

# Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



## March, 2015

### Notes from the Executive Director

Well, March has been quite a month so far! I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and perseverance in learning all of the new assessment systems and procedures. Thanks especially to Jeanne Schultz who organizes and administers all of the ACT testing. And, thanks to Melissa Jackson and Linda Koch who are both helping so much with the administrative aspects of PARCC and DLM. *Irish blessings on you all!*

On a more serious note, from time to time, I will be sending you information from different organizations regarding impending changes in the state budgets regarding children, students, and citizens with disabilities. I believe that information sharing and advocacy are part of a special education cooperative's mission. It doesn't matter what political affiliation you may have. I just think that we should all be aware and take action if compelled to do so.

### End of the Year Celebration: May 14<sup>th</sup>

Mark your calendars for May 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 for our End of the Year Celebration! We will be honoring our retirees, Lynn Chassee, Phyllis Markovic, Ami Burgess, Donna Popelka, Hope Moore, new staff (and their mentors); and staff who have achieved milestone years of service. I hope to see all of you at the celebration!

### Educator of the Year

Fingers crossed for our nominee, Melissa Jackson! Thanks to all of you who contributed letters and pictures. Her application book is 68 pages long and is truly a wonderful testament to her dedication. The banquet is at the Q Center in St. Charles on Friday, May 1. I think the tickets are approximately \$35 per person. I will send out ticket information as soon as it arrives. I'm sure that Melissa would love to have many of you attend.

### Community Days

Thanks to all of you who contributed and/or sold coupon booklets for MV's Community Days. In all, we made a little over \$300. Instead of contributing to WeatherBug, we will be contributing to the Sunshine/Giving Fund with these donations.

### Parent Forum

We are pleased to announce that about 20 parents have signed up for the upcoming Parent Forum on Toilet Training on March 26 from 6:00-8:00. At the same time, the session on Limit Setting will also occur. So far, we have no registrations for that session. If you need further information, please contact your program's social worker.

### Autism Awareness

*Mark your calendars for April 9<sup>th</sup>, the cooperative's Autism Awareness event! I believe we're going to wearing blue hair again, this time with two hairdressers!*

Trish Klein (New Pathways) reported that at Western Avenue, each grade level selects a community service project for the year. This year, 4th grade has chosen Autism Awareness. Attached are the outlines of what is going to be happening in April. :)

- Bulletin Board—Famous People with Autism (6)
- Presentation to Classrooms “What is Autism?” (22)  
2-3 Presenters per class along with Mrs. Klein and students from her class  
Teachers could sign up for slots  
Work out schedule for presentations w/4th grade teachers....perhaps during 4th grade recess?  
Mrs. Klein will send info for the students to use to write their 2-3 minute presentation  
Do presentations the first week back from spring break to kick off the month.
- Wear Blue on Wednesdays (all 4th)
- Autism Awareness Weekly Announcements (8)  
Have 4th grade students make an announcement each Tuesday afternoon of the month.  
Give a fact about Autism and remind everyone to wear blue.

I encourage everyone when you have some time to look at the information on this site (Light It Up Blue) and also information on the Autism Society of America site. See link below.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/world-autism-awareness-day>

### Vocational Services

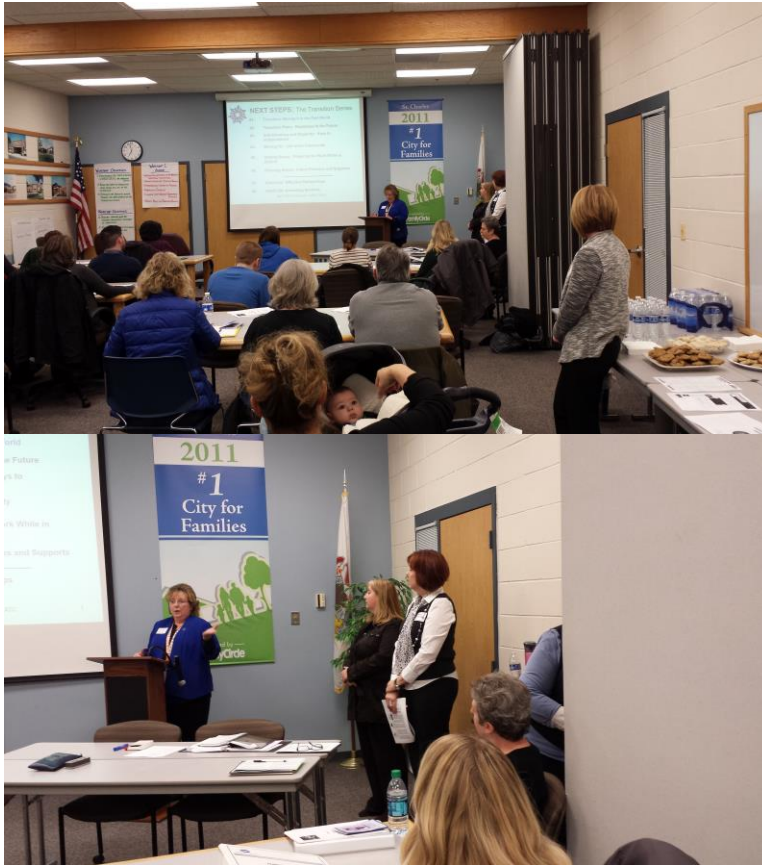
Linda Koch and Sandy Gearhart presented to the Board about vocational services on March 4. It is a major outcome of all of our programs and services. Briefly, here are the numbers (not including the New Directions students at this time):

- 56 students are in work training or community sites
- 23 students attend post-secondary schooling
- 24 students are in employer-paid positions
- 8 (now 6) students are in paid internship opportunities

These numbers represent many hours of preparation by the teachers, assistants, vocational facilitators, job coaches, for all of these students' educational lives. Excellent work!!!

### Next Steps Training

Our Next Steps Team (Amy Gately, Amy Penar, Kimberly Payne, Sandy Gearhart, Linda Koch and Melissa Jackson) did a fabulous job with their first (of 8) Transition Information Sessions for students, parents, and staff on February 24. The next one will be April 28. Please let your parents know about this great opportunity. Each session is a stand-alone session, so if they come to the next one, it will be packed full of more information! Pictures below:



### Institute Day

A huge thank you to Karin Alber and Jennifer Phillips for a great Institute Day last month. In all, arrangements were made for 289 Mid-Valley and District staff!

### License Renewal

Educators can only renew starting April 1st of their renewal year. Therefore, those that are up for renewal ON June 30, 2015 must wait until April 1, 2015 to enter your professional development and complete the renewal process. Those up for renewal in 2016 must wait until April 1, 2016. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Regional Office of Education's main office at [630-232-5955](tel:630-232-5955) or visit the licensure portion of our website at [kaneroe.org](http://kaneroe.org). Remember that the law has changed and you are supposed to enter your CPDUs within 60 days of obtaining them.

### Hear the Cheers

The Hear the Cheers fundraising campaign is up and running for the month of March. This philanthropic campaign was started by one of Sharon Jenkins' students and her parents when they realized how expensive hearing aids can be and that they are not covered by insurance companies. Sharon shared the link to an article in the Chicago Tribune that features her work and two more of her Geneva students who have benefitted from this campaign.

For more information and to donate, go to [www.chicagohearingsociety.org](http://www.chicagohearingsociety.org) and click on the Hear the Cheers link on the right side.

Article:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/batavia-geneva-st-charles/news/ct-tri-hear-the-cheers-hearing-aids-geneva-tl-0305-20150226-story.html>



## Special Olympics

We're off and running! This year we have 7 athletes and 9 coaches/helpers: Gina Banks, Kevin Molidor, Rona Henne, Michael Henne, Jason Ollie, Billy (don't know his last name), Keith and Carla Cumblad, and Paulette Ollie, who is heading up the operation. It is really just such a great time! We are just waiting for the snow to melt so we can practice our running and throwing outside! Come cheer us on at the Regional Track and Field Event on April 26 (Sunday) at North Central College in Naperville. The Opening Ceremonies are at 9:00.







### Electronic IEP Change

The Board approved our contract with PowerIEP. We are very excited about this change! We are currently working with NetIEP to help us with the transition. We are also trying to plan for the staff training. You will be hearing more about that in the next few months.

### Spring Testing Reminders

- The window for the End of the Year DLM Assessment has been expanded. The dates are now March 16-May 8.
- PARCC Testing for End of Year (EOY-required) is April 27-May 22.

### Upcoming Mid-Valley Professional Development

- April 10: Psychology/Social Work Network: Chemical Dependency
- April 22: Transition Network

### Think Summer! ESY!

Dates and Hours: July 6-July 30, 2015, 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: ***Air! Land! Water!***

Staff Deadlines: **MV Student Referral Information is due to respective coordinators by March 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Parent Deadlines:** **Parent registration packets are the responsibility of the case manager or teacher and should be forwarded to the MV coordinator by April 17<sup>th</sup>**

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.

#### Technology Inventory Confirmation

Thanks so much to all of you who have submitted your technology inventory. It is very helpful to us as we plan for what we need to purchase. For those of you who haven't turned it in yet, please do so by Spring Break to Bonnie.

#### Difficult to Test Clinic

The Difficult to Test Clinics are scheduled for March 18 and April 29. 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 10 Institute Day—SAIL
- August 12 Students start—SAIL
- August 10-13 New Staff Orientation Week
- ~~August 12 PowerIEP Training for New Staff—This date has changed.~~
- August 14 Institute Day--BHS
- August 17 First Institute Day for most of the MV staff
- August 19 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.

Also, we are anticipating that there will need to be some kind of training opportunities for all staff regarding the new IEP system. We may be hosting sessions right before school starts. More information will be coming out once we have a firm professional development plan.

### Purchasing Deadlines

The last day to submit purchase orders for expenses for the remainder of this school year will be March 28, 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 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 for the upcoming school year.

### Move Requests

For this month, our next move date will be Thursday, March 26. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to **Bonnie Carlson** by **Monday, March 23** 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.

### Journals

As a cooperative, we are members of the Council for Exceptional Children. We receive many pertinent journals with our membership. The table of contents are attached along with this newsletter. If you are interested in any of the articles, just contact Bonnie who will scan a copy to you!!

### New Staff in February

Mary Gonzalez was hired as a teaching assistant in the Blackberry Creek ELS program. Welcome!

### Birthdays!

Happy March birthday wishes to: Steve Haugen (7), Judy Robinson (9), Ginger Rohde (13), Sharon Reskey (15), Chris Boers (17), Jana Franklin (17), Trish Klein (28), Christine Phillips (28), and Kate Vincent (31). Happy Birthday!

### Our Sympathies

- Elizabeth O'Brien, a student in Leigh Ann Huntley's class just lost her mother to cancer. Our sympathies are with the whole family.
- Tim Stoudt's older brother, Denny, passed away suddenly two weeks ago.
- Beth Jasso's grandmother passed away last week. The services are in Alabama.

You are all in our hearts.

### Get Well Wishes to...

- Anne Waters who had surgery at the end of last month.



## People News

Gina Banks did the Polar Plunge again and look! It turned her hair black!



## Program News

### *Student Interns*

We are so proud of the SAIL and 12+ students who interviewed and obtained internships with manufacturing companies. 6 of them have received their first official paycheck. Below are pictures of them waiting for their interviews and working with their mentors. Thanks so much to Sandy Gearhart for finding and following-through on this new and exciting opportunity for our students.





### Baby Shower

The SAIL students arranged a baby shower for Kristin Dean. The students planned the luncheon, made the cake, decorated two classrooms, shopped for gifts, and most importantly kept it a secret from Kristin for over a month! A good time was had by all!





### 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.*

- April 29, Finding the Gray: Autism Seminar, Effective Interventions for Home and School Environments, Tim Wahlberg, Dixon, Illinois
- May 16, Putting the Zones into Practice, An Advanced Day of Training, Leah Kuypers, Schaumburg

### Final Thought

**May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you are going, and the insight to know when you have gone too far.**

I just have to end the newsletter with one more Irish saying. The Irish certainly can get it right when it comes to sayings and proverbs! It looks like I better wish you a Happy St. Patrick's day and send my wishes for a safe and fun spring break at the same time. It seems that time is really slipping away from me! Spring Break is only 2 weeks away now. Thanks as always for hanging in there during "March Madness". C.