

# The MSDB Cottage Bulletin

December 2022  
Vol. 2, No. 4

## Message from the Director

By Jim Kelly II

### Season's Greetings!

The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is a very busy and exciting time for the students and staff in the cottages. We had so many different activities, parties and performances happening. The students have done some holiday shopping, Christmas Cookie Decorating party, formal dinner a cottage-wide party with games and food and each cottage wing had a special Christmas party with gift exchange and food. Courtesy of the MSDB Foundation, cottage students and staff went out for dinner, which has been a long standing holiday tradition since 2001!

I am a firm believer that the holidays are for making memories. Thinking back on my Christmas past, it is not the gifts that I remember, but what we did as a family. It is our hope as we maintain the traditional cottage activities that your child will have some fond memories to talk about and share with you!

### Basket Raffle Drawing Results

The basket raffle fundraiser raised almost \$400 for an MSDB family to enjoy a wonderful Christmas!

#### Winners:

Baking—

Kirsten Myers

Cozy—

Leann Goss

Christmas —

Tami Kelly

**Student  
Council**

## MSDB, Shep, and a Christmas Tradition

*By Erin Faulkner*

Four years ago, I experienced my first Christmas Formal Dinner at MSDB. This was the first time I heard the story of Shep, the faithful sheepdog from Fort Benton. Each year before dining, the recorded story of Shep is played. Along with his moving story of waiting years for his owner to arrive by train, we hear about the relationship between his story and the creation of the MSDB Foundation.

Shep died on January 12, 1942 after waiting 5 years for his master to return. Ed Shields, a Great Northern train conductor, took an interest in Shep's story and wrote about him for the local papers. He also created the "Shep fund" which raised money to benefit the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind. The Shep Fund is now the MSDB Foundation and currently has \$3 million.

Amongst their many contributions, the MSDB Foundation helps the Cottage Program fund their many Christmas activities.

Thank you on behalf of our students!!!



## Winter Health Tips

Due to the winter wonderland outside, I want to remind you that frostbite can happen in a matter of minutes. The areas most vulnerable are the face, fingers, and around the batteries of hearing aids. For mild frostbite...the signs will be a tingling sensation, numbness and pain. The skin will be hard, blueish/gray. If you suspect frostbite don't rub the area, don't apply heat, just send them to the Infirmary, or let them warm up slowly.

Because the Infirmary is so totally awesome, we are here to help prevent frostbite before it starts!!! We have extra hats, gloves, coats, snow pants, and some boots.

Stay Warm and Safe!

Tami and the Infirmary Staff



## High School Happenings

*With Erin Faulkner*

One of the main components of the Independent Life Skills Program (ILSP) is learning to cook and plan meals. There are some things that need to be considered when meal planning: what you know how to cook, what you want to cook, when you will cook, what items you already have, what you need to shop for and how much it will cost (budget).

Our students use a meal planning form to help them track 1. what they will cook and when , 2. what do I have, 3. what do I need to buy. Our students have an added step as they are able to acquire some everyday items from the MSDB kitchen manager. A special form is used to request these items. Food purchased from Walmart is paid for by state funds earmarked for the ILSP program.

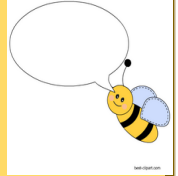
Name/Date							
	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Breakfast							
Lunch			X	X	X	X	X
Dinner							

**Already Have**

**Kitchen List**

**Walmart List**

## STAFF BUZZ



**Last month, we introduced our updated Staff Buzz—a place where families and coworkers could brag about cottage staff to say, “Wow! They are good at their job!”?**

**Cheri Luongo** absolutely goes above and beyond!!! She is also very in tune with my kiddo. Her advise is excellent and she is "spot on" when it comes to antics of my adorable granddaughter. She genuinely cares for the children at MSDB and knows how to coach, teach, love on, listen to, . . . I can go on and on. I don't know where we would be if it weren't for her. (Cheri is a Cottage Counselor)

by Parent of a Cottage Student

I think **Terry Knotts** is going above and beyond in her new position. She is extremely consciousness. The entire cottage not only looks clean, smells clean, but it is clean. (Terry is the Cottage Housekeeper)

by a Cottage Staff

There is one person that every time I see them has a wonderful attitude with a smile on their face. Always willing to help staff or students. **Mo Aguon** in the kitchen is an exceptional person as well as a staff member.

by a Support Staff

I would like to nominate **Bill Andrews** for this recognition. He definitely goes above and beyond with our students and staff. Bill checks in with his students' teachers regularly, asks how he can support students with their homework and students' learning at school, and seeks to make activities fun for the children. He has great enthusiasm that shines through everything that he does. He is certainly appreciated by both students and staff! (Bill is the Lead Resident Advisor in the boys Cottage)

by an Education Staff

**Diane Moog** makes ASL class fun and tailors it to each individual's needs or area of expertise. She is patient and makes everyone comfortable while improving their ASL skills. Diane allows us to grow and to better communicate with our students and each other. Diane ROCKS!

Diane has gone out of her way to accommodate those of us who are learning ASL. She meets at all times, and in different places with groups and individuals. She has to constantly flex classes when other meetings are scheduled as well. I have learned more and learned faster under Diane's instruction than I have in any other class or tutoring session at MSDB. Not only is my ASL progressing, we also have a good time laughing while we learn! Her time and teaching are invaluable to me! (ASL staff instructor)

by 2 Support Staff



## STUDENT HUB

Each year the Cottage staff and students invite the MSDB staff to come tour the Cottages. Usually this event occurs during the Holiday season as it is the most beautiful time of year in the cottages with lights and decorations filling the rooms and halls. This is an opportunity for students to share with their teachers and support staff what life is like in the cottages including mealtimes, homework time, socializing and special activities. This year's event occurred on Wednesday after school.



## Outings/Activities

### Weekly

- EOS (Mon/Wed)
- Goal Ball (Tues)
- Academic Bowl (TBD)
- Student Council (Wed)
- VIP (Wed)
- School Store (Wed/Fri)
- Swimming (Wed/Sun)
- Flying Hooves (Thurs)

### Look what we did!

- Mall shopping (12/2)
- Annual Cookie Decorating (12/3)
- Craft for Formal Dinner (12/4)
- Mini-Beanie Hat Fundraiser (12/7)
- Basket Raffle drawing (12/7)
- Games in Activity Room (12/9)
- Stud. Council Christmas Party (12/10)
- Children's Museum Open House (12/15)
- Obsidian Cottage Party (12/15)
- Student Piano Recital (12/15)

### We were so busy.....

- Geyser/Shoshone Party (12/17)
- Baking cookies for program (12/18)
- Formal Dinner (12/18)
- Cottage Open House (12/21)
- Fuddrucker's Dinner (12/21)

### Coming soon-

- Travel Return (1/2)
- Travel Home (1/13)
- Travel Return (1/16)

## Christmas Cookie Decorating



## Student Council Christmas Party







# Cottage Wing Parties





## ASL Education

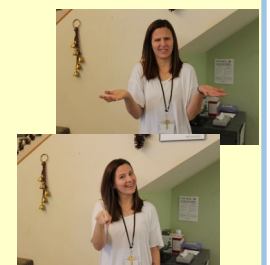
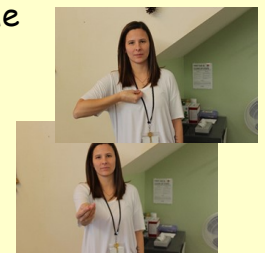
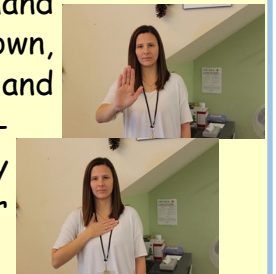
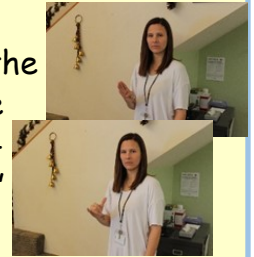
*With Diane Moog*



In this edition of ASL Corner, we will look at how each ASL sign can be broken down into five separate features called parameters. For a sign to be correct, each of these five parameters must be used correctly.

Now let's look at each parameter.

1. **Handshape:** This refers to the hand configuration which is used in the beginning of any production of a word in ASL. These handshapes were discussed in the previous article. Following is an example of two different handshapes. The first sign is BLUE. This sign uses the "b" handshape. The second sign is YELLOW and it uses the "y" handshape.
2. **Palm Orientation:** This parameter refers to the direction in which the hand is turned to produce a sign. This direction may include palm up, palm down, palm facing right, palm facing left, palm outward or away from you and palm inward or toward you. Following are two examples of palm orientation. The first is the sign for YOUR/ which has a palm out or away from you. The second sign is MY/MINE which has palm inward or toward you.
3. **Location:** This refers to the bodily location where signs are produced. The sign space used for sign production is approximately four inches above the head, elbow room as with hands on your waist, and about four inches below the belly button or belt buckle. Another way to think about this is to envision yourself in a frame. Following are examples of location. The first sign is THINK located on the forehead. The second sign is CANDY located on the cheek.
4. **Movement:** This parameter refers to the changing of the location of the hands during sign production. This can mean a sign is moving away from your or toward you to indicate a directional verb such I GIVE YOU and YOU GIVE ME. Movement also refers to the frequency of the action which affects meaning.
5. **Nonmanual Markers:** These are referred to as NMM or NMS and are signals or gestures done without the use of the hands and mostly from shoulders, head and face to relay a message. Specific NMM alter the meaning of a sign. Use of facial expressions fall under this category. Head nods, head shakes, eyebrow movement up and down, nose movement, eyes and lips carry meaning that can be attached to a sign. The first sign is WHY with eyebrows down. The WH questions have eyebrows down. The second sign is YES. This demonstrates eyebrows up.



Thank you to Jennifer St. Pierre for being the sign model for this article.

## LEAP REPORT

Our year in LEAP seems to be flying by rather quickly! Here at LEAP, we have been working on independent living, employment, and developing hobbies. Four of our six participants either have employer-paid jobs or work experiences. One of our participants will start a job shadow in the Benefis Hospital system after we return from break. Once she finds a good fit, she will transition to a work experience! We are all very excited by the prospect!

Finding job shadows and work experiences for our participants can be challenging. Often, we reach out to a business and wait for a response. Sometimes that response is quick - other times, it is a waiting game. Finding a balance between being pushy and persistent can be challenging. In the meantime, we are working hard on other skills needed for adulthood. Those skills may include cleaning, cooking, shopping, budgeting, arranging transportation, interpersonal communication, resume development, etc.

Two participants have taken classes or lessons to further their skills. One participant took a woodcarving class, and he enjoyed it so much he will be taking another in the spring. One of our female participants has been taking piano lessons and recently had a recital - we all attended to show our support.

LEAP has worked hard to arrange various trainings and tours around Great Falls. We have had the Great Falls Fire Department come and talk to us about fire safety and demonstrate how to use a fire extinguisher. Each participant had the opportunity to use the fire extinguisher, and they LOVED it! We have toured the Pacific Steel and Recycling plant, the Electric City Conservatory, and Great Falls Job Services. Several people have come to our program to present on various topics. Trudy Hill gave a presentation on being a guidance counselor, Shirley Wermeling presented on "Understanding Your Paycheck", Paige Thomas on "Understanding Your Mental Health", Sheri Devlin on SSI, and Sue Davis for Self Employment (A Self-Published Author). We have also worked on food, clothing, and health management. Work-Life balance is essential; therefore, some of our training days have included fun activities such as: attending CMR's production of Beauty and the Beast, a walk where we ended up getting caught in the rain and had to wait it out in a gazebo, a tour of the Paris Gibson Art Museum, White Cane Day, and Gibson Park.

As this year wraps up, we would like to thank all who have helped our program in one way or another. We have several staff members subbing in our program, and we are so thankful to all of them (you know who you are!). Thank you to our work experience partners - The Great Falls Public Library and Wee Disciples Daycare. Thank you to Benefis for being willing to partner with our program. Thank you to every business that has allowed us to tour their facilities and the staff members who took the time to give us a tour. Thank you to all of the outstanding presenters. Thank you, parents, for trusting us with your children!

Happy holiday and best wishes in the new year!

Carrie and Mackenzie



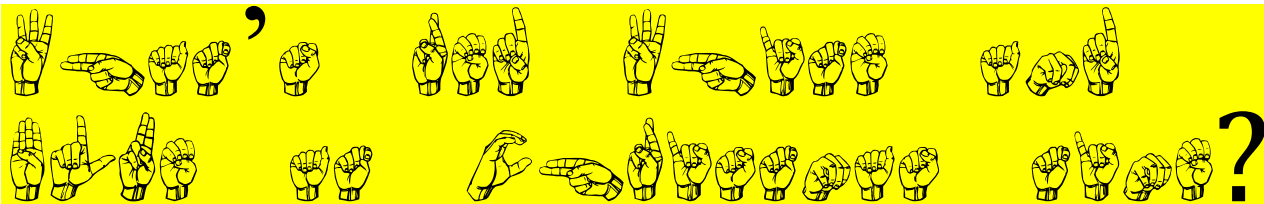
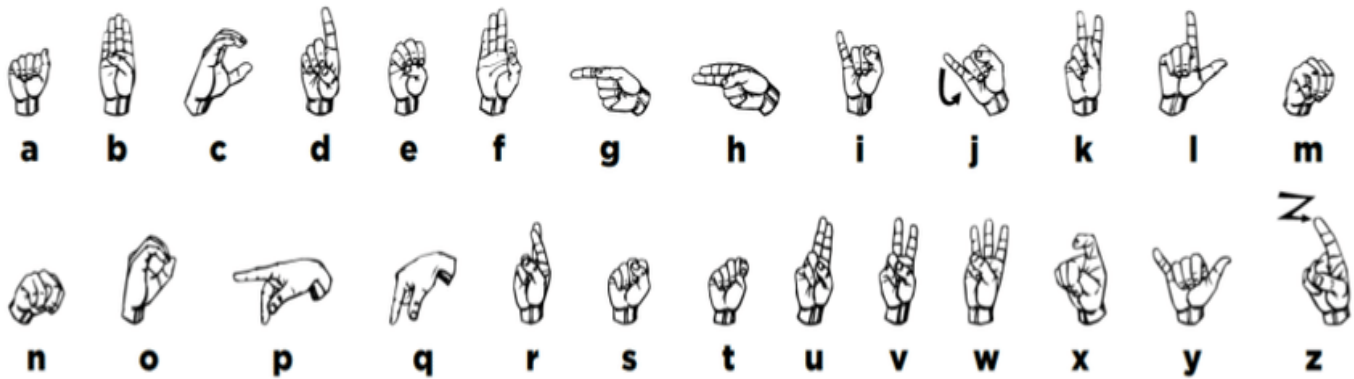
## PUZZLE PAGE

Decode the phrases using ASL Fingerspelling and Braille!

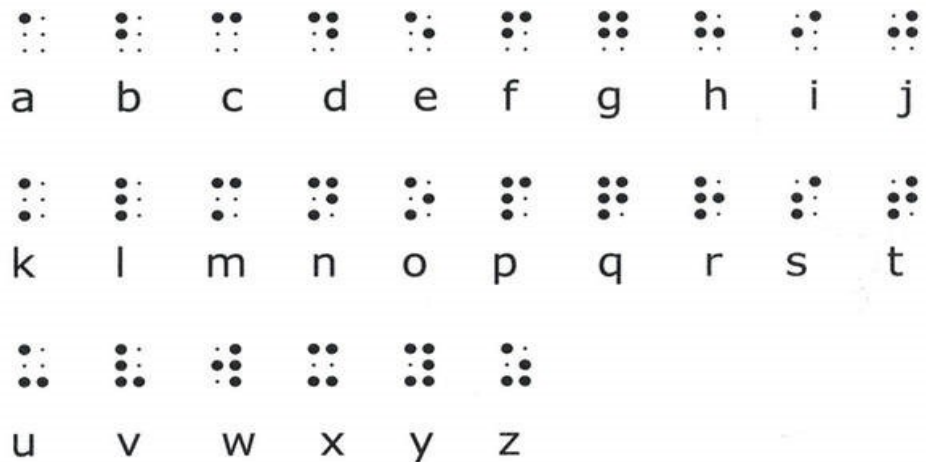
## PUZZLE PAGE

Decode the phrases using ASL Fingerspelling and Braille!

**Fingerspelling** is the process of spelling out words by using hand shapes that correspond to the letters of the word. A set of hand shapes used to spell words is known as a "manual alphabet."



**Braille** is a system that enables blind and visually impaired people to read and write through touch. It was devised by Louis Braille in 1821 and consists of raised dots arranged in "cells." A cell is made up of six dots that fit under the fingertips, arranged in two columns of three dots each.



## November 2022 Puzzler Answers:

Fingerspelling: Who isn't hungry at Thanksgiving dinner? Braille: The turkey. He's already stuffed.