



# The Greenleaf Report

Volume 2

December 2011

## How Full Is Your Bucket?

Last year I took the MLP class, taught by Laura Salley. During one of our sessions she read to the class the book by Tom Rath, *How Full is Your Bucket? for Kids*. The author points out that each person has an invisible bucket. A full bucket represents esteem, confidence and self-worth, while an empty bucket represents a disheartened outlook. The author introduces us to a boy, Felix, who is having a rough day. As Felix's day progresses, his bucket drains with each negative encounter. Before long, his bucket is nearly empty and his morale is at an all time low. However, his day begins to improve with a timely word from his teacher, followed by a positive interaction with a classmate. Felix realizes that each act of kindness he receives renews his self-esteem, and his bucket begins to fill. By the end of the story, Felix has figured out that when he builds someone up with a kind word or deed, he not only fills their bucket, but his own bucket is filled in the process. Felix ends the day on a high with a renewed sense of self-worth and a commitment to "filling buckets."

After reading that story to our class, Laura had us complete an activity, which I repeated with my own students today, before we left for Thanksgiving break.

I read the story to my students. We talked about the types of comments that lift up others. We further discussed the difference between genuine and superficial compliments. After that, I handed out paper plates that had strings attached. When the students put them on, the plate formed a placard on their backs. Students were then instructed to "fill each other's buckets" by writing a genuine, heartfelt comment on their classmates' plates. I knew the activity had been a success merely by watching the expressions on their faces as they read the comments left by their peers.

I followed this activity with a writing assignment. The students were instructed to journal their perspective of the activity. Below are excerpts from their journal entries.

"...three of my classmates said I was a good friend. That comment made my chest feel full. Last year, I was called names and didn't feel loved. Today, I felt loved."

"... it made me feel good to read all of those comments. The comment that meant the most to me made me feel really good inside. And to do something nice for my classmates was like getting a good report card or waking up on Christmas morning."

"... it felt very good that so many of my classmates believe that I am a good person. I got two comments that were very, very special to me. I don't get compliments like these every day. I was touched because of their thoughtfulness. This was just so unexpected!"

"I am so glad that people like me for who I am."

"[When I read the comments] I felt my bucket overflow."

It is easy to get caught up in assessments and interventions, and I'm continually trying to wring a few extra minutes of instruction out of each day. But after watching my students fill each other's buckets, and after reading their journal entries, I am glad that I made time for such a worthwhile activity. I am convinced that when students feel secure and loved, it creates a better environment for learning. Through this activity, my students are more aware of the effect their words and actions have on their peers. As a class, we agreed to be intentional about being "bucket fillers."

- Carrie Luce,  
5th grade teacher, Margret Chase Smith School

# Giving Back at Skowhegan Area Middle School

As a school we collected about 1100 items for the community food baskets for Thanksgiving meals. We also collected over 30 coats for “Coats for Kids”. Our Student Council members are making tray favors for the residents of: Cedar Ridge, Woodlawn, and Redington Memorial Home. These are cute little items they place on the food serving trays at meal time. Our members are also making Christmas cards for injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Hospital.

On December 3rd – Student Council members will make crafts with kids after they eat at the Santa’s Breakfast and on December 6th they will visit Woodlawn and sing holiday songs to the residents.

Rachel’s Challenge groups – Helped put together 22 Thanksgiving food baskets for local families with the help from the EMS group at RFGH who donated all the food items. The donations went to 20 families of middle school students and one family from Bloomfield and one family from MCSS.

Both Student Council and Rachel’s Challenge groups each adopt a local family and buys items for the children so they will have something at Christmas.

-Bruce Mochamer,  
Principal

## High School Students Create and Display Art Virtually

The Digital Art Students at Skowhegan High School in Maine display art work from the ‘real’ world in virtual museums and galleries. Approximately 50 students enrolled in Paul Skowhegan’s (all avatars use the last name of their school) art classes are using some of the latest techniques and software to create works of art that can, theoretically, be shared worldwide.

Students get directions for a specific project, incorporating the standards-based requirements and artistic techniques along with instruction in using the software and hardware. The results are 3D structures that reflect a unique aesthetic filled with artwork that each individual student selects.

As a visitor to the sim on Reaction Grid, my tour consisted of several student-constructed galleries, the Surreal Gardens, and a building that is being constructed in collaboration with an English teacher whose class is studying *The Great Gatsby*.

The works illustrate independent and collaborative works, the group products clearly indicate significant communication and collaboration among the students. Each semester the teacher clears the sim in preparation for the next class, Paul is considering a permanent structure to house select student works from each semester.

I had an opportunity to interact with the students, observing and discussing with them made it quite clear that they were totally engaged in the process and their creations. One student took me for a tour of his build, which he chose to construct suspended above the sim, in the sky. The structure is a three story building requiring a way to move from one level to the other, posing a problem. His solution was a transparent elevator shaft in the center of the room that allowed an avatar to fly up or down a level. The student, C. Skowhegan, explained he had a Second Life account but rarely went there as he preferred the freedom he had to build and create in Reaction Grid. Students I spoke to expressed a positive attitude regarding the class and the work they were doing.

The young artists in Mr. Skowhegan’s class to take it all in stride, it seems to come natural to them. The experiences these students are having are unique compared to other high school art classes and skills they are developing are 21st Century skills.

-Paul LeBrun,  
Business Dept.

# Thank You For Your Service

On Friday, June 17, 2011 the entire Title IA staff joined Patricia Nadeau, Jackie Stedman, and Alberta Cole in a celebration of their retirement. These three ladies had a total of 72 years of service to RSU54/MSAD54, a number that astounded and impressed those in attendance. When asked what they would do on the first day of school for the 2011-2012 school year, there was a rumor of riding around in a convertible with the top down!

-Debbie Hogate,  
Title 1A Coordinator



Pat, Jackie, and Berta are pictured here with their celebratory cake. If you see them out and about, please check on that convertible ride!

## Somerset's Retired Teachers

The Somerset Country Retired Teachers meet on the 3rd Friday of the month at the Norridgewock Congregational Church on the River Road. Last month the members brought in items to send to those serving in the Military around the world. The requested and donated items included: candy, gum, lotion, cards, toothbrushes and toothpaste, beef jerky and antibacterial wipes, etc.

In September we collected items to donate to an elementary school in Somerset County. We chose Athens Elementary School and delivered many bags and boxes of supplies for the teachers and the school. Items donated ranged from tissues and pencils to copy paper and notebooks.

More than 30 retired teachers attend the meetings from all parts of Somerset County. The members of this organization still care deeply about education and continue, even in retirement to donate time and resources wherever needed.

Most meetings have speakers that share information about issues that affect retirees and any new legislation that we should know about. We also share health and nutrition ideas everyone can use. The church members cook and serve a home-cooked meal at each meeting. The meal costs \$7 and members pay \$6 for annual dues. All Somerset County retirees are welcome. Meetings start at 11 am.

-Dawna Esty,  
For more information call her @474-7654

## DGA's Photographers

Four Digital Graphic Arts students, Eliza Li, Micki Stone, Danica Strout and Kylie Whittemore, acted as event photographers during the recent state-wide MACTE (Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education) conference held in Skowhegan at the Somerset Career and Technical Center. All four students came to school on that teacher workshop day and spent the day frequenting the break-out sessions, keynote speaker address and luncheon capturing candid photographs of the presenters and attendees.

With the assistance of Education Technician Andrew Staples, the SAHS seniors used the photos to create a digital slide show that was shown on a large screen during the closing ceremonies. All four seniors are dual-enrolled in DGA and Central Maine Community College in a three-credit digital photography course and this photo-shoot was part of their training.

-Bob Gauvin,  
Digital Graphic Arts Instructor.

# Every Little Bit Helps

In October, I had one of those experiences with my students that truly warmed my heart! Three students in my class exhibited true giving (and initiative) by organizing a donation. They came to me and asked if I knew it was Breast Cancer Awareness Month and told me their idea.....to raise money to help by challenging each of their classmates to bring in a quarter. Their goal was \$10. They presented their idea to our class and Mrs. Brewer's class asking their classmates to bring in change, "even a quarter will help." I sent an e-mail to staff making them aware of this opportunity to donate and the girls made and hung posters. They even made pink ribbons to give to those who donated.

They collected for the month of October and surpassed their goal by raising over \$100!! I have been teary-eyed over this example of selflessness! They were testimony to the fact that we can all do something to help one another...and every little bit helps! On Monday, these girls, Sadie Abbott, Olivia Hatch and Emily Reichenbach, presented the money raised to Seabasticook Valley Hospital.

-Patty Gallison,  
Grade 4 teacher Canaan Elementary School

## We Are So Proud Of You!

Here at our MCSS Resource Room, we have a 6th grade student who has a diagnosis of Autism. He works at his own speed and often surprises us with how much information and knowledge he actually has stored in his head. During the parent-teacher conference his teacher was sharing his recent writing prompt with his mom. The prompt asked the students to write about a person they thought should be put on a stamp.

Our student has been reading about Martin Luther King during Read 180 and his prompt was about how he thought MLK should be placed on a stamp. We were amazed and really pleased to see that he had included so much information that he had learned from Read 180 and was able to use that and write a thoughtful, well planned out prompt. We are so proud of him!

-Karen Andrus and Mary Swindells, Special Education  
Margaret Chase Smith School

## After School Program

Students in the After School Program have been creating Ceramic Artwork at the Skowhegan Pottery studio located in the former Skowhegan jail, now known as the Somerset Grist Mill.

-Yvonne Bollenbacher,  
AmeriCorps volunteer, Skowhegan Area High School

## Almost, Maine

The Skowhegan Area High School Theater program presented its fall play, Almost, Maine, November 17-19. Proceeds from opening night were donated to a Skowhegan family who lost their house to a fire. Also, during the run of the show, the theater group collected over 190 food items which were donated to St. Anthony's Soup Kitchen.

-Maura Smith,  
English Teacher

