

Spring Reflections

Spring is the season of transitions. The blooming of beautiful flora and the splendor of Nature's bounty gives us the spirit to energize and succeed. While our northern neighbors are still challenged by wintry weather, we all know that sometime, sooner or later, the bright sun will shine! Tallahassee is where we make our home, and one of our local town slogans is "Where Spring Begins."

The celebrations of Easter and Passover are symbolic of what many of us hold most dear. Easter gives us the spiritual message of the power to dedicate ourselves to faith, overcome suffering, and celebrate the fabulous rebirth of life's cycle. The saga of Passover focuses on freedom from oppression and the importance of persistence in the face of adversity.

All religions strive to provide an emotional connection to life's realities, and light a path for understanding our complex voyage. My friend who practices Buddhism recently reminded me how all of life's events, including death, are merely transformations into another stage of being.

Transitions are life's crossroads. We are rooted in our personal experiences and make important choices as we move forward. As a parent, I know how critical it is to balance guidance and freedom, influence and acceptance. Who among us would not wish for more power to make decisions for others, especially for our children, but know we have limited capacity to do so. We can hope for the best, but must be prepared to respond to whatever events come our way.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and National Volunteer Month across the nation. It's a time to focus on ways to protect family members from abusive environments and to prevent abuse from ever occurring in our community.

Focusing on prevention is a most noble calling. Keeping bad things from happening is as important a priority as any. Learning from mistakes is valuable, but avoiding mistakes is a more important goal.

As I travel the advocacy road, I'm learning about the power of one person to lead the way. I meet people everywhere who inspire me and instill confidence in those around them....neighbors, parents and grandparents.....to act to make a difference.

Among the actions we should consider are these priorities:

- Pay attention to recognize the signs of family violence, child and elder abuse and neglect.
- Educate families, children, neighbors, organizations and communities on how to prevent abuse and neglect and promote positive parenting.
- Assist families in practicing healthy parenting through education and community resources. Healthy Families is an example of an excellent voluntary program model. Visit <http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org>
- Volunteer for an organization that helps children and their families. Guardian ad Litem and CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) are especially focused on representing children in the court system.
- Invite a speaker to your organization, workplace or place of worship to spread the word about the threat of family violence and how to keep all of our family members safe.
- Mentor a child who may be at risk and become a beacon of hope for someone who needs kindness and consideration.

- Give personal support to a mother or father in need.....or to a caregiver of an elder experiencing stress.
- Support advocacy organizations and communicate with elected officials in support of parent education, child abuse prevention, health care, and access to quality services across the generations.

Please continue to give others the power of your positive influence. Across the generations, our humanity is rooted in the respect we have for others, and the energy we exert to make a difference.

In the words of Robert Frost...

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

The 4Generations Institute, an initiative for bridging the generations for mutual benefit, is making great progress and serves as the prime focus of my advocacy activities. I recommend your connecting with Generations United <http://www.gu.org> for access to resources that this outstanding organization brings to our country and communities. I'm thrilled to be affiliated as a member of such an outstanding network.

I also recommend your involvement in the Divided We Fail Campaign launched this election year by the non-partisan AARP to focus on health care and financial security as the most pressing domestic issues facing our nation.

Visit <http://www.dividedwefail.org>

I enjoy public speaking, seminar facilitation and assisting organizations and with their planning needs. I share strategies on how to connect with community opinion leaders, recruit volunteers, communicate effectively, develop financial resources and become more powerful advocates. I would welcome being called upon to assist your efforts and help achieve your goals.

Remember to order your Free GRAND Magazine subscription by clicking on <http://www.grandmagazine.com/4Gen> . This is a wonderful resource for active and community connected grandparents and those who love them!

Here is a link to a wonderful website of stories, blessings, prayers, humorous and inspirational quotations.....Please enjoy and share.....

<http://www.appleseeds.org/SPEC-IDX.HTM>

I hope you feel free to share my messages with family, friends and colleagues.

Jack

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