



MSB REACHING OUT NEWSLETTER



THE MARYLAND
SCHOOL FOR
THE BLIND

Volume 1, Issue 4

Spring 2015

MSB Statewide Parent Regional Conference

By Renee Kirby

On Saturday, March 7th MSB collaborated with Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind & held their second Statewide Parent Conference to provide resources for parents and educators of blind and visually impaired students. The Sheraton Silver Spring, specifically chosen as the location for this event so that families and educators from in and around PG County could easily access this resource-packed day.

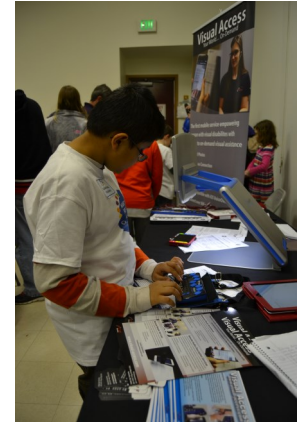
Susan Vanderhoff, Outreach Social Worker and myself opened the morning with a workshop focusing on the **Impact on The Family of a Child with Special Needs**. Susan encouraged parents to recognize their strengths as a parent and mentor and build on those to continue to do such incredible “work”. I provided personal stories to parallel Susan’s recommendations.

The second part of the morning, parents and educators were provided choices for concurrent workshops; **A. Life After School for Those with Severe Multi-handicapping Conditions**—Presented by **Scott Truax**—Program Manager AFB Family Connect & **Emily Coleman**—parent, TVI and Family Connect blogger. Family Connect is a website created by the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and the National Association for Parents and Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) to give parents of visually impaired children a place to support each other, share stories and concerns and find resources on raising their children to adulthood. Visit www.familyconnect.org. **B. Assessments and Accessibility—PARRC**— Presented by **Josh Irzyk , Ed.D.**— Statewide Vision Low Incidence Specialist . Josh provided attendees with basic information on the changes in accommodations for visually impaired and blind students in PARRC made by the MD State Department of Education (MSDE) and how it may affect our students. Parents were also given the opportunity for a question/answer period in the 2nd half of the presentation. **ADL Tips for the Home**— Presented by **Genelle Hughes**, Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. Genelle’s presentation consisted of multiple hands-on ideas to assist parents and educators in making the student’s surroundings much more user friendly for the blind or visually impaired student. Genelle is also available for home visits to work directly with you & your child. Contact Genelle at genelleh@mdschblind.org.

After enjoying our boxed lunches provided by the Sheraton, we re-grouped for a session on **Adapted Physical Education**. One of MSB’s Health & Adapted PE teachers, **Matt Mescall**, provided our participants with many useful ideas and suggestions for visually impaired and blind students of all ages and capabilities to use at home. Matt also touched on the multiple organized sports that have very minimal adaptations (if any) to make it a “level playing field” for our students, ie: swimming, track, wrestling and goalball (a sport specifically designed for visually impaired and blind athletes).

The Conference was wrapped up with a **Body Safety Training** workshop run by **Lauren Zaffos, RN**. Lauren is a nurse working towards her Masters with a concentration on Body Safety of visually impaired and blind children 3-18 of age and has recently merged with MSB’s Outreach Department, working directly with parents (Parent Lunch Group) and with the Outreach after school teen group.

Over-all our feedback was very positive—all participants were able to take away some new and useful information and we are hoping to have more conferences next school year.



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Special points of interest:

- **MSB** Short Courses
- **The Braille Challenge**
- **MSB Statewide Parent Spring Conference** in Prince Georges County



MD REGIONAL BRAILLE CHALLENGE



By Jackie Otwell

The Maryland Regional Braille Challenge was held on MSB's campus on February 7, 2015. Thirty-four students participated the day of the Challenge! It was an exciting day of hard work and fun. Students participated in a variety of contest categories that may have included Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Proofreading, Charts and Graph Reading, and Speed and Accuracy, depending on the student's grade level. At the end of the day students received prizes, had their faces painted and walked away with balloon animals!

Thank you to all the staff that helped make this event a success! Please go the Ustream link below to view the Keynote address from Dr. Marc Maurer, Immediate Past President of NFB, and the award ceremony.

To watch these events please go to <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/MSB-Outreach-and-Training>.

Congratulations and thank you to the participants in the 2015 Maryland Regional Braille Challenge.. Below are the results of all participants:

Novice:

- 1st **Maddox Dalyai**
- 2nd **Oriana Riccobono**
- 3rd **Nadiya Albrecht**

Apprentice:

- 1st **Meredith Day**
 - 2nd **Maria Zoerlien**
 - 3rd **Tyler Huber**
- Honorable Mention **Nadezda Chernokwizhaia**

Freshman:

- 1st **Sujan Dhakal**
 - 2nd **Julia Stockburger**
 - 3rd **Anthony Moncman**
- Honorable Mention **Derrick Day**
Honorable Mention **Mossila Gaba**
Honorable Mention **Naudia Graham**
Honorable Mention **Devon Lengel**
Honorable Mention **Alexis McPhail**

Sophomore:

- 1st **Kayla Harris**
 - 2nd **Feven Geleta**
 - 3rd **Melika Aziminia**
- Honorable Mention **LaShai Richardson***
Honorable Mention **Mitchell Villanueva***
Honorable Mention **Ladrea Stanton***
Honorable Mention **Virginia Jacobs***



The Maryland School for the Blind

Junior Varsity:

- 1st **Gracie Zuzarte***
- 2nd **Andrea Darmawan**
- 3rd **Nesma Aly**
- Honorable Mention **Tyler Shallue***
- Honorable Mention **Steve Lin**

Varsity:

- 1st **Christopher Nusbaum**
- 2nd **Naim Abuelhawa**
- 3rd **Steven Cantos**
- Honorable Mention **Nick Cantos**
- Honorable Mention **Cody Mulligan**
- Honorable Mention **Caroline Carbaugh**
- Honorable Mention **Leo Cantos**

A job well done to all and we hope to see each one of you again for the 2016 Maryland Regional Braille Challenge!

*MSB Students

The Maryland Regional Braille Challenge Planning Committee





MSB Goalball Short Course

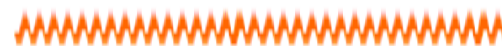
By Beverly Schmitz

While it was a snowy afternoon, the participants in the goalball short course came focused and ready to play – on the goalball court, of course! At the start many even asked to spend the night so they could keep playing through the snow!

High school aged athletes with previous goalball experience were greeted by a few MSB Goalball Alumni who were gracious enough to share some of their goalball and other athletic experiences with the athletes. Much time was spent focusing on how to improve their defense individually so they could create a “brick wall” when combined with teammates on the court.

The short course allowed for all participants to work closely with coaches and fellow alumni on tips to improve their offensive skills, especially the roll. Each athlete stepped out of his comfort zone and pushed himself to try new techniques to use during games. All of the athletes hard work was showcased in front of MSB goalball alum and close friends and family as they went head to head on the goalball court.

The newly learned and practiced skills, game strategies and rolling techniques were effortlessly displayed by all. The level of play from the start of the day to the final game was unbelievable; it appeared as though they have been practicing all week! Each athlete left with a new repertoire of skills and a new level of confidence!





Albinism Family Day 2015

By Susan Vanderhoff

On Saturday, March 14th- MSB Outreach celebrated, with 45 participants, the 2nd annual "Family Albinism Day" in Easton, Maryland. This day-long event was co-hosted by NOAH- National Organization for Albinism/Hypo-pigmentation. The day started with a panel presentation by three speakers. Donte Mickens, who serves on the board of NOAH, was a fun and informative speaker who shared information and also his personal experiences as an athlete and an African-American with Albinism. Tiffany Jones, NOAH member and mom, spoke with insight and understanding about parenting a child with Albinism.. Sharon Whited, Low vision Specialist at the Maryland School for the Blind and Amy Morrell, MD School for the Blind Educational Consultant addressed the visual impairments typically associated with Albinism, as well as helpful strategies and tools.

After the panel presentation, two TVI's from Maryland School for the Blind Outreach Department, led games and activities with a large and lively group of elementary aged children to make friends and practice social skills. Tiffany led a parent group, Donte led the Teen Share group, and Sharon discussed tools and technology with everyone who stopped by her table. The last 90 minutes of the day were devoted to socializing, lunch and climbing the fabulous climbing wall at the Easton YMCA. Many thanks to the Easton YMCA who has donated their facility and staff for the last two years. They help make this wonderful opportunity to learn and build community possible.





Community Events for Families Of Children with Disabilities

For Students with Special Needs:

Special programming and modified environments!

PortAbility Days - Autism (Inclusive Day)

May 12, 2015 (all ages)



Discovery Days -Special Needs / May 13, 2015 (pre-K to 2nd grade / May 14, 2015 (3rd grade & up)

Be A Part of the Art Days -(Inclusive Day) / May 15, 2015 (all ages)

35 Market Place at Baltimore's Inner Harbor / MTA Metro Station: Shot Tower/Market Place

Admission is limited. Advanced registration required!

For more information:

Email: groupsales@portdiscovery.org

Phone: **410-864-2727**

Limited grant money available for Maryland Students. Call for individual rates.

"Sibshop" - For Siblings of Children with Disabilities or Special Health Care Needs

Wednesday, May 13, 2015 / 5:30pm-7:30pm

Location: **Anne Arrundel Medical Center Belcher Pavilion**, 7th floor (Free parking available in garage E)

Dinner, Crafts and Other Fun Activities Designed Especially for Siblings Ages **5-8!**

Want to Learn More? **Call 443-510-4630** for Registration Info

Assistive Technology Fair / The ARC Baltimore

Wednesday, May 27, 2015 / 10:00am-3:00pm

Location: **The Arc Baltimore at Seton Business Park, 6151 Metro Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215**

An opportunity for people with disabilities and those who support them to learn about Assistive Technology devices and resources. Staff, family members and professionals welcomed!

For More Info, **please contact Mercedes Thompson at mthompson@thearcbaltimore.org or 410-296-2272, x 5318**

Hourly giveaways, light refreshments

SMART IEPs: Goals and Objectives - Free Webinar for Parents

To access this pre-recorded webinar from Parents' Place, please go to:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3750397143610264066>

The term SMART IEPs describes IEP goals and objectives that are Specific, Measurable, use Action words, are Realistic and relevant, and Time-limited. For more information about Parents' Place: www.ppmd.org



FREE PARENT WORKSHOPS

*Sponsored by the Special Education Resource Center located at White Oak School
Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Special Education*

****Ready? Set? Let Go?**

This workshop will offer academic, social/emotional, and self-advocacy strategies that parents may use in supporting transition of students with disabilities from high school to college.

Instructor: Robyn McCray, LCSW-C, Senior Disability Specialist, Towson University

April 21 7-9 pm

Location * (See below)

****Transition Planning –Diploma**

(For parents of students with IEP's receiving a MD High School Diploma)

Transition planning is the first step in developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students with disabilities, age 14 and older. This workshop explains the process required as students progress through their school years. It will assist parents in understanding the preparation necessary for life in the adult world.

Instructor: Mike Bracknell, BCPS Transition Facilitator

May 5 7-9 pm

***Location for both workshops: New Town High School Library, 4931 New Town Blvd., Owings Mills, MD 21117**

****Try College for A Day: For Students with IEPs**

Reschedule Date: Saturday April 25, 2015 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm

Location: Anne Arundel Community College, Center for Applied Learning and Technology (CALT) Bldg.,

Room 107, 101 College Parkway, Arnold Maryland 20212

This event is for Junior or Senior High School students with an IEP who are considering enrolling at AACC. Learn about the admission process, Disability Support Services, placement test, and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). Participate in a mock class and take a tour of AACC. RSVP by contacting Michele Dilege, Transition Specialist (AACPS at 410-222-5486 or

mdilege-goldfein@aacps.org

****Behavior Management at Home**

May 7, 2015 / 7-9 pm

*Location: Building E, Room 114, BCPS Greenwood Campus, 6901 Charles Street, Towson, MD 21204

Effective home behavior management strategies for use with elementary age children and teens will be discussed. Specific emphasis will be on how to most effectively improve your child's behavior at home. Ways to increase cooperation, foster prosocial behavior and promote positive family interactions will be explored.

****Registration is required and limited! For more information or to register contact:**
The Special Education Resource Center at 410-887-5443 or email Lisa at ldiffender@bcps.org



THE MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

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MSB's Mission

As a statewide resource center, The MD School for the Blind provides outreach, school & residential services for students to reach their fullest potential by preparing them to be as successful, independent & well-rounded contributing members of their communities as possible.

Since we 1st opened our doors in 1853, we have treated the whole child, not just the disability. We provide instructional, residential, orientation & mobility, recreational activities, sports teams, clubs, health services, physical, speech, & occupational therapies & braille instruction as well as all the basics: including math, reading, content & science.

We also understand the role of caring & compassion as it relates to our students. We never forget that our students have many specialized & unique needs. Most importantly, we never forget they are also children, youth & young adults.

Albinism Day 2015

