As the election for both the primary, August 16 in Natrona County, and general election, November 8, fast approach, we thought it would be important and pertinent to have some tips about talking with teens about local, state, and national elections. Believe it or not young people have the knowledge and cognitive skills to engage you about politics. So spend some time discussing the future of country – and get your kids involved.

**TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT THE ELECTION**

**LET YOUR TEEN BE THE EXPERT**
- Ask your teen what he/she knows about the election and the candidates.
- Keep in mind your powerful influence as a parent; let your teen ask you about your views rather than imposing your views on your teen.
- Beware! Political dissonance can be uncomfortable for teens and parents alike. Be sure to create some ground rules that create respect for multiple political perspectives at the table.

**FAMILY MEDIA TIME**
- If your teen is showing an interest in politics, tune in together to political talk shows, websites and newspapers.
- Introduce your teen to the concept of spin *fairly* by showing them a few different political perspectives on the same issue.
- Help them understand and question context to become critical consumers of political media.

**HOT BUTTON ISSUES**
- Be aware of what issues might be sensitive arenas for your teens.
- Make room and respect for multiple perspectives.
- Don’t push your teen to accept your point of view.

**HELP THEM GET INVOLVED**
- You’re still their No. 1 role model – demonstrate enthusiasm and interest for politics.
- With parental guidance and consent, teens can make their own campaign commercials for their favorite candidates.
- Teens can support their favorite candidates by volunteering.

**GET EDUCATED TOGETHER**
Not sure how the whole election process works? Ask your teen what he’s learning in school about the election and U.S. government. Do some searching online to find information together to help you both learn the process!

GEAR UP AND DONUT

By Rodney Oster

During the last school year, Dean Morgan Junior High School started GEAR UP Breakfast Club for students who arrive early to school. Every Wednesday morning GEAR UP students meet for a half hour before classes begin. The students engaged in many activities such as: discussing educational goals, creating personal goal-folios, exploring occupations through games, discovering various colleges, preparing for their futures, and much more. This is a great time to share ideas and learn from each other.

On top of all these experiences, students get to enjoy breakfast. Daylight Donuts consistently provided us with a donation of nourishment each week. Studies have suggested that “the brain works best with about 25 grams of glucose circulating in the blood stream.”* Eating a donut is a pretty easy way to get 25 grams of glucose into the blood stream, right? The breakfast club is a huge success and a ton of fun.

With so many donuts donated, GEAR UP brings the remaining donuts to Natrona County High School every Wednesday to accompany a wide range of conversations pertaining to the GEAR UP philosophy.

Daylight Donuts impacts the community in many ways by offering a free small coffee and donut to any veteran and regularly donates to Joshua’s Storehouse. We are lucky to partner with a business that values our community and continues to give back. We hope to build upon our successful partnership and programs in the upcoming school year. We want to truly thank Daylight Donuts for their continued support.

*live science.com/3186-brain-food-eat-smart.html

By Andrea Covert

TIPS, TRICKS, AND TIDBITS

This month as you are getting ready to start school, I encourage you to set some meaningful goals and think about how you will accomplish them! To help you stay on track and keep motivated I am sharing a template from justagirlandherblog.com/how-to-set-goals-that-youll-actually-accomplish-free-printable-goal-worksheet.
NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY

MORE CHANGE ARRIVES IN THE DISTRICT WITH A NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY

Along with many other new policies that have come forward in the past year, a new attendance policy is currently in the works. “Basically what happened is the High School Expectations Committee has been meeting for a couple years, and attendance is a huge concern of theirs,” Shannon Harris, NC head principal said. “They wanted to draft a policy that was a little harsher … to encourage better attendance.”

The policy allows for students to have only five parent-excused absences in each class. Doctors can excuse you for illnesses, counseling, or dentist appointments without it counting against their five parent excuses, and students can be excused for school activities without the five parent excuses being used. If a student reaches their limit of five unexcused absences, then the school must hold a meeting with at least one principal, one teacher, one parent, and the student to meet about attendance issues. Once a student has three more unexcused absences (a total of eight), they lose credit in the class they’ve missed eight periods of.

“I support a black and white attendance policy so that we know, and students know and parents know, that when you get here this is what happens. This is going to be really hard for schools to implement because of the number of meetings,” Mrs. Harris said, expressing some more concern. “We can’t have kids in partial schedules wandering around the school. So if you lose credit, how motivated are you going to be to go to class? So we need some kind of appeal.” Mrs. Harris explained that at the last school she taught at they had a similar policy, however once you lost credit, you continued to go to class and do the work. If at the end of the semester you were passing the class, you could petition a committee of administrators, teachers, parents, and students to get the credit in that class back.

Although the policy doesn’t directly reference an appeals process, both Mr. Dresang and Mrs. Harris talked about possibilities for different appeal processes. Mr. Dresang explained that once the policy was in full affect, the administrators for each individual school would sit down and determine what administrative regulations they would put into effect for things like regaining credit and how the meetings would work.

Mrs. Harris also expressed concern about sick day absences. Since there are only five parent excuses a year, Mrs. Harris explained that it may potentially put a burden on parents to take their kid to the doctor to get an excuse for being sick so that it doesn’t count against their absences, which could cause those parents to spend money that they didn’t with the past policy.

If students, parents, faculty, etc. are interested in commenting about this policy, they can watch the Natrona County School District website for the information about when the policy will be brought up for a work session with the board. They can also email the school board with any comments, questions, or suggestions pertaining to this new policy proposal.

PARENTING TEEN GIRLS

By Lucie Hemmen, Ph.D.

It’s not easy being a teen girl and not easy parenting one. More than previous generations, today’s teen girls face a daunting range of stressors that put them at risk for serious issues including self-harming behaviors, substance abuse, disorders, anxiety, and depression. Parents everywhere struggle to respond appropriately to the challenging behavior, hit-or-miss communication, and fluctuating moods we see in teenage girls. No wonder parents are overwhelmed!

As a clinical psychologist specializing in teens, I work with teen girls and their parents nearly every day. A lot of girls who come to therapy are stressed and lack the ability to cope in healthy ways. A lot of parents who come are worried about their daughters and feel frustrated, ineffective, and “locked-out” of the relationship they hoped to have – one where they could consult, guide, love, and enjoy their teen daughter in this final stage of childhood.

I also have two teen girls of my own and literally go from teen girls in my office to teen girls in my home in a five-minute commute. My girls are at opposite ends of the spectrum in many ways. One just turned 18 and is finishing high school while the other just turned 14 and is finishing middle school. One is easy-going but private, sharing information with me on strictly a “need-to-know” basis. I’ve had to modify my natural communication inclinations and evolve specific skills that work with her. My other daughter shares a lot and has an intense and passionate nature. Likewise, I’ve grown to “learn” her and manage myself in important ways in order to parent her the best I can. I notice other parents with more than one child also experience their kids as vastly different in basic temperament.

I do not write about parenting teen girls because I do everything right with my two teen daughters. In fact, the mistakes I make are even more shocking given my immersion in the topic. I write because, by nature and by training, I am an observer of emotional dynamics. With my clients, and even in challenging parenting moments with my daughters, I am constantly observing. I can be swept up in a stressful parenting moment yet, at the same time, track what’s going on developmentally (for teen and parent), strategically (communication skills and relationship management), and emotionally (what feelings are getting activated, how is each person managing them). Because the teen years are an important time for girls to build a sense of identity and a repertoire of healthy coping behaviors, both are always on my radar.

Then, I watch and listen carefully to see what works and what doesn’t. My clients and my kids teach me a lot! I take suggestions and collaborate to come up with new ideas that work better and get better results. Or I understand something in a new way and share that understanding to bridge the gap of alienation between parents and teen girls.

Taken from: psychologytoday.com/blog/teen-girls-crash-course/201205/parenting-teen-girls

BIRTHDAY BOX

August

Mariah Phillips, Aug. 2
Natalie Jones, Aug. 4
Amber Bennett, Aug. 6
Maria Diaz Hernandez, Aug. 7
Jalicia Washington, Aug. 7
Jonathan Gallardo, Aug. 8
Ethan Hackworth, Aug. 9
Kannon Prochnow, Aug. 9

Michael Lesco, Aug. 12
Jordan Shoyo, Aug. 14
Vanesia Friend, Aug. 20
Alondra Garcia, Aug. 20
Merrick Brown, Aug. 21
Madilyn Davenport, Aug. 21
Brett Johnson, Aug. 21
Sarah Nalley, Aug. 21

Aaron Villescas, Aug. 22
Aidan Wolfe, Aug. 23
Kortnee Andrews, Aug. 26
Carson McLaughlin, Aug. 28

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STEPPH’S FITSPOT

By Stephanie Marker

This month I want to emphasize the importance of a good breakfast. Breakfast is the best way you can start your day. It provides brain stimulation, jump starts your metabolism, and gives you lasting fuel. There are so many options to choose from. Your breakfast can be healthy and convenient. Try to make sure and have a good balance of protein and carbs to give you the energy your body deserves! The following recipe is one of my favorites to throw together really fast. You can always just make some eggs and a bowl of cereal or oatmeal. Just leave out the processed sugar in the packets or sweetened cereal. Stick to the basics.

BANANA PANCAKES

2 eggs
1 mashed banana
1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp cinnamon
**For more substance you may also add:
½ c oats
¼ c of applesauce

Blend these ingredients together and cook in a pan like pancakes. You can even throw it in a waffle maker, which I find to be even easier! Top with REAL maple syrup or honey.


MEET THE GEAR UP STAFF

From left to right: Anna Skimbova (GEAR UP Assistant), Stephanie Marker (Student Success Advisor), Rodney Oster (Student Success Advisor), Ray Pacheco (GEAR UP Regional Director), and Andrea Covert (Student Success Team Lead).

Casper College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination and harassment. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/gender or sex discrimination/sexual misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. If you report this to an employee, she or he must notify our college’s Title IX Coordinator, Linda Toohey, associate vice president for student services, 125 College Drive, Walter H. Nolte Gateway Center, Room 412, Casper, WY 82601; 307-268-2667; linda.toohey@caspercollege.edu about the basic facts of the incident. Employee concerns should be directed to the director of human resources. For more information about your options, please go to: caspercollege.edu/nondiscrimination.
**GEAR UP HAPPENINGS**

1. Students learn about the old west and running a museum during a tour of the Wyoming State Museum!
2. Students learn about bones during a tour of the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center.
3. Students toured the KGWN news room during the summer trip to Cheyenne, Wyo.!