

# The MSDB Cottage Bulletin

November 2022  
Vol. 2, No. 3

## Message from the Director

By Jim Kelly II

As you read through this newsletter I hope this is a small peak at the great stuff we have happening in our Student Life program. For our formal Thanksgiving dinner, we have a tradition of "Thankful Leaves". For the past week students and staff write what they are thankful for and those leaves are then placed on the walls in our dining room. Sunday night, before the dinner, I spent some time reading all of the things written on the leaves and clearly we are blessed to have family, friends, teachers, MSDB, food, pets, co-workers, faith, jobs, freedom . . .the list is endless!

Happy Thanksgiving



## Student Council Fundraisers

Student Council currently has 2 fundraisers, one to raise money to adopt a family for Christmas and one to benefit Student Council.

This is the 2nd year that Student Council is raising money to provide an MSDB family with a Christmas dinner and gifts for the children. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The drawing will be held on December 7, 2022. You may designate which baskets you want your individual tickets assigned to. The baskets are Baking, Christmas and Cozy!



The Mini Beanie Hat fundraiser  
Is outline on the next page.



## Finding Fun in Learning

*With Cheri Luongo*

Well it's not hard to find the fun in our Mustang Swimming pool! The cottage students have been (rather impatiently) waiting for our pool to be ready. Now that it is, they are enjoying every moment.

Wednesday evenings after dinner and Sunday afternoons after craft time, the excitement begins. The students put on their swimsuits, dress in warm layers over the top, find their hats, goggles, towels, life jackets, and ear coverings and walk the short distance over to our mustang pool. This walk has been rather magical itself as it's getting dark earlier. The new snow sparkles on the lighted up sidewalk and we often spot the deer that have been hanging out on campus in the evening. This walk provides opportunities to practice safely walking in the dark and different weather conditions; being aware of the environment. This is often made more difficult since everyone is excited to get to the pool.

Once at the pool the safety rules are reviewed and the giggles begin. The students jump and dive from the deep end, have races with each other, play games and dive deep. Nobody seems to notice there is so much communication, exercise, and life long skills being developed. It just feels like fun!



## STUDENT COUNCIL FUNDRAISER MINI BEANIE CHRISTMAS HATS

The students and staff have been working together to make mini beanie hat Christmas ornaments. We will be selling them for a fundraiser for the cottage student council. The cost will be \$3 each and we will be in the IMC on Wednesday December 7 at 2:00. Come and check them out. We have Christmas colors, school colors and a variety of fun colors and sizes.



## High School Happenings

*With Erin Faulkner*

Many of the students in the Independent Life Skills Program (ILSP) share the same goal...learn how to independently ride public transportation. Students have already attended a workshop on how to read the map of routes and the schedule for the Great Falls Transit and will soon get experience riding the bus. They will need to pay the fee, request a transfer ticket and either communicate their destination and/or be watching to pull the cord at their stop. This skill is vital for some of our students to become independent in shopping, leisure activities and employment.

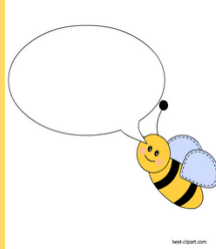


## STAFF BUZZ

**This column is changing gears! Last year, Staff Buzz was focused on allowing staff to introduce themselves. This year, we want our staff to talk about their colleagues. What are they doing that makes you say, "Wow! They are good at their job!"?**

**To kick it off, we want to recognize our newest staff member, Autumn Harvey, an LPN in the Health Services Department. Autumn has hit the ground running! She makes an effort to get to know each of our students by visiting with them in their cottages and the activity room. By doing so she has built a trusting relationship with the students that she cares for.**

**Thank you, Autumn!**



## STUDENT HUB

Though each of the three cottages has different routines, they each have some kind of routine or special time for homework and educational activities. This has traditionally been called Cottage Homework Connection. Oftentimes, this is planned for an hour sometime after dinner each weeknight. The teachers of the younger students send activities to the cottage staff that they can work on to develop math and reading skills. Older students work on homework, read books, study for Academic Bowl or Driver's Ed, or practice or develop leisure skills, such as art, crafts or puzzles.

## Winter Health Tips

Hello everyone!

As the weather gets colder, we thought we would share a few tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for staying safe and healthy this winter.

- ⇒ Wash your hands! Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap, if you do not have access to soap and water, alcohol based hand sanitizer is a good alternative.
- ⇒ Distance yourself from those who are sick.
- ⇒ Stay home while you are sick.
- ⇒ Move away from others before coughing or sneezing.
- ⇒ Sneeze or cough into a tissue and then throw the tissue away (and then wash your hands).

Happy Holidays!

Autumn, LPN



## CAT/GRIZ Game

One of the annual traditions in the cottage is to celebrate Montana's oldest rivalry... the Cats vs the Griz. Last year, the Griz were triumphant. This year, the Cats took home the trophy! Regardless of the result of the game, the students and staff had a great time eating good food (chicken wings, bbq smokies, nachos, chips and cookies), playing games, and winning prizes.





## 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!

- Halloween Events (10/28)
- Drug-Free Fence Project (10/29)
- Fright Fest (10/29)
- Halloween Party (10/30)
- Trunk or Treating (10/31)
- Class of 2023 Bingo Night (11/4)
- CAT/GRIZ Game Party (11/19)
- Thanksgiving Formal Dinner (11/20)

### Coming Soon-

- Cookie Decorating (12/3)
- Cottage Christmas Party (12/10)
- EOS Performance (12/11)
- Obsidian Christmas Party (12/16)
- Geyser/Shoshone party (12/17)
- Christmas Formal Dinner (12/18)
- Travel Home (12/22)
- Travel Return (1/2)

## Halloween by Cheri Luongo

This is Halloween, this is Halloween, Halloween, Halloween, Halloween. We work hard to plan travel home weekends on the major holidays, however Halloween is one where the kids stay in the cottage. Together with friends, the kids made some great memories. On Friday October 28th, the younger students went to the Great Falls Children's Museum for games and party fun while the older students went to Scream at Centene. On Saturday the 29th, all of the students went to the Fright Fest hosted by Alliance for Youth. They then returned to the cottage activity room to watch a Halloween movie. On the 30th, the cottage and several of the student council members got together for the all cottage Halloween party. The students toured each of the cottage wings in their costumes, playing games and winning candy and prizes. Our amazing kitchen staff, Mo and Bobbi, created fun Halloween treats for all to enjoy. One of the highlights of the evening was doing the Thriller dance along with ASL interpreters on the big screen TV. All of this before we ever got to October 31st. Halloween itself was celebrated by a costume parade at school followed by trunk or treating by some of the students at a local church. Although nothing beats holidays at home, the kids all seemed to enjoy their Halloween weekend fun with friends.



## ASL Education

*With Diane Moog*



Last year, I introduced myself. I am Diane Moog and I work with staff on the development of their ASL skills. Over the course of this year, we will look at various topics related to ASL. The first information I would like to cover relates to how many letters do we have in various languages. Naturally we know that the English language has 26 letters. We use those letters to spell words. Spanish has 27 letters due to the Ñ. Now let's think about China. The Chinese do not have letters. They use a system of characters, and this system has over 6,000 characters! ASL is like the Chinese system. ASL uses handshapes rather than letters. There are variations of the letters so for example, the A handshape can take on variations where the thumb position changes slightly. The C handshape can be changed to a claw handshape or a bent 3. Altogether ASL has approximately 90 different handshapes.

In ASL, we use 5 basic parameters to describe how a sign behaves within the signer's signing space. These parameters include handshape, palm orientation, location, movement and expression/palm orientation. . We find that precision is extremely important as it affects meaning and comprehension. The program we use at MSDB True+Way ASL has included a 6th parameter. This parameter is referred to as proximation. This relates to the development of sign in young children. Their ability to produce a sign in an accurate manner depends on their physical development starting at the shoulder, moving to the elbow, wrist and on down to the fingertips. As these muscular systems develop the sign begins to look more like the sign we use. These parameters also help us differentiate between similar looking signs. Without these parameters, we would have no sign. In future ASL corners we will look at these parameters.

## ACCESSIBILITY IN THE COTTAGES

With a mixture of deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired and blind students and staff in the cottages, accessing information, traveling around the cottages, campus, and community and engaging in recreational and leisure activities is a part of any activity planning.

One of the cottages newest acquisitions, thanks to funds through APH, is a set of three electronic dice. The cottage has different kinds of dice, such as large and braille, but these dice have proven to be a new favorite.

One student had this to say about these new dice. "I like the electronic dice because it talks to you. It lights up to show you what the numbers are. If you miss the speech, it can repeat. It's a lot easier to use than the braille dice because it doesn't scatter all over the table. It just says in one place. I love it so much. I wish I had one at home!"

We have used these dice for various games for one-on-one games like Shut the Box (at left) and the Pop It Game, as well as, large group games like Yahtzee and Bunco (at right).



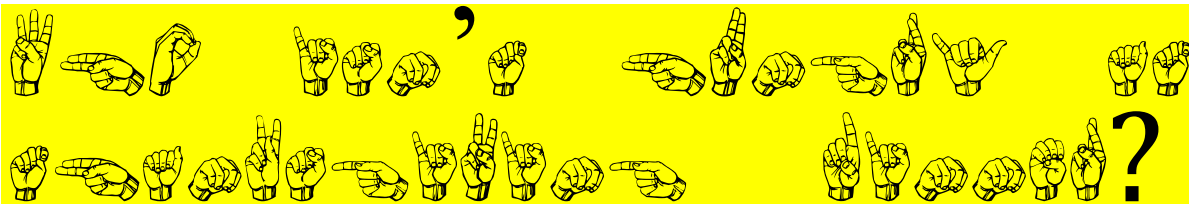
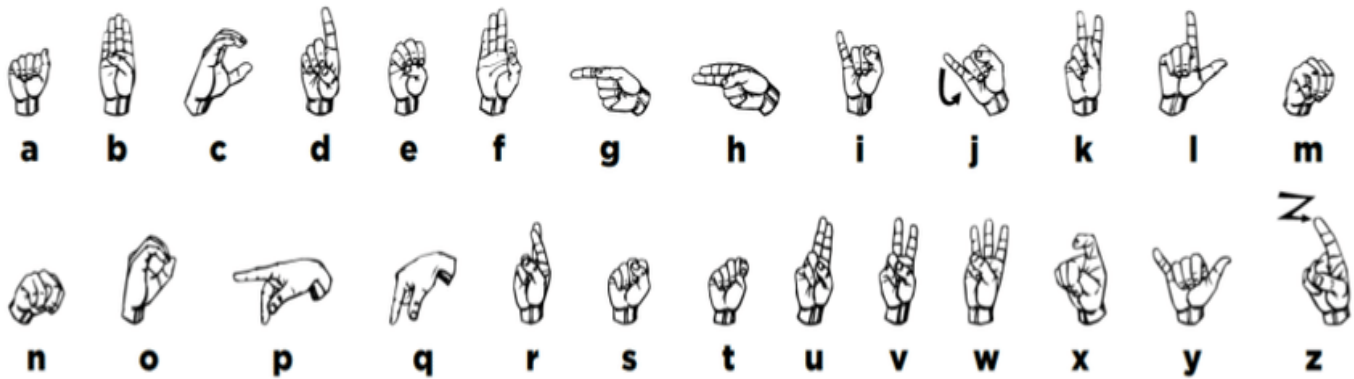
## PUZZLE PAGE

Decode the phrases using ASL Fingerspelling and Braille!

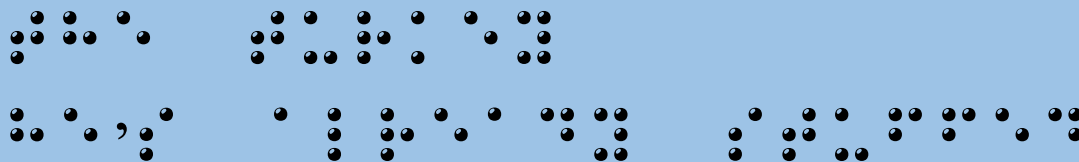
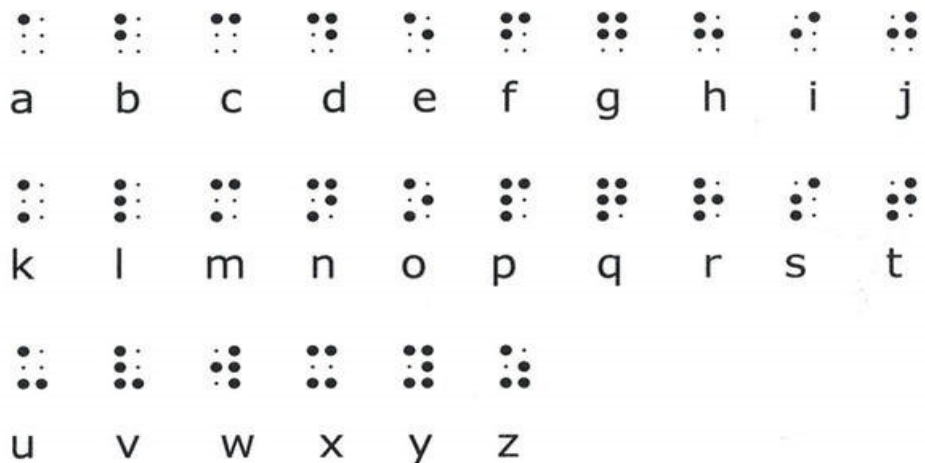
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**Fingerspelling** is the process of spelling out words by using hand shapes that correspond to the letters of the word. A set of hand shapes used to spell words is know as a "manual alphabet."



**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.



Email puzzle results to [efaulkner@msdb.k12.mt.us](mailto:efaulkner@msdb.k12.mt.us) by 12/2 for a chance to win a \$1 coupon to the School Store.

## October 2022 Puzzler Answers:

Fingerspelling: How do you make a skeleton laugh? Braille: Tickle his funny bone.