Family support starts at birth with Home Visiting Connection

If you have visited your medical provider recently, you may have seen brochures that advertise a Home Visiting Connection.

The idea behind this program it is that everyone needs support with families at some time, regardless of a person's education, background, income, and ethnicity.

This program was launched April 1 and is the result of a collaborative effort by many local agencies and a local initiative, Keeping Families Together.

This initiative will hopefully improve connections and referrals to the many local agencies that support families in Hood River, according to Terri Vann of the Keeping Families First coordinating agency. Vann said Home Visiting Connection will help families from falling through the cracks when it comes to needed services and supports.

This process started with a group of representatives from agencies sitting down and discussing how to best serve all of our parents, families and children in our area. This included agencies from Hood River County as well as Wasco, Sherman and Gilliam.

Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital provided a bonus to the team, according to Vann. Jan Brauer, a local Labor and Delivery Nurse, joined the team and provided the needed background in terms of new moms and the connection to local providers in Hood River County.

Wasco County had already been using a similar system, with all prenatal support going through one provider office. But Hood River has six offices delivering babies, as well as NW Pediatrics, who serves children.

A simple survey was developed for parents, and a brochure was created with general information about the Home Visiting Connection and where to call to access services.

The process went live April 1 in three of the local provider offices and has now expanded to three more. These offices are now administering surveys to all consenting expectant mothers at 20 weeks into their pregnancy.

WHO'S INVOLVED?

Health departments for both Hood River and Wasco counties, MCCC Head Start/ Early Head Start, OCDC/Migrant Head Start, Next Door, Early Intervention, PacificSource Community Solutions, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, and Keeping Families Together, which is a prevention program funded through Casey Family Programs.

The survey is then sent to the local Health Department, where it is reviewed for any possible need for support from agencies mentioned above, and support with breastfeeding, parenting groups or medical support. The screening can also include family support for children and teens ages 0-21.

As the process broadens, the process will be expanded to any entities that have direct access to children such as the school district. It is essentially a "one stop shopping" for families in Hood River and North Central service areas.

Once the survey is reviewed by the Home Visiting Connection team, support may be offered within two weeks by any applicable agency. Many families may not need any support, but every new mom will receive a Welcome Baby Packet, which includes information, baby books and supplies for new moms.

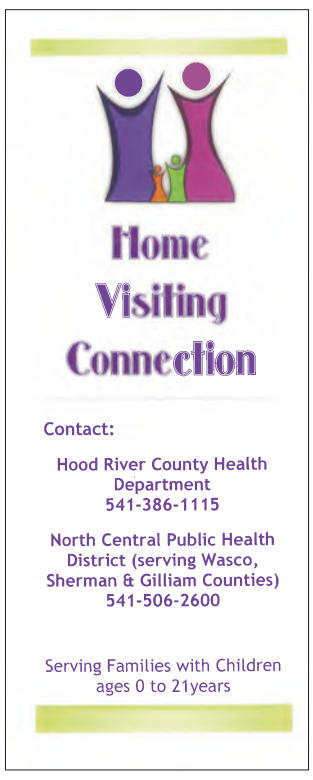
"Again, the goal is to reach every pregnant woman mid-pregnancy and to begin connecting them to services prior to the birth, as well as serving every child through age 21 who may also qualify for the broad program offerings," Vann said.

Examples of services available are car seat information and support for obtaining one, welcome baby visits, play groups and parenting support, referrals to local services, home visiting, birth-to-5 educational services, and food support. They can provide support with babies when questions arise about feeding, sleeping, development, and how to tell if your baby is ill.

For families, there is support for preschool and childcare, concerns with your child's behavior, transportation needs, and food related issues or concerns.

For women in general, the Home Visiting Connection can provide support for women who may not feel safe in their home, are feeling blue after the birth of a child, have breastfeeding concerns, want to get pregnant, or want to connect with other moms.

Ultimately, all referrals go through the Health Department, so if someone needs support, they can contact them directly: Hood River Health Department, 541-386-115,or North Central Public Health District in The Dalles, 541-506-2600.



The Home Visiting Connection brochure is availabe at the Hood River Health Department.

AUTHOR

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sage), effectively killing the company before it even began. By then, he was living in the United States, on a six-month sabbatical from his corporate job with a wife and newborn son, and the rejection crushed him.

But it led him down a new path: How does a person overcome the fear of rejection? He created the 100 Days of Rejection Therapy project, using an iPhone to film his rejections and uploading the videos to YouTube. It's this experience that he chronicles in "Rejection Proof."

He started out by asking a stranger if he could borrow $100 — the stranger said no, of course — and Jiang fled the scene, he said, in embarrassment afterwards. His second day — a request for a burger refill at a restaurant — was also met with a no.

"But then something strange happened," Jiang told the students. "People started saying yes."

His first yes was at a Krispy Kreme, where the manager went out of her way to make doughnuts in the shape and colors of the Olympic rings (which she gave to him for free for making her day). That doughnut video got over 5 million views and inspired a lot of people.

"And it turned out that everyone is afraid of rejection," Jiang said.

The more he put himself out there, the larger his comfort zone grew. And, conversely, he also learned how to say no.

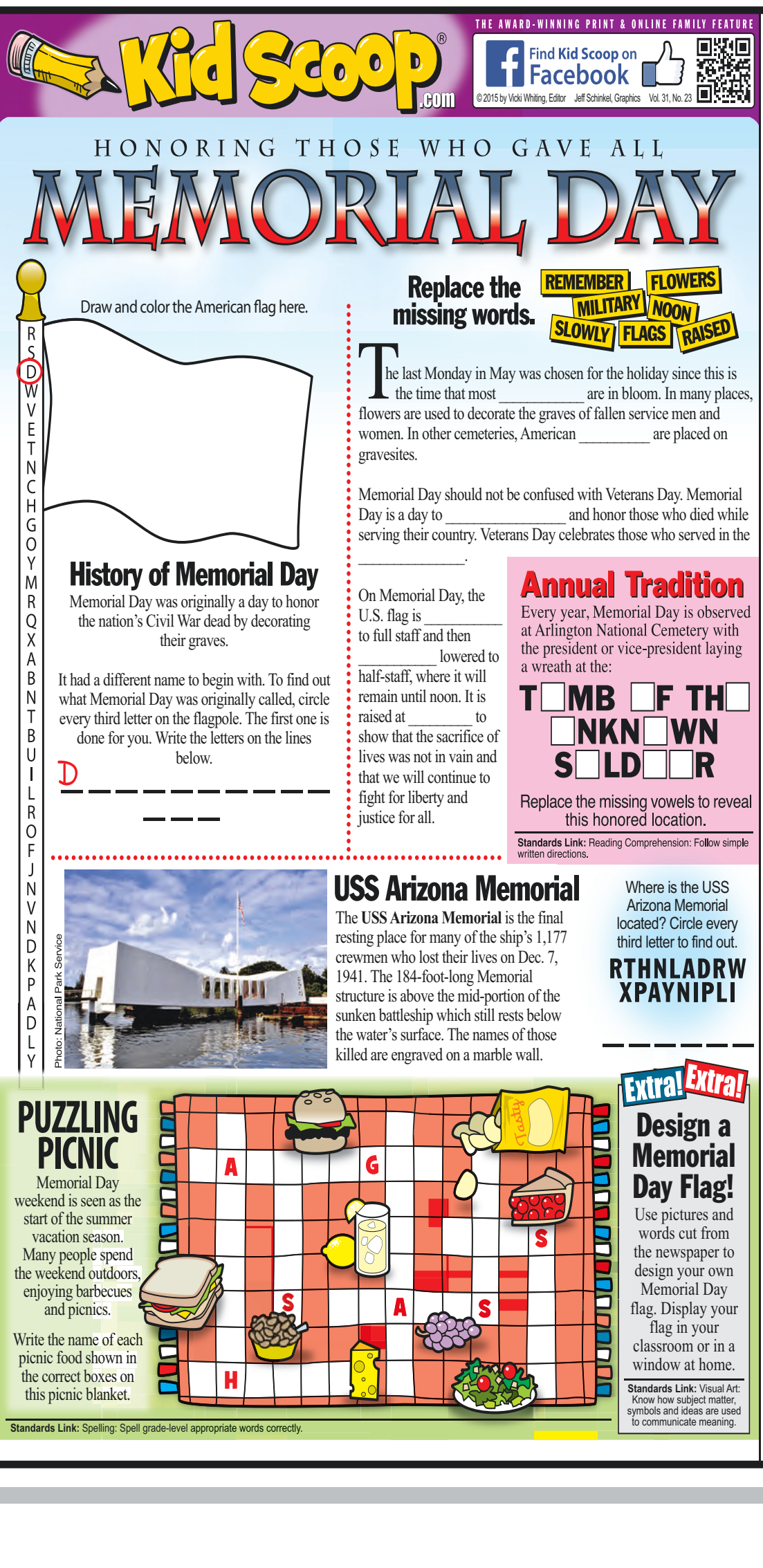
Rejection, he said, is really a numbers game: Ask enough people and you will eventually get a yes. He cited J.K. Rowling, whose "Harry Potter" series received 12 noes from publishers before getting a yes.

"Rejection is really just an opinion," he said. "And opinion is the cheapest resource on earth.

"Rejection says more about the rejecter than the rejected," he added.

He urged students to not let fear of rejection get in the way of living their lives. "Go after your dreams. Start businesses, ask for a raise.

"Don't be ignored by the world."

Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

AUTHOR JIA JIANG of "Rejection Proof" speaks at the Hood River Valley High School cafeteria, in what was his first book tour talk with a high school audience.