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## Communication With Youth Needed

UNUSUAL, negative and violent actions always have attracted more attention than normal, placid and positive ways of life.

This makes news because it is what people want to know, even if it is bad news. Good news often is less exciting although it frequently is considerably more significant.

Bad news about young people may appear to dominate the news, but it is not because there is more of it. Day after day, newspapers report successes scored by teen-agers in science, debate, drama, athletics and many other activities.

A single sensational crime committed by a youth or the serious problem of youth unemployment may offset all this.

What about the majority of young people, those who obey their parents and the law, who are respectful to their teachers, who study hard and earn their own spending money?

In spite of reckless driving by some irresponsible show-offs, most teen-agers are careful, safe drivers.

More than a decade ago, Optimist Club members decided too much attention was being given to negative acts of young people and not enough to their positive, responsible actions. So the civic club launched an annual Youth Appreciation Week, which is now widely observed across the nation.

In the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, 10 Optimist clubs are devoting attention to the movement this week. Their objectives are to recognize accomplishments of youth in the home, in the school, in the church and in the community.

In so doing, the clubs are focusing on another serious national problem, the decline of family and home life. Leaders believe that more participation in wholesome activities by families "as a unit" will slow erosion of traditional American values.

A stated purpose of Optimist Club youth week is to encourage parents to rededicate themselves to responsibilities of parenthood.

Children learn early in life that

they can attract attention to themselves by misdeeds when obedience seems to be ignored. This has been offered as an explanation for part of the delinquency that young people drift into. Many rationalize their actions by saying "My parents don't care what I do."

Another worthy objective of the Optimist program is to focus attention on the influence religion and moral teachings have on young lives, and to encourage youth to seek these things.

Many leaders have pointed out the need for more effective communications between adults and young people and for more appreciation and greater respect for young people who are trying to do right, who work and study, and who obey the law.

This takes a conscious effort, because a few bad boys and bad girls, by their tantrums and misdeeds, can make more noise than a whole room full of good kids. And they know this.