



Marion County OREGON

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Marion County Commissioners Designate “Family Day”

At board session this morning, the Marion County Board of Commissioners designated September 22, 2008, and every fourth Monday of the month thereafter as ***Family Day*** in Marion County.

This declaration is to encourage families to take the time to eat dinner together. Over a decade of research conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has found that the more often children and teens eat dinner with their families the less likely they are to smoke, drink and use illegal drugs.

Director of Marion County’s Department of Children and Families, Alison Kelley, presented to the board the importance of designating Family Day. She said a University of Minnesota study reports that over the past twenty years, there has been a decline of 33 percent in the number of families who eat dinner regularly together.

“Parents have a profound influence on their child’s life,” she explained. “Parents who are engaged in their children’s lives through activities such as frequent dining together are less likely to have children who abuse substances.”

She suggested that families make the time to share a meal together. Turn off the TV, let the answering machine take phone calls and keep the conversation positive. She said start small. “If you rarely enjoy a sit down dinner together, start with once a week or once a month and work your way up to four or five days a week,” she said. “If your family is on the go, take the time to sit down in a restaurant rather than going to a drive-through.”

Kelley concluded, “The correlation between frequent family dinners and reduced substance abuse is now well documented. We hope that Marion County families will consider this to be an opportunity to be proactive in supporting and inoculating their families against illegal drugs, cigarettes and alcohol.”

For more information about Family Day, go to www.CASAFamilyDay.org.

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