

## FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

BY DR JAMES DOBSON

### EMPTY NEST

The empty nest is painful, but it gives you a great perspective on parenting. When our youngest child, Ryan, went off to Chicago for his freshmen year in university, his final day at home was filled with the hustle and bustle of packing and getting him ready for a new life. And somehow, we missed the gravity of that moment.

But then as we were driving him to the airport the next morning, an unexpected wave of grief swept me. I thought I couldn't stand to see him go. It was not that I wanted to hold him in childhood or to exercise control on his life. No, I mourned the end of an era, a precious time of my life when Ryan and his sister, Danae, were young, and their voices rang in the halls of our house. I couldn't hide the tears as we hugged goodbye.

If you're thinking that I'm hopelessly sentimental about my kids, you're right. But I hope my experience has a message for those of you whose children are still underfoot. The days that you've been given to care for your children are much briefer than you think. Yes, it's a difficult and exhausting assignment, but I urge you to stay on the course; finish the job. When you stand where my wife and I are today, you'll know that you have performed the most important task a human being can undertake. And it's worth everything it costs you to do the job right.

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HILTON'S  
BACK IN THE  
SPOTLIGHT

37

# Where were the first aid staff?

Qualified medics should have been at hand to save Thaddeus

Letter by **EDWARD NEO FENG RUI** and **KENDRICK ONG YI QIAN**

THE tragic death of Thaddeus Cheong (picture), a Raffles Junior College athlete who collapsed during a South-east Asian Games selection race, is cause for some serious reflection.

We are qualified first aid personnel and find it strange that no one performed any type of resuscitation after Thaddeus failed to respond to verbal stimuli. We also cannot understand why medics and an ambulance were not on standby for an event of this scale, with such a high casualty risk.

Also, why didn't a single coach step up when Thaddeus collapsed? Sports coaches are qualified in first aid as that is a requirement before they can be awarded their certification.

Even smaller scale and lower risk intra-school sports meets have first aid stations covering the entire venue.

During cross-country meets of schools, first aid personnel stationed along the route tend to anyone who is injured or unwell through the course of the event. There is also a base station at the finishing point where athletes are at the greatest risk of exhaustion or, in the worst cases, cardiac arrest.

Secondary injuries should be accessed only after the victim's airway is clear and when he or she is breathing and has a pulse. Even if the cause



TODAY FILE PHOTO

of the collapse could not be determined, the lack of heartbeat or a pulse should have called for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

CPR-qualified personnel should think about preserving the life at hand, rather than technicalities such as the absence of a heartbeat.

Brain injury begins if blood supply is denied to the organ for at least four minutes and is irreversible after a continued absence of flow for up to 10 minutes. Even if first aid reaches the victim after four minutes, CPR should still have been performed to give the victim a fighting chance at survival until the paramedics have arrived.

On the Triathlon Association of Singapore website, it states that relevant certification and experience are necessary for first aid officers. Also, they have to work with the duty safety officer on the race day.

Were first aid personnel present on that day? What is the job scope of safety officers? Were they qualified to perform CPR?

## HDB car parks are for residents, not the public

Letter from **TAN YANG SONG**,  
Head, Pasir Ris Branch Office,  
Housing & Development Board (HDB)

I REFER to Mr Tan Chee Meng's letter, "Be flexible when meting out fines" (June 23).

HDB car parks are provided primarily to serve the residents' parking needs.

For the more popular car parks, for instance those located near recreational or commercial facilities, reserved lots ensure that our season ticket holders are not deprived of their parking lots.

The car park where Mr Tan had parked in a reserved lot is one such

car park, in view of its proximity to Downtown East.

For this car park, we have been receiving feedback from residents on parking lots taken up by non-season ticket holders on weekends.

Hence, we have intensified our enforcement action.

Visitors to Downtown East who wish to park at HDB car parks have other options, such as those at Blocks 478 to 487 Pasir Ris Drive 4, Blocks 405 to 411 and Blocks 412 to 429 Pasir Ris Drive 6.

## Clean up your act, high-rise litterbugs

Letter from **ALVIN CHAN**,  
Public Relations Manager,  
Sembawang Town Council

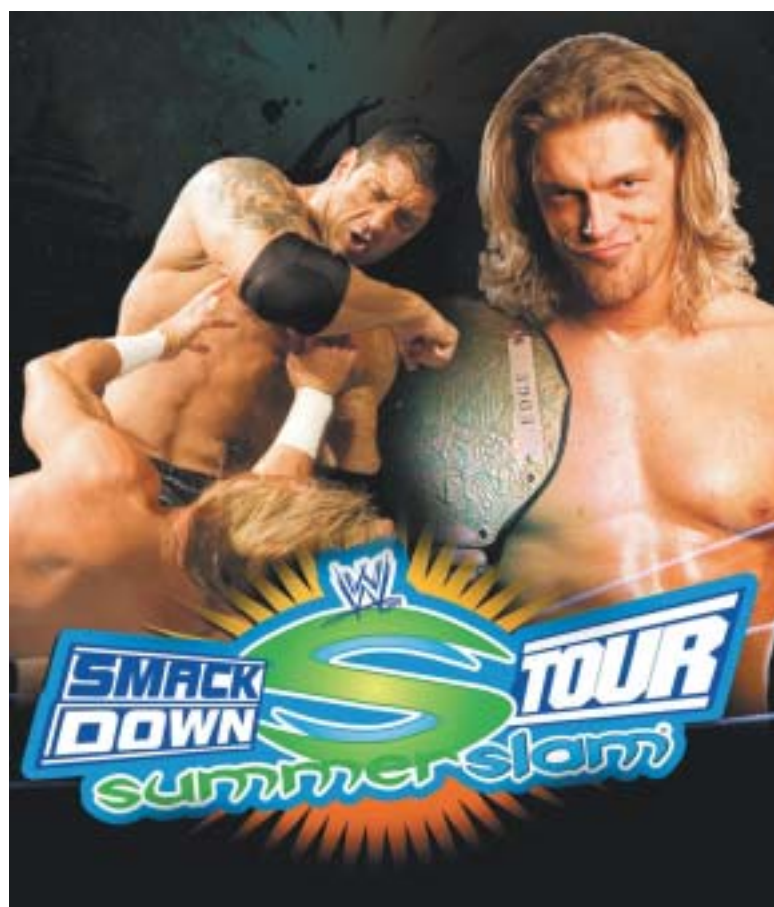
the residents not to engage in high-rise littering acts and have served reminder notices to that effect.

WE REFER to the letter, "Litter by litter, garbage builds up" (June 23-24), by Ms Goh Hwee Ching.

We wish to inform Ms Goh that the litter on the ledge was cleared on June 25 and we will continue to ensure the cleanliness of the canopy ledge. We seek the cooperation of

We also agree with Ms Goh and urge all residents to be mindful of their civic duty and contribute to the upkeep of the environment.

We take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Ms Goh and her family and we wish them a pleasant stay.



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