Who Are You?
By Dennis Plubell

When you move to a new community or transition to a new job assignment you inevitably meet many new people. You want to know about these people and they likewise will ask, “who are you?” Of course, the question is not usually that direct. They discretely inquire about your work experience and maybe your family. In business, the introduction to new people is often accompanied by the exchange of business cards. On that small card is a job title, the company name and lots of numbers—contact information. The sharing of this information is supposed to be the beginning of a relationship that will grow into profitability.

The business card, however, cannot adequately portray anyone! For instance, the job title accompanying the name only hints at what a person does. The responsibilities and tasks of any job are not easily captured in a job title. Personal skills and abilities are not summarized on a card. More importantly, personal character traits and personal values that have been in development for a lifetime are not captured in a short biography.

What matters most cannot be quickly or easily shared. What each of you bring to the Adventist Christian classroom and child care center is a Christ-centered, character-driven capacity to lead young hearts and minds to Jesus. In the manner of Jesus Christ you do this by first caring for the real, personal needs of the young children. With consistent care and compassion you begin each one of these little people on a multi-year journey. Just as you have had a lifetime to develop a Christian character, so too will the young ones in your charge. It is not an employment position or job title equips you for this important assignment. It is your personal relationship with Christ and personal character traits that are essential.

I look forward to getting acquainted with you in the coming weeks and months. To learn about your experience and expertise will be rewarding. But, to hear of your personal passion and commitment to God’s kids will be inspiring. The children and families that you serve daily are the true biography of your faithful service that will be noted for eternity.

Dennis Plubell is the new NPUC Vice President for Education

“Let the little children come to Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”
Luke 18:16
**MARKETING TIPS**

**Signage** — Make sure your signage is as large as possible, clear, and well maintained in a prominent area. (Consult with local officials for signage regulations.)

**Phone Book Listings** — Your center should be listed under several headings of the local phone book: childcare, preschools, day care, schools. Potential clientele must see the center’s name many times before they will remember and consider your services.

**Website** — This is a great way to promote your center with little effort and minimal cost. Visit www.netadventist.org/ for more information on the Adventist system that can help you design your own website.

**Clientele** — There are two groups: those who pay and those who play! The parents make the decisions and pay the bills, however the children must be happy on an ongoing basis. Don’t be scared of doing an annual evaluation. Their critiques will make the program stronger. Also, parents talk among themselves, they know what is going on in other centers and you can learn from them. In short, know your competition and your clients’ needs and target your marketing message accordingly.

**Open House** — This is a great way to get potential clients into your preschool facility. Provide copies of important information: philosophy, curriculum, tuition rates, hours of operation, insurance, special services, sample menus, etc.

**Staff** — Your employees can be your most powerful marketing tools. If they love their job and their employer the word spreads. Be sure to always show your gratitude for your staff by thanking them verbally and/or in writing. Be spontaneous with acts of helpfulness (clean toys, bathroom, or classroom) and demonstrations of gratitude (provide treats or small gifts from time to time, pray with and for them).

**Local newspaper** — Submit an announcement of an upcoming event. Take out an ad in the paper when you have openings or at the beginning of a new school year. Provide a photo and a brief description of a special event that took place at your center.

**Other ideas** — Facebook, bumper stickers, T-shirts and/or caps (especially worn on field trip days) with center’s logo and name.

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**Growing Minds LOVE Growing Gardens!**

Outside a Midwest early childhood center 4- and 5-year olds step carefully around a raised garden bed, their little hands covered in dirt. When one of them is asked what he is doing he excitedly responds, “We’re planting peas!”

The garden bed has become the latest “classroom” where the children spend part of their day learning how to grow their own food. More and more preschools are adding this experience to the daily curriculum, trying to make an early impact on budding tastes and helping to develop healthful habits.

The children plant, water, and weed as the growing season progresses. Their toys are practical—shovels, rakes, buckets, watering cans, and wheelbarrows. Daily monitoring the growth, the children have learned much about the science of plants including how to care for them, as well as using important math skills—first counting the seeds, then measuring the growth, and finally weighing the results. They have “written” stories and kept picture journals of their experiences—from planting to harvesting, weighing, preparing…and eating!

Taking it to the next level, the center conducted a “food audit”, and cleared its kitchen of all canned goods and preservative-heavy ingredients. It is adding a greenhouse to extend the growing season. The children are much more interested in their food now and many are even in trying new things because they had a part in producing it.
Getting to Know YOU!

I’d like to introduce you to Sueal Cunningham who is program administrator and teacher for the Pre-K classroom at the Adventist School in Dillingham, Alaska.

Now if you are wondering just where in the world Dillingham is, you are not alone, I wondered too. Then a few years ago I was thrilled to have the privilege of traveling there. I flew from Portland to Anchorage, where I spent the night. The next day I flew west to Dillingham. For a while there was a dense cloud cover, but, as the clouds finally broke I saw a lot of vast tundra-like vegetation. Then I spotted a small, remote settlement which I mistook for a Native village.

Imagine my surprise when we started descending and I realized that was Dillingham! While visiting there I met many friendly, salt-of-the-earth people who truly care about their neighbors. With very limited local shopping available, I soon learned that when someone in Dillingham told you they were “going to town” and then asked, “do you need anything?” It meant they were flying all the way to Anchorage and would be glad to go to Costco or Target and pick up supplies for you! That’s how remote Dillingham is, and that’s the type of people Sueal lives among and loves, probably because that also describes her!

Sueal hasn’t always lived in Dillingham. In fact, she was raised on the lovely island of Jamaica in the West Indies. Of her three brothers and one sister, only Sueal holds the distinction of being her mother’s special birthday blessing as they share the same birthday. Sueal attended Northern Caribbean University and the North American Montessori Centre which prepared her well for her present position. Her classroom includes thirteen students, ages three to five.

Sueal comments, “The very best things about what I do are the random hugs and ‘I love you’s’ from my students.”
It’s Spring! Time for Scavenger Hunts
(adapted from an article by Molly Gerrish)

Children love to explore, and scavenger hunts are a great way to encourage investigative skills. With some preparation and creativity teachers can plan scavenger hunts that deepen children’s understanding of the world around them.

Ideas:

- Give children small containers of various sizes. Ask them to collect only things that will fit in their container. *(Why won’t some things fit? Who has a container that will hold that?)*
- Ask children to find 5 things that are alike (5 pebbles, 5 leaves, 5 sticks). Have them compare their 5 things. *(Are they different in some ways? In what ways are they the same?)*
- Place several hula hoops on the ground. Give each child a magnifying glass and assign each one to a hoop. Have them see what they can discover within the area of their hoop. Move the hoops and repeat.
- If your scavenger hunt is in an area where the children should not disturb the natural setting, take a digital camera along on your hunt and photograph what they discover, then show and discuss back in the classroom.
- Take a “listening” scavenger hunt. Make a list of the man-made and natural sounds that are heard. Later discuss whether it is man-made *(moving car, horn or siren)* or natural *(water running, dog barking, birds singing, wind through trees)*.
- Try an indoor hunt. Ask children to find something in the room that rhymes with ____. Or something in the room that is a specific color or shape. Or ask them to locate where certain classroom items are kept (crayons, puzzles…).

Prepare the children for the hunt
Ask them to pay close attention to their surroundings. Practice looking for particular items. Read books that encourage careful observation. Before beginning the hunt, discuss rules and expectations about behavior.

Build on children’s interests and skills
Incorporate the hunt into the curriculum. If the children are involved in a project about shapes create a hunt list that includes some shapes they know well and some they are still learning.

Select a learning-rich setting
Choose a setting that invites children to explore their surroundings. Going outdoors presents a fantastic opportunity to explore a living laboratory and connect with nature.

Create a list of items
Later have children categorize items they found by type, size, shape, or color. Encourage children to make comparisons.

Reflect and respond
Observe children during and after the scavenger hunt. *(How did they react? What did they say and do? Did the activity spark new interests?)* Use the information from observations to provide materials and plan activities that support and build on their interests and skills.

I Love Dirt! 52 Activities to Help You and Your Kids Discover the Wonders of Nature,
by J Ward (Trumpeter Books, Boston, MA 2008)
Help! I'm a Parent

Join us for a Webinar on May 13

REGISTER NOW

Space is limited.
Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/145237576

This webinar is for early childhood education center directors and their staff to learn how to use the Help! I'm a Parent curriculum as a parent education component of their ECEC. Centers who participate in the entire live webinar will receive a complimentary curriculum (retail value $69.95).

Title: Help! I'm a Parent
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Time: 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM EDT

System Requirements
PC-based attendees
Required: Windows® 8, 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server

Mac®-based attendees
Required: Mac OS® X 10.6 or newer

Mobile attendees
Required: iPhone®, iPad®, Android™ phone or Android tablet

For great information, visit the website: www.helpimaparent.org

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...(a school or center)...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our ATTITUDES.”

Charles Swindoll
Where to Find the BEST Role Model

In God’s Word we find all the virtues of the perfect parent (or caregiver):

- Psalm 18:16-19 - Rescues, supports
- Psalm 91:4 – Provides shelter, protection
- Psalm 103: 13-14 – Tender, compassionate
- Proverbs 3: 11-12 – Disciplinarian, corrector in love
- Isaiah 41:13 – Holds, offers assurance
- Isaiah 46: 3-4 – Cares and nurtures
- Isaiah 66:13 – Comforts
- Zephaniah 3:17 – Saves, delights in us, calms fears
- Matthew 7: 9-11 – Showers us with good things
- 1 John 3:1 – Shows us His love, calls us His children

QUESTIONS for REFLECTION

In which of these areas would I most like to grow?
Which of these virtues means the most to me as God’s child?
Which of these qualities is the hardest for me to accept as God’s child?

Begin asking God to help you understand these virtues more clearly, and to experience their reality in your own life.