

## Parents help each other cope with family issues

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER  
Post Staff

**SHAVERTOWN** - Six women sit on comfortable couches and cozy chairs set in a circle in a meeting room at Shavertown United Methodist Church.

Except for the two who came together, they walk in quietly one by one and take their seats. One woman recently moved from Maine to Scranton, three are from the Back Mountain, one is from Dupont and one is from Wilkes-Barre. The women come together because they share a desire for support, answers and strength in dealing with their children.

Every Thursday night at 7 p.m. the parent support group, Because I Love You (BILY), formerly Toughlove, meets at Shavertown UM Church on Pioneer Ave. The current coordinators are Cathy and David Mansfield of Trucksville.

The group has a 10-year history in the Back Mountain. It was started by Susan Davis, who served as coordinator until Sept. 1996. The Mansfields took over the group's leadership when Davis moved on.

BILY is the only group of its kind in the area, with Allentown the next closest location.

Mrs. Mansfield explained that the group changed their affiliation to BILY because Toughlove was going to begin charging a \$5 fee per meeting.

Mrs. Mansfield joined the group a year before becoming its coordinator because she needed some support in dealing with her teenage boys. "It really taught me how to relate better to my teenagers. It taught me how to set up a home life in such a way that I didn't feel like I was being attacked all the



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER

Helping each other through discussion, from left, "Trudy" and Cathy Mansfield at a Because I Love You meeting.

time. I changed in my own ways to relate to them," she said.

All of the women at this particular meeting are here because they need help dealing with teenagers. They asked that their names not be used for this article.

"Trudy" has a 15-year-old daughter who is depressed and threatened suicide. Her daughter is currently being treated at a hospital for her depression on an inpatient basis.

"Trudy" said she and her daughter have problems communicating and clash when it comes to discussions of phone use, curfews and friends.

Mrs. Mansfield discussed the signs of a suicidal person with "Trudy" and suggested that "Trudy" think about how she will handle it when her daughter returns home.

"When my daughter gets back from the hospital, I think we need to learn to respect each other again. I need to look more into understanding where she is instead of dismissing things. I'm going to talk with her and

*"Reach out for help and try to get it immediately."*

"Alice"

Mother of teenager

not to her," "Trudy" said.

The meetings are set up in three sections. There is a check-in time at the beginning of the meeting. This is where everyone tells a little bit about themselves and how things are going with their family situation.

Then comes the discussion time and finally the weekly planning session. Each person writes down on a card what they want to happen or what they don't want to continue and a short-term goal for the week. Everyone gets a contact person to call at some time during the week to check on them.

People in the group encourage other parents to seek help if they are having problems with their kids. "Part of the problem is being embarrassed," said

"Beverly," who is working on setting house rules with her 13-year-old daughter.

"Alice" agrees. "Reach out for help and try to get it immediately," she said. "Nip it in the bud because if you let it go, it will get worse and become one thing after another."

"Alice" has been coming to the group for two years. She started when her daughter, now 19, began running away, skipping school, smoking and drinking. Recently her daughter moved out of the area and is doing much better.

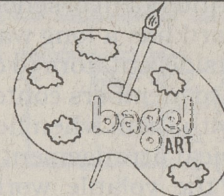
"She is a good girl now. She is getting straightened out," she said. "Alice" is working on establishing more consistent communication with her daughter.

"The group has helped me a lot. I got information about what to do with police, school, magistrates and fines. The group helped me not to cry and not to feel so bummed out," she said.

For more information, call 696-9099. BILY is free and open to the public.

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## Childbirth classes at Nesbitt

Wyoming Valley Health Care System will hold three Childbirth Education Class Series in the auditorium of the Nesbitt Medical Arts Building, 534 Wyoming Avenue, Kingston.

The Sunday series will be held Feb. 22 through March 22 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The Wednesday series will be held mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 26 through March 26. The sixth class for each series will be held April 1 at 6:30 p.m. and is designed for those individuals planning to breastfeed or are unde-

ecided about breastfeeding.

Coordinated by the Family Outreach Community Services Department, these series help women and their partners prepare for the birthing process through exercise, breathing techniques, knowledgeable guest speakers and video presentations.

Participants should bring a blanket, pillow and tennis ball to every class and also should wear sweat pants, or slacks that offer ease of mobility.

Pre-registration is necessary. To register or for more information, please call 552-8632 or 1-800-838-WELL.

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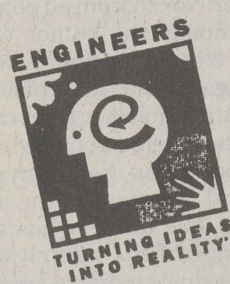
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