



If you didn't know any better, you might think Angela Siefker has a twin at Overbrook. She monitors the gym every morning until the bell rings, she runs the end-of-day pick up line, she operates her a unique camp program to prepare new students for prekindergarten at Overbrook and she is a prekindergarten teacher.

But there is only one Ms. Siefker and she has been omnipresent at Overbrook since 1986.

She grew up in Ohio as a sports fan along with her three brothers. She married and started her teaching career in 1973. Her husband took a job in Tennessee, so the family moved south. At a Montessori training session in Memphis, she met

Ellen Herman, who told her about a new preschool program opening at a Catholic school in Nashville.

Together Siefker and Herman opened the Overbrook preschool in 1986 and both have taught in the program ever since. They are opposites in terms of teaching styles but they have seamlessly lead hundreds of students into the kindergarten program together and managed to remain friends.

"I just know that God put me on earth to teach," Ms. Siefker said. "I love what I'm doing; I love teaching."

The first students Ms. Siefker taught are now reaching their mid-twenties and she hasn't yet seen children of students she has taught come into her classroom. But she hopes that is coming her way soon.

"I'd like in two years, on my 25th anniversary, to have a big celebration and invite all the students we've had in preschool," she said. "It would be a great way to see them again." Despite the fact that she has been teaching for 23 years now, Ms. Siefker said she looks forward to trying new things and revisiting old programs in the future. First up will be to help bring back the three-year-old program.

"It's the foundation, the first building block for a Montessori education," she said. "When we bring the three-year-old program back, I want to teach them." The return of the three-year-old program, slated for 2010 (?) will complete the three year cycle of the Montessori method here with kindergarten being the final step before students move on to first grade. "It really will set the foundation for academics," she said of the program.

One regret Ms. Siefker has is that she hasn't kept notes over the past 23 years of all the things children have said to her.

"I so wish we had been taking notes all these years. We could have published a book and been millionaires," she said.

Siefker also enjoys the fact that she gets to see children grow up after they leave her classroom.

"There is a real sense of joy in seeing them mature and grow in their love for God and be so nurturing with the younger students," she said. "I have a real love for this place."