

YC YOUTH CONNECTIONS MAGAZINE

Summer 2021 | lincolncountyuniteforyouth.org

ALSO
*Do You Know
Marijuana
Slang?*

HELPING CHILDREN LEARN FROM THEIR MISTAKES

- » How to Manage Behaviors
- » Nurture with Nature
- » When Teens Try to Cope Alone



TOGETHER ... SUPPORTING
YOUTH AND FAMILIES
FOR A STRONG, SAFE AND
HEALTHY COMMUNITY!





In Montana,
parents want
what's best
for their kids.



ParentingMontana.org has information
and tools for parents of children at every age.

.....
TOOLS FOR YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS

SUMMER 2021

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ABOUT UNITE FOR YOUTH COALITION

In 2008, following the US Surgeon General's Call to Action to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking, a cross-section of the Lincoln County community gathered together for a presentation focused on the reality of youth binge drinking and drinking and driving across the lifespan in Lincoln County. At that time, Montana ranked first in the Nation for underage drinking and Lincoln County ranked 5th in the state. Nearly 84 percent of youth in grades 8-12 reported drinking alcohol in their lifetime and nearly half of high school seniors reported binge drinking on a regular basis. Additionally, Lincoln County had lost three young people to alcohol-related crashes in the 18 months prior to the event. The evening's presentation ended with a call to action. EVERY person in the room responded with a "yes" and committed to being part of Lincoln County Unite for Youth (UFY), a community coalition comprised of individuals, agencies and organizations dedicated to working together to create a stronger, safer, healthier community for youth and families.

As a coalition, UFY often poses challenging questions regarding how we as a community – *our beliefs, our attitudes, and our actions* – including long-standing community norms, contribute to or support the problems we face as a result of underage drinking and Rx drug abuse in Lincoln County. What we have learned is not always easy, but we understand that by keeping the health and safety of our community at the center of this conversation, we can arrive at consensus and through collaborative prevention efforts, begin to implement strategies shown to reduce youth substance use.

UFY's Mission is...*to leave a legacy of community health and safety by reducing youth substance use through collaborative, individual and systems-level prevention and intervention efforts.* UFY's mission statement serves as a guide for coalition building, strategy selection and action planning. In Lincoln County, the idea of leaving a legacy speaks to individuals from all sectors of the community interested in reducing youth substance use. It lifts them out of the (often overwhelming) day to day consequences of youth and community substance use, sets their eyes (and hearts) on a better future, and draws them in to the creation of a shared vision for community health and safety. With an established vision, coalition members can think creatively about the pieces of the community puzzle essential for achieving our common goals and are better able to see their place in the big picture.

Risk factors leading to youth substance use exist at the individual, peer, family, school and community levels. None of us is equipped to address them all, but together, as reflected in our mission statement, we can draw upon our collective strengths and expertise to raise awareness, provide support, build skills, change consequences, reduce access, change physical design, and implement policy-level changes aimed at promoting health and reducing youth substance use. As a result, we are creating a stronger, safer, healthier community for all of us!

WELCOME *Readers!*



**Vel
Shaver**



**Maggie
Anderson**

Unite for Youth (UFY) is thrilled to get this issue of *Youth Connections Magazine* (YCM) into your hands! As always, our YCM team was thoughtful to include information that we hope will be timely and relevant in your parenting journey.

Here at UFY, we believe in the power of collaboration and recognize that every person in our community holds a unique perspective and each of you serves as an essential piece in elevating the health and well-being of youth in our community. As we look forward, our desire is to increase involvement of all sectors—*parents, education, law enforcement, faith-based, business, government, volunteers, etc.*—with the goal of creating an authentic, community-level shared vision where young people have all they need to thrive!

With this in mind, UFY is pleased to announce the **Communities That Care** (CTC) model for implementing evidence-based programs, policies, and activities across Lincoln County. This 5-step framework engages a proven process developed by the University of Washington that prioritizes risk and protective factors unique to communities. The CTC operating system utilizes the advances of prevention science to reduce levels of adolescent risk-taking behaviors, while achieving measurable and sustainable improvements in the health and safety of youth and families.

Now THIS is exciting ...

Research shows youth who feel connected at home, in school, and in the community are more likely to align their behaviors with positive community expectations. The CTC process fosters connection through the **Social Development Strategy** (***SDS—refer to link below**) by encouraging adults, parents, family members, teachers, administrators, faith leaders, and others to provide opportunities for young people, teach skills needed to be successful in those opportunities, and provide meaningful and authentic recognition for a job well done. The good news is it doesn't cost a dime—just a caring adult that has a heart for youth. We ALL can have a place at the table and offer something of value here!

Thank you for coming alongside us to collectively make a difference in our community. We really can't do this meaningful work without you!

**With Gratitude,
Vel & Maggie**

***SDS Reference:** <https://www.communitiesthatcare.org.au/how-it-works/social-development-strategy>



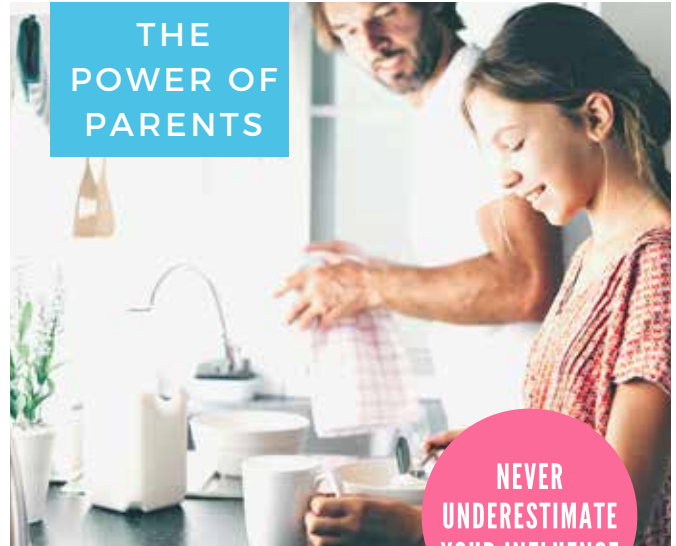
THE POWER OF PARENTS



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR INFLUENCE!

Check in with your kids when you are not around - make a call or send a text. Consider creating a code word they can send if they find themselves in trouble or need your help.

Together...elevating the health and well-being of kids in our community!



THE POWER OF PARENTS

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR INFLUENCE

Three building blocks

Provide opportunities for safe and healthy involvement, teach the skills they need for success, and recognize their positive choices and behaviors .

Learn more at lincolncountyuniteforyouth.com



Phase 1 is Complete!



Roller Rink



Ice Rink

Park is open to the public at no cost and is completely privately funded.

Coming Next!

Soccer Fields
Tennis and Pickleball Courts
Playground
Running and Biking Trail

We Need Your Help to Build the Park!
Drop off donations to EYSL (Eureka Youth Sports League) at the Lancaster & Company office in Eureka.

More info

Want to Volunteer?

406-291-8622
info@lancasterandco.com
eureka-mt.com



**HEALTH
CARE
HEROES**

WE APPRECIATE YOUR
DEDICATION AND
COMMITMENT!





CONFESSIONS FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE

For many caregivers, each week is spent dodging and ducking the same endless complaints: *"What's for dinner?" "I'm hungry" "I don't like that." "Why can't we have more chips?" "I want McDonald's like yesterday."* And so on...

I, too, struggled and fought, begged and pleaded, in an effort to keep my kids eating healthy and under control. Finally, in an act of desperation, I threw a Hail Mary Pass...

I grabbed my colored Sharpies, a pair of scissors, paper, and an old corkboard and set to work. I wrote every mom-approved food I could think of on a slip of paper. Healthy breakfasts were scribbled in bright yellow. Simple lunches were written in blue. Filling dinners were noted in green. But why stop there? In orange I wrote an arrangement of side dishes. In pink were nutritious snacks my kids loved. So as not to be a totally meanie, I listed a few favorite indulgences in purple.

I gathered my youngins (ages 7 and 11) and explained that I needed their help. I told them I knew they were frustrated about food and so was I. I showed them all the slips of paper and asked if they had anything to add.

"Taco soup!? Great! Let's add it to a green strip."

"Lasagna? Mmm... I love lasagna. But that one takes some extra work, and it is something that would be better if we only ate every once in a while, so let's put it on a slip with purple marker."

The kids came up with a lot of great things that are written in purple but plenty of healthy choices, too. We made some lunch slips that said "leftovers" and one dinner slip that said "take out," and we were off to the races.

Then the real magic began... "It is going to be your job to decide what we eat and when," I explained. Their backs straightened and eyes lit up. "But there are a few rules!" I added hastily. I blurted out some preemptive precautions:

- You can only use one purple slip and one take-out slip each week.

- Work together to choose our meals or take turns each week.
- No complaining about the schedule since you made it.
- If you are hungry, eat what you listed - don't add in extra snacks or meals.
- We all stick to the schedule as much as we can.

And it worked! That Hail Mary pass was scooped up and run to the endzone for a touchdown! The kids love being in charge and having control. I love that I am no longer agonizing over what they will eat or being haunted by their complaining.

Making our weekly menu has become our new Sunday morning routine. It isn't completely foolproof. For the first week or two I had to help them a bit. "Can we pair something other than baked potatoes and pasta?" Or, "I notice we have eggs three days in a row." But, by week three they were on a roll.

Some weeks the kids draw every yellow breakfast slip from a hat. "Drumroll please... Monday's breakfast will be... oatmeal!" Some weeks they painstakingly debate the merits of serving hardboiled eggs on Tuesday or Wednesday. Some weeks they work together. Some weeks they take turns.

When the rainbow of slips are all arranged and pinned in seven neat and tidy rows and each day of the week has been assigned breakfast, lunch, dinner (with sides), and two or three snacks, we snap a photo. Even though the menu on the corkboard is dismantled and the slips are saved in envelopes for next week, the photo of the menu hangs proudly next to the fridge and is referenced often.

When the kids are done making the meal schedule, I create a weekly shopping list. Grocery shopping has become abundantly easier. I no longer find myself standing in the snack aisle wondering, "Will they like that?" and, "How much will they eat this week?"

Gone are the days of, "Mom, I don't know what to eat" or "Burger King is right there and I'm so hungry." Instead, these cries are replaced with, "Let's look on the schedule!" ■

YOU CAN SUBMIT YOUR STORY AT: lincolncountyuniteforyouth@gmail.com

For many of us the kitchen table represents the typical family experience. We have laughed while having family game night. We have cried over our children's choices. We have blown out the candles on many cakes. We have argued our way out of doing the dishes. We have struggled through those "three more bites." We have learned hard lessons and celebrated many deserved successes. One thing is for sure though—if our kitchen tables could talk, there would be plenty of stories! So often it is in relating to others' stories that we realize there isn't always one answer, or even a right answer. Parenting is hard work! If you have a story of lessons learned, we invite you to share it with our readers. Sometimes, knowing we aren't the only ones struggling to find the answer is all the help we need.



HELPING CHILDREN
learn from the



LDREN ir mistakes

By LEN LANTZ, MD

HAS YOUR CHILD EVER BROKEN A BIG RULE?

There are some situations that no parent wants to deal with. It can be very embarrassing for you and your child when they are in trouble. I consider breaking a big rule to mean that your child:

- Shoplifted/stole
- Started a physical fight that didn't involve protecting themselves or someone else
- Did drugs or sold drugs
- Got suspended from school
- Bullied someone relentlessly
- Attacked you or a member of your family or engaged in very serious physical threats
- Missed curfew or ran away for days or weeks
- Skipped school routinely
- Engaged in high-risk behavior

When you learned about their behavior, what started running through your mind? Like many parents, you might have thought:

- "Is this how I raised them?"
- "Is this what our family stands for?"
- "Do they believe this is right?"
- "Is this what their music, video games and friends are teaching them?"

In your heart, you hope that the answer to every one of the above questions is no. If the answer to any of the above questions is yes or if you don't know all the answers, then you might have a lot of work to do in finding answers and hopefully stopping repeated rule-breaking behavior.

AN EPISODE DOES NOT EQUAL A PATTERN

I think it's reasonable to point out that if your child breaks a big rule, it does not necessarily mean that they are doomed to repeat the same mistake. Most parents understand this by instinct. There are many ways to handle a child's first-time big rule violation. It can be hard to know how to handle it because it is outside your previous parenting experience. Some parents lead with the mother-of-all groundings, which backfires as often as it is effective. Other parents go the route of humiliating their kids.

One of the worst strategies used by parents is shaming and ridiculing their children, often by reciting rules, which is the equivalent of saying, "You're stupid."

One of the most effective parenting strategies to use when dealing with your child's big first-time offense is to get more information. Listen to every one of the excuses they have to offer. I'm not kidding. Ask questions designed to get more specific details without shaming or blaming. Expect some lies at the start, so take written notes and let them know that you are willing to contact every person who knows about the situation to confirm their version of events. Learn as much as you can about their experience, because for a substantial number of kids, getting caught is the greatest punishment. What did they go through, especially when they were caught? What was it like for them?

continued on page 9

STOP

A Message From Lincoln County Youth



PROCEED WITH CAUTION

PROVIDING alcohol for minors is illegal and may result in fines of up to \$585 and 6 months in jail

**PLEASE...
PREVENT DON'T PROVIDE**



JOIN A NEW YEAR-ROUND READING CHALLENGE!

The concept is simple, the rewards are priceless!

Read a book (any book) to your infant, toddler or preschooler.

The goal is to read 1,000 books before your little one starts kindergarten.

Check out lincolncountylibraries.com or visit the library to get started!

ZERO TO FIVE
Lincoln County

LINCOLN COUNTY LIBRARY
EUREKA. LIBBY. TROY.



AUG

05

2021



**4TH ANNUAL
GUNS VS. HOSES SOFTBALL GAME
LEE GEHRING FIELD - 6:30 PM**



Ask them if there is anything else they want you to know. Are there any more details they want to share? In everything they say, make sure to listen for the apology. “I’m sorry” actually counts as an apology in Kid World. Read back to them what happened and what their experience was. Ask them if there are any details that they want to change or that they think they didn’t get quite right. When they are completely done and have let it all out, tell them, “I hear you.”

Then, ask them if they are ready to hear about what you experienced regarding their big mistake. If they say yes, then start immediately. If they say no, then let them know you will share your experience with them tomorrow. Share with your child:

“When I heard about (or experienced) your mistake...

My biggest fear was _____.

My most powerful emotion was _____.

My strongest thought was _____.

My initial reaction was to _____ (big consequence), but I don’t believe I should base my decisions only on my initial reaction.

That was a big mistake. I believe in you and that you can learn from this mistake. We’ll talk about your consequence tomorrow (or let’s talk about your consequence now).”

HOW DO OUR CHILDREN LEARN OUR VALUES?

We teach our values to our children in several ways. The things I’ve listed below, individually or in combination, are some of the most common ways kids see what we believe in. Our children are watching and studying us as often as we are them. If you have a pattern of saying one thing and doing the opposite, expect and accept your child someday calling you out on it. Values are communicated in:

Sayings:

- “In our family, we stand up for each other.”
- “We take care of each other.”
- “We can disagree and still love and respect each other.”
- “Everyone makes mistakes. The best thing we can do is learn from them.”

Traditions:

- Eating meals together.
- As a family, serving a meal at a homeless shelter.
- Donating goods to a charity.
- Saying grace at a meal.

Earning/spending money:

- “We donate money to this cause because it is one way for us to stand up for what we think is just and right.”
- “I don’t make much money at this job, but it is meaningful to me.”
- “This job is not what I would like to be doing, but it allows me to provide better for our family.”

Going against herd thinking:

- “I didn’t see that going to college would help me get the job I wanted to do.”
- “I believe spending huge amounts of money at Christmas is not the best way to say, ‘I love you.’”

Education/service:

- Pursuing advanced educational degrees.
- Serving in the Peace Corps.
- Serving in the military.
- Doing public service.

Volunteering/advocacy:

- What do you do that you don’t get paid for?
- What or whom do you stand up for?

Relationships/friendships:

- With whom do you surround yourself?
- Do you want your children to be like your friends?

Spiritual practices:

- Attending religious services.
- Practicing meditation.
- Praying together.

Your children, especially as they get older, start to fill in the above categories on their own. Do you know how your child would fill in the value categories above? Teenagers especially are frequently trying out different ideas and figuring out what they like and what they reject. They are forming their own individual identities and while most have no desire to be a clone of their parents, parents are the first and usually the most powerful influence on kids as they develop their own values.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MODEL YOUR VALUES AS YOU HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH THEIR BIG MISTAKE

Your success or failure at maintaining your cool and modeling the values you hold will influence your child’s acceptance or rejection of your values – especially in the times when they are most vulnerable, such as when they make a major mistake. Helping your child through this is an opportunity to demonstrate what you believe.

- 1. Own it:** At some point, kids need to acknowledge that they made a mistake.

Period. Until kids take personal ownership of their behavior, including their mistakes, they are going to have a hard time with the subsequent steps, which are critical to their development and forming healthy relationships.

2. Fix it: Determine what needs to be done to make amends. Depending on what happened, this may involve much more than a genuine apology. Working to undo a mistake that they made can help kids feel absolved from guilt or shame they may have about their behavior.

3. Deal with the fallout: There may be additional consequences even though kids have worked to make amends for their behavior. There may be a loss of privileges at home and there may also be consequences outside of the home, such as legal, work or school consequences.

4. Learn from it: People commonly repeat mistakes unless they take the time to review the factors involved with their behavior and what changes could have resulted in a different outcome. Figuring out how not to repeat a mistake is incredibly valuable and can turn an episode that feels a bit traumatic to a child into an important learning moment in life.

What can you do if you are scared about the direction your child is going? One of the best places to start when you are worried about your child’s choices and behavior is to spend more time with them. That doesn’t mean spending more time delivering sermons and lectures. It means spending more quality time with them. For more information on what that looks like, please read my article, “Special Time – the Most Fun You’ll Have as a Parent.”

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD THROUGH THEIR BIGGEST MISTAKES AND IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP ALONG THE WAY

Kids make mistakes – sometimes big ones. How you handle it can help your relationship with them and help you to understand why they did what they did. Many parents want their kids to adopt their values and continue their traditions. While kids vary in terms of what they accept and what they reject, especially as they move through adolescence and develop their individual identities, parents are often the greatest influence on kids’ values. You can demonstrate your values to your kids as you help them through some of the toughest times in their lives. How you handle these situations will have a tremendous impact on them and may help further instill your values in them. ■

ARTICLES AND BOOK REVIEWS AT LENLANTZ.COM: “Special Time – the Most Fun You’ll Have as a Parent.” • “Creatively Stopping Your Kids’ Disrespectful Behavior” • “Changing Your Force Point by Eliminating Bad Habits in Parenting” • *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting* by Dr. Gottman • *Between Parent and Child* by Dr. Ginott • *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Faber and Mazlish

Check out who's standing out in our community.

IS THERE SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO NOMINATE?

Please email lincolncountyuniteforyouth@gmail.com and tell us why this individual has stood out in your crowd.

DIFFERENCE MAKERS



Nick and Zeannah Awarded Opportunity to Learn New Skills

Nick Harper and Zeannah Reid were selected to represent Troy's Kootenai Kids and Kritters as they participate in Lincoln County's 4H Beef Heifer Project—a long-term project designed to provide experience in selecting, growing, developing, breeding, and managing breeding animals. Both Nick and Zeannah have been a part of 4H for several years. Their passion for animals and experience with previous projects laid a strong foundation and motivated them to step up to the challenge of taking on the very real responsibility of raising a heifer to maturity. Both are advancing their skills quickly as they learn to identify and address the needs of their new-found friends. We are inspired by your commitment and dedication!

Olivia Martineau: Committed to Pets for Life

Olivia Martineau wanted to do something special (a penny drive fundraiser) for Kootenai Pets for Life (KPFL), a local non-profit organization that loves animals as much as she does. Olivia designed simple posters and hung them up around her school to promote the drive. School staff supported her efforts and sent notes home to encourage involvement. Morning announcements served as reminders all week. Five days later on a Friday, Olivia and her father spent three hours feeding more than 100,000 pennies into LCCU's coin machine! In the end, Olivia was proud to present KPFL with a donation of more than \$1000! Thank you for putting your thoughts into positive action and for all who supported Olivia's vision!



Katelynn Singer, Franka Striefler, and Taylor Lancaster Encourage Others to Join the Pride

Katelynn, Franka, and Taylor have a passion for making a positive impact at school and in the community. They are committed to elevating the health and well-being of young people in Eureka and to expanding opportunities for involvement for kids in Lincoln County High School. Each aspires to be an example to others as they encourage others to branch out and experience new areas of interest—whether that be a club, group, sport, hobby, etc. Together, they realize how important connection and belonging are for kids in Eureka. Above all, the trio wants other students to understand they are not alone and that all Lions are part of the Pride.

Community Collaboration in Action: Welcome Baby Baskets

In the spirit of collaboration, Cabinet Peaks Medical Center's Welcome Basket Program encourages young families from the moment they begin their new journey and offers support in their new parenting adventure. CPMC's Obstetrics Department works with partners from across the community to create gift baskets filled with items shown to comfort, uplift, and inform—items that will help as young families transition in the early days of parenting and those aimed at connecting to resources they may need in the coming years. Thank you, CPMC, for your commitment to creating a network of support and for encouraging young families from the start! For more information, please contact Kimberlee Rebo, Acute Care Manager, at krebo@cabinetpeaks.org.



Troy's Bike Project: Social Development Strategy in Action

The Troy Bike Project will build upon existing resources (local bike trails, pump track, flow track, 78-member bike club, and incredibly supportive community known for pulling together and getting things done when they put their mind to it) to create a program that expands opportunities for youth ages 8-18 to participate with friends, family, and community members who share their passion for biking. Young people will learn the skills needed to not only care for a bike, but also to develop ownership and pride in their community as they work to maintain and enhance the local trail system and explore additional opportunities for sustaining the project for the long term.



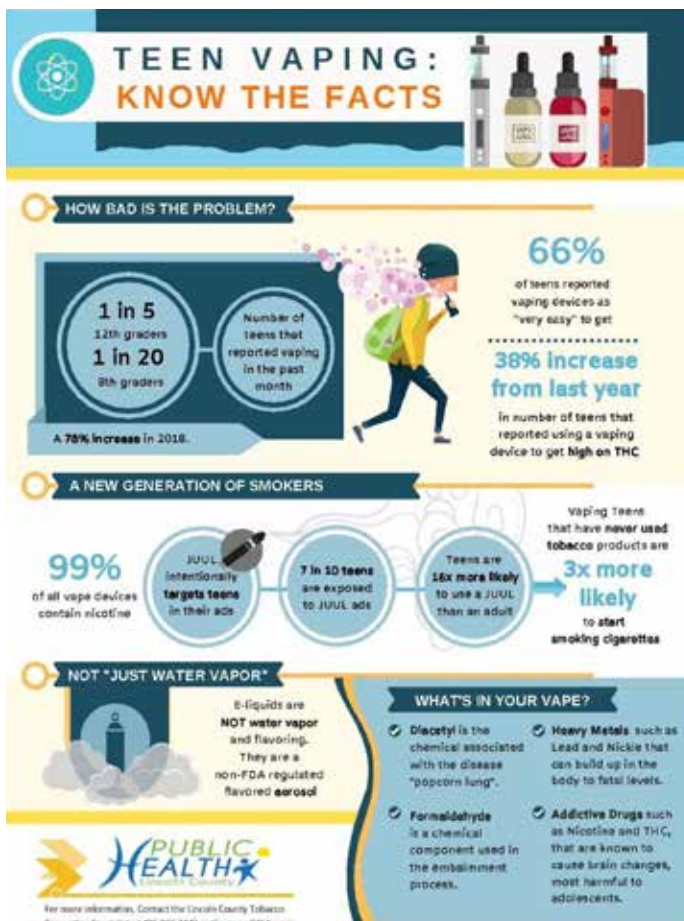
THE POWER OF PARENTS



NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR INFLUENCE!

Playing a board game, riding bikes, cooking dinner together... Every moment you spend with your child provides a clear message that they matter. Take time to be around your child in their environment and invite them to be a part of yours!

Together...for a strong, safe and healthy community!



40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

40 Developmental Assets are essential qualities of life that help young people thrive, do well in school, and avoid risky behavior.

Youth Connections utilizes the 40 Developmental Assets Framework to guide the work we do in promoting positive youth development. The 40 Assets model was developed by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute based on extensive research. Just as we are coached to diversify our financial assets so that all our eggs are not in one basket, the strength that the 40 Assets model can build in our youth comes through diversity. In a nutshell, the more of the 40 Assets youth possess, the more likely they are to exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes (such as good health and school success) and the less likely they are to exhibit risky behaviors (such as drug use and promiscuity). It's that simple: if we want to empower and protect our children, building the 40 Assets in our youth is a great way to start.

Look over the list of Assets on the following page and think about what Assets may be lacking in our community and what Assets you can help build in our young people. Do what you can do with the knowledge that even through helping build one asset in one child, you are increasing the chances that child will grow up safe and successful. Through our combined efforts, we will continue to be a place where Great Kids Make Great Communities.

Turn the page to learn more!



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Caring community members supporting kids in fun/creative ways



Nothing better than time spent creating something beautiful together



Utilizing skills and abilities to honor our nation



Eureka students install new bench to honor deceased veteran

EXTERNAL ASSETS

SUPPORT

1. **Family support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication:** Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
3. **Other adult relationships:** Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood:** Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate:** School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in school:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7. **Community values youth:** Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources:** Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others:** Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety:** Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

11. **Family boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models:** Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence:** Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations:** Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. **Creative activities:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community:** Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

INTERNAL ASSETS

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. **Achievement motivation:** Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- 22. **School engagement:** Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- 23. **Homework:** Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- 24. **Bonding to school:** Young person cares about her or his school.
- 25. **Reading for pleasure:** Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
- 27. **Equality and social justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- 28. **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- 29. **Honesty:** Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- 30. **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- 31. **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. **Planning and decision making:** Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- 33. **Interpersonal competence:** Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- 34. **Cultural competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. **Resistance skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. **Peaceful conflict resolution:** Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. **Personal power:** Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- 38. **Self-esteem:** Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- 39. **Sense of purpose:** Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- 40. **Positive view of personal future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.



Coach challenges Libby students to dig deep at Hoopshoot



Eureka leaders start school newspaper to promote positive change



Spending time exploring interests and building skills in Troy



Eureka students make quilt to benefit a family in need



how to manage **BEHAVIORS**

EMOTIONAL REGULATION THROUGH AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LENS

By SARAH BUSSELMAN, OTR/L • JENNA BLAIR, OTR/L • RYANN MACMURDO OTR/L • JJ LEECE, OTR/L

In our day-to-day lives, we use something called emotional regulation to control how we show our emotions to others. Emotional regulation is something we call an executive skill, or a skill that we need to be able to “execute” tasks in our daily lives and is a skill that is learned and developed over time, and not something that simply happens. Learning more about emotional regulation helps us teach and support our kids in productive ways. Occupational Therapy provides us with a unique lens to approach emotional regulation.

Occupational Therapy is the therapeutic use of everyday life occupations for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation and improving overall quality of life. More simply said, Occupational Therapists help people live life to its fullest despite any challenges. Children who are experiencing difficulties with emotional regulation may have emotional outbursts or tantrums that limit their participation in activities they value and enjoy. Some children need more support developing these skills than their same-aged peers. Emotional regulation develops and matures over time and looks different at different ages. This explains why having a tantrum is expected of a toddler, yet an adult is expected to problem solve and communicate their feelings. Emotional regulation challenges can stem from several factors including the environment, personality of the child, and/or a medical diagnosis. Some common diagnoses that impact development of emotional regulation include Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, anxiety, childhood trauma, and sensory difficulties.

If your child is struggling with outbursts, the first step starts with you as the caregiver. For younger children who are learning emotional regulation or older children who need more support, you are their role model and teacher. You will need to become aware of factors or triggers that may be contributing to your child’s emotional state. Some common factors

*When our brains never
take a break – when
they constantly
perceive threats
without allowing our
thoughts or our body
to relax, anxiety
becomes an issue.*

that can impact regulation include sleep, hunger, thirst, fatigue, stress, and sensory processing differences. Sensory processing is the ability to take in and make sense of external input from the ever-changing environment using our senses such as touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight, body awareness, body movement, and interoception (our sense or perception of the sensations from within our body). Everyone processes their sensory world differently, and some sensory experiences can be irritating or noxious and can make emotional regulation difficult. Understanding these factors can provide insight into using strategies to support your child. When you have an understanding of your child’s triggers, you can begin to anticipate the different activities or settings that lead to outbursts and be proactive to set your child up for success.

To support your child during particularly challenging activities, make a plan with your child to engage in regulation strategies prior to, during, or after the activity. Each child has specific needs, but some general regulation strategies include helping your child have a regular sleep schedule, offer healthy snacks between meals, have a consistent daily routine, encourage drinking water throughout the day, and provide quiet time after stimulating activities (such as school or shopping at a busy store). Some strategies

that can be calming to the senses include rocking, big hugs, laying under a weighted blanket, noise cancelling headphones, calming music, dim lights, looking at a sensory bottle, or cuddling with soft stuffed animal or blanket. Simple activities such as movement breaks (playing outside or going for a walk), blowing bubbles, swinging, or providing deep pressure (such as a shoulder massage) can also help with regulation. Some children become upset with changes in their daily routine. Providing a simple picture or written schedule can assist your child with understanding what is upcoming and expected during their day.

When teaching emotional regulation, we can change the environment, but children also need to be taught about their emotions. In occupational therapy, we relate emotions back to the body and the changes that happen when we experience different emotions, this is called emotional awareness. For example, our bodies show we are mad by a frown, lowered eyebrows, clenched fists, and stomping feet. To help children learn to be aware of their emotions and bodies, first you can model your own feelings. You can talk about what emotion you are feeling, how your body reacts to this emotion, why you are feeling that way, and a strategy that you can use to help. Second, you can talk about your guess at what your child might be experiencing because of changes in their body language and offer potential coping strategies for difficult feelings. Both of these strategies will help increase their emotional vocabulary and relate emotions back to their bodies. All emotions influence behavior, so it is important for you and your child to understand that all emotions are natural and there are no “good” or “bad” emotions. All emotions are important because they are your child’s authentic experience of the world.

Improving emotional regulation is a journey and will take time for your child to learn and develop. If you feel that you need support, occupational therapy is a profession that can help you and your family in providing individualized assistance for your child in regulating emotions and behaviors. ■

NURTURE WITH NATURE

benefits of being outside

By EMILY C.T. HANKINS

The outdoors is in my blood. My grandfather worked for the Forest Service. My father worked for the Boy Scouts of America as a park ranger. My family was granted the privilege of living on a nature preserve nestled in the redwood forest. There, among the majestic trees, I lived an ideal childhood. I spent my formative years camping, hiking, building campfires, and falling in love with nature. I was a literal tree hugger.

These days, I spend most of my time indoors, and I am the worse for it. Most of us will admit to not spending enough time in the open-air and recognize that having an active, outdoor lifestyle is healthy. Time spent outside is even more crucial for youth.

Author Richard Louv coined the phrase 'Nature Deficit Disorder.' In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, he cites that the growing distance between children and their exploration of the outdoors is a major contributor to the rise of obesity, attention disorders, and depression.

WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES BEING OUTSIDE SUCH GOOD MEDICINE?

The Children and Nature Network is a non-profit that promotes pediatric wellness through experiencing nature. They cite research documenting that time spent outdoors leads to improved educational engagement, classroom behavior, and overall academic success. According to the Children and Nature Network, the general health benefits of time outside are even more far reaching. Some conclusions are expected, such as increased physical activity and social interaction. In addition, aggression levels are lower and vitamin D levels are higher. Children who spend time outside even have better eyesight. The information I found most surprising and fascinating was that health benefits of being outside start even before birth. Time spent in nature can improve fetal growth and improve birthweight among expectant mothers. The evidence is clear that time spent in nature is helpful and healing.

As the seasons change and the weather warms, we want to be out and about, but

Reaping the benefits of nature and spending time in the great outdoors does NOT necessarily mean rubbing sticks together to build a fire, gathering edible fungi, or hiking to the top of a mountain.

many find embracing the call of the wild intimidating. Reaping the benefits of nature and spending time in the great outdoors does NOT necessarily mean rubbing sticks together to build a fire, gathering edible fungi, or hiking to the top of a mountain. (But if that is your thing, go for it.) There are simple ways to soak up nature's goodness without going into mountain-man mode. No trip to the local REI store is required.

OUTSIDE IS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

You can enjoy many health benefits right outside your home. Gather small rocks from around the neighborhood, paint them (I like using paint pens), and put them back for others to find. Grab some sidewalk chalk and leave positive notes on a friend's (or neighbor's) driveway. Teach the kids some retro sidewalk games like hopscotch or jacks. It doesn't have to be Easter to hide eggs, or July 4th to get out the lawn games.

TAKE A HIKE

Take a walk on a groomed trail. National programs like Rails to Trails have created easy-to-access walking paths in countless communities. If you are looking for something a bit more challenging or far-afield, head to the local outdoor shop and ask for a trail map of your area.

PARK IT

The right park for you might be a local

playground, an open field for flying a kite, or one of our majestic National Parks. Parks are there to be enjoyed. One summer, I created Park Passports for my kids. We made it a goal to visit every park in town. For each new spot we explored, we stamped our passports.

GET ARTSY

How many shades of green can you count? Go on a colors-of-nature scavenger hunt - how many colors can you find? Paint with Water. Draw in mud. When appropriate, gather natural objects and arrange them into a mandala. Peel the wrapper off a crayon, lay a paper over some rough tree bark (or other interesting textures), and rub the side of the crayon over the paper. Collect flowers and leaves to press between pages of a book, or pinecones and rocks to form imprints into playdough. Encourage older kids to help younger ones.

WEATHER OR NOT

Like the Scandinavians say, "There is no such thing as bad weather." In the misty mountains of my childhood, the weather never stopped us. If it was raining, we put on a slicker. When the temperature dropped down, we bundled up. Let the weather be your guide. Unexpected snow means it is the perfect opportunity to learn to snowshoe. If it's super-hot, go jump in a lake.

BE PREPARED

The Boy Scout motto isn't just lip service. Whether you are staying near, or going far, nothing ruins a day of outdoor fun faster than being underprepared. Wear your sunscreen, plan on bugs, dress for the weather, and take plenty of water.

Nature's potential for play and healing are infinite. To this day, I crave the outdoors. It is my refuge, my happy place. I return from being outside refreshed, relaxed, and renewed. Lifelong outdoorsman John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club and father of our National Parks, said it well, "Between every two pine trees, there is a door leading to a new way of life." ■



Q&A

How can I combat screen fatigue - for me AND my kids?

It's been months of virtual meetings, virtual school, and virtual friendships viewed through a screen. It is taxing on everyone, and it is getting harder and harder to focus on the screen in front of us. What is it really doing to us and why do we feel like we ran a marathon after we get done with a virtual meeting or school?

A lot of our communication is non-verbal, which is why text messages can easily be misconstrued. Think about how we interact with people in person: our tone of voice tells them how we are feeling, our hand gestures help, and we can see non-verbal cues from others, as well. We see in real time if someone is going to respond, and we can adjust accordingly. When we are in front of a screen, many of our non-verbal communication cues aren't there to process. We are also aware that we are being watched, and we feel like we need to be "on," because we don't know who is watching us. Laura Dudley, a behavior analyst at Northeastern University, says, "You might find yourself toggling back and forth between your webcam and the other person, but this is not the same as sustained, joint eye contact between two people. And keep in mind that the other person is probably doing the same toggling."

What we are experiencing is a real thing called "Zoom Fatigue." What can we do about it? Here are some tips to for managing this fatigue:

- Unplug from technology after work or school.
- Take breaks during long screen sessions. Get up and get some water; do stretches.
- Limit screen time as well as family's screen time. Play a board game together or read a book (that is not on a device).
- Go old school and write friends a letter or send a card.
- Ophthalmologists recommend directing our eyes away from the screen every twenty minutes and focus on an object roughly 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds (the 20-20-20 rule).
- With kids spending more time than normal in front of screens, it is important to limit recreational TV and technology time.

Give yourself and others some grace and know that this is a hard time for everyone.

HAVE A QUESTION?

lincolncountyuniteforyouth@gmail.com

We cannot guarantee all questions will be published; however, we will do our best to respond to all questions submitted.

BY THE NUMBERS



2

The number of golf balls sitting on the moon.

180

The average number of sesame seeds on the bun of a Big Mac.



9,000

The age in years of the oldest piece of chewing gum.

293

The number of different ways to make change for a dollar.



22

The percentage of people who leave a glob of toothpaste in the sink.

3,200,000

The number of 12-17 year olds in the U.S. who used marijuana last year.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY





when teens try to COPE ALONE

By JOELLE JOHNSON, LCSW, LAC

Recently, a young girl was brought to my therapy practice by her mother. The girl had attempted suicide a week earlier, which was a sudden and traumatic alert that her daughter was struggling with depression. The first therapy session held more surprises as the daughter revealed she had been feeling very depressed for over a year. With both genuine shock and concern, her mother asked why she had never told her mom about her feelings. The hopelessness so often prevalent in depression shone through the young girl's response: "I didn't talk about my feelings because I didn't think it would help." For over a year, this young girl attempted to cope with her depression, as well as her overwhelming hopelessness, on her own.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time I have witnessed this interaction between parent and child in my therapy office. Parents are sometimes caught off guard by the extent of their teen's emotional challenges and attempts to cope with these challenges. Often, teens are confused by their own emotions and have difficulty putting their experiences into words or knowing how to ask for help. Trying to communicate their emotional struggles—or even understand them—teens often attempt to cope in isolation. They may withdraw from important people and activities that are creating anxiety. Ongoing feelings of sadness may be seen through increased irritability, conflict, and even aggression. They may begin to use of substances to numb or dull the intensity of emotions. Self-harming behaviors, such as cutting or burning on the body, are also sometimes used to create physical pain as a distraction from intense emotional pain.

And though these attempts are unhealthy and often downright dangerous, they can also be understood if we compare them to our own attempts to cope with physical pain. Think of having a sore back. We may be able to shift our sitting or standing position to offer some temporary relief,

Wonder with them about specific stressors or fears that may be impacting their mood, but if they aren't able to identify anything specific, don't get stuck there. The biological component of a mental health challenge may make it difficult to identify situations or reasons for experiencing emotional shifts. A continued focus on identifying "why" will likely shutdown communication from a teenager.

but if the pain is being caused by a slipped disc or pinched nerve, the pain will return and will likely intensify and worsen if measures to address the underlying issue are not taken. A more effective approach might be going to the doctor for an examination and then following through with recommendations like physical therapy or surgery. Obviously, while having much more positive and lasting outcomes, these measures also will take more time and effort. Additionally, we cannot fully execute these measures on our own, but will need the partnership of a medical professional and also likely the support of friends, family, and co-workers to effectively heal.

Effective coping for mental health

challenges is much the same. Often the first step toward healing is to identify and talk about the problem. Besides clueing others into the problem, the simple act of reaching out to another person to share emotional struggles can be therapeutic in and of itself. Feeling cared about, understood, and experiencing the compassion and concern from another person can lessen the intensity of feelings of anxiety or depression. Parents are in the perfect position to provide this support to their children. When teens share emotional difficulties, open communication by asking them, "How can I help?" They may want a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on or they may want advice—let them guide the response. Wonder with them about specific stressors or fears that may be impacting their mood, but if they aren't able to identify anything specific, don't get stuck there. The biological component of a mental health challenge may make it difficult to identify situations or reasons for experiencing emotional shifts. A continued focus on identifying "why" will likely shut down communication from a teenager.

An empathic response will help a teen to feel understood, opening the door to identifying any underlying issues and effective coping strategies. Strategies may include increasing activities that produce dopamine and endorphins, such as spending time outside, exercising, eating well, and getting enough sleep. Relaxation techniques or taking planned and frequent breaks from stressful or anxiety producing tasks may also be useful. Above all, parents should continue to support and encourage an ongoing conversation with their teen about their emotional health. Parents also need to be aware of when their teen may need professional assistance. Two weeks is a good guideline, meaning, if a teen is experiencing feelings of depression, hopelessness or anxiety lasting two weeks or more, a referral to a mental health professional is warranted. ■



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END OF THE DAY, YOU
SHOULD SMELL LIKE DIRT.
-MARGARET ATWOOD**



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do you know **MARIJUANA SLANG?**

By YOUTH CONNECTIONS STAFF



You may be familiar with the term 420 – the international time (4:20) to get high, or the day, April 20. There are variations to this to allow youth to freely speak about drugs in front of parents or teachers without raising suspicion. A lesser-known term, but meaning the same thing is 40 to 5, or 40 minutes to 5, which is the same as 4:20.

Another number you may have seen and not known the meaning is 710. It is “OIL” upside down and backwards. 710 can also mean the time or the day (July 10) to get high. Marijuana oil is the extracted THC (the psychoactive ingredient) from marijuana. It is highly concentrated and is used to smoke or put into products from cookies, candy, and anything edible to toothpaste, toothpicks, lotions and more. These are not the hemp products that are available in retail stores. Hemp is different from marijuana and has about .3% THC. Oils are extremely concentrated THC, upwards of 90%, where the only purpose for use is to get high.

The oil extracts have many slang names such as budda/budder, wax, dabs, honey, shatters and oil. Marijuana edible manufacturers use these terms in the names of their products, such as Buddafinger candy bars, Captain Chronic cereal, Orange Kush soda, etc.

Other terms to be mindful of:

Baker – *person who smokes marijuana.*

Chronic – *very strong marijuana.*

Flower – *refers to the bud of the marijuana plant.*

Ganja – *term comes from the Ganges River in India where marijuana grows on the banks; synonymous with marijuana.*

Jay – *short for joint.*

Kush – *is a strain of indica cannabis; very popular term and used to rhyme with bush in rap music.*

Rig – *the device used to smoke dabs.*

Nail – *the tool used to put the dab of concentrate on to heat and then be able to smoke.*

For additional information, all these terms can be searched on the internet. The marijuana industry is blatantly open about how to get high. With marijuana legalized in more states, the normalization of these terms is something for parents to continually be aware. ■

SUMMER | 2021

PREVENTION MATTERS



Together... elevating the health and well-being of youth and families in Lincoln County!



COMMUNITIES THAT CARE



Lincoln County Unite for Youth

Unite for Youth – Communities That Care (UFY-CTC) is a collaborative, community-based organization made up of individuals, agencies, and organizations committed to reducing and preventing behaviors of concern among youth. Together, we aspire to inspire healthy lifestyle choices across the lifespan.

Members work alongside parents, educators, law enforcement officials, the faith community and more to align programs and policies with a shared vision for a strong, safe, and healthy community – one in which youth and families are supported and empowered to reach their highest potential.

UFY-CTC connects local, state, and national resources to promote and expand meaningful opportunities to build skills, strengthen relationships, and co-create healthy standards for behavior that elevate the health and well-being of youth and challenge all of us to do and be our best!

A proven process that harnesses the power of community to...

- Identify risk factors that are leading to or sustaining youth problem behaviors including substance use, delinquency, violence, and mental health concerns.
- Connect, support and expand resources available to reduce risk, increase protection, and elevate the health and well-being of young people.
- Implement tested and effective programs and policies shown to positively impact the ability of youth and families to reach their highest potential.

Why it Matters

Risk and Protection

As a community, we want our kids to do and be their best. But for too many, problem behaviors such as substance use, mental health concerns and lack of opportunities for prosocial involvement are detouring plans, delaying accomplishments, and making it difficult for young people to make their way.

Healthy youth development can be derailed by a variety of factors that exist at home, among friends, at school, and in the community.

Risk factors make it more likely for young people to engage in problem behaviors and more likely for them to experience depression, anxiety and disconnection.

Protective factors work in the opposite direction and serve as buffers against harm. Protective factors promote health and well-being and make problem behaviors less likely.

Unfortunately, Lincoln County youth in grades 8-12 report higher than average levels of risk and lower



than average levels of protection than their peers across the state and nation. These conditions make it more difficult for young people to steer clear of problem behaviors and more likely for them to experience physical, emotional, and academic difficulties as a result (2018 Montana Prevention Needs Assessment).

Ready to make a difference for kids? Contact us! lincolncountyuniteforyouth@gmail.com



Together... Making a Difference

Positive Health Outcomes for Kids!

Collaborative community prevention efforts are helping kids make better decisions than ever! The average age of onset for alcohol use has increased, lifetime use of tobacco and alcohol has decreased, and more kids in grades 8-12 report having clear family rules about the use of alcohol and other drugs (MPNA, 2018).

Whether you are a policymaker, educator, parent, or community leader, YOU have the ability to put youth success first.

Your investment in prevention today will result in a brighter future for kids, and in a stronger, safer, healthier community for all of us!

<https://lincoln-county-unite-for-youth.constantcontactsites.com>



YC Magazine is Guaranteed to Reach Families !

Lincoln County Unite for Youth (UFY) is proud to introduce **Youth Connections Magazine (YC)**! UFY's YC Magazine is a quarterly publication created to promote a culture of health and safety among youth and families in Lincoln County. The magazine will be distributed **four times annually to every parent of every student** in Troy, Libby & Eureka. YC is filled with helpful tips and inspirational stories, as well as timely information and resources regarding more difficult topics such as mental health issues and youth substance use.

Please join us in celebrating the many positive things happening in our community as together, we grow awareness of the invaluable resources available to youth and families.

Take advantage of being part of this amazing publication! Advertising is a cost-effective way to market your business, service, agency or organization and allows you to align yourself with others who promote the health and safety of kids in our community. When you place an ad in UFY's YC Magazine, you will **connect with more than 2000 families every quarter** and as a result will help us support youth by strengthening parents.



Ad placement and pricing options include ...

Quarter page.....	\$175
Half page.....	\$300
Full page.....	\$500
Full page-Inside Front.....	\$600
Full page-Inside Back.....	\$600
Full page-Back Cover.....	\$650

Check out a sample of YC magazine at
www.youthconnectionscoalition.org

For additional information about YC magazine or advertising opportunities, please contact:

Lincoln County Unite for Youth Coalition
lincolncountyuniteforyouth@gmail.com



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