

Safe Neighborhoods Newsletter

Safe Kids Now Network, LLC JUNE 2024

Making Neighborhoods Safer for Kids & Families!

Safe Kids Now Network LLC (www.safekidsnow.com) shares information to empower and keep children, families, and neighbors safe



Children are God's love gift; they are Heaven's generous reward - Psalm 127:3

NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKING NEWS!

Each month, Safe Neighborhood Breaking News will feature important information for our network. If you have any important news you want to share, email to safeneighborhoods@gmail.com and mention NBN in the subject line.

- ✓ Safe Kids Now Network is in its second campaign month to create stronger neighborhoods with a free download 10-step blueprint on protecting your children. Safe neighborhoods have always been a way for families to protect their children. Help us reach our goal of 1 billion people all over the globe.
- ✓ SKNN has formed a new partnership with Spiritual Playdate to promote self-awareness and emotional strength during early childhood development and provide hands-on resources for parents and family members to empower their young children. The first virtual workshop for parents will be in September, with registration information on both websites by July. www.safekidsnow.com and www.spiritualplaydate.com (More about Spiritual Playdate on page 4)

A Child's Spiritual Journey to Freedom!

By Stephanie Mann

Life on planet Earth is a journey of self-discovery to find our hidden talents and develop the courage to excel. Children are born with imagination, intuition, creativity, insights, instincts, a sense of humor, and a self-protective conscience, which can keep them safe and healthy. Our life's journey is to find our path to peace and help others. You cannot rely on anyone else; self-discovery is an individual journey. We are ultimately responsible for the decisions we make in life.

Children may become schoolyard bullies, but they have the potential to become future leaders in sports, arts, business, or government. Sensitive children can become victims, or they can develop their inner power to become musicians, artists, or creative individuals who excel in their chosen fields. Every child can discover their spiritual gifts and live fulfilling lives.

Obstacles are life's lessons. A controlling or violent individual may have unresolved pain, develop an inflated ego for protection, and send the message, I am right, and you are wrong! They might have experienced bullying, abuse, neglect, violence, and anger or witnessed abuse at home, in school, or in neighborhoods. They can choose to be angry and violent, which makes life difficult, or they can grow stronger by remaining calm, speaking up without anger, and learning from experience. Seeking revenge is going down a self-destructive path.

Today, young Americans are experiencing a spiritual crisis. Americans witnessed riots and hateful behavior toward Jewish university students. Teenage mass shooters killed nearly 500 students and teachers and wounded more than 1,200 since Columbine. Police have become targets for angry, misguided youth.

Lacking any emotional guidance, off-centered bullies can shut down their conscience and become ego-driven and self-destructive. Today, we are moving away from freedom when children kill at school, gangs destroy property and kill indiscriminately, and teen drug use and suicide increase.

Students fail when they don't know how to remain calm or listen to authority. If they don't learn the lessons life is trying to teach them, pain can be repeated, and they can become emotionally stuck. Without understanding one's inner power, kids won't have any spiritual understanding of themselves. When people try to escape their conscience, drugs, porn, or sex can become an addiction. There is no free pass for humans who abuse themselves or others. Our jails and streets are full of people who never discovered self-confidence or self-worth.

Beware of people who create their own rules; listen to your instincts. They want to control YOU with empty promises. They may be a sex trafficker who wants to control your life. Or, they may be a socialist who wants you to rely on government control. Either way, they want to control your freedom.

A small percentage of Americans want us to believe there is no "higher power" than man. We can ignore "old-fashioned" boundaries and rules and do whatever makes us feel good. In other words, they want you to ignore the Ten Commandments, which are rules that keep us safe and healthy. Everyone has the power to turn pain and anger into self-empowerment!

Regardless of good, bad, or controlling families or religious upbringing, individuals can discover their inner power and freedom through prayer or meditation. Don't be too hard on family members and friends; we are all imperfect! I experienced alcoholism, abuse, and abandonment as a teenager. Parents may or may not have learned their behavior from grandparents. Friends, family, or classmates may be experiencing abuse at home.

Everyone has a guardian angel if they take the time to look within and listen. Birds have an innate understanding of how to make a nest or fly south in the winter. Humans have free will and guidance if they tap into their intuition, instincts, and resilience. Wisdom and freedom come into focus when we understand the power of forgiveness and self-empowerment. We all have the power to take charge of our lives.

Rich or poor, everyone has a resilient spirit that can inspire us when we let go of pain and anger and let our inner power guide us. The message is: Love conquers all, which means a child's spiritual journey to freedom grows as they discover, develop, and perfect their inner gifts. You can empower children. Visit <https://www.safekidsnow.com> to download a free copy of what you can do today to strengthen and unite Americans.

BeSomeone.org Teaches Kids How To Make Positive Choices Through Chess!

By Sher Graham



Games teach children and adults about making choices, how to, what is a good choice, and the consequence of making choices.

In 2001, I met a young man while attending a nonprofit funding training in Georgia. He introduced himself and said he was starting a nonprofit to teach chess to kids to "build character, hope, and inspiration so that kids can set and achieve lifetime goals, realize their full potential, and Be Someone." This young man was Orin Hudson.

His own story is one of real-world experience on both sides of the law. Orrin "Checkmate" Hudson is a former, small-time crook, gang member, state trooper, Air Force veteran, and world-renowned chess champion. "The reason I started my nonprofit, Be Someone, Inc., is deeply rooted in a tragic event that shook me to my core. Seven people were senselessly shot in the head during a robbery for a mere \$2,400. This horrific incident was a stark reminder that bad things continue to happen when concerned individuals fail to take action. It was a wake-up call for me, a moment when I knew I had to step up and make a difference."

With the realization that the root cause of such violence often stems from a lack of guidance and opportunities for youth, to prevent such tragedies, he felt kids needed to learn how to use their brains before resorting to bullets. In a recent interview, Orrin shared why he started BeSomeone.org. "In my community, I noticed a stark divide among the kids—some were on the right track, making good moves, while others were struggling, often making decisions that led them down a difficult path. I saw potential in every child, but not every child had the same opportunities or guidance. This disparity troubled me deeply, and I felt a strong urge to level the playing field." He continued, "Chess is not just a game; it's a powerful educational tool that helps kids learn to anticipate consequences, solve problems, and stay focused. It encourages them to think several steps ahead and to understand that every move has a consequence."

He personally is dedicated to teaching young people the power of critical thinking and strategic decision-making through the game of chess. "Chess is more than just a game; it's a powerful tool that equips kids with the skills they need to navigate life's challenges. It teaches them to think before they move, to plan ahead, and to consider the consequences of their actions. The organization's mantra is "Making Every Move Count". This refers to the belief that success in chess and success in life require the same fundamentals, including concentration, self-esteem, problem solving skills, and discipline. Be Someone teaches kids the practical skills and techniques to overcome obstacles in life, illustrated through the best and most intellectual visual aid: the chessboard. And, he has been making a difference in the lives of thousands of children and families in the past 23 years.

Hudson travels the country teaching youth from underserved communities the game of chess and how to succeed in life. He has touched the lives of over 88,000 young people. The main program "WIN BY CHOICE" provides a structured way of learning and helps to develop skills, such as patience, concentration, responsibility, problem-solving, and the ability to follow rules. It demonstrates that all actions have consequences. Lastly, it teaches that winning isn't everything; sometimes losing can be a valuable instrument for improvement.

Orrin said that one of his greatest accomplishments has been witnessing the incredible transformations in the lives of the kids I've had the privilege to mentor. Seeing children I helped when they were in the first grade now thriving in college and doing great things is immensely rewarding." Continuing, he smiled as a proud parent as he finished with "It's truly heartwarming to know that none of the kids I've mentored have appeared on the news for negative reasons. Instead, they are achieving their goals and making positive contributions to their communities. This success is a testament to the power of teaching critical thinking and strategic decision-making through chess."

And to finish, he said that each time he sees a former student excel, whether academically or in other areas of their lives, it reaffirms the importance of the work of Be Someone, Inc. As he and his organization helped kids across the

United States build a strong foundation for a bright future, it is awesome to see that each day Be Someone continues their mission of empowering youth and making a difference, one move at a time.

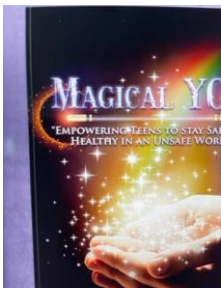
Be Someone, based in Stone Mountain, Georgia, has an ultimate vision to serve 1,000,000 at-risk students using Hudson's motivating mantra: "Get Your Heads-Up!!, Pants-Up! and Grades-Up!, and most of all, to "Never Give Up! – No Matter What!" Visit www.besomeone.org to read more of the exciting ways the game of chess is being used to develop a sense of self-confidence, critical thinking and logic and having fun.

About the Writer: Sher Graham began as a community activist at age 12. Her commitment to making life better for others began with the legacy inspired from her grandmothers. As an author and speaker, she shares her personal journey of surviving parental substance abuse disorder, verbal/physical assault and being an unwanted child in her writings and speaking. She is an international best-selling anthology author of 14 mental health and business books. Her journey has led her to advocate for mental health services for everyone, bring awareness of mental illness stigmas and to guide other to create heart calm with their chaotic environments. You can reach her at slgraham4969@gmail.com or <https://www.shergraham.com>.

From the Editor's Desk

YOUR NEWS: If you have relevant announcements about important events aligned with our efforts to shed light on the problems that kids, their families, please email safeneighborhoods@gmail.com by the 30th of each month prior to our monthly newsletter emailed around the 15th-20th of each month. If it is an event, we need 60 days' lead time to promote your event.

MONTHLY BOOK CLUB SELECTION



A WONDERFUL GUIDE FOR YOUR CHILD: Stephanie Mann has written an empowerment guide that targets our preteens and teenagers on how to stay safe and healthy in an unsafe world. "**Magical You**" is a unique opportunity for parents, grandparents, what they need to do to make better choices in everyday life. This is the time to prioritize time for that conversation with them about making choices, what events are happening in today's world, and how those events impact their lives. "Magical You" is available on Amazon. Visit www.safekidsnow.com for more information. For more information on Safe Kids Now, or to book Stephanie for keynote speech, workshop or panel, community crime prevention consultation for law enforcement, education and faith-based affiliations, email her at safeneighborhoods@gmail.com.

SKNN Welcomes Spiritual Playdate to Our National Partnership Network

Edwina Cowell and two other moms in Glenview, Illinois, struggled with finding a way to engage their kids on a social, emotional, and spiritual level. They wanted to create a time together in which they could share their beliefs and be heard; where everyone has permission to explore their ideas and feelings — a time that would also be fun!

For over two years, the moms worked together and created games, activities, and topics regarding different spiritual concepts and skills, and met weekly with their kids. They began to dig deeply into these big (and sometimes challenging) ideas and were surprised to find how much these discoveries helped them in their daily lives. And then... everyone's busy schedules got in the way. As one mom shared with her kids, and with other parents and friends about what she was doing, many of were interested to try it out with their kids and friends. So she began using the original format as the foundation for an inclusive interfaith website, designed to give parents and mentors the tools, resources, and vocabulary to engage in spiritual conversations with kids... and Spiritual Playdate was born!

Today Spiritual Playdate is an L3C mission-based corporation that puts its mission above its bottom line. "Through a culture of conscious leadership and a focus on serving the global community, we seek to foster spiritual dialogue, creating a platform for understanding and communication." For more information, visit <https://www.spiritualplaydate.com>.