



# Express

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XIII, Issue 3, Summer 2015



MSDB Foundation Provides  
Digital Braille Access

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Family Learning  
Weekends Have Become a  
Successful Tradition

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# RUSSIAN PEER TO PEER EXCHANGE

By Pam Boespflug, Outreach Consultant

In late April the MSDB family had an opportunity to host a group of staff and students from the Lipetsk school for the Blind in Russia. Four adults and five students arrived in Great Falls, where they observed MSDB classes and toured local sites for a week.

In exchange, an MSDB contingent traveled to Russia the following month. Superintendent Donna Sorensen, Outreach Supervisor and instigator of this awesome project Carol Clayton-Bye, teacher Diane Blake, student Seri Brammer, and I left for Russia on May 11. We flew into Moscow and were met by the Lipetsk School van and staff. We had plenty of time to visit on our 6 hour drive with our English teacher/Interpreter Oksana and our host Svetlana,



whom Carol had worked with for three years. We were introduced to our host families that evening and arrived the next morning at school to a jazz band serenade and the traditional bread and salt ceremony. The week in Lipetsk went fast as we visited many classes at the school of over 500 students including those in distance education. We also toured the local city, statues and cathedrals, museums, a zoo, summer camps, and got to know our host families. Sunday we left for a vast Orthodox Monastery, the deaf school, another museum and met people from local businesses. We learned about clay making, local herbs, and ate the best porridge ever. It had been baked in a wood fired brick oven and we ate it with traditional wooden spoons. (Carol didn't like the apricots in it so I got two bowls, but then we often took turns taking one for the team.)

On to Moscow and the Inclusion Program headquarters, Red Square, shopping and The Kremlin. For three days we toured in a whirlwind on our own or with the direction of our tour guide Anna. We saw cathedrals again that were not destroyed during the Soviet era but turned into museums. We got to see Moscow at night from Sparrow Hill (see picture above). At the Inclusion



Left to right: Donna Sorensen, Igor Batishcheva, Carol Clayton-Bye, Pam Boespflug, Seri Brammer, Diana Blake, and Svetlana Veretennikova. We are standing in front of a fountain for preserving eyesight just outside of Lipetsk. It is thought that if you wash your eyes with this water, you will have good eyesight.

Headquarters we were able to see magnification and embossing equipment much like ours and share a few stories. We ate a lot as usual, introduced our tour guide to Krispy Kremes (which she said only tourists eat until she tried them). So many challenges in the language but Donna was able to chat with a small group of young deaf adults we found in downtown Moscow. We learned about so so many things including Russian Braille is easier to read than Russian and it is easier to sign to other Russians that sign than it is to talk to people that only speak Russian. At times we all felt so comfortable in each other's countries that we forgot we didn't speak the same language and that we were 24 hours from home. Go if you get the chance! 🇷🇺

# Everyone Wins When Everyone Reads

By Staci Bechard, Librarian

Congratulations to David, an elementary student in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department, on winning a brand new bike from the Great Falls Masons Euclid Lodge and their “Bikes for Books” program. Their generosity also extended to the Visually Impaired Department. Alyson, a high school student, won a Kindle Fire HD e-reader from the Masons’ “Kindles for Kids” program.

David and Alyson were the lucky recipients in a drawing which included every student at MSDB who’d participated in the “500 Book Gumball Reading Challenge.” Students began reading for the contest in March and continued through the end of the school year. They earned small prizes and awards for individually completing 20, 40, 60 and even more books (or a 15 minute per-book equivalent depending on their reading levels and the length of the book). Those smaller prizes were supported by the MSDB Foundation. The students were also highly motivated by the grand prizes, which included the Masons donation of the bike and the Kindle.

The reading contest was a big success. MSDB students did such an excellent job that they not only read 500 books, but far surpassed expectations by reading over 1000 books total as a group!! The grand prizes were given out during the annual MSDB end-of-the-year Award Ceremony. They were presented by Tom Duffy of the Masons, who leads the Bikes for Books Program. This was the second year MSDB participated in this wonderful community program. Last year the Masons donated a bike to the MSDB Cottage Program. We extend our sincere appreciation and a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to the Masons and their support of reading at MSDB, as well as all of the public elementary schools across Great Falls.■



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# EARLY INTERVENTION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN

By Kitty Griffin,  
Outreach Consultant

I clearly remember the day I met a very cute 3 year old boy, “A,” who was nonverbal. His parents were intelligent and deeply concerned. “Why isn’t he talking?” they asked me. “He seems like he understands a lot.” “Let’s see if we find out,” I countered. At that time, I was working as a Speech Language Pathologist in my private practice. I pulled out the Preschool Language Scale-3 which measures both auditory comprehension and expressive language. A. watched me carefully, waiting to see the test pictures. He said nothing the entire appointment, but smiled at me.

After the test was completed, I decided to see if he could understand gestures or simple signs. I signed “baby” with a rocking motion. He quickly pointed to the picture of the baby. My internal dialogue got very animated. “What a bright kid!” I thought; “He is Deaf.” I have specialized in the care of children with hearing loss my entire career of nearly 29 years. A. needed to see an audiologist to rule out or confirm a hearing loss, and the sooner the better. His parents took him right away. A severe hearing loss, bilaterally (involving both ears) was diagnosed. A. was fit with hearing aids binaurally. His parents later reported to me that he wears them constantly, even having to be reminded to take them off in the shower or when going to bed!

Today, I am lucky enough to work with MSDB on behalf of children with hearing loss almost every day. I continue to promote early intervention in my private practice as well. Early intervention is becoming more newsworthy as research discovers that



Early intervention starts at home. As an outreach consultant, Kitty (right), works with Christina (left), Bobby (not pictured) and their daughter, Bella, on a regular basis.

For more information on identifying signs of hearing loss or language disorders in young children and how to help, see the bottom of the next page.

early intervention for communication yields better outcomes. How early is too early? Truthfully, it is never too early to start working on functional communication. From “birth to age 3, the brain changes more rapidly than any other time in his/her life.” (Montana Resource Guide, MSDB.)

Montana has adopted the national standard of 1-3-6 model for children with hearing loss - identification of hearing loss by 1 month of age, hearing amplification by 3 months of age and early intervention services by 6 months of age. Thanks to the Universal Newborn Hearing (UNHS) Program in Montana, many newborns are diagnosed early. According to Lisa Cannon, MSDB consulting audiologist, 97% of newborns in Montana are being screened. The ideal is that those babies who require further testing in either ear are sent on for a full audiological evaluation. Early identification of a hearing loss would allow these babies to receive early intervention services.

Montana is fortunate to have a number of early intervention providers such as Family Outreach, ECI, DEAP, Child Development Center, HI Line Home Programming, STEP and Quality Life Concepts. These professionals may be the first to assist parents in lining up the necessary services. Those working for these organizations may initiate developmental testing such as motor skills, self help skills and communication skills. In addition, they can also assist parents in locating services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech language pathology.

MSDB also offers its own brand of early intervention services including DHH (Deaf and Hard of Hearing) Outreach in the child’s home and community. Families receive valuable information on hearing loss, amplification choices, communication options, and a wide variety of topics to help them boost their child’s communication development.

# MSDB Hall of Fame

By Gary McManus, retired MSDB teacher

The Hall of Fame for our school has been in the minds of many of us for some time but just never materialized until 2011. So Ed Van Tighem, Bob Corwin, and Gary McManus sat down to discuss how we could set one up. We have had so many good athletes that we felt it very important that these athletes get the recognition they deserved. Hence, the MSDB Hall of Fame!

We established criteria necessary for any athlete from MSDB to make it to the HOF. We established a location for the HOF to be seen. We went through a list of names who possibly could be elected. We set up a date to honor those whom we nominated. In September of 2012, we invited the inductees and their families to MSDB to be honored. It truly was a night to remember for those who were inducted. Many tears and happiness filled the room when names were announced and when they went up to receive their HOF plaque. There are replicas of the plaques posted on the wall of the Hall of Fame room. Now those same Hall of Famers can come back many times and look at their pictures and plaque and be proud that they made a difference in the school's history of sports.

Every 2 years, the committee gets together to review



other nominees for consideration for the HOF. We will have 4 more inductees this coming fall to be honored.

## Listed here are the inductees honored in 2012.

- **1983 400 meter relay team** – Lee Dubois, Shannon Elletson, Phillip Janes, and Cody Duncan
- **Jeff Richards** – wrestling
- **Amy Quigley** – softball
- **1957-1958 basketball team**
- **Dennis Catron** – basketball
- **Jayne Thexton** – track
- **Dan Humphrey** – manager for track and basketball
- **Gary McManus** – coach
- **Laurie Whitaker** – basketball
- **Newton Shular** – basketball and coach
- **Vernon Hippe** – 1947 graduate
- **Steve Cather** – track

The committee members now are Bob Corwin, Ed VanTighem, Jeff Richards, Jim Kelly and Gary McManus. Next time you are visiting the school, be sure to go to the Mustang Center lobby and see this impressive tribute to our top athletes who made us all so proud! 🇺🇸

## IDENTIFY THE SIGNS OF HEARING LOSS

- Lack of attention to sounds (birth to 1 year)
- Does not respond when you call his/her name (7 months to 1 year)
- Does not follow simple directions (1-2 years)
- Shows a delay in speech and 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 1/2-3 years)
- Has trouble playing or talking to other children (2-3 years)
- Has problems with early reading and writing skills-for example, may not show interest in books or drawing (2 1/2 -3 years)

## WAYS TO HELP WITH LANGUAGE DISORDERS (asha.org 2015)

- Listen and respond to your child
- Talk, read and play with your child
- Communicate with your child in the language you are most comfortable using
- Know that it is good to teach your child a second language
- Talk about what you are doing and what your child is doing
- Use a lot of different words with your child
- Use longer sentences as your child gets older
- Have your child play with other children

# 34th Annual Games for the Visually Impaired

By Denise Rutledge, Teacher

**T**his year the MSDB Games for the Visually Impaired had an exciting international flavor.

In addition to the students who came from around the state to participate, five Russian students joined us for the Games on May 1-2! The students and four staff members from the Lipetsk School for the Blind in Lipetsk, Russia, visited and took part in activities at our school during the week preceding the Games. Their final activity with our school was the Games for the Visually Impaired. Our students had a wonderful time socializing and playing with their international peers. Our Russian friends competed with pride and were strong competitors in many physical activities, including swimming, running and goalball. Our own on-campus and outreach students also competed with enthusiasm and confidence. They were delighted to



teach their new friends how to play Showdown and to challenge them in endurance skills or gymnastic capabilities!

A huge note of thanks goes out to all the people that make this event a success. We appreciate the families that travel at such distances to come and take part in the Games. We thank the students that come with their generous spirits. We thank the staff

that put in many hours preparing, organizing and working the event. We are thankful for the businesses and individuals that donate to our raffle, as well as those that purchase tickets to support the Games. And we send a huge note of appreciation out to the MSDB Foundation that helps fund this event. The work of many help to make this an event that is looked forward to each year! ❖

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## Alumni Make Great Role Models

By Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant

**T**his picture shows the smiling faces from our spring Deaf & Hard of Hearing Enrichment event! This spring we welcomed Terra Donovan, an MSDB graduate, and Emilie Banasiak. Both ladies work with Hamilton Relay and treated our students to a variety of physical and social activities. Their life experience dealing with hearing loss made them great role models for our students. On Saturday Tyler Hansen (an



MSDB staff member who is also a graduate of MSDB) led the younger group (red t-shirts in the photo) in a combination of activities including FOLF (a game like golf only using a Frisbee) and a variety of races in the swimming pool. The opportunities for learning and socializing are many during our Enrichment Weekends. MSDB staff puts their best effort forward to ensure the success of these weekends. Our thanks to each staff member for making a positive difference in the lives of our students and to our MSDB Foundation for sponsoring this event! ❖



# HARD WORK PAYS OFF

By Michelle Cross, Teacher

**C**ongratulations to Christy Haagenson! Christy has achieved her goal of completing the Braille Certification Training Program through the Library of Congress (in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind). Christy started her career at MSDB substituting in the cottage and education department during the 2001-2002 school year. The following year she was hired full time as a paraprofessional in the Blind and Visually Impaired Department. After working in her job for a couple of years, she participated in a braille class offered by Pam Boespflug to better understand the role of braille within the educational environment. Christy started out working in the multiple impairment-visually impaired class with Geri Darko for the first couple years, and then went on to work within all the other classrooms in the Visually Impaired Department. She also has supported visually impaired students by spending time in classrooms at Lewis and Clark Elementary and East Middle School with multiple students. Christy continues to use her extraordinary skills to support students at MSDB as well as our students within the public school setting here in Great Falls.

Christy has also completed coursework through the Hadley School for the Blind to become certified in Blindness Basics. In 2008, she was given the opportunity to enroll in the Braille Certification Training Program through the National Library for the Blind/National Federation of the Blind. During the past 6 years, she has worked on the 20 lessons required to receive her certification. Her final project required her to produce a 35-page manuscript with correct collation, formatting, grammar and spelling in literary braille. This intense coursework certifies the individual to transcribe print materials into braille. It is important to note that experienced braille transcribers may find full-time employment working for major braille producers, working for school districts transcribing handouts and/or textbooks for students, or working for a business or government agency preparing braille copies of materials for customers and/or staff. Some braille transcribers work at home, typically producing piecework.

Christy has continued her braille education with Hadley School for the Blind by enrolling in its Transition to Unified English Braille (UEB) course. This class will help to facilitate the transition to the Unified English



Christy holds the certificate she worked hard to achieve. MSDB is proud of her commitment and dedication to our students. We are so fortunate to have our second certified braille transcriber on staff.

Braille (UEB) system at MSDB. This past March, she attended a national conference in San Francisco to address the changes that UEB will bring to our staff and students. Meanwhile, Christy continues her daily duties as a paraprofessional/transcriber in the Blind and Visually Impaired Department.

How do I describe Christy? These are only some of the words that come to mind when I think of her and her commitment to MSDB: dedicated, fun, full of energy, knowledgeable and a true friend. If you see Christy, please congratulate her on her huge accomplishment and her many years of service and commitment to MSDB and our students. ■■



# Montana School *for the*

## HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

### MSDB FOUNDATION PROVIDES DIGITAL BRAILLE ACCESS



Every day at MSDB, blind students are exploring a larger world, thanks to a grant from an anonymous private foundation. Using their fingers to read braille dots that change on a refreshable display as the reader moves through online material, they are now able to access information much more quickly and efficiently than they were by navigating the internet via audio commands – a far more cumbersome process.

The MSDB Foundation solicited the funds that helped cover the purchase of two of these important pieces of technology that have relieved our blind students of an educational burden and greatly increased access to everything from their textbooks to web pages. MSDB now owns two of the refreshable braille displays and continues to use the one we've had on loan from the dealer for a couple of years now. All are in great demand by the school's blind students.

As you can see in the photos of MSDB students Billy and Maci, the braille display connects to an iPad or other electronic device in order to access

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

With your help, the MSDB Foundation has been able to provide funds for services and equipment for the students at MSDB for 30 years. The Foundation is committed

to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives. Please join us in that commitment by making a tax-deductible donation at [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org) or mailing it to: ➡



# Deaf & Blind Foundation

## BRIDGING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE



Blind students using their fingers to read their textbooks downloaded from the internet via digital braille – something Louis Braille would have never imagined and would surely be thrilled by. Billy reads a science textbook.

information a sighted user would see on the screen. The refreshable display changes dots as the student reads.

The primary use of the technology in class is to access textbooks through a website called Bookshare, which provides many texts in digital braille format. The braille displays provide free access to textbooks that

would cost as much as \$900, because braille books are so labor intensive to produce. In the past, MSDB has used its own braille embosser to print out textbooks it could download from the web, but this highly efficient new access has saved much in the way of even those considerable costs and labor and will make it possible to prolong the life of our braille embossers by giving them a lighter load.

Mrs. Rutledge raves about the effects the braille displays have had in her classroom. “At first, with this wonderful new technology, I could see a lot of potential,” she said, “but now, I don’t know what I’d do without it! It definitely gets used every day. . . .The students attend to their classes better since we began using the braille displays. They are more in tune with what’s going on.”

Reading, as opposed to just listening to something being read to them, is a key part of developing literacy for blind students. The refreshable braille display greatly enhances literacy for them, since it makes it so much easier to actually read in the digital world. This technology is becoming standard for blind people, and MSDB students will need to know how to use it when they go to college or get a job, so the anonymous gift the MSDB Foundation helped provide has once again helped prepare Montana’s blind young people for independent lives. ■■

### MSDB Foundation

P.O. Box 6576 | Great Falls, MT 59406  
For more information, please call 406-771-6040

*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”  
~Helen Keller*

# WITH GRATITUDE...

This wonderful group retired this year.

Left to right and the years they worked at MSDB: Pam Boesflug (42 yrs), Hal Adams (29 yrs), Debi Knuth (40 yrs), Steve Fugate (7 yrs), Betty Cook (28 yrs), Pam Stuckey (29 yrs) and Julie Borgreen (7 yrs). They will be missed.



## Pam Stuckey's Farewell!

I, Pam Quesenberry Stuckey, must now say "Good-bye to you, all my friends at MSDB." Here is a little about my past: I grew up in Bozeman, Montana, (near the Missouri River), and I studied Speech and Hearing at UC Santa Barbara, California, and Deaf Education at Minot, North Dakota. Beginning in 1971, I taught older students math and language for 9 years at the North Dakota School for the Deaf in Devils Lake, and I married my fellow teacher, Richard Stuckey, a Gallaudet graduate. Our two children, Sara and Seth, were born there in the 1970s in that prairie town (near the Missouri River). I received my Ph.D. in Education at the University of Illinois, and our family moved to Great Falls, Montana, (near the Missouri River) where I taught speech and high school English at MSDB. Rick was the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, so our lives have always been entwined with Deaf students' activities and learning. We never planned it that way, but you can



see that the Mighty Missouri was the River that Ran Through our Lives! Rick and I were two of the authors of the Reading Milestones curriculum which was syntactically designed for Deaf students, and I devised and utilized an Articulation Test based on common signs. I was a guest lecturer for two graduate courses at the University of Montana Speech Department in Missoula. Here at MSDB, I was co-author of a 6-level curriculum for the SpeechViewer computer, an interactive program comprised of many modules for Deaf students to "see" their speech. Students always enjoyed signing the meanings while talking, listening, and watching visual displays of their

spoken words and sentences.

In the years 2001-2008, I held fun annual Vocabulary Bee contests in which Deaf students had to read complex English words and remember their signed definitions. For awhile each year, these kids were competitive walking dictionaries! For high school seniors, I developed a year-long curriculum for translating sentences from ASL adults' video-recorded stories into written English grammar. You can see that I have always believed in the integration of signing and English to improve students' reading and writing. I have always wanted the best future jobs for you, my students!

Most of all, during these last 44 years, I have enjoyed listening and watching children's personal-experience, conversational stories as they grew from toddlers up through high school graduation. They connected eye-to-eye with communication partners, "fixed" words and phrases, and made others understand. Amazing learners! And I am proud of all of you!

*"Your teachings will forever be treasured, your contribution in our lives can never be measured. Happy retirement."*



# MSDB SAYS FAREWELL

## Debi Knuth Retires After 40 Years at MSDB



**T**o all the students, staff members, families, friends, and patrons of the awesome Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind, I would like to thank you for allowing me to be in your lives for so many years. MSDB has been a safe, learning home for me. Words cannot express how happy life has been with all of you (past and present). I have been more than fortunate (than any one person alone) to have such incredible experiences and cherished memories for

a better part of my life. Someone asked me the other day, what has been the best part of my job...that's easy...you. I know other retirees have felt the same way and I know they had a difficult time putting into words how much we love you and how much we will miss each of you. Godspeed my special friends, and may He grant you the same fond, loving memories and spectacular adventures that I have had at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind.

— Most sincerely, Knuth

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## Linda Willis Thanks MSDB for the Memories

**I** was born in Indiana and went to school there. When I was in 10th grade and only 17 years old, I met and married a guy who was in the Air Force. We had to leave Indiana and never having been out of Indiana before, I had to learn to travel. We moved about every two or three years to different states and lived on base. Every time we moved, I had to get a different job. Finally, he retired while we were stationed at Malmstrom AFB, Montana!

The first six years in Montana I had different jobs, then I was told about MSDB and I thought I would like working there. I got the job in the

kitchen and I really liked it. I met lots of teachers, co-workers, and of course all the students.

In my 16 years at MSDB, I saw a lot of students graduate. I have really enjoyed the students. I learned a lot from them. I have worked in nursing homes and day care centers; but I liked MSDB the best.

We all talk about when we retire and that time is now for me. I have no plans; I'll just enjoy being with my husband and my family. I will always remember my time at MSDB. Thanks for all the memories; I will miss everyone very much.



Hal Adams (left) and Steven Fugate (right) also retired from MSDB this year. Hal worked for 29 years as a Cottage Parent and was known to always keep a good sense of humor with the students. Steve worked for 7 years as an Outreach Consultant and was a great contributor of interesting and informative articles to this newsletter. They will both be missed by coworkers, families but especially by the students whose lives they touched throughout their years at MSDB.



*“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”*

— Henry Brooks Adams

# BEST WISHES FOR A

## Pamela Hofeldt Boespflug - Retiring after 42 years in education

I grew up in the Bear Paws south of Chinook, Montana. I graduated from Montana State University – Billings (MSU-B) in 1973 with a Bachelors of Science in Secondary Education in the areas of Health, Recreation and PE and Special Education. After student teaching in both areas I knew I wanted to be a Special Education teacher. Ten days after I graduated I started teaching Special Education at Eastmont Training Center in Glendive, Montana. There I fell in love with the rugged Breaks landscape and Dale, my husband of 41 years.



traveling an average of 640 miles a week and serving 50-60 children each year with vision loss. Mrs. Crawford, Hays/Lodgepole Superintendent, remembered my passion for respectfully teaching three decades earlier when we met again in the wilds of Montana. I remain passionate about making life experiences and education accessible and positive, now focusing on my grandchildren. I am a certified INSITE/VIISA trainer; this is a comprehensive program for training individuals working

That was before the time of Individualized Education Plans and assessment and a guarantee of a free and public education. I was a pioneer in the field of special education in Montana, writing assessments, curriculum, goals and lengthy lesson plans. In the next 10 years I earned a Masters at MSU-B in Special Education, graduating Magna Cum Laude and started working with children and adults with blindness and deaf blindness. In 1993 I earned a certification in elementary education at the University of Great Falls. I realized I really wanted and needed a degree in the area of blindness so attended Michigan State University, earning a Masters of Art in Special Education in vision and became a certified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) in 2003.

After 33 years of teaching I became an Outreach Vision Consultant for rural northeastern Montana,

with children and students with visual impairments with and without additional disabilities. I am also Past President of the Northern Rockies Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (NRAER) and a Professed Secular Franciscan.

I have so enjoyed working with the MSDB family since 1985. You have taught me so much about life and myself. I will miss working with you all. I will miss ending the days reading your emails which energized me for morning. Your caring touch, the pride in your school, yourself, your family bring me memories I will take with me. On Campus and Outreach families, students and staff, do your best because you make a difference in the world. The best comment I have heard through the years is how warm, friendly, and comfortable yet challenging the school is - I will miss that but I know you will keep it that way!

*“One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.” — Carl Jung*



# HAPPY RETIREMENT

## Farewell from Betty Cook



I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the staff and students I have worked with these last 28 years. My career at MSDB started in the spring of 1987 as a substitute and became full time in the fall of that year.

I worked in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pre-school when I was first hired, then worked half days in deaf pre-school and half days in the Visually Impaired Department. After a few years, I decided to go back to college to get a second degree. After getting my teaching degree, I taught English, math and life skills in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school

and life skills in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing middle school. I have taught English, social studies, health/PE, and a little bit of music and art, but mostly concentrated on a wide variety of math classes (from second grade to high school and also transition) and life skills in the Visually Impaired Department.

I also enjoyed all the years working both Deaf Camps and the Summer Skills Camps. Believe it or not, I was the cook at my first Deaf camp!

I have so many fond memories of the people and students with whom I have worked!

Thanks for the Memories!

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## A Fond Farewell from Julie Borgreen

To all the wonderful students and staff of this great school – THANK YOU! You are amazing! I will carry you with me always. Although I've only been at MSDB for 7 short years, I feel I've made life-long friends and the learning experience has been tremendous. I'm honored to have been a part of this institution. Although I'd like to think I've contributed a few things of value, I know that whatever they are they're minimal compared to the gifts I've received. I will always remember having my first meaningful

conversation with a deaf colleague ... hearing the first words of a 1 year old with bilateral hearing loss ... having a blind student recognize me by my voice after only meeting me once ... watching the joy in the preschoolers' faces as they watch a small remote car that surely seems to be alive... then more recently communicating with a deaf high school student and realizing that he actually understands me AND I understand him!! These are just a few of the gifts I'll never forget! I will open these gifts over and over ... my sincerest thanks to all!



*“Education is one thing, but you gave us much more.  
With inspiration beyond limits, you helped us rise and soar. Farewell.”*

# Class of 2015

CONGRATS!



Congratulations to the 2015 graduates: Jarrod Blair, Holly Wagner and Brooke Wood. Doug Marsh, a former MSDB graduate and current owner of Brush Crazy in Great Falls, gave the commencement address. Mary Jo Brammer from the Board of Public Education conferred the diplomas aided by Superintendent Donna Sorensen, Dean of Students Jim Kelly, Principal Kim Schwabe and Kathy Wanner from Great Falls Public Schools. The graduating class was sponsored by teachers Dee Blake and Wendy McDunn. Interpreters were Sheryl Lute and Sharon Denniston. We wish our graduates well on their next journeys.



# Prom ★ Night

## Grab Yer Boots – It's Prom!

By Lynda Eddards

On the night of May 15, in a light rain; the MSDB high school students, Michelle Cross, and I waited with great anticipation for the limo to arrive and whisk us off to the Montana Club, where we had our own banquet room for our dinner. After dinner we headed back to MSDB to dance the night away.

"Barn dance" was our theme for the night, which worked out perfectly for the ladies who like to wear their boots with their dresses! We had a great variety of music, from the chicken dance to line dancing to hip hop. We did the limbo and had a piñata. Mikayla and Kyle were crowned king and queen with cowboy hats, and of course a tiara was added to Mikayla's pink hat!

The success of the evening was definitely the result of a group effort. Josh and Denise Rutledge were our amazing DJs for the night! Richard Aguon was there with his camera to capture memories for all. Bob Corwin brought in the hay bales for seating and pictures. Michelle Cross and I would like to thank everyone for helping make this prom so special. There were so many great desserts donated by staff, and several staff stopped by to join in the fun. Also, we are grateful to Kyle and Mikayla for not only coming up with such a great theme, but also for all of their hard work and that of many of their classmates in transforming the gym into the magical barn dance that we will remember for years to come! ❖



*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."*

— Eleanor Roosevelt



MONTANA SCHOOL  
FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

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## Learning is Fun at Family Learning Weekends

By Jim Kelly, Dean of Students

The summer kicked off with the Family Learning Weekend for Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. This was the 19th annual event and was by far the largest in attendance with 179 parents, grandparents, professionals, children and staff in attendance. The event was held on the MSDB Campus, June 12-14. Parents attended various workshops and presentations on such topics as IEP's (individualized education plans), Audiology 101, American Sign Language, as well as separate mom's and dad's discussion groups. As the weekend came to a close many of the families commented on how wonderful the weekend was and were looking forward to returning next year!

The next weekend, June 19-21, was the Family Learning Weekend for Families of Blind and Low

Vision students. This was the 15th annual event and while the attendance was about average (115) it was said to be one of the best weekends! There were several MSDB alumni and other persons with visual impairments who shared their failures and success with the families. For so many of the parents listening to the stories of the presenters and panel members gave them a sense of empowerment and encouragement. Also, parents had the opportunity to experience a "sighted guide" and doing some basic household chores while under the blindfold. All told, another successful weekend for the families and other participants.

The Family Learning Weekends are sponsored by the MSDB Foundation Inc., the Montana Office of Public Instruction, Gallaudet University Regional Center - West

Ohlone College and the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind. ❖



Top: Children and staff practice "Love in Any Language" for the kids' performance on the final night of the Deaf Learning Family Weekend. This song and performance for the parents has been a long standing tradition. Bottom: Parents listen to one of the students on the "Teen Panel" during the Deaf Family Learning Weekend. Parents always rate the panel and the students' personal stories as a highlight of the weekend.



### LOOK OUT KINDERGARTEN: HERE TYLER COMES!

Congratulations to Tyler Hoiland on graduating from Preschool at MSDB. Best of luck in Kindergarten, Tyler!



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

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

## BACK TO SCHOOL: MSDB - AUG.24, 2015 | GFPS - AUG. 26, 2015

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