

Montcalm

M E S S E N G E R

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS & FRIENDS OF MONTCALM STUDENTS WINTER 2010

Montcalm students were asked to submit their New Year's Resolutions or goals for 2010 for this issue of Montcalm Messenger. Below are their responses.

Montcalm Boys

This year I will do the best I can in school, continue to build positive peer relationships and do my share of the work around the cottage.

- Bo -

I will continue working to improve on my hand-eye coordination, life skills and making friends!

- Nick -

My New Year's resolution is to graduate from Montcalm School for Boys. Looking back at how far I've made it was a big success. I definitely felt a lot better being here at Montcalm versus being in a public school. In Montcalm, people don't make fun of you because you are different. People don't gossip behind your back. I feel that Montcalm has allowed me a lot of opportunities in terms of doing my school work. There have been a couple times that I haven't gotten 100% on all of my work. Fortunately, Montcalm has provided me with chances to make that work up whereas in high school they didn't. I'm looking very forward to graduating from Montcalm School for Boys.

- Emil -



Soup's on!

Students of Newton cottage proudly display their trophy from the first annual Michigan Sustainable Stoup Competition. The cottage entered the competition, a fundraiser for the Michigan chapter of Envirothon, a nationwide and Canadian program aimed to educate high school students about agriculture and the environment. The statewide competition featured 11 entries including homemade soups and stews among other entries.



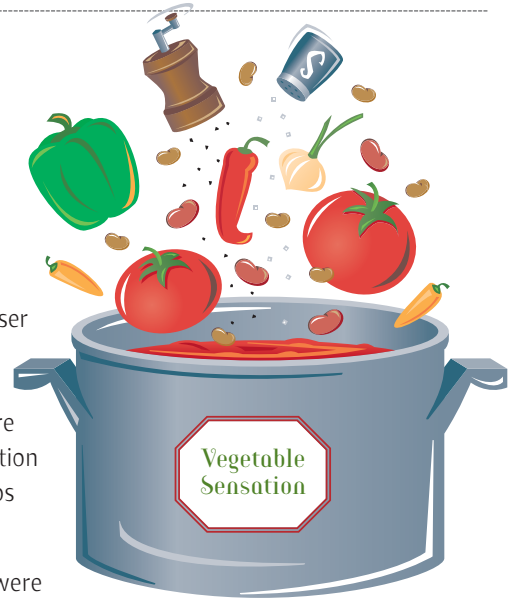
Entrants were categorized into 100% local, allergen friendly, organic, youth and vegetarian. Individuals as well as restaurants in Michigan were able to enter, keeping the focus on local, sustainable foods. Newton cottage entered the youth category, submitting "Vegetable Sensation" – a group-prepared vegetable soup.

In preparation, the students learned about allergens, making sure their recipe was allergen-free. The group discussed using Michigan-grown ingredients and went to a farmer's market to buy the ingredients for their recipe. Jeff, a Newton Cottage student who aspires to being a chef, said, "I liked the cooking competition, it was cool because it had a time limit. It gave me the feel of what it's like to be a real chef. I was able to add my own ingredients such as seasonings and vegetables; it was a fun learning experience."

Newton staff, Betsy Hauger, attended the event representing the students and staff and working the station where the vegetable soup was kept. Students made a poster complete with the Montcalm School and soup name to be proudly displayed at their station.

With more than 100 attendees, the Montcalm boys won the youth competition and returned to campus with a trophy and a new blender for the cottage.

Congratulations to Newton staff and students on their award-winning "Vegetable Sensation" soup!



Boys (continued)

Over the next year I look forward to working hard to get better grades in school, continue to build friendships and most importantly improve on my patience.

- Nick -

I hope to stay more focused in class, work on maintaining appropriate boundaries, improve my self-control and think before I speak.

- Scott -

My New Year's resolution is to do well in school and lose weight.

- Blake -

Montcalm Girls

My New Year's resolution is to lose weight and finish school.

- Mandi -

My New Year's resolution is to eat less unhealthy food and eat healthy food instead.

- Hannah -

To be more nice to others and authority.

- Celine -

My New Year's resolution is to become a healthier person so I can live life how I know I should.

- Mariah -

My New Year's resolution is to lose weight and get fit.

- Jennifer -

To attend an art school.

- Mia -

To have a healthier relationship with my family!

- Emily -



MEET OUR STAFF

Matthew Berkemeier *Teacher, Mendelssohn*

Matthew Berkemeier joined Montcalm School as Mendelssohn's new teacher in September 2009. He has done an amazing job acclimating himself in providing outstanding teamwork and support of the students' academic growth. Just recently, Mr. Berkemeier completed his Masters in Education degree from Spring Arbor University!

Mr. Berkemeier has displayed many dynamic learning experiences for the students due to his exceptional devotion toward helping, his ability to build relationships with students and to deliver his teaching methods in a manner that best fits each student's method of learning. Mr. Berkemeier also focuses on cultivating a caring classroom environment where students help one another.

We are very fortunate to have Mr. Berkemeier as part of the Montcalm School and hope he continues for many years to come.



Koby Cottage.

For one weekend, parents can call it home.



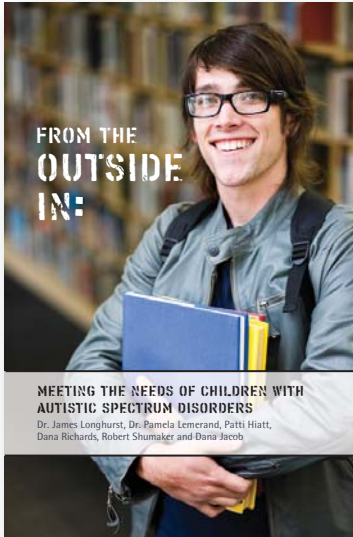
Koby Cottage is now open for parents to reconnect with their children in treatment, while nestled in the beautiful, secluded setting of Montcalm Lake on the Albion campus. Parent involvement in treatment is critical, making it essential to provide the family a private, supportive environment to spend quality time.

Experience this architectural showcase, a first in green modular construction, while enjoying the convenience of staying on campus, within walking distance of your child's cottage and activities. With two bedrooms, two baths, a kitchen and living room all centered around the dining room table, Koby Cottage offers the standard modern-day amenities in addition to the breath-taking views of Montcalm Lake.



Therapeutic services and recreational activities are available for families staying at Koby Cottage. Families may choose from these fee-based options: Conflict Cycle training, Service Learning Projects, Outdoor Adventure Education and Family Relationship Dynamics.

To cover the cleaning and maintenance of Koby Cottage, there is a per night charge. Make reservations for your stay in this unique, one-of-a-kind home by calling 517.630.2401 today.



NEW "OUTSIDE IN" WHITEPAPER

A team from Starr Commonwealth and Montcalm Schools has authored a new whitepaper for parents trying to understand Autism Spectrum Disorders, and how treatment options are available through Montcalm's Outside In program.

"From the Outside In: Meeting the Needs of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders" is a free booklet available to families of youth with Spectrum Disorders and for professionals who work with youth with autism, Asperger's and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

The information consists of research from Dr. James Longhurst, Senior Vice President of Clinical and Psychological Services at Starr and Director of Montcalm Schools, insight and guidance from Dr. Pamela Lemerand, Director of the Autism Collaborative Center at Eastern Michigan University, as well as decades of experience from Patti Hiatt, Dana Richards and Robert Shumaker, all of whom work closely with students with developmental disabilities.

For a free copy of the booklet, please call 800.837.5591, ext. 2312, or visit www.starr.org/publications to download the file.



RISING STARRS

According to staff at Montcalm School for Girls, the Samantha you meet today is much different from the Samantha you might have encountered earlier this year.



Samantha, or "Sam" as she is known, is a 15-year-old from Cincinnati, Ohio who graduated on October 23, 2009 from Montcalm School for Girls in Van Wert, Ohio. Prior to her graduation from the program, Sam took a minute to talk about her success at Montcalm.

After completing a 90-day placement at a wilderness program in North Carolina, Sam had a brief two-day visit with family before arriving in Van Wert.

SAMANTHA

"I loved being at Wilderness," Sam said. "It was one of the best times of my life. It was kind of like a vacation, though, and I really didn't address my issues, just avoided them."

Sam said her parents learned about the Montcalm program through the Internet and appreciated that it was close to home.

"They liked how it felt really home-like and really welcoming," Sam said, adding that she agrees. "I was kind of scared going to Montcalm, but I loved it right away. I thought I'd just be another student, another number, but it's not like that. People care."

Those caring people Sam refers to are the peers and staff she met during her seven-month stay.

"I will really miss all the people," she said. "It really kind of feels like home. I know everyone here and it might be hard to not have the structure, but it's really about the family feel. I have never had relationships with anyone like this before."

Dani Duncan, Activities Coordinator for Montcalm School for Girls, also credits the program for strengthening Sam's bonds with her family and in her decisions about other relationships.

"From the day Sam got here, she had a huge problem with knowing what was healthy and what wasn't in relationships," Duncan said. "Now she knows what healthy boundaries are. Her relationship with her parents used to be superficial and unhealthy but now she is open and honest with them."

Returning to Cincinnati, Sam plans to attend a private school and prepare for college.

"I feel really prepared to go home. I'm really confident. I got my mind straight, and I've made goals I want to reach. I want to go to college for music, and I want to work with special ed students. It's always been a goal of mine, but I kind of forgot about it until being here. Being at Montcalm just kind of grounded me and put me where I needed to be – back in a good frame of mind."

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MONTCALM SCHOOLS WINTER CALENDAR

BOYS ACTIVITIES

Grocery shopping
Cooking Classes
Movie Nights
Bowling
Trips to the Mall
Temple (Friday Nights)
Trip to Bookstore and Library
Drop off unwanted clothing and items to Goodwill
Ice Skating Angel Food (*Service Learning*)
Blood Drive (*Service Learning*)
Interfaith Shelter (*Service Learning*)
Homer, MI recycling center (*Service Learning*)



Cardboard Classic sled racing in Albion
Basketball games (Albion H.S.)
Humane Society (*Service Learning*)
Food distribution at local church (*Service Learning*)
Yard work for elderly Albion resident, twice a month
Caring for cottage rabbits

GIRLS ACTIVITIES

Pottery class
Cross Country skiing
Clothing drive for the Chamber Leadership program (*Service Learning*)
Ethnic dinners



Chemical Bank makes "SMART" donation



Montcalm School for Boys students on the Albion campus are benefiting from new classroom technology, allowing students the ability to interact with a computer in a group setting and become more engaged in the classroom.

Chemical Bank of Marshall, Michigan contributed toward the purchase and installation of new SMART Board technology for the Montcalm classrooms. The interactive technology allows users to connect to the computer and projector. The technology has proven to be very effective, especially among our students with special needs that require different modalities to learn.

"With our diverse population of students with various learning styles, the new SMART Boards are helping teachers to bridge the gap between learning and true comprehension," said Patti Hiatt, Montcalm's Dean of Students.

"Last year, more than 600 students received education and therapeutic services through our residential program in Albion," said Martin L. Mitchell, President and Chief Executive Officer of Starr. "This coming year, with the help of several generous donors including Chemical Bank's contribution of two SMART Boards, one projector and one wall mount, we hope to provide similar numbers of students with access to this new learning technology."

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