

ACCESS TO SUCCESS

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION PROGRAM

Located at: Helena College

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER- OCTOBER 2017

The Fall 2017 semester is in full swing and before you know it the semester will be half over! The students are off to a fantastic start and this is looking like our best semester yet!

Gratitude

We would like to say, "thank you" to the wonderful Helena community businesses that have donated to our program. So far we have received donation from Wendy's, Cinemark, Buffalo Wild Wings, Stockman Bank, and Dairy Queen. With their donations are able to celebrate the success of our students! If your business would like to donate give us a call at 447-6380!

Class Spotlight: Math Testing

At the end of September, we assessed students with an Access to Success custom math assessment created in partnership with Montana Digital Academy. All students new to the program this semester and

any students currently enrolled in a math class took the assessment. Students will then take a similar post-test at the end of the academic semester.

The goal of the assessment is to measure Access to Success student growth in mathematics each semester. We know students are succeeding in our program and this will give us some evidence to prove it.

Trivia

What is the flower for October?

Comments from an Access to Success Student:

When I heard about Access to Success, I wasn't sure if it was the right program for me. I had always defined myself as "the smart one", and I was afraid that I couldn't be anything else. The school system I had grown up in taught me to demonize anyone that didn't fit neatly into the education program. They were the bad kids, doing drugs and getting pregnant, and making stupid decisions that the "good kids" were smart enough to avoid. Joining the program would

be the final nail in my coffin as part of the "other", the bad kids, the outcasts. But eventually I had to face the fact that with my laundry list of health problems and my dismal attendance record, I was already an outcast as far as the system was concerned. This program offered me my best chance for normalcy.

What I found here surprised me.



The "other" that I was told was so stupid and toxic was really a bunch of kids who were working to overcome their past mistakes, or who had health problems, or lived in toxic and dangerous homes. They were as funny and intelligent and compassionate as the friends I had left at my old school. They had made mistakes, sure, but they had learned from them, and

****Access to Success is a high school completion program in the Helena School District. We provide students, 16 and over, who have dropped out the opportunity to earn their diploma. ****

they had moved past the crippling fear of failure that had held me captive for so long. I felt guilty for all the assumptions I had made, and was ready to be an outcast here as well. But I was met with acceptance. These people didn't care what I had been like in the past, they judged me on my current actions. I can't tell you how refreshing it was. I didn't feel like people would be disappointed if I didn't know the answer, or would make fun of my for my vocabulary. There was no one asking me to fit into a box. Everyone was here because we wanted to graduate, and there was a level of mutual respect for each other's goals that shocked me. So many people here have overcome horrible things in their lives, and it made them stronger, and more determined.

This program gave me a chance to graduate, but it also gave me a chance to define myself in differently, I don't have to be just the smart one anymore. I can be smart and strong and funny and bad at sports and have depression and like to sing and be anxious and love to read. And so can everyone else. Everyone has made decisions that they regret, or found themselves in unfair, impossible situations. But we are here because we refuse to be defined by those mistakes. We came here to graduate, because we have plans for our futures, and in doing so we got a second chance to define ourselves. We are all more than single sentences. We are smart and kind and funny and strong and some of are parents or recovering-drug addicts or actors or singers or

survivors or dancers. And as a community, we are Access.
~Amalie Hodges

Angel Fund

On October 2nd students will be able to pick up their application for Angel Fund. Angel Fund is a program that assists in purchasing basic school clothing, shoes, undergarments, warm outerwear and school supplies. Access students are eligible for up to \$150 towards the purchase of these items. We are limited to 10 students this year and the deciding factor will be attendance. Please stop by the office and see Ms. Rowling if you would like an application or if you have any questions.

Midterm Madness

Midterm is coming soon!!! To celebrate the halfway point of the semester we will be having pizza, soda, and raffle drawings!!!!!!

When: October 18th, 2017

Where: Rooms 002 & 003

Time: 11:00am – 3:00pm

Stop in and eat when you can!

UPCOMING INFORMATION NIGHTS

October 3rd, 2017

November 7th, 2017

December 5th, 2017

Information nights are at 6:00pm on the Helena College campus in room 009.



Access Video

Our very own Christa Schoenfeld has made a wonderful short Access to Success video to show off just how wonderful our program is! Please take literally a minute out of your day and go to our webpage to watch!

<http://accesstosuccess.helenaschools.org/>

Did you know that you can also find tons of other information on our web page? Important dates, the calendar, scholarship applications, and more!

2018-2019 FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid will be available starting October 1, 2017. You can receive free help in the Helena College Student Center on the following dates:

Monday, Oct 2nd from 12-2pm

Tuesday, Oct 3rd from 11-1pm

Wednesday, Oct 4th from 8-10am

Thursday, Oct 5th from 2-4pm

Friday, Oct 6th from 12-2pm