



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & THE BLIND Express

lifting students beyond expectations

Volume XXXVI Issue 2, Spring 2023

LSL Comes to MSDB



**A Roadmap to Listening
and Talking**

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**Meet the New MSDB
Foundation Board President**

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From Our Superintendent



When I was blessed to be the Interim Superintendent weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic started, I was optimistic on how to begin implementing effective instructional practices here at MSDB. Then the pandemic did hit and the focus became more about survival of the fittest. I will confess, it has been a blur since that time. However, taking a step back the past couple of weeks and looking at what has been accomplished has provided me with a sense of gratitude for the pandemic.

I am thankful to have the administration, educational staff, outreach staff, and residential staff. Without all of their efforts, we may not have made it this far. Our nursing staff worked many extra hours as some staff left for higher paying jobs. The nurses did an outstanding job of making sure that our students received the level of service they deserve, in addition to implementing testing here on campus to help control the virus. Our paraprofessional team took on countless roles to make sure

our students were learning and safe. Our education and outreach staff found ways to meet the needs of every kid on their caseload. Whether they taught a class both virtually and in brick-and-mortar, our students received the very best instruction possible. Residential staff made sure that the students had their physiological needs met. Looking back, what a great team effort by MSDB staff.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the money provided to MSDB during that time was very impactful. With the help of staff, students, and other stakeholders we have utilized the money to begin implementing successful strategies. We have received GEER funding from the Governor to purchase technology equipment that allowed us to do remote learning. We are hopeful to receive more GEER funding in the future to fix the airflow systems on two HVAC systems. We have received ELC money to help pay for medical supplies, PPE, and to pay for all the overtime our nursing staff has worked due to the pandemic. We have received ARPA money to update our bandwidth at the school in order to conduct future online courses. Lastly, we have received ESSER money that has allowed us to develop an outreach database, implement MTSS system, develop a SEL program, provide staff with stipends, and to provide staff with a sick leave bank to use as a result of COVID. In total, this funding was around \$1.4 million.

So again, I am grateful for this pandemic. It helped create a stronger staff that serves students around the state. It jump started MSDB into developing needed whole child supports. It further provided funding that will provide appropriate bandwidth and technology for MSDB to broaden its services.

If you would like to see MSDB consider any other projects with funding that may come available, please email those suggestions to me at pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us. Many of the projects have been initiated by you, the stakeholders. 🍌

In Mustang Spirit, Paul Furthmyre
Superintendent
pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

FAMILY LEARNING WEEKEND

FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

SAFE THE DATES!

06.02.23-06.04.23

JOIN US ON THE MSDB
CAMPUS IN GREAT FALLS
JUNE 2-4, 2023 FOR OUR 27TH
ANNUAL FAMILY LEARNING
WEEKEND.

FLW WEEKEND IS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND
SHARE WITH FAMILIES FROM
ACROSS THE STATE.
ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION
WILL BE COMING SOON ON OUR
WEBSITE. [MSDBMUSTANGS.ORG](https://msdbmustangs.org)

DEAF ENRICHMENT WEEKEND
APRIL 14-15, 2023

DEAF SUMMER CAMP
JUNE 11-17, 2023
AGES 9-14 (7&8 YEAR OLDS ON
A CASE BY CASE BASIS)

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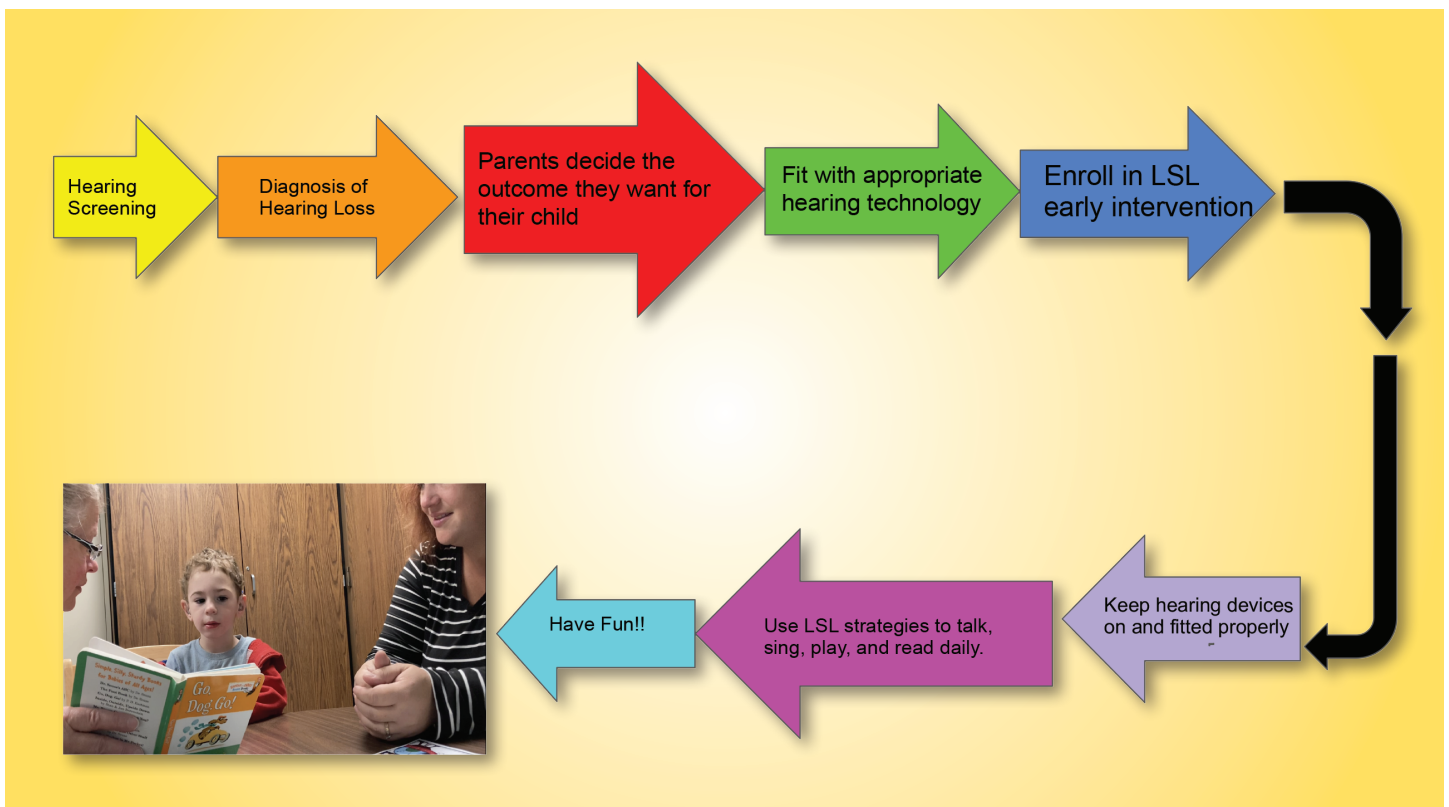
LSL: A Road Map to Listening and Talking

By Sherri Widhalm - MS, CCC-SLP, LSLs AVEd

LSL stands for Listening and Spoken Language. LSL consists of a set of principles and strategies that develop the brain, allowing a child with hearing loss to learn to listen and talk. Montana now has a certified Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS) at the Montana School for Deaf and Blind in Great Falls. While LSL is new to Montana, it is not new to other states nor is it new to schools for the deaf. It is not a new idea or philosophy, but first began in the late 1800s. LSL is currently being provided at other schools for the deaf and is highly sought after by parents/caregivers who want their child to listen, speak, and attend mainstream classrooms with typical hearing peers. A LSLS is a professional who has met stringent eligibility requirements in order to receive board certification over a 3 to 5 year time period. The following requirements for certification must be met: 100 hours of continuing education, 1000 hours of specific therapy focusing on development of the auditory cortex of the brain, 10 hours of observations with required mentorship, 20 videos analyzed by a mentor, and a 4-hour national exam. Certified LSL Specialists are committed to providing quality specialized services to families, as well as educators, in order to develop speech, language, and auditory abilities in a child who

is deaf or hard of hearing. Auditory verbal therapy promotes early diagnosis, audiologic technology that is well-maintained and worn, as well as one-on-one therapy. Through guidance, coaching, and demonstration, parents and educators become the primary facilitators of a child's spoken language development. Research shows that it is the gold standard for a child to learn to listen, process auditory information, and speak.

Let's talk about listening and the brain. As humans, we begin to listen at 20 weeks gestation (before birth). Our brains are "pre-wired" to learn spoken language through listening. While you may think we hear with our ears, hearing is really about the brain. The brain has a critical period of development for auditory, speech, and language. The first 3 years of life is the optimal time to develop the neural pathways of the brain which allow a child to develop the ability to hear and talk. After age 3, children continue to develop audition, speech, and language at an accelerated rate until age 7, at which time this process slows down. While the pediatric audiologist plays a role in early diagnosis of hearing loss, appropriate amplification, and maintenance of hearing technology, the LSL specialist will guide and coach the parent or





educator to use specific strategies within daily routines to teach a child how to listen and talk. It's critical for brain development that children hear you talking, singing, and reading aloud. This is the way they learn to listen, understand, and talk.

While LSL is only one of many roads to a child learning to listen and talk, it is a well proven path supported by independent research. It is a well-established path that helps parents move the child from where they are to where they want their child to be. This journey consists of an initial hearing screening, early diagnosis of hearing loss, and appropriate amplification used full-time. It requires decisions made by parents as to the outcomes they desire for their child. It is a path where the LSL specialist guides and coaches parents to use strategies and techniques that enable the child to access and to learn the meaning of sound in the home and daily environment. It is a road that must be traveled throughout the school years, with occasional bumps found in the road (i.e. waiting for earmolds,

broken hearing devices, new teachers, new intervention providers, etc). While these bumps cannot be avoided entirely, they can be minimized when there is acknowledgement and problem solving. LSL specialists help children with hearing loss progress on this journey in order to reach their destination of listening and spoken language. For those who are considering or beginning the LSL journey, the roadmap below is helpful in guiding and staying focused on what is required to help your child reach the outcomes for which you are hoping. ■■

If you would like more information about LSL services, please contact:
 Sherri R. Widhalm, MS, CCC-SLP, LSLs AVED
 Speech Language Pathologist/Certified Listening and Spoken Language Specialist
 Montana School for the Deaf and Blind
 swidhalm@msdb.k12.mt.us
 1-406-771-6006

Online Safety and Child Predators

By Yvette Smail - MSDB Behavior Specialist



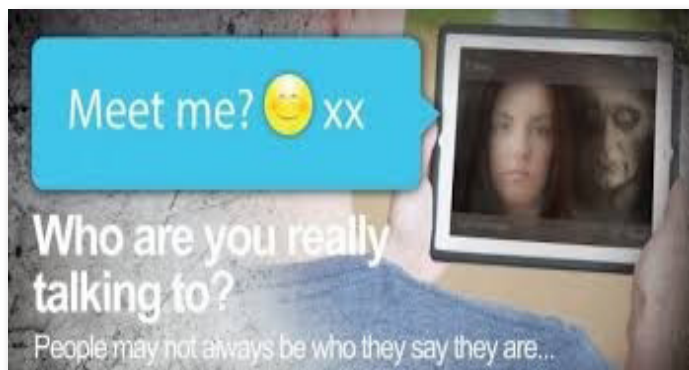
Online dangers continue to increase and predators lurking online continue to hone their skills in order to lure children and affect them in a variety of ways. The way that our children communicate and interact with one another has changed drastically with the continued evolution of the internet. Young people use popular social media sites to stay in touch with their friends and to meet new people. Websites intended for children and young adults are sometimes created by adult online predators who are trying to interact with and bait children. Some of these interactions can lead to dangerous in person encounters.

According to the Child Crime Prevention and Safety Center, there are an estimated 500,000 online predators active each day. Children between the ages of 12 and 15 are especially susceptible to be groomed or manipulated by adults they meet online. According to the F.B.I., over 50 percent of the victims of online sexual exploitation are between the ages of 12 and 15. An estimated 89 percent of sexual advances directed at children occur in Internet chatrooms or through instant messaging. In over a quarter of all reported exploitation incidents, the online predator will ask a child for sexually explicit photos of themselves. Four percent of children receive aggressive solicitations from adults online, including attempts to contact the children in person or over the phone. In addition, 58 percent of parents report being concerned about the threats that strangers pose online. Two out of ten children between the ages of 8 and 11 are aware of the issue and are concerned that strangers may find out information about them. And while using social media, forty percent of children remove privacy settings in order to attract more friends or followers.

Predators attempting to groom children online will typically visit social media websites that are trending for young people and they will pretend to be children themselves. The predator will oftentimes try to gain the child's trust by creating fake profile pictures, pretending to share similar interests, as well as showering the child with compliments and/or gifts.

If an online relationship has been created, the predator will often attempt to start trying to add sexual language into the conversation in hopes to pressure the child into taking inappropriate and explicit photos or videos of themselves and sending them to the predator/groomer. In the most severe cases, the predator may hassle the child to meet in person and will travel to the child. They will often accomplish this by threatening to share the private photos or videos with the child's friends or family.

Though groomers are usually strangers, this is not always the case. In some situations, the child may have met a groomer/predator through family or other contacts and the adult builds a connection with the child online. Children may not even be aware that he or she is being groomed and think this person is a boyfriend or girlfriend.



Detection of online grooming can be difficult as the child can simply be on the computer at home, school, or a friend's house. Predators will most likely dictate to the child not to talk about their relationship/conduct with anyone. However, there are some signs that may indicate a child is being groomed by an online predator, including an escalated amount of time on the computer or other technology, becoming cagey about their online activity, closing tabs or windows or changing screens whenever someone is close, using language not used before that is sexual in nature, as well as being more emotionally volatile.

It is imperative that we have discussions regarding online safety and the very real and dangerous situations youth can become victims to. Remember, technology for our kids is a privilege, not a right, and being aware of what they are doing on/with their phones, iPads, laptops/PC's etc. is very reasonable and essential to help keep our children safe. ■■

MSDB Welcomes a New Club

By Morgan Maker - DHH Teacher

MSDB is excited to welcome a new club! The Swim Club is for students of MSDB, grades pre-kindergarten (age 3) to high school. Swim club meets Mondays and Tuesdays from 4pm-6pm in the Mustang Center. Students are assigned a specific day and time when they join the instructors in the pool.

Swim club's first session was at the beginning of the semester. The first week consisted of getting to know the students and completing skills assessments. Swim club aims to help students learn how to swim and water safety. Each swimmer will be encouraged to reach their full potential and be made to feel a part of the club. The club seeks to create a love of swimming and fun. As of now 18 club members and participants are from both departments.

The instructors are Cheri Luongo and Morgan Makar. Cheri is a behavioral counselor in the cottage program who was previously a swim team coach and instructor. She is excited to bring the love of swimming to each student. Morgan Makar is a teacher at MSDB. She has had the pleasure of teaching swimming lessons for five years and has learned various ways to meet the needs of each student. She is excited to use her skills to support students in learning how to swim. ☒



Lucia



Gracie



Morris



Montana School *for*

LIFTING STUDENTS



Meet the New President of MSDB Foundation Board

MSDB Family,

My name is Mark Willmarth, and I am the incoming President of the MSDB Foundation Board after being a member of the board for 5 years. Outgoing president Shawn Tulloch will continue to support us as Past President,

and I am grateful for the amazing group of board members from all walks of life and locations who have a passion for the mission. We often read and discuss our vision as a Foundation which is:

“To lift our students beyond what the world expects.”

To me this means funding the kinds of activities, equipment, travel and professional development that gives MSDB students, teachers and staff the opportunity to excel in the world. We all have different barriers to success; how can we help remove some of those barriers for our students?

Here are my goals and challenges for both myself personally and the board as a whole in the coming year:

1. Get out and see and experience more of the campus during our meetings. We have always had lunch in the cafeteria with the students, but I want to experience more of MSDB so we can be more effective. We are taking the time to get into the classrooms, tour the buildings and/or have presentations on programs and equipment at the school. We want to see where the Foundation money goes or needs to go. The better we understand and appreciate the needs, the more successful we will be to find funding!
2. Attend more events on campus. I will commit to attending more of the events on campus and encourage other board members to do so as well.
3. Collaborate with Superintendent Furthmyre to more effectively communicate the needs of the school with the mission of the Foundation.
4. Learn more basic sign language. Interested board members are meeting an hour before each meeting to learn sign language from Diane Moog. Many of our board members are familiar with or proficient with ASL and providing an opportunity for other board members to learn is important.

I also want to thank Kristina Rossberg who was the Administrative Assistant to the Foundation. She now works full-time in the main office and has continued to help our Foundation board as we look for her replacement. It was hard to see her leave us, but she is still serving the school in a different capacity. We have found her replacement and her name is Carmen Turnbow. She is familiar with the school because her daughter was a student at MSDB a few years back. We are excited to have her on board and passionate about the mission of the Foundation and the school. I hope everyone will welcome her to the family!

I have to say I am a bit overwhelmed by being in the role of the President of the MSDB Foundation. Being a board member and being President aren't the same, but I also know that I have great support around me to hopefully have a successful, fun and productive year. As someone reminded me, the Foundation doesn't do the work, we are here to support the wonderful people who do. This is an amazing place doing hard and amazing work all over the state. Outreach is just as important to us as the school.

As a final comment, I am also a member of the Great Falls Lions Club. Several years ago the Montana Lions supported a fundraising campaign along with Lions International and a number of grants secured by our grant writer, Heidi Gibson. It was the biggest fundraiser I have ever been a part of and collectively we raised \$300,000 to purchase 100 low vision readers to distribute around the state in about six months. It was not difficult to get people to donate when they saw what the readers would do to truly transform the life of a young person with low vision. I was both proud and in awe of how much people wanted to help. This is why, even though it is overwhelming, I want to be part of this Foundation and the school!

Thank you for all your support of the MSDB Foundation, both past and present! ■■

Sincerely,

the Deaf & Blind Foundation

ITS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Support Us Through Your Local Day of Giving Campaign!

May 1-5 GIVE GREAT FALLS - www.givegreatfalls.org

May 3-4 GREATER HELENA GIVES - www.greaterhelenagives.org

May 4-5 GALLATIN VALLEY GIVES BIG - www.givebiggv.org

May 4-5 YELLOWSTONE VALLEY GIVES - www.yellowstonegives.org

May 4-5 MISSOULA & BITTERROOT GIVE - www.missoulagives.org



“Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean.” – Ryunosuke Satoro

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Vision West, Inc.

Todd Carmichael • Vice President
Schnider Funeral Home

Laura Walker • Secretary/Treasurer
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North Central Independent Living
Former MSDB Student
Travis Stevenson
MSDB parent
Rick Thompson
Hi-Line Home Programs

How You Can Help

With your help, the MSDB Foundation has been able to provide funds for services and equipment for the students at MSDB for 40 years. The Foundation is committed to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives. Please join us in that commitment by making a tax-deductible donation to www.msdbmustangs.org or mailing it to:

MSDB Foundation • P.O. Box 6576 • Great Falls, MT 59406
For more information, please call 406-771-6040

Expressions in Their Own Words

Naomi Witham-Travers - Teacher of the Visually Impaired

Brenda Warren - Teacher of the Deaf

Reading can be considered perhaps the most complex skill that can be mastered. The multitude of rules and patterns that must be detected and memorized can be overwhelming. As a result, the teaching of reading can be equally complex and overwhelming. As we learn to read, we simultaneously develop and hone our writing skills. While we do not need to know how to write in order to read, the two skills are virtually interdependent.

In recent years, more and more studies have begun to reveal this interdependency between the skills of reading and writing. The results have indicated the importance of teaching these skills together rather than in isolation. For example, when students are required to perform writing tasks with their weekly spelling words, not only did their spelling scores increase, but their emergent reading skills improved as well (Reis et al., 2016). Several LMSDB staff members went to a Summer Literacy Conference in Helena last year where much of this research was being presented to teachers of reading and writing. The common recommendation amongst literacy experts, both at the conference and in the current research on the subject, is to increase the amount of writing activities during reading lessons. Although the two skills share many similarities, it is thought that it is the differences between the skills that contribute to the way this

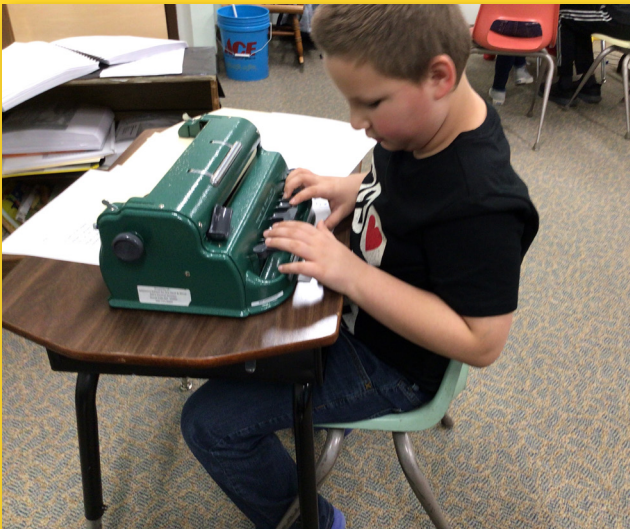
interconnectedness can improve student outcomes (Philippakos & Graham, 2020). To capitalize on this connection, teachers who integrate writing activities into daily reading lessons can directly impact and improve reading scores. As MSDB teachers returned from the Helena Literacy Conference, we began to take heed of these new recommendations and focus on the integration of writing into daily lessons. We can see improvements not just in how students read, but in how they make connections to text. It is by connecting to what we are reading that the motivation and interest levels become higher, sparking the desire to read and to practice reading.

As we continue to work with our students on both their reading and writing skills, and observe their interest and ability improve, we seek opportunities to share their progress and individuality. Please enjoy some writing passages from our young VI students. ■■

References

Philippakos, Z. A., & Graham, S. (2020). *Teaching Writing to Improve Reading Skills. Research Advisory. In International Literacy Association. International Literacy Association.*

Reis, T. S., Postalli, L. M. M., & de Souza, D. das G. (2013). *Teaching spelling as a route for reading and writing. Psychology & Neuroscience, 6(3), 365-373. <https://doi-org.lopes.idm.oclc.org/10.3922/j.psns.2013.3.14>*

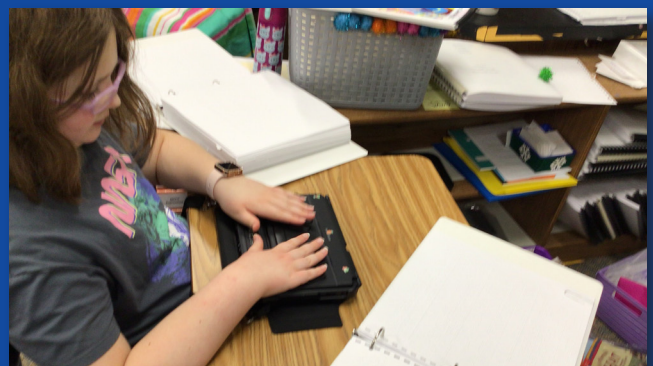


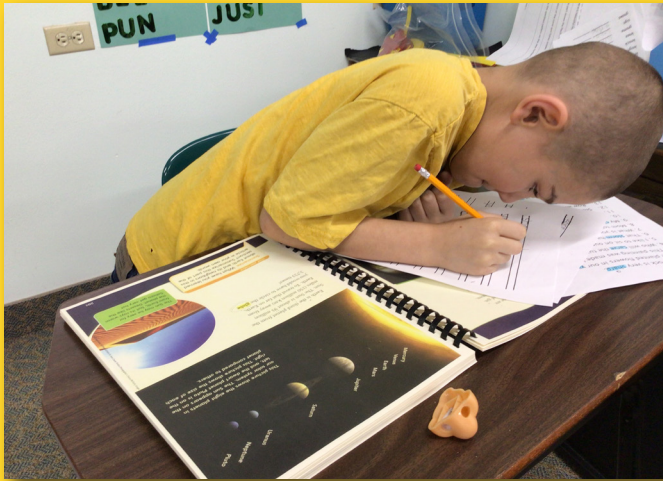
Poem by Caleb (8 years old)

The ice, frozen and hard.
Cold and white.
It feels like a cold, brutal wind...
My hand feels very, very hurt touching ice.

Gracie (11 years old)

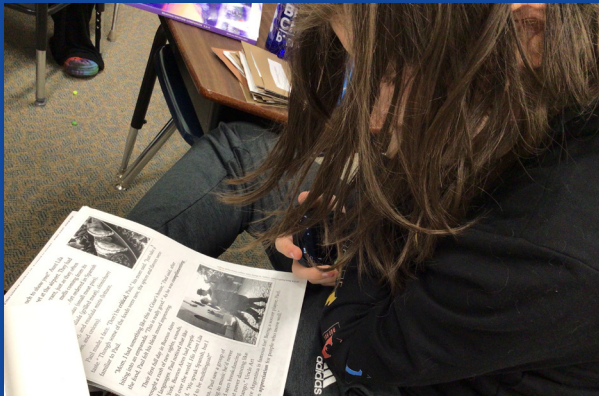
We have problems all the time,
Every day in every way,
Like when my food dish is empty.
Or I run out of fresh, sweet ice water.
But do these troubles have the same weight
As someone being injured,
People stranded and shivering,
Animals losing their homes?
While I concern myself with the dog chasing me?
Although these little pickles weigh as much as
mountains in the moment,
How do they compare
To the tragedies that occur every day?





Seasons by Carter (8 years old)

I believe fall is the best season. I like the leaves that fall down off the trees. I like the fall colors of orange, brown, red, and yellow. Halloween is my favorite holiday because I get candy. Thanksgiving is the second best holiday because I get to spend time with my family. These are the reasons why fall is always the best season.



Elden Ring by Logan (14 years old)

My controller is bumpy
I grab the sides
It feels like rubber
the black triggers feel like metal
I grab the top thumb stick
I use it to move around
the character in the game is holding
a katana
a sword from Japan
it is curved
I feel ready to fight a boss

And I lose
lose
and lose
over and over again

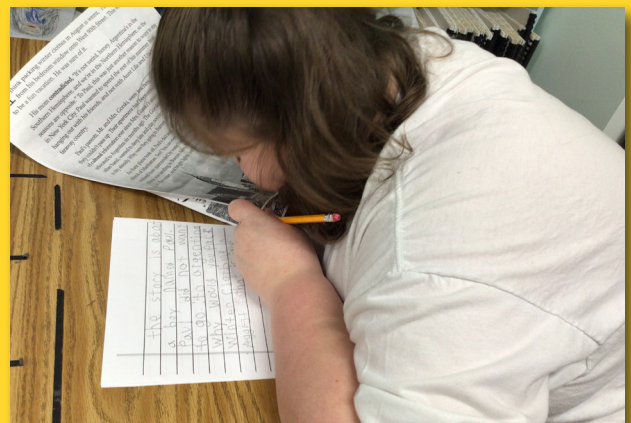
then I go get money to level up my character
then
I get back to the boss
and win
I'm me.

Colors by Paisley (10 years old)

Sometimes I'm beautiful
Sometimes I'm not
I'm full of many colors

When sad
I'm blue
When angry
I'm red
When joyful
I'm yellow
When disgusted
I'm green
When crushing
I'm pink
When nervous
I'm purple
When hot
I'm orange

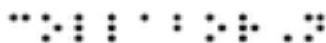
Sometimes I'm beautiful
Sometimes I'm not
I'm full of many colors





Denise and Levi.

Collaboration - Regular Print Collaboration - Large Print



By Emily LaSalle - Outreach Consultant

"When I look back at pictures of Levi as a preschooler, I remember the magic of working with a young student to try and determine how they learn best. I see the two of us sitting on the floor in close proximity to one another. We are using a sentence strip written in large print, that also has braille over the top of it and it is also paired with simple, bold line drawings showing the formation of the sign language that represents the words. This incredible, hard-working preschooler was learning print, braille and sign together! As a high schooler, Levi is still just as diligent a student. Now, you will find him in class using his assistive technology skills to complete assignments and communicate with peers and staff. Beyond his academic skills though, it has been so gratifying to watch Levi develop as a person--he truly cares about his family, community and school!"

-Denise Rutledge, Teacher of the Visually Impaired. ■■

"One of the advantages of working at MSDB is the pleasure of watching our students grow and progress. In a traditional school, you may get to work with the same student for a year or two before wishing them well and sending them on to the next teacher or school. At MSDB, I have been able to work with students in preschool (and sometimes in the home setting before preschool) through high school and beyond into transition. I was with them when they first touched a brailier or used little tactile manipulatives to learn the names of shapes. I was also with them when they received their diploma and went off on their next adventure. It is a bittersweet experience to be part of a student's life for so long." -Denise Rutledge ■■



A grown-up Levi working with Denise.

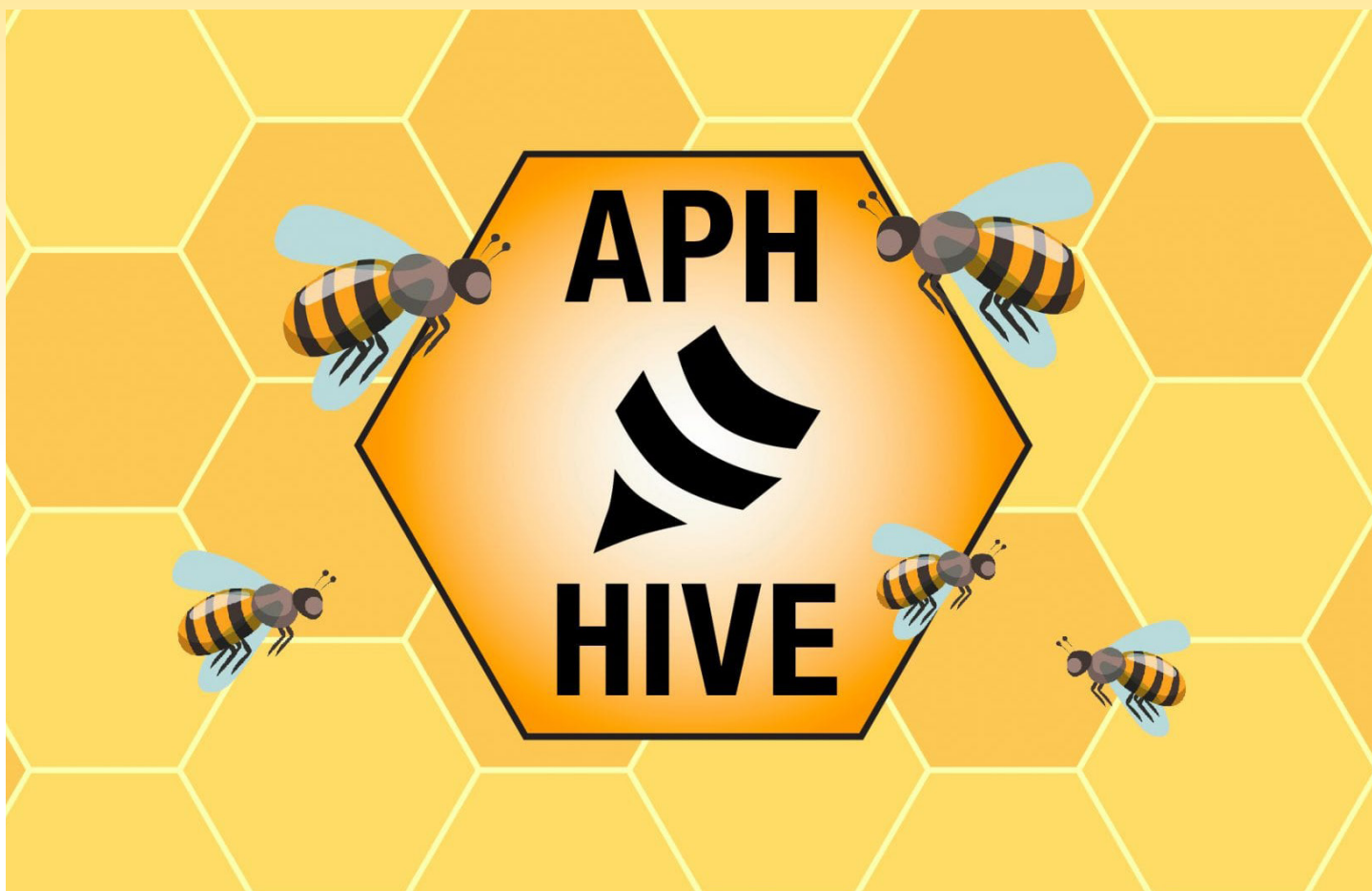
“Let me introduce you to Levi Wahl. Levi is a MSDB sophomore and has spent time attending school in both his home town of Dutton as well as MSDB. His wishes of attending his hometown school with his siblings conflicted with meeting his academic needs of being a deaf/blind student. When Levi attended Dutton/Brady Elementary, Outreach Consultants on both the Vision and Hearing side collaborated with Dutton/Brady staff to help meet his needs. As Levi transferred to MSDB full time, campus staff began their work and Outreach moved to the backseat. It is such a unique opportunity to continue to be involved in Levi’s education and watch him grow. These photos make me smile to see how far Levi has come. I cherish your smile, Levi. At his last Individual Education Plan meeting, Levi expressed an interest with bookkeeping, financial work or maybe payroll. If your business has the ability to offer a job share program that may meet Levi’s interest, please reach out to MSDB.” ❖❖



A collaboration we look forward to each year is performing hearing screenings on Special Olympic athletes. The time we spend with each other in a new setting and with athletes, brings such joy and is a highlight of our year. This year’s screeners included: Kathy Johnson (former MSDB audiologist), Leann Goss (Outreach Consultant), Emily LaSalle (Outreach Consultant), Sarah Eyer (Former Outreach Consultant and current Jefferson County Superintendent of Schools) and Dr. Katherine Lynch (current MSDB audiologist).



“Joy is going on a home visit and working together with a student baking his 4H project. Every time I am with Jaxon, I learn something new from him. Thank you to the entire Roseleip Family for welcoming me into your home, sharing home cooked meals, farm fresh eggs and enjoyable family stories. The time we share together is so special.” Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant.



APH Hive

By Barbara Peterson and Michelle Cross - Outreach Vision Consultants

Attention, busy bees! Here is the latest buzz on professional development! The saying goes, there is so much to do and so little time to do it! This is a common expression we all experience as vision consultants when working with parents, schools and specialists in the field. Indeed, time is of great value to each and every one of us who work in education. We certainly have learned a lot about how to get things done in a limited amount of time, and we have learned how to best pace ourselves while working to be productive in our roles. This is exactly why we are so excited to tell you about the **APH Hive**!

Do you have an individual in your classroom with a vision impairment? Do you want to prepare and gather quality resources to better support your student? Look no further than the support provided through the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), the world's largest nonprofit organization creating accessible learning experiences through educational, workplace, and independent living products and services for people who are blind and visually impaired.

The Hive is a place to grow professionally, and it's FREE! It is exciting to share the Hive with parents, vision professionals and

educators by offering professional development in the areas of assessment, early childhood development, core curriculum and expanded core curriculum. The Hive was launched in late 2020 by APH and began with a mere 7 courses. Today, the site offers nearly 30 courses and is committed to constantly sourcing new content to create educational opportunities.

Courses in The Hive are designed to focus and demonstrate how to make different types of core curriculum instruction accessible to students with visual impairments. To date, there are over 1,300 professionals who have utilized and gathered some sweet knowledge from the provided online coursework. The short courses are of very high quality and screened in a peer review process for excellence. Professional credit is available upon completion of a course. It is designed to be completed on your own time through self-study. Some titles of the courses you might find of interest include: Tactile Aids for Mathematics, Science and Health, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Career and Technical Education, and many more! It is easy to register with the Hive, to do so simply buzz on over to www.aphhive.org to get started.

It's honey-licious! 🍯

DHH Preschool Corner

By Amber Bateen - Teacher of the Deaf

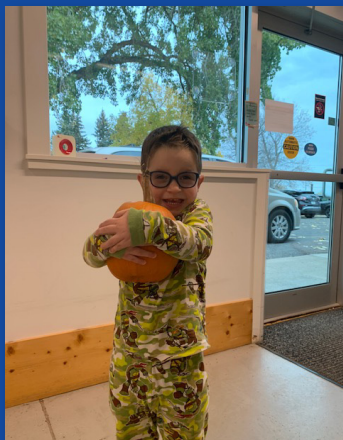


Oliver

This month we studied Jan Brett's book *The Mitten*. After reading the book, we investigated different winter animals and learned that some animals stay awake, while others hibernate during the winter. We also explored how stretchy things can change sizes. Our class had fun stuffing as many toy animals as we could into the knit mittens as we retold and sequenced the events from the story. Last we incorporated fine motor activities such as cutting yarn and lacing mittens into our fun.



Kyzer



Kirin



KayLynn



Morgen

The VI preschool students loved the pumpkins donated by the Rainbow Garden Club.



MONTANA SCHOOL
FOR THE DEAF & THE BLIND

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Letter from the Editor

By Missie Hill - Editor for the Express



Staff creativity can be found anywhere you look on campus. This year is definitely no exception. There are always great things going on before, during, and after school. The teachers think outside of the box regularly to make sure the information grabs the students' attention. Many of our students do not learn one specific way, but need information given to them in a multitude of ways to ensure they are understanding and learning. Teachers are doing that. The learning is stronger than ever in many parts of the school.

Staff continue to sponsor extra curricular activities as well. From Expressions of Silence (EOS) to Visually Impaired Performers (VIP), from swim club to yoga, from goal ball to volleyball or football with East Middle School or Great Falls High School; we continue to see our students involved with many activities in a myriad of ways.

The cottage follows suit with programs on and off campus to involve our students in things like 4-H, music lessons, and painting, to name a few. They also continue building independent skills through programs run weekly.

Our students, though many are far from home, are made to feel at home here. They can hang out with friends, play a game, watch tv, laugh; whatever they need to do.

I have said it before and I will continue to say it: We are one big family.

I personally adore my students. I refer to them as "my kids" and I want the best for them and their future. We all do.

Thank you to the families that allow your children to come to school here, thank you for sharing your wonderful kids with us, and thank you for making us better at what we do. 🍕

Missie Hill, Editor • Mhill@msdb.k12.mt.us

Special Education Coordinator | Indian Education Coordinator | Science Teacher

Cottage Life

By Cheri Luongo - Cottage Counselor

The MSDB cottage is a very busy place. Thanks to the generosity of the MSDB Foundation, collaborations with Vocational Rehabilitation, the inclusive community we live in and the creativity of the dedicated MSDB staff, our students are involved in over 50 different clubs, organizations, and structured activities every year. There is so much I could say to try to explain how these activities enrich the students lives, but Fred R. Barnard may have said it best way back in 1921, "A picture is worth a thousand words." 🍕



Marissa and Lilly.



Ayvia and David.



Angelina and Blair

See Us On



Montana School for
the Deaf and Blind
Foundation

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