

HES counselor forms support groups for kids

Getting a handle on kids' problems...

By Dee Dellenbach
Staff writer

A handful of boys sat around a table at Hillcrest Elementary School and talked about what made them angry. One serious boy told the group he'd gotten in a fight that day because another boy wouldn't give him back his football. Then he described the circumstances that led to another fight earlier in the week.

The boys belong to the fourth grade anger management group that counseling intern Natalie Betz conducts.

"What are the ways you handle your anger?" she asked the boys.

"I don't," replied one boy.

He's not the only student who doesn't know how to manage his emotions. Hillcrest teacher Cassy Gasser said she had a variety of behavioral problems in last year's class.

"Before Natalie came, I would spend half an hour, two or three days a week in the hall counseling students. There were a lot of different problems. One of them was gossip. I had to talk to several girls about that."

She said this year, there have been fewer disruptions during class time.

"With the No Child Left Behind law, that's the way it has to be. There is a lot of material to cover. It's been great having Natalie here this year."

Betz is in her last year of graduate school at Purdue and is set to graduate in May. She majored in law and society for her undergraduate degree.

"I want to help families," she said, "and to focus on juveniles and delinquency. When I graduated, I worked with child protective services. But I wanted to be proactive

instead of take care of them after the fact." That's when she decided she'd like to become a school counselor.

In Betz's anger management group, a boy explained that he had a toolbox, and in that box was a remote control. The buttons on the remote had special meanings: Play prompted him to play his thoughts properly, the Power button reminded him that he has power to get over his own anger, and Pause reminded him to take time to cool off.

Betz asked the boys why they got into fights. One boy matter-of-factly stated that it was a reflex.

"Someone says or does something and I react," he said.

The other boys told Betz about incidents that they'd reacted angrily to earlier that day.

Betz asked them if they had a good reason to be angry. One boy answered that his parents divorced and his best friend moved away. Other boys answered that they had reasons to be angry. Betz asked if they were angry about those things today. A few said yes and the rest had no answer.

She asked the boys if they sometimes take their anger out on other people.

"Yes, my mom," piped one boy. "How can we let anger not affect us so much?" asked Betz.

"I can draw to get it off my mind," said one.

Betz ended the session by asking the boys to draw pictures of a recent incident that made them angry, and then to think about how they han-

dled it.

She said she spends about 25 hours a week at Hillcrest and has just begun a support group for kids from divorced families.

"Kids feel like it's their fault," said Betz. She said she tries to help children realize that divorce is a decision between their parents. The group's goals are to get kids to understand that they are normal, that others are going through the same problems and that they are not alone.

During the week, Betz sees about 30 kids for a variety of reasons. She also goes into classrooms and talks about issues. Second graders, for example, hear lessons about social skills, like how to keep their hands to themselves and not to speak out in class.

Laurie Linback was having a troublesome time with her third grader after her divorce.

"After we moved her, Hannah had a longer ride to see her dad every other weekend. She started coming home acting rude and disrespectful to her stepfather," said Linback. "She'd always been a calm, sweet child. I contacted Natalie. They started by playing games and gradually talked everything out. She's back to her old self again. She says she feels better and enjoys talking to Ms. Betz."

Susan Caputo said her daughter was having trouble dealing with being a younger sibling and not getting to do all of the things her older sister did. She said Betz taught her daughter to write in a journal to help her understand why things work out the way they do.

Betz said she has had a good year at Hillcrest. "I love it and I enjoy working with these teachers. We have worked with specific problem



Learning to manage their anger

Graduate student Natalie Betz has spent the year taking courses at Purdue and working as a counseling intern at Hillcrest Elementary School. She has initiated a support group for children of divorce and one for anger management. Pictured, in the back, is Betz listening to a fifth grade boy describe his emotional arsenal. He said he has a toolbox and is able to use those tools to avoid acting out when he gets angry. Comet photo by Dee Dellenbach

For more help

Wabash Valley Outpatient Hospital in Delphi offers anger management and other types of counseling for Carroll County residents. The facility offers payment on a sliding fee scale. They may be contacted at (765) 564-2247.

The newly-formed Prevent Child Abuse Carroll County will distribute pamphlets containing helpful tips for parents in stressful situations during April. April is National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Awareness month. For more information, call Debbie at (765) 564-6073 or Julie at (765) 564-6466.

'Footloose' on stage at Carroll



Carroll High School Drama Department will present the musical, "Footloose," this weekend in the John A. Bush Memorial Auditorium. Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are on sale in the CJSHS welcome center and will be available at the door. Cast members include (l-r): Front - Seth Pencek, Kelsey Kennedy. Row 2 - Lauren Wilkinson, Dillon Carter, Angel Jackson, Adam Bonner, Amanda Fife, Leann Hazelgrove, Nick Barnard, Anna Scharer. Row 3 - Shaina Stonebraker, Drew Ayres, John Collins, Kylene Miller, Nick Jones, Chelsie DeVos, Garret Herron, Clinton Bernier. Row 4 - Chase Meade, Sam Scharer, Chase Richardson. Photo by Wyndham Traxler Carter

TLHS presents 'Li'l Abner'

Comet staff report

Twin Lakes High School Theatre and Music departments will present the musical, "Li'l Abner," this weekend in the TLHS auditorium. Performances will begin at 7:30 on both Friday and Saturday nights.

Based upon the beloved comic strip of the same name, "Li'l Abner" features cartoonist Al Capp's world famous characters placed in an upbeat musical extravaganza. The story is set in Dogpatch U.S.A., a quaint mountain town where Kickapoo Joy

Juice is the drink of choice and maidens have to catch their prospective husbands in the Sadie Hawkins Race.

Tickets may be obtained from DiAnn Adams in the high school guidance office at 574-583-7108, ext. 2326).

Area homeschoolers to present children's musical

Area homeschoolers will present "Penny and the Magic Medallion" on Friday, March 31, at the Wabash and Erie Canal Park Interpretive Center in Delphi, at 6:30 p.m.

"Penny and the Magic Medallion" is a children's musical set in the mythical kingdom—"when" is a good question!—of King Reginald the Righteous, who is always right and never wrong.

When King Reginald complains that his servants aren't up to par, he is visited by an elfish person who presents him with a magic medallion, which is able to transform anybody into a highly-efficient robot.

King Reginald has to crack the code to discover the magic words, "I Am Wrong" and say them out loud, to bring the kingdom back to normal.

Chock full of singing and dancing and important themes and lessons for children of all ages (the

values of literacy, humility, respect for others, loyalty, etc.). "Penny and the Magic Medallion" is, above all, good, clean fun. It has audience participation and is only an hour long.

"Penny" is presented by the Master's Voice Players Drama Club, out of Delphi. The drama club has gone by other names in the past, and has presented such productions as "Little Women," "Emma," or "Uncle Tom's Cabin" over the years.

This latest production is the club's first musical, presented by a cast of seven, and starring Heather Glenn as Penny and Thomas Glenn as the King. The director is Margie Haley and the music director is Debbie Glenn.

Single-ticket price is \$3, or 2 for \$5. For a family ticket with 8 or more, the price is \$2 each. Tickets may be purchased in advance by contacting Margie Haley at 574-

652-4505. If the first performance sells out, another one will be held immediately following.



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Science teachers sound off

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

Carroll Jr.-Sr. High School science teachers told about pressing needs of their department at the Carroll School Board meeting March 7.

Science teachers who spoke were MaKay Adams, Stephanie Dickerson, Nathan Sheets, and Melissa Keown.

Supt. John Sayers prefaced their remarks by saying that updating the science facilities had been identified as one of the school corporation's priorities (based on a feasibility study conducted in 1998).

The science teachers highlighted the problems of teaching new curriculum in 40-year-old facilities. They said they need more lecture space, more laboratory space, and more technology. Some of the things they mentioned specifically were more stations for hands-on experiments, extra room for ongoing science fair projects, computers and programs, outdoor lab and greenhouse.

The teachers have been visiting other schools to see their science facilities. Carroll Jr.-Sr. High School principal Charles Huckstep, who formerly taught science, said Carroll's science classroom size is

1100 sq. ft. He said today's updated science classrooms are 1500 sq. ft.

"In a science facility, you can't have too much room," Huckstep said.

The teachers also pointed out some safety concerns. Sheets said the classrooms need better ventilation. He cited an incident where some fumes escaped, and students had to continue class in the cafeteria.

There was no board discussion on the teacher presentations.

Sayers told the *Comet* Friday that a consultant had earlier presented several options for the science renovation, including a new addition, reutilizing current space, or a combination of the two.

Sayers said an architect hasn't been hired yet, but he expects the renovation to begin in the summer of 2007. He said the teacher presentation at the board meeting was for information purposes only. He said there will be discussions between the science teachers and the board before architect interviews are conducted.

In other business, the superintendent announced that a corporation Wellness Committee has been formed to develop a wellness policy for recommendation to the school board. He said the federal govern-

ment mandates that school corporations have such a policy in place by July 1, 2006. The policy will address such issues as nutrition, childhood obesity, and physical education.

Members of the Wellness Committee are Carolyn O'Connell, Barb Payne, Beth Hayden, Kathy Woodward, Karla Taylor, Brandi Oliver, Lori Smith, and Kathy Sanders.

The following conference and field trips were approved:

- Joe Spence to take the Cougar Blues to the Navy Pier and other attractions in Chicago April 7 and 8.

- Roger Mahrling to attend the Privacy Concerns-Best Practices Conference April 12 and May 10 in West Lafayette.

- Mike Hyman to take the fifth grade stock market students to the Indiana Council for Economic Education Stock Market Awards Program May 12 in Indianapolis.

The board's next regular meeting will be March 21 at Carroll Jr.-Sr. High School. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m., and then students will be invited to the meeting at 1:30 p.m. The board holds a meeting with students once a year. A board work session will be held that morning at 10 o'clock in the Administration Building.

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