

the N'essenger

News from *Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV*

Winter, 2015 Edition

Dear Friends,

As 2015 begins, it is pleasant to look back at some of the accomplishments of the Intermediate Unit in 2014, and to look forward to some of the exciting things that we have coming up. Understanding that our organization maintains a fairly low profile with the public, and even with some of our school districts, we started several projects in the past year to heighten awareness, not only about our programs, but even about the fact that we exist! One of these new initiatives was the redesign of the IU website.

Although the IU has had a website for many years, it lived in a state of arrested development, not moving beyond late 1990's technology. It was hard to navigate, it was not searchable, and in general no longer met our needs. Between Jill Manczka, Communications Director, and Scott Powner, Technology Director, a new website was designed for the IU, and hosted by the IU. It went live in mid-December and is a vast improvement over the old one. Please check it out at www.miu4.org.

From the time I arrived here in 2013, it has been one of my goals for this organization that we expand our services in the area of transition. Every student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is entitled to transition services starting at age 14. These services are meant to ensure that special needs students can make the transition from the world of school, with all of its mandated services, into the world beyond. Transition services include planning for post-secondary education, post-secondary career, or independent living. Many of our students have such severe needs, that their transition is more of a challenge than a traditional Career and Technology Center (what we used to call a vo-tech) can handle.

In answer to this call for the IU to provide more transition, two wonderful things have happened. The first is that Toby Woodward, Director of Special Education, has arranged for several students to come to the Intermediate Unit on a regular basis and "work" at creating snack products that can be sold to the public. The staff has named the workshop "Starfish Creations," and in it the students work on weighing, measuring, and packaging of products, along with retail sales, all of which are skills that are translatable to the workforce. The second great thing that happened was that a small building in Lawrence County was made available to us for purchase. For the very small price of paying back taxes, the IU is in the process of acquiring this building through which we can expand our transition program. When we have prepared it appropriately, students will be able to learn myriad skills here, from landscaping, to maintenance and repairs, to food service. We envision this to be a magnet for not only young students in transition, but also for graduates who can work here, producing goods, improving their community, and mentoring their younger peers.

With all of these things, and so much more going on, it is an exciting time to be involved with the Intermediate Unit, and more importantly, it is an exciting time to be a student served by IU programs. We are always looking for ways to improve our service to schools, families, and children. Stop by any time and see what great thing we're coming up with next!

Killmeyer's

Korner



**Midwestern IU IV
Has a New Website!
Visit us Today at
www.miu4.org**

MIU IV Seeks Volunteer Adult Education Tutors

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU IV) is seeking volunteers to provide tutoring for adult learners in Mercer County. Tutor teachers will provide one-on-one or small group instruction for students. Tutor aides work alongside regular classroom instructors. Training and materials are free and the hours are tailored to fit the volunteers' schedules. Background check, FBI and Child Abuse clearances are required.

To become a volunteer tutor call Christine Ekas, Tutor Trainer, Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV at 724-458-6700 ext. 1225 or e-mail christine.ekas@miu4.org.

Guest Teacher Training Set for February

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV created a Guest Teacher Training Program designed to turn college graduates who possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university into emergency substitute teachers who can fill in when a certified substitute teacher can't be found.

Through the MIU IV's emergency substitute consortium, potential subs attend a three-day training session and then apply to the PA Department of Education for an emergency substitute certificate. With certification through MIU IV, substitutes can teach in any school district participating in the consortium. According to Lorinda Hess, Director of Continuing Education for the intermediate unit, 27 area school districts and three career and technical centers are participating in the consortium this year.

The intent of the program is to increase the number of available substitutes for our public schools. A three day training will be offered at the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV on February 23, 24 & 25, 2015 and will focus on classroom management, instructional strategies, school procedures and routines, team building and positive behavior in the classroom.

To register for the training, contact the MIU IV Continuing Education Department at 1-800-942-8035, extension 1286 or 1238 or email devon.agostino@miu4.org or lorinda.hess@miu4.org.

MIU IV Partners with Southern New Hampshire University to Offer Graduate Credits

MIU IV's Continuing Education Department has partnered with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) to offer new courses to educators across the state of Pennsylvania.

Thanks to this timely and innovative partnership, students now have the option of adding SNHU graduate credit to their courses. For an additional \$150 per credit, students can add this option when they register for SNHU approved courses on the MIU IV online registration system at <https://www.edulinkinc.com/iu4registration/>.

SNHU is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, whose accreditation is nationally recognized.

"In recent months, we have received many requests from educators to offer online course options that include affordable graduate credits" said Lorinda Hess, MIU IV's Director of Continuing Education.

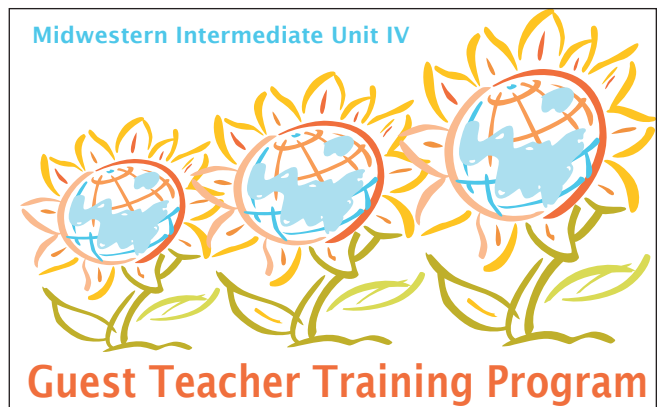
"This partnership with SNHU responds to that need. I am certain that those who choose to take advantage of this opportunity will be pleased with the course content, the instructors, the ease of use, and price," Hess said.

"Given that the courses are online, educators from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can take advantage of this opportunity."

To learn more about course offerings and to view course descriptions, visit www.miu4.org/continuing.education and select Southern New Hampshire University or call the Continuing Education department at 724-458-6700 ext. 1286.

**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**



Southern New Hampshire University

Field-based Graduate Program in Education

www.miu4.org

Melanie Turner Honored with 2014 MIU IV Labor & Management Spirit Award



Melanie Turner was honored at the November 19, 2014 Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV (MIU IV) Board of Directors meeting as the 2014 recipient of the Spirit Award. Mrs. Turner has been employed by MIU IV for 14 years as Graphics Operator in the Communications Department.

This award, presented by the Intermediate Unit's Labor & Management Committee, was created to recognize a support staff individual who exemplifies excellence on the job, caring involvement, and involvement in the community. Mrs. Turner was nominated by several

employees from the organization as well as members of the school and business communities. Recipients are chosen by a selection committee representing all areas of MIU IV.

"Melanie is a talented, hard working member of our team," said MIU IV Director of Communications, Jill Manczka. "She demonstrates a positive work ethic and does her job with enthusiasm, compassion, commitment, and integrity. Her work product meets the high standards that we expect from the employees at Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV," Manczka said.

Melanie collaborates with all departments at MIU IV to create marketing materials and publications. This includes graphic design, layout, and commercial printing. In addition, she assists with management of MIU IV's website and daily departmental operations. She manages MIU IV's annual Very Special Art Exhibit. Melanie is the co-founder of the MIU IV Giving Committee which coordinates dress down days to raise funds for charity organizations. Additionally, Melanie serves on MIU IV's Labor and Management Committee and is a past treasurer of the Education Support Personnel Association.

In introducing Mrs. Turner to the MIU IV Board of Directors, Manczka said, "Not only does Melanie possess a unique skill set in graphic design and print media development, but she also possesses strong 'people skills'. I hear many positive comments from our partners and colleagues about her positive attitude and consummate professionalism."

Mrs. Turner lives in New Castle, Pennsylvania with her husband Mark. She has five grown children and five grandchildren.

GCS Student's Artwork Selected for Holiday Card

Each year, MIU IV Executive Director, Dr. Wayne Killmeyer asks the students from different MIU IV Community Schools to submit artwork to be considered for the cover of the annual MIU IV holiday card. A committee reviews the artwork and selects a winning design.

This year, fourteen students from Greenville Community School submitted entries.

After much consideration, the committee selected a Winter scene design created by Tori Lawrence. Congratulations, Tori!



Upcoming Events @ MIU IV



February 23, 24, 25
Guest Teacher Training
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV



April 7-18, 2015
Reception April 12, 2015
Very Special Arts Exhibit
Pew Fine Arts Center



April 22, 2015
MIU IV Convention
By Invitation Only
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV



May 8, 2015
Northwest Pennsylvania
Superintendents' Summit
Grove City College



June 13, 2015
MIU IV 5K Race to Benefit
My Bike by
Variety the Children's Charity
Neshannock High School



August 3-7
Movement & Music Camp
Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV



August 17
MIU IV All Staff Inservice
Grove City High School

on Services

Spotlight

MIU IV's human resources department is proud to announce their ability to provide expert HR consultation services to school districts.

Human Resource Director, Brenda Marino said, "Many school districts are not large enough to employ full time Human Resources staff. We are ready, willing, and able to help districts build capacity by providing HR services to them."

Our experienced human resources professionals have established service programs for school districts in the following areas:

- The Educator Discipline Act
- Job Description Services
- New Employee Orientation
- Tracking Level 1 to Level 2 Certification
- Employment Posting Services
- HR Consultation Services

The HR department has developed a brochure that provides a detailed description of each of their services.

"Given that employees are at the center of a school's effectiveness, it is important to implement a top quality human resources program," said Marino.

"The manner in which school districts select, develop, motivate, and manage employees is crucial to achieving success."

MIU IV's HR department can begin your journey to increasing your school's success through your most important resource; your employees.

For more information about any of Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV's Human Resources Services or to obtain a price quote, please visit www.mu4.org/human.resources or contact us 724-458-6700 ext. 1237.

Making a Difference in Education: Human Resources Services



Brenda Marino, Esquire
Director of Human Resources
724-458-6700 ext. 1204
brenda.marino@miu4.org



Donna Urey
Secretary
724-458-6700 ext. 1237
donna.urey@miu4.org

Brenda Marino and Donna Urey have extensive experience in Human Resources. In particular, they are experts in HR as it pertains to school district employees. They have received special training from the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the Educator Discipline Act. In addition, they are experts in requirements for teacher certification.

Although she does not provide legal counsel to school districts, Ms. Marino is an attorney. Her legal knowledge and skill set is valuable when analyzing HR issues in school districts. She can work closely with administrators and district solicitors to help make sound HR decisions.



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

Human Resources Services

Special Education Introduces Starfish Creations



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is proud to introduce Starfish Creations, a new Community Based Vocational Training program for transition-aged, special education students.

Under the direction of teacher, Melissa Hogue, students are building a small business where they can create and sell trail mix, coffee, snacks, and

other items to MIU IV staff.

"We are able to integrate IEP goals into our work," said Hogue.

"The students use math to weigh and measure portions for the items that we are making. They are ensuring that they follow food safety standards, counting money, making change, dealing with the public, and working as a team. These are all important academic and career skills," Hogue noted.

The Starfish Creations team can be found on select days at MIU IV's central office at 453 Maple Street, Grove City, PA. They have already filled orders for the MIU IV central office staff and the Neshannock Township Cub Scout Pack 743.

"It is our hope to expand the program and allow our products to reach a larger audience in the near future," said Toby Woodward, Director of Special Education at MIU IV.

"This is an outstanding opportunity for students to meet their transition goals while making a contribution to the public through work. We are all very excited about the future of this program" said Woodward.



MIU IV is on social media! "Like" our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MIUIV, follow us on Twitter @MIUIV, or subscribe to our YouTube channel to receive updates about programs, services, and special events.

Get Your Robots at MIU IV

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is proud to introduce robotics services to our school districts.

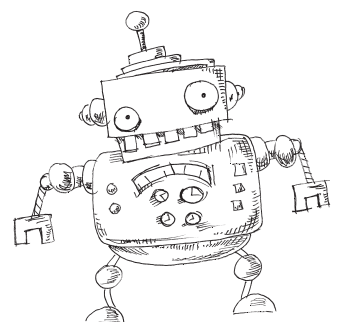
The staff at MIU IV can provide support, sales, or lease of robots for district use. These robots can be used by teachers between buildings to teach class, by homebound students to attend class, or to keep that potential cyber school student in the home district.

"The robots offer solutions to many different issues that schools are facing today," said Scott Powner, Director of Information Technology.

"A lot of schools use the robots for homebound instruction. Some teachers work with kids in different locations simultaneously. The possibilities are endless."

Step right into the latest in technology with the backing of the Intermediate Unit. Lease for \$275 per month and never go obsolete.

Contact MIU IV's information technology department at 724-458-6700 ext. 1230.



Entrepreneurship Academy to Expand to Butler County in 2015-2016 School year

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is expanding its Entrepreneurship Academy to Butler County in the 2015-2016 school year.

"After a successful and exciting pilot in Mercer County at the eCenter@Lindenpoint in 2014, we are excited to spread the wealth to Butler County at Butler County Community College," said Dr. Cathleen Cubelic, MIU IV's Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment.

Butler County's version of the Entrepreneurship Academy will begin in September, 2015 at Butler County Community College. 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.

MIU IV is in the process of recruiting students from school districts in Butler County to participate. "Our goal is to enroll 25 students by the end of the current school year," Dr. Cubelic said.

Under the direction of a certified teacher, students will participate in hands-on experiences and engage in an entrepreneurship course through 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 an award. In addition, students will travel on excursions to businesses throughout the region and meet with local business leaders.

"The cost for student participation will be minimal. The rewards that students will receive if they participate will be immeasurable. We are looking forward to spreading the excellence of this program to another county next year," Cubelic noted.

Interested school districts in Butler County should contact Dr. Cubelic at 724-458-6700 ext. 1227 or cubelic@miu4.org.

Entrepreneurship Academy²
@BC³ by MIU⁴



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

453 Maple Street

Grove City, PA 16127

724-458-6700

www.miu4.org

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.