



# PARENT PERSPECTIVES

February 2021

This edition of Parent Perspectives is submitted by Missouri Affiliate Director, Janet Fite. Janet reflects and shares on how she began her passionate association with Future Problem Solving. Janet is a forty-three year participant in the Future Problem Solving Program. She has been a coach, evaluator, Affiliate Director for Missouri for over twenty years, and has also served on the FPSP Board of Trustees in a variety of roles, including the President of the Board.



A parent introduced me to Future Problem Solving. In 1977, Mrs. Kiekhaefer came to me and asked if I would coach her children in a program called Future Problem Solving. Her family had recently moved to Missouri from Nebraska. I love challenges; so, I agreed. My passion for FPS began then and continues to this day!

I have always wanted my children, my grandchildren, and my students to develop the skills they need to attain the best possible future for themselves and society. Cyd Rogers, Texas Affiliate Director, created a poster of what skills FPSP graduates have (See page 3). They are skilled problem solvers, collaborative workers, effective communicators, self-motivated learners, and global citizens. Through FPS, life-long skills are strengthened. Researching a variety of topics improves knowledge and the ability to weigh facts objectively. The ability to analyze a future scene or a situation and identify possible challenges is just as important as the ability to come up with solutions. Knowing how to articulate an action plan to implement a solution is a vital part of solving problems.

For parents, FPS provides an opportunity to have meaningful conversations with your children. I look back to class discussions I had with my students on a variety of topics. One topic we researched in 1978 was an underwater city. In the late 1970s, we did not have access to the Internet. However, we used underwater maps, studied ocean currents, and learned about the effect of pressure on aquanauts. We picked an undersea canyon off the coast of Florida for our city. In 2001, the NASA NEEMO Aquarius underwater research lab was constructed near the site these students chose!

“Creativity is the process of sensing problems or gaps in information, then identifying the difficulties and seeking solutions through trial and error or through forming hypotheses.” ~ Dr. E. Paul Torrance, Founder of FPS



Pictured above are Janet and Deanna Bindel. Deanna is a former middle school student of Mrs. Fite's who now serves on the FPSP Evaluation Committee and as an Evaluation Coordinator. She also serves as the Co AD for Missouri.

Parents can help with research and motivation to learn about a variety of subjects. In the late 1970's, one of the topics was the impact of computers on education. Because of this, I bought my first Apple computer and took classes in computer programming. Another topic we studied was nuclear waste; a parent scheduled a tour of a nuclear plant. A few years later, one student on this field trip attended a United States congressional session and the topic of vitrification came up (a process used for stabilizing and encapsulating radioactive waste). She asked her high school teacher if he knew what that meant. When he shook his head, she said, "I do! Future Problem Solving!" This student later earned a full-ride scholarship to college; she and her parents credited FPS.

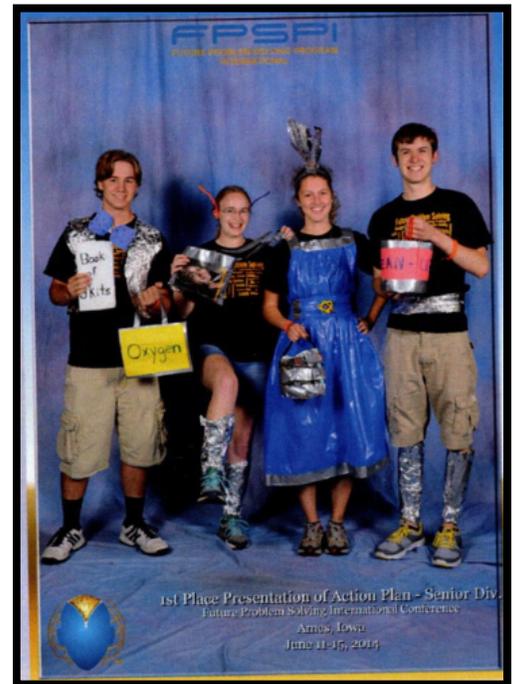
Because of FPS, I have been able to mark off two items on my bucket list. The first was to see whales in the wild. We saw humpback whales when my students and I attended the FPSP International Conference in Rhode Island. The second was to

see a Space Shuttle launch. A former Missouri FPS student is an astronaut. He invited his coach and a guest (me) to the launch of the Space Shuttle Endeavour. This was a nighttime launch, and we had clearance to sit with the astronaut families. This remains one of the highlights of my life. All things possible through FPS!

Among my former FPS students are alumni of Ivy League schools, employees of Intel and Apple, and even an Oscar winner! The students are medical doctors, pharmacists, PhDs, teachers, and so much more. One student is studying nanotechnology in graduate school. One works for the Peace Corps in Myanmar and is using FPS to teach students. Recently another former student commented on Facebook that she was feeling overwhelmed because of Covid. She stated, "I need to use my FPS skills and focus on solutions!" Several of my students are evaluators for Future Problem Solving Program International; they share my passion for FPS.

Future Problem Solving becomes an integral part of thinking and learning in a way that moves beyond participating in an exciting competition. I honestly believe FPS has opened opportunities for my students, and for me, that would not have been possible otherwise. Seeing what they have been able to experience and accomplish and knowing that FPS has helped make that happen for them has been one of the most rewarding things to me about being an FPS coach.

Janet Fite  
Missouri Affiliate Director



Pictured above is Janet Fite's last Senior team, who placed 1st in Presentation of Action Plan at the 2011 International Conference!

### Skilled Problem Solvers:

- Use effective questioning
- Use the problem-solving process
- Apply thinking strategies
- Have global viewpoints from a variety of perspectives
- Risk takers with tenacity and creativity
- Analyze data for informed decision making



### Collaborative Workers:

- Respect diversity
- Able to compromise
- Work within a risk-free environment
- See challenges from multiple perspectives
- Value strengths & weaknesses of others
- Address conflict in a positive manner

## Portrait of a FPSPI Graduate!

### Effective Communicators:

- Choose effective communication methods
- Build consensus
- Possess command of content they are communicating
- Able to disagree respectfully
- Able to express their knowledge and opinions with finesse



**FPSPI**  
FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING PROGRAM  
INTERNATIONAL

### Self-Motivated Learners:

- Use knowledge to construct meaning
- Own their own learning and are responsible for success
- Possess metacognition
- Seek learning with confidence, diligence, and resourcefulness
- Are goal directed and engaged in learning

### Global Citizens:

- Are empathetic
- Appreciate differences in others
- Are technologically skilled
- Form relationships from diverse groups
- Use language that values others
- Are geographically literate
- Give back to society
- Are culturally competent
- Connect authentically with others
- Take initiative to solve problems

Do you have a funny, interesting, or intriguing Future Problem Solving story to share? We LOVE to get testimonials from parents, coaches, evaluators, current students, and former students! Tell us your FPS story and help us inspire others to share. We also love to share photos from your FPS history as well as current photos.

Here is what you need to know to submit something to our *Parent Perspectives* newsletter:

- Send your article in a Word document
- Send your photos as JPEG or PDF
- Send your articles and photos to [cyd.rogers@txfmsp.org](mailto:cyd.rogers@txfmsp.org) or [april@fpspi.org](mailto:april@fpspi.org)
- Be creative! Have fun! Let us hear from you!



## Share your love for FPS!

