



The Community  
School

Passages Program



# Passages Press

## Does Prison Help?

by Santa Havener

I have a strong opinion about imprisonment due to drug charges. To make things simple, if you are caught with drugs in our world today, what happens? Right - you most likely get sentenced to prison. A brick house full of rapists, murderers, etc. A place where you're locked in a cell (cage) and treated like an animal. You get told what to do, when to do it, beaten when a crooked guard feels it's necessary, you even have to fight for your life until the day you are released. Now to a drug addict, how is any of this going to help? It's not! The only thing being put in hell is going to do is make the urge to use whatever choice of drug worse. Think about it. If you were being treated as if you were someone's trashy pet who no one cared a damn thing about, wouldn't you want to get high? You're dang right. I would.

Usually when a person becomes an addict it is because (s)he wanted to forget about what was going on in his or her life and feel better about things. Crack, cocaine, meth, heroin, ecstasy, or whatever, is what makes this person feel better. Living as a prisoner anyone's going to want to feel better. To feel better, what's a person going to want to do? He or she's going to do what they know best. USE.

Oh, did I forget to mention you can get drugs just as easily, if not more easily, in prison

than on the streets? Someone wants cigarettes, or maybe someone is hungry, because the system feeds people like shit. There you go, a trade is made, and then the trader is getting high. What is a person going to learn from this? Absolutely nothing! Except to keep doing what they were sentenced to prison for in the first place. So, when Joe Blow gets out of prison, how long before you think he goes back? Not long, because he never learned anything the last time he was there.

What I believe is that if someone is caught with a usable amount of drugs and they are not found guilty for selling, trafficking, or whatever you want to call it, then they have a problem, a habit, an addiction. You need help. Prison is not going to help. You need rehab, counseling, and lessons on what drugs really do to you and those around you. Instead of using our tax money to make prisons bigger, we need to use the money to build rehabilitation homes. Instead of the judge saying you are sentenced to however many years in prison, he or she needs to start saying you are sentenced to rehab. If we want to keep locking these people up, we need to lock them up where they are going to learn something and not want to use after they are released. We need to stop putting people in prison and put them in rehab. We want our people coming out clean, not as dirty as they were in the beginning.

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Now for people who sell drugs and don't use, I don't have much of an opinion on that. I say this because they are ruining other people's lives, or maybe even killing people, but what I do know is that wherever they go some kind of education should be provided to teach them what the product they are selling to others is doing to people and their lives.

Also, I would like to mention that I have been speaking only of prison. I would like to correct myself by saying sometimes people are sent to a local jail instead of prison, but to remind you jail is just as bad. The only difference is that your sentence may be shorter. The point is, stop putting people behind bars and start putting them behind a teacher. I know people say people had the choice to get help before it came down to prison, but what a lot of us don't understand is some of us can't afford it. It doesn't cost the person anything to go to prison so why should it to get help? Also, some people don't realize they have a problem because what they are doing is normal to them. It should be up to our courts to help them realize they do have a problem by putting them in to a rehab again, free of charge. I bet when they get out, over three quarters of them will know they had a problem and I bet they will not touch a drug again.



I was told to pick one subject and give my opinion on it. Well, that's all good and dandy. However, I have decided to take a different route and "rant and rave" about a bunch of subjects.

Right now President Bush wants to send more troops to Iraq. I think this is a bad idea, I feel it is not needed. We already have plenty people killing themselves for something I feel they

shouldn't be, but I'll get into that later. Saddam is dead, ergo, we won. Bring the troops home. We don't need to turn Iraq into the 51<sup>st</sup> state of America, or the first country of Bushville. Which brings me back... Saddam is dead, yes, but what about Osama? Osama Bin Laden attacks America on September 11, 2001. We attack Afghanistan. Good idea. Months later, we attack Iraq. Then declare war. Why did we start the war with Iraq? Some people claim Iraq had nuclear weapons that they were going to use on America. Ok, but there were no nuclear weapons found throughout the war. I think Bush just wanted to do what his daddy couldn't. That's my two cents on that subject.

This brings me to the topic of the military draft. I think the draft is not a good way of resolving who's in the armed forces. If you want to be in the armed forces, go ahead. If not, then you shouldn't be made to. And as far as gays being in the army, let them. If they want to go kick some foreign ass, let them. I have nothing else to say on the matter.

Another subject I feel strongly about is the legalization of marijuana. Marijuana I feel could be legalized. Have you ever heard of an abusive pothead, while only on pot? I haven't. Most people only become abusive with the substance of alcohol. I feel that if they don't want to legalize marijuana, they should ban alcohol. I am still a strong believer that marijuana isn't as bad for you as alcohol, although I don't smoke anymore. Also, I have never heard of anybody ever overdosing on marijuana. They could sell joints in packs like cigarettes. Though they might be a bit more expensive. Then again if it was legalized the price might drop drastically. That's all I gotta say about that.

As far as how I came to my conclusions, I pieced together different parts that I've gotten from different people and just put them together as my own. These are just a few things floating around in my head. Most are complete opinion, no fact, or at least none that I've heard. If I had to choose which propaganda technique I used, it would have to be card-stacking, because I only gave one side of the story.

# Moms and Dads

by Jessica Isakson

I think the roles between a mom and dad are really not all that different. Yes, I know dad takes you out fishing or teaches you how to play football or basketball, but I know a couple where that's what the mom enjoys doing and the kids love it anyway. I think the major thing is knowing that when one parent might not understand or support you in something, the other might. It's always nice to know that you have at least one person on your side when the other one isn't.

I always found that I was fine having two moms. It didn't matter to me that I didn't have a dad. I think some kids feel they need a dad more than others. I think the thing that a dad gives you is an extra sense of security. They kind of just ooze that teddy bear feeling. You know how you got your first teddy bear years ago and now you look on it and it's old and worn and is missing one eye, but you still just can't throw it away because it just calms your mind and heart just by hugging it?

That's the way a dad, I think, makes you feel. You just have to know that they are there, just that one hug, and it can make all the difference in the world. I also think that mom is more the nurturing caretaker, whereas dad is more the adventuresome, play, teaching role model. Mom



understands that the girl wants to go on a date and dad is protective. Dad realizes that the son needs the car, and mom makes sure his shirt is pressed and his hair is combed back. I think that throughout the parenting years, though, mothers and fathers oftentimes switch roles back and forth. It just depends on the situation, who wants to handle it, who has more experience with this or that, and who feels up for the challenge. Sometimes it's just teamwork, too.

I want to be able to demonstrate a lot of things to my son. I know that I will make mistakes as a parent, but I want the outcome to be good. I

want my son to be understanding of all people and all things around him - good or bad. I don't want him to be close-minded, but I also want him to be able to say what he thinks is right or wrong without feeling hesitant. I want him to feel confident in what he feels, whether it is what others think is cool or not. I want to be able to demonstrate that it's ok to show emotion and tell people what you think of them as long as it is constructive. I want to be able to show him what it means to be a person who is responsible and trustworthy. I want to be able to show him how to treat others in a relationship. I want him to know that when you talk to someone you love or care about, you have to respect them and their opinions. You have to honor what people ask of you, what they tell you, and honor commitments that you have made. You have to be a trustworthy person when it comes to relationships and not make people feel like you are in control. I want to show him that everyone has equal rights in the world and in the home. I want his father figure to show him the correct way to treat a lady. I want him to be shown what it means to really be a man. I want him to learn that he needs to be kind, helpful, polite, courteous, loving, caring, and most of all understanding as a man. I think that that is what it takes to be a man, and I want his father figure to be able to show him how to be that way when he gets older.

I also want to show my son how I act in a relationship is how he should act in a relationship. All relationships start with honesty and communication. I want him to know that these two things are what will get him a start to really great relationships with all sorts of people. I want him to also see me as being a person who listens to others and treats people with respect. I want him to know that you can care about people and give people second chances. I want him to know that it's a part of life to get hurt, but you always make it out on the other side, and it's usually a place where the grass is greener. All of these things are what I want him to see in my relationships with others. I just want him to know that it's good to have relationships with more than just yourself. It's important to grow and

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change with the people around you in your own way.

I hope that someday my son will have someone that he can look up to, whether it is me or someone else who really deserves to have my child's admiration. I only want the best for him. It's what he deserves.

## Parenting

by Jazman Nash

My mom was never there for me. It was hard at times. I didn't really understand why she didn't want me. I have one full sister and two half brothers. She gave Alex and me up and kept the two youngest ones. Sometimes I think it was just because she was too young. Really, that isn't any excuse. There are so many young girls out there who have babies at young ages. Take me for an example - I'm 17 and I have a baby. I'm doing fine with raising her. Then I think, well, maybe it's because I don't want to be a mother to Summer like my mother was to me.

My mom was always doing drugs and well she still is. When I really think about it though, I was one of the lucky ones. I wasn't brought up in an environment full of drugs. I was lucky that I had the chance to live a different life than that. My grandmother does a wonderful job with me. She is a lot of help with Summer. I don't have drugs around me all the time. The world is full of them, though. The only time that I have ever had drugs around me was when I wasn't home and some of my friends did it. I was brought up completely differently. I know that drugs don't get you anywhere in life.

My dad is a drug addict. He has been in and out of jail his whole life. He has never been there for me. He went away for 12 years and I didn't have anything to do with him. Once in a while when I felt like going to see him I would. That wasn't often though. He always promised me that we would be together and he would make up for it. That day never came. He was out for a while and he did the same stuff he did before he went in. Now he is back in jail doing it all over again.

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Sometimes I wonder if what my parents have done to me is why I have depression. Then I try to look at it from a different angle. I have depression because I let that stuff get to me, and really I shouldn't. I get mad at my grandmother and I say stuff I shouldn't say. After I sit down and think about what I said, I realize I'm not mad at her, I'm mad at my mother and my father. She is a great grandmother, and I think she did a pretty good job of raising me. I just hope that I can do even a better job of raising Summer.

I only have one goal for myself on how to raise Summer better than most of these kids around here. My goal is to teach her that drugs are no good, that drugs may make you feel good for a little while, but they can affect your life so badly. I'll tell her about her grandparents and how my life was without them in it. I'll explain to her that drugs can't help you out of any situation that you may be in; that drugs may make the pain and problems go away for a little while, but in the long run, when your high is gone, you still have the same pain and the same problems; that really the pain and problems never went away to begin with; that you were just too drugged up to realize that it all was still right there.

Drugs affect so many people's lives. Teenagers don't realize how much drugs hurt themselves and the people around them. That inside, the pain, hurt, problems, and agony are still there. Drugs change you in so many different ways. They mess with your mind more than anything. Drugs don't make your life any better, they only make your life worse. I have lived life having drug addicts for parents. I have realized and seen what drugs actually do to people, and how it changes how that person used to be or to think.

When you really think about it, everyone says that guns and drugs kill people. But really people kill people. The number one disease in this world is ignorance. I don't think so many people would do drugs and do what they do, if everyone just got along. That's just my opinion on that.

# Living with a Mental Illness

by Amanda Cross

My dad has a mental disease called schizoaffective disorder. I refer to this as a disease because there is no cure, it does not go away on its own, and if it is not properly treated he could die. Unlike schizophrenia, he does not have extreme paranoia, extreme disorganization, or extreme catatonic state. He is schizoaffective with extreme depression, and auditory delusions and hallucinations.

The formal diagnosis is SCHIZOAFFECTIVE DISORDER: DEPRESSIVE TYPE. Schizoaffective disorder is when symptoms of schizophrenia and mood disorders combine. The symptoms overlap each other, during a major depressive episode, or major manic episode. My dad never has mixed or manic episodes so he's the depressive type. He has some of the common side affects of schizophrenia, like social / occupational dysfunction: "functioning in areas such as work, interpersonal relationships, and self care, are markedly below level achieved prior the onset" – DSM – IV – TR Delusions or hallucinations must be present to make this diagnoses.

His doctors believe that this may be something he used to adapt as a child to deal with the abuse he suffered from his father, and a negligent mother. Most of his siblings suffer from chronic depression. When it first started in his childhood it was probably a slight case of schizophrenia, being just the withdrawal from reality, and a choice to live in a fantasy world. Some medical books even have chewing shirt collars as a sign of mild schizophrenia, (which he did). When he ignored and denied his past and problems as an adult, resulting in his "breakdown", it may have changed to, or grown into schizoaffective disorder.

Schizophrenia and the genetic factor have been studied more extensively than any other mental disorder. "The cumulative weight of this evidence points clearly toward some type of genetic influence in the transmission of this disorder."-

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Abnormal Psychology Doctors note that schizophrenia often seems to run in families. Family members share genes, but they also share environment. There is no way to discern between genes and learning process. According to a pooling of studies done between 1920 and 1987, children of patients have a 13% chance of developing schizophrenia, grandchildren have a 5% chance, and siblings have a 17% chance. When I say "developing", I mean exhibiting symptoms and being diagnosed, for if it is genes determining this we would already have it, even though it may be dormant.

It is said there are gender differences between male and female patients, such as when they first show signs. On average the male patient will experience problems four to five years younger than the female. Also, the first hospital admission will be earlier. Symptoms for the male will most likely be typical withdrawn, passive negative, where as the females will be atypical affective, active positive. There are consistent studies that suggest dysfunction in the frontal cortex and temporal lobes of the brain. This is also observed in patients with major mood disorders. This seems to affect the overall severity of the disorder. I present this information, because schizoaffective disorder is a closely related disorder. What is found to be true with schizophrenia could also be true for schizoaffective disorder.

This disorder affects my father's whole life. He had his first breakdown and stay at a psychiatric unit in 2003. He has most likely had this since early childhood, but it did not hit him hard until then. He admits ignoring many of the symptoms for a long time.

After his first episode, he became very childlike again. He could not be left alone, and could not function normally. He became a responsibility to me instead of a parent. I have always loved my dad through it all, but being only fourteen at the time, I did not understand anything about his problems. I became very angry with him. At that point I took care of him because I *had* to, not because I *cared* to. I did not want my brothers to

feel tied down by him, and my mother couldn't handle it, so she constantly busied herself elsewhere. My dad used to cry and beg me not to leave him alone, and if I needed to shower when no one else was home, it had to be ten minutes or less.

After about 10 months to a year, I moved out for the first time, and left care of my dad to my brother Thomas. My mother bailed about the same time, because my dad wasn't really a functioning being, and my brothers and I were too much to handle. I still came home quite often to check in, clean the house, do laundry, and cook something good. I also got my dad to start smoking pot with me. It woke him up a bit, and made him more social. When he was high he would play cards, and shower himself, maybe even get out of the house. I had a cervical cancer scare, and needed lots of test and eventually an operation, and because I was a minor I needed a parent to sign the papers. My dad refused.

At sixteen I emancipated myself, so I could make my own legal decisions, but I moved back home to care for my dad, and help my brother out. I worked a full time job, 40-53 hrs weekly. When I was not working, I was cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, and trying to keep a healthy relationship. I moved out again, and then just before my daughter was born, lived there once again.

My dad has had upswings, and down points in the past years. Our house burnt down, and he is doing much better since. He was in the psychiatric hospital when it happened, and since he has been released, he has not been back. He has a small apartment in town. He still has trouble keeping up with normal activities such as hygiene and house cleaning, but he is getting better with time. Now he still has to battle every day with depression and they have him on many medications that help. He still hears voices; he explains them to me as like being in a stadium. He hears many voices, but he can't clearly hear what they say. Except for one, that occasionally channels through and commentates on his life, and tells him he is a failure. He has one particularly violent voice, which will tell him to commit suicide, and other horrible things like to

jump out the window, fall down the stairs, and walk into traffic. Awful ideas like these bring out his depression. These are auditory hallucinations. My dad has learned to recognize that they are hallucinations, and he will try to ignore them. He does pretty well.

We are both much more informed about his problems, and we have a much better relationship. I try to help anyway I can, like suggesting he writes, or gets out of the house. I no longer ask him to smoke pot. We sobered up together when I got pregnant. We both realize now it's not a healthy option. He has joined a cooking class, and the interaction and good food helps him, emotionally and psychically. When he is around my daughter, Teakin, he cheers up, and it makes living worth it again. I know this will always be a battle for all of us, but I am so proud of my dad. He could have just committed suicide, but he chose to live.

He will never be daddy in the same way as when I was three - the big protector, and playmate. He is daddy as in a role model and inspiration. It takes a lot of strength to ask for help, and a lot more just to keep fighting. If I had voices in my head, and the other problems as well, I know I'd be weaker than him. I wouldn't be here. There is no end to his problems, but we are working on making every day easier and not so lonely. Maybe someday we will find the perfect balance of medications and home remedy. I hope so. He deserves life to be a little easier, it's hard enough as a "sane" person.

## Addressing Abuse in Your Life

by Amanda Cross

When you are addressing abuse in your own life, the first step is admitting it, whether or not you are the victim or the abuser. No one can change or change a situation without admitting there is a problem. Next you need to get help. It's very hard to change an abusive situation without help. If you are the abuser, you have to be ready to change. If you are the abused, to escape on your own is even harder. When you are abused, especially for long periods of time, you become conditioned to it. This

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is a tactic many men use when they abuse their wives. They start very gradually, and convince the women it is normal or ok, because they are in the position of power, and they will try to convince her that she is nothing without him. Many women believe this - that they can't do any better.

Emotion is both a weapon and an excuse. It makes you vulnerable. When you love somebody, you cling to the hope that they not only can change, but that they will. Emotion also comes into play with fear. Many women today live in fear of their husbands, fathers, and many other men close to them. They are afraid if they reach out, he will find out, and abuse her worse. They are under the belief that if they try and escape there is no safe haven, he will find her, and maybe even kill her. In many of these cases there are children involved. This creates a cycle. Not all, but many people who are abused turn out to become abusers themselves later in life. This behavior is normal to them. Though many will recognize that it is wrong, few will be able to stop themselves without help. It is weird for them to be without abuse, because they are so used to it.

We are raising the next generation, and it is up to us to put a stop to these kinds of harmful cycles. We, as parents, need to instill good morals and behavior in our children. Not too long from now they will be running the world. If we teach our children that abusive behavior is not ok, they have a better chance of overcoming our downfalls. I believe that if we educate our children not only about abuse, but the negative effects, they should be able to make the right decision. It does not all fall on education. We teach them best by our own examples. Show your children healthy and safe lifestyles, homes and relationships, and that is what they will seek. Show them abuse, unsafe behaviors and bad relationships, and they will seek that because it's all that they know.

## My Two Pregnancies

by Shelly Matthews

My first pregnancy, with Brandon, went smooth as cream. So, when I got pregnant for the second time I naturally expected things to go the same or even better. I had been told by several second-time mothers that the second baby was the easiest child to have, that it was less stressful and painful than the first. As naïve as I was about this, I went on thinking my life was going to be perfect while I was pregnant. It would be just like the magazines and movies - my face would glow, I would feel beautiful, and I would be at my happiest. Wow, do not ever take for granted that you can breathe, eat, sleep, or even stay awake to watch a sitcom you have been dying to see for the entire week! Not every pregnancy is the same. Trust me.

I hate to be the one to ever say this about my beautiful son, but when I found out that I was pregnant with Brandon, I was not a very thrilled mother. I was not expecting him, which in all honesty, means that I did not exactly plan on becoming responsible for another life. I struggled with this. I didn't want to be pregnant, but I just couldn't consider abortion. There were other alternatives like adoption, but that left me cold. Then I got to thinking, "Wow, I actually have a little baby growing inside of me. I am very fortunate." I thought about how sad I was for all the men and women who struggle to become pregnant and have to go through a series of tests and years go by, and still the mother doesn't conceive. I thought to myself, "This is going to be very hard. I've never even been that responsible for myself, let alone someone else." And I could not stand the father of my child; just the thought of him disgusted me. I worried that the way I felt about him would affect the fetus somehow, or how I felt about the baby after it was born.

Once I accepted the fact that I was going to have a child, I got excited about it. I was anxious and happy. I was ready to go shopping for all the really cute clothes and the toys that would help with his developing skills. I was not thinking about the



**Field Trip to State House**  
**Wednesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>**  
Meet at Cscool @ 9:00  
(no babysitting available)

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cost of the diapers, wet wipes, food, and formula. It was almost as though I was thinking that he was going to be like a little doll. I thought I'd just do the things I liked to do once his needs were met. That meant feeding him, changing him, and putting him to sleep. Then I'd be free to do what I wanted. Well, of course I knew better than that, but I did not understand the responsibility that I would face.

So, from the very start, things were different between pregnancies. While I hadn't expected or wanted Brandon at first, the second pregnancy was planned. Michael and I had made the decision to have another child. Little Michael wasn't a surprise. We were both certain that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together and to share the cost and responsibility of our child. The day that Michael and I decided to get pregnant, I am quite sure Little Michael was developing in his own little way inside me. I was prepared. Brandon was three and a half when we decided to have Little Michael. By then, I knew how much everything was going to cost and what the responsibilities were, but I wasn't afraid. The second time around none of that mattered to me.

As far as the pregnancy itself, things were different as well. When I was pregnant with Brandon, things went smoothly. I craved the oddest foods, stopped smoking, had very few morning sickness days, and I was very energetic. I continued to do the things that I had always done before. I even made a stone wall out of rocks for a flower garden. I guess you could say that I was a little bit creative. I was also a slight bit ignorant to the things that I should not have done. When I was seven months along, I went out on a mountain four-wheeling in a vehicle, and we were stuck there for about six hours. Now that was not so smart. I remained very healthy throughout the entire pregnancy.

Compare that to the second time. I knew right away that I was pregnant with Little Michael. It was almost like he was saying, "Here I am mom. Ready or not, here I come!" I began feeling very nauseous, something I hadn't experienced much with Brandon. I was tired, I lacked the energy I had

with Brandon, and I just felt different. I was so happy to find that I was pregnant. I set up an appointment with Dr. Wilbourne and was disappointed when Dr. Pilliteri took over. Dr. Pilliteri told me that since I had a leap done previously, my cervix was weakened, and I could make the choice to have stitches put in to help hold the baby. I had to have this done before twelve weeks, and the down side was that if I did have it done, I could get infections and the baby could have complications and I could miscarry. If I decided not to do so, my cervix could weaken and I would have a chance of losing the baby around twenty-five weeks. Scary, scary, scary. I talked it over with Michael. We decided not to have it done, because it seemed like more of a risk for the both of us than having it done. I'd never had to face these kinds of decisions during my pregnancy with Brandon. I'd never been that scared. There were no thoughts about building stone walls.

I worried the entire pregnancy. I read everything to the point I really needed to stop because everything was scaring me. I wanted the baby more than anything and I was so worried I'd lose it. I was sick day and night. I could not eat anything the first three months, and if I did, it came up. I had heartburn so bad that I *lived* off Roloids. I alone supported that company with my nine month supply! I was beginning to feel restless, sore, and tired. My blood pressure was an issue for the first time in my life. When I first went to the appointments, it was my excitement that elevated the blood pressure, but later on, it was my fear. My blood pressure became a high risk factor for both me and the baby. On top of all this, I was very moody during Little Michael's pregnancy, something else I'd never experienced with Brandon. I was so sick every night that I could not sleep well. But, I absolutely could not wait to see my beautiful child. Every night, I would tell his daddy how much I loved our son and that I could not wait to have him in my arms.

When Brandon was ready to come into the world I began labor at nine one evening. Around five thirty in the morning I told my mother that I

was ready to go. The pain at that point was unbearable. My doctor was so old fashioned he had told me to stay at home until the pain was so horrible I could not stand it, so that's what I did.

I arrived at the hospital at a quarter to six. The nurses called my doctor, and in the meantime, during an internal exam they were shocked to find that I was already ten centimeters. I was very hot and thirsty, but the thing that bothered me the most was how sweaty I got, it felt as though I were going to pass out. I did not want to move when I was in the pushing stage, but Brandon's heartbeat went very low and the doctor wanted me to get on my hands and knees. I kept apologizing the entire time.

"Was I doing a good job? Was I moving correctly? Was I doing okay? Did they know if I could push yet? Why can I not push? Wow, I am so hot, can I have a cool cloth? I am so sorry. I am so sorry." Over and over I apologized for not knowing what to do. At three minutes after seven, Brandon was born. I cried because I thought he was so beautiful. My mother and my grandmother were there for me the entire time. It was the first time that they had seen a baby born, other than their own.



With Little Michael's delivery, I went to the hospital at five centimeters. The doctors wanted me in early because of my blood pressure. The pain was fine until he broke my water.

Aahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. The pain from the contractions were so strong and intense..... uh, did I say **strong** and **intense**? It was horrible! I did not scream as they do in the movies, but trust me, I felt like it. Little Michael got caught on my pubic bone. I pushed a few times, and then he was in Daddy's arms. I was so excited to push the afterbirth out to see what it looked like. I was more curious about it this time. With Brandon, I almost got sick. After Little Michael was born I literally passed out. Michael said I turned green and fell right over. My blood pressure was sky high. This was when the

anxiety I'd suffered all during the pregnancy got worse.

Postpartum depression. I didn't have that with Brandon, either. I am now on a small amount of blood pressure meds and I have terrible anxiety. Before I was diagnosed, I truly believed I was having a heart attack or that I was going to die. I am on Prozac and I like it a lot. It most definitely helps. Postpartum, that is a whole other subject. I could go on forever.....

Because the circumstances were different for both pregnancies, the way I've mothered has been different too. At least, initially. I felt really guilty about the way I raised Brandon. I was so inexperienced. I was also stressed because he was born with tuberous sclerosis, and somehow I feel like I could have done something else to help with his development. I did not read much on parenting skills. I did not really want to learn a lot about what children did at a certain age, what they ate, or how they felt. I did not realize this was what I should have been doing until he was a little bit older. Afterwards, I was constantly trying to make this up to him. I can't help feeling sad now about this, because I know that I am a better mom to Little Michael than I was to Brandon. Sometimes I feel like crying, or just dreaming a crazy dream like the one in Alice in Wonderland. Only it would be Shelly in Wonderland and in it I could do everything differently.

Brandon knows I love him. I treat him the same as I do Little Michael, but then some days the guilt is there again. Brandon does not require touch, hugs, or attention as Michael does. We try to include Brandon in everything that we do, but that just does not matter. He does not like all the love that we have to give, he would rather it be on his own terms. Without this feedback and mutual feeling of love it is hard to feel as if I've made up for my mistakes.

I am a very good mother now. I read several articles, magazines, and books to help with my children's development. Better yet, I read them stories every single day. I sing to them, and do fun

activities. I really enjoy reading to them so much that we have a Disney book club, *Hooked on Phonics*, *Clifford Hooked on Phonics*, and an Einstein club going. They send books and DVD's every month. I have another club that has educational A-B-C's and 1-2-3 books. We have playtime every single day, belly time, and special television shows.

I love learning about the different activities and developmental achievements they have monthly. I know what foods are healthy and how personal hygiene is important. I know that they need to brush their teeth every day, and that I need to do all this for them. I really actually enjoy doing all of this. I do not know how I would survive without them. It would be the most dreadful thing knowing I COULD NOT EVER see them again. I love to see the way their eyes light up when we walk into the room. I love it when Brandon holds his hands out to be held. I love it when Little Michael wants just me, and gets upset when I need to put him down.

Both of them are very important to Michael and me. We think that they are the best human beings in the entire world. We want them to be healthy and be the best that they can be. I know that the both of them will be respectful and we will teach them to respect themselves. We will show them how much we care by being the best parents we can be.

I just want to end this by saying, "Trust me." Just because you had one wonderful, smooth pregnancy does not mean that the next will be the same. But do remember the result is this: You have the most wonderful gift of all - your children.



## The La Leche League

by Jessica Isakson

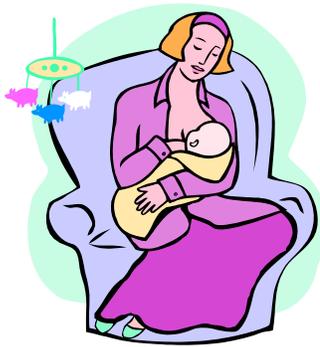
I heard about the La Leche group from the lactose nurse at the hospital after my son was born. My mom and I discussed my going and we both thought it would be an excellent idea. I started going when my son was two weeks old. When I first went I was shy and wasn't sure if I really wanted to be there. There were so many women and babies. I soon realized that they had a lot of good information and could answer questions that I had. I enjoyed being there and liked talking to the women about their babies and what challenges they had that were similar to the ones I was having. I soon began to really enjoy myself at the group and even began to put in my own two cents when I had an answer or idea for a question that someone would have.

I began to learn that babies certainly do have their own personalities, even at a young age. Some of the women talked about their babies going on a nursing strike, or a bottle strike. I was definitely happy to know that they will get past it, but that it takes time and patience. I was also happy to know that another mother had to use the nipple shield that I was having to use for three months before her baby would latch on to just her breast without it. Andrew didn't need it a few days later. It was really helpful because the woman told me to just keep trying at random times and sometime the baby might just decide to do it. That was exactly what happened with my son. It was amazing.

When Andrew got cradle cap, several of the mothers began to share ways to help get rid of it. Some of them also just suggested leaving it alone if he also had excema because the oil may cause the cradle cap to get worse. I started out trying to use baby oil, but it seemed to aggravate his cradle cap and dry skin, so then I began to just let it run its course, and it has almost completely healed up.

Some of the women also helped me get some ideas of how to get Andrew to sleep more at night. A lot of them said if you try and get a routine

that you are going to be able to do every night, that that would help. I soon began to put him down at the same time every night, feeding him and changing him right before bed. I put him in his bassinet and don't let him sleep with me anymore. When he goes into his bed he knows that it's time for him to go to sleep. Feeding him right before bed helped, too. It made it so that he was full so he would sleep longer before he would get hungry again. He now sleeps between four to six hours at a time, then wakes up to be fed and changed and goes right back to sleep.



I really enjoyed going to the group also because these are women who went through a painful labor, yet they are so calm and loving towards their children, even when they are driving their moms up the wall. I began to realize that you can't

think about how tired you are; you have to concentrate on what your child is crying about or why they are acting a certain way. It's like solving a puzzle and that is what you have to focus on.

I have learned a lot from going to the group, and I really hope that others will go. I can't go any more because I am no longer breastfeeding, but I do hope that when my friend who is pregnant has her baby, that she will go to the group. It is a great learning tool and support system. Breastfeeding is not as easy as it looks. It takes time, patience, love, and cooperation by both mom and baby. You have to eat right, be calm, not be stressed out, pump all the time, feed all the time, and always be on top of how the baby is eating and latching on. It's a lot of work, and this group is a great way to feel good about what you are doing, get new ideas, and share what's been hard and have people know what you are talking about and really care.

## Aidan

by Ashley Hoffses

With every toothless smile,  
every tiny tear,  
every wonderful dream and every fear,  
I love you.

My love for you could never fade,  
we make more memories each day.

I love your deep brown eyes  
and every toe!

I love that when I'm sad  
you seem to know!

When I hear your laugh  
all my sadness goes away,

I just don't know where I would be today  
without you.

My love is here to stay because

you are a part of me

I couldn't live without.

You are my little heart.

My love is all yours  
without a doubt.

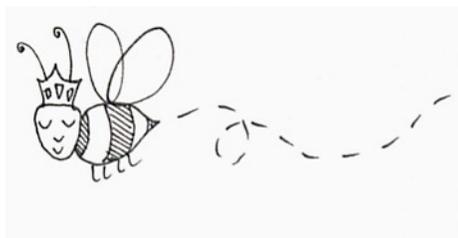


## Clean Bee – A Passage Proposal

by Ashley Coffin

My passage is to open my own cleaning business. The name I have chosen is Clean Bee. My business offers cleaning and organizing services in the Knox county area. Opening my own cleaning business has always been in the back of my mind. My mother had her own cleaning business and I helped clean when I had time. Having to do a passage has really opened up some windows of opportunities. My plan is to go post my business cards (which I already have) everywhere. My advocate will be laid up soon giving me the time I need to do this. I've already met with a couple people who seemed interested but have yet to call me back. I hope to have at least one client before my final presentation. My Passage will be complete in March.(given I have a client) It will be a few more months before I get done with my expert, Eola Ball of the Maine Center for Women, Work, & Community. As of now I have all my cleaning products, a vacuum and a suit for when I meet possible clients.

The only real big problem is time. I have a six month old and very limited trustworthy people I can leave her with while I promote my business. To date I will continue to work with Eola Ball and try to learn more things to help my business. The most important thing I think I need to learn is book keeping. If my business fails that would stink but that's one of the risks I have to take. I need to focus on the rise of my business. At my final meeting I will tell all about my success or failures. Stay tuned.



## BOOK CORNER

### New and Selected Poems

by Mary Oliver

reviewed by Jessica Isakson

I read a book that had all of Mary Oliver's best poems in them. The whole book was amazing but there were a couple of poems that I really enjoyed.



The first poem that I really liked and moved me was "The Journey." I really enjoyed this poem because it seems to echo what has been going on in my life for such a long time now. It starts out by saying, "One day you finally knew what you had to do, and began..." I really like the way this poem starts because that is exactly what happens. It just hits you one day with what you need to do in your life. You don't really think about it, you just go out and know what you are supposed to do. You think about what you should do earlier in your life, but you don't really take action on it until when that feeling just hits you and you suddenly know which steps to take first to move on in your life. People may want you to help them in their lives but for some reason you realize at some point that you can't focus on yourself while focusing on others as well. When you finally get passed those voices and really start to listen to yourself and what is going on in your heart and mind you come to a peace that you've never felt before. This poem really touches me in the deepest places because it is how I feel when I listen to myself and what I need instead of what other people need me to do for them.

The second poem that I felt moved by was "White Night." I don't really know why this poem touched me. I think it was because of how Mary Oliver described the night, and how it shows the activity that occurs during the night and how the moon caresses everything that its light touches. My favorite verse that hit me the most was, "All night I

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float in the shallow ponds while the moon wanders burning, bone white, among the milky stem.” I also felt my heart reach out to the verse, “Morning will rise from the east tangled and brazen, and before that difficult hurricane of light I want to flow out across the mother of all waters, I want to lose myself on the black and silky currents, yawning, gathering the tall lilies of sleep.” These verses touched me because I could see the images in my head. I could see the moon crossing the pond, and I could see the milky stems that were white because of the white pureness of the moon’s light. I could see the currents of water and see the blackness come in and swoop up the lilies to put them back to sleep. This imagery made me feel at peace and feel in awe of everything around me.

These poems just really made me think and see what was around me. They made me realize that there is beauty in everything including the hard stuff that happens in our lives. Mary Oliver is a wonderfully powerful writer, and makes you not just read what she writes, but makes you think about what you are reading. The words make you take it all in and ponder each word carefully, and piece each sentence together to bring the whole poem together.

## Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone

by J. K. Rowling  
reviewed by: Nick Halliley

This book and movie series have been hyped up so much. I found the movie enjoyable, but not as good as its publicity. With the book, yes, it is a lot better than the movie. However it still isn’t as spectacular as people have told me it was. I have found myself literally laughing out loud. Maybe not for a long time, but I definitely have gotten into it. If the Harry Potter series wasn’t so hyped up I think I would’ve liked the movie and book a lot better.

Is this a good enough book to consider reading? Yes. I fought and clawed my way from

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having to read this long book, but I bought my girlfriend the first book and movie for her birthday in October. We watched the movie. My exact words after the movie was; “It wasn’t all it was hyped up to be.” I wouldn’t say I liked it or anything. I was just being stubborn. Truth is, I *did* enjoy it, and I want to see the second movie. Now I also want to read the second book.

I really like how the characters react to each other. Hermione, Ron and of course, Harry, all have very close encounters with trouble. In one encounter, Hermione gets in trouble with a troll and Harry and Ron have to save her. After that incident is when Harry and Ron accept Hermione as a friend. The gamekeeper, Hagrid, is my favorite character. Hagrid is a complete redneck sounding giant. I found Hagrid to be hilarious. He is funnier in the movie because of the visual and sound, but he is still funny as hell in the book. I recommend this story to wizards, witches and even muggles (non-magic folk).

So in closing, no - it wasn’t all it was hyped up to be, but, yes - it was a good book.

Again, I would love your feedback and thoughts on this book and any other book I’ve reviewed. It won’t give you extra points in school, but it will help you learn to express yourself, and give others your opinion.

### Passage Committees

Our next graduation is scheduled to take place on June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. Many of you will be working on your Passage in the next few months and looking for people to be on your committees. To those of you who are asked to serve on a team, we encourage you to participate and remind you that it is very important to show up for the Passage meetings. Besides learning a lot about the process, the person working on a Passage relies on his/her team members for feedback and support.