

Family Living

Activities for Kids

Here are some "I made it myself!" gift ideas

Kwanzaa Gifts

Kwanzaa Necklaces

Dye three groups of mostaccioli noodles red, green and black with alcohol and food coloring (you can get black food coloring at craft stores in the cake-decorating section). Let dry. Give each child a piece of yarn with a small piece of masking tape wrapped around one end. Let each child string the colored noodles.

Kwanzaa Placemats

Let the children try this version of African cloth dyeing to make place mats for snack time. Dribble rubber cement in designs on sheets of white construction paper. Allow the glue to dry for about half an hour. Then brush paint over the glue. When the paint has dried, peel off the rubber cement to reveal the designs the children have created.

Hanukkah Gifts

Dreidels

Fold down tops of milk cartons to form boxes. Mix a little glue with paint. Let children paint the boxes, and let dry. Poke a pencil through each box from the top downward, so the point is on the bottom.

Holiday Treats



Apple Juice A-La-Mode

Sounces Martinelli's Sparkling Cider

1 scoop of vanilla ice cream
whipped cream
cinnamon to taste nutmeg
Blend ingredients together,
garnish with whipped cream and
sprinkle of nutmeg; serve in a
glass with a wedge of apple (for
extra appeal, serve inside a cored
apple). Makes 1 drink.

Part Three: A Time For Success For Caucasian Youth

Many of the essential things that Caucasian young people need in order to thrive are missing from their lives. That's the conclusion of a survey that included 5,716 Caucasian sixth, eighth and tenth grade students (as part of a survey of 10,000 students overall) within Multnomah County. The survey measured the presence of 40 assets or building blocks that all young people need to grow up healthy, caring and competent.

On average, as our survey revealed, local Caucasian youth have only 19 of these 40 assets, leaving them vulnerable to many problems.

Now that we know that, what do we do? Well, as this research report reveals, you can do a great deal. For example, most Caucasian youth say their families provide a high level of love and support, but too few receive support from other adults, or say they have caring neighbors. As community members we need to show young people we care about them. While more than half of our young people serve in the community, less than a third say young people are given useful roles. We can provide those roles for our youth. Our young people are motivated to do well in school, but a minority find their schools provide a caring, encouraging environment.



A profile of Caucasian Youth by Multnomah Commission on Children & Families

What do we know about Caucasian youth? We know most see a positive future for themselves. We know most have integrity and accept personal responsibility. We know many are motivated to do well in school.

Their inner strengths and attitudes contradict the myth that young people simply don't care. Most have peers who model responsible behavior and many are involved in community service and their religious communities. They are engaged in school, care about others, stand up for what they believe in, and those inner strengths allow them to see a bright future for themselves.

Caucasian youth continue to believe and to care and to hope even as they lack support that can virtually guarantee success.

While Caucasian youth have many inner strengths, they suffer because they don't have enough adult involvement in their lives. Inner strength isn't enough - young people simply can't do it all on their own.

The vast majority of Caucasian youth say adults don't value young people. Most say they don't have a positive adult role model. Many say they don't have caring neighbors. These are things adults can help to fix.

Our youth need parents, rela-

tives, neighbors, schools, members of the religious community, and community members who believe in them. They need adults who will take the time to help them succeed.

Through this survey, we discovered that most of our young people feel they have family support and love, but the majority says their family doesn't communicate well. Far too few feel the community cares about their success or failure. While young people care about learning and we know their school environment can have an enormous impact on shaping their skills and ambitions, too few have parents who are involved in their education.

On the average, Caucasian youth have just 19 of the 40 assets they need, but it doesn't have to stay that way. There are things we can do to provide our youth with positive role models, and to show our interest in the success of every Caucasian young person. This important research shows that for our Caucasian young people to succeed, we must take the time to show them we care for them, take the time to communicate with them, and take the time to support them. By doing so, we give our youth the assets they need to succeed. This research was conducted by the Multnomah Commission on Children and Families. To order additional reports, call the Take the Time Line at 503/248-5066.

Portland Center Stage In Support Of Outreach Programs, Local Charities

In the spirit of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Portland Center Stage invites its patrons to take part in a special event to benefit programs for at-risk youth and underprivileged families in the Portland community.

The Fezziwig Family Feast, taking place on Sunday, December 13 in conjunction with the theatre's new production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, will benefit PCS's outreach programs by providing over 500 complimentary tickets to youth and families in the community through a variety of service agencies. Tickets to the event, which includes the performance in the Newmark Theatre and supper/entertainment at the Hilton Hotel, cost \$100 for adults, \$50 for children under 16. For tickets, please call 274-6586.

In addition, partnerships with local retailers will provide warm clothing for families in need. As

part of this effort, PCS will host a holiday clothing drive to benefit local women's and children's charities. Patrons who wish to participate may bring an unwrapped item of warm clothing (such as socks, gloves, or coats) to the Newmark Theatre lobby of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts anytime during the run of *A Christmas Carol* (December through January 2nd). Drop-off centers will be present in the building.

Julie Vigeland, Chair of the PCS Board of Directors, said, "This event offers a wonderful opportunity for the PCS family to share the holiday and this delightful production with more members of the community than otherwise possible. And in the spirit of Dickens, who presented readings of *A Christmas Carol* to benefit charity, we are pleased to help keep neighborhood children warm and dry this winter."



A Christmas Carol is playing through January 2 at Newmark Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway.

After Welfare, Many Families Fare Worse

By MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

At the beginning of this month, the Children's Defense Fund and the national coalition for the Homeless released a joint report showing what's happening to families leaving the welfare rolls. Families on welfare are decreasing, as President Clinton the Congress, and the states insisted they must. Over 3.8 million parents and children have left welfare since the signing of the 1996 law. But very much as we had feared, up to half of the families leaving welfare do not have jobs. Among welfare recipients finding jobs by March 1998, 71% earn less than \$250 a week, which hits the poverty level for a family of three.

The passage and signing of the welfare law in the 1996 election year

has left too many families struggling to get food shelter, or needed medical care. In many cities, one in 10 families in homeless shelters say they are there because of welfare cuts. Without help like child care, transportation, training, and wage supplements, too many families are trying to survive on very low wages, and extreme poverty is growing more common for children, especially those in female-headed and working families. The number of children living in families earning below one-half of the poverty line (\$16,401 a year for a 3-person family) increased from 6 million in 1995 to 6.4 million in 1997. That's 400,000 more children nationwide plunged into deep poverty.

Stop and look at those numbers again. They're not just statistics in a newspaper. They are children - poor

children who are twice as likely as non-poor children to be born at low birth weight and/or repeat a grade in school, poor children who will score lower on reading and math tests and suffer more mental and physical disabilities. They can be expected to earn 25% lower wages as adults.

Families who leave welfare are increasingly unable to pay their rent. Some have been evicted from their homes or apartments and if they can find housing at all their children will most likely have to change schools. Children who move and change schools frequently score lower on reading and math tests and are more prone to drop out of school. And most of those families not finding a job or unable to get a job that will pay livable wages, and not nearly enough to pay for quality child care - or any child

care? Homeless children suffer higher infant mortality, asthma, chronic diarrhea, delayed immunizations, family separation, and missed school. What kind of future does this predict for our country when our most precious resource, our children, are growing to adulthood so burdened and handicapped? What kind of society are we that we can read about children sick, hungry, endangered, and otherwise tortured by poverty, and allow it to be so?

There are horror stories everywhere. Long waiting lists for child care assistance in Texas left 30,000 families waiting for help. And even when help is available, many moving from welfare to work are not aware they can qualify for it, and not familiar enough with the laws to fight bureaucratic mistakes. In Utah, according to a re-

The crises many families are facing and will face as time limits loom can and must be avoided. We simply cannot condemn millions of children to such suffering.

tired state welfare administrator, half of the families cut off from welfare had reasons that they could not immediately go to work, but their problems were not identified and addressed. One mother cut off had a disability herself, no transportation, and was caring for her 4-year-old son who had neurofibromatosis.

Many states that created innovative and supportive programs to help families find stable, above-poverty employment. I applaud the efforts of Rhode Island, which provides child care help for all families with incomes up to 185% of the poverty line; an Illinois policy that reduces but does not eliminate cash assistance to recipients who work at very low wages; a Federal program operating in several states that locates child care at convenient transportation hubs; and a Cali-

fornia program that provides access to community colleges for job training.

There are answers, and I implore our federal, state, and local governments to implement similar programs, as well as the following changes:

- * Allow education and training to count towards the work requirement;
- * Give states the flexibility to use federal welfare funds to pay partial benefits when families work at least half-time, without those months counting towards the family's time limit;
- * Invest more federal and state funds in quality child care and
- * Invest in more federal housing subsidies to address the housing needs of a record 5.3 million households who pay more than half their incomes for rent and/or live in sub-standard housing.