

# Marriage and Family Life Corner

Debby Gullery

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## HI EVERYONE!

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I wanted to let all of you know how I've spent my first month and a half 'on the job'. I started out by meeting and speaking with several key people in our community who represent different areas of our diverse and fascinating congregation. I wanted to understand **us**, in all of our glory and messiness!

I had the opportunity to get to know our awesome Youth Pastor Yasu, and some of his capable and righteous staff, and was able to speak to our Youth Ministry about how our matching process has developed and improved. That was a real treat –and I hope to do it again!

I've also spoken with Justin Okamoto in his capacity as young Adult Pastor, met with some of our young couples to see what's on their minds and what's going on in their lives, and I've gotten a much better understanding of our Kodan members and their families. I've discovered, as I fully expected to, that we are a pretty amazing group of people, with a lot of potential!

I've been reading a book by Shawn Achor about what constitutes happiness, and in it he says that **social connection** is one of the biggest predictors of happiness there is! In other words, the more we connect with others, and the more social connections we nurture in our lives, the happier and healthier we are.

So I got to thinking .... why not **create more** opportunities for us to make connections with each other? That'd be good for us and any friends of our faith that we may be getting to know. So here are a few ideas I thought we could begin with. Let me know what you think and please consider participating in one or all of them!

- 1. Adopt a Grandparent:** You probably noticed that our younger couples are having babies! It's wonderful, and it's hard! Let's match up any empty-nesters who haven't been blessed with their own grandchildren yet, with some of our younger families, so that they can get out of the house and nurture their marriages! If you're interested in getting more oxytocin in your life ( snuggles, hugs, coos and all around good feelings) , contact me and we'll get started matching you up to some young couples in need of a date night! Oh, and if you're a young couple in need, contact me and I'll match you up with some loving arms.
- 2. Become a Matching Advisor!** Currently, our large community has only 2 trained and active matching advisors and we really need more! If you are interested in helping

brothers and sisters navigate the matching process and find true love, please consider getting the training. You just need to be trustworthy, a good listener, a patient communicator, and Blessed. And you decide how much time you want to dedicate to this ministry, and when you can be available.

The next training and certification for prospective matching advisors is being held Friday and Saturday, July 11-12, 2014, together with the Parents Matching Convocation (PMC), at the Columbus, Ohio Church. The MA Training will be held Friday from 8:30 AM – 5:45 PM, with additional sessions integrated with the PMC Friday evening and Saturday until 6:00 PM. The training is **free** for qualified participants. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are included on Friday. But accommodations and food Friday night – Sunday afternoon are the responsibility of each participant. MA Training participants are encouraged to remain for the entire duration of the PMC, which ends at 2:00 PM on Sunday.

As a trained MA, we feel that you will add so much to the strength of our community that WestRock wants to contribute to the cost of your transportation and accommodations. (Specifics about that are coming). And one more thing, this training is *not* just for first generation – second generation around the country are being trained as MAs and making a difference in their local communities! Please contact me if you're interested! It's a wonderful way to contribute, support and make really significant connections!

- 3. Summer Small Groups/Clubs:** I thought it'd be fun to try something that the Manhattan Church has been doing for quite a while. They invite members of the community to **share their skills and/or interests** in some form for **a specific time period**. So for example, if you love to hike with your family, you might want to offer a Hiking Club that other families can join. Or if you love to cook, you could do a cooking club. Or a salsa dancing club, or a gardening club, or a drum circle. You get the idea. But this time, **it won't go on forever**. Let's experiment and do it for 8 weeks in the summer. You can offer your club/class to the community and anyone who is interested can sign up for it. Then, if it goes well, we can consider doing it again in the fall.

So, if you're interested in starting an 8-week club, beginning in July and going through to the end of August, **send me an email** with the time, the place, and a brief description. I will compile a list of all the clubs being made available them and then we'll have a big sign up. Remember, this can also be a great way to bring our guests and friends closer to our community and an excellent way for each of us to make more connections in our lives.

1. **The Japanese Family Matching Handbook is finally in print** and will be available for purchase in WestRock very soon.

2. **Level 1 Blessing Workshop: Discovering My True Self**

Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at White House, 9am to 5pm. Cost: \$10.00

**Who is this for?** This program is designed specifically for our seniors and others who are older and want to understand the basics of the matching process, the meaning of the Blessing, and how to prepare for it. It emphasizes *becoming* the right person before trying to find the right person, and gives practical and spiritual guidance to help them be successful in the years before they begin the matching process. **Rsvp please:** [debbygullery@yahoo.com](mailto:debbygullery@yahoo.com)

3. **Parents Matching Convocation** in Columbus, Ohio: Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>.

This is for **all parents of teenagers 16 years and older**. Don't wait until your son or daughter approaches you and tells you they want to get matched. You and your spouse need to prepare for that wonderful moment *before* your kids are ready, so that *you* can understand the matching process thoroughly, and the best way to do that is to attend a PMC!

If you go, you will learn everything there is to know about our matching process, talk to parents who have already successfully matched their kids, receive support from trained matching advisors, get ideas for how to strengthen your relationship with your teenagers, and network with parents who are also learning.

You will also receive the brand new, much-improved 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Family Matching Handbook ( in English or Japanese! ), and learn about our matching websites and how they work.

To register for the PMC visit [www.blessedfamilies.org](http://www.blessedfamilies.org), and click on the pink PMC registration banner on the right side, above the Matchbook logo. Onsite registration will open at 5:00 PM Friday afternoon, July 11 (pre-registering online will save you money and time at the conference registration). The program begins with Orientation at 7:30 PM that evening, and closes at 2:00 PM on Sunday, July 13.

- **EARLY BIRD Pay by June 24:** \$100/individual; \$150/couple; \$50 for each additional family member
- **Pay after June 24:** \$120/individual; \$180/couple; \$60 for each additional family member

The registration fee covers the convocation program and materials, the **new 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Matching Handbook (choose English or Japanese)**, snacks and refreshments during the program, and 5 meals: Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch. Accommodations are the responsibility of each participant. Dinner on Friday is optional at the cost \$8.00.

**To register, visit [www.blessedfamilies.org](http://www.blessedfamilies.org), and click on the pink PMC registration banner on the right side, above the Matchbook logo. If you need assistance registering for the PMC or uploading profiles and photos, email [BFMadmin@unification.org](mailto:BFMadmin@unification.org).**

- 4. Getting Back on Track Workshop:** This will be held in a confidential site on the east coast, between July 18<sup>th</sup> – July 21<sup>st</sup>. This workshop is designed for all BCs who have had a sexual relationship outside of the Blessing, but would like to move forward from there and prepare themselves for Blessing in the future. This is one of the most powerful workshops our movement puts on! Contact me if you're interested or if you have any questions.
  
- 5. Unificationist 24+ Singles Retreat:** Save the Date: August 21 - August 24. Contact me if you're interested or check out [bfm.familyfed.org](http://bfm.familyfed.org) for on-going updates.

**That's it for now – let's stay connected!**

Blessings to all of you,

Debby