

Spring 2012 Quarterly Newsletter

As we officially 'close the books' on the 2011-2012 school year and complete our planning for 2012-2013, it is important that you and your children take a few minutes to review the past year. In my January newsletter article, I suggested that your family take a few minutes shortly after the end of the school year to reflect on the past school term. Celebrate your successes and classroom experiences that you were particularly proud of and consider those instances when things weren't as positive or didn't turn out as you'd planned. For those less than positive experiences, set goals for your family and your children to increase your chances for success next year.

The Martensdale St. Marys High School Chapter of the National Honor Society held the induction ceremony for nine new members on Tuesday, May 15, 2012. Congratulations to Riley Dunn, Paiten Gavin, Elizabeth Gerdes, Madison Hall, Vicki Kordick, Eddy Kraber, Laura Lacquement, KatyMae Moore, and Trista Thomas for being selected as the Class of 2014. It is indeed an honor to be selected as members of the National Honor Society.

Two of our teachers were recently selected as Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District Teachers-of-the-Year for the 2011-2012 school year. Congratulations to Mr. John Amfahr, secondary social studies teacher, and Mrs. Mollie Scrivner, second grade teacher. These honors are well-deserved and reflect favorably on the positive contributions that John and Mollie have made!

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CLASS OF 2012

Forty-seven senior students were graduated from Martensdale-St. Marys on Sunday, May 20, 2012, and the graduation program was very dignified and respectful. Valedictorian for the Class of 2012 is Hailey Sweet and co-salutatorians are Robert Walker and Morgan Halverson. Josh Butcher and Morgan Halverson received the Betty Gibbons Sportsmanship Awards and Josh also received the Bernie Saggau Award from the Iowa High School Athletic Association. Thanks go to Mr. Randy Olson and our secondary band and Mrs. Susan Clark and our high school choir for providing the musical selections.

The following members of the Class of 2012 were recognized for their hard work and achievements while completing their program of study at Martensdale-St. Marys High School.

Accomplishments of this type do not happen accidentally.

They are the result of hard work on the part of the student, strong support from family and friends, and a school system that places the students' educational goals and objectives first and foremost. This year the Martensdale-St. Marys Seniors have been awarded over **\$350,000** in scholarships.

They are:

Jacob Anctil

MStM Jim Donohue Annual Alumni Tournament Scholarship

Josh Butcher

Four Seasons Auto Wash Scholarship
Martensdale- St. Marys Booster Club Scholarship

Kate Cook

Webster University Academic Scholarship

Alice Dembinski

Millikin Merit Scholarship

T J Foster

Indian Hills Athletic- Baseball Scholarship

Dalton Gibson

Martensdale- St. Marys Booster Club Scholarship

Morgan Halverson

Jordan Elizabeth Eyberg Memorial Scholarship
(Linn Grove United Methodist Church) Save Our
Neighborhood Scholarship

Olivia Hand

Lester Phren Scholarship
Mercy College of Health Science Freshman Academic
Scholars Award

Andria Harper

Mar-Mar Scholarship
Alumni Scholarship
Simpson Honor Scholarship
Simpson Grant
District 8 Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Scholarship
Martensdale- St. Marys Booster Club Scholarship

Ashlyn Manchester

Simpson Theatre Scholarship

Michaela McIlravy

(Linn Grove United Methodist Church) Save Our Neighborhood Scholarship
Lester Phren Scholarship
Wartburg Regents Scholarship
Wartburg College Grant

Emma Michels

Lester Phren Scholarship

Paige Mullins

I-35 Telephone Scholarship
Bernard J. Brommel Scholarship in honor of Grace Laird and Carol Croat Kubik
UNI Distinguished Scholars Award

Justin Nielsen

University of Illinois Full Athletic Baseball Scholarship

Zeb Noel

North Iowa Area Community College Athletic Baseball Scholarship

Taylor Schad

Grand View University Pro Musica Choral Scholarship
Grand View University Pro Musica Instrumental Scholarship
Grand View Dance Scholarship
Grant View Grant

Hannah Shnurman

Alumni Scholarship

Meagan Streyffeler

Mar Mar Scholarship
Lester Phren Scholarship
Morningside College Grant
Morningside Womens Track Athletic Grant
Mustang Co Curricular Scholarship

Hailey Sweet

Millican Christy Scholarship
Nadine Wilgenbusch Doughty Scholarship
MStM Jim Donohue Annual Alumni Tournament Scholarship

Robert Walker

MStM Jim Donohue Annual Alumni Tournament Scholarship

One scholarship, valued at \$500, has been established in memory of Jordan Elizabeth Eyberg who was tragically taken from us in an automobile accident on May 22, 2005.

The criteria for Jordan's awards were as follows: the person must be caring, honest, loyal, motivated, trustworthy, responsible, and family oriented and will further their education at an institute of higher learning.

This year's recipient is **Morgan Halverson**.

REGISTRATION AND LUNCH PRICE FEES FOR 2012-2013

At the May 14, 2012, regular board meeting, your board of education voted to keep the 2012-2013 elementary, middle school, and high school registration fees; high school computer fee; and family and student activity pass fees at the same rates as the past two years.

Elementary (Grades K-6) Registration Fee	\$50.00
Middle School (Grades 7-8) Registration Fee	\$90.00
High School (Grades 9-12) Registration Fee	\$100.00
High School Computer Fee	\$50.00
Student Activity Pass Fee	\$60.00
Adult Activity Pass Fee	\$90.00
Family Activity Pass Fee	\$220.00

On July 13, 2011, we received an official notification from Ms. Patti Harding, Administrative Consultant, with the Iowa Department of Education Bureau of Nutrition, Health, and Transportation Services regarding federally mandated hot lunch price increases. According to the calculator we were required to use, the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District is below the minimum federally mandated nutrition fee level. Unless the district increases our hot lunch food prices for elementary and secondary students by five cents per meal, we will lose the reimbursement we receive for the free and reduced-price meals we serve. **Beginning on Wednesday, August 22, 2012, the first day of the school year, the price for an elementary student lunch will be \$1.70 and the price for a secondary student lunch will be \$1.90.** We do appreciate your understanding with this mandated lunch meal increase, but the district cannot afford the potential loss of free and reduced-priced lunch federal reimbursement.

DISTRICT PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT LEVY

The Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District has relied on the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) for many, many years to provide important 'maintenance' funding to repair roofs, playgrounds, and sidewalks; purchase transportation vehicles like activity buses and vans; purchase musical instruments for our band program; support classroom technology; and more. Well-maintained school buildings, athletic facilities, and grounds are an essential part of our school community and you have been an important member of our school-community. We have listed several Frequently Asked Questions related to the renewal of the district Physical Plant and Equipment Levy vote.

When is the community vote to renew the district Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL)?

On **Tuesday, September 11, 2012**, you will be asked to vote on a renewal of the district Physical Plant and Equipment Levy.

How much does this levy generate and for how long?

Maximum length of the voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program is ten years. The current levy

expires on June 30, 2013. Our district voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program provided approximately \$80,000 per year for the past ten years.

Will the passage of the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy raise my property taxes?

Renewal of this levy will **not** increase your property taxes. The district is asking you to continue the voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy at the same rate (sixty-seven cents per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation) that has been in place for at least the last ten years.

Because of recent school district budget deficiencies, why hasn't the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program been used to offset the general fund?

Physical Plant and Equipment Levy revenues **cannot** be used for salaries, textbooks, or new educational programs. The requirements for use of Physical Plant and Equipment Levy funds are very specific and limited to maintenance, technology, and equipment.

What are examples of the types of things the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy revenues can be used for?

Physical Plant and Equipment Levy funds can be used for technology, such as computer purchase and replacement; musical instrument purchase and replacement; roofing repair and replacement; masonry repairs; energy conservation improvements; concrete and asphalt repairs and replacement; school grounds landscaping and improvement; and school transportation vehicle purchase.

What happens if the voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy does not pass?

Some projects and purchases still need to be completed and would have to be funded by other revenue sources, such as the general fund, where approximately 80% is dedicated to salaries. Our district would struggle to meet the maintenance requirements for our facilities and grounds without the voter-approved Physical Plant and Equipment Levy in place.

What is the difference between the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program and the state one cent sales and services tax program?

For the Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District, the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program is used as a maintenance and facilities improvement fund and the state one cent sales and services program is used for major capital improvement projects, such as the new football and track complex.

Where can I learn more about the district Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program?

If you have questions or want to learn more about our Physical Plant and Equipment Levy program, please call Bob Newsum, Superintendent, at school (641-764-2466), on his cell telephone (641-203-8893), by email at bob_newsum@mstm.us or stop into the district main offices for a visit.

FACILITIES UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

When students return to school in August, they will notice several improvements that were completed since we dismissed for the summer late in May. The board approved the use of one cent sales and services tax funds to remove and replace the elementary gymnasium roof. While the contractors are completing the replacement of the roof membrane, they will add several inches of insulation material that will improve the heating and air conditioning energy efficiency.

At the regular March board meeting, board members approved the resumption of the secondary industrial technology program. Mr. Lynch and the custodial staff are busy rebuilding the industrial technology classroom and shop and the newly hired teacher will be ready to welcome students in August. The addition of the industrial technology program will be of great benefit to many of our students who have missed out on these opportunities the past two years. It will also prepare those students who intend to enroll in the new DMACC Career Academy, at the South Ridge Shopping Center, in Fall 2013.

The last significant improvement that secondary students will notice is that the old furniture has been removed from the family and consumer science classroom and replaced with new cabinets, storage units, and counter tops.

KEEP YOUR CHILDREN READING THIS SUMMER

Summer is a great time for children to want to take a break from all school work. But it is important that students are still reading over the summer so they don't lose the skills that have learned and can become more fluent readers in the fall. Make reading a family activity this summer and share your love for reading with your children. Below are 10 easy activities that you can do with your children this summer to encourage them to read.

1. Have your child read for 15 minutes per day.
2. Get involved in the local library program. Many libraries have special programs during the summer to keep kids reading and give some great prizes for those children who keep up their reading.
3. Encourage your children to play educational games on the computer.
4. Create an incentive program at home to reward your child/children to keep reading.
5. Ask your children about what they are reading. Showing your own interest will encourage your children to be interested in what they are reading too.
6. Set a good example! Enjoy a good book yourself so your children can see that reading is fun for everyone.
7. Let your children choose their own books. Encourage them to pick books that look interesting to them.
8. Buy books on tape for your children to listen to. It is great for children to listen to reading too!
9. Look for reading opportunities everywhere you go-reading billboards and signs along the roads or even let your children read the map.
10. Read aloud with your children every day.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

This quarter's alumni spotlight is on an individual who currently resides in Colombia, South America. After graduating from MSTM in 2003, Alisha Harper

attended Simpson College & graduated with honors in Cum Laude in December, 2007. She is the oldest of four children and the daughter of Craig & Amy Harper. She received a triple major in Liberal Arts, Spanish, & Elementary Education from Simpson College along with four endorsements in Early Childhood, Special Education, Reading, & Spanish. Her Spanish degree has taken her many places & has opened many doors.

While attending Simpson College, she studied abroad in Nicaragua and Costa Rica in the spring of 2006. Living in Latin America for five short months opened her eyes to an undiscovered world thanks to her Spanish teachers. Nicaragua has always been seen as a third-world country, not having many opportunities, but what she discovered was an unlimited quantity of opportunities. She gained an appreciation for the abundance of resources we have in the United States.

After graduating from Simpson College in December 2007 and prior to moving to Colombia, she worked for Des Moines Public Schools as a special education teacher at Nathan Weeks Middle School and Park Avenue Elementary. When asked what made her decide to teach abroad, she said her adventure began in the summer of 2009 as she toured Europe. While traveling through Europe she explored different cultures, perspectives, and histories, and decided her next career step would be to teach in a Spanish speaking country.

In July of 2010, she uprooted herself to Colegio Albania (Mushaisa) in Colombia, South America to teach English in a Kindergarten classroom. The school is an International Baccalaureate School that has a teaching method to help students be life-long learners through their thoughts and actions

in the world. All students attending the school are taught English even though Spanish is their native language. Although Colombia has a reputation of drugs, poverty, and war, the community of Colombia has welcomed Alisha with open arms. The town she teaches in has the world's largest coal mine, called Cerrejon. The community is surrounded by a fence and has armed guards 24/7 for protection of the mine. Colombia is much safer now than it was 25 years ago.

After living in Colombia for only a few months, Alisha has influenced many people and was chosen as the 2011 International Carnival Queen. The Carnival is an annual festival each Latin American country looks forward to and lives for every year. As the 2011 International Carnival Queen, Alisha has had the opportunity to participate and perform on stage with a 'comparsa' in several festivals and meet many people.

Alisha feels blessed with the ability to adapt and accept a culture not of her background. Although she is in Colombia to teach English, she finds herself learning about their language and culture. Even though miles away, family and friends continue to support her as they know that education and travel are a part of her destiny. Alisha only hopes that she leaves an imprint on their hearts to continue to question, reflect, and learn about the world as many teachers left their marks on her.

Growing up in a small community like Martensdale-St. Marys has helped her look for ways to expand her horizon and not be afraid to look for opportunities. She has had many teachers and community members influence her to dream big. Her advice to others is to follow your dream and grow as much as your horizon allows you to grow but most of all, remember ...

Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumble bee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and make your dreams come alive.

