



MCIU Connection

The bi-weekly newsletter of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

March 7, 2008

Online: www.mciu.org



Reading Olympics Breaks 500 in Team Participation

The Reading Olympics, sponsored by the MCIU, has broken its record with 506 teams signed up to participate this year. With 12 members per team, that means about 6,072 children will be competing. Last year, 471 teams participated. "We are thrilled to have one of the most successful and growing programs in the county that supports reading," said Maria Johns, who organizes the event for the IU's Division of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development.

Volunteers are still needed for the following dates:

March 25, 2008 -Norristown High School
April 14, 2008 Hatboro-Horsham High School
April 16, 2008 -Wissahickon Middle and High Schools
April 21, 2008 -Colonial Middle School
Date TBD -Welsh Valley MS, Lower Merion
May 13, 2008 -Pottstown MS

All events are 5:30-8:30 pm. Email Maria Johns at mjohns@mciu.org to sign up.

Spring Fling

**Mark your calendar for the
MCIU Spring Fling
Thursday, March 20th
12-1 pm
Meet in Rooms B3/B4 for a
walk @ noon**

To celebrate the first day of spring, join your co-workers in a walk around the MCIU neighborhood. Bring your bag lunch and enjoy socializing afterwards.



Beam School Activities World Wide New TIS Service

Imagine parents being able to watch important student activities even though they are at work. Imagine a child's grandparents being able to see them graduate even though they live in another

country. Imagine watching the presentation of a great speaker at a school on the other side of the state. Thanks to a new video streaming and hosting service provided by the MCIU, these opportunities are now available to all Montgomery County schools.

For the first time on March 3rd, the Technology and Information Services Division provided this new service by receiving a live feed via videoconference of a music performance at Cheltenham Elementary School. The event, Cheltenham's 4th Grade Music Ensemble's performance of *Water Dance*, was then encoded and streamed live so it could be viewed in real time around the world. TIS then archived the live stream hosting it on the TIS streaming server for future on-demand viewing.

This technology enables schools to broadcast events, including trainings, special assemblies, graduations, etc., anywhere in the world for viewing at any time. It is not necessary for TIS to capture the video live, the department can also provide video content hosting and storage for events that have been recorded by the schools or another party.

"This is an exciting new service which incorporates a number of technologies— video conferencing, video streaming and archiving. It should be very beneficial to schools," said Al Moore, (pictured above) the TIS staff member who designed and implemented the system for the IU.

For additional information, pricing, or to view a sample stream please contact John McBride by direct phone at 610-755-9372 or via email to jmcbride@mciu.org.



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Questions?

Comments?

Story Ideas?

Contact Kristen Rawlings
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IU Cabinet Member Receives Prestigious Award



Jane Mansuy, Assistant Executive Director/Director of Human Resources, received the William K. Dowler Award for Excellence in Human Relations Administration from the Pennsylvania Association of School Personnel Administrators (PASPA) at their annual state conference on February 27th. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to PASPA and the personnel administrators' profession. William K. Dowler was a founder and charter member of the Pennsylvania Association of School Personnel Administrators.

In a letter of support that Dr. Jerry W. Shiveley wrote on Jane's behalf, he said "I can think of no one more deserving of this

award. Jane has extremely high values and ethics. She both earns trust and delivers trust in her relationships. Jane is very well respected in Montgomery county, not just by personnel administrators, but by everyone who works with her."

Jane, who was ill and had lost her voice the week of the state conference, got up before the audience to squeak her thanks and appreciation. Congratulations, Jane. We're all proud of you!

Spotlight Technology & Information Services Moving at the Speed of Light

Over the past year, the IU's Technology and Information Services Division has been creating and incorporating new services at the speed of light. TIS has added or enhanced dozens of internal services as well as developed a myriad of new services for school districts and non-public schools. Among some of the most exciting and beneficial services TIS is now offering are:

Moodle — This on-line learning management system allows teachers to build on-line course and classrooms. TIS has upgraded its server to allow districts to continue to take advantage of the full potential of Moodle.

Audio visual equipment installation—This is a new service in which TIS can design and install Smart Classrooms, including Smartboards, projectors and audio systems.

Technology evaluations—TIS has provided evaluations for Upper Perkiomen, Pottsgrove and Upper Moreland school districts to determine technology needs.

eBay service – Districts can dispose of obsolete equipment through the eBay auction service. TIS will

manage the listing and auction and return sale proceeds to the district.

Pearson PowerSchool—TIS is set up to host and provide training and support for this student information services program. School districts, including Cheltenham and Pottsgrove, are now using this program for grading, attendance and other student information. Jenkintown will be implementing PowerSchool next school year.

Spam Filters—Districts can buy this effective product from the IU and have TIS host it

PAIUNet and Act 183 E-Fund Grant— Through these state grants TIS will be part of an initiative to create a regional and statewide network that connects all intermediate units, school districts and other educational entities enabling them to share educational content, software applications, etc.

MCIU Website—The TIS Division has also redesigned the IU's website, www.mciu.org, which will go live sometime this March. The website has simplified its navigation to be easier for users to find information about IU trainings, services and events.

New Leadership Camp for Boys Camp Ophelia for Girls Continues

The reviews on Camp Ophelia have been so complimentary, it only made sense to expand the concept to include a boys camp this summer. Therefore, the IU's Nonpublic School Services Division will be piloting a Boys' Leadership Camp from June 16 to June 20, 2008 in cooperation with La-Salle College High School. The camp will be open to middle school aged boys enrolled in Montgomery County nonpublic schools. They will join in activities that help young boys become healthy young leaders by focusing on the four domains of leadership: self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management.

"We developed this camp to teach boys how to become leaders using their very different individual strengths," said Melissa George, NPSD. Fifteen boys will be accepted to participate in this year's camp.

The highly successful Camp Ophelia, now entering its fourth season, will be offering three cost-free camps for 20-25 girls per camp. Sessions will be held June 16 to June 20, 2008 at Manor Junior College and Merion Mercy Academy and June 23 to June 27, 2008 at Mt. St. Joseph Academy. Camp Ophelia is designed to educate girls about relational aggression. Participants are empowered to build healthy, positive relationships with each other through sound decision making, conflict resolution, communication and other life skills.

George noted that the boys and girls camps will be

"The talk about relational aggression and the openness in which the girls were encouraged to speak about it was unbelievable. Whoever dreamed this camp up is an angel. My girls will never forget their experience there."

Parent of a Camper

beneficial for both middle school students as well as the 11th graders who mentor the students.

"I wish when I was in 6th, 7th

and 8th grade someone had told me about relational aggression and ways to build healthy relationships. When I think back to those last three years of school I remember the drama and fights and silent treatments that seemed never ending. Being a mentor at Camp Ophelia gave me the opportunity to help and make a difference," said a Camp Ophelia mentor.

Another strength of the programs are that students are accepted from non-public schools across Montgomery County so the camps feature a diverse group of peers.

"I learned to be a better person and to love a person for what's inside not outside," said a camper from last year.

Upcoming IU Events

Study Buddies: Two of the Non-Public School Services Reading Specialists will be presenting at the Tri-County Reading Council Literacy Fest on March 8, 2008. *Theresa Russo* and *Ruthanne Alberts* will provide a variety of strategies that can be used by students to make the most of their study time and effort in a session entitled **Study Buddies**. These techniques can be used in all content area subjects to increase subject-specific vocabulary, help with understanding text, and studying for tests and is geared for the intermediate through high school grade levels.

Transition Council: The Montgomery County Transition Council will host their annual "Transition to Adult Life Resource Fair" on Thursday, April 24th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The event is held at the Norristown Area Senior High School Auditorium. The Resource Fair will feature three sessions and numerous representatives are available. This fair is coordinated by our TAC consultant, Gail Katch. Please contact Gail for additional information at gkatch@mciu.org.

e-Mission takes Students to Mars and Beyond

Yvonne Holman, of the IU's Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development Division (pictured below) had a busy day on March 3rd helping fourth grade students from the Norristown School District work with NASA to locate and rescue a lost space ship that was orbiting one of the outer planets. The activity was part of an e-Mission videoconference hosted by the MCIU in coordination with the Challenger Learning Center at Wheeling Jesuit University. The MCIU hosts these events and provides training to teachers interested in having one in their school. The March 3rd event was called **Moon, Mars, and Beyond**.





Everyone Loves a Snow Day

After this winter's first and only snow day on Friday, February 22nd, the MCIU staff was polled about what they did to celebrate their unexpected day off.

"The day couldn't have happened at a better time! Our son had been battling a bug all week, so I was able to let him sleep in and take care of him. AND, when he was napping, my husband and I finished painting our extra bedroom! Finally, in the afternoon, we rented a family movie, got cozy on the couch, and watched it together." Jen Rourke, Remediation Specialist

"I was a complete slug for the day. Aside from shoveling and taking a walk in the snow, I spent the rest of the day watching old movies on TCM. It was just what I needed to recover from a very difficult week and the loss of a friend." Roseanne Westerfer, Executive Assistant

"Yeah for snow days! My kids went to a friend's house and played outside most of the day. So I had the day basically to myself to catch up on things (wash, paperwork & cleaning) – this was a much needed and appreciated day not to mention a rarity!!!" Lois Winton, Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development

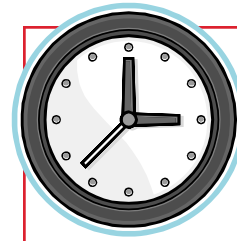
"I did not do anything particularly exciting on our February 22nd "Snow" day. I did go back to bed, of course, after I fed the cats and made coffee. I also caught up on some video tapes, did some painting on a ceramic bear I've been working on, did some organizing, and generally just pattered the day away. It was great!" Diane L. Saylor, Secretary to Hearing & Vision Programs

I celebrated the unusual occurrence of a snow day with a quiet breakfast, the newspaper, and the crossword puzzle over a second cup of coffee while the rest of the house slept - because after all, I was wide awake after making four phone calls and I received at least five more! As anyone who has ever remodeled their home will tell you, finding the time to choose tile and wallpaper and cabinetry during the work-week is virtually impossible, so that's how I spent the rest of the day as our 30+ year-old home needs some sprucing up! What an absolutely delightful treat – as I told my staff, "I am the happiest person in Montgomery County today!" Nancy Myers, Supervisor, NonPublic School Services

"Since my husband broke his leg, I ended up shoveling our VERY long driveway and two walkways on my own. Not that fun...But, the kids and I made a terrific snowman they named George (who knows why?) and that, of course, was what a snow day is all about!" Kristen Rawlings, Communications

"I was scheduled to do "Jury Duty"...which got cancelled...thank you very much! Other than that, I just stayed home, drank Dayquil..(for my cold), and practiced my instruments." Michael Gordon, TIS

"I decided to create a web site that shows how others can turn their old hard drives into something useful and save some space in the local landfill at the same time.. Check it out at <http://mwhisted.googlepages.com/home>." Mike Whisted, TIS



Daylight Saving Time Reminder

Daylight saving time begins on March 9, 2008. Please remember to set your clocks **AHEAD** 1 hour at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning.

To Move or Not to Move? That is the Question

The IU's Management Services Division has sent out fifteen requests for proposals (RFP's) to do a study of the current MCIU building to determine whether the IU should stay put or relocate. Ten proposals were received in response. The proposals request the following:

- Show inadequacies of current facility
- Identify needs in terms of space
- Determine cost to gut and rebuild

Three respondents have been called in for interviews. The winner will meet with each division director to get a list of the needs and inadequacies within their division. The study is to be completed by April 15, 2008. Dr. Shiveley will share the finished report with the MCIU board in June.