

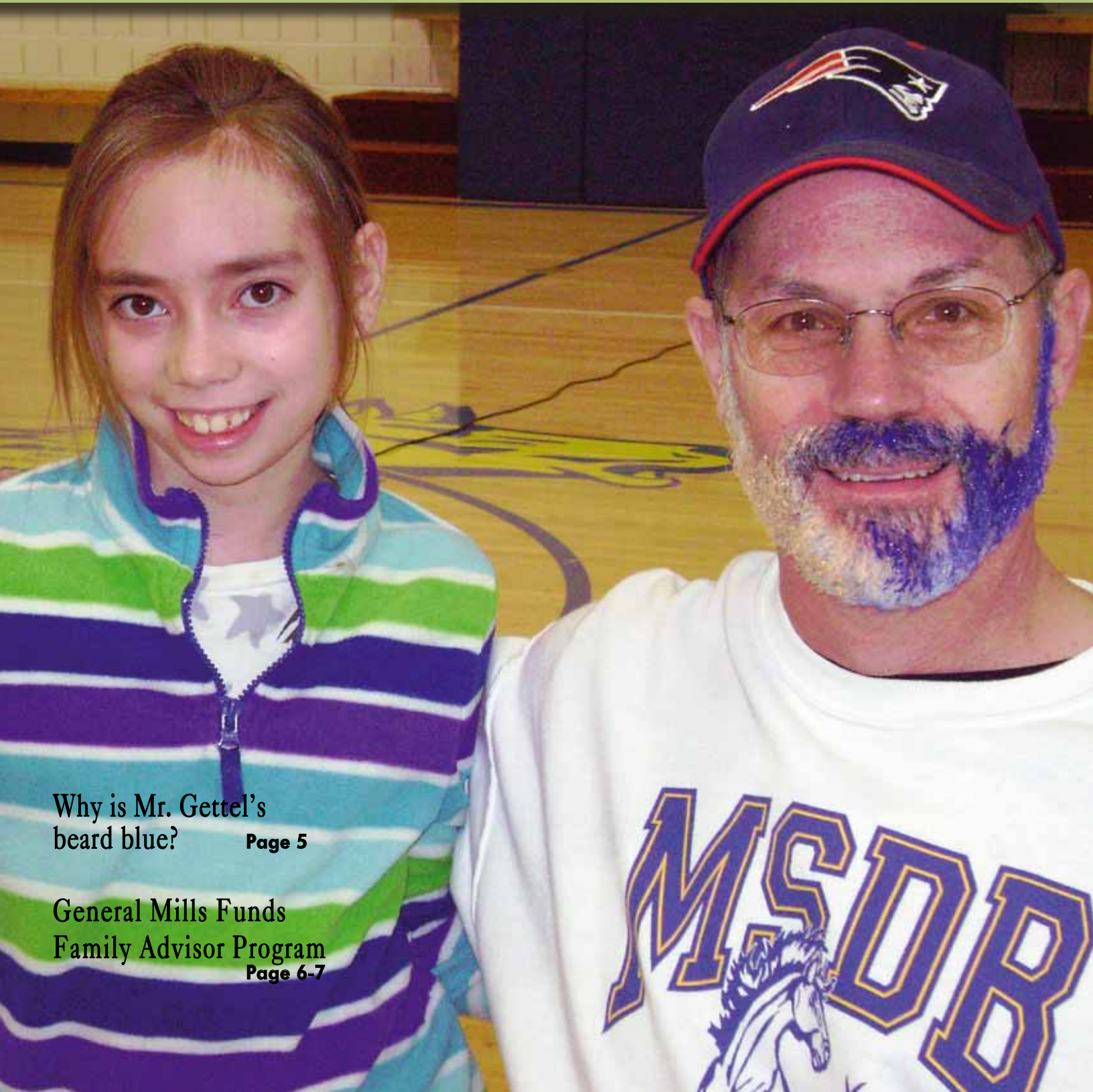


Express

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume IX, Issue 2, Winter 2011



Why is Mr. Gettel's
beard blue? **Page 5**

General Mills Funds
Family Advisor Program
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Make Today Better Than Yesterday

Amber Chastain, Interpreter
Tiffany Harding,
Coordinating Interpreter

“Give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and he will never go hungry.”

This can be applied to the world of deaf and hard of hearing children and how they use interpreting services as they grow up and are in different settings. For instance, at what age would it be appropriate to request having an interpreter at a doctor’s visit? What about a dental appointment? Eye appointment? If we think long term, there will come a day that the child will need to be requesting these kinds of services for themselves. Should we start in second grade? Third grade? This of course would depend on the student and their maturity and ability to understand what the role of the interpreter is, the type of appointment, and parental discretion.

Having access to the language in these specific environments will no doubt expose the children to new ideas, concepts, and/or vocabulary that can lead to further dialogue and explanation between parent and child. The child will bank knowledge that can be used to make continued connections for the rest of their lives. Sometimes we only think of interpreters in terms of “educational” settings, but these little people are taking in large amounts of information--via all of their senses--to learn about the world around them!

It is beneficial for them to see interpreters working in a variety of settings so that they can begin to decide what works for them so they can be successful consumers, advocating for themselves as they grow and mature. This might be something to ponder the next time your child has an appointment beyond their educational setting. ■■



Come Over and Play!

It’s a balancing act! Davi Jean enjoys the new equipment.

Denise Philipp, MSDB Teacher

Thanks to the MSDB Foundation and a generous grant it received from an anonymous source, the Visually Impaired Department has some new physical education equipment specifically designed for children with visual impairments: tandem bikes to ride with a friend, tactile stepping stones and beams to strengthen our sense of balance, tunnels to crawl through, and mini-trampolines with rails to hold on to while we jump for joy! This equipment helps teach visually impaired children the balance, agility, mobility, orientation and navigational skills that people with visual impairments need to make their way in the world.

The preschoolers in the V.I. Department graciously volunteered

to try out the equipment and make sure that the new equipment hits high on the fun factor scale. Our young friends have been busy constructing their own paths around the room with the brightly colored foam balance beam pieces that allow multiple ways to design the beam. Giggles can be heard inside the tunnel as they hide from one another. We can’t wait for the weather to improve so that we can take a ride around the campus on the tandem bikes.

This new equipment will be featured in the upcoming Goalball/Enrichment Weekend on March 25-26, as well as the Games for the Visually Impaired on May 13-14. Come and play with us! ■■

The MSDB Foundation provided the funds for this equipment.

Music is Life

Thyra Wood – MSDB/GFHS Student

Buzz, Buzz, Buzz

Ugh. The dreaded feeling of my vibrating alarm clock at five in the morning sadly interrupts my peaceful slumber. I have to be at Bisonettes practice by six o'clock in the morning every Wednesday,



Thursday, and Friday. This year, the Great Falls High School Bisonettes broke off from the flag/drill team to be a dance-focused group under the direction of our new coach, Lacy Rozas. We perform at various sporting events, including football and basketball

games. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of this group because of the opportunity to develop and further positive relationships with girls my age who all share a common love: dance. I joined for three reasons. Number one, I had two good friends who tried out and made it, then encouraged me to try out myself. Second, I had heard that the Bisonettes had a new coach, separate from the flag/drill team. Finally, I joined because I have an undying passion for dance- it's even in my sign name! Ever since my mother enrolled me in dance classes at The Dance Syndicate when I was three years old, I've loved it. My participation in Bisonettes proves that deaf people can dance just as well as hearing people can. Bisonettes has had a lasting impact on me and I'm glad I participated this year. ■■

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COTTAGES ARE ON THE MOVE

**Maeona K. Lee,
Supervising Counselor**

The two residential cottages on campus are looking brighter as MSDB completes a project that began in 2008 to replace the carpet, vinyl flooring, and curtains in the cottages. The MSDB Foundation raised \$50,000 to complete the first phase of the project, and the School is completing the final phase with state funding.

The first phase included roughly one quarter of the cottage flooring, as well as one half of the window coverings. New wood blinds replaced tattered curtains in the Yellowstone Cottage. Last year, the School replaced the Glacier Cottage's curtains with blinds, and this winter we began the daunting task of replacing flooring in the remaining half of Yellowstone and all of Glacier.

Since early November the students and staff have waited patiently for each area to be finished. When the carpet was to be laid in one cottage wing, the students and staff from that area



Juan prepares for a temporary move so his room can be re-carpeted.

would move to another wing for a week or two. When the carpet layers moved to another area, the students in that cottage would have to move again.

The new carpet looks great, and the recently carpeted areas still have a bit of the "new carpet" smell. The kitchens in each cottage and the activity rooms

also have new vinyl flooring, which really brightens up the rooms and makes each area appear larger.

It is amazing how many things needed to be moved from each area during the process. It was a challenge quite often to figure out where 14 beds, 14 desks, 14 chairs, etc., plus the kitchen and living room furniture could be stored, then another challenge moving it back. The students and staff were excited to get new flooring and were willing to help move their own things as well as items in their cottage kitchens and living rooms. Moving back into the cottage also gave everyone the opportunity to rearrange their living room furniture.

The carpet project took time and patience, but the end result is very nice. Hats off and a huge round of applause to the many students and staff who helped to make the many moves to and from cottages go smoothly. Their hard work is very much appreciated. ❧

Support from the MSDB Foundation helped make this project possible.

A BADGE OF HONOR: Sign Language

Sandy McGennis, Outreach Consultant

On a cold January Saturday about 60 Girl Scouts, parents and leaders met at the Helena Alliance Church to learn some sign language in order to meet their badge requirements. MSDB Outreach Consultants Emily LaSalle, Sarah Eyer, and Sandy McGennis were their instructors. The youngest Daisy Scouts (ages 5-7) learned the fingerspelled alphabet and how to fingerspell their names. They practiced signing The Girl Scout Promise and learned family names, numbers and animal signs.

Older Scouts were divided into two groups and learned songs like Montana and You Are My Sunshine, in addition to the basics. They also learned about the types of technology that help deaf and hard of hearing people in our society. During the lunch break the group enjoyed watching a DVD of a performance by MSDB's Expressions of Silence group, which signs songs and dances. The afternoon wrapped up with each group performing the Promise or a song that their group had



learned. Their experience will allow the Scouts to approach a deaf or hard of hearing person with some basic skills to communicate. ❧



MSDB is proud of all the kids who worked hard at reading and earned the opportunity to participate in this fun event. Mr. Gettel was a good sport about getting his beard dyed blue and gold.



Brandon was careful not to miss any spots. Gracie is amazed a toothbrush can become a paintbrush!

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

Sally Tilleman, MSDB Counselor

Students at MSDB have been working very hard since the beginning of the year to conquer the 20/20 reading challenge. Students were asked to read 20 minutes a day for at least 20 days a month to increase the love of reading and to promote its importance.

Each month, students who turn in their completed reading calendars are rewarded with a special celebration by MSDB Principal Kim Schwabe. Many of our students have been successful and continue to challenge themselves to increase their reading. Six students were able to meet the challenge for the first four months of school and were given

the honor of coloring the School Superintendent's beard at a pep assembly in January. They colored Mr. Gettel's beard in true MSDB fashion, blue and gold. Five other students that completed three out of the four months earned the right to assist with the fun event.

The challenge continues with a fresh new reward at the end of the year. Students who are able to read the required amount for the months of January-April will be able to take part in dunking Mr. Gettel in a dunking booth. We are finding that the students are getting motivated to join in the fun and are also finding a personal reward in just spending time with a good book. ❖



Montana School *for the*

HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUIL

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

~Helen Keller

MSDB Foundation Turns 30!

Thirty years ago, in 1981, the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind Foundation began providing services and equipment for the students at MSDB, with the help of a number of generous contributors.

With your help, we can fulfill our commitment to ensuring that deaf and blind children get a good chance for success. Please join us in that commitment by making a tax-deductible donation at www.justgive.org.

OR MAIL YOUR
CONTRIBUTION TO:

MSDB Foundation

P. O. Box 6576

Great Falls, MT 59406

For more information,
please call 406-771-6040



Family Advisor Ginni Paulson works with Tovia Graham in Kalispell.

General Mills & MSDB Foundation Support Early Intervention

With the help of the General Mills Foundation, the MSDB Foundation is providing funding for the School's early intervention services, which play such a critical role in the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children with vision or hearing loss.

Deaf & Blind Foundation

ENDING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

Since hearing is critical for the development of speech, language, communication skills, and learning, the earlier children with hearing loss receive special services, the better their chances for success. Similarly, children who are unable to gather information about the world around them using sight need help to get that information in other ways as soon as possible so they can begin to develop ideas, concepts, and knowledge.

MSDB's Family Advisors work with parents in their homes to address the unique learning needs of their infants and toddlers. The General Mills Foundation has provided a \$15,000 grant to help fund the Family Advisor Program during the current school year. We are most grateful for their generous support of this important program!

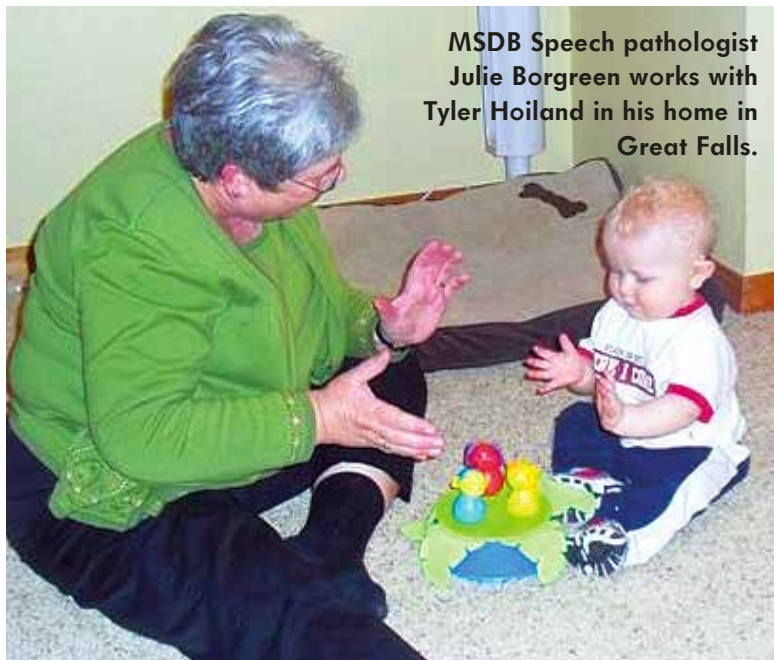
Approximately 35 Montana families are receiving services from the Family Advisors. The advisors help parents feel comfortable and confident as they raise their deaf or blind children, and this increases the children's chances of reaching their development potential.

With deaf and hard of hearing children, Family Advisors focus on language development (using the appropriate combination of speech and sign language). With blind and visually impaired children, they work on spatial and concept development and mobility skills.

The Family Advisor Program gives kids a fair chance at successful and independent lives. The MSDB Foundation is happy to support these essential services at MSDB along with partners like the General Mills Foundation. ■■



Family Advisor Teri Larson and Auditory Consultant Mary Koch Cline work with Anna LaCroix in her home.



MSDB Speech pathologist Julie Borgreen works with Tyler Hoiland in his home in Great Falls.

CAUTION: Hazard Ahead!

Deb Metge, Cottage Counselor

Residential students in the cottage have been busy completing their student council service project, called “Survival Starts With Us.” They are making “Hazard Ahead Kits,” to be used in the case of a roadside emergency and/or vehicle malfunction. The students received a mini grant from the Governor’s Office of Community Service, which is funding the project.

The students are each making a hazard kit for their families to carry in their vehicles, as well as extra kits for the MSDB school buses and state vehicles used to transport students. Each kit includes a neon road marker, glow sticks, space blanket, fleece blanket, flashlight with extra batteries, aluminum foil, waterproof matches, Sterno, bottle of water, Lifesaver candy, jerky and/or nuts, which the students purchased with the help of staff members.

The students began their work in the MSDB wood shop (with the help of cottage staff), cutting, sanding, painting and putting together their wooden road markers using a hinge, nylon strap and wood screws. Helped by staff, each student engraved “MSDB” on their marker. These road markers were designed to fold flat when not in use so as to fit nicely into each kit.

ProBuild of Great Falls donated the wood for this project, and Home Depot gave the students a discount on other needed supplies, for which they are very grateful. Thank you, ProBuild and Home Depot! MSDB’s Supervising Counselor Maeona Lee designed the kits.

Once the contents were ready, the cottage students worked on sewing the bags to hold each hazard kit, using the printed fabric they chose and purchased. They cut and



Be careful, Erin! Students worked hard at making roadside emergency kits.

pinned the fabric together for each bag. With the help of staff, they sewed the fabric together using a sewing machine and put in a drawstring cord. They then put all the contents of each kit in each bag, and the “Hazard Ahead Kits” were complete.

The students very much enjoyed making the kits, including learning some new skills! They are very happy with the results of their effort in making something that will both help their families and provide safety for all traveling in our MSDB school buses and vehicles. ■■

100 DAYS & COUNTING



Students celebrated 100 days of school recently with different events such as making silly hats & glasses, eating donut “zeros”, and counting lots of things up to one hundred!



Put Reading First

Jennifer Wasson, MSDB Teacher

Shannon Hoiland, a local Wells Fargo representative of the Reading First program (and a parent who is also being served in MSDB's Outreach Program), comes to MSDB every two weeks to read to our elementary students in both the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Visually Impaired



departments. She reads two books per visit, engages the students in the stories, and answers the students' questions related to the stories. Shannon then gives the books she reads to the MSDB library.

Wells Fargo developed Reading First in a partnership with The Children's Literacy Initiative in 1997. The early childhood literacy program is

designed to have a measurable impact on children's lives. Across the country, thousands of Reading First volunteers read to elementary classrooms and donate books to school libraries.

Wells Fargo now partners with Scholastic, Inc., the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books. Scholastic provides discounted and donated high-quality educational books for the program's participants. Scholastic and Wells Fargo share a commitment to instilling a lifelong love of reading in young children.

This is a great literacy partnership between Wells Fargo, Scholastic, Inc. and now MSDB. ■■

HEALTHY HABITS

Geri Darko, MSDB Teacher

Students in the Visually Impaired Department got a firsthand look at the parts of a grocery store during a trip to Albertson's on 10th Avenue South in Great Falls. David, a very knowledgeable store employee and the "tour guide," talked with students not only about the different sections of the grocery store, but also about foods that are healthy for you and foods that are not.

The tour began in the bakery where David talked with students about "sometimes foods" and "anytime foods." "What would be a sometimes food we would find in the bakery?" David asked. Students gave many great answers as they looked around and saw donuts, cookies, and cakes. David shared one of the anytime bakery foods with students: freshly baked whole wheat bread. As the tour moved on, students saw the produce department, meat department, learned about the deli, and visited the dairy department. Students went down the cereal aisle and discussed cereals that are anytime foods because they are high in fiber and whole grains as well as "sometimes cereals" that are high in sugar. Along the way, students and staff were given several opportunities to try samples of anytime foods such as orange slices, cheese, chocolate soy milk, and Oatmeal Squares cereal.

David taught students some important words to remember when shopping for healthy foods. They learned that healthy breads contain whole grains and fish contains Omega 3. Students also learned in the dairy department that some people are lactose intolerant, or are allergic to milk and dairy products. Fruits and vegetables have many vitamins and minerals that help keep us healthy. When choosing foods from these two groups, we should "eat the rainbow" and get at least five servings each day. Students were able to give several examples of fruits and vegetables of each color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

The tour was very informative, and at the end David gave each student a reusable grocery bag with coupons for healthy foods and a bottle of water. It was a great opportunity for students to become oriented to the grocery store and to learn about healthy eating habits. ■■



A Key to Independence...Cooking

Betty Cook, MSDB Teacher

Every Wednesday morning a group of High School students in the Visually Impaired Dept. hits the kitchen. As part of their life skills training, which prepares them to achieve the highest level of independence possible, the students are learning to cook. The recipes are produced either in Braille or in the appropriate font size for each student. The students keep the recipes in three ring binders, and at the end of the year, they will each have a cookbook of recipes they have made and tried. Recipes are simple so that the students will be able to make them independently (or with minimal help) and economical enough that they will be able to afford to make them when they are on their own.

This year students have made individual pizzas, three different kinds of macaroni and cheese, a cheese ball, Creamy Taco Dip, Raspberry Oat Bars, Breakfast Burritos, Impossible



What's cooking, Tyler? Lots of delicious smells filled the air when the VI students hit the kitchen for life skills this year.

Cheeseburger Pie, Meatball Soup, Spaghetti in One Pot, Thirty Minute Soup, Tortilla Soup, Flavored Popcorn, Carmel Corn, Melt-In-Your-Mouth Pecan Rolls, Upside-Down Pizza, apple pie, and apple crisp.

The class has discussed cooking terms including cut, dice, julienne, bake, broil, sauté, steam, and poach. They have learned about different methods of cooking such as: moist heat, microwaving, baking, and frying. They practiced measuring dry and liquid ingredients from different size containers, especially from small containers such as spices, and leveling ingredients. Student have looked at and identified kitchen tools and learned how they are used. We really appreciate all the helpful ideas we get each week from our Occupational Therapist on tools

that make working in the kitchen easier and safer for each student. ❖



Give Me Some Space

Sharon Woods, Outreach Consultant

Shatorrie Whitewolf is happy about the special space designed and built for her by her educational team in Miles City, where she receives outreach services from MSDB. Spaces like this cost little to build and can bring the world closer to children with visual impairments. Shatorrie is new to her space, so there are just a few familiar items in the space. Objects can be added as she progresses.

These spaces allow for independent exploration and concept development for infants as well as for older children with other disabilities. They learn that random movements create noise and are encouraged to shape this random movement into more purposeful movement, setting the stage for cause and effect concepts. Visual stimuli can be controlled, encouraging vision use for some children. ❖

A FAN-tastic EVENT

Darreck Hale, Cottage Counselor

What a fun time to be part of the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind family. This week MSDB came together for the 45th Super Bowl event.

We enjoyed many types of finger foods and treats while cheering on our favorite teams. The students were able to win multiple types of prizes while enjoying some NFL BINGO.

By the end of the night, the room was split down the middle with Green Bay fans on one side and Steelers fans on the other. We cheered and routed as the

intensity grew to a final showdown. In the end, Green Bay took the victory 31-25 – its 4th Super Bowl victory.

During this year's season, the cottage students and staff voted on their favorite teams and kept track of the wins. Kyle Hotzel and Richard Aguon each received a \$10 gift card for having the highest scores. We had a great time and cannot wait to do it again next year. ■■

Funding from the MSDB Foundation makes the Super Bowl party possible.



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

www.msdb.mt.gov

MSDB CLASSROOM SPOTLIGHT

Think Ink

**Juan, Skylee, Gabe, Alysha -
Social Studies, Grade 4/5**

Social Studies 4 and 5 made ink from blueberries. We stirred in salt and vinegar. We used a feathered pen known as a quill. With the remaining blueberries, we made pancakes with syrup. We dyed cloth like the colonists did almost 300 years ago. We boiled tea bags (brown) and blueberries (deep purple) in water. We put white cloth into the two colors and waited several hours. The white cloth was dyed purple and brown. ■■





MONTANA SCHOOL
FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

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SUMMER PROGRAMS

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

MSDB offers a variety of enriching summer programs for children and their families. Family Learning Weekends offer opportunities for families to draw support from one another as well as from MSDB staff and other experts. Summer Camps are a chance for kids who attend school in their home communities and those who attend MSDB to come together for a week to socialize with their peers, develop independence, and learn new communication and technology skills.

FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS



One Family Learning Weekend is designated for families of deaf and hard of hearing children, and one is for families of blind and visually impaired children. These popular weekends include dynamic national speakers and a wealth of information on learning to relate to a child's disability. The weekend provides opportunities for families to learn about blindness and visual impairment, share

their experiences with other families, and communicate with one another in a warm and caring atmosphere.

Learning Weekend for the Deaf/HH: June 10-12, 2011

Learning Weekend for the Blind/VI: June 3-5, 2011



SUMMER CAMPS

MSDB offers two week-long camps, one for children who are blind and visually impaired and one for those who are deaf and hard of hearing. The camps welcome students from around the state and offer skill-building in the key areas of communication, social interaction, independent living, and the use of technology.

The camps include structured leisure and recreational activities, including trips to the local water park, Great Falls White Sox baseball games, and exploring the historical, art and children's museums in Great Falls.

Summer Camp for the Deaf/HH: June 19-25, 2011

Summer Camp for the Blind/VI: July 10-16, 2011

The Montana School for the Deaf & Blind provides room, board, entertainment, and transportation to and from the Great Falls campus at no cost to the student. This summer, as in the past, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), MSDB, and the MSDB Foundation have co-sponsored summer programs at MSDB.

For more information: Please visit the MSDB website **www.msdb.mt.gov**. (click on "Campus" then "Summer Programs"). You will find further explanation of each event along with applications and program booklets. For additional information you can also call MSDB at 1-800-882-MSDB or email us at info@msdb.mt.gov. ☐☐