



Northwest Missouri School Counselors Association

Counselors Helping Counselors

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

▶ 2015 Scholarship Recipient Announced - Pg. 2

▶ Call for Governing Board - Pg. 3

▶ Counselors of the Year Announced - Pg.3

▶ Drug Trends and Our Students - Pg. 5

April 2015



Presidential Perspective

Glenda Fine
NWMSCA President

What Are You Looking For?

Let me begin with an apology. Yes, I was a high school language arts teacher before becoming an elementary school counselor, so I know I should not end my sentence with a preposition. But, I really want to know – *what are you looking for?* As the school year comes to an end and thoughts of summer vacation and relaxation begin to stir, where is your focus? What ideas are consuming you?

My intent in asking is not to further overwhelm you with thoughts of MAP and EOC testing (online nonetheless – which raises a whole new set of issues), or scholarship applications, credits (or lack thereof), ACT scores, class rank, warm weather recess issues (and, let's face it – after-recess smells), scheduling and placement dilemmas, or summer school plans. My intent is to help you think about what you're looking for – because whatever it is, you're bound to find it. Have you heard

— Continued on Page 2 —

Congratulations 2014-15 Retirees

by Sandy White, Emeritus Co-chair

Spring is here and that long awaited day – RETIREMENT DAY – will soon be here! You have earned every bit of your retirement with the dedication you have given to your students, schools, community, and Missouri education. Kick back, relax, and enjoy!!

Some of you have plans to travel, spend time with family and friends, pursue interests that have been put on the back burner, or work in another field. Whatever it happens to be, NWMSCA wishes you well and congratulates you on a job well done as you begin another chapter in your life.

However, we do not want to lose contact with you. It would be greatly appreciated if you would email either of our Emeritus chairpersons, Sandy White: slwhite_64429@yahoo.com or Debbie Fite Benitz: debbiefitebenitz@sjsd.k12.mo.us with your name, home address, email as it will be after retirement, and best phone number to reach you.

Thank you and best wishes!

Norm Gysbers to Retire

The "Father of Guidance," Dr. Norm Gysbers, is retiring! Several counselors got together at the NWMSCA Spring meeting to make a quick video as a thank you for all of his amazing work and longtime dedication to the school counseling profession. Thank you to all who helped with that, and look for that clip along with many others to be shown at the MSA Fall Conference.

2015-2016 NWMSCA Slate of Officers

The Slate of Officers for the 2015-16 open positions was presented to the membership at the Spring Meeting and was unanimously approved. Congratulations to the following individuals:

DeeAnna Kelley – Secretary

Karrie Engel – Secondary Vice President

K'lea Steeby – Middle School Vice President

Perspective . . .

— Continued from Page 1 —

the story about the vulture and the hummingbird? These two birds fly over our nation's deserts: large birds that thrive on carrion - dead things – the vultures; and tiny birds that thrive on new life - hummingbirds! Although different in size and looking for very different life sustenance, both birds are able to find what they are looking for!

Isn't the same true for us? Have you ever sat at the back of a faculty meeting – where the naysayers are? Before you know it, your feelings may begin to drop and your own doubts and negativity begin to rise. When we focus on the negative – it seems to multiply and can be all-consuming. But, don't forget about those quick, little hummingbirds. They focus on beauty – and they find it. Their work is still difficult, but when they set their eyes on splendor and magnificence, they discover it. And the same is true for us. Positives attitudes are contagious. When we become intentionally aware of all the good around us, we can find it everywhere. Although we will still need to deal with all the stressors mentioned earlier, we can do it with a smile and a happy heart. Because we are professional school counselors!

Not only are we able to choose what we're looking for and how we look at and deal with situations, but we are also fortunate enough to be able to help our students learn to do the same. All year we've talked about Breaking Barriers and Instilling Hope. One of the greatest sources of hope we can give anyone else is to help them learn to see hope even when it seems all hope is gone. One method for doing this is by the example we set daily. Be the positive voice – be the hardworking hummingbird that focuses on finding the beauty in life. Enjoy your work and thrive in it. What you are doing matters so much. Your students – regardless of what age level you work – are counting on you. So are their parents. So is the staff and administration. Rather than allowing this awesome responsibility to negatively consume you, face it with hope and thanksgiving. Just as the busy, beautiful hummingbird flaps its wings 70 times per second, so you will sometimes feel you are in constant motion. Remember **why** you are doing this. If necessary, adjust your focus. So, again, I ask you – *what are you looking for?* I hope it's something beautiful.



Helping **O**ther **P**eople **E**xcel



Recognition of **Past President, Shelly Vertin**, with K'Lea Steeby and Karrie Engel.

2015 Scholarship Recipient Announced

by **Lorraine Bowers, Scholarship Co-chair**

The NWMSCA Scholarship for 2015 was awarded to **Alyssa Shifflett**. Alyssa is currently in the NWMSU Counseling Program. She is also employed with the St. Joseph School District as Benton High School's College and Career Specialist. Alyssa works closely with the other Benton Counselors helping students with various scholarship opportunities, teaches the College 101 classes, and collaborates with district counselors creating other college and career programs. Congratulations to Alyssa Shifflett!

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Counselors of the Year and Advocate of the Year Announced

by K'Lea Steeby, Professional Recognition Co-chair

The Northwest Missouri School Counselor Association recognized **Rhonda Peterson** (pictured at left) from West Nodaway School as the NWMSCA Counselor Advocate of the Year on February 12, 2015. Rhonda is a paraprofessional at West Nodaway and was nominated by West Nodaway counselor Lori Snead.



There were three NWMSCA Counselor of the Year Awards given at the Spring Meeting on March 20, 2015.

Amy Adkins (pictured at left) was selected as the NWMSCA Elementary Counselor of the Year. Amy is the counselor at Carden Park Elementary School in Saint Joseph, Missouri.

Jenni Van Winkle (pictured at right) was recognized as the NWMSCA Middle School Counselor of the Year. Jenni is the counselor at Smithville Middle School in Smithville, Missouri.



Corrine Allee (pictured at right with her family) was selected as the NWMSCA High School Counselor of the Year. Corrine is the 7-12 Counselor for the West Platte School District in Weston, Missouri.



***Congratulations to all of our Counselors of the Year!
You make us proud!***

Call for Governing Board

by Laura Shelton, NWMSCA President-Elect

If you have ever wondered how our great organization operates, a way to find out is to join the NWMSCA Governing Board for 2015-16! We have a few positions available for next year and would love to have some new faces come aboard. We certainly do some valuable work, but we also have a great time! Governing Board is a wonderful group of people just like you. Many years ago, someone challenged me to join and I am so glad I did! It has been a great opportunity to grow my leadership skills and to get to know some fantastic counselors. If you are interested and have not filled out a form stating this, please contact Laura Shelton at lshelton@savannahr3.com.

In addition, if you know of any school counselors who are not part of our great organization, please encourage them to join NWMSCA. Our membership trend has actually been down, and we fear there may be some school counselors out there who are not even aware that NWMSCA exists! There may be some who do not know why they should join. Please advocate for our great organization- let counselors know we have great PD opportunities and the networking we do can be so valuable in this challenging occupation!

Thank you and I hope to see YOU on our NWMSCA Governing Board and a continuing member of this organization! Have a great rest of the year and a wonderful summer!

Games Collected

A big thank you goes out to everyone that donated a new board game for next year's conference project- Cherish Kids. We collected about 10 games at our NWMSCA Spring Meeting! There will be another opportunity to donate at our NWMSCA Fall Meeting next year, so keep an eye out for those sales this summer!

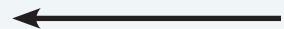
Vicky Ward was the
Guest Speaker at the
Spring NWMSCA Meeting.



2014-15 NWMSCA
Governing Board Members



Counselors and
Administrators
having fun
with the photo
booth at the
Administrator's
Breakfast



Drug Trends and Our Students: Know What's Out There!

by Laura Shelton, NWMSCA President-Elect

Vicky Ward, Prevention Manager at Tri-County Mental Health in Kansas City was the speaker for our Spring NWMSCA meeting. If you missed this event, you missed out on some crucial and frightening information. Some main points Vicky covered were as follows:

- Kids are driven by three main factors to experiment or use drugs – perception of risk/harm, perception of availability, and perception of acceptability.
- Kids have alarming access to many drugs, such as alcohol-infused whipped cream/ice cream, over-the-counter products like energy/downer drinks, medications, even lazy cakes (relaxation brownies).
- Kids also have alarming access to prescription drugs. Many parents are not aware that kids can get these and abuse them, and therefore they are easily accessible.
- The younger a person is when they start using, the more likely they will abuse.
- Products are targeted towards our youth – especially tobacco products.
- Marijuana is a growing problem due to the social acceptability and the much higher potency than back in the 70's.
- There is no regulation on many products and kids can easily access them in smoke shops and gas stations.

Vicky reminded us that we need to be aware of the products our kids may be accessing, and to educate them that these things are harmful to their bodies and how. She also pointed out that many parents have no idea that these products even exist. Kids can be using drugs right in front of their parents (such as the alcohol-infused whipped cream) and the parents do not even realize it. Kids are also taking products to school because many mimic regular products (powdered alcohol in a water bottle looks like a bottle of water infused with any common powder like a "Crystal-Lite" packet). Many e-cigarettes look like a pen and school personnel are not even aware that they are actually holding a product that is not allowed on school property.

In summary, be aware of the many temptations and easy access kids have to drugs. Stay on top of the types of products that are being sold in your community. Be watchful of the things kids are talking about and educate parents about the dangers of so many of the products being sold that are not regulated. NWMSCA was very glad to have such a fantastic speaker who truly opened our eyes to the sad truth about the drug trends of today.



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