

Healthy U News: by Nicole Rensenbrink

The truth is, whenever someone hurts himself or herself, they aren't hurting only themselves. It isn't true that an alcoholic drinking is just the alcoholic's problem, nor that smoking is only a smoker's business. It's not true that obesity is only an issue for the obese, and it's certainly not true that the only victims of suicides are those who kill themselves. Each of those victims hurts everyone who depends upon or cares about them, as well as everyone who might share the cost of their care: parents, children, friends, employers, or taxpayers.

We humans are pack animals. We get excited by firefighters who rescue the injured and superstar athletes who win for our teams. We love sappy romances, weddings and infants. We're never fiercer than when defending our families. Conversely, isolated babies and small children grow up severely damaged, if they grow up at all, and isolated elders

die before their time.

We need each other and with that need comes obligation. It's an obligation to do the best we can with the most basic gift we've been given: the gift of life. That's what health is all about. Health is a journey, not an arrival spot. Increased health is losing weight for many, stopping an addiction for many more, and learning to relax in ways that nurture our bodies rather than destroy them.

Unfortunately, most people think about their health only when it's absent. Because of that, people rely heavily on medical establishments and medications to address their health. These don't always work, often work temporarily, and are always costly.

It's time to take charge of our health. We can limit long term aches and pains through better posture, functional shoes, yoga, or other such practices. We can handle mental stress and emotional upsets through

breathing exercises, meditation, and psychological skill building. We can limit the amount of cancer causing toxins we consume and increase our intake of the nutritious foods most of us know we should eat. We can keep our weight in check, work on eliminating destructive addictions, and practice personal safety. We can join community groups, confront each other's destructiveness with kindness, and hold hands with the lonely.

Personal health is the thank you note each of us should give our creator, whether that has religious connotations to you or not. And your community will be much happier supporting your attempts at self-care than dealing with the aftermath of your self-destruction.

The staff and volunteers of Healthy U present this column as part of their mission to promote health in the Illinois Valley.

And the winner is ...



(Courtesy photo for The Illinois Valley News)

Mayor Carl Jacobson awarded this years 'If I were Mayor' contest winner award to Ariel Himanek, last Wendsday at Evergreen Elementary. Other participants pictured as follows.

Top row from left: Alexis Wyatt, Ariel Himanek, Maizi Giroux, Tanner Paul and Aidan Peters. Bottom row from left: Sergio Robles, Luis Alberto Hernandez Guzman, and Chris Hopkins

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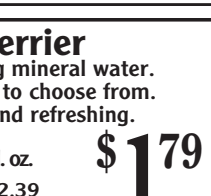
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