

July Newsletter

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your wonderful support during the NAFCC election! In case you haven't heard yet, I did receive the President Elect position. I am so excited about this new endeavor, thank you for the opportunity!

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

Is There a Leader in YOU?

Having just taken a leap into a leadership role, I began to think about what my goals as a leader will be and also what I would want to look for in others to help the organization grow more leaders. Brenda Ives, a consummate leader, once told a group of state presidents at the NAFCC conference that the day you take your position is the day you should start looking for your replacement. What she meant is that it takes time to grow leaders, so start right away so their ready when their time comes.

So I'm looking for future leaders. And that led me to some questions: What makes a leader? How do you know if you are one, or could be? Do leaders just know that they someday want to lead, or do they just kind of grow into it?

There are many things that make a leader. In fact, there are entire books written on the subject! But personally, I believe that you can't write a one-size-fits-all list of what makes a good leader, because I've seen for myself that people with very different skill sets can each effectively lead the same organization.

If you had to pick something they had in common, I think it would be this: passion for the organization they are representing.

When you have a passion for the work of a group you are going to represent, what happens is you become hyper-sensitive to noticing things that affect it: things that make it weak, things that make it strong, missed opportunities that could have helped it, and you start to really notice who are the people that make it run effectively, and what is happening with the people who make it less effective.

Since you are noticing these details, you start to see and analyze things in a way that maybe others are not. You see the problems. You see the solutions. And you desperately want to see more of the good stuff happen and less of the bad. Your passion for the organization drives you to action. That action is what moves you from being simply a participant, to being a leader. Because you are the one who can't sit back and just watch anymore, you want to see something happen, something good, and you are willing to do the work to make it happen.

Sound familiar? Is there something in your life you are passionate about? Something you find yourself spending more and more time on, even when there may not be any tangible or immediate personal reward for what you're doing? There's just something about it that gets your juices flowing, something you could talk to a friend about for hours? Maybe it's something that's frustrating you and you want to see it done differently. Maybe it's something that you see a future for, a vision on what it could be, and you would love to be a part of getting it there. Maybe it's something that is wonderful just as it is and you passionately want to protect its integrity and see it continue.

Passion of this sort can propel you into a leader - if you let it. It's easy to say no. Well, at least for some people! But I've found there's many more people, especially in this field, that are the type where they will always be willing to say yes, if not just for a few small tasks, possibly to answer the call of leadership.

Leadership is definitely a journey. For me, it began after attending my first NAFCC Conference. I sat there

listening to all that the organization accomplished that year, and met some of the amazing leaders, and began to see how this group I had never really thought much about, (other than being the place I went for my national accreditation), was thinking of ME when advocating for provider needs on a national level. I never really understood before the connection between my little family child care business in Wisconsin, and what was happening in Washington, D.C. After that conference, I did a little bit more.

Following the conference I decided to find out what was happening in my own state as far as our legislature and what decisions they were making that would affect me. I called an old friend, Peggy Haack, long known for her advocacy work. She hooked me up with our state family child care association, asking me to represent them as part of a new Early Learning Coalition being formed in our state. I did, and after attending my first meeting, realized how much there was for me to learn.

It was all very interesting to me. I've always been attracted to learning new things, and this advocacy work became one of them. I still remember my first visit to a Senator's office by myself. I was scared to death and thought "Why would they care about what I'm here for?" I found he did care. And, as I let my passion for what I did pour out, I saw I was able to make him care even more. That was powerful.

Eventually, another friend, Jeff Johnson, led me to joining the board of NAFCC. He knew how passionate I was about this field too and felt it'd be an asset to the board. It was like this ball that had started to roll and I couldn't stop it - the more I learned, the more I wanted to learn! The more I learned, the more I wanted to do something, to be a part of positive changes. My head kept filling with ideas to make things better for providers, and I couldn't stop. I've often joked at board meetings about how each night at dinner, my husband would ask about my day and I would gush out all the wonderful things I had done or conversations I had, that were all connected to either my state association or NAFCC, and he would ask "Did you do ANYTHING today that makes money?" I always responded with "How about we make that your job and my job will be making a difference?" He never liked the response, but he respected it.

Thanks to my understanding husband (he knows not to try and stop me once I get rolling on a project), I've been able to follow my passion where it led me - to the presidency of NAFCC.

What's your passion? Do you want to make a difference? Do you see something that needs to change and have ideas on how to change it? Do you see something you think needs defending, or just a strong supporter? What talents do you have that can make these things happen?

As I said earlier, many different types of people can be leaders. In fact, that's a great thing! An organization that's led by the same type of person year after year can go stagnant and become ineffective. New leadership always brings a breath of fresh life into an organization because each person has a new perspective - a new angle on what they are passionate about within the organization.

Some leaders are great at getting everything organized, some are great at having a vision and setting a plan to reach it, some are great at bringing the people in the organization closer together so their work is more productive and enjoyable. What will my talents be as a leader? I'm not sure any leader can answer that before they begin. Just as the road to leadership happens gradually and is steered by your passion, what you accomplish as a leader will evolve as your passion steers you in new directions. For now, all I know is that my style will have one common denominator: things will get done. I'm an action person and if we say we're going to do something, I assure you I will not let up until it is accomplished. Even if I have to do it myself. (It's this attitude that got me so involved in the first place!)

So maybe you do have a plan, you want to be a leader someday. Great! Maybe you're not sure. Maybe you're thinking, "No way, nice for you but leave me alone." Never say never. I believe we've got some amazing and wonderful people out there that love children. That are passionate about what affects these children. Right? Well, lookie there, you're halfway down the leadership road already!

To start making plans for your future as a leader, check out the chapter on Setting Goals in my book on professionalism: *From Babysitter To Business Owner*. Get yours TODAY! Visit: www.patriciadischler.com.

Tips & Tricks

Got a few great ideas from providers in Montana I met recently...

- Put small plastic dinosaurs in a plastic tub, fill with water, then freeze! Let the children be archeologist and dig them back out. (You can use toy hammers and wooden golf tees to chip it out safely.)
- Freeze jello in small cubes and other shapes and put it in your sensory table.
- Use the bag your lawn chair came in to store plastic store bags.
- Store puzzles individually in large Ziploc bags to keep pieces and boards together.

In the News

NEXT WEEK!!

NAFCC 2011 Conference - Come to my sessions: Teaching the 3 Cs Train the Trainer, Teaching Outside the Box & Fabulous Fieldtrips!

Quest for Quality: Supporting Happy, Healthy Children

Come join me and all the nation's top experts in our field for high quality trainings, networking, and the opportunity to rejuvenate you and your career! We'll be at the beautiful Green Valley Ranch Resort Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada, July 21-23, 2011. Easy layaway plan available, check it out at: www.nafcc.org and I'll see you there!

Listen to my Interview on EduTalk Radio with Larry Jacobs!

Just had another great interview this morning with Larry, all about NAFCC, Accreditation and our conference next week. It was a fun interview! Listen to this interview in the archives, as well as my past interview on the 3 Cs, at: www.education-talkradio.org.

Check out these great resources from NAFCC Past President, Cris Cross!

Get great information from one of the best in the business! Forms for providers, presentations and e-books, available at: www.crossroadstosuccess.com. And tell her Patricia says "Hi!"

Monthly Sale Items

July Sale Item: Alphabet Tubs - \$5 Off!

Give your children a hands-on, fun way to learn their ABC's! You get a bin filled with tubs - one for each letter of the alphabet. Inside are 3-4 small toys that begin with that letter. Start with 2-3 letters/sounds, dump the toys together and have the children find how to sort them by sound, finding the matching letter tub. Add new letters(sounds) each week and before you know it they can dump out the entire set of toys and find the matching letter tubs! You can also expand on this - make it a home/school activity by sending a tub home with each child, asking them to find small items beginning with that letter to add to the tub. Sold in school supply catalogs for over \$80!

Regular Price - \$35 Sale Price - \$30

August Sale Item: KIDBIZ From Babysitter to Business Owner Half Day Training Trainers Guide - \$40 Off!!

Terrific trainers guide gives you everything you need for a half day training for providers on professionalism, communicating with parents, marketing and creating a Parent Handbook. This information is from the book of the same name, and was used as the basis for many of the BAS evaluation standards. Help increase the level of quality of providers in your area with this training, and at a fraction of the cost!

Regular Price: \$95 Sale Price - \$55

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com or www.KIDBIZResources.com!

Speaking Events

NAFCC CONFERENCE

Green Valley Ranch Resort, Nevada

July 21, Pre-conference:

Teaching the 3 Cs Train the Trainer Half Day Session

July 22, Conference Workshops:

Fabulous Fieldtrips

Teaching Outside the Box

For more information visit: www.nafcc.org

September 24, 2011

Mclean County Family Child Care Association

Full Day Training, topics:

Turning the Job You Love Into the Career You'll Keep

The Parents Can't Hear Me!

Creating Inspirational Child Care Environment

Tips & Tricks

For more information call: 309-663-0521

If you are a member of a group planning a training event and would like to book one of my keynotes or workshops, visit the Lecture page on my website and contact me for availability. Visit www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php.