

STEPPING Stones

February 2013

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

5TH ANNUAL MANSEF ADVOCACY DAY IN ANNAPOLIS

Over 100 parents and staff members gathered at the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis, February 12, for our 5th annual MANSEF Advocacy Day. Each year, the Advocacy Day is planned to follow within weeks of the opening session of the Maryland General Assembly.

MANSEF school staff and families of students met with legislators from their respective districts to educate them about the importance of nonpublic special education schools, the effects tuition freezes have had for the past four years, and the value of supporting a 2.5 % increase that Governor O'Malley has called for in his proposed budget. Among the speakers at the event were: Tania DuBeau, MANSEF President; Alice Harris, Branch Chief, Interagency Collaboration Branch at the Maryland State Department of Education; parent Carin Smith, representing the Friends of MANSEF; and Kristin Tribble, representing Senator Karen Montgomery's office. MANSEF Executive Director Dorie Flynn hosted the event and outlined numerous achievements that MANSEF has had – foremost among them was to help the state achieve a #1 ranking nationally in education. She cited MANSEF outcome studies highlighted in a January article in the The Baltimore Sun. President Tania DuBeau added, in her remarks, that "it is most critical that funding support the high level of service and standards that are met in our schools."

She said, "It is imperative that legislators support a 2.5% increase. Tell them about your children and what our schools have done for them so that they understand the human side of the story."

Friends of MANSEF representative Carin Smith described her advocacy efforts and the impact of MANSEF parents. She also spoke about her own struggle to acquire services for her daughter Ellie, who is now leading a productive life at St. Elizabeth School and recently was invited to meet President Obama at the White House.

Perhaps the most inspiring words of the day came from a student herself, 17 year old Erica Caulkins, who spoke to the audience about her individual struggle, her success, her optimism, and her appreciation of her school – The Pathways Schools. She praised the staff and talked about her goals for the future – in essence, the story of MANSEF and its vision for every student.

Her inspirational words ended the formal part of the event leaving the audience standing and applauding this amazing student. A question and answer session followed and attendees learned how to present topics to their

legislator and how to keep them informed about students with special needs and their challenges.

The event ended with congratulations being given to all the attendees and the staff of MANSEF's 93 member schools all across the state, for their advocacy, hard work and achievements.

MANSEF
President
Tania
DuBeau
and Erica
Caulkins



Erica Caulkins

"You are truly the heroes. You are committed to a group of children with exceptional needs and you make a difference in the lives of your students and their families. I admire you for the heroic work that you do every day."



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Colleagues,

This was the message conveyed over and over again by the nationally acclaimed speakers at the recent National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC) Annual Leadership Conference. While these words were shared with the leaders of nonpublic special education schools across the country, the message really describes the efforts and work of so many. For students in MANSEF schools across the state of Maryland, it is the collaborative efforts of many that **inspire dreams and change lives**.

Especially within the realities of the current economic challenges, it is imperative that the special education community, including MSDE, local school systems, MANSEF member schools, families, and community advocates stand together to strengthen access to the continuum of services for students with special needs. Within recent weeks, many MANSEF supporters have made their views known to the state legislators about the importance of equitable funding to support nonpublic special education schools. It is rewarding to know how many of our parents and staff come to Annapolis annually to advocate for children with special needs. Our efforts continue to focus on these points:

- More than 4000 Maryland students are served in 93 MANSEF schools in 15 counties and Baltimore City
- Nonpublic school tuition rates were capped and frozen for three years and then raised by only 1% last year while costs continue to increase substantially more
- There is a legal obligation and a social need for the specialized services offered in MANSEF schools
- Our outcome study demonstrates that MANSEF students enroll in post-secondary education at a higher rate than students from public school programs and MANSEF schools employ over 2500 people

Together we will continue to be the heroes who inspire dreams and change lives of students across the state of Maryland. The way in which you make a difference may be by advocating on a student's behalf, by seeking a legislator's support of funding for nonpublic schools serving the state's neediest students, by developing programs to strengthen the continuum of services, or by dedicating your work to create better lives for students with disabilities.

Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

Sincerely,

Tania DuBeau
MANSEF President

MANSEF CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS



Dr. Eddie Oliver, Sylvia Williams, Kameron Williams, and Dr. Lisa Sheehan

Baltimore Lab School

Kameron Williams, a 12th grader at Baltimore Lab School, was honored by the International Dyslexia Association, Maryland Branch, at the annual Finish Line Scholarship event for his outstanding achievements as a dyslexic. He was described as a tireless worker whose confidence has grown tremendously during the past few years at BLS. Kameron is an active member of Baltimore Lab School's Rehearsal and Performance Ensemble, appearing on stage as Al Capone and Luke Skywalker in an original play written by BLS high school students, and plays on the high school boys' basketball team. He is currently working on his college applications.

Chelsea School

Chana Kramer is an extraordinary young woman with a tremendous work ethic, an



Chana Kramer

internal motivation to succeed, and the ability to navigate all different types of social situations. Although all this praise might sound too good to be true; this genuinely describes Chana.

Chana began attending the Chelsea School four years ago as a high school freshman and distinguished herself by acting as a positive role model, continuously working hard to achieve good grades, and by always showing kindness to others.

Prior to attending the Chelsea School, Chana was in a public school and struggling academically which impacted her socially and behaviorally. She was anxious about attending school and she often avoided work. This seemed hard to believe because the moment she began at Chelsea School, it was clear that she was a hard-working student who was determined to succeed both academically and socially.

Her scholarly achievements have included earning straight A's and being on the honor roll every quarter for the past four years. Other accomplishments include holding the office of Vice President for her class for three straight years, participating on the leadership core, and being invited to participate as a member of the National Honor's Society (NHS) for the past two years.

Outside of school, Chana also shines as an exemplary individual. She has participated in three different sports: basketball, softball and track and field. She was new to these sports but picked up the fundamentals quickly and became respected as a hard-working athlete. These qualities are noted not only by the staff at Chelsea but also by her peers. A perfect example is that Chana was appointed the captain of the girls' basketball team. Chana's pleasant disposition, popularity and motivation to succeed have caused all members of the Chelsea community to hold her in high esteem.

The staff at Chelsea School will definitely be sad to see Chana graduate because we will miss her presence at the school. It will be hard to find another student with all of her intrinsic strengths of being so well-rounded, kindhearted, compassionate, determined and bright. One positive thing about having Chana move on to college is that we know she will be successful!

The children's Guild

Children's Guild fourth grader **Codie Hansley** is being recognized as an exhibiting artist with "Yo soy...Je suis...I am..." an international art program for children with disabilities through The Kennedy Center's affiliate, VSA, an international organization on arts and disability.

Hansley was one of 20 student artists selected from 428 who submitted their self-portraits through Artsonia.com, an online student art gallery. As an exhibiting artist, his artwork will be displayed at the United States Department of Education in Washington, D.C.



Codie Hansley

STUDENT Success



Quincy

The Gateway School

Quincy has made great progress in his time at Gateway School. When he first arrived at Gateway as a three year old, the current fifth grader did not understand much of what was going on around him, and was not speaking at all. He was frustrated by his inability to understand and communicate - and often acted out his frustration.

Over the years, Quincy has worked very hard to develop his language skills. He has now progressed to the point where he is able to talk about his own feelings and communicate his feelings to others. In addition to using words to talk about what is on his mind, he has also learned to use visualization, counting, meditation and physical activities to strengthen his self-control and self-confidence.

Quincy is a natural leader. His peers now model their own self-improvement after him. Quincy has grown from a child who had limited communication and self-awareness to a strong-minded young man who serves as a positive role model to his peers in school and in the community. Congratulations to Quincy on his accomplishments in – and out – of school!



Gabi Montes-Garzon

The Diener School

The Diener School is thrilled to highlight **Gabi Montes-Garzon!** Gabi has overcome so much in her life. She has hydrocephalus, a condition in which the primary characteristic is excessive accumulation of fluid in the brain. This condition has impacted Gabi's learning and memory.

Gabi started at Diener in 2007 with a bit of anxiety about school, learning and friendships. We have watched Gabi blossom these last five years, recognizing her full potential socially and academically. Please enjoy Gabi's essay below. Go Gabs!

OT Palooza at The Diener School

By Gabi Montes-Garzon

Over the past five years at The Diener School, I have learned a lot of useful things to help me later in life. I've learned about my learning style, sensory strategies and handwriting.

For example, I am a kinesthetic learner. That means I learn through actions and touching. I often take frequent breaks. I often do "Water Writing" with my spelling words. Sometimes in OT, I do some handwriting exercises with Ms. Kathy.

As a kinesthetic learner, I enjoy subjects that help me stay engaged. I like science and art because I can use my hands. To help me stay engaged, I use thera-putty, fidgets, seat cushions and movement breaks. In class when I feel a bit jumpy, I often do "cross crawls."

My handwriting has improved a lot over the past five years. My handwriting used to be very sloppy with lots of spelling errors and punctuation errors but now it is legible and cursive. For example, my spacing and legibility have improved. At home, I do creative writing. I make my own comics and fiction writing at home on weekends.

When I leave Diener, I will take all I've learned with me, and I will use these useful things I've learned along the way to adulthood. I will try to share these skills with people I meet along the way, friends and relatives.

The Harbour School

Adrienne Guillory spoke before the meeting of the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland. She had the opportunity to talk about what a MANSEF school means to her. She also had her photo taken with MANSEF President Tania Dubeau, MANSEF Executive Director Dorie Flynn, and State Superintendent Dr. Lillian Lowery.



Adrienne, Dorie Flynn and Dr. Lowery

Tyrique came to The Harbour School at Annapolis as a non-reader.

Thanks to the help of Harbour therapy furry-faced kid, Candi, Tyrique is rapidly learning to enjoy books. Tyrique also reads to his own furry-faced pet at home, according to Tyrique's mother.



Tyrique

Mann Residential School

When the Forbush Therapeutic Preschool needed a Santa this past Christmas, they knew just who to call. The principal of the Mann Residential School, Mr. Jeffrey Alperin, and his trusted reindeer, Mrs. Kimberly Malehorn, brought holiday spirit with their Elfish crew and they knew just which students would make the best helpers. Several elves volunteered to read holiday tales, sing carols, distribute gifts, candy canes, and more! The excitement was palpable.

The Mann Elves also put their Elfish abilities to work for the Gatehouse Shop at Sheppard Pratt annual Holiday Extravaganza. Purchases from the shop, the proceeds from which go to the patient fund at the health system, were expertly wrapped by the elves to the delight of customers. Only one elf was able to help with both projects and that is why **Faith** is our Star Student. Look at her fantastic smile and realize the impact of the contribution she gave, spreading holiday cheer to children and patients this holiday season!

Phillips School Laurel

Teacher shares story of one special student

It was 2008, and I had just been given a new student in my class. She was quietly standing in the corner of the room, crying softly. I had no idea how I was going to cheer her up, or make a connection with her. This is my first memory of **Mallory**— and I can hardly reconcile this memory with the vibrant, self-assured young woman who walked across the stage at Phillips School ~ Laurel's graduation in 2012.

I was lucky enough to teach Mallory for four years. Over those four years, Mallory proved change is possible! At first Mallory was very quiet, but gradually she came out of her shell. She began to socialize with her peers. She learned to stand up for herself in a manner that was respectful of others, and began to take up for others that needed a champion. Mallory's sense of fairness would not let her stand by and do nothing. She decided in her junior year that she wanted to be a counselor because she wanted to help others, and worked really hard to ensure that that goal was possible.

Mallory kept her grade point average up – winning a scholarship to attend college. This fall Mallory began classes at Howard Community College where she is pursuing her dream of getting a degree in social work so she can help others. Mallory came to see me after classes started to say she had been placed in English 101. She seemed surprised by her accomplishment, but I was not. I told her I would be happy to give her any help if she needed it, but she never came back. Mallory was ready; she had achieved the independence we all wished for her and she didn't need us anymore.



Mallory



Kimberly Malehorn and Faith

Kennedy Krieger School

A few words from Matt as he gets ready for high school

"I have been at Kennedy Krieger since the fall of 2006. I have been in Room 20 for two school years. I am getting ready for high school right now. This will be my last year in this building. I have become more independent, but I still need some work. I have learned math and reading that was at first difficult to me, but now I understand. I still have problems with writing and paying attention, but I am working on it. In high school, I am looking forward to getting a summer job. I will miss my school, but I really believe I am ready."



Matt

UCP-Delrey

Congratulations to **Shawn Szazy** of UCP-Delrey on recently taking his first steps!

Shawn is an active, engaged kindergartner who is eager to explore his environment. When he came to Delrey at age 3, Shawn was unable to walk and relied entirely on being pushed in a kid kart. After undergoing intensive physical and occupational therapy at Delrey,

Shawn has shown remarkable improvement in strength and upright balance.

With the help of his experienced team of therapists, Shawn made the critical transition to walking unassisted. His hard work and dedication are truly an inspiration to all who strive to walk independently.

Shawn





MANSEF STUDENT SUCCESS

continued



Brian

St. Elizabeth School

Once upon a time, a young student named **Brian** came to St. Elizabeth School. Brian was a shy boy; talking to or doing things with others made him uncomfortable. But over time, with the encouragement of his family and the staff at SES, Brian found ways to let his many talents shine.

Brian has a great talent for writing, and recently he has been working with Ms. Jackie Herrell, his homeroom teacher, to produce reviews and articles for SES's Development office, as well as our brand new St. Elizabeth School student-run newspaper. Because of his natural ability, and the encouragement of staff like Ms. Herrell, writing has become a safe outlet through which Brian can express himself. With the SES newspaper, Brian has become part of a team of students who work together on something of which they are proud. We're pretty proud too!

SCHOOL News

The Ivymount School

Light Up the Night for Ivymount Stars

The Ivymount Benefit Auction 2012 was held on November 17, 2012, at The Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C. Approximately 600 guests attended "**Light Up the Night for Ivymount Stars**" – the silent auction, dinner, and live auction event supporting Ivymount's nationally recognized school and community-based programs for children and young adults with autism, learning disabilities, and speech and language impairments.

Proceeds from the auction will help Ivymount to continue their mission to provide students with the training, resources, and experiences they need to achieve independent and self-directed futures.

Ivymount Joins Kennedy Center to Create Sensory-Friendly Theater Experiences

With the goal to make live theater at **The Kennedy Center** accessible to all children and their families so that they may enjoy the theater together, The Kennedy Center Accessibility Office invited The Ivymount School to partner (along with the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia and the Smithsonian Institution Accessibility Program) in creating pilot "sensory-friendly performances" for local families with children on the autism spectrum or with other disabilities that create sensory sensitivities. The response to the first pilot performance this past spring was overwhelming, with reservations filling up and a long waiting list created within three days of the launch!

Based on the response and the successful feedback from families, The Kennedy Center launched a full season of sensory-friendly performances this year, and Ivymount staff participated in the usher and front office staff training, along with advising on performance adjustments and meeting with the artists to educate on autism and the sensory integration needs of their audience.

An article appeared in the Washington Post (Arts Section) on Sunday, January 20, 2013, highlighting these sensory-friendly programs, as well as an Ivymount family's experience at the theater and the involvement of Ivymount staff, including School Director Jan Wintrol, to advise on adjustments and efforts to create a welcoming environment for the performance.

First Special Needs Resource Fair on February 23

On **Saturday, February 23**, from noon – 3 p.m., plan to attend the **Ivymount Special Needs Resource Fair**.

This resource fair is targeted to parents and families of children and young adults with special needs in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area. With over 50 registered exhibitors including special needs financial planners, adult service providers, community resources, special needs camps, learning resources and more, this will be a great opportunity for parents and families to learn more about resources in our community. For information, go to: www.ivymount.org/specialneedsfair.

From l to r: Dorie Flynn, Executive Director of MANSEF; Stephanie deSibour, Assistant Director and Director of Admissions of the Ivymount School; Gary Williams, Honorary Chair; Jan Wintrol, Director of the Ivymount School



St. Elizabeth School

Tom Wopat Performs at "Unwrap the Magic for Autism"

St. Elizabeth School and Pathfinders for Autism teamed together to present "**Unwrap the Magic for Autism**," held December 11 at Goucher College. Headlining this spectacular event was **Tom Wopat**, known by many as Luke Duke from the 1980s TV series "The Dukes of Hazzard." Wopat's expressive baritone singing voice has made him a Broadway star for over 30 years, with leading roles in the Tony Award-winning "City of Angels," "Guys and Dolls," "Chicago" and "42nd Street."

This benefit performance featured an entertaining mix of seasonal and Broadway favorites, performed by Wopat and an eight-piece band from New York. The magical night also included special appearances by the **Friends School Chamber Choir**, the **Susquehanna Youth Ballet**, and the elite dancers of the **EMC Performance Arts Studio**. A VIP reception hosted by **Tom Wopat** and **B.J. Surhoff**, President of Pathfinders for Autism and Orioles Hall of Famer, was held prior to the show.



B.J. Surhoff and Tom Wopat

The Katherine Thomas School

Norwood "Gym Buddies" Celebrating 10 Years at TLC's Katherine Thomas School

For the past 10 years The Katherine Thomas School has been hosting "**Gym Buddies**," a community service program in partnership with Bethesda-based Norwood School. Eighth grade Norwood students visit KTS six times throughout their school year. Norwood students assist **Wendy Epstein**, PE Teacher, and also help with pragmatics classes. Special events like Silly Olympics and scavenger hunts are often planned on Monday mornings to take advantage of these exceptional helpers. Gym Buddies provides a 1:1 ratio of students to volunteers/staff, and facilitates opportunities for KTS students to play safely in larger group games as well as role modeling for sportsmanship.



Norwood Volunteers

Learn about Programs offered at Montgomery College

Please join us on **February 28** at 7 p.m. for a presentation by Karla Nabors about programs and services offered through Montgomery College for students with disabilities. Learn about how Montgomery College helps students with their initial college experiences, through participation in the Graduate Transition Program, Challenge courses, specialized driver education classes and much more.

Please R.S.V.P. by February 21 to Gretchen H. Levine at Glevine@ttlc.org or (301) 738 – 9691. This event will be held at the Katherine Thomas School, 9975 Medical Center Drive in Rockville. Student participation is welcomed and encouraged.

The Forbush School at Glyndon

Holiday Home Tours and Annual Talent Show

The school participated in the "**Glyndon by Candlelight**" on Dec. 1, 2012. This was a self-guided tour of homes in Glyndon decorated for the holidays.

The students from the autism program made wooden ornaments and pine cone with bird seed ornaments, and strung popcorn and cranberry garland for a live tree displayed at the Glyndon Post office. The Horticulture students decorated the street signs along Central Avenue with fresh garland and made beautiful holiday flower arrangements and boutonnieres for each of the homes on the tour.

We also held our **annual talent show** on Dec. 20. Students from all the school divisions shared their many talents with a very enthusiastic audience. Families, friends, LSS representatives, staff and former staff enjoyed the singing and dancing as well as the poetry, skits, and comedy acts included in the show. What a great way for our students to share their special talents!



Mann Residential School

A Festive Holiday Cruise Aboard the Spirit of Baltimore

What better way to celebrate the season than by jumping aboard the Spirit of Baltimore for a holiday harbor cruise! Students and staff from Mann Residential School did just that. We took in the sights of the bay, enjoyed a delicious full course lunch and spent a glorious afternoon with music and dancing. We had a special visit from Santa, aka, **Jeffrey Alperin**, our school principal, who came bearing gifts and lots of Ho, Ho, Ho's! And the school chorus, led by **Mr. Warren Williams**, topped off the day with beautifully orchestrated Christmas carols accompanied by our resident drummer, **Brandon H.** We had a wonderful time and this was the perfect segue to the holiday season. Bon Voyage 2012.

A Happy 2013 to all of our MANSEF friends!

Mann Residential Holiday Cruise



GateWay School

Two Seminars for Parents

Gateway School's **Auditory/Oral Preschool Program** is partnering with Family Support Services to offer two separate seminars for parents of children who are deaf and/or hard of hearing, in order to help them identify and access local educational and therapeutic resources.

In addition to the information and resources provided, these seminars offer a forum for families to share their personal experiences and to network with other parents and professionals.

The first of these seminars, **Communication Options**, will be held on **Wednesday, March 13**, at The Hearing and Speech Agency, 5900 Metro Drive, Baltimore, MD, 21215. The second seminar, **Total Communication**, will be held at the same location in **April 2013**. Visit www.hasa.org for more information and to register.



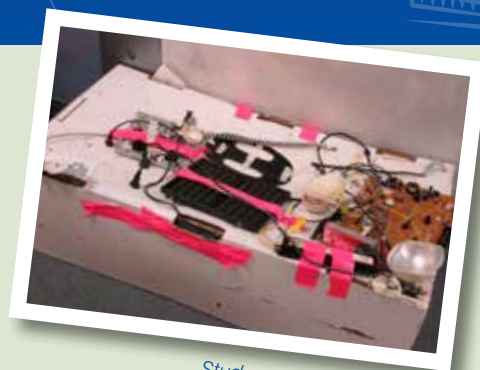
Harbour School

Students take on tech challenge

The students at The Harbour School at Baltimore are reading Kurt Vonnegut's EPICAC in their literature class. They decided to see if they could build a mock supercomputer that would think and solve problems like a human but also learn to love like one. We think the computer is happy.

Graduate studying Japanese

Henry Guth, a 2010 graduate of The Harbour School at Annapolis, is completing a degree with a major in Japanese. Henry began taking courses in Japanese while still a student at Harbour.



Student-built "computer"



This past summer, Henry went on trip to Japan on his own with some friends. He reports that the Japanese do better with Japanese food than other cultures' cuisine. He was very curious as to why they tried to do a Chinese buffet. Henry reported it was so bad he went out for pizza that night.

Home Depot helps out at Harbour

Staff of the local **Home Depot** visited the Career Center at The Harbour School in Annapolis. They participated in cleaning up the back yard and did some interior painting. The good works on the part of staff made the Annapolis Capital newspaper.

Home Depot and Harbour School make the papers

SCHOOL News



High Road's new facility

High Road School of Prince George's County

Grand Reopening

Since 2001, the High Road School of Prince George's County has been providing educational services to students with social and emotional needs. In an effort to meet the growing needs of today's students, the High Road School moved into a new facility this past

November. Located in Largo, MD, the school's new facility has expanded transitional services and a gymnasium.

This past December, the school celebrated its state of the art facility with a Grand Re-Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Joined by several representatives of Prince George's Public Schools, the school ceremoniously embarked on the beginning of a new future for its students.

The Foundation Schools

Governor O'Malley Named Honorary Chair

The Foundation Schools is excited to announce that **Governor Martin O'Malley** has agreed to be the Honorary Chair and speaker at this year's **"Art and Soul of Learning Benefit,"** being held on **Thursday, March 21, 2013**, at the University of Maryland Riggs Alumni Center. The theme of this year's event is "Giving Kids Another Chance."

Governor O'Malley is one of the leading voices on education and mental health. Maryland has again been named the #1 school system in the nation, and MANSEF schools are an important part of the continuum of services that lead to student success.

UCP-Delrey

Snowflakes for Sandy Hook

Every student knows the most joyous part of winter – snow! But the simple pleasures of winter are far from the minds of students at Sandy Hook Elementary. Returning to school after the devastating events in December was a difficult and emotional experience.

To ease the transition, UCP-Delrey helped the Connecticut PTA decorate the new Sandy Hook school with a fun and inviting wintry theme. Delrey students created beautiful handmade snowflakes that were hung in the new building housing Sandy Hook Elementary. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of students at Delrey, their peers at Sandy Hook were welcomed back to a winter wonderland.

The Benedictine School

New Leadership at Benedictine

Benedictine Programs and Services in Ridgely, Maryland, is moving forward with new directors following the retirement of founder Sister Jeannette Murray, O.S.B.

- **Scott Evans** is Executive Director, after being in leadership positions for 12 years, including Director of Adult Services. A long-time advocate for disabilities providers, Scott has volunteered with Special Olympics for 15 years.
- **Dr. Jodi King** is Education Director of The Benedictine School. She was previously Section Chief, Nonpublic Special Education, with MSDE.
- **Carol Callaway** is Adult Services Director, with over 30 years experience in the adult developmental disabilities provider community on the Eastern Shore.

The Children's Guild

National Award for Transformation Education

The Children's Guild was recognized by the **National Association of Private Special Education Centers Award for Leadership and Innovation in Special Education** at its 2013 Annual Meeting in Phoenix Arizona. The recognition was bestowed on The Guild for its innovative management approach to operating schools and child serving organizations,

Transformation Education.

Using Transformation Education to manage their nonpublic schools resulted in student outcomes that exceeded the national average for returning children from nonpublic schools to public schools, and significantly reduced length of placement in their nonpublic schools.

Villa Maria School Timonium

Canned Food Drive at Villa Maria School

The students at Villa Maria School-Timonium Campus spent the month of November thinking of others in need and then doing what they could to help.

During the season of giving, the PBIS Committee wanted to come up with a way to teach a practical lesson in civic responsibility and make it fun, so they organized a canned food drive competition between the classrooms. Each classroom was given a box to fill and it was not long before the students and staff started filling theirs to the brim. The competition was tracked on a bulletin board in the school so students and staff could see who was in the lead and try to catch up.

On November 30, the donations were counted and the results were in – **classes D, G, and K were the top three winners** and each of these classes earned a pizza party to help celebrate. **Class J won “Honorable Mention”** for the most creative donation. As a whole, the school was able to donate over **800 items** to **Our Daily Bread**, a Catholic Charities program in Baltimore City. Thanks to all who donated and helped make it a success!



Villa Maria Goes to the White House

This summer, all classrooms participated in an Olympic-themed PBIS incentive in which classrooms competed with their grade peers for the best behavior for the **school-wide goals of practicing respect, acting safely, and working responsibly**. Classrooms were awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals based on their daily behavioral statistics. At the end of the summer, medals were counted and **Classes H and J** were determined the winners!

On Thursday, October 25, 2012, those students and staff from Villa Maria Timonium Campus traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit the **White House**. The excitement started early that morning as students changed into Villa Maria shirts, generously donated by Volunteer Services. As our bus entered Washington D.C., many students were speechless; they were experiencing sites in person that they have seen on their televisions and learned about in their classrooms. We had the opportunity to see the Washington D.C. Mall, the Capitol Building, and the Washington Monument before the “main event.”

As we waited patiently through multiple security checks, students got to meet and talk with Secret Service Agents. They also met people from different countries that traveled great distances to come to our nation’s capital.

Once we were inside the White House, we toured the East Wing, Green Room, Red Room, Blue Room, and the State Dining Room. Upstairs, we were treated to a view of the Lincoln Bedroom and the Queen’s Bedroom. Everyone had their fingers crossed hoping that we would get a glimpse of the President and his family, but settled for pictures outside of their home instead!

The ride home was very quiet as we all thought about the experience. **Isiash**, a sixth grade student, said, “I can’t believe I was in the White House today! The place I see on television everyday - I was inside!” **Kiante**, an eighth grade student, thanked staff by saying, “We got to do something today that most people only dream of doing. It was a chance of a lifetime.” **Richard** said, “It was the best thing I have ever seen. It [the experience] was HUGE.”

The experience also left a lasting impression on **Charles**, who said, “I liked many things about my trip to Washington, D.C. It was a long drive but we made it. I liked looking at the town and being able to observe their traditions just like in New York. Washington has lots of hot dog stands. We had a nice lunch - sandwiches, chips and soda. The only problem was that the sandwiches were a little spicy. Overall, we had a good time in the White House. We saw historic things like the Red Room, Blue Room, Green Room and the State Dining Room. We had a long drive back. I’m proud of me and my school,” said Charles. “I’m not going to go back and visit, I am going to go back and WORK there!”

MARK YOUR *Calendar*

2nd Annual Parent Empowerment Conference

March 2, 2013

9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**John Carroll Elementary School
Hyattsville, MD**

Keynote Speaker: Vince Culotta, Ph.D.

"Current Topics in Autism: The Impact of DSMV and ASD Diagnoses and Setting Healthy Limits on the Virtual World"

Other sessions include:

"Making Social Skills Less Frustrating for Individuals on the Spectrum"

Heather Hinkle, M.Ed., Monocacy Development Center

"MSDE, PPMd, MDLC and the IEP – Really??!"

Kim Marchman, MSDE, Yvette DeCosta, PPMd, Terry Lindsay, MDLC

"ASD and Spirituality"

Emily Marshall, Faith Fellowship Church

"Get The 411: Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)"

Terry Lindsay, Maryland Disability Law Center and Diana K. Wyles, Esq.

This conference is **FREE**, but registration is required.

Go to **www.pathfindersforautism.org** to register.

Child care will be available for a fee, but space is limited. Call 301-618-8395 directly to book child care.

Co-sponsored by: The One World Center for Autism, Prince George's County Public Schools and Pathfinders for Autism.

SAVE THE DATE



2013 Conference

Friday, November 1, 2013

Baltimore Convention Center

Over 2,000 special education professionals will convene for a full day of workshops covering topics that focus on providing a continuum of services for Maryland students with disabilities.

Check the MANSEF website frequently at

www.mansef.org

for updates and more details

Call for Presenters

As in the past, we are looking for people willing to donate their time to present workshops related to topics that would be informative and applicable to our audience.

Interested?

Contact Joyleen Hamilton at
410-938-4413

or **MansefAssistant@aol.com**

SAVE THE DATE...



2013 MANSEF GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, September 30, 2013
Woodholme Country Club
Pikesville, MD

***Presented jointly with the Education
Foundation of Baltimore County Public
Schools***

Get to know the many faces of MANSEF!



Who are we?

We are students who have different disabilities, including emotional, intellectual, learning, speech and language, physical, and visual, as well as autism.

What are the reasons we are in a non-public school?

We are public school students whose educational needs could not be met in the public schools. We may need smaller class sizes or smaller overall school settings that are not so overwhelming. We generally need individualized attention and special accommodations that are not consistently available in the comprehensive public schools.

When did we go to a MANSEF school?

We went to a MANSEF school after the public schools tried diligently to meet our needs but recognized that we needed a different option on the continuum of services.

Where are we in school in Maryland?

We are 4000 students who have been referred to MANSEF schools from just about every public school system in Maryland. Ninety-three MANSEF schools are located all over our state.

What are our dreams and goals for the future?

We dream and have goals of graduating from high school, going to college, or getting vocational training to prepare for a job and living on our own just like students in the public schools. Research shows our older classmates were able to do that, so we know we can too.

To learn more, go to www.mansef.org or call Dorie Flynn at 410-938-4413. Learn about our classmates who graduated and see what an appropriate education can deliver to students and society.

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**.



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