



Mississippi For
Progress, Inc.

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44th Annual State Training Conference

Mississippi Action For Progress, Inc. celebrated its 44th Annual State Training Conference October 13-15, 2010. It was held at the Marriott Downtown Hotel in the heart of Jackson, Mississippi. This year's theme was **"Engaging Parents, Empowering Staff, Enhancing Communities."** The conference was co-chaired by **Dr. Dot Hearon, Program Services Director** and **Dr. Peggy S. Johnson, Research/Development Director**.



Conference participants and guests arrived at the conference looking forward to gathering information that would help them on their jobs and in their everyday lives. The opening session was presided over by Dr. Johnson. She began the session by asking the question, "Who is minding the children?" Her answer was, "We are." We as an agency are minding the children and helping to prepare them for the future.

Greetings were delivered by **Ms. Holly Spivey, Director Head Start Collaboration Office – Office of the Governor, The Honorable Harvey Johnson, Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi** and **The Honorable Robert Graham, President of Hinds the County Board of Supervisors**. Ms. Spivey spoke specifically about "nurturing, protecting and teaching" the children. She also charged us to "get involved for positive change." Mayor Johnson spoke about how proud he was of the work that Mississippi Action For Progress does for the children of this state. Supervisor Graham also commended the agency on its work with the children. He ended his



greeting by saying, “Instead of saying ‘welcome,’ I want to say ‘thank you.’” He was thanking the agency for being so important in the lives of the state’s “young children.” **Dr. Dorothy S. Foster, Fiscal/Administrative Support Director** offered the Agency Welcome by letting everyone know that this conference was, “planned with you in mind.” We were to be attending motivational and educational workshops designed to be of particular benefit to all participants.

The children of **Gilliam Head Start** and **Early Head Start** provided the entertainment for this session. Their enthusiasm provided everyone in attendance a small sample of what the children of Head Start and Early Head Start are learning and doing. It was particularly enlightening. **Mr. Reginald Dancil**, guest soloist, also provided songs for the attendees. Mr. Dancil is a part of Head Start having retired from the Region IV Regional Office in Atlanta, G A . He’s now President of **Anointed Sounds, Inc.**



The keynote speaker for the Opening Session was **Mr. Jeffrey L. Fredericks**. Mr. Fredericks is the **Branch Manager of the Region IV Office of Head Start in Atlanta, GA.** In his address, he wanted to know how does MAP, Inc. go about being “The Best In The Business.” More specifically, he wanted to know how each one of us went about being the best. He raised three assumptions when aspiring to be the best.

(1) We are all a room full of adults. We should treat each other as adults and engage as such.

(2) We are to prove ourselves to be professional.

(3) We are people who want to be a part of something special.

He also spoke to us about the re-emphasis on parental involvement. Mr. Fredericks ended his address by allowing various members of the audience state why they feel they are “the best in the business.”



The end of the first day of the conference concluded with networking among guests and participants and a Body Movement and Dance seminar. After the seminar everyone was entertained by a 70’s Retro event. The highlight of this event was a 70’s dress contest to find the person who had the best outfit reminiscent of the 1970’s. This event was a lot of fun for everyone.

The second day of the conference would rightly have been called the “Day of Information.” It was filled with workshops of all sorts. A sampling of the workshops presented included the following: *Enhancing Communities; Healthy Families Equals Healthy communities*, presented by **Ms. Tiffani Grant, Lead Prevention**, presented by **Ms. Crystal Veazey, Ten Sure Ways For Increasing parent Involvement**, presented by **Mr. Columbus Copeland** and *Empowering Staff and Engaging Parents: Designing Parent Education*, presented by **Mr. Charles Thurman**. This also served as the venue for the Governance and Parent Committee orientations.

The night concluded with the **Awards & Recognition Banquet**, which is appropriately

called **The M A P Awards**. As always, the night was filled with glitz and glamour as MAP recognized the accomplishments of its parents, volunteers and staff. Live entertainment was provided by the **Dowell Taylor Quartet** and **Mr. Reginald Dancil**.

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last day of the conference began with breakfast and a little musical entertainment. **Dr. Demond L. Spann, Human Resources Director** presided over this closing session. The speaker was **Dr. Sarah M. Greene**, Vice President of **Business Initiatives Applications Link, Inc.**

Dr. Greene began her address by commending MAP on its long history of Head Start and by speaking about the national alumni event held this year in Washington, D.C. The event was touted as a reunion of sorts for former and current Head Start staff, parents, graduates and friends. She continued on by talking about how, "...no other program has remained true to it's original purpose like Project Head Start," and how Head Start's "core values remain the same today."

Dr. Greene ended her speech with these 10 thoughts for us to ponder.

- "Make sure you value every person."
- "Don't just meet to meet."
- Examine yourself carefully.
"Am I doing what I need to do?"
- "Is the answer to 3 *yes*."
- "Give a full day's work."

- "Treat everyone as you want to be treated."
- "Always express *Thank You*."
- "Think outside of the box."
- "Be the best public relations person for your agency."
- "Give God the credit."

Ms. Dorothy Robertson, a Governing Body member, performed the governance seating ceremony for new members. Ms. Robertson expressed to the members and everyone in attendance the importance of the governing bodies.

In closing the session **Dr. Dot Hearon, Program Services Director**, thanked everyone, specifically the parents, presenters, and conference committees for their time and effort. She also expressed how it was a pleasure to serve as the co-chair for the conference.

The **44th Annual State Training Conference** was commendable. We all hope it continues to be so for many years to come!

