

Salem

Breakfast series to focus on children and media

WANT TO GO?

By AMANDA MCGREGOR
STAFF WRITER

What: Parent Breakfast Series

Topic: "The Impact of Media on Children"

When: Thursday, April 10

Time: Registration opens at 8:15 a.m.; presentation at 8:45 a.m.

Where: Children's Friend and Family Services, 110 Boston St.

Cost: \$5 donation to support the Youth Mentoring program at Children's Friend

Registration and information: Call 978-744-7905 ext. 280, or email breakfast@childrensfriend.net

SALEM — The glut of material that streams across the Internet and television can overwhelm parents, who struggle to monitor and gauge its impact on their children.

That concern has prompted a Salem nonprofit agency to kick off a Parent Breakfast Series on Thursday. The talk is titled "The Impact of Media on Children," given by national expert Michael Mann.

"He looks at the culture of disrespect

created through media, and values and attitudes," said Elizabeth Holmes-Coutracos, director of community relations for Children's Friend and Family Services, which is a 170-year-old charity headquartered in Salem that provides services to children and families throughout the North Shore.

"What's the media diet essentially that you feed/give to your children?" she continued. "He's not saying the media is bad, but you need to be very critical in looking at it."

The Breakfast Series committee is comprised of local parents including Mayor

Kim Driscoll. National Grid will sponsor this Thursday's inaugural breakfast, which begins at 8:45 a.m. at Children's Friend, located at 110 Boston St.

"More and more, parents really need resources and tools," Holmes-Coutracos said, "especially today with hectic schedules and the influx of stuff that's out there."

Children's Friend plans to expand the Breakfast Series to three or four per year, choosing one annual theme — this year's being media and children.

"We have an obligation ... to provide the best intelligence available on children and growing up, to families on the

North Shore," said Stephen Schaffer, president and executive director of Children's Friend.

Children's Friend serves more than 4,500 children and families a year throughout Essex County through mentoring, counseling services, programs for parents, teen parent day care, and more, according to Holmes-Coutracos.

"Our main focus is on the interrelation of children, families and the community," she said. "We believe treatment services have a much greater impact only when integrated into a youngster's community and family life."