

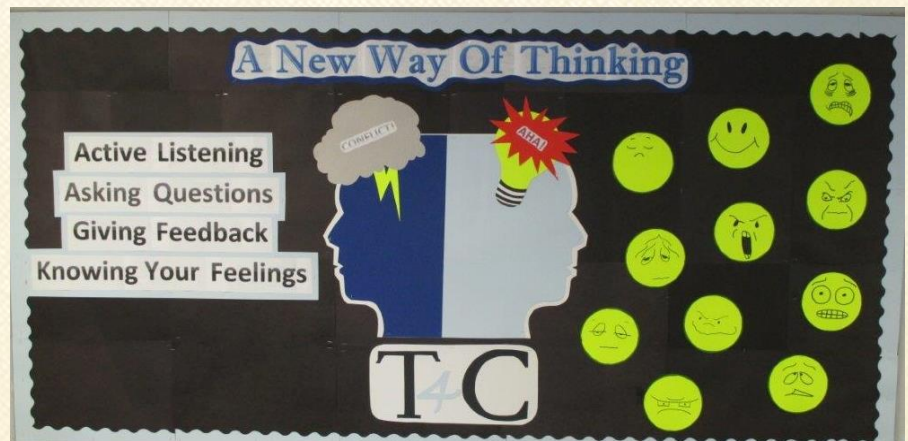


Blue Mound Woodcarvers Make Their 7th Annual Visit to SYS

For seven years, the Blue Mound Woodcarvers of Luverne have spent one month teaching the SYS students how to carve. Past projects have included loons, cardinals, and Scotty dogs, but this year's project was a pheasant. The boys learn how to use carving knives and sand paper to create a finished product which some give as gifts, some keep to remind them of their days at SYS, and some give to staff who have made an impact with the student in some way. During these sessions, not only are there carving lessons, but there are also real human connections being developed. Many of the SYS students have had very little positive male influence in their lives. The Blue Mound Woodcarvers bring this positive influence and teach patience and appropriate interaction, as well a lifetime skill. These annual woodcarving lessons are just another example of how SYS is so strongly supported by our surrounding community. There is no way to thank our many volunteers for all they do and, like the SYS staff, may never know what impact they may have had. The kindnesses shown, however, make an invaluable contribution to the SYS mission.

Thinking For a Change (T4C)

Created by the National Institute of Justice, Thinking for a Change is a cognitive behavioral change program for young people who find themselves in placement due to having made poor behavioral choices. It teaches social skills that most people take for granted but for some were never developed or taught. At SYS, it is a twice weekly class taught in a small group setting by a trained teacher who introduces regular lessons in thinking about thinking. The students learn how to break down the thought process into steps that can be manipulated either positively or negatively, depending on the consequences they are willing to accept. The program addresses the emotional and social benefits of being aware of societal expectations, cognitive reasoning, and the subsequent results that accompany impaired judgment. Students are challenged about their current beliefs, attitudes, and values and how these play a major part in their current circumstances. Another aspect of the T4C curriculum is teaching better problem-solving skills. Restructuring thought processes and frequent review of those skills is emphasized in hope that the lessons will be learned and incorporated into daily life upon the students' return to the community.



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Up Close and Personal With The Middle Ages



The SYS students were treated to a visit by some of the members of the Shire of Border Downs on Sunday, February 16, 2014. The eight members of the Shire belong to the Society for Creative Anachronism, an international organization dedicated to the recreation of history through revival of the arts, skills, and life styles of pre-17th century Europe. This “living history” lesson brought visual and auditory learning to the students as they watched how wool is “turned” to become yarn, saw how a Roman soldier might live, examined the armor of a knight during the Middle Ages, and learned many of the cultural traditions of the various time periods. While you may have seen some of these re-enactors at local Renaissance Fairs, SYS was honored to have them visit our facility. We are very grateful and look forward to many SYS students attending a local event hosted by the Shire of Border Downs in Adrian on June 28, 2014. This “fair” will feature demonstrations in archery, cooking, weaving, leather working, chain mail construction, and other necessities for living in the Middle Ages.



SUPER BOWL 2014

For many years, the SYS students have participated in a Super Bowl party – ours just happens to occur on Monday, the day after the game is played. This year was no exception and a good time was had by all, even though the Denver Broncos fans amongst us were not so thrilled with the outcome of the game. At any rate, the boys consumed 18 pizzas, four gallons of macaroni and cheese, two gallons of nacho cheese dip with chips, and bowls and bowls of popcorn, assorted snacks and candy, and five gallons of Cool-Aid. Not only is this party an opportunity to be out of school for an entire afternoon, it is also the culmination of a social studies class called “Pigskin Geography,” whereby each student chooses their favorite team and follows them throughout the NFL season. While the students call it the “football class,” they also study the cities and states of their team and others, the regions, land formations, and populations of various locales of the U.S., and learn how to organize and find team statistics to add to their team notebook.



**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN SYS
REPRESENTATIVE MAKE A PRESENTATION
TO YOUR GROUP ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION,
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