Recently I visited ABC Day Care in Sheridan, Oregon. I wasn’t exactly sure where Sheridan was, but I tapped the address into my GPS and away I went. Soon I left 1-5 and I found myself in beautiful countryside. When my GPS told me to turn left onto a road that warned of a ferry ahead I was sure I was lost. I ended up taking that small ferry—more like a large raft—safely across the river. (Since I survived, it was an experience I do recommend—I just can’t tell you exactly where it is!)

By the time I arrived at ABC Day Care it was naptime and soothing music permeated the building. Director Jeri Nelson gave me a wonderful tour of the facility and regaled me with stories of answers to prayer in behalf of ABC Cay Care and its children and families. My cup of inspiration was filled and overflowing by the time I left.

I want to take this opportunity to tell you a little more about Jeri, though she is hesitant. She didn’t want me to include her picture but many of you remember meeting her at our June workshop.

Jeri was born in Walla Walla, WA during the Depression. She and her older sister were raised in the country near Hoskins, Oregon. The three attributes that reigned supreme in her home are the same ones Jeri promotes in her day care: Respect, Truthfulness, and Honesty.

Graduating from Laurelwood Academy, Jeri was surprised when the opportunity presented itself for her to attend Walla Walla College. She graduated with a degree in elementary education and taught in Vale, OR. Later, at age 53, after she and her husband raised their five children, Jeri went back to college to learn more about early childhood education. And as they say, the rest is history. Through the years Jeri’s biggest supporter and right hand help was her dear husband whom, sadly, she lost a few years ago.

I asked Jeri what her hobbies and interests are, outside of the daycare. Since children and their families are her passion she had to think about that. “I love stories about how God has led in people’s lives,” she said.

Jeri is just finishing her 18th year at ABC Day Care. As 2011 draws to a close Jeri is looking at stepping down as director. She is concerned about its future, “Our daycare is a mission. There are low income children who need to have the chance to experience Jesus in this loving Seventh-day Adventist setting. People have subsidized for many of these children to attend.” (And several of those in attendance are children of former students, and the bulletin board is full of newspaper clippings about former students.)

We commend you, Jeri, for your tremendous service to God and His children. Thank you for the inspiration you continue to be, and for sharing Jesus with all who have the privilege of knowing you. May God bless you in your plans for the future and especially on your birthday, December 1.
The Value of PLAY

“Will the next generation have a Steve Jobs?” asks Darell Hammond of KaBOOM in the Huffington Post. He continues: “The forecast isn’t good. In an era of parental paranoia, lawsuit mania, and testing frenzy, we are failing to inspire our children’s curiosity, creativity and imagination. We are denying them opportunities to tinker, discover, and explore – in short, to play. Jobs played not just as a child but also throughout his adult life. He played to understand how things worked, than he played to invent new things, and then he kept playing to make those things singularly whimsical and ‘insanely great’…”

We are raising today’s children in sterile, risk-averse, and highly structured environments. In doing so we are failing to cultivate artists, pioneers, and entrepreneurs, and instead cultivating a generation of children who can follow the rules in organized sports games, sit for hours in front of screens, and mark bubbles on standardized tests.

We say we are ‘protecting’ our children. We say we’re setting them up to ‘succeed.’ Really we’re doing neither, and we’re letting an entire generation down. The most fitting way to honor Jobs’ legacy: Let our kids outside to play.” (From ExchangeEveryDay, “Whither the Next Steve Jobs”, Oct. 31, 2011) Thanks, Dr. Christine Gillan Byrne!

NAEYC’s position statement on play is: “Play is an important vehicle for children’s social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.”

“Directors frequently have to explain to some parents that learning to read and write at ages 3 – 4 are not the important issues in the children’s lives. The parents are so focused on their children excelling in cognitive skills (especially reading) that they have much difficulty understanding the place of play in their children’s lives…. Play contributes to the physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development in a way that just cannot be taught with the most expensive equipment or perfect planning.” Dr. Aleene Schaeffer-Mills

Children’s Play—The Roots of Reading, Edited by Edward F. Zeigler, Dorothy G. Singer, and Sandra J. Bishop-Josef

THIS ‘n THAT (thanks for sharing!)

Easy Songs for Smooth Transitions in the Classrooms, by Nina Arau’jo & Carol Aghayan

For many great themes: www.gaylespreschoolrainbowactivitycentral.org

The Values Book: Teaching 16 Basic Values to Young Children, by Pam Schiller & Tamera Bryant

10 Christian Values Every Kid Should Know, by Donna Habenicht

A classroom post office supports social interaction and writing skills. A post office encourages Pre-K children to recognize their own names and the names of their friends. Children will enjoy “writing” to friends and receiving letters from each other. (Especially great after a visit to the post office.)
Excerpts from “Childcare’s Role in Promoting Nutrition & Physical Activity”

Many of the daily activities that you provide are the foundations of lifelong healthy habits and can be a powerful, positive force in encouraging healthy habits in children’s homes. You play a variety of roles in helping young children adopt healthy behaviors. One of the most important is that of a positive role model. Children who see the adults in their lives eating nutritiously and enjoying physical exercise are more likely to adopt those habits themselves. Integrate physical activity throughout the daily schedule.

Food eaten at childcare may account for ½ to 2/3 of a child’s daily caloric intake. Therefore it is essential that the food served be of high nutritional quality. Experts emphasize the importance of using fresh fruits and vegetables as much as possible as well as whole grains. Children younger than two years should not have fat restricted in their diets, but after the 2nd birthday fat should be gradually decreased until by age five their diet has not more than 30% of calories from fat.

It is important to be conscious of what children are drinking as well as eating. A fiber rich alternative to juice is whole fruit. Water should be readily available and encouraged. Avoid using food as a reward. Rewarding with food is a poor habit that can last a lifetime. Nutrition education is most effective when it is integrated into other areas of the curriculum and through daily activities. For example you might share a book about vegetables before introducing a new vegetable at lunch. Children may have the opportunity to grow a vegetable in a windowsill garden.

Childcare provides daily opportunities to demonstrate healthy behaviors that can positively impact children’s health and wellness throughout their lives. Letting parents know what you are doing to promote healthy eating and physical activity can help them with ideas they can put in place at home.

RESOURCES:


*Preventing Childhood Obesity: Tips for Childcare Professionals,* New York State Dept. of Health, [www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/resources/obchcare.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/resources/obchcare.htm)

*Child & Adult Care Food Program,* [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care)


*Physically Active for Life,* [www.pbs.org/teacher/earlychildhood/articles/activeforlife.htm](http://www.pbs.org/teacher/earlychildhood/articles/activeforlife.htm)
North American Division Teachers’ Convention

*Moving Hearts and Minds Upward*

Gaylord Opryland Resort, **August 5—8, 2012**—Nashville, TN

“We are looking forward to the NAD Teachers Convention in Nashville on August 5-8, 2012 and hoping to see the NPUC ECEC directors there. Please check with your local conference superintendent for details regarding travel support.”

Lanny Hurlbert, NPUC Director of Education

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**ON A PERSONAL NOTE...**

In Sept/Oct I had the opportunity to go to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Africa to help build a memorial church and 4 (multi-use, including preschool) classrooms with funds donated when my husband died three years ago. It was a thrill to see the acreage become a campus in just three weeks!

While there I was able to visit a thriving Seventh-day Adventist preschool in Victoria Falls whose similar buildings were just completed one year ago. With very limited supplies, these dedicated, creative preschool teachers accomplish amazing things for His glory—just like you!