



Bobcat Insider



Inside this Issue:

- Four questions with
Woodbury teacher Mary
Estrada

- United Way awards Miller
teacher Wendy Olinger

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Staff are key volunteers in Big Brothers Big Sisters



Jacque Wyant, MHS principal, with Jimena

"I have been a Big for 10 years now. I enjoy connecting with my little when we talk about things that bother her and we 'brainstorm' how she can address these issues. Since I am a math teacher, I've been able to show some other methods for dividing or learning multiplication facts that have helped my little. The greatest pleasure comes from seeing them succeed: improvement in Iowa Assessment scores or stronger emotional health.

As the high school principal, walking into the elementary building helps me connect with multiple students. I receive a lot of 'hello's' from the children. They ask me many questions which I gladly answer. So, when they finally make it to high school, I will already have a connection with many students.

Finally, I believe these are all of my students. I have to be invested in the children in the younger grades because what they are doing now impacts what happens at MHS in the future." - Jacque Wyant



Anna Wolvers, Rogers Elementary teacher, with her "Little" Maria on a trip to Adventureland.

"Having lost my mom at the age of 5, my school counselor helped get me enrolled with a Big from Des Moines BB/BS program. My Big, Sue was my rock through many of life's trials and tribulations. We remained matched for 22 years, even after we technically aged out of the program. We stayed in contact even while I went to college and traveled to Hawaii as a Camp Adventure counselor, and student taught in Australia.

She earned her angel wings a couple years ago, due to cancer, and I lost yet another 'mom.' Her spirit, insight, kindness, and wisdom has made me the woman I am today. I decided to honor her and pay it forward, and become a big to someone else in need. My little, Maria, says due to me and what I've helped her with, she also wants to be a big someday. It's quite a generational ripple effect. Sue never had children of her own and wanted to be a mom. I'm in the same boat and getting the mom effect through being a big and a teacher." - Anna Wolvers

See more volunteer stories on page 2

Staff speak on Big Brothers Big Sisters Continued from page 1

Chris Matney, MHS paraeducator

“I have been a mentor for the past 8 1/2 years. It has been very rewarding as I don’t have a little sister as I am an only girl.



The little I have has had a tough life as she lost both her parents and just recently her grandfather, who helped raise her. She is a bright young lady and I think the world of her.

The program is a great opportunity for Bigs and Littles to form a bond that they might not have otherwise. We have had one-on-one time and also family time with my daughters. It’s part of an extended family for both sides. I know her grandparents appreciate the time we spend together and having someone that is also parenting young ladies. I’m there for her and she knows that.

I believe in being involved in the community and giving back. With Big Brothers and Big Sisters you get that and then some. We have volunteered at the Vets Home and have been to many functions sponsored by the program. I’m very fortunate to have a Little that has a very supportive family. Not all our Littles have that. We can make a difference in a Little’s life and lead them to a path that we can all be proud of.

I highly recommend the program and will always be a big supporter of it.”

Ronnie Manis, Anson Elementary School principal, Big Brothers Big Sisters board member

“All kids need a positive influence, a mentor if you will, in their lives. BBBS has the opportunity to provide such a person in many lives. Many of the Littles are missing that component in their lives. BBBS also has the potential to impact a child’s education, as the mentor is there to provide that encouragement to continue to try and excel in school. Mentors also can gel Littles with their self confidence. Often, Littles never hear encouragement from an adult they look up to and when a mentor can offer encouragement, their self



confidence can soar.”

Joe Miller, Miller teacher

I began volunteering as a Big Brother in May 2013. I like interacting with kids and had some extra time on my hands so I thought this was a perfect way that I could contribute to my community. I enjoy spending time with my Little though less



frequently this year because of my graduate studies course load. We have a very good relationship that I hope will continue. Our favorite outings together include attending Bobcat sporting events, video gaming, and spending time at the pool.

Sometimes, because of life’s circumstances, kids don’t always have someone they can count on to help direct them down the right path. Through mentoring I try to provide a trusting, supportive, and positive relationship. I attempt to offer guidance and encouragement for his school and social situations. It’s been rewarding for me to watch him grow and learn to manage each new environment he encounters. I believe this relationship has helped me to become a more understanding teacher.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters notes

- * Several retired MCSD staff members are mentors in the program.
- * MCSD Superintendent Dr. Theron Schutte has recently become a mentor.
- * There are 19 current MHS students who serve as school-based mentors.





**Cannon
Leo
Meckley**

Hello Baby!

Cannon Leo Meckley was born on May 2, 2016, weighing 7 pounds, 4 ounces and 19.5 inches long at birth. He is the son of Miller Middle School counselor Rachel Meckley and her husband Josh Meckley.

Rachel reports that Cannon's hobbies include watching the dogs play, going for stroller rides, cheering for the Cyclones and eating pears.

MCSD staff get a thumbs up from HUMANeX trainers



Woodbury Principal Anel Garza is pictured with Jared Northrup of HUMANeX, which held training for principals and other supervisors on its system to help with staff recruitment. The training was held the week of January 9. HUMANeX is also helping with the staff climate survey.

Miller Middle School special education teacher Wendy Olinger, holding award, was honored with the Marshalltown Area United Way volunteer of the year award on December 15. Pictured from left, are United Way 2016 campaign co-chairs Kelli Thurston and Fauna Nord and United Way Executive Director Nancy Steveson. Wendy serves on the United Way board and runs the MCSD United Way campaign. She also volunteers at many United Way events throughout the year.

United Way awards Miller teacher



4 questions with...

Mary Estrada
1st grade teacher
Woodbury Elementary School



What led you into teaching and what do you enjoy most about the profession?

Mary: “I began working as a bilingual tutor for Marshalltown schools years ago and that is when I knew I wanted to pursue a teaching degree. I love working with young children and I truly enjoy teaching in bilingual education. I am grateful that the Marshalltown Community School District supports and offers bilingual education for students.”

What’s the best piece of teaching advice you’ve received in your career?

Mary: “The best piece of teaching advice I received is to find a balance between your professional and personal life so that you can give more of yourself to your students and to your family.”

How do you get through a challenging day?

Mary: “I try to do my best job every day and I try to stay positive even through difficult times.”

What is something unique about you (hobby, activity or interest)?

Mary: “I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I also enjoy walking outside in nature and listening to music.”

New MCSD Vision

“Preparing ALL learners, through an unparalleled culture of excellence, to be productive and engaged citizens in a diverse world.”

New MCSD Mission

“We develop learners who have the knowledge, skills, and positive mindset to successfully pursue a meaningful future through personalized learning experiences.”

Althaus receives master’s degree



Anson Elementary Teacher Jessica Althaus received her master’s degree in Education and an ESL endorsement through Morning-side College. The ESL endorsement was earned through the Project Proficient grant. Fellow Anson teachers Kate Troskey, Danielle Platt, Dani Cameron, and Rachel Olson also all just completed the ESL endorsement.



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