



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 6, 2017

## Program Has Rich History of Serving Students and Families

Families of students who receive services from SSD have a long history of benefitting from supports offered by the Parent Education and Diversity Awareness Program (PEDA).

From workshops on transition, behavior strategies, youth mental health, and a multitude of other topics, to borrowing resources from the program's library, PEDA has been serving those who help students since 1990.

"PEDA is part of the scaffolding that has supported me for over 15 years with two students," said parent Anne Roux. "Looking back over time, the amount of topics they assisted me with is unbelievable. It's like they anticipated what I was going to have to learn."

By championing meaningful inclusion, diversity awareness and family engagement through supporting and working with everyone who touches the student's life, PEDA reaches students, staff and families served by SSD and partner district schools.

The PEDA program was launched in 1990 when SSD hired its first administrative liaison for disability-related issues.

"The PEDA team values the rich history of the program and we never forget those first program team members and families who came before us," said Michelle Levi Perez, PEDA administrator.

In 1992, the program expanded to include an administrative liaison for parent education.

"While titles have changed over the years, the overall mission and goals of the PEDA program have always aligned to the mission, vision and values of SSD," said Levi Perez. "We work with a student's building-level team and parents to provide

the resources, training and support needed to assist them in obtaining the best possible educational outcome."

"Whether it was reading up on a social skills program, resources for teaching shoe-tying, videos on coping with a tic disorder or handling bullying, or how to prepare for transition, the staff at PEDA never failed to provide the information, answers, resources, and connections that I needed — in a compassionate and empowering manner. They are gold," said Roux.

Additionally, PEDA provides ongoing collaboration with local agencies and offers resources to the entire community.

"Currently, our outreach to families in all 22 school districts and SSD schools, as well as the community, continues to grow each year and utilization of technology through online offerings and materials furthers that outreach," said Levi Perez.

PEDA also operates the Family and Community Resource Center (FCRC), a clearinghouse of disability-related information available to the entire community. Offerings include books, DVDs, ability awareness materials, community agency information, brochures and resource packets with articles for the most requested topics.

For more information on PEDA or FCRC resources, contact Michelle Levi Perez at 314.989.8438 or [mleviperez@ssdmo.org](mailto:mleviperez@ssdmo.org). ■

**Watch your mailbox for the Parent Connection newsletter in early January for a complete listing of upcoming family workshops.**



Celebrating 60 Years  
of Student Success

**Throughout the 2017–2018 school year, SSD will be celebrating the District's 60th anniversary. Watch for this logo for stories about our staff, students, families and others throughout our community who have partnered with SSD to help all students achieve success.**

**Share your SSD memories and stories with us: [www.ssdmo.org/ssd60.html](http://www.ssdmo.org/ssd60.html)**

# South Tech Design & Entrepreneurship Program Turns Students into Entrepreneurs

The Design & Entrepreneurship program classroom at SSD's South Technical High School is much more of a lab than a classroom. Rather than walking into a room with rows of desks facing a blackboard, you walk into a room with several different workspaces.

On your right, you hear the methodical buzzing of the 3D printer hard at work. A student stands watch as the printer slowly builds a prototype of the latest project. You make a left and you walk by a series of smaller rooms — mini conference rooms with glass windows — where a pair of students are brainstorming by writing with a dry-erase marker on a specially painted wall.

Then you see the program facilitator, Albie Mitchell. Facilitator may be the perfect description for Mitchell. He's not lecturing in front of the class. Rather he's moving from student to student, asking probing questions and challenging them to imagine a solution that doesn't yet exist.

"It is a brand new program that combines a business incubator with a maker space," Mitchell said. "What we're trying to do is to create a studio culture here, which borrows from design and studio art, and infusing it with hands-on projects where students learn by making things in a very tactile kind of way."

Students are charged with identifying a problem, imagining a solution to the problem and then producing prototypes of that solution.

"There's an emphasis on using digital tools — like computer design software — to figure out what our design is and then tools like 3D printers and laser cutters to basically create very precise and refined outputs from that," Mitchell said.

Alex Bird, a junior at South Tech, is developing a sensory pen for students with autism.

"We start with coming up with a problem area and trying to come up with a solution for that problem," Alex said. "I started brainstorming ideas and realized there are lots of sensory toys and fidget toys. I decided it would be nice if you could combine the uses of a pen and fidget toy," he said.

Alex is currently in the prototyping phase of his project.

"I've been 3D printing some models and working on getting a patent," Alex said. "Then, I'm moving into making molds and casting plastic for the pens."



Alex Bird, a student in the Design & Entrepreneurship program at South Technical High School, works on a project.

The students also work on class-wide projects in collaboration with other programs at South Tech. For example, students in the Design & Entrepreneurship program collaborated with the carpentry program and the veterinary assistant program on designing a chicken coop.

"We've modeled the situation among these three programs where we're building a chicken coop and yard for the veterinary assistant program," Mitchell said. "The veterinary assistant program is the client, (the Design & Entrepreneurship program) is the architect and will design the coop and the carpentry students are the general contractor."

This collaboration allows each program to focus on its individual areas of expertise, while gaining experience working with outside clients and contractors.

This is the second year for the Design & Entrepreneurship program, and it's expected to grow.

"We're looking for students who are curious and creative, which I think is actually most people," Mitchell said. "One of the great things about the individual projects is students can insert their own interests and passions into what they do, then they can work that into a physical and real solution."

For more information about the Design & Entrepreneurship program, contact the South Tech admissions office at

<http://southtechnical.org/admissions>. ■

## Student Scholarship Opportunities

The SSD Board of Education, as well as other organizations, provide multiple opportunities for graduating seniors to earn scholarships for their post-secondary education. Any senior receiving SSD services or attending an SSD technical high school is eligible to apply for these scholarships.

Each scholarship is unique, and has its own history and specific requirements. Visit [www.ssdmo.org/student\\_scholarships.htm](http://www.ssdmo.org/student_scholarships.htm) for applications.

**Application deadlines for each scholarship are listed below.**

- James E. Westbury Memorial Board of Education Scholarships – Jan. 12, 2018
- Bonhomme Lions Scholarships – Jan. 12, 2018
- Allison M. Haake Memorial Scholarship – Jan. 12, 2018
- Special Education Foundation John Cary Scholarships – Dec. 11, 2017

## SSD Parent Advisory Council

The SSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is comprised of families advising and collaborating to improve the education, confidence and social outcomes of each student served by SSD.

The PAC consists of five parents or guardians — one member and four alternates — from each of the 22 St. Louis County school districts and from each of the five SSD special education schools. The parents or guardians of students receiving special education services in that district or school elect SSD PAC members.

For more information, visit the PAC's website at <https://tinyurl.com/SSDPAC>, email [pac@ssdmo.org](mailto:pac@ssdmo.org) or call 314.989.8448 ext. 6650. ■



# Special Education Foundation

Success Beyond the Classroom

### Penny Wars

SSD's North Technical High School raised \$850 in Penny Wars. The money will benefit the Special Education Foundation (SEF) Kid-to-Camp initiative with a \$250 campership, along with North Tech's Give and Grow Program, which supports students with school supplies and uniforms.

North Tech teacher Barbara Schipp developed Penny Wars as a way to have fun while raising money. Pairs of classrooms competed by filling their jars with pennies, which counted as a point each. If someone put in silver coins or bills, that amount was deducted from the points for that jar. So students put pennies in their own jars and silver coins and bills in other classrooms' jars.

The teacher in the winning class was resourceful, calling Embassy Suites in St. Charles and asking for the coins out of their fountain. This windfall put them over the top, and they had a party to celebrate.

### Thank a Teacher

Honor a teacher for his or her dedication to students with disabilities by making a donation to the SEF. Donations are tax deductible. The donor receives an acknowledgement letter, and the teacher receives a notification with no mention of the amount. Visit [www.sef-stl.org/donate](http://www.sef-stl.org/donate) for details.

### Apply for an Adaptive Equipment Grant

The SEF provides equipment such as hearing aids and eyeglasses to students with disabilities. Through a grant from the Tilles Foundation, it also replaces adaptive equipment for students who graduate from SSD. Adaptive devices provided by SSD must remain with the District when students graduate. Apply at [www.sef-stl.org/programs/specialized-equipment-request](http://www.sef-stl.org/programs/specialized-equipment-request).

### 15 Years of Golf

The SEF held its 15th annual Dan McLaughlin Golf Tournament on Oct. 9. The event raised more than \$300,000 to support programs for students with disabilities.

SSD staff volunteered and contributed in many ways. The tournament committee included many SSD teachers, staff and retirees, and 75 others volunteered on the day of the event.

SSD schools compete each year to sell the most raffle tickets. Litzsinger School sold the most tickets for this year's raffle, which generated \$8,000. SSD schools and departments also raised \$10,000 to support the Kid-to-Camp effort. Staff from two SSD departments — Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Audiology and Early Childhood — raised enough contributions that each department was able to sponsor a golf hole for \$1,000.

SSD is proud to partner with the SEF, which provides so many valuable resources and opportunities to District students and teachers. ■

## Board of Education

- **Ms. Jan Goodman**, Board President  
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[www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org)

**MISSION:** In collaboration with partner districts, we provide technical education and a wide variety of individualized educational and support services designed for each student's successful contribution to our community.

**VISION:** Partners for every student's success

**VALUES:** student success • collaboration  
• integrity • stewardship • continuous improvement • equity

**Special School District Notice of Non-Discrimination and Accommodation:** Special School District does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation against an individual based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, veteran status, age, or activity protected by federal or state law in its programs, activities and employment and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Direct inquiries and complaints under this policy to Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison, 12110 Clayton Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63131, telephone (314) 989-8100 or to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, One Peticcoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, telephone (816) 268-0550, fax (816) 268-0599, TDD (800) 877-8339, email [OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.KansasCity@ed.gov). Information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities accessible to impaired persons can be obtained from the Special School District's Director – Compliance Liaison at the phone number and address listed above.

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314.989.8288 / [communications@ssdmo.org](mailto:communications@ssdmo.org)

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## NEWS FROM SSD



**Special School District  
of St. Louis County**  
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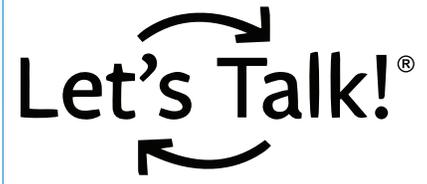
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## Let's Talk — Tell Us What's on Your Mind

SSD has launched Let's Talk, an online tool that will allow you to submit feedback at your convenience directly to the SSD staff member who can help. Just visit the SSD website at [www.ssdmo.org](http://www.ssdmo.org) and look for the Let's Talk button on the homepage.



Once you click on the Let's Talk link, you'll be able to choose an interest area related to the message that you want to submit. Let us know what's going well, ask a question, offer suggestions, submit a concern or make a general comment.

As we work to continuously improve the District's communication with stakeholders, we look forward to starting a conversation with you. ■