

ROCKLAND NEWS

Going for the Goal



On the bookcase of my den sits a photograph of my Great-Grandfather Benjamin with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. My great-grandfather was a U.S. congressman in 1954. The picture was taken after a group of Colorado lawmakers met with the President at the White House.

Whenever I think about my future, I think about that picture. My Great-Grandfather Benjamin really did something important with his life. But he didn't wake up one day and say, "Hey, I'm going to go to Washington." He had to make a plan and work hard to get to the U.S. Congress. He went to college, fought in World War II, became a lawyer, then a city councilman, a state legislator and finally a U.S. congressman.

Deciding to do anything takes planning. It's called setting a goal and following steps to reach it. Whether you want to get an "A" on a test or serve in the U.S. Congress, you've got to make a plan and carry it out.

So what's your goal? Think about what steps you need to take and get started. The outcome depends on you!

Jessie Star Lives Up to His Name



Last night the Rockland School Glee Club presented their spring concert to a packed house at the County Civic Center. While the night was mostly group performances, there was no denying that Jessie Star was a standout and lived up to his name. But what may surprise you is that Jessie came very close to never even trying out to sing.

"Well, I've been singing since I was 5-years-old, but kids told me to be quiet and stop making so much noise," Jessie said. "A lot of kids told me I couldn't sing, so I just stopped singing. But a year ago I joined a choir at my community center and for the first time people started to encourage me and tell me that I had a unique voice. That's why I decided to join the glee club at school."

This just shows how important it is that we all recognize the things we do well and keep a positive attitude about ourselves. It's also important to look for the best in other kids. It's called having a positive self-image—but we can't do it alone, it takes all of us recognizing the unique talents inside of us and around us. A positive self-image is the reason why Jessie started singing again. It could be the very thing you need to begin to reach for your dreams, whether it's singing in the glee club, playing on a sports team or becoming an artist.

Q: *Sometimes, when I have to make a decision, I freeze and don't know where to start. Sometimes I don't do anything. Any suggestions?*

A: *One of the toughest things to do is to make good decisions. But it always comes down to this—thinking before acting. There is a simple process you can use to make just about any decision and it's called the STAR model:*

S = STOP—Ask yourself, “What decision needs to be made?”

T = THINK—“What are my choices? What are the positive and negative consequences of each choice?”

A = ACT—Make your decision and take action!

R = REVIEW—Ask yourself, “Did things work out as I planned?”

I suggest you try out the STAR model with a simple decision to see how well it works. Then, when you're faced with something tough, you will be familiar with the steps and feel confident that it will help you make a good decision.



Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) is a nonprofit organization working to empower youth with the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions for a lifetime. Find out more by visiting their website at www.HLConline.org.



My Corner of the World



My mom says truth is always stranger than fiction. Which means that real people do some crazy things in their life, crazier than some of the things we read in storybooks. Sometimes my mom will read us a story out of the daily paper about a person who made a decision and something great happened to them, like they got a prize or won a contest. But she also reads us stories about people who made a decision and something bad happened to them, like the boy who was hit by a car when riding his bicycle because he didn't look before crossing the street.

When we read the news articles my mom will ask, “What could they have done differently to give the story a happy ending?” Usually, there's a point in the story where if they had made one different choice, everything would have been better. If only the boy had stopped to look before crossing, he wouldn't have been hurt.

We can learn a lot about life from other people. Why don't you try going through the news stories with your mom and dad to see how people are making good choices or how things could be different? It just might help you out next time you've got a decision to make.