

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

This is my first president's letter, and I'm not quite sure how to start. Honestly, I'm a little intimidated to be taking over after having Marilyn Dean lead the association for so many wonderful years. Luckily, I have wonderful board members to work with and help along the way.

It might be best to first introduce myself. My name is Carrie Kennedy, and I'm JCCCA's newly elected president. Some of you already know me-I've been a board member since 2016 serving as the Program/Education Coordinator, Public Relations Coordinator, and Website Coordinator and before that the Children's Book Review and Activity contributor for JCCCA's "Open Door" newsletter. I've been a licensed family child care home provider in Arvada since 2000. My husband Jeremy and I have been married for almost 24 years and have two sons, Aaron (21 years) and Ethan (19 years). Both will be attending college in Fort Collins this fall, and we'll officially be "empty-nesters".

JCCCA has always strived to support licensed family child care providers. The board works hard to provide educational training and programs to help providers grow as professionals, mentorship to guide members through changes, referrals to build their businesses, and support in whatever ways are needed professionally and personally. We are here to support individuals wishing to and working through the process of becoming licensed. JCCCA also reaches out to the community by helping families find a family child care program and building relationships with different community agencies and partners. When we join and work together, we are stronger.

Marilyn's tagline was "Burn Brightly But Don't Burn Out". This is such a perfect phrase for those working in the early childhood education and care field. We are always thinking of and often put the needs and care of others ahead of our own. Yet, we need to remember to take care of ourselves so we have the strength, patience, and wisdom to care for others, especially those young children who mean so much to us.

I've thought a lot about what my tagline should be as president. I've decided upon "Never Stop Learning". This is a very personal phrase for me. I've always loved to learn and have always sought out as much information and knowledge as I could. My original educational path after high school was to study to become a middle/high school English and journalism teacher. Life, however, doesn't always take us down the path we thought we would follow. My detour took me to begin a career in early childhood education. What began as a part time job, and then a way to stay at home with my children while supporting my family, has become a passion and profession for me. Along the way, I have changed my license type, had my program rated through Qualistar and then Colorado Shines, as well as earning my Associates of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. Each time, I was hesitant to take the leap, thinking that I "knew it all already", had nothing more to learn, and my program was great the way it was. I couldn't have been more wrong. With each new step, I learned something new, deeper, and grew as a professional. My learning didn't just come from books, classes, and ratings. It came from others I met along the way: instructors, classmates, coaches, other providers, parents, and the children I was caring for. Each has taught me something valuable and helped shape me as an educator.

I am looking forward to continuing the work JCCCA has done over the years and leading the association through 2020 and the future. What that future is going to look like is a mystery to all of us. We are definitely in unprecedented times. We are navigating through a world-wide health pandemic, working our way through professional and economic uncertainty, and striving for social justice and equality for all. I have to admit, some days are pretty scary not knowing what is going to happen and how we'll come out on the other side. One thing I do know though, is I have friends and family that I can count on no matter what to help support me through this. Many of these friendships have been formed during my time and participation in JCCCA. I hope that JCCCA can continue to be a system of support for all our members through this time. Please don't hesitate to reach out to a board member if you need help, a little advice, or just an ear to listen. Our board, and association, is full of some pretty amazing individuals! I have learned so much from so many of you through the years and look forward to continuing to learn and grow as a professional during our time together.

NEVER STOP LEARNING!

