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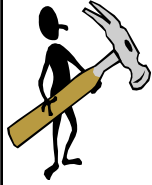
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WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

By Tanni L. Anthony

I have been thinking a lot about tools these days. When I was in my late 20s and still single, my mother mailed me a toolbox loaded with screwdrivers, wrenches, a serious hammer, pliers, and a bunch of other tools as a Christmas present. It was a heavy red toolbox and it cost quite a bit to ship it to my then home state of Alaska. I remember thinking, "Wow, I could really use these and isn't this amazing that it was from my MOTHER!" My male friends often asked to borrow my tools and I became more independent around my house. When I married much later, those tools and that shiny red toolbox went with me. I still prefer MY hammer over the one that Wayne brought into the union. It reminds me of my wise mother and my long established independence.

Tools are our friends and there are certainly the lifetime companions of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired. Given the right tool, a person can go from unnecessary dependency on another person and not having true access of information to independence and getting the needed information. Tools may be an everyday type of item like my hammer or something very high-tech.

A child's first tools in life come early with playthings that invite exploration, onto a spoon for feeding, or a mobility device or cane for clearing that next step. As we introduce magnifiers, GPS devices, braille writers, the abacus, tactile maps, talking calculators, computers, etc., we add to that child's independence.

There are several examples of tool use within this newsletter. Enjoy *Bonnie's Tidbits*, the APH essays and the article about a young woman now in college. The more we know about the tools to enhance learning and independent, the better for our students and children. Let's work to fill the toolbox early and often.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

**A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
October 2008**

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Bits From Bonnie

Viewing the Bigger Picture

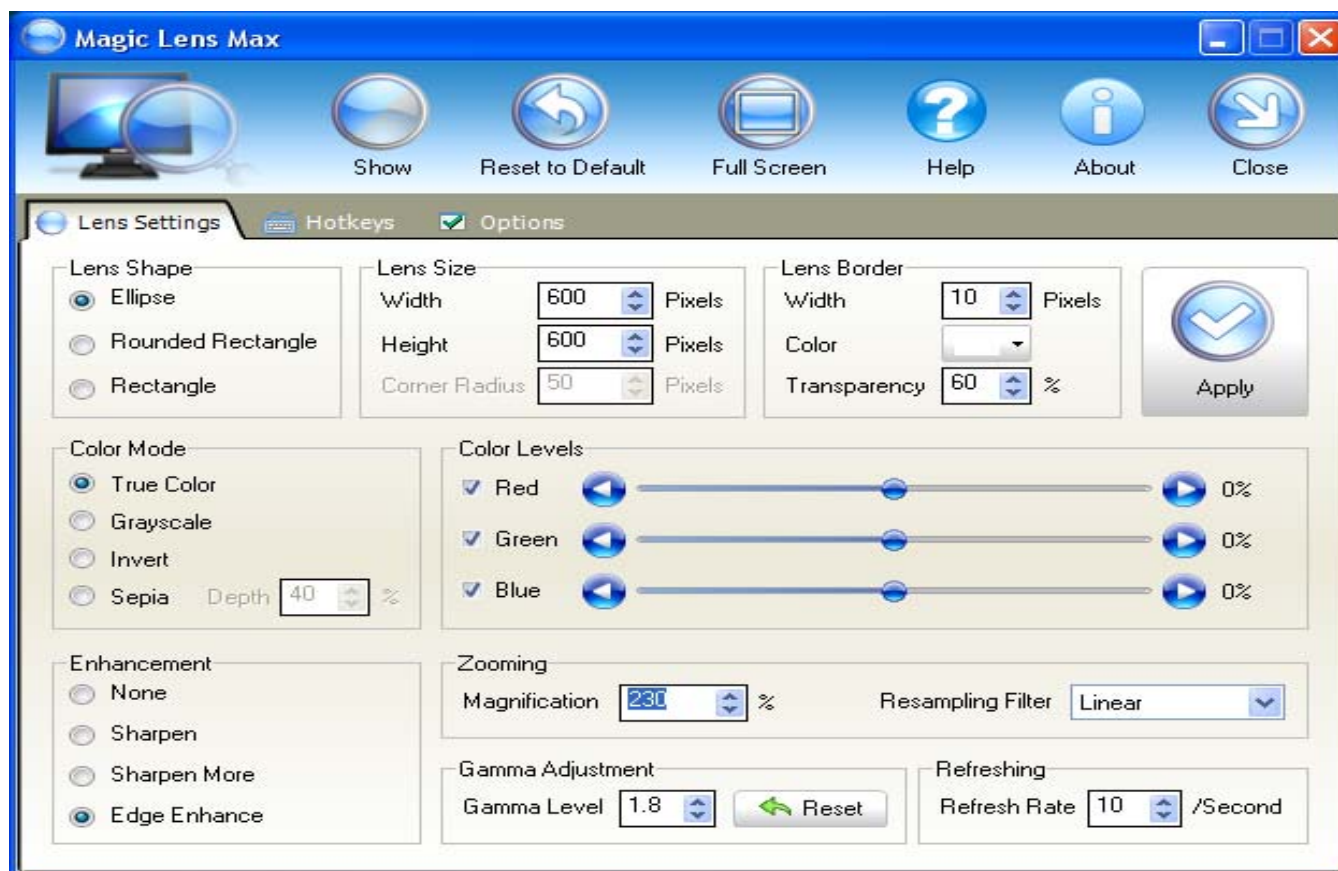
By Bonnie Snyder

BonnieLS21@Gmail.Com

In this article, I will discuss two screen enlargement programs that might help us minimize the visual difficulties of low vision students as they use computers. Please keep in mind that I am not endorsing either of these programs. I am just comparing and contrasting to supply you with useful information.

The first program I want to talk about is called **Magic Lens Max**. I downloaded an older version of the program from <Giveawayoftheday.com> and was very impressed with what it could do. I emailed the program's author and told him what a terrific program it was and I have demonstrated it to various groups who provide services to the blind and visually impaired. Additionally, the cost of the program is only \$39.95. I went ahead and purchased a copy of the most recent edition and was even more pleased with what the author had added since my downloaded version.

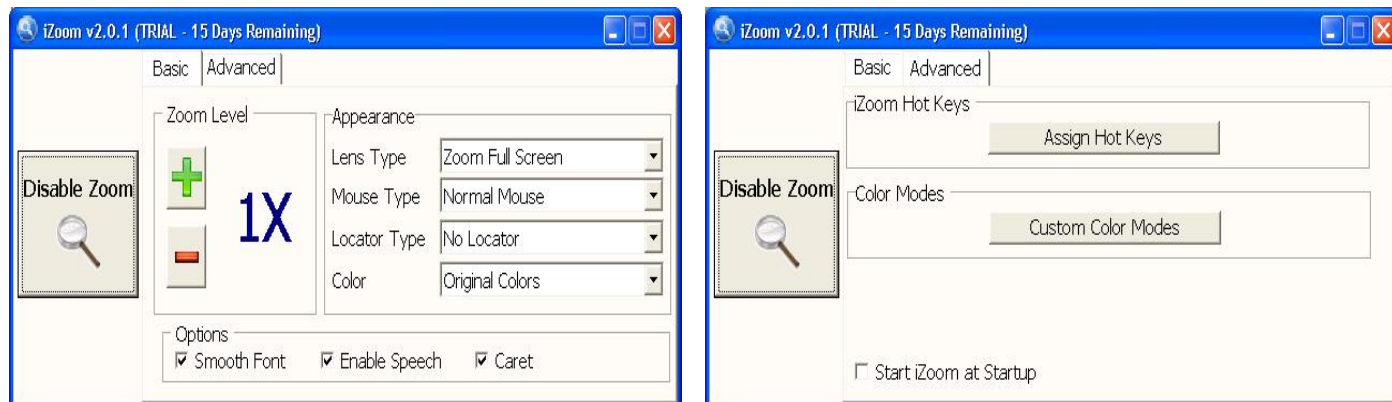
Magic Lens Max provides a variety of ways to magnify the computer screen, from resizable moveable lenses, which magnify directly over where your mouse or cursor is working, to a full screen magnification option which slows down the screen refresh very minimally. You have some color contrast options to choose from with this program as well as an invert colors option for light text on dark background. The magnification levels can be selected from 50% (which is non magnification) up to pretty much infinity. Anything above 350% starts to blur a bit, although there are options to sharpen. Below is the Magic Lens Max option screen:



The Magic Lens Max icon that resides in the system tray can be single clicked on to turn on or turn off the magnification.

This is an excellent program that is both useful and affordable. If you are interested in testing it out, go to <www.visionsuit.com>. You can download a 30 day demo of the latest version. If you decide to purchase Magic Lens Max, once you have paid the \$39.95, you will be sent a registration code which can be entered into the demo and it becomes fully functional.

The second program I evaluated for screen magnification allows for an additional option: speech along with the magnification. This program is called **iZoom**, and can be obtained from <<http://www.issist.com/>>. I really like the customizing options available in iZoom. These can be accessed from the initial menu when iZoom comes on, or once the menu is closed, you can reopen it quickly by clicking the mouse on the iZoom icon in the system tray. Here are the option screens:



iZoom allows for default or customizable hot keys, several sizes and colors of mouse pointers, color combinations supplied with the program, as well as custom color modes, several sizes and shapes of “locators” which help the user find the location of the mouse pointer, and a choice of several lens shapes as well as full screen magnification. iZoom magnifies from 1X to 32X. Another of iZoom’s features that is really neat: it has an option to display and magnify only one line at a time with the others blocked out. For students who have difficulty tracking, this will be an excellent choice.

Potential concerns that I have found in iZoom are as follows: First, when using the lens mode, you have to place the lens first over what you want to interact with, and then move the mouse pointer within that lens. Second, from about the 3X magnification up, the display becomes more and more pixilated which can be a problem for some vision conditions. Third, there is only one voice offered with the speech option and it is not a particularly pleasant one.

As you would expect, with additional options comes an additional cost. Again, you can download a 30 day demo of iZoom from the website and if you wish to purchase the program, the price is \$199.00.

If you feel the need to view the bigger picture, give the demos of the above programs a try to see if they will be of use to you.

Editor’s Note: The CDE does not endorse these products. We thank Bonnie for her personal review. Please remember to be in touch with Bonnie for your on-site or remote technical assistance needs for technology demonstrations and/or training.

Low Vision News

By Jim Olson



New APH products for Students with Low Vision



Several new products designed for students with low vision were shared during a product fair at the recent APH annual meeting in Louisville, KY. Below are brief descriptions of the new products taken from the APH catalog and website <www.aph.org> which can be ordered for your students through the CIMC.

FAX (719.578.2207) or email your order form attachment to <cimcaids@csdb.org>.

Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills, Revised, 1999 (CIBS-R):

Student Large Print Edition: Item # 4-00000-00 -- \$153.00

This assessment is also known as Brigance Green. CIBS-R is a criterion-referenced inventory that assesses, on an individual basis, a student's strengths or weaknesses in specific skill areas. The CIBS-R has been especially useful in support of IEP development and program planning. The revised 1999 edition spans grades pre-kindergarten through nine. Innovations include options for group administration, updated grade placement tests, updated skill sequences, and alternative assessment options for pretests and posttests. Two spiral bound volumes contain the student pages, which can lie flat or be used on a bookstand or with a CCTV.

Features:

- Color-coded tabs and divider pages match the print test colors
- Spiral bound volumes can lie flat or fold back
- Enlarged illustrations and maps printed on separate 11 x 17 inch "pull-out" pages
- Large Print Toss-Away Rulers supplied for math subtests
- GlaReducers glare-reducing sheets included

Note: Administration and scoring of this large print edition should be carried out by trained paraprofessionals and professionals precisely in accordance with instructions found in the regular print edition.

Note: This student large print edition was designed to be used only in conjunction with the print inventory. To order the print test, student record books, and other regular print materials, contact: Curriculum Associates, Inc., 153 Rangeway Road, North Billerica, MA 01862-0901, 800-225-0248, Fax: 800-366-1158, <www.curriculumassociates.com>

EZ Track Calendar 2009: A Low Vision Appointment Book and Calendar.

Calendar with binder: 1-07900-09 -- \$31.00

APH's EZ Track Calendar provides teens and adults with an organized way of keeping track of appointments, dates, bills, holidays and other events. Each large print page holds four days, with enough room to write notes and appointments. The calendar comes with a three-ring binder, or can be ordered with out a binder.

ToAD: Tools for Assessment and Development of Visual Skills:

Item #1-08152-00 -- \$595.00

This set of standardized tools aids in performing functional vision evaluations or visual skills development activities. ToAD does not provide a curriculum – the ToAD kit provides tools, toys, and puzzles that assist the educator as he or she performs assessments or activities. In addition to its uses for assessment and for vision development activities, ToAD serves as the Vision Modality for the Sensory Learning Kit. *WARNING: Choking Hazard-Small Parts. Not intended for children ages 5 and under without adult supervision.*

Turbo Phonics Software

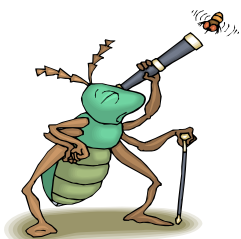
Includes software, enhanced print Teacher's Guide, one Student

Activity Book: Item #D-00100-00 -- \$155.00

Turbo Phonics is a computer-based, phonemic awareness and phonics program for young students who are preparing to develop reading skills. This program has been specially designed for students who have low vision, but students with typical vision may successfully use the program. Exciting racecar sounds, racing graphics, and student-friendly interface make Turbo Phonics loads of fun when learning to read.

Student performance is tracked in a self-contained database that the teacher may access at any time. The program identifies skills in which the student may need further practice.

This program provides students with simple, high contrast graphics, audio reinforcement, and excitement throughout the interactive program. Students will love Turbo Phonics!



Jim Olson

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Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)

1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559

Toll Free: (800) 765-5951 / FAX (719) 578-2207

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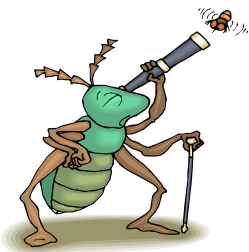
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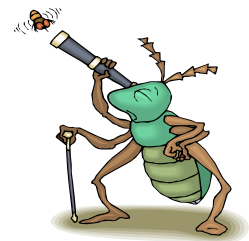
The annual statewide VI Registration Process has been improved. To assist in the planning of district budgets, it will now occur sooner and in two phases in order to notify Colorado administrative units of their assessment fees by the end of January 2009. Remember *all* students who have an IEP stating that they have met ECEA criteria as visually disabled need to be registered with your administrative unit. This includes your learners who have multiple disabled AND are seen by a TV because of a visual impairment. "VI Registration Forms" need to be filled out for students who are new or re-enrolling in your district. A new "Exit Form" has been developed for TVIs to fill out as students leave your districts.

Phase I of the registration process is underway. Print copies of spreadsheets listing your students have been delivered to your district contact personnel. Please complete the updates specific to your district and return them as quickly as possible to Donice Fennimore.

Phase II will occur on the actual APH federal count day, the first Monday in January of the current calendar year. You will receive your updated spreadsheets sometime in December, check your district's enrollment and make updates on the January 5th count day, and return your completed forms to Donice by Friday, January 9, 2009..



The CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule



for the 2008-09 Academic Year:

Region:	Dates:	Location:	Site Coordinators
Metro Denver	November 20-22, 2008	Stapleton	Nancy Knight
Southern	December 11-13, 2008	Colorado Springs	Melissa Shular
Northern	February 20-21, 2009	Fort Collins	Carol Love & Sally Eldridge


OFF AND RUNNING!

By Donice Fennimore

The Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinics got off to a good start for the 2008-2009 school year with the Western Region Clinic, which was held September 26th and 27th in Grand Junction.

There were 11 students present, representative of 5 districts; Mesa, Montrose, Delta, Mountain BOCES and San Juan Valley BOCES. TVIs present at the clinic with their students were Sarah Sonnier, Angela Sims, Barbara Adams and Kevin O'Brien. During the two-day clinic, 23 devices were recommended for the students and 20 were dispensed.

Many thanks to Sarah Sonnier and all the Western Region who helped make this a successful clinic. We would also like to acknowledge all the staff at the Hawthorne Building (where the clinic was held) for their assistance.

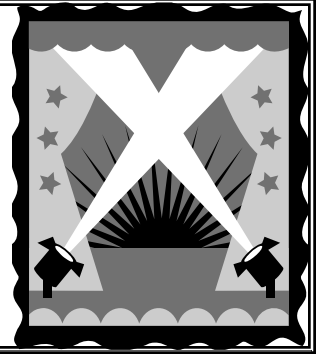


NEW MAILING ADDRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit of the Colorado Department of Education has moved to a new nearby building. The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Deafblindness Project and staff associated with low-incidence disabilities, including blindness and deafness have a new office address. Please adjust your records according if you are sending mail to Tanni Anthony or Gina Quintana. The new mailing address is:

Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, Colorado 80202

Spotlight on



Optic Nerve Hypoplasia

Pediatric Visual Diagnosis Fact Sheet™

Reprinted with permission from Blind Babies Foundation

Definition

Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH) refers to the underdevelopment of the optic nerve during pregnancy. The dying back of optic nerve fibers as the child develops in utero is a natural process, and ONH may be an exaggeration of that process. ONH may occur infrequently in one eye (unilateral) but more commonly in both eyes (bilateral). ONH is not progressive, is not inherited, and cannot be cured. ONH is one of the three most common causes of visual impairment in children.

Characteristics

- ONH may occur by itself or along with neurological or hormonal abnormalities. Hormonal problems not apparent in early life may appear later.
- Children with ONH demonstrate a wide spectrum of visual function ranging from normal visual acuity to no light perception. The effect on the visual field may range from generalized loss of detailed vision in both central and peripheral fields (depressed visual fields) to subtle peripheral field loss.
- A high percentage of children with ONH have associated involuntary rhythmic movements of the eye (nystagmus). In most cases, the nystagmus is associated with significant bilateral reduced visual acuity.
- ONH is a stable condition. Visual function does not deteriorate with time. A mild improvement in visual function may occur as the result of maturation processes of the brain. In some cases, reduced nystagmus may also occur.
- Depth perception may be more severe, if vision loss is great.
- Mild light sensitivity (photophobia) may occur

Diagnosis

ONH is diagnosed by direct examination of the eye by an ophthalmologist. No current laboratory or radiographic tests will establish the diagnosis. Many infants who are diagnosed with optic nerve atrophy are, in fact, children with ONH. Sometimes visual functioning can be predicted from the appearance of the optic discs. However, it is very difficult to predict visual acuity on this basis alone.

Visual and Behavioral Characteristics

- The child's vision is characterized by a lack of detail (depressed field), but this lack of detail is not comparable to the blurred reduction in vision when a person removes her glasses.
- In certain cases of ONH a specific field defect occurs. Children may not be aware of people or objects in the periphery.
- Children with ONH may be unable to locate objects in space precisely due to a lack of depth perception.
- Some children with ONH have mild photophobia. These children may squint, lower their head, avoid light by turning away, or resist participating in outdoor activities.
- When one eye is affected more than the other, an ophthalmologist may recommend a trial of patching the stronger eye, since the visual loss may be due to amblyopia

- Some feeding issues are associated with hormonal problems. Lack of interest in eating may be due to absent or diminished sense of smell and taste. Children with ONH may have very restricted food preferences. Some children exhibit excessive lip smacking while eating.
- Behaviors of some children with ONH may be due to associated medical conditions, such as inattentiveness and irritability due to low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia).

Conditions Associated With ONH

Associated brain and hormonal abnormalities are common in children with nystagmus and bilateral severe vision loss, and are less common in cases where vision loss is mild or unilateral. Abnormalities may include:

1. Midline anomalies of the brain: septo optic dysplasia (absence of the septum pellucidum and the corpus callosum), encephaloceles, anomalies of the ventricles, anencephaly, cerebral atrophy, and rarely, tumors.
2. Hormonal insufficiencies: thyroid, growth hormone, pituitary, adrenal, anti-diuretic hormone (ADH).

Associated midline brain anomalies can be identified by either an MRI or CT scan. Hormonal insufficiencies require an examination by a specialist in hormonal disorders (pediatric endocrinologist).

Children particularly at risk for having associated hormonal insufficiencies are those who had neonatal low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), had prolonged jaundice (hyperbilirubinemia), failed to grow normally (failure to thrive), have difficulty regulating body temperature in connection with viral illnesses, and/or had a CT or MRI scan showing an absence of tissue connecting the brain to the pituitary gland (the pituitary stalk).

Resources

Borchert, M.S. An Inside Look At Optic Nerve Hypoplasia Research - A Leading Cause of Infant Blindness, USC School of Medicine.

Hoyt, C. (1986). Optic Nerve Hypoplasia: A Changing Perspective. Transactions of the New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology. Raven Press, New York.

Lambert, S. & Hoyt, C. (1987). Optic Nerve Hypoplasia. Ophthalmology. **32**, #1, July, August, 1-9.

Marsh-Tootle, W.L. (1994). Congenital Optic Nerve Hypoplasia: A Symposium Paper. Optometry & Vision Science. **71**; #3, 174-180.

Tait, P. (1989). Optic Nerve Hypoplasia: A Review of the Literature, Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, April, 207-211.

Willnow, S. et al. (1996). Endocrine disorders in septo-optic dysplasia (De Morsier syndrome)-evaluation and follow up of 18 patients. European Journal of Pediatrics, **155**; 179-184.

Acknowledgments

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Resources for more information:

Information about Optic Nerve Hypoplasia / Septo Optic Dysplasia

American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus: <<http://www.aapos.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=87>>

The Magic Foundation: <http://www.magicfoundation.org/www/docs/101.116/optic_nerve_hypoplasia_septo_optic_dysplasia.html>

or <http://www.magicfoundation.org/www/docs/101/septo_optic_dysplasia_optic_nerve_hypoplasia.html>

National Institute of Neurological Disorders <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/septo_optic_dysplasia/septo_optic_dysplasia.htm>

APH ESSAYS on Building Independence

To celebrate its 150 years of building independence, the American Printing House for the Blind sponsored an essay contest during the last year. The first place winners in each age category were in attendance of the 2008 Annual Meeting. Permission was granted to share two of the essays in this newsletter. It is impressive to hear from the students themselves what APH products have offered to their personal independence.

Alex Folo

1st Place, Grades 6-8

HOW THE DEVICES FROM AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND HAVE HELPED ME

As I go through my school day, I take for granted that I can complete all of the assignments of the day with little or no assistance. But when I look at it, without American Printing House's devices, I would have much difficulty going through my day.

When I wake up in the morning and open my large Braille folder for school, I am using an American Printing House product without even thinking about it. First period when I have to write Spanish letters, I am also using a device from APH, the Perkins Braille Writer. Without this device I would not be able to complete math or Spanish. It helps me by producing Braille dots as I type on Braille paper (from APH as well). Before I started using technology, I used this device for every subject.

During math, I use a talking calculator. This device helps me by speaking the numbers in the calculator which allows me to use a calculator like my sighted peers. In every subject I read Braille books and materials to complete assignments. Braille books are vital to my education and without them; there would be no way for me to access the materials to learn. I believe that this is the most important item provided by APH. Having books available to read is also important to my enjoyment. Books can make you laugh, cry, feel sad, happy, or about any other feeling you can experience. They are an important way that humans learn about the world around them. I am fortunate to be able to have the same materials as my sighted peers to read and learn.

The American Printing House also provides technology that I use. An important tool I use is audio recordings. The narrators at APH make this possible by offering their time to record my textbooks so I can keep up with my class work. Audio books and Braille books are the two most important devices that I use in my education.

These are just a few of the devices I use provided by APH. I could name hundreds and they have all affected my life. Without them, I could never be where I am today.

Josh Pearson

1st Place, Grades 9-12

LIFE WITHOUT APH

The alarm clock was set to ring at 5:00 on the dot. I had finished the last chapter of my book and was settling down into bed for the night. Before climbing into bed, I stuck a Braille label on one of my new CDs. Thank God for APH, I told myself. Thank God that they made such wonderful products for me to use. But until I had my nightmare, I wouldn't know just how useful those products really were. Have you ever had one of those nights when you just lay there, trying to sleep? That was how it was with me that night. When at last I did drop off to sleep, I was pitched headlong into a dream of terror. But this was no dream of psychotic killers or mad birds trying to eat me, this was a dream where my entire world of independence had been shattered. Here's the dream in its entirety:

I awoke early and stepped out of bed. The first thing I noticed was that my Bookport and Scholar, which I use on a daily basis, were not on the shelf where I normally store them. In fact, searching my room, I found that they weren't anywhere to be found. . This wasn't good, as I had to read "Lord of the Flies" for English today and

(Continued on page 10)

Resources and Materials



UNICEF has a new publication entitled *It's About Ability*. This publication explains the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to children. Its main purpose is to empower children, with and without disabilities, to play their part in challenging discrimination and promoting the Convention's principles. To download the document, go to: <http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Its_About_Ability_final_.pdf>



the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is "To promote the independence of blind and visually impaired persons by providing specialized materials, products, and services needed for education an life." This year APH is celebrating their 150th years of service to individuals who are blind/visually impaired. A book, entitled *APH History Book* has been written to chronicle the rich history of APH. Envision the delivery of braille book by mules and you will have a glimpse of the early days of APH. For more information about APH products, please go to <www.aph.org>.



APH History Book The mission statement of

(Continued from page 9)

had a test in Algebra which required the use of the Graph-it program on the Scholar. Things were only made worse when I realized that I'd overslept by an hour. I bolted up to the kitchen and wolfed down breakfast. My mom gave me a lecture on the merits of not being tardy as we drove to school. Looking closely at my backpack, I found that the sticky dots and letters that I used to make diagrams for Biology were in shreds. My dog had savagely mutilated my tools of learning. As I contemplated a funeral for the great dots and sticky letters, the thought crossed my mind that I would not be able to make any kind of graphs for Biology today. I would not be able to label anything, either. To my horror, I found my Braille labeler snapped in half in my locker. It must have gotten stuck in the door!!

Thinking that the day couldn't get worse, I walked into my paraprofessional's office to explain about the horrors of my day. The dark power that seemed to be bent on destroying my life struck again, for my paraprofessional tearfully explained that the school had been vandalized last night. The only things the crooks had seized were the graphic tools needed to make pictures for Health, the maps and tactile drawings used in History class, a few Slate and Styluses, some textured paper, and all of the APH-produced Braille books from my English class.

Amidst all of the sadness and horror at finding my necessary tools to get me through school demolished or stolen, I knew that there was one thing I could do right. That was to write graphs on graph paper for Geometry. Walking down the stairs! Math, I tripped and all of the graph paper I carried fell from my grasping hands. It sailed through the air like leaves tossed about in a summer breeze, and sailed out the window and landed with a wet THWUMP in the pond that abutted the school building. Practically crying now, I headed for lunch, knowing that they couldn't take my meal from me, though everything else lay in shambles. However, the worst was yet to come. For when I entered the lunchroom, a friend alerted me to what was going on the balcony overhead. The two Perkins Braillers had been taken hostage from my classrooms. As one of the students holding them raised his high over his head, my stomach gave a lurch. This was the last vestige of independence I had left to my name, and that was now to be shattered upon the cafeteria floor. The Brailler sailed over the floor of the lunchroom and shattered, keys and bars and knobs flying everywhere. As I bent over the pitiful remains of my Perkins Brailler, weeping for the loss of such a noble tool and helpful invention, I failed to notice to the second Brailler fly down from the second balcony. When I did, it was only because the heavy object had struck my head. As the pain overtook me and I found myself collapsing, I heard the Brailler shatter on the ground like the first one had. I swooned.

Sitting bolt-upright in my bed, I began to panic. What if all these wonderful products were gone? What if my life was ruined because of the theft or destruction of APH products? Frantically, I searched my room and found everything in its place: Bookport and Scholar lay atop my shelf, my labels and graphing tools lay in my backpack, nestled snug between several APH-produced books for English. Breathing a sigh of relief, I crawled back into bed. What would like be like without APH? A horrible nightmare, where we cannot be independent, where all of the tools which help us through school and access the curriculum are nonexistent. Thank God for APH and all of their fabulous inventions and achievements in making the lives of the blind better. No words can describe the satisfaction that my day at school was only a horrid dream.

Touch Museum

We are developing the following kits for check out: *Animals*, *Feathered Friends*, and *Predator vs. Prey*. Each kit is based on one theme and includes animals, artifacts, activities, and information. In the *Animals* kit students compare different species, fur vs. skin vs. feathers, and listen to animal sounds. In *Predator vs. Prey* they compare skulls, teeth, and claws; discuss the food chain; and study adaptations for survival. In *Feathered Friends* they examine feathers, compare beaks and feet, listen to bird calls, and learn about wing spans.

Please let me know if you would like to check any of these out.

Janet Rose

jrose_80909@yahoo.com



PEAK Parent Center

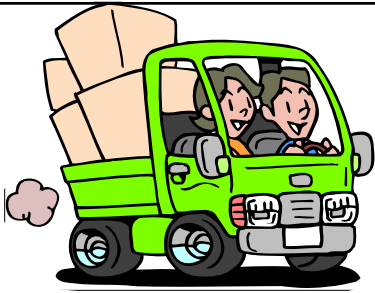
Peak Parent Center helps families and educators see new possibilities for their children with disabilities. PEAK's mission is to provide training, information and technical assistance to equip families of children from birth through 26, including all disability conditions, with strategies to advocate successfully for their children. As a result of PEAK's services to families and professionals, children and adults with disabilities live rich, active lives participating as full members of their schools and communities. PEAK helps families make informed decisions about early childhood, education, transition, employment, recreation, and other services for their children.

What does PEAK provide? PEAK provides a toll-free hotline staffed by trained parent advisers, statewide workshops, an annual Conference on Inclusive Education, a statewide calendar of disability-related events and parent support activities, SPEAKout newsletter, a website, books and videos on inclusive schooling, a family library, and customized in-service trainings. PEAK's conference sessions, workshops, and publications are available in English, Spanish, and Hmong to support families across Colorado. Translation to other languages is available as well.

How much do these services cost? PEAK is a non-profit organization and most of its services are free to Colorado families of children with disabilities. PEAK's books and videos are available at low cost.

Where is PEAK Parent Center? PEAK operates offices in Colorado Springs and Denver. PEAK also has Parent Mentors located in eight regions across the state. Visit www.peakparent.org for locations and contact information.

How do I contact PEAK? You can call, email or fax PEAK at any time. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Voicemail is available when PEAK offices are closed.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

🔊 **Career Connect** A free employment resource created by the American Foundation for the Blind to expand employment possibilities for people with vision loss.

Use CareerConnect to find the information and resources you need if you are:

- A student who is blind/visually impaired
- A job seeker investigating work options
- An employer planning to diversify your workforce
- A professional working with people who are blind/visually impaired
- A friend or family member assisting someone who is blind or has low vision

Use CareerConnect's accessible information about the current U.S. labor market to:

- Help determine which jobs are right for you
- Connect with successfully employed adults who are blind/visually impaired
- And much more!



Contact CareerConnect staff at <careerconnect@afb.net> or call toll-free at 1-888-824-2184 or visit the web site <www.afb.org/careerconnect>

AFB CAREERCONNECT®

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 your name 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&Ms: 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 or to
Tanni Anthony, CDE ESLU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202
Or Fax it to Tanni at (303) 866-6767

Transition: The Perfect Pair

By Kristen Lavergne

Before moving to Virginia in a few weeks, I promised my former student, Jordan Walters I would visit her at college in Boulder. I wondered how she “transitioned” to college life, especially with her new dog guide, Plato from The Seeing Eye. So last Thursday, I made the trip up to Boulder to see this pair in action.

Wow! That’s all I can say. As I stood in front of the campus bookstore, I saw the pair quickly coming towards me, smoothly weaving through the crowded student center. As we headed towards the bus stop, I realized the tables had turned. As a Certified O&M Specialist, I am used to knowing the bus routes ahead of time, planning the lessons, and then teaching them to my students. On this trip, my former student was taking me on various bus systems (the “Buff Bus” for on-campus and the HOP and SKIP routes to Pearl Street and other shopping areas), where I was quite confused! We “hopped” off somewhere on Pearl Street, where we sat over lunch to talk about college life.



According to Jordan, the hardest part about college was the social aspect: trying to meet new friends on such a large campus. Jordan feels Plato has helped her in this regard, as people will casually talk with her about him. He participated in Russian class by catching the tennis ball for her as the class tossed it around, saying the next letter of the alphabet. Being roommates with her best friend from high school has

helped her feel more comfortable, too. When asked if college classes were harder or demanded more work, she thought her high school classes were more challenging and felt she had a handle on her current classes- at least for the moment!

When asked if there was one thing she could have learned from me but didn’t (either as her TVI or O&M instructor), she said, “JAWS”. In high school, Jordan was a very visual learner, using a combination of CCTV’s (regular sized and mini) as well as a laptop with screen magnification software. “College is different,” Jordan explained, “because much of my reading is not from text books, but from online websites, including PDF files. JAWS reads the information so much faster than I can read the information visually.”

Although Jordan and Plato are quite the traveling duo, they have gotten themselves into one “sticky” situation. In the dining area, Jordan sat down to grab a bite to eat while Plato, who normally lies quietly under the table, was licking uncontrollably. He was lying in syrup!



Following Jordan and Plato is no easy task! They travel at the speed of light! According to Jordan, this is one of the reasons she and Plato were such a good match when the instructors at The Seeing Eye were trying to match her with a compatible dog guide.

After seeing Plato “work”, it’s hard to imagine he still does “normal” dog things like perking his ears and raising his tail when he sees a squirrel (and probably thinking, “I wish I could run after that one!”). We then headed back to her dorm room, so he could take a break and have some fun. One of his favorite games is playing “fetch” with his squeaky ball. I’d have to say that looks a little odd: a dog bounding after a ball in a college dorm. I had to remind myself that he’s still a dog- an awesome one at that, who has provided companionship, independence, and confidence for a well-deserving young woman.



(Editor’s Note: “Wow” is right! Thanks, Kristen, Jordan, and Plato!)



“Education for Life” Program

Applications Now Available

*Application Deadline: **March 1, 2009***

The Need: Students who are visually impaired and blind throughout the state of Colorado are faced with unique challenges in life. Many students find it difficult to "see their future."

The Mission: To provide financial assistance to students who are visually impaired or blind and who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to encourage and support the pursuit of higher education (community college or university), which will enhance both career and personal success.

To apply for an “Education for Life” scholarship and to obtain more information, please go to: www.seethefuture.org and click on “Education for Life” scholarships. You may also call Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at 719-471-3200.

National Center for Family Literacy Invites Entries for Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year

The National Center for Family Literacy and Toyota are accepting applications for the 2009 Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year.

Family educators from across the United States are eligible for the award. Nominees must work primarily in children's education, adult/ESL education, parenting education, or other educational services and must be able to demonstrate an impact on intergenerational learning between parents and children. Programs may nominate up to two educators. The online nomination form must be completed by the program director or coordinator. The nomination must include a statement of support for the nominated educator written by an adult student who works with the educator.

The winner will receive \$7,500 for his or her family literacy program as well as a free trip to the 2009 National Conference on Family Literacy in Orlando, Florida. In addition, several finalists will be selected to receive a \$500 scholarship.

Program guidelines and nomination forms are available at the NCFL Web site.

Contact: <http://www.famlit.org/site/c.gtJWJdMQIsE/b.3136491/>

Colorado Parents of Blind Children
A Division of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado
Invites You to Our Annual
“Day of Information and Inspiration”

Saturday, November 7, 2008

2:00–5:00 p.m.

Please join us for a Seminar for Parents and Teachers

IN SCHOOL.....AT HOME.....AND IN THE WORLD

The Journey Towards Independence for the Blind Child

This event will take place at the 54th Annual State Convention of the
National Federation of the Blind of Colorado
Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2886 South Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906

SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER... We are honored to present the president of the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children, Carrie Gilmer. Carrie, parent of a blind teen and nationally recognized advocate for blind children, will open the seminar with a discussion of the importance of holding high expectations for our blind children.

TRAVEL... What do blind children need to know for safe, efficient, and effective independent travel in adulthood? How do we build those skills in childhood so they are ready to be confident travelers when they're grown? Join us for a panel discussion lead by blind adults in the various techniques and travel methods that are important for successful orientation and mobility, from those who have useable vision to those with other disabilities.

TECHNOLOGY... Have a look at the latest and greatest in technologies designed to enhance the independence and quality of life for the blind. Where does technology fit in the education of blind children? What technology is needed in the classroom and when should it be introduced? When should an Assistive Technology Evaluation be requested? How should assistive technology be addressed in the I.E.P. process?

COST: The parent seminar is open to all registered convention attendees at no additional charge. The convention registration fee is \$10. Pre-registration is encouraged. Call Lorinda Riddle at 303-778-1130, ext. 236.

FREE CHILDCARE: Childcare will be available throughout the convention. Pre-registration is required. Call Lorinda Riddle at 303-778-1130, ext. 236

ADDITIONAL CONVENTION ACTIVITIES: The NFB convention runs from Friday, November 6 to Sunday, November 8. It is an exciting annual event that includes educational and inspirational sessions, committee meetings, entertainment and hospitality. Please visit www.nfbco.org for convention details. Families are invited to partake in as much of the weekend as they would like, but are particularly encouraged to attend the Saturday morning convention session that begins at 8:00 a.m. preceding the parent seminar.

For further information contact Rene Harrell at 719-266-4309 <rjharrell@gmail.com> or
Julie Hunter at 800-401-4632 ext. 216 <jhunter@cocenter.org>.

SAVE THE DATE



Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference
The Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
Located in Southern California

November 12–15, 2009

Look for more information soon on our web site!

www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com

COSTA MESA, CA

PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS

November 6-8, 2008—Vail

February 26-28, 2009—Colorado Springs

PEP

PEP Conferences are family centered conferences designed to offer support, information, and education to parents and professionals from Colorado. PEP promotes the partnerships that are essential in supporting and including children with disabilities and their families in all aspects of the school and community.



For more information and to apply for the conference online or download an application go to: <www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp> or call the



**TAKING THE NEXT STEP ON OUR JOURNEY
TO FREEDOM!**

November 7-9, 2008

[THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND](http://www.nfb.org)

54th ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

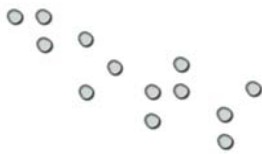
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott C. LaBarre, President

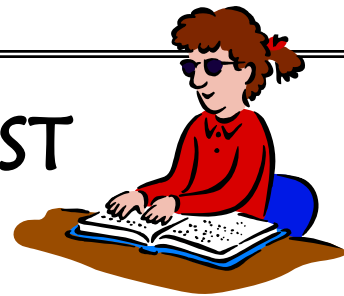
NFB of Colorado , 2233 W. Shepperd Avenue, Littleton, CO 80120

Phone: 303-778-1130, ext 302 or toll free 800-401-4NFB

Email: slabarre@nfbco.org



DOTS OF INTEREST



* **NEW! APH /Perkins Braille® -- The Next Generation™**

APH Blue Model: 1-00800-00 -- \$650.00

Note: This new braille IS available with Federal Quota funds.

The classic Perkins Braille® has been reimagined, retaining all the attributes that make it the most widely used braillewriter in the world. The Next Generation™ Perkins/APH Braille is quieter, lighter, and more comfortable for brailleing. It includes functions that YOU asked for: a built-in eraser, a way to read the page easily while writing, a shorter keystroke requiring less force, and margin guides on the front. And there's more...the Perkins/APH Braille features a sleek design with tactile elements, environmentally-friendly materials, and an APH Blue color.

Features

- Lighter and smaller: Easier to hold and carry
- Quieter: The keystroke noise is reduced, end-of-line bell is audible but muted
- Gentle Touch Keys: Less force required, keys are lower and easier to reach
- Easy-Erase Button: Push to erase an entire braille cell
- Easy-Grip Handle: The Braille base is also a handle
- Reading Rest: The back panel can be raised to provide a flat surface for reading the page
- Front Panel Margin Guides: Easily accessible; no more reaching around the back
- Highly durable: Metal inner frame and parts, and high-impact polycarbonate outer shell
- Paper-Feed Knobs: Easier to hold and turn
- High contrast colors between keys and Braille body for low vision users
- Environmentally friendly: Uses less oil and recyclable plastic
- Sleek design with tactile-friendly materials



Specifications

Weight: 25% lighter than the Classic Perkins Braille

Dimensions: 12"L x 10"W x 6"H

Paper Size: 8 1/2" x 11" (max. 8 1/2" x 14"), 28 cells

Special Web Page Celebrates the New "Next Generation" Braille

Hear the specially written song NEXT GENERATION by

Raul Midón at <<http://www.perkins.org/nextgeneration/>> and learn more about the new Perkins/APH Braille.



IMPORTANT!

We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for the next school year. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your job openings. We have THREE metro-area TVIs looking for employment for this next school year, so we have a chance to really ensure that anticipated vacancies are filled.

If you know of an anticipated opening in your part of the state, please begin working to recruit someone into our field by ensuring he or she has an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an Orientation and Mobility Specialists. This may be a paraeducator, a brailist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession. Please work with Dr. Paula Conroy to learn more about the UNC distance education / graduate program to prepare TVIs and O&M Specialists in Colorado!

Jobs for School Year 2008-2009

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment.

O&M = Orientation and Mobility

Metro Region:

- ✓ **Paraeducator** (1.0 FTE) and **Paraeducator**(.5 FTE) positions open in Denver Public Schools. For more information, contact Cheryl Leidich 303-324-9591

Southern Region

- ✓ **Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments** (.5 FTE). Contact Kim Lovelace at <lovelkm@dll.org> in El Paso 11 District in Colorado Springs for more information.
- ✓ **TVI - Elementary / Special Needs** (1 FTE) for the CSDB School for the Blind in Colorado Springs. Contact Chelle Lutz at <clutz@csdb.org>.
- ✓ **TVI: Transition Program / Outreach Services** (1 FTE) for the CSDB School for the Blind in Colorado Springs. Contact Chelle Lutz at <clutz@csdb.org>.

The job announcement for TVIs is accessible via the CSDB website, at <<http://www.csdb.org/>>.

Northern Region:

- ✓ **TVI/ O&M Specialist** (.5 FTE) - Weld County 6 School District in Greeley. Contact Mrs. Darrel Sundeen, Special Education Program Co-coordinator, at 970-348-6244.



Calendar of Events

2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008

- November 6-8** Parents Encouraging Parents Conference - Vail
 Visit: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp
- November 7** Metro TVI Meeting
 Contact: Nancy Cozart - NCozart@lps.k12.co.us
- November 7-9** National Federation of the Blind State Convention - Colorado Springs
 Contact: www.nfbco.org
- November 14** Northern Region TVI Meeting
 Contact: Carol Love - Love_Carol@stvrain.k12.co.us
- November 19** Southern TVI Meeting - Colorado Springs
 Contact: Stephanie Isabel - sbell@cmsd12.org
- November 20-22** Metro LVE Clinic
 Contact: Nancy Knight at nknight@lps.k12.co.us
- December 11-13** Southern LVE Clinic - CSDB in Colorado Springs
 Contact: Melissa Shular at melissa.shular@asd20.org



2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- January 2-February 3** CELApro Administration
- January 5-8** Braille 1809-2009 International Conference - Paris, France
 Visit: www.avh.asso.fr/rubriques/infos_braille/colloque_louis_braille.php
- January 21** Southern TVI Meeting - Colorado Springs
 Contact: Stephanie Isabel - sbell@cmsd12.org
- January 22-24** Technology, Reading & Learning Diversity 2009 San Francisco, CA
 Contact: www.trld.com
- January 29-31** Snowshoe Weekend - YMCA of the Rockies
 Contact: Elaine Karns at elk@psdschools.org
- February 4-27** CSAPA Grade 3 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Administration

More Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- February 4–March 27 **CSAPA 4-10 Administration**
- February 6 **Braille Challenge** — CSDB in Colorado Springs, CO
Contact: Randy Witte at rwitte@csdb.org
- February 17-27 **CSAP Grade 3 Reading and Lectura**
- February 18 **Southern TVI Meeting** - Colorado Springs
Contact: Stephanie Isabel - sbell@cmsd12.org
- February 20-21 **Northern LVE Clinic** (Fort Collins)
Contact: Carol Love at love_carol@stvrain.k12.co.us or
Sally Eldridge at eldridge_sara@stvrain.k12.co.us
- February 26-28 **Second Session of Literacy Course for TVIs** - Denver
Contact: Tanni Anthony—anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- February 26-28 **Parents Encouraging Parents Conference**— Colorado Springs
Visit: www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp
- March 1 **"Education for Life" Application deadline for scholarship**
Visit: www.seethefuture.org
- March 5-8 **Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute**—Washington, DC
Contact: Caitlin McFeely at cmcfeely@afb.net
- March 9–April 10 **CSAP Grades 3-10 Administration**
- March 12-15 **CA Transcribers and Educators of the VI** —Burlingame, CA
Visit: www.ctevh.org/conference.htm
- April 1-4 **CEC Annual Convention and Exposition**— Seattle, WA
Visit: www.cec.sped.org
- April 15 **Southern TVI Meeting** - Colorado Springs
Contact: Stephanie Isabel - sbell@cmsd12.org
- April 22 **COACT State Test Date**
- April 23-25 **Western Region Early Intervention Conference**—Colorado Springs
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

CORRECTION: Please note that the August - September 2008 WHOT newsletter posted the wrong date of the National Braille Challenge Event that will be held at CSDB next February. The correct date is Friday, February 6th, 2009. Thanks to Randy Witte for making this correction.

More Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- May 6 **COACT Makeup Test Date**
- May 13 **Southern TVI Meeting** - Colorado Springs
Contact: Stephanie Isabel - sbell@cmsd12.org
- June 5-7 **Annual Family Learning Retreat**— CSDB in Colorado Springs
Contact: TBA
- July 14-17 **13th International Mobility Conference**—Marburg, Germany
Visit: www.imc.blista.de
- July 17-19 **Families Connecting with Families Conference**, Costa Mesa, CA
Visit: www.napvi.org
- October 15-17 **APH Annual Meeting of Ex Officio** - Louisville, KY
Contact: American Print House for the Blind
- November 12-15 **Getting In Touch with Literacy Conference**—Costa Mesa, CA
Visit: www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- July 20-25 **AER International Conference** - Little Rock, AR
Visit: www.aer.bvi.org
- August 8-13 **World ICEVI Conference**—Jomtein, Thailand
Visit: www.icevi.org



I forgot to add someone very special to the list that was posted in the August - September WHOT newsletter article on Who Ya Gonna Call. Please add Maureen (Mo) McGowan as your Helen Keller National Center contact for our Rocky Mountain Region. Mo's contact information is as follows: Maureen McGowan, Regional Representative, Helen Keller National Center, 1880 S. Pierce St. #5, Lakewood, CO 80232, Phone: 303-934-9037, Email: [<Maureen.McGowan@hknc.org>](mailto:Maureen.McGowan@hknc.org)

Family, Food, and Fun

Or How The Role Model Team Got Us Talking

By Carol Love, St. Vrain School District



We are called the Social Club. We are teachers and students who meet for social activities and fun! Who are we? You ask. We are: Sally Eldridge (TVI/O&M), Wanda Gwinn (Braillist), Carol Love (TVI/O&M) and a small group of students who are blind/visually impaired from the St. Vrain Valley School District in Longmont, Colorado. The Social Club was the brain child of Sally Eldridge and one student whose wish was to “Find more friends like me.” The Social Club meets monthly to encourage fun activities among students as they come together to socialize.

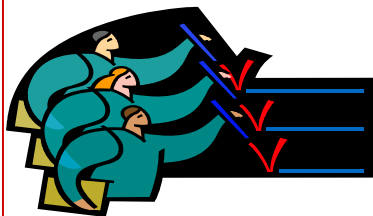
One particular month (May 2007), the Social Club decided to have a food party. The group of students decided to cook something for their parents. Also, to entice the Role Model Team to visit, it was decided that bribing them with food would be the best choice. The resounding selection on what to cook was PIZZA! Students came before the meeting to prepare a delicious meal: cheese and pepperoni pizza, salad, and chocolate chip cookies. The Role Model Team came with their members: Roger Harwell (coordinator), Gabe Gates, and Kyle Thomas. Ms. Donna Keale, Outreach coordinator at CSDB also attended. Parents were invited to attend and eat the meal that their child had prepared.

While eating, the Role Model Team members each sat with a different group of parents and students to chat informally while they munched on the good food. The Role Model Team also provided handouts for parents to use with helpful resources.

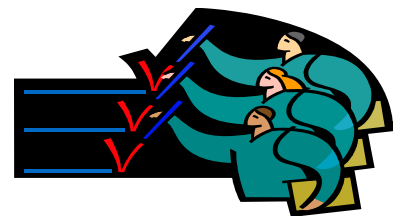
After eating, the Role Model members each took turns sharing with the group their own personal backgrounds as a person with blindness or visually impairment. Parents and students then asked questions of individual Role Model Team members. Some examples of the thought-provoking questions asked were: “How do you get about if you don’t drive?”, “What is something that is hard for you as a person with blindness or visually impairment?”, “What are some positive strategies you have used when you feel frustrated?”, “Do you ever get angry because of your blindness/visual impairment?”, “How do I help my child overcome obstacles due to their blindness/visual impairment?”

Parents and students came away from this event feeling hopeful and with positive tools to help support their child. Everyone was able to leave with information, resources, and strategies to help them: parents, children, and teachers. This evening took a lot of pre-planning and time involvement, but in the end it was worth the effort! We hope you consider booking the Role Model Team to come and visit with your group soon!

Editor’s Note: Please be in touch with Donna Keale at <dkeale@csdb.org> to make arrangements for a Role Model Team visit to your home and/or school. It is so important for students and families to have face-to-face time with adult role models who are blind/visually impaired. These discussion can be life changing. Special kudos to the St. Vrain team for making the most of this experience and for submitting the article to the CSDB Outreach Program to include in this newsletter. You all ROCK!



CHECK IT OUT!



✓ **The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project** has been funded for a new five-year cycle! The grant award from the United States Department of Education will continue to fund technical assistance activities to Colorado children, birth through 21 years, who have both vision and hearing loss (deafblindness). The project is located at the Colorado Department of Education. Tanni Anthony is funded .1 FTE as the Project Director and Gina Quintana is funded .3 FTE as the Project Coordinator. Shannon Cannizzaro and Anna Trujillo will be project Family Specialists. Ann Gillmeister and Shawn Sweet Bernard will be on contract as technical assistance specialists. To arrange a free consultation visit, please contact Gina Quintana at 303-866-6605 or <quintana_g@cde.state.co.us>. Please be sure to check out the project website at <<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Deafblind.asp>>. The website has over 50 Fact Sheets in English and Spanish on various topics pertinent to children and youth with vision and hearing loss and/or significant support needs. The project newsletter, *VIBRATIONS*, is also posted on the website. The newsletter is mailed to all persons receiving the *What's Happening Out There* newsletter. The project has a well-stocked lending library of over 500 books and videos, many of which are books in the field of educating learners who are blind/visually impaired. For more information about the project, please contact Gina or Tanni.

✓ **Second Edition Colorado Accommodations Manual & ELL Accommodations Manual** The Colorado Accommodations Manual and the English Language Learners Accommodations Manual are now posted on our Web site at the link below. The second edition manuals include important updates regarding The Colorado Student Assessment Program Standard and ELL Accommodations for CSAP, CSAPA and CELApro. <<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/publications.html>>. This is a must read for all TVIs administering state assessments (CSAP, CSAPA, and CELA).

✓ **"FREE For All!"** NEW! Free at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Website: *Guide to Designing Tactile Illustrations for Children's Books*. The *Guide* offers teachers, caregivers, and transcribers information concerning:

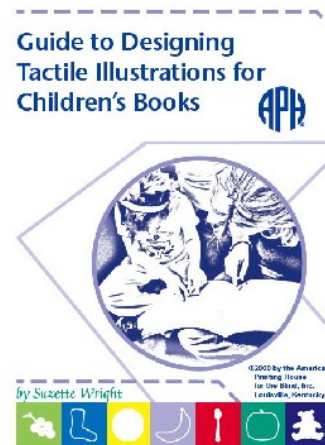
- the role of tactile illustrations in books for a young child
- challenges and limitations of tactile illustrations
- factors that contribute to a well-designed tactile illustration
- considerations in designing a meaningful tactile illustration
- information supporting an overall sequence of difficulty for various types of tactile illustrations
- types of tactile illustrations and tools and materials to create them

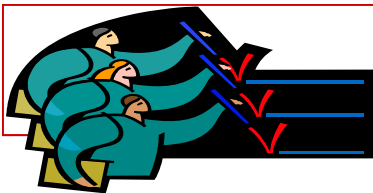
The 35-page illustrated *Guide* is available in multiple file formats:

- HTML
- Print PDF (Portable Document Format)
- BRF (Braille Ready File)

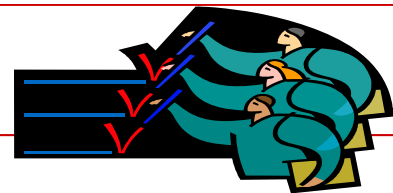
Follow the link below to the format of your choice:

<www.aph.org/edresearch/illustration.htm> or visit the APH homepage, click the "Research & Development" tab, then select "Research Resources." Click on *Guide to Designing Tactile Illustrations for Children's Books*.





CHECK IT OUT!



- ✓ **APH Offers Its First Home Grown Webcam Presentations: *Making Test Items Accessible***
Thanks to the recording efforts of Maria Delgado (Field Services) and Michael Sell (Accessible Tests) all the major presentations provided at APH during an August 18-19, 2008 workshop on "Making Test Items Accessible for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired" will soon be available as archived webcam files on the APH website <www.aph.org>. Archived presentations include half-hour to one hour sessions on an overview, general issues, and universal design by Dr. Carol Allman; braille basics and the roles of the test editor, transcriber, and proofreader by Michael Sell; tactile graphics issues and guidelines by Karen Poppe; large print and color issues and guidelines by Elaine Kitchel; audio, verbal, and multimedia issues by Kris Scott; and more. Sets of the workshop handouts significantly help to make the archived presentations more meaningful and are available upon request for a nominal fee. For more information, contact Deb Willis at <dwillis@aph.org>.
- ✓ **JOMTEIN, Thailand is the Venue of the 13th World Conference of ICEVI** The 13th World Conference of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) will be held in Jomtein, Thailand on August 8-13, 2010. The site is a beautiful seaside location. Mark your calendars to join your colleagues across the world. Watch the ICEVI website, <<http://www.icevi.org>> and the next edition of *The Educator* for the Call for Papers, registration / cost information. The theme will be determined in November. If you have suggestions for the theme or key content, please be in touch with Dr. Kathleen Huebner at <kathyh@salus.edu>.
- ✓ **Help Needed! APH Reviewers** In February, APH will need 5 reviewers to read and review the content of Section II of Address: Earth, their large format atlas, which is now under development. Reviewers will need at least 4 years of experience in teaching Geography and/or Social Studies to students with visual impairments in grades 7-12. Reviewers will be compensated fairly. If you or a colleague, have the requisite experience and are interested in reviewing, please contact Elaine Kitchel at <ekitchel@aph.org> or call 800-223-1839 ex:313.

CCIBVI Update

By Michelle Chacon

The Colorado Commissioners met for the third time this year on October 8, 2008. We met at the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation training facility at 2211 W. Evans. The Commissioners were able to tour the facility and learn about the various services and resources that are available and connected with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Dr. Ken Schmitt gave us a report on the Howard fund and how it operates to assist individuals who have a visual impairment in the state of Colorado. For more information, please go to the D.V.R. website and you will find a link to information about the Howard fund along with applications. Dr. Schmitt also spoke about town hall meetings, which have been conducted around the state to get feedback from individuals who would like to give input on the services provided by D.V.R. Debbie McCloud (Director of the Colorado Talking Book Library) gave us a presentation on the services that are provided to not only the Blind, but also anyone who is print reading impaired. There was also a time for lots of brain storming, and a plan for the next meeting to be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind 2233 W. Shepherd Ave. in Littleton, on November 19, 2008. Meetings generally begin at 9:00 am.

We are still looking for a youth who must be at least 18 years but not much older than mid-twenties to fill a Commission position. If anyone has a student in mind that they think would be a great candidate, please give them the contact information so they can submit an application. The contact person to initiate this process is Jean G. McAllister. Her email address is <jeangmcallister@aol.com>.

Vision Coalition

September 16, 2008

Persons in Attendance: Barbara Adams, Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, Kay Ferrell, Donna Keale, Stephanie Isbell, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, Cathy Smyth, Wendy Stoltman, and Lou Tutt

Persons Absent: Paula Conroy, Julia Zanon

Guests: Ben Wentworth, Carol Hilty

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome Trina Boyd Pratt to the Vision Coalition. Trina and Deb Carlisle will take turns this school year representing the Colorado AER Chapter. We welcome Wendy Stoltman back to the VC; Wendy will be representing the northern region. Thank you to Samantha Hoffman and Vicki Pearson for their representation of CAER and the northern region in the past school year.

Lou announced that the US Women's ParaOlympic Goalball Team won gold!!

Thank you to CSDB and the CIMC for hosting this meeting on the CSDB campus!

PROGRAM UPDATES

Northern Region (Wendy Stoltman)

The Technology Task Force has finished its work and submitted its report and recommendations to Tanni at CDE and Laura Douglas at CSDB.

The Northern Region is looking to provide more training on the Communication Matrix to its TVIs and their teams. Vicki is looking in her district for sponsorship and will let Tanni know financial needs.

Our group has not yet met this year. Our first meeting will be in Loveland, and at that time we will decide on a schedule and locations for meetings. Another agenda item is to survey the group for needs for professional development.

Communication with local districts: *Anchor:* When a child registers at Anchor, is there a way that the TVI in home district where the family resides can be contacted by Anchor and informed that a young child with visual impairments is in the district. Child Find is supposed to do this, but we have had children fall through the cracks and have not known about them until they transition from Part C to Part B. Seems like everyone benefits if Anchor can contact TVIs and relationships are formed between family and home district early. *Discussion:* Cathy will check into Anchor procedures and be in touch.

Communication with local districts: *CSDB, summer programs and short term placements:* In the past, when a student attended CSDB summer programs, a report was sent to the TVI as well as the family that stated what was covered during the time student participated and gave an indication of student performance. We haven't received reports in the last few years. When one district inquired, he/she heard that the reports are sent to the family. Is it possible to have a parent release form signed when students register for a CSDB program allowing the report to be also sent to the TVI? It would be helpful in program planning.

Discussion: Donna shared that a narrative is developed on the general enrichment activities of the summer program. This could be sent to the teacher of record if requested and parents agreed. Information has been shared about the content of the short term courses.

Fall Conference: networking. We will miss the Thursday night opportunity to share what's going on in our field and hear what's coming up. So much is happening so quickly---RTI, CIMC new policies, etc.

Discussion: An issue that has come up in the field with the challenges of online assessments. Nancy shared that this was a past topic of a metro TVI meeting last year. Nancy Cozart has information from the meeting. There are many complications with the online tests. Some of the tests have hard copy versions that can be brailled. Others do not. Many of the tests are highly visually dependent. Some have timed sessions on the

computer and the session will log out after a set period of time. The topic of state and district assessments has been put on agenda for the January 2009 Vision Coalition meeting.

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The first regional TVI meeting is September 19, 2008 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Anchor Center. A representative from RFD&D is coming to provide updates on their services. Nancy Knight is going to send specifics on the Low Vision Clinic to make sure the paperwork is turned in on time. Future topics will be finalized but two topics scheduled will

Nancy and Sharon Benn hosted a six week course on braille during the summer. There was a diverse and wonderful group of people involved. Some of the participants will go onto obtain national certification as a brailist. Others are interested in continuing to learn braille.

Southern Region (Stephanie Isbell)

This year we will be holding our meetings at Tesla in the meeting room of the SPED itinerant offices. We will be meeting the following dates from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.:

2008: September 17	October 17	November 19	
2009: January 21	February 18	April 15	May 13



Agenda items and topics will be decided at our first meeting in September. The low vision clinic will be held December 11-13th at CSDB. Melissa Shular is the site coordinator. She has been in touch with southern TVIs about completing the needed paperwork and scheduling appointments.

Western Region (Barbara Adams)

From the Western Slope, there is not much news. We are going to have the first Low Vision Clinic of the school year on Sept. 26 and 27, with most appointments scheduled so far. There are questions about the computerized NWEA assessments.

Mountain BOCES: Kevin O'Brien, Meagan Nehls (the instructional assistant who works with Barbara in Rifle), and Barbara, all from the Western Slope, went to Colorado Springs for Bonnie Snyder's week long course on technology to use with students who have visual impairments or blindness. We had a lot of fun while learning about new and updated devices and software available for the students with whom we work (i.e. different JAWS applications, different notetakers, freeware and shareware). CSDB graciously allowed us to stay on campus for the week, which made it easier to take advantage of this great opportunity. We were also able to network and socialize with some of our "distant" colleagues from other parts of the state.

San Juan BOCES and UnBOCS: Not much new here! Tracy is still serving UnBOCS, and has the student for O&M at Alamosa. One new thing is, I do have the full contract for Durango this year, which is great!

Moffat and Northwest BOCES: Robin Bremner has retired, but continues to work in Moffat. NW BOCES continues to need some contract assistance.

CAER (Trina Boyd Pratt)

Kathy Hegemann, Deb Carlisle, and Nancy Cozart are new CAER Board members. Samantha Hoffman is the new President. Julie Adams will be leaving as the rehabilitation representative. Please check out the CAER website – <www.co.aerbvi.org>. Janet Anderson continues to keep the website updated. One of the biggest projects is fund raising to help supplement conferences/ workshops and the mini-grants. About \$3,500 in mini grants were awarded last school year! The mini grants will be reviewed in November 2008 and May 2009. CAER continues to provide a partial reimbursement for initial and renewal ACVREP certification.

Colorado was well represented at the July 2008 International conference. A feature of this conference was a "pass" to view presentations online.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Julia Zanon)

There is not much new from the DVR counselors. The rehabilitation counselors who work with blind clients and the Vision Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Specialists met on July 1 to network and make sure we are all working cooperatively with each other to benefit the consumer. This was a productive meeting in which we were able to clarify policies and procedures and compare philosophies and practices. You all might have heard rumors that we have had to “tighten our belts” this year because our federal funding is less than we need. Our agency has implemented “cost containment” procedures to make sure we can make the most use of the budget and you might notice that counselors will be negotiating services and searching for every possible comparable benefit to pay for services. I am working with the Colorado Center for the Blind to find an individual who is interested in learning how to repair Perkins Braille writers so that we can have a Colorado resource for this service. I will let you know when this is available.

Anchor Center and CSDB Early Intervention News (Cathy Smyth)

It is difficult to believe that we have been in our new building for a year! As we watch the sunflowers in the garden reach for the sky, we are reminded of how grateful we are to be here. The Preschoolers were able to harvest items from their “pizza garden” with our Lillis intern in Horticultural Therapy and this month we are hosting a part-time Psychology/ECE Intern from the University of Denver. We are also branching out into increased training/mentoring opportunities by working with Early Childhood Special Education interns.

Along with the excitement and bustle of the Democratic National Convention here in Denver several weeks ago, Anchor Center was thrilled to host the XXVIII International Preschool Seminar. A “tribute” dinner included touching memories of our own Dr. Kay Ferrell of UNC, and JC Greeley of ACBC. The guests included representatives from Canada, Israel, and all over the United States. We were happy to also welcome Louise Gettman and Jennie Germano from CSDB for our opening discussions and our keynote speaker, Patricia Davies, an Occupational Therapist and sensory processing specialist working on brainwave research. Work was continued on such national projects as clarifying the use of the Expanded Core Curriculum for the 0-5 crowd, how to best access the data collected with the Babies Count Survey and preparing for the next IDEA Reauthorization.

At Anchor Center, everyone is busy with a record Preschool attendance of 27 students and additional projects such as The Gerber Foundation Feeding Research Project, Parent Education projects, and the implementation piece of our Redesign process. The staff involved with the Gerber Foundation grant is being asked to present in many places! We will be looking at obtaining “Qualistar” status as we have started to participate in the new Denver Preschool Initiative.

All of us here at Anchor Center who presented at the International AER Conference this summer had a terrific time and learned so much. We hope that this exposure will bring in more opportunities for us to share our feeding expertise. Carol Pulchaski, our psychology consultant, will be attending the Zero to Three Conference in December and doing a Poster Session on the new building.

We know that the Colorado planning committee with CSDB’s lead is busy pulling together speakers and the details for the Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC). We are looking forward to attending and possibly presenting at this conference!

The last few months, Cathy has had the opportunity to attend a new task force (Comprehensive Training Opportunities for Paraprofessionals in Early Intervention Services or CO –TOP*EIS project) started by the Department of Developmental Disabilities and Early Childhood Connections looking at the use of Paraprofessionals in Early Intervention. It has been a fascinating process, and she is learning a lot about curriculum development for adult learners and she is enjoying contributing information in the area of vision.

Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC) (Jim Olson)

First, the good news: 94.6% of the braille textbook orders are in the hands of students, at least partially, allowing these learners to read their volumes of braille materials along side their sighted peers as of Monday, September 15, 2008.

CIMC Data updated 09/15/2008:

Braille Orders Shipped Complete	Braille Orders Shipped Partially Complete	Total % of Braille Textbook Orders In The Hands of Learners for First Semester 2008-2009
90.1%	4.5 %	94.6 %

There are 31 textbooks that have had zero volumes delivered to date. Of those 31, two books were ordered in April 2008 and still have not been delivered. An update from the vendor last week explained that they are in the production process of the orders they received in March and they fill the orders on a first come, first served, basis. The remaining 29 orders were all placed since August 1st. Purchase orders have been sent for 28 of the 31 books which are readily available and the remaining three have had contracts written with vendors and are in the production process.

Date	Total Braille Textbook Orders	# Shipped Complete	% Shipped Complete	# Shipped Partially Complete	% Shipped partially complete	Total % partial materials
05/31/2008	584	512	87.70 %	26	4.5 %	92.2 %
06/30/2008	599	555	88.10 %	27	4.3 %	92.4 %
07/31/2008	679	567	87.40 %	28	4.3 %	91.7 %
08/13/2008	659	569	86.30 %	28	4.2 %	90.5 %
08/20/2008	677	591	87.3 %	32	4.7 %	92.0 %
08/27/2008	707	620	87.7 %	35	5.0 %	92.7 %
09/03/2008	720	636	88.3 %	34	4.7 %	93.0 %
09/10/2008	747	669	89.6 %	31	4.1 %	93.7 %
09/15/2008	749	675	90.1 %	34	4.5 %	94.6 %

The newly designed CSDB website will be running soon. TVIs will be able to access the CIMC by clicking on the "Outreach" tab and then the "CIMC" tab. The CIMC is in the process of updating their forms which will be available online in the future. We are in the process of updating our handbook which will also be available on the website. There will be a new braille textbook order form, a large print sourcing request, a large print order form, an updated VI registration form, a new exit form to be used when a student leaves a district, a braille writer repair form as well as fact sheets with information about the VI registration process, the APH quota process, and braille writer repair.

The VI registration process will occur much sooner this year, beginning October first, in an effort to report the student assessment fee data to administrative units by the end of January/early February in time to assist in their budget planning process.

Staff development training has focused on customer service, efficiency, productivity, and work flow. The CIMC is using the COTVI_COMS listserv to communicate with TVIs in the state as well as our email distribution list of district designated contact personnel.

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Donna Keale)

Short Course Program

October 9-11, 2008: Orientation and Mobility Bus Travel

November 3-7, 2008: Daily Living Skills from Simple Snacks to Simple Meals (1 Week Course)

December 1-5, 2008: Assisted Technology –This week is divided with Monday & Tuesday for elementary –middle school with the focus on Introduction to JAWs. Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday for upper middle school to high school age with an advanced focus on JAWs, script writing and frames.

January 22-24, 2009: Orientation and Mobility Bus Travel

February 19-20, 2009: Daily Living Skill Adventure – Using Customer Service to Navigate and Shop for Meals

March 23-27, 2009: This program will be offered during CSDB's Spring Break – Introduction to Independent Living (must have 6 students to run program)

April 16-18, 2009: Orientation and Mobility Bus Travel to Recreational Activities

May 7-9, 2009: Orientation and Mobility Bus Travel



A minimum of 2 students to run each STC unless otherwise noted. The Short Term Courses are free to administrative units. For more information, please be in touch with Donna at <dkeale@csdb.org> 719-578-2251.

Donna Keale and Paula Cochran will present at the 16th Annual Paraeducator Conference on working with students who are blind/visually impaired.

Donna shared an email from a parent from Rhode Island whose family was in Colorado Springs this last summer and attended local baseball game where Summer Enrichment Program students also attended. Their son was very impressed to meet students who are blind/visually impaired and wanted to share some of his money to future Summer Enrichment Programs!

There will be a scholarship fund set up on behalf of Michael Witter to assist students who need financial support to attend Summer Enrichment Programs for the Deaf and for the Blind.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Lou Tutt)

CSDB has some staff changes as we enter the 2008/2009 school year. Ms. Robin Theryoung, who has done O&M as a contractor, is now a full-time O&M instructor on campus; Ms. Amanda Johnson is our new librarian; Mr. Nico Alvarado is teaching high school English and Social Studies; Ms. Kathleen Bosch-Leighton is a new elementary teacher; Ms. Amy Gunning, who interned with one of our elementary classes last year, is now teaching an elementary class.

We currently have 44 students enrolled in Preschool through 12th Grade, including 13 elementary (1st through 5th grade) students. The Transition Program has changed its name; it is now the Bridges to Life Program. We have 41 students ages 18 to 21, both Deaf and Blind, enrolled in that program. Our middle school class, led by Mr. Dian Megarry, presented to the Board of Trustees at the September meeting. Ms. Lina Ponce, a high school senior at CSDB, was chosen as one of the Mayor's 100 for 2008. This is a program which recognized high school students for community service.

The CSDB School for the Deaf and School for the Blind Accountability Committees have merged. The combined committee will meet the 1st Wednesday in October from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. The CSDB Board of Trustees meets the second Thursday of each month in Lions Conference Center. The November meeting will be an exception; the meeting that month will be Tuesday, November 11th. The meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. The public is welcome to attend.

The CSDB Board approved the CSDB 2008-2009 Schoolwide Plan. There are four goals in this year's plan. They are:

1. Academic Achievement: Based on pre/post standardized assessments, 80% of students tested will meet or exceed their projected gain in Reading and Math by June 2009
2. School Climate: Positive Behavior Support (PBS) behavioral expectations will be evident in all school environments as measured by a rating of "in place" on the PBS School Wide Readiness Rubric. Interventions targeted within specific environments, based upon SWIS data, will result in a 25% reduction in Office Discipline Referrals for that environment throughout the school year.
3. Parent/Community Involvement: Data from the post-IEP survey will be used in at least two staff trainings to improve the IEP process at CSDB. There will be at least six unique parent education programs during the 2008-2009 school year

4. Employability: 85% of Seniors will participate in the 2nd year pilot On the Job Training (OJT) program. 80% of students who have completed their coursework at CSDB will successfully transition into their post-secondary goal area as identified on their IEP

UNC (Paula Conroy)

We have recently been awarded another personnel preparation grant from OESPS so UNC is now accepting applications to the Special Education: Visual Impairment Emphasis and O&M Grant Program. Please spread the word. The topic of this grant is again cultural and linguistic diversity and we will be creating training materials for use by other personal preparation programs. There are some strong teacher candidates looking for positions in Colorado at this time. Please let Paula (or Tanni) know any anticipated needs, this could be your lucky year in finding a TVI early to prepare for next school year. UNC continues to be seeped in program evaluation and assessment. Students have gone to an electronic portfolio for each course including practicum. This doesn't replace assignments but is a nice way to be able to review what they have completed in each course in order to show development from novice level skills to advanced skills.

National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities (Kay Ferrell)

The National Center has been working on an online braille drill and practice system, known as Web-Enabled Simulated Braille (WESBraille). It grew from the dissatisfaction with existing tools which require instructor intervention for grading and feedback. Educators who wish to use this resource are encouraged to contact the National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities <ncssd@unco.edu>.

The funding of the National Center has been reduced significantly since its inception. The number of staff has decreased, but the good work continues. The center is currently doing a meta-analysis of low vision for the American Printing House for the Blind. The center has also completed meta-analyses of math, literacy, and descriptive video.

For the past two years, Kay has been working with AFB as the Associates Director of Policy Research. Two major projects she worked on both focused on description. One developed guidelines for the Described and Captioned Media Program <www.DCMP.org>; the other was analysis of the description in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) images for Daisey books, with the National Center for Accessible Media at WGBH in Boston.

Kay's work with AFB ends this month, and she is glad to be back in Colorado full-time!

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

There is lots of news to share! The first news is that the majority of the Exceptional Student Leadership Unit (ESLU) has moved to a new location, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202. Our new 11th floor home is very close to the 201 E. Colfax building. Everyone who has moved will have the same email and voice mail, but a new mailing address. There will also be new fax numbers: 303-866-6767 and 303-866-6918. The name of the building is Civic Center Plaza.

The 2008 Summer Institute on Deafblindness was a fabulous success. Over 60 people participated in the 2.5 day training on the Communication Matrix. The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss was proud to bring back Philip Schweigert and feature two great Colorado talents, Dinah Beams and Lynn Wismann Horther. Dinah and Lynn work for the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) and have done great work with using the Communication Matrix with very young children. There have already been two off-shoot training opportunities since the Summer Institute. Phil is coming back to work with a team from Fletcher Miller School in Jefferson County and Vicki Pearson has been working with Tanni to host a northern Communication Matrix training on September 20.

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss will complete its fifth and final year of its current funding cycle as of September 30, 2008. A new 5-year cycle has been funded! Many thanks to all the people who took the time to write a letter of support to this new project cycle. We are excited about the proposed activities of the new cycle as we have five years ahead of highly-collaborative projects. We are pleased to announce that Ann Gillmeister and Shawn Sweet Bernard will be two of our technical assistance consultants to the project. Be watching



for more details about the project in the Fall 2008 *Vibrations* newsletter. For new personnel to Colorado, please be in touch with Gina Quintana at <Quintana_g@cde.state.co.us> or Tanni at <Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us> for more details about the project's free technical assistance to learners who have combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness).

Several items have been sent to the BVI programs in each administrative unit. The most recent mailing was the *Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment* by Sanford and Burnett. In addition, June Downing's book *Teaching Literacy for Students with Significant Disabilities*, Christine Roman's book *Cortical Visual Impairment*, LaVenture's *Parent's Guide*, and Fenney's and Trief's *College Bound* have been sent to administrative unit BVI programs. Thanks to everyone who took the time to send a note of thanks!

The paraeducator modules will be out the door soon! Thanks to Judy Mumford for her final proofreader efforts over the summer months.

The eight CDE budgets that the Vision Coalition worked to design and recommend for the 2008-09 school year were fully funded. All BVI-specific budget activities were aligned with the three ESLU initiatives: Response to Intervention, the State Performance Plan, and monitoring efforts of federal/state requirements. Details about each project can be found in the budget section of these meeting notes.

The 2008 Fall Conference on Visual Impairment is ready to go. Colorado will be the first pilot site in the country for a course developed by Dr. Cay Holbrook on reading instruction specific to learners who are blind/visually impaired. Participants may take the course for 15 (1 semester hour) clock hours or its full 45 (3 semester hours) clock hours. For those taking the course for the full 45 hours, it will involve an additional onsite session and participation in several online sessions. The first session will involve co-teaching with Frances Mary D'Andrea.

Thanks so much to Janet Anderson and Nancy Cozart for their assistance completing the annual item analysis of the CSAP braille-format tests. Janet and Nancy went through each comment submitted by CO TVIs about the 2007-08 tests to determine whether it was valid. Information was grouped by whether the comment involved a recommended change for the test, the braille format vendor, and/or a training issue for Colorado TVIs.

The Colorado Braille Competency Committee members Sarah Sonnier, Brenda Shepard, Lucia Hasty, and Tanni Anthony met in early August to review the current test and testing procedures. Julie Wetzstein could not join us due to the early start of her administrative unit, but has provided feedback through email. The Colorado Braille Mastery Test was reviewed for the new BANA changes and from item analysis data. Changes have been made to the multiple-choice test. Changes have also been made to the testing procedures and documents associated with testing procedures. The new test and its procedures will be used as of October 1, 2008. Tanni is currently working on posting the new procedures on the CDE webpage on Blindness/Low Vision.

The four Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have been funded and scheduled for the new school year. The clinic forms have been sent to the site coordinators and posted on the CDE webpage on Blindness/Low Vision. Jim Olson authored an article for the August-September 2008 edition of the state newsletter with details to TVIs and parents on how to best prepare for the clinics.

Bonnie Snyder will be back for another year of technology consultation. The summer course on technology was a good first-start of onsite training opportunities. Bonnie will continue to consult on our listserv, through personal email and phone calls, and site visits. Technology will be a continued area of professional development focus between CDE and CSDB.

The annual O&M Conference is a work in progress. CDE and CAER will be working closely on this training event. Be watching for more details in future newsletters

JC Greeley and Tanni Anthony are working with other folks in the western region on the Deafblind and Blind/Visual Impairment strands for the upcoming April 23-25, 2009 Western Region Early Intervention Conference. The proposed line-up of speakers is very impressive! Be watching for a conference announcement from CSDB very soon. Tanni is also working on the general session speaker with CSDB, the focus will be on Positive Behavior Support / Early Intervention Style!

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Visualizing Science Program

Ben Wentworth shared information about the *Visualizing Science Adapted Curriculum Enhancements. Accommodative Curriculum Enhancement (ACE)* study that he is involved in with McREL. The proposed program has its origins from the work of CSDB's School for the Blind. The goal is to provide an instructional framework to help science teachers improve the science knowledge and inquiry skills for students who are blind/visually impaired. This study will involve up to 12 TVIs in Colorado. It is a three-year commitment. There are stipends to support TVIs in attending annual project meetings. Registration information for the study was included in the August-September 2008 *What's Happening Out There* newsletter and posted on the cotvi listserv.

Discussion: It was suggested that Ben check into the science work that NFB, AFB, Kutztown University, National Center for Accessible Media have been involved in over the past year.

Colorado Instructional Material Center

The Vision Coalition members were treated to a tour of the CIMC. There are lots of physical changes to the CIMC set-up and many new procedures are in place. Jim explained that he is the CIMC Coordinator .56 FTE. His remaining days in his contract involve outreach responsibilities in the area of low vision. He also contributes, as he can, to the low vision students in the School for the Blind.

Jim reported on a recent survey monkey survey. There were two questions that focused on customer service and efficiency. There were 29 respondents. Results include:

Staff was courteous and helpful.

Strongly Agree – 62%

Agree – 37.9%

Staff provided complete and accurate information.

Strongly Agree – 51%

Agree – 44.8%

A timely response was provided.

Strongly Agree – 48.3%

Agree – 41.4%

My overall experience was positive.

Strongly Agree – 55.2%

Agree – 41.4%

My overall experience was positive.

Strongly Agree – 55.2%

Agree – 41.4%

My questions were answered promptly.

Strongly Agree – 46.4%

Agree – 46.4%

Orders were received in a timely manner.

Strongly Agree – 27.6%

Agree – 48.4%

Forms are easy to access.

Strongly Agree – 31.07%

Agree – 34.5%

Forms are easy to submit.

Strongly Agree – 35.7%

Agree – 32.1%

Orders were correct.

Strongly Agree – 48.3%

Agree – 37.9%

Email communication has been proactive and helpful.

Strongly Agree – 44.8%

Agree – 41.4%



Discussion: People really appreciate communication that an order has been received and/or that something is back-ordered. If an email to the CIMC does not have a response (within a reasonable time), please call Jim.

It was suggested that one of the Fact Sheet that could be developed would be an explanation of all the steps involved in making a braille book.

The CIMC is working to send confirmation information about the book order. Once the book has been completed, the CIMC will provide information about the cost of the book.

Jim applauded the western slope TVIs for following CIMC Handbook procedures and using the CIMC as a repository. When a student moves out of a district, the CIMC equipment assigned to that student should be returned to the CIMC. Equipment not in use should always be returned to the CIMC.

The CIMC is working to ensure that there is an accurate count of the number of students who are blind/visually impaired in each administrative unit (AU). The list of students per AU will be sent to the CIMC contact person in each AU in early October. It is critical that information be updated and returned to the CIMC. The count must be completed by mid January 2009 so that the numbers can be converted into an assessment fee formula for AUs utilizing the CIMC for braille books.

Discussion: Jim queried whether braille writers should be sent ONLY to legally blind learners or limited to one brailier/writer per student from the CIMC (many students have two). TVI were asked to have this discussion at their next TVI meetings.

The APH quota funds per child who is legally blind during the last school year was \$230. The APH funds are pooled at the CIMC. The funds were fully expended last year well before the end of the school year. The CIMC is notifying each AU about the amount of their APH funds. Smaller AUs will have fewer dollars because they have fewer students who still may require high-cost APH materials. As such, concessions will need to be made to smaller AUs.

Discussion: It is very helpful that one can order replacement parts from APH – this has been a cost savings when there may just be a piece or two missing from a kit. Lou and Jim will follow up as APH Trustees with APH to determine whether it is feasible to access additional funds if our CO funds have been depleted. It was mentioned that another state sends out a list to each AU at the end of the school year with APH products that have been check out. Materials not in use should be returned. Jim mentioned that the CIMC could provide this information. Each AU should have in-house conversations to prioritize APH orders.

The CIMC does not currently bill for missing volumes of braille books. The TVI reps were asked to have a conversation in their regions about whether this is a practice that should be implemented. It was suggested that the CIMC keep track on how much revenue is lost over the course of this year because there are missing volumes of braille books.

School Year 2008-09 Budgets (CDE and CSDB)

The members of the 2007-08 Vision Coalition worked together to recommend a budget for activities to support students who are blind/visually impaired, their families, and service providers for the 2008-09 school year. All the following budgets were reviewed by the Exceptional Student Leadership Unit Administration Council for their fit to the unit's three priorities. These priorities include: a) the State Performance Plan, b) Response to Intervention, and (c) state monitoring efforts. BVI-related activities that have been funded include:

CDE ESLU Budget:

Reading Instruction for Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired course	\$36,000
Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:	\$17,900
Technology Consultation	\$12,200
CSAP / CSAPA / CELA (adaptations specific to BVI)	\$5,500
Braille Competency Testing	\$9,500
Vision Coalition	\$1,000
Orientation and Mobility Workshop (specific to RtI)	\$6,500
TVI Mentor Program	<u>\$6,500</u>



CDE ESLU Budget Operated Through CSDB

CIMC	\$400,102
Low Vision Evaluation Clinics (CSDB staff)	\$11,677
Braille Transcriber Mentor Project	\$3,000
Family Learning Retreat	\$2,000
Adult Role Model	\$1,000
Western Region Early Intervention Conference	<u>\$1,000</u>

NIMAS / NIMAC / Bookshare / Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic

The CIMC is the ONLY authorized user of NIMAS files housed at the NIMAC. Bookshare and Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic cannot be authorized users. They are AMPs. This means that if either RB&D or Bookshare needs a NIMAS file, they must go through the CIMC. When an audio or digitized textbook is needed, please go through the normal RB&D or Bookshare procedures. If a NIMAS file is needed, they will contact the CIMC. While Bookshare does offer braille books, these books do not have tactile graphics and may not be prepared by a Library of Congress certified transcriber. One VC member reported that Bookshare has produced braille novels for her student, which was very much appreciated.

Technology

The proposed budget for technology outreach for this current school year was not carried forward to the Joint Budget Committee. The current focus is to elevate the cash authority that CSDB can take in from the field. This would allow for more options to provide fee-for-service outreach activities. The Outreach Department is working on other funding options for the proposed technology budget.

Trina shared that other funding options for technology are the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Howard Fund and the Colorado Center for the Blind.

Lou shared that CSDB hired a person last year with strong educational technology skills; she will be a good resource to Colorado TVIs. Her name is Mary Hattick.

Braille Committee Update

The document prepared last school year by members of the Vision Coalition, with Nancy Cozart as the lead, was shared. Any recommended edits should be sent to Nancy by the end of October.

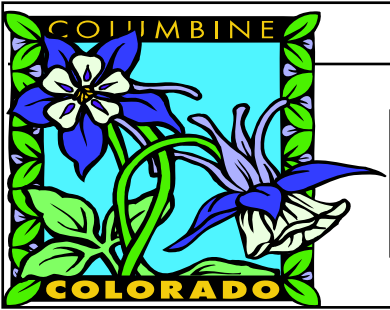


ACTION PLAN

Next Meetings:

Next Meeting: January 16, 2009 at the Anchor Center

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Tanni, Cathy, Trina, and Nancy	Work with identified parent reps (CSDB, Anchor, and Parents of Blind Children) to develop a survey to determine parent needs.	Prepare survey by mid October, disseminate by late October. Use data to help plan the agenda for the November 18 th meeting.
TVI reps	Talk with a parent who could join us at the November VC meeting.	Between now and the next VC meeting.
TVIs reps	Talk to regional TVIs about: (a) recommendations for braillewriter dissemination; (b) the CSDB Short Term Placements; (c) thoughts about a fee for missing braille volumes.	Between now and next VC meeting
All VC	Send Nancy Cozart any feedback on the Braille Fact Sheet.	October 15, 2008



COLORADO CONNECTIONS

- ☞ Good for **Vicki Pearson** for organizing a Communication Matrix training in the northern region. The training was attended for over 20 people from Poudre and Boulder Valley School Districts. Other TVIs in attendance included **Rita Albright**, **Tanni Anthony**, and **Elaine Karns**. The training was sponsored by the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project.
- ☞ Colorado was well represented at the recent American Printing House for the Blind Annual Meeting, held in Louisville, KY. In attendance were our two Ex Officio Trustees **Lou Tutt** and **Jim Olson**. Special guests included **Tanni Anthony** and **Kay Ferrell**.



The 2009 Conference on Inclusive Education February 12-14, 2009 in Denver, Colorado

This annual conference is nationally-recognized for continually presenting cutting edge educational techniques to parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals. With school and personal budgets tighter than ever, begin planning today. Talk to agencies in your local communities and inquire about how they might support you or someone you know to attend. And, as always, PEAK is working diligently to allocate scholarship funding, keep update by visiting <www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp>. A brochure with full details will be available later this fall.

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