



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & THE BLIND

Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XVI, Issue 1, Fall 2016



Students Showcase their Talents
During Red Ribbon Week

PAGE 12

You Can Help MSDB
Foundation Help Kids!

PAGES 8-11

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Stakeholders...

In early October, Carol Clayton-Bye and I* traveled to Louisville, KY for the Annual American Printing House (APH) Meeting. In 1879, the US Congress passed the “Act to Promote the Education of the Blind” creating a Federal Quota system to provide accessible materials for students who are blind and visually impaired. Each state has one (usually the state school for the blind’s superintendent) or more “Ex Officio Trustees” who are responsible for overseeing the use of this Federal Quota money for their state. This Act also established the annual mandatory meeting of all Ex Officio Trustees to gather and share ideas and information regarding Federal Quota funds. In 2015 in Montana, there were 251 students who qualified for Federal Quota funds creating an allotment of \$70,054 to assist schools, including the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB), in obtaining accessible books and materials.

This year, most of the workshops focused on gathering information from Ex Officio Trustees and others in attendance about current and upcoming APH products and programs and how to create the best possible product. There are a few very cool items APH will be producing soon.



One item is “The Graphiti.” This item will be a full-page size tactile graphic touch display with multi-level interaction. Think “topographical maps gone wild.” This display will be able to show shapes, maps, photographs, and so many more things in a tactile format! See www.aph.org/graphiti/ for more information.

I also attended a workshop regarding the best age to introduce refreshable braille technology for young students. This workshop was full of passionate ideas and various states’ established practices and policies. Many questions were raised about the student’s learning media assessment results. If the student is using a refreshable braille display for reading, is an assessment measuring their reading level or measuring their technology skills? One person said their state allows third graders and up to use refreshable braille displays; however, students starting at Kindergarten are given access to digital books. Is this equitable for those who need braille? Is listening to a book the same as reading a book?

One participant suggested the development of prerequisite concepts and skills list that students needed to understand before working with refreshable braille displays.

The summary of this workshop was that sighted students have access to technology as young as 18 months old. The longer we wait to introduce technology to students, who are visually impaired, the further behind they get. Also, students and adults, who are visually impaired, use different devices at different times for different purposes. Therefore, young students need experience with a variety of devices throughout their education so they are as independent as possible when they leave school. Finally, you’ll notice an asterisk* at the top. For the past two years, we strive to have several people attend this workshop because it is powerful professional development. This year, we had two additional people scheduled to attend who opted not to attend due to family needs. There wasn’t enough time to make arrangements for others to attend. We look forward to others attending this meeting in the future so we can continue to provide the best education for all our students. ■■



REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES MAKE BIGGEST IMPACT

By Miché Jarvey, Teacher

Brittany Smith and I are taking online classes through Portland State University to become Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI). As part of our program, we went to Portland, OR for 3 weeks this summer for what is known as face-to-face class time. One of our most memorable experiences was visiting Guide Dogs for the Blind in Boring, Oregon.

While visiting their amazing campus, they explained the process and prerequisites for getting a guide dog and gave us a tour. Our favorite part of the whole visit was being under blindfold and having Solomon, one of their trained dogs, guide us. I would encourage anyone who has a chance to visit Guide Dogs for the Blind and witness the amazing service they provide for those with visual impairments. ■■

The Governor's Award of Excellence

On August 22, 2016, Governor Steve Bullock recognized Montana state employees that have made a significant, positive impact within their workplaces. Each state agency was invited to nominate one of their employees (or a group of employees) that exemplified excellence in their professions. The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) recognized Geri Darko, our Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist.

Geri works with our students who have visual impairments on orienting themselves in space, on using good white cane skills, and on traveling independently in a classroom, in a building, across campus, and in the community. Geri works with students in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department with students who also have a vision condition. She has learned sign language at a proficient level to be able to communicate with these students. She works with the Residential staff in training them to work with students who have visual impairments to be as independent as possible. She collaborates with city officials with comments,



questions, concerns, and ideas about various crosswalks that our students need to use. She teaches students O&M skills that they will need to use in their mainstream classes. She works with families to increase students' independence skills. She is a life-long learner attending conferences and sharing her knowledge with others.

Geri traveled to Helena to receive her award from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Her parents, Kim Schwabe, and Donna Sorensen traveled to Helena to be with her and to celebrate with her as she accepted this award! Congratulations, Geri! You deserve this award! 🍷



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

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2

- Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Stakeholders...
- Real Life Experiences Make Biggest Impact

Page 3

- The Governor's Award of Excellence

Page 4

- National Award Winner!!!
- A Note of Appreciation

Page 5

- Students Learn Through Experience
- IEFA is Thriving at MSDB
- What's UTD?

Page 6

- What Gives You Wings?

Page 7

- Pumpkins, White Canes, and Families, Oh My!
- Schulte's Students of the Week

Page 8-9

- Collaboration is the Key

Page 10-11

- Thanks for Your Support

Page 12

- What Did We DO at DEW?
- Red Ribbon Week at MSDB

Page 13

- "Ear Buds" Supporting Families and Educators in Innovative Ways

Page 14

- Distance Learning at MSDB

Page 15

- I Say "Montana," You Say "Griz!"

Page 16

- Preschool Peeps
- MSDB Welcomes New Staff

NATIONAL AWARD WINNER!!

By Donna E Sorensen

Each year, the Principals for Schools and Services for the Blind (POSB) solicits nominations in 6 different categories from schools for the blind across the country. This year, the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind nominated the following people in these categories:

- DIANA “DEE” BLAKE: Outstanding Teacher of Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired
- DIANE MOOG: Outstanding Teacher of Students who are Blind/Multiply Impaired
- RICHARD AGUON: Outstanding Residential Life Staff Member who is Currently Working with Blind or Visually Impaired School Age Children
- CHRISTY HAAGENSEN: Outstanding Paraprofessional who is Currently Working with Blind or Visually Impaired School Age Children
- STEPHANIE ANNIS: Outstanding Related Services Provider
- BARB BALKO: Outstanding Provider of Outreach Services



and the Blind (MSDB) had one National Award Winner – Diane Moog!

Diane Moog has taught at MSDB for almost 30 years. Under her guidance, students have grown in their daily academic skills and have learned many expanded core curriculum skills related to technology, self-help, organization and recreation. She firmly believes that there is no challenge too great and that all activities and tasks can be adapted to meet our students' unique needs. All learning and communication modes are respected in her classroom. Students understand that they each have different tools for accessing material and participating in class. Peer interactions are frequent and provide opportunities for practicing many varied skills.

One co-worker says, “I have wit-

nessed her dedication to providing an environment that meets both the auditory and visual needs of all her students. Students flourish as they learn new skills in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Diane is mindful of the need to develop independence skills and is able to structure her classroom in such a way that it allows students to direct themselves. Her use of adaptive technology allows students to fully participate in meaningful learning activities.”

Please congratulate these individuals and thank them for the incredible work they do every day. From these nominations, the Montana School for the Deaf

nessed her dedication to providing an environment that meets both the auditory and visual needs of all her students. Students flourish as they learn new skills in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Diane is mindful of the need to develop independence skills and is able to structure her classroom in such a way that it allows students to direct themselves. Her use of adaptive technology allows students to fully participate in meaningful learning activities.”

Diane had one student last year who is deafblind. His mom says, “There is one teacher that grabbed my son’s capabilities and brought them out of the shadows. Where there was a lack of communication, there is now my son, Diane’s student, correcting me in sign and vocally (the best way he can). He now uses questions, answers, and his imagination. Knowing and seeing the growth my son has made and continues to make, there truly is not enough gratitude or gratefulness that I can show to Diane Moog.”

Congratulations to all nominees and to Diane Moog for being recognized nationally! ■■

A Note of Appreciation

By Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant



Co-workers make our lives better. I am blessed by amazing co-workers. We all hold areas of specialty and sharing the talents we possess makes us better employees as well as better people.

Kathy Johnson is an amazing co-worker. Kathy is the Audiologist at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB.) Not only is Kathy responsible for MSDB’s day and campus students, she also travels with our Outreach Consultants to help with students around the state. Kathy’s years of experience are a gold mine when it comes to identifying and brainstorming possible solutions for students with hearing loss. Consultants take advantage of this experience and

are extremely appreciative of Kathy’s hard work. She is an important part of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams across the state, working side by side with public school personnel and families.

There are countless testimonies to Kathy’s work and I will share just a few with you. After diagnosing a fifth grade boy with hearing loss, a parent later told a consultant how much she appreciated the way Kathy talked directly to her son about hearing aids and FM systems and how letting him listen to the equipment she had available helped to put her son’s mind at ease and to understand what was ahead for him as they moved forward. Another story involves a middle school student. This student started wearing hearing aids and an FM system. Her mother wrote, “Thank you both for doing what you do and doing it so well. You have made a world of difference in our lives and in (my daughter’s) for many years to come.”

Thank you, Kathy, for all you do for each of us! Kathy, you make a difference! ■■



Students Learn Through Experience

By Leann Goss, Outreach Consultant

Like most teachers on the MSDB campus, Carrie Dawes teaches a variety of subjects to students from a variety of grade levels throughout the day. She uses every opportunity to make learning meaningful, interesting, and motivating through hands on, real life experiences. A good example of this is the fact that her classroom is known as “The Mustang Recycling Center” and students in her Employability class collect and process paper products to be taken to Pacific Recycling (pictured above). Another example is the fact that she took her Montana History class on a field trip to Fort Shaw to view the monument to the 1904 Fort Shaw Indian Boarding School Girls Basketball Team (pictured below). When asked about her philosophy of education she said, “I have always believed that students learn best when they can experience a lesson first hand instead of just reading about it in a book or hearing about it through stories.” Thanks for all you do everyday Carrie! ❖



IEFA is Thriving at MSDB

By Missie Hill, Special Education Coordinator

MSDB participated in an Indian Education for All (IEFA) activity by celebrating Native American week September 19-23. The students participated in various activities led by the Indian Education Coordinator. They played Apache games, listened to Chippewa stories, learned how many reservations and tribes are in the state of Montana, and even drew pictures. They were filled with questions and laughter throughout the week. At the end of the week, the whole school came together to decorate fabric squares however they wanted. These squares will be sewn together into a quilt to honor the Native Americans and our school. The students were told that,



Students sit at long tables in the IMC and share their ideas and designs for their quilt squares with each other.

in certain tribes, when someone has touched your heart, you honor them with a quilt. This school, this staff, and these students have become my family and my heart. Once this quilt is complete it will hang in the Bitterroot building for everyone to enjoy. We are already starting plans for Native American month in November so stay tuned!!! ❖

WHAT'S UTD?

By Kerri Norick, Outreach Consultant

U is for ‘Untangling’, T is for ‘the’, and D is for ‘Dots’. Put it together and what do you get? Untangling the Dots. The 10th annual Untangling the Dots braille in-service workshop was held at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) on October 7-8, 2016. MSDB Outreach Consultants for the Visually Impaired plan for this annual workshop for months. This training takes place every year due to the passing of the Montana Braille Bill. This bill ensures that school districts assign a teacher or paraprofessional “within two years of the date a student with a visual impairment has been identified as



Participants learn from Allison O'Day, a National Transcriber Proofreader and Braille Instructor.

in need of braille instruction and/or materials. AUTH: 20-2-114, MCA IMP: 20-1-121, 20-7-475, MCA.” Guest speaker Allison O'Day, National Federation for the Blind Braille instructor, reads and corrects lessons on site to provide immediate feedback to braille students. Our main focus is to get people trained in reading and writing braille so students with visual impairments can have materials provided in their accessible format: braille. ❖

What Gives YOU Wings?

By Geri Darko, Orientation and Mobility Specialist

It's that time of year again, Mustangs! Autumn, cool weather, raking leaves, football season, and our favorite: WHITE CANE DAY! In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed that White Cane Day would be observed annually on October 15. Students and staff at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) have made White Cane Day a special event since 2007. Mustangs in the Visually Impaired (VI) Department started thinking about White Cane Day as soon as school started in August. A White Cane Day t-shirt design contest was held in which there were only three rules:

1. Designs must contain a White Cane Day-specific theme/logo.
2. Designs must include school spirit (school mascot and/or school colors).
3. Simple, bold, solid line drawings without many small details are best.

Students and staff in the VI Department were given a week to put their artistic abilities to good use. Nine sketches were entered and all Mustangs were given a week to vote for their favorite. The winner of our White Cane Day T-shirt Design Contest is... DRUMROLL, PLEASE: MIRACLE BIGHEAD! Identity Screen Printing in Great Falls, MT deserves a big THANK YOU for turning Miracle's design into this year's t-shirt.

During this year's White Cane Day celebration, participants will employ many of their skills to become oriented to the new Super 1 Foods grocery store in Great Falls. How does a person



with a visual impairment become oriented to a brand new environment? The process involves many of the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) for students with visual impairments. The ECC is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique disability-specific needs. These areas are taught in addition to the core curricular areas of education (reading, writing and math).

- **Compensatory/Functional Academic Skills** will enable each student to use their best learning modality to access written information such as signs, labels, and price tags. Our field trip will include large print and braille maps of the store and some students may carry hand-held optical devices to enlarge written information.

- **Orientation and Mobility** allows students to use concept development and spatial awareness to understand their position in relation to the environment. Safe, efficient, and independent travel is the name of this game.

- **Social Interaction Skills** will be employed by students as they ask appropriate questions, politely inquire about the location of specific items, and make purchases from cashiers.

- **Independent Living Skills** will be practiced as students demonstrate money management while shopping on a limited budget, time

monitoring as they make sure they don't miss their ride back to school, and organization of items within various categories of the store.

- **Career Education** on this field trip will consist of learning how many different jobs are available in a grocery store setting and meeting some of the employees holding those positions.

- **Technology** can be used by students who carry smart phones, touch-screen tablets, braille note-takers, currency readers, or digital voice recorders. Technology will enable students to independently keep track of grocery lists, enlarge small labels and price tags, and identify the bills in their wallets.

- **Sensory Efficiency Skills** are important for integrating all of the remaining senses to counter the impact of any missing or impaired sense. Learning how to use auditory, tactual, gustatory, and olfactory rather than visual cues is an important part of becoming oriented to any new environment. What better way to know we're getting closer to the bakery than to smell the fresh baked goodies!

- **Self-Determination** is all about our students believing in themselves and working to achieve their life's goals. By working on all of the areas of the ECC, we believe our students can achieve anything they set their minds to. ❖

To learn more about the Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments, visit the American Foundation for the Blind--<http://www.afb.org/info/programs-and-services/professional-development/teachers/expanded-core-curriculum/the-expanded-core-curriculum/12345>

Pumpkins, White Canes, and Families, Oh My!

By: Sharon Woods and Susan Davis, Outreach Consultants

On Monday October 24th more than ten families and several friends gathered at the University of Mary Billings campus for an event of fun and sharing. The event was co-sponsored by the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) Foundation and the University of Mary. Fifteen occupational therapy students and staff provided pumpkin painting and a White Cane Day obstacle course while MSDB staff provided games and refreshments. This was made possible by financial support from our wonderful MSDB Foundation. This event provided a great opportunity for families from all around the southeast part of the

state to meet and feel supported by one another. The University of Mary staff and students made us all feel welcome.

Parents and caregivers often feel that they are alone in their journeys. Events and support groups are wonderful ways to give and get the support needed when raising a child with visual impairments. The Billings area support group welcomes all families with children who have visual impairments. The support group meets the second Saturday of each month. Please contact your MSDB Outreach Consultant for more information. If you happen to be in Billings on the Saturday we meet, please plan on stopping by! As you can see by the pictures, this is a warm and welcoming group! ■■



ABOVE: Students in costumes use paint to decorate their small pumpkins. LEFT: Participants who were too young for painting, sculpted mini pumpkins out of orange play dough.

Schulte's Students of the Week

Every town has its share of convenience stores but not many towns are lucky enough to have a store like Great Falls' own Schulte's 38th Street Store and Coffee House. In business since 1989, they are best known for their deli chicken and family-like customer service! Their community outreach always includes recognizing the great work of students in their neighborhood schools, and for one week of each month a student at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) is selected. Teachers and/or staff nominate students for the Schulte's Student of the Week award and that student gets to go to Schulte's every day for that week and get a free treat! The store owners proudly display that



student's name on their marquee for the neighborhood to see. It's a great honor and one that we all celebrate with all the winners!

Congratulations to Gracie for earning Schulte's Student of the Week in the month of September. She got off on a great start to the school year. Gracie is enthusiastic about her learning and participates in class. She is motivated to learn every day.

Maci earned Schulte's Student of the Month in October for being cooperative and respectful to staff and students. She works hard in class and when Maci finds something to be new or uncomfortable she still gets right to work. Congratulations to Maci for earning Schulte's Student of the Week in the month of October! ■■



Montana School *for the*

HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

COLLABORATION IS THE KEY

By Carol Clayton-Bye, Director of Outreach

In a rural state like Montana it is often difficult for students to have access to a range of services specific to their hearing and/or vision needs. At the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB), we welcome that challenge. Having a state school located in the center of Montana allows for a place where students from around the state can come together to work on essential skills and learning. Outreach Consultants work in tandem with Campus Staff to provide enrichment activities in a 2-3 day scheduled event focusing on specialized skills. We call it our Visually Impaired Enrichment Weekend (VIEW) for students who are blind or visually impaired and Deaf Enrichment Weekend (DEW) for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Students who are blind or visually impaired and are served in a public school setting attend VIEW to be involved in a variety of activities alongside campus students including braille, technology, independent life skills, O&M, self determination, recreation and transition. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing participate in social emotional activities, developing peer relationships, self determination, language and communication using both English and



Deaf Enrichment Weekend (DEW) was held in October on the MSDB campus and attended by students from all over the state of Montana.

ASL, technology, independent life skills, recreation and transition. The students are grouped by age to participate in fun learning activities planned by the staff to meet critical needs.

New to the DEW event this fall was a community day where students focused on safe travel, soliciting assistance, community awareness and community services. MSDB partners with additional agencies like

“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

Blind and Low Vision Services, Vocational Rehab and a variety of other agencies to introduce students to services that will bridge their school life to adulthood. These events are instrumental in providing rural students access to a wide range of services not always available within their home community and build a wealth of knowledge for students to refer to when thinking about options and opportunities throughout their lives. At MSDB, we see collaboration as the key to student success!

Do You Support the MSDB Foundation?

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) serves approximately 50 students on campus and approximately 650-700 students throughout the state. That is A LOT of students. Each student MSDB serves has unique needs educationally, academically, and social-emotionally. While the state funds the school as a state agency, there are so many additional ways students need support. This is where the MSDB Foundation comes in. Our MSDB Foundation generates funds through



This year's annual Visually Impaired Enrichment Weekend (VIEW) was held in November on the MSDB campus and attended by students from all areas of the state.

investing our corpus, through project-specific and material-specific grants, and donations from businesses, other non-profits, other agencies, and from individuals like you.

Donations are tax-deductible. They can also be earmarked for specific materials and specific activities or projects. These donations directly support students. One of the most important "pots of money" in the Foundation budget is the

"Student Support" line item. The funds from this line item can be used for a variety of student needs including sports fees, club memberships, special clothing or shoes needed by a student/s for an activity, or anything a student might need that the family simply cannot afford. These activities also support our students in becoming independent people as they grow and learn.

Would you consider donating today? If you have questions about various projects, activities, or materials to support, please call 406-771-6000 and ask to speak to someone about the Foundation. If you use a videophone, that number is 406-205-0016.

Thank you for your donation today! ■■

MSDB FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Are you interested in serving on the MSDB Foundation Board?
We need YOU! Call 406-771-6000 and ask to speak to someone about the Foundation!



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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Deaf & Blind Foundation

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(Those who are honored are highlighted in green.)

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Donald Fink
Cam & Shawn Tulloch
Kerri & Storm Norick

JEFF MEULI

Jan Irvin

SHANNON HOILAND

Susan Johnson

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 record a gift incorrectly we apologize. Please drop us a note so we can correct our records.

What did we DO at DEW?

Deaf Enrichment Weekend -
Sept. 23rd and 24th at MSDB

By Sarah Eyer, Outreach Consultant

We made new friends, connected with old friends, learned about planning for the future, visited a variety of interesting places in Great Falls, participated in fun and educational activities that were accessible to everyone, laughed, hugged, and went home happy.....and exhausted.

During the day on Friday the older students went on a “Scavenger Hunt” in downtown Great Falls, gathering information on different businesses, stores, services, and public transportation, which could be important in their future. MSDB students were welcomed warmly everywhere they went. It was obvious they are a valued part of this community. Students met with Vocational Rehabilitation (V.R.) Counselors



to learn more about how V.R. will help them with careers, training, and education during and after High School.

The younger students had their own adventures around Great Falls including Giant Springs, the

Forest Service Wildlife Center, and Petco. They fed fish, petted an owl and a snake skin, and came back with cool fish tattoos. Although they weren't able to find the owl with the toilet-paper-roll binoculars they made, they were excited to find owl pellets.

Friday night started with students sharing one memory from the day trip and having dinner together. Then everyone enjoyed making ice cream, and getting to know more about themselves and each other.

Saturday was jam-packed with fun and educational activities. Again, the older students had opportunities to plan for their futures: their individual career goals, traits, strengths, weaknesses, and resources to support them. All the youth had the opportunity to participate in games and art activities that were accessible to everyone.

Staff, families, and students commented on the positive development of social skills, confidence, and independence that attendees of the DEW exhibit from year to year – and even from Friday morning until Saturday afternoon. It's magical to see friendships and leadership skills develop when over twenty-five young people, from pre-school through high school, have full access to social and educational activities. That's what we DO at DEW!

Don't miss the next DEW on Friday and Saturday, March 24th and 25th. Check out the MSDB website: www.msdb.mt.gov under the “What's Happening” tab to learn more about DEW and other amazing events. Contact MSDB or your Outreach Consultant to make sure you're receiving our information. ■■

RED RIBBON WEEK AT MSDB

By Erin Barr, Teacher

October 24 through October 28 was Red Ribbon Week at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB). Red Ribbon Week is a celebration of choosing to be drug-free and a



way to open a dialogue about drugs between students and staff. This year's theme was Super Heroes and doors across campus were decorated with Super Hero/Anti-Drug designs. First place doors were chosen from each of three locations around campus, the Aspen building, the Bitterroot building, and the Cottages/Mustang Center.

Each day provided an opportunity to dress-up against drugs! Monday was Super Crazy Sock Day, Tuesday was Super Crazy Hat Day, Wednesday was Super Mismatched Outfit Day, Thursday was Super Cape Day with students designing and wearing their own capes, and Friday was Dress-up Against Drugs with Halloween Costumes. Teachers hosted brief discussions about the dangers of drugs with a preselected topic each day and presented students with special Red Ribbon items.

A new twist was added this year to help motivate students and staff to remember to wear their red ribbons each day. Each ribbon was numbered and there were daily drawings for prizes with the caveat that the person was caught wearing his or her red ribbon.

Red Ribbon Week culminated with an Our Talented Kids are Drug Free talent show on Friday. Students and staff were able to showcase their talents (Henry is pictured on the cover playing his guitar) and students shared drug-free messages between acts. ■■

“Ear Buds” Supporting Families and Educators in Innovative Ways

By Kitty Griffin, Outreach Consultant

Forming relationships is hard. Communication is harder-communication when you have a hearing loss is even harder still! There are people that naturally excel at communication. One of those people who spreads her talent in Deer Lodge, MT is Kim Stavlo, a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) at the Elementary school in Deer Lodge.

Kim started a new program at her elementary school which made me proud to be her colleague. Not only does she work tirelessly providing evaluations and treatments for all the students on her caseload, she also took the bold step to create something new for her Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students. EAR BUDS held its initial meeting at Granville Stuart Elementary School on May 24, 2016. The invited guests were parents and family members, school staff, administration, the school nurse, the local MSDB consultant and of course our DHH students. The group was small, and the sharing was huge. The school principal, Mrs. Morani expressed her excitement for Kim's idea and shared that she is pleased her DHH students receive a variety of supports including education to classroom teachers, written information and family support.

Great minds think alike! American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) has a campaign that also provides information to SLP's, audiologists, students and the public: Listen to Your Buds <http://www.asha.org/buds>. Events and public service announcements are listed as well as current research and printable information including lesson plans and classroom activities about noise and hearing loss. One of the best sections I found was bullet-pointed information on how hearing loss may affect children including “social interaction, communication skills, behavior, emotional development,



The team pictured: Ann Morani, Principal; Rebecca McNeil, RN- School Nurse; Kitty Griffin, DHH Consultant, MSDB; Kim Stavlo, SLP; Marie Porter, Mom (and Classroom Teacher at the Deer Lodge school).

and academic performance” (Listen to your Buds, ASHA 2016) A wealth of information can be found there.

A wealth of information is also found in Deer Lodge, MT! Thank you, Kim, we are big fans of your work!

Identify the Signs of Hearing Loss

Reference: www.asha.org

HEARING LOSS

- Lack of attention to sounds (birth to 1 year)
- Does not respond to when you call his/her name (7 months to 1 year)
- Does not follow simple (spoken) directions (1-2 years)
- Shows a delay in speech and (spoken) language development (birth to 3 years)

KNOW THE SIGNS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS

- Does not smile or interact with others (birth and older)
- Does not babble (4-7 months)
- Makes only a few sounds or gestures, like pointing (7-12 months)
- Does not understand what others say (7 months to 2 years)
- Says only a few words (12-18 months)
- Words are not easily understood (18 months to 2 years)
- Does not put words together to make sentences (1.5-3 years)
- Has trouble playing or talking to other children (2-3 years)
- Has challenges with early reading and writing skills- for example, may not show interest in books or drawing (2 ½ -3 years) ■■

Distance Learning at MSDB

By Denise Rutledge, Teacher

Some MSDB students with visual impairments are trying a new format for math classes this year—on-line instruction! We have partnered with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) in Vancouver, Washington to receive direct instruction in a variety of mathematic areas including algebra, geometry, life skills and functional math. Students “attend” class by sitting at a computer and calling in (via Skype to Business) to their teacher who is located 717 miles away! With both the audio and video feeds going, students and staff in both locations can see and hear one another. While some work is mailed back and forth between the schools, additional work is emailed and even displayed using document cameras.

The students are responding well to the instruction. Ms. Sonja Steinbach, the WSSB teacher, works hard each day to connect with her students in Great Falls, Helena and Vancouver. She teaches students in her own classroom as well as those at MSDB and Helena High. Her principal, Sean McCormick, describes her as a “math guru”. This description is evident in her instruction and her genuine enthusiasm for the subject.

When asked about their WSSB class, students excitedly responded with all positive reviews. Maci, a 6th grader said, “I love it. I like the teacher. I’m learning division on the abacus and it seems way easier this way. It is better than just doing it by ourselves at a table.” While working on his abacus under Ms. Steinbach’s direction, Billy, an 8th grader, exclaimed, “Ms. S has a lot of fun stuff planned. I didn’t know all about



ABOVE: Maci reads her braille assignment and responds using a Perkins brailer.



LEFT: Anthony is using braille with his technology.

the abacus until now.” Anthony, a 10th grader said, “It’s very cool. You are getting math, but it is virtual. I needed more practice with using the abacus for multiplying and now I know.” And Adriana, an 11th grader (who participates in WSSB classes at both MSDB and at Helena High) said, “Math is so much fun. I can’t wait until we start in our Life Skills math book.”

While there have been some initial glitches with coordinating time (they are an hour behind us) and getting

the technology set-up, all involved with these classes have addressed these minor problems and love the new learning format. It’s a great way to expose our students to distance learning opportunities. Many schools offer courses on-line and these classes give MSDB students experience with this style of learning. They also help them make connections with other students who have visual impairments from across the country. It has been fun to see our students reach out to their peers and ask questions about their school and activities. The WSSB staff and students have asked how a fieldtrip went on our end. Our students have exchanged dialogue on whether the students or staff of WSSB won the recent goalball match-up. E-learning at it’s very best! ■■



I Say “Montana,” You Say “Griz!”

By Erin Barr, Teacher

“I say Montana, you say GRIZ!” can be heard on the bus as paraprofessional Anna Greely encourages a student to chant with her. There is happy chatter everywhere from students and staff as we headed to Washington-Grizzly Stadium in Missoula for the Griz football game. For the last twelve years, MSDB students have had the privilege of attending one Griz Football game each year thanks to the generosity of GrizKidz and the MSDB Foundation. GrizKidz provides 50 tickets along with t-shirts, hats and food vouchers for each attendee; and the MSDB Foundation provides the bus and some spending money for each attendee. GrizKidz is a non-profit organization managed by board members who are former University of Montana football players and believe in giving back to their community through philanthropic efforts.

Before reaching the game day destination, the bus stopped at the Hi-Country Jerky Store in Lincoln for a brief break and some shopping! After shopping, we hit the road again and headed for the official MSDB tailgate



Students always look forward to collecting football players' autographs on the field after the game. Ceceila looks great in a football helmet.



area, where we are greeted by Jim and Tami Kelly in their decked-out, silver and maroon Griz Tailgate van. Before lunch, students and staff mill around between the tailgate area, the “M” Hiking Trail, and the University Bookstore!

Donna and Donovan Schmidt help with the setup, takedown and tailgate meal that MSDB Griz Game-goers feasted on before heading to the game! Following lunch, GrizKidz visited with students, passed out Griz hats, t-shirts and concession vouchers to everyone and posed for a group photo. Then it was time to head to the stadium for kickoff, where the University of Montana Grizzlies won 67-7 against

Mississippi Valley State Delta Devils. After the win, students ran onto the field and met players for signatures on shirts or hats. One very motivated student, Trenton, was able to score 22 signatures in 20 minutes, compared to this author's paltry 12! When asked about his game day experience, Trenton said, “The Griz game was fun and cold. The best part was when the cannon blew off and the Griz scored and got a touchdown!”

The students and staff from Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind would like to extend a sincere “Thank You” to GrizKidz and the MSDB Foundation for providing students with this opportunity. ■■



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MSDB WELCOMES NEW STAFF

My name is Audra Huguelet and I am the new Cottage Behavioral Counselor for the Deaf girls. I recently moved here from Michigan with a degree in Sociology and I'm currently in the process of obtaining a Masters degree in Counseling. Growing up with a Deaf sister fueled my passion for the Deaf culture and pursuing this career path. My role within the cottages is mainly to help students succeed academically and socially by providing a positive support system and maintaining communication with families. I am responsible for making sure students are able to reach their full potential at MSDB by providing guidance, advice, and extra skills they may need. The last month has flown by quickly and I have had the pleasure of seeing students grow and learn so much already. I can't wait to see what the rest of the year holds for us!



G'day! After an extended walkabout, I have come full circle back to Big Sky Country where my teaching journey began 22 years ago. I've brought my husband and our three daughters with me and we will be finalizing the adoption of our son in November. I am very excited to be back in the classroom and feel privileged to be able to get to know a whole new group of Montana students. The first stop after I left MSDB was to Washington, DC and Gallaudet University where I studied really hard and completed a degree in Curriculum. I have taught most subjects and grade levels in both self contained and itinerant settings as well as a bit of administration work in the states of Montana, Arizona and Colorado. My most recent stop has been the last five and a half years "down under" in the suburbs of Sydney Australia, where I was working at a school for students who were deaf, blind, or deaf/blind, all with disabilities. Australia was a very interesting place and I'm always excited to talk about my experiences there – especially about learning Australian Sign Language – AUSLAN. This year I am working in the Deaf Department with upper elementary students and will be assisting with mapping out the MSDB curriculum as well as the accreditation processes.

