

# Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Newsletter



## September, 2016

### A message from one of our parents, Marisa Zirlin...

Over the past 3 years, Munhall has been, and continues to be, an amazing place for Colin to have his New Pathways Program housed as well as be a part of the Munhall Community. This picture is just one way that Mid-Valley and Munhall make an amazing combo. Seeing the pure joy on Colin's face, in the Munhall lunch room at the 3rd grade table with some buddies, sums up how much we appreciate all that you do for our son. We are blessed to have a specialized education for Colin as well as access to typically developing peers.

The student sitting next to him is Jack Miller, and I have included his mom Tami on this email so she can grant permission. Jack asked Colin to sit at his lunch table last year and it slowly evolved into what is now coined as the "Colin Club".

Truly grateful for the patience, understanding, acceptance, and kindness, Colin receives everyday at school.

### Notes from the Executive Director

Welcome to the new school year! Everything is off to a very great start this year. Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to make it go well. And, I must say, this message from one of our parents means so much to all of us!! What a great way to start.

### A Note of Thanks: Starting School

As always, I have so many people to thank for all of the summer activities! (Please excuse me if I've forgotten anyone!)

- Bonnie Carlson for everything as usual, especially that positive, upbeat, and friendly attitude! And, for always keeping the website as up to date as possible!
- Carolyn Viereckl for organizing the mentors and conducting the mentor training.
- Denise Quechol for ordering, organizing and figuring out what you need in your classrooms!
- Karin Alber for finalizing all the new hires paperwork!
- Linda Koch and Melissa Jackson, who planned and conducted New Staff Week.
- Jennifer Phillips who conducted many summer trainings and hosted many events.
- Karin Alber who organized all those events!
- Rona Henne for all the tech set-up!
- Kim Payne, Nicole Claeson, Karen Belich, Meg Bingam and Kevin Molitor for finding job placements, scheduling all the students and job coaches and figuring out the transportation.
- So many of our experienced staff who will be our mentors of new staff: Joanne Carrington-Warren, Rona Henne, Jill Thomas, Scott Carchedi, Kate Vincent, Anne Waters, Megan Burnett, Myra Stinson, Carolyn Viereckl, Rudy Via, Mackenzie Nissen, Bethany Akers, and Jessica Antoniou
- Our coordinators who interviewed and hired such a wonderful new group of staff members.
- Thanks to all of the administrative team who pulled together to set up for the staff/family picnic. And thanks to all of you who came. It was a great time and so valuable for our families. (And, it's good to meet all of your families as well!)
- And, of course, thanks to Mr. Mike for the music!
- Meg Bingham who is taking on the challenge of working through the issues at the Illinois Youth Center.
- 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. We're off to a great start!

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

Thanks again to Paulette Ollie, Sandy Gearhart, and all of the staff who worked during the summer to provide ESY services for 278 enrolled students. For another year, the parent surveys were extremely positive. As always, the students especially liked Mr. Mike!

### Welcome to our new staff

- Cindy Gotha, Administrator
- Becky McCabe, Behavior Coach
- Andrea DeMola, Occupational Therapist
- Ken Nelson, Vision Itinerant
- Marly Ramsey, Social Worker, New Directions
- Jackie Weber, Social Worker, ELS, New Pathways
- Nicole Allen, Social Worker, 12+
- Doug Mavity, Teacher, New Directions
- Lindsay McEachern, Teacher, CLASS
- Christina Amico, Teacher, GHS At-Risk Program (no name yet!)
- Mike Denslow, Teacher, New Directions

- Monica Brusa, Certified School Nurse
- Ann Aderman, RN
- Lynn Bach, TA/Transcriptionist
- Elisa Dressler, TA
- Kelly Hopper, TA
- Michelle Diorio, TA
- Quintina Terry, TA
- Sarah McGrew, TA
- Melanie Saunders, TA
- Megan Arison, TA
- Mary Thierrault, Job Coach
- Kathy Goblet, Job Coach
- Amanda Lopic, Job Coach
- Mary (Allie) Plum, Job Coach

### Family Picnic

Opening Week ended with another very successful Family/Staff Picnic. We had approximately 120 guests! It was a wonderful time. This year, the weather was perfect. And, as always, thanks for the music provided by Mr. Mike!





#### Goals for 2016-17

- New CLASS section
- New High School New Pathways
- Additional Vision services
- Continue to expand Special Olympics
- Illinois Youth Center
- Implement student growth in the evaluation plan
- Create new strategic plan
- iREady in New Directions
- CERTS in New Pathways

#### The Buddy Bench

In honor of Ben who passed away last year, the students and staff took up a collection to have a Buddy Bench where students can go if they are having a bad day and have some help from a buddy who can help them. It's a wonderful tribute to a wonderful student.



## News to Use

### Welcome Back Cruise Night--Sept 15<sup>th</sup>

Mark your calendars for the first social event of the year: Cruise Night at the Dam Bar in Geneva from 3:30-7:30! I hope to see you there!

### Kick-A-Thon

For many years, Melissa Jackson has been our representative in the St. Charles KickATHon to support funding for cancer research. Please support her efforts by making a donation by this Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. Or, you can always come out to cheer her on at North High School.

### Educator of the Year Nominee—Terri Edwards

Our nominee for the Educator of the Year will be Terri Edwards. We can't think of a more dedicated and student-centered person to nominate! Start collecting your pictures and memories now and send them to Josie Wallace and her team who will be assembling the nomination book for her. Thanks!

### New Staff from this Year and Last Year

We are going to hold progress monitoring/goal writing training for all certified staff who are new this year and who were new to the cooperative last year. Please mark your calendars (and get a sub) for the following dates: October 21 (full day) and February 10 (half day).

### Family Movie Night—October 21

Mark your calendars for October 21 from 6:00-8:00 at MJC. It's Family Movie Night! The Social Workers are busily preparing for the event and a flyer should be coming out soon.

### 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. ***A copy of the emergency forms should be given to your school office and sent to the main MV office or the MJC office as well.*** If you have received medical information, please send a copy to Monica Brusca at MJC and give a copy to your school's nurse.

### CPI Training

If you are new to Mid-Valley and do not have CPI certification or if any of you are a current employee and have let your certification lapse, please check with your program supervisor to see if it is a requirement for you to complete this class. If so, mark your calendars for a full day September 19. For those of you who need a refresher, it will be on September 20. Please register by going to mvse.org and clicking on those dates on the calendar.

*We really would prefer if our existing staff would attend this training opportunity in the summer. It is a hardship on our students and programs if we have to provide substitutes on these training days. Especially because we may not have enough substitutes to cover the classrooms.*

#### My Service Tracker Training

If you are an SLP, SW, OT or PT, you will need to attend a MyService Tracker training on either October 5 OR 6, from 3:00-4:00. This is a mandatory training. Please register by going to mvse.org and clicking on those dates on the calendar. You will be compensated for your time. If you have a conflict with these dates, please contact your supervisor.

#### 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 29. So, that means you should turn in any move requests to Bonnie.Carlson@d303.org by **Monday, September 26** 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 under Staff Resources.

#### Global Compliance Network (GCN) Mandatory Training

You should have received information about the on-line, mandatory GCN trainings that are required of you this year. Please try to have it completed by September 30. This is a requirement for every staff member in the state. ***If you finish by that date, your name is going to be entered into a raffle for some great prize that the leadership team is thinking up!*** If you have questions, please contact Nancy.

#### Technical Assistance for the Illinois Youth Center

We were contacted by the Illinois State Board of Education to assist with the organization, professional development and service delivery of special education students at the Illinois Youth Center. Right now, Meg Bingham is trying to sort out the needs for our assistance. In the future, Reesa Kizior and Denise Quechol will also be helping them out. It is a very important one-year contract and we're grateful for Meg's continuous optimism and organization!

#### New Program at Geneva High School

I am excited to report that we are trying a new program this year through the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP). We have hired Christina Amico to work in Geneva High School with students who have either been hospitalized or are in danger of being hospitalized. She is figuring it out as she goes along. We hope that this program will be successful for students who are at-risk of not meeting their schooling and/or career goals.

#### 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 and this year, we received funding for respite/baby-sitting services so that parents can attend the various parent forums throughout the year.

One of their big fund raisers is peanut sales. The Transition students are going to collect money at Blue Goose as they have for several years. 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. The deadline for those purchases is mid-October.

They Kiwanis are also offering boxed holiday tins this year, so you can provide nice little treats as gifts as well. I'm also including this new form for you. The deadline for those purchases is November.

### Student Teachers

Thanks to our cooperating teachers for hosting a student teacher this fall. It is so important that you share your skills with the new generation of teachers!

### **NIU Student Teaching**

| <b>Student</b>  | <b>School</b>                   | <b>Cooperating Teacher</b> | <b>Level</b>    | <b>Dates</b>          |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Allison Johnson | Fox Ridge Elementary            | Paulette Ollie             | Early Childhood | October 17-December 8 |
| Jeanette Joerg  | Mades-Johnstone, New Directions | Myra Stinson               | Elementary      | October 17-December 8 |

### **ISU Student Teaching**

| <b>Student</b> | <b>School</b>                   | <b>Cooperating Teacher</b> | <b>Level</b> | <b>Dates</b>          |
|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Nina Bucaro    | Mades-Johnstone, New Directions | Joanne Carrington-Warren   | Elementary   | August 22-December 16 |
| Nicole Dillon  | Various—Hearing Itinerant       | Angie Gregory              | Various      | October 17-December 8 |

### Looking for Substitutes

We are continuing to look for substitutes for our programs and we even have an open position for a permanent substitute for the autism programs. If you know of anyone who would be interested, please have them go to our website (mvse.org) and look under employment to fill out the applications for either certified or support positions. We plan to have an orientation session in October, but tell your friends and relations!

### Flu Shots

In collaboration with D303, annual flu shots will be offered again this year that is free to all full and part-time staff. This year we are working directly with Walgreen's to administer the flu shots on September 14, 15 or 20 at D303's Administration Center. Sign up using the following link: <http://WagOutreach.com/CUS978487>

### It's a Holiday or an Institute Day: Where Am I Supposed to Be?

Just a reminder that all of the work calendars for both teachers and support personnel are now on our website under About Us/Human Resources/Staff Calendars. And, along with this newsletter, I'm sending the schedule for everyone on October 7, which is a full or partial Institute Day for most certified staff. If you have questions, please contact your coordinator or principal.

#### Committees

- Professional Development (Facilitated by Cindy Gotha, Maura Burns, Jennifer Phillips): Reesa Kizior, Scott Carchedi, Samantha Cocroft, Tracy Linning, Paulette Ollie, Jackie Weber, Raven Stromeck, Joanne Pikula, Carrie Fisher, Diane Berg, Rona Henne
- Discipline (Facilitated by Maura Burns)
- Sunshine (Facilitated by Linda Koch): Joanne Carrington-Warren, Kate Vincent, Sandy Gearhart, Laura Clark, Jaclyn Chopelas, Courtney Baier, Ellen Vasuaskas, Elisa Dressler, Kimberly Payne, Bonnie Carlson, Samantha Cocroft
- Policy (Facilitated by Tim Stoudt, Nancy Sporer, Carla Cumblad): Scott Carchedi, Mindy Kaplan, Paulette Ollie
- Insurance (Nancy Sporer) Amy Gately, Alternates: Jeff Baker, Mike Glabinski
- Work Load Plan (Facilitated by Melissa Jackson, Carla Cumblad, **meeting in October**): Josie Wallace, Terri Edwards, Carolyn Viereckl, Kimberley Payne, Jill Wilder, Anne Waters, Samantha Cocroft
- Evaluation (Facilitated by Melissa Jackson, Cindy Gotha, Carla **Cumblad, meeting in April**): Sharon Jenkins, Sandy Gearhart, MaryAnn Domaracki
- RIF (Facilitated by Nancy Sporer, Carla Cumblad, Linda Koch): Carolyn Viereckl, Mindy Kaplan, Kimberly Payne
- Book Club (Facilitated by Sandy Gearhart) (so far) Mike Glabinski, Joanne Carrington-Warren, Cady Hanson, Magen McCarthy, Myra Stinson, Alaina Glabinski, Leslie Surta, Kate Vincent, Tracy Linning, Mary Ann Domaracki, Sandy Gearhart, Kimberly Payne, Jennifer Giese, Angel Ascencio, Denise Anthenat, Christine Phillips

#### Book Study—Message from Sandy

Fall's book choice was referred by Melissa Jackson, and will be a great selection to broaden our understanding of autism through the eyes of a parent.

#### ***Not Even Wrong, A Father's Journey into the Lost History of Autism. By Paul Collins***

In *Not Even Wrong*, Paul Collins melds a memoir of his son's autism with a journey into this realm of permanent outsiders. Examining forgotten geniuses and obscure medical archives, and beginning to see why he himself has spent a lifetime researching talented eccentrics, Collins shows how these stories are relevant and even necessary to shed light on autism.

For additional information on the book: <https://www.amazon.com/Not-Even-Wrong-Fathers-Journey/dp/1582344787>

For those of you new to Mid-Valley, we read two books per school year (Fall/Winter). The group usually meets weekly or bi-weekly at an off-site location (local coffee shop) from 3:30 - 4:30. By participating you receive CPDU's, a \$100 stipend, and a copy of the book.



Besides gaining knowledge, book study is a great way to meet and share ideas with fellow colleagues. Please let me know if you would like to be a part of this book study by Friday, September 9th. I hope you will consider joining us! Note from Carla: Please contact Sandy if you still wish to join.

### Jazzercise

Just one more reminder that Jazzercise is being offered in our multi-purpose room at MJC at 6:00-7:00 M-Th, and 8:00 on Saturdays. They have just started a 4:30 class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, just for us! All classes are free for the month of September, then are discounted if you sign up after that. A healthy staff is a happy staff! Come join us!

### Next Steps Transition Training for Staff and Parents

From the flyer...

Do you know your child's goals after high school? Is your child's transition plan in alignment with their post-secondary school goals? Are you aware of the types of services available to your child once he/she completes high school?

Our FREE workshops provide families specific information to help a young person transition from school to adult life in the community. This training series will focus on skills and information you will need to work with your child's school and post-secondary service providers. **Register online by selecting the Workshop, or contact Amy Gately at [630-849-7865](tel:630-849-7865).** Location: **DayOne PACT 1551 E Fabyan Parkway, Geneva IL 60134**

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016**

6:00-8:30pm

**Making it in the Real World**

**Thursday, October 20, 2016**

6:00-8:30pm

**Self-Advocacy and Support:  
Keys to Independence**

**Thursday, October 13, 2016**

6:00-8:30pm

**Transition Plans:**

**Road Maps to the Future**

**Thursday, October 27, 2016**

6:00-8:30pm

**Getting Ready:**

**Planning for Work while in School**

Birthdays!

Happy August birthdays to: Elisa Dressler (1), Bruce Janus (10), Sarah McCafferty (10), Angie Gregory (13), Rona Henne (16), Melanie Saunders (19), Melissa Jackson (21), Tina Smith (22), Reesa Kizior (24), Connie Gush (26), Mindy Kaplan (26), Jill Thomas (27), and MacKenzie Nissen (26).

Happy September Birthdays to: Tracy Linning (1), Terry Quintina (7), LeeAnne Dixon, (11), Marianne Belica (19), Cindy Gotha, (22), Cynthia Phelps (24), Laurie Zielinski (25), Jackie Chopelas (26), and Catherine Ostergard (30).

Get well wishes to...

- Kim Kirby is out of the hospital and back at work!
- Karen Belich had her knee replaced.
- Melissa Jackson is recovering really well from her knee surgery in the summer.

Our Sympathies the families of those who have recently passed away...

- Dawn George's husband
- Ruth Freidel's grandmother.
- Bethany's Aker's grandmother
- Diane Zedonis's father
- Joanne Carrington-Warren's father
- Carrie Fisher's mother

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Student news

- Aiden got a heart! Aiden's team has had a staffing and he will be returning to school on a limited basis. Great news!
- Jerry N. is going to have heart surgery soon.

Staff News

- Judy Donner is doing well!
- John Johnstone is getting married soon!
- Gina Banks is engaged to be married next July 22!



Anne Water's new granddaughter, Talulah with big sister Ada!



Linda Koch's new granddaughter, Riley Elise Stone. She is 7 pounds 11 ounces and 22 inches long. Sara and Riley are doing great! (Grandma is a little tired!)

Student and Program News



Just an early reminder to get on board the Autism Awareness Train!





Carolyn Viereckl's students with their edible ears!



Josie and one of her students with his new hearing aids!



James, (with Paul Scanlon), and Linsey won an art contest last spring. Each of them won a tree as one of their prizes. The next time you are at MJC, look to the left of the building where you will see them planted to enjoy for years to come. James and Linsey were very happy and proud.

#### 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.

- Sign Language Classes, (10 weeks from September 14-November 16 for staff and families; NIA Offices, St. Charles
- Have Dreams Structured Teaching, Basic Elements, September 27-28; Reading/Social Leisure/Redy2Learn, October 4-5; Park Ridge

#### Final Thought

Trust that an ending is followed by a beginning.

Anonymous

I must say that it is really strange for me to think that this is my last year in the public school system. It is very bittersweet. With my mom as a teacher, I have been following the school calendar my whole life! It's really quite an adjustment for me. I promise that I'm not going to end every newsletter with some kind of sappy, nostalgic quote (just this one). We still have work to do!

I just want to assure you that from the Board's perspective, the cooperative is being supported fully and will continue. They are considering the job description and position posting now. They will probably post in November and interview in early December. I will keep you informed with further details as I know them. I am confident that a new executive director will continue all the fabulous work we have done together.

