

## Family Living Focus

by  
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### Graduates Need A Family Tapestry

It is the custom of our church to allow the graduating high school seniors to give a presentation during a Sunday worship service in May. Last Sunday morning I had the opportunity to hear four high school students who will be graduating on June 6 give their presentations. The students presented their perspectives on how the church, friends, and family helped shape and mold them into the emerging adults that they have become.

Now if you are like me, I knew it would be a truly moving experience emotionally. After all, graduation definitely ranks right up near the top of the list for me emotionally. Given four young people who you've known almost all of their lives as well as their parents' lives, you can't help get choked up when they talk about their life experiences.

Coupled with the fact that one of the students was my nephew, I found it difficult seeing through a triple layer of balled up tissues and foggy tear-soaked contacts. I guess I hadn't realized until that moment that they had really

"grown up" and were no longer the squirming young children "trying" to sit attentively in a pew each Sunday.

As a family educator, I always find it interesting to hear what young men and women consider the positive motivators have been in their lives. These four graduates weren't any different. They talked about their parents being involved in their lives through sports, academics, scouting, band, and other activities. Family members were cited as being supportive in times of self-doubt and when poor personal decisions had been made.

They also thanked the people in the congregation for taking time to be a part of activities like Bible School, camping, white water rafting, and caving. Their involvement showed their concern and commitment to help them become better-rounded individuals.

When my sons became teenagers, I often referred to them as "man cubs." They had one foot in manhood and one foot still under my wing. (As for myself, I was desperately clinging to each single feather stretching my wing further and further!)

Last Sunday morning each person in that congregation also lifted their wings to set these newly proclaimed young adult birds free. I, as well, saw my nephew now as a man, and what a good man he had become.

When you've been a part of young people's lives and shared experiences with them, you become a family member whether through blood or relationship. I like to think of it as a tapestry woven with each person representing a thread. This large "family tapestry" provides the support and control in times of celebration and challenge. When a thread in the tapestry becomes weak, it is important for someone else to step in to offer support and strengthen the fabric. This also serves as a safety net.

If you have the opportunity to become involved in a young person's life through a volunteer organization, church, school, or just being the neighbor next door, remember even the smallest positive thing you do can make a difference. It is you who they will reflect upon as having been there to role model or offer words of advice and kindness.

It is important for other adults to become involved in children's lives and bring a new color to their tapestry. How do you let the bird out from under your wing? Provide children with the safety net of a tapestry made from love, guidance, positive life experiences, and the knowledge that people do care what becomes of them.

This is a gift we all can begin to give our graduates beginning when they are children. Graduation should be a time to celebrate a job well done by everyone.

## Plants Can Be Started From Cuttings

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — For most backyard gardeners, the best way to start a plant is to drive to the nearest greenhouse and buy one. However, a scientist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences says savvy plant lovers can save money and have fun by starting their own plants from cuttings.

"The reason plants can take root from cuttings is that each cell in the plant has all the genetic information necessary to produce a complete plant," explains Robert Berghage, associate professor of horticulture. "When a cutting is taken by snipping a portion of the plant stem, we are removing the connection between the stem and the roots."

As a result, the snipped plant has had its growth patterns disrupted. These changes in growth patterns are governed by plant hormones produced in the leaves, stems and roots of the plant.

Berghage explains that once a cutting is taken, the plant hormones no longer can travel back and forth between the roots and the stem. "That means there is a change in the balance of hormones within the cutting," Berghage says. "The hormonal change signals the plant to first heal the wound, and then replace the missing roots."

Berghage points out that the healing and rooting process takes time, and gardeners must be vigilant in caring for plant cuttings. "In its simplest form, cutting production means taking a snip

of a plant stem, sticking it in some water, and letting it develop new roots," Berghage says.

Although some plants, such as geraniums, coleus, oleander and mint can be propagated using this method, Berghage explains that many other plants require a few more steps to get them to root.

Berghage advises (1) do not let the cutting dry out; (2) use a rooting hormone; (3) use a sterile, well-aerated and moist rooting medium; (4) provide high humidity and reduced light.

"Cover the cuttings with a plastic bag to provide high humidity," advises Berghage. "If you reduce light levels, just remember you must have enough light for the plant to grow."

## Patriot Bonds On Sale

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