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Commissioner

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M.O.M ... Masters of Multitasking

To all staff in the DMHAS state operated and private non profit sector who are mothers, stepmothers, grandmothers, foster mothers and those who are caring for their mothers...how do you do it?

I am writing this message, first to simply voice a hearty “Happy Mother’s Day and Thank You!” Before and after each work day, you handle all of the challenges of being a mother and, in special circumstances, during the work day as well. Yet you also manage to shift your focus and spirit to provide direct care or administrative services that impact thousands of people who entrust their care to us in the DMHAS healthcare system. *Peoples’ lives are helped, are changed because of what you do each day in DMHAS.*

But how do you do it...handle your home life and work life at the same time? What is the key ingredient?

My perspective is as an observer—of my young adult daughter, and how her relationship with my wife has formed over all these years. As an observer of how our lovely daughter-in-law, who is a wife to my son, does her job as a high school counselor and handles all those varied tasks of raising two little, but absolutely tireless children...all on a shift that goes from 5:30 am until the kids “cave” somewhere near 8:30 pm.

It struck me last year, as my wife opened a card from our daughter, that there are stages to motherhood. In our family, we tend toward funny yet nice greeting cards. I would not call them “lovely cards.” However, last year’s card from my daughter was truly lovely. It said:

“I love you as my mother. I respect you as a woman. I trust you as my friend.”

I think these words reflect stages of being a mother. They imply the maturing of a relationship. My daughter’s relationship with her Mom, and vice versa, has taken work...ups and downs... sometimes very tough work. I am sure it will continue to change and grow over the years, to become even more satisfying than it is now. I saw that satisfaction yesterday as we spent the day in New York with my daughter as she was on call for her job. Bridesmaid’s dresses, the latest boyfriend, a walk on the grounds of the Vanderbilt estate, a slow (gads...slow!) walk through an antiques store, takeout Chinese food dinner, big good bye hugs...a great afternoon. All carefully planned for Mom!

I expect that something similar happens in your family with your child(ren), with your mother. Yet in addition to handling the challenges of fostering relationships with your child(ren), you come to work each day and do your job. Some of you interact with patients/clients/consumers, forming therapeutic relationships that reflect your care and respect for them...that they should trust you as a skilled, caring person. Others of you relate to co-workers, or other DMHAS “customers” to carry out the DMHAS mission.

Caring, respectful and trusting relationships...it works at home and at work. I do not presume to know how you do both so well. I am just thankful that you do.

Comments are welcome at Thomas.Kirk@po.state.ct.us