



Jasper, Texas — Home of Connor Day

# The Jasper Newsboy



For local [email](#)

**Marketplace:** Shopping • Health Care • Home Improvement • Going Out • Real Estate • Classifieds • Place an Ad

News

**Front Page**

- News
- Viewpoint
- People
- Records
- Faith
- Sports
- Honor Roll
- Outdoors
- Food

**PDF Edition**

Archive

Search Archive

Search

**Beaumont Papers**

- Beaumont Journal
- Mid-County Chronicle
- Hardin County News
- Orange County News

**About Us**

- Beaumont Enterprise
- Contact Us
- E-mail Us
- Subscribe
- Copyright© 2005-2006 Hearst Communications Inc.
- All Rights Reserved

## Front Page

November 1, 2006



**Beaumont Lumberton Vidor**

## Program prods more father involvement in education

By SHARON KERR



**LAST TUESDAY'S program drew both young and older dads to the Jasper High School shell gym.**

Tuesday night, Oct. 24.

J. Michael Hall was more a combination circus ringleader and coach than a guest speaker. The Jasper Independent School District arranged the free evening as part of an outreach program to get parents more involved in children's schooling, according to Rachel Pickle, program director.

Hall said, "I come from a small town like Jasper where

Everyone in the Jasper High School gym was on their feet, laughing and moving at the "Strong Fathers, Strong Families" program that brought an estimated 600 people together

**MORIAN KAHLA**  
Attorneys At Law, L.L.P.



*1st Choice Real Estate*  
2005 J.D. Power and Associates Award Recipient



**J&J Trailer Sales**  
China, Texas

**STARK MUSEUM of ART**

**Click for la**

**JOHN M.**

**Medic Treatn**  
Now seeing Jasper  
**300 Marv**  
(in the offices of)  
**FOR AF**  
**1-800-4**

**Lynn F**

**ORTHC**

• Sports Medici  
Tunnel Release • P1

**922 N. Whee**  
OFFICE HRS

**Appointme**

**Abdul B. B**  
Board Certified

(409) 38

Office  
Monday the  
8:00 am. to 12 pm. &  
Medians

Woodford Heights  
802 W. Gibson • 34



Newspaper web site content management software and services



[Add to My Yahoo!](#)

everybody knows each other. It's fun to see people making connections and catching up with folks they haven't seen in awhile."

Notices were sent inviting all parents from pre-K through 12th grade to come to an appreciation dinner, with special emphasis on including fathers.

"Dads sometimes come to these things thinking they are going to get a beating," Hall said. "We tell them no beatings, no preaching, just information and they can decide what to do with it."

Hall quoted U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, "If America's dads got as involved as America's moms in their children's education, America's children would be studying harder and getting a lot more A's."

Hall should know. He holds a master's degree in school administration and has worked as a special ed teacher and school principal.

He now works with dads and their children in Head Start programs and public schools to develop products and projects to benefit fathers and families.

"We help dads realize their strengths first. There's differences in feminine and masculine parenting and both have inherent strengths. Kids need both," Hall said.

His website, [www.strongfathers.com](http://www.strongfathers.com), outlines programs and offers tips to educators on strengthening family bonds to improve children's performance.

If this all sounds very serious, the evening was quite the opposite. As soon as the meal in the cafeteria was over,



**J. MICHAEL HALL (center) guides parents through exercises to strengthen families by getting fathers more involved in their children's education. Kids enjoyed their own fun and games, and dads signed a pledge to the schools to stay in touch.**

Retirement Planning  
*Fin*  
 Luxury Living  
 Life Long Learning  
 Maintenance  
 936.564.1  
 www.  
 412 North Str

**Jasper U  
 Maged**

Now  
 for n

**Adult &**  
 Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 a  
**215 Water S**

[System an  
 Ads hav  
 Click Here](#)

children were escorted to play groups in the classrooms.



Parents broke into play groups of their own, with some serious homework. To break the ice, groups stood and formed a

circle, throwing a ball from one member to another, making introductions and answering questions.

Hall asked open-ended questions that the group could interpret different ways. One seemingly simple question was, "What would you like your child to be?"

One group answered in terms of personal qualities; honest, fair, a good student. Another group answered in terms of careers and activities: cheerleader, football player, doctor, engineer.

Before long the groups were making posters of qualities to be admired in good fathers and mothers.

"We're not trying to 'fix' everybody," Hall emphasized in a follow-up phone call. "We're looking to improve outcomes for families."

At the end of the evening, fathers were asked to sign a pledge to remain involved in their children's education, whether the child lived with them or not.

Hall said by giving teachers their phone numbers and email addresses, the dads are committing to stay in touch.

"The bottom line for all schools is achievement, and that's why schools want this

program, because it gives them another ally when dads take an active role."



Pickle first heard about the "Strong Fathers, Strong Families" program at a parents and teachers leadership conference in July.

Other programs Hall promotes are "Bring your dad to school day," and dads and kids math night, science night or play night.

"Parenting is such a tough job," Pickle said. "We wanted to make the parents feel valued."

JISD is planning another parent mini-conference Jan. 23 from 5-9 p.m. Pickle said this will be a different format, with break-out groups on different topics like learning disabilities.

She is working with Judy Marken, the elementary school director, and Gwen Gilford, director of curriculum, to line up speakers for the January program.