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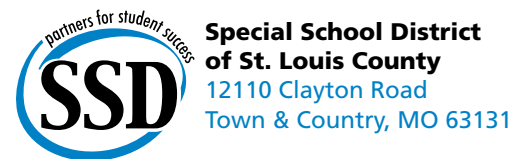
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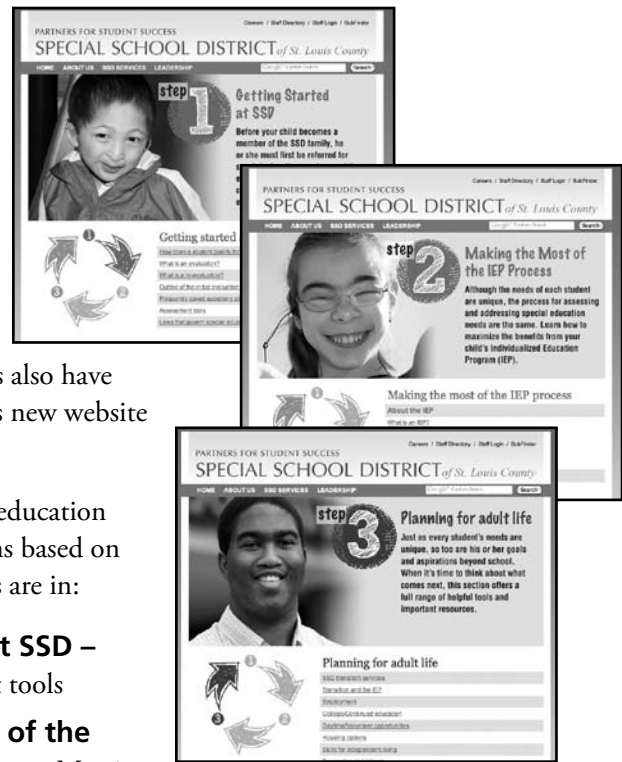
# A step in the right direction

Each student has unique needs addressed by the IEP. Families also have specific needs, which is why SSD's new website offers such a variety of resources.

Steps 1, 2 and 3 cover the special education journey, broken down into sections based on which stage of the process families are in:

- **Step 1: Getting started at SSD** – Featured resource: Assessment tools
- **Step 2: Making the most of the IEP process** – Featured resource: Meeting evaluation checklist
- **Step 3: Planning for adult life** – Featured resource: Checklist for the first 21 years

Find your path at [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org). ■



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 6, 2010

## Consider Yourself...Impressed

In a recent production of "Oliver!," Normandy High School junior Ashley Brown had a piece of advice for the title character: "Go home...you little brute!" Granted, it was just one of her character's two lines in the musical production presented by Variety Children's Theatre. But Ashley, an SSD student and member of the cast ensemble, sang and danced to several familiar tunes, including "Consider Yourself At Home."

However, anyone who knows Ashley will tell you she does not follow the advice of her character.

Along with her growing theater résumé, Ashley finds time away from home to participate in sports, dance and chorus. She is also an active member in the St. Louis 4-H Urban Youth Development program.

Ashley insists all of her extra-curricular activities count as "down time" for her because it allows her to "spend the time with my family and friends."

In middle school, Ashley received her first taste of the theater, playing Shug Avery in the musical cabaret of "The Color Purple."

It comes as no surprise that Ashley enjoys performing on stage — it runs in her family. Her older sister, Amber, is an aspiring actress in Los Angeles, and checks in regularly with Ashley to see how her stage work is coming along.

"She taught me everything I know," Ashley said. "She gives me advice on what to do up there."

Amber, 25, is a graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, and does work on stage as well as behind the scenes.

Her big sister's advice came in handy as Ashley took part in her first Variety Children's Theater production last fall, serving as the assistant costume director for the production of "Tom Sawyer." After that, she earned her spot on stage in this year's ensemble for "Oliver!" "My goal is to audition for more productions," Ashley said. "(I always say) 'Don't be afraid to do what you want to do in life.'"

Along with acting on stage, Ashley is the full triple-threat. She performs as a dancer and singer, too. She is a member of the dance ministry team at her church, and she's participated in the Variety Children's Chorus.

So what does Ashley do during those rare times she actually is at home?

"She does chores, like anyone else," her mother, Michelle Mitchell, says. "We don't treat her any differently because she uses a wheelchair."

But Ashley expresses less interest in her chores and more concern with her other at-home activity. "I'm a big gamer," she admits. "I would love to pursue making graphic designs for video games." So much so, she is considering gaining these skills at DeVry University's gaming degree program after finishing high school.

Ashley has been a "Variety kid" since she was three years old, receiving all the equipment she needs, including several wheelchairs, over the years.

Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis assists more than 1,350 St. Louis area children by providing them with medical

equipment that empowers them to be physically independent. It also conducts a number of inclusive programs such as theater, chorus, camps and field trips.

Along with her stage work with Variety, Ashley has been an active soccer player for the past five years with The Disabled Athlete Sports Association. This summer, Ashley and the DASA Firecrackers made it to the national championship in Indianapolis. But that's not the only place her talents have taken her.

Performing with the Variety Children's Chorus, Ashley made a memorable trip to Washington, D.C., to perform at the White House.

However, it's still unclear how much Ashley remembers from the performance.

"Well, I kind of fell asleep on stage," Ashley said.

"It was such a hectic trip, and we did so much traveling to get there, by the time they hit the stage, Ashley was just out," Mitchell explained.

With as much as she does, it's hard to blame her for catching a much-needed nap. ■

Ashley Brown, right, participates in a dress rehearsal for her ensemble role in "Oliver!"



SID HASTINGS

# Scholarship, Campership Deadlines Approaching Quickly

With the school year approaching the halfway point, many students are already making plans for when the school year wraps up. Summer jobs, time with friends and trips to the park are popular choices.

Many graduating seniors, however, are preparing now for post-secondary education. And it's no secret that the cost of schooling is rising every year.

To help deserving SSD students offset the costs of college and camp tuitions, SSD and other organizations, including the Special Education Foundation (SEF) and the Bonhomme Lions, provide opportunities for scholarships, camperships and other awards.

"The impact of scholarships on the students and their families is significant," said SEF Executive Director Diane Buhr. "It gives a student a great sense of accomplishment to be selected as a scholarship recipient, it aids in self-esteem and provides a very good financial start for the first year of college."

Each reward is unique, and has its own history and special requirements.

Scholarships and camperships will be awarded at the Commitment to Kids Awards Banquet on April 28, 2011.

## Scholarships:

### SSD Board of Education Scholarship

Established in 2008, the SSD Board of Education honors graduating SSD students who show strong leadership skills as well as a dedication to volunteerism and community involvement. For the 2010-2011 school year, the SSD Board will reward two students who demonstrate these skills and who plan to attend college or post-secondary institutions. Visit [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 18, 2011.*

### Bonhomme Lions Scholarships

The Bonhomme Lions, longtime supporters of education in the St. Louis area, have been providing scholarships to graduating SSD students for many years. Visit [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 18, 2011.*

### Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship

Established in 2008, this scholarship was created to honor an aspiring teacher who lost her battle with cancer in 2007. The scholarship is awarded to a deserving SSD student who has an interest in working with children. Visit [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 18, 2011.*

### Special Education Foundation Scholarships

The Special Education Foundation (SEF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of students with disabilities within the St. Louis area. Each year, SEF awards scholarships to college-bound SSD students.

Winners for the award are selected based on multiple criteria. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 28, 2011.*

### Laura K. Sherman Laughlin Scholarship

This scholarship honors the memory of Laura K. Sherman Laughlin and pays tribute to her life and to the many lives that she touched. The scholarship is presented to a deserving student who has sustained a brain injury or brain-related disability, including cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 28, 2011.*

### Dianne Arbeiter Scholarships

Given in memory of Dianne Arbeiter, a 25-year SSD employee, these scholarships are awarded to students who are served by the deaf/hard of hearing program of SSD. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 11, 2011.*

## Camperships:

### Sammy Goldman "Living Big" Campership

Given annually to a child with special needs, the "Living Big" Campership is given in tribute to the life of Sammy Goldman. Sammy, whose life ended at age five, is remembered for his zest for life and "living big." Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is March 11, 2011.*

### Dianne Arbeiter Camperships

Through the Dianne Arbeiter Fund, selected SSD students who are deaf or hard of hearing are provided tuition to enable them to attend summer camps. Campership winners are based on several criteria. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is Feb. 11, 2011.*

### Stages St. Louis Access the Arts Campership

In partnership with Stages St. Louis, this campership offers assistance to students who wish to participate in the performing arts. Access the Arts is specifically designed to make participation in musical theater arts accessible to students with special needs. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and application form. *Deadline is Feb. 11, 2011.*

### C.J. Aubuchon Campership

This campership, given in honor of C.J. Aubuchon who lost his battle with cancer, is presented to a student who exemplifies C.J.'s qualities of kindness, caring, humor and courage. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for more information. *Deadline is Feb. 10, 2011.*

### Special Education Foundation Camperships

The Special Education Foundation's mission is to assist students with disabilities to achieve success in their endeavors beyond the classroom. One of the ways it carries out this mission is by providing tuition to enable students served by SSD to attend summer camps and other instructional and/or recreational camps. Visit [www.sef-stl.org](http://www.sef-stl.org) for complete details and an application form. *Deadline is April 18, 2011.* ■

Students and staff at Neuwoehner School in Town & Country put in a paved pathway to make the new school sensory garden accessible to all students. The project was managed by students in the Boot Camp program at Neuwoehner. This program helps to develop leadership skills by pairing students of various disability levels

together to assist one another. The project was funded by a Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant. ■



## FEATURED resource

The Wolfner library is a library service free to anyone in the state of Missouri who is unable to use standard print materials due to a visual or physical disability. Equipment is provided free of charge. The library collection consists of more than 360,000 volumes of books in non-print formats (digital, cassette and Braille) on a broad range of fiction and non-fiction subjects, for all ages. For more information, visit [www.sos.mo.gov/wolfner](http://www.sos.mo.gov/wolfner). ■

## North Tech Assistant Principal Named One of 30 Leaders in Their 30s by North County Inc.

Jim Hieger, assistant principal at North Tech, was named one of 30 Leaders in Their 30s by North County, Inc. This group of up-and-coming professionals and volunteers who are making a difference in the North County area were recognized at the NCI Salutes 30 Leaders in their 30s reception on Sept. 25.

Hieger is in his third year as assistant principal at North Tech. Prior to working at North Tech, Hieger worked for Special School District in a different capacity. He began his career as a special education teacher at Hazelwood West High School, eventually serving as the special education team leader for three years. Hieger was promoted to area coordinator for SSD students in the Hazelwood School District, where he was responsible for the supervision of the special education program for 650 students.

Hieger constantly seeks out professional development to further develop his skills and serves on a variety of committees to enhance the school environment. His committee involvement has focused on important educational issues, including closing the achievement gap and supporting special education students in the least-restrictive environment. He also is a leader in parent involvement at North Tech, serving as the administrator for the North Tech parent organization.

North Tech principal Mike Powers, describes Hieger as essential to the success at North Tech. He says his whole demeanor helps him create effective partnerships with parents, students, teachers, administrators and the community. ■

