

# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

January—February 2014

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## S/He Who Laughs, Lasts

By Tanni L. Anthony

*Laughing is an involuntary reaction to certain external or internal stimuli. Laughter can arise from such activities as being tickled, or from humorous stories or thoughts. Most commonly, it is considered a visual expression of a number of positive emotional states, such as joy, mirth, happiness, relief, etc. To show that you are happy or that you think something is funny by smiling and making a noise in your throat* (Wikipedia and Merriam Webster found online).


There is both scientific and anecdotal evidence that laughter is just plain good medicine. Doctors have noted that people who find humor in the world are at lower risk for heart disease, as laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increasing blood flow. It is a great antidote to stress, pain, and conflict. It relieves physical tension and stress, leaving muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after that great belly laugh. Laughter also decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies (can't you picture a grinning super hero coursing through your veins!).

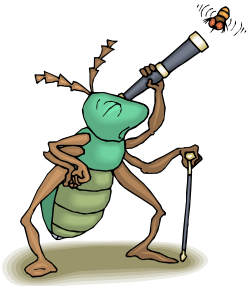
Humor is most often infectious. The sounds of laughter are often more contagious than a cough, snuffle, or a sneeze. Further, laughter reduces stress hormones and triggers the release of endorphins—our feel-good brain chemicals. Bottom line, the propensity for laughter and a sense of humor have been listed as one of the 24 “signature strengths” a person can possess. One study noted that healthy children may laugh as much as 400 times a day, whereas adults tend to laugh only 15 times per day. It is true, adults have more to think and worry about than a child who still finds daily delight in the simplest of things. But the notion beckons us to have a few more chuckles each day.

We live and/or work with children. Funny things happen—sometimes when no one is trying to be comical. Children do say the darndest things, autocorrect creates unbelievably out-of-context words in our text messages ... and then there are the days when we look down and realize we have two different shoes on (yes, this does happen—for me it occurred at DIA when I realized that I had on two different sneakers while boarding a plane to South Africa for three weeks!).

If we laugh—we last. We last longer spiritually, physically, and emotionally. So get a giggle on and last longer. “Tee hee” to you (and with you) all!

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# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



## 2013 / 2014 CDE LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC DATES

REGION	DATES	PAPERWORK DEADLINE	SITE COORDINATOR
Metro Region	February 27, 28, March 1, 2014	Wednesday, February 12, 2014	Amber Rundle Kahn
Southern Region (CSDB)	April 11, 2014	Wednesday, March 26, 2014	Donice Fennimore

### SOUTHERN LVE CLINIC

by Debbie Haberkorn

The Southern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held Friday, November 15, 2013 at the Pueblo County District 60 Administration Building in Pueblo, Colorado. Five students received evaluations. Three parents and two TVIs attended the evaluation with their students.

The Clinic team would like to thank the staff of the Pueblo County District 60 Administrative Offices for hosting the clinic. Thank you to Donice Fennimore and Beverly Cherry for bringing students. The team would also like to acknowledge Donice Fennimore for coordinating this clinic. We truly appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm Donice had for making this clinic successful.

## Low Vision Clinics Coming Your Way - Be Prepared

The five regional low vision evaluation clinics are once again funded for a new school year. For many TVIs, this has become a standard annual event in their region. For new TVIs, this will be the first time to partake in great opportunity to address the low vision device needs of our Colorado students. Whether you are a newbie or a veteran, please take time to do your part to help the involved students and families be prepared for the clinic and to have the best follow-up experience possible with any prescribed devices.

Your onsite coordinator will be sending out the required paperwork. Please take time to complete the forms so that the clinic team has advance information on each student. Dr. Theune needs an eye report that has been completed within three years of this appointment. The student's eye care is the responsibility of the family's eye care specialist. We ask that you come prepared with examples of your student's work products.

It is an expectation that the TVI attends the clinic with his or her student. Please be on time. If you need to cancel, do so as soon as possible. Ask questions and seek assistance on how to follow-up with any prescribed devices. It takes a team to make our clinics a great success - so please do your part to ensure a great experience for your student.



## Spotlight on Angelman Syndrome

Information retrieved from: [http://www.medicinenet.com/angelman\\_syndrome/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/angelman_syndrome/article.htm) and <http://www.angelman.org/understanding-as/>; and <http://www.angelman.org/>

**What is Angelman Syndrome?** Angelman Syndrome (AS) is a rare genetic condition present at birth due to a missing section of the mother's copy of chromosome 15. Children diagnosed with Angelman syndrome typically have intellectual disability, speech problems, hyperactive behavior, outbursts of laughter, seizures, and physical impairments, notably jerky movements and unstable gaits. Visual impairment is an associated complication in 20% to 80% of individuals. Many of the symptoms of AS are similar to those in autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and Prader-Willi Syndrome. AS is roughly estimated to occur in 1 birth in every 10,000 to 25,000 children.

**How Was Angelman Syndrome First Discovered?** In 1965, Dr. Harry Angelman first documented this disorder in three young patients. He observed that they all had "flat heads, jerky movements, protruding tongues, and bouts of laughter." Technical investigations were not as sophisticated as they are now, limiting Dr. Angelman's study for scientific proof of its existence. Therefore, Dr. Angelman was hesitant to write about his findings. However, he happened to see an oil painting in Italy called "A Boy with a Puppet." The boy's laughing face and the fact that Dr. Angelman's patients exhibited jerky movements gave him the idea of publishing his findings by using the title of "Puppet Children." For a while AS was known as the "happy puppet syndrome" until it was, more appropriately, renamed Angelman Syndrome.

Nothing was documented for the next 22 years. Then in 1987, Dr. Ellen Magenis of Oregon Health Science Center discovered the missing chromosome 15, specifically gene UBE34A, in young patients who were thought to have Prader-Willi Syndrome. This provided the scientific proof that AS was a syndrome on its own.

**What Are the Symptoms of Angelman syndrome?** Children with AS may appear not to have any challenges at birth but often have feeding difficulties early on and exhibit noticeable developmental delays by six months of age. In addition to developmental delay, symptoms include seizures, sleep disorders, and a happy demeanor. Between birth and age 24 months, infants exhibit a lack of cooing and babbling and delayed motor skills (lift head, stand, etc.). Young children have delayed ability to walk, unstable gait, or balance issues and an inability to speak more than a few words. AS has become one of the important syndromes causing neurological impairment, and now most doctors have some awareness of it.

**How is AS Diagnosed?** Most diagnoses of AS are made when a child is between the ages of three and seven years. A blood test can detect up to 85% of individuals with the syndrome by identifying whether the UBE3A gene is present and functioning properly. For the remaining 15% of children, an experienced clinician familiar with AS can provide a diagnosis. Because of its similarities to other disorders, AS is commonly misdiagnosed or is diagnosed late. As a result, opportunities for specific early intervention programs, resources, and personalized support may be lost.

**How Does AS Affect Vision?** Individuals affected by a large deletion of chromosome 15 have skin and eye disorders because the pigment gene is missing (hypopigmentation). In some children with AS, this hypopigmentation can be so severe that a form of albinism is suspected. Research over the last several years has shown an increase in strabismus (eyes that are not aligned). It occurs mostly in those who have hypopigmentation. If the eye misalignment is not detected early and treated, permanent vision loss may result.

**What is the Treatment for AS?** There is no specific treatment for AS. Medical therapy for seizures is usually necessary. Physical and occupational therapies, communication therapy, and behavioral therapies are important in allowing individuals with AS to reach their maximum developmental potential. Management of strabismus requires evaluation by an eye care specialist, correction of any deficit, and where appropriate, surgery to correct the problem.

**What Are the Educational Implications of Angelman Syndrome?** The child should be evaluated to determine whether he or she qualifies as a “child with a disability” due to the educational impact of the condition and need for specially designed instruction. Once determined eligibility for special education and/or a 504 Plan, the educational team will recommend specially designed instruction, need for specific accommodations, and need for speech language therapy, or other related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.

**For more information see the links below:**

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Angelman\\_syndrome](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Angelman_syndrome)

[http://uscm.med.sc.edu/tecs/babynet\\_covered\\_diagnoses.pdf](http://uscm.med.sc.edu/tecs/babynet_covered_diagnoses.pdf)

<http://www.cureangelman.org/>



*Boy with a Puppet*



## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### Off to College in 2014? Scholarship News!

**Attention high school seniors! It's time think about applying for a college scholarship!**

- The NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND national program offers 30 awards, worth from \$3,000 up to \$12,000, plus assistance for the 30 winners to attend the July 2014 Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida. For full information and the online application form, go to: [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships)>. **The deadline for applications is March 31, 2014.**
- On a state level, the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO distributes a total of up to \$15,000 in scholarships to legally blind Colorado residents. Scholarship winners must also agree to attend the 2014 NFB national convention in July (expenses paid). The application form will be available on the [www.NFBCO.org](http://www.NFBCO.org) website in January. For additional information about the scholarship program, contact Buna Dahal, NFBCO Scholarship Committee Chairperson, at 303-758-1232 or email her at: [bunadahal@dynamicbuna.com](mailto:bunadahal@dynamicbuna.com)>. **The application deadline is not yet posted, but will likely be around April 14, 2014.**
- SEE THE FUTURE FUND (a foundation supported by donations from medical professionals, educators and others) will be awarding up to \$42,000 to six visually impaired or blind college students under its scholarship program. Applicants must be residents of Colorado. These scholarships based on high academic achievement. For more information go to: [www.seethefuture.org](http://www.seethefuture.org). **The deadline for applications is March 1, 2014.**

### Success in College Program

The Colorado Center for the Blind offers a program called the "Success in College" program, which combines real academic college experience (one or two classes at Arapahoe Community College) with direct support from the Center staff in specific blindness techniques and strategies used to ensure success in the college environment. In addition, the student will have the opportunity to increase skill levels in braille, technology, home management, and Orientation and Mobility. The student may elect to be enrolled for one or two semesters. For more information contact the program director, Dan Burke, [dburke@cocenter.org](mailto:dburke@cocenter.org), 303-778-1130 ext. 213.

### Individualized Learning Plan "Kick Start Your ILP" Toolkit Released

A new toolkit aimed at high school students and called "Kick Start Your ILP" has been released by the Office of Disability Employment Policy. An individualized learning plan (ILP) is both a document and a process that students, including students with disabilities, use to define and explore their career goals and post-secondary plans throughout high school in order to shape their decisions about courses and activities. "Kick Start Your ILP" includes an explanation of ILPs, a year by year checklist of steps to follow, and tips to pull it all together. For more information, please go to: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/ilp/kickstart.htm>



## .....MORE TRANSITION INFORMATION

### New 2014 General Education Diploma (GED)

Beginning January 2, 2014 there is a new GED in Colorado. Colorado uses GED to issue High School Equivalency Diplomas, and with the 2014 GED aligned to more rigorous standards, having this diploma will reflect student's readiness for postsecondary education and the work force. For more information on the New 2014 GED, visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/gedindex>

#### What's New?

- The 2014 GED will be taken exclusively on the computer, in-person at approved testing centers, **not online**.
- The 2014 GED is aligned with new state standards, so those that pass demonstrate they meet rigorous standards of high school completion and college and career readiness.
- Test takers will get their scores reported back the same day they test, within three hours of completion.
- Scores will provide detailed, personalized feedback on specific skills that can be improved for a higher score, and targeted study recommendations.
- The 2014 GED focuses on critical thinking and problem solving skills, testing four content areas: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies.
- Students can register, schedule, and pay for only those parts of the tests they are ready to take.



### From School to College: A Transition Activity Calendar

This Transition Activity Calendar designed by the Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University (MSU-NRTC) lists tasks which students who are blind or visually impaired need to complete as early as middle school in order to be ready to attend college. From taking the right courses, to learning to use assistive technology that is most appropriate for you, to career exploration and finding the colleges best suited to your course of study to what you are looking for in campus life, the demands of good preparation start early and continue through 12th grade and the summer before the fall semester when college starts.

College will still be demanding, but a student who has completed the tasks outlined in the Transition Activity Calendar, will be prepared to meet the challenges of college academia as well as campus life.

For more information, go to: <http://ntac.blind.msstate.edu/providers/tac/>



MISSISSIPPI STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## Recruiting Academic Students Who are iPad Users!

- Do you have a blind or low vision student in grades 5-9 who is studying math?
- Does your student use an iPad for academic purposes and have access to one in the 2014-2015 school year?
- Would you and your student like to be on the cutting edge of technology? Help us evaluate the AnimalWatch Vi Suite app and materials during the 2014-2015 school year.

The AnimalWatch Vi Suite research project at The University of Arizona has developed an iPad app and supporting materials to help students build their math problem solving skills while learning about endangered species such as the snow leopard and sea turtle. In spring 2014 we will recruit 48 students in the U.S. who are blind or low vision to participate in our intervention study in 2014-2015. (Schools will need to approve participation of TVIs and students.)

To qualify a student must:

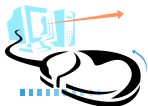
- Receive direct TVI service a minimum of 1 time per week.
- Be learning math content appropriate to grades 5-9 (fractions, proportions, converting distances, etc.).
- Be able to see the information on the iPad screen using Zoom if needed. (Pinch zoom does not work in our app.) **OR**
- Be able to use VoiceOver to access content on the iPad. The student must be proficient either with gestures, a Bluetooth keyboard and/or a refreshable braille display.
- Have familiarity with educational apps and have skills to navigate between screens, enter information, etc.



To participate, students must be "iPad literate" and have strong familiarity with this tool. Teachers will receive a small stipend, and students will receive a gift card.

For more information, please contact Project Director, L. Penny Rosenblum at [rosenblu@email.arizona.edu](mailto:rosenblu@email.arizona.edu) or at 520-621-1223.

To learn more about our project visit: <http://awvis.arizona.edu/>



### ...Different Things...



eSchool News-App of the week-Ordered Fractions:

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/2013/12/23/app-week-ordered-fractions/?ps=355404-001a000001Q5VPY-003a000001uO0a1>

About Assistive Technology-Radio Shows & Podcast for the Blind and Visually Impaired-A way to keep current on assistive technology: <http://assistivetechology.about.com/od/ATCAT1/tp/Radio-Shows-and-Podcasts-For-The-Blind-And-Visually-Impaired.htm?nl=1>

# Assessment News



## Assessment Window School Year 2014-15

Below you will find a list of tentative state testing windows for 2014-2015. They may also be found on the Assessment Unit web page at the following location: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/generalinfo>.

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) name encompasses the new Colorado-developed science and social studies assessments as well as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)-developed English language arts and mathematics assessments. Although the testing windows for established programs are similar to past years, next year is the first time that all of the CMAS assessments will be administered operationally. Please review carefully.

Assessment	Grade	Tentative Windows
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	12	11/03/14 to 11/21/14
CMAS: PARCC Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)*	3-8, High School	3/09/15 to 4/03/15
CMAS and CoAlt: Science and Social Studies	4 and 7 (Social Studies) 5 and 8 (Science)	4/13/15 to 5/01/15
CMAS: PARCC End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)*	3-8, High School	4/27/15 to 5/22/15
<b>ACCESS for ELLs®</b>		
Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening	K-12	1/05/15 to 2/06/15
<b>CO ACT</b>	<b>Initial Test Date</b>	<b>Make-up Test Date</b>
Grade 11	4/28/15	5/12/15

\*An additional window for PARCC testing may be available in fall 2015 for high schools with block schedules.

## The Science of Children Birth to Age Eight

The US Department of Health and Human Services is teaming with the US Department of Education and key players in the philanthropic community in the United States to fund a study titled *The Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success*. The study, executed via the National Academies of Science, is launching this month and will result in a consensus report on how the science of children's health, learning and development (birth to age 8) can inform how we prepare a workforce to seamlessly support children's development and education, including standards and expectations, instructional practices, professional development, and family engagement across diverse contexts (e.g. rural/urban) and populations (e.g. immigrant children, dual language learners, children at risk for developmental delays and disabilities).

This unique public-private initiative will help inform the field of the most recent advances in developmental science and use that knowledge to determine the skills and competencies early childhood teachers must have to meet the developing needs of young children. Teacher skills and competencies will be mapped to children's developmental needs (birth to age 8), so that we can assure that the expertise of the workforce is truly aligned with what the science tells us children need.

On February 28, 2014, the IOM/NRC study committee will hold the public information-gathering session at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC to obtain input from stakeholders interested in the developmental science, care, and education of children from birth to age 8. Online registration to attend in person or view by webcast will be available in late-January. Please visit: <http://www.iom.edu/activities/children/birthtoeight.aspx>.



# Assessment News



## Webpage Announcement - AT Device / Software Use

CDE and Pearson are pleased to announce that a webpage has been developed that will be used as the tool used to communicate Assistive Technology (AT) software and devices that have no known conflicts with Test-Nav 8. This page will be updated on a continual basis as new devices or software are researched, and also a wider range of platforms will be added as Pearson expands research when possible.

This page should be helpful in determining if a student's AT device or software may be used with the computer-based assessment, or if the student will need to use the paper-based accommodated form for the Science and Social Studies assessments.

The page can be found at: [www.pearsononlinetesting.com/at](http://www.pearsononlinetesting.com/at) or [www.pearsononlinetesting.com/assistivetechology](http://www.pearsononlinetesting.com/assistivetechology)



## Now Available: Communications Toolkit for New Assessments

The Colorado Department of Education released new communications resources to support districts in successful implementation of new Colorado Measures of Academic Success assessments. To access the link for information and for answers to frequently asked questions, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs-assessment>



## Dynamic Learning Maps



Colorado has joined the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Consortium (DLM), a multistate initiative in the process of developing an instructionally relevant, computer-based assessment system designed to help students learn. The DLM Consortium is developing the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment for public school students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These assessments are expected to replace our current CoAlt reading, writing and mathematics assessments, paralleling PARCC.

In addition to the traditional summative assessment, the DLM system is being designed to simultaneously support teacher instruction and student learning by having assessment tasks model good instruction and by being embedded within teachers' classroom activities throughout the school year. The assessments are anticipated to be administered for the first time during the 2014-2015 school year. Assessment and special education staff will be working together to provide the field with additional information and supports regarding the instructional and assessment tools being developed by DLM throughout the course of the next year. As a starting point, additional information may be found on DLM's website at <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org>

The DLM Consortium, led by the Center for Educational Testing & Evaluation (CETE) at the University of Kansas (KU), now has 18 member states: Alaska, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.



# just for PARENTS

## Interactive Site for Parents

This is an interactive site sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and supported by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (their parent organization). If you have a question or need an opinion on raising a child who is blind this is the place to go. To check it out, go to: [blindkid@nfbnet.org](mailto:blindkid@nfbnet.org)

## Family Engagement Trainings

CDE, in collaboration with SACPIE (the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education), will be conducting trainings about promising practices in engaging all families as partners in education. These trainings are geared toward District Family Partnership Liaisons (the district personnel appointed by superintendents to act as a connector on family and community engagement work).

The trainings are free and open to all interested participants wanting to learn more strategies to implement family partnerships initiatives for student success. This may include Family Partnership Liaisons, district personnel, school personnel, parent leaders, and District or School Accountability Committee members. It is recommended to attend the training as a district team.

The training dates are:

**Greeley: February 11, 2014**

**Pueblo: February 13, 2014**

**Lamar: February 14, 2014**

**Denver Metro: February 19, 2014**

**Durango: February 25, 2014**

**Grand Junction: March 4, 2014**



Details for the trainings, as well as registration links, are available at the link below.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/familyengagement>

## Connecting Families

There are several organizations that can connect families to advocates in Colorado. PEAK Parent Center is Colorado's Parent Training and Information Center. PEAK has parent advisors on staff and can provide families with the names of advocacy organizations. For more information, visit:

- PEAK's website at [www.peakparent.org](http://www.peakparent.org).
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People ([www.thelegalcenter.org](http://www.thelegalcenter.org)) and
- The Arc of Colorado ([www.thearcofco.org](http://www.thearcofco.org)) are other resources for families looking for advocates.

If your family is looking for support groups and/or trying to connect with other families, Parent to Parent of Colorado is a useful resource - [www.p2p-co.org](http://www.p2p-co.org)

The Parent Information and Resources page on the CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit's website has information about conferences and training opportunities. Every year CDE offers three Parents Encouraging Parents Conferences for families and educators throughout Colorado.

For more information, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp>

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

**Parents:** If you are moving out of state or your child has graduated, please be in touch so we can remove your name from our newsletter mailing list. If your child is still enrolled in a Colorado school district and you have a new mailing address, please be in touch with your address changes.

**TVIs and COMSs:** If you have any changes in program contact information, please help us out and send Tanni these changes.

Thanks to everyone for helping to keep our mailing list up-to-date! Send changes to:

[anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1175, Denver, CO 80202. Or leave a voice message at (303) 866-6681. Thank you so much!



## **New AFB Advocacy Resources! Be a Better Champion for Specialized Services**

As advocates for people who are blind or visually impaired, the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) knows first-hand the value of specialized services. The staff at AFB works to change lives by teaching people with vision loss the skills needed to thrive in the classroom, the workplace and everyday life. Yet, these services are almost perpetually in danger of being cut due to shrinking state budgets. It is therefore crucial that we continue to effectively communicate with policymakers about the importance of specialized services to ensure their continued provision and enhancement.

To that end, AFB has created new advocacy materials on strengthening specialized services that you can actively use and share. You can find an overview of specialized services as well as specific documents on education services, employment services, and services for adults with age-related vision loss on their website. These documents are also available as accessible PDFs that can easily be printed and shared.

Visit: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org) to find resources concerning:

### **An Overview of Specialized Services:**

[http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?  
FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553](http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553)

### **Education Services:**

[http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?  
FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&Docu  
mentID=6490](http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&DocumentID=6490)



### **Employment Services:**

[http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?  
FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&Docu  
mentID=6499](http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&DocumentID=6499)

### **Services for Adults with Age-Related Vision Loss:**

[http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?  
FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&Docu  
mentID=6500](http://www.afb.org/section.aspx?FolderID=3&SectionID=3&TopicID=553&DocumentID=6500)

For further information, contact:

Mark Richert, Esq.  
Director, Public Policy, AFB  
(202) 469-6833  
[MRichert@afb.net](mailto:MRichert@afb.net)



## **New Webcast! A Parent's Perspective: Helping Your Child with Multiple Disabilities Engage with the World Around Them**

Perkins is pleased to present this webcast with Amber Bobnar. Amber is a parent of a young boy with visual impairment and additional disabilities.

In this webcast, she talks about how important it is to involve children with disabilities in their community and gives advice on how to make this work. Amber is the creator of the [WonderBaby.org](http://WonderBaby.org) website which provides a support network and a multitude of resources for parents of children with visual impairment.



# ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

## Survey on Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner

*Orientation and Mobility Techniques: A Guide for the Practitioner*, the landmark publication originally compiled by Everett Hill and Purvis Ponder and published by the American Foundation for the Blind to document the essential techniques forming the foundation of O&M, is being revised and reissued!

AFB Press and the authors of the revision, Dr. Diane L. Fazzi and Janet M. Barlow, would like to invite users of the first edition as well as those who are unfamiliar with this famous work to provide suggestions and input helpful during the revision process. Please take a few moments to help us better understand your needs and address the critical content that provides professionals with the guidance and support they require by participating in a survey that is posted on AFB's web site at

[www.afb.org/OandMsurvey](http://www.afb.org/OandMsurvey)



The deadline to respond to the survey has been extended to **February 14, 2014**. **Please contribute your opinions!** and thank you for your participation -- your feedback is invaluable!

**AER INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE 2014**

*Moving into the Future*

July 30 – August 3 ★ San Antonio, Texas



Celebrating  
**30**  
Years  
1984-2014

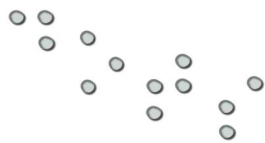


## Awards Nominations

**Deadline to receive nominations is March 14, 2014**

It is time to nominate our colleagues for the prestigious AER Awards that will be given at our conference in San Antonio, Texas, this summer. Please visit the 2014 Awards page link below and review our six awards, along with the Outstanding Chapter award. Consider honoring the work of our colleagues through this nomination process. You can download the applications for the awards from the AER web site (<http://aerbvi.org>) and send them to AER. Award recipients will be notified by May 16, 2014. Go to: [http://aerbvi.org/international2014/2014\\_awards.htm](http://aerbvi.org/international2014/2014_awards.htm)

Please consider nominating your mentor, your colleague, your hero. We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio. Thank you for your time and effort in this AER Awards process.



# DOTS OF INTEREST



## The Hadley School for the Blind

### Braille and Your Baby or Toddler Course

Getting ready to read and write is a process that begins long before a child reaches school age. Young children who are blind are no exception. The Hadley School for the Blind now offers a correspondence course entitled "Braille and Your Baby or Toddler" (Course ID: BBT-201). In four lessons the parent will learn the Braille alphabet and numbers. There are also guidelines for creating a Braille-rich environment in the home and suggested activities for promoting the development of oral language, concepts and motor skills. For course information, go to: <http://www.hadley.edu/ShowCourseDetail.asp?courseid=BBT-201>

### Twin Vision Books



Story books with Braille overlays, sometimes called twin vision books, will help make the connection between reading and Braille dots on a page. A recent partnership between the American Printing House for the Blind and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is making print/Braille books available free of charge for children under 6 years of age. A child is able to receive five free print/Braille books each year. Books are limited and enrollment is on a first come/first serve basis. For more information, go to: <http://www.aph.org/dolly-partons-imagination-library/apply.html>



### Braille Book Bag

National Braille Press offers a Braille Book Bag to children up to seven years old. This program was written up in detail in the November, 2013 issue (Previous e-Connector issues are posted on the NFB of Colorado at <http://www.nfbco.org/newsletters/newsletter-archives>) Briefly, the bag contains a print/Braille book for the child, a Braille instructional book for parents and some other tactile learning aids. To fill out the form from the National Braille Press, go to: <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/programs/readbooks/request.html>

### WRITING CONTEST

The Youth Writing Contest (poetry and fiction) is meant to promote braille literacy and excellence in creative writing. Entries will be judged on creativity and quality of braille. The contest is divided into three groups, determined by grade level – elementary, middle, and high school. Prizes for contest winners range up to \$30 for each youth category. All contest winners will be announced the first week in July, at the Writers' Division business meeting during the NFB national convention, held in Orlando, Florida. And shortly after convention, a list of winners will appear on the Writers' Division's Website, which is:

<http://writers.nfb.org>.

For additional contest details and submission guidelines, go to the website.



# DOTS OF INTEREST



**AFB** American Foundation™  
for the Blind

Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss

## Special Webinar Offering in Honor of National Braille Literacy Month!

The **Unified English Braille (UEB)** code is a new and exciting addition to our community. Educators and parents along with transcribers are a vital piece of this community. Learn more about the UEB, its similarity to current code, and what is and isn't changing. Attend this **FREE** session to see how you can become involved in the UEB implementation plan being developed now.

<http://www.afb.org/store/Pages/ShoppingCart/ProductDetails.aspx?ProductId=eUEBoverview&ruling=Yes>

The webinar is presented by **Frances Mary D'Andrea, Ph.D.**, who is an instructor at the University of Pittsburgh and other universities, and an educational consultant specializing in literacy issues related to students with visual impairments. Dr. D'Andrea is currently Chair of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA), and has served as AFB's representative to BANA since 1998.

The webinar has been approved by **ACVREP** for 1 hour of continuing education credit.

Learn more about the Unified English Braille code now!

<http://www.afb.org/store/Pages/ShoppingCart/ProductDetails.aspx?ProductId=eUEBoverview&ruling=Yes>

You can unsubscribe at any time. To remove your name from this mailing list, or to find out what other newsletters are available from AFB, visit <http://www.afb.org/myAFBNewsletter2.asp>.

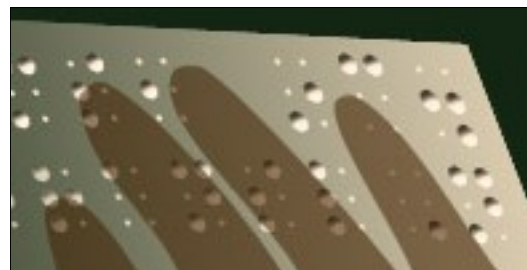
## UEB Chart Available for Download from Duxbury, Systems, Inc.

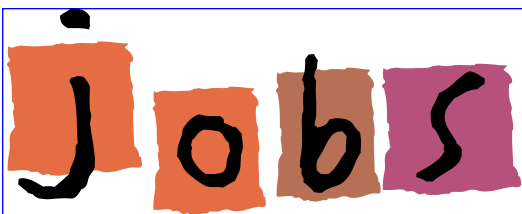
Duxbury has a one page chart/list of UEB symbols available as a pdf for download from their site. Along with the BANA and British Braille charts, it can be found at:

<http://www.duxburysystems.com/braillechart.asp>

or to go directly to the pdf of the UEB chart, here's the URL:

[http://www.duxburysystems.com/images/ueb\\_black.pdf](http://www.duxburysystems.com/images/ueb_black.pdf)





## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2014. 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 Specialist. 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!

TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairment  
COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist

### Southern Region Jobs

- ✓ Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind is actively recruiting and accepting applications for the 2014-15 school year. For details about what positions may be open, please contact Chelle Lutz at [clutz@csdb.org](mailto:clutz@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2114.

### Western Region Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (1 FTE) for San Juan BOCES. Please contact HR Director Paula Sublett at (970) 247-3261 x 203 or [psublett@sjboces.org](mailto:psublett@sjboces.org).
- ✓ **TVI/COMS** (part-time/sub): For the 2013-14 school year in Mountain BOCES. Please contact Joy Yudnich at 719.486.2603 or [joyy@mtnboces.org](mailto:joyy@mtnboces.org) for more information.

**TVIs and COMSs**—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE teaching and support services licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing in the future with part-time or sub work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement!





# Calendar of Events

2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014
January 31	VIIB Database (Round 2) due back to the CIMC									
February 3	<b>Metro TVI Regional Meeting</b> - Anchor Center Contact: Jeannie Lei at <a href="mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org">jlei@cherrycreekschools.org</a> or Mimi Schaper at <a href="mailto:mschaper2@cherrycreekschools.org">mschaper2@cherrycreekschools.org</a>									
February 5— March 14	<b>State Testing: CoAlt Reading, Writing, and Mathematics</b> —Grades 3—10									
February 7—8	<b>Courage to Risk Conference</b> —The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs Visit: <a href="https://couragetorisk2014.eventbrite.com/">https://couragetorisk2014.eventbrite.com/</a>									
February 10—21	<b>Early Window TCAP State Testing: Reading and Lectura</b> —Grade 3									
February 11	<b>Southern Region TVI Meeting</b> —CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>									
February 10—21	<b>Early Window TCAP State Testing: Reading and Lectura</b> —Grade 3									
February 13—14	<b>2014 Conference on Inclusive Education</b> —Denver, CO Visit: <a href="http://www.peakparent.org">www.peakparent.org</a>									
February 24— March 7	<b>State Testing TCAP Reading and Lectura</b> —Grade 3									
February 27— March 1	<b>Metro Region Low Vision Clinic</b> Contact: Amber Rundle Kahn— <a href="mailto:amber_rundle@englewood.k12.co.us">amber_rundle@englewood.k12.co.us</a>									
February 27— March 1	<b>AFB Leadership Conference</b> —New York, NY Visit: <a href="http://www.afb.org/afblcregistration">http://www.afb.org/afblcregistration</a>									
February 27— March 1	<b>PEP Conference</b> —TBA Visit: <a href="http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp">www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp</a>									
March 3—21	<b>Early Window TCAP State Testing</b> (May be extended to March 28 for Grades 3—10 if Spring Break is included in school calendar) Grade 3—Writing and Escritura /Grade 4—10 Reading and Writing Grade 4—Lectura and Escritura /Grade 3—10 Mathematics									





## More Calendar of Events

2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014

### **Snowshoe Weekend - "Under Construction"**

*In the spirit of ongoing program evaluation and improvement, the Snowshoe Weekend co-sponsored by Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) and Colorado Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired (CAER) will not be offered in 2014. CSDB and CAER will collaborate in advancing recreational events for students who are BVI in Colorado. Feedback from past participants indicate a need for more opportunities for recreation and leisure activities throughout the state. Information will be sent to TVIs and families about future recreational activities.*

- March 10—  
April 11**      **State Testing TCAP** (It is strongly suggested districts finish by March 28 to provide separation between TCAP & new science and social studies assessments)  
Grade 3—Writing and Escritura /Grade 4—10 Reading and Writing  
Grade 4—Lectura and Escritura/Grade 3—10 Mathematics
- March 11**      **Southern Region TVI Meeting**—CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.)  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- March 27—29**      **PEP Conference**—TBA  
Visit: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp)
- April 1**      **CIMC to mail Special Education Directors**—Updated VIIB DB information; CIMC Policy/ Procedure changes for 2014-15; estimate of student assessment fees for 7/1/14 invoice based on 1/6/14 count
- April 3—6**      **CTEBVI 2014 (California Transcribers & Educators for the Blind /VI**—Los Angeles, CA  
Visit: <http://www.ctebvi.org/conference.html>
- April 8**      **Southern Region TVI Meeting**—CSDB (12—2:30 p.m.)  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- April 9—12**      **CEC 2014 Annual Convention & Expo**—Philadelphia, PA.  
Visit: <http://www.cec.sped.org/Home/Professional%20Development/Annual%20Convention>
- April 11**      **Southern Region Low Vision Clinic**—CSDB  
Contact: Donice Fennimore at [dfennimore@ppboces.org](mailto:dfennimore@ppboces.org)
- April 16**      **Vision Coalition Meeting**—CO DVR Office  
Contact: Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

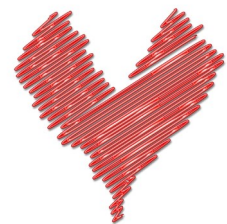
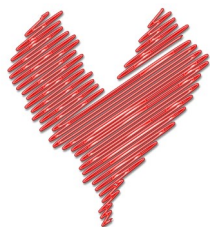
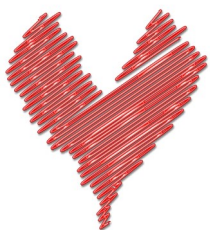


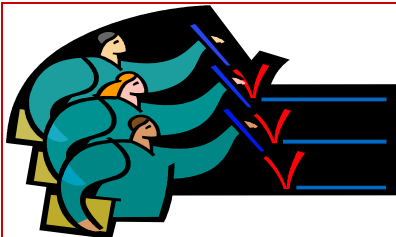
## More Calendar of Events

2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014
April 23		<b>Colorado ACT Initial Testing—Grade 11</b>								
May 1		<b>Due date for textbook orders for the 2014-2015 school year to CIMC</b>								
April 14—May 2		<b>CO Summative Assessment Testing</b> (May be lengthened pending results of technology readiness tool) Grade 12 Science & Social Studies TBD, Fall 2014 Grades 5 and 8—Science AND Grades 4 and 7—Social Studies								
April 14—May 2		<b>CoAlt State Testing</b> (Note: Grade 12 Science & Social Studies TBD, Fall 2014) Grades 5 & 8— Science AND Grades 4 & 7—Social Studies								
May 7		<b>Colorado ACT Makeup Testing—Grade 11</b>								
May 13		<b>Southern Region TVI Meeting—CSDB</b> (12—2:30 p.m.) <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>								
June 15		<b>CIMC due date for tech equip/textbooks</b> *Districts billed for unreturned items								
June 27—28		<b>3rd Annual American Conference on Pediatric CVI—Omaha, NE</b> <u>Visit:</u> <a href="http://www.childrensomaha.org/upcomingconferences">www.childrensomaha.org/upcomingconferences</a>								
July		<b>CIMC to begin invoicing AUs</b> for equipment /books not returned in complete, usable condition (includes missing/damaged volumes)								
July 1		<b>CIMC to mail invoices to Special Education Directors</b> for student assessment fees based on 1/6/14 enrollment of students identified as VIIB								
July 30-Aug 3		<b>AER International Conference</b> – San Antonio, TX <u>Visit:</u> <a href="http://www.aerbvi.org">www.aerbvi.org</a>								
September 1		<b>Due date for AUs to submit payment</b> of CIMC invoices to CSDB								

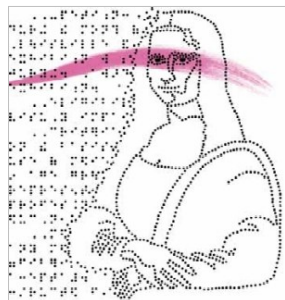
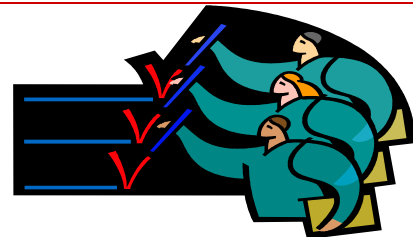
2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015
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January 4      **Official Date for Full UEB Implementation in the United States!**





# CHECK IT OUT!



## The Twenty-Third Annual APH Juried Art Competition

***The deadlines for the Twenty-third Annual Juried Art Competition and Exhibition for Artists Who Are Visually Impaired or Blind have been established.***

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) invites artists who are blind/visually impaired of all ages to submit artwork to APH InSights 2014! This art competition and exhibition is exclusively for blind and visually impaired artists and draws entries from across the U.S. and around the world. Last year we received 401 entries from across the U.S.

Again this year, there are two deadlines: Student Preschool through High School must submit a completed 2014 entry form along with the original artwork (no digital images) by **March 24, 2014**; adults must submit their completed entry form along with their entry by **April 1, 2014**. Each artist may submit only one entry.

The competition is open to any person who meets the following definition of blindness: corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye (as measured on a Snellen Chart), or a visual field limited to 20 degrees or less. This includes those who function at the definition of blindness (FDB) due to brain injury or dysfunction. There is no limit on the subject or the type of materials that can be used, but the artwork must be original in concept and execution and be completed by the artist, with minimal assistance from others.

Updated entry forms and rules will be posted on the website in February. Contact Roberta Williams by email with questions: [rwilliams@aph.org](mailto:rwilliams@aph.org).

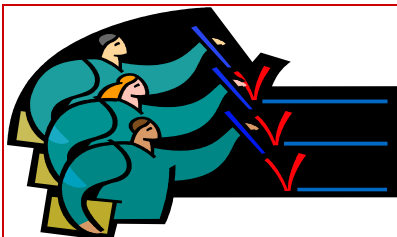


## Lights! Camera! Unforgettable APH Star!

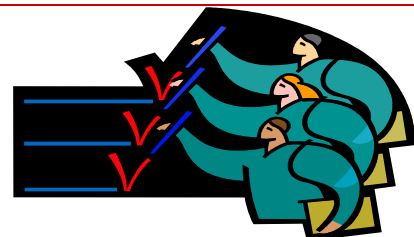
Watch our Winter 2014 Promotional Video!  
<http://www.aph.org/contest/videos/14W-promo.html>



Although the next Unforgettable APH Star Contest deadline is yet to be announced by the American Printing House for the Blind, they are now accepting entries for Winter 2014! What a great indoor project for these cold days! It's fun and easy, too! Just grab your favorite APH product, get somebody to shoot some footage of you raving about it, send them the video, and BAM! The next contest winner could be YOU! As always, the Unforgettable APH Star Contest is open to individuals and groups of all ages. Go to [www.aph.org/contest](http://www.aph.org/contest) for more information.



## CHECK IT OUT!



### **New Class! Dancing Dots Training: Preparing Accessible Music Materials in Braille and Magnified Notation**

**February 4 – 6, 2014**

**Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, MA**

Participants will learn how to create accessible scores using a suite of software from Dancing Dots. An "accessible score" is a Lime music notation file that can be reviewed with JAWS using braille verbal and musical cues, transcribed into hardcopy braille music with GOODFEEL, and/or displayed in magnified print music using The Lime Lighter.

The course will focus on teaching teachers not only how to prepare the accessible materials but also how to teach students how to both make the best use of material they need to study and how to create their own accessible scores using the technology.

Training will consist of a balanced mix of lecture followed by hands-on application of material presented. Participants are encouraged to bring music which they need to transcribe so that they can leave with material that can be used right away by their students.



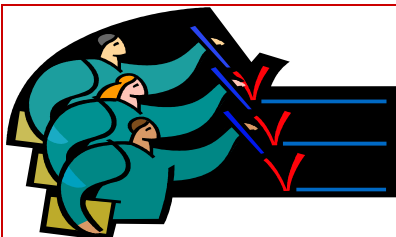
## Music Over the Summer



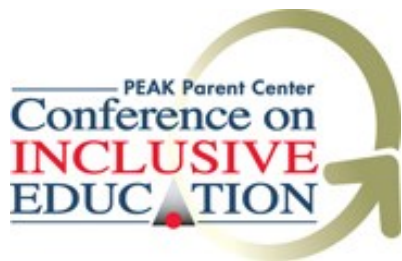
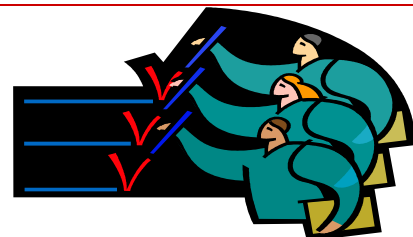
The Colorado Music Festival and Center for Musical Arts (CMF & CMA) is a one-of-a-kind organization that provides a broad spectrum of music education opportunities and world-class performances to citizens throughout Boulder County and beyond. CMF & CMA is a full member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education and has the core belief in "**Music for All... For Life!**" The CMA (the education wing of the CMF) offers many summer lessons, performance options and group classes for students. This is achieved, in part, through the Heartstrings Program, which consists of an Instrument Bank to provide low-cost instrument rentals and Tuition Assistance so that everyone can afford to participate. For more information go to: [comusic.org](http://comusic.org)

## **BANA Affirms Date for Implementation of UEB**

At its November 8–10 meeting in Louisville, KY, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) affirmed **January 4, 2016**, as the date by which the U.S. will implement the general use of Unified English Braille (UEB). BANA recognizes that the implementation of UEB will require major adjustments to the infrastructures that produce, deliver, and teach braille, as well as time and strategies for braille users to become familiar with changes in the code. BANA continues to work with leaders throughout the field to build a carefully designed timeline and coordinated plan. Detailed timelines are under development by individual organizations, and transition efforts are now being initiated. BANA stands ready to collaborate with the braille community as it builds and adapts the infrastructure necessary for a smooth transition to UEB. For additional resource information, visit [www.brailleauthority.org](http://www.brailleauthority.org).



# CHECK IT OUT!



## 2014 Conference on Inclusive Education

February 13-14, 2014

Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center

PEAK is excited to announce that the 2014 Conference on Inclusive Education is happening February 13-14, 2014! Registration is now open, some of the featured presenters are confirmed, and it is shaping up to be the best conference yet!

Whether you are a family member, a general or special education teacher or administrator, an advocate, a self advocate, or a professional, this conference is for YOU! This conference has been bringing the nation evidence-based practices for over 25 years, and is exactly the professional development activity you need to reinvent schools to be places where ALL students can achieve success. To register go to: [www.peakparent.org](http://www.peakparent.org)

## CDE Webpage on Visual Impairment, Including Blindness

Tanni maintains a webpage specific to visual impairment, including blindness on the CDE website. All TVIs are recommended to have this webpage in their list of favorites! It has a host of information including the state eligibility criteria for visual impairment, including blindness; the forms for the regional low vision clinics; the braille competency testing procedures; local/state/national resources ... and a good bunch of other stuff. Please be sure to put this in your browser: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>



## 2014 Courage to Risk Conference

Sponsored by Colorado CEC

Friday and Saturday, February 7—8

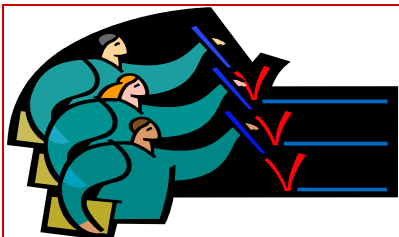
The Broadmoor, 1 Lake Avenue, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Registration is now available online for the 2014 conference at: <https://couragetorisk2014.eventbrite.com/>

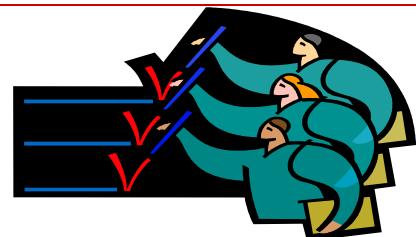
Don't miss your chance to get the early bird rates!

### Join US!





## CHECK IT OUT!



### Check Out These New Videos from WSSB

Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) has added two new short video clips to their website. The first, "Cortical Visual Impairment [CVI] in Orientation and Mobility" was created by WSB O&M Specialist Joe Dlugo and provides a glimpse into the special characteristics a child with CVI has to deal with.

The second video is on WSSB's Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) program. To view these and other videos go to:

<http://www.wssb.wa.gov/Content/offcampus/Video.asp>



### A Must See Video! Painter Who is Blind

Thanks to Rita Albright who sent in this link about a man who was born blind and who is a wonderful artist. Rita recommended that it be shared with your students' art teachers. It can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ii9VuuxBYk0>



### Denver Art Museum Programs

The Denver Art Museum has recently launched a bi-monthly tactile tables program that provides engaging, hands-on art experiences facilitated by specially trained docents for visitors of all ages. Small school groups are welcome to make the program part of their visit to the museum and would love to have TVIs bring their students down to the program if they were interested. Information on an upcoming tactile tables session:

**Spanish Colonial Tactile Tables**  
**Fri. Feb. 7 and Sun. Feb. 9, 2014**  
**10:00am-1:00pm**

Denver Art Museum  
100 W. 14th Avenue Parkway  
Denver, CO 80204

Free with museum admission. Limited numbers of complimentary tickets available for first-time visitors- email [smccance@denverartmuseum.org](mailto:smccance@denverartmuseum.org) in advance of your visit with questions. Visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org) and subscribe to our e-newsletter.

### "Creating e-Books, Integrating Progress Monitoring Tools, Broadcasting and Monitoring Content"! With Dan Herlihy

Thursday, April 24, 2014 from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. Hosted at Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, Colorado with Distance Locations in Colorado Springs, Durango, Haxtun & Lamar. BYOD for iPads, laptops, tablets, etc. List of apps and programs for iPad, Android, Chromebook and computers will be provided for pre-installing before the session. Register now at: [https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/UCO/event/showEventForm.jsp?form\\_id=167135](https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/UCO/event/showEventForm.jsp?form_id=167135)

# Vision Coalition Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2014

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, Barb Galgano, Elaine Karns, Jennifer Langley, Judy Mumford, Jim Olson, Angela Sims, and Sarah Bickford Vallese **Persons Absent:** Paula Conroy, LaVerne Dell, and Everett Romero

## MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION

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

## LEGEND OF ACRONYMS

CAER = Colorado Chapter of the Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired  
CDE = Colorado Department of Education  
CIMC = Colorado Instructional Materials Center  
COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist  
CSDB = Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind  
DVR = Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
ESSU = Exceptional Student Services Unit  
TVI = teacher certified in the area of visual impairments

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Elaine Karns! This is her first Vision Coalition meeting. Elaine is representing the northern region.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Metro TVIs, as well as several other TVIs from the north and south, met on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Children’s Hospital for a tour of the facility and a wonderful meeting with Dr. Bateman and Dr. Hanson. We were able to have open dialogue with these medical professionals about our roles, as well as gain specific information regarding communications between eye doctors and school systems. Jim Olson was able to share the forms that have been created distinguishing “meets the definition of blindness” (MDB) definition or is “functions at the definition of blind” FDB (FDB) (e.g. CVI). We also had opportunities to ask questions about specific medical information directly with the doctors.

On Monday Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will meet at Anchor Center for Blind Children from 3:00-4:30. The focus will be on early intervention including: concept development, emerging literacy, pre-braille skills. TVIs have been asked to come to the meeting with their own ideas, strategies and tools to share. It will also be a time to brainstorm challenges we are having with any students at this level .

The metro low vision clinic is upon us. It will be held February 27, 28 & March 1, 2014. Amber Rundle-Kahn needs all the paperwork completed by February 7<sup>th</sup> at the very latest. This is always such a valuable experience for the families who participate.

### Southern Region (Judy Mumford)

The Southern Region TVI meetings have had to be cancelled the last few months. There has been recent discussion to try and resume these in the near future.

Sensory Safari will be happening in April. Typically it is the first Saturday of the month and is for children birth-2nd grade. More information will be forthcoming. This is a great opportunity for children to have hands on experiences with skulls, bones, and skins of animals as well as being able to touch the turtles, lizards, and snakes. The contact person is Donna Keale - [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org).

We have heard that Window Eyes is now free to those who have a licensed version of Office 2010 or later. You can download from GW Micro website.

**Discussion:** *There was discussion that some of the regional meetings are struggling to maintain regular meetings. One suggestion was to capitalize on the upcoming metro meeting and work to Lync. Sarah will check to see if Anchor Center can install Lync to have the opportunity for others in the state to participate. It would be great if ALL the regional meetings could utilize the Lync system. This is something to explore! Jim Olson can help with the Lync process.*

#### **Discussion Questions:**

**1. Can a TVI provide services, direct or indirect, to a student that does NOT meet any of the 3 eligibility criteria but has decreased vision? If a child is on an IEP for other areas NOT including VIB can an IEP team determine that vision services would be beneficial and should be included on the IEP and then indeed write it on the IEP?** *Children can only be determined to be “a child with a visual impairment, including blindness,” if they meet the eligibility criteria in our ECEA Rules and outlined in the CDE Eligibility Form for this disability category. These students must have a documented visual impairment (static or progressive) and require specially designed instruction. Eligibility is determined through a combination of an eye care report to quantify the visual impairment and the educational evaluation that determines educational need. Once eligible, the child qualifies for special education services and, as appropriate, related services. But first comes the need for specially designed instruction from a special educator. In the case of learners with visual impairment, including blindness – the educator is a TVI. When a child has additional disabilities, it may well be a TVI and a special education generalist (or equivalent according to past licensure). A TVI should obligate services specific to “visual impairment” services per his or her professional training and experience.*

*In the event that a child is eligible under another disability category – the door is now open for special education and related services that the child needs for reasonable education benefit. If there is a “vision concern” that does not meet the threshold of a “visual impairment, including blindness,” it would be advisable for the TVI to be consulted before there is any commitment for “VI services.” It may be helpful to define these services as “Visual Impairment Services” as opposed to “Vision Services.” A TVI should not operate out of his or her scope of training practice. TVIs are trained to work with students who are blind/visually impaired. TVIs are not trained, for example, to provide optometric therapies. To do so, may put a district in a situation of liability.*

*If a TVI has been obligated to provide VI services without his or her consultation at an IEP meeting, whether for direct or indirect, it would be prudent to seek advice from the AU’s special education director to clarify scope of training abilities, resource issues (need for additional personnel), etc.*

**2. TVIs would like some clarification on qualification criteria and direct goal/instruction.** *Once determined to be eligible as a “child with a disability,” special education services are based on student need. Services from a TVI are based on the student’s needs specific to his or her blindness or visual impairment. Services should be based on a need for specially-designed instruction. The TVI should determine how best to implement this specially-designed instruction through either direct or indirect services. No matter the frequency of service, the IEP should tell the story of this student’s educational needs and the goal(s) for the child. If a student receives specially-designed instruction, he or she is also a candidate for the related service of O&M. Specially-designed services should address the general education curriculum and the Expanded Core Curriculum. The latter is key for students of all ages.*

**3. How do you determine qualification of a student as Gifted for students who are blind/visually impaired? The state requires a body of evidence to identify a student that includes three pieces of qualifying evidence. Questions are regarding visual bias on cognitive tests such as WISC IV verbal portion. Are there any tests available?**

*There are a couple of good resources on the subject of cognitive (and other domains) evaluation for students with visual impairments. One is the book called “Making Evaluation Meaningful: Determining Additional Eligibilities and Appropriate Instructional Strategies for Blind and Visually Impaired Students” written by Marnee Loftin that is housed in the CDE Deaf-Blind Library. The other document to access is the Psycho-Education Practices for Students who have Vision Losses written by Dr. Laura Douglas— <http://www.csdb.org/Default.aspx?DN=4404af0c-3435-4067-9f3a-93b6d6967064>*



*The CDE ESSU is in the process of finalizing a module that will detail information about GT and Visual Impairment, including Blindness. It is suggested that the TVI and the GT Coordinator in each district work closely together to build a body of evidence to substantiate the child's abilities that may be tied to a Gifted and Talented status. The body of evidence does not need to include a cognitive measure, however, in order for identification to occur. A student could have some normed characteristics scales (such as the Gifted Evaluation Scale, or the Scales for Identifying Gifted Students), a standardized achievement measure at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or above (or at the Advanced level), perhaps a portfolio of outstanding achievement in some non-tested area, such as music or leadership, or a standardized measure of creativity such as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (using the verbal portion of the TTCT and not the figural portion). If there is achievement in more than one tested academic area, such as Mathematics and Writing or Science, that would count as more than one piece of qualifying evidence.*

### **Western Region (Angela Sims)**

There are a few changes on the Western Slope. Stephanie Labossiere from Steamboat has retired and Kaitlin Lombardi is working as a contact TVI for NW BOCES and Moffat School District. We wish Stephanie the best in her retirement and would like to extend a big welcome to Kaitlin! Western Slope TVIs report things are quiet for now and they are busy working with students. Computer-based testing is still a concern and we are all trying to be as patient and flexible as possible. No new discussion items at this time.

### **Northern Region (Elaine Karns)**

Northern teachers are very happy to have Francey Liefert join SVVSD, St. Vrain district in Longmont. They had been hoping to fill their .5 FTE and that has been accomplished. Longmont is experiencing iPad purchase for student, so that they may access online curriculum. Sally wrote a grant last year, which allowed them to purchase iPads for the students with visual impairments, so those students are ahead of the game! Abby Beaton, Julie King, and Sherry Bainbridge have also joined the northern teachers this year.

The SSP evaluation rubric pilot project is being put into place in both Loveland and Windsor. Observations have been set up in Loveland and the self-evaluation will be done on the Bloom Board. The CDE training for the pilot districts was very helpful. This is perhaps the biggest issue for all of us since it only looks at part of our job.

The Low Vision Clinic held in Fort Collins was a one-day clinic this year. It was successful and parents were appreciative of the opportunity to look at such a variety of devices.

*Vision Program Guidelines* were written in Poudre School District last summer, but perhaps it would be good to have State Guidelines in the future.

### **CAER (Barb Galgano)**

Your CAER Board would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year! The CAER Board has been hard at work preparing for the upcoming year with many new and exciting opportunities for all. With the process of obtaining our tax-exempt status in place you will see a number of fundraising and potential opportunities for acquiring CEUs through CAER. If you have a suggestion for a fundraising event or are interested in teaching a workshop, please contact Heather Parsons-Solberg, CAER President, at [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com)

All fundraising events provide funding for CAER Mini-Grants program. Recent recipients of Mini-Grants were Taylor Oliver iTunes card to obtain Read To Go program for her iPad (see her "Pay It Forward" video on CAER website, Trina Boyd-Pratt (Aurora Public Schools) and Barb Galgano (Cherry Creek Schools) for financial assistance to attend the International O&M Conference in New Orleans. Please see their account of conference and conference handouts on CAER website (<http://co.aerbvi.org>).

If you are a current CAER member and in need of some possible financial assistance for yourself, student/client or families, please consider the CAER Mini-Grants as a possible resources for assistance. All applications are reviewed by the CAER Board and voted on for potential assistance. All applications can be located on our website. Our next voting for Mini-Grants has been moved up this spring to March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Each spring CAER hosts its annual banquet. This year's date has not been fully determined as of yet, but will coincide with the CDE O&M Conference. Be on the lookout for dates and locations! Hope to see you there! The banquet is also a time to recognize your fellow coworkers or individuals that have made a difference or contribution to the field of visual impairment. Nominations are now open for CAER awards. Please see our website for awards and qualifications for each. The Board is also accepting applications for NEW & INTERESTED members to join us. Please see application process for running to become a voting Board member. ALL MEMBERS are welcome and encouraged to attend Board meetings. See our website for upcoming dates, times and locations! We hope you will consider joining CAER.

If you have questions regarding your membership or about joining AER/CAER contact Barb Galgano at [bgalgano@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:bgalgano@cherrycreekschools.org) or 303-349-7661. Contact information - CAER Homepage: <http://co.aerbvi.org> and CAER email: [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com)

### **Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (LaVerne Dell)**

DVR has seen a number of changes over the past few months. There is now a Statewide Teachers Unit that will be supervised by Karen Klein. This unit will include the center based teachers and Statewide Teachers into one unit.

DVR also underwent a State audit, which the agency has established new practices to address some of the findings.

The waitlist has not moved as of yet; however, it is expected that there will be movement in the near future. Please continue to encourage perspective clients to apply.

### **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Sarah Bickford Vallese)**

Anchor Center is pleased to welcome Jennifer Klyzcek (soon to be) TVI to our program. Jennifer will graduate from the UNC program in May. Lisa Roll Moore, Early Childhood Special Educator, and Stefanie Kirkwood M.S.S.A are both nearing the completion of their TVI program through Portland State University. All Anchor Center TVIs are working towards completing the Colorado Braille Mastery Exam sometime this summer. As enrollment in our program continues to grow, we are looking forward with excitement to working with both CDE and Early Intervention (EI) Colorado to discover the best ways to provide services to the infants and toddlers who are visually impaired in the EI community. We continue to provide home consultations throughout the state as we are able and we have record numbers of students attending center based programming. Home-based consultations are often conducted with other service providers with the intention that other therapists incorporate vision strategies as part of their regular visits.

***Discussion:** Anchor Center for Blind Children, Early Intervention Colorado, and CDE and working together to explore (a) the training needs of Part C providers on the needs of infants and toddlers who are blind/visually impaired and working with TVIs; (b) the Part C system needs of families with infants and toddlers who are blind/visually impaired; and (c) the role of school-based TVIs who may participate on Child Find activities for infants and toddlers who are blind/visually impaired. We have some work to do to ensure everyone is educated on both the identification and service needs of this population of children.*

### **CSDB – School for the Blind (Jenn Langley)**

The School for the Blind was a pilot site for the new Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests. This was an important opportunity to give feedback on how the tests work for students with low vision and who are blind.

We just completed Winter MAP testing. Our students are showing improvement (as we expected) from their fall scores. Celebration! We held a wonderful Winter Concert that demonstrated how much the kiddos connect life skills, literacy and numeracy into everything they do. From: counting and shape songs to high end musical compositions that required the students to read print or braille music. Bravo! Our music teacher recently became engaged and will be leaving us at the end of the year.

Our web page will be changing and they are adding in screen enlargement option and making sure that all images are tagged. We hope it will be up and running by February.

We have begun to instruct our braille readers with the changes that come with the UEB code. In braille classes Mr. Megarry is also instructing them on their note-taking devices.

Technology has been booming. Tiffany Sandlin, our technology specialist, has created and documented the growth of all our students in their skills from: keyboarding to Microsoft products to screen enlargement/reading programs. The advanced students have been working on programing, as well as creating multi-media presentations that include audio descriptions and captions.

Our middle/high school resource room has implemented Community Based Learning to their weekly activities. They focused their morning instruction on functional skills (ECC / literacy / numeracy...) then take their skills into the community in the afternoon to practice it in the world. The independence and maturity that the students are showing in the community is beyond what we hoped for.

### **CSDB Outreach (Jim Olson)**

**National Braille Challenge for Colorado:** 28 “rookie” level registrants will celebrate braille while 25 contestants between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade will compete in the Colorado Braille Challenge scheduled for Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> on the campus of CSDB. Two students will be taking the tests in their own district, administered by their TVIs. Apprentice (Grades 1 & 2) and Freshman (Grades 3 & 4) contestants will compete in 3 categories: *Reading Comprehension, Proofreading, and Braille Spelling*. Sophomore (Grades 5 & 6), Junior Varsity (Grades 7-9) and Varsity (grades 10 & 12) students will compete in 4 categories: *Reading Comprehension, Proofreading, Speed and Accuracy, and Chart and Graph Reading*. **Discussion:** *Numbers are down this year for participants in the Braille Challenge. Most of the participants are CSDB students. A number of variables were discussed such as transportation challenges, parents not wanting their child out of school, students who are dual media learners not being interested, etc.*

*Jenn asked for feedback on how to strengthen numbers and shared that there will be a variety of activities onsite to make it a full-bodied fun day. Another avenue to explore might be to offer the Braille Challenge in regional sites (though this is a challenge due to timing logistics and low numbers of students). We also want to really ensure that our new TVIs have information about the Braille Challenge. There may be a number of ways we can work together to advertise the Braille Challenge and expand our statewide involvement / commitment. This will be a brainstorming activity for the Fall 2014 Vision Coalition meeting.*

**Recreational Activities across Colorado:** CSDB’s outreach services would like feedback and ideas for ways to support recreational events for students who have been identified as visually impaired, including blindness, that could occur on a more frequent basis than one time a year and that do not require an overnight stay. Submit your suggestions to Laura Douglas at [ldouglas@csdb.org](mailto:ldouglas@csdb.org)>. **Discussion:** *Suggestions recommendations included: a 1 day snowshoe activity, rock climbing, including staff from the National Sports Center for the Disabled, having four activities per year—one activity per quarter, each in a different region of the state.*

**Close-Up:** “Close Up” is a non-profit agency that exists to educate and inspire young people to participate in our democracy. High school students are visitors to Washington, D. C. with groups of other students from across the country. The student groups spend a week visiting monuments and museums in the Washington, D. C. area and participating in activities such as a mock congressional workshop in preparation for a visit to Congress to watch Senators and Representatives in action. Go to [www.CloseUp.org](http://www.CloseUp.org) for more information. The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) will pay the expenses of one student who has a vision loss and is a junior or senior attending a public or private school in Colorado to attend the May 4-9, 2014 Close Up activities.

A student who is enrolled at CSDB and a CSDB staff member, who will serve as a chaperone, will also attend. In 2014, the student who is chosen from the public or private school must be a female for supervision purposes. A male student will be provided this opportunity in the future. Parents of the student who is selected will be asked to pay \$75 toward the cost of the trip and provide any “spending money” the student may need for personal expenses or souvenirs. Applications are due into CSDB by February 14, 2014 and can be found at [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org)>. For more information, contact Dr. Laura Douglas at [ldouglas@csdb.org](mailto:ldouglas@csdb.org)

## **Colorado Instructional Materials Center** (Jim Olson)

**Website:** A new website is coming soon! The CSDB website is being upgraded. This means the CIMC page of the website will also be new and improved.

**CIMC Forms:** Please use current versions of forms – they can be found on the CIMC website! Please delete any forms you may have saved to your computers and go to our website for the latest versions.

**Count 1 Update:** The statewide count of all learners identified as Visually Impaired Including Blindness did not go as smoothly as CIMC had planned. In fact, we are still waiting on some administrative unit (AU) contacts to return their Count 1 spreadsheets! Count 1 was mailed to districts at the beginning of October with a due date of November 22 (before Thanksgiving break).

The CIMC would like to ask the regional Vision Coalition representatives to solicit feedback on how to improve the statewide registration process. Some talking points to discuss with your regions:

- It appears as though many people did not read the directions.
- Some people simply initialed each student's information without making any changes at all.
- Many people did not appear to be aware of the deadline.
- The CIMC has distributed and published the "critical timeline" calendar dates in the *Keeping In Touch* newsletter, emailed them to district contacts, emailed them to the TVI email distribution list, emailed them to Directors of Special Education, included them in the CDE SDLT meeting handouts, and included them in the directions for the counts. They are also available on the CIMC website. What can we do to improve this process?

**Discussion:** *It was suggested that the CIMC do a webinar (or two!) or a Noon Bite presentation on the annual count process. This would be a great opportunity to equalize information and offer an onsite opportunity for questions.*

**Count 2 Update:** Marla mailed the Count 2 database reports to districts Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. The return due date is January 31<sup>st</sup>. For the first time ever they were mailed in a blue envelope to make them stand out a bit. General directions were included as well as detailed directions for each data field. On Feb. 14, 2014 updated Count 2 database reports will be mailed to CO Directors of Special Education, specific to district enrollment on the January 6th count day.

**Braille Distribution:** An email detailing the distribution process of Perkins Classic braille from CDE/CIMC inventory was distributed to CIMC Contacts and TVIs on November 21, 2103. There is a process for districts to remove the old barcodes, return them to CIMC, so that the CIMC can email each director with an inventory of braille that is now the property of their administrative unit. As of today, 1/17/14, the CIMC has received barcodes back from 5 out of 65 AUs. Kudos to: El Paso County School District 20 (Air Academy) - contact: Judy Mumford; Fort Lupton/Keenesburg Consortium District RE-3J (Keenesburg) - contact: Marty Rahn; Fremont County District RE-1 (Canon City) – contact: Carol Davidson); Larimer County – Thompson R-2J (Loveland) - contact: Teresa Barone; and Mesa District 51 - contact: Sarah Sonnier.

**Braille Related Updates:** If you need information about the Great Braillewriter Giveaway again, contact [cimcbraille@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbraille@csdb.org)>. The new NBA Formats study guide is now available for purchase from <http://nationalbraille.org/>. Our friends at NBA tell us that the new formats test is expected to be released in February 2014.

Submit your book orders for next school year (2014/2015). It is not too early. The earlier we get in the production queue with vendors, the better the chance that you will get your books at the start of the school year. Kudos to Donna Keale for being the first TVI to submit braille book orders for the 2014-15 school year!

## **University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)**

Paula is on sabbatical. We wish her a great sabbatical experience! If anyone has any questions or needs, please be in touch with Dr. Silvia Correa Torres until May. Her email is [silvia.correa-torres@unco.edu](mailto:silvia.correa-torres@unco.edu)>.

## **Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)**

**Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project:** The project is thrilled to announce that it has a new award for five years. The new five-year cycle is October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2018. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and services providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21 and who are deafblind or who have both a vision and a hearing loss. The project has a lending library and a website with a multitude of electronic resources that are available to families and educational personnel.

**Census:** The December 1, 2013 Census data is currently being tallied. Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to the completion and return of these forms. You are so appreciated!

**Project Webpage:** The webpage url is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>.

**Summer Institute:** The 2014 Summer Institute on Deafblindness and Significant Support Needs will be held in the Denver area on June 16-20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. We will once again feature two internationally-recognized experts in the field of literacy and learners with significant disabilities. This year, Dr. Karen Erickson and Dr. Penny Hatch will provide two 2.5 Advance Sessions on Literacy for Students with Deaf-Blindness and/or Significant Supports Needs. The participants who attended the level-one trainings held during June 2011, 2012, and 2013 will be invited to this level-two training.

**Western Region Early Intervention Conference:** The next WREIC will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in September 16-18, 2015. Both Tanni and Gina are on the planning committee and the CO DB Project will sponsor at least one speaker with the project funds. We also hope to be able to sponsor travel stipends.

**CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:** The Fall CDE Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment was held on October 3-5, 2013 with featured speakers on several state initiatives and specific training time with Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea on the topic of literacy instruction for students with visual impairments.

**Annual O&M Conference:** Plans for a Spring 2013 Conference are in process.

**Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** Five clinics were funded again for school year 2013-14. Two have been cancelled due to lack of sufficient numbers to host the clinic. The northern clinic was held in early November. The next clinic will be held in the metro area in early March.

**Recruitment and Retention:** We are currently in good shape across the state!

**Listserves:** The CDE ESSU maintains two separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

**Specialized Service Professionals (SSPs):** Members of the O and M Specialist committee continued to update the O and M rubric throughout the 2012-13 school year and over this past summer. The current draft is posted on the CDE website for feedback—it is so important that CO COMs take the time to give input (pro and constructive): The website is: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/specializedserviceprofessionals>

**IPad Training:** The training entitled, *IPad Strategies for Students with Visual Impairments* will be held on January 24 and January 25, 2014. The second session is a repeat of the first. Over 60 TVIs across the state will attend the training with featured speaker Tara Mason.

**Mentoring:** CDE is offered stipends to mentors of new TVIs in the field. Persons who are interested in having a mentor, should be in touch with Tanni.

**Braille-Format State Assessments:** Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, and Sarah Sonnier returned to the National Braille Press in early December 2013 to preview the 2014 braille-format TCAP assessments in the area of reading, writing, math, and science. This was the last of such trips specific to TCAP as the new assessments begin to be piloted in Colorado and the TCAP tests are phased out of the assessment framework.

A work team of Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Nancy Cozart, Shelley Moats, Wendy Stoltman, and Sarah Sonnier with convene in mid-February 2014 to preview the new Colorado Measures of Academic Success assessments in the area of Social Studies and Science.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### CDE ESSU Proposed Projects for School Year 2014-15

Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics    *Keeping in Touch* Newsletter    Vision Coalition    TVI Mentoring  
Orientation and Mobility Training    Braille Format State Assessments    Unified English Braille Code Testing  
Braille Competency Testing & Mentor Support    Webinars or Trainings (Technology How Tos)

#### CSDB – Blindness Interagency Agreement for School Year 2014-15

CIMC    Low Vision Evaluation Clinics (CSDB staff)

**Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools:** Virginia has published guidelines for their state. The product will be used as a draft product for Colorado and will be the focus of the next VC meeting. We will also review the good Program Services document from Poudre School District.

**Teacher / SPP Effectiveness Rubrics:** The O and M Special Service Provider Rubric is being field tested this year in a handful of districts. In addition a couple of school districts are working on either a specific draft of a TVI- specific teacher effectiveness rubric or a combined TVI and COMS rubric. This information will be gathered for review at the end of the school year.

**Next Meeting Date: April 16, 2014**

## In Gratitude and Honor, We Give Our Thanks



We congratulate **Maureen "Mo" Primrose McGowan** on her retirement which officially began on December 31, 2013, after some 38 years of dedicated service to Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) and to people who are deaf-blind. Mo's memorable career at the Center's headquarters began inauspiciously in July, 1976 when she was hired as the first certified O & M instructor, but as a shift supervisor was needed in the Residence, she worked there for three months before starting her job in the O & M Department. As Mo said, it was a "great experience to live with the students and get to know everyone in the Residence." Within two years, in 1978, Mo became the supervisor of the O & M and Low Vision Departments. She was also a partner in the National Training Team established in 1981 with Bernie Wynne as the coordinator. Mo remained at HKNC until 1985 when the "call of the West" got to her and she moved to Colorado where she worked as an O & M instructor for the Colorado Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. Since she was the only one who knew sign language, she worked with all the clients with deaf-blindness— thus staying in the field. She was finally lured back into the HKNC family in 1994 when she became the regional rep for the Rocky Mountain Region, which covered the following 6 states: CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY. She then moved on to be the Director of Field Services in 2011. It's hard to imagine HKNC without Mo! We will miss not only her wisdom, guidance, and leadership but also her ever present sense of humor. We thank Mo, for her contributions to our field and wish her all the best!

# In Gratitude and Honor, We Give Our Thanks

## Dr. Dean Tuttle Receives Prestigious Hall of Fame Award

The following is an interview with Dr. Tuttle conducted by Dr. Michael Bina, Maryland School for the Blind.

**When you were growing up what career did you think you would pursue?**

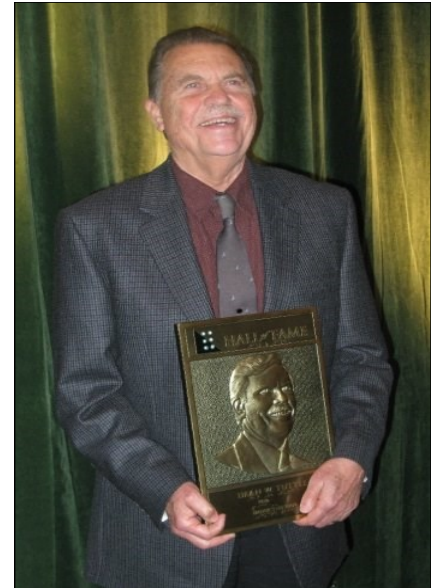
When I was growing up, my life revolved around hospital life on the mission field in Congo, where my father was a doctor and my mother a nurse. They were responsible for a clinic, a pharmacy, surgical unit, several wards with 100 beds, a nursing school, and a village for people with leprosy. Initially, when I would contemplate a career for myself, my thoughts would turn to the medical profession. Secondarily, I dreamed that I might someday be a missionary serving overseas.

**Did you ever imagine that you would be working in the field of blindness?**

**Did you find the field or did it find you?** Early on, I never knew there was a potential career in “the field of blindness.” I attended a boarding school for missionaries’ children in central Congo for the elementary and secondary education. During all that time, I had met only two blind persons and they were patients at my father’s hospital. I had been diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa and a ten year old so I had concluded that medicine was not for me and began thinking about the field of education. At Wheaton College, Illinois, I majored in mathematics and minored in physics with plans to be a high school teacher. I graduated in 1958 still reading print but with significant loss of peripheral vision and, as yet, had not connected with or been referred to any agency serving the visually impaired. I didn’t know such services existed.

**Who or what influenced you to work in this field?** In my 9<sup>th</sup> grade math class at Hillside Jr. High School, Montclair, NJ, there was a totally blind student, Debbie Stevens, who was receiving support services from a “Resource Room for the Blind.” She was using a Taylor Slate for her computations and doing it quite proficiently. However, it was cumbersome and slow compared to the paper and pencil used by her sighted classmates. With my math background, I was motivated to explore other computational options for blind and visually impaired students. The Resource Room teacher referred me to the NJ Commission for the Blind where I met Josephine Taylor who was director of educational services for the visually handicapped for the state of New Jersey. After explaining my interest in special education, she all but insisted that I pursue and M.A. degree in education of the blind with her friend, Georgie Lee Abel, and San Francisco State College.

**Who were your mentors?** I had so many mentors it would be difficult to list them all but I will confine myself to five: **Henry Phoenix** was the first blind person I had the privilege of knowing up close. He was the principal of the school where I landed by first job, teaching math and science to sighted high school students. He was confident, poised, knowledgeable, and very talented. Little did he know that he was serving as a role model for one of his teachers who was losing his vision.



**Jo Taylor**, who introduced me to the field, subsequently moved to Washington, D.C. to serve as a strong advocate for blind and visually impaired within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Division of Personnel Preparation. I admired her strength of convictions and her power of persuasion.

**Georgie Lee Abel** was my major professor at San Francisco State College and found her to be one of our nation's leading proponents of blind and visually impaired students integrated into public school education. She seemed to know everyone who was anybody in the field of blindness. Her engaging warm southern-style hospitality stole my heart.

As I was breaking into the special education arena, **Phil Hatlen** was already a legend in the education of blind children in California. I admired his leadership qualities, his uncanny ability to say the right thing at the right time. Always a favorite conference speaker, his presentations have invariably been thoughtful and provocative. I have always admired Phil's remarkable way with words and his effective style of communication.

**Berthold Lowenfeld**, in my opinion, was one of our strongest statesmen and ambassadors for our profession through his conduct, presentations and publications. If truth were known, I was in awe of him and his accomplishments. Then when he agreed to serve on my doctoral committee, I was simultaneously overjoyed and fearful ... overjoyed because he brought dignity, stature and credibility to the committee but fearful because I felt so insignificant in the presence of one of our foremost leaders recognized nationally and internationally.

**In your career you have been a mentor to others. Give an example where you had a positive influence on a colleague or young protégé.** As is probably true of most graduate programs, I found it gratifying to cultivate a relationship which started out as a professor-student interaction, but often grew into a friend and colleague dynamic. Although this relationship would begin on campus with give and take dialogues with both of us growing, many conversations would continue when the graduate would call about a particular problem or just to talk. I must admit to experiencing a sense of pride when our graduates took leadership roles within our profession.

**Do you still recall the names of some of your blind or low vision students and clients? Which three come to mind and why?** Larry Truong, blind from retinoblastoma, was one of my high school students who had recently immigrated from Viet Nam. He had learned his English by reading the Reader's Digest. He was so very bright and would sponge up everything I would pass on to him. He later earned his Ph.D. from UC-Berkeley in mathematics.

The Dole twins at the California School for the Blind taught me the value and dignity of every individual regardless of the multiplicity of handicaps. People with CP who are slow learners, have difficulty communicating and are tactilely defensive are indeed worthy of the very best that we can offer.

Gaylen Kapperman, now at Northern Illinois University, received his doctorate in Special Education at the University of Northern Colorado. He was a bundle of energy ready to explode onto the national professional stage. He had learned to pace himself and judiciously direct his energies to productive endeavors. He is one of those who, in many ways, has out-stripped his mentor.

**What would you list as your two or three proudest moments in your career?** I'm not sure I like to word "proud." I can tell you times when I have been pleasantly surprised. I was pleasantly surprised when I was awarded a Ph.D. for several reasons. Initially, I just wanted to take some graduate courses in education. I never thought of myself as a candidate for a doctoral degree. Then, surprisingly, I was accepted into the joint special education doctoral program between San Francisco State University and the University of California at Berkeley. Course piled up course until I had enough to graduate.



I was pleasantly surprised when Charles C. Thomas agreed to publish the book “Self-esteem and Adjusting with Blindness.” When I first started writing, I wanted to put the material I was organizing into an article. As the volume of the material kept growing, I began conceptualizing a pamphlet ... certainly not a book. When we finally sent our manuscript to the publisher, they requested that I cut twenty percent, a very difficult task for a fledgling author who had labored hard and long over each page.

Of course, I was more than pleasantly surprised to be recognized by my peers for a variety of tributes and awards from organizations like AFB, AERBVI, CEC/DVH, especially amazing to me because I’ve never thought of myself as anyone special. Each award was unique with special significance to me but the one that was especially gratifying was when my wife, Naomi, was recognized for her own accomplishments with the APH “Wings of Freedom” at the same time I received mine.

**Did you ever imagine that you would be recognized and inducted in the field’s hall of fame? When you were informed that you were an inductee, what were your thoughts?** In my mind, our field’s Hall of Fame was reserved for really prominent and giant heroes, those who had made significant contributions with a lasting influence here at home and around the world. This notion was deeply ingrained in me as we prepared for AER’s “Heroes and Pioneers” Presentation for the 2000 Denver conference. As Naomi and I wrote the bios for the original 32 heroes and pioneers, I realized how truly great these individuals were and the extent of the rich heritage they left us. When I was notified that I would be inducted into our Hall of Fame, I was flabbergasted. I thought there must be some mistake because I knew I was just an ordinary guy with ordinary abilities whose desire was to do his best at his various jobs. I knew I didn’t match up to the heroes and pioneers Naomi and I had written about in 2000.

**During your career you undoubtedly saw the field change in many different ways. How did it change? In which ways do you wish it would have changed more?** The push for “full inclusion” brought with it an influx of “generic” service providers who lack training in specific blindness-related specialized skills and adaptive behaviors. We over-stated the premise that blind children are just like other kids in our efforts to integrate blind and VI students into the public schools. I welcomed the strong efforts to recognize and detail the specialized needs of and intervention strategies for blind and VI students in what became known as the “Expanded Core Curriculum.” I have been gratified to observe the expansion of our professional literature and the increasing quantity of quality research being conducted which helps to define and provide direction for our field.

I can’t tell you how much technology has revolutionized my life and the life of blind people. It is my window to the world through the Internet for news, shopping, and communicating with others. I am able to scan, read, and braille personal copies of print materials. With my GPS adapted for the blind I can know my position, find points of interest, and create routes. These are only three examples of many more I could cite.

I have noticed an increased acceptance and understanding of people with disabilities in our communities. It’s far too easy to take this fact for granted, forgetting the many struggles of those that went before us. On the other hand, we still have a ways to go because I still run into unnecessary barriers and obstacles.

**What are three to five pieces of advice you would give to people entering the field just beginning their first experience working with clients or students?** (1) Enjoy blind people; learn to appreciate each individual’s unique strengths, abilities, and how each functions. (2) Enjoy your chosen profession. You have the opportunity to make a huge impact on many individuals. (3) Cultivate observational and problem-solving skills as you strategize to meet each individual’s unique needs. One size does not fit all. (4) Remember that the focus is on your students/clients. It’s all about them and not about you, your conveniences, your comforts. (5) Learn to laugh with your students/clients not at them.

**What are three to five pieces of advice you would give to those in the field who are experienced “having been around a few years?”** You make a difference. Many of us are not aware of the full impact we have on students/clients and their family members. It’s easy to get caught up in the day to day grind without seeing the big picture.

With the frustrations of administration demands, paper work, poor pay, and isolated work environment, resist the temptation to throw in the towel. Your students/clients need you more than you may acknowledge or realize.

Make the effort to keep current with our profession’s best practices, adaptive aids and devices. With changes and improvements coming at an increasingly fast pace, I realize it requires a strong personal commitment to stay on top of what’s happening. Your students/clients deserve the very best.

We have a great profession. Support one another at the local, state and national levels through our various organizations. Get involved in molding and shaping our careers.

**When you look back on your career, what was a humorous experience that really made you laugh?**

I can tell you an embarrassing moment in my professional career. I had a German shepherd dog guide named Warren who loved to work, was all business when guiding and rather socially aloof. He and I had traveled to many conferences, workshops and seminars where I was usually the speaker. At one AER conference, there was a topic that interested me so I wanted to sit in as a participant. Warren guided me to the correct conference room and dutifully took me to the front of the room and the speaker’s podium. The presenter was gracious about asking me if I wanted to take over, at which time, being uncomfortably chagrined, I tried to inconspicuously find a place in the audience.

*Editor’s Note: Our hearts are full with pride for our very own Dr. Dean Tuttle!*

## **In Memory of Alexis D’Luna: “She Attracted People Where Ever She Went”**

National Public Radio recently featured a segment on the extraordinary life of Alexis as told by her father, mother and sister. Ms. D’Luna had CHARGE syndrome, a rare, life-threatening genetic condition that causes many birth defects. She stood just under 5 feet tall because of physical deformities in her back and legs and was legally blind, hearing impaired and intellectually disabled.

Some children with CHARGE syndrome don’t live past the age of 5, but Alexis lived to be 25 years old.

She died in her sleep in December 2012.

Her parents, Debra and Lionel D’Luna, came to StoryCorps with her sister Adrienne to remember her. It is available on their website: <http://storycorps.org>.





# colorado connections

🔊 Hats off to **Nancy Cozart, Sarah Sonnier, and Tanni Anthony** who headed back to the National Braille Press in early December to preview the Spring 2013 TCAP assessments for Reading / Writing and Math. This was the last trip for TCAP. A very special thanks to Dan Dube of CTB McGraw Hill and the very wonderful NBP staff (MaryBeth, Nicole, and Jackie). Thanks also to the TVIs who took the time to turn in comments from the 2012 TCAP administration (**Elaine Brown, Michelle Chacon, Nancy Cozart, Judy Dixon, Donice Fennimore, Kathy Gallina, Nancy Knight, Jamie Lugo, Shelley Moats, Trina Boyd Pratt, and Julie Wetzstein**). These comments really matter - we go back and do a item analysis validation and learn from any confirmed challenges of last year's graphics to inform the new graphics for coming and final administration of these TCAP test. It truly takes a village to ensure our braille format state assessments are well prepared. Thank you!



🔊 Congratulations to **Kat Botsford**, UNC doctoral student, for her article entitled *Social Skills for Youth with Visual Impairments: A Meta-Analysis* that was published in the November – December 2013 edition of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*.

🔊 Hats off to **Jessica Hank**, who is the 113<sup>th</sup> person to pass the Colorado Braille Competency Test. Also hats off to **Edie Smith, Anitha Muthukumaran, and Elaine Brown** for earning braille renewal clock hours. Thanks to proctor **Lucia Hasty**.

🔊 Colorado COMS in attendance at the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013, that was held in New Orleans, LA on December 11-14, 2013 included: **Barbara Adams, Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Barb Galgano, Trina Boyd-Pratt, and Cathy Smith**. Sightings of former CO TVIs included **Lou Tutt, Loana Mason, Stephanie Isbel, and Tracy Mosbarger!** **Ann Cunningham** was also onsite as a vendor. Presentations were made by the following CO personnel:

- *Play and Movement in Early Childhood: Setting the Early O & M Stage for Success* (Tanni Anthony)
- *Aurora Public School O & M Club: Activities and Fund Raising* (Trina Boyd-Pratt and three Colorado students)
- *The Development of O&M Skills Through Physical Education* (Paula Conroy)
- *Tele-O&M: Exploration New Ways to Provide O&M Services to Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments* (Hong Phangia Dewald from UT and Cathy Smith)

🔊 Thanks to all of the 60+ TVIs who gave up a Friday or a Saturday (a special thanks to you latter folks) to participate in the January 2014 in the "iPad Strategies for Students with Visual Impairment" training sponsored by CDE. You all are amazing with your dedication! And a very big thank you to **Tara Mason** for her time with us as the featured speaker. All who attended were given access (for 20 weeks) to an iPad course called "Transforming iPads for TVIs—Tips for TVIs." It was a great first training effort of this kind specifically for CO TVIs!

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