

## President's Corner

*by Kyra Ostendorf and Tiffany Weeks, MnAEYC-MnSACA Co-Presidents*

Take a minute to reflect on the questions “Who do you lead?” and “Who do you follow?”

Our guess is that the answers to both questions are long and that parts overlap.

Sometimes you may follow the people you normally lead, and other times you may find yourself in an unexpected position of leadership with people you usually follow. This happens with children all of the time. You are their leader, yet being able to follow their interests and excitement is at the heart of being a childcare professional.

If you are a leader of adults, we hope that you attended and enjoyed our Summer Leadership Institute on July 28 at Black Bear Crossing on beautiful Lake Como. The keynote and sessions focused on helping you lead through conflict and change. Certainly these are two things that all leaders are faced with.

When we ask ourselves, “Who do we lead?” and “Who do we follow?” we realize that leading and following are at the front of our minds in so much of our work with MnSACA. As board presidents, we lead and follow right along with the other board members and with Sharon Bergen, our executive director. We also see this leadership style emerge in the work we do with the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children, our partner

organization. It is this give and take, lead and follow style that has lead MnSACA to take the necessary steps to combine our two boards. During our discussions we talked about the depth of leadership and the combined interests our organizations have. Our enhanced collaboration has been so successful and we feel confident that the board merger will only improve upon this success.

The first step was to approve changes to the organizational bylaws that will serve to combine the MnSACA board, which we did at our May 2011 board meeting by a unanimous vote. In doing this, we follow other nonprofit organizations who have joined boards while remaining separate organizations.

It is in this spirit of leading and following that we ask you to become a leader for MnSACA. We ask that you share the value of membership with someone else in the field and invite that person to join the organization.

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# Director's Corner

by Sharon Bergen



## SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS | PROMOTING QUALITY

### Go to the Front of the Line

Think back to your first years in school, navigating the classroom rules, your friendships and the teacher's expectations. Opportunities were presented for you to lead, none perhaps as cherished as the line leader. I can remember waiting, not so patiently, for my turn to lead my classmates to and from the cafeteria, the gym, and the playground. I was very jealous of classmates lucky enough to have last names beginning with 'A' who got to start off the year in that esteemed helper-job. What made the line leader job so desirable? Was it the chance to be first among the class? Was it the chance to set a course? Was it the opportunity to use skills that you might not otherwise exercise? Was it simply the thrill of knowing that others depended upon you to get them where they needed to be?

None of us grow up to be professional line leaders, of course. And lately I have been wondering what happens to the natural enthusiasm we had for leading others. Once the lines go away, what happens to our desire to lead? Perhaps the chances to lead become less obvious. Or, perhaps we develop a belief that only a chosen few can lead, that leadership is the business of a select group to which we may not belong.

Leadership guru Max De Pree describes leaders as those who help others reach their potential. I find this description helpful when thinking about the opportunities for all of us to lead in our personal and professional lives. As professionals who work with children and youth, helping others reach their potential is at the heart of our work; it is what we are best at doing. Yet our profession often lacks individuals anxious to take on leadership roles. Could you be a line leader in hiding? As you think about your own leadership roles and potential, reflect on the following questions:

*Can you lead by example?* One of the most powerful ways in which people learn and grow in our profession is by working alongside

accomplished practitioners. Valuable lessons can be learned watching your lead teacher guide a classroom; conversely, your assistant teacher may very well be observing your teaching style. When you do your best work, when you model excellent practice for others, you are leading by example.

*Are you willing to grow?* Leaders understand that things change, and growth is required to continue to keep pace. As professionals we constantly learn about ways to do our work more effectively, to improve our practice, and to extend our impact. But growth doesn't just happen. Growth has to be fueled. In the workplace, growth is fueled by learning and attention. When was the last time you engaged in professional development? What professional reading are you committed to? How do you learn new skills and stay current?

*Are you willing to practice?* Skilled leadership does not develop automatically or instantly. Leadership "muscles" grow strong through consistent exercise. The best leaders consistently take on challenges that allow them to flex their leadership muscles. Luckily, in our work there are myriad opportunities to get involved, to lead in big and small ways. Are you a member of a team or committee? Could you lead an initiative or form a group to advance a new idea? Where would you like to be more involved professionally? What problems would benefit from your skills or energy?

As a member of a professional association like MnAEYC or MnSACA you have many chances to lead by example, to grow your skills, and to practice as a leader. We welcome your involvement and encourage you to "come to the head of the line" by attending a professional development event, joining a committee, or running for a leadership position on our Board of Directors. Our organization will best meet its potential when all of our leaders take their turn at the head of the line with that enthusiasm we remember from kindergarten.

# Recognizing Our Leaders: MnSACA Award Nominations Open

Do you know of an individual or organization that has made a particularly worthy impact on the field of school age care? The Annual MnAEYC-MnSACA Conference is the perfect time to recognize their work! This recognition is an important way for our professional organizations to highlight the important work of professionals and to encourage involvement at the highest levels by all of our members.

MnSACA is currently accepting nominations for three annual awards, to be given out at the conference. Please take a few minutes today to nominate individuals or programs for their contribution to the early childhood field. Visit [www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](http://www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org) to download the nomination forms, located in the conference area of the website. Nominations will be accepted through January 6, 2012 and should be mailed, faxed or emailed to:

**MnSACA Awards Committee**  
2610 University Ave W, Suite 425  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
Fax: 651-789-2286  
Email: [erich@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](mailto:erich@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org)

## Award of Excellence

This award will be presented to an individual, organization or agency who:

- has had a significant impact on the field of school-age youth programming through their support; and/or

- has had a significant impact on the public awareness of the importance of quality programs for school-age children and youth; and/or
- has had a significant impact on the quality of programs for school-age children and youth through their vision and leadership
- has demonstrated extraordinary professionalism while directly working with school-age children and youth; and/or
- has developed new program ideas which have provided a model for others working in the field.



## MnSACA Distinguished Member

This award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance through the activities of their membership. One award in this category is given each year.

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# MnAEYC—MnSACA Welcome New Staff Members

Thanks to the support of our members and the growth of our programs, MnAEYC and MnSACA are growing our staff to better serve our members and to carry out our funded programs. This month two new Accreditation Specialists joined our team. Please welcome Dena Roberts and Julie Leslie who bring their considerable talents and experience to our Accreditation Facilitation Project. It is exciting to have their fresh perspective and abundant energy as we undertake an exciting expansion of our work in partnership with the Greater Twin Cities United Way. Many of you will have the chance to see Dena and Julie in your programs as we work together to make Minnesota one of the nation's most highly accredited states!

In September, Eric Haugee joined the MnAEYC-MnSACA staff in a new position, Director of Policy and Communications.

Eric comes to our organizations with deep policy experience from his work with Ready4K. And, Eric is also very familiar with our organizations having served as a MnAEYC Board of Directors member and Co-President and as a part of the Joint Steering Council that provides leadership for both MnAEYC and MnSACA. Eric is tasked with providing an enhanced member benefit by actively representing the interests of early childhood, school age, and youth program professionals in the policy area and by deepening our member communications and development of new programs.

Please welcome each of our new staff members and, as always, let us know how we can better serve you as members of our organizations. MnAEYC and MnSACA staff can be reached at 651-646-8689.



## 2012 MnAEYC-MnSACA Annual Conference: Building Bridges: Inspiring Action

*By Kara Lomen, Project Coordinator*

Join us February 10-11, 2012 at the St. Paul RiverCentre for the 2012 Annual MnAEYC-MnSACA Conference. This year's theme is Building Bridges: Inspiring Action. Each year our conference is made up of 800-1,000 professionals from the early childhood and out-of-school time field. Our combined conference is the premier place to explore best practices, connect with colleagues, and learn new skills!

Each day of the conference will kick off with a keynote session. Friday will focus on "The Champion Within" with author and consumer service expert Petra Marquart. Petra will share with us her ideas on the role of service within our work, how our sense of self affects our service and how we can restore and recover our sense of self when we find it running low. Saturday will feature Jeff Johnson and his message of "Keeping Your Smile," sure to be full of ideas to help maintain and strengthen your smile and your commitment to quality care and education. Each of these is sure to be an inspiring message!

Throughout the two days of the MnAEYC-MnSACA conference, we will be offering a wide variety of sessions to meet the professional development needs of administrators, lead staff, center directors, and direct care and education staff. Sessions include topics such as curriculum, leadership, wellness,

environment, quality and accreditation, and much more. We will also be featuring panels specifically targeted to caregivers of infants and toddlers as well as to programs for youth.

Due to popular demand, this year we are excited to announce the return of Innovation Stations! These displays are submitted by a variety of professionals in order to highlight new, innovative and exciting ideas. It is an opportunity for programs to learn from others in the field and gives attendees hands-on ideas to bring back to their programs to try for themselves. New this year, in place of the Silent Auction, we will be hosting a fundraising raffle. With both returning as well as exciting new prizes, we are hoping that the raffle will allow a variety of participation from conference attendees. All proceeds go toward future conference scholarships.

Conference registration will open soon; please visit our website at [www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](http://www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org) to reserve your space today. Early bird registration deadline ends January 13. Group discount rates do apply; conference rates remain the same as last year. We hope to see you there!

# Youthprise: Championing Learning Beyond the Classroom

By *Laura LaCroix-Deluhn*, outgoing Executive Director of Youth Community Connections

Youthprise has emerged as one of Minnesota's newest intermediaries after two years of research, analysis, conversations and planning. Recognizing that youth have nearly 2,000 hours of discretionary time each year — twice the time they spend in school — Youthprise was founded and funded by the McKnight Foundation to increase the quality, quantity, sustainability and innovativeness of beyond-the-classroom opportunities for young people in Minnesota.

In March 2011, the Youthprise board appointed Wokie Weah to be the organization's first president. Ms. Weah most recently served as Senior Vice President at the National Youth Leadership Council and has extensive history in education, youth leadership and youth development.

Ms. Weah brings energy, urgency and high expectations to the job. She says, "Our vision at Youthprise is to lead the nation in accelerating leadership and innovation beyond the classroom. We want to put Minnesota back on the map as a state that invests in its young people; we want to ensure that out-of-school time for all of our youth is truly enriching and transformative." Included in the vision is that:

- **Every young person** is included and engaged.
- **Every family** has access.
- **Every program** has support to ensure quality and impact.
- **Every community** has a clear plan—for youth and with youth.

The mission of Youthprise is to champion learning beyond the classroom so that all Minnesota's youth thrive. Young people will play a large role in developing and implementing strategy at Youthprise. As Ms. Weah states, "Communities (and the world!) will get measurably better when young people are more included, invested and engaged."

As an intermediary, Youthprise will bring together resources and people to identify and scale great programs and strengthen systems and policy. Through a combination of research, education, advocacy and strategic investment, the organization will accomplish its goals to:

- **Mobilize the power of youth** to enliven, expand and transform programs and systems.

- **Expand access to quality learning experiences** that prepare youth for education, work and civic life.
- **Advance integrated, community-based systems** that increase opportunities and improve outcomes for all youth.
- **Leverage and grow resources** to close the opportunity gap for under-engaged and under-served youth.
- **Ignite public insistence** on engaging, accessible, quality learning opportunities for all youth.

To jumpstart the work, Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance, Youth Community Connections merged into Youthprise in June 2011. Youth Community Connections and its state and local partners bring years of collaborative experience in building and supporting the field through policy and systems

*Youthprise continued on page 6*



## The MnAEYC-MnSACA Policy and Advocacy Committee needs you!

With the 2012 Legislative Session right around the corner, and with early childhood and out-of-school time programs potentially facing budget cuts, it's time to get organized. MnAEYC-MnSACA is looking for energetic, motivated individuals interested in crafting and implementing our 2012 Policy Agenda. Experience not necessary!

**When:** October 31, 2011 10am – 11:30am

**Where:** 2610 University Ave W, lower level conference room, St. Paul

Questions or to RSVP, contact Eric Haugee at 651-789-3590 or [erich@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](mailto:erich@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org).



# The Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Project Continues to Gain Momentum

By Kim St. Marie, Project Coordinator

In mid-September, 38 school-age program representatives and accreditation coaches representing 23 sites from the metro area and greater Minnesota joined together to kick off a brand new cohort of programs pursuing MAAP accreditation. The energy generated during this event left everyone inspired and motivated to get back to their sites and begin the journey towards program improvement and accreditation.

Thanks to funding received from the Department of Human Services, seven school-age programs have been accepted to participate in the Accreditation Facilitation Project and will receive FREE in-depth consultation and reimbursement of accreditation fees.

If you are looking for a vehicle to improve quality, MAAP may be an excellent choice for your program! It's not too late to enroll in MAAP or attend a cohort meeting to find out more about the process. Contact Kim St. Marie at 651.646.8689 ext. 39 or email [kims@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](mailto:kims@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org) for more information.

Congratulations to the following programs who recently received their accreditation endorsement through the Minnesota Afterschool Accreditation Project!

- West Seventh Community Center — St. Paul
- Hopkins Kids & Co. — Eisenhower
- Hopkins Kids & Co. — Meadowbrook
- Wayzata Home Base — Greenwood
- Wayzata Home Base — Sunset Hill
- Minneapolis Kids — Barton Open
- Minneapolis Kids — Ramsey
- Minneapolis Kids — Pratt
- Minneapolis Kids — Marcy Open
- White Bear Lake Extended Day — Lakeaires
- White Bear Lake Extended Day — Matoska
- White Bear Lake Extended Day — Otter Lake
- Roseville Friendship Connection — Emmet D. Williams
- Roseville Friendship Connection — Central Park
- Club Care — Chaska Elementary
- Club Care — Kindergarten Center
- Stillwater Adventure Club — Stonebridge

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## Welcome New MnAEYC-MnSACA Board of Directors Members

Recently MnSACA-MnAEYC members voted to select one new member for the organization's Board of Directors. In addition, two Board members were approved by the nominating committee to fill previously open positions. The organization is fortunate to have active members with such talent to contribute to our leadership! Please join us in welcoming the following talented professionals to our Board of Directors:

**Cory Woosley:** Cory is the Program Manager for Eager-to-Learn, an online learning program dedicated to providing quality distance education for early childhood professionals. She is also a faculty member in the MNSCU system in the Early Childhood department and field faculty at the University of MN CEED program. She is past-president of MnSACA and was instrumental in the success of the enhanced collaboration between MnSACA and MnAEYC.

**Catherine Gubbels:** Catherine will serve the board as Student Representative. She is an early childhood education major in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. She brings her passion for learning and connections to students and young people to the board.

**Mary Muhs:** Mary is the Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator at Rasmussen College — Blaine Campus. Mary has 20 years of experience in early childhood education, including time as the recruitment/membership chair for the local Fox Valley AEYC affiliate in Illinois. She also has experience leading programs through NAEYC accreditation.

Our next Board of Directors meeting is November 18, 2011. All members are welcome to attend. If you would like to join us, please notify Sharon Bergen at [SharonB@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org](mailto:SharonB@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org) so that we can reserve space for you.



*Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance*

2610 University Avenue West  
Suite 425  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
Tel 651-646-8689  
Fax 651-789-2286  
sharonb@mnaeyc-mnsaca.org  
www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org

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Organization  
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# We've Moved!

The MnAEYC-MnSACA office has a new location!

You can find us at:

MnAEYC-MnSACA  
2610 University Ave W, Suite 425  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org  
651-646-8689

Please update your records. Thanks!

