

PARENTS TALK BACK

How to survive your child's middle school years

In retrospect, the findings didn't surprise her at all.

After all, professor Suniya Luthar remembers when her children were middle-schoolers.

"Just horrible, those years," said Luthar, professor of psychology at Arizona State University. "And I say this as a mother and a scientist."

She's referring to the results of her recently co-authored study, which found that mothers of middle-schoolers reported the highest levels of stress and loneliness and lowest levels of life satisfaction and fulfillment. Other research has also shown marital satisfaction to be lower, and strife higher, when children are in their teenage years.

"Middle school is just chaos," Luthar said — both for the children in that period of rapid growth, and for their parents. There's no other time that brings such dramatic changes in a child's cognitive, physical and social development all at once, affecting school, friends and family life.

Luthar and postdoctoral scholar Lucia Ciocolla studied more than 2,200 mothers, most of them well-educated, with children ranging from infants to adults. They looked at several aspects of the mothers' personal well-being, parenting and perceptions of their children. Moms of middle school children, between 12 and 14 years old, were far more stressed and depressed than those rearing toddlers.

Many adults can remember the ways middle school was challenging for them.

Bodies are changing. Emotions are turbulent. You encounter rejection and being left out. Old friends might leave you. You feel awkward, and people around you are also awkward, or acting more confident than they feel. Everyone is trying to fit in. Insecurity is high. Peers compete on so many levels, academic and social.

It can be difficult for parents to accept that these same struggles may be hard for their child.

It's not a time for parents to disengage, even when children start to push away and pull back. But parenting at this age requires a new diplomacy. Caring for infants and toddlers is physically exhausting, but the complexities of child-rearing during adolescence can be emotionally and mentally exhausting. Parents are trying to figure out new ways to relate to, guide and discipline a child, and the stakes feel much greater than they did in elementary school.

So, what's the best way for parents to cope during their kids' turbulent years? Luthar says mothers, in particular, need to seek out other women who will nurture them: Mothers need to be given what they routinely give out, she said. Lean on your relationships with other women you respect and trust, and who care about you and your children.

"Go to other moms who share your values, who are kind people," she said. "Be able to share your hurts and vulnerabilities."

These relationships need to go beyond the occasional girls' night out.

During the middle school years, more than ever, moms need "tenderness and gentleness and support."

She remembers her own wise council of women, an ad hoc advisory committee she could turn to when she felt heartbroken, angry or bewildered. These were women who could tell her how they navigated similar challenges, or say, "Yeah, me too."

Don't wait until your child is in sixth grade to nurture these relationships, she said. "You need to have systems in place."

Michelle Icard, author of "Middle School Makeover: Improving the Way You and Your Child Experience the Middle School Years," writes that it's important to keep in mind that children need to form their own identities so they can have healthy relationships throughout their lives. It's also vital for parents to nurture their own interests, hobbies and passions outside of child-rearing during this time.

For me, just reading this study — the validation that yes, this is an especially trying period — was reassuring.

While we may know intellectually that our social supports and personal pursuits are important, we may not realize how much we need to prioritize them given the demands of other people in our lives.

It's how we build our shelter to weather a storm.

Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Korean woman raises 200 dogs saved from streets, restaurants

By HYUNG-JIN KIM
Associated Press

ASAN, South Korea — Puppies bark and wag their tails as they follow a gray-haired woman through a hillside compound that shelters more than 200 dogs.

"Hey, my babies. Give your mom a kiss," says Jung Myoung Sook, 61. She lowers her face and one puppy near a snow-covered kennel licks her lips; another gently paws her cheek.

In South Korea, where dogs are considered a traditional delicacy and have only recently become popular as pets, Jung's love for her canine friends is viewed by some as odd. But others see her as a champion of animal rights.

Rescuing and caring for dogs for 26 years, Jung has moved seven times because of neighbors' complaints about noise. She often stops to pick up dogs roaming the streets, and has bought others in danger of being sold to dog meat farms or restaurants.

Some question whether someone as poor as Jung, who ekes out a living cleaning a store and collecting recyclable boxes, can feed and care for so many dogs. While Jung's dogs looked healthy and well-fed during a recent visit by The Associated Press, their condition couldn't be independently confirmed.

Authorities in the central city of Asan know about Jung's current shelter, which she opened in 2014, but have no legal responsibility to inspect it, according to an official who refused to give his name because he wasn't authorized to speak to media on



AP Photo/Lee Jin-man

In this Jan. 27 photo, Jung Myoung Sook, 61, holds her puppies she rescued at a shelter in Asan, South Korea.

the matter.

Pets are growing in popularity here, where one in five households has a cat or dog, but activists say public attitudes toward pets lag those in the West.

Supporters of Jung see her as a heroine, saving stray or lost dogs from being killed for food or euthanized at public shelters if not adopted or found by their owners. About 81,000 stray or abandoned animals, mostly dogs and cats, were sent to public shelters in 2014, down from 100,000 in 2010, the government said.

"My babies aren't hungry. They can play and live freely here," said Jung, whose clothes are worn and hair is disheveled. "Some people talk about me, saying, 'Why is that beggar-like middle-aged woman smiling all the time,' but I just focus on feeding my babies. I'm happy and healthy."

Dozens of other South Koreans are believed to be raising large numbers of dogs, sometimes in unsanitary conditions where diseases spread easily. Jung says her dogs are mostly healthy,

although some die in fights with each other.

Most of the dogs live with her for good. She said she spends about \$1,600 a month on food and medicine, and otherwise relies on donations of soybean milk, pork, dog food and canned meat. Family, friends and sometimes strangers send her money.

Park Hye-soon, a local restaurant owner, has given Jung leftover pork for four years.

"She lives only for her dogs," he said, "without doing much for herself."

OUT OF THE VAULT

Pendleton teen shoots classmate after school party

A 15-year-old ninth-grader at Pendleton Junior High School shot a classmate after a school dance party in May 1950.

John Raymond Meyer was a transfer student from the Chicago area attending school in Pendleton. He attended a dance party at the junior high school on May 26 and another student, 15-year-old Ted Kinder, noticed that Meyer was carrying a gun. Kinder suggested that Meyer get rid of the weapon, and another student later saw the young man trying to hide it behind a piano.

The party ended at 11:30 p.m. and everyone left the building but teacher Carl Kligel and about 20 students who were on the cleanup crew. Kinder went to the lavatory in the



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

basement of the school, and a little later came upstairs and collapsed into a chair, telling Kligel, "I've been shot." He was rushed to St. Anthony Hospital, where doctors found the bullet had

missed all Kinder's bones and internal organs.

Kinder was interviewed by Police Chief Charles Lemon in the hospital, and recounted that he was in the lavatory when Meyer entered playing with the gun. Kinder again urged Meyer to put the weapon away, and Meyer left the room but returned

a moment later, pointed the gun at Kinder and said, "All right, Ted, you asked for it." He then shot Kinder once in the right side of the chest and fled.

Police immediately started a search for Meyer, and found him lying on the floorboard in the back of a car belonging to his brother, James Meyer, with whom he was living. The pistol was found shoved between the back seat cushions.

After his arrest, Meyer admitted to the shooting and also to a theft at Hamley & Co. the previous evening. Taken during the heist were four jackets, a wrist watch, a pair of gloves, a suitcase and \$4 in cash, in addition to the .32 caliber pistol used in Kinder's assault. He had also stolen a

bicycle in a separate theft. Chief Lemons said that Meyer was on parole for a house burglary in Chicago, and had only lived in Pendleton for about three weeks.

Meyer pleaded guilty to assault with a deadly weapon on June 6. He claimed during his trial he did not know the gun was loaded. He was remanded to the Umatilla County juvenile court, and sentenced to the Woodburn training school (now the McLaren Youth Correctional Facility).

Renee Struthers is the Community Records Editor for the East Oregonian. See the complete collection of Out of the Vault columns at eovault.blogspot.com

ODDS & ENDS

Dutch police eye birds to prey on drones

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — It may sound like a flight of fancy, but Dutch police are considering using birds of prey to swoop down and pluck rogue drones out of the sky.

Police are working with a Hague-based company that trains eagles and other birds to catch drones to investigate whether the birds can be used above large events or near airports, where the small flying machines are banned.

Dennis Janus of the national police said Tuesday that trainers exploit the birds' natural instincts to tackle the high-tech problem of drones flying in restricted areas.

Janus says the birds are trained "to think drones are their prey" and get a reward if they catch one.

Video released by police showed a small white drone with four propellers rising into the air and a bird of prey grabbing it from above with its talons in one fluid motion.

Dutch police will likely make a decision later this year whether to use the birds.

Janus said part of the evaluation includes research by a respected Dutch scientific organization into whether catching drones could harm the birds of prey.

Prank call leads to fast-food employees smashing windows

TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Police in Tucson, Arizona, said pranksters convinced employees at a fast food restaurant to smash windows by pretending to be a fire-suppression company. The employees received a call



Dutch Police via AP

In this Tuesday image, a trained eagle puts its claws into a flying drone.

around 1 a.m. on Tuesday saying that the gas levels were high and that the building needed to be evacuated. The prankster also convinced employees to smash every window of the building to prevent it from exploding.

Police say the call was illegal because it resulted in criminal damage.

Tucson police are investigating the prank.

Goat-tiger odd couple may be over

MOSCOW (AP) — A romance that enchanted Russia may be over: Timur the goat and Amur the tiger have had a fight and aren't together anymore.

In November, the goat was placed in the tiger's compound in a wildlife park near Vladivostok with the expectation that the big cat would eventually kill and eat him. But the two not only tolerated each other, they appeared to become friends. The odd couple became a popular topic on social media, and

T-shirts celebrating them went on sale.

But Timur started pushing it, constantly annoying and butting the tiger.

"Finally, the tiger couldn't hold back, grabbed the goat by the withers and tossed him," park director Dmitry Mezentsev told state news agency Tass on Friday.

"We decided to put them in different enclosures for a while," he said.

Jury summons directs people to sex hotline

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP) — Hundreds of southeastern Mississippi citizens received jury summons that incorrectly instructed them to call a sex hotline.

Multiple news outlets report that at least 350 jury summons with the incorrect phone number were sent out in Jackson County to potential jurors.

Circuit Clerk Randy Carney says people started calling the circuit clerk's office Monday

morning to report the problem. Others stopped by in person to address the issue.

Carney says he doesn't know what caused the mix-up. He has drafted an apology letter that will go out those who received the erroneous summons. He says he doesn't know if his office will be liable for costs associated with any potential jurors billed for using the hotline.

Carney added that he'll personally review summons before they're mailed out from now on.

Wisconsin police recover another load of stolen cheese

MARSHFIELD, Wis. (AP) — For the second time in a week, police in Wisconsin have recovered a stolen load of cheese worth tens of thousands of dollars.

Marshfield Police Lt. Darren Larson says 41,000 pounds of parmesan cheese worth \$90,000 was stolen from a Marshfield distributor Jan. 15. A semi picked up the cheese that day, but it never reached its intended destination in Illinois.

Larson says investigators received a tip Thursday that the cheese was likely in Grand Chute. Police in Grand Chute found the entire shipment intact. It had already been unloaded into a warehouse.

On Monday, police in Germantown said \$70,000 worth of cheddar and other cheeses stolen from a distribution center there last week had been recovered in Milwaukee on Friday.

Police haven't said whether the cases are connected.