

National Board Certified Teacher Terri Sue Ross

The Harbor Program



School District of Beloit

National Board Certification

Joining this family of Beloit's NBC teachers was a life-changing experience, says Ross who is quick to explain that the process was enlightening for her as an educator and happily coincided with the long awaited adoption of two daughters.

Established in 1987, the National Board for Certification is the profession's means of identifying and recognizing teachers who meet criteria for measuring excellence in their profession, and a challenging process it is says Ross, who recently received certification out of a not uncommon second attempt.

Married to husband Paul since 2005, Ross says, "Speaking of Paul, he deserves credit. I spent most weekends at the kitchen table working. He made dinner, cleaned, and watched a lot TV when I was busy working. This process requires a lot of sacrifice from

your family. He supported me through each and every moment. He picked me up after I didn't pass the first time and cried with me when I did."

The dedication to teaching that Ross says inspired and motivated her to explore and then try, try again and earn her certification is clear in her credentials. She says, "I have taught all 15 years of my teaching career at Merrill in Kindergarten. I love Kindergarten because the students generally love to learn and think you are

the smartest person alive. I can't sing to save my life but when you sing for Kindergarteners you usually hear 'You sing so beautiful and you are beautiful too.' Who wouldn't want to work when you hear that every day?"

Continuing, she says, "I have my Bachelor's degree in PreK-6, a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and I am also an Innovation Coach for Merrill and a PBIS Coach for our school as well."

Home & School Support

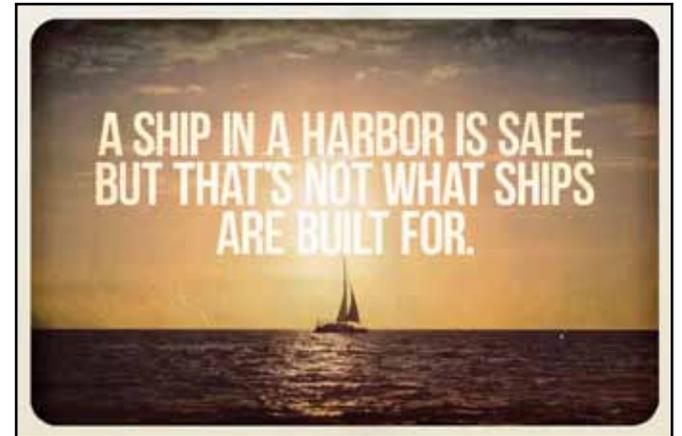
Concerning her board certification, Ross says, she was following in the footsteps of district teachers who led the way, including, Beloit Memorial High School teachers Lyman Elliot and Matt Flynn and Heidi Andre as well as Aldrich Reading Specialist Cynthia Slavish

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Paul Hermes
Associate Principal
Bay View Middle School

At the conclusion of the 2011-2012 school year, a team from Bay View Middle School in the Howard-Suamico School District, gathered to address a troubling trend in their school. They identified that multiple students with special needs and at-risk students were struggling academically, behaviorally, socially and emotionally, often resulting in poor grades and disciplinary actions including high numbers of suspensions and expulsions. There was an environment of struggle, frustration, and a lack of a solution to improve the situation for these students.

After reviewing performance data, the team identified a gap in the support structure for these students. Two specific areas were identified: (1) There were no "in-between" options for these struggling students. They were either in classes, full days, on the same load level as all students or historically would either be in self-contained classrooms or even worse, not in school at all. Having only these two options, at opposite ends of the services spectrum, was insufficient; (2) The students with special needs often had behavioral and social areas of focus outlined in their IEPs, areas that often impeded their academic progress. However, due to the amount time and effort required for academic work (i.e. homework, assessments, etc.), they actually received little support and training on these foundational areas.



Following multiple summer meetings, the team emerged with a new program designed to fill these gaps — a program named the Harbor Program. The Harbor Program mission statement reads "... highest level intervention program for our Special Education and At-Risk students who are in need of additional support and guidance for their behavioral, social, emotional, and/or academic challenges in order to be successful in school." As Associate Principal, Mr. Paul Hermes, explains, "The term "Harbor" came from the analogy that of a ship that comes into a harbor to seek shelter from a storm or to get repaired; some of our students, students who need it the most, will use the Harbor Program for their own shelter and/or repair.

However, as Mr. Ciske, teacher of the Harbor Program, also points out, "Like a harbor, a ship does not stay in the harbor permanently or exclusively." A cornerstone belief of the Harbor is that students will not be permanently housed in the program. The program's purpose is to ensure these students can

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PUBLISHER/EDITOR: Renee Feight
 EDITOR: Andria Reinke
 PAGE COMPOSITION: Andrew Clausen
 WEBMASTER: Scott Bayerl
 SPECIAL PROJECTS: Allie Zacharias
 ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE: Shaw Liljeqvist
 Please direct articles, advertising, questions or comments to:

Teaching Today WI™
 PO Box 1704
 Eau Claire, WI 54702
 Phone/Fax 715-839-7074
 www.teachingtodaywi.com

Please direct all inquiries to:
 renee@teachingtodaywi.com

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Meemic Masterpieces Art Contest

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Simulated Space Mission Builds On 4th-Graders' Math, Science Skills

A NASA mission simulation gave fourth-graders at a Colorado school hands-on experience with using math and science in a "real-world" scenario. Talking with a NASA astronaut through Skype, students working in groups were calculating payloads and cracking coded messages while tracking down a missing spaceship.

How Spatial Skills Can Help Boost Girls' Math Performance

Research shows spatial skills are an early indicator of later math achieve-

ment, but girls generally score lower on tests of spatial reasoning. Engineering professor Sheryl Sorby explores the issue and suggests exercises teachers can use to improve students' spatial skills.

Teacher: Help Students Learn Math With Visual Lessons

Visual math lessons can help students understand math concepts, asserts Allie Magnuson, a kindergarten teacher. In this blog post, she shares several strategies, including using rainbows, paper crafts, gumballs and Lego bricks to teach math.

Inclusion vs Exclusion: You Are the Deciding Factor

The development of inclusive practices requires those within a particular context to work together to address barriers to education experienced by some learners. Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.

In this Issue

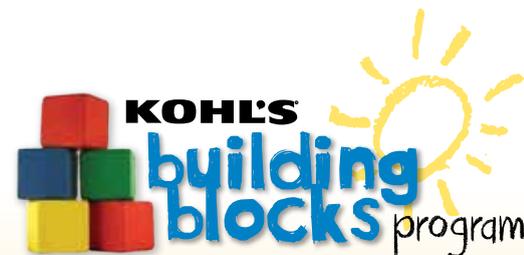
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my papers and easing me through my stress and panic attacks.

“When we didn’t certify on our first attempt, it was hard, but we kept going. I choose to redo everything. In the early morning on the November day 2014 when I found out I didn’t pass that first time, my husband and I — okay my husband

— crunched the numbers to see what I would have to do to pass on the second attempt. I choose to redo the two papers and three tests that didn’t pass and not leave any ‘what ifs’ by not redoing all that I could.

Home & School Families

“Having a district like Beloit support your efforts was a great motivator as well. Thankfully our district and school board have stood behind their teachers.

“As I got into the process,” she said, noting that certified teachers qualify for increased salary considerations that, for example, can be helpful in paying for undergraduate and gradu-

ate student loans, “it became more about being that teacher the NBC asks you to be.

I feel like a part of me is asking ‘Is that what a National Board Certified teacher would do?’ Going through the process makes you want to do more — to find that one way that works best for each of your students.

For Ross, it is also important to think about the fact that the beginnings of her certification process not only coincided with but are very linked to the adoption process for her and her husband. Simply, both involve the most important things in her life — her at home and at school families — both of which support the other in the sense that they make her aware of how important it is to try your best and be grateful for the opportunity to teach and nurture children.

“We were approved to be foster parents in February of 2015, on our 10th wedding anniversary,” she says. “We received news that we would get to meet two little girls.

Home & School Children

Through the summer we bonded with these girls every weekend and they moved in with us on September 5th. They are 18 months and three and have made our lives complete.”

With the joy of the girls, and watching her husband be a father for the first time,

Ross admits, “When I received the email our scores were being released, I realized that I hadn’t thought about the national boards in a long while. On Friday, November 6th, I went to sleep and woke up around 1 a.m. on Saturday, November 7th. I thought well ‘get this over.’ As I logged into the network, I was asked to type my name the way I would like it to appear on my certificate. I thought, ‘Hey, I get a certificate for not passing. Wow!’

And then it asked who would you like us to notify of your achievement? That is when I looked up and saw this little bar across the top saying ‘Congratulations! You are a National Board Certified Teacher!’ They could have made that bigger! I still don’t believe I passed. It is slowly sinking in. It is hard for me to accept that so many great things have been happening. First the girls and now National Board Certification.”

Each is a life changing event that will help her every day be inspired to be the best she can be with her children — at home and at school.

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Congratulations to Wisconsin's 37 New National Certified Teachers!



Thirty-seven teachers from 24 public school districts and two private schools throughout the state achieved certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, joining 1,826 nationwide who newly earned the National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) credential in 2015.

Statewide 972 teachers in Wisconsin's schools are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. They are among more than 112,000 board certified teachers nationwide. Certification consists of four components: written assessment of content knowledge, reflection on student

work samples, video and analysis of teaching practice, and documented impact and accomplishments as a teaching professional. The voluntary process can be completed over one to three years.

Belleville School District:

Meredith Smith,
Belleville High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science

Eau Claire Area School District:

Adam Boll,
DeLong Middle School Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Music

Fort Atkinson School District:

Martha MacWilliams,
Luther Elementary School Middle Childhood/Generalist

Franklin Public School District:

Kathryn Egan of Wind Lake,
Forest Park Middle School Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History

Germantown School District:

Colleen Schowalter of Colgate,
Rockfield Elementary School Middle Childhood/Generalist

Hartford Union High School District:

Kathryn Herrmann,
Hartford Union High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts

Janesville School District:

Andrea Behn,
Parker High School Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other Than English

Christine Munch of Beloit,
Adams Elementary School Early Adolescence/English Language Arts

Milwaukee Public Schools:

Stacy Knetter,
Reagan College Preparatory High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science

Matthew Turner, Riverside University High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Social Studies-History

Nicolet Union High School District:

Kristin Susedik of Franklin,
Nicolet High School Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialist



Northland Pines School District:

Ann Marie Perry of Sayner,
Northland Pines High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science

Mary Wait of Land O Lakes,
Northland Pines High School Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts

Todd Wilfer of Eagle River,
Northland Pines Middle School Early Adolescence/Science

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OUR MISSION IS TO HELP YOU FIND YOURS.

In this issue we are featuring two more of six honorable mentions entries from our “Dream Careers” contest. Two honorable mentions were published in the previous issue of Teaching Today WI, and two more will be published in the next issue. Contest winners were featured in the December issue of Teaching Today WI™ (Winter 2015–16, Volume 1). You can access previous issues on our website at www.teachingtodaywi.com.

Psychology



Alyssa O.
Greendale School District

Throughout life, I was continually questioned what I aspired to be. As a child, I often heard of the general occupations; a doctor, firefighter, teacher, etc., but as I grew up, I explored and found an extensive list of careers that could both bring me joy and allow me to further strengthen and develop my skills that I already have.

Finding a career is not just about

finding support for my future, but also about finding a career that will bring me happiness and passion throughout life. My passion is being able to work with kids. Leaving a positive impact on a child’s life would bring me utter jubilation and contentment.

A dream vocation of mine would involve being able to positively shape a child’s life. After countless explorations of careers that would allow me to attain this

joy, I discovered a possible occupation in psychology. Through this career, I would be able to work with children and build their trust in order to work through their obstacles and dilemmas.

I first encountered the option of psychology when I was discussing possible career options with my parents, and I was immediately interested and wanted to learn more about the career. I was officially able to see if I was interested in psychology when I began taking the AP Psychology course at my school, and I realized that I thrived in this area of study and I truly enjoyed the many aspects of the class.

Now that I knew that psychology was an interest of mine, I had to decide what branch I want to pursue. I am between criminal and school psychology, as my father works within the Criminal Justice Department and my mother works in a school setting. I recently shadowed a school psychologist at Milwaukee Public Schools as part of a school assignment for an Independent Living class, and I found that I enjoyed myself during the whole shadowing experience. The various activities and interactions between her and the kids, as

well as seeing the amount of passion she had, made me even more interested in this branch of psychology. I am also interested in shadowing someone involved in criminal psychology, so that I can see which I prefer.

One thing that I am certain about is being able to work with kids, because being with them brings me happiness. Every child deserves to believe in themselves and have a determined mindset. I want to be able to help kids that are struggling and help them work out their problems so that they can have the confidence and the crucial tools to reach their goals.

With this, I am aware of the day-to-day challenges and frustrations this career may bring, however, I believe the satisfaction of positively shaping a child’s life will make it worth it. While some may be focused on the careers that bring in the most money, my dream career is one that not only brings me happiness and passion, but it brings happiness to the lives of others as well.

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Registered Nurse



Alexis M.
Cornell School District

As kids we all had our dream jobs whether it was being a doctor, firefighter, soldier, teacher, or an astronaut. As a kid, my dream job was to grow up and become a firefighter or soldier. I have always wanted to be the person that could help someone who needs help and to be able to make a difference in someone's life. Now that I am at the point in my life to decide what career to pursue, I've decided that I want to become a registered nurse.

I've always wanted to have a job in the

medical field. A job where I could be that person who would be able to help people on a daily basis. A job that lets me be that one person who was able to make a difference in someone's life. I also would like a job where I would be on my feet and would be staying active. I want to become a nurse because I will be able to help people, be active on my job and be in the medical field. I decided that nursing was a great field because there are so many different jobs I can do with my nursing career. I could work in the fast paced and exciting emergency room, at a clinic from 8 to 5, or become a nurse manager. I know that I can

complete my nursing program and go onto further education for different jobs in the nursing field.

Registered Nurse (RN) is usually responsible for the supervision of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Registered Nurses work in many different environments. A RN may work in a hospital environment, a physician's office, provide home care, or health care agencies and outpatient facility surroundings. On a daily basis registered nurses supply and coordinate care, educate patients as well as the public about medical conditions, and offer recommendations and emotional support to their patients and their family members. Also registered nurses work with an assortment of patients from geriatric to pediatric, or they could also specialize in one specific area. Some areas that they could specialize in are cardiac, neurologic care or even dermatology. Registered nurses will communicate with healthcare professionals, render medications and treatments to patients, examine and record patient behavior, and perform diagnostic test. Registered nurses have many benefits, some of which are fringe benefits, pension plans, vision, dental, health, and philanthropy benefits, maternity leaves and many more. The schooling to become a registered nurse usually takes

about two to four years depending on the student's curriculum. If a student wants to receive a degree in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing it will take up to four years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the average registered nurse's hourly wage in the United States will be thirty-two dollars and the average salary is sixty seven thousand, four hundred ninety dollars.

I'm really looking forward to starting school in the fall, to be able to start my dream career as a registered nurse. I know that I'm going to be faced with many challenges, but I know in the end it will be worth it. Being able to help people who need help and to be that person who can make a difference and change someone's life is my dream job.

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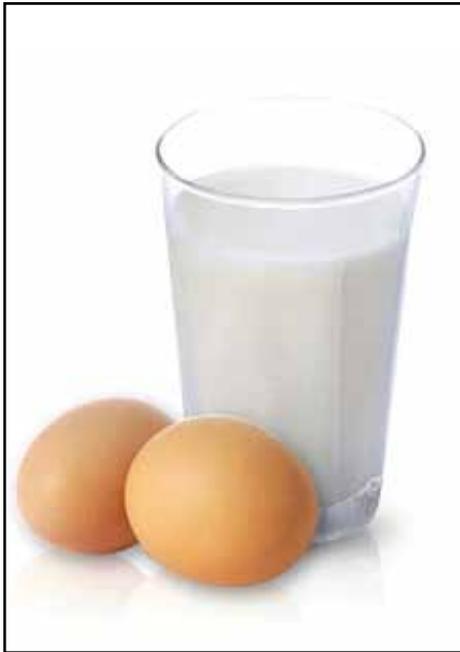
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*Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, [August, 2015] [www.bls.gov/oes/].

Bellin College

Choosing the Right Fuel for Athletes



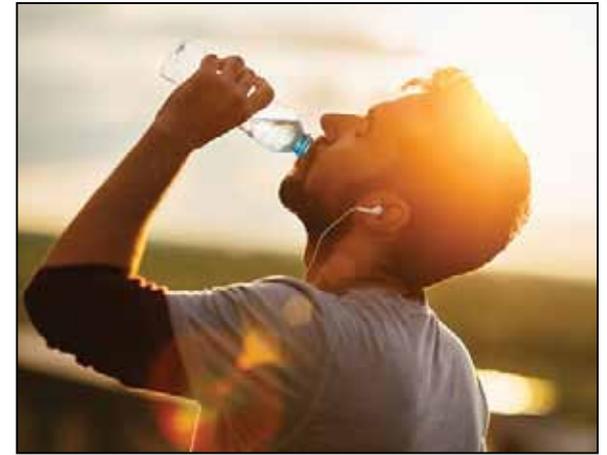
Aaron Rouse, LAT

We have all heard about the importance of “fueling up” for athletes. How making sure those athletes eat the correct food to help them during games and practices. However, some athletes may not know how to correctly fuel up before games. The thought of choosing

nutritious foods that will help one to succeed during athletic contests may be overwhelming for some. Here are some tips to ponder when thinking about pregame meals.

1. Don't overlook the importance of breakfast. Studies have shown that eating a good breakfast can help with concentration, mental acuity, and alertness. Eating within 30 minutes of waking has proven to help with mental sharpness. When choosing breakfast, it is important to choose healthy options. Fruity, sugary cereals may taste good but they only offer short bursts of energy. Instead, look for foods that are high in protein such as eggs and dairy products. Also, whole grains and fruits are always a good selection.
2. Take advantage of snacking times throughout the day. Athletes should never get to the point that they feel extremely hungry because this is a sign of being under fueled. This hungry feeling increases the chances that athletes will reach for less healthy options because they are a quick and easy snack. Instead, snack throughout the day on foods like cheese, yogurt, nuts, fruit, and vegetables.

3. It is important to eat a variety of foods. Eating foods that are high in protein and low in simple sugars. Also, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are important for to make sure that an athlete is getting all of the vitamins and minerals that are necessary for refueling.
4. Hydrating throughout the day is very important for athletic success. One of the easiest ways that an athlete can stay hydrated is to carry a water bottle with them throughout the day. Also, drinking on a schedule can help to make sure that the athlete stays hydrated. For example, drinking from the water bottle in between each class and after lunch. A simple test to ensure hydration is to check urine color. An athlete that is hydrated should have pale yellow, almost clear urine. If an athlete has dark yellow or amber colored urine, they are dehydrated.



Fueling for athletes is something that needs to be a practiced everyday. Starting the process of fueling should begin well in advance of any practice and especially competition. Making sure that the athlete has healthy snacks on hand and easily accessible is going to lead to higher likelihood for better fueling. Better fueling and refueling of athletes will lead to higher chance of success for athletes at any level.

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Nekoosa High School Transitions Expo



Rick Schmidt, Nekoosa's director of public works, helps student Samantha Smith pay her utility bills during a financial literacy simulation at Nekoosa High School. (Photo: Courtesy of Nekoosa High School)

Katie Peters, Community Outreach Coordinator School District of Nekoosa

Nekoosa High School students dream about life after graduation. . . . Where will they work? How many children will they have? What unexpected happenings will they encounter?

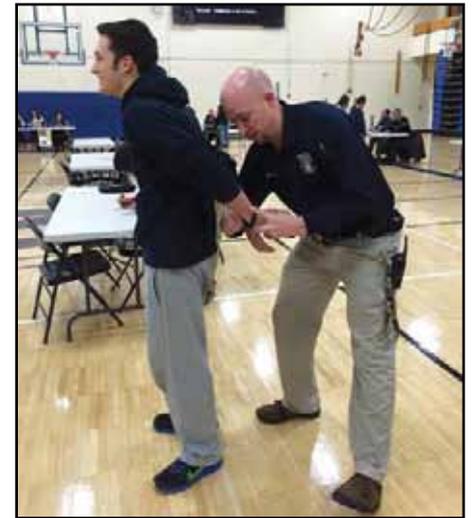
On, Wednesday January, 13th all Nekoosa High School Junior and Senior students participated in a financial simulation focusing on life in the real world after graduation. The

Nekoosa School District partnered with over 25 local businesses and community members to facilitate this program. Students were given a life scenario (occupation/married/single/pets/children/etc.) They were required to navigate through several booths to pay for things such as a home, car, medical bills, childcare, utilities etc. Our hopes were the students would gain a better understanding of how prioritizing income will be valuable in their future.

I had the chance to ask a few of the students participating about their thoughts on this event. Senior Kaylee Jensen couldn't believe the cost of children. She was glad the salaries were broken down into monthly income averages so the students could see what is left in the bank after all of the required monthly payments. One of the most important things senior Emma Sprehn took away from the event was learning how to really balance a checking account. She agreed that this was a wonderful experience for the students to get a taste the real world.

Senior Justin Mortel was happy that he actually ended up with the occupation that he is hoping to encounter after graduation. One of the main concerns for Justin was donating to charitable causes. After seeing some of his friends grow a negative balance in their bank accounts after paying bills, helping others became a priority for him.

Robb Sigler, of Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank was excited to work with the students. Mr. Sigler's reaction to the simulation was very exciting. He thought this was a wonderful way to give the students a heads up on what is to come. Some of the students had to return to the bank booth to take a loan out or seek more money just to pay their monthly bills. Mr. Sigler and his team served as financial advisors sharing ideas and tips with our students about different financial situations.

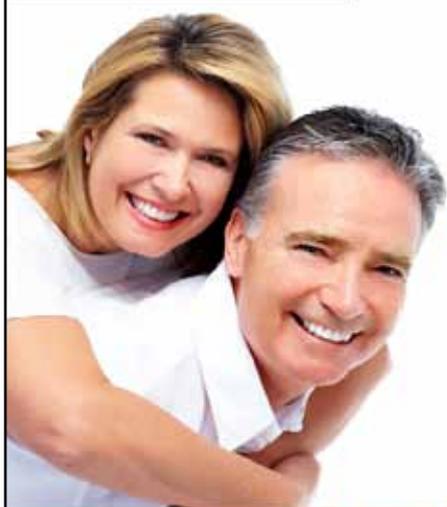


Trevor Smith, with the help of Officer Josh Kolo, the Nekoosa Police Department school resource officer, learns about the costs of breaking the law at a financial literacy simulation.

We will be implementing this program every other year in Nekoosa. If you run into one of our Junior or Senior students, ask them what their future might look like. You might be surprised to hear what they have to say.

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Valentine's Project Teaches Business Skills to 3rd Graders

Stevens Point Area Public School District

Mrs. Tuskowski's third grade class at Washington Elementary School have been preparing for Valentine's Day since early January. Their hard work culminated with the 'Cupid's Corner' store where fellow schoolmates could purchase Valentine treats for their friends and family. The Cupid's Corner project brought financial literacy skills and concepts, embedded in their social studies curriculum, to life by having the class plan product distribution strategies beginning with what product they wanted to sell, securing start-up funds and marketing their product.

They began by securing a loan of \$400.00 from the Washington Elementary Parent Teacher Organization. Students held market research focus groups, narrowing down their potential offerings to six selections they believed would sell. After calling local retailers to get the best prices, funds secured from the PTO loan were used to purchase supplies. Valentines treats were assembled and students began marketing their final products, leading up to Cupid's Corner. "I am so proud



of the hard work and enthusiasm the students have shown throughout the project," said Tuskowski, "seeing them connect their projects to what they are learning about economics has been a highlight of the unit".

Proceeds from Cupid's Corner are donated to Books from the Heart to fund the purchase of over 110 books for kindergarten classrooms at Washington and McDill Elementary Schools.

www.wisp.k12.wi.us
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West Senior Wins Wisconsin NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing



School District of New Berlin

New Berlin West senior Naomi Bhagat was selected as a winner of the 2016 Wisconsin National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Award for Aspirations in Computing.

The award recognizes young high school women for their computing-related achievements and interests as part of an effort to encourage more young women to choose careers in technology.

Award winners were selected from high schools across Wisconsin for their outstanding aptitude and interest in information technology and computing, solid leadership ability, good academic history, and plans for postsecondary education.

Naomi's interest in technology began in seventh grade with a Digital Concepts

class. Since then, she has successfully completed several Project Lead The Way and Computer Science courses and taught herself how to code in Python, Java, and C++. Naomi has a leadership role on the New Berlin Blitz Robotics team. She hopes to pursue a degree in Software Engineering.

"We are so proud of Naomi," Superintendent Joe Garza said. "Being recognized with the NCWIT Award makes her a role model and shines a spotlight on women and computing. The School District of New Berlin has significantly increased our technology offerings over the past few years to help prepare students for the needs of the projected economy. It is great to see students that take advantage of these opportunities recognized for their accomplishments."

Each award-winner receives prizes from top technology companies and universities, and is also eligible for scholarship awards from the Computer Science Departments at two universities.

"Encouraging young women's interest in technology careers is critical: our workforce needs their creativity and their innovation," said Lucy Sanders, CEO and Cofounder of NCWIT.

NCWIT works to correct the imbalance



of gender diversity in technology and computing because gender diversity positively correlates with a larger workforce, better innovation, and increased business performance.

Increasing the number of women in technology and computing also has the potential to improve the design of products and services to better serve a more diverse population, and increase economic and social wellbeing by providing more women with stable and lucrative careers.

"Understanding the environments that our students will learn and work in someday is a critical part of effectively

preparing them for life after high school. This is our collective work," Garza said.

Naomi will be honored at an awards celebration to be held April 3.

www.nbexcellence.org
(262) 789-6200

AASD Students Test Out Technology in the "Hour of Code"



Appleton Area School District

During Computer Science Education Week (Dec. 7–13) students at 155,000 events around the world learned about coding, jumping into a field that can change the rest of their lives.

We live in a world surrounded by technology, and we know that whatever field our students choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly hinge on understanding how technology works.

That's why over 100 sessions were held within the AASD. They joined in on the largest

learning event in history: The Hour of Code. More than 100 million students worldwide have already tried an Hour of Code. AASD Technology Integrators, along with staff, have been reaching as many students as possible within our elementary, middle and high schools.

When asking students if they know what computer programmers do, you hear shouts of "they're geeks" or they work on video games and in the government. Some students even mentioned binary code and CGI effects in movies. The Tech Integrators explained that computer programmers and software engineers work in marketing, healthcare, film and on cars and medical equipment. They emphasized that pretty much any industry you would want to go into for a career, there's someone in the background using computer science to make things work better, or more quickly, or more easily.

Dale Basler, K–6 Technology Integration Specialist, says that "When you listen to a group of students talk excitedly about the latest hit video game, you learn how important technology is to them. The Hour of Code helps students learn that they can do so much

MSOE UNIVERSITY
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MSOE Visit Days are designed for students looking for important steps and information relevant to their current academic year. The day consists of an admissions presentation, student-guided campus tours and refreshments with students and staff. Arriving promptly at 10 a.m. is encouraged to get the fullest MSOE experience.

Junior Visit Days
will be held from
10 a.m.–1 p.m.
February 26 and
March 11

(800) 332-6763
msoe.edu/explore

Continued on Page 16

Technology Businesses Amplifying Oshkosh Growth



*Rob Kleman
Senior Vice President, Economic Development
Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce*

It's no secret that Oshkosh has an ever expanding group of emerging Information Technology (IT) businesses and jobs. Our IT job growth has been happening since the mid-1990's but has accelerated over the past five years. We have recently seen explosive IT job growth in technology related companies as well as larger manufacturers and service based companies.

Collectively, we need to find new ways to support and encourage the growth and

expansion of these high-wage, job creating businesses.

To that end, a grass roots initiative of business, education, local government, Oshkosh Chamber and economic and workforce development officials have launched an effort called Amplify Oshkosh intended to amplify technology in Oshkosh businesses, careers and education. The formation of Amplify Oshkosh was a direct result of recommendations that were included in a business and industry cluster analysis for Oshkosh that was commissioned in 2013. The study identified growth in the IT sector as one of our top priorities from a business and economic development perspective. This initiative is now one of the Oshkosh Chamber's top economic development priorities.

Amplify Oshkosh is off to an amazing start and is only in its second year of existence. Amplify has formed a leadership team that consists of 35 members representing 22 different organizations. Its overarching goal is to position Oshkosh and our surrounding region as an IT hotbed, facilitate networking and educational opportunities for existing IT businesses and professionals, heighten the awareness and importance of the IT sector, and work collaboratively with education partners to help fill the IT talent pipeline.

Amplify has already reached over 1,000

people through its newly created networking and educational series called "Ideas Amplified". Over 250 people attended its inaugural "BIG EVENT" last November called WORK IT. The WORK IT event focused on how the "Future of Work is Driven by IT". It featured a keynote address from an internationally renowned expert on workforce trends and generational dynamics. The WORK IT event also featured panels from local business and education leaders. The Amplify team is already busy planning more events like this for 2016.

Amplify Oshkosh has already raised over \$50,000 in support of its cause and has received over \$250,000 in in-kind donations. This overwhelming support and interest in growing the IT sector is proof that there is a need and commitment in our market for an organization like Amplify Oshkosh.

In its first 18 months of existence, it is fair to say that Amplify is off to a great start. But its work has only just begun. A recent study forecasts that our 18 county New North region will need to fill 12,586 tech jobs by 2020, up from 11,252 in 2015, a net gain of 1,334 jobs. However, at this time, the demand for IT jobs is exceeding the supply of available talent. At its current pace, the study estimated the net shortfall of candidates to fill these positions in 2020 to be 2,900. So what can we do to tackle

this labor shortage? The study notes that the presence of a strong educational system, including Fox Valley Technical College, provide a talent base for future employees and core degree programs that will help the IT sector grow. Amplify has formed a Skills and Talent committee to help forge partnerships with our business and education leaders to address this talent shortage.

We need to spread the word to our local high school and middle school students that there are tremendous job opportunities in the IT field. The study pointed out that 86% of our high school seniors in the New North region are not interested in IT careers. We need to change the perception of what an IT career means. While some of the jobs we are referring to include skilled programmers, coders and computer scientists, there is also a need for employees with skills in sales and customer service, creative design, digital marketing and digital imaging to name a few. The study goes on to say that the average wages in our region in the IT field range from \$44,410 - \$83,220 annually.

Amplify strongly believes that we have immediate opportunities to work more closely with our K-12 education system as well as our higher educational institutions. It is criti-

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“When starting to integrate technology as a school, what is the best approach regarding professional development?”

By Matt Renwick

This question was posted recently to me on Google+. The question asker, Jennifer Dericks, was prompted while reading my new book for ASCD Arias (yeah, a reader!). Here is my response:

Jennifer, this is a great question, and I will post it right here in Google+ so others can read my response. My answer is multi-faceted because there are several considerations when first starting to implement technology within instruction.

First, look at your building goals, your school's past successes and areas for professional growth as a school. Where are you at, where do you want to be, and how might you get there? If you haven't identified these yet, look at your student learning results. Pay special attention to the interim/benchmark assessments instead of standardized tests and their ilk. These common formative assessments can show you trends and patterns that will guide your work.

Once you have a focus for professional learning that has a good chance of impacting student learning, the second step is to consider one possibility for technology-enhanced instruction. When I say one, I mean ONE!!

(sorry for shouting). For our school, there was a recognized need to augment our assessments to provide access and accommodation for our students, especially our most marginalized. Using digital tools such as blogs and portfolios have given students a greater voice in how they can be assessed with regard to what they know and are able to do.

Third, it is okay to pilot technology integration with only a handful of teachers in the first year. We selected the willing and the interested. Once they became accomplished in using the digital tools with fluency, they became our building leaders in terms of explaining the benefits of the initiative to the rest of the staff. Some of these teacher leaders have led staff development offerings are voluntary, paid, and led by the participants' questions which they post via Google Form prior to the sessions. It cannot be just the principal leading this change process.

Finally, make this initiative a multi-year focus that is embedded within a current academic goal. One year is not enough. Plan for at least three years for these enhancements to truly take hold in your school and make an impact on student learning. Also, expect an implementation dip during the process, prob-



ably the second year. In my experience, this happens when you think things are running along smoothly. This is a sign that teachers are starting to move beyond the basics of the technology and ready for more training with regard to more complex uses of the tools.

Matt Renwick is a 16-year public educator who began as a 5th and 6th grade teacher in a rural school outside of Wisconsin Rapids,

WI. After seven years of teaching, he served as a junior high dean of students, assistant principal and athletic director before becoming an elementary school leader in Wisconsin Rapids. Matt blogs at Reading by Example, tweets @ReadByExample and writes for EdTech magazine and other publications. His new book, 5 Myths about Classroom Technology, is available from ASCD.

Technology Businesses Amplifying Oshkosh Growth

Continued from Page 11



cally important that we collaborate to build awareness, interest, and advancement of IT professionals and tailor programs and classes to the available and required job skills. In fact, FVTC and the Oshkosh Area School District have already created an IT Career Pathway project that affords local high school students an opportunity to earn industry-recognized IT certifications before graduating. To build an awareness of IT for middle and high school

students, the Oshkosh Chamber partners with Amplify members on mini-career camps, structured job shadows, a career exploration fair, an innovation conference and youth apprenticeship IT experiences.

Given our recent company growth and newly formed training and educational programs, future success is within our reach. But it will take positive and unwavering cooperation and collaboration from all of the partners involved in this process to continue to grow IT businesses and the high-wage jobs they produce. I believe that Oshkosh and the New North region has all the necessary ingredients to be successful in becoming a hotbed for IT business and talent growth. We need to continue to work together to make it happen.

Rob Kleman has been with the Oshkosh Chamber for the past 25 years and now serves as its Senior Vice President of Economic Development. We are located at 120 Jackson St. in downtown Oshkosh. The Oshkosh Chamber is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. We can be reached at (920) 303-2266 or info@oshkoshchamber.com.

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Northwoods High School Student to be Honored In D.C. for Smartphone App for Autism Communication



By Ben Meyer

Jenna Marose knows communication can be a challenge for kids with autism.

“When I was in elementary school, my best friend, named Jack, was autistic. I wanted to learn more about that to help him communicate,” said the Chequamegon High School sophomore.

Marose also met an autistic four-year-old this schoolyear. The boy’s name is Carter, and he’s the grandson of Marose’s teacher, Dani-

elle Krueger.

“He can’t speak at all,” Marose said of Carter.

Meanwhile, Carter is a whiz with tech gadgets.

“I thought that if I made it technology-based, that maybe he would like it,” Marose said.

As part of a class at her high school in Park Falls, Marose made a smartphone app that could help

kids like Carter. Instead of verbalizing their thoughts, they can use pictures on the app to communicate.

The project is part of Krueger’s elective class called STEAM, or Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math.

“It’s going to be student-led,” Krueger said of the class. “The students are going to come up with the projects. The students are going to design the products, and they’re going to foresee the products. I’m not going to

tell them what they have to do.”

Students ask questions which make them curious, then base projects off of those questions. Marose’s interest in medicine, autism, and communication, for example, led her to create the app.

“I look at some of the conversations they’re having,” Krueger said about her students. “I look at the things they’re creating in class, and they’re having fun. But they’re learning so much at the same time.”

Krueger hopes the class has tangible real-world results.

“I really want them to gain the employability skills you don’t typically get. [I want them to say,] ‘I had a problem, I faced it, I pushed through it,’ not, ‘I have a problem, I’m going to give up,’” she said.

“It just gives me more of a focus on what I want to do after high school,” Marose said of the class. “It lets me have more freedom of what I want to do instead of looking at a textbook.”

Marose’s work on the app paid off nearly immediately. Her project was selected as a winner of the national Congressional App Challenge. Marose and Krueger are flying to Washington, D.C. on Sunday, where she’ll

present the app to people from across the country.

“I’m hoping we’re going to get back feedback like, ‘Wow, this could be really good,’” Krueger said. “Or maybe, ‘I have someone I know who’s autistic, they would love this.’”

“I really hope that people do use this app, because I feel like it’s very effective, and it definitely helps them communicate easier,” Marose said.

The real test will come when Carter, the four-year-old, tries it out.

“We’ll find out when we meet Carter again, and have him go through it,” Marose said. “I think it’s really beneficial.”

Marose and Krueger are seeking contributions to help fund their trip to Washington. If you’d like to contribute, check this link: www.gofundme.com/grntv35p.

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A Space to Create, Explore and Learn



School District of Sheboygan Falls

As the cameramen work hard to correctly frame their shot, two news ‘anchors’ sit side by side at their desk and carefully review their script. The cameraman counts one, two, three and Madie begins.

“Welcome to the Falcon announce-

ments,” she says and another taping of the weekly middle school announcements is underway. The finished product will be up on the school web site the next day.

The emphasis on video production is part of an emphasis on presentation skills, which begins in elementary school and extends

throughout the student’s entire school career. Developing such “soft skills” are important for future career success, said teacher Anton Shircel.

Shircel has been able to give students this type of hands-on experience thanks to a suite of newly purposed rooms at the middle school that has been turned into a Makerspace. The rooms were formerly used by the district’s early learning center, which was moved to the elementary school this year.

By turning the area into a Makerspace, the middle school students and teachers can supplement classroom instruction through hands-on projects, such as the video project.

“While our students’ creativity is tapped, we also focus on real world problem-solving and critical thinking skills used in the design process,” explained Mike Nikson, assistant principal for Sheboygan Falls Middle and Elementary Schools, who has been closely involved in setting up the Makerspace. Mastering creativity and problem solving skills will help students prepare for future careers, added Sheboygan Falls Middle School math teacher Crystal Galica, who has worked with Nikson to develop the new spaces.

“This is real life learning. In the future, they’re not going to be told, ‘This is what you do.’ Instead, they’re going to be told, ‘Here’s a project. Make it happen,’” Galica said.

She recently used the Makerspace as an enrichment activity for students in the top 10% of her class. She asked them to build a functioning pinball machine using the design process of research, drawing models, then detailed drawings and finally building and testing. They had to analyze the scientific principles behind a pinball machine and present their finished products to a team of district administrators who gave them detailed feedback.

The district’s first Makerspace started up at Sheboygan Falls Elementary School last year, and has expanded to middle and high school. Recent projects at the high school have included a weather report produced in Spanish by a Spanish class with students using the Green Screen to insert maps of various locations behind them as they gave the report. Another class made circuits out of paper with LED lights and silver ink to conduct the electricity.

“There are so many ways you can tie it into the curriculum,” Galica concluded.

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Portfolio Presentations as ELA Assessment in Cudahy



Having students present portfolios of their schoolwork to educators and community members as their semester final exam seems to be increasing student engagement and communication skills at Cudahy High School.

At the end of each semester in every English language arts class in the school, students talk about their work and their own growth, either to teachers (freshman and junior years) or to a panel of educators and community members (sophomore and senior years).

“When I first started teaching, kids always asked, ‘Why are we doing this? When are we ever gonna use this again? This is so dumb,’” remembers English Teacher Josh Beck, who pioneered the portfolio review at the high school several years ago.

“I don’t get any of that ‘why are we doing this, what is the purpose’ anymore.”

Now students know everything they do is “something that can be put in their portfolio, and a panel or a teacher or a community member is going to ask them about it.”

At the higher grade levels, Beck feels students are also better at connecting their school work to life after high school.

“It’s nice to hear kids talk about the standards, too: ‘Oh, I need to be able to analyze this – I need to know how a character changes through a book or a story.’”

Another advantage of this kind of assessment is how easy it is for students to look back and see their own growth (especially when the portfolios are created and stored electronically).

“They really like that reflective piece. Students talk about that on the panel, that they’re able to visually see now how much they’ve learned and grown. Whereas taking a test, you can’t really see that.”

Beck first got the idea from a teacher who came to the school from another state for a year. Then, with the advent of the new academic standards, he figured a portfolio presentation was about the best way to assess whether students had mastered all the learning goals.

Now, all Cudahy High School students

know what the goals are — in kid-friendly language adapted from the standards. They answer questions from the panel members about their progress toward each one.

The State Superintendent sat on one of the review panels last month and was particularly impressed with students’ oral communication skills. The formal setting is “similar to a job interview,” he notes, and the students had clearly been working on speaking skills.

Professional dress is required. “I couldn’t tell you how many young men I’ve shown how to tie a tie in the last 5 years, during semester exam week. Even female teachers – I’ve showed them how to tie a tie, so they can show the male students.”

Students choose which standards to work on, attempting to cover a list of 40 every two years. But they can choose to work on the same standard again if they need more work on it.

Marci Glaus, DPI English language arts education consultant, regularly serves on the panels and finds the practice highly effective. She loved this year’s innovation of putting the portfolios online: no more printing everything out and constantly looking around for the right page in one’s binder.

“Each kid would stand up in front of the panel and the other students, and the big screen would be projecting their portfolio,” Glaus explains. “They could click on the semester or

the assignment. It was really quick.”

To make this practice happen, Beck says, the administration had to sign on. Local school board policy is that an “exam” is necessary to show kids have met the academic standards. There was some question initially about whether the presentation qualified.

While there was a “little bit of a transition in getting parents and students to understand that this is their final exam,” Beck says, it’s since been very well received by students, parents, and the community.

Beck says while kids often dread the panel, they often say afterwards that they wouldn’t trade it for another form of assessment, because they recognize what good practice it is, for job interviews and the like.

In fact, one local company even hired a student for its management track straight out of a portfolio review.

And that’s a long way from the “why are we doing this?” era.

Reprinted from the DPI’s ConnectEd

www.cudahy.k12.wi.us
(414) 294-7400



“Hour of Code” Continued from Page 10



more than simply consume technology. They learn that they can control it. When students experience the chance to build something new, they see a world that they can make better with technology.”

Isaac Zimmerman, Technology Integrator at Wilson and Madison middle schools, says he has lots of students approach him because they would like to pursue a career in technol-

ogy and they are not sure how to turn their interest in computers into something they can do for a living.

“The Hour of Code and other programming activities students do in middle school give these kids a hands on experience in an information technology career that is in demand and provides students who are not interested in programming careers a chance to practice the critical thinking and problem solving skills they are going to need regardless of their plans after high school” Zimmerman continues.

The ‘Hour of Code’ is a nationwide initiative by Computer Science Education Week and Code.org to introduce millions of students to one hour of computer science and computer programming.

www.aasd.k12.wi.us
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Meemic Foundation Grants

The Meemic Foundation is offering grants up to \$500 for field trips, books, classroom projects, equipment, educator professional development, etc. Applications are accepted all year but are reviewed quarterly. The online fill-in-the-blank form takes about 25 minutes to complete. The process is simple and convenient; you don't have to be a grant writer to navigate the application. To enhance the grant process, the Meemic Foundation Club has been created. Joining the Club entails providing some basic profile information, which gets populated into all of your grant applications, thus saving time. The application can now be saved and club members are always the first to know about additional grant opportunities available year round.

Deadline: Current round of applications accepted through March 31, 2016

Website: MeemicFoundation.org

Crayola/NAESP Champion Creatively Alive Children

In collaboration with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Crayola offers an annual grant program entitled Champion Creatively Alive Children. This program provides grants for innovative, creative leadership team building within elementary schools. Up to 20 grants are available to help educators explore the "what if. . ." opportunities to develop a school creative leadership team that deliver professional development and innovative programs that inspire educators to increase arts-infused education.

Each grant-winning school receives \$2,500 and Crayola products valued at \$1,000.

Deadline: Applications are due by June 20, 2016. Applications received by June 6, 2016, qualify for Early Bird Bonus.

Website: www.crayola.com/for-educators/ccac-landing/grant-program.aspx

Library Grant Program

The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation annually awards grants to rural, urban, public, and school libraries and agencies that serve children who are economically or socially at risk, have limited book budgets, and demonstrate real need. Funds are earmarked for purchasing books for young people.

Awards range from \$500 to \$3,000.

Deadline: Applications due May 31, 2016.

Website: www.loislenskicovey.org/index.html

EcoTech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation, Inc. (CPF) is offering grants through a competitive program for schools and nonprofit organizations. Seventeen grants will be awarded to support inquiry-based projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields that engage students in using innovation, biomimicry and nature-based design, or new applications of technology to address environmental problems in their communities. Seventeen grants of \$2,500 each are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due March 15, 2016.

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/ecotech-grants/

Environmental Advocacy Grants

The Cornell Douglas Foundation provides small grants to organizations that promote the foundation's vision: advocating for environmental health and justice, encouraging stewardship of the environment, and furthering respect for sustainability of resources.

The average grant awarded is \$10,000.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cornelldouglas.org/apply

Brittingham Family Foundation Grants

The Brittingham Family Foundation is a private foundation whose goal is to be an enlightened community partner by supporting education, arts, social services, youth, health, and the environment. Future giving will focus primarily on education and health in California, Wisconsin, and elsewhere.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.brittinghamfamilyfoundation.org/grants-partnerships

Educational Assistance and Training Programs

The Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation (CICF) encourages the creation and expansion of learning experiences and opportunities at the primary, secondary, and higher education levels, particularly for minority and disadvantaged students. Areas of special interest to CICF include educational and training programs designed to improve literacy, teach

*"[Kids] don't remember what you try to teach them.
They remember what you are."*

— Jim Henson

More Grants on Page 18

Student Contests and Awards



Meemic Masterpieces Art Contest

Meemic Foundation Club members can sponsor a student's original art masterpiece to be entered in Meemic Masterpieces, our student art contest. Up to 50 artworks will be selected, and the winning artworks will be professionally framed and placed on permanent display at Meemic's corporate offices in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Sponsoring Foundation Club members of winning entries will earn a \$300 art supplies grant for their school. Plus each winning student artist will receive an Amazon Fire® Tablet and an invitation to a recognition ceremony. Every student entry will receive a certificate of appreciation.

Deadline: April 28.

Website: Get full details and rules at www.MeemicFoundation.org/Masterpieces.

Website: aapt.org/Programs/contests/photo-contest.cfm

Carton 2 Garden Contest

Evergreen Packaging and KidsGardening.org are on the lookout for your creative and sustainable uses for recycled milk and juice cartons in the garden. Public and private K-12 schools are encouraged to collect, design, and construct garden-related structures made from empty cartons and document their experience.

Deadline: Entries due by April 13, 2016.

Website: www.kidsgardening.org/article/carton-2-garden-contest-0

Young Reporters for the Environment Contest

Youth between the ages of 13 and 21 are invited to participate in the national Young Reporters for the Environment competition. Participants, who may enter as individuals or as part of a class or group, investigate an environmental issue and report on it in writing, photography, or video.

Deadline: Submissions due by 5 p.m. EST March 15, 2016.

Website: www.nwf.org/Young-Reporters-for-the-Environment/About-Young-Reporters/Join-the-Competition.aspx

Young Scientist Challenge

Discovery Education and 3M invite students in grades 5 through 8 to participate in the Young Scientist Challenge. Entrants must create a one- to two-minute video describing a new, innovative solution that solves an everyday problem.

Ten finalists will each receive \$1,000. The grand-prize winner will receive \$25,000.

Deadline: Entries are due April 20, 2016.

Website: www.youngscientistchallenge.com

Grants



Continued from Page 17

basic life skills, promote good citizenship and public services, and increase reading, mathematics, and science proficiencies.

Awards range from \$2,500 to \$15,000.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cruisefoundation.org

Game On Grants

Game On Grants provide physical activity and nutrition grants to support institutions becoming recognized as health-promoting schools. The grant provides funding for physical activity initiatives such as facilities and equipment for recess, playgrounds, play spaces, classroom energizers, physical education, intramural programs, and programs before or after school that introduce the value

of an active lifestyle. Funding is also provided for nutrition initiatives such as nutrition education, school gardens, competitive foods or smart snacks, salad bars, smarter lunchrooms, healthy fundraising or classroom celebrations that introduce healthy foods.

Awards range from \$500 to \$2,500.

Deadline: Applications are due April 1, 2016.

Website: www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/apply-for-grants#PA

Ezra Jack Keats Minigrant Program 2016

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation created a funding initiative called Minigrants, through which awards of \$500 are given to public schools and public libraries for projects that foster creative expression, working together

and interaction with a diverse community.

Deadline: March 31, 2016

Website: www.ezra-jack-keats.org/section/ezra-jack-keats-mini-grant-program-for-public-libraries-public-schools

Academic Enrichment Grants

The McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation offers Academic Enrichment Grants designed to develop classroom and extracurricular programs that improve student learning. The foundation considers proposals that foster understanding, deepen students' knowledge, and provide opportunities to expand awareness of the world around them.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Online applications are accepted January 15 through April 15, annually.

Website: mccarthydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants

Japanese Teaching Material Purchase Grants

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles (JFLA) funds small grants to support nonprofit educational institutions in the United States

program in the United States that serves children in any combination of kindergarten through grade 8 and is staffed by a state-certified librarian are eligible for the award.

Awards include a \$5,000 cash award, a plaque, and the promotion of the winner as a model program for other school libraries.

Deadline: Applications are accepted from March 1 through May 6, 2016.

Website: www.ala.org/programming/jaffarianaward

Craig Tufts Environmental Education Scholarship Award

The Craig Tufts Educational Scholarship Award is given annually to a young person between the ages of 8 and 18 to attend a week-long, summer outdoor educational adventure camp. The scholarship includes travel, room and board, and program fees for the award winner and an accompanying parent or guardian.

Deadline: Applications due by 5 p.m. EST March 25, 2016.

Website: www.nwf.org/What-We-Do/Kids-and-Nature/Programs/Craig-Tufts-Scholarship.aspx

with purchases of teaching materials for Japanese language programs. Eligible materials include textbooks, multimedia materials, dictionaries, and teachers' reference books.

Grants up to \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Grant applications are due March 15 and September 15, annually.

Website: www.jflalc.org/grants-jle-materials.html

Instrumental Music Grants

The Fender Music Foundation awards instruments and equipment to eligible music instruction programs that are part of US public schools or qualified nonprofit organizations. The instruments and equipment are lightly used, blemished, or otherwise imperfect and have been collected from manufacturers and retailers. The foundation provides information on specific imperfections to programs that are selected to receive instruments.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/grants-info



Mineral Point Student Athlete Knows No Limits



By Joelle Doye, for the WIAA
Communications Director
Mineral Point Unified School District

Cassie Bossert is the typical All-American girl.

As a high honor roll student, WIAA two sport athlete, and a young lady who enjoys shopping and hanging out with friends, at first glance, the Mineral Point High School Junior seems much like other teenagers.

To the untrained eye, one would never know the starting guard on the Pointer girls basketball team, which ended two-time defending WIAA state champion Cuba City's 61 game winning streak January 15, has a severe hearing impairment.

"I was born with a hearing loss," Cassie says. "At the time, newborn hearing screening was just beginning in Wisconsin, and therefore, I was considered late diagnosed at 14 months."

Cassie's hearing loss is in the severe range, with no residual hearing at all in her right ear due to her implant, and she cannot detect most sounds under 70 decibels in her left ear without her hearing aid.

As a comparison, individuals with typical hearing are able to detect sounds from 0-25 decibels.

"Without my hearing aid to amplify sounds, I cannot hear people talking," she says. "I did receive cochlear implant surgery in my right ear when I was five, and I used it for a few years, but I am not currently using it."

Even with her hearing aid, Cassie may miss approximately 60% of spoken information. She relies on lip reading and context to fill in what she misses auditorily.

"Cassie's hearing loss was suspected shortly after her first birthday when she wasn't talking and our daycare provider noticed that she wasn't reacting to loud sounds," says her mother, Carolyn. "When she was 19 months old, her father, Rob, and I learned that the cause of Cassie's hearing loss was Connexin 26 which results in an abnormal protein exchange neces-

sary for a properly functioning cochlea."

Cassie played the setter position in volleyball this past fall, and as previously mentioned, is starting currently on the girls basketball squad.

Both sports can present challenges, especially when hearing the whistles.

"Half the time I'll hear it and half the time I won't," she says. "Before each game, my coach and I walk up to the refs and explain to them my hearing loss and inform them that I may not always hear it when they blow it. For our plays in

basketball, my teammates will have a hand signal for which play we are running."

Pointer girls basketball coach and high school principal, Mitch Wainwright, has even learned a few signs to better communicate with Cassie, a gesture she really appreciates.

"I think she works harder, both physically and mentally, than many of the other people on the team," Wainwright says. "She has to concentrate so hard to read lips, remember plays, communicate on defense, and use her other senses to overcome her hearing loss. She has to be exhausted at the end of the day after doing all of that in the classroom and then during basketball practice. I only hope that I can help make it easier for her because she is a really good athlete and I want her to be part of my team."

Cassie's brother, Grant, who is in eighth grade, also has a hearing loss, but not quite as severe. Her youngest brother, Brett, who is in second grade, has no hearing loss.

Sports have always been an integral part of Cassie's life, beginning coach ball at age four and basketball in first grade. Also during her elementary years, she was a member of the summer swim and softball teams. Beginning in middle school, she participated in track, cross country, and volleyball. She also learned to play piano and

tenor saxophone.

In school, besides excelling at academics, she is a member of the Key Club community service organization and Future Business Leaders of America. Cassie is also active in the Mineral Point Youth Group and recently passed the American Red Cross certification to become a lifeguard this summer.

"To see her participate in so many activities today, some people who don't know her may not even notice she has a hearing loss or understand the severity, which speaks volumes for what she has had to overcome," says Carolyn.

Her own perseverance, combined with the educational support at school and at home, have been keys to her success. From an early age, she was immersed in language rich environments where she learned both sign and speech.

"Cassie has been fortunate to have incredible teachers and interpreters through the years at Mineral Point," comments Carolyn. "We are grateful for the support they have given her to help her achieve academic success."

As she has aged, support with her Teacher of the Deaf, Janice Neil, is once per week. She utilizes a sign language interpreter, Kelli Ritchie, to supplement the spoken language in class.

Cassie also credits her supportive family and friends through the years and says she never really faced bullying growing up.

"She has a great sense of humor, likes to have fun, and has a beautiful smile and heart," says her mother. "She is social, sometimes too

social, but that's ok as one of our greatest fears was that she would not be accepted or have friends due to her hearing loss."

Many parents nowadays complain about their children's seeming constant cell

phone use and texting, but the Bosserts praise the technological advancement.

"This was a huge benefit to her socially and became the preferred tool for her to communicate with friends since talking on the phone is difficult. Without this, social interactions might have been much more challenging for her," says her mother.

On the court, the hearing loss can be beneficial at times if she needs to focus and drown out the noise of the crowd.

However, her mother points out, she thinks sometimes Cassie might intentionally use her hearing loss to tune out what her parents have to say.

In typical teenage fashion, Cassie laughs and admits her mother is sometimes right about that.

"When we first learned of her hearing loss, we went through a grieving process and had to accept that our little girl was going to be different and would have communication challenges to overcome for her lifetime. Our fears have lessened some along the way, when seeing how

successful Cassie was doing academically, but the anxiety and fear doesn't completely go away," says Carolyn. "We know that college will pose many new challenges as she will not be in a place where others know her needs."

Cassie knows this as well and she is trying to get better at advocating for herself and not be embarrassed to say what she needs.

"I know I have to speak up and ask for help from teachers when needed."

Although just a junior, she already has a plan for post-graduation.

"I would like to attend a four year college and pursue a career in the medical field," she says.

It should come as no surprise that someone like Cassie has big goals.

"I've never had to prove myself. I just try to be the best I can be in sports, academics, and everything else," she says.

Although Cassie says she never really had a role model with a hearing impairment growing up, it's a high probability she is just that for young Mineral Pointers.

"We have some young girls in the elementary with hearing impairments, and it's wonderful for them to be able to come to games and see Cassie excelling," says Ritchie.

"She has always had very high standards of performance for herself and is a bit of a perfectionist," says her mother.

Cassie's advice for those young people with hearing impairments looking to excel is quite simple.

"Just because you have a hearing loss doesn't mean you can't do anything," says Cassie. "You can do anything you want to do. Do not let your hearing loss stop you."

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The Braille Club



Lucy shows her father, Adam, how to use a braille

By Eric Henrickson, Meemic

Any kid who's "different" can feel isolated, and in a rural area, it can be even tougher. So for low-vision and blind students in southwest Wisconsin's CESA 3, the Braille Club has been a great way for kids and parents to get together and support each other.

And with the help of a grant from The Meemic Foundation, the club was able to better fulfill its mission with three new braille writers, machines that let users type in braille. Vision teacher Cortney Jerrard runs the club,

which meets about once a month, mostly at Richland Middle School.

"I applied for the grant on behalf of the Braille Club. I knew that (Cortney) did not have enough machines, and it frustrates everyone," says Julie Prouty, director of special education at CESA 3. "I noticed last year at the club that the parents and children had to take turns using the braille writers. It seemed a shame that the parents, most of whom do not have a vision issue, had to wait to type."

Julie says only students who are recog-

nized as legally blind are able to get free braille writers, so the money was a big help for students who are less visually impaired and going blind.

The three new braille writers bring the group's total up to almost 10. When the club isn't using them, they're back in the schools so students can use them independently. It's the school use that really makes the new machines helpful. CESA 3 is not near any large cities with good access to visual assistance.

With braille writers in the schools, students can use them for themselves and also teach their peers, even when a vision teacher is not in the school. Between the schools and club, parents can learn to use them, as well, so they can better communicate with their children.

"Since we are a rural group of districts, and there are very few connections for these kids, the club was invented by Cortney," Julie says. "I attended the first club meeting, and there were smiles everywhere. Parents were translating braille jokes, and students were 'typing' their first letters. It was awesome to see parents helping each other with the awkward machines. The last meeting I attended, everyone had a braille writer to use. There was a lot more



Julie Prouty (center), director of special education at CESA 3, joins vision teachers Jan Breuer (left) and Cortney Jerrard in celebrating their Meemic Foundation grant to purchase additional braille writers to support the blind and visually impaired students throughout their 31 school districts in southwest Wisconsin.

typing going on.

"The group is going strong, and we may hook up telecommunications with others across the state. And when the students know each other, they may have braille pen pals."

Julie says the district would like to institute a similar club for deaf and hard of hearing students with support and sign language classes for them and their parents.

Interested in applying for a grant from The Meemic Foundation? Contact your local Meemic representative or visit www.Meemic-Foundation.org and sign up for the Foundation Club. Find more stories about grant recipients at www.MeemicFoundation.org/Stories.

The Harbor Program Continued from Page 1

be successful with their peers in the regular educational setting as much as possible. "The Harbor Program is not, and will never be, a self-contained program. That approach does not develop the lacking skills and abilities of these students and will not prepare them for being successful in school or in their future life path," said Mr. Hermes.

Since the Harbor Program began in 2012, it has provided students with a variety of services and features designed for the specific group of students with special needs and/or At-Risk students who are part of the program for a particular school year. The Harbor Program has offered alternative classes, small group guided study classes, an alternative location for lunch, Project-Based Learning social skills classes, etc. Furthermore, throughout these opportunities there is a major focus on improving the social, emotional and behavioral skills and abilities of these students so that they can experience academic and personal successes in school and life. "The Harbor Program allows for the teacher to have a small group of students to build relationships with and to get to know the students academically, socially, and emo-

tionally," said Mrs. Jennie Garceau, Assistant Director of Pupil Services. The program also serves as an effective platform for the coordination of outside school services. One of Bay View's school counselors, Mrs. Carol Bahrke, describes how the Harbor acts as the hub for these services, "We work as a team. Bringing together regular education teachers, administration, pupil services staff, parents, families, outside agencies, and the student — using the Harbor as the place where they all can all come together, creating an amazing support structure for these students. Our most severe behavioral/emotional students benefit from a team of people supporting them, their family and community supports and change then happens."

"And these efforts are paying off," said Bay View Middle School Principal, Mr. Steve Meyers. "We have seen a dramatic drop in suspensions and expulsions, fewer classroom disruptions, and we've created a feeling of success, optimism and hope in the minds of these students, many of whom to this point in their educational careers, haven't experienced many successes."

While the Harbor Program continues to



evolve and improve every year, its impact on students, their school performance, their opportunities for success, and its overall impact on Bay View's staff and school environment is obvious. "We identified an area for improvement, developed a creative solution, got the right people on board, and have evolved the program based on the specific

needs of our students," said Mr. Hermes, "I'm really proud of what we have done here."

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Metropolitan Airports Commission Helps Families 'Navigate Autism'



Many families who have children with autism avoid flying because they are unsure how their children will respond. In an effort to ease the anxiety associated with an airport visit and flying, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), Fraser and the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) have teamed up to create the Navigating Autism program. The program includes monthly events, all designed specifically for individuals with autism, that guide families through the steps of an airport visit, from walking in the door to finding their seats on a plane.

During the Navigating Autism event, families will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with airport and travel procedures. Children will practice entering the airport, obtain a security pass, go through screening at a TSA security checkpoint and walk through the airport to a boarding gate. To culminate their experience, children and their families will board an aircraft and find their seats. Please note that the aircraft will remain on the ground.

In addition to preparing families for a positive travel experience, the Navigating

Autism program also will provide a valuable training and awareness opportunity for airport, airline and TSA personnel to learn how to accommodate children with autism and other special needs.

Families are invited to participate in any of the Navigating Autism event sessions, scheduled for the first Saturday of every month. Join MAC, Fraser and AuSM for a fun, safe practice run, while learning from airport personnel what works and what doesn't work to make your travel experience efficient and less stressful.

A WOW experience for a participating family:

We were "wowed" by the Navigating Autism program on so many levels. It is one of the most detailed, organized programs that I have ever attended. The details provided from the beginning were helpful, the check in was so organized, and everything about it was so well thought out. Every person that we had contact with was informed, kind, and helpful.

Our son really struggles with new experiences and I feel like the pace was set to what he was comfortable with and the explanations along the way were great. I didn't expect to experience so many things about the airport (actually riding on the tram, seeing the obser-

vation deck, locating the "quiet" places around the airport) and all of the details made us so much more confident about traveling in the future. The fact that they even offered water and snacks before we "boarded" was extremely generous after all the walking around. To experience the additional snacks and juice while on the plane was also appreciated.

The pilot and flight staff were all so welcoming, professional, and knowledgeable. I really appreciated the pilot's tips for traveling with a child on the spectrum. We don't often get to have "successful" outings and our family truly enjoyed it. We learned a lot and had fun doing so. I really compliment the entire team for all of the little things that made this such a great day for us (the visuals, the one-on-one help through security, and all of the things that we probably didn't even realize were happening). We are so appreciative of everyone's time to volunteer at this event and for all of your behind the scenes efforts to make this happen. Thank you again for offering this program and for letting us attend.

— Sara L.

For more information go to:

www.ausm.org/navigating-autism.html

A Letter From Stephanie Morales

My name is Stephanie Morales and I am a 13 year old student at M.S.T. I have a 6 year old brother who has been diagnosed with autism. I also have a 9 year old cousin that was also diagnosed with autism. My brother was diagnosed with autism when he was 2 years old. Here are some helpful things that I think everyone should know about children with autism.

- We have to be aware of body language, withdrawal, agitation, or other signs that show something is wrong or when they are having problems interacting with others. If they don't know how to communicate through words.
- You really need to have a lot of patience with them.
- You can't give up on them when you are trying to teach them something. If you do they are going to think or feel like, "why should I try."
- You have to focus on one thing at a time and build on what they can do, rather than what they can't do.

- Try to find out what causes their meltdowns so you can prevent them from happening again.

To me, autism isn't a disability, rather an ability to view things in a different way. If it wasn't for my brother and cousin who were diagnosed with autism, and having the hands on experience of dealing with them and their issues, it has opened my eyes to seeing that they really need people that understand them and their needs. It has encouraged me to want to become a therapist for special needs children. The type of therapist I would like to become is an O.T. or a Speech Therapist. I used to go with my brother to speech therapy to see how they worked with him so that I would know how I could also help him at home. Some of the challenges that children with autism have to deal with are: communicating with others, sensory problems, behavior problems, and interacting with others. I think that this project was a great idea since April is Autism Awareness month. This gives me the opportunity to spread awareness.

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PACER stands for Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights

Our mission is to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families, based on the concept of **parents helping parents**.



With individual assistance, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing a free and appropriate public education for all children, PACER's work affects and encourages families **across the nation**.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Shelly Lopez at 612-726-5239 or Shelly.Lopez@mspmac.org.

