

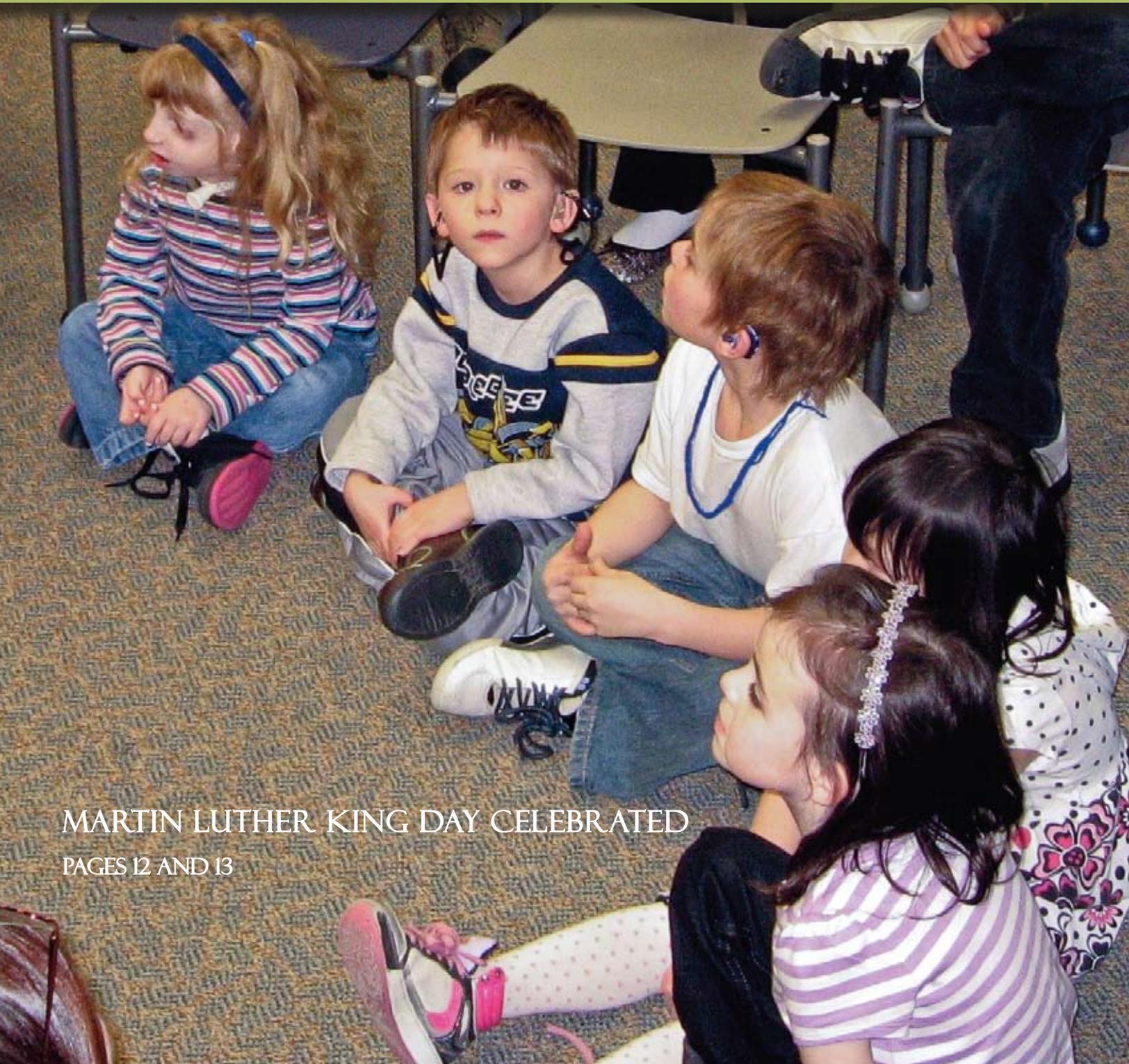
MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND



Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume IX, Issue 1, Winter 2010



MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATED

PAGES 12 AND 13



STUDENT VOLUNTEER

Erin Jessen, a junior at MSDB, is volunteering at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center for an hour on Tuesday afternoons. She is helping out in the office and building her computer skills by assisting with formatting articles for the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center's monthly newsletter. She will also be working with another volunteer to find articles about the Center in the *Great Falls Tribune* for archiving. The Center's staff has been very welcoming, and Erin looks forward to each new experience! ❖



S.E.E. SKILLSHOP 2010 SET FOR APRIL

**The S.E.E. Center
for the
Advancement of Deaf Children
Announces
2010 S.E.E. Skill Shop
April 16-18, 2010
Montana School for the Deaf and Blind
3911 Central Ave.
Great Falls, MT 59405**

The Signing Exact English (S.E.E.) Skillshops are for teachers, aides, parents and others who want to learn as well as those who use Signing Exact English and wish to improve their vocabulary, fluency, and expressiveness. For more information contact Sandy McGennis: smcgennis@msdb.mt.gov or 406-494-8179. ❖

STANDARDS HELD HIGH

By Tiffany Harding



Standards for interpreters are moving forward. With the help and support of the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Board of Education, the Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment (EIPA) is being recognized as a tool to evaluate interpreter skill. Montana will soon

be looking at a score of 3.5 as a minimum score for skills of educational interpreters. MSDB is fortunate to have interpreters that continually test at this level and much higher. We are proud of the interpreting services we are able to provide students that are enrolled with us.

In an effort to continue developing skills, OPI is sponsoring a video conference for the interpreters in Montana. This conference is presented by Boys Town National Research Hospital—the developers of the EIPA. The conference will be presented with distance technologies through MET-NET and allow us to network with other interpreters all over the nation. The video conferences are scheduled for Saturday, January 16, and Saturday, April 17. Sites include Billings, Bozeman, Helena and Kalispell, to make this as accessible as possible to interpreters all over the state.

Look to the next EXPRESS to see a write up of what was learned and how this has helped novice and seasoned interpreters alike! ❖

If you have any questions, please contact Tiffany Harding, Coordinating Interpreter of MSDB, at 406-771-6046 or tiffany_harding@gfps.k12.mt.us.

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EDMARK FITS THE BILL

By Kim Schwabe

Last spring the elementary deaf department teachers got together to see how we could support students in meeting their reading and literacy goals. As a result, each student was placed in a set of basal readers appropriate for their age and reading level. In addition, students began reading support/enrichment lessons. The Edmark Reading Program fit the bill for our reading support/enrichment.

Edmark is a computerized reading program that follows a carefully sequenced, highly repetitive sight-word approach to reading. Edmark lessons contain various sections: pre-reading, word recognition, sight word discrimination, direction cards (selecting pictures to match words

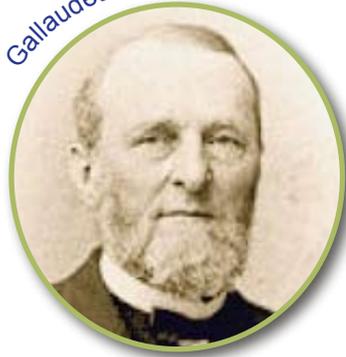
and phrases, as well as completing the directions indicated in the sentence), picture-phrase cards (matching sentences to pictures), practice drills, stories, and post exercises. Students earn stars as they complete bundled lessons. (Our line of stars is now almost halfway around the computer lab!) As students progress through the series, comprehension questions will become more complex, requiring students to give insight into what they have read. There are also supplemental worksheet assignments the students can do to practice skills away from the computer as well as stories that they can read to practice their vocabulary. Edmark Reading Lab sessions occur 30 minutes daily for most elementary students.

In addition to progressing through Edmark at their own pace, students participate in weekly interactive SmartBoard activities that include lessons from the program or activities related to literacy (e.g., learning about and identifying a story's title, author or illustrator, how to get information from an advertisement, etc.). Every Friday is dedicated to "Story Time," wherein students watch stories read/signed to them. We are beginning the transition from published signed stories to creating our own with MSDB library books and signers. By spring, the students will be making their own stories to share with others. ■■

FATHERS OF DEAF EDUCATION

By **Brenda LeMieux**

Gallaudet



During the week of December 7-11, MSDB celebrated Clerc-Gallaudet Week to honor Laurent Clerc and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet for their contributions to deaf education. Laurent Clerc, a native of France, was the first deaf teacher in America. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet was not deaf but was the first principal in a deaf school in America. He was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on December 10, 1787.

As part of MSDB's annual activities on December 10th, the middle and high school students told their fellow students about the book, *Deaf Culture A to Z*, written by Walter Paul Kelley. The book demonstrates hand shapes of the 26 letters of the alphabet. Each letter describes something related to Deaf culture, such as "F" for finger spelling, "L" for light flasher, and "W" for waving applause. With this book the students shared a sense of Deaf pride, traditions, values, lifestyles, humor, folklore, art, theater, as well as a rich

common language – American Sign Language.

American Sign Language and that rich deaf culture started back in 1814 when Thomas H. Gallaudet, a neighbor and friend of Doctor Mason Cogswell, tried to teach Dr. Cogswell's deaf daughter, Alice, as there were no

Clerc invited Gallaudet to visit and attend daily classes in his Institution in Paris. Gallaudet was impressed with Clerc's methods of teaching deaf children. Every day after school, the men sat and signed together; Gallaudet learned sign as Laurent Clerc learned to read and write English.

Gallaudet invited Clerc to come to America to assist in establishing a school. Consequently, the first school for the deaf in America, the American School for the Deaf, was established in Hartford, Connecticut on April 15, 1817. French Sign Language, which Clerc brought with him, formed the basis of American Sign Language.

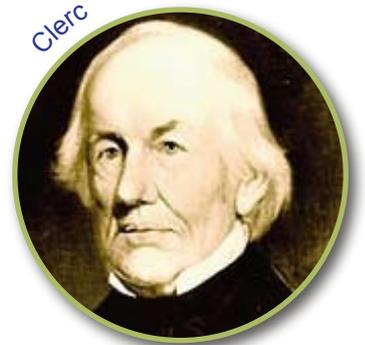
In time, the men founded numerous schools for the Deaf in several states. Laurent Clerc was an educator in several deaf schools for 41 years. Thomas H. Gallaudet was a principal of the American School for the Deaf for 33 years. Clerc and Gallaudet are revered today for their contributions and sacrifices. ❖



KK explains an ASL handshape

schools for the deaf in America. Gallaudet went to Europe, hoping to find successful methods of teaching deaf children. England would not share their ways of teaching deaf children. Luckily, Gallaudet met Laurent Clerc, a deaf educator from France.

Clerc





MONTANA SCHOOL *for* *Help us give kids the building*

“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE;
TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.”

~Helen Keller

Thanks to the generosity of our contributors, the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind Foundation has been able to provide vital services and equipment for the students at MSDB for more than 25 years. The MSDB 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 with the coupon below or online at www.justgive.org. For more information, please call 406-771-6040.

Federal employees can contribute via payroll deduction by giving their employer MSDB's code for the Combined Federal Campaign: #57314. ❖

PLEASE CLIP AND RETURN WITH YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION. THANK YOU!

Yes, I'd like to help give Montana's deaf and blind children their best chance for success!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Gift amount:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 Other _____

This is a memorial gift, in memory of _____

Send acknowledgement to: _____

I would like more information on planned giving

Please mail to: MSDB Foundation, P.O. Box 6576, Great Falls, MT 59406. You can also give online at www.justgive.org

*the*Deaf & Blind Foundation *blocks to independence*

FOUNDATION SENDS ACADEMIC BOWL TEAM TO REGIONAL COMPETITION

The four high school students who make up MSDB's 2010 Academic Bowl team have been hard at work exercising their minds as they gear up for Gallaudet University's West Region competition for deaf and hard of hearing students.

In mid-February, the team will travel to Utah to compete in the quiz tournament that resembles Jeopardy and covers topics including mathematics, science, social studies, geography, English, literature, art, deaf studies, and current events. Coaches Jennifer Wasson and Debi Knuth have been working since September with team members Katie Gilge, who is home-schooled in Havre; India Hayes, from Park High School in Livingston; Katarina Kawalski, from Bozeman High School; and Thyra Wood, who attends Great Falls High School and MSDB.

Each year, the MSDB Foundation covers the Academic Bowl team's travel costs, registration fees, and study guides, affording these bright students an opportunity to push themselves, to experience themselves as part of a larger community of deaf high school students, and to achieve academic excellence. This is an



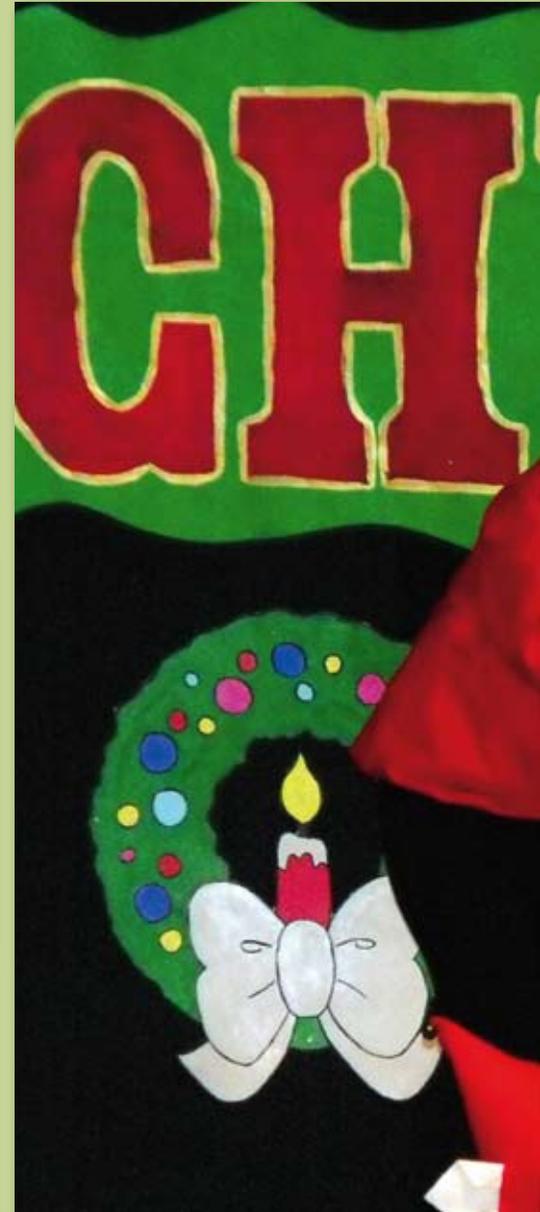
Back row (left to right): Katarina Kawalski, Katie Gilge, Thyra Wood, India Hayes. Front row: Debi Knuth, Jennifer Wasson.

excellent confidence-builder. Two years ago, MSDB's team placed first in the region and went on to the national competition at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC.

The tournament requires rigorous preparation, so the team has been pouring over workbooks, practice sheets, and internet sites all school year. They are sharpening their minds and their team-building skills in order to

do their best in Utah. Three of the team members must travel to Great Falls for practice sessions, and the MSDB Foundation helps cover these travel costs, too. The Foundation is happy to help provide this important opportunity for students from around Montana and wishes the team all the best! ❖

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTMAS 2009!



THANKS, LOAF N JUG!

By *Betty Cook*

For three years, Loaf N Jug has hosted a Christmas Party for students in the Visually Impaired Department. Although Loaf N Jug staff strives to make the party a little bit different, the one thing that has been the same each year is the warm friendly attitude of each Loaf N Jug employee and the smiles on the faces of all the VI Department. The Loaf N Jug employees raised money throughout the year to purchase a set of outdoor drums and a rain wheel. Students are already looking forward to this gift being installed in the spring. Each student also received a fleece throw, a stuffed animal and a Christmas pillow in addition to good conversation, laughter, games, and Christmas cookies and milk.

Money for the Loaf N Jug community project is raised through various events throughout the year. Each Christmas, Loaf N Jug managers from the region clear their calendars to bring treats, gifts and spend a few hours interacting with the students. One year they brought pizza and pop. The next they brought a pre-lit Christmas tree, stockings full of wonderful treats and glass ornaments to decorate. There

were large glass ornaments and many different stickers and decorations—enough for each student to make an ornament for home and also one for the department. They have brought descriptive videos which the students have enjoyed watching. One favorite is “Polar Express.” ❖



“THANKS,
LOAF N JUG,
FOR BEING
SUCH A GREAT
NEIGHBOR!”

COLLAGE LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM:

Parker, Coley, and Sean enjoy the Cottage annual holiday dinner at a restaurant.

Expressions of Silence performs.

Alysha is into it!

Aubrey and Brooke having fun.

The Jensen family gets creative during the annual Cottage Cookie Decorating Contest.

Christmas Program 2009.

Santa and Hayden.



MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION

By Sally Tilleman

In the spirit of community service associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, MSDB joined forces with the Foster Grandparents Program to collect food for those in need. The food drive was integrated into the School's curriculum, since the service activity offered many opportunities for learning important skills.

Using the packages of food, students learned weights and measures. Reading Point of Origin labels, classes mapped out locations and got a geography lesson. They also compared and contrasted products, analyzed data, and displayed information as they prepared presentations on what they had learned.

The Martin Luther King Day celebration kicked off with each group of kids enthusiastically displaying their charts and presenting their findings to the entire school community. The kids had obviously spent a great deal of time preparing and learning, because it was a huge success.

Upon completion of their presentation, the school stayed together to enjoy an informative book on the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the importance of spreading kindness and equality to all. ❖



ABOVE: Anthony, Tray and Alyson explain their project as Ms. Schwabe and Mrs. Cook look on.

MIDDLE LEFT: Preschool through First grade explains bread making

BOTTOM LEFT: Alyson and Coley announce how much food the VI department collected.

FRIENDSHIP BREAD

by *Preschool, Kindergarten and 1st Grade Classes*

Martin Luther King and Ms. K are kind. They share with others. We are kind and will share with our friends. We are making Friendship Bread. The Bread takes 10 days to make.



first

GRACIE stirred in yeast and water.



TREVIN added flour.



and

JESSE added sugar.



JULIE poured in milk.



then

HAYDEN stirred.



KATIE added more flour.



and

TWYLA stirred.



until finally...

we will bake bread on Thursday. We will share our starter mix with 2 people. They will make bread and will share their starter mix with 2 other people. Soon all the classes will have Friendship Bread.



TOP: Mrs. Goss and Mrs. Bechard's classes seized the moment when the fire department responded to a false alarm. Following the excitement and an impromptu lesson from the firemen the class noted: "A fire truck came to school and we got to climb inside, try on the fire fighter's coat and hat, see the blinking lights, and listen to the siren. That's one big truck!" Mrs. Goss was amazed, "It was really during our fire unit!"

MIDDLE: We filled the sensory pool with shredded paper and jumped inside! We watched the shredded paper fly and flutter in the air when we threw it. It was just like confetti!

BOTTOM: Tray works on a quilt in life skills which is being made as a raffle item for the Games for the Visually impaired.

RIGHT: The work crew from the VI department assisted sister school Lewis & Clark by preparing 300 snack bags for the public school's annual carnival.

EOS ALUMNI INVITED TO PERFORM

By Jennifer Wasson



Expressions of Silence will host their 6th Annual Spring Fundraiser and Performance on Saturday, April 17, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Mustang Center. This year, co-directors Jennifer Wasson and Dessica Wilson would like to invite EOS Alumni to perform with the group for a couple of songs. This will be a wonderful opportunity for former members to reconnect with each other and with MSDB staff and students.

Over the years, students who have been involved with Expressions of Silence have indicated their involvement with this group has been life-changing. Some of their fondest memories of their time at MSDB include the many opportunities they had while being a member of

EOS—including performing and traveling with EOS and developing lifelong friendships with their fellow performers and staff. Expressions of Silence increased self-esteem, confidence and an overall sense of self-worth —proving that students with a hearing or vision loss can do anything.

The annual event includes a silent auction and social. Cost of the performance is \$5 per person or \$20 for a family of 6. The proceeds from the fundraiser help offset the cost of travel and new uniforms for the team.

Please contact Jennifer Wasson at (406) 771-6143 v/tty or jwasson@msdb.mt.gov if you are interested in participating in this event. ■■

RSVP

Please return to:

**Jennifer Wasson
MSDB
3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59405**

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

T-shirt Size: _____





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GOALBALL COMES TO FLATHEAD VALLEY

By Jane Nybo

Yes, it's happening! Thanks to Mary Riddle-Cornell, mother of Eli Cornell— a low vision 7th grader from Kalispell—and The Summit Fitness Center, Flathead Valley Goalball teams are being formed for youth who have a visual impairment. Besides providing a new recreational sport in the valley, this is a great opportunity for kids to make friends with and support each other as individuals with unique abilities.

Now, visually impaired students in the Flathead can hone their goalball skills on a regular basis rather than waiting for the bi-annual Goalball/Enrichment Weekends at MSDB in Great Falls. Sighted peers will also be included on the teams to ensure there are enough members to create at least two teams for competition. The Summit has a big, beautiful facility that they are generously offering for this endeavor.

KUDOS TO MARY RIDDLE-CORNELL AND THE SUMMIT!

