

Here's a gem of an opportunity to help others



**LORRIE
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Commentary

Until recently, I really wasn't aware of how vital the Family & Youth Services Bureau is to Porter County.

It is such an integral part of the lives of so many children and families, and often is the catalyst that keeps a family together.

There are two dates related to the organization that I hope you will circle on your calendar.

I enjoy eating carrots, but I don't have many karats. If I did, I would head over to the bureau's offices at 253 W. Lincolnway in Valparaiso on Nov. 7, where there will be an out-of-the-ordinary fundraiser.

If you have any gold, gems or other fine jewelry you no longer wear or want, please make an appointment to visit. Local jeweler/appraiser Stephanie Swanson will be there from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to examine your items and determine the retail value of each piece. Then, when you donate them to the Family & Youth Services Bureau, you will receive a receipt so you can deduct the amount as a charitable donation on your income tax forms.

That unused, forgotten piece of jewelry will benefit children in need, and you will have earned a gold star. Please call 464-9585 to make an appointment.

Next, circle Nov. 11 on your calendar, and if you have teenagers in your life, come and listen to Dr. Richard Price as he presents a Family Life Workshop, "Why Can't We Ever Get Along?"

Price, a psychologist and certified drug and alcohol counselor, hopes to answer that question by teaching us how to respond proactively in dealing with defiant teens.

This workshop is not just for families who have someone with a drug/alcohol problem, but for any family who deals with teenagers bucking against authority.

The workshop is free, but advance registration is requested by Nov. 10. Please call 464-9585 or email kunderwood@fysb.org.

If you didn't see Jerry Davich's column last Friday, you missed reading about one of the kindest, most beautiful teen happenings ever, and the story behind it is definitely worth repeating.

For high school students to reach out to each other the way these young men did is a great lesson for all of us. This story should have been front-page news in every newspaper in our region and beyond.

Joey Sparks, a "rookie" football player on the Hobart Brickies football team, was living a dream when the nightmare hit. He had played in all of two games, one of which was against the Gary West Side Cougars, when he was diagnosed

with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Surgery, chemo and hospital time took the place of being on the football field, but his team rallied around him with visits, calls and even a fundraiser to assist his parents with expenses. Even more touching, when the West Side players learned about Joey's diagnosis, they added their support with calls, cards and prayers.

Joey was told in February he was cancer-free, and his mom believes that all the support he was showered with helped him heal.

An aunt, Valerie Heuring, a third-generation owner of Paul Heuring Ford in Hobart, enrolled in a Ford Motor Co. fundraising program, Drive One 4 UR School, and Joey's story was selected as a winner, meaning he could choose where the \$6,000 prize went.

The Hobart Football Booster Club was Joey's choice, to say "thank you." But he wasn't done yet. In Ford's "Go Further" program, Joey's situation was again a winner, and this time he chose

the West Side team to receive the \$1,000 prize.

Better yet, Ford was so impressed with the outpouring of caring from all these young men and Joey's reciprocal ways that the snowball kept rolling, and the West Side players will be the recipients of new helmets and shoulder pads.

All of you Hobart Brickies and West Side Cougars and Joey Sparks are my pet persons of the week. Thank you for leading the way.

Of course you've heard it before, but here's a reminder again. Hundreds of little children with their parents, and even some bigger kids allowed on their own, will be zooming helter-skelter from house to house to fill their bags full of treats Friday.

The excitement of the evening is the best part, but the kids will be more intent on tracking what's in the bag than they are about cars driving to and fro. So, please, drive extra carefully. Then I hope you have a great day because you deserve it.

Thanks for reading. Fly your flag.