



## Former businesswoman heads up new Bowie preschool

Published on: Thursday, September 29, 2011

By Alexis A. Goring

For Nita Armstrong, her corporate career became unfulfilling, but after a mid-career change, the new preschool owner feels her work and her heart are finally in the same place.

Armstrong recently opened a preschool in Bowie that promises to deliver premier, quality education to young children.

The Goddard School has recently, according to [goddardschool.com](http://goddardschool.com), been named the top childcare franchise in the country by Entrepreneur magazine for the 10th consecutive year.

But that is no surprise to Armstrong, who set her sights on Goddard School Inc. six years ago before it gained national recognition.

Armstrong comes from a strong and successful business background in corporate America, but she found education continued to have a special place in her heart.

"I've always known that I wanted to own my own business," she said. "In the corporate world, everything I did I ran it as if it were my own business. But after I had a daughter, it became clear to me that I needed to also focus on my purpose."

After prayerfully thinking about her purpose, Armstrong acted on her heart's desire by researching firms she wanted to be associated with and found The Goddard Systems, Inc. to be the best fit.

"There was always that yearning for something of my own, a legacy and all the things that come with it," she said. "So I took the plunge."

In July, Armstrong was handed the keys to her dream business. The Goddard School fosters an atmosphere that makes visitors feel welcome from the moment they step through the front doors. The school environment is kid-friendly, colorful, illustrious and welcoming.

The school building also features safety precautions. In the lobby, parents must scan their hand and type in their personal code to enter the building. Security cameras are also positioned in strategic places throughout the building.

Recently, the school held its ribbon cutting ceremony during which Armstrong expressed her three-prong vision for the school.

"The first is, it will be a center where children are loved, cared for and educated," she said. "The second is, it's an opportunity where teachers will be encouraged in their professional development.... Thirdly, it's an opportunity for us to provide others who are in the education field right now in schools to come in and intern and get hands-on experience in a quality program."

Armstrong's vision expands beyond the physical location of the school.

"My hope is that it's going to go beyond the preschool," she said. "It is intended to be an organization of service to the community at large, especially for those who are interested in furthering their knowledge and experience in early childhood education. This will be a center where they can come and obtain that kind of hands-on experience."

Cortni Mitchel serves as educational director for the school.

“She understands my vision for the school,” Armstrong said. “She’s done a wonderful job in bringing in a very talented team. We have a very diverse background of teachers in terms of experience. Some have their Master’s in Education but all love kids.”

The Goddard School is an all-year-round program with summer programs included. The teachers get time off and holidays breaks, but they do instruct the children year-round.