

the messenger



News from Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

Winter 2013/2014 Edition

Eaton Hired as New Director of Business Services

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV welcomes Kimberly Eaton as the new Director of Business Services. Ms. Eaton was hired with a unanimous vote by the MIU IV Board of Directors at their September 25, 2013 meeting. She took the post on October 21, 2013.



Ms. Eaton, a Grove City native, joins the MIU IV team with a wealth of education and experience in the education finance industry. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and Marketing and a Certificate in Accounting from Slippery Rock University. She has spent the last five years at Quaker Valley School District as the Assistant Director of Finance and Operations. In that position, she played an integral role in budget planning and preparation for the district. In addition, she was responsible for tax revenue collection, monitoring of expenses, audit preparation, and the supervision and training of staff. Prior to working at Quaker Valley, she was a Senior Auditor at the former McGill, Power, and Bill LLP in Grove City where she planned and performed financial audits of governmental and not-for-profit organizations.

"With her background as a school district business official, and as an auditor, Ms. Eaton will be a great addition to the MIU IV team," said MIU IV Executive Director, Dr. Wayne Killmeyer. "She understands district concerns about Intermediate Unit expenses, and she has a deep understanding of what it takes to be a good steward of public money. Everyone is looking forward to working with her," he said.

As the Director of Business Services, Ms. Eaton is responsible for organizing and overseeing all financial practices of the Intermediate Unit including budgeting, payroll, purchasing, fringe benefits, written financial policies and procedures, accounts payable/receivable, cash management, investment, and internal control.

Call for Leadership Award Nominations

Do you know a member of the MIU IV Act 93 staff who fosters and promotes the role and vision of a regional service agency? If so, nominate him/her for the 2014 MIU IV Labor & Management Leadership Award.



Nominations are due by January 16, 2014. Download the nomination form at www.miu4.org/staff/recognition_awards.asp.

The winner will be honored at the February 26, 2014 Board of Directors meeting.

Cyber Service Offers Keystone Exam Remediation

The MIU IV Cyber Service Program is offering an online, diagnostic-prescriptive tutoring program to school districts. The Virtual Tutor (VT) courses, offered through an agreement with leading online course provider Edgenuity, are intended to help students in need of remediation for Keystone Exams in Algebra I, Biology, and Literature.

"These online courses enable teachers to create an individualized content review class for each learner," said Director of Distance Education and Educational Planning, Justi Glaros. "Students can work at their own pace and teachers can closely monitor their progress toward the mastery of each standard."

Districts can purchase these courses using a cost-effective, concurrent license model. This model allows for an unlimited number of users to access the courses. Along with the licenses, a comprehensive professional development program is provided to district staff members.

"Not only do we offer the content and technology to deliver online Keystone remediation, but we also require that users are trained to implement it properly," said Glaros. "Our professional development component ensures that staff members maximize the features of this product to enhance student learning and performance."

The following courses are available to districts who purchase concurrent licenses:

- VT-PA-Keystone-Algebra I
- VT-PA-Keystone-Algebra I: Module 1- Operations and Linear Equations and Inequalities
- VT-PA-Keystone-Algebra I: Module 2- Linear Functions and Data Organization
- VT-PA-Keystone-Biology
- VT-PA-Keystone-Biology: Module A- Cells and Cell Processes
- VT-PA-Keystone-Biology: Module B- Continuity and Unity of Life
- VT-PA-Keystone-Literature
- VT-PA-Keystone-Literature: Module 1- Fiction
- VT-PA-Keystone-Literature: Module 2- Nonfiction

For more information, contact Ms. Glaros at 724-458-6700 ext. 1224 or visit www.miu4.org.

Cyber Service Program



Jodell Snyder Honored with Spirit Award



Jodell (Jodi) Snyder was honored at the November 20, 2013 MIU IV Board of Directors meeting as the 2013 recipient of the Spirit Award. Mrs. Snyder has been employed by MIU IV for 42 years as a Teaching Assistant at Clarence Brown

Community School (CBCS) in Butler, Pennsylvania.

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. Snyder was nominated by several employees from the organization as well as students from CBCS. Recipients are chosen by a selection committee representing all areas of MIU IV.

"Jodi Snyder is a pleasure to supervise," said CBCS Principal, Kristen Salina. "She demonstrates a positive work ethic and does her job with enthusiasm, compassion, commitment, and integrity. She is completely devoted to our students and invested in their futures," Salina said.

Both on and off the CBCS campus, Mrs. Snyder supports students who have special needs. Each day, she accompanies students to Butler County Vocational-Technical School where she assists them with organization and time management for career training classes. In addition, she works with children in the MIU IV Community Based Vocational Training Program (CBVT), an on-the-job, hands-on career training program for students with special needs. At the CBVT job-training sites, Mrs. Snyder assists students with career skills like time management, uniform preparation, and adaptation to the work environment.

In addition to supporting students, Jodi assists teachers and school administrators at CBCS with daily duties and functions.

Teacher Karen Thompson said that Jodi's assistance makes a significant difference in her classroom. "I teach children in grades 1 through 6 with behavioral and emotional needs. It can be challenging," said Thompson. "Jodi's fairness, smile, positive attitude, and kind heart encourages the students in our class to be positive and successful," she said.

In introducing Mrs. Snyder to the MIU IV Board of Directors, MIU IV Director of Special Education, Toby Woodward said, "Jodi is a dependable professional who can be counted on to work collaboratively to meet the unique needs of our students. Her level of commitment and dedication to the students is exemplary."

Mrs. Snyder lives in Butler, Pennsylvania with her husband Phil. She has two grown step-children and three step grandchildren.

Richard Sefton Receives Service Award

After 20 years as a member of the MIU IV board of directors, Mr. Richard Sefton's exemplary service has come to an end.

At the November 20, 2013 the MIU IV Labor & Management Committee honored Richard Sefton with a Distinguished Service Award.

"It has been an honor to work with Mr. Sefton," said board secretary, Laura Urbach. "He is a committed public servant who always had the best interest of MIU IV at heart. He will be missed."



CBCS Students Design Holiday Cards

Executive Director, Dr. Wayde Killmeyer, established the first annual MIU IV Holiday Card Contest.

Each year, Dr. Killmeyer will ask the students from different MIU IV Community Schools to enter the contest by submitting artwork to be considered for the cover of the annual MIU IV holiday card. A committee will review the artwork and select a winning design.

In 2013, twenty-eight students from Clarence Brown Community School submitted entries. Art teacher, Chuck Davies, provided guidance and instruction to students throughout the creative process.

After much consideration, the committee selected a Christmas tree design created by 11th grade student Dakota C. as the winner. Dakota was presented with a certificate of appreciation and a \$25 gift card to Sheetz at the December 18 Labor & Management committee meeting.

"I think this is a great opportunity for the IU to showcase the talent and skills of our students and teachers," Dr. Killmeyer said. "I was impressed with all of the artwork. It was difficult for the committee to select the winning design."



LinguisHTIK Competition Held at SRU

MIU IV's Annual LinguisHTIK Academic Games Competition was held on December 4 and 11, 2013 at Slippery Rock University.

LinguisHTIK challenges players to improve their grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and writing skills. Players learn to compose better sentences with proper grammar application. They also use richer vocabulary as they compete against others and are rewarded. All grade levels play with the same set of procedural rules. However, each level of competition introduces increasingly more difficult grammatical concepts for the players to use. Competitors are challenged to enhance their vocabulary and grammar skills in increasingly creative ways. Players usually learn more from applying their knowledge in the competition than they do in their normal classroom studies.

Prior to the competition, MIU IV offered a training for teachers of gifted and talented students to assist in preparation for the games. "This training allowed teachers to learn about the academic skills that are needed for the competition," said MIU IV Supervisor Paula Bredl. "Teachers learned instructional strategies and relevant classroom activities that helped them to prepare students to compete in the games and to meet general academic goals."

Twenty-two school districts and two nonpublic schools participated in the competition. "We were proud to host a total of 645 students for the LinguisHTIK competition this year," said Bredl.

The next academic games competition, *Presidents*, will take place on January 14 and 15 at SRU.

Labor & Management to Host 5K Run/Walk



Put on your athletic shoes and start training for the 2nd Annual MIU IV Let Me Win 5K Walk/Run. Hosted by the MIU IV Labor & Management Committee, the event will be held on **April 26, 2014 at 10am** at the John Thompson Memorial Trail at Neshannock High School, 3834 Mitchell Road, New Castle, PA.

Runners and walkers are encouraged to include their small children in strollers and/or pets on a leash. The early-bird cost for pre-registered participants is \$20 for adults and \$15 for K-12 and college students. Children under 5 with adult supervision can participate free of charge. Those who pre-register will receive a t-shirt and the benefit of the early-bird price. Race day registration is welcome. The cost will be \$25 and a t-shirt is not guaranteed. All proceeds benefit the Special Olympics of Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties.

Download the registration form today at www.miu4.org. Questions can be directed to Veronica Gardner at 724-458-6700 ext. 1218.

Sharpsville MDS Classroom Accepts Donation

Mrs. Beth Emmett, a special education teacher in MIU IV's Multidisabilities Support (MDS) classroom at Sharpsville Elementary School, recently learned that her classroom was the recipient of a monetary donation from a local business.

Owners of *The Getaway* Restaurant, Bill and Mary Adams, were seeking opportunities to give back to the community when they became acquainted with a student from Ms. Emmett's classroom, Logan L. They were so inspired by Logan's spirit, that they decided to host a fundraiser that would provide funds to purchase supplies, equipment, and toys for Logan's classroom.

When notified of the fundraiser, customers of *The Getaway* reached into their pockets and donated a total of \$1,000!

"I was astounded to learn of this donation," said Program Supervisor, Janean Stringer. "In these tough economic times, classrooms are always in need of support. The equipment and supplies will be a tremendous help to the kids," she said.

Bill and Mary Adams visited Ms. Emmett's classroom on Thursday, December 12, 2013. They spent time learning about the kids, the equipment, the switches, the walkers, the feeding tubes and other items commonly used the MDS setting. They talked with the staff and took the opportunity to interact with the students on a one-to-one basis.

"This is a really good cause. The teachers and staff are great," said Ms. Adams. "It's amazing what they do in the class. We are so happy to support the kids."

The Getaway is located at 711 West Main Street, Sharpsville, PA. MIU IV thanks them for their generous support.



MIU IV and PAIU *Shape the Future* with New Microsoft Discount Program

The Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU) and MIU IV are proud to announce the availability of *Shape the Future* (STF), in partnership with Microsoft Education, to benefit Pennsylvania K-12 schools.

Shape the Future is a public/private partnership designed to lower the cost of 1:1 computing and provide professional development opportunities to teachers. *Shape the Future* provides a discount to schools purchasing devices with Windows 7 Professional or Windows 8 Pro (National Academic SKU). In order for schools to receive this discount, they must provide a Letter of Eligibility (LOE) to their reseller of the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) of choice.

It is estimated that school entities purchasing new devices will achieve substantial savings per device - in some cases up to \$65 - through this program.

This discount will be available for any purchases during the 2013-14 school year and for any purchases made prior to August 19, 2014 in anticipation of the 2014-15 school year.

To receive a letter of eligibility, contact Scott Powner with the following information.

- District/charter name
- District/charter contact
- Contact's email
- Contact's direct phone
- Estimated purchase date
- Estimated # of devices
- Intended reseller or OEM
- Operating System (Windows 7 Professional or Windows 8 Pro)

Contact Scott Powner at 724-458-6700 ext. 1273 with questions.

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

CBCS Partners with Local Nursing Home



To practice skills taught as part of an ongoing social and emotional learning curriculum, students at Clarence Brown Community School (CBCS) entered Sunnyview Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center's Build a Scarecrow contest.

After judges from the nursing facility reviewed entries from throughout the community, they selected a scarecrow created by students from CBCS as the official contest winner.

Operated by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, Clarence Brown Community School serves 50 students with specific learning and behavioral needs. Most students are residents of Butler County and range from 5 to 21 years old. Along with traditional academic instruction, teachers at CBCS use the Lions Quest curriculum to help students learn social skills and character education. In addition, students receive hands-on instruction for transition to adulthood through job training and community based activities.

"Our school has had a long-standing relationship with the Sunnyview Nursing Home," said CBCS Principal Kristen Salina. "For several years, many students have completed on-site job training and practiced social and emotional skills by visiting residents and working there," Salina said.

On a visit to Sunnyview with a student, teacher's assistants, Darlene Lavery and Pam Dasch, noticed a flyer advertising the Build a Scarecrow & Win a Prize contest. They shared the flyer with Mrs. Salina who introduced it at a faculty meeting. "The teachers and their assistants ran with it," she said. "Each class used their creativity to build scarecrows while the teachers incorporated the instruction of skills like teamwork, compromise, and conflict resolution into the project."

CBCS Guidance Counselor, Thomas Long, noted that students drew inspiration from their personal and educational experiences to create their scarecrows. "We had everything from sports-themed creations to red hat society lady themes. Students even found inspiration from current and former school faculty members to create their contest entries," Mr. Long said.

Students and staff delivered photos of six scarecrows to be judged in the contest. The Sunnyview staff displayed photos of the scarecrows along with other entries from the community. After viewing the photos, Sunnyview residents, visitors, and staff voted for their favorite. The scarecrow with the most votes was selected as the winner. The Sunnyview community presented the most votes for a scarecrow wearing a red hat and a purple outfit named, Red Hot Gladdie. The winner was one of the six creations submitted by CBCS. The students affectionately named it Red Hot Gladdie after a beloved, retired teacher's assistant, Gladdie Paczek.

"Ms. Paczek was not a big fan of red hats or the color purple," Salina laughed. "Her distaste for these two things has become a running joke around here. The students have always looked for different ways to incorporate them into different projects just to get under Ms. Paczek's skin."

Winners enjoyed a class pizza party with their prize, a \$25 gift card to Anna Maria's Pizza.

18 Wheels and 1,000 Backpacks

MIU IV and *Feed the Children* have partnered to kick off the holiday giving season. MIU IV staff members spent the month of November delivering 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies, nonperishable food, and personal care items to homeless children throughout the region.

Feed the Children, an international relief organization, partners with organizations throughout the country to deliver essentials to children in need. Each year, they collect donations from patrons and choose partners from across the United States to deliver the items they have collected. This year, they selected Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness as partner for the second time. Region 5 of this initiative ensures that homeless children receive an appropriate education by assisting them with the removal of barriers and obstacles often caused by homelessness. Operated by MIU IV, Region 5 serves school-aged students in Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties.

Wendy Kinnear, MIU IV's Region 5 Coordinator, rolled up her sleeves and began to organize this effort several weeks before the delivery of supplies to MIU IV's central office in Grove City, PA. "*Feed the Children* arrives in an 18 wheeler filled with brand new, stuffed backpacks. It is my job to coordinate the unloading and distribution of the backpacks," she said. "I started by looking at the number of students in need at each of school. Then, I deployed MIU IV staff to pick up the correct number of backpacks. After that, they delivered them directly to the schools or to students."

Kinnear noted that the backpacks and supplies make a tremendous difference in the education of the children that the program serves. "Homeless children face many obstacles and barriers that can interrupt their education. It is our job as the administrative agent for this initiative to help remove those barriers," said Kinnear. "One of major obstacles homeless children face is the lack of school supplies, clothing, and personal care items. The backpacks provided by *Feed the Children* serve as a tremendous help in lifting those barriers."

MIU IV social worker Susan Pfahles delivered backpacks to children in Lawrence County. "The kids often become overwhelmed with joy and show tremendous appreciation for the donations from *Feed the Children*," said Pfahles. "I just had the pleasure of giving a backpack to a homeless student who is new to his school. He will be able to start a new life in his new school ready to learn and grow because of these supplies."



Special Education Searching for Surrogate Parents for Students in Need

MIU IV is responsible for recruiting, formally training, and assigning surrogate parents to students in need of those services. Director of Special Education, Toby Woodward, has placed advertisements in local newspapers hoping to find appropriate candidates.

What is a surrogate parent?

Children who are unaccompanied, homeless, wards of the state, or whose parents are unknown or unavailable, may require a surrogate parent to represent them. Such children are in need of representation if they are, or thought to be, eligible for services under IDEIA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. IDEIA addresses matters related to the identification, assessment, educational placement, and provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for eligible students.

Who can be a surrogate parent?

Applicants for surrogate parenthood must:

- Be person of good character
- Be at least 18 years old
- Possess reasonable ability to make decisions based on a student's educational needs and Pennsylvania's educational system.
- Have no vested interests that would conflict with the interests of the child.
- Obtain Act 33/34 Clearances

Those who may be interested in becoming a surrogate parent, or who would like additional information should contact Toby Woodward at 724-458-6700 ext. 1206 or via e-mail at toby.woodward@miu4.org



MIU IV Approved by PDE to Provide English as a Second Language Program Specialist Courses

Midwestern Intermediate IV is an approved provider for the Pennsylvania English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Specialist Certificate. This certificate is designed for teachers with a valid Pennsylvania Instructional I or II certification who are currently working with or plan to work with ESL students in public schools in Pennsylvania. This credential is not valid for teaching English abroad.

The ESL student population has been increasing across Pennsylvania. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education reported a 114.5% increase in the ESL population in Pennsylvania public schools over the past ten years, with a 1.4% decrease in all other student populations. This significant growth has led to an increased need for trained ESL teachers. Although the ESL Certificate is required for individuals to lead ESL classes, it is strongly recommended for ALL teachers to receive this training as Pennsylvania classrooms become increasingly diverse.

In response to the significant need for well-trained ESL and mainstream teachers, MIU IV has partnered with Global Classroom, Inc. to create an ESL teacher training program. MIU IV's ESL Certificate Program offers a set of six challenging and practical courses that prepare teachers to work effectively with ESL students. Through this program, learners develop a foundation in English usage, linguistic awareness and second language acquisition. They also learn to adapt and develop instructional materials for ESL students, to administer and interpret a variety of formative and summative assessments, to become knowledgeable about support services for English language learners, and to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity. Given that each course requires field experience, students have frequent opportunities to teach ESL students and immediately apply newly-learned concepts and skills.

Prospective participants should have a valid Pennsylvania Instructional I or II certificate. Successful applicants should be committed to improving educational opportunities for English language learners. Fluency in a second language is preferred but not required.

The program is designed to serve practicing teachers and professionals. It has two basic components; core courses and a field-based component.

All of the core classes meet on-site at the MIU IV office for the first session of each course and the remaining sessions meet on-line. The ESL Program consists of 6 courses. Each course has been approved by PDE for 3 graduate level credits with 90 Act 48 hours. Graduate credits are available from Southern New Hampshire University for an additional cost. The required core courses are as follows:

- Literacy Acquisition Language Acquisition
- Observing and Planning Instruction for ESL Students
- Developing Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity
- Implementing and Managing Instruction to ESL Students
- Assessing ESL Students



Each ESL course in the program includes a field-based component of 10 hours. The field experience is aligned with the course competencies.

Please direct any questions about the ESL Certification Program to Lorinda Hess, Director Continuing Education at 724-458-6700 x1238 or via e-mail at lorinda.hess@miu4.org. To register for the program visit <https://miuiv.globalclassroom.us/portal/>.



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV

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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.