

Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



February, 2013

Notes from the Executive Director

Well, it looks like winter has finally arrived---Just in time for Valentine's Day! I hope all of your students (and you) enjoy this really fun day. I was always amazed at how much the students seemed to love this day most of all. It just reinforces how important relationships are to each and every one of us.

On another note, as you probably know, the federal special education IDEA funds are part of the sequester conversation in Washington, D.C. So far, the news from the federal government is that they are trying to push back the March 1st decision until June 30th, the end of the fiscal year. Special education advocacy groups are encouraging anyone interested to use this extra time to contact their local representatives to voice their concerns over cuts to an already underfunded program for the some of the more needy people in the nation.

End of the Year Celebration: May 6th

Mark your calendars for May 6th for our End of the Year Celebration! We will be honoring our retirees, new staff (and their mentors) and staff who have achieved milestone years of service. If you would like to help with the arrangements, please come to the Sunshine Committee planning meeting at 3:30 on Feb. 4th. I hope to see all of you there!

Bowling on March 10th

Please join us for the Bowling Party on March 10th (Sunday) from 12:00-3:00. We will be providing pizza, soft drinks and dessert. Families are welcome to join us at this event and/or come with your colleagues as a team! There will be prizes and high expectations for outrageous bowling outfits! Please watch for the flyer from Bonnie.

Website

Thanks again to Bonnie who has been working diligently on the website. We seem to be adding new items every day! All of the necessary forms are on the website, just remember to click on them twice so that you can type on them. Also, we have added an "Important Information" section under the "For Staff" tab. After we send something to all of you or discuss something at a

department meeting, that information will be found under that section. *For example, I recently sent a memorandum with reminders and responsibilities in preparation for IEP meetings. Please read the memo carefully.* If you can't find your copy, it is on the website. Don't forget that you should access your email via mvse.org.

IAA training

The second IAA training is scheduled for February 12 from 3:30-5:00 at the administration offices, Room 4. If you missed the last one because of the snow, just attend this one. Remember, this is a mandatory training for those who are administering the IAA.

Think Summer! ESY!

ESY will be from July 8 – August 1st, from 8:00-12:00. In case your parents are wondering, this constitutes two hours less than last year. And, this decision was made due to construction issues in the summer. The three locations will be MJC, Ferson Creek in St.Charles and the Shelby Building for transition students.

We will be starting to notify staff about positions in late-March. If you are interested in applying, the application is under the ESY tab on the website.

Referrals for ESY are due to your coordinator by March 15. Parent registration packets are due to your coordinator by April 15.

Parent Forum

Our next Parent Forum will be February 28 at 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. We will be talking with the families about our emerging strategic plan. On March 21 at 6:30 we will be hosting a speaker, Ambrose Panico who will be talking about behavior management. Flyers will be coming soon for both of these events. We are counting on you to get the word out to your parents!

Institute Day

March 1st will be our next Institute Day. Most certified staff will be attending the following session at MJC. All others, see below:

Agenda: Show and Tell---Student Growth

8:00	Registration, welcome and warm-up
8:30	Video Modeling Presentation featuring New Pathways staff
9:30	Review of goals/progress monitoring examples
10:00	Break
10:30	Small Group Discussion: <i>Bring goals or future goals, p.m. methods</i>
11:30	Lunch
12:30	Show and Tell: Progress Monitoring featuring key staff members
1:30	Program Discussions Student Growth (Current and Future)
3:00	Adjourn

- HI staff and Mary L. will attend ITHI and make this day up on April 12th.
- From ND, follow-up with goal writing and progress monitoring on April 12th if staff are attending ICE.

- OT/PTs are planning small group or individual professional development and will be submitting plans to Linda.

St. Charles Noon Rotary Donation



Thanks to Peg Frank and Betsy Blowers! At their most recent meeting, The Foundation Board of the St. Charles Noon Rotary Club unanimously approved a \$3,472.00 Award to the Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative for the purchase of adaptive bike for multi-needs high school students who attend Mid-Valley at Batavia High School. When classroom teaching assistant, Peg Frank, started to work with her current students, she believed that using an adapted bike could be a part of her students' therapy and learning experience. Peg's husband, Rotarian Craig Frank, showed his Noon Rotary Club several short videos of some his wife's students using the borrowed modified bike for the first time...the smiles and enjoyment from the students convinced the members that this was a request that we needed to support!

Mid-Valley Special Ed worked closely with Hal Honeyman of Creative Mobility at The Bike Rack in St. Charles who provided the bike. Mr. Honeyman has worked with Mid-Valley before and supports their efforts. This three-wheel modified bike has an added dimension of comfort and support for the mature rider. The handlebars, seats and crank mechanisms are adjustable and the walk-through design and step on platform make getting on as easy as sitting down in a comfortable chair. For stopping safety, the bike has two rear brakes with controls that can be mounted on the handlebars. If the rider is unable to operate the hand lever, one can be positioned on the Rear-Steer Discreet Assistance handle for a companion to operate. The bike also comes with head and body pads to assist in maintaining stability of the rider's torso and head during the fun riding experience.

Thanks also for the very positive press releases and information in every local paper!

Book Study

The next book for the Book Study will be Learners on the Autism Spectrum. Preparing Highly Qualified Educators. The last book study was a little like a book club; this book will be a great

opportunity to take the time to study the latest about the unique needs of students with autism who are served in all of our programs. Please contact Sandy Gearhart if you would like to join this group!

Workboxes

Thanks to Sandy Gearhart, Amy Rogers, and Nicole Claeson who have worked diligently to organize the workboxes and a checkout system. Remember that we are looking for new ideas to create new boxes. We will need your suggestions by March 1st.

Kane County Chronicle

We were so pleased to see the great article about Mid-Valley in the recent Kane County. Front page news! Thanks to everyone who contributed!

MVSEC Spirit Wear

Thanks so much to Paige, Natalie and Phaedra who helped us with our Mid-Valley Spirit wear. Be sure to wear it on Opening Day next year and on the Institute Day in March!

Thinking Ahead to Next Year

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

- August 19th First Institute Day
- August 12-15 New Staff Orientation
- August 14th Netchemia Training for New Staff/Refresher for All Staff

All of the CPI training will be in the summer so that it does not interfere with the programming. You will be compensated for these dates and more information will be coming out soon.

Annual Needs Assessment

Last few days! You have until February 16th to give us your feedback about programming and professional development for Mid-Valley. Please contact Natalie Assell if you need help with the link. Thanks!

Purchasing Deadlines

The last day to submit purchases orders for expenses for the remainder of this school year will be March 22, the day before spring break. Please submit your orders to your coordinator prior to this date. Exceptions to this date will be rare.

After the Board approves the final budget (anticipated in May or June), you will be notified and you can work with your coordinator to submit purchase orders for items that need to be purchased over the summer.

Move Requests

For this month, our next move date will be Thursday, February 28. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to **Bonnie Carlson** by **Monday, February 25** so we can organize the

work requests. If you have large furniture, equipment or large boxes to move, please fill out the form and clearly label the items to be moved. The forms are on the web-site.

New Staff in February

Magan McCarthy and Kevin Bishop have joined us as new teaching assistants in the New Directions Program. Welcome!

IMPORTANT Deadlines

Several important deadlines are fast approaching. If any of the following apply to you, please notify Sue IN WRITING in the Human Resources Department, by the appropriate deadline.

- Mar. 1: Educators must notify MVSEC of interest in receiving payment in full the balance of their salary (no summer pay) (MVSEA)
- Mar. 1: Any certified employee who is interested in a transfer for the upcoming school year should notify MVSEC of their intent (MVSEA)
- Mar. 1: Employees must file an irrevocable notice of retirement (MVSEA & TASC)

Birthdays!

Happy January birthday wishes to: Maryann Domariacki, Josie Wallace, Martha Egan, Stacey Krenning, Melissa Mills, Mark Wallin, Linda Moran, and Carla Stewart. Happy Birthday!

Thoughts and Prayers...Get Well Wishes

At the time of this writing, Paige's son, Lucas has been hospitalized again. This is such an incredible strain on him and his entire extended family. Please keep them in your thoughts.

And, keep Beth Bosak's husband in your prayers as he continues his journey with the Mayo Clinic. Jeff Baker's wife is undergoing chemotherapy treatments. Linda Hensel's sister is in hospice. Sandy G's dad has returned to the hospital, but is improving. Our thoughts are with all of you.

Our Sympathies to...

Terri Edwards' mother, Norene Yopst, 78, passed away suddenly on January 15. She loved her grandchildren and always attended their sporting events and activities. She is survived by her daughter, Terri (Phil) Edwards of St. Charles; grandchildren, Matt and Brad Edwards and Christie and Vicki Yopst; daughter-in-law, Barb Yopst of Sycamore; brother, James (Dahlia) Dierks; sisters, Jean Smith and Susie (Larry) Judd, both of Clinton, Iowa; and several nieces and nephews. We are so sorry for Terri's loss.

People News

Loren Gineris's therapeutic horse riding business, Strides in Motion at Bull Run Farm, is off to a great start!

Myra Stinson has earned a "Golden Ticket" that allows her to treat two more staff members to participate in Handwriting without Tears training! Congratulations!

Program News

Anthony Becker, from New Directions, was honored at the St. Charles East High School Breakfast of Champions on February 7. He was nominated for his hard work in the Family and Consumer Science Department. Terrific news! His award ceremony is aired on Channel 10, Monday through Friday at 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or log on to www.geneva.il.us and click on Channel 10.

Deb Sall's New Pathways Middle School class has been participating in the Woods Class at Geneva Middle School South all year and have made some terrific products!

ToTAL Graduates

Daniel Lott will be turning 22 years old on February 10th –his last day was Feb. 8th.



Alonzo Wick's will be turning 22 years old on February 12th –his last day is today, the 11th.



We will see them at graduation, but we are going to miss them!

Professional Development Opportunities

Aurora University has been granted ISBE approval to offer the **Special Education Director Endorsement** courses. We will be holding an **information session for summer cohorts on Thursday, March 14th at the Kane County Regional Office of Education**. If we receive any more information, we will let you know.

The following are some professional development opportunities you may want to explore. Just let Carla know if you'd like more information.

Mid-Valley Sessions: Consult the website for more specifics about these sessions. Just click the date on the calendar in the "About Us" tab.

- February 12 iPad Touchback: 3:30 in Room 4
- March 15 (Note change from March 8) SW/Psych Network: Dr. Michael Feld
Psychopharmaceuticals

The following are some other professional development opportunities you may want to explore.

- Boys in Crisis, Rachel's Challenge, February 13, Eisenhower Cooperative, Crestwood
- College Expo for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities, February 13, Rockford
- Embedding SEL into a PBIS Framework, February 19, Eisenhower Cooperative, Crestwood
- Autism/Asperger's Conference, featuring Temple Grandin, March 1, Chicago

Former student of Judy Donner at GHS, then SAIL Student featured in Golf Digest



Once nonverbal, Susie Doyens now gives speeches for the Special Olympics.

I didn't speak for 20 years except a little to my mom. To teachers and even my brother and dad, I wrote notes. When I try to remember why I didn't talk, all I see are shoes. Shoes under desks and shoes walking down hallways. I was so painfully shy that I couldn't look even my mom in the eyes. Sometimes, alone in my room, I would say things to remember I had a voice.

I have Down syndrome, which is an intellectual disability. After I was born, a doctor told my parents it would be best to leave me in an institution. My mom always spoke badly about this doctor.

I saw a therapist every week for nine years. I can't tell you what she looked like; I only wrote her notes. I learned to write at age 6, same as other kids, though I don't write fast. I repeated every grade twice until fourth, but then I did better. The only time I ever took an IQ test I scored 33, but this is wrong.

People tell me I'm good at focusing on one thing at a time. After high school I worked at a Walmart stocking shelves. For 12 years I worked at a restaurant, busing tables. I keep my room very neat. Coach Dave says my pre-shot routine is as good as anybody's. I've never broken 100, but I've come close.

When I was 22, I was asked to be a Global Messenger for the Special Olympics. This meant giving speeches to spread awareness for our cause. I didn't understand why they had picked me. Even though I really wanted to help, I didn't think I could give a speech. I was still barely talking.

Sandy Hutchins, our area director for the Special Olympics, said she knew I could do it. She said there was something deep inside my heart I didn't even know about, and it would feel amazing to let it out. So I attended the three-day school where they taught us how to give speeches.

My first speech was to a local high school volleyball team. Because of my stutter, I was worried the words would not come out. I couldn't look at anyone, but I got through the whole thing. I said that I dream about golf and that competing is the most fun thing I do all year. Everyone stood up to clap, and my mom cried because she'd never heard me talk for minutes at a time. The father of a girl on the team, Tom Reasoner, became my partner in the Special Olympics' unified golf, which is what we call alternate shot.

I'm 35, but sometimes strangers guess I'm as young as 12. We moved last year when my dad retired, and the tendinitis in my elbows is feeling better in the warm weather. Our new house is boring, and I hope we can get some arcade games soon. There's nowhere to have a job, but that's OK. I'm happy because there's more time for golf.

Each morning I wake up and fix myself cereal, watch cartoons, then go to my room to draw or write words. I've kept the same dictionary with pictures for years, and each day I copy its words on paper and save them. My favorite word is "intellectual."

In the afternoon, I hope that my mom takes me to play golf. The course is only three minutes away.

Read More <http://www.golfdigest.com/magazine/2013-01/golf-saved-my-life-susie-doyens#ixzz2JDIPLJuq>

Final Thought

It's OK to ask for help.

Gretchen Rubin

It's ironic that my book club's selection for this month is the Happiness Project. As you know, I started that book a while ago and couldn't get past the first month because of all the items in my life that were to be addressed under "Tackling a Nagging Task". I will admit, I have been working hard on this one goal, but it takes a really long time. My major project is my mom's picture book. It is really coming along now, but mostly because a daughter of a friend offered to help. It is hard for me to "bother" anyone to ask for help. But, I am here to tell you that every time I have benefitted from the help of others, the product is generally much better! I am grateful to those who offer and are so good at it! I hope you are able to reach out and help each other...

Happy Valentine's Day!