

# Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



## January, 2016

### Notes from the Executive Director

Happy mid-January already! I hope you are all well on your way to accomplishing your New Year's Resolutions! I think maybe I'll have time to think about resolutions maybe in February! As you know, my goal is my son's wedding in July. I can't wait and am so happy for him.

We've all been awaiting St.Charles D303 Board of Education's decision about school closings. At last Monday's meeting, they decided not to close any schools. We are still unsure what impact that will have on some of the decisions they are making for students in the cooperative, but we should know soon. Regarding New Directions, we are receiving quite a few referrals from districts outside of our member districts, so we're hopeful that our numbers will be about the same. Unfortunately, this is the nature of living in a cooperative. From year to year, we always have to revisit all of our programs and services. We will keep you informed as soon as we know any further information.

### Annual Needs Assessment

We have updated some of the questions on the annual needs assessment, with new questions regarding autism, assistive technology and behavior. It is really important that we have your input as we plan for professional development opportunities for our upcoming years. This survey includes certified, licensed, and non-certified staff. 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. Just go to the website and click on the survey!

### Parent Survey

A part of the needs assessment is a survey for parents. For those parents for whom we have email addresses, we have sent it directly to them electronically. We will send all other parents a paper copy via the administrative offices, if they request it. 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 as well. Please include the importance of this information in your newsletters to parents.

### Mandatory Crisis Prevention Institute Training (CPI)—January 25 or 26

If you are a new staff member (or a returning staff member whose certification has lapsed), you must attend the initial CPI training on January 25 or the refresher training on January 26. Sign-up to attend via our website (mvse.org) on the professional development calendar. If you have questions, please contact your immediate supervisor.

### Upcoming Professional Development

All details about professional development, mentor meetings, department meetings are available on the website (mvse.org) by clicking on the calendar button on the right side of the page. **Please register via the website for all of the events. Just click on the event on the calendar on our website (mvse.org).**

The Transition Network is scheduled for January 28.

Information on the upcoming Institute Day for March 4 will be coming in a separate email from me. Once you receive it, you should all register for the assigned sessions using the information in the paragraph above.

### Family Bingo Night!!!!

Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative is excited to host its first annual Basket Raffle and Family Bingo night on Friday, February 26th!

The basket raffle will take place in the MJC gym at the Mades Johnstone Center and there will be refreshments and Bingo throughout the event. To ensure there are plenty of items to raffle off for our students and so they can enjoy the excitement of the evening, we are asking each classroom to team up to create a basket(s) to add to the raffle. Donations are optional. Any donation—small or large—is appreciated. Your social worker will provide you with all the details. They have all the answers if you have questions, too!

### Special Olympics

This year, we are planning to have another Track and Field team of students K-8<sup>th</sup> grades with intellectual disabilities. We are hosting a parent orientation session on February 8. Parents can sign up via our website: mvse.org/professional development. We are also hosting a coach/helper session on February 22. Everyone should mark their calendars for May to attend the regional meet. I promise it will be warmer in May! The flyers for both parents and coach/helpers are attached to this newsletter. For more information, please contact Paulette Ollie.

### Cruise Night

Our Sunshine Committee has been busily planning our monthly events so we can all get to know each other better. This month's adventure will be in St. Charles on February 21. Please come and bring along any new staff who have joined us this year. We want them to feel like they're a part of the family!

### Take Me Out to the Ballgame!

Save the Date for June 5<sup>th</sup> when we will have a staff, family outing at the Cougar stadium!! Remind your parents many times!

### Wellness Checks

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).

### End the R Word Grant

Congratulations to Paulette Ollie who has just been awarded \$500 for Fox Ridge's Town Hall event focusing on differences in response to the End the R Word campaign. The money will allow them to purchase books for every group and then any supplies or rewards that we want to purchase to support the follow through from the book!

The End the R word campaign is a nation-wide awareness day to make people aware of how hurtful the word retarded can be. Wednesday, March 2nd is the official End the R word Day with younger kids we focus more on respecting individual differences instead of teaching them the R word. The Get In To It program provides a variety of lesson plans and ideas if you want to do any activities with your students.

Here is the link <https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/>

There is also the End the R Word website where there is information and ideas also. Here is that link <http://www.r-word.org/> Pinterest also has numerous ideas about what other schools have done. I hope you are able to find a little way to help to end the use of the R word.

### We're Looking for a Few Good Teaching Assistants

We have the opportunity to send a few teaching assistants to a national teaching assistant conference held this year in Chicago in May. We are looking for some folks from our fine teaching assistant staff to attend and possibly share information with other teaching assistants at a later date. If you are interested, please contact Carla by the end of January. Thanks!

### Substitutes Needed!!!—Orientation February 11

As we reported to the Board last month, so far this year, we have had 226 unfilled absences in our teacher and teaching assistant positions. Of course, this many absences compromises what we are able to do with our students. So, we are watching our absences and heavily recruiting for substitutes. The Board has also allowed us to hire a permanent substitute primarily for the New

Pathways and New Directions Program. If you know of anyone who may be interested in a teaching assistant or teacher substitute, please have them attend the Orientation Session on February 11 or contact Nancy Sporer.

### Case Manager Reminder

Especially with possible cold/snow days, 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!

### Move Requests

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

### Think Summer! ESY!

Dates and Hours:	July 11-August 4, 2016, 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:	<b>TBD</b>
Orientation	June 28 and 29 (teachers and therapists), June 29 (everyone)
Staff Deadlines:	MV Student Referral Information is due to respective coordinators by <u>March 25</u> (Right before Spring Break for most of you)
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.

### New Staff in January

Tracy O'Higgins is a new TA at MJC; Jamie Potts is a new TA in the New Pathways Program at Fabyan; Lindsay McEachern is a new TA in the CLASS Program at Harrison Street; and, Cady Hanson is our new primary teacher in the New Directions Program. Welcome, everyone!

### 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.

- 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)

### Birthdays!

Happy January birthday wishes to: Linda Hensel (1), Carla Hart (1), Karin Alber (3), Lela Frantzen (6), Megan Dickey (10), Paul Scanlon (15), Dianne Zedonis (17), Ryan Potter (21), Dana Brosso (22), Theresa Baier (26), Johnny Johnston (26), Althea Sawalski (26), JoAnne Pikula (26), Meg Bingham (29), Magen McCarthy (29), Terri Edwards (30) and Maura Burns (31). Happy Birthday!

### Thoughts and Prayers...Get Well Wishes

- Jeanne Schultz (PE New Directions) had surgery for her shoulder.
- Joanne Carrington-Warren's (Teacher, New Directions) father has been ill, but is on the mend now.
- Denise Quechol's (AA for Business) son, Reuben had surgery right after the holidays and is doing very well!

### Our Sympathies to...

Adam Marszuk, one of our students in the New Directions Program whose brother passed away on Christmas Eve.

### People News

We're happy to report that Trish Klein (Teacher, New Pathways) has returned to duty!



Jen Traub (TA, New Directions) gave birth to Margaret in December!

### Program News



Cullan D. was Walgreen's Employee of the Month! They call him Big C! Cullan worked at Walgreens in Aurora as part of our work training program during the 2014-15 school year. At the end of the 2015 school year, Cullan was hired at the Geneva Walgreens where he worked one or 2 days per week stocking the store. Since then he has learned to run the register and now works several days per week.

Karen Belich asked one of the store managers how they determine who will be employee of the month. He replied that the management staff get together and determine which employee has gone above and beyond for Walgreens. In December, it was Cullan! All of us at SAIL are extremely proud of Cullan. The confidence Cullan has gained from the time he was hired is incredible to see.

---

Thanks to a Grant from the Health Department, New Playground Equipment at MJC---They love it!! (Below)







Student Spotlight: Jeremy Minner







### From the Batavia High School Website

Jeremy Minner is one special senior. He's part of the [Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative](#) at Batavia High School and is in the Ability Based Learning and Education (ABLE) program. Jeremy has Cerebral Palsy, which affects his motor functioning, including oral functioning.

Just like any other student, Jeremy goes to school every day to learn new skills and grow academically and socially. Jeremy's team of dedicated teachers and aids are from Mid-Valley, but work at Batavia High School. He's also supported by BHS students, called "peer leaders." Peer Leaders work one on one with ABLE students by doing crafts, playing board games, cooking, reading, etc., during their gym block.

Jeremy recently played a role in the [BHS video](#) "Just Say Hi," which is based on the Cerebral Palsy Foundation's [Just Say Hi videos](#). The videos address the uneasiness and hesitation some might feel around people with physical and intellectual disabilities. The campaign encourages everyone to strike up a conversation just as you would with anyone else.

Jeremy recently took time out of his school day to not only say hi, but also answer a few questions. Read on ...

#### **What advice would you give to someone on *how* and *how not* to approach someone with a disability?**

I like it when people say hi to me in the hall. Sometimes I have my voice output speech button and I use my head switches to say hi. Sometimes, I can say hi with my voice. I don't like it when I say hi and people just walk on by.

#### **What's your favorite thing about being a BHS student?**

I love hanging out with my friends. I like going to band and listening to the drums. Sometimes they let me play the timpani drum. I sit and direct with the music.

#### **What kinds of activities do you do with your BHS student/peer leaders?**

I go to band, choir, and orchestra class throughout my week. My favorite is band. I go to the gym and we play different games like volleyball using a beach ball. My peer leaders help me move my arms and my wheelchair. On Thursdays, we go to the field house for walking club. Sometimes my friends push me fast, slow, or backwards. It's fun!

**What type of assistive device(s) do you use at school and how do they help you?**

I can use my voice to talk, but sometimes it's hard to be loud enough. I have head switches on my wheelchair to use with a voice output button. I am hopefully getting a voice output tablet in January, which will be much cooler than my current button.

**The "Just Say Hi" video was terrific! What involvement did you have in the creation of it?**

I was interviewed by the peer leaders and I said, "Just say hi." My teachers wanted me to speak up, so they sent my friend Brad out of the room and had me yell, "hi!" really loud. That part made it into the video.

**What's your favorite movie and why?**

At home, I like to watch "How It's Made" with my dad. I'm looking forward to seeing the new "Star Wars" movie.

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.

- Illinois council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2016 Conference, February 5-6, Lisle.
- Sensory Processing in the School Setting for Teachers and Therapists, Winnie Dunn, February 9, Tinley Park.
- Multi-Modal Communication and Learning Strategies for Children Who Face Significant Challenges, Linda Burkhard, February 29-March 1, Glendale Heights.
- Social Thinking Across the Home and School Day: The ILAUGH Model, Nancy Clements, May 2, Chicago.
- The Social Thinking Informal Dynamic Assessment and Core Treatment Strategies, Nancy Clements, May 3, Chicago.
- Thinking about YOU Thinking about Me, Michelle Garcia Winner, May 4, Chicago.
- Implementing Social Thinking Concepts and Vocabulary: A Day to Develop Team Creativity, Michelle Garcia Winner, May 5, Chicago.
- Case-by-Case: Using Videos and Guided Observation to Develop Social Thinking Targets, Michelle Garcia Winner, Pamela Crooks, May 6, Chicago.

Final Thought

There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called yesterday and the other is called tomorrow, so today is the right day to love, believe, do, and mostly live.

The Dalai Lama

So, that's mostly my thoughts about New Year's resolutions. It's a good idea to plan, but mostly, we need to live each day like it's the only one we have. I'm sending you all my very best wishes for a happy, healthy, productive and wonderful 2016!