



FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

THOUGHTS FROM GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN

The Original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

Friendship Helps Love Flourish

Father Val J. Peter, JCD, STD (NAPSA)—As our hearts turn toward the promise of love and romance this St. Valentine's Day, it is important to mention an old-fashioned but vital part of this holiday—friendship.

While most modern television shows and films reduce love to its most basic levels, the basis for true affection is and always will be friendship.



Val. J. Peter

The skills and art of friendship are impossible to depict in a two-minute movie scene. In fact, they couldn't be entirely displayed in a full-length film or television series. Friendship is about relationships, support, reliability and helpfulness.

So why is friendship so difficult? Why is it so hard to get close to others and to let them get close to us? Maybe people find it difficult because they have been hurt and are afraid to be vulnerable.

That is why learning friendship skills are so important. Here are some friendship skills we teach our children here at Girls and Boys Town:

- Friendship is sharing—common interests, happy times, sad times, our fears and secrets.
- Friendship is liking each other.
- You must give of yourself to be a friend.
- You must be there for your friend when she needs you.
- Your friend is there for you when you need him.
- Your friends need to trust you, and you them.

- You must understand what it means to be reliable.

Our children at Girls and Boys Town are learning to trust again and to make true friends. Their relationships prior to arriving here have left them feeling confused and vulnerable.

These skills help them and can help you build positive relationships that last a lifetime. You can be a better parent, spouse—or just a better person. Friendship and friends are the heart of our life.

We teach our children these skills because they are what life, marriage, and family are all about. Our kids notice the difference after they practice them, and you will too.

One of the most common things our children tell us is: "We like it here because we are becoming real friends to each other. Helping each other, caring for each other."

So in preparation for this festive holiday, practice or improve upon your friendship skills. The effort to open your heart is worth the risk.

Girls and Boys Town, the original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, is a leader in the direct treatment and care of abused, abandoned and neglected girls and boys. Through 19 sites across the country, the organization directly cares for more than 40,000 girls and boys annually.

Girls and Boys Town also assists 1.5 million children and parents through its National Hotline (1-800-448-3000), outreach and training programs and community partnerships.

