

Teach your children well

Classes designed to teach improved parenting skills

Jennings Court resident Sharon Silverstein says her work "makes me feel hopeful for all of mankind."

Her work is offering programs helping family members respect and support each other, courses such as "Living at Peace" or "Teaching Love Through Peaceful Words."

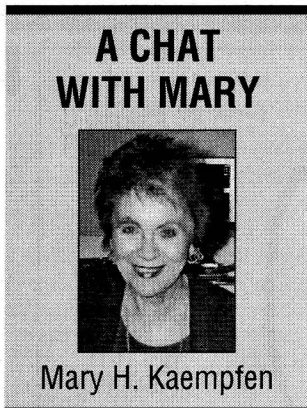
Ms. Silverstein believes that local families can benefit from the practical parenting skills her classes offer.

"It's time to start thinking ahead for our families," she said. "So many of us will be back to more structured days, (with) after school activities, and the stresses that go with the school year."

That's why she's launching two sessions of her five part "Redirecting Children's Behavior" (RCB) course at her home. The course is taught for three hours one evening a week, and the techniques are learned through role-playing and group interaction.

An evening session starts at 7 p.m., Monday, and a morning session at 9 a.m., Tuesday.

Ms. Silverstein notes that her course teaches parents how to "diffuse power struggles, encourages their self-esteem, and



creates a loving, supportive family life ... families should be a source of rejuvenation, fun and encouragement."

Ms. Silverstein thinks that those goals are often lost in the stresses of everyday life.

Ms. Silverstein, a pleasant-looking, well-spoken young woman whose eyes and speech show her determination about her work, is a certified parent educator — she completed the coursework in 2003 to be so designated by the International Network for Children and Families — and began offering similar classes for children in 2002.

She first became interested in the RCB program when her

son, Jared, entered a Montessori school.

What were the needs that made Sharon's program originate?

It was to help children overcome their "self-limiting beliefs."

And as Ms. Silverstein says in a brochure, a study of children ages one to 12 revealed, "the single most important determinant of children's self-esteem is their perception of how they are valued by their parents."

Parents are grateful, she said, when they learn to use the right words to enlarge their children's self-esteem, rather than diminish it ("You were awful to spill that milk even if it was accidental!" versus "Here, I'll give you a rag to clean it up.").

She engages listeners by giving examples of what parents should or should not do, helping them learn to "teach love through peaceful words."

First of all, a parent's intentions may be helpful or unhelpful, and that fact underlies words and actions. Secondly, the way a parent says something is what counts.

She notes that she practices her lessons at home — and surprisingly learns a lot about herself.

Ms. Silverstein offers several classes for families and family members. Participants can learn practical parenting skills in a supportive, non-judgmental and loving way in the parents' course. Learning mutual respect, resolving conflicts, and creating effective teamwork are the aims of the group.

"Parents can learn how to respond to their children more from the heart, rather than in reaction from our mind," Ms. Silverstein said.

A family functioning course is designed for children whose parents have participated in the RCB course and a second course, designed for children between ages 6 through 12, helps children learn they have choices in how they think and feel about themselves and other people. Participants in the "Positive Thought Through Positive Attitude" course also develop tools for increasing their self-awareness, self-love and their love of others.

The children's workshop gives participants a chance to explore their beliefs about themselves without reservation in its non-judgmental environment.

Ms. Silverstein finishes her chat by commenting on her other activities: she likes to bike ride, she meditates, she does yoga,

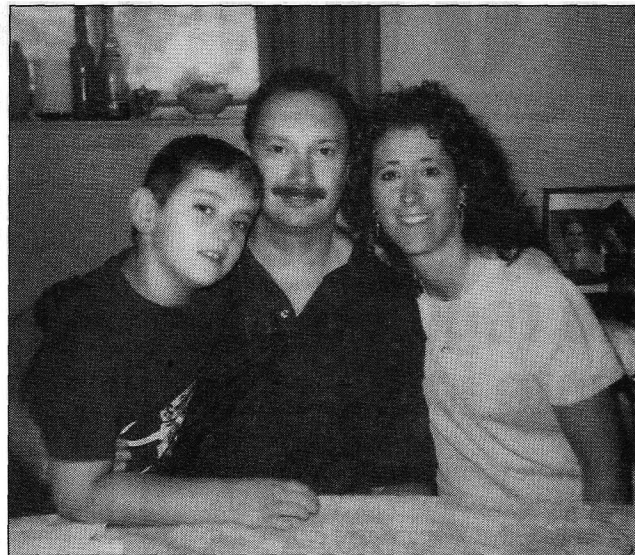


Photo by Mary Kaempfen

Sharon Silverstein, shown with her husband Robert and son Jared, says families can become stronger with communication principals that encourage members' growth.

and she entertains with her own songs with her guitar and voice at outdoor fairs and coffee houses.

She works with a group and the group includes saxophonist husband, Robert.

And, yes, she uses her RCB techniques with her seven-year-old son Jared.

But you never forget what Ms. Silverstein believes: "Our

communities need families who are positive, loving and empowered, and 'Living at Peace.'"

"RCB" can set parents on that path.

Registration and fees for the courses are listed at Ms. Silverstein's Web site, www.livingatpeace.com, or for more information, she can be reached at 431-9904.