

MSBSD INSIDE

“...developing citizens for a global society by inspiring students to think, learn, achieve, and care.”



By Richard Carter, “My drum shows the balance between humans and nature, the predator/prey relationship, and also shows the respect that Native Alaskans have for animals and the land.”



By Hattie Schmidtkunz, “My drum represents happiness. The raven symbolizes the trickster personality, which is very entertaining.”



By Rochelle Wilderness, “My drum represents the balance between man and nature.”



By Hannah Emrick, “My drum tells the story of Jonah. The symbols represent parts of the Bible story which tells to have faith in God.”

PHS — IB ART,
researching Native Alaskan drums

Palmer High School IB (International Baccalaureate) art teacher, Shelli Franchowiak, describes her students’ work:

“Palmer High School students enrolled in International Baccalaureate (IB) visual arts created the drums after researching traditional Native Alaskan drums. Each drum tells a story.

To make the drums functional, airplane fabric is stretched tight over a wooden hoop. The fabric is then tightened further using an iron. The weave of the nylon fabric is sealed with polyurethane, and air is no longer able to pass through the fabric. The result is a good sounding drum.

Symbolic imagery is added to the drum heads by using colored inks, paint markers, and permanent markers. To make the drum handles, basswood is carved using hand tools or power tools. The handles are both functional and symbolic. Some of the artists used found objects attached as a handle.”

Funded by the Rasmuson Foundation through the Alaska State Council on the Arts, the IB students will be visiting the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage. Students will have the opportunity to learn about Native Alaska culture and learn to play their drums. While at the Center, they will also learn traditional dances. The trip is part of the Excursion Grant Program of the Rasmuson Foundation.



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MSBSD Inside

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 For story ideas and features, submit using the
 Media Submission Form (available online)

MSBSD STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

MSBSD Student Advisory Board was approved by the School Board on November 19, 1979—this group now has a long history of working with the School Board. The purpose of this Board is: *To advise the School Board of the needs and wants of the students.*

Tony Jensen, Wasilla High School social students teacher, is Advisor, Dr. Susan McCauley, MSBSD Director of Education, Supervisor. His second year as Advisor, Jensen has the SAB off and running with committees and student ideas for improving the climate and involvement of Mat-Su students in the 43 schools. (Jensen is pictured upper right with Middle school representatives).

Working in teams of middle and high schools, the students break out into committees which focus on wellness, recycling, and student learning areas such as exploring more foreign language offerings and upper-level electives at schools. The wellness and recycling projects have been in the works for a few years—both include projects across the District and specific to school sites.

In November, Elizabeth Ripley met with the SAB and discussed wellness and opportunities available through the Mat-Su Health Foundation (pictured right).

Dr. McCauley says, “These are thoughtful, hard-working students who bring very good ideas to the table.”



One new area for the SAB this year is in building and school maintenance. **District Operations & Maintenance Facilities Coordinator, Don Carney**, discussed ways students may tackle their projects such as “adopt a classroom” or “adopt a hallway”. Carney laid out a plan where students may become trained in District cleaning procedures and discussed implementing their ideas of helping out the building custodial crews. (See photos left)

MSBSD STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD at work



SUSITNA VALLEY JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Opening for classes, January 4, 2010—First Look with First Graduating Class/Class of 2010



A SENSE OF PLACE

By Wrynn Johnson, WMS Art Teacher

The Wasilla mural recently installed at Wasilla Middle School was made by students—beginning during their 6th grade year and continuing through 8th grade.

The lesson began with one class of 6th graders as a unit on “sense of place.” As the guiding force, the student chose to focus on Wasilla—their hometown and sense of place. The students also decided they wanted to demonstrate their growth in learning with a final project—a mural about our town.

We began by taking a walking field trip around the school and took photos of all of the buildings and places that the students felt were a significant part of “Wasilla.”

After choosing a specific building, place, or person from our brainstorming list, each student researched the

importance of that building, the place, or the individual. Sharing their findings with the class, the history of Wasilla came alive.

Using the photos and the historical knowledge about each building, place, and person, the students began to draw their mind’s view of place onto the tiles. After the images were drawn, the students rolled out clay and traced their drawings onto the slabs. Finally, the tiles were arranged as geographically accurate as possible, and filled in with broken and decorative shards.

Students learned that they have a “place” in their town. After becoming more informed about Wasilla’s history and importance, they were excited to share what they had learned with the rest of the school and the community.

PLACE



Mat-Su artist, Gail Moses, with WMS art teacher, Wrynn Johnson



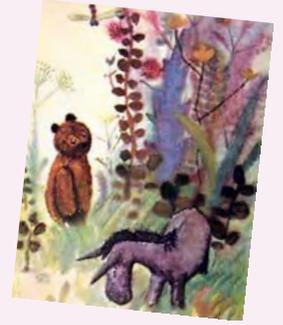
WASILLA MIDDLE SCHOOL ART



MAT-SU SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

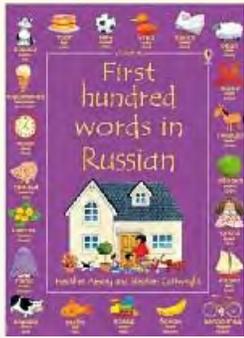
Locally funded grant helps purchase Russian school books

by Paul Morley, Language Arts Teacher, Burchell High School



One of eight \$250 mini-grants recently awarded by the Mat-Su Schools Foundation went to Goose Bay Elementary School for purchase of books in Russian language. Funding was provided with matching support from Knik-Goose Bay Elementary PTA, and Goose Bay Elementary School principal, Brooke Kelly, to serve some sixty Russian speaking children and others interested in exploring Russian language and culture. Mat-Su Schools Foundation president, Linda Conover, presented a check to teacher/grant applicant, Cherie Koss, at an October 28 staff meeting.

The grant money will help purchase picture dictionaries, Russian folk tale books, language primers, and story books with school and family based themes. Some are bilingual, facilitating comprehension by non-Russian speakers. Among the 50 books to be purchased are, *First Hundred Words in Russian*, *Winnie-the-Pooh (R & E)*, *Tales by Rudyard Kipling (with CD)*, and *Russian Magnet ABCs*.



Purchase of the Russian language books will serve several goals. One is to encourage and support Russian speaking children in the Goose Bay community by providing educational materials and by encouraging pride in their cultural heritage. Another is to

provide elementary materials for non-Russian speakers that may be interested in Russian culture and language. School wide, the books will help promote cross-cultural awareness.

The Mat-Su Schools Foundation is a non-profit organization which provides grants twice a year (Fall and Spring) as part of its mission to, "maintain and enhance extraordinary educational opportunities for students and staff of the Matanuska Susitna Borough School District." A total of eight projects were funded during the most recent grant cycle.

Mat-Su Schools Foundation grants have funded a wide range of educational opportunities including Lego Robotics, weather station equipment, a Shakespeare performance, Native drum and Kuspuk making, Project Ocean participation, and a Sealife Center visit.



ELL teacher, Cherie Koss, with English-language learners



The Foundation Board of Directors:

Dr. Deena Paramo, Assistant Superintendent of Education, says that serving on the board of the Mat-Su Schools Foundation is a *new passion* for her. "The core purpose of the Foundation is to raise money and distribute it for the betterment of schools," she explains. Dr. Paramo outlined the goals of the Foundation in a Mat-Su Borough School District Board Meeting, and said, "The goals include: fundraising, board development and public relations." Working for Mat-Su schools through the Foundation, Dr. Paramo said, "The mission is to acquire and distribute resources that maintain and enhance extraordinary educational opportunities for students and staff of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District."

In addition to Dr. Paramo, long-time supporters and School District employees sit on the Board of Directors for the Foundation, and include:

Linda Conover, President Barbara Shogren, Secretary Bob Doyle, Treasurer
Dan Kennedy Katie Conover Pat Purcell Linda Menard Paul Morley Robert Hall



Matanuska-Susitna Schools Foundation





Matanuska-Susitna Schools Foundation

Other grants for Mat-Su Schools:



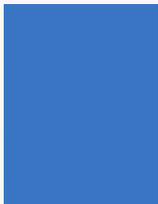
Houston Middle School—teacher/grant applicant,

Roy Stone, art:

\$250 grant for instructional and informative video productions

Students will participate in planning, filming, and editing videos that inform others about current events, past events, special interest stories, and provide detailed instructions or teach valuable intrapersonal or academic skills.

These videos will be posted on the District Web site and benefit the thousands of community members, students, School District staff and support personnel.



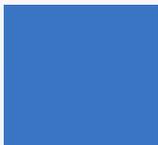
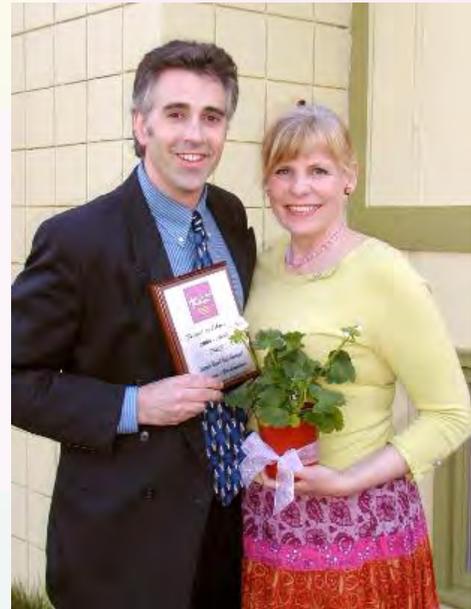
Houston Middle School—teacher/grant applicant,

Brandy Bishop, language arts:

\$250 grant for Edgware Theater Company production of a Shakespearean play at HMS

The goal is to add enrichment to our students, and support our curriculum. A high percentage of our students are considered “at-risk”. Many Shakespearean characters are “at-risk” and they suffer from insecurities, poverty, greed, fear, anxiety, and social position. The characters embody the human spirit and the human condition. “Shakespeare speaks for us and to us today.”

(Pictured at right—Paul Schweigert and Elizabeth Ware, Edgware Theater Company)



Houston Middle School—teacher/grant applicant,

Leland Fishback, Special Education:

\$250 grant for Weather Recording System

The weather recording system would be installed outside the school building and provide students with the instruments for measuring daily current weather conditions, using math and other skills.

The measurements we wish to record include: average wind speed and direction, temperature, snow and rain fall amounts, and barometric pressure readings.

This project will add “real life” application to our daily math classes at HMS.



Further information about the foundation may be obtained at www.matsuschoolsfoundation.org.

MSBSD FEDERAL PROGRAMS—FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

Dave Rose, Coordinator

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. By providing for students a source of stability and normalcy, the District supports academic achievement and mental and emotional security for students.

The District's **Families In Transition Program**, Dave Rose, coordinator, focuses on raising community and District awareness of student need while providing essential school and home services. Academic Tutor, Deb Price, is also assigned to assist Mat-Su students. Serving upwards of almost 500 students, Rose has held public awareness meetings during October and November.

One school organization participating in providing life essentials

for Mat-Su students is the Business Professionals of America (BPA) Chapter at Colony High School.

BPA Advisor, Jane Bulovsky, reports, "We donated personal and school supplies to Families in Transition. Members contributed donations throughout October and November. These students, along with Palmer Jr/Middle School students, also help out with the Mat-Su Special Santa Program under the direction of Mari Jo Parks through the umbrella of Alaska Family Services.

The 45 BPA students made Christmas cards—50/100 individual greetings—to be delivered to the Palmer Senior Center. Bulovsky and her students will personally deliver their cards and greet the residents.

There are many ways that District employees, students, and community members may assist Federal Programs Families in Transition.



What can you do to help?

For details, contact Dave Rose at 746-9228 or email at david.rose@matsuk12.us. Also log on to the District Web site, Federal Program Department and find helpful answers and links to more information.



MSBSD SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITIONS



Colony High School champion cheerleaders — cheering their way to their 5th straight first place win and 12th championship overall



MSBSD School Board President, Colleen Vague (shown right) congratulates Glacier View School as Title I Distinguished School for Alaska. Accepting the certificate on behalf of Glacier View School is Claudia Berkley, teacher (pictured left). Wendy Taylor is principal.



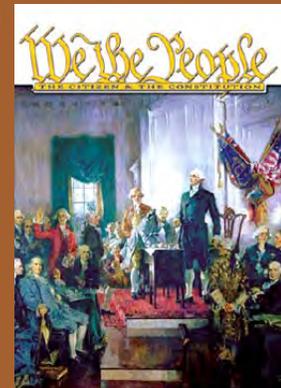
Palmer High School FFA students with teacher, Don Berberich National winners at 82nd Annual Convention, Indianapolis



We the People THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION



We the people—the Citizen and the Constitution is a civic education program designed to promote civic competence and responsibility. For its third year in the competition, Wasilla High School placed 4th in the State overall.



Wasilla High School "We the People" team—4th Place Overall

COLONY HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERS CLUB

By Shawn Arnold, Teacher/Advisor



Photo Credit, Shawn Arnold, CHS. L to R: Dawnn Charles-Vannasdoll, Ashley Baker, Kendal Lacy, and Avery Smith

When Colony High School Partners Club students stepped onto the lanes at North Bowl for the Special Olympics Alaska Southcentral Unified Bowling Tournament on November 13, 2009 it felt just like home to them. Partners Clubs Bowlers traveled from Anchorage schools to compete against Wasilla, Palmer, and Colony High School's Partners Clubs.

Bowlers representing the eight schools competing were grouped into four-player teams for team competition. Each team was comprised of two Special Olympians and their partners, which helps carry the message of friendship and camaraderie. The amazing thing is only a few weeks old, Colony High School won their first competition!

Partners Club is a unique Special Olympics Alaska sponsored, school-based program that teams students with and without intellectual disabilities through sports training and competition. The club also offers social and recreational opportunities.

"I'm so glad we started this club," said Shawn Arnold, the CHS Partners Club advising teacher. "The smiles on the faces of the athletes and the overwhelming human kindness surrounding this event are priceless. Watching these athletes come out to compete continues to reinforce what our Special Education department endeavors to do."

"There's so much enthusiasm you don't find in peers our age," said Partners Club student President Dawnn Charles-Vannasdoll, a senior. "It totally helps you put your life in perspective."



MAT-SU CAREER & TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL to Costa Rica, with Tim Lundt, Teacher (Photo credits: Tim Lundt)

Reporting to the MSBSD School Board...

In Costa Rica, there is a saying for the good life, "Pura Vida." It was that good life that 14 students from Career & Technical High School experienced, along with teacher, Tim Lundt.

Through hands-on science activities, including work at the Serafin Turtle Station with the endangered leatherback turtles, and at the Sloth Rescue Center. Located just north of Cahuita, Costa Rica, the center is the only one of its kind in the world focusing on the rescue of three-toed and two-toed sloths.

With the leatherback turtles at Playa Grande, Mr. Lundt explained, "Students were able to collect the eggs from one leatherback turtle—100 plus eggs—and relocate the nest." Students learned how this project protects the turtles from poachers and predators.

During the trip, the group observed 57 leatherback turtles hatching. "Students weighed and measured the hatchlings, and then released them into the ocean," explained Mr. Lundt.

At the sloth rescue center, students learned that rehabilitating rescued orphaned and injured sloths is an important part of the center's work. There is even a "Slothpital" to help the wounded and hurting heal. Working with the sloths for more than 16 years, the center's founders and operators began with one orphaned three-fingered sloth whom they named Buttercup. Rescued after the 1991 Limón earthquake, Buttercup was the first rescued.

Lundt said, "Many students didn't want to come home and want to return to Costa Rica." He said, "As well as learning about the rainforest and animals, students had a great time interacting with the locals."



Pacific Ocean



Venado Cave Exploration



Zipline through cloud forest of Moteverde



Sloth Rescue Center



Endangered leatherback turtle



KNIK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

on stage... Lenora Davis, music teacher



MAP testing...



in the classroom...

