

STEPPING Stones

November 2017

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NON-PUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

CHELSEA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR WITH PKD RECEIVED 'GREATEST GIFT' FROM STUDENT'S FATHER



BY SANDY LUNDHAUL — There are many stories about educators who change student's lives. But sometimes, it's a student — or their family — who changes the life of an educator.

Kristal Weems-Bradner was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease in her late 20s, a genetic disorder that runs in her family and can result in kidney failure. Now 48, Weems-Bradner has been on daily, peritoneal dialysis for more than two years. Weems-Bradner is the Interim Co-Head and Middle Division Principal at the Chelsea School in Hyattsville.

"My mother, some of my aunts and many of my cousins, including male cousins, all have the disease," Weems-Bradner said. She says her mother received a kidney

from a deceased donor that lasted for 6-7 years and then she returned to dialysis for the remainder of her life. Her mother died in January 2016.

"I knew what to expect," said Weems-Bradner.

Weems-Bradner was on the transplant list, on dialysis and waiting for a deceased donor while friends and relatives were tested to see if any of them were a match. Her son, the best match, was disqualified when they learned he also has the gene for polycystic kidney disease.

Two years ago, Weems-Bradner spoke to a biology class at Chelsea School about how kidneys function and different ways they stop working. After the class, Alexander

(Alec) Casey offered her something precious: Alec offered to donate one of his kidneys. Unfortunately, donors must be at least 18 years old.

Fast forward two years.

"I'm 18 now," said Alec, who recently graduated from Chelsea School. "Do you still need that 'thing'?" he asked Weems-Bradner. "I want to give you my kidney," Alec says he told Weems-Bradner the day after his 18th birthday. "She told me that I had to talk with my parents."

With his parents' approval, Alec went

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

-- Margaret Mead



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MANSEF continues to strive to inspire dreams and change lives of Maryland's neediest special education students. With the combined efforts of our thoughtful and dedicated member schools, community supporters, and students' families, the world is changed one child at a time.

- You have the potential for playing a valuable role in sustaining our efforts and in generating the support of others.
- Share your stories to help educate others about the value of making a difference in the lives of students with disabilities.
- Tell other parents how your child was able to finally learn how to read, to make a friend or to graduate from high school by attending a nonpublic school.
- Join the Friends of MANSEF, a group of parents with children attending our schools and help to advocate on behalf of Maryland's special needs children requiring alternatives to public school options.
- Tell your neighbors and acquaintances about nonpublic schools and how they help to provide individualized educational opportunities for students with physical, emotional, learning and developmental disabilities.
- Share the new MANSEF directory highlighting the options and services available at more than 80 nonpublic special education schools across the state.
- Tell your friends about how valuable your work is in educating students with disabilities who could not be appropriately served in the public schools.
- Attend the 27th MANSEF Conference on December 1 in Baltimore to enhance your skills, explore new approaches, and network with others who are dedicated to working with students with special needs.
- Tell your legislators about the existence and value of MANSEF, about the importance of advocating for increases in tuition rates for nonpublic schools that support employing high quality staff members, and about the significance of reinforcing our efforts to work together with the public schools to provide an essential continuum of educational services.

There is no doubt that each person reading this can help to change the world for children with special needs in Maryland by taking the time to tell the stories of our success. All together, we can develop a greater understanding of our valuable role in special education in Maryland and of how critical it is to support nonpublic special education schools through state funding.

On behalf of the MANSEF Board of Directors, I thank you in advance for joining us in supporting our efforts to develop our students' greatest abilities, to strengthen our communities, and to change the world.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tania DuBeau".

Tania DuBeau
President MANSEF

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MANSEF CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS



The Children's Guild

Jarryd Transitioned From Student In Crisis To An Honor Student

When Jarryd came to The Children's Guild, he was a middle school student living in a group home struggling with completing assignments and interacting with peers and needed dedicated staff for safety. Instead of giving up on Jarryd, The Guild saw a student in crisis and supported him. He was relocated to a Children's Guild group home, reinforcing the school structure at home. Once Jarryd had a consistent school and home environment, he flourished, experiencing academic and social gains and no longer needing dedicated staff. Now a 12th grader, he is growing academically and socially, making honor roll and using new-found coping skills in The School-to-Work Program.



Jarryd

The Forbush School at Oakmont Upper School

Matthew came to The Forbush School at Oakmont Upper School in February 2017. Since then, Matthew has had many accomplishments and has demonstrated his willingness to go the extra mile! Matthew is a very hard worker, always asking staff if there is any job he can help out with, and never hesitates when given the opportunity. Back in July, Matthew saved up \$20 worth of "Upper Bucks" from working at school and in the community, in order to buy a new pair of shoes! He has made progress in counting his "Upper Bucks" and keeping track of his earnings with a check register log. Matthew is a friendly and outgoing student with a very promising future.



Matthew and Mr. Anthony

The Foundation Schools

Seniors and best friends **Daa'lyah and Tyrese** were hired as ushers at **The Anthem** in DC. They will be assisting guests to their seats to listen to top artists perform. They worked hard to develop good interview skills and rose above their challenges to land the job. They also completed all the employment paperwork, W-4, direct deposit, I-9 and schedules. They were excited to attend their orientation on October 3. We are so proud of them and their accomplishment, and will continue to provide support and encouragement as they venture into the world of work.



Daa'lyah and Tyrese

MORE!

STUDENT SUCCESS



Ziaire

High Road Academy

Ziaire Baker is an outstanding eleventh grade student at High Road Academy in Laurel, Maryland. When he began two years ago, he was a shy student with many challenges. Ziaire blossomed into a mature young man who enjoys voicing his thoughts and opinions. "Ziaire is a diligent and conscientious student. He has worked hard pursuing his academics," says Ms. Horter, testing coordinator. Ziaire has skyrocketed in comprehension, now testing above twelfth grade on listening comprehension and word attack skills have improved by seven years. "Ziaire is an excellent worker who strives to finish strong," explains current teacher, Ms. Errico. Math scores, a relative strength, increased by three years.

Salem School

A new school year brings many different challenges and changes; however **DJ**, a 9th grade student at the Salem School, has a familiar face to welcome him back. The Horsemanship Program at the Maryland Salem Children's Trust and Salem School offers youth the opportunity to participate in Equine Assisted Learning as part of their school day. While learning the horsemanship skills of steering, walking, trotting and caring for his equine partner, Jose', DJ has also been developing the life-long values of compassion, patience, responsibility and attention to safety. DJ and Jose' are looking forward to another year together learning, growing and, most importantly, having fun.

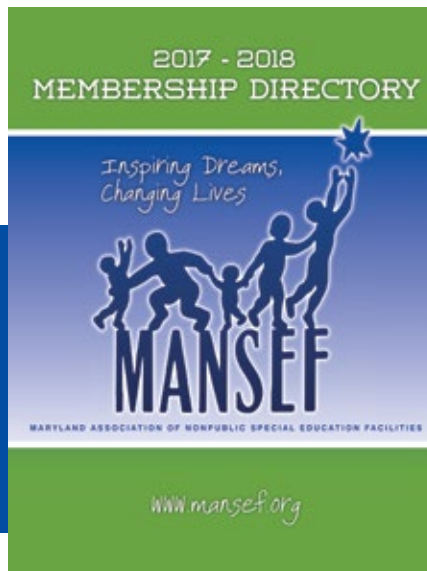


DJ



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SCHOOL News

Innovation Station

The students at the **Forbush School @ Glyndon- Hannah More Campus** are currently experiencing project based learning in their newly created Makerspace (Innovation Station). Our Innovation Station is a place where students are given the opportunity to explore interests by learning to create and invent using various manipulatives for prototyping and technology based materials. This is also accomplished by using physical and virtual materials and tools not otherwise offered in the classroom setting. This learning environment is student led, while the teacher facilitates the hands-on environment. The Innovation Station currently offers prototyping materials, 3D printing, laser cutting, circuitry, and many other hands-on opportunities.

Right: Students Michael Pucket & John Fanelli learn about the 3D printer with staff member Mr. Feinburg Bottom: Innovation Station at the Forbush School, Glyndon - Hannah More Campus



The Mann Residential Treatment Center

The Mann RTC Renders Powerful Message

On Tuesday, September 26th, The Mann Residential Treatment Center, part of the Sheppard Pratt Health System, hosted its third annual Hope Not Dope assembly. With the current Opioid and Heroin crisis sweeping across our nation, it seemed prudent to heighten awareness of such a growing epidemic. The students got down to business creating thought-provoking posters, incredibly meaningful works of art, and true-to-life skits with profound messages surrounding the ills of substance use and abuse. How fortunate we were to have Mr. Devon Blackwood, an

author, speaker, radio host and professional counselor, as our guest speaker.

Mr. Blackwood offered powerful words of wisdom and focused our attention on staying drug free and not losing sight of our life worth living goals. No question that the messages were received loud and clear...HOPE NOT DOPE!



The Pathway Schools

A Garden Blooms

The students and staff from The Pathways School - Anne Arundel care for a flower garden bed along the Baltimore and Annapolis Trail in Severna Park. The students prepared the garden for planting this summer by removing large roots and adding soil, and then chose to plant hardy, sun loving flowers that would do well through the hot months. Now in the autumn, they are weeding and preparing the bed for cooler weather. As the students work, walkers, runners, and bikers using the trail have thanked them for planting and tending the garden. This project is part of the school's commitment to serving the community.





Rosena Jordan

MORE! SCHOOL News

The Harbour Schools

The Harbour School honors staff longevity

On August 16, The Harbour School celebrated staff who have been at Harbour a long time. The average staff tenure at Harbour is 6.5 years. At the August ceremony, six people received charms and tie tacs for 10 years of service. Michelle Giera, Lisa Hoey, Carol Larson, Suzanne Roberts, Allison Hauck and Lou Prudente all received 10-year awards. Five people received chairs engraved with the school logo and their names and length of service for 15 years at Harbour. The 15-year awardees were: Bobbie Huber, Don Emerson, Amy Emerson, Dr. Rhonda Ford and Susan Dilaberto. Rosena Jordan received a 14k gold bracelet for 20 years of service to the school. Harbour honors staff longevity with bonus awards and with tangible awards.



Bobbie Huber

The Harbour School honors Independence Day

At this year's Patriotic Parade at The Harbour School at Baltimore Delegate Julian Jones, Karen Dates-Dunmore (MSDE), and County Council candidate Marisol Johnson served as judges to determine which class best exemplified the theme of Celebrate America.



Harbour School Staff Celebrate Independence Day

Performing Arts in the Community

Hayden Lipczenko, a 2017 graduate from The Harbour School at Annapolis, performed in Sitar Arts Production of Fiddler on the Roof. **Grace Korolenko**, a high school student at The Harbour School at Baltimore performed in Glendon Area Players Beauty and the Beast.



Hayden Lipczenko



Grace Korolenko performing in 'Beauty and the Beast'

Art works

Art students at The Harbour School at Baltimore created an artistic creation of the new Wegmans grocery store at Foundry Row in Owings Mills. The entire mural was made of re-cycled materials. The mural was displayed at Wegmans on October 7. Students were treated to lunch and did a Q & A about their school with Wegmans' customers for three hours. The store manager said he was very impressed with the creativity. He also was pleased that all the materials were re-cycled because Wegmans values being a green store.



Harbour school art displayed at Wegmans in Owings Mills



SPARK Conference

In August, Harbour ignited its first ever SPARK conference. SPARK stands for Strategies to Prepare Agile Resourceful Kids. Service providers, educators, administrators, and parents hosted a variety of sessions on a range of topics from mindfulness and compassion fatigue to 3-D printing and preparing for post-secondary transition. One of the events was the demonstration of an escape room. This is a room where kids can go and work on puzzles and "escape" the problems that are bothering them at that moment.

Over 200 excited attendants discussed best practices, exercised team building skills, explored academic innovations, and won fabulous prizes. We are looking forward to expanding next year's conference and continuing to SPARK a flame of informed inquiry in the realm of special education.



Lead to Feed team to be featured on Jumbotron at Ravens game

Watch Harbour on the Jumbotron on December 3

The Ravens football team reviewed over 400 requests from charitable organizations to be featured at the December 3 game. Siri Iltamas, teacher at The Harbour School at Baltimore, and her Lead to Feed team were selected for their dedication to the Baltimore community. They have been picked for the 2017 Honors Row Program because of their volunteer hours with Meals on Wheels and because of the \$80,000 they have earned through their prizes in the Lead to Feed program. As part of the program, students will have free tickets and special seating at the game. The image of the students in their section will be featured on the Jumbotron and their contribution will be announced at half-time at the game.

Talent in the woodshop

The Harbour School at Annapolis students created school projects in the woodshop. These students designed and built a shelf and coat rack for a classroom. The purpose of the woodshop is to teach the students skills such as responding to supervision, completing a project, arriving on time and working even though you may not feel like it.



Coat rack

Woodshop

MORE!

SCHOOL News



High Road Schools

A Grand Opening

The High Road Lower and Upper Schools have been serving students throughout the Prince George's County and the entire DC Metro area since 2002. Having spent most of these years in Beltsville, Capitol Heights, and Largo, both programs have a new home in Lanham. This new state of the art facility allows us to provide continual education for students from grades 2- 12. Michelle Anderson, Executive Director, said, "We are so very excited for this new facility. Having our Lower and Upper School programs in the same location, will allow us to provide educational continuity for our students and their families".

Kennedy Krieger Schools

New Home for Kennedy Krieger's Montgomery County Campus

For the past 10 years, Kennedy Krieger School Programs' Montgomery County Campus operated in Rockville, where it shared a building with another non-public school program. As the success of the Kennedy Krieger program grew, so did requests from local school systems for student placement in the program.

To meet this demand, the school found a new location—a former elementary school—in Silver Spring.

After a renovation of the building this past summer, the school opened on Aug. 30. Thanks to the additional space, the program expanded from eight to 10 classrooms. Sixty-five students now attend the program, an enrollment increase of more than 15 percent. Extra space in the building will enable the school to offer additional work-based learning and vocational opportunities made possible through partnerships with local businesses. A grand opening will be announced for later in the year.



**Photo courtesy of Howard County Government.*

Linwood Center

Linwood Boutique Grand Opening

Linwood Center held a Grand Opening celebration at its new Linwood Boutique in Old Ellicott City on August 14th. Linwood staff and program participants were joined by neighbors, supporters, and elected officials, including First Lady Yumi Hogan, County Executive Allan Kittleman, County Council chairman Jon Weinstein, and Delegate Bob Flanagan. Staff were thrilled to show off the new and improved store and supported employment program for individuals living with autism, which includes artisan stalls where participants design and create crafts to sell. We hope you'll stop by the store sometime soon.

Sensory Integration Room Opening

Linwood School kicked off the fall school term with the grand opening and ribbon cutting of their newly improved sensory integration room. Thanks to a generous grant from the John J. Leidy Foundation and contributions from individual donors, the school was able to revitalize their extensively used sensory integration room with brand new equipment. This equipment provides staff with a wider selection of tools to address students' sensory needs and enhance their occupational therapy services. The room now has two swings, a rock and rope wall, a ball pit, a peg board, bean bags, sensory lighting, a tactile board, and more. The students love it.



Linwood School sensory integration room

Katherine Thomas School

The Katherine Thomas School's Culinary and Restaurant Management students are enjoying their newly renovated commercial kitchen. The renovation included new commercial ranges, microwaves, and toaster, a griddle with a refrigerator underneath, and a 3 sink washing unit. The students will now be able to share the delicious fruits of their labors through sales to students and staff. The kitchen renovation was made possible through funds raised by the KTS Parents' Association at their annual auction.



KTS Newly Renovated Kitchen



Thank YOU



Children's Guild P.G. Campus

Often times, finding community support for our students can be a challenge. With the help of DORS, we are jumping hurdles and beating the odds. On October 10, 2017, **Ms. Beth Lash**, Regional Director of DORS Region VI, visited The Children's Guild to provide amazing knowledge on the services that our students can and will take advantage of.

Ms. Lash offered knowledge on the Pre-Employment Transition Services Program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. DORS Pre-ETS Program provides services to our students such as job exploration, work-based learning experiences, post-secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy services and training. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program goal is for students to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment through services that include counseling, career decision making, assistance with higher education, technical and vocational training, job search assistance, supported employment, and on-the-job training and support.

Our students at The Children's Guild Prince George's Campus have been 100% referred so that they may receive all of these necessary services! With the help of DORS and especially Ms. Lash, our toolkit is now full and ready for student building and restructuring.

Thanks Ms. Beth Lash for supporting The Children's Guild Prince George's Campus!



MANSEF *Retirements*

Joe Leshko

Please join MANSEF in wishing Joe Leshko, former MANSEF Board member, our best wishes on his retirement and his many years of hard work and dedication.





CHELSEA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR WITH PKD RECEIVED 'GREATEST GIFT' FROM STUDENT'S FATHER

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through the questionnaire process, but stopped when he learned — incorrectly — that people with tattoos could not donate. Rather, prospective donors are advised not to get a tattoo before donating because of the risk of infection.

That's when Alec's father, Chris Casey, 66, stepped in and went through the same extensive process and found out that he was a perfect match for Weems-Bradner.

Chris wanted to give back to a school and school official who had given so much for his son.

"It's because of my affection for Weems-Bradner and the [Chelsea] school," said Chris. "My son had been in public school and was not receiving the academic support he needed. Within 18 months of attending [Chelsea] he made substantial progress despite his dyslexia and ADHD. He received the highest score in the ACT reading test and was declared 'college-ready.'"

"We try to build strong relationships with our students and family," Weems-Bradner said. Each teacher becomes an advisor to two or three students, she explained, and stays in contact weekly with the family initially and then at least monthly to inform parents of their child's progress and to find out about potential problems as early as possible.

"She [Weems-Bradner] changed my thinking about school and life," Alec said. "When I first came to [Chelsea], my main purpose was definitely not school. I was fighting a lot. She gave me lots of advice and we had a really good connection. I would call her more than my advisor whenever I needed help."

Weems-Bradner says she is "blown away" when she thinks about Chris's donation of his kidney to her. She described her feelings in a Facebook post on June 30, 10 days after surgery:

I am an African American woman and I need to thank a white man for saving my life. In this day and age of such turmoil, especially between the races, ... What are the chances of this man being a direct match when I had been waiting on the transplant list for 2 years without any potential matches (living or cadaver). On June 20th, Chris donated a kidney to me. This is one of the greatest gifts anyone has ever given to me. I am eternally grateful to [the Casey] family, for they are truly a blessing to me. ... We are surrounded by hate, distrust and malice [and yet] there is truly good in the world, and there is truly hope!

Why did Chris go through with it?

"How many times do you really have an opportunity to give back?" asked Chris. "We, and especially Alec, developed a strong relationship with Weems-Bradner. She deserved it. We are so happy she received the kidney well and that it is working. She's got the big challenge."

Chris said he worked hard to be as physically fit as possible for his surgery. Afterwards his energy and soreness improved each day. About three weeks after surgery, Chris had gone back to work and was on his way to an assignment in Uganda for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Alec will be attending West Virginia Wesleyan's nursing program and plans to combine nursing and travel by working in different hospitals around the world. "I want to help others and travel," Alec said.

He said he wants people to remember the golden rule, to treat others how you would like to be treated and that it is important to think about how what you do affects others. "Always keep that in mind," he said.

"My dad is a great man. He cares for people and wants to give back," Alec said.

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MANSEF is committed to creating optimum educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all Maryland children with disabilities through: ADVOCACY, NETWORKING, COLLABORATION and INFORMATION/RESOURCES.



COUNTDOWN TO THE MANSEF CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 1, 2017

BALTIMORE CONVENTION CENTER



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