

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!

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

January—February 2010

January—February 2010



RESOLUTIONS

By Tanni L. Anthony

With each New Year comes the task of making new resolutions. No sugar (okay, less sugar), more exercise, not so much work, more play - fill in the blanks on what you want to improve in your life. We all have our new lists and it is tempting to think that the slate is clear of all that was not accomplished the year before. This year I am going to do a new approach and focus on the actual word RESOLUTIONS or in memo format—RE for the word regarding—**RE: SOLUTIONS**. This puts the focus on being proactive and ultimately focusing on what can work or, simply put, finding a solution or even solutions.

Think of this way. Rather than tell myself, "YOU need to exercise more," I can reframe the need to improve my cardio and trim my waistline; I look for a solution to the question, "How to exercise?" All of a sudden things start to present themselves, a noon yoga class at my work, a "date walk" around our neighborhood hills with my husband each Saturday and Sunday mornings, a friend inviting me over for a gal's night of Wii, and a new gym mat at the foot of my bed for some morning stretching. Bit by bit, moments of exercise are being woven into my life with the side benefit of being with people that I love and enjoy.

Finding solutions mean starting with the right question. If a student is struggling with reading, the educational team (parents included!) need to ask WHY? The goal is to find the root cause of the problem and then work on building solutions that can be tried over time. The key is to give the solution a chance, but not to assume that it will be successful. If reading does not improve, something new must be addressed. Solutions are only viable when they match the challenge.

So whether your RE: SOLUTIONS are for yourself, your child, and/or your students – I wish you all the best. No more empty promises or well-intentioned proclamations of "This year, I will...!" Instead focus on a solution, give it time, measure the results, and do not be shy of admitting when it did not work and when it is time to try again. Happy New Year!

Table of Contents

Page	Page	Page
1 Resolutions	10 Spotlight on Retinitis Pigmentosa	28 Braille Books
2 CSAP Update	13 Just for Parents	30 Jobs
5 Bits from Bonnie	15 Resources & Materials	31 Calendar of Events
7 2010 Kid's Ski Day	18 Transition Information	34 Check It Out
8 2010 Junior Science Academy	23 2010 Learning Labs	35 Vision Coalition
9 2010 AER Awards Program	25 Dots of Interest	46 Colorado Connections

CSAP Update

2009-10 CSAP Tests and Students Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired: General Recommendations

By Tanni Anthony

The 2010 CSAP Test Administration period is just around the corner! Please review these general recommendations **well before** administering a CSAP test to a student who is blind/visually impaired.

CSAP Administration Dates	Regular Testing Window	Early Testing Window
Grade 3 Reading	2/16/10 to 2/26/09	2/1/10 to 2/12/10
Grade 3 Writing and Grades 4-10	3/08/10 to 4/9/10	3/01/10 to 4/02/10

Test Formats: The CSAP test is published in five possible formats for students who are blind/visually impaired: (a) regular print; (b) standard large print of 18 point; (c) extra large print (per an approved non-standard accommodation request); (d) uncontracted braille; and (e) contracted braille. If the test is in braille format, **it is mandated** that the person who is administering the test can read and write braille. The test should be administered by someone with a current CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.

Data Grid or Biogrid of the Test: Please fill out the “braille version” bubble on the student data grid. This is very important as some of the tests MAY have omitted items due to visual-bias challenges. This bubble is **the only way** for the test publisher to know that a particular grade/content test in braille may need to be pulled for special scoring (due to fewer test items).

Transcriber and/or Teacher Notes in the Braille Tests: All braille CSAP tests will include transcriber notes and/or teacher notes. **Please go through the braille test(s) ahead of time** to become familiar with this information. Further TVIs should work with their students to scan for braille transcriber notes using other materials well before the test administration period so they are able to scan the transcriber notes on the actual days of testing. This skill may need to be an actual IEP goal to ensure that the student has this ability.

There will be transcriber notes specific to picture descriptions. Captions will be noted as such to make the distinction between a picture description and an actual picture caption.

Teacher notes have been added in some instances to clarify what is appropriate for a student response when drawing is required and/or if there are special materials that are permissible to bring to the assessment setting for a particular item.

Preview of the Test and Gathering of Needed Testing Materials: Look in the back of the test booklet for the envelope for any provided materials for that particular test.

Continued next page

It is the responsibility of the TVI to read through the braille CSAP test well ahead of time in order to determine if there are any needed and allowable “other materials” for the test. For example, some of the math tests will require materials such as graph paper, material to plot points for making a line graph, and appropriate manipulatives. Other needs may include 3-D geometric shapes. It may be helpful to bring a tactile diagram kit, wikki sticks, and thumb tacks for some items on the math tests.

Protractors, Rulers, and Tangrams: If the test requires a protractor, an APH protractor will be included. It would be best practice, however, to be proactive and ensure that the student uses the protractor used in everyday instruction prior to the test. (CDE is no longer dispersing protractors).

The rulers used last year seemed to be fine. They are paper rulers with braille added. If you want to bring the ruler that the student has used for everyday instructional purposes, that may be the better option.

Please note: ALL measurement tools are preserved at their true measurements. A large print ruler, for example, is not going to have larger increments of spacing than a regular ruler.

Tangrams will be provided for the math tests needing these materials. Be proactive to ensure that these materials have been sent with the test.

Accommodations: The *Colorado Accommodations Manual* can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/documents/csap/manuals/2010/2009-2010%20Colorado%20Accommodations%20Manual%20Final.pdf>

Please review the manual for allowable accommodations. These accommodations should be on the student’s IEP for testing purposes. Be aware of accommodations that provide for extra time or give the student appropriate breaks to accommodate for visual fatigue etc.

It will be important to be aware of the rules for scribing. There are times when using a scribe is the most efficient way to collect the student’s information. For example, during CSAP items that require drawing, it may be best for the student to describe what needs to be drawn to the test administrator or the student can dictate his or her thinking as a math problem is worked on the abacus when the problem asks for the student to show written work.. Some students who use braille may choose to do their own drawing. For other students, it is permissible for them to verbally indicate what needs to be drawn or physically use manipulatives, to demonstrate knowledge of the answer specific to the math tests.

A scribe cannot be used when the test is actually measuring writing skills unless the student dictates needed punctuation etc. It is recommended that rules on scribing be read prior to test administration.

For tasks requiring writing, students can use a separate piece of paper(s) for their answer.

The Test Directions Etc.: If a student does not understand the test directions, the TVI can use different words to convey the intent of the test items. If the directions do not apply to the student such as “use your number 2 graphic pencil, the TVI can substitute the language needed to fit the type of writing instrument for the student.

It is permissible to give students verbal information to help orient them to a tactile graphic, as long as information is not given to guide the student to the answer.

Look at what the test question is measuring. Sometimes it is not tied to the actual content of items – but another construct. For example, the question may not truly be about a basketball court, but some aspect of math.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

Suppressed Test Items: There are a handful of suppressed items in the braille version of the CSAP tests. This should not be a surprise to the TVI administering the test(s) – the expectation is that each test is pre-viewed ahead of time. A suppression of a test question DOES NOT mean that we do not have high expectations of our braille readers or that they should not know a certain construct. Please be sure to explain this to your student. In the rare instance that a question has been suppressed, it has been done so through a strict peer-review process. Reasons for an item to be legitimately suppressed include: (a) there is not a good way to illustrate the graphic tactually and there are no corresponding easy-to-get objects to accommodate the missing graphic; (b) there are no commercially-produced manipulatives, such as a geometric shape, that correspond to a question where the tactile graphic is highly confusing; and (c) the amount of time needed to tactiley review the needed graphics that correspond to the test question are inordinate (we test this onsite at the National Braille Press and have instances where it took the braille reader 30 minutes just to acquire the needed tactile information to answer one test question).

Transcription of Results in the Regular CSAP Booklet: Students who use a large print and/or braille test format may record answers directly on the adapted format copy of the test, may use a scribe or use other techniques for response as designated in the student's IEP. Upon completion of testing, the student's test responses MUST be transferred into a regular print test booklet. When the student has used braille as a response format, the transfer of this information into the regular print assessment booklet should be completed by the TVI or a district braillist. The content of both a large print and a braille test must be transcribed into the regular print CSAP booklet. The data grid should indicate it was a braille test.

Storage and Returning Completed Tests: Please remember that the Braille version of the test is always considered to be a part of the secure materials and must be secured on a daily basis. No versions of the CSAP may be stored in classrooms.

All transcribed test booklets, along with the original braille and standard and nonstandard large print test materials must be returned to your administrative unit District Assessment Coordinator.

Contributing to the Annual Item Analysis Process: I will send out an electronic form to gather information about the 2009-10 CSAP tests. If there are particular test items in a grade/content/particular format test that were problematic for your students, this information will be critical to further test development. We also want to know if the test had no concerns. This item specific information is reviewed annually with the Office of Standards and Assessments, the test publisher, and the braille vendor.

The CSAP questions have been reviewed over the past 8 years for visual-item bias. We have been diligent in removing or altering questions that are too visually-based for accommodation and, on rare occasions, would be too time consuming to complete. As such, the expectation is that the braille-reading student will be able to complete the CSAP test.

Be familiar with grade-level expectations and content standards for your students. It is important to ensure that our students have instructional experiences commensurate with their peers when we are aware of what is addressed in the state standards (e.g., graphing, Venn Diagrams, etc.).





Bits From Bonnie

By Bonnie Snyder

BonnieLS21@gmail.com

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

Welcome 2010! I am looking forward to 2010 to be the best ever for us all. This month's column will cover information on two freeware programs and one shareware program that you should find very useful for your students.

I will begin with the Dorina Daisy Reader (DDR). It is freeware and is an add-on to the Web browser Firefox. This is an excellent DAISY reader and well worth looking into. I have been emailing back and forth with the head programmer of this freeware, Pedro Milliet, who works with the Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind located in Brazil. He is delightful and we have had a lengthy conversation covering the Dorina Daisy Reader features and the DAISY technology in general. You can go to the website: http://www.caracol.com.br/agora/doc.cfm?id_doc=1982&lang=en to download either the full Firefox with the DDR already installed or you can just download the add-on if you already have Firefox. The latest addition to the program is the ability to export notes that the reader places in the bookmarks to nice, clean text files. DDR can use any of the Microsoft SAPI compliant voices from Nuance, AT&T, Cepstral, and other commercial producers of premium voices.

Next is another freeware called, ironically enough, Visual Music. This is a great program for the musically inclined student. It is fully accessible with JAWS and the student can create musical compositions by playing notes and chords on the computer keyboard (with a choice of 128 instrument voices), or with an attached keyboard synthesizer, or by writing scripts in its own simple scripting language in a text editor and running the scripts in the program. The documentation is quite good and the program is really fun to use. Here is a Web address where you can find this program: <http://software.informer.com/getfree-visual-music-download/>

Finally I want to tell you about a shareware program. Over the past year or so, I have received complaints from various TVIs about how many of the teachers in their schools have been creating documents in PDF format that are not accessible for the blind students (these PDFs are being scanned as graphics). I discovered a really good shareware program called Image2OCR Converter. It basically takes the PDF graphic and bypasses the scanning process, and just rewrites the file to whatever editable format you select (Word, text, html, text based PDF). It does a really good job, but you will still need to clean the file to some degree. It will also adjust the positioning of the graphic if it isn't completely straight when it was originally scanned. Image2OCR comes in three versions: The Lite version is \$9.99, the Pro version is \$14.99 and the fully bundled version is \$19.99. I went ahead and purchased the fully bundled version and am very impressed with it. You can download a limited demo of the program from Softpedia.com or you can go to the Software Solutions, Ltd. Web site at: <http://www.fileconvert.net/img2ocr/index.htm>

On another topic, I am still looking for volunteers to help me test out Skype/InnerPass as a possible means of offering convenient and free webinars. Please contact me if you want to help me get it going. I will need at least two people besides myself in order to fully test it. Have a great 2010!

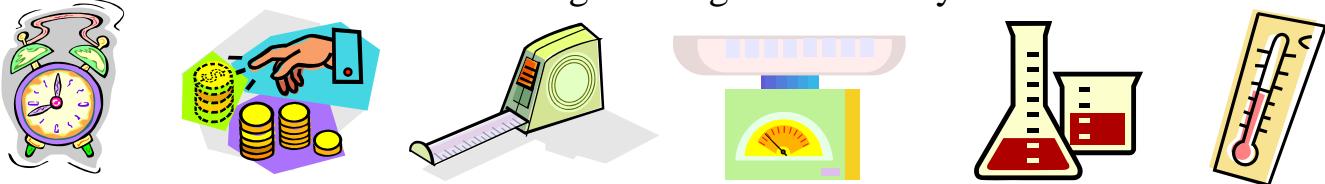
Editor's Note: Parents and TVIs, please be in touch with Bonnie to assist you with the child's / students' assistive technology needs. Her consultation services are provided through the CDE Exceptional Student Leadership Unit and are of no costs to families / administrative units.

Field Evaluators Needed for Elementary Math Products!

The American Printing House for the Blind is seeking field evaluators for two elementary math products. **MathBuilders - Measurement** is designed for elementary braille students in grades K-3. The unit consists of lessons for each grade level, a set of manipulatives designed for braille readers, and worksheets to reinforce concepts. Objectives for each lesson have been matched to NCTM standards for grades K-3. Lessons will be introduced for measuring: Time (including the calendar), Money, Length, Weight, Liquid Volume, and Temperature. **Addition and Subtraction Tables** is a tool to help large print and braille students with addition and subtraction problems. The grids can be used to find the sum of two whole numbers from 0-10 or the difference of a related subtraction problem.

If you would like to be considered as a field reviewer for either of these products, please e-mail Jeanette Wicker, Core Curriculum Project Leader, at jwicker@aph.org

Field testing will begin in February 2010.



The CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Proposed Clinic Schedule for School Year 2009-2010



Region	Dates	Location	Site Coordinators
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



2010 Kid's Ski Day!!!

Come and learn to cross-country ski with sighted guides at the 5th Annual Colorado Ski For Light Kid's Ski Day!

- Where? Frisco Nordic Center in Frisco Colorado. Pick up and return in the parking lot at CSDB.
- When is it? **February 7, 2010**, Sunday, 9:00am to 4:00pm
- How do I register? Fill out the Colorado Ski For Light Kid's Day Application, emergency data form, and waiver form and place them in the mail with **\$15** to reserve your skis, boots, lunch, sighted guide and training.
- Why should I do this? Because we would like to introduce you to a challenging and fun sport!
- Do I need skiing experience? No, beginners as well as advanced skiers are welcome. We will start from the basics so even if you have been skiing for awhile, you will benefit from the training.
- Who do I contact for more information? Becky Myers, 2127 N. Nevada Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80907, (719) 578-9268 or becky@rebeccamyers.com
- You can also contact Diane Fitzkee at dfitzkee@ppboces.org

We will meet at Frisco Nordic Center at 9:00 AM. We will get skis and boots at this time and sighted guides and skiers will be introduced. Then we will begin! Lunch will be provided between 11:00 - 11:45 for the skiers and guides, and the day continues with an afternoon of skiing. Call Becky Myers if you need transportation or have special dietary restrictions. Skiers should return to CSDB about 6:00 pm or parents will be notified. Bring snacks if you want or need them.

See you there!!!



National Federation of the Blind

2010 Junior Science Academy



A STEM Program for Blind Children Ages 8-12



In 2008 the National Center for Blind Youth in Science (NCBYS), a program of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Jernigan Institute, offered its first Science Academy program for elementary students. Once again NFB is making this program possible for children in grades three through six. The NCBYS developed its Junior Science Academy (JSA) in 2004 in order to spark and enhance blind students' interest in scientific study. This year, with hands-on experiences, tactile materials, and innovative nonvisual teaching methods, the JSA will open its doors again to young explorers with two sessions of the program. Applicants can apply for one of the following dates:

Session 1: July 28-August 1, 2010

Session 2: August 4-August 8, 2010

The Junior Science Academy is a four-day session that will expose blind children to the excitement of science in real-life applications. The students will learn about how much fun science can be through hands-on instruction, field trips, and interactive activities. Attending parents will participate in a corresponding seminar with workshops designed to focus on meeting the needs of their blind children.

A registration fee of \$150 will be charged for each accepted student and parent/chaperone pair. The cost of travel, room, board, and program materials will be covered by the NFB Jernigan Institute for all student and parent/chaperone pairs.

Contact Brent Batron at the Colorado Center for the Blind For More Information:

303-778-1130 x222 or bbatron@cocenter.org

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE 2010 AER AWARDS PROGRAM!!!

Submission Deadline: March 1, 2010



The 2008-2010 Awards Committee strongly encourage you to nominate candidates for one of AER's prestigious awards. The highest recognition that AER gives to outstanding blindness professionals include:

Mary K. Bauman Award - This award honors an individual who has made significant and outstanding contributions to the education of children and youth who are blind and visually impaired.

Ambrose M. Shotwell Award - Established to honor an individual who has made significant and outstanding contributions to the personal adjustment or rehabilitation of adults who are blind or visually impaired.

John H. McAulay Award - A professional who has contributed outstanding efforts and achievements leading to the placement of people with visual impairments in productive employment is honored with this award.

Alfred Allen Award - Established to honor professionals who have spent their career in direct service to people with visual impairments.

Douglas C. MacFarland Award - This award is presented to an individual who is retired from the field after having provided leadership in the field of blindness and visual impairment and who made innovative, significant or outstanding contributions either through direct service, professional organizations, research, literature and/or preparation of professionals.

C. Warren Bledsoe Award - Presented by the AER Publications Committee in recognition of an outstanding piece of literature in the field of blindness and visual impairment that has been published within the past five years.

**For complete award criteria and nomination forms, please visit www.aerbvi.org
or phone 877-492-2708 x201**

Spotlight on



Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)

Retrieved from: <http://www.lighthouse.org/medical/eye-disorders/retinitis-pigmentosa/>

What is Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)? Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) is the name given to a group of hereditary disease of the retina characterized by progressive loss of visual field, night blindness and reduced or absent electroretinogram (ERG test) recording, which indicates that a large portion of the retina is damaged.

RP causes the degeneration of photoreceptor cells in the retina. Photoreceptor cells capture and process light helping us to see. As these cells degenerate and die, patients experience progressive vision loss.

There are two types of photoreceptor cells: rod cells and cone cells. Rod cells are concentrated along the outer perimeter of the retina. Rod cells help us to see images that come into our peripheral or side vision. They also help us to see in dark and dimly lit environments. Cone cells are concentrated in the macula, the center of the retina, and allow us to see fine visual detail in the center of our vision. Cone cells also allow us to perceive color. Together, rods and cones are the cells responsible for converting light into electrical impulses that are transmitted to the brain where "seeing" actually occurs.

Genetics of RP: Within the nucleus of every human cell reside a host of genes. Genes are the fundamental building blocks of life. Inherited from our parents, genes carry family traits like eye and hair color, the shape of our face and even diseases like RP. Genes are like computer programs containing sets of coded instructions. Each gene instructs the cell to create a specialized protein that performs a specific task for the cell. In retinal cells, some genes encode proteins that allow the cell to process light. Other genes encode proteins that uptake nutrients and eliminate waste. Still other genes encode proteins that form the cell walls and other structures within the cell.

Sometimes, the coded instructions within a gene become altered. These alterations, known as mutations, can confer a benefit, allowing the organism to better adapt to its environment. However, mutations can also interfere with the proper encoding of a protein. The resulting protein cannot perform its job within the cell, thereby hampering the cell's well being and leading to disease.

Retinal cells are among the most specialized cells in the human body and depend on a number of unique genes to create vision. A disease-causing mutation in any one of these genes can lead to vision loss. To date, Foundation Fighting Blindness researchers have discovered over 100 genes that can contain mutations leading to RP.

RP can be passed to succeeding generations by one of three genetic inheritance patterns -- autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, or X-linked inheritance. Each type of inheritance causes a different pattern of affected and unaffected family members. For example, in families with autosomal recessive RP, unaffected parents can have both affected and unaffected children. In recessive RP, there is often no prior family history. In families with the autosomal dominant RP, an affected parent can have both affected and unaffected children. In families with the X-linked type, only males are affected, while females carry the genetic trait but do not experience serious vision loss.

It is very important to remember that because RP is an inherited disorder, it can potentially affect another member of the family. If one member of a family is diagnosed with a hereditary retinal degeneration, it is strongly advised that all members of that family contact an ophthalmologist.

Related Diseases: Other inherited diseases share some of the clinical symptoms of RP. Some of these conditions are complicated by other symptoms besides loss of vision. The most common of these is Usher syndrome, which

Spotlight on



causes both hearing and vision loss. There are three types of Usher syndrome. Type One involves congenital deafness, Type Two involves congenital hearing loss, and Type Three involves a progressive loss. The onset of RP tends to be earlier in type one than type two than type three. Other associated syndromes related to retinitis pigmentosa include Bardet-Biedl (Laurence-Moon) syndrome, rod-cone dystrophy, choroideremia, gyrate-atrophy, Leber congenital amaurosis, and Stargardt's disease.

RP and related diseases are rare and difficult to accurately diagnose. Only a specialist can properly distinguish between the subtle clinical features of these diseases. Therefore, it is important that patients who are symptomatic see an ophthalmologist who specializes in retinal degenerative diseases.

Symptoms

- Normal visual acuity in early stages, possibly -- but not usually -- progressing to no light perception
- Donut shaped visual field loss progressing to severe constriction (loss of peripheral vision)
- Night blindness / Poor light-dark adaptation
- Decreased response to magnification
- Need for more light

The most common feature of all forms of RP is a gradual degeneration of the rods and cones. Most forms of RP first cause the degeneration of rod cells. These forms of RP, sometimes called rod-cone dystrophy, usually begin with night blindness. Night blindness is somewhat like the experience normally sighted individuals encounter when entering a dark movie theatre on a bright, sunny day. However, patients with RP cannot adjust well to dark and dimly lit environments.

As the disease progresses and more rod cells degenerate, individuals most often lose their peripheral vision. People with RP often experience a ring of vision loss in their mid-periphery with small islands of vision in their very far periphery. Others report the sensation of tunnel vision, as though they see the world through the opening of a straw. Many individuals with RP retain a small degree of central vision throughout their life.

Other forms of RP, sometimes called cone-rod dystrophy, first affect central vision. Individuals first experience a loss of central vision that cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses. With the loss of cone cells also comes

What It's Like

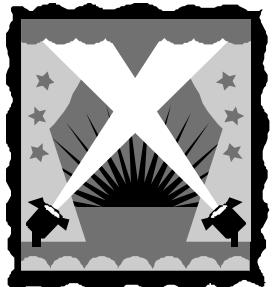


This is how a street scene looks with normal vision.



Example of Retinitis Pigmentosa

Spotlight on



disturbances in color perception. As the disease progresses, rod cells also degenerate causing night blindness and loss of peripheral vision.

Symptoms of RP are most often recognized in children, adolescents and young adults, with progression of the disease continuing throughout the individual's life. The pattern and degree of visual loss are variable.

Diagnosis: These special tests can be used to help diagnose RP:

Acuity Tests: These tests measure the accuracy of a person's central vision at specific distances in specific lighting situations.

Color Testing: These tests can help determine the status of the cone cells, the retinal cells that interpret color.

Visual Field Testing: This test uses a machine to measure how much peripheral vision a person has.

Dark Adaptation Test: This test will measure how well one's eyes adjust to changes in lighting and can help the doctor better understand the current function of the retina's rod cells, which are the retinal cells responsible for night vision.

ERG Test: The ERG (electroretinogram test) records the electrical currents produced by the retina due to a light stimulus. The intensity and speed of the electrical signal becomes reduced as the photoreceptor cells degenerate.

Risk Factors Associated with RP: Recent research findings suggest that in some forms of RP, prolonged, unprotected exposure to sunlight may accelerate vision loss. RP is an inherited, genetic disease. It is caused by mutations in genes that are active in retinal cells. Gene mutations are programmed into a person's cells at the time of conception. RP is not caused by injury, infection or exposure to any toxic substance.

What Can Be Done to Reduce Risk: Reducing exposure to sunlight is important for keeping the eye protected. However, since RP is an inherited disorder and it runs in families, the disease is not preventable. If someone in your family is diagnosed with a retinal degeneration, it is strongly advised that all members of the family contact an eye care professional.

Treatment: As yet, there is no known cure for RP. However, intensive research is currently under way to discover the cause, prevention, and treatment of RP. Researchers have identified some of the genes that cause RP. It is now possible, in some families with X-linked RP or autosomal dominant RP, to perform a test on genetic material from blood and other cells to determine if members of an affected family have one of several RP genes.

Source: The Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) www.blindness.org

Resources

RP International PO Box 900, Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Phone: (818) 992-0500 Fax (818) 992-3265 E-mail: info@rpinternational.org

The Foundation Fighting Blindness 11435 Cronhill Drive, Owings Mills, MD 21117-2220

Phone: (800) 683-5551 (TDD) Fax: (410) 363-2393 Retinitis Pigmentosa

National Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation, Inc. 11350 McCormick Rd., #800 , Hunt Valley, MD 21031-1002

Phone: 800/638-5683 TTY

just for PARENTS

EConnector Newsletter

The E-Connector is a newsletter for parents of children who are blind/visually impaired in Colorado. It is sent out electronically. If you would like to add a friend or family member to the e-mail list, please contact Julie Hunter: jhunter456@gmail.com.

CCIBVI: Parents Have a Seat at the Table

The Colorado Commission for Individuals who are Blind and Visually Impaired (CCIBVI) was established by the Colorado legislature in 2007 to act as a liaison between the blind and visually impaired community and the Colorado government. The Commission is charged with making recommendations regarding vocational rehabilitation services, pre-vocational training, independent living services for seniors, and the Business Enterprise Programs. There are 15 seats on the Commission representing a wide variety agencies, special interest groups, and age groups. One of the 15 seats is designated to represent parents of blind and visually impaired children. Julie Hunter was appointed to that seat by the Governor in 2008. Currently the Commission is working on building a web site and resource directory and assessing the needs for additional services in the state. As the voice for parents on the Commission, Julie welcomes questions, comments and suggestions. She may be reached by phone at 303-377-9021 or by e-mail: jhunter456@gmail.com. The CCIBVI meets four times a year and the meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2010.



**THE
HADLEY SCHOOL
FOR THE BLIND**

just for PARENTS

NEW! Family Mini Courses from Hadley

Mini courses are Hadley's answer to busy family schedules. Each mini course is on a topic relevant to parents with babies and young children. They are each one book and one assignment and include photos and insightful comments from experienced parents. The courses are free and are offered in large print or online.

You, Your Child and Your Community

Shows how planning can help you face parenting challenges more confidently and strengthen the relationships with yourself, your child, other family members and your community. Includes strategies for taking care and scheduling time for self and tips for enjoying your child, building strong family connections and building community.

Beginning the Special Education Journey

Discusses professionals and the system of services in the United States. Explains the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and outlines the range of placements for children with visual impairments. Includes ways to prepare for the transition from early intervention to preschool.

How to Be Your Child's Advocate

Discusses parents' rights and the laws pertaining to special education in the United States. Presents advocacy strategies to help you work with your educational team to ensure your child receives a free, appropriate public education.

For more information about these mini courses, contact Debbie Worman, Instructor, The Hadley School for the Blind at 800-323-4238 or worman@hadley.edu. To learn more about Hadley, visit www.hadley.edu.

PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS

February 25-27, 2010 in Colorado Springs

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 online or download an application go to:

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

Resources and Materials

I-CRAYON



independent living aids, LLC

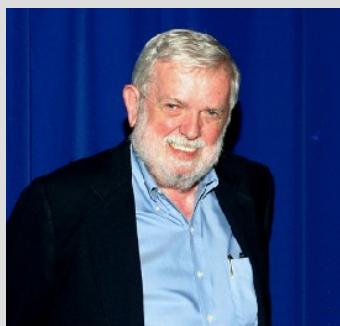
PRODUCTS FOR YOUR ACTIVE INDEPENDENT LIFE 1-800-537-2118



The I-Crayon is a device to help children who are blind, have low vision or who are color blind. When a crayon is placed into the I-Crayon, a cartoon character speaks the name of the crayon color in either English or Spanish. I-Crayon also spells the color of the crayon. For more information, visit www.independentliving.com or call (800) 537-2118.

New Publication!

THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE EQUAL,
THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT



By
Dr. Phil Hatlen

Since the mid-1950s, Dr. Phil Hatlen has had a huge impact on the education of students who are blind and visually impaired, including his efforts in gaining acceptance of the Expanded Core Curriculum. In his new book, he writes of his personal experiences in championing the rights of persons with blindness and low vision. The pages of this book contain both the personal perspectives of a man passionate about education, and the historical perspectives about the events that have molded many of our lives. *The Opportunity to be Equal, The Right to be Different* includes information about the educational needs of the blind and visually impaired persons including those with multiple impairments, placement, the ECC, Braille, O&M and a chapter on his mentors and peers. Order #59400 HATL, \$35.00. Order from Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired by calling (512) 454-8631 or visiting www.tsbvi.edu.



Resources and Materials

Math Teachers Love the Geometro

More than 4,000 math teachers attended the *National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Conference and Exposition* in Nashville, TN, November 18-20, and they loved the new APH Geometro! Geometro materials first appeared as an American Printing House for the Blind product in May of 2008 when MathBuilders, Unit 6: Geometry was introduced. In September 2009 Geometro Sets became available for sale in the APH catalog. Geometro materials provide hands-on experiences with manipulatives that aid in teaching 3-D geometry. For more information, go to www.aph.org



Reach Out to Vietnamese Families

Washington Learning Systems has added a Vietnamese version of the On-the-Go parent-child activities for free download. To access these materials go to www.walearning.com.

The image features the "Language is the Key" logo with the tagline "Every child is ready to learn" on the left, and the "WASHINGTON LEARNING SYSTEMS" logo on the right. Below the logos are two photographs: one showing a woman holding a baby, and another showing a man sitting with a young boy.

Does your early childhood program serve families who speak Vietnamese at home? On-the-Go materials have been posted for free download so you can reach out to families who speak Vietnamese AND help them promote early literacy at home. You will also find On-the-Go materials in English, Spanish, Russian, and Somali. These materials complement our Language is the Key video training programs.

Infant-Toddler language and early literacy activities: Free and reproducible
Developed by Angela Notari-Syverson, Ph.D., and Judy Challoner, M.S. Illustrations: Don Syverson

Resources and Materials

Toy Ideas from National Parents of Blind Children: www.nfb.org/nfb/NOPBC_Toys_for_Blind_Kids.asp--This Webpage, compiled by parents of blind children, lists commercially available toys that can be enjoyed by kids from preschool through the school-age years.



2009 Toy'R'Us Toy Guide for Differently-Abled Kids:

www.toysrus.com/category/index.jsp?categoryId=2257808--This catalogue, updated annually, is available online and is free of charge at all Toys'R'Us and Kids'R'Us stores. The catalogue is not arranged on the basis of specific disabilities; rather, it emphasizes particular skill sets and/or areas of strength. Categories include auditory, creativity, fine motor, gross motor, language, tactile, and more. Within each category you can search by age and gender.

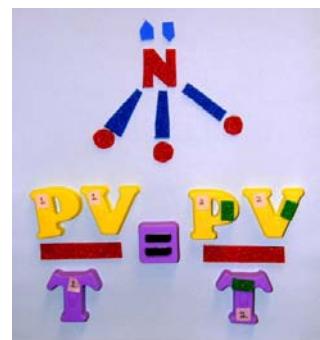


The T-Map Project: (415) 694-7363;
www.lighthouse-sf.org/services/vlrc/tmap.php--Also using Tiger Embosser technology are maps from the T-Map Project of the San Francisco

Lighthouse. The program creates tactile maps based on nearly any street address in the U.S. The address is marked by a small circle at the center of the map, which covers the streets in the surrounding square mile. Street names are given in the accompanying key. The maps are free to California residents and cost \$15 apiece to persons outside the state.

Tactile Adaptations Kit: MDW Educational Services, LLC, 1115 Inman Ave., Suite 116, Edison, NJ 08820; (908) 565-1802;
MDWEducationalServices@gmail.com;

<http://dswinograd.web.officelive.com/tactileadaptationskit.aspx>--This kit is designed to help teachers and parents create tactile graphics for students who are blind and sighted children who learn best in a multisensory environment. The kit contains a magnetic dry erase board and a variety of materials for making pictures. Materials include glue sticks, textured dots, magnet-backed felt and foam, and magnetic print and Braille letters. A booklet presents ways the kit can be used and suggests adaptations for teaching difficult concepts.





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

National Federation of the Blind 2010 Scholarship Program

Each year at its national convention in July, the NFB gives a broad array of thirty scholarships to recognize achievement by blind scholars. All applicants for these scholarships:

- ◆ must be legally blind (go to <http://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/Confirmation%20of%20Legal%20Blindness.pdf>) in both eyes, and
- ◆ must be residing in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, and
- ◆ must be pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, postsecondary course of study in a degree program at a United States institution in the 2010 scholastic year, except that one scholarship may be given to a person employed full-time while attending school part-time, and
- ◆ must participate in the entire NFB national convention and in all scheduled scholarship program activities.

In addition to a scholarship, each winner will receive assistance to attend the 2010 National Federation of the Blind Annual Convention in July, providing an excellent opportunity for high level networking with active blind persons in many, many different professions and occupations.

**2010 Deadline: Scholarship applications and documents
must be e-mailed or postmarked no later than **March 31, 2010**.**

For more information and/or the application materials, please go to: http://www.nfb.org/nfb/scholarship_program.asp

All questions should be directed to the Chairman. E-mail is preferred.

Mr. Anil Lewis, Chairman - NFB Scholarship Committee
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND at Jernigan Place
200 East Wells Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230
Office: (410) 659-9314, extension 2415
E-mail: scholarships@nfb.org





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

50 States, 50 Weeks, 50 Jobs What Kind of Job Do You Want?

Daniel Seddiqi has been a real estate agent, archeologist, petroleum engineer, cheese maker, peanut sheller, insurance broker, and held 44 other jobs, all within the past year. Seddiqi traveled to all 50 states to explore the diverse careers, environments and cultures offered in America. Although Seddiqi is not visually impaired, perhaps a review of his jobs might spark an interest in students who are visually impaired to consider how many jobs they might be able to do. Seddiqi's journal is located at www.livingthemap.com. Students who are visually impaired can also visit AFB Career Connect® at <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=7> to learn about jobs performed by adults who are blind or visually impaired or find a mentor to help them learn about career opportunities.



College Preparation Checklist

This publication is a "to-do" list, starting with elementary school, to help students prepare academically and financially for education beyond high school. Each section is split into subsections for students and parents, ex-



plaining what to do, and which publications or web sites might be useful to them. This publication is available in print and in braille. It will be available in Spanish soon. You can order a copy by contacting the Federal Student Aid Information Center toll-free at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!



YOUTH EXPLORATION OPPORTUNITY

Global Explorers provides educational tourism experiences for youth of all physical abilities ages 14-21 through its Leading the Way program. The program 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.

Two trips are planned for 2010: Rim to River Expedition: Grand Canyon, Ariz., July 6-20, 2010 and Yucatan Leadership Program, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, July 10-18, 2010. For additional information, e-mail LeadingTheWay@GlobalExplorers.org; call 1-877-627-1425; or visit www.GlobalExplorers.org and click "Leading the Way." Braille, screen reader friendly and large print materials are available upon request.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

American Council of the Blind 2010 Scholarship Application Program

The American Council of the Blind scholarship application process must be completed online. For this information, please go to: <http://www.acb.org/scholapp2010-instruct.html>

Only approved supplements will be accepted by regular mail. Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Autobiographical sketch (details found in online application)
2. Certification of legal blindness from an ophthalmologist, optometrist or physician. (This hard copy letter may be mailed.)
3. Certified transcripts from the school you are currently attending. Entering freshmen and sophomores, please include high school transcripts; graduate students, please include undergraduate transcripts. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, a 3.3 cumulative grade point average is required. (This hard copy letter may be mailed.)
4. Two letters of recommendation from a current or recent instructor, career counselor or employer.
5. Proof of acceptance from a post-secondary school.

Completed application supplements (only) that are not able to be emailed must be postmarked no later than Monday, **March 15, 2010**, to:

American Council of the Blind Scholarship Program
Attn: Patricia Castillo
2200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 650
Arlington VA 22201

**Online applications must be submitted
by 11:59 PM (EST) Sunday, March 14th, 2010.**





THE SEE THE FUTURE FUND

Scholarships for the Blind & Visually Impaired

Application now available for the 2010 SEE THE FUTURE Fund Scholarships

Updated application information is now available on-line for the 2010 "Education for Life" Scholarships.

Go to www.seethefuture.org

Click on: "Education for Life" Scholarships

Click on: "Application Information" to access an updated form

Kane-SEE THE FUTURE "Full-Ride Tuition" Scholarships

The SEE THE FUTURE Fund is excited and pleased to announce a partnership with the Kane Family Foundation. The Kane Foundation is offering two merit-based "full-ride tuition" scholarships to visually impaired or blind students who meet the SEE THE FUTURE Fund criteria. The scholarship will also cover usual and customary fees and \$1,500 in books per school year. The scholarship does NOT cover room & board expenses.

Students who are interested in becoming a Kane-SEE THE FUTURE scholar must submit a completed SEE THE FUTURE application by the **March 1, 2010 deadline**. All applicants will be considered for the Kane scholarship if they meet the STF criteria along with the following:

Acceptance to CU-Boulder, CU-Denver, or CU-Colorado Springs.

Un-weighted high school GPA: 3.40 or higher (through senior year).

Achieve an A or a B in at least one AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) course during junior or senior year. If a school district does not offer AP or IB courses, the student must address this in their application. If an applicant is graduating from the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, that student must achieve an A or B in at least one AP class from a local high school.

Achieve an ACT composite score of 25 (80th percentile) or above.

Up to two Kane-SEE THE FUTURE scholars may be selected each year by the SEE THE FUTURE Fund's Selection Committee.

Please Be Advised: At this time, all Kane – SEE THE FUTURE recipients **must** attend CU-Boulder, CU-Denver, or CU-Colorado Springs. We recommend that eligible and interested students apply and have acceptance to one of the CU schools.





2010 Learning Labs

IMPROVED Learning Labs!

Learning Labs will be offered on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 2:30 – 4:30 pm. Live presentation will take place at the Assistive Technology Partners Denver office at 601 E. 18th Ave., Denver, CO 80203. The Colorado Springs and Grand Junction satellites will participate in Learning Labs via web-based training software simultaneously.

Watch for future e-mail notifications that will have details for each lab.

CapTel and Telephone Relay Services

Presented by Jim Sandstrum, MA, CCC-SLP

Thursday, January 14th

Boardmaker Overview

Presented by Chris Perkins, MA, CCC-SLP

Thursday, February 11th

Ergonomic Solutions for Computer Access

Presented by Greg McGrew, ME

Thursday, March 11th

Computer Use for Toddlers with Special Needs

Presented by Brian Burne, MSM, OTR

Thursday, April 8th

University of Colorado Denver

Anschutz Medical Campus

www.assistivetechnologypartners.org

ATP@ucdenver.edu

800-255-3477

OUTREACH

Overview of Guide Software for People with Visual Impairments
Presented by Denice Roberts, MEd
Thursday, May 13th

Wheelchair Back Supports
Presented by Leslie McLachlan, PT, MSPT, ATP
Denver - Thursday, July 8th

**Adaptive Telecommunication Devices for
Limited Hand Function or Hands Free Use**
Presented by Aleaza Goldberg, MA, CCC-SLP
Thursday, August 12th

Introduction to TextHelp
Presented by Shelly Elfner, MS, CCC-SLP
Thursday, September 9th

Do-It-Yourself Switch Adaptations for Toys and Video Games
Presented by Gavin Philips, MSE
Thursday, October 14th

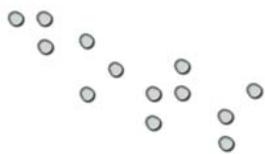
Smart Pen for Struggling Students
Presented by Becky Breaux, MS, OTR, ATP
Thursday, November 11th

Assistive Technology Partners (ATP)
601 E. 18th Ave., Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203
303-315-1280

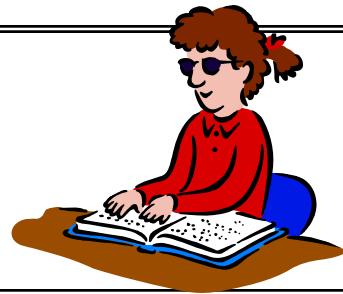
ATP-Western Slope Technical
Assistance Center (WesTAC)
Mesa County Workforce Center
2897 North Ave., Modular 3A
Grand Junction, CO 81501
970-248-0876

ATP-South East Technical
Assistance Center (SETAC)
828 Wooten Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
719-380-6220

University of Colorado Denver
Anschutz Medical Campus
www.assistivetechnologypartners.org
ATP@ucdenver.edu
800-255-3477



DOTS OF INTEREST



TECHNOLOGY

The following information on technology was retrieved from the American Foundation for the Blind webpage on DOTS for Braille Literacy (Development of Teacher Support), Volume 15, Number 1, Fall 2009, which can be found at <http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=6&TopicID=19&DocumentID=4863>

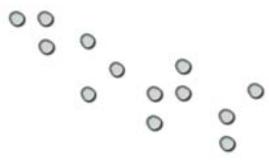
EAP. This new acronym (which stands for electroactive polymer materials) is important to braille readers because of the potential to improve refreshable braille displays. Yoseph Bar-Cohen, a senior researcher at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, wrote about the idea of tiny "artificial muscles" that may yield a full-page active braille system, and scientists and engineers around the world have used his ideas to develop prototypes. The Center for Braille Innovation at National Braille Press contacted Bar-Cohen about collaborating with researchers to accelerate the development of EAP-actuated braille displays. (Visit www.popsci.com/scitech/article/2009-08/iphones-blind or search on EAP at www.spie.org)

6Dot Labeler. Designed by MIT students, the 6Dot is a portable device that embosses braille onto commercially available adhesive labeling tape. The major difference in this device from previous label makers is the standard braille keyboard and the fact that it uses a built-in microprocessor that can store up to 16 characters. A provisional patent has been filed, and two companies have expressed interest in manufacturing and distributing the 6Dot. Feedback has been mixed on the news of the 6Dot, which won the Dyson Award, an engineering competition with the goal of designing something that solves a problem. (Visit www.braillelabeler.net/about.html)

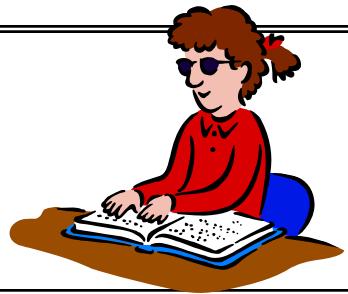


Tactility Phone, the Braille Phone, the Universal Phone, and the iPhone. Accessibility of cell phones, especially touch screen models, is an important issue for users who are blind or visually impaired. The gadget blog, Ubergizmo, found several designs being developed for cell phones with tactile access. Korean designer Seon-Keun Park uses EAP (identified by this company as Electric Active Plastic) to raise part of its surface in braille so the user can retrieve text messages. Another designer, Siwei Liu used current technology to produce a cool-looking phone with a simple three-dimensional braille face to make dialing easier for users who are blind. (Visit www.yankodesign.com and search for "braille.") AccessWorld®, AFB's free technology magazine for people who are blind or visually impaired, reviewed the iPhone's ingenious "gesture" technology for interacting with its touch-screen interface, and concluded, "We do not often use the term 'revolutionary' in AccessWorld, but it does apply here." (Visit [AccessWorld®](http://www.accessworld.org) to read the full review.)

DeafBlind Communicator. Washington State's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conceived the idea for a two-piece portable device for individuals who are deaf-blind to independently communicate with a non-signing person. The system developed by HumanWare features a braille note-taker (laptop-size device that has either a regular or braille keyboard and beneath that, a small refreshable braille display), a cell phone, and software to translate text messages between the two devices. (Visit www.humanware.com to see more about the testing of this device.)



DOTS OF INTEREST

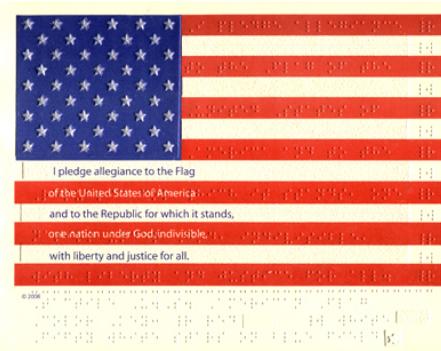
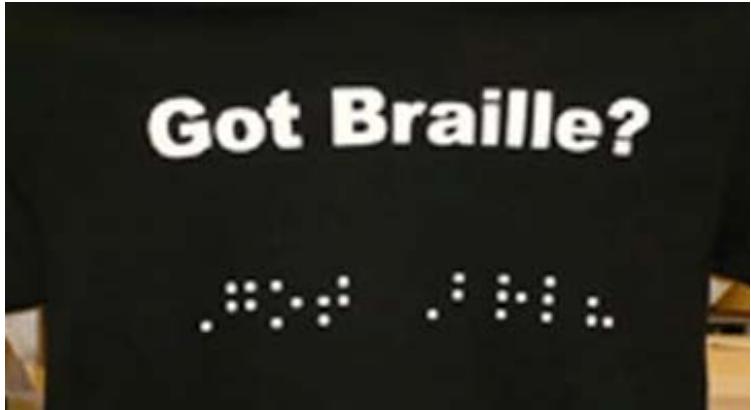


The Parents & Friends Association of the California School for the Blind is selling t-shirts and sweatshirts that honor Louis Braille to raise funds for some of the school's extracurricular activities. The front of each shirt reads, "Got Braille?" On the back it says, "Happy Birthday Louis! Louis Braille



1809-2009 Blind innovator who gave reading and writing to the blind

world." All shirts are solid black with white puffy writing and braille. Shirts are a 50/50 poly/cotton blend. T-shirts go for \$12 each, sweatshirts for \$20, plus \$4 per shirt for shipping. For more information, contact Staci Gonzales at (510) 794-3800 extension 216 or at sgonzales@csb-cde.ca.gov.

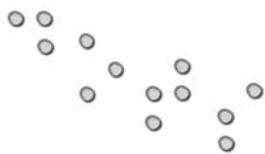


OH SAY, CAN YOU SEE ...

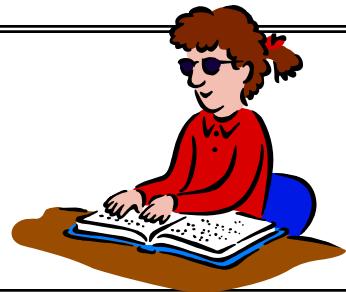
National Braille Press now offers tactile American flags for \$5 each. The stars and stripes are tactile; the red stripes are indicated with a braille "r" and the white with a "w." Flags measure 7 1/2" x 9 1/2". These flags also include The Pledge of Allegiance in both braille and large print. Flags are available in contracted and uncontracted braille. To see one for yourself, visit www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/FLAG.html. For more information, call NBP at 1-800-548-7323.

Opus Technologies: 13333 Thunderhead St., San Diego, CA 92129; (866) 678-7832; (858) 538-9401; opus@opustec.com; <www.opustec.com>--
Established in 1992, Opus Technologies develops and sells software as well as print and Braille materials for the learning and use of Braille music. Publications include *How to Read Braille Music, Second Edition*, by Betty Krolick, in print, Braille, and CD-ROM formats; *Music Braille Code, 1997*, in print and Braille; *New International Manual of Braille Music Notation*, in print and Braille and on CD-ROM; and *Music Literacy: Its Role in the Education of the Blind*, by Sylvia Clark, a historical view of music notation systems for the blind used in Europe and the US, available in print only.



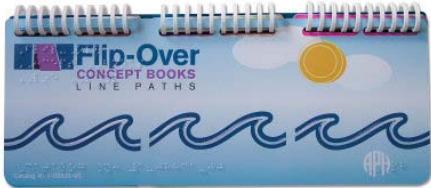


DOTS OF INTEREST



Flip-Over Concept Book: LINE PATHS

The first in a planned series of print/tactile books, uniquely designed by APH, that provides interactive and independent learning for young children as they build basic concepts and develop early tactile skills.



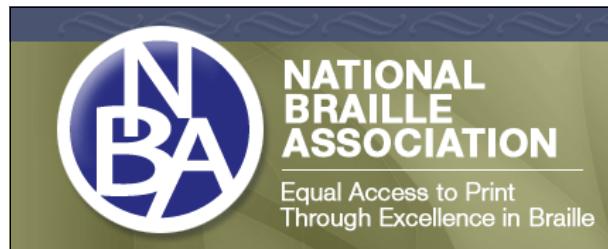
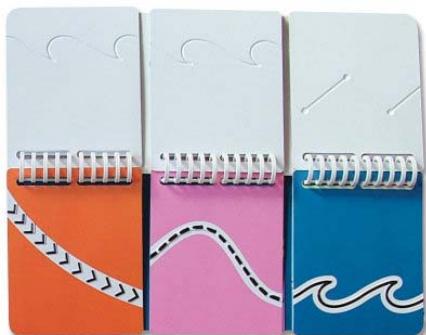
The format of Flip-Over Concept Books includes print and tactile panels that can be turned freely until the child finds adjacent panels that

match each other, continue a line or pattern, complete a sequence, build an image, and so on.

With *LINE PATHS*, Introduce and practice:

- Directional, spatial, and descriptive vocabulary such as curved, straight, zigzag, down, up, staircase, wavy, diagonal, wide, narrow, etc.
- Familiarization with many types of tactile lines that will later be encountered in tactile displays (graphs, maps, etc.)
- Tactile discrimination and line-tracking
- Visual discrimination and line-tracking

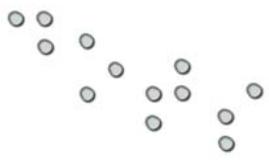
Continuous Line Path Worksheets are included to allow the child to practice tracking each line type, from start to finish, in a continuous motion before tracking across three separate panels.



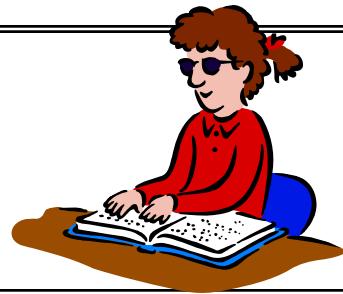
Updated Web Site

The National Braille Association (NBA) has updated its *Ask An Expert* web site, a wonderful resource for asking questions or reviewing the answers about textbook formats, tactile graphics, mathematics or science notation, and much more. The site includes forums for Transcriber and Educator Services, Online Braille Course, Literary Braille, and others. You can also view past *Ask An Expert* posts since NBA is maintaining a link to their archives for the site. When you visit the new site at www.nationalbraille.org you might also check out the online store to find NBA publications on braille transcribing.





DOTS OF INTEREST



FREE BRAILLE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Seedlings Braille books for Children has a free program open to all blind children in the United States that enables them to receive two free Braille books a year. Register with the Book Angel Program online at www.seedlings.org/bkangel2009.php or call Seedlings at 800-777-8552.

BRAILLE BOOKS

With the National Federation of the Blind Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest in full swing, it can be a challenge to keep up with fresh reading material. Braille books also make great holiday gifts, and several sources offer books for purchase or free of charge. Here is a list of resources.



American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults:

Kenneth Jernigan Library for Blind Children, 18440 Oxnard St., Tarzana, CA 91356; (818) 343-2022; <www.actionfund.org>--lends books from its Twin Vision collection free of charge to individuals and schools. The books contain Braille pages bound between the pages of the original print book.

American Action Fund Free Braille Books Program: 1800 Johnson St., Baltimore, MD 21230; (410) 659-9314, Ext. 2361; action@actionfund.org; <www.actionfund.org>--This program provides titles in popular children's series free of charge to schools and individuals. Books are mailed out monthly so that blind children can have them at the same time they appear in the bookstores.

American Printing House for the Blind: 1839 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206; (800) 223-1839; info@aph.org; <www.aph.org>--The American Printing House (APH) offers a variety of Braille and print/Braille titles for purchase. Books in the On the Way to Literacy series are print/Braille titles with tactile illustrations.

BRAILLE BOOKS CONTINUED

Braille Institute of America, Inc.: 741 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90029; (323) 906-3104 or (800) 272-4553; ums@brailleinstitute.org; <www.brailleinstitute.org/childrens_books>--The Braille Special Collection includes some 1,100 titles for children at all grade levels. Any blind child in the US or Canada can receive books free of charge. Additional titles are available for purchase.

Braille International, Inc.: 3290 S. E. Slater St., Stuart, FL 34997; (772) 286-8366; molly@brailleintl.org; <www.brailleintl.org>--Braille International has an extensive online bookstore with fiction and nonfiction titles for children from preschool through grade 8. A few Spanish-language titles are available.

Future Aids, The Braille Superstore: (800) 987-1231; <www.BrailleBookstore.com>-- Among the numerous departments at Future Aids is the Braille Bookstore, which offers both Braille only and "Text/Braille" titles for children. Designed to help parents and teachers who are not fluent in Braille, Text/Braille books have print text on the left-hand page and the accompanying Braille text on the right.

National Braille Press: 88 St. Stephen St., Boston, MA 02115; (800) 548-7323; <www.nbp.org>--Most titles in NBP's catalogue can be purchased in hard copy or electronic Braille "PortaBook" formats. NBP also hosts the Print/Braille Children's Book Club, offering a new title for purchase each month. Each book is sold at the same price as the print edition.

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: <www.loc.gov/nls>-- NLS has by far the most extensive library of Braille books in the United States. Books can be borrowed in hard copy Braille or downloaded as e-books through the WebBraille program. Visit the Website to locate your nearest regional library or to search the database by author, title, or subject. In addition to books, NLS offers the following Braille magazines for children and teens: *Boys' Life*, *Muse*, *Seventeen*, *Spider*, and *Stone Soup*.

Seedlings Braille Books for Children: P.O. Box 51924, Livonia, MI 48151-5924; (734) 427-8552 or (800) 777-8552; info@seedlings.org; <www.seedlings.org>--Seedlings offers more than one thousand reasonably-priced Braille children's books for preschoolers through teens. The Book Angel Program for VI Children allows readers to receive two books per year free of charge. The Rose Project provides Braille copies of articles from the *World Book Encyclopedia* on request.

Seeing Hands: P.O. Box 46374, Minneapolis, MN 55446; info@seeinghands.org; (763) 404-2675; <www.seeinghands.org>--Seeing Hands is a free lending library of print/Braille titles for children ages four to ten.

Volunteer Braillists and Tapists, Inc.: 517 N. Segoe Rd., No. 200, Madison, WI 53705; (608) 233-0222; office.vbti@tdsnet; <www.vbti.org>--VBTI maintains a lending library of some two thousand Braille titles for children and adults. Most library books are also available for purchase. The organization provides transcription services and will transcribe everything from textbooks to knitting patterns and crossword puzzles.



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 or 2010-2011

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.
- ✓ **Rehabilitation Counselor I - Vision (Rehab Teacher/Vision)** Please email: christine.lrsik@state.co.us
- ✓ **Rehabilitation Counselor I - Mobility (Rehab Teacher/O&M)** Denver and Grand Junction - Open Competitive - Residency Waiver - Revised and Re-announced Please email: christine.lrsik@state.co.us
- ✓ **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 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

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- January 23** **Open House for Youth Programs (older kids)** - Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x222 or bbatron@cocenter.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 spfaffenhauser@csdb.org
- February 11** **Southern TVI Meeting** - CSDB/CIMC (Make'n'Take fest) - 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
- February 26-28** **Snow Shoe Weekend** - Estes Park
Contact: Elaine Karns — elkinco@aol.com
- March 1 - April 2** **Early Assessment Window for CSAP Grade 3 Writing and Grades 4-10**
Contact: Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)
- March 5** **CDE Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic** - CSDB, CO Springs
Contact: Site Coordinator Donice Fennimore at dfennimore@csdb.org

More Calendar of Events

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- 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, Colorado Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spfaffenhauser@csdb.org
- March 22 - 27** **CSUN 25th Annual International Technology & Person with Disabilities Conference**
San Diego, CA - Visit: CSUN at www.csunconference.org
- April 8** **CSDB Board of Trustees Meeting** - CSDB, Colorado Springs
Contact: Susan Pfaffenhauser at spfaffenhauser@csdb.org
- April 13** **Southern TVI Meeting** - CSDB/CIMC (Case studies, video assessment)
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- April 16** **Vision Coalition** - Anchor Center for Blind Children
Contact: Tanni Anthony—Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- April 21 - 24** **Council for Exceptional Children's Convention and Expo** - Nashville, TN
Visit: CEC at www.cec.sped.org
- April 23 - 25** **CA Transcribers and Educators for the BVI** - Los Angeles, CA -
Visit: CTEBVI at www.ctebvi.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 spfaffenhauser@csdb.org
- June 14 - 15** **Colorado Assistive Technology Symposium - TBD**
Visit: Colorado AT Project at www.uchsc.edu/atp

More Calendar of Events

2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010

- June 27 - 30** **International Society for Technology in Education** - Denver Convention Center, CO
Visit: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/2010/>
- July 3-8** **National Federation of the Blind National Convention** - Dallas, TX
Contact: www.nfb.org
- July 20 - 25** **AER International Conference** - Little Rock, AR
Visit: www.aerbvi.org
- July 28 - August 1** **2010 Junior Science Academy** - Baltimore, MD
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- August 4 - 8** **2010 Junior Science Academy** - Baltimore, MD
Contact: Brent Batron at 303-778-1130 x222 or bbatron@cocenter.org
- August 9 - 13** **World ICEVI Conference**— Jomtein, Thailand
Visit: www.icevi.org



New Yoga Feature on the APH Physical Education website!



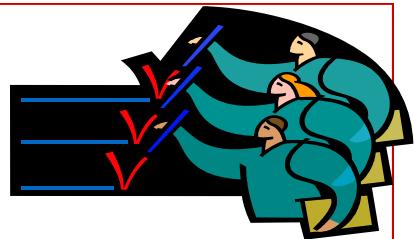
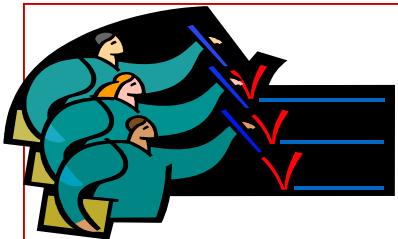
Yoga Instructor Cindy Rogers explains the benefits and reasons to practice yoga. Her YouTube videos provide tips that assist persons who are blind / visually impaired learn yoga safely. www.aph.org/pe/features.html



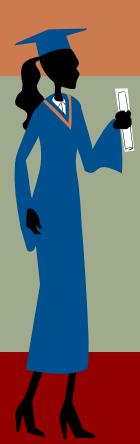
American Printing House
for the Blind
Building Independence Since 1858



CHECK IT OUT!



Earn Your Doctorate!



With a Specialization in the Education of Students who have a Sensory Impairment (Blind/Visually Impaired, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, or Deafblindness) The National Leadership Consortium in Sensory Disabilities (NLCSD) has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The consortium consists of 24 universities with doctoral programs that have an emphasis in one or more of the three sensory impairment areas: blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, and deafblindness. For more information, contact Dr. Kathleen M. Huebner, NLCSD Project Director, Salus University, kathyh@salus.edu

MEMO

Early transitions from IDEA Part C services to IDEA Part B services

The Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Human Services Division for Developmental Disabilities have issued a joint memorandum and technical assistance document on early transitions from Part C services to Part B services. Please view the memorandum at:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/
Guidance.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Guidance.asp)

For More Information, Contact: Susan Smith - Early Childhood Initiatives/ Preschool Special Education; Phone: 303-866-6712 or Email: smith_s@cde.state.co.us

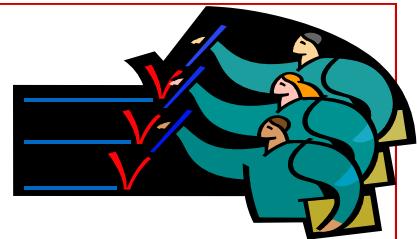
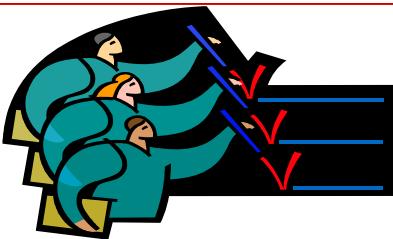
Results Matter Video Series

Reflections During the Final Home Visit, produced by Larry Edelman, documents Larry's amazing visit with a family as they transition out of early intervention services here in Colorado. As you listen to Laura reflect on her experiences with her primary service provider, Megan Klish Fibbe, I know you'll agree that she captures the essence of our mission in all of our early childhood work. You can stream this video at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/media/
resultsmatter/RMSeries/FinalVisit.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/media/resultsmatter/RMSeries/FinalVisit.asp)



As with all the video files in the Results Matter library, you can also download and save this production for future use. The entire video library can be accessed at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/
resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries.htm)

CHECK IT OUT!



American Printing House
for the Blind

Building Independence Since 1858



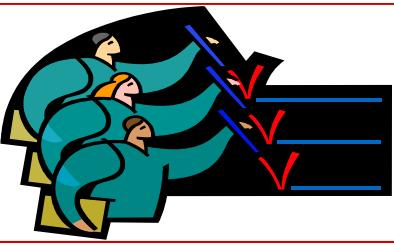
The American Printing House for the Blind is working collaboratively with Quantum Simulations who has previously worked with them to develop, test, and bring to the classroom tutoring systems that are based on artificial intelligence (AI). APH is assisting Quantum Simulations with a new research endeavor by seeking field evaluators for the world's first example of accessible AI-based software for mathematics education. They would like to ask for your help by reviewing this accessible prototype and giving them feedback. This involves using the prototype briefly and then completing an online survey. The entire review process takes only 15-20 minutes. This will provide much-needed information

from the teachers of students who are blind and/or visually impaired which will inform project decisions. You can access the prototype at: http://review.quantum-eservices.com/accessible_demo.php

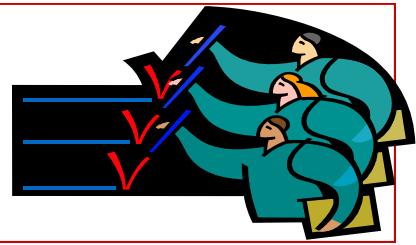
After using the software, please give us your feedback and suggestions by completing the survey at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=seubAqTdAKhWDtsG4_2fxZqg_3d_3d

For more information on the educational technology used in this project, please visit <http://www.quantumsimulations.com>

The current phase of the project specifically concerns screen reader use of the software. The next phase will add braille support (including Nemeth). The software is certified for use with JAWS and Window-Eyes. For more information, including "quick start" instructions, and the philosophy behind the screen reader features, please contact Jeff Dittel at dittel@quantumsimulations.com



CHECK IT OUT!



EC Newsletter that Announces New Projects

Washington Learning Systems invites parents and teachers to sign-up for their -newsletter about **early childhood development, early language and early literacy**. Sign up for their mailing list to continue receiving an email notice when new materials are posted: <http://www.walearning.com/site/mailing/> The Washington Learning Systems Newsletter includes: (a) Support materials for *Language is the Key* video programs, free and reproducible; (b) tips for educators; and (c) Research updates. There are six editions each year. The link to their most recent newsletter can be found at <http://washingtonlearningsystems.createsend.com/T/ViewEmail/y/07BDB067D39840FE>.

Grants Available for Child Health-Related Expenses

The United Healthcare Children's Foundation has a program that makes grant monies available to help children who need critical health care treatment, services, or equipment not covered or not fully covered by their parents' health benefit plans. UHCCF provides grants to families to help pay for services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy sessions, prescriptions, and medical equipment such as wheelchairs, orthotics, and eyeglasses. Grant applications, criteria and access to online help can be found at <http://uhccf.org/>

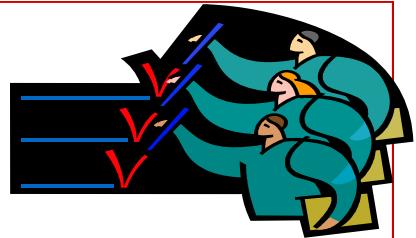
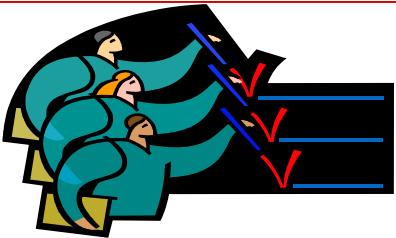
IDEA Information

The Website, <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>, sponsored by the US Department of Education, provides a wealth of information about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Topic areas include early intervening services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP), the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS), and much more. Videos and podcasts explain complex regulations in user-friendly, practical terms.

Pop-up IEP for Parents/Advocates

The Website, www.unco.edu/nrssd/bvIEP/index.shtml, designed by the National Center on Sensory and Severe Disabilities of the University of Northern Colorado in partnership with the National Parents of Blind Children, helps parents advocate for blind and visually impaired children in the IEP process. The site includes a list of sixteen arguments often posed by school personnel, followed by reasonable and persuasive responses.

CHECK IT OUT!



Inclusion Conference



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 is excited to share the brochure and registration information for the **2010 Conference on Inclusive Education: Igniting the Promise of Education** happening February 11-13 in Denver, Colorado. For the conference brochure, go to <http://www.peakparent.org/pdf/2010%20Conf%20Inclusive%20Ed%20Brochure%20PR.pdf>



Winter Time Fun for Teens

National Camps for Blind Children will be holding a winter camp for blind and visually impaired teens from February 28 to March 7, 2010. The camp is sponsored by Christian Record Services and will be held at the YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch, 1101 County Road 53, Granby, Colorado. For more information contact Keith Elliott, Camp Coordinator, 402-488-0981, ext. 222. Registration closes January 30th. (www.blindcamps.org)

Update Your Favorites - CDE Webpages Specific to Blindness/Visual Impairment

Blindness/Low Vision webpage: [<https://curly.cde.state.co.us/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/BLV.asp>](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/BLV.asp)

Deafblind Project webpage: [<https://curly.cde.state.co.us/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Deafblind.asp>](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/Deafblind.asp)

O&M webpage: [<https://curly.cde.state.co.us/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/RS-OM.asp>](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/RS-OM.asp)

Vision Coalition

January 8, 2010

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Jim Olson, Angela Sims, Cathy Smyth, Wendy Stoltman, Lou Tutt, Chloann Woolley, and Julia Zanon

Persons Absent: Nancy Cozart, Kay Ferrell, Bill Muir

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We thank Lou Tutt for his past three-year commitment to the national Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Board.

LEGEND OF ACRONYMS

CDE = Colorado Department of Education	COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist
CSDB = Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind	ESLU = Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairments	

PROGRAM UPDATES

Northern Region (Wendy Stoltman)

Thank you so very much to the CDE Exceptional Student Leadership Unit for the Nemeth Code math books. We are truly appreciative to have these books in our libraries.

We last met in September, and at this meeting Wendy and Danielle shared how we adapt general education literacy books using PowerPoint so that they are switch accessible to kids with more severe motoric disabilities. Carol also shared the following website with accessible auditory books, online: www.tumblebooks.com. Our next meeting is January 29, in Loveland, and our last planned meeting conflicts with the O&M Conference (4/30).

We are planning and preparing for the Low Vision Clinic February 19 and 20, 2010. Please continue to gather needed materials. So far it looks like the clinic will be full.

Danielle Hillebrand will be relocating out of state and the end of the year. We will miss her greatly! Marsha Roberson will also be leaving her position in Weld 6. Also Chuck Farnsworth who works with several administrative units in the northern region will be relocating to a new position in New York.

Discussion: It will be important to work with administrative unit personnel to determine the needs for replacement TVI/ COMS personnel. There is a CDE Personnel Shortage Committee that is comprised of Exceptional Student Leadership Unit personnel and Special Education Directors. Recommendations will be formalized in January for next steps. Tanni is a co-chair with Becky Minnis on the group addressing personnel needs in the area of visual impairment (TVI and COMS).

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The next meeting will be January 22. The focus will be on the TVI's role with CSAP tests. The proposed Eye Doc Night will be discussed as to whether it can be arranged yet this school year with all that is occurring with everyone's caseloads and general work responsibilities. Thanks to Nancy Knight for coordinating the November Metro LVE Clinic, which was a great success. Adams 12 still has a .5 opening. Laura Lanning has joined the Cherry Creek team!

Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)

We've had two meetings since the last Vision Coalition meeting. Our first on October 7th was attended by 6 members. Discussions were on: "Tools for Life" (if you need information search the web for "See the Future"); Two contact names were given for our area if people need help when a CCTV or digital magnifier is dropped if it is still under warranty; VI count must be completed by first week in January; special education directors will be more informed about the VI count and given a 2010 APH Insight Art Calendar; Alex Bradstreet is the new CSDB representative on the Southern Region TVI group; Discussion on who has responsibility for home school/college school children with Visual Impairments; Information regarding our next meeting on the 17th; don't forget about the AER mini grants – search the web AERBVI.org for info.

Personnel news: Debbie Haberkorn of the CIMC is now Library of Congress Braille certified. The Pikes Peak BOCES has hired a new TVI, Wendy Unwin-Watson who is enrolled in the UNC VI training program. There is a part-time position open in Canon City and a full time position with El Paso 11.

During our second meeting on November 17th, we had an exciting gathering with 19 people representing 11 districts. HumanWare with ViewPlus Technologies represented by Kevin Hughes and Steven Young demonstrated their newest Tiger embosser. Everyone had access to a computer to manipulate the software to create a tactile graphic and add Braille labels. They demonstrated a program called Math Type. We also got a brief taste of the Audio Graphic Calculator (AGC) and the use in creating tactile graphs. Please contact Kevin Hughes for more information: (720) 898-8875 email: Kevin.Hughes@humanware.com.

Our next Southern Region TVI meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2010 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. in the Lions conference building on CSDB campus. The topic for the meeting will be case studies and video assessments.

Western Region (Angela Sims)

Everyone is in agreement the school year is flying by too quickly. We all received the Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation and the reference sheets mentioned during the State TVI Conference. Thank you Tanni for making resources available to all Colorado TVIs!

Julie's student in Salida recently competed with the Young Guns goal ball team at the Alabama Lakeshore tournament. The team placed second overall. Great job! Barbara Adams is trying to organize some training for teachers for goal ball with Mark Lucas of the USABA. But if another snow storm creeps in our tiny window scheduling could be knocked out. She will also try to take students to the Braille Challenge in February. Stephanie in NW BOCES seems to be settling into her new area. Leilani in Cortez is only doing VI work 1/4 time and is the Special Ed Director the rest of the time and loving it! Things in Grand Junction are moving along smoothly. Last but not least, Kevin is working on setting a date for a western slope TVI meeting in the spring.

Discussion: Mesa uses Window 7. There is a question about Bookshare's compatibility with Window 7 and Victorsoft. We need to talk to Kevin Hughes (Humanware), Donna McNear (VI Consultant to Bookshare), and Glinda Hill (OSEP) to determine next possible steps. Tanni will send a joint email to these individuals to pose our questions and a request for assistance.

CAER (Bill Muir)

We have several board members whose terms are expiring: Sally, Nancy, Kathy, Barb, Julie and Heather. Never fear there is hope! Sally would like to stay an additional term as secretary. Way to go Sally, thanks. Mike will become president and Heather will stay on to be president-elect. We may even let Heather know what she is in for before she takes office. Samantha will be past president. Great work Samantha, thank you for the work you put into CAER.

CAER approved mini-grants totaling \$1000 for this year. These were items and projects that were supplemental to academic programs for students. Thanks to all those who submitted mini-grant proposals. Your dedication to the blind and visually impaired students of Colorado is so clearly seen in the time and effort put into these projects. It is hoped that the mini-grant projects will be "on display" at the upcoming CAER banquet.

A date has been set for the O&M Conference: April 29th – May 1, 2010. More information will follow but we have contacted several possible presenters and if they confirm it could be one of the best ever. Stay tuned for more information.

The spring AER Banquet will most likely be held on Friday, April 30th. We will recognize Dr. Tuttle for his induction in the Hall of Fame for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field at APH in October of this year. "The paths that our heroes have blazed and the legacies they have left provide us with purpose and meaning." --Dr. Dean Tuttle

Discussion: A question was asked about the status of ACVREP certification for Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists. There is no longer a concern that ACVREP would certify COMSs who did not have preservice training in O&M.

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Julia Zanon)

The Colorado Division of Vocational rehabilitation continues to encourage people with disabilities to apply for services. With regard to the Order of Selection wait list, the agency plans to continue to bring consumers off the wait list as soon as possible and it may completely open the most severe category soon. This is very good news for both consumers and counselors.

The rehabilitation counselors who serve Blind and Vision Impaired clients met in December to discuss topics including providing orientation and mobility training for pre-college and college students. We discussed making sure that we are able to work with students early enough to insure they have the independent travel skills they need to solicit assistance on campus when they need to learn the location of classes and campus services. We also want to make sure that college-bound students know how to access readers, audio books, tutors and know how to advocate for themselves with instructors and college staff.

DVR is still working to develop a new training program for consumers wanting to become licensed operators in the Business Enterprise Program. The *Rehabilitation Center Personal Adjustment to Blindness* training program is still looking for applicants to fill open teaching and Assistive Technology trainer positions. If you know anyone interested, please have them contact Lindsey Pacheco at 303-866-3319. There are current several openings as Rehabilitation Counselors specific to clients who are blind/visually impaired. If anyone needs to know how to contact the rehabilitation counselor in their area, please do not hesitate to contact Julia Zanon at 303-866-3562 or julia.zanon@state.co.us

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Cathy Smyth)

Anchor Center for Blind Children would like to welcome our newest staff member, Lisa Roll. Lisa has been a Lillis intern and will be joining us part-time in the Preschool this semester as she finishes her degree in Early Childhood Special Education. We look forward to having her fresh enthusiasm in the classrooms.

Plans for the *Infant/Toddler VIISA* training are underway for this upcoming summer. Sponsored and paid for by the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project and Anchor Center. The course will have a strong focus on young children who are also deafblind. State Early Intervention providers and TVIs will be contacted soon to participate in the training in June/August 2010. We look forward to providing this service!

This January marks the beginning of the last year of our ongoing feeding study in connection with the Gerber Foundation. We are busy reviewing videotapes to collect data and preparing a *Functional Feeding Checklist* that we hope will be available for field-testing by next fall.

The Division of Early Childhood through CEC is up and running in Colorado. Cathy is on the board and a co-chair of the membership committee. Many of the meetings will be conducted on-line.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

"Federal Quota" & Registration Of Students With Visual Impairments in Colorado:

At the request of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), the CIMC counts learners of students with visual impairment from birth through 21 (or graduation) in Colorado. The CIMC accomplishes this task in the form of two counts held annually in January of each calendar year. The first count is a statewide registration of all learners in Colorado who meet the ECEA requirements for visual impairment. The second count is the "Federal Quota" for learners who meet the requirements of legal blindness.

The first Monday in January is the Federal Quota count day of legally blind individuals across the country which is managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). This count results in an annual Federal Quota allocation to the Colorado Department of Education account of approximately \$235,000 that can be used by the CIMC to purchase braille and large print textbooks and special educational materials created by APH to support the education of student with visual impairments. The CIMC disseminated Excel spreadsheets of registered learners with visual impairments to administrative units in Colorado in October 2009. Districts returned updated spreadsheets which the CIMC corrected and re-disseminated December 18, 2009 prior to districts leaving for winter breaks. Monday, January 4, 2010 was the official count day. Administrative units have been instructed to compare enrollment of students with visual impairment in their districts on count day to their updated spreadsheets and return them to the CIMC by Friday, January 8, 2010. The CIMC is then responsible for entering the data into the national database at APH which opened on count day.

Data specific to Colorado learners with visual impairments will be posted on the CIMC website and published in a future edition of the What's Happening Out There Newsletter.

Book Returns from last school year:

1. The CIMC would like to thank administrative units for returning their book orders at the completion of last school year. We are happy to report that we have received a much larger number of returned books as well as fewer shipments of incomplete book returns that had volumes missing from them. This is particularly important since some of these books had been borrowed from other state agencies. Email notifications have been distributed to the designated AU contact persons regarding books that we have not yet received since the close of school in June 2009. We are continuing to track and communicate with districts that currently have outstanding orders to be returned.

	2007-2008 School Year	2008-2009 School Year
Books returned incomplete	13	11
Books not returned at end of school year	99	48
Books recovered and returned by January of the following school year	(as of January 2009) 25	(as of January 2010) 4
Administrative Units with outstanding or incomplete books	23	14

If you need to keep a book for an additional, consecutive, school year:

We attempt to accommodate requests from school districts for every book order. We are also trying to avoid inadvertently ordering additional copies of textbooks unnecessarily. As such, if a district wishes to keep a book for an additional year, a new order form must be submitted to indicate that the book will be kept in your district and not returned at the end of a school year. Please indicate very clearly, and boldly, on the order form that your district currently already has possession of the textbook. It is very important for the CIMC to receive completed order forms as early as possible to help plan budget spending for the future school year. For example, "Connected Math" and "Everyday Math" are very popular titles since they are a part of many district's curriculum. The CIMC has the ability to acquire these popular titles now, in early January, if orders are submitted. The sooner an order can be placed with a vendor, the more likely the CIMC is to receive the book prior to the start of the new school year. Textbook order forms are available on the CIMC website.

Book orders for 2010-2011:

The CIMC actively participates on a listserve of instructional resource centers from across the United States. Our email inbox has been filled with requests for textbooks for next school year since the start of the new year. Please help curriculum departments understand that we are requesting ***begging*** for vision departments to submit their book orders for next year as soon as possible.

Transcribers:

The CIMC is in the process of establishing an email distribution list to be shared by all district braillists and Library of Congress certified transcribers across Colorado. If any braillists are interested in being included in this list, please email Jim Olson, CIMC coordinating teacher, at jolson@csdb.org

Website:

Go to: www.csdb.org. Click on “programs”, “outreach”, “CIMC”. Click on the ‘CIMC docs” link to find the following forms:

- Order Form: APH Educational Materials
- Order Form: Braille and Large Print
- Order Form: Braille Writer
- VI Registration Form
- VI Exit Form

CSDB – BVI Outreach Program (Jim Olson)

CSDB Outreach program will host an exhibit table at the January Council for Exceptional Children Courage to Risk Conference. Former CSDB graduate (2003) Luke Adams and his mother, Margie Enoch Adams, are one of the two scheduled keynote speakers. They finished third in CBS’ “Amazing Race” last season.

CSDB – School for the Blind (Lou Tutt)

The Colorado School for the Blind begins 2nd semester 2009/2010 on January 5, 2010. There are 45 students enrolled in the School for the Blind and 6 b/vi students enrolled in the Bridges to Life program. The School for the Blind has 5 seniors this year. Seven students in the Bridges to Life program took their diplomas at the end of the first semester. Two new staff members joined us during the first semester: Eva Gonzalez is a one-to-one paraeducator working with a student with additional disabilities in the School for the Blind and Natalie Rush is a paraeducator in the Bridges to Life program.

We are working on the four goals of our School-wide Plan, paraphrased below:

- Student achievement and improvement in numeracy and literacy.
- Supporting P.R.I.D.E. (Positive Attitude, Respect, Independence, Determination, Excellence) in our students as part of being a PBS school
- Improve school climate and communication with parents
- Improve the employability of our students through the On the Job training program and the Bridges to Life program.

We are nearing the end of our 5-Year Strategic Plan and will be embarking on a new Strategic Plan during this second semester. The Shake, Rattle and Roll team is providing input to the Superintendent relative to revising the CSDB Mission/Vision statement.

Blind students from around the state are preparing to participate in the regional competition of the National Braille Challenge in early February, which CSDB is hosting. Also in February, many BVI students will be participating in the Snowshoe Adventure.

The CSDB School for the Blind Winter Program was very successful, and now the Music Director and students are getting ready for the annual Spring Program.

All in all, much collaboration is going on at CSDB, especially with the weekly meetings of the Professional Learning Communities.

Randy Witte and Cathy Kearny will be retiring at the end of the school year.

Discussion: The CSDB Board meetings are open to the public. The Board meetings are on the second Thursday of each month except December and May. Check the CSDB website for details.

UNC (Paula Conroy)

We continue to have a full grant program at UNC with over 50 students. Applications are now being accepted for the Fall 2010 semester. There were five graduates in December, all from out of state.

AER has developed a new program approval process that will begin this spring. UNC will participate in this process but only a couple of programs will be reviewed per semester so it may be a while before our review occurs. This approval is a stamp of approval from our professional association. It is guided by the new CEC standards for visual impairment and orientation and mobility. This approval does not relate to our state and national program approvals and accreditation. It is more of a national peer review.

National Center on Severe and Sensory Disabilities (Kay Ferrell)

The grant proposal entitled Description-Enhanced Assessments for Students with Visual and Print Disabilities was awarded to Utah State Office of Education on October 1, 2009. The NCSSD and WGBH National Center for Accessible Media are key partners on the grant. The Colorado Department of Education will serve in a minor role. The purpose of the project to examine the use of audio description as an assessment accommodations for students with visual and print disabilities, by investigating student comprehension under multiple conditions and documenting meaningful and effective practices for access to visual and complex imagines within high stakes assessments. Be watching for more information as the project rolls out in Colorado as subjects who are blind/visually impaired will be needed.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

The fall State Conference on Visual Impairment met with inclement weather, but had a great turn-out none-the-less. Dr. Derrick Smith provided two days of training specific to mathematics instruction for learners who are blind/visually impaired.

Sarah Sonnier, Nancy Cozart, and Tanni Anthony returned to Boston on December 14-15, 2009 to preview the braille-format CSAP tests. A new CTB McGraw Hill representative, Dan Dube, worked with the team. Feedback was given to National Braille Press (NBP) on tactile graphics. On four occasions, the team made a decision to suppress an item in either a math or science test due to visual-bias complications of a question. Eileen Curran of NBP commented that Colorado's process is one of the best in the country for ensuring accessible and high quality braille-format state tests.

The CDE has been involved with a comprehensive process of revising the state content standards. The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit took a lead role in working with a team of teacher-experts in revising the Expanded Standards, which have been renamed the Extended Evidence Outcomes. The EEOs are designed for students who have cognitive disabilities and will be candidates for the CSAPA. Thanks to Dena Coggins of the ESLU for her many hours of work with facilitating this committee.

Tanni is on the internal CDE committee to review requests for nonstandard accommodations that are visual in nature. Examples of nonstandard accommodations that have been approved include CSAP test produced on different colored paper or in black and white. These nonstandard accommodation requests are important as they provide a base for such accommodations possibly becoming standard CSAP accommodations. This was the case several years back when TVIs requested the use of the abacus as a nonstandard accommodation. It is now a standard accommodation for students who are blind/visually impaired.

There are still funds for mentors of new TVIs or veteran TVIs returning to the field after a period of time away from teaching learners who are blind/visually impaired. For more information, please be in touch with Tanni.

The staff members of the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project are working on two projects. One is a parent retreat that will be held in the Denver area. We have about five families who are working to build the design and content of this parent-only retreat. Second is the summer institute. Please be watching for more details on both topics.

Thanks to everyone who has participated in a low vision clinic thus far into the school year. Follow-up surveys have been sent to the participating families and TVIs of the western and southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinics and will be mailed to the metro clinic participants by late January. Please take time to complete the survey so that CDE and the low vision team has a full perspective of how the clinics went this school year.

Tanni, along with three CDE colleagues who represent low-incidence disabilities, will present at the January 15-16, 2010 Courage to Risk Conference. Their paper focuses on the Response to Intervention (RtI) Model for Learners who Have Autism, Sensory Loss and/or Severe Disabilities.

The planning committee for the upcoming O&M Conference is building the program for this year's conference. More details about the topic will be announced shortly.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Q and A on School Psych Assessment

Laura Douglas sent thanks to those persons who provided her feedback on the document. She is working on finalizing the document.

Online Assessment Practices Document

We thank Sarah Sonnier for her contributions to the document. Wendy will take this information and the comments of the Vision Coalition and work into a next step draft.

Remaining Professional Development Activities – School Year 2009-10

One of the activities that Tanni has yet to plan for this school year is a full day training on Optic Nerve Hypoplasia / Septo Optic Dysplasia. The group supported moving forward with the training. Two possible dates are March 6 or April 10th. Tanni will query the viability of these dates with TVIs and possible speakers. We are looking at a one-day Saturday training.

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

Proposed CDE ESLU budgets for 2010-2011.

- State Conference on Blindness/Visually Impairment (topics for consideration: stem cell research, autism, Cortical Visual Impairment, more on math, science)
- Annual O&M Conference
- Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Braille Format CSAPs / Visual Bias Review of State Assessments
- Braille Competency
- Mentor Project for new TVIs
- Technology Consultation
- Vision Coalition

CSDB Outreach (funded fully or partially by CDE)

- CIMC
- Braille Transcribers
- Low Vision Evaluation Clinics (CSDB staff)

Julia noted the importance of protecting training for persons who are blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing. This may be a topic that could be addressed at the upcoming O&M Conference.

It was also recommended that we revisit the need for the Adult Role Team. It was suggested that we explore the option of webinar trainings.

All TVI Regional Reps were encouraged to take these proposed budget items back to their regional meetings for discussion of need and ideas for other activities. Further please discuss topics for the proposed fall 2010 state conference.

Technology Plans

Julia led a conversation about the technology needs of our students who are blind/visually impaired.

Key ideas for technology training and equipment support ideas for the next school year include:

- Create videos of someone using a particular piece of equipment with key information about the needed skill set.
- Do a class in your school district on Technology for Students with Visual Impairments.
- Access vendors who will train on a particular product.
- Access the training of the folks of the CO AT Project
- Access the onsite AT person at CSDB for her expertise – this may be something to expand.
- Learn from other states who are ahead of us on statewide AT
- Access and highlight APH resources
- Tie technology in with adult role model team—real life examples of technology in use in the workplace etc.
- Use young adults to do videos for younger blind students
- Use resources such as Flying Blind (website) that provide tips for technology use (enews@flying-blind.com to subscribe)
- Continue to provide individualized technical assistance to TVIs and COMS on technology
- Provide short courses on technology (smaller groups)

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Tanni	Prepare article on TVI and O&M licensure for next newsletter.	March 2010
Tanni	Prepare and article on eligibility of students who are blind/visually impaired for next newsletter	March 2010
All VC members	Query CO TVIs and COMSs on proposed budgets for next year and professional development training topic needs for the fall conference etc.	February 1, 2010
Wendy	Complete an update on the Online Assessment document.	April 2010
Tanni, Lou, Wendy, Chloann	Collect examples of model goals / objectives for transition IEPs of students with visual impairments	April 2010
Wendy, Chloann	Draft examples of indirect and direct services of TVIs and COMS on the state IEP forms.	April 2010
Tanni	Work on next steps for ONH and SOD training	January 2010
VC members	Submit updates to Tanni	April 9, 2010

Next Meeting:

Friday, April 16, 2010 - Anchor Center for Blind Children



colorado connections

- ↳ Congratulations to **Ann Marie Jansen** for renewal of her CDE Certificate of Braille Competency Certificate. Also hats off to the following TVIs who earned renewal clock hours: **Melinda Carter, Peg Collins, Lorraine Hutcheson, Karen Jamison, Ann Marie Jansen, and Debbie Mendoza.** Thanks to braille proctors **Lucia Hasty, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein** for their recent braille proctor activities!
- ↳ So proud of **Charles (Chuck) Farnsworth** for his successful dissertation defense in December. His dissertation title is *The Cognitive Load Impacts of Assistive Technology Devices Used By Sighted Teachers In Training During Literary Braille Instruction*. He will graduate with his doctoral degree in May 2010.
- ↳ A world of thanks to **Nancy Cozart**, Littleton School District TVI, and **Sarah Sonnier**, Mesa County School District TVI, for their wealth of expertise and dedicated time to preview the 2010 braille-format CSAP tests. The three traveled to the National Braille Press in Boston in mid-December for this task. The team, along with **Dan Dube** of CTB McGraw Hill and several NBP employees reviewed the math and science tests for visual-bias and tactile graphic accuracy.



Sarah Sonnier (Mesa School District), Nancy Cozart (Littleton School District), Wynter Pingel (National Braille Press), Tanni Anthony (CDE ESLU), and Dan Dube (CTB McGraw Hill)



colorado connections

↳ A happy note from **Pat** and **Ed Lewis**: "Everyone who attended this past year's O&M conference might remember **Douglas**, the black lab that we were co-raising for Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael. He returned to school in August, whipped through his basic training and just this past Wednesday was teamed up with his person! He will graduate as a full fledged dog guide on December 12. We are so proud of him!! We are now co-raising a 4 month old yellow lab named Frisbee - he is a very good boy." *Thanks to Pat and Ed for their great dedication. We are proud of you both and, of course, we are so proud of Douglas!*



↳ Note from **Loana Mason**: "Hello colleagues, I bring you greetings from Louisville (Loo-ih-vuhl). I have traded the majestic Colorado mountains for Kentucky's rolling bluegrass hills in order to join the research department at the American Printing House for the Blind. As a Braille Literacy Project Leader, I am responsible for developing products that promote effective and efficient literacy skills for tactile learners with visual impairments. Since Colorado's teachers of students with visual impairments are so innovative, I encourage you to submit any ideas you have for products that would help make your jobs easier. If you want to discuss issues you've faced or successes you've had in teaching braille to children or adults, I can be reached at lmason@aph.org or 502-899-2325 (office)/800-223-1839, extension 325 (switchboard). I look forward to future opportunities we may have to work together!"

↳ Good for the CO School for the Blind which published the following news items in the Fall 2009 edition of **Howe's Now: Council of School for the Blind** newsletter: Featured Student Profile (by **Julie Novak**), and Creating a Masterpiece! (by **Barbara Jack**, CSDB art teacher), and CSDB Sports Education Week (by **Donna Keale**). It is great to see CSDB's good work highlighted in this publication!

State of Colorado Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

Marcia Neal
3rd Congressional District

Randy DeHoff
6th Congressional District

Angelika Schroeder
2nd Congressional District

Peggy Littleton
5th Congressional District

Elaine Gantz Berman
1st Congressional District

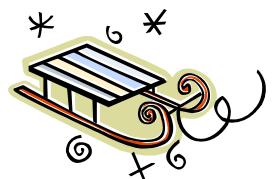
Jane Goff
7th Congressional District

Bob Schaffer
4th Congressional District

Dwight D. Jones
Commissioner of Education



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



25-23B-3401

MAIL TO: