

Editor:

Tanni L. Anthony, Ph.D.
State Consultant on
Blindness/Low Vision

Colorado Department of Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202

(303) 866-6681 (voice)

(303) 866-6767 (fax)

E-mail: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

A Little Help From My Friends

By Tanni L. Anthony

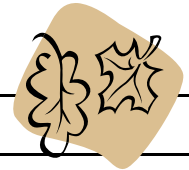


Wayne and I recently went to the Beatles Tribute at the Buell entitled *Rain*. It was a fun couple of hours to go back in time and listen to so many songs that are now hard-wired into my auditory cortex. I was struck by how some things never change. People like to get together to listen to music at all ages and to share what

we know with others. We once again have the latter opportunity to offer the TVIs for this school year ... **the CDE Mentor Project.**

So in the spirit of the Beatles' song noting *I get by with a little help from my friends*, please remember to be in touch if you would like the assistance of a mentor or to be a mentor. Mentors can help with modeling functional vision / learning media assessments, writing reports, mastering braille, using technology, training for low vision devices, the implications of certain visual disorders, and a host of other content areas.

I will work with you to match mentor and mentee. There is very little paperwork involved, it is free to the mentee, and the mentor will be paid a stipend. The goal is to just help people out whether you are still in our university teacher-training program, just out of school, returning back to the field after some time off, or you just want some assistance. We can all benefit from the wise wisdom of an experienced colleague. Let it Be!



WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired
October 2009

Table of Contents

Page	Page	Page
1 Help from My Friends	9 AT Partners	21 Calendar of Events
2 Bits from Bonnie	10 PEAK Parents Center	24 Check it Out!
3 Low Vision News	11 Resources & Materials	30 Fan Mail
6 Resource Fair	13 Transition Info	31 Global Explorers
7 See the Future Fund	17 Dots of Interest	32 Vision Coalition
8 Spotlight on Cataracts	20 Jobs	39 Colorado Connections



Bits From Bonnie

By Bonnie Snyder

BonnieLS21@gmail.com

[HTTP://TVIVIP.Org](http://TVIVIP.Org)

Here is some information to pass along to your students. If they have any interest in alternate operating systems, they might want to take a look at [Vinux](#). Vinux is a form of Linux (based on the Debian model) that is configured particularly for the blind and visually impaired. It uses prewritten scripts to allow the screen reader/magnifier, Orca, to access all of the operating system files plus a wide variety of applications.

Why Vinux (or Linux of any kind)? It is a free operating system with a huge collection of free applications to go with it. The people who have developed Vinux are, themselves, blind and visually impaired. They have made very clever modifications to Linux that create accessibility never experienced before in the Linux world.

In order to try Vinux out, you don't have to load it on to your system to replace your present operating system. You can obtain a version of it that can go on to a flash drive or CD and you can load it as you would any other application. It will run as if your computer had Vinux installed which will give you a good means of using and evaluating it. Learn more about Vinux at <http://vinux.org.uk/>. There is also a mail list which is very helpful in following the development of Vinux and providing support to Vinux users. Go to <http://groups.google.com/group/vinux-development?hl=en> to subscribe.

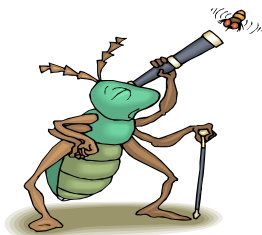
SAVE THE DATE

Getting In Touch With Literacy
Costa Mesa California
2009

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

LOW VISION NEWS



LARGE PRINT: TO BE OR NOT TO BE

By Tanni Anthony and Jim Olson



We are fortunate to live in a time of technology where there are many accessibility options for students who are blind/visually impaired. The educational teams of these learners should base the selection of learning and literacy media upon defensible assessment data. Large print may certainly be an option for many students, as may be prescribed magnification devices, screen reading enlargement software programs, digitized text, and/or braille.

As teachers of students with visual impairments complete Learning Media Assessments, they determine what learning and literacy media is appropriate for their students who are blind/visually impaired. For many students, large print may be a valid option for assessment and instructional materials. Like all other media choices, there is a need for defensible data to ensure that large print is a viable learning tool. The decision should be data-driven, not simply teacher / parent preference or because someone believes that a book can be easily ordered in large print whether it is needed or not. Large print should not be a substitute for a broken or lost magnification device. Included in the data collection process, should be information about the (sustained) reading efficiency of a student with different fonts and font size. The answer of the title of this article is that if a student needs large print, as demonstrated through appropriate assessment and instructional documentation, large print “is to be.”

If a student will benefit from large print texts, the Colorado Instructional Materials Center will be happy to source large print textbooks from their current in-house inventory, as well as nationwide on the listserv of other instructional materials centers across the country who loan items between states. Currently the CIMC will purchase large print APH texts with federal quota funds, if they are available. The CIMC will not, however, incur costs in dollars and/or staff time to produce large print books onsite. The decision was made with the input of the special education directors who met in March and May 2008 at the directors' forum meetings.

Does this mean that a Colorado student cannot receive a textbook in large print? No, it does not. It may be found through the CIMC sources or it may be produced within the local administrative unit. Many people may be unaware that many of these textbooks were created in the past using extensive CIMC staff time and copy machines. This responsibility is now placed on the administrative unit or the state operated program who provides the educational services for a student who is blind/visually impaired.

The CIMC has developed information to provide guidance on how to enlarge a book to a specific font size using a copy machine (see information at the end of this article). The copying

Continued next page

of a single copy in large print format does not violate copyright law when the book is used for educational purposes exclusively by persons who are blind or have other disabilities.

Section 306 of the Copyright Act, 121(d)(3) of Title 17, United States Code, defines specialized formats to include braille, audio, or digital text which is exclusively for use by persons who are blind or have other disabilities. Section 306 of the Copyright Act was amended by IDEA 2004 and print instructional materials now include large-print formats when such materials are distributed exclusively for use by persons who are blind or have other disabilities.

Our goal is to ensure that our students have access to all the materials of their sighted peers. Large print textbooks may well be one avenue of accessibility. Questions about the CIMC's role specific to large print texts, should be directed to Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org or (719) 578-2195. Questions about Learning Media Assessments should be directed to Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6681.

Guidelines for Large Print Reproduction

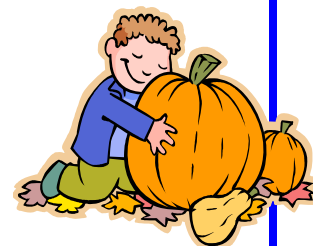
Fourteen to 18 point font is considered large print although 18 point is usually the requested font. All large print reproduction at CIMC was done on a copy machine capable of utilizing 11" x 17" paper.

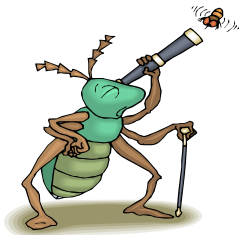
- It is much easier to reproduce a book if you are able to remove the binding.
- It is up to the administrative unit to decide if the book will be single sided pages or double sided.
- To begin the process of enlargement a good zoom magnification setting is 150%. The zoom is adjusted as needed to reach the desired enlargement, keeping in mind you will usually need at least ½" margin for the binding. Remember the page may need to be adjusted off of center on the copier to accommodate the margins needed for binding.
- A Self-Help Vision Chart is available from Large Print Reproduction Services (LRS). They can be reached at: 800-255-5002. This is a print copy of font sizes that will help you determine if the font is the desired size.

You may contact the CIMC with further questions:

Donice Fennimore, (719) 578-2198, dfennimore@csdb.org

Debbie Haberkorn, (719) 578-2120, dhaberkorn@csdb.org





The CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Proposed Clinic Schedule for School Year 2009-2010



Region	Dates	Location	Site Coordinators
Metro	November 12-14, 2009	Anchor Center	Nancy Knight
Northern	February 19-20, 2010	Brighton School District	Wendy Stoltman and Danielle Hillebrand
Southern	March 5 and 10, 2010	CSDB in Colorado Springs	Donice Fennimore

REGIONAL LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC REPORTS

By Donice Fennimore

The Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinics for the 2009-2010 school year got off to a good start Friday, September 18, and Saturday, September 19, 2009 with a two-day Southern Region Clinic held in the newly relocated low vision room in the School for the Blind on the campus of CSDB.

Representing the ten students seen at the clinic were four teachers of students with visual impairments and one student advocate: Diane Fitzkee (Falcon EP 49), Holly Guinan (Fountain/Ft. Carson EP 8), Kathy Gallina (South Central BOCES), and Chloann Woolley (Ute Pass BOCES); and Julie Novak, (student advocate from CSDB). Six administrative units were represented at the southern region clinic.

The low vision team was especially excited to have Claudia Johnson from Ute Pass BOCES. It is wonderful to see attendance of the clinic by a special education administrator.

The team then moved on to have a great Low Vision Evaluation clinic in Grand Junction. The two-day clinic, held Friday, September 25 and Saturday, September 26, 2009 in Grand Junction, was an awesome experience for the nine students with visual impairments and their parents who attended. The nine students were represented by five teachers for the visually impaired (TVIs) representing four districts from the Western Slope Region. A big thanks to Sarah Sonnier and Angela Sims, Mesa 51; Kevin O'Brien, Montrose; Julie King, Mountain BOCES; and Stephanie Labossiere, NW BOCES for bringing students to the clinic.

It was apparent that parents of the attending students left the clinic with a better understanding of their child's diagnosis, as well as, available devices to assist in the literacy endeavors of their children.

The low vision team would also like to extend a special thanks to the staff of the Hawthorne building for allowing us to utilize their facility and their help in making the clinic a success. A big thanks to Sarah Sonnier for her impressive work as site coordinator.

The Metro Region Low Vision Clinic will be held at the Anchor Center for the Blind in Denver, Thursday—Saturday, November 12-14, 2009.

**NOVEMBER 5-8, 2009
RESOURCE FAIR FOR PARENTS
OF BLIND AND VISUALLY
IMPAIRED CHILDREN**



A WEEKEND OF INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION!

Parents and Teachers of blind and visually impaired children of all ages take note! The Colorado Parents of Blind Children organization (POBC) and the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado are planning an event packed weekend you won't want to miss. All activities will be held at the Double Tree Hotel, 3203 Quebec St., Denver. Here are the highlights:

On Thursday, November 5th, a Resource Fair with over 40 exhibits of interest to parents and teachers of blind and visually impaired children will kick off the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado Convention at the Double Tree Hotel. "A Fair For All" exhibits will include demonstrations of the latest computer technology for the blind and visually impaired; toys that encourage auditory and tactile exploration; resources for participation in sports; hands on demonstrations of daily living skills techniques, and much more. At the same time, the POBC will be hosting break-out sessions in the morning and afternoon including "Making the IEP Work", "Computer Technology: What's New and What's Needed", "Career Exploration or 'What am I Going to Do When I Grow Up?'" and a "Teens Only Roundtable Rap". Lunch is included in the low registration fee of \$10 if registered by November 1st. After November 1 the registration fee will be \$15. (Please note: Registration for Thursday's Resource Fair is separate from the rest of the convention events.)

But, that's not all! There will be workshops for parents on Friday and Saturday afternoons as well. (NFB of Colorado convention sessions will be held in the mornings.) On Friday afternoon (Nov. 6) you won't want to miss "Cane Travel Lessons for Parents" and "Cane Travel Scavenger Hunt for Kids." Saturday afternoon the POBC workshop will explore the topic of communication and examine some of the challenges faced when trying to teach skills to children with visual impairments (for example, tying a tie, cutting with a knife, tying shoes). Some fun "hands-on" exercises will help improve communication skills...and make us laugh! The cost for all Friday, Saturday and Sunday events is \$15, if pre-registered or \$20 at the door.

To register, or for more information, contact Julie Hunter (jhunter@cocenter.org) or call 303-778-1130, extension 216.



THE SEE THE FUTURE FUND
Scholarships for the Blind & Visually Impaired



“Tools for Life” Program—Deadline Approaching!

Application Deadline: October 15, 2009

The Need: A visually impaired or blind student may be highly motivated and highly educated, but without the proper adaptive devices (tools) they are not able to perform to their highest level. Visually impaired and blind students need special “tools” to interact and compete with their sighted peers. Unfortunately, many families can not afford these tools for their children due to their financial situation.

The Mission: To provide financial assistance to the families of visually impaired and blind students (pre-K – Transition) who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to help purchase necessary & appropriate adaptive equipment which students may own and utilize in their home, school, and community. These tools will help support literacy and the pursuit of higher education.

To apply for a “Tools for Life” scholarship and to obtain more information, please go to: www.seethefuture.org and click on “Tools for Life” scholarships. You may also call Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at 719.471.3200 or email: twtheune@prodigy.net.

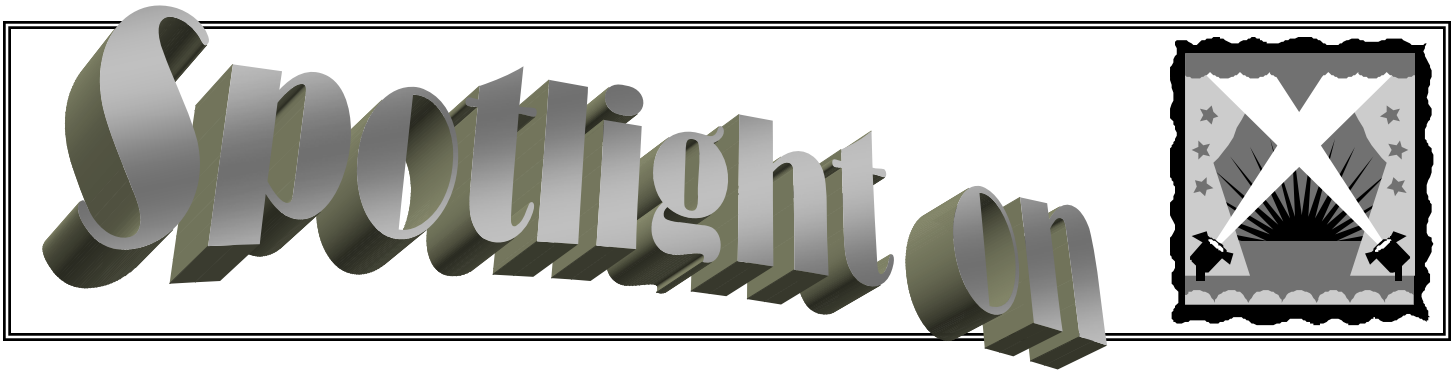
PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS

November 5 - 7, 2009—Vail

2nd Conference Date & Location—TBD

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: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>



Congenital Cataracts

Information Retrieved from: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1210837-overview>

Background

A cataract is an opacification of the lens of the eye. Congenital cataracts usually are diagnosed at birth. If a cataract goes undetected in an infant, permanent visual loss may ensue. Cataracts may be located in the center of the lens (nuclear), or they may involve the lens material underneath the anterior or posterior lens capsule (subcapsular or cortical). Not all cataracts are visually significant. If a lenticular opacity is in the visual axis, it is considered visually significant and may lead to severe visual impairment. If the cataract is small, in the anterior portion of the lens, or in the periphery, no visual loss may be present.

Unilateral (in one eye) cataracts are usually isolated sporadic incidents. They may be caused by chromosomal anomalies, metabolic disease (e.g., galactosemia), or intrauterine infection (e.g., rubella) or other maternal disease during pregnancy.

Bilateral (both eyes) cataracts are often inherited and may be associated with other diseases. They require a full metabolic, infectious, systemic, and genetic workup. The common causes are hypoglycemia, trisomy (e.g., Down, Edward, and Patau syndromes), myotonic dystrophy, infectious diseases (e.g., toxoplasmosis, rubella, cytomegalovirus, herpes simplex, and prematurity).

Frequency

In the United States, the incidence of congenital cataracts is 1.2-6 cases per 10,000. The incidence internally is unknown. Although the World Health Organization and other health organizations have made outstanding strides in vaccinations and disease prevention, the rate of congenital cataracts is probably much higher in underdeveloped countries.

History

- Congenital cataracts are present at birth but may not be identified until later in life. Prenatal and family history is helpful.
- Some cataracts are static, but some are progressive. This explains why not all congenital cataracts are identified at birth.
- Cataracts that typically progress include posterior lenticonus, persistent hyperplastic primary vitreous, lamellar, sutural, and anterior or posterior subcapsular. They usually have a better prognosis because they only usually begin to obstruct the vision after the critical period of visual development has passed.
- Not all cataracts are visually significant. If a lenticular opacity is in the visual axis, it usually is

considered visually significant and requires removal.

- Cataracts in the center of the visual axis that are greater than 3 mm in diameter are generally considered visually significant. This principle is furthermore correlated with the clinical ophthalmological examination of the patient.
- The association of amblyopia with a cataract is most often based on the level of anisometropia (unequal vision between the eyes) as a result of the cataract.

Treatment

Removal of a cataract within 17 wk after birth permits the development of vision and cortical visual pathways. Cataracts are removed by aspirating them through a small incision. In many children, an intraocular lens may be implanted. Postoperative visual correction with eyeglasses, contact lenses, or both is usually required to achieve the best outcome. A teacher certified to work with students with visual impairments will provide guidance on needed specialized materials/ equipment, and instruction.



Assistive Technology Partners
BREAKING BARRIERS, CHANGING LIVES

Assistive Technology Partners Open House

Colorado Springs
Wednesday, October 14, 3 - 5:30pm
828 Wooten Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80915

Grand Junction
Wednesday, October 14, 3 - 5:30pm
2897 North Avenue, Modular 3A
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Denver
Wednesday, October 14, 3 - 5:30pm
601 E 18th Ave, Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203

Governor Ritter has proclaimed October 11 – 17, 2009 Assistive Technology Awareness Week in Colorado. In celebration, Assistive Technology Partners is hosting an Open House. Please join us to see some of the many devices and services that are available for individuals with disabilities and senior citizens to support independence at home, at work, and in the community! There will be light refreshments, tours of the center, and demonstrations on the latest technology!

To RSVP, please email ATP@ucdenver.edu or call 303.315.1280 or toll-free 1.800.255.3477

www.AssistiveTechnologyPartners.org



About PEAK Parent Center

PEAK Parent Center helps families and educators see new possibilities for their children with disabilities. The mission of PEAK Parent Center is to provide training, information and technical assistance to equip families of

children birth through twenty-six including all disability conditions with strategies to advocate successfully for their children. As a result of PEAK's services to families and professionals, children and adults with disabilities will live rich, active lives participating as full members of their schools and communities. PEAK helps families make informed decisions about early childhood, education, transition, employment, recreation, and other services for their children.

What does PEAK Provide?

- A toll-free hotline with trained parent advisors who provide information, support, and referrals.
- An online calendar of events hosted by parent support groups across Colorado.
- Workshops statewide on successfully educating children with disabilities.
- An annual Conference on Inclusive Education attended by hundreds of parents and educators.
- SPEAKout newsletter which contains the latest information and updates for families.
- Books and videos on how to successfully educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms.
- A family library to help parents increase their knowledge and skills in advocating for their children's education.
- A leadership-training program for parents of young children.

How much do these services cost?

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

Where is the PEAK Parent Center?

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

How do I contact PEAK?

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

Phone: 719-531-9400 or 800-284-0251

Fax: 719-531-9452

Email: info@peakparent.org

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

Resources and Materials



Test Access

Making Test Items Accessible

The 4th edition of *Making Tests Accessible for Students with Visual Impairments: A Guide for Test Publishers, Test Developers and State Assessment Personnel*, copyright July 2009, will be available on the APH website this month. This document includes guidelines, information, and resources relevant to braille and tactile graphics, large print test formats and graphics, use of color, audio formats, and much more. The section on accommodations has been updated and a new segment on alternate assessments has been added. A variety of position papers such as use of an abacus during test taking, extended time and accommodations are included in the appendices. For access to this document prior to its availability on the APH website, contact Debbie Willis at dwillis@aph.org.

The IEP: A Tool for Realizing Possibilities

A Toolkit Developed for PEAK Parent Center

This new toolkit created by PEAK Parent Center, Inc. holds all of the resources you need to teach yourself and others how to have a successful IEP meeting.

The toolkit includes:

- A training script
- Resource handouts
- A Power Point presentation
- A Fast Flip booklet of key ideas
- Communication Tip cards

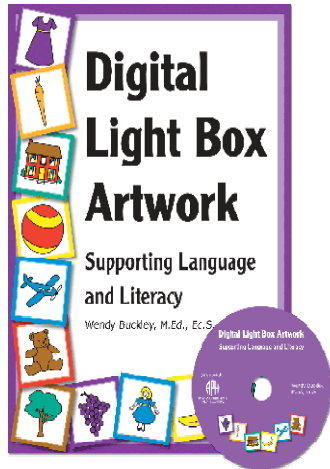
SPECIAL PRICE \$49 (regularly priced \$75)

To purchase your kit visit www.PEAKparent.org or call (800) 284-0251

Resources and Materials

Digital Light Box Artwork: Supporting Language and Literacy

Transitioning from the Light Box to the computer made simple!



Use the Digital Light Box Artwork (DLBA) in computer programs to provide extension activities for the Light Box and/or provide familiar images for children who transition from Light Box to computer activities.

The American Printing House for the Blind has digitized the individual art pieces from the APH Light Box Materials for use on the computer. The accompanying instruction guide teaches how to create personalized activities for cause & effect, choice making, and multiple choice. The artwork is compatible with both Windows® and Mac® platforms and can be used with many commercially available authoring programs, such as Clicker 5®, and Boardmaker®. The artwork files are provided in the .png format. The instruction guide gives detailed instructions on how to create activities using PowerPoint®.

Each piece of artwork is available in black line, red line, and full color. Instructions teach the user to change and/or add color to the artwork. This function is great for learners with cortical visual impairment who demonstrate a color preference. Instructors can create full-page black line art for a coloring activity to enrich the classroom lesson or as a take home project.

Digital Light Box Artwork: Supporting Language and Literacy Catalog Number: 1-08691-00, \$40.00. Format: E-File. *(Thanks to Jim Olson of the CIMC for sharing this information)*

June Sports Education Week

By Donna Keale, Sports Education Week Coordinator, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

CSDB was happy to host the 6th annual Sports Education Week, June 14-19th. Nineteen students from Colorado gathered on a Sunday afternoon. With a quick sign in and good bye to parents, they were off to the pool, kicking off a week of adventure. Athletes participated in a variety of activities from swimming, track and field, goalball, karate, judo, wrestling, zumba, rock climbing, kickball, soccer, golf, and tandem cycling.

Along with sports activities, we incorporated literacy into the camp. Each day after lunch or dinner, the athletes were given the opportunity to journal. Originally, the staff felt a little hesitant about how this would work out, but much to their surprise, journaling provided the most insightful piece of the camp. Quotes from athletes journals included:

“Next year, I really want to come back. I made a lot of friends this week. I think my favorite thing to do was either goalball or rock climbing.”

“I learned a lot about wrestling. We learned about the rules, some moves, and history of the sport.”

“Tandem biking was super fun. It was my first time riding a bike and I was really nervous. My pilot helped me a lot with keeping my balance and peddling.”

“My favorite part about camp is all my new friends.”



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Blind Teens Have Fun While Gaining Work Experience

by Karen A. Myers, St. Louis, Missouri

Q: Are there work programs available for blind high school and college students? What kinds of jobs can I get?

A: It is important for high school and college students with vision impairments to gain paid work experience to begin building employment histories. According to the January 2009 Current Population Survey, of the "4 million people who reported blindness or serious difficulty seeing, approximately 3 million [75 percent] were identified as 'not in the labor force'" (www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=15&SubTopicID=177). This alarming statistic should be a wake-up call for all of us to take action.

Full-and part-time paid jobs listed on your resume indicate to future employers that you are employable, have the necessary skills to do the job, and are not interested in being in the 75 percent of people with vision impairments who are unemployed. And getting a paycheck certainly helps the bank account! Volunteer work is a great learning tool and indicates a belief in service to your community; however, you may want to search for volunteer jobs that have high potential to turn into paid employment.

There are several ways to go about finding a job. You can search on your own for full-time or part-time employment through online newspaper ads, local job Web sites, and Web sites of particular companies with whom you would like to work. High school students are encouraged to ask school guidance counselors for information about youth career fairs, local job banks and teen employment programs. College students can seek job search assistance from the campus career services center and disability support services office. Employers often share job announcements and internship opportunities (some of which are paid) with these departments and also send representatives to participate in on-campus career fairs. Take advantage of these types of fairs, interviews, and meet-and-greet sessions. They are ideal for networking and getting to know people who can assist you in the job search.

Although most of these jobs will not be specific to students with visual impairments, you might find jobs for which you are qualified with or without an accommodation. I encourage you to check these out and apply for those in which you are interested. And remember, it is up to you when you choose to disclose your visual disability. You may want to do so upfront in a cover letter or job application while emphasizing your qualifications and experiences or you may want to wait until a face-to-face interview. At some point you will need to request accommodations, and, when you do, you want to make it a comfortable experience for all parties involved--including yourself.

Job hunting may seem overwhelming. Keeping it all organized may appear to be a daunting task. I strongly encourage you to seek assistance from family, friends and counselors. A unique user-friendly site that you may find helpful is eSight Careers Network, <http://esight.org/> A service of Lighthouse International, this site is "a powerful resource for learning how to manage your career or effectively deal with disability employment issues," according to eSight. There are job postings from disability-friendly employers who are interested in creating inclusive work environments. Additionally, there are articles about finding a job and where to begin, resources for job seekers and postings on community news as well as a networking forum. By creating your own membership login, you will be able to organize your job search and take advantage of the eSight services.

Continued next page

Continued from page 12

You might want to check out state and local summer work programs for students with visual impairments. Contact your state vocational rehabilitation agency. Find a list at www.jan.wvu.edu/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902. Some other useful Web sites for teen employment and internships as well as a sampling of accessible titles are listed at the end of this article.

For examples of the types of jobs blind students are finding, I spoke with Alyson Slaughter and Michelle Wesley, two college students with visual impairments who shared their insights about summer jobs. Alyson, 28, a nontraditional student, legally blind since birth, attends Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. She is working on a second career in sports nutrition after a career as a licensed attorney.

Through her undergraduate years, she worked summers as a nanny, a paid job she found on her own through family friends. She cared for the three children in their home and spent much of the time at the local pool playing with the youngest child while the older children swam and played with friends. "Their mom took us since I was unable to drive. I was an experienced swimmer and there were plenty of life guards around, so I wasn't worried about the other children. I knew they were safe. It was a great job." She felt at ease and confident as a nanny, and was comfortable talking to her employer about her visual limitations. Alyson's employer had confidence in her, and Alyson did not believe that her low vision was an issue. Later as a law student, she worked summers in a legal clinic for free, interviewing clients and completing paperwork on the computer. "I felt comfortable asking my professors for accommodations, such as large print, ZoomText on my computer, and extra time to complete work if I needed it. They were nice about it, and it wasn't an issue." In her new degree program, she will do an extensive internship during the summer. Her advice to high school and college students is to apply for any job you want and are interested in doing. "Be independent," Alyson said. "Ask for accommodations, have confidence in yourself and just go for it!"

Michelle, 21, is a junior animal science pre-vet major and chemistry minor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is legally blind due to an autoimmune disease in her eyes and joints, and uses a white cane, large print, ZoomText, and a scanner for school books. Michelle has worked in a downtown art gallery and at an animal hospital for the past three summers. The art gallery is a project for people ages 14 to 21, 10 percent of whom have disabilities. The hiring process consists of an application and portfolio submission, and the work entails painting outside all day long. "Best job ever!" said Michelle.

The animal hospital was "a bit trickier." As an animal science major, she had been looking for a job in her field for a year and was unsuccessful she believes due to her visual disability. Through acquaintances, she was able to arrange a job shadowing experience with an animal hospital technician. "We clicked from there," Michelle explains, and she soon had a paid position. This is an excellent example of how volunteer work or shadowing can lead to a paid position. As a veterinarian's assistant she is responsible for "bringing in patients, taking histories, charting, assisting with holding and restraining, monitoring surgeries, running lab work, taking phone calls, and pretty much anything else that needs to be done.

"Assistants are like nurses to vets," she said, "and I am learning new things every day."

Regarding accommodations, Michelle said that her bosses are very accommodating. "In the art program, since it was a city job at least 10 percent of employees had to have disabilities so my employers have had a lot of experience with all types of accommodations. At the vet clinic we constantly talk about what I can and can't do and ways to improve since every day there brings new challenges with the different patients." Michelle recommends both of these types of jobs to other students with visual impairments if they are willing to adapt. Animal Science is a highly "visual field, and I have learned that there are some things that I can't do," she said. "If you are willing to accept help from others and be flexible with accommodations, it is very possible to succeed."

Resources

There is a wealth of information to help teens explore careers and find jobs. A guide specifically for teens and young adults who are blind or have low vision is **JOB HUNTING RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH**

Continued from page 14

VISION IMPAIRMENTS by Karen Lynn Thomas with Carol M. McCarl and Nolan Crabb available from Blindskills in large print, cassette and diskette formats for \$10 per copy. For information or to order contact Blindskills at 800-860-4224 or visit <http://blindskills.com/publications.html>.

Career Books for Teens:

How To Get a Job If You're a Teenager by Cindy Pervola and Debby Hobgood (NLS: RC 47766, BR 11987 and Web-Braille)

Young Person's Occupational Outlook Handbook (NLS: RC 56352, DB 56352, BR 14794 and Web-Braille)

Career Choices: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults - Who Am I? What Do I Want? How Do I Get It? by Mindy Bingham and Sandy Stryker (RFB&D: GZ478 CD and Downloadable AudioPlus)

The Career Fitness Program: Exercising Your Options by Diane Sukiennik, William Bendat and Lisa Rauffman (RFB&D: HP726 CD and Downloadable AudioPlus)

Career Wisdom for College Students: Insights You Won't Get in Class, On the Internet, or from Your Parents by Peter Vogt (RFB&D: JG626 CD and Downloadable AudioPlus)

TeenWork: Four Teens Tell All - A Guide for Finding Jobs by Noreen E. Messina (RFB&D: HS434 CD and Downloadable AudioPlus)

Teen Job Sites:

www.myfirstpaycheck.com/

www.gotajob.com

www.snagajob.com

www.quintcareers.com/summer_job_sites.html

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/justforstudents/a/teenjobs.htm>

http://careerplanning.about.com/od/adviceforkidsandteens/Advice_for_Children_Teens_and_Parents.htm

Teen Self-Employment:

www.ja.org

www.mindyourownbiz.org

Teen Internships:

<http://fastweb.monster.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/104225>

www.twc.edu/disability_services.shtml

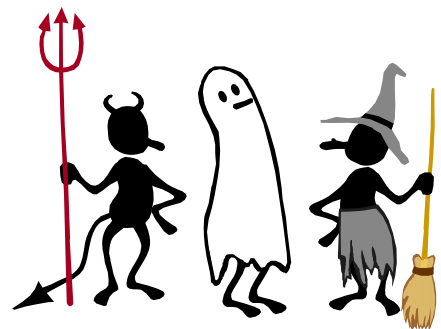
Teen Volunteer Opportunities:

<http://teenadvice.about.com/cs/volunteering/>

The above article was first published in DIALOGUE, January-February 2007. For a free sample issue of DIALOGUE or information about other publications, contact Blindskills, Inc., P.O. Box 5181, Salem, OR 97304-0181; Phone: 800-860-4224; E-mail: info@blindskills.com; Web site: www.blindskills.com.

Sincerely,

B. T. Kimbrough, Executive Director, Blindskills Inc., Salem, Oregon





MORE TRANSITION INFORMATION

Seven Tips for Partnering with Your Child's School During the Transition Years

By Amanda Green, Parent Training and Information Project

Before you realize it, your child is a teenager. When he was young, he was eager for you to admire his finger painting, attend school events, and help out with math circle. Now school notices are lost in the backpack, and the answer to "How was your day at school?" is a mutter. Your child is learning to be independent, yes, but does this mean that you have a lesser role to play? No! In fact, during the Transition years of 14 – 22, the partnerships you foster with your child's school can be key to his success as an adult.

Contrary to what you might think, research clearly shows that parents – not peers – still exert the biggest influence on teenagers. Teens whose parents are involved at school, check homework, and know their children's friends have more positive post-high school outcomes than teens whose parents do not.

7 tips to stay involved during middle and high school years:

- **Most importantly, get to know your child's teachers, and make sure they know you and your child.** Middle and high school teachers are committed to helping kids – yet they are exceptionally busy people, often with large numbers of students. At the beginning of the year, make a pleasant phone call or send a cheerful e-mail introducing yourself as Sarah's Mom, expressing your interest in partnering, and asking how you can be most helpful.

- **By law, teachers are responsible for implementing your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).** Ease your child's transition to the new year by creating a "Sarah-at-a-Glance" one-page document, highlighting your child's learning strengths and needs, as well as necessary accommodations and modifications. Sitting down with your teen to draw this up together will help to develop her self advocacy skills. Distribute this document to all your child's teachers and service providers. Your child's teachers will still need to read the entire IEP, but your one-pager will help the process along.

- **According to the law, your child is entitled to receive progress reports as often as children who do not have IEPs.** If you want more frequent updates, phone your child's teacher at regular intervals – perhaps once a week – and ask for a return phone call. Educators are usually good about returning calls, but they are busy people and appreciate reminders. If your child's school uses a Web site to update parents on student progress and assignments, be sure to check it regularly. Talk to your child about his schoolwork, too. Even though he's older, he will be more successful if he knows you're still interested and involved.

- **During the Transition years, it's important for you, your child, and the school to begin partnering together so that your child will develop the skills necessary for a successful**

adulthood. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education has created a Transition Planning Form, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf>, which you can print out and bring to your child's IEP meeting. Before the meeting, use the form as a guide to talk with your child about his vision for the future. What kind of job would he like to have? Where would he like to live? What are his hobbies, talents, interests? What are his needs? What skills will he need to develop to achieve his vision? At the IEP meeting, use this information to guide the Team's discussion. From age 14 onward, your child must be invited to attend IEP meetings so both you and your child will be able to provide key input into the process. Once the discussion is concluded, goals should be transferred from the Transition Planning Form to the IEP.

- **Learn about best practices in Transition by searching the Web, by reading, and by attending workshops.** Share information and resources with your child (to help her become an effective self advocate) and with her teachers. Good general books on Transition planning include: *Universal Design for Transition: A Roadmap for Planning and Instruction* by Thoma, Bartholomew, and Scott and *What Every Teacher Should Know About Transition and IDEA 2004* by Kochhar-Bryant, Shaw, and Izzo. Review the Transition Web sites in the Spring 2008 issue of *Newsline*, available online at http://fcsn.org/publications_resources/newsline/nlv28n4.pdf. Three times a year, the Federation sponsors a two-day Transition planning conference. Learn more at <http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/transition.php>, and invite your child's teachers to attend with you!

- **Network with other parents in your local special education parent advisory council (PAC).** Learn about your school district's services for students of Transition age, and volunteer to meet regularly with school officials as a PAC representative to discuss district Transition programming. According to state law, the PAC's role is to advise the school district "on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities." By partnering with other parents and with your school, you can have a positive impact on both your own child's education and on the education of all students on IEPs.

Make community connections. Get to know local business owners. Find out how people with disabilities can become involved in your community through recreation programs, volunteering, or jobs. Not only will you build future connections for your own child, you will also help to increase opportunities for other students when you share these resources with your school.

Reprinted with permission from the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Original article is from their newsletter, *NEWSLINE*, Winter 2009 ed., page 8.



DOTS OF INTEREST



BRaille TRANSCRIBER'S MENTOR PROJECT

With the goal of increasing the number of certified Braille transcribers who can produce quality materials for Colorado school students who read Braille, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Exceptional Student Leadership Unit has once again funded the Braille Transcriber's Mentor Project. This mentor project, coordinated by the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC), allows experienced transcribers to mentor Colorado residents who are enrolled in the literary Braille transcribing course through the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress (NLS) and the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute. Upon successful completion of the course, participants receive a Library of Congress certificate in literary Braille transcribing.

The CIMC attempts to pair mentors and mentees in similar geographical areas to allow for personal mentoring opportunities. Applications for the literary Braille transcribing course are available online at www.nfb.org. The course and the new 5th edition instructional manuals are provided free of charge.

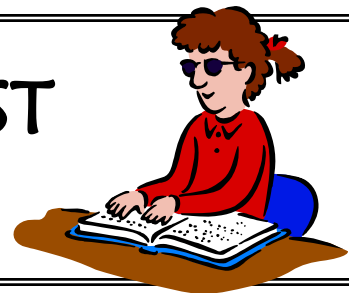
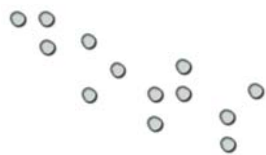
**For more information contact Jim Olson
at the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)
at (719) 578-2195 or jolson@csdb.org**

Step-By-Step Instructions on the APH Refreshabraille 18

A Refreshabraille 18 YouTube Tutorial (three lessons) is now available on YouTube by our student instructor Chase Crispin. Additional lessons will follow.

1. [APH Refreshabraille Display, with Chase Crispin \(Part 1\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ_aYCJ0yAE)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ_aYCJ0yAE
2. [APH Refreshabraille Display, with Chase Crispin \(Part 2\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSJVRrd_AI0)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSJVRrd_AI0
3. [APH Refreshabraille Display, with Chase Crispin \(Part 3\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNpb4OmkWOc)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNpb4OmkWOc>

DOTS OF INTEREST



Interested persons can receive a free copy of the CD of Louis Braille's 1829 book, The CD contains page images of the book, a transcription of the French text, and a translation into English. You can request a copy with an e-mail to jtblibrary@nfb.org. Please be sure to include a mailing address.



Braille Readers Are Leaders—27th Annual K-12 Contest

November 1, 2009 – January 4, 2010

The National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille, and the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children are pleased to announce the 27th annual Braille Readers Are Leaders contest. This contest encourages children around the country to be proud of their ability to read Braille and continually work to improve their skills. Children in grades K-12 can win T-shirts, cash prizes, and even an all-expenses-paid trip to the 2010 NFB Convention! This year participants will have the opportunity to form teams and compete for a special award. Gather your best friends, show your team spirit, and read read read! This year we are asking that all contestants register online at www.nfb.org/bral All who register by December 1st will get a tee-shirt.

The braille pages must be read between November 1, 2009, and January 4, 2010 All contest materials must be received no later than Friday, January 22, 2010. To request a paper registration form please contact:



Braille Readers Are Leaders

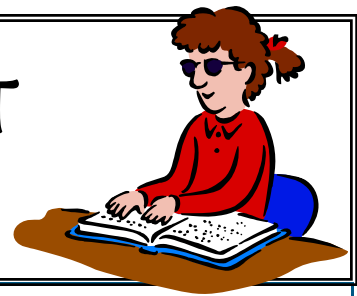
Phone: 410.659.9314 x2510

Fax: 410.659.5129

E-mail: BrailleReadersAreLeaders@nfb.org

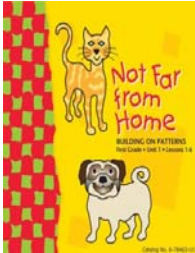


DOTS OF INTEREST



Building on Patterns:

Primary Braille Literacy Program, First Grade Level: Unit 1 Kit



Building on Patterns (BOP) is a complete primary literacy program designed to teach beginning braille users all language arts -- reading, writing, and spelling. **Note:** Building on Patterns: First Grade replaces Patterns Reading: Preprimer, Primer, and First Reader Levels. The remaining lesson units of Patterns First Grade (Units 2-7) and Unit 8 (Introductory and Supplemental Information) will be released during the 2009-2010 school year. This is an American Printing House for the Blind Product

Building on Pattern: Primary Braille Literacy Program: First Grade level: Unit 1 Kit, Braille: Catalog Number: 6-78460-U1, \$135.00

Building on Pattern: Primary Braille Literacy Program: First Grade level: Unit 1 Kit, Print: Catalog Number: 8-78460-U1, \$135.00

Early Braille Trade Books: Wright Group Sunshine Kit 2

Upper Emergent: Finding the right book for young students is now easier! The Early Braille Trade Books Project combines commercially available books with braille labels for beginning readers. This kit includes books, braille labels, and access to an interactive website, please visit:

<http://tech.apf.org/ebt/>

Features: Contracted or uncontracted braille labels ; Match books to a student based on braille knowledge. The interactive website allows you to: Search for books by genre, core curriculum, or expanded core curriculum; (b) access a book summary and activities designed for braille readers; (c) Maintain a listing and percentage of contractions learned by each student.

Kit Includes 12 books and braille label packs:

The Big Laugh ; The Green Dragon ; Griffin, the School Cat ; The Horrible Urktar of Or ; Just Like Me ; My Feet Are Just Right ; Sione Went Fishing ; A Spinning Snake ; Trees are Special ; Yippy-Day-Yippy-Doo! ; You Can Make Skittles ; You Did It! **Note:** Customer applies the included braille labels. A user ID and password are required to access interactive website.



Early Braille Trade Books: Wright Group Sunshine Kit 2, Contracted Braille. Catalog Number: 3-00203-00. \$250.00

Early Braille Trade Books: Wright Group Sunshine Kit 2, Uncontracted Braille. Catalog Number: 3-00204-00. \$250.00



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. 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 2009-2010

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment.

COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist

Metro Region

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE): Please visit www.DPSK12.org to apply for this Denver Public School's position.
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (.5 - 1 FTE): Contact Ann Marie Jansen of Adams 12 District in Northglenn at (720) 972-4789 or annmarie.jansen@adams12.org for more information
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1 FTE): Contact Dixie Periman of Cherry Creek School District at (720) 554-4250 or dperiman@cherrycreekschools.org for more information
- ✓ **TVI as Lead in a Preschool Classroom** (1 FTE): Contact Alice Applebaum of the Anchor Center for Blind Children, Denver at aapplebaum@anchorcenter.org or (303) 377-9732 x113

Southern Region

- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (1. FTE): Contact Kim Lovelace at LOVELKM@D11.ORG in El Paso 11 District in Colorado Springs for more information
- ✓ **TVI / COMS** (.1FTE or five hours a week for 2010-2011): Contact Debi Blackwell of Canon City Schools at BLACKWD@canoncityschools.org for more information



Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- October 14** **Assistive Technology Partners Open House** - CO Springs 3:00 - 5:30pm
Contact: To RSVP email ATP@ucdenver.edu or call 303-315-1280 / 800-255-3477
- October 14** **Assistive Technology Partners Open House** - Grand Junction 3:00 - 5:30pm
Contact: To RSVP email ATP@ucdenver.edu or call 303-315-1280 / 800-255-3477
- October 14** **Assistive Technology Partners Open House** - Denver 3:00 - 5:30pm
Contact: To RSVP email ATP@ucdenver.edu or call 303-315-1280 / 800-255-3477
- October 15 - 17** **APH Annual Meeting** - Louisville KY
Contact: American Printing House for the Blind—www.aph.org
- October 15 - 17** **27th Annual Closing The Gap Conference, AT in Special Education** - Minneapolis MN
Contact: Closing The Gap—www.closingthegap.com
- October 29 - 31** **Colorado State Conference on Visual Impairment** - Denver CO
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- November 5** **Resource Fair for Parents of Blind and Visually Impaired Children** - Denver
Contact: Colorado Parents of Blind Children at jhunter@cocenter.org
- November 5-8** **55th Annual National Federation of the Blind Convention**—Denver
Contact: Scott LaBarre at 303 504-5979 or slabarre@nfbc.org
- November 12** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spaffenhauser@csdb.org
- November 12 - 14** **CDE Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**
Contact: Site Coordinator Nancy Knight at nknight@lps.k12.co.us
- November 12 - 15** **Getting In Touch with Literacy Conference** - Costa Mesa CA
Visit: www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.com
- November 13 - 15** **AER Regional Conference** - Cleveland, OH
Visit: www.aerbvi.com
- November 17** **Accessible Math and Tactile Graphics Workshop** – CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Kevin Hughes at kevin.hughes@humanware.com
- November 18** **Accessible Math and Tactile Graphics Workshop** – Anchor Center, Denver
Contact: Kevin Hughes at kevin.hughes@humanware.com
- November 19** **Accessible Math and Tactile Graphics Workshop** – JeffCo School District
Contact: Kevin Hughes at kevin.hughes@humanware.com



More Calendar of Events

2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009 2009

- November 25** **Last day to order a Large Print or Braille CSAP**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- December 14** **National Instructional Partnership Workshop on Administering and Scoring the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement for Braille Readers - Phoenix, AZ**
Contact: www.aph.org/tests
- December 14** **Early Assessment Window for CELApro**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

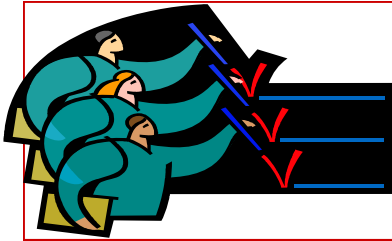
- January 4 - February 2** **Assessment Window for CELApro**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- January 13** **Southern TVI Meeting - CSDB/CIMC (New APH product "In Focus") - CO Springs**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- January 14** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting - CSDB, CO Springs**
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at sphaffenhauser@csdb.org
- January 29** **Northern Region TVI meeting - Loveland, CO**
Contact: Jan Wood at woodj@thompson.k12.co.us
- February 1 - 12** **Early Assessment Window for CSAP Grade 3 Reading and Lectura**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- February 3 - March 26** **Assessment Window for CSAPA (All grades)**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- February 5** **Braille Challenge - CSDB in Colorado Springs**
Contact: Randy Witte at rwitte@csdb.org
- February 11** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting - CSDB, CO Springs**
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at sphaffenhauser@csdb.org
- February 11** **Southern TVI Meeting - CSDB/CIMC (Make'n'Take feat) - CO Springs**
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- February 11 - 13** **2010 Conference on Inclusive Education - Denver CO**
Visit: www.PEAKparent.org and click the "PEAK Conferences" link
- February 16 - 26** **Assessment Window for CSAP Grade 3 Reading and Lectura**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- February 19 - 20** **CDE Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic - TBD**
Contact: Site Coordinators Wendy Stoltman at wstoltman@sd27j.org and Danielle Hillebrand at dmcgrath@sd27j.org
- March 1 - April 2** **Early Assessment Window for CSAP Grade 3 Writing and Grades 4-10**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)



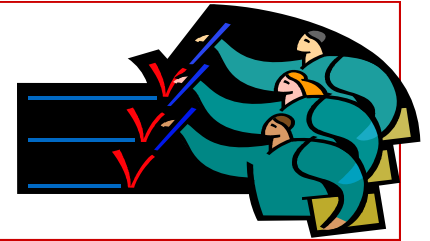
More Calendar of Events

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- March 5** **CDE Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Site Coordinator Donice Fennimore at dfennimore@csdb.org
- March 8 - April 9** **Assessment Window for CSAP Grade 3 Writing and Grades 4-10**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- March 10** **CDE Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Site Coordinator Donice Fennimore at dfennimore@csdb.org
- March 11** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spaffenhauser@csdb.org
- April 8** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spaffenhauser@csdb.org
- April 13** **Southern TVI Meeting** - CSDB/CIMC (Case studies, video assessment)
Colorado Springs CO Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 22 - 24** **Council for Exceptional Children's Convention and Expo** - Nashville, TN
Visit: CEC at www.cec.sped.org
- April 28** **Assessment Window for COACT State Test Date**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- April 30** **Northern Region TVI meeting** - Loveland, CO
Contact: Jan Wood at woodj@thompson.k12.co.us
- May 5** **Southern TVI Meeting** - CSDB/CIMC (APH Updates, paras invited) - CO Springs
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- May 12** **Assessment Window for COACT Makeup**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- June 10** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spaffenhauser@csdb.org
- June 14 - 15** **Colorado Assistive Technology Symposium**
Contact: www.uchsc.edu/atp/index.html
- June 27 - 30** **International Society for Technology in Education (formerly the National Education Computing Conference)** - Denver Convention Center, CO
Visit: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/2010/>
- July 20 - 25** **AER International Conference** - Little Rock, AR
Visit: www.aer.bvi.org
- August 9 - 13** **World ICEVI Conference**— Jomtein, Thailand
Visit: www.icevi.org



CHECK IT OUT!



SAVE THE DATE!

2nd Annual Stakeholders' Community Forum:
Risk, Resiliency and Resources for
Babies, Young Children, and their Families



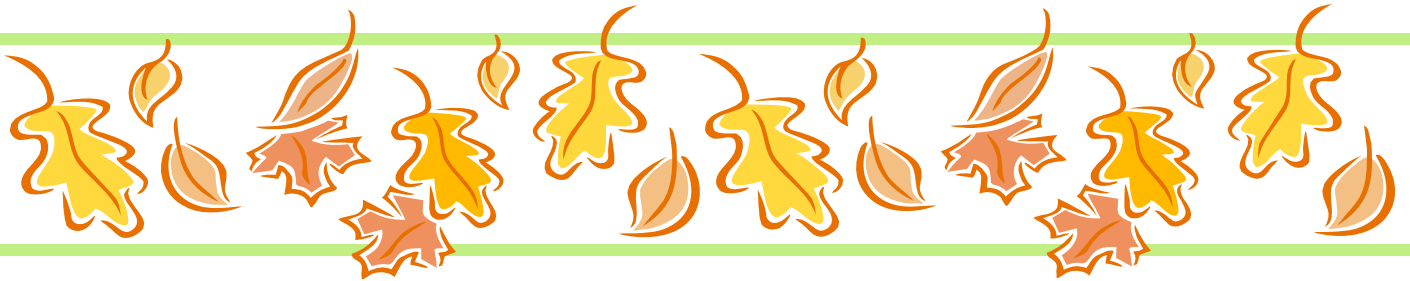
Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Keynote Speaker: Evelyn Wotherspoon, MSW, RSW

University of Colorado Denver – Anschutz Campus, Education 2 South Building, Room 1102



For more information contact Mandi Millar at amanda.millar@ucdenver.edu

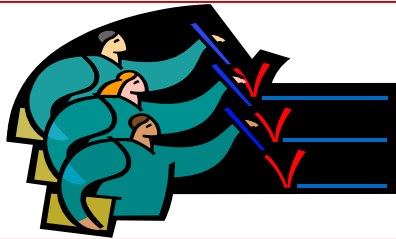


NEW READING MEDIA ASSESSMENT TOOL

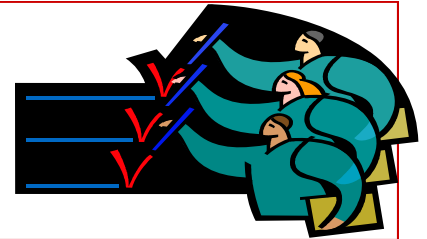
Educators and Parents: This autumn, the National Federation of the Blind will begin large-scale field testing of a new reading media assessment tool that specific to the literacy for blind and visually impaired students. Children, parents, and teachers in schools across the country will have the opportunity to try this new assessment.



They are seeking teachers, schools, and school districts that could take part in this next phase of testing. If you have pre-readers, children in grades K-12, children with cognitive disabilities, or sighted children with no visual impairment who can participate, and would like to help in the development of this national assessment, please contact Jessica Bachicha at the National Center at jbachicha@nfb.org, or call her at (410) 659-9314, ext. 2529.



CHECK IT OUT!



Call for Manuscripts!

AER Journal: Research and Practice in Visual Impairment and Blindness

Special AER Journal Theme Issue

- Do you work with children or adults who are deafblind?

- Do you conduct research involving persons with this dual disability?

Consider submitting an article on your research or practice for the AER Journal's Special Theme Issue 2010: Issues in Services to People who are Deafblind. Deafblindness creates challenges in communication, education and rehabilitation, as well as significant rewards. Professionals find there is only limited information in the research literature that applies to the work they do with people of all ages who are deafblind or who are losing both hearing and vision simultaneously due to their age. This issue aims to fill that gap.

Manuscript submission deadline: January 31, 2010. Publication date: August 2010.

Visit www.aerbvi.org for submission information.



Perkins Webcasts

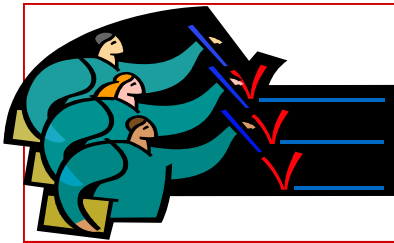
The Communications Portfolio—Just Released! Susan DeCaluwe presents our newest webcast on the development of the Communications Portfolio for learners with deafblindness and multiple disabilities. This tool that is jointly developed by family members and professionals creates a common and very personalized view of the learner's communication skills, abilities and challenges across all environments. Watch the webcast: <http://www.perkins.org/webcasts>

Procedures and Accommodations Manuals

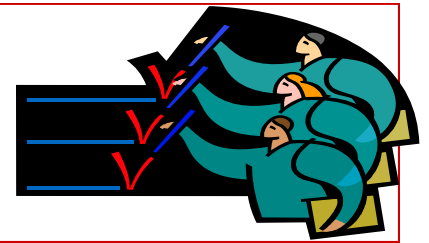
The following manuals are now posted on the Unit of Student Assessment Web site:

- ♦ 2009-2010 Procedures Manual for CSAP, CSAPA, and CELApro
- ♦ 2009-2010 Colorado Accommodations Manual
- ♦ 2009-2010 Colorado Accommodations Manual for English Language Learners

To access these manuals, please go to <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/publications.html>



CHECK IT OUT!



AFB offers Low Vision Technology Workshops

Many professionals in our field have expressed a concern about the difficulty of keeping up-to-date with the latest advances in technology for people with low vision. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has received a gift from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation to address this issue.

What: Four 1-day workshops on Low Vision Technology presented by Ike Presley, National Project Manager, AFB

When and Where:

- November 10, 2009, Center for the Partially Sighted, Los Angeles, CA, 8:30-4:30; Applications due 10/8/09
- February 18, 2010, Lighthouse of Broward County, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 8:30-4:30; Applications due 1/8/10
- March 3, 2010, Region 4 Education Services Center, Houston, TX, 8:30-4:30; Applications due 1/22/10
- April 22, 2010, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Boston, MA, 8:30-4:30; Applications due 3/12/10

Who should attend: Ophthalmologists, optometrists, low vision therapists/specialists, occupational therapists, rehabilitation teachers, teachers of the visually impaired, assistive technology specialists, allied health professionals working with people who have low vision.

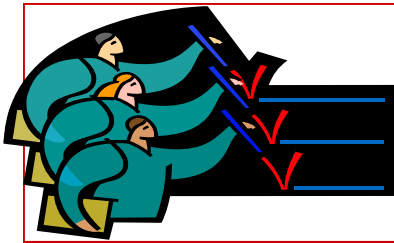
Cost: Free! In fact, we will be able to offer a travel reimbursement stipend of up to \$400 for each participant.

Objectives: These workshops have two broad objectives. Participants will acquire a general knowledge of the current types of technology available for people with low vision, and participants will provide input to AFB about the most effective strategies to keep professionals up-to-date on this topic.

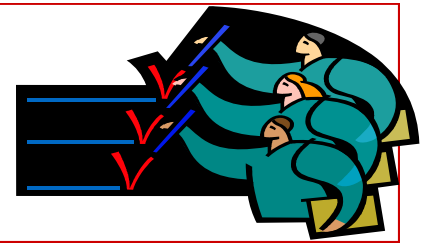
Application: Please contact Shirley Landrum at slandrum@afb.net for an application. Selected participants will be notified within 5-days after the application due date.

For additional information: please visit www.afb.org and select Calendar of Events under AFB Community, or contact Ike Presley at presley@afb.net, 404-525-2303.





CHECK IT OUT!



NFB Conference in Colorado

The Convention will kick off with the 5th annual Seniors Possibilities Fair and first ever Youth Fair, Thursday morning, November 5. NFB is calling this a *Fair for All*, because there is no generation gap when it comes to the pressing issues facing the blind of all ages. Hundreds of blind/visually impaired seniors and youth, their friends, family, and related professionals will learn about services, products, and possibilities available to them. In addition to the customary room full of exhibitors and service providers and a luncheon featuring a keynote address, this year's Fair will include breakout sessions targeted to specific topics and groups.

General Convention sessions will start Friday morning, November 6 and last through noon on November 8, 2009. Several breakout sessions will occur, concentrating on special topic areas and interest groups. Please contact NFBCO president Scott LaBarre at 303 504-5979 or slabarre@nfbc.org if you would like to be an exhibitor or if you would like more details generally.

PEAK's Newsletter is Going Online!

Future issues of **SPEAKout** from PEAK Parent Center will be published online. Be sure you don't miss an issue! To receive email notices announcing new issues of **SPEAKout**, make sure to submit your email address to info@peakparent.org and ask to be added to our list!

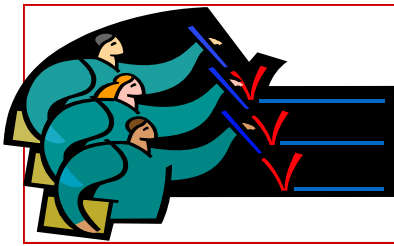
Please note if you submit your email address for SPEAKout, we will not share your email address with anyone else. You can cancel your online subscription at any time.

Save the Date!

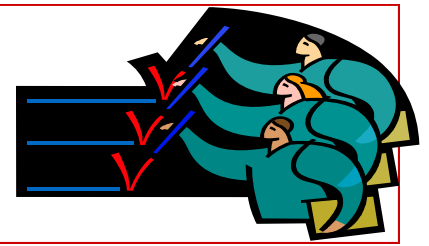
For the 2010 Conference on Inclusive Education

February 11 - 13, 2010 in Denver, Colorado

Visit PEAK's website at www.PEAKparent.org and click "PEAK Conferences" for details.



CHECK IT OUT!



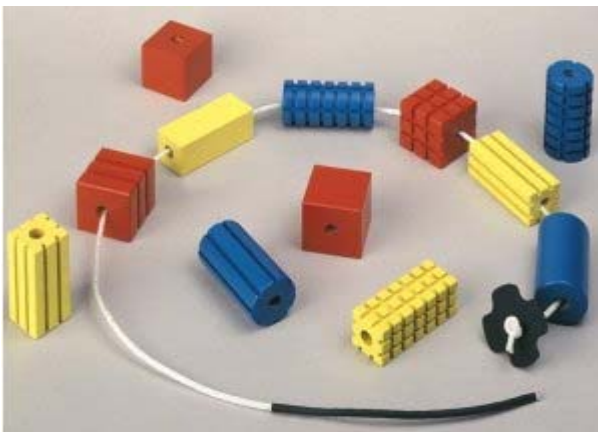
Field Evaluators Needed!

The American Printing House for the Blind is seeking field evaluators for tactile and print **Pattern Matching Cards** designed to be used with APH's Giant Textured Beads. The Pattern Matching Cards are designed to extend the use of APH's Giant Textured Beads which includes 12 large stringing beads of varying shapes, textures, and colors. When the beads and matching cards are used together, many basic concepts and skills can be encouraged including:

- Identification of shapes / textures / colors
- Sorting and classifying by various attributes
- Hand skills--stringing beads or inserting cards and beads into a tray
- Patterning skills: recognizing, describing, repeating, extending, and creating patterns
- Vocabulary expansion
- Interpretation of tactile displays--thermoformed and raised line formats--within a purposeful context

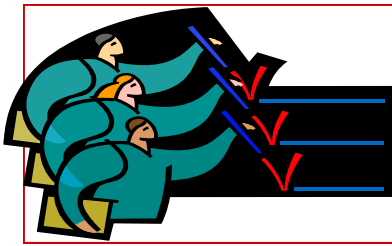


Giant Textured Beads are intended for very young children (preschool and kindergarten level); however, the Pattern Matching Cards will allow teachers to perform activities that are appropriate for older students as well. The patterning skills and concepts that are encouraged by this product are consistent with the current NCTM Standards for Grades K-3. Appropriate target populations also include students with multiple disabilities and much older students who lack formal tactile learning opportunities.

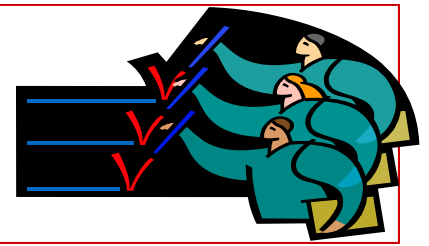


If you would like to be considered as a field reviewer for this product, please e-mail Karen Poppe, Tactile Graphics Project Leader, at kpoppe@aph.org

Field testing will begin in November; field test prototypes are limited.



CHECK IT OUT!



Contests for Readers, Writers, Poets, and Artists

After the winners of the APH 150th Anniversary Essay Contest were announced last year, many people thought it would be good for students who are blind and visually impaired to demonstrate their skills by entering similar competitions. As a Reading Promotion Partner of The Library of Congress Center for the Book (CFB), we have received word about two important contests open to students across the country. If you know a talented writer, poet, or artist, please make them aware that now is the time to be thinking about competing for the awards to be made in 2010.

River of Words is a poetry and art competition open to "any child in the world, from 5 to 19 years of age." Students are asked to explore their surroundings and comment on what they learn by writing a poem or creating an artwork based on the theme of WATERSHEDS. The annual deadline for entering is **December 1**, and all rules and forms can be found at:

www.riverofwords.org/contest/index.html

Letters about Literature asks students to write a personal letter to an author of a book, short story, poem, essay or speech they have read that has significantly impacted them. In their response, students must explain such things as their reaction to characters or what they may have discovered about themselves or the world around them. State and national award winners will be selected from the entries submitted by December 12. More information about this competition is online at:

www.lettersaboutliterature.org

Encourage the students under your care to take part in these exciting opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas!

Hadley School Developing a Self-Employment Curriculum

Entrepreneurship is a proven means of gainful employment for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, providing the opportunity to be independent, self-directed and creative. Do you know of blind individuals who have excelled in self-employment, "supported" self-employment or benefited from micro lending?

We especially want to interview those who have benefited from micro enterprise, home-based employment or micro lending to create unique enterprises. Please notify Chuck Young, President, The Hadley School for the Blind, 700 Elm Street, Winnetka, IL 60093. These blind entrepreneurs should also be encouraged to email: chuck@hadley.edu; fax: 847-784-2757; or call Hadley School toll free at 800-323-4238.

Fan Mail!!



Dear Jim and Kirk,

I cannot thank you enough for the incredible customer service that my student and I received this week. My student uses a unimanual braille-writer. This braille is specifically constructed to be used by a person who can use only one hand to write. I believe it is the only one like it in Colorado. We have been using the same braillewriter since my student began school well over 13 years ago (he is now a junior). The Braille writer broke (for the first time - ever) on Wednesday afternoon. I immediately called the CIMC because I could not swap out a typical two handed Perkins Braille Writer with the unimanual. Donice and Jim's response was amazing. They immediately dropped what they were doing, looked for a replacement braille-writer, and when one could not be located, found Kirk to repair the braille-writer with a turn-around time of 24 hours. This also means that Kirk dropped everything that he was working on to spend hours to repair the braillewriter for us. Kirk even personally delivered the Braille writer so that my student could use it today (Friday). I cannot tell you how much it means to us to have a group of people care so much! My student missed almost no instruction in reading and writing this week due to all of you! The entire experience was beyond my wildest expectations. My student, his family, his teachers and I sincerely thank you. Each one of you for the part that you played!

Very Sincerely and gratefully,

Wendy

Wendy Stoltman, MA

Brighton School District 27J



Unlikely Teams Embarking on Extraordinary Journeys

A life-changing adventure awaits you. Here at Global Explorers, we are passionate about providing the most comprehensive and genuine travel experience available to students and educators of all backgrounds and abilities. We are a non-profit organization committed to sustainable tourism and responsible global citizenship.

Developed in partnership with world-renowned blind adventurer Erik Weihenmayer, Global Explorers' nationally-recognized Leading the Way program is our only individual enrollment program. Individuals of all physical abilities between the ages of 14 and 21 are welcome to apply. Leading the Way integrates science, service, leadership, and culture, resulting in a life-changing adventure. Far more than just a fun trip, each expedition involves preparatory curriculum prior to travel and a service leadership project post travel.

Where There's a Will, There's a Way

Whoever you are, wherever you come from, we want to help you experience the joy of travel. Each expedition has its own unique focus, challenges, and rewards and we strive to match each applicant with the best experience possible. Our staff is dedicated to providing unparalleled support throughout the entire program, from fundraising efforts to service leadership project implementation and beyond.

Shattering Expectations

By making necessary accommodations and focusing on what participants *can* do, the program prepares students to act on the passions they discover. Through their unique stories, the teams help spread messages of hope and inspiration, while breaking down barriers between those with and without disabilities.

Braille, screen reader friendly and LP materials are available upon request.

What Are You Waiting For?

To apply, nominate a student or learn more about current programs

- visit: www.GlobalExplorers.org (click **Leading the Way**)
- email: LeadingTheWay@GlobalExplorers.org
- call: **877-627-1425**

"You don't merely teach leadership, you offer kids actual experience. You don't just introduce ecology, you live your care for the earth with the kids. You don't just educate about global cultures, you place kids in relationship with indigenous peoples."

—Parent of 2008 Participant

"I felt this swelling inside, like my consciousness, my confidence and my inner self was literally just growing sometimes. It was the most enlightening and meaningful thing I have ever been a part of."

—Ashley, Student Participant

Leading the Way has been featured on CBS Sunday Morning, The Travel Channel, ABC Nightline and World News Tonight.



Vision Coalition

September 17, 2009

Persons in Attendance: Barbara Adams, Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, Paula Conroy, Jim Olson, Angela Sims, Cathy Smyth, Wendy Stoltman, Chloann Woolley, and Julia Zanon

Persons Absent: Lou Tutt, Kay Ferrell

Special Guest: Laura Douglas

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome new members Angela Sims and Choann Woolley. Our thanks to Barbara Adams and Stephanie Isbel for their past contributions to the Vision Coalition. The Center for the Blind is working with Tanni to name a new parent representative of the Colorado Parents of Blind Children. Nancy Cozart is the interim representative of CAER, along with her metro TVI region representation.

Congrats to Cathy Smyth on her acceptance into the UNC doctoral program. She will be working part-time as graduate research assistant and will remain on with Anchor on a part-time basis.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Northern Region (Wendy Stoltman)

Jan Wood and Teresa Barone are hosting the three meetings set up for the 2009-2010 school year in Loveland. Meeting will be on Fridays from 9:00-11:00 am. The dates are as follows: September 25, 2009; January 29, 2010; and April 30, 2010

Items for vision coalition

- a. Thanks to the CIMC for getting braille writers into our district in time for school's start.
- b. One school district is moving to a new IEP and during training, it was indicated that service time reflected for TVI should include brailist hours, para support time specific to vision disability. Is this how other districts report? We've been instructed in the past to report only what a TVI and/or COMS involvement is. It may be important to have a standard across the State, especially since students move from one district to another.

Discussion on IEPs: It would be helpful to have a consistent message on what services should be reported on the IEP. With a young child with high needs, there are situations where between direct and indirect time, the service time on the IEP may actually exceed the time the child is in the school. Direct = instruction time. Indirect = braille, material prep, consultation, travel route review, etc. Only certified personnel are noted on the service plan. Under an explanation of indirect may include para / brailist time. Other questions are where to put functional vision and O&M reports. It was suggested that a small group work on some example documents to share with TVIs across the state. Interested persons include: Tanni, Wendy, Nancy, and Chloann.

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The Metro TVIs are having their first meeting of the school year on Friday September 18th at Anchor Center for Blind Children. At this meeting we will be organizing the doc night(s) on specific eye conditions that are heavily impacting the caseloads in the metro area. We are also working toward monthly Braille sessions for parents and community members to develop their own Braille skills. We really need people to take lead roles in these activities. The outcomes can be tremendous!

Carol Puchalski from Anchor Center for Blind Children has asked local TVIs to join parents in their monthly brown bag lunches. Each month, a different TVI will join the parents for lunch and have a chance to informally talk about educational programming and how we can help transition kids from preschool into the school districts. Shelley Moats from Douglas County attended the first brown bag lunch at Anchor Center and really felt good about the experience!

Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)

The Southern TVIs met on September 3rd at Lions Hall on the CSDB Campus. We had ten people attend our first meeting. We plan to meet on the following schedule.

October 2009

September 3 – reading eye reports; October 7 – IEP goals and objectives; November 17 – training with Kevin Hughes; January 13 – new APH products; February 11 – make and take; April 13 – case studies / video assessment; May 5 – APH updates.

We are hoping to have our meetings available to distant participants via phone or web cam to improve our coverage and participation to the tips of our region. We have also set up our monthly meetings to vary the days for scheduling purposes of TVI and Student contact time.

Jim Olson has graciously offered to keep us on topic and host our meetings. Holly Guinan is our secretary and Donice Fennimore will keep us all informed and reminded of meeting changes with emails. We welcomed Deb Carlisle as a new TVI/O&M teacher to our area. She is working in District 20 and District 12 in Colorado Springs. We're glad you're here, Deb!

Updates around our regions consisted of the following reports. Southern Region Low Vision Clinic is scheduled September 18th and 19th. CSDB has new enrollment, new personnel, new positions and a new school bell schedule to include and 8th period for the expanded core curriculum. We heard about students from the Eastern Plains, Pueblo, and Woodland Park. New students and a new district joined the Pikes Peak BOCES region. District 11 in Colorado Springs is still looking to fill a full time TVI position. There is also a need for a TVI and COMS in Canon City.

The CIMC reported that the search is on for 90 missing state Braille writers, update VI Registration (exit and new) Jim showed off the Library of Congress new DIGITAL Audio book player. They will not be available to the school population for another two years. Individuals shared that a Magnifying light (similar to "The Big Eye") was available on sale at Tuesday Mornings for \$39. There are cheap color overlays at Hobby Lobby. Check out the CDE Website for suggested goals in various areas for IEP writing help. Dr. Theune also pointed out that the "Tools for Life" grants can be used for any device a child may need at home for life (i.e. Braille writer). Dr. Theune noted that the funds should not be used to request computers – but adaptive tools that are specific to a visual disability. Grants range from \$500-\$5,000. Dr. Theune helped us to decipher the eye doctor reports by interpreting some of the symbols and doctor short hand used. His major message was don't sweat the small stuff. The main information needed is the diagnosis and acuity in Snellen terms. It is important to be able to make sense of the consistency between observable behavior, acuity, diagnosis and treatment.

Chloann noted that there are great resources on the CD included in the revised ORegon Project.

Western Region (Barbara Adams and Angela Sims)

Leilani Scott report from SW BOCES report that not only is the administrative unit TVI, but the ESS (Exceptional Student Services) Director as well! She has worked my caseload into a 1/4 time position, so she works on Fridays as TVI and Mon-Thursday as ESS Director. It is going very well and she is managing my time effectively. They are focusing on life skills and transition for ALL vision students. Students are running their IEP meetings with power points and other assistive devices. She is quite proud of how the program has evolved!

Barbara Adams from Mountain BOCES is going to a part-time schedule this year. She is also turning over the duties of Western Slope Vision Coalition Rep to Angela Sims, of Mesa County Schools. Thanks for volunteering, Angela. Mtn. BOCES had 2 students who participated in the Sports Camp that CSDB offered this summer. They enjoyed all the opportunities that were made available to them and are looking forward to going again.

The Low Vision Clinic will be held in Grand Junction on September 25-26th. Thanks to Sarah Sonnier for coordinating the Western Region Low Vision and to Sarah and Angela Sims for hosting it. Currently it looks like it will be a full clinic! Other news from Mesa School District is that former brailist Evie Roll is back with their VI program and enrolled in the UNC VI Program – the Mesa team is thrilled to have Eva back on board!

Kevin O'Brien from Delta and Montrose school district shares that his biggest issue that he is addressing right now has been significant paraprofessional turnover....bringing new staff on board and dedicating large amounts of time getting them up to speed. These are not VI paraprofessionals in my program per se but staff I work closely with in several severe needs programs he spends a lot of time in. Also, his Delta paraprofessional Beth Myers is attending UNC this fall (YAY!!) taking coursework to attain her undergraduate degree and will ultimately pursue a master's degree in visual impairment and O&M which is very exciting. Kevin is looking forward to attending the low vision clinic in Grand Junction with a student from Montrose.

From Moffat County/NW BOCES: Robin Bremner has retired from Moffat County School District and as TVI consultant to NW BOCES. She is looking forward to some overseas travel and extra time with her family. Congrats, Robin!

The newest TVI in that area is Stephanie Labossiere. She graduated from ASU and U of A with a Masters in Special Education / VI. She has worked with students with visual impairments for 26 years, in Arizona and Texas as a teacher and consultant for regional services. She is presently serving students in Steamboat, Craig, Grandby, and Frazier. Welcome, Stephanie, we are so glad you have joined the Western Slope.

CAER (Nancy Cozart)

Bill Muir will be our new CAER rep on the Vision Coalition. November 4, February 3, March 3, and April 7 are the next CAER Board meetings. All AER members are welcome to attend the board meetings. CAER board members will be helping out at the upcoming state conference and will be involved in fund-raising activities. CAER will be involved in the co-sponsorship of the annual O&M Conference. The website is being updated. CAER will continue to offer mini-grants for new applicants or for applicants who have not received a mini-grant in the past. The grant applications will be posted online. There are funds for ACVREP renewal for \$50 or ACVREP initial certifications for \$100. Persons asking for an ACVREP-rebate must show their new certificate to Deb Carlisle with the confirmation letter from ACVREP. This rebate is only for AER members in good standing. Ideas for fundraising should be shared with CAER!

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Julia Zanon)

The good news is that DVR was able to bring a large group of applicants off the waiting list recently and is looking forward to bringing additional people off the waiting list and into active employment plans in the next few months. The Denver office has a new RCB, Julie Halaba. She is replacing Heather Hamilton who left to work for the Veteran's Administration in Ohio. Michelle Medina, the RCB in the Colorado Springs office is moving to Pueblo to work so the new RCB in Colorado Springs is Sarah Mora. Please contact Julia Zanon at 303-866-3562 or julia.zanon@state.co.us if you are not sure who to contact in your area. Julia will send a listing of rehabilitation counselors of the blind will be sent to Tanni for statewide dissemination.

Please continue to refer students for vocational rehabilitation services. Currently, counselors working with blind individuals are busy taking applications, developing plans and monitoring services with current clients to help them become independent and employed. The RCBs met this month to discuss options for providing training for clients in the Randolph Sheppard Training program. This is the DVR managed program that helps blind individuals become independent operators in food service and vending facilities in state and federal government sites. We need to continue to train individuals for this career to fill the openings in the future. This can be a really great way for a blind entrepreneur to run his or her own business and make good money.

There are a lot of things happening in the next few months. DVR is hosting a Blindness and Low vision Technology Fair in Denver on October 1 at the Metro Denver location. This is free. The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado is hosting their annual state convention in Denver on November 5-8, 2009. The American Council of the Blind is hosting Resource Fairs in Denver and Glenwood Springs in September and October. All of these events are open to anyone interested in attending. The information about the ACBCO fairs and the NFBCO convention are on their websites.

If a school district TVI or COMS is interested in working on evenings and weekends for Colorado Division of Rehabilitation, they should be in touch with Julia at 303-866-3562 or julia.zanon@state.co.us

DVR has a new look and we have re-vamped our web site. Please check it out at: <http://www.dvrcolorado.com>

Anchor Center and CSDB Early Intervention News (Cathy Smyth)

The new school year has brought new staff members, visitors and lots of activities to Anchor Center as the seasons begin to change. Please help us welcome our new Family Specialist, Kivanc Ozer-Afsar. She is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays to assist families with resources and to take referrals. The phone number is (303) 377-9733 (ext. 117). Another new staff member that you may have contact with is Rachel Liebman. She is our new Development Assistant, as well as Office Manager on Mondays and Tuesdays. We are thrilled to have both of them on our team.

Speaking of new staff members, Anchor Center is looking to fill an additional TSVI position in our Preschool. Qualifications desired include a depth of experience and an educational background in Early Childhood Special Education. Spread the word!

Anchor Center enjoyed hosting a visit from the CSDB Preschool team last month. Each member was able to spend time with their counterpart at Anchor Center, and our staff enjoyed reciprocating my visit to the CSDB Preschool last fall.

At the Vision Coalition's request, our staff has put together a criterion list for attending our preschool. (This will be shared at the meeting). To help parents transitioning into school districts from Anchor Center, our Parent Program will be spending more time talking about what they can expect during the process. Nancy Cozart generously announced to the Denver Metro Meeting dates and times of Anchor Center's Parent "Brown Bag" lunches where we hope that representatives of different districts will come and informally talk about services and answer questions. Dates for the Brown Bag Lunches are October 6, November 3, December 1, January 19, February 2, March 2, April 13, May 4, and June 1. For more information contact Carol Puchalski at (303) 377-9732 (ext. 143).

Discussion on Anchor Eligibility: The brown bag lunches are a wonderful way to build connections and conversations for parents, Anchor staff, and administrative unit TVIs. These conversations may well drive some needed next step conversations and products. Thanks to Anchor Center for providing some guidance on eligibility criteria. There may still be benefit from working together on how families are prepared for the next step of school programming in their local administrative unit. Perhaps some documents could be developed to offer a bridge from when Anchor Center eligibility differs from ECEA Rule eligibility. The intent is to build bridges for families and children as they transition from one setting to the next.

Discussion of Part C Eligibility: A revised list of conditions of established conditions that meet eligibility for Part C services was recent disseminated across the state. There are still concerns that aniridia, coloboma, and microphthalmia have been removed as established conditions. There is a qualifier that if the condition does not have a sensory loss or is not associated with a higher than 50% probability for significant developmental delay.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

APH Certificated of Attendance for Final Registration of Blind Pupils: At the end of August, the CIMC signed Colorado's official APH Certificate of registered students. Our statewide total for the January 5, 2009 count day was 830.

Braille Inventory: Thank you to the TVIs and administrative units who participated in the braille inventory update in May/June 2009. As a result of everyone's hard work, we have been able to update our inventory database and collect valuable data that will be shared with directors of special education in administrative units.

Here is what we learned from the data gathered:

- Identified need for a "check-out" form for parents to sign when being provided a braille for home use.
- Identified need for more noticeable, and permanent, labeling of equipment (i.e.: "Property of the Colorado Department of Education" / "CIMC").
- Identified need for more frequent preventative maintenance.
- Identified need for improved repair history documentation.
- In an attempt to build inventory to meet student need, it has been decided that each student can check out up to two braille; one braille from the CIMC for school use and a second device for home use, if necessary. A certified TVI teaching in a Colorado administrative unit may check out one braille. For the time being, the CIMC cannot provide braille to paraprofessionals, district braille, transcribers, parents, or community members. Administrative units are encouraged to acquire braille for their individual district personnel.
- As a result of inventory discrepancies, there is an identified need for an additional statewide recall and inventory update at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Every effort will be made to provide replacement braille for students and TVIs who will have a need for units during the summer months.

Discussion on Braillewriters: A question was asked about what happened with the braillewriters that were returned to the CIMC over the summer. All braillewriters were sanitized and repaired, if there was a note about a need for repair. Jim asked that TVIs keep the boxes used to store the braille writers as the cost is about \$30 a box. The CIMC replaced missing covers. TVIs are encouraged to ensure that the braillewriter is covered always when it is not in use. This is a strong recommendation of the braille repair personnel as a prevention measure.

The braille recall will occur again at the end of this school year. There were several learnings along the way. There are way too many unaccounted for braille. There are AUs who do not have good documentation systems of their number of braille. There are personnel who do not understand that a CIMC braille cannot be permanently assigned to an AU. There are parents who do not understand that a braille assigned to a child's home must be returned to the AU

(and then the CIMC) if the family moves out of state and/or when the child graduates.

Statewide Count Data of Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired: Thank you to the TVIs who have submitted new “VI Registration” and “Exit” forms for students who have entered/withdrawn from AUs since last January’s count day. To date, we have received:

57 “VI registration” forms (including transfers between AUs and students new to Colorado)

87 “Exit” forms (44 of which were from Anchor Center for students who could potentially enroll in AUs). Exit forms are requested for students who have graduated or left transition programs.

Recap of January 2009 count data:

	<i>Statewide Data: (birth-21)</i>
<i>Registered learners who are blind/VI</i>	1,122
<i>Infants served</i>	169

Spreadsheets with updated VI registration and Exit for information will be prepared and disseminated at the Special Education directors meeting scheduled for October. Revisions to this year’s spreadsheets will include updated coding to match the December 1 count day coding, pre-adjusted grade levels (except for preschoolers), and additional columns for new information (such as “Braille learner”) for improved data collection.

This year’s count process will happen in stages. Phase I will provide spreadsheets to administrative units in October 2009. TVIs will be asked to make editing changes as necessary. Phase II will involve a mid-December mailing of updated spreadsheets to administrative units prior to the January 4, 2010 count day (the first Monday in January of each year). Once again, districts will be asked to physically count students enrolled on January 4, 2009, make editing changes, and return spreadsheets to the CIMC within a week of the January count day.

“What is Baby Count?” (birth to 3): Questions about Baby Count can be directed to Donice Fennimore at the CIMC at (719) 578-2198, dfennimore@csdb.org.

CSDB – BVI Outreach (Laura Douglas)

CSDB is sponsoring a college fair on September 28th. Personnel from many college campuses will be on the campus of CSDB. One of the areas of identified need on the CSDB Strategic Plan was technology. This information coupled with the technology survey completed a few years back has resulted in a technology loan bank,

A new strategic planning process is underway. Persons interested in being involved with strategic plan update should be in touch with Laura at (719) 578-2110 or ldouglas@csdb.org

Short courses are being planned for this school year. One idea is a Saturday *Mommy and Me* course specific to daily living skills.

Laura shared a draft version of her paper on *Psycho-Education Assessment Practices with Students who have Vision Losses*. This document is not ready for dissemination. Feedback should be shared with Laura.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Lou Tutt)

Lou is starting his 7th year as Principal of the School for the Blind and 3rd year as Principal of the Bridges to Life program.

Our new staff members this year are: Jamie Lugo - elementary teacher; Alexandra (Alex) Bradstreet - elementary teacher; Leo Randolph – on the job training teacher ; Carolyn Sparks - Bridges to Life teacher; Debby Stewart - 1:1 para in the School for the Blind; Roy Lucardie 1:1 para in Bridges to Life. We welcome Karla McKechnie as one of our local mentor coordinators.

We currently have 43 students in the School for the Blind and 44 in Bridges to Life. We have 6 seniors this year, including an exchange student from the Ukraine. The middle school class is no longer in a self-contained classroom. They now follow a rotating schedule similar to the high school classes. We have also instituted an 8 period day to allow more time for the Expanded Core Curriculum. One of our high school boys is on the CSDB football team.

Groups from three states are coming to CSDB homecoming week and will be involved with goalball.

UNC (Paula Conroy)

We have over 60 students in the UNC program and we are bursting at the seams. The traineeship grant is now full for the 2009-2010 academic year and we are accepting applications for Fall of 2010 for grant funding. Students may enter without grant funding at any time. We have 10 students on practicum this semester and there will be around five students next semester. Kay Ferrell, Paula Conroy, Silvia Correa-Torres and Madeline Milian will all be presenting various topics at the Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference in LA in November. We continue to focus on program assessment and data collection.

Discussion on Course Flow: Paula wanted to talk about the flow of classes with the VI Program at UNC. The fall semester is loaded and the spring semester is less loaded. Summer funds itself. Minimal enrollment is 10 students for a course to be viable during fall and spring semesters. If a class is not viable, it may put a student off-schedule. Students can enter the program at different times of the course schedule. A typical schedule is: Fall Semester = intro class, beginning braille course, principals of O&M, medical, and advanced seminar; Spring – assessment, methods, advanced braille, methods of O&M. Since most students are working and going to school, they take one to three courses at a time. If the person is working as a TVI on a TTE or a SEE, they are required to demonstrate braille competency within the first year of instruction. The braille course is also a “weeder” course for people getting into the field. What complicates the situation are people enrolled on an off-schedule and the need to take certain courses at certain times in order to be able to take another class. For example, Principles of O&M is required before Advances Methods of O&M. It was suggested that fall be reserved for the true intro courses.

National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities (Kay Ferrell)

Kay is working to set up the next Research Summit, which will focus on research on braille. Be watching for a call for papers and more details.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project hosted its summer institute in late June / early July. The featured speaker was Jane Korsten and the topic was Every Move Counts; A Sensory Based Approach to Communication. About 75 people attended the training. The project was also involved in co-hosting the June 2009 Family Learning Retreat in conjunction with CSDB and Hands and Voices. The project is current finalizing the fall newsletter and has over 15 active requests for technical assistance. If an administrative unit and/or a family would like consultation on the educational needs of a student who has both vision and hearing loss (deafblindness), please be in contact with Gina Quintana at (303) 866-6605.

Tanni has been and will be contacting Special Education Directors over the summer and into early fall about the status of their TVI's braille competency certificate. Thanks to all the TVIs who are being proactive with their initial or renewal braille competency status. The current procedures / guidance documents about braille testing are posted on the CDE webpage on blindness/low vision.

The theme of the fall conference will be Math Counts: Instruction for Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired and will feature Dr. Derrick Smith. The conference will be held in Denver on October 29-31, 2009. Registration materials have been sent out to the TVIs via email and will be posted in the next *What's Happening Out There* newsletter.

The Q and A document specific to the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) and the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) has been posted on the CDE website (go to <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/NIMAS.asp>). Important news with CO and NIMAC is that we now have three authorized users: (1) the Colorado Instructional Materials Center, (2) Bookshare, and (3) Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic.

A special thanks to both Bonnie Snyder and Jim Olson for their teamwork in co-hosting a technology course in June. The course was held on the campus of CSDB. Bonnie will be available again during school year 2009-10 for technology consultation, which will also include a June 2010 course. One goal of the Exceptional Student Leadership Unit is to build a blackboard technology course. This was a recommendation of the Vision Coalition when budgets were discussed during the end of the last school year.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Orientation and Mobility

There may be some misunderstandings in the field about licensure requirements for orientation and mobility. The orientation and mobility license is a separate and self-standing license to that of a TVI (Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment). There are two separate fees for people who are dual certified as TVIs and COMSs. Tanni will put an article in the next newsletter about licensure requirements.

Q and A on School Psych Assessment

Laura Douglas shared a draft of this document for review. Any feedback on the document should be sent to Laura at ldouglas@csdb.org by October 1 so she can finalize the document. It is very comprehensive and will be helpful to both TVIs and school psychologists.

Assessment Practices for Learners

The VC reviewed a draft document entitled Online Assessment and Curriculum Programs: Challenges for Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired. Wendy and Tanni will work to finalize the document. TVI reps will send in any comments to Tanni.

School Year 2009-10 Budgets (CDE Exceptional Student Leadership Unit)

An interagency agreement has been finalized between CDE and CSDB for three projects specific to blindness/ visual impairment. The budgets include funding for the CIMC, the braille transcriber mentor project, and funding support toward the low vision evaluation clinics (for CSDB personnel involved in the clinics).

Federal set-aside funds were reserved for the following other Exceptional Student Leadership Projects: (a) state conference on visual impairments; (b) CSAP, CSAPA, and CELA test activities to address visual bias, tactile graphics, and braille quality; (c) braille competency testing and technical assistance support; (d) low vision clinics; (e) orientation and mobility training; (f) TVI mentor support; (g) regional technology support; and (h) the Vision Coalition.

Other activities funded across the state were reported in the August-September WHOT newsletter, which can be found at

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Tanni	Prepare article on TVI and O&M licensure for one of the next newsletters.	November 2009
All VC members	Send feedback on Q and A document to Laura Douglas	October 1, 2009
All VC members	Send feedback on online assessment/curriculum document to Tanni	October 1, 2009
Angela	Send examples of transition goals	October 31, 2009
Tanni, Wendy, Nancy, Chloann	Draft examples of indirect and direct services of TVIs and COMS on the state IEP forms.	October 31, 2009
Tanni, Wendy	Update the online assessment / curriculum document	October 31, 2009
Julia, Jim, and Tanni	Plan the January VC meeting – which will have a focus on technology	December 2009
TVI reps	Identify technology expertise in each region	January 8, 2010
VC members	Submit updates to Tanni	January 4. 2010

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-BLV.asp>

Next Meetings:

Friday, January 8, 2009 – Colorado DVR Office

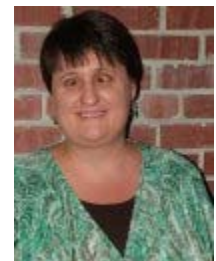
Friday, April 16, 2009 – Colorado DVR Office





colorado connections

- 🔊 Congratulations to **Debbie Haberkorn** of Colorado Springs for earning her Library of Congress Certification in Braille Transcription in September 2009. Ms. Haberkorn was mentored by **Burdine Haas**, of the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC), as part of the CDE sponsored Braille Transcriber's Mentor Project.
- 🔊 The members of the Vision Coalition for School Year 2009-10 include: **Tanni Anthony** (CDE Exceptional Student Leadership Unit), **Paula Conroy** (UNC Visual Impairment Program) **Nancy Cozart** (Metro Region TVIs), **Kay Ferrell** (National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities), **Bill Muir** (CO AER Chapter), **Jim Olson** (Colorado Instructional Materials Center), **Angela Sims** (Western Region TVIs), **Cathy Smyth** (Anchor Center for the Blind / CSDB Infant and Toddler Program), **Wendy Stoltman**, (Northern Region TVIs), **Lou Tutt** (Colorado School for the Blind / CSDB), **Chloann Woolley** (Southern Region TVIs), and **Julia Zanon** (CO Division of Vocational Rehabilitation).
- 🔊 Thanks to the great folks who are on the CAER Board of Directors: **Samantha Hoffman** (President), **Mike Plansker** (President -Elect), **Julie Wetzstein** (Past President), **Sally Burch** (Secretary), **Deb Carlisle** (Treasurer) and Board Members **Paula Conroy**, **Nancy Cozart**; **Barb Galgano**, **Bill Muir**, **Kathy Hegemann**, and **Heather Parsons**.
- 🔊 **CORRECTIONS** to the *Who Ya Gonna Call* List in the August/September issue: **Jan Wood** will be the contact person for the northern region's TVI meetings. Her contact information is woodj@thompson.k12.co.us or (970) 613-5106. The correct email and phone number for **Lucia Hasty** should be Lucia@TactileGraphics.org and 719-339-2935.
- 🔊 **Loana Mason**, a former CO TVI, has assumed the duties of Braille Literacy Project Leader in the APH Research Department. Loana has previous experience in the field of blindness as a teacher of students with visual impairments, a trainer of pre-service teachers, and a researcher. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Northern Colorado and is also President-Elect of the Division on Visual Impairments, Council for Exceptional Children.
- 🔊 This newsletter is dedicated to **Karen Crone**, a friend and a colleague who recently passed away. Karen was currently working in Houston, TX and was responsible for many good products specific to low vision. I first met her when she was a general education teacher in Nome, AK and working with a student who was blind. She was inspired to join our field and gave at these two decades of important contribution. We say "thank you" to Karen for all she gave to our children, our colleagues, and our profession.



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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202



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