

Young Hands at Work 17th Annual Conference for Young Artists

By Jenny Kirk, Marshall Independent (Reprinted with Permission)

More than 700 children with swirling imaginations stormed the campus of Southwest Minnesota State University Tuesday to explore the creative possibilities at the 17th annual Conference for Young Artists, sponsored by the SW/WC Service Cooperative for students in grades K-8. The conference included a variety of instructional guidance in all facets of the arts in addition to three separate, hands-on sessions for students to choose from, including acting, drawing, sculpting, writing and even juggling.



Linnea Bader, an eighth-grader who attends Marshall Area Christian School, was enjoying her time at the pottery wheel in Jim Swartz's class. "The conference is really cool. There's so many different things to do," Bader said. "I went from doing India ink to making pottery." Bader has been attending the annual event for a number of years, and reflected on her final time. "It's my last year, and I will really miss it," she said. "It's really fun."

Gary Harbo, author and illustrator of children's books, suggested various ways to create cartoon characters. Scott Rolfs, a professional cartoonist/illustrator, had kids morph human qualities onto an animal to create something "wild." While presenter Melanie Schmidt taught kids how to sand paint and Donna VanKeulen explained how to do scrapbooking, Kim Bovee read an art lesson book in preparation for making a water color journal. Sheila Tabaka conducted a session on drawing fashion clothing. While some kids learned about acting or making Origami critters, others were creating magic with lines drawn in pencil during Jim Fletcher's session.



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News from the Executive Director....

By Cliff Carmody, Executive Director

Recently, I was reading insights from John Maxwell's book "The Maxwell Daily Reader". He was telling about a picture Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, keeps in his office. The picture is of a turtle sitting atop a fence post. Haley kept it in his office to remind him of a lesson he had learned years before: "If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help!" Haley remarked, "Anytime I start thinking, 'Wow, isn't this marvelous what I've done!' I look at that picture and remember how this turtle got up on the post."

Haley's words ring true today, as we have received word that three of our staff members will be recognized at the fall Minnesota Rural Education (MREA) conference in November. Deb Moore and Josh Sumption will be recognized through the Profiles of Excellence award. Josh and Deb have been instrumental in the development of speech language services using technology. Through what we call "tele-practice", Josh and Deb are delivering speech and language services to a number of students in our region through a web-based application that minimizes travel time and maximizes service time. We believe using technology to deliver these services creates more focused clinical time and less wasted travel time. A special thank you and congratulations go out to Josh and Deb for all their efforts in making this an outstanding service for our members.

After 40 plus years with our agency, Dave Lammers, one of our special education directors has retired! Dave will be receiving MREA's Distinguished Service Award at the conference. Not enough can be said about Dave's leadership and influence on special education in our region of the state. Recognized for his calm demeanor, professional attitude, and commitment to the special education students and staff he served, Dave is well-deserving of this recognition!

Truly, all that we do, we do with the help of others. Dave, Deb and Josh are some of the individuals who have "helped" make the SW/WC SC the agency it is today. Alex Haley has it right. Nothing we do, nothing we have done, has been done without the help of so many people-thank you Dave, Deb and Josh!



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News from Risk Management Services....

By Doug Deragisch, Sr. Director of Risk Management Services

Health Cost Management Program: The School Pool Advisory Committee approved funding (\$20 per contract for reimbursement of program costs with an additional \$20 targeting wellness screenings) for the continuation of the site-based Health Cost Management Program for the 2010-2011 school year. Site Wellness Coordinators will receive weekly WELCOA Health Bulletins, quarterly Culture of Health newsletters, as well as additional assistance as needed in the development, implementation, and/or enhancement of a site-based program. If you are interested in forming a Wellness Committee and participating in a site-based Health Cost Management Program, please contact Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator at kari.bailey@swsc.org, or 507-537-2292.

Annual Health Conference: The annual health conference, scheduled for November 10th, is very beneficial in the continued success of a Health Cost Management Program. The conference provides information on what health themes are upcoming, ideas on wellness programs which may have an impact on employee health and well being, and offers an environment that encourages networking and resource sharing. Currently this conference occurs in the fall of the school year. Coordinators must participate and encourage other committee members to attend. For more information, please contact Kari Bailey, Health Cost Management Coordinator at kari.bailey@swsc.org, or 507-537-2292.

Flu Shot Season!

By Dan Weir, Risk Management Consultant

Interested in having a Flu Shot Clinic at your worksite? BCBS can help. To find out more about how to set up a Flu Shot Clinic with BCBS, go to Bluecrossmn.com and scroll down the left side of the site to Employers and click on employers.bluecross.com. Scroll further down the left side of this page and click on: It's time to schedule your FluStop clinic. This page includes the flu shot information you will need. Topics covered include: Why host a clinic; How to set up a clinic (list of participating providers), Questions and tips (FAQs); and Tools and Resources (Brochures, E-mail, Letters, Newsletter article, Posters).

Please note a very important change that was implemented last year. Roster Bills will not be accepted for

payment. The cost of flu shots must be submitted electronically as a medical claim for each covered member. The flu shots provided in the workplace are subject to the same benefits and member liability as those received at a provider's office or retail clinic. Flu shots are covered under preventative care benefits. If members are enrolled on a plan without preventative care benefits, the cost of the flu shots would be a covered expense subject to the plan deductibles and co-pays and become a member liability.

BCBS has set up a FluStop provider network. You should click on the list of participating providers to find flu shot providers in the network (under the "How to set up a Clinic" section). If a group chooses a non-participating flu shot provider, the group assumes the risk of claims processing out-of-network, claims being rejected and assumes the responsibility for all expenses incurred through use of a non-participating flu shot provider.

I recommend reviewing the list of participating providers to make sure the flu shot provider you intend to use is included in the network. Other materials, including the FAQ and tools and resources, should help make your flu shot clinic a success. We all win when employees' health and wellbeing is supported.

Critical Incident Stress Management--CISM

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

A CISM Team provides immediate assistance to local schools in times of crisis or traumatic events. The team works with crisis teams and the crisis plan already in place by school districts, but team members are specially trained by standards set by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) to respond to school crisis.

A "School Crisis Response" training has been scheduled for January 20-21, 2011, at the SW/WC SC in Marshall. A team of 35 people, representative of our 18 county region, will be trained by Dan Casey. At this time, team members are primarily school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors---and we are looking for more members! If you are interested, please contact me at the SW/WC SC at shelly.maes@swsc.org.

News From Special Education Services.... The Building Principal's Critical Role in SPED

By Mary Palmer, Senior Director of Special Education

Over 30 years ago, the Handicapped for All Children's Education Act became part of the school landscape. The Act is now referred to as IDEA and it ensures that all children are afforded a public education regardless of any disability they may have. When the law was first enacted, special education was seen as a "room" or "place" a student went to in order to receive instruction. In addition, often times if a student had special needs, the general education teacher did not play an integral part in providing instruction to the child.

Today, special education is seen more as an integral system that provides various supports to the student based on individual needs to allow a student with disabilities to be afforded an appropriate education. This has been difficult for some educators to integrate within their beliefs in that they still see special education as a separate entity and a place to send children who may have unique needs. This has never been the intent of the law. The law's intent has always been that students with disabilities will be educated with their peers whenever possible.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits when students with disabilities are included in the general education classrooms. Yet, some schools continue to struggle at implementing a system of supports that allows students with disabilities to be successful in an inclusionary and integrated system.

With the enactment of No Child Left Behind, the emphasis on children with disabilities meeting grade standards has been brought to the forefront. This has forced educators to review and amend the way they have delivered instruction to all students, including those with disabilities so as to meet the standards set forth in the recent legislation. Students with disabilities must have appropriate access to the general education curriculum if we want them to meet grade standards. However, it is not enough for a student to have access to the curriculum. The more difficult thing is to make sure that once they have the access, they are provided with the appropriate instructional support to ensure they receive an effective education based on their unique needs.

The principal's role is critical to ensure that all students receive an education that meets their needs and helps to overcome their challenges. He is a key to implementing an inclusionary system of educational delivery of services.

One of the major characteristics a principal must display to help inclusionary programs be successful is that the principal must be an instructional leader. He provides support and focus for those within the buildings in a manner that promotes inclusion as an effective system for all students. He must be the loudest voice in the room so to speak, and ensure that his words and actions reflect a commitment to special education and inclusionary programs.

Study after study has shown that educational leadership is ranked as the key variable associated with effective schools. Effective principals understand this and develop systems and supports for students and staff that allow for

Building Principal continues on page 15

Changes To Third Party Billing

By Martha Ritter, Regional 3rd Party Billing Admin.

In an effort to provide further support and assistance, and to maintain consistency for the third party billing process, school districts now have two major resources available from the SW/WC SC.

Most school districts are doing an excellent job with their third party billing processes, collecting federal Medical Assistance dollars to support their Special Education services. However, we would like to ensure that all school districts are obtaining every dollar available to them, while maintaining the integrity of the program.

The current 62 member school districts will have the direct support of Tonia Czech and Martha Ritter. They are available to assist all school districts in training staff, checking MA eligibility, obtaining medical confirmation from physicians, obtaining insurance denials, assisting with the reconciliation process, providing internal audits, assisting with SpEd Forms including training, and any other issues related to the 3rd party billing process.

Tonia will assist the southern school districts, while Martha will assist the northern school districts of the SW/WC SC service area. They both continue with other job duties as well as 3rd party billing work. If your school district has not been contacted by Tonia or Martha, please call Martha at (320)269-9243 so they can make sure you have everything you need to make your 3PB process successful.

Educational Resource Library Update

By Mary Weber, Coordinator

Welcome to a new school year! There are often questions about the delivery service for the library. For the schools in the Montevideo area, Devin comes on Mondays and then goes to Marshall with materials for the Plum Creek van exchange. The Plum Creek van driver picks up the materials on Tuesday afternoon for delivery to the southern public libraries. Plum Creek stops at each public library two or three times per week.

Science PAC kits are still available for checkout this year if you haven't sent in your request yet. If you need an order form, just call (1.320.269.9243) or email me (mary.weber@swsc.org). If the PAC is still available, we will certainly schedule it for you.

Participating members can send in recommendations for purchases of DVDs, curriculum content materials, special education testing materials, or other items. If we order your suggestion, you will be the first person to use the item.

Remember when requesting materials to have your request to us by Thursday noon for delivery on Monday. Materials are checked out for a two-week period for your use. Our catalog of available materials is on the SW/WC SC website under Programs and Services. Participating schools for 2010-11 include HLO; Windom; Mt. Lake; Cedar Mt.; Redwood; MCC; Fulda; Edgerton; Lake Benton; Hendricks; Ivanhoe; Minneota; ParkSide Elem/Marshall; Lynd; Canby; Dawson; Madison Elem; LqPV MS/HS; Appleton Elem; Benson; KMS; Montevideo; and BOLD.

Springfield High School YES!

By Mattie Pieschel, Senior at Springfield High School

Since the fall of 2009, students at Springfield High School have participated in the Youth Energy Summit (YES!) program sponsored by the Southwest Initiative Foundation, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, The Prairie Ecology Bus Center, and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. YES! is a team-oriented youth program that inspires widespread adoption of renewable energy technology and energy conservation practices which contribute to the environmental and economic health of rural Minnesota communities.

For the past three years, students on the Springfield YES! Team have envisioned and implemented projects that make our school and community more energy efficient. Our major accomplishments include the locker room lighting project, which consisted of motion detector lighting in both the boys' and girls' locker rooms, implementing the EMP (Energy Motion Patrol) program by training a team of 6th grade students to track energy use in their school, and the Carbon Footprint Challenge in the elementary school to teach students about their energy use and alternative energy options. To get high school as well as elementary students involved, we started a plastic and aluminum recycling program in our buildings and sponsored a YES! Week in the HS, during which students



Springfield continues on page 11

News from Teaching & Learning Services....

By Bob Braun, Sr. Director of Teaching and Learning Services

PBIS: There are 15 schools from the southern project that were accepted as part of cohort 6. From our region, this includes Marshall Middle School, Windom High and Middle Schools, RTR Middle School, KMS Elementary and MCC Elementary.

School Improvement: Five schools are a part of this year's shared services project, working with Jen Mahan-Deitte as their coordinator. The Principal Leadership Cohort kicked off on September 28th, with 15 principals in this year's cohort. Instructional Leadership will be the key focus of the cohort this year.

AYP: Although 2 school districts and 1 school successfully went off AYP this past year, we have 7 new schools and 4 new districts at Stage 1.1 or higher for 2010-2011. Two AYP regional meetings were held at the end of September, with MDE and the SW/WC SC partnering to hold these meetings.

Math/Science Teacher Partnership: This year's focus is on both science and math. Ten schools are involved in

the science module, including Cedar Mt., Lincoln High, Holy Redeemer, Hutch, Lynd, Minneota, Pipestone, Red Rock Central, RTR, and Worthington. Six are involved in the new math module, including BOLD, Lincoln High, KMS, Minneota, Round-Lake Brewster, and Sleepy Eye. Both modules will be incorporating lesson study in the PLC's and using data to drive decisions.

The **27th Annual Day of Excellence** will be held on Monday, March 7, 2011, at Southwest Minnesota State University from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. This year's focus will be on New Visions in Technology Relating to Education (both Special Ed and General Ed).

Sponsored by: SW/WC SC's Low Incidence Project and the Division of Teaching & Learning Services, Minnesota Department of Education and R-CSPD. Watch for registration info at www.swsc.org.



Data Mining with the School Improvement Team

By Lisa Gregoire, School Improvement Specialist

Over 60 educators from 16 districts spent two days of their summer break mining data with SW/WC SC's School Improvement team. This was an impressive turnout, not only because of the time of the year, but also due to the fact that many districts are now using data warehouses to clean up their data.

The Data Mine consisted of two intensive days of collecting, organizing and interpreting achievement data. On Day One, district teams prepared PowerPoint presentations and grade level reading and math Excel documents based on their 2010 MCA results. They then started the process of analyzing the data they put together.

Day Two focused on analyzing data, making observations, creating hypothesis and goals, and creating a plan of how the data mine outcomes would be communicated back at their home district. Not only was MCA data looked at, but also any other data each district collected to progress monitor and make teaching and curriculum decisions to meet their student's needs. Additional data could include NWEA, AIMsWeb, Dibels, etc. Teams were able to spend

valuable time brainstorming, discussing and sharing ideas and strategies within their own district, and also network with the other districts present.

If you are interested in digging deeper into your district's data, watch for our data mines next summer or call to request one for your school.



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Save the Dates!

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Looking for a Birthday or Christmas gift for that special child in your life – your daughter/son, niece/nephew, or grandchild? Conferences make great gift or field trip opportunities! Consider paying the registration fee or taking them to the conference. It will be a great learning



experience as well as offer quality time with that special child.

Teachers/Administrators: Please consider attending the Science & Nature Conference in place of a traditional field trip. There are many topics to choose from—all students will find classes of interest.



CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG WRITERS

January 6, 2011--grades 3-8

Keynote: John Coy, Well-known author of picture books & young adult novels

Nov. 23 – Early Bird Deadline, Nov. 30 – Final Deadline

SCIENCE & NATURE CONFERENCE

May 13, 2011 – grades K-8

Keynote: Dennis Regling, Entertaining and informative performer and author

March 29 – Early Bird Deadline, April 5 – Final Deadline

Register for Knowledge Bowl

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Junior High Knowledge Bowl

November 19 – Early Bird Registration Deadline

November 29 – Final Registration Deadline

Senior High Knowledge Bowl

January 31 – Early Bird Registration Deadline

February 7 – Final Registration Deadline

Knowledge Bowl Coaches:

Please refer to our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities for more information. There are three pages devoted to Knowledge Bowl:

- KB Coaches' Info – for both Jr. & Sr. High programs
- Jr. High KB – specifically for the Jr. High program
- Sr. High KB – specifically for the Sr. High program



Schedules of invitationals, as well as sub-regional and regional events, are posted on the website. In addition, there is information about registration fees, registration forms, and much more.

Questions? Contact us!

Plan Your Moves

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Do you have students in your school who play chess? If so, you might want to start a scholastic chess club. Go to our student activities webpage and click on Regional Chess Tournament. You will find information about the tournament, along with suggestions on how to start a chess club. Steve Harder wrote the article based on the program he started at Mountain Lake Public School. Harder approached us about hosting a regional chess tournament and has served as our tournament director since its inception in 2008. Please pass this information on to any students who play chess.

The Tournament is open to students in grades K-12 who have had prior chess playing experience. It will be held February 2, 2011 (snow date – February 9) in Marshall. This event is an opportunity to improve analytical thinking skills while having fun competing with other students. It's truly inspiring to watch them strategize their moves. Call us with questions!



Encourage Your Students To Start Writing

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

We're kicking off our 7th Annual Creative Writing Contest for students in grades 3-12. The categories include: Fiction, Poetry, and Creative Non-Fiction. This event is a partnership between SMSU's English Department and the SW/WC Service Co-operative to encourage a love of language and writing for all students and as a way to recognize talented young writers in this region.



A brochure with detailed information about the contest is available on our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities. The submission deadline is January 25, 2011, so there's lots of time to write!

An Awards Ceremony will be held on April 17, 2011. Winning entries are published in an anthology with a copy given to the top three place winners in each grade level from each writing category. In addition, gift certificates and medals are also awarded to students. A \$2,000 scholarship to attend SMSU is awarded to the top junior/senior place finisher in each writing category. (Limit of one scholarship per student, per year).

Art Contest for High School Students

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

The 7th Annual Water is Life Art Contest invites Minnesota's 9-12 grade students to create art and videos that represent issues facing our freshwater resources. This year, the theme for the contest is water conservation. Collaborating with Minnesota's Educational Service Cooperatives, the Freshwater Society hopes to inspire and educate Minnesota's youth of the important issues facing our vulnerable freshwater resources.



The 2011 Water is Life Art Contest invites students to create art that symbolizes water conservation. The artwork may illustrate the need for conservation, explore methods of conservation or be created with conservation and reuse in mind. The artwork and accompanying artist statement should convey the importance of protecting and preserving our most important resource.

The contest awards \$500 scholarships to the six top finalists, prizes to each region's semi-finalists and recognition to each participant.

For more information, check out the following website:
www.freshwater.org.

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Lots of Interest Shown in Science and Nature

By Sue Gorecki, Student Activities Coordinator

Approximately 1200 students, teachers and parents converged on the SMSU campus on May 14, 2010 to spend the day learning about various science and nature topics. It was the SW/WC SC's 16th Annual Science & Nature Conference. The keynote, Physics Circus, showed the students that Physics is fun! Physics Force from the University of Minnesota went above and

beyond (literally) to educate and entertain. The students were spell bound by the presentation.

The participants (grades K-8) attended three hands-on classes where they learned about edible science; saw a life-size, inflatable whale; built mini-solar panels; had fun learning about stars and how to use star maps and telescopes; saw how wetlands benefit water quality, soil, wild-life and river systems; learned about how icky things in nature such as slug slime and skunk

smell help animals survive; handled live snakes and reptiles; investigated crime scenes, learned about the amazing science of the ultra cold (cryogenics); wrote their name in hieroglyphics; attended planetarium shows; watched a wacky professor demonstrate science concepts; and much more! The excitement of the students was contagious.

Physics Force also presented an evening show that drew about 450 participants. In addition, Mike Lynch, meteorologist from WCCO, presented a Star Watch Party at Camden State Park that drew another 350 participants for a total of 2,000 participants for the day!



Student Activities Booklet

Booklets with information on Student Programs, Conferences & Competitions were distributed to principals, coaches/advisors of student programs, contact persons for student conferences, community education directors, and PTA/PTO chairs. The booklet contains summary information about each event/activity and also registration fees and deadlines. For detailed information, such as a conference brochure, please check our website: www.swsc.org/studentactivities. Consider adding our website as a link on your website. Check our website periodically as information is updated frequently.

News from Administrative Services....

By Darin Jensen, Sr. Director of Administrative Services

Did you know that the Divisions of Administrative Services and Special Education Services collaborate on a number of things? For example: At mid-year, for those districts who are members of the RMIC and also purchase special education services, the RMIC staff compare EDRS versus how districts are coding special education staff in UFARS. The RMIC notifies districts of any discrepancies, and allows them the chance to fix/update this at mid-year instead of the busy year end time.

Second, for districts that purchase both special education services and house their UFARS information on our Marshall Server, the RMIC extracts data directly from their databases each month. They pass this information along to the SW/WC SC business office staff to process payments for the various federal special education funds run through the agency. These districts only need to complete the entries in their databases—they do not need to submit any additional reports to request reimbursement. The SW/WC SC contacts districts if there is something coded in their UFARS that needs additional support documentation, and after all is complete, the SW/WC SC sends out the reimbursement check.

Explore Your Options at New London-Spicer

By Trish Perry, New London-Spicer Middle School Principal

New London-Spicer Middle School is excited to offer Explore Your Options, a program which allows students in 8th grade an opportunity to explore enriched curriculum and increase learning opportunities. The classes we are offering include: Small Animal Care, Wildlife Identification, Video Broadcasting, Introducing Woodworking, Learning Robotics with Lego's, Drama, Foreign Language, School Success Skills, and Native American Ceramics. During September, we offered Video Broadcasting. Students were able to create a morning news program and create their own independent project.

The classes are offered either as an "early bird" or during first hour. The classes are fifteen days in length. In order for students to take advantage of this program, students must attain a "C" average or better. Also, students are expected to attend each class session. Our goal is to offer as many real life experiences as possible to our students through this program.

The [2010 Southwest Minnesota Career Expo](#) is a regional project that takes many months of preparation. It could not be accomplished without the generous in-kind time and energy from a wide range of partners and over 100 volunteers. The expo partnership consists of 12 different agencies/organizations. Planning is already underway for the 2011 Career Expo!

Career Expo Had Biggest, Best Year in 2010

By Tom Hoff, Career and Technical Project Coordinator

Determining a career is one of the most important and difficult decisions facing high school graduates. What jobs are out there?....What skills will be required?....Which college should I attend?....Can I afford to go to college? These are just a few of the questions that high school students are beginning to think about as they prepare for their transition to adult life. The best way to find answers is to gain as much information and experience as you possibly can. The SW MN Career Expo has become a popular means for high school students in the region to gain first-hand information about a wide variety of careers, especially careers in Southwest Minnesota. On September 28 & 29, 1,854 HS sophomores from 31 schools participated at expos at SMSU in Marshall and MNWest in Worthington.

During the expo, students spent time visiting with over 60 employers, college programs, and community organizations that each established a **HIGHLY** interactive career exhibit. The exhibit gave students the opportunity to experience work tasks from a variety of jobs and to ask questions. After spending time in the exhibit area, students then participated in a one-hour Career Game Show that proved

to be an effective, fast-paced and fun way for students to learn about careers and education planning. To further student engagement, many schools assigned projects for students to complete. The exhibitors felt they made much deeper connections with those students who completed the school projects.



News from Members....

SW MN Educator Wins \$10,000 Award

By Shelly Maes, Manager of Member Services

In October 2010, six educators from Minnesota (including one from Southwest Minnesota) each received an unrestricted \$10,000 award from the WEM Foundation at the 12th Annual WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Brunch. [Nate Henry](#) (pictured at right), a teacher from Pipestone Area Schools, was recognized for his outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student achievement in the area of Academic Coach of the Year.

Henry currently teaches English to students in grades 10-11 and coaches the One Act Play at Pipestone Area Schools. He has been teaching for 11 years and coaching for 10 years. As director of the One-Act Play, Henry gives students of all backgrounds and abilities the opportunity to participate and excel on stage. He takes tremendous pride in how the One-Act Play and theatre can offer an opportunity for students who have not found their niche elsewhere.

The WEM Educator Awards program was created by the WEM Foundation, and is administered by the Center for Academic Excellence in partnership with The Minnesota Service Cooperatives, of which the SW/WC Service Cooperative is a member. Educators are nominated by students, students' parents, colleagues or community members. A blue ribbon selection panel reviews and ranks the nominees.



In addition to the six statewide honorees, ten additional educators were named as regional honorees for 2010. Southwest Minnesota was home to two regional honorees—[Rick Purrington](#) (left) from Marshall Public Schools and [Thomas Appel](#) (right) from Mountain Lake Public Schools.



Springfield YES! *(continued from page 5)*

learned about energy use in our school, were encouraged to carpool, and participated in a community clean up day.

We have numerous projects that were started last year and are still in progress, such as solar lighting around our community walking trail, installment of a green roof on the school, composting of cafeteria food waste, expansion of motion detector lights, and more. Future projects include installing air dryers in place of paper towels, a bicycle-powered television in the school lobby, growing local produce in our own greenhouse, and inviting Springfield businesses to be involved in our recycling program. Each year the students set new goals and imagine exciting, innovative projects.

YES! is a wonderful program which broadens experiences and knowledge for many students interested in energy efficiency. It not only affects the students involved in the program, but also touches each student in the Springfield district and reaches out to the community as well. YES! is a unique opportunity for students to become empowered and make decisions that create real changes in their communities and schools.



RTR Teacher Wins Award

By Amy Christensen, RTR Public Schools

Kari Kidman, a First Grade Teacher at RTR Elementary was awarded the First Place Thrivent Financial Foundation Personal Finance Educator Award for her elementary economics lesson titled “Be Careful.” In this lesson, students use the book Arthur’s TV Trouble to learn about wants and needs and what causes us to desire certain items. The students learn how advertisements can influence the decisions we make. The Thrivent Financial Foundation Personal Finance Educator Award was introduced to recognize teachers who develop and implement creative learning activities that increase personal finance understanding.

Kari Kidman (left) was honored at a recognition dinner on Tuesday, October 19th at Cargill in Minnetonka. She was presented with her award and honored for her creativity in personal finance education. Kari presented her award-winning learning activity during the mini-seminar sessions that preceded the reception and awards ceremony.

Hats Off For Cancer in Ortonville

By Laurie Maas, Ortonville Public Schools

The Ortonville Student Council sponsors a “hat day” at school for the elementary and high school students. Students pay a dollar to wear a hat all day at school. The money raised is donated to the

local cancer group to help families in the county who are dealing with cancer. Also, the elementary students collect money for 2 weeks and they hold a walk at the athletic field to support the cancer group. All money donated also goes to families in the area. This year students raised \$2,000 for these events.



Enhancing Education Through Technology at Lynd Public School

By Heather Fernholz, Technology Integration Specialist

Lynd Public School received an American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) technology grant. With this grant Lynd Public School purchased iPods, iPads, Lumens document cameras, SMART Tables, SMART Boards, and NEO2 computers.

Staff attended training during Technology Week August 2nd-5th. Topics included: Accelerated Math, Math Facts in a Flash and Accelerated Reader on the NEO2s,

Lynd, continued on page 13



Marshall Primary Level: A 2010-2011 MN School of Excellence

By Heidi Critchley, Marshall Public Schools

Marshall Primary Level (Park Side and West Side Elementary Schools) is validated as a 2010-2011 Minnesota School of Excellence. The Minnesota School of Excellence Program promotes excellence through a rigorous evaluation process that showcases dynamic schools of the 21st century. Established by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA), the program is recognized by the Minnesota Department of Education, as well as the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

MESPA endorses schools whose principal, staff, students, and community -- working as a team -- demonstrate the desire to strengthen education by successfully undertaking this research-based school improvement process. Aligned with six national standards (Learning Centered, Diverse Communities, 21st Century Learners, Quality Instruction, Knowledge and Data, Community Engagement), the Minnesota School of Excellence Program includes a systematic self-study, development of a school improvement plan, and implementation of the plan.

Heidi Critchley is the principal of Marshall Primary Level which consists of two schools: Park Side Elementary, with 487 grades K-2 students; and West Side Elementary Schools with 301 grades 3-4 students. "Marshall Public Schools develops the potential of each learner for success in a changing world is the district and school's mission statement," said Critchley. "It is the driving force behind everything we do. We strive to teach EACH and every student to reach his or her potential to be successful in today's world. This is accomplished through data analysis, programming, instructional practices, professional learning communities, and shared leadership," Critchley continued.

Quality teaching and teachers at Marshall Primary Level are ultimately measured by results. The school improvement plan goals guide the focus of all teachers' efforts and classroom instruction. The individual goals are measured through student data. The data each spring indicates if the site and individual teachers have achieved their goals, while ultimately aligned to and support the overall district goals.

An important facet of Marshall Primary Level is that leadership is truly shared among staff. The primary level has a leadership team comprised of 10 teacher leaders (top right). Five of the leaders are selected by securing the top number of votes from their peers. The other five are

selected by administration. The representation of teachers includes grade levels, social worker, and special education. The teacher leaders are assigned to represent a group of peers for whom they provide ongoing communication and support for improved student and adult learning.



Lynd *(continued from page 12)*

iPod basics, SMART Table basics, and SMART Boards above and beyond. Training was provided by Renaissance Learning, the SW/WC Service Cooperative, and Tierney Brothers.

While in the classrooms I interviewed a few teachers. When asked how technology would enhance student achievement, 4th grade teacher Connie Demers stated, "I believe technology adds a level of excitement to learning and students are motivated to do their best. It makes learning fun!" Caryn Douglas teaches 1st grade and this is how she manages technology, "The easiest way I found to manage technology is to use small groups and rotate students, so everyone has a turn." When I am in the classrooms I can feel the excitement in the room. Every student is interacting with a piece of technology on a daily basis. The staff at Lynd can already see the impact technology has on accelerating student's learning.



At Lynd we pride ourselves in being a leader in curriculum and technology. It is our mission, and we hope to continue this mission for many years to come. We also hosted Title I Family Night October 14th. Different stations were set up including technology. Families participated in games and visited with other families from the community.

Jumpstart to 5th Grade at NL-S!

By Liz Kruger Hommerding, LSW, New London-Spicer Schools

Over the summer, New London-Spicer middle school was able to offer incoming fifth grade students a program called Jumpstart to 5th grade! A grant through PACT 4 Families Collaborative made this transition program possible. Jumpstart to 5th Grade! focused on helping students become more comfortable with moving from the elementary school to the middle school by providing academic support, social/emotional support and a lot of fun! Jumpstart was a five day program that ran from 9:00am to 12:00pm each day. We had a great turnout with 45 students participating!

Each day was a little different. Monday and Tuesday were held at the middle school. Students were split into three rotations of reading, math and social skills. Students were able to brush up on skills and tour the building.



Wednesday began by taking a bus provided by Peterson Bus Service to the Big Kahuna Park in Spicer. The students practiced score keeping and averages on the mini-golf course, road bumper boats and go-karts. Upon returning to school, the students had a chance to practice locker combinations and write in journals. Thursday the group walked to the Monongalia Historical Society & Museum located a few blocks away from school. The students were able to explore and ask questions regarding area history. Friday was a big day. The group went to Sibley State Park to take part in an interpretative center class using GPS systems. Led by

a park ranger, the students learned about geocaching and practiced working together. After the students returned from Sibley State Park, parents and families were asked to join students and staff for lunch and an awards presentation. It was great week with very positive feedback from parents, students and staff.

WWG After School Academy

By Paul Olson, WWG Elementary Principal

Ask any educator about trying to schedule in all the extras during the day and they'll tell you there just isn't enough time! So, to ease the tug of war between regular education and Title I and III, Westbrook Walnut Grove Elementary School has moved it's Title Programs to after school.

First through sixth grade students meet every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30-5:30 PM. We have four teachers sharing the duties between math and reading. Two teachers work with our first-third graders, while the other two teachers work with our fourth-sixth graders. These groups

are then split in two more groups, each having it's own teacher.

All four teachers work in regular education during the day. Two of the

staff members are also fully licensed in ESL. This gives us the opportunity to bring our Title I and III programs together.



There was a lot of planning and preparation this past spring and over the summer to make sure we got off to a strong start. Our staff has done a great job implementing this new program. Our students receive a snack through the after-school snack program. This includes milk or juice and a fruit, yogurt, or other nutritious snack.

All curriculum implemented in our After-School Academy keeps the MCA state testing in mind. Many aspects of our program are based on visits with Sheri Allen, Supt of Mankato Schools, from whom we got the idea. We know every district is unique, but if anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at 507-859-2141. We would love to talk with you.



Cooperative Purchasing--Did You Know?

By Shareen Neumann, Sales & Marketing/Cooperative Purchasing

Cooperative Purchasing through the Minnesota Service Cooperatives saved members across Minnesota over \$4,200,000 in FY2010! CP offers more than just school and office supplies! We have contracts for technology, software, buildings and grounds, buying AND selling vehicles, and more!

netTrekker Search Just Got a Lot More Personal: netTrekker Search is still the same educational search tool that millions of educators and students have loved and trusted for more than 10 years, with some exciting new enhancements that help personalize learning even more. netTrekker Search still offers: 300,000 digital resources vetted by highly qualified teachers and aligned to your state standards, a unique set of personalized learning tools that make the content effective for every learner, including readability ratings, read aloud text-to-speech tool, dictionary/translation hot key, and customized content for ELL/ESL students, and an easy way to organize and share resources across schools and throughout the district with My Portfolio.

What's New?: netTrekker Search features a completely new user interface specifically designed to provide a more personalized, engaging, and productive learning experience for teachers and students. Some other exciting changes include: separate user interfaces for teachers and students and new options for sorting results. This will help users to more quickly and efficiently get right to the specific resources and tools that meet their personal needs, teachers and students can customize their netTrekker homepage for their own personal preferences with the tools they use and like the most, and a new voting feature lets teachers and students vote on their personal favorite resources. This helps users quickly identify the resources that are recommended most by their peers. Now it's easier than ever for teachers to personally connect with the rest of the netTrekker community to share integration tips, best practices, and favorite resources. Quick links to netTrekker Village, the netTrekker Customer Center, and Online Learning help teachers get the most out of their netTrekker subscription.

Building Principal *(Continued from page 4)*

growth and development. These effective principals serve as a champion for all the students in their building. They are at the forefront in developing programs within their buildings that help meet the needs of all the students and all the diverse needs they may bring with them. These principals model an attitude that all students can succeed and all students have the right to an education.

The principal must provide the necessary direction and vision to ensure that special education programming is a success in the building. He must inspire a shared vision with his staff. He must ensure participation and contributions from every member of the team. He must also ensure there is a positive working environment for all school staff and all students and serve as a spokesperson for the need to have appropriate and adequate resources in the area of special education.

There is no doubt that a principal's job is complex and demanding. However, the vital role a principal plays in implementing appropriate programming for all students cannot be underestimated. For it is his leadership and commitment that is necessary for the implementation of programs that are of a quality nature, including those supports necessary to ensure students with disabilities are provided quality programming.



To find out how other schools are using netTrekker Search, to request a webinar or to sign up for a free trial, please contact:

Nancy Hope-Landon
877-517-1125 ext. 3048.

We have negotiated discounted buying windows at a rate of \$1.10 per student per year with a minimum order of \$529.

*Non-member rates start at \$1775 per building or \$1.99 per student pending district size.

Our buying windows are:

12/3/10 to 1/17/11

4/15/11 to 5/30/11

6/15/11 to 7/30/11



www.swsc.org/mntaab

The next borrowing pool is scheduled for January 2011.

Upcoming Professional Development

To register for any of these workshops, visit our website at www.swsc.org and click on Workshops. Please check back often as workshops are frequently added. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Christensen at dawn.christensen@swsc.org or 507-537-2278.

November 2010

- 11/2/2010 SMART Board Level I Workshop, Marshall
- 11/3/2010 ELL Wkshp: Do You Speak My Language?, Marshall
- 11/3/2010 TIG Welding Training, Marshall
- 11/4/2010 Collaborative Web 2.0 Tools, Marshall
- 11/8/2010 Fall DCD Networking, Marshall
- 11/9/2010 Using the SMART Board in an Upper Elementary Classroom, Marshall
- 11/10/2010 Annual Fall Health Conference, Marshall
- 11/11/2010 SMART Response System (Senteo) Training, Marshall
- 11/15/2010 Read:Outloud Support Training and Curriculum Integration, Marshall & Windom
- 11/16/2010 Movie Maker Training, Marshall
- 11/16/2010 Fall DCD Networking, Willmar
- 11/18/2010 Podcasting/Vodcasting, Marshall
- 11/22/2010 Thinkfinity Training, Marshall
- 11/23/2010 Exploring the iPod Touch from Set-up to Practical, Marshall
- 11/23/2010 CPI for ASD Refresher, Willmar
- 11/29/2010 SMART Board Level I Training, Marshall

December 2010

- 12/2/2010 Using the SMART Board in a Science Classroom, Marshall
- 12/7/2010 Using the SMART Board in a Social Studies Classroom, Marshall
- 12/8/2010 Administrator Forum, Marshall
- 12/9/2010 SMART Board Lesson Development, Marshall
- 12/14/2010 SMART Board Level 2 Workshop, Marshall
- 12/15/2010 Technology Coordinator Meeting, Marshall
- 12/16/2010 Using the SMART Board in an English Classroom, Marshall
- 12/20/2010 SMART Board Level I Workshop, Marshall
- 12/21/2010 MIT Scratch Training, Marshall

January and February 2011

- 2/3/2011 Superintendent Workshop: Budgeting and Staffing Issues, Marshall
- 2/8/2011 EBD Conference, Redwood Falls
- 2/9/2011 Technology Coordinator Meeting, Marshall
- Dates TBD: Standards Based IEP Training

Important March Dates

- Annual Law Seminar - March 3rd
- School Business Conference - March 4th
- Day of Excellence - March 7th
- Technology Conference - March 10-11th



Our Mission

Through partnership, innovation, and exceptional leadership, our programs and services will meet the diverse needs of our members.