

## Myers Park Department of IEP Services

This web link is maintained by Jennifer Fox  
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# You have a voice!

We are seeking parents of students with disabilities to  
serve on the  
School Leadership Team.

Check out the SLT link on the PTSA website:  
[www.mphs-pts.org](http://www.mphs-pts.org)

It's here! The latest issue of the Mighty Mustang.

### ***Without you, this will be the last issue of the Mighty Mustang!!!***

The time has come for our son to graduate Myers Park. We are excited about moving on to the next stage of life but sad to be leaving so many friends. This school has been so invested in improving services for families and students with disabilities, we are forever grateful for the quality of education here. Thank you to Phylis Hampson, who has been instrumental in encouraging our families to stay connected to MPHS. Don't let the momentum fade.

We are seeking individuals to coordinate publishing two issues of Mighty Mustang per year and keeping the PTSA link up to date. You only need to know how to copy and paste on Word to do this. Many articles have been archived and can be reused. Please contact Jennifer Fox, editor

of *The Mighty Mustang* can be reached at [mottofox@aol.com](mailto:mottofox@aol.com) or by calling **704-619-0747**

Scroll further for an archive of the most recent issues.



# The Mighty Mustang

Newsletter of the Myers Park Department for IEP Services

“Our goal is for all students to find success.”

Spring 2010, Vol. 7

## Transitions by Lois Stickell

This is a question for all parents—did you know what you wanted to do when you graduated from high school? Some of you probably always knew what you wanted to do when you “grew up.” But a lot of you probably didn’t.

After twelve years of school, we all face that moment when we are no longer a freshman or a junior. We’re a graduate. The future has arrived and we may not be ready for it. After all those years of 5:00AM alarm clocks and long bus rides to school and dreading tests we’re not prepared for, we are now free of school obligations. It can feel wonderful. It can also feel scary. Now what?

***“The Future” is not one big, single event but a series of days.***

This year my son will leave Myers Park. His future path is even less clear than most. He won’t be going to college or out to get a job in competitive employment. Because of his special needs he will require help planning his future. It’s already clear from the preliminary looking I’ve done that there are few jobs out there that would be a good fit for him. Jobs are not just about the salary. They are also about a sense of fulfillment. Without a job, how will he get that sense of satisfaction?

To help fill that need I will help him explore volunteer work, possibly at Habitat for Humanity, and he and I will look for social groups through agencies like the ARC of Mecklenburg County. He’ll take job training classes to prepare for the day when the economy improves. Meanwhile, I’ll find community supports and lean on the advice of other parents. His father and I will work at home to teach him gardening, composting, woodworking, laundry, cooking and grocery shopping. Every new skill he learns has the potential to be a work opportunity.

*Now what?* will become what he wants to do at this point in his life instead of what he wants to do for the rest of his life. He has all of those days to find a path that works for him and to change course as often as he needs to.

## Thank you!

to our participants in the  
Transition Fair, March 18th

\*\*\*\*\*

Vocational Rehab, The ARC, Developmental Disabilities Resources, Special Olympics, Mecklenburg County Park & Rec-Div of Therapeutic Recreation, LifeSpan, Residential Support Services A big THANK YOU to teacher Mary Zalecki and parents Corine Bockenek and Lois Stickell

## Final Health Care Votes Bring Boost For People With Disabilities

By Michelle Diament  
March 26, 2010

Congress approved a series of final changes Thursday to the health care overhaul plan, taking steps to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates and clarify a series of other provisions, while largely drawing the health care reform debate to a close.

Most elements of health care reform became law Tuesday when President Barack Obama signed overhaul legislation. But a few last minutes changes and clarifications spelled out in a so-called reconciliation bill remained. Votes Thursday in the Senate and House of Representatives put the final issues to rest.

Specifically the measures approved late this week will grant doctors higher reimbursement rates for care of Medicaid patients in 2013 and 2014, while increasing federal funding to states to meet this cost. The reconciliation bill also includes a funding boost for community health centers and federal money to help states meet the cost of a Medicaid expansion spelled out in the initial health care reform legislation.

continued page 3 - Health Care



## Teaching Kids With LD to Drive: A Complex Family Matter

***One mother explains why parents need to be extra patient and take precautions when teaching kids with learning disabilities to drive.***

By Melinda Sacks

All parents worry when their children reach driving age and blurt out the inevitable question, "When can I get my license?"

But for those of us whose children are distractible, hyperactive, impulsive, or learning disabled (LD), the question is much more complex. Not only is it worrisome to think of the impact of these qualities on mastering the driver's education manual on the rules of the road, and the written test covering copious material that must be memorized, but the idea of a new driver with any sort of disability that impacts concentration taking to the road in a two-ton vehicle can be downright frightening.

This spring, we joined the ranks of concerned parents as our son Alex turned 16 and announced he wanted to learn to drive. As a fan of racing video games, and the owner of a life-sized steering wheel and gas pedal that attach to our home computer, our son figured he was ready to go. After all, he asked, how much harder could real driving be than his favorite game, "Crazy Taxi"? (The game's name says a lot about our fears.)

For the months preceding Alex's 16th birthday we circumvented the question of driving by telling him he had to make the call to sign himself up for driver's education at the local driving school. For whatever reason, he never seemed to get around to it. And we were secretly relieved.

But now that it's summer and his friends are taking driving classes, we can no longer dodge the issue.

### ***Driver's Education isn't Easy for Teens with LD***

While most kids find the driver's education course to be long (six hours a day for four days in California), most don't consider it particularly difficult. Not so for kids with LD, who like Alex, may find the in-class reading and frequent tests a significant struggle. And peer pressure, performance anxiety, and the group setting is, for many, far from ideal.

Thankfully an increasing number of programs are offering online driver's education, which is a great solution if you have a child like ours who enjoys the computer, needs to take his time digesting material, and feels pressured and uncomfortable in big groups.

If you don't have a computer or don't want your child online, many of these programs offer printed booklets that contain the same content.

Beware, though, that the at-home course isn't always a complete solution. When I went online and searched for online driving schools, there were myriad choices but I had a hard time telling how they differed. Once I chose a course and registered Alex, he wanted to start right away. But within 20 minutes he had given up, discouraged by the first chapter, which was so text-heavy that he was exhausted after reading just a few pages of small print.

### ***Shop Around Before Enrolling Your Teen in Driver's Education***

Before you embark on the driver's education road with your teen, be sure to check the requirements for the state where you live. Surprisingly, there is a fair amount of variation. Thirty-six states require teens to have a driving permit, 23 of them require the permit be held for at least six months before they can apply for a driver's license. Graduated licenses - those that allow a new driver incremental privileges to drive alone or carry passengers under age 21 - are increasingly common and also differ from one state to another. Even the age at which you can obtain a permit or driver's license differs across the country. Your local Department of Motor Vehicles can provide the specifics for where you live.

Driving schools also vary in approach and curriculum, although all are required to cover the same material in their final exams. Some courses, we found, are much more "friendly" to kids with LD, providing more interactive materials and experiences, including videos, computer simulations, and group work. Some contain just one final exam that encompasses the entire course curriculum, while others are broken into chapter tests.



Health Care cont'd from pg 1

Medicaid is a state-managed federal health care program that serves people with disabilities and those with low incomes. In recent times, those on Medicaid have reported significant difficulty finding doctors and other service providers willing to accept the government health care program because of low reimbursement rates.

“This vote represents a triumph for the health and economic stability of America’s families,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a statement following the vote Thursday. “The Congress of the United States finished the job of health insurance reform today; in doing so, we made history and progress for the American people.”

Disability advocates across the board hailed the health insurance reform legislation as a major step forward for Americans with disabilities. The new law will prevent coverage denials due to pre-existing conditions and eliminate annual and lifetime limits while expanding Medicaid and giving incentives for community-based living options. What’s more, once the law is phased in over the next four years, insurance plans will cover mental health services, rehabilitation and habilitation services as well as behavior therapy.

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<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2010/03/26/health-care-reconciliation-bill/7450/>



Drive cont'd from pg 2

You can also decide to conduct the driving lessons yourself, but we felt it was worth the cost to give Alex a professional introduction to driving.

Know Your Child and Stay Involved

As is true with many issues around parenting a child with LD, staying involved and applying what you know about your teen's strengths and weaknesses factor heavily into how you can help him learn to drive.

Knowing our son loves video games that glorify speeding, and in some cases, even crashing, we had long ago embarked on a heavy campaign to talk about driver safety. The fact that I had been in a serious car accident before I was married gave us plenty of ammunition for our discussions. On the road, we tried to point out mistakes other drivers made, and potential hazards such as kids on bikes, dogs near the road, and cars running red lights. Real driving, we said over and over, bears no resemblance to a video game.

We also repeatedly recited one line from Alex's driver education book describing driving a car: "Dangerous as a loaded gun if not operated properly."

Because Alex is such a weak reader, we were also concerned about how much he would digest from the home study driver's education booklet we chose. The 154-page soft cover book has fairly big print, which was a plus, but like all the home study books, it is quite text heavy.

Even though we knew it would take forever, we decided we would read the book aloud with Alex. Taking turns with the reading, then doing the chapter quizzes together, gave my husband and me a firsthand look at how well Alex understood the material. When he seemed to glaze over, we'd stop. We broke the lessons into small segments and did just a little at a time. We told stories about our own experiences as we read, hoping the real-life scenarios would help impress certain points upon him.

My brother, who has a dyslexic daughter, found that for her, an online course produced by [www.penschool.com](http://www.penschool.com) was ideal because there was no big final test, just small quizzes along the way. The 30-day completion policy requiring students to complete the course within 30 days of when they started was great incentive for her to finish.

At our house I was in no hurry to put Alex behind the wheel, so the fact that there was no time limit and we could go at our own pace was a huge plus.

Getting Behind the Wheel - Of a Golf Cart

No matter how long you stall, the day will come when your teen slides into the driver's seat and you give up control of the car. This is a day I was not looking forward to, so I was delighted when we happened upon an interim solution that eased the way.

It turns out that starting out in a golf cart is a great way to give a new driver the feeling of operating a moving vehicle with two pedals. It is a relief to introduce the challenges of negotiating parking spaces, tight turns and oncoming traffic in a small, battery-powered vehicle that won't exceed 5-10 miles an hour.

With Alex behind the wheel of the little electric golf cart we borrowed, we set off on paved paths that were mostly unpopulated for our practice.

At first, his driving was jerky, and my non-stop instructions punctuated every second of our short trips, leaving us both exhausted.

"You're too close to the curb!"

"Slow down!"

"Watch out for that bump!"

"Stay on your side of the road!"

And, "Do you see that bicycle?"

But little by little, Alex learned to watch for obstacles, smoothed his acceleration and braking, figured out how to make a three-cornered turn, and even parallel parked. Thankfully it was all done at about 5 mph.

It turns out that behind the wheel, Alex is far more conservative than I expected, and he is in fact overly concerned with kids, pedestrians and other cars, often stopping to wait for them when they were far, far away.

continued page 4 - Drive



Drive cont'd from pg 3

***But You Didn't Make My Sister Wait!***

One problem we didn't anticipate was the sibling rivalry that occurred when Alex realized we were stalling letting him drive, something we had not done with his older sister (who does not have LD). No amount of explanation or justification seemed to satisfy him.

The only approach we could take was to be honest. We revisited our reasons for taking it slow, and offered to drive him anywhere he needed to go. He wasn't pleased when it involved outings such as going to the movies with a girl, but we pointed out numerous times that due to our graduated licensing laws, even if he had his license, he wouldn't be allowed to drive other teens for six months.

***Practice, Practice, Practice***

The fact that in our state parents are required by law to spend 50 hours with their teen driving was a plus for our family. We figured the more time Alex spent practicing driving in a very controlled situation, the better.

I decided long ago that teaching our kids to drive was my husband's job, since he tends to be unflappable, a word that does not describe me. And while many parents let their new driver get behind the wheel with the entire family in the car, we did not go this route with Alex. The less distraction and the fewer people around, the better, so he and his dad are going to be spending a lot of quality time together.

It is still unclear when, exactly, Alex will be ready to get his license. But we are determined that by the time he goes to take the test, we will be sure he will not be a hazard on the road - to others or to himself.

Some things just can't be hurried, and learning to drive is one of them.

<http://www.greatschools.org/LD/family-home-life/>

***Lose The Training Wheels... and see where they go!***

Lose The Training Wheels™ is more than just a bike-riding program. For many children with disabilities, it's a seemingly impossible task they can typically master in less than a week's time. Within days of learning to ride, many children exhibit independent behaviors for the first time ever. This achievement, in turn, creates a gateway of opportunity, helping them gain assurance and self-reliance in many other aspects of their lives. Learning to ride a two wheel bicycle has many benefits, some obvious and some not so obvious including:

- \* Increase in self esteem & self confidence
- \* Inclusion
- \* Positive change in family dynamics
- \* Improved quality of life through recreation
- \* Independent transportation

The mission of Lose The Training Wheels™ is to teach individuals with disabilities to ride a conventional two wheel bicycle and become lifelong independent riders. This achievement, in turn, creates a gateway of opportunity, helping them gain assurance and self-reliance in many other aspects of their lives.

***A Brief History of Lose The Training Wheels™***

Our adapted bicycling program had its genesis in the more than 20 years of research of Dr. Richard E. Klein and his students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Richard retired from his academic career at the University of Illinois in 1998 and the first bike camp was held in 1999 in LaCrosse, WI. In the ensuing years, Dr. Klein and his wife, Marjorie, invested a significant portion of their lives in growing the program to three fleets of bikes and approximately 30 camps in 2006. Today Dr. Klein and Marjorie are principals in Rainbow Trainers, Inc.

In January 2007, a small group of parents, therapy professionals, and business leaders formed Lose The Training Wheels, Inc. as a not-for-profit organization which was recognized as a tax exempt public charity in June of 2008.

The Lose The Training Wheels™ bike program has grown from one camp and one fleet of bikes in 1999, to 50 camps

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**Lose the Training Wheels - June 21 to June 25, 2010 - Charlotte, NC.**

Our camp in Charlotte is hosted by Autism Foundation of the Carolinas ([www.autismcarolinas.org](http://www.autismcarolinas.org)) and will be held at the Metrolina Tradeshow Expo at 7100 Statesville, Rd. For more information about this camp email [info@autismcarolinas.org](mailto:info@autismcarolinas.org)



# The Mighty Mustang

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“Our goal is for all students to find success.”

Fall 2009, Vol. 6

## The North Carolina Guardianship Association

The NCGA is a private, nonprofit corporation founded in 1997. It is dedicated to promoting the protection, dignity, and value of persons through guardianship with diminished capacity through:

- providing advocacy, education, leadership, training, technical assistance, and networking for guardians, consumers, family members, volunteers, professionals, and surrogates
- promoting greater accountability and professionalism in guardianship practices
- furthering the professionalism of guardians as accountable court representatives
- developing a statewide, recognized standard of excellence, including professional ethics and standards
- promoting alternatives to guardianship and restoration of competency
- serving as an information clearinghouse
- promoting statutory changes and governmental policies that reflect best practices in guardianship
- establishing a team working structure that will enable the provision of a more effective, customer focused service

A guardianship is the legal proceeding by which a corporation or disinterested public agent can be appointed to manage the personal or financial affairs of an individual who has been judged to lack the capacity to do so on his or her own. It is a legal relationship between a capable adult entity (the guardian) and a person who has been declared legally disabled in a court of law (a ward).

The guardian may be a family member, a close friend or neighbor, or a professional guardian (an unrelated person who has received specialized training). He or she will support the right of the incapacitated ward to make decisions whenever possible, and will solicit and respect the views and wishes of the ward, unless these views and wishes must be overridden in the ward's best interest.

continued pages 2 and 3

Parent Coffee

October 27, 2009

The Art Gallery, 9am

Meet administrators about IEP services and other parents to learn about options for students.

## **Life After High School by Betsy Gufstason**

### **When a Quick Trip Becomes an Odyssey**

One of my favorite movies is the old, silly Steve Martin and John Candy tale entitled *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles*. I enjoy the wacky comedy and absurd situations juxtaposed to the story of human need for friendship, trust, and love. We recently encountered our own scenario with our recently-graduated son with high-functioning autism which could be called *Walk, Train, and Bus . . . and Bus*.

First, if it weren't for the support and education he received at Myers Park, he would not have embarked on his adventure in the first place. In high school, he received encouragement from his teachers and his ever-wise speech therapist to participate in group work and assignments which helped his social and communication skills and his confidence. His ability to reason was stretched by class work, homework, and discussions. He was exposed to new ideas and different points of view of authors, teachers, and classmates which widened his world. The students were kind to him which built trust in others. He learned and felt successful.

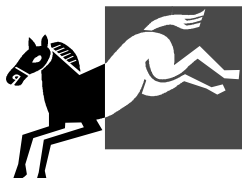
Having been obsessed with traffic signs and signals when he was younger, he was well prepared for the classroom part of Driver's Education. When it came to actually driving, however, we all began to question his ability to react to unexpected situations. Being a scientist at heart, he has long embraced environmentalism, so it wasn't a great leap to embrace using public transportation once he graduated and began taking classes at CPCC—Central Campus. continued page 4





**Skills to work on for independence & adulthood**

- Cooking**
- Cleaning**
- Hygiene**
- Personal Safety**
- Relationships**
- Money management**
- Transportation**
- Communication skills**
- Self advocacy skills**
- Organizational skills**
- Time management skills**
- Ways to deal with stress and anxiety**



**Numbers to Know**  
(prior to turning 18)

Charlotte Mecklenburg Area Mental Health – Developmental Disabilities. 704-366-6404

Clerk of Superior Courts – Guardianship  
704-347-7806

Social Security 1-800-772-1213

Vocational Rehabilitation 704-568-8804

**After High School Cont'd from page 1**

Last week he was excited about going to Festival in the Park. Having lived near the park and having attended the festival every year of his life, he felt very comfortable going. He and I talked and texted and made a plan. He would walk to my office uptown about 10 minutes from the CPCC campus to leave his book bag and lunchbox, so he wouldn't have to carry it to the park. I would walk him a block and a half to the LYNX where he could use his express bus pass from his morning and afternoon commutes from home to school. He would get off at the East-West Blvd. stop where he would take a shuttle to the festival. He liked the idea. The first two legs of the trip were successful. He made it to my office in the usual 10 minutes and boarded the train which took him five minutes. From there the shuttle for which he would need to wait would take 10 minutes at the most to the festival. That's where the plan broke down. He could not find any signage for a shuttle, so he was uncertain what to do. Answering his call, I advised him to seek help at a restaurant nearby where I frequently dine. At that moment, I had the sickening feeling I should have called ahead or scoped out this route, myself, first. He did find someone who was leaving work and happy to walk out with him to "the" bus. She did not know about the shuttle, however, and when he finally returned my phone calls to check to see if he had arrived at the park, he told me he had ridden on a bus all the way back uptown—not far from the CPCC campus which he had already passed on the first leg of his journey—to the Transportation Center. There he boarded another bus to Freedom Park. He took his odyssey in stride, happy to reach his destination at last. His father and I were proud of him for his independence, no matter how convoluted the journey.

This roundabout voyage, this odyssey, this journey sort of symbolizes our son's life. It hasn't gone exactly where we thought it would and has taken some turns and twists from the parenthood we expected. It traversed from the road of "normal" and "typical" off course a bit and nearly down a ravine as we experienced diagnosis, learning about autism, and releasing our son to navigate around a college setting, but the trip has provided amazingly spectacular moments we never would have anticipated. Achievement may have taken various routes and longer than expected, but the sometimes bumpy ride has always somehow ultimately found its destination. The exhibition has brought fulfillment, excitement, and special memories. At this point, just a simple, straight trip would seem boring, and we are grateful for the preparation provided by the high school experience.

***Thank you! Thank you!***

**To our Community Base Training Partners**

- The Raptor Center
- Misty Meadows
- Food Lion – South Blvd
- Harris Teeter – Park Selwyn
- The Place at South Park
- Family Dollar – South Blvd
- Radio Disney – WGFY 1480
- Adult Care & Share Center
- Friendship Trays
- Charlotte-Meck Park & Rec
- Carolina's Medical Center
- Animal Control Bureau – CMPD
- Harris YMCA
- Classroom Central
- Carolina Raptor Center
- Latta Plantation Equestrian Center
- The Heart Association
- Rosedale Plantation



***We are online!***

**Check out the link for updates and information including archived issues of the Mighty Mustang on the PTSA website at:**

<http://mphs-ptsa.org/pdfs/EC%20PTSA%20Link.pdf>



# The Mighty Mustang

Newsletter of the Myers Park Department for IEP Services

"Our goal is for all students to find success."

Spring 2009, Vol. 5

## Making the Transition from School to Work & Future Education by Sue Whitney Heath, Research Editor

Q: "I want my son to be prepared to enter the workforce when he leaves school. How can we combine No Child Left Behind with vocational goals?"

A: Parents need to start thinking about the transition to adulthood when their children are toddlers. Schools are not required to address this issue or develop a transition plan until the child is 16. IDEA 2004 states that a transition plan may be developed earlier than age 16.

Although schools exist primarily to provide academic instruction, they must also address the transition needs of children with disabilities. Look at these issues separately, starting with these definitions:

### Transition

Read the legal definition of transition services in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

The term 'transition services' means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that--

(A) is designed to be a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

See Transition cont'd pg 2

## Parent Coffee

May 5, 2009

9 am Art Gallery

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Staff from the Dept. of IEP Services  
Will meet with families of  
Prospective students as well as  
Current students to discuss topics on  
Education at Myers Park.

### Advice for High School Students

by LeDerick R. Horne

High school can be a very scary time for young people with a disability. Believe me, I know. I was classified in the third grade and was placed in special education right up until I received my high school diploma. By my junior year I was so sick of school that I spent more time looking at the exit doors than the blackboards.

If you are a high school student with a disability, I would like to applaud you because I know how hard it has been for you to make it this far. And if you are thinking about continuing your education once you graduate, I have a few suggestions that I would like to give you that will help the transition go smoother. Whether you are thinking about a county college, technical school, or university, here is some advice that I wish someone had given me before I left high school.

### College is an Option

I need to start out by emphasizing that, "college is an option!" It may sound obvious to some of you, but it is still important for me to say because far too many teenagers with disabilities think that they are not smart enough to continue their education. I remember being in high school and thinking that I would be allowed into a college when pigs fly and dogs drive SUV's. Then, if by some stroke of luck I was admitted into an institution of higher education, I was sure my learning-disabled-but would flunk out before the red ink on my midterm exams had a chance to dry. See Advice cont'd pg 3



Transition cont'd from pg 1

(B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests, and

(C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (20 U.S.C. Section 1401(34))

#### Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

The Individuals with Disabilities Act says the school must provide your child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):

The Term 'free and appropriate public education' means special education and related services that -  
(A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;  
(B) meet the standards of the State educational agency;  
(C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education in the State involved; and  
(D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under section 1414(d). (20 U.S.C. Section 1401(9))

#### State Academic Standards

To find out what North Carolina's department of education established as state academic standards, go to <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us>

These standards will tell you what has been determined that children in each grade need to know and be able to do. This is what your child's school must teach. This includes school wide education programs as well as individualized education programs.

#### IEP Team Decisions

If your child has a severe cognitive disability, the IEP team, which includes you (the parent), may decide that the child should be taught and tested on an alternative academic standard. However, this decision can only be made and implemented with your consent.

If you and other IEP team members agree, an alternative academic standard will be determined and your child will be tested annually against this alternative standard. The purpose of this testing is to determine if the school is teaching your child the academic content that the IEP team determined was appropriate for your child.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) provides additional educational requirements, above and beyond those in the No Child Left Behind Act. NCLB does not replace these requirements.

Issues about how No Child Left Behind affects children who receive special education services under IDEA are confusing to many parents and educators. Below is a list of resources that will help you sort these issues out. I hope you find information that is helpful to you.

#### No Child Left Behind Act Requirements

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the federal education law that was originally enacted as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB requires states to:

- \* develop academic content standards,
- \* test all children who attend public schools to determine if schools are teaching to these standards, and
- \* establish and enforce sanctions against schools that do not make sufficient progress so all children are proficient (at grade level) on these tests by 2014.

All states accept NCLB money and agreed to implement the provisions that accompanied this money.

When your state accepted money under NCLB, the state agreed to teach all children who attend public schools the material that your state requires students in each grade to know.

Excerpt from <http://www.wrightslaw.com/heath/transition.work.htm>



## Advice cont'd from pg 1

Given my experience in high school, this way of thinking is understandable, but it is simply not true. The overwhelming majority of young people with disabilities, me included, have all it takes to get into a college or university and do very well once we make it to campus.

### Documentation is One Key

I owe most of my success after high school to the support I received. From extra time taking tests to using a computer to check my spelling, all the accommodations and other services I used were made available to me because I could prove I had a disability that warranted modifying my classroom experience. Disability support offices at colleges and universities need to see some kind of documentation to grant accommodation requests. For some of us, providing copies of our IEP (Individualized Education Plan) reports from high school will be all the proof we need to get our accommodations, but some of us may need additional documentation to prove we have a disability. The point I am trying to make is that you will need to have some kind of paperwork about your disability if you are planning to use services at college. Documentation is the key to unlocking the doors of higher education for folks with disabilities. Make sure you have your documentation before graduation from high school, and once you have it, keep it in a safe place. Some high schools actually destroy the IEP's of past students a few years after they graduate.

### Connect With Your Campus Community

Once you get to college you will see that it is full of resources. There are advisers who will help you pick the right classes, the library will let you borrow books, and the financial aid office will do its best to find you money. These are just a few of the many resources available to you once you are accepted. But one of the most powerful resources available to you once you step foot on campus is something most people never think of -- your fellow students.

I recommend you make an effort to connect with the students on your campus. Join a club, sorority, fraternity, student government, or any campus based activity that will allow you to build relationships with the students at your school. Your fellow students will be able to offer academic support (like study groups or working together on projects), as well as emotional support (like wiping your tears as you study for your final in Calculus III). So make an effort to get to know the folks at your school.

Some of the most powerful relationships I had while in college were the friendships that I built with other students with disabilities. In fact, one of the best ways to determine the quality of a college or university's disability support services is to talk with students with disabilities who have been at the school for a year or more. I recommend that you contact the disability support person at the college you are planning to attend and ask if they can connect you with two or three students on campus who have a disability like yours. Ask those students what they think of the school. The information they formation they give you might be more valuable and relevant than any advice you get from a professional.

### Get Used to Standing Up for Yourself and Others

One of the buzz words you will hear over and over again as you get ready to leave high school is "self-advocacy." In a nutshell, self-advocacy is all about you going out and getting what you need to be successful. It is one of the most important set of skills you should learn before you go to college. This is because your college will depend on you, not your parents, to make all the decisions related to your education. So I recommend you practice being in control of your education before you graduate high school. One way to practice self-advocacy is to begin taking a more active role in your IEP meetings. Make some of your own academic goals for the year and challenge your IEP team to help you reach those goals. Let the IEP team members know that you would like to continue your education beyond high school. Ask them to come up with a plan (that you can understand) which will help you transition to the institution of higher learning that fits you best. My point is that it is your education, so start getting accustomed to making some of the decisions about what kind of education you are going to receive.

Lastly, it is important for all of us to advocate for others, in addition to ourselves. People with disabilities have a long history of fighting for the opportunity to be treated as equal members of this society. As the next generation of people with disabilities, it is our responsibility to continue that struggle. While you are in high school, take the time to work together with other students with disabilities to improve the quality of your education. Invite other students with disabilities into your IEP meetings to help you advocate for yourself. Start self-advocacy clubs in your school to give students an opportunity to work together to address problems. Work together to take a stand against bullying and name calling of students with disabilities. This kind of team work will teach you things about others and yourself which will help shape you into the kind of student that any college would be proud to accept.

*LeDerick Horne is a graduate of Middlesex County College and New Jersey City University. <http://www.tcnj.edu/~technj/2007/advice.htm> LeDerick is Board Chair of Project Eye-to-Eye, was recently honored as a Rising Star at the 2006 Equity Awards Dinner of the Educational Equity Center at The Academy for Education Development in New York This honor was in recognition of his service as an advocate and mentor for students with disabilities. From his own personal experience with a learning disability, he has become a national speaker, reaching thousands of students, teachers and service providers.*



### Looking Towards the Future

## Central Piedmont Community College

### Admissions and Disability Documentation

Students with a disability must meet the same admissions criteria as other students. In addition, students with a disability must also submit official documentation that is no more than three (3) years old verifying their disability.

Official documentation may include a comprehensive psychological or neurological report, vocational rehabilitation documentation, or medical records. The type of documentation required will vary according to the student's disability and will be determined during the intake interview.

### Academic Plan

Using the disability assessment information, career interest inventories, placement test results, and the intake interview, the counselor and the student will plan academic goals and determine the necessary accommodations.

It is recommended that students interested in requesting accommodations meet with the counselor to discuss their educational/vocational goals. These goals would include: the support services needed by the students based on the specific disability, the student's responsibilities and obligations, the College's commitment, course sequence, accommodations, course substitutions, etc.

### Full-Time Academic Status

Based on the nature of the disability, a student may not be able to take a full course load of 12 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters or 9 credit hours in the summer semester.

The counselor will recommend a full course load for students with disabilities based on the following: 1) the nature of the disability; 2) the course design, 3) the demands of the course; 4) the time the student requires to complete certain academic tasks; 5) the nature and the effects of medication the student may be taking; and 6) the stability of the disability.

### Reasonable Accommodations

To receive timely and appropriate accommodations, students should contact the Counseling and Advising Department at least six (6) weeks prior to enrollment. Students must maintain contact with their counselor throughout each semester. At all times, students are encouraged to discuss their accommodation needs with each instructor.

<http://www.cpcc.edu/disabilities/gen-info>

## The Office of Disability Services UNC-Charlotte

Academic Services at UNC Charlotte enriches the academic community by offering a broad range of initiatives promoting student success, ensuring access, and enhancing the educational experience of all students.

<http://www.ds.uncc.edu/index.htm>

### **Congratulations to Yvette Jones - MPHS Assistant of the Year!**

Nominated and voted on by faculty, Ms. Jones assistant coaches students with disabilities in the computer lab, assisting with assignments and EOC practice. She actually works with all students because she is so willing and will do anything that is asked of her. Ms. Jones has an excellent rapport with the students.

### Queens University

<http://www.queens.edu/studentlife/resources/disability.asp>

Welcome to the Office of Student Disability Services. This office serves qualified students with disabilities of all varieties: learning disabilities; ADHD; physical disabilities including vision impairment, hearing impairment, mobility issues; medical disabilities, and psychiatric / psychological disabilities.

It is the responsibility of the student to self-identify as having a disability. In order to access the rights provided through the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a student must register with Queens University of Charlotte by providing documentation verifying a disability. A student cannot receive accommodations until this is completed. It is also the responsibility of the student to inform his/her professors of the need for accommodations and to advocate for him/herself if these are not being met satisfactorily.

It is important to be aware that the IDEA laws that govern the implementation of accommodations in primary and secondary schools differ from the ADA Laws on which accessibility issues are addressed in a post-secondary educational setting. In order to avoid being surprised by the shift in responsibilities, students considering post-secondary education are strongly advised to do their "homework" and know what they need to ensure their needs are met.

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.transition.ocr.pdf>



# The Mighty Mustang

Newsletter of the Myers Park Department for IEP Services

"Our goal is for all students to find success."

Fall 2008, Vol. 4

## Welcome to Myers Park 2008!

In this issue, you will find updates on student activities, information on No Child Left Behind, and looking ahead to college.

If you are the parent of a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, I encourage you to attend the first parent coffee of the year. High school is quite a transition and meeting with staff and other parents in a relaxed environment is a terrific way to forge a partnership with the school.

It's often surprising to parents to learn some students with IEPs go to great lengths not to be identified by their peers.

In high school, it's all about fitting in and becoming independent from parents. We want to respect this by providing confidentiality to our students. You will see the brochure for new families "Welcome to Myers Park" is written to address students as well as parents. Also, we are in the process of dropping the terms "EC" or "Exceptional Children" and replacing with terms such as "students with IEPs" or "Department of IEP Services" in an attempt to address the stigma associated with "Special Ed".

- Jennifer Fox, editor

## First Person

### Advice About Being an LD Student

By: Caitlin Callahan

For any student with a learning disability, school often provides overwhelming challenges, which must be faced. The struggles come from both internal and external sources. The impacts of the disability vary and evolve, compounding the student's difficulty. Teachers, friends, and parents often add to the stress, in spite of their best intentions. Although as a student with a learning disability, I myself have experienced great deal of pain and frustration, there are several survival techniques which help me cope.

*Continued page 3*

## Parent Coffee

November 6, 2008

9 am Art Gallery

\*\*\*\*\*

Staff from the Dept. of IEP Services will meet with families of to discuss topics such as adjusting to high school and transition.

*Future coffee planned for March 10, 2008*

## Movie Tropic Thunder stirs debate over the "R" word

### When Words Wound

Roanoke Times August 19, 2008

by John Franklin Stephens

*Stephens is a Special Olympics Virginia athlete and a Global Messenger from Fairfax.*

A lot of people are talking about the movie "Tropic Thunder" that opened in theaters last week. One of the reasons that it is being talked about is that the characters use the term "retard" over and over. They use it the same way that kids do all the time, to jokingly insult one another.

The people who made the movie, DreamWorks and Paramount, and many of the critics who have reviewed it say that the term is being used by characters who are dumb and shallow themselves. You see, we are supposed to get the joke that it is only the dumb and shallow people who use a term that means dumb and shallow. My dad tells me that this is called "irony."

So, what's the big deal? Let me try to explain. I am a 26-year-old man with Down syndrome. I am very lucky. Even though I was born with this intellectual disability, I do pretty well and have a good life. I live and work in the community. I count as friends the people I went to school with and the people I meet in my job. Every day I get closer to living a life like yours. *Continued page 2*





Continued from page 1

To be student with a learning disability is to be a member of a minority, and as such each of us should share our experiences so that others may develop strategies to help them through their struggles.

I believe one key idea is to find one's own definition of the dual identity within oneself as a learner and as a student. The learner is the one who makes an effort to be curious, involved and motivated. The student is the one who determines how you cope in school. Not all knowledge is taught in school. It is the student identity which gets labeled as disabled. The "learning disability" should not be allowed to overwhelm one's desire to attain knowledge. The learner in you must prevent it.

Another piece of advice besides developing a personal definition is developing one's self esteem, to learn to have no fear of oneself. I felt like there was something wrong with me before I found out I had a disability; when I was diagnosed, it took me years to believe that I was not stupid or limited. However I now understand "to be categorized is, simply, to be enslaved," as Gore Vidal expressed. The label of learning disability should be allowed to determine one's identity, character, or self-image, nor one's potential.

Support from friends who can be trusted is crucial. It is destructive to believe that if you have a learning disability and your friends do not, you are too different from them to talk about your problems. I know from experience that the only result is self-imposed isolation. Asking for support from friends with whom you are comfortable will help maintain your self-esteem. Everyone wants to feel normal, not different, not disabled. The challenge is to accept yourself as who you are and believe in your own self-definition. Although there may be differences on some levels, you may also find friendships with those with whom you have something else in common. I have come to trust and value those similarities.

Getting help or asking for support in the areas which present hurdles is essential. What is also equally important is choosing carefully which voices or people have influence over you, your goals, your self-esteem, and your successes. Well-meaning or good-intentioned professionals or teachers can be just as hurtful to you as those who speak with prejudice and ignorance about learning disabilities. It is not a kindness to limit opportunities in education when a student experiences difficulty. As a member of a minority group which frequently cannot be protected from behavior or external clues, a student with a "hidden" learning disability ought to be able to acknowledge his or her vulnerability without being overpowered by negative and condescending opinions. No one should determine what you can and cannot do because he or she thinks that having a learning disability automatically makes you less capable. "The power to exceed is not the same as the desire to exceed." (T.P. Gore) A student with a learning disability can have just as much desire for success as a student without a disability.

But most of all, a student with a learning disability should always ask questions -- of themselves, teachers, counselors, and tutors. The reason is that only when there is knowledge about your disability can there be the opportunity for self-advocacy. Being able to speak for yourself is crucial for getting the accommodations needed for your education and for full inclusion in the class by the teacher. The children's storybook character Winnie the Pooh said appropriately that "rivers know this. There is no hurry. We shall get there someday." The fact is that every student can learn in school, even with a learning disability; we all will get there someday.

Excerpt from <http://www.ldonline.org/firstperson/8550>

## Useful Links!

About CMS's initiatives:

[www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/)

About the NC Occupational Course of Study:

[www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/ECFactSheet.pdf](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/ECFactSheet.pdf)

About initiatives at MPHS:

[www.mphs-ptsa.org/pdfs/School\\_leadership\\_team.pdf](http://www.mphs-ptsa.org/pdfs/School_leadership_team.pdf)



**Greetings from April Morrow**

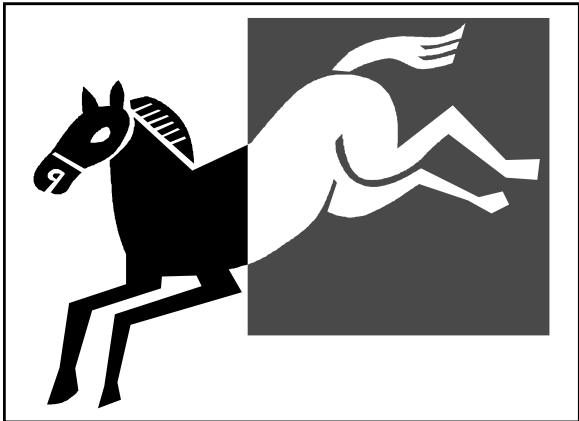
Hello! As the new departmental chair of the Dept. of IEP Services here at Myers Park High School, I am excited and looking forward to a great 2008-2009 school year.

Although this is only my third year at Myers Park, I have been teaching students with IEPs for nineteen years. I moved to Charlotte from Atlanta, Georgia, where I taught in both inner city and suburban schools.

I am a graduate from Furman University with a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education. I am the wife of Bobby, mom of Spencer and Haley and teacher of many. I have taught in South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina, in self-contained, resource and inclusion settings.

I am very excited about our department's faculty this year. We are all dedicated to doing all we can do to meet the needs of our students.

Thank you for all your support!  
April Morrow



**Congratulations to Sam Williams and JT Mehari – recipients of the April 2008 Mustang Manners award!**

Mustang Manners is a school wide program that recognizes students for their achievements in positive behavior.

For the month of April, the Autism Society of Mecklenburg County donated Visa Gift Cards to recognize students who help students with disabilities succeed at MP.

Sam was nominated for his regular volunteering in a class for students with disabilities and JT was nominated for helping a student participate on the track team.

*We are also on online!*



Check out the link for updates and information including archived issues of the Mighty Mustang on the PTSA website at:

<http://www.mphs-ptsa.org/courseofstudy.htm>

On the "courses & testing" page, follow the link called "Students with IEPs".



# The Mighty Mustang

Newsletter of the Myers Park Department of IEP Services

"Our goal is for all students to find success."

Spring 2008, Vol. 3

## Parent to Parent

*Life after High School by Kathy Snyder*

When I was asked to write an article for the Mighty Mustang, I felt flattered and a bit nervous. After all I am no expert and then I began to think about what I would say. Although my experiences are very personal, I am expert as far as my son is concerned and how autism has affected our lives. Some of my experiences may be similar to those parents that read this article and some vastly different; however, I hope my point of view will be valuable to some and may give ideas to others.

Our son, Jamie is a recent graduate of MPHS, Class of 2007! To say that we are proud of him is an understatement. Jamie completed the course work necessary to "walk the stage" with his class last June. We chose the occupational course of study for Jamie early in his high school career. This diploma path allowed Jamie to learn everyday life skills as well as receive on site job training, valuable for someone on the autism spectrum. During his time at Myers Park, Jamie spent time in the self-contained classroom, in a resource setting and attended classes with the general population, sometimes with the aid of a teacher or assistant and sometimes on his own. Everyday was not rosy. We had setbacks; Jamie needed encouragement to keep going along the way. His teachers kept the lines of communication open and we formed a good team that kept Jamie pointed in the right direction.

The Occupational course of study includes over 900 hours of school based, and community based training, includes the requirement of 360 hours of paid part-time employment. Vocational Rehabilitation began working with our son during his junior year to determine which jobs he is best suited. A job coach was provided through a local agency and this individual took Jamie job hunting. **Continued page 4**

## **Guiding Teens with Learning Disabilities-An Interview with Dr. Arlyn Roffman**

*Guiding Teens with Learning Disabilities: Navigating the Transition from High School to Adulthood* is the new book from former National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) Professional Advisory Board member, Arlyn Roffman. In her book, Dr. Roffman offers advice, tips, and information to help families, high school guidance and support personnel understand the extra challenges posed toward students with learning disabilities (LD) as they face the already daunting task of transitioning from high school to adulthood. **Continued page 2**

## **Parent Coffee**

April 1, 2008

9 am Art Gallery

"Special Education Services for Students with Learning disabilities"

\*\*\*\*\*

Staff will make a brief presentation and answer questions related to services at Myers Park..

## **Welcome to Myers Park!**

Open House for Prospective Families and Students with IEPs.

March 12, 2008 4-5:30 pm  
Art Gallery



## Guiding Teens with Learning Disabilities-An Interview with Dr. Arlyn Roffman

Continued from page 1

*In this interview, Sheldon H. Horowitz, Ed.D., Director of Professional Services at NCLD talks with Dr. Roffman about her book and about the role that self-awareness, self-acceptance, and humor play in the transition from adolescence to adulthood:*

### **Dr. Horowitz**

**In Chapter 1 you offer some great tips for promoting self-awareness and self-acceptance, a personal challenge for every teen and young adult. Why is this especially important (and so hard) for students with learning disabilities (LD)?**

### **Dr. Roffman**

Adolescence is all about discovering who we are and coming to terms with our own constellation of positives and negatives. This search for identity is hard psychological work, but self-awareness and self-acceptance are at the foundation of healthy adult adjustment. For youth with LD, the identity search also includes facing their disability and learning about how it manifests itself both in and out of the classroom. At a time of life when conformity is all-important and when being different feels like the end of the universe, this process of coming to terms with one's deficits can be very painful.

Parents and teachers can support teens in this crisis by helping them see the bigger picture and recognize that, although they do have areas of challenge, they also have strengths. In the book I refer to this as the yin and yang of LD. Awareness sets the stage for self-acceptance and readies youth with LD to step forward and self-advocate for the set of accommodations and modifications that will help them work around their areas of weakness and capitalize on their strengths in school, at work, at home and in the community.

Achieving self-acceptance is a journey made more difficult by the lack of understanding of LD in our society. Parents and schools need to do a better job of celebrating differences, of focusing more on what students ARE able to do rather than on their limitations, and of helping students learn to see that LD is only a piece of who they are and can, in fact, be a positive force in their lives.

### **Dr. Horowitz**

**As one reads *Guiding Teens with Learning Disabilities* it is clear that some students with LD will have significant challenges with life skills and others will struggle primarily in areas of academic performance. Any advice about how to predict the kinds of struggles a particular student will experience once they transition from high school?**

### **Dr. Roffman**

One of the interesting things about LD is how heterogeneous it is. A person can be an abysmal speller but be a strong reader or a brilliant mathematician but weak in social skills or very social but unable to independently organize his belongings or schoolwork.

During the school years, the focus tends to be on how LD affects academics, in particular, reading, writing, and math. But as you note in your question, learning disabilities spill out into a student's life well beyond the classroom and affect life skills as well. I think it's fairly predictable that a teen with a reading disability will struggle with a variety of reading-related tasks outside of school as well. He may not be able to read the directions on his headache medicine, he may find it difficult to read the daily newspaper, and he may have problems reading the directions to his newly-acquired piece of technology. When he heads off into the work world, he is likely to find himself struggling with the daunting task of having to read and understand manuals, memos, and scads of emails. That's where the need for accommodations comes in. In the book I write quite a bit about how schools and parents can help teens with LD begin to learn life skills as soon as during the elementary years. Launching early into the transition process will give them a head start at developing life skills for the challenges ahead. - **More of this article is available online at <http://www.nclد.org/content/view/1287/398/>**

We are now online!

Check out our new PTSA website link for the Department of Special Education Services at:

**<http://www.mphs-ptsa.org/courseofstudy.htm>**

At the main page, [mphs-ptsa.org](http://www.mphs-ptsa.org), click on "Courses & Testing" then "Special Education"

Updated monthly, you will find announcements as well as past issues of the Mighty Mustang!



### Articles Wanted!

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of The Mighty Mustang, please contact the editor, Jennifer Fox at

**[mottofox@aol.com](mailto:mottofox@aol.com)**

Or call **704-619-0747**



### Supporting our Students

At a recent parent coffee, a discussion that seemed to surprise parents was staff speaking about students with IEPs going to great lengths not to be identified by their peers as "EC".

In high school, it's all about fitting in and becoming independent from parents. We want to respect this by providing confidentiality to our students. You will see the brochure for new families "Welcome to Myers Park" is written to address students as well as parents. Also, we have dropped the term "EC" and use terms such as "students with IEPs",



### OCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Based Training Luncheon

Designed to recognize local businesses that provide opportunities for job training to students, the luncheon was held February 14<sup>th</sup>. The companies receiving awards from MPHS were:

Harris Teeter – Selwyn, The Place – South Park, Food Lion, Harris YMCA, Family Dollar – South Blvd., Friendship Trays, Carolinas Medical Center, Class Room Central, Misty Meadows, and Meck. Co. Parks & Rec

### Occupational Course of Study (OCS)

OCS is a diploma track for students with disabilities that prepares them for post-school employment and independent living. As part of this program, students are required to complete 300 hours of school based work hours. For the past four years, our OCS classes have participated in a school-wide recycling program. Each day, students collect paper and plastic/can bins around campus. During the 2005-06 school year, Myers Park was recognized as a leader in recycling at CMS.

In addition to recycling, students complete work hours at various school jobs. For example, Mr. Krafton's class does work for a store called the Bead Boutique. Each week the students sort, string, and tag beads to prepare them for sale. According to Mr. Krafton, the store loves the kids and what they do for the business.

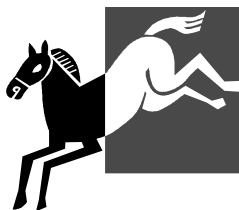
"Our students have enabled the store to get merchandise on the shelves faster and freed the employees to do other tasks." In return, our students are getting hours towards their diplomas in addition to valuable work experience that prepares them for future employment.

### Classroom Highlights

**Ms. Brown's OCS English class** is practicing presentation skills in different settings. The students have joined forces with an animal rescue group to teach younger students about being responsible and how to approach dogs using innovative techniques. Students use song, rap and dance to teach about responsibility and will present safety issues through story and mime.

**Ms. Sowell and Ms. Zalecki's class** participated in ice skating for the winter Special Olympics. The Charlotte Checkers were on hand to help with the games. Students dominated the events and received many gold, silver and bronze medals. The class plans to participate in next Special Olympics in April. In addition, the class continues to participate in community based jobs, including dietary at CMC and various parks in the Charlotte area. In March, the class will work with The Light Factory and poet, "Bluz" Rogers. The students will learn the mechanics of using a digital camera create self portraits and make their own visual diary. The students will give the photographs words with the help of Bluz Rogers. The exhibit will be displayed at Spirit Square mid summer.

**Mr. Krafton's and Ms. Thornton's OCC Prep Lab** classes are joining together to complete recycling and work to count and string beads to prepare for sale at the Bead Boutique at Hwy 51 in Matthews. This will help them complete 300 school based hours required for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Occupational Prep classes.







# The Mighty Mustang

Newsletter of the Myers Park Department of IEP Services

"Our goal is for all students to find success."

Fall 2007, Vol. 2

## Parent to Parent

*By Jennifer Fox*

Tips on the IEP process and Making Decisions about the Future

*I've been attending Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings since our son was 3. Fortunately for us, the support for children with autism was ahead of it's time in 1993. We parents were taught to be advocates for our children. On our journey of overseeing our son's education, I encountered many families who have not had the benefit of such powerful parental support. This included learning about IEPs and I have volunteered my time as a parent advocate, including 8 years on a parent advisory board for CMS (APPLE). I was surprised to find how varied some IEP experiences can be and realized there were steps that many parents don't take when approaching a school about their child's education. From my observations, there are many families who are able to advocate successfully for their students but it sometimes involves asking themselves the tough questions about what is working and what is not.*

### ***Getting Real...Trying to figure out what works and what doesn't.***

You may have several IEP meetings in a school year but it's especially important to take time to prepare for your child's annual IEP meeting. To learn the date of your child's annual IEP meeting, look at the previous year's IEP...it will have an anniversary date for the next annual meeting. To prepare for this meeting, think about how high school can best prepare your child for his or her future. Think about the outcomes that will have to take place to ensure your vision becomes a reality. What skills will your student need to develop and maintain in order to participate in the real world? What are the environments in which your child must be included in order to develop these crucial life skills? In addition to your child's development as a social being, a person who can initiate and maintain positive relationships with others, also think about the skills your child will need to earn a living.

Continued page 2 ***Start by making a list of outcomes***

## PBIS Comes to Myers Park

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a proactive, school wide system using school-based data to develop processes to promote positive behavior, with a focus on prevention of inappropriate behaviors. (PBIS) is a change in how schools handle discipline (Systems), how schools make decisions (Data), and how staff interact with students (Practices).

At Myers Park, we have altered the name to reflect our school culture - Mustang Manners. This program works to educate all students on socially appropriate behaviors, thus strengthening the bridge between improved behavior and improved academic progress. Studies have shown that there is a significant link between behavior and academics.

See Page 4 for more information about PBIS.

*Please help...*

Part of the PBIS program at MP involves recognizing students for their achievements. We are in need of donations for small rewards. Please contact your child's teacher to make a donation

## **Parent Coffee**

Friday, January 25, 2008  
9 am at Myers Park Art Gallery  
come meet Jennifer Fox, parent advocate and chair of the School Leadership Team at MPHS. Jennifer will meet with parents to discuss the School Improvement Plan.



### **Occupational Course of Study News**

#### ***Ms. Brown's Class***

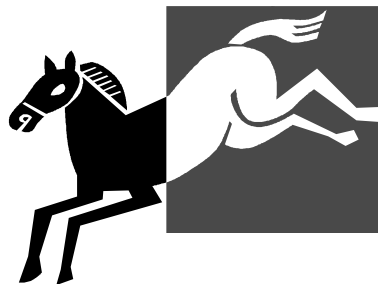
During the month of October, students attended the Carolina Renaissance Festival. Hundreds of costumed participants re-created the atmosphere of a European Market Fair with royal shenanigans and amusing antics designed to entertain and engage you. Students learned about the different areas of the festival including food preparation, rides and entertainment, acting and cashier job opportunities.

Also in October, several students joined a private rescue group for cats and dogs called Safe Animal Haven to teach elementary students about being responsible pet owners. Students were responsible for making signs, creating and organizing the performance. Our students practiced on a presentation for several weeks performing dance steps and a rap song about how to be responsible. Students performance taught all who attended the basic steps in caring for their pets at home. Our students learned about planning, organization, responsibility and how a private business is owned and operated.

### ***Thank you!***

To our Community Base Training Partners

- The Raptor Center
- Misty Meadows
- Food Lion – South Blvd
- Harris Teeter – Park Selwyn
- The Place at South Park
- Family Dollar – South Blvd
- Radio Disney – WGFY 1480
- Adult Care & Share Center
- Friendship Trays
- Park & Rec
- Carolina's Medical Center
- Animal Control Bureau – CMPD
- Harris YMCA
- Classroom Central



### **Volunteer Opportunity in the EC Department**

In order to enhance our students' skills in community based training, we are looking for ideas to help students design and market a craft for the holiday season. We need parent volunteers to help develop and implement this idea at Myers Park. Please contact your student's EC teacher for more information.

### **Welcome to Myers Park!**

EC Open House  
for Prospective Families

March 12, 2008 4-6 pm  
Art Gallery

### **Community Based Training Ms. Zalecki's Class**

Students continue job training at various places in Charlotte. They work in the cafeteria, stock drinks, cups, candy, salads, desserts and fruit cups at Carolina's Medical Center on Tuesdays. On Fridays, students work at various parks around Charlotte for Parks and Recreation. In addition, one student is training to stock shelves at Harris Teeter on Thursdays.

In October, the class participated in the roller skating event at the Special Olympics. There are two field trips for November: the class will visit ImaginOn where they will see the teen room and apply for library cards and the class will visit the Body Works display at Discovery Place.

A grant has been awarded from ArtsTeach. In March, students will work with the Light Factory to complete a visual diary and learn about the basics of photography. They will learn how to operate a camera, use correct lighting and make a self portrait. Students will work with "Bluz" Rogers, a local poet to put words to the photographs. Each student will choose four of their favorite works and display them in window frames. The work will be exhibited at the Light Factory in July 2008.

About CMS's initiatives for Inclusion:  
[www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/)

About the NC Occupational Course of Study:  
[www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/ECFactSheet.pdf](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/exceptionalChildren/ECFactSheet.pdf)

About EC initiatives at MPHS:  
[www.mphs-pts.org/pdfs/School\\_leadership\\_team.pdf](http://www.mphs-pts.org/pdfs/School_leadership_team.pdf)



### Questions and Answers about PBIS

**1. What is PBIS?** Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a process for creating safer and more effective schools. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students, all staff, and in all settings.

**2. Can schools purchase a new PBIS program?** No. PBIS is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior. PBIS is not new; it is based on a long history of behavioral practices and effective instructional design and strategies.

**3. What is the difference between behavior management and PBIS?** Traditional behavior management focuses on eliminating undesired behavior with punishment. PBIS focuses on teaching, modeling, practicing, and reinforcing desired behaviors. Different and more intense instructional strategies are used with students who struggle with behavior, just the same as schools help students who struggle with academics.

#### **4. What are the three components of PBIS?**

- **SYSTEMS:**  
Schools focus on consistent teaching and reinforcing good behavioral skills.
- **PRACTICES:**  
Schools use proven teaching strategies to improve student academic and behavioral skills.
- **DATA:**  
Schools collect their own information to help decide how to best manage their own students, staff, and settings.

**5. How do we collect timely and accurate data at the school level?** PBIS schools utilize the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to make decisions about discipline systems. SWIS is a web-based information system used to improve behavior support in elementary, middle, and high schools. Schools are trained in the use of SWIS when they implement PBIS.

**6. Does PBIS use different approaches to different behavior problems?** PBIS uses the science of behavior to model, teach, and practice socially appropriate behavior in the places where students learn and staff teaches. Three systems are designed to make problem behavior less rewarding and teach desired behavior.

**7. What three PBIS systems operate in a school?** These three systems operate in a school and are phased in over time:

- **Universal (Primary) Systems:** Staff develop, model, teach, and reinforce expectations, rules, and routines to prevent initial occurrences of problem behavior throughout the school. All students learn, practice, and are supported for displaying positive behavior.
- **Target Group (Secondary) Systems:** Staff are provided support to implement interventions for students who are having difficulty learning the rules and routines of the universal system and who are at risk for more serious problem behavior. Interventions at the secondary level may include such practices as Social Skills Club, Check In/Check Out systems, or a Behavior Education Plan. These can be used for small groups of student or individually for simple ongoing behavior problems.
- **Intense Individual (Tertiary) Systems:** The focus is on the needs and characteristics of individual students and specific circumstances related to them. These are students who exhibit behavior that are highly disruptive, and/or impede learning and result in social or educational exclusion.

#### **8. What are CMS plans for Implementation of PBIS?**

PBIS is open for all schools district-wide. CMS will offer unique training and technical support to schools. Because this is a process, it takes at least three years to implement all systems, levels, and components of PBIS within a school.