

Transportation/Nursing partnership nets national attention

The results of a partnership between the Harford County Public Schools Transportation and Nursing Services departments has been published in a national publication.

The article, outlining the use of Medical Alert Cards, was published in the November 17 edition of *Transportation Studies and Disabilities*, a publication of an independent national news service for Special Education transportation. It details the local program that provides information for bus drivers regarding any allergies students might have, as well as those students which have or may need to use Epi-Pens for allergic reactions.

According to Transportation Department Supervisor Paul Hawkins, in March 2004, Coordinators of HCPSS Nursing Services Rose Reisman and three school nurses — one from high, middle, and elementary — met with several school Transportation officials to address the issue of notification to bus drivers and attendants of those students with medical conditions that required special seating considerations and other driver instructions. Judith Swerman, the school nurse from Aberdeen High, created the medical alert cards, which was implemented at the start of last school year, Mrs. Hawkins said.

"The Transportation Department also wanted to provide in-service training for our school bus drivers and attendants in the area of amphetamine checks and the use of Epi-Pens and Epi-Pen Junior," she said. Mrs. Hawkins. "A PowerPoint presentation was created by the Transportation staff and shown to all bus drivers and attendants at the August 2004 school meeting prior to the 2004-05 school year."

All new drivers and attendants who would be required to transport a child with a potential need for the allergic reaction devices receive one-on-one training from school nurses.

"We feel Harford County Public Schools is on the cutting edge in providing this training to our drivers and attendants," said Ms. Hawkins. "The program was made possible by a collaborative effort between Student Services and Transportation which sends all students being transported on school buses in Harford County."

The article in *Transporting Students with Disabilities* points out that elementary students carry their Epi-Pens in a box which is given to the bus driver who carries it to the child at the end of the student's bus ride. Older students are permitted to carry the devices, according to Mrs. Hawkins.

Joppatowne/CMW high schools share 'Character' awards

Local schools honored for their 'Capturing Kids' Hearts' initiative

Two Harford County Public high schools, sponsored by more than 175 males and significant demographic differences, are sharing in the 2005 Harford County Schools of Character by virtue of a plan aimed at "Capturing Kids' Hearts" rather than punishing them for misbehavior.

Joppatowne and C. Milton Wright high schools use contingencies of these administrators, teachers, and students to the Transition Programs in Baltimore County on Thursday, December 1st, to pick up Harford's "Character School" awards for 2005. Awarded by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Character Education program, the honor is extended to those schools which demonstrate outstanding efforts in building positive relationships among their students, faculty and administration.

Joppatowne and C. Milton Wright high

schools earned the award in recognition of a \$21,000 grant they received from MSDE earlier this school year that will pay for 25 sixth grade and special area teachers from each school to attend a three-day seminar either in March or August concentrating on developing strategies to use as students' voluntary buy-in to positive values.

The "Capturing Kids' Hearts" is an award-winning program that provides instruction to teachers and school administrators in ways to demonstrate to students that adults at their school only care about the long term success of each student. The 24-hours of instruction, provided by the Harford County consulting firm from College Station, Texas.

C. Milton Wright has a minority student enrollment under ten percent while, at Joppatowne High, more than 35 percent of the student body is minority. In the presence of C. Milton Wright High's student majority, school-related pride took hold, while more than a fourth of the Joppatowne enrollment practices free or reduced priced meals — the federally accepted definition of poverty levels.

Joe Collins, assistant principal at Joppatowne High who formerly held a similar job at C. Milton Wright High, and Chris Battaglia, current C. Milton Wright High assistant principal, had worked together in creating a sixth grade Morning Transition Program when they worked together at CMWHS. The initiative concentrates on building a bridge for the assimilation of freshmen into high school in large part with the help of selected students who have demonstrated strong character and compassion for their fellow students. The effort has been wildly successful at C. Milton Wright with freshmen discipline referrals plummeting and school climate improving steadily.

Ms. Collins, now in his second year at Joppatowne High, has been instituting a modified program at the southeastern Harford school with similar early results.

"Joe and I attended the 'Capturing Kids' Hearts' seminar and were the guest principal together for many that would allow our sixth grade teachers to get the training," said Mr. Battaglia. "They are designing a contractual special seminar just for teachers at our two schools on August 8, 9, and 10 where most of the teachers from our schools will be trained — about five from each school will go to an open enrollment training in Harford County."

The seminar is intended to provide

educators with strategies to build relationships with students. "We can get to their heads if you don't have the personal relationship of ones," said Mr. Battaglia of the program which concentrates on building a "special contract" between teacher and student. "C. Milton Wright and Joppatowne serve very different (student) populations, but the program will work in both."

Meanwhile, Mr. Collins said the merits of the grant and the students' Character School commendation from MSDE indicates a new beginning for both schools. "I think we can build upon the beginning we've made in helping our sixth graders through our efforts with character education as part of a professional learning community," he said, noting that freshmen at Joppatowne currently dominate anti-social discipline referrals at his school. Just as they did last year ago at C. Milton Wright High prior to the implementation of the morning program. Superintendent Jacqueline C. Harpless. "Your plan includes the Character Development and will training for Conflict Resolution that I feel are so important to our system," Dr. In revere to Mrs. Battaglia and Mr. Collins. "It is essential about the potential for this plan to send significant and lasting changes in school climate and provide our next generation of educators with the skills to make each of our students successful."

At the December 1st awards, "Character School" honors were awarded to 34 Maryland public schools and seven private schools. Only four other high schools — in addition to Joppatowne and C. Milton Wright — received "Character School" awards.

"It was interesting that all the other schools' projects for which they received 'Character' awards were focused on kids — that's something we really care about," said Ms. Battaglia. "We're going our (grant) money into our staff, giving them ways to impact students — that's something we can control."

Ms. Battaglia pointed to a simple example of confounding a student who is exhibiting negative behavior. By asking him or her five questions — "Who are you doing when you are supposed to be doing it that when you are doing what you are going to do next time and what is going to happen if you do this again?" — responsibility for the student's action is transferred to the student.

But, he emphasized, the present results only if the implementation of the initiative is truly concerned about the student's well being.



FVS AP SCHOLARS — Thirty-three Fellows High School (FHS) students have earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program (AP) exams. The Advanced Placement Program offers students the opportunity to take challenging college-level courses while still in high school, and to receive college credits, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on the AP Exams. Pictured, left to right, are FHS senior Nevasia Markelovic, Melissa Dixon, Ranyia Kashi, Benjamin Amos, and FHS guidance counselor Sarah Sullivan. (Not pictured, James Marx and Allison Swearingen).

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been in the back of my mind."

That's where a collaboration with his old Towson University band mate, Brian H. Folan, now band teacher at Bal Sea and Joppatowne elementary schools, began to take shape.

"Three years ago I took a summer course on instrument repair and a couple of years ago offered an in-service course to our music teachers," said Mr. Folan, who also is director of the Harford South Orchestra. "That's when Bob approached me about his idea."

The "idea" grew into a campaign to seek donations of old and less usable instruments that the two music educators could rehabilitate and make available to needy students at area schools. Mr. Powers disabled the others "Band Together" and set out to make his dream a reality.

This year June, he held his first instrument donation day at the Harford Mall where he handed about 17 or 18 instruments in various kinds of shapes. Now, he has received over 50 instruments — mostly woodwinds, but also brass, trumpets, and trombones. On his own time, with the help of Mr. Folan, he has begun the arduous task of cleaning, waxing, and putting the instruments back into working order. Some have been so neglected that they've had to be sent out to a commercial music rehabilitation center to be reconditioned. Others are so far gone that they are being cannibalized for parts.

One of the instruments have already found their way to students who are happy using them to make music.

"I have to tell you, I feel like Santa Claus," said Mr. Powers, 48. "I've said, if just one kid is successful in buying, by using an instrument that 'Band Together' has collected, reconditioned, and made available to him or her, it makes it all



FIX-O-BEAR — Bob Powers, left, and Brian Folan appear to be playing a game of tag with an old instrument. Actually, the two are attempting to get the tube to re-attach after years of the instrument left unattended. The two former college band mates at Towson University are collaborating in the 'Band Together' effort aimed at rehabilitating old musical instruments and putting them in the hands of youngsters.

worthwhile."

Mr. Powers explained that school principals at Harford County Public School, Music Supervisor Jim Beards knows of a student whose family has a financial need but who has a desire to play an instrument. Mr. Beards informs Mr. Powers, and the attempt to match reconditioned instrument with enthusiastic students begins.

"Our intention is to give the instrument to the student and let him or her use it as long as they are in school or until they give one of it to a low income," said Mr. Powers. "As that time, the instrument would be returned and we will recycle it into the hands of another student."

Mr. Beards, who has headed the local school

system's music program for eight years, said the "Band Together" effort is one of the most laudable he has witnessed in his career as a teacher and administrator. "These two teachers are giving the opportunity to many more students to play an instrument who otherwise would not be able to," he said. "It demonstrates how much music teachers care about the students in our school — I'm very proud Mr. Powers and Mr. Folan have taken on this challenge and dedicated so much of their personal time to seeing it through."

Music legend and former Bal Sea High Band Director Ray Dombrowski recently donated an original instrument to the cause.

"People can bring the instruments in to any

(Harford County Public) school music teachers," said Mr. Powers. "We're accepting donations to help us pay for the reconditioning of these instruments which are beyond our capabilities."

He said monetary donations can be made by writing a check to "Harford County Public Schools," placing "Band Together" on the memo line, and sending them to Bob Powers at Emmons Elementary School, 2502 Village Road, Bal Sea, MD 21014.

"If we can repair dozens of old and off the instruments, we'll do it," said Mr. Powers. "If someone has an instrument their child might have played in school and it's here in their basement for years while they tried to figure out what to do with it, this would be a good way to get rid of it."

The longtime music educator said a receipt will be given to those making the donation as the kindred of this school in which the donation made no firm him at Emmons Elementary School. "We can do approach, deconstructing the value will have to be up to the person making the donation," he said.

Mr. Folan said the new "Band Together" committee will hold its next place on Saturday, April 22, at the spring Harford South Orchestra concert to be held at the Anne Arundel Center in Harford Technical High School (2003 p.m.).

"It's the kind of thing where a musical instrument in the hands of a child can give joy to that youngster and, we're sure, it will help him learn in other classes," said Mr. Folan, 47.

Mr. Powers said if the donations overwhelm him and Mr. Folan's ability to recondition them, he'll figure out a way to meet the challenge. "It's one of an amazing line we put together to giving these instruments away," he said. "If it's the day happens, it will be a pleasant problem to deal with."

For more information on "Band Together," contact Mr. Powers at Emmons Elementary, 410-638-9520.