



Over 40 years of caring for God's children each step as they grow.

December 11, 2018

Dear Trinity Friends,

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I reflect on nearly a decade spent at Stepping Stones. Oh, the fun we have had! However, it is with mixed emotions that I announce I will be stepping down as the Director of Stepping Stones at the end of this academic school year. The past nine years with the Trinity faith community have been the most satisfying of my career.

In addition to day-to-day joys of being with children and a faith-based work environment, my time with Trinity United Methodist Church has been punctuated by three major goals. My first priority was to blend two schools, Stepping Stones and Our Day, into one united ministry. The second was to add an after-school program to serve the needs of working parents. We created "Enrichment" and introduced a successful, progressive look for children enrolled in our extended day. The third goal was to change the school calendar to follow Alachua County more closely to allow for easier scheduling and integrate more deeply into our local community. Finally, the defining purpose of my career has been to underscore that early childhood education is about much more than day care. With my excellent team, we have implemented a validated, age-appropriate curriculum that equips our students for school while teaching them valuable life skills such as empathy, cooperation and faith.

On a personal note, I came to Trinity at a time of personal grief, and I found an extended family and loving community to help me heal and find new hope. By shifting my focus, I was able to move past what I was missing in life to those blessings that God had lavished on me. Our vibrant, engaging children, families, and congregation helped me turn to the next chapter in my life; and I will be forever grateful.

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I feel nothing but hope for the future as I transfer the stewardship of Stepping Stones to McCall Griggs, our current Assistant Director. McCall is the total package – brilliant, thoughtful, caring and beyond. I am certain that with her leadership, Stepping Stones will continue to perpetuate the care and standards our community has come to love and expect! Please join me in offering her encouragement on her new endeavors.

While I look forward to enjoying retirement, I will truly miss this ministry, my colleagues, and all our wonderful families. I have appreciated the support from the Trinity community and will always speak fondly of this wonderful ministry and continue my “cheerleader role” from the sidelines. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1.

In His Service,
Jan Banks