



AER Report

Vol. 30 No. 1 Spring 2013



University of Kentucky's New TVI Program

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New TVI Program to Launch in 2013

Self-Esteem Resources for Youths Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

AER O&M Conference 2013 Sneak Peek

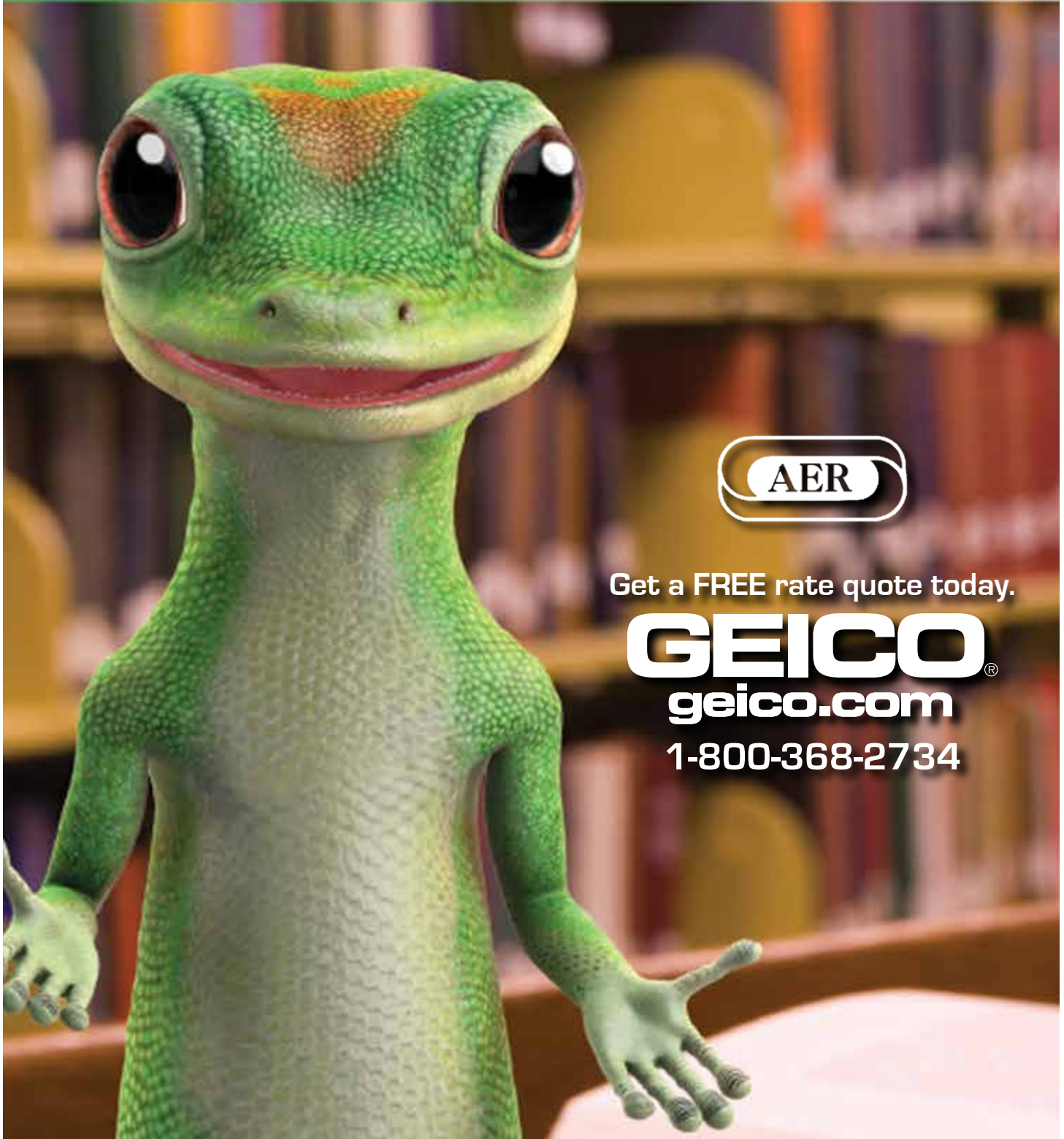
...and much more!

In fall 2013, the University of Kentucky (UK) will welcome the first students to its brand new program to train teachers of the visually impaired (TVI). This program marks the reemergence of TVI training in Kentucky, after the University of Louisville stopped accepting students in 2010. Although children who are blind and visually impaired are a low-incidence population, the need for well-trained professionals who can support them remains high. In this day and age of funding challenges, it is heartening to see educators across Kentucky collaborate to bring TVI training back to their state. The UK program, which will award an undergraduate degree and a graduate-level certification in TVI, promises to be a win-win situation, not just for the people of Kentucky but also for everyone in the blind and visual impairment field.

Leading the effort is Donna Brostek Lee, Ph.D., long-time AER member and chair of AER's Personnel Preparation Division. Fresh from her role as assistant professor and co-coordinator of the Teaching Children with Visual Impairments and Orientation & Mobility (O&M) with Children programs at Western Michigan University, Brostek Lee was happy to return to Kentucky, where she earned her doctorate degree at the University of Louisville.

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President's Message

by Jim Adams, 2012–2014 AER President



Since AER's creation in 1984, we as a professional community have undergone many changes. In fact that is one of the ironies of life: things are constantly changing. While many of these changes have helped us grow as professionals, some have created unique challenges. The U.S. and global economy has dramatically affected our association. However, I am pleased to report that our association leadership—including our executive director and staff—our board, and finance committee have pulled together to focus on our financial status, which has resulted in modest financial gains. With our members' support our International Conference in Bellevue, Wash., was a great success. We are looking forward to continued support from our members at the AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013, December 11–14, in New Orleans, La., and the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, July 30–August 3, 2014.

We all know that change is not easy. Such was the case in continuing to provide training for our chapters and divisions leadership. In our 2010–2012 biennium, the board voted to move our traditional leadership training, AER LIFT, to an online format. This program is available each month through July 2013 at no charge to our members. This change was partially due to the cost of the traditional delivery format, and it reflects a shift in

our society toward seeking ways to maximize our time and resources. While we all appreciate the opportunity to interact face-to-face with our colleagues, more and more of us are finding that time is a limiting factor. I am very pleased to report that AER LIFT Online has been—and continues to be—a wonderful success. You can now participate from your home or office in real time or come back at your convenience to view the online archives of each webinar or even use them as training tools at your local chapter or division meetings. This change is one of the best examples I know of our members working together to share their knowledge and skills to help us all. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Rick Welsh, Mike Bina, and Debby Holzapfel for making AER LIFT Online the success it has become.

Jim Adams
2012–2014 AER President



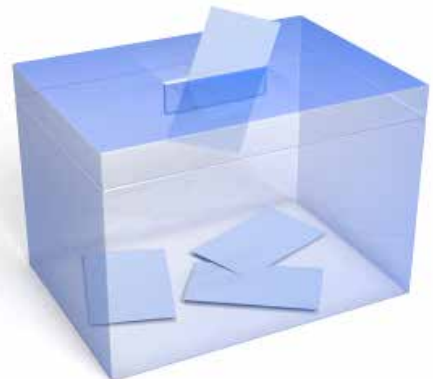
AER Suggestion Box

Have an idea or suggestion for AER?

Let us know!

Contact us via email at:

info@aerbvi.org



Executive Director's Message



Lou Tutt

April 1, 2013, marked the beginning of my third year as AER's executive director. I am the fifth executive director in AER's 28 year history. I am successor to: Kathy Megivern, Denise Rozelle, Mark Richert, and Jim Gandorf, in that order. I know all four of these former AER executive directors, and I never thought that I would one day become one myself. My sincere thanks to former AER

President Patricia Leader and

the 2010–2012 AER board of directors for giving me this opportunity. I have learned so much more about AER as its executive director than I did in my over 20 years as an AER member. Thanks to the AER staff, Ginger Croce, Bette Anne Preston (former AER staffer), Barb James, Mary Bean, and Joelle Ward (newest AER staffer) for teaching me the things that I had to learn about leading/managing a membership association. I have also learned much from the AER board of directors, and the AER membership. I thank all of you for the support you have shown me over these past two years.

As of February 2013, we have 4,100 members, down from the 4,500 members we had when I came to AER two years ago—not good! Over the past two years, my motto has been and remains: RECRUIT, RETAIN, REGAIN. Regaining members who have not renewed their membership remains a challenge for us. I am not giving up on my motto nor am I giving in to the fact that many associations are facing similar challenges. We are AER, and we plan to do more to improve membership numbers. Despite the obstacles, we will persevere and work together to resolve the issues that affect our membership numbers. I hope you will join me in recruiting, retaining and regaining new and former members of AER.

We have two major conferences coming up in the next two years: (1) AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013, December 11-14, in New Orleans, La., and (2) AER International Conference 2014, July 30-August 3, in San Antonio, Texas. And believe it or not, we are already working on the AER International Conference 2016! The program committees for these two upcoming conferences have been meeting often as they carry out their responsibilities to plan these conferences. Marjie Wood heads up the O&M Conference Planning Committee while immediate past president of AER, Patricia Leader, chairs the International Conference Program Committee.

The past two years, I have visited more than half of our 43 AER chapters, and it has been a wonderful experience. I have been given the opportunity to speak at chapter conferences, meet with the boards, attend presentations, reconnect with old friends, and connect with new friends and new AER members. Because of the freeze on travel for the AER staff, most of these chapters have funded my trips to their chapter conferences and meetings. This past year, I attended the conferences for the Virginia Chapter in February, the DC/Maryland Chapter in March, the Michigan Chapter in April, the Dakotas Chapter in May, and the Arizona Chapter in November. If I have not been to your AER chapter, please know that I would like to attend. Contact me, and we will see what we can work out.

We launched the AER LIFT Online webinars in September 2012, and we have completed 8 of the 12 webinars scheduled for this year. Many of you have been webinar presenters, and we thank you. Former AER board member Debby Holzapfel, now retired, and AER staffer Ginger Croce have been moderating these successful webinars. The webinars are scheduled the second Wednesday of each month, 3:30–5:30 p.m. (EDT). We also scheduled two town hall meetings for chapter leaders on April 4 and 5; Matt Hogel, chair of Council of Chapter Presidents, hosted them. Finally, the AER board of directors will meet for a day and a half at the end of April. The AER Executive Committee meets monthly, and President Adams and I meet weekly by telephone. I have also been working closely with other blindness organizations as well as occasionally attending congressional/legislative briefings on Capitol Hill.

If you and your families happen to be in the DC/MD/VA area, please stop by the AER office, 1703 North Beauregard Street, Suite 440, Alexandria, VA, and have a chat with Ginger, Joelle, Barb, Mary and me. We would love to have you!!

Drop Lou a line

Whether you have a question, an idea, or just want to say hi, he wants to hear from you!

Email lou@aerbvi.org

Designing the program

Since her appointment in summer 2012, Brostek Lee has focused her energies on designing the program and securing accreditation from the university, the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). From the outset, she has worked with representatives from UK, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) as well as advocates for people who are blind and visually impaired to build a solid program from the ground up. Together, they have studied the successes and challenges of various TVI programs across the country to cull best practices for instruction, and they have sought opportunities to build strong community partnerships to ensure UK graduates enter the workforce with both the training and network of professionals and peers necessary to support their career goals.

In its first year, the program will offer a bachelor's degree in TVI and a graduate-level TVI certification for working professionals. As the program grows, Brostek Lee expects to add a master's degree program in O&M. "Currently, most TVI and O&M programs are at the master's level," she said. "By having our TVI program at the undergraduate level, we can recruit students while they are younger and earlier in their careers. Likewise, offering alternate certification for those professionals who already have their master's degrees allows us to train individuals who otherwise might not have entered the field, because they don't want or need to pursue a second master's degree."

Students will progress through the two-year program in groups that stay together for all their classes (called "cohorts"), and take two courses per semester plus complete an internship. Because the courses begin at the 500-level (i.e., courses typically reserved for advanced undergraduates and graduate students), TVI undergraduates must be at least juniors and have declared a major. In addition to regular classes, students will meet at KSB for one or two weekends in both the fall and spring semesters plus three weeks in the summer for intensive hands-on training and instruction. To make these on-site intensive sessions as hassle-free as possible, housing will be available at KSB in Louisville.

Brostek Lee also plans for one of the weekend meetings to coincide with the AER Kentucky Chapter Conference so students can begin to network with professionals from across the state. "We need to instill in our students the importance of our professional organization and to help them understand the benefit of being part of AER," said Brostek Lee. "It's important for them to meet people in the field and build those connections while they're still in school. I want students to see the benefit of attending AER conferences, and I want to see them continue to grow and become active members of our association."

Because the anticipated student body will be a mix of full-time undergraduates and working professionals, Brostek Lee tailored the course schedule and format to accommodate the diverse life stages and lifestyles. The courses will meet after 4 p.m. for working professionals. At the same time, students may opt to take classes on campus in Lexington or online. By offering a synchronous online format (meaning students must login to class at a designated time), Brostek Lee can reach students in rural and distant locations and help them interact directly with their instructors and peers in real-time. "In cohorts, it's important for students to feel connected," she explained. "I hope that by having a synchronous format, the students form lasting relationships that will support them beyond graduation and into their careers."

Recruiting students

One of the biggest challenges in the TVI field is recruiting students. Although job openings abound, relatively few people know about TVI as a career path.

Brostek Lee plans to tackle this challenge by promoting TVI and O&M careers through videos on the UK website and at high school college fairs. She has also worked with the UK advising office, which helps students explore career options and declare majors, to ensure they have the necessary information to introduce students to the blindness field.

To attract rural and out-of-state students, the program's online format helps remove logistic obstacles, like proximity to campus. As an added incentive, out-of-state students who enroll in the online program pay Kentucky-resident tuition rates instead of out-of-state student rates. "This is a great recruitment tool for us," said Brostek Lee. "It makes our program competitive with all the others. More importantly, it makes it possible for anyone with an Internet connection to get TVI training at a reasonable cost."

Finally, the program's alternate certification track is in high demand by working professionals who need TVI certification to gain or retain employment. Brostek Lee has already received numerous calls from interested individuals, and she expects the first few cohorts to include many alternate certification candidates. She has worked extensively with the Kentucky Department of Education to disseminate information about her program to each school district and also to state coordinators of special education to reach teachers across the state. Much of Kentucky is rural, so she is especially focused on working with educators in rural areas to train teachers and keep them there. "Statistically, the best way to reach teachers in rural areas is to find someone from that area themselves," Brostek Lee explained. "People often take jobs in rural areas because they need them. However, once a job closer to their friends and families opens

up, they move. That's why the online format is so important. We are more likely to reach teachers who have roots in these rural areas and give them the training they need."

Funding

One of the most daunting obstacles to starting a TVI program is funding. Luckily, Kentucky was in a unique situation where stakeholders recognized the importance and need for TVI training.

When the program at the University of Louisville closed, advocates began conversations with UK, which has other programs serving low-incidence populations. "It really is an ethical decision," said Brostek Lee. "Even though low-incidence programs are not big money makers, the state and the university both recognized the need to provide teachers." Having an in-state TVI training program becomes a win-win, as students stay in-state to pursue their education while the state grows its corps of trained professionals. As a result, the Kentucky Department of Education awarded UK a grant to fund many of the program's start-up costs. While Brostek Lee continues to seek other grant opportunities, she recognizes that the program ultimately must become self-sustaining by controlling its expenses and enrolling enough students to support the program long-term.

One way Brostek Lee has controlled costs has been to grow the program slowly and carefully. Currently, the program plans for only two full-time faculty: Brostek Lee and Gerald Abner, a clinical instructor. Between Brostek Lee and Abner, they will teach all the courses and cover all the students. When the program expands to include the O&M master's degree, slated to begin in

either fall 2014 or 2015, she expects to add only one or two more faculty. With the goal of enrolling 15 students in each cohort and capping enrollment at 20 students, the program's small size is manageable and sufficient to avoid any budget deficits.

What's next

UK's new TVI training program holds a lot of promise for the future of the TVI field. For professionals who are looking to bolster their existing programs or to launch new ones, Brostek Lee cautions that it takes a lot of work to attain accreditation and secure long-term funding. Universities work slowly and developing curriculum is a time-intensive process. Recruiting is another challenge, as the TVI field lacks both practitioners in the school setting as well as higher education professionals who can train the next generation.

"We have made a strong partnership with the state," said Brostek Lee. "We've worked closely with the Kentucky Department of Education and KSB to develop a supportive relationship. We plan to help each other. For example, we plan to use their resources, and in exchange, we can help them with professional development and consulting. Ultimately, we have worked hard to form mutual partnerships to make sure we're meeting the needs of the kids in Kentucky who need good teachers."

Come back to *AER Report* for updates on how this new program progresses and what new plans they have in store for future TVI and O&M students! For more information about this program, go to <http://education.uky.edu/EDSRC/content/vision>.



Michigan Severity Scale Forms Updated

The popular Michigan Vision Services Severity Rating Scale (VSSRS), Vision Services Severity Rating Scale for Students with Additional Needs (VSSRS+), the Orientation and Mobility Severity Rating Scale (O&MSRS), and the Orientation and Mobility Severity Rating Scale for Students with Additional Needs (O&MSRS+) are all now available online and can be completed either with a computer or iPad. The forms are on the Michigan Department of Education Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) website at <http://mde-lio.cenmi.org/Services/StudentsWithaVisualImpairment/MichiganSeverityRatingScales.aspx>.

Two MDE-LIO task forces developed and revised the Michigan Severity Rating Scales, which assist teacher consultants for the visually impaired (TCVI) or teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists in making service recommendations for students who are blind or visually impaired in the state of Michigan,

and are widely used by TVIs and O&M Specialists elsewhere. The Severity Rating Scales are not assessment/evaluation instruments, but rather tools for helping to determine service delivery times. While the scales have been available online for several years as downloads, they are now available as PDF forms that can automatically calculate the Severity of Need Score. Professionals can download the forms to their computer or iPad and fill in each student's information, placing a score in each category. The Summary page features the Final Severity of Need Score as well as a table for converting the score to recommended frequency of service. Users can save the forms to their computers, following the Adobe Reader directions for "Signing the form," or to their iPads using the Acrobat app. For more information, contact Susan Langendonk, facilitator for the VSSRS/VSSRS+ task force, at langendonks@michigan.gov, or Susan Bradley, facilitator for the O&MSRS/O&MSRS+ task force at bradleys1@michigan.gov.

2014 AER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

GRAND HYATT SAN ANTONIO, JULY 30 – AUG 3, 2014



CELEBRATING OUR

30th *Anniversary*

ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED



From the Listserv:

Self-Esteem Products for Youth

One of the many benefits of AER membership is AERNet, our Listserv that brings together education and rehabilitation professionals from around the world. Members can gain valuable insight and advice on important issues in the field of visual impairments.

Recently, the topic of teaching self-esteem to youths who are blind or visually impaired came up on both the general and O&M lists. Eric Levy, a student at Salus University, submitted the following question:

Assuming a child is educated in a public school setting, what are some suggestions you folks may have for preventing a teen (with a visual impairment) from taking in many of the negative assumptions their sighted peers may have about blindness? Sure, we can teach good cane travel or self-advocacy skills to allow them to feel empowered; we can also have them speak to the school social worker and even to their classmates about what it is like to be blind—but even this separates them in a way. If anyone can suggest any good readings that offer new and interesting ways of dealing with this very deep and important question, I'd really be very grateful.

Several list participants responded with book and product recommendations. General books on adjusting to life as a blind person include *Blindness: What it is, what it does, and how to live with it* by Father Thomas Carroll (available from the Carroll Center for the Blind, online at <http://www.carroll.org>) and *Self-esteem and adjusting with blindness: The process of responding to life's demands* by Dean W. Tuttle and Naomi R. Tuttle (available from the publisher at http://www.ccthomas.com/details.cfm?P_ISBN13=9780398075088). One respondent

uses both texts in her classes and gave this thoughtful review:

I use Father Carroll's book in my classes because we discuss various philosophies of blindness rehabilitation, but the book is very dated in terms of the roles of women, and I would not recommend it for a modern teenager. I am very anxious for it to be updated which I understand is in the mix. It is written from the point of view of a 1950's Catholic priest, albeit, a wonderful one. The Tuttle book ... is one that we also use in our class and it is great. It is also used in the Hadley School for the Blind class.

For inspirational stories, some list participants recommended the NFB's Kernel Book Series, which profiles successful individuals who are blind or visually impaired (available at <https://nfb.org/kernel-books>) and APH's *Going Places Resource Guide*, which features individuals who are blind or visually impaired and active in sports and other recreational activities. Also from APH is *Loving Me: A Guide to Creating and Presenting Workshops on Self-Esteem* by Billy T. Brookshire, which explores the origin and expression of self-esteem in a workshop format (both APH products are available at <http://shop.aph.org/>).

Another respondent recommended APH's *Getting to Know You: A Social Skills and Abilities Awareness Curriculum* by Nita Crow and Stephanie Herlich of the California School for the Blind (available at <http://shop.aph.org/>), saying, "This K–12 curriculum involves forming a lunch or afterschool group to participate in activities raising awareness of how people who are blind or visually impaired do all sorts of tasks. It's fun and centers on the students who are blind or visually impaired

Continued on p. 10

From the Listserv: Cont. from page 9

making friends with a small group of peers.”

Finally, for those who want to take a course, Hadley School for the Blind (<http://www.hadley.edu>) offers a 10-lesson course entitled “Self-Esteem and Adjusting with Blindness,” through its Adult Continuing Education and High School programs. According to the course description, “Whether you were born visually impaired or lost vision later in life, this course will help you understand the adjustment to life’s demands. Maintaining self-esteem with the changes and adaptations that come with blindness are discussed in-depth and illustrated with quotes from many blind persons.”

These resources are a terrific starting point to gather information and ideas. But for lessons that really stick, several list participants said there’s nothing like finding a supportive peer group or mentor.

Said one participant:

The literature listed here is very much appreciated. However, nothing will assist [a] teenager’s self-esteem more than actually meeting and interacting with adults and teenagers who are blind, who are well-adjusted and who are living productive lives. It is always helpful to also make sure that these individuals are tax paying, employed citizens who are active in their families and communities. Nothing combats fear more than seeing someone overcome the thing of which you are fearful.

Another respondent suggested “getting together with other people who are blind—either a state ACB or NFB chapter or going to something like Space Camp or Youth Jam. There are mentoring programs through AFB and NFB. [The National Technical Assistance Center on Blindness and Visual Impairment (NTAC-BVI) website] lists transition programs, and many offer camps and weekends that would be good opportunities. You can check it out at <http://ntac.blind.msstate.edu/providers/>.”

Finally, Michael Byington, MA, RDT, COMS, provides some excellent food for thought, as both a professional who works with individuals who are blind or visually impaired and as a person who himself is blind.

This is a tough subject, and I hope some of the musings I provide will be of help. I am responding from two perspectives, one as a professional in the field of blindness, and also as a person who is legally blind and who, though many years ago, went all the way through integrated, large, public school education.

I feel that professionals taking an active role in attempting to help a blind or low vision teen deal with

negative peer assumptions often just makes things worse for the teen. It is something that the teen himself or herself has to be prepared to address.

In helping the teen deal with the situation, I think it is good to identify a strength or strengths that they have that allows them to participate in an activity—or activities—fully and without obvious intervention from related services or paraprofessional personnel. For me, it was debate and forensics. For other students, it might be wrestling, student government, other individual sporting events, etc.

The student then develops peer relationships within these interests and activities, and their interest in the common activities becomes more important than the blindness or visual impairment. I realize that it is hard to do this—and to pull back, if the student is multiply disabled, as many are—but even in such instances, sometimes the very presence of an adult paraprofessional or related services person can negatively impact naturally developing peer relationships.

I currently have one school district and one preschool with which I work. The greater part of my caseload is adults, and often older adults, but in my one school district, I do work with one very high functioning student. He is totally blind. I really do not work with him very much any more, because he is doing fine with his O&M, and he is so tied up with extracurricular music, drama, and sports activities that there often is not time to schedule O&M. The student recently sang a fairly major part in a school musical and was quite good. The staging worked around his blindness quite well. He did not hide his blindness, and it was not a factor in the part. When he came out for the curtain call, he had his white cane. I was really proud of that. I mention this guy because he seems to enjoy an active social life around the school, but as I think about it, his social life I believe is largely built around what he brings to the school’s sports and artistic activities. These have become his niche.

One other caution: Despite the rose-colored picture I have painted above, there will always be disappointment and discrimination from time to time against someone who is blind or legally blind. Part of growing up for teens, both blind and sighted, is learning to deal with disappointment and loss. Blind teens need to develop their own tool kit to get past the negative attitudes and stereotypes. After all, adults are simply

teens who have made it all the way through puberty. (Smile.) Dealing with attitudinal barriers and incorrect assumptions is a lifelong process. I will use my high functioning student as an example. Last year, he was a blocker on the school's football team. He is a strong and capable guy, and he got some playing time last year. This year, however, there was a new football coach who opined that he was not going to give a blind guy any playing time no matter how strong and capable he might be. Having been a professional advocate and lobbyist, before going back to school to earn my COMS, I told the student about Department of Justice complaints under the ADA. He seemed somewhat interested but too depressed about the situation to really want to pursue it. A retired minister, who is a very wise paraprofessional, then suggested to me, "He could win a Department of Justice complaint, and he might still be on the team, but he would not get any playing time. He might as well get used to the disappointment because it is something he will have to learn to deal with throughout life." He was right. Dropping football has given the student opportunities to excel in other equally important extracurricular ways. He has adjusted and indeed excels in many areas.

Do not think I am wimping out on enforcing the ADA or demanding civil rights. I spent a good part of my career in these fields before becoming a COMS. I do think, however, that blind students have to learn to

choose their battles wisely. It is impossible to fight them all. Some other students may never accept the blind student into certain circles of friends or peers, but there are plenty of other circles out there. Blind students simply need to present themselves as good singers, wrestlers, debaters, entertainers, scientists, politicians, etc. For at least some other students, who are peers, the blindness will then become quite secondary.

Thanks to all the members who posted their recommendations. It's important discussions like this that make AERNet such a great resource for our members. No matter what your question is, one of our many AER members will have some ideas and experiences to help you find your way.

Do you have a question for AER members? Or do you have your own suggestions to share? Sign up for AERNet and join the discussion on the Listserv!



Contribute to AER's Image Library!

AER is building an image library and we are inviting our members to contribute! We are seeking images and videos showing vision professionals doing what they do best ... serving those who are blind and visually impaired.

We will use the material to recruit people to the profession, for membership materials, and in other promotional efforts.

We are looking for photos and video of members providing services such as assistive technology, O&M training, low vision therapy, education services, braille instruction, rehabilitation therapy, and all the other services AER members provide.

We will need permission from the subjects in order to use the material for promotional purposes. AER will provide release forms to those who submit items.

Please send your photos (.jpg format, please) and videos (up to three minutes) to ginger@aerbvi.org. You can mail the graphics and videos on a CD -ROM to AER Graphics, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 440, Alexandria, VA 22311-1744.



High School Diploma Options: Hadley Diploma or Credit Transfers

by Julie Kay, high school instructor, Hadley School for the Blind

Each year students who would not have been able to graduate high school otherwise receive their high school diploma from The Hadley School for the Blind. What an exciting accomplishment and opportunity for the students we serve! Students as young as 18 to those well into their 70s have received their diplomas through our school. Many of our students cite frustration with insufficient quality vision services or accessible course formats in their local schools, difficulties passing the state required exit exam for graduation, inability to travel long distances, or simply losing interest in high school as reasons they decide to enroll at Hadley. Our diploma program allows students to accomplish their lifelong goal of earning a diploma at home, at their own pace.

For those students who prefer to remain at and graduate from their local school, Hadley offers the ability to transfer high school credits to a local high school. This little-known program has helped many blind and visually impaired teens persist in school and eventually graduate with their peers. The Hadley High School program offers three ways to help blind and visually impaired teens reach their dreams of crossing their local school stage at graduation:

- ♦ **Transfer credits.** Local schools consider many factors when allowing a transfer of credit from another school. They typically select courses that are not available through their curriculum. In addition, they consider each student's abilities and disabilities and their individual timeframe for completion. They carefully consider how students can use their time productively to reach their graduation goals, such as during the summer months when some courses may not be available. The Hadley High School Program works well for these students as Hadley enrollment is open year-round.

Before students apply to Hadley, they must first go through their local school to get approval for the Hadley course(s) they wish to take. Students can enroll in various subjects through Hadley, such as history, math, science, and electives, most of which are counted for credit at local schools.

- ♦ **Preparatory work.** Students who need to "brush up" on some skills or who want to learn the basics can take courses such as Basic English Skills 1 and 2, Pre-Algebra, or technology. Those who want to improve their communication skills may take Braille, Keyboarding, or

Effective Listening. Most students take these courses during the summer. This way, when they start a similar course in the fall, they already know the basics and are able to succeed. Some students even take these courses during the school year while attending their local school. If the local school approves the course, they may transfer these credits. Sometimes this allows students to take more advanced courses at their local school after taking a basic course with Hadley.

- ♦ **Homeschool opportunities.** Hadley works with those parents who choose to homeschool their children. Some parents may want help teaching elements of the high school curriculum or provide a variety of learning experiences for their child. In these cases, students who are blind or visually impaired may choose to take a self-paced course with Hadley. Parents and the Hadley instructors collaborate to ensure their high school students are offered the opportunity to learn, comprehend, and master the tools they need to succeed.

We are proud of our high school courses and the graduates who have taken advantage of them. The courses meet the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) and North Central Association (NCA) accreditation standards, are self-paced and are taught by our well-credentialed instructors. Courses are available as digital talking books (DTB), online, in large print, or braille. All high school courses are tuition-free and are open to anyone who is age 14 and over and legally blind.

For more information or to enroll, please visit www.hadley.edu or contact Hadley High School Coordinator and Director of Student Services Karen Woodfork at woodfork@hadley.edu or 800-323-4238.

Updated Version Available



\$39.95

Members

\$74.95

Non-Members

Order from the AER Store at www.aerbvi.org.

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired



AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013

Sponsored by the AER Orientation & Mobility Division

Exploring All the Options
Join us Dec. 11–14 in New Orleans, Louisiana!

Sponsored by AER's Orientation & Mobility Division, the AER International O&M Conference 2013 will bring together hundreds of O&M specialists from around the world. This exceptional opportunity for professional development and networking will feature more than 100 hours of presentations on topics such as:

- Street crossings
- VI students who are infants/toddlers
- VI students with additional disabilities
- Travel instruction for people with disabilities other than visual impairment
- Private contracting for O&M
- GPS and location technology for VI individuals
- Technology/apps and O&M

In addition to these topics, there are three educational tracks for topics related to guide dogs, international O&M issues, and research.

The last time AER hosted an O&M conference was ten years ago, and people are still talking about the valuable information sharing and ideas that came from that event. Join us as we explore and celebrate the joys and challenges of working in O&M. Discover techniques and technology, connect with colleagues and mentors, and help us shape the future of the field.

For more information about the conference, including the tentative presentation schedule, go to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013>.

Registration

Early bird registration rates are still available through July 31!

Go online to <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013> to register, download a registration form, and read the complete terms and conditions.

	Early Bird 3/1/13 – 7/31/13	Advanced 8/1/13 – 12/1/13	On-Site
AER O&M Division Member Rate	\$209.00	\$239.00	\$269.00
AER Member Rate	\$229.00	\$259.00	\$289.00
Student Member Rate	\$155.00	\$185.00	\$215.00
Non-Member Rate	\$355.00	\$385.00	\$415.00
AER Member Daily Rate			\$169.00
Non-Member Daily Rate			\$269.00
Guest	\$119.00	\$119.00	\$119.00
Optional Fee:			
Creole Queen Dinner Cruise	\$35.00		



Booking your room at the Hilton Riverside New Orleans helps AER keep its costs down for this important conference. AER is bound by contract to fulfill a specific block of rooms in order to offer you a special rate. If we don't meet the quota, we are financially responsible for any unused rooms. That may eventually result in increased registration or exhibit booth fees at future AER events. We appreciate your willingness to play a part in ensuring a successful conference!

Hotel

The AER International O&M Conference 2013, will be held at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, located at Two Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130 USA. Phone: 1-800-HILTONS (mention group code "BVI"). For online reservations, go to https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_gi_new&groupID=17822128.

AER is pleased to offer the following special rate for attendees for the nights of Dec. 10–14, 2013:

Single/Double: \$159 plus tax (currently 13% sales tax and \$3.00 occupancy tax per night)

Triple/Quad: \$30 plus tax per additional person per night

Room rate includes complimentary in-room wireless Internet for all attendees booked under the group's room block (retail value \$12.95 per day). Reservations made outside of the group's room block will not be eligible for the complimentary Internet.

The hotel is offering the group rate 3 days prior to/after the conference if available. If you would like to reserve a room before or after the **official conference dates** and cannot get the group rate, please contact Laura Bozeman at laura.bozeman@umb.edu if you would like to be placed on a notification list.

Reservations must be made by **November 11, 2013**, to receive the group rate. If calling, mention group code "BVI."

Room reservations require a credit card guarantee or a first night's deposit by check. Cancellations are required prior to 72 hours of arrival.

Transportation

American Airlines is offering all attendees a 5% discount off the lowest applicable published air fare. The discount is available Dec. 7–18, 2013, for travel to New Orleans, La. Book your reservations online at www.AA.com and enter promotion code **41D3AZ**. At this time there is no ticketing charge for reservations made and ticketed on www.AA.com.

Reservations can also be made by calling American Airlines at 800-433-1790 from anywhere in Canada or the U.S. A service charge of \$25.00 USD per ticket will apply for tickets purchased through American Airlines Reservations, subject

to change. For airport purchase, the service charge is \$35.00 USD per ticket, subject to change. If purchase will be outside the U.S./Canada, ticketing charge varies and will be in the currency of the country of purchase.

The 5% discount can be booked online at www.AA.com for American Airlines and American Eagle flights only. Itineraries involving any Oneworld or codeshare partner airline must be booked through the Meeting Services Department at 800-433-1790, if calling from the U.S. or Canada. International attendees should call their local American Airlines reservations number with the Promotion code **41D3AZ**.

Oneworld carriers are as follows:

AA – American Airlines/ American Eagle	IB – Iberia
AB – Airberlin	JL – Japan Airlines
BA – British Airways	LA – Lan Airlines
CX – Cathay Pacific	QF – Qantas Airways
AY – Finnair	RJ – Royal Jordanian
	S7 – Siberia Airlines

Ground transportation

Airport Shuttle New Orleans

Rates (per person): \$20 one-way or \$38 roundtrip

Reserve online at <http://www.airportshuttleneworleans.com/> or call 1-866-596-2699 or (504) 522-3500 to make a reservation.

Advance reservations are required 48 hours prior to travel for all ADA accessible transfers. Please call in advance of your travel date to reserve the specially equipped shuttle. For group reservations of 50 or more people please dial 1-866-596-2699. Ticket booths are located on the lower level in the baggage claim area of the New Orleans Airport.

Planning on renting a car while in New Orleans? Don't book a car without first checking the special discounts available through AER's Travel Discounts page (<http://www.alumnibenefits.org/aer/>).

Complete hotel and transportation information for the AER International O&M Conference 2013 is available online at http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/housing_transport.htm.

Experience the AER International Conference 2012 Online

AER's newest online educational resource, the AER Knowledge Center (<http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com>), gives you year-round access to 78 hours of recorded sessions from the AER International Conference 2012. Catch up on sessions you were unable to attend, review our most informative presentations, and earn CE credits from the comfort of your own home or office.

Try the AER Knowledge Center with the **FREE session recording from the AER International Conference 2012: NMSBVI O&M Inventory by Ron Later.**

If you purchased the All-Access CE Pass prior to the conference, you received an email with your user name and password.

If you have problems with your All-Access CE Pass, email us at aer@aerbvi.org.

Current member rates

\$179 for all-access pass

\$30 per hour

\$89 for MacFarland Seminar

Non-member rates

\$358 for all-access pass

\$55 per hour

\$189 for MacFarland Seminar

Keep your mind engaged between conferences with the AER Knowledge Center!

The screenshot shows the AER Knowledge Center website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the AER logo and the text "ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED" and "AER Knowledge Center". Below the navigation bar, there are links for "Home", "My Account", "Contact Us", and "Checkout: \$0.00". The main content area is titled "FEATURED SESSIONS" and displays six session cards, each with a shopping cart icon and the text "PREVIEW or BUY STARTING AT \$358.00 USD". The sessions are: "EMPLOYMENT MODELS FOR PERSONS WITH TBI AND VISION LOSS", "BRINGING LIFE SKILLS to Life During the School Day", "INTELLIGENCE TESTING of Students Who are Blind and Visually Impaired", "DISPOSITIONS: A Necessary Component in Personnel Preparation Programs", "PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES for Teaching Street Crossings", and "A DISTANCE ORIENTATION TO VISION LOSS". The website is sponsored by VRS (Arizona's Official Web Site). At the bottom, there is a banner for a "FREE session from the AER International Conference 2012: NMSBVI O&M Inventory by Ron Later" and a section for "Learn about AER's Knowledge Center FEATURES & BENEFITS". The American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. logo is also visible.

BANA to Hold Spring Board Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA), which meets face-to-face semiannually, will hold its 2013 spring meeting April 11–13 in Washington, D.C. This meeting is hosted by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a BANA member organization. Meetings on April 11 and 12 will take place in the Madison Building at the Library of Congress. Meetings on Saturday, April 13, including an open forum, will be held at the Arlington Public Library in Arlington, Va.

Agenda items include reports from all of BANA's technical committees such as music, formats, and tactile graphics. In-depth reports will be presented by the BANA Bylaws Committee as well as the Unified English Braille (UEB) Task Force. Interested parties are invited to observe the BANA board meetings. To learn the process required to comply with special security requirements and procedures for entry to federal buildings and to reserve a seat as an observer, please contact

BANA Chair Frances Mary D'Andrea at 412-521-5797 or by email at literacy2@mindspring.com.

Saturday morning, BANA will host an open forum during which members of the BANA board will share plans for the transition to UEB. Forum participants are encouraged to discuss their views and suggestions surrounding braille and its future. Braille readers, teachers and students as well as producers and distributors of braille are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to participate in a round-table discussion with the members of the BANA board. The open forum will be held Saturday, April 13, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Arlington Public Library. To reserve a space at the open forum and to help ensure accurate counts for handouts, contact Frances Mary D'Andrea.

For additional resource information, visit www.brailleauthority.org.



How Are AER International and the Chapters and Divisions Doing When It Comes to Accessibility?

by L. Penny Rosenblum, chair, AER Accessibility Committee

Are you having any access issues as you read this issue of *AER Report*? The last time you attended a conference or webinar, did you find access difficult? Are you on the planning committee for an upcoming conference and unsure of how to address all aspects of accessibility for your attendees?

If you answered "YES" to any of the questions, the AER Accessibility Committee would like to hear from you. To help chapters plan and host their conferences, our committee has compiled guidelines, available online at <http://tiny.cc/AER-Access-Guidelines>.

For presenters, the committee has hosted a Mangold webinar titled, "Guidelines for Creating Accessible Power Point Presentations," available online at <http://tiny.cc/AER-Mangold-Access>. Presented by Ike Presley, this webinar walks

through the steps needed to ensure your next conference presentation is accessible to all your attendees.

We'd like to know what accessibility issues AER members would like to discuss and address. Please take a moment to let us know. Email your thoughts to Penny Rosenblum at rosenblu@u.arizona.edu.



Share Your Own Experiences to Help Your Colleagues and Further the Literature of the Field

The Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB) is once again a benefit of AER membership, and a primary professional resource and tool for you. JVIB is your journal, and there are many ways in which you can be involved with the journal itself: writing a Letter to the Editor or Comment; listing your event on the JVIB Calendar for all to see; posting a question for an author or other colleagues; and reporting research results. In addition, electronic discussion groups, meetings, and symposia aren't the only settings where you can share your ideas. As you will see in the following Practice Perspectives, by Jane N. Erin, JVIB's associate editor for practice, the journal has a forum custom-made for rehabilitation and education professionals like you to share your tips, successes, and innovative ideas with the journal's broad international audience.

Being an active participant in JVIB activities can benefit you in so many ways. One important way to be involved in particular is by becoming a peer reviewer and helping to build the literature of the field. JVIB receives a large volume of manuscripts every year, and each one needs to be reviewed by at least two content experts just like you. Are you interested in becoming a peer reviewer for the journal? If so, please send a list of your areas of interest and experience and a short resume to the journal's editor in chief, Dr. Diane Wormsley, at JVIB@nccu.edu.

Practice Perspectives You Too Can Be an Author: A New Way of Making a Difference

Jane N. Erin, Ph.D., associate editor for practice, *JVIB*, and professor, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and School Psychology, College of Education, University of Arizona

If you are a professional in rehabilitation or education, you are also an inventor, an artist, an entertainer, an engineer, and an actor. You have tried new ways to make learning meaningful, although you probably take your own skills for granted as you go about your daily routine. Your personal creations might include a game to teach compass directions, a new strategy for improving reading speed, or an approach to involving the families of your students and clients in the learning process. Perhaps you sometimes wonder if anyone else could use your idea, but by the time you stop for groceries on the way home, sort through the day's mail, and help your children with homework, the desire to pass along your ideas has descended to the bottom of your list of daily goals. Many professionals are too modest to acknowledge the value of their own ideas and too busy to find time to write them down.

As editor of the *JVIB* practitioners' column, *Practice Perspectives*, I urge you to make this the year that you become an author. This feature invites brief articles by professionals who work daily with people who are visually impaired, with the belief that teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, and rehabilitation professionals are the true experts in what they do. In the three years since *Practice Perspectives* has been part of *JVIB*, we have included a wide variety of worthwhile ideas by professionals in practice. Articles have addressed ways of teaching reading to children or adults who are having

difficulties, materials for teaching basic technology concepts, introducing school-aged students to theatrical performance, using tactile maps in bus travel, preparing adults for careers in sound engineering, introducing travel with dogs to young children, and adapting classroom materials for a student teacher who is visually impaired.

What will your article be about?

The greatest challenge of writing a *Practice Perspectives* article is recognizing how your work can be important to others. Have you presented at your state or provincial AER conference and received positive feedback from colleagues? Have you shared a strategy with your immediate colleagues and heard them say, "That's a great idea!" Have you worked with an employer or classroom teacher who was unfamiliar with blindness, and then realized that this individual was doing exactly the right thing for a student or client because of your guidance? What worked for you is likely to be effective for others.

Some of the things you deal with every day may be of interest to other professionals. Perhaps you have found some successful approaches for addressing the questions below, which are often the topic of conversations on professional electronic discussion groups.

- ♦ How does your team make decisions about the amount and type of services that your student or client receives, especially when that person has a disability in addition to visual impairment?
- ♦ What ways have you used to teach and motivate learners who are transitioning from print reading to braille reading?
- ♦ How have you successfully worked with post-secondary students to guide them to a career path?
- ♦ How have you educated members of school and

community about the needs of a person with visual impairments, and how have you taught your students and clients to advocate for themselves?

- How have you worked with a student or client to use technology in solving a practical problem in the home, school, or community?

Now that you have an idea, how will you write the article?

The article need not be long. Somewhere between 500 and 2,000 words (that's 2 to 8 double-spaced manuscript pages) is just right. In the first paragraph or two, be sure to catch the reader's attention and tell what you are writing about. During the article, provide examples of how you knew your idea worked: descriptions of student performance and data that show improvement are very effective ways of presenting outcomes. If this is the first time you have written an article, you will find some helpful guidelines on the *JVIB* website, at <http://tiny.cc/JVIB-InfoForAuthors>, under *Steps to Publication: Guidelines for New JVIB Authors*.

As we welcome new and returning AER subscribers to the *JVIB* readership, I encourage you to consider contributing to *Practice Perspectives*. You will make a difference not only for colleagues, but also for the adults and children who gain from their expertise. As editor of *Practice Perspectives*, I welcome the opportunity to talk with you *before* you submit your article, to help determine if you have an idea that might work as a *Practice Perspectives* piece and ensure that you grasp how best to develop your article. I look forward to hearing from you as you take the first step toward becoming an author.

Where do I send my work?

If you have a professional success story that could encourage and inform others in our field, please send your idea to me, Jane N. Erin at jerin@u.arizona.edu, and I will work with you to develop an article for a future edition of *Practice Perspectives*.

[Reproduced from J. Erin, *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 107(2), 151–152, copyright © 2013 by AFB. All rights reserved.]

Call for Papers JVIB 2014 Special Issue on

Service Delivery Models in Education: Special Schools, Itinerant Programs

Guest editors: Eugene McMahon, Ed.D., executive director, Council of Schools & Services for the Blind; and Sharon Z. Sacks, Ph.D., director, Curriculum, Assessment, & Staff Development, California School for the Blind.

Deadline for submissions: February 28, 2014

Publication date: November–December 2014

For the past several decades, educational services for students with visual impairments have moved from geographically separate special schools outward, into the heart of local communities. During this time, every year has seemingly brought new challenges to professionals seeking to provide students with an effective education and promote their success throughout life. Innumerable forces have strongly influenced educational service delivery in the past decade, from government mandates to the price of gas. As the field of visual impairment seeks to build its evidence base of best practices, the effectiveness of professionals who work with students who are blind or visually impaired is being challenged today as never before, by everything from budget cutbacks, to an ever-increasing emphasis on high-stakes testing, to the rise of the Common Core Curriculum. The 2014 special issue of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* (*JVIB*) invites papers on topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- The role of the specialized school in today's educational landscape and beyond, and connections between specialized schools and programs around the world
- Outcome measurement: Best practices in producing accurate and meaningful outcome data, and using such data to improve programmatic and administrative operations
- Descriptions and outcomes of innovation in pedagogy, assistive technology, and distance learning at specialized schools
- The role of partnerships or initiatives between specialized schools and local educational and outreach programs in providing quality education to all students
- The changing roles of itinerant teachers in urban, suburban, and

rural settings

- Organizing principles and supportive strategies of effective itinerant teachers
- Meeting the needs of students with multiple disabilities who require specialized services and direct instruction and support
- Innovative instructional strategies for students with additional needs, such as English language learners or those with learning or multiple disabilities
- Coping with the critical shortage of teachers, as well as a lack of access to services
- The Expanded Core Curriculum
- Providing services to infants and their families
- The role of paraeducators, occupational therapists, and other members of the educational team
- The team approach: Pooling resources and managing relationships, responsibilities, and rights in schools
- Effective models of assessment for visually impaired students, including those with additional disabilities
- Universal design in action: How portable electronic devices, like the iPad and Surface Pro, are revolutionizing service delivery in the modern classroom
- Personnel training needs and solutions for braille proficiency, assistive technology skills, and working with students with severe multiple disabilities
- Knowledge-management systems and testing: How data can be created and transformed into information and ultimately into knowledge

Guidelines for contributors are available online at www.afb.org/jvib_guidelines.asp.

E-mail submissions should be sent to: qvib@nccu.edu.

Questions can be sent to the editor in chief of the journal at: qvibeditor@afb.net

Personal Reflections on AER Membership:

A Commitment to Personal Growth

by Laurel Leigh, COMS, vice president, AER New Jersey Chapter

Many of you have probably heard someone describe our profession as one of the most accessible and friendly professions out there. At least that's how I heard it. Of course the fact that we are a very small profession is part of the reason, but no matter how large we may ever grow, what holds us together is a genuine commitment to our chosen profession.

I believe those of us who are members of AER demonstrate this commitment even more by continuing to participate and support our professional organization, especially as employer support for dues and conference attendance continues to decrease.

My Introduction to Professionalism

I was first introduced to AER as a graduate student at Florida State University. What I have always appreciated about AER is that it has provided me with the knowledge that there was an organized community of professionals who were dedicated to furthering our profession. This was particularly helpful when faced with agencies and administrations that did not understand the needs of blind and visually impaired students and clients, especially in the days before social media.

Over the years, my professional participation has waxed and waned as my life has taken on various challenges and changes, but through it all, I have been able to return to AER and find that "lift" I always enjoy when I attend a conference, get on the Listserv, read the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, and otherwise network with colleagues around the world.

Meeting a Legend: Dr. Natalie Barraga

I am still amazed at how accessible the leaders of our profession are to each and every one of us who reaches out for information and support when faced with the day-to-day challenges of providing the best services we can to our students and clients.

My first-hand experience with this was when I ran into Dr. Natalie Barraga at my first AER International conference in Washington, D.C. I was trying to orient myself to this new world when Natalie approached me and asked if I needed assistance, which led to her asking my name and where I was from. When she learned I was a new graduate, she was delighted and welcomed me to the field right then and there.

During my stay at the conference, she always seemed to be present with a kind and reassuring word, including encouragement that I, too, could someday attain one of the lifetime achievement awards. Of course, for those of you who know Natalie, you might be tempted to dismiss this as "just" Natalie, but ask some of your friends in the professions of medicine, law, or even social work if they would have the same opportunity at their international conferences.

Although Dr. Barraga may represent an earlier (and gentler) era in our profession's history, I believe the same opportunities exist for every student and recent graduate out there today. My point is that our strength as professionals comes not only from our commitment to do our best every day we work with our students and clients, but also from our commitment to keep our skills up-to-date and to adapt to our rapidly changing world.

An AER Conference Opportunity: Critical Employment Issues Remain

This year's AER New Jersey Chapter conference, *Employment = Empowerment: Preparing All Clients and Students for Lifelong Success*, addresses employment, a topic that has been frustratingly difficult for students, clients, and professionals in our field. This is not to say that individuals who are blind or have visual impairment are not employable, but the data are clear that chronic underemployment has plagued our clients and student for decades.

The recent global economic downturn has presented employment challenges throughout the world, and the impact on individuals with disabilities has been devastating, especially for those who are blind or have visual impairment.

The Explosive Growth of Information Technology

I once heard an education administrator explain that we as teachers will be preparing the entering kindergarten class for a future we cannot begin to fathom as the rate of technological development is moving so quickly. Although the information technology that has exploded over the past several decades offers rich opportunities for our students and clients like never

before, it is only helpful if people have access to it.

School-aged students and adults need access to technology, and our operating budget constraints often limit what we have to offer. For this reason alone, the blindness field needs each of us to keep our skills up to date, attend conferences, and maintain professional certification.

Preparing Our Field to Move Forward

We need to be prepared to go forward with the ideas presented at professional conferences, share them, build upon them, and inspire change because, as Buckminster Fuller has been credited with saying, *“If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don’t bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking.”*

I hope every blindness professional reading this essay

will consider inviting a colleague, friend, parent, or other stakeholders in this field to join them for a professional conference. I believe the ideas and knowledge presented at conferences can provide fertile ground for future development and planning of services and programs as we look forward into this century.

[Reprinted from the winter 2013 newsletter of the AER New Jersey Chapter.]



AER Job Exchange

The Career Source for the Vision Community

Attention Job Seekers!

AER Job Exchange is the largest list of announcements for career opportunities in the field of blindness and visual impairment. Bookmark the Job Exchange page at <http://tiny.cc/AERJobExchange> and visit the site frequently for new listings.

Chapter News

Arkansas Chapter

AER Arkansas Chapter President Bill Jacobson recently published the second edition of his text, *The Art and Science of Teaching Orientation and Mobility to Persons With Visual Impairments* (AFB Press, 2013). Jacobson also authored a book chapter, entitled "Orientation and Mobility," in the book, *Assistive Technology for Blindness and Low Vision* (edited by Manducci and Kurniawan; CRC Press, 2012).

AER Arkansas will host a professional development day on May 13, 2013, at World Services for the Blind in Little Rock, Ark. The all-day workshop, "Your Beeping What??" will focus on using technology and fitness.

This year AER Arkansas will be moving its annual state conference date from May to October. The state conference is slated for October 21, 2013, at the Wyndham Riverfront in North Little Rock, Ark. Mark your calendar!

DC/Maryland Chapter

The AER DC/Maryland Chapter is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2013 AER DC/Maryland Awards: Deane Blazie, Nancy Patton and Janet Morrison.

Deane Blazie received the DC/Maryland Excellence in Blindness and Visual Impairment Award. He and his company, Blazie Engineering, which was located in Forest Hill, Md., were commended for their development and advancement in technology of portable braille note taking systems.



Deane Blazie

The 2013 AER DC/Maryland Award for Direct Service in Education was awarded to Nancy Patton. For over 40 years, Patton served as a teacher of the visually impaired, and she is currently the supervisor of the Prince Georges County vision program. Patton's dedication, passion and commitment has enriched the lives of blind and visually impaired children in Prince Georges County and throughout the state of Maryland.



Nancy Patton

Janet Morrison received the AER DC/Maryland Award for Direct Service in Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Morrison has tirelessly advocated for over 30 years for the promotion of information to low vision rehabilitation services for individuals with low vision in the D.C. area. Her efforts have resulted in an ongoing monthly support group at Sibley Hospital and many topic-specific seminars for low vision patients and their families.



Janet Morrison

These awards were formally presented at the AER DC/Maryland chapter conference in Ocean City, Md., on March 22, 2013. Congratulations to all our honorees!

Penn-Del Chapter

Currently, AER Penn-Del has held three of four quarterly board meetings. Our final meeting and our General Assembly meeting will be held during our annual chapter conference in April. Our main goal for this year is to work, both independently and collaboratively, with AER International and other chapters, to increase AER membership. Beyond this goal, we continue to focus on improving our website and increasing our virtual presence to better communicate with our members and other professionals.

We established an Ad Hoc Archives and Document Storage Committee to research and develop procedures for archiving and creating a repository for AER Penn-Del chapter and board documents.

The AER Penn-Del Conference Planning Committee has been busy planning our 2013 conference, "Equality, Accessibility, and Opportunity: Battles That Matter," slated for April 24-26, 2013. We are excited to announce a new location for this year's conference, the Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center in Gettysburg, Pa.

In addition to 36 concurrent sessions and more than a dozen poster presentations, the Penn-Del conference will offer three impressive general sessions by nationally recognized speakers. They are:

Keynote Address
(Wednesday, April 24)

Dr. Richard L. Welsh, former superintendent of Maryland School for the Blind, retired president of Pittsburgh Vision Services, and the first president of AER

Midnote Address
(Thursday, April 25)

Ms. Annette Reichman, director/
liaison, Office of Special Institutions,

Office of Special Education and
Rehabilitative Services, U.S.
Department of Education

Footnote Address
(Friday, April 26)

Master Sgt. Jeffrey Mittman (Ret.),
communications specialist, Defense
Finance and Accounting Service

Penn-Del is always interested in adding
new talent to our board and committees.
General members are encouraged to
join committees and subcommittees.
If you are interested in participating
in this award-winning chapter, please
contact the AER Penn-Del President at
christie.a.peel@gmail.com.

AER Penn-Del Chapter Awards.

Nominations are currently being
accepted for the prestigious Penn-Del
service awards, the Penn-Del AER
Service Award and the Elinor Long
Educator of the Year (ELEY) Award,
and also the scholarship merit award. We
strongly encourage everyone in the field
to nominate a deserving Pennsylvania
or Delaware professional who has
demonstrated outstanding service to
the chapter or the field. All three award
recipients will be recognized on April 25,
2013, at the Awards Banquet during the
AER Penn-Del Vision Conference.

The Penn-Del AER Service Award is
given to a professional who serves the
education and/or rehabilitation needs
of individuals with visual impairment in
Pennsylvania or Delaware, and who has
demonstrated outstanding contributions
and performance in the field. The ELEY
Award is named after Ms. Elinor Long,
who dedicated her career to developing
and supporting programs for students
with visual and dual sensory impairment
in Pennsylvania. This award recognizes
a professional in the field of education
of students with visual impairment in
Pennsylvania or Delaware.

AER Penn-Del also offers a merit
scholarship award to recognize one

outstanding university student who
is majoring in one or more of the
following certification areas: Low Vision
Therapy, Orientation and Mobility,
Rehabilitation Counseling, Teacher of
Students with Visual Impairment, or
Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. This
year's recipient will receive a \$1,000
award and his or her AER transitional
year membership fee. Applicants must be
admitted to an undergraduate, graduate,
or doctoral program and live or work in
Pennsylvania or Delaware. Applicants
need not be enrolled in a program within
the states of Pennsylvania or Delaware.

For additional information on the AER
Penn-Del chapter, our vision conference,
our committees and subcommittees,
service awards and student scholarship,
please visit our website at <http://www.penn-delaer.org>.

Virginia Chapter

The energy was high as AER Virginia
members donned their top hats to host a
great conference at the Wyndham Hotel
and Conference Center in Richmond,
Va. Guests were invited to allude to the
"many hats we wear" by donning a top
hat or making their own hat to reflect the
diverse roles assumed by those serving
in the field. A trailer for the soon-to-be
released movie "Keep on Keeping On"
introduced Justin Kauflin, professional
jazz musician, who charmed and dazzled
guests with his amazing talent on the
keyboard as he told his story of vision
loss and regained independence. After
a rich offering of breakout sessions
and networking opportunities, Amy
Armstrong, motivational speaker and
university professor, sent guests off
with her presentation, "Learning to
Thrive: Pursuing a Life Well Lived."
Plans are already underway for the 2014
Vision Conference at the Sheraton in
Roanoke, Va.

Wisconsin Chapter

On October 19, 2012 at its annual
conference, the AER Wisconsin
Chapter presented the WAER Special
Recognition Award to Sister Mary
Karen Oudeans. Her work in the
Special Education Department of Silver
Lake College has made it possible for
the pre-service training of teachers in
the education of students with visual
impairment. Silver Lake College hosts an
innovative program that allows teachers
to obtain certification in the area of
visual impairment; over 50 current
teachers of the visually impaired working
in Wisconsin completed their training
under the direction of Sister Mary
Karen. Through her many acts of service
to children who are blind or have low
vision, their families, their teachers and
administrators, Sister Mary Karen has
made a huge impact for the blind and
low vision community of Wisconsin.



Pictured second from left is Sister Mary
Karen Oudeans, recipient of the 2012
WAER Special Recognition Award. With
her (left to right) are her Silver Lake College
colleagues, Lisa Tomberlin, instructor; Dawn
Anderson, program coordinator for the
Program to Train Teachers of the Visually
Impaired; and Karen Schultz, instructor.

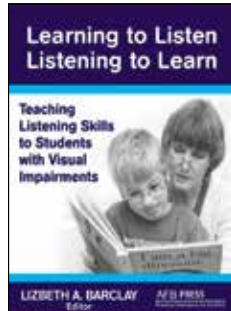
Resources from AFB Press

Learning to Listen/ Listening to Learn

New!

Teaching Listening Skills to
Students with Visual Impairments

Lizbeth A. Barclay, Editor



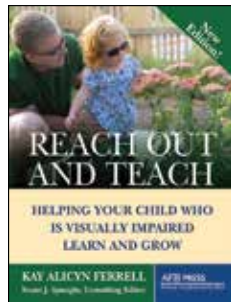
This is the first comprehensive book to address the systematic development of listening skills in children who are blind or visually impaired and may have multiple disabilities. Includes teaching strategies, activities, and a helpful assessment checklist.

Reach Out and Teach

Helping Your Child Who Is Visually
Impaired Learn and Grow

Kay Alicyn Ferrell

Susan J. Spungin, Consulting Editor



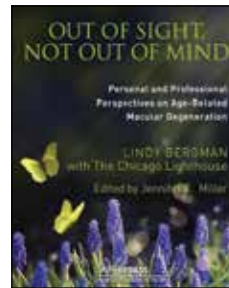
The empowering guide that taught parents and teachers how to promote the development of young children with visual and multiple impairments is now available in an exciting new edition that reflects the concerns of today's families and professionals and the latest research findings on learning in infancy and early childhood.

Out of Sight, Not Out of Mind

New!

Personal and Professional Perspectives
on Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Lindy Bergman with The Chicago Lighthouse
for People Who are Blind or Visually Impaired



Ninety-three-year-old Lindy Bergman shares her personal story of living successfully with age-related macular degeneration and the world renowned experts from The Chicago

Lighthouse present a cutting-edge model of rehabilitation that integrates psychological recovery into low vision service delivery.

Foundations of Orientation and Mobility

NEW Third Edition!

William R. Wiener, Richard L. Welsh, and
Bruce B. Blasch, Editors



This essential O&M text, reference, and teaching tool, has been completely revised, updated, and expanded by experts in the field!

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and Theory**

**Volume 2: Instructional
Strategies and Practical
Applications**

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AFB Launches Described TV Listings:

Finding Described TV Just Got Much Easier!

The landmark Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) has begun a revolution in mainstream telecommunications and video technology accessibility. In the United States among its many groundbreaking achievements, the CVAA mandates several of the most popular television networks to make some of their prime-time and children's programs accessible to viewers with vision loss by adding video description. To help celebrate and promote this achievement, AFB has implemented a Described TV Listings page on their website, an online guide where visitors can determine which shows will be described as well as when they air.

Video description (sometimes called "audio description" or simply "description") makes television programs and movies accessible for people who are blind or visually impaired. Short verbal descriptions of action or key visual scenes in a program, such as setting, costumes, and facial expressions, are provided to add context. The descriptions are inserted into pauses within a program's dialog.

Since July 1, 2012, the networks required to each provide approximately four hours of video description per week include ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, USA, the Disney Channel, TNT, Nickelodeon, and TBS. This expanded array of choices is a much-fought-for complement to the current rich menu of described programming that PBS has offered for many years.

AFB's Described TV Listings initiative makes it easier to find which shows are described, allowing people with vision loss to enjoy their favorite shows alongside their sighted peers. AFB is deeply grateful to the Rovi Corporation and Comcast for helping to create this valuable tool.

To learn which programs are being described and when they will air in your area, and to learn more about how to access them on your television, visit <http://www.afb.org/tv>.



AER LIFT Online

AER LIFT is an acronym for AER Leadership Initiatives Facilitate Teamwork, which was established as a three-day chapter and division leadership training program for AER elected officers to strengthen the association. To paraphrase a popular saying, "As the chapters and divisions go, so goes AER." With that in mind, the training program was designed to stimulate and encourage more involvement of grassroots members, thereby assisting the association in fulfilling its mission of providing support to AER members at the chapter and division levels.

Private funds were raised for the first AER LIFT held in Indianapolis. Based on its success and demonstrated value to the association and chapter and division entities, the AER board institutionalized the training program in the early 1990s by placing money in the budget for its continuation annually. At this time, due to financial challenges, the AER board has not been able to host a face-to-face AER LIFT meeting, which had been held in various parts of the United States.

As a result, AER LIFT Online has been initiated to offer the critically needed leadership training for chapter and division leaders. ACVREP continuing education credits will be issued for attendance and viewing of these leadership webinars.

Here is the schedule for the remaining 2012-2013 AER LIFT Online webinars. For more information, including the presenters of the webinars and to reserve your webinar seat, visit our Web page online at <http://leadership.aerbvi.org>.

Please note: All webinar times are 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm Eastern time zone.

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

The Roles and Responsibilities of Secretary and Treasurer

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Developing and Publishing a Newsletter

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

Effective Advocacy with Legislators



Non-24 Hour Disorder:

Update on a Potential Treatment

In the fall 2012 issue of the AER Report, we featured two research studies on Non-24-Hour Disorder (Non-24). Non-24 is a serious, rare circadian rhythm disorder that affects a majority of totally blind individuals who lack light perception and cannot entrain (reset) their master body clock to the 24-hour day. Currently there is no approved treatment for Non-24.

At the AER International Conference 2012, Vanda Pharmaceuticals was one of two presenters who addressed Non-24. As both an exhibitor and poster session presenter, they shared information about tasimelteon, a circadian regulator, and its efficacy in helping individuals who are blind manage Non-24. Since the conference, Vanda has reported significant outcomes in their study of tasimelteon, which will soon be submitted to the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for a New Drug Application (NDA).

In March 2013, Vanda announced that the company held a pre-NDA meeting with the Division of Neurology Products of the FDA to discuss the regulatory path for filing an NDA for tasimelteon. At this meeting, the FDA confirmed that the efficacy and safety data proposed by Vanda to be submitted in the tasimelteon NDA for Non-24 is adequate to support filing. The NDA supporting package that includes data from clinical pharmacology, pre-clinical pharmacology program, chemistry and manufacturing was also deemed adequate to support filing.

In December 2012 and January 2013, Vanda released the results of two studies they conducted to examine the safety and efficacy of tasimelteon. The first study indicated tasimelteon succeeded in the primary endpoint of Entrainment of the melatonin (aMT6s) rhythm as compared to placebo. Additionally, tasimelteon demonstrated significant improvements across a number of sleep and wake parameters including measures of total sleep time, nap duration, and timing of sleep. Tasimelteon also showed significant improvements over placebo in the Non-24 Clinical Response Scale (N24CRS) as well as in the Clinical Global Impression of Change (CGI-C), an overall global functioning scale. These results provide robust evidence of a direct and clinically meaningful benefit to patients with Non-24.

The second study demonstrated the maintenance effect of 20 mg of tasimelteon to entrain melatonin and cortisol circadian rhythms in individuals with Non-24. Patients treated with tasimelteon maintained their clinical benefits while patients

who received a placebo showed significant deterioration in measures of nighttime sleep, daytime naps, and timing of sleep.

“These results clearly demonstrate that tasimelteon can entrain the circadian clock and continued treatment is necessary to maintain entrainment,” said Steven W. Lockley, Ph.D., Division of Sleep Medicine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. “The study also shows that entrainment is associated with meaningful clinical benefits and that maintaining entrainment of the master body clock is critical to treating the problems caused by Non-24.”

“We are excited by these results as they move us one step closer toward providing a treatment for blind individuals with Non-24,” said Mihael H. Polymeropoulos, M.D., president and CEO of Vanda. “These results also highlight the importance of chronic therapy in treating Non-24. We are confident that if approved, tasimelteon may significantly improve the quality of life for individuals with Non-24.”

Based on the successful completion of the March meeting with the FDA, Vanda is targeting a New Drug Application submission for tasimelteon in mid-2013.

“As a person who regularly experiences the debilitating symptoms of Non-24, these findings are important to me and I think they are important to the blind community as a whole, because they give us hope that a potential new treatment approach is on the horizon,” said Melanie Brunson, executive director of the American Council of the Blind.

ANNOUNCING

a New Member Benefit

AER partners with Shop.com

Earn cash back on your online shopping trips while supporting AER

AER is participating in an exciting new fundraising program — its own shopping website featuring thousands of partner stores like Walmart, JCPenney, Best Buy, Apple, Home Depot, and many more. When you make a purchase on www.shop.com/aerbvi, AER receives royalties, and you earn up to 35% cash back on qualified purchases.

The benefits don't stop there! You earn 0.5% cash back on the purchases of everyone you refer to our website. Now, you can take advantage of the ease and convenience of Internet shopping to buy the products and services you want, while feeling good about helping one of your favorite organizations.

Our new fundraising website also offers:

- Hot Deals page with coupons and exclusive deals to help you save even more.
- Stores page with a full A-to-Z index of your favorite stores.
- Search feature to find exactly what you want from among over 35 million different products and services.
- Gift Ideas area to help you find the perfect gift.
- Unique products and services.


Getting Started is Easy!

1) Visit our website at www.shop.com/aerbvi.

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- Either enter your existing Shop.com or Market America account information OR select “No, I’d like to create a New Account” to create an account.
- Follow the prompts.
- You are now eligible to earn up to 35% on qualified purchases!

3) Go shopping!

- Use the search box at the top of the screen to find a specific item or type of product.
- Use “Shop Partners” to find a specific partner like Best Buy, Walmart, or Macy’s.
- Use “Shop All Departments” to shop by category.
- Use Hot Deals to find special deals and coupons to save even more money.
- Look for the  icon to find out exactly how much cash back you’ll earn from purchases made from that store or on a particular product.

NIH Competition Awards Prizes for Audacious Ideas in Vision Research

Winning ideas include restoring light sensitivity to the blind, precision correction of defective genes, and growing healthy tissue from stem cells for ocular tissue transplants

The National Eye Institute (NEI), part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), has selected 10 winning submissions from a pool of nearly 500 entries for its Audacious Goals challenge, a nationwide competition for compelling, one-page ideas to advance vision science. Each winner received a \$3,000 prize plus travel expenses to attend the NEI Audacious Goals Development Meeting in February near Washington, D.C.

The NEI Challenge to Identify Audacious Goals in Vision Research and Blindness Rehabilitation is part of a government-wide effort to bring the best ideas and top talent to bear on the United States' most pressing challenges through the awarding of prize money, among other types of awards. The challenge sought ideas that support the NEI mission to conduct and support research and other programs aimed at reducing the burden of vision disorders and disease worldwide. Prize competition entries were solicited not only from experts in vision research but from anyone in the private, government, and nonprofit sectors, including scientists, engineers, health care providers, inventors, and entrepreneurs, as well as the general public. Experts reviewed entries on the basis of relevance to the NEI mission and whether the idea was bold, daring, unconventional, or exceptionally innovative; broad in scope; and potentially attainable in about 10 years.

"We didn't know what to expect when we issued this challenge," said Richard S. Fisher, Ph.D., director of NEI's Office of Program Planning and Analysis, which is spearheading the initiative. "Surprisingly, nearly half of the submissions we received came from people who had never been funded by NIH, which demonstrated that we captured the attention of a wide audience throughout the U.S. We invited anyone with an interest in vision research to submit an idea that began with the phrase, 'It would be fantastic if...,' and in fact, we received many truly audacious ideas."

During the judging process, more than 80 experts in the vision community helped narrow the field of 476 to 81 final candidates. A federal panel consisting of 13 clinicians and scientists then selected the winning ideas.

The winners and their audacious ideas are:

Dennis Clegg, Ph.D.

University of California, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Regenerative Therapy for Retinal Disease

To treat degenerative retinal disease with an off-the-shelf tissue graft that could be implanted in the back of the eye to replace cells lost to disease.

Robert Duvoisin, Ph.D.

Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, Ore.
Restoration of Vision by Opto-electronic Stimulation

To restore vision by making nerve cells in the eye sensitive to light so that images captured by a camera can be converted to nerve signals that are sent to the brain.

Yingbin Fu, Ph.D.

University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah
Precise Gene Editing In Vivo

To permanently correct any disease-associated mutations in a patient through the use of molecules that are specially designed to target mutated DNA sequences and that can be delivered safely and efficiently into the eye.

Steven Pittler, Ph.D.

University of Alabama, Birmingham, Ala.
Using Molecular Scissors Genome Editing to Cure Ocular Genetic Disease

To permanently correct gene defects in patients at the site of the mutation using molecules that act like scissors to precisely replace genome errors with the correct DNA sequence.

Rajesh Rao, M.D.

Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and The Retina Institute, St. Louis, Mo.
An Audacious Goal: Reprogramming the Retina

To directly reprogram easy-to-isolate skin or blood cells to retinal cells using gene therapy and other techniques to enable repair strategies for degenerative retinal diseases.

Tonia Rex, Ph.D.

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.
Functional and Structural Neuroregeneration

To restore functional vision in patients who experience loss of axons—the threadlike extensions of a nerve cell that conduct electrical impulses—from the optic nerve as a result of traumatic optic neuropathy or glaucoma by complete axon regeneration.

Julia Richards, Ph.D.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.
Fountains of Youth for the Eye

To turn back the aging process in the eye so that ocular diseases like age-related macular degeneration or glaucoma start 10, 20, or 30 years later than they now do.

Jeffrey Stern, M.D., Ph.D.

Capital Region Retina, PLLC, Albany, N.Y.
Endogenous Retinal Repair: Releasing our Inner Salamander

To repair the retina by activating stem cells residing within the eye, awakening reparative processes that occur naturally in amphibians and other animals but which lay dormant in human patients.

Russell Van Gelder, M.D., Ph.D.

University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.
Reversing Retinal Blindness Using Small Molecules

To restore vision to patients with retinal diseases through the use of a photoswitch, a small molecule that is chemically modified to become active or inactive after exposure to certain wavelengths of light.

Janey Wiggs, M.D., Ph.D.

Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass.
Phenotyping Centers Using Genomic and Epidemiologic Data to Promote Personalized Ophthalmology

To create a network of biobanks that collect corresponding phenotype (physical characteristics) and genotype (genetic) data of people with certain eye diseases; the biobanks could be used for a wide range of studies, including the development of sensitive and specific gene tests that could accurately determine a person’s risk for glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other common complex blinding diseases as well as their likely response to certain therapies.

Next Steps

The winners were invited to present their ideas at the NEI Audacious Goals Development Meeting. The selected ideas will be discussed intensively for further expansion, development, and refinement. Then NEI staff and members of the National Advisory Eye Council will finalize and publish a set of the most compelling audacious goals for the institute and the broader vision research community to pursue over the next decade.

“The selection of the winning entries marks the true starting point for NEI’s Audacious Goals initiative,” said Dr. Fisher. “We are now at the point where some of the world’s most prominent vision experts can discuss these ideas in-depth, establish a set of audacious goals, and weigh in on how we can realize those goals.”

For more information, visit the Audacious Goals website at <http://www.nei.nih.gov/challenge>.



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Prevalence of Visual Impairment in U.S. Increases

The prevalence of nonrefractive visual impairment (not due to need for glasses) in the U.S. has increased significantly in recent years, which may be partly related to a higher prevalence of diabetes, an associated risk factor, according to a study in the December 2012 issue of *JAMA*.

"It is estimated that more than 14 million individuals in the United States aged 12 years and older are visually impaired (<20/40). Of these cases, 11 million are attributable to refractive error. In the United States, the most common causes of nonrefractive visual impairment are age-related macular degeneration, cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and other retinal disorders," according to background information in the article. Previous studies have shown that visual impairment is common in persons with diabetes. "The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes has increased among adults in recent years, rising from 4.9 percent in 1990 to 6.5 percent in 1998, 7.9 percent in 2001, 10.7 percent in 2007, and 11.3 percent in 2010."

Fang Ko, M.D., of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, and colleagues conducted a study to assess the prevalence of nonrefractive visual impairment and factors associated with risk of visual impairment. The study included data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a representative sample of the U.S. population. In 1999-2002 and 2005-2008, 9,471 and 10,480 participants 20 years of age or older received questionnaires, laboratory tests, and physical examinations. Visual acuity of less than 20/40 aided by autorefractor (a device for measuring a person's refractive error) was classified as nonrefractive visual impairment.

The researchers found that prevalence of nonrefractive visual impairment increased 21 percent, from 1.4 percent in 1999-

2002 to 1.7 percent in 2005-2008; and increased 40 percent among non-Hispanic whites 20-39 years of age, from 0.5 percent to 0.7 percent. In analysis among all participants, factors associated with nonrefractive visual impairment included older age, poverty, lower education level, and diabetes diagnosed 10 or more years ago. Among these risk factors, only the latter has increased in prevalence between the 2 time periods considered. Prevalence of diabetes with 10 or more years since diagnosis increased 22 percent overall from 2.8 percent to 3.6 percent; and 133 percent among non-Hispanic whites 20-39 years of age, from 0.3 percent to 0.7 percent.

"It is estimated that more than 14 million individuals in the United States aged 12 years and older are visually impaired (<20/40)"

"We report a previously unrecognized increase of visual impairment among U.S. adults that cannot be attributed to refractive error," the authors write. "If the current finding becomes a persisting trend, it could result in increasing rates of disability in the U.S. population, including greater numbers of patients with end-organ diabetic damage who would require ophthalmic care. These results have important implications for resource allocation in the debate of distribution of limited medical services and funding.

Continued monitoring of visual disability and diabetes, as well as additional research addressing causes, prevention, and treatment, is warranted."

Reference

Ko, F., Vitale, S., Chou, C., Cotch, M.F., Saaddine, J., & Friedman, D.S. (2012). "Prevalence of nonrefractive visual impairment in U.S. adults and associated risk factors, 1999-2002 and 2005-2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 308(22), 2361-2368. doi:10.1001/jama.2012.85685.

Blind and Visually Impaired Entrepreneurs Network With Success

An interview with Lighthouse of Broward's Dolores Hanley McDiarmid

Networking...the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups or institutions, specifically the cultivation of productive relationships for employment. Almost everyone knows networking is a large part of successfully finding employment. At the Lighthouse of Broward in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., staff and clients put together networking events to boost the businesses of entrepreneurs who are blind or visually impaired. We asked Dolores Hanley McDiarmid, MA, COMS, public awareness project manager, Lighthouse of Broward, to tell us more about these events.

AER: How did the idea for the networking events first come about?

DHM: When I first heard about the various small businesses some of our clients had, I asked myself why we, the staff, did not know about them. I thought we could provide them with the much needed support and encouragement to be successful. Better yet, they could support and encourage each other in their endeavors.

My creative juices began to flow. What if we had a "holiday market" in the dining area at Lighthouse of Broward? Our client entrepreneurs could each have a table where they could promote and sell their products/services. We would then invite our other clients, the Lighthouse of Broward staff, family members, and friends to visit each table and find out about each person's business and take a business card.

After giving this idea some serious thought, we successfully put together the Holiday Market for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The vendors represented a wide range of interests and services from artists, an author, jewelry makers, Avon representatives, and food vendors to those who specialized in computer-related services, health-related products, and digital restoration of historical art.

AER: What are some of the benefits for those who participate in such an event?

DHM: This type of networking would enable our clients to 1) be involved and interact with people, 2) gain and share knowledge, 3) become aware of new opportunities that exist, 4) meet new people who might be able to help them accomplish their goals of growing their business or finding employment, and 5) increase their self-esteem.

In terms of their business aspirations, the networking event would allow our client entrepreneurs to: 1) be involved in an event with other entrepreneurs they had never met and make new connections; 2) practice important social, communication and networking skills; 3) evaluate their skills in order to make improvements for future events that might take place in the community with a larger audience; and 4) show people attending the market the various things that people living with blindness and visual impairments can do.

AER: What were some of the outcomes of the Holiday Market?

DHM: As a result of networking, three of the participating clients met and eventually formed a corporation for entrepreneurs who are blind and visually impaired, naming it Vibrant Tapestry. They have organized this corporation independently, without any assistance from any agency serving the blind and visually impaired. They relied on their own resources!

Members of Vibrant Tapestry have been on various radio shows talking about each of their small businesses. At the same time they are educating listeners about the various businesses run by people living with blindness and visual impairments.

AER: Was the Holiday Market your only networking event?

DHM: Oh no! The feedback from the Holiday Market clearly indicated that people wanted another one! So, we organized a second market.

We called this one the "Autumn Market," because it occurred at the end of September. It took place on a Friday and Saturday to allow more family and friends of participants and Lighthouse of Broward staff to attend the event.

The entrepreneurs participating in the Autumn Market also had an opportunity to become involved with Vibrant Tapestry in order to increase their opportunities to network on a larger scale in the community while further educating the public about the skills and talents they offer to the community.

AER: Do you have future plans for other "markets"?

DHM: Based on feedback from the Autumn Market, we will probably plan for future markets to take place in November when more people shop for the holidays. Also, we would like to increase our advertising by using technology such as Facebook to bring in more of the public.

AER: Any last thoughts?

DHM: The opportunities for our clients to network has allowed them to be more involved in the community, gain and share knowledge about themselves, meet new people, live a life with greater meaning and fulfillment and most of all, increase their self-esteem.

Lighthouse of Broward is pleased to say that with each year that passes, more of our clients are learning about networking and the value of networking in order to find employment and/or grow their small business. Networking can help make life more meaningful and satisfying!



Welcome New Members!

September 6, 2012 – March 24, 2013

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CANADA

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Laurie Watson

Manitoba

Heather Harland

Ontario

Vicki Patterson

ENGLAND

Kristy Jackson
Ian Vaughan

UNITED STATES

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Donna Moore
Racheal Robinson

Alaska

Phillis Foster

Arizona

Yuvitza Hoyos Ballesteros
Nadine Mason
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Isreal Martinez
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Brynn Peterson
Lee Straub
Edgar Vargas
Griselda Vogt
Liam Whitney
Katie Young

Colorado

Beth Myers
Kristy Penk
Ellen Trapp

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Drew Metzger
Melissa Suess
Delaware
Robert Doyle
Emily Mulhern

Florida

Susan Hoffman
Jack Keitzer
Amber Lissow
Jason Sattler
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Sandra Luskin
Monica Stephens
Samantha Voll

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Kathy Mullen

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William Corrigan
Amber Mooney

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Michelle Bianchi
Frances Lamendola
Matthew Mescall
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Paul Doerr
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Jaelyn Sheridan
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Nancy Calvi
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In The News

Leader Dogs for the Blind Receives \$1 Million Grant from Edward T. and Ellen K. Dryer Foundation

Leader Dogs for the Blind, Rochester, Mich., announced in January that it has received a \$1 million grant from the Edward T. and Ellen K. Dryer Foundation to create and endow the Edward T. and Ellen K. Dryer Orientation and Mobility Internship Academy at Leader Dogs for the Blind. By providing up to three endowed paid professional internships per year, the Dryer Internship Academy at Leader Dogs for the Blind will fill a critical role in the education of graduate-level orientation & mobility (O&M) students, who must complete an internship as part of their master's degree programs.

AIDB Board of Trustees names Dr. John Mascia as 17th President

Dr. John Mascia became president of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind in January after being appointed by the board to succeed Dr. Terry Graham who retired Feb. 1. Mascia previously served as vice president of Adult Programs at AIDB, a position he has held since 2009. Before joining AIDB, Dr. Mascia worked as a supervising and chief audiologist and as an assistant professor in New York.



Monteferrante Named President and CEO of Envision

Envision, a service and employment provider for people who are blind or low vision based in Wichita, Kan., has named Michael Monteferrante as president and chief executive officer. Monteferrante assumed the position in January. He brings more

than 25 years in corporate leadership in a variety of industries including commercial real estate, e-commerce, transportation, construction and food. As CEO, Monteferrante will concentrate on executing the organization's mission, growing the Envision Rehabilitation Center, enhancing the Envision Foundation and diversifying Envision Industries.



Teachers of blind honored as pioneers

Educators and AER members Robin Lowell and Sherry Hahn were handed a tough problem: teaching algebraic concepts to visually impaired kids 170 miles away. With the help of technology, they solved the equation.

That's why the teachers from the Washington State School for the Blind in Vancouver stood last year in the 1,200-year-old Prague Castle in the Czech Republic as invited guests of Microsoft. They were among 21 educators honored worldwide by the software giant for using technology to bring innovation into classrooms. The Partners in Learning 2012 Global Forum in Prague, which ran from Nov. 28 to Dec. 1, brought together 500 of the most innovative teachers, school leaders and government officials from 80 countries. The group had been narrowed from more than 250,000 teachers competing in national and regional forums.

Lowell and Hahn's first-place finish at the American forum qualified them for the global competition in Prague, where they placed second in cutting-edge use of technology.



2013/2014

Calendar of Events

For more information about upcoming events, or to have your event listed, visit our Web site at www.aerbvi.org and click on the "Conferences" section.

2013

April

Apr. 11–13: BANA Spring Board Meeting, Madison Building at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, on Apr. 11-12 and Arlington Public Library, Arlington, VA, on Apr. 13

Apr. 18–20: AFB Leadership and AER Illinois Chapter Conference, Renaissance Chicago Downtown, Chicago, IL — Visit their website at <http://il.aerbvi.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=1>, for more information.

Apr. 19–20: 2013 NC Conference on Visual Impairments and Blindness, Governor Morehead School, Raleigh, NC — Visit their website at <http://www.ncaer.net/index.html>, for more information.

Apr. 22: NYSAER One-Day Conference, Albany Ramada Plaza, Albany, NY — Visit their website at <http://nysaer.aerbvi.org/events.htm>, for more information.

Apr. 24: The Aging Eye: Today's Treatments—Tomorrow's Hope Summit, Case-Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Cleveland, OH — The goal of this conference is to curb the growth of vision loss due to aging eye diseases in Ohio. For more information, visit <http://www.preventblindnessamerica.us/ohiosummit/index.html>.

Apr. 24–26: AER Penn-Del Chapter Conference, Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center, Gettysburg, PA — Visit their website, <http://www.penn-delaer.org/>, for more information.

Apr. 25–26: AER Michigan Chapter Annual Spring Conference, Marriott at Laurel Park Place, Livonia, MI — Visit their website at <http://www.maerbvi.org>, for more information.

Apr. 26–27: AER Board meeting, online

May

May 8: AER LIFT Online Webinar — The Roles and Responsibilities of Secretary and Treasurer. Webinar runs 3:30–5:30 p.m., Eastern time and is available at <http://leadership.aerbvi.org>.

May 13: AER New Jersey Chapter 2013 Conference, The Conference Center at the NJ Hospital Association, Princeton, NJ — Visit their website at <http://www.aerbvi.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1342>, for more information.

June

June 12: AER LIFT Online Webinar — Developing and Publishing a Newsletter. Webinar runs 3:30–5:30 p.m., Eastern time and is available at <http://leadership.aerbvi.org>.

June 19-21: AER Northern Rockies Chapter Conference, Snow King Lodge, Jackson, WY — Visit their website, <http://nraer.aerbvi.org>, for more information.

June 30-July 5: 8th International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) European Conference on Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment, Istanbul, Turkey — Visit their website at <http://www.icevieurope2013.org>, for more information.

July

July 10: AER LIFT Online Webinar — Effective Advocacy with Legislators. Webinar runs 3:30–5:30 p.m., Eastern time and is available at <http://leadership.aerbvi.org>.

July 21–26: Camp Abilities Nebraska, Iowa School for the Deaf, Council Bluffs, IA — For more information, visit the Boys Town website at <http://www.boystownhospital.org/hearingservices/EducationalOutreach/Pages/Camp-Abilities-Nebraska.aspx>.

July 25–28: 11th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference, Fairmont Scottsdale Princess Hotel, Scottsdale, AZ — For more information, visit <http://chargesyndrome.org/conference-2013.asp>.

August

Aug. 3–6: Camp Abilities Maryland, Lions Camp Merrick, Nanjemoy, MD — For more information, visit <http://www.campabilitiesmaryland.com>.

Aug. 24–28: Deafblind International 8th European Conference, Lille, France — “Identities and Changes—Commonalities across deafblindness—Learning from each other.” For more information, visit <http://www.dbilille2013.eu>.

September

Sept. 19–21: Envision Conference 2013, Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, Minneapolis, MN — For more information, visit <http://www.envisionconference.org>.

Sept. 26–28: AER Oklahoma Chapter 2013 Annual Statewide Conference, Oklahoma School for the Blind, Muskogee, OK

Sept. 27–28: AER Board meeting, online

October

Oct. 20–22: AER Alabama Chapter Annual Training Conference, Lake Guntersville State Park, Guntersville, AL — For more information, visit their website at <http://www.alabamaaer.com/Index.html>.

Oct. 21: AER Arkansas Chapter 2013 Conference, Wyndham Hotel, North Little Rock, AR — For more information, visit their website at <http://ar.aerbvi.org/>.

November

Nov. 13–15: AER Northeast Chapter 2013 Conference, Mount Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods, NH — For more information, visit their website at <http://www.neaer.umb.edu/>.

December

Dec. 11–14: AER International Orientation and Mobility Conference 2013, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA — For more information, visit the conference website at <http://aerbvi.org/O&M2013/>.

Dec. 14: AER Board meeting, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA, and online

2014

February

Feb. 7–8: AER Board meeting, online

May

May 2–3: AER Board meeting, online

July

July 30–Aug. 3: AER International Conference 2014, Grand Hyatt San Antonio, San Antonio, TX — Celebrating AER's 30th Anniversary!! Visit the AER website for updates, <http://www.aerbvi.org>.



AER International



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“Exploring All Options”

Dec. 11-14, 2013

New Orleans, Louisiana

New Orleans Hilton Riverside

The year's ***Must-Attend Event*** for Orientation & Mobility professionals presented by the Orientation & Mobility Division of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Join hundreds of O&M Specialists for this exceptional opportunity for professional development and networking.

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GPS and Location Technology
for VI Individuals

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Guide Dog Track

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AER Job Exchange

The Vision Community's Most Active Job Bank



Looking for a new career? Check out what AER Job Exchange, the largest online career resource in the field, has to offer. The following is a sample of available positions from AER Corporate Members. Additional job opportunities and complete details on the following positions is available at www.aerbvi.org.

HELP WANTED

DELAWARE

Education Program Principal Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired New Castle

Qualifications: Applicants must have education, training and/or experience demonstrating competence in each of the following areas:

A master's degree in educational leadership from a regionally accredited college, or a master's degree in education from a regionally accredited college and current and valid principal or assistant principal certificate from another state, or a master's degree in any field from a regionally accredited college and successful completion of a Delaware approved alternative routes to certification program from school leaders. A minimum of three (3) years teaching experience with students who are visually impaired and/or students who have other special education needs.

Duties: The principal is responsible for oversight of the Division's Educational Program for the Visually Impaired. Duties include supervision of itinerant teachers, collaboration with DOE, school districts and other agencies/programs. Responsibilities also include ensuring compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies including IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; providing training and mentoring to staff. Also responsible for budget and grant management.

Salary: Salary is based on the Department of Education pay scale.

Apply online at: <http://www.jobaps.com/DE/sup/BulPreview.asp?R1=022813&R2=>

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MACZ12&R3=350800
or contact: Lauren Williams
1901 N. DuPont Highway, Biggs Building
New Castle, DE 19720
Phone: 302-255-9812
Fax: 302-255-9964
Email: lauren.williams@state.de.us

IOWA

Teacher of the Visually Impaired Iowa Braille Sight Saving Schools Vinton

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in education plus experience using a computer and other office equipment required. Candidates must meet State of Iowa teacher licensure requirements with any endorsement in visual impairment by the time of appointment. The ability to travel throughout a designated region within Iowa on a daily basis also required. Master's degree in education preferred. Valid driver's license also preferred.

Duties: In collaboration with Area Education Agencies (AEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and using an itinerant model, the Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) provides appropriate support and/or instruction to students with visual impairments, in their local schools and home settings. Support is also provided to parents and local school personnel.

Salary: \$41,276 - \$77,367 commensurate with qualifications/experience. Comprehensive fringe benefit package.

Additional information: Position starts August 2013. Service regions cover multiple Iowa school districts. Specific service region and office locations to be determined. Responsibilities include occasional overnight

HELP WANTED

and out of state travel. Criminal and other relevant background checks required.

Application process: Position will be posted until filled. Send cover letter, resume, transcripts and copy of teaching license to: Director of Human Resources
Iowa Braille School
1002 G Ave.
Vinton, IA 52349

For more information, contact: Justin Reugg
Phone: 319-472-5221, Ext. 1226
Email: jruegg@iowa-braille.k12.ia.us

IOWA EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED / IOWA BRAILLE SCHOOL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER WITH A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.

Deaf-Blind Education Consultant Iowa Braille Sight Saving Schools Vinton

Qualifications: Master's degree in education or related field plus at least two years of experience working with persons who are deaf-blind, sensory impaired, multi-disabled and/or severely disabled required. Candidates must have or be eligible to obtain a valid Iowa teaching license or related statement of professional recognition from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners by time of appointment. Additional experience serving persons who are deaf-blind and/or children with multiple disabilities; demonstrated ability to provide consultative services; experience in sign language and/or Braille; a valid driver's license preferred.

Duties: Under the general direction of

HELP WANTED

the Deaf-Blind Project Director, provides consultative and technical assistance to programs and agencies serving early childhood and school-age students (birth–21) in Iowa who are deaf-blind and/or have additional disabilities. Serves as the coordinator for the Iowa Deaf-Blind Services Project, developing and providing professional development opportunities for educators and family members. This position is part of a continuing project funded by a 5-year U.S. Department of Education grant with additional support from the Iowa Department of Education and IESBVI.

Salary: \$51,252 - \$79,004

Additional information: Position starts no later than August 2013. Service region includes State of Iowa. Office location to be determined. Responsibilities include frequent travel within the state and occasional overnight and out of state travel. Criminal and other relevant background checks required.

Application process: Position will be posted until filled. Send cover letter, resume, transcripts and cover of teaching license to: Director of Human Resources
Iowa Braille School
1002 G Ave.
Vinton, IA 52349

For more information, contact: Justin Reugg
Phone: 319-472-5221, Ext. 1226
Email: jruegg@iowa-braille.k12.ia.us

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MICHIGAN

Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Leader Dogs For The Blind

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We currently have a position available for a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor. This is a full-time position responsible for training dogs to be qualified Leader Dog guides and instructing qualified persons who are legally blind to travel effectively with those dogs to enhance their mobility. This position requires bachelor's degree (BA or BS) from an accredited four-year college or university and a minimum of one year of related experience. Must have successfully completed an IGDF recognized Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Program.

Fluency in spoken and written Spanish strongly preferred. Previous experience in and knowledge in teaching skills, Orientation & Mobility, animal behavior, and dog training skills are strongly preferred. A desire to work for a fast-paced and ambitious organization with a vision is essential. In addition to exceptional interpersonal skills, you must have the ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with employees and clients and ability to effectively present information and provide instruction. This is an opportunity to do something that truly changes people's lives and you must have a "pull-up your sleeves" attitude.

Leader Dogs for the Blind has competitive salary offerings and excellent benefits that include medical, dental, 401(k) and life insurance.

Please send cover letter and resume (PDF versions only - others will be discarded) to humanresources@leaderdog.org.

Or mail to:
Leader Dogs for the Blind
Attention: Human Resources
P.O. Box 5000
Rochester, MI 48308

Leader Dogs for the Blind is an equal opportunity employer.
For complete job description, please visit our website at <http://www.leaderdog.org>.

HELP WANTED

VERMONT

TVI or TVI/COMS Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired Montpelier

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree (or higher) as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired

Duties: Itinerant position, responsible for vision assessments, braille instruction, consulting with schools and families, working with children with and without multiple disabilities from birth to high school graduation. If you are also O&M certified, caseload would include O&M lessons and responsibilities for children too. \$1,000 in moving expenses provided with receipts. \$1,000 bonus provided upon completion of second year of employment. Office space, iPad, computer, printer and secretarial support provided. Mentoring provided as well as professional development funding and professional dues provided. Drivers provided for visually impaired employees.

Send resume, letters of recommendation and VI specific transcripts.

Salary: Depends on years of experience and college degree.

Contact: Stephanie Bissonette, Supervisor of Children Services
VABVI
60 Kimball Ave.
South Burlington, VT 05403
Phone: 800-639-5861, Ext. 225
Email: sbissonette@vabvi.org
Fax: 802-863-1481

In Memoriam



Elaine Reiko Akagi, 67, passed away Oct. 19, 2012, from aggressive pancreatic cancer. Born in Highland Park, Mich., she was admired for her work as an advocate for both civil rights and children with disabilities.

Akagi taught in Detroit Public Schools as a special education/TVI from 1974–1985. She joined the Seattle Public Schools in 1987 in Washington, retiring in 2010, where she taught special education and ultimately became the consulting teacher for the visually impaired.

Akagi's life was dedicated to her passion for justice born out of the experience of the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. She joined the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) in her teens, dedicating the rest of her life to advocating for minorities who suffer discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, religion, color or disability. Her work for the marginalized has been honored by many organizations. Upon Akagi's retirement, Washington Governor Christine Gregoire appointed her to the Washington School for the Blind board of trustees. Just prior to her death, Akagi received JACL's highest awards, the Ruby Pin and the JACLer of the Biennium.



Lou Johnson Alonso, of East Lansing, Mich., passed away in November of 2012. Known as a teacher, mentor and author, she served as professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education and coordinator of the Program for the Blind, Deaf-Blind and Orientation & Mobility

Teacher Education at Michigan State University. Professor Alonso began her career at MSU as a graduate assistant in 1948. With degrees from MSU in audiology and speech science and visual impairment, she taught in the Flint Public Schools and the Michigan School for the Blind before returning to MSU to coordinate teacher education in visual impairment, and for five years, physical and other health impairment. She later developed teacher education in deaf-blindness to meet the need for teachers

of young deafblind children of the rubella epidemic; preprimary impaired blind; and orientation and mobility. In 1968 she was a co-founder of the professional journal *Teaching Exceptional Children*. She was the recipient of the Migel Medal from the American Foundation for the Blind in 2008, the John O. Mullin Distinguished Service Award from the National Federation of the Blind in 1999, and numerous other awards. As former student Trina Britcher said in an eloquent tribute on AERNet, "When people ask about that special teacher who left an impact on my life, it isn't a high school English teacher for me; it is Lou Alonso. I am thankful beyond words that she has been a part of my life."

Richard E. Shuck,



50, of Tipton, Ind., and Chicago, Ill., passed away on July 24, 2012, in Chicago.

Shuck was a graduate of Tri-Central High School. He received his bachelor's degree from Ivy Tech and received two master's degrees, one from Franklin College, Ohio, and the other from Western Michigan

University. He was a veteran of the Army National Guard and served during Operation Desert Storm.

The newsletter of the Central Blind Rehabilitation Center at the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital reported, "Richard first came to the Blind Center as a patient, then a technical career field (TCF) intern, and then was selected for a Computer Access Training area vacancy. Richard was the very example of what we strive to accomplish at the Blind Center every day. As a blinded veteran, he came to us for assistance, completed the program, returned to school and gained meaningful employment through his efforts and our assistance."

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Book Port DT with removable “mask” for simpler controls



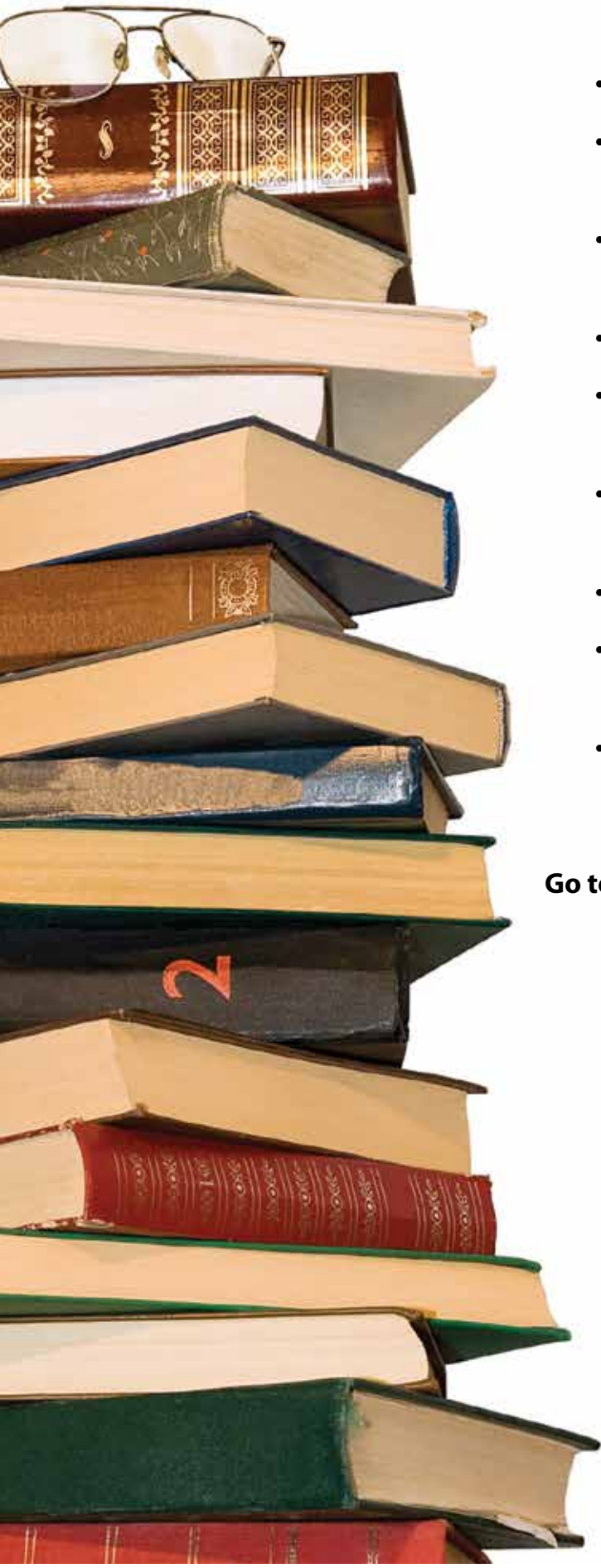
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