

HCI to release parenting DVD

Here's a shocker. Parents are busy. They're often too busy to take advantage of the traditional educational resources that would help them feel better about the job they are doing as parents.

The Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) has what it hopes will be at least a partial answer to that dilemma. It will soon be distributing a four-part, parent education DVD designed for home viewing. It's called *Powerful Questions: Parenting Adolescents*. Using local mental health professionals and parent educators, HCI has captured two hours of stimulating conversation that delivers both insight and practical strategies for raising adolescents. The powerful questions addressed by the DVD are: *Why Teens and Chemicals Don't Mix*, *Staying Connected to Your Teenager*, *What Good Discipline Looks Like* and *What Is Intentional Parenting.t*.

HCI plans to offer its program to local cable stations and distribute it on DVD free to parents. The DVD will be available on the parent resource carts in each school in Northfield and circulated through parent groups and organizations throughout the county. Church organizations are encouraged to use them to stimulate group discussions about parenting teens.

Sara Koehler, HCI coordinator, says this project is an attempt to address an unmet need.

"Parents have so many concerns about their teenage sons and daughters, but their lives are so busy it is difficult for them to commit to traditional classroom presentations," she says.

A recent survey conducted by the Rice County Family Service Collaborative's Parent Education Task Force supports the need for new approaches. Of the 600 Rice County parents surveyed, 88 percent said they would like more parent information and support. Almost half (48 percent) identified "time" as an impediment to getting parenting information. Reading and television were mentioned most often (31 percent) as the best way for those surveyed to take in parenting information.

Eric Lundin, a psychologist with Rice County Social Services, moderated the conversations. Sarah Shippy, a licensed social worker, and Mark Allen, a licensed chemical dependency counselor, both of Omada Behavioral Health in Northfield, appeared on each panel. Eric Bergh and Cheryl Schiappacasse, both licensed psychologists with of St. Olaf College's Counseling Center; Scott Robinson of the South Central Minnesota Drug Task Force; Pam Vig, Bethel Lutheran Church youth leader; and Scott Richardson, representing the Northfield Area Parent Communication Network, also participated. At the end of each of the four conversations, key ideas from that discussion are scrolled on the screen.

Lundin says the series touches on all of the major themes of parental concern and puts them in a context of adolescent development. What is right for kids who are at this stage of life?

"The panelists were able to convey the complexity of parenting adolescents," he says. "The multiple tapings allowed the panelists to consider a broad range of issues. Everything from neurological development to creating long-lasting relationships with their children was given thoughtful consideration."

Check out the HCI web site (www.northfieldhci.org) to learn how to get a copy of the DVD..