

Now that 2017 is over, it's time to kick 2018 into gear. *"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."* - Francis of Assisi

In January many of us reassessed our busy lives and thought about what we want to accomplish or do to balance our lives during the next year. With that in mind we have some New Year ideas for you!

First, if you haven't registered for the IHSA Annual Conference and Parent Leadership Institute you need too! Have you heard? We have Nefertiti Bruce Poyner as our opening keynote speaker! Nefertiti uses humor, personal stories and a spirit of enthusiastic optimism to help others "build their bounce." She is co-author of the Teacher's Choice Award Winning resource, Socially Strong, Emotionally Secure: 50 Activities to Promote Resilience in Young Children and Building Your Bounce: Simple Strategies for a Resilient You, designed to help caregivers build their own resilience.

Then to top it off, we have Stacy Bess as our closing speaker. Stacey is an award-winning educator with great insight into the hearts of children in need. She believes that the way to most effectively teach children any subject is to treat them with love and kindness. Audiences around the nation have discovered the treasure of Stacey Bess and the magic she works with children. You will find everything you want and need, including national speakers, experts in your area, the Office of Head Start, and leave energized and ready to accomplish your 2018 goals! Go to the IHSA website to register and find more information at www.ilheadstart.org.

Second, join your other colleagues on Hum Hub. Hum Hub keeps you connected to your peers. This is a special place to share your thoughts, share resources, ask the challenging question and receive the ongoing support in a small, networked community. Contact Michelle Iocca at miocca@ilheadstart.org to join.

Third, join us for the 3rd Annual Vanessa Rich Leadership Experience, July 11th and 12th. This leadership experience will enable you to get in touch with the important aspects of yourself as a leader...and to learn to be the voice of those without a voice. This opportunity will be held at Starved Rock Lodge in Utica, Illinois. A beautiful, retreat atmosphere, where you can enjoy your journey. Watch for more information coming on this soon!

Now, what to pay attention to in 2018!

1. The **federal budget** is still in turmoil. On February 8th the third short term FY18 Continuing Resolution will expire. I am not sure if Congress will have the major issues worked out by then, such as immigration and raising the budget caps. The work on the FY19 budget is to begin in February and we haven't resolved the FY18 budget.
2. Keep tuned in to those who have experienced the **new federal monitoring system**. What lessons can you learn from those who have gone through the new Aligned Monitoring System? The new format includes changes to the actual monitoring report too. Let's make sure we are involved with the movement by OHS to redefine how CLASS is utilized in the DRS. We have been submitting comments to NHSA on the proposed changes. Once final comments have been vetted across the country we will all have a chance to sign on to the NHSA Letter. This will give us a solid, unified voice. But we will have one more chance to provide feedback through the Notice of Proposed Rule Making process.
3. Look for changes to the data collected in the **Program Information Report (PIR)**.
4. Watch for **growth in ISBE's PFA, PFAE and PI programs!** In February IHSA will release a White Paper on the Impact of Federal and State Policy on Serving Three's and Four's. We see this as a conversation starter across our communities.
5. Be diligent on **using data to inform continuous quality improvement**. This is the future of our "data tours" and having a deeper understanding of our impact on children, families and communities. Have you joined the IHSA Data Services Project? If you are looking for ways to support cross analysis of data in multiple software systems then look no further. We have this figured out and are currently supporting programs. To join contact Lauri Morrison-Frichtl at lfrichtl@ilheadstart.org.

Wishing each of you a wonderful 2018! Please let us know at the IHSA how we can better support you in whatever your role is with Head Start/Early Head Start. Remember - *"We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."* - Walt Disney