

The Learning Alliance Summer Institute, July 18, 2016

Welcoming Remarks from Wanda Lincoln

Good morning.

I was asked to **welcome** you to what promises to be an **inspiring** week. A week that, I think, has the strong potential to be a very valuable part of your **teaching journey**.

Why do I say a journey? Well, it seems to me, after all these years in education, that one never really is a teacher...a teacher in the best, most influential sense of the word. Each of us who choose this profession are always, really, just on the way to becoming...to becoming that teacher we want to be...and the teacher we would have liked to have had ourselves!

Honestly, I think I was asked to be here today for **two reasons**.

One: I am a board member of a non-profit group in Indian River County called **Impact 100**. And I stand here today representing over 400 women who, through their donations, are able to provide grants to make good things happen in our county. Last year The Learning Alliance decided to apply for an Impact grant to make **this week** happen. It is very competitive process. There are many needs in our community, as you well know. So many organizations apply.

In April, four major grants were given out. And the Learning Alliance won one of them! Since their grant was all about supporting teachers, I think the award showed that the community, certainly Impact 100 values your efforts in the classroom. Hundreds voted for you. And, so, we are here today.

And the second reason?

I have a passionate belief about teachers. That **quality teachers make the difference in education**.

We often talk about a “school” or the “district”... But, **HONESTLY**, who is on the front line of educating children? On the front line every

day! Who shows up everyday to lead a group or groups of kids with keen minds, but with many different unmet needs, different skill levels and divergent ways of learning. Who is there?

TEACHERS! Teachers are the key!

***A note...not a “news flash...teachers operate in a larger environment. Often that environment does not make the teaching job easier. That environment is filled with assumptions, such as all a teacher has to do teach” the curriculum! Sure! But that little phrase assumes that all kids need the same thing at the same time and will learn it the same way!*

How many of you have noticed that this is REALLY NOT TRUE! I often would like to put the “How hard can it be?” folks in front of a classroom to meet your challenges...OH, how about for an hour????

And bottom line is this **Basic Truth:** kids...your kids, all kids...every one of them, deserve the **best!**

Kids learn what they live...and they “live” in your classroom. They learn not just the lessons you plan, but they learn from who you are, how you treat them, how you encourage them, how you understand them, and how you let them know that YOU are their **teacher, not a peer, not an entertainer, not a task master but an adult who will help them learn content, learn how to learn...AND how to be responsible, independent, compassionate and caring!**

By your being here this week... you have shown that you want to be a role model to your students. You want them to know that you are an eager continual learner. So:

Stay curious.

Stay questioning.

Be a problem solver.

Be encouraging.

And have high expectations of yourselves and your students.

BTW-Tell them you went to school this summer! When you try a new activity tell them where you learned about it! Ask for their feedback. Everyone likes to give their opinion...kids, too!

Always remember:

99% of high quality teachers are made, not born. And that 1% still has a lot to learn.

Teaching is complicated and often exhausting. And the challenge to be worthy of the children, your students, is a great pressure and an even greater responsibility.

One of my favorite quotes is from Grandma Moses, a renowned American folk artist who began painting in earnest at the age of 78,

Life is what you make it...always has been and always will be.

I hope you make this week a great one for you and, therefore, for your students.

Welcome to YOUR week...

Welcome to your week on your teaching journey.