

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

# Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XVII, Issue 2, Spring 2017



How the Foundation  
Supports MSDB

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MSDB's 2017 Academic Bowl Team

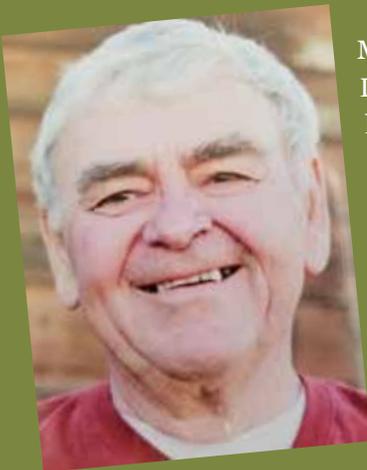
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# A Tribute to a Man Who Gave So Much

By Sandra Van Tighem, Interpreter

**E**d Van Tighem was born August 28, 1940 in Great Falls, Montana to Alphonse and Rose Van Tighem. With the exception of his senior year at Central High, Ed attended The Montana School for the Deaf immersed in sign language and Deaf culture.

During his school years, Ed started working for Buttrey Food in 1957 as a box boy. After 38 years of climbing the ladder of success with hard work and dedication, Ed retired in 1995.



Ed's involvement with the Montana Association of the Deaf (MAD) since 1965 made him a pillar within the deaf community. He was often called upon to serve in various capacities and did so willingly with the intent to empower the individual and the group as a whole. He was an active member of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Great Falls Club

of the Deaf, Big Sky Recreation Association of the Deaf as well as the Elks club of Great Falls where he bowled with a team of deaf members/friends.

He strongly believed in communication access for the deaf. It was that belief which led to his involvement years ago in the successful effort to have court-paid fees of interpreters for the deaf, and the beginning of telecommunication. He was tasked with the refurbishing of donated teletype machines from businesses, by stripping down the machine and rewiring it for use in the homes of deaf that he and other generous volunteers delivered. He continued this effort as a board member of the Montana Telecommunication Access Program for fifteen years before and after retirement.

He believed in the children of MSDB and supported the faculty and staff who teach them by serving on the MSDB Foundation Board for fifteen plus years. He gave his time as



Santa each year for both the Elks Club and MSDB even after he was ratted out by his three year old granddaughter who despite the Santa disguise, recognized grandpa's voice and publicly announced it while sitting on his lap.

Involvement with NAD required travel across the United States encouraging his love of travel. After his years of involvement on the national level ended, he and Betty, his wife of fifty-four years, traveled the globe. Their travels took them to fifty-plus countries with tours of the Deaf, meeting and making new friends along the way.

Ed spent countless hours during his childhood watching his grandfather, a cabinetmaker, work with wood. His fascination with the beauty of things made from different woods and skillful hands ignited his lifelong love of woodworking. That passion provided his family and friends with beautiful, treasured, pieces of furniture to last a lifetime.

His family and friends will forever miss his bright, brown eyes and warm, friendly smile. ❖

# A Letter from the Superintendent

**Dear Families, Students,  
Staff, and Stakeholders-**

Spring is here and the world feels like a different place! On a national level, there is much to pay attention to as there are new leaders who will make decisions that will impact education. One national piece of legislation to watch is the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act (HB 1120). This bill, known as the Cogswell-Macy Act, would ensure specialized instruction, increase availability of services and resources, enhance accountability, and increase research into best practices regarding all students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. You can find more information about this Act at [www.afb.org/info/get-connected/take-action/12](http://www.afb.org/info/get-connected/take-action/12) or [www.ceasd.org/child-first/alice-cogswell](http://www.ceasd.org/child-first/alice-cogswell)

In Montana, the 2017 Legislative Session is well underway. This session, every state agency is facing significant budget cuts for the next biennium. For MSDB, we are looking at a little over \$650,000 reduction in our budget over the next two years. The administration team has been studying our budget in preparation of



implementing this significant reduction. Our number one goal is to continue to provide a safe and happy environment for our students that provides them with the best education we can give them, both on-campus and off-campus. Our second goal is that we hope to retain our current staff members. To accomplish this, we have closed some of our vacant positions and will not be hiring. We will continue to analyze staffing needs and make decisions based on our work with students.

We have a busy spring and summer ahead of us! Please check our website [www.msdb.mt.gov](http://www.msdb.mt.gov) or our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/MtSDB/> to see upcoming events. Please join us!

***Wishing you peace,  
Donna E Sorensen***



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)**

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# MSDB Students Compete in California

By Jennifer Wasson, Teacher

MSDB's Academic Bowl team traveled to the California School for the Deaf - Riverside in February to compete in Gallaudet University's West Region competition.

This year's Academic Bowl team is comprised of first year members Brandon Arensmeyer and Sam Faulkner, second year member Aaron Polaske, and fourth year member Austin Polaske. Head Coach, Jennifer Wasson, and Assistant Coach, Yvette Smail prepared the students for competition.

The team practiced all winter to compete. The students practiced using the buzzers, learned how to study the material and answer the difficult questions, and learned how to work together as a team. Topics the students studied for included mathematics, science, social studies, geography, English, literature, art, deaf studies, pop culture, and current events.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Brandon, Aaron, Sam, and Austin prepared all winter and proudly represented MSDB in California at the annual Academic Bowl.

Twenty teams participated in the competition. The teams are divided into two pools, Buff and Blue. MSDB competed against 9 other teams. From there, the top two teams from each pool competed for the top four spots. MSDB's record this year was 5 wins

and 4 losses. We are very proud of them! Austin Polaske was presented with the 4-year player award.

The coaches and the school are very proud of these four students and the effort they put into the practices for this year's competition. Go Mustangs! ❖

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## COTTAGE INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM (ILSP)

By Darreck Hale, Lead Counselor

As the youth in the cottage approach adulthood, it is vital to teach them the necessary skills for being fully independent. MSDB offers a number of programs to aid young adults and one of them is our Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP). This program is designed to take students entering their junior year of high school and give them a glimpse at what it's like being a fully independent adult.

Students will begin by having an interview from a team of MSDB representatives that will question the student's maturity and readiness to take on this responsibility. If accepted, the student moves into an ILSP room



which consists of a bedroom, restroom, dining room, and a kitchen. Furthermore, each student receives a certain amount of funding in

both real and fake currency for specific needs. The students learn to make menus, grocery lists, and how to shop for the best deals using real currency. Next, over time the students learn to use the fake currency to learn about paying day to day bills like electricity, gas, sewer, car payments, and sometimes unknown disasters like flat tires.

Currently, in the boys' cottage we have a young man who is learning to cook new items he has never made before. He takes great pride in having the chance to choose what he wants to make and prepare over the course of his week. He has also come to find that having a clean apartment is much easier to operate when trying to find the things he needs. As ILSP students progress, they have the option of returning as transition students after graduation. We support each student as they obtain work and/or higher education depending on their capabilities and goals. Our goal is to help every student no matter their level to have a fulfilling life and to achieve their highest potential for independence. ❖

# MINDFULNESS

By Chris Gutschenritter, School Psychologist and Yvette Smal, Behavior Specialist

After reading about mindfulness techniques, we requested training in Mindfulness to learn more specific ideas that could be helpful to our students. We were able to attend a great training put on by PESI, Inc., an accreditation council for continuing medical education. It was a 2 day seminar that covered strategies we could easily implement in our groups.

We had already been using techniques in our group and individual time with students, to bring them into focus and to make them more aware of their triggers for anxious and unproductive thoughts and behavior. The training taught us that Mindfulness offers tools to help us become more in touch with our own needs, challenges and strengths. In teaching students these skills, we are also becoming more aware of our own need for mindful attention.

Mindfulness groups are being offered to 3 groups of students this year as a pilot program. We are piloting so we can see what we need more of and what we need less of. So far, the students are enjoying themselves, and so are we!

Our main focus has been the brain and body connection and understanding how our own emotional state impacts our ability to pay attention. We are working on this by focusing on some key elements of mindfulness:

- Connect – notice how you feel
- Breathe – this is a great way to teach students that they have some control over their own emotion and energy and can learn to regulate their emotions and energy level
- Move – we practice some very basic, relaxing movement
- Focus – focus activities give the students practice training their attention and their ability to bring back a wandering mind
- Relax – if we can relax, we can restore; these activities provide the opportunity to rest the body as well as the mind

# An Award Winning Team

By Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant



Pictured above at the 2017 MCEC Conference award banquet: standing Darci Haraldson and Michelle Monsen. Seated Emily LaSalle, Jon Skinner and Lori Keenen.

A team is a group of individuals working together to meet a goal - whether it is everyone's favorite Denver Broncos winning the Super Bowl or school staff working together with students who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

I am the most fortunate Outreach Consultant because I have the honor of working with amazing staff throughout the state that want the best for

all of the students. This year, together with my Sidney students, we nominated the Sidney School District for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Region One Team Award. If space permitted, I would attach the full nomination so you could understand the work and expectations of each person on our team. Trust me, each of the individuals listed here gives their all to each student they serve as well as to the community of Sidney.

This year's CSPD Region One Team Award winners are: Dr. Daniel Farr, Michelle Monsen, Dr. Sue Roller, Darci Haraldson, Lynette Farr, Nicole Simonsen, Tara Skaar, Lori Keenen, Carrie Peters, and Jon Skinner. My thanks to each one of you for all you do each and every day. ☘



The Montana Council for Exceptional Children's yearly conference is a time to learn from others, share resources, and recognize individuals and teams that do amazing work with students from all across the state. It's also an opportunity for Outreach Consultants to appreciate each other. VI Consultant Kerri Norick and DHH Consultant Cathy Jury enjoy the opportunity to work together!

# ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL Deaf Enrichment Weekend

By Emily LaSalle,  
Outreach Consultant

Our Deaf Enrichment Weekends (DEW) began as opportunities for socialization between students who are deaf or hard of hearing across the state. The DEW held this Spring was amazing! We met our socialization goal and so much more!

We invited our students who are deaf or hard of hearing living across Montana to come together for a fun, socially filled event on campus. This event focuses on the child who is deaf or hard of hearing and allows them to have an event of their own. Siblings are most welcome at our Family Learning Weekend.

On Friday night, the new De'VIA Art Club (see Mustang's Flying Hooves article) was highlighted. Ray and Ameer Sevrin began a new club this winter that allows students to creatively express themselves through American Sign Language and visual arts. The MSDB campus students had recently participated in a competition in Washington and performed their stories. It was wonderful to see their confidence building as they have learned new ways to express themselves.

After dinner, the students were divided into age groups. We filled the gym playing games like Red Light, Green Light and Duck, Duck, Goose. We also spent time getting to know each other. The kids loved it! Next we filled the children with snacks galore. Cotton Candy is a must at every DEW event. Then we sent them back to the cottage for a good night's sleep before rousing them in the morning for a fun filled day.



Students from across the state of Montana came together for another exciting Deaf Enrichment Weekend!

Saturday's events included three sessions, each unique in their own way. One session included building fractured fairy tales. Our high school group performed Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma ended up with a new fur coat! In another session, students created individual puzzle pieces according to their likes and their life. Putting the pieces together to make a giant puzzle demonstrated that each one of us is a piece of the puzzle and together we are pretty amazing. In the final session, the students created art animals, flowers, lighthouses, and mermaids step-by-step. Beautiful drawings were created and the collages will soon be displayed in the Outreach office.

We have so many wonderful people to thank. This DEW event was

so special not only for the students, but for the staff to come together and have shared experiences. To our campus staff: the kitchen crew that fed our hungry mouths, the cottage staff that watched over our angels, and interpreters that provided equal language access for all! Not to mention all the fun personalities adding laughter and knowledge of students to help us meet each child's needs. To our education staff who lent a hand and talents after putting in a full week's work; we appreciate you giving your all and then some.

We, as Outreach Consultants, are blessed. We have a vision and with you we fulfill our goal of giving our students who are deaf and hard of hearing an amazing Deaf Enrichment Weekend. ■■

# WE ARE SO PROUD OF CATHERINE “KITTY” GRIFFIN, M.C.S.D., CCC - SLP

Submitted by Lisa Cannon, Au.D

“The Louis M. DiCarlo Award for Recent Clinical Achievement recognizes an individual's significant accomplishments in the advancement of clinical service in speech-language pathology and/or audiology. The recipient is chosen from among



individuals nominated by state speech-language-hearing associations.”

This year, our own Catherine “Kitty” Griffin is the recipient of the 2017 Montana State Clinical Achievement Award through the Montana Speech-Language and Hearing

Association. She is also Montana’s nominee for the national Louis M. DiCarlo Award! Her outstanding work as a Speech-Language Pathologist is recognized and respected across the state. Kitty works with clients of all ages, but holds a special place in her heart for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. She is a certified Baby Signs® instructor, as well as being extensively trained in Listening and Spoken Language (LSL). She is often a “go to” resource for her fellow Speech-Language Pathologists and other professionals, and she is always willing to share her knowledge!

Kitty once said she needed more than one lifetime to accomplish everything she wanted to in her profession. To those of us who have seen her in action, she is the Energizer Bunny personified! She not only travels for MSDB as an Outreach Consultant part-time, but also maintains a private practice, State of the Heart Therapy, Inc. in Dillon. As if that were not enough, Kitty happily embraces any opportunity to educate students, professionals and families alike, whether in a classroom at the University of Montana or on our own campus during Family Learning Weekend! As both a professional and a person, Kitty’s energy, enthusiasm and dedication to her work inspire all who know her!

Congratulations, Kitty, on a job well done! You make us all proud! ❖



Gracie and Blair talk about the best way to get all of the handprints to fit on the inside of the teepee.

## Creating Another Tradition

By Missie Hill, Special Education Coordinator

MSDB has acquired its very own 8-foot teepee, made by the Salish/Kootenai tribe.

When we received it, we realized it needed some color to make it ours. However, out of respect for the various tribes, not only in Montana, but also represented in our school, we decided painting the outside would be disrespectful. Many colors and symbols are representative of a certain tribe and it is not acceptable to mix tribal symbols or colors on one teepee. So we got creative.

Our students and staff decided to paint the INSIDE of the teepee, thereby remaining respectful, but also enabling us to claim it as ours. We used fabric paint so the symbols will not run and will weather outdoors well.

The inside of the teepee consists of staff handprints at the top, with fingers pointing down and student handprints on the bottom, with fingers pointing up. Each staff or student signed their hand print. This symbolizes all staff and students reaching out to each other and becoming a family. That is what we are at MSDB- we are a family. ❖



# Montana School *for the*

## HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD



Staff members came together to do their part to help make a safer and more beautiful playground for the students.

## THE MSDB FOUNDATION HELPS KIDS!

**T**he MSDB Foundation is constantly raising funds and purchasing equipment, materials, and experiences for the betterment of our students. This year, the Foundation received a grant of \$4500 to upgrade and provide some much needed love and care to our school playground.

Years ago, the members of the Foundation built several small buildings in imitation of several local

businesses. The playground has a convenience store, a garage, a town hall, a log cabin, and a gas station. A concrete bike path runs throughout the playground. A unique walking loop borders the playground structure that allows students with visual impairments to experience a variety of ground covers – concrete, wooden slats, rocky, and grassy. The playground also features a wheelchair swing and a swing set with a sandy

### MSDB Foundation Board of Directors

Scott Patera, Great Falls, President  
John Musgrove, Havre, Vice President  
Doug Little, Great Falls, Sec./Treas.  
Nan Miller, Helena

Debra Redburn, Bozeman  
Donna Sorensen, Great Falls  
Shawn Tulloch, Bozeman  
Laura Walker, Great Falls

# Deaf & Blind Foundation

## BRINGING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

ground cover.

The Foundation purchased bright yellow paint along with a few other colors as well as some stain to give those small buildings a new shine. Rubber mulch will be purchased to replace the sand cover under the playground structure and the swings.

During the staff orientation week this past August, we hosted a team-building playground cleanup afternoon. We purchased the supplies, called in a few dedicated Lion's Club members, and got to work. We pulled up weeds, raked up leaves, and picked up trash. The bike path was in great condition; however, there was no visual indication of the sloped curve on the borders both inside and outside the path. We decided those curved edges needed to be painted bright yellow. All the buildings got a fresh coat of paint



John and Angelina enjoy a sunny Spring afternoon on the MSDB playground.

and the log cabin got a good sanding and staining in many places.

The Fagenstrom Company donated a beautiful concrete picnic table. The Contractor's Union will be coming later in the year to replace and repair several building roofs.

The Foundation and MSDB are grateful to have such generous community partners working together to support our students! Recess is important so students can build strong muscles, develop play and social interaction skills, and expand their proprioceptive development. The staff and students at MSDB are grateful to the Foundation for

their continued efforts to support our school by providing materials, equipment, and experiences for our students. Would you like to help our students? See below for ways to support MSDB and the Foundation. Thank you! ❖

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*–Margaret Mead*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can change the world for a student who is deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind by supporting the MSDB Foundation. With your help, we have been able to provide funds for services, programs, and equipment for over 30 years.

***Donate at [justgive.org](http://justgive.org) We appreciate you support! Thank you!***

# One! Three! Six!

By Leann Goss, Outreach Consultant  
and Kathy Johnson, Audiologist

“One, three, six!” echoed throughout the halls and meeting rooms of the 2017 National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia last month. The 1 – 3 – 6 model is the National EHDI System’s timeline goals of early intervention for deaf and hard of hearing babies. The goal is to have every baby’s hearing screened by 1 month of age, the diagnosis of hearing loss by 3 months of age, and entry into early intervention services by 6 months of age.



In the words of parent, Moriah Cochran, “It is really touching to see people show so much kindness and passion for our children. I feel very blessed for being able to attend EDHI so early in my son’s life. I left Atlanta feeling confident, supported and excited for his future!”

One goal of the conference was to enhance the implementation of comprehensive state based Early Hearing Detection and Intervention programs. Therefore each state had a meeting time to discuss how to improve services in their particular state. The table for the state of Montana had 10 energized and motivated participants. Leading the meeting was our state EHDI coordinator, Amber Bell, and Children’s Special Health Services Section Supervisor, Rachel Donahoe. Montana was well represented by 3 Audiologists, Kathy Johnson and Lisa Cannon from MSDB, and Charlene Schmidt from Glasgow Hospital; 1 pediatrician, Dr. Andrea Vannatta from St. Patrick’s Hospital in Missoula; 3 Outreach Consultants/Teachers of the Deaf from MSDB, Cathy Jury, Sarah Eyer, and Leann Goss; and one parent, Moriah Cochran. A steady flow of excited and collaborative conversation about the current data of screenings and follow ups, upcoming projects, needs throughout the state, and how we can all work together to meet the lofty goals of the EHDI initiative covered a time span of 90 minutes but easily could have continued another 90 more! One of the most exciting topics was how Moriah is starting the Montana chapter of the national organization known as Hands and Voices, a parent-driven, parent/



From left to right: Leann Goss, Kathy Johnson, and Sarah Eyer, presenters at the 2017 National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Meeting.

professional collaborative, unbiased group that works together to support all children who are deaf or hard of hearing in reaching their full potential! See the information on the opposite page for more information about this amazing organization!

Among the presentations during this national conference that spanned 3 days were 2 sessions given by MSDB’s audiologist, Kathy Johnson, and Outreach Consultants, Sarah Eyer and Leann Goss. The first presentation was about the many ways MSDB has been successful using the Oticon Amigo FM equipment not only for students who wear hearing aids; but also for students with a unilateral loss, auditory neuropathy, cochlear implants, or a temporary, mild conductive loss. The second presentation was Kathy Johnson’s in-depth study of Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome and a practical guide for parents whose children have been diagnosed with it. The response to these sessions was very positive and empowering especially among the parents who attended them.

The emphasis of the entire conference was on children birth to 3 years old; however, there was definitely a place at the table for information sharing affecting all ages of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Respectful dialogue was encouraged among all philosophies and approaches to working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. One goal that was definitely achieved at this conference was to create and enhance new and ongoing working relationships among federal agencies, non-profit organizations, state health departments and educational agencies, advocacy groups, families, and professionals. We encourage all parents of deaf or hard of hearing children and professionals working with these families to attend an EHDI conference in the future if the opportunity presents itself! ■■

# HANDS & VOICES: Start-up Efforts in Montana



**H**ands & Voices is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families and their children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, as well as the

professionals who serve them. We are a parent-driven, parent/professional collaborative group that is unbiased towards communication modes and methods. Our diverse membership includes those who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families who communicate orally, with signs, Cued Speech, and/or combined methods. We exist to help our children reach their highest potential.

A group of passionate parents and dedicated professionals are joining together in the process of establishing a statewide Chapter of Hands & Voices in Montana and we hope you will join us as we grow and

- Do you have an interest in improving the social and academic experience of your child or student who is deaf or hard of hearing?
- Do you have a need for advocacy for your child or student who is deaf or hard of hearing?
- Do you have an interest or talent that you might offer to a group of parents and professionals who have similar needs and interests?

support the needs of families in our state. Please visit the Hands & Voices website at [www.handsandvoices.org](http://www.handsandvoices.org) to learn more about this organization and to access the many available resources. Please share your contact information with us and let us know how you are interested in participating in this start up effort or if you just want to keep in touch with what this group is up to. As we move forward we will begin to accept chapter memberships in which your yearly membership fee will be tax deductible and benefits will

include the Hands & Voices quarterly newspaper, THE COMMUNICATOR. All contributions will be used directly for our chapter activities. We hope you will become involved in our efforts.

Join us on our Facebook group at: Montana Parents & Supporters of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children

For additional information, please contact: Moriah Cochran [moriah.cochran@yahoo.com](mailto:moriah.cochran@yahoo.com)  
406-239-3076

## MISSION:

*Hands and Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. We're a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential. ❖*



Students from the Visually Impaired Department drum along to tribal songs.

## LISTEN TO THE DRUMS!

By Missie Hill, Special Education Coordinator

**I**n December, the Great Falls High School Indian Education class arrived at MSDB with drum in hand. They went to the Visually Impaired Department to play tribal songs for the students and then the students were allowed to drum with them. This was followed by the group going to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Department. Those students sat on the stage while the group played so that as they listened they could also feel the beat of the drum through the floor vibrations. They, too, were able to play with the group.

The students enjoyed the time they spent with this group and were excited to hear that they will return on a regular basis to work with our kids. The first project we will work on together is a “pay-it-forward” project, where the two schools will combine forces to help others. ❖



LEFT TO RIGHT: Alysha, Traci, David, Juan, Blair, Jesse, and Angelina, participated in the Flying Hands competition and proudly show off their medals and awards!

# Mustang Flying Hooves Club!

**By Amee Sevrie, ASL-English Bilingual Specialist and Ray Sevrie, Cottage Life Attendant**

**W**e are excited to share with you a new club that has been set up at MSDB for our students. It is an after-school club that focuses on ASL Storytelling and De'VIA. This club was recently named by the students as the "Mustang Flying Hooves" club!

The goal of this club is to teach students how to improve communication skills and to give them more tools to express themselves using ASL storytelling, ASL poetry, and De'VIA. Many of you may be wondering, what is De'VIA? De'VIA stands for Deaf View/Image Art" and it is comprised of Deaf artists' works using paintings, drawings, woodwork, film making, etc, to share their experiences as Deaf people through visual expression. This club was created to provide opportunities for our students to improve critical thinking, develop skills in storytelling and visual art expression, and develop performance skills. How? By becoming involved in different ASL competitions!

This year in March, many of our students in the club had the chance to go to the Flying Hands competition at the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD). That competition had over 100 students from 4 states, 2 countries, and 3 of

our students won awards!

Our adventure to Vancouver, Washington, for the Flying Hands competition started at 5:30am Wednesday morning, March 8th. Two vans were loaded with seven Mustang Flying Hooves students and four staff members who set out for the adventure! On the way, we encountered a flat (exploded) tire in Idaho. Luckily, both staff and students remained positive when the sheriff had to escort us off the highway, and while we waited for a tire replacement. Our "minor" tire mishap put us behind schedule a few hours so we were all very exhausted when we finally arrived at WSD much later that night.

The next day, we watched students of all ages and from different backgrounds perform on stage. Each of our students did such an awesome job! David placed 3rd for his De'Via artwork and Juan placed third and Alysha placed first for their ASL storytelling! The students had a great attitude throughout the whole trip and were eager to support each other when the time came for their performances. They represented MSDB well! We were fortunate to meet so many wonderful individuals that made our time in Vancouver, WA an amazing one. We have seen how our students are blossoming from this opportunity to learn and develop communication and social skills. ❖❖

# SCHULTE'S STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Every town has its share of convenience stores but not many towns are lucky enough to have a store like Great Falls' own Schulte's 38th Street Store and Coffee House. In business since 1989, they



are best known for their deli chicken and family like customer service! Their community outreach always includes noticing the great work of students in their neighborhood schools, and for one week of each month a student at MSDB is selected. Teachers nominate students for the Schulte's Student of the Week award and that child gets to go to Schulte's every day for that week and get a free treat! The store owners proudly display that student's name on their marquee for the neighborhood to see. It's a great honor and one that we

all celebrate with the student!



Seth earned Schulte's Student of the Week in November for coming to school with a great attitude and cooperating with staff and students!

Congratulations Seth!



Donny earned Schulte's Student of the Month in December for forming good relationships with his peers. He is very respectful,

his work ethic is excellent, and he works hard in all subject areas. Congratulations to Donny!

Taylor earned Schulte's Student of the Week in January for being a hard



working student and being socially appropriate towards her peers. Congratulations to Tayler!



Bella earned Schulte's Student of the Week in February for her increased maturity both academically and socially. Congratulations to Bella!



Tyler earned Schulte's Student of the Week in March for being welcoming to the new students! Thanks Tyler and congratulations!

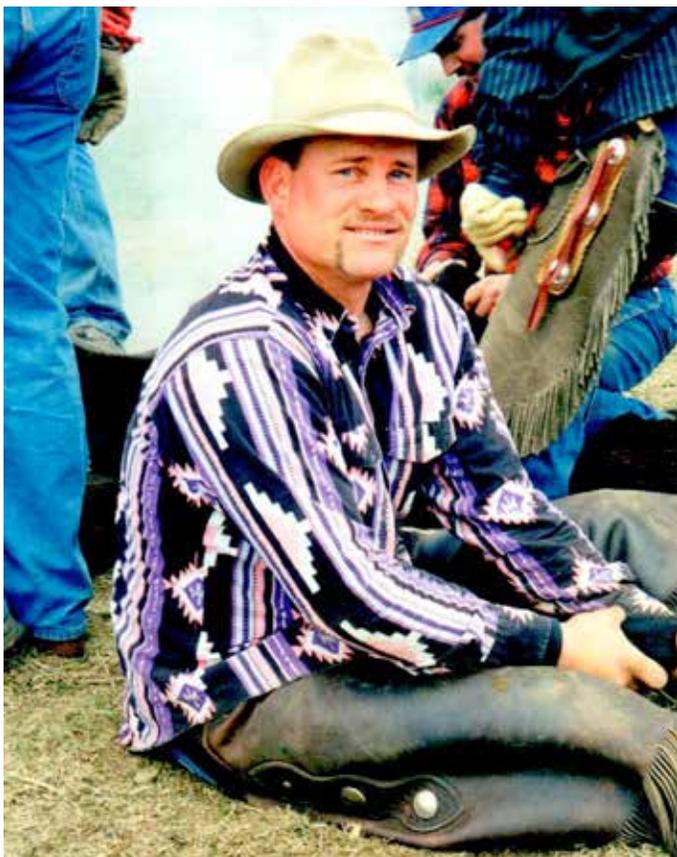
## PRESCHOOL PEEPS



There is some fine dining going on in the preschool room and Paisley is the hostess. Paisley is treating our classroom "guests" to a mid-morning snack of an apple, a slice of pizza, a sandwich, a pear, and some corn.



Charlee got to tell Santa all of her Christmas wishes when he visited our school in December!



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## Where Are They Now? LEE DUBOIS

**L**ee Dubois was raised in Belt, Montana and attended the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind. He graduated from MSDB in 1985. While at MSDB, he played basketball and track. He went to Seattle South Community College and majored in heavy duty diesel mechanics and was certified. Currently, he lives in Bozeman and works for Copper Spring Ranch. Lee is married to Theresa Gray who graduated from MSDB in 1989. They have 4 daughters and 9 grandchildren.

In 2002 Lee was a champion ranch team rodeo competitor. In 2006 he was honored with a belt buckle for all-around cow handler.

Lee loves to fish, hunt and camp. His hobby is making horseshoe lamps. ❖

## COCHLEAR IMPLANT COLLABORATIVE CAMP: DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

By Kitty Griffin, Outreach Consultant

**T**he rate of new technology continues to astound me - from videophone capability (what a marvel!) to people talking into their phones and having Siri or Cortana (or whomever) look that right up for you! Our lives are changed by technology. In the world of hearing technology, advances are occurring at lightning speed. In keeping with this trend, the number of children in the state of Montana receiving cochlear implants (CIs) continues to grow. According to Lisa Cannon, AuD, Consulting Audiologist with MSDB, there are 70 + children using cochlear implants who receive services with MSDB either on campus or through Outreach.

To address this new flood of technology and the need to provide support for Montana students, the first CI “camp” was born. Held in Helena on August 6, 2016, the Radisson Hotel provided the perfect location for meeting, learning and mixing with others who have cochlear implants. Individuals aged 18 months old to AARP range (retired folks) attended this first gathering. The event was sponsored and supported by the MT Department of Health and Human Services, MSDB Outreach, State of the Heart Therapy, Inc, and Rocky Mountain ENT/Hearing Center. Featured activities included arts and crafts, regional cochlear implant representatives, Auditory Verbal therapy techniques and aural rehabilitation strategies for older kids and adults. A very big hit with all ages was the presentation of native Montana reptiles and amphibians which rounded out the events. The kids proved brave indeed; handling the reptiles with confidence, while some adults kept a respectful distance.

This year’s CI camp is coming up on July 22, 2017 in Helena. Please join us this summer! Do you hear what I hear? : The sound of happy “campers” in Helena, MT! ❖



Some of the happy “campers” who attended the 2016 Cochlear Implant Camp where they shared experiences and learned about cutting edge technology!

# Welcome to MSDB



Hey all! I'm Charlie (Sangwin) Melton. I've recently taken a position in the residential cottages as a Cottage Life Attendant, CLA. I am working with the girls in the Rising Sun cottage alongside Amy C and Seri. I enjoy my new position tremendously as it gives me the opportunity to work closely with Deaf children. In the years past, I had been pursuing an education degree through MSU-Northern. Two years ago when I became pregnant with my son, Jackson, I decided that school would always be there, but the precious time with my newborn son would certainly fly by! I put my education on the backburner and stayed home with Jackson. Boy was I right about time flying by! He is now 18 months and is ready for more than what I can just give him at home and I am ready for more too! I am back at MSDB and planning to complete my elementary education degree. I would like to work with Deaf children for my career as I really feel this is where I am meant to be! I am Deaf, married and a mother. I work, and I will soon be in school again. Life is pretty good, and I feel blessed to be a part of this close-knit community here at MSDB. This is a great place to call home! 🍴



Hello, my name is Mackenzie Merja and I am the New DHH Preschool Teacher here at MSDB. I grew up in the area and was afforded the opportunity to learn sign language from Gary McManus. I fell in love with the language and wanted to be more involved. During my senior year at CM Russell High School, I was able to be an assistant here at MSDB for the last half of the day. I worked with Diane Moog and Brenda LeMieux. Through this experience I decided I would go to school to become a Teacher of the Deaf and hopefully return to MSDB to teach. I attended Idaho State University and majored in Special Education with a minor in Deaf Education. At the end of my student teaching, I was hired and given my teaching assignment in January. It has been a challenge, but it has also been one of the best experiences of my life. I am looking forward to many more years at MSDB. 🍴



My name is Seri Brammer. I moved to Great Falls this summer, so I could continue going to college. I am going to school for my Elementary Education degree. After I get that, I plan on continuing school for my Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) degree. I want to be a VI Outreach Consultant for MSDB someday. I have been involved with MSDB since I was five years old. I completed the transition program at MSDB for two years after I graduated high school. Now I am a Cottage Life Attendant. I work in the Rising Sun cottage with the younger deaf girls. I am so happy I have the opportunity to be a staff member. I feel I can show the students in the cottage that they can do anything they want, even with a disability. I want them to know not to put limits on themselves and not to let other people limit them either. 🍴



My name is Scott Henry. I was born profoundly deaf. I was placed in an oral school where I learned how to use speech and listening skills. I was there for a few years before attending several regular schools with no support. One day, I visited the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDS) in Phoenix, Arizona. I was in my freshman year and that was the first time I interacted with other Deaf peers. I learned American Sign Language (ASL) during my freshman year and have been fine-tuning my signing skills since then. After graduating from PDS, I obtained 2 Bachelor degrees at Gallaudet University. My passion is riding Harley Davidson motorcycles. I have one in Phoenix, AZ. I also have an 11-month old dog, Twixie, living with me. We travel a lot together. You may have seen her with me around campus. Just remember, she is a dangerous dog. Why? Because she is so friendly with everyone and everybody adores her! 🍴



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# MSDB Summer Programs... Hope to See You Here!

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

## FAMILY LEARNING WEEKENDS

One Family Learning Weekend is designated for families of deaf and hard of hearing children, and one is for families of blind and visually impaired children. These popular weekends include dynamic national speakers and a wealth of information on learning to relate to a child's disability. The weekend provides opportunities for families to learn about their child's sensory needs, share their experiences with other families, and communicate with one another in a warm and caring atmosphere.

**Family Learning Weekend for the Deaf/HOH: June 2-4, 2017**

**Family Learning Weekend for the Blind/VI: June 9-11, 2017**

## SUMMER CAMPS

Week-long camps for children who are blind or visually impaired, or children who are deaf or hard of hearing are offered to students from across the state and offer skill-



building in the key areas of communication, social interaction, independent living, and the use of technology.

The camps include structured leisure and recreational activities, including trips to the local water park, Great Falls White Sox baseball games, and exploring the historical, art and children's museums in Great Falls. The Montana School for the Deaf & the Blind has a complete recreation complex where campers can enjoy many games to enhance their language, communication, and their team building skills. For all students, learning these activities can be powerful accomplishments.

**Summer Camp for the Deaf/HOH:  
June 18-24, 2017**

**Summer Camp for the Blind/VI: July 9-15, 2017**

The Montana School for the Deaf & the Blind provides room, board, entertainment, and transportation to and from the Great Falls campus at no cost to the student or family. Summer programs are co-sponsored by MSDB, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the MSDB Foundation.

*For more information please visit the MSDB website [www.msdb.mt.gov](http://www.msdb.mt.gov). Click on Campus, then Summer Programs. You will find further explanations of each event along with applications and program booklets. For additional information you can also call MSDB at 1-800-882-MSDB or email us at [info@msdb.mt.gov](mailto:info@msdb.mt.gov).*