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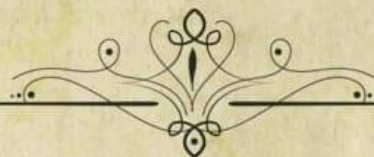
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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
March -April 2023



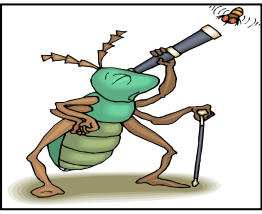
May we raise children
Who love the unloved things -
The dandelion, the worms, & spiderlings.
Children who sense that the rose needs the thorn,
And run into rainswept days
The same way they turn towards the sun...
And when they're grown
And someone has to speak for those
Who have no voice
May they draw upon that wilder bond,
Those days of tending tender things
And be the ones.



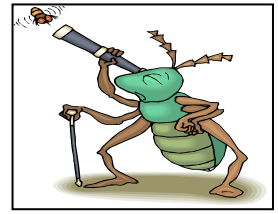
Nicolette Sowder

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LOW VISION NEWS



Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

The Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic for the Denver Metro area, the final LVE Clinic for the year, was held February 22-24, 2023 at Anchor Center for Blind Children. Sixteen students received low vision evaluations. Fifteen parents and 12 TVIs from 7 administrative units (AUs) attended the 90-minute evaluations. The clinic team would like to thank the Anchor Center for Blind Children for hosting the event. AUs included: Adams County District 14, Adams-Arapahoe County District 28J, Arapahoe County District 5, Arapahoe County District 6, Crown Pointe Academy, Denver County District 1, and Douglas County. Thank you to the following TVIs who accompanied their students: **Kaitlin Lombardi, Wendy Unwin-Watson, Barb Galgano, Jeannie Lei, Rachel Sullivan, Nancy Cozart, Melinda Russell, Morgan Harrington, Karin Hensel, Brenna Moser, Dana Downey, and Maggie Tutt.** A huge thank you to **Karin Hensel** for being the Site Coordinator.

This was the last LVE Clinic for Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, and Debbie Haberkorn. Three amazing contributors to the success of these clinics over the years. A proper thank you to these individuals will be made in the May KIT edition.

My “Why”

By Roberta Curtis

Editor Notes: Roberta is the Program Support Assistant on the Access, Learning, and Literacy Team. In this role, she supports me with all BVI activities and the CO Deaf-Blind Project. Roberta and I have worked closely together for many years on the annual contract for Dr. Tom Theune to bring him on board as an CDE ESSU vendor. Roberta processes the quarterly invoices that come from CSDB per our Interagency Agreement to fund Debbie’s time with the clinic and to purchase the low vision devices to fuel the inventory that is used with the clinics as the team travels to Grand Junction, Fort Collins, Denver, and Colorado Springs. I hope you will read Roberta’s WHY below – this is very special and highlights how all our work together contributes to good things happening for families, kids, and service providers. It sets the stage of how one person doing paperwork within the CDE assists the activities that support kids, families, and teachers. She sent this email to her four Program Support colleague after she returned from bringing her child to the most recent Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic. I have taken out the name of her child.

Hi team—I had an opportunity to witness the importance of the work we do. I took my child to a Low Vision Evaluation Clinic with Dr. Theune last week. This wasn’t the first time my child has been to this clinic, but this was the first time I got to see in person the work I have done to ensure these clinics happen. The length of work that goes into the Personally Identifiable Information agreement within CDE to working with your consultant in the creation of the SOW. To get all the required signatures and the, sometimes, lengthy process of working with Purchasing to get the final paperwork.

I got to watch the conversation Dr. Theune had with my child about their visual diagnosis to Wendy Stoltman working with my child on the computer and other high- and low-tech devices and how to use them. Karin Hensel sat with me and showed me how she interacts with the parents. Karin was patient and ready to answer any questions. Debbie Haberkorn may have been quiet, but she handled all the paperwork and followed up with clarifying questions. I wish I could have taken a picture to capture the energy.

I must tell you, seeing the care that went into communication with my child reminds me why I do what I do. The same care goes for other parents and students.

I hope all of you get a chance to see the impact of the work you are doing. It is priceless.

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Project Purpose and Staff: The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant) is in the final year of its federally-funded five-year grant cycle. We started the new grant award on October 15, 2018, and it will be completed on October 14, 2023. The grant project has been housed within the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for over 30 years. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and US territory, is to identify children and youth with deaf-blindness and provide free technical assistance (TA) to the identified children, their families, and service providers.



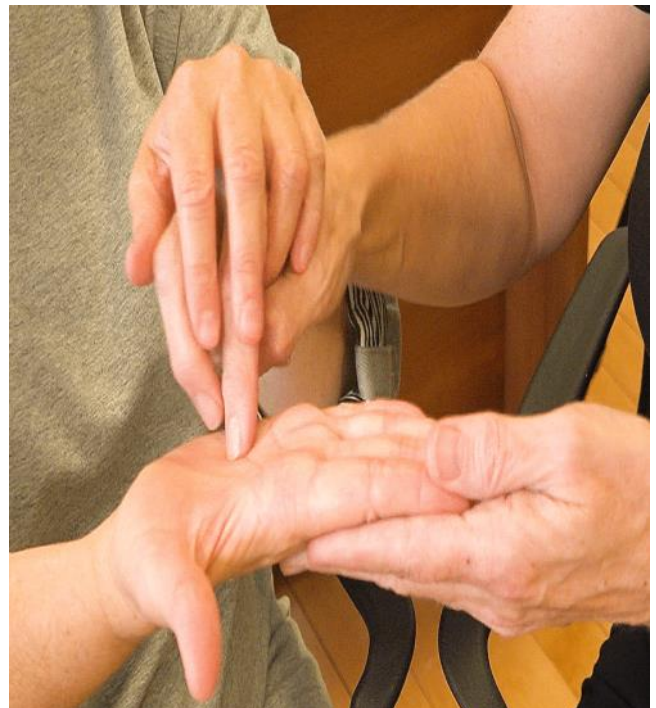
The team worked tirelessly to prepare a new grant proposal that was submitted several days ahead of the March 13th deadline. If awarded, the new cycle will begin October 1, 2023.

Key project activities are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events, and provide tiered and customized technical assistance. The current project has three broad goals: (1) timely identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support, and 4) intervener recruitment and training / support. The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have five CDE employees (**Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, Jessica Meisel, and Wendy Stoltman**) and one specialized Family Specialist contractor (**Cindy Colwell**) on board with the project.

The final training event for this grant cycle will be the June 27-28, 2023 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness! We will be closing the registration link soon and sending out confirmation emails to those accepted into the training, which will focus on the Communication Matrix: Assessment to Practice.

Also, check out our website at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>

Child Find Count of Colorado Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness The December 1, 2022 Child Count Forms was sent out to key contact personnel in early December to identify all learners, ages birth through 21 years with combined vision and hearing loss. Your time, and attention to detail is most appreciated! Children on the Child Count are eligible for free technical assistance from the project. As you identify new with deaf-blindness, please reach out to Tanni Anthony (anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or Gina Herrera (herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. We count on you! Child Count updates forms are due back NOW! Thank you!!



We hope you will join us to learn more about how to identify and support children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss project.

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the CO Deaf-Blind Project) offers intervener training and mentoring to provide support throughout the intervener certification process.

This program provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who would like to receive intervener training, and to obtain it free of charge if they are working with a student who is registered on the CO Deaf-Blind Child Count. The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working with students who are deafblind and leads to National Intervener Certification. For more information, please contact Jessica Meisel at Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us



Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness

Technical assistance is the term that field uses to mean “support” or “information” for individuals providing support to children and youth (ages 0-21) with deafblindness. This might be families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, school personnel, and agencies providing services to such children and youth.

Technical assistance may also include:

- personalized on-site consultation with family members / early intervention agency staff / school staff
- in-service training customized to the team’s needs
- workshops sponsored by the project across the state
- family support service, such as Parent Retreats, coffee hours, family outings etc.

We are here to support you! **To request a school or home visit**, complete the Technical Assistance Request Form located [here: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst)

Return the form by fax to 303-866-3808 or email Gina Herrera at Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us. You can also call Gina at 303-866-6605. Or fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance located at <https://forms.gle/FAWsSvo2itikrtLR6>

Usher Syndrome Identification

A new NCDB product on Usher syndrome, authored by Nancy O’Donnell, Outreach Director at the Usher Syndrome Coalition, is now available on the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) website.

“[Identification of Usher Syndrome: Information and Resources](#)” offers a wealth of information on the types and characteristics of Usher, how it is diagnosed, and the importance of timely referral. It includes fact sheets with information specifically designed for educators, healthcare professionals, and families.

Resource on Deaf-Blindness for School Administrators



School administrators play an important role in supporting the identification and referral of children who are deaf-blind. **Identification of Children with Deaf-Blindness: Resources for School Administrators**, by Deborah A. Ziegler, provides information to help school administrators increase their knowledge of deaf-blindness and strategies they can use to ensure that children with deaf-blindness are identified, referred, and receive appropriate services.



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

CAER is Selling Stickers!

(Photo of stickers)

The stickers are for sale: 1 for \$3.00 and 3 for \$7.00. They will be available at the upcoming CDE O&M Seminar and also available from your local CAER Board member! For more details, reach out to Nancy Cozart at ncozart@lps.k12.co.us.



Sticker #1: CAER logo: Capital C in print (AER) in yellow at the base. In the center of the C is a mountain range

Sticker #2: I read Braille what's your superpower? White print on a blue background with contracted Braille underneath each word. Outlined in yellow

Sticker #3: Vertical rectangle vocational rehabilitation therapist sticker with a word collage: low vision, cooking, work, independence, employment, family, phone skills, access, technology, travel, rehabilitation, white cane, self-confidence, job, VRT (background is black with white, blue, orange, and green print)

Sticker #4: Horizontal rectangle teacher of the visually impaired sticker with word collage: Nemeth, transitive, low vision, white cane, blind, braille, ECC, tactile, technology, abacus, Perkins brailler, independence, sighted guide, UEB, accommodate, TVI (background is white with a red outline, red, black, and yellow print)

Sticker #5: Circle certified orientation and mobility instructor sticker with word collage: directions, white cane, empower, sighted guide, outside, navigation, travel, blind, bus, inside, independence, orientation, maps, landmarks, low vision, COMS (black background with yellow, blue, and green print).

A-B-C's, 1-2-3's for Learners with Low Vision

REMINDER: Have you registered for AER's latest webinar?

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 7:00 PM ET

Title: A-B-C's, 1-2-3's for Learners with Low Vision

Description: Are you a teacher of students with visual impairments looking for ways to make their learning experience more engaging? Join this webinar "A-B-C's, 1-2-3's for Learners with Low Vision" from HumanWare to learn how to accommodate, support, and include students with low vision to ensure their academic success across all educational subject areas using the Connect 12 portable magnifier. Presented by: HumanWare

Click here to Register: <https://www.aerelearning.org/courses/52037>

Learning Objectives: Compare three customizable user interfaces; Discuss three support tools for reading, writing, and mathematics; Identify three supports for remote learning and inclusion.

2023 AER Scholarship

Just a quick reminder to you that AER has announced that we are now accepting applications for the 2023 AER Scholarship. Please help us spread the word! This scholarship opportunity is open to **graduate-level students studying for a career in the field of Teacher of the Visually Impaired or Orientation & Mobility.**

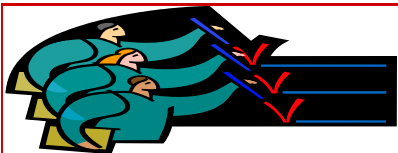
Three scholarships will be offered in the amount of \$2,000 each. **The deadline for submitting the application is May 15, 2023** and the three recipients will be announced on our website in the summer of 2023.

Please refer to the application for the specific eligibility criteria and for further details. Application and all accompanying documents should be submitted together.

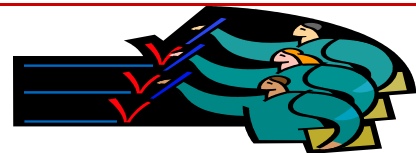
The deadline to submit the application is **May 15, 2023.**

Visit our [website for more information](#) or click here to view the [scholarship application](#).





CHECK IT OUT!



Hi everyone,

I am a TVI/COMS in Adams 12 and I am hoping you can help me out. I am completing my final research for my PhD in Special Education and need your help with recruiting families to participate. I am looking at resiliency within families of children with visual impairment.

On your caseload do you have a family of a child with low vision who meets the following criteria:

- They have fully accepted their child's visual impairment and embrace it
- They are active and positive participants in the IEP process
- They are involved in what you do with their child in a positive way
- They hold their child to the same standards as other children in their family
- They give them the same opportunities as other children in their family
- They work to connect their child with other people with visual impairments

If so, I would love to invite them to be a part of my research study. I am hoping to gain more information on the risk factors that are involved for families of children with visual impairments and the protective factors that allow them to overcome that adversity to move forward in a positive direction. For this study, I am targeting families of children with low vision. The criteria I would like to use is something between: an acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye, a field restriction of 20 degrees or less, or a physical condition of the visual system, which cannot be medically corrected on one end of the continuum and dual readers on the other. If braille is their primary literacy mode, they would not work for this study. Families would be asked to complete a short questionnaire, 1-2 interviews, and short journal responses. Please respond individually to me to let me know if you have a family who would match this criterion and I will send you the link to the initial survey. Thank you!

Debbie Mendoza (mend7547@bears.unco.edu)

The Blind Coloradan Blog—Kevan Worley does a Blind Coloradoan Blog that has great stories and information. It is a blog of reflection, contemplation, and celebration. He would love for you to take time to read it and share it with students and families. Check it out at: <https://theblindcoloradan.blogspot.com/>.

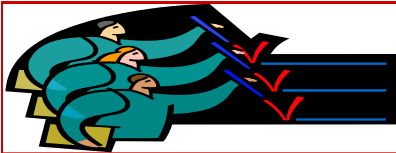
2023 Hall of Fame Nominations Now Being Accepted—Who should be the next inductees into the Hall of Fame for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field? Learn more about the easy electronic [nomination process](#) and submit a nominee to join the 52 inductees today. The nomination process will close on **April 30, 2023**.



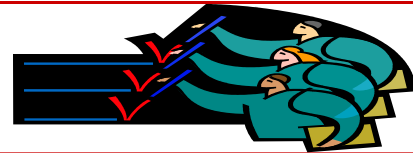
[The Blind Poet, Dave Steele](#)

Listen in to the chat with Dave Steele about his life with vision loss and his work as a poet exploring the topic of blindness. From drawing on that strength of having gone through tough times to describing aspects of living with low vision and blindness.

Check out the entire podcast with Dave Steele at the [Hadley Presents: A Conversation with the Experts](#). A downloadable transcript is available on their site.



CHECK IT OUT!



Southeast Deafblind Webinars

1:30 – 3:00 Central Time/2:30 – 4:00 Eastern Time
ASL Interpreting, Captioning & Spanish Interpreting provided



The Arkansas Project
CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS
and additional disabilities
1401 West Capitol Ave. Suite 450 Little Rock, AR 72201
(501)682-4221

April 20, 2023

Presenter: Professor Rachel Pilling



Title: Making it Easier to See: Supporting Children with Complex Needs and Vision problems

Bio: Rachel has been a consultant pediatric ophthalmologist at BTHFT since 2010 and was appointed as Professor of Special Needs and Learning Disability Eye Care by the University of Bradford in 2020. She has published widely on aspects of eye care for learning disability in particular special school visual assessment, cataract surgery and diabetic retinal screening. In 2016 she was awarded the Astbury Award in recognition of collaboration in eye care for the Bradford Special School and Learning Disability Visual Assessment. Rachel has a passion for ‘making it easier’ – easier to understand CVI, easier to diagnose, easier to offer support to children and families, and most of all, making it easier to see. **Website:** <https://makeiteasiertosee.co.uk/>

Click here to register: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NhAqNdXSPWBIBVGnsWpmg

May 18, 2023

Presenter: Dr. Gordon Dutton Title: Understanding CVI in Children, and Helping Those Affected:
With a Focus on Dorsal Stream Sparing and Dysfunction



Bio: Professor Gordon Dutton is a Pediatric Ophthalmologist who worked for over 20 years at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow. He is now Emeritus Professor of Visual Science at Glasgow Caledonian University. His current special interests include medical education and cerebral visual impairment (CVI) in both children and adults. Professor Dutton has lectured as a Keynote Speaker on a range of ophthalmic topics in relation to pediatric ophthalmology, both nationally and internationally. He has contributed to over 200 refereed publications, and to four textbooks concerning cerebral visual impairment in children, as well as to two information websites for teachers and parents, namely ‘The CVI Society’ and ‘CVI Scotland’.

Summary: The aim of this presentation is to help us understand how the two pathways in the brain, the dorsal and ventral streams, can be disordered by injury or dysfunction and the nature of the outcomes. First a case in which the occipital lobes and ventral stream have been lost will be described. This will show how the dorsal stream works. Next, cases in which the dorsal stream is disordered but the ventral stream is intact will be shown to illustrate the origin and nature of the resulting experience. Dorsal stream dysfunction is the commonest visual disorder in those with cerebral visual impairments. The aim of this talk will be to explain what the dorsal stream does, and to highlight what it is like to live with dorsal stream dysfunction, so that we can all come to better understand and optimally help those affected.

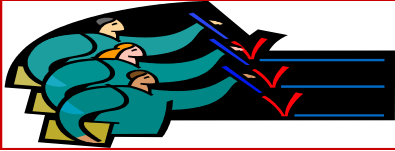
Documents:

1. [Identifying and characterizing cerebral visual impairment in children: a review.](#)
2. [Perceptual visual dysfunction in children.](#)

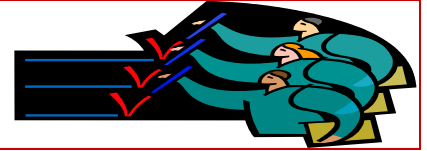


Click here to register: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_79MZBZuRQ3KG5sG5WsU1fw





CHECK IT OUT!



CCB Youth Services Summer Programs

The Colorado Center for the Blind's Youth Services will offer three summer programs. All will be held at the Colorado Center for the Blind, which is located at 2233 W. Shepperd Avenue in Littleton, CO. For questions about any of the programs, please be in touch with Chaz Davis at (303) 778-1130, x212, or email at cdavis@cocenter.org

Confidence Camp/BELL Academy

Dates: June 12 - 23, 2023 **Ages:** 5 to 10 years **Location:** Colorado Center for the Blind

Program Description: This two-week day program will be filled with learning, challenge, and fun. Your child will meet competent blind role models who will work with the kids on cooking, cleaning, Braille, independent travel, and technology. The kids will learn how to take the bus and use the light rail. They'll have fun swimming, rock climbing, making a tactile art piece and going on exciting field trips.

To apply, please navigate to: <https://nfb.org/programs-services/education/nfb-bell-academy/nfb-bell-colorado>

Coding/Robotics Camp

Dates: June 13-16, 2023 **Ages:** 13-17 years **Location:** Colorado Center for the Blind

Program Description: Okay, what if you had a robot that could do your chores, things like take out the trash or do the dishes. The Colorado Center for the Blind, in partnership with cyber.org, is offering a coding/robotics program for kids in the Metro Denver area this summer! There will be three days of coding and robotics taught by the cyber.org experts, daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and tailored for blind and low vision students. The final half-day will be a kayaking trip to nearby Chatfield Reservoir! We'll need some physical activity after all that brain work.

No Limits to Learning Camp

Dates: July 9 to August 4, 2023 **Ages:** 14 to 21 **Location:** Colorado Center for the Blind

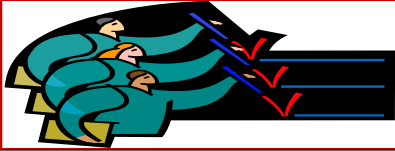
Program Description: This four-week residential program will change your life. You will live in an apartment with other students and a staff member. Learn about the world of work and meet blind people who work in all kinds of jobs. Challenge yourself through our program by participating in rock climbing, goal ball, boating, and much more. Build your core skills in Braille, technology, home management and cane travel. Expand your skill set in STEM fields with hands-on experiments using accessible, nonvisual tools and strategies. College coming up soon? Learn what it takes to be successful, including how to navigate the unfamiliar new landscape of higher education. You will learn that being blind will not limit you from pursuing your dreams.

Admission Requirements for All Programs

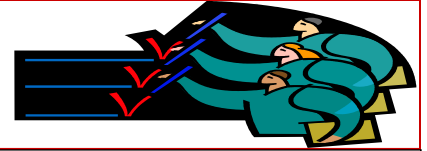
- Must be legally blind
- Interested in learning non-visual techniques
- Age 14 to 21
- Possess stamina to handle a full day of class and activities
- Independent with self-care skills

Admission Process: First, complete the online application by May 2, 2023: <https://cocenter.org/summer-application/>

Typically, vocational rehabilitation agencies are able to fund our program as part of their Pre-ETS programs. We can assist you with the approval process if necessary. Discuss your interest in our program with your rehabilitation counselor if you have one. The staff at the Colorado Center for the Blind will interview each applicant.



CHECK IT OUT!



OSEP-Funded TA Centers

OSERS' technical assistance centers are ready to address your questions regarding the IDEA and best practices and alternate models for providing special education and related services, including through distance instruction. The National Center for Systemic Improvement is the primary source for technical assistance resources during the COVID-19 national emergency for IDEA Part B programs. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center is the primary source for IDEA Part C programs. For questions pertaining to Part C of IDEA, States should contact their [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center State Contact](#). For Part B of IDEA, states should contact the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#).

** Early Childhood

The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) is providing State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs with the [latest information](#) on funding and guidance.



** NCSI

The [National Center for Systemic Improvement's](#) website has a wealth of information to support educators and outcomes for children with disabilities.



** Proficient Communicators Who Are Deaf-Blind

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) has compiled and organized [Resources for Providing Technical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It covers OSEP guidance, distance TA, resources for families and service providers, and online learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The page is being regularly updated with input from state deaf-blind projects and national partners.



** Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

[TIES Center](#) has launched a distance-learning series that provides a framework for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to get through these new transitions, engage fully in academics online, and interact with their teachers and peers, a critical component of well-being. TIES Center is regularly adding resources to the distance learning series that offer the following recommendations to support the inclusion and engagement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current resources include:

- [TIES Distance Learning #1: Morning Meetings](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #2: A Collaborative Start to Behavioral Supports](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #3: Effective Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Within the Distance Learning Environment: What in the World Does That Look Like?](#)



** Accessible Materials and Technologies

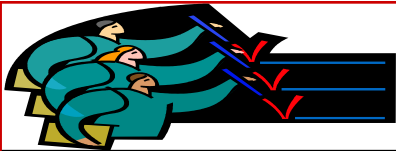
The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.



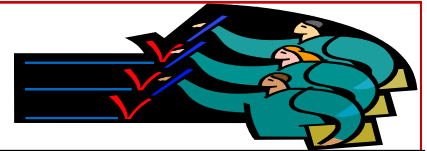
** eBooks

[Book share](#) provides accessible eBooks for eligible individuals with barriers to reading. The resources linked here will help students with dyslexia, blindness/visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and other print reading barriers to continue learning during school closures.





CHECK IT OUT!



APH Abacus Bee

Created in China in 1200 C.E., the abacus is an ancient tool used by generations of mathematicians and students before the invention of the calculator. Despite its age, the abacus remains one of the most effective tools for teaching math basics accessibly to students who are blind or low vision. In 2022, APH kicked off their first Abacus Bee competition for students in celebration of this foundational tool.

Get Your Bee On

Interested in having your student participate in the next Abacus Bee? The American Printing House for the Blind plans to hold preliminary rounds in the fall of 2023, between August and December, with Finals taking place March 21-24, 2024! Reach out to our Outreach Team at outreach@aph.org to learn how your region can participate or let Jim Olson know and he can find out for us!

2023 National Convention Registration Open

The National Federation of the Blind National Convention is the largest gathering of blind people in the world. It is the premier event for training, support, and information for the blind community. It also serves as a governing body, democratically electing our [leadership](#) and establishing each year's organizational priorities. Join us for the largest event of the year, July 1 through July 6. Our empowering convention is fast-paced, fascinating, and fun. [Register now for #NFB23.](#)



Anchor Center's [Impact Report](#) pays tribute to their journey over the past four decades and celebrates the special community of supporters (you!) without whom none of our accomplishments would be possible. Thanks to YOU, Anchor Center has grown to become a nationally recognized leader in providing high-quality early intervention, special education, developmental assessment and therapy, and supportive family engagement and coaching for children during their most formative years of development: birth to age five.

Anchor Center has developing a national reputation for its groundbreaking research and early assessment and treatment of Cerebral / Cortical Visual Impairment, considered the leading cause of pediatric visual impairment in the developed world.

The Anchor Center crew hopes you will enjoy reading about their history, champions and work transforming the lives of those touched by blindness.

Thank you for joining the Anchor Center for Blind Children in this great voyage in providing families HOPE and preparing young children with visual impairment for a life full of joy and possibility! ***You are the reason we "See Life Differently".***

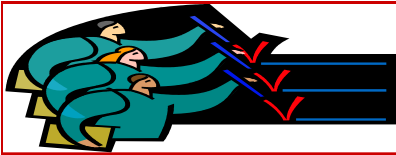
MTSS—Get in “the Know!”

How much do you know about CO MTSS? Are you involved in the process in your school, district or BOCES? Wish you knew a little bit more?

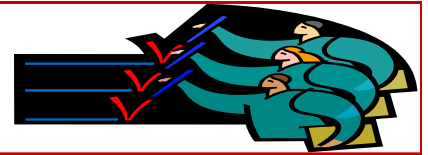
Here are some great resources for you to learn more about MTSS, get some free PD and learn a little more about the Reading, Writing and Communicating Standards that many of our IEP goals address.

MTSS online academy: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/trainings>

RWC resources page: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/supporting-students-with-disabilities>



CHECK IT OUT!



VIRTUAL CATE 2023

Conference for Assistive Technology and Education

June 5-6

Registration is now open!



Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE)
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND COMPUTING
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



The 2023 Virtual Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE) will be held on June 5 - 6, 2023. Learn more by visiting the [CATE Webpage](#). Registration and schedule are coming soon!

Take a sneak peek at our workshops and breakout sessions:

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Positioning to Optimize Function and Determining and Optimizing Access
- Make Stuff and Love People, Part 2: New Tools, Materials and Techniques
- Mission Possible: Robots Provide Inclusive School Experiences for Homebound Students
- AAC and Gestalt Language Processing
- Building Capacity through Effective Professional Development
- Teaching the Swipe Generation: Carefully Curating Apps for Early Childhood
- AAC Partner Training: Systematic Instruction for School Teams
- The Next Generation of Environment Control and Home Automation
- Prepared not Scared: Equipping AAC User to Discuss Personal and Body Safety
- A Different Model for AAC Evaluation
- Thinking Outside the Classroom: AAC & Social Skills in the Post-Secondary Environment
- Gadget & Gizmos to Support Students with Learning Challenges
- and more...

Add the event to your calendar:

[Google Calendar](#) | [ICS](#)

Resources and Materials

Paths to Technology Website and Blogs

Paths to Technology is designed to assist educators and families in learning and staying current on ever-changing technology for students with visual impairments and blindness. Wherever you are in your technology journey, you will find help with our library of resources designed to define and disseminate best practices, training, and support for teachers of the visually impaired, braille transcribers, other education professionals, parents, and students themselves. Check it out: <https://www.perkins.org/paths-to-technology/>

TEACH Colorado Resource Guides—Do you know a future educator? Over the past year, TEACH Colorado has expanded its list of comprehensive guides to help aspiring educators explore licensure options, prepare for content exams, find financial aid and more. Be sure to share these resources with future educators in your community!

Visit [TEACH Colorado's Reports and How-To Guides webpage](#) for more information.

The UDL Journey Guide

This digital travel companion guides district leaders and teams through four phases of implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL), with connections to state and national support along the way. Check it out at: <https://udl.ccee-ca.org/>

Accessibility tip Tuesday from our SWAAAC friends! Whether you are creating content in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, PDF, Canvas, or other Web applications, Accessibility by Design, has an electronic content accessibility rubric that can help you step up your electronic accessibility game. This resource makes it easier to find information that you need quickly so you can build accessibility into your content from the start! Check out the Electronic Accessibility Rubric here: <https://tinyurl.com/yckwrx8>



Part C to B Transition Webinar Available

Transition Nuts and Bolts

Roles of Local Early Intervention Programs (Part C) and Part B Special Education Administrative Units for Transition from Part C to Part B of IDEA



The recording from the Webinar "Transition Nuts and Bolts" as well as the accompanying Resources Handout is now posted in the [Transitions Section](#) of the Child Find Resources page on the CDE website.

Stories from the Classroom: Using a Telenovela to Explain the Special Education Process

In this video, Kathleen Donovan, Parent Resource Center Coordinator for Arlington Public Schools and parent, Gina Argotti discuss how they used the platform of a Spanish language soap opera, or telenovela, to explain and demystify the special education process for Spanish speaking families. This series was designed to support the engagement of families in the special education process, share information, encourage advocacy skills, and foster collaborative home-school partnerships which positively impact student success. The telenovela, *La Sopa de la Abuela (Grandma's Soup)*, was created by a design team that included family and staff members. In addition to the Stories from the Classroom Video, you can view the all five episodes and supporting materials on the [Arlington Public Schools Parent Resource Center webpage](#).

Use the quick guide to help facilitate reflection and discussion using this video. The quick guide can be used if you have about 15 minutes to view the video and facilitate a discussion. Check it out at: <https://promotingprogress.org/resources/stories-classroom-telenovela-special-education-process>

Resources and Materials

What's New in AccessWorld

Released each month, the American Foundation for the Blind's *AccessWorld* is a leading online magazine for news and reviews on accessible technology.

In the [most recent issue](#), Janet Ingbar's article covers the Apple Fitness Plus app since fitness plays such a key part in managing vision loss.

Visit the AFB website to access current and past articles from [JVIB](#) and [AccessWorld](#).



Launch into STEM: Upcoming Event for Blind & Low-Vision Students

Hands-on activities. Accessible graphics. Blind role models.

The National Federation of the Blind works to improve opportunities for blind students in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). NFB STEM2U brings nonvisual accessible lessons and activities to blind youth. Students of varying ages across the country will learn fundamental nonvisual tools and techniques they can use to pursue further education and careers.

This program is great for youth in grades three through twelve* who:

- Are interested in experiments and investigations
- Could benefit from fun programs specific to blind students
- Need hands-on, nonvisual skills training opportunities

**Some programs may accept students in younger grades.*

The theme this year is space! In collaboration with the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) join us for a day of excitement as we build and launch rockets, create a moon base, learn about the impact of craters, and make a parachute.

STEM can be accessible; let us show you how!

To learn more and to register visit:

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/education/nfb-stem2u>





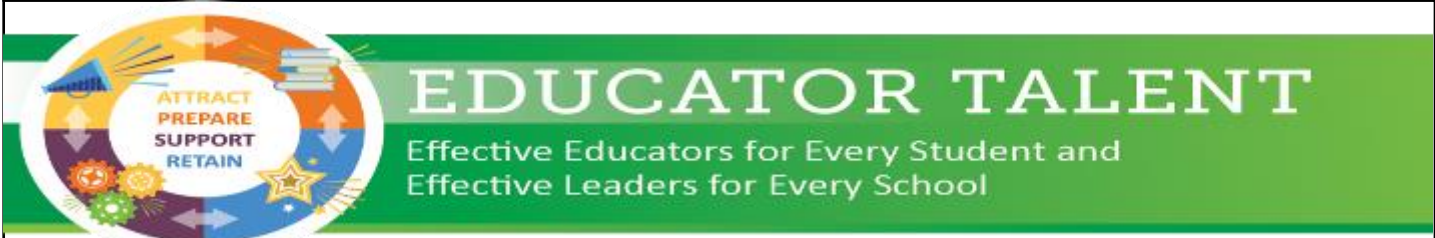
Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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 Colorado Department of Education. ✓ 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 350 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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Educator Talent Website

Check out the Educator Talent website! Their mission is to develop, deploy, and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.

Check it out at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent>.



High School College Entrance Suite of Assessments

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to go out to bid every 5 years for the procurement of the college entrance suite of exams. On March 13th, the CDE posted an award for the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade college entrance suite of exams to be administered to public school students in Colorado starting in spring 2024. The College Board's [adaptive computer-based SAT and PSAT assessments](#) have been recommended by a primarily field-based selection committee through an open, fair and competitive procurement process.

The adaptive computer-based SAT and PSAT exams are expected to be given in Colorado each spring starting in spring 2024 through spring 2028, replacing the current paper-based exams that will be administered for the last time this spring. An additional, optional writing exam will be available for 11th graders who self-select to participate. The tests are expected to be administered on Windows and Mac devices, iPads, and [school-managed](#) Chromebooks. Test administration dates for the spring 2024 PSAT and SAT school day exams will be determined through the contract negotiation process.

The selection committee recommended the computer-based SAT and PSAT exams in part because College Board's proposed exams – particularly at grades 9 and 10 – had somewhat stronger alignment to the high school Colorado Academic Standards, a statutory requirement. In addition, the committee considered the College Board's preparation and reporting systems more useful to students, as they provide greater access to free, high quality practice resources and connect students to resources and activities designed to help identify postsecondary college and career options. Lastly, because the College Board proposal offers these advantages at a significantly lower cost than the Pearson/ACT proposal, the committee found that College Board's proposal was more advantageous to the state.

The selection will become official after the conclusion of the procurement process, which includes a waiting period of 10 business days. College Board has posted information regarding their computer-based assessments that your staff may find useful:

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Digital SAT® Sample Questions and Answer Explanations](#)

[Assessment Framework for the Digital SAT® Suite](#)

[The Digital SAT® Suite of Assessments Specifications Overview](#)

More information on Colorado's spring 2024 administration of the new computer-based PSAT and SAT exams will become available by September after the official award and contract negotiations have been completed.





During its March 9 meeting, the State Board of Education selected McPherson & Jacobson, LLC, to support the process of selecting the next commissioner. [For more information about the search for a new Education Commissioner visit the Commissioner Search webpage.](#)

Assessment

[Timelines for Spring 2023 Colorado state assessment windows are available on the Assessment webpage.](#)

CDE has a [communications toolkit](#) to help communicate about the importance of participation in statewide assessments, including the Colorado Measures of Academic Success tests and the PSAT and SAT. The toolkit contains drop-in letters, fact sheets for parents and students and links to help answer frequently asked questions. Materials are also available in Spanish.

Teaching and Learning

[The third part of the Three-part COMTSS Learner-Centered Leadership Series is available.](#)

During the March 2023 meeting, the State Board of Education [adopted revisions](#) to the school readiness description. CDE will use additional feedback received to support further implementation of school readiness initiatives. For more information, visit the [school readiness webpage](#) or contact Megan Rogers at rogers_m@cde.state.co.us

Standards and Instruction

[CDE staff will begin reviewing academic standards for Computer Science, English Language Development, Physical Education and World Languages content areas for the 2023-24 school year.](#) After the review of national and international benchmarks, the State Board of Education will determine the extent to which the standards should be updated.

Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU)

[The State Board of Education will hear two rulemaking hearings on Wednesday, April 12.](#) One will be on proposed rule changes for the Exceptional Children's Educational Act. The other will be on changes to rules for the Administration of the Protection of Persons from Restraint Act. Public comment is open and written comments or suggestions to the rules can be emailed to state.board@cde.state.co.us by Wednesday, April 5.

[Additional information on these rulemaking hearings, including a current version of the proposed rule changes, can be found on the Special Education Directors' Corner webpage.](#)

Teacher Retention Focus Groups: We Want to Hear From Teachers!

Are you a current or former Colorado teacher willing to share what motivated you to become a teacher and what drives you to continue to teach or why you left the profession?

As part of efforts to improve teacher retention, CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education have partnered with the Regional Educational Laboratory, or REL Central, to conduct virtual focus groups in spring 2023 to learn what influenced people's decisions to become a teacher, what encourages them to stay, what prompts them to leave or what caused them to move away from teaching altogether. All teachers are invited, especially our BIPOC educators. Feel free to forward this invitation to those interested.

[Complete this brief form to express interest in participation.](#)

Questions? Contact Carolyn Haug at haug_c@cde.state.co.us.

Educator Recruitment and Retention—Know Someone Who Would Be an Incredible ECE Teacher?

TEACH Colorado has been hard at work expanding its [free resources to support universal preschool](#) and to broaden the funnel of aspiring early childhood educators. These future world-changers have access to a growing [suite of resources](#), including a new early childhood educator guide to simplify information about qualification pathways, \$50 career stipends, and advising in both English and Spanish from early childhood career experts.

Contact Elizabeth Cordova at ecordova@teachcolorado.org for more information.



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)



Pursuing Equity

NCSI provided a five-session thought leader conversation (TLC) webinar series on *Pursuing Equity at the Intersection of Language, Culture, and Disability* that focused on elevating equity in opportunity and achievement for students with disabilities, or who may have disabilities, and who are English learners? All recorded sessions and associated resources can now be found on their [2022 TLC webpage](#).

Windows and Mirrors: Making Diversity of Part of Every Storytime

All children need diverse books to offer them [windows into the experiences of others](#), and mirrors that reflect their own experiences. Together we will explore how to integrate picture books and music that honor our differences into every story time theme as well as how to evaluate diverse materials that respect different cultures, lifestyles, and “own voices” literature.

Receptive to Race: Normalizing the Discussion of Race with Children in Libraries

Research shows that children notice race at a very young age, and often draw erroneous conclusions if no one speaks to them about it. With a focus on story time, programming, collection development and user services, we will discuss and model [ways librarians can talk about race and racism in age appropriate ways with children](#).

Children’s Books with Characters who Are Blind/ Visually Impaired

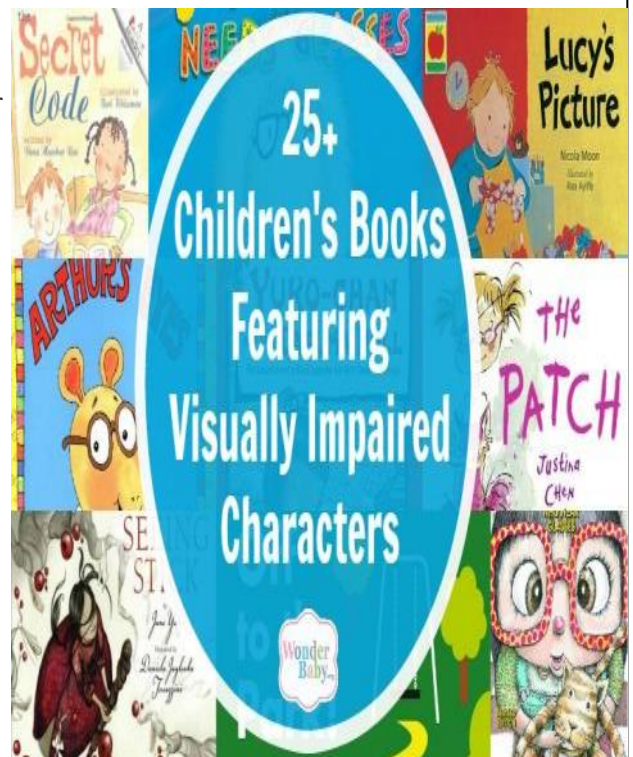
Amber Bombar prepared information about books with characters who are blind/visually impaired that is posted on the Wonderbaby website. There is a collection of 25+ chapter books and young adult novels. There are links to find the books in the US in audio or braille format (where available).

<https://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/childrens-books-featuring-visually-impaired-characters>

Check out the Abby Diamond: The Power of a Fictional Character who is Blind posted on the Pathways to Literacy website:

<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resource/abby-diamond-power-fictional-character-who-blind/>

If you have other books to recommend, let Tanni know so we can share this information across the state. We know the power of reading and how it takes us to new places and also the value of our personal recognition of ourselves in the stories.





COLORADO
Department of Education

2023 Seminar on Orientation and Mobility

at Lowry Conference Center
1061 Akron Way, Denver, CO 80230

Date: May 11-12, 2023

Time: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Registration is limited to Colorado O&M Specialist or O&M Specialist-in-university training who reside in Colorado.



Chris Tabb is an Orientation and Mobility Specialist working to advance the independence of students and clients, provide training opportunities and knowledge exchange for professionals and families, and bring accessible information to the community. He is presently employed at Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI), Outreach Programs, as Statewide Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Chris has worked as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist in California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Texas, providing services in residential programs, as an itinerant, an outreach specialist providing technical assistance, and as a private contractor. He enjoys working with all age groups, including infants and toddlers, school age students, adults, and senior populations. Chris' greatest professional interests are all things Orientation and Mobility, as well as Assistive Technology.

For more information or questions about the seminar contact Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Day One Topic: Orientation & Mobility Smorgasbord: Evaluations, Apps, & Sensory Efficiency

This session will begin the discussion and resources related to evaluations, followed by apps such as Soundscape, Seeing AI, Goodmaps Outdoors, and other technology for travel in the community; and conclude with a focus on sensory efficiency, and how all *three* training topics can come together for helping learners grow in independence.

Day Two Topic: Field Loss: What are We Missing?

This session will provide discussion and hands-on activities for developing greater understanding of the impact of field loss, as well as providing strategies and resources for addressing challenges that are common with loss of visual field, even when acuity is 20/20 or better.

Requirements to Receive Credit

- Attend both days of training
- Write an application paper.

Fifteen (15) CDE contact hours and One (1) UNC grad semester hour will be offered



Questions regarding registration, please contact Roberta Curtis, curtis_r@cde.state.co.us

Registration is open until April 27, 2023




Calendar of Events

2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023

It is April—it you have not ordered your braille texts for the 23-24 school year, please do it NOW!

- April 12** **APH Webinar: Stand Up and Speak Up**—7:00 to 8:00 p.m. EST
Registration:
https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GGzfHWXPTdSFjUeOwjY_IQ#/registration
- April 12** **APH Webinar: Employment Connections: Disclosing Disability**—7:00 to 8:00 p.m. EST
Registration: https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5OuguC4xQm-l8tDLaxaY-A#/registration
- April 19** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Dyslexia and Visual Impairment
Register: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/1959b4c9d59a4914896bfce0ac5f9bfb>
- May 5** **First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)** from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
- May 11-12** **CDE Orientation and Mobility Seminar**—Lowry Conference Center
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 17** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Assessment of Students with BVI
Register: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/1959b4c9d59a4914896bfce0ac5f9bfb>
- June 3** **Retirement Party for Dr. Tom Theune**—Colorado Springs
- June 5—6** **Conference for AT and Education (CATE)**—Denver
Contact: www.swaaac.org
- June 12-17** **Camp Abilities Four Corners 2023** - Cameron, Arizona
Contact: campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com
- June 12-23** **Confidence Camp/BELL Academy** - Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Chaz Davis at (303) 778-1130, x212, or email at cdavis@cocenter.org
- June 13-16** **Coding / Robotics Camp** - Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Chaz Davis at (303) 778-1130, x212, or email at cdavis@cocenter.org
- June 13-15** **Western Region Early Intervention Conference (WREIC)** - Cheyenne, WY
Contact: www/wreic.org
- June 27—28** **Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness & SSN**—Adams 12 Conference Center
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- July 1-6** **2023 National Federation of the Blind Convention** - Houston, Texas
Contact: nfb@nfb.org



Calendar of Events

2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023

- July 9—August 4** **No Limits to Learning Camp** - Colorado Center for the Blind
Contact: Chaz Davis at (303) 778-1130, x212, or email at cdavis@cocenter.org
- July 24-27** **International Conference on Low Vision**—Denver, CO
Register: <https://www.vision2023denver.com/>
- September 15** **Colorado AT Expo** — SAVE the DATE
- September 20** **Vision Coalition Meeting**—virtual
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- Nov 29 - Dec 2** **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference**— St. Pete’s Beach, FL
Contact: <https://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>

If you have any items to get on the calendar, please be in touch with Tanni so we can keep people in the loop on events locally, statewide, and nationally.

Registration Now Open for Camp Abilities Four Corners 2023



Inviting visually impaired athletes ages 9-17 to attend a **FUN FILLED** week of camp!

When: Monday, **June 12** (arrival 1 PM) to **June 17, 2023** (depart 3 PM)

Possible Activities: swimming, paddle boarding, golf, rock climbing, horsemanship, hiking, basketball, and soccer.

Location: Cameron Trading Post, Cameron, Arizona (1 hour northeast of Flagstaff, AZ)

Cost: \$200 per athlete (payment accepted via check, mail order, Venmo, Pay Pal, or Zelle)

Interested? Fill out the interest form under the Athlete Registration tab at www.campabilitiesfourcorners.org

Need More Information: Email campabilitiesfourcorners@gmail.com



Western Region Early Intervention Conference



June 13-15, 2023

Little America Hotel and Resort
Cheyenne, Wyoming

June 13 - Pre-conference \$75.00

June 14-15 - Conference Registration \$210.00

*Registration rates increase on May 1st

Register at [Eventbrite](#)

The Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC) is designed to support professionals working with children birth to five who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Visually Impaired or Deaf-Blind, and their families.

The WREIC has taken place for over 35 years, making it one of the longest ongoing early intervention conferences in the nation. Speakers and workshops have always focused on the most current research, technology, resources, and practices in our ever-evolving field. Colorado has been a long time partner in the WREIC and several CO agencies are sponsoring speakers or serving as presenters. We hope you will join us at this amazing event!

For more information go to www.wreic.org _____



2023 SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DEAF-BLINDNESS & SIGNIFICANT SUPPORTS NEEDS

No Cost
ACVREP & UNC
credits will be offered

Communication Matrix:
From Assessment to Implementation

JOIN US AT

*Adams 12
Conference Center*

*1500 E. 128th Avenue,
Thornton, CO 80241*



*Dates: June 27-28, 2023
8:30 am - 4:30 pm both days*

Featured Speaker



Megan Mogan is a Deafblind Specialist with the Arizona Deafblind Project. She worked as a Speech-Language Pathologist for 18 years at the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind-Tucson campus and in the Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson. Megan is an instructor for a Perkins eLearning Course on Augmentative and Alternative Communication Strategies and is a Facilitator for Arizona's Deafblind Intervener Online Training. She presents nationally on strategies related to literacy and communication for children and youth at the earliest levels of communication. Megan was the recipient of the Principals of Schools for the Blind 2017 "Outstanding Related Service Provider." She lives in Tucson with her husband and 3 kids, sneaking in a game of ultimate frisbee whenever she can.

Credit

The course will be offered for up to 15 CDE / ACVREP clock hours. One graduate level semester hour will be offered for those participants who attend the two full days and write an application paper. This is a two day training. All participants must attend both full days to receive the clock hour certificate.

REGISTER NOW

Questions regarding registration, please reach out to Roberta Curtis at curtis_r@cde.state.co.us

Participants will need to attend both days of the training. Priority will be given to team working with Colorado children and youth with deaf-blindness.

Registration is limited to Colorado residents.



Content:

When assessing the early communication skills of children and youth who are deaf-blind service providers and families can struggle to find tools outlining what a child can do. The Communication Matrix is an observational tool and behavioral inventory that pinpoints how a child at the earliest levels of communication uses multiple modes to express themselves, with or without speech or sign language. It also provides a road map to target communication skills preceding formal language expression. This workshop will provide participants an overview of administering the Communication Matrix, interpreting its results, and having conversations about data in family-friendly language. Participants will consider connections between early communication targets and the general education curriculum while observing a wide range of accessible daily activities and routines supporting early communication development in the context of trust, responsiveness, and interaction.

Objectives:

- List a variety of communicative behaviors students use to express themselves
- Understand the characteristics and features of the 7 levels of communicative functioning in the Matrix
- Identify the reasons Early Communicators express themselves
- Practice basic administration and scoring of the Communication Matrix
- Develop language around the Educational Needs of students based on Matrix results
- Review examples of how Communication Matrix results can be used to set goals and plan instruction

Who Should Attend:

Colorado IFSP or IEP teams working with children and youth with deaf-blindness and/or significant support needs who do not have an established system of receptive and expressive communication that includes formal symbols / sign language / and/or oral language. Priority will be given to those providers who have a student identified on the CO Deaf-Blind Child Count. All participants must be able to attend both days in full to be accepted into the training.

Lodging

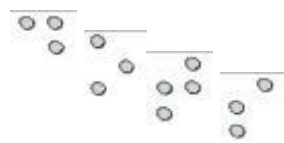
We have limited funds for travel support. The registration form will query the need for travel support based on miles away from the training event. First priority will be participants coming from the farthest distances and who work for a CO school district in the capacity of a Service Providers to children who are deaf-blind. We will gather this information and confirm the availability of funding support for those requesting travel funding.

REGISTER NOW

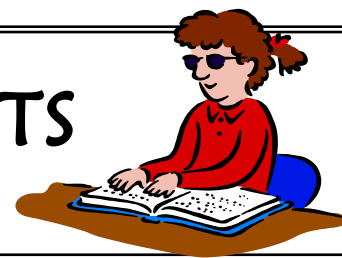
Questions regarding content, please reach out to Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

***PLEASE NOTE: This training is not open to para-educators as the expectation is that the professionals attending the training bring content back to their districts for paraprofessional training.*

Registration will close when the training is capped or no later than May 31, 2023



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial Colorado Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. The CDE Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for their important 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 process 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	Nkcozart@yahoo.com
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us

Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor for initial testing and renewal modules. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for initial testing and renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the greater metro area. If there is a testing need on the western slope, please contact Tanni.

The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs.

For Summer 2023 assistance, please be in touch with Tanni first to secure an available proctor / mentor.

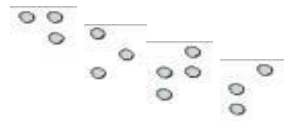
UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or an IEP decision. Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

Braillewriter Repair

- Kirk McCall (303) 875-4527 (phone) and email km2320@msn.com
- Mark Carpenter (719) 634-8720 (phone) and email carpdiane@yahoo.com





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Attend 2023 NFB BELL® Academy: Registration Now Open!

[En español](#)

Enhance Braille and nonvisual skills with us in our summer program for blind and low-vision children. NFB BELL In-Home Edition is a virtual program that will be held July 24 through August 11. In person programs are available in states across the country. Our current list of in-person programs includes:

- Ruston, Louisiana – June 4-10 Clarksville, Tennessee – May 30-June 3
- McCall, Idaho – July 24-29

The NFB BELL Academy—which stands for National Federation of the Blind Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning®—is a nationwide (United States and Puerto Rico) summer program that prepares blind and low-vision children to grow into confident and independent blind people who live the lives they want.

Who Should Attend: Blind and low-vision children, ages four through twelve*, who:

- Could benefit from more Braille exposure over the summer
- Would enjoy connecting with other blind and low-vision children
- Enjoy learning from blind role models

*Please note that some in-person programs may accept blind children who are older than twelve. Review details of each program for more details on eligibility.



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

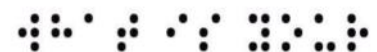
Live the life you want.

Project INSPIRE: Increasing the STEM Potential

Dr. Penny Rosenblum and colleagues share that [Project INSPIRE](#) is in their 4th year of preparing materials to support PK-12th grade braille readers in STEM education. To date they have had more than 375 people take one or more of their five free, on demand, self-paced courses that have focused on Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts. Their sixth course is being piloted this spring. In their final project year which begins in October, they will be offering a UEB Technical course. They want to hear from individuals who want UEB Technical professional development. They have developed a very short survey that is open until April 14. If you are interested in UEB Technical professional development, please take time to [complete our survey](#). Share this opportunity with others who are using UEB Technical to support braille users in STEM.



I READ BRAILLE



WHAT IS YOUR



SUPERPOWER?



APH Tactile Image Library

The American Printing House for the Blind has a free [Tactile Graphic Image Library](#)? Image categories are divided into core and expanded core curriculum areas of art, mathematics, games, orientation and mobility, science, social studies, and more. Registration is required, but it's very easy to sign up.



2023 Summer Program for Blind & Low-Vision Children: Enhance Braille and Nonvisual Skills

Coming soon to Littleton, Colorado!

The NFB BELL Academy—which stands for National Federation of the Blind Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning®—helps blind and low-vision children, ages four through twelve, develop the literacy skills that will empower them to achieve their academic goals and live the lives they want.



Receive Braille instruction and other nonvisual blindness skills through fun, hands-on learning.

Take advantage of this opportunity for your child to **connect with blind role models, students, and more!**

NFB BELL Academy will be offered at the Colorado Center for the Blind, June 12-23. Registration fee \$100. For additional information and to register visit our website at nfb.org/bell.





Programa de verano 2023 para niños ciegos y con baja visión: Mejore las habilidades en braille y no visuales

Próximamente en Littleton, Colorado!

La Academia NFB BELL, que son las siglas de National Federation of the Blind (Federación Nacional de Ciegos) Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning®, ayuda a los niños ciegos y con baja visión, de cuatro a doce años de edad, a desarrollar las habilidades de alfabetización que los capacitarán para lograr sus metas académicas y vivir las vidas que quieren.



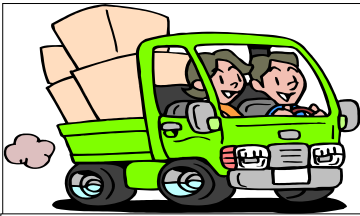
Reciba instrucción en Braille y otras habilidades no visuales a través de un aprendizaje práctico y divertido.

¡Aproveche esta oportunidad para que su hijo se **conecte con modelos a seguir ciegos, estudiantes y más!**

La Academia NFB BELL se ofrecerá en el Centro para Ciegos de Colorado, del 12 al 23 de junio. Cuota de inscripción \$100.

Para obtener información adicional y registrarse, visite nuestro sitio web en nfb.org/bell.





TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

DVR Training on Personal Adjustment—The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Personal Adjustment Training Unit offers specialized training programs to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired in becoming independent at home, in the community, and in employment. Training is tailored to each individual's unique needs, experiences, and employment goals and is provided in the home and local community. Services are available at no cost to eligible individuals. Center-based training options are also available. Training may include the following instructional areas: Adaptive Communications, Assistive Technology, Daily Living Skills, Low Vision, and Orientation & Mobility.

Please check out our informational videos that will provide you with an overview of the training we can provide to individuals who are blind or visually impaired: [Blind and Low Vision Services -- Personal Adjustment Training](#)

Training is available statewide to active DVR clients with a vision impairment. Referrals for training are made by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. To get started, contact a local DVR office.

Please share this letter with anyone you think will benefit from our services.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you!

Bryan Baldwin

Assistive Technology Specialist, Blind and Low Vision Services

Please check out our [informational videos](#) that will provide you with an overview of our services.



COLORADO

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Department of Labor and Employment



Tuesday, April 12, 2023, 7:00 – 8:00 PM EST Stand Up and Speak Up. A Self-Advocacy Plan

A participatory workshop for parents and children on how to self-advocate. You will learn the four components and five steps of self-advocacy. Learn how to teach children to stand up and speak up.

[Register Here for Stand Up and Speak Up. A Self-Advocacy Plan](#)

Wednesday, April 13, 2023, 6:00 – 7:00 PM EST Employment Connections: Disclosing Disability

Join the team at APH CareerConnect for the inaugural quarterly webinar of Employment Connections. Discussion will take place regarding how and when to disclose a disability during the job seekers employment journey. We will look at disclosure in a cover letter, resume, during an interview and after a job offer. We will be joined by Russell Shaffer, Executive Vice President of Strategy & Programs at Disability In. Join us with your questions!

[Register Here for Employment Connections: Disclosing Disability](#)

Looking for more event opportunities? The [ConnectCalendar](#) is a one-stop resource for all events in the field of blindness and low vision.

NFBCO 2023 Scholarship Program—For further information on the Scholarship and to apply please visit the [NFBCO Scholarship Programs](#) webpage. Please don't forget that all applications must be completed by 11:59 P.M. on **April 15, 2023**. Scholarship winners will receive expenses paid trips to both our National convention in, Houston TX and our state convention in Lone Tree, CO along with an academic scholarship. Should you have any questions regarding the application or application process please don't hesitate to reach out to me at codyjbair@yahoo.com or (970) 673-6998.

just for PARENTS

Everyone Has a Voice by Nancy Bentley

Check out a terrific article written by Nancy Bentley, a mom of a young man who is deafblind, in this month's issue of Exceptional Parent Magazine.

"When I thought of communication, I had always thought of tradition language, hearing a voice, and conversations. This is my journey of communication with my sone, who is deafblind. My now 11-year-old son has shown me communication can happen many ways. A voice can be heard without ears" [Click her to read more about Everyone Has a Voice.](#)

Dear Parents – We would appreciate your considering participating in the research study identified below.

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Chris Clark-Bischke, Ph.D. and Alexis Redford, M.Ed. at the University of Utah. The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of the transition to Unified English Braille (UEB) from the perspectives of all involved individuals (i.e. Teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs), administrators, parents, university personnel preparation program faculty, and braille transcriptionists/ paraprofessionals).

The goal is to acquire an understanding of the impact of the transition, identify supports for states/territories and current TVIs.

For this study, participants will be asked to, complete an online survey (**less than 10 minutes**) and, if you are willing, participate in one individual interview via phone or Zoom (less than 30 minutes).

To indicate your consent to participate in this study, **and to begin the survey**, please click the following link:

Parent Survey: https://educationutah.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_82Gt6zOiZgxrFxs

Please feel free to share this e-mail and the corresponding e-mail link with other relevant individuals. This e-mail includes only the Parent survey. If you do not receive the other surveys but would like access to them, please let us know.

If you have questions about the study, please contact **Dr. Chris Bischke** at chris.bischke@utah.edu.

Given issues experienced by students who are blind or visually impaired, their parents, teachers of students with visual impairments, braille transcriptionists/paraprofessionals and administrators since the 2016 transition to UEB, the surveys aim to acquire information that has the potential to guide practice and policies.

Though not affiliated with any formal entity, the UEB Coalition was created several years ago with the goal of better supporting all students who are braille readers, while specifically supporting students learning the Unified English Braille Math/Science code. Members of the Unified English Braille (UEB) Coalition, have identified a need for information from the above noted individuals from across the United States so that better supports could be identified.

The UEB Coalition includes:

- ◆ Teachers of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired (TVIs), including learners with deafblindness
- ◆ Representatives from Local and State Educational Agencies (LEAs and SEAs)
- ◆ Representatives from Instructional Material Centers and state agencies who serve individuals who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind
- ◆ Faculty from Blindness/Visual Impairment/Deafblindness personnel preparation programs and other stakeholders.

Thank you for your willingness to participate and help us identify areas where support is needed.



Multi-University Consortium
Teacher Preparation Programs
In Sensory Impairments

just for PARENTS

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

NFADB is the largest nonprofit organization serving families of individuals who are deaf-blind (combined vision and hearing loss). [Check out the NFADB website.](#)

The organization provides information on deaf-blindness, hosts webinars on a variety of topics, and is very involved in national conferences to support families of children with deaf blindness.



Family Recharge Zone

Are you a family member of a child or adult who is blind, visually impaired, or deafblind? The Texas School for the Blind/Visually Impaired offers virtual trainings that you might be interested in attending. Stay connected by completing the Family Events & Training Signup Form. You will receive emails about events and training just for families... including the [Family Recharge Zone!](#)

ParentConnect: A Family Support Group Offered in Partnership with the Virtual Parent Support

Group Chicago Lighthouse For The Blind - APH FamilyConnect and the Chicago Lighthouse are pleased to offer this virtual support group for parents and families of children who are blind or visually impaired. These monthly sessions are for families to connect with and learn from each other about the joys, challenges, and adventures of raising children with visual impairments and blindness. These sessions are open to families.

No ACVREP or professional development credits will not be available.

The next session is Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 7:30—8:30 PM EST

[Register Here for ParentConnect](#)

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children—Founded in 1983, the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (NOPBC) is a membership organization of parents, educators, and friends of blind children reaching out to give each other vital support, encouragement, and information. They have thousands of members in all fifty states plus Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

The NOPBC offers hope, encouragement, information, and resources for parents of blind or low-vision children. NOPBC provides emotional support and a network for families. They also provide information, training, and resources to empower families to take an active role in guiding their child's development and education.

Their status as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is their annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB. The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members, including sighted siblings, and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country. Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one!

For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.

Jobs IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for the current school year. Please keep in touch with Tanni about our 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 para-educator, 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 O&M Specialist = orientation and mobility specialist. If you are looking for a job, please check out the listings below and also reach out to Tanni, who will have a current list of work across the state, including TVI and O&M Specialist contract work. Together, we can fill in the needed gaps to serve all of our students.



Metro Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI (or part time)** TVI for Early Intervention Visit Program at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at tmiller@anchorcenter.org
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Adams 12 School District for SY 23-24. For more information, please contact Heater Greicius at gre008602@adams12.org
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Denver Public Schools. Contact Michelle Chacon at michelle_chacon@dpsk12.net for more information.
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI/ O&M Specialist** position in Douglas county for the 23–24 school year. Interested person should please contact Peg Collins at pacollins1@dcsdk12.org or look online for their job openings.

Southern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position**—Colorado Springs District 11. For more information, please contact Nancy Melo Maresh at nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org or (719) 520-2153
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI** for Secondary Social Studies teacher at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. Please contact Jamie Lugo for more information at jlugo@csdb.org.

Northern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. Contact Jennifer Sedaghat at Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org.

Eastern Region

- ◆ **TVI and O&M Specialist Contract Work**—East Central BOCES—Contact Beverly Bragg at (719) 740-0544 or bevb@ecboces.org.

Western Region

- ◆ **1 TVI / O&M Position** in the Colorado River BOCES for SY 23-24. Please contact Denise Rahe at drahe@crboces.org for more information.

Across Metro, Northern, and Western Regions

- ◆ **Contact Work with Flexible Hours**—A Shared Vision. For more information about working in many areas of the state with the 0-2 population, please contact Steve Lindauer at slindauer@asharedvision.org.

TVIs and O&M Specialists—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE TVI and/or O&M licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing with part-time or substitute work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! We are seeing many retired TVIs and O&M Specialists come back to contribute as subs for maternity leave, do contract work, and/or work at A Shared Vision. If you want to be on the CDE's contractor list, please be in touch with Tanni at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting – March 8, 2023

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Cheryl Austin, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Melissa French, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Tammy Miller, Erin Noe, Jim Olson, and Chloann Woolley

Person Absent: Paula Conroy, Chaz Davis, and Michelle Reed

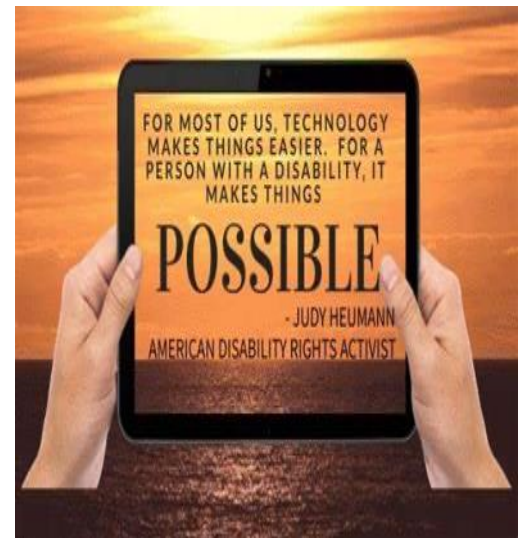
MISSION OF THE VISION COALITION: The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired. (April 1998)

ACRONYM LEGEND

ASV	A Shared Vision
BVI	Blind / Visually Impaired
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
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
TVI/TSVI	Teacher of students with blindness/visual impairments

MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Tammy Miller
- Colorado AER Chapter – Paula Conroy
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Chaz Davis
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michele Reed
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Cheryl Austin
- Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- Northern TVI / COMS – Melissa French
- Southern TVI / COMS – Chloann Woolley
- University of Northern Colorado – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS – Erin Noe



Norms of the Vision Coalition: Stay present. Verbally identify yourself before you speak. If we get into a serious discussion, please wait for your turn (we will assign someone to take stock of who is next in the discussion). Vision Coalition meetings are a confidential environment. We are here for the common good of students, families, and our profession. In the spirit of improvement, we will bring critical issues to the table.

Decision Protocol: In instances where a vote may be taken to decide of the Vision Coalition membership, a fist of 5, 3, or 1 will be used. 5 = agreement / can live with the decision; 3 = need more information to decide; and 1 = cannot approve the decision. A majority vote of 5 will indicate that the decision will move forward.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

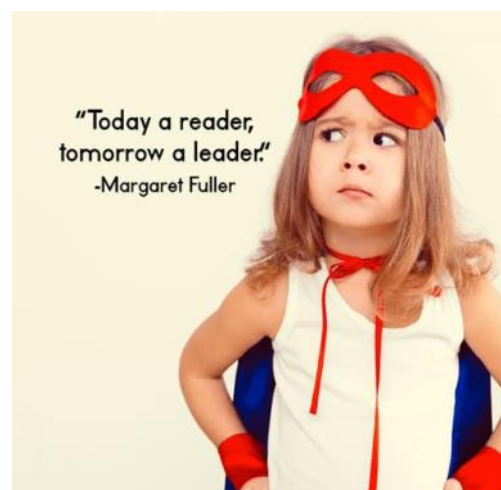
Our most recent meeting was held virtually on February 9, 2023 hosted by the TVIs in Littleton. Alyshia Shelton is a welcome addition to LPS as a .5 TVI! She also is completing part of her O&M practicum hours with the Nancys in LPS and in Cherry Creek with Jeannie Lei. Nancy Knight led some discussion on IEP services specific to students with CVI (specific goals & accommodations, figuring out planning for daily practice with individual students, determining time, etc.) The online CVI training options have been very valuable and appreciated! Then, TVIs and COMS shared ideas for revamping the caseload formula.

Our final Denver Metro Meeting will be held virtually on April 6th from 3:30- 5:00 p.m.

The Denver Area Braille Challenge was held at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) on Friday February 10th! The students had an opportunity to come together and celebrate their braille skills!

Denver Area Low Vision Clinic was held February 22-24, 2023. We are so grateful to the Low Vision Clinic team. Each of them will be dearly missed!

Nancy Knight will be retiring from Littleton after many amazing years of contribution. Littleton has hired Alyshia Shelton on a part time basis.



Discussion Items:

- *Updating the Caseload Formula- The majority of those who gave input believe there should be a separate document for TVI services and another for O&M services. See notes under other agenda item.*
- *How can we plan for changes in IEP systems to not lose preferred tools in drop down boxes, etc.? Follow up- any more info on this? The CDE is out of the state IEP system business. It is recommended that AUs with like-systems work together to address needs. Each AU has their own working with relationships with their vendor. TVIs are encouraged to bring their needs and ideas back to their Special Education Directors.*
- *Brailnote Technology- lack of control with firewalls; state vs regional desire to have a Q&A with Humanware regarding general issues for users. Follow up- There is interest in meeting with Kevin from Humanware for general questions online. Then, there may be interest in doing another online braille technology Q&A for other devices. This may be a great regional meeting topic.*

Northern Region (Melissa French)

The Northern Colorado TVIs and O&Ms will be meeting Friday, March 10th. We will be meeting in person and virtually. There is a position in Poudre and a half time position in Windsor.

Western Region (Erin Noe)

The Western Slope TVI/COMS met virtually in January and February. In January we went over some of the information from the December Vision Coalition Meeting. We discussed how students, TVIs and parents have benefited from the Low Vision Clinic over the years, the new VI/B eligibility criteria, and vision therapy. We talked about doing an FVA make and take as a region, however several TVI's are currently using and like APH's NewT's kit (<https://www.aph.org/product/newt>). In February we met to share ideas and answer questions to support one another. There is currently a position in Colorado River BOCES. There is a job posting in Colorado River BOCES for a TVI/ O&M Specialist.

Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)

The Southern Region had a quick but very informative remote meeting on January 28th. Cara Johnson, CSDB school Psychologist, presented on "Memory". She answered the following: How memory works; How to identify when memory is hard; and shared how to identify strategies to support memory. Some quick take aways about memory: (a) Memory is impacted by sleep ; (b) Engaging in hands on, visual, and listening activities support the likelihood that memory will improve; (c) Strategies to help our memories: *write it down; *create a tactile/visual map; *create/make an auditory record; *chain or chunk the task or thought – keep adding on another step/small pieces. Watch for more opportunities to learn about memory and how we can support our students that struggle in getting tasks and learning into their long-term memory from Cara Johnson.

Comments about the Learning Media Plan (LMP) template and guidelines were positive. The southern region participants supported the need for more training on the LMP in order to create uniform documentation across the state.

There was a good discussion about the Colorado Braille Competency Test and the Colorado Braille Modules. People requested that the concerns be brought up at VC to consider a revamp of the test and modules.

Our in-person meeting on Tuesday, February 28th hosted Brian and Mathew Smith from 'Magnisight of the Rockies'. They shared some of the newest technology tools for Low Vision. Check out their website for more information. www.magnisightoftherockies.co or contact them at: sales@magnisightoftherockies.co

Our next meeting will be an in-person meeting on April 25th. We have planned a Make-and-Take session to create tactile books based on SWAAAC Literacy Kits, visual occlude from Paths To Literacy, and/or tactile schedules.

There are openings at the School for the Blind and with Colorado Springs 11 School District.

Discussions:

- *The Southern Region TVI/O&M/DVR members would like to formally invite all interested parties to join us in recognizing and celebrating Dr. Theune on June 3. We will send out a flyer with more detailed information once arrangements are finalized. Everyone is invited. It was suggested that there be a virtual opportunity for people to beam in if they cannot drive. It was also suggested that TVI put together photos of kids with their low vision devices, with parent permission.*

- *LMP template - One suggestion was to combine question #3 and #4 of the LMP. It was stated that they felt like the responses provided similar information. Tanni will work with Chloann to finalize the LMP information and then send it out to everyone in a separate document.*
- *One of our colleagues put together this draft to present to the VC concerning the Colorado Braille Competency Test and the Colorado Braille Modules. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/130mPOetW7Luvs7PaoZqynXxYH1NrpEF2OTE8YQw7dDU/edit?usp=sharing>*

There was a discussion on the Colorado braille competency testing process. Questions are always welcome for clarification and in the spirit of improvement.

Testing in the first year can be an overwhelming task, especially when the candidate has not taken the university braille course that first year of teaching. We do have universities where the first braille course is taken in the second year. This puts the candidate in a tough situation as they are asked to take the CDE Braille Competency Test ahead of their braille training. This is also a complication due to TVIs-in-training being allowed to be employed in a CO school administrative unit while they are completing their program. So there are benefits and challenges when someone is hired to fulfill the role of a TVI..

Action Item: Tanni will poll some university programs to find out when the braille course is offered in their programs.

Delaying the requirement, would put the candidate possibly two years out of demonstrating braille competency. This means students do not have a braille-competent TVI for two years for purposes of assessment, instruction, and braille production. The Colorado Braille Bill was passed for the needs of students who are blind/visually impaired. These learners deserve a TVI who is efficient and accurate in all needed braille codes (while we only test UEB Literary). This role is unique to the TVI who must excel in braille. As such, any changes to the CDE Braille Competency Test would need to be approved by the CDE with legal review.

The CDE has a long history of braille testing. The first testing was done via a mass course with onsite quizzes and braille samples. For a time, people were allowed to attend trainings to count as renewal credits but this was discontinued as it did not yield any data that the candidate knew and could produce braille. The CDE Braille Test came at a time when there was one national test and this test had inherent challenges. The CDE test questions were taken from university course standard materials culled and reviewed by a team of braille experts. It is important to note that no braille testing products or procedures have ever been developed or implemented without a committee of state-recognized braille experts. The braille samples had analysis for their length, contractions, etc. The decision for allowable references was made to align with real life circumstances of candidates using references in their daily work. Because this is a state test, all practices must be standardized and cannot be individualized to candidate homemade references. The chosen references are advertised to the candidates and include “cheat sheets” of the alphabet, punctuation, and contraction symbols. The testing materials and procedures were peer reviewed by a national braille expert. An ongoing item analysis review is completed on all test questions to determine whether a question needs change or there is a next step to improve training on the construct of the question.

The timeframe includes a 4 hour time period for an 80% (this is a low B score) accuracy rate on multiple choice questions taken directly from standard resource materials, many of which are used in university courses and 7 errors on 3.5 pages of braille. It is unlikely that society would tolerate 7 errors on 1.5 page print passage for a sighted child. The test has been completed in as little as 2 hour of time with positive results. Two hours for 3.5 pages of braille (based on a 1.5 page print passage) is

considered generous given the role of at TVI with a braille reader. Two hours for MC questions is also considered to be generous based on (a) there are no trick (rule exceptions) questions and (b) there are reference materials that “match” the test questions (meaning the test questions were taken from the reference materials used in the university braille courses).

Reference materials are allowed, including the *Braille Enthusiast’s Dictionary*, which allows the testing candidate to look up words on both the multiple choice test and in the braille sample. There are other state tests that do not allow any references. Some states also mandate testing procedures using the slate and the stylus. The national NFB test charges a fee and the candidate does not receive any information back on errors on their braille sample.

TVIs who do not pass the test the first time are given the choice of 10 hours of free mentoring. Data are maintained on whether the test is passed after the use of the mentor to demonstrate its efficacy. Most TVIs who have received mentoring do pass the second time if mentoring was accompanied by the study and practice experience required by the mentor to progress through the lessons.

The test has usually been a good barometer of the knowledge and skill of producing braille. With that said, there can be intense test anxiety that can cause motor-mistake errors that are truly not indicative of the candidate’s knowledge and skill. The goal is to create a testing environment that is friendly, supportive, and positive. There are also times when the candidate truly is not braille competent – we have seen errors on the braille sample of over 60 in 3.5 pages and over 30 errors on the MC section. This means the candidate needs to learn and practice the braille code. The goal is for all TVIs to be proficient and efficient in braille. That is why there is a practice test and mentoring assistance.

The discussion confirmed that TVIs are still producing braille materials for kids on the fly. This is the reality for students who are braille readers. Action Item: Tanni will glean more information about whether the braille writer continue to be the equipment choice for other braille competency tests.

Further questions or concerns, should be directed to Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

Leveraging a unique and flexible operating model, A Shared Vision strives to attract and support a highly skilled workforce, build partnerships throughout the state, and provide a breadth of programming that grows the capability and capacity of all early intervention providers to serve families with very young children who are blind or visually impaired.

Through our Early Intervention Vision Services Program, our team of 15 teachers provides early intervention home-based vision services to families and young children in 55 counties across Colorado. In 2022, A Shared Vision supported 212 children, providing 1,675 educational service visits. This number is over 60% of all early intervention vision services to families statewide.

To meet the growing demand for vision services, A Shared Vision and Anchor Center are coordinating all new referrals in the Denver metro area. This allows us to use both organizations to find teachers who may be able to provide ongoing services to families. But, given the growing demand, we typically have 20 to 30 families waiting for an available teacher.

Our Education Program builds the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve very young children with blindness/visual impairments. Since we were awarded the contract by EI Colorado in July 2022, we have conducted 31 training sessions for EI Eligibility Assessment Teams (aka Child Find for 0-3). We

have conducted 27 Zoom-based trainings for more than 400 professionals. The locations for the in-person Objective Testing trainings, which will be coming this spring and summer around the state, will be announced soon.

Our Family Support Program provides education, community connections, and support for families of children with visual impairments through group activities, the newsletter, and other communications. Our virtual “Mystery Party” events are growing in popularity, especially for our rural families. During the one-hour program, our teachers create a fun atmosphere of sharing and curiosity for parents and caregivers. Four programs are scheduled for 2023, including one on supporting sleep with special guest expert Carol Puchalski and another on making sensory cubes with EI-TVI Maggie Tutt. From family feedback we also added three one-hour Caregiver Connect sessions for families to get together virtually and discuss any topics of interest to them.

EI-TVI Kimala Rein is on the organizing committee for the Western Colorado “Easter Egg-Venture,” an accessible Easter egg hunt for children with blindness or visual impairments and their siblings. It will take place on April 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Orchard Mesa Lions Park, Mesa County Fairgrounds, in Grand Junction. There will be a hunt with beeping Easter Eggs, sensory-friendly craft activities, and music. If you’re a Western Slope TVI or know a family who might like to attend, register at https://calendly.com/kimala_rein/orchard-lions-beeping-egg?month=2023-0.

Paula Landry, Steve Lindauer, and Kate Borg from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are presenting “Teaching A Child’s First Teacher” at the upcoming Western Regional Early Intervention Conference, which will be held in Cheyenne, WY, this June.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Tammy Miller)

We will be co-hosting along with (CU Anschutz’s Department of Ophthalmology) the International Vision2023 Conference in Denver on July 24-27! This conference focuses on Low Vision Research & Rehabilitation and promotes the exchange of information among these fields and medicine.

We have received a special donation that will allow us to build a new adaptive playground at Anchor Center! The construction will take place over the upcoming summer months, and we plan to have some special events to be able to show it off to the community and our partners next fall, so stay tuned!

We will be expanding our Preschool program from two days/week to three days/week beginning with the 2023-24 school year. We will have Preschool on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and our Infant and Toddler Program will be every Monday, as well as two Fridays/month.

Our Transition Project, funded by Early Milestones Colorado's CIRCLE grant, continues to gain traction to create meaningful ways to reach all families to help them be better informed of options and what to expect through the many important transitions happening in the early childhood years (from EI to preschool options to kindergarten and all the IFSP/Child Find/IEP meetings that go along with it all).

Headquartered in Denver for 40 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children specializes in serving children with visual impairments or combined vision and hearing loss during their most formative years of development, ages birth to five years. Staffed by a transdisciplinary team of highly trained teachers of students with visual impairments, early childhood special educators, therapists, and a pediatric ophthalmologist, Anchor Center’s vision services are customized to meet each child’s unique needs and strengths. Families also receive support, guidance, practical knowledge, and connections to other important resources. Anchor Center’s primary programming includes: vision assessments and pediatric ophthalmology exams; early intervention home-based services (for children, ages birth to 3 years); center-based programming for infants (newborn – 18 months), toddlers (18 months – 3 years), and preschoolers (3 – 5 years); occupational, physical, and

speech/language therapies; recreational, music, and horticultural therapies; summer camps and family respite care; and family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs but does not charge for infant services. No child is ever denied access to services based on the family's inability to pay.

Colorado AER Chapter (Nancy Cozart)

Colorado Association Of Education And Rehabilitation "Building Bridges Together"

Join Us for the 2023 CAER Annual Meeting & Banquet

Hoping for May 11, 2023 near the Lowry Conference Center

Cocktails & Dinner 5:00-7:30? **Details Coming Soon**

Annual awards will be presented!!!

There will be drawings for prizes of the attendees throughout the event!

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is a professional membership organization dedicated to professionals who provide services to persons with vision loss. They promote and support the professions by advocating for evidence-based practices, high-quality standards, value-added resources, and giving voice to issues of critical importance.

CAER (Colorado Association of Education and Rehabilitation) is our local chapter of AER that meets once a month to support the training and support for professional individuals that serve students and adults with visual impairments including blindness within our state. Congrats to Bryan Moles, the most recent recipient of a CAER Mini-Grant.

Benefits for Membership: AER members receive a subscription to the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)*, the international peer-reviewed journal of record in the blindness field and the official journal of AER. Reimbursement of \$50 for ACVREP Recertification

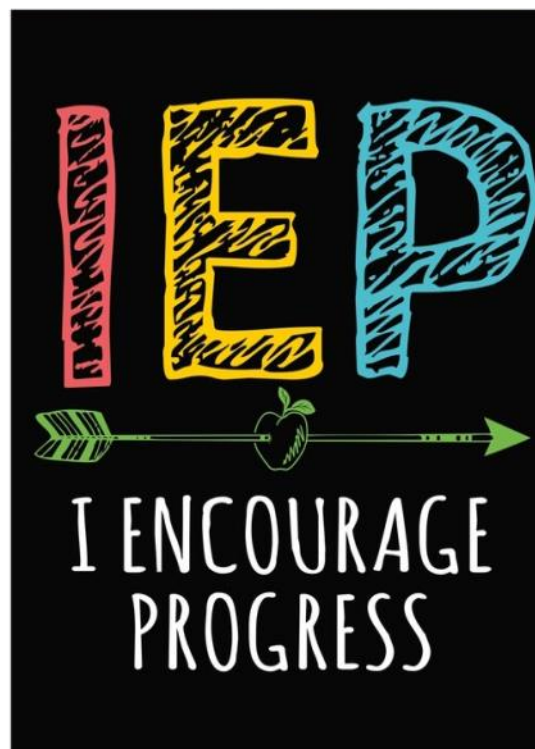
Scheduled Meeting Dates:

March 15, April 19. May Banquet, and June 21

STICKERS are coming! We have ordered a trial run of washable stickers. There will be stickers in different shapes that denote different branches of specialization of professionals who serve people with vision loss. These will be available for purchase as a CAER fundraiser to support mini-grants.

Michelle Robinson continues to manage the Adaptive Aid Equipment that is available to CAER members. This equipment can be helpful to students who are in need for home use, financial difficulty, etc.

WE NEED YOU!!! Please consider becoming a CAER Board Member. The great news is that we are virtual. We will continue to have virtual meetings to make it easier for our members on the western slope and southern parts to attend meetings. It also gives you CEUs for ACVREP! Easy credits for just an hour or so a month! Please consider joining and becoming part of this great group. Please contact Heather Solberg, heather.solberg@va.gov



Current CAER Board Officers

Heather Solberg- President

Nancy Cozart- Treasurer

Secretary- Michelle Robinson

Current CAER At-Large Members:

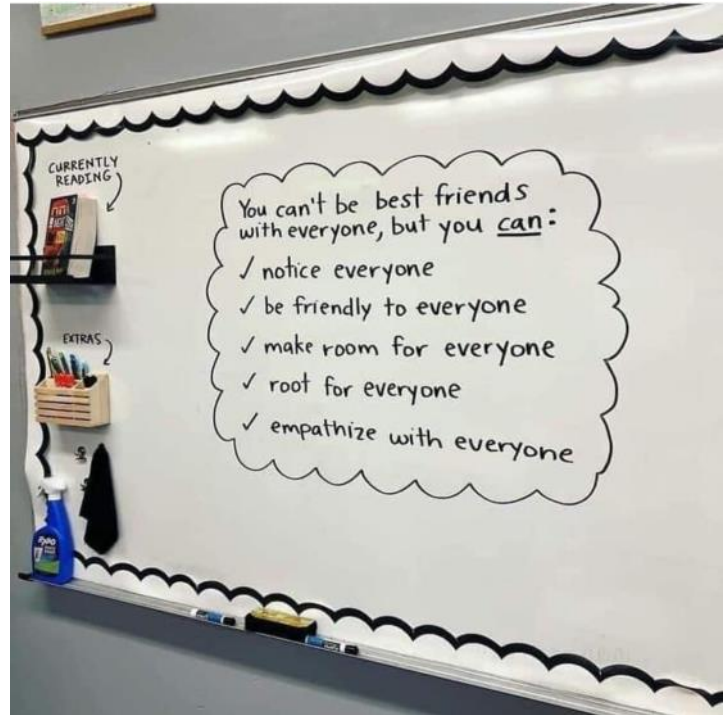
Wendy Unwin-Watson Chloann Woolley

Jamie Lugo Jeannie Lei

Bryan Moles

Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs (Chaz Davis)

In February, we started our calendar of year-round events for our CCB youth program for 2023 with our Fun Activities and Skills Training, "Dance From the Heart". Student attendees were able to participate in a dance module hosted by our personal fitness instructor, Julie. Students then made clay projects with our tactile art instructor, Dan while the parents of the blind children along with a couple of teachers of the visually impaired joined several CCB staff members to learn how their young ones could accomplish the art of chores non-visually. Overall, the attendees had a wonderful time, with one student remarking that they "never get the opportunity to learn dance moves in such an accessible way."



On the 26th of February, we hosted our virtual learning Box activity called "Don't Miss a Beat", where students were able to use an anatomically correct model of the heart with different tactile markers to understand the anatomy and physiology of the human heart. Students were able to identify the different parts and functions of the heart in a way that they are not always afforded in their science classes, with one-on-one instruction to help conceptualize in non-visual ways.

On March 25th, students who register with CCB will be going to the Denver Zoo for a fun, interactive experience that will allow for students to interpret the exhibits around them in ways that are accessible to them as blind students. The Denver Zoo's DEI coordinator is working with CCB to find ways to make all of their exhibits more accessible to the blind. The Denver Zoo's initiative for 2023 is access, so CCB is excited about this partnership.

CCB is also preparing for an accessible Easter egg hunt on April 1 and working on our 3 summer camps for 2023, BELL/Confidence Camp, Robotics/Coding Camp, and our 1-month residential camp, "No Limits to Learning".

CCB's Youth program was awarded the Colorado Parks and Wildlife "Outdoor Equity Grant" through the 2024 calendar year. This grant allows for the expansion of our challenge recreation activities to more households in Colorado. Participants will also be able to take part in environmental education activities too.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Two Vacant Positions: The CIMC currently has two job vacancies. The Administrative Assistant I position is primarily responsible for shipping and receiving duties as well as processing orders for APH educational materials, brailers, technology and software. We are looking for a Library of Congress certified braille

transcriber to fill the Administrative Assistant III position whose primary responsibilities include processing orders for braille textbooks and novels. The CIMC would appreciate it if you would help us spread the word on these two job announcements. Check the CSDB website for links to the job postings.

Our Two Statewide Counts:

Count 1) Statewide Student Registration Database Count: This annual count helps Colorado identify how many learners with visual impairment, including blindness, from birth through age 21, are receiving services by teachers of the visually impaired. This includes infants from birth through age 2 receiving early intervention (Part C) services, as well as school-aged (Part B) students aged 3 through 21 specific to enrollment on this year's January 2, 2023 count day. The deadline for Administrative Units to submit student registration data for the CDE statewide count was extended to Monday, February 27, 2023. CIMC staff has completed the data entry on all paperwork received for the statewide count. The plan is for EVERY child on a TVI's caseload to be on this count, with the exception of when parents are not in agreement.

Federal Quota Census count of students with legal blindness:

(Count 2) Agencies and school districts determine which of their infants/students enrolled on count day (the first Monday in January annually) meet the eligibility requirements to be included in the federal quota census of legally blind students. Those eligible students generate federal quota funding (approximately \$420.00 per child) for the Colorado Department of Education accounts that is used to manage the statewide repository of educational materials the American Printing House for the Blind managed by the CIMC. Phase 1 of the federal quota census closes on March 15th, the last day that the CIMC has to enter any new students into any of the three accounts managed by the CIMC.

One-on-one video meetings for you and your team: The CIMC continues to offer one-on-one agency/school district specific meetings for service providers to review products and services available at no cost to your agency/school districts, thanks to funding from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the federal quota census managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). Please contact any CIMC staff person to schedule a meeting for yourself or your team. If you have not booked your one-on-one, please do!!

Braille book orders for 2022-23 school year due April 1, 2023. It is never too early to order your braille textbooks and novels for future school years but the deadline is fast approaching. Please submit your email inquiries and official book Order Forms now so the CIMC can work with vendors across the country to begin transcription of your projects. Remember, you are competing with every other state for a spot in the production queue of braille vendors. The sooner you can submit a Book Order Form and the accompanying ink print textbooks, the better. April 1 is your deadline, but earlier submissions are recommended. Please be proactive as time really matters with ensuring your student has the needed materials when school begins this next school year.

CSDB – School for The Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Blind PreK is growing each month. We are up to 7 PreK with several more coming soon! We've welcomed four new students since the beginning of the new year, January 2023. Representatives from the state library visited our new library space. Jennifer Mathews showed them around. They are very impressed with the progress made since Jennifer was hired. Secondary students attended two different ski trips to Vail with the support of Foresight Ski Guides and their amazing instruction on the mountain. Upper elementary and lower middle school students attended a trip to Crested Butte as well.

All students participate in 100th day of school activities including 100 item trail mix, paper chains, 100 day stories, and cup creations. Some students and staff even dressed up like they were 100 years old!

Elementary students enjoyed a 911 Presentation. They participated in a game determining what is and what is not an emergency. The students enjoyed the presentation, and we thank Courtney Kinder, public information officer, for visiting us. CSDB is working with the public information officers to make their workbooks accessible to low vision and braille reading students. CSDB also helped add audio description to their PowerPoint presentation.

We celebrated Homecoming week at CSDB, January 23-January 28, 2023. We hosted The New Mexico School for the Deaf and the Blind for basketball and goalball games. The students enjoyed dancing the night away on Saturday evening.

The Braille Challenge took place on Tuesday February 28, 2023. It was a success. The Bulldog Band provided entertainment during the closing ceremony. Due to the generous donations of our sponsors, students and staff received a braille challenge t-shirt this year.

CSDB Outreach Services (Cheryl Austin)

CSDB Outreach Programs' three itinerant, dual-certified Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMSs) are currently providing services to approximately 57 school-age students and 26 early intervention families through agreements with 16 districts/BOCES and 2 Local Early Intervention Programs across the state of Colorado. They also fulfill additional assessment and training requests as the need arises and capacity allows. We are now beginning to evaluate requests for services for the 2023-2024 school year and hope to have agreements in place with contracted AUs by the end of May.

In April, we will pilot a 4-week evening program on campus for families with young children (birth to 5 years) which will address all aspects of the Expanded Core Curriculum through exploratory play and literacy, art, and music activities, as well as offer opportunities for parents to connect around shared experience.

2023 Metro Denver Braille Challenge Contest: In collaboration with the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB), the CSDB Outreach department co-hosted the 2023 Metro Denver Braille Challenge. The event was held in-person at the CCB in Littleton on Friday, February 10, 2023. 14 students from 5 administrative units participated in this year's Challenge contest. Other students participated from a distance, with TVIs proctoring tests in district. CSDB would like to thank the CCB for hosting the event.

AUs included: Adams 12 Five Star Schools (Thornton), Arapahoe County 5 (Cherry Creek), Arapahoe County 6 (Littleton), Denver Public Schools, and El Paso County District 49 (Falcon). Thank you to the following TVIs who accompanied their students: Jill Bookwalter, Lorraine Chevarria, Elsa D'Angelo, Caitlin Geoffrion, Christopher Kinney, Nancy Knight, Colleen Lydon, Lori Mattick, Debbie Mendoza, Natalie Palmer, Melinda Russell, and Micah Scott.

Colorado (Denver Metro) Low Vision Evaluation Clinic The Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic for the Denver Metro area was held February 22-24, 2023 at Anchor Center for Blind Children. 16 students received low vision evaluations. 15 parents and 12 TVIs from 7 administrative units (AUs) attended the 90-minute evaluations. The clinic team would like to thank the Anchor Center for Blind Children for hosting the event. AUs included: Adams County District 14, Adams-Arapahoe County District 28J, Arapahoe County District 5, Arapahoe County District 6, Crown Pointe Academy, Denver County District 1, and Douglas County. Thank you to the following TVIs who accompanied their students: Kaitlin Lombardi, Wendy Unwin-Watson, Barb Galgano, Jeannie Lei, Rachel Sullivan, Nancy Cozart, Melinda Russell, Morgan Harrington, Karin Hensel, Brenna Moser, Dana Downey, and Maggie Tutt.

UNC VI Program (Paula Conroy)

We are steadily working toward our HLC & CDE reaccreditation for all university licensure programs. The VI program is also going through the AER reaccreditation. These are intense processes that take months of preparation.

UNCO is in the final phases of hiring searches for a Professor in the Deaf and HOH Program and Professor who specializes in SSN and Autism. We are hopeful to hire these two people by the end of the semester, so they are ready to begin in mid-August when we return to campus. There are several changes in faculty that we will announce at the end of the academic year.

There are six Masters VI graduates this semester. None of these students live in Colorado

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in the final year of our five-year grant cycle. The project's mission is free technical assistance to parents and service providers of children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are deaf-blind 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.

Staff are currently in process of preparing the new proposal for 2023-28. The plan is to have it submitted before the March 13 deadline. A huge thank you to the many TVIs who took the time to submit a letter of support. Most sincerely appreciated!!

- *Project Staff:* Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are Co-Directors on the grant project. Wendy Stoltman and Jessica Meisel are our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists. Both Wendy and Jessica provide onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Jessica has been involved with training and support to school-based interveners. Cindy Colwell is our Family Specialist.
- To request FREE technical assistance, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us
- *Annual Deaf-Blind Count:* The 2022-23 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count forms are out in the field and should be returning to CDE through a secure online portal. Please note that 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. This can be child-specific consultation and customized staff training.
- *Project Webpage:* The CDE DeafBlind webpage URL is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>
- *Project Trainings:* We are offering a slate of 2022-23 Deaf-Blind Webinar Series trainings. We have one more to go in March! The registration is posted for the 2023 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs. We are close to being full. Our presenter is Megan Mogan and she will address the assessment and intervention strategies tied to the *Communication Matrix*.

BVI State Funded Activities: The CDE has a strong commitment to services and supports to our students and the staff who serve them. We are pleased to offer training and TA supports to the field serving children who are blind/visually impaired.

- *Sound Bites:* The BVI Office Hours have been transformed into Sound Bites or training / dialogue sessions based on identified topics of needs. Chris Russell did three amazing sessions on CVI in November, December, and February. . Derrick Smith has a great session in January. We have three left for this school year, a March celebration with Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy, Jim, and Debbie. An April session on Dyslexia

and BVI and a final May Sound Bites session with Cara Johnson and Tanni Anthony on assessment of learners with BVI.

- *CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:* The team has completed four regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics this school year. Thanks to everyone who took the time to take the LVE Clinic survey on the status of the clinics going forward. There was overwhelming support of the clinics. We are in a new phase with the retirement of Dr. Tom Theune and Wendy Stoltman. Debbie Haberkorn is in a new role at CSDB. As such, efforts are being made to determine the staffing plan to continue clinics going forward. We are so proud of all that has been accomplished this year with the clinics – great attendance and results. We thank our current team for their expertise and dedication.
- *CDE O&M Seminar:* We have a great game plan with Chris Tabb for May 11 and 12th. Registration is currently open for all Colorado O&M Specialists. It will be an in person training at the Lowry Campus.
- *Recruitment and Retention:* The Job Page in the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter is starting to get very long. We have openings in several parts of the state. Please share any expected vacancies with Tanni so we can be as proactive as possible with new recruits. Contract TVI and O&M staff are needed in several AUs. A Shared Vision and Anchor Center need more TVI / O&M Specialist support. Please keep Tanni in the loop on anticipated and real vacancies. If you want to be on the CDE list of contractors, please reach out to Tanni.
- *Listservs:* The CDE ESSU maintains two separate listservs specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMSs. The second one is specific to Colorado brailleists. 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 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to email out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter link and, on rare occasion, mailing to families. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate names and addresses of families of children with visual impairment, including blindness who 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. 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.
- *Braille Competency:* All TVIs who are new to the field are expected to demonstrate braille competency in their first year of employment in this role. If a TVI extends this date, the administrative unit of employment is at risk for a citation of noncompliance. A Practice Test is posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples. Please be aware that all TVIs in Colorado public schools must renew their braille certificate one time after the first five years of initial certification.
- *Keeping in Touch Newsletter:* The August-September, October 2022, November-December 2022, and January 1-February 2023 editions have been posted. There are two more editions to go (March-April, and May). Please be sure to share the email messages with the link with parents and paras, as we are no longer mailing out the newsletter and do not have the email addresses of most parents who have signed up to receive the newsletter.



AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Approved CDE BVI Budget for 2023-24

The following activities are on the docket were approved for funding

- ⇒ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ⇒ CDE O&M Seminar
- ⇒ CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual impairment – for late September
- ⇒ CIMC Interagency Agreement
- ⇒ Vision Coalition (all meetings will be held virtually)
- ⇒ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics-(with the condition of securing staff)
- ⇒ Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings) – Focus on ECC Implementation with invites to paras, general educators, parents.
- ⇒ FVA Make and Take (A summer team will assist – Jamie, Erin, Tanni, Paula L, and Chloann)

VIB Eligibility: Thank you to all of the TVIs and parents who submitted public comment. There is one more comment period and then the revised / proposed definition will be taken to the State Board of Education for their review. Once approved, there are a few more steps to finalize the new definition before it will go into effect. Tanni will keep people apprised.

Recruitment Needs: We must be creative and vigilant on bringing new people into the field. We are seeing more vacancies for this next school year than ever before. Take time to talk to paraeducators who may be interested in going into the field. If they have a BA degree, please encourage them to reach out to Dr. Paula Conroy for more information about the UNC program.

Workload Formula: There is field conversation about excluding O&M responsibilities. Also the need for validation. Tanni will work with Nancy and Amber on possible updates. The next step will be for VC TVIs to trial it ahead of our next meeting to determine its efficacy. There are other tools that can be used for this purpose, so before the CO tools can be recommended, we need trial use and further conversation.

Next Meeting Date: September 20, 2023

Please let Tanni know if there will be changes in your representation: Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

CSDB Outreach – Donna Keale will be the representative. Sara Noel will be the alternate representative. We thank Cheryl Austin for her representation of CSDB Outreach during SY 22-23.





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Braille Competency News



- ◆ Shout out to **Angie Brown** from CSDB for earning her CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Vicki Chinski** of Weld 6 School District and **Jennifer Caster** of Brighton School District for earning their CDE Renewal Certificates of Braille Competency!
- ◆ Kudos to **Natalie Palmer, Jennifer Caster, Dana Downey, Melissa French, Brenna Moser, Patti Shannon, Rachel Sullivan, and Maggie Tutt**, for completing braille renewal modules.
- ◆ Thanks for braille proctors **Nancy Cozart** and **Brenda Shepard** for their work with our braille testing candidates. Thanks to everyone for keeping our braille standards high!

Professional Development

- ◆ We had an impressive turn out on the March 15th Sound Bites with **Dr. Tom Theune**, who shared an informative low vision case study with us. It was wonderful to have the whole LVE Clinic Team in attendance with **Tom, Debbie Haberkorn, Jim Olson, and Wendy Stoltman**. TVIs in attendance included: **Deb Andrews, Tanni Anthony, Cheryl Austin, Jill Bookwalter, Sally Burch, Jennifer Caster, Peg Collins, Nancy Cozart, Meghan Crosby, Elsa D'Angelo, Morgan Harrington, Jennifer Holt, Carol Jordan, Leslie Kelly, Anahit LaBarre, Lori Mattick, Brenna Moser, Beth Myers, Erin Noe, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Ruthann Osborn, Natalie Palmer, Mike Plansker, Wendy Schlageter, Alyshia Shelton, Angela Sims, Wendy Stoltman, Maggie Tutt, Ellen Wallis, Julie Wetstein, and Chloann Woolley**.

Shout Outs

- ◆ My thanks to **Peg Collins** for sharing a student's story of great success that made my day. So glad she took the time to give me a happy update on a child who had been struggling and a mom who is very concerned.
- ◆ Another huge THANK YOU to some amazing Orientation and Mobility Specialists who participated in a February 15th and/or March 9th CDE Special Service Provider Standards Review Workshop - Orientation & Mobility: **Tanni Anthony, Danielle Burden, Peg Collins, Paula Conroy, Karin Hensel, Emilie Jackson, Amber Rundle Kahn, Trina Boyd Pratt, and Hannah Waldman**. These group worked with the CDE Licensure Unit on CDE O&M Standards and the results will soon be posted for a slightly streamlined licensure process. Heads up—ACVREP certification is required for both initial and professional renewal relicensure. Do not let your ACVREP certificate expire!
- ◆ Our huge thank you to so many TVIs who took the time to submit a letter of support for our new proposal for another five-year cycle of the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the CO DB Project). We thank the following: **Danielle Burden, Mary Chambers, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Megan Crosby, Elsa D'Angelo, Kari Finholt, Barb Galgano, Jessica Hanks, Julie Harrison, Karin Hensel, Jeanine Holmes, Ayrn McNichol, Erin Noe, Angela Sims, and Ellen Wallis**.
- ◆ We also had letters of support from A Shared Vision (**Steven Lindauer**), the Anchor Center for Blind Children (**Meghan Klassen**), Colorado Center for the Blind (**Julie Deden**), and CSDB Outreach (**Ashley Renslow**). There were 46 letters of support in total and that cheered us on as we wrote to the details of the proposal. Thank you again!



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- ◆ The Colorado DB Project proposal was submitted four days ahead of its due date and was a ton of work to prepare. A huge shout out to the writing and support team of: **Tanni Anthony, Roberta Curtis, Gina Herrera, and Jessica Meisel**. We will keep you posted about the results!

Personnel News

- **Mike Pillow** has left his position in Adams 12 as a TVI. We thank him for his service and wish him all the very best.

In Memoriam

The Life of a True Advocate – In Memory of Judy Heumann

Please take a moment to read this account of Judy Heumann's life story, accomplishments, and real-life everyday advocacy work on behalf of individuals with disabilities. She was a true pioneer in the work we have the privilege to carry on.



<https://www.npr.org/2023/03/04/1161169017/disability-activist-judy-heumann-dead-75>

“

Disability only becomes a tragedy when society fails to provide the things we need to lead our lives, job opportunities or barrier-free buildings, for example... It is not a tragedy to me that I'm living in a wheelchair.

”

Judy Heumann
American civil rights activist.



Celebration of Life: Scott C. LaBarre (July 2, 1968 – December 10, 2022)

This article can be found in its full text at: <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm23/bm2303/bm230308.htm>

KIT Editor Note: A service was held to honor Scott and so many people gathered in-person and virtually to honor this great man. Below are some of the important commentary on his many contributions as an attorney, husband, father, friend, and always an advocate for the rights of blind people across the globe.

Scott Charles LaBarre was a dynamic, dedicated, and diligent man whose life was characterized by gentleness, kindness, love, and a passion that resulted in hard work, initiative, and a determination to make the world better in every place he touched. There was nothing we asked of him that he did not tackle willingly and with enthusiasm. When we asked him to lead, he served as the affiliate president in Colorado from 2005 until 2021. When we asked him to use his skills to extend our rights through his knowledge of the law, again he answered, eventually becoming the National Federation of the Blind's chief counsel, and making a name for himself not only among blind people but among colleagues who also practice in the legal profession.

His work has made more books available to blind Americans and to blind citizens around the world. He has made the world a safer place to travel because of his work to make quiet cars audible. His love and passion have taught us all how to be generous and giving and to consider it an honor to be a giver. In the Jacob Bolotin Award he received in 2014, we recognize that Scott's contributions are not measured in steps but in miles, and the bar is one he has set by example that stretches us all and allows us to reach beyond where we were to where we dream to be.

A Life of Spirit, Service, and Strength

Scott C. LaBarre has made his place in history as a giant among those in search of civil rights for blind people as well as among those who pursue justice for all who receive less than they are due. He was the general counsel to the National Federation of the Blind and managed a multi-million-dollar legal advocacy program. Because of him, applicants can use assistive technology as an accommodation on the multistate bar examination and can pursue a doctor of chiropractic degree with their desired accommodations. More systemic in nature were his victories in employment law, disability rights, and international policy work, particularly in the area of copyright law. There he was a primary advocate for an amendment to the Copyright Act, allowing materials to be transcribed for use by the blind without having to undergo the long and tedious process of prior approval, which was the case prior to 1996. Extending this work, he was instrumental in the drafting and adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty, permitting the sharing of books in special formats among the blind and print disabled of many countries. Scott was permanently admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States; the United States Courts of Appeals for the Second, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and DC Circuits; the United States District Court for the District of Colorado; the Supreme Court of Colorado; the United States District Court for the District of Maryland; and the Maryland Court of Appeals (Maryland's highest court). He was named one of Colorado's Super Lawyers and Best Lawyers, distinctions recognizing the top five percent of Colorado attorneys.

A role model for many, Scott understood the importance of serving in the American Bar Association, believing that advancing his career must proceed hand in hand with advancing his career field. He was a founding member of the Disability Rights Bar Association and served on its Executive Board as vice chair. He served a three-year term on the American Bar Association's Board of Governors, where he chaired the Member Services Committee and served on the Board's Executive Committee during his last year. Scott was also active in the ABA's Solo, Small Firm, and General Practice Division, holding a position on its governing council for several terms. He recently became chair of the Division in August of 2022. ABA President Reginald Turner asked him to serve on the ABA's Standing Committee on Meetings and Travel and the Steering Committee of ABA's Practice Forward, a committee appointed to examine the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the practice of law. Scott represented the Denver Bar Association as a delegate to the ABA's House of Delegates. And within the National Federation of the Blind, Scott served as the president of the National Association of Blind Lawyers for more than twenty years.



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More impressive than his professional accomplishments are the things Scott did for his family, biological and spiritual. He knew he was one of the luckiest men alive when Anahit agreed to be his wife and lifelong partner. Together they brought into the world and nurtured two souls who would mean more to Scott than any hired or elected position. Being the finest father that he could be, was a commitment he strove to honor and uphold throughout his life. He cheered on Alexander as he played baseball and was immensely proud when he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Scott was enthusiastic in Karter's participation in the choir, on the basketball court, and in the theater activities where set design became a major focus and may well become a career. We dare not forget his beloved labradoodle, Mocha.

Scott loved the mechanics of flying, even when his life was made more difficult as a blind consumer who would not be left alone by those intent on learning where it was he was trying to go and telling him how slow and deliberate he should be in getting there. He loved anything to do with space and space travel and, when there was a launch or landing, he was often found in front of a television set cheering on the activity in the same way he would celebrate the victories of his favorite college and professional sports teams.

This outstanding Federationist will always be remembered for his distinguished service to the Colorado affiliate, the Colorado Center for the Blind, and his long-standing and successful efforts to raise funds through the NFB monthly donation program. Beyond his work, our love sprang from his determination to make us laugh, feel better about ourselves, and to know that we are appreciated and loved. Scott was one of the finest examples of an integrated human we have ever known, and may his work and example propel us not only to greater victories but to even greater successes as we strive to live as full and balanced people.

Scott LaBarre Legacy

Scott worked tirelessly to build the National Federation of the Blind. If you would like to contribute to further Scott's legacy, please consider a gift to the Museum of the Blind People's Movement. The next frontier is to change the nature of the broader public perception of blindness. America has no cultural institution that centers the experience of blind individuals of diverse backgrounds and celebrates how those people worked together to lift each other up through centuries of misconceptions. It is no accident that the blind have made progress in society, it has come through the sacrifice, struggle, and generosity of blind people who have worked together to build their own independence.



It is time for NFB to tell their story, Scott's story, to dramatically enhance the public understanding of blind people and our contributions within society. Our legal and legislative victories are central to our stories, and Scott's work including the Marrakesh Treaty will be highlighted in the museum. The museum is encouraging five-year pledges during this phase of the campaign. Please contact Patti Chang for more information at 410-659-9314, extension 2422, or pchang@nfb.org. In addition to the museum campaign, the National Federation of the Blind recently established the Scott C. LaBarre Leadership and Justice Fund. The fund will support many things that were near and dear to Scott, such as our advocacy work and our work around education. To give to the fund, visit <https://nfb.org/donate> and indicate that your donation is in memory of Scott. Thank you to all who have already pledged to our museum or contributed to the fund. Please join in creating a lasting legacy for Scott.



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