

Help children face these anxious times

by the American Counseling Association

Today's unstable economic environment has meant lifestyle changes, problems and increased stress for many families. Parents, however, sometimes forget that their problems, financial or otherwise, can also mean increased levels of anxiety and fear for their children.

Whatever a family's problems, children, even at very young ages, are usually aware that things are no longer "right." While young children won't fully understand what is wrong, and older children may fake a "so what," non-caring attitude, the reality is that major family problems cause stress and anxieties for our children that can manifest themselves in a variety of negative ways.

While problems don't just magically disappear, we offer a few simple tips you can use to reduce your children's stress levels and help them better un-

derstand and deal with the emotions they're facing:

- Listen to your child. Ask young children what's the biggest, baddest thing that's worrying them. Older kids will need more work to be coaxed into discussing their emotions. Be ready to explain and reassure them about your plans for handling the problems.
- Respond to questions honestly, in an age-appropriate manner. Hiding the truth won't make your kids feel better, but can cause more serious problems later.
- Discuss difficult issues, including your own worries, but don't overwhelm your children. Let them express their feelings so you can help them put the situation in perspective.
- Stick to factual information. Don't project your fears onto your child. It's okay to talk honestly about how serious the situation is, but don't increase your child's fears of what is happening.
- Accept that any major fam-

ily issue is going to bring reactions your children can't control. It might be nightmares, behavior changes, emotional outbursts or anger. Don't blame your children for such reactions, but instead offer comfort and support, and help them understand what is happening.

• Look for signs your child is being overwhelmed by the situation. Strong emotional changes or disturbing behavioral changes may be signs their emotional reaction is out of control and that professional help is needed.

• Most importantly, be loving and reassuring. Your children need to know that, even when major problems face a family, you're still there to love and care for them. Give plenty of hugs and verbal reassurances that they're still loved.

Family crises are never easy to weather and can be especially difficult for children. Take the time to give your children the attention they deserve and need in such situations.

Still time to join VHS Site Council

The Vernonia High School Site Council is now accepting applications for 2-4 parent/community members to join the VHS Site Council Team. Site Council is a Site-Based Team featuring administrators, staff members, students, and com-

munity members. The team will be involved in planning and developing school improvement ideas and professional development.

Applications for Site Council are available at the high school office.

Local 4-H kids excel at State Fair

Following are results from 4-H competition at the Oregon State Fair. Due to space limitations, only categories with 4-H members in *The Independent's* circulation area are included.

ART PAINTING

Orig Art, Draw/Sketch, Shaded Draw, Jr.: Blue Ribbon – Anthony Pelster.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Nature - Animals, Jr.: Blue Ribbon – Anthony Pelster, Vernonia.

Architectural, Jr.: Blue Ribbon – Anthony Pelster, Vernonia.

People, Int.: Reserve Champion & Blue Ribbon – Maria Pelster, Vernonia.

HORSE AND PONY

English Equitation (Hunt Seat), Int.: Red Ribbon – McKenzie Tarkalson, Vernonia.

Showmanship, Intermediate: Blue Ribbon, Medallion, & Other award – McKenzie Tarkalson, Vernonia.

SWINE

Market Hog: Blue Ribbon – Lane Sullivan, Vernonia.

Showmanship, Int.: Blue Ribbon – Lane Sullivan, Vernonia.

SHEEP

Crossbred Meat Breeds color incl., Producing Ewe: Blue Ribbon – Katie Tatman, Vernonia.

Showmanship, Sr.: Blue Ribbon – Katie Tatman, Vernonia.

Tips given for making college application process less stressful

by the American Counseling Association

Applying for college is never an easy task. For many students and their families, however, it can turn into an overwhelming, highly stressful experience. Last minute decisions, sudden deadlines and unexpected requirements can all take anxiety levels to new highs.

It doesn't have to be that way. With a little planning the college application process

may still require a lot of work, but not nearly as much stress.

Most advisors suggest beginning the college selection process early in the student's junior year. Of course, if you're reading this now because you have an anxious high school senior just beginning the process, it's time to play a little catch-up.

Honestly discussing college costs and family finances is one way to reduce stress. If an expensive school isn't affordable for your family, discuss

possible options. Is a scholarship or major grant likely, or if loans are necessary, who will be paying them back? Getting the financial issues straight helps lead to intelligent college choices.

A little knowledge can also reduce anxiety. Pick up several college guidebooks that rate schools and describe programs, acceptance procedures, campus life and much more. Online sites like collegeboard.com or unigo.com can also offer valuable facts and in-

sights. Don't forget your high school's college counselor as a great source of information.

Often, students feel overwhelmed and anxious because of all the college choices facing them. Encouraging your child to compare their own goals, interests and likes against the information they gather about various schools can help nar-

row the list of possible choices down to a manageable number.

The biggest stress reducer and "disaster avoider," is a simple task and deadlines calendar. For each school, work backwards from its application deadline, listing dates for required activities, such as ACT or SAT testing, recommenda-

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New website set up for Vernonia Scouts

On behalf of the Vernonia Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Vernonia Northern is announcing a website: www.vernoniascouts.org.

This site is open to the public, so boys and girls can look at the web site and see the activities they could be involved in this scouting year. The website is updated regularly as events are confirmed.

Parents will find contacts for the various age groups. Parents may also find that many of the trips or events are just as

interesting to them as to their scout.

Vernonia Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are sponsored by

the Vernonia Lions Club. Vernonia Northern (www.vernonianorthern.com) sponsors the scouting web site.

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