



dvaeycconnection

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Worthy Wages

Looking back, looking ahead.

Sharon Easterling, DVAEYC Executive Director

It all started with a casserole. The Secret Sisterhood of the Revolutionary Potluck gathered for food and conversation in the early winter months of 1992 and the local Worthy Wage campaign was born. Because DVAEYC understands the strong connection between good teachers and good programs, for decades we have been at the forefront of working for a better skilled AND better compensated early childhood workforce.

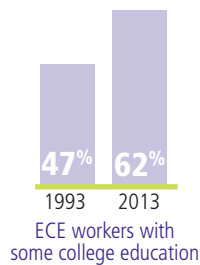
I remember fondly our first Worthy Wage rally at LOVE Park. Giddy with delight at the size of the crowd, we savored the headline in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "800 rally in LOVE Park for child care workers".

Over the years, under the steadfast work of Public Policy Director Pamela Haines, and extraordinary staffers Gerri DiLisi and Suzann Morris, DVAEYC has led hundreds of workshops, retreats, Worthy Wage socials, and community events to bring attention and resources to this critical issue.

Now, 20-plus years later, what have we accomplished? According to a new national study of the early childhood workforce, there is both good and bad news:

- The percentage of early childhood workers with some college education has increased from 47 to 62 percent.
- More employees were afforded health or retirement benefits from their jobs, and incoming child care workers were rated as more prestigious in 2010 than in 1990.
- Nearly 40 percent of workers in 2010 still lacked education beyond a high school degree.
- Turnover remained high, with about a quarter of all early childhood employees in 2009 leaving the industry completely by the following year.

The study notes that the overall improvement of the ECE workforce was primarily



driven by improvements within the home-based workforce. Read more at: http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Changing_ECCEDynamics.pdf.

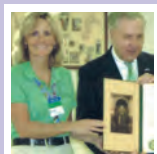
In Pennsylvania we have a good news/bad news report card as well. Requirements for teacher credentials have been increased, and resources from Keystone STARS and PreK Counts have made possible some improvements in compensation. One of the most significant developments in our state was the creation in 1997 of the T.E.A.C.H. program—and one of the most devastating blows to the early childhood education community was the sudden loss of T.E.A.C.H. in 2011. When the program abruptly ended, more than 1500 child care staff working toward professional degrees lost this vital support.

Advocates across the state have been working diligently to restore staff development resources to OCDEL's budget. Sharing our concern, Deputy Secretary Barbara Minzenberg has led the department's efforts to address this serious deficit, and we are delighted to report that the 2013-14 state budget includes \$3.5 million in new funds for the voucher program to support tuition costs for child care staff. New guidelines are being developed that will improve access and usability of these funds—stay tuned for details.

I imagine that if we had been told in 1992 that a lead teacher in a child care program would earn about \$35,000/year if she held a Bachelor degree and teacher certification in 2013, we would have been impressed. Yet, the disparity between salaries in the child care sector and public schools is still shocking. This point was recently driven home as the School District of Philadelphia, in an effort to reduce costs, moved 2,000 Head Start slots from public schools to community child care programs. The \$8 million that they saved came directly from the lower salaries paid to child care staff in community programs.

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Do these ideas interest or intrigue you?

Then plan to attend the 2104 DVAEYC Conference, *Take a Walk on the Wild Side; Connecting Children with Nature.*

Learning from Nature

In the spring, DVAEYC held a Nature Explore workshop at the Charlestown Playhouse in Phoenixville, PA, inviting early childhood education practitioners to learn how to use outdoor space and natural materials as part of their curriculum. An eager group came from Frankford Friends School, which is committed to learning from and implementing this approach. Four of them reflect on their experience at the workshop:

I really enjoyed "playing" in the outdoor nature art space. Making art from nature involves the imagination, problem solving skills, observational skills, and collaborative skills when working in a group. It made me think of our fairy house builders, and how they accomplish so much with so little natural resources at their disposal. Since the workshop, I have been bringing in supplies from nature to contribute to the fairy house builders.

—Victoria Davis, PreK-8th Art Teacher

I particularly enjoyed the task of showing a concept through the use of natural materials. My group created a mini version of The Grand Canyon, and I was struck by how valuable that experience would be for children, in terms of the knowledge and negotiation necessary to complete the job. The talk and activities reinforced my commitment to include experiences in the natural world for my third grade class.

—Jen Murray, 3rd Grade Teacher

I agree with Jen about using different materials to express an idea. What a good stretch of the imagination and nice group problem solving! I loved seeing the range of materials set out for the children, freeing me up to imagine all the things we could put in front of the children that they will find a cool use for. I also love the combination of "structured type activities" and just free exploration, with the more structured ones being one way to introduce the natural world to children who might not intuitively know what to do. I also liked seeing some natural items put out for display in a way that "appreciated" their beauty. I will never walk past a pine cone now without remembering how gorgeous they are when opened up!

—Penny Colgan-Davis, Principal



The most significant concept is that kids need to be outside experiencing the out-of-doors as it is. Don't worry about perfectly even and flat ground; uneven ground develops good coordination. There are many different skills used when working with the outdoors. The space should be called a Research Environment where play—the best kind of learning—can happen.

—Martha Sharples, Board Member

Worthy Wages

Looking back, looking ahead. *Continued from front*

The status and compensation of early childhood educators will improve only when our society recognizes birth-five for the critical child development window that it is; and when staff have the skills and credentials to deliver high quality early learning programming. This journey is filled with challenges and potential pitfalls—standardized testing, push-down academics, labor disputes, one-size-fits-all approaches to curriculum and teacher credentials—but the work must go on. DVAEYC is deeply committed to continuing to improve the early childhood system toward this end, and we welcome all suggestions and offers of help from our members.

None of us are in this field for the money. Yet it continues to be true, now as it was in 1992, that we deserve worthy wages for the critically important work that we do. As early childhood education professionals, we have a dual task: demonstrating and ever improving our ability to educate children well during their most formative years; and advocating for the respect and resources that will allow us—and the generations that come after us—to stay and flourish in the field. After all, who knows better than us how to make the system work for both our young children and their teachers?



Mary Jo Grieve with State Senator Rafferty.

Now is the time to move!

I am more inspired than ever to do my part. We need to create and build a collective perspective on the importance of investing in our young children—not just poor children—and make early learning an absolute priority for our country.



Supporting a Passion for **ECE**

Mary Jo Grieve, Director, St. Andrews Nursery School

Though I didn't know it at the time, my work as an advocate for early childhood education started almost thirty years ago when I was working in my first childcare facility. It became official when, as a newly-certified teacher, I took my teaching oath. I made a commitment then and there to become the best teacher I could be. I also made a promise to try and inspire my colleagues to do the same. Lobbying for and leading the charge for all things vital to the development of early childhood education is inherent in my role as a teacher, colleague and mentor for children and parents. It is my ethical responsibility as an educator. Throughout my career, I have listened to a relentless voice in my head saying, "As an early childhood professional, I have to be able to do more. All children need and deserve high quality early care and education. It is my responsibility to make this happen."

Time is a frustrating concept for me. As my family will tell you, I am haunted by the feeling that I can never get enough done. My lists are never ending. All of us who work in early learning programs know that our work is all consuming. It's hard to imagine adding one more thing to the plate. I had a problem: driven and passionate about my responsibility to do more, I was lost about how to find the time and where to begin. I was paralyzed by questions like, "Where do I start?"; "Who should I talk to?"; "Do I know all the appropriate facts?"; "Am I even qualified?"

In 2011, I was fortunate to be asked to participate in the DVAEYC ECE Fellowship Cohort #3. Through this experience, my questions were answered and clarified. My time with the cohort was an amazing experience, rich with learning, greater understanding, new opportunities, and a revitalized sense of empowerment. I worked with and became inspired

by like-minded people with the same call and voice in their heads and hearts as mine. They too wanted to be catalysts for social change for children. The cohort helped me realize that change, especially societal change, will take time.

Working so closely with my cohort colleagues helped restore and boost my professional confidence. Their feedback and shared experiences helped validate my skills and confirmed that I already am a very qualified advocate and "expert" in early childhood. The cohort help me fine tune my skills. As my fellowship came to a close, I felt like an informed advocate eager to push ahead.

The cohort taught me many lessons. First and foremost, I understand more fully that advocacy is already a major part of my daily work and program. As an active member of DVAEYC since 1993, I am relentless in encouraging and pushing my co-workers forward in their own early childhood work. I lobby and urge them to become DVAEYC members, promote opportunities for conferences and workshops, and inundate them with materials and access to all the latest research in the field of early childhood education. I make the same effort to expose all of my parents to as much information as possible. I have to. Successful advocacy work is built on informing others about what is best for all.

Since my fellowship, I have fostered and developed relationships with many local politicians. As a member of a regional nursery school director group, I actively attempt to keep the whole group informed on ongoing political advocacy work at both the state and federal levels. I also joined my DVAEYC colleagues in Washington this March for the NAEYC Public Policy Forum. Our cohort has kept in touch and works hard to monitor progress and activity. We will maintain our presence in Harrisburg, not just on Action Day, but throughout the year.

Now is the time to move! I am more inspired than ever to do my part. We need to create and build a collective perspective on the importance of investing in our young children—not just poor children—and make early learning an absolute priority for our country. If our country can make high quality early care and education an accepted reality, just consider what the side effects could be: less crime, a reduction in the need for remedial education, lower poverty, higher graduation rates, and a successful economy. I hope you'll join me in this work!



Quality in Community

Naomi Pereira-Lane, Director,
Changing Lanes Learning Center

I believe you have to be true to your craft. Educating children is who I am, not what I do. I'm not in it to get rich, and I couldn't see myself doing anything else.

I've been in early childhood for quite a while. I started working in day care at the Philadelphia Naval Yard, graduated from CCP as one of the first T.E.A.C.H. graduates, then worked for many years at Chinatown Learning Center. After getting my BA and MA, I saw a need for a full-day preschool in my area in Delaware County. We opened in 2010 and are now outgrowing our space, which is licensed for 20. Being totally peanut and tree-nut free has been a draw for some families.

When I made my application to open, I put flyers in people's doors: "If a center opened up in the area, year round, full-time, aligned with PA standards, would you come?" A lot of people said they would. The programs near us are just day care and parents were looking for preschool.

When we first opened, I scheduled a trip to the fire station. Before I knew it, the whole station came to us. We blocked the street and the children were totally engaged, getting on the ladder and trying on child-sized suits. We visit to the local park and have gone all summer to the shows at the Upper Darby Summer Stage. It gives the children a little more of the culture, then we bring it back to the classroom. Our summer theme has been on travelling. The children have passports, and the theme has run through all the disciplines-- food, music, science, literacy, large and fine motor skills.

Parents rally for the trips. I think it's because we're family oriented. We sit down and eat together; grandparents come in to volunteer, or just to be there. When a parent comes in, I put a note and a thank-you in the newsletter. We take pictures of parents, and put them on the family resource board. We bring in outgrown clothes, and put them on a table for anyone who wants them. The children love cleaning up. We do mentoring, where the older children nurture and help the younger ones.

We do a lot of parent conferences, an annual tea around Mother's Day, a luncheon around Father's Day, a graduation ceremony, and a holiday program, where every child gets something from the school. We get parents engaged in fundraising in September. I network with local businesses that donate food when we have events.

I walk the parents through the whole kindergarten transition process in January, so they don't wait till the last minute. I have a list of the local school options in the area, and keep a resource book at the front desk with information about early intervention, and tips for daily transitions. I pass on information about local events in Collingdale and Aldan to the parents so they can know about things for children that are going on in the neighborhood. Our website has links with DVAEYC, NAEYC, other agencies, and allergy resources. We have a weekly newsletter and a monthly calendar. I send it electronically, but make hard copies available too. We send home reminder slip for parents to





A parent reads to the children at Changing Lanes

check the website and e-mail, and the children are a resource for reminding their parents about things as well.

I feed off what the parents ask me for. We work together, talking about where their child is now, and where they might be in the next six months. I send home a folder with activities families can do together—a scavenger hunt, or counting the number of something in their house—as a way to bridge between home and school. Parents use my knowledge of their children to reassure them that they can do challenging tasks.

More and more people are finding out about us. The children have t-shirts that have the school's name and number. Whenever I'm out in the community, in a store or market, or at a children's sports event, I always introduce myself and give out my business card. If parents call me, or if they knock, I invite them to come in. They can look at the children's educational portfolios, or at the parent testimonials I have in a binder and on the website. If a parent refers someone else, they get a tuition discount.

DVAEYC has given me so much knowledge and skills to be a better director and owner. I've been volunteering at the DVAEYC Conference since 1995, and it has always been an amazing resource on quality. That's where I found out about the creative curriculum and STARS. Peg Szczurek and Lisa Schultz helped with room layout, making designated centers. The children are more independent with the centers, and with more child-oriented supplies—more blocks, multiple copies of books, fish to care for, flowers to water—they are more engaged. We're now at STAR 2, working on STAR 3. My two teachers with college degrees are working on certification, my recent high school graduate just enrolled in her CDA, and I've just finished the Director's Credential course.

I believe you have to be true to your craft. Educating children is who I am, not what I do. I'm not in it to get rich, and I couldn't see myself doing anything else. People ask, how could you be with children all day? How could I not?



An Early Childhood Victory!

Councilwomen Blondell Reynolds-Brown, Jannie Blackwell, and Maria Quinones-Sanchez announcing increased funding for early childhood education.

In late June, the early childhood community in Philadelphia got to celebrate a sweet victory. In a City Council hearing room packed with supporters, a group of ECE advocates announced a \$500,000 grant from the City, along with an additional \$500,000 from the William Penn Foundation, to encourage the expansion of quality early childhood education in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia for Early Childhood Education (PECE), which includes parents and grandparents and leaders from Woodland Academy, KinderAcademy, DVAEYC, and Childspace, formed in March in response to the School District's announced plan to save money by privatizing 2000 Head Start slots. While the plan was to transfer the children to STAR 3 and 4 community programs, no money was allocated to prepare these programs to receive additional children. PECE also argued that, if the goal was to increase access to quality, then additional resources needed to go into quality improvement.

The City investment, managed by the PHMC, will focus first on expanding STAR 3 and 4 programs, then look to improve programs at STAR 2, with grants likely to range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The William Penn grant will focus more on professional development.

PECE worked tirelessly throughout the spring to educate people in the School District and on City Council about the importance of investing in high quality early education, and the savings that such investment will bring down the road. Emerging as strong supporters during this process were Councilwomen Blondell Reynolds Brown, Maria Quinones-Sanchez, and Jannie Blackwell, whose role on Council's Education Committee was critical.

Kudos to everyone who worked so hard in this process. Hopefully this is just a first step in City leadership speaking out about the scientific logic, the fiscal prudence, the social foresight, and the moral imperative of investing in our youngest children.

11

ELEVEN TIPS For Advocacy in Troubled Times

The following is adapted from Harriet Dichter's presentation at PAEYC's 2012 Play Conference. Ms. Dichter currently serves as the Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning in Delaware. Previously, she served as Secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and was the first Deputy Secretary for the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

1. Use your voice: you are the expert

You are an expert on how young children learn and develop as well as on the most effective strategies to reach young children. You also know the best ways to engage and empower parents (our partners).

You know the challenges of providing high quality enriching programs for young children. You have a powerful voice that can express how public programs can help you do a better job of providing this important service. Use your voice.

2. Work to protect infrastructure

Early learning programs are effective when they offer our children and parents high quality. This means that we have to make sure we are protecting the core infrastructure—for example, STARS.

Consider the essential elements to support an effective early learning system: resources for quality programs; clear standards and supports for programs to reach them; community engagement; effective assessment and accountability measures to help improve quality and inform the public about outcomes. Each of these is part of the infrastructure.

3. Create partnerships— it's all about the relationships

Consider all of the people who make an impact in a young child's life, as well as those that have political and civic power to influence policy regarding early childhood education, and develop relationships with them. Create partnerships and relationships with:

- elected officials
- your parents



- civic and corporate leaders in your community
- leaders in public and higher education
- leaders in health care, human services, law enforcement, etc.
- the press.

4. Act in the present; think about the future

Take steps to protect and grow services now, but always think about your vision for reform and systems development. Articulate that vision and use it to inform your advocacy perspective. Motivate others about why this work is so important.

5. Use data to demonstrate value.

Use data and evidence that shows that early childhood education improves outcomes and economic development. Illustrating the link between early childhood education and important social and economic outcomes like graduation rates and reduced criminal activity is vital in highlighting the value of our work for those audiences who may not see its immediate importance.

6. Use your heart

People are persuaded by both data and stories, and you have lots of stories to tell. Has your work with an autistic child encouraged her to play with her peers? Have you empowered parents to incorporate family time in to their daily schedule? Does one of your colleagues lead a phenomenal music center?

Tell your stories! By detailing your work with children and their families, you can create an emotional connection for stakeholders in early childhood. Challenge yourself to think outside the box: how can you use your heart and tell your children's stories?

7. Persist—do not give up

Many of the best elements of the Pennsylvania system have required persistent, committed advocacy. For example, getting Pre-K Counts was an all-out community effort that required many people all around the state working to secure initial funding and support. Develop your voice. You cannot get what you want in early learning unless you ask for it and are constantly working on it.

8. Encourage leadership at all levels

We are all leaders together for early childhood. While some of us have "systems" leadership roles, each of us is a leader, be it in our child care centers, religious communities, or recreational clubs. Let us not forget that, and let us always use our voices.

As a matter of professional responsibility, we must all be leaders to call out the case for public investment in early learning, the impact of it, and the next steps we need to take in our society to advance responsible public investment in our children and their futures.

9. Show and tell

Provide tours to leaders in your community. There is nothing like helping our influential leaders understand early learning by providing them with tours of your programs.

Use tours to help educate leaders so that they can see the value of early learning, what children are learning and how they are doing it, and how the public funds are used in your programs. Make sure that all elected officials who take tours have a clear message from you about what they can do to help!

10. Stay on message; stay unified

Make sure you are clear about the public policy "ask" and put that ask out there. Keep in mind that fighting over positions is fine behind closed doors, but outside, in public, the messaging must be the same.

11. Play, celebrate

Celebrate your successes, big and small!

paeyc

Pittsburgh Association for the
Education of Young Children



Membership Matters



DVAEYC membership now stands at 1901.

DVAEYC's current membership count is 1901. Thank you to the 205 members that renewed their DVAEYC membership since June 1. Welcome to our 83 new DVAEYC members:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Veronica Abdus-Shahid | Leah Esmonde | Jasmine Holiday | Tori McDaniel | Judith Sexton |
| Meredith Adams | Kathleen Farabaugh | Beatrice Holmes | Brittany McDermott | Shira Smith |
| Jillian Adler | Carla Figorski | Nicole Hughston | Lyndall Miller | Carole Smith |
| Krista Alessandrini | Jennifer Garcia | Angela James-Wesley | Jillian Morgan | Jennelle Stevenson |
| Jessica Ashmore | Theresa Gardner | Deborah Johnson | Amani Muhammad | Kish Taylor |
| Stacy Blackshear | Christan George | Jamillia Kamara | Helen Oladotun | Renee Thomson-Hohl |
| Michelle Brandt | Anna Goldberg | Tonya Kamper | Ashley Orleans | Edwina VanDuyne |
| Natalie Brewer | Natasha Goodman | Madeline Karp | Denise Orsini | Stacey Vasquez |
| Julia Brooks | Karla Gray | Ahkeseh Lahm | Edna Parker | Christy Watson |
| Shreen Carroll | Susan Griesel | Shadin Lane | Danyl Patterson | Patricia Welsh |
| Tiffany Chambers | Tracey Grill | Denise Lawson | Susan Phillips | Gladys Williams |
| Laura Cooper | Saquetta Hancock | Terry Lieberman | Kelia Plaud | Lydia Wragg |
| Sherri DeSimone | Tamara Handy | Taquanza Love-Lee | Colleen Pullman | Kimberly Wright |
| Flame DeSouza | Lucy Haney Ed. D | Angela Ludwig | Anjail Robinson | |
| Marlene DeVore | Delores Hargrove-Blair | Chelsea Mahoney | Brittney Rogers | |
| Sue Downey | Patricia Hearn | Jack Marine | Stephanie Saraulo | |
| Heather Eller | Kathy Hirsh-Pasek | Warren Martin | Beth Semple | |

HIGH SCHOOL students catch the ECE bug.

This spring, DVAEYC started exploring with the School District what it would take to increase the number of high school graduates who have mastered CDA course content and are ready to get their credential. In pursuit of this goal, a group of 25 juniors and seniors from Parkway West and Furness High Schools did summer internships in six STAR 4 programs in West Philadelphia and Center City, and plans are underway to provide them with CDA course content, as well as ongoing work experience, before they graduate. With the CDA credential rapidly becoming the entry requirement into high quality programs, this is a promising development. Staff in some of these ECE programs comment on the experience of having student interns in their classrooms over the summer:

Mary Vietz of The Caring Center notes that her Transitional Pre-K (older toddler) staff found their student intern, Tiffany, to be an extraordinary young woman. "We were very impressed by her diligence and work ethic. She is able to successfully complete multiple tasks within and out of the classroom setting. It was a pleasure having her be a part of the T.P.K team this summer."

Over the summer, Joanne Hersker, Education Coordinator at Children's Village, reported life as busy and fun as usual. "The students are enjoying themselves and the experience seems to be working well for them and the children in the classrooms. Just listening to them chatting together in the morning makes me smile (they come in before 9am and gather together in our waiting area before heading to their classrooms); what a happy, energetic, smart group of teenagers."

Teachers Jill and Lenora from Children's Village had this to say about student intern Khari Collins: "During his first week in 301 Khari approached the teachers and asked if he could teach the children songs that he had learned while working at a camp. He had the courage to take over during large group and teach the children three new songs and moves to go along with these songs. The children enjoyed this very much and welcomed Khari right into our group! He comes to our class each day to play and interact with the children and is a big help to the teachers. We will miss Mr. Khari when his time in 301 has ended."



Group Child Care Home

★★★★★ **Attains STAR 4**



Owner and director Monique Jones, assistant director Khadijah Sabir and teacher Ikeema Boykin of Lovie Lee's Stars of Tomorrow are thrilled to announce that their group child care home has just attained a STAR 4 status. After achieving STAR 3 last December, their scores were high enough that they decided to keep on going right for the gold.

They are especially proud, since group child care homes—larger than a family child care, but smaller than a center—occupy a small and often overlooked niche in the early childhood system in Pennsylvania. Serving a maximum of twelve children, they offer the intimacy of a small group while not having all the work fall on a single practitioner. Yet they often fall between the cracks in the early childhood system. Of the 7544 early childhood programs in the Delaware Valley, 6513 are centers, 866 are family-based, and only 156 are group. Lovie Lee's has the distinction of becoming the seventh STAR 4 group child care home in the five-county area, and the only one in their part of the city. Monique, Khadijah and Ikeema are passionate about providing quality education to their children, and about helping group child care homes get access to all the resources, programs and recognition that are available to the rest of the early childhood community.

Congratulations to Lovie Lee's Stars of Tomorrow! ★★★★★

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Save the Date!
DVAEYC's Annual Conference
March 21 & 22, 2014 | PA Convention Center

Take A Walk On the Wild Side
Connecting Children and Nature

Strengthen the bonds between children and nature!
This year's Conference will highlight best practices in environmental education to help promote active nature exploration and unstructured play in early childhood development.

Are We CRAZY About Our Kids?

This thirty-minute video is one of the supporting episodes to the forthcoming documentary series, *The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our Nation*.

It starts with brain science demonstrating the importance of the early years, and discusses the big economic returns on investing in high quality early care and education. It shows how Quebec is fighting unemployment and poverty with universal childcare and other family supports, and looks at a pre-school initiative in Salt Lake City that has narrowed the achievement gap.

"While US child care remains largely haphazard, unregulated, and unaffordable for most, economists are clear about the equation: Our system is paying for failure, rather than investing in success. The question is—what will we do about it? How crazy are we about our kids?"

This could be a great resource for staff and parents and early childhood advocates.
For more information: www.raisingofamerica.org.



DVAEYC champions high quality early care and education for all young children (birth-eight) in Southeastern Pennsylvania through professional development, advocacy, and public engagement.

Joanne Bursich,
President

Sharon Easterling,
Executive Director

Pamela Haines,
Connection Editor



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