

SCREENS: Too much screen time has negative effects on children's development

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Center, city of Umatilla and Good Shepherd Medical Center drew a crowd of children and parents who played with giant beach balls, frisbees, bicycles, a colorful parachute and toddler toys at Hash Park.

Robyn and Travis Crist showed up with their children and spent time tossing around a frisbee and walking a mile-long trail around the park area. They weren't going screen free for the entire week, but did want to enjoy at least one evening outside in the warm, sunny weather as a family.

"It beats sitting around watching TV," Travis said.

Robyn said the family is

fairly new to town and it was a good opportunity to get out and meet people. Their daughter Jazzmen Alvarado, 14, said she was glad she came.

"I complained about it a little, because it was hot, but it was still fun," she said.

Judy Cardenas was at the park with her daughter and niece, ages nine and seven.

"It allows them to interact with other kids, off their tablets and phones, and get fresh air of course, and sunlight," she said.

City manager Russ Pelleberg said he loved seeing so many Umatilla families out and about enjoying the city's parks.

According to screenfree.org, the idea of a screen

free week came about in 1994 out of concerns that television was being used too often as a babysitter for children. Studies have shown that too much screen time at a young age has negative effects on children's development, particularly speech and the areas of their brain associated with things like impulse control and the ability to concentrate. Those effects can last into adulthood. Today the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no television for children under 18 months and only two hours a day for children older than that.

Too much time in front of a screen is bad for adults, too. It has been linked to ailments including obesity,

insomnia, eye strain, heart disease, high blood pressure and shorter attention spans.

Since "TV Turnoff Week," as it was originally known, was first promoted around the country, millions of families have participated in turning off the TV and other electronic entertainment for a week in the spring.

Screenfree.org offers ideas and other resources for schools and cities to offer screen free events during May. Although this week was the official national Screen Free Week, families can resolve to do their own screen free week next week and participate in two Hermiston activities: May 8 from 6-7 p.m. at Sunset Elemen-

tary School and May 11 at 5:30 p.m. at Lovin' Spade-fuls Community Garden on the Good Shepherd Medical Center plaza. There will be activities for children of all ages, healthy recipe tastings and free dental kits available.

Angie Treadwell, the supplemental nutrition education coordinator for the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, organized those events and the Umatilla one Wednesday.

"We're just trying to get people to step away from their screens," she said. "We're all guilty of that."

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HEALTH: 'There's more work to be done'

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and their doctors first. It will protect those with pre-existing conditions and provides states with the flexibility they need to help meet the unique needs of their citizens.

"There's more work to be done, and we know we are up to the task."

Democrats countered that the GOP bill would have the opposite effect from what Trump predicted, pointing to estimates it will kick millions off the insurance roles while imperiling coverage for people with pre-existing conditions who had gained protections under Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.

They also forecast that Republicans will pay a steep political price for passing legislation that's polled poorly and takes concrete benefits away while offering only promises of more choices and lower costs.

The GOP health bill would eliminate the fines Obama's law imposed on people who don't buy coverage, and erase tax increases in the Affordable Care Act on higher-earning people and the health industry. It would cut the Medicaid program for low-income people and let states impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients. It would transform Obama's subsidies for millions buying insurance, now based largely on their incomes, making the funding skimpier and tying it to consumers' ages.

And states could get federal waivers freeing insurers from other Obama coverage requirements. With waivers, insurers could charge people with pre-existing illnesses far higher rates than healthy customers, boost prices for older people to whatever they wish, and ignore a mandate that they cover specified services like pregnancy care.

The bill would block federal payments to Planned Parenthood for a year, considered a triumph by many anti-abortion Republicans.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in March that the GOP bill would end coverage for 24 million people over a decade. The House voted without a CBO estimate for the latest version of their bill.

AMMONS: Has been in critical condition since the crash but is now stable

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removed on the left side to allow the brain to swell," Dave Ammons said. "It removes intercranial pressure."

Ammons said his son has had some high fevers and respiratory issues, and is still paralyzed on the right side of his body, but the left side is moving. That's typical with left-brain injuries, he said.

Chase has always been an outdoors person, Ammons said, and had been in pretty good shape. He has been in critical condition since the crash but is now stable.

"One moment you're doing great, and the next there's issues," he said. "You gain a little each day, that's all



Photo contributed by Ammons family
Chase Ammons is in critical condition after an ATV accident near Pendleton April 20. His family and friends are raising money to help pay for medical bills.

we can ask for."

Ammons said his son still

has limited cognitive function after the accident. He realizes that people are in the room, but so far does not appear to recognize specific people. But he is able to follow people around the room with his eyes, and has obeyed a few verbal commands, displaying some basic understanding.

"We'll have to cross that bridge when we come to it," his father said. "A lot of issues that come with traumatic brain injuries take months, years. I've just got my hopes that once we get some other issues figured out, like respiratory, we can solve some other things."

Right now, he has a tracheotomy and is not able to speak, either.

Chase and his wife

Stefanie have two young boys, one eight months old and the other three and a half years.

Ammons said he doesn't know much about the night his son got in the accident, but that he was driving an ATV back to his own vehicle when the incident took place.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said police have not been able to identify whether the crash was speed-related or due to other factors, but noted that the police had responded to a call for a verbal dispute at Ammons' home earlier in the evening and that alcohol was a contributing factor in the crash.

Roberts said the accident occurred at 12:23 a.m. on

April 20, and that Ammons was not wearing a helmet at the time.

Friends of the family and many community members have joined to help out the family, raising money and selling merchandise.

Donations can be made at several locations, including Rocket Mart, Cadillac Jacks Saloon and Grill, Bare Bones convenience store and the Packard Tavern in Pendleton, and Hermiston Tavern and Short Stop convenience store in Hermiston. There is also a GoFundMe account in his name.

To find out more about how to help out the family, contact Jennifer Bush at 541-561-1147 or Laura Peterson at 541-571-2203.

NASA: Top two ideas will be presented at conference for American Institute of Aeronautics

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suite of exercise equipment that was lighter than 500 kilograms meant to be used in the International Space Station — started out as a class assignment.

Claudia Ehringer Lucas, a visiting assistant professor of engineering fundamentals and the team's adviser, explained in an email how entering the contest was incorporated into an introductory engineering class.

"(Ryan) is part of the ERAU Honors program, which provides select students with an opportunity to go above and beyond the typical education in a number of classes," she wrote. "As part of this program, he was enrolled in my honors section of Introduction to Engineering, which that semester was set apart from the standard section by inclusion of this project that I selected. The goal of this project was to create a proposal for the RASC-AL competition, which is a NASA competition aimed at engineering students ... I

like to provide students with opportunities to interact with professional engineers and giving them experiences that will aid them in their future endeavors."

Lacey said the class was divided into several teams and not only was his the only Embry-Riddle group to make the first cut, they eventually made it to the finals.

To participate in the finals, Lacey and his teammates will travel to a special forum at Cocoa Beach, Florida, which isn't too far from Embry-Riddle's Daytona Beach campus.

The Embry-Riddle team's concept will go up against projects from colleges and universities across the world, including Columbia University, MIT and the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.

Jesus Ferrand, the team member responsible for drawing the concept in the design software, said the team's exercise suite includes a treadmill, a rowing machine and a stationary bike.

"It's kind of like a space gym," he said.

Cheyenne Reed, who provided research on generators and skin suits for the team, said exercise equipment is essential for people who stay in space for long periods of time. If an astronaut doesn't exercise, they can lose 3 percent of their bone density per month.

Lacey performed a utility role for the team, editing and writing some of the technical paper required in the competition and researching some of the subsystems of the exercise equipment.

Without knowing what was submitted by other groups, Lacey said it was difficult to say what set their concept apart.

"We're not completely reinventing the wheel, we're just slimming it down," he said.

Although some members were unsure of what made their project unique, others

involved in the team provided their theories.

Reed said being based in an engineering school was a competitive advantage due to the access they had to engineering software that could provide more details in their design.

In her email, Lucas pointed out that the team was able to use commercially available, off-the-shelf parts in new ways for their design, something that was both innovative and cost-effective.

Reed said another advantage for the Embry-Riddle group was their teamwork.

Although they spend time working separately, when they do come together, Reed said there's no bickering or weak links.

Team leader Jack Grant said Lacey has been a reliable member of the team, someone he could count on if there was an extra task or

research to be done.

The team of freshman all come from disparate backgrounds: Lacey moved from Pendleton; Grant is a Daytona Beach native whose father works for Embry-Riddle; Reed is from the San Diego area and is enrolled through the ROTC program; and Ferrand learned about Embry-Riddle through a presentation at his high school in Lima, Peru.

The teammates will all descend on Cocoa Beach on May 31, where they'll present their concept to a panel of judges from NASA and the aeronautics industry.

If their concept is one of the top two ideas in the competition, they'll get to present again, this time at a conference for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the largest professional society in the aerospace engineering field.

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