

October 2018 Vlog: Using Social Media for Your Program

Dr. Deborah Bergeron: Happy October. And welcome to this month's vlog. This month's topic is social media. We'll get to that in just a minute.

But we're going to start with our love note. I do have -- I had so many love notes this month. But I did pick one. I had the pleasure of traveling to Alaska, and visiting many Head Starts that are located in villages, that are fairly remote. And in particular, I want to shout out the Hughes Head Start at the village that we visited there at Hughes. They just do amazing work with very, very few resources. And it was really great to see people coming together as a community just to make things work. The facility they had was clearly put together with a lot of care from the community. And one thing that stuck out to me is they've grown so much, that they need a third teacher. Finding teachers in local villages is kind of challenging. And so, one of the teacher's spouses is actually going to get his master's degree and be the new third teacher. And that's, that's a real community working together. So, big shout out to Hughes. Very impressed with your program. Keep doing the great work you're doing.

So, let's talk a little bit about social media today. As I was traveling around, when I first got this position, I kind of had the sense that I don't think we're using social media to its fullest potential. And even had a couple conversations of people who said to me, "Well, I don't think my parents are on, on social media." And I think that's probably not true. I think that many of them are, and I think there's a lot that we can do with it. And I know that many of you already are doing so much with it. That's great. But I want to kind of push some ideas out there. And interestingly enough, I came back to the office, and I said, you know, is there a group here that can work with me on this. And lo and behold, wouldn't you know, they already were working on it. And so, my timing was really good because I think this week the social media module is being pushed out. And it is fantastic. If I could have put it together myself, it, it wouldn't have looked this good.

So, without even having the conversation, people were already on this page. We were kind of all thinking the same thing, which is really good. Just kind of confirms the idea that this is something that needs to be done. So, I thought for a vlog, though, what I could do is just push a few -- the purpose of these vlogs is just very quick. What can I do today to make a difference? And so, these are just some quick ideas that I think, if you're not already taking advantage of social media, you could start, and start to get that momentum going, and see the real benefit that can come from taking advantage of what's out there. The first thing I suggest you do is put together a social media leadership team. And certainly, the best thing to do is to put out there, and see who jumps out there. There's going to be people who are really interested because they like meddling in this, and kind of manipulating social media. There are people who are really good at it, and they understand it. That wouldn't be me.

So, I wouldn't be a good person for a social media team. But getting some folks who really understand the inners, and take advantage of it, and they kind of like it. A couple of people like that from your organization, and let them be the social media leadership team. From there, encourage them to find a grantee that we already have. The Head Start program is already really doing a great job in this field. And then, reach out to them, and get them to give you some of the ideas that they had initially, so you're not just reinventing the wheel. We do have some really good programs out there that might be able to shed some light on ways to sort of breaking into the social media area. And it's always good to take advantage of experience. And then, the third thing I would recommend is that same leadership team go ahead and tackle the, this module. And I'm going to provide you the URL today. It is fantastic. It's fun. It's very entertaining, quite frankly, but it also just gets to the heart of what you can do in terms of social media.

So, have this leadership team go through the module. And then, have them share with the larger group what they can do to support the whole process. So kind of the train-the-trainer model. There are a lot of

really good ideas in there. And then, the next thing that you want to do is execute your plan and evaluate it quarterly. So, you develop a plan, have the social media team create that same annual plan, something with some benchmarks. And the great thing about social media is its all measurable. You can get metrics on, you know, click throughs, and visits, and things like that. So it's great.

And, you know, as you're working on that plan, the other thing you want to make sure you do is plan for a little bit of funding. It's not going to be hugely expensive. But it will cost some money to really execute a good plan. And then, just execute it, and every quarter go ahead and review it, and see how you're doing. Share out with the -- have that leadership team share out with the larger group how the campaign is going. You can take advantage of highlights during the year, push out some really great projects you're working on. Use it for enrollment. The great thing, though, I think is kind of an overarching effect this will have. Once you're embedded in the social media process, and you've got a really good process going that just kind of feeds itself, you'll be able to do much more in the community. Your profile will be higher, creating those relationships is going to be a lot easier. And so, it's just overall a good thing to do.

So, I highly encourage you to go ahead and take a look at the module. Get a team together. And make social media one of your big goals this year to really tackle. And so, that's it. Pretty easy. I hope you'll get started on it. If you're doing a campaign, share it with us. A hashtag. Something like that. We'd love to know about it.

And then, I'm going to end today with an -- If you already didn't know it, but I think you already know this one. I'm just going to remind you. It's October, and the weather is kind of changing in most areas. And it's beautiful here on the East coast. And so, this is a reminder to get your kids out on the playground. That free play -- I was just reading an article the other day about free play. And it just reminded me that, you know, sometimes we get bogged down in the lot of the day-to-day "have to's." We forget that kids just need to play. So, make sure that they have time outside. Free play. Exploring. Learning. Relating to each other. Figuring out how to solve problems. The great thing about free play is it's all about the kids, and their growth and development. So, I hope you'll take advantage of that, and really, enjoy watching the kids grow in the area of just playing and exploring the world.

That's it for now. Remember that Head Start is access to the American dream. Go make dreams happen.