

Grief group helps those who have experienced loss

(Submitted by Harbor Hospice)

Let's Talk is a social group for grieving people. It is run by volunteers who know what it is to mourn the loss of a loved one and who understand what it is like to want the company of others who are going through a similar experience. The group meets in restaurants in Muskegon, Oceana and Mason counties.

Grieving is often a time of "good days and bad days." The Let's Talk group answers the need for a safe place where grieving people do not have to worry about hiding their feelings in the company of others. If it's a rough day, it is okay to share your feelings with the group. And, it is just as okay to have a good day and share a laugh.

Volunteers with advanced bereavement training work to make sure new members feel welcome and want to return to this supportive environment. Harbor Hospice volunteers can help make connections for people who need additional services.

Let's Talk is an on-going drop-in group. Anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one is welcome to come. You need not have used the services of Harbor Hospice in order to participate in this group. Registration is not necessary. The only cost is that of your meal.

In Muskegon, the group meets the second Wednesday of each month for coffee from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Steak and Egger, 1535 Holton Road in North Muskegon.

Please call Harbor Hospice for a full schedule of bereavement services. •



Fruitport family "Backs the Pack!"

By Mary Weimer

Sarah and Josiah Luker of Fruitport paid tribute to the Green Bay Packers long before Sunday's Super Bowl victory. They built a seven-foot tall Green Bay Packers helmet out of the snow in their yard. It took them 12 to 14 hours to build and seven hours to paint with food coloring, water and flour.

"We love the Packers so much and are really excited to see our team go all the way," Sarah said. "I have been a fan for 20+ years, and my husband for five years. With all the snow, we knew we had to do something as a tribute to the Packers, especially due to the fact that they made the Super Bowl!"

Even their dogs, Maddie Packer Starr and Lambeau Vincent Farve, are a further tribute to their favorite team! •

Curves® adds Zumba® to shake up the circuit!

(Submitted by Curves® International)

Fruitport area Curves® locations ring in the New Year with new Curves Circuit with Zumba Fitness® classes. Fruitport area residents can try it free for a week.

A new 30-minute class that mixes the moves of Zumba with the proven strength training of Curves provides for a wildly effective workout. It is definitely not your mother's workout, but even your mother can do it!

The program lets you burn up to 500 calories in just 30 minutes with the Latin and internationally-inspired music and exhilarating, simple dance moves that have made Zumba so popular. This is definitely a boredom-busting workout. There is a lot going on to keep your attention and keep you motivated. You're listening to high-energy music that just makes you want to move, watching to make sure you're meeting your goals on the strength machines, and training your body and your brain by learning new dance moves.

Some have called it the perfect workout, but Curves gyms in the Fruitport area are willing to let you try it free for a week to find out for yourself. All ages, fitness levels and dance abilities can participate in and benefit from Curves Circuit with Zumba Fitness® classes.

For more information, please contact Curves of Muskegon, 1038 E. Sternberg Road at (231) 798-9811. •

Muskegon's future is looking bright!

(Submitted by the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce)

On January 28th, the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual Business for Breakfast — The Economic Forecast. This sold-out event was attended by nearly 400 chamber members and perhaps one of the most popular Business for Breakfasts ever.

Each January, George Erickcek, senior regional analyst at the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, comes to Muskegon to review the year's economic success and hardships. This year, Erickcek delightedly enlightened attendees on the good and bad of 2010 and what can be expected for 2011.

New this year, he was joined by John Berry, executive director of Design West Michigan. Berry's presentation focused on how the design of new products and services affects our economy and in order to be competitive and create jobs, we need to be designing.

With every economic forecast comes news, both good and bad. Highlights from George's presentation included his humor, of course, and also the alarmingly low number of young people achieving post-secondary education, especially in Muskegon County.

Despite this concern, there were many hopes for our community in 2011.

In Muskegon County, the housing market is stabilizing, our service sector employment numbers are comparable to that of the rest of the nation and consumer confidence was on the rise this holiday season, yielding a profitable December for many area retailers.

Our state as a whole can expect several positive outcomes in 2011 as well. The auto industry seems to be making a comeback; retail activity is on the rise; and most important, job loss has stabilized, to say the least. The forecast predicts 8,000 new jobs for 2011 and 46,000 new jobs for 2012.

Muskegon has done quite well weathering what many are calling the great recession. According to Erickcek, Muskegon has outperformed the state of Michigan in total employment, manufacturing and service sector jobs since 2008.

Although we are not out of the woods just yet, we should be patting each other on the back for maintaining our ground for the majority of the storm. •

Use caution when putting your baby to bed, especially in the winter months

(Submitted by Public Health-Muskegon County)

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, unsafe sleeping practices can often be a factor in infant death. Statistics show that infant death rates rise in the winter months. While the reason for the rise in deaths during the winter months is not completely understood, many experts cite the use of blankets and other bedding and the overheating of homes as contributing factors.

To prevent tragedies during this winter, Public Health-Muskegon County would like to provide some safe sleeping practice tips to parents, grandparents and other child caregivers.

- Infants should always sleep on their backs, at night or for naps. Infants that are used to sleeping on their backs are at higher risk of death if they sleep on their stomachs.

- Put infants to sleep in their own crib with a firm mattress and a fitted sheet. Sleep sacks or sleep clothing instead of a blanket will help to avoid the risk of overheating.

- Use a portable crib when traveling or taking the infant to a babysitter.

- Never put an infant to sleep on a chair, sofa, waterbed or cushion. Adult beds and sleeping places are not safe places for infants to sleep.

- The safest place for the infant to sleep is in the room where the caregiver sleeps, in their own crib.

- Keep pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins and stuffed toys out of the infant's crib. They can cover the infant's face — even if they are lying on their back.

- Keep your home at a comfortable temperature. Infants who are overheated are at a higher risk for sleep-related death.

- Breastfeed. Breastfed infants are less likely to die unexpectedly.

- Maintain a smoke-free home. Don't smoke anywhere around your infant and tell others to do the same.

For more information on safe sleeping practices, contact the Muskegon County Fetal Infant Mortality Review at (231) 724-6347. •

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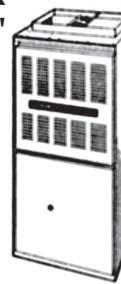
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