Greetings Fellow AER Canadians!

I hope you all had a great Summer. Now that Summer is over, it is time to begin thinking about Fall events. There are some major upcoming Canadian conferences.

The BC Vision Teachers’ Conference 2010: Inspiring Success takes place October 21-23 in Richmond at the Vancouver Marriott Hotel. The conference is presented by the Metro Vancouver Chapter of the BC Vision Teachers’ Association (in collaboration with PRCVI and SET-BC). For more information and to register, please visit http://www.prcvi.org/hostedsites/BCVTA.htm

One week later will be the annual CNIB Conference at the CNIB Centre in Toronto, ON October 28th and 29th. The theme of this year’s conference is “Now I Know MY ABCs”: Access, Braille, Communication. Please visit http://cnib.ca/en/events/cnib-conference/

The Vision Quest Conferences will be in Toronto (Saturday, October 23rd) and Ottawa (Saturday, October 30th). Please visit www.ffb.ca for program details.

Please continue to send event information, articles, Chapter news, etc... for future issues as the Bulletin is an excellent way to communicate across the country. Please feel welcome to contact me with concerns or ideas you have regarding AER in Canada.

Best Regards,
Dan Vodon

SCORE—Skills Confidence and Opportunities through Recreation and Education

Written by Nick Lebrun, CNIB Program Coordinator, Child and Youth

SCORE 2010 is a fantastic opportunity created by CNIB to assist adolescent clients from across Canada. SCORE is a two week intensive summer program for 16 to 18 year olds who are blind or partially sighted. This program has a strong focus on leadership, personal development, post-secondary and career preparation.

The first week of the SCORE programming takes place at the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre. Here students have the opportunity to do many things in its fully accessible facility. Many activities are offered there such as canoeing, tubing, tandem bicycling and many more. It’s not all fun and games, this program does include many helpful workshops.

Continued on page 2
SCORE aims to help students build skills such as confidence and leadership that will be important for their future success. The four primary themes are teamwork, leadership, personal development and civic responsibility.

The second week takes place in Toronto. Here the students are required to participate in a 3 day community service project. They have a choice of volunteering with either Habitat for Humanity, Toronto Urban Garden, Good Shepherd Homeless Centre, Royal Ontario Museum or High Park Nature Centre. Every year, students have a great time volunteering and are sad to leave by the end. The community placement program gives all of the students a good chance to get work experience and to give back to the community.

The program also has a post secondary night. Topics include advocacy, accessibility services and the opportunity to talk to other students with vision loss. During the time spent in Toronto students stay at the Ryerson university residence so they get a glimpse of university life. Career Night is the highlight of the program! Students have the opportunity to talk with successful professionals who are living with vision loss and they are open to ask any questions they want.

The program also has a recreation component to promote fun alongside learning about healthy, balanced lifestyles and physical activity. Participants learn important advocacy skills and learn from the successes and challenges of their peers with vision loss.

Learning during this program does not strictly happen during scheduled instructional time. Learning happens all the time. The students are constantly learning from each other and learning the necessary social skills of life. Score gives the students opportunities to try things that they may never have had a chance to try. SCORE does not only impact the student’s lives during the two weeks it is run, it is a far reaching program that will affect the students for the rest of their lives. SCORE teaches its participants the skills necessary to become an active member of the community and gives them the confidence to go out into their communities, and make a difference.

Independent Living Skills and Orientation and Mobility are a big part of SCORE. An Independent Living Skills Specialist is on staff to teach the students tips and strategies for living independently away from home for the first time. SCORE is a great opportunity for students to further develop their O&M skills as well. An O&M specialist works with them in a group setting and on an individual basis to help foster their skills and increase independence. By having Toronto as a setting the students have the opportunity to learn about the subway, buses and how to commute in a busy urban environment.

Continued on page 4
Dear Friends,

Welcome back. I hope you have experienced a great summer and that you are rested and refreshed for the year ahead.

This was an exciting summer for AER, especially for those who attended the Conference in Little Rock. I had the pleasure of meeting with the Canadian delegates, and although my AER duties kept me from attending the restaurant social with them, I know they had a great time renewing friendships and getting to know each other.

The conference was a great success. The diverse program ensured something for everyone, and the program did exactly what Sandy Ruchonich, 2010 International Conference Program Committee Chair, predicted. We were informed and challenged in countless ways. The MacFarland Seminar on “Brain Injury and Vision Loss: Medical Insights into Our New Challenge” made us far more aware of the results of brain injury, even seemingly minor head injuries occurring in sports, and the precautions that need to be taken. Kudos to Sandy, members of the Program Committee and, Jim Gandorf and the staff at central office, for making this one of the most successful AER conferences. Well Done!

I have the honour of serving you in AER for the next two years. I thank all of you who put your trust in me by voting for me. It promises to be a challenging year for the International Board of Directors. We are saddened at the resignation of Jim Gandorf, our Executive Director. During the 4 years of Jim’s tenure, membership has been increased, new regional conferences have been created and a new scholarly journal (with our own Debra Gold as the Editor in Chief) has been created. Although many difficult decisions were made, Jim led us through a financial recovery program that is ensuring the survival of AER, which is no easy feat during this economic recession. Jim has always been supportive to our Canadian members, and we shall all miss him very much, but we wish him all the best in his new professional opportunity.

As some of you may know, I have decided to formally retire from a career in the field of vision at the W. Ross MacDonald School in Brantford that has spanned 43 years. It was a difficult decision for me, since this has been a profession that has provided me with far more than I have ever given. I learned so much from colleagues, professionals, parents and families, but more importantly from the children and students with whom I have served. I have had great mentors who have helped to shape my career, but I wish to acknowledge two very special people who have contributed to this profession more than anyone I know.

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From Susan Howe, AER Canadian Representative

Ontario AER Outlook— “New Perspectives” AER Ontario Workshop, June 4, 2010

What a pleasure to attend the AER workshop in Toronto! It’s always enjoyable to see old faces, catch up with the news and meet any new kids on the block, and with great presenters like Tammy LaBreche, (Dr. of Optometry, UW) and Dr. Gord Hope psychotherapist), we certainly did gain new perspectives!

Tammy LaBreche gave a fascinating presentation on how prism glasses can help clients with strokes and brain injuries to regain some of their vision. She reminded us all just how valuable physical sports and recreation can be in strengthening the self esteem of individuals with visual impairments.

In the afternoon, Lisa Tyrrell (EIS) and Jennifer Ladd (ILS/O&M) shared their expertise in presenting easy and entertaining activities to prepare young children for Braille. I found Doug McJannet’s presentation on Personal Futures Planning particularly interesting. Having worked many years in Florida with kids coming out of the school system, I have experienced first hand how important it is for educators to assist... Continued on page 5
In order to participate in this program students are required to fill out an online application form and questionnaire that are due in early spring. Applicants must also submit a reference letter from a teacher, CNIB staff member or community group leader. Following that there is a short telephone interview.

Information for next year’s program will be available on the CNIB website in January 2011 or send your questions to score@cnib.ca.

Update on Canadian Membership

Congratulations to our new Canadian members, who have joined between February and August 2010:

- Wendy Veldman
- Anne Jarry
- Kimberley Douglas
- Stacey Gilbert
- Trisha Klein
- Susan Nieto
- Leanne Cornell

Emily Baarda
Karen Watts-Linares
Natasha Woodcock
Ruth Ferguson
Michael Lonergan
Sophia Syropoulos
Michael Venturi
Shademan Akhaven

Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership!

From Susan Howe, Con’t....

Under the capable leadership of our President, Pat Leader, AER, I have faith that AER will continue to become stronger, especially during this time of transition and economic recession. My retirement now means that I have more time to serve you, our Canadian members, to ensure Canada continues to have a voice in AER. I look forward to continuing to work with Dan Vodon, and you, the Canadian members, in the next two years.

Regards,

Susan Howe
Canadian Representative to the International Board
sue.howe@sympatico.ca
Planning particularly interesting. Having worked many years in Florida with kids coming out of the school system, I have experienced first hand how important it is for educators and families to plan ahead for their blind children. Doug’s well organized presentation included helpful tools for assisting families to think ahead and work out “student-focused” maps and a path to long-term goals.

These plans are not always easy. Families and educators often may find that the student’s priorities may surprise them, but these issues need to be confronted before the future arrives. While goals may be attained, there are a lot of special considerations and extra help may be needed. What is especially important is understanding what’s important to the student. Maybe he wants the same goals we do, maybe we can help him get there but it sure takes planning. Then again, maybe these goals aren’t right for him, or maybe they aren’t where he wants to go! This too must be considered. How many times have we all sat in meetings discussing a young person’s future where well meaning parents and teachers did all the talking!? I appreciate the respectful approach to planning provided by Doug’s MAPS & PATH presentation. I also appreciated him forwarding his slides and would encourage anyone working with transition kids to ask for a copy.

Sally Plant
VRT, COMS

**CNIB Toronto**

**Highlights of our Summer Programs for Children and Youth**

**IRTC Teen Program Summer Highlights**

The summer IRTC group had an eventful 6 weeks. We dedicated 1 day a week to volunteering at The Good Shepherd men’s shelter making beds, sorting snacks and folding linens putting into practice their O&M and ILS skills. Our students also worked on key-boarding skills, social skills development, kitchen safety, money identification and strategies for organization at home and at school. Orientation and mobility skills were taught and re-enforced regularly. We were fortunate to be able to go to Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab to use their Snoezelen pool which was like a day at the spa for our students and volunteers. Other summer highlights included a touch tour at the AGO, bowling and grocery shopping trips, as well as hiking and picnics at a local park. Our students finished the program successfully and look forward to the upcoming school year.

**Summer Camp Toronto Region 2010**

Due to the high interest generated from our March Break 2010 children’s program, CNIB Toronto region is proud to say we were able to offer two summer camps for children; one for kids aged 6-9, the other for 10-14 year olds. Both camps were run by groups of dedicated and enthusiastic service staff and volunteers.

In the 6-9 year old group, the children enjoyed a full week of indoor and outdoor activities designed to capture the imagination, stimulate the mind, body, and senses all in the name of fun! A trip to the movies, via public bus travel, to see *Toy Story*, was an excellent opportunity for the kids to interact and solidify friendships. A trip to the movies, Also enjoyed, was an outing to Centre Island again involving bus travel as well as ferry travel. Here the kids enjoyed a trip to the movies, amusement rides, pony rides, and a picnic in the park.

**Continued on page 6**
Ontario Outlook
Continued from page 5

Invited guest Patricia, from Beading Buds, instructed the children in the craft of bracelet making, an activity to work on fine motor skills and tactile discrimination. Another guest, Yolanta, from Creature Quest, thrilled the children with her hands on presentation of various reptilian creatures. The kids touched and held a guinea pig, a skinny pig, a slimy tree frog, a young python, a baby alligator and more!

The week ended on a high note with the children presenting three plays they had been practicing all week, Goldilocks, the Three Little Pigs, and Little Red Riding Hood to a delighted audience of family and friends. The children then, along with their guests, snacked on cookies and Rice Krispie treats they had made earlier in the day. Camp ended with the children receiving graduation certificates and applause for being fully active participants in a week filled with fun.

Tween’s Summer Program

In the 10-14 year old group had a action packed week filled with activities designed to be fun while reinforcing a variety of life skills. Some of the activities offered were outings to the following place:

Local grocery store to pick up items for a cooking competition (Iron Chef), Art Gallery of Ontario to experience accessible art, Centre Island where they experience tandem cycling, a maze and other various sports and games, Splash Park, In houses activities include a karate and dance lesson as well as cooking competition.

Some of the skills reinforced included route planning and subway, bus and street car travel, social skills, gross and fine motor skills, team work and sharing, and cooking skills.

So successful were both camps, many parents and children alike expressed their wishes for CNIB to extend the camp next summer. CNIB Toronto looks forward to again offering summer camps in 2011 and fully anticipates extending each to be two weeks in length.

Article submitted by Christine Matthews, Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

For more information, please contact Sue Marsh-Woods, Service Manager, Toronto.
Upcoming Events

October 21-23, BC Vision Teachers’ Conference 2010. Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel, 7571 Westminster Highway, Richmond, BC. For more information, please visit http://www.prcvi.org/hostedsites/BCVTA.htm

October 23, Vision Quest Conference. Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, ON. National Youth Conference – 8:30 to 12:30 p.m. Age-Related Macular Degeneration – 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please visit www.ffb.ca

October 28-29, 2010 CNIB Conference. CNIB Centre, 1929 Bayview Ave., Toronto, ON. For more information, please visit http://www.cnib.ca/en/events/cnib-conference/

October 30, Vision Quest Conference. RA Centre, Ottawa, ON. Retinitis Pigmentosa – 8:30 to 1:30 p.m. Age-Related Macular Degeneration – 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please visit www.ffb.ca

Know of an upcoming event of interest to Canadian AER Members? Please send details to aercanada@aerbvi.org
For those living or working with children and teens who are blind or visually impaired!

**October 21-23, 2010**
Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel
7571 Westminster Highway
Richmond, BC, Canada

**Presented by**
the Metro Vancouver Chapter
of the BC Vision Teachers' Association
(in collaboration with PRCVI and SET-BC)

For more information, please feel free to contact any of us:

- Stacey Gasoi  sgasoi@sd38.bc.ca
- Danita Kwong  drkwong@vsb.bc.ca
- Rita Schouls  rschouls@vsb.bc.ca
Thursday, October 21st, 2010  Low Vision Technology
Dave Rathwell & Vicky Midtdal, SET-BC Consultants

In this SET-BC (Special Education Technology-BC) workshop, we will be running two sessions. In the morning session, we will be looking at the SET-BC Vision Road Show: “Reading and Writing Strategies for Students with a Visual Impairment: A Classroom Teacher’s Guide”. This will be your opportunity to look at the workshop being presented to districts in the Province this fall. In the afternoon session, there will be a demonstration of low vision technologies. It will be followed by a brief presentation of “What is New” in the world of assistive technologies supporting visually impaired students.

Friday, October 22nd, 2010  Low Vision & Literacy
Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea and Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum

Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea and Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum will be presenting on low vision and literacy. They will be addressing issues such as best practices in literacy instruction, the impact low vision can have on literacy acquisition, use of low vision devices (including the pros and cons of various devices), and the need for collaboration. They will also be providing us with strategies for our own teaching. This will be done through the use of video clips, hands-on activities, photos and discussion.

Saturday, October 23rd, 2010  Transitions
Dr. Karen Wolfe

Morning Session: Skills for Success

Dr. Wolfe will be discussing the five critical components in the lives of children and youth with visual impairments to ensure their success in life: the importance of having high expectations, encouraging socialization, developing alternative techniques or disability-specific skills, providing realistic feedback, and promoting opportunities to work. This session will include a panel discussion with working adults who are blind or visually impaired.

Afternoon Session: Transitions from School to Work

Dr. Wolfe will be discussing transition issues such as functional academic skills, transportation, housing, socialization and recreation, career exploration, job seeking, and job maintenance. Learning activities from Navigating the Rapids of Life: The Transition Tote system, a career education curriculum for high school students, will be shared as well as additional resources. This session will also include a panel discussion with representatives from various organizations that support young adults who are visually impaired.

Conference Speakers

«Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea started teaching students who are blind or visually impaired in 1982. She has played a significant role in promoting braille literacy on a national scale. Dr. D'Andrea is the co-author of Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy, Looking to Learn: Promoting Literacy for Students with Low Vision and The Braille Trail books! You can read more about Dr. D'Andrea at: http://www.salus.edu/nclvi/fellows06/dandrea06.htm.

Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Arizona who prepares teachers to work with children with visual impairments. She has worked as a teacher of children with visual impairment and multiple disabilities. She has submitted contributions to the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness and contributed chapters to several books including Sacks & Wolfe’s Teaching Social Skills to Students with Visual Impairments: From Theory to Practice. You can read more about Dr. Rosenblum at: http://coe.arizona.edu/faculty_profile/128/bio_sketch.»
Dr. Karen Wolffe is a counselling consultant in private practice in Texas. She has worked for the American Foundation for the Blind where she managed their professional development and their CareerConnect program. Her areas of expertise include: career education, social skills development, transition issues, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. She is the author of *Skills for Success: A Career Education Handbook for Children and Youth with Visual Impairments*.

Vicky Middal received her teaching degree in the area of vision from UBC under the direction of Sally Rogow in 1981. She earned her certificate for Orientation and Mobility at UBC under the direction of Pete Wurzburger from San Francisco State. Vicky set up the vision program in 1981 in Port Alberni and then moved to the Okanagan to continue working with visually impaired students. Twelve years ago she became an assistive technology consultant with SET-BC. Vicky has developed curriculum and spoken at provincial, national, and international conferences. She has also done some work for SET-BC in Thailand. Her goal now is to keep just one step ahead of those eager children and teams working in classrooms in BC.

Dave Rathwell holds a Masters Degree in the Education of the Visually Impaired (O&M). He is presently an Assistive Technology Consultant with SET-BC and an Adjunct Professor at the University of British Columbia where he teaches a course in vision technologies. Dave has developed many teaching resources including accessible GPS and JAWS as well as contributing to the BC Expanded Core Curriculum for students with visual impairments. Dave has presented on vision technologies at provincial, national and international conferences.

### BC Vision Teachers’ Conference 2010 Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Thursday, October 21st</th>
<th>Friday, October 22nd</th>
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<td>8:00am</td>
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<td>Coffee &amp; Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30am</td>
<td>SET-BC</td>
<td>Low Vision &amp; Literacy AM session</td>
<td>Skills for Success AM presentation</td>
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<td>10:00am</td>
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<td>10:30am</td>
<td>SET-BC</td>
<td>Low Vision &amp; Literacy AM session</td>
<td>Skills for Success AM panel discussion</td>
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<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>Lunch Buffet</td>
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<td>1:30pm</td>
<td>SET-BC</td>
<td>Low Vision &amp; Literacy PM session</td>
<td>Transitions PM presentation</td>
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<td>2:30pm</td>
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<td>SET-BC</td>
<td>Low Vision &amp; Literacy PM session</td>
<td>Transitions PM panel discussion</td>
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<td>BCVTA AGM 4:15pm</td>
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<td>6:00pm</td>
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<td>Silent Auction &amp; Banquet in Ballroom</td>
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Unified English Braille (UEB) - A Short Course

Here’s what UEB is about:

- one braille code for literary and technical material
- one numbering system
- unambiguous
- one print symbol is represented by one braille character
- students will see the same symbol regardless of the subject
- print = braille = print which allows a student to work in braille and the teacher to read print
- automatically computable
- system for creation of future symbols
- symbols constructed so that the beginning and end of a symbol is always known

Here’s the history -

- 1991 Braille Authority of North America (BANA) begins the project to unify its codes
- 1993 International Council on English Braille (ICEB) agrees to take on the project for all English codes
- 2004 UEB accepted by ICEB as an official code
- 2010 Australia, New Zealand, Nigeria and South Africa have implemented UEB. Canadian Braille Authority (CBA) approves UEB as preferred code for Canada.

The braille authority of the UK will be considering UEB again in four years; the USA has yet to do so.

Here are the results -

Australia was the first country to implement UEB. New Zealand and South Africa followed within two years and Nigeria one year ago. Each country’s plan was unique to their circumstances in many ways but there were many similarities as well.

Implementation was staged beginning with the lower grades for all materials, middle grades for new texts, upper grades continued with their current technical codes. If a new technical textbook was introduced, it was provided in UEB and all future texts in that subject for that student were in UEB. General collections in libraries were phased in quickly because UEB is easily readable by any readers of English braille.

Training materials have been shared and the code book is available for downloading in print and braille at www.iceb.org

Countries are able to exchange braille materials. Australia and New Zealand have one braille certification. Nigeria, a developing country, demonstrates the great value of one code when materials are available to them from many sources.

All the countries found that the implementation was much quicker than originally planned; that the students used texts in literary braille in both the old code and UEB without any problems, and that most of the students chose to write their exams in UEB. Each country reported a renewed emphasis and enthusiasm for braille among the teachers and students generated by the move to UEB.

Here’s to the future of braille in Canada!

Darleen Bogart

[Darleen was the Chair of the ICEB UEB Project until its completion in July, 2010]
The FDA recently approved an implantable telescope that may help people with macular degeneration regain some of their sight and aid them in object recognition and reading. This first of its kind technology is exciting news for the estimated 11 million people living with macular degeneration.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a disease associated with aging that gradually destroys sharp, central vision. Central vision is needed for seeing objects clearly and for common daily tasks such as reading, setting appliance dials and driving. AMD affects the macula, the part of the eye that allows you to see fine detail. AMD causes no pain. In some cases, AMD advances so slowly that people notice little change in their vision. In others, the disease progresses faster and may lead to a loss of vision in both eyes. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in Americans 60 years of age and older.

While the new telescope is certainly a breakthrough, it is still in the early stages of development and is not a cure. Those with the condition must still educate themselves about the best strategies and treatments available to help them cope. Don Golembiewski teaches a course on macular degeneration at The Hadley School for the Blind (www.hadley.edu) and offers these top tips for learning to live with the condition.

**Get the facts**—While there is a wealth of knowledge available about AMD, from the Internet to various vision and health organizations, it’s important for consumers to separate fact from fiction. Many misconceptions are prevalent when it comes to macular degeneration. For example, many people are told that they will never go totally blind from macular degeneration. But in reality, macular degeneration is a leading cause of legal blindness. “Hadley gives people all the information—the correct information—in order to make the best choices for themselves and their health,” says Golembiewski.

**Learn to use your “functional vision”**—While macular degeneration can severely limit central vision and limit a person’s ability to perform everyday tasks like driving or reading, there are strategies people can use to maximize the vision they do have to improve everyday activities. “Since a lot people are older when they develop macular degeneration, they may feel like they want to give up. But it’s important to learn strategies early so that as their vision worsens, they are better equipped to deal with the challenges,” says Golembiewski.
Utilize support groups—When dealing with any major impact such as vision loss, it’s important to remember that you’re not alone. Since it is the leading cause of vision loss of Americans age 60 and older, people with macular degeneration are clearly not alone. Still, unless or until people with AMD come into contact with someone who also has the condition, they may feel very alone. “Support groups are local, usually free and normally welcoming to anyone. I always encourage my students to join them; talking about your problems with someone who is going through the same thing can be very therapeutic and a place to share tips and ideas that work,” adds Golembiewski.

Learn to use your “functional vision”—While macular degeneration can severely limit central vision and limit a person’s ability to perform everyday tasks like driving or reading, there are strategies people can use to maximize the vision they do have to improve everyday activities. “Since a lot people are older when they develop macular degeneration, they may feel like they want to give up. But it’s important to learn Consider medical interventions—

Depending on the type and severity of macular degeneration, there may be medical treatment options that while not a cure, can improve the condition. “Wet” macular degeneration may be treated by laser surgery, photodynamic therapy or injections. According to study performed by The National Eye Institute, taking a specific high-dose formulation of antioxidants and zinc significantly reduces the risk of advanced dry macular degeneration.

About Hadley: Founded in 1920, The Hadley School for the Blind’s mission is to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for people who are blind or visually impaired, their families and blindness service providers. The world’s largest educator of braille, Hadley enrolls more than 10,000 students in all 50 states and 100 countries each year. For more information, visit www.hadley.edu or call 800-323-4238.

Kate Streit
Media and Marketing Specialist
The Hadley School for the Blind
Reflections of this summer’s biennial AER International Conference.

**What We Learned in Little Rock**

Biljana Zuvela, Researcher Evaluator, CNIB
Alex Shaw, Senior Researcher, CNIB

Among the many excellent presentations at AER 2010 was Dr. Karen Wolffe’s “Lifelong Learning in Career Education.” Dr. Wolffe drew on years of counseling experience and outlined the stages of her Career Education Model. Career education, according to Dr. Wolffe, begins early in life and continues throughout the lifespan.

We have seen a number of Dr. Wolffe’s presentations in the past and have read much of her written work. Her work is always informative and inspirational and this time was no exception. What we find most remarkable is her ability to provide very concrete and common sense examples to illustrate each of the stages of her model.

In her presentation at AER 2010, Dr. Wolffe described the interrelated learning stages of her Career Education Model. These stages include: Career Awareness, Career Exploration, Career Preparation, Career Placement, Career Maintenance, and Career Mentoring. According to Dr. Wolffe, these stages apply equally to persons who are sighted as to those who are blind or partially sighted. However, because children with vision loss are restricted in their ability to learn through observation, they need structured learning activities to successfully progress through the stages and acquire knowledge about such things as work roles, the types of available jobs, tasks inherent in different occupations and expected and appropriate work behaviors.

Although these stages progress throughout the lifespan, it is in the earliest stages that children need to develop the skills that will form the foundation on which their school and work efforts will rest. For example, in the Career Awareness stage (preschool – elementary school years), children will need to develop an awareness of themselves, the world in which they live (including the jobs held by significant others), and the importance of contributing by helping around the house. Similarly, in Career Exploration (which usually begins late in elementary school or early in middle school), children should learn to manage time and money, balance home, school and community responsibilities, build academic and social skills, and explore vocational interests.

Successful mastery of these earliest stages will enable youth to progress to the Career Preparation stage (from early middle school to high school), a time for applying well developed academic skills, setting personal and vocational goals, using technology efficiently to complete tasks, and acquiring job seeking skills. In the Career Placement stage (high school into adulthood,) youth should begin to acquire real world work experience (both volunteer and paid) and plan for life and career.
The last two stages of Dr. Wolffe’s model come later in life and occur once gainful employment is secured. These stages include Career Maintenance and Career Mentoring. In Career Maintenance, the focus is on good workplace habits and skills including punctuality, reliability, team work skills, and working with supervisors to advance in one’s career. Later in life, adults should create an opportunity to mentor and share their experiences with younger less experienced people in their field.

Dr. Wolffe’s work is not simply about preparing for and securing employment. It is also about preparing for all the roles one plays over the course of one’s lifetime. Her enthusiasm is contagious and we strongly recommend Dr. Wolffe’s work to anyone in the field of vision loss, anyone working with or raising children, or anyone looking for guidance in their own career development. We feel we benefited both professionally and personally from attending Dr. Wolffe’s AER 2010 presentation.

**Reflecting on Little Rock**

Adam Wilton

Graduate Student, University of British Columbia

Selecting a topic for a reflection on the 2010 AER International Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, is no small matter. Whether it be the informative concurrent sessions or the fascinating key note addresses, there were so many “high” points to choose from! True to my own experience of the conference, I have elected to write on a topic that is very important to me, and I am sure one that is important to many readers – the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). I was thrilled to see the ECC so well represented at the 2010 Conference, in sessions across several divisions of AER. Dr. Phil Hatlen, Dr. Karen Blankenship, and Mary Ann Siller, all pioneers in the conceptualization of the ECC for students with visual impairments, held a day-long workshop to update teachers on the latest resources and tools for instruction in each of the nine areas of the ECC. Based on the audience’s reception, it very likely that the information presented during this session will be put into practice by the time I type these words.

While the 2010 Conference was certainly about highlighting both research and practice, its impact extended far beyond professional development. At Little Rock, friends and colleagues had a chance to reconnect and rejuvenate. The “Canadian content” was evident in this facet of the conference, in addition to the many stimulating sessions originating from Canada. I am quite sure that no one will soon forget Dr. Cay Holbrook’s very moving reflection on the relevance of messages from “pop culture” to our professional lives in the field of visual impairment. Equally as unforgettable was “Canada Night” - a great time to visit with our colleagues and enjoy the duelling pianos (something I have yet to find here in Vancouver!).

Looking forward to the next conference in 2012!
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Orientation & Mobility specialists in Manitoba have been hosting and participating in an annual professional development activity for over 20 years. This event, known as the M.O.M. (Manitoba Orientation & Mobility) Conference, was held in Brandon Manitoba on June 3rd and 4th. The theme for this year was ‘Access in the Community’.

On Thursday, Michael Goehring, field rep for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, discussed dog guide issues specific to rural and urban Manitoba. Friday saw an excellent presentation on audible signals by Judy Redmond, Universal Design Co-ordinator for the City of Winnipeg, Jonathan Foord, Traffic Signals Asset Management Engineer and Jody Morgan, Traffic Signals Maintenance Analyst. Participants came away with valuable information as well as an appreciation for the complexity of universal design issues.

The conference has always included a hands-on (and blindfolds on!) component. Participants worked in groups of two or three and practiced city bus travel. Two Brandon high school students joined the conference for lunch and supplemented this practical activity by reflecting on their experiences with transit travel.

The M.O.M Conference is attended by almost all of Manitoba’s O&M specialists as well as others in the field of visual impairment (we have occasionally had representation from North Dakota as well!) We are small but dynamic group of professionals, and would welcome those from neighbouring provinces and states to attend our event next year.