

HEALTH

Marriage Matters

PSU Professor says marriage is good for us

Married couples, on average, are more likely to be healthier, happier and better off financially than single people, no matter how they met or their type of marriage.

That's the conclusion of Portland State University Professor Karen Seccombe in her new textbook, "Exploring Marriage and Families."

In her review of the latest marriage research, Seccombe found that the benefits of marriage are deep, far-reaching and true for men and women, straight and gay, young and old.

Married people benefit economically from pooled income, have longer life expectancies, and are less likely to die from the leading causes of death, including coronary heart disease, stroke, pneumonia and cancer. They also report being happier than single, cohabiting, separated or divorced people.

"Certainly not all marriages are good ones, but many are," she says. "And those marriages can increase your happiness, because you've got a partner to share the psychological load."

In states where same-sex marriage is legal, married gay couples experience the same advantages, she says.

"Same-sex couples are fighting for the right to marry because they, too, know that marriage matters," Seccombe says.

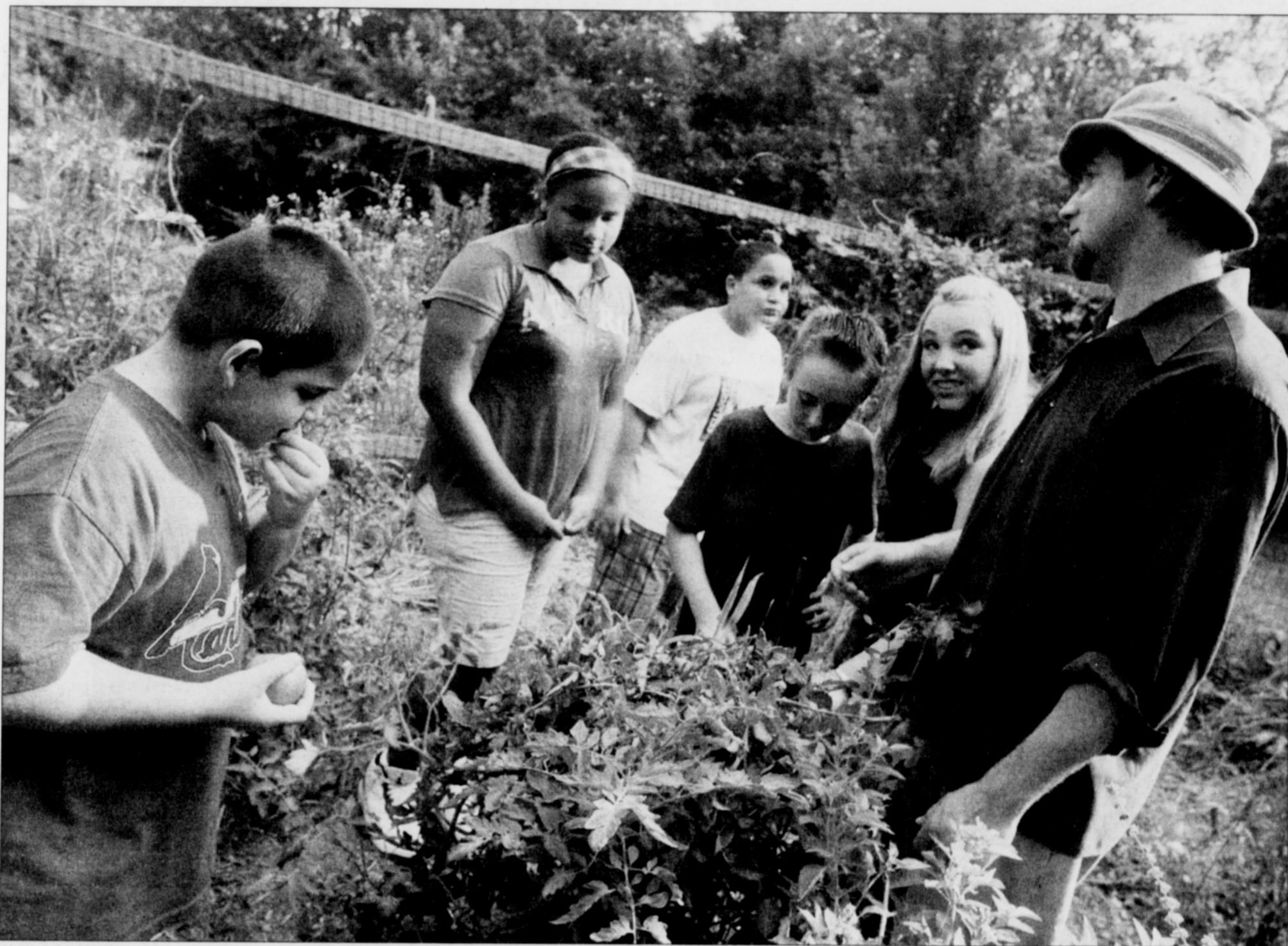
HEALTHWATCH

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(Associated Press/Herald & Review, Lisa Morrison) Park director Zach Shields, right, and his crew for the day look for produce such as tomatoes to harvest from the organic garden at Partnership Park in Decatur, Illinois.

Organic^{or} Not

Pediatricians' report says organics not proven to be any healthier than conventional foods

CHICAGO (AP)—Parents who want to reduce their kids' exposure to pesticides may seek out organic fruits and vegetables, but they aren't necessarily safer or more nutritious than conventional foods, the nation's leading pediatricians group says in its first advice on organics.

Science hasn't proven that eating pesticide-free food makes people any healthier, the American Academy of Pediatrics said.

"Theoretically there could be

negative effects, especially in young children with growing brains," but rigorous scientific evidence is lacking, said Dr. Janet Silverstein, a co-author of the academy's new report and a pediatric endocrinologist at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

"We just can't say for certain that organics is better without long-term controlled studies," she said.

The report was published online Monday in Pediatrics and echoes a Stanford University study released

last month. That research concluded that while eating organic fruits and vegetables can reduce pesticide exposure, the amount measured in conventionally grown produce was within safety limits.

Since organic foods tend to be costlier, a good strategy for penny-pinching parents concerned about pesticides is to buy only organic versions of foods with the most pesticide residue — including apples, peaches, strawberries and celery, Silverstein said.

But the pediatricians group says higher prices on organic foods might lead some parents to buy fewer fruits and vegetables — not a good strategy since both have health benefits including reducing risks for obesity, heart disease and some cancers.

Parents should aim to provide their families a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whether organic or not, along with plenty of whole grains and low-fat or fat-free dairy products, the report says.

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