



IT REALLY IS A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL

By Vicki Milana

This past school year has been an eventful one for twenty-two Houston area Ayusa families. In August 2012, these families opened their hearts and their homes to foreign exchange students from around the world. During the 2012-2013 school year, we had eleven countries represented in our area, some of the countries included were Germany, Brazil, Italy, Lebanon, China, Japan and Tunisia. The Ayusa foreign exchange student program is a great way to enrich not only the lives of your family members, but that of the folks in your community and the student themselves. “Both my wife and I have been hosting for the past five years and have enjoyed every minute of it!” says Theodore Odom of Pearland, Texas. “My wife and I have no children, so we are able to bring the students in for the full year and be their Host Parents. We believe it’s a way of giving back. This year’s student, Ina Zyfi of Albania has had a great time meeting new people, making new friends and volunteering her time to a local dachshund rescue.”

“We welcome host families of all shapes and sizes – families with young children, families with no children, empty nesters whose children have left home, single parents and non-traditional families,” says Connie Coutu, Regional Manager of Ayusa, a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization. “The key requirements for a host family are to provide a safe and nurturing home environment, genuinely love children, and have a desire to learn more about a different culture.”

“Our students really love giving back to the community”, says Heather Wells, the Houston area Senior Regional Director. “One of our students, Nesrine Mbarek of Tunisia, participated in over 300 hours of community service. She was actually one of three students who won a trip for her community service and also attended a US Department of State “Teaching English as a Second Language” conference in April for her hard work. Other students have worked in food banks and have given presentations on their home countries in their schools.”

This year, Ayusa is sponsoring over 900 students from 60 different countries in the United States. Volunteer host families are needed in our area to house these students for the 2013-2014 school year. The families need only provide foreign exchange students a nurturing environment, three meals a day and a bedroom (either private or shared with a host sibling of the same gender). Each host family and student is supported by a professionally trained community representative who works with the family and student for the entire program.

If you are interested in hosting an exchange student, please visit the Ayusa website at www.ayusa.org and complete the on-line application. You can view the students that are available for placement by clicking on the View Student Profiles on the home page. Help make this a memorable year for both your children and the prospective students. You’ll be glad you did!

The Forum

NEWSLETTER INFO

NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc.www.PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

Advertising.....advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

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VIRUSES STILL PRESENT DURING SUMMER

Many viruses are still frequent in the summer so good hygiene remains important, said Dr. Gail Demmler Harrison, professor of pediatrics-infectious diseases at BCM. Some viruses present in the summer include:

- Enteroviruses can cause symptoms such as sore throat and diarrhea, and can even lead to viral meningitis and inflammation of the heart and liver.
- Hand, foot and mouth disease, is characterized by ulcers in the back of the throat and a rash on hands and feet. This is common in babies and young children.
- Adenovirus, which can cause respiratory problems.
- Parainfluenza can cause croup, a loud cough; bronchiolitis, swelling and mucus in the small air passages in the lungs; and bronchitis, inflammation of the main air passages to the lungs.

These viruses cannot be treated with antibiotics, but it's important to get enough fluid and rest. Seek treatment immediately for high fever for more than three days, vomiting for over 24 hours, diarrhea, severe headaches or chest pain. Those with weak immune systems should consult their physician if they have any symptoms associated with these viruses.

QUALITY OF MEALS SHOULD NOT CHANGE DURING SUMMER

Students shouldn't close the door on healthy eating habits during the summer, says a Baylor College of Medicine pediatrician.

"Certainly it is just as important to eat healthy over the summer as it is any other time of the year," said Dr. Teresia O'Connor, assistant professor of pediatrics – nutrition at BCM.

She offers the following tips for health summer eating:

- Incorporate fruits and vegetables in all meals.
- A healthy summer lunch should include a fruit, a vegetable, some form of protein and whole grains.
- Don't skip breakfast.
- Eat three meals a day with one to two snacks.
- Stay hydrated - water is the best and healthiest way to stay hydrated.
- Be aware of how much sugar is in beverages. While it's okay to drink a small amount of these beverages, primary drinks should be water and low-fat or skim milk.

Encourage children and teens to help prepare their own meals so they become responsible for their own healthy eating.



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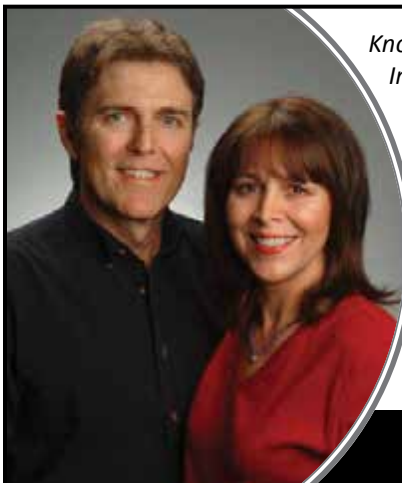
Take precautionary measures to protect your eyes during the summer to prevent long-term damage to eyesight, said a Baylor College of Medicine ophthalmologist.

"Ultraviolet light, or UV exposure, has been linked to the development of macular degeneration, cataracts and other vision-loss problems," said Dr. Elizabeth Baze, assistant professor of ophthalmology at BCM.

Baze offered tips you can practice to help protect your eyes from sun damage this summer.

- The more the sunglasses wrap around and shield your eyes and the skin around the eyes, the more protection you have.
- Sunglasses need to provide 99 to 100 percent UV protection.
- Sunblock is a must, including the skin around the eyes.
- A broad-brimmed hat can add extra protection.

If you have an existing eye condition like macular degeneration or cataracts, protecting your eyes from the sun should be a top priority during the summer, she said.



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PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS COULD BE SIGN OF DEPRESSION

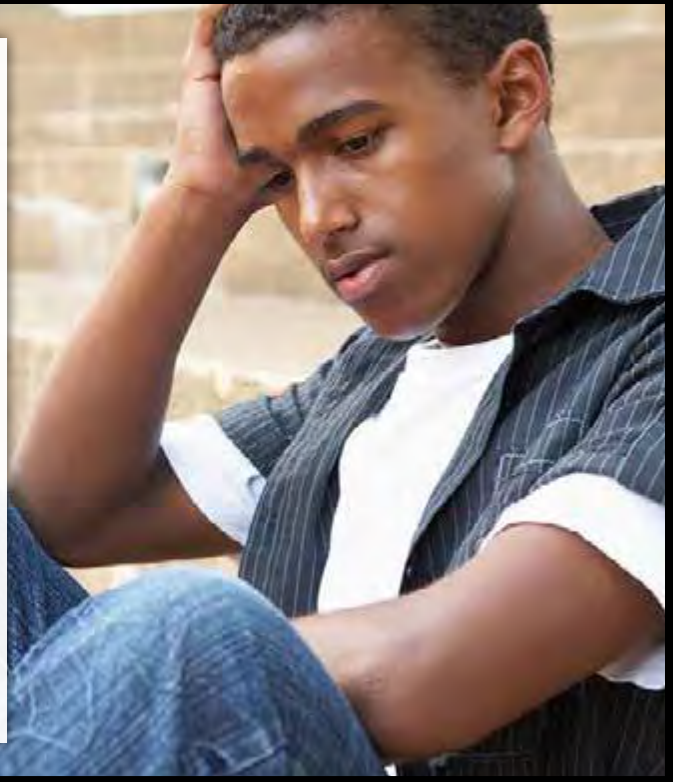
Depression and chronic mood disorders can manifest themselves through physical symptoms, said an expert at Baylor College of Medicine.

"Physical symptoms often drive a patient to see a primary care physician, and then the diagnosis of depression may emerge," said Dr. Sanjay Mathew, associate professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at BCM.

Symptoms include gastrointestinal syndromes or chronic pain conditions. Many patients will have diagnoses of both a physical illness as well as depression.

The first step is to get a complete medical history and physical exam to rule out any medical conditions before making a psychiatric diagnosis.

Certain types of antidepressants and medications that help treat seizures also help with the physical symptoms of depression at low doses. This can help avoid the use of multiple medications.



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