

## Time for gratitude



**it takes a  
village**

**MARIA FISK, PhD**  
Director of the Carpinteria  
Children's Project

*Editor's note: Coastal View News is thrilled to introduce its newest columnist, Maria Fisk, director of Carpinteria Children's Project at Main. Fisk will deliver monthly advice and information for parents and grandparents as they navigate the sometimes-rough, often-rewarding waters of child rearing. Prior to leading the Children's Project, Fisk worked as an educator at nearly every level. While raising her own two boys, she authored the book "Teach Your Kids to Think: Simple Tools You Can Use Every Day" to provide other parents with helpful tools.*

I saw it on Facebook so it must be true: "It's not happy people who are thankful; it's thankful people who are happy." I gave it a second read; it does ring true. Being thankful, or grateful, is a state of mind and a choice. Being grateful means being constantly aware of your blessings and seeing blessings all over the place. It's appreciating what you have now instead of focusing on what you might have in the future. It leads to sharing with others and being a positive contributor to the lives of those around you.

Researchers say being grateful can

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ing the day. At the Carpinteria Children's Project, we often start meetings by going around the room and sharing "WWW" (what went well).

3. When you are getting ready for bed, think of two things you are looking forward to in the next day.

4. Express your appreciation. When you are thankful for what others have contributed to your day or neighbors' days, take the time to tell them so.

5. Keep a thankfulness journal. You could write for 10 minutes or 10 lines about people, places, events, pets, colleagues and other things you are thankful for.

Here's a start to my thankfulness journal. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I write the inaugural issue of this column. I'm grateful for my two sons, my husband, our goofy dog, our spread-out extended family, and our local friends who feel like family. I'm grateful to be a part of Carpinteria, where high hopes for children and families and the power of community run deep. Examples are everywhere: overwhelming passage of Measure U, a new skate park on the ho-

lower stress and depression, increase motivation for life-affirming activities like exercise, and help us reach personal goals. And not only that, it makes us beautiful! As the author for children and adults Roald Dahl said, "If you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely."

I vow to rearrange my attitude, refocus on what matters, and aim to always have sunbeams shining. You are cordially invited to join me.

Let's do it. Some days it's easy to be thankful and express that glass-half-full approach to life; other days, well, not so much. Cultivating a thankful habit of mind requires intention and practice. Let's teach our kids, too. Even very young children and adults can learn to look for the bright side of life. We are born with inclinations to be positive or negative, thankful or grumpy; but early experiences shape those inclinations and have a lot to do with attitudes later in life. Some simple strategies, based on those of thinkers and researchers in psychology and related fields, can become habits, positive gratefulness-inducing habits. They can be used by each of us and in our families and workplaces.

1. Start each day by saying three things you are thankful for. Imagine yourself without the basics we too often take for granted—the roof over your head is a great place to start.

2. At dinner or another meeting time, share one good thing that happened dur-

rizon, and individuals and service clubs who give their time, talent and treasure to be the supportive community children and families need. I'm grateful to be part of the proactive, highly skilled, eager-to-learn, and caring staff at the Carpinteria Children's Project. I'm grateful to work with our Thrive Carpinteria Partner Network of early childhood education and social service providers and the school district. I am grateful every day to see beautiful smiling children and families whose growth and accomplishments make me cheer (those sunbeams really shine when I get knee-hugs from the kiddos!)

Finally, I'm grateful to have the opportunity to write a column in which I can share reflections and wisdom gained from others in the hope that it will be helpful to all of us who are raising Carpinteria's children: parents, grandparents, neighbors and community members. I look forward to writing again next month and to be inspired, if not by Facebook, by a topic idea you send my way!

*Maria Fisk, PhD is an educator who has taught young children learning English, parents and teachers learning about child development, and principals learning about data systems. She loves being the Director of the Carpinteria Children's Project (CCP). CCP provides early childhood education, family support services, and leadership of the Thrive Carpinteria Partner Network of early education and social service providers. Maria can be reached at [mfisk@cusd.net](mailto:mfisk@cusd.net) or 566-1600.*