

INDUCTEE

REBECCA (BECKY) KIDWELL

Graduated . . . 1971
ResidesGahanna, Ohio

Rebecca (Becky) Kidwell began her lifelong career working with young children nearly forty years ago just when she was entering high school. Her father had recently died and she needed to supplement the family income so she started working at the Gahanna Play Nursery in the Olde Gahanna Sanctuary and babysitting for a number of Gahanna families.

Following graduation from Gahanna Lincoln, she attended the Ohio State University but after one year she transferred to Ohio Dominican College where she received her degree in early childhood education in 1975. In 1973 while still attending college Becky began working at Stonybrook Early Learning Center (ELC) in Gahanna. She had long admired her aunt Irene Miesse, a first grade teacher in the Gahanna schools, and found her own place working with the young children at Stonybrook.

She progressed quickly in the program there, becoming lead teacher and then director in 1980. Barb Dodson of Stonybrook United Methodist Church described Becky as “a gracious, compassionate servant leader, and a caring example for teachers and co-workers....her loving spirit is very evident in all the children who go out of their way to say ‘hi’ to Miss Becky whenever they may see her.” Parents who attended the Stonybrook ELC are now bringing their own children to the program, which speaks to its integrity. Becky is celebrating her 35th year with the Stonybrook program which is in large a reflection of Becky’s knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs.

Recently Becky retired from the Gahanna Safety Town program. She had been director of the Safety Town for twenty-five years during which she and her staff helped Gahanna kindergarteners understand the important details of practicing safety on buses, streets and in the community along with knowing fire safety and being a good citizen.

Becky Kidwell is truly a person of service to others, sacrificing a carefree high school, teenage life for family needs and later serving many years as her mother’s caregiver in the 1990’s, but most of all for dedicating her life’s work to the young children of Gahanna. She has done this unselfishly for nearly 40 years now, even when outside opportunities in the public and private sector of education may have benefited her with more financial wealth. Gahanna resident Robert Kessler reminds us, in reference to Becky Kidwell, “...real service should not only be recognized, but praised and emulated. It isn’t often that we have an opportunity to recognize someone who has given so much and asked for so little in return.”