



MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

Express

giving kids the building blocks to independence

Volume XI, Issue 3, Summer 2014



**MSDB Foundation Supports
Games for the Visually Impaired**

PAGES 8-9

**MSDB Hosts Another Successful
Alex's Lemonade Stand**

Page 2

Alex's Lemonade Stand

FOUNDATION FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER™



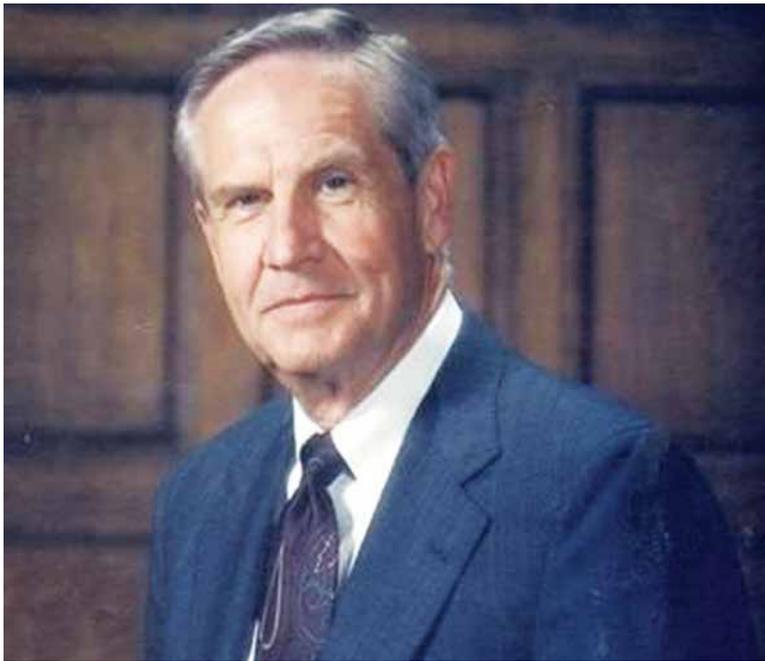
By Dee Blake, Teacher & Miché Jarvey, Teacher

Alex Scott, a Philadelphia-area hero, was diagnosed with pediatric cancer at the age of four. In 2000, Alex announced that she wanted to have a lemonade stand to raise money for all children with cancer. Unfortunately Alex lost her battle with cancer, but she inspired students and schools around the world to raise money and awareness for pediatric cancer with lemonade stands.

This is MSDB's third year joining

in on this nationwide event. Since Central Montana tends to be cold and dreary nine months out of the year, we decided to spread some beachy cheer with our lemonade and have a Hawaiian-themed stand. Who wouldn't want to lounge on the beach drinking lemonade being serenaded by parrots?? We wanted to share Alex's bright, sunny outlook to all of our Lemonade Stand customers! And guess what our grand total was?! \$1,129.05! Thank you to everyone who contributed to MSDB's third-annual Alex's Lemonade Stand. See you next year. 🍋

ABOVE: This photo of Trevin and Blair selling lemonade won the nationwide "Most Flair" contest put on by the organizers. LEFT: Ms Taylor supervises as Kae-lyn, Katie, Davi Jean, and Twyla work together to sell lemonade for a good cause.



Tribute to John Kinna

By Steve Gettel, Superintendent

Clarence “John” Kinna, Superintendent of MSDB from 1994 to 2001, passed away Thursday, April 25, 2014, at his home in Fairfield. John is survived by his wife Dorothy, sons John (Juli) Kinna and Kelly (Emily) Wiprud and 6 grandchildren. John was a veteran of the Montana Air National Guard and had a long and distinguished career as a teacher and school administrator in Sun River, Greenfield, Simms, and Fairfield. He also served as Chief of Staff to former Lt. Governor Allen Kolstad, and former Governor Stan Stephens from 1989-1993 before being appointed to the Montana Board of Public Education (BOPE).

It was while he was a member of the BOPE that MSDB was in need of a strong and respected leader. Mr. Kinna gave up his seat on the Board to be appointed and serve as interim superintendent; he stayed on for 7 years. During that time he helped the school regain the esteem of the legislature and a number of state agencies necessary to position the school to make a number of program changes that kept MSDB relevant and viable.

Mr. Kinna cared deeply about the education and success of our students. And he was a champion for MSDB, the staff, and the school community. Members of John’s family commented that of all the schools he served, John cherished his time at MSDB the most.

MSDB teacher Dessica McKeehan remembers John Kinna fondly. “As a man of noble character, Mr. Kinna exuberantly steered the MSDB ship with integrity and compassion. He greeted staff and students alike through the halls with a beaming smile and contagious laugh. His presence warmed the hearts of this school and will forever be remembered,” she said. ❖

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2

- Alex’s Lemonade Stand

Page 3

- Tribute to John Kinna

Page 4

- More than Just a School Store
- A Poem About The Snack Shack

Page 5

- Indian Education for All

Page 6

- Award Winning Students

Page 7

- Life is What Happens...

Page 8-9

- MSDB Foundation Supports Games for the Visually Impaired

Page 10

- Distance Learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students
- Life on a Ranch

Page 11

- Fun in Fort Benton
- Thank You to Our Family Advisors

Page 12

- Do Helicopters Have Wheels?
- Students Raise Money for New TV

Page 13

- Expressions of Silence Appreciates Your Support

Page 14

- Excellence in Education
- Turkey Feathers

Page 15

- A Visit from Miss Montana

Page 16

- Look Out 1st Grade: Here We Come!
- Limos, Leis & Limbo

A Poem About The Snack Shack

By Sami Faulkner

*The Snack Shack is a place
to get food.*

*Get your money, and walk
west, Dude!*

*Buy yourself some chocolate
that's hot*

*Or get some pretzels out
of the pot.*

*They have apple, orange,
berry, and grape juice.*

*When you drink, don't snort
like a moose.*

*They have sausage and egg
bagels and rolls.*

*Eat your goodies from
plates or bowls.*

*Corn nuts and jerky are
very good.*

*Buy some now, you really
should.*

*When you're deciding
what to choose,*

Hurry up and do not snooze.

*Some things cost quarters;
some cost a buck.*

*Don't eat messy; don't eat
like a duck.*

*High school kids can give
you help.*

*Be polite and quiet —
do not yelp.*

At the end, you must pay up.

*Watch the teacher drink
from a cup.*

*One dollar, two dollars,
three dollars, four--|*

*They put your money in
a drawer.*



More than Just a School Store

By Bob Corwin,
Transition Coordinator

“Good morning, everybody, and welcome to The Snack Shack.” That little greeting is something that happens at MSDB each and every Tuesday and Friday morning. MSDB operates a student store two days each week, where we serve our customers a variety of goodies.

The Snack Shack has been in existence for about five years now. The concept was a dream of four staff members who wanted to see an opportunity for our staff and students to gather, socialize and share some lighthearted moments. We also thought we could offer a variety of opportunities for our students to gain some valuable work experience in a store environment. The Snack Shack has done that and more.

We currently have two students who work in the store. They clean, stock shelves, help inventory, shop for items, assist customers, and work the cash register. The students also work with staff on consumer math concepts and counting the daily earnings to determine our profit for the day. When counting the earnings, the students fill out a ledger sheet. On that sheet, they will count and record the various coins, dollar bills, checks and charge accounts used for that day. After counting they make a “deposit” with the

daily earnings, in the school’s main office.

The students gain additional experiences by determining, with staff, the types of product to sell and how to mark that product “up” for profit. A business sense is being developed and tremendous daily life skills are being honed. Our school has become dependent on this opportunity and our students enjoy the experience. The store has become a meeting place where even staff members share stories and personal adventures. The students just love to see the Superintendent (for example) telling stories about his experiences in school as a younger person. “You mean you went to school too, and you had to ride a bus?” is an example of comments made by our students after listening to adults share their experiences. What a cool learning opportunity for all and a realization of true life moments. The students’ faces light up as adults engage in conversation and as a school community, we celebrate student and staff birthdays and special moments.

The Snack Shack has become a part of life here at MSDB, where many wonderful moments have been shared. And, with any luck, we will gather around to sit on chairs and couches again next school year to share, laugh, high five, and hug, as we open our doors and hearts for another school year. If you stop by please bring your laughter and smiles and you will fit right in. We hope to see you soon. ■■

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL

By Amanda Taylor, Teacher

Indian Education for All (IEFA) is a curriculum established by the Office of Public Instruction to integrate multi-cultural perspectives into education and promote cultural knowledge of Montana's tribes. The goal is for IEFA to be a natural part of our lessons, class work, and discussions.

As IEFA coordinator for our school, it was my job to support our teachers on this journey. For the most part our school was at the beginning and it was my goal to eventually get us to have IEFA fully integrated into all classrooms.

As a classroom teacher, I thought, "How could I do this? I don't know anything about Montana's tribes. How can I teach something I don't know anything about?" I realized you can't teach something you don't know about, so my goal for 2013 – 2014, was to start educating our teachers and staff about Montana tribes. This way the teachers would have some basic knowledge to share with their students.

I decided we would learn about one tribe each month. I emailed the teachers with information about each tribe's name, language, clothes, homes, types of transportation, and more. I would also include links to activities, dictionaries (audio and written), and lessons on the tribe of the month.

Below is the schedule we followed:

- August – Assiniboine
- September – Chippewa
- October – Blackfeet/Blackfoot
- November – Sioux
- December – Cree
- January – Salish-Pend d'Oreille
- February – Crow



Blair, Gracie, and Jesse experiment with drums made from animal hides.



Angelina and J see and feel a buffalo hide.

- March – Gros Ventre
- April – Kootenai
- May – Cheyenne

At the IEFA conference last year in Helena, I learned about the different

tribes' rules for storytelling. I wanted to respect the rules, so I made a schedule that would allow us to follow the rules. Some tribes only tell stories during the season we call winter. The rules state that stories can only be told after the first snow and cannot be told after the first thunder. Other tribes allow only tribal members to share their stories.

Some of the ways we incorporated IEFA were:

- **Sharing the information from emails**
- **Making artwork**
- **Playing the "Rock in Fist" game or the "Stick" game**
- **Field trips (some virtual)**
- **Salish Kootenai College visits MSDB**

Next year we will build on the foundation that has been established and continue to learn more about the culture of Montana's tribes. ■■

AWARD WINNING STUDENTS

By Chris Gutschenritter

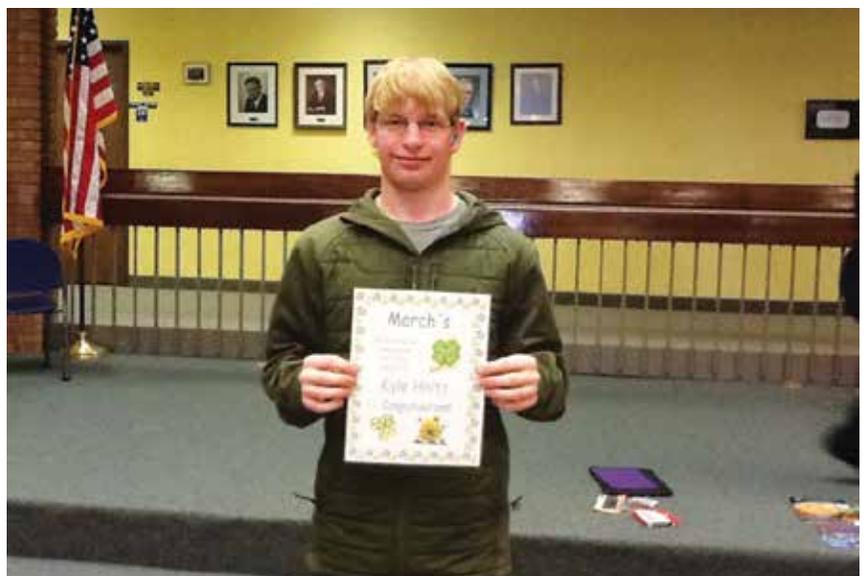
When it comes to our students at MSDB, social and emotional development is as important to the MSDB staff as academic development and independent living skills. Because of our commitment to the whole child, we recognize the importance of teaching the skills we are looking for, and rewarding them when we see them. To that end, we have several things in place to highlight and reinforce our students' accomplishments. Some of these "caught you doing great things" offerings are:

CAFÉ RIO - a weekly opportunity for students in both departments to be recognized for positive actions, good character, growth in a social, emotional, or academic area. These are staff nominated and the students receive a meal at Café Rio!

SCHULTE'S - a monthly opportunity for students from both departments (alternating) to receive recognition for hard work and good social skills. The staff nominates the student, who receives a mini shopping spree at Schulte's!

PRINCIPAL'S CLUB - a monthly opportunity for students from both departments to be recognized for growth, good character, nice manners, or any positive action noticed by staff. Students are given slips at the time of the great action or behavior, and are recognized and awarded a trip to the treasure box at our monthly Celebrations assembly.

LUNCH BUNCH - a weekly small group lunch on campus with Jennifer Briggs, school counselor, Yvette Smail, behavioral specialist, and Chris Gutschenritter, school psychologist. Students are chosen based on discussion between the three specialists. This may be a student or students who have overcome or persevered through a struggle recently, or who may be in need of some attention, or students who love the opportunity to visit in small groups...basically we are always looking for students who need or want time with some adults without a specific agenda! 🍌



Life is What Happens . . .

A FAREWELL FROM MR. GETTEL

By Steve Gettel, Superintendent

When I think back to my first years at MSDB some of my memories are as clear as if they happened yesterday: trying to fit ten desks in the elementary classrooms, giving Stanford Achievement Tests to anxious students, eating lunch at the long tables in the dining room of the old dormitory building, coaching Meadow Gold league basketball, chaperoning high school groups on Close Up trips to Washington DC and the Class of 1990 on its trip to Calgary, decorating the gym with crepe paper streamers for the prom, singing the Tree Song on Arbor Day.

Thinking back even further, I found my vocation teaching deaf kids almost by accident. They say life is what happens when you're making other plans. I wasn't going to be a teacher; I was going to be an architect. I didn't take my first sign language classes to teach deaf and hard of hearing students; I was looking to meet college girls. When I volunteered to work at a summer camp for deaf kids outside of Bozeman I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I sure didn't think a group of rowdy, adolescent students would help me find a purpose for my life's work. But they did.

Having a career in deaf education at a state school, first at Idaho and then here at MSDB, has truly been "living the dream." But being a successful teacher is something I couldn't have done on my own. There were principals and teachers over the years who gave me opportunities, mentored me, and gave me support. When I became superintendent there was support from the Board, school staff, and parents to achieve goals that changed a lot of what we do but made education better for our students. Any good we have done, we have done together, by considering the needs of the children first.

Almost everything about MSDB has changed since 1982, from the buildings to the way we teach and assess our students. We have residential cottages and a recreation center that are as nice as any you'll find at any school for the deaf or blind across the country. We've seen a decline in the number of students served by the campus program, while the outreach program has grown to support the kids who go to school in their local school districts. We've seen text to speech and downloadable text files for Braille embossing become standard equipment in the classrooms.



Mr. Steve Gettel was honored with a reception at MSDB on June 2. The students performed and he was presented with a handmade quilt from the employees. The quilt was made by Kathy Johnson, MSDB audiologist, and included pictures, favorite memories, good wishes from the employees all sewn together on a beautiful outdoor themed background to remind Mr. Gettel of the beauty of Montana.

We've gone from the Apple IIe, Hyper Studio, and 16 millimeter captioned movies to iPads, touch screens, on-demand streaming video, and Smart boards in most of our classrooms. In the past ten years we've doubled the staff in the outreach program and added a behavior specialist and guidance counselor to the campus program. The Foundation has provided over \$1,000,000 to support the activities of our students and professional development of the staff.

But one thing that hasn't changed is the dedication our staff has for the students we serve. The cottage, school, and outreach staff are every bit as skilled and caring today as they were 30 years ago. There aren't many left that were here 30 years ago, so that is saying something! And that "something" is that MSDB isn't really about the place, but what happens in that place. MSDB has been educating students for 121 years. As long as we continue to keep the needs of our students first, continue changing to meet those needs, and remember that success only happens when we work together, we'll be the school that Montana can depend on decades into the future.

It has been my privilege and an honor to have worked with all of you: staff, students, parents, board members, and education partners across the state, as well as contributors to the Foundation. I thank you for your friendship, support, and a career's worth of memories. ::



Montana School *for the*

HELP US GIVE KIDS THE BUILD

MSDB FOUNDATION SUPPORTS GAMES FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Eighth grader Adriana Huth ran the 100-meter dash with a partner who held a lead rope to let Adriana know where she was on the track, since she is blind. The 100-meter dash is just one of several events that make up the Pentathlon she and other students from around Montana participated in at MSDB's annual Games for the Visually Impaired on May 2-3.

After the race, Adriana was in tears, and her running partner asked what was wrong. "These are happy tears," Adriana replied as she hugged her partner. She cried more happy tears the following day when she received a medal for being in the top three performers in her event.



Mikayla overcame her hesitation about swimming to win 2nd place!

Happy seemed to be something many Games participants were feeling as they successfully completed events that challenged them. Roughly half of the 31 participants were from Great Falls, and the other half came from Billings, Missoula, Helena, Dillon, and other towns across Montana. Adriana splits her time between MSDB and C.R. Anderson

Middle School in Helena.

MSDB 10th-grader Mikayla Ellermann was happy about taking 2nd place in her swimming event. But she didn't mention her ranking until after describing her satisfaction in simply competing successfully in an event she found challenging. Swimmers in the Games use sounds and pool floats to help them know where

HOW YOU CAN HELP

With your help, the MSDB Foundation has been able to provide funds for services and equipment for the students at MSDB for 30 years. The Foundation is committed

to funding academic and extracurricular activities that help prepare students for independent lives. Please join us in that commitment by making a tax-deductible donation at www.justgive.org or mailing it to: ➡

Deaf & Blind Foundation

BUILDING BLOCKS TO INDEPENDENCE

they are in the water. “Last year I didn’t feel comfortable enough to try it, because swimming is hard,” she said. This year she decided to push herself, and that felt good.

While the Games are a competition, everyone supports each other. Cheers continue from everyone until the last swimmer finishes the race. Each participant gets a participation certificate and the top three winners in each event receive medals.

Donna Sorensen is MSDB’s Outreach Director and Co-director of the Games. “It’s heartwarming to see blind, visually impaired, and deafblind children, and those with multiple disabilities participating in sports events and succeeding,” she said. “Everyone participates to the best of their ability even if that means adults are fully supporting them through the event.”

Ninth-grader Shay Potts had fun with the bowling competition on Saturday. She hadn’t bowled before coming to MSDB this year from Havre, but she felt good about how she did at the Games. Using a bowling ramp to help get the ball going in the right direction and gutter bumpers that keep the ball in the lane makes bowling fun for people who can’t see the bowling pins well enough to aim at them.

MSDB teacher Denise Rutledge is Donna’s Co-director. “I am continually blown away each year by the generosity of spirit shown by all of the athletes and their families,” she said. “It is often commented on by families



Shay had fun with bowling, which she discovered on coming to MSDB this year.

in their first year of attendance that they have never been to a competitive event like the VI Games--in which all athletes celebrate their own personal achievements, as well as the victories of their competitors. I sincerely appreciate the families that travel great distances to help make these memories with us.”

The MSDB Foundation takes pride in its support of the Games each year, which offer students who are blind or visually impaired wonderful opportunities for building confidence. “Without their support,” Donna Sorensen said, “these students would never be athletes participating in these sporting activities.” ❖

MSDB Foundation

P.O. Box 6576 | Great Falls, MT 59406
For more information, please call 406-771-6040

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

~Helen Keller



Distance Learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

By Debi Knuth, Teacher

Meet Brooke Wood. She lives in Trout Creek, Montana, and attends high school in Thompson Falls, where she enjoys taking elective classes such as art and shop. Michelle Fitchett-Pirker is Brooke's Special Education teacher, who works collaboratively with MSDB to offer Brooke access to a trained teacher of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing for her core classes. During her busy academic day Brooke takes an MSDB math class and English class via interactive video on iTV, accompanied by her on-site facilitator who is also a sign language interpreter.

MSDB really appreciates the connection and the cooperation of Thompson Falls Public Schools for allowing us to keep in touch with Brooke. It has been an awesome experience for everyone. Computers...aren't they miraculous!? ❖

LIFE ON A RANCH

By Emily LaSalle, Outreach Consultant

Recently Dennis and Tami Mitchell hosted an "experience" day at their ranch for MSDB Outreach Consultants, Quality Life Concepts and the Montana Deaf/Blind Project. Their daughter Dariane will be a senior and receives services from the MSDB Outreach program.

Raising a daughter with vision, hearing and other health issues 40 miles from town is a challenging task. Not only is it quite a drive to get needed services, but the isolation and frustration of parenting a special needs child on a ranch presents its own set of challenges.

Dennis and Tami have done an amazing job raising a beautiful and spirited daughter. As the family ponders changes next year when

Dariane will graduate from high school, life on a ranch gives her multiple responsibilities and learning experiences.

Individual Education Plan meetings (IEP's) are meant to be a blueprint of what

the team wants for the student to strive for in the following year. These meetings can be stressful for families and staff. Not so when the Mitchells are around. Dennis and Tami share their everyday experiences of raising their daughter. Their insight is an educational seminar for us as Outreach Consultants. I learn so much listening to their stories, disappointments, hopes and adventures as they continue to raise their daughter. I sit in awe and complete respect as they bare their souls to us "professionals." What I learn from Dennis and Tami I am able to share with others around the state of Montana. Their knowledge and experience makes me a better consultant.

Thank you Dariane, Tami and Dennis, for opening your home and ranch to us so we could get a feel of your everyday lives. Watching the water break on the cows and their new calves arriving later is an experience of a lifetime and I will treasure that memory for years. Feeding lambs, driving across the fields checking on calves, eating fried chicken and sharing your dining table as we prepared a meal together was our privilege. You have shared so much with us and for that we are truly thankful! ❖



Fun in Fort Benton

FIELD TRIP TO THE MISSOURI BREAKS INTERPRETIVE CENTER

By **Bethany Hundley, Teacher**

On April 28th, 4th -8th grade students and teachers at MSDB had the opportunity to go to the Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center in Fort Benton. The goal was an informative field trip encompassing science, social studies and Indian Ed concepts. Connie Jacobs, education director of the interpretive center, was awesome to work with and provided lots of hands-on activities for the students.

In the exhibit room, the kids were so excited to see (and touch) a number of different kinds of animals including a bobcat and grizzly. As you can imagine, there were lots of football rivalry comments flying around when the students saw those! There were animal sounds to listen to and plants to see, touch and smell. Along with the natural sciences, the exhibits also included steamboats and other historical objects from both the American Indians in the area as well as the settlers who came later. Jesse Taylor, a

fourth grader, especially loved the steamboat hull and enjoyed playing steamboat captain. Adriana Huth, an eighth grader, really enjoyed the tactile plants and bird sounds.

After the kids finished exploring, the volunteers at the center told them American Indian stories and let them try out the stick game (where you try to get your hoop onto your stick). The students had a blast playing the game on the patio overlooking the river. Later, after lunch, the students were divided into groups and took two classes. One class was entitled "It's All in Your Head," where they learned about animal skulls and skins, and the other one was all about bird adaptations. The students even got to try to pick up food using a variety of "beaks" - Popsicle sticks, toothpicks, etc.

All in all, it was an amazing day and one that we hope to repeat annually. Maybe next year we can even go to the fort! Thanks to Connie and all of the wonderful volunteers at the Center who made our day a fun-filled learning experience! ❖



THANK YOU TO OUR FAMILY ADVISORS

MSDB Family Advisor Dawn Marxer of Browning shares a hug with Colby. Family Advisors from around the state will be serving students throughout the summer. Thank you to each and everyone of you for helping our students and their families!

DO HELICOPTERS HAVE WHEELS?

By Leann Goss, Teacher

The kindergarten and preschool students in the deaf department were in the middle of their transportation unit in Social Studies class when a debate ensued about helicopters. Some of the students believed that helicopters had wheels and some of the students insisted that helicopters did not have wheels. So



we decided to go and see some real helicopters and meet some pilots who could settle our debate once and for all! We visited the Customs and Border Protection unit near the airport. Mr. Jason Brantley is a pilot who was kind enough to let us sit in a real helicopter and even wear their special helmets that have visors to help them see better on sunny days! He explained to us how helicopters fly and how they steer. He let us put on the headsets in the back seats so we could hear our pilot. We met an avionics technician, Rick Goss, whose job it is to keep the helicopter in perfect shape for flying. Mr.

we decided to go and see some real helicopters and meet some pilots who could settle our debate once and for all!

We visited the Customs and Border Protection unit near the airport. Mr. Jason Brantley is a pilot who



Brantley explained the importance of teamwork and how he could not get his job done if the mechanics and technicians were not there to make sure the aircraft is in good operating condition and safe to fly.

As it turns out, we did not see any helicopters there with wheels, but Mr. Brantley assured us that some helicopters do have wheels and we saw a picture of a Black Hawk helicopter in their lobby that did indeed have wheels! So do helicopters have wheels? Yes, some most definitely do. ❖

Students Raise Money for New TV

By Patricia Levy, Student

The girls in the Geyser cottage have worked so hard getting a new TV. (The girls in this cottage are blind or have low vision, and the old TV was hard to see.) We had a lot of help too. Mr. Corwin, Mr. Kelly, and the staff from both departments put in just a little support.

We got a 55" LG SMART TV that can have a flash drive plugged in and we can look at photos on the big screen. It is perfect for us because, before we sat nose to nose with the TV so that we could see the smaller screen, now, we can sit about five feet farther back. For most of us, who have low vision, that was a big improvement.

How did we raise enough money to buy the TV? Well, we had 50/50 sales. Mr. Kelly, who fortunately, won five



Front Row left to right, students: Allyson, Kaelyn, Mikayla, Patricia, and Shay. Back row Cottage Parents: Teresa Leese, Tammie Burnham, and Barbara Stevenson.

50/50 tickets and donated most the money back to us, and Mr. Corwin helped with the setup and let us store all the

supplies in the office. Mr. Corwin even let Mikayla, Shaylene, and I have time off from concessions to work with the other girls.

Kaelyn explained, "What I like about the TV was, that we can sit far away from it and we don't have to sit close to it." when I asked her how she liked it. Ally commented, "I can sit farther back." When I asked Mikayla how she liked doing the 50/50 sales she explained, "I thought it was fun. I thought it helped the younger girls with math, communication skills, as well as me. It was fun getting it together."

We did the 50/50 sales during the basketball tournaments that were held in the Mustang Center in May. Not only did people go to watch their kids play, they came to see if they could win the money that was there. Not everyone was lucky, but they all had a good attitude and we wished them luck. ❖

Expressions of Silence Appreciates Your Support

By Jennifer Wasson, Teacher

On April 25, MSDB's performing group Expressions of Silence hosted a performance fundraiser. The group performs to recorded songs using sign language and dance. At the fundraiser, they collected cash donations and items of value that were raffled off during the performance. In addition, staff members participated in a basket competition and then donated the baskets for the silent auction. There were coffee baskets, a kitchen basket, and a book basket. The Outreach Consultants won the competition with their beautiful garden basket. Kathy Johnson and CJ Oakland also donated beautiful handmade quilts for a raffle the night of the performance.

Fundraisers are an important way the group helps fund its activities, particularly travel. The goal of the group is to provide the students with an opportunity to increase their self-esteem and to increase the general public's awareness of the capabilities of the students who attend the school. The group practices diligently throughout the school year to make each performance a memorable event for those fortunate enough to attend.

Expressions of Silence is directed by Dessica McKeehan and Jennifer Wasson, two MSDB teachers of the deaf. The two instructors sign the words of each song, providing cues for the hearing impaired students who then sign the lyrics to the audience as the music plays. There is also a significant amount of choreography that the group rehearses to coincide with the music.

The group has performed in



Great Falls for civic groups and in conjunction with choral concerts by Great Falls Public School choirs, in addition to various schools and professional organizations across the state of Montana, including the governor's inauguration.

In April 2013, Expressions of Silence traveled to Washington, D.C. to perform in the American Musical Salute: American Civil War Sesquicentennial. This wonderful opportunity was not the first time the group has been invited to perform at a national event.

In 2006, Expressions of Silence was fortunate to perform in Salt Lake City, Utah, with the world famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the country band the Oak Ridge Boys, in front of a live audience of 21,000 people during the Music Educators National Conference. The group also performed with thousands of other music groups from across the country to "The Star Spangled Banner," representing the state of Montana as well as the nation's Deaf community in the National Anthem Project. The project raises awareness about the importance of supporting and funding music education programs by having different music groups

across the nation perform the national anthem. The following year, the group performed in the National Anthem Project again – this time in Washington, D.C. .

The members of Expressions of Silence are honored to perform for numerous groups and schools locally and across the state. Because of your past support and belief in EOS, we've been able to broaden the horizons and enrich the experiences of many deaf and hard-of-hearing youngsters. Thank you, again, for any support that you may be able to provide.

Whether you are making a cash donation or a donation of items, your contribution is tax deductible as the MSDB Foundation has tax exempt status under IRS Code 501(C)(3). When making a contribution, please list the approximate value of the item. The MSDB Foundation tax ID number is 81-0405850. ■■

MSDB Foundation
3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59405

For more information, contact Dessica McKeehan (771-6034) or Jennifer Wasson (771-6143).

Excellence in Education

By Julie Borgreen, Speech and Language Pathologist

As the school year winds down at MSDB we have come to realize we have many folks in our midst who deserve special recognition and our appreciation. One such lady is Judy Scharhag, our newest Education Secretary. Judy joined the MSDB staff in January and quickly became a valuable member of the team. She has taken on some big responsibilities and is a diligent worker. Judy has brought many gifts



to her job. She previously worked at Lewis and Clark Elementary School as a Teacher's Aide and a substitute school secretary. She is also a life-long musician and has been playing the drums in her church for the past several years. Maybe that

refined sense of "keeping the beat" is what has helped us staff members stay organized and get things done!

Another of Judy's strengths and gifts is her ability to "fix" and "build." She says she learned so much from her father, ranging from electrical wiring to woodworking. Recently Judy's son donated a beautiful handmade wooden chest to an EOS fundraiser. Judy's proud that her son is carrying on the family tradition and admits that she only helped him with this woodworking project "a little bit." While reading the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation's "Excellence in Education" insert in the Great Falls Tribune on Sunday, May 11, we realized that Judy was also recently recognized for her contributions to the Great Falls Public Schools and given a "Gold Star Recognition Award" for "teachers or school staff who have been honored by community members for their work." When this recognition was pointed out to Judy she was so surprised! She wasn't aware of it! We, at MSDB, would like to add our voices to the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation and thank Judy for her work here. ❖



TURKEY FEATHERS

We have been discussing and role playing American History all year long in Mrs. Knuth's 5th grade Social



Studies class. Some of the questions from the students have been, "How did they do that?" "Making ink from berry juice, then writing with quills" was a response to one of their questions. The students crushed berries with stones and tried to use turkey feathers as a writing tool, but had a difficult time keeping a point. Mrs. Knuth found these ostrich feathers that Twyla and Trevin are using. The turkey feathers worked

much better for our writing. We had a good time learning about colonial handwriting and the utensils used. ❖



Miss Montana, Sheridan Pope, poses for picture after giving an inspirational and personal speech to the students.

A Visit from Miss Montana

By Pamela Boespflug, Outreach Consultant

It all started at the Special Olympics last summer when MSDB student Anthony Cox met Miss Montana, Sheridan Pope. When I visited Sidney Middle School in September, Sheridan's mom, Nicole Pope, found me and explained that Sheridan really wanted to come to MSDB and meet the students and have a chance to talk to them.

It finally happened on May 2nd, which was the first day of the annual Games for the Visually Impaired. That morning Miss Montana toured our beautiful campus and had a chance to visit with staff and students from the Blind and Deaf departments. Just before lunch, she spoke to the student body at an assembly. Our students and Miss Montana were both very surprised at how much they had in common, and how much they learned from each other. The focus of Miss Montana's reign has been on helping children become friends to other children who learn and communicate differently. She started her speech asking the students if they liked birthday parties – of course the students cheered loudly. Then she explained that her sister that had autism never ever got invited to birthday parties

because others did not understand her communication and learning style. She set out to change this and we believe she made a difference. The rest of her speech was well received and the students asked many good questions afterwards.

Miss Montana ate lunch with the students and signed her picture card for each one that asked and tried to spend time with them, even learning some signs from them. After lunch she started off the VI Games with a little pep talk and remained all afternoon for the competitions and then for dinner. After all of that she performed some tap dancing for us, since that is what she performed at the Miss Montana and Miss America contests. We all loved listening and watching her talented dancing! She touched our students deeply with her care and acceptance of all.

After her experience at our school, Miss Montana said, "I hope to be a resource and a reason to smile for all of you at MSDB even after I give away my crown. This day will ALWAYS hold a special piece of my heart. I won't always have a crown but I will have love for MSDB kids!" She will go back to school in Minneapolis and finish up her degree in Inclusive teaching. She added that she would love to do her student teaching at our school, so maybe we will see her again.



MONTANA SCHOOL
FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

3911 Central Avenue | Great Falls, MT 59405

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 128
Great Falls, MT



LOOK OUT FIRST GRADE: HERE WE COME!

ABOVE: Congratulations Kindergarten graduates:
L to R Bridger, David, and J.



LIMOS, LEIS & LIMBO

LEFT: Aloha! The high school students enjoyed a tropical night for their prom this year! The colorful Hawaiian theme included grass skirts, flower leis, sunglasses, coconut cups with little umbrellas, and of course a limbo competition! The students took a limo ride to eat dinner at the 3D Restaurant and then to take outdoor pictures at Giant Springs. A great time was had by students and staff.

Congratulations to Hawaiian King Jarrod and Queen Patricia (pictured here in the front row).

BACK TO SCHOOL: MSDB - SEPT. 2 | GFPS - SEPT. 4

The MSDB Express is published three times a year and is graciously funded by the MSDB Foundation. The current and past editions of Express can be found on the MSDB website at: www.msdb.mt.gov.