

## Paula Pranger teaches children manners, etiquette

By JENNIFER CHAPMAN

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Paula Pranger was raised with good manners.

Growing up in a small town near Toledo, Ohio, Pranger's parents entertained business associates regularly, often bringing their two children along to parties or corporate functions.

"My mom is known to be one of the best entertainers," said Pranger, an Alpharetta resident. "I would help my mom with preparing for dinner parties, and I learned to socialize in a mature setting early on...I knew proper manners."

Pranger and her brother would be in charge of answering the front door and taking guests' coats when they arrived for parties at their parents' home.

"Soon, we had friends and family asking if we could help out at their parties," she said. "Even though we were young, we were polite and courteous – and people noticed that."

As Pranger grew older and attended Spring Hill College in Alabama, she grew to appreciate new traditions, which only emphasized the value of social graces for her.

Pranger moved to Atlanta for a career, where she spent 10 years working in account management. After giving birth to her two children, Rylan and Harrison, she returned to her day job, but was laid off within a matter of months.

Pranger said the layoff was a blessing in disguise.

Her friend Tracee Meyer, owner and director of Cape Fear Cotillion in North Carolina, encouraged Pranger to launch a business focusing on etiquette.

Pranger had the desire to launch a business based on her personal and corporate experiences with social graces and manners. She noticed a disconnection in children and adults – the lack of manners.

Last August, Pranger launched Peachtree Etiquette, where she teaches children manners and etiquette in a variety of classes.

"Tracee had been telling me that I should do this, and I thought the idea of it all was daunting," said Pranger. "But, I make it work around my schedule, and I like it because it fits perfectly with where I am right now as a mom to two kids."

Peachtree Etiquette offers "Mommy & Me" manners classes, as well as pre-etiquette, pre-cotillion, junior etiquette, junior cotillion and holiday etiquette courses. The classes are catered for children ages two through 13.

The classes cover topics such as dressing



Alpharetta resident **Paula Pranger** is the owner and director of Peachtree Etiquette.

appropriately for holidays, personal grooming, table manners, setting a table, gift giving, greeting guests and more.

"I feel my business is a way to involve etiquette and manners in children's everyday lives," said Pranger. "There is more of a casual approach today, but there's a big re-emergence of parents wanting to see manners in their kids and kids having consideration for others."

Pranger said it's never too early to start teaching kids manners. At age two, for example, Pranger said children should learn to say "please" and "thank you." Learning simple manners at that age will begin to teach children to respect adults, she added.

"I've taken a different approach to this," said Pranger. "We do a lot of arts and crafts, games and role playing. I make it fun for the kids, and I try to tell them it doesn't have to be boring to learn etiquette and manners – it can be fun."

Pranger, who runs Peachtree Etiquette out of her Alpharetta home, also covers sportsmanship and various social skills, such as teaching children how to introduce themselves when making new friends.

"It builds self-confidence, and it's a way for them to overcome shyness," she said.

"It's adorable to watch two kids shake hands," said Pranger. "It's very rewarding that I'm making a difference in their lives, and they can carry it

### Top 10 Holiday Etiquette Tips for Children

Paula Pranger, owner and director of Peachtree Etiquette, offers tips to help your children with their manners when guests arrive for the holidays.

1. **Down Time** – Schedules are hectic during the holidays, and it's easy to forget or put off quiet time, naps and snacks. Avoid meltdowns by making sure your children get plenty of rest and eat a light snack prior to attending any holiday celebration.

2. **Greetings** – Holidays should bring out the charm in your children. Be sure children smile, stand tall and greet with either a hand shake (non family), hug (family members) or a confident and sincere hello or a holiday greeting, such as "Happy Thanksgiving!"

3. **Welcome** – Have your son or daughter (age six and older) offer to take the coats of guests and help with younger children while the adults get settled. Encourage your child to make young guests feel welcome by offering them food, drink and introducing them to the other children.

4. **All Dolled Up** – Nothing is more adorable than children dressed in their holiday best. Taking time to properly groom and dress up for an event gives a great first impression.

5. **Appetizers** – Instruct or assist your child with preparing an appetizer plate to prevent eating directly from the serving dishes. Spoon dips onto a plate to prevent double dipping, and teach children to select food closest to them, using serving utensils and touching only the food they put onto their plate.

6. **Table Time** – Children ages three to 14 should be able to master these fundamentals. (a) Wash hands prior to sitting at the table (b) Sit with feet under the table, hands and napkin on the lap (c) Start eating when the host starts, or once everyone is served (d) Food is passed to the right (e) Chew with lips together, and never talk with food in your mouth (f) Keep elbows off the table (g) Don't criticize the food (h) Ask to be excused (i) Thank the person who prepared the meal (j) Offer to help clear the table.

7. **I'm Sorry** – Accidents happen, drinks spill and sometimes things get broken. Make sure you and your child inform the host and apologize immediately. Offer to help clean up.

8. **Gifts** – Teach your children to come bearing gifts to parties. Children should graciously accept all gifts. Regardless if they already have the item or if the gift is something they don't particularly like, they should simply say, "thank you" or "that was so nice of you".

9. **Time To Go** – Be aware of the invitation's ending time and communicate departure timing to your children. Don't overstay your welcome.

10. **Thank You** – Children should always thank the host/hostess for having them. When in doubt, it's never wrong to write a thank you note.

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# her' story

Nov. 1, 1872

Susan B. Anthony registered to vote in Rochester, N.Y.

Nov. 2, 1755

Marie Antoinette was born.

Nov. 7, 1867

Marie Curie was born.

Nov. 7, 1893

Following in the footsteps of Wyoming and Utah, Colorado became the third state to allow women to vote.



Nov. 13, 1952

The first press-on fingernails were sold.

Nov. 19 1917

Indira Gandhi, first female prime minister of India, was born.

Nov. 22, 1990

Margaret Thatcher announced that she would step down as prime minister of England.

## Interview: Friends promote local areas

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Fulton Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Development Alliance of Georgia, to name a few.

Besides their local and state involvement on boards, committees and organizations, both women have an abundance of attractions to promote to visitors. Alpharetta and Roswell's assets include shopping, parks, trails, special events, hotels, historical attractions, restaurants and others, too.

"It can be a challenge sometimes," said Etris. "From marketing to visitors to promotional aspects, our constant focus is how to attract people to the city."

Etris and Rodgers co-founded the Hospitality Highway initiative. It pulled together the communities from Buckhead to Dahlonega in a partnership that earned Ga. 400 the state's designation as Georgia's official Hospitality Highway.

*We all have a heart for this city... I love that our city is such a family-oriented, aesthetically beautiful place, along with being progressive enough to keep us competitive.*

*-Janet Rodgers*

"People drive down (Ga. 400) and have no idea what's available right off the exits," said Etris. "We have so much to offer."

So while Etris and Rodgers are promoting two very similar, but very different entities, they share an equal passion for their cities.

Rodgers said she values the relationships she's

built throughout the years, which has parlayed into a special connection she feels toward Alpharetta.

"We all have a heart for this city," said Rodgers. "I love that our city is such a family-oriented, aesthetically beautiful place, along with being progressive enough to keep us competitive."

Etris said it's the people who make Roswell special.

"The history that we have in the city makes us unique, and all the while it feels like a community," said Etris. "The amount of involvement gives us vitality."

But throughout the similarities and differences between the two neighboring cities, one thing remains constant: the women's friendship.

"We're very good friends, and we'll be friends for a long time," said Etris.

## Safety: Protect yourself during the holidays

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appearance and vehicle, then call the police. The chances are good we've got a unit in the area that can respond quickly," said Howard, noting that nothing in your purse is worth injury, or worse.

### Tips for Holiday Safety

Minimize shopping alone, especially at night. Keep purses zipped or fastened and be aware of your surroundings.

Avoid wearing expensive jewelry while shopping. Provide as few clues to your wealth as possible, as thieves can follow you home.

Use ATMs only during the day or inside a business. If away from home, have neighbors pick up newspapers in your driveway.

Leave lights on timers and perhaps a radio or television on.

Don't display packages under a Christmas tree which are visible from the front windows of your home.

Have checks sent to your bank instead of delivered to your mailbox.

Consider investing in a lockable mailbox.

Ask your police department if it offers a house check service while you are on vacation.

## Manners: Alpharetta mom teaches etiquette to kids

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through as they age."

But it's not just children that need to brush up on their etiquette. It's adults, too.

"When I went back to work after stepping out for my kids, I noticed this huge lack of consideration for others at the corporate level," said Pranger, who is interested in expanding Peachtree Etiquette to offer corporate etiquette classes.

She said if children are taught manners at a young age, they will be more likely to retain the knowledge and grow up with those skills in hand.

The classes range from \$100-\$150 and vary in length of time, said Pranger. She sends home a class summary and two activities to reinforce what the students learned.

"The kids go home with the knowledge and know what to do," said Pranger. "But the day-to-day manners must be reinforced by the parents."

Pranger said her two children, ages three and five, practice their best etiquette at home, but at the end of the day, they are still children and are not perfect.

"They're still going to fight and make each other crazy, but the first thing they do is apologize for it," said Pranger. "It's about the balance to allow kids to be kids with having respect and consideration. I'm not expecting toddlers to be perfect. I'm not here to create mini-adults, rather considerate children."

For Pranger, manners encompass consideration for others.

"We all want to be treated nicely...and as long as the kids remember that, they'll grow up to be respectable and kind individuals," said Pranger.