

Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



January, 2013

Notes from the Executive Director

You'll notice that I have a picture of a snowman on this newsletter! I'm finishing writing this newsletter when the weather folks were promising that there would be snow. No such luck so far. I really feel sorry for those of you who are parents with little ones. My kids (and my husband and I) always enjoyed being out in the snow! Here's hoping!

I hope all of your holidays were wonderful and that you have come back to work refreshed and rejuvenated. Even though it has only been a week, it seems like it was a long time ago!

Website

With thanks to Bonnie, our website has a new look! Special features include a calendar of upcoming events, a staff directory, and very clear locations for every form that you need! All staff information (including forms) is on the staff pages. At this time, if you are accessing your email from home or another location, you can go to the D303 website and click on the staff link for MVSEC. However, in the near future, this link will be removed. So, just access your email via mvse.org.

Holiday Thanks!

A huge thanks to Jean Schultz, MaryAnn Domaracki, Sue Caddy, Meg Bingham, Myra Stinson, Johnny Johnston, and Phaedra McLaughlin for delivering all the food and gifts for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Jean did over 10 deliveries by herself. Also, a huge thanks to Ginger Rohde and Jean Schultz for helping at MJC when the church dropped off the food and gifts. They both jumped up to help Phaedra carry in over 125 boxes of food and gifts into the building.

More Holiday Thanks!

Thanks once again to the Sunshine Committee and everyone who came to the Holiday Party and the Cookie Exchange. We had a wonderful time and really appreciate everything everyone did to make it so much fun! It is a little strange to me to see that all of the horrific holiday decorations have landed in my office! I have a whole year to make evil plans for that stuff, so be warned!

Upcoming Bowling in Event in March

Mark your calendars now for the Bowling Party in March (8th or the 15th). Families are welcome to join us at this event. More information will be coming soon.

MVSEC Spirit Wear

We're so happy that Natalie and Paige have found such a great resource for MVSEC Spirit Wear. I am attaching the information from Natalie once again. You may see the samples (and even try them on) at the MJC office. Orders are due at the end of this month and may be sent to Phaedra.

New Directions Eagle

I'm also attaching the latest edition of the MJC Eagle. So many great things are happening in the New Directions and Safe Schools Program, I thought you'd just like to read the whole newsletter yourself. Thanks so much to Johnny Johnston, Ginger Rhode, and Paul Scanlon for helping the students with this great project.

Parent Forum

Our next Parent Forum will be January 31 at 6:30. We're still working on finding a speaker. The flyer should be ready this week. We will be counting on you to get the word out to your parents!

Annual Needs Assessment

In the next few days, you will be receiving a link to complete a needs assessment for all of Mid-Valley staff. This includes certified, licensed, and non-certified staff. The survey asks about professional development and program needs. It is an important part of our overall comprehensive plan and is a repeat of the survey from last year. It is a requirement of the federal funding that we receive. Please take about 15 minutes of your valuable time to provide us with your thoughts and insights so that we can better plan for the cooperative. The survey is open until February 16.

Parent Survey

A part of the needs assessment is a survey for parents. For those parents for whom we have email addresses, we will be sending it directly to them electronically. We will send all other parents a paper copy via the administrative offices. Parents may send them back to us or they may return them with their student. If you receive any surveys, just send them over to Bonnie. Of course, parents may access this survey via the MVSE website or they also may request a paper copy, if they were sent an email link. Please include the importance of this information in your newsletters to parents.

Workboxes

With the help of Nicole Claeson, Amy Rogers and Kim Payne, Sandy Gearhart has reorganized, reassembled and inventoried all of our existing workboxes! They are all located in Room 4 of MJC and are available for you to check them out. We are now looking for all of the other MV workboxes that you may have in your rooms so that we can place them on the inventory as well. I will be sending out an email to the teachers who generally use the workboxes with the inventory

so that you can respond to Sandy with this information. We are also looking for ideas for additional workboxes, so please let her know as soon as possible so we can start the process.

Book Study

The MV Book Study group has finished their first book. Sandy G. is looking for new suggestions for the next study, so get back to her with your ideas as soon as possible at Sandra.Gearhart@303.org.

Down's Syndrome Video

Mackenzie Hack has passed along a video that was shared by a classroom parent. The video tells the true life experiences and knowledge regarding children with Down Syndrome. It explains the many behaviors and characteristics that are often associated with DS that many people may question or misunderstand. This video can be used as a great tool to share knowledge about Down Syndrome with the general education students and staff. It is truly inspiring, thought provoking, and insightful! Thanks, Mackenzie!

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M--xOyGUX4>

AID Telethon Performers Needed

Answer the call! Singers, dancers, and musicians are wanted for the annual AID Telethon. This live broadcast event will benefit more than 5,000 special needs children and adults in the Fox Valley area. We would be thrilled to have you join us at the 18th annual AID Telethon on March 16, 2013. This live ten-hour event will be broadcast live from Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove; it airs on local cable television stations and streams on the [AID website](#). Contact wbialek@the-association.org for a registration form and more information.

Move Requests

For this month, our next move date will be Thursday, January 31. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to **Bonnie Carlson** by **Monday, January 28** 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.

Think Summer! ESY!

Dates and Hours: July 8-August 1, 2013, 8:00-12:00
Mondays through Thursdays (No Fridays)
This year, the hours have been extended and the weeks shortened to accommodate necessary building repairs.

Three Locations: MJC (Mades-Johnstone Center)
The Shelby Transition Center
A St. Charles School District Location TBD

Theme: ***All About Me!***

Staff Deadlines: MV Student Referral Information is due to respective coordinators by March 15

- Parent Deadlines: Parent registration packets are the responsibility of the case manager or teacher and should be forwarded to the MV coordinator by April 15th
- 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. Even if you have worked for ESY in previous years, you must complete an application each year. In order to be considered for employment, you must have completed the necessary certification requirements, including parapro requirements.

New Staff in January

There were no new staff added in the month of December.

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.

- Feb. 1: Employees on leave of absence must inform MVSEC of their intention to return to work (MVSEA & TASC)
- Feb. 1: Certified staff members seeking a leave of absence must inform MVSEC of their intention for the upcoming school year (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Full-time, tenured staff members may request a reduction to a part-time position (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Part-time staff members intending to continue part-time must provide written notice (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Individuals who wish to job share must jointly apply (MVSEA)
- Feb. 1: Employees may notify their desire for a change in their caseload assignment for the upcoming school year (TASC)
- Feb. 1: Employees may request a change in FTE status for the upcoming school year (TASC)

- 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)

Case Manager Reminder

If your IEP meeting schedule changes, please notify **all** of your related service providers. They often have many students and we don't want them to have a conflict or miss your rescheduled meeting!

Birthdays!

Happy January birthday wishes to: Linda Hensel, Karin Alber, Kathi Wieringa, Jen Haney, Donna Popelka, Paul Scanlon, Dianne Zedonis, Ray Ziegler, Rebekah Lehman, Theresa Baier, Johnny Johnston, JoAnn Pikula, Meg Bingham, Terri Edwards, and Grace Molina. Happy Birthday!

Thoughts and Prayers...Get Well Wishes

Beth Bosak's husband had a somewhat successful surgery and will be continuing with follow-up at Mayo clinic.

Jeff Baker and Jody Harrington have both had surgeries in the past few weeks. We send them both wishes for speedy recoveries.

Over the break, Paige McNulty's sons were sick and Lucas was in the intensive care unit (he is fine now), Paige's step-mom was diagnosed and is being treated for cancer. Her father had serious heart surgery and her husband went in for heart surgery as well. Keep them all (and Paige) in your prayers.



Lucas and Santa in the hospital.

Our Sympathies to...

Diane Rathgeber and Gail Feltault's sister-in-law passed away after a long battle with cancer in early December.

Mary Ann Domaracki's step father passed away the Wednesday before break. His name is J. Dean McQueen. Mary Ann was able to spend time in New Berlin to be with her family.

Ann Water's father-in-law passed away over the holidays. We're sending our sympathies to Ann and her husband.

People News

Trish Klein is expecting twins!

David Simone has accepted a teaching position in Korea end of January!

Congratulations to Myra Stinson who has just achieved her National Board Certification!

Congratulations to Joyce Laben who just defended her dissertation and earned her doctorate at NIU!



On 12/26/12, Linda Koch's most recent grandchild, Quinn Stone was born. She weighed 8 pounds and was 21 inches long. She has red hair and blue grey eyes. Mom and baby are doing great. This is a picture of her going home from the hospital.

Biggest Loser Club

We have about 11 people who have joined our biggest loser club. There is still time if you are interested. Just contact Bonnie. Remember, only 9 weeks until spring break!

Program News

Drama in December in Meg Bingham's New Directions Classroom



Mrs. Bingham's Busy Bees have been focused on "Drama in December". Not that awful kind that happens on T.V. or in the lunch rooms at other schools - real, live drama – the theater, if you please! We read a play called "The Bremen Town Musicians". This inspired us to try our hand at performing a play. We had to learn about parts in a script, scenes in a play, scenery and stage directions. We also made masks with the help of Mr. Scanlon, our **amazing** art teacher! He created masks that each child could paint for his/her costume.

In addition to reading a play and trying to perform a play, we also had the great privilege to go on a field trip to the magnificent Paramount Theatre in Aurora. There we saw a professional production of the Broadway musical, Annie. What an amazing and inspiring show! The students came back with lots of ideas about how to improve our little play.

A final source of inspiration was our read-aloud book this month. We read about what it is like to be in a school play in the hectic month of December. An elementary classic, "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" was the spark for many discussions about behavior in rehearsals, auditions for parts and how the show must go on...no matter what!

They also created an "e-book". Although we had a few glitches (announcements, etc.), I think the students did a wonderful job with the archaic language constructions and very challenging vocabulary. You may view it on <http://www.showme.com/sh/?h=frqX1Ps>



Mackenzie Hack's 3-5 Pals classroom participated in the Kaneland Holiday Spirit event during the month of December. The class was able to sponsor two young children from the Kaneland area due to generous donations from classroom parents and staff. After receiving each child's holiday wish list that consisted of functional and desired requests, the students took a field trip to Wal-Mart to shop for the necessary items. They practiced using a picture supported shopping list to find the appropriate items and used their money skills to purchase the items. Overall, the field trip went great and hopefully helped brighten the holidays for two young children!

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.

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

January 13 and 14th Autism Touchback

January 17 iPad Touchback

February 7 Autism Training #3

February 12 iPad Touchback

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

- Illinois Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders Conference, February 1-2, Lisle
- How Does Your Engine Run? Introductory Alert Program, February 1, Eisenhower Cooperative, Crestwood
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication Case Study Discussion and Lab, Kathleen Post, February 11, Kishwaukee College, Malta
- Boys in Crisis, Rachel's Challenge, February 13, Eisenhower Cooperative, Crestwood
- Embedding SEL into a PBIS Framework, February 19, Eisenhower Cooperative, Crestwood

Final Thought

**If you want to test your memory,
try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today.
E. Joseph Cossman**

What a fabulous sentiment! It just reminds us to focus on the important things and move ahead! I hope that this year brings you all a lot of personal and professional satisfaction and that you don't worry too much! Happy New Year!