

Congratulations, Ms. Melissa. PACCA's 2007 Educator of the Year.

It is my pleasure to inform you that Mrs. Melissa Readman is named PA Child Care Association (PACCA)'s Educator of the Year. Melissa has worked at Steps to Success since September 2000 as our Pre Kindergarten teacher. Allow me to introduce her to you.

Ms. Melissa was named
PACCA's 2007 Educator of the Year



Melissa graduated from Lock Haven State College in May 1983 with a degree and certification in Early Childhood Education. Dr. Helen Goodell wrote, "Miss Melissa Reiff is one of our strongest graduates

for several years. Melissa does not accept any task as being impossible, and she quietly sticks with it and produces. She has been recognized by the School of Education at Honors Convocation since she was a freshman, both for academic and professional contributions.”

Melissa was employed at the Day Care Center of Bloomfield-Glen Ridge in NJ from December 1983 to June 1984 as a preschool teacher. Elaine Bertram states in her reference letter that Melissa “exhibited an extremely conscientious and cooperative attitude together with good interrelations with co-workers. Her excellent rapport with the children in her charge has been reflected in their response to her daily planned schedules. She is a capable, imaginative and hard working colleague.”

Melissa joined Sonshine Pre-School & Child Care Center in Bensalem PA in August 1987 as a Pre-School teacher. Later, she was placed in charge of coordinating the Arts & Crafts activities for two pre-school and two pre-kindergarten classes. In May 1989, Melissa was named Assistant Director. In her July 1994 letter of reference, Debbie Bricker states that Melissa’s “input has been so valuable to me as Administrator and I was always confident that the Center was in good hands while she was in charge. Melissa has been a dependable and capable employee for these seven years. She is kind and loving toward children and displays a concern to provide the very best care for them.”

Melissa began employment at Our Small World in Kennett Square, PA in August 1994 as the director/head teacher of the preschool. When it was necessary for that preschool to close, Melissa accepted the job of pre-kindergarten teacher at the main center. Melissa served as director from September 1996 until July 2000. Kathryn Snyder stated “Melissa brings a myriad of personal strengths and learned skills to the field of child care. She has a natural gift of understanding people of all ages. Loving children is what Melissa does best. Her dedication to assisting children and families goes far beyond the expected realm of any employee.”

I was fortunate to interview Melissa in August 2000 for our Pre Kindergarten opening and even more so when she accepted the

position. There are not enough words to describe her value to our program. As you may have gathered from the excerpts from previous employers, it is Melissa's nature to go out of her way for her students and their parents as well as her coworkers. Her wealth of knowledge and experience have been invaluable to me and an inspiration to younger coworkers. I've lost track of the number of times that I have utilized her expertise. I am a better director because she models appropriate and successful ways of handling difficult situations and parents.

I interviewed a few of your school age students who were students in Melissa's Pre Kindergarten room. They stated that she is "nice", "encouraging" and she gives "lots of compliments." "Ms. Melissa taught me good manners." Melissa cooks or bakes with her children monthly. They remembered making "cookies, pies and cakes." Music and art are integrated into her daily activities. During the summer, they played in the sprinkler weekly. She had "really neat games." "Ms. Melissa is really good at reading stories...the best." There is "reading time for her to read and us to read." She rotates the classroom toys monthly. "She surprises us with stuff." "She helps us to building stuff." They also commented that the room was seasonally & thematically decorated. They also remember "working together" to do a play in the summer. The most mentioned memory with Ms. Melissa is Christmas time. She brings in a live Christmas tree. Every year Santa brings a gift for the class. It is wrapped with multiple layers paper. Each layer is addressed to a different child, allowing each member to participate in the opening of the class present.

I do not know a finer or more deserving educator. My staff and I are truly blessed to have an educator of this caliber in our presence.

Sincerely,
Michelle Harbaugh, Director