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Smart Discipline for Parents

By Andrea A. Firth

After a hectic summer where house rules went a bit lax and the kids a bit wild, many parents quietly hope that the regimen of school will get the kids back on track quietly and unquestioningly following rules, and life at home will return to a peaceful existence for the entire family. Unfortunately, this scenario may be more dream than reality for most. To address the parenting challenges of disciplining kids from ages 4 to 18, the upcoming seminar-Smart Discipline for Parents-will provide parents with ways to help their children take responsibility and control for their behaviors and bring a sense of harmony and cooperation back to the home. The presentation will be led by Dr. Dale Hancock, a family counselor specializing in marriage and family therapy as well as child and adolescent therapy. Hancock began conducting the Smart Discipline seminars ten years ago after having had success with employing the disciplining techniques with his own son who was five at the time. "We still use Smart Discipline in our home, and my son is 15 now," states Hancock. "No matter what age from three to four years on, it is a beneficial program," he adds. Based on the consistent application of rules and privileges, the Smart Discipline program employs visual tools to help both children and parents stay on track. "Stop signs, yields signs, and a variety of traffic signs provide adults with visual reminders of the rules as they drive," explains Hancock. "Kids need the same type of visual reminders." The program also focuses on verbal and written techniques for building a child's self esteem and providing effective criticism. "Consistency is the biggest challenge to making it work," notes Hancock. "Although the Smart Discipline approach is simple and visual, it still requires parents to consistently employ it." Hancock feels that although parents may see improvement right away when starting to use the Smart Discipline approach, it takes about four to six weeks for a family to establish a good disciplining habit. So if you are frustrated by the quarreling, whining, and eye rolling, and feel up to the task of making a change, the two-hour Smart Discipline seminar might be the solution to some family strife. Smart Discipline for Parents will be presented on Wednesday, September 24th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Parish Hall at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda (66 St. Stephen's Drive)). Admission is \$15 per person. To reserve a seat, call St. Stephen's at (925) 254-3770, ext. 10, or email office@ststephensorinda.org. For more information about the program, visit www.smartdiscipline.com.

Reach the reporter at: andrea@lamorindaweekly.com

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