



TRITON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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From the office of Dr. Sandra J. Halloran

News of the Week September 3, 2009

Summer 2009!

Jen Dubis was juried into the Cambridge Art Association and had three pieces of artwork hanging in Harvard Square. Her work was also part of the Marblehead Arts Festival for the second year in a row and Jen won three ribbons in the Greater Lynn Arts and Crafts Society Show. Jen also did art work for the C&C Lobster Co. in Peabody. In her “down time,” Jen became certified in Total Body Strength Training through AAI/ISMA and began teaching a muscle class at her local YMCA.

Jacob Sydney went to South Africa this summer where he studied the country's culture and history at the University of the Western Cape, walked above clouds, swam with Great White Sharks, and had lunch swiped by a baboon! Jacob collected great lessons to bring back for his students. The program was done through the National Endowment for the Humanities (www.neh.gov), which has summer institutes for all teachers from 1-6 weeks, with sites throughout the U.S. and the world - highly recommended by Jacob!

Jambo, Jambo everyone! (hello in Swahili)

This summer **Fran McConnell** had a wonderful opportunity to travel to Kenya on a two week mission trip with the organization, “Kupenda (Swahili for love) for the Children.” This tax-exempt organization focuses on helping disabled children in Kenya through such things as: child sponsorship programs, construction of classrooms and boarding facilities, provisions of medical supplies, funding of corrective surgery, workshops for therapists and teachers, provision of aides for classrooms, and so much more.

Over 10% of Kenyans are disabled and only 10% of that population attends school in a country where the average income is less than \$2.00 a day. Sadly, disabled Kenyan children are often stigmatized and view as “cursed”. This stigma causes some Kenyan parents to lose sight of the value of educating disabled children, to ostracize them,

leave them on the road as beggars and in extreme cases--to kill them. Kupenda's mission is "to help correct these misconceptions by demonstrating that these children can lead the full and happy lives that God intended for them." Throughout the course of her trip she wrote in a daily blog, <http://kupenda4thechildren.wordpress.com/page/2/> creating an online journal of sorts, detailing the various activities and experiences of the Kupenda trip.

Fran was the only special needs teacher to have ever visited this area of Kenya with Kupenda. They were very happy she was coming. They asked her to give a two day workshop on writing IEPs to over 30 teachers from 17 schools. She also worked in their schools helping the teachers with curriculum, teaching them how to use the materials she brought as well as classroom management techniques since some of the classes had more than 20 disabled students in them of all different levels and ages ranging from 4 to 26. Some of the disabilities in the classes were: cerebral palsy, loss of limbs, and developmental delay. There was also a very large deaf population because they do not have antibiotics to treat infections. "In many ways," Fran stated, "it was like being transported back in time almost one hundred years and that although they have great challenges to overcome the important thing is that life is better for these children than it was and that slowly but surely, with our help, they are moving forward."

With that being said, one of the ways we can help is with materials. They have so very little. The children use rocks and bottle caps for counting and do some paper and pencil and chalkboard work. They can use consumable workbooks in reading and math, manipulatives, books, art supplies, etc. on a preschool to about a 5th/6th grade level. Fran has indicated that she would be happy to pick up anything you would like to donate, just let her know. There are some people going to Kenya in January and another group in June and they will bring everything in spare suitcases. You can also donate money, sponsor a child or maybe even make a trip to Kenya. The website is: www.kupenda.org. Fran has seen firsthand that YES, we can make a difference in the lives of these children and teachers. Kwaheri (goodbye),

Kathy Harris, Administrator of Special Education, was selected to participate in this year's 2009 Special Education Leadership Academy in Ashland, MA. She was selected by a joint committee of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and ACCEPT Education Collaborative representatives to attend the Academy. This nine day Institute teaches proactive leadership skills to new special education administrators to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Through a series of workshop sessions led by outstanding faculty, facilitated mentoring groups, on-line coaching, outside assignments and a workshop binder filled with useful materials, participants form a Professional Learning Community (PLC). This Professional Learning Community provides a supportive environment to assist participants with implementation of IDEA and the myriad highly complex tasks and challenges they face.

Sharon Riordan wrote and presented one-woman theatre pieces about pioneer women from various regions of the country. She focused on women from Glacier National Park's history and did two shows out west this summer. Sharon was recently selected by the Park Service to be a Centennial presenter for next summer when GNP celebrates its 100th birthday - a very big deal as presenters were chosen from a large international pool!

Colleen Poulin's family will be going up for their black belts the day before Thanksgiving. They need to pass one more milestone and then test for their black belts in November. It is very rare that five people from one family become black belt candidates at the same time!

Janice Kovach and Martha Sterrett chaperoned 14 Spanish students to Costa Rica for 10 days from June 22-July 2. Among the places visited were Monteverde, the Arenal Volcano, Jaco Beach and Manuel Antonio Park. Students participated in a wide variety of activities including, kayaking, horseback riding, ziplining, planting trees, visiting an elementary school, and whitewater rafting. Students had many opportunities to speak Spanish and everyone had a wonderful time. Based on the positive attitudes of the students and their families, they would love to visit and see other parts of the country and are hoping to take more trips in the future.

Colleen Murray's family took part in the Fresh Air Fund for a week this summer. They hosted two disadvantaged children from the Bronx and shared all sorts of fun experiences like boating, biking, the beach and backyard camping with their visitors. The nine year old girl visited with them last summer and could not wait to return this year to a place where she felt safe playing outside and had access to plenty of fresh food, two things she doesn't experience at home. Colleen says that this program also helps her children appreciate many things they have grown accustomed to, and brings a bit of diversity into their lives. They cannot wait to invite the same children back next summer. Colleen learned about this program from NES teacher Leah Peicott, and would love to answer any questions you may have if you would consider opening your home next year.

Barbara Cyr spent six days in the lakes region of Cambria in Lamplough, England visiting her sister. She also went to Edinburgh, Scotland and then spent four days in London.

Erik Champy was a delegate at both the National PTA Convention in Fort Lauderdale and at the NEA Representative Assembly in San Diego. After his commitments, Erik traveled to Palm Springs, Washington DC, Madrid, Munich, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, and Salzburg. Among his travels, Erik had the opportunity to meet Cece Penniston and Kelly Clarkson. He ended the summer by enjoying a week on Martha's Vineyard with friends.

Kara Purdie attended the "Star Trek" convention held in Las Vegas in August. She had a great time meeting stars from several of the TV series and movies. Kara also got some autographs! "It was a very interesting social scene, to say the least." She had a fantastic week and broke even at the tables!

The NES faculty is adopting 6+1 Writing Traits in grades K-6. Sylvia Jordan, Betsy Boulanger, and Lisa Oliver attended the Northwest Regional Laboratories' three day 6+1 Traits training in New York City during August. The training they received will be used to provide professional development for the NES faculty in the Traits.

The 21st Century Learning Centers program at TMS has joined our SES 21st CCLC sister program in attaining Exemplary status! This means that funding will be continued for three more years and the program will serve as a model for 21st Century programs across the state. We will be responsible for mentoring others and presenting our **Triton programs** at state and national conferences, workshops, etc. for "Best practices."

Talented and Gifted News:



This summer Donna attended at the University of Connecticut, where she heard an inspiring Keynote address by Marcia Gentry, an expert in cluster grouping and academic progress. Three strands she attended were: *LIGHTING THE SPARK AND AWAKENING THE DORMANT LEARNER: COMBINING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND SEM; MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES OF TALENTED BOYS; and TECHNOLOGY UNTANGLED.* Each of these courses presented easily adopted strategies for making learning more active and engaging to a broad spectrum of students. A new resource offered at *Confratute* is the "ning" which is an online interactive tool that allows Donna to access everything from the summer's offerings. It's an amazing resource that she is beginning to explore and looks forward to sharing. Brian Housand, presenter of

Technology Untangled, gave a two day workshop at Triton on August 18 and 19. Classroom teachers from kindergarten through high school, computer specialists, and special educators attended this informative and inspiring event. Many Triton teachers will be returning to the classroom with a new perspective toward technology.

New Brides!

Kate Anderson of NES is now Ms Kate Arsenault.

Paige Ribaud of TMS returns as Ms. Paige Ribaud-Smith.

Morgan Welch of PGS is now Ms Morgan (Welch) Boselli.

New Babies!

Shauna Magee gave birth to **Marin Rose Magee** was on July 1, 2009.