



# MULE EXPRESS

## MISSOURI SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

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## Mules Release “PSA” for White Cane Day

On Tuesday, October 15, 2019, the MSB Mules celebrated White Cane Safety Awareness Day with a day of friendly competition against the MSB staff in a foot race, long jump, skipping race, goalball and building towers with large foam blocks. Louie, the mascot from the St. Louis Blues hockey team made a surprise appearance and cheered on the students with the help of Mo, the MSB Mules mascot! The festivities started off with the premier of a public service announcement-type video in which the students shared their “pet peeves” of how they are treated as people with visual impairments.

In the two weeks leading up to White Cane Day, the students broke into groups and had lessons with school counselor Mrs. Lampe to discuss the meaning and history of White Cane Day and to learn about advocacy. The students learned about advocating for their needs on a daily basis and what to do when they encounter people who make incorrect assumptions about them as people with visual impairments. The students had a lot to say on these topics, and enjoyed having a venue in which they could appropriately share their frustrations about the things sighted people do, say or assume about them. You can view the students’ White Cane Day PSA on Facebook at Facebook.com/MSBMules or on YouTube by searching “Missouri School for the Blind” and selecting the “White Cane Day 2019 PSA” video. Photos from the event are available on Facebook as well.

White Cane Day is a national observance on October 15 of each year to celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired and the important symbol of blindness and tool of independence, the white cane. It has been celebrated yearly since 1964.



Above: MSB students & staff pose on the track bleachers for a group photo with Louie & Mo the Mule

# 1st Quarter Awards Recipients

## Honor Roll

Malikye Baston  
Garrett Belcher  
Nathan Brown  
Mia Bussell  
Noelle Dobbs

Trinae Edwards  
Rylea Gammon  
Charles Grady  
Anastasia Gray  
Neil Grunig

Jalan Leach  
Thomas Limbach  
Khylie Longmire  
Daniel Matheny  
Alison Miller

Robert Mull  
Matthew Potts  
Ravin Roper  
Savanna Smith  
Allen Whalen  
Allie Wolk

### M.U.L.E.S.

(Moving Up, Learning Experience & Skills)

Sirria Brooks  
Shelby Burchett  
Chloe Deremiah  
Leigah Friend  
Alexiona Hamaker  
Vivan Helmig  
Madisyn Hinkebein

Alexis Kaibel  
Kiwan Sanders  
Derek Trischler  
Dionna Towns  
Wayne Watson  
Logan Wilson

### Scholar Athlete

(Played a sport and made Honor Roll)

Malikye Baston  
Noelle Dobbs  
Rylea Gammon  
Anastasia Gray  
Neil Grunig  
Thomas Limbach  
Khylie Longmire  
Ravin Roper

## Counselor's Corner

with Melissa Lampe, School Counselor

We began our school year in elementary guidance learning the importance of being a friend in the classroom and to other students at MSB. In our first guidance lesson we discussed the traits of a good friend and called it "Friendship Soup"; the students said the recipe for friendship soup is having a friend who likes to cook, helps clean up after playing together, likes to talk, is honest, truthful, nice, good, and shares the same interests.

Other lessons in our friendship unit included being mindful of our words and actions, resolving conflicts, positive thinking, and how to effectively deal with bullying issues. Our guidance unit for October is learning about strangers and how to stay safe at home and in the community. We've discussed the definition of a stranger and role-played different scenarios in which the children might encounter a stranger.

The children are also learning about using assertiveness in uncomfortable situations and respecting personal space. Overall, we are off to a very busy start to the school year with our guidance lessons and covering important topics.

## OUTREACH UPDATE by Megan Burgess, Deaf-Blind Project Coordinator

On Tuesday, October 22, MSB Outreach hosted the semi-annual meeting of the Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee (DBAC). The DBAC provides direction to the Missouri Deaf-Blind Project in establishing project priorities. The committee meets two times per year to review grant activities, monitor progress and provide input regarding activities and evaluation procedures and outcomes. Committee members serve as resources in their areas of expertise.

During this meeting, the Marcus Velázquez Service Award was awarded for the first time since 2016. The Marcus Velázquez Service Award is presented by the Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee to an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for individuals with deaf-blindness and their families in the state of Missouri. The 2019 Marcus Velázquez Service Award recipient Beth Jordan, Regional Representative CRC, Helen Keller National Center, Great Plains Regional Office.

Born in 1970, Marcus Velázquez was deaf and had a degenerative eye disease, retinitis pigmentosa that would eventually leave him severely blind — both conditions are a part of a disorder called Usher's Syndrome. He also had autism and Tourette's Syndrome. All of this never stopped him.

He wanted to do all the things everyone else did. So, he learned to swim, went to church and even tried to drive the family car (thankfully, no one was hurt). Among his other solo adventures: Riding Chicago's L Train and taking a bus in Mexico to a mall where he could get a McDonald's "hamburguesa" (burger).

He moved through the world with his cane in hand and a fanny pack fastened to his waist, filled with the essentials for adventure and independence: His ID, money and a reporter-sized notebook and pen to communicate with the non-deaf world. He preferred to express his thoughts through tactile sign language.

Marcus learned many of these life skills during the two years he spent learning at Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in Sands Point, New York.

He went to HKNC after graduating from Missouri School for the Blind, an institution where his teachers nurtured his desire for knowledge and independence. His education and growth was made possible through the efforts of the Missouri Deaf-Blind Task Force, his family, and countless advocates who believed in Marcus.

Upon his return from HKNC, Marcus lived and worked independently in St. Louis. (You can even check out his video resume.)

At 26, Marcus learned he had cancer. He died two months later, on July 4, 1997.



*Above: The Velázquez family present the 2019 Marcus Velázquez Service Award to Beth Jordan. Left to Right: Hilda Velázquez, Luis Velázquez, Beth Jordan, Daniela Velázquez*

## MSB Calendar of Events

**Superintendent:**  
Geoffrey Barney

**Assistant Superintendent:**  
Joyce Waddell

**Residential Life:**  
Marsha Bryant

**Outreach Services:**  
Jane Herder

**Business Operations:**  
William Runzo

**Human Resources:**  
Karen Burkhead

**Community Relations:**  
Carlie Lee

November		January	
1-2	Goalball Conference @ MSB	6	Classes Resume
8	10:00 AM Veterans Day Assembly	9	Wrestling & Cheerleading at Illinois School for the VI
11	Veterans Day -- No School	10	Wrestling & Cheerleading at Iowa Educational Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired
28-29	Fall Break -- No School	15	Wrestling & Cheerleading at Indiana School for the Blind
December		16	10:00 AM 2nd Quarter Awards
2	Classes Resume	20	MLK Holiday -- No School
4-5	Jr. Beta Convention in Springfield	24-25	Wrestling & Cheerleading Conference at Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
5	Wrestling & Cheerleading at Illinois School for the VI	27-31	Career Awareness Week
6-7	Sr. Beta Convention in Springfield	31	Career Awareness Fair
19	1:00 PM Christmas Extravaganza		
12/23-1/3	Winter Break -- No School		



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Missouri School for the Blind  
3815 Magnolia Avenue  
Saint Louis, MO 63110