

IDAHO DADS MATTER!

A Specialty Publication by The Down To Earth Dad® Featuring Idaho Parents!

Volume 2, Number 5

The On-The-Job Dad

...He Sacrifices Wants for Needs and Learns as He Goes

GREENLEAF—James Cureton gets up at 4:30 a.m. and works 10-hour days, then interacts with 10-year-old Armani at night and does any household chores that can't wait for the weekend. Then he makes dinner.

"My priority is to work—to make sure my son has a roof over his head and my little girl has money in her pocket and that her mom has money to take care of her," he said, noting that Lilly, 14, does not live with him.



"I ask Armani about his school day and homework, and after dinner we sometimes watch an Anime (Japanese animation) that my daughter recommended when we talked last by phone. That way we're all in on it," he said.

"Being a single, full-time father of my son gets stressful. Things pile up, but I make time for everything by sacrificing things I'd like to do and postponing other things for later when I can catch up," he explained.

James and Armani play video games in winter, and they swim, ride bikes, and go camping in the summertime. Jump Creek Trail and waterfall in Owyhee County is a go-to place close to home where Armani's uncle joins them. "But this year we'll probably go to Cascade Lake and make bonfires and s'mores and tell stories and go sightseeing and probably going to see if we can get some fish out there," he said.

Asked to share his parenting philosophy, James Cureton said this: "Teach your children the difference between *wants* and *needs*. You need some material things—a roof over your head and things to take care of yourself and your family when you have one someday. All the other things are wants—video games, electronic stuff—which are not needs like clothes on your back and food you can put in your belly," he said, noting he's currently looking for work as a live-in handyman.

James thinks about past bad choices he's made and about things he can do to make better choices in the future, he says. "People make mistakes and it's up to you to learn from them and deal with them and try not to make the same ones again. I try to be the best parent I can, and when I make a mistake, I learn from it and I don't do it again. That's how people grow—from their mistakes—and that's what I teach my kids."

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