



Nurturing the Young Child 2014 Conference Presenter Biographies

Mary Burt has practiced yoga for 25 years and taught Restorative yoga for five. An accident in 2008 turned her into an avid meditator and teacher in training of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program. Mindfulness allows her to manage chronic pain, physical limitations and PTSD. She enjoys teaching these easy skills to make life better for all. Her day job is coordinating the Pyramid Model Program for Gunnison and Hinsdale counties, this program promotes social emotional competence and inclusiveness in Early Childhood settings.

Kari Commerford, MA is currently in her 9th year as a lecturer of Psychology at Western State Colorado University. She has been presenting psychological information about adolescent growth and development for GCSAPP for the last 6 years. She enjoys working with the community and providing educational opportunities for students, parents, and organizations. She is the proud mother of three little girls, 4, 5, and 7 - She loves working with and teaching about children.

Kirsten Frazee has a BA in sociology/anthropology from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. from 1995. She completed her grades class teacher training for Waldorf education (a 2 year full time program) at Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, CA. in 2007 and has worked on organic vegetable farms from 1997 – 2004. Between 2007 and 2011, Kirsten taught grades 1-4 in the Carbondale Waldorf School. For the 2013-14 school year, Kirsten was the Farm to School program coordinator for Mountain Roots Food Project. While in this role she designed and taught lessons in grades 1-5 and coordinated a new preschool snack program (which incorporated a related lesson with the snack). Kirsten is a local resident with a 3-year old son who attends Playful Seasons preschool.

Holly Harmon, MA a single mama to her three-year-old son, and lifelong lover of learning is a graduate of University of Colorado Denver's Masters Program in Educational Psychology, specializing in human learning and development, Reggio Emilia and Constructivist approaches to learning. Holly has also completed her doula training through YoMamaYoga in Boulder, Colorado. She brings more than ten years of experience working in diverse settings with infants through elementary aged children and their families to her work with children, families, caregivers and educators. Her passion is advocacy through education, preconception through early childhood. She believes in informed consent, intuition, and instinct, the power of observation and above all the capabilities and competencies of our youngest citizens.

Kimberly McNamara, MLS has spent over 12 years teaching in early childhood settings. She has a BS in Sociology, taken multiple classes from CU in early childhood education and received her Masters Degree in Library Science from San Jose University with a focus on Youth Services. She has been the Youth and Family Services Librarian at the Gunnison Public Library for over 9 years and teaches Children's Yoga at the Sanctuary in Gunnison. She also has two sons who are her greatest teachers!

Carie Mitchell, is a certified Pyramid Plus Coach for the Gunnison Valley and also a lead preschool teacher at Stepping Stones Children Center. She has been working in early childhood for 10 years. She started teaching preschool in Taipei, Taiwan. After three years, she returned back to the US and received her Post BA and teaching license in Elementary Education from Western State Colorado University. After student teaching and working as an Educational Assistant at the Crested Butte Community School, Carie found her true passion in early childhood at Stepping Stones. She has been a part of the Pyramid Plus Leadership Team and helped in implementing the model in the Gunnison Valley for the last 4 years.

Jane Moloney, MA, ECSE is the Child Find Coordinator and Early Childhood Special Education teacher with the Gunnison School District. She is a certified Pyramid Plus trainer as well. Originally from the Washington DC area, Jane & her family have lived in Gunnison for 20 years. Her career in Early Childhood Special Education has spanned more than 30 years.

Brenda Ryan, RN, has over 25 years in Pediatric Nursing experience. The past 5 years, she has been employed by Gunnison County Public Health. Her primary responsibilities are with the Immunization 3 Program, she also works in Child Care Consulting and Health care Coordination for children with special health care needs.

Phillip Virden has been an educator for over 40 years. He has been a teacher with Teach for America, taught in Kenya, and worked as a teacher's aide, special education aide, substitute teacher, school board Director and President, State School Board Director and President and an Accountability Committee Chairman. His is a long-time advocate for early childhood education. He is the proud father of 2 successful young women ages 22 and 26.

Dr. Linda Williams is the parent of 4 successful children ranging in ages from 27 to 37. She has been married for 40 years and resides in the mountain community of Gunnison, Colorado. Dr. Williams is an academic and behavioral interventionist in the Gunnison School District. She has extensive training in child development, parenting, parent/teacher partnerships and teacher training. Presenter and consultant, Dr. Williams can be heard locally on "Families of Faith" (KJJ 98.3) and viewed on Paragon Television (Channel 12.2) 'Family Moments'.

