

Montcalm

M E S S E N G E R

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS & FRIENDS OF MONTCALM STUDENTS SUMMER 2009

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Before I came to Montcalm, I hardly ever went to school. I was failing and messing up my future. Since coming to Montcalm, I go to school every day and have been getting good grades. I have made the honor roll two times now. That's the first time I have ever made the honor roll in my entire school history. My short-term goal is to graduate high school with good grades. Once I get my diploma, I plan on focusing on my career as a cosmetologist so I can do nails, hair, facials and massages at a spa. I think that would be a blast, and from what I have heard, it is a fun job. People make a good amount of money too in this career. As soon as I get my license, I plan on working at the hair salon where I go. Also, once I get my license, I have the choice to go to college and get a degree in something else, like maybe criminal justice or maybe I would like to become a psychiatrist.

– ALEXA

I have many short-term goals for my education. One is to finish this year at Montcalm. Another short-term goal is to graduate from high school with a 3.5 or higher GPA. The most important short-term goal for me is to take one day at a time. My first long-term goal is to go to a community college. Then I want to go to a four-year college to get my Bachelor's degree. I would love to find what I want to do in life. I would also like
(continued inside)



To My Son

I built this house for you
It has two bedrooms
They are on opposite sides
Facing opposite directions
But the dining room is in the middle
You have to pass through it to leave
I'll meet you there
We can then sit down to eat together
Before you go.

Meeting in the Middle

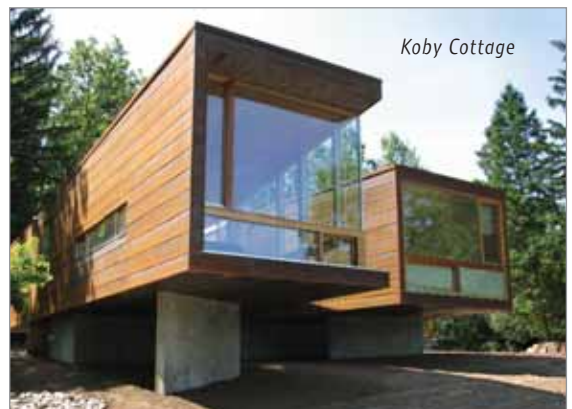
Parents and children don't always see eye-to-eye. Especially teenagers and their parents.

When it comes to understanding children and the complexities of their daily lives – school, social life, fashion, sports, hobbies – adults are challenged to truly listen to what their children have to say. And it's a two-way street. Many children do not feel comfortable expressing their feelings or talking to adults about what stresses them.

Finding ways to reconnect with one another is difficult but through the gracious gift of one very grateful family, strengthening the bonds that tie families together is now possible with Koby Cottage, a new residence on the Starr Albion campus in Michigan.

Featuring a glass, steel and wood exterior, the contemporary modular was designed by Garrison Architects (www.garrisonarchitects.com) of New York City and the building was constructed by Kullman Buildings Corp. (www.kullman.com) of New Jersey.

A wooded site along Montcalm Lake and blurred lines between nature and the interior will allow the cottage to blend seamlessly into the naturally scenic environment of the Albion campus, which stays true to founder Floyd Starr's belief that "Beauty is a silent teacher." An open rooftop deck also creates a connection with the outdoors.



Koby Cottage

"With its striking lines, use of glass and modern feel, the cottage will certainly stand out from the other buildings on campus," said Martin L. Mitchell, President and CEO of Starr. "Parents will appreciate the chance to not only stay on campus in such a unique building but the ability to share time with their child while immersed in the campus."

Koby Cottage is a gift from thankful parents who wish to remain anonymous in recognition of the great results achieved for their son after treatment at (continued inside)

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

to live on my own and be self-sufficient. I have only been at Montcalm School for Girls a short period of time, but I have gotten many things out of my stay here. I am learning more about myself and about what I want to do in life. I have more time to study, so that I can get good grades, that way I have more chances and opportunities in life. I have learned to focus, that way I learn more and I can focus on the important things such as school and figuring out what college to go to. The best thing about me being able to focus is that I can get extra credits. Because I am working hard, I am given the chance to take extra classes and finish high school sooner. Those are just a few things that Montcalm School for Girls has taught me

- CAITLIN

I had failing grades in almost all of my classes and I was behind in my credits before I came to Montcalm. Now, I have all passing grades, matter of fact, I have all As except for two Bs in my classes, and I'm in the process of catching up on my credits so I can get back on track. I've even made honor roll for both of the semesters that I've been here in Montcalm. School is actually something I take pride in and I feel that I can achieve in now. Since I've been doing so well in my classes, I decided it was time to make some short-term goals. These goals include passing all of my classes this school year and going to a technical high school for cosmetology next year. So far I've been working on achieving these goals and have been succeeding. A long-term goal of mine is to be a cosmetologist and save up enough money for college. Once I have enough money, I would like get degrees in teaching and liberal arts. Eventually after college, I would like to be a music teacher for elementary school to middle school kids.

- RACHAEL

STAFF UPDATES

Dr. Jim Longhurst, Licensed Psychologist and Senior Vice President of Clinical Services for Starr Commonwealth, has been named Director of Montcalm Schools.

Dr. Longhurst has been transforming the lives of children at Starr Commonwealth and Montcalm Schools for more than 35 years. He holds a Doctorate in Counseling Psychology and is an expert in the field of strength-based treatment for children and families. He also is a member of the Michigan Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, and a charter member of the International Positive Psychology Association.

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Kelley Jones, Executive Director of the Van Wert campus and Montcalm School for Girls, is now accepting inquiries and facilitating the admissions process for Montcalm School for Girls.

She has always been available to answer questions regarding the treatment and educational benefits of Montcalm School, but is now adding to her role with guiding families and educational consultants through the admissions process.

To contact Kelley about Montcalm School for Girls, please email her at jonesk@starr.org or call 419.238.4051, ext. 6104.



When I leave Montcalm, I will still be in high school, and I have the goal of graduating and going to college. Last year my grades, my attitude toward school, and my education were in a downward spiral. If I were still on that path, I wouldn't be able to graduate high school when I was supposed to and my goal of going to college would be irrational. I had mostly Cs and a few Bs and Ds. I was skipping class, or I wasn't there. I didn't want to go. I was making negative decisions to get myself suspended. At that point, I didn't

care, or I cared but not enough to do something about it. When I came to Montcalm, I realized what I had to do to accomplish my goals in life, and what I was doing wasn't going to get me anywhere. Now I'm getting straight A's, going to school every day, and putting forth my full effort because I actually want to. It is not because I have to, or someone is telling me to. I care a lot more. I think before I just do something that could hurt my family, my education, and what I want to do in life.

- SARAH



EDUCATIONAL GOALS

I plan to learn enough skills to successfully make a living working in some type of technological field. I already know quite a bit about working with computers, graphic design and composing music, so I have a variety of different expertise from which I can choose. I have weighed my option and may eventually go to college. Before I try that out, however, I will likely explore managing my own online business. I know that I definitely want to go to some college courses before Montcalm has helped me move forward. My grades have shown progress since I arrived, and the frequency at which I turn assignments in has significantly increased. My motivation to do work is, at this point, higher than it has been in a long time.

– JOHN

My short-term goal is to get into the STL (Structured Transitional Living) program here. Long-term, I want to go to Bellray Institute to become a vet. I have made tremendous progress since I got here. I don't run away anymore. My social skills have improved greatly, too.

– HARRISON

My short-term goal for the time being is to have a good phone call with my parents, and also with my brother. I just want to make the best of this week.

– ELLIOT

My short term goal is to get out of Starr with good grades. Then my long term goal is to be a full-time firefighter. After Starr I plan on doing EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) and ride in the back of an ambulance. Then I am going to work one year as a volunteer firefighter then do Fire 1 and Fire 2. I hope to be hired as a full-time firefighter. Montcalm has definitely helped me with my school I have been making A's and B's.

– STEVE

OUTSTANDING STAFF

Families often write to thank the Montcalm Schools staff for their professionalism, expertise, care and commitment. We recently heard from two families who had great things to say about one staff member in particular, Mr. Bonello. We wish to recognize Mr. Bonello's dedication to the Montcalm students by sharing with you the words of grateful parents.

My husband and I would like to thank Starr Commonwealth & Montcalm School for all the care, support, and education that was afforded our son during his residence and treatment while at Montcalm. We would like to thank and recommend in particular **Mr. Mark Bonello** for his genuine care and support. Mr. Bonello displayed great concern, not only to our son, but also to us as well. He went above and beyond his call of duty by being a person who truly seemed to care. He was always available and he took great concern to follow through with any help or questions we had. It is obvious that Mr. Bonello is quite passionate about his work. His expertise and education were of great help in working with our son to gain major strides at a very difficult and critical time in his life. We commend Mr. Bonello for all his efforts and we feel he should be recognized.

Thank you, again.
Pickering family



My short term goals for education would be to start taking classes on Health. I would like to become a nurse so that I can help people out. Another goal that I would like to achieve is getting my driver's license. That would mean a great deal. I also wouldn't mind taking Psychology classes at Kellogg Community College. In order to help people you have to know how.

My long term goal would be to get a diploma from Montcalm School. I originally wanted to graduate from high school, but that didn't work out because I was in a new environment. I had just joined my mom and dad in our new home in North Carolina. I wasn't able to adjust.

I would like to go to college after I leave here. The kind of school that I'm looking for is a school that specializes in nursing. I would like to go to a college that's not very far away. It's got to be in the South.

I am shocked that I have a B in Geometry. I've been able to get good help on Geometry. The teacher does something that makes me understand the problems better. When I was in a high school I had a solid F. This makes me happy. As of now I believe I have 3 As and one B. So in terms of school I am doing well.

– EMIL

(continued on back)

A's
AND
B's

(Meeting in the Middle continued) Starr Commonwealth's Montcalm School for Boys. It will serve as a home away from home for parents and a chance for families to reconnect while visiting.

The cottage should be completed in late summer. Details on how parents can make reservations for their stay will be made available soon.

"Koby Cottage truly is a unique piece of architecture," Mitchell said. "The view from inside is beautiful and we are looking very forward to the opportunities families will have to regroup while here."

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

My short-term education goals are to keep my straight A's, to be able to study better, which would also help to keep my grades up, and also to stay positive in school and to try to help others when they are in a time of need. My long-term educational goals are to get out of Starr, get through high school, and get to a college or some kind of tech school so I can later do some kind of work with building/construction. Before Montcalm, I have never made honor roll in my life. During my stay here, I have made it twice, which shows how much progress I have made while being here.

– TAVIS

My short term educational goals are to complete the work given to me each day so I can be proud of myself and have good grades on a consistent basis for the first time in my life. My long term goals are to graduate high school with a 3.0 G.P.A. and move on to college where I will be successful.

– NICK

My short term goal is to ask questions when I don't understand something and being respectful when I don't ask and want to do work on my own. One of my long term goals is to graduate with the grades I know show my fullest potential. After high school I plan on going to Miami, and I hope to become a technician and be successful in what I do.

– MARCO

My short-term goal is to graduate from high school. I would also like to move to STL and then graduate from there. I want to graduate from college in Illinois. I would like to be a mechanical engineer. I plan to get a Master's or Ph.D. I have made progress and have gotten better grades than before I came here.

– DONALD

SUMMER CALENDAR

BOYS ACTIVITIES

Mowing lawn for a disabled veteran
(Service Learning)

Grocery Shopping
Trip to South Haven
Nature walk



Cooking Classes
Interfaith Shelter
(Service Learning)

Albion Blood Drive (Service Learning)
Movie Nights
Go Carts

Fishing (Lakefront)
Chicago Cubs Games
Angel Food Drive (Service Learning)
Cook Outs
Putt Putt
Community Fair



GIRLS ACTIVITIES

Popcorn sales at the Concert in the Park
every Friday night
Hiking in Hocking Hills
Camping at Maumee State Park

Montcalm Girls experience therapeutic benefits of animals

A new interactive animal habitat has been created at the Montcalm School for Girls campus, behind Beckmann Hall. At the habitat are two rabbits, two pygmy goats, a miniature pony and a miniature donkey. Coming soon are three baby turkeys.

More than 40 people, businesses and civic groups from the community contributed to this project.

"Our students and staff are grateful for the community showing of support through the giving of their time and gifts to help with this new animal habitat," said Kelley Jones, Executive Director of Starr Van Wert and Montcalm School for Girls. "We had a very nice turn out for the ribbon cutting and our students were proud to show off the animals to the people who helped make it all possible."

The benefits of animal and human interaction are clearly recognized in numerous research studies. Even more clear is the therapeutic benefits of having children and animals together. Many of the Montcalm students who come to the campus bring with them a variety of emotional and behavioral issues such as anger, depression, low self-esteem and difficulties with attachment.



"Children form bonds and create safe attachments with animals without fearing rejection and abandonment," Jones said. "Animals have the ability to calm and relax while also providing opportunities to learn about responsibility and compassion."

Montcalm School for Girls students will host school and community groups to visit the animals.

Montcalm
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