

# EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Heidi Hobler, Director St. Francis of Assisi Preschool

## Take A Child Outside week

"We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust, and care for each other." Vala Afshar



In the years that I have worked at St. Francis preschool, I have often been asked to explain why I do what I do. There is a very simple answer...I get to do what I love (in working with the children), work with people that I love (in being with amazing staff), and have my faith thoroughly mixed in. That is not an easy combination to find in a career! I would even venture to say that finding all 3 in one job is nearly impossible! God has truly blessed me with not only the large collective preschool family made of the students and their own families but also with a family made of teachers and staff.

Many of the staff with whom I work have not only been working at our preschool for multiple years, but have also had their own children attend here. Several will joke that they loved preschool so much when their children were here that they never left! This is certainly true for me! My twins were here over 12 years ago and here I still am! Having teachers and staff who are so clearly vested, both personally and professionally, in our preschool program shines through in all that they do. It allows us to "Be a Light". This then not only transfers to the children and their families, but to each other as well.



While we were saddened that a few of our wonderful staff members were not able to return this year because of the pandemic, we continue to have a solid foundation in those that remain here with us. Several of our longtime staff are approaching their 10th, 15th, or 20th year anniversaries. We have seen each other through personal tragedies, triumphs, and many changes overall. Given where we work, we are lucky to be able to pray for and with each other. We regularly raise each other up through words of encouragement, hope, and faith. We celebrate each other and our collective experiences whenever possible. Whether it's through a simple note, a prayer intention, or hug (pre-COVID), we recognize the gift that we are to each other. There is not one staff member who would not jump in to lend a hand or share what they have with the other. Each day, we try to be examples of our faith in word

and action so that we are true in what we teach our children. We are a family, not by blood, but by the care, respect, and friendship that we share. When I came to school last week, I was hit with another reminder of how close we actually are when I saw that 4 of my teachers had unknowingly come to school dressed alike! You know that you are a cohesive team when you start reflecting each other's fashion choices!

Please join me in my prayers that God continues to watch over and bless these outstanding teachers. They give well over 100% each day to their students, but they also do this for each other. I very much believe that God works through them to create a loving family for our children and one another. Please also join in my prayers of thanksgiving for all that they bring to our preschool and church community!

To learn more about the wonderful opportunities that we provide, please visit our website at [www.preschoolatstfrancis.com](http://www.preschoolatstfrancis.com) or contact Shelley Freeman at: [shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org](mailto:shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org)