the

ability to communicate with other people, your needs, your wishes, your fears, your love, your emotions in general. One of the things we try to do is build people's self-esteem," Lontos said.

The Lontosos' agreed that people can never start too early in developing communications skills. These skills aren't taught in the schools and ought to be, they said.

Ideally, the Lontosos would like to reach the couples who are still in school, newly married or thinking of living together. They prefer to prevent problems rather than solve them.

They will eventually establish a resource center for the community in marriage education, bring more people in and put everything under one roof, including workshops on jealousy, parenting and coping with divorce.

"There are a number of organizations on campus that could conceivably bring us in to give workshops or courses," he said. "There's the Women's Resource Center, for example. There are study groups, social organizations. What's wrong with a social organization having something other than a dance? A dance helps you get off your feet and so can we."

The Lontosos believe in marriage and the family, but they are concerned with the changes these institutions are going through. "I think things are changing from a traditional marriage. I think they have to because we're in a different era now. I feel fairly positive about the way things are going. The family, I think, is in a lot of trouble in general, but I think it's going to make it," Balster-Lontos said.



Photo by Gregg Weed

Demetri Lontos and his wife, Lynn Balster-Lontos, have organized a center in Eugene for marriage education. They see their roles as different from marriage counselors because they try to educate couples about problems to foresee before they are married.

Film to highlight inventors

The University's Experimental Center for the Advancement of Innovation and Invention is the subject for government film crews this weekend.

The U.S. Information Agency (USIA) is featuring the unique facility in "Vision," a program similar to CBS's "60 Minutes," shown in some 60 countries and 600 stations around the world.

The crew, representing a Los Angeles film company under contract to USIA, will shoot footage of the campus grounds and the computing center. Interviews are planned with Gerry Udell, innovation center director and University Pres. William Boyd.

"It's a public relations-orientated series which attempts to put our best foot forward by showing foreign viewers new developments," Udell said. "Thursday, the crew filmed smoke jumpers and the Portland Zoo," he said.

Udell said the center is an experiment to stimu-

late innovation to solve energy and environmental problems. The center uses computer print-outs to help evaluate the inventor's chances for success. If the innovation has potential, the center assists the inventor to finance his project and smooth out marketing problems.

The crew will follow an inventor on his first successful project.

"He (the inventor) has developed a very innovative home," Udell said. "It will probably save up to 30 to 40 per cent. It is one of the best innovations I've seen."

The Innovation Center was established in 1973 as part of the College of Business Administration. It received a National Foundation grant of nearly \$1 million, making it the only major facility in the nation to specialize entirely in giving assistance to independent inventors and small businesses with new products.



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