



"Making a Difference"

March 2007

2007 MSCA Spring Institute

Planning is underway for one more great conference for the counselors of Montana. We are so pleased to announce a few highlights of the 2007 Spring Institute, Building Capacity for Montana's Kids.

Keynote: Dr. Judy Bowers, Past-President of ASCA and co-author of the ASCA National Model, will provide an opening Keynote: "School Counselors: Moving from Good to Great!!"

Using the philosophy of **Moving from Good to Great** by Jim Collins, Dr. Bowers will share the changing role of school counselors. She will include examples of school counselors using data to improve attendance and academic achievement that will prepare all students to be "Work Ready and College Ready."

Intensive Training from Dr. Judy Bower: Seven strategies to ensure the implementation of the ASCA National Model

Many school counselors are implementing the ASCA National Model in their schools and districts. To ensure that the program becomes institutionalized in your school district, seven characteristics must be in place. Judy will show how the use of data and accountability are areas where counselors must be proficient to show the difference they make. Judy will help you learn how you can develop these characteristics for your school counseling program.

Multiple Ways to help your students seek a brighter future

Montana counselors and career professionals will provide a full array of workshops providing you with ideas for your high school, middle and elementary students as they begin the process of moving from school to work with a stop for training on the way. We will have information on post-secondary options, career exploration, financial aid options and counselor resources.

Skills for the rest of the job

A school counselor's job is always multi-faceted. We know the variety of skills you need each day. The 2007 Spring Institute also will provide you with skills and information on Cyber bullying, Crisis Management, Technology for counselors, Play therapy, the Achievement Gap with our Native students and more.

Level Sharing

Each year counselors rate the level sharing as one of the most valuable pieces of the Spring Institute. Begin planning now for your contribution. Please bring copies of your favorite lessons, thoughts or motivations for everyone to enjoy.

Be sure to join us for this great event! We look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces!

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**Everything I needed to know
as a counselor, I learned from ...
my Mom**

Recently, I was thinking about my graduate program in counseling, and especially my written comps. I was required to select a specific theory of counseling and discuss how I would implement those components. While I continue to value the foundations and overall knowledge that was gained, I believe that sometimes there is a simpler source of wisdom. Having counseled now for some time, the real truth is that the “critical theories” I know, were not those I learned in graduate school, but were ones I learned from my Mom.

My Mom showed me that goodness is within every person I encounter.

She taught me that the “glass full” philosophy is a real strength for living.

Mom taught me about the importance of a good work ethic, of being responsible and living such that people could count on me.

I learned over and over that problems can be solved and that careful thought will usually result in options.

I also learned that love can do amazing things.

A lot of those things we now call Developmental Assets. Many of these components are embedded within counseling theories. Mostly, however, knowing and living these things just allow us to make a difference for kids. That is what school counseling is all about.

Keep doing what you do!

Barb Holden, MSCA President

The Time Is Now

by Kristy Savaria, President-Elect

As I contemplate how best to support all of you as your Ethics Chair and fellow school counselor, the message I continue to hear running through my head is “the time is now”. There couldn’t be a more important time to work on the school counseling model for your district, to join with other school counselors in your area, to schedule out your lesson plans, budgets, testing schedules (if this is an area you were delegated to help with or perhaps volunteered to support your school with), to educate the public on how our work is helpful to the population we serve, to talk with your colleagues and collaborate on how to work together with similar goals. Are you tired yet? I know I have been caught up in the trap of overworking. We all have. It’s not that uncommon for a group of people who is passionate about what they do to want to want to make a difference by giving that effort all they can. I confess I am devoted to my work. But it is not all that I am. For that reason, if nothing else, I have to set boundaries so I have time for me and my other passions. Fortunately most of us have more than one, our own children, our grandchildren, our hobbies, etc. These are all the more reasons for all of us to play a major part in the development of our district’s school counseling model so we have a voice and play that integral role of the professional school counselor. One vision one voice.

The time is now to join your national **and** this state organization, to get involved with what is happening with education in our state, to voice your opinions and to present ideas and have opportunities to grow as a professional. The time is now to be responsible to the students we serve by holding ourselves accountable to a very high standard which exceeds what is expected. To set personal and professional goals within boundaries that are meaningful,

measurable, and reasonable following the highest code of ethics. Some of you might be saying “yeah, right...”

How many of you know of people in any position who could have retired years before however they stay in their jobs, embittered and hostile? I can honestly say that I have not met any of you who hate what you do or who complain about the endless tasks you may have to complete in order to bring balance to someone’s life. It is a gift. You are a gift! You embrace your job everyday working with parents, students, administrators, teachers, specialists, psychologists, cooperative care workers, county welfare workers, just to name a few. You do it with optimism and a general sense of calmness. MSCA needs your help! We ask for you to step up to the plate. Our organization has grown. We have several board positions opening up. Elections will be in April at our conference in Bozeman, Montana, the 19 and 20th. We continue to offer exceptional speakers and sectionals as a service to you. Be part of this team. I, as the Ethics chair, ask you to not only be accountable to yourself as a professional school counselor, but to support this state organization with your time and volunteerism. Nominate yourself for one of the open positions. The time is now.....

“The time is now to
join your national
and this state or-



MSCA Board Position Openings

2007-2009

Are you interested in working with the Montana School Counselor Association to build the profession of school counseling in Montana? Are you looking for a challenge? Do you love counseling and have some ideas about how we can better help counselors in Montana? Elections will be held at the MSCA Annual Meeting for the following positions that will run from October 2007 through October 2009: President-Elect, Middle School Vice-President, and K-12 Vice President. Appointments for Treasurer and Secretary will be made by the President for that term, Kristy Savaria.

Any active school counselor with interest in any of the elected positions should contact Barb Holden. Any active school counselor with interest in the appointed positions should contact Kristy Savaria. Election information will be e-mailed to all members prior to the 2007 Spring Institute. Send a letter of interest or call soon!

As a member of the Board of Directors of MSCA, you would meet together 3 to 4 times per year. The board currently meets after the fall MEA/MFT Conference, after the Spring Institute and one Saturday in January. Much of the communication is by e-mail or phone.

The position of President-Elect is a two year term that then moves into two years as President, for a total of four years. It is a wonderful opportunity to work to improve our profession. Because of the time as President-Elect, the applicant does not need to feel ready immediately to jump into that role. You would have the opportunity to attend the ASCA National Conference and serve on the National Delegate Assembly, both amazing opportunities to develop your leadership skills. You would also attend the ASCA Leadership Development Institute. As the president of counselors in our state you would chair the Board of Directors and coordinate the activities and trainings within the organization.

The positions of Middle School Vice President and K-12 Vice President are board positions that focus on representing the counselors of that level. The vice presidents facilitate the Level Sharings at the conferences, contribute articles of interest for that level to the newsletters and communicate with members working in the same level. They also sit on the board, support MSCA activities such as the trainings, and should be able to work with a board in a collaborative way.

The secretary should have writing and computer skills, knowledge of meeting process, and should be able to manage or coordinate the minutes and newsletters of the organization. Knowledge of "Robert's Rules of Order" is helpful but not necessary.

The treasurer should have computer skills and be familiar with Microsoft Excel. This position requires keeping track of debits and credits, maintaining the financial records of the organization, providing written and verbal financial presentations for the organization and the board and supporting the Board as needed.

2007 Spring Institute
April 19th and 20th
Holiday Inn, Bozeman, Montana

Make your reservations now:

Call 1-800-366-5101 or 406 587-4561

or

Book on line at www.hibozeman.com

Use the code (msc) for the room block rate

(“Corporate, group & IATA Identification” drop down)

Room rates: \$79.00 single or double

Rate held until Friday, April, 6th

2007 Counselor Awards

It's time to acknowledge school counselors and administrators for their outstanding efforts in working with Montana's youth. If you have a colleague who you feel deserves this honor, now is your chance! Nominations are being accepted for the following areas:

- Elementary Counselor of the Year
- Middle School Counselor of the Year
- High School Counselor of the Year
- K-12 Counselor of the Year
- Administrator of the Year



In a letter of nomination, please state the person's name, level, school, address and qualifications. Please send your information to Linda Konesky in one of the following ways no later than **March 23, 2007**.

Hard copies can be mailed to: Linda Konesky
Centerville School
693 Stockett Road
Sand Coulee, MT, 59480

E mail: lindak@centerville.k12.mt.us

Fax: Linda Konesky at 406-736-5210

Call for Presenters for the MEA-MFT Conference, October 18 and 19th, 2007 in Belgrade, Montana.

Please submit your proposal to <http://mea-mft.net/> directly. Seeking elementary level, hands on best practices, behavioral supports, etc. and organizational sectionals, grant writing, time keeping supports, etc.

If you have questions feel free to contact co-chairs Kristy Savaria and/or Dana Eisenberg at:

kristy_savaria@laurel.k12.mt.us or deisenberg@bonner.k12.mt.us.

Making the Connection

By Vicki Smith, MSCA High School V.P.

As I think about those things that really make a difference in the success of our students there are several key phrases or catch words that come to my mind: attendance, academic preparation, relevancy, meeting standards, goal setting, critical thinking, problem solving, and time management. These are just a few, and they are all important for student success but I would like to talk about another key concept that I feel can help each student find success in school and that is “connectedness.”

In an article published by the California Department of Education (Winter 2006, P. 4), it states that “Study after study indicates that when students are connected to learning and to relationships with peers and adults, they are less disruptive and were more successful in academics.” As an American Indian, born and raised on the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Reservation, I know the about the feeling of “connectedness”. I’ve asked myself at various times in my own life, “Do I belong?” So I understand when students don’t find their niche, or their vision, or their sense of belonging that enables them to make the choices to be successful. Although I believe there’s a special need for American Indians in particular to feel the connectedness due to the historical perspective concerning boarding schools, this sense of belonging is about every student and who they are, where they come from and how we interact with them.

In a recent article in the Billings Gazette entitled *Lesson on listening resonates*, Pryor Schools Superintendent Luke Enemy Hunter discussed the critical need of getting “to know the child totally”. Enemy Hunter talked about knowing where students live and how they live. I believe his words are so true. I would like to share some ideas (some of which you may already use)

that may help give your students that sense of belonging.

1. Be visible every morning to greet students as they come to school. This is a chance to get to know students and if you sense something unusual with a student, make a note and find time to visit with that student later.
2. Be visible between classes as often as possible and strategically place yourself at different locations so you see as many students as possible.
3. Wear a name tag so students who don’t know you, will get to know you.
4. Offer humor often! And keep a sense of humor!
5. Conduct a survey to collect personal and family information on students. This can get tricky like when I asked the question “Number of brothers and sisters” and the student asked me if he had to count “them all”! But that’s good-to-know information! And it’s a great lead-in to ask them to tell you more. Ask what they like to do, if they have a computer, what games they like to play. Ask whatever helps you to know the student.
6. Be available during lunch and visit with students. Many don’t really like authority figures around but they get used to you and you become non-threatening and possibly a connection.
7. Set up a mentoring program utilizing other counselors and teachers. Target the students you feel may most benefit. Make it as formal or informal as you want: discuss expectations of your mentoring process, meet with mentors to get feedback, offer ideas for mentoring activities, have a handbook.
8. Set up a mentoring program for new students. Assign a current student to spend some time with them until they get acclimated to the school.
9. Go to activities in the community where your students and families are.

Ask students what they have planned for the week-end – that can give you great ideas.

10. Have a “student of the week” that you take to lunch or buy a soda for and take a short walk with.
11. Have your office inviting to the different types of students: a comfortable chair, hand games, pictures, posters, etc.
12. Send post cards – this is a quick easy way to connect with the family.
13. Be a Forensic Counselor: Talk to teachers, administrators and others to find out about students and their family – in a good way.
14. Ask students to tell you about themselves. Have you always lived here? Are you the oldest or youngest? What do you like to do when you’re not at school?
15. Schedule time in the classrooms to do activities: goal setting, handling teen stress through humor, time management, career assessments, learning styles inventory.
16. Watch for their names in the student news or local news and make a point to recognize that verbally or in writing.
17. Always be honest and straight-forward.
18. Get to know their family or their relatives.
19. Know your resources in the community so you can refer students or families as needed. They will come to know that you really want to help them.
20. Stay positive with students and family. They will always remember what we say.

Fellow counselors, we have a wonderful job helping students. I hope some of these ideas work for you. Please feel free to call me at 653-1200 or email at vsmith@wolfpoint.k12.mt.us to discuss this or any other issue. Pinamaya! Thank you!

Addressing Internet Safety

By Linda Konesky K-12 VP

At school, students are constantly reminded of ways to be safe. We have playground rules for safety purposes. We teach students to be aware of the possible danger of strangers. We teach them how to walk across streets safely, how to drive safely, the ill effects of drugs and alcohol, and the list goes on and on. A great article in the Nov/Dec issue of ASCA's School Counselor magazine points out another area where we should be concerned.... Internet safety, and in particular a popular teenage site called MySpace. Although just another tool for students to communicate, MySpace.com does impose some dangers to our students. We can't take it away, but we can make them aware of dangers associated with this type of communication. The following tips were printed in the magazine. I shared them with students at our school and with parents through the school newsletter. In case you aren't a member of ASCA and don't get the magazine, they are included below. Check out MySpace.com for yourself. I was surprised and bet you will be too. We all know there are benefits in online networking, but need to make sure stu-

dents realize there are red flags to watch out for.

Online Safety Tips for Students

(From ASCA School Counselor magazine, Nov-Dec. 2006)

- Keep personal information to a minimum. The nature of MySpace requires that some personal information be included, but be intentional about what is shared.
- Browse your friend's accounts to make sure they aren't sharing personal information about you on their Web pages.
- Be careful about the image you portray on your MySpace page. Avoid posting photos or comments that could be seen as provocative.
- Remember that the public can view all information posted on MySpace. If you wouldn't want parents, teachers, principals, college admission committees or employers to see it, don't post it.
- Feel free to delete people or comments from your account if you feel they are inappropriate.

- Trust your gut feelings; if something doesn't feel right to you, tell a trusted adult, and report the incident to MySpace.
- Be respectful to others while online. If other people are being disrespectful to you online, tell an adult.
- Educate your friends about the potential dangers of MySpace.

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.

Denver is close! Check it out!

Understanding Poverty by Linda Konesky, MSCA K-12 V.P.

In January, several members of our school staff had the opportunity to hear Dr. Ruby K. Payne present her lecture on "Understanding Poverty". At first, I thought this would be another one of those topics that "really doesn't fit our school", but it only took a few minutes before I realized that it really did fit. I guess my definition of poverty consisted of a vision of the poor starving children in Africa who basically have nothing in the form of resources. Poverty occurs in all races and in all countries. According to statistics in Dr. Payne's book, "in 2004, the poverty line in the US was considered at \$18,850 for a family of four." I'm sure we all know families that fall into this category. And of course, there is the other end of the spectrum; the wealthy. What was so enlightening to me about Ruby's whole presentation was learning about the "hidden rules" of various social classes. Much of the following information can be found in Dr. Payne's book, [A Framework for Understanding Poverty](#).

Individuals bring with them the hidden rules of the class in which they were raised. Even though incomes may raise, many of the patterns of thought, social interaction, etc. remain with the individual throughout life. Schools and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class.

For all of our students to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and at work. Some hidden rules in poverty are: The noise level is high, the most important information is non-verbal, you are not respected unless you're personally strong, and your value to the group is your ability to entertain. Can you think of students who exhibit behaviors that could be products of an environment with those rules? I can! There are also hidden rules about clothing, food and polite behavior. To me, this is where the conflict comes from at times with students. Educators and bosses expect them to understand our middle class "rules", but need to go back a step and teach them that there are different rules depending on the situation. Often times, these are the kids who end up in the counselor's office because they seem rude and disrespectful. I'm sure we've all said, "Well, you should see what the parents are like; no wonder the kid behaves like he/she does." Dr. Payne's information helped put things into perspective. These children and parents behave the way generations before them have. (Yes, there are exceptions to the rules. Some actually change with education and relationships.)

Obviously, hidden rules of the wealthy differ greatly. It's not ok to be less than

perfect, details are very important, time is more important than dollars, rules do not apply to their children, you are not respected unless you have expertise and their weapon of choice is social exclusion. I haven't had much experience dealing with this class of folks, but can think of a few parents who certainly had this mindset! Knowing their rules helps one understand why they are so intent on their child being the very best.

One of the biggest "aha" moments for me during this lecture, was when Dr. Payne talked about the hidden rules of money in each class. In poverty, money is to be used and spent. (Hence, students who are on free & reduced lunch always seem to have money for a bake sale or the pop machine.) In the middle class, money is to be managed, and in wealth, it is to be conserved and invested.

The bottom line is something we all know as counselors: kids are all different, depending on their backgrounds. We need to continue to find ways to help them succeed in today's world. Learning about the hidden rules of society is just one more tool to use to help us help them. Not everyone may agree with Dr. Payne's philosophy and ideas, but I found them to make sense. If you have a chance, take a glance through her book. I think you'll find it worth your time.

Level Sharing Comments by Elaine Schoyen, MSCA Middle School V.P.

Well, here we are in the final few weeks before the MSCA's Spring Institute/Conference. Just a few weeks ago board members drove into Great Falls from all over the state to work on the conference and put together the schedule for the presentations (Vicki Smith should have been given a prize for the tremendous distance she had to travel.). Once again, it was very exciting to see the professional quality and varied topics being offered to our members during the conference.

As your Middle School Vice-President, I just want to remind you to be thinking about the level-sharing segment. I encourage you to plan ahead and bring a particular lesson, idea, or project you would like to share with your peers. Last year there were many wonderful experiences shared, but unfortunately we were not able to get around to everyone. In order to provide adequate sharing opportunities with the necessary time restraints, I am suggesting the following format:

~Round I - Introductions of all attending the middle school sharing.

~Round II - Sharing of ideas/lessons/experiences within 2 to 3 minutes.

~Round III - Opportunity to ask specific questions, and/or provide your e-mail address for further interested contacts from peers.

~Round IV - Evaluation of this format given to me for future level sharing.

My intention in attempting to provide the above format is to help ensure as much sharing of ideas as possible. If you should have additional suggestions to streamline this time frame, please feel comfortable to contact me prior to the conference. The evaluations strongly indicate that this is a valued part of the conference and my goal is to provide the maximum opportunity for everyone.

Bozeman, here we come once again. I challenge you to invite someone that has never attended MSCA's Annual Spring Conference. They will be so grateful for the camaraderie, professional growth, and overall experiences. See you in April at the Holiday Inn.