

## Coast & State

# Speakers to discuss parenting principles

## ● Hyde School officials present 'The Biggest Job' free Friday in Bath.

By **LLOYD FERRISS**  
*Staff Writer*

When she speaks before many of the 5,000 people she's addressed in 50 parenting workshops across the country, Laura Gauld often asks her audience: What values do you want to give your children?

Gauld, 43, a former teacher and current board member at the Hyde School in Bath, said parents at her lectures all want similar standards for kids.

They want them to have integrity and courage, she said, and a belief in themselves.

During the presentations she calls "The Biggest Job We'll Ever Have," Gauld tells her audience how schools and families undermine the values they profess by dishonesty and stressing achievement instead of character.

Then in the lectures, where she's often accompanied by her husband, Malcolm Gauld, director of the Hyde School and Hyde programs in several other schools, Gauld tells how to get back on track, Hyde-style.

Usually the presentations cost about \$50 per person. But the Gaulds will waive the admission Friday, when they present "The Biggest Job" at the Hyde Mansion at 616 High St. in Bath.

According to Laura Gauld, the event's purpose is self-help for parents, and a Hyde effort to launch new parenting techniques. It is not, she said, a recruitment effort by the private secondary school.

Hours for the free lecture, which they've given three times before in Bath, are 6:30-9:30 p.m.

"We just wanted to give back to the community," she said. "And there's always been a little mystique about what goes on here at the school."

Ten child-raising principles cited in "The Biggest Job" lectures form the guiding philosophy of the 240-student Hyde School, begun in 1966 by Joseph Gauld. He is Laura

Gauld's father-in-law and author of the 1980s book, "Character First."

According to Laura Gauld, one very important principle is that honesty in a family serves its members far better than trying to appear harmonious.

"When our kids see us looking as if everything is going great, and it isn't, they know that," she said. "And deep down the parents know, it, too."

Another Hyde guiding principle of "Biggest Job" lectures is that attitude is more important than aptitude. By that approach, said Gauld, a hard-earned "C" is better than a "B" given to a student capable of "A" work.

"Instead of asking our kids what did they get," said Gauld, "a more important question is, 'How do you feel about the effort you put in?'"

The common pitfall of parenting, she said, is "falling in love with your kid's potential." Parents who do that, she said, tend to excuse behavior in their own children that would bother them if it were someone else's child misbehaving.

"Sometimes it's better to treat your own children like someone else's kids," she said. "Ask yourself, is this acceptable behavior?"

Laura Gauld's lectures are not the first effort to export the Hyde School approach to the community.

Joseph Gauld, the school's founder, tried introducing Hyde-based programs to private and public schools. Among them was an early 1990s attempt to bring Hyde methods to Gardiner Area High School.

According to Susan Emmet, a former teacher at the school and president at the time of the Gardiner Teachers' Association, the program failed months after it was launched for what she called "a whole host of problems."

The people from Hyde came in and demanded to do things that violated the (teachers') contract," she said. "There were divisions within the existing faculty and Hyde. ... You either had to walk the walk and talk the talk or you were a kind of pariah."

Laura Gauld looks back on the unsuccessful attempt as a learning experience.

"I look back and I think Hyde made mis-

takes," she said. "They came on strong. You can't go onto their turf and say, 'We have a better way.'"

Recent attempts to link with other schools, many the result of Laura Gauld's lectures, have gone better. There are schools with Hyde-based character-first programs in New York, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., and Arizona.

Chris Barnes, principal of the Litchfield Elementary School in Litchfield Park, Ariz., switched his 750-student school to Hyde methods after meeting Laura and Malcolm Gauld. A teacher in his school also attended a "Biggest Job" lecture.

According to Barnes, there's no resistance to his schools' new program, and the approach has changed student attitude.

"I'm seeing it work," he said. "The kids feel good, and when they feel good about themselves they do great."

Several Maine parents who attended past "Biggest Job" workshops in Bath said it's helped family relations.

Stephen and Valerie Campbell of Brunswick went to an initial lecture last fall, then followed up with more Hyde workshops that explore the 10 Hyde principles in depth.

Their two children also got involved. "You learn to be interactive and honest with each other," she said, "and not to ignore certain things."

Laura Gauld, a graduate of the Hyde School and mother of two children, emphasizes parent example at all her lectures. Parents must lead an honest and character-strong life, she said, if they expect their kids to have good values.

"Our kids are not going to pick it up by osmosis," she said. "We have to get in there and model it for them."

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