

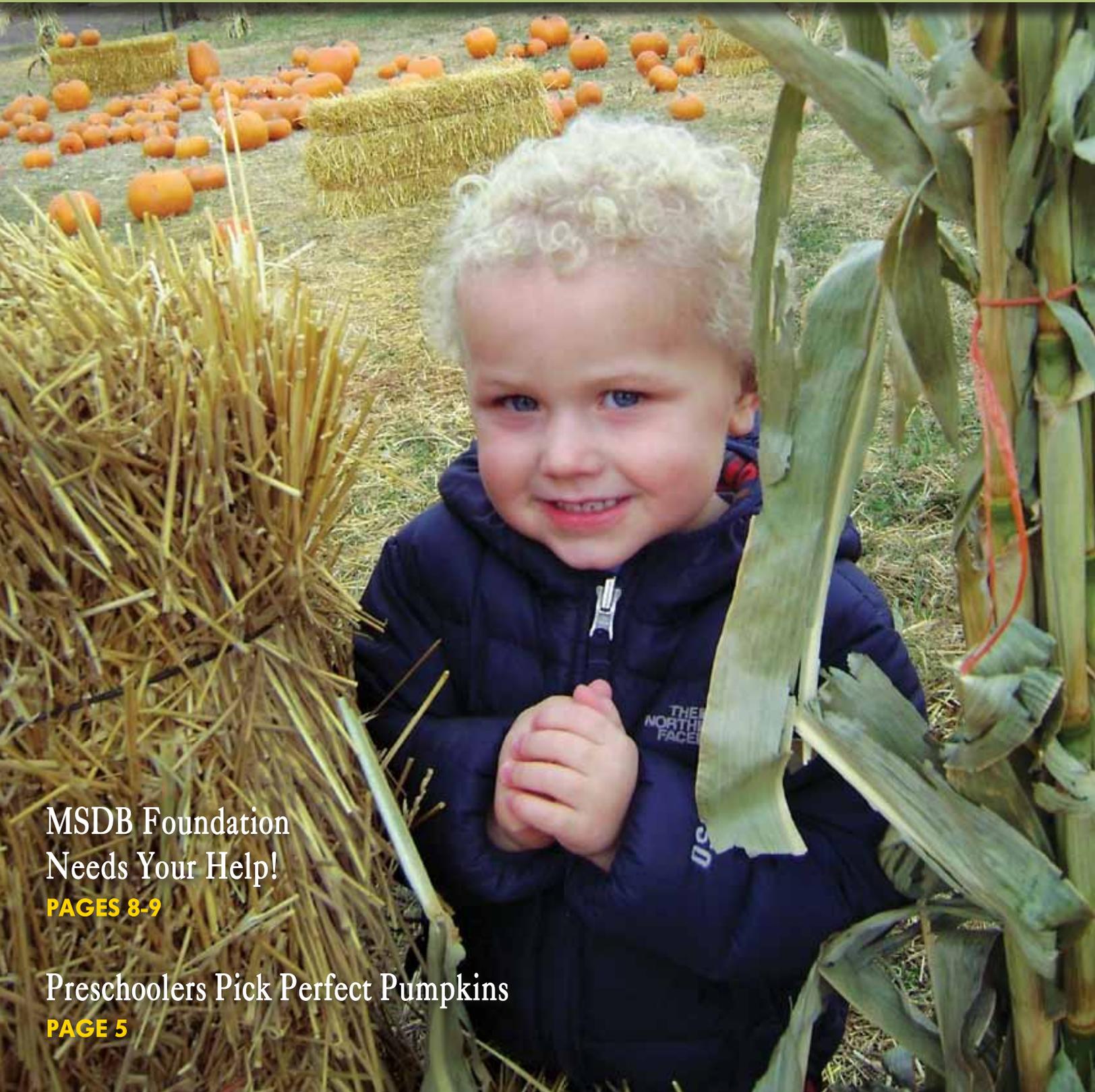


MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XII, Issue 1, Fall 2013



MSDB Foundation
Needs Your Help!

PAGES 8-9

Preschoolers Pick Perfect Pumpkins

PAGE 5

ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM COMES TO MSDB

Darreck Hale, MSDB Counselor

What an exciting time to be a part of the MSDB family and community. On October 23, MSDB staff, students, and friends came together to kick off the new Olweus anti-bullying program. To make things more exciting, Orbit (the Great Falls Voyagers mascot) decided to make a side trip to MSDB in his flying saucer to support our cause. The students were very excited to have Orbit's support during this endeavor to keep our school a safe academic environment that is bully free. Everyone enjoyed some nice warm popcorn while watching the students dance, act out skits, and sing songs about bully awareness.



The artistic talents of Jim Kelly, Grace McKnight, and all of the residential students pictured here show through in these handmade banners that express everyone's commitment to making all programs at MSDB bully-free!

As many are aware, Great Falls has been working energetically to keep schools bully free



and to reveal the negative impact bullying has on a society. Furthermore, MSDB has taken an initiative to combat the negative outcomes of bullying and to do what is necessary to give our students a safe and secure atmosphere. The Olweus system for K-12 students has shown promising data to back up its success and continues to show positive results all around the world. However, we cannot be successful unless we all work together and become fully aware of the negativity involved with bullying. As an MSDB family we can grow stronger as a team and hopefully reduce bullying that has spread to schools. We thank everyone for their constant support and hope the support will continue as we venture to make this program a success. ■■

FOOD SERVICE GROUP RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S EXCELLENCE AWARD



Top Left to Right: Governor Bullock, Wanda Sutinen, Linda Willis, Maeona Lee, Lt. Governor Walsh.
Seated from left to right: Teresa Knotts and Candies Gonzales-Genendlis.

Kim Schwabe, Principal

The MSDB Food Services staff and manager, challenged by the limits of the USDA school food program, do a wonderful job preparing and serving nutritious and delicious lunches and dinners for our day and residential students. They are creative, hard working, and always have fun together. They make meal time enjoyable for our students. Holiday dinners are lovingly prepared for the students who live on campus to help make their "home away from home" extra special.

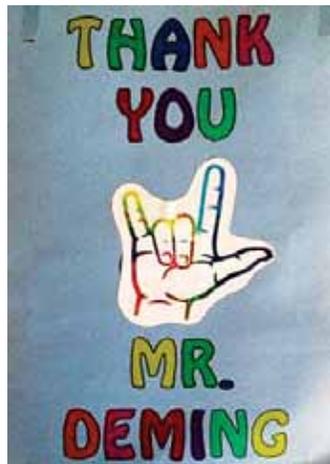
The good work of these staff members was recognized when they won a Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance for 2013. The awards are given each year to outstanding state employees. The food service group traveled to Helena to receive the award in September. Thanks to them for doing such a good job of feeding us! ■■



Tribute to Bob Deming

Steve Gettel, MSDB Superintendent

Former MSDB superintendent Robert “Bob” Deming passed away on Saturday, Oct. 26th here in Great Falls. Bob came to Great Falls with his family in 1969 so that his daughter Lisa could attend the school. He was a principal here and then superintendent from 1980 to 1987. After his retirement from MSDB he served on the Board of Directors of the MSDB Foundation for many years as a dedicated volunteer. He was also very active in city government, serving as commissioner and mayor, and in the Great Falls Lions Club. During his time as superintendent the cottages and Mustang Center were built. Those of us that were fortunate to work with him remember Bob as generous, progressive, and enthusiastic in all he did. Most of all, he always cared deeply for the students at MSDB. ❧



Bob Deming’s daughter, Lisa Deming-Christie, an MSDB graduate, found this handmade poster her father had saved all these years in his garage. It was made by MSDB students and given to Mr. Deming upon his retirement. “My father was a very kind, hard working man who fought for MSDB students. He cared a lot about education,” she said.

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ANIMAL HOSPITAL JOB SHADOW

**Jennifer Briggs,
MSDB Guidance Counselor**

Four of our MSDB high school students, Patricia, Shay, Kyle, and Mikayla, went to Best Friends Animal Hospital for a job shadow experience on October 7th. Three other staff members from MSDB and I accompanied the students. Donna Sorensen, Outreach Director, Yvette Smail, Behavior Specialist, and Amy Wicks, Outreach Consultant, were very helpful, and the students represented MSDB very well by being respectful.

Experiencing a job shadow is a way to allow students to step outside of the school setting and their comfort zone and see other areas of life. When the animal hospital was selected as our first job shadow the students were required to research various jobs, the skills for those positions, and the outlook for those jobs. Before going on the job shadow students had to list the various jobs they thought would make up the staff working there. They were surprised to find that there are a lot more jobs than they expected. Asking questions about what they wanted to learn on the field trip prior to the trip was the student's responsibility.

The presenters used a lot of technical vocabulary words so the students had the opportunity to advocate for themselves by asking what the different words meant, and they did a good job with that. Following the field trip the students were required to write a self-reflection paper. Some students found that they would enjoy the dirty jobs, while other students thought the contrary.

Viewing various glass jars containing tape worms, ring worms,



Kyle, Shaylene, Mikayla, and Patricia learn about career opportunities at the Best Friends Animal Hospital.



Mikayla and Patricia assist the Veterinary Tech with her surgical gloves as she goes through the pre-surgery protocols during their field trip to the Best Friends Animal Hospital.

baby kittens, eyeballs, etc., enabled the students to learn more about science and connect real life to their science class. The students particularly enjoyed viewing the living bearded dragon, kittens, and dogs. They were surprised about the various diseases that animals can have, such as one dog whose bones were unable to grow. They were able to go into the surgical room and learn the surgical

procedures as well as visit the lab to learn about the lab procedures. Next, the students were able to see viewing equipment that goes down the animal's esophagus and look at x-rays of the animal's bones. The students also learned how to prep for surgery including all of the pre-surgery sanitization procedures.

Engaging in job shadow experiences will be an ongoing process throughout the course of the year. Exposing students to different experiences will allow them to see what is out there in the real world and will help them to discover more about themselves. Eventually students will be placed in work related experiences where they can work first hand in a real world setting, such as a child care setting or a store so they can experience the working world. Also, I want students to learn how to research jobs on their own so they can advocate for their own education as well as the modifications they would need for their work educational setting. ❖



ABOVE: Bridger (back left), J (back right) and Tyler (front) pick the perfect pumpkins! RIGHT: Shaylene Potts, a high school student in the Visually Impaired Department who works in the Preschool classroom on a weekly basis, joined us on our fun filled fall field trip.



PRESCHOOLERS PICK PERFECT PUMPKINS

Leann Goss, Preschool/Kindergarten Teacher

The Preschoolers and Kindergarteners from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department went on a field trip to Tilleras Nursery in October. Our morning started out with a contest to see who could spot the most Halloween decorations as we drove through the neighborhoods along the way. Then upon arriving at the nursery we went on a hay ride over to a hay maze! Once we made our way through the maze, we each picked out a pumpkin, and then we made our very own scarecrow to take back to our classroom. We were given another hay ride all around the nursery to see all of the different plants, trees, and landscaping materials they sell. It was a fun way to learn all about the fall season! ❖

“Untangling the Dots”

Barb Balko, Outreach Vision Consultant

For the past six years, the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind has hosted a very special workshop titled “Untangling the Dots.” This class supports parents, paraprofessionals and teachers who desire to become certified in Literary Braille. The workshop was developed and implemented by MSDB as a response to new state standards for instructing users of Braille (learn more at www.opi.mt.gov).

Each year the workshop gains in popularity. On October 17-18, the workshop hosted 27 registrants from throughout the state of Montana. Their skills ranged from beginner to advanced users of Braille. This year we discussed various products and strategies that can be utilized for teaching Braille. We also discussed the use of new technology and tactile graphics.



Pam Boespflug demonstrates the Braille Notetaker at the Untangling the Dots conference in October.

The opportunity for participants to interact with one another through round table discussions, sharing hours and networking lunches was also beneficial.

Allison O’Day was this year’s special guest speaker. She is a Certified Proofreader for the National Library of Congress. All of our students know Allison through their online studies and receive one-on-one instruction from her through their enrollment in the Literary Braille Online Course. Upon completion of this coursework, students may become certified as Braille transcriptionists and qualified to produce Braille materials at the national level. Most of the 27 registrants who attended “Untangling the Dots” this year are working toward National Braille Certification and will meet the criteria set forth by the state of Montana to serve local schools and districts as Certified Braille Specialists.

It was great participating this year in a fun filled and informative forum and we look forward to meeting again next year for the October 2014 workshop. ❖

RED RIBBON WEEK

Chris Gutschenritter, MSDB School Psychologist

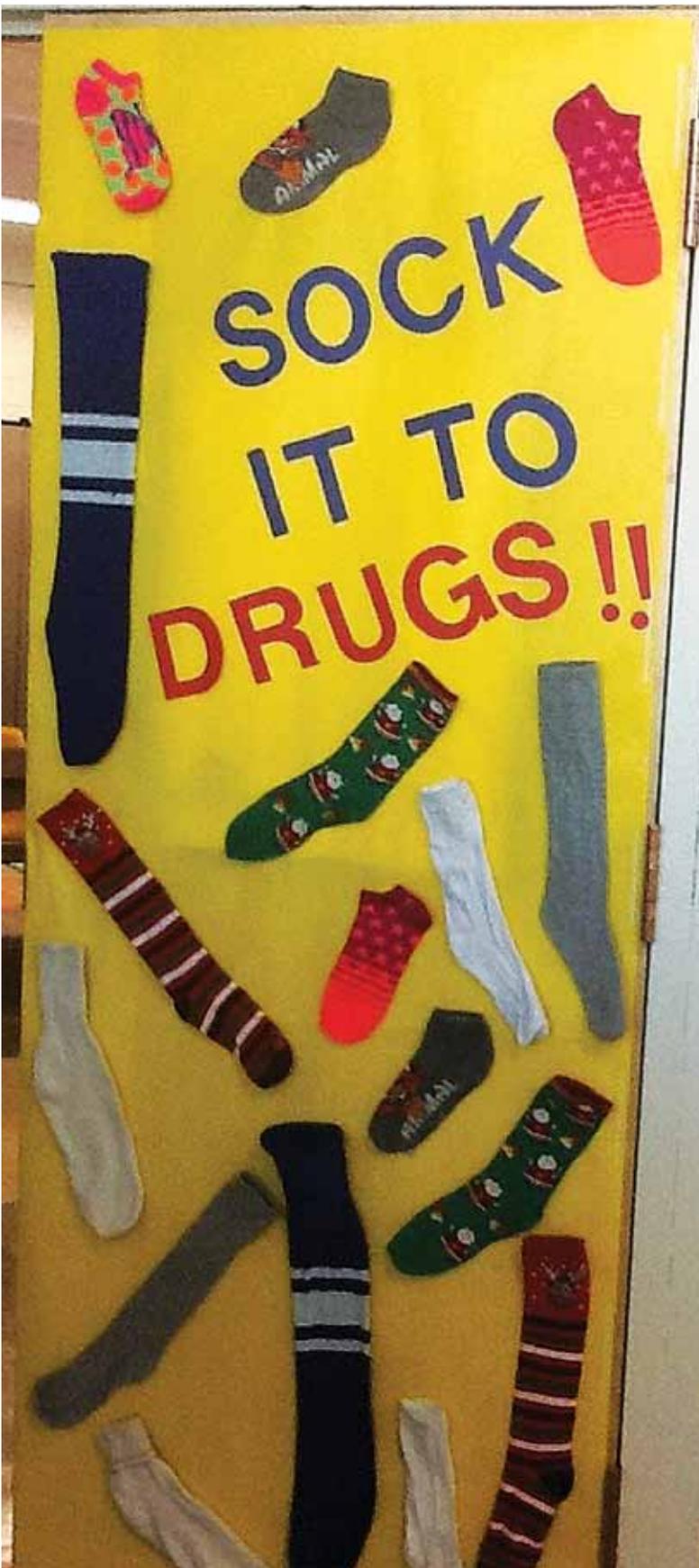
Red Ribbon Week is the oldest and largest drug prevention campaign in the country. It serves as a way for communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of our children through a commitment to drug prevention and education.

An interesting and not so widely known thing about Red Ribbon Week is that it commemorates the ultimate sacrifice made by a DEA special agent. Enrique Camarena lost his life at the hands of drug traffickers. He was fighting to keep illegal drugs out of our country.

Enrique grew up in poverty. He worked his way through college, served in the Marines and became a police officer. When he joined the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, his mother tried to talk him out of it. He told her he HAD to do this. He had always wanted to make a difference. He was sent underground in another country to investigate a major drug cartel. He was kidnapped and murdered by five men in that country.

Within weeks of his death clubs were organized by his friends and a congressman from his home state of California. Hundreds of club members pledged to lead drug-free lives in honor of the sacrifices made by Camarena and others. These coalitions began to wear red badges as a symbol of his memory. The Red Ribbon Week campaign emerged from the efforts of these clubs and coalitions.

Here at MSDB, we celebrate Red Ribbon Week each October. Staff and students join in the effort to learn more about making a personal commitment to safety. The activities are fun as well as educational, and encourage team work between students and staff. Our activities for the week included “Sock it to Drugs” by wearing crazy socks, “Don’t Sweat Drugs” by wearing sweats, “Drugs Make No ‘Cents” by participating in our penny drive, “Put a Cap on Drugs” by wearing your favorite hat, and “Hairs to a Drug Free Life” by wearing crazy hair! ❖



ABOVE: Classroom doors throughout the school were decorated for Red Ribbon Week. RIGHT: Andrea Freer sports her crazy socks during Red Ribbon Week celebrations.

Montana Association for the Blind Annual Convention

Steven Fugate, Outreach Consultant

The Montana Association for the Blind (MAB) had its annual convention October 11-13 in Bozeman. Both Keri Norick and Steven Fugate from MSDB were in attendance. The convention brought together adults with visual impairments and blindness, family members, government agencies and professionals in the fields of vocational and vision services. All three days were filled with informative and lively sessions to discuss and learn about a wide variety of issues, topics and advances in the fields of low vision and blindness.

As in past years, one of the highlights was the live auction of donated art, food and other goodies to help support MAB's Summer Orientation Program (SOP) held each summer at Carroll College in Helena. Bob Maffit



served as auctioneer, and, in his customary fashion, made the event lively and enjoyable for all. The funds raised will be used to offer scholarships to deserving participants so they can benefit by attending next year's SOP.

There were many breakout sectionals that included a wide variety of topics of importance to those in attendance. New this year were representatives from the Blind Veterans Association (BVA). Jim Carter, retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant, recently volunteered to head up the Montana Chapter of the BVA. Additionally, Dr. Moeller, an ophthalmologist from Bozeman, presented an informative talk on macular degeneration.

Another topical and interesting presentation was from Colonel Eric Hastings on the "Warriors and Quiet Waters" program which uses fly fishing to help U.S. service men and women who were traumatically injured in Iraq and Afghanistan (including those with traumatic vision loss) recuperate and heal.

The 2013 MAB Convention was a great success and participants left feeling informed and reconnected. Many of those attending were already looking forward to next year's event. ■■

FALL DEAF ENRICHMENT WEEKEND: SCIENCE IS FUN!

Cathy Jury, Outreach Consultant

Imagine this....experiencing a star lab; building a catapult; tasting, feeling, smelling the four seasons; witnessing science experiments your parents would never let you do at home — all happening under one roof! The students who attended our Fall 2013 Deaf Enrichment Weekend were able to participate in each of these activities. Thanks to the teaching talents of Tyler Hanson (Scientist Extraordinaire), Bethany Hundley & Amanda Taylor (Guides thru the Seasons), Wendy McDunn (Catapult Guru), and Bill Clark (Astrology Expert) who gave of their time & creativity to make this weekend so much fun and a learning experience too!

These Saturday events were preceded by Friday evening's activities: Expressions of Silence (EOS) performance (amazing!), ice breaker activity, bowling, swimming, Wii dance (you should have seen some of



What happens when you use a pencil to poke holes through a plastic bag filled with water? You separate the polymer chains without breaking them. Katie and Trevin both know that these molecules are flexible and form a seal around the pencil keeping the water in!

the Outreach Consultants dance), bounce house, basketball and great socializing. Overall, everyone (students & staff) seemed to have a wonderful time.

A shout out: "THANK YOU!!" to the amazing support staff of MSDB and those who take care of details 'behind the scenes.' All the time and energy you put into these events make these weekends pure enjoyment!

The Deaf Enrichment Weekends take place every fall and spring. Students from around the state are given the opportunity to get to know students who attend MSDB and participate in a fun-filled weekend of learning while making new friends and

keeping up with old friendships! ■■

Save the date: Spring DEW (Deaf Enrichment Weekend) is planned for February 28-March 1, 2014. You don't want to miss it! It's going to be grand.



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

HELP MORE STUDENTS LIKE THYRA TO FOLLOW THEIR DREAMS

AS a college freshman, MSDB graduate Thyra Wood loves being on a swim team where she doesn't need to rely on a sign language interpreter. Thyra is an honors student at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the only liberal arts university for deaf and hard of hearing students, where sign language is used in all settings. But Thyra is also deeply committed to the use of English, at which she excels. As a bilingual person, she moves gracefully between the deaf and hearing worlds, as she did as a student at MSDB, where she attended some classes and activities on campus and others at public schools.

The dynamic and gifted 18-year-old would like to one day teach high school English to deaf students so that they can have a command of both American Sign Language and English. Because language is acquired



"I would definitely not be at Gallaudet on a full-ride if not for MSDB."

through listening and speaking, learning English presents challenges to many deaf students, and Thyra would like to help meet those challenges. "I want the deaf community to be able to express themselves to the hearing world with eloquence and clarity," she said.

Thyra's own ability to model the type of expression she hopes to teach deaf students was shaped in part by her early start at language development. As a baby, she lived with her parents in the tiny community of Straw, Montana. When she was two years old, her parents realized she wasn't hearing things, and the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind sent their audiologist to Straw to test her hearing. Thyra had a moderate but progressive hearing loss, which has now reached the severe to profound end of the spectrum.

From age two to age five, Thyra attended preschool at MSDB two days a week. Her mother, Brenda Warren,

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
~Helen Keller

With your help, the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind Foundation has been able to provide funds for services and equipment for the students at MSDB for more than 30 years. The MSDB

Foundation is committed to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives.

Donate at justgive.org or by using the enclosed envelope.

Deaf & Blind Foundation

BUILDING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

recalled their weekly trips to Great Falls. “MSDB was an amazing help,” she said. Brenda sat in on classes to learn sign language and worked as a classroom aide. MSDB became an extended family of sorts for them. By the time Thyra was six, she and her mother moved to Great Falls so she could attend elementary school at MSDB. “*I didn’t raise her by myself; they helped me,*” Brenda said.

Thyra credits her early exposure to sign language and the social aspect of a deaf community at MSDB with helping her make the most of her young life and education. “I’m indescribably grateful for the exposure to deaf culture I had growing up,” she said. Throughout her years at MSDB, she was an enthusiastic member of Expressions of Silence (EOS), the sign language performing group. “EOS did so much for her,” Thyra’s mom said. “It taught her to express herself creatively, and to see the impact she can have as a performer.”

Jennifer Wasson was Thyra’s coach in both EOS and the Academic Bowl (not to mention her math teacher and driver’s ed teacher). “We really watched her blossom into a star performer,” Ms. Wasson said. “And she was one of the main reasons our Academic Bowl team made



Thyra was a star performer with Expressions of Silence.

it to Nationals.” Thyra won the All Star Award at the western regional competition last year.

Thyra knows how important it is for deaf children to have the kind of opportunities offered by MSDB. “*MSDB is a wonderful place to grow up in. It’s a family of peers and people who understand you in ways most people never*

will. If children get an early start here, their language development will be exponentially better, which is the foundation for all other learning in my opinion. Coming here sets students up for successful futures.”

You can help make it possible for more students like Thyra to grow up with all the educational and social support they need to achieve independence and to follow their dreams. All of the MSDB programs Thyra benefitted from – from early intervention to Expressions of Silence – have enjoyed support from the MSDB Foundation. Please consider making a contribution to the Foundation using the attached envelope or online at justgive.org. ::

Sincerely,

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

John L. Musgrove, President

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

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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. ❖

WELCOME ABOARD

I am a new staff member at MSDB. I am teaching junior high math, Kindergarten reading and math, and a life skills class in the Visually Impaired Department. Prior to coming to MSDB I taught for 14 years at Power Public Schools. While in Power, I taught Kindergarten, PreK-12 Special Education, and most recently I taught a Kindergarten/1st grade combination class. Last year, I was able to see my first set of Kindergarten students complete their senior year of high school and graduate. What a rewarding experience!

I am the mother of two daughters. Ty, my oldest, has played soccer at UGF for the last two years. This year, she is finishing up her pre-nursing classes at Great Falls College MSU and is coaching a youth soccer team. Kendyl is a 5th grader at Lewis & Clark elementary and is following in her sister's footsteps by keeping me busy with soccer practices and games.

I try to keep myself busy and active. Therefore, when I am not at work or following my daughters' sporting events, I am often out and about. I play on two different co-ed volleyball leagues, I am taking a sign language class, and I love to travel. When the weather is nice, I enjoy camping, fishing, and being outdoors. At home I like trying new recipes, watching football, and curling up on the couch with a good book.



While it was a hard choice for me to leave my teaching position in Power, I like to refer to this quote by Tom Stoppard: "Every exit is an entry somewhere else." This rings very true with me as I am settling into my new position at MSDB. The opportunity for me to teach here has been a rewarding experience so far, and I am looking forward to what the future holds for me as a Mustang! ❖

— *Miche Jarvey*



My name is Kyle Pettis. I am so excited to start my interpreting career here at MSDB! I am a NERDA (Not Even Related to a Deaf Adult), new to Montana, and fresh out of college! I grew up in a small town in Northern Idaho and started my college career at North Idaho College (NIC) where I started taking ASL classes in 2007. I decided after just a few semesters that I wanted to pursue American Sign Language (ASL) as a career in some fashion. After I graduated from NIC, I transferred to Idaho State University in 2010 and continued my education in a bachelor degree in Educational Interpreting. I arrived in Montana through a college internship this last March at MSDB, after which I was hired on as a full time interpreter. I am so fortunate to be working with an amazing team at MSDB! It has been fun learning the theories of interpreting at college, but it is rewarding to put them into practice and see the results. I am currently working on passing the EIPA written and performance exams. ❖

— *Kyle Pettis*

NEW MSDB STAFF

Hi there! My name is Amy Wicks. I taught English, Reading, and Life Skills in the Visually Impaired Department here at MSDB for several years before moving to Chester. While in Chester, I taught Middle



School Language Arts and High School Journalism. Chester has a school of less than 250, so it is a small, family-type environment. The school is the heart of the town. I enjoyed my classes at Chester, but I am very happy to be

back at MSDB as an Outreach Consultant for the Visually Impaired. ■■

— *Amy Wicks*

Hi, my name is Marianne Krogstad. Just like Lazarus I've come back. Not from the dead but from retirement. Why would anyone do such a crazy thing? Simply put...I missed the kids and the staff. You don't realize what a wonderfully unique place MSDB is to work, and what a terrific



staff that it employs both in the academic and cottage programs until you're away from it. I've missed it but it has been just like "coming home" even after 8 years. In my past life at MSDB I worked in the administration office for 27 1/2 years. Now I am a night watch lady. Although I rarely "see" the children between the hours of 12:00 and 6:00 a.m., I do enjoy fixing them breakfast on weekdays and getting to know each of them. I was "picky" about who watched my children, and

I can assure you that the safety of your children is my main concern while they are under my care. ■■

— *Marianne Krogstad*

My name is Tammie Burnham and I have over 15 years' experience working and caring for children. I am pleased to be working and caring for the children in the cottages at MSDB.



Every child has an individual personality that brings laughter, love, and excitement, so that working here is just a remarkable experience. In my previous job, I had my own childcare business

in Belt. I truly love being with these children; it's very rewarding. ■■

— *Tammie Burnham*



Hello, my name is Tammy Defalco and I have worked with children off and on

for about 20 years. The past 3 years I worked for Project Share in California. It is an afterschool program that helps students with homework, physical activities, enrichments and much more. I missed my work with Project Share and that is why I applied for a position at MSDB in the Cottage.

I love seeing the smiles on the children's faces and sharing life skills with them. ■■

— *Tammy Defalco*



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

Meet Two of Montana's Best Braille Specialists

Barb Balko, Outreach Vision Consultant

Erica Bell has been working with students in braille since 2002 in the Ronan Public School District. She received her Braille Specialist Certification in 2012. Her most recent student, Dakota Randles (pictured), attends K.W. Harvey Elementary School, and is in the fourth grade. Mrs. Bell has worked successfully with him for the past two years. She has been instrumental in instructing Dakota in braille. She also supports Dakota in orientation and mobility training. Mrs. Bell is a Montana native. She is currently studying to become an elementary school teacher. She is very hardworking and dedicated. Mrs. Bell is gifted in reaching and connecting with special needs children. She is a true asset to the school district and the state of Montana.



Billy Halley, pictured here with Braille Specialist, Billie Demsha.

Billie Dimsha has been working with Billy Halley (pictured) in braille since 2009 at Lone Rock Elementary School, located near Stevensville. Billy is in the sixth grade. Mrs. Dimsha provides supports to Billy in braille, technology for the blind, orientation and mobility, and one-on-one support in the classroom. She is instrumental in the adaptation of braille materials and is proficient in the utilization of tactile graphics. Mrs. Dimsha received her Braille Specialist Certification in 2012. She is a true professional. She sees the abilities in every child. She is a great motivator, and leads by example. It is not uncommon to find Mrs. Dimsha working overtime to prepare textbooks, worksheets and other classroom materials. She has put in countless hours to ensure the success of her students.

Both Mrs. Bell and Mrs. Dimsha have attended the "Untangling the Dots" Braille workshop at MSDB on multiple occasions. ❖



Braille Specialist, Erica Bell, pictured here with student, Dakota Randle.



Logan (left) and Levi (middle) carve out their own pumpkin with the guidance of their Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Geri Darko.

RAINBOW GARDEN DONATES PUMPKINS TO MSDB

Brittany Smith, MSDB Teacher Assistant

Every Halloween, the Rainbow Garden Club donates enough pumpkins to MSDB so that each classroom and office has a perfect, plump pumpkin to use throughout the week for learning and then to finally use to decorate our school for the holiday. To some it seemed we just carved a pumpkin; however, to our students in the Visually Impaired Department, it was so much more! We learned how to use knives for cutting the tops off the pumpkins. The students were also able to use the knives and melon-ballers for carving their pumpkins. Practicing how to use a knife independently and safely is a skill our students will need for life. Gutting the pumpkins was a fun way to include sensory exploration. We used our sense of touch to feel for the guts and seeds in order to get them out. Once we had the guts out, we separated out the seeds from the guts. These types of sorting skills are great for all ages. We separated the seeds to make baked pumpkin seeds. Later, in life skills class, students were able to learn how to prepare and bake the pumpkin seeds. Learning the steps of carving a pumpkin and what to do with the guts and seeds are all things sighted peers may take for granted. Having the opportunity to do it in a learning environment with detailed instruction and supervision allows our students to learn independence and safety. Thanks again for the great donation by the Rainbow Garden Club. ❖

WHITE CANE DAY AT MSDB

Gerri Darko, MSDB Orientation & Mobility Specialist

In 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson declared that each year on October 15 our nation would recognize White Cane Safety Day.

White Cane Day 2013 at MSDB focused on many of the skills our students are learning to become independent adults. This set of skills is known as the Expanded Core Curriculum. The skill sets of the Expanded Core Curriculum cannot be learned incidentally by a person with a visual impairment. When these special skills are learned and applied, they can increase independence for a student with a visual impairment.

Students were involved in planning and preparing for a campus-wide White Cane Day Dipping Party. Students used compensatory skills, their most appropriate mode of reading and writing, to make a list of items needed for our dipping party. Ideas included fruit, vegetables, chips, and a variety of dips for each snack. Orientation and mobility training was applied to plan walking or bus routes to grocery stores and convenience stores to purchase these items. Visually impaired learners used their visual efficiency skills to scan the environment to locate specific areas or objects. While shopping, students were able to use self-advocacy skills and ask store employees for assistance whenever



Lt. Governor John Walsh learns how Alyson uses her assistive technology in class.

necessary. After shopping, students helped set up for the party and prepare snacks using various independent living skills. Whether riding in public transportation, shopping in the store, or attending the White Cane Day party, all students needed to use appropriate social skills to interact with others.

Before our dipping party, students and staff in the Visually Impaired Department were treated to a visit from special guest Lt. Governor

John Walsh. He observed students in their assistive technology class where he learned about various braille note-takers and computer screen readers and why they are important for students with visual impairments. He was the guest speaker at the White Cane Day Dipping Party and even stayed for a meet and greet with students and staff.

This year's White Cane Day activities employed many of the skills in the Expanded Core Curriculum and were a fun learning experience for all students and staff involved! ■■

GrizKidz!

Bethany Hundley, MSDB Teacher

On September 21st I had the honor of going with a number of MSDB's wonderful staff and students to the University of Montana Griz football game. At 6 in the morning, a bunch of sleepy adults and VERY excited kids got onto a bus to head to Missoula. We were a happy, chatty bunch as we went down the road, stopping at Hi-Country in Lincoln to get treats and free drinks. Once we arrived in Missoula, Jim Kelly had a huge spread of food waiting for us in the tailgate parking lot at his "Ultimate Tailgate Van." It was a blast! We had lunch, played some football and posed for pictures with the GrizKidz volunteers who helped make our trip to the game possible. Once everyone was decked out in new Griz shirts and hats, we headed into the stadium. Our kids (and adults!) were given a \$10 voucher for food at the concessions, so they got to eat even more goodies as the game went on. It was an amazing game and the Griz ruled the field, dominating the game and making the cannon go "BOOM!" often! The kids thought it was awesome, as it could be heard AND felt. After the game, we went down to the field where the kids were able to get autographs from the awesome Griz players and cheerleaders. It was a day to be forever remembered and we thank the MSDB Foundation and GrizKidz organization for making it possible! ■■



LEFT: Twyla and Maeona Lee having a blast at the Griz Game. The football was almost as good as the popcorn! RIGHT: Blair shouting her appreciation after the Griz scored yet ANOTHER touchdown!





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Making MSDB Safer

Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant

Our thanks and gratitude to MSDB Benefits Specialist Shirley Wermling! Shirley has spent the past year in a training program designed to reduce work place accidents and develop a positive safety culture at MSDB. Montana State Fund (our workers' compensation insurance provider) sponsored the program. Each time a MSDB employee gets hurt while at work (our main accidents are due to slips, falls and lifting) our workers' compensation insurance kicks in to cover the cost of the doctor, hospital, medicine, time off of work, a replacement substitute while the employee is out of work, etc. These accidents cost our agency, not only financially, but in the

lowered morale of an injured employee and their co-workers who try to keep the boat afloat while the injured worker is out.

Because of Shirley's willingness to participate in the program our school will see a 5% cost decrease in our workers' compensation insurance rate. That equals out to thousands of dollars! Shirley's dedication has just begun. Following the training she will now play a stronger role in the MSDB School Safety Committee and implement the "Back to Work Program" that is designed to get an injured employee back to work as quickly as possible. If the injured employee is unable to perform their normal job they will work in a replacement position that will allow them to heal as well as be productive. Watch for more information in the future for more details. Shirley, our thanks to you for giving so much of yourself to benefit our school. Your dedication is greatly admired. ❖

Print/Braille Books Come to Billings Public Library

Steven Fugate, Outreach Consultant

In July, the Children's Department of the Billings Public Library introduced their first ever collection of Print/Braille books for the pre and emerging Braille reader. I visited with Cindy Patterson, the Children's Librarian, to learn about this great new addition to the Children's Department.

Cindy explained that the Children's Department made the decision this past winter to investigate the possibility of adding this new resource to the library's collection. With help from MSDB's Librarian Staci Bechard, the Billings Library's Acquisitions Department learned about the National Braille Press's "Children's Braille Book Club." For an annual fee the Billings Public Library will receive a new Print/Braille book selection each month. These books are selected from some of the most popular children's books currently in print. Each book contains both the printed and illustrated pages along with a plastic

Braille overlay for each print page. These books are generally presented in a spiral-bound format with the corresponding Braille page placed on top of the print page. The Billings Public Library made an initial purchase of 30 Print/Braille books to "kick start" their collection.



Cindy reports that there has been a great deal of interest in the library's new collection – classroom teachers, family members and Braille readers have all checked out Print/Braille books. Teachers often want to share these books with their students as an introduction to Braille or to help their students understand the different ways people can access reading materials. Family members appreciate the fact that the books have both print

and Braille. This allows them to sight read as their child reads the story in Braille.

So, next time you are at the Billings Library, stop by the Children's Desk and check out their new Print/Braille book collection. ❖