This issue of Parent Perspectives comes from a variety of contributors, each sharing a different perspective of their Future Problem Solving experiences. Please ENJOY!

Show Me the Money!
(If it were only that simple….)
By Carolyn Tragesser

Where is that fairy godmother when we need her? How about some ruby red slippers when we long to get out of a situation? FPSPI doesn’t have a magic wand, however appealing that may be, but we do have hardworking, knowledgeable and creative International Office staff, Affiliate Directors, evaluators, and volunteers (many of whom are parents).

When the Parent Committee was formed a couple years ago, I joined it to help parents learn more about the program. I have served on the FPSPI Finance Committee for nine years, so I was asked to contribute to this newsletter with some information about how the Future Problem Solving Program is funded.

FPSPI and its Affiliate Programs are nonprofit organizations. As such, we are not an agency like a library, post office, or forest service that receives money from the government to operate. We are not a business (though we do receive some revenue from products and services we offer); we are a service, which offers a unique opportunity for youth throughout the world!

The International Office is the hub of the entire program - you might call it the mother ship. Its staff and others develop the materials and oversee the policies and procedures. The members of the Board of Trustees are elected by the Affiliate Directors at the annual Governing Council meeting, which occurs annually prior to the International Conference (IC). Decision-making is done by these entities and the various committees.

Each Affiliate Program has its own director and board - and budget. Every program, including FPSPI, accepts donations from various supporters. (Go to www.fpspi.org and scroll to the bottom of the page and click the DONATE button. For individual Affiliate Programs, contact the appropriate Affiliate Director.)

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Revenues to FPSPI come from the International Conference registrations, annual Affiliate fees, investment dividends, sales of publications and novelties, and donations (approximately 1%). FPSPI is in need of connections with corporations for either grants or sponsorships, and the best means of gaining support is from those who are well aware of the benefits garnered from FPS. Annual Affiliate Fees have been set at $325 for a number of years, and a request will be made to Governing Council 2015 for an increase to $400. For this fee, Affiliate Directors receive the following major benefits: updated program materials to distribute to participants, informational brochures, travel and room/board for an AD to attend GC and serve as volunteer at IC, IO support as needed - just about 24/7. People, via their own business community giving, might actually sponsor an Affiliate Program for a year. One business in Melbourne Beach, Florida, sponsors an evaluator’s expense for IC – approximately $750. (Thanks, Indian River Technology!)

One fun vehicle for revenue is our annual Scholarship Auction, held at IC. You may contribute to it by donating items for auction or by contributing money (http://tinyurl.com/kjg9cmc). For the past few years, the scholarship fund has provided the funding needed to award a sizable check to deserving students headed to college. The diverse contributions for the auction have spotlighted many talents and great giving among our directors, evaluators, and supporters. Quilting, jewelry design, and affiliate-styled baskets of delectable items are included. Each year, a committee determines worthy applicants (graduating high school seniors) to receive an educational scholarship to further their education. Without the auction, funds would not be available.

Before retiring from teaching, I coached various academic competitions and offered programs and opportunities to my students. FPSP is the one I chose to continue with during this phase of my life. I have said that FPS gets in your blood, and I think it may be true. It takes blood, sweat and tears to make this opportunity happen for the youth - along with money!

Carolyn Tragesser
Idaho Affiliate

Can YOU help on any level?

New Resource for Parents on

21st Century Learning and Citizenship!

P21 has created a free digital toolkit to help parents support their learners in becoming 21st century leaders and citizens. The 3-part toolkit was developed with National PTA as a family engagement advisor and provides an overview of 21st century learning and how citizenship has changed in a digitally and globally connected world, tips and strategies for families, and real world examples of 21st century learning in action. Find out more at:

www.P21.org/Parents

FPS-ers, Its Who They Are!

They impact the future on all types of global topics
They come from “down under” and even the tropics,

They solve significant issues using six steps
Using research and knowledge gained in multiple preps,

Studying with experts, members often consult
Designing creative solutions for the optimum result,

Applying originality, teamwork, and critical thinking
Serving others through enthusiastic action plans without blinking,

In all that they do, their brains grow, develop, and evolve
Through a special process they love known as to problem solve,

That FPS-ers are leaders through innovation it is plain to see
They brighten the future with unique creativity!

From across the seas and the east to the west
Making the world a better place, is their ultimate quest!

Cyd Rogers
I participated in Future Problem Solving for several years, and I can confidently say this program helped me grow in so many ways I could have never realized at the time. FPSP is the only experience I can describe as challenging, thrilling, enlightening and gratifying wrapped into one memorable chunk of my formative years. I learned to harness my creativity and communication skills in a way that could positively impact others, which has since guided me in all educational and professional endeavors. After pursuing a bachelor’s degree in public relations, I am currently working as an account service manager at a content marketing firm. The invaluable problem solving thought processes I learned have undoubtedly been a huge factor in this role, and I cannot imagine working through my daily tasks without them.

**Hannah Van Amburgh**

2011 Graduate of Midlothian High School
Midlothian, Texas
2014 Graduate of University of Oklahoma
Bachelor of Arts in Journalism with emphasis on Public Relations

I treasure Future Problem Solving as one of the most valuable educational experiences of my formative years. Working through hypothetical scenarios and real-life issues in my local and global community helped to refine my creative and critical thinking skills, which have been invaluable to my graduate studies and professional life. It also played a major part in shaping my sense of civic and social responsibility. As a musician, I use the six-step problem solving process daily, whether I am teaching, practicing, analyzing music, or dealing with a high-pressure performance. Being able to think independently and solve problems on my own (by thinking out of the box) has helped me find success in every aspect of my career and educational endeavors. I am forever grateful for the creative and critical thinking skills I have been afforded, thanks to Future Problem Solving.

**Rachel Van Amburgh**

2007 Graduate of Midlothian High School
Midlothian, Texas
Bachelor of Music, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (2011)
Master of Music, University of Southern California (2013)
Doctor of Musical Arts, University of Southern California (expected 2016)

Rachel just completed the second year of her Doctoral studies at USC, with one more year to go. Currently, she is the Principal Oboist of the Young Musician’s Foundation Debut Orchestra in Los Angeles and freelances with a variety of orchestras in the city as well. She teaches oboe students at USC who are both non-majors and minors. Over the past year, Rachel has been a featured soloist playing concertos with the USC Symphony Orchestra, Contemporary Music Ensemble, and Early Music Ensemble. Rachel hopes to stay in Los Angeles to play and teach, and eventually secure a permanent teaching and orchestral position.

2 Sisters,
2 Career Paths,
Both Developed through Future Problem Solving!
When my first child became involved in FPS — 12 years ago, at age 10! — I was happy he had found an academic extra-curricular activity he enjoyed. Little did I know his involvement in this organization would eventually shape not only who he was as a student and as a critical thinker, but that this organization would influence his three siblings to do the same. Eventually, all four of my children — as well as myself and my husband — became, and are becoming, enmeshed in the FPS world.

My oldest son, Harris, learned more than just the six-step problem solving process during his involvement. He learned about being a leader, about research, about perseverance. His FPS resume includes myriad First Place wins, including the highest scoring booklet ever at FPS State during his Junior Year. He competed, and placed, at IC several years in a row. He has competed, and placed, in everything from Team Booklet to Scenario Writing to CMPS, at all levels of competition, and even was responsible for organizing Circus Maximus at State one year. He founded a Melbourne High School Community Problem Solving Team, which brought professionals into local schools to encourage participation in math and science fields. He even used the 6-step process to help his Melbourne High team win first place in the Business Ethics competition at FIT. This year, he graduates from the University of Florida with a BS in Chemical Engineering and plans to attend the University of Wisconsin Madison in the fall to pursue a doctorate degree in BioMedical Engineering. He says he still uses the FPS process to problem solve.

My oldest daughter, Ilana, was quick to develop the same passion for FPS, with similar results: First Place wins at both district and state competitions, and competition at the International level, participating in every aspect of FPS — booklet work, scenario writing, CMPS. In her senior year of high school, she formed an FPS program for the community at large, coaching several teams from various schools, at all levels. A freshman at the University of Florida this year, majoring in Materials Engineering, Ilana has brought her FPS passion to the various leadership organizations she belongs to. She has organized critical thinking workshops at UF and brought in problem solving speakers to address these groups. She also conducts research for a professor who is studying engineering critical thinking and problem solving, and is incorporating her FPS knowledge into this endeavor.

My next daughter, Daphna, a junior at West Shore this year, also seems to be following in her siblings’ footsteps: She has competed in FPS since elementary school. This year, her team won first place at District competition, and her Scenario won her an invitation to International, her second year competing there. My youngest daughter, Marlee, in 7th grade at West Shore, also started FPS at age 10, and will attend IC this summer as a MAGIC competitor. She, too, has caught the FPS spirit; how could she not?

And me? For many years, my involvement had been mostly in the form of driving my children to their FPS meetings, making trips to Walmart to buy supplies (Swedish Fish!) for competition and skits, and chaperoning and monitoring at the various competitions. I did dabble in evaluation: I attended evaluators training sessions. However, I quickly learned that was not for me. I just don’t have the heart to evaluate fairly — I’m usually too concerned about hurting the students’ feelings! But I have found my FPS niche as an organizer and co-coach this year for my youngest daughter’s team, and, always, as a cheerleader for FPSers everywhere.

Hannah Krause, Parent Coach & FPS Cheerleader
Florida Affiliate
We are the Champions!

Our sweaty hands were clenched together. We were breathing hard, waiting to see if we would win. We were at the FPS state competition. FPS stands for Future Problem Solving, which is basically a two hour long competition in which you solve problems set at least 20 years into the future. My team consisted of two of my friends, Blake and Noelle, and me.

We had been preparing for this day all season. We almost didn’t make it to State, but one of the teams that won at the regional competition couldn’t go, and we were next in line.

The day of State I woke up at about 4:45 a.m., and we had to be at school by 5:50. I was practically shaking. I was so excited. I scrambled to get ready and shoved down my breakfast of a bagel with peanut butter on it.

When I hopped into the warm car I started noticing that I was nervous, too. What if we didn’t finish on time? What if we forgot how to do something? Never mind that. I had the whole day to be nervous, right then it was time to be excited.

When my sister got in (she was in FPS, too), she was not happy that she had to get up so early. The beats of whimsical - but boring - classical music whistled in my ears. The drive to school felt like forever.

I ran into school and eagerly said hi to all of my friends.

“I’m so excited!” Noelle exclaimed.

“Me too!” I replied.

“I brought lemon poppy seed bread and banana bread!” Blake interrupted.

We all laughed and boarded the bus. I sat next to Noelle, and Blake was in front of us. You could feel the excitement lingering in the air. During the bus ride, Blake discovered new things on Minecraft, and Noelle and I chatted.

We had made it! We were finally at the school in Lino Lakes! Blake, Noelle, and I rushed inside, bid fare well to Ms. Edlund (our coach), and got into our room. It was a large gym with a lot of tables and monitors wearing orange vests. We sat down at the table labeled “N5”; that was us. While we waited, we talked and realized that with all of the excitement, we didn’t notice Noelle was sick! She could barely speak! We then heard some announcements over the loud speakers. After that, it was time to start our packet.

We were all pretty nervous. To calm us down, we started saying, “there goes the socks!” and “a beefa beefa”, which are both FPS inside jokes.

We blazed through the packet and had about 20 minutes left. We then started to work on something for the skit we had to perform later. Then the advisor told us time was up, and it was time for lunch!

We ran through the halls and into the lunchroom. “Aaaah….” I thought out loud as I smelt the Domino’s Pizza. I grabbed three slices, some grapes, and a Sprite. I then joined Ms. Edlund and my parents and gobbled down my lunch. My mom gave me some lemon poppy seed bread from Caribou Coffee. Mmmm…

When it was time to perform our skit, we ran through the halls and got our props ready. It was nerve-wracking but fun at the same time.

Then it was time for the epic snowball throw-down. We were pelting snowballs at each other and hiding behind trees. The cold, wet snow was soaking through my shoes. At the end, we were mainly targeting my friend Kara’s brother, Evan.

Now it was time for dinner. YES! We decided on Perkins and then hopped on the bus. For most of the time, we were laughing and playing Head’s Up on my friend Lexi’s phone. When we arrived, I already knew what I wanted- chicken strips. I sat next to my friends, Lexi and Maddie. They shared a gigantic sample plate, and both ordered a chocolate shake. I ordered chicken strips, mashed potatoes, and a root beer. The warm smells of freshly-cooked food was filling me. Mmmm… I was definitely hungry!

When the girls’ shakes arrived, we noticed there was an odd yellow powder on top that looked like sandy cheese. When our waitress came with our food, we asked her what the weird stuff was. (continued)
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“It’s just the malt mix,” she ensured us. I was not so sure... We happily munched on our meals until it was time to go. Ugh, I was as stuffed as a teddy bear. While we were walking out, we saw a lady giving face paintings. We rushed over and we all got glittery, unicorn face paintings. Then it was time for the awards ceremony.

Once we got in the auditorium, we heard the nervous chatter of other teams. That made me realize how nervous I really was. We sat down in a row of uncomfortable seats and got ready to watch the talent show (yes, I said talent show). There were only two people in it, and they were both piano players. The second girl was astonishing! Her hands were gliding across the keys wickedly fast. It looked as if we were watching her in fast forward. We applauded, and it was time for the awards. Wow, that was quick. My heart jumped, and I started drumming my fingers together.

It was interesting looking at everyone’s faces as they won their awards. There were the smilers, the huggers, the screamers, the people with an odd blank expression, and the straight-up happy-jumpers.

The time was here; it was our section. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion. The third and second place teams were both gone already. I have no idea why they would do that.

I blocked out everything and only listened to the announcer’s voice.

“And the winner is...“ OMG OMG “Team N5 from Lester Prairie, Minnesota!” Everybody from Lester Prairie stood up. Blake, Noelle, and I ran up to the stage and accepted our prizes. Noelle and I practically tackled each other instead of hugging when we went to get our pictures taken. I couldn’t believe it! We were the champions!

The drive home consisted of well-deserved laughter and chatter. I definitely will not forget that day in a long time.

Delaney Sebora
4th Grade FPSer
Minnesota Affiliate

Time Well Spent

Parenting centers around making seemingly constant decisions that will best nurture, enrich, and “grow” our children. Yet, providing those opportunities throughout weeks filled with studies, sporting events, and other extra-curricular activities challenges us all. And then the promise of summer vacation or a holiday break motivates us with a renewed hope that parenting can shift from a to-do list to meaningful moments based on spontaneous, genuine connections. The opportunity to provide a home stay for a group of Australian students and sponsors headed to IC in June 2014 provided exactly that.

I remember both the terror and excitement of clicking the send button, committing with a “YES!” to host Australian Future Problem Solvers from Cherrybrook Technology High School. Immediately flooded with doubts, I questioned how in the world I was to entertain students from Sydney in a small, rural Texas town. But shouldn’t we embrace this unique experience? Breaking the news of our future house guests to my then 9, 13, and 16 year old boys was not met with open arms. They were mortified about giving up beds, sharing bathrooms, and rearranging schedules for 4 strangers. Ironically, the bed that was so reluctantly given up that first day came to represent all that the experience gave us. Upon returning from the lengthy drive to the airport where we watched our new friends depart, my 13 year old climbed on that very bed and sobbed.

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He sobbed for the end of giving up his bed. He cried for the end of his time with Marcus, Yousef, Chris, and Eric. Yes, I knew that as these young men shared their stories and their varied heritages during our first meal together, something authentic and meaningful was happening. I hadn’t realized what a life-changing impact this home stay had on all my boys until I heard the emotion of loss in his pillowed muffled cry. You don’t feel a loss until you’ve first felt the worth.

How did these students’ 3 day layover in Brownwood, Texas become so valuable, such the we-didn’t-want-it-to-end experience? I don’t know how to concisely express the answer except by giving a series of info-shots that hopefully capture a few days of a simple itinerary: backyard squirrels, yellow school buses, a Texas high school football field and summer workouts, Mexican food and piñatas, Bar-B-Q and the local museum, a baseball game and sunflower seeds, a whiffle ball and swimming, and a last night gathered around a piano singing songs we all knew no matter our home address.

The common denominator—the answer—must lie in time well spent. Everyday sights and sounds for my family became new for a few days. We all make decisions on how to spend our time and how to share that valuable never-enough-commodity. The decision I made as a parent to open our home and our minds to that meaningful moment is one I will never regret. Invite the novelty of squirrels and sunflower seeds to visit your own backyard. Your everyday sights will become significant while hosting, and they will become your future priceless souvenirs of time well spent. All it takes is a “YES!”

Peggy S. Morales
Teacher, Parent, Coach, Home Stay Host
Early High School
Texas Affiliate

Thank you to each of our contributors in this edition of Parent Perspectives! We truly appreciate your time, effort and creative reflections. Did you know we accept testimonials from parents, coaches, students as well as alumni? It is our goal to collect 100+ testimonials in 2015! Submit your testimonial to cyd.rogers@austinisd.org, lisa_quintana4@yahoo.com, or april@fpspi.org. We’d love to hear about your experiences through the Future Problem Solving journey!

Please note: Parent Perspectives will take a break for the northern hemisphere summer and will resume in September 2015!