

Achieving Straight A's in the School of Life

By Thaya Gilmore

Imagine being graded for your life's accomplishments without having to attend school. Would you get straight A's? Would you work harder on relationships and how you associate with people? You can actually grade yourself in the journey of life and get straight A's with the aid of a workbook titled "Learn to 'School' Your Toughest Opponent," by Jack W. Rolfe, PT, and distributed by the School of Life Foundation.

Jack Rolfe is the creator of a new concept in learning he coins "the School of Life," using his own life experiences.

Born and raised in Ririe, Idaho, Rolfe met his wife, Lexie, who hails from Plano, Idaho, on a blind date at Rick's College where he was a student and basketball athletic trainer. They now have five children and two grandchildren.

"It is my desire to teach, train, motivate and inspire the youth, not in academics but in life's journey," said Rolfe, founder of the School of Life. "I have been working on this project for 14 years. In March the Foundation received the 501(c)3 status. It's been an amazing ride since March. I am excited about it." His life's experiences started in his home as a child, taught important principles by his parents, principles that still influence him today, such as: "Always be honest, always say thank you, and always be on time."

The idea for the School of Life comes as a result of his work with people both old and young.

As a Physical Therapist (PT), Rolfe worked with the elderly in nursing homes, assisted living centers as well as in private homes for 25 years. He also coached girls' basketball for 13 years in little leagues, middle school, high school, college, and WNBA camps. He is currently a member of the coaching staff of the girls' basketball team at Snow Canyon High School. He gained valuable insight while working with both groups simultaneously.

"What I've seen through working in these two occupations is both ends of the spectrum – the youth at the beginning and the elderly at the other end – with the good aspects of life as well as the mistakes," Rolfe said. "I wondered how I can put the two groups together on how to enrich their lives. However, the main focus of the School of Life is directed toward the young adults, to catch them early on life's path, to learn some important principles, and possibly help them in whatever they do in life."

Rolfe says that we are all automatically enrolled in the school of life from birth to death, and a person can choose how to travel along the path. A workbook will help the traveler to achieve straight A's by following a list of values and principles that can be used as a guide in life.

"The concepts of the Straight A's were tested out on our children. Throughout the workbook are examples

of their experiences, too, so it's been a family effort to help promote this mission for us," said Rolfe.

The 48-page, paperback workbook contains a 10-step formula for obtaining success, peace, and happiness in the School of Life.

Each step is an "A" with a simple homework assignment. The ten A's are: Appreciate, Assist, Attitude, Aim, Associate, Align, Action, Avoid, Adapt, and Always.

One homework assignment, for "Appreciate," for example, is: "Give a verbal thank you daily for something you might normally take for granted." The first "A" is: "Learning to give gratitude in your life can impact you in many ways. Therefore, when all 10 A's are completed, the student gets straight A's."

Rolfe practices the A's in his life and says there is another "A" that he would like to add to his list of A's, in tribute to his wife, Lexie – who has a degree in Fashion Merchandise and is the Events Coordinator at Deseret Book – for her support on this project. He said, "She's Awesome!"

The School of Life Foundation officially opened in Southern Utah with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 13, at the Stephen Wade Chevrolet/Cadillac Dealership in St. George, with sponsoring founding partner KCSG-TV.

Funded by private and business organizations throughout the U.S., the School of Life Foundation is committed to the social, moral and character development of youth. The Foundation donates the workbook and banners to sports teams, schools, church groups, at-risk programs, and other youth organizations, such as Millcreek High School, Santa Clara Elementary School, Snow Canyon High School, Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas, and Southern Utah Baseball Academy. The workbook offers life-guiding principles and values to help youth attain straight A's in the school of life. Each organization has the leeway as to how to present the workbook, introduced by a mentor to guide students through it. The foundation suggests that students work on one "A" each week, complete the assignment and report to the mentor.

"We ask three things of the organization upon the completion of the workbook by the group: (1) How are the straight A's in life helping them? (2) What is their favorite "A" and why? and (3) Who are they going to share the "A's" with?" said Rolfe. "We have traveled to several states to give presentations on this new idea, and people are grabbing on to it."

The office of the Foundation is in St. George. Donations are needed to help with printing costs of the workbooks and other expenses. Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor in making a donation can find more information on the Web site www.schooloflifefoundation.com or by calling (435) 632-2947.