



The **Jackie Ward Foundation for the Academics and the Arts** honors teacher, advocate, and volunteer Jacqueline Marie Ward, 1950—1997. Jackie's love of children and her passion for education now serve as a source of inspiration for The Learning Center! Charter School to promote opportunities in the academics and the arts for our youth.

Jackie Ward became a part of The Learning Center! as a parent and as a teacher in our 2 year old program in 1987 when the school was still at its second location (Ogden School, Brasstown/Warne, NC, 1985-1990).

All who had the privilege of working with Jackie can attest that she had a way with both children and adults that encouraged them to become all that they could possibly be. Of course, she had the same impact on The Learning Center! Jackie was an advocate of teaching the whole child. Her handprints are indelibly a part of our approach to education, our emphasis on nutrition and wellness, and our ongoing emphasis on the necessity of building a **Community of Learners**.

Jackie's tragic death in 1997 created a sense of loss in the Learning Center community, in Cherokee and Clay counties, and in a much larger body of people spread over and across many states. In the years following her death I had often thought of creating some venue through which we could celebrate Jackie's life and in particular the impact she had on our school. As The Learning Center! Charter School moved toward its **25th Anniversary Celebration** in 2008, the idea for the **Jackie Ward Foundation for the Academics and the Arts** was conceived. The foundation was then officially incorporated and established as a non-profit organization in February 2009. Founding board members and their professional affiliation at that time included Melanie Rothchild, Early Childhood Education, Department Chairperson, Tri-County Community College; Jason Chambers, Director of Student Services, Tri-County Community College; Steve Gilgen, CFO, Murphy Medical Center; Judith Wikstrom, MSN, NP, Chatuge Family Practice; and Mary Jo Dyre, Director, The Learning Center! Charter School.



The Jackie Ward Foundation for the Academics and the Arts has the privilege and responsibility of keeping a small portion of Jackie's dreams and vision alive. All who contribute hold the key to assuring that Jackie's voice continues to offer wisdom and guidance to our **Community of Learners**. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to each and everyone who keeps that voice going.

Mary Jo Dyre, Founder and Director, The Learning Center! Charter School

