

STEPPING Stones

February 2014

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

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Maryland **A**ssociation of **N**onpublic
Special **E**ducation **F**acilities

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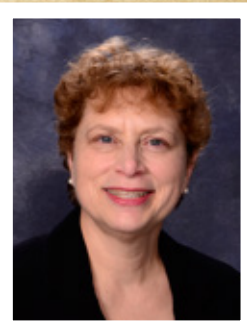
Dorie Flynn - Executive Director

Struttin' Our Stuff LEGISLATOR APPRECIATION DAY IN ANNAPOLIS

This month, in between the snow storms, many MANSEF members and parents came together to make their voices heard in Annapolis. Legislator Appreciation Day was a huge success. The staff and students from the Children's Guild and many parents and teachers delivered our message to maintain the full continuum of service. Also, our MANSEF students delivered apples and MANSEF Membership Directories to all 188 members of the Maryland General Assembly. It is rewarding to see such advocacy, and with your continued support the MANSEF schools will be here far into our future to appropriately serve students with special needs. MANSEF encourages all parents and staff to contact their individual legislators to thank them for their hard work on behalf of the citizens of Maryland and for their understanding of why a student's access to a MANSEF member school is so important.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues,

I was a bit reticent the first time I decided to advocate for The Katherine Thomas School. As I appealed to my local legislators on MANSEF lobby day, I wondered if I would be effective. What if I said something wrong? Did I truly understand the whole issue? What if they asked me a question I could not answer? Was I a strong enough spokesperson for the issue?

Despite my reluctance, I kept the appointments as I knew my voice was important in raising the visibility of nonpublic special education schools and, ultimately, providing a quality education to our students. What I learned was that sometimes I knew a lot more about the issue than the person I was speaking to, that often the issue was secondary to educating individuals about us and the importance of our role in the educational continuum, and that there were times when I had to go back to the basics of explaining disabilities and their impact on a student's education. I did get asked questions I did not know but discovered the response that got me through these moments: "I am happy to get you that information." Each time I communicated with legislators, either in person or in writing, I became more confident in my ability to effectively advocate for issues important to our students, families and faculty.

I encourage all MANSEF members to reach out to your legislators. There is influence in numbers, and you can make a difference. Your representatives were elected to represent you, and they know your vote is important to their continued service. Your personal experience is a powerful way to support our students and families.

MANSEF Executive Director Dorie Flynn does an outstanding job of outlining the issues and providing suggested wording to increase your comfort level. Please reach out to her for any support you need to present our current issues. MANSEF is dedicated to being a strong voice for our members and their families and with the 2014 Maryland General Assembly in full swing, our main issue centers on a rate increase in Senate Bill 172 – The Budget and Reconciliation Act. The proposed language makes the rate increase effective January 2015. This mid-fiscal year adjustment is essentially a cut and creates an undue administrative burden for our member schools and our local school system partners. MANSEF is proposing an amendment to make the approved increase effective July 1, 2014.

Your advocacy is needed now. Budget decisions are still being made and lawmakers do respond to their constituents. Teachers and parents are in the best position to raise awareness about the value of nonpublic special education schools. Your support does make a difference.

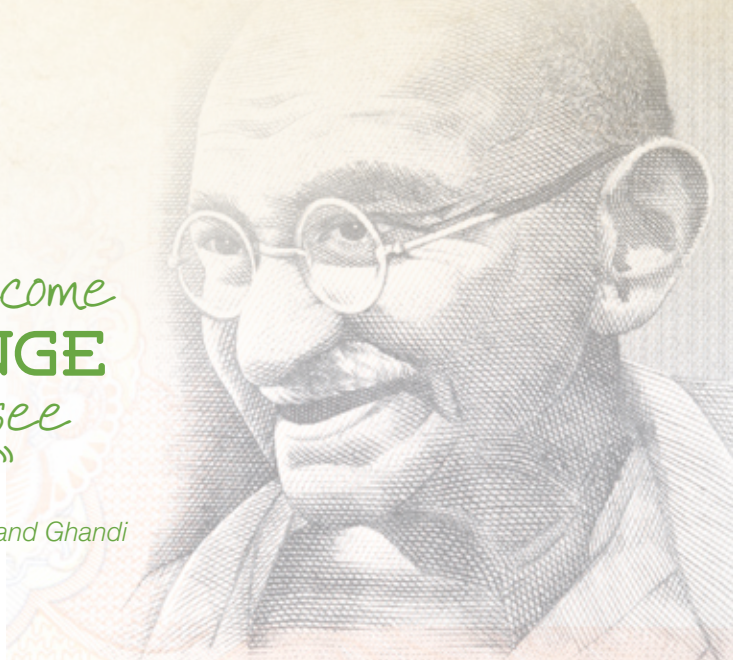
Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patricia A. Ritter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patricia A. Ritter, Ph.D.
MANSEF President

*"We must become
the **CHANGE**
We Want to see
in the World."*

— Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



MANSEF CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS



Congratulations to Baltimore Lab School senior James B.! James was recently accepted to Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA.

Compass Academy

Compass Academy would like to highlight one of our new students, **Stephanie Fazzari**. Stephanie joined Compass this past fall, and her positive impact has been felt all over school since then. Stephanie's enthusiasm and zest for life make her a constant source of positive energy in her classes, and she has developed many strong relationships with her classmates. Stephanie not only enjoys her schoolwork, but she is consistent in her unrelenting effort and always strives to do more than what is expected. Compass is very grateful to have such a wonderful, charismatic student join our family, and we look forward to the future contributions that Stephanie will make not only to her school, but to her community as well.

Children's Guild

Alumnus Kevin Koffenberg attended the Children's Guild 35 years ago.

I was referred to The Children's Guild by my pediatrician as I was not speaking at 3 years old. Starting with a summer term, I stayed for the academic year, and by summer's end was speaking. The Guild unlocked a door for me. By second grade, I had skipped two grades in math. I was in the gifted and talented program, graduated from high school with honors, graduated college with a bachelor's in business, and later obtained an MBA. Without the ability to communicate, I couldn't do my job as a senior manager at a medical group. I couldn't have learned Portuguese to communicate with my wife's family from Brazil or even talk to my son. I enjoy many life experiences thanks to those at The Children's Guild.

Hannah More

Every day when **Victoria Gerstley** is picked up at her work placement at Atrium Village, Victoria exclaims, "It was awesome!" Victoria, a Baltimore County senior, has been working at Atrium Village, a retirement village in Owing Mills, since September 2013. She is in charge of delivering the daily activities sheet, running groups, transporting residents around the facility, as well as other activities. She has done such a great job that Atrium has requested an increase in her hours to a half-day schedule. Also, her job coach will be faded out by May. Victoria hopes to pursue work in this field.

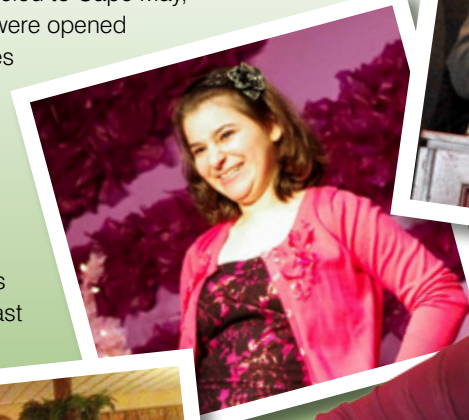
St. Elizabeth

"Independent Thinking"

St. Elizabeth School is always proud of its students who receive Cardin Scholarships each year. One of SES' most recent recipients, **Jacob Homsher**, decided to use his Cardin Scholarship to challenge himself and gain independence. Last August, Jacob went on a five-day travel camp organized by The League's Camp Greentop. The group traveled to Cape May, NJ, where Jacob's eyes were opened to exciting new adventures and new friends. He went shopping, ate out, went to the zoo, and — his favorite — watched dolphins from a boat. Jacob loved this experience, and urges his classmates to "try it at least once."

"Finding New Talents Every Day"

St. Elizabeth School students have been making their voices heard — on stage! Last December, SES students **Veronica Perry** and **Chiara D'Alessio** joined the Ann Street Players in their annual holiday production, "Hayden's Christmas Tea Party." Veronica and Chiara had to memorize several lines and songs during the troupe's rehearsals at Fells Point Corner Theatre. Veronica, a born performer, loved engaging with the audience during the show. Chiara's projection and expressions of genuine emotion onstage were remarkable. The audience gave a standing ovation to the entire cast, and SES looks forward to seeing more of its students on stage in the future.



*Clockwise from top right:
Kevin Koffenberg, Victoria Gerstley,
Chiara D'Alessio, and Jacob
Homsher (on left) with camp
counselor*

The Children's Guild

The Children's Guild announced the appointment of A. Duane Arbogast, Ed.D. Dr. Arbogast will serve as chief education officer of both its nonpublic and charter schools. Dr. Arbogast comes to The Children's Guild from the Prince George's County Public Schools, where he has served as chief academic officer since 2010 and as the acting deputy superintendent for academics in 2012/2013. Prior to that time, he worked for 32 years in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, serving as senior manager for academic accountability, a principal, assistant principal and teacher. Dr. Arbogast was a Washington Post Distinguished Leader in 2004 for his performance as an elementary school principal and his school was named School of the Year by Exceptional Parenting Magazine in 2000 for successfully implementing a special education cluster site in a mainstreamed environment. The appointment of Dr. Arbogast to head The Children's Guild Schools is directed to assuring continued innovation and academic rigor in its special education and charter school programs.

SCHOOL News



Iyymount

Iyymount Director Honored as Washingtonian of the Year

Jan Wintrol, director of The Iyymount School and Programs, has been named a 2013 Washingtonian of the Year.

This hallmark award of The Washingtonian magazine has been presented for more than 40 years, and recognizes a handful of people in our community whose work makes a difference and inspires awe in all of us.

The entire Iyymount community congratulates Jan for this well-deserved honor and recognition, and we thank her for her energetic, optimistic and visionary leadership for the past two decades. Jan is featured in the January issue of The Washingtonian magazine.

Nothing Stops Project SEARCH Interns

Life for many working adults in DC took an unexpected turn during the government shutdown this past fall, including the many interns in our region.



Project SEARCH Students

The interns in Iyymount's partnership with Project SEARCH Smithsonian lost their normal classroom to closures. However, the entire crew relocated temporarily to the Office of Fellowships and Internships (OFI) — which occupies a non-federal leased space and could remain open. During the shutdown the Project SEARCH interns did a great job helping OFI complete a massive archiving project. The motto for the Project SEARCH Smithsonian Interns may now be: Don't Stop Now!

Project SEARCH is a national program that Iyymount and partners (including SEEC) have replicated in the DC region. Iyymount and SEEC's three Project SEARCH programs include NIH, Montgomery County and Smithsonian. The goal is to provide student interns with practical job experience, and the program offers total workplace immersion to help build competitive, marketable, and transferrable skills.

Frost School

First on-site College Fair held at Frost School

On Dec. 11, 2013, The Frost School hosted its first on-site **College Fair**. Despite weather-related closings the previous day, it was a huge success and widely attended by Frost students and families as well as those from several other MANSEF schools. Representatives from Frostburg University, Montgomery College, Lincoln Technical Institute, George Mason University Mason Life and College Living Experience Program and Maryland Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) were present and available to speak with students and families about their programs and life after high school. The familiar environment allowed our students to interact with representatives more comfortably than a larger college fair. Several other nonpublic schools were invited and attended such as The Katherine Thomas School, Iyymount School and Pathways. It was a great day filled with learning, a free raffle, and networking with others about life after graduation.



The Harbour School

Bowls for the Hungry

Students at The Harbour School at Baltimore completed a **Bowls for the Hungry** project. Students painted and fired ceramic soup bowls. They made homemade soup and bread. The simple dinner was sold at a PTO meeting for \$20. Participants could keep the bowls. The students raised more than \$3,000 for a local food pantry.



Bowls for the Hungry

Gentlemen's Club

A Gentlemen's Club has been established at The Harbour School at Annapolis. Male students learn table manners, how to tie a tie and how to manage a date. Several male teachers are sponsoring the club. The club is over subscribed.



Gentlemen's Club

MANSEF performance

The Harbour School at Annapolis and The Harbour School at Baltimore performed at the bi-annual MANSEF conference. The Annapolis campus performed selections from *State Fair*, and the Baltimore campus performed songs from *Kiss Me Kate*. We were all proud of **Alison Hunt**, who chaired the conference.



Alison Hunt

Sudan Boys

The Harbour School at Annapolis middle school read "A Long Walk to Water" as part of their literature program. It was difficult for American students to appreciate the struggle depicted in the story. Some of these young men from Sudan live in the Annapolis area. They came to visit the Harbour students and told them first-hand of their experiences in Sudan.



Visitors from Sudan

Point-of-Sale System

The Harbour School is creating point-of-sale system for its village curriculum. Each student will have a bar-coded credit/bank card. Students may use the card to purchase goods and services from the village shops as well as borrow items from the media center. The cards will be scanned on iPads and computers to itemize the sales, produce receipts and maintain inventory. The Point-of-Sale system was featured on ABC2 news in Baltimore.



SPECIAL TENNIS LESSONS

The Greenspring Racquet Club is offering a tennis class for The Harbour School at Baltimore students. Students participate on Saturday afternoons.



Foundation Schools

All Smiles

On Feb. 3rd the Deamonte Driver Mobile Dental Clinic made a stop at The Foundation School of Largo. The mobile clinic honors the memory of Deamonte Driver, a student of The Foundation School who lost his life in February 2007 due to a brain infection caused by an abscessed tooth. Students received free dental screenings from the volunteer dentists and staff, one of whom was Deamonte's cousin. The Deamonte Driver Dental Project, though born out of a tragedy, has become a vital component in The Foundation School's mission to help all students triumph over adversity, no matter what form it takes.

*School Director Gina James and student Yasmeen;
Another happy smile created - LaMark*



GateWay School

Gateway School

hosted an Open House on January 31 that offered a first peek at Gateway's new **Little Learners** program, a program for children as young as 24 months. Little Learners has been established with the goal of developing language skills and social communication for children with speech and language delays, hearing loss or autism. The early intervention program is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education and licensed by the Office of Childcare.



Gateway School's Curriculum Coordinator, Beth Panitz, Ed.D, was invited to be a guest blogger for **Maryland Learning Links**. She wrote on the topic of classroom management and excerpts of her article were sent to the Baltimore Sun as an editorial. The complete article can be read at <http://marylandlearninglinks.org>.

Chelsea School

Chelsea School Students Take Part in White House Disability Mentoring Day — Teens with Learning Disabilities Share Lessons and Discuss Strategies for Succeeding in the Workplace

Students and staff from Chelsea School visited the White House on Nov. 13 for the 2013 Disability Mentoring Day in honor of October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The White House hosted 20 high school juniors and seniors with disabilities from five Washington-area high schools — the Chelsea School (Hyattsville, MD), Cardozo Education Campus (Washington, DC), Eleanor Roosevelt High School (Prince George's County, MD), Falls Church High School (Fairfax County, VA) and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (Washington, DC).

Mentors shared their personal experiences living and succeeding with disabilities and discussed their insights into varied career choices. Students also discussed "soft skills to pay the bills" for workplace success and learned about federal and state resources available to people with disabilities.

Kate Fedalen, head of Chelsea School, summed up the day's experience: "What a powerful and positive day! The students and I truly enjoyed the celebration and joy of the entire experience. We were all so impressed with the wisdom and passion of the mentors and gained a greater appreciation of the diversity within our disability community."

Chelsea School senior Paul Schad reflected, "It was an interesting and very educational day. I was proud to be a part of it. Its really opened my eyes to the many career options that I can pursue despite my learning difference."

The White House-sponsored event included discussions about career choices and the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Students had a mentoring lunch session, toured the White House, and met Tina Tchen, chief of staff to First Lady Michelle Obama.

"We are proud that the Chelsea School students had the chance to take part in such a meaningful White House discussion and share their insights with their peers," said Dorie Flynn, executive director of MANSEF. "It demonstrates the critical role that the Chelsea School — and all of our schools — play in educating our young people with disabilities and exposing them to opportunities to lead productive lives."



MORE!

SCHOOL News



Student intern at Ingleside

Katherine Thomas School

KTS in the Community

TLC's Katherine Thomas School and Ingleside at King Farm, a retirement facility, enjoy a delightful partnership spanning across the generations. For the last seven years residents at Ingleside were treated to a holiday choir performance by KTS students. This year students also shared their holiday spirit by delivering personally made cards to residents. KTS students have served as interns at Ingleside since 2011, providing companionship

and assistance to residents and working throughout the facility. In 2014 we are thrilled to extend this partnership, welcoming Ingleside residents to volunteer in KTS elementary classrooms. This collaborative partnership is beneficial to both communities.

Mann Residential School

Mann Residential School Breaking Out Into Uncharted Territory

I guess you would say that "the ball is in our court." The basketball court that is! Mann Residential now has a basketball team and as newcomers to the league, they are proving to be a worthy team to play! So far, they have a rather impressive record. They won the first game, lost the second in the final seconds of the game by a measly two points, and the third game by one point!

Who knew that lurking within the classrooms and hallways of our school were a group of young men and women who can dribble and shoot hoops with speed and precision? And, when it comes to teamwork and sportsmanship, our player's are the epitome of what any good coach is looking for in a team. Our coaches, Mr. Rob Harris and Ms. Kendra Baldwin, have hand-picked and shaped these individuals into a cohesive, talented team. Great work, coaches!

There is no lack of support from the staff and students at Mann Residential either. These diehard fans cheer the team on in the face of victory and defeat. No time for benchwarmers on our team! Go Panthers!

Forbush School at Glyndon

This past fall, a one-mile walking path was marked throughout our campus to encourage our students and staff to get outside and MOVE. So far we have 27 primary students signed up for a national program called "Marathon Kids." The program challenges them to walk/run the equivalent of a marathon (26.2 miles) over the course of the school year. Those that complete the challenge then are invited along with their families to a gala celebration to walk that last mile along with other students from other participating schools. All finishers receive medals and are eligible for prizes. So far to date, we have five students who ALREADY have completed the challenge! A program was created here for the upper division students to participate and we named "Marathon Teens." With students participating in a T-shirt contest, gift cards incentives will be provided for the same achievement. So far we have nine H.S. students enrolled. The Forbush Staff accompany the students during their use of the course and have been seen using the course before and after school too!

Phillips School

'Sardines Please!'

The Sardine Club was established at PHILLIPS Laurel School by teaching assistant Josh Cortes following a professional development workshop he attended at PHILLIPS last fall on bullying prevention. The workshop featured guest speaker Gary McDaniel, LICSW, MSW, who developed The Sardine Club in a West Virginia intermediate school to eat sardines with students and discuss the health benefits of this food and other foods rich in Omega 3 fatty acids.

Educating students on this uncommon power food is important, as research has proven that clear health benefits are derived from consuming Omega 3 fatty acids, including protective and developmental benefits for developing brains of young people, and perhaps, decreasing bullying behavior.



Cortes was so intrigued by the positive response from Gary McDaniel's students to eating sardines that he decided to try a Sardine Club at PHILLIPS Laurel campus. Once a week a group of lower school students gather for lunch with Cortes for their meal, including sardines and recently, smoked oysters. Sardines, once an unknown food to many PHILLIPS students, has now become a favorite. "Sardines are healthy for people, and — they are so good — I will eat them all", said a PHILLIPS Laurel student.

"The Sardine Club has been a great addition to PHILLIPS. The club encourages students to try different things and I've noticed an increase in their confidence", said Cortes. "It has also been a wonderful motivator for students to be together and discuss healthy food options and their benefits."



LET'S LIGHT IT UP BLUE!

April 2nd is World Autism Awareness Day, and to celebrate, hundreds of thousands of people are coming together to **Light It Up Blue**. Join Autism Speaks to help shine a light on autism!

Autism awareness is more important than ever — autism prevalence has increased 78 percent in five years and continues to rise. This increase can only be partly explained by improved diagnosis and awareness.

Find out how you can get involved at
www.AutismSpeaks.org/LIUB

Thank you for your support!

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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