



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XIV, Issue 1, Fall 2015



A Day with the Grizzlies
from a Bobcat Perspective

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You Can Help MSDB
Foundation Help Kids!

PAGES 8-11

STEM at MSDB

By Erin Barr, Teacher

Have you ever wondered why the blades of a wind turbine are shaped a particular way? Students in Ms. Barr's science class tackled this problem with Boston Museum of Science's Engineering is Elementary STEM Unit, *Catching the Wind: Designing Windmills*. STEM Units (science, technology, engineering, and math) are an interactive way to incorporate a variety of fields into a single, cohesive topic.

Students began talking about wind energy after listening to an engineering story. They were then asked to proceed through the 5 steps of the engineering design process (ask, imagine, plan, create, improve) as they created single sails that would push an airship across fishing line after harnessing the wind (in this case a fan). Students completed this step by improving sail designs and retesting. In Ms. Barr's science classroom, students are always encouraged to understand that experiments fail and/or challenge our initial understandings. In this case, students discovered that the airships actually moved better across



Dakota is preparing to attach blades to windmill hub.

the fishing line with the sails on the bottom of the ship. This was discovered because one student had a sail that made the ship top-heavy. Students recorded their most-efficient designs and discussed what designs worked the best and why. Students found that shape and weight were most important to the design.

Reviewing airship sails, students then created and tested blade designs on windmills to determine which



Tevon is working on a windmill blade design.

design could do the most work by lifting centimeter cubes. After observing the effect of wind (a fan) on the blades and the amount of cubes lifted, students worked to improve blade design. One design more than tripled the amount of work (lifted cubes), while another design did less work. Again, students had an authentic opportunity to discover that improvements do not always work.

Throughout the unit, students were engaged learners and continued to ask more thought provoking questions. Their ideas included: improving the hub/rotor of the windmill, actually testing the windmill outside, etc. ■■



Honoring the Fallen of 9/11

Riata Smith, a high school senior, honored 9/11 victims and survivors in her unique way. Submitted by Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant.



Our Lead Cottage Parents Honored

By Jim Kelly,
Dean of Students

On Monday, September 15, Richard Aguon, Debbie Brinka, David Brown and Dorothy Nutter were recognized for the Governor's Award for Excellence In Performance in Helena at the Great Northern Hotel. These outstanding MSDB staff joined 212 other state employees as they were recognized by Governor Bullock and Lt. Governor McLean.

It was announced at this ceremony that "this

group serves as leads in our residential cottage program. Over the past three years, they have been actively involved in professional development to increase their supervisory skills. They have risen to this challenge and have increased their ability to lead, direct, encourage, and correct the staff in their cottage to provide safe and happy learning environments for our students! They are superstars!" Thank you Richard, Debbie, David and Dorothy for your tireless efforts with our residential students. ❖



For a wealth of information about MSDB as well as a detailed calendar of the school year, check out our website at:

www.msdb.mt.gov

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Deaf Awareness Day Celebration

By Brenda LeMieux, Teacher

The Montana Association of the Deaf held a Deaf Awareness Day at Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind on Saturday, September 12th. We had about 100 attendees including members of the Deaf community, MSDB students and staff, and friends. There were several events during the day, including guest speakers, a recognition of MSDB Hall of Fame inductees, a presentation of Deaf History related to Communication technology, a silent auction and a live auction, and a BBQ dinner.

Legislator Tom Steenberg from Missoula and State Geographic Information System analyst Michael Fashoway of Helena shared the wonderful information on Text-to-911 for Deaf/Hard of Hearing people. Currently, the program is in effect in only three counties in Montana: Missoula, Deer Lodge, and Lewis and Clark. In those counties, Deaf/HH people can use their mobile text to contact 911. The Deaf community is asking the two legislators for their help in pushing the state and 911 to have access to Text-to-911 for the Deaf community in Cascade, Gallatin, and Yellowstone Counties, where there are more deaf people living.

The MSDB Hall of Fame recognized a couple of our MSDB alumni athletes, coaches and other individuals whose contributions to sports and recreation



programs for MSDB students have made a big impact.

Cheryl Dickens, Bev LeMieux, Brenda LeMieux, and Betty VanTighem shared with the audience how accessible communication technologies have impacted and changed our lives from the past to the present. These technologies include the telegraph typewriter (TTY/TDD), pagers/text (cell phone), videophone, relay services for TTY and Videophone users, and closed captioned TV. Throughout the day we had people

ABOVE: The Hall of Fame committee members and award recipients from left to right: Jim Kelly, Ed VanTighem, Bob Corwin, Lynda Eddards, Jason Miller, Jeff Meuli, Gary McManus, and Jeff Richards. More information about our Hall of Fame can be found on pages 12 & 13. LEFT: Representative Tom Steenberg (left) from Missoula and Michael Fashoway (right) of Helena who presented a power point about the Next Generation 9-1-1 program that would benefit people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

looking at the technologies display, and the items for the silent auction.

After the delicious BBQ dinner, we had a live auction. It was fun to watch how people bid for items. As a whole, we had a great Deaf Awareness Day. ■■



RICK & PAM STUCKEY HONORED

Pam Stuckey and her late husband, Rick, were recently presented with the Achievement Award from the Montana Speech-Language and Hearing Association (MSHA) at their annual meeting in Billings. This award was given in honor of Pam and Rick's life-long dedication to the deaf children and adults of Montana. Pictured left is Pam (center, seated) with various staff (past and present) from MSDB. ■■

Picture submitted by Julie Borgreen, Speech and Language Pathologist

A Special Song for a Special Day

Each year, the performing group Visually Impaired Performers (VIP) writes a special song about White Cane Day. Everyone looks forward to hearing how creative our song-writers can be and this year is no different! Here is a preview of this year's musical treat:

"IT'S MY CANE"

In the style of "It's My Party"

By Lesley Gore

It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
You would arc if, you had a white cane too

Everyone knows that Mrs. Darko
Is our O and M guide
She teaches us all the skills
We need to travel safely

It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
You would arc if, you had a white cane too

Know my routes, moving independently
Walk along with me for awhile
And I'm sure that you'll see
Why using my white cane makes me smile

It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
You would arc if, you had a white cane too

The VI students just walked through the door
All using their white canes
Oh, what a cane day treat
VIP is going to sing

It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
You would arc if, you had a white cane too

Oh, It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
Arc if I want to
You would arc if, you had a white cane too

Oh, It's my cane and I'll arc if I want to

MSDB's White Cane Day Meets Geocaching

By Geri Darko, Orientation and Mobility Specialist

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed that White Cane Day would be observed annually on October 15. Students and staff at MSDB have made White Cane Day a special event since 2007. This year's participants will be showing off their independent travel skills during a geocaching event.

What is geocaching? It is the real-world treasure hunt that's happening right now, all around you. There are 2,723,720 active geocaches and over 6



million geocachers worldwide (www.geocaching.com). With the advancement of technology and gadgets like tablets and smart phones, people with visual impairments have another tool at their disposal to assist them with independent travel. There are many free way-finding apps available for Apple, Android and Windows technology. A few of the apps that students have tried recently during orientation and mobility lessons are called ViaOpta Nav, Geocaching Intro, and Nearby Explorer Online. Our technologically advanced scavenger hunt will help students put their apps and skills to good use while having fun and celebrating White Cane Day.

During our White Cane Day celebration, students and staff will spread out across the MSDB campus, within the MSDB neighborhood, or will ride a bus downtown. While in their given area of Great Falls, they will be challenged to find the location of special caches, complete a special challenge, or answer a trivia question. After everyone has completed their geocaching event, groups will gather at MSDB to tell others about their experience and share pictures of their adventures.

Geocaching is a fun and free activity you can do with your family anytime. There are literally thousands of geocaches across the state of Montana with hundreds located right here in Great Falls. This fun family activity is a great opportunity for children to practice using technology, mapping skills, efficient visual scanning, and various white cane techniques.

Have fun and be safe at the same time. Students with sensory impairments are encouraged to follow some very important safety rules for using technology during independent travel. Always stand in one place to look at your technology including phones, tablets, iPods, etc. Looking at your screen while walking can be dangerous because it draws your attention away from your environment or obstacles that might be in the path ahead. Always keep your ears uncovered while you are traveling independently, especially when crossing streets or parking lots. Covering your ears with headphones or ear buds can be very dangerous to a traveler with a visual impairment. Use all of your available senses to be aware of dangers within your environment. Look alert, pay attention to your surroundings, and travel with confidence! ♠



MSDB staff and students enjoyed another exciting Griz game on a beautiful September day thanks to the Griz Kidz Association and the MSDB Foundation.

A Day with GRIZZLIES from a BOBCAT Perspective

By Geri Darko, Orientation
and Mobility Specialist

Because I have been a Bobcat fan as long as I can remember, I have always declined the invitation to make the annual trek to a Grizzly football game with students and staff from MSDB. September 26th was the 11th annual Griz Kidz field trip for MSDB and I was invited once again. This time, I couldn't turn down the wide eyes and excited smiles from many of my students in the Visually Impaired Department. "I'm a Montana girl! I can do this," I thought. I put my game face on and got ready for a new and exciting experience on the other side of the mountain.

The day was officially underway when the bus was fully loaded and on

the road at 7 a.m. The first stop was in Lincoln at the High Country Trading Post to buy snacks and stretch legs. As we drove closer to Missoula, the anticipation on the bus grew; students got louder and could hardly sit still. Upon arriving at the University of Montana, we joined Jim Kelly's family and Donna Schmidt and her husband for lunch at the ultimate tailgating van.

While some students and staff ate lunch, others went for a hike on the Mount Sentinel "M" Trail. Students with visual impairments used good cane skills and sighted guide techniques to stay safe on the steep, rocky trail. At the top, some marveled at the view of Missoula Valley and Washington Grizzly Stadium and others caught their breath, so proud they had completed the difficult climb.

Students and staff quickly realized they had worked up quite an appetite and were eager to make the trek back down to the tailgate party and lunch.

We met the former Grizzly football stars who founded the Griz Kidz Association and support our school each year with tickets to the game and vouchers for concessions. As a first-timer to a Griz game with our students, it was fun to watch the excitement of the kids walking into the stadium, finding their seats, buying treats and souvenirs, asking for details about the game, and anticipating the "BOOM!" of the cannon each time Grizzlies put more points on the scoreboard. The Northern Arizona Lumberjacks put 14 total points on the board while the Grizzlies dominated with 23 points for the win!

Students Attend Trades Rodeo Career Fair



By Jennifer Briggs, Counselor

The high school students had the opportunity to go to the Trades Rodeo Career Fair 2015. At the Career Fair the students learned about renewable energy. They were able to engage in carpentry and welding activities and demonstrations. Skylee was able to go in a forklift up into the air. She controlled the direction and height of the equipment. Skylee said, "I can't believe I went up in the crane! I felt really brave!" Skylee tried to drop beanbags into a bucket from way up in the sky and reported later that she was shocked when one made it in the bucket! Mikayla said, "I liked having the control over which direction the machine went and how high it went into the sky."



Shay and Alyson learned CPR strategies and the importance of doing compressions so that the blood travels to the brain and does not lose oxygen. Alyson and Shay said that working as an EMT would be exciting and scary.

The winning score meant there would be time with the team on the field where students could shake hands with players and get autographs. This is where I was the most impressed with my Grizzly experience. As I walked around with MSDB students asking for signatures on hats and shirts, I heard every player thanking us for coming to their game, supporting their team, and being the best fans ever! The players were so polite and generous to all of our students. They paid special attention to every kid waiting in line for signatures and pictures. What great representatives of their university!

The bus ride home included a stop in Bonner for more snacks and many of the students fell asleep before we made it to Roger's Pass. It was a long, busy day with many great memories for students and staff alike. I'd like to thank all the



After a difficult hike to the top of the Mount Sentinel "M" Trail, the reward was taking in the view of Missoula Valley and Washington Grizzly Stadium!

people who make this trip possible for our students including the Griz Kidz Association, MSDB Foundation, Jim Kelly and family, all the house parents, counselors, and teachers who work extra hours to make sure the trip is a success for all. To all the Grizzly football players and staff

at Washington Grizzly Stadium: thank you for everything you do to accommodate our students and make them feel so welcome and excited to come back year after year. Even this Bobcat fan can feel at ease accompanying MSDB to Griz games in the future! ❖



Montana School *for the*

HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

HELP PAVE THE WAY FOR KIDS LIKE TEARRA TO SUCCEED

Tearra Donovan is a young woman on the move. She negotiates the nerve-wracking Las Vegas traffic when she's at home, and her job takes her throughout the state of Nevada educating people and organizations about free resources available for people with difficulties hearing or speaking on the phone. She hops on planes regularly, to attend Deaf events around the country (including MSDB's Deaf Enrichment Weekend last spring), and she spends a lot of time on the road.

Tearra's mom, Connie Hiatt, of Helena, recalls her terror at the thought of her deaf teenager getting behind the wheel when Tearra was a student at MSDB. "Parents of deaf kids have so much fear about their kids driving," she said. "Jennifer Wasson teaching Tearra Driver's Ed was one of the huge things I was grateful to MSDB for."

Eight years after graduating from MSDB in 2007, Tearra returned to campus last March in her professional capacity as an outreach coordinator with Hamilton Telecommunications Relay Service. She's been with the company since 2012 when she graduated from Gallaudet University in Washington DC and took a position in Baltimore for two years before transferring back west. She was happy to be back at her alma mater to share her knowledge.



"Some days I wish I was still here so I could be part of EOS," Tearra said through her interpreter, referring to her membership in the MSDB sign language performing group Expressions of Silence. "I enjoyed performing around the state, showing that Deaf people can express themselves through sign." A highlight was traveling to Salt Lake City to perform with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in front of 21,000 people and also to Washington, D.C.

Connie Hiatt first contacted the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind when Tearra was 18 months old and "something was wrong." She learned the child was deaf after a consultation with the school's longtime audiologist

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

~Helen Keller

With your help, the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind Foundation has been able to provide funds for services and equipment for the students at MSDB for more than 30 years. The MSDB

Foundation is committed to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives.

Donate at justgive.org or by using the enclosed envelope.

Deaf & Blind Foundation

BUILDING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

Kathy Johnson. The school provided outreach visits to the family in Shelby until Tearra was 2 1/2. Then they decided to move to Great Falls and place her in full-time preschool at MSDB.

“There was so much they could teach her that we couldn’t do on our own,” Connie said. “Watching her, seeing her grow, getting some language – she picked up sign pretty quickly – we knew it was the right move. I really appreciated the fact that they gave us all of the options for Tearra,” she said. “They provided speech therapy, along with sign language, so she can use her voice when she needs to.”

“We had access to the best interpreters in the state, and they became part of her life. They made it possible for her to study Shakespeare at the public schools – things that were very difficult for a deaf student.”

Jennifer Wasson played many roles in Tearra’s life at MSDB in addition to teaching her to drive. She taught her high school math and coached her in EOS and Academic Bowl. “I’m proud of her,” she said after Tearra’s presentation at MSDB. She recalled that Tearra “always knew she was going to go to college, since she was a little



Tearra’s mom credits the traveling with EOS and the Academic Bowl with giving Tearra the confidence to travel as she does today.

girl. She always set goals for herself and accomplished them.” Playing volleyball at MSDB and serving as class president and president of Deaf Club prepared Tearra for holding the many leadership positions she held in her sorority at Gallaudet.

One of the best parts of attending MSDB, according to Tearra, was the socialization with other deaf kids. One lasting

friendship that began at the school when she was 3 is going strong. “I’m a godparent to her kids,” she said. “We keep in touch every day.”

“I don’t know where we would be now without having MSDB,” Connie said, “if we had stayed in Shelby, where the only suggestion was to place Tearra in special education classes.” **As it is now, her mom sums it up: “She just loves her life.”**

You can help us make sure kids like Tearra receive an early and comprehensive deaf education to help prepare them for successful lives. Please make a contribution to the MSDB Foundation using the attached envelope or online at justgive.org.

Sincerely,

MSDB Foundation
President

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Montana School *for the*

THANKS YOU FOR

We are most grateful for your contributions, which make such a difference for the students at MSDB.

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***(Those with established memorials
are highlighted in green below.)***

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We also recognize the dedication and effort of all current MSDB Foundation Board Members and we thank all past members for their service.

We have made every effort to confirm this record. If we have failed to record a gift or recorded a gift incorrectly we apologize. Please drop us a note so we can correct our records.



MSDB is proud of our newest Hall of Fame inductees pictured from left to right: Bob Corwin, Lynda Eddards, Jason Miller, and Jeff Meuli.

HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

By Jim Kelly II Dean of Students and Ed Van Tighem MSDB Alumni and Member of the MSDB Foundation

The Montana Association of the Deaf and the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind held its 2015 Hall of Fame presentation on Saturday, September 12th, in conjunction with Deaf Awareness Day. There were several fundraisers including a BBQ to raise money to assist with the cost of Hall of Fame inductee plaques, etc. The fundraiser was very successful with more than 100 people in attendance.

The MSDB Hall of Fame recognized athletes, coaches and other individuals whose contribution to sports and recreation programs for MSDB students has been outstanding. The following individuals were inducted in to the MSDB Hall of Fame:

- **BOB CORWIN** has contributed to the MSDB sports

and recreation program for more than 35 years. He has served and continues to serve in many capacities such as athletic director, coach, assistant coach, Games for the Visually Impaired Director, 8-C tournament director for volleyball and basketball – the list is endless. He has and continues to contribute to the success of the students and the MSDB sports program. Bob is most instrumental in developing and maintaining the relationship MSDB has with Great Falls Central Catholic High School, which serves as the co-op school for many of our athletes.

- **LYNDA EDDARDS** has worked at MSDB since 1998. She served as Gary McManus's interpreter while he coached at Great Falls Central Catholic High School. It is her calm demeanor that has allowed her to be an asset to the program. Lynda has served as interpreter for

Bisonettes, cheerleading, volleyball, basketball, swimming, kayaking, equestrian, football, soccer, wrestling and track. Because of her commitment to MSDB students she has proved to be such a valuable asset to the students who participate.

• **JEFF MEULI** was an outstanding long distance runner here at MSDB. He seemed to be a natural runner with his talents in the long distances. He helped the track team qualify for state in 1983 and placed 7th as a member of the mile relay team. This relay team still holds the record for the mile with a time of 3:38. Jeff played basketball at MSDB and was an outstanding 3-point shooter. Jeff qualified for the 1984 World Deaf Olympic Tryouts. Jeff is a wonderful addition and very deserving to be in the MSDB Hall of Fame.

• **JASON MILLER** was an outstanding athlete in many sports here at MSDB and Great Falls High School. He played football and basketball at GFHS. He also played basketball at MSDB during his senior year in 1996. Jason participated in track and field at MSDB and still holds the record for the javelin. Jason qualified for the World Deaf Olympics Tryouts in the javelin in 1996 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Jason is known as a fierce competitor and has the ability to demonstrate excellent sportsmanship – regardless of the outcome!

• **SANDRA VAN TIGHEM** served as an interpreter for Gary McManus in basketball. Sandra has done an excellent job of conveying the emotions that were expressed during games and practices by Coach McManus. Sandra was very dedicated and interpreted for many practices and games that were held at 6:00 a.m. or on holidays. Sandra demonstrated a high level of care – yet professionalism – for each student she interpreted for. As a testament to her dedication when others may have been sleeping on the team bus during the out of town games, Sandra was awake and interpreting to our athletes the conversations that were happening on the bus.

The Hall of Fame committee is composed of the following individuals: Bob Corwin, Jim Kelly, Gary McManus, Jeff Richards and Ed Van Tighem. The committee hopes to present the next Hall of Fame class in 2017.

PRESCHOOL

PEEPS



ReADy, Set, ReAD! Eli Soulsby, Paisley Ray, AND Henry Hoven enjoy their new library books in the visually impaired Classroom.



The RAINbow GARDen club onCe AGain ArrANGED for eACh CHILd to hAVE A pUMPKin to CARve or DeCORate. A huge thAnK you goes to the AlBERTsons store on 10th Avenue in Great Falls for DonATING the pUMPKins. CHARlee (right) AND LUCIA (left) pose in the front lobby where our pUMPKins were Dis-PLAYED until eACh CHILd piCKed one for their very own.

MSDB STAFF NEWS

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Community Stakeholders,

I am one of two new teachers in the Visually Impaired (VI) Department this school year. I have dreamed of working at a school like MSDB since I was in the third grade! I grew up in Clinton, Montana, with my parents Don and Teresa Barr. I completed my bachelor's degree in elementary education at the University of Montana and am a diehard Griz! After graduating from U of M in 2008, I taught at New Rockport Colony School and Golden Ridge School (a one-room school in Fairfield, Montana). While teaching at Golden Ridge, I completed my master's degree in education online. I feel very blessed to have joined the VI family at MSDB this year and look forward to many more years here.

In my spare time, I enjoy making beaded jewelry and teaching jewelry classes. I also love training and showing Rottweilers (and my one Gordon Setter, Rosie, pictured), as well as teaching dog obedience classes.

—Erin Barr

Hi, I'm Susan Davis, Outreach Consultant for the Visually Impaired (VI). I received my Elementary Education degree at MSU-Bozeman and taught in Broadus for 8 years



before moving to southern Colorado. Funny where life leads you simply by asking, "What else is possible?" In time, I obtained a masters in Special Education-VI and moved back to Montana to teach in Winifred. From there, I came to MSDB for new opportunities. I love to write young adult fiction and hope to, no, strike that

— I will be published someday. I enjoy spending time reading, writing and staying active with my friends and animals.

My name is Carrie Dawes and I was recently hired as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired at MSDB. My college years were spent at Montana State University-Billings where I received a B.S.



with double majors in Special Education and Education. I also have a M.S. in Special Education. Through the years I have had the privilege of working with both adults and children identified as autistic, cognitively delayed, and learning disabled. The last several years have found me

teaching in the regular education classroom. I am excited to be at MSDB and learning alongside our students who have visual impairments!

My name is Cheri Turner and I am excited to be the new Behavioral Counselor working in the Cottages. I'm a Montana native that grew up in



Sunburst and moved to Great Falls about 12 years ago. I have a degree in Child Development and Family Science from MSU-Bozeman and I'm currently working on my masters in Psychology with a behavioral analysis emphasis. I have spent the past 20 years working with

children, adults and families that need specialized supports. When I'm not having fun with the kids in the cottages I can be found fishing, camping, snow skiing and spending time with my awesome kids and very doted upon granddaughter.



I am Heather Geddings (Lamb), the new Speech-Language Pathologist. I moved from Virginia. I went to James Madison University for my undergraduate degree, and then to Radford University for my masters. I am recently married, and my husband is a US Airman. We just started a little family, consisting of two wild puppies. The pups consume most of my free time, but if I get a minute, I enjoy crafting and thrift shopping. I am very happy to be here at MSDB. I love the kids, and I appreciate the warm welcome I have received from everyone!

Where Are They Now?

Jeff Richards, a 1977 graduate of MSDB who lived in Seeley Lake while attending school now lives in Great Falls. MSDB teacher Brenda LeMieux had the opportunity to interview Jeff and this is what Jeff wanted to share with our readers:

"I am working part time at FedEx Ground and Malmstrom AFB Commissary. My favorite hobby is working as an automotive mechanic on cars and trucks. During my leisure time, I enjoy playing golf and going hunting. I am on a weekly bowling league. I always look forward to attending and bowling in the Northwest Bowling Association of the Deaf in the spring time. When I was in MSDB high school, I enjoyed playing sports (basketball and wrestling)." ❖



Where Are They Now? is a new column highlighting a different MSDB graduate in each issue of the MSDB Express. We will try to include a current photo as well as a graduation photo along with information about when the person graduated and what they are doing now. If any graduates are interested in being included in this column, please contact Leann Goss at lgoss@msdb.mt.gov

A Farewell Note from Mary Lou Wiest

To all the families, staff and friends at MSDB, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. You have allowed me to be a huge part of your lives for 28 wonderful years. I can't imagine



many people loving their job as much as I did, working as a paraprofessional at MSDB. My memories and learning experiences will forever be in my heart. I learned something from each and every student I came in contact with, and I learned valuable, helpful and heartfelt

lessons from my peers and administration.

I began working in the multi-handicapped room in the visually impaired department and soon I was working with all the students and all the teachers. Five years later, I was moved to the deaf and hard of hearing department where I worked primarily in the preschool room. Eventually, I started working with all grades and ages and all the teachers. I loved it. I was given the opportunity to travel to Missoula with several students and Bob Corwin, the Transition Coordinator. The students spent 2 days learning what college life would be like and what was available for them once they left MSDB. What an awesome experience; I will never forget it.

I want to wish all of you my very best. Once again, I want to thank you for letting me do what I love; caring about MSDB. I will miss you. ❖

MSDB STAFF NEWS CONT'D

Rebecca Stroud is the newest Cottage Life Attendant, or CLA, here on campus. She has been with us since October 19,



moving all the way from Virginia! She is one year away from graduating from Gallaudet University with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Communications. Becky likes to read, watch movies, and hang out with friends when not on cottage duty. She's been working in the Shoshone Cottage with the high school girls and has loved meeting everybody here.

MSDB is also proud to welcome Missie Hill as our Special Education Coordinator, Amee Sevrie as our ASL Bilingual Specialist, and 3 new paraprofessionals: Shelly Vana, Ray Sevrie, and Rhonda James. We are happy to have all of our new staff on board!



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The Cottage Student Council Hard at Work

By Jim Kelly, Dean of Students

The Cottage Student Council is a student organization that has been in existence for about six years. All the students who reside in the cottage and some day students are members of this organization. The students meet twice a month in the evenings and the officers meet prior to the general meetings to plan their agenda. The officers are elected by the students and serve a term of one school year. The officers for this school year are: President – Seri Brammer, Vice President – Isabella O’Neil, Secretary – Adriana Huth and Billy Haley (share duties,) Treasurer – Mikayla Ellermann.

The students have had several fundraisers this year: they sold snacks at the Deaf Awareness Day (hosted by the Montana Association of the Deaf), had a very successful car wash and most recently had a Fall Harvest Dinner (very delicious beef stew, taco soup and corn bread). The students work on all aspects of the dinner, from selling tickets to actual food preparation and cooking, to setting up the dining room and clean up afterwards.

The Cottage Student Council will



TOP: Student council members and staff sold snacks at the Deaf Awareness Day celebration. L to R: Isabella, Marianne, Patricia, Seri, Jesse, and Robert. LEFT: Student council members also held a car wash to help raise funds.

have a Cottage Christmas Open House on December 8 from 3:15 to 4:30. The students will have spent much time decorating their cottage and filling the air with the holiday spirit. Everyone is welcome to attend and check out the festive setting the students call their home away from home!

The students will have a pancake dinner on January 26 and a “super”

sandwich dinner April 26. Mark these dates on your calendar and join us! The funds from the fundraisers go towards an overnight trip near the end of the school year. The last two years the students and staff went to Helena and had a wonderful time. The Lead Cottage Life Attendants and the Counselors provide the leadership and guidance for this group. ■■