



AER Membership: Meaningful Connections, Inspiring Stories

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...and much more!

This issue of *AER Report* highlights various aspects of AER membership, from results of the recent membership survey to a summary of membership benefits. In recent years AER, like many other associations, has seen its membership numbers decline. While AER members enjoy numerous benefits, including outstanding professional development and networking opportunities, the fact remains that AER's greatest asset is its members.

Representing 13 countries, AER members create an unparalleled pool of knowledge and experience for professionals in the visual impairment field around the world. Although the vast majority of practitioners in our field operate in near-isolation from others, AER has the unique ability to connect professionals far and wide. Our members solve challenges and grow professionally, together despite the miles that separate.

On the following pages, we feature various members from different vision disciplines who share their thoughts on what AER membership has done for them. Perhaps the most universal sentiment among these individuals (and, indeed, among all AER members) is the importance of giving back to their profession. Volunteering and getting involved in the association's activities are just some ways these folks have given back. Their stories

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President's Message

by Christy Shepard, 2014-2016 AER president

Sitting here with all this flooding around me, I feel like I have been on an island and cut off from civilization since the power went off. When I first started teaching years ago, there were times that I felt the same way. There was no Internet, and in Texas the Educational Service Centers did not offer trainings as they do now. The only face-to-face interaction I had with fellow vision professionals was when the Texas School for the Blind offered a one-week seminar on campus during the summer. I really could have used more access to those who had been in the field with more experience than me. I would have loved to toss ideas around with them. I read everything I could get as a member of AEVH and AER. When I was an on-campus teacher, no one else on the campus knew what I did, and district trainings didn't apply to me.

I know we have come a long way from "the dark ages" with all of the social media we have now, but I think face-to-face interaction rates number one for sharing ideas. I don't want our new professionals to feel "stranded," so I encourage all of you, our AER members, to invite students still in school, new professionals and experienced professionals to join AER and enjoy networking with those who share the same interests.

AER offers numerous ways to connect with others. In the past few years we've hosted three regional conferences, an O&M conference in New Orleans, and our well-attended International Conference last July in San Antonio. This November we are holding the AER Conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans: Leveraging Our Collective Wisdom. These events have provided not only great educational opportunities but a way to experience one-on-one networking that is so crucial to helping professionals learn and grow. Nothing quite compares to the spontaneous sharing of information and stories that happens when people in our field get together—it's these casual

conversations that often spark the best ideas and create meaningful support networks for our growth as professionals.

For people who can't make it to the national and international conferences, AER chapters provide training sessions closer to home throughout the year, and some of our divisions distribute newsletters. AER also offers webinars, AER and AFB co-branded webinars, *JVIB* and *AER Report* to keep practitioners updated on the latest trends and research. There is quite simply no other home base for the range and depth of information that AER offers. Let's get out there and toot our own horn!

In April 2015, the AER Board of Directors held a face-to-face meeting in New York City. All of the board members paid their own way, and the New York Institute of Special Education (NYISE) offered room and board, thanks to Joe Catavero, our current AER president-elect and NYISE principal, and Dr. Bernadette Kaplan, NYISE director. Thank you, Joe and Bernadette!

Finally, I would like to welcome our new staff member, Angela Smith, director of Professional Development & Internal Relations. We are thrilled to have her on board, and I know you all will make her feel welcome.

Until next time,

Christy Shepard
2014-2016 AER president



AER Job Exchange

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Executive Director's Message



by Lou Tutt

Like many of you, who knew Peggy Madera, AER's president from 1998-2000, I am still mourning her passing on May 15, 2015. We have lost two former AER presidents in the past year: first, Dr. Richard L. Welsh, AER's first president (who passed away on September 13, 2014), and Peggy Madera, AER's eighth president. Our sympathies go out to Peggy's family and to the members of the AER Illinois chapter.

This issue of the *AER Report* highlights AER membership, be it chapter, division or general AER membership. I have been a member of AER for just under 30 years—almost as long as AER has been around—and I will continue my membership in AER as long as I am around! I am proud to be part of the primary association for professionals in the blindness and visual impairment field. I am also proud that many of you have been members of AER for 30 years or a little less also. Thank you for your dedication to this association.

When I came to AER as executive director in April 2011, AER had 4,500 members. Our association's highest membership numbered over 5,000 members. Today, we are just below 4,000 members. Our staff and board have discussed AER's declining membership at length, wondering, "Is it the benefits?" "Is it the economy?" "Is it the retiring Baby Boomer Generation (AER's largest number of members)?" "Is it the 'Y' Generation (the Millennials, the youngest of AER members)?" "Is it the membership fee/dues?" "Is it technology?" Other associations are asking those same questions about their declining memberships as well.

To help us find answers to some of these questions, we distributed a survey to the AER membership in February 2015 and received a 10% response rate. This issue of *AER Report* includes a summary of the survey results that I hope you will read. It was quite interesting to learn what members had to say about membership and how we can increase it.

Based on my own research on association membership trends, the challenge before us is two-fold: (1) Our largest group of members, those belonging to the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964), is approaching retirement, and many are opting to discontinue their membership upon retiring; and (2) The Baby Boomers' children, the Millennial generation (born between 1981 and 2000), question the benefit of association membership, as advances in social media and the Internet make professional development easily accessible and more affordable.

However, I have also read articles that indicate Millennials are "leading the charge" relative to meetings and membership in various associations. As this generation enters adulthood, they are expected

to outnumber the Baby Boomers. Per the U.S. Census Bureau, the Millennial generation—those under 35—will be 75.3 million strong by the end of 2015! I look to our younger members—those from Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1981) and the Millennials—to find meaningful ways to get involved with the association, for it is you who will inspire, innovate and invigorate our efforts as we move toward the next 30 years of AER.

To address our membership challenges, the AER Membership Committee, with its newly appointed chair, is looking at our declining membership and what we can do to tackle this issue. Meanwhile, the AER Professional Personnel Recruitment Committee is working to attract more Millennials to the field of blindness and visual impairment, and subsequently to AER. We know members are looking for benefits that will help them in their careers as vision professionals, and AER, as the only professional association in the blindness and visual impairment arena, will deliver what our members need. These are big challenges, and we need your help in meeting them.

AER celebrated its 30th anniversary during the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, almost a year ago. Now we are looking to the next 30 years—years in which AER will undoubtedly change to meet the opportunities and challenges of the future. We live in a digital world where technology changes every day and in every way. Accessibility is the key, and AER is doing all it can to make sure what it delivers to AER members is accessible.

Before closing, I would like to introduce Angela Smith as director of Professional Development & Internal Relations. Angela began on June 1, 2015, filling the vacancy created by Joelle Ward's resignation in February 2015. Please welcome Angela to AER!

Finally, thank you for your continued membership in AER. Thank you to the leadership of our AER chapters and divisions, and thank you, members of the AER Board of Directors, for making AER membership a priority for this next year. Wouldn't it be wond-AER-ful when we meet in Jacksonville, Fla., for the AER International Conference 2016, to report that we are back up to 4,500 members or more? Let's all of us RECRUIT new members, RETAIN the members we have, and REGAIN the members who have not renewed. I believe we can do it!!!

Thank you,

Lou



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

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To learn more about the link between total blindness and a sleep pattern that is out of sync with the 24-hour day, visit www.non-24.com.

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a circadian rhythm disorder



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AER Board Meeting Highlights

The AER Board of Directors met in April 2015. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- The two new AER divisions, International Services & Global Issues (18) and Physical Education & Recreation (19), were placed under the Related Services Divisions group of the AER board.
- The chair of the AER Bylaws & Structure Committee presented amendments to the AER Bylaws. The board approved the amendments, which will be on the ballot for the AER membership to vote on at its general business meeting during the AER International Conference 2016, in Jacksonville, Fla.
- A new Chapter Affiliate Agreement was amended and approved. The chair of the AER Council of Chapter Presidents will conduct town hall meetings on the new Chapter Affiliate Agreement with chapter leaders in the upcoming months.
- A new AER award was recommended and approved, The Richard L. Welsh Chapter President Leadership Award, in honor and memory of AER's first president, Dr. Richard L. Welsh. This new award and the first recipient will be introduced at the AER International Conference 2016, in Jacksonville, Fla.
- The "AER Guide to Professional Licensure," produced by the AER Licensure Task Force, was approved and will be published on the AER website.
- The board approved a motion from the board's Canadian representative for a Canadian AER newsletter, with a Canadian editor who will receive a small honorarium for compiling up to four issues per year.
- The AER president appointed two task forces: (1) Annual AER International Conference Task Force and (2) AER Strategic Plan Task Force.

AER Welcomes Angela Smith

Angela Smith has joined the AER staff as the director of Professional Development & Internal Relations. In this role she will manage professional development content and work with chapters and divisions. Angela brings more than 10 years of professional development and conference planning experience to the position. As a passionate human service advocate, she has spent the majority of her professional career working to improve conditions and opportunities for underserved populations by ensuring individuals have opportunities to gain knowledge, skills and abilities that will lead to optimal success in their positions.

Prior to joining AER, Angela provided conference planning, technical assistance and training, and designed learning programs for public and private sector agencies. She also served as the director of professional development for the Federal Head Start Program. While at the National Head Start Association, she planned their Annual Conference, Parent Conference, Leadership Institutes and Management Academy. She also developed, in collaboration with content experts, webinars, *Children and Families* magazine and online resources. Angela served on former Virginia Governor Tim

Kaine's Strong Start professional development/quality standards workgroup and is a graduate of the NIKE Leadership Fellows Program. Over the years, she has served on many task forces, committees and advisory panels including, but not limited to, Sesame Street, NAEYC, Casey Family Programs/Foster Care and Eco-Healthy Child Care.



Angela is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park where she received a bachelor's degree in government & politics and took graduate coursework in special education at Virginia State University.

Remembering Peggy Madera

AER President, 1998–2000



Peggy Madera, who served as AER president between 1998 and 2000, passed away May 15, 2015, after a long illness in her hometown of Oak Lawn, Ill.

“Peggy Madera earned a national reputation for her skills as a special education teacher and was particularly known for her work guiding blind and visually impaired students toward lives of fulfillment and independence,” wrote Joan Giangrassie Kates in Madera’s obituary in the *Chicago Tribune*.

The *Chicago Tribune* obituary included a statement from Sandra Murillo, blind since age 2 and now working as a journalist and an associate producer on Chicago’s “The Beacon” radio show, which deals with visual impairment issues. Murillo recalled, “Peggy began teaching me in preschool, and then continued right on through high school. To me, she was not only an extraordinary teacher but a loyal friend and mentor. She was patient and kind and could brighten even my darkest hours.”

During Madera’s leadership of AER, colleagues described her as smart, funny and supportive.

“Her sense of humor helped me through many difficult times,” said Billy Brookshire, Madera’s successor and AER president from 2000-2002. “Once, during a board meeting, the discussion got so hot and heated we called a break. When I returned, there was a plastic frog in my water glass—Peggy’s attempt to lighten things up—that struck a chord with all of us. From that moment on, the frog became our mascot. To this day, it still brings a smile to my face.”

Madera was the recipient of AER’s first Citation of Excellence Award for leadership in 1986, and she also served as president of the AER Illinois chapter. She remained active with the association, participating in a 2013 panel discussion for AER LIFT (AER leadership training) in which she shared her thoughts on characteristics of a good leader. She named such qualities as honesty, patience, adaptability, encouraging of teamwork and nurturing, all of which she herself modeled during her career as both a service provider and association leader.

Mary Nelle McLennan, former AER board member, shared, “For Peggy, no child had too many challenges or was too challenging. She never regarded them as ‘disabled’—rather, she saw them as ‘not yet abled,’ and she created brilliant, innovative lessons and opportunities through which they could develop their abilities.” Her lessons often included songs and humor, reflecting her belief that learning should be fun.

Born Peggy Heffernan, she earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology and psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a master’s degree in blind rehabilitation from Western Michigan University. She began teaching in the late 1970s in Chicago as a special education teacher for elementary and high school students.

Most recently, Madera worked for the nonprofit group Exceptional Children Have Opportunities in South Holland, Ill., where for many years she taught orientation and mobility to blind students, before stepping down in 2012 when her health began to fail.

Said McLennan, “For many of us, Peggy’s absence will be a personal loss as well as a professional one. All of us who were graced with Peggy’s friendship, leadership, professionalism, talent and commitment will miss her tremendously. There was only one Peggy. She was truly singular in her ability to teach and to lead and to love. We are all better for having had her in our midst.”

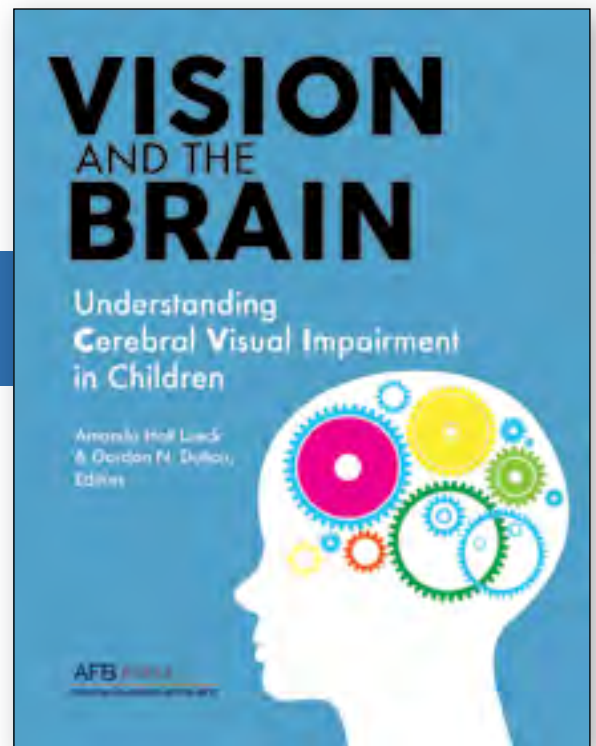
Survivors include her husband of 35 years, Aurelio; sons, Marty and Eric; her parents, Richard and Connie Heffernan; two brothers, Richard Heffernan and Daniel Heffernan; and three sisters, Maureen Heffernan, Nancy Heffernan and Kathy Cuba.

Vision and the Brain

Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children

Amanda Hall Lueck and
Gordon N. Dutton, Editors

Cerebral visual impairment, also known as cortical visual impairment, has become the most common cause of visual impairment in children in the United States and the developed world. In *Vision and the Brain*, two eminent leading experts bring to bear the collected insights, comprehensive descriptions, and practice suggestions of a range of specialists to illuminate the complexities of vision loss related to brain injury and neurological causes and provide readers with approaches to assessment and intervention.



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AER submits comments to U.S. Department of Education on State Supported Employment Services Program



On June 12, 2015, AER submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Education regarding a proposed rulemaking for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program: State Supported Employment Services Program; Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage.

The rulemaking summary is as follows:

The Secretary proposes to amend the regulations governing the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services program and the State Supported Employment Services program in order to implement changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enacted on July 22, 2014. The Secretary also proposes to update, clarify, and improve the current regulations.

Finally, the Secretary proposes to issue new regulations regarding limitations on the use of subminimum wages that are added by WIOA and under the purview of the [U.S. Department of Education].

For additional information on the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=ED-2015-OSERS-0001-0001>.

June 12, 2015

Honorable Janet LaBreck
Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 4086
Washington, DC 20202

RE: Comments for WIOA NPRM

Docket Number: ED-2015-OSERS-0001

RIN: 1820-AB70

Dear Commissioner LaBreck:

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is a professional organization representing the interests of those who work with the blind and visually impaired of all ages. AER works in partnership with private and governmental agencies for the blind, blindness consumer organizations, and university preparation programs that train instructors of blind and visually impaired children and youth, working age adults, and older blind persons. This letter puts forth AER's recommendations regarding proposed regulations to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended through the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Employment Outcome Definition – Section 361.5(c)(15)

AER is deeply concerned by the Secretary's action to remove "Uncompensated Outcomes" from the Vision Rehabilitation (VR) goals allowed through the Employment Outcome definition. Of particular concern is the disproportionate number of individuals who are blind who – through informed choice – determine to work toward a homemaker outcome. Curtailment of this opportunity will lead VR counselors to sharply reduce successful (status 26) outcomes if this population is not yet ready to fully return to work in a competitive, integrated employment setting.

Due to the rigorous and complex set of fundamental services and supports necessary to regain independence after going blind, it may take a significant amount of time before an individual has the confidence to regain employment. For individuals who are blind and who do not have remunerative employment goals, there is no guarantee that subsequent referrals for ineligible consumers will be able to meet this unique set of services, and that funding for these fundamental services can be appropriately allocated from other sources like the Department of Health and Human Services' grants to centers for Independent Living.

Without these services, an individual with blindness will be at risk of not receiving the basic independent living and orientation



harm will come to those individuals during their time working toward such an outcome. There will be individuals for whom competitive integrated employment is not the best setting. Individuals who possess multiple disabilities can encounter great difficulties in sustaining productivity to the degree that would keep them employed in a setting where low-performance becomes cost-prohibitive for an employer. Also, an individual, or his or her family, may wish to choose a setting where the supports and safety nets are more important than a wage based on performance and productivity.

Finally, AER requests greater clarification on which entity will be responsible (the schools or vocational rehabilitation) for the best interest of individuals age 21 and under, to make sure that the consumer’s best interest and safety are taken into consideration.

AER thanks the Rehabilitation Services Administration for this opportunity to comment on the NPRM for state vocational rehabilitation services. We look forward to further opportunities to contribute to finding real solutions for expanding innovation and opportunity for Americans who are blind or visually impaired, and we are happy to be a resource as RSA continues to finalize these regulations.

Sincerely,

Christy Shepard
President, AER

Louis M. Tutt
Executive Director, AER



and mobility skills necessary to move freely in their own home, much less in the broader community where that individual may someday choose to return to work. Since this change was not mandated in statute by WIOA, AER recommends that RSA not change the Employment Outcome definition, and for RSA to continue supporting the homemaker outcome.

Comprehensive Systems for Personnel Development – Section 361.18(c)(1)(ii)

AER requests clarification on this proposed revision. While intended to reflect a 21st century framework for qualified staff, it appears to diminish the value of proper credentialing, including putting at risk requirements for state certifications and licensures. Individuals who are blind require significant and advanced training across a wide range of complex and unique skills necessary for becoming independent. Braille instruction, assistive technology training, and orientation and mobility are just a few examples of the complex skills required in the rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired persons. A 21st century approach toward rehabilitation requires not just “on-the-job” experience, but advanced training for personnel who work with those who are blind and visually impaired. To this end, AER believes that the value of such advanced training programs should not be undermined by experience requirements that enable professionals to be qualified by education and experience in quasi-related fields.

Youth Pre-Employment Transition Services – Section 361.48

AER supports improving Transition Services for youths with disabilities, but believes the “rule” for State VR agencies to budget 15% of their federal allocation for these services is excessive and will diminish services for adults and older blind persons. AER recommends State VR agencies be incentivized via requirements that foster improvement of Transition Services in the most high-quality manner.

Limitations on the Payment of Sub-Minimum Wage – Section 397

AER supports the legislation’s intent to provide greater opportunity for individuals with the most significant disabilities a chance to secure employment in a competitive integrated setting. However, it is important to ensure that no

Membership **Cont. from page 1**

are truly inspiring and emphasize the importance of connection, of working together to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

We hope readers find inspiration in these stories, whether it be inspiration to try something new with your clients, to participate in AER events and experience the connection for yourself, or to become an active participant in the chapter, division or international arenas.

AER sincerely thanks Shireen Ali, Don Golembiewski, Audrey Graves, Bertha Avila Guerrero, Cay Holbrook and Yue-Ting Siu for sharing their stories and giving so much of their time and knowledge to AER and the professions it represents.

Shireen Ali — Making a difference through volunteering



For Shireen Ali, MBA, PG Dip Rehab (Low Vision), B.Soc.Sc., Br.Cert., a vision rehabilitation instructor in New Zealand with 30 years of leadership and management experience, volunteering has played a central role in her life. At every pivotal point in her education or career, foreign volunteers—often from America and Britain—were

there to provide instruction and training. From her school days in Malaysia to her first teaching job in Fiji to her recent humanitarian trip to Tonga, Ali has witnessed the lasting impact of volunteering. “I’ve gained a lot from people who have volunteered and countries that have given resources,” said Ali. “It was only a matter of time before I began looking for ways to give back.”

It is exactly this mindset that led Ali to chair AER’s Low Vision Rehabilitation Division (7). She jumped at the chance to be an AER leader, even though it is only her second year with the association. “When I first joined AER, the division board and members were so welcoming of me,” Ali recalled. “They were so positive, and they encouraged me to participate. I really wanted to be an active participant, too, rather than sit back and wait for AER to do something for me.” When she saw the call for volunteers to serve as division chair, she answered it. “I was nervous because to volunteer for something like this, you not only have to have the qualifications and experience to lead, you also have to get the group’s approval. Luckily, I wanted the ‘job’ and they wanted me to have it, so it was a perfect match.”

Although most professions in New Zealand have a professional body for education, support and growth, vision rehabilitation instructors do not. Luckily, AER has an international presence

and provides the kind of support and professional development that vision rehabilitation instructors need. “I had heard about AER when I was working toward my post-graduate diploma in low vision,” said Ali. “The reputation is there. AER is our professional association and being a part of it validates the work we do. Here in New Zealand, our profession is growing. And just as other professionals belong to their associations, vision rehabilitation professionals need to belong, also, to further our growth and education.”

For Ali, the most powerful benefit of AER membership is an intangible one. “Knowing I am a member of AER has given me confidence to try new things, because I feel like I have the support of my profession behind me,” said Ali. “Whether it’s real or psychological, there’s a sense that between my AER membership and my training and experience, I receive more recognition for what I do. This, in turn, gives me more confidence to expand my volunteer work.” For example, in November 2014, Ali traveled to Tonga to provide vision rehabilitation services and adaptive equipment training to the residents there. “I was inspired by my former student and present colleague, Fatima, who herself has impaired vision due to retinitis pigmentosa,” explained Ali. “At our office, she would frequently ask for any obsolete adaptive

equipment that was being given away. One day, I asked her about the equipment and she explained that she was sending it home to Tonga, where blind residents had nothing. Her story inspired me to put together our memorable trip to her homeland.” The project resulted in the formation of Tonga’s very first association for blind and visually impaired people.

“AER is the right fit for me at this time and place in my life,” said Ali. “I’m thinking differently now that I can write ‘AER’ behind

my name. I’m part of a professional body, and I’ve been wanting that for a long time. Now it’s happened, and I am seeing the immediate benefits of it.”



Don Golembiewski — Staying involved after retirement

When Don Golembiewski, M.A., CVRT, outreach director (retired), Hadley School for the Blind, and consultant, joined AER, AER wasn’t even an association yet! Golembiewski joined one of AER’s predecessor organizations, American Association of Workers for the

Blind (AAWB), in 1978. “I was in an itinerant position then,” recalled Golembiewski. “My job covered a nine-county rural area in northern Wisconsin, and I felt disconnected from other professionals in the blindness field. So, I joined AAWB. Although I had the resources of my local vocational

“I’m thinking differently now that I can write ‘AER’ behind my name. I’m part of a professional body, and I’ve been wanting that for a long time.”

~ Shireen Ali

rehabilitation office, it served all disabilities. What I really needed were peers to share information with and just bounce ideas off of.”

Vision professionals in Wisconsin have since benefited from Golembiewski’s leadership, as he served on the AER Wisconsin chapter board for many years, including leading the chapter through the transition from AAWB to AER. At the international level, he has served as chair of the AER divisions on vision rehabilitation therapy (VRT) and aging. “Serving on the boards during different time periods is one of my favorite memories of AER,” Golembiewski shared. “I got to work with some outstanding, committed professionals.”

For Golembiewski, AER comes down to connections—making connections with other vision professionals to share knowledge and improve skills. “For me, AER is all about those ‘water cooler conversations’ that spark natural sharing of stories and backgrounds,” he said. “AER chapter meetings and conferences give us those important opportunities to talk to others, to learn from their experiences. When you first get in the field, there’s a lot of potential for frustration because you feel like there’s so much to learn. We can all help each other deal with those aspects of the job.”

In fact, maintaining those connections convinced Golembiewski to continue volunteering with AER, even though he retired in 2012. “The profession cannot afford a big ‘brain drain,’ which is what we’re facing as many of our members look toward retirement,” he shared. “We can’t have a mass exodus without leaving some of our influence behind.”

Although the decision to stay involved after retirement is highly individual, for Golembiewski, it’s about giving back to a profession that became much more than “just a job.” He observed, “People want to feel like they can benefit others, especially if they’ve been in this field for a long time. We want to work for reasons beyond a paycheck. The field has done a lot for me, and I want to keep doing something to give back.” In particular, he says retirees or those close to retirement can help with meaningful activities, such as mentoring others, connecting conference organizers with speakers and vendors, and serving on panels to share the profession’s history.

Looking back on his career, Golembiewski recalled his first client as an itinerant VRT, “Here I was, a hot shot recent graduate of my program. My first client met me at the door and said, ‘Tell me something I don’t already know.’ I quickly learned there was so much that I truly didn’t know! That’s something I take with me into every new situation. There’s always something new to learn, and AER is one of the best places to find the people and resources who can further your education.”



Audrey Graves with a student at prom

Audrey Graves — You get what you give

When Audrey Graves, M.Ed., TVI, principal, Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (NCECBVI), first became a TVI, she wasn’t sure if she should join AER. “I really didn’t understand what membership was about at the time,” recalled Graves. “And then I heard Jim Adams, who was then-president of the AER Nebraska chapter, speak about AER, and his speech really flipped my mindset. It’s not so much about what perks you get

from the association; it’s about connecting with the people and the resources to bring myself and my career to a higher level of excellence.”

Like most others in the field of visual impairment, Graves strongly believes in giving back to the profession. “Some people just work a job for the paycheck, thinking ‘This is what I’ve got to do to get through my daily routine,’” she shared. “But if you want your job to turn into a career, a passion, a lifestyle, you need to access it from all areas. You can’t just clock in and clock out every day. You need to involve yourself across all different facets of the organization.”

Graves has done just that. She has served as president-elect and is now president of the AER Nebraska chapter, helping the group increase its size by over 50%. Since joining the association, she has organized an AER membership drive and two AER silent auctions, which raised over \$1,000 not only for the Nebraska chapter but also for state-wide efforts, such as the Nebraska Braille Challenge. “We’re a small group,” shared Graves, “but we are always looking for ways to bring AER Nebraska to the next level. We try to provide information that’s helpful to our members, like pointing

people to training opportunities or sharing information from conferences.”

Graves also uses AER to connect professionals to potential employers. “We utilize the AER Job Exchange when advertising for positions at NCECBVI,” she said. “We also encourage school districts throughout the state to advertise there as well when looking for a teacher of the visually impaired or orientation and mobility specialist.”

For many professionals, getting involved with AER can seem intimidating—especially trying to figure out how one can

“When you have a lot of people who decide to get involved and are really passionate about what they do, they challenge you to keep doing more and doing better!”

~ Audrey Graves

Continued on p. 14

contribute and what the so-called “return on investment” might be. “I was like that when I first started out,” said Graves. “But I learned that as a professional, it’s important to be part of the professional association. You get what you put into it. As I got more involved, opportunities to attend AER events started happening. And once I got to attend an AER event, I began to understand what AER was all about and what it could do for its members. It’s great to have discounts and freebies, but what really makes a difference in my work and my professional growth is connecting with others who are all committed to the same cause.”

Having a positive outlook has played an important role in Graves’ success, who also participates in the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life events. “When you’re part of a group of like-minded, focused individuals, it brings your skills to the next level. We challenge each other. When you have a lot of people who decide to get involved and are really passionate about what they do, they challenge you to keep doing more and doing better! Although my participation with AER and Relay For Life are separate, they’re really not—it’s all about working as a community to make life better for people we care about.”



Bertha Avila Guerrero with her seeing eye dog, Godiva

Bertha Avila Guerrero – Celebrating possibilities

Attending the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, really struck a chord for Bertha Avila Guerrero, M.Ed., teacher of the visually impaired, Hillsboro (Texas) Independent School District. “I loved hearing [music legend] Ronnie Milsap’s story,” she recalled. “Here was this man who, against all odds and in a very competitive field, did what he wanted

to do. And AER recognized him for that...for living his life and pursuing his dreams. To me, it was a celebration of possibilities. It’s what we teach every day to our students. I’m from a generation where people told us what careers to pursue—social worker, medical transcriber, and so forth. We were scared into our professions instead of following our passions. It meant so much to me that AER chose to honor Ronnie Milsap for succeeding in what he chose to do.”

Guerrero, who is finishing her dissertation on braille literacy, has been a teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) for 28 years. When she returned to school to pursue her doctorate, she joined AER as a student member and has been enjoying the benefits ever since.

“AER has helped me so much,” Guerrero shared. “It’s been great to meet people on the Listserv or at conferences who I otherwise wouldn’t have met, because we’re all over the country. I love being able to talk to other TVIs, especially since I am in a small community in a small district. It makes a difference to have that connection to other TVIs.”

An active participant on the AER Listserv, Guerrero finds a wealth of information from other members. Most recently, she posted a question about helping a student who will be participating in marching band in the fall. “I have no experience with marching band,” laughed Guerrero. “I was able to ask my question and get answers. When people don’t know the answer, they often point me to people who do. But beyond getting answers to my questions, I just love reading other people’s questions and stories. There’s always something new to learn!”

As a student member, AER provides a unique opportunity to network with fellow students. “I was so pleased when AER formed a student division,” said Guerrero. “Oftentimes, students don’t get the support they need from their university. In my case, it was because my university was too big. They didn’t seem to understand the challenges of being a TVI out in the field, working full-time while completing a doctoral program. Through AER, I can connect with students all over. It’s been a tremendous source of support for me.”

AER has also provided Guerrero with excellent resources for her research. “Right now, there is a lot of research going on about cortical vision impairment (CVI), but I can guarantee you that it’s not being taught at any university here in Texas,” she observed. “Through AER, I can get information from teachers who are successfully implementing techniques for students with CVI.” Guerrero also refers frequently to division position papers and the *Journal on Visual Impairment and Blindness (JVIB)* to access the most up-to-date research and best practices in the field.

“I love being able to talk to other TVIs, especially since I am in a small community in a small district. It makes a difference to have that connection to other TVIs.”

~Bertha Avila Guerrero

“When my husband and I began teaching, we were told to join the teachers’ union or the teachers’ association,” said Guerrero. “It was drilled into our heads that we shouldn’t ever teach without being a member of our professional association. I think the same is true for AER, maybe even more so, because so many of us work in isolation. Being a member of AER helps us stay motivated and current with our field. It puts us in touch with others so we can figure out what’s working and what isn’t. I look forward to becoming more involved with AER when I finish my program.”



Cay Holbrook — Finding strength in our collective voice

Cay Holbrook, Ph.D., professor, University of British Columbia, joined her first professional association as an undergraduate student. “When I was an undergraduate at Florida State University, AEVH [Association for the Education of the Visually Handicapped,

one of AER’s predecessor organizations] had a huge student chapter on campus,” she recalled. “About 50 students attended each monthly meeting. It was just what we did. We didn’t have email or the Internet, so these monthly gatherings were important in helping us understand our work and what it means to be a professional.” Although times have changed with how today’s vision professionals receive their training—most programs are at the graduate level and many are online—Holbrook’s membership in AER has remained constant.

From the beginning, Holbrook has looked to AER for support and growth. “In order to continue as a professional with integrity that comes from lifelong learning, we need a community that supports us—and oftentimes, AER is that community,” she said. “For example, AER conferences have allowed me to learn the latest news in research and curriculum that inform my daily work. Not only that, I get to network with people who do the same job as I do, and we help each other meet challenges and share techniques.”

Beyond the benefits to her career, AER has allowed Holbrook to join the international voice for advocacy. “I feel like I’m participating in the bigger conversation about services for people who are blind or visually impaired,” she explained. “We’re a small profession. Our individual voices, although influential, are small with only our own experiences to back our conviction. When we join forces with others at any level—be it state, provincial, national or international—we become more powerful, more likely to be heard. AER is our collective voice, providing information to policy makers and those in positions of power. By joining together, we are able to use our shared knowledge and experiences to make a difference in a way that our individual voices can’t.”

Another aspect of AER membership that Holbrook values is the access to professional literature. “In this day and age of increased accountability, the publications that are available through my AER membership are a crucial resource for finding the data and research to substantiate our actions,” she said. “As a low incidence field, we don’t have a teacher’s lounge to sit in and discuss issues with our colleagues. We need to reach out and find the information that others are publishing, and AER is my go-to resource for that.”

For vision professionals who are wondering how to get involved with AER, Holbrook

suggests small actions that can have lasting effects. “Support AER leadership,” she said. “It can be a small gesture, like writing a note of encouragement, or it can be more involved, like financial support or volunteering to serve on a committee or advisory board.”

As members become more involved, they will find a sense of community in AER. “Like any community, when you join, it may take a while to get a sense of the group’s culture and how your talents fit within the needs of that community,” said Holbrook. “But once you figure it out and you get involved with AER, the benefits are invaluable. You begin to meet people who you will interact with on a regular basis. And you become connected to others who share your passion for a single goal: making the world a better place for people who are blind or visually impaired.”

Yue-Ting Siu — A platform for what’s important

Many members enjoy being part of AER because it allows them to connect with colleagues far and wide. In a field where isolation is the norm, AER provides a welcome place—both through local meetings and the online Listserv—for practitioners to share knowledge with others who share their passion for blindness and visual impairment issues.



For Yue-Ting Siu, TVI, teacher of the visually impaired, Pleasanton (Calif.)

Unified School District and Dublin (Calif.) Unified School District, AER offers something even more valuable: a way to increase awareness for issues that are important to her. “I really care about ensuring equal access to information for everyone,” said Siu. “With all the advances in technology, I feel like teachers struggle to keep up with all the options and tools out there. It’s important to help people stay up-to-date, to remind them we don’t really have a choice about using technology, because our students don’t have a choice—they need the technology for equal access. I love being able to share that perspective on a larger scale because it’s a really important piece of advocacy.”

Besides teaching, Siu works as a consultant on accessibility issues. She reviews technology, offering the educator’s

perspective on products and training materials, and she also advises teachers on creating accessible coursework. Knowing Siu’s interests, her former professor and AER Accessibility Committee chair, L. Penny Rosenblum, invited Siu to join the committee, where she now serves as the liaison between the committee and AER headquarters.

Closer to home, Siu also serves on the board of the AER Northern California chapter. “Being active with the chapter has

“Being active with [my AER] chapter has helped me grow a local network of colleagues.”

~Yue-Ting Siu

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Membership **Cont. from page 15**

helped me grow a local network of colleagues,” said Siu. “If I have a question or need help, I have people who I can contact directly.” Having a network is especially important given the nature of Siu’s work. Despite living in an urban area just outside San Francisco, Siu rarely crosses paths with another TVI. “If it weren’t for my involvement in AER,” she observed, “I’d never have contact with others in my field.”

Another aspect of AER membership that Siu appreciates is having access to the *JVIB*. “The journal is a great resource for learning about best practices and the latest research,” said Siu. “This information is so important, especially if you want to keep improving your skills as a practitioner.”

Siu first joined AER as a student member. “Having the student membership really opened my eyes to the field,” she recalled. “It was the first time I was able to see all the different issues from all different perspectives. I got to hear from professionals who were working with students with specific issues and learn what they did to create successful outcomes.” Having professors who were active

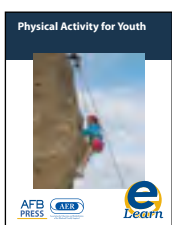
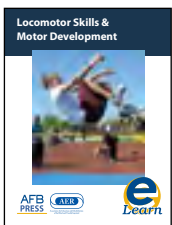
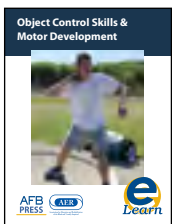
in their professional organizations also influenced Siu’s decision to pursue a student membership in AER. “I think it’s important for graduate schools to emphasize professional organizations, because they offer students an amazing opportunity to develop critical thinking skills from people in the field.”

For Siu, AER is more than just a professional organization. It has become a place to connect with a community of supportive peers. “Everyone I’ve met through AER is so passionate about their work,” said Siu. “It’s so rewarding to share knowledge with people who are so committed to their work. Every time I attend an AER event, I come away deeply inspired and excited to put the new information into practice.”

Moving to Learn Series

Adapted Physical Education for Students with Visual Impairments

Presented by Lauren J. Lieberman, Pamela Haibach, and Justin A. Haegele



Part 1: An Overview of Adapted PE

Discusses general instructional techniques and adaptations necessary to work with students with visual impairments, including tactile instruction and guide running. Includes an overview of other adapted PE resources available.

Part 2: Object Control Skills and Motor Development

Provides the definition and importance of object control skills and the associated tasks of throwing, catching, kicking, and striking.

Part 3: Locomotor Skills and Motor Development

Provides the definition and importance of locomotor skills and explains the developmental progression of skills such as running, jumping, hopping, leaping, and galloping.

Part 4: Physical Activities for Youth

Discusses strategies to improve physical activity participation for students, the health importance of being active, and school-based strategies for providing sports and recreational activities.

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AER Member Survey 2015:

Key Findings

In early 2015, AER conducted a member survey. The response rate was 9.6%, with the largest groups of respondents representing members for more than 26 years (32%) and members for five years or less (21%).

Key findings from the survey include the following points:

General association information

- The most cited reasons for joining AER are professional development followed by networking.
- Membership satisfaction: 37.6% are very satisfied, 36.8% are somewhat satisfied.
- Top membership benefits used by members: conference discounts, Listservs, publications/books and webinars, with 35.3% saying they value conference discounts the most.
- Social media: Most respondents use Facebook.

Participation in association activities

- A little more than half of the respondents say they belong to an AER Listserv, and most find it very or somewhat beneficial.
- While almost 59% of respondents say they have served on committees or as chapter or international leaders, more than 63% say they do NOT wish to volunteer.
- Only 30.6% have participated in AER LIFT training, and 44.8% think leadership training is somewhat important.
- Chapter activities: 70% of respondents attended a chapter event within the past year with 38.3% saying they are very satisfied with chapter activities.
- Division activities: 75% of respondents say they belong to a division. The division activities they find most valuable are (in order): topical town hall meetings, division business meetings at AER International Conferences and position papers.

AER publications

- *AER Report*: About 52% of respondents read the newsletter occasionally; 43% read every issue. About 68% find it somewhat valuable, and 28% say it is very valuable. Most of those who don't read the *AER Report* say they do not have the time.

- Most find AER Viewpoint, the new weekly newsletter, somewhat valuable.

AER International Conferences

- Approximately half of all respondents attended an AER International Conference in the past five years. Of those who did attend, most attended either the AER International Conference 2012 in Bellevue, Wash., or the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas.
- Those who did not attend an AER International Conference cited expense as the primary reason.
- Of those who attended, 65% were very satisfied with sessions, and about 59% were very satisfied with the AER International Conferences.

The survey concluded with some open-ended questions.

Salient responses include the following:

- **Members want to know more about the following benefits:** AER Knowledge Center, webinars, continuing education, CE tracking, Listservs and insurance.
- **Online learning opportunities wanted:** technology and UEB.
- **Issues AER should address in next five years:** recruiting people to the profession/personnel shortage; continuing education/training for new professionals; advocacy for the profession; licensure; reimbursement; collaboration with occupational therapists and physical therapists; multiple disabilities; membership cost and declining membership numbers.
- **Suggested AER Report topics:** more practical articles/practitioner tips, success stories and practical research.
- **Making chapter and international events more valuable:** cost, speaker quality and location.
- In response to **suggestions for improving services for members**, a few themes emerged: cost, advocacy, more content on rehabilitation/educational issues, publications in paper format and more frequent chapter communications.

**November 4-6, 2015
Norfolk, VA
Norfolk Waterside Marriott**



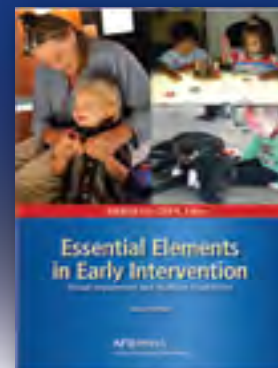
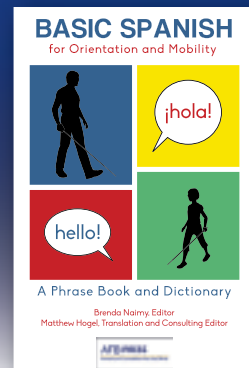
A first-of-its-kind event honoring older adults with vision loss and veterans and service members affected by injury or age-related eye disease resulting in vision loss.

Join us as we focus on the gains in vision rehabilitation made over the past 15 years in the private sector, the U.S. Veterans Administration and the U.S. Department of Defense.



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New Resources for Professionals from AFB Press!



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CAROL B. ALLMAN and SANDRA LEWIS, Editors
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This new handbook for teachers presents effective strategies for helping students develop skills in all areas of the expanded core curriculum. Includes learning activities that can be used in the classroom immediately, and targeted resources for understanding each area of the ECC.

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Good communication is essential to effective O&M instruction, and this new tool helps instructors work with students who primarily speak Spanish. O&M lessons are broken down step-by-step and displayed side-by-side in English and Spanish. The book also includes phrases, O&M terminology for instruction, and easy-to-read vocabulary lists.

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Essential Elements in Early Intervention

Visual Impairment and Multiple Disabilities

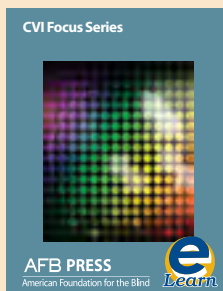
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Comprehensive information on vision and hearing screenings, functional vision and hearing assessments, and effective methods of providing early intervention services are laid out in this complete sourcebook for early interventionists and teachers. Includes new content on bonding and attachment, federal special education legislation, and evidence-based outcomes.

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Norfolk, VA
Norfolk Waterside Marriott**

Join AER at this first-of-its-kind conference for professionals in the vision field to share what they've learned working with older adults and veterans who have experienced vision loss.

In recent years, the field of vision rehabilitation has rapidly grown in the U.S. As veterans return with eye injuries from their tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, the demand for vision specialists within the U.S. departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs has risen. Meanwhile, the private sector continues to serve the growing population of older adults with vision impairments due to age and other health-related issues. As a result, the increased demand for vision rehabilitation services has generated tremendous growth and change in the field.

More than 50 sessions and posters will feature vision professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise who will share information about working with adults affected by trauma-related and age-related vision loss. This conference gives vision professionals the opportunity to share their collective wisdom to better serve adults with vision loss.



Register Today!

<http://aerbvi.org/aerconf2015>

Featured Speakers (as of June 2015)



Commissioner Janet LaBreck, M.Ed.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education

“Increasing Employment Opportunities for Those Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired”



B.J. LeJeune, M.Ed., CVRT, CRC

Training coordinator, The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC), Mississippi State University

“Things I Have Learned Living With Someone Who Has a TBI: More Confessions of a VRT”



John Crews, DPA

Health scientist, Vision Health Initiative, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Ga.

“Health-Related Quality of Life Among Older Adults With Vision Impairment: Findings From the 2006-2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System”

Pre-conference workshop: Bodies in Motion

The half-day pre-conference workshop on November 4 will focus on physical activity and recreation for adults with visual impairments. Leaders from sports and recreation organizations will share information and insight about specific physical activities. Attendees will participate in hands-on training and learn about practical accommodations and modifications to enhance the overall recreation experience for adults with visual impairments.



Why Should You Attend?

This conference will provide an unmatched opportunity to gain valuable information and resources. You will learn strategies, best practices and innovative solutions that will strengthen services provided to veterans and aging adults affected by vision loss.

Who Should Attend

- Vision rehabilitation therapists
- Low vision specialists
- Orientation & mobility specialists
- Veterans Affairs employees
- Occupational therapists
- Optometrists
- Ophthalmologists
- Assistive technology specialists
- Agency administrators
- Gerontologists
- Senior fitness specialists

Preliminary Schedule

November 4, 2015

- AM Pre-conference workshop: Bodies in Motion
- PM Opening session with keynote speaker
Educational sessions
Welcome reception

November 5, 2015

- AM Exhibit Hall Grand Opening & breakfast
General session
Educational sessions
- PM Lunch
Educational sessions
Meet & greet in Exhibit Hall

November 6, 2015

- AM Breakfast with exhibitors
Educational sessions
- PM Lunch
Exhibit Hall closes
Educational sessions
Closing general session



Selection of accepted abstracts:

- 1 Touch Project
- Accessibility of Hotels and Accommodations for Individuals With Visual Impairments or Deafblindness
- Active Learning Center in a Residential Facility for Aging Developmentally Delayed
- Balance in Adults With Visual Impairments and Blindness
- Case Study on How New Reading Aids Benefit Seniors for Sustained Reading
- Deciphering the World of Vision Rehabilitation for Families and Other Professionals
- Designing and Implementing New Internal Referral Pathways to Rehabilitation Service
- Don't Worry, Be'Appy
- Effect of Container Shape on Prescription Drug Label Readability
- eSight Eyewear, a Remarkable Wearable Video Device: User Experience and Feedback
- Examination of a Blind Veterans Peer Support Group at the Denver VA
- Fall Prevention Evaluation and Education
- From Teaching to Living: Did the Skill Transfer?
- Functional Skills and Quality of Life of Veterans With Vision Impairments
- Get "Rec'd"! The Leisure Skills Program at the EBRC
- Improvement of Flicker Sensitivity and Attention in Hemianopic Visual Field
- iOS Apps to Enhance Quality of Life of Older Adults
- Labeling for Everything: A Hands-on Demonstration of Tools and Systems
- Living Confidently With Dual Sensory Impairment (DSI)
- Living Without Barriers: Promoting Social Inclusion and Accessibility Within Senior Living Facilities
- Low Vision Lighting: It's Important, but How Important?
- Mining the Potential of the Aging Brain Using O&M Strategies
- Myths and Miracles of Medical Marijuana
- Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviors of Adults With VI: Research to Practice

Continued on p. 22

**Advance Your Career
Connect With Colleagues**

Selection of accepted posters

- The Impact of PTSD-Related Visual Dysfunction on Vision Rehabilitation
- Best Practices in Vision Rehabilitation After Brain Injury: The Multidisciplinary Team
- “You Ain’t Seen the Half of It!”: Approaches in Treating Unilateral Neglect

Where You’ll Be

/Nor-fok/ or /Naw-fok/ — No matter how you say it, the city promises fun, vibrant entertainment and culture, delicious cuisine and 144 miles of shoreline waiting to be explored! With the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean and countless rivers in its backyard, visitors are never far from the water. Take a tour of the Elizabeth River harbor on a majestic tall ship, sip some of Virginia’s finest wines at Mermaid Winery, Virginia’s very first urban winery, or watch world-renowned artists blow glass at the Chrysler Museum Glass Studio. If history is your thing, sign up for a boat or land tour of the world’s largest naval base (Naval Station Norfolk), stop by the World War II-era Battleship Wisconsin or walk the Cannonball Trail.

Accommodations

The **Norfolk Waterside Marriott** combines luxury accommodations with the traditional charm of Norfolk’s historic district. Located on the picturesque Elizabeth River, the Norfolk Waterside Marriott offers guests a vibrant, revitalized waterfront area with an abundance of entertainment options.

Book your hotel room by October 12, 2015, to receive the AER Conference group rate.

To book your reservation online, visit <http://tiny.cc/AER-2015ConfHotel> for the conference group reservation page or call toll-free 1-888-236-2427 in the U.S. and Canada or 1-757-627-4200. (International members can also go to Marriott’s worldwide reservation page for global reservation numbers, <http://www.marriott.com/reservation/worldwide-hotel-reservation-numbers.mi>). Be sure to mention “AER Conference on Vision Loss” when calling to receive the group rate.

The room rate is \$129 per night, single or double, plus tax.



Get Connected!

AER is social! Follow daily news from the association and interesting articles and information about the blindness field via social networking. Also, share your news and information about individuals and organizations.



Join the AER group page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi>



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Connect to AER’s company page at http://www.linkedin.com/companies?trk=hb_tab_compy

Celebrating
30
Years
1984–2014

AER 30th Anniversary Celebration

AER members gathered in San Antonio, Texas, not only for the AER International Conference 2014, but also to celebrate the association's 30th anniversary. To commemorate the milestone, the AER History and Memorial Committee compiled several "historical reflections" from key individuals in the association's history. The first installment appeared in the fall 2014 AER Report. The next reflection in the series follows.

"History Reflection: Building on a Solid Foundation," was presented at the AER International Conference by Gala Saber Brooks, and was written by AER's first president, Richard Welsh, Ph.D., before he passed away.

History Reflection: Building on a Solid Foundation

AER International Conference 2014

San Antonio, Texas – July 2014

Authored by Richard L. Welsh

Presented by Gala Saber Brooks



Today we focus on the 30th anniversary of the formation of AER. Those of us who consider ourselves "old-timers" in this field sometimes worry that our newer members may not understand how we got to 1984. The formation of AER was not a modern version of the Big Bang Theory. AER did not happen all at once.

Our predecessors in this profession, as of more than 160 years ago, were already pursuing the classical approach to professionalism first expressed by the Greeks and used as a guideline by various professions ever since. Guided by Hippocrates who expressed the principle, "First, do no harm," those who claimed special knowledge and ability to help other people were first committed to sharing what they knew with others who demonstrated a sincere commitment to that same profession.

In 1853, superintendents and select teachers from residential schools for the blind first met to share information. Delays, some associated with the Civil War, prevented the development of a formal association for almost 20 years. But in 1871, the American Association of Instructors for the Blind (AAIB), under the leadership of Samuel Gridley Howe, the director of the Perkins School for the Blind, was established and committed itself to the systematic improvement of education for blind children through professional development opportunities, publications and public advocacy.

Unlike some other disciplines, a separate association formed in 1895 made up primarily of graduates of residential schools for the blind. Originally known as the American Blind People's Higher Education Improvement Association (ABPHEIA), the

name was changed to the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) in 1905. This group focused on the difficult problem of finding suitable employment for the graduates as well as on the special needs of older blind people who lost their vision as adults.

Eventually, members of AAIB and AAWB—our ancestor organizations—working together as well as separately were responsible for many changes and advancements in the blindness field and eventually the establishment and professional evolution of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) in 1984.

Among other accomplishments, AAIB

- Established responsibility for producing embossed books and identifying federal funds for helping with this;
- Demonstrated the capacities of blind children by having them perform before public officials;
- Obtained approval of embossed type standards while continuing to search for an improved system;
- Recognized the necessity of a professional journal dealing with blindness;
- Obtained approval of a standard system of musical notation;
- Encouraged disciplining blind children as sighted children are disciplined;

Continued on p. 22

30th Anniversary **Cont. from page 21**

- ♦ Established responsibility for finding employment for the graduates of the schools for the blind;
- ♦ Explored consideration for the ideal architecture for schools for the blind.

Among other accomplishments, AAWB

- ♦ Led a public debate regarding the best ways to provide access to higher education for blind students, including an exclusive college for blind students; a special unit for blind students in an existing college; special scholarships provided for blind students in existing colleges; and some combination of these options;
- ♦ Established the opportunity for input from blind adults for the embossing of blind books. This input was previously provided exclusively by AAIB members;
- ♦ Addressed the quality of life for older blind adults and the possibility of special pensions for them;
- ♦ In 1905, focused its mission on improving career and vocational opportunities for blind adults to become self-sufficient;
- ♦ Encouraged the establishment of industrial education in schools for the blind;
- ♦ Encouraged the employment of blind people in trades, skilled labor and professional careers;
- ♦ Promoted the standardization of a tactual reading system;
- ♦ Expressed continuing concern for access to higher education for blind students;

- ♦ Expressed continuing concern for the needs of older blind adults;
- ♦ Launched the *Outlook for the Blind* in 1907 with Charles C. Campbell as the first editor.

Together, AAIB and AAWB were responsible for

- ♦ Establishing the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness;
- ♦ Establishing the National Industries for the Blind;
- ♦ Establishing the American Foundation for the Blind;
- ♦ Establishing a Code of Ethics and a Seal of Good Practice for agencies serving the blind;
- ♦ Developing training and certification standards for home teachers of blind adults;
- ♦ Endorsing the Peabody and Harvard teacher training programs;
- ♦ Approving a uniform code for the embossing of books.

In developing AER and continuing the evolution of this professional association, we were—and are—standing on the shoulders of giants who had come together to have a very positive impact on the lives and opportunities of blind people and those who served them.



AER and AFB Produce Joint Webinars

AER and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) have teamed up to create and deliver a series of webinars for professionals in the blindness field looking to expand their knowledge. AER members receive a 20% discount for the AER and AFB joint webinars. To receive the discount, AER members must go through the AER website (<http://aerbvi.org/>), using an AER member username and password to access the AFB eLearning Center. Non-members can access webinars by going directly to the AFB eLearning Center online at <http://elearn.afb.org/default.aspx>.



AER

Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

www.aerbvi.org

AER International Conference

2016

July 20-24, 2016

**Hyatt Regency Jacksonville-Riverfront
Jacksonville, Florida USA**





The AER Guide on Professional Licensure for VRT and O&M Service Providers in the United States

Prepared and respectfully submitted by the AER Licensure Task Force 2013-2015

Why do we need professional licensure if we have a national certification? What does professional licensure do and not do? What does certification do and not do? Can they co-exist?

A professional certification (or degree for that matter) identifies that one has completed a training, educational or preparation program to be able to provide a specific service, in this case vision rehabilitation therapy (VRT) or orientation and mobility (O&M). The certification identifies the professional as having the skills and education needed to be a professional service provider of the field. On the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) website, it states that a certified professional demonstrates “critical knowledge and skills that promote the provision of quality services and ethical practice” (<http://www.acvrep.org>).

Even though the professional field, national leadership and individual professionals as a whole might believe that one *should* have a certification, a specific degree or a combination of both to be considered a qualified service provider, that does not mean that a state or agency will require a provider to have that certification or that preparation. Professional licensure defines the minimum competence needed by a professional to safely and effectively practice the regulated profession and defines the scope of practice for the profession. States can grant licenses to professionals to practice or provide a specific service. They do this by passing a bill that describes the scope of the service and the profession that will be providing it.

Currently, the fields of VRT and O&M have yet to pass a state bill to grant licenses to these professions. One can speculate that this may be why many agencies do not require a specific

certification to be hired as a service provider or for one to provide services for their agency. In the case of New York state (NYS), it has been identified that there are many teachers of students with visual impairment (TVIs) who are also providing O&M services although they have not completed a professional preparation program to qualify to do so. Because O&M is not currently a licensed profession in NYS, they are able to provide orientation and mobility services. This is just one example but there are many more.

Licensure and certification can coexist. If done correctly, a licensure bill would support certifications. The history of occupational therapy provides insight on how certification and licensure can coexist. The profession of occupational therapy (OT) started with a national certification and progressed to getting the national certification registered and recognized on the state level. Next, the OT profession organized state licensure for their profession. OT professionals and leadership of each state worked to pass separate OT licensure bills in their respective states. Instead of creating a new qualifying exam for each state, each state chose to identify the national certification exam from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT, <http://www.nbcot.org>). OT assistants are also required to pass a certification exam from NBCOT. This is a win-win-win scenario for the states, for certification and for professional licensure of professionals. For the states, they do not have to go through a costly effort of developing their own test. For national certifying bodies, it keeps their client base significantly active and ensures their economic viability. For the licensed professionals, it means that their credentials are much more portable among the states if a professional relocates or serves clients in more than one state. Professionals would not have to take another qualifying exam

if both states used the national certification exam as the exam criteria for licensure.

What states currently license their professionals (general) and which ones do not?

Currently all states license professionals, but it varies amongst the states as to how many professions are licensed and what percentage of the state's workforce is licensed. At the time that *Licensing Occupations* (Kleiner, 2006) was written, California was leading the nation with over 178 licensed professions. Only five states had less than 60 licensed professions, with the lowest being Kansas at 47. All states license some type of health care professional (e.g., registered nurses [RN], medical doctor [MD], etc.)

One can easily conclude that licensing professions is a very common practice, and every state is already involved with licensing professionals on one level or another.

How do states currently recognize qualified VRT and O&M service providers for children and adults?

Recognition of O&M specialists varies by state. Upon soliciting information from AER chapters, the AER licensure task force received responses from nine states, which is an 18% sample. All nine states stated that they do not license VRT or O&M professionals or service providers.

With regard to how states recognize VRTs, one of the nine states surveyed responded that they require an ACVREP certification in VRT. All other states (8 of 9) responded that no specific credential was required.

Our task force found that one state in the survey offered a "supplemental license" for providing O&M services to school-aged children. In this case, the supplemental license is not required for providing services and does not have the benefits and privileges of having a professional license, such as a specific credential that is required to provide services.

For providing O&M to school-aged children, two of the nine states that responded to the survey require a TVI certification to teach O&M. In Florida, an additional endorsement in O&M from the Florida Bureau of Educator Certification must be obtained and is added to the TVI certificate. In Puerto Rico, an

undergraduate degree in special education with an emphasis on vision impairment qualifies the professional to provide O&M services. One of the nine states that were surveyed required ACVREP certification but cited that other non-certified professionals were providing services as well. Another state requires completion of an approved university O&M training program or completion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's O&M internship program. In two of the remaining states responding to the survey, credentials and qualifications are left to the individual school districts and cooperatives.

For professionals working with adults, three of the nine states surveyed require an O&M to have ACVREP certification. One of these states will also accept an O&M certification with National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB).

As mentioned before, this paper provides a sample (18%) of how some states are registering or recognizing who is considered a qualified professional in VRT and O&M. There might be other examples that differ from the ones that are presented here, but representatives from only nine states responded to the survey. Considering the states that responded to the survey, the data collected indicate there is little consideration about what training and education one needs to provide VRT services. Based on the data collected from the nine states that responded to the survey, there is no uniformity in the field of O&M with how O&M professionals are being recognized, what credentials one needs to provide services or how to be considered an O&M specialist.

This information is important if your state or you and your colleagues are considering licensure for VRT and O&M specialists and providers. In addition to understanding how your state currently recognizes VRT and O&M service providers, you will need to ascertain the following:

- What harm is caused by the current model of recognition of VRT and O&M professionals?
- How would licensing better protect the public (consumers, professionals, institutions, etc.)?
- Does licensing, or lack thereof, affect the persons receiving services?
- How does one determine if professional licensure is needed for VRT or O&M professionals in their state?

The need for licensure should be justified. Below are several examples of questions to help vision professionals determine if there is a need for licensure in their state.

1. Is there an age group that does not receive VRT or O&M services for people who are blind or visually impaired? If so, licensure could begin the process of addressing this

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Professional Licensure for VRT Cont. from page 27

gap in services. Getting a profession formally registered or licensed at the state level requires (or encourages) the state to make sure those services are available and provided by a qualified professional.

2. Are non-certified professionals or professionals without the proper training providing VRT or O&M services in your state? If so, one of the functions of licensure is to determine what training and education qualifies a professional to provide services. It also regulates the field to make sure that service providers have, at the very least, the appropriate credentials to be providing services.
3. Are agencies requiring a national certification or specific degree to provide services in VRT or O&M? Professional licensure regulates the field by requiring a national certification or specific degree. By ensuring that VRT and O&M specialists are licensed, the consumer is also protected and can verify that a qualified professional is providing the service. As licensed professionals, VRT and O&M service providers would have to register and renew their status with the state to maintain their credentials as a licensed professional. It was noted in *Licensing Occupations* that consumers always prefer a licensed professional.

These three questions offer guidance to anyone who is trying to identify the need for licensure in their state. The book *Licensing Occupations* (Kleiner, 2006) explains the benefits of licensing one's profession and discusses other reasons why a state should consider licensing professionals, such as VRT and O&M, and is recommended for further guidance.

How does one or a group start organizing in order to pass a licensure bill?

Each state should build a coalition with representatives from different agencies, groups and individuals. The types of agencies, groups and individuals will depend on the state and who the stakeholders are in that specific region. Examples of agencies, groups or individuals include public schools, state schools for the blind, state vocational and rehabilitation associations, private vocational and rehabilitation associations, individual service providers, administrators, advocacy groups, consumer groups, parent/family groups and perhaps groups of other licensed health professionals.

The coalition should identify the need for licensure and conduct research that can be documented as justification for licensure. Examples that could be included might focus on certain age groups not receiving services or service providers who do not hold the proper training. Remember to try to identify the harm of not having licensure and how the public could benefit from licensure. Once the need is identified and justification documented, a licensure bill can be developed. The New



York licensure bill, which is found on the New York Vision Rehabilitation Association's (NYVRA) website (<http://www.nyvra.org/>) is a good reference on developing a bill.

Once a bill is prepared, a senator or representative will be needed to sponsor the bill in the state legislature. After a sponsor for the bill is identified, a grassroots campaign will be needed to help spread the message and gain support for it. Inviting key state legislators to local activities and events in the VRT and O&M professions (like white cane day activities) will enhance the support for licensure and a better understanding of the field as a whole.

Letters of support from national agencies and professionals in the field will also help. Local and national agencies and leadership, leaders from other states and/or other health professions who have gone through the licensing process may be able to offer assistance or mentorship.

What organizational strategy will work best in your state? Is there a need to raise funds?

Efforts to license individuals within a state can start at many different points with a variety of groups. There are several models or combinations of models that could lead the licensure effort. Coalitions should assess which model or combination of models will be the best strategy in the state. Regardless of which stakeholders or groups start the effort, it is important to determine how to be most effective in achieving licensure for the professionals in your state.

- A local chapter of a national professional association or a state association may lead the effort using volunteers and/or paid staff.
- The professionals themselves and/or their unions could lead and fund the effort for licensure.
- A state entity may propose registration, certification or licensure because of lack of compliance with state or federal law.
- Consumers or parents may lead licensure efforts for a

particular profession through a volunteer effort using stakeholders who represent the service providers and policy makers.

- A paid lobbyist may be hired to advocate on behalf of the licensure effort in some states.

Next steps and things to consider along the way

Obtaining licensure can be a long process and each coalition should carefully consider the challenge. Who is likely to commit to a campaign that may take dedication and time? Can you devise a rotation to combat burn out? Can you get enough people involved in the effort to make the work light? The vocal, committed and organized stakeholders that persevere and overcome obstacles are most likely to achieve licensure.

If it is determined that a professional lobbyist is needed, the cost is often beyond the means of any one agency or group. There may be one or two organizations that are willing to contribute a larger share toward the cost of a lobbyist or may be willing to assign a lobbyist to work on this issue along with other issues of interest to the organization. Sometimes a lobbyist can be shared between stakeholders. For example a professional group, organization, school and consumer group might share the cost of a licensure lobbyist.

At times, the issues of stakeholders may go beyond licensure and the formation of a separate 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization might be the best option. There are complex federal and state regulations affecting these charitable organizations and seeking assistance from a pro-bono attorney is always an option. In this case, the new nonprofit hires and pays the lobbyist on behalf of the stakeholders. The cost of hiring a lobbyist can be funded through donations, membership dues, sponsorships or other fundraising strategies (e.g., events, sale of T-shirts and buttons, etc.) The annual cost of a lobbyist may vary dramatically from state to state. It can cost a few thousand dollars or a

hundred thousand dollars, depending upon how much of the lobbyist's time is purchased. You might also be able to negotiate a nonprofit rate. Most lobbying firms are willing to discount their fees for volunteer groups or very small nonprofit agencies.

Like any effort, it is important to identify as many interested stakeholders as possible and to find leaders who will spearhead the effort. It helps to have paid staff, but it is not essential if you have dedicated volunteers willing to devote their time and effort to the licensure process.

Lastly, investigate the most recent professions to be licensed in the state. It may be helpful to refer to the bills of other licensed professions and their efforts as a guide throughout the process. Do not reinvent the wheel unless it is necessary.

References

Academy of Certification for Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). ACVREP Certification. Retrieved on 04/03/2015 from <http://www.acvrep.org>.

Kleiner, M. M. (2006). *Licensing Occupations: Ensuring Quality or Restricting Competition?* Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute.

New York Vision Rehabilitation Association (NYVRA). Licensed orientation and mobility specialists and vision rehabilitation therapists are needed now in New York. Retrieved on 04/01/2015 from <http://www.nyvra.org/>.

Additional Resource

An Act to Amend the Education Law, in Relation to the Licensing of Orientation and Mobility Specialists and Rehabilitation Therapists. Bill A5451. New York State Assembly. Available online at <http://www.nyvra.org/#!legislativeupdates/c3qn> or http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&bn=A05451&term=2015&Summary=Y&Text=Y.



Chapter News

Colorado

The AER Colorado chapter presented awards during its banquet on May 1, 2015.

The President's Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities, was presented to **Brandon Mapes** of Mountain BOCES by CAER Board President David Gooldy.

The Lifetime Commitment award, which recognizes professionals who have given of themselves to clients/students throughout their career and possibly preparing to retire, was presented to **Rita Albright** of Boulder Valley School District by her colleague, Dr. Paula Conroy.

The Gary Schmidt Award honors an AER member who works directly with students/clients. Nomination criteria include: ethical standards, sense of humor, degree of excellence in job performance and professionalism. This award was presented to **Barb Galgano** by her colleague, Sarah Sonnier.

The Connections Award, which recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, and perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field, was presented to tactile artist **Ann Cunningham** by colleague Brent Batron.

The Dakotas

Deb Johnsen, North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, was awarded the 2015 Riki Nitz Worker of the Year Award at the AER Dakotas



Deb Johnsen receives the Riki Nitz Worker of the Year Award.

chapter's Annual Conference in Grand Forks, N.D., in May 2015. Deb, who has been with the school as a teacher of the visually impaired for 29 years, encompasses all the qualities of a master teacher of the visually impaired who truly cares and advocates for individuals with blindness.

Indiana

The AER Indiana chapter will hold its fall meeting Oct. 29-30, 2015 with the theme, "Making Life Less SC'AER'Y." The keynote speaker is Kathy Nimmer, a visually impaired graduate of ISBVI and Purdue University and one of four finalists for the National Teacher of the Year Award.

Michigan

At the April conference of the AER Michigan chapter, **Michigan Department of Education, Low Incidence Outreach** received an MAER Award in appreciation for its outstanding contributions to serving persons in Michigan who are blind and visually impaired.



Michigan Dept. of Education, Low Incidence Outreach receives MAER Award.

North Carolina

Our NCCVIB Annual Conference on Visual Impairments and Blindness in March was a smashing success with the greatest number of dedicated vision professionals in attendance in recent history! More than 180 attended, and there were some new and innovative topics of interest to participants, including crowd favorites: Managing Visual Impairment in Adults With

Acquired Brain Injury; The Syndrome of Optic Nerve Hypoplasia; Early Intervention Cortical Visual Impairment; What in the World Can I Use When Teaching the VI & MU Student; and Determining Appropriate VI Service Intensity With the VISSIT.

Please visit the chapter website, <http://www.ncaer.net>, to view our newsletter with a long list of summer programs available along with other important news. Also visit the chapter's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NCCVIB>.

North Carolina is a beautiful place to live, work and play, and there's quite a bit of need in the VI field here due to many recent retirees and a growing population. If you are looking for a new place to call "home" and continue your VI career, explore the VI and O&M needs of North Carolina! We'd love to have you!



An interactive session at the NCCVIB event in March.

Northern California

On May 14, 2015, AER NorCal held its annual spring full-day conference. With over 50 registered attendees, presentations included a dynamic overview on UEB implementation by AER Past President Patricia Leader. Sessions also included an update from Vanda Pharmaceuticals on Non-24 disorder and an intriguing talk on employment trends from our friends at Employment Link, a San Francisco based organization whose goal is to assist blind and visually impaired folks gain competitive employment. Attendees

had the opportunity to earn CEUs via ACVREP. The day ended nicely with a wine and cheese reception.

Later in 2015, AER NorCal plans to host seminars leading up to our 2016 Spring Conference that will tackle soft skills and the new Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). As always, our chapter is interested in hearing from our members on how we can become more involved to best support our field of professional colleagues.

For more information, please email: norcalaer@yahoo.com.

Northern Rockies

The AER Northern Rockies chapter will hold its annual conference in Boise, Idaho, on October 14-16, 2015. The theme is "Celebrating Our History Now and in the Making." The conference will include a trolley tour of historic Boise and a march on the Capitol for White Cane Day. Speakers include Wendy David, Jackie Macy, Holly Lawson, Tracey Gaver, Michael Graham, Dana Ard and a host of others. For information contact Ken McCulloch at Krmac6@msn.com. Also, see Names in the News (p.48) for more Northern Rockies news.

Texas

The AER Texas chapter held its annual conference in Arlington, Texas, on March 26-28, 2015. This year's theme was, "A Lifetime of Learning: Covering All the Bases," which included a pre-conference session called "Art in the Dark." Over 60 participants donned blindfolds to make two different art projects facilitated by the phenomenal art teacher Deborah Boudreaux from Mansfield Independent School District and Shay Utley, president elect.

The conference officially began with the keynote given by the dynamic Kevin O'Connor, who helped motivate us to become better service providers. The entire conference continued that theme with 40 breakout sessions and 22 vendors.

Winners of the 2015 AER Texas chapter awards are:

- Texas Chapter Award - Tom Westerman
- Sammie K. Rankin Award for Outstanding Member - Neva Fairchild
- Aubrey Boyd Tipps Memorial Award - Laynette Phillips
- Julia L. Young Award - Kara Chumbley
- Virginia Bishop Award - Donna Clopton
- Phil Hatlen Award - Debra Sewell
- Outstanding Parent of the Year - Karen Whitty
- Outstanding Student of the Year - Ivy Harris

- Jim Durkel Para-Professional/ Worker of the Year - Sue Mattson

The Texas chapter also presented scholarships to the following:

- Student With a Visual Impairment - Nicole Lyssy and Oya Karamehmetoglu
- Professional Preparation - Heather Munroe and Angela Pozzouli

The conference concluded with the TAER business meeting, which was very productive. Members discussed many great ideas on strategies to increase membership and attendance at conferences and opportunities for different interest groups/divisions to meet during conferences. This year's TAER conference, which was chaired by Brenda Lee, past president, was highly successful and has the attendees looking forward to the 2016 conference in Houston.



Participants create art at the AER Texas Chapter's pre-conference session, "Art in the Dark."

Welcome New Members! Jan 27, 2015-June 17, 2015

CANADA

Ontario
Caterina Ausman
Stuart Wiseman

NEW ZEALAND

Naomi Meltzer

UNITED STATES

Alabama
Velma Allen
Seth Williams

Arizona

Anne Rempé

California

Michelle Jefferson
Michelle Mazzilli

Colorado

Danielle Burden

Connecticut

Julie Spodnick

Delaware

Melodye May

Florida

Michael Foster

Georgia

Greg Aikens
Deborah Lovell
Paula Pop
Andrew Pregenzer
Ericka Tinsley

Illinois

David Cheske
Jennifer Jackson
Kathryn Page

Kentucky

Beth Baker

Amanda Greene

Toni Hardin
Kim Klump
DeAnna LeFan
Nancy Nichols
Cindy Queen
Katy Randolph
Rosie Renier-Powell

Lucy Stone
Janine Stubblefield
Theresa Thomas
Carolyn Zierer
Laura Zierer

Louisiana

David Eller

Maine

Frances Kelley
Brad Wiggin

Maryland

Michelle Britt
Jessica Doyle
Earl Miller
Christine Telford

Massachusetts

Callie Brusegaard
Kristen Clark
Sarah McIntire
Patrick Richardo
Heather Spicer
Charles Warren
Georgia Wattendorf-Guiney

Michigan

Lane Fowler
Carrie Harleton
Karen McQueary
Lisa Osoria
April Shunk
Lori Vargo

Mississippi

Karla Antonelli

Nebraska

Patrick Fischer
Doug Wampler
Anne Wilson

New Hampshire

Amber Wagner

New Jersey

Patricia Ebel
Elyse Giordano
Darlene Tammara

New Mexico

Christine Valdez

New York

Brenda Crespo Valle
Diana Greenspan
Thelma Hidalgo

Marlene Ortiz

Iris Popkin
Andrea Tedesco
Stefania Vukdedaj
Idalis Zapata

North Carolina

Cynthia Bell
Rachel Harris
Marsha Zobel

Oregon

Stephanie Sherwood

Pennsylvania

Rush Blady
Michele Hammersla-Quick

Lea Hyvarinen

Tiffany Jones
Maureen Kelly
Melissa Kenderes
Andrea Kilroe

Rebecca Knaub

Jessica Kolvites
Stacie Koprowdki
Nadya Krause
Brittany Larkin
Megan Marnien
Rebecca Matson
Amy Rebovich
Cheryl Rettger
Paula Rollins
Jessica Shackley
Rose Anna Stillwagon
Staci Szymanski
Lisa Temple
Susan Vaughan
Kristine Williams

Tennessee

Tonja Dandy

Texas

Heather Ballard
Jody DeLeon
Lyndee Furnace
Ashley Peterson
Erica Simms
Cydney Williams

Virginia

Janice Dishek
Rhode Fernandez
Audrey Goldberg

Washington

Michael Bicknell

West Virginia

Jamie Fox

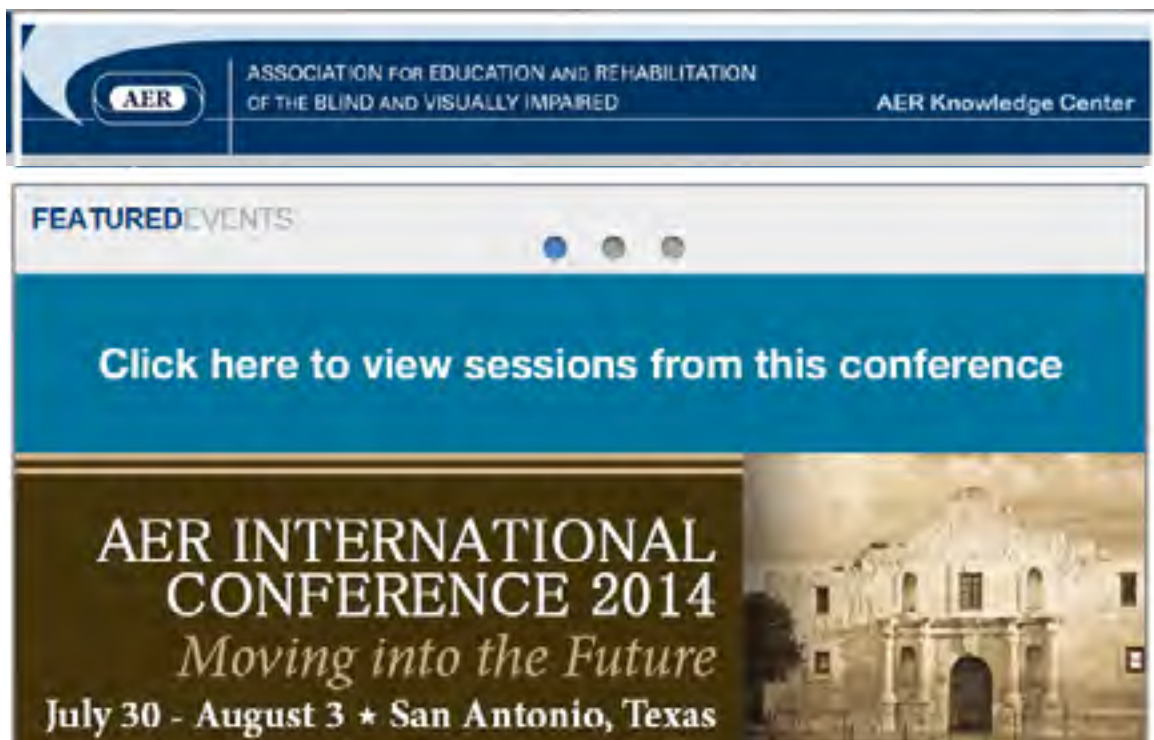
Wisconsin

Jaelyn Borchardt

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AER Knowledge Center

- Almost 200 hours of programming for Orientation & Mobility Specialists, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, and Low Vision Therapists from the:
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 - AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference 2013
 - AER International Conference 2014
 - MacFarland Seminar 2014 on Traumatic Brain Injury & Prosthetic Vision
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<http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com>

Division Docket

Two New AER Divisions Have Provisional Approval

As chair of the Council of Divisions Chairs, I am happy to announce the approval of two new AER divisions with provisional status until the AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla.

The two new divisions are: the International Services and Global Issues Division (18), proposed by Dr. Kay Ferrell; and the Physical Activity and Recreation Division (19), proposed by Matt Mescall. Those of you who signed on to one or both of these two new division proposals can now join one or both of these two new divisions. Even if you did not sign on to either of the original proposals, you can still join these two new provisional divisions by paying the \$10.00 dues for one of the divisions or \$20 for both!!

When the AER Board of Directors meets in Jacksonville in July 2016, it will grant full status to the two new divisions if each keeps and maintains the requirements of provisional status until that time.

I encourage you to join one or both of these divisions and become active members in helping create educational materials and addressing issues important to both.

On behalf of the AER Board of Directors and the AER Executive Director, congratulations to Kay and Matt and to all the members who supported the creation of these two new divisions.

Jill Brown
Chair, Council of Division Chairs

Information & Technology Division (5)

The Information & Technology Division (Infotech) will be presenting a back-to-school webinar in late August or early September to help AER members navigate the plethora of current and upcoming technologies available to TVIs during the 2015-16 school year. Watch for more details as summer's end approaches.

And Infotech members, don't forget to read the weekly tips and tricks that Infotech officers post to the Infotech Listserv. Just \$10 in dues gives you access to the Listserv information and the resources of assistive technology people who can answer your questions and/or address your concerns.

Low Vision Rehabilitation Division (7)

On April 15, the Low Vision Rehabilitation Division held a topical discussion on vision therapy, moderated and organized by Dr. Holly Lawson, coordinator, Visually Impaired Learner Program, Portland State University. As a result, the division formed a subcommittee, headed by Dr. Lawson, to develop a position paper on vision therapy. Other members include Dr. Amanda Hall-Lueck, Dr. Irene Topor, and Dr. Marla Moon.

We will keep you informed of progress on the position paper, and I would like to thank Dr. Lawson for leading the discussion and subcommittee; everyone who participated and contributed to the discussion; and the subcommittee members for working on the position paper.

Rapidly approaching is World Sight Day on October 8, a global event that focuses on bringing attention to blindness and vision impairment. (For more information, go to <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/world-sight-day>.) The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) are actively involved in coordinating events and activities for World Sight Day for the following purposes:

- To raise public awareness of blindness and vision impairment as major international public health issues.
- To influence governments, particularly health ministers, to participate in and designate funds for national blindness prevention programs.
- To educate target audiences about blindness prevention, about VISION 2020 and its activities, and to generate support for VISION 2020 program activities.

You can participate by:

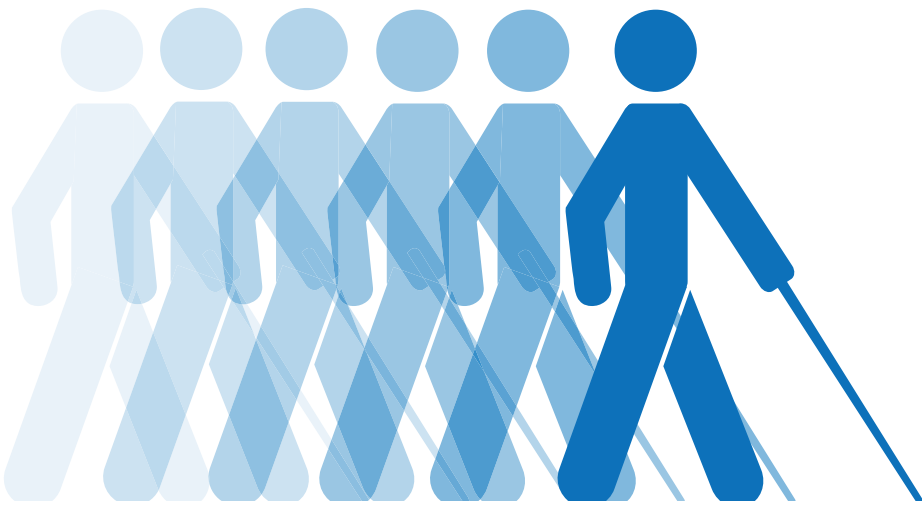
- Acknowledging a colleague by doing something nice, like buying him/her a cup of coffee.
- Planting a tree with the family or children at school.
- Fundraising for a cause. For example, my friend is hosting a fundraising high tea for my low vision rehabilitation, blindness awareness and prevention work. The guest speaker will be person with low vision who will talk about her life experience and diabetes.
- Spoiling yourself.
- Doing group work, such as tactile art. One group I know will be using cinnamon, star anise, cloves, bark, sand, straw, colorful crystals, etc. to create a multi-sensory work of art.
- Engaging with your colleagues and encouraging them to become a member of the Low Vision Division.

Take pictures of your activities and email them to kamala.shireen@gmail.com. I'd love to include your stories for our December newsletter.

Do you have other ideas? Would you like to see a Low Vision Division award given to a deserving division member on World Sight Day? What should the award look like? What shall we call it? Email me your thoughts.

Looking ahead to 2016 and beyond, think about how Low Vision Division activities can be improved and how you would like to help. We need your ideas to start the ball rolling for 2016 and the future. Please join the division Listserv by

Continued on p. 35



Association for Education and Rehabilitation
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

www.aerbvi.org

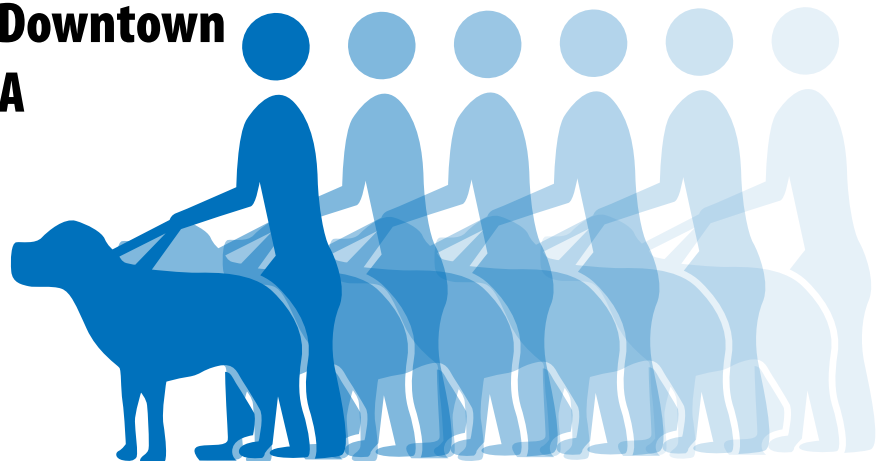
AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference

2017



July 19-22, 2017

**Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA**



Division Docket **Cont. from page 33**

emailing aer-div07@lists.aerbvi.org, and express your views! I look forward to reading them.

Shireen Ali
Chair, Low Vision Rehabilitation Division

Orientation & Mobility Division (9)

The Orientation & Mobility Division distributed a newsletter recently, the first one in a while. Thanks to Viki Poole for agreeing to serve on the division's Communication/Media Committee and acting as newsletter editor. Please send ideas for articles to her at brailletchr@gmail.com.

The ad hoc committee on Best Practice in Collaboration: O&M and OT/PT Scope of Practice is in the process of updating the 2004 Roles and Responsibilities of Orientation and Mobility Specialists position paper.

The Environmental Access Committee attended the Transportation Research Board meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 2015. All expenses were covered due to a generous donation from Polara Engineering. See their report (p. 36) for details.

The Nominations Committee has begun its work of identifying potential candidates for elections in 2016. Contact Eileen Sifferman or Meg Roberston, co-chairs, at eileensiffermann@comcast.net or mobilitymeg@aol.com to provide input.

The Awards Committee, chaired by Gala Saber-Brooks, brooks6242@sbcglobal.net, is in the process of finding committee members and will soon begin its work as well.

Susan Langendonk
Chair, O&M Division

Division on Aging (15)

The Aging Division is offering a monthly "water cooler" teleconference series to discuss topics relevant to vision professionals working with older adults. During our first discussion in May, members were asked to share comments and concerns about the four areas that the White House Conference on Aging is covering this summer. We plan to share the information we gathered with President Barack Obama.

During our May discussion, we were also asked to address dealing with cognitive decline and vision loss in our next call. We welcome ideas for future discussions, so please send them our way.

Future teleconference dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 10 a.m. Eastern
- Wednesday, August 26, 2015, 1 p.m. Eastern
- Thursday, September 24, 2015, 6 p.m. Eastern
- Friday, October 23, 2015 9 p.m. Eastern
- Monday, November 16, 2015, 10 a.m. Eastern
- Tuesday, December 15, 2015, 1 p.m. Eastern

Physical Activity and Recreation Division (19)

Following a proposal from the membership to the AER Board of Directors last year, the Physical Activity and Recreation Division was born. In order for it to become a full-fledged division, it must maintain at least 50 members between now and next summer when AER holds its business meeting at the AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla.

Division leaders expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to be part of the great professional organization that is AER. As we begin our division, we are looking for ways to define what physical activity and recreation means to all members of AER. One of the best ways to define what the division can offer AER members is to look at the amazing physical and recreational activities that members are doing and to celebrate their success as well as those of their clients, students and athletes.

AER members Mark Lucas and Matt Simpson, U.S. Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), visited elementary schools in Denver, teaching the basics of guide running and goalball. USABA coaches and goalball athletes represented the United States in a sports exchange program with Russia in the spring. The group included AER member Matt Mescall who visited schools, hosted clinics and demonstrations, and coached U.S. athletes in Russia's first international goalball tournament.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Camp Abilities in Brockport, N.Y., developed by AER member Dr. Lauren Lieberman. The program has trained over 1,200 future teachers on how to teach children with visual impairments. The Camp Abilities model has now been replicated in 18 locations around the U.S. and in seven other countries. Many AER members, such as Jenna Sticken and Justin Haegele with the Alaska Camp Abilities program, are participating in sports-related programs for children this year.

A lot of amazing members of AER and the division are creating opportunities for athletes who are blind or visually impaired. We hope that all AER members feel welcome to join the division to share their personal stories on how they are using movement and recreation to open doors for the people they work with. The division is not just for those who like to move or teach physical activity and recreation, but for those who want to move, for those who can create opportunities for movement and for those who see the value that movement has to offer for all.

We hope that, together with all the other wonderful divisions and professionals in the field, we can use this division to help build relationships between professionals, collaborate to create opportunities and inspire others to get moving and help get their students and clients moving as well. Physical activity and recreation are essential to helping build on skills and concepts along with raising the quality and meaning of life. Please consider joining the Physical Activity and Recreation Division!

Matt Mescall



AER Orientation & Mobility Division

Environmental Access Committee Report

by Janet Barlow, chair, jmbarlow@accessforblind.org

Environmental Access Committee (EAC) members have continued to provide updated information in their various regions, particularly fielding several questions on how to request and advocate for accessible pedestrian signals (APS) and proper installation of APS and detectable warnings. A recent concern for committee members is getting orientation & mobility (O&M) specialists in the field to teach accurate and up-to-date information about actuated traffic signals and the appropriate use of pedestrian pushbuttons.

Our main activity last quarter was attending the meeting of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Beezy Bentzen) and the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board (Janet Barlow, Beezy Bentzen, Lukas Franck, Meg Robertson, Dona Sauerburger). These are meetings of traffic engineers and transportation planners, many of whom have never heard of O&M specialists. Our goal is to continue to raise awareness of issues affecting travelers who are blind or who have low vision and to encourage designs and practices that improve access and safety.

National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices *Arlington, Va., January 7-9, 2015*

The National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) represents various traffic control organizations that make recommendations to the U.S. Federal Highway Administration on changes to information in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The NCUTCD meets twice each year, in January and June.

EAC member Beezy Bentzen is a member of NCUTCD's Signals Technical Committee, which helps develop proposed language about traffic signals. When approving new or revised language, the Signals Technical Committee distributes the proposed language to NCUTCD sponsoring organizations, and discusses and incorporates feedback before bringing the proposed language before the full NCUTCD council. If approved, the revised language is sent to the U.S. Federal Highway Administration's MUTCD team to be considered for inclusion in the next edition of the MUTCD. At this point, the next MUTCD revision is expected to be published in 2016.

Among the Signals Technical Committee's issues this year is making sure priority signal strategies for transit vehicles do not shorten the time for pedestrians to complete their crossings (pedestrian clearance times). We are also working toward a

requirement that there be an audible information device where there are pushbuttons to actuate flashing yellow beacons. The audible information device may be similar to an APS. It should have a pushbutton locator tone, so a person who is blind will know it is there, and a speech message that says, "Yellow lights are flashing," when the button is pushed and the yellow lights begin flashing.

The MUTCD has permitted the use of passive pedestrian detection to actuate pedestrian signals, including APS, since 2000. In passive detection, the pedestrian is detected by a technology such as microwave or video, so pedestrians do not need to push a button to get a walk signal. Now it is possible to actuate the APS pushbutton locator tone using passive detection, and some people think this may be a good way to reduce the noise of locator tones. We are working to make sure that if locator tones are actuated by passive detection, they are required to come on and be audible to approaching pedestrians when they are no less than six feet from the relevant pushbutton. It is quite complex to make passive detection and APS work well together, so we are also proposing research on whether or not this technology has any unintended adverse consequences for visually impaired travelers.

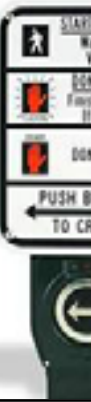
EAC members Janet Barlow and Lukas Franck are both actively participating non-members of the Signals Technical Committee. Because they are not members of any specific technical committees, they are free to participate in any committee that is actively considering an issue that affects travelers with visual impairments. However, neither Janet nor Lukas was able to attend this past January's meeting.

During the January meeting, a retiring member said in his "goodbye" speech that his work with us and with individuals who are blind to add language on APS was one of the two things he was most proud of in his 40 years on the committee.

Transportation Research Board

Washington, D.C., January 11-15, 2015

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) annual meeting occurs in Washington, D.C., each January and is attended by more than 11,000 people, mainly traffic engineers, transportation planners and researchers from all over the world. The meeting includes hundreds of presentations and workshops on issues ranging from asphalt (which we don't attend) to traffic signals to transit scheduling. Janet Barlow



led a workshop this year titled, “Look Right! Look Left! Where? Accommodating Pedestrians at Alternative Intersections” with active participation from participants to develop a list of research needs related to pedestrians and some new types of intersection designs.

In addition to presentations, more than 200 TRB committees meet during the annual meeting. The task of these committees is to:

- identify research needs;
- provide information to the transportation community on research priorities and procedures;
- review papers for presentation at the TRB annual meeting and for publication;
- encourage the incorporation of appropriate research findings into practice; and
- develop special programs, conferences and workshops.

EAC members attended meetings of the following committees: Pedestrians, Geometric Design, Accessible Transportation and Mobility, Work Zone Traffic Control, Traffic Control Devices, User Information Systems, Traffic Signal Systems, Safe Mobility of Older Persons, Roundabouts, Visibility, and the Intersections Joint subcommittee. By participating in committees, we help shape the research agenda in each area and advocate for and help arrange for workshops and sessions related to transportation factors affecting pedestrians with visual impairments.

Anyone can attend and speak at any committee meeting, although it can be daunting at times and the agendas are quite packed. Members of the EAC are members of a few committees (Pedestrians, Roundabouts, Accessible Transportation and Mobility) and are active participants in others. The following are a few examples of our participation:

- Dona Sauerburger told the Standing Committee on Safe Mobility of Older Persons about AER’s Conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans (in Norfolk, Va., on November 4-6, 2015), and several people approached her afterward for more information about it.
- After a presentation of the Standing Committee on Safe Mobility of Older Persons, Meg Robertson recommended that they put together suggestions to help people know when they need to stop driving.
- Janet Barlow shared information from her workshop on alternative intersections with the Standing Committee on Pedestrians and with the Intersections Joint subcommittee. She is also on a workgroup to develop a research problem statement regarding needs of pedestrians, particularly visually impaired pedestrians, at alternative intersections.
- Beezy Bentzen worked with two transit committees to get assistance and support for research proposals on guidance surfaces and wayfinding in transit stations.
- The Standing Committee on Roundabouts discussed ongoing research on accessibility of roundabouts and channelized turn lanes, and Lukas Franck talked with a U.S. Federal Highway

Administration representative about researching and standardizing sound making materials on roadways.

TRB first-time attendee, Meg Robertson, observed, “Thanks to the O&M Division & EAC committee, I was able to attend my first Transportation Research Board meeting this past January. We were in meetings from 7 a.m. to sometimes 9:30 at night! The one take away, I’m sorry to say, is the lack of understanding these professionals have regarding how an individual’s access to the community is impacted by vision loss. Even in the sessions which focused on the needs of older individuals, there was very little awareness or discussion of these sensory issues. There is a great need for our profession to attend these meetings and speak up at them so the environments being designed won’t negatively affect our consumers.”

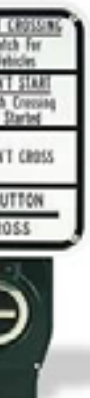
The participation of O&Mers in these meetings is valuable to the orientation and mobility profession and to people who are visually impaired for numerous reasons: (1) to remind attendees that visually impaired individuals travel on the streets they design; (2) to suggest research on issues of importance or add questions that may address needs of people who are blind or visually impaired; (3) to call attention to the relevance of topics for people with visual impairments; (4) to increase visibility of our profession among those who are designing and operating sidewalks, intersections and transit systems; and (5) to take advantage of opportunities for individual follow-up from traffic engineers or planners who heard us at committee meetings and want more information for a specific project in their city.

We have made progress in getting transportation researchers and professionals to realize that what they do has consequences for travelers who are blind or who have low vision; some of this is due to the active and vocal participation of O&M specialists in TRB activities. We continue to influence the direction of research and the topics addressed at conferences by our participation in TRB.

We’d like to again express our appreciation to the AER O&M Division for their support of our registration costs for TRB, Lois Thibault and Jacques Peters for providing a place for some of us to stay and to Polara Engineering for assistance with transportation and other expenses at both meetings.



Photos courtesy of Polara Engineering.





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BANA Report Summer 2015

by Diane P. Wormsley, Ph.D., AER BANA representative to BANA (dwormsley@ncu.edu)

At the most recent meeting of the BANA board, we welcomed new officers and a new member. The new officers for BANA are: Jennifer Dunnam, chair (National Federation of the Blind); Frances Mary D'Andrea, past chair (American Foundation for the Blind); Mary Nelle McLennan, vice chair (American Printing House for the Blind); Ruth Rozen, secretary (Hadley School for the Blind); and Jackie Sheridan, treasurer (National Braille Press), who arranged for us to meet in one of the conference rooms of the Boston Symphony Orchestra building.

The new member of the BANA board is Perkins School for the Blind, and we welcomed Kim Charlson as the Perkins representative. Charlson is not new to the BANA board having been chair and past chair of BANA when serving as a representative of the American Council of the Blind.

During two and a half days of deliberation the board discussed the progress made in the implementation of UEB in the United States and Canada. BANA will have a presence at the upcoming International Council on English Braille quadrennial meeting to be held in Baltimore in 2016. More information about that meeting will be provided through *AER Report* or the AERNet Listserv.

Many of BANA's current projects relate to aligning our present codes to UEB. The Formats Committee has been working diligently on this alignment. The combined board and technical reviews of these revised materials are finished and will be forwarded to the committee soon. The committee will then consider the review feedback before making their final revisions of the Formats Guidelines.

The Knit and Crochet Guidelines are now on the BANA website for all to use.

Other projects underway are guidelines for the graphing calculator and a revision of the Music Braille Code, which will be out for Technical and Board Review by June 15, 2015. The Music Code is an international code, and the committee has consultants from other countries who have contributed to the revision. Next in line will be Guidelines for Standardized Tests, which we know is eagerly awaited by many.

Frances Mary D'Andrea, on behalf of BANA, undertook a research project funded by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), which surveyed states regarding their plans for implementation of UEB. That report should be available soon on the CCSSO website and, with CCSSO's approval, on the BANA website.



Left to right: Jennifer Dunnam, BANA chair; Mary Nelle McLennan, vice chair; and Frances Mary D'Andrea, past chair, at the recent BANA meeting in Boston, May 6–9, 2015.

We know this summer is full of UEB trainings around the country. We hope you will enjoy the learning experience!

Please sign up to follow BANA through our BANA-Announce Listserv, if you have not already done so. You can sign up by sending a blank email message to bana-announce-subscribe@brailleauthority.org and following the directions in the confirmation email. You can also follow BANA on Facebook and Twitter!



2015-2018 Calendar of Events

For more information about upcoming events, or to have your event listed, visit our website at www.aerbvi.org and click on "Calendar of Events".

2015

September

Sept. 25-26: AER Board meeting, online

October

Oct. 14-16: AER Northern Rockies Annual Conference, Oxford Suites Hotel, Boise, ID — The conference theme is "Celebrating Our History Now and in the Making." For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://nraer.aerbvi.org/events.htm>.

Oct. 17-19: AER New York State Chapter Annual Conference, Albany Marriott, Albany, NY — The conference theme is "Still Growing Strong." For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://nysaer.aerbvi.org/index.htm>.

Oct. 26-27: AER Arkansas Chapter Annual Conference, Wyndham Hotel, Little Rock, AR — For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://ar.aerbvi.org/>.

Oct. 29-30: AER Indiana Chapter Fall Meeting, Canyon Inn, McCormick's Creek State Park, Spencer, IN — The meeting theme is "Making Life Less SC'AER'Y," and the keynote speaker is Kathy Nimmer, a graduate of ISBVI and one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://www.in-aer.com/>.

November

Nov. 4-6, 2015: AER Conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans: Leveraging Our Collective Wisdom, Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Norfolk, VA — For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.aerbvi.org/aerconf2015/index.htm>.

Nov. 4-6: 2015 AER Northeast Chapter Fall Conference, Sea Crest Beach Hotel, Cape Cod, MA — For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://neaer.umb.edu/>.

2016

January

Jan. 29-30: AER Board meeting, online

March

Mar. 9-11: AER Virginia Chapter Annual Conference, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, VA — The conference theme is "Waves of Collaboration; Oceans of Success." For more information, visit <http://virginia.aerbvi.org/events.htm>.

Mar. 30-Apr. 2: AER Texas Chapter Annual Conference, Omni Houston Hotel, Houston, TX — For more information, visit <http://www.txaer.org/>.

April

Apr. 29-30: AER Board meeting, online

July

July 20-24: AER International Conference 2016, Hyatt Regency Jacksonville-Riverfront, Jacksonville, FL — Stay tuned for more details!

July 22: AER Board meeting, Hyatt Regency Jacksonville-Riverfront, Jacksonville, FL

2017

March

Mar. 30-Apr. 1: AER Texas Chapter Annual Conference — For more information, visit <http://www.txaer.org/>.

July

July 19-22: AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference, Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, Pittsburgh, PA — Stay tuned for more details!

2018

July

July 25-29: AER International Conference 2018, Peppermill Reno, Reno, NV — Stay tuned for more details!

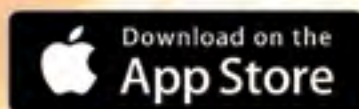
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AER University Review Program

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Now is the time to start thinking about having your university's programs reviewed to ensure you are adhering to the highest standards and meeting your goals to continuously raise the quality of your programs and, consequently, your graduates.

Reviews are conducted by your peers in the blindness field who are trained on the criteria, and your programs are evaluated against standards developed to ensure all universities are reviewed equally. The University Review Program underwent recent revisions, with the university standards updated in 2012/2013.

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- Bill Jacobson,
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Contact AER to learn how your university can save money by having multiple programs reviewed at the same time.

University Programs Eligible for Review:

- Orientation and Mobility
- Teachers of the Visually Impaired
- Vision Rehabilitation Therapy



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Please contact AER to sign up your university

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aer@aerbvi.org

www.aerbvi.org



Vision and the Brain Reviewed: **Outstanding Information on Cerebral Visual Impairment**

The two most recent issues of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)*, March-April 2015 and May-June 2015, are crammed with practical information, scholarly research, commentaries, essays, Statistical Sidebars, Letters to the Editor, and a book review. As the official journal of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), *JVIB* has lived up to its reputation as “a forum for the exchange of ideas, airing of controversies, and discussion of issues” with these last two publications.

The May-June 2015 issue features a book review of AFB Press’ newest title, *Vision and the Brain: Understanding Cerebral Visual Impairment in Children*, edited by Amanda Hall Lueck and Gordon N. Dutton. In her book review, reviewer Elizabeth Dennison of the SKI-HI Institute at Utah State University, talks about her 38 years of experience in working with young children with visual impairments, including cerebral visual impairment (CVI), and their families. She writes, “I have observed as the understanding of this visual disorder has evolved over time.... I have witnessed children with CVI being rejected for services by teachers of visually impaired students and instead being referred to special educators, because the students’ impairments were considered to be ‘perceptual or motor.’” The following are two excerpts from Dennison’s book review of *Vision and the Brain*:

During the past 15 years, I have been reading and following the work of some of the leading experts on CVI both in the United States and in Europe. In particular, I have found that information on visual processing via the ventral and dorsal streams, as explained by Dr. Dutton and Lea Hyvärinen, a chapter author of the book, has been most helpful in bettering my understanding many of the more puzzling visual behaviors of children with CVI. I was excited, to say the least, when I heard that many of these professionals were coming together to write this book.

My expectations were met when I read the book. *Vision and the Brain* is the first book of its kind. It is cutting edge and reflects the latest research on this topic, as well as the best work in assessment and intervention of children with CVI.

This book was written in such a way that teachers, therapists, and university instructors can understand, and I found the book to be straightforward in its presentation of information. I believe that the book will be very useful to direct service providers of children with CVI. *Vision and the Brain* would also be a good text to use in personnel preparation programs for teachers of students who are visually impaired. Because many such teachers are not adequately prepared to understand and address the needs of this growing population of children, I believe that CVI should actually be the sole topic of a course for prospective teachers of students with visual impairments. Such a course could address both assessment of visual functions and use of functional vision, as well as discuss appropriate interventions and modifications for the variety of ways in which CVI manifests in children.

The editors, Drs. Lueck and Dutton, did a great job of pulling together the work of a wide variety of writers in a cohesive manner. *Vision and the Brain* is an important contribution to the field of visual impairment, and it has the potential to improve the ways in which practitioners in the field serve children and students with CVI.

JVIB is published by the American Foundation for the Blind. AER provides the journal as a member benefit. To access your *JVIB* member benefit, as well as earn ACVREP CEUs, click on the *JVIB* link on the AER website and log in with your AER membership information provided via email to members.



An Overview of AER Member Benefits

When orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists, low vision therapists (LVTs), teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs), vision rehabilitation therapists (VRTs) and other vision professionals become AER members, they gain access to a broad range of benefits that can enhance their professional pursuits. It may take some time to explore each offering, but we are confident that each member will find something that can help them achieve their personal and professional goals in the visual impairment field.

Networking

Learning from peers is probably the most valuable benefit of membership in AER. The networking opportunities through active involvement in the association on the chapter, division and international level can aid in professional growth, career advancements and continued education.

At the local level, all AER members can communicate and network with others in their region through automatic membership in their local AER chapter. Chapter conferences offer a wide variety of learning experiences from one-day workshops to multi-day events with presentations from leading experts.

Division memberships allow members to focus on specific topics:

- Administration and Leadership
- Rehabilitation Counseling & Employment
- Multiple Disabilities & Deafblind
- Psychosocial Services
- Information & Technology
- Low Vision Rehabilitation
- Infant & Preschool
- Orientation & Mobility
- Education Curriculum
- Vision Rehabilitation Therapy
- Aging
- Itinerant Personnel
- Personnel Preparation
- International Services & Global Issues
- Physical Education & Recreation

International conferences bring together some of the largest gatherings of vision professionals to discuss a broad range of topics related to vision loss. These multi-day events are widely recognized as the best conglomeration of research and best practices in the fields of education and rehabilitation of people who are blind or visually impaired.

For members who cannot attend conferences, AER supports several **Listservs** that allow individuals to participate in discussions via email. Over 25 AER Listservs exist to facilitate

group discussions, including those of several AER divisions, chapters and committees.

Professional and Career Development

To enhance career development, AER members have access to **AER Job Exchange**, the most up-to-date and active online listing of job openings in the field.

Because continuing education is an important part of professional development, one of AER's goals is to develop ongoing continuing education opportunities for its members. In the past several years, AER has produced several online continuing education programs that are approved for continuing education credit through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). Members receive discounts on these timely course offerings as well as access to articles covering field-specific topics.

AER's many continuing education offerings include the **AER Mangold Distance Education Webinar Series** (http://aerbvi.org/?page_id=451) and **Joint AER/AFB Webinars** (http://aerbvi.org/?page_id=729), which bring leading experts in the field of vision to the desktops of AER members and other vision professionals. The **AER Knowledge Center** (<http://aerbvi.sclivelearningcenter.com>) provides access to almost 200 hours of sessions recorded at recent AER international conferences. Selected webinars are available for free through the AER website, such as a 2015 session on licensure of vision professionals (http://aerbvi.org/?page_id=455).

Publications

The online, interactive **AER Report** keeps members informed about association news and policy. AER also offers members a free, online subscription to the **Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness**, published by the American Foundation for the Blind. It is an essential professional resource for information about visual impairment and blindness and is now the official journal of AER. **AER Viewpoint** is a weekly online newsletter with current AER news and articles about the profession. AER also publishes several **books** for more in-depth explorations of specific topics related to working with those who are blind and visually impaired.



Insurance Programs

A professional liability insurance program, administered by Forrest T. Jones & Company (<http://www.ftj.com>), is available to AER members. See sidebar for more information.

Special Discounts

AER members receive discounts on continuing education opportunities, including online webinars, AER Knowledge Center recordings, AER publications and AER conference registration fees. Members can also save money on car rentals and hotel stays through AER's special discount program, available online at <http://www.alumnibenefits.org/aer/>.

Professional Recognition

AER recognizes its members' outstanding contributions to the field through biennial awards including the C. Warren Bledsoe Award, the Allen, Bauman, McAulay and Shotwell awards, the new Richard L. Welsh Chapter President Award and the AER Outstanding Chapter Award. Each AER chapter and division also recognizes vision professionals through chapter and division awards.

Scholarships

AER provides two scholarships to students who are legally blind and are studying for a career in the field of services to the blind or visually impaired. Awarded in the even-numbered years, the scholarships are named in honor of William and Dorothy Ferrell.

Recruitment

AER recognizes the critical need for additional professionals to join the field. With the aging population and increasing number of individuals with visual impairments, it is vital to keep the field in the spotlight and encourage young people to pursue careers as O&M specialists, LVTs, TVIs and VRTs. AER dedicates a significant commitment of time, energy and resources to professional personnel shortages.

Advocacy

Through its lobbying efforts, AER gives U.S.-based professionals and consumers in the field a collective voice in state capitals and on Capitol Hill to focus on the importance of maintaining specialized services for blind and visually impaired consumers of all ages. Membership in AER means supporting important educational and advocacy efforts for professionals who provide services to individuals with visual impairments.



AER Has You Covered

Wide variety of insurance products available to U.S. members

AER is part of the Trust for Insuring Educators (TIE), which offers associations related to education the ability to provide insurance plans at affordable rates. TIE's insurance products and financial services are administered by Forrest T. Jones and are available to members based in the United States. LegalShield products are also available in Canada.

Members qualify for discounts and economical group rates on insurance plans from leading companies such as New York Life, GEICO, Savers Property & Casualty Insurance Company and Transamerica Life Insurance Company.

To learn more, go to <http://www.ftj.com>. Select "Education" from the Profession drop-down menu, then "AER" from the list of associations. Finally, enter your zip code and press enter to access the AER page.

Below is a list of available plans:

Professional Liability Insurance

Educators professional liability
Private practice professional liability
Student educator professional liability

Life Insurance

Group term life
Group accidental death & dismemberment

Disability Insurance

Group disability income protection

Health Insurance

Cancer protection
Educators dental
Long term care insurance evaluation service
Medicare supplement
TIE Health Insurance Exchange

Auto & Home Insurance

GEICO auto, motorcycle and boat
GEICO homeowners, renters and condo
GEICO umbrella

AER's membership in TIE also provides members access to additional plans and benefits such as: LegalShield Legal Plans, LegalShield Identity Theft Plans (available in the U.S. and Canada), ASPCA Pet Health Insurance and international travel/medical insurance.



It Pays to Be a **MEMBER!**

Take advantage of outstanding discounts available to AER members for these fine products and services:

SHOP.com/aerbvi

Earn cash back on online purchases and support AER at the same time with the new member benefit, www.shop.com/aerbvi. Use the portal to access thousands of partner stores and earn up to 35% cash back on qualified purchases.

Car Rental & Hotel Stay

AER members are entitled to discounts from 10% to 25% on car rentals from Alamo, Avis, Budget, Destination Europe, Hertz, and National.

Choice Hotels International provides AER members with discounts of up to 20% at nine brands including Cambria Suites, Clarion, Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, EconoLodge, MainStay Suites, Quality, Rodeway Inn, Sleep Inn, and Suburban Extended Stay. Go to www.alumnibenefits.org/aer for details.

Info Bytes

Info Bytes is a regular column by the Information and Technology Division (5) to share resources, answer common questions and update AER members on new technologies. This issue's column focuses on information sharing tools.

Sharing information has always been a part of working with students and clients with visual impairment and blindness, and with today's technologies you can find some terrific and efficient ways of sharing. Two such technologies are Dropbox and LiveBinders. The beauty of these services is that once you have curated your resources, you only have to share a link once. If someone misplaces their information, they can go back to the site where the information is stored and reprint or download whatever they need for themselves.

Dropbox

Dropbox (<http://www.dropbox.com>) is a storage place for files, digital media and just about anything you can imagine that lives in an electronic format. To share files, you add files to a Dropbox folder, creating a collection of related items on a particular topic or theme. You can then share the folder's unique URL (uniform resource locator) that allows others to view and download the resources stored there. The recipient does not even need to have a Dropbox account, as the page will display on any Web browser with clickable links for downloading.

Dropbox URLs can be long and difficult to remember, so another useful tool is Bitly (<http://bitly.com/>), a service that shortens long URLs and even allows customization of the shortcut link. For example, the URL for a Dropbox folder with article posts on Information and Technology might look like <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/keq9qdw0a8ebkle/AAAPhAbXIJvwAZzRRRGdkEfea?dl=0> but after using Bitly, it could be shared as http://bit.ly/AER_IT. Both links go to the same place, but one is easier to remember and certainly to say over the phone.

LiveBinders

LiveBinders (<http://www.livebinders.com/welcome/home>) is another online tool that allows you to create collections of files to share. They could be Web pages, PDF or Word documents, YouTube videos, etc. that are all about a particular topic. You create binders containing files related to a particular topic and then share the binder's link with anyone. For example, you might use LiveBinder to share information on blindness and visual impairments with a team of teachers and related professionals to prepare for a new student at school. Another example is if you are leading an in-service training at a rehabilitation facility, you can share training materials with attendees.

The LiveBinders website presents you with two fields under the "Search" function. The first field searches all public binders while the second allows for a refined search within specific fields—e.g., searching content by key word, tags, author, etc. If you already know an expert in the field uses LiveBinder, it

is often easiest to find their materials by searching for their username and specifying a search by author in the second search field. For example, to search for binders by Stephanie Isbell, use her author/username, "sisbell"; for Susie Tiggs, use her author/username, "stiggs."

If you have content that you would like to share with a student's team, or with all the parents of students on your caseload, you can create one binder that everyone can access. By doing this, you only have to share a link, and everyone you share it with will know where to find the information. This also frees you from having to reprint documents, as recipients can easily navigate back to the LiveBinder if they misplace it. Basically, you do the work once—you no longer have to reinvent the wheel for each new client.

Here are some examples of ways to use binders:

- Have a "Starting the New School Year" binder
- Make a binder of reference sites for UEB or other braille contraction information
- Create a collection of websites, articles and activities that are recreation-oriented for families to consider doing with their children
- When searching for resources to learn about technology for yourself, add the links to a binder so your students and team members have access to the same information

Here are a couple of examples of a link that can be shared and then accessed by others:

TSBVI Orientation and Mobility:

<http://www.livebinders.com/shelf/view/152663>

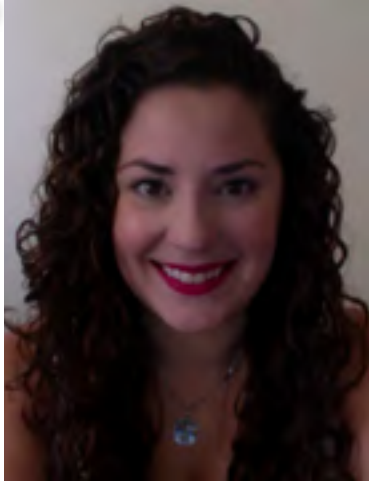
Mobile Devices for Blind and Visually Impaired Users:

<http://www.livebinders.com/shelf/view/152869>

Happy sharing!!!



Names In The News



The newest member of the AER Board of Directors is **Adriana Mattei Sosa**, who was named to the board this spring as the representative for the Council of Chapter Presidents, replacing Tracey Gaver. Adriana currently serves as president of the AER Puerto Rico chapter. She is an O&M specialist with the Center for the Visually Impaired in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Several teachers from the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind toured a Russian school for the blind in May. This exchange program was a return visit after several Russian officials toured the Great Falls, Montana, school. AER members traveling included **Pam Boespflug**, past president of the AER Northern Rockies Chapter, and **Donna Sorensen**.

The American Foundation for the Blind awarded **Dr. Gaylen Kapperman**, professor emeritus at Northern Illinois University, the Migel Medal at AFB's annual Leadership Conference in April. The award honors professionals and volunteers whose dedication and achievements improve the lives of people who are blind and visually impaired.

Dr. Kay A. Ferrell was honored in March by the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education as its Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for the Department of Instruction and Learning for 2015.

Dr. Justin Kaiser will join University of South Carolina Upstate in fall 2015. He will be the second faculty member for the Visual Impairment Program.

B.J. LeJeune received the Staff Award for the 2015 Diversity Awards from Mississippi State University in April. As training supervisor at MSU's National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision, she helps prepare service



B.J. LeJeune, third from right, received the Staff Award at Mississippi State University's 2015 Diversity Awards in April.

providers to more effectively serve blind, visually impaired and deaf blind individuals. As chair of the College of Education's Diversity Committee, she led efforts to obtain accessible restrooms in MSU's Allen Hall.

Dr. Tessa McCarthy will join the faculty of the Vision Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh in fall 2015. She will be working with the orientation & mobility and teacher of students with visual impairment programs as an assistant professor and program coordinator.



Dina Rosenbaum, the former director of marketing and a longtime employee of The Carroll Center for the Blind, has been named its chief program officer.

HIMS Inc. received the 2015 Red Dot Design Award for the CANDY 5 HD II Handheld Video Magnifier. The award recognizes outstanding design of a rehabilitation, life science or medicine product.



Lauren Branch, NewView Oklahoma, receives Program of the Year award for NewView's Older Blind Vision Rehabilitation Program from Lance Robertson, DHS Aging Services.

NewView Oklahoma's Older Blind Vision Rehabilitation Program was honored as Program of the Year by Oklahoma's Department of Human Services Aging Services in May. The Older Blind Vision Rehabilitation Program provides low vision examinations, occupational therapy, safe travel, exercise and other therapies that empower blind older adults with the tools and training needed to accomplish normal daily tasks and to remain living safely and independently.

Overbrook School for the Blind reports that Natalie Tidmarsh, a teacher in the school's Early Childhood Program, received the Teacher of the Year award during Teacher Appreciation Night at the Philadelphia Phillies game in May.



Tech Links

AER regularly collects Internet links to tech news and resources that may be useful to members and the people they serve. For up-to-date links and other resources, visit AER's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi.

Tiny compass brain implants allow blind rats to “see”

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/apr/02/tiny-digital-compass-brain-implants-allow-blind-rats-to-see>

Shoes that guide the visually impaired

<https://in.newshub.org/shoes-guide-visually-impaired-14990492.html>

Games for the blind: Making mobile fun accessible to everyone

<http://www.smh.com.au/digital-life/games/games-for-the-blind-making-mobile-fun-accessible-to-everyone-20150427-1mtxkn.html>

Five amazing inventions that are helping the visually impaired

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/slideshow/245443>

Forsyth County kids invent “Insta-Braille” to help blind children learn braille

<http://www.myfoxatlanta.com/story/28934054/forsyth-county-kids-invent-insta-braille-to-help-blind-children-learn-braille>

Wichitans develop portable communicator for the deaf-blind

<http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/Portable-embosser-made-for--302323071.html>

Cybernetic eye helps the blind see

<http://www.mobilemag.com/2006/04/03/cybernetic-eye-helps-the-blind-see/>

New wearable reduces risk of collision for visually impaired

<http://www.sunriseseniorliving.com/blog/may-2015/new-wearable-reduces-risk-of-collision-for-visually-impaired.aspx>

Cane can identify faces for the visually impaired

<http://www.popsci.com/cane-can-identify-faces-visually-impaired>

A robot to help visually impaired passengers navigate public transit

<http://www.citylab.com/tech/2015/05/robot-navigation-public-transit-visually-impaired/393509/>

Android accessibility settings: 5 hidden options everyone should be using

<http://dripler.com/drip/android-accessibility-settings-5-hidden-options-everyone-should-be-using>

Machine vision system could help the visually impaired shop for food

<http://phys.org/news/2015-05-machine-vision-visually-impaired-food.html>

iAid uses ultrasonic sensors mounted on belt to scan and map a person's surroundings

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/alex-deans-wins-ontario-science-133200052.html>

In virtual reality, San Diego scientist sees tool to help the visually impaired

<http://www.kpbs.org/news/2015/may/29/virtual-reality-scientists-see-aid-visually-impaired/>

Electronic cane can help visually impaired see their surroundings

<http://www.citynews.ca/2015/06/02/electronic-cane-can-help-visually-impaired-see-their-surroundings/>

Mobile device game has no images or visual instruction

http://www.atelier.net/en/trends/articles/startups-working-make-entertainment-accessible-visually-impaired_435882

“Responsive street furniture” in cities could boost accessibility

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/responsive-street-furniture-cities-could-090000990.html>



AER Job Exchange

The Vision Community's Most Active Job Bank



Looking for a new job? 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 are available at <http://jobexchange.aerbvi.org/>.

HELP WANTED

GEORGIA

Assistive Technology Instructor Center for the Visually Impaired Atlanta

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master's degree in vision rehabilitation therapy, O&M or TVI, or bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in education, rehabilitation or related field, with two years of teaching experience.
- Knowledge of computer technology and adaptations for blind and visually impaired persons a must.
- Formal education may be substituted by work experience and/or specialized training. Bilingual preferred.

DUTIES:

- Provides instruction in computer literacy, word processing, computer use with adaptive technology equipment and other appropriate programs and systems to meet client's needs in a center-based rehabilitation setting.
- Assesses skills of assigned adult clients and need for instruction in computer and adaptive technology use and develops individualized plan of instruction.
- Carries out individualized and small group instruction in use of computers with adaptive software and hardware.
- Emphasizes the effective use of any residual vision, tactile and other sensory modes and reinforces learning associated with other areas of instruction.
- Makes careful observations and evaluations concerning clients' progress and maintains appropriate records.
- Participates in client staffings and prepares monthly progress and statistical reports on assigned clients by due date.

SALARY: Competitive, commensurate with education and experience.

CONTACT: Center for the Visually Impaired
Anisio Correia, VP for Programs

HELP WANTED

739 W. Peachtree St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 30308

Phone: 404-602-4291; email: acorreia@cviga.org

Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist Center for the Visually Impaired Atlanta

REPORT TO: Low Vision Clinic Director

DEPARTMENT: Maxwell Low Vision Clinic

FULL TIME/PART TIME: Full-time

EXEMPT/NONEXEMPT: Exempt

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's or master's degree in orientation and mobility from an accredited college of university, with ACVREP certification as an orientation and mobility specialist or a commitment to attain this certification within one year of hire date.
- Dual certification in orientation and mobility and vision rehabilitation therapy preferred.
- Bilingual a plus.
- Must have access to reliable transportation.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Under the direct supervision of the CVI's Low Vision Clinic Director, is responsible for the provision of orientation and mobility services to assigned community-based blind and visually impaired clients on an itinerant basis.
- Whenever demand warrants, will be expected to fill in at the New View Facility-based program.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assesses clients' orientation and mobility skills and develops a plan to meet clients' needs.
- Carries out a program of individualized instruction in pre-cane skills, indoor travel, street crossings, travel in small business district, and downtown travel including travel on buses and rapid rail.

HELP WANTED

- Emphasizes the effective use of any residual vision, tactile and other sensory modes, and reinforces learning associated with other areas of instruction.
- Makes careful observations and evaluations concerning clients' progress and maintains appropriate records. Participates in client staffings and prepares monthly progress and statistical reports on assigned clients by due date.
- Provides follow-up services and/or familiarization to specific areas as needed.
- Cooperates and consults with other staff members and appropriate community resources on behalf of the client. Is an integral member of the Low Vision and Community-Based Services team, coordinating orientation and mobility skills training with other client services.
- Participates in departmental and agency-wide planning and evaluation functions. Makes recommendations to the Low Vision Clinic Director and VP for Programs concerning orientation and mobility skills training.
- Participates in the public education function of the agency as needed.
- Maintains a working knowledge of local and national resources and of significant trends in the field of blind rehabilitation through review of the literature and participation in seminars.
- Other duties as assigned.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be able to lift 20 lbs.
- Sitting and or standing for periods of time

SALARY: Competitive, commensurate with education and experience.

CONTACT: Center for the Visually Impaired
Anisio Correia, VP for Programs
739 W. Peachtree St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: 404-602-4291; email: sgarber@cviga.org

MAINE

Orientation & Mobility Instructor The Iris Network Portland

QUALIFICATIONS:

- The ideal candidate will have a master's degree in orientation and mobility and be ACVREP certified or eligible for certification.
- A minimum of 10 years of experience in center-based and itinerant programs (combined) is preferred.

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DUTIES:

- The orientation & mobility instructor will work collaboratively as a member of a multidisciplinary team with clients who are visually impaired or blind in both community-based and center-based rehabilitation programs.
- The O&M instructor will assess each client's needs and develop an individualized orientation and mobility plan, teach orientation and mobility skills, provide information and individualized recommendations to achieve client goals, develop and implement lesson plans for training-center clients as well as itinerant services in the community, maintain progress notes and case reports, provide information and public education within the community, and participate in ongoing program development activities.

CONTACT: The Iris Network

Aparna Shah
189 Park Avenue, Portland, ME 04102
Phone: 207-774-6273; email: ashah@theiris.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Dually Certified: Teacher of the Visually Impaired/ Orientation and Mobility Specialist Equal Eyes Vision Services Holly Springs

Are you passionate about the VI/O&M field and looking for a great opportunity in a beautiful state? We've got it all in North Carolina and you could be a part of our growing team that makes a difference in the lives of students with visual impairments.

As an Equal Eyes team member, you decide your schedule, your travel region and the jobs that you serve. Working as a contractor for Equal Eyes allows you to do what you love, while being appreciated for what you have to offer and well-compensated for your skills and time.

The Company

Equal Eyes Vision Services provides contract VI and O&M services to blind and visually impaired students throughout North Carolina. We serve school systems from the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between. Equal Eyes Vision Services is directed by Kim Hudson, a TVI and O&M specialist with 17 years of experience in the VI field.

Equal Eyes Vision Services strives to improve VI services across North Carolina, by providing qualified and dedicated TVI and COMS to serve the needs of students with visual impairments in all areas of the state, including big cities and some of our smaller counties. Team members are provided with the support and tools needed to be successful. Professional support is always

Continued on p. 50

HELP WANTED

available, as well as opportunities for professional growth through one-on-one and group training opportunities.

Benefits of Working with Equal Eyes Vision Services

- Professionally supportive environment
- Excellent compensation, including paid travel time, preparation and documentation time
- Team members choose their geographical travel region and choose how many hours they want to work
- Grow with a company that has a reputation for delivering quality services and opportunities to students and professionals
- Work a little, or a lot, as a contractor...you decide
- Professional development opportunities

QUALIFICATIONS

To be considered as an Equal Eyes Vision Services team member, individuals must have:

TVI: Visually Impaired (VI) Teacher Certification in North Carolina or be able to obtain licensure after relocating to NC and a degree in VI from an accredited program. 3+ years demonstrated successful teaching experience working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired, or a strong base of teaching experience with add-on TVI certification through a licensure program and a successful student teaching experience. Display knowledge of braille, low vision, IEP development, functional vision assessments/learning media assessments and current technologies in the VI field. Strong verbal and written communication skills and a great attitude are also a must!

COMS: ACVREP certification in O&M, or be a certifiable orientation and mobility specialist with experience from an accredited O&M program. 3+ years demonstrated successful O&M teaching experience preferred. New graduates with excellent student teaching referrals and prior experiences in the VI field will also be considered. Strong verbal and written communication skills and a great attitude are also a must!

Dually Certified TVI/COMS: You know we love you!

Why North Carolina?

North Carolina has it all! You will find NC to be a friendly and welcoming place to live, with Southern charm combined with a melting pot of cultures and people from all over the country. We have 4 distinct seasons here, amazing foliage in the fall, mild winters, vibrant springs and warm summers to spend at our beautiful beaches and lakes.

There is something for everyone in North Carolina! From hiking the Appalachian Trail to flying kites at Kitty Hawk where the Wright brothers first flew their plane in 1903, we've got mountains, coast and everything in between. You can live

HELP WANTED

in small towns, big cities or the suburbs. We've got professional and college sports, like the Carolina Hurricanes, Carolina Panthers, Duke, UNC Chapel Hill, ECU and NC State. Did somebody say BBQ? Come see what the BBQ wars are all about. Whatever you like, North Carolina probably has it.

Experience why North Carolina is such a desirable place to live, work and raise a family!

Equal Eyes Vision Services is seeking VI professionals for the Eastern Coastal areas, Central NC, the mountains and areas in between. If you already live here, then we can work together to find the right jobs for you. If you are considering North Carolina as a new home, then come see what we have to offer, choose your areas and let's talk about job possibilities in and around your desired locations.

Want to know more? Well, we want to know more about you, too! Let's get the conversation started.... Send your resume and a message to Kim Hudson at equaleyes@embarqmail.com.

Check out our website at: <http://www.equaleyesvisionservices.com>.

PENNSYLVANIA

Orientation & Mobility Specialist PA Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services Harrisburg

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Successful completion of an approved orientation and mobility program. Programs should include study in areas such as the history of orientation and mobility, the psychological effects of blindness, identification of common eye diseases, sensory devices and travel techniques and a practicum in orientation and mobility.
- Candidates must submit documentation from the agency which provided training in an orientation and mobility program OR a transcript from a college or university OR a list of completed coursework.

DUTIES:

- Provide orientation and mobility training for persons with visual disabilities, including evaluating clients to determine their travel requirements and preparing and providing programs of instruction to develop clients' ability to travel independently.
- Recommend services to assist in selecting, preparing for and obtaining training which will lead to satisfactory personal and social adjustment.

SALARY: \$45,692/year

CONTACT: LaKeysha McLaurin

PA Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services

HELP WANTED

1521 N. 6th St., Harrisburg, PA 17102

Phone: 717-787-2521; email: lmclaurin@pa.gov; fax: 717-783-5221

TENNESSEE

Dual Certified TVI/O&M Vacancies Tennessee School for the Blind Knoxville

TSB currently has two openings in the Outreach Department. Applications are currently being accepted and will continue to be accepted until both positions are filled.

BROAD SCOPE OF TVI POSITION:

These positions report to the director of Outreach, and are responsible for providing standards-based instruction to students who are visually impaired, and who may have other disabilities on an individual and/or group basis. These are itinerant positions: one position is based in Nashville and the other position is based in Knoxville.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Performs work associated with standards-based student instruction: prepares lesson plans, adapts instructional materials, develops input for and presents daily instructional/learning activities based upon the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and under the direction of the Outreach director.
- Demonstrates knowledge/skill in the areas of: data collection, task analysis, progress monitoring, daily living skills, assessment, behavior management, organization/planning, curriculum development, current technology practices relative to students who have vision loss, orientation and mobility skills, and parent relations and teamwork.
- Coordinates data collection and reporting.
- Works as part of an education/assessment team responsible for identifying, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating individual objectives for assigned students.
- Coordinates effectively with other service staff in providing student instruction, strategic planning and positively contributing to co-curricular activities.
- Positively serves as a team member; and participates in regular team and departmental meetings, school and instructional meetings as required.
- Provides parent consultation; participates in selected parent-focused activities, etc.
- Participates in activities related to professional development and training/workshops as appropriate.
- Performs other appropriate duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum of bachelor's degree in education from an accredited college or university.

HELP WANTED

- Must hold or be eligible for appropriate educator licensure in the State of Tennessee.
- Teacher of the visually impaired certification and ACVREP eligible in orientation and mobility.
- Experience teaching/working with children (in an educational environment) with visual impairments and/or multiple disabilities including severe and profound disabilities.
- Ability to demonstrate competency in braille.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES:

- Comprehensive knowledge of special education principles, practices and procedures, including developing and writing IEPs and performing appropriate teaching techniques.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply current standards-based educational practices associated with children who are visually impaired to a variety of settings.
- Knowledge of visual impairment, including causes, manifestations and adaptations.
- Knowledge of core and expanded core curriculum, program development, classroom resource management and student/personal scheduling for students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities.
- Knowledge of and ability to assess and apply technology to perform the requirements of the position; ability to effectively utilize a variety of computer software applications, which may include but is not limited to email, Internet, word processing, electronic calendar, presentation development, spreadsheet, database, etc.; willingness to stay current and develop skills as needed with or without direct support from TSB.
- Knowledge of and ability to effectively adapt and apply teaching skills, classroom management and lesson preparation to a technology rich environment, which may include but is not limited to on-site classroom, telepresence and multiple distance education technologies and delivery modes; ability to effectively implement technology necessary to model, teach and assist students relative to classroom instruction and activities.
- Knowledge of and ability to effectively implement current technologies utilized by children who are blind/visually impaired.
- General knowledge of medical disorders such as seizures or restrictions; alternate modes of communication; feeding technique and orthopedic impairment/handling and positioning.
- Ability to respond effectively and positively to feedback.
- Ability to work cooperatively with others and participate effectively in a team setting.
- Strong, positive interpersonal skills.

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HELP WANTED

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT:

- Selected applicants must verify experience/highest degree held.
- Direct deposit of paycheck on a 12-month schedule is required.
- TSB is a non-smoking facility in its entirety.
- Selected applicant must comply with the State of Tennessee Employee Drug-Free Workplace Policy and other policies.
- As required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), selected applicant must verify, within 72 hours of employment, his/her legal right to be employed in the United States.
- Selected applicant(s) will be required to submit to and pass a TBI/FBI background check, to include Tennessee and federal criminal history checks, child abuse records, employment verification and professional/personal reference checks.

HOW TO APPLY: Fully completed State of Tennessee Employment Application packets should be submitted to:

Nathan Travis, Interim Superintendent

Tennessee School for the Blind

115 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Nashville, TN 37214

Email: Nathan.travis@tsbrigers.org

Please DO NOT submit a State of Tennessee online application.

In addition to application (to include salary history and references), please include the following items:

Letter of interest

Current resume

Recent letters of recommendation, with signature

Copy of educator certification

Unofficial copies of all transcripts*

*An unofficial copy of transcripts must be submitted at the time of application. Transcripts from colleges or universities outside the United States must be assessed for U.S. equivalency by a NACES educational credential evaluation service. This documentation is the responsibility of the applicant and must be included as part of your application materials. Failure to provide a transcript or credential evaluation report may result in your application being rejected, and you will not be able to continue in the selection process for this announcement.

Candidates with disabilities who require special accommodations or alternative communication formats should contact the superintendent's office at (615) 231-7316 no later than five days prior to their scheduled interview to facilitate reasonable accommodations.

The State of Tennessee is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Discrimination on the basis of age (over 40), race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disabling condition or any other non-merit factor is prohibited.

HELP WANTED

Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Expanded Core Curriculum Instructor Tennessee School for the Blind Knoxville

BROAD SCOPE OF THE POSITION:

This position reports to the principal and is responsible for providing direct instruction to students in all the areas of the expanded core curriculum with independent living skills being the main focus.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provides direct instruction in the area of independent living skills to students of all ages and abilities. Direct instruction in many of the other ECC areas will also be necessary as a prerequisite to the daily living skills instruction, e.g., use of JAWS to access a menu/shopping list.
- Coordinates services and supervises students in the apartment living program.
- Works closely with cottage staff to coordinate after-school skill instruction.
- Coordinates effectively with other service staff in providing student instruction, strategic planning and positively contributing to co-curricular activities.
- Positively serves as a team member; and participates in regular team and departmental meetings, school and instructional meetings as required.
- Provides parent and teacher consultation; participates in selected parent-focused activities, etc.
- Participates in activities related to professional development, webinars, trainings and workshops as appropriate.
- Performs other appropriate duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum of bachelor's degree in education from an accredited college or university
- Hold or be eligible for appropriate educator licensure in the State of Tennessee.
- Hold teacher of the visually impaired certification
- Experience teaching/working with children (in an educational environment) with visual impairments and/or multiple disabilities including severe and profound disabilities.
- Ability to demonstrate competency in braille.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES:

- Comprehensive knowledge of techniques related to providing independent living skill instruction to students with visual impairments.
- Ability to tie in all other areas of the ECC to support student learning.

HELP WANTED

- Ability to provide professional development to other TSB staff, parents and other teachers of the visually impaired.
- Knowledge of special education principles, practices and procedures, including developing and writing IEPs and performing appropriate teaching techniques.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply current standards-based educational practices associated with children who are visually impaired to a variety of settings.
- Knowledge of visual impairment, including causes, manifestations and adaptations.
- Knowledge of core and expanded core curriculum, program development, classroom resource management and student/personal scheduling for students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities.
- Knowledge of and ability to assess and apply technology to perform the requirements of the position; ability to effectively utilize a variety of computer software applications, which may include but is not limited to email, Internet, word processing, electronic calendar, presentation development, spreadsheet, database, etc.
- General knowledge of medical disorders such as seizures or restrictions; alternate modes of communication; feeding technique and orthopedic impairment/handling and positioning.
- Ability to respond effectively and positively to feedback.
- Ability to work cooperatively with others and participate effectively in a team setting.
- Strong, positive interpersonal skills.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT:

- Selected applicants must verify experience/highest degree held.
- Direct deposit of paycheck on a 12-month schedule is required.
- TSB is a non-smoking facility in its entirety.
- Selected applicant must comply with the State of Tennessee Employee Drug-Free Workplace Policy and other policies.
- As required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), selected applicant must verify, within 72 hours of employment, his/her legal right to be employed in the United States.
- Selected applicant(s) will be required to submit to and pass a TBI/FBI background check, to include Tennessee and Federal criminal history checks, child abuse records, employment verification and professional/personal reference checks.

HOW TO APPLY: Fully completed State of Tennessee Employment Application packets should be submitted to:
Nathan Travis, Interim Superintendent

HELP WANTED

Tennessee School for the Blind
115 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Nashville, TN 37214
Email: Nathan.travis@tsbrigers.org

Please DO NOT submit a State of Tennessee online application.

In addition to application (to include salary history and references), please include the following items:

Letter of interest

Current resume

Recent letters of recommendation, with signature

Copy of educator certification

Unofficial copies of all transcripts*

*An unofficial copy of transcripts must be submitted at the time of application. Transcripts from colleges or universities outside the United States must be assessed for U.S. equivalency by a NACES educational credential evaluation service. This documentation is the responsibility of the applicant and must be included as part of your application materials. Failure to provide a transcript or credential evaluation report may result in your application being rejected, and you will not be able to continue in the selection process for this announcement.

Candidates with disabilities who require special accommodations or alternative communication formats should contact the superintendent's office at (615) 231-7316 no later than five days prior to their scheduled interview to facilitate reasonable accommodations.

The State of Tennessee is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Discrimination on the basis of age (over 40), race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disabling condition or any other non-merit factor is prohibited.

VIRGINIA

Teacher of the Visually Impaired/Orientation and Mobility Specialist Allied Instructional Services Ashland

AIS is seeking qualified applicants for several Teacher of the Visually Impaired and TVI/O&M positions to provide services for school divisions in Virginia, Maryland and Georgia.

Allied Instructional Services (AIS) is a rapidly growing company based in Ashland, Virginia that specializes in providing high quality services to low incidence populations in school systems throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, Maryland and Georgia. Our current team of independent contractors includes teachers of the visually impaired, O&M instructors, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, OTs, PTs and autism/behavioral specialists. AIS is administered by highly qualified professionals who have significant experience in the field of special education of the blind and visually impaired.

HELP WANTED

Both the president and vice president are licensed TVIs and AIS employs experienced “instructional specialists” in the field who can be called on as a resource when necessary. We strive to ensure that the school divisions with which we work (currently over 85) are provided with services that are exceptional, cost effective and, most importantly, give the students the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must hold a collegiate professional license with endorsement in special education, vision impairment and successful teaching experience working with students that are blind or visually impaired.
- TVI/O&M positions require COMS or NOMC.
- Excellent interpersonal, communications, conflict resolution, organizational and planning skills.
- Demonstrated knowledge of federal and state mandates and requirements as related to the provision of educational services and supports for students with visual impairments.
- Demonstrated knowledge of characteristics of individuals with visual impairments and other disabilities to include developmental, cognitive, socio-cultural influences and health related problems.
- Practical knowledge of technology used by blind and visually impaired students in the educational setting and trends related to the field.
- Ability to recognize and respond to individual student differences.
- Ability to work in a collaborative and cooperative manner with parents, co-workers, school staff and service providers.
- Experience with Windows-based computer and related software applications.
- Recent graduates with outstanding skill sets/

HELP WANTED

recommendations will be considered.

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH AIS:

- Excellent compensation
- Ability to set your own schedule—you can determine the amount of time you want to work from a few hours a week to full time.
- Paid travel time
- Paid materials preparation/documentation time
- Access to AIS resource staff knowledgeable in your field
- Being part of a team that has an excellent reputation for delivering quality services and respects the knowledge that you bring to the job
- Access to a professional benefits broker

If you understand how a knowledgeable and dedicated TVI can transform the life of a visually impaired student and are comfortable with the idea of being your own boss, come put your skills to work with a company that appreciates your talents and together we can make a difference in the lives of the students we are privileged to serve. If you are interested in learning more about these rewarding positions and becoming an AIS team member, please respond with a current resume to jobs@alliedinstructional.com.

To learn more about AIS, please visit our website at <http://www.alliedinstructional.com> or contact Karen Vay Walker at kvwalker@alliedinstructional.com.



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Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

In Memoriam

Peggy Madera

Please see p. 8 for more information.

Lisbet Mann

Elizabeth (Lisbet) Mann, 55, of Rockford, Ill., died March 21. A graduate of Northern Illinois University, she started her career as a special education teacher in Ottumwa, Iowa, before taking a job with the Illinois Bureau of Blind Services in Rockford where she worked for 29 years. Legally blind since childhood, she taught living skills to others who had lost their vision so they could remain independent. She is survived by brothers Christopher and Michael Byron. Donations may be made in her memory to Noah's Ark or a charity of your choice.

Mary Jo Martinez

Mary Jo Martinez, 57, of Durango, Colo., died March 19, 2015. As a TVI and O&M specialist, Mary Jo worked on the Navajo Reservation for the majority of her adult life. She loved "her kids." Mary Jo was a long-time member of AER and its O&M Division. Donations may be made in her honor to the MBC Food Pantry, a ministry she founded in Chinle, Ariz.



Donna Iszler

Donna Iszler, 80, former teacher at the North Dakota School for the Blind, passed away April 5, 2015. Donna was a long-time member of AER and a recipient of the Dakota AER Worker of the Year Award. She was also a recipient of AER's prestigious Alfred Allan Award. She came to Grand Forks, N.D., to work for the ND School for the Blind in 1957 and retired in 2003, but continued part-time until 2009.

She loved working with the students and teaching them music and braille. She also loved working with adults with recent visual impairments and was employed by Wyoming Lions Camp in Casper Mountain, Wyo., every summer from 1980-1997. Memorials may be sent to the North Dakota School for the Blind Foundation or Augustana Lutheran Church.



Oraien Catledge

Oraien Catledge, 86, former director of the Atlanta office of the American Foundation for the Blind, died Jan. 27. A Mississippi native, Catledge earned a master's degree in social work from Tulane

University. Although visually impaired, he became known as the "Picture Man." The self-taught photographer began a 20-year stint of documenting the life of people in the Cabbagetown neighborhood of Atlanta after the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill shuttered its operations there in the 1970s. His 25,000 photographs resulted in two books and collections in two art museums. Catledge is survived by his son Phillip, wife Sue, brother Charles and three grandchildren.

Sir Duncan Watson

Duncan Watson, 88, solicitor, civil servant and disability activist, died April 21, 2015. According to friend Lord Colin Low's writing in the *WBU Bulletin*, "Watson did more than anyone else in the United Kingdom to facilitate the emancipation of the blind and was one of the foremost leaders of the blind on the international stage during the 1980s and 90s." Watson played a pivotal role in the formation of the World Blind Union in the mid-1980s and served as its president from 1988 to 1992. Low wrote, "[Watson's] greatest contribution probably lies in the part he played in opening up the charities serving the blind, particularly the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), to the influence and involvement of blind people themselves."



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- Manipulative Pack for performance test items
- Test Administration and Scoring Directions
- Record Forms
- Parent Letters



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The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired is a 4,000-member group of professionals who provide education and rehabilitation services to people with visual impairments.

AER provides Orientation & Mobility Specialists, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, Low Vision Therapists, and others with:

- Professional growth & development
- Career advancement
- Education enrichment
- Networking through meetings & conferences
- News & research information

Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 4-6, 2015 – AER Conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans: Leveraging Our Collective Wisdom, Norfolk, VA USA

July 20-24, 2016 – AER International Conference, Jacksonville, FL USA

July 19-22, 2017 – AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference, Pittsburgh, PA USA



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

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