

**MSB Reaching Out Newsletter**

**November/December 2018**



During this season, typically known as “the season of giving” and “giving thanks” *we*, as parents of children that may have had a rough start to this world and/or continue every day to overcome obstacles, recall those “not-so-pleasant” memories in our children’s and our lives. The very same instances that have tested, tried, and strengthened us as human beings make us aware of how fortunate we are to have our children in our lives. We ponder the memories of our lives before and after the addition of our children…the people we have met and become close to, the experiences, the struggles and the celebrations…all relating back to our resilient, beautiful, perceptive children. Where would we be without them?!

You may find yourself asking these or similar questions in the midst of struggles and difficult times; would I have been able to handle emotionally draining situations as well if I had never gone through the struggles of raising my child? Would I be as driven, or perceptive, or as patient, or as compassionate if my child never touched my life? Would I have been able to speak out and up for my child and other children if I never realized that it was solely up to me if my child fails or succeeds?

I guess *we* will never quite know for sure the exact answers to these questions. *We* can, however, rely on knowing that our lives have truly become enriched by these amazing individuals that we are so fortunate to call *our* children. Enriched with layers and layers of hope, love, persistence, sweat, and tears…our lives are forever saturated with a perspective of perpetual *thanks!*

Wherever you and your child are on this *journey*, may you ponder, in between doctor visits, IEP meetings and the everyday events of life, on how far you have come and give thanks for the enrichment of your lives.

Until next time, **Renee**

 ***Upcoming Events*** 

* ***November Parent Informational Webinar***

**Monday, November 26th, 2018 / 11:30am-12:30pm**

 **“*Organizing Life for Social Independence*” -** Presenter, **Melissa Sheeder** will discuss the importance of learning skills to manage your life as a blind or visually impaired young adult working towards independence.

URL to register:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/0716b60cc3dc14144ac87b605f06faf5>

*\*Please register prior to the event.*

* ***December Parent Informational Webinar***

**Thursday, December 20th, 2018 / 11:30am-12:30pm**

**“*How to be Your Child’s Best Advocate*”** – Presenter, **Rene Averitt,** executive director of **Parents Place of Maryland** will discuss ways in which you, as your child’s advocate, can be an integral part of the IEP team.

URL to register:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/24929aae9acda5bc7510d14dfea9e911>

*\*Please register prior to the event.*

* ***Maryland School for the Blind’s Outreach Department Presents Braille Literacy Live!***

***Ask the Expert Series with Ting Siu***

Join experts in the field of educating students with visual impairments to ask your specific questions about braille using the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Our third session will be held on ***November 12th from 3 to 4 pm*** eastern time. **Ting** is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (*TVI*), and coordinator and assistant professor of the teacher preparation program in visual impairments at San Francisco State University. Her experience includes working with students aged birth to 65 with visual impairments and multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness. Ting began her teaching career as a paraprofessional in the Deafblind Program at the Perkins School for the Blind, and later taught at the Jewish Guild for the Blind, NYC Department of Education, and local Bay Area school districts. Ting’s research focuses on communities of practice to support TVIs' technology use. She also provides consulting support in the following areas: development of educational technologies for learners who are visually impaired, community education to design and deliver accessible instruction, and TVI trainings to facilitate accessibility and technology integration in the classroom. (www.tplus.education)

***Twitter: @TVI\_ting***

Her primary focus will be using technology to access braille.

Sessions will be most months throughout the 2018-2019 school year. Each session will be held on a Monday between 3 and 4 pm eastern time. Additional dates will be provided throughout the year.

Please e-mail your questions in advance to ***jacquelineo@mdschblind.org.*** Register in advance for this meeting: ***Zoom Registration***

\**Thank you for all you do to support braille literacy! Thank y!*

* Braille Challenge Art Challenge

Calling all Braille Readers and/or Braille Appreciators…

*Here is your chance to show your support of Braille and the Regional Braille Challenge by creating wearable art in the form of a T-shirt design!*

 *On* ***Saturday, February 9th***we will be celebrating the ***10th Anniversary*** of the Maryland Regional Braille Challenge. In addition, the Braille institute will celebrate it’s 100th Anniversary in 2019. The Braille Challenge is an academic competition for Braille readers grades 1-12 to show their literacy abilities in five categories of fundamental Braille skills; **reading comprehension, spelling, speed and accuracy, proofreading and charts and graphs.**

Won’t it be **AWESOME** knowing that all **Braille Challenge competitors** are decked out in your **wearable artwork?**

 **How to enter the 10th Anniversary of the MD Regional Braille Challenge**

 **Art Competition:**

1. **Students in grades K– 12 create a design within the perameters of the attached paper that represents what Braille means to you. This design can be a literal or abstract design. Have fun with it!!**
2. **Your design can be up to 4 different colors, plus the white background of the t-shirt.**
3. **Make sure you sign your artwork and include your name, age, grade, school and title of your artwork on the paper attached (full registration can be found on the MSB website).**
4. **Place your original artwork and the info page into an envelope large enough to accommodate braille paper 11-1/2”x11”. Seal envelope and send in the mail by December 17th to:**

**MSB Outreach Art Contest**

**Renee Kirby**

**3501 Taylor Ave.**

**Baltimore, MD 21236**

**The winner will be chosen and notified by January 25th along with all other entries. A runner up and honorable mention will also be chosen. Regardless of your participation in the Braille Challenge, all 3 winners will be given a t-shirt with the chosen design.**

**\**Your artwork will not be returned, so please snap a picture prior to sending it to the above address.***



 ***Check Out These Sites for Great Gift Ideas;***

***Gift ideas for young children;***

* [www.lightstax.eu](http://www.lightstax.eu)
* [www.nbp.org](http://www.nbp.org)
* [www.Braillecodeclothing.com](http://www.Braillecodeclothing.com)
* [www.lighthousetoolsforliving.com](http://www.lighthousetoolsforliving.com)
* [www.zappos.com/e/adaptive](http://www.zappos.com/e/adaptive)
* [www.amazon.com/Scentco-Dino-Dudes-Backpack-Buddies/dp/B07D1B85QJ](http://www.amazon.com/Scentco-Dino-Dudes-Backpack-Buddies/dp/B07D1B85QJ)

***Gift ideas for teenagers and young adults;***

* [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)
* [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)
* [www.usa.loccitane.com](http://www.usa.loccitane.com)
* www.zappos.com/e/adaptive

***If you have any questions about any of our programs or are in need of resources for your child or would like to be removed from our emailing list, please contact:***

***Renee Kirby***

***Parent Coordinator / The Maryland School for the Blind***

***3501 Taylor Avenue / Baltimore, MD 21236***

***reneek@mdschblind.org*** ***or 410-444-5000 ext. 1489***