


FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
 by Dr. Barry Harding
 Public Schools of Robeson County



If devoting an hour a week of your time could result in a student in the Public Schools of Robeson County not only remaining in school but also enjoying a whole new outlook on education and life, wouldn't you consider making that contribution? That's pretty much what the Mentoring Program that is gearing up for another year of operation when the new school year gets underway on August 6 is all about. Last week's banquet had as participants not only leaders in the program but also some people who had already gone through the mentoring training session and were prepared to get involved with their assigned mentees.

For those of you who may not be familiar with the program, it's important to understand that becoming a mentor doesn't mean that you necessarily have to help the student academically although it may mean helping the mentee to get organized and keeping him or her in school. It could also help them graduate and evaluate educational choices. A mentor is a listener, a friend, a coach, a guide, and a helper. The mentor is not a foster parent, a Ms. or Mr. Fix-it, a regis-

tered advice-giver, a cool peer, or a parole officer. The mentor helps the mentee develop life skills- things that may be as simple as teaching them how to shake hands, conduct introductions or demonstrate other social skills. He or she can teach students about personal qualities needed for holding a job such as punctuality, dependability, and

the mentors who could serve them best. It all starts, though, with people who would be willing to contribute an hour a week to the program and the first step is to contact Dr. Rona Leach at (910)671-6000 ext. 268 for more information. Do it today and join others who have already signed up to help.

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Pediatric Pointers

by Dr. Joey Bell, Pembroke Pediatrics

YOUTHSUICIDE

This is not a topic that people are excited talking about, but it is an important one to address. Suicide is a major cause of death for teenagers in the United States. The rate of suicides in our country (and others) has been on the rise over the past few decades. Here are some eye-opening statistics from the Center for Disease Control:

- In the USA, suicide is responsible for more deaths than homicide.
- Daily in our country, 1500 people attempt to commit suicide and 86 people die.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death in the 15-24 year old age group and sixth leading cause in the 5-14 year old age group.
- In the 5-14 year old age group the rate of suicide increased 100% between 1980 and 1996.
- From 1979-1992 the suicide rates for Native Americans were 1.5 times the national rate. 64% of Native American suicides were males ages 15-24.
- In 1997, 21% of US high school students had seriously thought about a suicide attempt and 8% had actually attempted suicide.

I am not trying to scare you, but want to raise awareness regarding adolescent suicide in our nation. It is so much of a concern that the U.S. Surgeon General launched a national campaign last year to fight suicide. Not all people provide warning signs, but many do. One problem is these signs are often subtle and are easy to overlook. Some signs or risks factors may include:

- changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of interest in hobbies, recreation
- Violent/defiant behavior

- Personality change
- Decline in Quality of schoolwork
- Threatening suicide
- Giving away of possessions
- Friends or acquaintances who have committed suicide
- People who are depressed
- Have access to a firearm
- Are experiencing extreme stress due to life event like divorce or separation

So, what do you do if you get concerned that your child is considering suicide? We are often afraid to bring up the topic of suicide for fear of planting the idea, or encouraging the act. This is a misconception; it is better to address the concern than to ignore it. The CDC provides these recommendations to help prevent suicide. For families and friends:

- Be a good listener. If people express suicidal thoughts or feel depressed, hopeless or worthless, be supportive. If negative reactions are encountered let them know that you are there for them and are willing to help. **NEVER ISSUE CHALLENGES OR DARES.**
- Stress that the person's life is important to you and others. Also, that there death/suicide would be devastating to you and to others.
- Express empathy and concern for people who express thoughts about committing suicide. When you try to help, the individual may not be willing to discuss their thoughts with you. Do not try to play down their pain, depression, or hopelessness; respect it. Encourage them to talk to someone.
- Tell the person what behaviors have been concerning. Be specific. This may start a dialog.
- Know your resources, doctors, counselors, hotlines etc.
- Restrict inappropriate access to firearms.

These are just some suggestions. If you are concerned that a child may be considering suicide or at risk for a suicide attempt, then talk to your child. Also, seek professional help from your family's health care provider, school counselor, suicide hotline (1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-784-2433), minister, etc. These people should be able to help or get you into contact with someone who is qualified to help.

"Pediatric Pointer"
 Charlie Pulliam PA-S2
 Duke University
 6/2001

Wiping countertops frequently with a nontoxic disinfectant reduces the risk of spreading food-related illness.



English engineer John Smeaton, inspired by construction methods of the ancient Romans, mixed lime and clay to create the basic form of cement we use today.

Why we're doctors for the Locklears.

Thomas Locklear:

"I can get my annual physical. They have dermatology services to treat any skin problem. They do their own X-rays and lab work. And they accept all kinds of insurance."

Zoe Locklear:

"I can get my yearly exam. Plus, the kids can see the same doctor. I can get nutritional information for the whole family."

Matthew Locklear:

"I can get all my forms filled out for baseball."

Elizabeth Locklear:

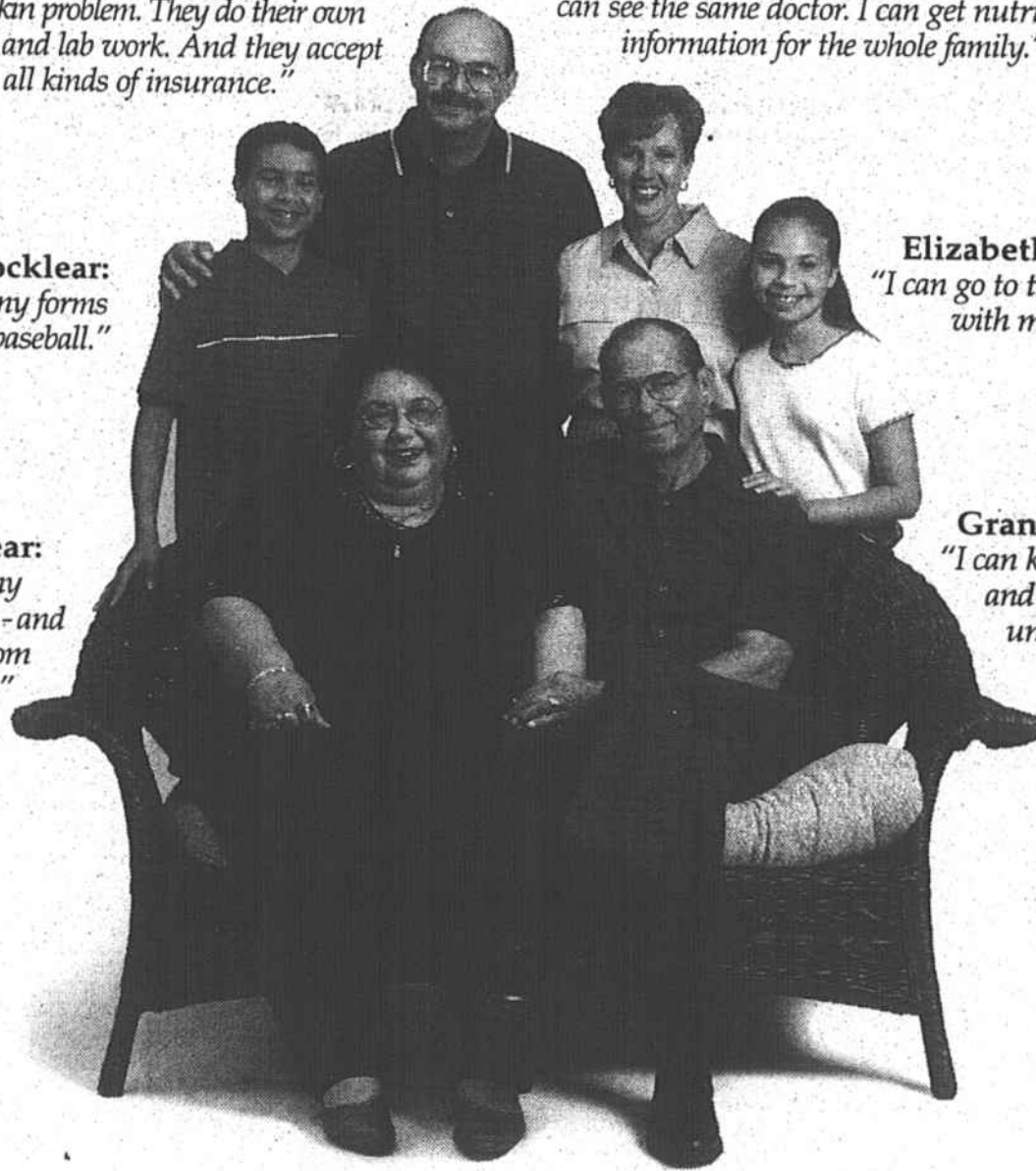
"I can go to the fitness center with my mom."

Grandma Locklear:

"I can make sure my diabetes stays in check - and keep my allergies from slowing me down."

Grandpa Locklear:

"I can keep my cholesterol and blood pressure under control."



If there's one thing the Locklears believe in, it's getting the proper health care. If there's one thing they don't believe in, it's driving all over the place to do it.

That's the reason they come to a FirstHealth Family Care Center. And maybe it's the reason you should bring your family here, too.

We're the place to go for all your family's health care, from the youngest to the oldest. In many cases our family practice physicians can even perform procedures you'd normally have to see another specialist for, such

as dermatology or women's services. And we're backed up by the entire FirstHealth network of hospitals, specialists and other health care professionals.

So the next time you need health care for your family, make an appointment at a FirstHealth Family Care Center near you.

FirstHealth
 FAMILY CARE CENTERS

www.firsthealth.org

For an appointment at the FirstHealth Family Care Center in Pembroke, call 521-6029.

Every 20 Seconds... Osteoporosis Causes a Fracture



HIP - Half of those who fracture never walk independently again.



SPINE - Causes posture change, height loss, and often chronic pain.



WRIST - Interrupts activities of daily living and causes pain.



Fighting Osteoporosis & Promoting Bone Health

www.nof.org or 1-800-223-9994

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WANTED!

Persons willing to help a Native American business.

Help by using your credit card to purchase 300 bestseller money booklets, "How To Have Extra Money All The Time". Total cost: \$1785 plus NC tax. Give them for Christmas, birthday, wedding gifts or sell at flea markets, yard sales, or as fundraising for your church or school. You will draw monthly from a Rebate Fund already set up. Limit: \$35,000 per month.

For more information by mail, call 910-521-7314 or write: WFCPress-STW, Box 3187, Pembroke, NC 28372.