

WEEK OF June 7, 2026



From Woody: With his permission I am attaching a recent column by John Broderick. I often think these days about how difficult it must be for children growing up. I believe our former Chief Justice of NH nailed it with the experiences he has had with his work on Mental Health. He is a great public servant, and I am grateful to share his thoughts with you all.

Quilt Raffle: Thanks to the generosity of Carolyn Ferguson-Wilson, we raised over \$300. Winner of the "In The Pink" quilt was Kristi Citak. The winner of the "Button Up" Quilt was Sally Moss. Proceeds will be donated to the bell repair.



Sewing Classes: Interested in learning basic sewing skills? Then please join Kristi Citak and Judi Hull on Saturday, June 20 9:30--12:30pm in the Dignard room. We would love to hear what you want to learn as well. Some of you may learn how to make dresses for our Dress a girl dress making. HOW exciting would that be? For more information, contact Kristi Citak (kris_kreations@comcast.net)



Summer Flowers for the Sanctuary: For June, July and August, flowers for the sanctuary will be "Potpourri" meaning a mixture of whatever anyone would like to share from their garden or favorite garden center. Questions?? Ask Ellen Anderson, cell 973-747-2321 or andersel@njms.rutgers.edu. No need to sign up. Vases are available in the kitchen. And many thanks in advance to those who can contribute to our worship service.



Paul Revere Bell: Work is progressing to get our Paul Revere Bell fixed for the 4th of July is on schedule. The estimated cost is \$25,000 and we have received a generous gift of \$10,000. Other gifts have been coming in, some in memory or in honor of someone. More gifts would be gratefully received to help us reach our goal. . You can donate by clicking on

this link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-help-restore-the-community-church-of-new-bostons-paul-revere-bell-and-bell-tower>



Completing the Virtual Santiago Pilgrimage: Dawn Sweet will be with us again on **June 14 at 3:00 pm** to provide a time of reflection with organ music, taking us Santiago de Compostela and on to “the end of the earth” at the Atlantic Ocean.



Open House: There will be an Open House at the new Fire House on Saturday, **June 20 from 10-noon.**



Summer Concert Desserts: We will be selling desserts at the Summer Concert Series, which begins in July. See Lynn W. or Karen Roach if you would like to help.



Peace Quote When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace. *Archbishop Oscar Romero*



QR Code: You can use the QR code to pay your pledge or other contribution—or click on the link: <https://www.zeffy.com/enUS/donationform/e47ab025-f0b0-40b4-90e6f262bb1a29e1>

WE BROKE CHILDHOOD—John Broderick (Union Leader June 1 2026)

I grew up in a middle-class town of 18,000 people north of Boston. My father, who had two chemistry degrees from Boston College, taught science at the local high school, and my mother, whose family couldn't afford the nursing degree she wanted, worked in an office in the neighboring town. My sister and I felt enveloped by the love of our parents and guided by the values they modeled every day. We had modest home-cooked meals every night and midday Sunday dinners. Everyone did. Our parents were around in the evenings, and our weekends weren't planned — just lived. The rhythm around me was unassuming and reassuring.

Our several-block neighborhood of modest capes and colonials, generously sprinkled with shade trees, was our playground. We knew the kids in most of the houses, and we knew their parents, too. They knew our names and they knew my parents. As you might imagine, my neighborhood self-policed pretty well. We all knew what was expected of us.

“Playdates” didn't exist, but unstructured, unsupervised play every afternoon when school got out was our oxygen. We had two sets of clothes — one for school and one for “after school.” Changing wasn't optional. No one was on a travel team because they didn't exist, and personal technology wasn't on anyone's radar. The closest thing to personal technology was an answering machine, and we never had one of those.

We were a one-car family, so my sister and I walked a lot of places — including school — or rode our bikes. We had family rules, of course, but they weren't overly confining. I had to be home for dinner, and homework was always on the menu after supper. Dinner was a time for my parents to talk about their days, about issues in town, or about notable national events, and for my sister and me to casually share our stories and talk about friends, school, or our worries.

I learned a lot about life from listening to my parents at those long-ago dinners — and a lot about them, too. Above all, I felt safe, loved, and respected as a kid. I felt I belonged. My parents supported my dreams as the years passed but never created them, and never micro-managed my decisions or choices. They must have felt they had done their jobs well enough to trust me. That trust allowed me to become self-confident, resilient, and comfortable in my own skin. My parents bestowed the gift of a childhood where I never felt compared, pressured to achieve, or in constant competition with someone or something.

Having spent the last 10 years traveling to hundreds of schools throughout New England, talking to tens of thousands of kids in grades 6 through 12 about mental health awareness and listening attentively to thousands of stories confided to me after my talks, I find my own childhood now seems a bygone relic. My undisturbed, well-paced, contented, and supported childhood seems to have nearly vanished. What has replaced it is driving levels of anxiety, depression, and stress in kids that are unlike anything seen before. All the surveys confirm what I have seen and sometimes hugged. Perpetual, addictive technology is a big part of it, but social-emotional growth needs the nurturing and character-building space that only an uncluttered and relatively unstructured childhood allows. Kids today may have more problems, but the kids are not the problem.

Most neighborhoods and schoolyards no longer host playing children after dismissal; after-school practices, clubs, and adult-supervised games have gobbled up free time; dinners are too often consumed on the way to practices and sporting events; and weekends belong to travel teams. Evenings have been surrendered to screens and TikTok. Chasing and achieving have replaced the unstructured spontaneity of a creative childhood.

Most kids don't even know their neighbors now, and parents in those neighborhoods don't know each other the way they used to, either. No wonder so many of us are feeling lonely. That essential feeling of belonging is slowly slipping away — and with it the indispensable ingredient to a happy and successful life.