

Community Comment  
June 5, 2015  
Sam Pennisi

On Youth

I've heard the phrase "youth is wasted on the young". I don't know why I think about such things but I do. Perhaps it's because I've been surrounded by young people for most of my adult life. I grew up with an older brother so I didn't start out that way. But my first real job out of college was teaching at the University. Even then, I was younger than more than half of my first class. It was a forestry class and many of my students had just returned from their two year draft requirement and one of those years was in Viet Nam. They were among the best students I ever encountered. But I was at Humboldt and was surrounded by young people.

~~Then my own kids came along. I can't say that infants and toddlers are my favorite age,~~ but as they grew they were the light in my life along with their mother of course. While we were both dealing with careers, our children were our focus. Raising our kids took priority over everything except for doing our jobs. We were involved with their schools and knew their friends. Thru the high school years, we were surrounded by young people. We lived so close to the high school that I often had a room full of teens at lunch and after school. Since I ran an Inn at the time, and still do, I was home most of the time. I happen to like the teen years so this fit me. ~~Most of the time, anyway~~

For about a decade, our kids and their friends were college age <sup>and beyond</sup>. Our daughters had great friends that we were lucky to know. They were serious about their education but each brought interesting backgrounds and experiences to our kids and to us. ~~Some had traveled extensively and some had lived abroad. Many had different ethnic backgrounds and family traditions. All of this was good for all of us.~~

Then our first grandchild arrived. Here we were, back with small children again. We both took to the experience with gusto; especially Sharon. We could not only be of help, we realized how much fun we were having. We had much more patience and were more observant than we were with our children. I don't think this a unique experience. Now we have three. Each is different and bright and interesting. At almost 11, almost 5, and almost 1, we enjoy the stages they are going thru. ~~Soon we will be at the high school age once again.~~

As a Rotarian, our club has long focused on supporting our youth. We sponsor leadership training, scholarships for high school seniors, and youth exchange programs with other countries. We also support after school activities and city parks, and emergency food for those in need. We give each 3<sup>rd</sup> grader in Arcata a dictionary of their own every year and support literacy and reading skills.

This last Wednesday, our Rotary club awarded 5 \$1000.00 scholarships to five graduating seniors. We had 9 applicants and would have given each one the award if we had the money.

~~Once again, this experience makes me feel like our future is in good hands. I wish all of you could meet them.~~

Wish our graduates well and support their continued training or education. It's for the good of all of us.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment