



Message from the Superintendent & CEO

Soon we all will be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holidays. It is a time to pause and reflect on that for which we are thankful. Personally, I am grateful for so many things, but as Superintendent of MSB, I want to pause and reflect on my gratitude of our community of supporters and advocates...**YOU!**

Through your support, advocacy, and sharing our stories, you are making a real difference for Maryland’s blind and low vision students. Without generous people like you, we could not fulfill our mission.

Everyday supporters like you are changing students lives in unique ways from hiring students to do a supported career education program such as the OneDo Coffee in Baltimore (pictured above right), donating to support free summer computer coding classes (pictured above center), or inviting them into a classroom like Towson University (pictured above left).

To encourage our supporters to go the extra mile this year **The Eugene B. Casey Foundation** has presented MSB with a **Matching Gift Challenge** up to \$50,000. If you would like to be a part of the Matching Challenge donate by mail (postmarked by December 31, 2021) or scan the QR code on the back of this newsletter to make a gift online.

I hope you enjoy reading about our student's annual visit to Towson University and we hope you will join us for our upcoming spring event - the See beyond Festival.

Happy Holidays!

Rob Hair



See beyond
Festival

Save the Date! See beyond Festival
Saturday, April 30, 2022
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

This isn't just another spring festival. Our one-of-a-kind event will feature a day of immersive experiences; every activity will be done blindfolded. See how our students learn and understand the importance of accessibility and inclusion.

This event features something for everyone. Try unique sports including blind soccer and beep baseball. Run a race on our sprint track using guide wires, or compete in team relay races. Engage in friendly competitions and win prizes.

Participate in hands on arts and crafts, braille activities, food tastings, and browse the makers market featuring over 30 vendors. Children can visit the hands on kids zone with face painting, balloon animals, and unique wonders to explore.

The See beyond Festival is a **FREE** family friendly event featuring-
Live Music, Kids Zone, Games, a Craft Fair and Market!

Visit marylandschoolfortheblind.org/See-beyond-festival
for more information



The Maryland School for the Blind

3501 Taylor Ave, Baltimore, MD 21236

See beyond

MSB Students Teach Valuable Lesson

by Dotty Raynor

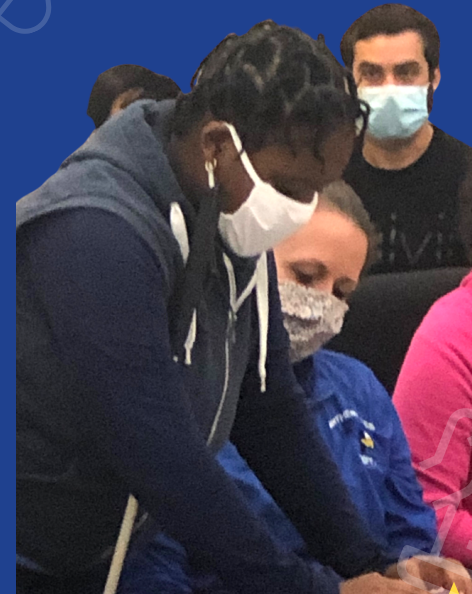
Annually, Professor Gail Kaplan, invites her former students that have become teachers to come back to Towson University and present to both undergraduate and graduate students in her Methods of Mathematics course. Students in this course are studying to become secondary Mathematics teachers or are graduate students currently working as secondary Mathematics teachers.

Math teacher Danny Salemie returns to his alma mater to take part in these presentations every year and has since he began his teaching career 17 years ago.

In 2017, when he began working at MSB as a mathematics teacher, he took the opportunity to make a significant impact in the perception of blind and low vision students. "I have learned so much from my students at MSB that I thought, wouldn't it be great if I could take them to Towson to help me explain to future teachers how blind or low vision students learn math." He took the idea to Professor Kaplan and she was completely on board.

"I LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING DANNY AND THE MSB STUDENTS VISIT MY CLASSES EVERY YEAR NOW. THEY HAVE OPENED BOTH MY EYES AND MIND, AND EXPANDED MY KNOWLEDGE AS WELL AS THAT OF MY STUDENTS. THIS IS SUCH A VALUABLE HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITY FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE EDUCATORS TO LEARN FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. THE KNOWLEDGE THEY ARE RECEIVING FROM DANNY AND HIS STUDENTS WILL TRANSLATE NOT ONLY IN THE CLASSROOM, BUT THROUGHOUT LIFE," SAID PROFESSOR KAPLAN.

It is also a great experience and confidence booster for the MSB students. Though it is strictly voluntary, Danny never has a problem recruiting his students to participate. "Our students really enjoy interacting with college students and relish the opportunity to teach them something new and share how they learn and live as a person with blindness or low vision," according to Danny. The students prepare weeks in advance and Danny encourages them to help create the presentation.



Marie demonstrates braille reading to a group of TU Students



James explains how he navigates his surroundings by using his cane



High school students, James Quade, Marie Ijambo, and Brandon Davis were the team selected to take the field trip to TU this year. They not only focused on how they learn math, but also explained and demonstrated how they navigate their environment through orientation and mobility skills, learn braille, and access technology. The presentation included student skits, demonstrations, and a Q&A session.

Following the lesson Professor Kaplan asks her students to reflect on the experience in writing. The reflections illustrate how much of a difference three high school students can make on an entire academic community.

"THE PRESENTATION BY DANNY AND HIS STUDENTS AT MSB WAS IMMENSELY VALUABLE AND INSPIRATIONAL. I HAVE REALIZED THAT I NEED TO CHECK MY ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT STUDENTS CAN AND CANNOT DO. I HAD IMMEDIATELY ASSUMED STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETE A SEEK AND SOLVE MATH ASSIGNMENT, BUT I WAS PROVEN WRONG DURING THE PRESENTATION." - CASEY BRADY, TU STUDENT

"THIS EXPERIENCE WILL STICK WITH ME AND WILL HELP ME AS I GO FORWARD AS A TEACHER. ANY TIME I HAVE A STUDENT WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, IN PARTICULAR, I WILL DO MY BEST TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT IT WITHOUT MAKING IT A BIG DEAL AND SEE HOW I CAN HELP THEM BEST. JUST BECAUSE THEY CAN'T SEE THE SAME WAY AS OTHERS, DOESN'T MEAN THEY AREN'T AS CAPABLE OR SMART. THEY JUST MIGHT NEED A LITTLE EXTRA SUPPORT TO BE ABLE TO BE ON AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD AND THEY DESERVE THAT." - NICOLE DOMSIC, TU STUDENT

Danny himself summed it up perfectly, "James, Marie, and Brandon made a huge impact in their community by demonstrating their capability and competence and delivered an important message to the teachers and future teachers, always set high expectations for all students, regardless of their seen or unseen disabilities."