

## From The President

Greetings to you! As your new President, I want to thank you for the privilege of representing you in our state. Professional school counseling has been taking on a changing role in schools across the nation and that is also true in Montana. Before I share my excitement and enthusiasm regarding my vision for our organization, I'd like to share a bit about my personal and professional background.

I am currently a middle school counselor at East Middle School in Great Falls. I have worked as a middle school counselor at East and at Paris Gibson Middle School since 1993. I love this level and this job! Prior to taking a counseling job I worked as the Executive Director of the Alliance for Youth, which is a community prevention network targeting high risk behaviors of adolescence. We merged two community organizations to form a strong network of almost 40 organizations in the

community. It was a wonderful experience but I found myself drawn to the students in the building more than to the grant I was writing. (The alternative high school was housed there.) I decided I needed to go back to school and hence my masters in counseling. I completed my LCPC in 1994 but prefer working as a school counselor. I have also worked with a teen pregnancy program, taught Lamaze childbirth classes for 13 years and taught 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade in Missoula and Hawaii.

I am also a wife, a mom of three, grandmother of three and usually have far more interests than time.

It is so interesting to me that all my work experiences and personal interests seem to combine with my career in school counseling. This career is so diverse with so many opportunities for growth and impact. It is the potential for all we can do as

school counselors that led me to volunteer my time with MSCA.

In the past 5 years, MSCA has gained a new vitality and purpose that had been missing for a while. Strong leadership, state support, university support and an eager membership has all played a role in that change. This board wants to continue the work that has been done. As the Board we have talked about possibilities for this organization. We want to improve communication and networking between counselors around the state. We want all students to have the benefit of their school counselor through the use of the model in more schools. We want to continue to build a strong organization that will sustain itself long after any of us. We will constantly look for ways to support all you do for students. Please, share with us any ideas you have to accomplish that.

-Barb Holden

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## The Joy of the *In-between-agers...aka Middle Schoolers*

Elaine Schoyen, Middle School Vice President

I remember many years ago when I was attending the NMSA Conference in Seattle, it was my pleasure to attend a keynote address with Julia T. Thomason, who at that time was the organization's president. Dr. Thomason came to the microphone and simply stated, "You are who you thought you were when you were 12 years old...unless you have worked hard to overcome certain issues." I remember thinking that she'd made a clever opening comment, but then she went on to share meaningful research to substantiate her statement. I perked up and started taking notes about the research from White, Piaget, Kohlberg, and other names that I instantly recognized. Later, I spent quite a bit of time revisiting topics like moral development and how this really did apply to the sixth-grade students in my science and social studies classes.

I challenge you to stop and take a trip down memory lane to the time that you were a 12 year old. This is the time in our lives that most of us decided whether we were going to be a *giver* to our world or a *taker*. With this in mind, I would like to remind you how important it is to embrace the National Standards established by ASCA, as you develop curriculum and strive for effective implementation to meet the social, emotional, physical, and academic developmental needs of your students.

Just a few days ago, I received a professional publication from ASCD with the title, "*Removing the Emotional Roadblocks in Education*". The article stressed the fact that student success requires a positive outlook. Carl E. Paternite, professor of psychology at the Runs Center for School-based

Mental Health Programs in Oxford, Ohio, stated "One result of efforts to implement NCLB and the recently reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education and Intervention Act...has been a focus on addressing conditions that promote academic achievement. In this regard, it is well-documented that mental health issues are often the biggest barriers to student achievement." As I was reading this article, I was reminded of the recent time I had been sitting in Boston at the Learning and the Brain Conference and realized that the top keynotes were advocating for a learning environment that I believed with all of my heart to be so very essential. These learned individuals were speaking out for the need to address...hold on...the development of the **WHOLE CHILD**. I remember looking around this very large ballroom with over a thousand in attendance and thinking, "Oh my gosh, I have now been in education long enough to have truly come full circle." For a brief moment I thought that I was in a time warp; this sounded so much like Kohlberg's Model of Moral Development from the 1970's (Incidentally, there has been a major resurgence of his works.). We have become so academically driven, out of necessity I realize, that we have left a very important aspect of those emotional milestones **BEHIND**. As school counselors, the research is on our side, as many states are now demanding and including emotional IQ standards on their state tests; the research makes it clear that the mental health of our students impacts academic success.

How can our students be all that they were meant to be, if the learning environment is stifled by

fear from bullying and sexual harassment? When our schools are purely academically driven without regard for the student's social, emotional, and physical developmental needs, I believe that we have truly short-changed these early adolescents. It is our responsibility to provide our students with the knowledge and skills to develop a strong sense of self in order that they might become a self-advocate demonstrating a strong inner voice. Just some of the areas that our curriculum will make a difference would be to model tolerance, to celebrate cultural diversity, and to acquire the means to mediate conflict with their peers or adults. These skills will enable our students to greet their adulthood with the gift of mental wellness at a healthy level.

So, I ask you to evaluate your role in providing your students the abilities to become that healthy 12 year old who will someday be a healthy adult that is a giver not only to their immediate community, or their state community or their national community. I would hope that we are striving to have our students become givers to their world community with a lasting respect for individual differences. In this time of significant world conflict, we have a responsibility to educate our students...the whole student.

"These learned individuals were speaking out for the need to address...hold on...the development of the **WHOLE CHILD**."

# Conferences and Conferencing

-Linda Konesky, k-12 Vice President

With the holidays behind us, I am reminded of just how fast the school year is zipping by! Hopefully you are all having a good year so far. I am already approaching information overload! There so many good conferences and workshops out there, but how do you ever put everything you'd like into practice? (I guess it's just like the old question "how do you eat an elephant??.....One bite at a time). I'd like to share some of the highlights I've picked up so far this year.

1.) At the Montana States' Career Cluster Conference in October, we heard how other states are implementing the career cluster idea, and what Montana is doing in that arena. Some great websites for more information include [www.careercluster.org](http://www.careercluster.org) and [www.careertech.org](http://www.careertech.org). The bottom line for K-12 counselors is to start career education in the early grades. Another highlight at this conference was an update by Garth Ferraro on the Montana Career Information System. By now, you probably all realize

you have free access to this wonderful program through the Student Assistance Foundation website at [safmt.org](http://safmt.org). If you haven't used this system, you are missing out on a great career-counseling tool. I urge you to check it out.

2.) In October, MSCA combined its fall conference with MEA/MFT for the second year. Our keynote speaker, Christian Moore, provided an excellent overview of his "Why Try" program for at-risk adolescents. Go to [www.whytry.org](http://www.whytry.org) for more information on this. John Sommers-Flanagan gave a great workshop on ethical dilemmas and responses. This area will be covered in greater detail at our spring conference in April, so make sure you plan to attend.

3.) MPSEOC provided a wonderful counselor update via Met-Net. Representatives from all of our Montana campuses filled us in about what's new at their respective schools. Check out [montanacolleges.com](http://montanacolleges.com) for information about all of Montana's

post secondary institutions . Students have such a wide variety of programs to choose from right here in Montana. I often think it would be nice to be eighteen again and starting over, but with so much to choose from, it wouldn't be an easy decision!



*Never stop learning!*

The part I like best about attending any conference or workshop is networking with colleagues I haven't seen for a while to find out what's really going on in the "trenches" and how they handle similar situations at their schools. Would anyone else be interested in trying to set up some regional "just networking" sessions? Please contact me at [lindak@centerville.k12.mt.us](mailto:lindak@centerville.k12.mt.us) or 406-736-5167 if you think this is something you'd like to try.

## MSCA Board of Directors Welcomes Joan Wycoff!

Joan Wycoff has been appointed to fill the remainder of Kristy Savaria's Elementary Vice President Board of Directors term. You may remember Joan for the excellent job she did last spring as the site manager for our annual Spring Institute held in Bozeman. She was the lady who made things work! This position will be available for election at the end of the next term in October, 2006. She shares the following information about herself.

Hello, my name is Joan Wycoff. I have been the elementary counselor (K-6) at Three Forks School in Three Forks, MT since 1999. I am extremely fortunate to work at a school with an incredibly supportive administration and staff! I absolutely love my job and the folks I work with as well as the community of Three Forks. I welcome the opportunity to become more involved with the MSCA as Elementary Vice-President. I received my M.Ed. from MSU, Bozeman in 1998.

I completed my undergraduate work at Boston University and UC San Diego. My husband, Dan, and I moved to Bozeman from Pittsburgh, PA (yes, I am a huge Steeler, Pirate and Penguin fan...) in 1995. We own a small home in Manhattan, MT where we live with our boxer, Reggie. We love to hike, fish and camp! We feel very lucky to have found such a great place to put down roots!

# Gear Up Fall Conference Report

- Carrie Stefanatz, High School Vice President

Greetings! I hope that this newsletter finds you healthy and aware that you are making a difference in your students' lives. I am excited to give you a report from the Montana Gear Up Fall Conference that I attended as a participant and speaker this last fall. This year's conference focused on kicking off the new 6 year grant. As you know Gear Up has been an instrumental resource for MSCA. Through Gear Up funding of the Spring Conference, our membership has grown from around 30 members to almost 300 strong.

I was asked to be a presenter for the conference and presented on the Montana Model. Instead of going over the same model and giving the same presentation on guidance and non-guidance duties that we have heard numerous times, I wanted to focus on where we were at in our specific schools with implementation and to come up with a collective needs assessment for MSCA and Gear Up.

I asked my participants to visualize their model program and journal about how that would look, specifically focusing on what they would be doing differently, how their relationships would be with administration, students, teachers, and parents. Then the participants were asked to share their visions and identify group needs and to brainstorm solutions. This provided a rich and powerful discussion. The following needs were expressed: Administrative Support and Education about the Montana Model, Clerical Support, and Regional Trainings for Planning and Assistance with Implementation of Model.

While I am aware of the great strides we have collectively made as an organization, I was struck during the discussion about how far we need to go as an organization. For all of the schools present, not one had a program fully implemented. Among the participants there were counselors that were serving as full time teachers, counselors who did not have of-

fices, and counselors who were doing all of the things on the non-guidance list of duties.

I would like to close with gratitude for how far our organization has come over the last 3 years, and to acknowledge the work that we need to do together to progress the profession of school counseling in Montana. If you have specific needs as you implement your program, or goals that you would like to share for our organization, please share them with your level vice-president. This is an exciting and challenging time for school counseling in Montana. Our mission is vital for Montana students.

Carrie Stefanatz

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# Make Your Voice Heard!

-Kristy Savaria, President Elect

Happy Holidays to all of our members! Thank you for your considerate questions as your Elementary Level Vice President over the past four years. Now I hope to fulfill your wishes holding this new and exciting position on the MSCA Board. As we redesign our policies and more closely define our board job descriptions and duties, it is my pleasure to share a few words about professional school counseling in this new role.

I was privileged to attend the National School Counselor Association trainings in Orlando, Florida in addition to the Leadership Development

Institute held in Oahu, Hawaii this summer. The education received cannot be replaced with the ideas or plans we try to accomplish in each of our schools on a daily basis. These developmental workshops provided many hours of useful tools to support counselors across the United States for the long haul. Your leaders are actively seeking ways to support you in our state by providing a Spring Institute and Fall Conference with the same types of information current with today's issues.

Some of us are lucky enough to be included in what is planned for our

school counseling programs in each school and some have it doctored to them with ancillary jobs assigned at the drop of a hat. It is imperative that we continue to unite as Professional School Counselors to empower ourselves with utilization of our Montana State Model for School Counselors. This program was adopted by the Office of Public Instruction two years ago after several years of hard work by Dr. Mark Nelson and our MSCA board. Dr. Rene Dubay was instrumental in supporting our organization with opportunities for advancement through the Higher Education Department and support from

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Gear Up. The time is now to become more involved in decision making for tomorrow. Please make your voice heard by actively joining and participating in your career through interest and involvement with this organiza-

tion. You will not regret the information or connections you make as a result. What a great gift to give our students, the school counselor who is highly qualified and aware of current movements to better their profession

resulting in higher lifelong learning for them!

Seize the Day!

Kristy Savaria

# Save the Date!

MSCA'S SPRING INSTITUTE  
*"TO EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN  
SCHOOL COUNSELING"*

**April 20 & 21, 2006**

BOZEMAN, MT

HOLIDAY INN

## FEATURING:

- CAROLYN STONE, Ed.D, PRESIDENT-ELECT OF ASCA GOVERNING BOARD, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
- MARK NELSON, Ed.D, LCPC, NCSC, ACS PRIMARY AUTHOR OF THE MONTANA SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM MODEL, MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

## TOPICS:

- COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM MODELS
- ETHICAL ISSUES AND DILEMMAS IN SCHOOL COUNSELING

## ASCA Excitement

### 2005 Annual Conference: Orlando!

Joy Jones and I represented Montana at the 2005 ASCA Delegate Assembly which met in conjunction with the Annual Conference. This is the body that writes, approves and revises the Code of Ethics, the Role Statements and Position Statements. It was an incredible experience to see the thought and intent that goes into those documents that we sometimes forget to use as a model for good counseling. We also had an opportunity to meet with Officers from similar size state organizations and officers from the Western States. Those dialogues result in good ideas for us to use and we run MSCA for you. The Conference itself is an opportunity to see what is happening nationally and see the wonderful growth in skills and programming within our profession.

### 2006 Annual Conference: Chicago!

ASCA is in Chicago next summer. This is one of the closest national conferences in recent years. Why not grab a group of friends and attend this wonderful conference next summer. Of all the conferences I have attended for many different organizations, this is the best! You will certainly leave with a greater sense of our profession as it exists nationally. You will also leave with greater skills and techniques, new ideas for your program, and connections with counselors around the country. Check out <http://schoolcounselor.org> for more information on a fabulous opportunity for your career growth.

- Barb Holden

## National School Counseling Week Kit

Mark your calendars! The countdown is on to National School Counseling Week 2006, slated for Feb. 6-10. The week's theme, *School Counselors: Changing Lives, Building Futures*, offers school counselors the ideal opportunity to tout the important work they do. Let ASCA help you get the word out with a special National School Counseling Week kit. This year's kit contains:

1. a printed [proclamation](#) suitable for signing by the district superintendent, mayor or other dignitary proclaiming Feb. 6-10, 2006, as National School Counseling Week
2. a printed certificate of appreciation to present to someone who's been especially beneficial to your school counseling program
3. sample morning announcements to help start each day of the week off with a special message from the school counselor
4. a sample press release
5. a [countdown calendar](#) to help you plan for the week's activities
6. 25 custom-imprinted balloons to decorate your office, cafeteria or other location (extras can be ordered)
7. 25 self-stick wristbands promoting the week to hand out to other staff members so they can show their support of the school counseling program (extras can be ordered)
8. a doorhanger to promote privacy while in counseling sessions
9. 20 custom-imprinted pencils to hand out to students (extras can be ordered)
10. a full-color bulletin board poster ([view sample](#)) highlighting National School Counseling Week (extras can be ordered if you'd like to promote the week in more than one location)

Kits are \$25 for members, \$35 for nonmembers, plus shipping and handling. Kits will mail after Nov. 15, but they can be pre-ordered before that date. [Download an order form.](#)

***See the ASCA website at [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org) for more information.***

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS (ETVs) FOR FOSTER CARE YOUTH

Did you know 70% of children aging out of the foster care system have a desire to attend college? Yet, fewer than 10% of foster care children who leave the system at age 18 will attend college? Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) is partnering with the Montana Foster Care Independence Program (MFCIP), the Department of Public Health and Human Services and other entities from around the state to provide ETVs and to assist foster care youth so they may pursue a post-secondary education.

The ETV program provides financial assistance to increase the availability of post-secondary educational experiences for foster care youth between the ages of 16 and 21. Youth participating in the ETV program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday may apply for continued assistance up to the youth's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday as long as they are enrolled full time in a post secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress as defined by the state.

Funds up to \$5000 per year are available for the "cost of attendance" at accredited institutions of higher learning and training programs. ETV funds are disregarded when determining a youth's eligibility for the amount of other federal or federally supported assistance, including Pell grants.

Who can apply? Youth who have turned 18 and "aged out" of the foster care system, those currently in foster care, those adopted from foster care or appointed a guardian after turning age 16 and youth who are or have been under Tribal court jurisdiction

and meet the same eligibility criteria.

Student Assistance Foundation is developing a comprehensive early outreach program and follow-up system so that foster care students are aware of the ETV program early in their high school experience. We are getting the information to the students about special events like College Goal Sunday, an event where they can get assistance in completing their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. By providing assistance to them through programs like MCIS (Montana Career Information System located on SAF's website at [safmt.org](http://safmt.org)) will help them make informed decisions about postsecondary education. We may be visiting your school in the not too distant future if we have not already!

Student Assistance Foundation is also in the process of developing a comprehensive follow up system for foster care students. This system will be used to help students in planning for, financing and completing their higher education goals. This is an important part of the program because foster care youth go from a structured environment to a non-structured environment when attending a post-secondary school or training program and often struggle with this change lacking support.

How can you help? High school counselors can help by educating any foster care youth attending your schools about the ETVs. These youth need to be made aware of financial assistance and believe higher education is possible for them. Without parents for guidance your assis-

tance would be invaluable to these students. Foster care youth must realize completing high school is a first step to entering post-secondary education. It is a prerequisite for foster care students to submit a FAFSA prior to the end of their senior year of high school.

If you have a student that you think may qualify for the ETV program please contact Student Assistance Foundation for more information or an application.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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*"I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it."*

*Harry S. Truman*