



The Mid-State Messenger

February 2022

Low Vision Awareness Month



Low vision is when even with regular glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery, people have difficulty seeing, which makes everyday tasks difficult to do.

Activities that used to be simple like reading

the mail, shopping, cooking, and writing can become challenging. Most people with low vision are age 65 or older. The leading causes of vision loss in older adults are age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, cataract, and glaucoma. Among younger people, vision loss is most often caused by inherited eye conditions, infectious and autoimmune eye diseases, or trauma. For people with low vision, maximizing their remaining sight is key to helping them continue to live safe, productive, and rewarding lives.

Life Changing Donation

Lucas Houser is a 14 year old freshman at Greenville, IL High School. He suffers from a rare visual impairment called Retinal Dystrophy with heterogenous pathogenic RPE 65 mutation. He is one of 2,000 people in America who has this eye impairment. He has severe night blindness, a compromised visual acuity that does not allow him to see objects, sometimes clearly and other times not at all at a distance. He reads print materials at

very close range. Four years ago Lucas was given the opportunity to try on the eSight glasses. The cost was far more than his grandparents (guardians) could possibly afford. He never forgot the experience of how he “could see” with those glasses. Fast forward to this fall where Lucas was reintroduced to the eSight eyewear and able to test the product over a two week period. His very first words were, “They are life changing”!!! He has had two weeks to wear the glasses at school and home on a trial basis. Thanks to a generous donation from Darts for Kids Lucas now has his own eSight glasses. Bob Hudzik, who created and oversees the non-profit Darts for Kids Foundation, has raised thousands of dollars over the past 11 years to help children who have special needs. Bob's foundation provided \$3,500 for the eSight eyewear and from there he was able to obtain \$1,000 from the Veteran's foundation and the rest of the money came from individual donors.



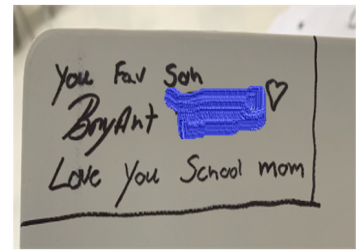
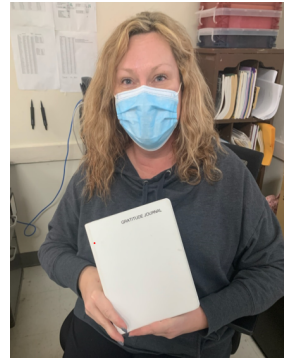
Thank you to Bob Hudzik and the Darts for Kids Foundation!!

Swinging through the Days

Lindsey Gibbs, a true advocate for her students, as well as a very dedicated teacher, wanted her wheelchair-bound students to be able to enjoy the fun of swinging with their peers while outside at recess. So she requested and helped research an appropriate swing. Litchfield's curriculum director added it to the IDEA grant and it was ordered. Thanks to their efforts, you can see one of the students at Litchfield elementary excited to use the new wheelchair-accessible swing to enjoy the outside weather with his peers.



making great progress with building relationships. Using these linked [Character Education](#) slides, she is able to start the hard conversations and has also incorporated a gratitude journal for her students. If ever there was proof that she is reaching those hard to crack cases, the first 2 entries in her new Gratitude Journal are from some of her toughest students. Keep striving for these relationships with your students because they're worth it!



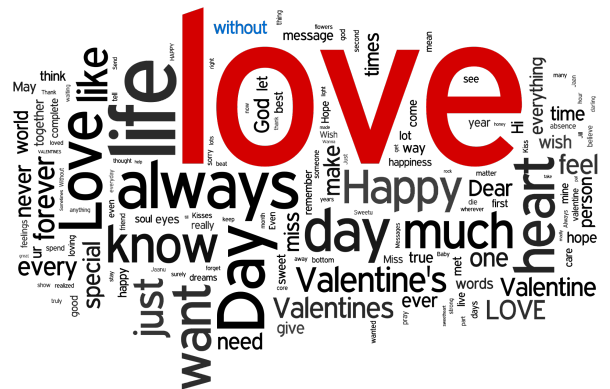
Social/Emotional Curriculum

Mulberry Grove Elementary School has continued their social/emotional curriculum with important lessons about emotions. Students learned about different parts of their brains and which areas control different emotions. Students were able to identify what emotions look like on their faces and they were able to identify what emotion they were feeling. Students discussed what to do before speaking and they talked about being present in the moment. Lastly, the students were able to identify where they were standing emotionally so they could decide on where they would like to go next.



Gratitude Journal

As teachers, we make it one of our very top priorities to build relationships with our students. Some come easy and some are constant works in progress that we feel we may never reach. Lisa Whisler, Special Education Teacher at South Fork High School, has some very tough cases to crack. Through perseverance and the right tools, she is



May this month of February and every month be filled with love, kindness and grace.