

MCAS Communicator

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

November 2011

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

American Education Week: Support Our Support Staff

American Education Week is November 14-18! This is an annual week set aside each year to spotlight public schools and education. Watch for a special token of appreciation for all YOU do, coming from Dr. Eason-Watkins to all buildings that week. Two special days to note: Be SURE to thank our Education Support Professionals for all they do on Wednesday, November 16th, which has been designated Education Support Professionals Day. Our secretaries, IAs, paras, food service, plant planning, transportation, technology, and central office support staff are essential to the success of our students! Also, Friday (November 18) is Substitute Educators Day... so remember to thank a sub!

Red Ribbon Week

The results are in... and the winner of the third annual Red Ribbon Week Display Contest is: Barker Middle School! The celebrity mystery judge was Mayor Chuck Oberlie; he rated all six of the displays with Special Ed Director Paula Earley on October 25. Thanks to all who helped create these impressive displays, which encouraged our students to stay drug- and alcohol-free... and to those who coordinated Red Ribbon Week activities at all schools. For more info on Red Ribbon Week - including photos of the displays - visit:

<http://mcasnow.mcas.k12.in.us:81/department-news/communications/red-ribbon-week-puts-spotlight-on-safe-drug-free-schools/>

Speaking of Ribbons...

La Porte County Career and Technical Education held a ribbon cutting ceremony at A. K. Smith last week to mark the re-opening of the building's lower level. Staff, students and many community and business leaders were in attendance for this event, which was followed by a well-attended Open House in the evening. An extensive renovation project was completed at A. K. Smith last summer by MCAS Plant Planning staff, after the area was prepped by students in Construction Technology, Facilities Maintenance, and Welding. The basement level now houses the Culinary Arts Academy, GED and Alternative Education classrooms, two technology labs, and a professional development/conference area. For more information (including a new brochure on Career and Tech) visit:

<http://mcasnow.mcas.k12.in.us:81/department-news/communications/a-facelift-for-career-tech-education>

Welding needs your scrap metal

Welding students at A. K. Smith are in need of metal - they are creating sculptures, garden ornaments, and other (very impressive!) works of art. Send old silverware, tools, and other scrap to welding technology instructor Kim Rosenbaum at A. K. Smith. Questions? Contact Kim at [873-2120](tel:873-2120) or krosenbaum@mcas.k12.in.us.

Schools need your pop tabs

Once again, Safe Harbor and Hours for Ours are supporting a district-wide effort to collect pop tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald Houses of Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana. The program is designed to teach our students about the importance of recycling and to encourage them to participate in community service. The collection runs through [April 30, 2012](#). Students and staff can bring pop tab tops to any school, where they are being collected in classroom containers or in the school's central collection bin. The school that collects the most tabs will be honored in May with a visit from Ronald McDonald at a school assembly. Last year, thanks to the efforts of all involved, our district collected over a million pop tabs in two months, which provided a donation of \$450 to support Ronald McDonald charities.

Flu Shots

'Tis the season! Flu Shots are still available at Working Well for \$21. Identify yourself as an MCAS staff member to receive this discounted price (good for all staff and their families). Working Well is located at 4111 Franklin St. and is open 8am - 5:45pm Monday thru Friday and 8am to 11:45am on Saturday. Questions? Contact Linda Bechinski at lbechinski@mcas.k12.in.us.

United Way Campaign News

A big thank you to all Michigan City Area Schools employees for your participation in this year's United Way campaign. The prize drawing for campaign incentives took place on Monday, October 31st at the administration building. The winners are:

Dinner with Dr. Eason-Watkins---- Nadia Dabagia (Joy)
 A Day with Dr. Eason-Watkins---- Lindsay Willis (Pine)
 United Way gift----- Sandy Kedo (MCHS)
 Wolves Wear basket----- Frances Howard (Edgewood)
 Wolves Wear basket----- Peg Mansfield (Edgewood)
 A.K.Smith Culinary Lunch----- Pam Jones (Knapp)

MCAS also had a successful car wash at the Ad Building on October 7 to support the United Way. Principals, Administrators, Plant Planning, and Support Programs staff all pitched in to help wash cars, trucks, and mopeds, plus one MCAS school bus and the MCPD SWAT team mobile command center. It was evident that everyone had a great time and a record amount was earned in just three hours. Bill Hanna, United Way Executive Director said, "I've been associated with a number of car washes in my fundraising career but I've never seen one that raised \$5 a minute!" Special thanks to Dr. Eason-Watkins, who greeted each car as it made its way through the line and collected the funds. It was a great team effort, raising an additional \$975.22 above and beyond our employee contributions. Thanks to all who brought dirty cars - and to all who washed them!

A final report on the campaign - including the total amount donated by Michigan City Area Schools Employees - will be coming in the next MCAS Communicator.

New logowear coming soon...

Polo shirts and lightweight fleece jackets will be available soon for any staff member to order, featuring our new MCAS logo. Watch for flyers (and e-mails) on this soon!

Board Meeting Date Change

Because next Tuesday is Election Day (and because the Board room is a polling location) the MCAS Board meeting has been rescheduled. It will take place on

Wednesday, November 9 at 6:00 p.m. at the Ad Building.

Mentors Wanted

"If you make a little impact in a child's life by encouraging them in the right direction, you've made a real contribution to the child, yourself and the community."

Do you know someone who has an hour a week to make a difference in the life of a child? **Hours for Ours** needs adult mentors! For more information, contact Sherri Silcox at [873-2026](tel:873-2026) x 8744.

Lights on Afterschool a Success

Oh, what a night! Lights On After School was held at the McDonalds Play Place on October 20, co-sponsored by WIMS (1420 am) and McDonalds. Special thanks go out to Ric Federighi and Sam Lubeznik for all of their support and help. We had a live 4-hour radio broadcast, featuring special guests Mayor Chuck Oberlie, Judge Tom Alevizos, Police Chief Mark Swistek, Asst. Police Chief Tim Richardson, School Board member Beth Pishkur, December Warren from Indiana Youth Institute, and a number of community partners and parents. Thirty members of the Elston band performed, under the direction of Beth Andert, and Shirley Allen led a combined chorus from Krueger and Barker. So many activities took place, including student performances, art projects, hands on science, and even robot-building. The Safe Harbor/Hours for Ours Programs received \$525 from the "give back" receipts that evening, plus an additional \$100 in donations. The Safe Harbor/Hours for Ours staff say a big THANK YOU for coming and supporting our "Lights On" event.

Owl and Pussycat Sculpture Coming to Pine

Pine Elementary, our new arts magnet school, is pleased to announce that they will install a special sculpture in front of the school on Thursday, November 17. The colorful, 10' steel structure is titled "Owl and Pussycat" and it was created by Beverly Shores artist Richard Kiebdaj in tribute to Edward Lear's famous children's poem, "The Owl and the Pussycat." The sculpture has been in residence at Purdue North Central for a year, and is now moving to Pine for a year, thanks to the generosity of NIPSCO. All staff (and members of the public) are invited to celebrate the installation of Owl and Pussycat; Pine fourth graders will perform a special program that evening entitled "Teaching Peace." The program begins at 6:30 p.m. See you there!

Technology Work Orders Reminder

If you have technology issues that warrant a work order, e-mail support@mcas.k12.in.us. In the subject line, please provide your building name, room number, and computer number. In the body give a complete description of the problem you encountered. You will receive a return e-mail with a hyperlink to access the status of your work order.

New Jazzercise Discount

Need another good reason to exercise? Here's one: MCAS staff can receive half-off the initial "join fee" plus a \$5 per month discount at Jazzercise on Franklin Street. This offer does not expire; simply show proof of employment (staff ID or recent pay stub/statement) and you will be healthier in no time!

Parent Conferences this week

Elementary parent conferences are tomorrow (Nov 2) and middle and high school

conferences are Thursday (Nov 3). Thanks to all who are working hard to prepare! Last year's conferences were successful in engaging families and showcased the great work that is happening in our schools.

Music to Our Ears

"One City One Sound" will be held on Thursday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. at Michigan City High School in the gym. All MCAS choral and instrumental music students, grades 5-12, will perform holiday selections. That's close to 1,500 of our students! Be sure to arrive early for this must see, must hear mega concert of the year.

Way to GO!

- Congratulations to the **36 MCAS teachers** in grades K-8 who have been awarded grants this year by the Michigan City Education Foundation. For a complete list of all the winners - and their projects - visit: <http://mcasnow.mcas.k12.in.us:81/departments/news/communications/36-mcas-teachers-awarded-grants>
- Thanks to **ALL** who volunteered for the MCAS and the MCEA booths at the "Boo at the Zoo" event, which was attended by 3,500 children. Special thanks to **Amy Harmon** (Barker) and **Angie Gresham** (MCHS) who organized student volunteers to help, to **Kathy Bair** (Elston) who wore the Wolf costume, and to **Kim Ellsworth** (Transportation) who has the scariest witch cackle in the midwest. Way to represent our schools!
- Hats off to MCHS Principal **Lee Dabagia**, who had at least 30 pies thrown at him during a fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Hospital, which was held last week at Buffalo Wild Wings. Lee singlehandedly (single-facedly?) earned more than \$150 for the cause.

Community Announcements

- The Michigan City Public Library will conclude its "Writing Out Loud" season with author and National Public Radio Broadcaster **Frank Delaney** on Saturday, November 12 at 7:30pm. Delaney has been called "The Most Eloquent Man in the World." An international best-selling author himself, he has interviewed more than 3,500 of the world's most important writers. He has earned top prizes and best-seller status in a wide variety of formats. His six-part series, *The Celts*, is still in active DVD distribution, some 20 years after its launch. Born and raised in County Tipperary, Ireland, Delaney moved to the U. S. in 2002. His first "American" book was the New York Times best-seller, *Ireland*. Since 2006, he's published five Novels of Ireland, addressing the 20th Century history of his homeland decade by decade.

NOVEMBER CALENDAR REMINDERS...

...VETERANS DAY IS NOVEMBER 11th. NO SCHOOL! REMEMBER TO HONOR OUR VETS.

...THANKSGIVING BREAK IS NOV 23-25 (WED-FRI). ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY!