



Fresno Fatherhood Collaborative



Inside this issue:

Kids and Cellphones	1
POPS Spotlight	1
Shawn's Message	2
Meet Manny	2
Cole's Top 10	3
Announcements	3
Calendar of Events	4

Is My 7-year Old Too Young For A Cellphone?

By: Alicia Austin-Townsend, POPS Program Manager

In the new age of technology, necessities are quite different then what they were when I was growing up. Nowadays most Americans feel the need to be connected to the world through smartphones, laptops, tablets, and even smart watches at all times. Just look at the Forbes Billionaire listing, 25% of the top 400 list made their fortunes from tech empires due to the tech-obsessed world we live in.

Cue my 7-year old son, who has asked for an iPhone for

every Christmas and Birthday since he was 3-years old. He recently requested to purchase his phone with savings from his weekly allowance that he earns from his household chores. He said "but Mom shouldn't I be able to buy whatever I want with my money; I earned it." Although my husband and I commended him for sticking to his budget and being responsible to earn the money needed to make such a large purchase, we had to make the tough decision to

hold off on succumbing to his wishes. It certainly doesn't help that many of his classmates (2nd grade) already have personal cellphones. But we asked ourselves 3 questions as we do with all major purchases to make a decision:

1. Is this a need or a want?

Many parents say that they allow their young children to have cellphone for safety and to be able to contact them at all times. We decided against this because we drop our son off at all activities and he is never

Spotlight: Orlando Benitez, Local Conservation Corps Participant

IN THE POPS SPOTLIGHT



POPS LCC Participant Orlando Benitez

In 2012, my first child was born and immediately I knew I had to put all my old habits aside. If I continued on the same path, I would most likely be incarcerated or worse. I wanted to be there for my daughter to set a good example and be a positive influence. I enrolled at Fresno EOC in November 2012 and began to take advantage of all the opportunities the program provided including the POPS Program.

In June 2013, I graduated from YouthBuild Charter School of California Central and was accepted as a Senior Corpsmember. I know that furthering my education will lead to a rewarding career and

allow me to support my growing family.

My education is important because I am a father in the process of obtaining custody of my one year old daughter. I wish to be able to set an example and encourage her to excel in education and surpass me. I want to provide for her, and give her the life I never had. I would also like to give and eventually become a substance abuse counselor working with young adults. It is those who have lived through the experiences that can make the biggest impact because they understand what it takes to change, and I want to be a

person who makes a difference. Being in the YouthBuild program has opened my eyes to the importance of being involved in my community. One of my goals is to become a volunteer for the American Red Cross. I feel that I can make an impact in this organization because I can utilize my medical assistant certificate that I earned in May 2013. I am a loving father to my daughter, I have a passion for helping other and I love to work. It has not always been easy, but I strive to set an example and never give up.

A Message From Shawn

- Shawn Riggins, Fresno EOC Local Conservation Corps Director

POPS Collaborative Partners

- County of Fresno Veterans Services
- San Joaquin Valley Veterans/ WestCare
- Department of Child Support Services
- **Fresno EOC**
 - Employment & Training
 - Local Conservation Corps
 - Sanctuary & Youth Services
- Fresno Housing Authority
- Fresno Street Saints
- First 5 Fresno County
- Marjaree Mason Center

Since 2009, the month of March now has double significance for me. I celebrate my birthday on March 22nd, and this year was the big one. I am still in shock. In 2009, my father passed on March 10th. This year was especially rough because I was in a beautiful location, with people who have become dear friends. I did not want to ruin everyone's good time, so I kept it to myself. As I grow older, and my father's passing increases in years, the loss grows stronger as well. I have faith that he is still watching what I am doing and is proud. Sons have a weird relationship with their fathers. We compete with them, yet we want to make them proud. As I was in this beautiful location the thought would not leave my mind that my father never had the opportunity to see what I was experiencing. With all of the sacrifice he gave for his family and community, he never experienced this.

It took me several days after I returned to realize this: My father sacrificed so I could be in a position to experience what I was experiencing. This is a father's duty. To do everything in his power to make the lives of his children better. Dad, thank you for being the man you were, allowing me to be the man that I am.



Meet Manny Brar: Sanctuary POPS Case Manager

On the 26th of January of the year 2012, a beautiful baby was born. There he was, my son Magnus. Never had I felt such joy (and anxiety) as when I held my son for the very first time. As the proudest father in the world (in my humble opinion), I feel extremely privileged to represent Fresno EOC as the new POPS case manager. In these past 6 years working here, I have learned a great deal and have gained a tremendous amount of experience working with at-risk youth at the Sanctuary Youth Shelter as the Lead staff. In my spare time I enjoy hanging out with my wife and son, exercising, watching sports, and occasionally riding my motorcycle (which I believe has so many cobwebs on it I

thought I was now farming spiders!) I have also worked part time with adults with learning disabilities for the past 8 years now and absolutely love it. I am a huge animal person so if you have any, we will probably get along just fine.

I am a very humble person and have always cherished working with people who may be less fortunate than I. I think that it is a beautiful thing to be able to walk work every day and be surrounded by people who share the same beliefs as you.

I am very thankful for the opportunity that I have to work with wonderful fathers that want nothing better than to be better dads!



Photo: Sanctuary POPS Case Manager Manny Brar

Cole's Top 10 List of Safety Tips

By: Cole Scroggins, Fresno EOC Sanctuary Youth Outreach Worker & POPS 24/7 Dad Facilitator

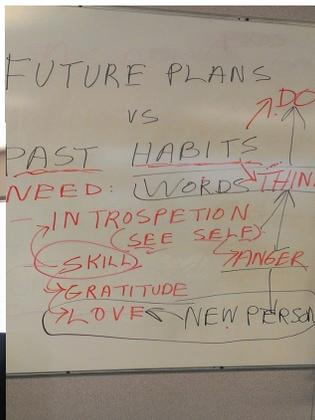


Fresno property crimes produce shocking numbers such as last year, 5,984 burglaries, 16,236 thefts, and 4,301 motor vehicle thefts. Here are a few tips to keep your residence safe!

Listed below are my tips to make your home safe from danger!

1. Store valuables in your child's sock drawer rather than in your nightstand. Thieves often scour the master bedroom but tend to leave children's rooms untouched.
2. Always be aware of unusual activities in your neighborhood; immediately report suspicious behavior. Be sure to always keep an eye on your child when they are playing outside and never leave them unattended.
3. If you don't have a security system, at least purchase a decal. This will keep the bad guys away and give your family peace of mind.
4. Make sure smoke detectors are working and up to code, or consider adding a monitored smoke or heat detector. Have a safety plan in place for the whole family to follow should the fire alarm go off.
5. Display "Beware of Dog" sign this is a great way to detour unwanted visitors and protect your family.
6. Keep keys next to your bed while you sleep. If you hear a suspicious noise and suspect that someone is trying to break in, press the Panic button on your key ring. The car alarm will sound, and the burglar will have no choice but to flee the scene.
7. Communicate with your loved ones of your whereabouts and time you are expected home. Make sure your kids never tell someone they don't know when they home alone.
8. Plant thorny shrubs, such as rosebushes, beneath ground-floor windows. They'll add beauty to your garden and deter burglars. Also, this rosy idea will keep your family safe.
9. Don't post your out of town trips, pictures, and statuses on Facebook! Don't forget, bad guys look for opportunities to burglarize a home and canvass social media for potential victims.
10. Rather than loading up the car the night before a day of work and ore a trip out of town, do it in the morning right before you leave. This will avoid your vehicle from being broken into by auto thieves looking for a quick buck.

Congratulations!
We had 10 individuals and couples complete the Love Notes healthy marriage curriculum this month!



Is my 7-year Old Too Young For A Cellphone? Continued From Page 1

with people we don't know and have a way to contact him immediately.

2. Can we afford it?

Sure we can, but my son can't. Sure he has earned enough money to make the initial purchase of the phone but taking on a new bill would be very disappointing to him when he wants to go to the movies or buy a new video game only to find that he is a little short due to his newly created monthly expense.

3. Can we (or he) handle the responsibility?

My son does a lot of things well but keeping up with things is just not one of them. We caught him trying to trade a Nintendo DS game (\$39.99) for a dollar at the to use at the snack shack at school. He cried when he lost his brand new varsity jacket at

school on the playground.

We made the decision that our son was not ready yet, but a good friend or mine found a way to give his daughter what she wanted. He and his wife said that if she earned half of the money on her own that they would split the cost 50/50 with her including the monthly bill. By adding her to their existing plan for only \$30 (just \$15 for her) which they all decided was manageable but every family is different.

Every time I turn on the TV I see commercials from the major cellphone carriers telling me how easy and affordable it is to just add members to my plan. They are now even encouraging you to put strangers on your plans to get a bigger break.

The worries don't stop at age 8. Even those with older children have to decide where to draw the lines of responsibility from adding a child to a cellphone plan, when to take your adult children off of your car insurance, maybe even adding a child as an authorized user on a credit card to help them build credit (or debt). There many ways to help children become responsible but what is most important (in my opinion) is to always keep the lines of discussion open so they learn to develop their own decision making processes.



Schedule of Events

- CHOICES Anger Management Monday's at EOC NYC- from 3:30 to 5:30 PM (Open Enrollment). CHOICES
- CHOICES Anger Management at WestCare (Closed Group)- Tuesdays from 10:00 AM to Noon.
- 24/7 Dad Classes at Fresno EOC NYC (Open Enrollment)- Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30 PM.
- Love Notes Healthy Relationship Classes at EOC NYC- Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 PM to 6:00 PM.

March 2014

Su	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 CHOICES	4 24/7 DAD 24/7 Dad SA CHOICES W Love Notes	5 24/7 Dad EPU	6 24/7 DAD Love Notes	7	8
9	10 CHOICES	11 24/7 DAD 24/7 Dad A CHOICES W Love Notes	12 24/7 Dad EPU	13 24/7 DAD	14	15
16	17 CHOICES	18 24/7 DAD 24/7 Dad SA CHOICES W Love Notes	19 24/7 Dad EPU	20 24/7 DAD	21	22
23	24 CHOICES	25 24/7 DAD 24/7 Dad SA CHOICES W Love Notes	26 24/7 Dad EPU	27 24/7 DAD	28	29
30	31					



<http://www.facebook.com/fresnopops>