On October 5th and 6th, in Mechanicsburg, PA, coaches and administrators new to PAHSCI convened at the Holiday Inn West for their first professional development session. Four high schools are new to the PAHSCI Initiative: Martin Luther King, Philadelphia; Allderdice, Pittsburgh; Brashear, also Pittsburgh; and Academy Park, Southeast Delco.

The session kicked off with an evening reception and dinner, followed by a program update from PAHSCI's Executive Director, Ellen Eisenberg. The evening concluded with a presentation from PAHSCI mentors Dianne Arnold and Phyllis Glassman, entitled *Do You Believe?*

The next day was jam packed with presentations and sessions, including: "Unity Builder" and "Attributes of a Learning Community." Whole group programs were followed by special focus break out sessions for coaches and administrators. The afternoon closed with a PLN presentation, "PLN Strategies for Special Needs Students."

Deb McKinney, PAHSCI Math Coordinator and October 5-6 attendee, offers us her own unique personal perspective and warm welcoming words for PAHSCI newcomers:

In August, 2006, I walked into my first PAHSCI gathering in Hershey and wondered what I had gotten myself into. I knew no one but was curious about what I would learn and what I could offer.

Fast forward to October, 2008, in Mechanicsburg. This time, the gathering felt like being surrounded by family. It was a delight to see my IU #1 students, other PLN facilitators and the Foundation directors and mentors. I know that whatever questions, concerns, and joys of success present themselves, whether small or grand in scale, my colleagues are there to lend their support with advice and suggestions. Sometimes just knowing that another coach or facilitator cares and understands can raise my spirits.

Each time I listen to Joe Ginotti, I learn some new tidbit that stimulates ideas in my mind. Becky Crossman shared her wisdom, and I found myself thinking that I would have been a better teacher way back when if I had known the insights she shared. I was impressed with the wealth of knowledge the Foundations mentors possess, evidenced by their guidance during our discussions and times of sharing.

Though it is difficult to be the newcomer floating amidst a sea of experienced professionals, I cannot think of a better place for fledgling coaches to be encouraged and supported than by the PAHSCI family. I am thankful to be a part of that Initiative and hope that all the new coaches will feel like they are "coming home" at the next gathering.