### 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

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

**Board of Education**

- Dr. Jim Westbury, Board President
  jwestbury@ssdmo.org
- Dr. Dan Cue, Board Vice President
  dcune@ssdmo.org
- Dr. Zella Williams, Board Secretary
  zwilliams@ssdmo.org
- Dr. Ken Eigenberg, Director
  keigenberg@ssdmo.org
- Ms. Jan Goodman, Director
  jagoodman@ssdmo.org
- Mr. John F. Kooper, Director
  jkooper@ssdmo.org
- Ms. Marilyn Stewart, Director
  mstewart@ssdmo.org
- Mr. John C. Cary, Superintendent
  jrcary@ssdmo.org

**Superintendent**

Dr. Zella Williams
jkoeper@ssdmo.org

**Director**

Dr. John F. Koeper
jkoeper@ssdmo.org

Ms. Jan Goodman
jagoodman@ssdmo.org

Ms. Marilyn Stewart
mstewart@ssdmo.org

Mr. John C. Cary
jrcary@ssdmo.org

**Board Secretary**

Dr. Dan Cue
mstewart@ssdmo.org

**Town & Country, MO 63131**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**

**PERMIT NO. 1282**

**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**

**ST. LOUIS, MO**

**NEWS FROM SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY**

**SPECIAL EDITION**

Issue 3, 2012

---

### South Tech, Washington University students COLLABORATE ON PROJECT FOR STUDENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

**Students at South Tech, Washington University students Usage MPS Awareness Day**

**The Color Purple = Courage**

Kindergarten students celebrate MPS Awareness Day

**MPS** is an acronym that most people are not familiar with. However, for one family, these three letters carry an indescribable weight. SSD student Danica Boni was diagnosed with MPS at a young age and has undergone a variety of treatments and surgeries in her short five years of life to combat the disease. MPS (Mucopolysaccharidoses) is a group of metabolic disorders caused by the absence or malfunctioning of enzymes that help build bone, cartilage, tendons, cornea, skin and connective tissue. The result is permanent, progressive cellular damage, which affects appearance, physical abilities, organ and system functioning, and in most cases mental development.

“We wanted to celebrate the courage it takes to face this disease and allow the importance of appreciating differences. Purple was our theme, if the day because purple is the color of courage,” said Danica’s parents Jason and Kelli Boni.

The Bonis spearheaded an MPS Awareness Day May 15 at Hills Ferry Elementary in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. The event included a school-wide announcement about MPS, followed by a book reading with the entire kindergarten class and a purple balloon release. The books covered specifics about MPS and about appreciating differences in others.

“We hope to raise awareness of MPS, and shine a bright light on all our MPS families and their collective portraits of courage,” said Jason and Kelli Boni.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MPS, PLEASE VISIT: www.mpssociety.org**

---

**SPECIAL EDITION**

**South Tech, Washington University students COLLABORATE ON PROJECT FOR STUDENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY**

Students at South Tech and Washington University students worked together to create a portable device designed to bring physical therapy to young patients. The project was developed by South Tech students as a response to the needs of students with cerebral palsy.

**In addition to getting help with building their prototype, the Washington University students received feedback about how to improve their design from a manufacturing perspective.**

“We’re really grateful for everything the students have done with us,” Phillips said.

Troubleshooting the design gave the South Tech students plenty of practical experience as well, according to Arcipowski.

“Problem solving is a big part of what we do,” he said.

Kyle Webster, one of the South Tech students who worked on the Flex2Play prototype, said the project offered the chance to get the kind of real-world experience that fits his career interests.

“I’ve always liked building things from nothing, really,” he said.

The design trio credits their project mentor, Washington University occupational therapy professor Dr. Jack Engberg, for posing the initial design challenge. He worked with the team throughout the year and will continue to work on developing the Flex2Play after the students graduate, including filing a provisional patent application.

---

**TOP:** Nick Boyd, a student in South Technical High School’s precision machining program, works on the prototype of the Flex2Play device.

**MIDDLE:** Krist Nalu, a student in South Technical High School’s precision machining program, works on the prototype of the Flex2Play device.

**BOTTOM:** Washington University students (from left to right) Kelly Hill, Amanda Meppelink and Liz Phillips designed the Flex2Play as part of their senior year design project in biomedical engineering.

---

**The Color Purple = Courage**

Kindergarten students celebrate MPS Awareness Day

**MPS** is an acronym that most people are not familiar with. However, for one family, these three letters carry an indescribable weight. SSD student Danica Boni was diagnosed with MPS at a young age and has undergone a variety of treatments and surgeries in her short five years of life to combat the disease. MPS (Mucopolysaccharidoses) is a group of metabolic disorders caused by the absence or malfunctioning of enzymes that help build bone, cartilage, tendons, cornea, skin and connective tissue. The result is permanent, progressive cellular damage, which affects appearance, physical abilities, organ and system functioning, and in most cases mental development.

“We wanted to celebrate the courage it takes to face this disease and allow the importance of appreciating differences. Purple was our theme, if the day because purple is the color of courage,” said Danica’s parents Jason and Kelli Boni.

The Bonis spearheaded an MPS Awareness Day May 15 at Hills Ferry Elementary in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. The event included a school-wide announcement about MPS, followed by a book reading with the entire kindergarten class and a purple balloon release. The books covered specifics about MPS and about appreciating differences in others.

“We hope to raise awareness of MPS, and shine a bright light on all our MPS families and their collective portraits of courage,” said Jason and Kelli Boni.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MPS, PLEASE VISIT: www.mpssociety.org**

---

**SPECIAL EDITION**

**South Tech, Washington University students COLLABORATE ON PROJECT FOR STUDENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY**

Students at South Tech and Washington University students worked together to create a portable device designed to bring physical therapy to young patients. The project was developed by South Tech students as a response to the needs of students with cerebral palsy.

**In addition to getting help with building their prototype, the Washington University students received feedback about how to improve their design from a manufacturing perspective.**

“We’re really grateful for everything the students have done with us,” Phillips said.

Troubleshooting the design gave the South Tech students plenty of practical experience as well, according to Arcipowski.

“Problem solving is a big part of what we do,” he said.

Kyle Webster, one of the South Tech students who worked on the Flex2Play prototype, said the project offered the chance to get the kind of real-world experience that fits his career interests.

“I’ve always liked building things from nothing, really,” he said.

The design trio credits their project mentor, Washington University occupational therapy professor Dr. Jack Engberg, for posing the initial design challenge. He worked with the team throughout the year and will continue to work on developing the Flex2Play after the students graduate, including filing a provisional patent application.

---

**TOP:** Nick Boyd, a student in South Technical High School’s precision machining program, works on the prototype of the Flex2Play device.

**MIDDLE:** Krist Nalu, a student in South Technical High School’s precision machining program, works on the prototype of the Flex2Play device.

**BOTTOM:** Washington University students (from left to right) Kelly Hill, Amanda Meppelink and Liz Phillips designed the Flex2Play as part of their senior year design project in biomedical engineering.

---

**The Color Purple = Courage**

Kindergarten students celebrate MPS Awareness Day

**MPS** is an acronym that most people are not familiar with. However, for one family, these three letters carry an indescribable weight. SSD student Danica Boni was diagnosed with MPS at a young age and has undergone a variety of treatments and surgeries in her short five years of life to combat the disease. MPS (Mucopolysaccharidoses) is a group of metabolic disorders caused by the absence or malfunctioning of enzymes that help build bone, cartilage, tendons, cornea, skin and connective tissue. The result is permanent, progressive cellular damage, which affects appearance, physical abilities, organ and system functioning, and in most cases mental development.

“We wanted to celebrate the courage it takes to face this disease and allow the importance of appreciating differences. Purple was our theme, if the day because purple is the color of courage,” said Danica’s parents Jason and Kelli Boni.

The Bonis spearheaded an MPS Awareness Day May 15 at Hills Ferry Elementary in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. The event included a school-wide announcement about MPS, followed by a book reading with the entire kindergarten class and a purple balloon release. The books covered specifics about MPS and about appreciating differences in others.

“We hope to raise awareness of MPS, and shine a bright light on all our MPS families and their collective portraits of courage,” said Jason and Kelli Boni.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MPS, PLEASE VISIT: www.mpssociety.org**
Musical With A Message: 
Litzsinger students perform show that promotes autism awareness

Students at Litzsinger School recently harnessed the power of music to teach their peers and the community about students with autism.

Litzsinger was one of four schools in St. Louis County chosen to partner with Stages St. Louis and VSA Missouri on a performance of “No Such Thing As Normal,” an educational musical about autism. Litzsinger’s production on May 8 marked the first time the musical was performed by an entirely special education population.

“No Such Thing As Normal” was originally created by VSA Missouri, a statewide organization promoting access to the arts for people with disabilities. The show’s plot focuses on a group of students on a school field trip to the National History Museum and their reactions to Josh, a fellow student who has autism.

The songs, lyrics and dialogue intertwine facts about autism throughout the musical. In the production, Josh is never seen on stage. He is always moving ahead of the rest of the students to the next exhibit.

Litzsinger’s cast featured students with singing and speaking parts, and students also helped create props for the performance.

Rob Grumich, director of education and outreach for Stages and Katie Hayes, one of the organization’s teaching artists, worked with the Litzsinger cast weekly for several months. Cast members learned about acting, being on stage and taking on the roles of creatures like dinosaurs and fish that appear throughout the show.

“They’ve developed a great rapport with the kids,” said Litzsinger music teacher Paula Berner, who also rehearsed with students during class time. “I’m seeing things that I didn’t know that these kids could do.”

The collaboration with Stages has resulted in one of Berner’s students getting the opportunity to take private voice lessons through Stages’ Access the Arts program.

“It’s a great connection to have,” Berner said. “This show is a great way to reach the community about what autism is and I think it’s such a positive message to send to everyone that really, none of us are ‘normal.’”

Character Counts:
Northview High School recognized for excellence in character education

Character education forms the foundation for everything that happens at Northview High School, and now the school is getting nationwide recognition for its efforts.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) recently named Northview as a 2012 National School of Character.

Northview, one of five special education schools operated by Special School District of St. Louis County, is one of 24 schools and one school district being recognized nationwide in 2012. It is the only one of five schools honored in the St. Louis metropolitan region that serves an entirely special education population.

Each year, CEP selects schools and districts that demonstrate through a rigorous evaluation process that their focus on character development has had a positive impact on academic achievement, student behavior, and school climate.

“We have a committee of staff members that have really adopted character education in our school through in-services, promotion, facilitation and professional development,” said Northview Principal Stephanie Valleroy. “It’s such a wonderful feeling for others to see what our students, staff and parents do. It’s because of them that we’re able to win this award.”

Character became a primary focus at Northview in 2002 when the school’s Club of Character formed. Those efforts have continued through events like the quarterly Hero Luncheon. Peers nominate classmates by giving examples of actions that show good character. The winners are escorted from class to the luncheon and honored with a badge to wear.

National Schools of Character honorees serve as models for other schools, helping them to achieve the same results.

“You hear so much about school problems these days that it’s great to focus on schools that work,” said CEP president and chief executive officer Mark Hyatt. “These schools went through a very rigorous evaluation process and we are thrilled to recognize their achievements and tell their stories.”

Earlier this year, Northview was among 12 schools from the St. Louis metropolitan region to earn distinction as a 2012 Missouri School of Character before advancing to the national level for review.

CEP will honor the 2012 National Schools of Character at the National Forum on Character Education, to be held Nov. 1-3 in Washington, D.C. At the ceremony, Northview will receive a National School of Character award, banner, and a small grant to help with outreach efforts.

For more information about CEP and the National Schools of Character program, visit www.character.org.