



The Foundation News

A Quarterly Newsletter: Winter 2008

Executive Director's Address - Jim Rossi



Before updating everyone on our plans for 2008, I'd like to look back at 2007 and recount our accomplishments. We had a great deal of success and were able to rise as an organization to meet some new challenges.

On December 1st last year, we had two important events. We opened our first auction to raise funds through [CMarket](#). The fundraiser was successful and we learned a great deal about how to run an online auction – skills we hope will help us to raise more funds this year. And many participants came away with great buys. Our auction included a wide variety of items from hour-long massages to Sharks hockey tickets. Our big winner purchased a family membership at the [Courtside Club](#) in Los Gatos, valued at \$1400, for only \$420! Thanks to everyone who bid during our auction week and to our sponsors, Tunik Law Firm and [Hopkins | Harada, LLP, Certified Public Accountants](#). Your support has helped us to thrive.

Our second important event was our first Gaming & Internet Addiction seminar for parents and professionals. [Dr. Suzanne E. Rapley](#) and [Jonathan Shafer](#) did a wonderful job presenting warning signs and treatment options for compulsive gaming and internet overuse. Special thanks goes to [Togo's](#) (4360 Steven's Creek Blvd, San Jose) who donated lunch for 50 people for the event – Yum! We received great coverage by NBC11 News – [watch the story here](#). Lisa Nichols also promoted this seminar in an interview which aired on four radio stations – you can listen to it [here](#). We hope to hold this event annually and to bring more experts in to share information and strategies to help families and professionals deal with this growing problem.

These two special events helped us end the year on an up-note and left us excited about what 2008 may bring. As many of you know, one of our primary services is parenting education classes, which includes our core course, [Conscious Parenting](#). Our plan is to expand our classes over to the Almaden Community Center, a vibrant and beautiful venue. More importantly, we are researching additional ways to bring our services to the community.

Speaking of the Conscious Parenting class, we will be launching the Spring session on February 25th, taught by Mimi Latno

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Internet Addition - Not All Fun & Games

Suzanne E. Rapley, Ph.D

A 2007 Harris Interactive Poll reported that 8.5% of "youth gamers" in the United States could be "classified as pathological or clinically 'addicted' to playing video games." As more games are being developed and released with each new season, the increase in youthful gamers has reached unprecedented numbers with more and more time being spent captivated by the 'thrill of the game'.



As world expanding as the Internet is, for young people it replaces face-to-face interactions without replacing the benefits. Peers are extremely important to the young adult's growth and development. The Web has created a virtual world where person-to-person contact is at a minimum, increasing social isolation and fostering pseudo-intimacy. Thus, the challenge for parents is to recognize when their child might be at risk for checking out of the 'real' world' in exchange for a virtual game...fantasy, role-play, or sport or hero identity.

There are several warning signs that may indicate that your child could be at risk for developing an unhealthy relationship with the Internet and gaming. Paying attention to your child's behavior, attuning to your child emotionally and physically, and educating yourself about the Internet are pro-active behaviors which can secure your child's healthy relationship with a technology that has so much to offer when used appropriately.

The warning signs for Parents are:

- A preoccupation with gaming
- Lying or hiding gaming use
- Disobeying time limits
- Loss of interest in other activities
- Social withdrawal from family and friends
- Mood changes when required to stop playing
- Using gaming as an escape

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Executive Director... (cont.)

in South San Jose. Please check with friends and see if there might be someone in your circle who would benefit from this dynamic and informative class. [Registration](#) is online through our web site.

FOFV benefited from additional press exposure through The [Childhood Matters](#) Radio Show featuring Jim Rossi in a one hour show about the [challenges of fathers raising children](#). Both Jim Rossi and Jay Harnden were also featured in B.A.B.Y. magazine "[Tips for Fathers to Be](#)". In addition, The Campbell Reporter featured a [story](#) about FOFV. We also got some great press for the [Koltly Chess Club](#).

Finally, Let me remind everyone of our weekly [Father's Support Group](#), facilitated by Jay Harnden. This group now meets on Tuesdays at the Almaden Community Center from 6-8pm and it is FREE to all fathers who'd like to attend.

Let me close with a belated Happy New Year to our FOFV community – and all of the families we serve!

Instructor Profile: Mimi Latno

Mimi Latno, M.A. has been an educator and teacher for the past 30 years. With training in a variety of holistic therapies as well as experience in classroom, workshop and retreat settings, Mimi blends numerous tools and methods to create a fun, practical and unique learning atmosphere. Mimi is the author of two books, which empower adults and young people to live consciously, with vitality and in health – body, mind and spirit. Mimi is also a mother of two daughters, one is a teenager and the other is a young adult.



Drugs & Kids: Setting Boundaries

Mark Pensler, MA, LPC, CADC-II

Over the years, I've taught many classes on Drugs and Kids – mostly to pre-teens and their parents. My goal is to educate families about the disease of addiction and to share effective drug resistance strategies. It's important to understand the seriousness of the problem before it erupts, to know how to prevent its occurrence, and to respond effectively if warning signs crop up. A primary parental skill in the fight against this disease is learning how to set clear boundaries with children.



Whether we are adults or kids, we are all powerless over the disease of addiction and we cannot stop others from using. This disease is especially prevalent among young people because of the temptations and pressures upon today's early adolescents. Unfortunately the earlier a teen starts to experiment and use, the more virulent the addiction becomes—once it takes hold. So it's important for parents to set clear expectations prior to adolescence and respond swiftly and appropriately should any signs of substance abuse appear.

On the brighter side, research shows that early intervention is very successful – in fact the earlier the better in terms of achieving positive treatment outcomes. Below is a list of some warning signs of drug abuse. Remember - the primary objective is to intervene BEFORE these signs appear.

- mood swings (especially irritable moods, often accompanied by explosive outbursts)
- depression, isolation, withdrawal from the loved ones
- insomnia
- memory problems
- weight loss
- lethargy
- declining school/work performance
- lack of hygiene (including the smell of marijuana and "alcohol breath")
- poor concentration
- sudden changes in friends
- minimal interaction with family
- frequent absences from work/school
- trouble with the police

If you think there might be a problem with addiction in your family, don't wait – seek help from a professional. And watch for FOFV's next Drugs & Kids class – it's a free, open forum where kids and parents can exchange frank dialog, learn about addiction, and discover valuable community resources.





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The Involved Parent

Jackie Kite, Parenting Coach

There are many misconceptions about parenting. One particularly prevalent one is the idea that parents should be more involved when children are young and gradually back off as their kids gets older. While our parenting roles may change as our children mature, we need to remain involved during every stage of our children's development and schooling. Studies have shown that children whose parents are actively involved with their child's education are more apt to fare better in tests and do better in school than those children without parental support and encouragement.



There are different ways for parents to remain involved in their kids' lives. As children reach their high school years, there is a natural decline in their dependence on parents. However, these years are crucial to the developing adolescent and even though teens may be demanding more freedom, the parent needs to be there to provide support, comfort, and especially a listening ear should the situation require it.

These transitions in roles can be difficult for children and parents alike, but as parents we need to remember that we are role models first and foremost. Sometimes we may have to lower our standards or expectations, but we also need to reevaluate boundaries to allow more freedom and use our conflict resolution skills to work out solutions without compromising our values.

Parents are not alone in these struggles and sometimes talking to others who shares the same problems can help. FOFV is a great resource for parents who want to continue becoming the positive, involved parent they strive to be – and their children need them to be.

Internet Addiction... (cont.)

- Continuing to game despite consequences

Any of these signs alone or in conjunction with others are indicators that taking a hard look at the benefits and liabilities of computer use may be in order. It may be that a 'computer holiday' may be a simple intervention to help get family members back on track. Setting time limits on computer use may facilitate moderation and relieve the stress involved with long hours of sitting in front of the monitor, eyes and arms strained from fatigue. Planning family activities outside of the home, such as family movie nights or board-game nights, can break the cycle of repetitive gaming. One thing is for certain – shaming or blaming will not foster communication with your child. Remaining uneducated about the risks involved with 'over use' of the Internet will only serve to isolate you further from your children when they need you more than ever. As in all other aspects of our child's life, it is our responsibility to assist them in becoming the best they can possibly be.

Let the games begin!

About FOFV

The Foundation of Family Values (FOFV), a 501(c)(3) Tax-exempt Non-profit Organization, was created in honor of the late Don Rossi. We support family well-being for families of all political, religious, sexual preference, economic, and racial categories. We define family as being any combination of parent(s), grandparents, other relatives, and children. The FOFV has no specific religious affiliation.

Mission Statement

The Foundation of Family Values seeks to enhance the core values of modern families through creating innovative programs in combination with providing resources that facilitate the intellectual development of parenting ethics and responsibilities in the best interest of children. FOFV accomplishes its mission through a variety of educational, therapeutic, and recreational programs and services designed to provide a menu of positive options for families who wish to participate in a holistic approach to family well-being.

Values

Our values are the ones identified in Search Institute's research on primary developmental assets for adolescents, plus one that we've added ourselves: Cultural Diversity. The primary values categories listed in their research are:

- Support
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Commitment to Learning
- Social Competencies
- Empowerment
- Constructive Use of Time
- Positive Values
- Positive Identity

FOFV supports any kind of positive spiritual expression, regardless of it being associated with a religious institution.