



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

# Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XII, Issue 3, Winter 2014



Students attend a  
U of M Griz game

**PAGE 4**

You Can Help MSDB  
Foundation Help Kids!

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# Josh Rutledge Receives Governor's Award of Excellence

On September 15th, Governor Steve Bullock recognized 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 Blind recognized Josh Rutledge, our network manager. Josh traveled to Helena to receive his award from the governor and lieutenant governor.

With over one hundred employees serving hundreds of students across the state, MSDB recognizes the importance of having a skilled person that can manage the maintenance of our on-campus network and assist our outreach consultants with the many devices they use to keep in contact with the school. It is pretty much assumed that if it involves something that plugs in, Josh is the person that can help. Josh's easy-going, attentive manner is much appreciated when technology trouble arises. He understands that technology plays a vital role in daily tasks,



as well as in the preparation of our students to compete in a tech-savvy world. Staff and students are fortunate to have such a knowledgeable, friendly person on their side when it comes to all things "technology." Congratulations, Josh! You deserve this award! ::



Allyson and Cecelia (left photo) and Anthony (right photo) explore the empty pool with Bob Corwin and Brittany Smith. The students realize not only that there is a bottom of the pool, but also how the transition between the shallow end and the deep end occurs.

## A WALK IN THE POOL

By Bob Corwin, Transition Specialist

During the month of September MSDB had our pool resurfaced. As a result we had the opportunity to share with some students in P.E. classes what a pool surface looks like and just how deep our pool is. As you can see by the pictures the perspective inside the pool looking up and out was different for our students. All were amazed by what they saw, felt and shared. What was

interesting was to approach the pool (empty of course) as they might normally do if there were water in the pool. We walked down from the shallow end to the deep end. Many students did not like this at first as there is a sharp drop off. But, once they felt safe and were able to look around they were giddy and excited. This just proves that everything in our students' lives can be a learning experience. The pool is back up, running and all is good in "Water World." ::

# Gary McManus Inducted into the Hall of Fame

**W**e are so very proud to announce that on Saturday, September 20, 2014, retired MSDB teacher and coach, Gary McManus, was inducted into the Special Olympics Hall of Fame. This is what Gary had to say about his experiences with Special Olympics and receiving this prestigious award:

*"In 1973, I started as a coach for Special Olympics at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. In 1975, my team went to Billings for the State Special Olympics and that is where I met my wife, Barbara. She was a coach for the Great Falls Public School Special Olympics team. We have been together ever since. I traveled to Steamboat Springs, Colorado for the first International Winter Special Olympics in 1975, and to Paris, France for the first International Summer Special Olympics in 1977. My wife was co-games state director with Chuck Paul in 1981 and 1982, and she put me to work as the volunteers' director. I continued to volunteer with Special Olympics for the area games held every year in Great Falls at Memorial*



*Stadium, was co-competition director for our state Spring Special Olympics meet in 2006-2008 and co-competition director for our state basketball competition in 2011 and 2012.*

*On September 20, in Missoula, I was inducted into the Special Olympics "Hall of Fame" for my 39 years of service to our special athletes. I was truly honored and blessed to have achieved this award and to have my wife, Barbara; Gail and Brad Bechard; my brother Gordon and his wife Kristi; and Nancy Marra as dinner guests for this special occasion. It was a fun night and a night to remember." ❖*

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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](http://www.msdb.mt.gov)**

# ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?

Debi Knuth, Teacher

The students and cottage staff were ready when Saturday, September 13 arrived. Due to the generosity of the Griz Kids Association and the MSDB Foundation, we had the opportunity to travel to Missoula to watch the mighty U of M Grizzlies play a winning game against the South Dakota Coyotes.

The afternoon began with a chattering bus ride to Missoula, stopping along the way at the Hi-Country Trading Post in Lincoln. We were treated to a free soda while purchasing our favorite Montana jerky, candy, and other Montana made goodies. The sweet ladies welcomed

us with open arms, patience, loads of smiles, well-wishes and laughter.

Arriving at our destination around 4:00 in the warm sun of Missoula, we were all treated to Jim Kelly's annual tailgate party. He and Donna Schmidt and her family cooked a delightfully delicious BBQ of hotdogs, hamburgers, yummy brats with all the fixins'. We really chowed down. For dessert we enjoyed two tasty cakes with thick, creamy icing decorated in Griz colors.

Needless to say we snarfed this wonderful meal with loads of thanks to our fine chefs.

Have you ever been to the Washington Grizzly stadium? It is an experience everyone needs and deserves at least once in a lifetime. The excitement, anticipation, and enthusiasm of every fan booms throughout the stadium. Colors of maroon, gray, and white fill the aisles and stands. When the game begins, everyone stands and cheers, barely sitting throughout the game. Monte and Mo (team mascots)



lead the crowd in exuberant shouts and cheers. The thunder of the cannon as it shoots each time the Griz scores is a stadium shaking event. What a thrill for all who are there to witness the challenging win! It was announced that there was a record crowd of 26,303 in attendance – the largest gathering for a sporting event in the history of the State of Montana! And we were part of it!

When the game was over, the Griz players were on the field exchanging autographs, photos, and well-wishes with all the fans. Our kids were able to cover their hats, Griz Kids shirts or whatever they had with them with signatures and “thank yous” from the players. This was a very special time for our kids. Watching them gather autographs and meeting the players was an extra bonus.

The journey home began (around 10:30 that night) with a stop at a local convenience store to stock-up on snacks for the dark, star filled trip. It didn't take long for the reminiscing of our super day to quiet down. By the time we reached Lincoln, the majority of the kids were sound asleep. We “die-hard” adults stayed awake the entire trip, arriving in Great Falls by 2:30...that's a.m., folks!

Many, many thanks to the MSDB Foundation, Jim Kelly, Maeona Lee, Donna Schmidt and all the cottage staff who helped make the Griz football game an unbelievable experience. A very special thank you is given to the wonderful and delightful Griz Kids Association. Without their caring, sharing, concessions vouchers, t-shirts and hats, this awesome event would never have taken place for the past 10 years. Bless you all for everything. You are all the best and we thank you so very much! ☘





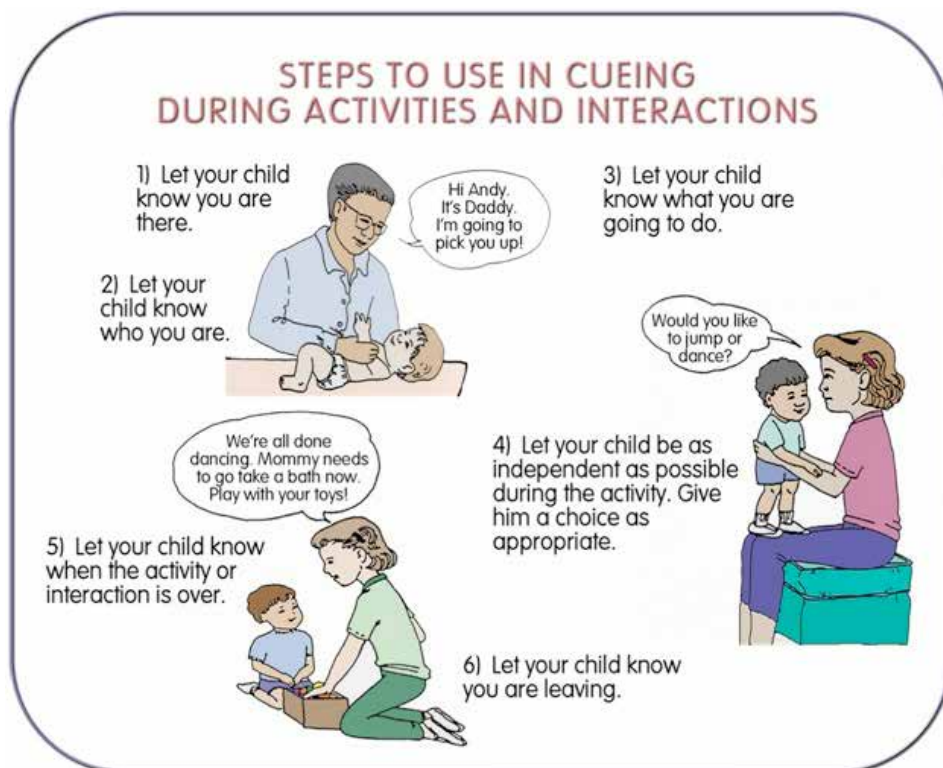
# MSDB Provides Important Training

Kerri Norick, Outreach Consultant

According to the Ski-HI (pronounced “sky-high”) Institute at Utah State University, which provides services for children with special needs, many of the early intervention programs serving preschool aged children with visual impairments do not have access to adequate support services from a teacher of the visually impaired, because of a shortage of teachers trained in the field of vision. In order to try to meet the need, organizations like the Ski-HI Institute and the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind provide training for service providers.

One training model is called INSITE/VIISA. INSITE stands for IN-home Sensory Impaired Training and Education. The INSITE Program offers home-based family support for families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, from birth to age five, who are sensory impaired and have additional disabilities. Ideally, the INSITE training requires 6 days of training.

VIISA stands for Vision Impaired Inservice in America. The content of VIISA training is directly relevant to the needs of individuals providing direct services to infants and young children with visual impairments and their families. With federal grant support since 1991, the VIISA project developed the expertise, materials, delivery methods, and procedures needed to effectively train vision personnel as well as early intervention/childhood personnel to work with infants and young children with blindness or visual impairment and their families. Ideally, the VIISA training requires 4- 5 days of training.



The presence of severe visual impairment is highly significant for young children. More information is gained in a shorter period of time through the eyes than through any other single sense organ. (SKI-HI, 2014)



Most infants and young children with vision impairment have usable vision and the best time for learning to use this vision is within the first five years of life when the brain is still developing (Hyvarinen, 1994).

MSDB is proud to have five certified INSITE/VIISA trainers. They are: Pam Boespflug, Sharon Woods, Jane Garrison, Amy Wicks and Kerri

Norick. In the past, MSDB trainers have provided on site and web conferencing training opportunities to parents and professionals throughout the state of Montana.

Amy Wicks and Kerri Norick were selected to train at the Ski-HI Institute's INSITE/VIISA Program in June, 2014.

As part of MSDB's early intervention strategic planning, the INSITE/VIISA trainers are planning the next statewide offering. If you are interested in attending the INSITE/VIISA training, please contact the Director of Outreach, Carol Clayton-Bye, at 406-771-6091 or cclayton-bye@msdb.mt.gov.

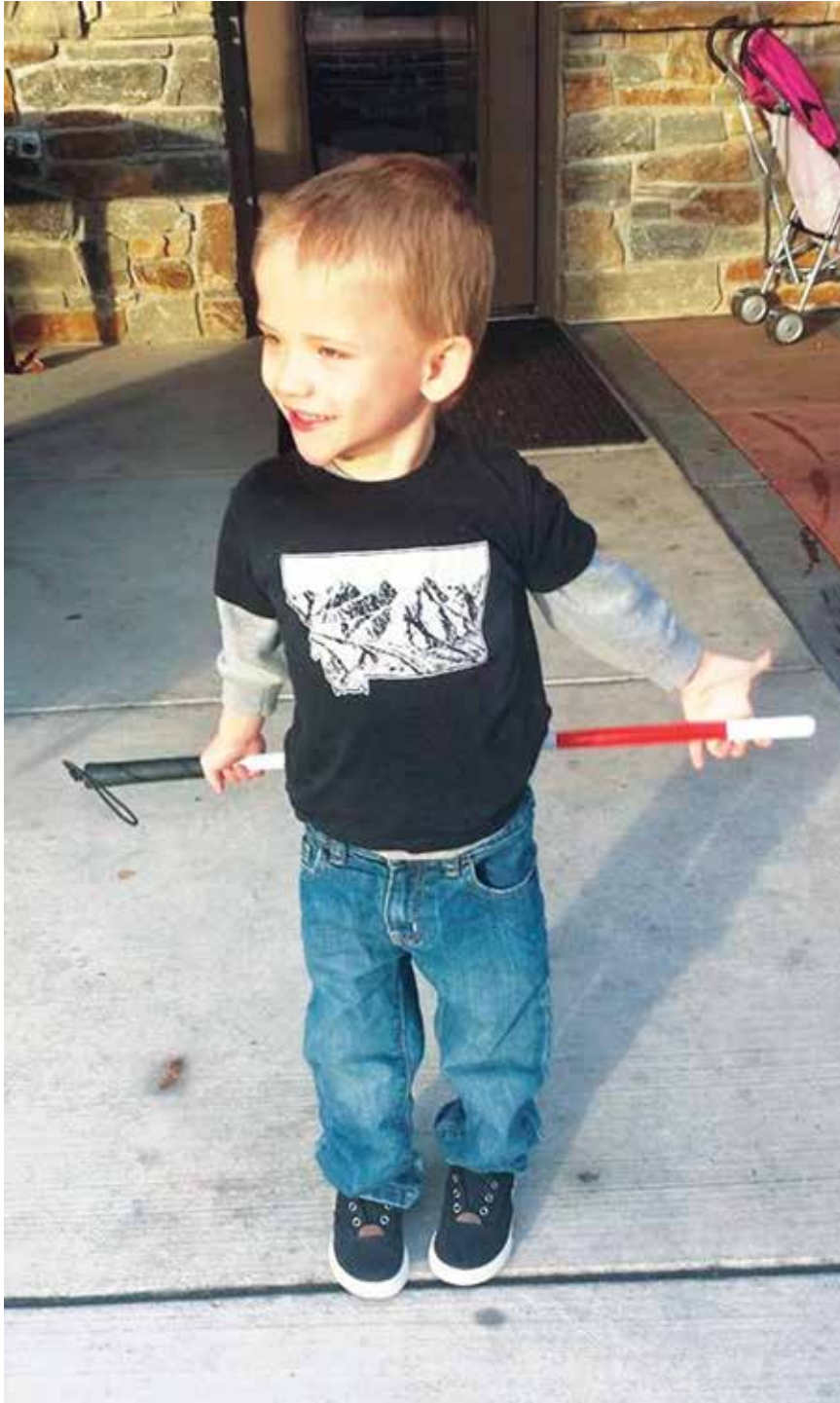
Much of the information presented here was provided by the Ski-HI Institute. ■■



**Submitted by Barb Balko, Outreach Consultant:**

*Kieran Simpson is a four-year-old boy who attends Jefferson Preschool in Missoula. He is a bright and loving child who happens to be blind and is served through the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind Outreach Program. Kieran is developing his cane and prebraille skills in school. His devoted mother expressed her thoughts and emotions regarding Kieran in the following piece:*

# THROUGH HIS EYES



Some days I wish I had no sight. Some people see my son with his cane and say “poor kid.” What they don’t know is they are the ones missing out. Kieran is blessed with the ability to meet people and judge them by one thing; the way they treat him. He never mistakes a kind person for a fat person or a poor person. He never judges someone by their skin color or by the brand of shoes they wear. He doesn’t care where they work or how much they make. He doesn’t know how much makeup they wear or what car they drive. He enjoys the most beautiful part of people. Their soul. Are they kind? Are they patient? Are they understanding? Are they happy? Can they love without these judgments?

This theme is reoccurring in his life. Kieran doesn’t care what he wears. He doesn’t care if he looks cool, he only wants to play or snuggle or learn or read or listen to music. He doesn’t need the candy with the cartoon on it. If it tastes good then it actually tastes good. It’s not just bright green or has sprinkles. Kieran doesn’t want a new toy from the store, he wants to go wander in the forest and climb anything he finds. He wants to enjoy a bath for eternity, and feel the comfort of snuggling with Mommy in the rocking chair. He wants to hear music. He wants to feel it and experience it in its most raw form.

Kieran is one of the most inspirational people I have ever met and I am honored to be in his life. I am honored to teach him, to love him, to help him, to be his mother. Everyday he teaches me more than I could have imagined. I strive to live more like him every day. ❖

— Terri Johnson





# MSDB Receives Grant from First Interstate Bank

## \$23,000 GIFT WILL HELP REMODEL COTTAGE

**K**yle Herda, President, and Colleen Kunz, Senior Vice President of First Interstate Bank of Great Falls, presented a check in the amount of \$23,000 to the MSDB Foundation on September 15, at the school. “This is the largest donation we’ve made in several years,” Kyle Herda said, “and it’s because of the statewide nature of the gift and the huge statewide impact MSDB has.” The check represents combined gifts from First Interstate branches in Great Falls, Helena, Bozeman, Livingston, Missoula, and Billings, as well as the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation.

The unusual combined gift is in recognition of the statewide services of the Montana School for the Deaf &

Blind. The Great Falls-based school serves children from across Montana, either as residential students on the Great Falls campus or via outreach services in their home school districts. MSDB’s outreach consultants work in every county in the state with hundreds of families, teachers, and service providers of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, to ensure they receive the best education possible.

MSDB’s new superintendent, Donna Sorensen, was previously the school’s outreach director. “In addition to each of the cities represented in this wonderful gift,” she said, “MSDB makes such a difference in the lives of children in Belgrade, in Eureka, in Miles City, in Lame Deer – we have an active presence in so many communities where kids need our services, and this grant will help us





serve them better.”

Most of those children attend weekend and summer events on the Great Falls campus, and some of them attend MSDB full time and live on campus in the residential complex or “cottage.” All of them spend nights in the cottage, whether for the nine-month school year, a week-long camp, educational weekends, a Family Learning Weekend, or the Visually Impaired Games. For residential students, the cottage is their home away from home. After 30 years of using the same furniture, that furniture needs to be replaced, and the MSDB Foundation is raising funds to update the



First Interstate Bank presents a check to the MSDB Foundation in September.

cottage with new furniture and paint. It is this project that the First Interstate Bank grant will help fund.

According to MSDB Foundation President John Musgrove, “We are thrilled with this generous donation from First Interstate, which has given us the boost we needed to complete the remodel of the first wing of the cottage this fall. Our kids will soon be living more comfortably in their home away from home.” ■■

Check out MSDB’s Facebook page for a link to the KRTV news coverage of the check presentation. [www.facebook.com/MSDB](http://www.facebook.com/MSDB)



# Montana School *for the*

## HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

### YOU CAN HELP GIVE KIDS A NEW START



When she was five years old, Mikayla Ellermann asked her mom why everything looked black and white all of a sudden. That was the beginning of Mikayla's vision loss that continued to the point of legal blindness, as a result of tumors on her optic nerves. For many years she faced the social and academic struggles of being the only kid in class with a visual impairment.

Things changed for the better after moving to Montana, when Mikayla started 9th grade at MSDB, where she is now a junior. Making the move away from her family in Polson was tough, for both Mikayla and her mother, but they agree that it has been worth it.

*"MSDB has taken a shy, sad, very withdrawn child, and turned her into a thriving,*

*independent young person,"* Shelley Ellermann said. "She was not nearly as confident before going to the school."

*"I'm less moody now, since coming to MSDB,"* Mikayla says. "I'm friendlier, and I have more courage – I've changed. *Being with other kids like me has helped me build confidence. They understand me."*

MSDB teacher Denise Rutledge has taught Mikayla to use technology to access educational materials and to communicate. "I've seen huge growth in Mikayla's ability to make these accommodations for herself," she said. "She's ready for the real world."

Mrs. Rutledge also commented on Mikayla's "great leadership qualities." She manages costumes and other details for the performance group

***"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](http://justgive.org) or by using the enclosed envelope.**



# Deaf & Blind Foundation

## ENDING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

Expressions of Silence. She helped organize and facilitate the school's annual cookie decorating contest – a large event she handled competently. She is an active member of Cane Club, which takes trips around town to learn different ways of traveling – both on foot, with white canes, and by bus. She works at the school's concession stand to help raise money for her class's senior trip. She overcame her anxiety about swimming by competing in MSDB's annual Visually Impaired Games last spring and won 2nd place.

This year Mikayla takes half her classes at MSDB and half at Great Falls High, where last year she won a Heisey Award for overall improvement. She is unafraid to join in activities among her sighted peers there, attending Prom and excelling at a competition called Warfare. She and her MSDB friend, Patricia, collaborated on a project on visual impairment that placed 9th out of 100 Warfare entries.

This fall Mikayla began the two-year MSDB Independent Living Skills Program. She lives in her own apartment on campus, where she is responsible for grocery shopping, preparing her own meals, and cleaning. Later she will learn budgeting and other real world skills. Last summer, she landed herself a job as a prep cook at



Mikayla prepares her own meals in her on campus apartment.

the Finley Point Grill back home in Polson. She chose the job to learn culinary skills she plans to use in a career as a pastry chef.

"She worked all summer and paid for all her new school clothes and supplies," Shelley Ellermann said. She admits it's sometimes difficult adjusting to her daughter's newfound independence. "Before she went

to MSDB, I'd always been her advocate. But I won't be around forever and she has to be able to advocate for herself. I called her the other day and she didn't have time to talk. She and her friends had mapped out their bus ride and were going to the movies, just like that. **The school has opened so many doors for her,**" she said. "They've done such an awesome job for her."

The MSDB Foundation supports many of the programs Mikayla participates in. **Please help us continue to provide these life-changing opportunities for students like her.** You can make a contribution online at [justgive.org](http://justgive.org) or by using the attached envelope.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Musgrove".

John L. Musgrove, President

## MSDB FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ed Van Tighem, Great Falls  
Brett Weber, Missoula

**Just 15% of the MSDB Foundation's budget goes to administrative costs. When you support the Foundation, you are supporting programs for kids.**



# Montana School *for the*

## THANKS YOU FOR

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

### DONATIONS FROM JULY 2013 — JUNE 2014

#### DONATIONS \$5,000 TO \$50,000

Mary E Wolff Estate  
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Scholarship Trust  
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Campaign  
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Book Fund  
Big Sky Retired Teachers Association

#### DONATIONS LESS THAN \$100

Yoshihiro Kasuga-Student  
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United Way Beaverhead County  
Jeff Richards  
Target  
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Grace Mears Trust  
Dorothy Albert

Cambridge Place  
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Ed & Betty Van Tighem  
Franklin Society Public School Library  
Book Fund



# Deaf & Blind Foundation

## YOUR SUPPORT!

### MEMORIAL GIFTS

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

#### SAM ROSE

Stanley & Mary Rathman  
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Arlene & Phillip Harris  
Michael & Colleen Campbell  
Donnell & Lois Morren  
Steve & Mary Gettel  
Charles & Heather Fellows  
Roger & Mary Vandyken  
Harold & Inez Gaarder

### HONOR GIFTS

*(Those who are honored are highlighted in green.)*

#### STEVE GETTEL

Beverly LeMieux  
Jim & Bonnie DeNoma  
Derald & Alice Guilbert  
Brenda LeMieux  
Ed & Betty Van Tighem  
Great Falls Club of the Deaf  
MSDB Scholarship Fund  
Brett Weber

*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.*

# MSDB STAFF NEWS

*Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Community Stakeholders,*

We are excited about our 2014-2015 school year at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB)! Students returned in September and it was wonderful to see smiling faces both in the cottage and in the school as students arrived. Our greatest priority at MSDB is to



provide a safe environment for students and staff to engage in learning!

As the new Superintendent at MSDB, I want to thank you all for your well wishes, support, and encouragement. We have an incredibly talented staff working hard to ensure we are all safe, happy, and healthy - especially our students. I am excited to be part of this wonderful team.

Over the summer, the Facilities Program spent time painting some classrooms and hallways. I want to thank them for their wonderful work in helping our school continue to look beautiful. We also received a grant from First Interstate BancSystem Foundation to begin updating our cottages. We are so thankful to have community partners to help up provide a home-away-from-home to our students. Our Cottage Program continues to provide all those extra experiences that allow our students to develop

into well-rounded individuals. They recently went to the Griz football game (courtesy of Griz Kids and our MSDB Foundation) and had a wonderful time.

Our Outreach Consultants continue to provide service to more than 650 students throughout the state. Each day they are working hard to enrich the lives of those students and families they work with. I am proud of the skilled and diverse team we have working throughout our state. Carol Clayton-Bye, whom most of you know as the Supervising Teacher in the Visually Impaired Department is now the Outreach Director.

This year, our Education Program is focusing on setting educational and social emotional goals as a school and periodically reviewing how we are progressing on those goals. Basically, we are writing an IEP for ourselves! We want to make sure we continue to provide quality education to our students and we want to continue learning as staff members.

Everyone is excited about this new school year! I know our students are going to have an incredible year of learning and growing. We appreciate having you as our partners. Please feel free to call me or any of the program administrators or supervisors if you have any questions or concerns. ■■

**Wishing you peace,**

**Donna E Sorensen, Superintendent**  
**V: 406-771-6001 • VP: 406-760-1068**  
**email: dsorensen@msdb.mt.gov**

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## CAROL CLAYTON-BYE IS NEW OUTREACH DIRECTOR

As the school year begins, I am excited to announce I accepted the position of Director of Outreach for MSDB. My role will be working directly with the Consultants serving students in towns throughout the state of Montana. This is a very exciting new challenge as I know that every student attending MSDB started by working with an Outreach Consultant. The creative drive in these professionals has lead to a variety of programs that serve both students on campus and in outreach, such as the Deaf



Enrichment Weekends (DEW), Games for Visually Impaired and the Focus (Focus on Expanded Core for Students with Vision needs). In addition some regional

programming and partnerships have also formed. Our goal is to continue to look at a continuum of placement options to meet the sensory needs of children from birth through age 21 in the state of Montana. I will have an office on campus in the Bitterroot Building and will be traveling throughout the state during the year, and I encourage parents and families to share with me ideas for upcoming events and topics or trends you see as important for your child and their development. Have a great school year! ■■



# MSDB STAFF NEWS

## OUTDOOR SEPTEMBER WEDDINGS

**B**randi Martinez, right, of our Maintenance staff, married Travis Voss on September 20. Bethany Hundley, far right, teacher in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing department, married Eric Hultz on September 27. Best wishes to both of these beautiful brides! ❖



## VIBECKA OLSON IS THE NEW SCHEDULING SECRETARY

**M**y name is Vibecka Olson. I was born in Cut Bank. We moved a lot when I was a child as my father was a Methodist minister. We lived in various places, such as Browning, Hardin, Fromberg, and East Helena. My first name is of Swedish origin. Although Dad altered the spelling a bit, it means "beautiful."

I moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in 1983 and attended 8th -12th grades there and moved back to the states in 1989. I have lived in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and most recently, Missouri. I travelled to Germany, Austria and Switzerland in 1986 to tour the countries and visited many castles!

I lived in Lexington, Missouri, from 1996 until July, when I came back home to Montana. My son, Victor, 22, and daughter, Cheyanne, 18, still live there. My son has his Building Trades certificate and my daughter is currently enrolled in college. My mom and sister are in Missouri;



but my dad is here in Montana. I did have two brothers, but they have both been killed in accidents.

My physical interests/activities are: reading, canoeing, hiking (although I am taking the easier routes now due to injuries sustained in a serious accident in October 2010 which I am still recovering from), and photography (especially of old barns and other buildings). Some more interests are: Native American culture, art and artifacts, wolves, history, poetry, music, book collecting (did I mention reading??), painting (both artistic and house), ancestry, ghost towns. I am sure there are more!

Before coming to MSDB to work as a Scheduling Secretary, I worked in a variety of jobs, as a waitress, bartender, Med Tech and CNA. I have painted antebellum houses with a restoration company, delivered mail for several years with the Post Office, and managed convenience stores.

I started here at MSDB on September 15th and I love it here! Thank you for welcoming me aboard! You all have been wonderful in helping me feel at home! You can call me Vi (or V if you want to make it really easy). ❖

**M**SDb also warmly welcomes 2 new employees in the cottages: Cherie Berger, and Cyrstal Case; as well as food service worker, Stefani Buska. ❖



## Geri Darko, Orientation and Mobility Specialist

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson declared that each year on October 15, our nation would recognize White Cane Safety Day. Each year on this special day, MSDB celebrates the independence and accomplishments of people with visual impairments.

During this year's White Cane Day festivities, MSDB focused on the safe, efficient use of the special tool of independence: the white cane. Students from the Visually Impaired Department competed in a White Cane Challenge. White cane users walked familiar routes on and around the MSDB campus. As students walked, staff members were watching for the very best cane techniques for constant contact, two-point touch, contacting objects for opening doors, ascending and descending stairs. Each route led students back to the Visually Impaired Department where students, staff and family members gathered for a White Cane Day celebration. MSDB's Visually Impaired Performers (V.I.P.) treated the crowd to an original White Cane Day song, and life skills classes had snacks prepared for everyone. Certificates were given to five students for the best use of techniques in the following categories:

- Contacting objects with the cane while opening doors—**Davi**

- Ascending stairs with the cane—**Trenton**
- Descending stairs with the cane—**Kaelyn**
- Two-point touch technique—**Mikayla**
- Constant contact technique—**Shay**

Why focus on cane skills? A consistent cane arc sweeps the walking path about one to two steps in front of the feet, ensuring that each step will be a safe one.



Using proper cane procedures on all staircases will help the traveler detect the next step, determine how tall the riser is on a particular set of stairs, and detect the last step in the set. Proper cane procedures at all entrances will enable a traveler to locate door handles efficiently and gracefully and detect drop-offs or obstacles near the doorway. Proper cane techniques are essential for safe, efficient, and independent travel.

Using proper cane techniques during orientation and mobility lessons is great, but generalizing those skills within various environments is fantastic! Students who consistently use good cane techniques are great role models for other students as well as great ambassadors for our school. Congratulations to all our White Cane Day Cane Challenge winners! The next challenge is to practice the great cane skills of White Cane Safety Day every single day of the year. ■■



# SWING IT OUT

To the tune of Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off"

By Erica Peterson

I know many routes  
I keep them in my brain  
Travel every day, mmm-mmm  
That's the O&M way, mmm-mmm

I can go all over town  
I always use my cane  
Travel safely every day, mmm-mmm  
That's the O&M way, mmm-mmm

So I keep cruising  
Can't stop, won't stop moving  
It's like I hear Ms. Darko in my mind  
Saying, "Please use your white cane right."

Cause my feet are gonna step, step, step, step, step  
And my body's gonna move, move, move, move, move  
Baby, I'm just gonna swing, swing, swing, swing, swing,  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
My cane tips' gonna roll, roll, roll, roll, roll  
And the cane is gonna arc, arc, arc, arc, arc  
Baby, I'm just gonna swing, swing, swing, swing, swing,  
I swing it out, I swing it out

I am sure of all my steps  
The cane's magic in my hand  
Even though I cannot see, mmm-mmm  
Won't let that bother me, mmm-mmm  
I travel on my own  
Show off as I go  
So stand back and watch me cruise mmm-mmm  
And you'll see us on the news, mmm-mmm

So I keep cruising  
Can't stop, won't stop moving  
It's like I hear Ms. Darko in my mind  
Saying, "Please use your white can right."

Cause my feet are gonna step, step, step, step, step  
And my body's gonna move, move, move, move, move  
Baby, I'm just gonna swing, swing, swing, swing, swing,  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
My cane tips' gonna roll, roll, roll, roll, roll  
And the cane is gonna arc, arc, arc, arc, arc  
Baby, I'm just gonna swing, swing, swing, swing, swing,  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
I swing it out, I swing it out  
I swing it out, I swing it out



# Red Ribbon Week Learning and Fun

Yvette Smail, Behavior Specialist

Red Ribbon Week serves as a way for schools, communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of our children through a commitment to drug prevention and education and a personal commitment to live drug free lives with the ultimate goal being the creation of a drug free America.

Red Ribbon Week also commemorates the ultimate sacrifice made by DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki"

Camarena, who died at the hands of drug traffickers in Mexico while fighting the battle against illegal drugs to keep our country and children safe.

This year at MSDB, our theme for Red Ribbon Week was I "mustache" you not to do drugs! We started the week off



by giving red ribbons to all the students and staff and then we had fun activities and treats throughout the week. On Monday, October 20th, teachers and students started their "I mustache" you not to do drugs posters for our poster contest. The posters were hung throughout the Bitterroot building as well as the hallway of the Aspen building.

## FUN STUFF FOR THE WEEK:

- MONDAY, "Don't sweat drugs" day and everyone came to school in their favorite sweatpants and/or sweatshirts.
- TUESDAY, "Put a cap on drugs" day and everyone wore their favorite hats to school.
- WEDNESDAY, "Sock it to drugs" day and everyone wore their favorite crazy or mismatched socks to school.
- THURSDAY, "Mustache you not to do drugs" day and everyone wore a mustache to school.
- FRIDAY, "Dress up to fight against drugs" day and everyone wore their favorite costume or outfit. The winners of the posters were announced as well.

MSDB had an awesome Red Ribbon Week! 🍌

# Salamanders and fish oh MY!

There are more than just cute, smiling faces in the Preschool room in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department! You'll also find Pipsqueak, Cody, and Sally the salamanders as well as our many beautiful fish, Angel, Gilly, Big Daddy, Marshmallow, and Goldy, just to name a few. We take good care of them and learn so much just by watching them each day.



## Election Day 2014

The students at MSDB took part in the November elections. Students from Ms. Cook's and Ms. Blake's classes helped to construct and decorate an "official" voting booth. Ballots were available in large print, regular print and braille!

Below are the results from voting held in Aspen Hall on Election Day.

(20 students and 14 staff voted)



**Senator** Curtis: 21 Daines: 9 Root: 2  
**House of Rep.** Fellows: 7 Lewis: 14 Zinke: 11  
**Public Service Commissioner** Travis Kavulla: 26  
**Supreme Court Justice #1** Herbert: 2 Rice: 27  
**Supreme Court Justice #2** VanDyke: 9 Wheat: 23  
**District Court Judge** Sandefur Yes: 22 No: 9  
**County Commissioner** Larson: 10 Anderson: 21  
**Clerk and Recorder** Rina Fontana Moore: 30  
**Sheriff** Bob Edwards: 32

**County Attorney** John Parker: 30  
**Public Administrator** Gerald Boland: 28  
**Treasurer/Sup. Of Schools** Bailey: 8 Liedle: 22  
**J. P. #1** Eric Bailey: 13 Mary Jolly: 16  
**Justice of the Peace** Fagenstrom Yes: 24 No: 8  
**Belt** A. Olson: 14 J. Olson: 11  
A. Porter: 17 J. Porter, Sr.: 7  
**Constitutional Amendment CA #45** Yes: 21 No: 9  
**Legislative Referendum #126** Yes: 15 No: 14



# Expanded Core Curriculum: What is it?

Sharon Woods,  
Outreach Consultant

The knowledge and skills students are expected to learn by high school graduation are considered “the core curriculum.” These are typically related to academic subjects such as reading and math. Students and children with visual impairments who qualify for special education services have an educational team of professionals working toward common goals that support that students’ success. Along with the “core curriculum” there is something known as the “expanded core curriculum.” The expanded core curriculum has nine areas that every educational team serving a child or student with visual impairments should assess and address. Those areas are: Orientation and Mobility, Assistive Technology, Career Education, Compensatory Skills, Independent Living Skills, Recreation and Leisure, Self-Determination, Sensory Efficiency, and Social Interaction Skills. It is easy for some parents of visually impaired children to look at the list and say, “My kid is fine in those areas.” Although each of the nine areas is described here, I encourage families and professionals to visit the websites listed in the middle of this page for more in-depth information.

**Orientation and Mobility** allows the individual with visual impairment to travel not only in the school environment but is essential for travel in unfamiliar areas (such as field trips) and independent travel after high school graduation. Orientation and Mobility is a whole curriculum that



- [www.tsbvi.edu/math/3973-ecc-flyer](http://www.tsbvi.edu/math/3973-ecc-flyer)
- [www.perkins.org/news-events/eNewsletters/insight/inside-story/expanded-core-curriculum.html](http://www.perkins.org/news-events/eNewsletters/insight/inside-story/expanded-core-curriculum.html)
- [www.pathstoliteracy.org/expanded-core-curriculum](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/expanded-core-curriculum)

takes many years to teach and learn. **Assistive Technology** enhances communication, access to curriculum and learning in school and on the job. Assistive technology can vary as widely as an active learning/special space built from PVC pipe or an electronic note taker.

When we consider **Career Education**, remember that all that we learn about jobs as a child comes from watching others do their job from a distance while moving around in our world. A child with low or no vision may need hands-on experiences. For some of our children, a goal for career education may include work-related skills such as staying on task. **Compensatory Skills** include concept development, communication mode, organization and study skills, use of CCTV, Braille or Nemeth code to access school curriculum, and other skills.

**Independent Living Skills** include both skills necessary for right now and future independence.

An individual with low vision can and should do all tasks within their physical means but may require direct instruction and more practice.

**Recreation and Leisure** skills can give our students life-long skills to stay active and healthy. Self-determination includes problem solving and self-advocacy. Does your child have someone at school that solves all their problems for them or are they allowed to search for that missing paper or book?

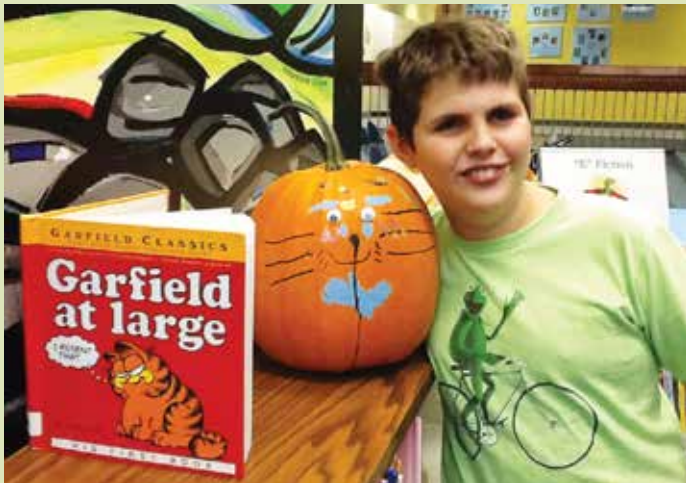
**Sensory Efficiency** includes the use of vision and all other sensory channels to learn. Low vision devices help maximize visual learning. For most people, **Social Interaction Skills** are learned primarily through visual observation and often need to be directly taught to individuals with visual impairments. The teacher of visually impaired and the orientation and mobility specialist on your child’s team can assess these areas and advise you and the team as to any needs for intervention. ■■



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# THE GREAT Pumpkin Parade

Denise Rutledge, Teacher

The Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired received a generous bounty of pumpkins from friends of MSDB student Davi Munroe.

On a beautiful fall day, the staff and students worked together to decorate the pumpkins as favorite story book characters. Glue, yarn, wiggly eyes, markers, paint... the



Dakota (top left), Davi (middle left), and Denise Rutledge (bottom left) show off their story book pumpkins. The Harry Potter pumpkin (above) was created by Jarrod and Anthony (not pictured.)

pile of supplies quickly engulfed every available table. Hands and pumpkins were covered in a sticky, colorful mess. Out of this creative whirlwind emerged the likes of Skippy Jon Jones, Lilly (and her Purple, Plastic Purse), Fancy Nancy, Harry Potter, and many more. The

pumpkins were delivered to the library where they were given homes on the shelves next to the titles of their inspirations. Welcome to MSDB, Pumpkinheads! ■■



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](http://www.msdb.mt.gov)