

# the S.I.N.E. Post

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**S.I.N.E.**  
Southwest Indiana Network for Education  
866.380.SINE (7463)  
www.SINEonline.com

## from the Executive Director



I am pleased to greet you in the new year and report that SINE continues to be a major force in providing support to the local school districts and adult literacy providers in their quests to deliver a learning experience that will create life-long learners. SINE looks forward to continuing to offer this support for many years.

On October 28, 2004, SINE sponsored its first-ever Literacy Celebration at The Centre in downtown Evansville. The celebratory event included educators, administrators, students and parents from nearly 100 schools in SINE's nine-county area.

I would like to personally thank all of the participants from these schools who devoted so much of their time and efforts to make the Literacy Celebration such a huge success. From their participation in the all-day literacy workshop to their booth displays where they showcased their schools' successes in literacy, all of the participants did an outstanding job of demonstrating their commitment to literacy.

The hard work of all of these educators, administrators, students and parents was rewarded during the highlight of the Literacy Celebration when participants were treated to a dinner featuring keynote speaker Henry Winkler. Winkler, a famous actor who is currently writing a series of children's books, commended those in education for all of their hard work and efforts to promote literacy for ALL students.

Over the last several years, SINE has witnessed the great dedication our educators have to providing the best learning experience for their students. From the full implementation of the Four Blocks Literacy Model in some of our area schools to the use of Accelerated Reader to increase students' reading comprehension levels, the students in our area schools are reaping the benefits of these efforts.

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## Henry Winkler helps SINE celebrate literacy

To highlight the successes which schools in its nine-county region of southwest Indiana have made in literacy over the last several years, SINE hosted a week-long Literacy Celebration October 25-29, 2004.



The highlight of the week took place when world-famous actor, producer, director and children's book author, Henry Winkler, was the keynote speaker at the Literacy Celebration Dinner on October 28 at The Centre in downtown Evansville.

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# Learning for Life.

## Montgomery retires from SINE; Nixon to take on professional development



The new year ushered in a change in staffing for SINE. Four-year Assistant Director and Professional Development Coordinator, Dr. G.W. Montgomery, retired from SINE at the end of 2004. Current Consultants in Education (CIE) Program Coordinator, Sandy Nixon, will now assume Montgomery's duties.

Nixon, who previously coordinated the CIE projects and programs, will continue in that role in addition to coordinating all professional development opportunities for SINE through CIE. She will work closely with area school districts to determine their needs for staff development.

Montgomery, a former teacher, high school principal and school superintendent, earned a doctorate in Educational Administration from Indiana University. While a superintendent, his district won national awards for teacher staff development. Montgomery will be retiring to Florida, with his wife Betty, where he will enjoy golfing, fishing and relaxing.



Nixon retired after 29 years with the North Gibson School Corporation - serving the last eight as superintendent. She earned a BS in Elementary Education from Oakland City University, an MA from the University Of Evansville and an Ed.S. from Indiana State University.

Montgomery, a native of Gibson County, said Southwest Indiana has always had a special place in his heart. "Even though I have spent most of my career in other locations, I was pleased to find that the people of this part of the state had not changed appreciably," he said. "This part of the state still values hard work and has a great sense of a caring community. It was my privilege to work with teachers and administrators these past four years. I have found them to be highly professional and eager to serve the youth of our community in the very best manner possible. It is my hope that SINE, the state and the local school districts will continue to provide the resources for staff development. Teachers and administrators continuing to grow professionally is an absolute necessity for our students to get the kind of education they deserve."

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## SINE helps to support Perry County Learning Partnership

To fulfill its mission to enhance communications between the business and education worlds, SINE has recently pledged its support to the Perry County Learning Partnership (PCLP).

The PCLP is a collaboration of Perry County businesses and industry, as well as the county's three school corporations. The purpose of the group as stated in its mission statement is, "To provide leadership, resources, and advocacy for life-long learning and workforce development in Perry County."

According to Executive Director, Mary K. Cardinal, SINE partnered with the PCLP to help carry out its mission and goals.

One critical goal for the PCLP was to help overcome the shortage of qualified applicants for entry-level employment in Perry County. The groups identified this as the most significant detriment to the competitive positioning of the county's existing employers. Because qualified applicants are recognized as vital to the economic development effort of the community and the attraction of family-wage jobs, this was an area of great importance for the group.

To work toward alleviating this problem, the PCLP proposed the creation of an entry-level manufacturing training program. The program consists of four training modules with subject matter identified by local manufacturers. The four areas of training are math skills, basic communication skills, fundamental business and manufacturing concepts and workplace responsibilities.

Each of the four training modules will consist of 24 hours of classroom instruction. Upon the successful completion (certification) of this program, participants will be directed to Perry County employers who have committed to the highest level of consideration of these individuals for next available positions within their employment ranks.

Major employers of Perry County view this program as a powerful and positive opportunity to ensure a quality workforce for the future.

Ed Zellers, Personnel Manager at the Waupaca Foundry in Perry County, said that because

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from the  
**Executive Director**

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Not only has SINE provided support for increased literacy in its area schools, but it has also put forth much effort to promote adult literacy services throughout our region. SINE has experienced huge successes with the creation of the SINEonline.com "Clearing House" - a web-based directory of adult literacy services and providers. The "Clearing House" provides a confidential means for adults to access information concerning basic literacy and GED preparation services in their own community. Additionally the Adult Literacy Councils established in each of SINE's nine counties provide a means for more effective use of resources in reaching adults seeking to improve their literacy and life skills.

Together, the benefits of increasing literacy levels in our schools and among the adult population will have positive, long-term effects on the local economy. As literacy and life-long learning continue to become valued skills in our communities, the economy will benefit from a more educated and skilled workforce. Our relatives, friends and neighbors- no matter their own personal educational achievement level - will have more opportunities and a better standard of living. This is all part of SINE's mission to enhance the culture for learning in Southwest Indiana.

SINE began with a vision, supported by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. That first grant has run its course, and currently we are applying for additional funding from Lilly's CAPE III grant program. This new funding will allow us to continue supporting all the professionals and volunteers who enthusiastically pursue the goal of creating lifelong learners in students of all ages.

SINE has had the opportunity to work with thousands of people, from all walks of life, who are striving to create a "culture for learning" in Southwest Indiana. Many magnificent things have been achieved in the last three years, and SINE looks forward to continuing its work to improving lives for all members of the Southwest Indiana community.

Mary K. Cardinal  
Executive Director



**Learning for Life.**

## **SINE helps to support Perry County Learning Partnership**

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manufacturing has changed so much over the years there are now areas of focus, such as quality improvement programs, that most entry-level employees do not have experience with. The PCLP training program will help give these future employees that knowledge and experience.

Zellers also noted that Perry County has seen a drastic drop in its unemployment rate, and several county employers have been regularly adding to their workforces. This adds to the pressure for employers to find qualified employees.

The PCLP project also represents an obvious shared effort between Perry County businesses and education communities. Perry County's three school corporations have been involved in the planning stages of this project.

As area high schools represent a source of potential candidates for the program, the group recognized the need to work toward curriculum alignment with area schools to ensure that students exiting Perry County high schools have the prerequisite skills needed for the program and/or employment.

Students in Perry County's alternative education program will have the opportunity to work concurrently on high school credits and PCLP certification so that they potentially could receive their high school diplomas and the Perry County certifications and be ready to enter the workforce.

Mary Roberson, Superintendent of Perry Central Schools, says educators recognize that their purpose is to help prepare students for their futures.

"Business connections are key to this process - in helping us align curriculum to meet employer needs and provide opportunities to make learning experiences authentic for our students," she said. "By working together, business and education representatives send powerful messages to students and employees that we share common goals for our community. We know that by working together we can make a difference for individuals and the community."

SINE is currently in the process of heading up similar partnerships in its other eight counties of Southwest Indiana. The long-term benefits of these programs include a quality workforce, which will serve current and future employers, building stronger communities that value lifelong learning.

# SINE provides opportunities for schools to become “models” for others to emulate

Last year SINE introduced its Model School program as an in-depth training opportunity for area schools to become exemplary in the implementation of an instructional strategy or sets of instructional strategies. The Model School program encourages the entire school staff to become involved with change and to become a site where other educators will want to come to view the highest level of implementation of a particular program.

In its Model School program, SINE awarded grants up to \$60,000 to 23 schools and 7 school districts that chose to pursue this endeavor. Although many schools and corporations applied for the Model School grants, SINE selected ones that most closely aligned with its mission.

## Hedges Central Elementary

At Hedges Central Elementary, the focus of the school's Model School Program is the Four Blocks Literacy Model.

According to Principal Barbara Givens, Four Blocks has been implemented in all grade levels and all curriculum areas at Hedges Central.

“Our teachers in the areas of physical education, music and art, along with the librarian and speech pathologist, are also integrating this research-based program in their curriculum and lessons,” she said. “Through SINE's Model School Program, the Hedges Central faculty and staff will have access to consultants who will assist them in honing and refining their skills as they continue to apply the Four Blocks Literacy Model in their classrooms.”

Using the SINE Model School grant monies, Hedges Central faculty and staff received training this past summer from Cheryl Sigmon, a national consultant for Four Blocks, and Mary Giard, a national consultant in the area of reading comprehension. Throughout the school year, consultants from Consultants in Education, a division of SINE, are presenting workshops for the teachers on Guided Reading,

Reading in the Content Area, Refining Four Blocks, and Leadership in Four Blocks.

In its quest to become a Model School in the area of Four Blocks implementation, Hedges Central teachers will visit other schools where the Four Blocks model has been implemented, and the school will also play host to teachers from other area schools who would like to observe the Four Blocks methodology put into practice in Hedges Central classrooms. The school has designed brochures which include testimonials about Four Blocks from the teachers, and a profile of the school and pictures of its students working with the various blocks of the program to share with other schools.

Givens said the Four Blocks Literacy Model was selected for the school's area of focus because it is included in the school's improvement plan as a way to increase the reading comprehension levels of all students.

“Because one hundred percent of the Hedges Central teachers, including the Title I staff, are actively involved in the



Model School Program I believe the students will definitely benefit from the extensive training provided to faculty and staff members,” she said.

Givens is thankful for the opportunity SINE has provided her staff to implement the Four Blocks Literacy Model and become a model school for other schools to emulate.

“The teaching staff is proud to be designated as a model school, and Hedges Central students are fortunate to be a part of this

opportunity for learning,” she said. “We are excited that visitors who come to Hedges Central will be observing an effective reading program designed and carried out to help all the students improve their reading comprehension skills.”

## St. John Elementary

St. John Elementary in Newburgh also chose to focus its Model School program on the implementation of Four Blocks.

“Our emphasis is on improving writing skills and facilitating the use of technology in writing across the curriculum,” said Principal Charlotte Bennett.

Bennett said the teachers at her school have been involved in ongoing staff development in the area of Four Blocks, Write Traits, Writing Across the Curriculum, Differentiated Instruction and technology training over the past three years.

“The programs were implemented beginning with kindergarten six years ago,” she said. “The Four Blocks training was added to first grade then to second and now to the third grade classrooms. The upper grades are using parts of the Four Blocks Program so the program is at some point of implementation within all grades of our school.”

Bennett said the Four Blocks literacy model was initiated at St. John's to meet individual reading skills and writing for all students. Student test scores indicated that students needed support in their writing skills from composition to keyboarding, she said.

The students at St. John's are definitely reaping the benefits of the program. According to Bennett, student success has been marked by higher scores on ISTEP. Students are also benefiting from the use of wireless laptops used for keyboarding with their writing projects.

Overall, the staffs and students at Hedges Central Elementary, St. John's and dozens of other SINE Model Schools, are instrumental parts of schools where other educators will want to come to view the success of their programs and emulate in their own schools.

## Montgomery retires from SINE; Nixon to take on professional development

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Nixon looks forward to her new role and said SINE has been lucky to have an educator of Dr. Montgomery's stature heading up professional development over the last four years. "I am looking forward to the new opportunities and challenges afforded me as I assume the role of heading up professional development for SINE in the future," she said. "I enjoy working with the schools in SINE's nine-county region and am excited about all the possibilities ahead of us."

Executive Director Mary K. Cardinal said SINE is extremely fortunate to have two individuals highly dedicated to improving education- Dr. Montgomery and Mrs. Nixon - providing the vision and planning for teacher professional development. "Dr. Montgomery has been dedicated to ensuring high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers throughout our region," she said. "The standards he set will positively affect the quality of classroom instruction for many years. Mrs. Nixon is resolute in her pursuit of excellence for teacher professional development and her expertise in the educational field will be a tremendous asset to SINE as we move forward."

### How to CONTACT US

#### Wilder Center

Route 3, Box 12C  
Oakland City, IN 47660  
866-380-SINE (7463) toll-free  
812-749-4972 fax  
www.SINEonline.com

#### Mary K. Cardinal

Executive Director  
Cell 812-385-6946  
mcardinal@SINEonline.com

#### Martha Carpenter

Administrative Assistant  
Cell 812-454-1600  
mcarpenter@SINEonline.com

#### Sandy Nixon

Coordinator, Consultants in Education  
812-385-4756  
Cell 812-677-0493  
snixon@SINEonline.com

#### Kevin Chattin

Technology Coordinator  
Cell 812-385-6956  
kchattin@SINEonline.com

#### Susanne Wilson

Business/Education/Adult Learning Coordinator  
Cell 812-459-6123  
swilson@SINEonline.com

#### Alisha Tichenor

Public Relations/Advertising Specialist  
Cell 812-385-6973  
atichenor@SINEonline.com

\*SINE employees' cell phones can also be accessed through the toll-free number

## Henry Winkler helps SINE celebrate literacy

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During his speech, Winkler discussed his recent career as the author of a series of children's books for Penguin Publishing entitled "Hank Zipzer: The Mostly True Confessions of the World's Best Under-Achiever." These books were inspired by Winkler's discovery in adulthood that the education problems he suffered as a child were related to dyslexia.

SINE's K-12 Literacy Celebration began with literacy celebrations at each of the participating schools. The local celebrations involved students, teachers, parents and members of the community.

"Over the past three years the educators of Southwest Indiana have devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort in professional development devoted to improving the literacy skills of our region's youth," said Mary K. Cardinal, SINE Executive Director. "SINE's Literacy Celebration recognizes the achievements of these educators and their students."

Schools who participated received up to \$1000 to host their literacy celebrations, \$1000 for their school libraries, eligibility for prizes including a Promethean ACTIVboard, laptop computers and funding for classroom libraries. Schools that participated also received recognition of their efforts to promote literacy in their communities.

SINE's week-long Literacy Celebration culminated with an all-day workshop for teachers, a literacy fair for students and teachers to display their work in literacy and a celebratory dinner on October 28 at The Centre.

The workshop included presentations from nationally renowned literacy consultants Barry Lane, Jerry Pallotta and Cheryl Sigmon. The literacy fair allowed students and teachers the chance to display booths showcasing their recent work in literacy for attendees to view.

Following the workshop and booth displays, almost 800 people attended the Literacy Celebration Dinner and had a chance to have books signed by Winkler and take photographs. Several attendees were also awarded door prizes from local businesses.



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ROUTE 3 BOX 12C  
OAKLAND CITY INDIANA 47660

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# You and SINE

## Partners in a Stronger Future

SINE has had a very good beginning ... but this is just the beginning. SINE has made a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals in Southwest Indiana ... not only through direct contact, such as the many training programs, but also through the impact that these trained professionals, successful students, and achieving adult learners will have on the lives of those around them.

Your generous contribution aids SINE in developing and sponsoring the much-needed programs that partner with education and businesses to improve our workforce; assist us in underwriting costs for programs that aid our at-risk and underachieving youth, creating brighter opportunities for their future; help us establish or enhance adult learning opportunities that include literacy services, basic computer training, ESL, GED or high school completion programs; and allow us to increase the contributions that SINE makes to such programs as our classroom libraries.

Yes, I want to become a SINE partner. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution that will enable SINE to develop and support much-needed programs in our communities. I understand that through my generous gift, I will contribute to building a better future for Southwest Indiana.

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