

Montana School Counselor Association

"Making a Difference"

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From The President

Our nation just recently recognized the 5th anniversary of September 11th. This was a day that changed our nation. Fear, death, change, caring...all of these were part of the days that followed that dreadful morning. I had the opportunity this summer to visit Ground Zero. I felt all of that again. The big open space that was once the World Trade Center is just a space. It is moving and overwhelming. Across the street, however, was a surprise I didn't expect. It was a monument to the kindness of man and to the work of our profession.

St. Paul's Chapel lies just across the street to the east from where the Towers once stood. On that morning when the Towers fell,

debris fell, but no damage was done to that old chapel and the cemetery in front of it. Sure, some tombstones were knocked over, and papers and dust were everywhere, but the building remained intact and became the place for hope and caring. Counselors from across the nation answered the call to come to help the survivors and the rescue workers. The counselors were at St. Paul's Chapel when rest and food and support were needed. The impact of their work is still there in that little chapel in the notes of thanks that were left and in the pictures documenting those days.

Each day, as a school counselor, we are filled with work just as important as what was

done in the days following September 11th. We never know what we will hear when that student appears at our door. It might be a stuck locker and it might be a cry for help. We must never get so wrapped up in the paperwork of our job that we forget the children. Our job is about making a difference for them, about knowing that in some way the students are different as a result of knowing us.

- Barb Holden

"I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." - Helen Keller (1880-1968)

Inside this issue:

From the President	1
Bullying Solutions	2
Accountability	3
Carrie's Goodbye	3
Communication	4
ASCA Summer Conference	4
MSCA Spring Conference	5
MSCA Website Reminders	5

Bullying...Harassment...Our On-going Attempts to Put a Stop to Scarring

Elaine Schoyen, Middle School Vice President

“People won’t even talk to me, because I am lower class, because my parents make less money than theirs do, because they’re richer.”

East Middle School 7th grade student

Great Falls, Montana

“I wanted to speak up and tell the bully to stop picking on Brad, but I was afraid that he’d start to pick on me. Now I wish that I had... maybe Brad wouldn’t have brought that knife to school and gotten expelled.”

East Middle School 6th grade student

Great Falls, Montana

If your school day is anything like mine, I either witness or learn of an unkindness being thoughtlessly delivered to someone on a daily basis. The scarring effects of bullying are not limited to those of the victim or the perpetrator; those silent victims are damaged as well. As a middle school counselor, for years I reluctantly dismissed the often cruel and taunting behaviors of my seventh-grade girls as a product of these *in-between-agers*’ emotional development...(aka-the year of the girl wars). Thank goodness that books such as Queen Bees & Wannabes, by Rosalind Wiseman and Odd Girl Out, by Rachel Simmons have provided us with information that resulted in our raising the bar, so to speak, in our expectations of their social and emotional behavior.

I would like to share with you information regarding two different sources that many of you have probably already integrated into your standards-based counseling curriculum. First, hopefully you all remember Peter Yarrow, of the famed Peter, Paul, and Mary folk trio (They produced so many wonderful albums primarily during the 60’s and 70’s). Peter founded Operation Respect, a non-profit organization designed to change environments that touch the lives of our children and youth from ridicule, bullying, other types of harassment, or even violence to a safer environment based on mutual respect, kindness, and tolerance of individual differences. It was through Operation Respect that the marvelous Don’t Laugh at Me (DLAM) program emerged free for the asking. This free school program includes a 2-5 and 6-8 curriculum guide, pre-and-post questionnaires (perfect for gathering program data to substantiate how we counselors make a difference). There is also a camp program and an after school program based on the same philosophy. You can download the DLAM guides and the video “Don’t Laugh at Me” (<http://www.dontlaugh.org>) without any costs. Then, you can simply place the video into a PowerPoint presentation and encourage your students to address those issues that rob them of their self-respect and promote social, emotional and possible physical cruelty. If you have never seen the video, be sure to have a box of Kleenex beside you. Even though I have seen this video dozens of times my heart strings are pulled each and every time.

Another program that I believe worth mentioning would be the publication Teaching Tolerance (www.teachingtolerance.org) and it is mailed twice a year to educators at no charge. Teaching Tolerance is published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a non-profit legal and educational foundation that has been fighting hatred for over 30 years (ie. successful litigation against the Ku Klux Klan in the millions). One of my favorite issues would be “Bully on the Bus”, fall 2005. However, all issues are packed with articles on tolerance, standards-based lesson plans, and offers of free videos and other curriculum support materials. One of their programs declares each November, “Bring down the walls” by implementing “Mix It Up at Lunch Day”. At this time “Millions of students across the country are accepting the challenge, swapping seats in their cafeterias, stepping out of their comfort zones and connecting with new people. Teaching tolerance encourages us to provide our students with the challenge to bring down the walls that divide our schools.”

Now, I have shared a couple of programs that promote tolerance, respect, and compassion with you that would not require any funding from your school district. I would appreciate it if you have materials to share that you will write back to me and I will gladly pass the information to our members. I sincerely want to wish you the very best school year ever. I look forward to seeing you in Billings this October and then again in Bozeman in the spring.

Accountability

-Kristy Savaria, President-Elect

The year is off to a bang with testing and new students. The recent growth of our schools has put many school counselors into a fight or flight response which is not our passion or desire. Many counselors are doing those tasks "and other duties as assigned" kinds of responsibilities.

Where are you? What is your passion? Now, how will you turn your passion into success for your students?

The tools are there for the taking, free of charge to support you in your district to set up the best school counselor program possible. MSCA has posted the state adopted model on our website. We also included a best practice category. Our National organization, ASCA, continues to support us with more tools, some free, some for a small price. We will continue to bring highly qualified leaders in this industry to you at our conferences for updates information in areas of concern.

Our **Spring conference focused on**

Ethics/Accountability and the legal aspects of working with school students in today's world. Dr. Carolyn Stone provided us with many "tools of the trade" searching for some clarity in a world with gray answers. At **MEA-MFT, MSCA** is following up by providing **eighteen sectionals** offering a plethora of information on school counselor needs. **Collaboration with MAASW and MCEC** has allowed us the opportunity to bring back the **Why Try** Group with a two day certification training during **MEA days October 19 and 20th at Castlerock Middle School in Billings.** As stated in the MEA-MFT registration book, you must preregister for this event by October 7, 2006 if you are interested. Call if you have questions 628-3452.

We are here to help you. We encourage you to contact the board member most closely associated with your job setting to discuss any ideas you might have about what you need. Perhaps you'd like to share a best practice.

We can post that to our website. Let us know how we can best serve you for your students. That really is what it is all about! Hope to see you all in Billings. Save that date for Spring Conference in Bozeman, April 19 and 20, 2007.

"You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives." - Clay P. Bedford

Carrie Stefanatz Bids Farewell as MSCA Board Member

Greetings and Happy Autumn!

I wanted to take a moment to thank MSCA members and MSCA Board for the opportunity to serve for the past 6 years on the Board, 4 years as the MSCA High School Vice President. It has been my pleasure to serve and grow with our outstanding organization. I have loved being part of an organization that is as exciting as Montana School Counselor Association. To have been part of an organization that has grown tenfold in size has been amazing. We have accomplished many goals: increasing

our membership, becoming a real organization, creating a highly qualified board, publishing a professional newsletter, working with the Montana legislators and policy makers advocating for the school counseling profession, and offering nationally renowned professional development twice yearly to name a few. Wow! To have been a small part of the energy and enthusiasm that has accomplished these tasks has been truly rewarding and inspirational. I have many fond memories of meeting new friends while learn-

ing and growing as a professional. I wish to congratulate Vicki Smith on her appointment; I know she will do an outstanding job serving our organization. I would like to encourage anyone wishing to join the fire and contribute their passion to working towards the betterment of school counseling in Montana to join our Board. We need to keep our fires burning. I feel truly blessed to have shared my passion for school counseling and Montana's youth with you. Thank you and God Bless, Carrie

Communication is Key!

- Vicki Smith, High School Vice President

Greetings Fellow Counselors! Welcome back to another year of opportunity! It's exciting to know we can do things that make such a positive influence on young people's lives!

I'm excited about the upcoming MEA-AFT Conference to be held in Billings. This year's theme is "Putting Our Minds Together". (Congratulations to Nikki Simon for designing this year's clever logo - see, we offered an opportunity to influence someone's life in a good way!) I like this theme because it's so appropriate for what we need to do to be the best professionals. I personally love to get ideas from other counselors. In northeastern Montana (90 miles from the nearest Wal Mart) we're awfully isolated but area counselors have banded together over the years and developed NEMSCA (Northeast Montana School Counselors' Association) as a way to meet three times a year and share ideas and concerns. After attending a counselors' conference last year I returned

back to Wolf Point and was so appreciative to have made some great contacts. I made several phone calls and sent emails to get more information on various career activities they do with their students. (I'm a rare "Sensing" type in counseling and struggle with my creative side - but I can recognize a great idea when I hear one!)

As everyone knows we have an unlimited amount of resources available via the internet. But I most enjoy the "natural" resources we have here in Montana - other Montana counselors. One of the things I would really like to undertake this year as High School V.P., is develop a listserv for Montana high school counselors.

For those of you who haven't subscribed to a listserv, it's a method of sharing each other's ideas, questions, and concerns via email so everyone subscribing can read it. For example,

a subscriber can submit a question and all the other subscribers receive it via email, read it and anyone can respond. All subscribers then receive any and all responses - so we all get to hear the same thing(s). I think it's a fabulous way to network and "brainstorm" through technology. I've looked at several sites on the internet and this site has some good examples: <http://doe.state.in.us/sservices/list.htm>. I look forward to getting feedback at the MEA-MFT Conference on this and other ideas you have. Contact me any time at 653-1200 or vsmith@wolfpoint.k12.mt.us.

I'm honored to be a part of MSCA and look forward to working with you in the capacity of High School V.P. Best wishes for a great year, health, and safe travels. Pinamiya! (Thank you!)

- Vicki Smith

ASCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Reach New Heights in Your Professional Development

ASCA's 2007 annual conference, "Reaching New Heights," June 23-26, 2007, at the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center, will bring together approximately 1,500 pre-kindergarten to post-secondary professional school counselors, counselor educators, supervisors and graduate students.

From educational sessions to networking events, pre-conference workshops to inspiring keynote speakers, ASCA's conference helps professional school counselors across the country meet their professional development needs.

Conference sessions allow attendees to take away solid, practical ideas they can put to work tomorrow, make valuable contacts in the school counseling field and discover the latest techniques in school counseling.

The above article is posted on the ASCA website: www.schoolcounselor.org.

Please be sure to visit MSCA's website for up to date information!

Also included at this site is information on:

- Montana School Counseling Program Model
 - Best practices
 - Journal of School Counseling
- Links to school counseling resources
 - Membership Information
 - And much more!

Save the Date!

MSCA'S SPRING INSTITUTE
April 20 & 21, 2007

BOZEMAN, MT
HOLIDAY INN

Your MSCA board is in the midst of planning the next MSCA Spring Institute. This institute will be a sectional format focusing on the three domains of the National Model. We will be sending out a "Call for Presentations" later this fall.