

FALL SHOW FUN



The Music In Motion middle school group performing "Shakalaka Baby" at the Fall Show at Vermillion High School Monday night.

ELYSE BRIGHTMAN/FOR THE PLAIN TALK

Loving A Porcupine: Talking About Foster Care/Adoption Experiences

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

How do you love someone who has had their heart broken multiple times especially those who need love the most, namely foster children?

This is a question Dr. Serena Patterson, Clinical Psychologist from British Columbia, Canada, has attempted to answer through her clinical practice as well as becoming an author.

The Vermillion community was treated to a presentation by Patterson about her experiences and professional expertise with the foster care and adoption system.

"I've been a psychologist for 25 years, and in that time have worked with many children and families, and taught many classes on child development," she said. "Then, 12 years ago my partner and I my partner and I met couple of children who were living with close friends of ours as foster children. Eventually, the children came to live with us. There have been many struggles, especially in the teen years, and many good times, too. Being part of their lives challenged everything I thought I knew about attachment, parenting, children and family—just about everything. It's been huge."

This change inspired Patterson to become an author.

"When the kids were still pre-teens, I began writing a book for families like ours—parents with preteen adopted kids," she said. "I wanted to write a sort of 'What to do with parents' manual for children who were adopted as older kids. I thought that we must be very mysterious to them—us parents with our strange expectations of closeness, communication, and trying to help. I also wanted it to be fun to read and fun to write, so I wrote it as fiction. In the story, Hunter, Faith and the Ancestors; an Adoption Story of Courage and Belonging, the children get a panel of ancestor ghosts who coach them. It's a panel, because there is never just one answer to anything."

The book has not only served to educate others, but Paterson herself.

"I've learned a great deal more since beginning the book, which has been through so many revisions," she said. "I feel like I'm just beginning to get to the heart of what this is about, theoretically—and then, there is the art of actually living through it. Adoption is very, very complicated for everybody."



COURTESY PHOTO OF DR. SERENA PATTERSON

The first edition of Patterson's book is currently available through Amazon with the second edition in the process of publication.

A big complication according to Patterson is the emotional struggles of the children themselves even when they are presented with a family willing to love them.

"Children in foster care have already had their hearts broken at least once," she said. "That makes them children with special needs. The things that work with other children—such as letting them set the pace for connection and giving them logical consequences for misbehavior—often don't work with them. In my teaching I now focus on Attachment—the unique kind of love the children need to have toward their parents. The focus is on the children's love because I find that parents are more than ready to love the kids, but the kids are typically not ready to fully trust in return. Attachment means that when a child is hurting, or needy, they long for the parent and they believe that the parent's very presence will make things feel better. We want them to long for us—the adoptive parents—right away, because we are so ready to help."

It is a problem that many adoptive families find themselves dealing with. According to Patterson, it is a misconception that most adoptions deal with infants.

"Although there are still a few families adopting babies and without an ongoing relationship to the birth family, this is not the most common scenario," she said. "Mostly, we are looking at older children who have been through multiple placements in foster care and/or institutions. This is true of foreign as well as domestic

adoption. Many, perhaps even the majority of children in domestic adoption have experienced exposure to alcohol or drugs in utero, followed by neglect, possibly abuse, and the loss of caregivers that they have loved and trusted with all of their little hearts—all before meeting their 'forever family.'"

Much is still unknown about the best ways to deal with these issues according to Patterson.

"We have almost no current research to guide us on tough questions, such as contact with birth families (which is a huge issue), sibling reunification, and bi-cultural identity," she said. "We don't even know how often older child adoptions break down, or what all of the risk factors are for this. There is a desperate need for funded research to follow up older child adoptions. There is also a big need for social workers who specialize in adoption case work, and for family therapists who specialize in post-adoption family support. This is a specialty area that deserves much more study, research, and support at every level—from the lived experiences of families to university-based research on what works."

Patterson is unsure of the status of the foster care system in South Dakota specifically but stated that generally there is always a need for loving adults to support a child in growing up, this taking many forms.

"We need also to look toward helping the first families of children, to prevent the need for fostering and adoption wherever possible," she said. "When conditions are good for families, then fewer children need foster care, and that is the best case scenario. So these days I believe in creating a healthy and supportive world for all families, where all kinds of parents can thrive and grow to meet their children's needs."

To individuals interested in looking into foster parenting and adoptions, Patterson said keep in mind it's harder than it looks and previous mental and emotional preparation is a necessity.

"Don't let anyone tell you that it's going to be easy," Patterson said. "Look around you, and make an inventory. You are about to become the circle of family support for a child who struggles with loving, so what will be your circle of support?"

According to Patterson, foster

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'Winter's Tale' To Be Performed At The S.D. Shakespeare Festival

The South Dakota Shakespeare Festival (SDSF) announced its 2016 season this Tuesday November 17th at the Vermillion Rotary Club weekly luncheon. This summer, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is proud to present Shakespeare's late Romance, The Winter's Tale, June 9th-12th, in Vermillion's beautiful Prentis Park.

Now in their fifth season, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival invites you to take a break from the summer heat and travel to the far off lands of Sicilia and Bohemia, to a time long gone by. Here you will encounter a magical world where Time heals all wounds, and even the gravest of errors is not beyond redemption. The Winter's Tale, a late Shakespeare play, features elements of heart-wrenching drama, pastoral comedy, and giddy romance, and is sure to transport and delight as it celebrates the folly, resilience and expiable nature of the human spirit! The production will feature an all-star artistic team of seasoned professionals hired from competitive national and regional markets, combined with younger professionals drawn from USD's Theatre program.

The South Dakota Shakespeare Festival (SDSF) is a professional non-profit theatre company that is supported in collaboration with USD's College of Fine Arts and Department of Theatre, and produced by Coyoteopoly, an interdisciplinary service-learning company designed and operated by students to reinforce classroom learning in USD's Beacom School of Business. The mission of the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is to increase the cultural, artistic and educational offerings of the state of South Dakota and surrounding regions through professional Shakespeare performances and arts education events delivered in a lively and accessible format. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Chaya Gordon-Bland, Executive Director Greg Huckabee, and Production Manager Scott Mollman, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival seeks to fulfill an important cultural and educational need throughout the state and Great Plains Region.

In 2015 the SDSF served approximately 1200 patrons through professional performances of Macbeth in Vermillion's Prentis Park, educational workshops for youth, outreach performances to Vermillion's SESDAC and Sanford Senior Care Center, and a Scholars' Roundtable discussion hosted by USD's College of Arts and Sciences and Department of English. In keeping with their mission of accessibility, all SDSF programming is offered at no cost to the public.

On November 23rd and 24th, 2015, in collaboration with USD Theatre, the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival will be sending a tour of Shakespeare performances to high schools throughout the state. The touring group will travel to Wagner High School, Flandreau High School, and the Flandreau Indian School, and is expected to engage nearly 400 South Dakota high school students with live arts. The tour is supported with a grant from USD's Center for Academic and Global Engagement (CAGE), matched by funds from USD Theatre, Coyoteopoly, and the United Way of Vermillion.

"Wine with Will", the annual fundraiser for the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival will be held on February 12th, 2016, at the John Day Gallery in the Warren M. Lee Center for Fine Arts, during the Stillwell Exhibition. Tickets for this event will be \$50/person and include wine and hors d'oeuvres tastings with a sommelier from RED Steakhouse, live music and Shakespeare performances, and a silent auction. All proceeds from this event directly support production of the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival's 2016 season.

Support for the South Dakota Shakespeare Festival is provided by the City of Vermillion, the Vermillion Chamber and Development Company, Vermillion Rotary, Sanford Vermillion, the Dakota Hospital Foundation, the University of South Dakota, the Vermillion Area Community Foundation, the United Way of Vermillion, and many local and regional businesses. South Dakota Arts Council support is provided with funds from the State of South Dakota, through the Department of Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, tickets, or to get involved, please visit our website at www.sds Shakespeare Festival.org.

VCT Announces Auditions For Dinner Theatre

Vermillion Community Theatre is holding auditions for their winter production of the musical "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 7 p.m. at 226 E. Main Street (United Church of Christ, Congregational).

This lively show has parts for adult men and women of various ages. The Director is Jo Nesmith with Matt Nesmith as the music director. There are audition forms and information on the website: vermillioncommunitytheatre.org.

Performances are scheduled for February 12-15, 2016 at the Vermillion Event Center next to Howler's. On Friday and Saturday there will be a social time at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and the show. On Sunday, the social time will start at 2 p.m.

Tickets will be will go on sale February 1, 2015 at the Nook 'n Cranny. Information will be updated on the website.

USD Students Bring Food To Families In Need

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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Over Halloween week, Coyoteopoly—a student run business through USD, raised a total of \$2,237.48 in cash donations for the Food Pantry and collected 4,550 various non-perishable food and personal care items.

"We are very proud of the success of this event," said Megan Lewno in an interview with the Plain Talk. "We have raised more this year than we have in the past and because of that we were able to help the local food pantry."

The donations will put the pantry in a great condition to help local people who are in need, especially over

the holidays.

"This is the largest donation to date that Coyoteopoly has been able to donate to those in need," Lewno said. "A special thank you is needed to all those who donated items or a monetary contribution, it was a tremendous help to the Food Pantry."

Two major contributors this year were the Vermillion Rotary Club and Hy-Vee. Rotary made a donation of \$500, which went directly to Food Pantry. Hy-Vee also made a substantial contribution by allowing Coyoteopoly students to participate in their round-up program for October 27th through the 31st, to which Coyoteopoly

students raised more than \$700. Without the support of these two particular businesses and from the community overall, these donations would not be available to the many people in need.

The Food Pantry runs year round, and also accepts donations, as well as volunteers, throughout that time.

Lewno said the monetary donations really increased this year.

"It is exciting because we are told that for every \$1 donated it equals \$5 dollars of donated items, because they can go and buy items in bulk," she said. "This was

just a great success and we are so glad to see that people in the Vermillion community are really starting to participate and help us help the food pantry."

For more information, please contact either of the Food Pantry Directors, Jessica MacKenzie or Keith Joy, or the Coyoteopoly Food Pantry President, Jordan Gooding.

The Food Pantry's has a website where more information is available, as well. That is: <http://www.vermillionfoodpantry.org>.

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For more information, contact Dr. Randy Royer with ASBSD at royer@asbsd.org or 605-773-2504.



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