

Turning a New Leaf

Divorce Doesn't Have to Equal Despair

by Terry Top, Marriage & Family Therapist, Executive Director



God's original design for marriage is that it should be life-long; "until death do us part." But, because we live in a sin-filled and broken world, sometimes those relationships end in divorce.

Wherever and whenever possible, our therapists strive to restore and heal broken relationships. But when that is not possible or the relationship is too damaged that it cannot be healed, the focus turns to minimizing the harm to the couple and their children.

What is best for the children needs to be at the forefront of every divorcing couple. Children benefit from maintaining the familial relationships in their lives that were important and meaningful prior to the divorce. They also need their parents' relationship to be supportive and cooperative.

So many couples get caught up in their own anger and hostility towards their ex-spouse. Children often get stuck in the middle of this conflict causing even more stress from the divorce. It is especially harmful if children sense that they need to "choose sides." Parents need to keep in mind that they need to love their children more than they hate their former spouse. Cooperation with an ex-spouse may be challenging, but it needs to happen for the sake of the children.

Because unresolved resentment can be the biggest problem, here are some good rules for divorced couples to adopt:

- Keep parental disagreements between the two of you.
- Keep disagreements non-violent both verbally and physically.
- Manage disagreements by setting limits on them including time and place.
- Spell out what is essential to discuss and what is not.
- Separate spousal issues from parenting issues.

Whether parents are divorced or not, studies have shown that kids thrive in a healthy, safe environment. So reframing your assumptions about divorce, can benefit everyone:

- Divorce does not end your family, it only rede-

fines it.

- Divorce does not ruin your children. Children in binuclear families can be as healthy as children in nuclear families.
- Divorce does not mean total failure. Good things can develop from a divorce that is managed appropriately.

Next, you need to establish goals during the divorce transition. The first is to keep your family a family. Recognize that compromise is absolutely necessary, avoiding an all-out war. Stay in charge of the divorce and construct a vision for your new binuclear family. You also need to make new rules for how the two households will be linked.

Often different members of the family are at different stages of acceptance regarding the divorce. Adjusting to the changes takes time, especially for children. Children adjust best when they have regular and positive contact with both parents that is encouraged by both parents.

Finally, integrate divorce into your life in a healthy way. Take time to "sort out" the separation, heal the hurts and resolve your personal issues. If a divorcee bypasses this process, and jumps into another relation-

(Continued on page 3)

Divorce Recovery Resources

DivorceCare Groups are offered at the following local churches:

- Calvary Reformed Church, Orland Park, IL
- Christian Church of Clarendon Hills, IL
- Crossroads Community Church, Schererville, IN
- Faith Church, Dyer, IN
- Moody Church, Chicago, IL

You can find more information and a wide variety of resources at divorcecare.org.

Recommending Reading:

[The Good Divorce](#)
by Constance Ahrons

[The Art of Forgiving](#)
by Lewis B. Smedes

[The Smart Step-Family](#)
by Ron L. Deal

Websites:

- FamilyFire.org
- ThrivingFamily.com

Board of Directors

President

Rev. Joel Sheeres

Vice President

Carol Moxey

Treasurer

Tim Eriks

Secretary

Cheryl Smithgall

Directors

Russ Clousing, Donna J. DeGraff,

Lisa Doot Abinoja,

Deb Koster, Dave Larsen,

David Mackinnon,

Michael Reagan,

Thelma Venema,

Barry Zalane

Stated Clerk

Rev. Gerrit Veenstra

Executive Director

Terry Top



Offices

2325-177th Street
Lansing, IL 60438
(708) 895-7310

11035 Broadway, Suite D
Crown Point, IN 46307
(219) 226-1810

165 E. Robbins St.
Wheatfield, IN 46394

info@newleafresources.org
www.newleafresources.org

Our Mission

New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

Timothy Seventh-graders Learn How to “CARE”

Timothy Christian School and New Leaf partnered again last Fall for CARE 360°, a day long prevention program focused on staying drug-free, caring for self and others and living in a God-honoring fashion.

The theme for the convention was based on Micah 6:8, which says “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”



Students and volunteers ham it up for the camera during CARE 360° last fall.

Through skits and talks, the event addressed issues facing 7th graders including grief and loss, peer pressure, gossip and standing up for their faith.

Thanks to the Timothy High

School students and parents who volunteered their time together with counselor **Laura Provancal**. Therapist **Kathy DeVries** (former New Leaf Intern) and **Kaitlyn Dykstra**, office support staff helped coordinate the event.

Special Gifts

Contributions to New Leaf Resources can be made in memory or in honor of a loved one or friend. Thank you to the following donors:

In Memory of Grace Elzinga

Frank & Gladys Van Til

In Memory of Barbara Hatch

- David & Elizabeth Kaul Clark
- Mary Lee Giangrande
- Rev. Graham & Barbara Goode
- Chuck & Linda Green
- Janet Hoover
- Larry & Judi Hoskins
- Gregory Jasper
- Holly Klingaman
- John Lungerhausen
- Richard & Jeanann Lungerhausen
- David, Shirley & Bob Osborne
- Kevin & Kay Priebe
- Dale Read
- LTC Richard H. Reed
- John Studdard
- Richard Urban

Bullying Impacts Everyone

Everyone can be affected by bullying. You could either be the victim, the bully or the bystander. For children living in a digital age, it’s crucial that they learn and understand how to respond to bullying and how to tell teachers, parents or another adult about any type of harassment.

Last fall, Family Therapist **Donna Southard** conducted presentations for **Demotte Christian School** students, teachers and parents on the topic of bullying. Her talks focused on putting a name to the behavior and she shared specific examples of

what bullying looks like. She also spent time teaching the difference between “tattling and telling,” as the children were encouraged to talk to an adult about bullying.

“Kids bully for many reasons,” Donna said. “Maybe they want to ‘copy’ their friends or they are trying to fit in. But bullying is a serious offense, with serious consequences.”

If you are interested in having Donna talk to your school, scout troop or organization, please contact New Leaf Resources at 708-895-7310.

Finding Self-worth Helps Client Overcome Depression

A client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her hope, help and healing.

"I starting feeling depression symptoms, again...crying, anxiety, trouble dealing with friends. This is the fourth time I've been in counseling, the second time at New Leaf.

I finally feel as though my counselor has gotten to the heart of my feelings about myself. She has been so helpful and supportive. I am so grateful for her kindness, humor and persistence in helping find myself.

I am working on standing on my own and realizing that I am worth something just being a human being.

I am learning new self talk, questioning mistaken beliefs. I am growing and becoming a whole person.

The best thing you can do for yourself is to invest the time and money into counseling. Don't hesitate to get help. God can change you - for the better."

**- Kathy, age 54
in counseling for
depression**



What's "New" at New Leaf Resources

We are excited to announce the addition of three new Board Members to the ministry.

Michael (Mike) Reagan joins the Board as the Assistant Treasurer. Mike works for Providence Bank, splitting his time between their Munster and Frankfort offices. Originally from Homewood, Mike is a graduate of Eastern Illinois University and received his MBA from Lewis University. He and his new wife, Aimee live in Cedar Lake and are members of Living Springs Community Church. There he is involved with their missions teams. In his spare time, Mike enjoys running and hunting.

Returning to the Board is Crown Point resident **Thelma Venema**. Thelma was instrumental in the opening of the Crown Point location in 2006. She attended Calvin College and graduated

from IUN. In addition to her support of New Leaf, Thelma has served on several Boards including Lake County Salvation Army, Crown Point Christian School and Calvin College.

Also joining the Board is Palos Heights resident **Barry Zalane**. Barry is a licensed Independent Agent with Wirtz Insurance Agency in Chicago. He and his wife Nancy both grew up in Rose-land, have been married over 50 years, and are grandparents to four. They attend Christ Community Church in Lemont and volunteer in church committee activities, senior choir and have served in consistory positions. Barry is an avid classic and antique car enthusiast, a White Sox and Blackhawks fan and he enjoys gardening.

We are truly grateful for the time and dedication of

our retiring board members, **Dick Lubbers, Ken Van Dellen, Burt VanderLaan** and **Joel Zuidema**. Each brought such a passion and expertise that will be sorely missed.

Welcome Student Intern **Jennie Sawyer**. Jennie will be seeing clients in the Lansing office under the supervision of Marriage & Family Therapist **Norm LeClercq**. Her interests include marital, family and relationship concerns, life transitions and stress, grief and loss, among others.

Jennie received her B.S. in Family & Consumer Science from the University of Georgia and is currently working on her Master of Science in Marriage & Family Therapy at Purdue University Calumet. Jennie attends Bethel Church in Crown Point and enjoys cooking and reading.

**" Don't
hesitate to get
help. God can
change you -
for the better."**

**- Kathy,
a client**

Divorce

(Continued from page 1)

ship too soon, it's only a matter of time before the same painful issues will resurface in the new relationship. Remembering the good as well as the bad parts of the past relationship is important, and may help you face the losses without drowning in the pain.

Seeking the help of a professional counselor or the camaraderie of a support group can also be invaluable. Many churches offer programs such as Divorce-Care (see list on page 1).

Save a tree

Would you prefer to get this publication via e-mail? Please let us know by sending us your e-mail address to terri@newleafresources.org.



Find us on
Facebook

www.fb.com/NewLeafResources

 **new leaf resources**
hope. help. healing.
2325 - 177th Street
Lansing, IL 60438
www.newleafresources.org

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lansing, IL
Permit No. 8

Page 4

Winter 2013

You are Invited! So Save the Date!

New Leaf's Annual Celebration Banquet



Thursday, April 18, 2013
The Center for Visual & Performing Arts,
in Munster, Indiana

Featuring the
improvisational comedy of
"Playfully Simple"
Led by Doug Pruim

Enjoy dinner,
fellowship & fun!
RSVP by April 1st -
(708) 895-7310 or
banquet@newleafresources.org
or www.newleafresources.org

Interested in hosting a table? Maybe a Sponsorship?
Please call Terri for more information.

 **new leaf resources**
hope. help. healing.

New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.