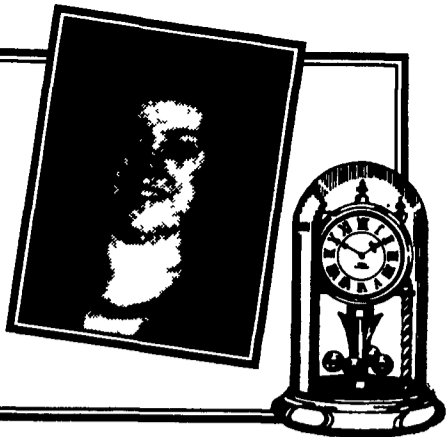


Taking Time
by
Rebecca Escott



Granted, that's not a huge number. But some of those kids who seemed really at risk when they were younger "made it." So Peterson and Peterson asked, "What made the difference for these guys?" Eighty percent named a specific adult—Mrs. Johnson, Coach T., Grandma Wilson, etc.

All it took to "save" these kids from a cycle of criminal of activities and disappointments was one adult expecting them to succeed, believing in them, and continuing to provide positive opportunities. Wow! One adult.

Maybe your life is not as dramatic as that, but you could probably name adults that who have stepped in and provided important supplemental encouragement in ways that parents can't. Some of the people who made a difference in my life were a camp counselor, a 4-H leader, an English teacher, a youth group leader, a best friend's mom.

Sometimes, we make the mistake of thinking that it takes

special talents or a lot of money to do something that would matter to children. Wrong. I listen to radio announcements in our community where our children make requests for attention through "Big Brother, Big Sister" program. What do they want? Someone to talk to, someone to take them to the mall, someone to shoot basketball with, someone to play games with.

Children need adults and "big brothers/sisters" to care about them, to miss them if they aren't at school, to notice when they are sitting alone crying, to give a hug, to be in the audience at their school program.

Consider ways that you might make a difference to a

child who seems "at risk." Could you be a phone pal, calling them when they get home from school? Could you host a story-hour for kids at your home? Could you rock some infants in the hospital or at day care? Could you "adopt" a boy on the little league team whose dad lives in another town? Could you drive a van full of teens to the state park for hiking? Some very ordinary actions taken over time can produce extraordinary results in children.

As you think about Memorial Day, and making memories that last beyond this generation, consider taking time not only for your own children, but at least one child outside your family. Your caring could change a life.

Take Time for a Child

This weekend many families will be getting together to celebrate Memorial Day—putting flowers on graves, watching parades, having picnics, opening pools, and kicking off the summer season. It's a perfect recipe for adult-child fun!

Recently I was reminded of how desperately children need caring adults around them. I reviewed a study originally released in 1989 by Peterson and Peterson. For 10 years they

tracked adolescent boys who had committed several serious crimes between the ages of 14 and 18.

The researchers wanted to know how many, if any, of these boys would have successfully joined society 10 years later. They checked how many of these juvenile offenders by the time they were 24-28 years old had gone without an arrest in the past three years and had filed a tax return. The result? Seventeen percent had.

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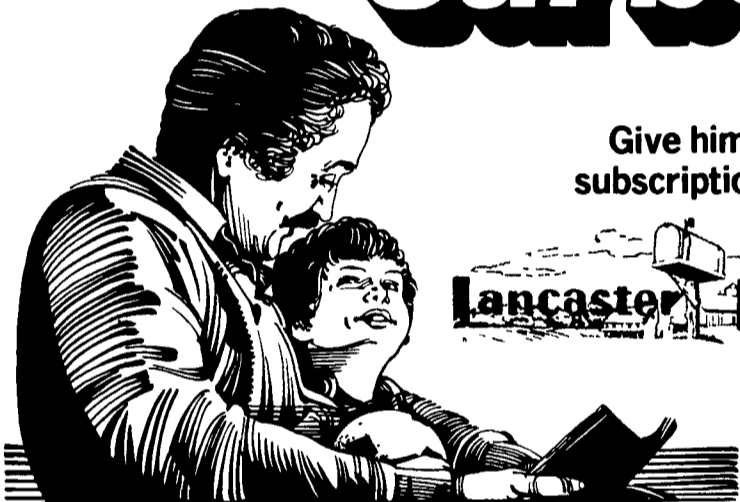
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