Mary Behrends is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker offering **parenting education and individual counseling.** She graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelors degree in Child Development and Family Relationships and has worked with children and parents for over 20 years. As a mother to 4 and grandmother of 7, Mary believes that raising children is the most important job we will ever do. It is also the skill we get the least preparation for. The Mustard Seed offers **parenting classes** for parents who want to learn new skills to become the best parents they can be.

In 2012, Mary graduated from the University of Georgia with a Masters of Social Work degree. She provides individual counseling for children, adolescents, and adults in all areas including crisis management, anger management, grief, low self esteem, stress, anxiety, depression, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Mary recently completed a Post Masters Certificate in Veterinary Social Work through the University of Tennessee. This combines a desire to help people with a lifelong love of animals. Along with her therapy dog, Nick, she specializes in **Animal Assisted Therapy** and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for children, teens, and adults.

What is Animal Assisted Therapy?

Animal Assisted Therapy is a therapeutic intervention where a carefully trained and tested animal is used by a licensed professional to help an individual achieve their therapeutic goals. The animal provides comfort, helps the client relax, aids in communication, and assists with activities to teach an individual coping skills including anger management, enhanced social skills, assertiveness, and impulse control. Evidence shows that AAT is especially helpful in treating children and adults who are afflicted with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, low self esteem, and Attachment Disorder. Animals naturally provide unconditional love and acceptance. Working with an animal/therapist team is a fun and relaxing form of counseling.