

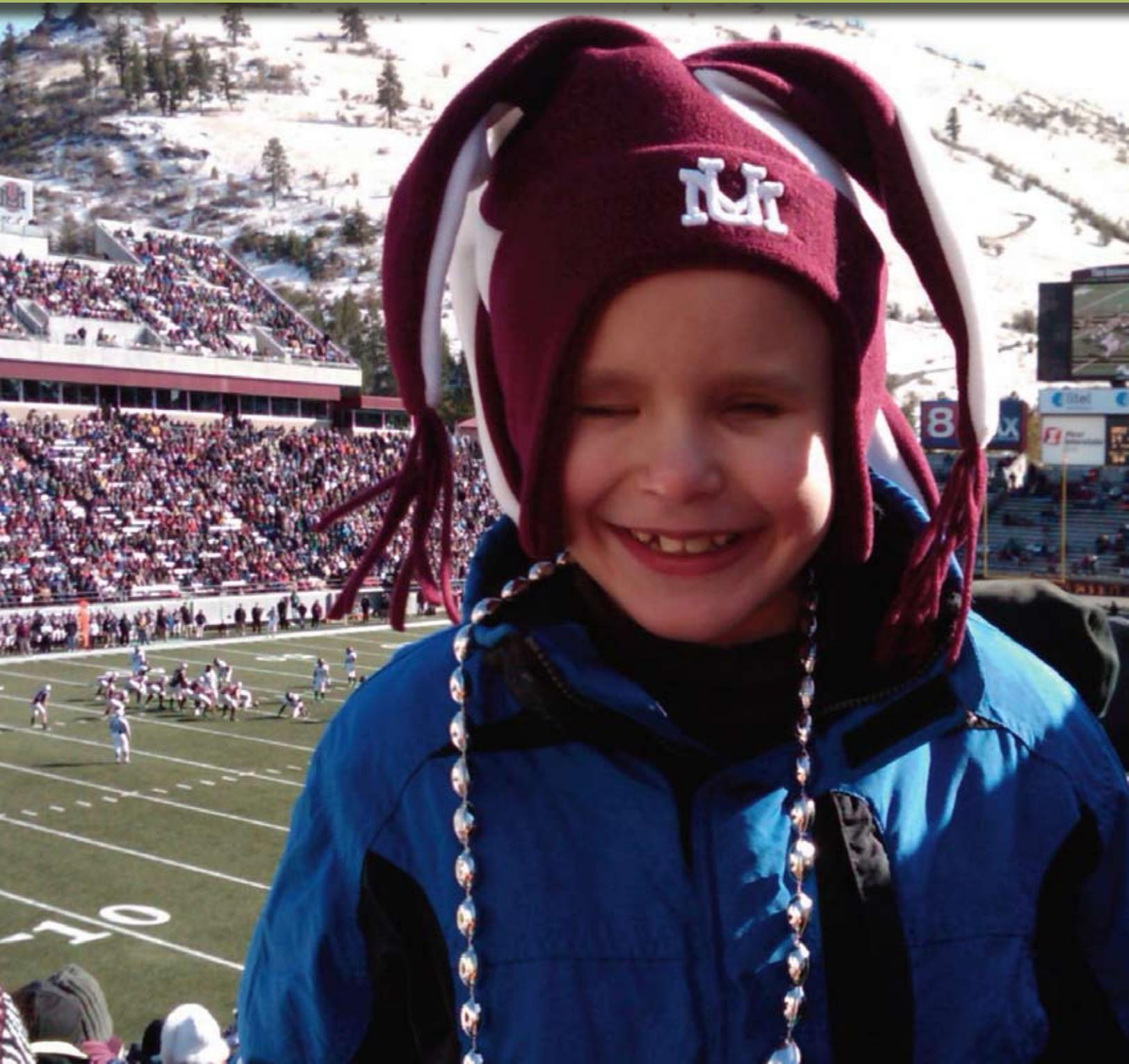
MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND



Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume IIIIV, Issue I, Fall/Winter 2009





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

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

By Diane Moog



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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GRIZ KIDZ—AN OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

By Emily LaSalle, MSDB Outreach Consultant



ABOVE: Griz Kidz show off shirts and tickets before entering Washington-Grizzly Stadium for the University of Montana homecoming game. Left to Right: Aubrey, Thyra, Megan and Nelly
BELOW LEFT: Steen, David and Sean brave bone chilling temperatures. BELOW MIDDLE: Alysha and Deb wait for kick-off. BELOW RIGHT: KK, Brook, Thyra, and Aubrey on the bus to Missoula.

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! ❖



MORE THAN JUST A GAME

By Carol Clayton-Bye, TVI, COMS

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



Anthony and Alyson flank Griz Linebacker #32 Alex Shaw following the 35/23 Homecoming victory.

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.

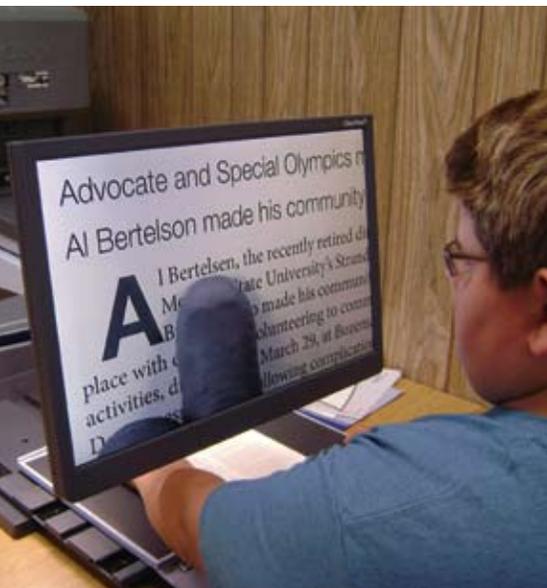
Of the 5W's, the one question which I never heard asked was WHY. It was clearly answered by the interchange between staff and students hours before the tailgate party, kick off, or the cannon announcing touchdowns.

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 UPDATE

By Kim Schwabe, Supervising Teacher HI



Top: Reading a magazine with the FarView Portable CCTV.

Bottom: Working with the ClearView + CCTV.

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.”



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.

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. ■■



MONTANA SCHOOL *for*

Help us give kids the building

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

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

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. ❖

For the Deaf & Blind Foundation

g blocks to independence

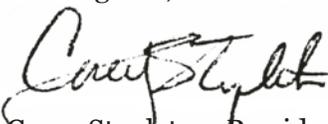
pay bills, manage money, use public transportation, and other skills she'll need to live independently. She takes courses at MSDB that are preparing her for the work force and other aspects of adult life.

“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



Board of Directors

Just 13.3% of the MSDB Foundation’s Budget goes to Administrative costs. When you support the Foundation, you are supporting programs for kids.

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MONTANA SCHOOL *for*

Thanks so much for your support!

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Montana State Grange Family Issues



*the*Deaf & Blind Foundation

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



In-Kind Donations

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Rhea Baylor
Deb Brinka
Leanne Burgess
Ray Castor
Children's Museum of Montana
Consolidated Veterinary Services
First Security Bank
First State Bank
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Great Falls Children's Receiving Home
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Patrick Kindle
Sharon Kindle
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Loaf-N-Jug
Karen Lord
Sheryl Lute
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Quizno's
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That's A Wrap/3 Sisters
TownHouse Inns
Wal-Mart
Len & Brenda Warren
David Wood
Lorrie Wood

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June Meier

Joe Rohner

Ann Moore

Nancy Rohner



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. ❖



Marcus, Great Falls Transit Dispatcher and Erin get ready for a bus ride during White Cane Day Activities.

WHITE CANE DAY

By Tray Cook, Student VI Department

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.

MOBILE FREEDOM

By *Monica Sayler, COMS*

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-aring 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.



Tony tries his hand at the obstacle course.

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

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. ❖

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. ❖



Twenty-two-month-old Madison practices signing and speaking her colors with Family Support Specialist, Karee Logston. MSDB's Outreach team works cooperatively with Family Outreach in serving hearing impaired students of all ages. Karee has been involved in numerous training opportunities offered by the MSDB as well as attending our Family Learning Weekend. Thank you Karee, working with you is a pleasure!

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

17-21 PIR Orientation
 23 Students Return
 24 First Day of School

AUGUST '09						
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SEPTEMBER '09						
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27	28	29	30			

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

14 Travel Home - School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
 15-16 Teacher Convention
 19 Travel Return School in Session
 28 End of 1st Quarter (45 Days)

OCTOBER '09						
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NOVEMBER '09						
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29	30					

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

10 Gallaudet Day
 16 Dress Rehearsal 9:00 AM
 17 Christmas Program 1:00 PM
 Christmas Tea to follow Program
 18 Travel Home - School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
 Christmas Vacation (December 19-January 3)

DECEMBER '09						
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JANUARY '10						
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31						

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

12 Travel Home - School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
 15 Travel Return
 16 Classes Resume

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

1 Travel Home - School in Session Dismissed at 12:30 PM
 2-5 Spring/Easter Vacation
 6 Travel Return
 7 Classes Resume
 14 Arbor Day and Music Program 1:00 PM
 24 Prom
 30 Games for the Visually Impaired (April 30-May 1)

APRIL '10						
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MAY '10						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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

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

www.msdb.mt.gov

1 800 882-MSDB

3911 Central Avenue
 Great Falls, MT 59405-1967

JUNE '10						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

JULY '10						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind
 Administration 406 771-6000
 Education 406 771-6030
 CST/IEP Information 406 771-6060
 Cottage Office 406 771-6120
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Approved Board of Public Education:
 January 9, 2009
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CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DEAF AWARENESS WEEK

By Brenda LeMieux

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 to educate communities about the many issues the deaf population face during everyday life, as well as to honor the history and culture of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

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.

