



**Executive Director's Report  
November 18, 2022**

This month has been a whirlwind of activities at MECDH/GBSD. In every program I see growth and forward movement! Staff are working incredibly hard to meet student needs and support their teammates. I am seeing collaborative teamwork in every department. Our new Leadership Team is working diligently to provide the support and attention needed to take this organization to the next level. This new organizational structure has received much positive feedback and I see first-hand the difference! Projects and initiatives that have been in the works for years are coming to fruition and staff are excited to see their hard work pay off.

I had the honor of bringing three of our High School students to the Hyde School Leadership Day to provide presentations on leadership. I was incredibly proud as I watched them present their topic in three consecutive breakout sessions and watch two of our students stand and present in front of 1,000 students and administrators from all over the State of Maine. These three students have touched every program in our organization so this day was the culmination of years of work and support by many different departments and staff members. Great job MECDHH/GBSD!

Djenne Morris spent a week with us meeting with staff and families and continuing her training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access. Staff are enjoying the opportunity to have her support. Karen, Susie, Djenne and her husband Michael hosted a dinner for families, and it was not only well attended, but happened to be all families of students that are transition age. The discussion was rich and offered much support and collaborative ideas to these families. Djenne will be back again in December to provide training and more support to staff and families.

MECDHH/GBSD is an incredible place to be right now. We are so fortunate to have the staff that we have working for us with the students, families and providers statewide. I get calls from other states often wanting to learn from us and our various models of early intervention and deaf education. My message is one of sharing our model of trial and error, collaborative planning, and our statewide reach. We have come a long way in Maine and with this current team of staff we have at MECDHH/GBSD we have an exciting future ahead of us!

Warmly,

Karen Hopkins, *Executive Director*



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## Human Resources/Payroll

Lori Levesque, *Director*

The HR/Payroll office is continuing to work on various processes such as hiring, onboarding, timesheets, evaluations, standardizing job descriptions, and certification. There is so much to do and so little time!

Our health insurance premium holiday was extended through November so that is very good news for everyone! We are in the middle of open enrollment for our AFLAC supplemental policies like dependent care, flexible spending accounts, and short-term disability.

We have the following positions open right now:

- Early Intervention and Family Services
- Accounts Payable Generalist
- Site-based Special Education Teacher
- Ed Tech I, II, and III
- Subs

If you know of anyone looking for an awesome job at an amazing organization, send them my way! Thank you for the opportunity to do this work.

## Early Intervention and Family Services

Amy Spencer, *Coordinator*

EIFS continues to move forward in supporting families throughout the state with the great group of providers shown here! We had the chance to dig into Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussions with Djenne exploring some common themes we see in our practice here in Maine. Providers brought real life experiences and questions to the table that brought up some processing of internal biases and allowed us to explore ways to reflect on the HOW of providing services to families, vs the WHAT.



Family playgroups are ongoing with some intimate groups in the south and great family events in the north. Families in the south have explored the theme of families integrated into fall fun through a variety of activities tailored to each week's group needs.

In the north, October brought a crew of families to a pumpkin patch for pumpkin painting, hay shuttles, goat petting, and a bilingual bimodal story time! In both settings the goal is family connections, peer interactions, language rich experiences, and JOY!





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## Mackworth Island Preschool

Cathy Lushman, *Coordinator*



This month in preschool we have enjoyed our first unit of our new curriculum – “All About Family.” We are using the PreK for ME curriculum and the children



are really enjoying the hands-on activities provided. A few of our favorite stories include, *Corduroy*, *Sometimes I’m Bombaloo*, *Peter’s Chair*, and *Cry Baby*. Every Wednesday we enjoy a story in ASL by one of our ASL specialists.

## Elementary, North and South

Melanie Bowlus, *Coordinator*



This past month at EECS we have been acclimating to the school schedules, routines and expectations. Ms. Joanie gave an “Intro to Deaf Culture” presentation in the mainstream classrooms that have MECDHH students. Students had lots of questions and were highly interested to learn about Deaf culture and ways they can communicate with their peers.

Staff from both Brewer and EECS attended the ASL Immersion Weekend. We learned so much from workshops given by Dr. Sandra Wood; Josh Seal CDI; Sammy Hargis;

and the energetic Visual Vernacular team.



In the Baxter classroom, Kindergarten through 2nd grade is continuing to work on their feeling identification unit and learning new Bedrock vocabulary. Ms. Katie prepared a special tea party to encourage students to try new foods, some of which are provided by EECS as part of their Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program. 3rd through 5th grade is working on identifying subjects



and predicates using the Bilingual Grammar Curriculum. 3rd and 5th graders also completed their NWEA assessments.

This month EECS hosted a community dinner, inviting all families to come together for a time of fellowship and sharing a meal. A few MECDHH families participated and were able to see their child’s classroom, current work samples, as well as meet classroom teachers Ms. Joanie and Ms. Katie.



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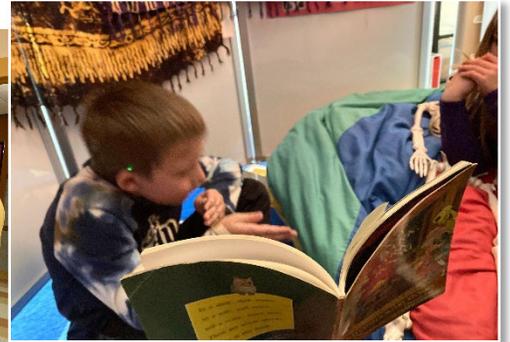
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At the end of the month, we celebrated fall with a classroom party! K-2 students helped make apple sauce, a snack mix, and set the tables. All students painted pumpkins and enjoyed their fall snacks while watching fall ASL stories. On Halloween day, retired MECDHH pre-school coordinator Sammy Hargis shared his ASL storytelling skills with a Halloween themed book, "We're going on a Pumpkin Hunt" for all students. Students were enthralled and have been asking for Sammy to return!

At Brewer, we had lots of fun at the end of October! Everyone on our team contributed to the decoration of our door, Hocus Pocus-style and won Honorable Mention for First Prize! The door has many tactile elements to help everyone enjoy it.

We made our traditional spooky cave where we went to tell scary stories to each other by the light of the flaming cauldron.

One of our team members roasted some witches' fingers for us to enjoy as a snack. We are the Brewer Witches after all!



## Middle/High School, North/South

Erin Bunce, *Coordinator*

Portland High School students are making wonderful strides towards their future! Recently Executive Director, Karen Hopkins and three PHS students went to the Hyde School in Bath to participate in the Maine Youth Leadership Conference. Additionally, Reena Banerjee, an admissions counselor, from Rochester Institute of Technology /National Technical Institute for the Deaf visited students at PHS. Reena shared information about RIT and NTID. Students asked Reena a lot of questions! It was a great



visit. Another way that students have been making strides towards their future is through PATHS, Portland Arts and Technology High School, in the fields of welding, food service and masonry. Check out the pictures of the students working hard on career skills! Shana Kelley-Cohen and Alicia Pieper will continue to work with students and their families with transitioning plans in anticipation for life after high school.



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During the month of October, Megan Garrity began a cross content novel study on *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park at Lyman Moore Middle School. Megan’s goal is to have students make authentic connections between ASL, English Language Arts, social studies, and science. The students continue to be involved with after school activities such as soccer, ASL Club, Robotics and Anime. This involvement allows them to make connections with others after school hours and is critical for their social and emotional growth!

Lyman Moore students also participated in grade level team building activities called Rippleffect (<https://www.rippleffectmaine.org/>). 6th, 7th and 8th grade students went off campus on a day-long

journey centered around teamwork with fellow students, staff and a chance to explore the great city of Portland! A great time was had by all!

## Outreach, Part B

Donna Casavant, *Coordinator*

Check Referrals, 8am	Check Referrals, 8am	Car: to island store 7:30 - 9:30am	Drive to Falmouth Office: up equ 7:30 - 9:30am
	✓ Donna and Alyssa 8:30 - 9:30am	Leia at 9 - 10am	Leia at 9 - 10am
	Jennifer 9 - 10am	✓ Meet with D 9:30 - 10:30am	Leia and Donna 10:30am - 12:15pm
LT Change meeting 10am - 12	Leadership meeting/LINK/cafeteria 10am - 12	Peer Awareness Bangor 10:15 - 11:30am	
✗ Leia and Donna 12 - 1pm	✓ Denise and Donna 11:45am - 1:15pm	donna and Jane meeti	
	✓ Donna Casavant, M	✓ Rob and Donna 1:30 - 2:30pm	
✓ Heather and Donna 1:30 - 3:10pm	✓ Angel and Donna 1:15 - 2pm	Effective Processes Special Education 2 - 3:30pm <a href="https://goalbookapp.z">https://goalbookapp.z</a>	✓ Tani and Donna 2:30 - 3:30pm
✓ Alyssa and Donna 3:30 - 4:30pm			✓ Denise and Donna 3:30 - 4:45pm

Outreach TODs are reaching across the state to support students and educational teams. Here are some highlights of the month:

Google Calendar’s depiction of 3 days in the life of an MECDDH coordinator. This week I met a personal goal of seeing each outreach member at least once in person or virtually. I hope they feel the support! I think they do.

Linda Koehler, Brewer site-based TOD and Heather Kanumalla,



outreach itinerant TOD, created a mini-Kids Like Me program for some of their students. This is not a statewide initiative, yet it was an attempt by two motivated staff members to get their students together.



Denise Adams, itinerant TOD, shared this picture of how one of her students is currently accessing her education. Denise and Katie Duncan, audiologist, are working together to find ways to make this unique situation more accessible auditorily for the student. Thanks for being there for our student!

Lastly, as we approach the holiday season, my Christmas cactus seems to like the May Street office location. If you zoom in, you’ll see it’s got dozens of new buds ... something this plant never did at home!

I’m looking forward to seeing you all in person next Friday.



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## **Maintenance**

Steve Kimball, *Supervisor*

Along with the maintenance department's day to day routine we have been working on the following:

- Cutting brush on the causeway
- Cleaning out drainage areas
- Putting studded tires on all state vehicle
- Thinning out trees for better growth, more natural light and safety
- Helping with events happening on the island
- Cleaning out emergency boat launch, requested by Falmouth Fire Department
- Picking up leaves
- Checking roof condition and clearing roof drains on campus
- Working on updating keys for emergency use
- Building a resonance board floor
- Turning on heat to all areas and checking for problems
- Preparing equipment for winter season