

Florida Educators of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals—FEHI

Summer 2011

President's Message

Greetings to all you FEHI members! Summer is now upon us, and the new school year approaching in about two months. So let me update you on what is coming up in the first part of the new school year.

Planning work is underway on the 2011 FEHI Conference. The conference will be held November 4th and 5th at the Westin in Lake Mary. Go ahead and mark it into your calendars and begin to make plans to attend! Currently, we are also looking at potential Keynote speakers and working on a schedule of events. For those of you interested in presenting at this year's conference, we will soon be calling for papers.

As soon as the conference schedule is complete, we will be posting it on the website and will be sending out an email as well. In terms of the website, sorry for the delay in getting it updated, but it should be done within the next couple of weeks.

Finally, this year is also an election year, so I hope that you will consider serving on the Board. It is a wonderful leadership opportunity that will also allow you to guide FEHI's future activities and make a difference to deaf and hard of hearing children throughout the state. Once again, more information will follow by email and on the website for those of you who are interested in serving on the Board.

I look forward to seeing you in November. I hope you have a wonderful summer and will be ready for a great start to the new school year.

Sincerely,

Nada El-Khoury

khouryfl@gmail.com

Dates to Remember:

2011 FEHI
Conference
November 4-5
Lake Mary

Nominations for
FEHI Teacher of
the Year and
Honors of the
Association:
Deadline is January
31, 2012

Applications for
FEHI Mini-Grants:
Deadline is January
31, 2012

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FEHI 2011 Conference Information

FEHI will hold its annual conference November 4-5, 2011. The theme of this year's conference is "Opening Doors—Unlocking the Potential". We are currently working on procuring a keynote speaker, and a call for papers will be going out shortly.

This year the conference will be held at
Westin Lake Mary
2974 International Parkway,
Lake Mary, FL 32746

The cost per room is \$109 (plus tax) per night and it will include breakfast. This group rate will be available until October 20 and is subject to availability.

To get more information, or to book, modify, or cancel a reservation, you can go to

<http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1104260909&key=8239D>



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FEHI Membership

FEHI BOARD
MEMBERS:

President:

Nada El-Khoury
khouryfl@gmail.com

President-Elect:

Mattie Bozzo
bozzom@stlucie.k12.fl.us

Secretary/

Treasurer:

Robin Harwell
robininjax@hotmail.com

CEES Representative:

Gail Strassel
strasselg@fsdb.k12.fl.us

Even if you are not planning to attend the conference, please remember to still renew your membership in FEHI. Benefits of FEHI membership include the FEHI newsletter; the opportunity to attend the business meeting at the conference; the opportunity to participate in elections for FEHI Board members; the opportunity to apply for mini-grants; eligibility for FEHI awards, and the opportunity to attend potential future workshops at a reduced, members-only cost. Individuals who have not remained current with their FEHI membership for a period of five years will be purged from the FEHI membership database. The membership form can be downloaded from FEHI's website, or contact Robin Harwell at robininjax@hotmail.com.

FEHI Elections

2011 is an election year for FEHI. Elections will be held during the business meeting at the FEHI conference in November. Consider nominating someone you know, or even yourself, to serve on FEHI's Board. Nominations will be taken for all Board positions except President, which is filled by the current President-Elect. (note: Secretary and Treasurer are generally considered two separate positions, and have only temporarily been combined.) The responsibilities of each Board member can be found starting on page 4 of the FEHI By-Laws which are available for download at <http://www.fehi.org/bylaws.html>. You can also contact any of the current Board members, whose contact information can be found on left of this page.

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Financial Assistance

Some of you may feel you are unable to attend the FEHI conference or other professional conferences and workshops due to financial constraints and budget cuts. There is a resource that may be of help to you. Georgia/Florida PepNet is an organization that may be able to provide stipends to help pay for individuals to attend the FEHI conference as well as other conferences or workshops they may be interested in. To learn more about these stipends, contact Katherine Bruni, PepNet's Outreach Coordinator.

Katherine J. Bruni
324 Knots Circle
Woodstock, GA 30188
404-406-8194 cell/text
770-928-6785 v/tdd
770-928-9929 fax
katherine.bruni@pepnet.org

Treasurer's Report

At the time of my treasurer's report a year ago, in July 2010, FEHI had a balance of \$16,005.75. Our expenses for the 2010 conference totaled \$9,112.52. This included \$4,828.15 for the hotel expenses, \$2,830 for interpreter services and expenses, \$225.00 for stipends to presenters, \$1,204.48 for "gifts" given to conference attendees, and \$24.48 for miscellaneous expenses. This year, FEHI gave out \$1,250 in mini-grants and awards. Expenses for the annual meeting of the Board in March totaled \$573.22, and expenses for our CEES representative to go to Tallahassee totaled \$317.28. As we start to prepare for the 2011 conference, \$780 was paid to the Westin Hotel for an initial deposit. As of June 30, 2011 FEHI has a balance of \$15,451.44. FEHI continues to maintain tax-exempt status as a non-profit organization.

Robin Harwell
Treasurer

Awards Announcements 2011

Every year, three awards are made available to the membership. These include the Teacher of the Year, Honors of the Association, and Teacher Mini-grants (two recipients). Cara Wilmot of Duval County was chosen as the FEHI Teacher of the Year. One mini-grant of \$500 was given to Angie Craft of Sarasota County and a second mini-grant was given to Ivette Perez and Mayra Sanabria of Miami-Dade County. The Honors of the Association was awarded to Kids Together Development Center in Oviedo.

FEHI 2011 Teacher of the Year

Cara Wilmot was selected as FEHI's 2011 Teacher of the Year. Cara graduated from Flagler College with her bachelor's degree in Deaf Education and Elementary Education. She received a Masters in Disability Services from the University of North Florida. Cara has been teaching in Duval County for 13 years. Her first 6 years were in an auditory oral classroom at Landmark Middle School and the last 7 years have been as an itinerant teacher. In 2009 she became the lead teacher for the itinerant program. Cara is a trainer for iTransition and enjoys teaching her colleagues how to use this program with their students. In 2009 and 2010, she organized the Florida Itinerant Roundtable Discussions. She has served as the assistant ASL sponsor at Mandarin High School. Cara has been married for 10 years to her husband, Ryan. They have two children.

FEHI 2011 Honors of the Association

Each year FEHI recognizes an individual or organization that is making positive contributions to deaf education by presenting them with the Honors of the Association Award. This year FEHI is proud to present its Honors of the Association Award to Kids Together Development Center in Oviedo. Three years ago a four-month old deaf child was enrolled at Kids Together. From the beginning Kids Together rose to the challenge and has worked closely with the little girl's family to meet her educational and developmental needs. They have worked to educate their staff as to the needs of a deaf or hard of hearing child. They have participated in her Individual Family Service plan meetings, as well as her IEP transition staffing meeting with Orange County Public Schools. They have welcomed the child's speech therapist and itinerant teacher to work with her onsite. As an organization Kids Together has exemplified an impressive commitment to this young deaf child and future students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

2011 Mini-Grant Recipients

Technology Intervention: Angie Craft is a teacher of severely handicapped deaf/hard of hearing students in Sarasota County. As DHH teachers, we are expected to teach the curriculum, redesign it as needed, and customize it to each student's needs—all with limited resources. The iPad and the apps available for it have the capacity to offer inexpensive, individualized, and engaging learning experiences to a variety of academic levels. The competition amongst app makers has resulted in a large selection that can meet the needs of a diverse population. These apps often engage students' interest longer than paper and pencil activities, and that new enthusiasm encourages students to try activities they once thought too hard or boring. Apps also allow for more consistent data collection and baseline observations of behavior and academics, recording as the student "plays." Angie is using her \$500 grant to purchase an iPad, an adaptor cable for her white board and a defender case for durability. These will be used to enable her students to take full advantage of a new improved learning system that thrives on the experiences and feedback of its students, that supports and evolves the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and that taps into the power of play.

Technology Intervention: Mayra Sanabria and Ivette Perez are both itinerant teachers who work with ESOL deaf/hard of hearing students in Miami-Dade County. Their students, like all others, love and are motivated by the use of technology. However, as itinerant teachers, Mayra and Ivette do not have the luxury of having classrooms that they can make "technologically exciting." Many of the students come from countries where technology is barely accessible, so they are fascinated by the teacher's laptop. However, its small size makes it difficult for use with groups of two or more, since the students cannot clearly see what is on the screen. Mayra and Ivette plan to use their \$500 grant to purchase a pocket projector, tabletop screen, stylus pen and touch screen. These items, which they will share, will enable the students to interact with the lessons presented to them, allow the students to share their work with others and make the process of using the laptop very simple for the younger students and those with mobility issues. In addition, they will have a lot more resources available to them. Having a picture at your fingertips can make the world of a difference in helping a student with limited language proficiency understand a new and abstract concept.

We hope the activities and materials used in both grants lead to successful outcomes. Angie, Mayra and Ivette will share their projects and results with the FEHI membership at the FEHI conference in November.

In this time of budget constraints, consider applying for a FEHI mini-grant yourself. Applications can be turned in during and after the conference. The deadline is January 31, 2012.



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Coalition for the Education of Exceptional Students (CEES)

CEES (Coalition of *Educators of Exceptional Students*), was established in 1972, and is a coalition of parent and professional organizations who share a common concern for educational opportunities for children with special needs in Florida. CEES is has more than 30 member organizations including associations for school psychologists, and organizations concerned with meeting the needs of gifted children, blind and visually with autism, etc.

FEHI is a member organization of CEES. Each year, a portion of your FEHI dues helps to pay for FEHI's membership in CEES. Each CEES member organization has a representative who attends a meeting each fall to develop the CEES platform and also attends a meeting each spring in Tallahassee during the spring legislative session. Gail Strassel serves as FEHI's representative to CEES. CEES uses its membership dues to work with a lobbyist who advocates for special education issues, advises the coalition of proposed bills and changes, and provides a link between CEES member organizations and the legislature.

For more information about proposed legislation, legislative contacts or with other concerns please contact FEHI CEES representative, Gail Strassel
strasselg@fsdb.k12.fl.us - 904-827-2257