

# Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



## September, 2013

### Notes from the Executive Director

Welcome to the beginning of another school year! It has been a very busy start! I am happy to report that we are just about where we were projected to be with our student enrollment. That is up overall across the cooperative. We “lost” about 19 students before the beginning of school, but have “gained” another 18! Thanks to everyone, including our district partners, for your patience and flexibility as we work out all the arrangements.

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

I hope to see you all at Mid-Valley’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on September 12, from 3:30-6:00 at MJC. The program will start at 4:30. There will be refreshments, slide shows, and a time for sharing and visiting. Please invite families and former staff. It should be a very special time.

### Strategic Plan

As we discussed on Opening Day, we have a comprehensive Strategic Plan. On September 4, I updated it and shared it with the Board. We have already accomplished many tasks together. You can see the areas of emphasis for this year in the highlights. The updated Strategic Plan is on the website under Board information.

Our overarching goals:

- 1. Provide quality programs and services for member district students*
- 2. Improve networking, communication, and collaboration among stakeholder groups*
- 3. Establish and maintain efficient operations*
- 4. Provide meaningful and effective professional development and support for MV and district staff*
- 5. Promote advocacy, vision, and leadership for students with special needs, staff who serve them and families who love them*

### A Note of Thanks: Starting School

We have so many people to thank for all of the summer activities to prepare for the start of school! (Please excuse me if I've forgotten anyone!)

- Carolyn Viereckl was so excited to have attended a mentoring conference over the summer and came back with terrific ideas for mentor training. Then, she got sick on the planned day! We sincerely appreciate all of her efforts and her organization!
- Members of the New Directions staff came in to revise and adapt their behavior management system.
- Bonnie, Sandy, and Karin for all the summer details: letters, transportation, hiring, etc!
- Linda Koch, Melissa Jackson, and I (with the assistance of the other administrators) planned and conducted New Staff Week.
- Natalie Assell who shared some behavior management tips with our paraprofessionals and the paraprofessionals from Kaneland.
- Thanks to Deb Sall and Melissa who conducted a discrete trial training for MV and district staff.
- Thanks to Rona who hosted a "switch training for our ABLE and ELS staff.
- And, our New Pathways staff (almost all) participated in the STARS curriculum training. We're so excited to see how that program helps the students (and staff!).
- Thanks to the SAIL and vocational staff who spent many, many hours planning and scheduling over 60 students in the transition program!
- This list doesn't begin to mention the countless hours that each of you have spent in preparation for the school year. Thanks so much!

### While we're thanking...ESY

Thanks again to Jen Haney, Phaedra McLaughlin, Sandy Gearhart, Diane Berg and all of the staff who worked during the summer to provide ESY services for 264 enrolled students. The parent surveys were extremely positive. They liked everything about ESY, even the transportation and the condensed time frame!

### Opening Day and Week

We think Opening Day was a great success. Thanks to everyone who helped make the days successful and productive, especially Bonnie. This was her first time through a summer with us and she's still here! We loved being at the Arcada and watching a movie together. We'll see if we can do it again. That CD has other short films, resources, and dialogue guides available for staff meetings. Just let me know if you'd like to borrow the CD.

### Family Picnic

Opening Week ended with another very successful Family/Staff Picnic. We had approximately 90 guests and it was a wonderful time. Parents commented on how special it was to have something just for them. Thanks to Chris Morris, her girls and the administrative team who helped plan and set-up for the event. And, as always, thanks for the music provided by Mr. Mike!

### Introducing our Summer Hires...

- Nancy Sporer started as our new Director of Business and Human Resources.
- Jackie Vivoli was just hired this week to be a part-time addition to our behavior/autism technical assistance team. She will be primarily serving as a behavioral consultant to the districts.
- Tricia Sbiathne is one of our new SLPs. The Board approved this increase last spring!
- Anne Santanelo is our other new SLP!
- Amanda White will be our third new SLP coming from a contract agency.
- Josh Axelsen is our new Vocational Facilitator for the New Directions Program.
- Sandy Gearhart will be adding new vocational duties to her position as well.
- Carolyn Werline is back, helping with the vision students. She just can't stay retired!
- Jayson Via will be teaching new section of New Directions Middle School that opened up this summer due to enrollment increases.
- Amanda Butler is our new teacher for New Directions primary.
- Lela Frantzen is our new Vision Itinerant Teacher.
- Ryan Potter is one of the new Primary New Pathways teachers.
- Althea Sawalski is the new teacher for the ABLE program at Batavia High School.
- Leslie Surta will be a new teaching assistant in the SAIL program.
- Christopher Lee, Elizabeth Brown, Tonya Ditsworth and Susan Pacy were all recently hired as teaching assistants in the ELS-PK and New Pathways Programs.

### Transfers: Thanks to everyone for their flexibility!

- Myra Stinson is teaching the CLASS Primary Program.
- Paulette Ollie is teaching the new section of ECE New Pathways.
- Josie Wallace is teaching in the ELS program at Geneva High School.
- Jenny Best is teaching in the ABLE program at Geneva Middle School South.
- Many teaching assistants switched positions this year.

### Emergencies

Please make sure you have your class list and any health plans available for a quick grab whenever you leave the room or in case of emergency. Also, please remind your building administrator to include your students in any bus evacuation drills that may be scheduled in the near future.

### New Staff: Progress Monitoring Dates

New staff should mark your calendars for October 2 and November 7 for two fun-filled days of progress monitoring! Even if you don't need a sub, you should record your absence in the AESOP system as soon as possible.

### New Staff: My Service Tracker Training

If you are a new SLP or SW, you will need to attend a MyService Tracker training on either September 17<sup>th</sup> OR 18<sup>th</sup>, from 3:30-4:30. If you are a returning staff member and would like a refresher or have an opportunity to ask questions of Steve Karuna, you are welcome to attend as well. Please RSVP [Bonnie.Carlson@d303.org](mailto:Bonnie.Carlson@d303.org). You will be compensated for your time.

### Upcoming Professional Development

Please check for updates on by clicking these dates on the calendar of our website.

- 9/10 and 9/11 CPI Initial Training
- 9/11 p.m. CPI Refresher Training
- 9/12-13 ADOS II Training
- 9/17 a.m. Introduction to iPad (Invitation only)
- 9/24 or 9/25 Google Training - E-mail and Calendars: 3-4:30 pm in the computer lab at MJC
- 9/27 a.m. DSMV Update
- 10/2 Progress Monitoring for New Staff
- 10/1 or 10/2 Google Training - Google Docs: 3-4:30 pm in the computer lab at MJC
- 10/4 a.m. Video Modeling Overview—ELS and Vocational Staff—Blackberry Creek School
- 10/4 p.m. Technology Showcase and Assessment
- 10/11 p.m. Mentor Training
- 10/11 Discrete Trial Training for Select TAs (You will be invited.)
- 10/11 a.m. Technology Showcase and Assessment

### Transition Networks

This year, we will be hosting an open forum with our district partners concerning issues relating to transition. Mark your calendars for November 13 and March 6 from 3:00-4:30. More to come!

### New Calendars

Everyone should have received revised work calendars. We're sorry if this created any confusion. Please let Bonnie know if you need a new set.

### Move Requests

As you know, we are trying to limit the number of equipment moves to one time a month. Our next move date will be Thursday, September 27. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to your coordinator (for this month) by **Monday, September 24** so we can organize the work request. 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.

### Flu Shots

Don't forget to sign up for the flu shots on Wednesday, September 25. From 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the MV conference room. Sign-up online at <http://register.wellness-inc.com/district303> or call the wellness hotline at 866-935-5462.

### Safe Schools

You should be receiving information soon about the on-line, mandatory Safe Schools training. Please try to have it completed by September 30. This is a requirement for every staff member in the state. If you have questions, please contact Nancy.

### Student Emergency Information

Please obtain the emergency and media release information for all of your students. Make one copy and submit it to your coordinator or Phaedra at MJC. Make sure that your school's front office has a copy of this same information. If you have received medical information, please send a copy to Mary Jo Zampa at MJC and give a copy to your school's nurse.

### Music Grant

We are pleased to report that Paul Scanlon, the New Directions Art teacher, will be a full-time electives teacher this year. One of his new duties will be to teach music. When ordering supplies, he applied for and received a grant for \$975! Thanks for the outstanding effort, Paul!

### Visits

After everything settles down, Nancy and I are going to come out to the classrooms for visits. We probably will email you the day before to see if it's a good day for a visit. We can't wait to get out of the office and see what we're really all about! Looking forward to it!

### Handbook Inserts

We have many extra handbook inserts for this year! We tried to save money by making copies of only the sections that had changes. This means that each of you should replace the appropriate pages in your staff notebook. If you did not receive a set, please contact Bonnie. If you are new and cannot locate your own copy, please notify Bonnie and we'll make you a new handbook. We really want everyone to be as up to date as possible on important procedures.

### Contracts

The new union contracts just arrived this week. Bonnie is attaching name labels to them to make sure that you receive one. We will be sending them through school mail or through your coordinators.

### Presentations at Illinois Council for Exceptional Children, November 7-9

At ICEC, on Saturday, staff from the New Directions program will be presenting their Character Education program and staff from the New Pathways program will be presenting about video modeling. We are very proud of their efforts and their students. Sign up for this conference and support your colleagues! [www.illinoiscec.org](http://www.illinoiscec.org)

### Committees

Our Committees this year are:

Sunshine: *Facilitated by Sandy Gearhart and Linda Koch*

Diane Berg, Jeanne Schulz, Yolanda Smith, Mary Ann Domaracki, Terri Edwards,  
Denise Anthenat, Bonnie Carlson (Others from the past?)

Report Cards: *Facilitated by Melissa Jackson*

Mindy Kaplan, Josie Wallace, Nicole Claeson, Jill Wilder

Discipline: *Facilitated by Paige McNulty and Natalie Assell*

Debbie Sall, Mike Glabinski (These folks signed up last year! Need more members!)

Book Club: *Facilitated by Sandy Gearhart, Instructional Facilitator*

Meg Bingham, Denise Anthenat, Carolyn Viereckl (Others may join any time!)

Policy: Mike Glabinski, Tim Stoudt, Carla

### MJC Open House

On Wednesday, September 17, MJC will host their annual Open House for district and community representatives from 1:00-2:00. Last year, it was a huge success! The students have invited district personnel and will conduct tours while wearing their spirit wear. We're looking forward to another great event.

### Parent Forum Change this Year

As I mentioned on Opening Day, the parent forum will change this year to be more specific to the programs. Each social worker will be planning events throughout the year for these groups. In that way, we hope to better meet the needs of our parents. If you hear of resources or events for parents, please send them our way, because we continue to communicate to parents via email. We would like you to update your email lists and forward them to Bonnie so we can keep this list as current as possible.

### Need Parent Partners

I also mentioned that we will be seeking parent partners for parents of students who are considering placement with us and/or who are new to our programs. Already, I've heard that Meg Bingham has identified a couple of parents. If you have those names, please forward them to your coordinator. We will be planning a letter and/or orientation information for our parent partners. I think it will be very helpful during a stressful transition time.

### Driver Training

If you work in the New Directions, Safe Schools or SAIL programs, we encourage you to go to the ROE to be trained as a driver. For more information about the training events this fall, please contact Bonnie or go to the Kane County Regional Office of Education website.

### Substitute Recruitment and Training

We are actively seeking substitutes for both teaching and teaching assistant positions. Please refer potential candidates to our website.

When you post for a sub in AESOP, please describe the students and activities that the sub is likely to do on the day they sub for you, especially if you are going to be somewhere else besides your classroom!

We will be sending a few substitute handbooks to each classroom to give to your subs if they didn't already attend the orientation.

### Kiwanis Peanut Day Fundraiser

On behalf of the cooperative, I am a member of St. Charles noon Kiwanis. Kiwanis is an organization that raises funds to assist children in a variety of different organizations and services both locally and internationally. Last year, we received funding for a heavy-duty shredder for the transition program. This year, we have submitted for respite/baby-sitting services so that parents can attend the Parent University on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

One of their big fund raisers is peanut sales. The Transition students collected money at Blue Goose last year. I think it might be a great fundraiser for your students to collect money to send a box of peanuts to the troops. I know they are very appreciated. Of course, you can order a box as well! I am attaching an order form that you can fill out and send back to me. If your students don't have peanut allergies, they are a healthy snack and a good Halloween treat.

### Support Melissa

Support our own Melissa Jackson at the Kickathon on September 13 at 6:00 at East High School. If you can't attend to cheer her on, I'm sure she'd be happy to collect any donations for the Cancer Fund.

### Project Mobility

Everybody Rides is a fundraiser for Project Mobility, a local source of adapted bikes for students with disabilities who need them. The fundraiser will be on Sunday, September 15. It will be held at James Breen Community Park at the corner of Campton Hills and Peck Roads. There will also be food, drinks, raffles, games and entertainment at the park. An adaptive bike, valued at >\$3,000 will be given away.

Registration can be by individual or by family. Participants can register for the 10 mile trail ride or rides of varying lengths. Go to the Bike Rack webpage or [facebook.com/ProjectMobility.org](http://facebook.com/ProjectMobility.org).

*Applications are now being accepted for adapted bikes, so get on-line and have your students apply!!*

### Birthdays!

We've had lots of summer birthdays! Happy birthdays to all of you!

Happy June birthday wishes to: Kim Kirby, Gary Nielson, Joy Shurts, Jeanne Danos, Cynthia Meo, Anne Waters, Ellen Vasauskas, Susan Jochum, Amy Rogers, Deb Sall, Lynn Chassee, and Kristin Dean.

Happy July birthday wishes to: Jessica Scalia, Tim Stoudt, Leigh Ann Huntley, Kim Payne, Holly Heinrich, Carissa Mingo, Ben Dahm, Elizabeth Brown, Renee Mollenhauer, Karen Tredup, Lindsey Higgins, Megan Burnett, Elizabeth Preusse, and Nicole Claeson.

Happy August birthdays to: Bryan Lindstrom, Joyce Laben, Bruce Janus, Sarah McCafferty, Angie Gregory, Dawn Clanton, Rona Henne, Tonya Ditsworth, Ken Racine, Sandy Richmond, Melissa Jackson, Tina Smith, Reesa Kizior, John Beem, Connie Gush, Mindy Kaplan, MacKenzie Hack and Mary Jo Zampa.

*September:* Annelise Ehrhardt, Christopher Lee, Marianne Belica, Amanda Butler, Cynthia Phelps, Natalie Assell, Ami Burgess

### Staff News

*We extend our sincere sympathies to...*

- Paulette Ollie (New Pathways) whose dad passed away peacefully after a 6 year battle with lung disease.
- Tricia Sabathne (New SLP) grandma passed away on the Opening Day.
- Elizabeth Preusse whose mom recently passed away.
- Karin Alber (payroll) whose 98 year old grandmother passed away. The whole family gathered in Canada to honor her.
- Judy Donner (Transition) whose nephew was killed in a motorcycle accident. He was the family's only grandson and was such a tragedy.
- My nephew (my husband's brother's son) died of heart failure this summer. He was 39.
- Bethany Akers (New Pathways) whose grandmother recently passed away.
- Carolyn Vierekl (Hearing Itinerants) whose mother-in-law also passed away.
- Jeff Baker (OT) whose mom passed away in late June of heart failure.

*Get Well Soon wishes to...*

- Sharon Reskey (Safe Schools) was in the hospital this week for a few days with respiratory issues. She got out on Wednesday and is home resting.
- Bonnie Carlson's son continues to be in our thoughts and prayers as his mysterious illness is still unsolved.

*Good news...*

- Gary Nielson (New Directions) donated his time over the summer and built a fabulous traveling bookshelf on wheels for our MJC library for the students and staff to use!
- Mackenzie Hack (ELS) will be getting married in October!
- Amy Rogers (Vocation) is engaged!
- Josh Axelsen (Vocation) moved from NC and was married this summer!

### Student and Program News

Need news and pictures for the next edition!

### Professional Development Opportunities

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

- Basic Elements of Structured Teaching, 9/24-25, Evanston
- Teaching Self-Advocacy to Students with LD, 10/5, Aurora
- Stress and Anxiety in Students with LD, 10/26, Chicago
- Fostering Executive Function in Students with LD, 11/16, Chicago



- Independent Thinking and Problem-Solving for Students on the Spectrum, 10/22, Elmhurst
- Effective Interventions for Behavioral and Social Challenges (Autism), 10/23, Elmhurst
- Anti-Bullying, 9/26, Crestwood
- Technology and Reading: Practical Strategies for the Classroom, 9/24, Crestwood

Final Thought

*Happiness is a warm puppy. Schultz*



Enough about happiness. I did that LAST year! I just thought the quote went so well with my new puppy, Miles. He is a rescued dog and appears to be golden retriever and a yellow lab. Time will tell. He is affectionate, sweet and a real chewer. He is busy chewing under the table and at my feet as I write this newsletter!

My best wishes for a great start to the new school year. As always, I am grateful for everything all of you do every day with students and to support our students.