

# Path To Shine®

## Winter 2018

### From the Director



"Children do not care what you know, until they know you care." A powerful quote from Herbert Kohl that epitomizes the work we do at Path To Shine®. With 14 programs across Middle and North Georgia, there are over 130 adult volunteers who show up each week because they *do* care. By working with the same one or two children weekly, our volunteers are able to develop healthy, trusting relationships where children take to heart stories of perseverance, courage, hope, and dreams.

Join us in *our* dream to inspire young children! Volunteer, make a donation, invite us to speak at your church or civic group. There is so much more work to be done! Help us to continue growing so that more children come to know the power of an adult volunteer who cares.

Lesley-Ann, Executive Director

## Help Us Share the Love!

During the 28 days of February, Path To Shine will **Share the Love** via daily posts on Facebook and Twitter. Our goals are to:

- inspire more people to get involved;
- raise funds in support of our expanding programs;
- increase awareness about inequity in the public education system

You can help celebrate this "Month of Love":

1) Make a quirky [donation of \\$28](#) (\$1 for each day in February).

2) Follow us and Share our [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#) posts.

25% of Georgia's children live in poverty; children who need your help. Please join Path To Shine as we *Share the Love* this February!



## Christmas Treats



The children in our programs benefit from the relationships that are built over weeks and months. And Christmas is no exception! While many churches donate gifts to charitable organizations at Christmas, Path To Shine is privileged to know the children for whom we buy gifts. Those gifts are often practical (new coats, jeans, sneakers) although new books and other fun treats are given as well, while traditional activities such as making gingerbread houses, or candy cane reindeer, are included during our curriculum time.

A special tradition has developed in Smyrna at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church where Christmas wishes for children in our Smyrna and Marietta programs become reality through the generosity of parishioners. The next step is the children's mothers are invited for a luncheon at the church where they can sit and relax while lunch is brought to them. After lunch they wrap the gifts given for their family. A frenzy of volunteer elves share in the excitement, scooting around serving lunch, helping wrap presents, and enjoying Christmas cookies. It is a wonderful way to enjoy fellowship and celebrate Christmas. Thank you, St Benedict's!



## Meet Ellen Gaffney, Affiliate Director

While I am not a teacher, I had plenty of opportunities to help my own children with reading and completing their homework at the kitchen table. So last year, when I expressed an interest in working with children, I was introduced to Lesley-Ann. After two visits to the Marietta Path To Shine program, I committed to volunteering as a mentor when school began again in the Fall. Imagine my surprise when I was asked to serve as the director of the Marietta affiliate. Thankfully I have a co-director who has volunteered with Path To Shine longer than a minute, and we make a great team. We both wish for the children in the program to have the educational opportunities our own children, now grown, had when they were in school.



That being said, I can be at a loss as to how to teach a 7-year-old about telling time. I find myself googling all kinds of lessons and worksheets and flash cards but often I am just winging it - and praying! What I really get out of my mentoring experience is the relationships I am building with my now second grade students, a boy and a girl. They get along well but often compete as to who can finish first. They work so hard to gain my approval, so I encourage them as much as I can. They trade their snacks (one likes cheese and the other doesn't) with good-natured ease and sometimes they offer to share with me. There are days I am exhausted and days that I am exhilarated by the experience, but I love working with them and with the other adults in our program. I have learned so much from the other mentors, and I am impressed by their years of dedication to Path To Shine. *I still have a lot to learn but most of the lessons I need to learn will be taught by my second graders. May they continue to have patience with me as I stumble through "new math" and may they continue to be as excited to see me each week as I am to see them.*



## Eeeeeew! The Reptile Guy

We love to bring in special guests and sometimes they can test our limits. This guest brought in a yellow cobra, an iguana, a baby alligator, a toad and a large turtle. While some of the adults skittered away, the children were fascinated. They felt the different textures and asked a myriad of questions - just what we want because asking questions is how we learn. This live encounter took learning to a new level - one they won't forget. Thanks, Reptile Guy

## All Our Children: The Church's Call to Education Equity

"By focusing more on policies and test scores, we have lost sight of the fact that our relationship with each child is what transforms lives. As a consequence we have failed many, many children in our often-neglected public schools." This was the over-arching message at the Education Equity Conference hosted by **All of Our Children**, and it affirmed the basic tenets of Path To Shine's focus, training, and delivery to the children in our programs.

The key-note speaker, Dr. Jeff Andrade, is a 25-year veteran in the public schools in Oakland, CA. He noted that 53 years after schools were desegregated "with all deliberate speed," schools still do not meet the needs of all our children. When resources are scarce, our most vulnerable children suffer more than those who are resource-secure. We cannot, as people of comfortable means, be "dream hoarders" for our own children and families. Education is key to a child's ability to break out of poverty, and if we do not deliver a quality education, schools then become the "pipeline to prison." Equity - not equality, because each child needs different things to be successful in school - for *all our children* is critical, and we must have the courage to talk about the role of racism in denying all children equal access to education.

We know a trusted relationship with a caring adult is still the premier way of bringing transformation, justice, and happiness to a child's life. The hope of American public education partnerships must be that we want all children to flourish. We must keep our hope and we must give our children hope. We know that as Bishop Desmond Tutu said, "If we truly see one another as children of God, then we will bow to one another." Let's keep moving down the road with hope for all our children.

*By Edith Woodling, Educational Consultant*



For more information about Path To Shine and about the articles in this newsletter, please visit our website at **[www.pathtoshine.org](http://www.pathtoshine.org)** or contact us: Lesley-Ann Drake, Executive Director, Path To Shine, 2160 Cooper Lake Road SE, Smyrna, GA 30080. 678-279-4308 [lesleyann@pathtoshine.org](mailto:lesleyann@pathtoshine.org) [facebook.com/pathtoshine](https://facebook.com/pathtoshine)