



AERODYNAMICS

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FIRST CLASS

Cay Holbrook Receives Wings of Freedom Award



Cay Holbrook

Congratulations to longtime AER member M. Cay Holbrook, Ph.D., of the University of British Columbia (UBC), who received the American Printing House for the Blind's (APH) Wings of Freedom Award this fall. APH presented the Wings Award, its highest honour, to Holbrook at its 149th Annual Meeting, held October 11-14, 2017, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dr. Holbrook is Professor in UBC's Department of Education and Coordinator of its Visual Impairment Program. Over the course of her career, she has created the biennial Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference with Janie Blome, the Learning Media Assessment tool with Alan Koenig, and Building on Patterns, a literacy product, with APH. For more information on Cay Holbrook, visit [APH News: November 2017](#).

BUSINESS CLASS

Call for Presenters! AER International Conference 2018

Looking for a chance to connect professionals in the field of blindness and visual impairment with the latest information, evidence-based practices, strategies and solutions? Be a conference presenter!

AER is currently accepting presentation proposals for the biennial AER International Conference 2018 (#AERIntlConf), to be held July 25-29, at the Peppermill Resort in Reno, Nevada. In keeping with the conference's theme, "#Evolve.Empower.Succeed," AER is especially interested in

presentations that reflect innovation and cutting-edge content, stimulate and provoke discussion and audience engagement, provide diverse approaches for different types of learners, and explore issues important to a range of professionals in the field.



The Call for Presentations is open until February 2, 2018. For further details, visit <https://aerbvi.org/professional-development/conferences/aeric2018/>.

Save the Date! Seeing Beyond the Horizon 2018



Julie & Lowell Taylor

The 15th biennial Canadian Vision Teachers' Conference, "Seeing Beyond the Horizon 2018," will take place May 3-5, 2018, at the Nisku Inn and Conference Centre, in Edmonton, Alberta. Pre-conference workshops will be held May 2. Besides general, concurrent and poster sessions, attendees can also enjoy a banquet, silent auction and award presentations.

Several presentations have already been finalized. Matt Tietjen, M.Ed., an education consultant and teacher of the visually impaired in Connecticut, will hold an all-day preconference workshop on cortical visual impairment, while Diane Brauner, an educational accessibility consultant with the Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts, will present three general sessions during the conference.

Three keynote addresses have also been finalized. Molly Burke is a young motivational speaker from Ontario, who was bullied by schoolmates after losing her sight due to retinitis pigmentosa. Dr. Kevin Stewart is administrator of Blind, Low-Vision and Deafblind Services at York Region District School Board in Ontario. Julie and Lowell Taylor will deliver the banquet keynote address. Julie is a speech-language pathologist, and Lowell is a para-athlete (he is legally blind) and a psychologist with Alberta Health Services. They are a married couple who appeared on season four of The Amazing Race Canada!

Seeing Beyond the Horizon 2018 promises to be most memorable! Early-bird registration rates are in effect until February 28, and the call for papers has been extended until January 15. Planners are particularly interested in receiving a proposal for a session on getting reluctant low vision students to use their assistive technology tools. For further details, and for schedule updates, visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/2018cvtc>.

Calendar of Events

January 25-26, 2018 – [Inaugural International Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium](#)

February 15-16, 2018 – [Illinois AER Conference](#), Naperville, Illinois, USA

February 21-23, 2018 – [Virginia AER Conference](#), Glen Allen, Virginia, USA

March 6-9, 2018 – [Kentucky AER Conference](#), Lexington, Kentucky, USA

March 8-9, 2018 – [Georgia AER Conference](#), Atlanta, Georgia, USA

April 5-7, 2018 – [AFB Leadership Conference](#), Oakland, California, USA

April 12-14, 2018 – [Texas AER Conference](#), Fort Worth, Texas, USA

April 25-27, 2018 – [Penn-Del AER Conference](#), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA

May 3-5, 2018 -- [Seeing Beyond the Horizon \(CVTC\)](#), Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Survey: How Can BLC Help You?

Braille Literacy Canada would like to hear from you about the BLC services, programs and offerings that you believe are most important to you as a braille enthusiast. Please complete a short survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BrlLitCan2017>) by December 22, 2017, that will help your Board of Directors take BLC into the future. Provide your email address on the survey's last page and you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a \$20 gift certificate to the [Future Aids Braille Superstore](#).

BLC Launches the 2018 Edie Moure Scholarship

Braille Literacy Canada (BLC) has established an annual scholarship in the name of Edie Moure, a dedicated CNIB employee starting in September 1977. Moure worked for the Library in the Winnipeg office as head of the recording studio and braille production, and in the last few years also as a transcriber. She served as treasurer of the Canadian Braille Authority and was passionate about braille, as well as about life in general.

The Edie Moure Scholarship will be awarded to someone wishing to study Unified English Braille, Music Braille, or other Braille systems. We will be accepting applications until January 31st, 2018. For more information or to download an application, go to www.brailleliteracycanada.ca/en/professional-development/edie-moure-scholarship. If you need an accessible version of the application, please send an email to info@bcl-lbc.ca.

Together, We Touch Lives

We invite you to include AER in your gift-giving plans this holiday season. Your donation will support the work of your association in providing services to help you make a greater impact on the individuals whose lives you touch. There are numerous ways to participate, including shopping through the AmazonSmile and Shop.com cashback programs. For more information, visit <https://aerbvi.org/about/support-aer>.

Hall of Fame Nominations Now Being Accepted

The Board of the Hall of Fame for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field is pleased to announce that the 2018 nomination process is now open with a submission deadline of March 31, 2018.



Hall of Fame

Who should be the next inductees? Persons from North America who have made significant contributions to improve the lives of those who are blind or visually impaired, in such areas as professional practice, research, writing, leadership, direct service and/or in their professional organizations, are eligible to be nominated. Persons are eligible five years after departure/retirement from positions where their significant lifetime body of work was made.

What is required to nominate someone? Nominators must submit a comprehensive nomination packet, including a thoroughly completed nomination form and three letters of support.

Questions? Visit <http://aph.org/hall>, or contact Co-Curators Janie Blome at jblome@aph.org or Bob Brasher at bbrasher@aph.org.

COAST TO COAST

Renew Your Membership on AER's Website



AER's website allows members access to their member records for online renewals, address updates, and to members only sections of the website for resources such as *JVIB*. If you have not set up your personal user name and password, locate your member number/contact ID to get started.

- Go to <https://my.aerbvi.org> and select Register Now at the bottom of the page
- Select quick Activation by Contact ID on the next page.
- Enter your member number, first name, and last name.
- Choose your own user name and password. Keep it handy!
- When you return to the site and log in, select My Account at the top of the page to view your record.

PILOTS & PROJECTS

CNIB Community Hub: "What Do You Guys Do Here, Anyway?"

By Suzanne Decary, Director, GTA Operations, CNIB

In June 2017, CNIB opened a community Hub in Toronto—the first of its kind in the province—for people who are blind or partially sighted. Located in the vibrant Yonge and St. Clair neighbourhood, the Hub is an innovative, fully accessible space where people with sight loss can come for social and emotional support, learn new skills, hang out and thrive in an engaging space. The Hub offers specialized life-enhancing programs, classes and workshops for people who are blind or partially sighted such as: yoga, toastmasters, art therapy, woodturning, fashion, technology etc. What's more, many of the program leads and volunteers are people living and working with sight loss themselves.

Another goal of the Hub is to cultivate a stronger community presence, promote increased public awareness and change misconceptions about blindness. Longstanding advocacy issues, such as guide dogs being refused entry and disproportionately high rates of unemployment/underemployment in the blind population, persist because the public still has



CNIB Community Hub

very little understanding of blindness. Most of our program participants still have some functional vision, for example, even though they are legally blind. We hope that by having a positive presence in the community--people with white canes and guide dogs crossing streets, accessing public transit, shopping and dining in the neighbourhood--we can begin to educate and change the misconceptions people have about what it means to be blind. And it has already garnered a positive response. People have popped into the Hub to ask, "What do you guys do here, anyway?" By providing a more realistic view of what blindness is, we can smash misconceptions and perhaps even "normalize" blindness.

Since moving in to the neighbourhood, CNIB has committed to help make Yonge and St. Clair the most accessible neighbourhood in Canada. With funding from the RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION, CNIB has embarked on an advocacy project called "ShopTalk." The project is intended to help individuals who are blind or partially sighted navigate the neighbourhood safely and confidently, through the placement of "beacons" in businesses. Once a beacon is placed in a business, it connects to a smartphone GPS app called BlindSquare. When the app user is in a beacon's range, a verbal navigation message from the beacon is relayed to the user's phone using Bluetooth. The beacons provide directions and accessible navigation indoors and outdoors including a description of the business, the layout or floor plan of the shop, and the goods for sale or on display. With nearly 100 beacons currently installed, the project has been a big success. The Toronto Transit Commission has also expressed interest in installing beacons in stations throughout the city.

In addition to the auditory beacons installed at the hub, the building itself also has: tactile floor strips and an elevator; a virtual reality room where community members (both with blindness and full vision) can simulate various situations for people living with sight loss; an accessible kitchen; artwork on the walls described in braille and audio format; a discovery zone for children; and a Doggy Bar. Participants are also able to access the space on request for personal events like fundraisers, meetings, baby showers, rehearsal space, etc. at no cost.

While the official business hours are Mon./Wed./Fri. 10-6 and Tue./Thur. 9-7, some programs and events run in the evenings and on weekends to accommodate people's busy schedules. For more information about the Community Hub and to check out our programs, please visit www.cnib.ca/en/ontario/gta/Pages/default.aspx.

THE JOURNEY

They Kiss, We Tell: The Story of TELIME TV

By Kevin Shaw, President and CEO



Kevin Shaw

Several years ago, my sighted coworkers got into a lively discussion about what movies and TV they watched growing up. I got a little lost, as there were many "classics" I still hadn't seen. In moments like that, I would keep to myself and drift away from the conversation. I felt I was missing out on connecting with coworkers and friends. I planned to catch up by spending a weekend watching classic movies I hadn't seen.

Later, when I ran my hands over a shelf full of shrink-wrapped DVDs, I asked myself, “Why did I spend all that money to have these DVDs just sitting around in shrink wrap? Why haven’t I watched them?” Then I realized I didn’t want the frustration of trying to navigate the silent, inaccessible on-screen menu that would appear when I put the DVD into my player. So, I went online looking for an accessible website where I could watch audio-described movies and TV. I couldn’t find any. I said, “There has to be a better way.” It was out of this frustration that I started TellMe TV—the world’s first 100% described video on-demand service featuring movies and TV shows with audio description for users with vision loss.

After launching in late 2016, the TellMe TV library currently hosts 100 movie and TV titles. The content offering is growing with a collection of classic films, documentaries and experimental movies from the National Film Board of Canada, as well as independent content not available anywhere else. The library targets adults, but several titles for children and young adults are also available.

I created TellMe TV out of my love for connecting with others over visual storytelling. After losing my vision at 19 during my time in Radio & Television Arts at Ryerson University, I was thrust into the world of assistive technology and accessibility while being educated about the broadcasting industry. TellMe TV solves many of the challenges I saw with sites such as Netflix or broadcaster websites at the time—inaccessible controls and a lack of described content—with a screenreader-accessible interface and by providing 100% of its content with description.

TellMe TV includes features of a typical VOD (video on demand) service. Search, browse and receive recommendations on content, pause and resume playback across devices and create watch lists for later viewing. Signing up requires a credit card and logging in doesn’t require a password. There is a small monthly subscription fee with no contract or minimum requirements. For users who want to watch on mobile or a set-top box, the companion VHX app enables users to view their TellMe TV subscription on Apple devices (including Apple TV), Android devices, Google Chromecast and Roku.

Canada is leading the world in its adoption of audio description. Online players are slowly increasing their offerings and TellMe TV is among a growing landscape of choice in this market. Explore TellMe TV at <http://www.TellMeTV.com>.

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Views herein represent those of the authors and not necessarily those of AER, its Board of Directors, staff, members or Editor. Likewise, any products or services mentioned do not necessarily represent endorsement.

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