

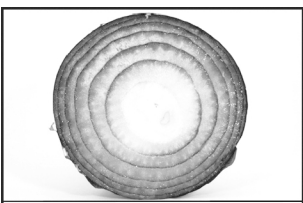
Know your worth

Do you know your worth? I am not talking about financial worth. I am asking if you believe in yourself enough to stand up and say, I am worthy of respect in all my relationships.

And, if you can answer yes, I know my worth, then have you relayed that confidence to those around you both young and old?

I know there are times in everyone's lives that we question our worth or at least I have. As I navigate through life and work to proclaim the importance of stopping violence and encouraging respect, it can be daunting. There are times I question if I am truly making a difference?

It is in those moments that I have to remember that I was called to do this work and God has been faithful to me and will continue to be faithful as long as I trust



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



and believe. As long as I remember I am worthy.

It is that confidence and belief that we must relay to our teens and pre-teens. As I prepared for February, which is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, I solicited input from my IWU Social Work student to write a couple radio ads.

This is one of the ads she wrote:

"Coming from someone just leaving their teenage years, I can tell you firsthand how difficult it is to spot when your dating relationship becomes unhealthy. It is vital in these years to learn the red flags and warning signs. Navigating relationships may be difficult, but you deserve to recognize your worth. As we focus on teen dating violence the month of February, call Hands of Hope at 765-664-0701 for questions, answers, or resources."

Know Your Worth is the national theme for the initiative this year. Congress declared the month of February to be National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in 2010. This annual, month-long initiative focuses on advocacy and education to stop dating abuse before it

starts.

Unfortunately, too many times I do not believe we know our worth and settle for less than what we should in relationships. We hope things will be better over time or we want so desperately to just be loved that we overlook those red flags as they appear ever so subtly and increase over time.

As a longtime advocate of breaking the cycle of violence in all relationships I continue to believe if we are going to be successful we must educate our youth on what to look for and empower them to strive for mutual respect in all relationships, not just romantic ones.

Just as is found in adult abusive relationships, teen dating violence is a pattern of harmful and destructive behaviors used to exert power and control over a

dating partner.

Many teens experience some form of intimate partner violence even before graduating from high school.

The task of ending teen dating violence is a community responsibility. By building the self-esteem of teens in our communities, we can encourage our young people to pursue healthy relationships, promote their resilience, and interrupt the cycle of violence.

In having conversation with teens about Knowing Their Worth here are some suggestions I found researching tips from national websites: Remember: Your worth does not depend on your grades, your looks, your friend group or your achievements.

Instead of criticizing yourself for a mistake or failure, take a deep breath

and think about how it could be an opportunity for growth.

Know that you are not a bad person for moving on from an unhealthy friendship or relationship.

Practice talking with supportive friends and family about what is hard for you and cheer each other whether you succeed or struggle.

Forgive yourself for the harsh or unkind things you may think or feel about yourself.

It behooves each of us who have the opportunity to educate a teen or pre-teen to take time to have the conversation. It may be in the form of a text or a post or a comment made while driving together. The venue used to relay the information, is not nearly as important as the message itself.

Early Childhood program kicks off community service project

By Mandy Mahan

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The students of the Early Childhood program at Heartland Career Center kicked off their fundraising efforts for their annual community service project on Monday, Feb. 1.

The class is accepting feminine hygiene products as well as cash, and all collected items and money will be donated to FISH of Wabash.

The Paper of Wabash County spoke with Early Childhood student, Wabash senior Gabi Wagoner about the project.



"(Feminine products) are ridiculously priced and they should not be that expensive and not everyone can afford it," she said.

On average, women spend \$14 a month on feminine hygiene products, which amounts to \$6,400 in a lifetime. This can

be very expensive for low income families with multiple females in need of these monthly necessities.

Wagoner also pointed out that this project was chosen as a way to lessen the stigma around the natural functions and needs of the female body.

Donations are being accepted in the form of tampons, pads, menstrual wipes, and menstrual soaps, as well as cash. All products must be new but can be any brand. Donations can be dropped off at the front office of Heartland career center. Donations are being accepted until Friday, Feb. 5.

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where the pair exchanged hundreds of explicit messages, videos, and photos over a three-month period, according to the affidavit.

On Feb. 18, 2020, officials at Marion High School seized a school-issued iPad, where they found the conversations between Vermilion and the victim. After police discovered a photo of a man who appeared to be in his 40's, the picture was sent to the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center, which led to the identification of Vermilion.

All persons are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

COVID

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remain active, but will be dropping down to two days per week due to the depleting number of patients using the treatment.

While the vaccine has not been opened up to anyone under 60 as of yet, both Futrell and Srikanth believe that, with a new shipment of vaccines, they will soon be able to open it up to more members of the community.

In other positive news, it was announced that Grant County has moved from red to orange, indicating a decrease in COVID-19 in the region.

"We are orange and still remaining steady at this point," Grant County Health Department representative Tara Street said. "The only thing that really changes is that large gatherings can go to 25 percent capacity, like athletic events."

In accordance with CIC guidelines, if the numbers continued to trend down-

ward, Grant County will move to yellow status if they continue to see a decrease in numbers over a two-week period.

The biggest concern at the moment, both in Grant County and across the country, is the multiple COVID-19 variants that are presenting in other places of the world, particularly in South Africa and England, and are now beginning to present in the United States.

Grant County EMA Director Bob Jackson stated that they have been monitoring the movement of the variants closely and that

safeguards and plans are in place in the event they come to Grant County.

"We've been in some conversations with the Department of Homeland Security," Jackson said. "We are planning for a contingency plan in the event that those other mutations take a nasty turn on us. We are always trying to be a step

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ahead."

However, according to Srikanth and according to studies, the Pfizer vaccine, one of the two major vaccines being administered in

the world, along with Moderna, has proven to be effective against the variants as well. The FDA and independent agencies will continue to look at it and give

their final analysis soon.

The next COVID-19 update will take place on Thursday, Feb. 11 beginning at 3:30 pm.

THE NEWS HERALD

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