

the Nessenger

News from *Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV*

Summer 2014 Edition

Becky Plymale Receives Annie Sullivan Award



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU IV) honored Becky Plymale with the Annie Sullivan Award at their Board of Directors meeting on May 28, 2014. Becky has served as a Hearing Impaired Support teacher at MIU IV for 30 years.

Plymale is the 27th recipient of the Annie Sullivan Award named for Helen Keller's teacher. The award

was established by MIU IV's Labor and Management Committee to recognize an educator who shows care, concern and skill in helping students with special needs gain acceptance in their schools and communities. She was nominated for this honor by her colleagues and students.

Throughout her career with MIU IV, Ms. Plymale has taught students with hearing impairments at all grade levels in many different schools in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties. This year, she is an itinerant teacher based in an MIU IV classroom in the Seneca Valley School District.

"Most of us have had one teacher who crossed our path during our educational career that made a lasting impression on our lives and the lives of our students," said Toby Woodward, MIU IV Director of Special Education. "I have found Becky Plymale to be one of those teachers."

"Becky has experienced significant transition since I first met her," said Woodward. "Throughout her transitions, she never lost sight of the students. She continued to advocate for their needs and think outside the box to deliver services to them. She is definitely a champion for her students."

Shawn M. Crawford, a student at Slippery Rock University and one of Plymale's former students, described some of the lessons that he has learned from Plymale in a nomination letter.

"Ms. Plymale reminds me to advocate," said Crawford. "She has brought teaching to a high standard. Challenging her students is her top priority. She has been a great role model for me and many of her other students. She truly deserves the Annie Sullivan Award."



MIU IV is on Facebook! "Like" our page at www.facebook.com/MIUIV to receive updates about programs, services, and events.

Dear Friends,

To me, one of the most impressive aspects of Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is one that not many people know about. Although we don't trumpet this to the public, our organization is very civic-minded, and for years has run numerous fundraisers for various charities and public service providers. Each month during the school year, we sponsor internal fundraising opportunities for our employees. Those who participate are permitted to wear jeans on a designated Friday, but this inducement does not begin to explain the level of participation that we normally enjoy.

This IU has raised, literally, tens of thousands of dollars over just this school year, with recipients ranging from homeless relief organizations to the Heart Association to Special Olympics. We are aware that, one way or another, our work at the Intermediate Unit is supported by public tax dollars. Therefore, even if we felt no other obligation to do charitable works, we would feel the financial obligation to give back. The fact is, though, that we do feel other obligations to our community.

On an individual basis, and as a public entity, we care about our neighbors and want to help them. Partially, this is a product of our employee makeup. Most people go into education as a career because they care about kids, they care about education, and they care about their community. We express this through the work that we do with school districts, children, and families. In Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV we also express this by participating in these marvelous opportunities to support outside entities, with our work, with our time, and with our money.

Watch this space in future editions of our newsletter for more of my own news and observations. As always, thank you for your interest and support!

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MIU IV Offers Summer Camps for Young Engineers, Singers, and Dancers

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU IV) is hosting two new summer day camps for children; Bricklab Zoo Summer Camp and Movement and Music Performing Arts Camp. Each week-long program promises to provide enrichment, fun, and new challenges for children in a variety of age groups. All camps will be held at Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, 453 Maple Street, Grove City, PA 16127.

Young animal and Lego enthusiasts entering grades 1 through 3 will love MIU IV's Bricklab Zoo Summer Camp. Campers will learn about animals and their habitats while building models of their furry friends out of bricks. By the end of camp, students will get to imagine and create their own brick creature. Bricklab Zoo Summer Camp will take place from July 21 through 25 from 8:30am until 12:30pm each day. The cost is \$100. Registration materials can be downloaded at <http://www.miu4.org/summer.camps/summer.camps.asp>. Registration deadline is June 30.

"We are excited to offer such an enriching program for young children," said Justi Glaros, MIU IV's Director of Distance Education and Educational Planning. "While they are having fun and meeting new friends, students may or may not realize that they are learning about science and technology and valuable 21st century skills like critical thinking, communication and collaboration."

Performing artists entering grades 5 through 9 interested in dance, theatre, and music are sure to enjoy Movement and Music Summer Camp. This unique day camp was created by the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, master voice teacher Diana Walters, and Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. Throughout the week, students will learn how to use their bodies, voices, and minds to prepare for performance in dance, theatre, and music. Regardless of skill level and experience in dance and music, students are sure to learn something new. Participants will work on dance and music activities and present what they are learning at a demonstration for their family and friends at a showcase on the final day of camp. Movement and Music Summer Camp will be held from August 11 through 15 from 9:00am until 3:00pm. Cost is \$230 for those who register on or before June 30. After that the price will be \$245 per student. The registration fee includes a t-shirt, lunch, drinks, snacks, certificate, and memory book. Registration materials can be downloaded at <http://www.miu4.org/summer.camps/summer.camps.asp>.

"Students who participate in Movement and Music Summer Camp will have the opportunity to receive world-class dance and music instruction," said MIU IV Director of Communications, Jill Manczka. "The instructors from the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Mrs. Walters are truly the best in the business. They have extensive experience in both performance and teaching. They will focus on creativity, technique, and self-confidence on the stage. The students are promised a fun and memorable week."



Questions about MIU IV's Summer Camps can be directed to Jill Manczka at 724-458-6700 ext. 1255 or Justi Glaros at 724-458-6700 ext. 1224.

Summer Events@ MIU IV

Bricklab Zoo Summer Day Camp
July 21 - 25, 2014
8:30am-12:30pm
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV



**Movement & Music Summer
Performing Arts Day Camp**
August 11-15, 2014
9:00am-3:00pm
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV
Grove City High School



SPAC Annual Conference
June 30 - July 2, 2014
Seven Springs Mountain Resort



Annual All Staff Inservice Day
August 18, 2014
8:00am - 3:30pm
Grove City High School



MIU IV Best Practices Meeting
Special Education Staff Only
August 19, 2014
Butler Intermediate High School
8:30am - 3:30pm



Best Practices Week Activities
Special Education Staff Only
August 20, 21, & 22
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV
8:30am - 3:30pm

All Fun and Games Until Students Learn

Is your school district seeking an innovative, engaging approach to teaching 21st century career skills? Are teachers, parents, and administrators seeking course content that encourages critical thinking, leadership, and responsibility while teaching valuable academic skills? Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV has partnered with Zulama to provide a solution.

Created by faculty at Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center, Zulama offers an exclusive online program for middle school and high school students that focuses on video game design. The semester long courses are centered on programming, 3D art, and digital story telling.

"Even though Zulama's courses focus specifically on game design, students learn many other important skills," said Justi Glaros, MIU IV's Director of Distance Education and Educational Planning. "The courses ensure that students are learning 21st century career skills like collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving while mastering content across the curriculum as defined by the Common Core Standards."

Zulama's courses were designed around a project-based approach to learning. Although the content is online, offline activities and regular interactions between faculty and students are necessary. Formative and authentic assessments are embedded into the curriculum allowing teachers and administrators to analyze student learning.

Through a partnership with MIU IV, school districts may purchase Zulama licenses at a discounted rate. In addition, MIU IV partners will receive high level training for faculty and staff. Joining the consortium with MIU IV will allow districts to begin offering Zulama's courses as early as the fall of 2014. However, implementation may start at the beginning of the second semester.

"Once districts make the decision to implement Zulama, we will support them every step of the way," said Glaros, who recently became a certified Zulama trainer. "We will provide training and guidance to inspire teachers, help meet technology specifications, and assist in implementing courses successfully."

To learn more or to join the MIU IV and Zulama partnership, district administrators should contact Justi Glaros at 724-458-6700 ext. 1224 or via e-mail at justi.glaros@miu4.org.



Film Screenings and Art Exhibit Raise Awareness About Youth Homelessness

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, the Midwestern Arts & Humanities Foundation, and Region 5 of Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) are proud to present a brand new opportunity to raise awareness



and provide arts in education. On November 20, 2014 at 6:00pm, the groups will host concurrent film screenings and student art shows at four locations in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties of the Academy Award winning documentary, *Inocente*. The film is about a homeless teenager who refused to give up on her dream of becoming an artist.

Students in art classes for grades 5-12 from schools in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties are invited to participate in the Fall of 2014 by submitting Creative Reuse artwork for display at the film screenings.

Creative Reuse is an art form where artists use existing, unwanted, unused, recycled, or repurposed items to create pieces of art. MIU IV will begin collecting artwork in October to be displayed at the November 20th film screenings.

"The committee chose to feature the Creative Reuse art to illustrate that, like *Inocente* and other homeless children, an artist can be creative without purchasing expensive supplies," said Jill Manczka, MIU IV's Director of Communications and *Inocente* project co-leader. "There are so many unwanted or under-utilized items all around us that can be made into something beautiful. The *Inocente* exhibit is sure to illustrate that."

The November 20 film screenings/art exhibits are free and open to the public. Attendees can view the art exhibit and watch the *Inocente* film. Refreshments will be provided. Donations will be accepted to provide opportunities in arts education for area homeless children.

Teachers who are interested in encouraging or requiring their students to submit Creative Reuse Artwork for the *Inocente* exhibits can obtain an official "Call for Entries" by contacting Jill Manczka via e-mail at jill.manczka@miu4.org or by phone at 724-458-6700 ext. 1255.

Students Sign Letters of Intent to Participate in Entrepreneurship Academy This Fall

On April 15, twenty-one high school juniors representing seven school districts in Mercer County signed formal letters of intent to participate in a unique, pilot program for high school seniors entitled, The Entrepreneurship Academy@LindenPointe. The commitment ceremony was held in conjunction with a program orientation for students and their parents at the eCenter@LindenPointe in Hermitage. Participating school districts include Commodore Perry, Farrell, Greenville, Hermitage, Sharpsville, Sharon, and West Middlesex.

Created by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU IV) in partnership with the eCenter@LindenPointe, the city of Hermitage, the Franklin Center of Beaver County, Community Connections and seven local school districts, The Entrepreneurship Academy@LindenPointe will begin on September 2, 2014 and continue through May 25, 2015. The program is funded in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Discovered in PA, Developed in PA (D2PA) program. D2PA was established by the Corbett administration in 2011 to better support Pennsylvania businesses and to spur creativity and innovation in economic development services. D2PA funds are used to promote entrepreneurship, encourage technology transfer, build capacity for regional economic development, and proactively reach out to and help businesses.

Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, MIU IV Curriculum Director, serves as the committee leader for the Academy. She conducted a comprehensive orientation for students, teachers, and parents prior to the formal commitment ceremony.

"The activities that we have planned for students will allow them to gain insight and skills foundational in becoming an Entrepreneur," said Cubelic. "Students will participate in investigations, activities, excursions, and creative problem solving activities, that will engage them in hands-on STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics] instruction."

Cubelic noted that the program schedule is non-traditional. "Students will attend regular classes in their home school districts in the morning every Monday through Thursday," she explained. "Each afternoon, they will be transported to the eCenter@LindenPointe for the remainder of the school day. Fridays are re-

served for excursions and other activities."

At the eCenter, students will engage in an entrepreneurship course through the Franklin Center and the Entrepreneurship Youth curriculum. The curriculum focuses on team building, personal inventory, goal development, public speaking, record keeping, communication, and the study of entrepreneurs. Guided by this curriculum, participants will have the opportunity to develop their own Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) business plan. These business plans will be presented to an eSTEAM panel of experts to be judged for potential startup. Each member of the winning team will receive a \$500 cash award.

"Their business plans will be created using teamwork," said Cubelic. "We will provide a coach to guide them through the business planning process. Students will create marketing plans, financial goals, projections summaries, and a vision for their company's future."

Along with business planning, students will participate in at least twenty group excursions. Visits to InventionLand, TechShop, Google, LaunchHouse, and the Energy Innovation Center are scheduled. In addition, a variety of guest speakers representing Western Pennsylvania businesses have been invited to address the Academy students.

"We are excited by the enthusiastic response that we received from students, teachers, and parents at the orientation," Cubelic said. "There has been an outcry from the Federal government and private business and industry to produce graduates who possess 21st Century skills and STEAM-related expertise. The activities that we've planned are sure to provide the students with the critical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st Century workforce."



Above: Students from Greenville Area School District sign Letters of Intent while Parents and school administrators observe.

Financial Management and SIS Software Offers Solutions for School Districts

Is your school district seeking a fully integrated software for financial and personnel management? Are your administrators, counselors, and teachers searching for an easy way to manage essential operations without sacrificing valuable time with students? Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and Tyler Technologies have partnered to provide a solution.

With MIU IV and Tyler Technologies, school districts may purchase one or two products that will drastically improve essential operations management at one affordable, consortium price.

The first product is Tyler Infinite Visions Suite; a fully integrated financial and personnel management software. Designed specifically for schools, Infinite Visions is a true K-12 multi-fund, modified accrual accounting system that is Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) compliant. The Infinite Visions Suite includes expert state reporting (PIMS), customizable data sorting, and comprehensive reporting.

The Infinite Visions Suite is accompanied by the iVisions Web Portal. Offering anytime, anywhere access for employees, the portal allows transactions typically handled by Human Resources to be completed online by employees. From their desktop computers or mobile devices, staff members can access employee communications, paystubs, personal attendance and leave information, and compensation data. In addition, staff members are guided through enrollment in employee benefits programs and life event benefit changes.

The second product available through the consortium is the Tyler Student Information Suite (SIS). This system allows district staff to manage all student information including attendance, discipline, grades, health records, standardized test data, registration information, and scheduling. Additionally, it provides parents and students access to a web portal where they will obtain essential student information.

District staff at all levels can securely access and update student information for state and local reporting and daily student management. Parents and guardians will have access to a web portal from either a desktop computer or mobile device to review real time information about their child's academic progress. At the same time, parents can use the portal as a platform to communicate with teachers and administrators. A student portal empowers learners to take an active role in their education by providing web-based and mobile access to homework assignments, progress reports, bus information, classroom assignments, and graduation plans.

"Tyler's system is state of the art and fully integrated," said MIU IV Director of Technology, Scott Powner. "It is more powerful than any school management product available now."

"Administrators, teachers, and other staff members spend a lot of time juggling daily operations while trying to meet the needs of their students," Powner continued. "Tyler's products are so powerful and intuitive that they enable staff members to spend less time managing daily operations and more time working with students to increase their achievement."

Districts who join the MIU IV and Tyler consortium will receive special, affordable pricing for one or both of these products. In addition, MIU IV's Information Technology department will maintain all servers, provide customized report writing, and serve as the first-line help desk. Additionally, MIU IV will provide data backup in the event of hardware failure, deliver high-level professional development to district staff, and assist with initial implementation.

"At MIU IV, we are prepared to be the statewide go-to center for these Tyler products," said Powner. "We are able to combine our expertise in technology, human resources, and student information management with Tyler's highly sophisticated products."



To learn more about joining the MIU IV/Tyler Technologies Consortium, school district officials should contact Scott Powner at 724-458-6700 ext. 1273 or via e-mail at scott.powner@miu4.org.

Spotlight on Services

Spotlight



The Messenger has a new feature entitled Spotlight on Services. The goal is to share information with MIU IV stakeholders about our high quality services and the dedicated staff members who deliver them. In the spotlight for the June, 2014 edition is MIU IV's Audiological Services team.

MIU IV's educational audiologists provide comprehensive services for students with hearing loss, their families, and school personnel. Services include evaluation, screening, identification, consultation, and counseling for students ages birth to 21 years.

Throughout Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties, MIU IV's audiologists conduct evaluations and screenings for students with hearing loss. In addition, they collaborate with team members to make recommendations for instructional strategies, environmental accommodations, and appropriate amplification.

The audiologists directly service students by performing listening needs assessments using questionnaires, performing classroom observations, and conducting parent intakes. Programming hearing aids, preparing FM systems, and taking impressions to properly fit children for hearing devices are common duties and functions of MIU IV's audiologists.

"All of our Audiological services are conducted in compliance with the Pennsylvania Department of Health's requirements," said Dean Hoffman, MIU IV Program Supervisor. "Our staff does an outstanding job delivering and implementing these services with fidelity and ensuring that all team members take an active role in the process."

Along with providing direct services to students, audiologists design and implement regular professional development activities for teachers, administrators, and other school district personnel. They work with school nurses on annual hearing screenings and coordinate with outside agencies to facilitate audiological and ontological care for hearing impaired students.

School districts who wish to access audiology services, should call Dean Hoffman 724-458-6700 ext. 1294 or 1267.

Making a Difference in Education: MIU IV's Audiology Services



Suzie Ivory – Prior to accepting employment at MIU IV in 1990, Suzie Ivory worked as a Clinical Audiologist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. She holds a Master's Degree in Audiology from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and maintains a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology from the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association. She services hearing impaired students in Lawrence County.



Matt Schomburg – Matt Schomburg received his doctorate in Audiology from Ohio University. He has been employed with MIU IV since 2009. His primary service area for audiological services is in Mercer County school districts. However, he performs Central Auditory Processing Evaluations in schools in Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties.



Debbie Smith – Debbie Smith has been employed with MIU IV since 1989. She holds a Master's Degree in Audiology from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. She has worked as a Clinical Audiologist for an Ear, Nose, and Throat Physician in Pittsburgh and a hearing aid manufacturer in New Jersey. She serves students in Butler County schools.

Do you have news that you would like to share in an upcoming issue of *The Messenger*?

**Contact Director of Communications,
Jill Manczka**

**Phone: 724-458-6700 ext. 1255
e-mail: jill.manczka@miu4.org**

iCan Banquet Honors Students and Keynote Speaker Encourages Entrepreneurship

On May 15, MIU IV participated in the 2014 End of the Year Banquet for the Mercer County In-School Youth Program. Designed to honor students for their participation in the program, the celebratory event was held at The Corinthian in Sharon, PA. Over 100 students, parents, instructors, and community partners attended the banquet.

The Mercer County In-School Youth Program, also known as the iCan Program, is a career awareness program operated by MIU IV personnel and funded by West Central Job Partnership. In the iCan Program, students in grades 9 through 12 research and explore career choices and opportunities while attending workshops either during the traditional school day or after school. In addition, students develop work readiness skills and learn about the job search process. Participants work closely with instructors to create resumes, learn to properly complete job applications, and practice interviewing.

The banquet featured keynote speakers, Andrew Rademacher and Brad Maniscalco, the owners of the internationally acclaimed Lem's Shoes company. Both Hickory High School graduates, Rademacher and Maniscalco presented the company's interesting story of entrepreneurship. Rademacher noted that his membership on the high school track team inspired his idea to create a great fitting shoe. He discussed the years of research and different design concepts that eventually led to the development of Lem's shoes. Maniscalco, who joined the company last year as the Public Relations representative, presented a motivational speech that encouraged students to work hard, never give up, and find a career that they enjoy.

In addition to enjoying dinner and an inspiring keynote address, students participated in a drawing to win an iPad and iTunes gift card. Tickets were awarded based on workshop attendance throughout the school year. The winners were Dylan Boles, a ninth grader from Hermitage, and Sami Junk, a senior at Greenville.

Former In-School Youth Student Received 2014 Governor's Achievement Award



On May 8, 2014, Kathryn Foore was honored with the Governor's Achievement Award. Ms. Foore, a former student from the Mercer County In-School Youth Program at West Middlesex High School and the Mercer County Career Center, accepted the award at the 30th Annual Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association Employment, Training and Education Conference in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

The Governor's Achievement Awards were presented to seven Pennsylvanians who have benefited from workforce development initiatives throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The awards are jointly sponsored by state workforce development agencies including the departments of Aging, Labor & Industry and Public Welfare, and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association. Ms. Moore was selected to receive the 2014 Governor's Achievement Award sponsored by the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association and the PA Department of Labor and Industry.

"These individuals are role models for all Pennsylvanians," said Governor Tom Corbett. "Their determination and commitment to succeed are incredibly admirable and I applaud each of them for their accomplishments and wish them continued success."

Kathryn received her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) license in 11th grade. She is currently working as a CNA at Sharon Regional Health System. She is a full time student at Butler County Community College. She was nominated by West Central Job Partnership and the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV's iCan staff.

The Mercer County In-School Youth iCan Program is implemented through a partnership between The West Central Job Partnership and Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. The mission of the program is to prepare in-school youth for employment and educational opportunities in their futures. The Mercer County In-School Youth Program promotes goal-setting, hard work, ambition, and recognizing potential in oneself regardless of any barriers. Students learn that they can work, study, serve, and ultimately, succeed—right now and in life after high school.

This year the Mercer County In-School Youth iCan Program served 75 eleventh and twelfth grade students in 9 local high schools. Instructors offered weekly in-school and after school workshops focusing on career exploration, employability skills, and lifelong skills for success. Topics included How to Write a Resume and Cover Letter, How to Complete a Job or College Application, Interviewing Skills, Teambuilding and Problem Solving, Time Management, and High Priority Occupations, to name a few. Additionally, the participants used the Keys2Work computer program for career exploration and academic remediation, and they were enrolled on the PA CareerLink® website where they could post their resume and search for local jobs.

Clarence Brown Community School Hosts Annual Academic Fair & Pinewood Derby

On April 4, 2014, Clarence Brown Community School (CBCS) hosted their Annual Academic Fair and Pinewood Derby. Teachers, parents of CBCS students, administrators, and community members attended the event.

With the help of the CBCS faculty and the Moraine Trails Council Boy Scout Pack's Scout Reach Program, the Pinewood Derby race kicked off the festivities. Students in grades 7 through 12 created Pinewood Derby cars during structured free time on school days leading up to the event.

"The Pinewood Derby race is a culminating event that allows students to share the fruits of their labor," said CBCS teacher, Natash Duska. "The students spend a lot of their structured free time designing, sanding, painting, and detailing the cars for the event. It is always rewarding for them to show off their final products to their parents and other members of the audience."

Duska noted that creating the Pinewood Derby cars requires students to utilize the academic and social skills that they are learning each day at CBCS.

"When students create their cars, they have to focus on the mathematics and science that will help the cars perform at their fastest," she said. "Although they create cars individually, they learn how to compete with others in an appropriate and friendly manner too."

Following the Pinewood Derby, students and parents participated in a special family luncheon and visited the Academic Fair.

The Academic Fair featured student-created poster sessions and academic projects for attendees to view in a gallery walk setting. During the fair, students were able to share the academic skills that they are learning in mathematics, science, art, and social studies.

"Parents and teachers are able to ask students questions about their academics in a non-intimidating atmosphere. It is great to see both students and parents engaged in this process," Duska said.

CBCS plans to host another Pinewood Derby & Academic Fair in the 2014-2015 school year.



Above: CBCS Pinewood Derby Cars created by students for the Annual Academic Fair.

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

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Grove City, PA 16127
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Dr. Wayde Killmeyer, Executive Director



The mission of Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is to provide educational and administrative leadership, programs, services, and resources which enhance the education of all individuals to meet the changing needs of a global society.