**Parent-Teen Activity Series**

**Family Mailbox**

In a busy family, sometimes it is helpful to stay connected through letters that you write to each other. The family postal service can also be a fun way to surprise family members for no reason in particular.

- Each family member is allowed to "mail" letters to other family members to express their feelings.

- Some of these letters can be about positive emotions and some can be venting about negative emotions that are more difficult to express verbally.

- Anonymous comments and suggestions can be allowed for those who would like their voices heard without repercussions.

- Each family member can have a mailbox of his/her own or the whole family can share one large "mailbox" – be creative decorating or shaping the box and where to place it in the home (or outside the home!).

**How will this activity promote the parent-teen relationship?**

This activity can allow you and your teen to communicate about serious issues that may be too heated to discuss face to face.

This is a way for both parties to have time to consider the feelings and concerns of the other without saying or doing anything in the heat of the moment that might hinder future open communication on the subject.

This also can be a way for teens to express positive feelings toward parents (and vice versa) without feeling awkward. Family mailboxes are especially useful if either parent or teen is not comfortable expressing emotions face to face.

**Suggestions for mailbox stuffers . . .**

- Home-made holiday cards
- Birthday cards
- Post cards from places you would LIKE to go
- “Care packages” of cookies and other food treats can be sent to family members, too