

IMLEA is dedicated to promoting, improving, and supporting middle level education.



MIDDLING AROUND

The Newsletter of the Indiana Middle Level Education Association



A Time of Transitions *Test Takers vs. Lifelong Learners*

I hope this note finds you doing well. As we enter the season of standardized testing, we wanted to send a message of encouragement.

As we, at our school, started practice testing this week, I could physically see the anxiety levels and behaviors of our staff and students escalate. As we reflected on this observation, we came to some conclusions that we wanted to share with you. Hopefully this will encourage you to keep doing your very best in our noble profession.

We have decided that we will encourage our students to do their best on any form of accountability; however, from this point forward, we are going to shift our focus as a school from being good test takers to preparing our students to be lifelong learners and well-rounded citizens. We have decided that we will not be holding the annual ISTEP pep rally nor will we take weeks to finish these assessments.

It was obvious to me that there is already enough implied pressure on both our staff and students; therefore, we are going to take the first round of

ISTEP, ILEARN, or whatever test that is implemented in our future, in two days. We decided to do this so that we can get back to doing what we feel we are best at: teaching our students. Our focus will remain on the main thing, our students.

We do not want a student's identity to be found in the passing or not passing of a test. We are going to focus on teaching essential standards that will prepare them to do well, no matter what situation they are in. We are going to provide them with character development, provide experiences that will make them well-rounded citizens, and most importantly, love our students.

As I pray over our students, especially my own children, I do not ever ask for them to be the best test takers in the state of Indiana. I specifically ask for each of them to feel loved by their teachers each and every day. I can promise you that 30 years from now, your students will not remember their test scores, but they will remember your name, what you taught them, and how you made them feel. So, in closing, I would encourage you to increasingly show them even more attention, engagement, and, most importantly, *love* during this testing season!

Jessica Tubbs is Assistant Principal at Creekside MS in Carmel. You can contact Jessica at jtubbs@ccs.k12.in.us.



Leading from the Middle

Indiana Middle Level Education Association
2019 Fall Conference
September 29-30, 2019
Indianapolis Marriott North
Indianapolis, IN

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MIDDLING AROUND

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Vicki Wertz, Editor - imleanews@comcast.net

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IMLEA Office: 317.894.2937

Fax: 317.454.0749

Website: www.imlea.org Email: imlea@iasp.org



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IMLEA HAPPENINGS

Shirley's Desk



Get Active – Nationally!

National Forum Summer Conference
Washington, D.C. – June 26-29

Get active in supporting and participating in middle grades education nationally – the **NATIONAL FORUM SUMMER CONFERENCE** in Washington, D.C. is June 26-29!

Member Benefit of IMLEA: National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform partnership

As most of you know, IMLEA partners with many different organizations and associations that we feel will benefit our members and all middle grades-configured schools in Indiana. One of our partnerships is with the National Forum. Our 13 Indiana designated "Schools to Watch" get support, information, professional development, recognition and opportunities for participating in advocacy at the federal level.

Some of our STW principals have been invited to testify in Washington, D.C. on their success with new engaging practices in their schools. Even if you are not in a "School to Watch," you can still benefit from Forum membership. Check out the link below to learn more about the Forum and the Member Benefits:

<https://nationalforumtoacceleratemiddle-gradesreform.wildapricot.org/>

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform – <https://www.middlegradesreform.org/> – is an alliance of educators, researchers, national associations, and officers of professional organizations and foundations committed to promoting academic performance and healthy development of young adolescents.

In order to prepare students to be lifelong learners ready for college, career, and citizenship, the National Forum seeks to make every middle-grade school academically excellent, responsive to the developmental needs and interests of young adolescents, and socially equitable.

To accomplish its goal of improved academic and developmental outcomes for all students in the middle grades, the Forum identifies and disseminates best practices, articulates and promotes effective policies, recognizes and develops enlightened leadership, and informs and engages the public.

The National Forum, through its Schools to Watch® (STW) program, has developed criteria for identifying high-performing middle-grades schools, created tools to help schools use the criteria, expanded the program to 18 states, and selected and honored 465 successful schools across the country during the Annual STW Conference.

Shirley Wright is the Executive Director for the Indiana Middle Level Education Association. Contact Shirley at the IMLEA Office by phone at 317.894.2937, or email at imlea@iasp.org

INDIANA SCHOOLS TO WATCH



Ben Franklin Middle School, Valparaiso
Principal Jean Sienkowski
jsienkowski@valpo.k12.in.us

Northridge Middle School, Middlebury
Principal Rachel Vallance
vallancer@mcsin-k12.org

East Washington Middle School, Pekin
Principal Amber King
aking@ewsc.k12.in.us

Riverside Intermediate School, Plymouth
Assistant Principal Ryan Welch
rwelch@plymouth.k12.in.us

Hebron Middle School, Hebron
Principal Jeff Brooks
brooks@hebronschools.k12.in.us

Rochester Middle School, Rochester
Principal Oscar Haughs
oscar.haugh@zebras.net

Sunman Dearborn Middle School, St. Leon
Principal Dr. Matt Maple
mdmaple@sunmandearborn.k12.in.us

IPS Center for Inquiry 84, Indianapolis
Principal Kathleen Miller
starkkb@myips.org

Shelbyville Middle School, Shelbyville
Principal Ryan Mikus
ramikus@shelbycs.org

Tri-West Middle School, Lizton
Principal Ryan Nickoli
nickolir@hendricks.k12.in.us

Lebanon Middle School, Lebanon
Principal Doyle Dunshee
DunsheeD@leb.k12.in.us

South Ripley Junior High School, Versailles
Principal Destiny Rutzel
drutzel@sripley.k12.in.us

Triton Central Middle School, Fairland
Principal Bobby Thompson
bthompson@nwshelby.k12.in.us



Horace Mann finds another way to partner with you

No one loves to form partnerships with educators more than Horace Mann. It's why so many school districts welcome our agents into their buildings and why so many teachers take advantage of our insurance and retirement planning expertise.

A new partnership with **DonorsChoose.org** helps donors find teachers who need financial assistance for classroom projects big and small. Teachers post their projects, donors choose projects to support, and teachers and kids benefit with materials delivered right to their schools. Now that's a partnership that can help everyone.

To learn more contact your local agent or visit horacemann.com



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 **Horace Mann**
 Founded by Educators for Educators

IMLEA 2019 Annual Conference

The 2019 IMLEA Conference will be September 29-30 at the Indianapolis Marriott North. Our theme of “Leading from the Middle” highlights the importance of the middle years, and the value of providing leadership opportunities for both staff and students.



Our keynote speaker for Sunday evening will be **Dr. Buddy Berry**, Superintendent of Eminence Independent Schools in Kentucky. Implementation of his “School on Fire” model (Framework of Innovation for Reinventing Education) has led to dramatic changes in his district.

Educators from different systems and states regularly visit Eminence Schools, and our board members enthusiastically recommended him as our speaker.



Dr. Lori Desautels, Assistant Professor at Butler University, will give the Monday morning keynote. Dr. Desautels has a passion for educating both pre-service and practicing teachers in best practices and current neuroscience research. In recent years, with seeming increases in students dealing with adversity, attendees praise her workshops for helping them understand the why and the how for trauma-informed teaching.

Our special conference website can be accessed directly at <https://www.imleaconference2019.com/> or through the IMLEA site. 2018 attendees were unanimous in their praise for the Marriott; hotel rates have gone up only \$3, and we have kept registration rates the same. We have every intent of making this conference affordable for all, and encourage schools to send a team of teachers. It is even possible to request an eLearning day from the IDOE to send your entire staff to the conference. Triton Central Middle School has done this in the past, and you can contact principal Bobby Thompson (bthompson@nwshelbyschools.org) if you have questions.



Leading from the Middle

Indiana Middle Level Education Association
2019 Fall Conference
September 29-30, 2019
Indianapolis Marriott North
Indianapolis, IN

Leading from the Middle

Attend the IMLEA Conference and explore...

- eLearning Best Practices Panel Discussion
- The Return of Katie Powell: Worksheet Busters and Lecture Busters!
- Computer Science Updates from DOE
- Planning Effective Instruction Using the Math Framework
- SEL and Literacy Presentations from DOE
- Interdisciplinary Literacy from a PAEMST Winner
- Culture of Student Self-Efficacy
- Mindful in the Middle: Realistic Technology Integration
- Developing Student Leaders through Inquiry
- STEM-ulating Activities on Human Ecology
- Digital Safety



Here's what last year's attendees had to say!



- "We send a good team (4-7) and hardly ever overlap sessions. Easy to take back and share lots of info that way!"
- "This facility and the service was amazing...it was perfect for the size of the conference. Plus, no parking charges."
- "I really appreciate the variety of content available."
- "It was SO great! The facilities, food, service, and amenities were all superb."
- "Excellent. Location was very accessible without having to be downtown. Parking was tops. Food (vegetarian) was delicious. Climate of venue was perfect for the type of sessions we had."
- "The session topics were robust and covered a lot of pertinent topics this year."
- "The Marriott was great. Plenty of room and great service."
- "It was well-planned and organized! Thank you for allowing me to present!"
- "I was really glad I attended. I had no idea that it was going to be as helpful as it was."
- "I love the variety of choices – always able to find a topic that pertains to our school's needs."
- "I love the focus on middle school!"
- "I wish I had attended sooner!"



ACROSS THE STATE

Hands-On History

by Ben Neilson
Cascade MS, Clayton

Dear Mother, that you
are all well at home, I am
thankful that the good
weather still continues which enables
the army to keep on the move,
pressing the enemy back to this
side. I hear cannon booming
this morning which sounds
down to the Rapidan river.
I am in hope that our army
will be more successful this
time and not have to fall back
from this position. if we are
successful and the weather holds
for a few weeks longer I
am in hope that our army
will take Richmond this time.
I should like a few gallons
of that cider which you say you made
and about one barrel of those apples
this winter. I should also
like to have one of that pig's
legs after it was well pickled.

but one thing I feel
bad to hear, that Willie has
gone to Haverhill to work this
winter instead of going to school,
I wish very much that he
would go to school this winter,
instead of working. I hope he
has not let himself for 3 years
for if he works this winter he must
go to school next winter.
I suppose of course you will go
to school this winter
try hard to learn all you can
and when you are older you
will be glad you studied so.
I have rec'd the paper you
sent me and was very glad to
get them. I received a letter
from George a few days ago
he was well so was Joe,
you Clinton. I hope Mr. Siner will
will find some trace of our
Dear Father;

difficult work of transcribing them. Many of our students have had little experience with reading cursive handwriting, let alone a 150-year-old letter.

Once the students have transcribed the letter they go about researching the soldier who wrote it. The students try to find out what his regiment did in the war, if he lived through the war, if he had children, and anything else they can find about the people and places mentioned in the letter.

All of this information is on our class website, found at <https://cmscivilwar.weebly.com>. The process page on the site has many pictures, and outlines the steps used.



Four years ago, my teaching partner Hilary Carpenter and I had the idea to apply for grant money to get actual **Civil War letters** and have our students digitize and transcribe them to make them available to the public. This past year we received funding from the Danville Rotary Club and the Jack Eggers Memorial Grant. We wanted our students to know that they could actually "make" history, and not just passively listen to someone tell them about it.

Our friends at the Danville Public library have graciously donated their time to help the students digitize the letters and help them do the



Monitoring Fitness at Connersville MS

by Rachel Burkhead
Physical Education Teacher
Connersville MS

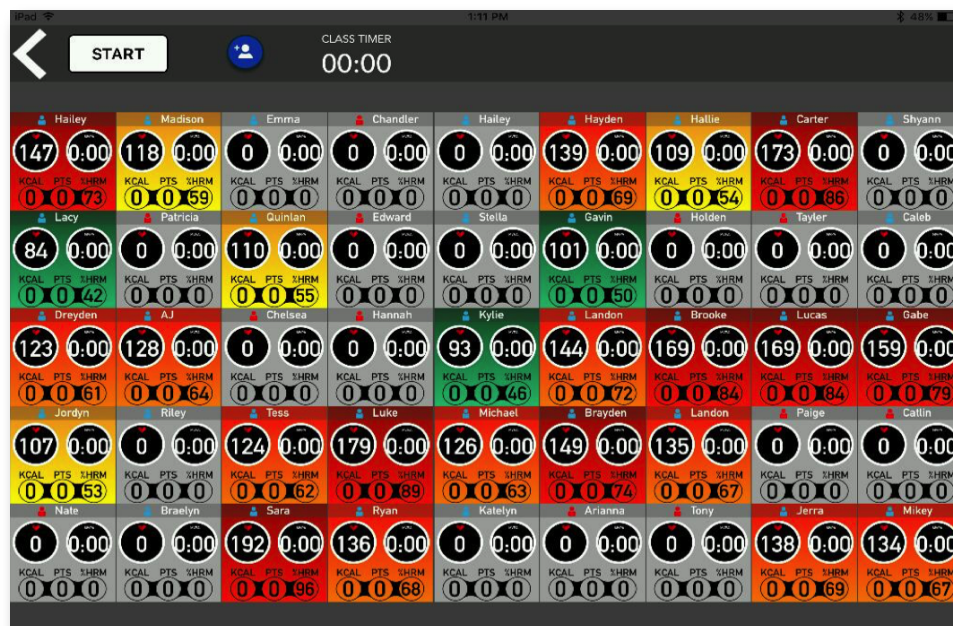
In the fall of 2018, Connersville Middle School Physical Education Department was awarded a grant from the Fayette County Foundation to purchase a class set of **Heart Tech Plus Heart Rate Monitors**. These have been a valuable asset to the physical education program at CMS.

CMS students wear the heart rate monitors twice each week during Physical Education for cardiovascular workouts. Workouts can include recumbent bikes, rowers and stairs. Data can be projected to a screen so students and teachers can have real-time assessments to help keep their workout in the desired zone by increasing or decreasing their intensity levels accordingly.

Students have set personal goals to allow them to work at their fitness level. By personalizing each student account with baseline data, students will find success by setting attainable goals. Other information can also be obtained from a workout such as calories burned, steps, and even points earned to be redeemed for a reward.



Students cannot continuously check their heart rate during cardiovascular activities to know their intensity without proper technology. With the heart rate monitors, students are able to see their heart rate in real time and can adjust their intensity accordingly to stay within their target zone. This also allows teachers to provide proper assessment and feedback.



The Heart Tech Plus platform enables coaches and PE teachers to assist students with achieving individual results during group fitness activity. Each student's data is displayed, then stored in a secure web portal for later access.

It is our mission to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. Monitoring data keeps students accountable for the required intensity level throughout the class activity. Students can achieve desired cardiovascular endurance levels each session due to real time feedback.

Students have used their heart rate data to set SMART goals. Using the heart rate monitors allows users to track progress toward fitness goals. It is the teachers' hope to educate these students enough about their heart and overall health that they will carry this information into adulthood and maintain a healthy lifestyle to reverse the trend of obesity. The physical education teachers are continuously looking for new ways to use technology in the classroom to help engage the students and help them take ownership of their overall health.

In Physical Education classes at CMS, students have shown improvement in a number of fitness assessments including mile run, PACER test, sit and reach, and body composition.

During the semester, students work on cardiovascular activities to help improve their scores for the end of course assessment. Without technology, teachers are unable to continuously assess students and help them stay within their target heart rate zone during a cardiovascular workout which could hinder their potential improvement.





Adding to Your Toolbox Via Social Media

Susie Highley

IMLEA Director of Operations
shighleyimlea@iasp.org

Are you connected with IMLEA via social media? You can follow us on **Twitter** @IMLEAorg, and **Facebook**. Items of interest to middle level educators are often tagged with #mschat on Twitter, and there is usually a live chat on Thursdays at 8:00 pm ET. Many of those Tweeters appear to be from Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Our national affiliate, @AMLE, has an active Twitter presence as well.

You can also connect with others through **Voxer**, a walkie-talkie-type app that is easy to use on your phone; it can also be accessed via desktop. You can join different groups (called chats) and communicate via voice, text, video, or images. The beauty of it is that you access messages when it's convenient for you. Many people listen during their commute, or times when they might regularly access music, podcasts, or audiobooks.

If you would like to start with Voxer in a low-key manner, we have an IMLEA group you can join at <http://bit.ly/voxerIMLEA>. I belong to some

VOXER TIPS
GRAPHIC BY RACHEL PIERSON @APIERSONEDU

- Turn Off Notifications
- Try to be Concise
- Get Permission to Share
- Listen at 2-3X Speed

groups with many daily posts, some with just a few a week. Voxer is a free app with a premium version, one of the few I pay for annually. Some of the groups are so active that I can ask a question and get answers within minutes, or at least the same day.

You can find a variety of special interest chats by searching "Voxer for Education Groups";

there are schools that have a Voxer group for their staff, there are international book studies, friend groups, school clubs, and many business uses. Being able to listen to someone, even asynchronously, makes communication more personal.

The "Inseparable Shelfie Challenge"

and Other Resources
from Indiana Humanities



After a successful statewide series of events related to Frankenstein, Indiana Humanities has embarked on a two-year program with the theme of "Inseparable." They describe it as, "a two-year Indiana Humanities initiative that invites Hoosiers to explore how we relate to each other across boundaries, real or imagined, and consider

what it will take to indeed be inseparable, in all the ways that matter." In conjunction with this, every school and library in Indiana will be receiving a special poster showing population shifts in Indiana over the past 100 years.

One of the special experiences related to this is for students in grades K-8 to read books relating to the theme. Students who read at least five books from the designated grade-level list by December 20, 2020, and submit feedback will earn a \$10 Amazon gift card. Libraries could even have a special shelf for these books; two of them from the 4-7 list even

have Indiana settings: *The Mighty Miss Malone* by Christopher Paul Curtis and *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon. The 8-12 list has two Indiana authors, John Green and Jay Coles. The details can be found at <https://indianahumanities.org/programs/shelfie-challenge>.

Indiana Humanities is also supportive of schools in the areas of grants and author visits. Through their Novel Conversations program, several schools, from elementary to high school, have been able to host successful authors while incurring few or no associated costs.



Great Things Happening in Middle School Libraries!



Of the many positions in today's schools, the librarian is among those whose job has changed the most in the past 25 years. No more simply "the keeper of the books," librarians can be the chief collaborators in a school. Many now incorporate digital literacy instruction, computer science standards and coding, utilization of INSPIRE databases for research, makerspaces and 3D printing, technology integration and training, and co-planning with classroom teachers.

Here's what some Indiana librarians are doing:

Carli Sauer, Carmel MS

- Carli helps teachers implement BreakoutEDU, has "book tastings" that align with reading workshop in ELA classes, has 3D printing, and manages a library council where students show leadership and take ownership of the library.

Jenn Brower, Indian Springs MS

- Jenn collaborates with an entire sixth grade team. First, the students came with writing teachers to learn how to use Gale PowerSearch combined with filters, which leads to quick location of useful articles. Then they returned with social studies teachers to build upon that with advanced search features. Science classes then focused on website evaluation. Future visits will feature proper citations, which will be especially important as the new iLearn test is said to require students to read multiple articles and cite information used in their essay.

- Beyond research: digital citizenship lessons, proper chromebook care/troubleshooting, email etiquette 101, and "online life."

Stacey Kern, Clark Pleasant MS

- Students and staff are all about reading and sharing what they have read with others. The 30 Book Challenge was issued to all at CPMS in July 2018. Their motto is 'Warriors Read,' and embraces the best practice that students and staff choose what they read for enjoyment.
- At their weekly Monday Maker session after school students have done coding, sewing, cooking, art projects, and are given time to grow by inquiring on their own.
- They've had two author visits this school year with a third lined up for May at our "30 Book Challenge" Party.
- Lessons in the LMC include MLA citations, databases, research processes and more.
- A recent partnership with the Johnson County Public Library was created to arm students and staff with SMART cards which give all of them digital access to the JCPL collection.



Author Kwame Alexander in conversation with awed Clark Pleasant MS students.

JoyAnn Boudreau, Hamilton Southeastern Intermediate Junior High

- The HIJH library recently hosted author Alan Gratz, incorporating whole-school sessions, breakout groups and signings, and managed DOE's Instagram takeover for a week.



"Library teacher" JoyAnn Boudreau with guest author Alan Gratz.

- There is a monthly "Try This" newsletter for staff that highlights new resources, tech ideas, makerspace ideas, book recommendations, and more.
- JoyAnn attends meetings for new staff to help them get their bearings, and gives them tech help sheets; she helps new students as well. She regularly presents at and attends PD and conferences.
- She gives personalized reading recommendations to students, and is looking at collection development with an equity focus.

Principal Tim Mankin sums up what a librarian can do for a school: "JoyAnn Boudreau is a model media specialist/librarian/teacher/learner! She has quickly become one of the 'go to' lead learner/teachers in the HSE District.

She embodies our HSE21 learner framework through her innovative practices and integration of technology as a learning tool. She also spearheaded our new Makerspace where students are empowered to be a creator."

And, he added this question that she recently received from a sixth grader, "So, you're like a teacher. And you're a librarian. So, you're a *librarian teacher?*"



New Ways to INSPIRE Service-Learning!

Beth Smith
Statewide Consultant, INSPIRE³

What was your New Year's resolution for 2019? The usual ones that we all have made are always a good way to refresh and start a new year off right. A great way to INSPIRE students in our schools is to utilize one of these new ideas for service-learning. Resolving to incorporate service-learning into the existing curriculum has many benefits for students. Students will be educated, engaged and empowered as they hone and acquire 21st century skills, exercise their voice and choice, and are inspired to serve those in their community while gaining real-world application of their classroom content.

New Ways to Engage and Empower Through Service-Learning:

Advocacy – Advocacy is a way to incorporate service-learning and its benefits for students without having to leave the classroom. By being informed about the needs and concerns in the community, students discover the need for action and see themselves as an integral part of the community and are INSPIRED with the power to affect change. They can find a passion to serve by informing others of community needs and promoting action or change that addresses those needs. Access these resources on Learning to Give that promote advocacy and address relevant ideas.

- **Current Events:** Topics on the Current Events tab are timely and appropriate. They address the ideas and concerns that are on our students' minds in a thoughtful, careful way that is respectful of individual differences.
- **Difficult Conversations:** Educators will find resources to address challenging issues in the classroom, establish a safe



The "A" Team at Crawfordsville Middle School is stocking Patient Comfort Carts at their local hospital as a result of the Learning to Give lesson, "What is Philanthropy?"

environment, promote respectful dialogue, back up arguments with facts while discussing news and current events

- **Media Literacy Tips:** Help students evaluate the role of media, bias, "facts", and critical thinking related to controversial topics and current events.
- **Able-Ness Toolkit:** This toolkit gives access to information, activities, and service-learning project ideas to help students of different levels and abilities participate in life skill opportunities with philanthropy themes.

Clubs – After-school clubs and organizations are a great way to extend service-learning beyond the school day. Students can create their own service-learning clubs or become involved with existing clubs that make a point to include service-learning as a part of their club activities.

- **Student Council:** Service is generally an important part of a student council's agenda, but service-learning would make service more meaningful and help students learn about the importance of being civically engaged while discovering their

passion for serving others. Rob Zeider, Director of the Indiana Association of Student Councils, describes the importance of incorporating service-learning: "Regarding service-learning...the IASC values service learning highly. It is the cornerstone of the work we encourage our student councils to pursue. Student councils must serve their schools and school communities. In order for others to follow, they must first know your service to them." Student Councils (elementary, middle school, high school) throughout Indiana are invited to become a part of the IASC. Students have opportunities to meet and work with their peers from different schools.

- **Honor Societies:** Students work to earn service hours, so making them service-learning hours will make the service more meaningful and create life-long philanthropists. Exploring the Toolkits on LTG will give students ideas for new service-learning projects that go beyond the traditional projects and open up additional ways for students to engage in service in their communities.

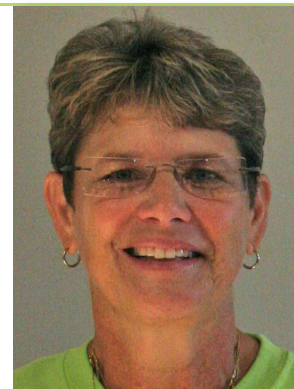
INSPIRE, continued on page 11



INSPIRE³

Indiana Service-learning Philanthropy Initiative

Resources to Educate, Engage, Empower



INSPIRE³ (formerly generationOn Indiana) is a grant-funded program facilitated by the IASP and the IMLEA that supports and assists Indiana educators, administrators and youth development professionals with philanthropy education, service, and service-learning resources from generationOn (<https://www.generationon.org/>) and Learning to Give (<https://www.learningto-give.org/>) and provides Indiana educators free professional development and supports their service-learning projects with our mini-grants.

Connect to us by filling out this form at https://iasp.formstack.com/forms/indiana_service_learning_program_sign_up or registering on [generationOn.org](https://www.generationon.org/). Email Director Joan Belschwender at joan.inspire3@iasp.org if you have any questions.

It is our hope that our new program name and logo – INSPIRE³ – will attract and encourage more educators to incorporate service-learning into their existing curriculum and service

projects, including resources and support for Indiana's Employability Skills Standards (K-12) that are a part of the new Indiana Graduation Pathways. Incorporation of service-learning **Educates** students while addressing academic standards and employing critical 21st century skills, **Engages** students in their content with real-world application, and **Empowers** students to see themselves as an integral member of their community with the power to affect change.

Our INSPIRE³ Team can offer your school free professional development related to service-learning, and the free resources that we share on the Learning to Give and generationOn websites. Our free trainings or workshops at your school can be customized to fit your time-frame and include specific service-learning connections to PBL, STEM, Employability Skills K-12, Social Emotional Learning, Special Education, as well as any specific content area. Contact one of our INSPIRE³ Team to schedule

your free professional development.

Beth Smith, Statewide Consultant

beth.inspire3@iasp.org

Darlene Short, Southern Indiana Field Rep
Teacher, Castle North MS, Warrick County
dshort@warrick.k12.in.us

Jack Birmingham, Northwest Indiana Field Rep
Assistant Superintendent, Union Twp Schools
jbirmingham@union.k12.in.us

Lisa Crick, Northeast Indiana Field Rep
Counselor, West Noble Elem, Noble County
lisamcrick@gmail.com

Check out our page on the IMLEA website under INSPIRE³ for more information, links to resources and archived Spotlight on Service-Learning articles.

Joan Belschwender is Director of INSPIRE³.

Contact Joan at joan.inspire3@iasp.org

INSPIRE, continued from page 10

- **Create your own Service-Learning Club:** Many schools have found that their students become passionate about service-learning after engaging in a school or classroom project. Those students who wish to continue their service as an ongoing exercise of philanthropy could participate in a club that is service-learning based. Check the generationOn website for their Service Clubs opportunities for Kids and Teens at <https://www.generationon.org/page/clubs>. Because a service-learning club can involve ALL students – they do not have to be elected or meet an

academic threshold to be involved – it is a great way to inspire every student with the passion to serve others.

Shannon Hudson and Laurie Vellner at Crawfordsville MS have a service-learning club called "A" TEAM. Each year begins with the Learning to Give lesson, "What is Philanthropy?", and students are asked to list what philanthropic efforts in the community they would like to pursue as future community leaders. Some annual projects include a canned food drive, teachers kissing an animal (such as pigs, llamas, or sheep), selling carnations, performing random acts of kindness, sponsoring school dances, and assisting with Operation Toy

Box and ReinDear (sponsor a child at Christmas). All the students are rewarded at the end of the year with a trip to Kings Island in May.

This year, the members have begun a new project. The members wanted to donate items for children at their local hospital. Due to health regulations the hospital was unable to accept those, but suggested to the members that they create a Patient Comfort Cart containing travel sizes of products such as shampoo, soap, and deodorant. Each year, "A" TEAM will be responsible for restocking the cart.

Your school can ENGAGE students in New Ways with Service-Learning, too!



THE INDIANA MIDDLE LEVEL
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

11025 E. 25TH STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46229



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