



# MADSEC Newsletter

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Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities  
675 Western Ave., Suite 2, Manchester, ME 04351  
www.madsec.org info@madsec.org 626-3380 (Ph) 626-3347 (Fax)

## President's Article

*By Erin Chase*

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A few days ago, I was checking my emails and, as often is the case, 90% of them were stressful. Staff issues, student issues, parent concerns, and budget curtailment information. One by one I scrolled through my emails, opening crisis after crisis, concern after concern, issue after issue...on and on until I hit one with the simple subject of "feedback."

Hmmm, do I want to shut my computer down now and leave it for later? With a header like "feedback" it could be anything. I clicked open with that familiar semi-nauseous pit-like feeling in my stomach and waited for the font to appear.

The message was a good one. One of my staff had taken the time out of her busy day to share a parent's positive feedback with me and the student's team. Apparently, the parents felt that we were doing a really good job with their daughter and were happy with the education she was receiving. This email could not have come at a better time.

Later that week I thanked my colleague for sending her message. She said that she had decided that every day she would find something nice or positive to say to someone with whom she works. She said that sometimes it feels like all we hear every day is bad news and that she was going to take it upon herself to spread some positivity throughout the district, I imagined like some kind of Pied Piper of Positiveness. While a daunting yet respectable initiative, what she said really clicked with me. Lately I feel that I must "take away" from staff, programs and students as we work to close the financial gap now and in the future between what we need to run our programs and the actual resources we will have to make these programs successful. I am frequently met with the dilemma of having a positive attitude and facing reality at the same time; most of the time these feelings are not congruent.

*Please see President's Article on page 2*

I have been mentally compiling a list of simple (and virtually free) ways to support my self, colleagues and staff in this time of intense fiscal cutbacks. My positivity-spreading staff person reminded me of this mental list and I thought now would be a great time to share it with the readership of the MADSEC newsletters.

Eleven Virtually Free Ways to Feel Good about Your Work as a Special Education Administrator (When Times are Tough - and Maybe when they are Not):

1. Send an email complimenting a colleague on a job well done...in a meeting, with a student, with a parent, on some paperwork, etc...
2. Even better...send a handwritten thank you note.
3. Take time to informally mentor a staff that may be looking towards the field of educational leadership.
4. Join a classroom activity with your favorite students (isn't this why we got into this in the first place?).
5. Buy your secretary a cup of coffee - his or her hard work helps you looking good.
6. Take five minutes every once in a while to call parents with some good news about their child.
7. Say thank you to those who make your work life easier.
8. Use your experienced staff to provide internal professional development opportunities...they will feel valued and the rest of your staff will learn something new.
9. Encourage yourself to plan a new project or read about trends in the field that are new to you - learning is revitalizing and virtually free.
10. Connect regularly with your local community of directors - I could not survive without my group's camaraderie and support.
11. Don't forget to laugh!

This list could apply to any other job, including the "occupations" of parenthood and spousehood, but I have found that many of the ideas listed above have helped me when I felt challenged by the work that presents itself to me on any given day. I also know that this is *my* list and that *your* lists may be different and as effective, if not better than mine. As we struggle through future years of tough budget times, probable changes in our regulations, and anything else that comes our way, we must rely on positive thinking and relationships to support our students, families, and each other.

## MADSEC Executive Board

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Beth Lorigan	President-Elect
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Sharon Goguen	Secretary
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Dominic DePatsy	Past-President

MADSEC *NEWSLETTER* is published three times during the school year by the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC). Executive Director: Jill V. Adams; Administrative Assistant: Pamela Ouellette.

This publication is available in alternate formats to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. It is also published on the web at: [www.madsec.org](http://www.madsec.org).

MADSEC Publications Committee members: Jill Adams (MADSEC), Anna Perkins (Good Will-Hinckley, and Clarissa Errington (RSU #10).

Kennebec Centre  
675 Western Ave., Suite 2  
Manchester, ME 04351  
Phone 207-626-3380 • Fax 207-626-3347  
E-Mail: [info@madsec.org](mailto:info@madsec.org)  
Web: [www.madsec.org](http://www.madsec.org)

The [MADSEC website](http://www.madsec.org) is a good source of information. Check it out to find things like:

- Professional development calendar
- Interesting and important articles written by fellow educators
- Workshop registrations
- Membership Application

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MADSEC invites readers to submit articles for consideration for publication in this newsletter. Contact Jill Adams, Executive Director, if you are interested. In addition, if you have a need that can be met through this newsletter, please contact the MADSEC office.

MADSEC is grateful for the financial support of the providers of goods and services advertised in this publication. MADSEC solicits paid advertisements for the purpose of helping defray the costs of this publication and other services provided for our membership. The association does not intend to create a public forum for the expression of ideas by advertisers or any other segment of the public. As set forth in policy, MADSEC reserves the right to refuse to publish certain advertisements which may not serve its best interests. Publication of advertisements should not be considered an endorsement by MADSEC of the goods and services therein.

### Mission Statement

The Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC) believes in, and advocates for, the right of all students to receive a free and appropriate public education. We provide support to our members, opportunities for professional growth to Maine educators, and leadership in shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education for children with disabilities.

## MADSEC Regional Representative Board

Aroostook Bridges	Rick Umphrey - Caribou School Department Will Burrow - RSU # 4 Alt./Lisa Caron - MSAD #61 -- Naples
Capital	Deb Marshall - RSU #2 Alt./Donna Madore - Augusta School Department
Central	Stacy Shorey - MSAD #53 - Pittsfield Alt./Cheryl Mercier - RSU #18
Cumberland Hancock	Alison Marchese - Scarborough School Department Kelley Rush Sanborn - AOS #91 Alt./ Lynn Maddocks - Ellsworth School Department
Katahdin Mid-Coast	Cheryl Morin - RSU #67 Judy Gove - Fivetown CSD/MSAD #28 - Camden Alt./Karen Etheridge - MSAD #40
So. Penobscot	Lesley Snyder - MSAD #23 - Carmel & #38 - Etna Alt./Sharon Brady - RSU #26
Tri-County	Janet Morse - RSU #19 Alt./Norleen Fleming - RSU #19
Washington Western	Susan Hodgkins - MSAD #37 - Harrington Brian Foster - MSAD #9 - Farmington Alt./
York	Ruth Venell - RSU #60 Alt./Jean Beetz - York School Department

Child Development Services - Greg Armandi - CDS-Franklin

### Liaisons Who Serve On the Representative Board:

Special Purpose Private Schools - Anna Perkins - Good Will-Hinckley

## 2009- 2010 MADSEC Calendar

### January 2010

8 Rep. Board Meeting

### February 2010

11 Rep. Board Meeting

### March 2010

19 Rep. Board Meeting

### April 2010

15 Rep. Board Meeting

### May 2010

21 Rep. Board Meeting

### June 2010

28 - 30 Directors' Academy

## MADSEC Website

MADSEC is very excited with the newly launched website on August 17, 2009. It is currently a work in progress. Pam and I are learning to manage the website, so please have a little patience. Just a reminder, if you have not joined MADSEC for the 2009 - 2010 year you can also do your membership on line. Remember to sign on to the website as a member and get your password so you visit the "Members Only" section. As a member you will be able to join in our blog once this portion is launched. There will be one for Special Education Administrators and one for Administrative Assistants. This is your website so please email us with ideas for information that you would like posted for the field. NOW take a minute and go to [www.madsec.org](http://www.madsec.org) and let us know what you think.

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## **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT:**

### **A new way to deliver articulation therapy in school settings**

I am a school based speech therapist who has developed a new articulation intervention program that I have called "The Practice Makes Perfect Program." After years of playing "Go Fish" and "Memory" and providing service to the same students for multiple years, I decided I needed to make a change in my approach to therapy. The progress that the special education staff was making with their students encouraged me to learn from them and to change the way I approached my work with students.

I started by timing each student on the sounds they had difficulty producing. I recorded the number of correct responses during each one minute or 30 second timing. Each day, I collected the data and encouraged the students to "beat their score" during the next session. I was amazed as I saw them making measurable progress each time they completed a timing.

Next, I changed the frequency and duration of my therapy sessions. Instead of the traditional twice a week for 30 minutes I now started to see every student at least four times a week for 15 minutes. The progress that the students were making was incredible. To see how much of a difference scheduling and "The Practice Makes Perfect Program" was making, I decided to put the data of 2007, 2008, and 2009 into chart form using a standardized learning rate chart ([www.celeration.org](http://www.celeration.org)). In 2007, students started to use the first version of "The Practice makes Perfect Program", but I kept the traditional 30 minute sessions twice per week. The progress was limited and inconsistent. In 2008 and 2009, I changed therapy to 15 minutes per day and implemented an improved version of "The Practice Makes Perfect Program". The progress was amazing! The students moved from one sound position to another in a matter of a few weeks instead of months.

My dismissal rate has increased since making the changes to my speech program. Aside from the quantitative evidence, I have observed qualitative changes in student's lives that I have not seen before. I would encourage all speech therapists to consider making similar changes in their program

so they can see the results for themselves. Please contact me for more information or to discuss the practical issues that arise as you change your practices.

Michele Bosse, Certified Speech Therapist  
[Bossemichele13@yahoo.com](mailto:Bossemichele13@yahoo.com) or  
[Michele.bosse@rsu4.org](mailto:Michele.bosse@rsu4.org)

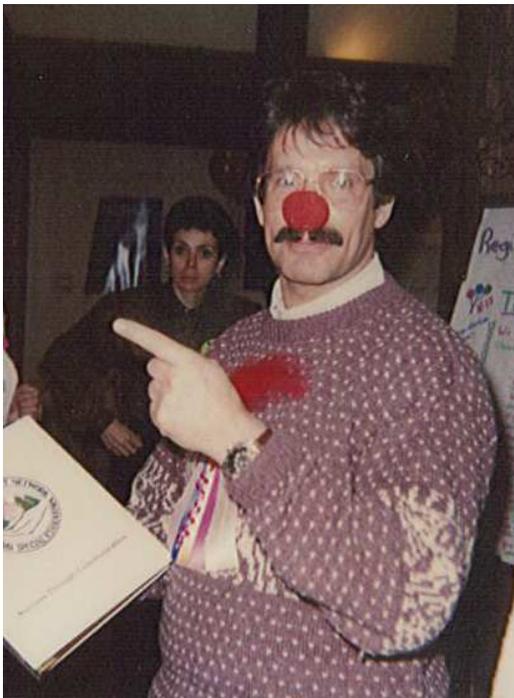
### **Loss of a colleague: Kori Ellis**

The educational community in Aroostook County recently lost a dear friend and colleague. Kori Ellis, the founder and director of the Circle of Learning Developmental Pre-Schools, died in a car accident while on her way to an IEP meeting on November 24th. Kori was deeply loved and respected by hundreds of children, parents, and educators. She was an active member of the Aroostook Directors of Services for Children with Exceptionalities. Her twenty years of expertise in educating young children with special needs will be greatly missed. She leaves her husband, Jaye, and three young daughters, Mariah, Skyler, and Calie. She also leaves two sisters, Lori Whittemore (CDS Director for Cumberland county) and Tori Kirby, a brother John as well as her parents Kathari and John Findlen. Her legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of the many children, parents, and providers who knew her through her programs and the consulting she did for schools in Aroostook County.

## “Blast from the Past”

After reviewing numerous photos MADSEC has had hidden away, Jill and Pam thought it would be a “missed opportunity” not to share some of them with our colleagues. This is the first of many photos that will appear in upcoming newsletters. We hope you enjoy looking back.

### Michael Opuda . . . “clowning” around!



## Maine Support Network’s 23rd annual Winter Retreat!

We have redesigned this year’s Retreat to ensure that it remains affordable while still providing the same rich and inspirational learning experiences for which we are known. The 2010 Winter Retreat will be held on January 30 at Point Lookout on Duck Trap Mountain. This event will offer you the choice from one of three exciting full-day learning opportunities:

- Teaching the BRAIN Way, *with John Almarode*.  
Dr. Almarode, a national presenter, truly practices what he preaches, so be prepared to fully experience brain-based learning at its best.
- Response to Intervention (RtI), *with Ellen Holmes*.  
Ellen will walk us through the RtI process and help us understand what this process can bring to educators and students.
- Understanding Social Skills for Children With Asperger’s, Non-Verbal Learning Disorder, and ADHD, *with Robin Lurie-Myerkoff*.  
Robin, from the Asperger’s Association of New England, has facilitated sessions for MSN before, to rave reviews. During this session Robin will offer professionals and parents information on the topic of social thinking.

In addition to the above opportunities, you can:

- Visit the bookstore and purchase materials to help enhance your learning.
- Stay overnight and rejuvenate yourself.
- Take advantage of the health facility and bowling!
- Join us Friday night for a “make and take” session.



*Continued on Page 8*

### Maine Support Network cont.

We are very excited to rejoin the Point Lookout staff and hope you, too, will enjoy the experience of a family setting in shared cabins, with the opportunity to save money and create your own meals. You can choose to come for the day, or take advantage of Point Lookout's reduced cabin rates. Duck Trap Mountain is a beautiful place to experience nature, take a breath, and rejuvenate You.

As always, we will provide many opportunities for you to network with a wide range of professionals, engage with your peers, and reconnect with old friends. We know you will leave here energized after this fun-filled, learning-rich, and network-oriented experience.

We hope to see you at "The Top of the Roc"! For more information visit our website, [www.mainesupportnetwork.org](http://www.mainesupportnetwork.org), or call 1-866-291-0004.

### Maine Support Network is an Employment Network!

In concert with its commitment to support the successful transition of Maine youth, including youth with disabilities, from school to college and careers, the Maine Support Network has become an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Act.

Ticket to Work is an employment program for people with disabilities, designed to remove many of the barriers that previously influenced people's decisions about going to work due to concerns such as loss of health care coverage. The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase opportunities and choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations. Under the Ticket Program, the Social Security Administration provides disability beneficiaries aged 18-64 (SSI and SSDI recipients) with a Ticket that may be used to obtain jobs, and the services they need, from organizations called Employment Networks (ENs). A wealth of information about the Ticket Program can be found at [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com)

The MSN Employment Network is available to youth in transition who assign their ticket to us. We provide student-centered planning, assistance with resume writing, job search skills and job development, customized employment supports, and extended services to assist youth at work. If you are interested in learning more about how MSN might assist your students, please contact Debbie Gilmer at [gilmer@maine.edu](mailto:gilmer@maine.edu)