

Breaking the news of divorce

QUESTION:

My husband and I are going to separate, but we have two children, ages 10 and seven we have to tell and we want to do it in the best possible way. Can you help us?

Answer:

Some general guidelines for parents might be helpful to you, although I think you can mix these in with your own instinctive way of being with your children. You know them best, and I'm assuming you have their best interests at heart.

Parents sometimes feel it will be easier on everyone (including themselves) if they don't tell them, but this only leaves children in the dark, wondering what is happening, feeling bewildered, and vulnerable, with lots of unanswered questions gnawing at them. Children need and deserve to know about your intentions and how they will affect their lives. Parents naturally often dread having this conversation because they are anxious about being able to control their own emotions and are worried about the children's reactions and their well-being which is all very natural.

The following are some ideas for how to think about your talk and what it should



include. Most importantly, tell them together if you can, be calm and keep strong emotions you may be feeling toward each other in check. Research shows that children who do best with separation and divorce are those who do not witness ongoing anger and conflict between their parents. Kids easily blame themselves for what isn't working between their parents and can end up with an unbearable weight of guilt on their shoulders.

Children mainly want to know that their own lives will not change as a result of the separation. They will want reassurances about what will happen with all of their routines they take for granted — where they will sleep, whether they can stay at the same school, what happens

to the dog, whether they can continue with hockey, the special time at the playground, and so on. They need time to ask all of these questions. If there will be changes, or if you aren't sure, it is important to be up front and to have a conversation with them about their worries. You might have noticed that kids are very smart and can come up with ingenious solutions themselves when they are encouraged.

It is essential to give the children the message that you will always be their parents and will always be there for them, whether or not they are always living with you. Keep in mind that what they need is reassurance that they will not be abandoned and that you will continue to care for them because you want to.

Children of different ages will react differently, as will children of different temperaments. The important thing is to be available and to be observant. If you notice any troublesome symptoms, rather than ignoring or denying them, take care to talk and communicate your love. If they continue having trouble with the adjustment, a play therapist can help, or you and your husband may want to consult with someone with expertise in separation and the

impact on children.

Bea Donald, M.A., R.C.C., B.C.A.M.F.T., is a program manager and clinical supervisor of the family counselling/employee assistance program at Family Services of the North Shore. Questions? Write onthecouch@familyservices.bc.ca or call 604-988-5281.

health notes

Hope Walks On The North Shore: The Persian Women's Walking Club, HOPE, developed by staff and volunteers with the Canadian Cancer Society will kick-off on Wednesday, June 17 at John Lawson Park, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Featuring music, food and walking. For more information or a schedule of walks, phone 604-328-7202 or e-mail sberisavac@bc.cancer.ca.

North Shore Lymphedema Awareness/NetworkingDay: With Grace Dedinsky-Rutherford, of the North Shore Lymphedema Clinic, Saturday, June 20, 8:30 a.m.-noon at the Delbrook Community Centre, 600 West Queens Rd., North Vancouver. For more information and to register visit www.northshorelymphedemaclinic.com or call 604-551-8202.

— Compiled by Pamela Stone and Debbie Caldwell listings@nsnews.com

Lions Gate Christian Academy
and community partners present:

Summer Shopping Spectacular
At the Westin Bayshore Hotel
June 19th 2009 7.00 - 10.00 p.m.
M.C. City A.V. Host Dawn Chubai

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west vancouver
THE WATERFRONT COMMUNITY

**The Corporation of the District of West Vancouver
Expression of Interest EO1 09 14**

**Gleneagles Golf Clubhouse
Restaurant Operations and Banquet Hall Services**

The District of West Vancouver invites submissions of Expressions of Interest from established companies interested in operating a restaurant and providing banquet hall services at the newly constructed Gleneagles Golf Clubhouse in West Vancouver, BC.

This is a unique and exciting opportunity in the spectacular setting of the Gleneagles Golf Course. This attractive new building features a 250 seat banquet hall, 50 seat restaurant, 1250 sf dance floor and 1000 sf covered outdoor patio overlooking Larson Bay. The building's specifications and design drawings can be viewed at: www.westvancouver.ca/clubhouse.

A formal RFP process was undertaken in 2008, however that process has concluded without a contract award. The District of West Vancouver is now in a position to receive Expressions of Interest and negotiate a contract with an established service provider.

Criteria for consideration will include experience operating banquet halls and restaurants, reputation, extent of golf course experience, financial capacity, legal history, references, and other criteria as determined by the District.

Submission of an Expression of Interest will not guarantee an invitation to participate in any future contracting process. The District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Expressions of Interest. An invitation to negotiate may be made to more than one firm, or no firm as a result of the Expressions of Interests received.

Interested persons or firms shall be responsible for all costs associated with preparing their submissions. Submission of an Expression of Interest does not constitute an offer to contract and can be withdrawn at any time. Submissions will be received up until June 26, 2009. An Expression of Interest may be made by phone, fax, mail, or email:

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