

Decidedly DECAL

Highlighting the Events That Shape Who We Are



November 2016 - In This Issue

[By the Numbers](#)

[Important Links](#)

[Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz Winner](#)

[November Birthdays](#)

[A Day in the Life of...](#)

[DECAL Welcomes New Interns](#)

[Virtual Suggestion Box](#)

[Board of Early Care and Learning](#)

[Commissioner's Corner](#)

[Georgia Wins \\$200K National Governors Association Grant](#)

[Georgia's CACFP Program Available to Eligible and](#)

[Approved Facilities](#)

[Haker Retiring from Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office](#)

[Purcell Was First Chairman of DECAL Board](#)

[October Quality Rated Programs](#)

DECAL By the Numbers

4,961 - Licensed child care programs in Georgia

4,388 - Completed inspections for FY2017

80,564 - Children attending Georgia's Pre-K Program this school year

3,872 - Georgia's Pre-K Program classes this school year

Commissioner's Corner

by Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs

Dear DECAL Staff,

You've heard me comment repeatedly about DECAL's reputation as the "gold standard" of state agencies when it comes to customer service, fiscal integrity, and positive outcomes. But, let's face it: an organization is only as effective, as professional, as "gold" as the people who make up the organization.

So, I clearly recognize that the ONLY explanation for the department's superlative reputation is each of you, DECAL staff, who work every day to serve children and families in our state. This fall, we're taking the opportunity to recognize some staff members who YOU feel demonstrate the Spirit of DECAL in the work they do every day thereby establishing our reputation.

We were going to name four Spirit of DECAL award winners, but the competition was so close, I used my prerogative as Commissioner to recognize five winners. Following are the three who have been announced so far and some of the remarks from their nominations:

Kristen Huie, System Reform:

- Kristen exemplifies an ability to think on her feet: when a crisis arose at the ALL STAFF meetings in 2015, she immediately took charge to rectify the situation.
- She models the DECAL value of customer service, because all requests for help regardless if it comes from the Commissioner or an entry level staff member receives the



1,164 - Quality Rated programs in Georgia
24,038 - Children served by Head Start in Georgia 2015-2016
6,233 - Children currently enrolled in Blended Head Start/Georgia Pre-K

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Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz Winner

DECAL's E3Z Subsidy Contracts Specialist Tamisa Sapp is the winner of this month's Decidedly DECAL CALi Quiz. She won two tickets to The Center for Civil and Human Rights. Tamisa's name was drawn from all employees who took the quiz and scored 100.



Tamisa Sapp

To win, read this issue of Decidedly DECAL and look out for the next quiz for your chance to score some fun prizes donated by local businesses!

November Birthdays



Best wishes go out to the following DECAL employees who celebrate birthdays this month:

- 1 - Tammie Baldwin
- 1 - Alison Benson
- 1 - Connie Fisher

same courteous and diligent response.

- Kristen is always identifying new ways to add value to DECAL. She developed and implemented DECAL's first formal intern program handling recruitment, selection, and policy writing.
- Kristen doesn't seek out praise or the spotlight. Yet, she is almost always the person in the background doing the work that makes so many of us look good, and more importantly, that allows us to most effectively serve children, families, and providers.



Donna Marks, Pre-K:

- Donna's favorite phrase is, "I hope I've made a difference." When visiting programs, she is "hands-on"... rearranging classrooms, getting on the floor to demonstrate strategies to teachers, and putting paperwork together for providers.
- Donna builds relationships. It is easy to see the friendships and trust she has built with providers and teachers. Through these relationships, she makes a difference.
- Donna sees it as her obligation to help new consultants. She volunteers to go on visits with them and shares anything she thinks will help them be successful.
- Donna is the first one to take on extra duties. In 2009 when Pre-K had a goal of doing a CLASS observation in every Pre-K class in the state, she volunteered to visit classes that were not on her assigned list.
- She never complains about having to drive too much or about having too heavy of a caseload with her 119 classrooms. Her joy is sharing about individual teachers and their accomplishments or how proud she is of a "site" for the gains they have made.



Kie Davis, Information Technology:

- Kie consistently provides excellent customer service in his role as a Help Desk Specialist. No question is too difficult for him. No technical problem is too big or small.
- He is the epitome of customer service. If you were to look up the term in the dictionary, his picture would be there.
- He is always pleasant to his audience, whether over the phone or in person; and he continuously displays a smile that can even be seen remotely! Kie does it all with a smile.
- His friendly nature, cheery and positive attitude, and smiling face brighten my day whenever our paths cross.
- He continuously builds relationships with fellow employees by talking with them and acknowledging them outside of "business interactions." He always has a smile.
- Kie recently issued Pre-K consultants their upgraded smartphones... He demonstrated tremendous patience while training more than 30 consultants all of whom have different levels



- 2 - Robin Currie
- 3 - Rachel Fowler
- 4 - Rian Ringsrud
- 4 - Keturah Washington
- 6 - Leah Klatzker
- 6 - Arlene Green
- 9 - Leslie Truman
- 10 - Shannon Carroll
- 11 - Shani Drake
- 11 - Jill Vandenbos
- 13 - Colleen Covey
- 13 - Andrea McFarland
- 14 - Jessica Grant
- 14 - Christi Moore
- 15 - Shenina Broaders
- 16 - Shyreeta Hicks
- 16 - Nikiesha Neil
- 17 - George Davis
- 17 - Brenda Haynesworth
- 17 - Colette Upshaw
- 19 - Emily Grosoff
- 22 - Lisa Rambhajan
- 23 - Michael Chandler
- 25 - Valerie Blackmon
- 25 - Alva Huff
- 25 - Rita Lang
- 28 - Seydou Kompaore
- 30 - Shayla Lewis

Day in the Life of Jeannie Lippy



Jeannie is a Georgia native who was born right down the street at Piedmont Hospital. She has worked for DECAL for 8 years.

Day to day, Jeannie analyzes Pre-K data to find problems and come up with improvements. In doing this, she loves learning from her peers and sharing tips.

Jeannie Lippy She loves that her job makes it easier for teachers and simplifies their processes. She says it is truly rewarding helping teachers and children (much more rewarding than her old corporate job!).

of technical skills.

- Day in and day out Kie is pleasant and approachable and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

Thank you for nominating Kristen, Donna, and Kie...and the two remaining award winners (who will be announced at the All Staff meetings this month). Each of them deserves this special recognition; but I also know that DECAL staff includes many "Kristens, Donnas, and Kies." So, I thank each of you for your part in building the reputation we enjoy around the state.

Have a wonderful, blessed Thanksgiving holiday later this month.

Gratefully,

Georgia Wins \$200K Grant on Parents and Children Thriving Together

Georgia is among five states recently selected by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) to participate in the Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT): Two-Generation State Policy Network. Georgia will work with the other states in the network to develop and implement strategies to change systems and policies that impact two generations, parents and children. The systems/policy areas on which the network will focus include workforce development, human services, education, health, child care, and early childhood education. The other states selected to participate in the network are Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Oregon.

As part of the network, Georgia will receive technical assistance and \$200,000 to research and pilot two-generation strategies to promote the learning and development of children who receive the state's child care subsidy, while helping their parents and families become more successful caregivers and breadwinners. Governor Nathan Deal has designated DECAL as the lead agency for this project in Georgia. The Georgia Department of Economic Development - Workforce Division, Technical College System of Georgia, and University System of Georgia will also support the effort.

"A two-generation strategy aligns programs and policies for children and their parents with a goal to ultimately and permanently move the family out of poverty," said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. "Research supports that these strategies can be effective, particularly when both generations receive services simultaneously."

"Part of DECAL's focus will be connecting access to quality early learning for children with school readiness and workforce readiness supports for parents and families," added Kristin Bernhard, Deputy Commissioner for System Reform. "Through increased coordination with our state's education and workforce programs, we believe we can better support families who already benefit from our child care subsidy program. We are excited about the potential positive impacts of this model."

If Jeannie were commissioner for a day, she would implement Free Ice Cream Friday, or she would give employees their birthday off.

Outside of work, Jeannie has four kids (three at home), so her days are filled with shuttling them around to various sporting events and practices. In her free time, she loves walking on the beach, water skiing, and murder mystery novels.

Another notable thing about Jeannie is that twice a year she manages a children's consignment sale. So if you need kids' clothes, go to Jeannie!

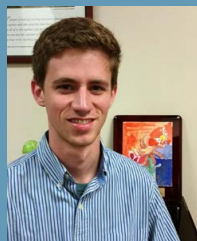
A quote that she keeps beside her desk is: "The depth of your preparation determines the magnitude of your impact."

DECAL Welcomes New Interns

This fall, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning added some helping hands to the team. DECAL welcomed four new interns to the department in late August. Kristen Huie, DECAL's system reform coordinator, organized the internship program.

Isha Barrie works as our professional learning intern; Shannon Williams works as our communications and government relations intern; and LaTanya Barber-Swift and Ryan Simmons both work as our System Reform Interns.

Each of the interns said they are excited to work with our team. They all come from a variety of backgrounds. Here's more information about each intern. Be sure to say hello if you see them around. No, they can't get you coffee!



Ryan Simmons is an undergrad student pursuing a bachelor's degree in sociology at Georgia State University. Ryan grew up in Fayetteville, but he now lives with his newly started family in Smyrna.

He said so far, he's enjoyed working at DECAL and providing support to various groups in the department.

"I wanted to intern with DECAL so that I could participate with the team that has its hands on shaping the educational experiences of the generations to come," Simmons said. He said he hasn't had a favorite project at DECAL thus far

The Parents and Children Thriving Together: Two-Generation State Policy Network is supported by grants from the Annie E. Casey, W.K. Kellogg, and Doris Duke charitable foundations

Georgia's CACFP Program Available to Eligible and Approved Facilities



Falita Flowers

DECAL is seeking eligible child and adult care facilities to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP is a federally-funded U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition program available to child care centers, adult day care centers, Head Start programs, emergency shelters and before- and after-school programs. The program reimburses approved facilities for nutritious meals and snacks served to children and adults in care.

Falita Flowers, DECAL's Director of Nutrition Services, stressed the importance of the CACFP. "The CACFP is uniquely positioned to abate childhood and senior hunger through its federally funded reimbursement program structure. Children and seniors have access to nutritious meals through approved eligible organizations that contribute to their overall health and well-being," Flowers said. "It is critical that more eligible institutions participate in the CACFP so children and adults across the state have access to healthy and well-balanced meals.

Federal income guidelines determine a participant's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals through the CACFP. Children who receive benefits through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are automatically eligible to receive free meals through the CACFP. Adults who receive SNAP benefits, FDPIR benefits, or Social Security Income (SSI) or are Medicaid participants are categorically eligible for free meals.

Approved or exempt institutions that offer a structured after-school program with educational or enrichment activities may be eligible to participate in the At-Risk Afterschool component of the CACFP. This program reimburses institutions that serve nutritious after-school snacks and/or a supper meal to children up to 18 years old in a structured environment after school hours. The after-school program must be located in a low-income area where 50% or more of the children at the nearest school receive free or reduced-price meals. Qualifying eligibility data can be found on DECAL's website at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Nutrition/EligibilityData.aspx>.

Did You Stay or Did You Go?

Hurricane Matthew skirted the Georgia coast October 7-8, 2016, causing mandatory evacuations and closing schools for a few days. School started back in Effingham County on Thursday, October 13, 2016. The hurricane is all the children were talking about so Ms. Stuckey's class at Guyton Elementary School (pictured below) charted how many children stayed home or evacuated -- a great example of following children's interests!

because all the projects have been equally important as learning opportunities.

Simmons enjoys painting, skateboarding and spending time with his family

LaTanya Barber-Swift, a former family child care provider, said she wanted to intern at DECAL because she was very impressed with the DECAL staff she encountered while she worked in the field.



LaTanya Barber-Swift

Barber-Swift is majoring in human services with a concentration in mental health prenatal through adolescence at Mercer University. Coming from a military family, she grew up in many places some of which included Hawaii, Philadelphia, Kentucky and Atlanta. She currently lives in Conyers. In her spare time, Barber-Swift said she loves traveling.

She said she really doesn't have a favorite project that she's worked on at DECAL because she likes all of them, but she noted that she's really excited about presenting her ideas on ways to recruit family child care providers into the Quality Rated program.

Isha Barrie earned a bachelor's degree in teacher education for the ages of birth through five for children with/without disabilities from Georgia State University. Barrie is currently on a break as she is pursuing her master's degree in public administration with a concentration in non-profit organizations at GSU.



Isha Barrie

She said she interned at DECAL to develop professionally in her field.

"After being in the classroom for some years, I wanted to branch out and do more for the field of early childhood education. DECAL seemed like the perfect fit, and I knew



Haker Retiring from Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office

Janice Haker is retiring from her position as Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office Director on December 31, 2016 after 12 years of service with DECAL. The position will be filled by Allison Setterlind, who has 20 years of early childhood experience.

Throughout her tenure, Haker forged many state, regional, and national partnerships that have proven beneficial to Georgia's youngest children and families. One of Janice's most recent projects targeted school attendance as a means to lasting positive child outcomes. As a result of her data collection and research, Georgia's Head Start and Early Head Start have improved their policies and practices to help families understand the importance of daily attendance for life long school readiness.



Janice Haker and Allison Setterlind

Haker is looking forward to focusing on her own projects in retirement. You may find her on the dance floor renewing her passion for west coast swing dance or in her back yard working on her Master Gardener certification. We will celebrate Janice's impending retirement on December 2, 2016 at 1:00 p.m....details to follow.

"I have been fortunate to meet many wonderful people who are passionate about causes that impact Georgia's children and families. I hope to be a lifelong friend to my colleagues here at DECAL," said Haker.

that once I became an intern I would be learning new skills to help develop myself more as a professional," Barrie said.

So far, she's enjoyed all of the projects she has worked on at DECAL, but the most exciting activity that she participated in was attending the Montessori education and Atlanta Children's Museums committee meetings with her fellow DECAL colleagues and manager.

Barrie was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa and moved to America with her family when she was five.

"When my family and I came to America, we lived in Maryland for three years then moved to Gwinnett County when I was 8. I currently still reside in Lawrenceville," she said. Shopping is one of her favorite things to do in her spare time.



Shannon Williams

Shannon Williams grew up in Marietta, but she said she's moving to Decatur soon for a change of pace. Williams graduated from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta last spring.

She said while here at DECAL, she's really enjoyed creating a video celebrating 25 years of Georgia's Pre-K Program, which she is currently still working on.

"I am putting together a few graduates' stories who attended Georgia Pre-K and graduated with the HOPE scholarship," Williams said. "I'm really excited to see real evidence of how starting off your education with Georgia Pre-K can make a difference."

Williams, who attended Georgia Pre-K herself, said she wanted to intern at DECAL because she took a class on food politics and rhetoric and was amazed that in a big city like Atlanta, there were children and families who had little access to food without assistance.

"When I learned about DECAL's summer food program, I knew I wanted to be part of that team," she said.

Williams' favorite thing to do is hike. "Atlanta has a lot of great trails within an hour of the city and I also love hiking a trail whenever I travel to a new place," she said.

Let Us Hear

Setterlind, meanwhile, previously served as a Head Start Technical Assistant Manager. She spent more than 12 years working on behalf of Head Start and Early head Start grantees within the Region IV Office of Head Start Training & Technical Assistance Network. She served as Georgia's Head Start Technical Manager and Infant Toddler Lead for six years, partnering closely with the Head Start Collaboration Office and DECAL.

The Head Start Collaboration, housed here at DECAL, is the link between federally funded Head Start programs and organizations that serve young children and their families. The Collaboration Office is the backbone to the Office of Head Start, state agencies, and local entities, because it provides a structure and formal process to help each organization achieve our common interests. Through the Collaboration's partnerships, the Office fosters: state policies and plans that affect preschool children and families, initiatives on behalf of children and families, and a service delivery system. Additionally, it encourages the community to get involved. This way, we ensure that every child has access to an equal level of care and education.

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year:

- 27,409 children had health insurance at the end of the year
- 2,288 children with disabilities were served
- 749 homeless children were served
- 472 foster children were served

Setterlind said: "Janice Haker has been a visionary, a mentor, and an advocate for the important work DECAL and Head Start have partnered on for children and families. I am thrilled to join the DECAL team and honored to continue Janice's legacy on behalf of our Head Start programs in Georgia."

Purcell Was First Chair of DECAL Board

Dr. Luann L. Purcell has served on the Board of Early Care and Learning since its inception in 2006. In her professional life, Dr. Purcell serves as Executive Director of the internationally known Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc. (CASE), a division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). In the last 14 years, she has keynoted and led sessions in over 46 states and four foreign countries on various educational issues and the development of proactive leadership skills in times of change.

"Working with and getting to know the four DECAL commissioners has been a highlight of my career," said Dr. Purcell. "All of the Commissioners have been truly amazing public servants who have had the children and families of Georgia at the core of their mission."

Dr. Purcell has had a variety of experiences throughout her 43 years in public education including experience as a general education teacher at both high school and middle school level, teacher of students with emotional and behavioral disorders, coordinator at a regional educational service center, and assistant



Dr. Luann L. Purcell

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Board of Early Care and Learning

*Supporting and guiding the mission and vision of Bright
from the Start:*

Board of Early Care and Learning

Kay Ford, Midway
First Congressional District
(Secretary)

Susan Harper, Albany
Second Congressional District
(Vice Chair)

Kathy Howell, Carrollton
Third Congressional District

Phil Davis, Stone Mountain
Fourth Congressional District

superintendent for pupil services for 18 years in a local district with 27,000 students. Dr. Purcell received her Doctorate from the University of Georgia. She has received many awards at the local, state, and national level.

Dr. Purcell said, "One of the most rewarding parts of my very long tenure was having the honor of being the first chair of the founding board for DECAL. It was a historic moment of combining three state departments into one cohesive and functioning department, all for the benefit of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens."

Dr. Purcell is married to Douglas Purcell. They have two grown sons and six grandchildren. The Purcells will welcome a new addition to the family this month in a Boston Bull Terrier puppy.

 Congratulations to the newest
QUALITY RATED child care programs!

Patricia P. Ellis, Hinesville ★★

Garden Lakes Baptist Preschool, Rome★

Monumental Developmental Center, Albany ★

Prince of Peace Preschool, Martinez ★★

PCA Head Start - Lawrenceville, Tucker ★★

Appleton Early Learning Center, Atlanta★

Maria L. Jones, Hinesville★

New Life Learning Center, Colquitt★★

Asia D. Bacon, Ludowici★

Dean Rusk YMCA Head Start Academy, Atlanta★

Nicole R. Wong, Richmond Hill★★

Letitia L. Johnson, Brunswick★★

Tina's Tiny Tots, Camilla★

Happy Sprouts Academy, Columbus★★

The Faces of DECAL

DECAL faces featured in the banner of this issue are (L-R) Amy Hill, Cresia Jackson, Meghan Pendergast, Jessie Bruno, Glen Clardy, Janette Duke, and Rosalind Morris.

Contributing to this issue were Mark Waits, Danielle Williams, and Shannon Williams.

Carlene Talton, Decatur
Fifth Congressional District

Dawn Henderson, Marietta
Sixth Congressional District

Vacant
Seventh Congressional District

Luann Purcell, Ed.D., Warner Robins
Eighth Congressional District

Sheri Hooper, Gainesville
Ninth Congressional District

Janice Gallimore, Greensboro
Tenth Congressional District

Victor Morgan, Cartersville
Eleventh Congressional District
(Chair)

Jerri Kropp, Statesboro
Twelfth Congressional District

Melissa Boekhaus, MD., Mableton
Thirteenth Congressional District

Tangela Johnson, Cohutta
Fourteenth Congressional District

