



Spotlight on Staff

Natalie Jones Children's Enrichment Program Storyteller

Natalie Jones has delighted audiences as a professional storyteller across the South-east for over 20 years. A former park ranger, teacher and librarian, she hails from Eastern Kentucky, a great growing ground for stories. Her interactive style engages listeners of all ages. Natalie has performed at the National Storytelling Conference in Gatlinburg TN, the Jimmy Carter Library and at schools and libraries all over the state of Georgia. In 2016, she was crowned Georgia's Biggest Fibber, which is actually a compliment for a teller. In addition to telling stories for children for the Craddock Center, she regularly visits area churches and preschools. You can find her each year in October as the campfire storyteller for the Red Top Mountain State Park Halloween Hayrides. She teaches her craft in workshops for students, teachers and adults. Natalie holds an Masters in Library Science and is a Georgia Certified Media Specialist. She lives in Acworth, GA with her husband Chris and two children, Caroline, a sophomore at Georgia College and State; and Davis, a new graduate of Brevard College. In her spare time she loves water aerobics at the Northwest YMCA and enjoys Paddle boarding with her husband at Lake Allatoona.

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When it comes to the well-being of the little ones in any community, you often hear the phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child." Nothing could be a better example of that statement than the efforts so many people associated with the Craddock Center have put forth to make sure that Camp Craddock 2017 will be a success.



By the time you read this newsletter, one week of camp will have already happened with four more exciting weeks of fun to come after that. However, it's taken months of time, skill, and commitment from some of the finest people you'll ever meet to make this program happen.

When the children we serve during camp are eating a nutritious and filling meal, we'll think of Faith Presbyterian Church in Blue Ridge and the Gilmer County Schools Nutrition Department who so tirelessly coordinate the Seamless Summer program that provides many of the breakfasts and lunches our campers eat. We'll also remember the generosity of the local restaurants who so quickly stepped up to offer meals on the days Seamless Summer isn't operating.

When our mission groups return to the center to rest after a busy day of providing Camp Craddock, they'll have a comfortable living area with partitioned sleeping quarters, furniture they can sit on to relax and bond as a group, and multiple entertainment options. That wouldn't be possible without the volunteers who spent hours sewing and hanging the curtains that will partition our multipurpose building to allow the mission groups to sleep in privacy or the generous contributions of new and gently used items from various donors.

When our campers enjoy a story or proudly take home a craft they made at camp, those things were made possible by the incredible kindness of friends of the Craddock Center who heeded the call when we made a wish list for supplies.

By the end of the summer, we'll have delivered "happy and hope" to at least 150-200 children in our community. Their fond memories will include the people who came to their backyards each day with the sole purpose of bringing them joy—whether its the mission groups from Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Bruton Parish Episcopal Church, First Christian Church of Mt. Carmel, Sandy Springs Christian Church, and Colliersville Christian Church or the two college interns who are volunteering 5 weeks of their summer to be at the Craddock Center to assist with various camp-related tasks.

While I think fondly of the amazing summer that is about to happen for the children in our community thanks to this incredible "village" of people, I also begin thinking of the children I am hoping to contribute an investment in starting this fall. You see, my brief journey as Programs Coordinator for the Craddock Center is coming to an end.

Although I have loved my time at the center, I've accepted a teaching position for the upcoming school year that will allow me to work with a new group of children and hopefully create for them some of the "happy and hope" I've learned so much about at the Craddock Center.

Longtime CEP artist Connie Chancey will be stepping into my position and with her years of experience at the center, I have no doubt that our programs are going to continue getting better and better. I'm excited for my adventures to come returning to the education field, but I will always carry a piece of the Craddock Center with me. Thank you for welcoming me into this amazing "village" during my time here and for the care I know you will continue to invest in our community's children!

Amanda Riley, Programs Coordinator



“HE IS SLOW,” SHE SAID.

“He is slow,” she said. I knew what she meant; she is his teacher and knows that he lags behind his peers in the classroom and on the playground. It was evident to me, a visitor for the day. But it seemed not to be evident to him; he seemed happy to appropriate life at the pace given him. Whether he will gradually move to the pace of others as he matures, of course, I do not know.

I do know that I am also slow. Not the slowness that comes with age, although that, too. But I have always been slow. This is not a commentary on my physical condition; I have had the ability to run and jump with the best of them, but why should I? A slower pace allows me to think, to reflect, to muse, to assimilate, and to process. That I am slow is not a commentary on school performance. I found the demands of school rather easy to negotiate, allowing me time to slow down, time to savor the wisdom and skill of those who came to me in books. Why rush to finish homework in an hour when you could spend an entire evening with Shakespeare, or Milton, or Poe, or Melville, or DuBois, or Plato?

And every day I am more aware how slow I am. Everyone else is multitasking, taking advantage of the speed and immediate availability of all people and all knowledge. Even the music is fast; my ear is able to catch only a word now and then. Mind you, I am not setting you up for an argument against speed or in favor of my pace. I am comfortable in the pace given me.

However, a close friend did raise with me the question: Have you ever wondered what you could have achieved if you had quickened your pace a bit?

No. Probably even less.

Dr. Fred B. Craddock, A Taste Of Milk & Honey

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