Celebrate Family Literacy at Our November Summit

—by Reggie Curran

The member agencies of Tennessee’s Family Literacy Consortium have joined forces to develop a one-day celebration and overview of Family Literacy in Tennessee. The Family Literacy Summit will be held at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, on November 8 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The free, day-long program will support the Consortium’s efforts to help parents realize the importance of parental involvement in the academic success of their children. By providing opportunities for age-appropriate child learning, adult education, parenting support, and parent and child literacy activities, family literacy programs help parents develop their strengths and prepare their children for success in school.

Speakers at the Summit will include Sharon Ramey, co-director of the Abecedarian project, a longitudinal study demonstrating the success of early educational intervention with at-risk children. Hedda Sharapan, associate producer for PBS’s “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” and Becky King, program developer with the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) will shed light on how children learn, and Susan Benner, of the University of Tennessee College of Education’s Department of Early Childhood Education, will be a presenter and summation speaker. Members of agencies that represent Family Literacy in Tennessee will summarize work they do to support family literacy efforts.

The Summit is intended to inform the public of the positive effects of family literacy programs in strengthening families. Especially geared for members of civic organizations, business leaders, church and community organizations, school administrators, teachers and practitioners, it will appeal to anyone who would like to find ways to help parents and children reach their full potential.

The event includes a Continental breakfast and luncheon for participants, so reservations are required for correct meal count. For more information, and to register, contact the Center for Literacy Studies at 865-974-4109, or e-mail: rcurran@utk.edu.

In May 2002, a group of Memphis literacy collaborators hosted an event for the children graduating from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Head Start Center. The family-oriented event demonstrated early writing and drawing abilities of the preschoolers, and taught parents and guardians the techniques of creating books with their children. Mary Jon Girard and Paula Hamilton of Go Kid Writer designed, created, and facilitated the workshop in which the children, with the help of family members and their teachers from Head Start,
No Child Left Behind: What Does It Mean for Family Literacy? —by Kelli Havens

A new Federal law promises to change the way schools do business. Among other things, this act provides all parents more information about the schools their children attend and the teachers and paraprofessionals who provide instruction. More radically, it provides parents of children in certain identified schools expanded educational options including choice of school and opportunities for supplemental educational services.

In January 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This law represents President Bush’s education reform plan and makes the most radical changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965. NCLB requires America’s schools to determine success in terms of individual student accomplishment, and implements four new reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The stated purpose of Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is to:
➢ ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and
➢ reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and State Academic assessments.

Implementation and Accomplishment

An “accountable” education system involves several critical steps with a defined timeline for implementation and accomplishment. The NCLB clock starts ticking in school year 2001-02, and continues for twelve years (2014).

The action plan begins with each state setting measurable objectives for academic progress; includes a strong requirement for public and parent access.

We’re Ready to Read, continued from page 1

Inc., created and illustrated their own books. Students were provided with materials to make another book at home with their parents. Each child was also given a portrait album with his or her picture on the cover that included summer word lists and more ideas for summer family activities.

Forty-nine preschoolers and over 120 of their family members participated in the event. This outstanding turnout can be largely credited to the excitement and enthusiasm that Mary Holman, the center director, generated among the children, teachers, and parents. Ms. Holman recruited her teachers, and many of them were trained in advance by Paula and Mary Jon. They learned book-making skills that they will be able to use in their classrooms and with their own children. The teachers greeted the families as they arrived, and made them feel very special and welcome.

This event was a team effort of individuals from: Go Kid Writer, It’s Time To Read, the Assisi Foundation, Memphis PBS station WKNO, Bridges, Caldwell Elementary School, Memphis Brooks Museum, Volunteer Memphis, Memphis City Schools, Aramark, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. Everyone who participated had an active and important role in a fast-moving, fun agenda, and children, family members, volunteers, teachers, and facilitators rated the event a resounding success. Our theory is simple: a program that gives attendees something interesting to do, something good to eat, and something of real value to take home will always succeed! ▲

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT —by Reggie Curran

Since its foundation in April, 1994, the Assisi Foundation of Memphis has contributed valuable support to the West Tennessee community, and literacy is one of the programs on which they have focused. Nardine Aquadro, Programs Manager for Literacy, says that the need to read has never been greater, and her group has spearheaded action to address literacy issues in the mid-south. Nardine believes that building on community literacy strengths helps to improve identified weaknesses. With that goal in mind, the Assisi Foundation has worked to develop and fund collaborations for reading initiatives in the Memphis area. Watch for Assisi’s reading programs and activities published in Memphis’s The Commercial Appeal, which feature fictional characters such as “Hank the Cow Dog” and “Luke in a Really Big Pickle.”
to information about individual student, school and district achievement and sets standards for a highly qualified instructional team.

A rigorous accountability system for schools regarding individual student achievement is outlined in Title I of NCLB.

**Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals**

Each State Department of Education (SDE) must ensure that all teachers teaching within the State are highly qualified no later than the end of the 2005-06 school year. To accomplish this goal, each State shall establish annual measurable objectives for each Local Education Agency (LEA) and school, including:

- an annual increase in the percentage of highly qualified teachers at each LEA and school and
- an annual increase in the percentage of teachers who are receiving high-quality professional development.

For the purposes of NCLB a highly qualified teacher:

- has attained full certification or passed the State teacher licensing exam,
- holds a license to teach in the state, and
- does not have a waiver on emergency, temporary or provisional basis.

This provision applies immediately to all newly hired teachers paid or supported by Title I funds. Teachers employed at the time of passage of NCLB have until 2006 to become appropriately credentialed.

Paraprofessionals providing instruction to children must also meet new and tougher standards. New Title I paraprofessionals must

- have completed 2 years of college,
- have an associate’s degree or higher or
- meet a rigorous standard of quality in a formal assessment showing knowledge and ability:
  - to assist in instructing, writing, reading and math.
  - to assist in readiness instruction.

Current Title I paraprofessionals must meet the above requirements within 4 years of signing the reauthorization (January 2006). Exceptions to these requirements are paraprofessionals who are translators or work only with parents. The educational requirement for these instructional assistants is a high school diploma or equivalent.

Each State is required to prepare and publicly disseminate a Report Card through various media including the internet and in a language that parents can understand. The Report Card must include:

- student achievement on statewide tests, disaggregated by subgroups;
- a comparison of students at basic, proficient and advanced levels of achievement;
- graduation rates;
- number and names of schools in improvement;
- professional qualifications of teachers; and
- percentage of students not tested.

Based on the premise that “parents have a right to know,” NCLB requires LEAs to notify parents at the beginning of the school year of their right to request information about the academic status of their child(ren) and the professional qualifications of the child(ren)’s teacher(s). Allowable queries include:

- the achievement level of the parent’s child on each of the State’s assessments;
- whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade and subjects taught;
- whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status and
- whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

Excerpts from recent online editions of The Achiever:

**Tips for Parents** (September 2002)

Being involved in your children’s education helps them do well in school and improves the quality of your school. Here are some suggestions for getting started. Find the time to get involved—it makes a difference!

- Take your child to school on the first day.
- Let your child know that school is important. Be sure to ask questions about homework, and set up a quiet place for your child to work.
- Read everything that is sent home from school—report cards, homework assignments, school lunch plans and vacation and bus schedules.

If you would like to subscribe, visit [www.nclb.gov/subscribe.html](http://www.nclb.gov/subscribe.html)

**Tips of the Week** (April 2002)

- When children become good readers in the early grades, they are more likely to become better learners throughout their school years and beyond. Reading aloud to young children is a great way to ensure their future success.
- Choose a comfortable place where the children can sit near you. Help them feel safe and secure. Be enthusiastic about reading. Show the children that reading is an interesting and rewarding activity. When children enjoy being read to, they will grow to love books and be eager to learn to read.
2002 Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year: Noe Ortiz Gutierrez —by Elaine Weaver

It has been said, “If a man has any greatness in him, it comes to light—not in one flamboyant hour, but in the ledger of his daily work” (Beryl Markham). These words illustrate the life of Bedford County’s Noe Ortiz Gutierrez. Each year, the Tennessee Association for Adult and Community Education (TAACE) recognizes the Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year. This award is given to an adult with significant responsibilities relating to employment and/or family and who has been enrolled in an adult education program in the last twelve months. Most importantly, this person must have overcome difficult circumstances in order to pursue adult learning, to improve life for self and family. Noe Ortiz Gutierrez has done just that.

Noe was born in 1970, in the village of Yerba Buena, Guatemala. One of eight children, he lived with his grandparents, Valeriano and Lucia Perez. There was little material wealth in his family, but the values of honesty, integrity, patience, and diligence were instilled in him by his grandparents.

When Noe was only 13, soldiers came to his village and announced that all the boys would be expected to fight in Guatemala’s civil war. Noe told his father that he did not want to kill other people. His only hope was to leave the village. His father gave Noe permission to leave along with the little bit of money he had managed to save.

The next day Noe left the only life he had ever known and began walking to Mexico. He lived in Mexico for a year and a half, taking odd jobs on a ranch to support himself. He continued to yearn for a better life, and in 1984 he and a friend decided to go to America. Before walking across the border in Arizona, the two boys spent three days and two nights in the desert, finally joining a group headed to Florida to work in the fields. Within days, Noe found himself part of a labor pool that reported at 4:00 a.m. each morning, hoping to be picked to harvest tomatoes or oranges or to be part of a construction crew. It was a great day’s wages when he earned $15 to $20.

As the season changed, Noe and his friend moved to Virginia to harvest crops. But in Virginia, they found no jobs; instead they were told there was a need for laborers in Tennessee. In southern Middle Tennessee, Noe met the man he counts as his mentor and adopted father. George Holt owned a large farm near Fayetteville. He brought Noe to his farm and provided him with a job, a place to live, and lessons in life. Holt taught Noe that the way to success in America was to work, pay your bills, learn to speak English, and get all the education you can get.

Holt taught Noe that the way to success in America was to work, pay your bills, learn to speak English, and get all the education you can get.

Holt adopted me with their hearts.

In 1992, he moved to Shelbyville to take his first factory job at Tyson Foods. Here he found his way to the Bedford County Adult Education program, where he enrolled in English as a Second Language classes two nights a week. After taking English classes for five years, Marie Parks, the Supervisor of Bedford County Adult Education, told Noe he must make a decision about his next educational goals. He was encouraged to enter either a GED preparation class or the Bedford
Noe more than twice the required 133 hours to complete a credit, but he never became discouraged or spoke of giving up. After ten years, Noe walked across the graduation stage on May 20, 2002, and was awarded a Tennessee high school diploma. He was the first person in his family to graduate from high school. On graduation night, he received the Bedford County Breakfast Rotary Club Scholarship to help finance his continuing education.

So what else has Noe accomplished in the past ten years? In 1997, he purchased his own home, and he has often worked two or more jobs to pay for it and to send money to his family in Guatemala. Since leaving his family some twenty years ago, Noe has three more brothers whom he has never met. He has provided a home and support to four of his brothers who have come to the U.S. looking for a better life. In February 2001, he married Lynnette Ernestina Gutierrez, who became a U.S. citizen in May. He is employed at the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Bedford County, where he works 33 hours a week, and he works an additional 15 hours a week as an apprentice to a local carpenter.

Noe's plans include both short- and long-term goals. He has been accepted into the Industrial Electricity/Electronics class at the Tennessee Technology Center in Shelbyville. He tells his teachers that his heart is full of gratitude for all he has been given, and he would like to give back some of what he has learned. Noe's dream is to go back to his small village in Guatemala and teach the people about electricity so they might build factories and provide jobs for the people who live there.

Noe sets an example for all who know him. His educational goal was daunting, but Noe has an extraordinary work ethic. He has inspired countless adult learners and non-English speaking members of the community. He offers encouragement and concern for those continuing their educational journeys. He is always gracious and grateful. Truly, our Adult Learner of the Year, Noe Ortiz Gutierrez, shines the light of greatness in the ledger of his daily life.

2002 Even Start Star Learner Shines Brightly  —by Jacqueline Sturdivant

Each year the Office of Family Literacy Programs asks Even Start site directors for nominations for the Even Start Star Learner. After a director makes a nomination, the nominee's adult education teacher writes a recommendation, and the student writes a letter describing how the Even Start Program has affected his or her life. Department of Education staff reviews nominations, and the winner is chosen. Although all nominees are invariably worthy of the honor, this year's award goes to Angela Lynch.

Motivated, committed, creative, bright, energetic, and sensitive is how Adult Ed teacher Cathy Matyskiela describes Angela. Referred to Even Start by Graceworks, Angela enrolled in the
Williamson County program early this year. She is a wife and mother of two sons, ages four and two.

While attending her adult GED classes, Angela’s sons participated in the early childhood classes in another part of the building. The classroom is designed to foster cognitive, emotional, fine and gross motor skills. The daily schedule includes PACT (Parent and Child Time), center play, group time, reading time, and outside play. When Angela and her family first enrolled, her sons were unsure of the new classes and did not want to leave her. She patiently participated in PACT time in hope that her sons would become more comfortable with the other children and staff. Eventually the tears ended and they grew more comfortable with the early childhood classroom. Laura Grzegorczyk, Early Childhood teacher, shared, “The schedule and curriculum design of the Early Childhood classroom ensures that it is a true learning experience for each of the children. As a result of Angela’s participation in the family literacy program, she and her children are becoming lifelong learners.”

Because Angela was returning to school after several years’ absence, she was unsure of her capabilities and frustrated with her math scores. Cathy Matyskiela, Angela’s teacher, encouraged her while she remained steadfast in working towards her goal. Angela attended regularly, and she often worked outside the classroom, which made the difference in how she was able to build on what she brought to class.

Angela’s willingness to be an active participant in PACT time and parent groups proved her commitment to school for herself as well as for her children. Even on a limited budget, she found ways to give her boys special experiences at school. Whether it was providing cupcakes for her son’s birthday or going on field trips to Wee Read Cottage, Angela truly has a mother’s heart for her children. Her teacher related just another example of Angela’s heart and great attitude: “Angela always volunteered to help other students in any way.

On one occasion, one of her classmates had a car that was in need of repair. Angela had learned the skills necessary to repair cars, so she offered to go with her fellow student to make sure the repair shop estimate was fair. The estimate was too high and, thanks to Angela, this student saved hundreds of dollars.”

After intense preparation, Angela took the GED test in May and passed the exam. As a matter of a fact, she passed with one of the highest scores seen at the Williamson County Even Start Program. Angela’s completion of the GED is just one step further in her education and her children’s education. She has enrolled one son in the FSSD pre-kindergarten program for children with developmental delays, and she plans to continue her education at Draughons Junior College in Nashville, where she will study to be a pharmacist’s technician. Angela said, “I plan to further my education for my family and myself.” Because she has such a passion and desire to help others, she plans to pursue a career in medicine.

Each parent’s motivation to enroll in Family Literacy classes is unique. Angela overcame difficult financial circumstances and challenges at home. She has been an example and inspiration to others as she balanced her responsibilities as a mother and student. This is why Angela Lynch is this year’s Even Start Star Learner. ▲

The Family Literacy Alliance – Uniting to Strengthen Networking and Advocacy

—by Debbie Nichols, Manager, Outreach Services National Center for Family Literacy

Connecting the Family Literacy Community.
A year and a half ago, the Family Literacy Alliance (FLA), a membership program sponsored by the National Center for Family Literacy, was introduced at the National Conference on Family Literacy in Dallas, Texas. Now 2,700 strong, with members in every state and in several countries, the Family Literacy Alliance continues to provide unity in the diverse field of family literacy practitioners and supporters, allowing greater networking and stronger advocacy efforts. Current FLA members, who may work in adult education, early childhood education, Even Start, Head Start, Migrant Education, social services, volunteering, library services or many other public and private sector agencies and organizations, can network and share information and resources. The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), advocating on behalf of the FLA membership and others in the family literacy field, represents the interests and needs of FLA members to elected officials, policy makers, business partners and community leaders. It aims to strengthen and expand support for the field of family literacy nationwide and at
the local level. By joining together through FLA, the individual voices of family literacy supporters are made stronger than ever before.

Enhancing Networking and Communication

The Family Literacy Alliance, bringing together many diverse family literacy supporters and practitioners, provides a variety of tools to enhance communication and idea sharing among its members. Through FLA resources, members can to learn not only from experts in the field, but may also learn from one another. This capacity to connect family literacy supporters across the nation and around the world with the latest in family literacy best practices, resources, legislative updates, and with one another is what truly makes the Family Literacy Alliance so exciting!

The FLA listserv regularly shares resource information, legislative news and advocacy bulletins, FLA member questions and answers, and FLA member surveys and results. The FLA Member Directory, featuring member contact information, is published annually and mailed only to FLA members. FLA members are encouraged to use the directory as a tool for contacting other members across town, across the state and across the country when seeking information and advice. Connecting, the quarterly FLA magazine, includes feature articles such as: “Creating Collaborative Partnerships,” “Early Reading First and Reading First—The Connection to Family Literacy,” “High Quality Family Literacy Programs: Child Outcomes and Impacts,” “The Family Literacy Advocate’s Top Ten List,” and “Time for R and R – Recruitment and Retention.” Other features and columns focus on student success stories, personal interviews, and feedback and responses from FLA members. Two FLA Regional Forums—one in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and the other in Albuquerque, New Mexico, created venues for FLA members to come together, share and extend their family literacy horizons.

Websites Promoting Family Literacy

There are some wonderful Websites available to people who are working with Family Literacy. Here are a few that we recommend for teachers, parents, and even children...have fun!

- www.nifl.gov/lincs – LINCS – provides tons of literacy resources.
- www.famlit.org – The official website of the National Center for Family Literacy.
- www.nochildleftbehind.gov – The official website of No Child Left Behind.
- www.literacydirectory.org – Find a literacy program or volunteer opportunity near you.

The third FLA Forum will take place in Atlanta, Georgia on December 6, 2002, and will offer interactive, high-energy learning opportunities to discuss topics and issues of concern to FLA members. Through its many networking options and offerings, the Family Literacy Alliance helps us reach out to each other so we can better reach families.

Strengthening Advocacy Efforts

FLA members, through regular e-mail legislative updates and advocacy-focused articles in Connecting, receive current information and instruction about how to become stronger family literacy advocates at the grassroots level. Just as staffers at NCFL work daily to communicate the power of the family literacy cause to state and federal policy makers, FLA members are also encouraged to individually advocate on behalf of family literacy. Through letters, phone calls and e-mails to local and state policy makers, FLA members can speak from the heart about their own program success stories. Empowered to become family literacy champions and activists, FLA members can create great success for family literacy at the local or state level. This grassroots involvement, when undertaken by many, can spiral into even greater success for family literacy overall and for all families nationwide.

Are You a Family Literacy Alliance Member? To learn how you can unite with others in the family literacy cause, go to the National Center for Family Literacy Website at www.famlit.org and click on the membership button. If you don’t have Internet access, call Ann Reynolds, Outreach Coordinator, at 1-502-584-1133, extension 149, or send an e-mail to areynolds@famlit.org.

NCFL Releases Nationwide TV Public Service Spots, Offers Toll Free Number

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), in conjunction with The Advertising Council, has kicked off a series of public service announcements. The messages can be seen or heard on television, radio, print, or the Internet. The campaign’s goal is to promote literacy within the family by encouraging parents with low literacy skills to seek help from a variety of literacy programs and services. The spots target those 40 to 44 million adults in America who possess skills at the lowest level of literacy.

The television spots depict parents and their children in urban and rural settings. They end with a toll-free number, 1-877-FAMLIT-1 (1-877-326-5481), which provides information about family literacy. See NCFL TV Public Service Spots, page 8
National Family Literacy Day: November 1, 2002

It’s almost that time of the year again! November 1 will mark another National Family Literacy Day. Celebrated on the first of November each year, it kicks off a public awareness campaign that encourages communities and programs throughout the nation to recognize the powerful impact a family can make when they form a learning partnership. Co-sponsors of this year’s day include Toyota and the National Center for Family Literacy. Here are some great suggestions from the NCFL to celebrate not only November 1, but throughout the month and year:

• Visit your local library and ask your child to pick out a book to read together.
• Make hats or other items out of newspaper, pointing out words your child has in his or her vocabulary but may not recognize by sight.
• Read an instruction manual together from a toy or video game to show how reading is important to learning new things.
• Learn 10 new words together throughout the day. See how many your child can recall at bedtime.
• Hold a spelling bee and invite your child’s friends to participate.
• Take a photo or draw a picture of your child doing a favorite activity. Write a story together, using the picture as illustration.
• Instead of listening to the radio, keep books in the car and have children read on the way to your destination.
• Create a story about the family using words cut from old magazines and newspapers.
• Build a tradition of literacy in your family by designing a specific area for reading. Make it as cozy and soothing as possible.

Don’t just stop there! Create new activities with your family to do all year long. Make them fun, challenging, and most of all, unique to your family!
Looking for Literacy? Try LINCS  —by Kelli Havens

If you have not yet visited the LINCS Website, you’ll want to do so and then bookmark the site! LINCS stands for Literacy Information and Communication System. The core of LINCS is a database of literacy resources. The site is a service of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), an independent federal agency geared toward the development of state, regional, and national literacy services.

LINCS was designed to allow the practitioner, teacher, parent, child, and adult learner to find information on current grant and funding opportunities, the latest literacy conferences, training, and major literacy events. One may also find news from major media, research journals, policy briefs and other publications, federal legislation concerning literacy, current job opportunities, and curriculum materials. LINCS established five Regional Technology Centers (RTCs) across the United States, including Southern LINCS at the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee. Practitioners may contact the nearest RTC for training and technical assistance opportunities, integrating technology and LINCS resources with teaching and learning, developing Web-based resources, and establishing discussion lists for practitioners in their area.

A special feature on the LINCS Website is their “Collections.” The Collections offer expert-reviewed materials and resources on Family Literacy, Health and Literacy, Literacy and Learning Disabilities, Policy and Legislation, English as a Second Language, Equipped for the Future, Workforce Education, Technology Training, Science and Numeracy, Assessment, and Correctional Education. The Collections are funded by separate grants and are constantly updated. Faced with hundreds of resources in a regular LINCS search, the Collections search distills the results to only 10 to 20 of the most current and most highly recommended resources. Another key feature on the LINCS Website is the “Hot Sites” option. LINCS employees or practitioners have recommended these Web links as outstanding adult education and literacy-related sites. You may log on and recommend your favorite site, as well.

Another useful feature from LINCS is the Family Literacy Resource Notebook, accessed via Midwest LINCS/Ohio. The Notebook was designed by the Ohio-based LINCS and includes information about how to develop your own family literacy program. It provides definitions of family literacy, models of various family literacy programs, a listing of existing family literacy programs, and how to get started, as well as how to develop your staff, curriculum, how to gather funding, and how to evaluate your program.

If you have not already visited LINCS, go to www.nifl.gov/lincs. A plethora of helpful, literacy information awaits!

1 Information from the LINCS brochure, published by the National Institute for Literacy.

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The more types of reading materials there are in the home, the higher students are in reading proficiency. (Educational Testing Service, America’s Smallest School: The Family, 1999.)

Average reading proficiency increases as the number of different types of reading materials at home increased. More than one-third of 4th graders and one-half of 8th and 12th graders reported having each of the four types of reading materials (books, newspapers, magazines, and encyclopedias) at home in 1994. (U.S. Department of Education, The Condition of Education, 1996.)

Children who were read to frequently are nearly twice as likely as other children to show three or more skills associated with emerging literacy (42% versus 24%). (Ibid.)

Children who were told stories three or more times in the last week are also more likely than those who were not to recognize all the letters of the alphabet (28% versus 20%), to count to 20 or higher (60% versus 54%), and to read or pretend to read (79% versus 68%). They are also more likely to be able to write their own names (54% versus 49%). (Ibid.)

As a mother’s education increases, so does the likelihood that her child is read to every day. In 1999, 71% of children whose mothers were college graduates were read aloud to every day. In comparison, daily reading aloud occurred for 53% of children whose mothers had some postsecondary education, 45% whose mothers had completed high school but had no education beyond that, and 39% whose mothers had not completed high school. (Ibid.)

Parental involvement in schooling and avoidance of frequent school mobility are important predictors of high school completion. In looking at children who participated in Child-Parent Center programs, there is a 7% to 8% reduction in the probability of dropout from high school. (Institute for Research on Poverty, paper no. 1180-98, 1998.)

Parental involvement can include attendance at a general meeting (open houses or back-to-school nights), a scheduled meeting with a teacher (parent-teacher conferences), a school event (class plays, sports, or science fairs), or acting as a volunteer or committee member. (Condition of Education, 2000.)
Celebrating Family Literacy at the Academy: 
*July TAACE Meeting Focuses on Families*  
—by Susan Greer

When over 700 adult education instructors, supervisors, and participants from across Tennessee arrived in Chattanooga on July 13, 2002, they were greeted with a large banner that read: “Teach the Parent, Reach the Child.” That theme resonated throughout the four-day event as family literacy advocates and dedicated adult education professionals embraced the idea and spent time exploring, learning, and networking at the second annual Academy of Instructional Excellence, held in conjunction with the 17th annual Tennessee Adult and Community Educators (TAACE) meeting.

TAACE kicked off the July event with a banquet and awards presentation. The prestigious Sequoyah Awards are given annually to individuals and businesses in Tennessee that have excelled in the field of literacy. Adult education supervisors Phyllis Bradley, Betty Cook, Carol Ergenbright, and Catherine Via, along with Micki Greer and John Taylor, received the Direct Service Awards, while the Administrative Service Awards went to Joy Fulkerson and Deborah White of ETSU America Reads Challenge and Mark McGee of the Shelbyville Times-Gazette. The recipient of this year’s Special Award went to State Office of Adult Education Director Phil White. The speaker for the evening was Edwin Gleaves. Dr. Gleaves is Tennessee State Librarian and Archivist, as well as a member of the Tennessee Historical Commission, who enlightened and delighted the audience with a history of Chief Sequoyah, the namesake for the awards.

The General Session began Monday morning with a salute to the American flag and patriotic songs led by Families First teacher Rebekah White-Williams. TAACE president Carol Ergenbright welcomed

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**A good time had by all…**

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNERS 2002.  
Left to Right: Carol Ergenbright (Blount Co.), Betty Cook (Montgomery Co.), Micki Greer (McNairy Co.), Mark McGee (Editor—Shelbyville Times-Gazette), Nancy Weatherman (TN State Library and Archives), Dr. John Taylor (Professor Emeritus, ETSU), Phyllis Bradley (Dickson Co.), Catherine Via (Crockett Co.), Phil White (State Director of Adult Education), and Dr. Edwin Gleaves (TN State Library and Archives and keynote speaker). Not pictured are Joy Fulkerson and Dr. Deborah White (ETSU, America Reads Challenge).

AT THE AQUARIUM.  
Left to Right: TAACE Executive Director Susan Greer, Dwain VanVector and Joan Phifer (Steck-Vaughn Company – co-sponsor of the event), and Sherrie Claiborne (Claiborne Co. – Immediate past president of COABE).

TAACE OFFICERS—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. Left to Right: 2002 Secretary Winona K. Pless (Athens City/McMinn Co.), 2003 President Betty Cook (Montgomery Co.), 2002 President Carol Ergenbright (Blount Co.), and 2001 President Sue Quinn (Henry Co.).
the group to the Academy/TAACE meeting and introduced Phil White. In addition to the special award, White was also recognized for his 30 years of service to adult education in Tennessee. The morning speaker was Nell Mohney, a writer and lecturer who inspired and motivated everyone with her insights and “life steps” to a more productive life. She encouraged the group to have a positive attitude, show gratitude, think big, and be compassionate. Dr. Mohney complimented the educators on their work and encouraged them to use the “life steps” with their students and in their personal lives.

The Academy for Instructional Excellence placed attendees in appropriate “tracks” which focused on ABE/GED, ESOL, Families First, Family Literacy, Program Leadership, Even Start, or Workplace. The participants’ days were consumed with curriculum, while the evenings allowed time to enjoy downtown Chattanooga. Monday evening the TAACE Board of Directors welcomed attendees and guests to the Tennessee Aquarium for a president’s reception and tour. Everyone enjoyed an opportunity to view the “sea life” and exhibits during a private, after-hours event and then to have dessert with fellow participants, family, and friends.

As the week progressed, participants continued to pursue their tracks, collaborate with fellow instructors, visit the exhibit hall to see the latest in adult education products and materials, and enjoy the sights of Chattanooga. Special events for the attendees included the Southern Belle Riverboat Cruise with dinner, a shopping trip to Hamilton Place Mall, the IMAX 3D theater, Rock City, Ruby Falls, and visits to other area attractions.

The concluding event was the TAACE annual business meeting and breakfast, where TAACE members gathered to elect officers and board members for the coming year, recognize programs with 100% membership in TAACE, and present more awards for 2002. This year’s TAACE Learner of the Year was awarded to Noe Ortez Gutierrez of Bedford County. B.D. Spence from Marshall County was chosen as the Volunteer of the Year, and Scotty Brown from Weakley County received the $1,000 Martha Brown Memorial Scholarship. TAACE’s Star Learner award went to Angela Lynch of the Williamson County Even Start program.

As the meeting closed, participants were invited to attend next year’s Academy/TAACE meeting in Nashville, July 13-16, 2003.

Photos by Winona K. Pless
Welcome to the Family Literacy Forum! You’ll find updates and information on family literacy programs in Tennessee and on how you can work to strengthen families.