

GREAT ROLE MODELS

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

A friend drew my attention to an internet blog entry the other day. It was written by Alan, a youth Pastor who is married with a dear little girl named Emily. This is what it said.

“My friend Jared is the kind of Dad I want to be. He is super dedicated and juggles the world of work, family and playing ‘shredding’ guitar in my little band. Today we went to the beach to play on his Kayak and swim. Emily had a blast and got to ride on top of the Kayak as well.

Jared is someone that I have a huge amount of respect for. His heart, passion and loyalty as a friend leave me humbled and grateful for his influence in my life. There is even talk of an ‘arranged marriage’ between my Emily and Jared’s son number two. We would indeed be stoked for either of his boys to join our family - they are both awesome!

Jared’s 3 year-old son is one of the most social and friendly kids I have ever met - and I have worked with kids forever! He walked into a children’s church he had never been to a few months ago, and although it was filled with strangers, he said, “Hi, I’m Jaedon and this is my Dad!”

It is great to have role models in our lives. I love that I have friends like Jared. I don’t put them on a huge pedestal or anything, but just admire qualities that they have and hope that by hanging out together, these qualities will rub off on me! Who do you have in your life that makes you want to be better?”

Alan poses a very good question. We need to gravitate towards people who are going to enrich our lives as well as the lives of our children. Think about the friends that you have. Do they add quality to your life? Are you the kind of friend that makes a positive difference to someone else? When you are gone, what kind of footsteps are you going to leave for your family to follow and your friends to admire?

One sure way to become good role models as parents is to create and maintain strong family values. When your family members act positively within the boundaries and expectations you set, not only will you have a peaceful home environment, but you can be sure others will be influenced and want to hang out with you. Negative role models have the opposite affect. Explain to your kids why particular behaviors are not acceptable so they can make wise choices over friendships they make whether you are there are not. Praise your kids for their mastery of positive behaviors. Politeness goes a long, long way in creating a good impression. When you teach your kids to acknowledge adults by saying

something like, "Good morning, Miss Mary. It is wonderful to see you," you can guarantee that child will get a very positive response from adults every time.

It was very thoughtful of Al to acknowledge his friend in such a manner. What a thrill Jared must have had when he read such praise. It will surely encourage him to want to continue to be that kind of mentor to all his acquaintances. We all need to tell good role models how much we appreciate them. After all, they are sowing great seeds for now and the future. Do you know what Jared's parents thought when they read such praise about their son? All I can say is, through it all, we must have done something right!

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.