



On the Job in Jackson with Rhonda Scott

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Larry HookRhonda Scott

MLive reporter Larry Hook recently sat down with Rhonda Scott to ask her what it's like to be a preschool teacher.

Age: 43 Residence: City of Jackson

Position and Workplace: Preschool teacher for the Head Start Program at Salvation Army, 806 Pearl St., Jackson

Length of employment: 17 years Family: Single. No children.

Q. What are your job duties?

A. Lots of fun and challenges. We have 17 children in each (of two daily) sessions. ... Throughout the day they eat two meals ... we have playtime, we do one-one-one time with them. We work on different skills they need to know to get ready for kindergarten. It's just like a big family. We're helping the parents to get their children ready to go to the next stage in their early childhood.

Q. How did you get into this line of work?

A. I've always loved children and always wanted to be a teacher, every since I learned how to write my name. My mom said I used to make pretend classrooms ... and talk to all of my imaginary students. Then as I got older I saw that there is a huge need (for teachers) and I think that I can do the most help at the young stage.

Q. What is your favorite part of your job?

A. Reading stories and acting silly. I have to have props when I read a story so I'll have a puppet, some pictures or something. Then I do silly voices and it cracks the kids up. And they remember the stories, so hopefully they'll develop a love for reading, because everything you do, you have to read. So if you have reading skills, that's a good start.

Q. What has been your proudest moment at work?

A. When I started I didn't have a degree. I went and got my associate's and bachelor's degrees from Baker College. I stayed on the President's List and I got awards both times when I graduated. I had a 3.9 grade point average all the way through. I got my bachelor's degree in 2009. Being that I wasn't fresh out of high school, that was an accomplishment and I'm proud of that.

Q. What has been your most embarrassing moment at work?

A. Once I was sitting in a kid's chair at lunch time. It was only a foot off the ground and I'm six feet tall. The chair bent and bent and bent, then I fell. ... I stood and picked up the chair and the kids fell over laughing.

Q. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?

A. I'd work all year round so we can help more children and make them retain the things we teach them. When they get out in the middle of May for the summer, then they go to school at the end of August, that's a long time. Sometimes they lose some of the skills they've learned.

Q. How do you like to spend your free time?

A. I've very active in my church; I go to First Evangelistic Church on Francis Street. When people ask me what I do, I tell them, "Work, worship and Wal-Mart." Usually if I'm not at work or at church, then I'm at Wal-Mart buying something for one of those places. I also like to read and do crafts.

Q. What are your professional plans for the future?

A. I'll probably go back to college and before it's all done I'll probably have a PhD in some field stemming from education; maybe learning disabilities.