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# WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired

January 2007

## STOP & SMILE AT THE SNOWMEN!

By Tanni Anthony

We have rounded the corner of the school year and started the new year. It does not seem that long ago that Y2K was on everyone's minds and we are now more than half way through the decade. Time has a way of flying by. My mother is always telling me, "Tanni Lee, SLOW down!" I think this is good advice. When we are going too fast, it is easy to miss all the wonders along the way. The focus is on the destination and not the journey.

On a recent holiday trip, I had the time luxury of strolling through a number of amazing art museums. What a privilege to study the paintings of European masters—to see their individual strokes up close, then back away for a full perspective. Then later this past week, after hours of shoveling and snow blowing, my husband and I took a break to walk around the neighborhood and discovered a wonderful snowman in someone's yard. Each day, we now notice how much it has melted from the day before. Each time I see it, I pause to smile at its beauty. There are masterpieces everywhere!

There are many views and stops a long the way to enjoy on the journey of the rest of this school year. The Snow Shoe Weekend is just days away, CSDB will soon be hosting the Braille Challenge, and our annual O&M Conference will be held in April. In addition, there are the countless and priceless moments of the children in our lives. It is important to stop and celebrate the learning that happens every day.

So in honor of my wise mother Wanda, lets all try to ... "Fill in your name, (including the middle one!), SLOW down." Enjoy & smile at the snowmen!

### Table of Contents

| Page                                    | Page                      | Page                |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Stop & Smile                          | 10 Summer Enrichment      | 21 Kid's Ski Day    |
| 2 Bits from Bonnie                      | 11 ICEVI                  | 22 USABA            |
| 3 Early Literacy                        | 12 Dot of Interest        | 23 Check it Out!    |
| 4 Transition Program /Low Vision Clinic | 13 Creating Tactile Books | 25 Vision Coalition |
| 5 NIMAC Opens                           | 14 More Dots of Interest  | 35 CO Connections   |
| 6 Movement Ideas                        | 15 Job Openings           |                     |
| 8 Kennedy Fund                          | 16 Calendar of Events     |                     |
| 9 Resources and Materials               | 20 CSAPA Material Prep    |                     |



# Bits From Bonnie

Bonnie Snyder

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(soon to change to Comcast.Net)

Recently, I received several inquiries about obtaining large mouse pointers to be used by low vision students. I did some searching on the Web and came up with a very useful freeware program called "Big Cursors." You can download the Zipped file from Tucows.com. It contains a variety of enlarged mouse pointers of differing colors.

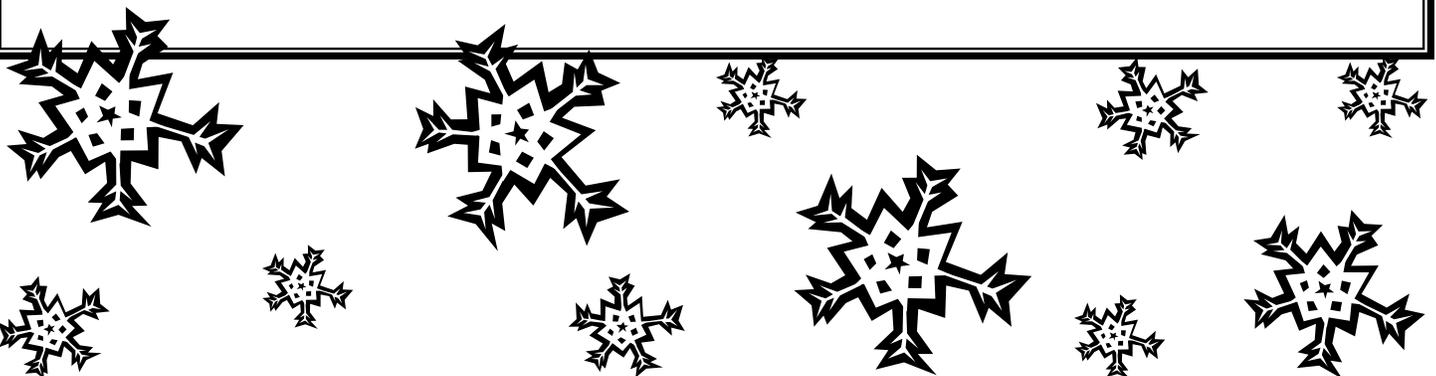
Once you have downloaded the file (I can file attach it to you, if you prefer, just let me know), double click on the file and it will uncompress into a folder that goes into the Windows\Cursors folder. Then, go to the Control Panel, click on Mouse and then on Pointers. From that menu select "browse" and you will be given a whole screenful of mouse pointers (cursors) including the colorful new big cursors. Click on the color you want and you will have it to use in most programs. If it doesn't meet your needs, all you have to do is go back to the Control Panel, Mouse, Pointers and choose the old cursor or a different cursor.

I have tried out other enlarged mouse pointers, but many of them were just plain too big. I liked these particular ones because they were larger than normal, but not so big as to be obtrusive.

Please let me know what you think, if you decide to try the Big Cursors program out.

To follow up on last month's article about a loan/tryout bank, could you please let me know if you are interested in participating? Also, if you would like some help in inventorying what you have and testing the devices to see if they still work, please let me know, and I would be more than willing to help.

*Editor's Note: Bonnie still has a good chunk of hours left for technology consultation this year. PLEASE use them! It is better to run out of the hours than to have any left over. Individual TVIs can ask for her help. Just keep record of the time for your regional TVI meeting coordinator.*



## COLORADO'S EARLY LITERACY EFFORTS

Three studies released this year confirm that Colorado's work in early literacy is bearing fruit and actually creating change!

\* "Fast Facts" Training Jumpstarts Early Literacy Services (No. 239 - June 8, 2006) summarizes initial thoughts of those taking training several years ago, about HOW their library might adapt services. See this site for both "Fast Facts" <http://www.lrs.org/fastfacts/index.asp?year=2006>

\* "Fast Facts" Early Literacy Initiative Impacts Public Library Services for Young Children (No. 237 - April 20, 2006) re-contacted some of these participants and determined that the CSL's workshop series, public libraries and librarians throughout the state have earmarked both time and material resources toward enhancing their early literacy programming and services. (For example, 76% said their library has made changes to existing early literacy services such as story times and outreach to parents and caregivers.)

\* "Early Literacy Programs and Practices at Colorado Public Libraries," by Robbie Bravman Marks - October 2006, is an extensive, qualitative report based on interviews with library leaders in early literacy. In efforts to help young children aged birth through six prepare to read, public libraries across the nation are stepping to the fore with new or enhanced early literacy programs and services. See <http://www.lrs.org/closer.asp>



## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

**Parents:** If you are moving out of state or your child is graduating, please be in touch so we can remove you from our newsletter mailing list. Also, please be in touch with your address changes if you move to a new Colorado location.

**TVIs and O&MSs:** If you have any changes in program contact information over the school year, please help us out and send Tanni these changes.

**Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up to date!!! Just send your changes to [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or to Tanni Anthony, CDE, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203.**



# TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

- ✘ **AFB CareerConnect** is a free resource for people who want to learn about the range and diversity of jobs performed by adults who are blind or visually impaired throughout the United States and Canada. Check out the *Tips for Career Exploration* document that is listed under the Job Seeker option on the menu bar; this will help provide more job-specific information. CareerConnect houses a database of successfully employed blind and visually impaired adults who are willing to discuss their work lives and how they perform their day-to-day work responsibilities with or without accommodations. To search for a mentor, link directly from the homepage, and narrow the search by city, state or province, country, key word, affiliation or mentor identification number. To explore this website go to [www.afb.org/CareerConnect](http://www.afb.org/CareerConnect).
- ✘ The **GuildScholar Program** is aimed at high achieving college-bound high school seniors who are legally blind. For more information about this scholarship program for the 2007 year, please contact Gordon Rovins at (212) 769-7801 or email [guildscholar@jgb.org](mailto:guildscholar@jgb.org)
- ✘ **Free On-Line Resource**—The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education is providing information, which explains the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools. *Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities* is a pamphlet that explains the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, and to ensure that the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The pamphlet is available in print and on-line to answer frequently asked questions about transitioning and can be reproduced and distributed. For more information visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) or call 877-433-7827 to order a free copy.

## Low Vision Clinic News



| <u>Region</u> | <u>Date</u>          | <u>Site Coordinator</u>         |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Metro         | January 25-27, 2007  | Amber Rundle                    |
| Northern      | February 23-24, 2007 | Rita Albright and Vicki Pearson |

## Southern Clinic Update

By Donice Fennimore

The Southern Region Low Vision Clinic held in Colorado Springs was a great success despite a blizzard. Thanks to everyone for their patience and efforts to make this work. The first day of clinic was held on Oct. 28, 06 at which time five students were seen. On November 3 rd, four students were seen and on November 17 , the clinic saw six more students. Thanks to **Randy Witte, Jan Megarry, Anastasia Campbell, Melissa Schular, Ruth Massara, Cathy Kearney, Judy Mumford, Jenevieve Carpenter, Karen Samples, Diane Fitzkee, Karla McKechnie, and Chloann Woolley** for bringing students to the low vision clinic.

Thanks to **Jim Olson** for serving as Clinic Coordinator. We believe the parents, students and instructors attending the clinic left with a better understanding of what the Low Vision Clinic is all about. Thanks for another great clinic turnout! We're looking forward to the upcoming Metro clinic in January 2007.

# National Instructional Materials Access Center Opens!

At 12:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 3, 2006, the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) began operations!

The mission of the NIMAC is to serve as the national repository of publishers' electronic files of print instructional materials in the National Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) format. The NIMAC is the conduit through which the NIMAS files are made available to authorized users, who can then convert them into accessible textbooks for elementary or secondary school students with qualifying disabilities.

The NIMAC was established through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, and it is funded by the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Projects.

More information about NIMAS and NIMAC are available at:

<http://www.nimac.us/>

<http://nimas.cast.org/>

National Instructional Materials Access Center  
1839 Frankfort Ave. Louisville, KY 40206-0085  
Ph.: (502) 899-2230  
Web site: <http://www.nimac.us>  
Email: NIMAC@aph.org

Nicole Gaines  
NIMAC Manager  
American Printing House for the Blind  
Phone (502) 899-2338  
Fax (502) 899-2363  
[ngaines@aph.org](mailto:ngaines@aph.org)



# What Opportunities Can We Give For The Child With Limited Movement to Interact with His/Her Environment?

By Janet Pentalow

*Editor's Note: This article was distributed on the early intervention listserv. Care should be taken to individualize the recommendations with each child. Parents are encouraged to talk about the recommendations with their child's teacher of students with visual impairments. Further, some of the items are from European companies. The author suggests finding comparable items in the United States.*

In order for children to develop in other areas e.g. visually, physically – they need opportunities to be active participants in the learning process and to learn that they can have an effect on the world around them. So often these children can be passive “partners” where everything is done to them, their hands are manipulated and very few expectations on their ability to participate are made. Children need opportunities to interact with:

1. People (the area of early communication is another area and so is not covered here);
2. Objects.

Finding a variety of equipment/activities which can help these children to learn the basics about cause and effect is not easy. Equipment needs to have a sound or vibratory quality. Consideration also needs to be given to texture, weight and the visual quality. It must be very easy to activate so that the slightest movement (from hands, feet, elbow, body etc) gives some feedback to the child and hence resulting in the child's motivation for increased activity. Also careful consideration needs to be given to the positioning of the child and the equipment. It is useful to work alongside a physiotherapist to establish the best positions for different activities e.g. in which position the child is most able to use his/her hands or feet. The following are just some ideas which can be made accessible to these children.

Giggling Ghoul: If positioned close enough to the child's hands the slightest touch will activate this cheap novelty toy. It lights up, vibrates and makes a whirring sound. Also sound activated. Available from Woolworth's and similar stores before Halloween.

Sound Activated Red Crab/Black Spider: Touch or sound will cause these creatures to vibrate. Available from TFH/Magic Planet— [www.specialneedstoys.com](http://www.specialneedstoys.com)

Electronic Keyboard: A small compact adult type as opposed to a toy keyboard gives the child a range of sounds within a relatively small area. This needs only a slight touch to produce a sound e.g. Casio SA5 Song Bank Keyboard.

Wrist Bells: Sew bells on to elastic or a hair bobble or buy the plastic bands which fasten with Velcro from Early Learning Shops. Attach to the child's wrists or ankles.

Activity Frames: Suspend a variety of objects from a baby gym/activity frame or hooks in the ceiling. The objects need to make a sound when knocked e.g. attach bells or objects need to be of a material which makes a sound when they knock against each other. They need to be different weights, have interesting tactile properties, move in interesting ways when knocked and be visually motivating. Use a variety of household items rather than plastic baby toys. Large activity frame for older children available from TFH/Magic Planet.

Bar Chimes: The slightest touch causes the bars to make exquisite fine chimes. Suspend these where they can be easily touched. Similar is the mirror chime-about which is free standing. Available from Rompa [www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com) and TFH/Magic Planet.

Bowl of Balls: Place a variety of balls in a bowl or tray. The slightest movement of the child's hands will cause the balls to roll around and bump into one another. Use different sizes and weights of balls e.g. golf

balls, table tennis balls, tennis balls, plastic balls with holes, balls with bells inside, large marbles, wooden balls, soft balls, etc.

Ping Pong Balls on Velcro Board: A home made item. Put strips of Velcro (the self-adhesive kind is easiest) across an oblong shaped piece of black stiff card or black painted/covered hardboard. On to this Velcro as many ping pong balls as will fit so that they are placed close together. The child's movements on this will produce a rewarding sound as the Velcro pulls apart and an even greater satisfaction if he/she succeeds in knocking them off all together. This can be very effective under ultra violet lighting.

Space/Survival Blanket: The smallest movement results in a rewarding sound. Useful for draping just slightly above the child or lying the child on. These blankets are also very visually motivating. Available from Outdoor/Camping Shops. For similar auditory feedback use the inserts from cereal packets.

Resonance Platform (as promoted by Lilli Nielson): This is a board made of 4mm plywood size 150cm x 150 cm (120 x 120 cm if the child is very small). Along the edge of the underside is a wooden strip which is 2 x 2 cm. This raises the board slightly off the ground. Hence the sounds which the child produces on the board are accentuated and transmitted through the fibers of the wood to different parts of the child's body. A variety of objects can be placed around the child by his/her hands, feet and under the head.

Little Room/Beactive Box: This is a three-sided wooden box with a clear Perspex roof from which a range of objects can be suspended. The child learns that his or her movements will result in contact with the objects that feel and sound interesting. The box cuts out many of the sounds of the general environment and hence encourages the child to learn from the sounds which she/he makes through movement or contact and so becoming an active learner rather than a passive listener. The box can be placed on a resonance platform for greater feedback. The little room is available from RNIB, [www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk](http://www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk) and the Beactive Box from Suffolk Playworks, <[www.suffolkplayworks.co.uk](http://www.suffolkplayworks.co.uk)>. Alternatively make a simpler version from a cardboard box or under a table.

## Switches

Use a special clamp or wedge to ensure the switch is positioned so that the child can press it easily. Big Red Switches and Big Macs (on which sound can be recorded) are particularly good for early switch use. Think carefully about the reward given. Is it motivating for the child?

Switches and switching equipment are available from Inclusive Technology, [www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk) and a range of other special needs catalogues.

Kick 'n' Play Piano: Plays ten musical songs, makes animal sounds and lights up. Available from Argos.

Big Step A Tune: Large electronic floor keyboard features eight piano keys, four rhythms, six demo songs and six instrumental styles. Good for lying on/next to.

Crystal Bell Balls: Sparkling low bounce hollow balls with bell inside. For best results put several on a tray. Available from Rompa.

Musical Vibrating Light: Touch lightly to turn on the orange light, music and vibratory reward. This is exceptionally easy to operate and a highly motivating reward. Available from Rompa.

Tall Light Switch/Mini Dome Switch: Switches which provide a variety of sensory stimuli. Available from Liberator, [www.liberator.co.uk](http://www.liberator.co.uk)

Squeezies: Easy to activate squeaky rubber toys. Available from Rompa.

Vibration Pillow: Soft foam filled pillow which vibrates when hugged or squeezed. Available from Rompa.

## Project Funding Opportunity

Request for Proposals will be available  
February 5, 2007 on the CSDB website

[www.csdb.org/about/grant.html](http://www.csdb.org/about/grant.html)

The **KENNEDY TRUST FUND** at the **Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)** will begin accepting applications to fund new or existing projects serving **Colorado** children birth to 21 years of age who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Blind/Low Vision on February 5, 2007. The intent is to provide support when other sources of funding have been exhausted, are limited or unavailable. Awards will range from \$500 to \$5000.

Three funding strands are available:

- ▲ Non-profit organizations use the *Request for Proposals from Non-Profit Organizations*
- ▲ Public school personnel use the *Request for Colorado School Districts*
- ▲ Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind personnel use the *Request for Proposals for Internal Projects Application*

*(Editor's Note: These are the funds that Trina Boyd was awarded last year for her district CVI work.)*

Contact Christine Vidal at 719.578.2244 or via email  
at [cvidal@csdb.org](mailto:cvidal@csdb.org) with specific questions.

# Resources and Materials

- **SQUID: Tactile Activities Magazine** is intended for students 5 to 12 years of age. Two *SQUID* issues are now available from APH with more issues soon to come! Karen Poppe, Tactile Graphics Project Leader, welcomes student feedback about the types of activities they most enjoy and would like to receive more of in *SQUID* issues. Please encourage students to visit and complete the short survey (maybe as a classroom assignment!) located at [www.aph.org/edresearch/squid.html](http://www.aph.org/edresearch/squid.html). Teachers' and parents' comments are welcome as well.
- **Adventures in Darkness: Memoirs of an Eleven-Year-Old Blind Boy**, by Tom Sullivan, is a new book that takes readers through the adventures of a "monumental" year in the life of Tom, a boy who has been blind since birth. Publishers describe the synopsis: "Tom lived in a challenging world of isolation and special treatment. But he was driven to break out and live as sighted people do." The 240-page book is available in hardcover and abridged audio on CD for a cost of \$24.99. For more information, contact: Thomas Nelson Publishers, P.O. Box 141000, Nashville, TN 37214; phone: 800-251-4000; web site: [www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product\\_detail.asp?sku=078522081X](http://www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product_detail.asp?sku=078522081X)
- **DB-LINK** frequently gets questions regarding appropriate toys for children who are deaf-blind. The current issue of the Family Center on Technology and Disability newsletter is devoted to toys and issues of play for children with disabilities. Also includes a long list of resource links <http://www.fctd.info/resources/newsletters/displayNewsletter.php?newsletterID=10041>
- **Free Audio Library**—Books Aloud, Inc. provides a free audio book library service for people of all ages who are unable to read printed books on their own due to a visual, physical, or learning disability. Books Aloud records on regular two-track tapes and offers a few CDs. The collection includes almost 6,000 titles in various categories. The "Touch & Sound" programs provides children's books in a kit containing a print-and-braille book that accompanies the audio book. Verification of disability forms are required to begin service; these are available online at [www.booksaloud.org](http://www.booksaloud.org) or by calling 408-888-2613.
- **Symbolic Sentiments** are cards and gifts that are a special way to say thank you to teachers, therapists, aides and families who support children with special needs. Choose from note cards, personalized stationary and other unique gifts—all featuring colorful Mayer-Johnson picture symbols used to help children with autism and other developmental disabilities express their desires and choices. Check them out at [www.givinggreetings.com](http://www.givinggreetings.com).
- **Web Magnifier**—Big.com Web Magnifier is available from <http://www.big.com/toolbar> as a free downloadable toolbar for use with Internet Explorer web browsers.
- **The CHARGE Syndrome Foundation**—The mission of the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation is to provide support to individuals with CHARGE Syndrome and their families; to gather, develop, maintain and distribute information about CHARGE syndrome; and to promote awareness and research regarding its identification, cause and management. For more information: CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, 409 Vandiver Drive, Suite 5-104, Columbia, MO 65202; call 1800-442-7604; email to [info@chargesyndrome.org](mailto:info@chargesyndrome.org); or visit <http://www.chargesyndrome.org/>
- **CHOICE Magazine Listening (CML)** is available free of charge only to people who are blind, experiencing vision loss or have other disabilities that limit or prevent reading standard print. A four-track tape player is needed for listening to CML. Information on subscribing and obtaining a free tape player is available on the CML website, [www.choicemagazinelistening.org](http://www.choicemagazinelistening.org) or by calling toll-free 1-888-724-6423.



Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Presents:

# SUMMER ENRICHMENT 2007



Please put these dates on your calendar! Parents, this is a perfect opportunity for your child to meet friends from across Colorado and to learn new skills.

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| June 3 <sup>rd</sup> - June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2007   | Colorado Adventures                 |
| June 3 <sup>rd</sup> – June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2007  | Independent Living 2 Week Camp      |
| June 10 <sup>th</sup> -June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2007  | Compensatory/Tech Camp, Evening O&M |
| June 17 <sup>th</sup> -June 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2007  | SPORTS EDUCATION CAMP (SEC)         |
| June 24 <sup>th</sup> - June 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2007 | Independent Living 1 Week Camp      |
| June 24 – June 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2007               | Cheyenne Mountain Zoo               |

\***Sports Education Camp:** SEC empowers blind and visually impaired youth by teaching them basic sports skills and activities. The “Junior” camp, for 10-12 year old athletes, and the “Senior” camp, for 13-16 year old athletes.

For more information, contact Donna Keale at [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)

## Hadley School for the Blind Offers Free Course on “Blindness Basics”



Hadley School for the Blind is offering a free online course called “Blindness Basics” as a scenario-based, interactive e-learning module. It targets paraprofessionals and volunteers new to the field of blindness providing an opportunity to learn fundamental concepts about visual impairment and to apply these concepts to real-life situation.

The course teaches students the proper etiquette when interacting with people who are visually impaired. It presents an overview of the field’s history, identifies some common causes of blindness, and explains how people with disabilities can live independently.

If you are interested in taking the course or have questions, please contact Hadley by email at [student\\_services@hadley.edu](mailto:student_services@hadley.edu) or visit their website at [www.hadley-school.org](http://www.hadley-school.org).

## Our Mission

Founded in 1952, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) is a global association of individuals and organizations that promotes equal access to appropriate education for all visually impaired children and youth so that they may achieve their full potential.

## Our Values

We believe that all children and youth with visual impairment have basic human rights.

- ✘ They are entitled to a full range of educational services and to be included in the educational programs of their communities.
- ✘ They should receive pre-school support.
- ✘ Their teachers and other professionals supporting them should be properly trained.
- ✘ Their parents and other family members should be encouraged to support their education.
- ✘ Appropriate educational materials and methods should be available to meet each child's needs.
- ✘ Educational programs should be of a high standard and conform to best practices.
- ✘ The children should be able to live in an environment free of barriers, social stigmas, and stereotypes, and to lead a productive life according to their aspirations and capabilities.

## Our Goals

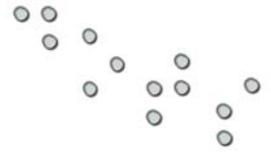
- Goal 1. To ensure access and full participation in education for all children with visual impairment and youth by 2015.
- Goal 2. To promote and assist in building of local capacity to develop curriculum, to provide training and to identify and provide equipment and materials to children and youth with visual impairments and their parents, teachers and others in their communities.
- Goal 3. To collaborate with and make use of networks to ensure that substantially more children with visual impairment and youth receive quality and comprehensive education.
- Goal 4. To ensure that ICEVI initiatives are based upon current evidence of best practice.
- Goal 5. To provide information on ICEVI and its services through all possible and appropriate media to all target groups.
- Goal 6. To build an appropriate and sustainable organizational structure for ICEVI, to include the required financial base.



[www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)



# DOTS OF INTEREST BRAILLE UPDATE



## The National Braille Challenge

- WHO:** All school-aged Braille users/learners
- WHAT:** The National Braille Challenge and the Rookie Contest
- WHEN:** Friday, **January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007**. Registration from 8-9 AM. The day ends at 2:30PM.
- WHERE:** The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, Colorado Springs
- WHY:** We have hosted 2 already...you think Lou Tutt will let me stop now? Seriously, this is the day we celebrate BRAILLE and have some fun!! Be a part of it!
- HOW:** Just call or e-mail. Give me a name and a grade level for your student. I order the tests and the pizza. You and the Braille Whiz come down here and have some fun! That's pretty much how it goes!
- BONUS:** If you come down this year, you will get to hear LIVE the newest music sensation to hit the Rocky Mountains, "The Bad News Bulldog Band" so don't miss it!
- CONTACT:** Call or e-mail Randy Witte, and do it NOW! Contact information: (719) 578-2204 or [rwitte@csdb.org](mailto:rwitte@csdb.org)

## Functional Braille Training

The American Foundation for the Blind has announced a workshop to be presented by Dr. Diane Wormsley. The workshop will be held February 22-24, 2007, at the American Foundation for the Blind in Atlanta, Georgia. Stipends will be available to assist with travel and lodging expenses. Space is limited to 25 participants.

The two-and-a-half day hands-on workshop will assist teachers who provide braille instruction to children and adults with special learning needs, including those with multiple disabilities, developmental delays, deafblindness, speak English as a second language, or have other learning challenges.

Upon completing this hands-on workshop, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Name/discuss aspects of reading and writing acquisition that can be applied to all learners
- ◆ Describe student characteristics for whom a functional approach may be useful
- ◆ Describe the 12 components of a functional approach
- ◆ List ways to create a braille-rich environment
- ◆ Describe several activities that teach tactile perception in a meaningful context
- ◆ Define diagnostic teaching and list reasons why it is important

If you are interested in participating, please contact Shirley Landrum at [slandrum@afb.net](mailto:slandrum@afb.net), or call (404) 525-2303 to request an application. All applications must be received by **January 19, 2007** at the American Foundation for the Blind, 100 Peachtree Street, Suite 620, Atlanta, GA 30303. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance status within one week of the submission deadline.

# MORE DOTS OF INTEREST



## Creating Tactile Books

This article was found at <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=6&TopicID=97&DocumentID=1258>

Bookmaking is one of the most satisfying literacy experiences an adult can share with a child. The process of creating a book promotes oral language and fine motor skills, while developing many important literary concepts.

### Guidelines for creating books:

- ◆ Let the child help to choose the topic.
- ◆ Spend lots of time talking about the subject before writing.
- ◆ When making tactile pictures, keep them as simple as possible, and let your child help with cutting, stapling, and gluing. Use a diagonal strip of film for a slide or a piece of fur for a cat; complex details are usually not necessary. Be sure your child has had experience with the real object so that these simple representations will be meaningful. Invest in a small hot glue gun for attaching heavier objects to book pages.
- ◆ If your child has vision, she may enjoy drawing and coloring pictures for her books. Even if your child does not have any vision, she may still enjoy coloring. Anti-roll crayons have a flat side that can easily be labeled with a color word in braille. A screen board (a piece of window screen securely fastened with duct tape to a stiff sheet of cardboard) can be used under the paper your child is coloring on; the texture of the screen will come through and add tactile feedback to the crayon marks.
- ◆ Compose words and sentences together with your child.
- ◆ Verbalize sounds and words as you write on the braillewriter.
- ◆ Let your child write a "word" or a "sentence" below yours by pressing random keys on the braille. Or, if he already knows some words or letters, he may want to help you write the text.
- ◆ When all of the pages are finished, decide on the order together and number them in braille.
- ◆ Cut a front and back cover of appropriate size and bind the book with rings, staples, or plastic comb binding (many schools have machines that will bind student-made books). You might also like to use a thin 3-ring binder to hold the pages, particularly if you may be adding to the book in the future.

### Suggested Books to Make with Your Child

- ◆ Texture book with a cover in the shape of a hand; one texture per page accompanied by a braille word describing the texture.
- ◆ Counting book made from rectangular poster board pages with textured shapes and everyday objects; for example, 1 jar lid, two fuzzy triangles, 3 squares, 4 pieces of masking tape, 5 paper fasteners, 6 large paper clips slipped over the top edge of the page, 7 staples, 8 stick-on stars, 9 holes punched with a hole puncher, 10 cuts made along one edge of the page with scissors. Attach the appropriate braille number to each page.
- ◆ Point book including a fork, toothpick, pushpin, triangle, paper fastener, paper clip, and so forth.
- ◆ Fastener book made by attaching a textured shape to each page in a different way: staple, glue, paper fastener, metal ring, paper clip, tape, and twist tie.
- ◆ Experience book focusing on a daily activity such as breakfast or a special event like a trip to the pumpkin patch. Use real objects as pictures when possible (for example, a plastic spoon, napkin, and small plastic bag of cereal for breakfast) or simple textured shapes to represent objects with which the child is familiar (such as a cardboard rectangle with small squares around it to represent the table and chairs). Some children like to include photographs of themselves in experience books to share with sighted family members and friends.
- ◆ Shape book focusing on a simple shape, such as a circle. Round objects such as lids, buttons, and coins can be hot-glued to each page.
- ◆ *Book about Me* which tells about your child! Could include favorite objects, photographs or tactile illustrations of family members (e.g., Grandpa's scratchy sweater), whatever your child wants to share.



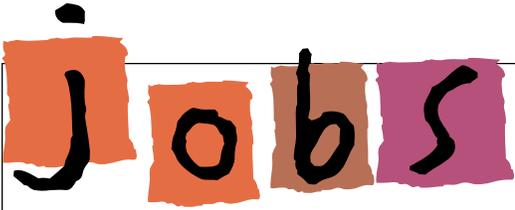
## MORE DOTS OF INTEREST

**Braille Transcriber Training:** Northwest Vista College in San Antonio, Texas, recently unveiled their new, three-semester online college certificate program to train people to become braille textbook transcribers. The college reported the online classes began August 28, 2006, with a full enrollment of 22 people from six states. AFB partnered with Verizon Communications, Northwest Vista College and the National Center on Low-Incidence Disabilities (NCLID) at the University of Northern Colorado to develop this online career opportunity for the nation. A significant addition in the online coursework is the inclusion of NCLID's open source WESBraille system. WESBraille is a system of computer-graded drill and practice lessons. Using only a web browser and a normal computer, a student can practice reading and creating braille and get immediate feedback without the direct involvement of an instructor. Students have the ability to use the pre-established drills, create their own ad hoc drill sessions, or take instructor prepared quizzes that forward the results to an instructor. The WESBraille system has been incorporated with an online version of the National Library Service (NLS) Manual of Braille Transcription to create an online braille curriculum that's available for use as part of a braille course, or as a self-study aid. For more information, email [nvcbrail@accd.edu](mailto:nvcbrail@accd.edu) or visit [www.accd.edu/nvc/areas/braille/default.htm](http://www.accd.edu/nvc/areas/braille/default.htm).

**Resources for Teachers of Braille:** AFB's National Literacy Center is proud to support [brlhelp-afb](mailto:brlhelp-afb), an e-mail discussion group to promote discussion and share ideas about braille instruction. This mailing list is open to all people who wish to ask specific questions about braille instruction or the students to whom they teach braille; to respond to requests for information; to share successful strategies that have worked in teaching braille; and to discuss resources and materials that are available. They welcome input from special education and rehabilitation teachers of braille, preschool and general education teachers of children who are blind or visually impaired, parents and other family members of blind individuals, and anyone else who is interested in promoting excellence in braille instruction. To subscribe to the list, send an e-mail message with this in the "To" line: [brlhelp-afb-subscribe@igc.topica.com](mailto:brlhelp-afb-subscribe@igc.topica.com). There is no need to add a subject or to put a message in the body of your e-mail. You will receive a message asking you to confirm that you wish to be added. Once you respond to the confirmation request, you will get a message that you have been added to the list, and giving you instructions on how to send messages and so on.

**Braille Labels for Literacy**—The Labels for Literacy program is designed to place braille on more mainstream products in order to increase the usage and understanding of braille. The program will also increase access to brand and product information for blind and visually impaired consumers. It produces sheets of self-stick labels that identify common brands and products in large print and braille. To sign up for these free labels, fill out the form at [www.labelsforliteracy.com/survey\\_form.html](http://www.labelsforliteracy.com/survey_form.html).

**Braille Books—82 Braille Books for \$10.00.** It's true! Our Early Readers Series is a collection of 82 books for young readers—all in PortaBook format (electronic Braille) on a CD-Rom, ready for printing on an embosser, or read them with a refreshable Braille display. This collection includes books from these popular series: Amelia Bedelia, Arthur, Biscuit, Frog & Toad, and many, many others. Each book is presented in four formats; single-spaced uncontracted Braille, single-spaced contracted, double-spaced uncontracted and double-spaced contracted. You can print out whatever books you want and send them home with your students! Please note that these books will only print out correctly if you are using a Braille embosser with the Duxbury embossing/printing software. Read the list of books on the Early Readers CD here: <http://nbp.org/ic/nbp/EARLY.html>. To order any books, send payment to : NBP, 88 Stephen Street, Boston, MA 02115-4302 or order online at <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/publications/index.html>.



## IMPORTANT!

### We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for the next school year. It is never too early to advertise an expected opening. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings.

#### Jobs for School Year 2006-07

##### Metro Region:

- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairment with Early Childhood Training or Experience (O&M and/or training specific to deafblindness preferred (.5 to 1. FTE).** Contact Alice Applebaum at Anchor Center for Blind Children at (303) 377-9733.
- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments / O&M Instructor (1 FTE).** Contact Susie Sutherland - (303) 982-7202 or Larry O'Connor – (303) 982-6672 in Jeff Co School District.
- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments / O&M Instructor (1 FTE).** Contact Kathy Grebbs of Adams 50 School District (north of Denver) at (720) 542-4537.

##### Southern Region

- ✓ **TVI with focus on vocational education / daily living skills (1 FTE)** at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (School for the Blind) located in Colorado Springs. Contact Chelle Lutz at CSDB at (719) 578-2114 or [clutz@csdb.org](mailto:clutz@csdb.org)
- ✓ There may be two other southern district openings—if you are interested in the Colorado Springs area of the state, please contact Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681 for more information.

*The Colorado Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age, in access to, employment in, or provision of any of CDE's programs, benefits, or activities.*

*The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding this policy. Please contact either:*

*Patrick Chapman  
Colorado Department of Education  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1450  
Denver, CO 80202  
Phone: 303-866-6780  
E-mail: [chapman\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:chapman_p@cde.state.co.us)*

*Wendi Kispert  
Colorado Department of Education  
201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: 303-866-6815  
E-mail: [Kispert\\_w@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Kispert_w@cde.state.co.us)*



# Calendar of Events

2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| January 9                     | <b>CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting – CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Susan Pfaffenhauser—719-578-2102   |
| January 13-15                 | <b>5th Annual Snowshoe Weekend – Estes Park</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Elaine Karns—(970) 225-6720  |
| January 16 - Feb 16           | <b>CELA Testing</b>   |
| January 17                    | <b>Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Chloann Woolley—ccwool5@yahoo.com   |
| January 19 <i>Date Change</i> | <b>Braille Challenge - CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Randy Witte: rwitte@csdb.org or (719) 578-2204   |
| January 21-26                 | <b>CSDB Short Term Placement—Compensatory and Social Skills</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org  |
| January 25-27                 | <b>Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic - Aurora</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Amber Rundle - amber@ctech.aps.k12.co.us  |
| February 2                    | <b>Northern TVI Regional Meetings - Longmont</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Carol Love - <a href="mailto:love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us">love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us</a> |
| February 4-9                  | <b>CSDB Short Term Placement—Daily Living Skills &amp; Recreation/Leisure</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org                                    |
| February 7-March 9            | <b>CSAPA Administration Window - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading/Writing</b>   |
| February 7—March 30           | <b>CSAPA Administration Window - Grades 4-10 / All Content Areas</b>  |
| February 12 - 23              | <b>CSAP Test Administration Period - 3rd Grade Reading &amp; Lectura</b>  |
| February 13                   | <b>Metro TVI Meeting - Cherry Creek from 2-4:00</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart—(303) 347-4126 or ncozart@lps.k12.co.us                                     |
| February 13                   | <b>CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting – CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Susan Pfaffenhauser—719-578-2102   |

## *More Calendar of Events*

| 2007                | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007 | 2007  |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| February 15-17      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>2007 Inclusive Education Conference—Denver</b><br><u>Contact:</u> <a href="mailto:conference@peakparent.org">conference@peakparent.org</a>   |
| February 21         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Chloann Woolley— <a href="mailto:ccwool5@yahoo.com">ccwool5@yahoo.com</a>   |
| February 22-24      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>AFB Workshop Braille Literacy: A Functional Approach—Atlanta, GA</b><br><u>Contact:</u> <a href="http://www.afb.org">www.afb.org</a>   |
| February 23-24      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic - Fort Collins</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Rita Albright - <a href="mailto:rita.albright@bvsd.org">rita.albright@bvsd.org</a><br>Vicki Pearson - <a href="mailto:vpearson1@yahoo.com">vpearson1@yahoo.com</a> |
| March 1-3           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference - Breckenridge</b><br><u>Contact:</u> <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp">http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp</a>   |
| March 2             |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Northern TVI Regional Meetings - Longmont</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Carol Love - <a href="mailto:love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us">love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us</a>   |
| March 2-4           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>CTEVH Conference— Santa Clara, CA</b><br><u>Contact:</u> <a href="http://www.ctevh.org">www.ctevh.org</a>  |
| March 13            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting—CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Susan Pfaffenhauser—719-578-2102   |
| March 21 - April 13 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>CSAP Test Administration Period - All remaining grades/content</b>   |
| April 2-27          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade "Online" Alternate Administration Window</b>   |
| April 10            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting — CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Susan Pfaffenhauser—719-578-2102   |
| April 12            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Vision Coalition - Centretech Conference Room</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony - <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>  |
| April 12-14         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Annual O&amp;M Workshop—CO Center for the Blind</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony— <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>   |
| April 18            |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB</b><br><u>Contact:</u> Chloann Woolley— <a href="mailto:ccwool5@yahoo.com">ccwool5@yahoo.com</a>   |
| April 18-21         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | <b>CEC Annual Convention &amp; Expo—Louisville, KY</b><br><u>Contact:</u> CEC— <a href="mailto:conteduc@cec.sped.org">conteduc@cec.sped.org</a>   |

## *More Calendar of Events*

2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007 2007

- April 20**                      **Western TVI Regional Meeting - TBD**  
Contact: Kevin O'Brien - kobrien@mcsd.k12.co.us
- April 22-27**                      **CSDB Short Term Placement—Technology JAWS & Braille Note with GPS**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- April 25**                              **CO ACT Initial Test Date**
- April 25-28**                      **NBA Professional Development Conference—Colorado Springs, CO**  
Contact: www.nationalbraille.org
- May 4**                                **Northern TVI Regional Meetings - Longmont**  
Contact: Carol Love - love\_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us
- May 9**                                **CO ACT Make-up Test Date**
- May 10,11,12**                      **CSDB Short Term Placement—O&M and Public Transportation**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- May 16**                                **Southern TVI Meeting—CSDB**  
Contact: Chloann Woolley—ccwool5@yahoo.com
- June 1-3**                                **Family Learning Retreat - CSDB**  
Contact: Diane Covington - dcovington@csdb.org
- June 3-8**                                **Summer Enrichment—Colorado Adventures—CSDB**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- June 3-15**                                **Summer Enrichment—Independent Living (2 weeks)—CSDB**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- June 10-15**                                **Summer Enrichment—Compensatory / Tech Camp -CSDB**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- June 12**                                **CSDB Board of Trustees' Meeting — CSDB**  
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser—719-578-2102
- June 17—22**                                **Sports Education Camp—CSDB**  
Contact: Donna Keale—dkeale@csdb.org
- June 21-23**                                **CO Assistive Technology Conference - Denver**  
Contact: [www.AssistiveTechnologyPartners.org](http://www.AssistiveTechnologyPartners.org).

- June 24-29**                      **Summer Enrichment**—Independent Living (1 week) —CSDB  
Contact: Donna Keale—[dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)
- June 24—29**                      **Summer Enrichment**—Cheyenne Mountain Zoo—CSDB  
Contact: Donna Keale—[dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)
- June 30—July 7**                **ACB Convention 2007**—Minneapolis  
Contact: [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)
- July 2-6**                            **Lions Club International Annual Convention**—Chicago, IL  
Contact: 630-571-5466 or [www.lionsclub.org](http://www.lionsclub.org)
- July 13-15**                        **Families Connecting with Families**—Omaha, NE  
Contact: [www.napvi.org](http://www.napvi.org)
- September 25-30**                **Deafblind 14th International World Conference** - Perth, Australia  
Contact: [www.dblink.org](http://www.dblink.org)
- November 9-11**                 **Canadian Vision Teachers' Conference**—Montreal, Canada  
Contact: [www.canada.aerbvi.org](http://www.canada.aerbvi.org)
- November 29-Dec 2**             **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference**—St. Pete Beach, FL  
Contact: [www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org](http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org)



- April 2-5, 2008**                 **CEC Annual Convention & Expo**—Boston, MA  
Contact: CEC—[conteduc@cec.sped.org](mailto:conteduc@cec.sped.org)
- July 7-10**                            **9th International Conference on Low Vision**—Montreal, Canada  
Contact: [www.opto.umontreal.ca/vision2008](http://www.opto.umontreal.ca/vision2008)
- July 22-27**                        **AER International Conference**—Chicago, IL  
Contact: [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)



### HOLD THE DATE!

Colorado O&M Specialists should hold the dates April 12 (evening) and all day April 13 and 14th for the Colorado Annual O&M Workshop. The training will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind in Denver. The planning committee has a tentative agenda that is being finalized with the selected speakers. Please be watching for more information.

## **CSAPA Testing Material Coming to a DAC Near You!**

A disk of CSAPA student materials (for all the tests) and an equipment list will be sent to all District Assessment Coordinators about three weeks before the CSAPA Test Administration Period. All TVIs are encouraged to review these materials before the test to make any large print or braille format accommodations and to gather the needed materials.

### **New Screening Tool For Usher Syndrome**

Dr. William Kimberling at Boys Town National Research Hospital has announced a new tool to screen for Usher Syndrome. USMChip is a microchip that can test a saliva sample for all known types of Usher Syndrome (currently, there are eight) by checking for approximately 420 known DNA mutations. The success rate is expected to be between 65% and 75% and should improve over time as new mutations are identified and included on the chip. The cost of the test is \$200 per person. The National Center for the Study Treatment of Usher Syndrome welcomes new participants interested in screening for Usher Syndrome. This involves purchasing the chip and sending a saliva sample by mail. Interested persons should contact Dr. Kimberling, Ph.D., Center for the Study and Treatment of Usher Syndrome, Boys Town National Research Hospital, 555 N. 30th Street, Omaha, NE 68131; 402-498-6713; email [kimber@boystown.org](mailto:kimber@boystown.org).

### **Family Conference**

Families Connecting with Families in the Heartland of America will take place July 13-15, 2007 in Omaha, Nebraska.

This is a national family conference for families with children who are blind or have low vision of all ages. The American Foundation for the Blind, the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments and Seeing Eye will be the lead sponsors for the 2007 program. The conference will be held at the Hilton Omaha. For more information, check out the following web sites:

[www.napvi.org](http://www.napvi.org); [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org); or [www.seeingeye.org](http://www.seeingeye.org).





## 2007 Kid's Ski Day!!!

***Come and learn to cross-country ski with sighted guides at the Annual Colorado Ski For Light Kid's Ski Day!***

- \* Where? Frisco Nordic Center in Frisco Colorado
- \* When is it? February 25<sup>st</sup> 2007, Sunday, 9:00am to 4:00pm
- \* How do I register? Fill out the Colorado Ski For Light Kid's Day Application and waiver form and place them in the mail with **\$10.00** to reserve your skis, boots, lunch, sighted guide and training. Scholarships are available!
- \* Why should I do this? Because we would like to introduce you to a challenging and fun sport!
- \* Do I need skiing experience? No, beginners as well as advanced skiers are welcome. We will start from the basics so even if you have been skiing for awhile, you will benefit from the training.
- \* Who do I contact for more information? Becky Myers, 2127 N. Nevada Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80907, (719) 578-9268 or [becky@rebeccamyers.com](mailto:becky@rebeccamyers.com)

We will meet at the Nordic Center at Frisco at 9:00am. We will get skis and boots at this time and sighted guides and skiers will be introduced. Then we will begin! Lunch will be provided for the skiers and guides. Call Becky Myers if you need transportation or have special dietary restrictions.

***See you there!!!!***

# The United States Association of Blind Athletes

Contributed by Sarah K. Bradley

The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) is a community based organization of the United States Olympic Committee and serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired across the United States. Our vision is a world in which all individuals who are blind or visually impaired have the opportunity to discover their athletic potential and pursue their athletic dreams.

USABA emerged in 1976 when a group of individuals met at the Olympics for the Disabled in Toronto, Ontario to discuss their vision of the future of sport for athletes with visual impairments. In the beginning, founder Arthur Copeland ran the organization from his kitchen table on a shoe string budget in Beach Haven, New Jersey. Since then, USABA has evolved into a national organization that provides sports opportunities in eleven sports which impact the lives of more than 2,000 athletes of all ages and abilities each year and has reached more than 100,000 individuals in it's 30 years of operation. The organization has emerged as more than just a world-class trainer of blind athletes, it has become a champion of the abilities of Americans who are legally blind.

This past summer, USABA had thirty-four of its athletes compete in the 2006 Rocky Mountain State Games, the first state games in the nation to fully integrate athletes who are blind and visually impaired into competition. More than 25 medals were earned by USABA athletes from the ages of 7 through adult who were able to showcase their talents and abilities in a competition with more than 5,000 competitors.

**Sports Education Camps:** Each summer, USABA chapters around the country hold Sports Education Camps for youth ages 5-18. The first Sports Education Camp (SEC) took place in 1988 after a group of adult athletes with visual impairments identified the problem within physical education and sports for children with visual impairments. Their goal was to teach youth with visual impairments basic sports skills and activities, increase the knowledge of parents, teachers and the community regarding adaptations required for participation, and in turn increase access to physical education, sports and recreation for people with visual impairments. Today, SEC's take place in ten different states around the country, each summer offering youth the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports and recreation activities, including judo, cycling, track & field, swimming, wrestling, goalball, gymnastics, bowling, and rock climbing. Paralympic athletes and elite coaches are involved in these residential programs.

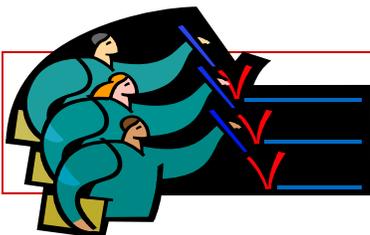
For information about the Colorado Sports Education Camp June 17-22, 2007 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, please contact: Donna Keale [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)

**IBSA Youth and Student World Games:** USABA will be playing host to the 2007 International Blind Sports Association Youth and Student World Games in Colorado Springs, Colorado July 11-17. Young athletes from around the world will compete in five sports for blind and visually impaired youth, ages 12-19. Competition will be held in track & field, judo, swimming, powerlifting and goalball. These Games will take place at the athletic facilities at Colorado College.

In 2005, USABA had the privilege of hosting more than 250 athletes from 26 countries in the World Youth Championships, which were also held in Colorado Springs. "USABA is honored to once again host this prestigious event and showcase the best young blind and visually impaired athletes from around the world in world competition," stated Kevin Szott, USABA Board President. "These games will serve as a springboard for other international competition for these young athletes, including future Paralympic Games." More than 100 countries have been invited to participate and twenty four of these countries with delegations from Europe, Asia, South America, North America, Australia and Africa having already committed to send competitors. For more information on these games, visit [www.usaba.org](http://www.usaba.org) or contact USABA at [media@usaba.org](mailto:media@usaba.org)



- ◆ **2007 Nomination Process for the Hall of Fame:** Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field: The Hall of Fame for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field is now accepting nominations for 2007 induction consideration. If you are interested in learning more about the process and/or submitting a qualified nominee to join the 38 inductees, visit: [www.aph.org/hall\\_fame/nom\\_letter.html](http://www.aph.org/hall_fame/nom_letter.html) The nomination process will close Friday, March 16. Nominees who were first submitted in 2006 will remain active.  
*"The Hall of Fame for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field is dedicated to preserving, honoring, and promoting the tradition of excellence manifested by the specific individuals Inducted into the Hall of Fame and through the history of outstanding services provided to people who are blind or visually impaired."*
- ◆ **Experiences of Parents With Visual Impairments Raising Children:** Dr. Sunggye Hong, University of Northern Iowa, is seeking parents with visual impairments to participate in a 1-hour telephone interview. The purpose of the study is to learn about the strategies, concerns, and experiences these parents have as they raise their children. Parenting partners will also be invited to participate in the study. Visit [www.ed.arizona.edu/rosenblum/recruit.htm](http://www.ed.arizona.edu/rosenblum/recruit.htm) and read a letter of invitation and complete an on-line information form or contact Dr. Sunggye Hong at 319/273-7954 or [hong@uni.edu](mailto:hong@uni.edu) to request an information form.
- ◆ The **American Foundation for the Blind Public Policy Center** is inviting applications for the summer and fall sessions of the 2007 AFB Policy and Research Internship programs. Candidates for the six week internship must possess a bachelors degree and be pursuing a graduate or professional course of study relating to special education, rehabilitation, law, public health, or related human services. For application guidelines and questions, email Mark Richert at [mrichert@afb.net](mailto:mrichert@afb.net) or call (202) 408-8175.
- ◆ **Straight Talk about Vision Loss with Dr. Z:** The National Federation of the Blind is excited to announce a new Web-based video series featuring Dr. Betsy Zaborowski (Dr. Z). In the series, Dr. Z discusses issues surrounding blindness and vision loss and introduces the viewer to special guests and demonstrations. Recent episodes included a demonstration of the Kurzweil– National Federation of the Blind Reader. The newly opened Independence Market and some of its products was featured in episode two. New segments will be added regularly, so be sure to check the NFB Web site at [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org) periodically to see what is happening.
- ◆ **Youth Slam 2007 Needs Mentors—** The National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute is looking forward to this summer when we launch the first annual 2007 Youth Slam. Blind youth from across the country are currently applying for the program. Those accepted will be mentored by blind role models during fun, challenging, and inspiring activities meant to stretch the imagination, build confidence, and increase science literacy. The 2007 Youth Slam is held in partnership with Johns Hopkins University and NASA. We are looking for enthusiastic and highly motivated mentors. Applicants should be energetic, responsible, caring role models who have a positive philosophy about blindness. For further information, please contact our education office at [youthslam@nfb.org](mailto:youthslam@nfb.org).
- ◆ **BVI Pop-Up IEP—**The National Center on Low-Incidence Disabilities announces that the BVI Pop-Up IEP is now available! Share this link with administrators, practitioners and parents who work with or have children who are blind or visually impaired: [http://nclid.unco.edu/joomla/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1084&Itemid=2](http://nclid.unco.edu/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1084&Itemid=2). Pop-up IEPs for the fields of Severe Disabilities and Deafness are also available at this site.



## CHECK IT OUT CONTINUED

- ◆ **New project recruiting for students for January 2007 term in Utah.** Project SEIM, Sensory Impaired Early Intervention Masters Program has openings for students interested in getting a masters degree in Early Intervention Deaf-blindness. Coursework will be done at Utah State University in Logan, Utah and is a three semester Masters program in the department of Communicative Disorders/Deaf Education. Program is designed to provide a unique experience for the individual desiring to work with infants and young children with sensory loss. Applicants who have a bachelors degree in special ed., early childhood ed., elementary ed., family and human development, education of the deaf, education of the blind or a related field are eligible to apply for this program. Student stipends are available that cover tuition and other expenses. Out of state students will receive in state tuition rates. All students accepted into the program are eligible for financial support. For further information, contact Linda Alsop at 435-797-5595 or e-mail: [lalsop@cc.usu.edu](mailto:lalsop@cc.usu.edu)
- ◆ **Space Camp Dates Set**—Space Camp for Interested Visually Impaired Students (SCIVIS) will be held September 22-28, 2007 in Huntsville, Alabama. All students who qualify for vision services are eligible to apply, pending grant funding. For more information contact Dan Oates at the WV School for the Blind, 304-822-4883 or [scivis@atlanticbb.net](mailto:scivis@atlanticbb.net)



### FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

*Department of Childhood Education, Reading, and Disability Services*  
205 Stone Building  
College of Education  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4459  
Voice: 850-644-4880 FAX: 850-644-8715

Greetings!

We train teachers of children with visual impairments at Florida State University and are interested in helping our new TVIs to be better prepared for working with classroom assistants and other paraprofessionals, including one-to-one aides who might be assigned to the students you serve. We have prepared a survey that we hope will help us to understand these roles and relationships from the perspective of both the TVI and the paraprofessional.

If you are a TVI who works with at least one paraprofessional, you can help us in two ways:

1. Complete the survey at this link: <http://www.coe.fsu.edu/CERDS/Parawelcome.html>
2. Forward either this message or the following link <http://www.coe.fsu.edu/CERDS/Parawelcome.html> to the paraprofessionals who work with you or your students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us at [mckenzie@coe.fsu.edu](mailto:mckenzie@coe.fsu.edu) or [lewis@coe.fsu.edu](mailto:lewis@coe.fsu.edu).

Thank you,  
Amy McKenzie and Sandy Lewis

# Vision Coalition Meeting

December 7, 2006

**Persons Present:** Barbara Adams (western region), Tanni Anthony (CDE), Paula Conroy (UNC), Nancy Cozart (Metro Region), Ann Hicks (CIMC), Samantha Hoffman (CAER), Donna Keale (CSDB), Carol Love (Northern), Judy Mumford (Southern Region), Cathy Smyth (Anchor Center), and Lou Tutt (CSDB).

**Persons Absent:** Kay Ferrell (NCLIB)

## **Acronym Glossary:**

CAER – CO Chapter of the Association of the Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind Visually Impaired

CDE – Colorado Department of Education

CIMC – Colorado Instructional Materials Center

CSDB – Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

NCLID – National Center on Low Incidence Disabilities

TVI – teacher certified in the area of visual impairment

UNC – University of Northern Colorado

VC – Vision Coalition

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A very happy birthday to Lou Tutt!!

## **GROUND RULES (12/03)**

1. What is said here, stays here (be specific).
2. Focus on issues, not individuals; do not “personalize” comments.
3. Use professional talk and behavior.
4. Protect meeting as a safe place for discussion.
5. Assume best intention.
6. Use humor appropriately.
7. Allow completion of individual discussion.
8. Focus on representative role (i.e. coalition members representatives are accountable to specific groups or organizations). Attend to how information is reported back to field in a professional manner.

## **GROUND RULES FOR MINUTES (12/03)**

1. Minutes are the official written document of the meeting.
2. Representatives can do verbal updates.
3. Published in WHOT and on CDE Blindness/Low Vision website.
4. State facts, that than innuendo or argument.

## **MISSION AND MEMBERSHIP**

“The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired” (April 1998).

Membership has changed over the years from a “representational” perspective. Teacher reps and a CAER representative were added in recent years. The CAER representative has both school age and rehabilitation service interests.

Membership centers on intervention and educational services of children, ages birth through 21 years. The intent is to

have a workable size of membership that allow for discussion and needed work products. Persons interested in attending a meeting or a part of a meeting should notify Tanni ahead of the meeting to determine the schedule.

*Discussion: Tanni will contact Candi Leathers to determine if there is an interest for a rehab-specific representative. Parents, consumers, and other professionals involved with the education of Colorado children with visual impairments are welcome to come to the VC meeting for a specific agenda topic and they are encouraged to talk to their appropriate representative. For example, if a parent has an issue that he or she would like the VC to discuss, he or she should talk to their teacher certified in visual impairments. The TVI should then talk to the VC teacher rep to ensure this concern is brought to the table. Or the parent could email their teacher rep or Tanni directly.*

*We also discussed the importance of individual CSDB representation by each unique member. For example, Karla is the School for the Blind teacher representative and may well have a different perspective on an issue than another CSDB colleague who is representing another entity.*

## **PROGRAM UPDATES**

### **Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)**

Metro area TVIs had our 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the school year on November 16<sup>th</sup> in Littleton. We had a meeting full of lots of conversation! We had three speakers: Ann Cunningham (author of *Sadie Can Count*), Randy Witte (representing Lou Tutt at CSDB) and Ann Hicks from CIMC. Ann C. spoke for a bit about her book and hoped to get feedback about its use with young children. Teachers who have seen and used the book shared that it is a nicely made and illustrated book for a specific age range of kids. It was also shared that this type of pattern book was a stepping stone for individually made materials for specific kids. Ann Cunningham also shared there would be a Tactile Art Access Day at the Colorado Art Museum. (*I later got a flyer from another source stating an opportunity at the Art Museum on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> - I will clarify this.*) Ann Cunningham stayed as a guest at our meeting for most of the later discussions.

Randy Witte and Ann Hicks came up from Colorado Springs to be with us. Randy shared history and the construct of CSDB's strategic plan. He encouraged anyone who wanted to be involved in the various committees to communicate his/her interest. The CSDB website has a link to see the whole strategic plan. TVIs can share feedback on it via email. Ann Hicks came with gifts! She shared a variety of materials we may not have seen in a while or at all that are accessible for our programs through CIMC directly as well as through APH quota funds. She covered a variety of specific questions from individuals as well as provided general information to us. Here are a few key things that you should already know. First, if you place book orders after April 15<sup>th</sup>, assume you have to send an ink print. If you feel for some reason you do not need to do so, call and confirm this to be correct. You do **not** need to pay postage for print books that are to be brailled. Ensure the correct ISBN # for each book ordered.

We really ran out of time to discuss many issues around the use of technology support with Bonnie Snyder, planning cooperative activities with students and/or families, future meetings, etc. As coordinator of the metro meetings, I am trying send more updates, posing questions and ideas via email this year. It helps to maintain regular communication among all of us rather than waiting until the next quarterly meeting to discuss things that arise.

We are looking forward to the Braille Challenge to be held on January 19, 2007. CSDB is once again hosting the event. Be sure to get your information to Randy Witte to ensure your student(s) have their needed materials prepared on that day.

The metro low vision clinic is being held Jan 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Amber Rundle is our clinic coordinator again this year. She had all the necessary paperwork out to us well in advance. TVIs have to get their information into Amber R. so Dr. Thuene has time to review each individual student's packet in a timely manner before the clinic. Also, this will provide time for adjustments to be made if a district has more students than their allotted slots to determine if other students can attend.

Our meetings for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester are: Tuesday February 13 from 2:00-4:00 in Cherry Creek and Tuesday April 17 from 2:00-4:00 in Jeff Co.

*Discussion: The teacher reps talked about how best to communicate with one another in their region. There are differ-*

ent styles; some use listservs, others use email or phone. Often the nonresponses mean that people are okay with what is being planned at a regional meeting.

### **Northern Region (Carol Love)**

We have slots to fill for our Low Vision Clinic. Tanni is working with Rita Albright and Vicki Pearson, the coordinators of the northern clinic, and Jill Gallegos to see about including students from WY. Jill, is a TVI, from WY. The first priority is to fill the clinic with northern region students.

*Discussion: Preschoolers who might benefit from a low vision evaluation can come to the clinics. This is true for all low vision evaluation clinics and an area we hope to expand over the years.*

Could we get clarification on what qualifies a student as visually impaired? We are getting many referrals to test students who have problems with: convergence, binocular disorder. Could we have something in writing about this (perhaps about vision therapy, too)?

*Discussion: There seems to be an increase in the requests for large print CSAP tests. In some districts, any large print CSAP request to a DAC must be investigated by the district TVI. The TVIs are giving more and more time to these requests. Many of these learners are on a 504 Plan. Tanni will follow up with CDE to determine if there are any policy or general recommendation statements that can come out of our Exceptional Student Services Unit. Tanni will also see if there are any national position papers address that the role of the TVI and vision therapy. Judy shared a Position Statement that she and Jan Barron many years ago about the issue of vision therapy and the role of the TVI. A copy was shared with the VC members during the meeting.*

Janice Schmidt providing information on daily living skills at the November meeting. We are planning to have Bonnie Snyder come up for our meeting on Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 for technology training.

### **Southern Region (Judy Mumford)**

Due to the October blizzard of 2006, the first two days of the Southern region clinic (originally scheduled for a Thursday and a Friday) had to be cancelled and rescheduled. Our original Saturday clinic ran smoothly on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Scheduling conflicts with Dr. Theune resulted in a shorted clinic day on a sun drenched Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The third and final clinic day, rescheduled for Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, included our first student with Deafblindness as well as twin preschool boys. In all, 16 students from District 2, District 20, CSDB, Pikes Peak B.O.C.E.S., and Woodland Park received free evaluations. Thank you to Anastasia Campbell, Diane Fitzkee, Karla McKechnie, Jan Megarry, Judy Mumford, Karen Samples, Jenevieve Scott, Melissa Shular, Linda Witte, Randy Witte, and Chloann Woolley for attending evaluations with students from their districts. (J. Olson, 11/06) We have an unbelievable opportunity for our students through the expertise of the Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic team.

At our last meeting we had discussion around who we are and why we meet. There have been questions raised about structure, attendance and frequency of meetings as well as a parent question about attending. It was decided that our mission is professional networking and professional development. We had dropped meetings in December and March.

Bonnie attended our October meeting and it was wonderful to welcome her back. She had a presentation on TextAloud. In regards to "Bonnie's Tech Time" the southern region would like to at least video/DVD trainings that Bonnie provides throughout the state so that these could continue to be available for all when individual needs present. Lou Tutt is checking into video taping, teleconference/ satellite possibilities at CSDB. Bonnie also emailed a list of services that she can provide which was forwarded to all region reps.

Service hours have been discussed. It does appear that not only do districts list services differently but often teachers within a district may list differently. We agree that we do more than what we list on the IEP and that the service page should reflect a break down of services provided. The service page is directly related to our record keeping techniques and procedures. We spent time sharing our various record keep forms and felt this was valuable for us for data collection as it directly correlates to the IEP service page.

Two new rehab providers, Garrett Mumma and Michelle Palazzolo, came with Patty Wagner to the last meeting.

*Discussion: We had a discussion on children with progressive vision losses qualify for the services of a TVI. The an-*

swer is that we would encourage TVIs to establish a relationship with the family and service providers so that people understand the eye condition, its functional implications, the warning signs for vision loss, the need for ongoing eye care. It is important to determine whether the school staff is concerned about the child's developmental or academic performance. In the event that the child is a preschooler, it may be possible that Anchor Center can provide services. Fee structure, however, would a conversation with the district and Anchor staff.

### **Western Region (Barbara Adams)**

*Mesa:* JC Greeley will be coming out here for a 0-3 clinic in December and we continue to appreciate the support that CDE gives for her rural outreach work. We have 4 local students participating in the Braille Challenge and will host our own local event on a Saturday.

Randy Witte offered to print certificates for our students that CSDB has made up for their participants in this event. Thanks Randy! Phyllis has applied for a grant for GPS systems. The grant will allow us to have the systems on loan for 6 months, with an option to buy at a reduced price. We will not hear about that until January.

*Mtn. BOCES:* Julie King is getting ready to do her practicum this coming semester. One of her students will participate in the Braille Challenge and another is going to participate in the CSDB's Short Term Placement for social skills. Barbara Adams provided a vision screening training for Child Find personnel in Fairplay in October and will do another in Greenwood Springs for Mtn. Valley Developmental Services in December. JC Greeley is coming to Mtn BOCES also, in December, braving the snow and cold temperatures to provide outreach services.

*Discussion:* Child Find responsibilities for birth through three children are no longer a mandated school district activity. As such, many Community Center Boards or Part C agencies are learning how to do vision screening for their infants and toddlers. If TVIs are asked about the vision screening bags that the Colorado Services for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss provided to districts many years ago, please let people know that there are NO MORE screening kit bags. This was a one-time activity sponsored by the grant. Tanni does, however, have a standard PowerPoint on 0-5 vision screening that she will send to TVIs per their request. The 0-5 manual and corresponding documents can be found on the CDE webpage on Blindness/Low Vision (there is a link to these materials.)

*Delta & Montrose School Districts:* The school year is progressing incredibly fast and it is hard to believe it is nearly half over. Student numbers are remaining consistent in both Delta and Montrose County school districts which is surprising since our region (especially Montrose) continues to experience significant growth. CSAPs are approaching quickly and the emphasis with print users will continue to be utilization of magnification rather than large print adaptation. Regarding low vision magnification, Kevin reports how exciting it is to see his visually impaired students actively using, enjoying and benefiting from the low vision devices recommended by the Low Vision Task Force. Even at this early juncture, Kevin is putting together a list of follow-up appointments for next year's Low Vision Task Force!! On a related CSAP note, it appears that 18 point, large print orders for non-VI students are up significantly this year (as reported to me by district DACs) which is interesting. Kevin and his paraprofessional, Beth Myers, look forward to April's west slope regional meeting in Grand Junction.

### **Anchor Center for Blind Children and CSDB Early Intervention News (Cathy Smyth)**

Winter is here as Infants and Toddlers start to arrive at Anchor Center for Blind Children dressed in full body fleece snowsuits and Home visits take more time due to inclement weather. However, the weather is NOT stopping progress on our new building as the basement takes shape. The preschoolers will be taking a field trip to the site to check out the big machines, complete with hard hats, of course! It is exciting to see it actually happening!

Our first Lillis grant practicum student has joined us and we love having her at the center. Tammi Gomes recently moved here from California and she is continuing to pursue her Orientation and Mobility degree from San Francisco State University. She will accompany JC out to the Western Slope for an Outreach trip, and is busy learning to do Functional Vision Assessments, Home Visits and attending presentations, as well as helping out in the classroom with preschoolers and Infants and Toddlers. All of our internship positions have been filled for the rest of the year.

Carol Spicer and Mindy Doyle-McCall (Anchor Center's OT and PT) recently did a presentation on Motor and Sensory Needs / Development of VI children for the Cherry Creek School District. It was very successful and they would love to

do the presentation again if other school districts are interested.

Cathy Smyth, TSVI, Carol Spicer, OTR, and Zoe Morgese, SLP are working on a potential journal article discussing Feeding development for VI infants. It's a bigger project than we anticipated, but well worth the effort. It is exciting to realize how much we know, and we are anxious to share it with others. Our center-based program that focuses on Parent and Infant/Toddler interactions gives us a unique opportunity to look at a diverse population with similar needs. We hope that a more focused study will follow the article.

Early Intervention news from Louise Gettman at CDSB includes some excitement regarding the Early Years first meeting for parents and how they hope to develop this new service. Louise and Jennie Germano from CSDB will be visiting Anchor Center for Blind Children this upcoming January. We are looking forward to their visit and hope to go to CSDB's preschool program in February or March.

A meeting has been scheduled for January 30, 2007, to discuss Anchor Center's interaction with the new Federal initiative, Results Matter. We look forward to finding the best way to serve visually impaired little ones from birth to 6 consulting with the State Consultant, Nan Vendegna. Currently Louise Gettman (CSDB), Charlotte Morgan (Anchor Center), Cathy Smyth (Anchor Center) and Carol Spicer (Anchor Center) are all trained to administer the AEPS test. Our strategy for now is to assist with the AEPS when applicable, consult with other providers when using a different test, and continue to use the Functional Vision Assessment for primary programming information. As we all learn the different testing methods throughout the State, we would love to hear how other TVIs are adapting them for their preschoolers.

*Discussion: Cathy would like TVI reps to find out what is happening with Results Matter in their regions. This will be a topic for the next VC meeting. It was suggested that this be a deliberate area of study to determine appropriate adaptations etc. for children with visual impairment.*

### **CAER (Samantha Hoffman)**

CAER once again co-hosted the fall Vision Conference with CDE. The conference was well attended and a great success. CAER helped to support the attendance of parents that benefited greatly from attending. The local talent featured during the Friday sessions included CAER members and even one board member. They did a great job. Anna Swenson's session on Saturday was also fantastic. Once again, Colorado VI professionals demonstrated their commitment to the field by maintaining good attendance even on a weekend. The field should be commended for their dedication.

The CAER annual meeting will continue to occur in the spring in conjunction with the Orientation and Mobility conference at this point. However, at this year's fall conference the CAER board was able to honor last year's award recipients who were unable to attend the annual meeting. Brenda Shepard was presented with the President's Award. While Jim Olson received the Gary Schmidt award. Congratulations again to these very deserving winners.

Please begin thinking of colleagues you would like to nominate for the Gary Schmidt award, as well as a person or group that may be deserving of the Connections Award. We will also be seeking new nominees to serve on the CAER board. Terms for board members are two year and more fun than you can imagine. Please consider getting involved. It is not too soon to begin thinking about these things. The 2007 annual meeting is right around the corner.

At the state conference, Amber Rundle of the CAER board announced the creation of a new website: <[www.co.aerbvi.org](http://www.co.aerbvi.org)>. We plan on the website being a great information provider as well as communication tool between members and the board. CAER will, in the near future, have mini-grants for professionals and financial assistance for clients, parents, and students guidelines up on the site. Applications to submit to the board for consideration will be on the site as well. An e-mail account, <mailto:caerboard@gmail.com> has also been established, so that applications can be submitted to the board electronically. We are excited about formalizing the system for providing support to our members as well as those clients and families we serve. If you have any questions or suggestions for CAER, please feel free to contact any board member.

### **UNC (Paula Conroy)**

There is currently a search open for a term faculty position in the area of Visual Impairment. Anyone interested should contact Paula Conroy at [paula.conroy@unco.edu](mailto:paula.conroy@unco.edu) or 970-351-1651.

We have just come to the end of the fall semester and run our first section of our beginning braille course using a new system called WesBraille. Although there were some glitches, the overall outcome was positive. We have only one graduate this semester, but will have a bunch of students who are currently working in Colorado as TVIs who will graduate in May.

Congratulations to Vicki Pearson who has successfully earned her doctoral degree from the UNC College of Education! We are so very proud of Dr. Pearson!

### **Colorado School for the Blind (Lou Tutt and Karla McKechnie)**

Students at CSDB continue to have a great time learning. Mr. James Dean of the Johnson Space Center visited to recruit students to assist him in a pilot program to educate visually impaired people about NASA's space activities. Global Explorers presented an informative assembly on their international cultural immersion experiences. This group offers a variety of educational experiences to visually impaired students. 6 of our students will be attending a ski experience in December, through a partnership with Foresight Ski Guides.

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, several students are coming to Denver for Young Ameritowne. They are chartering a bus for the participating students from both the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf.

On January 19, 2007, CSDB will again host the regional contest of the National Braille Challenge. All K-12 Braille readers are invited to participate, regardless of skill level. For more information, please contact Randy Witte at 719 578-2204 or by email at [rwitte@csdb.org](mailto:rwitte@csdb.org)

We have had a new staff person added: Catherine Sounart is the new Pre-School teacher for the blind. Amy Gunning has returned to her duties in the elementary school classroom. Our librarian, Diann Cullen and her staff, our students, and our volunteers have been working to label 4,000 books for the Accelerated Reader Program. These books are available in print, twin vision, Braille and on tape. The School for the Blind will host three student interns from out of state programs. A long term sub will fill the DLS position. A new art therapist is coming in January.

On December 5 and 14, several of our para-educators in the School for the Blind will be attending training classes to increase their already awesome usefulness and ability. In January, Mr. Tutt, newly elected to the CEC Board of Directors, will be attending their meeting in Arlington, VA. Our curriculum teams are meeting bi-weekly to adapt and implement our new curriculum.

The annual Snow Shoe Trip is coming up! CSDB partners on this fun event!

### **CSDB Outreach (Donna Keale)**

There were seven students signed up for the first short term placement. This event was cancelled due to blizzard conditions. There were some kids who had made it on the campus ahead of the storm! It all worked out, but there were many logistics to consider. The Short Term Placement O&M has been rescheduled for the 14, 15, and 16<sup>th</sup> of December. There are three confirmed students for this Short Term Placement.

Another student has been down to CSDB for a week-long STP. The STP on technology has been interesting to schedule as there are such individual needs. This one has been rescheduled for January. The goal will be to highlight a particular technology for a particular day. Students should come for the days that have their needed technology training. There are many things happening in January (metro low vision clinic, braille challenge, snow shoe weekend, etc) , so there may well be some overlap with a STP. If people are interested in having students participate in a STP, they should be in immediate contact with Donna ([dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)).

### **CDE – Tanni Anthony**

*CSAP and CELA Braille Format:* Tanni Anthony, Sarah Sonnier, and Nancy Cozart met with the National Braille Press on December 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> to review the 2007 braille format CSAP tests. Also in attendance was a staff person from CTB McGraw Hill, our CSAP test publisher. Tanni, Nancy, and Sarah have reviewed some of the CELA Test content from a visual-bias perspective.

*Discussion:* A person who knows braille **MUST** administer the braille tests. This can be problematic for districts with a  
January 2007

*large number of braille readers.*

*ECEA Rules Specific to Braille Competency:* Per the discussion of the May 2006 VC meeting, Tanni is working with CDE to change the current language of our ECEA Rules specific to braille competency testing. Currently there is a loop hole that allows TVIs who are not providing braille instruction to not have to demonstrate braille competency. A change has been drafted that all CO TVIs working in public schools MUST demonstrate braille competency. This proposed change will go through public review with other proposed changes to the ECEA Rules.

*Recruitment and Retention:* Open positions include: 1 FTE in JeffCo, 1 FTE in Adams 50, 1 FTE for CSDB in transition/ DLS program, and 1 FTE at the Anchor Center. There are two administrative units in the Colorado Springs area who are in need of additional FTE. Tanni is working with these directors on advertising the positions. TVIs and O&M Specialists, who are interested and available for contract work, please be in touch with Tanni.

*Fall VI Conference:* The conference occurred in early October. It received very favorable reviews. Tanni will meet with the CAER Board.

*Low Vision Device Training:* Chrissy Cowan provided two days of training on near and distance low vision devices. The training was held in Denver on November 10-11, 2006. Jim Olson helped provide a number of devices for the training and also gave a great overview of the CO Low Vision Evaluation Clinic. The evaluations were very positive.

*Technology Consultation for Next Year:* Monies have been approved in the CDE VI-Related Budget for school year 2006-07 to contract with Bonnie Snyder to provide technology consultation to southern, metro, northern, and western regions of the state. This will be trial year and it will be important to develop a model that allows equal access across the regions. Currently the plan is for each region to have five days of Bonnie's time. Coordinators of the regional TVI/O&M meetings are encouraged to meet with their regional constituents to develop a TA plan for their region.

*O&M Conference:* The date of April 12-14, 2007 has been set for the annual O&M Conference. It will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind. The speakers and content are currently being finalized.

*O&M Caseload Formula:* Tanni is still collecting information about the draft document from the O&M Specialists who were asked to pilot it. So far, she has collected data from Ann Gillmeister, Nancy Cozart, and Nancy Knight.

*NIMAS and NIMAC:* Tanni will be organizing a state committee to address our NIMAS obligations. We have a lot of work to do.

*State Listserv:* Per the request of CO TVIs across the state, there is a CDE-based listserv for Colorado TVIs and O&M Specialists. People are slowly signing up. The intent will be to have a communication tool for topical discussions. Registration information has been sent out to TVIs by email.

### **CIMC (Ann Hicks)**

*NIMAS Update:* The CIMC is listed as the authorized user for materials needed for school aged children in Colorado. If you find books available from the American Printing House for the Blind which are stored in the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) that you need, you will order them just like you order any other book. If you want them in electronic format, we can get them for you. Just remember that these materials will still need to be translated into textbook format for you to produce them in Braille. However, if your student has a device which can read the electronic format, then you can use the electronic file after we get it for you. You will still need to go through us to get these files. You cannot just call or email APH to order them.

Not all books are going to be housed in the NIMAC. When your School District orders a book series, the School District MUST let the publisher know to send an electronic file of that book to APH for the NIMAC. This is done through a contract between the publisher and the School District at the time that the order is placed.

*Bad Braille:* We have been informed by several districts this fall that they have received books with bad Braille in them. This is not acceptable! If this should happen to you, please take the following steps:

1. Call or email us immediately with the title, author, publisher, copyright date, and the ISBN number of the text.
2. It also helps us to know the name of the vendor that produced the braille, the person's name who did the transcribing and the date it was transcribed.

3. We also need to know specific mistakes along with the page numbers of those mistakes.

We will source the book again to see if anyone else has done this book, what the cost is and the approximate date they could send it to you. To do this we have to know what page the student is on. Also a syllabus (dates and chapters the class will be doing next) really helps us. Then together we can decide if we can get another book for you.

*Current Status of Fee Assessments:* We currently have 53 districts in Colorado that have at least one student who is visually impaired. Of those districts only 2 (El Paso #2 and Morgan County) have not paid their assessment fee. Our big problem is that 16 districts (Adams #14, Adams #50, Arapahoe #2, Big Sandy #100-J, DPS, El Paso #2, El Paso #3, El Paso #22, El Paso #49, Larimer #3, Morgan County, Northwest BOCES, Pueblo #70, Uncompaghre BOCES, Weld #6, and Woodland Park RE-2) have not sent us a letter stating that their fee assessment money was taken out of Federal Funds. Two districts (Adams Arapahoe 28J and Douglas) send us a letter stating that their money was taken out of federal funds but their letters were not signed. If we do not have a signed letter which states that the funds were paid by federal funds, we can not deposit the funds and use them. I have emailed all these districts to ask for their money and/or letters and my next step is to personally call each district to ask that they please respond. If one of these districts is your district, please help me by speaking to the Special Education Director. Thanks for your help with this project.

*Current Status of Book Orders:* As of today, December 4, 2006, the following is the status of our textbook orders:

|  |              |                |                     |
|--|--------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1040 Total orders  |              | 100%           |                     |
| <hr/>  |              |                |                     |
| 928 Shipped complete   |              | 89%            |                     |
| 39 Shipped partial   |              | 4%             |                     |
| 41 Purchased   |              | 4%             |                     |
| 6 Being Sourced (all recent books)                             |              | 1%             |                     |
| 4 Being large printed  |              | 0%             |                     |
| 15 Purchased from APH and waiting for delivery                 |              | 1%             |                     |
| 7 Waiting on inks  |              | 1%             |                     |
| <br>   |              |                |                     |
| Orders received by April 15, 2006 for 1 <sup>st</sup> semester | Total Orders |                |                     |
| 326 Total Orders   | 100%         | Total Orders   | 1040                |
| 295 Shipped complete   | 91%          | Inks Sent      | <u>-260</u>         |
| 20 Shipped partial   | 6%           |                | 780                 |
| 1 PO (Workbook)  | 0%           |                |                     |
| 8 APH (back ordered)   | 3%           |                |                     |
|  |              | Inks requested | 65                  |
|  |              | Inks received  | <u>-58</u>          |
|  |              | Still waiting  | 7                   |
|  |              |                | (5 from 1 district) |

**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

It is important to work with district administrators to determine FTE needs for the future. As appropriate, the district can work with staff to home-grow a TVI/O&MS. Everyone is encouraged to be proactive with recruitment.

**BUDGET**

Topics for CDE budget consideration for the 2006-07 School Year.

- CSAP, CSAPA, and CELA Test Review
- Braille Competency
- Low Vision Evaluation Clinic (with funds for Spanish translation of LVE information)
- Training on Eye Conditions – Optic Nerve Hypoplasia
- Mentor Program with more of an individual focus on topical needs

- *What's Happening Out There*
- O&M Annual Conference
- VIISA
- State Conference on Visual Impairment (local talent, medical updates, Expanded Core, vendors)
- Paraeducator Specific Training - ?
- Vision Coalition
- Follow-Up with Low Vision Device Mentoring
- Technology
- CIMC
- Adult Role Model
- Braille Transcriber Mentoring
- Family Learning Seminar

A growing need on the School for the Deaf campus are students with visual impairments who are in need of a TVI/O&M Specialist.

TVIs and parents are encouraged to be in touch with Tanni per their thoughts about next year's VI-based budget.

### **BRAILLIST POSITION DESCRIPTION**

There was a review of draft-versions position descriptions of a paraeducator specific to visual impairments, a state certified brailist, and a national certified brailist. The two latter tiers provide a career ladder for brailists. The purpose of the documents is to provide a broad

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY CONSULTATION**

People are encouraged to use Bonnie's time! Individuals, small groups, and regional meeting folks can access Bonnie. The goal is to spend this money and use her expertise. If an individual does use Bonnie's time, they should send an email of the amount of hours used to their regional meeting coordinator so that person can keep a record of the time used. Tanni will be checking in with Bonnie on a regular basis to see how we are proceeding in each region.

### **PARAEDUCATOR**

There are many issues to consider with paraeducator training. We have a couple of written resources on this topic. Tanni talked with Nancy French of the CO TOP program with UCD. She is willing to work with us to develop modules that would ultimately be used on a local level. The UCD modules would be offered for credit. The trainers would be paid.

Topics to include in the modules: Expectations of paraeducators; general content for paraeducators on working with students with visual impairments; and Supervision

There is feedback on the importance of getting paras together for networking, training, and support. Feedback from the southern region indicated that paraeducators would like modules.

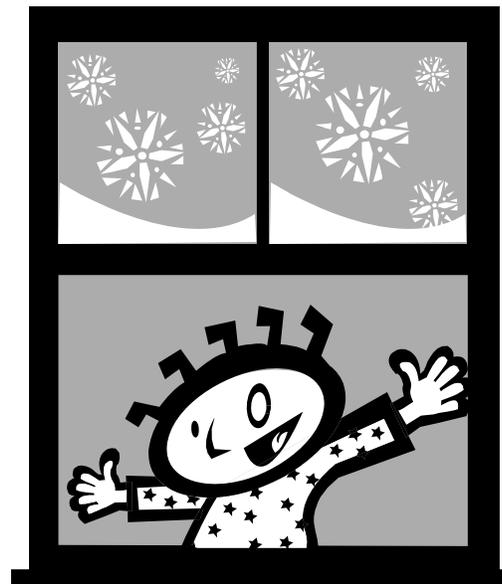
One of the dorm staff from CSDB has attending a paraeducator training held in Nebraska. The trainer is Cyral Miller from Texas School for the Blind. A next step discussion will be whether to bring this training to Colorado.

We are thinking it would be helpful to have a summer work group to design the content. Summer work group: Judy Mumford, Nancy Cozart, Lou Tutt, Donna Keale, Ann Hicks, Barbara Adams, Paula Conroy, Carol Love.

**Next Meeting Date for the Vision Coalition:** April 12, 2007 at Highline B

## Agenda Items for the April Vision Coalition meeting

- \* Review of Budget status
- \* Paraeducator Modules
- \* Para / Brailist Position
- \* Summer Enrichment Programs
- \* Results Matter
- \* Fall State Conference Content and Dates
- \* RtI and the Student with Visual Impairment



## Assignments for the April 2007 meeting

| WHO          | WHAT  | WHEN  |
|--------------|---|---|
| All          | Electronically submit program updates to Tanni  | April 6, 2007   |
| Tanni        | Check with CDE about how to provide further guidance on 504 issues related to large print, as well as the of the TVI with vision therapy and visagraph results. Check to see if there are any national position papers on the role of the TVI and vision therapy. | February 2007   |
| Teacher reps | Bring information back to the April meeting on how Results Matter tests are being conducted in their regions specific to preschoolers with visual impairment.   | Between now and April 2007.                                   |
| Teacher reps | Encourage nominations for the Gary Schmidt and the Connections Award through the CO AER Chapter. Also, please encourage people to consider submitting their name for the CAER Board.  | Between now and the middle of February 2007.                  |
| Ann Hicks    | Will contact the Library of Congress to learn more about the requirements of their manuscript preparation. Ann will also check on textbook formatting and tactile graphics.   | Between now and April 2007.                                   |
| Carol        | All VC members should review the three position descriptions (brailists/ VI-related paraeducators) and send any feedback to Carol Love at Love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us  | Feedback to Carol by February 2007, review at next VC meeting |

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