

Miss Ruby's Kids

Helping parents to inspire a passion for learning in their children

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Madeleine Ritchie's Dedication Unfolded in ECLE

On a few precious occasions someone enters another person's life and ignites a passion, fostering a desire to grow as an individual, develop a unique skill or gift, and carry those endowments on to others. Madeleine Ritchie stands out as a woman who brings this magical way of impacting others wherever she travels.

Madeleine shares her gifts locally through the Enriching A Child's Literacy Environment (ECLE) program and Miss Ruby's Kids. After serving as a classroom teacher and later working as a principal, Madeleine resided in Salt Lake City where she met her own inspirer, Dr. Ethna Reid, who developed the research for ECLE. Madeline participated in that research and was on the U.S. Department of Education Program Effectiveness Panel that eventually validated the project. Since 1985 Madeleine has served as a consultant for the Reid Foundation training parents, teachers, and administrators in school districts across the U.S. and Jamaica to use ECLE strategies in parenting classes, preschools, kindergartens and first grades.

ECLE is an educational service that instructs parents, teachers, and other child-care providers how to model various educational activities with children aged six months to three years. These techniques promote psychomotor and cognitive development, impacting the child through positive educational experiences. Through ECLE participation care providers are taught to assist the child in developing large and small muscle coordination, oral language through sensory stimulation, print and number awareness, appreciation of literature, sensitivity to music and rhythm, and other basic concepts. On average, for every month a child remains involved in the ECLE program, the child shows more than two months of cognitive growth relative to the normative group.

When Madeleine appears in her bright blue apron and with her stopwatch, one should get ready for a fast-paced and fun-filled program! She efficiently and skillfully leads participants through an obstacle course of simple activities using common household items. From hopping like a rabbit to dancing the "Cabbage Patch," using a graham cracker to illustrate math concepts, or smelling flavorings and describing them in as many words as possible, there are hundreds of activities that stimulate the imagination. Madeleine ob-



Madeleine Ritchie demonstrates rhythm with dowels during an ECLE awareness workshop with parents of Miss Ruby's Kids.

serves the children and parents with the joy of someone who truly finds gratification in her work. She always finds a way to praise and encourage participants while guiding them through her obstacle courses; she brings to each child the gentle loving gift of educational interaction that every child needs from a caring adult.

Madeleine embodies a wonderful hybrid of the calm, caring, and compassionate Mr. Rogers and the Energizer Bunny. She involves herself not only with ECLE, but serves on the Board of Directors of Miss Ruby's Kids. Since 2005, Madeleine has also served as an educational consultant for the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation in Georgetown in addition to her continuing work with the Reid Foundation.

Graduation Wish List



Mark your calendars -

Our Friends are invited to see this year's 17 Miss Ruby's Kids "graduate" on May 17th!

You are also invited to help us fill the graduates' MRK backpacks with pencils, crayons, rulers and other supplies as they prepare to enter school in the fall. To find out how to help- call the office at 527-8560.



Front row: Suzette Wright, Charlotte Van Hoose, Suzanne “Sue” Zeddun. Back row: Ron Church, Lee Wright, Fedrick Cohens, Yorky Burnas. Not pictured, Judy Ingle.

Eight New Members Join MRK Board

Welcome to our eight new board members who joined us in January.

Yorky Burnas, a Chilean native, is well known to the local Hispanic community as Director of Hispanic Ministry for Georgetown Presbyterian.

A recent transplant, businessman **Ronald “Ron” Church** comes from Stanly County, North Carolina where he was active in a variety of community service projects. Ron will chair the Board’s Finance Committee.

Fedrick Cohens is Principal of Kensington Elementary School in Georgetown and was Georgetown First Teacher of the Year in 1999-2000 and Georgetown County Distinguished Reading Teacher in 2003. Fedrick will chair the Nominating Committee.

Judith “Judy” Ingle, a retired teacher, coordinator and principal, currently consults in literacy, curriculum development and High Schools That Work. Judy is the new Program Committee Chair.

Before retirement, **Charlotte Van Hoose** taught native Spanish-speaking students in Mexico. She now volunteers with Georgetown Presbyterian Church’s Hispanic Ministry and with Miss Ruby’s Kids Education Mentors.

A Verizon retiree, **Leviticus “Lee” Wright**, comes to Miss Ruby’s Kids from the New York City area where he served as a mentor with the Sesame Flyers Youth Development and the Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Suzette Wright uses her degree in accounting to help low-income citizens prepare income tax returns. In addition to her commitment to Miss Ruby’s Kids as an Education Mentor, Suzette volunteers with Teach My People and the local chapter of First Steps.

A career educator and elementary school principal, **Suzanne “Sue” Zeddun** moved to Georgetown where her community interests include CASA, children’s outreach for Pawleys Island Presbyterian Church, and the Pawleys Island Philanthropic Education Organization.

The talents these new members bring to the Board ensure that Miss Ruby’s Kids will continue to grow and develop its mission.

IT’S SPRING – TIME TO CELEBRATE

Two “red letter days” adorn Miss Ruby’s Kids’ spring calendar. We cordially invite *Friends* and supporters to join our families, staff, Board and volunteers at both milestones.

On **Sunday, May 17th**, Miss Ruby’s Kids will hold its *sixth* Graduation Ceremony at Greater Saint Stephens Methodist Church, Winyah Street, Georgetown. Beginning at 3 p.m., seventeen 3-year-olds will receive their “diplomas.” These children have successfully completed two years of bi-weekly visits by our Home Visitors and are well prepared and enthusiastic about entering Georgetown County’s pre-kindergarten programs.

Saturday, June 27th is *Miss Ruby Day*, a celebration of the life and legacy of Miss Ruby Forsythe, the inspiration for Miss Ruby’s Kids. *Miss Ruby Day* will begin at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church with remarks by graduates of Miss Ruby’s School. A brief ceremony in the garden dedicated to her memory, and a festive picnic for all attendees will follow.

Come join us to celebrate *Miss Ruby Day* as we honor a woman whose life greatly enriched our community and who, before her death in 1992, was named by former President George H. W. Bush as one of America’s “Thousand Points of Light.”



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Leading Children to Literacy