

Parenting Classes to Strengthen Families

*Sunset Junior High School
Sunset, Utah*

Sunset Junior High School's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) co-sponsored the "Strengthening Families" parenting class with Davis Behavioral Health. The program consisted of seven two-hour sessions held once a week. Parents and their teenage children ate dinner together at the school before the evening activities began. During the first hour of the program, the parents and students met separately to focus on issues such as time management, celebrating families' strengths and values, and "why do my parents/children act the way they do?" Parents and teenagers came back together for the second hour to practice the lessons they learned. The weekly classes gave families the opportunity to bond while eating a meal and working together.

Sunset families liked the parenting classes so much that multiple seven-week sessions have been scheduled. As a result of their favorable experiences, two sets of parents asked to be trained as trainers for the program. These parents will receive the necessary training and offer a class at one of Sunset's feeder elementary schools in the fall. Another group of parents will work with the school guidance counselors to offer two-hour sessions teaching parents how to use the computer to access the school web site, find their students' grades, and use the Internet. Parent workshops are also planned on how students should organize their notebooks, available resources for extra help, study skills, lunch and learn, and how to contact the teachers.

Still more parents were so inspired by the workshops that they were asked to write a column in Spanish for the school's newsletter.

The ATP at Sunset Junior High School identified workshop topics that are developmentally appropriate for parents and teenagers. The workshops helped strengthen family bonds and are building school, family, and community partnerships well into the teenage years.

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