

Welcome back! Our VOICE Advisory Group is excited to participate in our school community for 2009 – 2010. Our VOICE Parent Group's theme is "Fostering Attainable Achievement for all Students because All Lives have Equal Value". We have a great year planned with some disability awareness activities in our October and January meetings. We'll also be supporting an exhilarating event on our campus in the spring, but I'll leave the details for another monthly update once the final plans are set.

Although I took the summer off from VOICE, I had the pleasure of working with Sue Herrmann and Dana Distasio from PTSA and PIE on the VCS Parent Group Shared Decision-Making Nominating Committee (PRNC). Our team facilitated the annual process to select parents for Shared Decision Making Councils and program reviews for Math, ELA, and Special Education. I'm pleased by the strong collaborative teamwork across PTSA, PIE, and VOICE for this and other activities. I'm also impressed by the diverse members of our community who will be volunteering as our representatives for shared decision-making and within our parent group organizations. Volunteerism is alive and well at Victor Central School which ensures that our rapid growth is governed by all within our community.

### **VCS to Celebrate Disability History Week in October**

During the third week of October, Victor Schools, in conjunction with VOICE, will celebrate Disability History Week. During this week students will be provided with the opportunity to learn how people with disabilities were instrumental in changing history, and how they became active participants in changing societal attitudes about their needs, desires and capabilities.

VOICE Quarterly Meeting, Tuesday, October 20, 2009, VEC Center, Conference Room A

### **Disability History Week Role Model Awareness Roundtable**

#### **Learning Goal**

Participants will gain an understanding of the successes and challenges experienced by Disability History Role Models such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Tom Cruise, Brad Cohen, and Jim Abbott.

#### **Objectives include:**

1. Release the new VOICE booklet, "When I Grow Up" that shares brief success stories from the inspirational lives of Disability History Week Role Models.
2. Student, staff, and community volunteers will have conducted "A Day in the Life" hands on activity on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> that represents an understanding and a day-long awareness of simulating the disabilities and lives of our Disability History Role Models.
3. Our volunteers will share personal stories from their "Day in the Life" activity including a brief overview of their chosen role model and what they learned as they simulated daily life with a disability.
4. The roundtable will be recorded for future viewing.

**STUDENT, STAFF, and COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED for the DAY IN THE LIFE activity on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Ideally, some of these volunteers will be available to share their experiences in our roundtable on January 19<sup>th</sup> or write about their experiences on our VOICE BLOG. Please contact Keith**

**Partington if you have an interest or idea to volunteer for our events during Disability History Week. ([kpartin1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:kpartin1@rochester.rr.com) or 585-737-7678)**

Special thanks to Tanya Zazulak who piloted this awareness activity in the Victor Primary Building last year. You can read about Tania's experiences in our VOICE Blog for a framework of our volunteer activity request.

**A New Experience, Tania Zazulak, School Psychologist**

**<http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/KPartington/myblog.cfm?blogid=8347>**

**VOICE SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS – In memory of Senator Ted Kennedy**

As our nation mourned the passing of Senator Ted Kennedy, we were reminded as Republicans, Democrats, Independents across red states and blue states of the significant contributions that the entire Kennedy family has contributed to representing the values of diversity, respect, and inclusion for all.

**Commentary: “Kennedy a champion for disability rights” by Andrew Imparato**

Story highlights include how Kennedy's family helped spark interest in disability rights, how his involvement in pushing the ADA legislation was key, how the ADA has helped create a global movement for rights, and how his legacy will be felt by 600 million people with disabilities

**<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/08/29/kennedy.disabilities/>**

*Andrew J. Imparato is chief executive of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), a national nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization of people with disabilities, their family members and supporters that was founded in 1995.*

**ANNOUNCEMENT of APPOINTMENT**

I am very pleased to announce that the Board of Education has appointed Melanie McGuire to the administrative position of Director of Special Education in the Victor Central School District effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Melanie has worked in the school district for four years as the Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education. Although Melanie's duties and responsibilities will be expanded in certain respects, her office location will remain in the Pupil Personnel Services office in the Victor Education Center.

**UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**

Victor Parks and Recreation have added a Special Needs Program Section to their Fall Brochure. This includes Anime Club, Wii Bowling League, Teen Night, and Special Needs Programming After-School Social Club. Check out page 15 in their Fall Brochure for these programs:

**<http://www.victorny.org/Data/FileManager/PageDownloads/Town/recreation.pdf>**

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

## **Webster Parent To Parent and SEPTA fall offerings:**

### **Central Auditory Processing Disorders: More than Just Inattention**

Has anyone ever commented that your child does not pay attention?

Does your child struggle in school?

Is your child having difficulty in social situations?

Your child's ability to process what they hear may be at the root of their academic or social struggles. Dr. Larry Medwetsky, one of the leading experts in this country will be presenting on central auditory processing disorders (CAPD) and its management. Dr. Medwetsky has developed a unique approach to the assessment of CAPD that is based on his own research as well as from various professional domains. This approach allows for the determination of specific underlying processing deficits and, in turn, guide individualized management approaches.

Thursday, October 15 2009, 6:45 –9:15 PM

Location: RL Thomas High School Library, 800 Five Mile Line Road, Webster, NY 14580

### **Financial Strategies for the Special Needs Family**

Planning for the future of a child with a disability can be a challenging experience when you are juggling unique day-to-day concerns. To ensure their child's quality of life, parents must understand the complexities of federal and state entitlement programs and how they relate to their child, the legal tools they can use (such as guardianship, special needs trusts, and letters of intent), and the financial strategies they can employ.

Proactively addressing these planning issues makes a tremendous difference in protecting your child's future, and in your peace of mind. Susan Vreeland and James T aylor, members of MassMutual's Special Care team, assist parents in crafting solutions around special needs planning. Please join them as they present an overview of this essential planning process.

Thursday, November 12, 2009, 7pm - 9pm

Location: RL Thomas High School Library, 800 Five Mile Line Road, Webster, NY 14580

PTP (Parent to Parent) is a volunteer group of parents providing educational workshops for all parents to gain information and direction to help themselves, their children and each other while in the educational system. We encourage parents/guardians to become their child's best advocate.

(For additional information: Please contact Colleen Brown at [brown@advocacycenter.com](mailto:brown@advocacycenter.com) or 546-1700)

## **VOICE COMMUNICATION UPDATE**

Do you have information you can share with our VOICE community? Please send to Cole Partington at [cpartin1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cpartin1@rochester.rr.com) for inclusion in our monthly update.

## **VOICE FEEDBACK**

Our VOICE Parent Group is always open to feedback and ideas. Please feel free to contact Keith Partington at 585-737-7678 or [kpartin1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:kpartin1@rochester.rr.com) to discuss.

Thanks for your continued support!

Keith Partington, Chairperson

VOICE Website:

<http://teachersites.schoolworld.com/webpages/KPartington>