

WHERE LOVE RESIDES

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

It really is always gratifying to see a happy, peaceful, loving family in action. It makes me truly wish all families functioned that way. Yet, through all the training sessions we have done with parents we are astonished that many parents, whose families are in complete and utter disarray, think that this is how families normally operate. They think that some fine day the physical and/or emotional carnage will disappear all by itself and all will be well. Unfortunately, the most likely thing to happen is that those children will continue this pattern in their own homes, and on and on it goes.

Over the years we have heard of some horrendous conditions children are subjected to. Sometimes it is just the home environment and sometimes it is the way parents are mistreating or neglecting their children. Yet these children love their parents despite all of it. It is amazing to see this unconditional love children display in such circumstances. How can this be? From the time they are born children know nothing other than what is being offered in their home. It is not until they socialize outside the home that they realize their life is different from others. When our kids were teens they would come home from a sleepover, and say to us, "Mom and Dad, we are so grateful you are our parents and not Sue or Jason's parents." That was good news for us to hear. It is indeed sad to see children compare their own home situation with others and wish they had other parents. We need to be our children's positive heroes!

It is vital to our own and to our children's emotional and physical well being to have a positive and happy home life. They have a right to expect this. Step back and take a good, hard look at your family. Are you really happy as an individual? Do you openly show affection to one another as parents and towards your children? What are your children saying about your family? What are their friends saying about your family? If you wish things could be different, then stop just wishing and do something about it immediately. There are a number of excellent marriage counseling organizations that offer help. If your spouse won't initially attend, then get help yourself. You know what they say – 'You can only change yourself'. Monitor the tone in your home. If the kids want to be away from home as much as they can, there is a problem. Ask your kids about how they feel and seek their ideas on how to create a more loving home environment. It is imperative that you do so, or your kids will find what they are missing elsewhere, and that may not be a healthy thing.

As parents, we are responsible for developing our children into happy, responsible, productive members of society, as well as providing a loving home for our children to be raised in. It is up to us to show them how to pass it on.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.