



# MCIU CONNECTION

## Nominations open for 4th Annual "Voices of Inspiration" Awards



*Last year's MCIU winner of the Voices of Inspiration Award, Terri Russo, Nonpublic School Services, with her husband*

Nominations are now being accepted for the 4th annual "Freedom's Voices of Inspiration Award for Teaching Excellence." Initiated in 2007 by Freedom Credit Union in partnership with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, the award honors and celebrates the contributions of exemplary educators in the Montgomery County school districts.

Nominations should be based on an individual's contributions or performance during the school year, or for cumulative efforts over many years. They may be submitted by any of the following people: students, parents, co-workers, administrators, or

school employees. The nominee should clearly demonstrate an extraordinary dedication to teaching young people, while exhibiting the qualities that represent a truly inspirational educator.

Twenty-three finalists, including one teacher from each of the 21 Montgomery County public school districts, one teacher from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, and one teacher from a Montgomery County nonpublic school, will be selected to receive \$500 and be recognized as winners in their respective districts at Freedom's "Voices of Inspiration" awards banquet held on May 6. From these 23 finalists, three teachers (one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school teacher) will be awarded with Freedom's "Voices of Inspiration Grand Prize" and receive an additional \$1,500. The school with the most nominations will also receive a \$1,000 award and the two runners up will receive \$500.

**For more information or to submit a nomination for an extraordinary educator in the Montgomery County school districts, visit <http://www.freedomcu.org/voi/voi.htm>.**

## New Year's Opportunity! Mini-grants Available to MCIU Staff

The window of opportunity has opened! All full-time MCIU staff members are eligible to apply for the MCIU Mini-grant Program. Submit your ideas for enhancing the instruction and programs within the MCIU and using your individual creativity. Minigrant projects should be innovative in nature and beyond the scope of what is typically provided within the program of the applicant.

Typical grants are funded in the range of \$500, but grants are available in amounts greater than \$500 and will be based on the needs presented in the grant application.

Some examples of past grant recipients include:

- "Virtual Warehouse" by Dale Roberts
- "Learning Opportunities through Music for Hearing Impaired Preschoolers" by Kim Buck

The grant process is extremely simple. Proposals should be short and concise containing the following information:

- ▶ Statement of purpose highlighting the intended outcome of the grant
- ▶ List of specific goals, objectives and activities
- ▶ Description of how you will share the project and results with other MCIU staff
- ▶ Budget including costs of all items needed for the project
- ▶ Final summary of the effectiveness of the program

The second step of the application process is to explain your proposal to the selection committee comprised of five of your peers. The presentation schedule is as follows:

Support Staff:	February 8 at 4 pm
Professionals:	February 8 at 5 pm
ASCP:	February 10 at 4 pm
TAs & Paraprofessionals:	February 10 at 5 pm

Money will be available the first week of March! So act now. Contact Dr. Mary Jane Gales at x193 or [mgales@micu.org](mailto:mgales@micu.org) for more detailed submission guidelines and the application. She is available to answer any questions you may have and to help in completing the process.



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
INTERMEDIATE UNIT**

*An Educational Service Agency Supporting School Excellence*

**MCIU Connection**

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

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**Questions? Comments?  
Story Ideas?**

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

**New Year's Resolutions**

If you're already having trouble keeping your New Year's resolutions, consider the following tips:

1. Have a strong initial commitment to make a change.
2. Have coping strategies to deal with problems or obstacles that are sure to come up.
3. Keep track of your progress. The more monitoring you do and the more feedback you get, the better you'll do.

Take credit for success when you achieve a resolution, but don't blame yourself if you fail. Instead, look at the barriers that were in your way. See how you can do better the next time and figure out a better plan to succeed. You do get to try again and can make behavior changes throughout the year, not only at New Year's.

*Information provided by Human Management Services Inc. (HMS), the MCIU's Employee Assistance Program*

**Holding Space for Difference**

**A Continuing Series on Teachings from the Jorgensen Learning Center**

Dr. Ray Jorgensen teaches five principles of the "Learning Conversation" which can enhance personal and professional relationships and improve desired results through quality conversation. The fourth principle is to "Hold Space for Difference". Dr. Jorgensen explains this principle to mean:

- \* Embracing differing points of view as opportunities for learning.
- \* Replacing the use of the word "but" with the word "and."
- \* Noticing others who are silent and providing opportunity for involvement.
- \* Acknowledging the usefulness of other points of view.
- \* Being involved while being detached...open to outcomes that may not be your outcomes.
- \* Avoiding being fixated on one outcome or idea.



**Inclement  
Weather  
Reminder**

When those snowflakes start falling, the quickest way to determine if the MCIU will be closed or delayed is to watch or listen to KYW or log on to the MCIU website, mciu.org. 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)
- Montgomery County School: #394
- Anderson School: #1237

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.

**Upcoming SPIRIT Events**


Football fans, mark your calendars for the SPIRIT Super Bowl Party to be held on Friday, February 5. It's only \$5 to join your co-workers for pizza, soda and fun! Contact Anita Watson at x151 to sign up.

If you're looking for a special gift this Valentine's Day, you may also want to attend the 3rd Annual Valentine's Day Bake-Off on Thursday, February 11 (Room C3). Homemade desserts may be entered into the Bake-Off contest and will be available to buy through silent auction. Other items (i.e. roses, gift certificates or store-bought sweets) may be donated and will be available through silent auction as well. More details to follow via email.

**MCIU Now Wireless**

MCIU staff and visitors can now take their computer on the go and not worry about Internet connectivity thanks to the wireless network recently established by the Technology and Information Services Division.

MCIU staff with Windows XP may connect to the network by following these steps (Non-MCIU staff will use a GUEST wireless network):

1. On the bottom of your desktop you will see your Task Bar. 
2. Locate the Wireless Network icon
3. Double click on the Wireless network icon to open the Wireless Connection window.
4. Left click once on the IU Private network and then click the Connect button.
5. Enter 6107559358 where it says Network key and enter it again where it says confirm. You should be connected! Contact TIS at ext 233, 238 or directly 610-755-9358 if you are unable to connect the network.