

"Middle School Teacher Speaks Out"

(a letter to the editor published in the Spokesman Review on 9-19-98, written by Jan Foland)

Children are killing teachers, family members and themselves as society asks, "How can this be happening?"

I hear the question too often and am reminded of it daily as I rub shoulders with people in pain. When the problem walks into our personal lives in the form of drugs, alcohol or violence, then it is time to ask: "Who set the stage for the violence and ugliness? How did we move from a more healthy society to one that too often fears children and teens?"

I am 53 years old and have taught for 25 years in the public school system. I lived through the era when there was no TV and then the era when programs were conducive to family viewing. I know that adults have been indirectly responsible for the violence and attitudes in society. Adults "program" our children by feeding them the music and the movies. The children do not produce the songs or the movies - adults do.

It's time we realize that a healthy child must be fed healthy food. Do we feed them candy, bacon, chip dip and ice cream for supper? Never. But I am convinced that each adult who reads this article is responsible for the feeding of our children.

Some time ago, the adults took a small step across the line and started to feed the mind with inappropriate pictures and words. We slowly allowed "garbage" to be seen by the young and old alike. Today, we seem to put a stamp of approval on movies and television programs that use the F-word over and over, and visually show explicit sex and violence. Pictures speak 1,000 words. It's no wonder we are in a desperate situation as a nation.

I challenge you adults to search your hearts and souls to see if you have aided in establishing this new code of morality. Have you promoted a lifestyle that you viewed on the television set or listened to on the radio? The eyes and ears of the youth are learning from us!

Area high school students are willing to work on a petition that would call for television viewing to be free from violence, sex and inappropriate language. To support this petition, please send your name, address and comments to Television Petition, P.O. Box 10111, Spokane, 99209. We will see that the petitions are placed in the hands of the media, executive producers of the national network stations and political leaders.

This is a war that we cannot afford to lose! Our greatest resource, the children, is at stake.