

Aggie Friends provide support, service to young people in B-CS

By Angela Cobb
Reporter

A special group of Texas A&M students is brightening the lives of many Bryan-College Station children.

Aggie Friends is an organization of 37 students whose goal is to provide service and support to young people. It's sponsored by the A&M Student Y Association and members are chosen through an annual application and interview process.

Sandra Stroope, Aggie Friends chairman, says she and subchairman Benji Hubbard looked for people who are enthusiastic and dependable.

"We wanted people we could depend on who would be there for all the activities," Stroope, a junior psychology major, says.

Aggie Friends originally started as a Big Brother-Big Sister program in 1984, but getting students to stay with the program was a problem, says Hubbard, a junior secondary education major.

"It had trouble getting off the ground," he says.

In 1985 the organization was changed into a group effort instead of a one-on-one program

between the students and the children to combat the problem.

But another problem arose because the organization couldn't go through area schools to find children, he says.

"Because of House Bill 72, the schools didn't want to work with us," he says. "We decided to

"I got involved in Aggie Friends because I like kids. It makes you feel like you've helped someone by giving these kids a little highlight."

— Susan Eugster,
Aggie Friends member

change the program to a service organization for kids.

House Bill 72 is a state bill that mandated sweeping education reforms.

But Stroope says finding children to participate in the program proved much easier this year.

"We just called organizations that were involved with children and asked them if they would like us to do activities with them," she says. "Most of them said that they would love to."

Both Stroope and Hubbard express a desire for Aggie Friends to succeed.

"I wanted it to work so bad," Stroope says. "I had ideas on how I wanted to change it, and I think it is going great so far."

Hubbard says, "I put everything I had into it. I love kids to death and I wanted to see it work. It's a lot of fun."

So far this school year, Aggie Friends seems to be working well. In December, the group went Christmas caroling in the children's wing of St. Joseph Hospital. And on Valentine's Day, members gave a party for children in the federally funded Head Start program, which gives needy children a chance to get a head start on their education.

Students involved in Aggie Friends also are enthusiastic about the program.

"I have two younger sisters at home who I hardly get to see, and I wanted to be able work with kids," says David Mendoza, a junior computer science major.

North Texas hopes to get collider site

FORT WORTH (AP) — North Texas officials are scrambling to land a superconducting supercollider that would bring 3,000 jobs and a \$270 million-per-year budget.

The supercollider is a 52-mile, doughnut-shaped tunnel, packed with high-power electromagnets, that allows beams of protons to be shot at one another.

The North Texas Commission, a group which promotes business development in the area, must persuade the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission to propose the North Texas site to the federal government.

Five other Texas sites, as well as numerous other states, also are vying for the project. Gov. Bill Clements said last week that Illinois and California both have an edge on Texas in the race for the supercollider.

Specialist says preparing for role is key to becoming better parent

By RaeAnn Warmann
Reporter

People will be better parents when they make wise decisions, when they prepare for their roles and when the roles are ones that they want to assume, a family life specialist says.

Diane Welch, a family life specialist from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, says the average age for getting married is 23, meaning that the majority of students will be parents in the next five to seven years.

"At this time in their lives, what they really are concerned about is one, preparing themselves to get a job and career," she says, "two, maybe looking at the possibility of marriage, and three, thinking in terms of 'Do I really want parenting to be a part of my life?'"

A parent must be willing to take on the responsibility of a child for a significant period of time until that child can be responsible for himself or herself, Welch says.

Some of the decisions young peo-

ple must consider as they think about becoming parents, she says, are how much it will cost to raise a child, how to combine the responsibilities of a career and parenthood, and what kind of child day care is available.

"The majority of women in this country are working, the majority of women in this country have children and the majority of women are combining family roles and work roles," Welch says.

One of the responsibilities that parents are faced with, she says, is in providing a nurturing atmosphere for the child. This atmosphere provides emotional attachment, love, guidance, discipline and encouragement.

She says parents need to have knowledge and understanding of the growth and development of children in four areas — social, intellectual, emotional and physical.

"When parents don't know this," Welch says, "then often we get into situations of unreasonable expectations which can lead to frustration

on the part of the parents, frustration on the part of the child, and, at the end of that continuum, abuses of some sort."

Parents need to learn how to manage and share their role as parents and develop appropriate stress management techniques so an overload of stress is not taken out on the child, she says.

"If you've got a couple who are trying to put themselves through school, trying to earn a living, and trying to be parents at the same time, they've got several roles there," she says. "The more roles you add on, the more stress you have."

Some of the signs indicating stress that stems from parenthood are a feeling of being out of control, a tremendous amount of aggression, anger, and physical symptoms such as headaches, tiredness or depression.

When parents feel stress, she says, they should be certain that the child is in a safe environment and then get away from the child until their sense of control returns.

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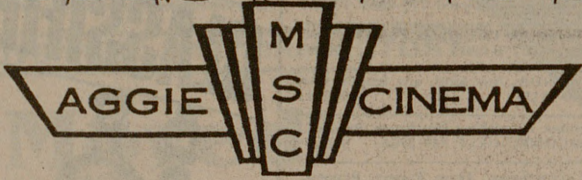
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