Jerry Madden, Executive Director of the Friends Program, announced his retirement from the organization effective April 2017. Madden has served as the Executive Director of the Friends Program since March 2007. Prior to that he worked for the Concord Police Department and spent his last 6 years on the force as the Chief of Police.

Madden’s entire career has been dedicated to public service, building volunteer partnerships and helping the vulnerable. During his tenure, the Friends Program implemented a structured case management component to the Emergency Housing Shelter program to offer the opportunity for shelter clients to participate in a transitional housing program; expanded the Foster Grandparent Program and became the program sponsor for New Hampshire; and grew the RSVP Program from Rockingham County to include Merrimack County. Madden will continue to serve until April 7, 2017. The Friends Program will initiate a search for a new Executive Director immediately. Inquiries may be directed to Catherine Devaney, Chair of the Personnel Committee, at friendsEDsearch@gmail.com.

“‘When I joined Friends, I thought I understood the role the organization played in the community. After spending the last ten years witnessing firsthand the incredible power of community service I now realize how much I had underestimated the power that volunteers have and how their gifts of time and compassion have impact for those less fortunate,” reflected Madden on the lessons he learned during his tenure.

Communication Through Behavior

Everybody communicates through behavior. An infant may cry when she is hungry or wet, just like an adult may yawn when he is bored at work. Adults and children are communicating something through their behavior during every moment in every day, even if they are not aware of it. A child's problematic or inappropriate behavior is a sign that he is upset and that something is not right.

There is always a reason for problem behavior. Children sometimes have trouble communicating, because they may not know the words to describe how they are feeling or what to do in a difficult situation. At these times, children may act out their feelings or needs. Thus children engage in challenging behavior for a reason. The purpose may be getting someone's attention, stopping an activity they don’t like, or gaining sensory pleasure — but there is always a reason behind the behavior.

There can be many reasons behind one specific behavior. Children with challenging behavior are sending adults the message that something is not right or that their needs are not being met. There could be many reasons for a single behavior, such as being hungry, scared, hurt, tired, bored, wet, sad or angry. Some children have a hard time knowing how to tell adults they are angry, so they act out in ways that get them into trouble. Other children may engage in behavior that seems destructive, because they enjoy the physical sensation, for example punching things or pulling threads from clothing. Sometimes children feel unsafe or out of control, so they take inappropriate action over the things they do control, like being able to kick or hurt someone. A child who has tried several times to communicate to adults about what he needs, but whose needs remain unmet, will often use problem behavior as a way of sending a very loud message.

Adolescents can learn to understand and interpret children's challenging behavior. Since children often use their behavior to tell us what they need, adults can help the child by figuring out the meaning behind the child's behavior. All children, but especially those who display challenging behavior, need the consistency of a reliable and loving adult who will provide support and guidance, especially during difficult times. Just as it is important to find meaning in children's behavior, it is equally important for adults to be aware of the meaning in their own behavior. Children learn a lot through the messages that adults send everyday.

Children's challenging behavior can be reduced with support, not punishment. Once adults understand what children are communicating through their behavior, they can respond better. When children feel respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behavior to communicate. Yelling at or punishing a child for a behavior may stop the behavior for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When adults use punishment, they are sending the message that anger is a good way to solve problems. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life.
Words like “nice job,” “fantastic,” and “awesome” reinforce good behavior and motivate people to do good things. We all like to hear them and most of us use them often in our daily interactions with children, students, loved ones, and friends. Those of us who work with individuals with special needs find verbal praise particularly effective. It is the easiest form of positive reinforcement you can provide. It does not cost anything, and it never runs out.

However, although verbal praise is an extremely effective teaching tool, it can sometimes be too broad and too generic. Expressions like “nice job,” “fantastic,” and “awesome,” are not specific and they do not let individuals know which behavior is being praised. Behavior analysts understand the importance of rewarding appropriate behavior and often use what is called behavior-specific praise to let the people they are working with know exactly which behavior is being rewarded.

“Nice job making your bed” provides praise for a specific action—making a bed. “Fantastic! You got a ‘B’ on your test” uses verbal praise toward an academic accomplishment. If you are working with students who are learning to spell or count, “good spelling,” and “awesome counting,” are great ways to specifically praise these skills.

When providing verbal praise, it is not only important to be specific but also to convey sincerity and enthusiasm through your body language, which can make your words of praise more meaningful. Imagine working overtime to complete a report that is due to your supervisor at the end of the week. You give the file to your supervisor who simply says, “Thanks — good job.” You received verbal praise for your hard work, but imagine how much better it would have been if your supervisor had smiled, looked you in the eye, reached out to shake your hand, or had smiled, looked you in the eye, and said, “Hey, thanks for finishing this report! I appreciate the extra time you put in. You are such an asset to our organization.” In both scenarios, your supervisor used verbal praise to reward your hard work. But, which example is more likely to reinforce your behavior and make you want to get started on the next report? The difference between the two scenarios is that in the first one the supervisor used general praise, while in the second one s/he used behavior-specific praise. In the second example, the praise also incorporated pleasant body language, appropriate physical contact, and included a compliment.

Verbal praise is a great way to show someone you are pleased with his or her performance. While general praise is good, behavior-specific praise goes one step further, identifying exactly which behavior pleased you. When you offer behavior-specific praise, you are giving the individual positive attention and highlighting his or her good behavior. Your enthusiasm and sincerity enhance this type of reinforcement and show people that not only are you paying attention to them, but you also appreciate what they are doing.

By Teka J. Harris, M.A., BCBA

www.mayinstitute.org

March Workshops

SEACOAST
Wednesday, March 8th at 10:00 am
First Parish United Church, Somersworth
Speaker: Nancy Paul, Director of Senior Programs

CONCORD
Wednesday, March 15th at 10:00 am
Friends Conference Room
Topic: TBD

LAKES REGION
Tuesday, March 21st at 10:30 am
Sacred Heart Parish
31 Gilford Ave Laconia (building behind the Church offices on corner of Union and Gilford)
Topic: TBD

NASHUA
Tuesday, March 14th at 10:00 AM
St. Philip’s Greek Orthodox Church
500 W. Hollis St., Nashua

Topic: Program Information/Updates
Speaker: Nancy Paul, Director of Senior Programs

MANCHESTER
Wednesday, March 15th at 9:30 AM
Derryfield Village
628 Hanover St., Manchester
Topic: TBD

HAMPTSTEAD/DERRY
Thursday, March 23rd at 1:00 PM
Hampstead Library
Topic: Program Information/Updates
Speaker: Nancy Paul, Director of Senior Programs

There is a sign hanging in a first grade classroom that says, “Words can either hurt or heal. What did your words do today?” That sign is a reminder that every word can send a powerful message to children about respect.

Choose language that focuses on individuals, not their disabilities or differences.

The words adults use to describe other people are important because they reflect how we think. Using words that describe a person and not his disability reminds children that a person’s disability is only one part of who that person is. Carlos may see only shadows, yet he is a child, much like any other. It is more respectful to speak of Carlos as a “child who is blind” than as a “blind child,” because he is a child first and foremost. Instead of calling Angela a “cripple,” you can show more respect by saying that she “uses a wheelchair to move around.” This is called “people first” language and it is a simple, yet powerful, way of showing our respect for others.

Avoid making jokes about others.

Names CAN really hurt. Children learn respect by listening to how adults talk about others. When adults tell jokes about people, it sends a message that it is okay to make fun of others. Children can learn that there is nothing funny about name-calling or telling a joke about a person who walks, talks, dresses or learns in a way that is different from them.

Teach children to handle anger constructively.

Anger is a natural emotion that both children and adults feel, but even when we’re angry, we should respect those around us. We can teach children different ways to handle anger, such as deep breathing, writing in journals, creating pictures or poems, or talking to someone who cares. If children do harm to something or someone, we can teach them how to apologize and how to better handle their anger next time.

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**Birthdays**

Susan Masters 3/6
Marjorie Leandro 3/9
Al Thibault 3/10
Sandra Suydam 3/18
Marjorie Morrill 3/21
Mary Harrington 3/29

**Anniversaries**

Grace Joy 14
Trudy Kukler 12
Flora White 12
Claire Hannon 10
Connie deSchuytner 7
Beverly DiCenso 4
Gloria Fitzgerald 3
Elizabeth McLaughlin 2
Carol Parent 1

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Welcome to our new volunteers!

Joyce Morton – Union Sanborn School
Nancy Lessard – Woodman Park Elementary School
Kathleen McCormack – Epsom Central School
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No}

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