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Bill Cirone op ed column

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A vision for the New Year

By Bill Cirone, Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools

A new year is the traditional time for making resolutions.

Family Circle Magazine once printed resolutions for parents, and I'm going to repeat them because they help focus our efforts as the new year begins:

I will always love my children for who they are — not who I want them to be.

I will give my child space to grow, to dream, to succeed, and even to fail. Without that space, no growth can occur.

I will create a loving home environment, regardless of what effort it takes at a given time.

When discipline is necessary, I will let my child know that I disapprove of what he *does*, not who he *is*.

I will set limits and help my children find security in the knowledge of what is expected of them. They will not have to guess what is right or wrong.

I will make time for all my children and cherish our moments together. I will not burden my children with emotions and problems they are not equipped to deal with.

I will encourage my children to experience the world and all its possibilities, taking pains to leave them careful but not fearful.

I will try to be the kind of person I want my children to be: loving, fair-minded, giving, and hopeful.

These are good resolutions for all of us.

The new year is also a good time to take stock and share our vision for children in Santa Barbara County for the year that is about to take shape. It is a vision I'm sure most members of our community share.

We envision children growing up in good health, with a zest for learning and living.

We see them with a spark inside that makes them want to share their talents with those less fortunate, and work for the good of the order, just because it's the right thing to do.

We see children who are free of fear, free of abuse, free of drugs, free of prejudice.

We see children who are free to reach beyond their circumstances, whatever those might be, and to join a society that welcomes their contributions on the job, in the community, and in the voting booth.

And we see a community willing to work together to bring all our children closer to that dream.

My sincere gratitude to all, for helping in ways both large and small to make this community a better place for young people and families. That support is evident at every turn, and it is deeply appreciated.

Happy holidays to young and old alike.

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