

319 words, column #8
Java Talk
(for June 14 to June 20, 2007)

Every Age Is The Best Age

Fostering Dads

Fostering, in the *OneLook Dictionary*, is defined as “encouragement; aiding the development of something; raising someone to be an accepted member of the community.”

My dad died when I was two, from leukemia, so traditional Fathers’ Day celebrations come and go, as if just another day. I appreciate, instead, that it takes a whole community to raise a child; and how much there is to learn from everyone, as a child, and as an adult.

In a Chicago Tribune article, “Foster children find love—and a dad” (2/07), Gerald Hamilton, 51, who has raised seventy foster children since 1978, tells the reporter, Ofelia Casillas, that “[t]raditionally, foster care has been little old ladies—they come with the right resume. My mother told me years ago that the most dynamic thing a man can do is be a father.”

The Guinness Book of Records doesn’t have anything listed for the oldest father, or foster dad. However, in another interview, Donald Crowdis, 92, Canada’s oldest blogger, (derived from blog or web log, an on-line journal generally updated often), told Australia’s oldest reporter, Eric Shackle, 87, his memories about how he survived the 1917 Halifax explosion:

“I like to say that I remember remembering. Some things are very vivid. I recall being found in the wreckage of our house, and then being transported with my mother in a wheelbarrow to an immigration hospital (I wasn’t injured). My sister was walking beside us. And I remember living in multiple foster homes over the next two years (I still know the names of at least two of the families), before our family was back together again. It was such a pivotal event that in part my answer is: ‘How could I not remember?’”

All of our experiences make a difference and it is a great thing to share and celebrate them, whether we are a natural parent, foster parent, or anyone in the community.

Deidre Hill