

"November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear."
- Sir Walter Scott



Friday, November 13, 2015



COMMUNITY Connector



A FAST BOTP - The Plan Behind the Plan

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Maybe you've been contacted about a Back on Track Plan (BOTP), or maybe you will be in the future. If so, here are some things to keep in mind.

The FAST team's goal is to support students in getting to a place where school is no longer overwhelming. However, getting to that place takes hard work and accountability. Accountability can sometimes be frustrating but it builds responsibility in both the learning coach and student. It is important that students are able to maintain consistent progress in their school work in order to achieve success and avoid being overwhelmed.

A BOTP starts with a referral by the homeroom teacher who has identified a need for additional student support. The referral is assigned to a Family Academic Support Liaison (FASL) who communicates via kmail that they are ready to assist the family with their needs. The FASL will set up a meeting to discuss with the student and Learning Coach how they can partner together to improve the student's academic or family situation. Each BOTP is individualized and addresses the specific needs that are identified in conjunction with the family.

The BOTP is a tool used to encourage engagement and to empower and equip the student. The FASL provides encouragement and expectations so that in the future students are prepared to stay on track and progress successfully in their courses. BOTP's usually last for 2 weeks but may last longer depending on the individual goals identified during the family meeting.

In short, a referral for a BOTP is an opportunity to receive extra encouragement, support and coaching on how to be a successful student in the on-line school environment.

Learning Styles – Fundamental to Learning

Over the last few weeks at MVCA homeroom teachers have been asking students in grades K-12th to complete a personal Learning Styles Assessment. This assessment is free to our students and provides a resource for understanding, appreciating, and most importantly, valuing the diversity of learning, thinking and working. When the unique characteristics possessed by others are valued, a positive shift in attitude often occurs. If your student has not taken advantage of this opportunity, please have them contact their Homeroom teacher.

Our Parent Learning Institute (PLI) will be holding a VIRTUAL Workshop for Learning Coaches & parents on Learning Styles in November. During our first session we will review learning styles and the assessment taken by your students. Learning Coaches and parents will be shown resources where they can take a similar assessment on their own learning style. In our second session we will talk about how to interpret Learning Styles results as well as how to use this information to help your students be more successful in their schooling.

VIRTUAL Session Dates: Tuesday, Nov. 17 & Thursday, Nov. 19 at Noon and 6:00 pm

For more information on the November Parent Learning Institute (PLI), please check out our event flyer by clicking the link below or look for an announcement in the OLS or NOHS.

[CLICK HERE for PLI November Flyer](#)



Andrei Nichols
Interim Head of School

The vision of Michigan Virtual Charter Academy is to lift students up in a safe, student-centered environment to become confident leaders of the digital age .



K-6
Grades

Meet & Greets

Getting to know you in September



Our FAST (Family Academic Support Team) as well as local teachers gathered for face-to-face Meet & Greets across the state in September.

These Meet & Greets offered families an opportunity to meet others in their area who are part of MVCA as well as meet some of their teachers.

The FAST staff work with families who have questions about the on-line school, how to access their courses, check progress, log attendance, etc. They also explained the different services that make up the FAST program at MVCA.

Meet & Greets will be happening again in February! Please keep an eye out for information on events in your area.

Answer Garden

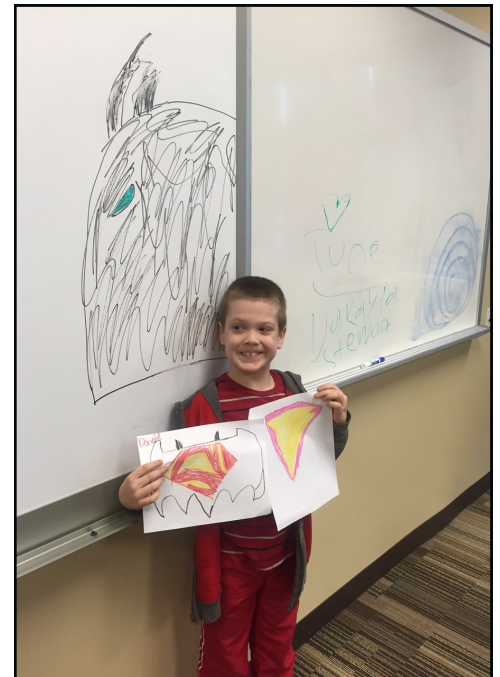
Like it or not, the first big snow storm is just around the corner. Here in Michigan we know that the first snow storm can come as early as October and can be followed by sunny, unseasonably warm weather. Ah, the joys of living in Michigan.

Answer Garden, if you haven't seen one yet, is a graphic representation to a specific question. Anyone anywhere can ask a question then post it out for people to answer. We thought it would be fun to try it here in our MVCA newsletter. If you

would like to participate, simply click on the question below to go to the Answer Garden site. You will have up to 20 characters to answer the question. You will be able to see the answers others have posted before you.

[What is your favorite thing about the first Big Snow Storm?](#)

We will post the resulting answer graphic in the next issue of *Community Connector*.



Connect Winter Resources

The Holiday Giving Network, Toys for Tots, Angel Tree / Angel Teen, and other food and gift programs are available for families and students. Most require sign up at a [Local Food Pantry](#).

Do you know families struggling to pay their utilities? [SER funds from DHHS](#) will also be available starting Nov. 1st for heating fuel.

To find eligibility guidelines for any local or state assistance programs, a good place to start is 211 . [Click Here](#)

7-8
Grades

Life Line: a Lifesaver for Learning Coaches

Are you struggling to understand the new HS platform? As a Learning Coach are you unsure how to check your student's progress, overdue assignments, or daily plan? Do you have questions about the OLS for K-8 grade and how to efficiently spend your valuable LC time getting your students ready for their day?

If so, then LIFE LINE's Learning Coaches open virtual sessions are for you! Every month our Family Engagement Coordinator, Marla Baldwin, holds Life Line hours. These sessions are designed for Learning Coaches as a place to come to get your questions answered. Ms. Baldwin can help you in a variety of ways with the expectation that you will leave more comfortable with your role as a Learning Coach.

Whether you are a NEW Learning Coach or you've been with us for a while, come with your questions and get on the spot

help right when you need it.

November Life Line hours are Mondays & Wednesdays from 5pm-6pm (except Nov. 25th due to the Holiday break). If this time does not fit in your schedule, Ms. Baldwin is able to set up individual sessions. Please contact her directly through Kmail or at (616) 309-1600 ext. 3161.

For more information on FAST services and to see a full calendar of Engagement Events, please visit our website.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Connect Workshops offer an opportunity for students to explore a variety of topics that hit home with many of our youth today.

All workshops are held in virtual Class Connect Sessions every other Thursday from 3:00-4:00 pm.

Look in your Daily Plan for the link to join the sessions.

Connect Workshops are run by our amazing Connect Counselors Mr. Dave Krause and Mr. Mike Scheel. They look forward to talking with you in one of the upcoming workshops.

11/5/15 Coping Skills For Depression

Are you struggling with feelings of depression? You are not alone. Join us as we explore ways to deal with these feelings and work to get ahead of them.

11/19/15 Alternative Programs: Tech Ed, Voc Ed and the GED

Thinking about attending a Vocational or Tech Center, maybe getting your GED? Check out what's available to you at this workshop.

12/3/15 Community Resources for Families

Many families struggle to make ends meet. This workshop for parents and students can help you locate resources in your community to assist you and those you love.

12/17/15 Coping Skills for Anxiety

Stressed and worried? We get it. Together let's work on lowering those anxiety levels.

1/7/16 Community College Information

A GREAT idea for MANY students. Want to hear why? Let's talk about the benefits of a community college education for YOU.

1/21/16 Mindset

The way you view yourself and the world can determine a lot about your future. Join us to discuss how you can adjust your mindset to get where you want to go.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
Catch Up On Your
School Work**

Great for Break!!

Breaks are the perfect time for you to get caught back up in the classes you are just a bit behind in! Spend just an hour or two each day and you will be back on track in no time!

- ◆ Watch recordings of Class Connects you missed.
- ◆ Take on those non-mastered lessons one more time.
- ◆ Complete 2—3 lessons each day and you'll be on a roll!
- ◆ Watch those "Overdue" assignments disappear

Thinking about Testing?

From the Academic Counselors

- ACT registration deadline is January 8, 2016 for the February 6, 2016 test. www.act.org
- SAT registration deadline is December 28 for the January 23 test www.collegeboard.org
- Fee waivers are available for students who qualify. Ask your academic counselor about this.
- Upcoming College Rep Visits Scheduled — Check your CC sessions for more colleges.

Henry Ford Community College (Monday, November 16 @ 3:30)
 University of Detroit – Mercy (Tuesday, November 17 @ 3:30)
 Wayne State University (Thursday, November 19 @ 3:30)
 Michigan Technological University (Monday, November 23 @ 10:00)
 Spring Arbor University (Monday, November 23 @ 3:30)



AMY STIRLING

7-12 Academic Lead
 High School Science Teacher

Amy Stirling is entering her fifth school year with MVCA. Her previous roles include the high school science content coach, science department lead and high school lead. She received her undergraduate degree from Hillsdale College in Marketing Management with a minor in Biology (where she also played college volleyball), and her secondary teaching credential in biology and integrated science from California State University, Northridge. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in educational leadership with Grand Valley State University. In her spare time Amy enjoys spending time with her family, making jewelry, cooking, and playing volleyball.

Mr. Nichols shares the wisdom of his mother, Troycie Nichols:

Growing up we were forbidden to use the word "can't" in the house. My mother would order us, *"Not until every measurable option deems it impossible ... and even then get my permission."* Who would dare oppose their own human capacity when surrounded by such words and expectations?

THE GREAT #TheGreatListen THANKSGIVING LISTEN Join us in preserving the voices & stories of generations of Americans.

Millennia ago early societies relied on an oral history, stories told from generation to generation so that those who came after would be able to continue to develop an identity. Often, within these societies, a person would be responsible for learning the oral history of a village, clan or tribe.

Today our society has so many ways to record our history. Every time you use social media, send an email or text, you record history. Our society has come to rely so much on these forms of communication to record our stories, but the best stories are told—not read; heard not written.

There exists a method to record our oral history right now in the United States. National Public Radio (NPR) with Story Corps has been traveling around the nation for several years and inviting people to tell their stories. Often it is a memory or an interview between a child and a parent.

NPR and Story Corps have issued a request to all teenagers across the United States. **They challenge each of you to help add to our records of oral histories.**

Many of you celebrate Thanksgiving, a time to come together as families – to welcome

with joy family members you may not see often. Take time to record a conversation and add to the American story.

We have an opportunity as a nation to become a primary document. We can create a database of memories that span 70 plus years of American history. Your story should be something personal – it could be a memory of a baby sister or brother being born, a first communion or bat-mitzvah, a family trip to Disney World, a new job, a happy memory or just asking about your family. All of this will add to the rich tapestry of stories that makes the United States a mixing bowl - a wonderful, beautiful mix of cultures, ethnicities, religions and races.

NPR and Story Corps have created an app to make your conversations easy to record. My challenge to each of you is to spend 15 minutes over your Thanksgiving break recording something on the Story Corps app.

You can download the Story Corps app at this website: <https://storycorps.me/>

For more information: <http://www.npr.org/2015/10/14/448295644/thanksgiving-listen-to-and-interview-your-elders>

Events

Jaylie Dice **Photographer**



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Sun. Nov. 8 ~ 12-5 pm

Sloan Museum

Flint, MI

Fri. Nov. 20 ~ 4:30—6:30pm

Woodland Skating

Grand Rapids, MI

Sun. Nov. 22 ~ 9 am-1:30 pm

Detroit Institute of Arts

Detroit, MI

For more information and to sign up, contact our Family Engagement Coordinator, Marla Baldwin.

616-309-1600 ext. 3161

[Engagement Calendar](#)
[CLICK HERE](#)

Jaylie is a 10th grade student at MVCA.

These pictures were taken in Bay City, Frank-enmuth and Caseville. "Graffiti City" is a ruin of an old chemical factory built in the early 1900's. The photo that is both color and black/white was taken at a local antique store.

Jaylie enjoys exploring many different settings through the eye of her lens.

Come on, we know you want to be published!

The MVCA Community Connector invites submissions from Learning Coaches and students!

Our students (K-12), families, and Learning Coaches are the reason we are all here. Send us your articles, poems, photos, personal interest stories, hobbies, accomplishments, and anything else you would like to see included in future newsletters. We want to celebrate with you!

Submit your newsletter items by clicking on this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1OyysMnrMpVD-lwq1yXrm_4ieLUP6brszaNzXzyL-fEQ/viewform

We can't wait to hear from you!