

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

The Rising Cost of Raising Kids

I can't remember where I read this. But some bright spark has calculated that raising a child from year 0 to 18 costs a grand total of \$160,000! *That's right, \$160,000!* Which is a bit of a shock, eh. I mean, just imagine what you could do with all that money ...

But wait – before you sell your kids on *TradeMe!* Some even brighter spark has pointed out that this total is not so grand if you break it down. Like how? Well, like \$160,000 is \$8,888 a year ... or \$170 a week ... or \$24 a day ... or just a dollar an hour!

“And look what you get for that dollar ...” (says this brighter spark):

- *You get naming rights ... glimpses of God every day ... giggles under the blankets every night ... and more love than your heart can hold.*
- *You get butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs ... endless wonder over rocks, ants, crabs and clouds ... and a hand to hold (usually covered with chocolate or jam).*
- *You get a partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sandcastles, and skipping down the footpath in the pouring rain ... plus someone to laugh yourself silly with, no matter what the boss said or how you performed that day.*



“For just a dollar an hour, you never have to grow up:

- *You get to finger-paint, play hide'n'seek, catch bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus.*
- *You have an excuse to keep reading *The Adventures of Piglet and Pooh*, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney movies, and wishing on stars.*
- *You get to frame rainbows, hearts and flowers under fridge magnets ... and collect hand-prints set in clay for Mother's Day, or cards with backward letters for Father's Day.*

HE WHO LAUGHS LAST HAS NOT BEEN TOLD THE TRUTH.

“For a mere \$160,000, there’s no greater bang for your buck:

- You get to be a hero just for pulling out prickles ... filling a paddling pool ... retrieving a frisbee from the garage roof ... taking the training wheels off a bike ... and coaching a team that never wins but loves the half-time oranges.
- You get a front row seat to history where you witness the first step, first word, first bra, first date, and first time behind the wheel.
- You get to be immortal – adding another branch to your family tree, and (if you’re lucky) a long list of limbs called grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

“In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there under God:

- You have the power to mend a broken heart, scare monsters from under the bed, ground them forever, and love them without limits.” (Author unknown)

Which is all very nice. But I have a problem. These calculations assume that the costs all STOP

when a child turns 18. And I have ample proof that this is simply not true.

For my birthday last year, my three grownup kids (in their 30s, or near enough) bought me a Personalised Plate – to make my car look cool and remind me how much I was loved. The thought was kind and generous ... the plate looked impressive ... and my kids all basked in the afterglow.

But one month later I discovered they’d charged the cost of this expensive plate to MY credit-card ... promising their mother they’d refund her “next week”.

And one year later I discovered they’ve never refunded a cent – not one single, solitary, brass razor!

I PAID FOR MY OWN BIRTHDAY PRESENT!

But, as their mother keeps reminding me ... “What’s new?” ❁

JOHN, GRAPEVINE’S FOUNDER & EDITOR, HAS WARNED HIS KIDS: THE DAY IS COMING WHEN HE WILL TURN UP AT THEIR PLACE ... STAY FOR A YEAR ... DRIVE THEIR CAR ... MAKE TOLLCALLS ON THEIR PHONE ... USE UP THEIR FOOD, THEIR PETROL, THEIR HOT-WATER ... AND PAY FOR NOTHING!

THORT



If a kid asks where rain comes from, I think a cute thing to tell him is, “God is crying.” And if he asks why God is crying, another cute thing to tell him is, “Probably because of something you did!”