

The Mid-State Messenger

February 2021

Self-care and Mindfulness Training



On December 11, 2020 Lisa Harrod, Superintendent of Manteno District #5, provided 38 MSSE staff with a powerful and timely mindfulness training focusing on self-care. As a leader, educational consultant and former SLP, Lisa fully understands the stress educators experience on a daily basis. During the training she shared the physical symptoms of stress and explained how stretching, laughing, and celebrating can guard us from its negative impact. Lisa will be taking a deeper dive and leading us through virtual stress management, self-care, mindset, and coping strategies over the next four months. These virtual trainings will be held from **11:30 - 12:30 on 2/10, 3/10, and 4/14**. The link will be sent to all MSSE employees and anyone else who is interested in improving their mental and physical health. Training sessions will also be recorded for those who are unable to join us in the middle of the school day. We hope you can take advantage of this training series and spend a few hours focusing on yourself.

Legislation for Telehealth Speech

Bipartisan legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Rep. would provide audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) permanent authority to provide telehealth services to Medicare beneficiaries. The Expanded Telehealth Access Act (H.R. 8755) would ensure continuity of care once the public health emergency expires.



Employee Spotlight



These ladies do an outstanding job of meeting the needs of our 13 member districts and keeping MSSE running smoothly. Among

their many duties, Tammy Burney, Shera Hunt, Liz Holcomb, Shay Jones, and Vickie Throne ensure that all required data is entered into I-Star, manage student data, maintain accounting records, complete ISBE reporting, and support all MSSE and district staff. We are fortunate to have such a competent group of individuals working to help us meet the needs of students. Thank you!

First Book

Jamie Heldebrandt, Special Education Teacher at Morrisonville Elementary, is thankful for a fantastic resource called First Book that has allowed her to build her classroom library. By joining First Book on Facebook, teachers and school staff can receive codes for items on the First Book Marketplace and the opportunity to purchase books for next to nothing. Books are available for a variety of age ranges, reading levels, and topics and have been arriving to MES by the caseloads. All of the books pictured here have come from First Book and students love being able to have their own books to use at school and to keep at home. Check it out at www.firstbook.org!



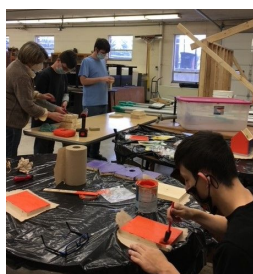
Screen Time Vision Concerns

April Wilson, Vision Itinerant, has screen time concerns, especially now that we all rely on technology with our services/instruction. Doing what we can to limit screen time is even more important now. Eye doctors across the nation are seeing a 40% increase in children/students getting eye glasses for the first time and that % number is directly related to the amount of device usage for remote learning. April's tip is called 20/20/20. After 20 minutes on the device, STOP, focus on something at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This gives the eyes time to reset their focus and gain some normalcy before going back to the device, repeat. She suggests we all do this; not just students.

Making Memories & Birdhouses



Lisa Lomprez (Special Education Teacher at HHS) and Laura Snyder (MSSE Transition Specialist) are pictured with Jack on his last day of school after completing his transition program. On this day Jack was so excited to make and decorate Christmas cookies to give to his family. Before heading off to his job at IGA, Jack thanked Mrs. Lomprez and Mrs. Snyder for all their help and shared how much he will miss them. Jack has many wonderful memories of his time in school thanks to the wonderful teachers and staff he has encountered along the way. Below Mrs. Lomprez's class is busy at their new business - making birdhouses!



Spreading Joy while Quarantined: Power of Laughter



Even though Mr. Wygal was on quarantine he still found ways to brighten the days of students and staff. Mr. Wygal participated in school spirit activities virtually (his students were very glad to see him!). During a zoom meeting he brought smiles to team members by sporting his STL Cardinals Santa hat which of course prompted Mrs. Rozmisłowicz to put on her Chicago Cubs Santa hat!

It's true: laughter is strong medicine. It draws people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body. Laughter strengthens your immune system, boosts mood, diminishes pain, and protects you from the damaging effects of stress. Nothing works faster or more dependably to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh. Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hope, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert. It also helps you release anger and forgive sooner. The ability to laugh easily and frequently is a tremendous resource for surmounting problems, enhancing relationships, and supporting physical and emotional health. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use. As children, we used to laugh hundreds of times a day, but as adults, life tends to be more serious. Seeking out more opportunities for humor and laughter improves your emotional health, strengthens relationships, helps you find greater happiness—and even add years to your life (article from help guide).

Check out our new website at www.midstatespec.org

