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Yes We Can!

By Tanni L. Anthony

Can we model and maintain high expectations for the independence of our children and students in all aspects of their lives? **Yes we can.**

Can we work together as parents and professionals to create ongoing learning environments for our children and students? **Yes we can.**

Can we foster high literacy standards with a variety of reading & writing tools within a child's and student's home and school environments? **Yes we can.**

Can we ensure that our children and students have the technology and instructional supports to be successful learners? **Yes we can.**

Can we provide early access to mobility tools and O&M instruction for our children and students to become competent / confident travelers. **Yes we can.**

Can we partner with one another to nurture and expand the social skills and a world of friendships for our children and students? **Yes we can.**

Can we plan accordingly so that our children and students have full and timely delivery of their needed equipment and materials? **Yes we can.**

Can we succeed in our advocacy for services and supports to ensure full access to the core and expanded core curriculum? **Yes we can.**

Can our children and students have successful lives as friends, marriage partners, neighbors, employees, and world citizens? **Yes THEY can!**

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

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

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Survey Says! Information By and For Parents

In late October, a Parent Survey was sent to each family listed on the CDE database of parents of children and youth who are visually impaired. In total, 72 surveys were mailed out with a metered-return envelope. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about the priority topics and activities for student-specific activities and parent-training and support. Thank you so much to those of you who took the time to complete and send their survey back. The results provided the Vision Coalition with great information. More details about the survey can be found on pages 33-35 of this newsletter in the Vision Coalition notes. The table below lists some of the top priority areas for families and some of the established resources in these areas. The goal is to ensure that parents know about the good things we have in place on these topics. We will continue to work to provide additional family training and support activities.

INTEREST AREAS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE
<i>Braille</i>	For braille students, there is an annual Nation Braille Challenge contest held on the campus of CSDB. Braille students participate in a Colorado regional competition of the contest and can qualify for the final rounds of competition in Los Angeles. Students from across Colorado spend a fun day doing braille tests and braille activities, have a big lunch together with lots of pizza, listen to CSDB's Bad News Bulldog Band, win prizes, and make some new friends--- all while celebrating BRAILLE. For more information, contact Randy Witte at (719) 578-2204 or rwitte@csdb.org .
<i>Brothers and Sisters</i>	At the annual Family Learning Retreat, which is held the first weekend of June, there is often a session for parents on sibling relationships and a time for siblings to meet with counselors to talk about their experiences of having a brother or sister who has a disability. For more information about the Family Learning Retreat, please contact Stefanie Morgan at (719) 570-0793.
<i>Eye Conditions</i>	All teachers certified in the area of visual impairment (TVIs) are trained on the numerous eye conditions that result in blindness/visual impairment and are a resource to families. A specific eye condition is highlighted in each <i>What's Happening Out There</i> newsletter. The FamilyConnect website has information for parents on specific eye conditions. To access the webpage, go to http://www.familyconnect.org/eyeconditions.asp .
<i>Individualized Education Program Assistance</i>	All TVIs are trained to provide assistance to families on the development of an IEP. "Pop-Up IEPs" designed for parents can be found on at the National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities at : http://www.unco.edu/ncssd/resources/popup.shtml >. This tool provides a wealth of information to prepare parents of children who are blind/visually impaired to prepare for an IEP and/or address questions with school district personnel.
<i>Family to Family Events</i>	The Annual Family Learning Retreat is a two and a half day get together for families of children with a sensory disability. There are activities for parents and their children. It is held on the campus of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB). For more information, contact Stefanie Morgan at (719) 570-0793
<i>Friendships</i>	Each summer, the CSDB sponsors a series of Summer Enrichment Programs that bring together children and youth who are blind/visually impaired across the state. For more information, please contact Donna Keale at (719) 578- 2251 or dkeale@csdb.org >. An annual Snow Show Weekend is a winter highlight for many Colorado students who are blind/visually impaired. For more information, contact Elaine Karns at elk@psdschools.org >.

<p>Low Vision Devices</p>	<p>The Colorado Department of Education, in collaboration with the CSDB, sponsors four regional low vision clinics each school year. The clinics are free to families and devices are sold at cost. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us></p> <p>A regular column in the <i>What's Happening Out There</i> newsletter is about low vision news by Jim Olson, our certified low vision therapist who is on the regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinic.</p>
<p>Parent to Parent Activities</p>	<p>The TVIs in each district can help to put parents in contact with one another. The TVIs have access to a state listserv where they can request a connection in a confidential manner.</p> <p>The Anchor Center has specific activities for families of young children who are blind/visually impaired. Contact Karen Roberts at (303) 377-9732.</p> <p>Colorado Parents of Blind Children offers activities for families of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired. Contact Rene Harrell at rjharrell@gmail.com for more information.</p>
<p>Recreation and Leisure</p>	<p>If a school program offers physical education to their students, this program must also be offered to students with disabilities. For more information, talk to your child's teacher certified in the area of visual impairment.</p> <p>Many of the CSDB Summer Enrichment Programs have a recreation and leisure component. For more information, contact Donna Keale at (719) 578-2251 or dkeale@csdb.org>.</p> <p>Each summer, a Sports Camp is offered to CO students who are blind/visually impaired through the US Association of Blind Athletes and CSDB. This is an excellent opportunity to build lifelong recreation and leisure skills. Contact Donna (see contact information above) for more information</p>
<p>Role Models</p>	<p>A Role Model Team is available to children and youth who are blind/visually impaired, their families, and their teachers at no cost. The role models are adults who are blind/visually impaired and represent a variety of occupations and life experiences. For more information, contact Donna Keale at (719) 578-2251 or dkeale@csdb.org>.</p>
<p>Scholarships</p>	<p>Information about scholarship opportunities is posted on the CDE webpage on Blindness⁷/Low Vision (http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-BLV.asp) and featured in the Transition section of the <i>What's Happening Out There</i> newsletter.</p> <p>The SEE THE FUTURE Fund's "Education for Life" Program offers scholarships to visually impaired and blind students who are pursuing higher education. For more information, go to http://www.seethefuture.org/index.htm>.</p>
<p>Technology</p>	<p>Bonnie Snyder is on contract with CDE to provide free technical assistance consultation on technology for learners who are blind/visually impaired. Bonnie can be contacted at (719) 322-3854 or BonnieLS21@gmail.com>.</p> <p>The SEE THE FUTURE Fund's "Tools for Life" Program offers financial support for families to purchase necessary adapted technology for their child who is blind / visually impaired. For more information, go to http://www.seethefuture.org/index.htm>.</p>
<p>Transition from School to Adult Life</p>	<p>The What's Happening Out There newsletter features a regular column on Transition in each edition. The content includes information about scholarships and resources to assist with finding career and making the next steps from school to adult life.</p> <p>The CSDB Bridges to Life program is available for students ages 18-21 who have met the requirements for graduation from high school. For more information about this program, contact Louis Tutt at (719) 578-2195 or ltutt@csdb.org>.</p> <p>CareerConnect is a website for students who are blind/visually impaired, their parents, and service providers to check out videos and resources specific to employment. The web address is: www.afb.org/careerconnect>.</p>



Bits From Bonnie

By Bonnie Snyder

BonnieLS21@Gmail.Com

Yesterday I had lunch with my professor friend from UCCS. His specialty is virtual reality and he and I had discussed on previous occasions collaborating on projects that would benefit people who are blind / visually impaired. We have decided to focus on three possible projects which I would like to share with you and ask for your suggestions and input.

Project 1: We would use a virtual reality device called a “haptic pen” which would be programmed to guide a user through the process of creating the letters to write his/her signature. We would also create a portable haptic pen which could be worn on the wrist and be used to help the user write his/her signature at any time it is needed, right on the spot.

Project 2: We would develop a tray-like device that would attach to a computer via the USB port and would have tactile pixels that would correspond with the pixels on a computer screen. We would then connect the LOGO programming software which, at the lowest level, would come with LOGO programs that would create various shapes which would allow a young or special needs student to observe tactilely how a shape is made and what different shapes look like, as well as teaching them size and comparison concepts. For the older students (probably grades 4 and up), the students could learn to use the LOGO language to produce a wide variety of shapes and sounds as a programming class. Additionally, I can see the device used for creating maps to correspond with geography classes or for mobility route planning.

Project 3: Development of a fully accessible graphing calculator with voice, sound, and hardcopy output.

It would be wonderful if any of you could read through these projects and make suggestions for expanding each project or adding other uses for the projects. My contact information is above.

Editor's Note: Bonnie has been busy providing technical assistance to several TVIs across the state. Parents, please also feel free to contact Bonnie with your technology questions or consultation needs. The goal is to max out her contract with CDE between now and June 30 so we can take full advantage of her expertise.

Low Vision News: Education Needs of Learners with Albinism

By Jim Olson, CLVT, COMS, TVI

(719) 578-2283 FAX:(719) 578-2247; Email: jolson@csdb.org

Albinism is the most common visual impairment diagnosis among school-age students attending the Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. It is also the 4th leading cause of visual impairment among students in Colorado receiving services from a teacher of students with visual impairment (TVI) according to the 2008-2009 VI registration data.

There are many “tools” available to low vision students with Albinism. First, they need current and regularly updated eye health care from an optometrist or an ophthalmologist to determine the health of their eye as well as their need for prescription spectacles. Secondly, many students with Albinism will benefit from a low vision evaluation from an optometrist or ophthalmologist specializing in low vision. A typical low vision evaluation will look at the following areas and devices:

Near Viewing Tasks: The easiest to use low vision aid for near viewing tasks include dome magnifiers and stand magnifiers. Both of these types of magnifiers remain in focus when they lay flat on the surface of the printed material. Hand-held magnifiers require the user to hold the device a specific focal distance from the printed material and are available in a wide array of magnification strengths in both illuminated and non-illuminated styles. Hand-held magnifiers easily fit in a pocket or purse providing portability for their users. Reading glasses allow for a closer working distance, a wider field of view, and provide a hands-free magnification option.

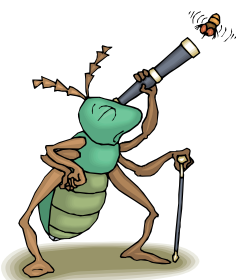
Distance Viewing Tasks: Telescopes are the most common low vision device used for distance viewing tasks which include everything from viewing the white board inside a classroom to reading street signs in an outdoor residential area. The most commonly used Monocular telescopes are available from 2X-10X magnification. This number indicates how many times closer an object appears to the user. The stronger the magnification, the smaller the field of view.

Electronic Magnification: Video magnifiers (sometimes called Closed-Circuit Televisions, or CCTVs) and smaller portable electronic magnifiers come in many makes and models. These devices provide some of the greatest magnification levels and are available with multiple contrast settings allowing the users to manipulate the colors of the background and text of a print document.

Lighting: Brighter is not always better. A halogen bulb shining on white paper can be uncomfortable for a student with Albinism to view. Desk lamps and task lighting are available in a variety of lighting styles including incandescent, full-spectrum, and fluorescent bulbs. Some come with rheostats, allowing detailed control of the illumination.

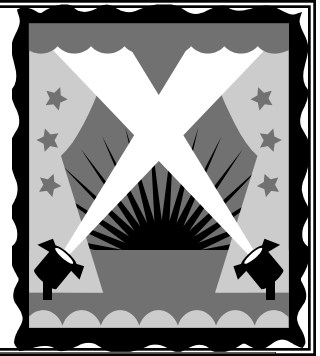
Sunglasses and Glare Control: A brimmed cap and a pair of sunglasses are two common preferences used by students with Albinism to help control and reduce glare. An evaluation of the many tints of sunshades available for both indoor and outdoor use in various lighting conditions is recommended.

Computer Accessibility Options: Accessibility options have been improving with every update of computer operating systems. Tutorials and training for specific Microsoft operating systems and products is available at www.microsoft.com/enable. Accessibility options for Apple computer users are available at www.apple.com/accessibility. Many screen enlargement software programs are available at a variety of price points. These programs are capable of enlarging everything on the computer screen and some have built-in contrast settings.



Non-Optical Aids: Bold-lined paper used in conjunction with felt-tip or gel pens can make writing tasks more accessible to students with impaired visual acuities. Students may also benefit from asking their teachers to use darker colored dry-erase markers on the white boards in their classrooms.

Spotlight on



ALBINISM

Information found at: <http://www.albinism.org>

What is Albinism? The word “albinism” refers to a group of inherited conditions. People with albinism have little or no pigment in their eyes, skin, or hair. They have inherited altered genes that do not make the usual amounts of a pigment called melanin. One person in 17,000 in the U.S.A. has some type of albinism. Albinism affects people from all races. Most children with albinism are born to parents who have normal hair and eye color for their ethnic backgrounds. Sometimes people do not recognize that they have albinism. A common myth is that people with albinism have red eyes. In fact there are different types of albinism and the amount of pigment in the eyes varies. Although some individuals with albinism have reddish or violet eyes, most have blue eyes. Some people with albinism have hazel or brown eyes. However, all forms of albinism are associated with vision problems.

Vision Problems: People with albinism always have problems with vision (not correctable with eye-glasses) and many have low vision. The degree of vision impairment varies with the different types of albinism and many people with albinism are “legally blind,” but most use their vision for many tasks including reading and do not use Braille. Some people with albinism have sufficient vision to drive a car. Vision problems in albinism result from abnormal development of the retina and abnormal patterns of nerve connections between the eye and the brain. It is the presence of these eye problems that defines the diagnosis of albinism. Therefore the main test for albinism is simply an eye examination.

Skin Problems: While most people with albinism are fair in complexion, skin or hair color is not diagnostic of albinism. People with many types of albinism need to take precautions to avoid damage to the skin caused by the sun such as wearing sunscreen lotions, hats and sun-protective clothing.

Types of Albinism: While most people with albinism have very light skin and hair, not all do. Oculocutaneous albinism involves the eyes, hair, and skin. Ocular albinism, which is much less common, involves primarily the eyes.

Types of Visual Problems: Eye problems in albinism result from the lack of pigment in the eyes. Visual problems include:

- Nystagmus (horizontal back and forth movement of the eyes)
- Strabismus—muscle imbalance of the eyes resulting in crossed eyes or other eye deviations
- Photophobia or light sensitivity
- Refractive error or the need to wear glasses due to nearsightedness or farsightedness
- Low vision or reduced visual acuity due to the lack of pigment in the retina and the eye’s inability to

Screen out stray light coming into the eye (light normally enters the eye only through the pupil, the dark opening in the center of the iris (colored part of eye), but in albinism light can pass through the iris as well.

For the most part, treatment of the eye conditions involves the involvement of an eye doctor for glasses, sunglasses, and possible surgical correction of any eye deviation. Various optical aids may be helpful to people with albinism. A low vision evaluation is important to ensure that the individual has the opportunity to see if magnification devices and other optical devices are helpful.

Medical Problems: It is important that individuals with albinism use skin protection from the UV rays of the sun. Sunscreen and sun-resistant clothing are important.

Resources

The National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation

PO Box 959

East Hampstead, NH 03826-0959

Phone: 603 887-2310

Web: <http://www.albinism.org>

Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome Network

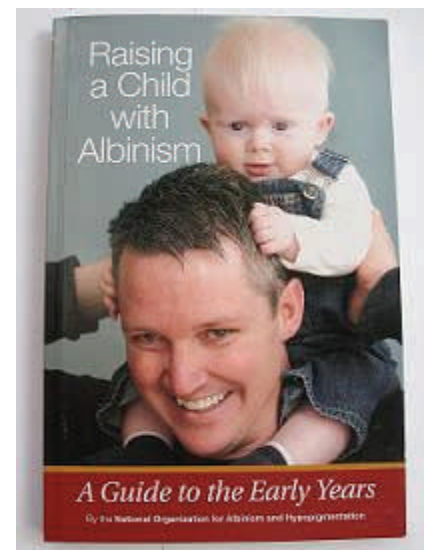
One South Road

Oyster Bay, NY 11771-1995

Phone: 800-789-9HIPS

Web: www.hpsnetwork.org

NOAH has produced a book entitled, *Raising a Child with Albinism: A Guide to the Early Years*. It is a 200-page volume containing contributions from close to 20 different writers. . Edited by NOAH member Susan DuBois, mother of two children with albinism, the reassuring and comforting book is illustrated with color photos contributed by Positive Exposure's Rick Guidotti and eight others. Topics include: (a) what is albinism?; (b) how will albinism impact my child's development?; (c) how do I stimulate my child's vision?; (d) the social impact of albinism; (e) sun safety; (e) early intervention and IEP programs.



For more information, contact:

http://www.albinism.org/Raising_a_Child_with_albinism.html

CSAP & CSAPA News



The Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate (CSAPA) tests are already designed in large print font type (minimum at 18, some are at 20). TVIs will have access to these materials to further enlarge or to prepare in braille, as needed. The materials can be accessed from the District Assessment Coordinators on **January 5th, 2009**.

The 2008-2009 **CSAP Procedures Manual** is now available on the CDE Unit of Student Assessment website. The web link is:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/publications.html>

The most current version of the **Accommodations Manual** is available at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/manuals/2009/2008-0929_CO_Accomm_Man.pdf

It is important to familiarize oneself with the allowable accommodations for students with disabilities. There are restrictions of what accommodations can be used with the CSAP tests.

If a student is using an accommodation that is not automatically allowed, the district may request permission to use a nonstandard accommodation. Examples of nonstandard accommodations requests would include a large print CSAP test that is LARGER than the standard 18 point large print test or a black and white version of the CSAP test. Remember that you must be defensible with your request. There should be evidence of a completed Learning Media Assessment. You will also need to acknowledge that the request nonstandard accommodation is in place during the student's everyday instruction. An accommodation must be tried and true so that the student is familiar with this accommodation well before the day that the CSAP testing begins.

The last day to request a nonstandard accommodation is **December 15, 2008**.

The website to download the **Nonstandard Accommodation Request Form** is

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/accommodations.html>

Resources and Materials



An Illustrated Guide to Cane Repair and

More is a resource that shows simple steps for repairing and modifying canes and Adaptive Mobility Devices (AMDs), requiring minimal tools and supplies. The four-color manual include photos and step-by-step instructions. The publication is \$34.95 for AER members, \$69.95 for non-members plus shipping and handling and is available online at www.aerbvi.org or by phone to (877) 492-2708 or (703) 671-4500.



Empowered: An Activity Based Self-

Determination Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments The emergence of self-determination as a concept all its own allows us to target specific skills that must be taught.



Since students with visual impairments must often be explicitly taught skills before they can use them spontaneously, the **Empowered** curriculum has been developed to guide the instruction of self-determination skills. Visit www.tsbvi.edu or call (512) 454-8631.



Evals: Evaluating Visually Impaired

Students using Alternate Learning Standards Emphasizing the Expanded Core Curriculum In order to determine



Curricular focus and plan effective instructional programming for

students, the TVI must know the student's levels of functioning in all areas of academic and unique needs. By conducting appropriate evaluations. Visit www.tsbvi.edu. Note—there are 2 copies of the Evals in the Colorado Deafblind Lending Library. To check a kit out, contact Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6605 or her email at Quintana_G@cde.state.co.us.



Better Together: Building Relationships

with People Who Have Visual Impairment & Autism Spectrum Disorder An increasing

number of students with visual impairment are being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. The issues related to

Better Together

identifications of autism in children with visual impairment

remain controversial. The goal of this manual is to provide practical suggestions for teachers and parents who want to build important foundational relationships and teach social skills to children with visual impairment and autism or other types of atypical social development. Visit www.tsbvi.edu or call (512) 454-8631.



The Opportunity to be Equal, The Right

to be Different Since the mid-1950s, Dr. Phil

Hatlen has had a huge impact on the education of students who are blind and visually impaired, including his efforts in gaining acceptance of the Expanded Core Curriculum. In his new book, he writes of his personal experiences in championing the rights of persons with blindness and low vision. The Opportunity to be Equal, The Right to be Different includes information about the educational needs of blind and visually impaired including those with multiple impairments, placement, the ECC, Braille, O&M, and a chapter on his mentors and peers. Visit www.tsbvi.edu or call (512) 454-8631.



The 2008 Toys “R” Us Toy Guide for

Differently-Abled Kids is now available in Toys “R” Us and Babies “R” Us stores and online at www.toysrus.com/differentlyabled. This free guide offers toy recommendations based on research from National Lekotek Center. For more assistance, call the Toy Resource Helpline at 1-800-366-7259.

Resources and Materials



2008 AccessWorld Guide to Assistive

Technology Products This is a completely updated 2008 edition includes detailed profiles of over 280 products for people who are blind or visually impaired, including more than 30 new products. For more information go to www.afb.org.



Teaching Children with Visual Impairments [Online video in 2 parts]

www.campabilitiesbrockport.org/Camp-Video.html > *Teaching Children with Visual Impairments* is a 35-minute-long free online video that was filmed during Camp Abilities, a summer sports camp for children with visual impairments, blindness, and deafblindness. Topics include: 1) types of visual impairments, 2) child-specific considerations, 3) instructional techniques, 4) safety considerations, 5) other specialists in the field of visual impairment or deafblindness, 6) running techniques, 7) equipment and game modifications, and 8) teaching children who are deafblind. The video highlights the experiences of four children with visual impairments and three children with deafblindness. It is available online in 2 parts from:

www.campabilitiesbrockport.org/Camp-Video.html >. The information on deafblindness is included in the second part. The Camp Abilities web site is www.campabilities.org.



Description Key: Guidelines for the

Description of Educational Media: The Described and Captioned Media Program has partnered with the American Foundation for the Blind to forge "guidelines" to equal access for students with vision loss. The Description Key guidelines are complete and are posted online. Go to www.afb.org/descriptionguidelines.asp at AFB for this resource. And to connect with DCMP, visit <http://www.dcmp.org/descriptionkey>.



Online Bookstore: The Associated Ser-

VICES for the Blind/Visually Impaired (ASB) Online Bookstore provides shoppers from around the world access to over 800 braille books, 26 recorded magazine subscriptions, and 11 radio broadcast selections. To see a list of titles, visit www.asb.org.



The Braille Caravan by Creative Adapta-

tions for Learning is available from the National Braille Press. The toy consists of 30 goldenrod nontoxic plastic blocks. Each block represents a braille cell, designed with six black pegs that can be manually pushed up or down to form dots 1-6. The set contains a 30 braille blocks, a canvas bag, a print activity guide, and an English Braille Symbols Chart. The cost is \$30. For more information, call 1-800-548-7323 or visit www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/CARAVAN.html.



Two Ends of a Leach: Unshackled is the

life story of Dr. Grace Napier, a Colorado resident and former professor at UNC. Dr. Napier started school when there were no special education programs for blind children in her community. To order, contact Wheatmark at 1-888-934-0888 (ext. 100). The book's ISBN is 978-1-58736-959-9.



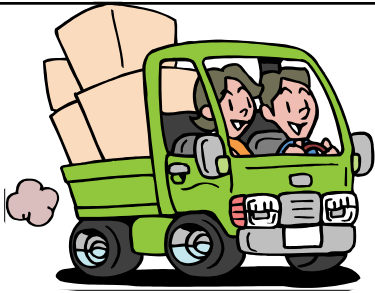
Behind our Eyes is an anthology of 27 writ-

ers, each of whom has a visual or physical disability. Their individual perspectives are shared through poetry or short essays. The book is available for order for IUniverse, Barnes and Nobel, or Amazon.com using ISBN 978-0-595-46493-7.



The View From Under the Pew by Diane

Winters Johnson is a children's book about a guide dog who assists a pastor. For ages 6-10. The book is available from the National Braille Press for \$14. Call 1-888-965-8965 or visit <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/BC0608-VIEW.html>.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

🔊 **Employment Website** <JobEnable.com> is an employment web site designed specifically for people with disabilities. The goal of the site is to enhance the opportunities for people with disabilities to find employment by providing a vehicle where they can showcase their qualifications and talents to an audience of prospective employers. Job seekers can post their resumes and search the database for available positions. Employers are able to post jobs and search resumes, recruiting qualified candidates who are the best fit for their organizations.

🔊 **Dress and Impress** is a new video from CareerConnect® that is available to view at www.afb.org/careerconnect>. Employees determine whether to hire an applicant within the first two minutes of a job interview, so it is critical to make a favorable first impression and maintaining a positive impression throughout an interview. The video is designed to show students how they can make the right impression. Aaron, a high school senior, walks the viewers through the dos and don'ts of interviewing and making a great first and lasting impression. In addition to the video, teens who are looking for their first jobs or thinking about their future careers, can contact mentors in professions they are interested in and view other videos such as **On Your Mark, Get Set ...Go to Work!**



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

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

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 PEP hotline at 303-866-6846.



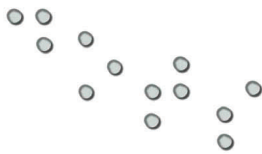
The 2009 Conference on Inclusive Education

February 12-14, 2009 in Denver, Colorado

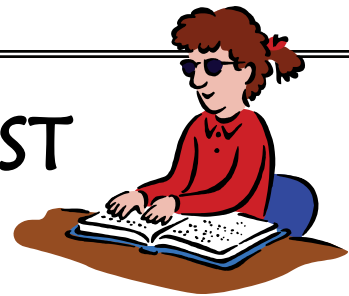
This annual conference is nationally-recognized for continually presenting cutting edge educational techniques to parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals.

Keep updated on the conference by visiting their website at:

www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp.



DOTS OF INTEREST



* **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) seeks knowledgeable and enthusiastic Braille readers, teachers, and transcribers to serve on various committees. BANA has nine technical committees which are charged by its board to develop code (e.g., rules and symbols), revise and update code, review work from other technical committees, and respond to questions from constituents. In addition, there are five ad hoc committees dealing with issues such as publications, crafts and hobbies and Braille signage, and labeling. All committees have representatives from both the United States and Canada, and consist of at least one Braille reader, one teacher and one transcriber. Most work is done via email. Several committees are currently seeking members. If you are interested in serving on a BANA committee, fill out the form on BANA's web site, <www.brailleauthority.org>, stating your areas of interest and your qualifications (for example, years of Braille reading, teaching, or transcribing experience, etc.).

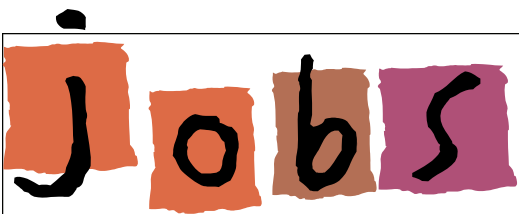
* **Seedlings—Braille Books for Children** Placing a book in a child's hands is like planting a seed. Contact: Seedlings for a free catalog with over 860 titles of books. Contact: Seedlings, 14151 Farmington Rd. Livonia, MI 48154; Phone: (800) 777-8552; Email: <seedlink@aol.com> or Web site: <www.seedlings.org>.



* **Braille Bicentennial** Celebrate Louis Braille's bicentennial in January 2009! Contact National Braille Press at (888) 965-8965 and ask about the bicentennial pin. NBP commissioned artist Judith Krimski to design an icon of Louis Braille to celebrate the bicentennial. Krimski chose the silhouette, and to capture Louis' genius, she "ignited a fire in his head" by painting his curly locks in vibrant colors—orange, purple, lime, teal. The pin is about 1 inch wide and 1 3/8 inches high with a rubber clasp. It costs \$5 per pin. Also available are note cards, with the same design as the pin, for \$7.99. To purchase your pin, or note cards, contact National Braille Press at the number above, or visit <www.nbp.org>.

* **Braille Toy for Pre-literate Individuals** National Braille Press recently introduced a new Braille toy: The Braille Caravan by Creative Adaptations for Learning. Designed to introduce Braille to children who are blind, sighted parents, or people who need to learn Braille later in life, the toy consists of 30 plastic blocks each with six pegs that can be pushed up or down. Each block represents a Braille cell, and the pegs form dots 1 through 6. The blocks can be connected in a "caravan" to form words and sentences. The kit also includes an English Braille symbols chart and an activity guide and is available for \$30. For more information, contact: National Braille Press, 88 Saint Stephen Street, Boston, MA 02115; phone: (800) 548-7323; email <orders@nbp.org> or web site <www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/CARAVAN.html>.

* **Braille Greeting Cards:** Shadows in the Dark offers a selection of braille greeting cards. Their new contact information is: Shadows in the Dark, 22615 Mathis Road, San Antonio, TX 78264 or (210) 621-2070 or www.shadowsinthedark.com.



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 Leah Bitat at bitatlm@d11.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/>.





Calendar of Events

2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008 2008

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 15** **Metro TVI meeting** - Anchor Center from 2—4:00 pm
 Contact: Nancy Cozart - ncozart@lps.k12.co.us

- January 21** **Southern TVI Meeting** - Colorado Springs
 Contact: Stephanie Isabel - isbell@cmsd12.org

- January 22-24** **Short Course Program on Orientation & Mobility - CSDB**
 Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.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

- January 31** **Breakfast and Braille** - Anchor Center in Denver
 Contact: pstallman@anchorcenter.org

- February 4-27** **CSAPA Grade 3 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics Administration**

- February 4-March 27** **CSAPA 4-10 Administration**

- February 6** **Braille Challenge—CSDB in Colorado Springs**
 Contact: Randy Witte at rwitte@csdb.org

- February 12-14** **2009 Conference on Inclusive Education—Denver**
 Visit: www.peakparent.org/conferences.asp

- February 19-20** **Short Course Program on Daily Living Skills - CSDB**
 Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org



More Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- 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
- March 23-27** Short Course Program on Introduction to Independent Living — CSDB
Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- 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 - isbell@cmsd12.org
- April 16-18** Short Course Program on Orientation & Mobility—bus Travel— CSDB
Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- April 17** Metro TVI meeting—Anchor Center from 2—4:00 pm
Contact: Nancy Cozart - ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
- 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
- May 6** COACT Makeup Test Date
- May 7-9** Short Course Program on Orientation & Mobility (bus travel)- CSDB
Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- May 7-9** Annual O&M Conference - Anchor Center in Denver
Contact: Melissa Shular at melissa.shular@asd20.org
- May 13** Southern TVI Meeting - Colorado Springs
Contact: Stephanie Isabel - isbell@cmsd12.org
- June 5-7** Annual Family Learning Retreat - CSDB in Colorado Springs
Contact: Stefanie Morgan at (719) 570-0793.



More Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- 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

NAPVI's Families Connecting with Families 2009 International Conference

Co-Sponsored by the Braille Institute and Junior Blind of America
July 17, 18, 19, 2009

*at the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa
3050 Briston Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626*

*(Within 15 miles from Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm Amusement Parks, 5
miles from Newport, Laguna, and Huntington Beaches!)*

**Families Connecting
with Families**





National Braille Challenge—Colorado Regional Contest

The election is over, it's too early to eat turkey, so it must be time....to register students for the National Braille Challenge -Colorado Regional contest!

Every student who comes to CSDB to enter the NBC regional contest or the Rookie Contest will have their name put into a drawing, and at 2:30 PM on that day, one lucky student will win a brand new Perkins Braille Writer of their very own (one of the new models)!

Who: Any Braille student in Colorado who has not yet graduated from high school. TVIs, braillists, paraeducators and parents are welcome.

What: The National Braille Challenge Regional Contest and the Rookie Contest for Colorado

Where: The School for the Blind at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, Colorado Springs

When: Friday, February 6, 2009 (alternate date will be Friday, Feb. 20, 2009) from 9:00 AM until 2:30 PM

Why: To recognize and promote Braille achievement. Prizes and gifts will be awarded, lunch is included, and there is NO COST!



Regional qualifiers are invited to the final round in LA next summer. Congratulations to Alison Utter from Fort Collins who went to the finals last summer!

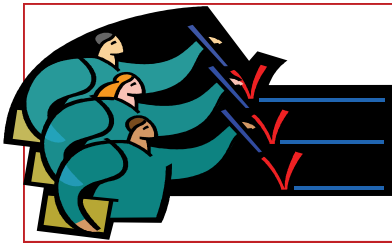
SO, please email or call with your student's NAME and their GRADE that you want to register. Please note if your student cannot compete at their grade level, they can compete at a lower level but then they are ineligible to qualify for the finals. REMEMBER, if you can't come, students can still participate with you giving the tests-but the free Braille writer prize is only available to regional contest participants. Go to the National Braille Challenge or the Braille Institute website to download practice tests. I will announce soon the official deadline to register students, but the window is now open, so get signed up!

Thanks,

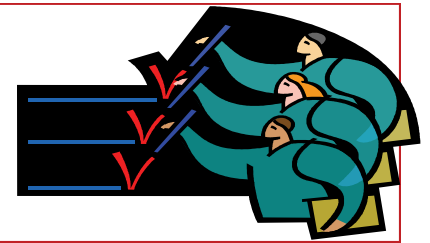
Randy Witte, CSDB

(719) 578-2204 or rwitte@csdb.org





CHECK IT OUT!



✓ **Call for Papers Celebrating 100 Years...and Beyond** For the past 100 years the Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB) has been the primary journal of record for the field of visual impairment and is a critical forum for the discussion of significant research, practice, and trends. In addition to articles and reports on all aspects of the work of the field. JVIB welcomes submissions on the following topics of great current concern:

- Practice reports from teachers of students with visual impairments, including students with multiple disabilities
- Discussions of low vision service delivery, focusing on models of team collaboration and service providers roles, funding and reimbursement issues, and patient need and service outcomes
- Perspectives on the impact of federal No Child Left Behind legislation on programs for students with visual impairments and on teacher effectiveness
- Experiences of participants in the national Medicare demonstrations project examining reimbursement of services by certified orientation and mobility specialists, low vision therapists, and vision rehabilitation therapists
- Examinations of different certification models and approaches in such areas as orientation and mobility

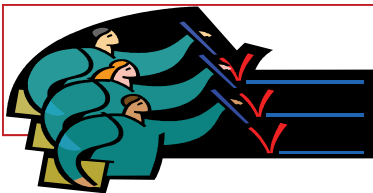
Guidelines for contributors are generally printed in each issue of JVIB, and are also available from AFB Press, American Foundation for the blind: website <www.afb.org/jvib_guidelines.asp>, phone (212) 502-7651; email: <jbiv@afb.net>. Manuscripts should be emailed for peer review to: Duane R. Geruschat, Ph.D., Editor in Chief, JVIB: <jvib@jhmi.edu>; or mailed to Lions Vision Center, 550 North Broadway, 6th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21205. Inquiries for the editor in chief should be emailed to <jvibeditor@afb.net>.

✓ **Colorado Talking Book Library** The Colorado Talking Book Library expects the long-awaited new digital talking book machines to arrive around June 2009. At the present time CTBL will receive a monthly quota of machines and are required by law to distribute them to veterans and centenarians first followed by other patrons. CTBL's policy for distributing the new machines is as follows: Patrons who read the most will receive the new machines first. CTBL will run a monthly list based on reading levels of the prior 12 months to see who is at the top of the list. This will also incorporate the patrons joining their service during the years of transition. Patrons will be called to ask if they want the new machine and if so, they will send them a machine. CTBL will work our way through all active individual patrons and then finally move on to our institutional accounts.

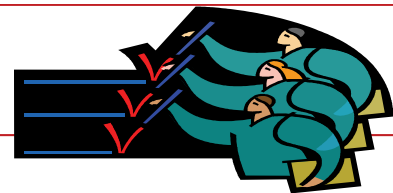
Until then there are other currently available digital options. These include:

- Unabridged—our digital audio book program—you need an MP3 player, the ZenStone is available for \$43.
- BARD, NLS's digital download service—you need to purchase a VictorStream which costs \$350. For both services you need a broadband connection and for more information on either service, please call the library.

CTBL provides free library service to Colorado's print-disabled. Contact the CO Talking Book Library at: (303) 727-9277 metro or (800) 685-2136 or <www.myctbl.org>



CHECK IT OUT!



- ✓ **New Webcast** The latest webcast on Early Literacy for Students with Multiple Disabilities or Deafblindness is now available for on-demand viewing at <<http://www.perkins.pvt.k12.ma.us/whatsnew/webcast.html>>. The presenter is Deirdre Leech who is a teacher in the Deafblind Program at Perkins School for the Blind. Perkins School for the Blind would appreciate your feedback on the webcasts, as well as topics and formats that you would recommend to address your in-service training needs in the future. If you had difficulty logging on in the past, it is no longer required to view the webcast. Perkins School for the Blind, 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472; Phone: (617) 924-3434; Email <info@perkins.org>.
- ✓ **All Children Have Different Eyes** Social skills training; Peer awareness; Parent activities; Online Resources. Free teacher guide at <www.lowvisionkids.com> or visit <www.amazon.com>.
- ✓ **Navigating Nystagmus** What is nystagmus? How does it start? Find a doctor. Discover treatments. Available at <www.amazon.com>.
- ✓ **Attention All Crafters** National Braille Press is in the process of producing an instructional book on crafts which can be done with little to no vision. They are seeking you craft ideas. If your project is chosen for inclusion, you will win a copy of the book. Please clearly state all necessary materials and step-by-step directions for each project. They will not be including any knitting, crocheted or intricate sewing projects. Submit all materials as well as your name, address and phone number to Ann Bliss using <AnnBliss@tampabay.rr.com>. Print and unfolded Braille will be accepted by Ann Bliss, P.O. Box 6579, Bradenton, FL 34281.
- ✓ **Self Defense Class** Tim Cullen, Self-Defense coach at Chaparall High School in Parker, is hosting a 90 minute self-defense class for the visually impaired on **Wednesday, December 10th** from 8:30-10:30. This class is offered for students 6 years old and up. Denver Judo will be providing the instruction. The director of Denver Judo is also the director of the Association for Blind Athletes. Tim would like to open it up to other school districts for any of their students who are visually impaired and might be interested. He would like to have from 20-25 students. If you have any students that might be interested contact Shelley Moats at <shelley.moats@dcsdk12.org>.
- ✓ **Breakfast and Braille!** Anchor Center for Blind Children, 2550 Roslyn Street, Denver, 80238 -- Saturday, **January 31, 2009**. Breakfast and Braille from 9 to noon in the Community Room. A big success last spring, this class will be taught by Anchor staff and include Braille basics as well as more advanced fundamentals for parents that have been learning on their own. RSVP to Paula at 303-377-9732 x127 or <pstallman@anchorcenter.org>. Class is intended for adults only.



Mom is “Old School!”

By Donna Keale

Have you jumped on the Webcast/Podcast band wagon yet? Isn't it awesome that there is so much information available at your fingertips? Even some of us older folks are starting to figure out what my 19 year old has said all along, “Mom why do you do so many things ‘old school’?” Now, if you know my son, Brian, you would know he is just like his Mom and will call it the way he sees it without any hesitation!

Just to let you know Perkins School for the Blind, <www.perkins.org> has a just released a new webcast titled: Early Literacy for Students with Multiples Disabilities or Deafblindness presented by Deirdre Leech. The webcasts are closed captioned as well as verbal. What a great tool to use for regular education staff members who work with students who have sensory loss. Other webcast include; Creating Vocational Portfolios for Students with Significant Disabilities by Mary Zatta, Meal-time Skills by Sue Shannon, and Social Skills for Children and Youth with Visual Impairments.

The Washington School for the Blind, <www.wssb.org> also has webcast that are quick “Video Clips on Blindness Tips.” Currently they have posted: Making a Bed, Folding Clothes, Tying Shoes, Buttoning, Zipping, Matching Clothes, Room Familiarization, Folding Money, Learning to Pour, Self Medicating, Sighted Guide Techniques, White Cane Technique (3 parts) Two Point Touch, Locating a Bus Stop, and Constant Contact. Washington also has *Guides for Parents such as Daily Living Skills*. As we move into the next era and throw out the manual type writers, huge desk top computers, and heavy TVs, lets share all the great resources with others. Help me as I move from “old school” to whatever “current school” might be!

AFB Distance Learning Survey Results Now Available

More and more schools, colleges and universities are using online educational tools that students are required to use to obtain course syllabi, access lectures and associated material, participate in class discussions, read course material, and receive grades and feedback from instructors. These popular tools, such as Blackboard, can frequently pose significant barriers to students with vision loss because they do not work well, if at all, with computer programs commonly used by students who are blind or visually impaired to access content displayed on the computer screen.

AFB explored ways in which popular online educational tools can be made more accessible with the help of nearly 100 individuals who recently completed our online survey. The results are now available! Findings indicated the most important and necessary features of online educational tools present significant problems for those using assistive technology such as screen reading or screen magnification software. In nearly every instance, respondents indicated features that were inaccessible. To read the full report, go to www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=3&TopicID=377&DocumentID=4492.

Assessing High Interest/Low Vocabulary Book Interest:

APH is assessing the need for High Interest Low Vocabulary books for students who are blind or visually impaired. This survey is in response to the interest expressed by Ex Officio Trustees, focus groups, and individuals who have submitted Product Submissions for specific reading materials. Help us determine the need for this type of book by completing a short survey at: <http://www.aph.org/edresearch/hilv.html>.



The Colorado Chapter of the Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Call for Action

Join an AER Committee!

Make a difference!

Get national recognition for your contributions!

Join one of AER's committees!

Committees are the driving force behind AER, taking directions from the board of directors and our organization's strategic plan, AER committees create the content for online professional development, organize regional and international conferences, and publish new books for our field.

Interested? Contact AER to see which committee fits you best: 877-492-2708 or aer@aerbvi.org.



Colorado O&M Conference

By Melissa Shular

Give me a map and I'm good to go. Give me a GPS system and I haven't a clue! Ladies and Gentlemen, the time has come. Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for the blind and visually impaired are coming our way. That is the focus for this year's O&M conference. It's okay if you do not have any students currently using a GPS system. This is the time to learn. The conference will be held at the Anchor Center in Denver on **May 7-9th**. More details to come.

Orientation & Mobility News



International Journal of Orientation & Mobility (IJOM) is a new peer-reviewed journal intended to explore issues and contribute new knowledge to the field of orientation and mobility (O&M) that seeks to strengthen the dialog within the field of O&M (including mobility with dog guides) around the world and to facilitate communication among instructors and service providers from a variety of cultural backgrounds. IJOM publishes qualitative and quantitative research articles and analyses, essays, concep-



tual papers, historical commentaries, comprehensive reviews, case studies, policy analyses, and innovative practice reports and evaluations on a wide variety of issues and topics related to O&M and people with visual impairments. The guidelines for contributors for IJOM can be found online:

www.ijorientationandmobility.com/index.php?module=guidelines. The journal is provided free to people in Australia; all others may subscribe for an annual cost of \$40 Australian (\$31 U.S.). For more information, contact IJOM Client Services, Guide Dogs, NSW/ACT, P.O. Box 1965, North Sydney, NSW 2059, Australia; fax +61-2-9412-9388; email dgallimore@guidedogs.com.au or mike.steer@ridbc.org.au.



“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.

2009-2010 CIMC Textbook Orders

Please begin submission of your textbooks for next school year. Data from the past 5 years has demonstrated that textbook order forms accompanied by an ink copy of the textbook resulted in at least partial delivery of that book in the hands of our learners with visual impairments by the first day of school.

The CIMC realizes all of the obstacles TVIs face in acquiring the proper textbook list for your students an entire semester ahead of time. We appreciate every effort you put forth to help get the textbook orders in early with their accompanying ink copies.

Remember, for large print textbook orders only you may simply email the ISBN to the CIMC for sourcing. If available, we will email with a request for a complete order form.

If your order is for a braille textbook, you may fax your completed order form to (719) 578-2207 or email your order form to cimctexts@csdb.org.

For any additional information, please email Tammy McCullough at “tmccullough@csdb.org” or call her at (719) 578-2196.



2009

Leading the Way: Grand Canyon Expedition

Come Discover Classroom Earth!

Rafting the Grand Canyon...

is an unbelievable opportunity that many people wait a lifetime to enjoy. Building on the success of our 2008 Grand Canyon Leading the Way Expedition, we are working with our partners, Grand Canyon Youth and the National Park Service, to develop the **most comprehensive educational experience**. Join us on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure as we explore science, culture, leadership and service within the canyon walls.

A nationally recognized program with Erik Weihenmayer, as featured on ABC Nightline, the Travel Channel and CBS Sunday Morning.



Embark on an extraordinary journey with an unlikely team of students.

Lead: → STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND LEARN TO USE ADVERSITY AS AN ADVANTAGE





Learn: → EXPLORE NEW CULTURES, ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE AND STEP UP TO BECOME A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN.

Live: → EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF TRAVEL AND DISCOVER THE POWER THAT YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.



Pre-Trip Preparation:

The Leading the Way Program is about much more than just an expedition. It is about creating globally responsible citizens who appreciate the diversity of the world and strive to make a positive difference. As a part of the preparation blind, visually-impaired and sighted students will:

-  Engage in fundraising activities with the support of Global Explorers staff to help support the costs of your program
-  Participate in monthly conference calls beginning in January where you cover our preparatory curriculum concepts of science, culture, leadership and service.
-  Attend a retreat with Erik Weihenmayer, the only blind person to summit Mt. Everest, and Global Explorers staff to learn important technical and leadership skills
-  Help spread the word throughout your community, in the press and beyond about the goals of our expedition.

Program Essentials

PARTICIPANTS

High school and college students who are sighted, visually-impaired or blind

HOW TO APPLY

Apply online, call 877-627-1425 email leadingtheway@globalexplorers.org to request an application

PRICE

\$1,800-\$2,500 We fundraise with you!
*Final price will be set by November

Timeline

November 15

Registration deadline

Spring 2009

Weekend retreat with Erik Weihenmayer in Colorado
4 conference calls with Global Explorers Staff

Summer 2009

Grand Canyon Expedition
*Exact dates to be determined by November '08

Fall 2009

Conduct follow-up service leadership projects



2009

Leading the Way: Grand Canyon Expedition

Come Discover Classroom Earth!

The Expedition:

- Raft on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon
- Learn about conservation issues and ecology
- Hike along beautiful slot canyons accessible only from the river
- Conduct a community service project on the rim of the Canyon
- Learn about Native American cultures, traditions and history
- Work together as a team of blind, visually-impaired and sighted students



Service Leadership Project:

This trip will inspire you - we guarantee it! We ask you to take that inspiration back home and make a positive difference in your community. You'll design your own project with our support upon returning from your expedition.

Expedition Highlights

* Subject to Change

7-8 DAYS RAFTING THE GRAND

We'll raft the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Days will be spent on the water, exploring slot canyons and enjoying sand beaches. You'll study the conservation issues and the ecosystems of the Grand along the way.

Ribbit!

A National Social Awareness Campaign:

Not only an amazing experience for the participants themselves, each Leading the Way expedition is paired with a social awareness and media campaign which we use to educate a much broader constituency. These campaigns provide a message of hope and inspiration while helping to break down barriers, misconceptions and prejudices that the public has about people with disabilities.

7-8 DAYS SERVICE & CULTURE

On the rim of the canyon, you'll learn about Native American culture and history. You'll conduct community service and begin planning for your leadership project upon your return home.



Payment Details:

\$200 nonrefundable deposits will be due on December 15, 2008. 50% of the program fees will be due on February 15, 2009 and the remainder will be due 60 days prior to travel. Participants will be billed directly for their final payments. While GEx does everything possible to ensure appropriate arrangements and schedules in support of our trips, we have yet to find a way to control weather, common carriers, hotel operators, etc. Thus, our itineraries are always subject to change based on local conditions. Should circumstances beyond our control result in additional expenses (e.g. flight delays resulting in additional lodging or food expenses, fuel surcharges), travelers will be responsible for those costs. Withdrawal 60 days or less prior to date of departure results in 100% loss of program fees. Late payments beyond 30 days are charged an 18% service fee and can result in the loss of participant's reservation. Billing for international airfare will follow a separate payment schedule based on availability of flights, best fares and airline policies. Our staff will contact travelers with details.



Global Explorers
420 S Howes St.
Suite 300
Fort Collins, Co 80521
T. 877.627.1425
F. 719.623.0442

www.globalexplorers.org

New Programs at Anchor Center for Blind Children

By Sheila Galatowitsch, Development Director



Most of you know about Anchor Center's developmental education services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and its family support, home visit and rural outreach programs.

But you may not know that in the past two years, Anchor Center added three other programs to its core services.

The National Internship, Eye Exam and Research programs build on Anchor Center's mission to serve Colorado's children with blindness. The new programs also make Anchor Center a national leader in developmental education of young children with blindness.

National Internship Program. The National Internship Program for student teachers of the visually impaired entered its third year in 2008-09. A total of 10 interns from around the country have participated in the program, which is ongoing. There is currently a shortage of teachers of the visually impaired, particularly for children from birth to 5, and this program addresses that need.

The Lillis Foundation in Denver funds the program. Charles and Gwendolyn Lillis believe that education is the primary means to positively and enduringly impacting individuals' lives. Anchor Center is deeply grateful for the Lillis's support and dedication to the future of the profession.

Eye Exam Program. Since Anchor Center launched its Eye Exam Program in November 2007, more than 50 children have received initial eye exams, follow-up exams or second opinions. The Eye Exam Program provides eye exams to children who receive services through Anchor Center and also to children referred to the program.

The program is made possible through Anchor Center's new teaching facility at Stapleton, which includes an Ophthalmology Examination Room with appropriate equipment. The program is available one day per month and each appointment lasts approximately one hour. A Spanish interpreter is available for Spanish-speaking families. After an exam, the doctor explains a diagnosis to parents and teachers/therapists, who have the opportunity to ask questions related to a child's learning style and educational plan. The doctor also debriefs the entire staff at the end of the day.



The program is the brainchild of Dr. Robert King of Children's Eye Physicians. It is the first setting where medical and educational components are so closely linked—a development that is having an immediate positive impact on the children.



Young children with established vision concerns from other programs and school districts may be referred for an eye exam. To schedule an appointment, please call Linda Corssmit at (720) 234-4035.

Research Program. In January 2008, Anchor Center teamed with The Gerber Foundation on a three-year research project to determine how vision impairments affect feeding development in children from birth to age 3. This study is the first of its kind and will determine the validity of anecdotal evidence that links vision impairments with delayed feeding development.

Carol Spicer, occupational therapist at Anchor Center, is the Principal Investigator on the project. Researchers are Cathy Smyth, teacher of children who are blind/visually impaired, and Zoe Morgese, speech/language pathologist.

The team's hypothesis is that vision impairment significantly impacts feeding and eating development in young children. The research is expected to confirm that children with the greatest degree of vision impairment have the greatest amount of feeding concerns and challenges.

As part of the project, the researchers will create a Functional Feeding Assessment for families, therapists and nutritionists to help children achieve independent eating and enjoyable mealtimes.

Community Outreach. Finally, an "unofficial" new program at Anchor Center is the increased outreach to friends and colleagues via our new building and 100-seat community room. The Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Association of Education and Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired, the Denver Preschool Program, Children's Eye Physicians, Girl Scouts, Lions Club and other groups have hosted events and training in the community room.

Our new building increased collaboration with local school districts and service providers, many of whom visited the facility informally or attended formal professional meetings and training sessions held in the community room. Moreover, service providers from the northeast, mountain and western regions of Colorado—and even from surrounding states—traveled to our new facility to receive training and/or consult on specific children.

We've even enjoyed visits from representatives of charities for children in Zambia and Uganda!

These new programs make Anchor Center a place of leadership, nurturing and transformation. For more information or for a tour of the new building, please call Alice Applebaum at (303) 377-9732 x 113.

Western Regional Early Intervention Conference



Conference for Providers Working with Children,

Birth to 5 Years Old,

Who are Blind/Visually Impaired,

Deafblind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing

April 23rd-25th, 2009

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Cheyenne Mountain Conference Center and Resort



For more information:

mbrady@csdb.org

(719) 578-2260

Hosted by:



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Vision Coalition Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2008

Persons in Attendance: Barbara Adams, Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, , Donna Keale, Rene Harrell, Stephanie Isbell, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, Cathy Smyth, Wendy Stoltman, Lou Tutt, and Julia Zanon.

Persons Absent: Kay Ferrell

Guests: Cindy Norcross, Heather Hamilton, Audrey Levy, Karen Roberts, and Catherine Trunfio

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome parents to this meeting of the Vision Coalition. Rene Harrell has been invited to be a regular member of the Vision Coalition as a representative of Parents of Blind Children. The other parents attending the meeting (Cindy Norcross, Audrey Levy, Karen Roberts, and Catherine Trunfio) are invited guests per TVIs Stephanie Isbell, Louis Tutt, Cathy Smyth, and Nancy Cozart. Our goal for this meeting is to review the results of a parent survey and to work together to discuss next steps for parent/family support and resource activities in Colorado. Welcome everyone!

SETTING THE STAGE – COLORADO DEMOGRAPHICS

Submitted 11/17/2008 by Jim Olson, CIMC

2008-2009 VI registration data (updated November 01, 2008):

All learners, birth through 21 years who are blind/visually impaired, are registered with the Colorado Instructional Materials Center. This count is separate to the December 1 Count, which is a federally-mandated count that is reported to the federally government. The December 1 Count ONLY counts learners by their primary disability label. The CIMC count is more accurate as it counts all students regardless of age and/or the presences of additional disabilities.

1,105 total “VI registrations” have been completed for Colorado students (0-21)

149 of these children are of infants/toddlers

956 of these children are ages 3-21 (preschool through transition)

American Printing House for the Blind (APH) *projected* January 7, 2009 count data:

777 statewide meet the criteria for legal blindness and will be included on the annual APH quota count next January. (CSDB AU=64; other CO administrative units = 713)

Top Four Diagnoses of Visual Impairment taken from VI registration forms 11-17-2008

Visual Diagnosis	Number of Students with This Diagnosis	Top Four CO Visual Conditlons
Cortical Visual Impairment	241	#1 leading diagnosis
Optic Nerve Hypoplasia	104	#2 leading diagnosis
ROP	86	#3 leading diagnosis
Albinism	73 (ocular + oculocutaneous)	#4 leading diagnosis

Discussion: The national data indicate that the three leading pediatric diagnoses in order of prevalence are (1) Cortical Visual Impairment, (2) Retinopathy of Prematurity, and (3) Optic Nerve Hypoplasia. It is interesting that ONH is our second leading diagnosis. Anchor also confirmed that this is a second leading diagnosis with their young children. This is important information.

It was also noted that parents have reported that the school district personnel are not well prepared to work with a child with a diagnosis of CVI when the child entered the school district. Colorado has had two statewide trainings on CVI within the last ten years. The book by Dr. Chris Roman on CVI that was published by the American Foundation for the Blind was sent to each administrative unit with a certified teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI). The book and the APH CD on CVI is housed in the CDE library of the state deafblind project. It was noted that septo optic dysplasia / optic nerve hyperplasia are diagnoses that would benefit from training time.

It will be helpful to provide some training guidance to TVIs registering students with the CIMC as many of the listed diagnoses are not actually eye conditions (e.g., cerebral palsy, Down syndrome). To help maintain an accurate database of eye conditions, Jim will work to provide more guidance on this section of the annual CIMC registration form.

Another issue that was raised was whether learners who are home schooled are on the identification and support radar. These learners are not counted as a part of the annual December 1 Count. Since the children are not affiliated with school district services, they do not have an assigned teacher certified in the area of visual impairment (TVI). The TVI is the person responsible for the annual CIMC registration. The CIMC does know about some families who are home schooled, but it is very likely that other children are not counted in the annual CIMC Registry.

A question was raised about whether there are particular administrative units that have seen an increase of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired. Anchor Center is in an excellent place to share information about new diagnoses, frequency of diagnoses, etc. It is important for receiving administrative units have a timely heads up on young children that will be moving into their local school districts at age three.

REVIEW OF PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 285 surveys were mailed to parents on the CDE parent database. Five were returned as undeliverable. Anchor Center submitted 6 separate from the mailing. As such, 286 surveys were disseminated. As of December 1 2008 (updated since the VC meeting), 72 surveys were completed and returned for a return rate (thus far!) of 25%. Thanks to all who took the time to return the survey. This input will help guide both local and statewide activities. The following are key finding of the top three priorities and activities selected by parents in each of the five age groups:

Age Group	Top Priorities for Families	Top Preferred Activities
Infant / Toddlers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eye Diagnosis of My Child 2. Low Vision Devices/ Resources 3. IFSPs / Transition from One Program to Another 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities for My Child to Interact with Other Children 2. Attending Events Just for Families 3. Attending Educational Seminars
Preschoolers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brother and Sister Relationships 2. Friendships with Other Children / Transition from One Program to Another 3. Braille Instruction for My Child 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentoring Programs with Adult Role Models/ Attending Educational Seminars 2. Assistance with My Child's IEP 3. Opportunities for My Child to Interact with Other Children

Age Group	Top Priorities for Families	Top Preferred Activities
K – Grade 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendships with Other Children 2. Transition from One Program to Another Program 3. Brother and Sister Relationships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities to Interact with Other Children 2. Attending Events Just for Families 3. Attending Educational Seminars / Opportunities for Parents to Interact with Other Parents
Grade 6-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eye Diagnosis of My Child 2. Transition from School to Adult Life 3. Individualized Education Program / Low Vision Devices and Resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opportunities to Interact with Other Children 2. Attending Events Just for Families 3. Mentoring Program with Adult Role Models
Grade 9-12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transition from School to Adult Life 2. Career Planning / Employment Skills 3. Transition from One Education Program to Another 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentoring Program with Adult Role Models 2. Opportunities to Interact with Other Children 3. Opportunities to Interact with Other Parents / Attending Events Just for Families / Attending Educational Seminars
Transition Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Career Planning / Employment 2. Transition from School to Adult Life 3. Friendships with Other Children / Transition from One Education Program to Another 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mentoring Program with Adult Role Models 2. Opportunities to Interaction with Other Children

Other topics of importance to families that were listed on the surveys include: fostering independence and being part of a blind community, technology advances; reading systems to use at home and school to see better; research studies; how to transition from partial vision to blindness; more information on ways to use community and public programs; resources to pay or help pay for technology; See Eye dogs; sports activities; self esteem / self worth; scholarship opportunities; dating activities for teens; and college supports for students with disabilities.

Other activities of importance to families that were listed on the surveys include: scholarship information; joining in community activities with the organized blind; financial workshops; theater and arts programs; and computer training and technology;

Discussion: The results of our parent survey cannot be generalized due to the low return and specifically the small numbers in each age group. These data are, however, more than we have had in the past and can be used to give us some direction. The survey results are somewhat similar from a survey that one that was sent out by Parents of Blind Children. The results of that survey indicated a need for assistance with understanding the Individualized Education Program.

It is heartening that many of the selected priorities and activities are ones that already have events in place for families through the Anchor Center, the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, the

Colorado Center for the Blind, and Parents of Blind Children. It will be important to continue to advertise such events to parents and to continue to use these events as a base on which to build.

One drawback of the survey was that it was provided only in English. There is not a way to know which families, if any, on the CDE database speak a different language than English. Since the database is used primarily as a mailing list for the What's Happening Out There newsletter, which is only produced in English, it is unlikely that the list includes families who do not speak English. We know there are many families in Colorado who do not speak English. Part of the challenge is that even if the survey was made available in other languages, there are not a host of activities other than El Grupo Vida Conference which is exclusively for Spanish-speaking families of children with disabilities or the annual Family Learning Retreat, which offers Spanish interpreters on site.

The newest form of the CIMC form has a question about the family's home language. It may be helpful to collect this information to help determine potential next steps for our families who speak another language than English.

Eye diagnosis topic: This has been a topic in the metro area and can continue to be a topic of training. The metro regional group would like to schedule this topic at a future meeting and then have time for parents to meet with eye doctors.

It was suggested that we pursue trainings on optic nerve hypoplasia / septo optic dysplasia and cortical visual impairment. TVIs will go back and ask their colleagues about an interest in ONH and CVI training. Cindy Norcross will assist with the ONH training efforts.

It would be great to have more events that involve kids and families. For example, the Easter Egg Hunt with Parents of Blind Children is one that many students look forward to each year. Another example that brings kids together is the annual Braille Challenge. It was suggested that there be a fall event such as a scavenger hunt or a costume party. The Parents of Blind Children will be meeting soon to plan out an annual calendar. This would allow people to plan ahead. Events can be advertised in the What's Happening Out There newsletter.

Rene shared that here are will be plans to have a parent teleconferences that focus on a particular topic. The teleconferences can focus on a variety of topics that will address the many needs of parents and their children. It will be important to work together to ensure that we define a unified calendar of events so there are not conflicts and people have time to plan ahead. Our older students or students who have graduated are in a good position to share their wisdom with younger students and families. There may be avenues to share this information. either through specific school activities, the Summer Enrichment Program, and students on a Role Model Team.

Bemis Library in Littleton has a section of braille books and a technology room that includes an embosser, voice output systems, etc.. It would be helpful to have a class on technology specific to using a braille embossers, etc. This would be a great task for the Colorado Center for the Blind as their center is in this area. The staff in LPS, along with Catherine Trunfio, will set up training opportunities. They are looking at monthly sessions that focus on specific equipment each meeting at the library.

IDENTIFIED PARENT RESOURCES

A file of parent resources was compiled for the meeting. Items in the packet included information on events for all families of children and youth with disabilities and blindness/visual impairment specific information.

Discussion: In addition to these items, the following additional items were recommended to add to such a packet of information:

Other items to add:

- Family Learning Retreat flyer

- Pop Up IEP on the National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities website
- The Children's Cane Bank: A Cane Loan Program brochure
- Colorado Parents of Blind Children brochure
- *The Everyday Guide to Special Education Law: A Handbook for Parents, Teachers, and Other Professionals* by Randy Chapman *
- Information on family will and trust planning
- Information on guardianship
- Howard Fund brochures
- Vocational Rehabilitation brochures
- Vocational Rehabilitation Resource Guide
- Family Conferences information

** This book was highly recommended by Cindy Norcross. She has had her copy since her child was an infant/toddler. She recommended it as a resource to all families. The cost of the book is \$25 and it is available from the Legal Center.*

Rene shared that the Colorado Parents of Blind Children have recently begun sending resource packets to ophthalmologists in the state. The purpose is for the eye doctor to have the packets on hand to give to families as a visual impairment is diagnosed. This is a brand new activity of the Parents of Blind Children. It was suggested that the packets contain information about how to reach the families' local TVI. It may be easiest to refer families to Tanni at CDE for specific information about the TVI(s) within the families' local administrative unit. It was also recommended to take care not to overwhelm a family with too much information right after a diagnosis of pediatric blindness/visual impairment.

Anchor Center gives their new families a resource packet. The CSDB Infant/Toddler Program has a packet based on the Anchor packet. These packets are given to parents once their child has been enrolled in these specialized programs.

It was also suggested that a resource packet to be given to parents at IEP meeting. The packets could be organized on a regional level. Different resources may be more appropriate at different ages. As people come across new resources, please send them to Tanni so she can distribute new resources to VC members. Teacher reps are asked to have this discussion at their next regional TVI meetings about building their own packets. Tanni will post an inventory of the resource items on the CDE webpage on Blindness/Low Vision. TVIs in each region can add download items as needed and add to their packets based on regional resources.

The Family Connect website can be an announcement vehicle for Colorado events. There is a mechanism for families to request email notices of upcoming events within a state. In order for this resource to have full impact, it will be important for Colorado agencies to keep the Family Connect calendar of Colorado events up to date.

The question of an email list came up for discussion. Some families would be more likely to use a Survey Monkey method to survey parents. Mail options may be better for other families. The group discussed the importance of a variety of contact modes. Tanni agreed to modify the existing Parent Release Form for the CDE database to include an email field for those parents who might want to receive information electronically.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Northern Region (Wendy Stoltman)

Northeastern Vision Teachers from Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, NE BOCES, Greeley, Fort Collins and Brighton met
November—December 2008

along with PE teachers from various schools on November 14, 2008. The meeting was absolutely fantastic, idea filled, and inspirational. Kirk Pfeffer from Boulder Valley Schools presented on how he is adapting PE for one of his students. Kirk teaches a Motor Lab once a week in the morning before school starts. During Motor Lab he preteaches skills coming up in class. He had video of wonderful teaching/learning sequences of catching and dropping a bouncing ball, ballroom dance, rock climbing etc. Some ideas he shared were: wrapping a ball in plastic so it can be heard, adapting a puck for hockey using a singing hallmark card, light up/singing Discovery Toys puck, and teaching sequences to understand complex motor skills such as throwing. We had some discussion about how to make time in a PE teacher's day for a Motor Lab and some ideas were: sliwer grants, Kennedy Grants, extra duty time, exchange a duty for Motor Lab, PTA funding, etc. In his opinion, there is no substitute for the personal attention he provides outside of class. With a class of 29 students, even 30 seconds aside can disrupt the entire class. Kirk also teaches art, and he brought examples of how he adapted this class, but the PE portion was so comprehensive, we never got to art. Kirk, please come back!

We would like direction around the following issues:

1. RTI and O&M
2. RTI and kids without visual disabilities but who are referred for service from the TVI - including vision therapy issues
3. Online tests and instruction (Carnegie Math)
4. Literacy Plan questions: service provider and time with the choices available in Encore
5. Reading Class vs. State Conference (networking time)

Discussion: Kirk was recommended as a conference speaker! He also does wonderful adaptations for teaching art.

How RtI is implemented across the state is very diverse with low-incidence students. Tanni will follow up with her RtI notes from the AER Conference and will be inviting a group of O&M Specialists to work with her on RtI issues specific to COMS.

If there are concerns about the local computerized IEP that an administrative unit is using, these concerns should be taken to the AU's Special Education Director. CDE does not have any control over individual vendor programs. If a TVI wants to send Tanni a comment about a particular concern, she will try to compile this information and return it to the TVIs – but it should be resolved at a local level.

The next VC meeting will be dedicated to the assessment issues.

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The next meeting dates: (at Anchor Center) Thursday, January 15, 2009 from 2:00-4:00 and Friday, April 17, 2009 from 2:00-4:00

Jim Olson from CIMC brought the latest and greatest from APH! Some highlights included the Math Builders that has a geo metro kit for elementary students. The shapes are big and colorful. It also includes hands on materials to address folding shapes to assist with concept development of items that have been challenging for some of our blind students. The Azer's Interactive Periodic Table Study Set, including periodic table with Velcro manipulatives is invaluable to many teachers who have been creating and re-creating materials for science class. The options for social studies maps and graphics were shown. The high contrast with little visual clutter maps will be a very nice tool for many low vision students. TVIs got to put their hands on the first Next Generation Braille in Colorado. Thanks, Jim, for loading and unloading ALL those materials. Jim clarified the procedures for accessing large print materials from CIMC. If a text is already enlarged and available to a student, CIMC will send it. If a text is not already in large print, CIMC will not produce it. The administrative unit of the student will be responsible for its production.

JC Greeley provided handouts on the proper use of Teller Acuity Cards. This is a forced choice preferential looking test. We had a chance to ask questions and practice using the cards on each other. Ideas were given on how to keep the cards clean and protected. It was a very committed group in attendance...some people were still talking and trying things out close to an hour after the meeting was officially over! Thanks for your input, JC!

The Metro Low Vision Clinic is filled and we are expecting to have a productive few days. Thanks to Nancy Knight for getting everything finalized!

Discussion: At this time, the Metro Low Vision Clinic is not full. The clinic may close early on Saturday.

Southern Region (Stephanie Isbell)

The Southern Region met on October 22 at Tesla. We finalized agenda topics for the rest of the year. The upcoming meetings will be:

November 19	12:30 - 3:00	Bonnie Snyder – Technology Update
January 21	12:30 - 3:00	CSAPA
February 18	12:30 - 3:00	Transition Panel Discussion
April 15	12:30 - 3:00	Bonnie Snyder (topic to be announced)
May 13	12:30 - 3:00	APH / vision reports (meeting will be held at CIMC)

The Southern Region will hold their low vision clinic December 11th-13th at CSDB. We are excited to say that every slot at our low vision clinic this year should be utilized. Louise Gettman shared her early childhood caseload with the TVIs in the districts the students will be entering. Jim Olsen and Donice gave an update on CIMC and the VI registration process. Thank you for walking us through all of the changes and explaining the importance behind the process! We appreciate all the improvements that have been made to the spreadsheet.

Western Region (Barbara Adams)

One AU shared issues with district wide tests. The issues are:

1. We can braille them locally (we have done that in the past), but it took forever to get permission to do that and evidently there is no correspondence to the scores that the MAP test puts out, so they don't know what level to put our kids on. For very young test takers who need enlargement, part of the question is off the screen, for example, how many are there and they only see 3 planes or whatever, and there is actually a fourth one that they can't see that is off the screen unless they scroll. There are also charts and graphs that are not displayed totally on the screen when using enlargement, so then we get into visual memory and the ability to use screen enlargement proficiently. SO, we are testing the ability to use screen enlargement on a test for really young test takers instead of their abilities. For older kids who are very proficient in using screen magnification, this may not be a problem and they know that all parts of the question are not visible...however, then it gets into visual memory ... instead of being able to answer the question while you are also able to see the graph, chart, etc.

There are also concerns about the district alternate test being piloting by some administrative units on the western slope. The pictures in the test are of concern for students who are blind/visually impaired.

Barbara raised the following questions braille writers and missing braille volumes of books. Questions and answers are as follow:

1. ***Should individual school districts and/or parents be purchasing their own braillewriters?*** No, we should not be punished for the stuff other school districts are doing. We are diligent about returning unused braille writers and know where each and every one of ours are. The quota money is exactly for that purpose and parents cannot afford

this price. For many of our multiply impaired kids we order very little from the CIMC each year and it seems like with the money those kids generate in APH funds, that there should be money around to buy braille writers. Another person noted, for anything used exclusively at home, sure, why not? But not for any equipment that's used in school (full or even part time) and is identified on their IEP. If it's on the IEP, the school district pays for it...my opinion.

2. ***Should students be limited to one braillewriter per person?*** The students should be allowed at least two braillewriters. One for home and one for school. Unfortunately, clubs like the Lion's Club that we used to go to buy a braillewriter for a kid are no longer willing to do that. They want to do something that will benefit more than one student (a bigger community project) and have stopped buying braillewriters for students. One TVI suggested a 50-50 split between schools/students and CIMC for purchasing braillewriters, regardless of 1 or 2. Another noted that one braillewriter at school is OK but they should have another at home that the parents can pay for. This is analogous to computers all regular education students use ... school computers at school and personal computers at home. Makes sense to me. Another TVI feels two braillewriters are necessary for academic students. One TVI had a little trouble with now sending a payment for each student and then asking school districts to also buy braille writers. I thought the whole premise of the CIMC was sharing materials and perhaps the answer is for the CIMC to contact districts who have lost braillewriters and find out where the heck they are. Unfortunately, if old teachers left and new teachers are in place, it will be very hard for the new teachers to answer that question. Another TVI indicated that she wouldn't mind if districts had to pay for braille writer repair ... it is something that we could talk to our directors about that might need to be budgeted in.

3. ***Should schools/parents be billed for missing volumes of returned books?*** One TVI did think students/schools should be responsible for missing volumes. For many years, the "free" materials from the CIMC have been taken for granted, some people even believing the materials are owned by the student, once obtained. Another TVI feels missing volumes are the responsibility of the school/student and should be charged a replacement fee. Yes, the students should be required to pay for the missing volume if the cost is within reason. For example, I would not want them to be billed for \$200 for a missing math volume because the book cost \$5000, but I think they could be charged for the going cost of the print book that the district would charge if the book was lost. Sighted kids have to pay if they lose a school book--so I think our braille readers should as well. Another TVI felt I had to think about this one for a bit since ultimately, we TVIs are responsible/answerable to CIMC for what happened to those volumes so the district and parents should be billed. This needs to be taken seriously and the potential billing is an appropriate way to "turn up the heat" districts/families that are lax about keeping track of braille volumes.

Discussion: We may need to work on increasing everyone's understanding of that the CIMC materials are on loan.

CAER (Deb Carlisle)

CAER would like to congratulate Allison Utter on her mini-grant. Allison is going Europe to study architecture and we can't wait to hear all about her travels! The CAER mini-grants are reviewed twice a year, so please visit our website for more information: www.co.aerbvi.org. Funding is also provided to partially reimburse individuals for their initial and renewal ACVREP certification. We are raising money to support these endeavors by selling BPA-free, stainless steel water bottles with the CAER logo. The cost of the bottles is \$15; please contact any CAER board member if you wish to purchase one.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Julia Zanon)

Colorado DVR has had some pretty significant changes over the past few months. First, we have been looking at ways to reduce our costs so that we can continue to provide services to our eligible clients this year. Given the economy and the fact that the cost of doing business has gone up so much in the past few years, and since we have not received any additional funding to keep up with the increased costs, we have been doing the best we can to make sure that consumers receive the services they need to become employed. In the past, DVR counselors had sometimes been contracting with outside agencies for job placement and job development services. The agency has decided that since the rehabilitation counselor is trained to provide these services, we will not be contracting for these services in the future. In October, the agency administration then decided that we needed to place all new applicants on a wait list for services. Currently eligi-

ble clients will continue to receive services as planned. We are not certain how long the wait will be and the agency is monitoring our expenditures each month and will open the order of selection categories based on availability of funding. If a consumer is thinking about applying for services, it is best if they go ahead and apply because the determination of who will be served will depend on both the severity of disability as well as date of application.

Heather Hamilton has joined our counseling team at the Denver Metro office since Jackie Geib has taken a position as the client services coordinator for the personal adjustment training program at the Rehabilitation Center at 2211 W. Evans. The other personnel changes are the addition of Nancy Elliott in the Ft. Collins office and Douglas Sanderson in the Salida/Alamosa district.

The next meeting of rehabilitation counselors will be on December 3. One of the topics will be on work accommodations and accessible work sites.

Discussion: The order of selection kicks into place when there is a limitation of funding. The order of selection means that a state will dictate priority categories for services. For example, certain diagnoses may be classified in a certain category = then these categories are ranked.

Julia is also on the new Commission for the Blind. The members are working this year to gain a more informed perspective on what services are in place for individuals who are blind/visually impaired in Colorado. Tanni will attend the meeting tomorrow to share a brief update on educational services across Colorado. Julia will continue to keep us posted on the Commission's work.

Anchor Center and CSDB Early Intervention News (Cathy Smyth)

Anchor Center staff are looking forward to hosting the Denver Metro Area Teacher's Meeting, as well as the Denver Low Vision Clinic again this year at the end of this month.

The preschool is proceeding with the qualifications necessary to become a Qualistar rated facility. The staff is busy learning the IEP online software for Denver Public Schools, completing Oregon Project Evaluations as well as implementing new information learned about the improved Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessments from earlier this year. We are hoping to move a great deal of our paperwork to a "paperless" process this year; addressing releases and resources accordingly.

Anchor Center has a new Volunteer Coordinator, Karen McClurg, who will be working tirelessly over the next few months to round up and organize volunteers for program activities, administrative needs and keeping Anchor Center running smoothly. We welcome Karen gratefully, and if anyone is interested in Volunteering at the Center, contact her at 303-377-9732 x 129.

Other activities at Anchor Center include finally having access to the "Treehouse" for the Preschoolers with the help of a new volunteer and inviting our neighbors from Primrose Daycare to join the Preschoolers as they spent the afternoon with the Guide Dog Puppies. From all accounts, a good time was had by all, and there are plans to repeat the experience as well as look at other activities together.

This year Anchor Center has become the location for providing "Mobilizing Families" sessions for Denver County families, a six week opportunity to learn everything from "Managing the Healthcare system, to understanding how to make the most of services within the Denver Public Schools. It was a successful endeavor taken on by our own Karen Roberts, Family Specialist. In addition, we also sponsored a "Retinal concern diagnosis group" for our parent group in October
Discussion: Cathy talked about putting more energy to information about eye diagnoses for families per the discussion today.

Cathy noted that she appreciated the opportunity to observe the Preschool at CSDB before the last Vision Coalition

meeting. Thank you to Louise Gettman, EI Provider, for setting up the visit!

Parents of Blind Children (Rene Harrell)

The CoPOBC is looking forward to a busy and full year providing support and connection for parents throughout Colorado. On October 25th, we held a Fall Family Social and braille/large print book exchange. Saturday November 8th we held our annual Parent Seminar as part of the NFB-CO's annual convention activities. We had a very successful seminar discussing O&M and technology, and we want to thank Jim Olson, Nancy Cozart, Paula Stallman, and Michelle Chacon for participating as panel members.

The CoPOBC has developed an information and resource packet for parents of children newly diagnosed with blindness or vision loss. It includes a welcome letter, a 9 page list of local and national resources, brochures about the CoPOBC's cane exchange program and the CoPOBC, a Kernel book, and a copy of Future Reflections special "Early Years" addition. We have started distributing them to pediatric ophthalmology offices across the state of Colorado.

While not fully functional yet, we will have a website up and running sometime around Thanksgiving. The web address will be www.copobc.org. We invite one and all to check out the new website!

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Jim attended the Metro region vision teacher's meeting on November 7, 2008 and presented new APH products as well as all of the products related to Social Studies and Geography allowing TVIs to supplement classroom instruction.

On Saturday, November 8, Jim represented the CIMC on two panels sponsored by the Parents of Blind Children at the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado Convention in Colorado Springs. This provided an opportunity to discuss the VI registration process and APH technology products as well as introduce the new Perkins/APH braille to conference participants.

Of the 141 textbooks that were not returned at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, many have been sent to the CIMC after Debbie Haberkorn contacted each administrative unit with the titles of their outstanding textbooks. The CIMC would like vision coalition members to discuss how to handle the issue of textbooks that are not returned by administrative units.

2008-2009 VI registration data: Several administrative units have submitted their corrected VI registration spreadsheets to the CIMC. This data is in the process of being updated in the CIMC database in preparation for the January 5, 2009 APH Federal quota count day. Final tallies will be submitted to directors of special education along with the student assessment fee invoices by the end of January, 2009.

As of November 01, 2008:

1,105 total "VI registrations" have been completed and turned in to the CIMC.

149 of the 1,105 are infants (0-3).

777 meet the criteria for legal blindness and will be included on the annual APH quota count next January.

68 students are listed as braille users on their VI registration forms.

Braille Textbook ordering data: first semester 2008-2009: 68 students are listed as braille users on their VI registration forms and braille textbook orders have been received for 53 students for the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year. As of November 01, 2008, 814 total large print and braille orders received. 620 of these were for braille textbooks while 194 orders have been filled for large print textbooks. 12 of these orders are for second semester.

Of the 814 orders, 757 have been shipped complete (93.%) and 33 (4.1%) have been shipped partially completed. Fifteen of the orders for first semester have had purchase orders written, but the CIMC has not received any part of the book from the braille vendors as of November first. It should be noted that all 15 of these were placed after the start of the current school year and were subsequently placed in the bottom of each production queue. Orders that were received prior to May 1, 2008 have all been filled and shipped at least partially.

The processing of nine textbook orders has been put on 'hold' because the CIMC is continuing to wait for TVIs to submit ink copies of these nine textbooks before production can continue. The ink copies need to be forwarded to the braille production vendors before price quotes can be submitted to the CIMC and a purchase order (contract) can be written. Some of these nine textbook orders are for first semester books. Obviously, it is highly unlikely that a textbook can be transcribed into braille for a first semester textbook when an ink copy has not been submitted by mid November. This is certainly an issue for discussion at the vision coalition meeting.

APH ordering data: first semester 2008-2009: 447 orders for 906 APH items totaling \$64,364.25 have been filled and delivered to Colorado administrative units benefiting 142 students. The CIMC would like to remind TVIs that the CIMC is a repository and APH materials should be returned to the CIMC when a student is finished using them.

One of the new Perkins/APH brailers has been received by the CIMC. This one unit will be housed in the CIMC for staff development purposes. 9 additional brailers have been ordered and the CIMC is expecting delivery by December 2008.

Time to Place Textbook Orders for the 2009-2010 School Year: As our data shows, the sooner a textbook order is placed, the better the chance of our learners having their braille textbooks in their hands the day school starts. Please begin submitting your textbook orders for next school year as quickly as possible.

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Donna Keale)

The Short Course program has been advertised, however, due to the website being "under construction" we have not had as many request yet this year. The schedule was listed in the last *WHOT* newsletter and I can send it individually electronically if someone requests a copy.

The Role Model Team is starting to come together and hopefully will be having an activity in December for the Southern Region. The Outreach Staff have been busy working at the Deaf Symposium and preparing for the Common Sight / Common Vision Breakfast Fundraiser. The Braille Challenge will have additional activities this year for the participating students. the Outreach Department worked at the recent Symposium on Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Donna shared information about some new communication technology and good information pertinent to deafblindness.

To help save postage costs, the Outreach Department is working hard to car courier items. To help save postage costs, the Outreach Department is working hard to car courier items. To date, we have saved insurance money on transporting Braille writers, taking materials to conferences and other TVI gatherings. If you are trying to get something to CSDB please let us know and we might be close enough to meet up to receive or deliver materials.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Lou Tutt)

The School for the Blind currently has 42 students enrolled in the K-12 program and three in the Preschool program. We are also serving 40 transition-age students, both deaf and blind, in our Bridges to Life Program. We have hired one new paraeducator, Wade Adams, who is working one-to-one with a special needs high school student. We also hired one new elementary teacher, Kathleen Bosch-Leighton. Amy Gunning, who finished her student teaching with us last year, is now teaching one of our three elementary classes. Nico Alvarado, who worked for us last year as a para-educator, is now teaching English and Civics to our high school students. Karla McKechnie is on a leave of absence this school year. A researcher from NASA (Baltimore) was on campus the evening of October 29, where Mr. and Mrs. Megarry's class did

beta testing via computer on hurricanes.

White Cane Day on October 15th was celebrated by our students with an assembly and trips into the local community to raise awareness of blindness. Randy Witte hosted a visit by a class of teacher cadets from a local high school on October 28. These students are exploring careers in education. On October 27, Julie Novak escorted three blind school students to participate in the Black Forest League Honor Choir. The Bad News Bulldog Band played at the opening of the Tactual Art exhibit at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Barb Jack, art teacher, took some of her art students to the show.

Building on the success of last year's staff involvement, Superintendent Hilty is continuing the series of meetings entitled "Exploring Leadership" to give interested staff the opportunity to explore what leadership is and how it can be achieved.

Mr. Randy Witte, Braille instructor and public school liaison, was honored with the Governor's STAR Award for his many years of outstanding service to blind and visually impaired students. The award ceremony was attended by Superintendent Carol Hilty, Principal Lou Tutt and the two staff who nominated Mr. Witte, James Bristol and Rae Cunningham.

Randy Witte, Julie Novak and Lou Tutt attended the Friday session of the NFB-CO Convention in Colorado Springs the weekend of November 7. Six students from the School for the Blind were there as well and heard Principal Tutt speak at lunch time.

The School for the Blind staff attended the 3:00 p.m. session of the CSDB Board meeting on November 11, 2008. Dr. Tanni Anthony was there as well.

Ms. Julie Novak, music teacher, and her students are preparing and practicing for the upcoming annual Winter Program to be held on Thursday, December 11, 2008. Have a happy Thanksgiving!

UNC – (Paula Conroy)

The UNC Program on Visual Impairment is accepting students on the new grant and getting many rural folks who can only access online education. That was one of the original reasons for going online. Madeline Milian and Paula are working on a research project in the area of CLD and VI learners.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss has received federal funding for the next five years. Thanks to all the wonderful people who submitted letters of support for the grant proposal. The project has five broad goals that are reflected of many wonderful partnerships across the state. Ann Gillmeister and Shawn Bernard Sweet are on board as technical assistance specialists. The project also has two Family Specialists, one of who speaks Spanish! Please be in touch with Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6605 with requests for technical assistance. Technical assistance is provided at no costs to families or administrative units.

The project is working on preparing the annual mail-out of census forms to register all learners birth through 21 years who have a combined vision and hearing loss. The census forms have been sent out to agency and administrative unit contacts. Forms are due back to CDE by December 18th, 2008. If anyone has questions, please be in touch with Tanni.

The five paraeducator modules have been mailed out to a contact person in each school district. The five modules are: Overview of Working with Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired; (b) Working with Students who are Blind; (c) Working with a Students Have Low Vision; (c) Working with Students who Are Visually Impaired with Additional Disabilities, and (e) Working with Students who are Deafblind. Each module has accompanying presenters' notes and some have additional support documents. We thank Perkins School for the Blind for their permission to use some of their

PowerPoint slides and film clips from the publication *Welcoming Students with Visual Impairments to Your School*.

The first section of the Teaching Reading and Writing: An Introduction for Teachers of Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired took place in Denver on October 16-19, 2008. Fifteen persons took the course for one semester hour and 43 persons are taking the course for three semester hours. Course participants will receive CDE / ACVREP clock hours and university credit from the University of Northern Colorado. The second section of the course, which involves online session, is currently in progress. The final section will involve a 2.5 day onsite session at the Anchor Center on February 26-28, 2009.

Sarah Sonnier, Nancy Cozart, and Tanni Anthony will make their now annual trek to the National Braille Press in December to review the braille format CSAP tests for the 2008-09 administration. Information from last school year's item analysis will be used for this review.

The *CDE Braille Competency Testing Guidelines* were revised in October 2008. They are posted on the CDE webpage on blindness/low vision. The revised renewal guidelines have also been posted. For any question regarding the state-mandated braille competency requirements, please be in touch with Tanni.

Three out of the four Low Vision Evaluation Clinics are remaining for the school year. The clinic forms have been sent to the site coordinators and posted on the CDE webpage on Blindness/Low Vision.

Bonnie Snyder has been busy providing technology consultation in different locations of the state. Please be sure to access Bonnie during this school year.

The annual O&M Conference is a work in progress. CDE and CAER will be working closely on this training event. The dates have been set for May 7-9, 2009. Information will be mailed out to the COMS via email and posted in future newsletters as the conference agenda is finalized.

Colorado is the host state for the next Western Region Early Intervention Conference. The fine folks at CSDB are leading our host efforts (thanks to Jennie Germano, Diane Covington, and Michelle Brady). JC Greeley, Tanni Anthony, and Gina Quintana 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 – including Dr. Joy Brown, Dr. Toni Linder, and the Anchor Center “feeding expert” team! 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

CDE Set Aside Budget 2009-10

The budget development and review process will start internally at CDE by January, 2009. TVIs reps are encouraged to talk to the TVIs at their next regional months about what activities should be recommended for funding for the next school year. Activities will need to be tied to CDE's State Performance Plan. It will be important to talk about what activities, if any, that are specific to parent/family support will be recommended. Currently the Family Learning Retreat receives funding for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired, and Deafblind strands. Are there other parent/family support activities that should be submitted for funding?

Colorado Instructional Material Center

Discussion Items:

Submission of ink copies of textbooks to accompany order forms.

Jim shared that several other instruction resource centers require *two* ink copies of a textbook to accompany each order before it is considered “submitted.” The CIMC is trying to continue to only require a single ink copy of a textbook before production begins. The CIMC has had to routinely make up to 4 and 5 email requests of a district contact person in order to obtain an ink copy of a textbook. This delays the braille textbook production enormously and is a topic being addressed on the CIMC’s efficiency improvement plan.

Charging administrative units/students for missing volumes of braille textbooks.

If this does occur, it will be important to have a written policy that is disseminated to administrative unit personnel so that expectations are understood.

How to handle textbooks that are not returned by AUs.

It is important that the administrative unit staff receive information from the CIMC about the expectations of CIMC loaned items. It may be helpful for the TVI to be very clear with the “receiving” staff about expectations of CIMC loaned materials and texts.

New VI registration spreadsheets / procedures. Feedback from TVIs.

The CIMC has received positive feedback from most AUs regarding the easier to read font and spreadsheet format of the new and improved VI registration spreadsheets. TVIs are encouraged to forward any comments and recommended changes to the CIMC before Phase II of the VI process is completed.

Upcoming January 5, 2009 APH count day and student assessment fees

CIMC staff is currently updating the returned “Phase I” VI registration spreadsheets that were disseminated in October. “Phase II” paperwork will be mailed out the week of December 15, 2008. TVIs will then be asked to retain their spreadsheets until the actual federal count day of Monday, January 5, 2009. On that day, TVIs will compare their spreadsheets with actual district student count data and make any minor changes to their spreadsheets before mailing them back to the CIMC by the end of the week, no later than Friday, January 9, 2008. The directors of special education for each administrative unit will receive their January 2009 count data and student assessment fee billing the last week of January for consideration in their 2009-2010 budget planning process.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Tanni	Send out amended parent release form with email field	December 1, 2008
Rene Harrell	Edit parent letter to include Tanni as contact person to determine the local TVI for parents	By end of year
Nancy Cozart	Connect Jennifer at Children’s Eye Physicians with Rene Harrell	By end of year
All	Send their program update to Tanni	January 9, 2009
All	Send Tanni any materials to include in parent packet	January 9, 2009
TVI reps	Discuss budget priorities with regional TVIs	January 16, 2009
TVI reps	Discuss how to gather parent need information from families who speak another language than English	January 16, 2009
TVI reps	Discuss need with TVIs on eye condition trainings	January 16, 2009
TVI reps	Talk to regional TVIs about communicating Encore / other IEP programs directly to their Special Education Directors and to Tanni at CDE.	January 16, 2009

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
TVI reps	Talk to regional TVIs about concerns / solutions with student assess-	January 16, 2008
TVI reps	Work with regional TVIs to create parent packets	end of school year
All VC	Contribute to “spotlight on eye conditions” articles	throughout school year

Next Meetings:

January 16, 2009 at the Colorado Rehabilitation Division at 2211 West Evans in Denver

The topic of discussion will be assessments including: (a) progress monitoring tools, (b) district assessments and district alternate assessments; (c) online assessments; and (d) psychological assessments.

CIMC Phase II - VI Registration Update

Phase II:

-Updated VI Registration spreadsheets will be mailed to each Administrative Unit the week of December 15, 2008.

-On the first Monday in January of the current calendar year, all TVIs across the nation count their caseloads.

-On Monday, January 5, 2009 Colorado TVIs are asked to compare the information on their VI Registration spreadsheets with their district enrollment information, make any minor changes necessary, and return their spreadsheets by mail to the CIMC no later than Friday, January 9, 2009.

-Directors of Special Education for each AU will then receive their district’s final count information and student assessment fee billing by the last week of January for inclusion in their 2009-2010 budget planning process

COLORADO DEAFBLIND CENSUS

The Colorado Census Forms have been mailed to a specific contact person in agencies and/or administrative units who have learners, ages birth through 21 years, with combined vision and hearing loss. It is important that we register all learners who are deafblind. These learners, their families, and their service providers are eligible for free technical assistance from the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project at the Colorado Department of Education.

The census forms are due back to Tanni Anthony by December 15th, 2008. If you have questions, call Tanni at (303) 866-6681.

Save The Date!

Family Learning Retreat



June 5-7, 2009
Colorado Springs,
Colorado



This conference is for families who have a child who is deaf, blind or deafblind. If you have questions If you have questions, you can contact:

Shannon Cannizzaro (deafblind) 303-424-6077

Stefanie Morgan (blind) 719-570-0793

Gina Quintana (CDE) 303-866-6605

Diane Covington (CSDB) 719-578-2225

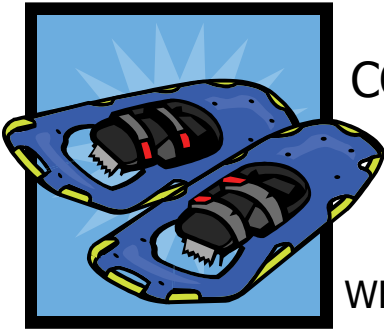
2009

This retreat is a collaborative activity by:

- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
- Colorado Families for Hands and Voices
- Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss

SNOWSHOE WEEKEND

JANUARY 30-February 1, 2009



COME JOIN THE WINTER FUN!!
7th Annual Weekend

WHO: All students with visual impairments in the state of
COLORADO, age 8 or older!

WHEN: January 30-February 1, 2009

Check in at 4:00 p.m. January 30th (Friday)

Check out at 3:00 p.m. February 1 (Sunday)

WHERE: Estes Park Center, YMCA Center of the Rockies

WHY: Why would you want to miss winter in the mountains?

COST: \$80.00 per person (but the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind has agreed to sponsor this event again, so each person is responsible for only 1/2 the cost! \$40.00 per person!)

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CSDB!

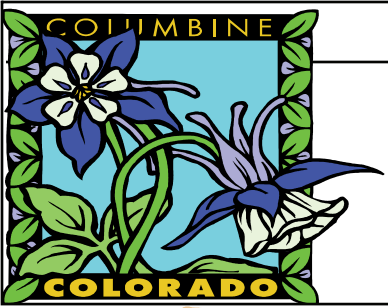
Registration forms were sent to all TVIs via email in early December. Complete the registration form and send to:

Elaine Karns
1303 Armsley Ct.
Fort Collins, CO 80525



Registration Deadline: January 3, 2009

Questions or Need a Registration Form? Contact Elaine at 970-225-6720 (evenings)



COLORADO CONNECTIONS



☞ We are so proud of **Kevin O'Brien** who participated in the recent New York City Marathon. Kevin completed the marathon on Sunday, November 2nd. Kevin describes the race as a "dream come true." NYC is the city of his youth and the race through all five boroughs of the city beginning with Staten Island. His finish time was 3:18:44 or 7:31 mile pace. Kevin, you are an inspiration!

☞ **Charles Farnsworth** is a new AER Member for the Colorado Chapter!

☞ "Happy Ever After" congratulations to **Charlotta LaSage** of the Anchor Center for Blind Children and Paul Javier on their marriage on November 15, 2008.



☞ Colorado TVIs / CSDB folks were in full attendance at the recent Annual Colorado NFB Convention: **Michelle Chacon, Jim Olson, Lou Tutt, Nancy Cozart, Paula Stallman, Julie Novak, Bonnie Snyder, and Chloann Woolley.**

☞ A very special congratulations to our very own **Randy Witte**, who was selected as a finalist for one of the State Top Achievement Recognition (STAR) Awards. Randy was on 125 employees selected out of a pool of almost 60,000 nominations!! He was then selected as the final winner!!!! He was presented with the award at a lunch with Governor Ritter on October 15th. The always humble Randy noted, "I was very honored to be chosen, and I was proud to receive the award on behalf of our field, CSDB, and the Colorado Department of Education (which is on my trophy)." Randy, you make us so very proud!



☞ Thanks to **Lori Kochevar** for all of her past work on producing the What's Happening Out There newsletters AND all the other great work to support state activities for TVIs, parents, and children who are blind/visually impaired. Lori has been the support staff teammate of Tanni's for well over a year. She was recently promoted within CDE. Congrats, Lori, and thanks for all you contributed to us!

State of Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

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6th Congressional District

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