

## core training

Thanks to everyone who attended the 2011 Core Trainings in Bemidji and Mankato! As usual, we were impressed with our members' enthusiasm and creativity as they tackled a wide range of current unit issues. With unit goals identified and action plans in place, members hopefully returned to their units with one more tool in their toolbox to affect positive change in their workplace. Great job everyone!

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

*Margaret Mead, US Anthropologist*

## success story

### CHRISTINA'S CORNER



CHRISTINA L. CLARK  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Rejoice!

Just in time for the holiday season, we celebrate the MSEA Little Falls food service members' defeat of a proposal to subcontract their work to a private vendor! After an intensive 9-week effort, the superintendent withdrew his recommendation in favor of the proposal and did not ask the school board to vote on the question. A happy holiday indeed for those members!

You can read more about the campaign in our unit spotlight story on page 3. Learn about the strategies MSEA members employed to mobilize the community and educate the school board about keeping the "community" in "Little Falls Community Schools."

In the meantime, maintain your vigilance. I have written before about the dangers of subcontracting or privatizing the work that MSEA members do for our schools. When a district contracts with a private company to provide janitorial, food or other services, MSEA members lose wages, benefits, job security, pension and all the other protections of unionized public employees. Some districts are under the mistaken belief that privatizing our work is in the best interests of the district, the community, and the students. In reality, the community loses control over its workforce, the quality of services, and the safety of students.

As I've said before, if your district starts talking about subcontracting services currently provided by MSEA members, please call your field representative. Do not pass Go, do not collect \$200: call your field rep. We will strategize how to combat and defeat a district's misguided look at subcontracting. And always remember: ¡Sí, se puede!

*Christina*

### SAVE THE DATE!

## DAY ON THE HILL - March 1st

Come one, come all! Join MSEA and AFSCME Council 65 members at Minnesota's beautiful Capitol building in St. Paul to deliver our message to the legislators who work there - on **MARCH 1st**.

What is our message? Minnesotans want to work. Minnesotans deserve a living wage. Minnesota school districts are here to educate students, not carry the state's debts. Minnesotans don't need political maneuvering, we need to solve problems.

This year MSEA will again charter a bus to pick up riders in Moorhead and at other stops along the I-94 corridor. Members who live at least a 90-minute drive from St. Cloud can stay in a free hotel room on Wednesday night and pick up the bus in St. Cloud on Thursday morning. We will also have vans traveling to St. Paul from southwestern and southeastern Minnesota. All who attend are eligible for a \$50 stipend and mileage reimbursement. And don't forget - lunch is included!

DOTH online registration will open soon. Spread the word. Bring a friend. The more voices we have, the more we will be heard!

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**LOOK** for MSEA on Facebook under Minnesota School Employees Association.

Join our online conversation!

## SPRING REGIONALS

### Delegate Assembly

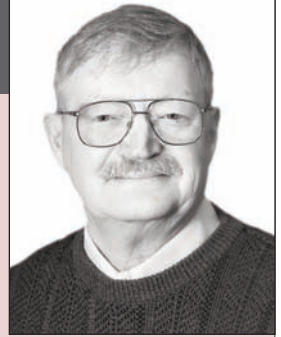
Once again, Spring Regionals will be held around the state to prepare Delegates and Alternates for the Delegate Assembly in Fergus Falls on **April 20-21**. Discussion items will include resolutions, Board elections and unit recognition. See schedule below.

### Day On The Hill

Spring Regionals will also include discussions of important legislative issues and initiatives affecting MSEA members and their families for the 2012 MSEA/AFSCME Day on the Hill in St. Paul on **March 1st**. Our main objective is to help members feel more comfortable when speaking with their legislators. After all, they work for YOU. Online registration for DOTH will be available soon.

| 2012<br>spring regionals |      |   |
|--------------------------|------|---|
| REG                      | DATE | LOCATION  |
| 1-2                      | 2/18 | <b>REDLAKE</b><br>Seven Clans Casino<br>12:00 PM    |
| 3                        | 2/11 | <b>ALEXANDRIA</b><br>Holiday Inn<br>11:00 AM        |
| 4                        | 2/9  | <b>SAUK RAPIDS</b><br>Jimmy's Pour House<br>6:00 PM |
| 5                        | 2/7  | <b>SHAKOPEE</b><br>Dangerfields<br>5:00 PM          |
| 6                        | 2/22 | <b>WORTHINGTON</b><br>Pizza Ranch<br>5:30 PM        |
| 7                        | 2/21 | <b>ROCHESTER</b><br>Old Country Buffet<br>6:00 PM   |

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been exciting for me to see the changes within MSEA over the last year or two, and to see the trainings that the staff has provided us are being used by MSEA members and units.

A couple of examples of this are the Mankato, Moorhead and Little Falls units. Mankato put together a school board candidate forum that was very successful. It showed not only the members, but just as importantly, the school board, that our members in Mankato are a force to be reckoned with and are also a big part of the Mankato school district team. A feature article about the forum in the Mankato FreePress also gave MSEA visibility in the community.

In Moorhead, the unit helped organize a rally to support the locked out sugar beet workers. The rally demonstrated solidarity with other unions and workers and also showed that union members are a vital part of the community. Again, the event resulted in some good media coverage, including some video footage on the evening news featuring MSEA members.

We also saw the trainings at work in Little Falls, where the school administration tried to subcontract out the food service. Using tools learned at the August Rally and Core Training, our members successfully campaigned to defeat the attempt and save their jobs and pensions.

What these examples show is that all classified workers are an important part of the whole district team. It also shows the community that we care about our schools and our communities. It sends a definite and positive message to the administration and school board that we demand and expect to be treated with respect.

On a final note, on behalf of the MSEA Board I would like to take this time wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

In Unity,  
Evan Mapes, MSEA President

## Little Falls Food Service Subcontracting Defeated!

After nine weeks of work and worry, MSEA's Little Falls food service members are celebrating and breathing a sigh of relief.

In September, the Little Falls business manager recommended a proposal from Chartwells, a giant multi-national corporation, to employ the food service workers in the district. Chartwells already manages the food service program and accepting the proposal would leave MSEA members in limbo – Chartwells would have no obligation to hire them and would have full control over wages and benefits.

By Chartwells' own admission, employees would have no job security. Seniority rights would disappear. PERA retirement benefits would be frozen. All local control would be out the window.



MSEA Field Rep Lori Carlson w/Penny Flansburg, Vicky Wendland & Elizabeth Duscher of Little Falls

Adopting the message of **“Keep the Community in Little Falls Community Schools”**, Little Falls members jumped into action and challenged the administration's claims that Chartwells' proposal would save money and improve the food service program. They distributed flyers throughout the community, spoke during school board meetings, called in to the local radio show, wrote letters to the editor, emailed, phoned and spoke face-to-face with board members and asked other area union members to contact board members as well.

MSEA provided support by hiring a school finance expert to dissect the administration's projected cost savings claims and presented its analysis to the school board; doing a statewide member outreach asking MSEA members to contact the Little Falls school board members with their concerns; and drafting and editing flyers and other informational documents.

After MSEA began its campaign, the district postponed the October vote in order to hear formal presentations from MSEA, Chartwells, and district administrators. Upon further review, claims of cost savings and reduction of administrative burdens proved to be much less significant than originally projected.

**T**here is strength in numbers, we have to work together.  
Joan Jendro, Little Falls Food Service

**D**on't give up, even if the future looks bleak; it's not over until it's over. Listen to your union's advice!"  
Michelle Thesing, Little Falls Food Service

As the November meeting approached, MSEA members started their final push. More flyers, phone calls, emails and conversation. More discussion on talk radio and letters of support from other unions and the community. Finally, Superintendent Curt Tryggestad withdrew his recommendation that

the Board accept Chartwells' bid. MSEA's contract – and MSEA jobs - remain intact. Let the celebration begin!

MSEA remains vigilant on the issue however. Tryggestad has suggested that the district would bring subcontracting into negotiations and he intends to renew Chartwells' management contract for another year.

But for the moment, MSEA's food service members in Little Falls continue to provide healthy meals to Little Falls students. Enjoy!



Little Falls members: (standing) Retired Chief Steward Jan Peterson, Chief Steward Vicky Wendland, Cami Lies, Vice Steward Elizabeth Duscher, Michelle Thesing, Joan Jendro, (seated) Little Falls para & MSEA Director Penny Flansburg

**W**hen you work together and support each other and get the community involved - you can achieve great things!"

Vicky Wendland  
Little Falls Chief Steward

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## NEWS & NOTES

### MSEA Educational Scholarships

Register at: [www.msea-mn.com](http://www.msea-mn.com)

Don't forget! Online registration for the 2011-12 Nancy Crippen Educational Scholarships is up and running. Applications are due March 1st.

### MSEA Members On Leave

If you wish to remain an active member while on a leave of absence from your district, you must notify MSEA in writing (emails are permitted) and pay a one-time yearly dues of \$25. If you return to work at some point during the school year, the \$25 payment will be applied to your total dues amount for the current year.

Maintaining active status with MSEA allows you to receive all mailings and meeting notices during the year, vote on contract proposals and ratifications and hold a local or state office. It will also allow you to be eligible for all MSEA member-only benefits.

Please notify Lynn Jansen ([lynn@msea-mn.com](mailto:lynn@msea-mn.com)) as soon as possible if you wish to maintain active status during a leave of absence. Have a great year!

### LaCrescent Bus Driver Honored

#### Robin Yeshe Receives Recognition

At the end of the 2010-11 school year, the MN Special Education Transportation Committee named MSEA member Robin Yeshe (LaCrescent) as the best school bus driver serving Minnesota students with special needs.

Robin was nominated by several co-workers and the high school principal who described her as "always putting students' needs first."

Described as having the "patience of a saint" and using "teachable moments" to help students better themselves, Robin has the unique ability to be firm, but is keenly aware of the needs and problems of special students.

Her good sense of humor, respect for others and a willingness to learn has made Robin an indispensable member of the LaCrescent school district team!

Congratulations Robin - you are obviously very deserving of this award!

did you know?