YPP VOICES
The Young Parents Program

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The Truth About Santa Claus

Veronica Rodriguez Springfield, YPP

After researching about Santa Claus, I found out that the story came from Nordic mythology. It all began with the legend of Sinterklaas. The Norse were a fierce people who originated from Northern Europe and Scandinavia. The Norse told tales of a magician (Sinterklaas) who punished naughty children and rewarded the good children with presents. Some Santa Claus researchers associate Santa with the Norse "god" Odin. Odin was described as riding through the sky on an eight-legged white horse named Sleipnir. (Originally, there were only 8 reindeer. Rudolph came a while later.)

Odin was believed to live in Valhalla and had a long white beard. He would fly through the air during the Winter Solstice (December 21-25) rewarding the good children and punishing the naughty. There are still other "origins" of Santa Claus. Surprisingly, this next one comes from the Norse myths as well. It all began with Thor.

Above: Sinterklaas

Thor was the god of the peasants and the common people. He was represented as an elderly man, jovial, friendly, heavy build, and a long white beard. His element was fire, and his color was red. The rumble and roar of thunder were said to be caused by the rolling of his chariot.

Thor was fighting the giants of ice and snow and became the Yule-god. It was believed that his home was among the icebergs. "Thor" was looked upon and a friendly god, never harming humans, but protecting them. The fire place in every home was sacred to him. It was said that he came down the chimney's into his element. Fire.

Arroz con Dulce
Holyoke Y.P.P : the English Class

Arroz con Dulce is Spanish for Rice Pudding. This is a very popular dessert in Puerto Rico, especially around Christmas time. We have provided an excellent recipe for you to enjoy. Try it! We're sure you'll like it.

Ingredients:
1. 2 cups of water
2. Pinch of ginger
3. 2 cloves
4. Pinch of salt
5. 1 cinnamon stick
6. 1 1/2 cup short grain white rice
7. 1 can of condensed milk
8. 1 can of evaporated milk
9. 1 can of coconut milk
10. 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
11. 2 tablespoons of butter
12. 1/2 cup raisins
13. Ground cinnamon
14. Shredded parmesan cheese

Combine ingredients from 1 to 5 and bring to a boil. Drain, add rice, and ingredients from 7 to 11.

Cook until rice is tender. Reduce heat, add raisins and stir constantly until it gets thick. Transfer to small cups. Dust with ground cinnamon, shredded parmesan cheese, and serve. Enjoy! This is delicious and easy to make.
When I think of Christmas I think about decorated trees, mistletoe, and candy canes. But why do we think of these things at Christmas time? I found out the meaning behind some of the common symbols.

By: Kristen Sullivan
North Adams Y.P.P.

**Christmas Trees**
The Christmas tree is the center of attention. Not just in our homes, but all over the world. There are ceremonies for the lighting of the Christmas tree. It gets lit up, decorated, and we place presents underneath it to be opened Christmas morning. The tree symbolizes wisdom and life.

**Mistletoe**
A symbol of peace. Those who kiss under the mistletoe are said to have good luck and happiness in the following year.

**The Candy Cane**
Although it's a tasty candy and a decoration, the candy cane symbolizes something religious. The white stripe represents Christ's purity. The red stripe represents the blood he shed.

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**A Little Fun Answers**

1. On my way to the fair, I met 7 jugglers and a bear. Every juggler had 6 cats, every cat had 5 rats. Every rat had 4 houses. Every house had 3 mice, every mouse had 2 louses. Every louse had a spouse. How many in all are going to the fair?

2. What grows down when it grows up?

3. How far can you walk into the woods?

4. What is so fragile even saying its name can break it?

5. There were two ducks in front of a duck and two ducks behind a duck, and one duck in the middle. How many ducks were there in total?
Are you going to make a New Year’s resolution this year? Are you going to stick to it this year? I decided to research the 5 most common New Year’s resolutions. Have you made any of these?

1.) Many people resolve to spend more time with friends and family. They plan to take a trip, or go to an event together. Some resolve to get together with that person they haven’t seen in forever.

2.) How many girls resolve to lose weight and get into shape? Oh so many. They say they’ll join a gym, go on a diet, and just get fit. This is a great New Year’s resolution. Not only will you look better, you’ll also be much healthier.

3.) Simply enjoying life a little bit more. Maybe spend the evening alone with your significant other. Get a babysitter and plan a date night. Spend more time focusing on yourself. You won’t be 100% for others if you’re not 100% for yourself.

4.) Hey smokers. You already know it’s a bad habit. No one has to tell you that. Needless to say, many people try to quit smoking as their New Year’s resolution. Not only is quitting smoking good for your health, it’s also good for those around you. Second-hand smoke is just as bad as regular smoking. It’s also better for children to live in a smoke free environment. Guess what else? Quitting smoking equals more money for other things.

5.) Many people resolve to spend more time in the New Year focusing on helping others. Maybe something simple like listening more, and focusing on being a better friend / daughter / partner / or parent. Even bigger ideas could be something like helping someone move, or babysitting for someone close to you.

These top five resolutions may have been very familiar to some of you. The main point is that you try to make each new year something special. Good Luck with your resolutions!

See you in 2011!!

By, Kimberly Torres
Springfield Y.P.P.
The G.E.D. Will Change My Life

It all started back in High School. I was doing horrible. I never concentrated on what I had to do. My goals never mattered; it was always about my friends. I was basically a follower. I never did my school work. I skipped school any chance I got. Back then, my future was not important to me at all.

Suddenly, I fell in love. Shortly after, I planned to have a child. Once my pregnancy began, I was unable to go to school for several reasons. For a few years, I was a “stay at home” mom. By the time I was 17, I realized that this wasn’t the best thing for me.

I started to realize that I could not do this alone. I was trying to take care of my son, with-out a job. Additionally, my parents were struggling at that time. I decided to find out what my options were. I went down to the welfare office. When I signed up for welfare, they told me I had to go to school. I was scared and nervous. I got over my fear, and started attending the Y.P.P.

Once I started the program, I focused on my work. I listened to the teacher, and I completed all of my assignments. I realized that I am a smart girl! I had to give this program a try. The Y.P.P. is really helping me in life. It will also help my son’s life. I want to set a good example for him. I want him to know that he should push forward and succeed in life. Now I feel like I can really go somewhere in my life. I am confident that the GED will get me where I want to be.

I want to go to college and have a good life. Going to college can help me get a career. I am really appreciative for all the teachers do for me in this program. I am trying to continue to get good grades. I am looking forward to getting my GED. Now, I know I can do it. The YPP has changed my point of view on my future, my goals, and my life. This is why I came to the Y.P.P.

By,
Veronica Enid Rodriguez
Springfield Y.P.P.

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Mi Experiencia Como Padre

El ser padre para mí, me llena de mucho orgullo porque sé que ahora hay alguien que depende de mí. Yo pensaba que ser padre era bien fácil, aunque tampoco es tan difícil! Al principio, cuando mi esposa me dio la noticia, yo me puse bien nervioso y no sabía ni que hacer. Pero después, lo cogí con más calma y tranquilidad. Durante el embarazo yo veía cómo mi bebé iba creciendo y lo rápido que pasaba el tiempo. Ni cuenta me había dado que habían pasado ya nueve meses cuando ya en mis brazos estaba mi hijo. Yo siempre digo y digo: “yo nunca tuve bebé, por lo grande y lo inteligente que salió y lo mucho que sabe”. Para mí, mi hijo es lo más grande que hay en todo el mundo. Por él yo haría y daría lo que fuera; lo amo más que a mi vida. Por eso digo: “mi experiencia como padre es la mejor que he tenido y todo lo que me falta por vivir con él”. Por lo tanto, me esforzaré lo suficiente por sacar mi GED, para así darle un mejor futuro a mi hijo.

Erick Vázquez
Clase de Español
Springfield
Hola soy Jaileen Santiago de Holyoke YPP. Parte de lo que aquí redacto lo tome de un artículo en una revista de psicología y lo adapte para mí. Espero que lo disfruten.

En todo el mundo no hay nadie como yo. Soy dueña de mi cuerpo, mis pensamientos, mis ideas; me pertenecen las imágenes que ven mis ojos y tengo que saber escogerlas. Poseo mis propias fantasías, mis sueños, esperanzas y miedos. Dado que soy dueña de mí misma, tengo que conocerme íntimamente. Hay aspectos de mí que me confunden, otros que desconozco.

Sin embargo. Esté o no de acuerdo con todo lo que soy, esto es auténtico y representa el momento en el que vivo. Me amo, me cultivo, me consiento y me felicito, para amarme, tengo que ser yo mismo, amarme con mis virtudes y mis defectos, mi pasado, mis éxitos y mis fracasos. Descubro mis capacidades, mis valores, transformo mis defectos en cualidades, lUCHO por mejorar.

Para desarrollarme, me señaló un plan de estudios, de lectura, de conocimientos que me ayuden a superar, de amigos que sean impulso y soporte de mi superación. Me alejo de todo ser, hecho, o acto que pueda lesionarme. Para consentirme, me premio de pensamiento y obra porque estoy en el camino de la superación. Me hago un regalo. Me miro al espejo y le hablo a ese amigo maravilloso y perfecto que siempre confía en mí. Y me felicito porque, soy estupenda!

Me amo!

Jaileen Santiago
De Holyoke YPP

Cual es Mi Experiencia como Papa y Varon en YPP?

Como papá y varón de YPP mi experiencia es única en la cual uno aprende cosas todos los días. El ser varón en un programa donde la mayoría son mujeres uno como hombre aprende como se sienten muchas jóvenes madres y es algo bonito. Hoy en día podemos ver cómo hay hombres que maltratan a sus esposas. Esto nos enseña a hacer una mejor persona. Muchos jóvenes al estar aquí no les gusta el Programa ya que no tienen con quien “basilar”. Esto es una experiencia bonita la cual yo recomiendo.

Jashua Delgado
Clase de Español
Springfield

“...En todo el mundo no hay nadie como yo. Soy dueña de mi cuerpo, mis pensamientos, mis ideas...”

“El ser varón en un programa donde la mayoría son mujeres uno como hombre aprende como se sienten muchas jóvenes madres y es algo bonito.”
The YPP Newsletter would like to offer every student enrolled in the program an opportunity to voice their opinions, ideas, and creativity in the form of writing. If you have questions, comments, or are interested in joining, please call or visit me.

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Newsletter Editor

Congratulations

Here, in the Young Parents Programs, we see success daily! Here are the students who have recently passed the G.E.D., parts of the G.E.D., or have earned extra-points. Keep

Springfield
Passed the entire G.E.D.
Christopher Reyes
Aneris Gunn
Crystal Maldonado
Javianne Perez
Norian Rivera
Kira Wood

North Adams
Passed parts of the G.E.D.
Kristen Sullivan—writing and social studies

Holovke
Passed the entire G.E.D.
Natalie Davic

Passed parts of the G.E.D.
Jessica Diaz—science
Raquel Parilla—science
Ashley Simmons—science
Yelitza Fernandez—reading and writing
Misty Preston—Passed all subjects! needs to earn points.

UP-COMING EVENTS...

- Springfield Y.P.P. Christmas Party is December 16th!!
- Saturday, December 25th is Christmas Day.
- Y.P.P. Winter Break is from December 17, 2010 through January, 2, 2011.

See you on Monday, January 3, 2011.

Have a safe Christmas and a Happy New Year’s. See you all in 2011!!