

the Sprout

News from Forty Carrots Family Center

SPRING 2010

Beyond Parenting Basics

Forty Carrots Parenting Program Helps Keep A Marriage On Track

The last couple of years have been rough on families. In 2009, more than 1.4 million people in America filed bankruptcy – a 32 percent increase from the year before. As many as one in 10 people lost their jobs, and many of them their homes.

Divorce rates reached an all time high in some states – with increases as high as 50 percent – while others reported slight declines. Some debt-ridden couples, they noted, simply could not afford to divorce.

Hospitals and mental health providers across the nation reported disturbing 20-50 percent spikes in the number of people seeking help for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, domestic violence and child abuse.

In the midst of that turmoil, Terry Turner and Justin Nichols met in Sarasota and fell in love.

“I don’t know that it was love at first sight ... but when we were together, it just felt right,” said Justin.

Both were 27 and new co-workers on a local sales team. She was a single mom raising two kids on her own – her son Aiden, 11, and daughter Mattie, 4. Justin was just getting his life back on track after a few misspent college years. They clicked on so many levels – first as teammates, then as friends and gradually much more.

Within six months, Justin knew Terry was the one. He offered her his grandmother’s engagement ring and asked her to marry him. Neither doubted their love would conquer any challenges to come.

Bumps in the Road

Love and marriage ... according to Sinatra, they’re supposed to go together like a horse and carriage.

But what happens when you have two horses leading the carriage and one begins pulling to the right, while the other is turning left? The carriage can get a little wobbly.

And what if there are children riding inside, and being children, they’re rocking it even more?

The journey could become slightly jarring. The carriage might even be pulled off track.

That’s the path Justin and Terry found themselves heading down shortly after beginning their new life together. Although they eased into it gradually, moving in together was a major life change for everyone.

Justin had to find his place and assume a new and unfamiliar parental role in a family that had functioned most of its years without a father figure. Terry had to let go of some of her protective motherly instincts and allow a new authority figure into the lives of her children. And the children, who had befriended Justin easily, had to adjust to new rules and accept his changing role and influence in their family.

The unavoidable challenges of parenthood soon set in and, as most couples discover at one time or another, the road to “happily ever after” got a little bumpy. Rarely a day went by that Justin or Terry were not engaged in or trying to avoid power struggles with the children – getting Mattie dressed in the morning, homework battles with Aiden, managing Mattie’s frustrations and outbursts, dealing with Aiden’s ambivalence over a new male influence in the home.



Although both were deeply committed to doing what was best for the children, they discovered differences in their discipline styles disrupting the harmony in their new home. He felt she was too soft on the kids. She felt he was too hard.

Raised by parents who rarely ever raised their voices, Terry likes to talk through issues with her children, encouraging cooperation through mutual discussion and understanding. Justin favors a more authoritarian form of parenting. He’s much more gruff, quicker to raise his voice with the kids and expects immediate compliance.

“For me, it’s about respecting your parents,” he said. “I didn’t get told 10 times to do something. I was told once, sternly.”

Their parenting beliefs – rooted in childhood – run deep, and it was harder than they expected to find a healthy balance.

Marriage & Parenting—continued on page 3

Sound Advice for all Parenting Couples

Having a baby sets off seismic changes in a marriage. In the year after the first baby arrives, studies show that 7 out of 10 couples experience a significant drop in marital satisfaction. Here, Forty Carrots parenting educators offer a few tips to help strengthen your marriage and family:

- 1. Focus on parenting as a team.** Carve out time to discuss parenting issues in a comfortable manner. Try to understand and support each other’s viewpoints.
- 2. Recognize that there is more than one right way to parent.** Mothers, particularly, should step back if you find yourself directing – or chastising – your partner on the “right” way to do things. Children will benefit from more than one style.
- 3. When you feel gridlocked, don’t feel like you have to solve the problem immediately.** Accept the differences between you and your partner and establish an initial compromise that will help you continue to discuss the problem amicably.
- 4. Take a parenting class.** Parenting styles often are rooted in childhood memories. Couples may need to explore the underlying feelings to address difficult situations.

Welcome to Our World ...

Join other families navigating the newborn phase in this free supportive, fun & informative Forty Carrots class: **Every Monday, 10:45-11:45 a.m.**

Janet Kane: A Legacy of Giving

To many in Sarasota, Janet Kane was a celebrated philanthropist. Her financial support and charming powers of persuasion helped countless non-profit organizations flourish.

But to her family – and to many at Forty Carrots Family Center – she will always be simply mom.

“No other non-profit has the honor and privilege to say they owe it all to Mom,” said Betsy Kane-Hartnett, Janet’s daughter and co-founder and executive director of the not-for-profit parenting center and preschool.

It was Janet’s love of children and belief in her own daughter that made the Forty Carrots dream a reality. She persuaded Betsy’s father Stanley

Kane to purchase the building at 1500 South Tuttle, and through the Janet and Stanley Kane Foundation, provide ongoing financial support to refurbish and help turn it into the top-quality family center it is today.

For 16 years she attended Forty Carrots fund raisers, bid on auction items and brought her friends along. And when the Forty Carrots’ Board of Trustees decided to purchase the property, she ensured a generously lowered selling price.

Today, her impression on families lives on in Forty Carrots’ building, named the Kane Center. And supporters like Lee Peterson, Janet’s longtime friend, remain committed to continuing her legacy. The Petersons

recently made a donation to Forty Carrots in memory of Janet Kane. As did others ... friends and supporters contributed more than \$24,000 following Janet Kane’s service last November.

“Janet was so giving and generous ... she would support almost anything if it was connected to a good cause,” Peterson said.

“But it was always the children who were most important to her, and she loved what Forty Carrots was

Legacy of Giving—continued on page 2



Director's Letter

As an early childhood educator, I have embraced the benefits of play my entire 35-year career (35 joy-filled years since I have spent much of it playing!) But it is the recent research that underscores the risks of not playing, that really has me energized to encourage all of you to play more and play smarter.

Did you know that research has found a correlation between lack of play in the early years and criminal behavior later on? Less extreme yet still disconcerting is the fact that with the decrease (or elimination) of good old-fashioned rough and tumble play, children have lost the opportunity to learn give and take...the basis of social interactions and future healthy relationships.

In our mission to strengthen families, Forty Carrots is bringing Stuart Brown, M.D., author of *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* to Sarasota for our 8th Annual Free Community Speaker Event. Mark your calendars for Oct. 11 and get ready for a playful talk steeped in Play Science.

Meanwhile, I invite you to play with us. Club Forty is a one-night-only adult playground, while Forty Carrots' signature classes – Partners in Play and Talk and Play – are available for you and your children to enjoy together.



Dr. Brown writes that joy is our birthright. Here's to a joy-filled 2010!

Warm regards,

Betsy Kane-Hartnett
Executive Director

Janet's Legacy — continued from pg 1

doing for them," Peterson recalled. "I remember her saying, 'They are our future ... and we have to do whatever we can to better their lives, better their education and help them be successful in life.' "

Capital Campaign Update

Contributions to Forty Carrots' Capital Campaign are helping to secure a permanent home for its future and ensure the continuation of its specialized community programs

that promote positive parent-child relationships, healthy long-term child outcomes and reduced incidence of child abuse and neglect in our community.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

Whether you can contribute cash, stock or some other form of planned giving, there are a variety of ways you can help. For information about Forty Carrots' Bell Tower project, Wall of Tiles or other ways you can support the campaign, **call (941) 365-7716 or visit fortycarrots.org.**

Heroes on Wheels

Forty Carrots is proud to recognize its newest Heroes on Wheels – Juno Baby and Oasis Outsourcing. As leaders in the community, they have joined the businesses below who share our vision to provide children with experiences and environments that are emotionally and physically safe and programs designed to help them grow into capable, responsible, respectable adults. Heroes are recognized on our Forty Carrots' vans which travel throughout Sarasota County.

Our other Heroes include: Advanced Masonry Systems • BYN Mellon • First Watch • Lee Wetherington Foundation • Publix Super Markets Charities • Tervis Tumblers

For information on how your family or business can be a hero too, visit fortycarrots.org or call (941) 365-7716.



Our Mission

Forty Carrots Family Center is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to strengthening families through educational programs for parents, their children, and professionals in the field.

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10,000 New Reasons To Give

Although the outlook is improving, families continue to struggle in the aftermath of a difficult economic year. To help keep non-profits sound when communities need them most, the Gulf Coast Community Foundation has established a special 10,000 Ways of Giving program. The foundation will immediately send a \$10,000 grant from their own account to Forty Carrots (or a local charity of your choice) for each \$100,000 you contribute to a new or established Donor Advised Fund at the Foundation.

Donor Benefits include:

- Immediate tax deduction for the \$100,000 gift.
- \$10,000 operating grant to your favorite local charity – given in your name.
- Your fund at the Foundation to carry out your charitable intentions.
- Professional staff assistance with your philanthropy.

For More Information

Call the Gulf Coast Community Foundation at (941) 486-4567.



Wine, Women & Shoes

A 2009 Heel-Clicking Success!

More than 500 women, and 25 brave men, helped raise \$150,000 at Forty Carrots' premiere fund raiser Wine, Women & Shoes 2009. Proceeds benefit Forty Carrots parenting classes, bringing skills, information and support to families throughout Sarasota County in libraries, high school programs serving teen parents and several outreach partners. Special thanks to our "Solemen" and Title Sponsors for making the event one of the most exciting yet: Center For Sight, World Class Dentistry/Dr. Jill Morris & Dr. Burr Bakke, The Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Victoria Leopold Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.



Cheers to our 2009 event Tri-Chairs Jenny Pendery, Pam Krouse and Rochelle Reeves for a wonderful fund raiser.

Mark Oct. 21-23, 2010 on your calendars now ... that's when Wine, Women & Shoes will uncork the fun again!

Thanks to Forty Carrots' 2009 free community speaker event sponsors! With their support, bestselling author Joline Godfrey showed hundreds of business leaders, professionals and parents how to raise financially fit kids – in 2 community presentations.



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A heartfelt thanks to Speaker Event Chair Lesley France for leading a group of amazing women who helped educate families & professionals on how to raise financially fit kids!



Play in the Preschool Setting

The topic of play as a means for learning is thankfully back in the national spotlight – evidenced by NAEYC's 18th National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development's focus on research surrounding play.

Not only has research proven the benefits of children having time for free play, it also has verified what becomes of children who are not exposed to free play in the early years.

According to one study, children enrolled in play-oriented preschools were more socially adjusted later in life than children who attended play-free preschools where they were constantly instructed by teachers. By age 23, more than one-third of children who had attended instruction-oriented preschools had been arrested for a felony, compared with less than one-tenth of children in play-oriented preschools (*Wenner, Scientific American Mind, 2009*).

The philosophy of The Preschool at Forty Carrots Family Center is built around creating a developmentally appropriate environment that allows

children to learn through self-directed play. Teachers set up an environment that supports academic growth through play. The classrooms are divided into centers filled with props that enhance the monthly curriculum themes.

Teachers join the children playing in centers, building on what the children already know and challenging them to attempt new things. Examples of academics taking place in classroom centers include:

Block Center: Mathematics, geometry, and spatial concepts

Dramatic Play Center: Language development, reasoning skills, social interaction

Art Center: Fine and large motor skills, creativity

Science Center: Problem solving, concepts of scientific observation (evaporation, metamorphosis, etc.)

Sarah Schebel, B.A., Assistant Preschool Director. She has educated children, parents and professionals at Forty Carrots for more than 10 years.



Preschool registration for Fall 2010 has begun.

To learn more about our NAEYC-accredited preschool, call (941) 365-7716 to schedule a tour or visit fortycarrots.org.

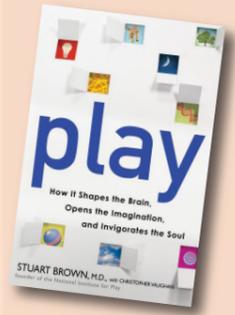


Announcing Forty Carrots' 8th Annual Free Community Speaker Event

Monday, Oct. 11, 2010
Hyatt Regency Sarasota

Nationally recognized researcher & author of **Play:**

How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul, Stuart Brown, MD, will amaze parents and professionals with ground-breaking discoveries about the importance of play to human development.



New Manatee Elementary Program Focuses On Parent-Child-Teacher Relationships

A shared passion and desire to strengthen families brought two influential forces together in a mission to educate and empower local parents.

Forty Carrots Family Center and Manatee Elementary School have developed a series of evening workshops – Empowering Parents – to encourage stronger parental involvement in the school lives of their children. The classes – taught by veteran Forty Carrots parenting educator Alison Butler – are designed to teach parents about character education, cooperative learning and discipline strategies.

The school's guidance counselor Jill Houglund hopes the collaborative program will strengthen the school/parent relationship, and in turn,

help students perform better at school.

"Manatee Elementary is proud of the business partnerships that have formed over the years," Houglund said. "By building the bridge between school and community, we can achieve more."

Forty Carrots hopes the Manatee initiative will encourage other organizations to take a similar proactive approach. Forty Carrots customizes its outreach programs to meet a variety of needs.

"This is a great opportunity to support teachers and provide parents with a tool box of tried and true strategies just right for them and their children," said Christina Rodrigues, Forty Carrots Parenting Program Director.

Marriage & Parenting — continued from page 1

"We knew that some disagreement was normal," Terry said. "But the battles were becoming too frequent and it was beginning to exhaust us all. I knew if we didn't get on the same page soon, we weren't going to make it."

Learning to Pull Together

Terry searched for help online ... and found Forty Carrots Family Center.

Most families who take Forty Carrots' parenting classes are just like Terry and Justin – mothers and fathers, stepparents and grandparents, aunts, uncles and significant others learning to be the best parents they can be.

In her haste to sign up for the next series available, Terry and Justin inadvertently enrolled in a special session of Parenting Basics for court-ordered parents. Parenting Basics is a series of five classes dedicated to helping parents who have been caught up in the legal system and are struggling to retain or regain custody of their children. Some have had their children removed from the home.

It was a moving experience for Justin and Terry. They quickly realized how much simpler their situation was than others in the room – families whose carriages were not just rocking ... doors were flapping open, wheels were falling off and hitches were splintering apart.

"I could tell how committed they were that very first night," said Christina Rodrigues, director of Forty Carrots Parenting Program and facilitator of its court-ordered Parenting Basics series. "When it comes to parenting, you find a common thread that crosses all families, regardless of where they've found themselves in life."

Terry and Justin completed the five weekly sessions with eye-opening insights. While learning about children's normal developmental stages and behaviors, they also learned more about themselves. They came to understand how childhood memories had positive and negative impact in their lives, and how their respective upbringings influenced their perceptions and shaped their parenting beliefs.

And with that understanding came respect and a clearer path to compromise.

"What really clicked for them was understanding the differences and similarities in temperament, not only in their children but in themselves," said Rodrigues, a veteran parenting educator who has been with Forty Carrots for more than 12 years.



"Each family is unique and has many factors influencing their parenting styles," she said. "The goal for parents is to learn how to approach challenges with understanding, how to cope and adapt to new situations, and more importantly, to practice an important lifelong skill – communication."

One Year Later

A year has passed since that life-altering lesson. And though no one should expect to save a marriage by taking a parenting class, Terry and Justin said it certainly smoothed out the bumps in the road.

Today, the couple still pulls out their class materials and compares notes when the inevitable parenting issues arise.

As for the differences in discipline style, Terry has acknowledged that she

has "jelly fish" tendencies – and could take lessons from Justin on how to take a firmer approach to parenting. And he learned he could be a "brick wall" at times and could benefit by taking a more authoritative, rather than autocratic approach with the kids.

"For me, it was kind of like going to traffic school," Justin said with a laugh. "I wouldn't say it was fun, but I learned a lot. We have two beautiful kids and we want to do what's best for them, not just for today, but for their future."

Perhaps most importantly, they learned strategies that are helping to prevent and diffuse power struggles early, before they escalate into more serious battles.

And that has given them time to focus on the road ahead and the simple joys of parenthood – like helping Mattie find just the right flower girl dress, and fitting Aiden for his groomsman tux.

"The class helped us relate to each better and because of that we've become even closer," Terry said. "We are a stronger couple and stronger family because of what we learned at Forty Carrots."

The couple is planning a June wedding ... no word yet on whether a horse and carriage will be involved.



Forty Carrots Family Center

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 For the 3-5 year-old ready for a little independence

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July 5-22: Imagination Station
 (art, music, dance & dramatic play)

July 26-Aug. 12: Creepy Crawling Critters
 (nature's laboratory)

Visit fortycarrots.org for our complete schedule.

Newsletter / Spring 2010 / Published Irregularly / Issue 016
 Forty Carrots of Sarasota, Inc. / 1500 S. Tuttle Ave., Sarasota, FL 34239

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**Support Forty Carrots
 2010 Annual Fund**

As we turn the chapter on 2009 and look forward to a brighter 2010, the need for parenting education and support is greater than ever. Families at all socio-economic levels are struggling to stabilize and strengthen their relationships, homes and jobs while continuing to cope with the after-effects of a difficult economic year. Your contribution to Forty Carrots Annual Fund today will help provide children a brighter future tomorrow - **100% of your donations help children, teachers and families in our own community!** Visit fortycarrots.org or call **365-7716** to donate today!

Please join us for a special reception and tree planting

Honoring Diane Weiss

Wednesday, April 7 • 5:30 pm
 Forty Carrots Family Center
 1500 S. Tuttle Avenue

Join us for a toast & tribute to Forty Carrots Co-Founder Diane Weiss. All trustees (past & present), staff, parents, supporters and colleagues are invited.

RSVP to info@fortycarrots.com

