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Ampifying Life

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Strengthening Families Program

My last article focused Hope, Joy, and Happiness in our lives. I hope that you found time during the holidays to enjoy those. Family and parenting is not a one size fits all package. What brings happiness for one person or family does not always create happiness for others.

Parenting is similar. Each child is unique in their personality, emotional needs, and timing of development. Each adult is unique in their personality, emotional needs, and response in the role as a parent. Making the home environment a priority can help to decrease stress and better cope with what life brings our way.

I recently attended the training for the Strengthening Families Program. This is a research based program focuses on the family as a unit. This program has been taught in 50 states and 38 foreign countries. The skills taught in this course are for ALL families. This program defines "family" as one or more adults responsible for one or more children; a "parent" is an adult with that responsibility.

One of the ways this program is unique is that parents and children are encouraged to attend together and work through the program as a family unit. There is discussion about brain development and mindfulness practices to help reduce stress and anxiety as we work to improve the relationships within our homes.

If you remember my first article, I shared that using the 4-H motto can help us as individuals to improve our personal well-being and quality of life. We take a topic and see what we can apply to our daily lives to "make the best better". How can I use this information to be a better parent? How can I take this material to have a better relationship with my child or parent? No one is perfect and learning and reflection allows us to examine if we can be better at something.

A few of the goals of this program are to increase family communication, decrease family conflict, and improve parent and child relationships. There is an emphasis on family bonding with respect, praise, and positive time together. There is a video used in classes and available for home review between sessions.

This eight-week class will be offered in Council Grove, every Monday January 29 through March 19. The third week is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th instead of Monday due to a scheduling conflict. The class will be held 6:30 -8:30 PM in the Courthouse Meeting Room. Cost is \$40, plus a \$5 refundable fee if the DVD for the program is returned. Pre-registration is requested. For more information about the program contact me, Shandi Andres, at the Flint Hills District Extension Office in Council Grove, 620-767-5136 or sdandres@ksu.edu.