LOVING LEARNING

FANTASTIC FACTS MAKE LEARNING FUN

ED U. GATOR’S MOM HITS THE NET

BILL NYE THE SCIENCE GUY

PROJECT: Solution
DISCOVERING LESSONS FOR LIFE
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It's absolutely amazing what you can learn about the world! Did you know that the earth is 92,897,000 miles from the sun? That's an unbelievably long way! Speaking of the sun, do you know how hot it is at the sun's center? 29,000,000 degrees! Ouch! Do you know how many nerve cells there are in the brain? 10,000,000,000! Wow, we must be incredibly smart! Every day we learn new things. We learn by reading, we learn by talking to other people, we learn by listening, watching, smelling and tasting. You started learning on the day you were born and you'll still be learning new things 60 years from now!

So, what can you do with all these fantastic facts and incredible ideas? Well, you can carry on fascinating conversations with your family and friends. Someday you might even write articles or books about your favorite subjects. And best of all, you can take all that precious knowledge you've acquired and you can turn around and give it to somebody else! You can teach others all the neat stuff you've learned. Pretty cool, right?

So live your life like it's one long thrilling adventure! Seize every opportunity to search for, hunt down, uncover, dissect, analyze, and file away in your 10,000,000,000 brain cells that never-ending parade of fantastic facts!

VOCABULARY:
Acquire: to get; to become the owner of.
Dissect: to study carefully every part of something.
Analyze: to examine or study something in

ACTIVITY:
There's a saying that goes "You learn something new every day." You might learn that "something" in the classroom, in the schoolyard, in the gym, in a conversation with a friend or on a walk in your neighborhood. If you really love learning, you can pick up new ideas and information everywhere! Think really hard, and try to remember what new things you learned this week.
i gators, crocs, guys and girls. Ed here. As you all probably know, I spend quite a bit of time on our computer at home. I have some really cool CD-ROMs like 3D Dinosaur and Swampdon's Encyclopedia that are fun to use, and also help me with my school work. Dad uses the computer to keep up with news and sports on the Internet. Gramps uses it for figuring out puzzles and playing solitaire. El likes the programs that teach her how to read and write. In fact, it seemed like there was always somebody on the computer. Except Mom, that is. Mom had never learned how to use it. One day I asked her why she didn’t want to learn how. She said, “Oh Ed, I’m too old to pick up this new technology. I could never figure out what to do on it, or how to use that moose thing!”

"You mean mouse, Mom," I said. Well, my mom’s pretty smart, and if Gramps can use it, nobody’s too old to learn. So last Saturday I decided to give Mom a computer lesson. I could tell she was reluctant at first, and maybe even a little afraid. But I tried to do what Mr. Salam Ander does. Whenever we don’t catch on to a subject right away, he slows down and encourages us to ask a bunch of questions so we can really learn the right way. I tried being especially patient with Mom. And you know what? She picked it up really fast. After just an hour she was using the mouse all by herself, clicking and dragging like a pro!

When I got home from school on Monday, there was Mom glued to the computer. She was writing a letter to our Aunt Lucy in Swamp City. You should have seen all the neat graphics and designs she put on the borders of the page. I was very impressed! At first, she didn’t notice I was there. Then she turned around and saw me staring over her shoulder. “Ed,” she said, “I can’t tell you how thankful I am for you showing me how to use this. I love it!” Tuesday night she went to the computer store and bought a program to do the family’s budget. Wednesday she was downloading a recipe for chicken gumbo from the Internet. Thursday she spent two hours chasing dinosaurs on my 3D CD-ROM! It’s great to see Mom so excited about learning something new.

There’s only one problem now. Since Mom learned how to use the computer, I barely get a chance to use it myself!

QUESTIONS
1) What are some of the different ways Ed’s family uses the computer?

2) Why didn’t Ed’s mom use the computer? Why was she afraid to try?

3) Why was Ed such a good teacher? What had he learned from Mr. Salam Ander about teaching?

4) What did Ed’s mom learn to do on the computer?

5) How did she feel about learning a new skill?

6) What did Ed say was the only problem with Mom using the computer? Can you think of a possible solution?
YOU HAVE A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE!

Directions: In the list below there are 10 different subjects. Pick three of them that really interest you, and write a few FASCINATING FACTS you’ve learned about each. If you don’t find a favorite subject on the list, choose your own!

- Trains, planes and automobiles
- Dinosaurs and reptiles
- Parts of the body
- Fire safety
- Music and entertainment
- Other countries; other cultures
- United States history and the government
- The five senses
- Computers and technology
- The ocean and outer space

1. ___________________________________  ___________________________________
   ___________________________________  ___________________________________
   2. ___________________________________  ___________________________________
   ___________________________________  ___________________________________
   3. ___________________________________  ___________________________________

A BOOK REVIEW: BY YOU

Directions: Read a good book lately? Or perhaps you have a favorite book of all time. In the space below write a brief summary of the book, and tell what it is you liked about it. Ask an adult if you need some help.

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**IN THE NEWSPAPER**

**Directions:** Sometimes in the magazine section of the Sunday paper you can read an interview with a famous person. Pretend you’re a newspaper reporter, and you’re interviewing a celebrity you really admire, like a famous athlete, actor, musician or politician. What kinds of things would you love to learn about that person? Try to think of five questions you would ask if you had this special opportunity, and write them below.

_____________________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________
Here once was a boy named Todd who thought he knew everything. Whenever anyone tried to tell him anything, he would just say, “I already know that!” or “Yeah, so what else is new?” He rarely paid attention in class, because he was convinced there was nothing left to learn. He never read books either. He thought, “Why bother? I already know everything there is to know!” He wasn’t a very pleasant fellow to talk to really, because he was never interested in what anyone else had to say. Of course, as far as Todd was concerned, his answers and his opinions were always the right ones, and if anyone disagreed he would say, “Oh, you don’t know!”

One day Todd was sitting on the steps in front of the school, waiting for the bus. A few of his classmates came out the door and walked by Todd. “Hey, Todd,” Judith said, “how would you like to come with us? We’re going exploring down by the stream, to see what interesting stuff we can find.”

“No thanks,” said Todd, “Been there, done that. Sounds pretty boring to me.” So Judith and her friends said goodbye and headed toward the woods behind the school. A few minutes later, Todd’s bus came. He rode home and spent the afternoon twiddling his thumbs and staring at the ceiling in his bedroom.

The next day in class, Judith and her friends walked in the door laughing and smiling, and carrying jars full of bugs and worms and bags full of sticks and leaves. The teacher spent the first half of the class explaining what the different specimens were. Then he asked Judith and her friends to talk about their unique adventure at the stream. Judith was very excited about her discoveries, and the class was extremely curious. Except for Todd, who spent the whole time with his head on his desk, staring aimlessly out the window. As usual, he didn’t listen to a word. He figured he already knew everything there was to learn about bugs and trees and streams.

And that’s how Todd lived the rest of his life. While everyone else learned as much as they could learn, read as many books as they could read, went on as many adventures as they could go on, Todd twiddled his thumbs, and stared aimlessly at ceilings and out windows, convinced that he knew everything there was to know. But, truth be told, Todd didn’t really know very much at all.
Bill Nye is a scientist, a comedian, a teacher and an author. He’s best known for his zany but educational weekly television show Disney Presents Bill Nye the Science Guy. Even as a kid, Bill Nye loved combining learning and laughter.

He did extremely well in, and was fascinated by, math and science, and while in high school tutored fellow students in those difficult subjects. When he wasn’t reading books, he spent his time riding his bicycle and exploring the world around him. He later graduated from Cornell University with a degree in mechanical engineering. While living in Seattle, Nye won a Steve Martin look-alike contest and began performing stand-up comedy at night, and continuing to work as an engineer during the day. Soon after, he created the character of Bill Nye the Science Guy, incorporating humor and teaching. He made frequent television appearances and answered science-related questions on local and national radio.

Bill Nye goes to great lengths (heights and depths) to make learning entertaining. On various shows he’s dropped into an active volcano in a helicopter, plunged into a tub of water from three stories high and bungee-jumped off a bridge. Each episode of the show features do-it-at-home experiments, wild graphics, special effects and ridiculous jokes. Nye is committed to doing “whatever it takes” to reach kids and teach them to enjoy science and love learning. In 1995, the show won the International Monitor Award for Best Achievement in Children’s Programming.

Amazingly enough, Bill Nye still rides his bicycle to work every day. He also continues to tutor, teaching inner city pre-teens and teens as part of the “I Have A Dream” program, which works at keeping kids on track toward college and university studies.

**VOCABULARY:**

**Mechanical:** having to do with machinery.

**Engineering:** the science or work of planning and building machinery.

**Incorporate:** to combine with something else.
TIPS

1) Help your child understand the value of learning, and that learning happens in, and outside of school. We learn in all of our encounters with different people, in our relationships with friends and family, and just by being aware of the world around us. When you see or discover something unique and interesting, share it with your child. Your enthusiasm, curiosity and sense of wonder will undoubtedly rub off on her.

2) Look for opportunities to explore and have adventures. Many of these experiences are inexpensive, but rich in learning. It’s amazing what can be taught and learned by a simple walk in the woods, a hike in the mountains or a stroll by a stream.

3) Learning is a life-long process, and teachers come in all shapes, sizes and ages. Don’t be reluctant to learn from your children, too. Kids are studying some fascinating subjects in school today. If your child sees how much you appreciate and respect what he’s learned, it will encourage him to keep learning, and to keep sharing his discoveries and knowledge with you.

4) Use the library for the multi-dimensional learning experience it is. Most libraries have audio, video and computers to augment their extensive book collections. The library can be a great adventure, and a fun way to help develop a love of learning. It’s also a wonderful place to get lost in a quiet zone for a few hours.

RESOURCES
Seuss, Dr. Oh, the Places You’ll Go! Random House, 1990.

FAMILY ACTIVITY
The next time your family takes a weekend trip or an adventure to a new location, try keeping a family journal of the experience. Using a composition notebook or just some blank pages stapled together; encourage family members to write down thoughts and observations along the way. If you can take photographs while you’re there, include them in the journal, along with spontaneous drawings and sketches. It will probably enhance the learning aspect of the adventure, and help instill the experience in your family’s collective memory.

FAMILY PLEDGE CARD
Our family has completed the Family Page together.

______________________________
Child’s name

Family members:

____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

School: ___________________________________

For more information about Project: Solution, call 726-8918 or 1-800-351-1227, ext. 8033 or 8918.