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Missouri School for the Blind

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The 2016-2017 year is off to a great start! Residential students arrived on campus on Sunday, August 21st, and classes resumed on the 22nd. Several new faces joined us as both staff and students and were promptly welcomed into the MSB family. The first quarter is moving by quickly and the events we've experienced so far are commemorated on the following pages.

With all that's already happened this year, it's easy to forget how busy we were last year! MSB had several major accomplishments including being fully accredited by AdvancED and completing our second year using ACT Aspire to assess student readiness in English, math, reading, science, and writing.

Last year, our sports teams performed exceptionally. The track, cheerleading and swimming teams all placed 2nd in the entire NCASB conference, and our girls goalball team placed 4th. But MSB doesn't just produce athletes: we have artists as well! Two of our students, Zyshaun Cross-Williams and Allisandra Wolk, won prizes for their artwork in the APH InSights Art Competition and Exhibition, and Zyshaun even sold his winning piece of art after the exhibit.

In May of 2016, MSB students and staff culminated their year-long capstone project "The Birth of a Nation" in historic Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our students explored the city and researched George Washington, Betsy Ross, James Madison and Benjamin Franklin as individuals and the Founding Fathers as a group. To view our final projects and check out our interactive map of the trip, visit [msb.dese.mo.gov/curriculum/capstoneproject](http://msb.dese.mo.gov/curriculum/capstoneproject). The MSB campus was busy throughout the summer with several programs open to our students and blind or visually impaired students who attend the local school district throughout the regular school year including Camp Abilities, STEM I Puttin' the Zoo in Zoology, Performing Arts Live On Stage, STEM II Recycle City, Tactile Arts-Art with InSight, and Independent Living: Summer L.I.F.E. The students participated in many activities including seeing "Music Man" at The Muny (Municipal Theatre Association of St. Louis).

Already this year, we're working hard on several programs including the 2017 Capstone Project. The theme is "Destination Geology" and MSB students and staff will travel to Arkansas. for a fun and educational adventure.

Keep an eye out for our new "Quick Connections" monthly newsletters, Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Twitter to stay updated on what's happening at MSB!



## GIGI THE BLIND CHINCHILLA

Gigi was given to Missouri School for the Blind when her breeder realized the chinchilla had a vision impairment. Chinchillas are large-eared, fluffy-tailed rodents with velvety fur coats. They are found in the wild in the Andes Mountain region of South America, and domestically-bred chinchillas are popular pets. Gigi now lives with MSB teacher Shaughn Doyel and comes to the school a few days every week for a dust bath and to visit with other staff and students.



Chinchillas should never get wet! Instead, they roll in volcanic dust to clean dirt and oil from their thick coats.



Our staff and teachers encourage students to touch and interact with Gigi when she visits every week.

## Going GREEN at MSB!

MSB is making strides to improve student and staff health while reducing our carbon footprint. Our most recent efforts show in the installation of new water fountains with bottle refilling stations in the student center and administrative hallway. The bottle refilling stations track the number of plastic water bottles saved from going into landfills, and there is a contest to fill the 250th "saved bottle" from the student center water fountain with the winner receiving a prize and their photo on MSB's social media pages. Two other ongoing projects revolve around a plan to grow some of our own food at MSB. In the Collins Hall courtyard, a milk crate garden tended by Food & Nutrition Manager Margaret Cimarolli and the kitchen staff contains herbs, tomatoes and broccoli to be used in preparing meals for MSB students and staff. A compost pile started by science teach Nancy Arnold during the July STEM program "Recycle City" and maintained by MSB students will provide compost to be used in the garden and campus landscaping. Both are part of a larger future plan to build a greenhouse, full garden and orchard on MSB's campus.



# Residence Life



# Outreach

## Deafblind Awareness Day

On September 22, St. Louis Deafblind Task Force; Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project hosted Deafblind Awareness Day. During the event, Opeoluwa "Ope" Sotonwa, Executive Director for the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, was honored as the 2016 recipient of the Marcus Velazquez Award for significant contribution to improving the quality of life for individuals with deafblindness. The Marcus Velazquez Award is presented each year during Deafblind Awareness Week by the St. Louis Deafblind Task Force to an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for individuals with deafblindness and their families in the greater St. Louis area. Other activities during the event included a presentation by the Velazquez family, an panel entitled "Understanding HB 1696: The SSP (Support Service Person) Bill," an NCDB short video on transition, a Post-Secondary Person Centered Plan presentation, Consumer Perspective by Abby Pfefferkorn, and coverage of work of the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and How they Support the Deafblind Community.



Opeoluwa Sotonwa receiving the Marcus Velazquez Award award from members of the Velazquez family

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### UPCOMING EVENT

#### Implementing Effective Calendar Systems for Students with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss and Multiple Disabilities

By Robbie Blaha, Consultant Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired & author of "Calendars for Students with Multiple Disabilities including Deafblindness." Sponsored by Missouri Deafblind Technical Assistance Project & MSB for teachers, administrators, speech language therapists, paraprofessionals, & parents of students with combined vision & hearing loss.

This one-day workshop is free for participants & will instruct on the effective teaching strategies for utilizing a calendar system throughout the instructional day. The calendar system helps students learn time concepts & time vocabulary, provides a way to understand & have some control over schedules & supports conversations about everyday life activities. The workshop is on Tuesday, November 8, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 3500 Vandiver, in Columbia, Miss. from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Registration is posted at [www.msb.dese.mo.gov](http://www.msb.dese.mo.gov)  
For questions, contact: Susan Bonner, Coordinator of Outreach Services, MSB, 314-633-1553 or [susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov](mailto:susan.bonner@msb.dese.mo.gov)



## The Amazing Cane Race WHITE CANE DAY 2016

Missouri School for the Blind

White Cane Day, also known as Blind Americans Equality Day, is a national observance in the U.S. celebrated on October 15 of each year since 1964. The date is set aside to celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired and the white cane, an important symbol of blindness and tool of independence. On Oct. 13, students and staff of MSB celebrated White Cane Day with The Amazing Cane Race, a scavenger hunt that led students and teachers around campus and the community to complete fun and challenging activities!



## MSB Students Shoot for the Stars at NASA Space Camp

Every year, a few lucky MSB students attend NASA Space Camp at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. This year, Lighthouse for the Blind sponsored three students to attend.

During camp, students are trained using the same methods that astronauts experience, but modified for those who are visually impaired. Students take part in simulated space missions, experience walking on the moon in the 1/6th gravity chair, navigate a tumble spin on the Multi-Axis Trainer, climb the Mars Climbing Wall and experience four times the amount of gravity on Earth during the liftoff of the Space Shot simulator ride. Our students always have a blast at Space Camp!



## Erik Weihammayr, blind adventurer: Adversity is the Path to Success

MSB students and staff were invited to see Erik Weihammayr speak at Principia School in St. Louis County on October 6th. Erik shared inspiring stories about climbing Mt. Everest and the Seven Summits (the highest mountain on each of the seven continents), kayaking the Grand Canyon, writing several books and founding No Barriers USA despite having impaired eyesight. Erik's life work is to always challenge himself and spread the message that adversity is the pathway to success. He believes that no one should let anything, including blindness or physical disability, get in the way of achieving your dreams and started No Barriers USA to help disabled people reach their adventuring goals.

Erik took a few minutes after his presentation to speak privately with the group from MSB and answered many questions our students and staff had. We look forward to hearing more from Erik in the future!



## Missouri Council for the Blind-Alma Murray Essay Contest

Three MSB students were honored at the Missouri Council for the Blind convention for the phenomenal essays they wrote for the Alma Murray essay contest. The essay topic was how Braille has affected the writer's life. Zyshaun Cross-Williams won 1st place and read his essay aloud for the audience, while Jessica Johnson took 2nd place and Damon Tyson took 3rd place. MSB alumnus and current Braille teacher Adnan Gutic and MSB school supervisor Desiree Morris attended the MCB convention with the students.



## Tennessee Invitational

The MSB Mules traveled to Nashville to compete against student athletes from Arkansas, Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. MSB won the meet with 240 combined points. Other scores: Ark. - 229; Tenn. - 178; Ohio - 130; Ken. - 13.



## Eberhardt Track Meet

On Thursday, September 15, MSB hosted the 41st annual Eberhardt Track Meet. Named for longtime coach and teacher Al Eberhardt, the meet brings together student-athletes from Midwest schools for the blind to compete in track and field events. MSB won for the 7th year in row. Scores: MSB - 226; Wis. - 76; Ill. - 22.

"My favorite events are the 3-con jump, long jump, shotput and 60-meter dash."  
-Taylor, Wisconsin

"I like watching everybody else, but my favorite event is the 3-con jump."  
-Oliver, Indiana



## Track Conference at Indiana School for the Blind

The MSB Mules traveled to Indianapolis to compete against nine other schools in the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind (NCASB) conference. The MSB girls team won 1st place and the boys team won 4th place with only 5 boys competing.



# New MSB Staff



**Angela Allen, Receptionist**  
 I want to say thanks and share my gratitude for being blessed to work here at MSB.



**Tim Calvin, Paraprofessional & Assistant Goalball Coach**  
 I'm glad to be on board and love working with the kids. I'm looking forward to bringing back the goalball championship!

**LaNee Dorsey, Residential Secretary**  
 I'm very excited to be here. I hope I can bring something fun, artsy and flavorful to the school!



**Carlie Lee, Director of Community Relations**  
 I'm so pleased to be part of MSB! I'm working on updating our website, increasing our social media presence, improving our publications and better connecting MSB to the community. Let me know if you have any ideas or if I can help you!



**Bryan Mueller, Music Teacher**  
 I am so pleased to be teaching at MSB. The staff and administration have been very friendly and helpful to me. Our musical groups are rehearsing diligently toward learning new chords and songs to be performed at our winter concert. I also hope to take the older group out to perform at some local schools after the holidays. Thanks to all!



**Tammy Popp, Math Teacher**  
 I'm really excited to be part of the MSB community. I love teaching math and helping my students make connections. I love it when they finally understand and I get to witness their "aha moment!"

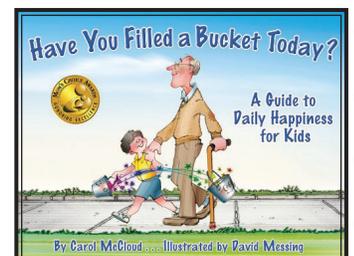
Residence Life substitutes:  
 Langston Adams, Patricia Clark, Christopher Griffin, Christopher Hill, Wendell Jones, Trina Simms, Vernetta Wright

## COUNSELOR'S CORNER with Andrea Piel, School Counselor

Welcome to the first ever Counselor's Corner! I would like to introduce myself to any new families to Missouri School for the Blind. My name is Andrea Piel, MSB's School Counselor. Some of my responsibilities include: Weekly elementary guidance lessons, individual counseling sessions, transitional planning, and much more!

This month I would like to highlight a new program I have implemented with the elementary students. Did you know everyone in the whole wide world walks around carrying an invisible bucket? If you didn't, you should read the charming book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" by Carol McCloud. This fun little book talks about the theory that everyone has an invisible bucket that can be filled with kind acts or emptied with mean behaviors. We feel happy and good when our buckets are full and very sad and lonely when our buckets are empty.

I began the 2016-2017 school year reminding the elementary students that our actions can either fill or empty others' buckets. We learned about many ways to become "bucket fillers," and established a yearlong goal to fill a classroom bucket by receiving drops from teachers around the school. Any time a student is recognized for their good behavior they receive a special drop. For every five drops the class receives a plastic ball for the classroom bucket. We hope to have the bucket completely full by the end of the year and enjoy a special celebration! To learn more about bucket filling visit [www.bucketfillers101.com](http://www.bucketfillers101.com)



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**MSB CALENDAR OF EVENTS****October**

20	Goalball @ Illinois
25	Quarter 1 ends
26	Quarter 2 begins
27	10:00 a.m. Q1 Awards Ceremony 10:30 a.m. QuizBowl Finals

**November**

4-6	Goalball Conference @ MSB
10	10:00 a.m. Veteran's Day Assembly
11	Veteran's Day - No School
14-18	Career Awareness Week
18	9:30 a.m. Career Fair
21-25	Thanksgiving Break - No School
28	Classes Resume

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