

The MSDB Cottage Bulletin

January, 2023
Vol. 2, No. 5

Message from the Director

By Jim Kelly II

Another travel weekend is upon us. After all of the festivities during the month of December things have quieted down a bit. The first semester ended just a few days ago. It is hard to believe we are half way through the school year! I hope you have an enjoyable weekend with your child.

FUN WITH LEARNING

by Cheri Luongo

They say variety is the spice of life. So here in the cottage we live pretty spicy! We have students pursuing music lessons, art interests, competitive sports, performing arts and multiple clubs. This month, we have added two more clubs to our mix!

The swim lesson club focuses on water safety, swimming techniques, and having fun in the water. We have 18 students signed up so far and have them separated into 6 small groups. This allows for individualized attention and skill development at the students own pace. This first week has consisted of getting to know the students in the water environment and completing an initial skills assessment. We are really looking forward to seeing the kids gain confidence in the water. (Coaches Cheri Luongo and Morgan Makar)

We have also started up an MSDB 4-H club based out of the cottages. We will be meeting on Tuesday evenings. The students have chosen individual projects that they want to learn about. This will provide for additional leadership opportunities, skill building, community partnerships, and most of all fun! Look for more information to be coming out regarding both of these new clubs in the coming months!
(Leader Cheri Luongo)



High School Happenings

With Erin Faulkner

The School Store offers opportunities for high school students to gain experience in a variety of job related skills. Through hands-on learning, training and working as well as workshops, students are learning valuable skills they will need in future employment.

All middle school and high school students have opportunities to work in the School Store when it is open by either being a cashier or a helper/stocker. Students practice “soft skills” such as customer service, social skills, responsibility, time management and focus. They also learn “hard skills” such as using a cash register, counting change and stocking items that are running low.

The School Store currently has 5 paid positions that give high school students even more experience. In addition to working, the students have also recently attended a workshop on how to apply for a job and interviewing skills. Five out of 8 eligible students applied. Interviews were conducted and job offer letters were given to the students. Next week, students will attend a New Hire Orientation where they will learn about time sheets, being evaluated and expectations. Orientation is a new activity for this quarter! For the first time, student employees will also be learning about “pink slips” and a point system. Points are earned for arriving late to work, missing work (no call/no show), late time sheets, poor evaluations and disrespecting their employer.

Current School Store jobs are: Bookkeeper, Inventory Clerk, Pop Stocker, Delivery Person, and Janitor/ Stocker.

Funding for school store employment is provided by Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These are activities that provide an early start at job exploration for students with disabilities ages 14-21 to assist with transitioning from school to postsecondary education or employment. Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) works with schools and other organizations across the state to deliver Pre-ETS services. Pre-ETS services focus on: Job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

High School Happenings (Part 2)

With Erin Faulkner

Last week, 4 high school students reviewed how to read the map and route schedules for the Great Falls Transit city bus system. Using the schedule, they planned a route from MSDB to the west-side Walmart. This requires transferring from one bus to another. Students were how to pay, ask for a transfer ticket, transfer buses downtown and pul the cord for their stop.



The next day, the students, along with 2 staff, followed that route. Students were given index cards with “transfer ticket” on one side and “Walmart” and “MSDB” on the other in order to communicate with the driver. They also got to shop for a half hour! The students thoroughly enjoyed the activity and learning how to apply what they had learned.



ASL EDUCATION

With Diane Moog

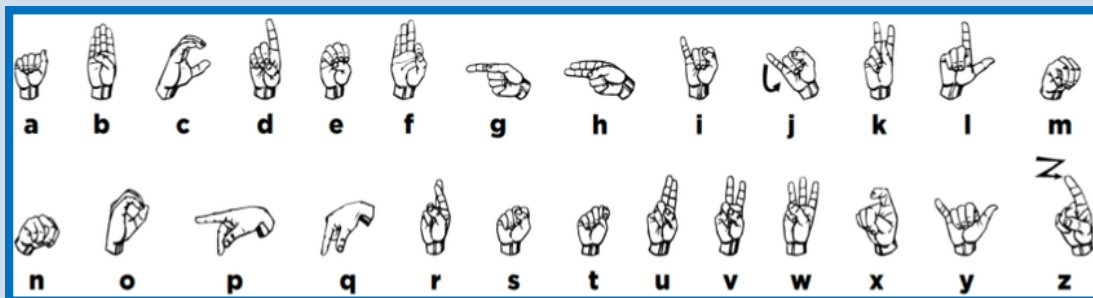
Happy New Year! I hope the year ahead is good for you. As we start the new year, we are going to look at fingerspelling. What is it and what do I need to know about it?

Fingerspelling is the process we use to spell out words by using handshapes that correspond to the letters of the English alphabet. As ASL users, we would use the American Fingerspelled Alphabet that is also referred to as The Manual Alphabet. This alphabet is used to spell out proper nouns, names and certain signs. The American Fingerspelled Alphabet consists of 26 letters that correspond to the English alphabet. The manual alphabet consists of only 22 handshapes that when held in certain positions and/or are produced with certain movements represent the 26 letters of the American alphabet. The letters that share the same handshapes are H/U, G/Q, I/J and K/P.

Where did fingerspelling originate? The handshapes of the manual alphabet were originally taken from a book of prayers written by a Franciscan monk Melchor Yerba. A prayer was associated with each letter of the alphabet. When a monk was too ill to recite a prayer, he could indicate the prayer by making a corresponding handshape. From this practice, the use of handshapes to form words and messages. This allowed the monks to communicate without violating their vows of silence. This practice of using the handshapes was borrowed for using in education deaf students at the National Institute for Deaf-Mutes in Paris. Laurent Clerc was a student there and a future instructor. He and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet established the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb persons in Hartford, Connecticut. Fingerspelling was in integral component there.

When we use fingerspelling, we need to follow specific rules:

1. Fingerspelling has a big role in ASL communication and cannot be neglected
2. Do not omit fingerspelling by omitting the word or inventing a sign
3. Try to catch the first and last letter of the word. Complete the word by using context
4. Relax! When you are learning fingerspelling, you will make mistakes and it is ok and part of the learning process
5. The best way to improve your skills.... Practice, practice, practice



When do I use fingerspelling? In general use fingerspelling for:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. First and last names | 2. Proper nouns (person, place, and thing) |
| 3. Titles of movies, magazines, and books | 4. Brand names |
| 5. Clarification | 6. Specific concepts |
| 7. Loan signs (special fingerspelled words with unique patterns of movement) | |
| 8. Abbreviations | 9. Acronyms |
| 10. Signs not yet established | 11. Technological terms |
| 12. Profession-bound terminology | 13. Lexicalized signs |

****Article continued next page**

ASL EDUCATION (continued)

As we learn fingerspelling, we are learning how to produce or form the letters which is referred to as Expressive fingerspelling. As you are forming the letters/words remember to relax. Your hands and fingers should be loose. Don't squeeze your fingers or tighten your hands. Your signs should be produced slightly to the side of the body in your signing space. The hand should be next to the cheek and slightly above the shoulder. Your palm should face out. Keep a constant rhythm and avoid bouncing your hand. At the end of a word, hold your sign for one fourth of a beat. Don't look at your hand while you fingerspell. Do not worry about your speed. Clarity and developing a smooth, consistent rhythm is more important. Lastly, it is critical to practice with someone to gain experience and confidence.

We are learning how to read and understand the formation of the letters or words, we are using our **Receptive** fingerspelling skills. As you are attempting to read fingerspelling, remember to relax. It is going to take time to master this skill. Focus on the whole word and not letter by letter. Fingerspelled words are used in context of a conversation. Look for the context. Practice with someone that you can gain experience. Remember to not mouth or speak the words out loud.

Here are some tips to help you become more effective at reading and understanding fingerspelling. These tips are known as the Three C's of fingerspelling. The first is **Context**: this is the topic of the conversation or category being discussed. These can be vehicles, names, cities, states. The next is **Configuration**: This is the shape of the word or how the letters look. Up words use B, U, R, V, D, F. Moving letters are Z, J. Down letters are P, Q. Sideway letters are G, H. Double letters are MM, OO and TT. The last is **Closure**: this is filling in the gaps and using the conversational clues and knowledge you already have to make educated guesses. Use the letters you recognize, consider the topic and make a guess.

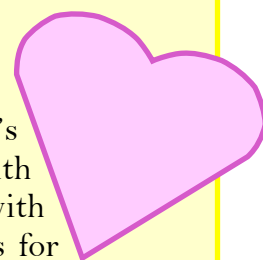
Many of you may have seen this short passage in social media. It is a great example of the three C's

Accodrign to an elngsih univiestitry sutdy the order of letetrs in a owrd desen't mttar, the only thing thta's iopmrantt is that the frsit and last ltteer of every word is in the crcreot ptoision. The rset ca be jbueld and one is still able to raed it wiohtut dclftfuiiy.



Coming Soon!

For the past two years, Student Council has sold Valentine's Cards as a fundraising activity. Last year, the cards were beautifully made with 5 different styles available. Upon return from travel, students will be working with staff to pick the new designs and start taking orders. Be watching your emails for more information!



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!”?

I would just like to say a few things about Christine. I really enjoy working with her and you can see that she enjoys being here. She is willing to do whatever she is asked to do. She works extra hours and is willing to come on her day off to fill in when someone is sick or needs time off. She knows the job and pays attention to what needs to be done. She cares for these kids and works well with all ages both DHH and VI and the kids all love her. (Christine Lay is a Residential Advisor in both girls' cottages)

-by a Cottage Staff

Missie Hill always arrives early, energetic with bells on.. She is always willing to support anyone she can; all one has to do is ask. One can see how much she cares for the school, students, and staff just by her attitude daily. She gives 100%, and has gone way beyond in more than a few recent occasions. Cheers to Missie! (Missie is the science teacher and Special Education Coordinator)

-by a School Support Staff

Outings/Activities

Weekly

- EOS (Mon/Wed)
- Swim Club (Mon/Tues)
- Goal Ball (Tues)
- Academic Bowl (Tues)
- 4-H (Tues)
- Student Council (Wed)
- VIP (Wed)
- School Store (Wed/Fri)
- Swimming (Wed/Sun)

Look what we did!

- Workshop: Bus Review (1/5)
- Workshop: Bus Ride (1/6)
- Workshop: Application/Interview (1/7)
- Bunco (1/7)
- Movie night (1/7)
- Craft (1/8)
- 1st 4H Meeting (1/10)

Volleyball for middle school (3 students)
Private piano lessons (1 student)

Coming Soon-

- Workshop: Job Soft Skills (1/17)
- New Hire Orientation (1/17)
- Workshop: Student Accts (1/19)
- Super Bowl Party (2/12)
- Travel Home (2/17)
- Travel Return (2/20)

From Student To Employee

Dakota Randles graduated from MSDB in 2022. While he was a student, Dakota had several work study opportunities in the food services department. Dakota is currently a participant in LEAP (Learning, Employment, Academic Program) at MSDB. This winter, Dakota became one of the newest staff members at MSDB. He is now the prep cook! Dakota said that he wanted to work here because he has experience working in the kitchen, he is familiar with the campus, and his employment status offers him benefits. Welcome, Dakota!!!

Dakota helped with the Christmas Formal Dinner where he made this beautiful fruit tree! Yum!



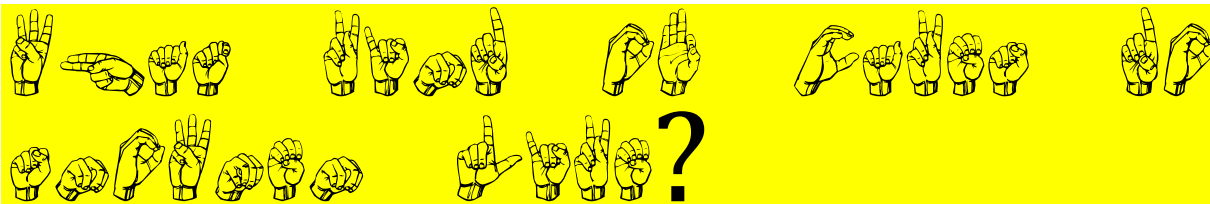
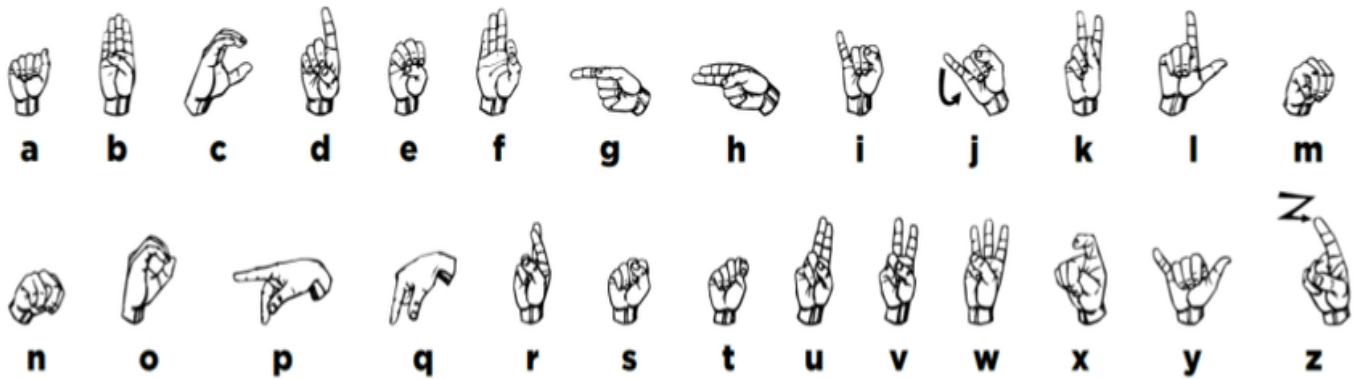
PUZZLE PAGE

Decode the phrases using ASL Fingerspelling and Braille!

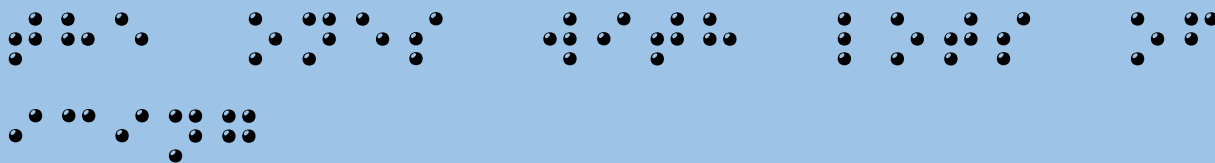
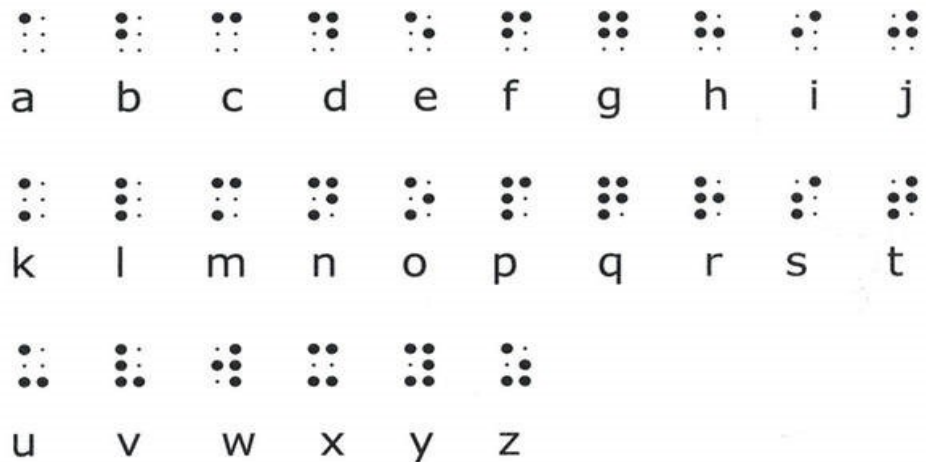
PUZZLE PAGE

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 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.



December 2022 Puzzler Answers:

Fingerspelling: What's red, white and blue at Christmas? Braille: The turkey. A sad candy cane.