



LEND A HAND: New program designed to help co-parenting families

By Staff report

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Family Counseling Service in Tuscaloosa is starting the new year with a new program.

Building Bridges, the nonprofit's new program, is designed for divorced parents with minor children to assist with meeting their co-parenting needs. The purpose is to minimize co-parents returning to family court after their divorces by reaching a better understanding of the needs of their children.

"We are very excited about this program," said Larry Deavers, director of Family Counseling Service. "Participants will have an increased self-awareness and expanded knowledge of effective coping skills for themselves and their children."

Family Counseling Service has previously offered a program called Transparenting, but Building Bridges will replace that program.

"Building Bridges is designed to more specifically meet the needs of families in our community and provides valuable information to parents on helping their children through divorce," Deavers said.

Trevia Wilkerson, a licensed professional counselor at Family Counseling Service, is the coordinator and developer of the new program.

"Building Bridges empowers co-parents to solve their own problems for basic decisions about parenting through cooperation and collaboration," Wilkerson said. "In addition, it assists co-parents with emotional reticence by encouraging them to separate their past personal relationships from their new roles as co-parents."

To register, call 752-2504 or visit the Family Counseling Service office 2020 Paul W. Bryant Drive. Classes are held bi-monthly, and one session lasts four hours and costs \$75.

Family Counseling Service has also set the date and time for the annual Death By Chocolate Tournament, one of the nonprofit group's top fundraisers.

Each year, restaurants, catering companies, and other businesses in the Tuscaloosa area compete by bringing their best chocolates in hopes of being recognized as having Tuscaloosa's Best Chocolate.

This year's tournament will be held at 5:30 p.m. April 19 at the Tuscaloosa River Market, 1900 Jack Warner Parkway.

For more information about the event, go to www.counselingservice.org/death-by-chocolate. The website also has information about how licensed caterers and restaurants can register to enter the tournament.

Tickets can be purchased before April 19 for \$25 or at the door for \$35.

In last year's competition, A Cutting Edge Caterers earned an award for best presentation, Peterbrooke Chocolatier earned third place, Southern Ale House finished in second place and Vivere Chocolate was the tournament winner.

Family Counseling Service is a non-profit counseling agency, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of the people of West Alabama by providing counseling services and programs that promote mental, emotional and social well-being.



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