

## Be the Change



by Mary Glovak, MTSA President

Welcome back MTSA members! We have all started this school year facing challenges that, in some cases, we

thought we would never see in our careers. I was recently looking for a quote to add to my email at work. I kept thinking, "What statement do I want to send with my messages this year?" I searched the word "change." Change was the word that kept coming to my mind as I thought about this upcoming year. Everything that we have known has changed, will change, or is going to change again. I found this quote by Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the world". We as MTSA members, transition professionals, and as persons who care about our students making the "transition" to the adult world can "be the change."

One thing that we know will not change this year is the needs of our students. In our MTSA community and as Transition professionals, we must look to each other for strength, resourcefulness, and creativity in supporting students. Our professional community brings a wealth of information and expertise to the table. We must stand together to be the best professionals that we can be in order to "be the change." We must continue to persevere in giving our students our best. As our students face unique challenges every day, so will we. In the world of Transition, we often "think outside of the box." This school year, we will all be looking at new, different, and creative ways to keep doing good things to help students be successful.

The MTSA Board is excited about providing some new ways to reach out to support you. We have been working hard to "think outside of the box."



- We have formed a technology committee to look at ways to support members through our website and resources such as wikis and podcasts.
- MTSA will be sponsoring our first book study! We will be looking at the book, *Universal Design for Transition, A Roadmap for Planning and Instruction* by Colleen A. Thoma, Ph.D., Christina C. Bartholomew, Ph.D., & LaRon A. Scott, M.Ed. (ISBN 978-1-55766-910-0). Look for more information in the next couple of months.

Our MTSA Board is excited about this years conference theme, "Universal Transition." As students move to more inclusive environments, embedding transition activities into content expectations becomes challenge. Finding the time to provide students with transition activities that are crucial for success can be frustrating and difficult. MTSA is looking forward to exploring new ways to support our membership and the Transition community.

In closing, I am not sure that any of us have all the right answers at this moment. Let's stand together. We know that there is strength in numbers. "Be the change that you want to see in the world." Gandhi

## Index

### Association News

- President's Message.....1
- C. David Anderson Award Nomination.....3
- Board Nominations.....4
- Upcoming Conference Information.....5
- Regional Reports.....6
- MTSA Mini-Grants.....8
- 2010-2011 Board Contacts.....11

### Standing Features

- Program Spotlight.....2
- Check It Out.....3
- MRS Honors John Mans.....9
- TIC Talks.....10



# Program Spotlight

## Eleven Students Graduate From First Annual Project SEARCH

by Jim Samsel, Monroe County ISD and Lori Eshenroder, Project SEARCH Instructor

Monroe County Intermediate School District (MCISD) and Mercy Memorial Hospital System (MMHS), in collaboration with Hope Network; Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Development (DELEG, a. k. a. Michigan Rehabilitation Services); and Monroe County Mental Health Authority (CMH), celebrated eleven graduates from their first annual Project SEARCH program at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led transition program designed for students with developmental disabilities. The vocation-oriented program targets students in their last year of school whose main goal is the development of competitive, marketable, and transferable skills leading to employment and who will benefit from career exploration and training. The cornerstone of the one-year program is immersion into the Mercy Memorial Hospital System, which serves as the host site for the program.

In the program, students learn employment-related job skills while participating in three, ten-week worksite rotations that prepare them with the essential job-specific skills needed to gain and maintain meaningful employment. Individualized job development and placement occurs based on each student's experience, strengths, and skills.

Two of the eleven graduates were hired within MMHS. One has entered training in the culinary program at the Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI) in Plainwell, Michigan. The remaining eight graduates continue to receive job-related support through Hope Network, MRS, and CMH.

Nine MCISD students are currently participating in this year's program. Our first open house for this year is scheduled for October 26, and prospective candidates for the class of 2011-2012 program will be invited.

Lori Eshenroder, Project SEARCH Instructor, was asked to contribute to the MTSA newsletter. Following is her report of the first year of Project SEARCH:

*As instructor, being a part of Project SEARCH has been an amazing experience! In fifteen years of teaching, I can never recall a time when I looked forward to each day with eager anticipation of what lies ahead, and I close many days with a*

*sense of satisfaction on behalf of my students. A significant part of the success of the program is the total immersion the interns have with interagency and hospital staff in the training environment of MMHS. I even have experienced physical reactions in the form of facial soreness from smiling so much and goose bumps at least once a day.*

*Our first hire took place in January. Upon hearing the news, the excited young man hugged me and picked me up off my feet. People at surrounding tables shed tears. The excitement and energy of being a part of the MMHS family was as strong on the last day of school as it was on the first.*

*I have the privilege of watching my students transform from students into interns and then, into ready and able candidates for employment. Where possible, interns have found independent means of transportation, have moved out on their own availing themselves of interagency support, and, in one case, has earned a driver's license. They have realized that they do not need to remain in school until the age of 26, they do not have to live at home forever, and most importantly, they can balance what they earn with SSI benefits or perhaps, exceed that amount.*

*MMHS managers and mentors have stepped forward to recognize the change in atmosphere they observed as the Project SEARCH program stepped down for the summer and the positive impact they look forward to for this year.*



Project | SEARCH

## Win a Free 2012 MTSA Conference Registration

The 2011 MTSA Annual Conference Committee is looking for Poster Session displays. We welcome all individuals, schools, and agencies to share their innovative programming and materials, particularly those that embody the spirit of "Universal Transition", this year's Conference theme.

Registration begins October 18, 2010, and can be accessed by going to the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com). A panel of judges will determine one display that excels and award that lucky registrant a free 2012 MTSA conference registration. So start designing and remember to register!

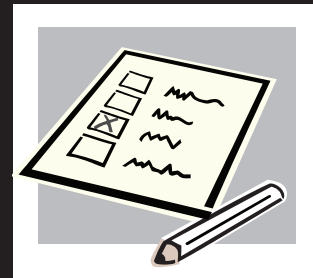
## Nomination Requests for the C. David Anderson Award

by Mary Glovak, Farmington Public Schools, MTSA President

Every year, Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) honors an MTSA member with the C. David Anderson Award. This MTSA recipient exemplifies outstanding support and promotion of transition services. This individual, through leadership, advocacy, and innovation, defines the best and brightest of our profession and association. Past winners include Maria Peak, Ann Marie Ball, Mary Eileen Goss, and Julie Longstreet.

Do you know someone who:

- Shows exemplary dedication and personal commitment to student transition
- Contributes to student engagement through student-focused planning and development
- Dedicates his or her service to colleagues and the professional community
- Promotes family involvement



Then you know someone who deserves recognition and should be nominated for the C. David Anderson Award! For further information, please go to [www.michigan.tsa.com](http://www.michigan.tsa.com) and click on the Anderson Award button to view the full criteria and procedure for nomination. The website also allows you to download the nomination form.

Please send completed forms, no later than January 31, 2011 to:

Mary Glovak, MTSA President, 30299 Lyndon, Livonia, MI 48154



by Maria Peak, Eaton ISD, MTSA Region Two Representative

I would like to share with all of you one of my favorite little indulgences. I love to sleep in on Saturday mornings, and when I do finally wake up, I like to flip through the T.V. stations, while I continue to lie in bed. Now, you have to realize that we do not have cable T.V. in our home; therefore, station selection is very limited. So one Saturday morning a few weeks ago as the stations were flashing by, there were brief stops at "Jane and the Dragon," "Raven," and "Power Rangers," when I finally landed on a program.

What Saturday morning show caught my eye? It was an "informational style" show, in which teenagers were talking about the jobs they wanted in the future, and they were interviewing people in their desired careers. I cannot tell you exactly what channel I was watching, but I do know that the show was called "Real Life 101," and at the end of the show, they mentioned their website: [www.rl101.com](http://www.rl101.com).

Their website is fantastic, and they say it best: Real Life 101 introduces you to real people doing real jobs. From doctors, lawyers, and veterinarians to career counselors,

drug counselors, Lipizzaner stallion trainers, and special effects wizards, Real Life 101 takes you "on the job." so you can see for yourself why these professionals love what they do. Learn about jobs you might not know even existed!

If you have some time to spend, the Real Life 101's website is the place to go. There is a wealth of information and several links on colleges, careers, jobs and internships, volunteer opportunities, and resource materials. They have produced more than 130 episodes of Real Life 101. Unfortunately, you cannot view them online through their website, but I did find another site where the first 13 episodes could be purchased ([www.mediakids.com](http://www.mediakids.com)). These 13 episodes are pretty pricey.

My recommendation is to spend a little extra time sleeping in, then grab the remote on Saturday morning, and spend a half hour watching Real Life 101.

If you have something you think we should "check out" please send your ideas to [mpeak@eatonisd.org](mailto:mpeak@eatonisd.org).

# Call for Nominations to the MTSA Executive Board

by Jim Samsel, Monroe County ISD, MTSA Nominations Chair



***Looking for an exciting way to demonstrate your leadership skills? Build on your MTSA experience? Make a positive, lasting contribution to our MTSA legacy of success?***

The Michigan Transition Services Association's Nominating Committee is seeking interested, qualified candidates for the roles of President Elect, Regional Representatives for Regions 3 and 5, Secretary, and Treasurer as described below.

The **President Elect** serves for three years. The first year focuses on a number of MTSA operations, particularly scheduled meetings with the Nominations Committee, the Transition Issues Committee (TIC), as well as serving as a representative to the Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP) Core Team.

The President Elect works closely with the current President, the Past President/Conference Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and the five regional representatives to see that MTSA operations are carried out in a timely manner.

At the end of one year, the President Elect assumes the position of MTSA President followed by a third year as Past President and Chair of the MTSA Conference.

Those best qualified for the President Elect position should have:

- Some familiarity with the workings of MTSA's Executive Board.
- The time to listen and the willingness to be responsive to members' needs and concerns.

They must also be willing and available to travel to, attend, and/or chair presidential meetings (all expenses are paid by MTSA), and they must be able to make a three-year commitment to the successive roles of President Elect, President, and Past President.

## The **Regional Representatives:**

- Serve a two-year term representing their respective regions at scheduled board meetings
- Hold at least two region meetings each year.
- Encourage partnership/collaboration with other regional associations/agencies/parents that support Transition activities for students.
- Actively recruit new MTSA members.
- Regional monitoring of mini-grants and scholarships.

For the 2011 elections, Regional Representative positions are open for Regions 1, 3, and 5.

The **Secretary** and **Treasurer** offices are both one-year terms.

A few of the Secretary's tasks include:

- Taking and distributing minutes.
- Maintaining a roster of active board members and liaisons.
- Collecting and compiling reports.
- Distributing correspondence to the board.

A few of the Treasurer's tasks include:

- Maintaining MTSA accounts.
- Paying all expenses authorized by the board.
- Preparing reports as necessary.

Please give some thought to running for one of these offices or, if you have served, whom you might nominate. For more information about open board positions, contact Jim Samsel, MTSA President-Elect at [james.samsel@monroeisd.us](mailto:james.samsel@monroeisd.us) or check out the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com).

# Announcing the 2011 MTSA Annual Conference: *Universal Transition*

by Geoff Dickenson, MTSA Past-President and Conference Chair

I am sure that it does not take me to remind you that the MTSA Annual Conference will be here before you know it. What you may not know is that work for the conference has been underway since, well, work is always underway for the next conference!

This year's theme "Universal Transition" reflects not only the long reaching effects of Transition, but also, the growing notion that transition has an appeal that makes it relevant to a universal audience. When we think of universal design, originally an architectural term, we think of designs that impact across a spectrum—beyond an intended audience. This design concept gave a momentum to other considerations including education.

Universal design led to universal instruction, then universal learning, and now, to universal transition—a growing awareness that what has proven so successful for special education students may very well be successful for every student in every content area. Moreover, designing instruction and skill building that is universal in approach will also prove beneficial to a larger pool of diverse learners.

The tricky part of having a "theme" is that it must be specific while also having enough latitude for wide appeal and participation. I think that the "Universal Transition" theme can accomplish this.

In conjunction with the conference theme, we also are sponsoring a book study program that highlights a publication the MTSA Board received at this year's Strategic Planning. The book *Universal Design for Transition-A Roadmap for Planning and Instruction* is a great text that includes lesson plans, resources, and a narrative of a first year teacher as he struggles with and succeeds in re-designing his instructional approaches to reach his "universal" range of students. We hope that we can get a large number of participants in the book study group creating great discussion and feedback on not only content but ideas and further possibilities for universal design.

So, here's to another exciting year, another great conference, and more great accomplishments from a strong association which keeps us motivated and unified.

Online registration begins October 18, 2010 at 12:01 a.m. for conference attendance, presentations, the poster session, and exhibitors. Remember, there is a discounted fee for early registration and additional discounts for current MTSA members.

It is not too late to join MTSA and receive the discounted membership rate. Membership forms are available on our website. The conference is March 16-18, 2011 at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth, so mark your calendars and visit the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com) to get started!

## MTSA Annual Conference: *Universal Transition*

March 16-18, 2011  
Bavarian Inn  
Frankenmuth, Michigan

**Conference Registration:**  
October 18, 2010 to February 28, 2011

**Early Registration:**  
October 18, 2010 to January 31, 2011

**Late Registration:**  
February 1, 2011 to February 28, 2011

**Presenter's Registration:**  
October 18, 2010 to January 14, 2011

**Exhibitor's Registration:**  
October 18, 2010 to February 18, 2011

**Poster Session Registration:**  
October 18, 2010 to February 18, 2011

**Accommodations Deadline:** January 31, 2011

**Refunds Deadline:** February 13, 2011

Early Registration Fees	
Current MTSA Member	\$210.00
Non-Member	\$250.00
Late Registration Fees	
Current MTSA Member	\$230.00
Non-Member	\$270.00
Awards Banquet	\$25.00



## Region 1 Report

by Sandy Steele, Region  
One Representative



Welcome back Region 1 members! I hope the start of the school year has been inspiring and exciting. We are looking forward to another great year at MTSA and a wonderful conference in Frankenmuth. I am in the process of planning regional meetings and topics for those meetings. Watch for emails with times and locations. If you are interested in hosting a regional meeting at your location or have topic/speaker suggestions, please do not hesitate to email me at [ss Steele@cgresd.net](mailto:ss Steele@cgresd.net).

You should have already received an email about the MTSA Mini-Grant and Scholarship opportunities. If you did not receive the email, please contact me so that I can make sure I have your correct email address.

Remember the website for Michigan Transition Services Association is [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com). Explore the website for links to transition related resources.



## Region 2 Report

by Maria Peak, Region  
Two Representative



Can you believe that winter is right around the corner—Christmas decorations are already on display? Another school year is well under way!

I am once again honored to be your Region 2 MTSA representative. I am currently in the process of planning our regional meetings; there will be two this year. Our focus will be student engagement and creating a positive atmosphere. Those of us who work in the field know that education in our state/country has experienced some troubled waters during the past few years, and work environments may be strained. My focus for MTSA/Region 2, as well as in my personal work, is to create positive energy and support to those with whom I come in contact. A positive work environment can benefit your co-workers, the students you serve, their parents, the community as a whole, but ultimately, it benefits you. Following are a few helpful tips to consider when trying to build positive working relationships and environments:

- Build trust.
- Maintain positive and open communication.
- Expect the best from yourself and those with whom you work.
- Build team spirit.
- Say “thank you” and “great job.”

- Have an open door policy and make yourself available.
- Share your knowledge and resources.
- Make it FUN!

A few quotes that may help bring a little positive energy your way:

- Ideas are funny little things. They don't work unless you do.  
-Anonymous
- You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins.  
-Jim Stovall
- Leaders will be those who empower others. -Bill Gates
- A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.  
-Attributed to Arthur McBride Bloch

I hope this puts a smile on your face:

*"Dad, can you write in the dark?"*

*"I think so. What is it you want me to write?"*

*"Your name on this report card."*

If you are an MTSA member of Region 2 and are not receiving my emails, please contact me at [mpeak@eatonisd.org](mailto:mpeak@eatonisd.org) Let's have a great year together!



## Region 3 Report

by Kimberly Norman, Region  
Three Representative



Fall ~ Indian summer days, crisp evenings, brilliant colors...Harvest Festivals, Grand Rapids “Art Prize”... all the beauty surrounding us. Everyone I meet up with each day first expresses how busy things are, but they are also quick to add comments about these glorious things. I find inspiration, hope, and excitement following me through my schedule!

Now that we have completed the State Performance Plan Indicator 13 reports and hopefully have settled our students into the best programs for their needs, we are looking at what needs to be done next. I have sent out an email to Region 3 members seeking input for our fall meeting. The responses I received asked mostly for clarification and curriculum for the “Certificate of Completion” and also, “Personal Curriculum.” On December 1, 2010, we are planning to meet as a Region at the Kent Transition Center to address these issues. I hope many of you will attend and bring your ideas and/or examples of what you are using. An agenda will be forthcoming in November.

Applications are now available online for the MTSA Mini-Grants

and Scholarships. Go to [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com) to access these great opportunities! Region 3 will have a committee to review all applications and decide on distribution. Please note: Region 3 prefers to fund four to five grants of \$500 or less to be able to support as many ideas as possible. We also like to look for sustainable ideas as well as ideas that impact on the greatest number of students. Please check out the website and get your applications submitted! Deadline date for both the Mini-Grants and Scholarships is December 1, 2010.

As always, I will attempt to share information about Transition related opportunities as much as I can, but please feel free to contact me at 616-361-3446 with your questions, concerns, and input. Here's hoping you are touched by the beauty of everything around you!



## Region 4 Report

by Judy Hernandez, Region Four Representative



Welcome Region 4 members to a new school year! My name is Judy Hernandez, and I will be your Region 4 Rep this year. I am a teacher with Wyandotte Public Schools and currently a Transition Coordinator at the Jo Brighton Skills Centers, a center-based program in Wayne County. Although most of my experience has been with center-based students, I am very passionate about transition from school to adult life for all students. I am very interested in representing all students with disabilities and very eager to collaborate, assist, and network with MTSA members, so that we can provide our students with a transition from school that makes sense to them.

During this school year, it is my goal to have two region meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to give MTSA members the opportunity to get together and network with each other and to discuss transition issues and concerns, as well as to share our experiences in the field.

I plan to have a speaker/presentation at each meeting to speak about various aspects of transition. MTSA has identified "student engagement" as an area on which all regions will collaborate this year. Therefore, this will be one of the topics that I hope to be able to address with Region 4 members. I invite all MTSA members to notify me of other topics of interest to you or presentations that you may have attended that you feel would be beneficial to our members.

I plan to represent Region 4 members to the best of my ability. I hope that you give me the opportunity to get to know you and to become aware of your transition issues, so that we collectively are able to network and collaborate as a region, an organization, and a state, bringing the best to our students. Please remember to use the MTSA website to find out the latest about our organization, grants, scholarships, conference, and transition information.

I would like to close by thanking Yolanda Bell for her efforts and hard work as the past Region 4 Rep. Thank you. Great job Yolanda! Feel free to email me at [hernanj@wy.k12.mi.us](mailto:hernanj@wy.k12.mi.us).



## Region 5 Report

by Rick Conklin, Region Five Representative



Thank you to Diane Conklin for the following article: *PAYING IT FORWARD*.

Thank you to Mrs. Debbie Pavlat for all of her hard work on behalf of the Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD Student Transition Fair 2011 planning committee. Mrs. Pavlat has organized numerous bake sales with a group of students and adults. They volunteer their time selling the baked goods at Glen's Food Market to raise funds and awareness for the annual Student Transition Fair.

These funds help defray the cost of the event for all of our students in the EUPISD. The last bake sale, held during the summer months, brought in \$112. At a planning meeting held on Tuesday, August 24, 2010, the volunteer student captains and parent committee agreed unanimously that the funds would be donated to the Rotary Project that benefits children in Nicaragua.

The local Chippewa County Rotary Clubs are putting together "shoeboxes" containing several personal hygiene items, an outfit of clothing, sports equipment and/or toys, and school materials. The bake sale contribution helped to fill a shoebox for a boy and a girl with all of these items that will make their lives less challenging and let them know that we are sending them hope and friendly thoughts.

So, thanks to the generous people of Sault Ste. Marie and the district who bought the donated baked goods, thanks to the generous effort of Mrs. Pavlat and her group of volunteer student captains and student crew members (Bethany Pavlat, Neal Pavlat, Deveny Zabelka, Sarah Sears, Stevi Newell, Olivia Theut, and Chelsie Pavlat) who worked a total of 28 hours, and thanks to the generous hearts of the morning and afternoon rotary clubs. We certainly...PAID IT FORWARD!

Note: The EUPISD 12th Annual Student Organized Transition Fair, "TRANSITION SMART," will be held April 14, 2011 for the middle school and April 15, 2011 for the high school at Chi Mukwa (Big Bear) Arena. There will be a special parent night on Thursday, April 15, 2011 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. sponsored by MTSA; the Parent Action Committee; and the Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac Counties Transition Council.

**All MTSA members are invited to attend!** Call Rick Conklin, MTSA Region 5 Rep at 906-635-5681 ext. 115 or email at [rconklin@eup.k12.mi.us](mailto:rconklin@eup.k12.mi.us).

# MTSA Mini-Grants Available for the 2010-2011 School Year

by Tim Flahive, Muskegon ISD and Kim Norman, Kent County Region 1 Special Education

The Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) is again offering Mini-Grants to MTSA members. The Mini-Grants provide funding to MTSA members to support local projects focused on student activities that contribute to successful transitions for their students. This year, each MTSA region will have \$2,250 to distribute to Mini-Grant recipients.

The following is a sample of approved activities for Mini-Grant awards that support student transition services:

- Field Trip
- Video Library
- Specialized Transition Material
- Entrepreneurship Activities
- Student Incentives/Stipends

- Transition Curriculum Materials
- Specialized Transition Supplies/Equipment

This is not a comprehensive list of approved activities. Be creative! Think of transition activities that will be meaningful to your students' transition services.

To receive a Mini-Grant award, one must be a MTSA member by December 1, 2010. The Membership application and the guidelines/application for a Mini-Grant are available on the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com).

Do not miss this opportunity to provide special transition activities to your students. **The deadline to apply for a mini-grant is December 1, 2010.**

## Microenterprise Post Graduation

by Amy Benn, Teacher, Calhoun County ISD Adult Training Program

*The following is one of the Mini-Grant summaries from the 2009-2010 school year. Each Mini-Grant recipient submits a summary of the activity that was supported by the MTSA Mini-Grant. More summaries will be posted on the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com).*

Calhoun Intermediate School District's Adult Training Program's (ATP) primary focus is on transition from school to work. Some of our students move into the workforce upon graduation. However, many need something they can do from home; therefore, students are given the opportunity to work with microenterprises within the program.

Self employment is an important option for people who need customized employment. It allows for individual strengths, talents, and abilities to be utilized. Along with individual microenterprise, we have group microenterprise courses in the ATP. Some of these include lanyard making, coffee barista, shredding, and now, a car wash business.

The MTSA grant provided the funds necessary to purchase a pressure washer and the necessary supplies we needed to get our car washing microenterprise started. Since spring has arrived, students have learned how to clean a car inside and out! Over time they will learn the skills necessary to start up a microenterprise, and they will have the ability to implement a home-based business upon graduation. They will also learn the work skills needed to sustain such a business.

We initially started out practicing on classroom staff vehicles. We went over safety rules when using the

equipment, the chemicals, and when working in a parking lot. The excitement only grew when we accepted our first paid job! While we were washing that first car, at least five people approached us and asked if they could be next. Everyday, students come to class and ask, "Are we going to power wash today?" That gets you excited to come to work!

By teaching the necessary skills of starting and growing a business, we will enable individuals to achieve self sufficiency post graduation. Students want to be valued and to feel part of something. It will give the students independence that will lead to a dignified, meaningful adult life. I look forward to all the possibilities microenterprise has to offer students!

Thank you, MTSA, for giving us this opportunity!





## MRS Honors John Mans for His Dedication to Transition

John Mans, a long-time MTSA supporter and former Executive Board member, was recently honored with a Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) 2010

Partners Champion Award. Partners are described as people who have demonstrated a strong commitment to empower individuals with disabilities to take charge of their futures.

MRS in the Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth (DELEG) has collaborated with the Michigan Rehabilitation Council to recognize employers, partners, customers, and MRS employees who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to Michigan's public vocational rehabilitation programs. The MRS awards were presented to the champions at an awards luncheon in Lansing on October 21, 2010 by the MRS counselors who nominated them.

Students in the Cabinet making/Millwork program at the Michigan Career and Technical Institute, a vocational and technical training school operated by MRS and located in Southwest Michigan, engraved the special awards. "We commend these champions for opening up workplaces, developing innovative partnerships, and showing steadfast

commitment to Michiganders with disabilities by seeing past restrictive attitudes," said DELEG Acting Director Andrew S. Levin. "By doing so, they are recognizing the skills and abilities of these individuals and seeing them as assets to their companies and communities."

"People with disabilities have proven to be an untapped resource for employers and are among the most productive employees who consistently rate above average in reliability, performance, and safety," said Levin. "It's just good business to put these very able workers to work to gain independence and contribute to Michigan's economy."

MRS offices around the state nominated champion candidates. The consistent theme from those nominated was demonstration of the "value" of hiring and retaining vocational rehabilitation customers. The Michigan Rehabilitation Council reports that every dollar spent on public rehabilitation services returns \$12.66 back to the Michigan economy.

MRS assists more than 7,000 individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive employment and self-sufficiency annually. This is the 90th anniversary year of the vocational rehabilitation program in Michigan. Congratulations to John Mans, who has helped so many young people transition to successful adult living situations.

## Diploma vs. Certificate of Completion

by Shelly Neal, Rehabilitation Counselor, MRS Oakland District, Waterford Office  
Facilitator of Diploma vs. Certificate Panel

One of the sessions at the August 17, 2010 Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Transition Training addressed the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), the standards students will need to achieve to earn a high school diploma, and the anticipated implications for students that exit secondary education with a Certificate of Completion (sometimes referred to as a Certificate of Attendance).

One of the first things that became apparent was that many parents, students, and professionals do not know much about the MMC and its ramifications regarding graduation. Some people did not realize that students may not be receiving diplomas next year if they are unable to meet the requirements of the MMC. The graduating class of 2011 is the first class to be impacted by the MMC.

The MMC can be amended with a Personal Curriculum (PC) that is developed by the school and signed off by the superintendent of the school district. A PC can be

developed when a student with a disability needs to modify the credit requirements based on his or her disability and Individualized Education Program (IEP). This upcoming school year is the first time that school personnel can initiate a conversation about a PC. Previously, the parent had to request it.

Chuck Saur shared with the group that a certificate of completion does not end a student's entitlement to special education. Local districts have created Certificates of Completion to give to students who do not earn a high school diploma. The Certificate of Completion is not recognized by the Michigan Department of Education.

The panel discussed work/career options for students who receive a Certificate of Completion. To read this complete article, please go to the MTSA website at [www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com). Click on the Newsletter button on the left and see the Read More About It at the top of the Newsletter page.

## 2011 MTSA Scholarship Applications Now Available

by Diann Robinson, MTSA Scholarship Chair

The Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) Scholarship was established in 2000 to assist persons pursuing an education and career in the area of Special Education or Rehabilitation. Scholarship awards are made to MTSA members at the discretion of a committee established by their regional representative and based on MTSA board recommendations. All awards are made without regard to race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

Scholarship recipients must be enrolled in an accredited college and must be either junior/senior level in an undergraduate program or in a graduate program. The program must be in an area of Special Education or Rehabilitation.

**Applicants must be an MTSA member prior to December 1, 2010.** Scholarship and Membership applications can be found at the MTSA website ([www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com)). Scholarship applications are due to the scholarship chairperson or the MTSA Regional Rep of the person applying for a scholarship by December 01, 2010.

Each recipient will receive \$500 toward their educational needs, as well as reimbursement for attending the 2011 Annual MTSA Conference.

## MI-TOP and MRS Purposeful Collaborative Workshop

by Cynthia Wright, MRS Rehabilitation Consultant

MI-TOP and MRS are planning a collaborative training workshop during the first day of the January 27 and 28, 2011, MI-TOP workshop at the Ramada Inn West in Lansing. The workshop will be for MRS staff (counselors and/or managers), transition coordinators, and other educational transition professionals to build and strengthen transition services to youth with disabilities as they transition into adult life.

The session will be structured around the following questions:

- Are schools providing what is necessary to ensure that students are ready to belong and to be successful in their communities?
- Is the community ready to support students to belong and to succeed as they transition into their communities?
- How do we know?
- Are we satisfied with the results?

Mark your calendars for this important event!  
(From the MRS Fall Transition Bulletin.)

## Transition Issues Committee News

by Jim Samsel, Monroe County ISD, TIC Chairperson

The Transition Issues Committee (TIC) is a forum for Regional Reps to develop and implement strategies to carry out the mission and goals of MTSA through regional meetings and activities. Annual priority issues are identified by the MTSA Board through Strategic Planning. The TIC also addresses issues common to the five regions in the state and makes recommendations to the Board for future planning.

Each year, the TIC's focus reflects discussion that has taken place at the previous year's Strategic Planning meeting. These discussions often lead to a theme that Regional Reps agree to present at one of their regional meetings. Of the four priority issues identified for 2010-2011, TIC will focus on Increasing Student Engagement as the common theme to be addressed. Regional meetings will explore best practices for increasing student engagement in transition which will ultimately lead to improved post school outcomes.

In addition to mini-grants and scholarships, each Regional Rep will have the opportunity to award an individual scholarship for the MTSA Annual Spring Conference. Applications will be distributed to community members who may not otherwise attend the conference due to barriers or other identified needs. Each of the five Reps will form a committee to select an applicant to attend the entire conference in hopes of building membership and community partnerships. If you know of someone who may qualify, please contact your Regional Rep.

Our next Zoomerang survey topic will be determined at the November TIC meeting. We are committed to monitoring the needs and input from our membership. Our goal is to provide leadership as well as a platform to discuss emerging issues and concerns in the transition field.



## MTSA Executive Board

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## 2010-2011 Executive Board Meeting Schedule

Date	Location/City
Friday, September 17, 2010	Ramada Lansing West Conference Center
Friday, October 22, 2010	Ramada Lansing West Conference Center
Friday, November 19, 2010	Ramada Lansing West Conference Center
Friday, January 21, 2011	Ramada Lansing West Conference Center
Friday, February 18th, 2011	Ramada Lansing West Conference Center
Thursday, March 17th, 2011	MTSA Conference, Bavarian Inn, Frankenmuth
May 18-20, 2011	Strategic Planning – To Be Announced

All Michigan Transition Services Association members are invited to attend Executive Board meetings. If you wish to attend, please call or email Mary Glovak at 248-426-2732 or [mary.loewe-glovak@farmington.k12.mi.us](mailto:mary.loewe-glovak@farmington.k12.mi.us) to confirm date, time, and location. Occasionally, a last minute change may be necessary.

Unless otherwise noted, all MTSA Executive Board meetings will be held at the Ramada Lansing West Conference Center, 517-627-3211.

**MTSA Membership Current Count = 644**

**Please report changes in your email or snail mail address to Henrietta Hilberath, MTSA Membership Chair, [henrietta.hilberath@farmington.k12.mi.us](mailto:henrietta.hilberath@farmington.k12.mi.us), 248-426-1026.**

Graphic Design:  Professional Communication Solutions (PCS), Charlotte, MI 989-429-3118



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