

# Marvin's Message

*A weekly email update from the HIPPY USA National Executive Director*

## HIPPY Photo Highlight



**"Make new friends, but keep the old..."**

The participants in this photo are with the Dawson HIPPY program in Bryant, Arkansas. McKenzie Green and Evan Herron are shown taking a break from field trip activities last October.

The group visited a local family farm and program coordinator Cindy Rowlan tells HIPPY USA that they both have older siblings that were in the HIPPY program, as well as younger siblings the same age.

**"Their families have become best friends through HIPPY and it has been a wonderful experience watching this friendship take place and grow," says Rowlan. This is another example of how HIPPY impacts lives by creating new friendships, educating children, empowering families, and enriching communities! We'll announce the photo contest winners during the National Conference in April – don't miss it!**

## National Advocacy

HIPPY program staff is invited to submit stories and analysis of partnerships with other home visiting organizations, In particular, information is requested about HIPPY programs in collaboration with: Parents As Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, Prevent Child Abuse America, and The Parent Child Home Program. The input will be woven into an article to be co-authored by members of the Home Visiting Coalition and submitted in April to the "Zero-to-Three" magazine. I will serve as the lead editor of the article focusing on a history of home visiting programs and the organizations' goals in the current political environment.

HIPPY program staff is also invited to submit stories and case studies of how community development efforts can be stimulated by HIPPY early childhood education and parent empowerment. The stories will become part of a presentation I will make at the National IMPACT Conference in Little Rock, March 19-21, an event attended by approximately 2,500 socially conscious college students.

HIPPY's contribution to local community development is a key factor in all AmeriCorps programs, as HIPPY home visitor/AmeriCorps members are very active in promoting volunteerism and community engagement among their parents. Other HIPPY programs, such as Williams Temple in Gainesville, FL, have leveraged extensive community support and local participation through community coalitions. Community development starts when individuals become more involved in improving local conditions.

I believe there are hundreds of great stories of HIPPY parents and communities who have been motivated and assisted in this journey of progress. Please share them with me!

## **Curriculum**

Revisions to the Age 4 curriculum continue, with work completed on the activity packets for "Sometimes Big, Sometimes Small." Project Leader Karen Greening has incorporated input to the project from a University of Arkansas professor of education and a diverse committee of HIPPY Coordinators and National Trainers. New color illustrations have been inserted.

Following approval of the Activity Packets, the content revisions will be applied to the Home Visitor Guides. Then, Spanish translations will be created of all revised materials, and Connelly 3 Publishing Group will print a supply of the new materials for a pilot program to be launched in Fall 2010 with a select group of English and Spanish-speaking families.

The project will ultimately include revisions to the curriculum for all Age 4 books.

## **National Conference and Champion Event**

Activity in preparation for the National Conference continues to gain momentum. At this time:

- 297 participants are registered.
- 30 presenters are scheduled to offer 32 workshops. Additional workshops are expected. Workshop room assignments are still in progress
- 10 home visitors and 8 coordinators have signed up for the newly created Advisory Groups.
- Nominations for the Avima Lombard Award have been received and are under review by a nominations committee.
- March 15th is the deadline for registration in the Networking sessions, the cultural outings, and ordering conference T-shirts.
- A banner promoting the conference will be displayed at the Little Rock airport.
- Arkansas HIPPY is coordinating a network of volunteers to help prepare the conference bags and assist with registration.

Activity is also moving along in preparation for the HIPPY Champion Event. Activity at this time involves:

- Sending "Save the Date" cards and event invitations.
- Developing press releases and media contacts.
- Contacting sponsors with follow up phone calls and meetings.
- Confirming and creating event program content, including display materials honoring Avima Lombard.

The Champion Committee is co-chaired by two Little Rock women, Robin Stewart and HIPPY USA Board member Shanti Halter, with a passionate and committed support for HIPPY. Unrelated to HIPPY but a point of interest to many, Shanti's husband, Bill Halter, the Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas, this week announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate and has launched a campaign for the state Democrat primary election this spring.

## National Office

Bids have been received from four technology organizations interested in working on the new MIS. A scoring system is being developed to assess the bids on an even basis.

HIPPY programs interested in an innovative system for postage and mailing might look into [www.Stamps.com](http://www.Stamps.com). This on-line service allows users to print postage as needed and customize stamps with logos or unique designs. There are cost savings of the systems in comparison to traditional postage meters.

HIPPY USA is exploring development of a for-profit initiative. The process could create a product or service whose revenue will supplement nonprofit program operational or administrative costs. We're looking into adapting the HIPPY model and developing a business plan to bring HIPPY to military families. We'll keep you informed of this new work in-progress.

A HIPPY presentation at the Fathers and Families Coalition Conference last week in Los Angeles was very well attended. Gayle Hart spoke to more than 50 workshop attendees about how men can and should be involved in early childhood education.

The new HIPPY USA web site will be launched this week, filled with new and attractive visuals and improved user-access to a vast database of program information. The new site is planned to have video clips of HIPPY alumni. One of the clips will feature Arkansan Erika McMahan, now an elementary school teacher in the KIPP Delta Early Literacy Academy at Helena-West Helena, AR. (Erika's video may not be fully ready for the web launch, but she'll be a program speaker at the national conference, so you'll nevertheless get to see this extraordinary young women in person.)

Until next week...

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