



The bi-weekly newsletter of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

MCIU CONNECTION

www.mciu.org

December 23, 2010

Happy Holidays to all MCIU Staff! “All Aboard the MCIU Express”: Holiday Party a Hit



Dale Roberts (pictured above) showed off his artistic talent, posing in front of his drawing of a Polar Express train scene.



Arthur Mitchell, MCIU Polar Express conductor, checked tickets and ushered guests.



Donna Kelly and Stan Wisler show their golden MCIU Polar Express tickets.

“All aboard!” the train conductor (AKA Arthur Mitchell, Assistant CIPD Director) called to the MCIU staff, ushering them to their seats at the annual MCIU Staff Holiday Luncheon held on December 16th. Just like Billy, the little boy in *Polar Express* who had lost his faith in Santa Claus, the MCIU staff were reminded to “believe” during the annual holiday party. Thanks to the creativity of the CIPD staff, who organized this year’s event, staff were transported into different scenes of the *Polar Express* movie: train sets adorned the conference rooms while the movie played in the background; “MCIU Polar Express” tickets were checked by Mitchell, the train conductor; the sound of bells tinkled in the background -- a party favor for all of the staff who attended the celebration -- and a beautiful train scene drawn by MCIU artist and Warehouse Supervisor, Dale Roberts, completed the festive atmosphere of the room.

More than 65 staff enjoyed the celebration, which included a delicious catered meal by Anthony Aquilanta of Berwyn, holiday music from the Perkiomen Valley School District Jazz Choir and Select Strings, generous door prizes and award presentations for the holiday decorating contest and holiday raffles.

Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley thanked all staff for their hard work and wished everyone a peaceful and joyous holiday break.



The ladies in red, Linda Curran and Debbie Conaway.



Retired staff, Maria Johns, and new staff (albeit temporary) George Carlino join the party.



Kendall Glouner announces door prize winners.



The Special Education Administration Team won the holiday decorating contest with their creative Candyland display.



Al Moore and Bobby Browne check out one of the train displays.



The Perkiomen Valley School District Jazz Choir and Select Strings delighted staff with their selection of holiday music.



Linda Bean won the gingerbread house raffle organized by Nonpublic School Services.



Jan Wright and Sue Alderfer are all smiles!



MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT

An Educational Service Agency Supporting School Excellence

MCIU Connection

The bi-weekly newsletter of the
**Montgomery County
Intermediate Unit**

1605 W. Main Street
Norristown, PA 19403
610-539-8550

Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley

Executive Director/CEO

Jane W. Mansuy

Asst. Executive Director/
Director of Human Resources

Stan H. Wisler

Chief Financial Officer/
Director of Management Services

Kristen Rawlings

Director of Communications

Questions? Comments? Story Ideas?

Contact Kristen Rawlings
krawlings@mciu.org or 610-755-9313

Social Security Retirement Estimator

Staff interested in estimating their benefits or learning more about Social Security are encouraged to visit the Social Security Administration online service – the Retirement Estimator - at www.segurosocial.gov. The Estimator is now also available in Spanish at www.segurosocial.gov/calculador.

The Retirement Estimator uses a person's own Social Security earnings record to provide immediate and personalized benefit estimates.

The Retirement Estimator is interactive and allows the user to compare different retirement options by changing retirement dates or expected future earnings. It protects the user's personal information by providing only retirement benefit estimates -- it does not show the earnings information used to calculate the benefit estimate, nor does it reveal other identifying information. Almost four million people have used Social Security's English-language Retirement Estimator this year.

Operating Principles

A Continuing Series on Teachings from the Jorgensen Learning Center

One of the guiding principles and values of the MCIU as defined in the document, "Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Leadership Purpose and Operating Principles," is respect. Respect is defined as "esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or ability." In action, this means:

- Build quality relationships. Always think of the impact of your actions.
- Regularly assess the impact of your actions with those you lead using feedback from direct reports and colleagues.
- Recognize and express appreciation to those who are furthering the mission, vision and values of the MCIU. Seek solutions that are collaborative.
- Recognize differing perspectives and value diversity.
- Recognize the value of others and be polite, patient, and positive.
- In actions and statements, treat all individuals in a way that is helpful, courteous and respectful.
- Share with the Executive Director conversations and/or requests you have had with MCIU board members, district board members or Montgomery County superintendents in order that there be no surprises.
- Give and expect high level executive skills and practices.



Inclement Weather

When those snowflakes start falling, the quickest way to determine if the MCIU will be closed or delayed is to log on to the MCIU website, mciu.org or listen/watch KYW. The website is updated as soon as a decision is made. If you are watching or listening to KYW, keep the MCIU closing numbers handy. They are as follows:

- MCIU Staff: #432 (all staff unless announced as office staff only)

For other information related to weather emergencies, refer to the Fast Facts section of your employee manual and review the pages entitled *Weather Emergencies* and *Shortened Work Hours-Office Based Staff*.

If you have any questions about closings or shortened work hours, contact your supervisor or Jane Mansuy.

TECH TIP: Safe Passwords

Most people create passwords that are easy to remember. The problem is that they are also easy to crack by a savvy hacker. In order to protect your sensitive data from hackers, follow these helpful tips:

1. Avoid common names, dates, phone numbers or things easily associated with you (personal information) or listed in your account information.
2. Avoid common words or phrases. Password cracking software will search dictionaries and other listing of words.
3. Use a combination of numbers and letters. For example, substitute numbers for letters and letters for numbers in a word or phrase.
4. Use upper and lower case.
5. Choose a phrase or combination of words to make the password easier to remember.
6. May be two words separated by a non-letter non-digit.
7. Make it something you can remember all by yourself. Don't write it down anywhere!
8. Don't use naturally occurring keyboard sequences (alpha characters or numbers)
9. Try to make it at least 8 - 16 characters long. The longer the password, the harder it is to crack.
10. Plan on changing your password often. Experts suggest changing your passwords at least every 6 months.

EXAMPLES:

Bad Password: Cat

Better Password: BigCats!

Much Better Password: B1gC@t\$!