



# Georgia Preschool Association

## The President's Corner

Diane Lamb

**Fall 2015**

It is beginning to feel a lot like Fall and it is so wonderful to see the leaves changing colors and the weather being a little crisp and refreshing. This is really a very special time of year. Hopefully, by now your classes have settled into a routine at school and they are eager to learn and eager to participate in all the new activities. It is such a joy and pleasure to see how children begin to learn new things and then when they accomplish some of the goals it is with so much pride for them and for you as their teacher or the school director. We are given that opportunity over and over every year and every day. I know none of you take that task lightly. Always know that those little eyes and ears are seeing what you do and listening to what you say. Always set a good example. Remember that all

children don't fit the same mold.

I would like to share something that I received many years ago:

### What Teachers Make

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." To stress his point he said to another guest: "You're a teacher, Diane. Be honest. What do you make?" Diane, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, "You want to know what I make? Well, I make kids work harder than they

ever thought they could. I make a C+ feel like the Congressional Medal of Honor. I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parents can't make them sit for 5 without an iPod, Game Cube or movie rental...You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions. I teach them to write and then I make them write. I make them read, read, read. I make them show all their work in math. I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know in English while preserving their unique cultural identity.

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I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe. I make my students stand to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, because we live in the United States of America. Finally, I make them understand that if they use the

gifts they were given, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life. Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, I can hold my head up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant....you want to know what I

make? I MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

Each and every one of you MAKE A DIFFERENCE. It is truly a privilege to work alongside and with you in this great profession where we can MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

## Membership

Membership in Georgia Preschool Association is the key that unlocks the door to many training events and resources that are valuable to early childhood educators.

District workshops held throughout the state bring experts in the field of early childhood to your area. The training events are often at no cost or very little cost to members and the training sessions have been approved by Bright from the Start for state approved training hours. Some district workshops offer intermediate level training----a must for those childcare centers seeking to be Quality Rated by the state.

Our Annual Conference held at Cobb Galleria in Atlanta brings leading national and state early childhood educators together to offer outstanding learning experiences for teachers and directors. Members of the Association attend the conference at a lower rate than non-members. This year the conference will be held on February 26 and 27<sup>th</sup>. We will honor our members who are directors and introduce them to a new early learning initiative sponsored by Georgia Preschool Association.

Our website and newsletter offer valuable resources and links to other sites that our members

find useful.

As preschool teachers we are known for sharing any good idea or resource with others. Let's share the news about membership in Georgia Preschool Association.

Renewal letters have been sent to all current members. Please take this opportunity to renew your membership and to urge other early childhood professionals to join. The individual membership fee is only \$15 and there are group rates so that schools will receive a discount for staff membership.

## District 4     Tonie Sanders

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Our fall training event, "Back to the Basics 2015", was held on August 15<sup>th</sup> at Saint Philip AME Church in Decatur. We had over 160 participants with 26 schools represented.

Donna House did an outstanding job of presenting "Developing Key Literacy Skills". Evaluation reviews included comments on the excellent practical lessons on correct sound pronunciation and

the wonderful information given regarding on-line phonemic awareness resources.

Danny Darby conducted a fantastic session entitled "Super Science". Attendees learned how to include science in the preschool classroom through hands on activities appropriate for all children, toddlers to Pre-K. His "easy and fun" approach left participants eager to get back to school to

incorporate more science into their curriculum.

We thank Georgia Preschool Association for sponsoring this event in our area. We had a great time and earned 6 state approved hours of Intermediate training.

We have begun planning for next year! Contact Tonie Sanders [sand4@bellsouth.net](mailto:sand4@bellsouth.net) with suggested topics.



Where do Good Health and Nutrition Fit in the Life of a Young Child While in the Guidance of Others?

The important and irreplaceable years of early childhood provide the optimum time to promote good health and nutrition practices, often supplied by those adults who are charged with caring for our littlest learners. Your program might strongly consider making an effort to consciously support the goals of enrolled families through a collaborative effort

which promotes and sustains excellent practices relevant to imparting core values for good nutrition. When teachers emphasize an awareness of how important good nutrition and health are during the course of the average day, coupled with movement, the potential for lasting impact on healthful food choices is real. For example, incorporating exercise as it accompanies music, hand-washing as a foundation for discussion, when combined might promote a positive perception of nutrition.

When adults model and discuss values and good practices, eventual adoption of wise choices becomes more likely. Embrace the opportunity to create and talk about healthful snacks to support your outstanding program delivery.

Wishing all of our dedicated program leaders and the staff who work so hard at loving and guiding young children, happy days and many smiles.

Photo below from recent District 4 training event held on August 15, 2015.



## District 6 Diane Lamb

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District 6 has been very busy with training opportunities. The District 6 training at Griffin First Baptist Weekday Education was held on July 22. The event was well attended and everyone enjoyed learning new things, meeting new people and enjoying fellowship together. I highly recommend training that is not just done via the computer. Some computer training is fine, but it is so much more effective to actually talk with educators that are doing the same thing you are doing. Personal connections really do make a difference for directors and teachers.

As a result of the meeting in Griffin, Debby Daniel-Bryant, Director at First United Methodist Church, agreed to organize a group for directors on the south side of Atlanta to meet several times a year. The first meeting has already

happened and there are plans for two more during this school year. We will be discussing items that are pertinent to all of us. There will be discussions about what new rules and regulations in the state that may affect our industry, salaries for teachers and assistants and what benefits teachers may receive. It is a wide open discussion for all the directors in District 6. There again we can gain information from our fellow directors. Thank you Debby. The next meeting will be January 12, 2016 at J. Henry's in Griffin. If you can join us, please do so.

Griffin First Baptist Weekday Education has been designated as a "pilot program" using the new phonemic awareness materials that are being sponsored by the Georgia Preschool Association. There was a training session held for teachers

and staff taught by Betsy Primm, Donna House and Diane Snyder. The program began in September and is reporting daily how the training is helping students and ways the program may be improved. It is a wonderful phonemic program that is absolutely free and is easily implemented into school programming. Visit the Georgia Preschool Association website to obtain more information.

Also, mark your calendars for February 26 and 27, 2016 for the annual Georgia Preschool Conference to be held at Cobb Galleria in Atlanta, Ga. There will be great training opportunities and many vendors for you to visit.

If I can be of any assistance to you or your program feel free to call me at 770 228-7880 or email me at [dianelamb@fbcgriffin.org](mailto:dianelamb@fbcgriffin.org).

## District 7 Helen Geesey

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Staff from 45 schools in the area attended the District 7 August 2015 Training Event. This year we were able to offer nineteen choices of workshops. Several workshops dealt with special needs issues including *The Magic behind Sensory Integration and Learn the Signs! Act Early*. Music teachers enjoyed *Wee Share Music* and *Chug-a-Chug-*

*a Choo Choo*. Our teachers of toddlers talked about *Taming the Teething Tiger*, *Math Madness*, and the *Magic of Toddlers*. Workshops on literacy, science, transitions, centers, fine motor skills and faith development were also popular choices. Directors used one session to discuss professional growth. A couple of workshops dealt with ways

to work more effectively with parents.

Participants enjoyed a lunch together and had time to view a vendor with cool felt stories and other with a traveling book bus. Everyone earned 4 hours of BFTS credit and had a fun start to their school year.

## District 8 Kyle Taft

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Maybe it is just me, but I feel like teachers of young children are under a lot of pressure at the moment. There seems to be a constant barrage of new regulations

and requirements that we are expected to implement in the classroom. Then you add the regular stress of the day-to-day workings of the classroom, and early child-

hood teachers begin to get overwhelmed. Soon the stress rises, and quickly reach the teacher burnout level. Finally, we start to question our choice of careers. If you are at



## Continued

this point, I want to ask you today to "Remember."

Think back to the time you were considering what you were going to do with your life. Do you remember that little nagging feeling that you wanted to make a difference? Remember how excited you got when you were around those little children, and how you wanted to talk to them, play with them, and just interact with them? Remember how other adults looked at you a little funny because you were spending more time talking with the mini-adults around than with them? Do you remember why you started working with kids anyway?

You see, too many times, our focus shifts from our genuine love of children to all of the "problems" or "hassles" that we are facing. I tend to get tunnel vision and only see those issues that are stressing me out. That is when I begin to feel discouraged and lose my enthusiasm

for teaching. The only hope for me; the only thing that pulls me out of my doldrums is for me to remember! Remember the one who hugs you every morning. Remember the eyes that lit up as they read their first words. Do you remember the first steps, the first jumps, the first lost tooth, the first words, and the first smile? I remember the excitement of the smiley face on the paper. I remember the proud parents when they realized their child had exceeded their expectations. I remember the soft "Thank You" from the shyest child in the class. These are the moments that matter!

So, when your day is crashing in  
And the pressure is getting in your  
head  
Instead of jumping up to greet the  
day  
You would rather stay in bed.  
Remember!

The paperwork has piled up high  
You'll never see the light of day  
So you stop and ask yourself,  
"Why am I doing this anyway?"  
Remember!

Your head is hanging low  
What difference do you make?  
This frustration that you have  
Is simply more than you can take.  
Remember!

Look at those you have reached  
The little hearts that you have  
clutched  
How many have been forever  
changed?  
How many have you forever  
touched?  
Remember!

Lift up your head and face the day  
Your soul was just re-stirred  
All because you stopped to think  
And suddenly, you remembered!  
Remember!

## District 10 Amy Wraga

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Is your school or center looking for creative ways to raise extra funds or to save money?

We are raising funds by partnering with local businesses to create events that help them grow and they are giving back to our school. We are lucky to be across the street from a charming independent book store. Last year we asked to do a book fair in December. It was such a big success that we are having a two day fair this year. Parents can shop while their child is at school or take their child to the store after school. Teachers made

a Christmas wish list in September; the store ordered the books and had them ready for purchase at the fair. We received a percent of all sales and teachers got specific books for their classes. The store was happy that so many new families knew about their shop.

We have a parent that has opened a baby and mother resale shop and offered to do a percentage day. This not only brings business to her store, it allows parents to meet other parents that own a local business. These one day events also give parents an opportunity to meet

other parents from the school. We are lucky in Athens to have many wonderful small businesses that support our school. Perhaps your community has some businesses that would like to partner.

Often these community partnerships work well, but I always initiate the relationship by stating that a committee reviews all our events after the first year. This allows a gracious way to move to another idea if a particular business does not fit the needs of your school or the families.

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## District 10 (continued)

We are saving money by asking for donations of recycled items. In my summer newsletter I send a list of typical recycled art materials such as paper towel tubes, plastic jars, etc. that parents could save with their children. At preplanning the teachers decorated two big barrels: one for each doorway. Each month we announce a new

wish list of items such as sewing scraps, buttons, and ribbon. We have received many fun donations from church members, former families and friends of teachers who are cleaning out closets. Several people have continued to drop off children's books, games and even a tricycle. These contributions are not only fun, but we are thoughtfully

reusing materials and teaching children about recycling and being kind to the environment. I hope that one of these ideas may work for your school or center while also helping the environment and local businesses. It is also a great way to test your creativity with materials and resources.

## Conference Update

"With a Song in My Heart" will be our theme for the 2016 Georgia Preschool Association Annual Conference to be held on February 26 & 27, 2016 at the Cobb Galleria Centre in Atlanta. With our keynote speaker, Dr. Jean Feldman,



leading the charge, and Dr. Thomas Moore continuing that charge, we will be taken through many ways to keep a song in our hearts! It will be great to see some new faces, as well as many folks we have seen before.

Directors will have their own sessions, as well as a special session on Friday at 3:00. We will cook, sing, move, write, shuffle, slide & celebrate. We will learn about sickness in our children, diversity, development, STEM, and be reminded of some "Oldies but Goodies." Most of all, we will continue to build our network and learn new ways to help Georgia's children be the best that they can be! Mark your calendars and plan to join us for

Diane Snyder

another great Georgia Preschool Conference in February.

Keep watching the web site to keep up to date with the latest information at

[www.georgiapreschool.org](http://www.georgiapreschool.org).  
Diane

**Save the Date!**

**Georgia Preschool  
Association  
Annual Conference**

**February 26 and 27,  
2016**

**Cobb Galleria Centre**

## Hostesses Make A Difference!

Janis Smith

One of Georgia Preschool's strongest characteristics is the quality of the consultants we are able to provide at our Annual Conference. One of the reasons consultants are happy to return to work with us is because of the warm hospitality we provide and our hostesses are responsible for that hospitality.

Thank you to all who served as hostesses at the 2015 Annual Conference. Not only did you provide a warm and friendly contact with the consultants, you gave us important insight as to the quality of the workshop through your evaluations. We are always in need of hostesses, if you would like to be one,

please contact Janis Smith at [jsmith@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:jsmith@georgiapreschool.org)



## GPA Conference Silent Auction

Amy Wraga

**Did you know that you can participate in our auction right now?**

We are looking for donations from all over the state of Georgia. We would love to promote small businesses, entrepreneurs and nonprofits. You can bring a donation to the conference in February or you can email contact information to

[amywraga@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:amywraga@georgiapreschool.org). I will contact the business and follow up with a tax donation letter. It is a great way to promote a product/business to over 1,000 early childhood professionals!

When you are at the conference, stop by the exhibit hall to see the many items from around the state and the great donations

made by our vendors. Are you attending the conference both days? We have all new merchandise on Saturday!! Terry, Amy and Laura are looking forward to meeting you when you stop by to place a bid.

## GPA Conference Exhibit Hall

Karen Coffeen

We are looking forward to another great conference on February 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>! A part of that wonderful experience is the Exhibit Hall (don't we all love to shop?). We are inviting the exhibitors back from last year, some from previous years, and some new companies. We have easily accessible space again this year and we'll be bringing back our fun Bingo so that you can win

a prize just for visiting the vendors. A lot of the prizes are donated by the vendors, so you'll get a useful or a fun prize—it's your choice! You can fill out as many Bingo cards as you want—the more you fill out the better your chance of winning a prize.

We would also like your input. If you would like to be an exhibitor, know of someone else who would, or remember a company that has

not been there for awhile; please contact me as soon as possible:

Karen Coffeen

[kcoffeen@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:kcoffeen@georgiapreschool.org)  
or 770-590-0982.

You can also check the GPA website ([www.georgiapreschool.org](http://www.georgiapreschool.org)) for more conference and vendor information.



## Georgia Preschool Awards

Do you know an early childhood educator?

Would you like them to be recognized by their peers and have a complimentary registration to our annual conference?

Each year Georgia Preschool awards certificates of recognition to those members who have distinguished themselves as going the extra mile at their jobs. We will honor an individual

in each of these categories: teacher, assistant teacher, administrator and home day care provider. Winners will be awarded their certificate during the Friday morning opening ceremony of the annual conference. They will be highlighted in the program and receive a **complimentary registration to the conference at the Cobb Galleria in February.** How can

you nominate an individual? Complete the nomination form available at

[www.georgiapreschool.org](http://www.georgiapreschool.org) and return by **November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.**

We accept applications all year from current GPA members. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this process.

[amywraga@georgiapreschool.org](mailto:amywraga@georgiapreschool.org)

## Savannah Conference

GPA held its 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive conference in the south-east section of our state.

This year the Coastal Center in Savannah hosted us. We are happy to offer an additional training opportunity to schools in this part of our state. We offered 10 sessions to the 111 participants registered!

Participants heard presentations such as *Early Math Literacy*, *Inkblots to Inkjets*, *Trash to Treasures*, *The Parent-Teacher Conference*, *Critical Thinking Skills* and *Circle Secrets*. Directors held a session on Principled-Centered Leadership.

Our partners in this conference were Early Start CCRR and Georgia Southern. In spite of hurricane threats and potential flooding, the group earned 4 hours of BFTS credit and enjoyed making new friends and contacts!

