



A trip to the White House and a meeting with President Obama were among the perks of induction into the National Teachers Hall of Fame for Jennifer de Grassi Williams

Which is more important—the destination or the journey? For Jennifer de Grassi Williams, becoming the first Idaho teacher to be inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame was an amazing honor and in some ways the culmination of an amazing career as a professional educator. But if the Hall of Fame represents a destination, Williams is adamant about viewing it through the lens of the journey that got her there—a journey that didn't stop when she "retired" and isn't likely to taper off anytime soon.

Since arriving in Idaho in 1972, Williams has utilized her passion for art and her knack for sharing to impact the lives of countless young people. First at Mountain Home High School, then at Skyview High School in Nampa, and whenever and wherever else there has been an opportunity, she has connected with students through art education. Williams' signature art education program, Project Van Go, recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. She spent many years helping the next generations of teachers as an adjunct professor at Boise State University, and still mentors early career educators through a variety of outlets, including her longtime membership in the IEA.

"It was awesome and humbling," she said of the induction ceremony, which took place in

Jennifer de Grassi Williams: "It's My Life's Work"

National Teachers Hall of Fame Welcomes First Idahoan

June at the National Teachers Hall of Fame headquarters in Emporia, Kansas. "I was lucky to be the one who got to represent all of us who do this. As I was standing there I thought of my own teachers, my colleagues, my friends and family, and all of the people who have fed into my soul."

Williams' Hall of Fame recognition also came with a visit to Washington, D.C., where she and the other four inductees toured the White House and met with President Obama, along with spending time at the Department of Education and the NEA home office. She took advantage of those opportunities to pass along a message from teachers in Idaho and around the country. "It's about the ownership piece," she told education policy-makers. "Give teachers the freedom they crave about what to teach and how to present it. When I was in the classroom the teachers were the experts—that is something that is hard to explain to today's teachers."

The IEA's like-minded position on education advocacy has made it easy for Williams to be involved with the Association's mission. "I have always seen the IEA jump in with support for members," she says. While the IEA can lead the way in activism on behalf of public education, at the end of the day it is up to each and every teacher to share their voice, according to Williams. "You have to stand up and fight for your classroom and for your school," she says.

We hear a lot about innovation in education these days, but Williams combined outside-the-box thinking with inspiration and determination in starting Project Van Go in 1976. She procured a van and took art supplies and Mountain Home High School students to the small, rural town of Prairie, which only had kindergarten through eighth grade in a little red schoolhouse and had limited resources. "It really took on a beautiful, wonderful life

of its own," Williams says. She has picked up many of the expenses herself in order to keep the program on course during its 40 year run, expanding it to other rural communities, including Atlanta, Pine, and Three Creek.

Williams has also penned a series of children's books, chronicling the adventures of her family and focusing on her passion for pets and animal advocacy. Her books are available online and at the River City Coffee Shop on State Street in Boise. She officially retired from day to day classroom work 10 years ago.

Jennifer de Grassi Williams didn't set out to be an art teacher, not even taking an art class until her junior year of college. But she found her calling and has enjoyed the incredible journey that now includes the distinction of being the first teacher from Idaho inducted into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. "This experience just tells me that I have more work yet to do," she says. "I stand on the huge shoulders of so many Idaho teachers and I know that I can't disappoint them." No worries there, Jennifer—all educators salute and celebrate your amazing contributions.

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Robin Nettinga Retiring from the IEA

Backbone of the Association Through Good Times and Bad

The impact that Robin Nettinga has had on the Idaho Education Association, its professional educator members and students throughout Idaho cannot be overstated. We all owe her a huge debt of gratitude for the dedication, distinction and passion with which she has served during her career. I personally extend to Robin a profound thank you for everything she has done as my partner in leading the IEA. We are so much richer for having had Robin in our lives, and wish her the very best in her retirement.

--Penni Cyr, IEA President

IEA members:

It is time. When I joined the IEA staff in 2001, I could not have contemplated uttering those three words. But, I once read that you never really leave a place or person you love. Part of them you take with you, leaving a part of yourself behind. This perfectly expresses how I feel as I pen this open letter to you announcing my intent to retire from the IEA effective January 2017.

Author Willa Cather once wrote, "There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm." I have learned a great deal over my years with the IEA, and certainly in the past eight years—during both turbulent and tranquil times.

When I became the executive director in August 2008, we could not have predicted that we would soon be navigating our way through the worst economic disaster our nation had faced since the Great Depression.

We could not have predicted that the outcome of the 2010 elections would signal a years-long, vociferous attack on the union

movement across the country, even in the some of the most stalwart union states.

Nor could we have predicted that Idaho would find itself caught in the maelstrom.

We could not have predicted that we would spend nearly two years fighting what sometimes felt like insurmountable odds to save our students, our communities, our profession and our union from these vile attacks. At the time, we could not have forecast the thousands of Idaho parents and teachers who would step forward to help.

Nor could we have predicted that with their help we would make state history by overturning some of the most damaging laws educators and our union have ever faced. Our political victory was not the "happily ever after" ending of fairy tales; but, that feat gave us confidence that we could successfully win those contests that were sure to arise in the future.

What I admire most about the IEA is that we are much like the reed in Aesop's fable that bends to the force of the wind. Once the

storm has passed, the reed stands strong again. We've done so since 1892, and I have every confidence that the IEA will continue to grow and thrive for the next 125 years... and beyond.

Thank you for entrusting me with the management of our beloved organization. I am proud to have been a part of our many victories and accomplishments over the course of my career.

If I could create the perfect ending to my time with the IEA, we would have had fewer struggles and greater and more frequent successes. But, I know our most difficult challenges taught us important lessons that will serve to make a stronger, more resilient organization.

I am blessed to have had the abundance of opportunities to meet and learn from some of the most amazing educators in the country. I am gratified for the chances I've had to work side by side with you to improve the teaching profession and our association.

My association family is made up of the most inspiring and committed people I will ever meet. I leave my service with a heart overflowing with admiration and the deepest respect for you. I rejoice in the many friendships I've made and I await with anticipation the next chapter in IEA's history.

Robin Nettinga, IEA Executive Director

Have feedback on the **IEA REPORTER** or a story idea for a future issue?

Need to change your address or sign up to get the **IEA REPORTER** mailed to you? Contact us at editor@idahoea.org.

If you happen to be in or around Boise's Shadow Hills Elementary School, don't be surprised if you see teachers walking in place, parking in the back of the school lot, or doing laps around the school. This flurry of perpetual motion is part of a simple, yet extremely important plan for helping teachers take control of their health and well-being.

Brandy Carstensen and Shannon Cullen are two of the most notable advocates of an increased emphasis on fitness, nutrition and health. In Carstensen's case, more exercise and a healthier diet have made a dramatic difference—she has lost more than 90 pounds and has seen her energy level and attitude both perk up.

"I have two boys at home and I realized that in order to take care of them, I had to take care of myself," Carstensen says. So she started to become more active, but in a manageable manner. Swimming laps in the pool was one way. Purchasing an elliptical machine for her house with a gift certificate she won through the Boise School District's wellness plan was another. A Fitbit® to monitor her activity was a big help. And bonding with other teachers at Shadow Hills to encourage each other to find opportunities for exercise during the school day made a significant difference.

"I am so very proud of Brandy," Cullen says. "She has been a great motivator and we are



Shannon Cullen (left) and Brandy Carstensen stay very active—in and out of their classrooms at Shadow Hills Elementary School

Just Keep Moving

Activity Jump-starts Better Health for Shadow Hills Teachers

all learning from her. Partly because of the example set by Carstensen, several other teachers now join in on walks around school grounds—made a little easier by the fact that Shadow Hills is a "late start" school with the tardy bell ringing at 9:10 AM. The school also has a health committee geared toward nutrition and fitness for students, which spills over and makes it easier for staff to prioritize their own health.

The Shadow Hills crew also makes use of technology in their pursuit of better health. Fitbits and similar devices that track activity during the day help them meet their daily goals. "If I see that I am not on pace, I will start walking around the classroom during a lesson or find another way to catch up," says Carstensen. "A little bit of something

is better than nothing" is an important mantra.

Better Diet Makes a Big Difference

Pairing exercise with improved eating habits is the real key to better health for these teachers. "I now look at food as fuel for my body," Carstensen says. "50-70 percent of my diet is fruits and vegetables, and I try to make most of my meals over the weekend so that I have them ready to go in Tupperware® during the school day." Planning meals ahead of time and then shopping accordingly is also part of the strategy. Healthy recipes can be found in many places

online, including Pinterest and Facebook.

"The key is moderation," notes Cullen. "Look at the portions if you are eating out at a restaurant, and plan to take more home as leftovers." Starting the day off right is another one of her tactics. "Eat a good breakfast, a bigger meal at lunch, and then eat small meals or healthy snacks at night," she says.

The staff room at school is also a great source of inspiration, support and ideas. "I highly encourage teachers to get out of their rooms and sit in the staff room for lunch," says Cullen. "We have a lot of discussion about who eats what and the collaboration about diet and exercise helps all of us."

Fitness and Health: Tips for Teachers (and Everyone Else)

- Start slow and simple. If you are just getting started on changing your health habits, ease into it. Begin with short walks, a quick workout at a gym, a bike ride, or whatever activity you choose. Make gradual changes in your diet, replacing unhealthy foods with vegetables, fruit and protein-rich choices.
- Everything in moderation. You don't have to deny yourself the foods you really like—just eat less of them.
- Drink lots of water. Good old H₂O helps hydrate and keeps you from feeling as hungry. Replace soda with water whenever you can.
- Shop the perimeter. At the grocery store, produce, meats and dairy tend to be in the outer aisles.
- Substitute whole grains. White bread, white rice and similar products are full of preservatives and have very little nutritional value. Try whole wheat or multi-grain versions instead. Quinoa is a great substitute for rice.
- Think leftovers. When eating at a restaurant, plan ahead of time to take some of your food home for leftovers.
- Just keep moving. You don't have to train for a triathlon—walk whenever you can, take the stairs, go for a bike ride with your family, find simple exercises you can do at home or work. It all adds up in the end to a healthier you.

Financial Decisions Looming?

Whether you are a member just starting out in the public school profession, or you have been around for years and years, everyone is faced with decisions from time to time that have an impact on your financial well-being. Because you are a member of the NEA and IEA you can take advantage of the benefits provided by your organization to help you make those financial decisions wisely.

- Thinking of buying or selling a house? The IEA Member Benefit **Giving to Teach** can save you money on your realtor commission (even thousands of dollars).
- Thinking of buying a used or new car? The NEA Member Benefit, **NEA Auto Buying Program** can save you thousands of dollars.
- Need to insure your car and/or house (or an apartment)? The NEA Member Benefit, **NEA Auto and Home Insurance Program** with California Casualty can make you a great deal. This benefit is used by 25% of IEA members!
- Want to earn better interest on your savings from what you get at the corner bank? The **NEA Savings Program** is for you. Up to five times the interest on regular savings, money markets, and Certificates of Deposit from those offered by national savings institutions.
- Need a new refrigerator, dishwasher, range, or microwave? Check out the **NEA GE Appliance Store**. Major discounts and free shipping await.
- Want to save money on auto service, hotels, electronics, dining, entertainment, travel, cruises, movies, recreational activities, ski holidays, golf, etc.? You can with **NEA Click and Save** and the **IEA Educator Discount Program**.
- Going on vacation and want to save money at Las Vegas shows, national theme parks, California attractions, etc.? Then the IEA benefit **TicketsatWork.com** is for you.
- Need to rent a car? The **NEA Rental Car Program** is worth investigating. Hertz, Alamo, Enterprise, National, and Dollar all participate. IEA's Director of Member Benefits paid a total of only \$141 with this benefit for an eight-day rental in Hawaii!
- Do you need the advice of or service of an attorney? The **IEA Attorney Referral Program** can save you 30% on attorney fees.
- Professional services and discounts on professional needs with **NEA Member Benefits**.

Details on these and other benefits are available where?

NEA Member Benefits – 1-800-637-4636, neamb.com

IEA Member Benefits – 344-8336, 1-800-223-6583, idahoea.org > members > member benefits.

Call or go online and take advantage of IEA/NEA Member Benefits today!

Tools of the Trade: The Four Necessities of Learning

Classroom management is one of the first classes taught in the College of Education, and it is a constant source of professional development. Rightly so, for students are rarely disobedient if they are actively engaged in learning. Teachers must also be actively engaged in their schools and with their students.

In the classroom, teachers act much like conductors leading a symphony, directing students seamlessly from one activity to the next. Good routines and structure make these transitions possible. By setting expectations on the first day and maintaining those expectations, teachers are able to create classroom routines that move students from independent learning to whole group activities to play opportunities with minimal disruption. There are many moving parts in a classroom, as there are in a beautiful piece of music, that require different levels of attention, from monitoring to direct intervention.

New and experienced teachers who focus on the Four Necessities of Learning as outlined below find greater success in leading the symphony of their classroom. These Four Necessities of Learning will give you a broad support base and many tools to use as you make music with your students.

Reading:

Read everything you can get your hands on. Read about best practices, pedagogy, specific subject areas and classroom management. Read the local newspaper and the New York Times online. Read teaching blogs and cooking blogs. Read that new John Grisham novel. As appropriate, share what you have read with students. Let them know that you are reading, what you are reading, and why. This simple example will help create a new generation of readers.

Writing:

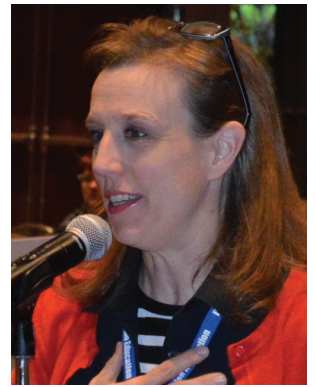
Write your lesson plans. As you move through the year, make notes on your lessons, noting what worked and marking what failed. Write notes home to parents in good times and in bad. Write words of encouragement to students on assignments or notes to inform them that this is not their best work. Teachers also should write with students in class, becoming the in-class expert on how to write. When students see teachers writing, and sometimes struggling with writing, the students will learn how to write, to problem solve and how to persevere.

Speaking:

Speak with everyone in your building; those who teach your subject or grade level and those who do not. Discuss teaching, the school, the lunch options, and survival tips for when Halloween is on a Tuesday. Create a safety net of coworkers to buoy you up on a rough day. Offer to help when a coworker is having a tough time. Cultivate those in-building relationships. And, reach out to teachers across the city and across the state. There are networks of teachers online, especially through mynea360.org, an online meeting place sponsored by the National Education Association and the Idaho Education Association.

Listening:

Listen to your gut. You are the expert in the classroom. You know your students and you know your subjects' or grade level's needs. You have this under control and are on track to have a great year.



By Billie Wixom
Skyline High School, Idaho Falls
Idaho Falls Education Association



By Lindsey Matthews
Lewiston Education Association
Twitter @MissLindseyM

“Genius Hour” Concept *Ignites Passion-Based Learning*

This idea stems from Google’s plan for their employees. Each employee is given a percentage of their working time to research and develop projects they are passionate about. This isn’t time to take a nap. Instead, it is a time to explore their curiosity about a certain topic that they haven’t had the time or ability to explore in the past. As a result of this concept, we have innovations such as Google Earth, Gmail, and more.

I teach in a 5th and 6th grade looping classroom in Lewiston, where Genius Hour has empowered my students and completely transformed our culture. Because my students are free to choose and explore areas they are passionate about, they are reaching a greater depth of knowledge and finding their purpose for learning. They inspire me daily with their projects, including exploring other means of communication through American Sign Language, researching to find an end to

world hunger, collaborating with doctoral students at Massachusetts Institute of Technology about robotics, and many more.

When students are simply told that their ideas matter, they are overwhelmed with inspiration and drive. We need to push away from the disservice of underestimating our students and unconditionally believe in them. If they believe in themselves and find a love for learning that will not falter, then there is nothing they can’t do?

Scan this QR code to find resources and structures for these powerful student-driven learning experiences. This will leave you one step closer to implementing passion-based learning into your own classrooms and schools.

Be brave and support change! Be that crazy teacher. Share relentlessly. Love fiercely. Be their person, always.



What would you learn about if you were given structured time during the workday to follow your passion?

Teachers have a tough, but extremely rewarding job. Great teachers inspire and make a difference, but great classrooms have students inspiring each other. Passion-based learning gives students the opportunity to take ownership of their education and kindle their passion for learning. The idea of Genius Hour—or 20% time—in the classroom is an emerging trend that is storming the nation.



Left: Professional Development Committee members Mary Anne McGrory, Jamie Morton, Becky Hanafin and Jolene Dockstader

Below: Summer Institute presenters Megan Perryman and Cheryl Spall

rhetoric; believe in yourself,” she reminded Idaho’s professional educators while discussing the external attacks on teachers.

IEA President Penni Cyr shared her thoughts during the closing luncheon. “Thanks for contributing your time and expertise this week, and for everything that you do for students,” she said. Cyr also expressed appreciation for the Professional Development Committee, which was responsible for the planning and execution of the Summer Institute. In addition to Cyr that committee consists of **Jolene Dockstader, Jamie Morton, Mary Anne McGrory, Ingrid Spence, Allison Gordon, Becky Hanafin, and Valerie Aker Player**, with able assistance from **Sue Wiggorski, Julie Fleharty** and other IEA staff members.

Preparations are already under way for next year’s Summer Institute, so make a note on your calendars now!

2017 IEA Summer Institute
July 26-29, 2017
Northwest Nazarene University



Happy Trails!

Circling the Wagons at 2016 IEA Summer Institute

IEA members had a rip-roarin’ good time and rounded up corrals-full of information and ideas at the annual summer institute, held this year on the campus of Idaho State University in Pocatello. More than 200 attendees took part in sessions on topics such as:

- Teacher evaluations and Student Learning Objectives
- ESP rights and responsibilities
- Effective mentoring of new teachers
- Anti-bullying and LGBT awareness
- Classroom resources and technology

The keynote address was provided by Shelly Moore Krajacic from the National Education Association’s Executive Committee. “Don’t believe the

IEA PEOPLE • • • • •



Melissa Child.

Melissa joins the IEA team as an associate working in eastern Idaho, and is based in Idaho Falls, where she lives with her husband and two dogs.

She has professional experience in both education and clerical work, and has served as a special education paraprofessional while pursuing her special education degree. She has extensive experience working with special needs children through equine assistance therapy programs, and continues to do volunteer work with Innovative Therapy

Riding in Idaho Falls. She grew up on a farm in Yakima, Washington, and has also lived in Seattle. "I believe in education and have always been more productive in a supporting role," she says. "I look forward to working with the great IEA members—and my door is always open." ■



Shanny Gallegos.

The IEA's new associate in the Twin Falls Region 4 office is Shanny Gallegos. She has several years of clerical experience under her belt with an emphasis

on bookkeeping/accounting and business

management. She has also worked as a Certified Medical Assistant. She was born and raised in Twin Falls. ■



Joyce Raasch.

Former IEA President Joyce E. Raasch passed away in June at the age of 83.

A native of Notus, Joyce spent more than 30 years teaching in Idaho, with stints in Caldwell, Boise and Meridian. She taught math and science, and also served as a counselor. She was the president of the IEA in 1985-86. ■

ESP CORNER

The IEA's Summer Institute provides tremendous opportunities for all types of professional educators, including our amazing ESP members. In July, many ESPs flocked to Pocatello for the Association's marquee professional development event. Idaho ESPs showcased their expertise and hands-on experience as they presented to educators from all over the state.

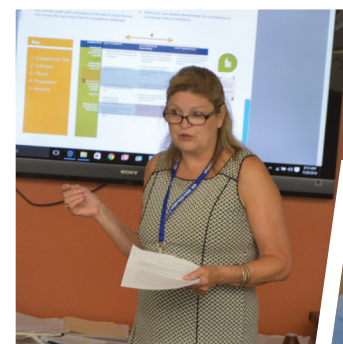
There were several ESPs who presented at the 2016 Summer Institute.

- **Bree Wildman** (paraeducator: Boise) and **Katie Wiese** (elementary librarian: Vallivue) presented a workshop from the NEA ESP Conference on the prevention of bullying and harassment.
- **Angie Arnett** (paraeducator: Lewiston) co-presented with her local president Deanna Didier (special education teacher: Lewiston). The workshop was entitled "Para Pow-Pow Power" and featured materials that Angie brought back from the NEA ESP Conference, including a "how-to" plan for school-wide engagement on prevention and intervention for student bullying and sexual harassment.
- **Stacie Aspiazu** (paraeducator: Boise) co-presented with IEA Region Director Luke Franklin (WeROC) on ESP membership recruitment and ESP rights and responsibilities in a right to work state.
- **Jeni Fereday** (library aide: Moscow) presented a session using the NEA Leadership Competencies for ESP leadership growth.

Leadership competencies are a best practices model for Association leadership.

- **Allison Gordon** (district library support: Boise) provided valuable training about resources that can be used in the classroom.

It is evident that ESP membership is increasing across the state. ESPs have seen a higher membership increase than certified staff, and every region around the state has enjoyed an increase over the past 10 months. The encouraging trend toward recognizing ESPs as professionals who are helping to educate the whole student is continuing. Join the ESP movement today by following us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IdahoESPs or by contacting Stacie Aspiazu-Johnson at stacieaspiazu@gmail.com.



ESP Jeni Fereday (left) presented at Summer Institute. Dave Lyman, Deanna Didier and Angie Arnett (below) were part of the ESP contingent in Pocatello



Here are some dates to mark on your calendars for upcoming ESP events.

- Wednesday, November 16th is National ESP Day
- March 9-12, 2017 is the NEA ESP Conference in Dallas, TX
- SPARKS for ESPs in their first five years of membership-dates TBA



Jeryl

4th-grade teacher, VA

GET THE RESOURCES YOU NEED TO START THIS SCHOOL YEAR **RIGHT**

Visit neamb.com/backtoschool to find:

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Voices and Votes

"To improve recruitment and retention of teachers, it is important that Idaho build an environment and narrative statewide that clearly values teachers, their professionalism, and their voice"

**Teacher Pipeline Report
presented to State Board of Education, August 11, 2016**

What are the instruments of change as we continue our ongoing quest to improve public education for students, teachers, and communities? In a nutshell—Voices and Votes. It is critical that we leverage these tools at all times, but particularly in an election year. While the presidential race draws much of the attention, it is important to remember that races up and down the ballot can have tremendous repercussions for public education—both positive and negative.

The IEA encourages you to exercise your right to vote on Tuesday, November 8th. An informed electorate can make a huge difference, so do your homework, find out what the candidates stand for (and against) and cast your vote for people and policies that will enable Idaho to break free from an archaic mindset that has stifled growth and opportunity for our children. Don't defer to people who have less expertise or have financial gain as their primary motivation. **Make your voice, and your vote, count on November 8th.**

For information on how to register to vote, as well as where and how you can vote, go to www.idahovotes.gov

Be on the lookout in October for a mailer from the IEA with recommendations on pro-public education candidates and issues.

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