

Muskegon Opportunity MESSENGER

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From the Coordinator

I cannot believe it is already the middle of August and a new school year is just around the corner.



For several of our local school districts, a new year brings some new

faces. Please join me in welcoming the following people to their new positions:

- Dave Sipka – superintendent, MAISD
- Dave Peden – superintendent, Mona Shores
- Nathan Robrahn – superintendent, Montague
- Jon Felske – superintendent, Muskegon
- Jerry McDowell – superintendent, Whitehall

For the Muskegon Opportunity Executive Committee, a new year brings a chance to grow and change. Please join me in welcoming the following people to our team:

- Kelly Baldwin – assistant principal, Muskegon Public High School
- Ann Cardon – superintendent, Holton Public Schools
- John Selmon – vice president of student services, Muskegon Community College

With the addition of these new leaders comes new ideas and a renewed commitment to our mission. We are so excited for the 2011-12 school year—and we hope you are, too!

Marissa

Marissa Higgs, coordinator

Muskegon Opportunity revs up for school year

By Kayla Bunge
Administrative Assistant

exciting and busy school year ahead.

MUSKEGON—For some people, a summer was about sunshine, vacations and cookouts.

For Muskegon Opportunity, summer was about sunshine, meetings and more meetings.

The staff, executive committee and advisory committee spent much of the last few months reflecting on a successful year of bringing college access and readiness services to students and their families. They spent perhaps even more of the last few months planning for another year.

Muskegon Opportunity has an



Morgan Lind, the F4CE of 4 for WOTV Channel 4, will serve as the new host of the Muskegon Opportunity KnowHow2Go Road Show, which will be presented to high-school juniors starting in September.

The KnowHow2Go Road Show, a 45-minute talk-show-style presentation for high-school juniors, kicks off in September with a new host, a couple new guests and some other new features.

Muskegon Opportunity has teamed up with WOTV Channel 4 and secured Morgan Lind, the F4CE of 4 station ambassador, as the host of the road show.

The organization also has partnered with Everest Institute, as well as Baker College, Muskegon Community College, Ferris State University, Grand

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College Knowledge

Things You Can Do Now to Prepare for Post-Secondary

School is about to start. Schedules are about to get busier. Time to prepare for college is about to slip away.

Wait a minute! There's never too little time to prepare for post-secondary education!

There's at least one thing families can do right now to start the school year on the right foot.

Here are a few examples by grade level:

•**Elementary school:** Talk about what your child wants to be when he or she grows up. Ask him or her what he or she likes to do, who he or she admires and what that person had to do to get their job. Listen to his or her answers.

•**Middle school:** Take your

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Program Updates

•**Federal GEAR UP grant:** Muskegon Opportunity and Ferris State University submitted their joint application for a federal GEAR UP grant in mid-July. The two entities worked tirelessly to design their proposed Imagine More! program and secure dozens of community partners who would contribute career-related services to students. The grant, if awarded, would serve more than 1,300 students in 10 middle

schools in Muskegon County to the tune of \$7 million over seven years. The federal government is expected to announce grant recipients sometime this month.

•**MCAN "Collective Impact" grant:** Muskegon Opportunity is working on its application for a "Collective Impact" grant from the Michigan College Access Network. The highly competitive

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Save the Date

•**Thursday, Aug. 25:** Whitecaps baseball game (buy-one-get-one tickets for mentors, mentees, supporters)—7 p.m., Fifth Third Ballpark, Grand Rapids; contact Anne at (616) 994-4580 or asulliva@msu.edu.

•**Monday, Sept. 19:** KnowHow2Go Road Show—9 a.m., Fruitport High School.

•**TBD:** Advisory committee meeting—8 a.m., TBD. (e-mail notice forthcoming)

MESSENGER

SCHOOL YEAR/Road show, workshops among plans for coming school year

Valley State University and Western Michigan University and retained representatives of those institutions as guests on the show.

Muskegon Opportunity has tweaked the road show—including the addition of some “Jeopardy!”-style trivia questions to test the guests and engage students—but ensured it still bears its signature fun and interactive style.

The monthly college access and readiness workshops also roll out in September, also with a new twist.

Muskegon Opportunity has planned to have representatives from Michigan colleges and universities as well as current college students at the workshops to help students and their families get the most reliable information about post-secondary education. The organization also has planned to hold the workshops on local college campuses to give students and their families a real feel for post-secondary education.

Muskegon Opportunity has revamped the workshops—selecting an overarching topic

and then breaking it down to juniors-only, seniors-only and parents-only discussion sessions—but ensured they still provide the most timely, useful information.

Muskegon Opportunity Coordinator Marissa Higgs said the organization is excited about the changes.

“The fall is a busy time, but also an exciting time for us,” she said. “The road show and workshops are time-tested initiatives that we are really proud of and are once again excited to bring to the students in our community. But we wanted to keep both of those projects fresh and relevant, not only for our students, but also for us and for our partners.

“We’re always striving to keep our students and their families engaged in the conversation about post-secondary education,” she said.

The first KnowHow2Go Road Show is scheduled for 9 a.m. Monday, Sept. 19, at Fruitport High School. The first college access and readiness workshop is planned for 5-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 21, at the Stevenson Center on the MCC campus.

Pilot of middle school road show a success

By Kayla Bunge
Administrative Assistant

WHITEHALL—Middle-school students in Whitehall got a sneak peek at the newest Muskegon Opportunity road show in late May.

Muskegon Opportunity worked with the theater department at Reeths-Puffer High School to create and present a pilot middle school road show. The organization provided the high-school students with a basic framework—modeled after “The Wizard of Oz” and sprinkled with information from the middle school section of the KnowHow2Go website—and the students took eighth-graders on a journey through the Land of Oz and through the college and career goal-setting process.

The organization received positive feedback and constructive criticism; teachers and counselors said the message was spot on but the presentation needed improvement.

Muskegon Opportunity now is improving the show and exploring the possibility of using high-



Scarecrow and Dorothy, portrayed by Reeths-Puffer students Bobby Munro and Naomi Langlois, respectively, discuss their uncertainty about the future and their desire to ask the Wizard for help during the pilot of the Muskegon Opportunity middle school road show May 27.

school students to present the show at eighth-grade transition days or at the career fair.

UPDATES/Executive committee grows

grant is awarded to support community-based local college-access networks that are coordinating individuals from broad cross-sector entities within their community to affect large-scale social change. The grant is an opportunity for our community to showcase the partnerships it has created to support the goal of having 60 percent of our population holding high-quality degrees or credentials by 2025. The grant application is due Sept. 2.

•**Executive committee changes:** Linda Riepma, retired executive director of secondary education for Muskegon Public Schools, recently resigned from the Muskegon Opportunity Ex-

ecutive Committee to more thoroughly enjoy her retirement. The committee invited several people to join the group and is pleased to welcome three new members, each of whom brings valuable knowledge and experience to the organization: Kelly Baldwin, assistant principal at Muskegon High School; Ann Cardon, superintendent of Holton Public Schools; and John Selmon, vice president of student services at Muskegon Community College.

•**Data dashboard:** Muskegon Opportunity has put together a “dashboard” of college access-related data for Muskegon County, such as education attainment rate. Check it out [here](#).

KNOWLEDGE/Time to prepare is now

child on a scavenger hunt on the campus of his or her choice. Locate key places, such as the admissions office, student union and football stadium.

•**High school:** Explore colleges and universities with your child at [www.collegesearch.collegeboard.com](#) and find the schools

that best fit his or her wants and needs. Request information from those schools or visit them over a school break.

Want more ideas? Go to [www.muskegonopportunity.com](#) and click on “resources” for lists of things parents and students can do to get ready for college.

Check it out!

Did you miss the Timeline of Accomplishments and Plan for the Future unveiled at the June advisory committee meeting? Go to [muskegonopportunity.com](#) to view it.