

Kid's Korner

Fourth Grader Writes About 'Farmer Grandpa'

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BELLEVILLE (Mifflin Co.)** —

The purpose of promoting good relationships between all ages inspired the Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging to again offer, for the sixth time, its annual "My Special Senior Friend" essay contest. A teacher, in turn, inspired Andrew Yoder to write about his special senior friend — his "Pap" Joshua Yoder.

A fourth grader at Belleville Mennonite School, Andrew wrote his essay because he wanted everyone to know that his grandfather is "a nice person to be around".

"I picked him because I like to do activities with him and to go to his house," Andrew said.

And as "Farmer Grandpa," as Andrew sometimes calls him, Josh provides for Andrew and his six other grandchildren, lots of chances to learn while doing.

"I've learned how to drive a tractor and feed cows," says Andrew, who wants to be a farmer when he grows up.

While Andrew's uncle Marvin milks the 55-cow herd on the home farm near Belleville, Josh takes care of the 120 crop acres, tends to heifers at different locations, and calls his grandchildren to ride along and help out.

And, as Andrew's essay explains, his grandfather does a lot, lot more.

My special senior friend is a very busy person. He hauls sawdust for people and lets me ride along. He goes to a lot of sales. He hauls cows and other animals for people who buy them at the sales. I like to ride with him in his cattle truck. He lets me help load and

unload the animals. I like to watch the sales with him. He usually buys me candy bars and soda. One time he tried to trick me into buying a litter of pigs. I was glad I didn't have to pay for them!

Whenever he doesn't go to sales he does the farmwork on a farm. I like to ride with him in the tractor. Last year I helped unload hay. It was a heavy job but I like working with hay. He also raises a few calves. He helps clean up after fires. He goes to church every Sunday. I like to visit him because I like to feed his calves. I am very glad he's my friend. I like him a lot.

by Andrew Yoder

Joshua learned of Andrew's entry in the contest a few weeks before he submitted his entry. Then, after reading the entry and attending the honors celebration for entry winners, Josh discovered he learned a few things from Andrew!

"I learned how close they (grandchildren) were watching me. It came out in Andrew's essay. Andrew mentioned that I was always in church every Sunday. It made me aware that kids watch grandparents as much as parents," Josh explained.

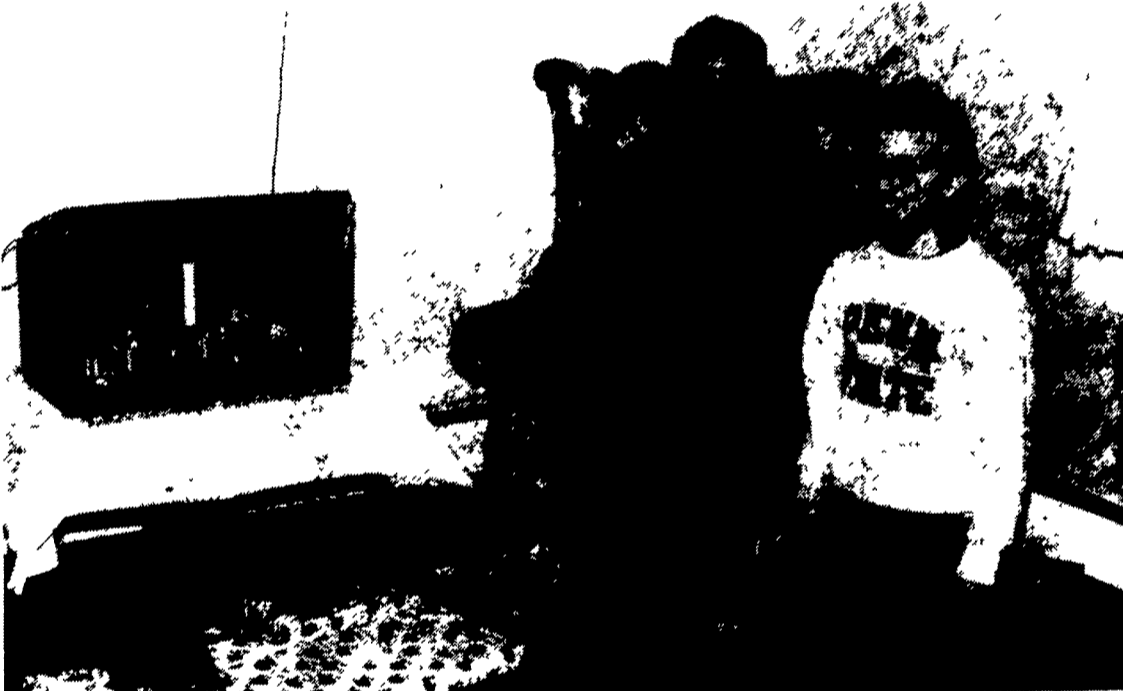
And with little eyes watching, Josh hopes to instill the same values he taught his own six children — to go to church on Sunday, and to teach them the value of work, of getting something done, of getting something accomplished.

While Andrew made his Pap feel surprised, happy, and honored by writing his essay, both are partners in the process of keeping families close, of promoting good relationships between all ages.

Andrew's parents are Wayne and Sandy Yoder of Belleville.



Andrew Yoder chose Pap as his "Special Senior Friend."



Through Andrew's entry in "My Special Senior Friend Contest," Joshua learned how closely children watch their grandparents.



Whether it's feeding calves, hauling sawdust, or attending sales, good relationships are built by working together.



Heather Charles (left) and Anne Palermo, New Castle County 4-H'ers, build towers on gelatin and clay slabs to learn about earthquake dynamics during Every Youth a Scientist SERIES Training. After completing the training, they and other teenage volunteers will share what they've learned with younger children. SERIES, which stands for Science Experiences and Resources for Informal Educational Settings, is a new 4-H educational program being started in Delaware by Cooperative Extension.