Financial instability taking its toll on children's mental health

By Rebecca Ruiz, Huffington Post

Drew McWilliams, a clinician and the Chief Operating Officer at Morrison Child and Family Services in Portland, Ore., suggests that amid the underwater mortgages, chronic unemployment and other fallout of the recent recession, a less obvious but equally worrying phenomenon has emerged: the troubled minds of children.

Since the financial collapse of 2008, McWilliams said his clinic has seen an increasing number of children suffering anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Of the 6,000 children that the center treats through in- and out-patient programs, McWilliams said many are trying to cope with the stress borne of persistent financial insecurity.

"Parents are struggling with their own issues and that spills over to their kids," he said.

Most parents don't think children are affected by financial burdens. In a 2010 survey, the American Psychological Association found that 69 percent of parents said their stress had little or no impact on their kids, while 91 percent of children said they saw the effects in their parents' behavior, which included yelling and arguing. The young respondents who noticed their parents' tension reported feeling sad, worried and frustrated.

The developing brain is also more vulnerable to chronic stress than most parents may realize. New and emerging research hints at how the constant barrage of stress hormones can change the way the brain develops, causing behavioral and psychological

disorders and putting children at risk for mental illness later in life. While the brain's malleability may be worrisome, it also means positive changes can occur with the right interventions.

"Kids who face adversity have highs and lows, strengths and weaknesses," said Christopher Sarampote, a program officer at the National Institute of Mental Health who focuses on trauma and anxiety disorders. "Parents can really be strong agents of change."

It may not always feel that way to the millions of parents who have struggled since the recession. In addition to the middle-class families that have experienced unemployment, the number of children living in high-poverty areas increased by 25 percent to nearly 8 million in the last decade, according to a recent report. Last month, the child advocacy group First Focus reported that the foreclosure crisis has affected 8 million children, 2.3 million of whom have lost their homes.

Read the whole story

Contractors being sought for Stateline bike route

One segment of the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail should break ground this summer.

The bid process is open. Potential contractors have until June 1 at 1:30pm to submit their proposals.

Last fall planners had hoped to seek bids in April for the 3.2-mile south demo part of the larger 30-mile route that goes

from Stateline to Crystal Bay.

The plan is the demo site, which goes from Stateline to Round Hill Pines, will be built in three phases – three consecutive summers. The middle section will be built first because it is all on U.S. Forest Service land through Rabe Meadow.

The three South Shore segments are:

• Casino area to Kahle Drive

• Kahle Drive to Elks Point Road

• Elks Point Road to Round Hill Pines.

Tahoe Transportation District is the lead agency.

Planning is under way for the north end, but not to the level it is on the south.

For more information about bidding on the south project, contact Alfred Knotts at (775) 589.5503 or aknotts@tahoetransportation.org.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Opinion: Mother's Day mixer a success

To the community,

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce would like to thank

the event sponsors, volunteers, vendors and attendees of the Mothers' Day BAHM for a fabulous evening last week at Valhalla.

The weather was perfect and more than 100 people were there to support the two winners of the Mothers' Day Makeover.

A special thank you to Tahoe Tallac Association and their volunteer staff; they were a great group of people and a huge help at the event. Thanks to Harrah's and Harveys Catering who provided the appetizers including chicken skewers, grilled vegetables, and a cheese and fruit platter. The food was a hit, as well as the wine poured by BellaGrace Vineyards and Crystal Basin Cellars. Raising the Bar Beverage Catering was on hand with a no host bar set up outside on the patio overlooking the lake.

The two winning moms looked lovely on the stage during the fashion show sponsored by Sidestreet Boutique. Vaolrie Hazley from V'z Image Optionz was one of the models in the show as well as one of the providers of the makeover services donated to the winning mothers. Additionally, the moms received dental care from Mireya Ortega at High Sierra Dental, babysitting from Lake Tahoe Sitters, three months of training from Escobar Training Grounds and a couple of tickets to the Improv at Harveys for a night on the town.

The chamber would like to thank all involved for spoiling the two deserving moms as well as the community for another great BAHM!

Jessica Cunningham, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Free seminar on estate planning

What will happen to your children, your business or finances if you are not around? Will your assets go to the people you want? Do you have creditor protection for yourself and your beneficiaries?

Barton Foundation is sponsoring a free presentation by Julia Gold, tax and estate planning attorney, to learn how to protect assets and secure your children's future if you are not around.

The event is May 31 from 5:30-7:30pm at Kahle Community Center in Stateline.

Space is limited. RSVP to jeane@parasol.org or (775) 298.0184.

Birding festival

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit and the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science are putting on the third annual Lake Tahoe Bird Festival on June 2 from 10am-4pm.

The free event is at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center, located three miles north of South Lake Tahoe on Highway 89.

The event includes guided bird walks every hour from 10:30am-1:30pm along the Rainbow Trail, information on bird feeding and landscaping, a talk on binocular and spotting scope use, a migration discussion by Will Richardson and a presentation by master falconer Marie Gaspari Crawford that includes live birds of prey.

For a schedule of activities, go online.

Expense of cancer pills can be hard to swallow

By Michelle Andrews, NPR

If you've got cancer, chances are you'd rather take a pill to fight the cancer cells than sit for hours hooked up to an IV line as the chemotherapy drips slowly into you.

The difficulty is, many of the new cancer pills, which often target cancer cells for destruction but leave healthy cells intact, are pricey, costing tens of thousands of dollars for a course of treatment. And how some insurers pay for treatments means that pills can wind up costing a patient more than chemotherapy given by IV.

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia now require private health plans to cover cancer-fighting pills, if they're available, to the same degree and without charging patients more than they would for traditional intravenous infusion therapy, according to the National Patient Advocate Foundation.

So, for example, a health plan that has a $1,500 limit on out-of-pocket spending for outpatient services like IV chemotherapy can't charge more than that annually for their treatment pills.

But Medicare beneficiaries don't benefit from these laws.

Read the whole story

Mark Twain Tahoe Mystery Public Festivity

The question of where Mark Twain camped on Lake Tahoe has inspired the Gatekeeper's Museum in Tahoe City to host the Mark Twain Tahoe Mystery Public Festivity featuring two authors with competing theories.

The event, which kicks off a summer-long public opinion poll about the two possible sites, will be June 21 at 6:30pm at the Gatekeeper's Museum.

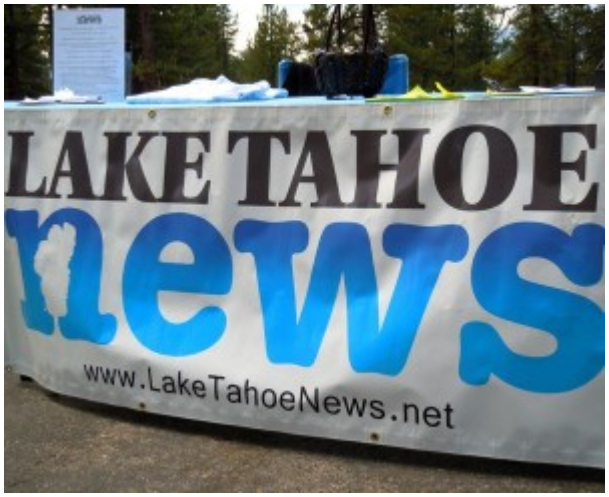
When Twain and a partner came to Lake Tahoe to stake a timber claim and get rich, he fell in love with the lake. Twain built a campfire that accidentally spread, starting a low-burning forest fire. The exact location of Twain's camp has never been officially determined.

Two authors recently offered competing theories of Twain's Lake Tahoe campsite location. Robert Stewart, in his book "Finding Sam Clemens' Cove at Lake Tahoe, Nevada", pegs a site near Sand Harbor State Park in Nevada. David Antonucci, in his book "Fairest Picture", pinpoints a site near Speedboat Beach on the North Shore on the California side.

The event is free for North Lake Tahoe Historical Society members. A $10 donation is suggested for non-members.

The Gatekeeper's Museum is located in the log cabin next to Fanny Bridge in Tahoe City.

LTN tidbit 18: Learn about Tahoe's wildlife



May is 31 tidbits about Lake Tahoe News month.

LTN tidbit No. 18:

A recent addition to *Lake Tahoe News* is the weekly column by Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. Usually Cheryl Millham, executive director of the South Shore nonprofit that rehabilitates wildlife so they can keep living in the wild, writes the articles. Occasionally, Tom Millham, her husband and secretary-treasurer of LTWC, contributes.

The columns run every Saturday.

The articles run the gamut from why swallows are good to what to do when crossing paths with a mama bear and her cubs.

Here is information about becoming a paid subscriber.

Water, sewer rates going up for STPUD customers

By Kathryn Reed

Sewer and water rates are going up July 1 for South Tahoe Public Utility District customers.

On a 3-2 vote, the board agreed to raise sewer rates 5 percent and water rates 2 percent. Board members Chris Cefalu and Randy Vogelgesang voted against the rate increase. Cefalu has said all along he is against raising rates.

During a break in the May 17 board meeting, Vogelgesang told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I was for a zero percent increase. Everyone I know has had their income go down."

He would like cuts be made in the budget, but would not share his ideas with *Lake Tahoe News*. Vogelgesang said he has spoken to General Manager Richard Solbrig about his ideas, but then added he does not want to micromanage.

Eric Schafer, president of the board, said while he appreciates the financial constraints people are under, to keep services at the level people are used to requires investing in the product. He said smaller rate increases are easier to cope with than going years without an increase and levying a large spike in fees to ratepayers.

The combined rate increase will mean an additionaal $27.60 a year for most residential ratepayers.

It was a 5-0 vote to alter the rate for metered water customers.

No members of the public spoke at the Thursday afternoon

meeting.

Information about how the additional money will be spent is outlined in this article.

Sugar is a natural enemy that is hidden in many foods

By Mandy Kendall

Sugarcaine. I have not spelled it wrong. Scientists are now starting to call sugar “legal cocaine” as studies are revealing that sugar can potentially be as dangerous as the class A drug.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 3 children born in 2000 will become diabetic.



Mandy Kendall

The *New York Times* recently reported that childhood obesity and the incidence of type 2 diabetes in children are rising at an alarming rate, adding an additional concern that “the disease progresses more rapidly in children than in adults and is harder to treat.”

There are many factors that influence whether someone will contract diabetes, but it is accepted that sugar is one of the biggest culprits.

We need sugar to survive, but not in the form and the amounts we are exposed to everyday. Our bodies are designed to digest natural food and turn that into glucose that circulates in the blood and is then used as our energy source. A very fine balance is required as too much, or too little, glucose in the blood can have dire consequences.

Insulin is the hormone that is used to soak up excess sugar in the blood to prevent high levels harming us. However, the barrage of sugar that our bodies get from modern diets can be too much for insulin to handle and things go wrong.

Think of Lucille Ball, in that famous scene in the chocolate factory. Lucille (insulin) is standing and watching the chocolates (sugar) go by her on the conveyor belt (blood stream) and she is not allowed to let too many go through at once. All is well while there aren't too many chocolates on the belt (normal blood sugar levels), then all of a sudden there are more and more chocolates and she has to do something. So she starts picking them up, stuffing them under her hat, shoving them in her mouth, but all too soon she can't take anymore and great piles of chocolates go past her and there is nothing she can do about it. That, in essence, is exactly what happens in our bodies.

CNN reported that children get more than 20 percent of their daily calories from sugar, equating to about 2 pounds of refined sugar a week. Would we let our dogs drink soda and eat sugar-laden foods every day? So why do we let the kids?

Sugar is highly addictive and hidden in so many foods so here are some *Qwik-e* tips to help avoid the sugar traps.

If you are really craving sugar – Eat a piece of fruit. The fiber in the fruit stops the blood sugar levels from spiking

too high and the sugar is in a natural form that is far better for your body.

Keep blood sugar levels balanced – This can be done by making sure you eat small amounts of food regularly so that you never get those energy slumps, caused by low blood sugar, that have you craving a quick fix. Kids are especially prone to this as they use up so much energy so quickly, so have them keep healthy snacks to hand (especially in school where the snack options might not be so healthy). Trail mix provides a good balance of protein and carbohydrates to keep blood sugar levels steady. Just make sure you get the unsweetened stuff without candy in it.

Watch out for sneaky sugar – Condiments and dressings are often loaded with sugar (there is a about a teaspoon of sugar in every tablespoon of ketchup). And let's face it, it is very easy to have more than just one tablespoon of ketchup. Sports drinks and most processed foods have sugar. Just look out for any ingredients with -ose at the end. Cereals can often be the biggest culprits and tend to set the kids up for a blood sugar spike early in the morning that plummets around mid morning, causing them to crave something sweet to bring their blood sugar levels back up again. Oatmeal sweetened with fresh or canned fruit is a very good alternative.

Slowly reduce sugar – It's an addiction after all and no one likes going cold turkey. Gradually swap out sodas for fruit juices diluted with fizzy water. However, be aware that fruit juice is also quite high in sugar so don't rely on this for too long. Mix a higher sugar content cereal with a low (or no sugar) cereal and slowly reduce the high sugar cereal while taste buds adapt.

Fat free – Often just means more sugar. They have to replace the fat with something. Check labels of low fat or fat free products and compare it to the full fat version. You might save a small amount of fat but gain much more sugar.

Diet sodas and artificial sweeteners – These will often have the same effect on your body that ordinary sugar does, as well as introducing chemicals into your system.

Protein and fiber – Adding protein and fiber to foods that convert to sugar quickly, like fruits and carbohydrates, will help slow down how quickly the sugar enters the bloodstream. Try, for example, Greek yogurt with fresh fruit or peanut butter (unsweetened) on whole wheat toast.

Visit sites like this for more information.

If you really want to know what sugar can do to you, check out this site with 146 reasons for reducing your sugar intake.

The Mayo Clinic also has a great list of tips for reducing sugar and also how to recognize the different names for sugar on food packaging too.

Until next time.

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, would like some advice, or would like to request some Qwik-e tips on any health and wellbeing topic, please feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.