

# 23TODAY

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY IU23  
FALL 2015



Pictured: Students from our Jump Start to First Grade Camp at Blessed Teresa of Calcutta School. See page 3 to learn more about the summer camps of 2015.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

MCIU welcomed three new board members at the August 26, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting. Our new members are: (pictured left to right): Dr. Kerry A. Drake representing Upper Perkiomen School District, Mr. William England representing the School District of Cheltenham Township and Ms. Brenda G. Hackett representing Methacton School District. We thank you for your commitment and support of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit.



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## MCIU OPENING DAY FOR STAFF

All Montgomery County Intermediate Unit staff members gathered for an Opening Day event to kick-off the 2015-16 school year on Thursday, August 27, 2015. This was a notable occasion, as this was the first time all intermediate unit staff has been assembled in one location! To accommodate an event of this proportion, the MCIU enlisted the help of the North Penn School District who graciously offered use of the North Penn High School Auditorium.

The program included a welcoming message from MCIU Executive Director, Dr. John George, highlights of recent accomplishments, and an overview of organizational goals for the coming year.

MCIU Board President Lou Polaneczky (Hatboro-Horsham School District) addressed the audience with opening remarks. Board Secretary Maura Buri (Upper Merion Area School District), Board Member Sherri Becker (Wissahickon School District) and Board Member Brenda Hackett (Methacton School District) were in attendance and assisted during the awards portion of the program.



## HEAD START

MCIU formally took over as the grantee for Head Start on August 1, 2015. We welcomed Tara Kelly and Melanie Lewin as the Program Administrators. Additionally, Samantha Bader, Brenda Postell and Ann Wilson have come on board as the Health & Wellness and Educational Supervisors respectively. The grant allows for 490 students in 27 classrooms at 11 locations across Montgomery County. Under this grant MCIU has been able to extend the student day to 5 ½ hours or 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Our expectation is that this enhanced schedule will increase kindergarten readiness for all students.

Since assuming the grant on August 1, 2015, the Head Start Leadership and Family Engagement Teams have processed applications from over 500 families. Despite losing three classrooms of returning students, due to lack of child-care subsidy and/or site relocation, we have enrolled 430 eligible children in our 27 classes. Recruitment and enrollment is ongoing to fill the remaining 60 seats. Additionally, we consolidated three locations in Pottstown to one at the former Edgewood Elementary School. We have also relocated one of the Lansdale classrooms to Schwenksville Elementary School, which has generously offered us space in order to better meet the needs of the community.

The school year got off to a strong start with all staff receiving a full week of professional development here at the IU led by the Head Start Leadership Team. Subsequently, the teaching staff received intensive multi-day development around Creative Curriculum led by Kendall Glouner and Tammy Bertel. The effects of this training are already evident as we welcomed families beginning the week of September 14, 2015. The establishment of any new program is not without its challenges; however, we anticipate being fully enrolled and providing a quality early learning experience for all Head Start families in Montgomery County this year.

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## SUMMER CAMPS 2015

The end of the 2014-15 school year did not signal the end of learning opportunities for some nonpublic school students in Montgomery County. Rather, over 260 students ranging in ages from six years to seventeen years combined learning with peer-group activities, games and pure, simple fun by participating in one of seven different summer camps during the week of June 15th.

Staffed by the same counselors, remediation teachers and speech-language therapists from the Office of Non-Public Services who work with the students throughout the school year, these no-cost-to-students camps are located at various nonpublic schools throughout the county. Regardless of whether the student is going into first grade or twelfth grade, the half-day morning camps offer something for everyone.

Observations and responses from parents provided support for the camps.....

*"I thought the program was great. My son really enjoyed it. The themes each day had my son very interested. Thank you!"*

*"My daughter was hesitant about attending and I pushed her to go. In the end she really enjoyed it and got a lot out of it. She feels she will be able to handle certain situations better in the future. I think the camp is one of the best out there. Thank you!!"*

*"My son was quite thrilled to have gone. He wrote on the calendar, 'leadership camp that I'm not going to'. After attending said, 'Thanks mom, I loved it. It was fun. I'm glad you signed me up. And if you didn't know anyone or liked anyone, that was ok cause the leaders were my friends and I loved them!!' By the way he did make some friends but it was scary at first. You did a good job and my boys reaction was proof! He came back loving what he did during camp and how nice people were. Thanks!"*

*"My daughter loved this camp and was sad when it was over! Staff members clearly put a lot of time and effort into planning and executing activities, and care for the children. The ladies were extremely pleasant and evidenced enjoyment of their craft! My daughter has been spouting off facts and items learned for two weeks. The themes were awesome and left the kids excited for the next day. Thank you so much!"*

*"Make Mind Fun Camp available for each year. The skills worked on with the children are well done. As they say, 'What you learn with pleasure, you learn full measure.'"*

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## MONTGOMERY VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Montgomery Virtual Program (MVP) is an online learning solution offered by the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU). MVP allows students to attend their local school while taking virtual courses on a part-time to full-time basis. Through partnerships with local schools, our structure allows students to earn a diploma from their local school, participate in school-sponsored activities and athletic programs, and also attend vocational technical high schools. Students have access to rigorous and engaging online learning materials and the flexibility to complete school work on

a schedule that works well for them. MVP had an extremely successful inaugural summer! A total of 251 students from nine schools and districts enrolled in 372 accelerated and credit recovery courses. MOUs for school-year cyber learning options are in place for 2015-2016 with Hatboro-Horsham and Perkiomen Valley School Districts, as well as two non-public schools. MVP has enrolled and provided orientation to 15 students from four different schools in 26 courses.

MVP continues to grow! Presentations to Montgomery County Business Administrators and Non-Public school leaders during the month of September are examples of our efforts to inform our constituents of MVP's services and courses.

MCIU has also been contracted by Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 to support their development of a similar cyber program. MVP staff will be working to bring them online with systems and services over the next few weeks.



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SAVE  
THE  
DATE

Next MCIU  
Board Meeting  
Wednesday,  
October 28, 2015

MCIU Education Foundation  
Comedy Show &  
Silent Auction  
Friday, November 13, 2015

Offices Closed:  
Thanksgiving Break:  
November 26-27, 2015  
Winter Break:  
December 24-31, 2015 and  
January 1, 2016