



School Events & Happenings

Jan. 29 – MSHS Choir will be performing the national anthem at the Denver Nuggets game, 7p.m. at the Pepsi Center, 1000 Chopper Cir, Denver, CO 80204
March 14 – MSHS 4th annual World Language and Culture Night, 5:30–8 p.m. at Manitou Springs High School Library.

School Opportunities

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ute Pass Elementary: PARAPROFESSIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION /SEVERE NEEDS (part time, mornings). Requires lifting up to 40 pounds and diapering/toileting duties. Paraprofessional experience preferred. Must complete a fingerprint and background screening.
BUS DRIVERS NEEDED: We are now accepting applications for qualified school bus drivers.
More information: www.mssd14.org.

Pop Quiz

In which of the following years did MSSD14 have the most snow days?

- A.** 2008/2009 **B.** 2011/2012 **C.** 2013/2014 **D.** 2015/2016

Previous week's answer: B. 266 – There were 266 participants in the 2017 fall session of ARTs14.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Q & A with Ben Gilliam and Amy Rockenbach

Ben Gilliam and Amy Rockenbach are two examples of educators who truly impact the lives of our high school students.

Briefly describe your position at MSHS.

BG: I am the director of the Manitou Abound Program (MAP), an alternative program for 9th and 10th graders. I also co-lead the high school's Intervention Team — a group of teachers who meet weekly to discuss interventions and strategies to help students who are struggling academically.

AR: I coordinate the 6-12 Exceptional Scholars – Gifted and Talented program. I work with students, parents and staff to help students find ways to connect their passions and talents with their education here at Manitou and beyond.

What inspired you to become a teacher?

BG: I began student teaching at an alternative high school in Gunnison, Colorado. We spent our first week of class camping in the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, where I was deeply inspired by the work my mentor teachers were doing with the students. On the last night of our trip, I led the students in a game of capture-the-flag on the dunes, under a full moon. I had never felt such a sense of belonging and purpose, and immediately knew that I wanted to spend my life as a teacher.

AR: I was inspired to become a teacher by my own curiosity and desire to understand myself, the world and people around me. I come from a family of storytellers and believe that a primary means of understanding ourselves comes from sharing our stories and perspectives with one another; whether that is through art, language, literature, music, film, sport, dance, spiritual or academic pursuits. With a degree in psychology and experience working in a psychiatric hospital

in Dallas, I was inspired early in my career to help young people find ways to make sense of their lives through the study of English and Psychology. After more than 20 years in education, that still inspires me.

How do you motivate your students?

BG: I think the best way to keep my students motivated and engaged is to always illuminate the relevancy of what we're learning. An essential component of MAP involves getting students out of the classroom and into nature and the community, where they can make connections between the real, living world and our curriculum.

AR: I genuinely enjoy learning about my students and their lives. I spend a lot of time getting to know what they like and don't like, what sets their hair on fire and what shuts them down. I've found that helping them connect their interests to what they are learning is highly motivational. I also like to laugh a lot and have a tendency to get pretty fired up about things I think are important; I suppose laughter and enthusiasm are contagious and can motivate even the most reluctant learner to at least engage in the process.

What do you like most about teaching?

BG: The thing I enjoy most about my job is the ability to provide my students with meaningful, memorable and hopefully influential experiences in the outdoors. I'm so filled with joy when I watch my students learn and play and connect in the outdoors.

Artist of the Week



Artist: Sarah Weimer

Title: Heroine

Media: Acrylic

There are so many benefits to spending time in the natural world — particularly regarding intellectual, emotional and physical health — and I see every day spent sharing those benefits with my students as a gift.

AR: The best thing about teaching is watching someone discover that they are smarter, stronger and have more potential than they thought. I love when a kid, who "hates" school or thinks a subject is "boring" or "pointless," leaves my classroom or office surprised that they have learned something they thought they couldn't and that they maybe even enjoyed it. Most of all, I love when I have the privilege of witnessing a

student who has discovered that his or her life has purpose and meaning and then they take off running toward it! The. Best.

What is the greatest success you have had in teaching?

BG: It's hard to pinpoint a single greatest success.

Most of the successes I notice are often small, incongruous advances in my students' lives; sometimes they're so subtle that they're hard to notice. But when I'm able to watch a student, who maybe a year before thought they'd never graduate, walk across the stage and receive their diploma — I just hope that I was able to be a positive influence.

AR: By far the greatest success I've had has been receiving notes, letters, emails and phone calls over the years from former students sharing their successes and thanking me for having been a small part of them.

A Message from the Head Learner

I am extremely proud of the teaching staff we have in Manitou Springs School District. Our people make the difference between having an average school district and the one recognized across the state as being extraordinary! We'll be sharing some of our amazing instructors with you via this forum from time to time so that you can become more familiar with the people you pay to serve the children we all love.

I want each of you to consider the enormous task placed upon each teacher in today's public school system. Not only are they responsible for providing the educational skills and knowledge required to have successful lives, many are also coaches, mentors, counselors and support systems for many children.

Our community must encourage and support our teaching staff as they strive for excellence, push for innovative and creative lessons, and struggle with the monumental task of meeting the needs of each and every student.

It is a very difficult job and many teachers often do not see the fruits of their efforts until years later, if at all. The children they taught often move away, begin careers and have successful lives in places far from town. Many educators never fully understand the enormous impact they've made on their students.

Now, more than ever, it is critical to support the profession of teaching as there is a very real crisis in our state. Colorado, along with other states across the country, has a teacher shortage.

Many young people today are choosing other ways to earn a living. There are a number of reasons for this: pay issues, unfunded state and federal mandates, enormous accountability for growth, the increasing social and emotional needs of students just to name a few.

A recent article in the *Denver Post* revealed "there is a need for 3,000 teachers to fill existing slots in Colorado schools while the number of graduates ... has declined by 24.4 percent over the past five years."

Unless we begin to shift the way teachers are supported and valued by society, there could be a day when we just can't find folks to work in schools.

Fortunately, today, we have extraordinary teachers in Manitou. I hope everyone realizes we must support these incredible people day in and day out.

Thus, if you have time, reach out to one of our staff members and let them know how much they are appreciated. I would be eternally grateful.

~ Ed Longfield,
Superintendent of MSSD 14



Ben Gilliam finds that teaching outdoors helps motivate and engage his students.

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