

## Happy Birthday SafeCare!

By John Lutzker

Happy New Year to all and VERY HAPPY 5th BIRTHDAY to NSTRC! As so many of you know, the roots of SafeCare date way back to 1979, making it, we think, the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest evidence-based home visiting program (Nurse Family Partnership dates back to 1977). SafeCare has had some lengthy hiatuses that many of the other EBPs have not. SafeCare ran in southern California from 1994-1998 and was jump-started in 2002 by our remarkable colleagues in Oklahoma. But, until the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation funded us to start NSTRC, there was no formal organization to actively disseminate SafeCare. In my mind, NSTRC's "birthday" was January of 2008,

when Dan Whitaker became its Director. And, WOW, what has been accomplished since then is beyond my wildest expectations. We have trained in 15 states, Belarus, and England. We are rated as very effective by the Maternal Infant and Child Home Visiting program of the federal Affordable Health Care Act. We have a staff who make us proud every day; it's FUN to work here, and my heart bursts when I hear people like you all over the country speaking so knowledgeably about SafeCare. So, let's all eat a piece of virtual cake of our choice and say, "Happy Birthday, NSTRC", and may you have so very many more. Or as my fellow Jews say, "may you live to be 120". You all save lives metaphorically and literally. Thank you, thank you.

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## Valentine Gratitude Tree

Simple crafts are always a great way to teach parents how to engage with their small children. This craft promotes positive interactions between parents and their kids and can be a great way for parents to practice the skills they learn in the Parent-Child Interaction module!

### **What you'll need:**

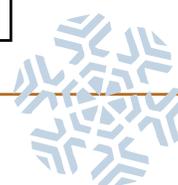
- Paper (construction paper, printer paper, recycled cereal boxes—anything you can cut and write on!)
- Crayons, markers, pens, or pencils
- String or ribbon (dental floss will work!)
- Scissors
- Cup or vase
- Hand-full of twigs or small branches

### **Directions:**

1. Cut paper into heart shapes; poke small hole at the top of the heart, thread string through and tie in a knot.
2. Place twigs in cup or vase to form your 'tree.'
3. Ask kids what or who they love or are grateful for and you might find their answers surprising! Help them write each idea on a heart (you can start with "I love..." or "I'm grateful for..."). Let the kids decorate the hearts with crayons or markers.
4. Let the kids decorate the tree by hanging each of the hearts.
5. You can save a few hearts for when Grandma and Grandpa come over and the kids can ask them to add what they are grateful for too!



*For more free activities and crafts for kids aged zero to ten go to [www.nurturestore.co.uk](http://www.nurturestore.co.uk)*





## Melissa Cowart's Thesis

Many of you know Melissa Cowart as our extraordinarily able program coordinator for SafeCare in Georgia. But did you know Melissa was also pursuing her Master's degree? The emphasis is on *was* because Melissa defended her Thesis and completed her MPH degree in December! Working with Dan Whitaker, Melissa's thesis used data from a CDC-funded study in Portland Oregon to examine why women experiencing partner violence may be at increased risk for child maltreatment. She found that depression played a large part in the link between partner violence and child abuse risk, but parenting stress did not. She also found that the link between partner violence and women's risk for maltreatment did not depend on their level of social support, which was surprising.



Congratulations to Melissa! We at NSTRC are all very proud of you!



## Meet Our New NSTRC Staff



Alicia Klotz

Alicia earned her MPH with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Sciences from Temple University. There, she continued as a Research Coordinator for clinical and behavioral research studies at Temple's Center for Obesity Research and Education. Projects included research on type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, caffeine intake and weight gain during pregnancy. After 25 years of living in the Northeast, Alicia made the move to Atlanta in August 2012. She joins the NSTRC as a Project Coordinator on a grant designed to provide additional services to the clients of DeKalb County Drug Court. Alicia enjoys reading, vegetable gardening, cooking, and weekends.



# Meet Our New NSTRC Staff

(cont.)



Sarah Roby



Sarah joins the NSRTC staff as a Research Coordinator while finishing her Masters of Public Health here at Georgia State. She was previously a Graduate Research Assistant at the center and has studied as a fellow with the Center of Excellence on Health Disparities. While completing her undergraduate studies, Sarah worked as a social worker at a domestic violence agency, which helped shape her passion for her career. She was born and raised in Atlanta.

Katy joins NSTRC as Program Coordinator. She attended Vanderbilt University where she earned a B.S. and M.Ed. in Child Studies. She has worked on research studies with families dealing with loss of a child as well as preschool curriculum assessment. She has worked with children and families in various settings including nonprofits, hospitals, church, and camps. She recently moved back to Atlanta from Nashville and is enjoying being close to family!



Katy Miller



Hina Ahmed

Hina completed her BA in psychology at Georgia State University in fall 2012. As an undergrad, she interned at Raksha, an Atlanta-based non-profit helping South Asian survivors of domestic violence. Her experience led her to the field of public health because she wants to impact communities on a macro-scale. After being admitted to the MPH program at Georgia State, she has come on board as a Graduate Research Assistant at the NSTRC! She is interested in the relationship between child maltreatment and domestic violence.

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