January 2018

Sincerely Sandy . . .

2018! A new year!
What does it mean?
What does it mean for FLC?
New Buildings!
Challenges? Always!
New Opportunities? Yeah!
Where are we going?
Where have we been?
What are we doing?

In all honesty! This journey has been one filled with uncertainties, few absolutes, but always a passion to help families find a better way to live. To show parents what their children need and give them the tools and information to meet those needs has been our heartbeat. I wish you could feel the joy I feel when observing mothers loving their children, being patient and kind. I was not a perfect mom, none of us are and yet God gave me a heart to show others the way. I have been at this for over 15 years now and it gets better all the time. God has sent some incredible people to walk beside me and teach moms, dads, and children secrets to a better life.

Though our work with families continues to be extraordinary, our life at FLC continues to be uncertain. So what am I saying? We are facing the new year knowing there will be changes. We are embracing those changes and look forward to them. We do not have all the answers and we are not sure when we will. We are trusting and have found that a good place to rest!

In early summer after a series of events, we were notified by the county that our lease would not be renewed for the building that our Family Literacy Center occupies. The county has been gracious in supplying a building to us for the last 15 years for a cost of $10 each year. This work could not have impacted the people it has without the building that is in a near perfect place for the families we serve. We have been responsible for the upkeep of the building and though we have spent many dollars in keeping it up, it has not been enough. The roof has continued to leak. Because of the concerns with the consequence of the roof leak the building must be vacated.

We have been assured by Dougherty County School System that our programs can have space at Albany High School. This is not something that can happen overnight. Licensed childcare centers, such as ours, have many regulations to meet. Many of the regulations are expensive renovations to buildings, playgrounds, sinks, diaper changing areas. And the list goes on.

We are excited to begin a closer working relationship with our partner, Dougherty County School System as we both continue to work toward educating people in our community. We believe that our impact on families can be greater as we assist the school system in educating our very youngest citizens and their parents. So expect and watch for more news and please keep us in your prayers!

Don’t forget to join us for our Annual Laugh for Literacy
March 8, 2018
7:00pm at
Chehaw’s Creekside Education Center

Silent Auction begins at 6:00 pm
Bring your friends!

Family Literacy Connection
PO Box 1497
406 West Highland Ave.

Accomplishments:

- 85 Families with two to three children each received Christmas gifts
- 30 Parents received GED instruction or Adult Basic Education
- 47 Volunteers gave 1074 volunteer hours at the Family Literacy Center
- Parents as Teachers served 55 families with 286 home visits
- Parent Educators gave 17 assessments to pre-school children
- 46 Parenting classes with 52 hours of instruction
- Reading and Racquets after-school program served 33 children with STEAM, tennis instruction, and tutoring
- 33 Children received early childhood development classes

Literacy Lines . . .

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Parents As Teachers . . .

In Lashawnda’s words, “Hello my name is Lashawnda. I have obtained my G.E.D. and am currently obtaining my CDL license. It has been a challenge to get where I am now. I went to Albany Tech & Job Corp, but neither worked out. I was struggling to get my life on track. I was trying to gain custody of two of my children, who lOST to all the negative things that were going on in my life. I was determined to get them back. I was trying to figure out how I would complete my goals. Thankfully, I remember Ms. Suzette from FLC, who I started talking to about getting my G.E.D. She gave me a lot of information about FLC. I decided to try it out and I must say it was one of the best decision I made in my life. The staff were so nice, helpful, and patient. They helped me improve my thought process, which helped push me. I started working, while obtaining my G.E.D. I gained custody of my boys because of the great feedback received from the school and the fact that my life made a full 360°. Thanks to the guidance and advice I received from the PAT program, the home visits really help me understand a few things I didn’t understand and help me identify my goals instead of not know. My family and I really enjoy and appreciate the items that we received such as diapers, wipe, and household item. My children like the fact that they receive books, which encourages them to want to read. FLC is great with helping guide you to great resource. Overall the programs are great and very helpful.”

Donor Spotlight . . .

LifeGate Church is a faithful donor to FLC. Every month for 8 years, we have received a gift from LifeGate. Many times their donation has been exactly what was needed. Pastor Cory Wise states: “We love partnering with Family Literacy Connection because they take a holistic approach to the needs of the individuals and families they work with. Family Literacy doesn’t just help with the educational goals of their students, they teach parenting skills, self-discipline, leadership, and help to empower these young people to dream again. Family Literacy is taking a very practical approach to the mandate to make disciples, and they don’t need a church building to do it!” LifeGate’s commitment to FLC goes far beyond their donation of funds. The countless hours members have given in service projects have kept us going. Fifth Sunday Projects have been endless from building a covered structure for our playground to cutting a new door for our infant room, building rooms, landscaping, yard work, painting, computer work, electrical, AC, cleaning, organizing, tutoring, Blessing Closet items, parenting classes, marriage enrichment classes, and numerous members assisting with needs of families.

Reading and Racquets . . .

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We can’t believe it’s January! The students and staff at Reading and Racquets have been very blessed the last three months with amazing opportunities.

Every October there is a celebration called Lights on Afterschool. Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) partnered with Reading and Racquets, and Network of Trust to hold a luncheon for leaders to discuss Afterschool Programs in Albany and the significance of Lights on Afterschool. Mayor Hubbard wrote a Proclamation of Afterschool and Dylan, Terry and Marceles spoke on what they loved about Reading and Racquets.

At the end of the luncheon our students were asked if they would present Mayor Hubbard with a gift for giving her proclamation of Afterschool. Dylan’s quote about Reading and Racquets was put on the gift for Mayor Hubbard. Please see his quote in the side box. This was such an opportunity because Reading and Racquets represented all Afterschool programs in Albany.

The key to our outstanding program is our outstanding staff. We have been blessed with two new staff members Mrs. Marlina and Ms. Nefertari. We also partnered with ASU’s Work Study Program and were given three wonderful workers. We look forward to continuing this partnership next year!

Thank you to Toys for Tots and the Salvation Army, they overwhelmed us with gifts! Every year we partner with the Salvation Army and Toys for Tots to provide our families with toys for Christmas.
Adult Education

The students in the Adult Education class recently wrote an essay on how they will implement positive changes in the upcoming year based on what they learned in their leadership, customer service, and parenting classes. I am very proud of the hard work and effort these students put forth! Below are excerpts from five of the essays.

Being Intentional
“This time I am not playing, this is a whole new me. In the upcoming year, I’m going to be intentional about getting my G.E.D. going to college and starting my own business, being intentional about getting my education and making the right decisions.” – Queenesnest McNeil

Overcoming
“I am striving to drink less by staying away from those who drink. I must stay away from those negative environments. In order for me to accomplish this goal, I will create a circle of positive people who will encourage and support me as I make this major life change, which include my teacher, kickball teammates, and church members.” – Ursula Brown

Goal Setting
“There are so many things and goals that I’m still working towards, like getting my GED, a good paying job, and learning how say no to any and everything that will detour me from reaching my goals.” – Ivery Hardy

Priorities
“In the long run, I am the only one my kids are looking up to, so I have to be wise on what I do because every decision I make will affect my children.” – Ciero Ford

Child Development Center...

Welcome Ms. Hampton our new Toddler Teacher and Ms. Marlana our new Assistant Teacher to the Child Development Center! We are glad you are a part of our staff!

In October, Mrs. April’s preschool class visited the Civic Center to learn about fire safety. They even took a picture with Sparky, the Fire Dog!

This year we have seen a significant increase in our parent involvement activities. Way to go parents! The main focus of our Parent and Child Together (PACT) activities are for the parents and their children to spend time together while engaging in fun and educational activities.

During the month of November, our Parent and Child Together activity consisted of eating a delicious Thanksgiving dinner together and creating snowflakes to hang in the hallway. The hallway of the Child Development Center looked like a Winter Wonderland with their beautiful snowflakes.

In December, The PACT activity for the month consisted of creating Christmas bells and families celebrating Christmas gifts from Toys for Tots. We want to give a big shout out to Toys for Tots and the Salvation Army for providing our families with an abundance of toys! We are so grateful!

One of our wonderful parents Keyana wrote why she and her son Keyon love FLC’s CDC. Keyana wrote, “Family Literacy Connection has been wonderful to me and my family since enrolling my babies in their program! Staff members are dedicated to providing 100% customer service, cleanliness and well educated teachers with their classroom environments. With this security I have been able to obtain a stable income with their reliability to care for my children while I work and I thank the FLC family for their love and dedication.” We love our FLC families!

Volunteer Spotlight

Nefertari McDonald grew up in the Albany and Leesburg area. She said, “I believe growing up with less as I did inspired me to want to help children with similar backgrounds and experiences as myself. I saw studying psychology as a window to that.” She recently graduated with her Bachelor’s in Psychology from ASU. During her last semester in school she joined the Work Study Program and chose to work at Reading and Recess. She said, “I was extremely excited for the experience because I knew it would give me the chance to work with children, specifically children of lower economic status like I’ve always dreamed.”

Nefertari knows how much the program means to the children who are a part of it because her son previously attended. She said, “My son would come home beaming with excitement over the fun he would have in the program and the love he felt for his administrators. I feel so grateful to be apart of giving that joy to other children and I hope to work within the organization for awhile.”

Once she graduated from ASU we officially hired her to be a part of our Afterschool Staff!
The mission of Family Literacy Connection is to help disadvantaged families gain stability, self-sufficiency, and success through a cluster of educational programs that target the whole family.

FLC is in great need of books for pre-school children. Our PAT Parent Educators give the children a book at home visits. If you have new or gently used books for preschoolers or if your group could collect books for us, please contact our PAT Supervisor, Cheryl Vinson at 229-886-3719 or cherylv@familyliteracyconnection.com

A special thank you to our sponsors and partners!
Working together to make a difference!

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www.facebook.com/readingandracquets