

ISD Success Stories

Allegan ISD-Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library, in collaboration with the Allegan County ISD, local school districts, Allegan County Literacy Initiative, Allegan General Hospital, several corporations (including Perrigo Company, Verizon, Fifth Third Bank, United Bank, Meijer, etc.) and others, Allegan County United Way and Volunteer Center is implementing this new program, that is designed to deliver books to preschoolers to help ensure they are ready for kindergarten and their entire educational experience. The long-term, desired outcome is to assist the Allegan County Literacy Initiative reach the goal of every child in Allegan County being a reader by the end of third grade. For \$27, a child will receive a high quality, age appropriate book each month for a year. For details, contact Midge Stamas, 269-673-2161.

Alpena-Montmorency-Alcona ESD's Pied Piper School

The list of services that the Alpena-Montmorency-Alcona ESD offers its 9,000 plus students is endless. A special service school, the Pied Piper School, has a number of services for children and young adults with physical, cognitive, social and educational needs. The school's programs are aimed at helping very young children reach their fullest potential while also offering programs to assist older students with independence and technical skills. Another success of the Pied Piper School is the parent connection the school provides to ensure parents participate in the educational, emotional and life success of their child. Parents have access to psychologists, speech and physical therapists, home visits and transportation—services local school districts just can't afford to provide.

Berrien County ISD

Arts & Science Expo Berrien County ISD has a yearly event called the Arts and Science Expo. This competition is open to all children in grades 4-12. There are 41 different categories for students to enter including: original music composition, creative writing, ceramics, wood working, textiles and fibers, behavioral and social sciences and zoology. Between 2,000 and 3,000 students enter each year. The entries are displayed and judged at a local mall which has an increase of visitors of over 25,000 during Expo Week. Over 100 community volunteers participate in this event, which also has six business sponsors. The ISD goals for this event are: (1) Encourage students to reach their full potential in the arts and sciences, (2) Show the community the excellent quality of student work, and (3) Encourage teachers to use real-life projects as a teaching method.

Videoconferencing Program Berrien County ISD provides videoconferencing services to Berrien and Cass counties under the project name, Southwestnet Distance Learning Collaborative. Classes at all levels participate in curriculum-rich high quality interactive learning experiences. For example, each year our government classes connect to Senator Carl Levin and Congressman Fred Upton to discuss current events, policies and issues in the news. Our advanced biology and anatomy and physiology classes annually connect to COSI Columbus and Mount Carmel Hospital in Columbus, Ohio for interacting with surgeons and hospital staff during a live open heart surgery or live knee replacement surgery. Middle school and fifth grade geography classes also participate in Mystery Quest USA and World Geography. In these projects, six classes from around the nation connect via videoconference to present clues about a country and city or a U.S. state and city, and then try to guess the mystery locations presented by the other classes. The Berrien County ISD hosts a database of

interactive videoconference programs offered by zoos, museums and other organizations around the world. Videoconferencing allows students to connect to people and places otherwise difficult or impossible. School districts cutting field trip budgets find it much more cost effective to participate in videoconference field trips. Student learning is enhanced by visual learning and being interactive with experts and peers around the world. The Berrien County ISD brings these benefits to our districts, with over 145 field trips last year.

COOR ISD Enhances Educational Experiences

COOR ISD works cooperatively with the local school districts in the four county area to provide services that can be more economically and efficiently provided through an area-wide agency. COOR ISD really understands how to enhance the educational experience for all who participate in the many valuable services it provides to students and community members. One of the programs, Grade 4 MEAP, rewards students who have met Michigan Standards on the MEAP Reading and Math test. Those students get a free week at Kirtland Community College where they get to immerse themselves in one of 13 courses offered, such as robotics, aquatic chemistry and comic book illustration. A second program is Grade 8 shared time advanced classes taught at Kirtland. Each course is taught in accordance with established college standards, but has a special section for the 8th grade students. Classes include Web page design, creative writing, photography and theater. Other unique programs offered by COOR ISD include Michigan Tech Summer Institute, Space Camp and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camps. The purpose is to both encourage high achievement and provide students with access to expanded educational experiences.

Genesee ISD

Challenge Day Sponsored by the Flint Area Citizens to End Racism and the Genesee ISD, Flint Area High School students

participated in Challenge Day activities. Challenge Day is a national program designed to reduce bullying and improve relations between students, teachers and school administrators. Features of the program include a series of icebreakers, focus group meetings and activities to get bullies and the bullied, teachers, students and administrators to understand one another better. Genesee ISD has 21 school districts in the county and offers peer mediation and other programs to deal with bullying and other school related issues. Challenge Day may soon be coming to other districts in Genesee County.

Ingham ISD's Capital Area Career Center

Ingham ISD's Capital Area Career Center should be called the award-winning center with all of the accolades and impressive achievements of the students coming from the center. Ingham's Career Center produces award-winning students in numerous areas of the center's expertise. The center provides students with the essential skills to enter, compete and advance in the workplace. Just in the last year, the Career Center can boast awards in many facets of high-tech areas including technology, drafting, banking, machining and many other real-life, specialty skills. The true success of Ingham ISD's Career Center is the opportunities it affords to thousands of young people every year, and its emphasis on real life success!

Kalamazoo RESA-Teacher Earns Top State Award

Jeanne Church has been called many things during her 30-year career. Most often those around her describe her as a selfless, creative and constant advocate for students with visual impairments. Her coworkers at the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency call her an inspiration; her former students call her a friend. The Michigan Council for Exceptional Children agrees, naming Church as the 2005 Dr. William C. Morse Teacher of the Year. Church has been a teacher consultant for the visually impaired at Kalamazoo RESA since

1971. She began her career with visually impaired students in 1968 at the Michigan School for the Blind. Her lengthy career is filled with compliments and accolades from coworkers, students and their families. Church demonstrates her dedication via the numerous extracurricular activities she plans and the personal time she donates to her students. Over the years, Church has raised more than \$30,000 to sponsor fun activities for students with visual impairments. For more information about programs for the visually impaired and other special education services, contact Kalamazoo RESA's Special Education Department at 269-385-1534.

LAMP-Lansing Area Manufacturing Partnership

The Lansing Area Manufacturing Partnership (LAMP) is a six-year pilot school-to-work initiative composed of three entities: The International United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), General Motors Corporation (GM) and the Ingham Intermediate School District (IISD). LAMP was established in 1996, in response to increasing concern by manufacturers about the skills and abilities of the workforce and whether workers would be prepared for the manufacturing world of the next century. The LAMP program is designed for high school seniors interested in exploring manufacturing with the intent to pursue post-secondary training for a career in that field. LAMP has built an integrated curriculum that combines classroom instruction with work-based learning experiences that occur within GM facilities.

I want to let you and your colleagues know that I am so grateful that Jake is in your program. He was dying on the vine with "regular school" and this program has resurrected his confidence that he IS a smart and capable young man that DOES have the ability, interest and enthusiasm needed to learn and continue learning. Thank you for the good work you do. I hope that programs like this continue to expand. -Nanette

Pearson, CPA

We have seen Jim bring his work ethics to the next level. It began at the Career Center and has continued to grow, almost daily. As you know, Jim has severe dyslexia which has hampered his "traditional" style of learning. The Career Center gave Jim the opportunity to feel good about himself and achieve great things...The LAMP program is giving Jim the opportunity to be successful in areas where he never realized he could be successful...His communication skills, confidence, work ethics, teamwork and maintaining his excitement about learning continues to amaze us...Thank you for giving Jim this great opportunity...This is an outstanding program and I wanted to thank you all for your commitment to this program and to our kids...as parents we really appreciate it. - Johanna Haack

Lapeer ISD

Challenge Air Program Helps Lift Spirits Lapeer County ISD's Challenge Air for Kids and Friends program helps to lift the spirits of more than 70 special needs students from around the county. The program, in its seventh year, happens at Dupont Airport. Since bringing the Dallas-based national event to Lapeer, C. Jack Lewis, himself a wheelchair user and pilot, said nearly 500 students have flown in the annual event. Lewis, who works for the Construction Code Authority, is also a North Branch Board of Education member. Kudos to this program that allows young people, especially those with physical and mental challenges, to see how they can overcome their disability to do exciting and useful things for the community.

Culinary Arts Program The Lapeer County ISD has expanded the kitchen area and upgraded with new state of the art equipment. The culinary arts program serves 48 students each year from Dryden, Imlay City, Lapeer East, Lapeer West and North Branch high schools. In the new demo kitchen students run cooking shows open to the public. Besides

cooking, juniors and seniors gain knowledge of food presentation, state and federal health regulations, nutrition and food chemistry. In addition, there is a restaurant next to the new stainless steel kitchen where student's serve seasonal luncheons about seven times a year.

Lenawee ISD-CHILD Program Reaches More Than 4,500 Families

Lenawee's CHILD began as a program of the Lenawee ISD for families of young children birth to five in the fall of 2001, serving 653 families. Today the program reaches 4,557 families, 277 school district staff and has trained 338 professionals. Currently, Lenawee's CHILD serves families with young children in Lenawee County through Parents as Teachers playgroups, home visits, parent workshops, connections with community agencies, and resource information and materials. Families receive program services at local school and community sites. Each Parent Information Resource Center has a set of lending literacy kits parents may borrow, use and return. Parents can attend workshops regarding various topics such as car seat safety, infant massage, kindergarten readiness, emergent math and early literacy. The training in early literacy strategies assists child care providers with the state licensing requirement to provide 30 minutes of daily early literacy activities. Lenawee's CHILD has a bright future ahead for children, families, professionals and the community.

Muskegon Area ISD

Career Tech Center The Muskegon Area Career Tech Center is now open and fulfilling dreams. The new building, a decades-long dream in the making, is on Harvey Street at Stebbins Road, just east of U.S. 31. The 58,000-square-foot tech center building eventually will house 20 different programs, including a student-run restaurant, child-care center and flower shop. About 1,000 students from all 11 Muskegon

County public school districts plus private and charter schools are expected to attend. The purpose of the center is to consolidate vocational programs that for years have been offered at various districts throughout the county so that all students can take advantage of the opportunities. This Career Tech Center provides affordable and attainable opportunities for education innovation and community connections.

Science Challenge: Students From Four Counties Solve Tough Problems During Science Challenge Do beverages affect the PH level of the human mouth? To what extent does age affect short term memory? Which sand erosion control fencing is the most effective on sand dunes and beaches? What is the effect of electromagnetic fields on spirogyra? What method of washing apples gets off the most microbes? Does the level of hotness in a spice prevent the growth of bacteria? Do boys or girls have a better sense of smell? Who says students aren't learning exciting, challenging real-world science? These are just a few of over 100 problems solved by fifth through twelfth grade students as part of the West Michigan Science Challenge at Muskegon Community College. The young scientists, who have worked individually or in teams of two, from schools in Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa and Newaygo Counties came up with a problem to solve and then spent the school year developing a science experiment to be presented and judged at the regional science fair. Over 70 volunteer judges, including physicians, dentists, biochemists, surgeons, educators, engineers and business people evaluate each project's methodology, variables, data collection and analysis, conclusions and visual presentation.

Futures 2005 Transition Conference As part of the *Futures Transition Conference* series, more than 350 students who receive special education services from 15 high schools in Muskegon and Oceana counties will spend the day at Muskegon Community College preparing for "life-after-high-

school." Students will also choose to attend three of 25 hands-on sessions on topics relating to community resources, specific careers, leisure activities and post-secondary educational options. The keynote speaker will provide students with tools to overcome obstacles and be successful in life.

Students Benefit From "Teaching American History"

Grant Students in Muskegon and Ottawa counties will soon benefit from a three-year grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. The federal grant funds programs that raise student achievement and assist teachers in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to teach traditional American History in an exciting and engaging way. Program content will focus on three themes: national security; slavery and civil rights; and trade, tariffs and taxes. The grant provides fifth through 12th grade teachers in Muskegon and Ottawa counties with ongoing training, teaching strategies and tools.

Sanilac ISD-Taste of the Thumb Culinary Arts Program

Each year the Sanilac County Baby Pantry is able to provide hundreds of moms with baby equipment, clothes and formula thanks to donations from the community. Last year's first annual Taste of the Thumb event raised more than \$2,500 for the pantry. This year eight area restaurants along with the Sanilac Career Center Culinary Arts program offered samples of their specialty fare. Tickets for the food sampling were \$10 per person. The event was held January 30 at Uri's Landing in Port Sanilac and raised \$3,365. The money will be used to purchase diapers, cribs and other baby equipment for area mothers.

Shiawassee RESD

ABC Great Start Program Shiawassee RESD is reaching out to their local communities to impact early childhood development and literacy. The ABC Great Start program, a

collaboration of many groups and agencies, includes hearing and vision screenings and overall developmental and blood screenings for lead. Other efforts of the program include area play groups, home visits and parent education efforts...all to ensure children are ready to learn by age five. This program not only helps identify difficulties which may require special education, but it connects family and school together to impact student achievement for many years to come.

Even Start Program The Even Start program, another service from Shiawassee RESD, helps people reach their literacy goals...not just kids, but entire families in need! Even Start brings support home through personalized, one-on-one visits that encourage participants to achieve their goals. The home visits help both families and children hone their reading skills and succeed in life!

Tuscola ISD

Health Education is a Top Priority Tuscola ISD promotes health of children and their families that will positively impact improved student performance. They pride themselves on their Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Consortium project which enhances the daily lives of participants. Tuscola ISD also spearheaded a comprehensive survey project that profiled the current health status of area youth. The ISD sponsored more than 24 trainings and workshops involving more than 228 students, 185 teachers/administrators and 37 parents to spark discussion of the highly important link between student health and student achievement. Tuscola ISD is a leader in health education—which means healthy life, healthy minds, healthy hearts!

Computer Safety Program All nine school districts in Tuscola County have received two new computer safety programs, which assist in dealing with crisis. One of the programs, REDI, is designed to assist schools in the first 30

minutes of crisis and manage a response. The second program, Aftermath, helps schools return to normal after a crisis situation. Both programs were underwritten by East Central Michigan Education Consortium and funded by federal grants of almost \$480,000. These two programs with help teachers and administrators throughout the county respond to crisis situations in a very similar fashion.

Van Buren ISD

Mentoring Roundtable Summit Van Buren County citizens met to learn about the benefits of mentoring. The Mentoring Summit provides attendees with the opportunity to become part of the growing world of mentoring. They help develop a vision for mentoring in Van Buren County. The Van Buren Mentoring Roundtable consists of representatives from local school districts, Van Buren ISD, Berrien County ISD, Lewis Cass ISD, public service organizations and county residents. For more information on the Van Buren Mentoring Roundtable, contact Andre Reddick, Community Liaison, Covert Public Schools, 269-764-3707.

Recycling Program An innovative recycling program that utilizes special education students from age 16 – 25 has been in existence since 1989. There are currently 50 mentally and physically handicapped students working in this program. The students pick up the office and school paper from each classroom or office from a designated recycling tub. The paper is transported in a recycling cart where it is sorted, checked, weighed, bagged and placed in a special dumpster. Van Buren County, Van Buren ISD, Quality Assured Plastics of Lawrence, Welch Foods of Lawton and North Star Plastics of Kalamazoo worked together to demonstrate educational improvements through partnerships with private industry. The program gives the students job skills and on site training. The

students practice proper job behaviors and feeling good about having a job. For information regarding this program, contact Ginny Wippel at the VBISD Learning Center 616-674-8091 ext. 479.

Management Finance Program Students from Van Buren, Berrien and Cass counties are earning college credit for being a part of the Management Finance Program offered by the Van Buren ISD's Business Academy. Thirty-eight students will soon receive Internal Revenue Certification to prepare tax returns. The students will be volunteering their services to qualified members of the county at no cost.

Technology Center Van Buren ISD Technology Center is operating at a 90 percent capacity rate and has an enrollment of more than 1,100 students from 14 school districts. Students spend half to the day at their high school and then half at the tech center. The tech center offers a variety of courses, from welding, construction, automotive and hospitality services, combined with well-educated faculty and the most modern equipment aid in keeping enrollment high and students excited to be in school.

Send your success stories to Jennifer Rogers, MASB, 1001 Centennial Way, Suite 400, Lansing, MI 48917