



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

# Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume X, Issue 1, Fall 2011



**MSDB Griz Kids are All Smiles...**

**PAGE 6**

**MSDB Foundation Helps Tyler Get A Great Start In Life & Thanks Donors!**

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# ☆ MSDB SUPER STARS ☆

In honor of Deaf Awareness Week, Brenda LeMieux received the **Hamilton Relay 2011 Deaf Community Leader Award** for the state of Montana. Brenda has been a teacher in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Department at MSDB for the past 22 years. She has also been a longstanding member of the Montana Association of the Deaf. At MSDB, Ms. LeMieux is the sponsor for the Jr. National Association for the Deaf and the Close-Up government studies program. She has served as yearbook coordinator and summer camp instructor and is the sign language consultant for the Expressions of Silence performance group.

Brenda is a master teacher who works tirelessly to provide quality instruction to our students. She demonstrates professionalism to her peers and respect to all her students and their parents every day. She has boundless



energy and enthusiasm for her job. All of this makes it possible for her students to be as independent and successful as they can be. ❖



Colleen Kunz, Senior VP First Interstate Bank; Jessica Munkres, Teller; Diane Moog, Teacher; Brandon & Jason, 4th grade students; Shannon Newth, KRTV Anchor.

Diane Moog received the **“One Class at a Time”** award on behalf of her 4th grade reading students on October 27th. She was presented with a check for \$250 and a desk plaque by First Interstate Bank and KRTV. The monies will be used to purchase books in a variety of genres for her students, such as mysteries, biographies, science fiction and more. KRTV and First Interstate Bank select a classroom each week in their viewing areas to receive this mini-grant. This is Diane’s 27th year at MSDB. She has taught at all grade levels and also served as supervising teacher, followed by four years as MSDB’s principal. Diane then transitioned back into the classroom, which is where she feels her heart is. Diane is an outstanding teacher and co-worker. She is dedicated to making sure her students receive the best education possible. In 2000, Diane also received a “Teacher of the Year” award from Sam’s Club. ❖

For her outstanding contributions to the blind and visually impaired, MSDB Outreach Consultant Nancy Getten was awarded the traveling **Frank Smith Award** by her colleagues in the Northern Rockies Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of Children and Adults (NRAER).

She received the award at the NRAER Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho on October 20. The NRAER membership is made up of professionals in this field from Idaho, Wyoming and Montana. The traveling plaque has the name of all the people in the past that have been awarded this great honor, and each recipient also receives an individual plaque to keep.

Nancy taught Braille and Language Arts at MSDB for 20 years. After retiring, she became an Outreach Vision Consultant and is now in her 7th year. Congratulations, Nancy! We are so proud of you; you have touched the lives of so many children with vision loss, and you continue to inspire those of us in the field! ❖





## ☆ Governor's Award for ☆ Excellence in Performance

**M**SDb recognized Gary McManus for this year's Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance. For 38 years, Gary's focus has been on giving children opportunities to learn and grow both inside and outside the classroom. He has been a teacher, mentor, and friend to hundreds of students. Because of his caring nature and volunteer work, there's always someone who knows Gary. The first thing alumni ask is whether Gary is still teaching and how he's doing. If there is a person who personifies the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, it's Gary. ■■



### Proud Showing

"Congratulations to Riata Smith of Wibaux for placing first in 4-H Horse Showmanship at the Wibaux County Fair!"



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\*Cover Photo Courtesy of Jim Baker

# BE A STAR!

Laura Copp & Jennifer Wasson,  
MSDB Outreach Consultants

This fall's Deaf Enrichment Weekend (DEW) was held October 7-8 on MSDB's campus. DEW proved to be another success, with over 40 children – preschool through transition students – participating from around the state. The theme for the weekend was “Be a Star,” with activities designed around constellations and other star themes.



We kicked off the weekend with a performance by Expressions of Silence. This is always a favorite for the kids in the audience. It's a joy to watch them as they sit in the bleachers signing along with the EOS performers. After the performance, we enjoyed a pizza dinner, swimming and

gym activities, and plenty of snacks. The kids were worn out once it was time for bed.

The next day, Wendy McDunn, a teacher of the Deaf at MSDB, began our activities by facilitating a group shadow-box activity in the gym. There, participants made constellations out of boxes. When the boxes were



Save the date for our spring Deaf Enrichment Weekend, March 9-10, 2012. Contact your Outreach Consultant for more information or call MSDB at 1-800-882-6732.

complete, each child had the joy of turning on flashlights and seeing their constellations come to life. Students then were broken into age groups and participated in four more activities throughout the day related to the “Be A Star” theme. At the end of the day, each group was able to present what they learned to their parents in the audience.

Whether it was creating origami, singing the Solar System song, hearing stories of the constellations or creating their own, fun was had by all. ■■

***Enrichment Weekends are supported by the MSDB Foundation.***



## OUR BABY JAMBOREE ROCKS

Pam Boespflug, Steve Fugate, Sharon Woods,  
MSDB Outreach Consultants

Thanks to collaboration between MSDB outreach staff and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in Billings, parents, infants and toddlers gathered in ECI's activity room for a Billings Baby Jamboree. Parents and their children participated in gross motor, fine motor, and sensory activities, as well as games adapted

for children who are blind or have low vision. Raising children with visual impairments presents parents with unique joys and challenges, and Baby Jamboree is an opportunity for parents to share their experiences with each other and build a network. They can also learn from each other as well as from staff trained in early intervention. ■■

## PARENT PERSPECTIVE: “iSIGN”, DO YOU?

“Mobile applications” or “apps” as they are often called, are compact software programs that perform specific tasks for the user of a mobile device such as a cell phone. Apps can be downloaded for free or a small fee from Web



The Foote children practice their sign language skills using iSign.

sites. There are a large variety of apps available depending on a person’s needs and what device they are using. “iSign” is one such app that helps teach sign language. It is an animated version of 800

Sign Language phrases compatible with the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad.

Carmel Yarger, Outreach Consultant for MSDB, recently introduced the iSign app to Romsey Foote, a parent she serves. After downloading the app onto her iPod touch, Romsey was enthusiastic about its use and wrote the following information to share with other parents:

*“iSign has been a phenomenal way to increase our signing vocabulary. For 3 years my family and I would look up words in signing books, watch DVD’s and occasionally watch a speech therapist interact with our son. I am embarrassed to say, progress was slow. Then there was iSign. Within the first month of getting the iPod touch and downloading the iSign app, my son had broken his arm. While waiting for the doctor to cast his arm we looked up words under the Health and Medical Category. We looked up the words, found the matching nouns, then spoke, signed and finger spelled them. In one hour we learned 25 words. Even the children who haven’t taken an active role in learning sign language find it entertaining to look up words and test Mom’s ability to get it right. My nine year old son is now putting sentences together and looking up words to communicate. Taking the guesswork out of how ASL words are to be signed, iSign built our vocabulary and confidence level. It became a pocket size, 24/7 virtual tutor, for less than \$10, apart from the price of the iPod touch. Our “tutor” is at our beck and call, available and ready anytime we have a spare moment.”* ■■

—Romsey Foote, parent

## INCREDIBLE EDIBLE CELLS

**Denise Philipp,  
MSDB Teacher**

“Focus Week” was held in conjunction with the Goalball/Enrichment Weekend in the Blind and Visually Impaired Department during the first week of November. Students enjoyed creating “Incredible Edible Cells” in a science class to finish their unit study about the cell. Favorite cell components included the vacuoles (hot tamales) and endoplasmic reticulum (folded fruit roll-ups). Tactile (and edible) experiments are a great way to get kids involved in learning about science. ■■



Anthony adds the ribosomes (candy sprinkles) to the cytoplasm of his animal cell (red gelatin).

## WIGGLES & GIGGLES

**Leann Goss, MSDB Teacher**

The Preschool class in the Department for the Deaf/HH is learning the letters of the alphabet through hands-on experiences with things that start with each letter and by using our 5 senses to explore things. While studying letter “Ww” we examined a cup filled with earth worms! We measured to find the longest and shortest worms, then estimated how many worms were in the cup and then counted to see if we were correct. We also watched them wiggle across the table and we learned about where they lived. Last but not least, we made a tasty snack of (gummi) worms in the (Oreo) dirt. ■■



Wow! What a wonderful, wild week we had!!

# GO GRIZ KIDZ!

Denise Philipp, MSDB Teacher

“I love the GRIZ!” shouts Patricia Levy as she enthusiastically hugs her friend, Ally Sherrill, during another Montana Grizzlies touchdown. The two girls experienced their first U of M football game on Saturday, October 15th.

The cool, crisp fall weather and light morning rain shower in Missoula was no match for the high temperature of Griz fever found in first-time attendees from MSDB, as well as veteran Griz fans like Thea Dupre and Isaac Jones. Students and staff from the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (51 strong!) enjoyed the 7th annual trip to the Washington-Grizzly Stadium. The stadium is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month, proudly situated at the foot of Mount Sentinel with the large, white “M” for the university overlooking its thrilling football games.

Our day started early in the cottages. Richard Aguon cooked made-to-order omelets for all staff and students so that we could board the bus by 6:45 a.m. Students lumbered onto the luxury travel coach armed with snacks, music players, books, pillows, and excitement for the day ahead. Many of us tried to recapture some of our lost Saturday snooze hours, while others talked animatedly with their friends. Our only stop between MSDB and the U of M was in Lincoln to give patronage to the High Country jerky store.

Upon arrival in Missoula, we were greeted by the tempting smells of barbecued pulled pork and baked beans. Jim Kelly’s custom Griz van was ready and rocking for a tailgate party! The grill and mini-kitchen located in the back of the van was cooking up a storm to feed us all, while the stereo system was pounding out classic rock songs heard at every football game. “We Will Rock You” played as the students helped one another apply removable tattoos of maroon bear paws to each other’s faces.

As we finished filling our bellies, our friends from the “Griz Kidz” group, Mike Bouchee, Mike Rankin, Tim Polich and Bryan Tripp arrived to welcome us to the game and to share tickets, t-shirts and hats with our group. We paused for a picture and to thank them for



Jordan Tripp #44 (cover) and Jordan Canada #26 (top of page) are among the many Griz players who met to sign autographs following their victory over the Portland Vikings.

Our MSDB Griz Kids thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to interact with the team. Thanks guys, you are heroes to these students, as you can tell by their smiles!

their generosity. The Griz Kidz organization recognizes that some families cannot afford to send their kids to Washington-Grizzly Stadium for football games, so the group, made up of six former University of Montana football players, found a way to give back to a community that continually shows phenomenal support for Grizzly athletics. As quoted from the Griz Kidz website, "For the past six years, through corporate and individual sponsors, Griz Kidz has been successful at securing a block of over 50 tickets at each Grizzly Football home game and providing great experiences to underprivileged children all over Montana." MSDB has been a lucky recipient of tickets each of those years, along with groups like Big Brothers and Sisters, Head Start, and the Montana Hope Start.

Our seat locations afforded us an excellent view of the north end zone and a close proximity to the touchdown cannon. We waited not-so-patiently to hear the boom of the cannon,

as the game started out in favor of the Portland State Vikings. Technical fouls seemed to be the order of the day for our beloved maroon and silver-clad players. After a colorful half-time show by the band, the University of Montana Grizzlies returned to the field to light up the second half. The cannon blasted its way through the third and fourth quarters and the Griz pulled out a win of 30 to 24.

Students and staff from MSDB were able to walk onto the field after the game to meet players and coaches. Jordan Tripp, a junior linebacker, remembered many of our kids from last year. He greeted Anthony

Cox by name. Jordan's mom was there and said that they kept a picture of Anthony and Jordan from the 2010 game in a scrapbook at home. At 6'3", Jordan had to kneel to give the kids hugs and to get in the picture with Alyson Flamand, Anthony Cox and Ally Sherrill, but he didn't seem to mind.

A tired but delighted crew of MSDB Mustangs said farewell to the Montana Grizzlies and we headed back to Great Falls with vivid memories of a great day in Missoula. When asked what their favorite part of the day was, our "Griz Kidz" had a variety of answers. Sean Wixsten said, "I liked meeting the cheerleaders the best!" Austin Horstmann announced, "I loved going onto the

field and getting autographs." Tyler Nicholson replied, "I was sad that they were losing for the first half of the game. But I was so happy that they ended up winning. That was cool."

Staff and students would like to thank the Griz Kidz organization for allowing us this

opportunity to attend a game. We would also like to thank our driver, Rich, from Big Sky Bus Lines for getting us safely to and from MSDB. Thanks to the MSDB Foundation for paying for the charter bus and monies for the lunch at the games and additional treats on the bus trip. Thanks to Maeona, Wanda and the kitchen crew for preparing a great tailgate lunch and snacks for the road. Thanks to all of the staff and students involved for packing along your patience and positive energy to make this day sensational. ❖

***Trips to Griz games are supported by the MSDB Foundation.***

## "I LOVED GOING ONTO THE FIELD AND GETTING AUTOGRAPHS."

— Tyler Nicholson



MSDB says "Thank You" to the Griz Kidz organization and everyone who helped make this trip a success.



# Montana School *for the* HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

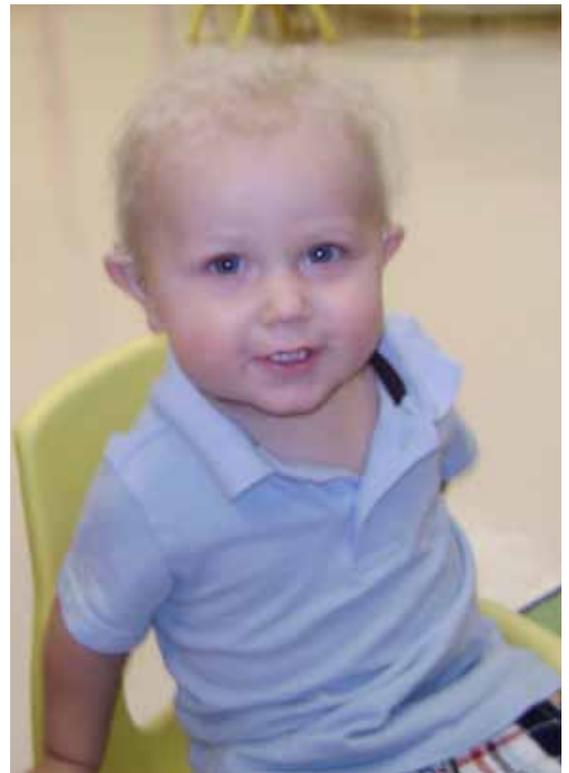
## YOU CAN HELP GIVE KIDS LIKE TYLER A GREAT START IN LIFE

**W**hen James and Shannon Hoiland learned last year that their baby had a significant hearing loss, they were overwhelmed. Finding the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind made all the difference for them, and for their son, Tyler. **“Before we found MSDB, we really struggled,” Shannon Hoiland recalled. “It was a great relief to find MSDB’s outreach services.”**

Today, as he approaches his second birthday, Tyler is a thriving member of MSDB’s preschool class for deaf and hard of hearing children. According to his teacher, Leann Goss, “He comes in each day happy and confident in his abilities to communicate with his teachers and friends!”

**“It’s great to look back and think, ‘Wow, we’ve come so far,’”** his mother said. Since he was 5 months old, Tyler has been receiving services at home from MSDB’s speech pathologist, Julie Borgreen, who teaches him both spoken and sign language. Shannon credits these services for Tyler’s remarkable progress. “I watch his interactions with Julie and hear all the words he’s using, and I see what a difference it’s made for him.”

MSDB’s outreach staff works with infants and toddlers in their homes across Montana. Babies with varying degrees of vision or hearing loss benefit enormously from early intervention, which plays a critical role in their cognitive, emotional, and social development and gives children a fair



Tyler Hoiland

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

*~Helen Keller*

**W**ith 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 30 years. The MSDB Foundation is committed to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives. ■■

# Deaf & Blind Foundation

## PLACING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

chance at successful and independent lives.

The Hoilands recalled that during the first few months of his life, Tyler was not responding to his environment much and that his speech and language development was delayed. After several months of working with MSDB, they felt he was nearly equal to his peers. "Every mother's worry is that your child won't be able to keep up with his peers and won't be able to do all the things other kids can do," Shannon said. "Right now, I have no doubt that he will."

James Hoiland said, "The outreach services have made us more comfortable with Tyler's disability and made us understand more so we can help get him where he needs to be."

Even before Tyler's birth, Shannon was no stranger to the challenges and the possibilities presented by a child's hearing loss. Her sister was born with a profound hearing loss yet was very successful in school. "I learned how important a strong program for the hard of hearing was – it was key to her success," she said.

"MSDB's staff and services are so positive. They're going to be a big part of Tyler's future."

Jennifer Wasson supervises Tyler's home-based MSDB services. "We love seeing Tyler, hearing him use



words, watching him sign his way through the days with us, and knowing he is off to a great start!"

**You can help ensure that other babies like Tyler will get a good running start in life.**

Please join the MSDB Foundation in helping to make these early intervention services possible for Montana's children by making a contribution using the enclosed envelope, or online at [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org). ❖

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Susan McIntyre".

**Susan McIntyre, President  
MSDB Foundation**

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**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.***

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# Deaf & Blind Foundation

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*(Those with established  
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in green below.)*

**JOHN & DOROTHY KINNA**  
Leep Brothers & Sisters

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

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

# WHITE CANE DAY CELEBRATIONS ACROSS MONTANA

**Geri Darko,**  
**MSDB Orientation and Mobility Specialist**

## GREAT FALLS

Students and staff at MSDB took a day this fall to celebrate the independence of our blind and low vision students on White Cane Day. Every year on October 15, our nation observes White Cane Day to celebrate the white cane, a symbol of independence, and to honor the achievements of persons with visual impairments.

This year's festivities included scavenger hunts across the MSDB campus for students and staff. Elementary school children were given directions in the form of poetry. These poems led students on a white cane chase across campus and back to the Visually Impaired Department to partake in snacks and goodies prepared by our blind and low vision students.

The middle and high school students were given clues leading them to various locations across the MSDB campus. Clues were so specific that they even included cardinal directions, building names, and door numbers to help students locate the next clue. The end of this scavenger hunt yielded great treats, also cooked by our own blind and low vision life skills classes. ❖



**Pam Boespflug, Steve Fugate, Sharon Woods –  
MSDB Outreach Consultants**

## BILLINGS

A White Cane Day event was held in Billings, MT on October 14th at the STEP (Support and Techniques for Empowering People) offices. Children and parents enjoyed face painting and games. Parents had time to visit and network while staff and children went on parades around the neighborhood. This was a wonderful opportunity for young students to meet others who use a long white cane for safe, graceful and independent travel. White Cane Day is celebrated around the world to bring attention to and awareness to the importance of independence for people who travel with long white canes. ❖

# MY PLACE IN SPACE: O&M TIPS

Gerri Darko, MSDB Orientation and Mobility Specialist

During our White Cane Day Events, it was surprising to kids and adults alike just how many of the students were unaware of the building names and door numbers on our very own campus. Not all of them were knowledgeable about cardinal directions and how they apply to all environments.

When telling students with visual impairments about objects or places within the environment, it is always important to describe them using words such as left, right, above, below, around, and through. The following is a list of concepts that have so many meanings and applications that they must be taught in a purposeful and meaningful way to students with visual impairments.

A firm grasp of these basic concepts is important, not only when children are young and in school, but becomes more essential when students become older and begin to travel independently. Orientation is the understanding of “Where am I?” and “Where do I need to go?” as well as “How do I get there?” Mobility is moving through space with the greatest degree of independence possible, and these concepts are important tools for achieving that mobility:

- Left/right
- Big/little
- Short/long
- Narrow/wide
- Deep/shallow
- Tall/short
- Up/down
- Top/bottom
- Over/under
- High/low
- Next to (or beside)
- Center (or middle)/corner/side
- Through/around
- Forward/backward
- Parallel/perpendicular
- In/out
- In front of/in back of/behind
- Near/far
- Beginning/end
- Between
- Straight/crooked
- Open/closed
- Toward/away
- Color words
- Geometric shapes
- Body parts
- Spatial awareness and movement of head, limbs, and trunk (straighten arm, bend elbow or knee, put your arm out to the side, and bend forward or to the side)
- Body planes (front, back and side of body, top of head, bottom of foot)



## WHITE CANE PLAY DAY

Sharon Woods,  
MSDB Outreach Consultant

While the national White Cane Day is observed in October, for people who use white canes, every day is white cane day! In August, a White Cane Play Day gave children and families in the Yellowstone County area a time and place to gather, share and have fun. Events and activities were planned for the children and their siblings while parents spent time visiting, sharing and enjoying each other's company. The event started with an obstacle course with both visual and tactile features that the white cane travelers, ranging in ages from three to eight, enjoyed. The

children were challenged by a twisting, turning balance beam, stepping stones and a twirling lighted hula hoop. We ran races and blew bubbles. There were opportunities to try out some adapted physical education equipment.

It is important for children and families to have time with other families and children dealing with the joys and frustrations of growing up with visual impairments. Events such as this and MSDB's Enrichment Weekends, Games for Visually Impaired and Family Learning Weekends allow for opportunities to give and get support and understand that there are others out there traveling a similar road as we are.

**Check out [www.msdb.mt.gov](http://www.msdb.mt.gov) for dates of future events or visit with your child's outreach consultant. ❖**

# UNTANGLING THE DOTS

**Kerri Norick and Nancy Getten,  
MSDB Outreach Consultants**

The Outreach Staff in the Department for the Visually Impaired hosted the annual MSDB workshop for Braille instructors. The need for this training arose from the 2006 adoption of new state requirements for those instructing students using Braille. We had 34 participants from all over the state this year attending “Untangling the Dots.”

**Presenters this year included:**

- National Federation for the Blind Braille Transcription Instructor Allison O’Day presenting on transcribing do’s and don’ts and her personal experience growing up in public schools as a Braille reader.

- Hadley School for the Blind shared via web conferencing about their on-line courses focusing specifically on the Braille Teaching Methods course.

- Francisco Roman from the Office of Public Instruction gave an overview of the Braille bill.

- Laurie McRae, PT, and Carol Clayton-Bye, supervising teacher of the visually impaired department

gave a presentation on proper positioning and posture.

- Sharon Woods, Nancy Getten, Allison O’Day and Marge Holt gave their perspectives on how to be a successful transcriber and Braille teacher during the professional panel



hosted by Pam Boespflug.

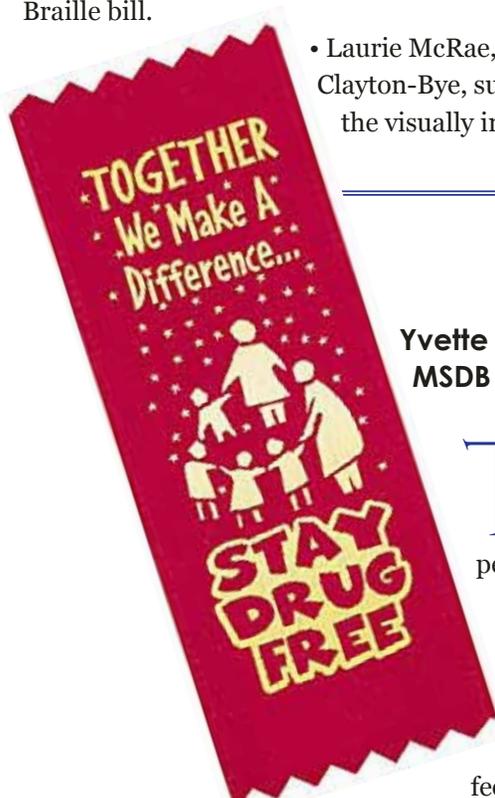
- Barb Balko-Rolf, Jane Garrison, and Kerri Norick shared information about University Teacher of the Visually Impaired Programs from Portland State University, Texas Tech University and Stephen F. Austin State University.

- Hadley School for the Blind shared information about its partnership with Utah State University on coursework designed for para-professionals who work with young people who are blind or visually impaired.

- Steve Fugate led the networking lunch opportunities for participants to discuss the roles and responsibilities of Braille instruction.

Kudos to Maeona Lee and the dining room staff at MSDB for the delicious lunch and the healthy

snacks. The best part of this year’s workshop was the opportunity for professionals to practice their Braille lessons, and techniques shared by Allison O’Day. This was a great opportunity for teachers to network and learn more about dots! ❖



## RED RIBBON WEEK

**Yvette Smail,  
MSDB Behavioral Specialist**

The staff and students were honored to take part in the national effort to encourage people to be drug free.

MSDB had different activities every day of the week from October 24-28th. Students dressed in red, sported comfy sweats and decorated their feet with cool socks to show their

support for the slogans, “Don’t Sweat Drugs” and “Sock it to Drugs.” MSDB is proud to show schoolwide encouragement for this worthy cause.

Students spent time in and out of the classroom creating posters to decorate the hallways, and making a “Leaf Drugs Alone” tree so visitors knew they were proud of the drug free life they have chosen.

Thanks to the support of the MSDB Foundation, we were able to give the kids some cool tokens to help them remember to stay drug free. ❖

# PLAY BALL...AND MORE!

Wendy McDunn, MSDB Teacher

**D**id you ever think you would see people who are visually impaired and blind play tennis? Well, with a few adaptations to the equipment and the rules, MSDB's Visually Impaired health enhancement class was given a shot at "love", and loving it. The ball is modified to jingle, making noise allowing the players to seek it out. Unlike a single bounce in regulation tennis, a 2nd or 3rd bounce is allowed, giving the player extra time to get to the ball. The visually impaired students also use a child's racket, which provides extra target area. "Soundball," as it is often referred to, was developed in Japan in 1980. The first tournament was held in 1990.

Funding from the American Printing House for the Blind allowed MSDB to purchase the special tennis equipment in addition to other PE equipment. We acquired some great 21st century jump ropes. Remember back in the day, taking a hula hoop, standing it on end and spinning it through your hands and jumping through it like a jump rope? Now they have specially designed oblong



For more information on Soundball history and rules see [www.tennis-foundation.org.uk/disabilitytennis/otherdisabilities/](http://www.tennis-foundation.org.uk/disabilitytennis/otherdisabilities/)

shaped, hard tubular pieces of PE equipment just for the job. The most exciting piece of equipment is an electronic jump rope, without a rope. Yes, I said without a rope. This gadget has handles that allow you to program a rhythm, a timer, and even track the number of jumps. It allows the student to practice jumping and engage in rhythm, getting cardiovascular exercise without getting tangled up in the rope. This is not just great for students with disabilities who would not otherwise be able to jump

rope; it's a great motivational tool, and it's just plain old cool.

The kids adore the new 3 wheeled bicycles MSDB received; they learned the parts of the bicycles and bicycle safety before taking them out for a spin. We did not get a chance to take the new beautiful tandem bike out before the cold weather hit but will set that on the agenda for spring health enhancement.

Other equipment we received allows visually impaired students to run on their own without a sighted guide. A guide line is set at shoulder height, horizontal to the ground. A carabineer and then a loop line allow the students to run from one end of the gym to the other unimpeded.

We are having a great year in health enhancement with fun new activities, including a wide assortment of games we've learned from a great new book of adapted health enhancement games. We have also been horsing around with horseshoes, before the weather turned chilly outside, with sound sources and a little adaptation of the rules and the equipment. WE can do anything!! And we're sure giving it our best shot! ♠

## How big are those blades anyway?

MSDB students from Ms. Philipp's & Ms. McDunn's science classes took a recent field trip to MSU-COT, where they discussed wind energy, examined a wind turbine, and learned about Montana windmill farms from Jason Harding, MSU's Sustainable Energy Educator.





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# BUILDING SUCCESS

## Amber Chastain, MSDB Interpreter

“This is like coming to work and playing a video game all day!” said a student in the Construction Tech class at Great Falls High School while watching a

backhoe dig the foundation for a new house. The class is better known to students as “the high school house.” Students are given an opportunity to apply classroom knowledge and skills to actual job sites. The students travel from the high school to an off-site location that has been designated by the local chapter of NeighborWorks as the outside “classroom.” They are involved from the very beginning – from reading the plot plan in the fall to figure out where the house will sit on the lot, to laying the very last piece of sod in the spring—and all of the work needed in between. The students work on the house two class periods of their day so they have the time needed to accomplish the tasks assigned.

The students are prepared for these adventures by prerequisite classes such as Woods and Pre-Construction so that they become familiar with tools, machines and materials

needed in a construction career. The instructors work closely with the students along the way to emphasize the importance of safety and commitment to the trade while exposing them to new technology, innovations and invaluable experience.

Throughout the year the Interior Design classes from

the high school travel to the job site to see the work being done and explore the options available for the finishing touches of the house to make it comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. They have the opportunity to put together their own “presentation board” with their choice of color schemes, materials (for countertops, flooring, etc.), textures and décor. The NeighborWorks Board of Directors votes on the one they like best for the current project.

Do such classes and projects intimidate MSDB students? No way! For several years

in a row Deaf/Hard of Hearing students have been involved in both programs and have had memorable experiences and forged new friendships while gaining invaluable skills and guidance from their neighborhood high school. Maybe this could be a great opportunity for your high school student while attending MSDB! ■■



Isaac lends a hand.



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)