

SOUTH TEXAS



# FAMILY & Health



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*Valuable information on health care, family issues & more.*

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Special thanks to Janine Marie Photography in Harlingen for providing the cover photo.

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# Friends fighting Cancer

One friend in a lifetime is much, two or more are many.

Everyone has at least one best friend whom they can count on for almost any and everything. A friend is someone who may know you better than yourself, and is with you in both good times and bad. A friend is a shoulder to cry on, a source of joy, which drives away the tears and puts the smile back on one's face.

Everyone has stages of our life when we need a friend. We may have family problems, or be dealing with a medical issue. A true friend is one who will support us, listen to our concerns, and give us hugs through hardships and shared joys.

Eight close friends in Harlingen have offered all of these things, without hesitation, for more than forty years, and share one thing in common: they are all cancer survivors, collectively having survived over 100 years battling the dreaded disease. Their friendship and bond have formed the Friends Fighting Cancer group.

Through fundraising efforts, Friends Fighting Cancer has supported the American Cancer Society research programs to help find cures and "create a world with less cancer and more birthdays." Friends Fighting Cancer members and their survivorship include Lois Day 5 months; June Toland 2 years; Anne McCullough 4 years; Amy Koppel 5 years; Joy Burns 21 years; Patty Gorges 22 years; Mary Sharp Mount 26 years; Cookie Tisdale 29 years; and George Toland III 26 years (photographer who took the photo of the Friends Fighting Cancer ladies on this page).

Friends Fighting Cancer are proud to join many other generous volunteers and donors in supporting the American Cancer Society's signature event, Relay For Life, which will commence at 6 p.m., Friday, April 29 through 6 a.m., Saturday, April 30, 2011 at J. Lewis Boggus Stadium in Harlingen. A twelve-hour fund raising walk, Relay For Life of North Cameron County is one of the biggest Relays in the Rio Grande Valley. With 80 teams strong, the event will help raise over \$170,000 to help people stay well by working to prevent cancer or detecting it early, when it's most treatable.

With everyone's help, people can save lives and create more birthdays every day. For additional information, contact the American Cancer Society McAllen office at 956-682-8329.



Eight Harlingen ladies share more than a 40-year friendship, they are all cancer survivors. Pictured (front row) are Amy Koppel, Lois Day, Joy Burns; (back row) Mary Sharp Mount, Patty Gorges, Cookie Tisdale, Anne McCullough and June Toland. The women and the photographer taking this picture, George Toland III, collectively have survived over 100 years battling the dreaded disease.

## RELAY FOR LIFE

Fri., April 29 6PM  
through  
Sat., April 30 6AM  
Boggus Stadium  
Harlingen

Join the fight! Walk for a cure and show support to the many cancer patients who fight cancer each and every day of their lives.

Come to Relay for Life...a fun-filled family event in Harlingen that celebrates survivorship and raises money for research and programs for the American Cancer Society.

# get fit have fun

By SHARON HALEY BYNUM

There is an old adage: The family that plays together, stays together. Whether or not it is true, it certainly is a wonderful way to enjoy family togetherness while reaping the rewards of physical fitness. Rio Grande Valley residents have an abundance of natural resources and parks, and a wonderful climate in which to enjoy it.

Here are some ideas to put your family on the path toward better physical health.

◆ Take a walk every evening. Studies show that walking even 30 minutes per day can lower blood pressure and cholesterol while increasing stamina and energy. It's also improves circulation and overall cardiovascular health. If it's been awhile since you had any exercise, walk 5 - 10 minutes until you feel comfortable increasing your time. You can set goals and keep track of how many miles your family has walked every week, month or year. This is something you can do in your neighborhood, or take advantage of hike/bike trails. Change up your routine by opting for bike riding or skating.

◆ Swim, swim, swim!

There are many public pools in the Valley, with moderate pricing. Swim laps, race each other, or take water aerobics classes. If you suffer from back or joint pain, working out in the water is an option because it's a non-weight bearing exercise, and will keep your body cool. It's also the perfect way for pregnant women to exercise.

◆ Tennis, anyone? Even if you don't know all the particulars of the game, you can still get out on the court and hit a few balls. The same holds true for basketball, softball, kickball, freestyle frisbee, etc. Get together with family members or friends and put together weekly games for a friendly competition.

◆ Too hot to get outside? Turn on some music and shake your groove thing. Teach your kids some dance moves and they can teach you break dancing. Wii and Xbox also have exercise and dance programs.

◆ Several gyms offer family rates and have a variety of machines for workouts as well as weight training and racquetball. Zumba and Yoga provide great exercise for the family.

◆ If you give your body the proper fuel, you will feel more energetic and likely to stick to an exercise regimen. If your family is used to a diet high in fast food or processed food, then start declaring a weekly "healthy" night. A great way to get kids enthused is to involve the whole family in meal preparation. Seasonal veggies and fruits with lean proteins are easy to prepare, inexpensive, and terrific for you. Make a healthy pizza using whole grains, fresh sauteed veggies, and low fat cheese. Take the family to any of the Valley's Farmer's Market for fresh, homegrown food.

The most important part to starting a new routine is to stick with it. Before you know it, a healthier family lifestyle will become your preferred choice.



# Childproofing



By **KRYSTAL KRENEK**

**Design in Mind Valley Morning Star Columnist**

Walk down the child supply aisles of nearly any store, and you will have a vast selection of childproofing products well within reach of your adult fingertips. Plastic devices, door knob covers, latches, locks, corner cushions, and door stoppers are found aplenty. But do you really want to deck out your home with those little white gadgets gleaming on every surface? There are ways to keep your kids safe in your home while still living in an adult-friendly environment.

A fundamental part of childproofing is simply de-cluttering. The fewer opportunities for trips, slips, and tumbles, the smaller the Band-aids® you have to keep on hand. By keeping your home organized and tidy, you reduce the risk of haphazard accidents. Keep your hallways and stairs clear. Have designated storage pieces and hooks installed up high at your entry points for shoes, umbrellas, and backpacks.

Keep surfaces clear of clutter in the kitchen, home office, and bedrooms by having small appliances, supplies, and accessories out of sight. Store books and magazines properly on upper shelves or decorative baskets. Keep toys from totally having the run of the place by collecting them in bins, baskets, or cubby systems and purging what your children have outgrown once or twice a year.

Consider ways to swap out child-hazard elements for something both kid friendly and visually appealing. Placing corner cushions on the four points of a coffee table ruins the look of a perfectly good table. Try something more modern that serves the purpose but also eliminates a hard, pointed surface altogether in your liv-

ing room seating area by using cluster ottomans instead. Whether leather or upholstered, these soft surfaces can fulfill the role of a table without posing a threat during a fall while they add a stylish touch to your furniture arrangement.

Make smart storage choices to do away with the need for all the latches and locks that just make your daily tasks a little harder to carry out. In the past, latching the double cabinets below the kitchen sink was a staple to keep harmful products out of the reach of children. Today's homes offer more storage solutions with upper cabinets, more than one "linen closet," and both shallow and deep heavy drawers below the sink and cooktop in lieu of cabinetry. Take advantage of your storage space and "move it on up" if you would rather your child not have access to a grouping of items. When it comes to electrical outlets, use the little clear covers.

Find the balance that will work for your family and your children's stages of development. Keep them safe and you happy by blending storage and safety solutions in a fashionable manner. And provide your youngest children with plenty of appropriate stimulation at their fingertips to help keep them from steering into unlatched waters.

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# caring for aging parents

By SHARON HALEY BYNUM

When Ann's parents became ill and needed help, she was in the position to move back to her hometown to care for them. At the time, her father was suffering from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease and her mother, who had been his caregiver, was facing major surgery. Her mother's health then began a steady decline throughout the next several years. Although extended family was able to visit and lend a hand, the bulk of caregiving fell to Ann. "I was happy to do it. I wanted to give back after all they had done for me throughout my life," explains Ann, but she does admit there were plenty of times when it became overwhelming.

Something that sometimes happens when an older person begins to feel helpless, is they sometimes lash out at the person who is helping them. Such was the case with Ann. "My father was very grateful for the help, and was almost childlike in his appreciation. While my mother was grateful, she was also at times resentful. She had always been such a strong, independent person and accepting assistance was difficult for her. When you're in that type of situation, it's really important to keep a sense of humor." Because of her help, though, her parents were able to remain in their own home for a much longer time than if she hadn't been there.

If you notice your loved ones are becoming forgetful or confused, the first step is getting them a full medical check-up. Since prescription drug interactions, vitamin B12 deficiency, and dehydration can be mistaken for the various forms of dementia, those causes need to be eliminated as quickly as possible and corrected. If, however, you have a parent who is beginning to suffer from dementia or has chronic or immediate health problems that render them unable to care for themselves, there are many options to consider.

The first would be in-home care. This scenario would most likely be a family member as the primary caregiver. Because it can become an overwhelming task, you may

want to look into the various social and community services that are available. Alonzo Rodriguez, Assistant Director of the Rio Grande Valley Area Agency on Aging explains that they provide temporary services (up to three months) until the client can find a more permanent solution. They can provide meals, a companion for a few hours a day, build wheelchair ramps, or modify bathrooms to make them more accessible. Permanent solutions can include everything from adult day care to in-home health services and homemaker services.

Assisted Living Facilities, Continuous Care Facilities, Independent Living Communities, and nursing homes are all options. You should check with your parent's insurance provider to find out what benefits are available to them. There are also many websites that can aid you in deciding on the best method of care. [www.elder-care.gov](http://www.elder-care.gov) is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging that will connect you with various services in your area.

Whatever method you choose, it's important to arm yourself with as much information as you can get. And keep a sense of humor.





# improving your child's education

By SHARON HALEY BYNUM

Every parent has dreams for their children's future. We all want to see our progenies flourish and become happy, successful, independent adults. So what can -- or should -- a parent do to help our children to become better students?

**INSPIRE.** We need to inspire our children to want to learn. Children are curious by nature, so we can use that to help them explore, ask questions, and find the answers. Younger children can benefit from simple activities like playing certain board and card games that require basic math skills, learning new words, trips to the library, and doing fun activities with the newspaper.

**COMMUNICATE.** If your child is having difficulty in a particular subject, find out why and what your child does or does not know about it. That means sitting down with them to determine if they know a noun from a verb, if they know how to add and subtract. Scheduling a meeting with your child's teacher would be a good way to start, but you need to know exactly what your child is learning or not learning. If you don't feel equipped to help your child master algebra, you are not alone. Tutoring programs are available to assist.

**ROUTINE.** Never underestimate the importance of good study habits and organizational abilities. However, this varies with age and grade level.

**RESPONSIBILITY.** That is, be clear about parental responsibility and student responsibility. We parents are supposed to be completely involved in our children's school life, right? Wrong, says retired teacher Frank Guilliams. "In fact, the phrase 'parental involvement' should be changed to 'parental assistance.' The parent should know what the assignments are, and if you're not sure, call the teacher. Sit down with your child for maybe 20 minutes, but don't do the work for them."

**QUESTION THOSE A's AND B's.** Your child brings home a report card full of A's and B's. You're excited

because here is proof positive that your child is a genius. Not so fast, advises Guilliams, who has 36 years of teaching experience. "Just because they have an A on their report card doesn't necessarily mean they know the subject. Challenge them, find out what they know."

The most important thing you, as a parent, can do is to prepare your child for college. You should financially plan for it, but you should also know your child's interests and talents and explore additional educational resources to meet their goals.

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# building literacy skills

The Literacy Center of Harlingen has been "changing lives for 25 years." The Center provides small group and computer-assisted instruction to adults in need of basic literacy skills, including E.S.L. (English as a Second Language), Basic Literacy (reading & writing), Basic Math, Citizenship preparation and G.E.D. (General Equivalency Diploma) test preparation. All of the tutors are volunteers who give of themselves to assist others.

The 2010 census figures show that approximately 28% of the adult population (18 years and older) in Cameron County have a high school diploma or G.E.D. Thousands of adults have been able to further their learning and improve their lives at the center. The center serves between 300-350 students per year.

The reasons adult learners choose to come to the center are varied; some want to improve their English skills in order to obtain employment or get a better job, others are interested in helping their children with homework, and still others are

planning to continue their education by attending a college or university.

The center's success stories include former students who have secured better jobs or received promotions, those who now own their own businesses in the community, and others who are attending college or have completed their degrees.

One of the center "star" students, Eliseo Moreno, obtained a Bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and graduated Magna Cum Laude. He later obtained his Master's degree from the UT-Texas Pan American, graduating with honors. Eliseo was recently honored at the center's Appreciation Luncheon. After speaking to the group about his achievements, he presented the Literacy Center with one of his original paintings, which is now proudly displayed at the center.

The Literacy Center has been changing lives in our community for 25 years, and plans to continue helping adults better themselves year after year.



Literacy "Star" student Eliseo Moreno obtained a Masters Degree from UT-PA, Edinburg.

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# WINNERS

1st Place - Nala



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1st Place  
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AGE DIVISION 2-3



1st Place  
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1st Place  
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In an era where an alarming percentage of children suffer from ADHD, ADD, diabetes, and obesity, it is vital that parents arm themselves with as much information as possible in order to understand treatment and, in many cases, prevention.

The typical symptoms of ADHD or ADD are if you child is in constant motion, squirms or fidgets, seems not to listen, doesn't complete tasks, often makes careless mistakes and loses things. Because most children exhibit some or all of these behaviors at varying times, there shouldn't be a cause for alarm unless your child has consistently behaved like



this for at least six months.

While there is no one test to diagnose ADHD or ADD, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests your child have a thorough medical exam where family medical history is fully disclosed.

Because ADHD and ADD symptoms can mimic other underlying health issues; it is important to

rule those out first. They include sudden life changes such as death or divorce, thyroid problems, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, and lead toxicity. There have also been recent studies suggesting certain food dyes can cause symptoms similar to ADHD.

Once a child has been diagnosed, his or her physician will most likely prescribe one of the many drugs that seem to treat the disorder. However, some children respond well to behavior modification therapy and dietary changes.

There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 occurs when the body's own immune system destroys insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. This type of diabetes usually occurs in people under the age of 20, and affects about 1 out of every 250 Americans. It requires lifelong treatment. Some of the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes are constant thirst, frequent urination, abdominal pain, dry mouth, nausea, and unexplained weight loss.

People with Type II diabetes produce insulin; however, either their pancreas does not produce enough, or their bodies cannot adequately use the insulin. Some of the risk factors for developing Type II are being overweight, family history of diabetes, female gender, and certain ethnic groups such as African American, Asian, American Indian, or Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, another risk factor is excessive abdominal weight.

In addition to the symptoms of Type I diabetes, Type II sufferer's symptoms may also include heavy breathing, slow healing of wounds or sores, and numbness or tin-

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See "Health" page 13



# Bullying and your child

By SHARON HALEY BYNUM

Hardly a week goes by that we don't read or hear a story about a child being bullied at school, and some of those stories have tragic endings. Children as young as nine have committed suicide because they were mercilessly teased and bullied at school. Last month at the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, President Obama admitted he was bullied as a child and went on to say that bullying in this country affects about 13 million children a year.

Children who bully often witness verbal or physical violence at home. They tend to be physically strong, have trouble following rules, and show little concern for

the feelings of others. They are also at risk for dropping out of school and for committing criminal acts later in life.

Children who are bullied tend to be sensitive, socially withdrawn, passive, and are more likely to get depressed. Boys are more likely to be bullied than girls. Some signs that your child is being bullied are unexplained bruises, not sleeping well, frequent crying, changes in appetite, and making up excuses not to go to school. Their grades may also begin to slip and they may even talk about suicide.

Since bullying usually starts in elementary school, parents should teach their children the "talk, walk, squawk" rule. Simply looking the bully in the eye and saying in a calm, strong voice, "Leave me alone" can be effective. They should not run away from the bully, but walk away. Most schools have a zero-tolerance bully policy. They should find a teacher or other adult and let them know what's going on.

Another form of abuse is social or emotional abuse. This is when a child is purposely excluded from a group or a game, and can be psychologically harmful. First, let your child know it is not their fault, and then practice

*See "Bullying" page 13*



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# internet safety

By SHARON HALEY BYNUM

Somebody, somewhere, would love to have your children's social security numbers, and may be at this very moment working to retrieve them. How do these thieves obtain something so private? Every time you enroll your child in school, a sports team, take them to the doctor or hospital, or file a tax return, you are required to relinquish your child's social security number. Since your 6-year-old hasn't secured a car loan, chances are her credit record is pristine, and therefore a potential gold mine to the criminal. When she does grow up and applies for a college loan, car loan, or home loan she may find that the only thing she actually does own is a checkered financial history.

Identity theft isn't the only concern you should have. Parents must also be aware of inappropriate or even pornographic sites, as well as online predators. Although a federal law (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) prohibits anyone from obtaining a child's personal information without parental consent, their best source of protection is you. Talk to your children about potential online dangers. You can also get online tools to control your children's access to certain sites. Most Internet service providers have parental control options to keep certain materials from being accessed from your computer. Other steps we can take to protect our children are:

**IS IT NECESSARY?** While hospitals and schools do their diligence in protecting social security numbers, you need to make sure that providing your child's social security number is an absolute necessity. For exam-

ple, does the baseball team really need your son's social security number?

Can he be identified some other way?

**SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES.** Even if a social networking site doesn't require a social security number, the information your child provides can help a thief or predator obtain their private information. If you decide to let your child join one of these sites, do not let them sign up alone. Sit beside them while they're opening their accounts. Insist on password information. Check their postings on a regular basis. Make sure they know to never use their real name, their real town, or anything associated with you or them. Also, spend time with them while they are online to make sure they understand appropriate behavior.

**INTERNET PROTECTION.** Make sure your computer is updated with the latest security software. Use firewalls and spyware protection. Make sure your passwords are complicated.

**DO NOT CHECK YOUR CHILD'S CREDIT FILE.** Even if you are suspicious that your child's records have been compromised, do NOT check them. If you do, you may unwittingly open the gravy train that your child's unblemished credit report could provide.

**DO CALL SOCIAL SECURITY.** Find out if any income has been reported against your child's social security number to help determine if someone is using that social security number.

**NO CHAT ROOMS.** Make sure your child knows to never enter a private chat room while online. Posting messages in a chat room will reveal the user's email address.



## Bullying...continued from page 11

ways they can respond to hurtful comments without escalating the situation.

Also, find other opportunities where your child could form friendships such as church groups or clubs.

If your child is bullied online, experts agree your child should not respond to it. Make sure your child knows this is unacceptable and they should tell you about it.

You can block messages from the sender, and can report inappropriate comments to the site manager.

Any form of bullying should be reported because the only way to end the abuse is to expose it.

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gling in the hands and feet.

Obesity affects 1 out of every 5 children in the U.S., and that number is increasing every year. Overweight children usually become overweight adults and are prone to develop heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes and suffer low self-esteem. Because obesity and a large number of Type II diabetes cases are preventable, here are some tips to keep your children from developing these issues.

1. Don't single out or criticize if your child is overweight. Instead, lead by example by increasing your entire family's level of physical activities.
2. Do have family discussions of healthy choices so that everyone is included and a part of the solution.
3. Don't use the "D" word. The word "diet" suggests deprivation and punishment. Instead, you want to help your family to make better food choices that develop into a lifelong habit. Start by cutting down on fried foods, trans fats, and excessive sugar. The more you introduce fresh fruits and vegetables to your menus, the more you will find that those are the foods you crave.
4. Do make sure the entire family sits down together for dinner as often as possible. Sometimes work and school commitments make it difficult to do every night, but you should be together for meals more often than not.

Obesity research has shown that families who sit down together for meals often eat more vegetables and fruits. They also tend to eat less fried food or fast food. These same studies show that in families who eat meals together, teens have improved in school work and are less likely to indulge in risky behavior.

# nutrients for your body

By Dr. SUSAN DUVE, DC, ND, FIAMA, Port Isabel

According to The Wellness Institute of Somatic Studies foods eaten today are stripped of nutrients through refining, processing, and growing on nutrient depleted soils. The institute states that foods eaten are laden with fats, sugars, salts, and devoid of other essential nutrients and that due to the time it takes fresh foods to get from the farm to your table, 57% or more of the nutritional value can be lost. It further states that some foods may be harmful from the use of pesticides, fungicides, sulfites, and preservatives.

When it comes to the natural enzymes in food - freezing removes 5%, steaming removes 15-40%, cooking removes 40-100%, microwave ovens destroy 95% of enzymes. Almost all processes in a biological cell need enzymes. How can we expect to maintain our health when the building blocks for wellness are not in our foods? The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that between 1910 and 1980 poultry consumption increased

See "Nutrients" page 13

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# heart healthy

Heart disease is the nation's No. 1 killer, affecting one in three Americans. The American Heart Association has a simple solution to keep your heart healthy. It's called Life's Simple 7 - proven ways to improve your health and significantly lowering your risk of heart disease and stroke. With My Life Check, free at [mylifecheck.heart.org](http://mylifecheck.heart.org), you can receive an assessment and customized life plan.

"A lot of people don't realize they're at risk for heart disease and stroke," said Ralph L. Sacco, M.D., president of the American Heart Association. "The American Heart Association's My Life Check can help identify your risk level and offers simple steps to get started on the path to ideal cardiovascular health."

Take a look at the seven behaviors and factors you can quickly improve:

1. **Get Active.** Start small by incorporating physical activity into your daily routine more and more: Take the stairs, park at the farthest end of the lot, or use your lunch break to take a quick walk. When you're ready, aim for 2½ hours of moderate exercise each week. You'll get the same heart-pumping benefits with 75 minutes of vigorous exercise.

Exercising regularly can lower blood pressure, keep body weight under control, and increase your HDL - known as "good" cholesterol. Exercise also better regulates blood sugar by improving how the body uses insulin.

2. **Control Cholesterol.** We all have cholesterol, that waxy substance found in the bloodstream and in the cells of our body. Cholesterol plays an important role in keeping us healthy. There are two types of cholesterol: the "good" kind (HDL) and the "bad" kind (LDL). High levels of bad cholesterol can clog your arteries, increasing your risk of heart

disease and stroke. HDL cleans out that bad cholesterol from the arteries.

3. **Eat Better.** Eating the right foods can help you control your weight, blood pressure and cholesterol. Here are some good guidelines: at least 4½ cups of fruits and vegetables a day, fish at least twice a week, fiber-rich whole grains every day, less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day and no more than 450 calories a week of sugar-sweetened beverages.

4. **Manage Blood Pressure.** One in three Americans has high blood pressure - yet, of those, one out of every five doesn't even know they have it. That's because high blood pressure has no symptoms, which makes it often called "the silent killer." To keep your blood pressure in a healthy range eat a heart-healthy diet, exercise regularly, do not smoke, maintain a healthy weight, limit your salt intake, limit the amount of alcohol you drink and take medication prescribed by your doctor.

5. **Lose Weight.** Too much fat, especially around the belly, increases your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. So drop and keep the extra pounds off.

6. **Control Blood Sugar.** Diabetes can quadruple your risk of heart disease or stroke, so keeping blood sugar levels under control is crucial to preventing medical problems involving the heart and kidneys.

7. **Stop Smoking.** With one in five deaths caused by smoking, going smoke-free can help prevent heart disease, stroke, cancer and chronic lung disease.

The American Heart Association is committed to preventing heart disease one heart at a time. Learn more at [heart.org](http://heart.org), or call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721).

## Health...continued from page 10

350%, fresh apple consumption decreased 70%, and fresh fruit decreased 33%. Between 1930 and 1980 processed citrus fruit consumption increased 2500%, fresh citrus fruit consumption decreased 50%. Between 1940 and 1980 egg consumption decreased 25%, food coloring consumption increased 90%. Between 1960 and 1980 soft drink consumption increased 300%.

How does this food consumption trend translate to the quality of life experienced by Americans? The average American adult gains 7 lbs. in December during the holidays. More than half of Americans are overweight or

obese.

The body's natural state of being is one of health and wellness. We are only as healthy as our cells. Our bodies are self-rejuvenating when given the right food. Raw organic foods contain all the enzymes, minerals, vitamins, glucose, and fats needed to maintain a healthy body.

Whole food concentrate supplements are no longer a luxury but a means to help maintain your health and vitality. For more information on the food supply visit [www.globalfoodfreedom.org](http://www.globalfoodfreedom.org).

# Blue Sunday

Child Abuse Prevention

Blue Sunday Day of Prayer - Sunday, May 1



By JANET MAGEE

Blue Sunday Child Abuse Prevention Initiative is a local-grown organization which serves abused children. We desire to show our communities how to become fully dedicated to the needs of abused children through volunteer programs and services. Our goals are three fold: RELIEF - EDUCATION - MOTIVATION

## Relief Efforts

**Sibling Revelry (Not Rivalry!):** Many times foster children are housed in separate foster homes. They need opportunities to interact in the happiest of settings. We help with Christmas Parties and trips to the Zoo all geared towards helping children stay connected.

**Family Court:** Abused and neglected children must attend court with their foster families. We offer kid friendly distractions by way of books and quiet toys.

**Kids in Crisis:** Many children come into the "system" without personal belongings. We help provide necessary items during this time of transition through clothing, gift cards (for essentials) and gently used car seats.

**Christmas Gift Cards For Foster Teens:** Christmas is hard for foster children and especially for Teens who are too old for the typical toy drives.

## Education

**Resource materials:** The Little Blue Book of Big Ideas - Creating Your Own Prevention Projects (\$5 on Amazon.com). All the funds from the sale of this publication are used for prevention projects in Cameron County.

**Have a Heart Speaker Presentations:** Blue Sunday provides speakers and materials for workshops hosted by school districts, day care centers, and churches to sharpen prevention and intervention skills.

## Motivation

**Blue Sunday Day of Prayer Campaign:** The prayer campaign began 10 years ago here in the Rio Grande Valley with 20 churches taking time in their morning services to pray for the victims of child abuse and for those who rescue them. It has grown into an international effort with over 2 million

participants. New relief/prevention projects have begun directly from this effort. Many churches will hand out small blue ribbons on Blue Sunday. Ribbons are wonderful but our focus will always be prayer. Will your church pray? Register online at [www.bluesunday.org](http://www.bluesunday.org)

**Put Foster Kids First:** This program works with local service clubs and organizations to show them how easy it is to participate in prevention/relief efforts. Blue Santa Awards

**Child abuse prevention is everyone's job.** Won't you join this noble fight? Blue Sunday is an all-volunteer effort.

There are no salaried workers. To learn how to volunteer call 956-299-0564. Donations may be mailed to Blue Sunday, PO Box 730 Port Isabel, Texas 78578.

Blue Sunday is a 501 C3 not for profit organization and your gifts are tax-deductible. For more information go to [www.bluesunday.org](http://www.bluesunday.org).

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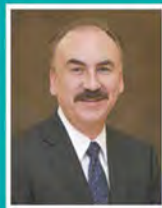
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