

Family Living Focus
by
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Keep Connected This Year
You probably had the chance to connect with relatives and friends whom you seldom see or hear from during the year over the holidays. At our home, we celebrated with adult children and their families. We received letters from family and friends describing the year's events in their lives. There were special activities or visits arranged between youth groups and organizations serving elderly.

Our holidays are special because they are a time for younger and older people to interact with each another.

I recently read study results that indicated during a period of one month, only five out of 25 teens could recall having any direct communication with an elderly person.

In the New Year, most of the younger people and older people are returning to their separate worlds, even those who live in the same community. Nephews and nieces are preparing to go back to college, the grandchildren have resumed school and activities, and the adults have returned to their separate routines.

What can we do to keep connected across generations all year and not just at the holidays? How can we overcome obstacles in our society, including geographic dis-

tance, family separation, age-grouped activities and separate living arrangements, that isolate the young and old and prevent interactions between young people and old people?

One of the things I look forward to is a letter I receive every January from one of my nephews. The words are simple and spoken from the heart. In addition to thanking me for his gift, he always tells me something about what he is doing at school or in one of his activities. His letter encourages me to continue our conversation. Keeping connected through letters to this nephew and other young members of my family who are separated geographically strengthens our bonds of understanding and fondness for each other. We learn about each other's interests. Knowing how young people in my family spend their time, the challenges they experience, and what they think keeps me from accepting stereotypes about young people. So, think of someone you know, block out some time, and write a letter to him or her this week.

If you are connected electronically, you may consider corresponding by e-mail. Sharing an interest about computers can help both young and old develop some new skills! Another way to

keep in touch is by phone calls. One of my favorite Family Circus cartoons brings home the important connection between grandparents and grandchildren. The cartoon shows a little girl holding up a phone receiver, looking up to her mother, and asking, "Mom, can we call Grandma? I like having her in my ear."

Being needed and wanted brings purpose to older peoples' lives. Having a positive effect on children's lives brings older people a sense of fulfillment and completion. Young people, supported by caring adults who have lived through many changes, receive the gift of hope for the future. They enjoy learning from these experts who love and accept them even when they break a dish or fail a test.

There are also other ways for interacting across generations. How about making an audiotape or video tape?

This month a group of high school seniors in my hometown were recognized for their achievements in interacting with elderly people living in a local nursing home. The students used information collected from recorded interviews with the elderly people to develop an exhibit that traces the history of the area where these elderly people lived.

Whether it's through face to face visits, letters, or phone calls, make a New Year's resolution to communicate with a relative or a friend in your community. Keeping connected across generations throughout the year is what is important.

If you are interested in receiving additional ideas on ways to initiate communication across generations, contact the family living agent at your local Cooperative Extension office and request the Intergenerational Tool Kit. Other resources are also available.

Keystone Degrees To Be Awarded

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Following are names of several Keystone Degree candidates who will be receiving degrees during Farm Show ceremonies on Monday, Jan. 7 in the Large Arena. See remaining candidates listed in the Special Farm Show Section of this paper.

Steven Klinger
My Chapter: HG Parkinson.
How Old I Am: 17.

Parents' Names: Clyde and Barbara Nishnick Jr. and Jeff and Mary Klinger.

Where I Live: Hickory.
The Offices I've Held: Greenhand president and chapter chaplain (two years).

These Are My Favorite Activities: Anything mechanical in agriculture.

Committee Memberships I've Enjoyed: Fruit fund raiser.

My Favorite Experience In FFA: National convention 2001.

What I Hope To Accomplish In The Future: I hope to attend NADC and receiving my two-year degree in auto mechanics

The Career I'd Most Like To Have: Agricultural mechanic.

Things I Most Enjoy About Being An FFA Member: Meeting new friends and going to new places.

Eric Kneller
My Chapter: Troy.
How Old I Am: 18.

Parents' Names: Silas Kneller and Denise McNeal.

Where I Live: West Burlington.

The Offices I've Held: Chapter president.

These Are My Favorite Activ-

ities: Football and hunting.

Committee Memberships I've Enjoyed: Citrus committee.

My Favorite Experience In FFA: Land judging.

What I Hope To Accomplish In The Future: Owning my own farm.

The Career I'd Most Like To Have: Farming.

Things I Most Enjoy About Being An FFA Member: The trips.

Jonathan Kosa
My Chapter: Headwaters.
How Old I Am: 18.

Parents' Names: Kurt and Laurel Kosa.

Where I Live: Ulysses.

These Are My Favorite Activities:

Committee Memberships I've Enjoyed: Flower bulbs, citrus sales, donkey basketball, and banquet committee.

My Favorite Experience In FFA:

What I Hope To Accomplish In The Future: Attend college and major in political science.

Things I Most Enjoy About Being An FFA Member: I really enjoyed the camaraderie in our chapter. I also enjoyed the FFA field trips.



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