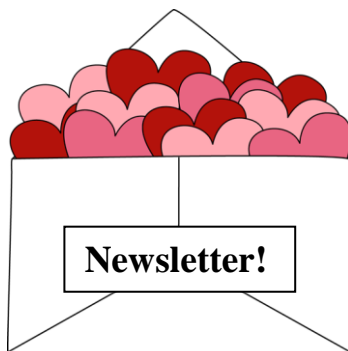


Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative



February, 2016

Notes from the Executive Director

Thanks to all of you who made purchases to support the SAIL microbusiness this month. It was a huge success! It is so important to support our students and also provide really sweet things for your sweeties!

Don't miss February Cruise Night this month! It is February 23 at 3:30 starting at Eddie Gaedels in Elburn. These events are really a great opportunity to get to know everyone who works in the cooperative. We are especially interested in meeting all of our new staff. The Sunshine Committee works hard to provide raffle prizes, snacks and a really good time. I hope to see you there!

News for Parents...

Bingo Night!!

The social workers have been hard at work again! Family Bingo night will be Friday, February 26, from 6:00-7:30, at the MJC gym. There will be food, prizes and fun! Thanks to all of the departments and programs who are creating baskets for the raffle prizes. Already, we know of many families who will be attending. I hope to see you there, too!

Parent Session—Transforming your Child's Stress into Success

One of the sessions for our Institute Day, will be sessions offered by Renee Jain about reducing stress for students. A session for parents will be offered the evening before on Thursday, March 3, from 6:00-8:00 at Haines Middle School in St. Charles. If you know of parents who might be interested, please direct them to our website (mvse.org) and to click on to professional development calendar. Plenty of slots are still available!

Save the Date for Theresa Varnett—Sunday, April 17

Back by popular demand! Theresa Varnett is an incredible resource for families to help with their futures planning for their children. More information will be coming soon!

Parent to Parent Connection

We are happy to report that our first parent-to-parent connection has been made. Thanks so much to Scott Carchedi and Amy Penar who are making this resource available for our families, especially our incoming families.

National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) Parent to Parent Training

We are so happy to announce that NAMI is going to provide 6 weeks of parent training sessions on Saturday mornings at MJC. For a long time, these sessions have been offered, but were in Aurora and were too far for our families to participate. Thanks, too, to Kiwanis who support the babysitting that is going to be offered by Dominia York and Cady Hanson. This is truly great news.

Roller Skating for Students with Hearing Impairments

On February 28, from 12:00-2:00 at Funway in Batavia, the Teachers of the Hearing Impaired will be roller skating with their students. Sounds like a great time!

Save the Date and Think Spring! Student and Family Cougar Game—May 6th

Mark your calendars for Friday evening, May 6th for the Family Cougar Game! We had at least 30 folks there last year and we think it's a great idea to do it again! Watch your emails for more information soon. Play ball!

Next Steps Training: Self-Advocacy and Support—Keys to Independence

We are pleased to announce that our Next Steps Team (Amy Gately, Amy Penar, Kimberly Payne, Sandy Gearhart, Linda Koch, Meg Bingham, Melissa Jackson, and Kimberly Garcia) are hosting a Self-Advocacy Information Session for students, parents, and staff on February 18, from 6:00-8:30 at Day One Network in Geneva. This team has participated in special training sessions from the state and will be presenting very pertinent information for students of transition age. If you missed the flyer, please contact Amy Gately.

Project Dance: Fierce!

Sharon Jenkins' son, Tyson, the team captains, and the members of Team Polaris at St. Charles North High School are preparing for *Project Dance: Fierce*. This is their annual fundraiser that strives to raise money for the agencies and facilities that provide supports and services in our community for people with disabilities.

This is a family friendly dance that takes place at St. Charles North High School. I hope Mid-Valley teachers, staff, students, and parents can support this worthy cause that helps so many of our students. Friday, February 27, 1:00-5:00 St. Charles North High School.

News for Staff...

End of the Year Celebration: May 3rd

Mark your calendars for May 3rd at 3:30 for our End of the Year Celebration! We will be honoring our retirees, Sharon Reskey and Connie Miller; new staff (and their mentors); and staff who have achieved milestone years of service. It is a very special time and I hope to see all of you at the celebration!

Special Olympics

We have a huge team this year! There are 20 athletes who signed up at the parent meeting on Monday night! We are in search of helpers and coaches. The orientation meeting is February 22 at 5:30. Please contact Paulette Ollie or Kevin Molidor for more information. And, make sure you mark your calendars for May 1st to cheer our athletes on at the Regional Meet in Naperville.

Book Study

The Book Study for this month is Making Classrooms Better. So far, there are 13 folks in the study. It sounds like a wonderful read and a great follow-up to the last book. If you would like to catch up with the group (they've only met once), please contact Sandy Gearhart.

Student Growth and the Joint Committee

Please make sure that you collect information on your first student growth tool and are collecting regular data for your second pilot tool. The joint evaluation committee will need to have information about how the student growth relates to the 4 teacher rating categories: unsatisfactory, needs improvement, proficient or excellent. The committee's work must be completed by the beginning of May, so your information is crucial to our work.

Wellness Screenings

Once again, in conjunction with D303, wellness screenings are being offered from February 17 through March 16 on different dates and different locations. This screening can detect many treatable illnesses and is a great service to our staff. It should take about 30 minutes of your time and is far better than being sick! Register at <https://register.wellness-inc.com/district303> or call [866-935-5462](tel:866-935-5462).

Mental Health Partnership

We have been fortunate to participate in the Mental Health Partnership, a group of individuals who are very interested in improving awareness about mental illness and improving the coordination of services for students with mental illness. On February 29, there will be a special showing of the movie, Love and Mercy at the Arcada at 6:00. It is a special community event and a fund-raiser for service agencies. I've seen the movie before and it's a great story. I hope I will see you there.

Great News and Announcements...

Pilots

- The CERTS model of service delivery is being piloted at Fabyan in the New Pathways Program. It is a needs-based system of supports. Thanks to Jessica Antoniou for taking it on!
- iReady is a diagnostic system that has aligned instructional strategies for interventions. It is being piloted in the New Directions Program in the middle and high school programs. Thanks so much to Sandy Gearhart for searching out this great resource and for working with the staff to implement it.

March is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month

The Batavia High School ABLE class and their peer leaders are celebrating the Month of March as Cerebral Palsy Awareness month. According to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, March 25th is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day. Our peers last semester did an excellent job of making and promoting the "Just Say Hi" video. This semester's class wants to make green ribbons to pass out to the BHS student body the week of March 25th. They are currently making CP awareness posters and will be sharing some facts about CP on the daily announcements. We are asking everyone to wear green on March 25th to show your support for our Mid-valley students who have Cerebral Palsy.

The students in conjunction with 3E Love have created a shirt for themselves to wear on March 25th. We are extending the offer of purchasing the t-shirt or hoodie to all of Mid-valley programs, staff and students. If you wish to make a purchase please contact Althea Sawalksi for the order form. If you are unable to purchase a shirt we ask that you wear green or somehow promote awareness of cerebral palsy. Cerebral Palsy isn't contagious, but our smiles are.

April is Autism Awareness Month

The New Pathways staff will be highlighting Autism Awareness throughout the month of April. This year we have designed a new t-shirt in collaboration with 3eLove for us to wear to help bring awareness in our school communities. I am attaching the flier for anyone who would like to order a t-shirt. Also, if you feel it is appropriate, you may send fliers home with students for them or their families to order shirts as well. All orders and payments are due to Bethany Akers by Wednesday, March 2nd via cash or check. If anyone needs to write a check, please make it out to the MV Sunshine Committee.

Sandy Gearhart Goes to Kansas

We are so happy that Sandy was able to go to the Strategy Intervention Model (SIM) trainer of trainers sessions at the University of Kansas. She can back so enthusiastic and full of information, she was just about bursting. These sessions have made her an even more valuable resource for all of our classrooms!

Peer Leaders and ABLÉ Students Featured at Batavia Board of Education Meeting

Jeanne Danos spearheaded the “Just Say Hi” campaign at BHS. She and the peer leaders presented at a D101 Board meeting to celebrate the peer leaders! Pictures below.



Institute Day: March 4

March 4 will be an exciting Institute Day. A table listing all of the activities is included with this newsletter. Please contact your coordinator if you have any questions. The teaching assistants will be attending sessions in the morning. They are welcome to stay in the afternoon to continue your learning, but you are not required. Don't forget to wear your spirit wear! Please register on the website.

Transition Guidelines

Thanks so much for all of the Transition team members and administrators who worked so hard to establish guidelines for referrals to our Transition programs. We are very proud of this work. I have contacted other cooperatives and districts for their examples and ours is very impressive!

Think Summer! ESY!

All of the required forms and information about ESY is on the website under the ESY tab. Please make sure you review all of your students' needs and complete the necessary paperwork by the required deadlines. Remember to include the Services pages from PowerIEP with the student referral information.

Dates and Hours:	July 7 through August 4, 8:00-12:00 Mondays through Thursdays (No Fridays)
Three Locations:	MJC (Mades-Johnstone Center) The Shelby Transition Center Munhall Elementary School, St. Charles
Theme:	<i>All About Me! Health and Fitness</i>
Staff Deadlines:	MV Student Referral Information is due to respective coordinators by <u>March 18th</u>
Parent Deadlines:	Parent registration packets are the responsibility of the case manager or teacher and should be forwarded to the MV coordinator by <u>April 22nd</u>
Procedures/Forms:	Details for ESY procedures and forms are included on the web-site
Hiring:	MV will be hiring supervisors, teachers, teaching assistants, related service personnel, and secretaries. Hiring for available positions will begin in late March and will continue through May. Interested applicants should apply through the form on the web-site and not Applitrack or Kane County. <u>Even if you have worked for ESY in previous years, you must complete an application each year.</u> In order to be considered for employment, you must have completed the necessary certification requirements, including parapro requirements.

Needs Assessment

Thanks for completing the needs assessment. Results will be compiled soon and will help contribute to the annual comprehensive professional development plan.

Difficult to Test Clinic

The Difficult to Test Clinics are scheduled for this year. These clinics are for students whose vision abilities cannot be screened in a typical fashion. If you have questions or would like to schedule a student for this clinic, please contact Mary Jo Zampa, our Certified School Nurse.

Thinking Ahead to Next Year!

Mark your calendars for the following dates:

- August 15 Institute Day—SAIL, 12+ teachers; vocational and related staff
- August 17 Students start—SAIL, 12+
- August 15-18 New Staff Orientation Week
- August 17 PowerIEP Training for New Staff
- August 17 First Day for Students--BHS
- August 22 First Institute Day for most of the MV staff, including BHS staff
- August 24 Students start (most students)

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.

Purchasing Deadlines

The last day to submit purchase orders for expenses for the remainder of this school year will be March 26, the day before spring break. Please submit your orders to your coordinator prior to this date. Exceptions to this date will be rare.

You can also start to work with your coordinator to submit purchase orders for items that need to be purchased over the summer for the upcoming school year. After the Board approves the final budget (anticipated in June), these purchase orders will be processed. If there are changes to the budget, your coordinator will be informed regarding those anticipated purchases.

Move Requests

For this month, our next move date will be Thursday, February 25. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to **Bonnie Carlson** by **Monday, February 22**, so she 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.

No New Staff were hired in February!

IMPORTANT Deadlines

Several important deadlines are fast approaching. If any of the following apply to you, please notify Nancy 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: Jennifer Phillips (9); Maryann Domaracki (10), Beth Jasso (11), Josie Wallace (13), Christine Cotto (15), Kevin Molidor (15), Martha Egan (17), Melissa Mills (21), Mark Wallin (22), and Rudy Via (23). Happy Birthday!

Get Well Wishes

If there is anything we should do for any of our staff or students who are ill, we will let you know.

- Aidan Atkins. one of our NP students in Bethany Akers class, has been in the ICU at Christ Hospital with heart failure. The first procedure went well, but he was re-hospitalized for complications. Thanks to all of you for your thoughts and prayers for Aidan and his family.
- Michael Evola, a student in New Directions is also quite ill.
- Connie Miller (TA-SAIL) will probably have surgery after spring break.
- Carrie Fisher's (TA New Pathways, EC) mom is very ill.
- Leigh-Ann Huntley's (ELS MS) father has been ill. Leigh-Ann's father was once an administrator for Mid-Valley.

Our Sympathies to...

- Sue Steele's (TA New Pathways) brother-in-law passed away.
- Maura Burns' (Principal New Directions) grandmother passed away.

People News

Gina Banks (SAIL) will be doing the Polar Plunge again this year on March 6th to raise money for Special Olympics. Here is the link if you want to donate to her cause and a picture to remind you of what she will undertake! (Gina is in the black wig.)

<https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/FundraisingPage.aspx?registrationID=3203206&Referrer=https%3a%2f%2fsecure.e2rm.com%2fregistant%2fFundraisingPage.aspx%3fregistrationID%3d3200949%26langPref%3den-CA>



Program News



(Above) Here is a photo of Mirella (ABLE) enjoying her time with BEEMZ, a laser operated music program. Thanks so much to Rona Henne for setting the systems up in the ABLE classes.

Hear the Cheers!

From Sharon Jenkins: One of my students (Eliza) started a charity organization three years ago to help kids and their families purchase hearing aids because many families cannot afford them. Please see the information below. There are many kids still on the waiting list and it would be wonderful if they received new hearing aids in 2016.

From Eliza: Hear The Cheers is back for the 2016 edition! Once again, we are raising money to fund hearing aids and equipment because they aren't covered by insurance. In the past 3 years of Hear the Cheers you have helped us raise \$81,000 in funds and equipment! When a child is in need of hearing equipment and they have exhausted all other avenues they can go to our website on the Chicago Hearing Society and fill out an application. They may need a pair of hearing aids, one aid, an FM station or other equipment that helps them be able to Hear The Cheers and most importantly their teachers, friends and coaches! Thanks to all of your support we have been able to help 29 kids "Hear The Cheers". Even with your generous support the past three years, there are still children on our waiting list, waiting to "Hear The Cheers".

Here are a few of the children that Hear The Cheers has been able to help in the past three years.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYXbWuWEKaE>

*We hope you will consider making a donation this year to continue helping others!
 To donate go to www.chicagohearingsociety.org/hearthecheers*

And, the good news has spread to Batavia!

While in sixth grade, Eliza Peters, who is now a freshman at Geneva High School, teamed up with ESPN's Sarah Spain and the [Chicago Hearing Society](#) to develop a "Hear the Cheers" fund for student athletes who can't afford hearing devices. One of the recipients of the fund is Alice Gustafson Elementary School third-grade student Cate McLaughlin, who, along with other fund recipients, were featured in the recent "Hear the Cheers" video: "Our student was fortunate enough to receive an FM system through this grant," said Jennifer Erickson, who is Cate's teacher at AGS. "This helps her hear her friends, family, teachers, and coaches."

Professional Development Opportunities

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

- National Conference on the Training and Employment of Para-educators, April 1-3, Oak Brook
- Common Sense and Best Practice Facilitating Optimal Sensory Motor Skills in Children, March 4, Aurora

Final Thought

If things seem under control, you are just not going fast enough.

Mario Andretti

Isn't that just how you feel sometimes?? It is a super busy time, preparing for testing, final observations, parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, and all of the special touches you are providing for all of our students! Remember, it is better to be busy than bored! When I read through the newsletter items, I am just overwhelmed by what everyone is doing! Although we may be a little out of control, we are definitely going to win the race!