



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 6, 2012

## Taking Learning to New Heights

For a week this fall, a group of students with visual impairments and their SSD teachers took their learning to new heights by venturing outside the classroom. Way outside.

Three SSD teachers and 11 students who receive services from SSD traveled to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., in September to participate in the Space Camp for Interested Visually Impaired Students (SCIVIS).

The weeklong camp, coordinated by teachers of the visually impaired from throughout the United States, features accessible, hands-on activities using state-of-the-art simulators and mission hardware. Many adaptations are available to allow students with visual impairments to participate fully, including Braille and large-print materials, lamps and magnification devices.

Students learn about teamwork, leadership and decision making in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math. Living in a group setting with other students away from home also allows participants to increase their independence and skills in Braille reading, daily living, orientation and mobility, said SSD teacher Alexis Moore.



Damon Tyson

"I think the students benefit in so many ways," Moore said. "They are able to meet other students from around the United States and the world who may have the same or similar visual impairment. Some will cry, overcome fears, mature, exhibit leadership qualities and most, if not all, will establish friendships for life."

Aryana Dread, a fifth-grader who receives SSD services at Townsend Elementary in the Hazelwood School District, helped lead simulated missions as a flight engineer and a mission scientist. She relished meeting new people and learning about space exploration.

"This was the first time I ever traveled away from home for a week without my mom or dad or two brothers," Aryana said. "I learned that even though I am blind, it doesn't mean that I can't be successful in school or in life. I just need to work harder to achieve my goals."

Damon Tyson, an eighth-grader at Hazelwood East Middle School, said he especially enjoyed interacting with other attendees during the dance at the end of the program and serving as the leader at Area 51, where camp participants worked together to create a bridge.

"Damon showed terrific leadership and problem-solving skills, and really grew socially," said Bonnie Lenz, Damon's SSD teacher. "This was the first time he had been around other kids with visual impairments and it was like leveling the playing field for him."

Students from SSD have been going to space camp since 2006. Lighthouse for the Blind-St. Louis pays all expenses for students and chaperones to attend. ■



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*– Aryana Dread, student*



Student Kiara Miller and SSD teacher Bonnie Lenz at space camp.



Northview students Kourtney Edwards, Artie McCulley and staff member Stephanie Strickland attend a pizza party for students earning Student Hero Awards.

# Northview Receives Celebrity Treatment in Nation's Capital

Entertainers, politicians and athletes are accustomed to adoring fans and cheering crowds. But when a group of Northview High School teachers and staff showed up in Washington, D.C., to attend the National Forum on Character Education, they were surprised by the reception they received.

"It was amazing," said Northview Principal Stephanie Valleroy. "Everyone there knew us. They knew all about us when we walked in. We were treated like celebrities."

The reason for the rock star treatment was because Northview was named a National School of Character earlier this year. More prestigious than an Emmy or an Oscar, just 24 schools in the country earned such an honor. And the forum in Washington, D.C., could be compared to the Super Bowl for character educators.

Along with receiving their official award and banner there, the forum gave Northview staff the chance to meet with other award-winning schools from across the country.

"We brought back lots of ideas from talking to people from other schools there," said Northview teacher Cris Bushway. "Things like making sure we're giving students more voice in their school."

At Northview, having a voice is much more than speaking. Throughout the school, whether students speak, use a communication device, picture symbols, sign language or communicate in another way, everyone is a part of the Northview family.

"Everyone has a voice and a choice," said Northview student Alexis Thomas.

Northview will hold the title of National School of Character for five years. However, the staff and students have no plans of resting on their laurels now that they've reached the highest award.

"The amazing thing is that this is just the beginning," said Northview teacher Cindy Janoski. "Our character education initiative will continue to grow and evolve just as it has done every year. New staff and students will come on board and bring new life and new ideas to the table."

"It's exciting to go to a school of character," said student Monte Moore. "I get to help people when they need help and it makes people good students."

"The student success has started to grow within the community," Janoski said. "Part of our plan for the future is to involve our parents and community partners as active participants in this process."

With the national accolades the school has earned, those at Northview now look to keep the highest standards within the community and beyond as they spread the importance of character education.

"I like to represent Northview," said student Brianne Thomas. "I try to keep a good and positive attitude. I learn more about character traits so I can do something more with my life."

When asked how she shows good character while at school, Terianne Adams repeated her classroom mission message: "The sky is the limit to achieving our personal best." ■

**"It's exciting to go to a school of character. I get to help people when they need help and it makes people good students."**

*— Monte Moore, student*

From left, Northview student Chris Tomblin, teacher Cindy Janoski and student Keegan Baker sit in front of a mural that promotes positive character at their school.



Northview staff members present the school's National School of Character banner.

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS: THE HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTION

With support and training from SSD, schools throughout St. Louis County are using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, or PBIS, to create positive learning environments where all children can find success.

PBIS strategies incorporate campus-wide routines, expectations and rules as part of a proactive approach to managing potential problem behaviors. These expectations extend to all areas of the school day, from the classroom to the playground and the bus.

But PBIS is not just for schools — the routines that students learn from PBIS in school can carry over to promote positive behavior outside of school.

Parents can play an influential role within the PBIS framework by becoming involved within the school setting and making connections at home.

*Here are some examples of ways to help:*

- Review the PBIS materials sent home with your child.
- Volunteer at lunch or bus times to supervise and acknowledge expected behavior.
- Join the PBIS leadership team at your child's school.
- Volunteer at PBIS-related school activities, such as schoolwide celebrations.
- Collaborate with the school PBIS team on the development of your child's individual plan to ensure academic and social success.

The PBIS matrix that students follow at school can also be adapted and used to outline expectations for behavior at home. See the example above. ■

TEACH	GETTING UP IN THE MORNING	GETTING TO SCHOOL	HOME-WORK TIME	MEALTIME	GETTING READY FOR BED
<b>H</b> Help Out	MAKE YOUR BED	BACKPACK READY, LUNCH	PUT THINGS IN FOLDER WHEN FINISHED	SET TABLE, CLEAN UP	BRUSH TEETH, DIRTY CLOTHES AWAY
<b>O</b> Own Your Behavior	GET UP ON TIME, GET DRESSED	BE READY TO LEAVE ON TIME	DO YOUR BEST WORK, START ON TIME	USE KIND WORDS	GO TO BED ON TIME
<b>M</b> Manners Count	TRY A MORNING SMILE BE PLEASANT	"THANKS FOR THE RIDE" OR "HAVE A NICE DAY"	KINDLY ASK FOR HELP "THANKS FOR THE HELP"	PLEASE AND THANK YOU GO A LONG WAY	END THE DAY WITH NICE WORDS AND THOUGHTS
<b>EVERYDAY</b>					

### PBIS RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

**SSD PBIS Compendium:** <http://pbiscompendium.ssd.k12.mo.us>

**State of Missouri PBIS:** [www.pbissmissouri.org](http://www.pbissmissouri.org)

**Illinois PBIS:** [www.pbisillinois.org](http://www.pbisillinois.org)

**For more information, contact SSD:** Lisa Powers, Ph.D.

Phone: 314.989.7808 Email: [lpowers@ssdmo.org](mailto:lpowers@ssdmo.org)

## SSD Staff Earn Honors

- Four SSD teachers recently received 2012 Emerson Excellence in Teaching Awards. Each year, Emerson presents the awards to about 100 teachers across the St. Louis metropolitan area for their role in shaping students' lives.
  - **Christine Haberberger**, Oakville Elementary in the Mehlville School District
  - **Margie Holly**, Jackson Park Elementary in the University City School District
  - **Cheryl Mulkey**, McKelvey Elementary in the Parkway School District
  - **Tammy Topp**, SSD's Litzinger School
- **Jeff Chandler**, a counselor at SSD's North Technical High School, recently earned a Leader in Education award from Peabody Energy. He developed a program that partners with businesses to incorporate mentoring to students for future employment. He also partners with other North County high schools to create a College Night where parents and students can preview colleges, universities and post-secondary opportunities.
- North County Inc. recognized **Krista Sherman**, a social worker at North Technical High School, as one of the "30 Leaders in Their 30s." The annual award recognizes up-and-coming professionals and volunteers making a difference in North County.

## Board of Education

- **Dr. Jim Westbury**, Board President  
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**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 every student's success

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

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## NEWS FROM SSD



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## THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN STUDENT SUCCESS

On behalf of SSD and the more than 25,000 students we serve, I would like to thank our communities for their support of Proposition S. This investment in student success will allow SSD to continue to provide quality special education services to children with disabilities and cutting-edge career and technical education to students throughout St. Louis County.



Visit [www.ssdmo.org/prop\\_s\\_thanks.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/prop_s_thanks.html) to view a video thank you message featuring several of our students.

I invite you to stay connected with SSD via our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SSDStLCo](http://www.facebook.com/SSDStLCo) and our website at [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org). Thank you for your continued support for SSD and its mission.

John Cary

Superintendent, Special School District of St. Louis County