

FOCUS

Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE 2008

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES MAY ~ OCTOBER 2008

May 23
Jimmy Buffet Day at the school.

May 26
Memorial Day
All Programs Closed

May 28
Graduation Ceremony for Eric &
Dustin at Starlight School

May 30
School Talent Show

June 20
MSI Annual Picnic
At the YMCA (formerly Armco Park)

June 4
Last Day for Students at Starlight
School

July 4
Independence Day
All Programs Closed

August 18
All Preschool Medicals are due

August 24
Professional Day
All Programs Closed

August 25
First Day back to school for
Starlight Students

September 1
Labor Day
All Programs Closed

October 12
Columbus Day
All Programs Closed

LET'S PLAY BALL

John Hill - Superintendent



That phrase will be ringing out in the near future as the Muskingum Valley Miracle League nears completion of a new ball diamond on property adjacent to the Starlight Program campus on Newark Road. The property was leased to the Miracle League group by the County Commissioners in 2007 to build the field and facilities to offer children and young adults an opportunity to participate in the game of baseball. The sports complex should draw participants from several regional counties.

The Miracle League idea began in Georgia several years ago in an effort to provide a place and means for children with disabilities to play organized baseball with their peers. The idea has spread throughout the country and through the efforts of Fred Grant and Caribeth Legats with the help of several community clubs and individuals through public and private funding, this dream will become a reality for many children and young adults in the Muskingum Valley area.

The concept is simple. Teams of children and young adults will play baseball on a totally accessible field with the assistance of "buddies" to help them as needed while friends and family watch. This simple idea has taken much planning and work of the Miracle League Board of Directors including Dan McVey, Bill Hill, Tim McLain, Del Dunlap, Mike Lynch, John Hill and Caribeth Legats. This group has guided the planning of the accessible facility including the rubberized surface, bleachers, lighting, support building housing restrooms and snack bar and the parking area.

The construction began last fall and should conclude this summer. Opening day ceremonies will be planned to kick off the use of the field. Teams will be organized soon and volunteers will be recruited to help. If any one is interested in participating as a player or as a buddy, please contact Caribeth Legats at 740.453.0315.

FROM SUPPORT AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Service Coordination Department has a couple of topics for the newsletter:

1) Provider/Health Fair:

Service Coordinators participated in the Starlight Provider/Health Fair on Monday, March 17, 2008. The Provider/Health Fair was for Starlight enrollees as well as some identified community members with disabilities to participate and hopefully gain benefit. Our goal was to give people the chance to meet various agencies that provide services in the areas of homemaker and personal care, day services as well as making information available related to healthy life choices. If you recognized this event as a benefit to individuals, please let us know. This may become an annual event.

2) Realigning case loads for Service Coordinators:

We will be re-looking Service Coordinator's case load assignments this spring. Due to individuals moving, changing providers and life in general, we need to make sure Service Coordinators are using their time as efficiently as possible. For example, we attempt to be sure there is only one Service Coordinator visiting a home in which several people live together. We know this is extremely difficult for individuals to adjust to and accept so we will attempt to make as few changes as possible.

If you have a question related to Service Coordination that you would like answered, please feel free to contact me at dfountain@muskingumrdd.org or call me at 740.453.4829.

Starlight Programs Operation Feed Campaign

Operation Feed is an annual community wide food drive sponsored by The Muskingum County Hunger Network and United Way of Muskingum, Perry and Morgan Counties. Food and monies collected from Operation Feed is divided between eighteen food pantries and four hot meal programs. Starlight Programs have been busy planning and executing many different fund raising events to raise money for the Operation Feed Campaign. We have collected many cans of food and raised \$1219.73 so far. The Operation Feed Campaign continues until May 17th. The MSI Employee Council has held a hotdog sale and also a root beer float sale. They are also planning a car wash to be held in May. The different departments that make up Starlight Programs have run numerous fund raising events including an eggo-gram, jean day, cabbage roll sale, and etc. There is also collection boxes located in all buildings for donated food items. The MSI volunteer group has several dates planned to assist with the sorting of the collected food that will then be distributed to the different food pantries. As you can imagine, it has been a very busy two months for those involved in planning and implementing the fund raising events. This extra effort is always justified by experiencing the generosity and support of the Starlight employees, students, and enrollees and there families.

MRDD Awareness Month



March was MRDD Awareness Month not only here in Muskingum County but across Ohio and the nation. This is a time when Starlight Programs focuses on encouraging the public to better understand the individuals we serve. This year the theme was;

Success! When doors open - we succeed. I may have a developmental disability but I can vote, I can volunteer, I can be a neighbor, I can work, and I can be a friend!

Starlight Programs celebrated March MRDD Awareness Month by sponsoring several events and activities to raise public awareness of the many abilities people have, regardless of their disability.

John Hill, Superintendent and Sandy Knicely, Recreation Specialist appeared on WHIZ TV's "Live at Noon" on February 29th with Brian Wagner to promote MRDD Awareness events and activities. Public Service Announcements could be heard on many radio stations with Eric and Thelma from Starlight School and MSI sharing what they like about the Starlight Programs. Audrey Foster, Board Member also helped with our awareness campaign by taping two Public Service Announcement from the point of view of a parent.



We hope you had a chance to see Lavina on the billboards located on Maple Ave. and James Street and also on Maysville Pike at King Street. Lavina works at the Java Hut and was giving the thumbs up with a big smile to show everyone how much she likes her job. Lavina enjoys many of the same things we do; taking pictures with her digital camera and putting them in a scrap book, playing country music especially Brooks and Dunn and listening to her sister sing in a local band.

On May 17th Saint Patrick's Day, Starlight Programs and Northside Pharmacy sponsored a Health and Provider Fair for our students, enrollees and their families. The Health Fair was coordinated by Kathy German, Wellness Coordinator for Northside Pharmacy and the provider fair by Dee Fountain. Providers shared with Health Fair goers' information about their agencies and the types of services they provide such a homemaker personal care and transportation services. Over 40 vendors attended bringing information on Diabetes, nutrition, why proper fitting shoes is important to prevent



knee and foot pain and how to deal with difficult behaviors at home. Fair goers toured the Smoke House which was manned by the Falls Township Fire Department to learn how to get out of a burning building. Community Ambulance and Falls Rescue Squad was available for students and enrollees

continued on pg. 4



to see the inside of an ambulance. Everyone had a chance to win some very nice door prizes donated by the vendors by playing Shamrock Bingo. Participants had the vendors mark their Bingo card as they went to each table and then the winning card was drawn from the "Pot of Gold" at the end of the day.

Other events that took place in March and brought awareness to our community was the MSI Employee Council's Applebee's Pancake Breakfast on March 29th and the Special Olympics Basketball Fun Day with the Tigers playing the Times Recorder and WHIZ WHIZARDS was held on March 15th. March was a big month for the Tigers, as they played in the Special Olympics State Tournament for the second year in a row.



EARLY INTERVENTION, PRESCHOOL, AND SCHOOL AGE SERVICES

The 2007-08 School year is quickly ending. IEPS are finished and graduation plans are in progress. We have two graduates this year, Dustin Wickham and Eric Schrack. Both young men are very involved with activities both in and out of school and will be greatly missed by everyone here at the school.

The end of the year always brings many exciting activities. Preschool classes were able to spend the day at the Wilds. The animals were out and were seen easily by the students! Jimmy Buffet Day is May 23, a special thanks to Marcia Owen who has brought this tradition to us. Classes 5, 6 and UL I will be going to Kidzville for a day of fun and the two oldest classes will be finishing their year with a trip to Sunrise Bowling. Starlight students and staff will also be showing off their talents during the annual Talent Show on Friday, May 30.

During the school year, the School Age students were able to use the swimming pool at the Field House. Classes took turns going and both played and worked in the pool. Laura Crouse, our Physical Therapy Assistant, made sure everyone was active and moving. Our youngest school age class will be going for the first time May 16.

Our Early Invention program has been busy trying to get schedules adjusted for the summer. Our program was chosen to be the Developmental Evaluation & Assessment Team for Muskingum County by the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention. This is a pilot program developed to provide timely evaluations and assessments for our local Help Me Grow children under Part C regulations.

Starlight School, Preschool and MSI are involved in a curriculum search. We are looking for one that would satisfy the requirements of each of our departments as well as the Ohio Departments of Education and MR/DD. The mission of this search is locate a means to assist our students and adults transition easier for one class or department to other and with consistency between each.

Our most unfortunate news we need to share for the end of this school year is that Starlight School will not be hosting a summer camp. We had hoped to link with the YMCA and their summer camp, but we were unable to register enough campers to do so.

Hope your summer is safe and fun!



Notes from the Shop

As many of you may realize Muskingum Starlight Industries (MSI) has been on the thin side of work over the past year. While not one to make excuses, I would like to point out a few outside forces that have contributed to the situation. The minimum wage at both the state and federal level has been and will be increased in the coming months. One doesn't have to go past the front page of the newspaper to know the economic forecast and employment figures for the nation let alone Muskingum County.

I understand our employees don't care what we call it. Like many Americans they just see it in their paycheck. Last month, I had the opportunity to hear a presentation from the Port Authority. Part of their message was that they understood what was in the press and government figures regarding the current state of the economy but despite the stories and numbers, they choose to have an optimistic outlook.

Hopefully, optimism and some hard work by me and the other members of my management team will turn this thing around. My message today is to give you some idea of what we have done and will be doing to bring employment and paychecks for those who want to earn one. I have registered MSI as a contractor for the federal and state government. We have already used that registration to make a bid cleaning The United States Army Reserve Center in Zanesville; a bid which we did not win. I have ongoing meetings scheduled with the Voinovich Center located at Ohio University to learn more about the government bidding processes. We also bid on a job for Bilco a company which supplies basement doors and other similar products for home and industrial applications. The bid was accepted and soon we will begin bundling torsion rods for use in the installation of their basement doors. While nothing is ever definite they have said this project may lead to more work for them. We have completed a few packaging jobs consisting of assorted screws for Fastnel a company that sells a variety of fasteners, hopefully they will be returning as an ongoing customer.

We also continue to do work for Heritage Stone, Allegra Print & Image, General Graphics, Offinger Management and Russett Printing and Cerco Diamonite. OT901609 Diversified Industries, the sheltered workshop for Cambridge Developmental Center has also shared work with us. I hope this gives you some idea of what we are doing to secure work for our employees. As I said earlier, it doesn't matter what we call it economic downturn, sluggish economy, or recession. The fact is we need to work harder and smarter to maintain the jobs we have and find new ones regardless of economic conditions.

Volunteer Group

The Volunteer Group has had a very busy spring. We continue to volunteer at several nursing facilities in the area. We go to Genesis Extended Care on Tuesday's, where we join in and assist the residents there with completing assorted crafts. We have many regulars in the group and have developed wonderful relationships. We also go to Adams Lane where we do crafts, play cards and socialize with the residents. Every other Wednesday, we assist

the residents from the Beckett House with playing Bingo. Several of the residents there would not be able to participate in playing Bingo if our volunteers were not there to assist them. The Volunteer Group continues to serve lunch at Christ's Table on Friday's. The staff there has "adopted" us and will surprise us with signs of encouragement and congratulations for the volunteers that participate in the Special Olympic Events.

As always in the spring, the volunteer group is involved in sorting the food collected during the Operation Feed Campaign. This year, we are scheduled to help sort food on six different dates. We have also assisted by making food collection boxes and cutting out donation plates for the campaign theme of "Filling Plates in 2008".

The Volunteer Group remains a fun and rewarding activity for the enrollees involved.

The Adult Day Program says... Let's go outdoors!!

Hello to all, hope this article finds you OUTDOORS!!

We in the Adult Day Program have been more than happy to have the opportunity to be outside enjoying some beautiful weather!! Spring has sprung and so have we!!

I'm sure you have heard the expression; a picture paints a thousand words, well rather than take up too much space typing, we

would like to share our recent day of fun in the sun right here on the Newark Road Campus in the courtyard!!

...until the next time...ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS!!



Habilitation Services

With a flick of the wrist, and a tapping of the correct keys, Brian started up the computer. The time had come for his weekly adventure on the Internet. Two of his favorite things to look up are the "Cleveland Indians" (even when they are losing) and the upcoming attractions at the "Muskingum County Fair."

Out of all the services offered by the Habilitation Services of Starlight Industries, computer class has become the most popular. Most recently, the individuals we work with

continued on pg. 7

have opted for making Mother's Day cards. This provides an opportunity to practice using the mouse, and fine tuning those keyboard skills. More importantly, it offers a creative outlet for expressing thoughts and feelings through written words. Carmen, for one, has spent a considerable amount of time writing a letter to an out-of-town relative. She has needed very little assistance. And with the ability to save her work to file, Carmen takes pride in her continuing efforts.

The Laubach Learn to Read Series is still a favorite with many of the adults. Alisha's very first lesson brought immediate success. After reciting every word on a vocabulary list, she quickly incorporated all of these into a related story. On the other side of the spectrum, Shoni has nearly completed all four books. In the fourth and last reader, she has learned about the great scientist and inventor, George Washington Carver, and Terry Fox, the young man who attempted to run across Canada on one leg to raise cancer awareness.

Some of the other regularly scheduled habilitation classes include money and budgeting, math skills, counting and identifying numbers, telling time, writing, cooking, safety skills, interpersonal skills, and socialization groups. A monthly bereavement group is offered at both workshops for people who need support during times of loss and other traumatic change.

If you are interested in knowing more about any of these offerings or have some ideas to share for brand new classes, make sure to bring this up at your next team meeting. Don't miss out on the fun and excitement of these learning opportunities. As Mary said, "it's (the computer) fun and I like making things and playing games."

Recreational

(FUN DAY HOOPLA)

A basketball "Fun Day" was held on March 15th, 2008 starting at the James Singer Center, on Matthews Street. The Special Olympics basketball skills group started the day by showing off their fundamental talents that they honed during the season. The events used to display their skills were the Target Pass, Dribbling and Shooting. Everyone enjoyed performing their talents for the audience. The main event of the day was the basketball game between the Special Olympic "Tigers" against the WHIZ/Times Recorder "WHIZARDS". The Tigers eked out a win with a nail biting one point victory. The final tally was 43-42. At half-time there was a raffle, with an Archie Griffin picture, an Ohio State hockey T-shirt and a Special Olympic quilt made and donated by our own Jessie Owens' grandmother Carol Robinson. Thank you Mrs. Robinson! Over \$400.00 was raised by the raffle and concessions. The day ended with a pizza party and the Knights of Columbus "Free Throw Contest" at the Starlight School and Gymnasium.



In the beginning of May we attended track meets at Steubenville and Columbus with 45 athletes attending, each meet. Thank you to all the volunteers and bus drivers who helped us arrive safely to those events. We also hosted a cycling event on May 16th at the OUZ parking lot. To start our summer and end our season, we will attend the State Summer Games held June 27th thru 29th, with 13 athletes. Good luck to all who qualified to attend!

Muskingum
County
Board of M.R.D.D

1304 Newark Rd
Zanesville, Ohio 43701

Board Members

Ernest E. Bynum, President
Dr. John Hoyes, Vice President
Audrey Foster, Secretary
Robert E. Brandford
Caribeth Legats
Kevin Kanavel
Barbara Russell

Superintendent

John E. Hill

MISSION STATEMENT

Working in partnership with individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, providing opportunities utilizing public and private supports, to live, learn, work, and play in the community.

