

Work and Family

November 2001

COMMUNIQUE

Volume V Number 2

November 11 – Veterans Day
November 22 – Thanksgiving Day

GIVE THANKS EVERY DAY - As the holiday season approaches, this year more than ever we find this to be a time of reflection and remembrance as well as a time to give thanks. With Veterans Day, we pay tribute to all those who have so valiantly served our country during times of war as well as times of peace. Some fought for, and continue to fight for, our freedom or that of others around the world; others have volunteered to stand ready to serve their country should the need arise. And, Thanksgiving Day 2001 – despite all of the recent tragedies, many Americans have found new reasons to be thankful. Unfortunately, it is only now that we truly realize how lucky we are to be American. How different things are now than at the first celebration – most people take eating for granted. How humble to give thanks for food and friends. Let us remain humble in this era of excesses, and remember the important things like family and health. These are the basis for true happiness, and many people will find themselves alone or ailing at this time of year. Reach out to those less fortunate in any way possible. The joy you will receive for bringing joy to others is immeasurable.

Teen Tips – It is not always easy, but having some guideline rules for your teens' evening activities can help:

- Must have a destination in mind. Simply saying, "We're going out" should not be adequate. Expect a phone call when plans change.
- Don't make others worry. Expect a call home when they are going to be late.

- Emergency money. Originally a good idea for young girls, it is also a good idea for the boys. See that they have enough money for a cab ride or a way they can contact you if you will not be home. Make sure they always have an alternative to getting in to a car if they are in an unpleasant or dangerous situation.
- Address book for teens' friends. Keep a separate address book that contains the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all your children's friends. It could be invaluable when needing to trace the steps of a child that does not return home when expected.
- Know your children's friends as well as their parents. In some cases, the friend could be absolutely wonderful, but knowing what is going on in their home, or what type of parental supervision there is, could be even more important to the well-being of your child.

Are You Wearing That? What children, especially teenagers, choose to wear can become a real area of conflict. Styles change rapidly, and every season seems to usher in something a little bit stranger that we find difficult to accept. Something inside us resists letting our children wear styles we do not like, and it is too easy for us to make comments to show our disapproval without coming right out and telling them to change. Most teens will take it personally if we do not carefully choose our words. If something is inappropriate for an occasion, tell them and be specific. *Never* criticize your children's clothes in public. That does nothing positive for them, and besides, what can they do about it then but feel ashamed until they can get home and change?

Grandparent Power! Simply by virtue of your longevity, you are a treasure trove of knowledge and the wisdom that is born of experience. You have survived your own childhood, adolescence, and parenting years and guided your children through life's stages as well. You've seen so much and learned so much about human nature that you have the power to prepare your grandchildren for the future. And although they may be resisting their own parents' attempts to prevent them from letting the downside of history repeat itself, because of the vital connection the children really will listen to you and take you seriously. What is so wonderful is that as you teach your grandchildren the lessons of life, even your mistakes become invaluable. Think of this as a time to rectify past errors in judgment and behavior as you pass on what you have learned to the most willing and receptive of pupils, your grandchildren. Your memories, your tales of times past, and your seasoned view of the world are all priceless gifts that you alone can offer them.

On-Line Safety Tips for Parents

- Make sure you understand all the charges to your phone bill and credit cards. If your child is charging on-line fees, determine what they are for.
- Find out what your child is doing if he spends a large amount of time on-line, especially late at night.
- Visit bulletin boards, chat rooms, and Internet sites that your child frequents, so you can see what goes on there. Adults who can put a quick stop to inappropriate conduct monitor some sites.
- Consider keeping the computer in a room frequented regularly by all the family – such as the living room or a family room – rather than isolated in the child's bedroom.
- Spend time with your child while he is on-line to get to know his on-line friends, just as you insist on knowing his playmates from school and the neighborhood.
- If you encounter child pornography on-line, inform the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at (800) 843-5678 and the police.
- If you do not know how to use the computer, LEARN! It will be almost

impossible to protect your child from something you know nothing about.

You and Your Aging Parent – Stubbornness and avoidance of change are two particularly successful and related adaptive patterns of behavior used by the elderly. Both are likely to be extremely frustrating to children, close friends, and other relatives. “He won't move”, “She won't see a doctor”, or “They refuse to watch their diets” are all familiar complaints of those who are trying to help. So many changes and losses are forced on the elderly as the years go by that they may often try to take back some control of their lives by avoiding change whenever possible. A pattern of avoidance can also operate more subtly. Avoidance of change and stubbornness can often be used by the elderly as a kind of protective armor that wards off the changes well-meaning children or relatives would like to impose. In these cases, it is patience and understanding that are of vital importance.

Working Mindfully – The next time you are at work, spend the day doing your job mindfully. Be fully aware of what you are doing and how you are feeling throughout the day. Naturally, since we're all human, your mind will wander frequently. When you are mindful, you will have some awareness that your mind has wandered, and you can gently bring it back to the present. When you are mindful, you will do each task with full attention and to the best of your ability. Take note of your attitude while doing each task – do you feel good about it? Can it be accomplished in a different way? This will help you either to make your current job better or to get the awareness you'll need in order to make a change in the way you work.

*Happy
Thanksgiving
to You
and Your Family*