FAREWELL REMARKS FROM
BOB DEMING

EVERYDAY YOU ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE, GUIDING, TEACHING, LEARNING, AND LIFTING CHILDREN SKYWARD, THAT THESE CHILDREN HAVE THE COURAGE AND SKILLS TO REACH FOR THE STARS!!!!

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR SERVING THIS SCHOOL AND ITS CHILDREN. THANK YOU FOR MAKING MY LAST DAY ON THIS BOARD SO VERY SPECIAL. THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO SERVE MSDB AND ITS CHILDREN.

MAY GOD BLESS EACH OF YOU
BOB DEMING
Welcome to the 2009/2010 school year at MSDB. Staff spent a week attending workshops and in-services to expand their knowledge base and prepare for the arrival of our students. Students returned excited to see their old friends and meet new ones. It is always an exciting time for all to get reacquainted.

Teachers will be infusing writing in their classes to provide more practice and experience in the writing process. This is so critical for the students to recognize that writing occurs in environments other than the traditional English or language class. This cross content practice will increase the opportunities to refine and develop skills.

Reading is always a skill area that we focus on. This too will be encouraged in all aspects of the student day whether it may be reading themselves or being read to. Mrs. Bechard continues to keep up with student and staff needs in regard to ordering and organizing the library. She is always available to assist in locating appropriate materials for students and staff.

In the VI Department, the year is off to a busy start. Students from preschool to transition are learning the rules and responsibilities of being a member of our school community. Students are learning about jobs, roles and relationships in addition to a great deal of hands on academics. We have already had over 200 students from the public schools come into the department to learn about how a visual impairment impacts everything in life. Students are joining after school clubs and community activities to use the skills they have learned in class. The days have been packed with a variety of practical experiences to help the students become more involved members of the community.

I would encourage you to stop by and see what is happening in our classes. You will be amazed at the great things our students are doing. If you have any questions, please contact Carol Clayton-Bye, supervisor of the visually impaired department, Kim Schwabe, supervisor of the elementary hearing impaired department, or myself, Diane Moog, principal. Thank you for your support.

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On Saturday, October 10th, MSDB students and staff boarded a bus at 7:00 am and headed to Missoula to attend the homecoming game of the mighty University of Montana Grizzlies! The temperature was bone chilling according to local media, but our spirits were as high as the attendance—25,694! Forty-three students and staff from MSDB, including four students served by Outreach braved the weather and attended the game.

Dean of students, Jim Kelly and his family, hosted a tailgate B-B-Q before the game. The football tickets were a gift funded by Griz Kidz—a non-profit program created by 6 former University of Montana football players to allow children the opportunity to experience Grizzly football. Along with the football tickets Griz Kidz supplied Griz t-shirts and baseball caps! What a day! The MSDB Foundation provided funding for the B-B-Q, the charter bus and money for the kids and staff to purchase a “snack” during the game. The Mission Mountain Wood Band (former Griz alumni) sang the National Anthem while our students sang and signed along.

Following the Griz 35-23 homecoming victory over Cal Poly, the fans were allowed on the football field for autographs from the Griz players. What a thrill for students and staff alike to be standing on Griz turf with players on their knees visiting us.

Thank you to all of those involved for giving us an opportunity of a lifetime. It’s a memory we will treasure!
In October I had the pleasure of attending an out-of-town weekend event with MSDB’s Residential Program. Through the organizational efforts of Jim Kelly, Dean of Students, U of M’s “Griz Kidz” program, the commitment of residential staff and support from the MSDB Foundation students headed to Missoula on a chartered bus to watch a Montana Grizzlies football game. Students who had attended this annual event in the past were clear on what would transpire throughout the day; however, questions from students new to the “Griz Kidz” began before day break as staff and students loaded the bus.

The next three hours of the trip were filled with what teachers like to call the 5Ws; who, what, where, when, why. The number of concepts covered while traveling on the bus was amazing to see. Who will be there, was answered with players, referees, fans, supporters, alumni and staff. Which lead to other questions about what those titles meant and how a title is determined. The concept of what would happen could not be easily answered because individuals’ choices would lead down different paths.

One student asked, “When can we buy our toys?” and it was quickly followed by “Where?” This led to the use of technology and a search of the Grizzlies web site on a cell phone where we learned about a variety of items and their prices. That led to organizing her wallet and using math skills to determine what could be bought and assure that she had money for both her wants and NEEDs. We practiced counting money and using the wallet and its compartments. All this practice not only allowed her to be independent, but gave her the confidence to make her own purchases at the game.

Of the 5W’s, the one question which I never heard asked was WHY. It was clearly answered by the interchange between staff and students hours before the tailgate party, kick off, or the cannon announcing touchdowns.

Each time a visually impaired youngster goes out into the unknown a new opportunity presents itself; an opportunity for growth. An opportunity to: “immerse themselves in just manageable difficulties of their own choosing in the directions they wish to become.” For the young students I was partnered with the Griz game was an opportunity to use math and reading skills, self advocate, problem solve, use and rely on their orientation and mobility skills, understand the importance of careers, and learn from being a consumer. Although learning often begins in the classroom, it is in the world that it takes on meaning and begins making sense. To me the “Griz Kidz” opportunity is more than just a game! ☀️
Technology continues to be a valuable learning and teaching tool at MSDB. We have established a computerized reading lab in our deaf/hard of hearing elementary department that serves many of the students from PK–4th grade. The elementary students also participate in a weekly fun-filled technology class with Mrs. Alt learning things from mouse control to keyboarding and more. High school deaf/hard of hearing students meanwhile are learning to make electronic portfolios as part of their transition program. In addition to the VI students learning to use Braille technology, they are focusing their energies on everything “magnified”; learning which magnifier is best to use for a given situation, becoming familiar with the different kinds of magnification, using magnification safely, and applying it to everyday life.

In June, several staff members attended the EdTech Conference in Great Falls. In fact, Jim Takenaka, was a presenter and showed participants technology that blind and low vision students need and use. Other workshops gave MSDB staff training in using SmartBoards, Web 2.0 applications, and much more. This fall staff participated in an online technology assessment which will help us determine needed technology training. In time, the middle and high school students will also participate in this assessment to better determine their technology strengths and needs.

In addition to the hardware and software we were able to purchase this summer, our E-Rate application for video conferencing transport was approved. Consequently, we are now beginning the process of connecting up to VisionNet for video services such as conferencing and streaming. This will open up new avenues to connect to students across the state, the individuals that serve them, and other programs that serve sensory-impaired students.

“OUR WEBSITE IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REDESIGNED. LOOK FOR CHANGES IN THE MONTHS TO COME.”
IS THERE ANYTHING I FORGOT TO SAY?

By Sharon Woods, VI Outreach Consultant

Children who are blind or have low vision miss a lot of details that all the rest of us take for granted. I remember a story a parent told how their child had no idea there were frogs on her sandals. The decoration was clearly evident to all but to this child with low vision they did not exist. That is something to always keep in mind. If I can’t see it, it may not exist in my mind.

It is very important to verbally describe things and allow for time to move close and look at things with both hands and eyes. Always ask your child to describe what they see rather than asking, “Can you see that?” Often times the answer to that questing will be yes, as often a child ‘can’ see something but they do not know what it is.

Some tips:

- Have your child help with a variety of chores such as loading and unloading the washer and dryer, making a bed, feeding and caring for a pet
- Plant a garden together, pull out a plant and examine the entire plant top to roots. Use the knowledge to help understand large plants like trees
- At the park (with help from a tall strong person) examine play equipment as thoroughly as possible
- Have your child help in the kitchen: for example the experience of understanding the concept of an egg in all its states: in the shell, raw and cooked in different ways will allow for whole rather than partial concept development
- Go to the store and touch/look closely at a variety of fruits, vegetables, and containers of food

The possibilities are limitless! There are opportunities all day long and in all kinds of settings to help your child develop concepts. Don’t stress out about getting to every thing at once, just take advantage of the opportunities as they come along in every day life. ☺

Vision Outreach Consultants Pam Boespflug and Jane Nybo, were on hand at the 2009 Council for Exceptional Children conference held in Missoula dispersing information about programs and services provided by MSDB.
A MESSAGE FROM COREY STAPLETON, PRESIDENT

Did you know that the unemployment rate for blind people is 75%? The Montana School for the Deaf & Blind is working to change that sobering statistic.

Until Melissa Lane came to MSDB three years ago as a high school sophomore, she needed assistance with every aspect of her education. An aide read her school texts to her, wrote her assignments for her, and walked her to her classes. This year, she is in MSDB’s Transition Program, preparing to live independently when she goes off to college in 2010.

“I’m nervous,” she said, “but by the end of this year I’ll have the skills I need down, so I’ll be ready to go on to bigger and better things.” Those bigger and better things include majoring in psychology at MSU Bozeman or UM Western at Dillon, followed by a masters in counseling. There is no question that she will have not only a job, but a career.

Melissa is completing requirements for graduating from MSDB and Great Falls High School, where she has learned to independently navigate her education. She reads all her texts in Braille, embosses her assignments in Braille, and prints them in ink for her teachers. She gets around on her own with the use of a white cane.

“She’s made a 180 degree turn,” said Carol Clayton-Bye, MSDB’s Supervising Teacher of the Blind Department. “Using technology, Braille, and her Orientation & Mobility skills, she learned she could do it all and more.”

Thanks to the generosity of many contributors over the years, the MSDB Foundation has been able to provide vital services and equipment for Montana School for the Deaf & Blind students for more than 25 years.

This year, donors aged 70½ or older have an opportunity to take advantage of a tax savings by making contributions from an IRA by December 31, 2009. Donors may direct up to $100,000 from a traditional IRA to a charitable organization and may exclude the amount donated from their gross income. This provision was first made in 2006 and later extended to 2009. It will not be extended to 2010.

Federal employees can contribute via payroll deduction by giving their employer MSDB’s code for the Combined Federal Campaign: #57314. ::
pay bills, manage money, use public transportation, and other skills she’ll need to live independently. She takes courses at MSDB that are preparing her for the work force and other aspects of adult life.

“She’s gone from relying on everyone for everything to doing 90% of everything herself,” said her mom, Janice Plucinski. “As hard as it was to send her to school in Great Falls at MSDB, it was definitely the right thing to do. She’s grown by leaps and bounds, and she’s had a great education. I’m so proud of her.”

The MSDB Foundation provides funding for the Transition Program, with help from our friends, like you. Every year, this program prepares young deaf and blind people to go out into the world and live productive, meaningful lives.

Please help us to help more students like Melissa turn their lives from feeling helpless to being confident about finding their way in the world. You can donate now by using the enclosed envelope, or by giving online at www.justgive.org. We and the kids at MSDB thank you!

Best regards,

Corey Stapleton, President

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**Just 13.3% of the MSDB Foundation’s Budget goes to Administrative costs. When you support the Foundation, you are supporting programs for kids.**
MONTANA SCHOOL for
Thanks so much for your support!

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10 MSDB EXPRESS
We are most grateful for your contributions, which make such a difference for the students at MSDB.

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That’s A Wrap/3 Sisters
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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 to MSDB, and thank-you for joining us in celebrating White Cane Day. The White Cane, like the public transportation busses, helps visually impaired people obtain mobile freedom. Mobile Freedom is the ability to go wherever is required, or wanted.

White Cane Day celebrates the symbol and usage of the white cane for blind and visually impaired people across the United States. The cane has been a tool used from biblical times; however it wasn’t recognized as a symbol until, December 1930, when the first white cane ordinance was passed. The ordinance gave blind and visually impaired people protection and the right of way while carrying the white cane. The ordinance was passed into law in 1937.

White Cane Day started on October 6th 1964 when a joint resolution of Congress passed. October 15th every year since has been an observance of the white cane. Let us celebrate the symbol and usage of the white cane! ✅

Sean poses with 8 feet of cake.
Preschoolers to transition students prepared for the 3rd annual, school wide, White Cane Day Celebration at MSDB. The theme picked by students in the Finding Wheels class was “Mobile Freedom”. Although White Cane Day is traditionally celebrated on October 15, activities for “Mobile Freedom” took place over 2 days in October. This year students traveled to their homes throughout Montana for a 4 day break on the 14th.

On October 9th, to help our friends across Central Avenue at Lewis and Clark Elementary School to better understand what we do and why, 150 students from Lewis and Clark visited Aspen Hall and rotated through three stations. The stations not only focused on independence gained through orientation and mobility skills, but also through the use of braille and technology.

At the O&M station a short public service announcement, “Mobile Independence”, on how the white cane promotes independence was aired. The PSA produced by the high school Finding Wheels class included appearances by preschool and elementary age students. Lewis and Clark students also had the opportunity to walk to another location in the building using a long white cane.

In addition to the activities on the 9th Great Falls High School classes toured Aspen Hall the morning of October 22nd and a school wide lunch was held for students, staff, and friends of MSDB that afternoon. Lunch was followed not only by dessert in the form of an 8 foot long cake in the shape of a cane, but by an obstacle course to be negotiated under blindfold and the re-airing of “Mobile Freedom”. In addition, students invited Great Falls Transit as a partner in independence and arranged for tours of and a ride on a transit bus as part of White Cane Day. Use of the public bus system in Great Falls, promotes students’ ability and opportunity to participate in the community and proclaim their independence.

A celebration of such wide scope could be a major disruption to normal routines at MSDB, but it is also a great learning opportunity; promoting a work ethic and the value of teamwork. Although the kids worked and worked hard, white cane day could not have occurred without collaboration and teamwork between the kitchen, the maintenance staff, and administration. White Cane Day lets our kids know they not only can be independent, but that they are in fact independent.

What better way to celebrate a day promoting independence than by being independent? As important as that independence is, White Cane Day has another message that is both to and from the kids. They don’t always have to be the takers. They can offer something back to the culture and people at MSDB.

“WHITE CANE DAY LETS OUR KIDS KNOW THEY NOT ONLY CAN BE INDEPENDENT, BUT THAT THEY ARE IN FACT INDEPENDENT.”

Tony tries his hand at the obstacle course.
WEEKEND TO FOCUS ON MUSIC

By Barb Rolf – Outreach Vision Consultant

We are fast at work here at MSDB. September is the month for reuniting with our students and getting ready for another great year. In Outreach, we have several events planned. The first is coming up on November 13-14 with our fall Goalball/Enrichment Weekend. In general, the Weekends are designed to be action-packed and focused on enrichment activities that address the needs of children with visual impairments. They offer an opportunity for our outreach students to come together on campus to examine equipment, materials and VI resources available at our school. In addition, players of all abilities learn, practice and develop their goalball skills.

The upcoming November Weekend will focus on music allowing participants to enrich and discover a part of their own musical creativity and ability. Students will learn about braille music and explore the music code by both reading and writing. Participants will also have a chance to interact and play various musical instruments, as well as, make their own instruments.

Outreach students come from all corners of Montana to participate and the students who attend school on campus are also invited to participate. The Goalball/Enrichment weekend provides a wonderful opportunity for students and staff alike to interact with one another and become better acquainted. Children, parents, and educators are essential participants in this event.

ALUMNI NEWS

Editor’s Note: Please update us and your classmates on what you are doing! Send Alumni News to: EXPRESS 3911 Central Avenue, Great Falls, Montana 59405.

CLASS OF 2007 Donovan, Tearra

After I graduated from MSDB in 2007, I went to Gallaudet University and I’m still here as a junior, third year student. I have not declared my major, but I hope to declare a major in Elementary Education soon. During sophomore year, I joined the Delta Zeta Sorority, I’ve been a sister ever since November 2008 and I am currently the Vice President of Membership. I am hoping to be the next President. I will find that out in December. Being part of Delta Zeta has been a rich experience for me. We do so many things together as a sisterhood: community service, meeting many new people, and many other things. I tried out for the Gallaudet Dance Company this fall and I made it! So I’m now a member of the Gallaudet Dance Company. I’m doing really well here at Gallaudet. I keep busy with classes and assignments, Delta Zeta, and the Gallaudet Dance Company. I will be here for at least another 2 years. After I get my BA in Elementary Education, I would like to also get my MA at Gallaudet. I’m grabbing as many opportunities as I can before I come back home to beautiful Montana, hopefully as a teacher at MSDB. That is my goal for the future.
### 2009—2010 School Calendar

#### August '09
- **17-21**: PIR Orientation
- **24**: First Day of School

#### September '09
- **7**: Labor Day – No School (Cottages Open)
- **18**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **21**: Travel Return School in Session

#### October '09
- **13-14**: Enrichment/Goalball Weekend (VI)
- **18**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **21**: Travel Return School in Session

#### November '09
- **13-14**: Enrichment/Goalball Weekend (VI)
- **24**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **25-29**: Thanksgiving Vacation
- **30**: Travel Return School in Session

#### December '09
- **10**: Gallaudet Day
- **16**: Dress Rehearsal 9:00 AM
- **17**: Christmas Program 1:00 PM
- **18**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **28**: End of 1st Quarter (45 Days)

#### January '10
- **4**: Travel Return School in Session
- **18**: End of 2nd Quarter (45 Days)
- **22**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **25**: Travel Return School in Session
- **??**: Homecoming

#### February '10
- **12**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **15**: Travel Return
- **16**: Classes Resume

#### March '10
- **12**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **15**: Travel Return School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **23**: End of 3rd Quarter (45 Days)
- **26-27**: Enrichment/Goalball Weekend (VI)
- **??-??**: Criterion Reference Test

#### April '10
- **1**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **2**: Spring/Easter Vacation
- **6**: Travel Return
- **7**: Classes Resume
- **14**: Arbor Day and Music Program 1:00 PM
- **24**: Games for the Visually Impaired (April 30-May 1)

#### May '10
- **7**: Travel Home – School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
- **10**: Travel Return School in Session
- **22**: Graduation
- **28**: Last Day of School Awards Assembly 10:30 AM Dismissed at noon
- **End of 4th Quarter (45 Days)**
- **Teacher Check-out**

#### June '10

#### July '10

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**1st Quarter:** October 28, 2009  
**2nd Quarter:** January 18, 2010  
**3rd Quarter:** March 23, 2010  
**4th Quarter:** May 28, 2010  

[www.msdb.mt.gov](http://www.msdb.mt.gov)  
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3911 Central Avenue  
Great Falls, MT 59405-1967  

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Approved Board of Public Education: January 9, 2009  
Updated: August 10, 2009
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING students at MSDB participated and celebrated International Deaf Awareness Week during the last week of September.

As part of their Deaf Studies classes, primary and elementary students had some fun making posters and headbands. Students identified themselves with headbands using cutout manual alphabet letters. The middle school and high school students also came up with wonderful informative posters in recognizing Deaf Awareness Week. Posters included: We learn With Our Eyes Through Sign Language and ASL Is Beautiful.

The purpose of Deaf Awareness Week is usually observed the last week of September, in commemoration of the first World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) conference, which has been held every September since 1951. WFD is an international organization composed of 120 national associations of the deaf which, in collaboration with the United Nations, help in enhancing the lives of deaf and hard of hearing people. Seminars, celebrations and observations held during the week help raise awareness about the culture, heritage and language unique to deaf people of the world.

Mrs. LeMieux’s class sports headbands.