

Volume 1, Issue 3

Spring 2012

CONNECTION



Missouri School for the Blind
3815 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis

COMMENCEMENT 2012



On Tuesday, June 5, MSB honored the class of 2012 in its commencement ceremony held in the Samuel McKnight Green Auditorium.

Mr. John Thompson, president and CEO of the Lighthouse for the Blind (LHB), addressed the students as the commencement speaker, offering words of wisdom for the students to carry with them on their journeys.

The class of 2012 included Khrystal Coleman, Amanda Drake, Leticia Eckhoff, Brynn Haines and Emily Pope. Mr. Trevon Graves was named Salutatorian and Ms. Carolyn McGhee was named Valedictorian.

After graduation, Trevon plans to attend Ohio State University where he has been accepted into the Business Administration Program. Carolyn plans to attend Missouri State University in the fall and looks forward to earning a degree in psychology.

The president of the Missouri School for the Blind Advisory Board, Mr. Donald Gerard, presented students with their diplomas.

Following the ceremony, graduates, family and friends all gathered for a reception in the student center. Congratulations class of 2012!

Wherever you go, go with all your heart. ~ Confucius



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From the Superintendent

The end of the school year always brings mixed emotions. As educators, it can be a rewarding time as we celebrate our graduates and the accomplishments of all of our students. At the same time, we are saddened to have to say goodbye to so many amazing young adults whom we watched grow and blossom over the years. As we move forward, the class of 2012 now takes its place in MSB's rich history, as well as in our hearts. To the parents, thank you for sharing your children with us and allowing us to be a part of their lives. To our partner school districts, we have tremendously enjoyed working with your staff for the benefit of blind and visually impaired students. I wish everyone a fun and safe summer and look forward to seeing you in August!




Superintendent
Patty Yocum

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

On Tuesday June 5, students and teachers traveled off campus to enjoy an awards luncheon at the Genesis Banquet Center in south St. Louis County. This event recognizes students for academic, athletic and personal success. Students were rewarded for their achievements with certificates, trophies, letter jackets – and in some cases, all three! Congratulations to everyone for a successful 2011-2012 school year!



MSB Leads the Way in Technology for Blind and Visually Impaired Students



On March 29, 2012, Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) hosted its first ever “Tech It Up a Notch” technology event. This event provided students in grades 5-12 with hands-on access to software and devices designed for the blind and visually impaired. In addition to MSB students, visiting students from various Missouri school districts attended this event.

Students were given a variety of topics to choose from. During each of three sessions they could explore devices or demonstrate their skills in competitive rounds for the chance to win prizes – including iPads, LiveScribe Pens, Adaptive ADL equipment and more!

Students were able to explore APH software, including Talking Typewriter and Math Flash, as well as devices like Refreshable Braille, LiveScribe pens, iPads with B/VI software and adaptive cooking equipment.

Other courses included:

Managing Important Information: Using Talking Watch, Talking Calendar, and Talking Prescription Bottle, participants learned to manage medical information and appointments, as well as other personal information.

Text enlargement: Participants viewed demonstrations of a CCTV, Pearle/Open Book, Sapphire, Ruby, ZOOM-Text, and Transformer for use with enlarging text in a variety of formats.

Braille Note Takers: Participants used Braille Note Takers to find, create, edit and print files and documents.



What Not To Wear—Clothing Identification and Labeling: Using Match Maker, Color Mate, and Braille Labeler, students identified items of clothing and then labeled them by sewing in Braille or tactile labels.

Trekker: Students used the Trekker to navigate throughout an assigned course on MSB’s campus.

Screen readers and enlargement: Students used ZOOMText, JAWS and NVDA to navigate text, computer files, operating systems and the Internet to answer a series of questions.

Through this event, students were able to identify adaptive technology that could be utilized in their everyday lives and learned where this new technology can be purchased or borrowed.

Attendance prizes, including talking watches, calendars and liquid measuring cups, were given away during the closing session. In addition, winners from the competitive rounds were announced. In the middle school division, 1st place went to Tiondra Pollard (6th Grade) and 2nd to Josh Starner (8th Grade). In the high school division, Ryan Frappier (11th Grade) came in 1st and Matthew Frappier (11th Grade) in 2nd. First place winners received iPads and second place winners received LiveScribe pens!



Explorations in **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering and **M**ath – **STEM!**

Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) is pleased to offer two summer sessions focused on developing students' abilities to access science, technology, engineering and math with increased independence! These FREE courses are designed for blind and visually impaired students in grades 5-8.

Participants will work in collaborative teams to solve problems, explore concepts and develop scientific inquiry skills that can be transferred to the regular curriculum. They will use the newest generation of speech-accessible tools and modified laboratory procedures and equipment specifically designed for students who are blind and VI to perform laboratory experiments, collect, analyze, report and use data to make decisions with increased independence and decreased sighted support. They will also explore technology specifically designed to support the unique learning needs of students who are B/VI as they investigate career opportunities related to *STEM*. In addition to organized *STEM* activities, participants will practice community-based Orientation and Mobility emphasizing the use of public transportation and safely accessing unfamiliar environments for both educational and leisure activities. Students will have the opportunity to foster new friendships, and practice Activities of Daily Living skills designed to increase independence in the home environment.



During the summer sessions, residential services are available to qualified participants. Transportation is provided to residential students to and from MSB via charter bus. The bus routes include highways 70, 44 and 55 with designated stops along each route. Day students are considered students who reside in St. Louis and the surrounding suburban areas. Transportation for day students is provided to and from school daily.

Session 1: July 9-20, 2012 - Mission to Mars

Session 2: July 23- August 3, 2012 - CSI Summer

For more information, please visit www.msb.dese.mo.gov or contact Joy Waddell, Assistant Superintendent at 314-776-4320 ext. 1140 or via e-mail at Joyce.Waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov

MSB Introduces State-of-the-Art Science Lab



We are currently in the process of renovating our science lab in preparation for summer courses and the 2012-13 school year. A new drop ceiling, new floors, fresh paint and new furniture are all in the works, as well as safety equipment that is compliant with current recommendations for high school science labs. Each of the new lab stations will be outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment and software specifically designed for the blind and visually impaired. This includes a computer at each station as well as Vernier handheld devices and software that will allow students to measure various phenomena, like air pressure, respiration, heart rates and more. These devices will allow students to collect, share and chart data like never before. In addition, a third SMART board will be installed in this classroom.

The new space and equipment will give our students the ability to carry out many more projects and experiments than we currently are able to accommodate. They will be exposed to the latest accessible technology, which will allow them to explore and learn in more depth and expand their horizons. We believe that students will have more fun learning and be eager to come to class ready to work.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ATHLETICS & FORENSICS



The last weekend of April, our forensics and swim teams did a great job representing MSB at their meets in Minnesota. In forensics, we had two students bring home gold medals and two students brought home the bronze. The swim team earned silver medals in the co-ed relay, the girls relay and the girls' freestyle, and the bronze in the boys' 50-yard freestyle. Student Jill McBroom was the gold medal champion in the backstroke and the 500-yard freestyle. Overall, the MSB girls swim team won the 3rd place trophy for total points in the meet!

At the end of May, we had six students participate in the Missouri Special Olympics Summer Games. Of the 18 events MSB students chose to participate in, MSB won 13 medals and seven ribbons! Leading the way in medals earned were Courtney Baty (gold in shot put, gold in standing long jump and silver in the 100-meter run) and Noah O'Neal (gold in the 25-meter run, gold in the 50-meter walk and silver in the softball throw). Other members of MSB's all-star team were Jesse Finnell, Tyler Baty, Khrystal Coleman and Jesse Hicks.



READING

Many of our students also participate in various statewide reading programs offered through our library. Eighty-four percent of MSB students joined the Library Cat Club. Of those members, 84% met their personal reading and reporting goals. These students received a pizza party in the park at the end of the year! As a reward for participating in these programs, 10 of our elementary students attended the St. Louis Storytelling Festival at the Missouri Botanical Gardens on May 3. Students in the High School Book Club who participated in the statewide Gateway Reading Award Program were rewarded with a trip to the theater to see a movie based on a book they had recently read.



ART

APH InSights, organized by the American Printing House for the Blind, is an annual juried competition and exhibition for visual artists with vision loss. An international competition, this project "promotes the independence of blind persons" by encouraging individuals to create original art. Each year, about 500 entries are submitted. This year, MSB student Courtney Baty entered a piece in the ungraded multimedia category and walked away with first place! Judges from Louisville's education and art community select pieces for display at the APH annual meeting in October. Courtney has been invited to go to Louisville to receive her award at an evening banquet. Artwork from entries may also be reproduced in the annual InSights calendar and as images on greeting cards.

THANK YOU!!

To all of the Lions and other supporters of MSB, thank you! It is your generosity that makes it possible for students to participate in extracurricular activities such as these, and many more!

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CALENDAR

JUNE

National Junior Beta Club Convention
Greensboro, NC 6/23-26

National Senior Beta Club Convention
Greensboro, NC 6/27-30

AUGUST

Staff Professional Development 8/17-19, 20

First Day of Class 8/21



ALUMNI NEWS

On April 18-20, MSB was pleased to welcome back former students for the annual alumni weekend event. Friday evening, guests enjoyed a festive sock hop with refreshments. On Saturday, the schedule was filled with business and pleasure, including a trip to the history museum in Forest Park, a business meeting and the alumni banquet. At the awards ceremony following the banquet, Frances Lowe Baker was recognized as the 2012 Alumni of the year. On Sunday, alumni wrapped up the weekend with a booster's meeting and the Lantz Memorial Picnic at MSB. Returning students came from all over the state and more than 70 people attended activities throughout the weekend. If you would like more information on alumni activities, please call June Lenk at (314) 351-2814.

Congratulations to MSB 2011 Valedictorian David Brown! David is currently at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, CA, training for the 2012 Paralympics Trials. He is also a member of the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA). If you would like more information on his endeavors, you can e-mail David at downtowndavidbrown1992@gmail.com or francinebrown@sbcglobal.net. Good luck David!