

# Parenting center prepares for fall opening

By JANE THOMPSON-SMITH  
Of the Free Press

Plans are underway for the Lakeside Parenting Education & Resource Network to open a Parenting Center in Quakertown this fall, now that 13 area parents graduated from a certified Parenting Educator Course in May.

"We're planning for August or September for the opening," said the network's Suzanne Spanton, who led the course. "We're checking the school calendar before we decide."

Spanton said the newly graduated parenting educators are now meeting every other week putting together project management pieces like a brochure on the center, and setting up a library for parents to use.

Spanton continues to attend the meetings, even though her teaching days at Quakertown are over.

"I'll do it until [the new parenting educators] are ready to let me go,"

she said.

Once Spanton does back out, the educators will be led solely by two fellow graduates who will serve as center co-directors - Sue Wilson and Sandy Horan.

"They will oversee week to week operation," Spanton said.

The rest of the parenting educator class joined committees [finance, marketing, play and share, program, library].

"The committees will complete tasks, and Sue and Sandy will assist," Spanton said.

The Quakertown center's first two parenting workshops have already been planned, Spanton said, and will discuss the topics of Healthy Communication and Effective Discipline.

The workshops will probably be held once a month, and a nominal fee may be charged.

"Most centers charge five dollars per session," she said.

St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital has donated office space and an

available conference room at its Community Education Center, located at 10th and Juniper streets, for the workshops.

In addition to the workshops, the center will offer book discussion groups, and a Play and Share.

Spanton said she isn't quite sure where the Play and Share will be held yet.

"We're trying to find somewhere that is available during the day, and has a child-friendly atmosphere," she said.

The educators are planning some fundraisers to boost the budget needed to run the center. Further fundraising may be done so the educators can receive a small stipend for their works.

Spanton thinks there will be a lot of interest in the center once it opens.

"We've had nothing but positive feedback from the community," she said, adding representatives of the center were asked to speak to the local Sertoma Club recently.

## Center provides a place to learn good parenting

■ The goal is to offer programs that will help promote healthy homes.

By LISA KOZLESKI  
Of The Morning Call

Upper Bucks parents have a new outpost where they can learn to communicate more effectively with their children.

It's called the Quakertown Community Parenting Center, and its goal is to provide parents with an education in healthy communication, effective discipline, conflict resolution and countless other subjects to promote healthy homes.

"It's a collaborative initiative," said Sandy Horan, a parent of two and a co-director of the center. Drawing on the expertise and resources at the Upper Bucks YMCA, the Quakertown Community School District and St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital, the center exists to work both for and with parents.

Some of the center's first events get started in the next two weeks. First, the center will offer a two-session workshop titled "Healthy Communication" on Wednesday and Oct. 10. Next, a three-session workshop titled "Effective Discipline" is planned Oct. 23, Oct. 30 and Nov. 6.

All workshops will be held at St. Luke's Educational Center at 10th and Juniper streets in Quakertown from 7 to 9 p.m. Workshops cost \$5 per family, per session.

In addition to these workshops, a book discussion will be held three nights next month. The discussion of the book "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk" by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish will be held from 7 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 15, 22 and 29. The discussions will take place at Lion Around Books on Broad Street, and books can be purchased in advance at the bookstore.

The center also has a large lending library of parenting books available and is planning several "Play 'n Share" programs to bring children together for playtime while parents can share their experiences.

All of these programs offered by the center grew out of an initiative suggested by Quakertown school district Superintendent James R. Scanlon within the last year. The initiative involved using a \$25,000 grant to bring in Lakeside Educational Network Inc. of Fort Washington to train parents to become educators who then can instruct other parents in parenting.

Thirteen area parents spent 24 weeks this year reading, writing reports and discussing their experiences as parents. Led by Suzanne Spanton and Rosemary Melnick of Lakeside, the group met three hours each week.

The Lakeside leaders aim to help parents find a middle ground between the strict disciplining of the early 1900s and the permissive philosophy of the 1960s.

After graduating from the program in May, the parent-teachers are now working to spread their knowledge, said Heron.

"We have committed to giving back to the community in terms of sharing the information and tools that we have learned," she said. That information will be passed along through the workshops, book discussions and play periods.

Good parenting, Scanlon said, is the most important factor in education.

"Children come into this world and none of them come with manuals," he said. "The parenting center can help our parents write the manuals that will enable our children to make healthy choices."

To register for the workshops, call the Upper Bucks YMCA at 215-536-8841. For more information about the parenting center and its programs, call 215-538-4797.

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