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NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWO



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DEAR ANNIE Laughter is much more important than stuff



BY ANNIE LANE dearannie@creators.com

Dear Annie: The recent letter about giving children experiences instead of things really struck a chord. When the writer said, "One of the most beautiful sounds in the world is the laughter of a child. You can almost hear their brain enjoying life," it nearly brought me to tears.

I've been a "recess teacher" at the local primary school (kindergarten through fourth grade) for nearly 32 years. I've spent countless hours on the playground, watching and listening to those priceless little ones, and one of our favorite games is when I look at them real serious and say "Don't laugh!" Of course, we all start laughing.

have found my niche, and after all these years, there are now children coming through who I can tell, "I was your dad's (or mom's) recess teacher."

Dear Laughter: Your

I feel so blessed to

- Laughter of Children

letter put a smile on my face. Thank you for sharing how grateful you feel getting to work with children. Laughter

teboarding to rowing to

rugby, with a little seed

curious and the cour-

ageous.

money to help attract the

As pointed out by one

is the same in all languages. I hope that laughing doesn't end in childhood and that, as adults, we find lots of joy and laughter.

Dear Annie: I was

very happy to receive a lovely bridal shower invitation in the mail this week.

Last year, I went to a total of four baby/wedding showers. Three of those invitations were sent via text, one by email. I took umbrage by the impersonal, thoughtless manner in

which they were sent. After all, I will be setting an afternoon aside from my schedule and spending \$50-\$100 on a gift.

Am I old-fashioned, or is this rude? - Annoyed by the Invites

Dear Annoyed: It is acceptable to send out a beautiful paperless post via email. A text message, less so. The invitation sets the tone of the shower.

If it is to be very casual, then a text could suffice, but if it is very over-thetop, then a paper invitation, or a very nice paperless post, is better. What is rude is not saying "thank

There are many people

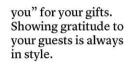
fighting the good fight

who only need support.

"It's a continuous in-

vestment. It's not one and

done," said Santee High



D

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ence to change their outlook

Starting in 2024-25, recess is mandated in California for 30 minutes during the school day. So

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5. Government negotiator

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Start at the double hexagon. Spell solutions to the clues below by

winding your way through the grid. You can backtrack to use letters more than once. Each new word starts with the last letter of the

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TAMOJAID , DAAOH , HTOOMR , SMOOA , SOTOM © 5054 MIGGLES 3D GAMES' DIST. BY ANDREWS WCMEEL SANDICATION

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CERED

previous word

1. Engine

4. Amass

2. Hotel units

3. Not rough

4-29



ERIC SONDHEIMER Los Angeles Times/TNS

Renata Simril president and CEO of the LA84 Foundation, speaks about the 40 years of impact since the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

COMMENTARY

Legacy of 1984 Olympic Games includes LA84 Foundation

BY ERIC SONDHEIMER Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES

Driving past a San Fernando Valley middle school during lunchtime, the sports fields were buzzing with activity. Soccer balls were being kicked, basketballs were being dribbled, tetherballs were being socked.

My previous three hours had been spent attending a conference sponsored by the LA84 Foundation in downtown Los Angeles, listening to speakers discuss the magic and importance of inclusion in sports.

When competitions are open to anyone, whether you're rich or poor, nerdy or athletic, a future pro or a future doctor, what unfolds could produce something unexpected.

Right on cue, amid the many games being played during lunchtime on the middle school campus, there was a kid wearing glasses and long pants receiving a high five from another kid in shorts who looked like the school's soccer star. They were having fun, a lesson that needs to be appreciated everywhere.

In the rush to separate those with pro ambitions from the amateurs, people can forget the journey. Remember when it was fun to win a game and get cupcakes. Remember when it was fun to lose a game and still get ice cream. Remember when it was fun to be

nized you in the hallway and greeted you with a friendly handshake that immediately injected self-confidence during a morning of nervousness.

GENOSMITH

driven to your Little

League game and debate

what to listen on the car

radio. Remember that

first day of high school

when the coach recog-

A S H E S C A R

KITS

Former NBA player Derek Anderson was at the conference telling his story of overcoming poverty and absent parents.

"Listen to learn," he said. "You don't always begin where you end.'

He explained how sports was so influential in his life.

'Basketball taught me to be a good teammate," he said.

He said that when coaching a youth team, he tries to empower his players by putting them in position to exercise authority, such as making them the coach. Suddenly they're shouting for players to stop making turnovers when they were making the turnovers a few minutes earlier.

"Put kids in position of leadership roles and you'll see a different outcome," he said.

It's the 40th anniversary of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, and there was no more important outcome than the creation of the LA84 Foundation from the Games' financial surplus. It has invested millions of dollars in youth sports and helped save, expand and cultivate the idea that sports should be available to anyone. It's the greatest legacy of the Olympic Games and proves passionate people with integrity and resources can make a difference.

So many disadvantaged communities have been given lifelines to develop sports programs. So many alternative sports have gained in popularity for boys and girls, from ska-

speaker, not every sports experience is positive. Perhaps a coach hasn't been trained properly. Perhaps a facility doesn't have enough security to allow participants to feel safe. Perhaps politics or ignorance prevents a newcomer from getting the chance to shine.

Yet intervention by professionals who recognize problems can transform something negative into a big positive.

KENTUCKY.COM

principal Violeta Ruiz, a former water polo coach who welcomes sports participation from all her students and seeks partnerships in her community.

Her school's valedictorians are athletes.

'Sports really opens up their eyes," she said.

It's magical when a shy, previously unmotivated student discovers something new, makes a friend and uses a sports experi-

much can be done positively for the mental health of students with the right approach. Just like vacations can reinvigorate and revitalize, so can exercise breaks.

Thanks to the LA84 Foundation, Southern Californians have the opportunity to embrace the fight for everyone to enjoy a sports experience if they want one.



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