

Seen and Heard



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Superintendent's Corner

With the school year about to end, the seemingly rapid passage of the past few months becomes more pronounced! Along with our usual activities, the implementation of the strategic plan has been a focus since the formal Board approval in November. The process of consolidating all programs and services under the two Program Directors, in addition to fulfilling their respective "regular" responsibilities, made for a demanding 2013-14. Throw in the hosting of a national conference, a major pilot project and unanticipated staffing challenges ... APSEA staff can be excused for looking forward to a well-deserved summer break!



Recipient of Principal's Award

- submitted by Lisa Weir, DHH Itinerant Teacher

APSEA student Peyton Carrier, who is six years old and attends Jacquet River School, recently won the "Principal's Award". Here is what principal Allistair Tulloch had to say about Peyton:

"Peyton has shown significant gains and improvement. She continues to work hard with her teachers, EAs and classmates. She is a positive role model at Jacquet River School."

I am very proud of how far Peyton has come since I first met her back in September. She not only works hard during our APSEA sessions but with all of her school work.

Way to go, Peyton!



Public Speaking Experience by Shelby MacLeod

- submitted by Susan MacLean, DHH Itinerant Teacher

Shelby MacLeod is a grade five student at Cusack Elementary in Sydney, NS. She has a profound hearing loss and was implanted before the age of four. Recently, Shelby had completed an autobiography project for her classroom teacher and she shared it with me. I told Shelby that her story would make a great speech for public speaking. She said she wasn't interested, as she thought it would be too scary an experience for her. After a week, Shelby said she would consider going and we quickly arranged to get her name on the list.

Shelby is quite a shy student who hesitates speaking in class or to people in general. This speech was going to be a lot of work in terms of having Shelby project her voice, add lots of expression, and to watch her pacing and breathing during her speech.

We looked at the scoring rubric and worked together on a rough draft.

The excitement was building as Shelby was looking forward to sharing her story, of which she was very proud. We worked on her second draft and then a final draft over the following weeks between snow storms. We practiced her timing and pacing as it couldn't be more than three minutes.

The big night arrived on April 7th and Shelby was very nervous. I was glad that I had pictures of the event from previous years to show her what to expect and what she would see there. Shelby also agreed that using the FM system would be a good idea, so that she could hear the speeches of the other students as this is traditionally an unamplified event. It was important for her to hear what the organizers were saying as well as the adjudicator.

Shelby said, "It was not as scary as I thought it would be. I was still scared, but it was better than I expected." She was surprised that her speech caused a few tears in the audience and some laughs too. She was glad that the FM system was used. Only three out of 19 speakers couldn't use it because of their dresses. Her favorite speeches were about bullying, coyotes, family expressions, and her own.

Shelby with APSEA Teachers Susan MacLean and Beryl McPherson.



It was a very special night for Shelby, her parents, grandparents, her best friend, her sister, and her two APSEA teachers. We were all so proud of her courage to share her personal story about being deaf on a stage in an auditorium in front of about one hundred people. Way to go Shelby!

Camp Mockingee – February 2014

- submitted by Samantha Benoit, Grade 5 Student

Hello, my name is Samantha Benoit and I was lucky enough to attend, for the second consecutive year, the APSEA winter camp, Camp Mockingee, during the weekend of Feb 21st. I met up with the group of campers at the Atlantic Superstore in Lower Sackville when the buses made a pit-stop for weekend snacks. After all of the kids got back on the buses, excitement filled the air and we all dove into our snacks. During the journey, the bus driver got lost and so it took a while before we arrived at our destination, luckily we had more time for snacks. When we got to Camp Mockingee they split us up into different rooms and we had time to unpack before supper. For supper we had one of my favourites, fajitas. Then we all went back to our cabins and got ready for bed. No one was tired, so we stayed up until one of the teachers came and read to us and when she left, everyone went to sleep.



Suddenly at 2:00 Saturday morning I was woken up by some girls because of a thunderstorm. After the excitement died down (as did the thunder) we finally went back to sleep. When it was time to get up, we got dressed and decided to chase the boys until breakfast was ready. We returned to the Mess Hall where there was a bounty of toast, fruit, bacon, eggs, and all the breakfast favourites.

The first thing on the agenda was “stations” and they were “Mary and Ashley’s surprises”; “Nova’s yoga” and “making bird seed”. I enjoyed all three but the one that I like the most was Mary and Ashley’s surprise. It was a game that involved running to a treasure chest, quickly grabbing a treasure and returning to your place. It was a lot of fun because what kid doesn’t love digging for treasures. For lunch we had hamburgers, hotdogs and every kid’s fav...cookies!



After lunch we went outside for more fun. We organized ourselves into groups so we could participate in hockey, luge, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and we built a model Olympic city. We had so much fun that by the end we were soaked so we went in to change our clothes and have supper.

I was thinking it was my lucky day, since for supper they had another one of my favourite foods: spaghetti and garlic bread. Yay!

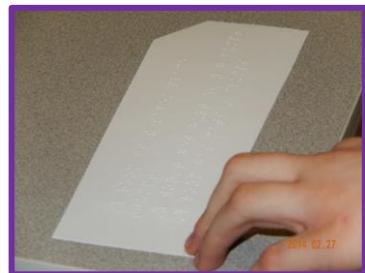
After supper, we had ice cream sundaes and I chose chocolate ice cream topped with chocolate sauce, chocolate chips and marsh-mellows. Following supper, we had the always popular camper’s talent show. Anyone can participate and you can go solo or in groups to tell jokes, act, sing, dance, or anything else you want to do. Everyone has a talent, so we are all encouraged to show and share it. This is one of the best parts of camp, as it is always great to see everyone laughing, sharing and being themselves. Usually, I go in with a group of my friends to put on a play but this year, I went solo and sang “Do you want to build a snowman” from the Disney film “Frozen”. Everyone who participated did an awesome job.

On Sunday morning we woke up and got ready to go to Ross farm. After we packed and while we were waiting to leave, we slid on the ice and walked on the hiking trail. We went on a tour of the farm where we were treated to hot chocolate and a sugar cookie. We ended our visit with a wagon ride and I was able to sit beside one of my friends for the ride. Sadly, the weekend had to come to end. We all boarded the bus and headed for home. This is the third time I was able to go to an APSEA camp and I have enjoyed every single camp. If you ever get a chance to go, don't hesitate as you will have a great time, eat good food and learn new things. But the only thing that will be better than all of those things is the memories and the friendships that you will make. My parents said that I should thank, on behalf of all the campers, the staff, teachers, volunteers, organizers and everyone in APSEA for all that they do to put on these wonderful camps. And so I will do that; however I also want to extend this thanks on behalf of all the parents and kids to include everything these incredible individuals do every day. APSEA is unique and we are truly blessed to have this extraordinary network here in NS.



Braille Challenge Competition

APSEA hosted the 2nd annual Braille Challenge Competition this past semester. The students had one day of testing and a couple days of fun! The test was held on February 28, but the Braille Challenge event started the day before. We had four students participate in this year's Braille Challenge and they all arrived at lunch time on Thursday February 27. That afternoon the students reviewed the testing process; that way the students knew what to expect when the real test started. Thursday evening was a blast! First the students participated in a Braille chocolate hunt. They also got to kick back and play some card games in the pool! In the evening they added sparkle and pizzazz to their T-shirts with the De Dazzler. The next morning the students started their day with some bingo to relieve any pre-test jitters. Then it was test time!! When the testing began the Perkins exploded with the noise of keys punching and paper rolling. It was a long day of work and we applaud all the students for their efforts. After a long day of testing we decided that a pizza party would be a good way to relax. So we ordered some take-out food and relaxed for the night with some crafts and movies. Saturday was the closing ceremonies. The students were awarded with prizes and certificates before heading home.



We've submitted our results to the Braille Institute for processing and once all the regional test results have been submitted the Braille Institute will select the top 60 candidates. Those selected will travel to the Braille Institute in California to partake in the final round of testing. APSEA wishes all our students the best of luck while we wait to hear the results.

Students in Skilled Trades Programs

- submitted by Susan MacLean, DHH Itinerant Teacher

It is rare here in Cape Breton that so many APSEA-DHH students attend the same high school. This year, there are five direct service students at Memorial Composite High School in Sydney Mines, NS. Students are attracted to this school because of the *Skilled Trades Programs* that are offered here. There are core trades programs, as well as, non-core trades programs. Four out of five APSEA students are enrolled in the trades offered here.

The core vocational programs at MCHS include: Electrical Construction/Industrial, Heavy Duty Equipment/Truck and Transport, Plumbing/Steamfitter, Motor Vehicle Mechanics/Metal Fabricator, Carpentry and Cooking. The non-core vocational programs available to students are as follows: Dining Room Service, Marketing and Inventory Management, Graphic Design Print/Media, Radio & TV Broadcasting, and Information Technology/Data Programming.

Nathan Yurczyszyn is a returning graduate of Memorial Composite High School in Sydney Mines. He returned to take advantage of the IT program offered at the school to earn program credits towards his NSCC studies in the area of Information Technology. He has applied to NSCC to study the Computer Electronics Technician Program for 2014-15. Nathan also benefitted from the Dining Room Service Program offered at MCHS when he was in grade 10. He was recently employed at a local restaurant for a few months before it had to close.



Brittany Hare is a Grade 10 student at MCHS. She is currently enrolled in the Dining Room Service Program at Memorial. She gains real life experiences by learning in a restaurant-like environment that is built into the school. She takes menu orders and serves customers during her lunch periods on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week. She sets up tables, clears tables, as well as takes her turn working the cash register. These students obtain Dining Room Service and Food and Safety Training Certification in conjunction with NSCC standards.

Glenn McInnis is a Grade 10 honors student at MCHS. He was one of two Grade 10 students to make the AAA Memorial Marauders high school hockey team. Glenn plays center and is the high school hockey rookie point leader in the local high school hockey division.



Mira Beaton and Ryan Kennedy are both Grade 10 students at MCHS who are taking the Construction 10 program. Both students travel a significant distance to attend this school. Next year, Mira will continue with the Carpentry 11 program and Ryan will continue with the Plumbing/Steamfitter 11 program.

These programs are equivalent to and meet NSCC standards. Any units covered at MCHS are transferable and recognized by NSCC post-secondary programs.

We Day

- submitted by Samantha Benoit, Grade 5 Student

My name is Samantha Benoit. I am in Grade 5 and attend Hammonds Plains Consolidated School. I was born with Bilateral Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH). ONH is when the nerve between the eye and the brain is small and as a result vision and development can be impaired.

On November 27, 2013 my class and I attended the first We Day event ever held in Atlantic Canada and it was held at the Metro Centre. 8000 students and teachers attended.

We Day was created in 2007 by Craig and Marc Kielburger. We Day is an event where 1000's of kids learn to change the world by helping to create positive change in our communities and around the world.

In order to get there we needed parent drivers. I went in the car with my teacher, Mrs. White. We parked by the “Staples” on Gottingen Street and walked the rest of the way to the Metro Centre. When we arrived it was filled with excited kids. To make it even more exciting there were a group of “crowd pumpers” who welcomed us at the door. “Crowd Pumpers” are volunteers who get dressed all in neon and try to increase the excitement through their positive example and crazy energy. So as we walked past these individuals, we got even more excited and pumped up.

When we finally arrived at our seats, there was a little gift bag on each one. Peering inside I discovered that it was full of stuff, like: a cardboard school shaped piggy bank, a neon glow in the dark bracelet, but the best of all was a book written by one of the co-founders, called “Free the Children”.

There were a lot of performances, dances, motivational and guest speakers and singers. Some of these included: the Canadian band, Hedley; Canadian Hip-Hop Artist, Classified; Shawn Desmond; Martin Luther King III, the Kenyan Boys Choir; Kardinal Offishall and Spencer West. All of the performers and speakers were awesome and spoke about the importance of being involved and connected to our world. Of all the presenters, my favourite was a girl that became totally blind at age 14 due to a rare genetic disease of the eyes. Her name is Molly Burke and she was born in Toronto, Ontario. Molly is a “Me to We” motivational speaker who spoke out against bullying and the incredible power of hope. Her message was that “silence is powerful to a bully.” What I think she meant by that was that you have to stand up to a bully and you have to help those who are being bullied. That message was powerful and memorable to me was because I feel that it was really important and when I heard it got me thinking about how to approach bullies. In my school I am a student leader and one of my jobs is to help kids who are being bullied and to help kids to stop fighting.

One of my biggest concerns before We Day was that I would not be able to see. I was concerned as I was not familiar with the building and therefore was worried that there would not be enough lighting, that I would not be able to find my seat and there would be a lot of uneven ground and too many stairs. I was also concerned that I would not be able to see from where I was seated. While I could not see the stage, fortunately there were big screens everywhere which allowed me to see what was going on. My only problem was that there were a lot of stairs but I had a parent helper who helped me navigate the stairs.

During We Day there were some amazing speakers and amazing songs. Sometimes I wanted to have a break because I was hungry, thirsty or had to go to the bathroom. Luckily there were breaks but I would have liked more. We Day ended with the Grand Finale where all the performers and guest speakers came on stage. Classified sang two final songs.

Since our participation in We Day, my class has organized 2 We Act activities. In December 2013 we collected 1820 pounds (equivalent to 7 Baby elephants) of non-perishable food for We Scare Hunger for Feed Nova Scotia. In January 2014 our class organized a PJ day for our school. Anyone who wanted to wear their PJs to school on January 29th could for a small cost of \$0.50. People could also wear a hat for an additional \$0.25. Overall we collected over \$300.00 and donated the money to “Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter”.

If I ever get a chance to participate in We Day again I would definitely go. Next time however, I would bring my newly acquired small handheld portable telescope (Thanks APSEA!!) so I can see what is going on a little better!

If you ever get a chance to participate in a We Day event, go as you will have the time of your life.

Tandem Biking

- submitted by Sheila Jamieson, Supervisor of Residential, Summer and Weekend Programs



Now the nice weather has finally arrived, a different variety of activities are available to students in the residence. Tandem biking is a wonderful way for individuals to enjoy the outdoors while getting some physical activity. Tandem biking is something students with low vision or blindness can experience, while at the same time keeping safe. Tandem bikes have two people sharing one bicycle. The person who sits at the front of the bike is called the Pilot and this person steers the bicycle.

This spring, the Tandem bike was introduced to several of our students. The introduction started in the gym with them exploring the bike along with time riding the bike. Then they proceeded outside for a bicycle ride at Point Pleasant Park. The students really enjoyed this experience.



Boston Marathon – Determination and Friendship

As you may know, Nicole Gushue (DHH Itinerant Teacher) participated in the 2013 Boston Marathon as part of the Mass General Boston charity team in memory of her cousin's son. Nicole did not get to cross the finish line because of the explosions last year. Like many others, Nicole was invited to return this year for the 2014 marathon. The Vanguard published an article about Nicole's journey during the marathon involving her friend Dick Davis.

If you would like to read the full article, it can be found via the following link:

<http://www.thevanguard.ca/Sports/2014-04-26/article-3702998/Determination-and-friendship-help-get-Dick-Davis-across-Boston-Marathon-finish-line/1>

Congratulations to Nicole on completing the Marathon!

Playground Update

Following years of planning, fundraising and construction ... the new APSEA playground will be "ready for fun" at the start of the next school year. The original playground was constructed in the 1980s and three years ago much of the equipment had to be removed, for safety reasons. A committee, under the leadership of teacher Karen Keats, undertook the daunting task of raising funds to build a new one, which is currently underway.



We have been overwhelmed by the response, with approximately three-quarters of the \$200,000 required already donated/pledged. The new playground was designed with safety and the special needs of our children being the prime considerations. An official opening is scheduled for 4 October 2014, to coincide with the APSEA Parent and Family Weekend.

Board News

The APSEA Board of Directors held its annual meeting on 17 June, with the new Executive Committee being elected for 2014-15:

Chair – Sandra McKenzie, Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia

Vice-Chair – John McLaughlin, Deputy Minister, New Brunswick

Secretary – Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Prince Edward Island

Treasurer – Janet Vivian-Walsh, Deputy Minister, Newfoundland and Labrador

Program Advisory Committee Chair - Don Glover, Director of Student Services, Nova Scotia
Financial Advisory Committee Chair - Joe MacEachern, Director of Finance, Nova Scotia

Strategic Plan

The major priorities for this year included an evaluation of the Autism in Education (AIE) project, Assessment for Student Success, and Resource Allocation/Funding. Significant progress was made in all of these areas; the AIE evaluation report was presented to the Board, foundational research was completed on assessment, and analyses have been made on cost-sharing options. The Board approved the continuation of the organizational structure put in effect at the start of the 2013-14 year, with centre-based programs remaining aligned with the two Directors of Programs.

“Next steps” associated with these initiatives will continue in 2014-15, with greater attention to service delivery (distance education, centre- and field-based short-term programs) and external communications. Appreciation is extended to the APSEA Leadership Team (Supervisors and Directors) who have steered the implementation of the SP to date. Such work is sometimes daunting, difficult and time-consuming ... but also rewarding, as we seek to make our operations more effective and efficient. We look forward to your continued support in the next phase!

Staffing Update

While our staffing process continues, most positions for 2014-15 have been filled, as noted below. The update notes staff who are new to APSEA and those who are changing location or position for the coming school year.

Brian Yee – Classroom Teacher (APSEA Centre)
Lisa Brett – Classroom Teacher (Sept - Feb) / Itinerant Teacher (March – June)
Ayoka Junaid – Contract Interpreter (APSEA Centre)
Lisa Weir – Consultant for Students who are Deaf with Additional Challenges (NB & NS)
Amanda Weaver – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)
Janice (Devitt) MacPhail – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Miramichi, NB)
Sue Ley – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Liverpool, NS)
Debbie Davis Maybee – DHH Provincial Supervisor (NS)
Laura Getson – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Dartmouth, NS)
Rebecca Morey – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Bathurst, NB)
Kimberley Sutcliffe – Library Technician (APSEA Centre)
Jenny Lind – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Port Hawkesbury, NS)
Francine Deveau – Occupational Therapist
Peter Parsons – Orientation & Mobility Specialist
Melanie Weir – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)
Lisa Jenkins – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Coldbrook, NS)
Nicole MacDonald – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Pictou, NS)
Cheryl MacNeil – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Sydney, NS)

Braille Challenge Finals

We are pleased to report that Sheila Jamieson (Supervisor of Residential Programs) has been selected as the regional coordinator to attend the Braille Challenge finals in Los Angeles. She is looking forward to participating in the event and bringing back exciting and innovative ideas for APSEA's Braille Challenge next year. Sheila is planning to take lots of pictures, and will provide an update for the fall newsletter.

Anyone for Summer Reading?

SUMMER READING AT APSEA!

Summer is the best time to catch up on reading! Here are a few ways the APSEA library can help build your summer reading list.



NEW ACQUISITIONS!

The APSEA library has spent the last year updating and expanding its collection for both the Blind and Visually Impaired and Deaf and Hard of Hearing staff and students. Newly added resource topics range from the latest in Assistive Technology to Zambonis. Comprehensive lists of both professional and student resources can be found on the APSEA library webpage and include a description of the item and the format in which it is available. The lists also include a guide on how to search for the new material on the database. Requests for these resources are welcome throughout the summer!

REMINDER! APSEA PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

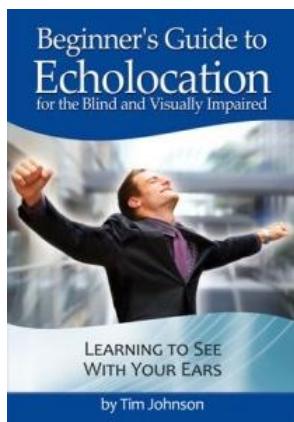
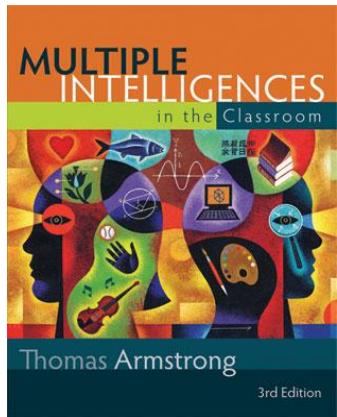
The APSEA library subscribes to several specialized professional journals to keep APSEA staff abreast of the latest in the education of Blind and Visually Impaired and Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. An updated list of journal subscriptions is available on the APSEA library webpage. Staff can access most of these journals from an APSEA-issued computer or laptop, otherwise a username and password can be obtained by contacting the library. If you have trouble accessing these journals or would like to access gain access from a personal computer, please contact the library for login information.

NAVIGATING EBSCOHOST

The Nova Scotia Department of Education provides APSEA staff with full access to over 2,100 educational journals and nearly 500 books and monographs through their EBSCOhost service. An updated guide on how to navigate EBSCOhost is available on the APSEA library webpage. Conducting a basic search, accessing the entire list of available journals, and browsing journal issues, are covered in new easy-to-read guide to ensure you are making the most of the research tools available to you!

These are examples of some of the new acquisitions in the library – check them out!

Happy reading!



Reading and Activity Websites from APSEA AT

Here are some good websites for online reading activities.

Reading A-Z: This website has leveled readers, worksheets and assessments. It can be accessed on a computer, or through the RAZ KIDS iPad or Android app. There are some free sample books, but you may also request this from the APSEA library for a username and password. You will need internet access to download the books. <http://www.readinga-z.com/members/>

Helpkidzlearn: This website has switch-activated activities, including songs with words for emergent readers. It also has games, picture stories and activities. There are a few free activities however to have access to all the activities you should contact the APSEA library for a username and password.

<http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/>

TumbleBooks: This is a collection of fiction and non-fiction books including early readers and “beginning chapter” books. You can access tumble books through the children’s section of the public library. You must have internet access to read the book. There is a free trial available.

http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/asp/customer_login.asp?accessdenied=%2Flibrary%2Fasp%2Fhome_tumblebooks%2Easp

Book Share: To access this collection you must have an account to access this program. There are thousands of books available. Membership is currently free through the CNIB for anyone with a print disability (not only vision related) this includes students with a diagnosed learning disability. You can contact the CNIB if you think that you have a child who would qualify.

https://www.bookshare.org/?c=en_CA