Happy Holidays from FESS

By Shelly Willis

Let’s be grateful for those who give us happiness; they are the charming gardeners who make our soul bloom.  
--Marcel Proust

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work in a field filled with such wise, committed and passionate people wanting to make the world a better place.  Our staff has continued to grow as we have added programs to better serve the community. Our new "Parent Engagement" program has already shown significant outputs.

I have been reminded through both global and personal challenges that life is uncertain and individual action is significant.  Perhaps the only thing that is truly important is connecting with others and contributing to a brighter future.  To not only do good– but rather to help others do better.

This year some of our friends have fallen ill, or have moved on to other jobs and cities.  Our staff have lost family members, and we have stood by those we serve as they mourned the loss of a family member.

I am reminded once again that one of the most important contributions we can make in our lifetime is to express gratitude for the love, guidance, support and inspiration we draw from others.

As I consider our good fortune this year, I want to extend my appreciation for the tremendous support we have received from the community, individuals, and the staff and volunteers who keep the agency humming.

Best wishes for an enjoyable, healthy and happy New Year!
Ways to Keep Healthy over the Holidays

1. Family gatherings, airports and travel stops, shopping malls; they’re all places germs like to mingle. So protect yourself: Get a flu vaccine and wash your hands. The holidays are all about sharing, but some things you’ll want to keep to yourself: forks, spoons, and drinking utensils. People can be contagious before they know they’re sick,
2. Eat healthy and be merry. Holiday foods can be high in calories and low on the nutrition you need to battle germs and boost energy. Make it a priority to eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day. Carry an apple or a bag of baby carrots so you always have a healthy snack available.
3. Exercise gives you energy in addition to burning calories, so don’t give your exercise routine a holiday.
4. Chill. “Can I afford it?” “Will it be perfect?” Even things we look forward to, like parties or gifts, can come with worries attached. If you feel stressed out, stop what you’re doing for just a moment. Take five deep breaths — all-the-way-down-to-your-belly deep. Concentrate on each breath as you inhale and exhale. Then go back to what you were doing, realizing that holiday drama will happen. Just hope it leaves you with some great stories to tell.
5. Beat the blues. Holiday depression doesn’t just happen in songs. For some people it is seasonal, brought on by shorter days, longer nights, and colder weather. Other people are going through difficult life events like a break up or a move. Don’t hesitate to talk to someone you trust, like a parent or teacher, about how you’re feeling.
6. Get some Z’s. Getting 8½ to 9 hours of sleep a night during the holidays can help strengthen your immune system, give you more energy, and make you less vulnerable to stress. Laugh and enjoy yourself — the holidays only come once a year.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adapt to change and maintain stability during stressful situations. This is a time of the year when we all feel a bit more stressed and need to practice resiliency on a daily basis. Strengths of resilient families include include **cohesiveness, effective communication and adaptability**. Cohesive families provide support, encouragement and constructive criticism with respect, commitment, and trust at their core. Effective communication in resilient families fosters healthy, positive relationships and problem solving, while adaptability provides restoration resulting in a strong family unit. We are all so “busy” it is important that parents/caregivers take the time to create a peaceful atmosphere for family members. Invest in self care and show children the value of sleep, quiet, and calm. Do your best to try and maintain a schedule. Remember to make plans for fun activities with friends and families. Look through photo albums, clean out the junk drawer, create a family “TREE”, or go on a walk together. These are the memory maker activities that ground us in the hard times, help us rebound and become Resilient Families.
Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

Domestic violence happens in every neighborhood, in every social class, and in every religious, racial and ethnic group. It can happen to our friends, grandparents, neighbors, co-workers, and ourselves. According to the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “50% of men who frequently assault their wives also frequently assault their children...domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in the county.” For these reasons and more, FESS is committed to the support and education of families who are affected in any way by domestic violence. So far this year, 125 parents have learned how to support children by attending the 4-hour Impact of Domestic Violence on Children class. Classes are focused on how violence affects children and includes skill-building in the areas of communication, discipline and guidance, as well as anger management strategies for prevention of domestic abuse. Classes are offered once a month at a cost of $75. Scholarships are available thanks to a generous donation by the Community Foundation of South Puget Sound.

Winning at Parenting

What do the Squaxin Island Tribe, North Thurston's Woodard Elementary, and the office of Family Education and Support Services have in common? They have all held a seven-week Winning At Parenting class this year. Over 50 families have been served through this parenting class. This family participation-based parenting program is designed to increase the health of families by helping participants develop their parenting skills. Throughout the seven week class, group members share parenting strengths and identify areas for personal growth. The class combines discussion, lectures, group activities, and the positive social support of peers to address common parenting concerns. Winning At Parenting is intended to strengthen families by providing information, resources, and an opportunity for parents to connect with each other. Classes are offered for FREE and include an on-site children's program. Topics covered in class discussion include: Realistic Family Expectations, Fairy Tale Families, Child Development, Family Communication, Anger Management, Methods for Managing Stress, and Effective Discipline and Guidance Tools. If you are interested in learning more about the upcoming classes please give us a call at 360-754-7629 or visit our web site at familyess.org
FESS Furniture Upgrade

You may notice our offices feel a little brighter, staff sitting a little straighter, and spontaneous smiles abound as we prepare for a December facility upgrade. Words of congratulations are ringing in our office as we celebrate a $5,000 grant from the Cheney Foundation to upgrade our office furniture, clean carpets and add a fresh coat of paint. Our desks in our office today are the same ones we purchased at Goodwill nearly 10 years ago. We are so grateful to the Cheney Foundation who will help us to offer a safer, more effective, and more comfortable work environment for our staff, contractors and volunteers. The Ben B. Cheney Foundation Cares about our community!

Parenting Tools

Over 400 participants were able to enjoy the two presentations we coordinated featuring nationally recognized speaker and author Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. Her daytime luncheon presentation, sponsored by the Thurston Early Learning Coalition, welcomed over 150 individuals and the evening Parenting Tools training for parents welcomed an additional 300 adults.

Hands On Museum Opens

We are very excited to share with families that the new Hands On Children’s Museum facility is now open. You will find some of your old favorite exhibits mixed in with soon-to-be new favorites. There are 8 galleries packed with hands-on discovery. Climb up to the Eagles nest 70 feet in the air! Drive a fire truck, make and float your own boat, shoot snowball catapults and make a flying machine to send up the wind tunnel. Dates to remember:

- Open New years Day
- The second Tuesday of each month is a FREE parenting presentation from 6-8pm.
- Parents Night Out! Preregister by calling 956-0818 and for a fee of $35-$40 you can go shopping or make a date with your sweetie while the kids have a blast with Hands On activities.

Museum is located at 414 Jefferson St. NE, Olympia, WA. website: hocm.org
Rotary Club Presents Elizabeth Smart and Rani Hong on January 10, with free resource fair

On January 10, at 7 PM, at the Marcus Pavilion at St. Martin’s University, the Rotary Club will present Elizabeth Smart, child abductee, and Rani Hong, founder of the Olympia-based Tronie Foundation and Special Advisor to the United Nations on Human Trafficking. Together they will share information on the need for increased awareness and prevention of child trafficking and exploitation. This event is a fundraiser for local programs and the Tronie Foundation. Tickets are $15 for seniors and students, $20 for adults, and are for sale through the Community Foundation of Puget Sound, on the events page at thecommunityfoundation.com

Before the evening event, from 1-6 PM, the Zonta Club will be sponsoring a free information and resource fair, including the opportunity for fingerprinting and retina scans for your children.

Meet our newest staff member, Lisa Sayaogo

Lisa joins us from Work Source, and we are so happy to have her. She has three children, ages 2-22 years, and hopes one day to become a social worker. Her current project at FESS includes pulling together community resources related to financial literacy.

Thank you to our donors!

Over two hundred individuals, families, and organizations supported Family Education and Support Services in the last fiscal year. Many, many thanks to all of you. In September, October and November of 2012, the following individuals and groups contributed money or supplies to FESS:

**Individuals:**
- Glenda Drebick
- Jerry Barney
- Nancy Koptur
- Ann Jackson
- Carrell Simmons
- Ron and Robyn McLean
- Joyce Mallinger
- Linda and Jon Bryant
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- Stacy Kearns
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- Medina Foundation
- Community Foundation of Puget Sound

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- Julie Alexander
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- Tanya Murray
- Loraine Nelson
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We’re on the Web!
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