



An Organization That Changed My Life

By Midge Simpson, Preschool and Early Childhood Representative

Nazarene Educators Worldwide! What is that? It is an organization that changed my life!

I first learned about a Nazarene group that helped people who worked in a Nazarene preschool in 1994, and the group was called Nazarene International Education Association (NIEA). My pastor at Greenville, South Carolina, First Church of the Nazarene asked me to start a preschool. He heard about a Nazarene organization that encouraged Nazarene preschools and childcare facilities. I wanted to be a good director of my preschool, so I joined NIEA. That was the beginning of a long and wonderful relationship.

I was asked to serve on the NIEA Council. This group supported Nazarene preschool facilities and some Nazarene elementary and high schools. I loved serving on the council. We met once a year to plan activities for the coming year, including a yearly meeting at one of the Nazarene colleges. The council appointed me to lead the council in planning a yearly conference at Trevecca Nazarene College (now University). It was hard work, but the council helped a lot. It was successful. Each summer, I looked forward to the yearly conference. One year, the Nazarene schools in Hawaii hosted the conference. That was a lot of fun!

I was able to travel overseas on some work and education trips. The organization sponsored overseas trips to Belize and to Nairobi, Kenya. The team visited the Nazarene schools and

brought them school supplies and teaching aids. I will never forget the children and teachers we met. We were able to conduct workshops for the teachers.

As a council member representing early childhood, I had opportunities to answer questions from preschool directors and pastors who had questions about starting or maintaining a preschool in their respective churches. I shared samples of my center's handbooks for parents and for staff, as well as other materials that would help a new director. I was ready to answer calls from pastors or directors.

I also conducted workshops in my local area, on the district level, and at special events like the quadrennial General Assemblies. And, I wrote articles for the monthly newsletters.

I learned so much from talking with other directors, and we shared experiences—good and bad. It has been a good experience to serve on the council. The organization's name was changed to Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW)—expanding our focus to other educators outside of Nazarene schools. We now have council representatives from public schools, homeschools, Christian schools, colleges/universities, preschool and early childhood learning centers, and global Nazarene schools. It has been a joy for me to work with people from all of these areas.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity and ability to serve my local church, district, region, and world through Nazarene Educators Worldwide. Formerly, my main focus was on Greenville's Sonshine Learning Center in Greenville, South Carolina. Now God has changed my vision to focus on Nazarene schools around the world. It has been a joy to serve with chairpersons and council members. I recommend highly being part of NEW.

Midge Simpson lives in Greenville, South Carolina. She is retired from the early childhood center, but she continues to help those who direct and/or work in early childhood centers and preschools. You may contact Midge at midgesimpson5@gmail.com.