

AECA Update

Fall is one of my favorite seasons because it is such a beautiful time of the year. The different colors one is able to see as we travel across our state serves as a reminder that change is underway. And, change is good. Think about it, when the trees begin to blossom again in spring, there will be new, colorful greenery for us to enjoy.

So, like the trees, the Arkansas Early Childhood Association has also changed. New officers have been elected, a new business manager for the association will soon be selected to begin the process of helping to lead and guide our organization. We have two new conference planners and a president-elect who will soon begin working to plan the 2009 annual conference.

Your comments and feedback regarding the conference is valued and really helps as plans are made for next year's conference. Every evaluation form is read and information provided is taken seriously by organizational leaders. The conference is planned for your professional growth and development and our goal is to ensure that we provide high quality workshops, exhibits and new learning experiences.

The strength of our state association lies with strong, active and vibrant local affiliates and the goal is to work throughout the state to support them. Each affiliate has the potential to grow its membership by offering services to keep members informed and updated on current issues related to school readiness, family support and education. Local affiliates are asked to work with their member-at-large to figure out ways to increase their membership as well as plan activities that enable you to attract and retain new members. In other words, let's change the way we have done business in this area and make it better.

During the next several months that I serve as your president, it is important that connections continue to be made. Yes, our annual conference is important but it happens only once each year. We do however want it to reflect your needs. To do this, we need you. Please work hand-in-hand with us to ensure that AECA continues to play an important role in meeting the needs of the entire membership. Let's work together to create a climate that leads to the local and state leaders "Making Connections for Children." Please feel free to contact me with ideas or suggestions on what we can do make things even better.

Thanks and have a blessed and wonderful holiday season!

Barbara Gilkey

Barbara Gilkey
AECA President

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2008 AECA Conference Reflections

Michelle Pounds & Christi Johnson, Conference Co-Chairs
Michelle Wynn & Lindsey Smith, Program Co-Chairs

This year more than 800 participants attended the 47th annual AECA Conference October 16-18 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. It was a huge success!

As usual, the 2008 conference was registered through the TAPP Registry. But, this was the first year AECA teamed up with the Arkansas Department of Education to also offer ADE credit to certified teachers. What a great way to offer excellent keynote speakers, informative interest sessions and a variety of exhibitors to all early childhood professionals from across the state.

Both of our keynote speakers, Kathy Thornburg & Shawn Brown, were remarkable. They were not only enlightening, but entertaining and encouraging, too!

In addition to great keynote speakers & interest sessions, conference attendees also enjoyed many other events. Friday, participants enjoyed visiting the many exhibitors at the Networking Event. Participants also placed their bids on a variety of items at the Silent Auction. On Saturday, Poster Sessions provided an opportunity to discuss relevant issues in a more relaxed atmosphere. And as always, there were great door prizes!

The AECA committee is already working on next year's conference. The 2009 AECA Annual Conference will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center October 8-10, 2009. A call for proposals will be posted on the AECA website www.arkansasearlychildhood.org January 1, 2009. Proposals must be received by April 1, 2009.

We look forward to seeing you at the
2009 AECA Conference!!!

Want to volunteer to help
during next year's conference?

Email Christi Johnson at
christijohnson@comwaycorp.net

Haven't received your
ADE certificate yet?

Call Christi Johnson at
501-339-1058

**AECA Mission Statement : Enhancing the lives of children, families
and early childhood professionals in the state of Arkansas.**

HSECA Training Update

February, March & April 2009

HSECA Meetings Theme: Building Relationships

Specific topics and presenters will be available in January 2009.

For more information, contact Terri Helms at 501-760-2423 or Dot Brown at 501-525-4829

NWAECA Training Update

February 5, 2009 / 6:30 p.m.

Training: Transitions

Presenter: Natasha Crosby,

Helen Walton Enrichment Center

Location: Springdale Early Childhood Center

409 North Thompson

Springdale, AR 72764

For more information, contact Robin Jones, NWAECA President, at 479-575-5029



T- Shirts for Sale!

AECA will be selling conference t-shirts throughout the year. To purchase your t-shirt contact Christi Johnson through email at christijohnson@conwaycorp.net or by telephone at 501-339-1058. A limited number of shirts are available. Bulk orders are eligible for discounts. All proceeds will go back to AECA.

Service Project Update

Traci Johnston, Past President

Thanks to everyone who brought toys and materials for AECA's Community Service Project. We have been collecting items throughout the year and collected boxes and boxes of materials. We are now in the process of putting together the Isolation Activity Kits for Arkansas Children's Hospital. We will be delivering the kits to ACH before the end of the year. Thanks again to everyone who contributed to this worthwhile cause.



Paying Your Dues

Ever wonder when your dues are going to expire? Well, wonder no more! A new feature to the *AECA Update* has been added to make it easier for you tell when to renew your dues.

If you look to the right of your name on the back side of this newsletter you will see a date. That date is the date your membership expires.

"What must I do to renew," you ask. It's easy! Visit www.arkansasearlychildhood.org select the **Membership** link on the left and download the pdf. Print it out, fill it out and send it in with your dues to:

AECA
PO Box 2898
Little Rock, AR 72203

Calendar of Events

February 5, 2009 – Winter Update Articles Due

February 5, 2009 – NWAECA Training

April 1, 2009 – AECA Conference Proposals Due

April 19 – 25, 2008 – Arkansas Children's Week

Congratulations!

The Northwest Arkansas Early Childhood Association (NWAECA) won the 2008 Merit of Achievement Award at the 2008 AECA Conference.



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Dear Member,

The Update is a medium for affiliate leaders to communicate information about upcoming events with their members. It also gives our members the opportunity to voice their ideas and opinions. So, if you would like to share activity ideas, stories about the children in your care, classroom tips, or parent involvement ideas with your peers, here is your opportunity!

If you would like to contribute to the next Update, please submit your entry no later than February 5, 2008. Remember, you can submit as little or as much as you like. Contributions can be sent to Lindsey Smith at lsmith@uaex.edu or PO Box 391, Little Rock, AR 72203.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Lindsey Smith



Lindsey Smith, First Vice President - Publications