



## Taking Notice: Teacher's Daily Practice Enhances Student Engagement

Many families can relate to frequently receiving the one-word response from their children and young adults. You know, “yeah” or “fine,” those solitary words that don’t really tell you much about how the child is doing.

SSD teacher Jean Goldstein, who works at Brown Elementary in the Hazelwood School District, saw this as an opportunity to learn more about the students in her school.

“I have morning hall duty in a spot where I see the majority of our students,” Goldstein said. “If I asked a student a question, they’d reply ‘sure’ or ‘yeah,’ but I could tell their demeanor didn’t match their response.”

So instead of asking probing questions, Goldstein changed tactics.

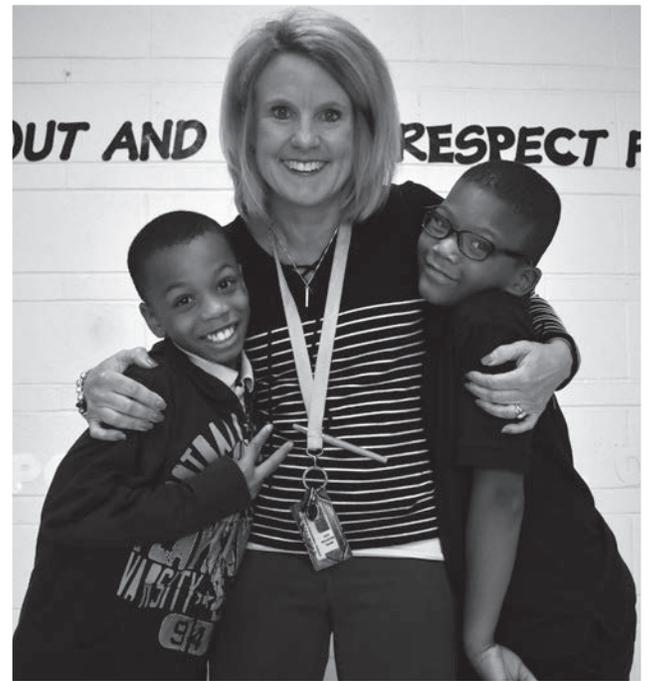
“I began ‘noticing’ everyone,” Goldstein said. “I’d say ‘I notice you have new shoes,’ or ‘I notice you’re earlier than usual.’”

Goldstein said taking the time to “notice” students lets them know that they matter and belong in the Brown Elementary community.

“Once students realized that they mattered, it opened up avenues of communication,” Goldstein said. “Some students are more comfortable with a brief exchange, while others want to share personal updates and some just want to give a high five,” she said. “It allows each student to get what they need to start their day on a positive note.”

Goldstein has been practicing “I notice” for two years now. Her technique has helped inform her teaching and has provided her with insights to share with colleagues.

“I collect lots of observational data,” Goldstein said. “The responses give me immediate insight into whether or not something may be going on with a student, and then I can share that with that student’s classroom teacher or counselor.”



**SSD teacher Jean Goldstein greets students at Brown Elementary in the Hazelwood School District.**

Now, Goldstein is not the only one who notices things. The students at Brown Elementary are noticing her, too.

“I truly believe that I get as much, if not more, out of our daily interactions as they get from me. It’s truly one of my absolute favorite times of my day,” Goldstein said.

“On the other hand, if I’m ever absent or late,” Goldstein said, “I will always hear about it from the students, ‘Where were you this morning?’”

It seems that not much goes unnoticed these days at Brown Elementary. For this community of students and teachers, that’s a good thing. ■

# Students Use Assistive Technology to Achieve Goals

Assistive technology helps redefine how students with individualized education programs are learning, which can lead to increased independence and self-confidence.

Micah Truelove-Herrick, a seventh-grader at Sperreng Middle School in Lindbergh Schools, uses a scanner to assist him with his schoolwork.

“I use my computer and scanner because my handwriting is bad,” said Micah. “The scanner helps me so much. I scan in my worksheets and then I’m able to type my answers.”

Assistive technology (AT) includes services and devices that promote, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Devices range from enlarged keyboards to reading materials in Braille, and include computer apps and extensions, keyboard and mouse alternatives like joysticks and switches, reading supports including text to speech and word banks with text and pictures, and environmental supports including visual schedules and choiceboards.

According to Kathy Lalk, an SSD assistive technology specialist, AT provides the opportunity to increase independence, maintain current skills, or decrease issues that prevent the student from accessing the curriculum.

“It helps them to actively participate in class and demonstrate their knowledge,” said Lalk. “AT tools have features that allow customization to suit all students, regardless of cognitive level or physical ability.”

“Teachers support students by embedding strategies and implementing AT tools to increase engagement, independence and make progress in IEP goals,” said Lalk. “Assistive technology can be used to individualize instruction for students.”

Teresa Miller, an SSD teacher at Ballwin Elementary in the Rockwood School District, has two students who use Bookshare, an online library of accessible e-books. They also use speech-to-text technology. One student uses a C-pen, which is



**Micah Truelove-Herrick, a student at Sperreng Middle School in Lindbergh Schools, uses a scanner to assist him with his schoolwork.**

a portable, pocket-sized device that reads text out loud with a human-like digital voice.

“Both students have extreme difficulty with reading, and the technology has enabled them to be independent with classwork and work toward their reading and writing goals,” said Miller. After using these assistive technology tools for one day, one of her students said she was very excited.

“We downloaded five more books on her Bookshare and she finished three quickly,” said Miller. “She said she had always wanted to read those books, but until now she couldn’t. She kept saying, ‘I love reading!’ over and over. The C-Pen has enabled her to be more independent in her class for the first time. She is definitely a success story.”

Kim White, an assistive technology facilitator, said it’s great to see students meet goals with assistive technology, and seeing their progress is one of her favorite things as a facilitator.

White praised Micah for helping other students with their AT tools. “Micah has helped us with technology issues at Sperreng. We’ve even pulled him in to talk to the SSD and Lindbergh technology staff to explain issues and he helps them troubleshoot. He’s very knowledgeable.” ■

# Special Education Foundation

## Style and Substance

The Special Education Foundation (SEF) Women Leaders support five SSD schools based on needs identified by their principals. The group raises money through an annual Boutique, Fashion Show and Luncheon, which will be held this year at 10 a.m. on Thursday, April 11. For more information about the event, visit [www.sef-stl.org/events](http://www.sef-stl.org/events).

The group heard presentations in September by principals Dan Kelly of Litzsinger School, Lorie Arnsman Schwartz of Neuwoehner High School, Niki Tedoni of Southview School, Dr. Kelly Grigsby of Ackerman School, and Brian O'Connor of Northview High School, addressing how the SEF could help their students.

During the 2018–2019 school year, the Women Leaders funded requests totaling \$8,200:

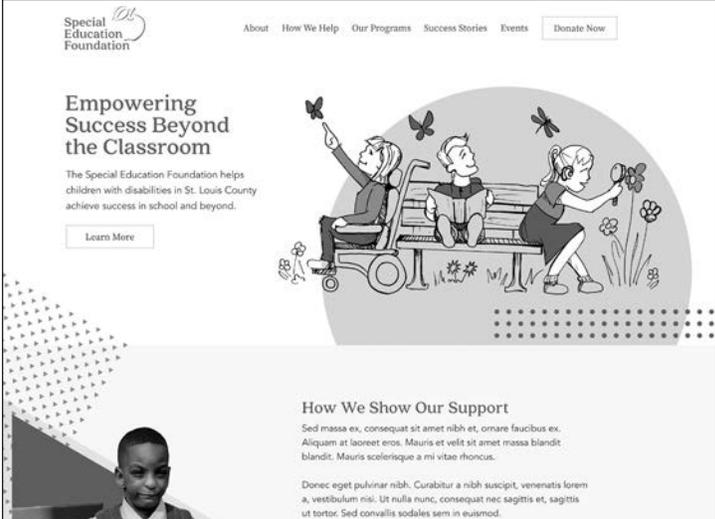
- \$1,425 for an ice cream truck visit at field day and one Springboard to Learning program for Neuwoehner
- \$875 for a swing for Litzsinger
- \$1,000 for an inclusive swing set for Southview
- \$1,900 for prom photos, graduation caps and gowns, support of family PTO events at the school, yearbook subsidies, prizes and supplies for fall barbecue and spaghetti bingo, partial funding for end-of-year picnic and an emergency fund for Northview
- \$3,000 for arts and culture experiences including the National Blues Museum, Gateway Arch grounds and a play at Grandel Theater for Ackerman

## New Application Deadlines

The SEF awards camperships to help students bridge the educational and social skills gap over the summer break. Campership applications are due April 3. The Foundation also has a program supporting the year-round critical needs of students with disabilities. Those applications may be submitted at any time. Online applications are available at [www.sef-stl.org/programs](http://www.sef-stl.org/programs).

## Fresh Approach

The SEF has engaged the services of marketing agency Hub & Spoke to freshen its image and better engage its audiences. Keep an eye out for a new and improved website coming soon at [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) and check out the updated logo above.



The screenshot shows the new website design for the Special Education Foundation. At the top left is the updated logo, which features a stylized leaf and the text 'Special Education Foundation'. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with links for 'About', 'How We Help', 'Our Programs', 'Success Stories', 'Events', and 'Donate Now'. The main content area has a heading 'Empowering Success Beyond the Classroom' and a sub-heading 'The Special Education Foundation helps children with disabilities in St. Louis County achieve success in school and beyond.' Below this is a 'Learn More' button. To the right is an illustration of three children sitting on a bench; one child is in a wheelchair, another is reading a book, and a third is holding a flower. Below the illustration is a section titled 'How We Show Our Support' with placeholder text: 'Sed massa ex, consequat sit amet nibh et, ornare faucibus ex. Aliquam at laoreet eros. Mauris et velit sit amet massa blandit blandit. Mauris scelerisque a mi vitae rhoncus. Donec eget pulvinar nibh. Curabitur a nibh suscipit, venenatis lorem a, vestibulum nisi. Ut nulla nunc, consequat nec sagittis et, sagittis ut tortor. Sed convallis sodales sem in euismod.'

## SSD Parent Advisory Council

The SSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of families advising and collaborating to improve the education, confidence and social outcomes of each student served by SSD.

The PAC consists of five parents or guardians — one member and four alternates — from each of the 22 St. Louis County school districts and from each of the five SSD special

education schools. The parents or guardians of students receiving special education services in that district or school elect SSD PAC members.

For more information, visit the PAC's website at [tinyurl.com/SSDPAC](http://tinyurl.com/SSDPAC), email [pac@ssdmo.org](mailto:pac@ssdmo.org) or call 314.989.8448 ext. 6650. ■

## Board of Education

- **Ms. Jan Goodman**, Board President  
jagoodman@ssdmo.org
- **Mr. John F. Koepfer**, Board Vice President  
jkoepfer@ssdmo.org
- **Ms. Juli Brown**, Director  
jbrown1@ssdmo.org
- **Dr. Dan Cuneo**, Director  
dcuneo@ssdmo.org
- **Mr. Curtis Faulkner**, Director  
cfaulkner@ssdmo.org
- **Ms. Peg Lestina**, Director  
plestina@ssdmo.org
- **Dr. Joan Zavitsky**, Director  
jzavitsky@ssdmo.org
- **Dr. Don Bohannon**, Superintendent  
dbohannon@ssdmo.org

ASK QUESTIONS • MAKE COMMENTS • GIVE COMPLIMENTS

Let's Talk!™ **Get started at [ssdmo.org](http://ssdmo.org)**

 LIKE US ON FACEBOOK:  
[facebook.com/SSDStLCo](https://facebook.com/SSDStLCo)

 FOLLOW US ON TWITTER:  
[@SSDStLCo](https://twitter.com/SSDStLCo)

[www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org)

**MISSION:** In collaboration with partner districts, we provide technical education and a wide variety of individualized educational and support services designed for each student's successful contribution to our community.

**VISION:** Partners for each student's success

**VALUES:** student success • collaboration  
• integrity • stewardship • continuous improvement • equity • accountability

**Special School District Notice of Non-Discrimination and Accommodation:** Special School District does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation against an individual based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, veteran status, age, or activity protected by federal or state law in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Direct inquiries and complaints under this policy to Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison, 12110 Clayton Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63131, telephone (314) 989-8100 or to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, One Pettocoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, telephone (816) 268-0550, fax (816) 268-0599, TDD (800) 877-8339, email [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov). Information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities accessible to impaired persons can be obtained from the Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison at the phone number and address listed above.

*Special Edition* is a publication of the Communications Department of Special School District of St. Louis County.  
314.989.8288 / [communications@ssdmo.org](mailto:communications@ssdmo.org)

 Contains 50% pre-consumer and 10% post-consumer content.

## NEWS FROM SSD



**Special School District  
of St. Louis County**  
12110 Clayton Road  
Town & Country, MO 63131

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

ST. LOUIS, MO  
PERMIT NO. 1282



The U.S. Department of Labor presented SSD with its official Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) apprenticeship certificate for the Adult Education Apprenticeship Program at the Nov. 13 meeting of the SSD Board of Education.

The program is a partnership among Delmar Gardens, the Missouri Job Center–St. Louis County, and STL Training. The apprentices train in a skilled nursing setting to gain valuable hands-on experience and receive a nationally recognized credential to support furthering their career pathway in healthcare. For more information, visit [www.STLtraining.org](http://www.STLtraining.org).