

MCAS Communicator

an e-newsletter for the staff of the Michigan City Area Schools

March 2012

(Please post for/share with those employees who do not check email!)

Wellness Screenings this Month

Wellness Screenings for staff will take place from 6-9am on **Tues, March 20th** in the MCHS Faculty Resource Room (A129) and **Thurs, March 22nd** in the Elston Middle School Library. You may sign up either online or by using a paper form available at your building. (If you sign up using the paper form, remember to bring your completed form to the screening.)

Click on the link below for more information and/or to register online:

<http://educatemc.net/cms/lib5/IN01001792/Centricity/Domain/85/wellnessscreenings2012.pdf>

Note: A wellness screening will also be held at Barker on **April 27th** from 6:30-8:30am. Watch for more details in next month's MCAS Communicator.

Administrators in Lock Up

Michigan City Area Schools has a serious(?) situation on its hands: 11 administrators will be "locked up" on **March 8** - this is a benefit for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Participating MCAS administrators include: Linda Bechinski, Xavier Botana, Gloria Dombkowski, Kelly Martin-Fargo, Clausell Harding, Sue Harrison, Kathy Kane, Audra Peterson, Jan Radford, Marsha Tappan - and yes, even our Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Eason-Watkins. They are all seeking donations to make bail... Thanks in advance for your support! visit the site below to make a donation online.

www.mdaLockUp.org/Laportecounty2012

Happy Breakfast Week!

What's been proven to boost test scores and improve classroom behavior, while reducing tardiness and trips to the nurse's office? School breakfast! Yet in the race to get to the head of the class, many students forget the importance of jump starting their school day with a morning meal. To highlight how eating a balanced breakfast at school can help students succeed, Michigan City Area Schools Food Service is celebrating National School Breakfast Week, **March 5 - 9**, with the theme "**School Breakfast - Go for Gold.**" Elementary students will have the opportunity to create their own school breakfast t-shirt design highlighting the benefits of eating a healthy breakfast. School Breakfast is available every morning before school in the cafeteria and is FREE to all students in grades preK - 5. The cost for School Breakfast at Middle Schools and the High School is \$1.35 (during ISTEP+, it's FREE!). Each year, Food Service provides nearly a half million breakfasts to the children of our community.

Employee Daycare Survey

MCAS is exploring the idea of offering daycare services at one of our buildings, to serve staff who are parents of children ages 0-3. If you fit this description... please take a moment to complete a quick online survey here:

<http://educatemc.net//cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=116>

MCAS Logo Wear Still Available

Polo shirts (both cotton and poly "performance" style) and lightweight fleece jackets are

available, featuring the new MCAS logo. Visit the link below for a flyer featuring three of our very own MCAS models! Contact Dorothy Harris at the Ad Building with any questions regarding your order at ext. 8311.

http://educatemc.net/cms/lib5/IN01001792/Centricity/Domain/85/Logowear_Combined.pdf

Relay for Life Returning to MCHS

Michigan City High School will be hosting Relay For Life of La Porte County once again this year. This was a huge success last year and organizers hope to see more people out there this year. The Relay For Life Event will be held **Saturday, June 23rd- Sunday, June 24th, 2012**. Relay For Life is one of the American Cancer Society's largest fund-raising events and the money raised is used to support various ACS research and services in the area. Team captain/participant planning meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm at PNC. To get involved or for more information, contact Kim Olesker at [1-574-257-9789](tel:1-574-257-9789) option 3 or email kim.olesker@cancer.org. Cancer survivors can register at the website www.relayforlife.org/laportecountyin to participate in all the Relay activities.

Music in Our Schools

March is "Music in Our Schools" month -- listen to WIMS and WEFM radio to hear special public service announcements featuring music celebrities and Dr. Eason-Watkins. MCAS Music Boosters are also conducting a drive for used musical instruments - if you have a "gently used" instrument in your attic or basement, please consider donating it to our music department! Instruments may be given to any MCAS music teacher or dropped off at the Administration Building. (And while you're at it... thank a music teacher [today!](#))

Dress for Success Update

At the [February 28th](#) Board Meeting, Dr. Eason-Watkins announced that the Administration will be recommending adoption of the "Dress for Success" dress code for students at all MCAS schools next fall. This is based on positive feedback from staff and parents at both the pilot schools and those not currently part of the DFS pilot. The school board will consider a revision to the dress code policy at its two March meetings and will have a final vote on the new policy [March 27](#). For more information and updates visit: <http://educatemc.net/Page/105>

MCESP Food Drive

The Michigan City Education Support Professionals are conducting a Spring Food Drive to help re-stock the shelves of our local Salvation Army food pantry. Collection boxes are located at all schools in the faculty lounge area, and also at the Ad Building in the front lobby. Please remember to donate a canned good or other non-perishable item!

Leap into Mentoring!

On Leap Day, 13 McDonald's restaurants sponsored 15% give-back nights for mentoring programs in their area, thanks to the hard work of mentoring champion Sam Lubeznik. Our own Hours for Ours program participated at the 3507 Franklin Street store, along with Michigan City Fire Chief Ron Martin and Firefighter Mark Baker. Firefighter Baker dressed in complete gear and visited with families. WIMS Radio broadcast call-in interviews from the participating restaurants. The event was a fun way to send a very positive message about mentoring to a very broad area, and encourage community members to give an hour a week of their time to a child.

So how about YOU?

Since the beginning of January, 14 students have gotten new mentors through Hours for Ours! In addition, three new mentors from the Michigan City Fire Department will be

starting in the near future. **WHAT ABOUT YOU??** It takes only one hour of your time each week to make a big difference in a child's life. You can mentor at lunch time or after school. You will benefit personally, too. Ask any current mentor! For more information call Sherri Silcox at 873-2026 x 8744. (Note: Special congratulations to the five MCAS mentors who were among 87 individuals nominated for the Inspire Mentoring Awards - Mentor Al Walus was a finalist for this award this year, and was honored recently in Indianapolis!)

Continuing Education Opportunities from "360 Education Solutions"

360 Education Solutions can connect educators with a number of regionally accredited programs and professional development courses offered online. Visit the following link to review a list of Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral programs:

<http://www.360educationsolutions.com/programs.php>

Did you know that individuals who teach full-time for five consecutive complete academic years in certain elementary and secondary schools that serve low-income families are eligible for \$5,000 in student loan forgiveness? Individuals who are employed as a highly qualified math, science, or special education teacher in a Title I School are eligible for \$17,500. This program has helped many teachers looking to get their Masters or Doctorate degree. For more info on loan forgiveness and "TEACH Grants" visit:

<http://www.360educationsolutions.com/funding.php>

Graphics Department News

Check out the new Graphics & Printing Dept website at <http://educatmc.net/graphics>! This is a place where you can:

- * order business cards online
- * look up, download, and/or order forms online
- * browse downloadable publications
- * order extra copies of current print publications (such as student handbooks, calendars, etc.)
- * check the status of current orders

There are also resources for staff working on their own publications -- you can download logos, look for good sources of clip art, and get quick solutions for common design problems. Note: Interactive options are limited unless you are a staff member AND logged in to the site.

Kick Butts Day

On [Wednesday March 21](#), VOICE students who are advocating for tobacco-free air will be raising their VOICE during the MCAS middle school lunch hours at Barker and Elston. (Kick Butts Day is a day for activism when thousands of youth in every state and around the world will "STAND OUT ... SPEAK UP ... and SEIZE CONTROL" against the tobacco industry.) During the Kick Butts Day events, our VOICE students will have a display that shows all of the ingredients that are inside of a cigarette and a petition for other students to join the movement for smoke-free air. If you would like more information about VOICE, and how you can support these advocacy groups please contact Nakia Bonds, Club Discovery Team Lead, at [873-2057](tel:873-2057) ext. 7329.

Robotics Team Needs Cheerleaders

Michigan City's new Robotics Team is preparing its robot, "Firehawk," for regional competition in [March 22-24](#) at the University of Illinois Circle Campus Pavilion in Chicago. The competition is free to the public on Friday and Saturday and the MC team would love to have a cheering section! Anyone who comes will receive a free Michigan City Robotics team lime green t-shirt...just find Sherri Silcox or Herb Higgin and identify yourself as a Team 3936 MC Robotics supporter. There will be 52 teams in this event, some from as far away as Arizona. The team will know by Saturday if they are part of an alliance traveling to World

Championships in St. Lois **April 25-28**. Please post a note of well wishes on the team web site at <http://www.mcrobotics3936.com/>

Top Bananas

MCAS Support Programs staff would like to thank Mentor Becky Piekelnjak, Manager of the Banana Republic Store at Lighthouse Place Premium Outlet. Becky and a group of colleagues in town for a conference recently helped the staff of Hours for Ours and Safe Harbor by assisting in the organization, clean-up and sorting of miscellaneous items and areas at Mullen.

WAY to GO!

- Congrats to **Coolspring Elementary**, which was honored by Indiana Secretary of Education Tony Bennett last week at a Statehouse awards ceremony honoring the Top 10 schools in Indiana for E/LA and Math achievement based on Indiana's Growth Model. Coolspring ranked #4 in the state in English/Language Arts. To put this in perspective, this is #4 out of more than 1,500 schools!! Read more about it on the MCAS home page, EducateMC.net.
- Congrats to **Springfield Elementary**, which finished *just* outside the top 10 statewide in English/Language Arts growth. Springfield was #14 in Indiana! We are on the move!
- Hats off to **Tess Bowers**, Edgewood kindergarten teacher, who has received a Lilly Teacher Creativity Fellowship of \$8,000. This grant will allow her to follow her passion this summer - "embracing her inner science geek" by visiting areas of the Midwest and Hawaii to research volcanoes, tornadoes and meteors. Read more about her project on our home page, EducateMC.net.

Community Announcements

- The LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra will perform a classical concert featuring the music of Beethoven and Sibelius on **Sunday, March 4**, at 3:00 p.m. at the Elston Performing Arts Center. It will feature Andrius Zlabys, pianist, and Nikia Hammonds-Blakely, a Susan G. Komen spokesperson and singer/songwriter. Tickets are \$18, \$15 for seniors (65+) and free for students. A coupon for a free health screening will be given to ticketholders over age 40, and everyone will receive a special gift from I. U. Hospital.
- Auditions for the Hoosier Star Vocal Competition will be held **March 17 & 18** at the La Porte Little Theatre. Both children and adults are welcome to audition; there is a \$20 audition fee. An application form and additional information can be found at LCSO.net. Pre-application is recommended to reserve a time, but walk ins are welcome on the weekend of auditions.
- More than 200 Black History Month posters created by students for the 2012 Human Rights Commission contest will be on display at the Lubeznik Center through **April 6**. On **March 7** from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., there will be a special opening reception for the exhibit; this is free and open to the public. Please stop by!