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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

April — May 2017



It's Independence Day!

By Tanni L. Anthony

As we approach the summer months, we begin to look forward to July 4 – our Independence Day. It is a time to celebrate our country's freedom complete with fireworks, picnics, and deep gratitude for our independence as a nation. To be independent is to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. It means to have freedom to make choices, to fulfill our potential, and to make our own mark on the world.

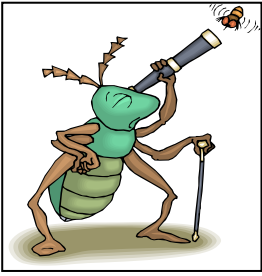
Our goal is to raise and support our children to become fully self-sufficient and self-reliant. This creed is so powerful that the field of educating children who are blind/visually impaired long ago developed a companion curriculum to the core general education curriculum. Educators define "core curriculum" as the knowledge and skills expected to be learned by high school graduation. The core curriculum consists generally of knowledge and skills related to academic subjects (English Language Arts, math, science, etc.). The Expanded Core Curriculum for Children and Youth with Visual Impairment (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by all students who have blind/visually impaired due to their unique disability-specific needs. The underpinning focus of the ECC is to build concepts and skills to increase personal independence and success. What we all need to implement the ECC is time—and what better time than summer time!

There are many activities (see the Calendar of Events) that children and youth can become involved in over the summer months to increase their concepts about and skills of independence. Summer is also a great time for families focus on building self-sufficiency on the home front. Parents are key to encouraging / expecting a child's self-responsibility of getting dressed in the morning, helping with or fully completing house-hold chores, making snacks or a meal for the family, getting around the neighborhood and community, etc. No matter the age, blindness/visual impairment should never be an excuse for a child not to be working on age-appropriate independence. Without high expectations and real opportunities, our children and students do not move steadily down the path of independence.

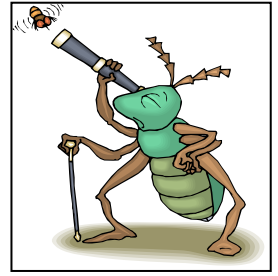
As summer approaches, think about how to maximize personal independence skills of our shared children. Everyday should and can be Independence Day!

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LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



Low Vision Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2017-18

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator
Western Region	September 29-30, 2017 Paperwork due to Clinic Coordinator: September 15, 2017	Angela Sims
Northern Region	Dates to be Determined—but the goal will be November 2017	Christina Martin
Metro Region	February 22-25, 2018— Date paperwork is due: February 2, 2018	Nancy Knight
Southern Region	To be Determined	To Be Determined

Attention all TVIs!

Over the next few weeks, we hope to have the dates of all of our 2017-18 Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. As the southern and northern dates are finalized, Tanni will send them out to each region. Please get started NOW thinking about which of your students are candidates for the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. We want to ensure that every slot is filled with a deserving student. You can find the LVE forms on the CDE website. You are on notice now to get the paperwork completed in a timely manner to support our team in the next school year!

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities.asp

Your Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Team

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY

CDE O&M Seminar 2017



What a great turn-out for our recent CDE O&M Seminar, which was held on May 4-6 at the Colorado Center for the Blind! We had well over 60 COMS attending the training, representing personnel working exclusively with infants and toddlers to school age children and youth to adult with blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. The photo to the right is the Friday BlindSquare group—just half of the class!

A huge thank you to our amazing presenter team; **Diane Brauner, Ed Summers, and Chris Tabb**. The wealth of applicable information was wonderful across three days of training. Thank you also to the good folks of the Colorado Center for the Blind, who provided our meeting space. Ahead of the conference, both **Brent Batron** and **Trina Boyd Pratt** helped with finalizing the host-site logistics. Thanks also to each person who participated in the training—it was a great time to network, share, and learn together.

O&M Live Binder

Our huge thanks to Chris Tabb, recent speaker of the CDE O&M Seminar who shared information about the O&M Live Binder. This is a project that has resulted in a collection of materials that support orientation and mobility services for children and adults. The link is : <http://bit.ly/LiveBinderOM>

If you would like to contribute a document to the O&M Live Binder website, please send this information directly to Chris at tabbc@tsbvi.edu

O&M Research—Invitation to Complete an Online Survey

William Mefford Penrod, Nora Griffin-Shirley, Kevin Hollinger, and Ximena Burgin are conducting Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research from the field to determine whether practicing Orientation and Mobility instructors and O&M students think that knowledge of uncontracted, contracted, and/or UEB braille should be an integral component in preparation programs leading to O&M certification. The instrument has been reviewed by persons who are blind using common screen readers and we think that it is accessible to all.

Please take 10 minutes out of your busy schedules to complete the survey at https://niu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5iGONugj7TsCI5 You may choose to enter the drawing for four \$50.00 gift cards upon completion of this survey.

Thank you! Bill, Nora, and Kevin.

Resources and Materials

Cultural Competency Cultural Responsiveness Resource Guide

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families has released a new resource guide to help community-based organizations find relevant resources for developing and implementing culturally competent programs in increasingly diverse communities.

Developing Culturally Responsive Approaches to Serving Diverse Populations: A Resource Guide for Community-Based Organizations (March 2017), includes information on choosing, adapting or developing interventions, conducting needs assessments, selecting appropriate measures, collaborating with other organizations, ensuring workforce diversity, budgeting for culturally competent programs, and more.

Click on the link to view the resource guide <http://bit.ly/2mzfajS>

A Great Student Tool: The Braille Caliper

Chris Tabb shared information about the braille caliper at our recent CDE O&M Seminar. The Tactile Caliper is a simple to use, accurate low-cost measuring ruler for people who are blind and visually impaired. It provides a braille output to 1/16th of an inch.

Developed by SQUIRREL DEVICES (past winner of the Louis Braille Touch of Genius Award), the Caliper allows its user to measure with accuracy and speed. It displays readings directly in braille. It is a simple mechanical instrument that can be used anywhere by people of all ages. It can be found at: <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/CALIPER.html> There may also be other venues who sell this product.



Something for Everyone on APH's YouTube Channel



Have you checked out APH's YouTube videos recently? They have more than 300 videos for your information and enjoyment, including weekly Quick Tips videos, product demos, APH Annual Meeting presentations, and historical videos.

Check it out at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/aphftb>

Resource on Cerebral Visual Impairment

Check out this website on Cerebral Visual Impairment that has a wealth of information: CVI Scotland at http://peroosh.com/sites/cvi_scotland/index.php



Gifted Identification and Twice Exceptional

The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) requires all administrative units (AUs) in Colorado to identify and serve students between the ages of five and twenty-one, and age four in administrative units with Early Access, whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs.

Administrative units include: school districts, Charter School Institute (CSI), multi-district administrative units and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). There are a variety of important resources about Gifted Education at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/identification>

Twice-exceptional students are those who are identified as gifted according to state criteria in one or more of the categories of giftedness (cognitive, academic, creative, leadership, or arts) *AND* Identified with a disability according to federal/state criteria – and the disability qualifies them for either an IEP or a 504 plan. Check out the resources at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/twice-exceptional>

The goal of identification of a child as a twice-exceptional learner is to bring personnel together; both those trained in gifted education and those trained in special education. For the child with visual impairment, including blindness, this means that the teacher of students with visual impairments plays an important role to work closely with the gifted education personnel to determine accessibility to the identification tools and process. It may be that the team works to build a body-of-evidence to determine the child's qualifications for Gifted Education.

Licensure Requirements for TVI and COMS Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing’s Endorsement Requirements page at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

All candidates for initial educator licenses in Colorado have historically been required to take and pass one or more of the PLACE Content Assessments. Candidates for the special education endorsement in Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment were mandated previously to pass the *PLACE Educator Content Assessment for Special Education Specialist: Severe Needs – Visually Impaired*. This test had a short section to assess braille competency in English Braille American Edition. This particular content assessment is suspended currently as a licensure requirement. Whether this specific test will be revised to include a section specific to Unified English Braille or is fully replaced with another test as a licensure requirement is yet to be determined.

At this time, it is important to note there is not a Professional Services and Educator Licensing Unit content test that requires a candidate for the Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment to demonstrate braille competency as a requirement of licensure.

It is further important to note that if such a content test is reinstated, it does not replace the Colorado Braille Competency Test administered through the Exceptional Student Services Unit. This latter test is not tied to CDE licensure.

CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialists, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a special services provider: School O&M Specialist.

If you do not have this license, your scope of O and M services should be severely restricted to those skills that could already be taught by a TVI. Without this license, you are placing yourself and your AU at risk for O&M-related liability. There is no temporary or emergency licenses for School O&M Specialists.

Questions or need some assistance? Contact Tanni separately at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Visual Impairment

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth -21, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

<p>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must hold a Master’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Department. ✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for special education specialists: visually impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements
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For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>

<p>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution ✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists ✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 320 hours, full-time, under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) licensed orientation and mobility specialist. ✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam ✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate
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Application for 2018 Colorado Teacher of the Year now available



Each year, the Colorado Teacher of the Year Program honors an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled teacher in any state-approved or accredited school, kindergarten through grade 12, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status. The award recipient will automatically become Colorado's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Applications are due no later than 11:59 p.m. Thursday, June 1, 2017.
For more information, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeawards/teacheroftheyear>

iAdvocate 2

Guided Practice with the Expanded Core Curriculum

DATE: JUNE 25-29, 2017



- Daily Living Skills
- Orientation and Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure
- Social Skills
- Technology

Hiking

Goalball

Bus Travel

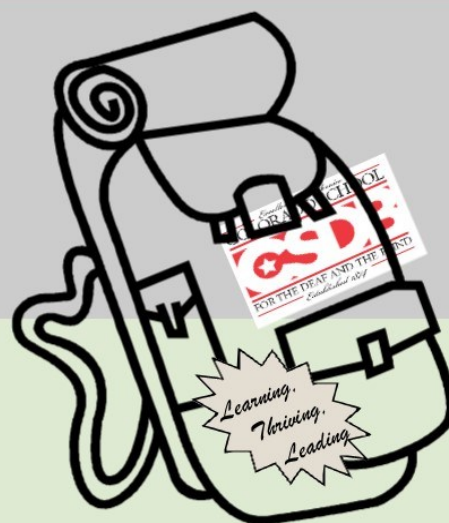
Team building

Eating out at a restaurant

**Preparing simple meals
and more!**

Activities designed for students, currently in 6th-10th grade, who are blind or visually impaired.

**Location: Colorado School for the
Deaf and the Blind**
33 North Institute Street/Colorado Springs, CO
www.csdb.org



DEADLINE TO REGISTER: MAY 31, 2017

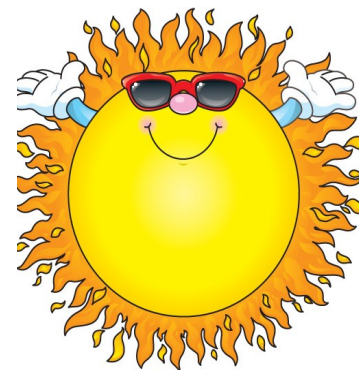
RSVP to Donna Keale: 719-330-7387 ; dkeale@csdb.org




Calendar of Events

2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017 2017

- June 5-23** **Confidence Camp**—Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton , CO
Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 9-August 4** **Earn & Learn High School Program**—Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton , CO
Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 9-August 4** **Summer for Success College Prep Program**—Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton , CO
Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 12-June 30** **Initiation to Independence Middle School Program**—Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton , CO
Contact: Brent Batron at bbatron@cocenter.org
- June 12-13** **2017 SWAAAC Symposium**—Thornton, CO
Contact: Maureen Melonis at melonis_m@cde.state.co.us
- June 14-16** **Western Region Early Intervention Conference** – Scottsdale, AZ
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- June 20-21** **Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness**—Denver, CO
Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- June 25 –29** **iAdvocate**—CSDB
Contact: Donna Keale at dkeale@csdb.org
- June 26-30** **16th international Mobility Conference**—Ireland
For more information please visit: <http://imc16.com/>
- June 30-July 7** **2017 ACB Conference and Convention**—Sparks, NV
For more information, go to: <http://acb.org/2017convention>
- July 2-7** **Adaptive Sports Camp** - Crested Butte, CO
Contact: Brandon Mapes - brandon.mapes@summitk12.org
- July 10-15** **The National Federation of the Blind National Convention** - Orlando, FL
For more information please visit: <https://nfb.org/convention>
- July 19-22** **AER International O&M Conference**—Pittsburgh, PA
Contact: <http://swoma.org/>





Calendar of Events



July 27-30



13th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference—Orlando, FL

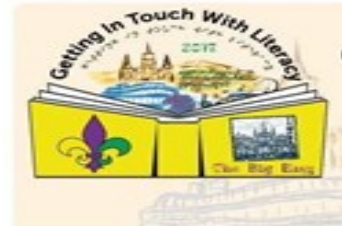
For more info, go to:

<https://www.chargesyndrome.org/for-families/conferences/>

December 6-9

Getting in Touch with Literacy—New Orleans, LA

Contact: <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>



2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018 2018

February 8-9

PEAK Parents Center's - Inclusive Education Conference—Colorado Springs, CO

Contact: Pam Christy pchristy@peakparent.org

July 25-29

AER International Conference 2018—Peppermill Resort, Reno NV

Contact: www.aerbvi.org

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Parents: If you are moving out of state or your child will or 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.

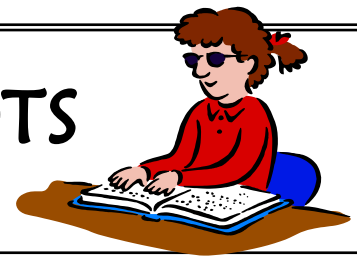
TVIs and COMSs: If you have any changes in program contact information, please help us out and send Tanni these changes.

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

Send changes to: anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or to Tanni Anthony, CDE ESSU, 1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202. Or you can leave a voice message for Tanni at (303) 866-6681. Thank you so much!



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial CO Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. THE CDE Exceptional Student Services Unit Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education for their role in: (a) developing, refining, and reviewing braille competency testing and support materials, (b) proctoring test sessions for initial braille competency and renewal modules; (c) providing approved mentoring to test candidates, and (d) other duties as needed to support our UEB competency processes across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

Tanni Anthony	(303) 866-6681	anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
Nancy Cozart	(303) 905-4074	ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	christine.maynard@asd20.org
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	brendashep@comcast.net
Sarah Sonnier	(970) 245-5228	sonnier.sarah5@gmail.com
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	jwetzste@jeffco.k12.co.us

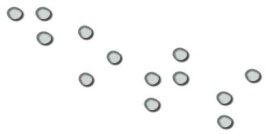
As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the metro and northern area.

If you need to take the Colorado Braille Competency Test over the summer months, please be in touch with Tanni. If you need to take renewal modules, please work directly with the other braille proctors. Some people will be on summer holiday, so if you cannot reach someone, let Tanni know and she will work to make a summer module session happen! Thanks to everyone for being proactive with the state requirements for braille competency!

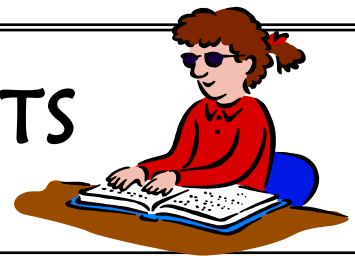
Braillewriter Repair

Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair. His contact information is:

Phone: 719-634-8720 and Email: carpdiane@yahoo.com



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Dear Colleague,

Beginning in August 2017, College Board tests will switch to Unified English Braille (UEB). This applies to the SAT[®], SAT Subject Tests[™], PSAT-related assessments, and Advanced Placement[®] Exams. We will continue to use Nemeth Code for all math items.

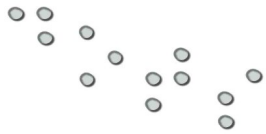
The switch to UEB, with Nemeth Code, follows recommendations from the Braille Authority of North America.

All students who are currently approved for braille versions of College Board tests are also receiving this notice. Please work with your braille users and their families to ensure they are aware of and understand this change. If you have any questions, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 844-255-7728.

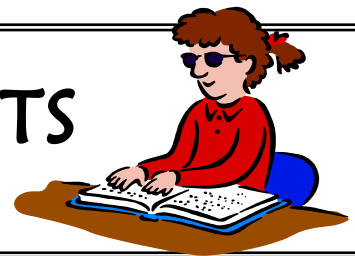
Sincerely

The College Board
250 Vesey Street | New York, NY 10281
Customer Service





CONNECTING THE DOTS



NIMAC Version 3 Launched with New Features

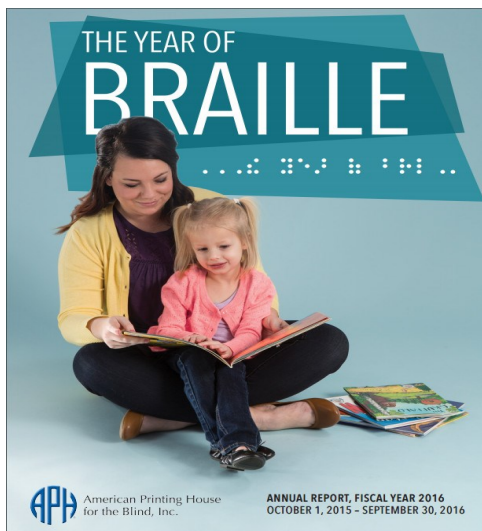


The NIMAC is excited to announce the successful launch of their new online system, NIMAC v3. The launch on March 21, 2017 represents the culmination of a year-long development project which involved a comprehensive analysis of their users' needs and a complete system redesign. As technology advanced over the past several years, new options became available to the NIMAC.

Since its beginnings in December of 2006, the NIMAC has now grown to house over 46,000 file sets from 130 educational publishers. The NIMAC's more than 400 users—including all 50 states and seven Outlying Areas—have downloaded over 26,000 NIMAS files for use in the production of accessible materials on behalf of students with print disabilities. This work is going forward with the launch of the new system.

Feel free to [visit our new public search at https://nimac.overdrive.com/ContentInventory](https://nimac.overdrive.com/ContentInventory), or for more information, [visit our website at www.nimac.us](http://www.nimac.us)

APH Annual Report Celebrates the Year of Braille

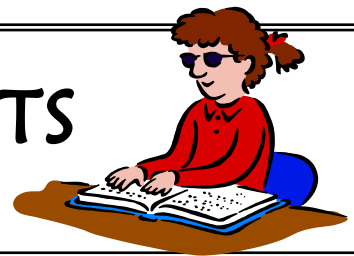


Addison is a kindergarten student who loves her braille story books and who looks for braille everywhere in her environment. APH shares they are proud that "Addy" has benefited from APH braille products, such as Building on Patterns: UEB and Braille Tales print/braille books. Read Addy's story and other inspiring stories in the fiscal year 2016 APH Annual Report that we entitled "The Year of Braille." The report contains information about the field of blindness, the activities of APH, and stories of independence. We celebrate braille and the many other areas of APH's mission.

Enjoy "The Year of Braille."

[APH Annual Report, FY2016, Accessible PDF Edition.](#)

CONNECTING THE DOTS



Typhlo & Tactus Tactile Book Contest 2017



First Place winner of the previous contest

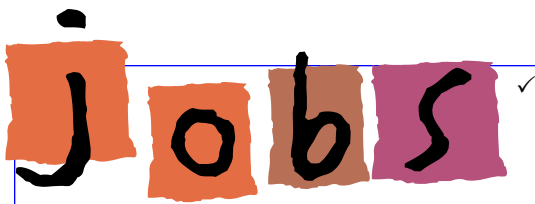
Entries Due August 10, 2017! Once again APH is the U.S. national contact for The International Tactile-Illustrated Book Prize, a biennial competition created to encourage improvement of the quality and quantity of tactile books for young children with visual impairments. Don't miss your chance to submit your tactile book, designed for children with visual impairments from 3 to 12 years of age.

The competition is conducted by Typhlo & Tactus (T&T), an organization comprised of western and eastern European nations that exists to improve the quality and quantity of tactile books available to young children with visual impairments in member countries. As a part of T&T's efforts, the organization has conducted a biennial tactile book competition each year, beginning in 2000. At first, the competition was open only to European T&T members, but in 2011, it was opened to a worldwide audience.

A panel of U.S. judges will review entries sent to APH and select the top 5 tactile books for final adjudication by an international panel of children and adults with visual impairments, as well as professionals in the field of vision. A single winning entry will be chosen, along with ten shortlisted books. Selected books may be featured on the T&T website, on posters, or in promotional materials used by T&T.

U.S. entrants should send their completed tactile book to the American Printing House for the Blind by **August 10, 2017**. Questions? Contact Rob Guillen, rguillen@aph.org

Visit this link for rules and entry forms and to see last year's winners
www.aph.org/tactus-international-tactile-books-competition/



IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with anticipated vacancies for this school year or the one starting in fall 2017. 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 O&M 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 of students with visual impairments and COMS = certified orientation and mobility specialist.

Northern Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI/COMS (.5FTE)** for Thompson School District. For more information about this position, contact Charlie Carter at (970)-613-5092 or charlie.carter@thompsonschoools.org
- ✓ **TVI/ COMS (1 FTE)** for Greeley Schools. For more information, please contact Kate Green at kgreen4@greeleyschools.org
- ✓ **TVI/ COMS (2 FTE)** for Poudre Schools District in Fort Collins. For more information, please contact Romie Tobin at rtobin@psdschools.org

Southern Region – Jobs

- ✓ **CSDB** - Please be in touch with Chelle Lutz for CSDB Openings. She can be reached at (719) 578-2100.
- ✓ **1 TVI / COMS** opening for Pikes Peak BOCES. For more information, please contact Trish Reitingger Trish Reitingger@ppbooces.org or 719 622-6205

Metro Region—Jobs

- ✓ **TVI (1.5 FTE)** at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please contact Lindsay Standish at lstandish@anchorcenter.org
- ✓ **TVI (1 FTE)** As well as a Full-time substitute for the Fall Semester and a brailist / para in the Denver Public Schools District. contact Karin Hensel at karin_hensel@dpsk12.org for more information.
- ✓ **TVI / COMS (2 FTE)** in Cherry Creek School District for school year 2017-18. All information can be found on the Cherry Creek Schools website www.cherrycreekschools.org

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 substitute work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement!

Please keep Tanni in the communication loop about your vacancy status over the summer months. We need to work very hard to fill these vacancies!



Colorado Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

CAER AWARDS

The CAER Award Recipients were recognized at an evening banquet on May 5th, 2017. Congratulations to these amazing recipients for well-deserved recognition of their service and contribution.

◆ **President's Award:** This award recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities. The current board president will select and present this award. The recipient was **Julia Zanon** of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

◆ **Connections Award:** This award recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field. The CAER Board considers the nominations. Three individuals received this award: **Dr. Shannon Kessler, Scott LaBarre, and Callan Clark.**

Ken Neve Award: This year CAER is introducing a new way to recognize an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The Ken Neve Award honors a man who was an amazing teacher, co-worker and role-model in the world of O&M. Ken brought humor and warmth to all situations. He worked at the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for 29 years. Nomination criteria include: (a) a CAER member who is in the field as a practicing Orientation & Mobility Specialist; (b) dedication to life-long learning; (c) a role-model for others in the field. The first recipient of this award is **Barb Galgano**. The photo to the right features Ken Neve's sons Travis and Dylan, along with Barb Galgano and Heather Solberg.



Congratulations to our esteemed award recipients.

**Thank you for your advocacy for and service to individuals
who are blind / visually impaired.**



TRANSITION INFORMATION

National Federation of the Blind Youth Slam Program

The 2017 National Federation of the Blind Youth Slam is a weeklong learning opportunity in a wide-variety of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. Students will learn new skills, make new friends, and have fun while being mentored by STEM professionals, many of whom are blind, from all over the United States.

One hundred blind and low-vision students from across the country will be selected to attend this weeklong adventure at Towson University in Maryland from July 23 to 29, 2017. The NFB Youth Slam will engage, inspire, and encourage you—the next generation of blind scientists, engineers, programmers, and mathematicians—to consider STEM careers. While some falsely believe these careers are not for blind students, the NFB is here to help you live the life you want. Your hopes and dreams define your future; blindness does not.

While staying on campus at Towson University, you will be mentored by positive blind role models. The range of fun and challenging activities will raise your expectations, build confidence, and increase your science literacy. Build your NFB Youth Slam schedule from a selection of twenty STEM disciplines including fields such as: robotics, biology, engineering, neuroscience, chemistry, and even video game design! The possibilities are endless.

Students who are currently in grades 9-12 in the United States are invited to apply. Interested students should apply online by **as soon as possible. The doors are closing!**

For more information about the NFB Youth Slam program and to apply, please visit <http://blindscience.org/nfb-youth-slam>.

If you have additional questions, contact us at (410) 659-9314, extension 2418, or email STEM@nfb.org.

Join us as we continue to raise expectations and make history at what promises to be the best NFB Youth Slam yet!

Guidebook for Visually Impaired Students

This resource is designed to help find scholarships and information about assistive technology. They have also included an interview with a graduate student who is visually impaired, discussing the challenges and sharing support and advice for future and current students.

Check out their full length guidebook here:
<http://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/helping-students-with-visual-impairments/>



TRANSITION INFORMATION

New OSEP Center

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is excited to be a partner in the launch of the [Youth Pathways to Postsecondary Education and Employment](#) site. This site brings together five different National Youth-Focused Training and Technical Assistance Centers, funded by the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and Office of Special Education Programs, as well as the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP). These five centers are working together to provide technical assistance and training to state/local agencies and programs to build successful pathways to postsecondary education and employment opportunities for children and youth with educational disabilities.

The purpose of this website is to serve as a platform for a cross-boundary Community of Practice for professionals who share a passion and a vision for building pathways for students and youth with disabilities to postsecondary and employment. You may access this new website and the resources posted without a login or password, however to join the Community of Practice, you will need to request membership.

Our first community will focus on [Pre-Employment Transition Services](#), as defined by Section 113 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The purpose of this community is to provide a space for communication and collaboration in the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities. This community can be used to share lessons learned, pose questions, discuss and collaborate on pre-employment resources and services. We also plan to launch additional communities based on your input and suggestions.

To join, please click here [Pre-Employment Transition Services](#). Once you are on the Pre-Employment Transition Services page, click on the green "Request Membership" bar on the right hand side of the page under "Join This Community". A dialogue box will open so you can enter your name and email address in order to become a member. You will then be able to login to the Community of Practice, where you can view the discussion topics and join in the conversation.

We hope to see you on the new site and encourage you to reach out and ask and answer questions via the discussion board.

Sincerely,

The NTACTION Team

www.transitionta.org



TRANSITION INFORMATION

Transition and Employment Resources from CDE

Check out this many resources on secondary transition and employment. Many are on the CDE website. There are also key resources specifically for parents. Summer is coming and it may be a great time for your older students to have a summer job!

Cooperative Services Handbook:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/cooperativeserviceshandbook_youthintransition

Cooperative Assessment Guidelines:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/cooperativeassessmentguidelines_schoolpractitioners

Get a Job toolkit:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdesped/download/pdf/stw_getajobtoolkit.pdf

411 on Disclosure: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure>

Skills to pay the bills: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>

Colorado Options (postsecondary education): <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/options>

Documentation guidelines for postsecondary:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdesped/download/pdf/guidelines_documentationguidelinesforeducators.pdf

WIOA webinar for educators (recorded):

https://zoom.us/recording/play/DsSJ5tjLiqL4Rga3ec4fm7thDk_kyl-nJS623zdAEmNQivct57dbP-F5axUzcb3l

Parent Resources for Employment:

The Guideposts for Success: A Framework for Families Preparing Youth for Adulthood

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/familyguideposts-information-brief>

Understanding the New Vision for Career Development: The Role of Family

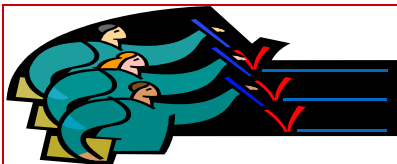
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/understanding-the-newvision-for-career-development-the-role-of-family>

Helping Youth Develop Soft Skills for Job Success: Tips for Parents and Families

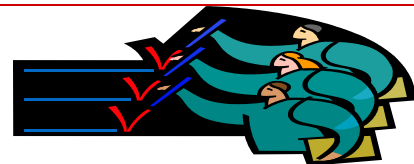
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-28>

Helping Youth Build Work Skills for Job Success: Tips for Parents and Families

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-34>



CHECK IT OUT!



Heather's Camp

Created for Kids.
Anchored in Love.

MAY 19 – 21, 2017

Estes Park - YMCA of the Rockies
Estes Park, Colorado

www.heatherscamp.org

Sponsored by:

Delta Gamma Fraternity
and



To improve the quality of life and provide inspiration for the blind and visually impaired through employment, outreach, rehabilitation, education and research.

Heather's Camp

Join us at this outdoor weekend adventure where youth who are blind or visually impaired can learn new skills, create friendships and build confidence with support and encouragement from mentors.

- Music
- Arts and Crafts
- Chapel
- Campfire & Songs
- S'mores
- Swimming
- Horse Trail Riding
- Beep Archery
- Fishing
- Skating
- Gym & Fitness Activities
- Mini Golf
- Low Ropes
- High Ropes
- Hiking & Nature Walks
- Indoor/Outdoor Games
- Family Fun Nite

Ages

Age 5 – high school
Rookie Day for youth 4 and under or older children as desired

ANCHOR adventure



ANCHOR confidence



ANCHOR friendship CREATED



Register
your child at
www.heatherscamp.org

Registration opens Feb. 1, 2017



Total cost is \$50 per camper.

Financial assistance is available.

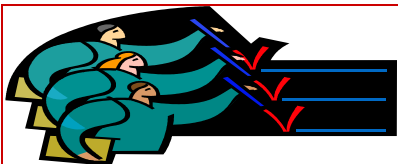
Registration is completely online.
If you need help registering your camper please contact us.

admin@heatherscamp.org
Lyndsey Metzen: (316) 737-2661

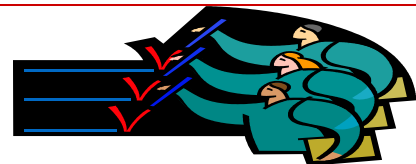
FOR KIDS.
ANCHORED IN LOVE.

LEADS PROGRAM

Looking for adventure? Check out a new non-profit emerging on the Western Slope of Colorado, San Juan LEADS Serves. LEADS (Leadership, Education, Adventure, Development and Service) serves youth, veterans, and athletes with adaptive needs. This year, as a part of the LEADS pilot programs, we are offering several opportunities to schools and educators including small group presentations to blind youth, class/ school presentations, and community presentations. Would you like one of our blind athletes to speak to a group of your students? Part of the broader LEADS mission and vision is serving the community. Are you a professional or soon to be professional working in the field of visual impairment and/or orientation and mobility? Would you like to learn the subtle nuances of how to guide a blind athlete up a mountain peak or through a desert canyon? LEADS can make that happen. LEADS is honored to host several opportunities for professionals and students to practice their skills in an outdoor and adventure context. For more information about trips planned for 2017 or future opportunities, please contact Meghan Crosby or Anne Ryan at www.LEADSserves.org



CHECK IT OUT!



NOMINATE A SCHOOL TO WIN A FITNESS CENTER

The National Foundation of Governor's Fitness Councils wants to reward an elementary or middle school for showing leadership in student fitness. All educators across the state are encouraged to nominate their public or public charter school to receive a \$100,000 Don't Quit! state-of-the-art fitness center.

Applications are due by June 2, 2017 <http://natgovfit.org/2017-nfgfc-nomination-form-colorado/>

For questions, contact: info@natgovfit.org

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND NATIONAL CONVENTION 2017

The National Federation of the Blind National Convention, organized by the National Federation for the Blind will take place on July 10-15, 2017 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, Orlando, FL

For parents needing child care during the convention, the NFB Camp will be available during convention sessions for children from six weeks to twelve years. Child care is staffed by qualified, experienced teachers.

Details and registration can be found at <https://nfb.org/nfb-camp-registration-form>

For more information, go to: <https://nfb.org/convention>



SAVE THE DATE!

Save the date for the 2017 SWAAAC Summer Symposium, taking place at the Adams 12 Conference Center in Thornton, Colorado on Monday, June 12th and Tuesday, June 13th. This two-day conference will feature internationally renowned presenters, local assistive technology experts, and knowledgeable AT vendors.

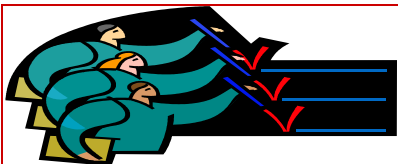
Check it out at: <http://swaaac.com/>

KEEPING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER POSTED ELECTRONICALLY

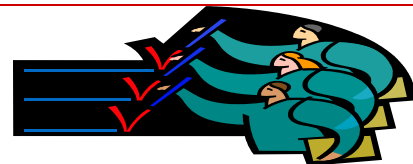
Each edition of the *Keeping in Touch Newsletter* is posted on line at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-Vision_Activities

Since there are so many links in each newsletter, this electronic version will give you direct access to the content tied to each link.



CHECK IT OUT!



PLAY FOR ALL SUMMER CONFERENCE

The STAR Institute is hosting a "Play for All" Conference this summer. Please see the attached agenda and STAR Institute invitation. For any questions regarding the conference please contact the STAR Center directly.

- Who:** Occupational Therapists, COTAs, Physical Therapists, PTAs, School Principals and Assistant Principals, Special Education Teachers, Play Space Designers, and Special Education School Administrators
- What:** Play for ALL! Conference
- When:** Thursday, June 8, 2017
- Time:** 8:00am-5:00pm
- Where:** Denver Marriott Tech Center
4900 S Syracuse St
Denver, Colorado 80237

Link to the conference: <https://www.spdstar.org/basic/play-for-all-conference>

The Importance of Pre-K Work with Our Youngest Students

A task force comprised of esteemed social scientists from Brookings and Duke University has just issued six consensus statements on what is known about the effects of Pre-K. Not surprisingly, but of great importance, the scholars agree that what happens before, during, and after Pre-K all matter:

"Children's early learning trajectories depend on the quality of their learning experiences not only before and during their pre-k year, but also following the pre-k year. Classroom experiences early in elementary school can serve as charging stations for sustaining and amplifying pre-k learning gains. One good bet for powering up later learning is elementary school classrooms that provide individualization and differentiation in instructional content and strategies."

Available electronically are a [Brief Article from Brookings](#), a [16-page Consensus Statement](#), and [106-page Full Report](#).

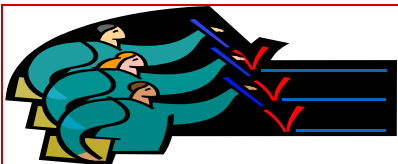
For those of you interested in short- and long-term evaluation studies of state- and district-funded Pre-K, there is an excellent bibliography at the end of the [Full Report](#).



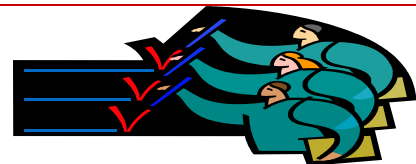
2017 ACB Conference and Convention

The CHARGE for the Blind will have its annual conference and convention in Sparks, Nevada on June 30 - July 7, 2017.

For more information, go to: <http://acb.org/2017convention>



CHECK IT OUT!



Your Input on Survey is Needed!

2016-2017 Assessment of Students who are Blind and Visually Impaired

A survey on “Assessment of Individuals Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired” has been prepared using Survey Monkey. The purpose of this survey is to gather various pieces of test-related information from each state that can be shared on the Accessible Tests Resource Center (ATRC) site. Personnel involved in the assessment of students and clients who are blind and/or visually impaired are asked to complete this survey form. Your input is extremely valuable in helping APH as well as your state and neighboring states to assist students and clients who are blind and visually impaired to be prepared for tests and assessments that are administered to them. Find the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016-2017Assessments>

State assessment teams can get together to complete the survey, or individual members of a state’s assessment team can respond separately. Any questions? Contact Debbie Willis at dwillis@aph.org or call 502/899-2311.

Data will be collected in May and June 2017. The survey results will give APH staff information on what’s happening across the country; and the results will provide similar information to each state on their own state as well as other states of particular interest

The value of the data collected via this survey depends on active participation from personnel involved in assessing students and clients in each state. Thank you, assessment personnel, for your time, interest, and expertise in completing this survey. As Helen Keller stated, “Together, we can do so much!”

Wishing you a happy summer!

Enjoy the well-deserved time off!



just for PARENTS



Center for
Parent Information
& Resources

Center for Parent Information and Resources

This website was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs No. H328R130014. It has links to Resources and Parent TA Centers. Check it out at: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

There is a specific webpage for Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. Go to: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/visualimpairment/>

Tips for Parents

Retrieved from: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/visualimpairment/#parents>

—**Learn** as much as you can about your child's *specific* visual impairment. The more you know, the more you can help yourself and your child.

—Understand that your child is **receiving small bits of information at a time**, not all at once through vision. Help your child explore new things with his or her senses and build up a concept of the “whole.” For example, your child might need to be shown a banana, help you peel it, feel the banana without its skin, have a bite of it, and then help you mash it in her bowl to understand the qualities of bananas and that bananas can be eaten in different ways.

—**Encourage curiosity and explore** new things and places often with your child. Give lots of opportunity to touch and investigate objects, ask questions, and hear explanations of what something is, where it comes from, and so on.

—Learn how to **adapt your home**, given the range and degree of your child's visual impairment. Help your son or daughter explore the house and learn to navigate it safely.

—Encourage your child's **independence** by letting him or her do things, rather than you doing him or her. Teach how to do a chore by using hands-on guidance, give lots of practice opportunities with feedback.

—**Work with the early interventionists or school staff** (depending on your child's age) to build a solid individualized plan of services and supports that address your child's unique developmental and educational needs.

—**Talk to other parents** of children who have visual impairments similar to your child's. They can be a great source of support and insight in the challenges and joys of raising a child with vision problems. Many of the organizations we've listed in the Resources section have state or local chapters you can contact. You can also visit **Parent to Parent**, which specializes in teaming new parents up with veteran parents of children with similar disabilities. P2P is online at: <http://www.p2pusa.org/p2pusa/sitepages/p2p-home.aspx>

—**Keep in touch with the professionals** working with your child. Offer support. Demonstrate any assistive technology your child uses and provide any information teachers will need. Find out how you can augment your child's learning at home.

Technology News



The B2G – A Lot of Options for the Low Price of \$2,495!



National Braille Press developed the B2G for one reason. To provide students and adults the flexibility to tailor the B2G for access to information at the lowest price possible. The B2G can access social media apps, file sharing apps like Dropbox, Docs and Drive, and fun apps like TuneIn Radio, or Echolink that can turn the B2G into a Ham Radio Station. Plus, we have the most comprehensive NBP Calculator app available for STEM applications.

Thanks to the Accessibility team at Apple, the B2G can now Bluetooth with iOS 10.3 and above for your iPhone or iPad. It can also act as a braille terminal for computers. With WiFi, Bluetooth and GPS built in, you can access the internet of things like never before.

To learn more, click on their [B2G Resources page](#) to see FAQs and a link to our YouTube Channel with introductory videos of the B2G. You can also call our customer service staff at 617-266-6160 x 520 or click on the link for more information <http://www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/technology/b2g/b2g-resources.html>.

Jobs Updates

A few quick updates as we go to press...

Congratulations to **Erin Noe**, who just accepted a full time TVI / COMS position with Mesa Valley School District! Erin has been a Vision Tutor Interpreter / Brailist with Jefferson County School District.

Congratulations to **Wendy Unwin Watson** and **Erin Kerr** for their new positions in Aurora Public School District. Wendy will finish the year with Pikes Peak BOCES and Erin is currently a brailist with APS and is in the UNC VI Program.

We are sad say goodbye to **Adrianna Estep**, who will be relocating out of state at the end of this school year. We wish you all the best, Adrianna! We hope there is a time when you will come back to us!

VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2017

Persons in Attendance: Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Julie Hutchinson, Paula Landry, Lori Mattick, Dana McMullen, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, Angela Sims, and Callie Spotted Elk

Absent: Dan Burke and Jamie Lugo

Guests: Dr. Robert King, Dr. Kara Hanson, Linda Corssmit, and Amber Rundle Kahn

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

ASV = A Shared Vision

CAER = CO Chapter of the Association of the Education/Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired

CCB = Colorado Center for the Blind

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

POBC = Parents of Blind Children

TVI = Teacher of students with visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Callie Spotted Elk
- Colorado AER Chapter – Trina Boyd Pratt
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Dana McMullen
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado Parents of Blind Children – Lori Mattick
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Sara Noel
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Dan Burke
- Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- Northern TVI / COMS – Julie Hutchinson



- University of Northern Colorado VI Program – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS – Angela Sims

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are happy to welcome Dana McMullen and Callie Spotted Elk to the Vision Coalition! Dana will be representing the CO DVR and Callie will represent the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

Assignment Updates from Last Meeting

- *Information about identification of students who are gifted and talented / twice exceptional was posted in the January – February 2017 edition per questions about this process.*
- *We are still in need of a DVR listing of providers for the state.*
- *A goal for the fall will be to prepare a video tape of a child being screened in a braille-format DiBELS.*

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR EYE CARE COMMUNITY

Working with our Ophthalmological and Optometric Communities: Discussion with Dr. Kara Hanson and Dr. Robert King. Dr. King is a pediatric ophthalmologist who works closely with Anchor Center for Blind Children. Dr. Kara Hanson is a low vision optometrist. She noted that she really appreciates it when a TVI / COMS come into the eye examination. Linda Corssmit is the Eye Clinic Coordinator at the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

There was a wealth of discussion about the unique roles of eye doctors and TVIs. Dr. King shared that eye doctors very seldom gets feedback. There is not enough communication. It is important to understand that many eye examination appointments may be only be 15 minutes in duration. Any information that can be provided ahead of the examination can be very helpful. For learners on the TVI's caseload, there is a great opportunity to help provide information to the doctor.

We discussed something very simple – a paragraph or simple comments specific to:

- Some history of what is working with the child / what is not working.
- What do you want out of the evaluation – what are key goals of the appointment. The TVI can “lead” the exam in certain areas.
 - ✓ Estimation of Acuity
 - ✓ Positioning of Child / Positioning of Objects
 - ✓ Glasses: Full-Time Near / Distance
 - ✓ Lighting Needs
 - ✓ Low Vision Device Need
 - ✓ Considerations: print enlargement or enhancement, braille

What can we do to have a feedback loop to the doctor about his or her recommendations? What worked and what did not? It was recommended to have a template for 0-3 and 3-21. It was also recommended that we have a standardized form.

What are recommendations for reaching out to establish a communication relationship with an eye doctor? Dr. King noted that it would be helpful to know more about the child and what is needed from the eye exam.

It would be good to reach out to liaisons from certain eye care offices to bring that person into the communication loop. Dr. Hanson thought she could find someone from her faculty. She has also invited a TVI to come meet with the residents.

We also discussed the value of lab notes / report summaries that could be attached to the form to avoid duplication of effort.

Assignment: Meet to draft the standard eye examination report form that could be used for school-age student (Tanni, Nancy, Julia, and Jim).

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our last meeting was on March 9th, hosted by Denver Public Schools. We covered a lot of information! Key Content included:

Trina Boyd Pratt is no longer operating as a coordinator for Foresight.

DPS staff did a wonderful job of formulating a document with a variety of options for field trips to do with students who are visually impaired. Others in attendance added to the list as well.

We had the opportunity to hear from staff members from DVR who are getting the transition services off the ground. We were able to ask questions and give input. This special division will be evolving by getting input from a variety of TVIs, COMS, agencies, and families. It is great to begin forging the possibilities for our teens across Colorado.

Steve Lindauer, Director of A Shared Vision, introduced himself and was present for the whole meeting to learn more about services for the school age population of students with visual impairment.

Items discussed at the March meeting:

There was a brief discussion about eye report forms in general, as well as how to communicate with doctors, including educational recommendations, attending appointments, etc.

A request was made for input again on the Resource Allocation Guidelines for a caseload management. We are trying to get scoring of three types of students – braille, low vision, and additional disabilities through 2 TVIs that know the same three kids for inter-rater reliability. (Thanks for the couple of you who have already shared!) A few TVIs are working on a major revision of this document, so your input is very important. Then, others representing various agencies will review the final draft. Changes that are being discussed include: (a) updating language to 2017; (b) separating O&M to a self-standing RA document ; (c) looking at this document through the lens of the 9 ECC areas; and (d) threading our students with additional disabilities more effectively

The final metro regional meeting will be held May 11th at 3:30 p.m. TVIs in Aurora Public Schools will host. Janet Anderson has arranged for Paul Sandoval to be there. Paul used to work at Beyond Sight as the technology expert and now owns his own consulting and training business. He really knows his stuff and can teach it. He will be talking about iPad apps and the accessibility features on OS. We also plan to set dates for next year. The plan we currently have in place of certain districts hosting is working well. The TVIs now organize the topic(s) and set up guest speakers in addition to the physical space and snacks. The collaboration has been terrific!

Nancy shared a metro-created document that had links of different places that might be good field trip opportunities for students with visual impairments. This list can be expanded across the regions. This information could be posted on the CAER website.

Southern Region (Deb Andrews)

Southern Region has been busy. Diane Fitzkee is working on planning a trip to Skate City for kids in our region. The tentative date is May 1. Contact her for more information. Dfitzkee@d49.org We've had some training at our regional meeting on making Word Documents accessible and are set for round two on April 12. Several TVIs attended a training at CSDB on audio description.

Regional Meeting dates: May 10, 2017

Discussion: *Would it be possible to ask eye doctors to put “consult with district TVIs” regarding school accommodations instead of putting specific accommodations in the eye reports?*

A recent discussion at the southern region was on making word documents accessible. The goal is to teach teachers to understand accessibility needs, but it is really helpful for TVIs to also have this information. Paula shared that Closing the Gap is a great AT resources. One of the featured presentations was on recent apps. There may be some great resources on their website.

There have been concerns that a CVI diagnosis may lead families to believe that the child is automatically eligible as a child with visual impairment, including blindness. As with ocular visual impairment, it is important to determine whether there are true visual impact concerns that require specially designed instruction. It is important to reassure families that services may be reconsidered based on new needs for the child.

There was a good discussion on student data privacy concerning the CIMC registration of students (etc.). There will be a meeting in June to discuss CIMC policy needs and privacy factors will be one of the key discussion areas.



Western Region (Angela Sims)

Mesa School District wants to give a big shout out to their amazing braillist Lesli Tigert. Lesli just completed her braille modules! Congratulations on that major accomplishment! More excitement worth mentioning ... Hayden Roswell competed in the Braille Challenge and once again took first place in her division! She is so excited and just waiting to see if she'll be invited back to nationals. We're all so proud of her and keeping our fingers crossed.

Angela Sims is passing off the baton; Julie King will be taking over as the Western Slope representative for next year. Thank you Julie!

Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

Staff Updates in the North: Liz Wieder (Saint Vrain Valley Schools) has completed her Master's Degree and O&M Practicum – yay, Liz! Greeley Schools (District 6) is looking for a full-time TVI for the 2017-2018 school year and a TVI to provide ESY services this summer. Thompson School District is also looking to hire a half-time TVI.

At our last meeting (1/27/17), Trina Boyd provided our group with a braille cleaning workshop. Each TVI came to the meeting with one especially dirty braille in need of some TLC and Trina showed us disassemble, clean, oil and reassemble each braille; the workshop was incredibly informative and equally fun. Sally Burch filmed the workshop on behalf of CAER and the video should be available on its website soon. The Northern Region TVIs also reviewed and discussed notes from the recent Vision Coalition meeting. The Northern Region agreed that it would be beneficial for all Colorado TVIs to use the same eye medical report templates – one for babies/toddlers and one for K-12 students. TVIs shared that they are beginning to make connections between DVR and their students/families but that the process is still somewhat slow-moving with regard to setting up meetings between counselors and families. The Northern Region is hopeful, however, that the summer programs provided by DVR will help their students to become more familiar with DVR and their purpose in working with students at the transition-age level. At our next meeting, we will be exploring and discussing the Building on Patterns Prekindergarten program and other programs being used with early learners in order to develop a better sense of how our region's TVIs are utilizing time and instruction with younger children with visual impairment, including blindness.

The next Northern Region Meeting will be on April 21, 2017

Discussion:

- *Are any other TVIs receiving eye medical reports in which the eye care professionals are writing/documenting that students should qualify for vision services on the eye medical report itself? Not a recommendation but more like a professional assertion. If so, how do you address this with the families/IEP team when determining eligibility, with the issue being that this is somewhat of a pre-determination of eligibility from an eye doctor? Response: This is will be a focus on the VC to help to develop a sample eye doctor form.*
- *Some TVIs from the Northern Region are experiencing an increase in amount of students with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) on their caseloads and are feeling somewhat overwhelmed in determining the amount and types of services they should be providing to these students. They are hoping for some discussion on what the rest of the state is doing in reference to the amount and types of services TVIs are providing to students with CVI (i.e. are you providing direct instruction in literacy to address the unique instructional needs that students with CVI require or are you providing indirect instruction to their Sped teachers to address these needs? Do you feel that the teachers are listening to and utilizing TVI recommendations or do you get the sense that you are expected to provide academic instruction to these students? Are you using a CVI severity rating scale? Generally, what do your services look like for this demographic?). Response: This may well be a topic for the fall conference. It sounds like there is a continued need for strategies to work with children with CVI.*

Colorado AER (Trina Boyd Pratt)

CAER has been active with trainings and fundraisers since the last Vision Coalition meeting.

February 4th was our first JAWS training. We had 22 people come. February 11th, we had a fundraiser at the Spero Winery. We made \$1,000 with donations included (Barb Galgano brought in many donations from her friends). March 14th, the McDonald's at Parker and Quincy held a McTeacher's fundraising night from 4-7pm in which CAER received a percentage of the money made. Jeannie Lei was the coordinator for this activity. We made \$250. On April 8th, we held the second JAWS training that dealt with Google documents. Showe Yang has been the instructor for the JAWS trainings and graciously has given her time on the Saturday trainings. Found out that NVDA works well with Google documents instead of JAWS.

Upcoming events

CCB and CAER will co-sponsor the Winter Outdoor Adventure (aka Snowshoe Trip) to the YMCA at Estes Par, which will be held on April 21st to the 23rd. Currently, there are 20 kids coming. Some parents and students were not aware of the activity. We will have team building activities, hiking, swimming, roller skating, mini-golf, fishing, archery, arts and crafts, knot-tying class, fire starting class, fire ring with s'mores (if weather is bad, a scavenger hunt). In the past, kids have loved all the activities and time to socialize with each other. Thanks to Kaitlin Lombardi for coordinating this annual activity (and Elaine Karns for starting it).

May 5th will be the Annual CAER Banquet. It will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind. We will present our annual awards.

April 29th EyeCycle event will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind area. Thanks to Barb Galgano for organizing this activity. (*Editors' Note: check out the CAER Award information on page 15.*)

Welcome to EyeCycle Colorado! Visually impaired or blind tandem cycling is what makes our group fun!



Captains and Stokers make up an EyeCycle team. Our group consists of sighted “captains” (front seat of the tandem bike) and we team them up with a blind or visually impaired “stoker” (back seat of the tandem bike).

Thanks to Heather Solberg for coordinating the CAER Newsletter every month.

In August 2017, CAER is planning on holding another JAWS training and Basic skills. These trainings are open to anyone who would like to learn these skills. Please share with parents, students, co-workers, administrators, IT people within your work settings.

Remember to look on the website for opportunities to apply for Mini Grants and ACVREP reimbursement as members of CAER! Find information daily at <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

Contact Information: Please contact CAER Board Members by email if you have any questions or suggestions for the board. The board can be emailed at caerboard@gmail.com Website: <http://co.aerbvi.org/>

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Dana McMullen)

DVR is now providing Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services) to students with visual impairments. A survey was sent out to all TVIs, thank you for your feedback.

- Eligible for Pre-ETS – Transition age (15-21) who are enrolled in school.
- YP Case – Student who have a visual impairment, are enrolled in school, but has not established an employment goal.

Denver Metro DVR teachers are currently working on a series of Pre-ETS 2-3 day workshops that will take place over the summer including career exploration/counseling, college preparation, and work readiness skills which include all the areas of Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) including Daily Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Adaptive Communications and Adaptive Technology (see brochure).

BLVS teachers now have two supervisors. Karen Klein supervises the center program and Sue Williams supervises the field teachers. Laverne Dell supervises counselors. DVR hired a new trainer for the Business Enterprise Program, Ellen Karre.

Discussion: What is the main barrier that keeps your students from attending summer programs? How can DVR/PAT staff be more involved in the transition process?

Dana brought packets of information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

Our first few months as A Shared Vision have been a whirlwind of meetings, trainings and travel, but best of all: lots of quality time spent with children and families! This past month we provided over 120 consults and home visits in both local and rural communities. As our numbers continue to grow, we have hired our 4th TSVI! Caitlin Bleything, our former intern, has officially joined the ASV team and we couldn't be more thrilled! Caitlin joins TVI staff members Paula Landry, Stefanie Kirkwood, and Sarah Bickford Vallese. We have recently completed the Telehealth Training through CDHS and will begin providing Early Intervention vision services throughout the state via telepractice. Through the use of audio/video conferencing, our teachers will be able to participate in home visits with families and other service providers in “real-time.” We are very excited about telepractice and the increased access to services it provides to families.

Our team is gearing up for our 2nd outreach trip which will be in early May. We will be making stops throughout the north and south western areas of the state (including Montrose, Durango, Cortez, Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, Vail) in addition to the north east (Sterling). We would welcome the opportunity to connect with TSVIs in these areas to discuss how we can best partner in supporting our youngest children with visual impairment.

Discussion: Tanni shared an update of EIVI meetings. One need will be to help work with transitions from Part C to Part B. There is a lot of information being addressed on how best to serve the state specific to home visits to families of infants and toddlers with visual impairment, including deaf-blindness.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Callie Spotted Elk)

Program: We are looking forward to celebrating with the graduating preschool class of 2017 on June 8th. The majority of these graduates have been with Anchor for 3-5 years and we feel honored to be part of this monumental accomplishment with them. Our Infant and Toddler programs will also celebrate the end of their year on June 7th.

Dr. Bow, an international fellow from CHC serving as a rehabilitation physician from Thailand, has been spending time in different parts of our program learning from our staff about the needs and services for families of children with visual impairments. When she returns to her hospital in Thailand she is going to initiate a program that serves children with visual impairments.

Karen Jamison, one of our TSVIs, is currently enrolled in the CVI endorsement training through Perkins and anticipates successful completion by the end of the school year. Together with Dr. King and Dr. Steele, we are initiating a more concentrated effort on CVI assessments and interventions for the children we serve.

Community Outreach: On March 15th Deb Curry, our family service manager, facilitated an IEP training with Parents Reaching Out for several of our families. The room was full where lots of great discussions were had throughout and after the training. Our goals are to provide ongoing support to help educate and prepare our families for the IEP process with the public school system.

Hiring: We are currently accepting applications for TSVIs and Early Childhood Special Educators.

Colorado Chapter of Parents of Blind Children (Lori Mattick)

We attempted to host a phone conference meeting on Feb. 26th in order to move forward with re-establishing an active organization. In attendance were Lori Mattick, Brent Batron, Scott LeBarre (NFB president), and Julie Hunter.

We discussed ways to try to get this organization up and running. We will keep you posted if there are any upcoming events! If anyone knows of any parent (young or old) that may be interested in connecting with other parents, please give them my contact information. I will always have time and the desire to connect with parents!

Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs (Dan Burke)

We hosted our first employment and career fair on March 10, with nearly 150 in attendance. Thanks to all those who came and brought students! Thanks also to those who completed the follow-up survey – we got some very useful feedback for next year.

We've hosted two CAER-sponsored training sessions on Google products with JAWS or the NVDA screen reader, both taught by Showe Yang, one of our Technology Instructors. We very much appreciate this opportunity to partner with CAER and its members.

Applications for our various summer programs are out and, actually, already coming in. Go to www.cocenter.org to find out more and download an application form.

We've been asked to partner on a couple of STEM projects, and we'll publish details and dates as soon as things are set.

Here's what's coming for sure:

- April 21 – 23 – Winter Outdoor Adventures at Estes Park. This is a great time for kids to spend time with friends that they do not get to see all the time as well as make new ones. There will also be lots of good blind adult role models as well as teachers of blind students. This will be a lot of FUN!

- May 13 – FAST Program will be all about cane travel. 10 – 2 and lunch is included.
- June 5 – 23 – Confidence Camp
- June 9 – August 4 – Earn & Learn High School Program
- June 9 – August 4 – Summer for Success College Prep Program
- June 12 – June 30 – Initiation to Independence Middle School Program



Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Book orders for next year are due May 1st. Call us if you need an order form.

Returning Books: please pack your braille books carefully and securely seal your box, adhering the book return label to the outside of the box so they can be read when stacked 6 boxes high.

Do NOT clean out your closet and mail us junk.

Our 2 vacant positions were posted Friday evening 4/7/17 and will close in one week, on Friday 4/14/17. (We are optimistic this means new staff should be hired by the start of the school year.)

CSDB – School for the Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Student News: Two high school students were selected to attend the Close Up Trip in Washington DC, April 23rd-28th. These students were selected based off a submitted essay and also for demonstrating leadership skills in our school on a regular basis. Quincie Mattick a 10th grade student, is traveling to Germany with the Paralympic Judo Team February 22nd-28th. We wish Quincie the best of luck in her matches abroad. Go Team USA. 10th-12th grade students attended a Career and College Fair at the Colorado Center for the Blind on March 10th.

School Events: PSAT and SAT prep workshops are helping prepare 10th and 11th graders for their upcoming examinations during Friday workshop time. Two former students, Leilee Sage and Nina Kamekona, who now work at the Independence Center are meeting with 11th and 12th graders to present mini seminars. The first session was entitled “Knowing Yourself” and this week the session is entitled, “How does your visual impairment impact you?”

Special Activities: February 12th-15th, six secondary students skied at Vail Mountain with Foresight Ski Guides. We will be sending a different group of seven secondary students to Crested Butte for more skiing adventures, February 22nd-26th. March 20th-21st 2 elementary students skied at Vail with the Foresight Ski Program. Our students were included with a group from Cherry Creek Elementary School and enjoyed the opportunity to learn and socialize with blind students from another schools/districts. Upper elementary and supported secondary students participated in a special performance by the Philharmonic Orchestra at the Pikes Peak Center called, “The Orchestra Rocks.” Students brought their recorders and clarinets along to the performance so when called upon, they played along with the orchestra to songs they had practiced in music class ahead of time. WE Fit Wellness visited Brown 1 South to speak with our students about the 2017 National Fitness Challenge. Three of our dorm students are signed up to participate in this challenge which includes tracking steps on a Fitbit, tracking water intake, and logging sleep patterns. The students are ready to go and excited the application is accessible through their iPads and cell phones. We hosted our second audio description training on Saturday, February 25th. March 6th-10th = READ across America activities were planned in both schools for our elementary students. Students listened to daily stories and participated in daily theme events. Friday students from both schools attended a shared story with Jamie Lugo voicing and Tera Wilkins signing. Freshman Job Shadow day occurred on Monday May 20th. Students from the School for the Blind prepared for their trip to iHeartRadio (106.3 FM) by writing commercials for CSDB. While visiting the radio station, they recorded the commercials, which were scheduled to air the morning of March 21st. March 3rd – At the invitation of Julie Novak, the Youth Orchestra performed in the CSDB gym. The performance was attended by students from both schools. Running Club began the first week of April for elementary students in the School for the Blind. The Bulldog Band was invited to Denver on March 22nd to play for the Legislature. This was a great honor for the band and our school.

The School for the Blind welcomed 3 new students in March, bringing total enrollment to 57 students.

CSDB Outreach Services (Sara Noel)

The *Visual Impairment Including Blindness 101* workshop, held at CSDB on March 23, addressed interventions for instruction of children who have visual impairment including blindness. Thirty-five attendees, from fifteen school districts/BOCES, listened to three presenters as well as networked through a lunchtime job-alike Q&A session. Attendees included general education teachers, para-professionals, school counselors and psychologists, special education teachers, occupational and physical therapists, orientation and mobility teachers, and a brailist. The activities included discussion on instructional strategies and accommodations, hands-on simulations, while blindfolded, and new resources available.

At the Sensory Safari, held on April 8 and led by staff from the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, fifteen families spent a Saturday morning being introduced to the smells, sounds and "slop" of some of the most distinctive animals. This CSDB Outreach event provided a special day for children, who are blind and visually impaired or deafblind. The families visited the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo learning stations and talked with zoo and wildlife staff. Zoo docents brought lizards, turtles, and an armadillo for a hands-on experience. The families also fed the giraffes and then touched animal pelts/bones. Many families talked with each other about transitioning to preschool, and available resources. After the guided tour, families spent the rest of the day exploring the zoo grounds.

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is hosting the 26th Annual Council of Schools for the Blind Outreach Forum. This forum is an opportunity to learn from each other and share our widely varying models for helping provide short term programs, in-service training, personnel prep support, family support, ECC information and resources, and more. *PLEASE NOTE:* This conference is only open to Outreach staff. May 3-6, 2017 – Colorado Springs, CO.

iAdvocate 2, June 25-29 at CSDB. Summer Enrichment in the Expanded Core Curriculum for students who are visually impaired in grades 6-10. Please contact Donna Keale for further information and to register your students: 719-330-7387, dkeale@csdb.org

University of Northern Colorado – VI Program (Paula Conroy)

It has been a busy time at UNC. There will be one Colorado-based student graduating this May from the VI Program.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in the fourth year of our five-year cycle. The grant is funded from 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.

Project Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera coordinate the grant project. We are thrilled to share that we now have three Technical Assistance Specialists. Callie Spotted Elk has been hired to do specific work on the topic of interveners. She will be building networking opportunities for our existing interveners and information materials on the role of the interveners. Callie joins Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists Kathryn Daniels and Wendy Stoltman with the project. Kathryn and Wendy provide onsite child-specific consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Shannon Cannizzaro is our Family Specialist. To request technical assistance during the school year and across the summer months, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us

Annual Deaf-Blind Census: Thanks to all the people who completed the census forms. We have identified 140 infants, toddlers, children, and youth with combined hearing and vision loss in Colorado. This is a slight increase from our last December 1 Count. A child can be registered at any time in the school year. If you work with a learner with both vision and hearing loss, please be sure to work with Tanni to register the child. All learners identified as having combined vision and hearing loss are eligible for free technical assistance.

Annual Report: Tanni and Gina are currently preparing our annual report for the reporting period of March 1, 2016 through February 28, 2016. It has been fun to go through the data to show the number of technical assistance events and the quality and efficacy of the trainings. (*Editor's note: the report was submitted three weeks early and contained a wealth of data on the TA work from this past reporting period.*)

Summer Institute: The 2017 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness has been planned! The dates are June 20-12, 2017. The featured speakers will be Dr. Julie Durando and Ira Padhye. Their topic will be making It Routine. Key objectives will be learning to: (a) complete a Literacy Skills Checklist for students with sensory loss and multiple disabilities; (b) identify three building blocks of literacy; (c) describe two strategies for developing joint attention and meaningful interaction; (d) list three reasons to connect literacy related experiences into the daily routines; (e) identify two strategies for adding literacy skills to established routines, and (f) identify two strategies to select objects to represent. Registration will close shortly as we have a full-up!

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

Annual CDE O&M Seminar: This year, the annual CDE O&M Seminar will have three days of content. The first day will be a make-up day for the full-day session that was cancelled due to winter conditions during last year's seminar. The featured speakers will be Diane Brauner, Ed Summers, and Chris Tabb. This year's topics will be O&M strategies specific to: (a) teaching auditory perception, (b) teaching the use of technology specific to IOS products, (c) evaluating and developing auditory skills, and (d) teaching location literacy. The training will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind on May 4-6, 2017. CCB is located at 2233 West Sheppard Avenue, Littleton, CO. Registration is closed with 65 participants! (*Editor's Note: The O&M Seminar was a great success—see page 3 for details.*)

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The Low Vision Evaluation Clinics have occurred for the Western, Southern, Northern, and Metro regions. Thank you to all who have participated! We are grateful for our returning LVE Clinic returning team of Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman, and Debbie Haberkorn. Tanni recently sent out a request for this year's TVI participants in this school year's clinics to send a response to four evaluation questions. So far over 15 have responded with some great results data.

Recruitment and Retention: We have a significant number of openings. There is a full time opening in Denver, along with a fall maternity substitute position. Greeley Schools has a full time position. Poudre has 2 full time positions. Thompson School District has a half time position. Pikes Peak has a full time position. CSDB Outreach has a full time position. Anchor Center for Blind Children also has TVI openings. If people are aware of any upcoming vacancies in their administrative units, they are strongly encouraged to be in touch with Tanni for proactive advertising and recruitment efforts. (*Editors' Note: Since this time, Cherry Creek now has a full time opening.*)

Listservs: The CDE ESSU maintains three 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 brailists. The third is specific to Colorado TVIs and brailists. It is important to remind all users of these listservs that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listservs, please be in touch with Tanni.

Parent Database: We currently have about 215 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,100 families across the state. The database is used only to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate addresses AND families of children with visual impairment, including blindness that are currently enrolled in our Colorado early intervention or public school programs. As children graduate or families move out of state, we need to ensure that we remove those families from the database. You can do this by leaving a message on Tanni's voice mail at 303 866-6681. As new families come into the system, please help Tanni to be proactive with getting families registered on the database. This is a voluntary process – so families need to complete and sign their registration forms.



DISCUSSION ITEMS

Proposed CDE-Funded Projects for School Year 2017-18

CDE ESSU

- ◇ State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment (possible topics were discussed)
- ◇ Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ◇ CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar
- ◇ Braille Competency Testing and Mentor Support
- ◇ Keeping in Touch Newsletter
- ◇ Vision Coalition
- ◇ Regional Technology Support



CSDB – Blindness

- ◇ CIMC
- ◇ Low Vision Clinics

Braille Competency in UEB

All CDE braille testing materials have been converted to the Unified English Braille (UEB) Code. There are no longer any braille competency materials in English Braille American Edition (EBAE). The materials used in the 2016 CDE Braille Refresher Course will be converted to practice test materials for test candidates of the CO Braille Competency Test. It is anticipated that these items will be posted on the CDE webpage specific to braille testing by May 31, 2017. As such, these materials will be fully retired for their use with Colorado TVIs who had demonstrated braille competency with the English Braille American Edition Code.

For those individuals who are in process of completing their 15 braille renewal modules, all remaining modules must be completed in UEB format. For all TVIs who will demonstrate their initial braille competency with the CDE Braille Competency Test in UEB format will be required to take all 15 renewal modules in UEB. As noted, there are no braille competency materials remaining in EBAE format.

Assignment: Tanni and Paula Conroy will talk more about how best to support UEB for math instruction.

Caseload Formula

Amber joined us to talk about the need how best to update our Resource Allocation tool. Amber has been working with Nancy Cozart and Julie Hutchinson. She has completed a literature review on this topic to learn about what has happened in other states. Goals are to: (a) update language; (b) taking out O&M; (c) embedded ECC needs, and (d) determining how best to include students with additional disabilities. There may also be a place to identify the needs from a brailist. This group will continue their work on the document!

Vision Coalition Reps for the 207-18 School year

Everyone will be returning with the exception of Angela Sims. Julie King will represent the Western Region TVIs and COMSs. We thank Angela for her many years of service on the Vision Coalition!

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 21st, 2017 - location to be determined

Forever in Gratitude, We Say Thanks and Farewell

Dian Megarry's Retirement

This history was provided by Jan Megarry.

Dian Megarry will retire this June from the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. Dian received an Honorary Mention for the Teacher of the Year given by POSB in 1999. Dian P. Megarry grew and performed duties and responsibilities as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired since 1991 as a graduate student in one of the best VI training programs developed in the state of Utah. Dian finished the program with a high recommendation from Helen Brymer, head of the program and one of the gurus in the vision field. Dian was hired at CSDB in August 1993 to teach elementary students in the School for the Blind. Dian recognized the need for students who are blind and visually impaired to learn and perform as close to their sighted peers as possible. During his first year, he found that the academic curriculum was limited and began the process of creating an academic program that would help elementary students learn to read and write braille, learn and use math, connect with the world around them, and learn to become independent, along with many other necessary skills. Dian didn't just teach in the classroom but he helped plan and involve students in activities and field trips that would help them connect and understand the world around them.



Dian has never done anything half-way. His motto has always been 'If anything is worth doing, it is worth doing well' and gives it everything he has to give, including, and not limited to, time, energy, and self. During his years at CSDB, Dian has served on numerous committees such as: curriculum development (reading, mathematics, writing, social studies, extended core curriculum, daily living skills, social skills, science, transition), School Wide Plan, has created ideas to help with students be successful with graphic organizers and VENN diagrams, evaluated tactile graphics for use in testing and learning materials, and willingly served on interview panels, as well as other committees he felt would help benefit blind and visually impaired students. Dian also assisted in the development and teaching of self-defense for the blind and visually impaired during summer camps, ACB, Independent Center, and others. He promoted physical activity and physical exploration to aid the intellectual development of blind and visually impaired students. Summers were often spent helping students from around the state with summer experiences at CSDB. These included camping, visiting mining camps, rock climbing, exposure to various sports, and teaching transition skills, daily living skills, job skills, braille literacy, and Nemeth mathematics. He also courageously faced the cold to take students snowshoeing during the winter months. Dian loved the idea of being active and enjoying the energy of youth and collaboration with other Teachers of the Visually Impaired.

Dian has always been active in the field of vision, not only working with children but working with adults. He was an active mentor for students who are blind and visually impaired, served on the role model team as a Community Mentor, and was a member of NFB, AFB, and AER, as well as assisting where he was able. Dian attended the Getting In Touch with Literacy Conference in Vancouver, Canada in 2003 then assisted with planning, implementing and presenting at the Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference in Denver in 2005. Dian was eager to help new and upcoming teachers in the field. He shared his knowledge and skills serving as a mentor to three student teachers and four new teachers. Dian even encouraged two of his best paraprofessionals to go to school and become teachers of the visually impaired and have their own classroom of blind and visually impaired children. Dian took training to help at risk students become successful in school by becoming trained and certified in each of the Lindamood-Bell Programs (Sensory-Cognitive Instruction: A Reformation in Teaching Reading, Intensive Reading Demonstration, Implementation-Staff Perspective, Implementation of Lindamood-Bell, Lindamood-Bell Phoneme Sequencing (LIPS), Lindamood-Bell On Cloud Nine for mathematics).

Forever in Gratitude, We Say Thanks and Farewell

Dian participated in the 1999 National Federation of the Blind Braille Readers are Leaders program with his students. He became an instructor for the Intel Teach to the Future Program at CSDB, became a certified tester for the Woodcock-Johnson III Intelligence Test, and maintained his braille proficiency for the state of Colorado. We must agree that Dian believes in being active and keeping up with information, as well as participating in trainings that would benefit students who are blind and visually impaired.

Dian took a little time off but was unable to stay away for long and returned to CSDB to, once again, put students first by teaching braille, and elementary literacy and science focusing on academic success. Albeit a short time since his return, it is now time for Dian to spend time with me, his wife, while we are still able to camp, travel, explore, and learn together. Dian has been a huge asset in the field of vision during all the time and energy he has invested and will be missed. I assure you that Dian may not physically be in the classroom but his mind and his heart will always be with students and those in the profession.

Full Circle

Rebecca Warnell's Retirement



As a young girl growing up on the East Coast, Rebecca read a book about guide dogs and instantly became interested in them and in blindness. Her passion ignited, she completed a research project about people who are blind when she was in the 6th grade. She also visited a school for the blind and started to teach herself the braille code. All this at the tender age of 12! This curiosity brought her to Penn State where she graduated with an elementary degree in Elementary Education. She fell in love with the Nittany Lions and was a member of the Penn State Equestrian Team. From there, she moved to CO so that she could attend UNC and learn about visual impairment (and ski J).

After graduating from UNC, Rebecca took a long term substitute position in the Aurora Public Schools as a TVI for Brenda Shepard. Then she went on to teach in the Vision Resource rooms at Johnson Elementary and then at Kunsmiller Middle School in Denver Public Schools. As the circle continued, she went back East and was an Orientation and Mobility instructor at the Westchester Lighthouse for the Blind. She missed Colorado so much that she decided to come back and then she worked as a TVI in Aurora again. She opted to try her hand at other teaching positions and taught 5th grade for a while at Sixth Avenue Elementary and then 8th grade social studies for 15 years at Columbia Middle School. She loved making history come alive for her students! She also decided to go back to school and get her administrative license and was a Dean of Students at Quest for 2 years.

As the circle closes, Rebecca returned to being a Teacher Certified in Visual Impairment in APS. She is a determined, knowledgeable, "tell it like it is" teacher who works hard to offer students with blindness/ visual impairment quality education. We will all miss her dearly as she advances onto retirement. Maybe her next adventure will involve guide dogs :)

Thanks to the APS staff who put together this tribute for Rebecca!

Forever in Gratitude, We Say Thanks and Farewell

Shelley' Moat's Retirement



Shelley Moats has been working as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist at the Douglas County School District for 21 years. For the past 11 years, she has been the Team Lead for the department in addition to carrying her own caseload of students. Shelley's tireless effort to increase the knowledge base of all she interacts with is astounding. She was instrumental in establishing the Douglas County Special Education Advisory Committee for district parents. Shelley has participated in statewide policy groups to develop standards with regards to state and national assessments and goal writing. According to her co-workers, Shelley is 100% the most positive, dedicated, and committed individual that keeps her passions alive.

According to Donna Trujillo, her supervisor who just nominated Shelley for the DCSD Apple Award: *“One can only imagine the numbers of lives she has impacted over the course of her career. People often say that everyone is replaceable and that the work we do is often forgotten. In Shelley's case this does not fit. Shelley is someone who is leaving behind a legacy of dedication and commitment and the student's she has worked with are out in the world achieving things they never thought they would. Next time you see someone who is visually impaired crossing an intersection, navigating a grocery store, or sitting in Starbucks in the DCSD region, think of Shelley, as she has likely had a hand in their success in one way or another.”*

For all of these reasons and more, we would like to honor Shelley Moats for her many years of dedication and service. Happy retirement Shelley! May you enjoy your travels and grandchildren!

Thanks to the Douglas County School District team for putting together this tribute to Shelley.

Marci Reid's Retirement

After 40 plus years as a TVI and hearing specialist with the last 17 plus serving the Denver Public Schools, **Marci Reid** will be retiring at the end of the school year.

We thank Marci for her many years of contribution! Marci has always been the first person to show up for training over the years—her commitment to learning new content and skills has been very impressive and very much appreciated. We wish Marcia all the best in the golden years ahead!



colorado connections

- ◆ Baby and Big Sister Congrats to the family of **Jamie and Alex Lugo**—they welcomed big sister Naomi Reina on March 13th. She weighed in 5 pounds and 13 ounces and was 19 and 3/4 inches long.
- ◆ Congratulations to **William Reynolds** of Westminster Schools and **Tesia Nasehi** and **Karissa Johnson** of CSDB for earning their CDE Certificates of Braille Competency! Congratulations also to **David Gooldy, Karin Hensel, Taryn Galow, Lesli Tigert, Shannon Martinez,** and **Jeannie Lei** for earning their CDE Renewal Certificates of Braille Competency. More congrats to **Janis Mountford** and **Carol Jordan** for earning their UEB (update) Certificate of Competency. Hats off to **Meghan Crosby, Donice Fennimore, David Gooldy, Lisa Hebbert, Karin Hensel, Taryn Galow, Shannon Martinez, Brandon Mapes, Lesli Tigert,** and **Morgan Turner** for earning braille renewal hours. THANKS TO GREAT OUR GREAT CDE BRAILLE COMPETENCY COMMITTEE TEAM—**Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier,** and **Julie Wetzstein.**
- ◆ A big thank you for the following individuals who served on the 2016-17 Vision Coalition: **Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Dan Burke, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, LaVerne Dell, Julie Hutchinson, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Lori Mattick, Dana McCullen, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Trina Boyd Pratt, Angela Sims,** and **Callie Spotted Elk.**
- ◆ Report on Snow Shoe Fun! The 12th annual Winter Outdoor Adventure, at the YMCA of the Rockies, was another hit this year. The weekend was filled with activities including hiking, fire building, s'more making, knot tying, roller skating, swimming, leather craft, team building activities, and archery. Archery was a fan favorite this year! A good time was had by all! Thank you to the TVI planners and chaperones; **Barb Galgano, Kaitlin Lombardi, Trina Boyd-Pratt, Deb Andrews,** and **Mike Planskar.** A HUGE thanks to **Colorado Center for the Blind** and **Brent Batron,** for making this trip possible; and the adult chaperones from CCB, including **Steve Patton, David Nietfeld, Mo Melton, Showe Yang,** and **Ceci Martinez.**
- ◆ We are so proud of **Jim Olson,** who is a member of the APH Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC), which just met in Louisville, KY. The purpose of the Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) is to: (a) Provide oversight and leadership in the planning, evaluation, and delivery of services.; (b) Identify new services needed.; (c) Assist the promotion of APH products through services; and (d) Advise APH on general operations and communications as they relate to the accountability of services provided. Jim continues to serve us well!
- ◆ A huge shout out to our amazing CAER Board of Directors for all of their hard work this year. The Board considers of **Brent Batron** (President), **David Gooldy** (Past President), **Trina Boyd Pratt** (Treasurer), **Nancy Cozart** (Secretary), and Board members Sally Burch, **Ann Cunningham, Heather Solberg, Michelle Robinson,** and **Amber Rundle Kahn.** It is exciting to see the representation of personnel across agencies, school districts, and age groups. Thanks to each of you for all you do to support kids, families, and professionals.

THANKS TO EACH OF YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT SCHOOL YEAR—YOU ARE THE WIND BENEATH MY WINGS! SO PROUD OF OUR COLORADO TALENT! ENJOY THE SUMMER.

State of Colorado Department of Education

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25-43E-3401

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