

# Parents should create adults, not 'adulolescents'

Arnold Schwarzenegger isn't the only guy uttering the admonition that "I'll be back." So are more than half the college students polled in a survey by Monster.com (the job-search Web site) who plan to move back in with Mom and Dad after commencement.

It's not that they are homesick for Mom's cooking or the household responsibilities and rules they abided by for 18 years of their lives. They simply can't afford a place of their own or haven't found a job yet.

With young adults delaying marriage and the job market in the pits, approximately 4 million Americans between the ages of 23 and 34 are heading home to live. Some of these "adulolescents," as they were labeled by Newsweek magazine, are enjoying all the amenities of their childhood home — cable TV, air-conditioning, groceries in the fridge — without paying the dues.

And that's a problem in terms of becoming self-supporting, conscientious and responsible people.

"There's a later passage to adulthood," said Frank Furstenberg, a sociologist who directs a MacArthur Foundation project studying the transition into adulthood, "and at the same time it's less orderly. There's more moving in and out."

Some parents are as



**Therese J. Borchard**

## Our Turn

thrilled to hear the question "Can I move back home?" as they are to hear they are going to become grandparents (if their children are employed and married).

But others enjoy their empty nest.

"Long ago a Readers Digest article made a huge impression on me," said Illinois-based author LaVonne Neff. "Children should be raised so that they truly are adults when they legally become so, it said. By age 18, young adults should be self-supporting, responsible for their own debts and decisions. Teach the little birdies to fly, and then shove them out of the nest."

She laid down the line at the first mention of a possible homecoming by her younger daughter. "When Heidi asked me, 'What would you do if, after college, I needed to come home to live for a while?' I told her I'd buy a smaller house," Neff recounts.

I don't think there is any-

thing wrong with helping young people out as they find themselves, go back to school or try a few entry-level jobs before committing to a career path. But I do think that during the interim period they shouldn't be exempt from financial or household contributions. Treating them as dependents might put a Band-Aid on the problem, but it ultimately enables and encourages laziness and irresponsibility.

If I've learned anything in my young-adult years, it's that I am fully accountable for my decisions. If I accidentally bounce a check, it shows up on my credit report five years down the line when I apply for a mortgage loan. If I accrue debt, I have to work twice as hard to pay it off.

When nothing is free, everything is valuable: like clean clothes, a dinner out, a brand-new mattress.

And when everything is on the house, we are deprived of the true joys of adulthood such as turning up the thermostat as high as we like, pigging out on ice-cream for breakfast if we so desire and being in control of the remote control. Such freedom is surely worth working for.

Therese J. Borchard is a columnist for Catholic News Service.



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

that we are giving our children one of the greatest gifts that we as parents can give, the gift of faith.

My faith is so important to me. Not to be melodramatic, but Jesus has been there for me at times when human reasoning and comfort just couldn't touch my heart. I have such a personal and wonderful relationship with Him. I know that I have many people to thank for nurturing this relationship. I have my parents to thank for bringing faith alive for me, and I have those involved in my Catholic education who reinforced and reaffirmed on a daily basis the morals and beliefs my parents held dear. I am a stronger, more loving person for having experienced Catholic education, and it is this that I wish for my children.

Monica T. Marsh  
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## All can join prayer circle

To the editor:

I'd like to thank reporter Jennifer Burke and photographer Mike Crupi for the poignant article "Face to face with violence," in the Dec. 4 issue. Deacon Bill Coffey has been the thread

and inspiration that holds the homicide prayer vigils together. Deacon Bill has said time and again how he wishes this group did not have to continue meeting. But as long as people find violent ways to react in our community, the prayer vigils will continue. The Holy Spirit is a very powerful presence as we stand in these circles, hand-in-hand, deep in prayer and sympathy at each homicide site. These gatherings try to bring healing and hope to the families who have lost loved ones, and to the neighbors who must continue their lives knowing that someone has died a violent death on their street.

One thing not mentioned in the article is that whether or not we are physically able to be with the vigil group, everyone can be a part of the energy of prayer. Each time we hear of another homicide in our city, we can stop and pray. People who want to be informed as to where the vigil groups are meeting can e-mail my office at [grcc@juno.com](mailto:grcc@juno.com) and I will connect them with Deacon Coffey. During this season of miracles we can be assured that God is with us during our prayer vigils.

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