



St. Michaels Association for Special Education 1st Quarter Newsletter



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear SMASE parents & community members:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year! I hope you have enjoyed a summer vacation full of fun and exciting memories with your loved ones. We are thrilled to welcome all of you back to a new school year of learning and growth.

Personally, I am grateful and elated to continue this journey with you as your Executive Director. Over the past several years, I have had a chance to meet with some of you and continuously work with your special children. I look forward to continuing to build a strong relationship with all of you this upcoming year. As we enter this new school year, I want to tell you that our staff will be engaging in conversations regarding growth, both for themselves and for their students. We believe that everyone here at SMASE should always be growing and learning. Despite obstacles that may arise, we must always believe in our ability to rise above challenges and come out stronger on the other side.

We embrace the challenges of the future while continuing to cherish and celebrate the

traditions of the past. Our remarkable staff, involved parents and special students come together to make SMASE a wonderful and unique place.

We hope to have our website up and fully running before the Spring Semester. Once updated, we will give you a quick snapshot of life at our school. Until then, check out our Facebook and our Newsletters to find out about the activities happening at SMASE.

On October 19th from 6-8 pm we will be having an Open House for parents and guardians. This will be a great time to strengthen our SMASE community, meet teachers and other families, and learn about the upcoming school year. We will keep you updated as we develop a plan to make this a successful event.

Lastly, the safety of your special children is our top priority and we will always do everything we can to keep your students safe, healthy and happy.

As always, please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Michelle Spencer,

Letter from the Education Director

Executive Director SMASE Education is now in it's 7th week of operation for the 2017-18 school year. Our annual approval from the Arizona Department of Education to provide services to your children has been granted. The service delivery model for this year consists of a dynamic team of staff and services, centered around the needs of our students.

Three classrooms will operate full-time to address functional academics, structured learning, self care, health needs, physical needs, communication and preparation for adult life and independence. Additional learning opportunities will be provided on campus and in the community through programs such as horticulture, SMASE café, service-learning program, Flying Colors program and Diné Language and Culture.

With our medically fragile student population, SMASE nursing will maintain it's critical role with students and families. Family support and communication will help with these efforts to balance student's health needs including clinical/ hospital and doctor services as well as student

medications. The dedication of our staff, enthusiasm of our students and support from our families is making for a great start to the school year. Please recognize some of our new staff and changes in their assignments.

•Kameo Benally- Speech/ Language Pathology Assistant

•Abby Rieker- Teacher in the Rise Classroom

•Lavina Anderson- Flying Colors Instructor

•Ronnie Townsend- Mercy Volunteer Corps/ Para-professional in the Rise Classroom

•Kyle Rodgers- Mercy Volunteer Corps/ Supervisor in the DTA Program

•Meg Blount- Mercy Volunteer Corps/ Therapy Aide

Happy New School Year,
James Conner
Education Director



Ongoing Projects

Flying Colors



From October 6th through November 26th, thirteen of our students will have artwork from our Flying Colors program displayed in the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in Chicago. The exhibit is called “A is For Artist” and features works created by adults and students with disabilities.

It is such an honor to have our students and clients works displayed in a museum of this magnitude. Our program, Flying Colors, also known as A.R.T. (Art Realization Technologies), was developed by Tim Lefens, a New Jersey-based artist; this program enables people with physical disabilities to create art. Since 2005, St. Michaels Association for Special Edu-

cation (SMASE) has been trained in this process, which utilizes an abled bodied person to act as a “tracker,” who takes direction from the client artist to create a painting that the client has in mind. Clients chose their own shapes, colors and even the tools used to create the paintings, communicating by movement of a finger or turn of their head.

Flying Colors provides a vital outlet for clients who might otherwise not have the ability to express themselves creatively. Currently, Lavina Anderson, a para-professional staff in the multisensory classroom, is the primary instructor and tracker of Flying Colors here at SMASE.

DigDeep: SMASE WATER PROJECT

In the August of 2015, Mary Longest began her year of service as a Mercy Volunteer in the therapy department at SMASE. She quickly became oriented in the school and learned to accept that the school ran almost entirely off bottled water due to the foul smell of the tap water. During her year at the school, Mary became both interested in learning more about the bad-smelling water at the school and concerned about the overall water problem across the Navajo Nation.

After doing some research, she learned that roughly 40% of the reservation does not have access to clean, safe drinking water; her research also led her to learn about a nonprofit organization called DigDeep and their founder and executive director George McGraw. DigDeep was already working in the area, so in September 2016, Mary reached out to George, sending him a

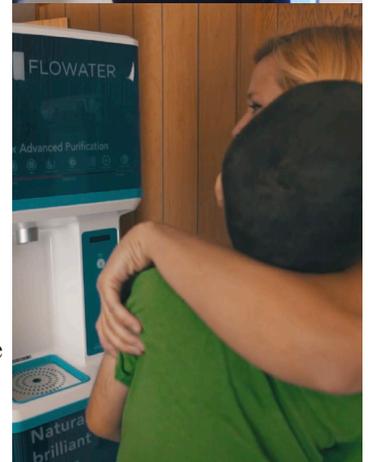
Facebook message expressing her interest and praise. Without intending much to come of it, Mary also wrote about the dirty water situation at SMASE. George’s response came in a matter of hours; he wanted to know more! He requested a phone call so he could learn about the history of the school, the students, the staff, the location, etc.

Soon after that, the team for DigDeep was on campus testing the water. Working tirelessly to find a solution for our beloved school, DigDeep came up with a plan to build a water treatment system specifically for our school. In March of 2017, the project really took off, as DigDeep began crowd funding for our school.

Countless videos and interviews were sent out letting the public know about our school and informing people how they could help. More than \$100,000 was raised in just a few months, and our school

was even featured on NPR. Eric Stonestreet, Cam on Modern Family, even tweeted about our school’s need. FloWater, a California based water filtration and refill station company heard about the project, and donated 5 point of access water filtration systems that are now installed across campus, providing staff and students with medical grade clean water. Twenty-three time Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps also heard about our school, and in early September 2017, partnered with Vice Impact to release a story about our school.

DigDeep hopes to complete the water filtration plan and replace plumbing to the school by early November. Currently, engineers are working tirelessly to come up with a design that will fit our needs. As more progresses with this project, we will keep you updated!



Departmental Updates

Day Treatment and Training for Adults



DTA kicked off the new school year with a lot of energy! Clients have engaged in a variety of activities that promote both sensory learning and independent skills. Most of our clients have gone on outings to local places such as Window Rock Library and Bashas' Diné Market. Some of the swimmers practiced for the Special Olympics at the Gallup Aquatics Center. During our Thursday Cooking Days, clients baked homemade apple pie and mixed their own homemade vanilla ice-cream in a bag! Yummy!

Some clients eat in the cafeteria, which allows them time to socialize with friends from our education department. All fueled up, they are ready for games and light exercise such as walking and bocce ball in the afternoon. While some worked on puzzles and canvas sewing this month, others played games to practice counting money. Also we made and raced soap-bar boats as well as participated in the DTA Sweeping Games. September proved to be full of fun activities; we look forward to an event filled year.

Special Olympics

Roughly 30 student and adult athletes, more than half of SMASE's clients, participate in Special Olympic competitions throughout the year. Fall is a busy time for coaches and athletes with both Bocce Ball and Swimming competitions taking place. On September 27th, a handful of athletes competed in the regional Bocce Ball competition in Chinle. On October 13th and 14th, our team will travel to Phoenix to compete in the State Swimming competition. Every Tuesday, our athletes practice their swimming at Gallup Aquatics Center. On October 27th and 28th, the State Fall Classic will take place where student and adult clients will participate in a Bocce Ball competition with athletes from around the state. Special Olympics competitions are always an exciting time for our student and adult athletes as they get to show off their athletic skills, make new friends and win awards for their effort! To help support our Special Olympics team, visit any Red Robin in Arizona on October 21st; they will be donating to Special Olympics through the program called Tip-a-Cop.



The Therapy Department



The SMASE Therapy Department added two new staff members this year: Kameo Benally, a Speech/Language Pathology Assistant, and Meg Blount, a Mercy Corps Volunteer who studied Exercise Science. Along with Dawn Moyer, SMASE's Occupational Therapist, the three work with other staff to carry out a variety of group, individual and classroom-based program and activities tailored to meet students' needs.

The SMASE Therapy Department provides its wide range of support this year through direct and indirect services as well as consultation from speech pathology and physical therapy. The therapy department will continue its comprehensive approach and focus on a team effort between students, families, classrooms, doctors and clinics. Much of the physical, occupational and speech therapy will be integrated into our students' educational activities.

Group Home Construction Update

A hoghan is a sacred place for our children and adults. A dwelling is always blessed before we utilizing it as sleep. Our hoghan is our mother earth and father sky. The floor of the hoghan is like our Mother Earth, we sleep, walk and sit on it. We have our blessed water and fire. The same needs we have on our Mother Earth is what we have in our Hoghan. The roof of our hoghan is like our Father Sky. Our Hoghan keeps us warm and safe. We are obligated to take care of our Hoghan as we care for our Mother Earth and Father Sky. The hoghan should face East, to receive the blessings of Diyin Dine'e'. These principles are what makes our hoghan special and is where our children and adults can always return for strength and guidance.

As many of you know,

most of our group homes are hoghans and these hold a special place in our heart. Built in the mid 70s, Hoghan Ayoo' anii' nishni' (GH #6) was the first group home on SMASE's soil. Sister Marijane Ryan lived in this hoghan with some children who made up some of the original students here at SMASE. For more than 44 years, Hoghan Ayoo'anni' nishni'(GH# 6), Bitsiidi Hoghan (GH #8) and Dine' bi' Hoghan (GH #11) housed children with developmental disabilities. Each group home housed three residents. Over the years, these homes eventually grew old and began to show wear and tear. Soon their upkeep and repairs were too much, so the homes had to be demolished. Last fall, in memory of Sister Marijane Ryan and the first building

here on campus, prayers and blessing were offered before the demolition of Hoghan Ayoo' anii' nishni' and the other two hoghans. It was very sad to see the first hoghan collapse; so much history and so many memories were held in its walls.

By early 2018, we will have three new group homes here on SMASE's campus. Each home will house three residents. These dwellings will have ample space for storage as well as updated amenities. As with all of our group homes, these homes will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, since some of our children and adults live on campus year round. When completed, we are looking forward to celebrating their construction with an open house.



Upcoming Events

- October 5th- Rise classroom is going tea picking
- October 5th- Learning support is going to Narbona Pass
- October 13th & 14th- Special Olympics Swimming in Phx
- October 17th- Learning Support is going to a pumpkin patch
- October 19th from 6-8 pm- SMASE Parent Open House
- October 24th- DTA is having a Haunted House
- October 27th & 28th- Special Olympics Bocce Ball in Phx
- End of October- Halloween Dance
- November 2nd- Diné Culture Day

Other outings may occur. Dates might change.

Website Information

Exciting update on our website! We should have a temporary website up and running by October 6th. This temporary website will be: <https://smase.godaddysites.com>. Then by November, everything should be transferred back to www.smase.org, which will be our permanent website. Please make sure

you check out the website. We will be updating it frequently and will have information such as contact information for staff, the monthly lunch menu and information about activities and events. In the meantime, don't forget to check out our Facebook for (almost) daily updates on the fun we are having!



Food Service 729-2819		October 2017				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
2 Beef ravioli Wheat crackers Steam peas & carrots Purple plums Milk	3 Ground beef & Spanish rice Wheat bread Green beans Apricots Milk	4 Chicken nuggets Sweet potato waffles Steam broccoli Fresh apple slices Milk	5 Beef macaroni Toss salad Wheat bread Purple plums Milk	6 Corn dog Pork & beans Cheese stick Fruit grain bar Milk		
9 Tuna sandwich Sun chips Carrot sticks Apple/orange Milk	10 Diced chicken tomato bake Wheat bread Broccoli salad Pineapple tidbits Milk	11 Spaghetti w/meat sauce Garlic bread Corn Apple crisp Milk	12 Chef salad w/diced ham Wheat crackers Fruit cocktail w/cottage cheese Milk	13 Bean & beef burrito Hominy corn Diced pears Milk		
16 Chicken patty Baked red potatoes Steam spinach Pears Milk	17 Chicken salad on croissant Baked potato chips Tomato wedge Apricots Milk	18 Beef taco w/garnish Spanish corn Refried beans Fruit salad Milk	19 Chicken Teriyaki w/brown rice Vegetable blend Mandarin orange Milk	20 Pepperoni Pizza 3 bean salad Cheese stick Apple/orange Milk		
23 Fish filet Potato wedge Cole slaw Fresh apple slices Milk	24 Chicken chow mein Brown rice Vegetable egg roll Mandarin orange Milk	25 Potato boat w/meat sauce & garnish Wheat crackers Apple/orange Milk	26 Beef stroganoff Mix vegetables Wheat bread Jello w/fruit Milk	27		COOKS CHOICE
30 Salisbury steak w/mash potato Wheat bread Steam beets Fresh orange Milk	31 Cold-cuts combo on hoagie bun w/garnish Baked potato chips Apple/orange Milk					

