



# Connection

Missouri School for the Blind

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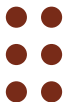
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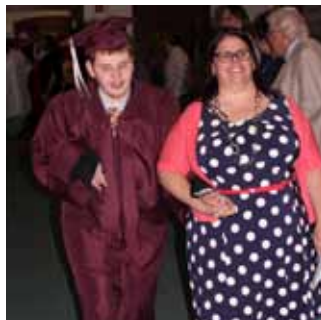


## MSB SAYS FAREWELL

On Thursday, June 4, students, staff, family and friends gathered to celebrate the graduation of nine MSB students. The MSB family welcomed back former teacher and commencement speaker, Patti Schonlau, for an inspiring address. We are proud of everything these students have accomplished and wish them the

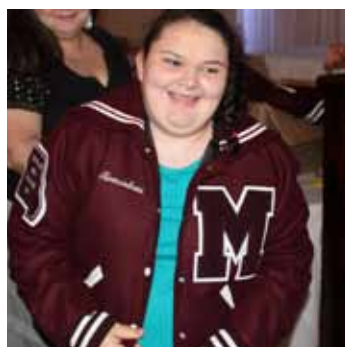
best as they pursue their post-high school goals. Thank you for sharing your time with the MSB family!

Congratulations and best wishes to Garrett Akins, Tyler Baty, LeShay Culton, Jesse Finnell, Amber Lacey (Valedictorian), Cristian Marquez, Alexandria Richardson, DeVaughn Smith, Alisia Thornton (Salutatorian).



## MSB HIGHLIGHTS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

On Thursday, June 4, students and staff gathered at the Genesis Banquet Center in south St. Louis County to honor students and highlight their success. Awards were given for academic, athletic and personal achievement. Scholarships were also awarded during this ceremony. Congratulations to every MSB student for the hard work you put into this school year!



## STUDENTS HONORED FOR LEADERSHIP AND MORE

Congratulations to Josh Starner who was chosen to participate in the 13th Annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum this summer in Columbia, MO! The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is a unique career leadership-training program for high school students with disabilities, ages 16 – 21. Youth delegates are selected from their local communities to cultivate leadership, citizenship, social and career development skills at this summer program.

We also congratulate DeVaughn Smith for being selected as a recipient of a 2015 Special School District Board of Education Scholarship! Established in 2008, the SSD Board of Education Scholarship honors graduating SSD students who show strong leadership skills as well as a dedication to volunteerism and community involvement. DeVaughn was honored at the Commitment to Kids Awards Banquet on April 23, 2015.

## STUDENTS WORK WITH LOCAL ARTIST TO PRODUCE UNIQUE WORK

Earlier this year, we had the pleasure of working with Rich Brooks, an artist based in St. Louis. He was a significant contributor to the “Cakeway to the West” exhibit - a 250th anniversary celebration of the founding of St. Louis that placed large, iconic birthday cakes in various locations across the region.

Thanks to MSB library assistant Chris Davidson, who loaned the school one of these large fiberglass cakes, art students worked with Rich to create a truly unique piece. Some students chose to highlight their athletic or musical interests on the cake, while other students chose to represent famous St. Louis landmarks. The cake is now on display in front of the school.

We thank Rich Brooks and Chris Davidson for providing our students with this unique and enriching opportunity!



## MSB BETAS DETHRONE 17-YEAR CHAMPS TO TAKE STATE!

In March, the MSB Senior Beta club traveled to Branson for the Missouri State Beta Convention. While our school has always had strong participation in the various academic competitions at the Beta Convention, for only the third time in the club's 15- year history, our students chose to participate in the group talent competition.

Leading the charge was student James Rodgers who garnered support from his classmates. Together, they created an outstanding percussion performance with materials found around the school. While everyone was impressed by their performance and expected them to do well, the MSB family was ecstatic when they won first place – defeating the school that has been the reigning champions of this event for the last 17 years!

While we have continued to celebrate this memorable victory, the Beta's have been working hard to improve their performance even more. At the end of June, the Beta's will travel to Nashville, TN to compete at the National Beta Convention.

The National Beta Club is the largest independent,

non-profit, educational youth organization in America. There are now more than 450,000 active members and more than 8,750 clubs nationally and internationally. It has become the nation's largest independent, non-profit, educational youth organization.

To see video of the MSB Beta's award-winning performance, and to get updates on the how they do at the National Beta Convention, visit our Web site at <http://msb.dese.mo.gov>.

Congratulations to Nikki Cox, Jessica Johnson, Michael McCurdy, Tiondra Pollard, James Rogers, Lee Smith, Josh Starner and Damon Tyson.



## MSB BRAILLE CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT TAKES NATIONAL TITLE

In February, MSB hosted its annual Braille Challenge, a regional qualifying event for the National Braille Challenge that is held every summer in Los Angeles at the National Braille Institute. This year, Richie Tienter, a participant in MSB's Braille Challenge from Westridge Elementary School, qualified to participate in the national event. We are very pleased to announce that Richie took first place nationally in the Freshman Division! Congratulations to Richie and to all of the students who participated in the Braille Challenge!



### MSB Regional Braille Challenge Winners

#### *Apprentice Level - Uncontracted*

- 1st - Michael Johnson\*
- 2nd - Michael McCurdy\*
- 3rd - Hannah Tracey



#### *Apprentice Level - Contracted*

- 1st - Jessica Johnson\*
- 2nd - Seyoon Choi
- 3rd - Anna Koepke

#### *Freshman Level*

- 1st - Richard Tienter
- 2nd - Chance Cole
- 3rd - Austin Schwan



#### *Sophomore Level*

- 1st - Zyshaun Cross-Williams\*

#### *Junior Varsity*

- 1st - Kaitlan Hall
- 2nd - Nicole Cox\* (Nicole was unable to participate the day of the event due to inclement weather, but completed the work at a later date. She scored second place at that time.)
- 2nd - Lydia Olmsted
- 3rd - Heather Thaller\*



#### *Varsity*

- 1st - Brandon Hahs
- 2nd - Josh Starner\*

\*MSB Student



## ALUMNI RETURN TO MSB

May 15-17 of this year marked the annual alumni weekend. On Friday night, guests enjoyed a pizza party and bingo. Saturday was a busy day with a guided tour of the school, meetings and the alumni awards banquet in the evening, followed by a talent competition. Approximately 60 alumni returned to campus for the event to catch up with friends and reminisce. Congratulations to the MSB Alumni Board for all of their hard work and a successful event!

## SPRING INTO FITNESS

On May 21, students and staff enjoyed a day of fitness and recreation. Spring Into Fitness is an event designed to show students a variety of activities that they can enjoy and incorporate into a healthier lifestyle. Walking/running, archery, bowling, cycling, goalball, beepball, swimming and traverse wall climbing were all offered throughout the day. In addition, students and staff enjoyed a healthy smoothie break in the morning and a nutritious picnic lunch in the afternoon out in the courtyard.

## SPREAD THE WORD

In an increased effort to get the word out about the Missouri School for the Blind to more people, we are proud to announce the release of a newly-designed brochure highlighting the wide variety of MSB programs, activities and services. To download a PDF of the brochure, please visit our Web site at <http://msb.dese.mo.gov>. Printed brochures may be requested by calling the school at (314) 776-4320.



## LIONS – OUR KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOR



On Sunday, April 12, MSB welcomed more than 100 Lions' Club members and their families into the school for our annual Lions' Night event. This year's theme was Knights in Shining Armor. Guests enjoyed roasting marshmallows over the bonfire in the courtyard, guided tours of the school, a medieval-themed dinner, silent auction, and best of all, a musical performance presented by students and the MSB music department. And, as a special treat, guests were able to see the MSB Senior Beta's award-winning performance as well! In addition to having the opportunity to thank the Lions for all that they do for the school, the event also serves as a fundraiser with proceeds directly benefitting the students. This year's event raised more than \$12,000! Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the success of the evening!



JULY	
6-17	STEM Session I
20-30	STEM Session II
AUGUST	
13	New Employee Orientation
17-21	Professional Development (8:00-4:00) – NO SCHOOL
24	First Day of School/Beginning 1st Quarter/1st Semester
SEPTEMBER	
1-4	Aspire Interim Testing (English, Math, Reading, Science)
5	Track Meet – Illinois
7	Labor Day – NO SCHOOL (Residential Students Travel In)
11-13	Track Meet – Tennessee
17	Track Meet – Wisconsin
19-26	Space Camp



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