

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**TVIs and learning disabilities  
in Canada**

**Conference on Vision Loss  
in Older Adults & Veterans  
in Norfolk**

**AER Professional Quality Task  
Force letter to NASDSE**

**UEB update**

**VRT Appreciation Week**

**...and much more!**

Mary is a 13-year-old who has been a braille learner since she started school. When talking with peers or answering questions in a classroom, Mary can communicate about a variety of topics. She speaks in complex sentences using an extensive vocabulary. Whether answering discussion questions in class or telling a peer how to play a game, Mary speaks with organized, well-developed thoughts. With writing exercises, such as short answers on tests or essays, Mary has great difficulty. Her sentences are short and are often sentence fragments. When she does write a longer sentence, the sentence is frequently a run-on with poor or no punctuation. Mary has significant problems with spelling and often spells a word in multiple ways within the same paragraph.

Rudy is a 10-year-old with low vision who was able to learn basic addition and subtraction using manipulatives, but has not learned the fundamentals of multiplication and division. When asked to solve math problems on paper, Rudy confuses the different operations and requires manipulatives to support his efforts. When given word problems, Rudy cannot determine the information he needs to solve the problem. He seldom determines the correct operation on the word problem without the support of the teacher.

Samantha is an 11-year-old who has been a braille learner throughout her

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# President's Message

by Christy Shepard, 2014-2016 AER president

With all the holiday revelry behind us and warmer weather just around the corner, it is time to gear up for spring. Mother Nature's trees leaf out, her flowers start blooming, and we start thinking about spring with its fresh, new beginnings. We get our toolboxes to spruce up our homes for warmer weather and our gardening toolboxes to plant and revive our gardens.

It is also time for us, as professionals, to examine and update our professional toolboxes. One good item to add is the AER Viewpoint. This new benefit for our members "features a mix of AER news and summaries of articles related to the field of blindness and visual impairment." Besides being a wonderful resource at your fingertips, it is FREE to AER members! If you have any suggestions for AER-related articles, please send them to Ginger at [ginger@aerbvi.org](mailto:ginger@aerbvi.org). As our website gets updated, we will add more features for our "toolboxes," so stay tuned!

As we look down the road, mark your calendars for the November 4-6, 2015, conference, "Vision Loss in Older Adults and Veterans: Leveraging Our Collective Wisdom." Join us in Norfolk, Va., for this unique opportunity to focus on how we can better serve adults and veterans with vision loss.

I also want to thank all of our board members for the hard work they've done for AER. They are very dedicated to promoting the best services for vision professionals, giving their time for both board and committee meetings. Another unsung group of heroes is our AER office staff—Lou, Joelle, Ginger, Barb and Mary—who keep us up and running everyday. They attend committee meetings and are busily preparing for the November conference. They do all this IN ADDITION to

taking our phone calls and answering our questions. Please take time to thank them for all they do the next time you speak with them.

The next board meeting in the spring will be a face-to-face meeting at the New York Institute for Special Education in New York City. Dr. Bernadette Kaplan and Jim Catavero, our current president-elect, have graciously invited AER to hold our meeting at their institute. The board members will be providing their own travel, while the school will provide lodging and some meals. The board feels it is very important to hold one face-to-face meeting each year, if possible, and in the spirit of fiscal responsibility to our organization, board members cover their own transportation costs.

Finally, I encourage each of us to communicate with other professionals in our field who are not AER members about joining AER. Whether they are students finishing their degrees, new to the field or experienced professionals, it is important that we have a strong, united professional organization. It is up to us to nurture it.

Until next time,

Christy Shepard  
2014-2016 AER president



## AER Job Exchange

### The Career Source for the Vision Community

### Attention Job Seekers!

AER Job Exchange is the largest list of announcements for career opportunities in the field of blindness and visual impairment.

Bookmark the Job Exchange page at <http://jobexchange.aerbvi.org> and visit the site frequently for new listings.

# Executive Director's Message



**by Lou Tutt**

Since joining AER as executive director on April 1, 2011, visiting AER chapters has been a highlight of my job. I have enjoyed visits with over half of the 43 AER chapters, and it has been a wonderful AER-ful experience!

In previous years, Matt Hogel, former AER board member and also former president of the AER Puerto Rico Chapter, would invite me to his chapter's conference every year;

however, I could never accept, as the AER Board of Directors meetings always occurred the same weekend, the end of January.

Well, this year, I attended the AER Puerto Rico Chapter Conference, held January 29-30, 2015, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, thanks to AER President Christy Shepard, who excused me from the AER board meeting so I could attend the conference. I spoke at the conference, attended the sessions and participated in their board meeting. It, too, was a wonderful AER-ful experience, and I hope it was the same for them. Also, it was my first time in Puerto Rico! Two other AER board members were at the Puerto Rico conference, namely Dr. Laura Bozeman, board secretary, and Janie Blome, related services representative, as they were invited to speak at the conference. (Were you two excused? Smiles...)

The reason I was invited to speak at the Puerto Rico conference was because of the low membership numbers in their chapter and what recommendations I might bring to increase their chapter membership. And I will tell you that it is not just the AER Puerto Rico Chapter that is having membership issues but many other chapters as well. In fact, when I came to AER on April 1, 2011, AER had 4,500 members and today we are down to 4,000. My AER motto—RECRUIT, RETAIN, REGAIN—has not changed, and it has become a very big challenge.

As an AER staff, we are taking this drop in membership seriously, and so is President Shepard and the board. The baby boomer members are retiring, and many are not renewing their membership. Meanwhile, the millennials are not joining, as they don't think it is necessary, since they can access professional development easily from their smartphones, YouTube and other social media. Both the economy and the increase in memberships fees have affected membership, although AER's membership fees are far less expensive than those of most professional organizations and associations.

To tackle these challenges, AER's Membership Committee is looking at the decline in membership and strategies to mitigate and reverse it. We also have a Professional Personnel Recruitment Committee to develop materials in different formats, including technology, that may attract millennials not only to the field but also to AER. Members are looking for benefits—benefits that will be instrumental in their work as vision professionals—and we as the only professional association in the blindness and visual impairment arena should be able to deliver what our members need. It's a challenge, and we need your help in meeting it.

AER celebrated its 30th anniversary during the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, this past July. And now, with AER in its "new 30," as I have called us, we have to do things differently. Drastically different. We live in a digital world where technology changes every day and in every way. Accessibility is key, and AER must do all it can to ensure what we deliver to all of our members is accessible! In 2044, will today's oldest millennials—those who are 30 years old today and who will be 60 years old then—be able to say, when they look back, "AER was there for me"? I want that answer to be a resounding "Yes!"

Thank you for your continued membership in AER; thank you to the leadership of our AER chapters and divisions; and thank you, AER Board of Directors, for making membership a priority these next two years. Wouldn't it be great, when we are in Jacksonville, Fla., for the AER International Conference 2016, to report that we are back up to 4,500 members or more? Please join me, and let's all 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](mailto:lou@aerbvi.org)

**Trouble sleeping at night? Napping to get through the day?**

**Sleeping at night but not feeling refreshed the next day?**

**Difficulty concentrating?**

For people who are totally blind, these may be symptoms of Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Disorder (Non-24) – a serious, chronic circadian rhythm disorder.

Non-24 results from a body clock that is out of sync with the 24-hour day, which can make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep at night and can create an uncontrollable urge to sleep during the day. This may lead to exhaustion, difficulties with school or work, and problems with concentration.

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](http://www.non-24.com).

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Call toll free: 1-855-856-2424 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

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# Vision Rehabilitation Therapist Appreciation Week: April 12-18, 2015

Members of the AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division (11) are gearing up for the fourth annual Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT) Appreciation Week. The event will run April 12-18, 2015.

VRT Appreciation Week began in 2012 as a way to increase awareness of the field, recruit people to the profession and recognize current practitioners for their dedication. Committee members are already planning celebrations in their home states of Alabama, Illinois, Maine and Pennsylvania. For example, in Alabama, committee member Cardelia Cunningham, CVRT, is planning an event in Tuscumbia, Ala., where Helen Keller's home—including the famous pump at which Anne Sullivan taught Keller the sign for "water"—still stands. For VRT Appreciation Week, Cunningham has invited the Tuscumbia mayor to speak at the Helen Keller home on VRTs and their importance to the community.

This year marks the first time VRT Appreciation Week will occur in April to coincide with Sullivan's birthday, April 14. Previously, the event was held in late June to honor Keller's birthday. By moving the event to April, VRTs can reach out to students through campus visits and career day presentations. "We want to recruit new people to the profession," said Lenore Dillon, CVRT, co-chair, VRT Division's Recruitment and Retention Committee. "When we talk to students, we need to tell them how exciting the profession is. This is the kind of work that makes a real difference in people's lives and that really resonates with students searching for meaningful careers." Dillon noted that VRTs can also reach students through visits to high schools and even elementary and middle schools. "It's very important to get people interested. We don't hear kids say, 'I want to be a vision rehabilitation therapist when I grow up,' but I think it's possible! We can make that happen."

Although VRT Appreciation Week is only in its fourth year, Dillon has already seen some small, positive changes in the field. "When I visit universities now, more and more people seem to know about the field. I've also had people tell me that after they found out about the profession, they wished they had learned about it earlier. Those are some promising signs that VRT Appreciation Week is making a difference."

While one component of VRT Appreciation Week is to recruit new people to the field, another focuses on current practitioners and acknowledges their dedication to the profession. Last year,

Dillon presented certificates of appreciation to all the VRTs in her state. "It's important to recognize our VRTs," she said. "The work they do is life-changing, and we need to take time to honor them for their commitment." The committee also plans to recognize veteran VRTs who helped to shape the field. "Recently, many outstanding VRTs have passed away," said Dillon. "We want to interview the ones who are still here and learn about their techniques from the early to mid-1900s." The committee plans to release the first interview via the VRT Division newsletter in the near future.

Leading up to VRT Appreciation Week, the committee will be posting announcements on the VRT Division's Listserv. They began with a letter in January 2015, inviting members to host VRT Appreciation Week events in their areas and to exchange ideas on how to celebrate the profession. Submitting articles to local papers about VRTs in the community, making posters of equipment and supplies that VRTs use and preparing podcasts about the profession are just a few examples of what people can do.

To help promote the event, VisionAware, a joint effort of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation, will publish articles on its free informational website for adults with vision loss (<http://www.visionaware.org/>). "In addition to recruiting people to the profession, we also want to reach those people who might have vision loss or have family or friends with vision loss. We're the best kept secret," laughed Dillon. "But we really do need to reach those people who need VRT services, so they can learn the skills they need to live productive, fulfilling and independent lives."

Dillon continued, "The work we do is thrilling. When we work with a consumer who thought life was over and empty, and then all the sudden, their lives are filled with new adventures and opportunities that they thought weren't possible...that's what makes this job so exciting."

The committee invites all AER members, whether they are VRTs or not, to find ways to participate in VRT Appreciation Week. For more information about bringing VRT Appreciation Week to your area, please contact Lenore Dillon at [lenore.dillon@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:lenore.dillon@rehab.alabama.gov).



# Message from AER Professional Quality Task Force

One of AER's key goals is to ensure highly qualified personnel are hired to provide specialized services to meet the needs of students with visual impairments. AER members have reported that school districts across the United States are being contacted by healthcare staffing corporations to assist in recruiting and placing teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS). Using this medical model of placement for education professionals poses concerns related to the quality of educational services provided.

In April 2014, AER formed a special task force, led by AER Executive Director Lou Tutt and Mary Ann Siller, AER member from Texas. The goals were twofold: to gather information and to bring to the attention of human resource management departments and special education administrators the importance of hiring practices that include appropriately certified TVIs and O&M specialists to serve the students with visual impairments in their districts.

On May 2, 2014, the AER board approved a motion to immediately consider assembling a group of AER members and other professionals from agencies/organizations of similar persuasion to explore, report on and recommend a course of action regarding the questionable practices of healthcare companies in respect to TVIs and O&M services.

In fall 2014, AER contacted the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to ask for their support in sending a position statement letter to

administrators in each state. NASDSE welcomed the idea and asked state directors of special education to distribute the letter to local schools. AER headquarters heard from many school administrators across the United States that the AER letter had circulated in their district. This dissemination was excellent news and built upon the importance of grassroots efforts.

The AER letter (see p. 9) follows goals, outlined at the AER International Conference 2014 business meeting, to communicate with AER members about these issues. This letter is an important first step toward an open dialogue with human resource management staff and special education directors about the significant concerns with using third-party, private healthcare staffing agencies to manage their hiring practices.

Thank you for reviewing the position statement letter. We want your support as an AER member to distribute the letter and to help agencies and school districts in your community understand the importance of quality instructional services for students with visual impairments. The AER Professional Quality Task Force is studying additional resources and supports. If you have questions regarding this document or ways in which the task force can assist you with recruitment efforts, please contact the co-chairs of the AER Professional Quality Task Force: Lou Tutt at [lou@aerbvi.org](mailto:lou@aerbvi.org) and/or Mary Ann Siller, M.Ed., CTVI, at [dmasiller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmasiller@sbcglobal.net).

Sincerely,  
AER Professional Quality Task Force



AER

## AER Viewpoint

### AER Viewpoint Weekly Newsletter Launched in January

In mid-January 2015, AER launched a new, weekly, online publication, AER Viewpoint. It features a mix of AER news and summaries of articles related to the field of blindness and visual impairment.

The newsletter is produced at no cost to AER by MultiView and supported by advertising. We encourage you to ask organizations to include AER Viewpoint in their marketing plans.

You may access past issues of AER Viewpoint as well as past issues of the AER Education Brief, which highlights recorded sessions in the AER Knowledge Center, at <http://multibriefs.com/briefs/AERBVI>.

We welcome suggestions for AER-related articles. Send your ideas to [ginger@aerbvi.org](mailto:ginger@aerbvi.org).





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

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October 2, 2014

Dear Special Education Administrator & Human Resources Director:

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired (AER) is an international organization representing education and rehabilitation professionals who provide services to students who are blind or visually impaired. One of our goals is to ensure that highly qualified personnel are hired to provide specialized services to meet students' needs. As determined by a student's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Individual Transition Plan (ITP), students with visual impairments require instructional support from a teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) and/or a certified orientation & mobility specialist (COMS). These individuals have specialized training to meet the unique educational needs of this highly diverse population.

School districts across the nation are being contacted by allied health corporations to assist in placement of TVIs and COMS. Using this medical model of placement for education professionals poses concerns related to the quality of educational services provided.

As a national organization, AER strongly recommends that:

1. School districts make all efforts to hire a TVI or COMS as a district employee or connect a qualified, in-district teacher with a university personnel preparation program for TVI/COMS training, thereby ensuring the TVI/COMS are an integral part of the educational team and have the same benefits and salaries as other educators.
2. School districts hire TVIs or COMS that have and maintain state or national certification and licensure, as appropriate.
3. School districts make every effort to maintain quality programs based on educational needs for students who are blind or visually impaired, including students with additional disabilities, as determined by the students' IFSP/IEP/ITP. Providing quality programs assures compliance with federal and state laws and avoids potential litigation.
4. If outside contractors are used to secure a TVI or COMS, districts require that the TVI/COMS is paid for instructional time, conducting evaluations, writing reports, collaborating with other professionals and families, attending in-services and training, and attending planning meetings and IFSP/IEP/ITP meetings.
5. If outside contractors are used to secure a TVI or COMS, districts ensure that the individual's hourly rate is equal to other professionals with the same level of education and expertise in comparable geographic areas.

Thank you for reviewing our position and acknowledging the need for quality instructional services for students with visual impairments. If you have questions regarding this document or ways in which we can assist you with your recruitment efforts, please contact us at 703-671-4500.

Sincerely yours,

Christy Shepard  
President, AER

Louis M. Tutt  
Executive Director, AER

## Does your student have a learning disability? Cont. from page 1

education. She struggled with learning the letters of the alphabet, and she still confuses similar letters, particularly when they are not presented in isolation. With support she can identify beginning letter sounds of simple words. Her peers are now reading chapter books, and Samantha is reading books that have single words repeated throughout a story. Each night, Samantha reads at home for practice. When she reads, her rate is slow, and fluency is forced and awkward.

These hypothetical stories describe the challenges teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) might see their students grapple with in the classroom. When these problems persist, the TVI might wonder, “Does this student have a specific learning disability?” In many cases, schools attribute learning challenges to vision impairment, accepting subpar performance rather than holding students to a higher standard of achievement.

Meanwhile, TVIs continue to question whether or not their students might need alternative instructional supports to help with the learning challenges, especially since deficits in foundational skills such as reading and arithmetic can have a snowball effect as students progress to higher grade levels. Should TVIs advocate for their students to be evaluated for a specific learning disability and if so, how do they do that? What types of information support such evaluations? What happens if the evaluation comes back and the student is not eligible for specialized instruction? Longtime AER members Marnee Loftin, MA, LSSP, LPA, school psychologist (retired) and consultant, and Cyral Miller, TVI, MPA, outreach director, both with the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, frequently tackle these questions and share ideas to help TVIs in this situation.

### Does learning disability eligibility help the student?

Some parents and teachers may wonder whether qualifying for a specific learning disability is worth pursuing. Realistically, students who have an individualized education program (IEP) for sensory impairment have access to a broad range of accommodations, many of which can support learning challenges. At the same time, evaluating for a specific learning disability in the United States can be complicated. Although the process varies by state, many typically require two tests, one to measure cognitive functioning and the

other to measure educational performance, and they both must be administered by a qualified individual, typically the school psychologist. “In my experience, few school psychologists know how to work with students who are blind or visually impaired,” said Loftin. “Some psychologists are even hesitant to test a child who is not included in the standardization sample of a particular test.” Furthermore, the tests often are not accessible to students with visual impairments. In fact, only one, the *Woodcock-Johnson III NU*, is available in braille or large print. (For more information, visit the American Printing House for the Blind website at: <http://tiny.cc/WJ-braille>.) Between having access to many accommodations and the obstacles of the evaluation process, it is no surprise that many schools cite visual impairments as the primary reason for a student’s subpar performance instead of testing for a specific learning disability.

Yet, qualifying for services with a specific learning disability can benefit a student. Academically, having the learning disability documented on the IEP ensures instructional accommodations will remain available for the duration of the student’s academic journey. Emotionally and psychologically, the eligibility provides tremendous benefit, because it gives students, parents and teachers a reason for the challenges. “It’s not that [the students] are lazy or uncooperative,” explained Loftin. “There is a specific learning disability that likely involves many different factors, such as auditory memory, long-term recall, etc. All of these can be powerful factors that appear as difficulties in learning.”

### Before the referral

Before TVIs in the United States refer their students for an evaluation (also called “IEP eligibility”), they must first understand the U.S. federal and state special education laws. Although the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recognizes and defines learning disabilities at the national level, each state handles IEP eligibility differently. TVIs should know their state’s process: What tests, if any, are required? Who is involved in the evaluation process? What types of information and data are needed? Having answers to these and similar questions helps TVIs as well as the entire IEP team



**“That is the TVI’s responsibility: to recognize the problem and provide interventions”**

~ Marnee Loftin,  
school psychologist, TSBVI

prepare for the evaluation and avoid mistakes regarding the legal aspects of eligibility.

The next step is to collaborate with the student's teachers to rule out vision issues as the primary cause of the problem and to make sure proper interventions have been enacted. The IDEA specifies:

Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (IDEA, 20 U.S.C., Sect. 1401(30))

Therefore, it is important for TVIs to determine if the learning problems are directly attributable to the student's vision. For example, has the student received sufficient training in using their low vision devices? Does the student lose his or her place when reading because of trouble tracking or because moving from the board (distance) to the paper (near) requires more time? Is the student missing decimals in math problems because of low acuity?

Advised Loftin, "In my mind, TVIs are among the first to recognize that students are struggling with something. But the next step is not to refer to testing. The next step is to provide interventions. That is the TVI's responsibility: to recognize the problem and provide interventions." Added Miller, "Good instruction must happen first. The team needs to look at what the student's achievement is, what is holding him or her back, and what might help."

The first and most important step for the teaching team is to meet and discuss in detail what they do when they work with the student. This type of review ensures everyone clearly understands the student's learning experience and needs. Explained Miller, "The team needs to figure out if the student is struggling because the team hasn't understood how to implement appropriate accommodations across multiple learning activities. Or perhaps there's a lack of knowledge about concepts typically developed through visual means." Also, during these meetings, the team can evaluate current interventions and determine if they are being implemented correctly and consistently. "It is hard to say that something has not worked if it is only being implemented 50% of the time," observed Loftin. Finally, the team should consider possible alternatives, keeping in mind that not all interventions require special training or equipment. They can be as simple as changing the contrast on a screen or closing the window shades.

### **Working with the psychologist**

If the teaching team determines, after reviewing their current strategies, that vision impairment is not the primary reason for the student's learning problem, then the student should be referred to the school psychologist for evaluation.



When creating the referral, TVIs should include a summary of the functional and educational implications of the visual impairment and the response-to-intervention (RTI) data. These two reports are critical in helping the psychologist understand where the student is in his or her academic performance.

Ideally, the next step is the psychologist and TVI meet to discuss how the student's vision issues may affect the test. "Be prepared to discuss those things we never think about at all," advised Loftin. "Things like: loud noises can be distracting. Students may hear a hum that we don't hear. Or [the TVI] might have a long discussion with the psychologist about how many blind students learn concepts tied specifically to a lesson. For example, when they learn the concept of 'island,' students with visual impairments may learn about a tiny piece of land with palm trees; they may not generalize the concept to other islands like Manhattan or a kitchen island." Concepts that most people learn primarily through visual means may not be available to students who are blind or visually impaired. The psychologist should be aware of these issues before testing the student.

TVIs can provide guidance on the testing environment and materials. For example, students with cortical impairments are easily distracted by visually busy environments. Said Miller, "We don't know the tests, but we do know our kids. So, it's important to focus on accessibility, like contrast of pictures used during the test."

Some states do not perform evaluations for specific learning disabilities. For TVIs who live in those areas, Loftin and Miller suggest testing as part of a diagnostic process to identify strengths and weaknesses. "If we provide intervention, there must be some sort of testing at some point," said Miller. "The way we evaluate students and plan is based on data." So even if the end result does not include IEP eligibility, collaborating with school psychologists to improve the accessibility of these tests can still benefit the student's instruction.

*Continued on p. 12*

## Does your student have a learning disability? Cont. from page 11

### Evaluation results

Once testing is finished, the psychologist makes the determination that either a specific learning disability is present or it is not. The binary nature of the test result (the disability is either there or it is not) can be frustrating to everyone involved because in some cases, it is clear the student is having difficulty in the classroom, yet he or she did not meet all the criteria for eligibility.

Many reasons exist for why students fail to meet eligibility criteria. They may not qualify because their academic skills are consistent with their cognitive skills. In other cases, they actually may have demonstrated higher academic skills during the test than in their everyday performance in the classroom. Said Loftin, “Regardless of the outcome, good testing—meaning testing done with good knowledge of the student, the impact of the visual impairment on the student’s learning and a solid understanding of which interventions worked and didn’t work—is always beneficial to the teaching team. Students who don’t qualify still benefit from the process. Their teachers receive helpful information about their students, which ultimately helps to serve them better in the classroom.”

Students who do meet eligibility for a specific learning disability have access to services from a specialist in their area of

weakness—whether it be reading, math, language or some other field. The instructional strategies that work best to resolve learning problems come primarily from the learning disabilities field, not visual impairment. “Often, people assume the TVI has all the knowledge about all instructional strategies,” said Loftin. “But they need to understand that specialists from the learning disabilities field are the ones who have the best strategies for students with learning disabilities.” The TVI’s role in supporting the student’s learning disability is to work with the specialist and classroom teacher to ensure the student can access his or her education fully. Working together, the TVI and the specialist can provide a program that meets the student’s needs.



# Identifying students with learning disabilities in Canada

Teachers of students who are visually impaired (TVIs) in Canada face challenges similar to those of their counterparts in the United States. Namely, they must rule out vision as the primary cause for their students’ learning challenges, and they must ensure assessments are accessible to their students. Consequently, Canadian TVIs collaborate extensively with teachers and psychologists to analyze student performance in the classroom and ensure appropriate accommodations on psycho-educational assessments.

In Canada, service delivery of specialized instruction varies by province. In Manitoba, vision specialists work from a central

office and serve as consultants to schools that have students who are blind/visually impaired. AER Manitoba Chapter President Elaine Bradley explained, “We each have a caseload of students throughout the province, as our students attend schools in their home community. We work with the schools to provide specialized supports including alternate format materials.” Meanwhile, Ontario follows an itinerant model similar to that used in many U.S. states. “Our vision teachers have ‘core’ schools where they’re located,” explained AER Ontario Chapter President Doug McJannet, TVI, COMS. “We still serve students at different schools, but we might work from a school where more intensive instruction is happening.”



Although their provinces' service delivery models vary, both Bradley and McJanett emphasize the importance of working collaboratively with school teams to ensure students receive the supports they need. "Working as a team, we can all see when a student is struggling in the classroom," said Bradley. "Because we focus so much on collaboration, I've rarely had problems getting the team to buy into the idea that the student has issues beyond vision." Echoed McJanett, "We can't be complacent about a student's performance. If there's an issue that continues to concern us about a student, we need to pursue other avenues. It calls for a transdisciplinary approach, involving psychologists and sometimes, occupational therapists and physical therapists. They can often recognize behaviors that could be neurological."

The starting point for a learning disability assessment in Canada begins with a team meeting at which teachers discuss the student's performance and determine if all the accommodations have been implemented correctly. "At these team meetings, we might have to provide information about typical development patterns for students who are visually impaired. It's hard to say 'typical' but there are some norms for our kids—for example, in reading—that may differ from what their peers demonstrate," said Bradley.

Sharing information from the functional vision assessment during the team meeting is critical, as it helps everyone understand how vision affects the student's academic performance. For example, during the functional vision assessment, Bradley often includes an informal reading assessment. "For a student who's having trouble reading, if I don't see a pattern in their performance because of similar-looking letters, or if there's no difference in their decoding or reading speed when I vary the print size, it tells me that what's happening in reading might not be related to media format," she explained. "This type of information can be very helpful to the classroom teachers and may indicate the need to further assess the student's reading."

Both Bradley and McJanett also emphasize the wealth of resources on provincial education websites, which house documents on the identification process and working with students with learning disabilities. "The York Regional District School Board (YRDSB) and the Learning Disability Association of York Region provide frequent opportunities for professional development and offer materials and resources online," said McJanett. "They do a lot of in-services and also share their materials online." Bradley also recommends the book, *Collaborative Assessment: Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Including Those With Additional Disabilities* (from AFB Press at <http://www.afb.org/store/>), which she often uses with schools to discuss how to assess students with visual impairments and interpret the results.

To prepare for the psychological assessments, McJanett stresses the importance of early collaboration. "It's very difficult to find psychologists who feel comfortable assessing students who are blind or visually impaired," he said. "It is critical that we collaborate throughout the process." When a student requires further assessment, McJanett suggests reviewing the instruments with the psychologist to ensure that proper accommodations are made. "Consider all the pictures and abstract concepts used on these tests," he said. "There may be a whole section the student can't do if the psychologist doesn't talk to me first about the student's ability to interpret visual concepts. It's not fair for my students to get something wrong on the test because the appropriate accommodations weren't made."

Both Bradley and McJanett also analyze and discuss assessment results with teachers and psychologists. "I've done reading assessments with teachers," explained Bradley. "The teacher looks at reading skills while I look at issues that relate to low vision. We look at the child's errors and make educated guesses about whether they were due to visual acuity or something else." In addition, McJanett makes himself available for direct consultation during testing.

The bottom line is students are best served when their TVIs proactively work with the school team to analyze the student's classroom behaviors and determine if their learning challenges indicate issues beyond vision. School psychologists and TVIs should work together to make sure assessments are fair and valid for students with visual impairments. "The best outcomes are when we work as part of a collaborative school team for both the assessment and instruction," said Bradley. "We're not just there as specialized teachers; we really are part of a school team that's working to make sure our kids get the accommodations they need to support the education they deserve."



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



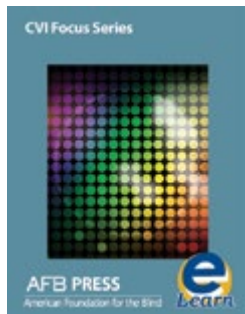
**A first-of-its-kind event honoring older adults with vision loss and veterans and service members affected by injury or age-related eye disease resulting in vision loss.**

**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 From the AFB eLearning Center!



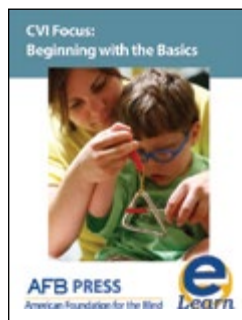
A 5-part webinar series!

## Cortical Visual Impairment Focus Series *Assessment, Intervention, and Literacy for Individuals with Cortical Visual Impairment*

Presented by Christine Roman-Lantzy

### Part One: Beginning with the Basics

Includes definitions of CVI, differences between ocular and cortical visual impairments, medical causes of CVI, and a description of the visual and behavioral characteristics associated with CVI.



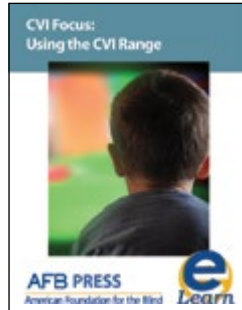
### Part Four: Facilitating Literacy

Reviews a sequential teaching approach that considers the impact of CVI characteristics on learning and literacy.



### Part Two: Using the CVI Range for Functional Visual Assessment

Provides information on the CVI Range, a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the functional vision of individuals with CVI.



### Part Five: Building Language and Literacy Skills

Describes specific strategies for building the learning and language skills of individuals with CVI.

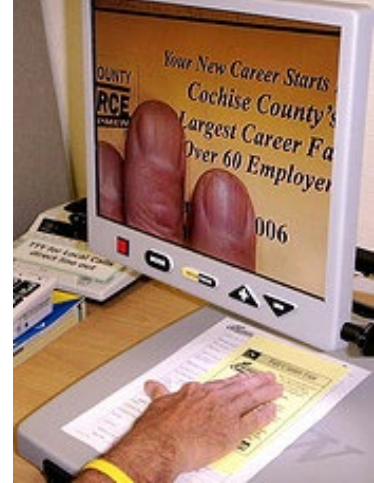


### Part Three: Designing Interventions and Opportunities

Provides information about methods for designing and providing interventions and adaptations throughout the daily routines of individuals with CVI.



Purchase the entire series and **save 10%** on Christine Roman-Lantzy's book *Cortical Visual Impairment: An Approach to Assessment and Intervention*



**November 4-6, 2015**  
**Norfolk, VA**  
**Norfolk Waterside Marriott**  
<http://aerbvi.org/aerconf2015>

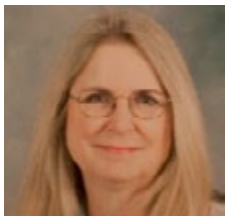
**Join AER at this first-of-its-kind conference**

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.

AER is thrilled to bring together vision rehabilitation professionals from the U.S. departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs as well as those in the private sectors to 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.

**Featured Speakers (as of February 2015)**



*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”

**Who Should Attend**

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

**Preliminary Schedule**

**November 4, 2015**

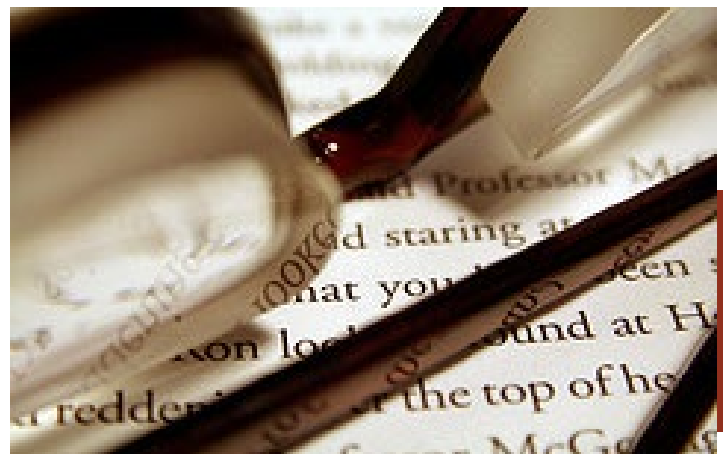
- AM Exhibit set-up
- PM Opening session with keynote speaker
- Concurrent sessions
- Welcome reception

**November 5, 2015**

- AM Breakfast with exhibitors
- General session
- Concurrent sessions
- PM Lunch
- Concurrent sessions
- Exhibit Hall open

**November 6, 2015**

- AM Breakfast with exhibitors
- General session
- Concurrent sessions
- Closing general session





## Call for Abstracts Now Open!

### Share your discoveries, techniques and experience!

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) cordially invites you to submit an abstract for this exciting and timely AER one-of-a-kind event.

Held Nov. 4-6, 2015, at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott, in Norfolk, Va., this conference is geared toward professionals in the vision rehabilitation and medical fields who work with blinded veterans and older persons with vision loss, including:

- vision rehabilitation therapists
- orientation and mobility specialists
- ophthalmologists
- low vision therapists
- optometrists
- occupational therapists
- ... and others

We seek dynamic presentations and posters that will inform and educate attendees on proven practices in vision rehabilitation for older adults and veterans, young and old. Presentation topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Age-related vision loss
- Physical activity and recreation
- Traumatic brain injuries resulting in blindness
- Employment of older adults and blinded veterans
- Age-related medical issues
- Quality of life
- Government benefits and services
- Prosthetics
- Retirement issues

For more information, visit the conference website at <http://aerbvi.org/aerconf2015/>. Please read the Presenter Information page ([http://aerbvi.org/aerconf2015/presenter\\_info.htm](http://aerbvi.org/aerconf2015/presenter_info.htm)) before submitting your application in AER's new, user-friendly abstract management program.

All abstracts are due by April 15, 2015, with presenter notifications made by May 15, 2015. For additional information, please contact Mary Bean at (703) 671-4500 or [mary@aerbvi.org](mailto:mary@aerbvi.org).

We hope to see you in Norfolk!

### 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.

**Advance Your Career  
Connect with Colleagues**



# BANA Report November 2014 Meeting

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

The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) hosted the second Unified English Braille (UEB) Transition Forum during the American Printing House for the Blind annual meeting in October 2014. Discussion at that meeting indicated some concern regarding BANA's initial vote to adopt UEB and still maintain Nemeth code. In response to that discussion, BANA voted on a statement of clarification during its November meeting, hosted by AER at AER's headquarters in Virginia. (See p. 19 for the complete statement.)

States are continuing to move forward with implementation plans. Former BANA Chair Frances Mary D'Andrea negotiated a contract with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to conduct a survey regarding implementation at the state level. BANA will use the survey results as a guide for states to use when implementing UEB. An AER chapter survey found chapter members are assisting in many states with implementation plans. We hope that more and more AER members will be involved in this effort, either by providing UEB training for teachers or by taking coursework in UEB through the various opportunities available.

BANA has a wealth of UEB information on its website, <http://www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html>, including "Provisional Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth



Lou Tutt, right, AER executive director, welcomed members of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) Board of Directors at their fall 2014 meeting. AER hosted the November event at its headquarters in Alexandria, Va.

Code within UEB Contexts," which addresses how to move from UEB into Nemeth and back again. We urge AER members to visit the website to get answers to their questions about UEB or use the "Contact Us" link on the website for more information.



**AFB American Foundation<sup>®</sup>  
for the Blind**  
Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss

## 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 will 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>.



## **Implementation of Unified English Braille (UEB)**

**The following statement was approved by the BANA Board on November 9, 2014.**

On November 2, 2012, the United States members of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) to replace English Braille American Edition in the U.S. Based on extensive dialog and planning that involved more than 30 organizations as well as individual consumers, teachers, and transcribers, BANA established January 4, 2016, as the date by which the United States will implement UEB.

BANA is working toward implementation of UEB in four phases:

2013: Information year—BANA developed and disseminated information about UEB and gathered input from constituents.

2014: Infrastructure year—BANA and other organizations planned for procurement and production of braille materials in UEB and developed training materials.

2015: Instructional year—Readers, producers and educators will become proficient in UEB.

2016: Implementation year—All new transcriptions will be produced in UEB; educators will teach the code. Devices and software will fully and accurately incorporate UEB.

As of the implementation date in 2016, UEB, Nemeth, Music and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) will be the official codes for use in the United States. BANA is providing guidance on how to incorporate the Nemeth Code into UEB context with the intent that the Nemeth Code will continue to be integral to braille in the United States. The document *Provisional Guidance for Transcription Using the Nemeth Code Within UEB Contexts* is available as PDF and BRF files on the BANA website at [www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html](http://www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html).

BANA recognizes that in order to make an effective transition to UEB, states and organizations will need to develop customized implementation plans. To maximize efficiency and impact, BANA encourages widespread collaboration and sharing of expertise, resources and training.

BANA continues to post and update information and materials about UEB at [www.brailleauthority.org](http://www.brailleauthority.org).

This document, *Implementation of Unified English Braille (UEB)*, is posted on the BANA website at [www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html](http://www.brailleauthority.org/ueb.html).

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.

"Assembling a New Association" was presented at the AER International Conference by Sandra Lewis, Ed.D., and was written by AER's first president, Richard Welsh, Ph.D., before he passed away.

## Assembling a New Association



### AER International Conference 2014 San Antonio, Texas

*Authored by Richard L. Welsh, Ph.D.  
Presented by Sandra Lewis, Ed.D.*



Congratulations! You and I are members of one of the oldest organizations of its kind in this country. We are members of that continuous caravan of teachers, counselors, administrators and others that stretches all the way back to 1853. That was the first recorded time when our ancestors in this work came together to find ways to help each other accomplish the mission that we shared.

We heard earlier of the many accomplishments of our predecessor organizations. We truly have had a significant impact on the fields of education, rehabilitation and employment of people who are blind and visually impaired.

In the beginning, AAWB (American Association of Workers for the Blind) was a counterpoint to AAIB (American Association of Instructors of the Blind) but eventually, the superintendents and others associated with the schools also joined AAWB to support the efforts to find employment for adults. There seems to have always been some overlap in the membership.

Because of the similarity in our missions, from time to time in our history, we held joint conferences, and we called for greater unity. The first joint conference happened in 1915. Another occurred in 1938. And another was held in 1952. It did not seem to be a high priority for us.

In the 1970s, conversation of collaboration began again. There were some practical forces at work in the 60s and 70s:

- Each organization first took on paid staff in the 1950s; they had previously been run by the elected officers

operating from their own schools or agencies.

- The cost of doing business became an issue for both associations in the 60s and 70s.
- An awareness was developing of the need for an ongoing presence in Washington, D.C., in view of the growing lobbying of all interest groups and the increasing activism of consumer groups.
- Both associations were receiving financial contributions toward their operations from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) and from the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB).
- There was an increasing crossover in membership and in association business, especially as it related to the emerging profession of orientation and mobility (O&M).

In 1975, a collaboration committee was appointed by Bob Whitstock of the Seeing Eye, who was the president of AAWB at the time. Whitstock's successor was going to be Hank Roberts of AFB, and his term would overlap for a year with the term of his wife, Ferne Roberts, who was the president of AEVH (Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped) at that time. The window of opportunity was opened even wider when Mary K. Bauman was elected to succeed Hank Roberts as president of AAWB. Bauman had been the executive secretary of AAIB and then AEVH and had been widely regarded as "Miss AEVH." She was, in effect, going to be the elected head of AAWB and the executive head of AEVH.

At the first meeting, members of the committee were asked to introduce themselves and to say what they thought about the future of collaboration between AAWB and AEVH. Out of respect for Bauman, who was seen as being in a rather awkward spot at that time, the other members of the committee seemed to bend over backwards to talk in vague, general terms about working more closely together, but they all stopped short of suggesting that we should look at putting the two organizations together.

The collaboration committee proposed a number of specific steps to take in an effort to improve our work together. They included:

- having observers at each other's board meetings;
- exploring legislative collaboration in Washington, D.C.;
- exchanging information about each other's meetings, including national, regional and chapter meetings;
- cooperating on job listings; and
- organizing a joint conference every three years, beginning with the 1980 joint conference celebrating the 100th anniversary of Helen Keller's birth that had already been organized by AFB.

Also, at this time, a couple chapters of our two organizations had begun to work closely together and to plan joint chapter or regional meetings in their areas. This was happening especially in Northern California and in New England.

At the business meetings of the two associations at the joint conference in 1980 sponsored by AFB, both had voted to explore joint conferences every three years.

However, fiscal realities had already overtaken both of our organizations. In the spring of 1981, a formal alliance—known, cleverly, as the Alliance—was formed. This more formal

collaboration called for a Joint Management Committee, a shared office and a combined staff, a joint publication program, more collaborative activities, financial support from AFB and a commitment to form a combined organization by July 1, 1984. The officers from both associations formed the operating Board of the Alliance.

In the meantime, the groundwork continued on the creation of a new unified organization. AFB further encouraged us in this direction by offering to provide the new association with a substantial endowment if it came to be. Significant work was done by the Consolidation Committee in seeking and taking direction from the members and in encouraging us to buy into the concept. Under the direction of Kathy Megivern, who was the executive director of AAWB and then of the Alliance, suggestions and concerns were solicited from the members, considered by the Consolidation Committee and responded to in the development of the new structure and bylaws.

Members were asked to suggest a new name and nearly 100 did so. We were asked to vote on the top 10 selected by a subcommittee of the Alliance Board. Elections were held, and officers and board members for the new association were chosen.

At the first and only conference of the Alliance in Nashville, Tenn., in 1984, the new association, AER, previously approved by mail ballot was ceremoniously approved by those in attendance at that conference. AFB was there to present its gift of an endowment to the new organization. After this momentous and very moving event, the presiding officer at the session, Kent Wardell, could not find the gavel. As always, quick on his feet, Kent reached down, took off his shoe, and kicked of the new organization by pounding his loafer on the podium.

## 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>



Find AER on Twitter [@AERBVI](https://twitter.com/AERBVI) for tweets and retweets



Connect to AER's company page at [http://www.linkedin.com/companies?trk=hb\\_tab\\_compy](http://www.linkedin.com/companies?trk=hb_tab_compy)



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[www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)

# *AER International Conference*

2016

**July 20-24, 2016**

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



# Chapter News

## Georgia

The 2015 AER Georgia Chapter and Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI) Conference is scheduled for Saturday, March 21. Entitled "Exploring the New Braille Code, Technology Solutions and the ADA," the event will be held at the Center for the Visually Impaired in Atlanta. Session topics include: the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) as it applies to school and work settings; assistive technology solutions for children and adults; and changes and resources related to the new braille code. Six ACVREP CEUs will be available pending review. Visit <http://www.gaaer.org> for more information.

## Michigan

The AER Michigan Chapter will hold its annual conference on April 23-24, 2015, at the Marriott at Laurel Park Place in Livonia, Mich. This year's theme is "Drawing Parallels Across the Lifespan." Join us as we welcome Karen Blankenship, keynote speaker, and many of our Michigan members to share our collective knowledge. Check the Michigan Chapter website for registration and program information at <http://maerbvi.org>. Email Mary Beth Kullen at [kullen@gdabvi.org](mailto:kullen@gdabvi.org) for registration information or Susan Langendonk at [susanlangendonk@gmail.com](mailto:susanlangendonk@gmail.com) for program information. ACVREP and State of Michigan SCECH continuing education credits will be offered.

## Northern Rockies

The AER Northern Rockies Chapter will host its annual conference in Boise, Idaho, at the Oxford Suites on October 14-16, 2015. The NRAER conference planning committee is working furiously to provide an amazing event. We look forward to meeting with colleagues from all over in the exciting Boise theater district with its neon lights and upscale restaurants. A "save the date" mailing

is forthcoming. The committee has discussed multiple topics for sessions, including ADL skills for younger children, reading eye reports, networking luncheon for parents of blind children, a panel of working and non-working adults, mental illness in the transition VI population, roundabouts, disability law, guardianship laws, early intervention, and transition.

Send inquiries to Dana Ard at [danalynard@q.com](mailto:danalynard@q.com) or Ken McCulloch at [krmac6@msn.com](mailto:krmac6@msn.com). Ken can also be reached by phone at (406) 556-7103.

## Northern California

AER NorCal presents its Annual Spring Workshop on May 14, 2015, at the Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley, Calif. Workshop plans include a fearless panel and talk on UEB, lunch reception followed by current information on Non-24 Sleep-Wake Disorder, and a presentation on rehabilitation technology and employment. A wine reception and networking will round out the day. CEUs will be available.

Chapter members will receive registration information with final details via email by the end of February. For more information, please contact Richard Rueda at [richr@hotmail.com](mailto:richr@hotmail.com) or by telephone at (510) 825-4106.

## Penn-Del

The 2015 AER Penn-Del Conference will take place April 22-24, 2015, and this year's theme is "Reflect, Renew, Resolve: The Three aeR's of Action."

This annual conference offers a wide range of relevant and engaging opportunities for attendees to network, enhance their skills and share ideas and insights with colleagues. Attendees and presenters are provided Certificates of Completion to submit for continuing education credit for Pennsylvania Department of Education Act 48,

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and for the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP).

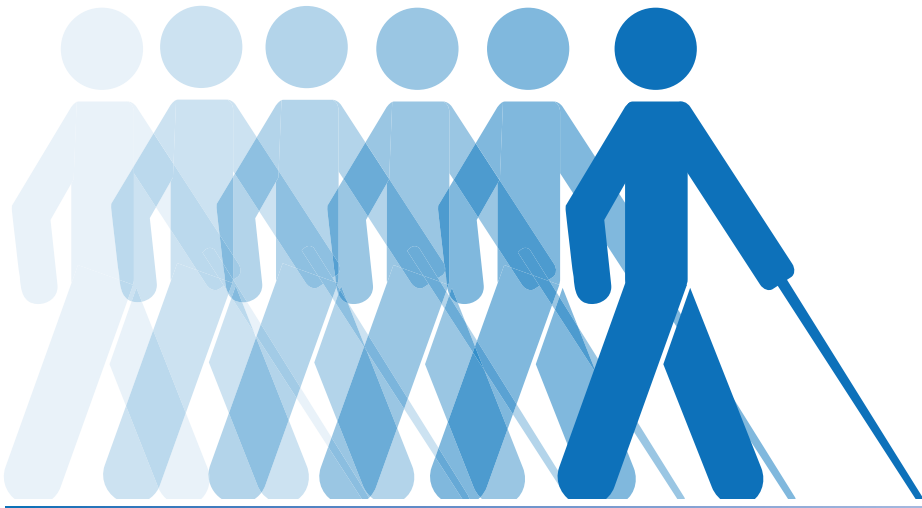
The event will be held at the Best Western Premier Central Hotel in Harrisburg, Pa. For more information visit <http://www.penn-delaer.org>.

## West Virginia



Attendees at the December 2014 West Virginia Collaborative for Visual Impairments conference

The West Virginia Collaborative for Visual Impairments (VI Collaborative), representing the West Virginia Department of Education, the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Project and AER West Virginia Chapter, sponsored a 2-½ day conference in Morgantown, W.Va., in December 2014 to address the upcoming changes affecting children who are blind/low vision. Key components of this training included: policy and eligibility changes, functional vision assessments, UEB and general assessment. This conference was well attended and the VI Collaborative is looking forward to future initiatives.



Association for Education and Rehabilitation  
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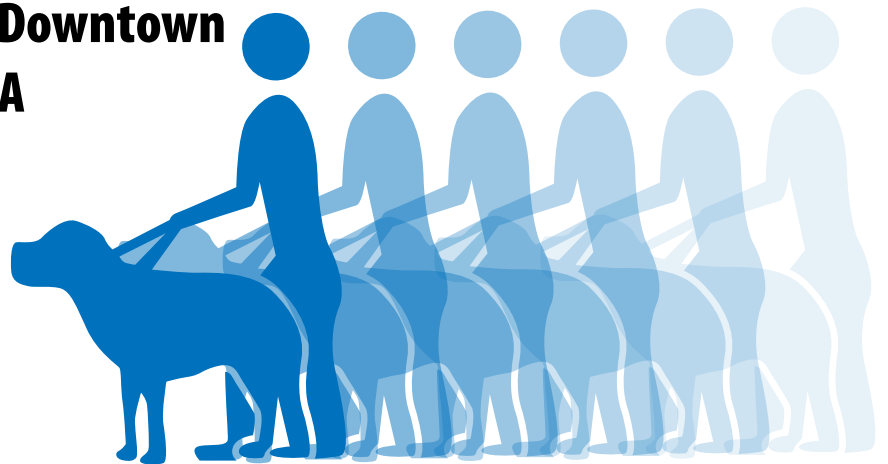
# AER International Orientation & Mobility Conference

# 2017



**July 19-22, 2017**

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





# Division Docket

## Infant & Preschool (8)

The AER Infant & Preschool Division co-sponsored a pre-conference workshop with the AER Illinois Chapter at the 2015 IAER Vision Conference. Guest speaker Mark Borchert, MD, from Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, delivered his talk, "Optic Nerve Hypoplasia: The Evolving State of Our Knowledge," which focused on eye and brain development as well as the medical problems associated with optic nerve hypoplasia. Dr. Borchert directs the world's largest study on optic nerve hypoplasia and brought a unique opportunity for division members to learn more about a diagnosis that affects so many young children and their families.



AER Infant & Preschool Division members pose with Dr. Mark Bouchert at the 2015 IAER Vision Conference. Pictured (left to right): Marla Garstka, Olanda Vialand, Michelle Clyne, Dr. Brochert, Sheila Walker, Mindy Ely, Joyce Zablocki, Mary Ellen Drobnik and Linda Stanish

## Orientation and Mobility (9)

Happy New Year from the Orientation & Mobility Division! We had a busy 2014 —here are some of our accomplishments.

Under the leadership of now Past Chair Kevin Hollinger, representatives of the O&M Summit Group and the O&M Division met and agreed to work together to support and improve both the O&M Division and the profession of O&M. Kevin has continued to act as chair of the division's Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning, Goals and Initiatives (see report on page 26) and has facilitated presentations at NCOMA, SOMA, SWOMA and CAOMS conferences. These presentations involved small group discussions geared toward identifying the field's concerns as well as successes. The information will be used to develop a strategic plan for the O&M Division. Presentations at future conferences are also in the works.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Best Practice in Collaboration: O&M and OT/PT Scope of Practice, co-chaired by Bill Penrod and Michelle Antinarelli, has met several times to explore the extent to which O&M services are being provided

by individuals who are not trained in teaching travel skills to people with visual impairments.

The Environmental Access Committee sent several members to the Transportation Research Board meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 2015. The O&M Division was able to cover registration costs from the 2014 division budget and much of the transportation and lodging expenses, thanks to a generous donation from Polara Engineering.

Viki Poole is now the chair of the Communications/Media Committee. Together with Lisa Sluszka, they will be developing new ways to communicate with O&M Division members. They welcome other O&M Division members who are interested in serving the division to help update the website and possibly bring back the newsletter.

The O&M strand of the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, was well attended and featured many new and exciting sessions. Many of these are on the AER website as PowerPoint presentations with audio recordings; they can be purchased for CE credits. Division awards were presented to Lea Ann Myers and Tom Rotunno (Sandy Kronick Award); Dr. Grace Ambrose-Zaken (Certificate of Special Recognition); Dr. George Zimmerman (Lawrence E. Blaha Award); Kathy Alstrin and John Kilpatrick (Donald Blasch Scholarship); and Eileen Sifferman (Newcomer-Hill Service Award).

As always, the O&M Division leadership wants to hear from you—questions, comments, ideas and complaints! We're looking forward to a productive 2015.

## Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (11)

Division members are working on celebrations for Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT) Appreciation Week, set for April 12-18, 2015. Begun in 2012, the week celebrates and brings attention to the vision rehabilitation profession. For the first time this year, VRT Week occurs in April to coincide with the birthday of Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher and one of the first VRTs. For more information about VRT Appreciation Week in your area, please contact Lenore Dillon at [lenore.dillon@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:lenore.dillon@rehab.alabama.gov).



# Taking Initiative:

## AER O&M Division Works on Strategic Plan

In August 2014, O&M Division Chair Susan Langendonk appointed the Ad Hoc Committee for Strategic Planning, Goals and Initiatives within the AER Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Division, charging the committee to:

1. Engage constituents in brainstorming for the development of a strategic plan and potential division initiatives,
2. Identify real and perceived strengths and weaknesses of the division's leadership, activities and initiatives,
3. Conduct a member/constituent survey for strategic planning,
4. Formulate short- and long-term division goals and initiatives with estimated dates for accomplishment,
5. Report to the division membership at the AER International O&M Conference 2017 in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The following individuals serve on the committee: Susan Langendonk, O&M Division chair; Michelle Antinarelli, O&M Division chair-elect; Sarah Bussey; Lukas Franck; Kevin Hollinger, O&M Division past-chair; Dr. Richard Long; and Beth Sutton.

To inform stakeholders about the strategic planning effort and to begin soliciting their input, committee members and select division members have moderated roundtable discussions at many conferences, including those held by NCOMA, SOMA and CAOMS, as well as distributed questionnaires at the conferences of SWOMA and AER Missouri chapter. The committee is actively researching and submitting abstracts to present at multiple conferences in 2015, including the AER Conference on Vision Loss in Older Adults & Veterans, and various AER chapter conferences (Penn-Del, Michigan and Northeast); their poster has been accepted for the poster session at the 2015 International Mobility Conference (IMC15). The session outcomes largely mirror the committee's charge—i.e., to engage constituents and members in brainstorming for the strategic plan and division initiatives and to identify the division's strengths and weaknesses—with the added goal of recruiting volunteers to serve in the division.

The sessions are conversations about the O&M Division's strengths, needs and future, and they allow committee members to connect with division members, non-members and interested constituents, learning how the division can improve communication and serve O&M specialists (OMS) and guide dog mobility instructors (GDMI). Engaging as many OMS and GDMI as possible will help identify common

concerns about the field's future and ideas to strengthen the profession while gaining information and integrating ideals into the strategic plan. The committee's goal is to host several information work sessions to conclude the input stage of the project at the AER International Conference 2016 in Jacksonville, Fla., followed by the committee's finalizing and reporting on the strategic plan and initiatives at the AER International O&M Conference 2017 in Pittsburgh, Pa.

### Committee history

Langendonk appointed the committee following a meeting held at the AER International Conference 2014 in San Antonio, Texas, between several division members and the O&M Summit Group Steering Committee. Meeting participants included then Division Chair Kevin Hollinger, Chair-Elect Susan Langendonk, Past-Chair Marjie Wood, "to be" Chair-Elect Michelle Antinarelli, and summit leaders Dr. Richard Long, Sarah Bussey and Lukas Franck.

The O&M Summit Group formed after the AER International O&M Conference 2013 in New Orleans, La. Summit participants discussed the possibility of OMS and GDMI forming their own professional association, and also if the group could structurally operate within AER and/or the O&M Division, or if it should be a separate organization. The genesis of this discussion was a sense, among a minority of professionals, that the field was "going astray." Some participants voiced concerns about AER and the O&M Division, citing a desire for stronger leadership on O&M-related issues.

The summit met through a series of five conference calls, under the guidance of Jeremy Grandstaff of S&G Endeavors. Areas of concern included the quality of personnel preparation programs, recognition of the profession in the broader community, the encroachment of occupational therapists into the field, third party payment, licensure and control of division dues within AER. Despite identifying several areas to improve upon with AER, summit participants decided to work within the O&M Division to achieve their goals rather than establish an independent organization.

The 2014 San Antonio meeting between division officers and summit leaders included an enlightening discussion of AER's financial history (as reported in the summer 2014 issue of *AER Report*); a review of the division's financial history; discussion of the summit's reported conclusions; consideration of the serious, expressed concerns of division members about the future of the field; and the division's ability to take effective action to support the profession from within AER. The group agreed to begin

soliciting input from its members, as well as non-members and other constituents, on the future of the division and profession as a whole. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee for Strategic Planning, Goals and Initiatives began.

## Next steps

To help disseminate information about the committee's efforts, the committee is developing an accessible PowerPoint presentation with audio and a survey and will post them on the division's website. We ask all members, non-members and other constituents to attend and participate in the presentations as well as visit the website in the coming months. A blast email will announce the launch of the PowerPoint and survey. We welcome your feedback and input now and always.

With anticipation of great things to come,

Ad Hoc Committee for Strategic Planning, Goals and Initiatives

Michelle Antinarelli (chair-elect), Sarah Bussey, Lukas Franck, Kevin Hollinger (past-chair), Susan Langendonk (chair), Dr. Richard Long and Beth Sutton

Guests: Dr. Bill Jacobson, Dr. Justin Kaiser, Brenda Naimy and Chris Tabb



The Information and Technology Division (5) is beginning a regular submission to *AER Report* to share resources, answer common questions and update AER members on new technologies. For this first article, we asked division members to share some resources they frequently use. While some recommendations may already be familiar to AER members, we hope readers will discover some new resources...or maybe rediscover ones long forgotten!

**Accessibyte Arcade** (<http://www.accessibyte.com/accessibyte-arcade/>) provides a bit of fun and learning with interactive and accessible games.

**AFB Access World** (<http://www.afb.org/aw/main.asp>) has terrific reviews and information.

**Android Access** (<http://www.androidaccess.net>) covers accessible Android apps and news.

**AppleVis** (<http://www.applevis.com/>) is, according to the site's tagline, "a community-powered website for blind and low-vision users of Apple's range of Mac computers, the iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and the Apple TV." AppleVis offers reviews of accessible iOS apps.

**Braille Authority of North America, BANA** (<http://www.brailleauthority.org>) has everything from UEB updates to tactile graphics standards.

**Creative Commons Search** (<http://search.creativecommons.org>) allows users to search the Web for images that are publicly and legally available for presentations, webinars, articles, etc. (Users should still check the copyright information of any material they find on this website to ensure their usage falls under the Creative Commons license.)

**Math Forum** (<http://mathforum.org/>) and its **Ask Dr. Math** feature (<http://mathforum.org/dr.math/>) are excellent resources for teaching math.

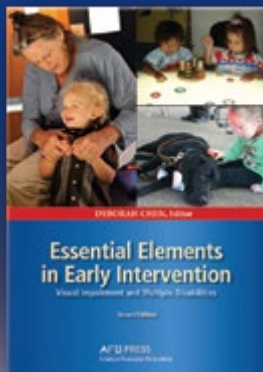
**Perkins eLearning** (<http://www.perkins.org/elearning>) and **Accessible Science** at (<http://www.perkinselearning.org/accessible-science>) provide tools, resources and inspiration for educators and parents working with students who are blind or visually impaired.

**TSBVI Distance Learning** (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/distance>), **Math** (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/math>) and **Resources for the Expanded Core Curriculum** (<http://www.tsbvi.edu/recc/>), all from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, cover a broad range of topics and teaching techniques.

**Washington State School for the Blind** (<http://www.wssb.wa.gov/content/offcampus/video.asp>) offers a wide array of video clips demonstrating various teaching and daily living techniques used with individuals who are blind or visually impaired.



# New Resources for Professionals from AFB Press!

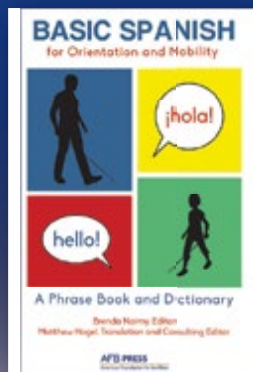


## Essential Elements in Early Intervention *Visual Impairment and Multiple Disabilities* Second Edition

DEBORAH CHEN, Editor

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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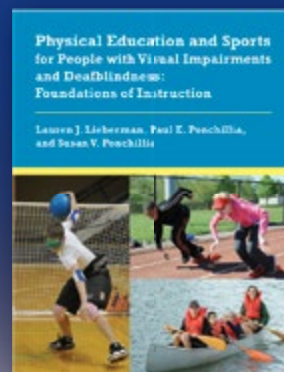


## Basic Spanish for Orientation and Mobility *A Phrase Book and Dictionary*

BRENDA NAIMY, Editor  
MATTHEW HOGEI, Consulting Editor

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.

Available in paperback, e-book, online subscription, and ASCII



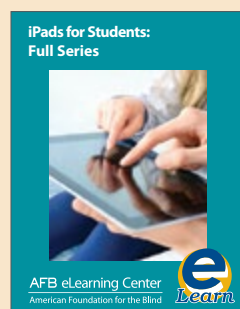
## Physical Education and Sports for People with Visual Impairments and Deafblindness *Foundations of Instruction*

LAUREN J. LIEBERMAN  
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SUSAN V. PONCHILLIA

Everyone should experience the multiple benefits of regular exercise and physical activity. Learn techniques for adapting sports and other physical activities for children and adults with visual impairments and deafblindness. Includes practical strategies that can be used in rehabilitation and instruction.

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## AFB eLearning Webinar Series



### iPad in the Classroom — Webinar Series

The iPad and other accessible tablet devices are a new and powerful classroom learning tool for students with visual impairments. The three webinars in this series provide the rationale for their use, and specific strategies and teaching tips that create fun and effective learning opportunities.

- Creating Tactile Overlays for the iPad and Tablet Devices
- iPad and Communication for Students with Visual and Multiple Disabilities
- Reinforcing Braille Literacy Using the iPad



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Download webinars and e-books from  
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In the UK, order books at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

# One Size Does Not Fit All When It Comes to Teaching

The January-February 2015 issue of the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* (JVIB) includes a pair of Practice Perspectives articles, compiled by JVIB's Practice Editor Jane Erin, retired professor, University of Arizona, that remind us that one size does not fit all when it comes to teaching. These articles relate the experiences of teachers who used the Individualized Meaning-centered Approach to Braille Literacy (I-M-ABLE), which incorporates meaning and motivation into braille reading instruction.

In these case studies, the teachers (Rachel Schles, a teacher of students with visual impairments in Falls Church, Va., and Jill McMillan, a teacher in Morrisville, N.C.) designed literacy instruction around their students' interests. In Schles' case, working with a boy with autism and decreasing vision, for whom English was a second language, she used a tape measure that the student found fascinating and writing that focused on meaning rather than precise spelling. McMillan, who worked with a girl transitioning from reading print to braille, allowed the student to choose favorite words and write her own stories to stimulate interest in reading. It is unlikely that either student would have progressed as far in a conventional reading program, but the resulting literary success demonstrates that many methods exist for teaching effectively. Learn how these teachers considered the individual needs of their students when deciding the best approach for literacy instruction in the current issue of JVIB.

This issue also features the inaugural Statistical Sidebar feature, which discusses control groups, written by the journal's Consulting Editor for Research Robert Wall Emerson, professor, Western Michigan University and a book review of Morton A. Heller and Edouard Gentaz's *Psychology of Touch and Blindness*, by Tessa S. McCarthy.

## Articles

- Virtual Environments for People Who Are Visually Impaired Integrated Into an Orientation and Mobility Program by Orly Lahav, David W. Schloerb and Mandayam A. Srinivasan (CEU opportunity)
- The Recreation and Leisure Pursuits of Employed Adults With Visual Impairments in Nigeria: Part 1 by Stacy M. Kelly, Paul M. Ajuwon and Karen E. Wolffe
- The Recreation and Leisure Pursuits of Employed Adults

with Visual Impairments in Nigeria: Part 2 by Paul M. Ajuwon, Stacy M. Kelly and Karen E. Wolffe

- The Role of Visual Experience in Changing the Size of Objects in Imagery Processing by Magdalena Szubielska and Boguslaw Marek

## Practice Perspectives

- Different Paths to Success: An Individualized Approach to Effective Teaching by Jane N. Erin
- A Student Success Story Through the Use of an Individualized Meaning-centered Approach to Braille Literacy (I-M-ABLE) by Jill McMillan
- Individualized Meaning-centered Approach to Braille Literacy Education (I-M-ABLE) Case Study: Ajay's Story by Rachel Anne Schles

## Practice Report

- iStimulation: Apple iPad Use With Children Who Are Visually Impaired, Including Those With Multiple Disabilities by Laura V. Campana and Donald A. Ouimet

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, go to the Member's Only area of the AER website and log in with your AER membership information provided via email to members. Then follow the links that say JVIB until you reach the table of contents of the current issue.



# AER University Review:

## Strengthening the Profession, One Program at a Time

When it comes to professions, very few have as real and direct an impact on a person's quality of life as those of AER's members. The everyday tasks performed by orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists, teachers of students who are blind or visually impaired (TVIs) and vision rehabilitation therapists (VRTs) have the ability to transform lives. O&M specialists give people the freedom to navigate their worlds independently; TVIs make words and numbers accessible in the classroom, and VRTs empower individuals to live and care for themselves.

Because these professions can have such a profound impact on a person's life, it is important to ensure these fields continue to demonstrate the highest level of quality and professionalism. Building that quality and professionalism begins with training and making sure the training meets the expectations of the field.

AER's University Review program is the only program available that provides important, field-specific feedback to programs that train O&M specialists, TVIs and VRTs. Developed and administered by professionals in each of the vision disciplines, the University Review uses a streamlined and user-friendly process to assess program performance. Since AER revised the University Review process in late 2012, eight programs have completed a review, and another dozen have indicated interest in being reviewed this year.

"We leaped at the chance to be reviewed by AER, because it's so important that we critically look at ourselves," said William Jacobson, Ed.D., COMS, chair, Department of Counseling, Adult, and Rehabilitation Education, University of Arkansas at Little Rock. "We want to make sure we're meeting the needs of the profession." Echoed Tessa McCarthy, Ph.D., COMS, TVI, assistant professor, Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Central University, "AER is the primary professional organization for [vision professionals]. It's important to have their stamp of approval. It means a lot to have your professional organization confirm that you are training and producing high quality professionals."

Almost every university in the United States and Canada requires its programs to undergo some form of review, and many use the accrediting process of a related discipline. For example, many vision programs operate in the education department of their universities, so they undergo the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation process. What makes the AER University Review particularly useful to vision programs is that vision professionals who are active in their fields collaborated to develop the criteria, and many serve as program evaluators.

"We go through so many approval processes," said Sandra Rosen, Ph.D., COMS, CVRT, coordinator, O&M Program, San Francisco State University. "Still, I really wanted to do AER's University Review because that's our field. They look at quality in much more detail than the other accreditations do. They know the content and curriculum." For programs at publicly funded universities, the state legislature often requires an external program review. "If it weren't for AER, I would have had to use a state-mandated process with people who know nothing about our field," said Jacobson.

Many directors of programs that have completed the review have said the feedback from the process was invaluable in helping them improve their programs. "I think there's something to be said for having colleagues look at what you do and having them help you rethink it," said George Zimmerman, Ph.D., COMS, coordinator, Vision Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh. "When we went through the review, we were already discussing how to improve on our program. The University Review essentially corroborated our thoughts. We used their feedback to help support our case when we went to our School of Education to add new courses to our program."

Echoing Zimmerman's observation, William Wiener, Ph.D., COMS, CRC, chair, AER University Review Committee explained, "The goal of the University Review is continuous quality improvement. We want to bring all programs up to the highest standards." To help achieve this, the committee introduced conditional approvals with the process revision. Continued Wiener, "One of the major improvements of this new system is providing conditional approval for programs that are clearly high quality but fail to meet one or two standards. Under the old system, these programs would not receive approval. With the new process, we give conditionally approved programs one year to rectify areas that are not in compliance."

Besides improving programs, AER approval helps build a solid cadre of new practitioners in the field. "We need to demonstrate that we have been able to master our profession at the gold standard that is accepted by the professional community," said Zimmerman. "We want our students to be viewed at that level by their colleagues." Likewise, Rosen said, "Coming from an AER-approved program gives our students the assurance that they graduated from a good quality program, that they have met the highest standards. Our students are proud of where they trained, and our program's reputation serves them well in their careers." Finally, Diane Wormsley, Ph.D., retired Brenda Brodie Endowed Chair

and professor, Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Central University noted, "Graduating from an AER-approved program can help our graduates when they apply for jobs. Many schools for the blind and rehabilitation agencies know who AER is and what the association represents."

Most students who enter vision programs have little to no experience with the field. When they graduate, however, they know about AER and what the association means for the profession. "If you have a person who meets the standards and values certification, and who speaks highly of their program and of AER, that's the best outcome you can ask for," said Zimmerman. "These are the people who will go out into the field and continue to be involved at the professional level. They will be the ones who participate at conferences and volunteer to serve on committees." By meeting the standards of

the University Review, programs can help build leaders who are committed to growing and improving vision rehabilitation and education.

The greatest impact the AER University Review can have on the profession is to define a standard of excellence for consumers and practitioners. The more programs that complete the review and earn AER approval, the better the quality of service to people who are blind or visually impaired. By participating in the University Review, vision programs can help train a workforce that has mastered a comprehensive set of skills to serve people with vision loss, to ensure all practitioners who enter the field meet the standards set forth by their profession. The best way to realize this goal is to see more and more programs earn AER approval through the University Review.



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## **ABLE Act Becomes Law**

### **Allows Tax-Free Savings Accounts for Persons with Disabilities**

On December 19, 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama signed into law the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. Hailed as an example of bipartisanship at its best, the new law allows people with disabilities and their families to create tax-free savings accounts that can be used for education, housing, medical treatment and transportation.

Co-sponsored by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Richard Burr (R-NC) and Congressman Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), the ABLE Act passed with overwhelming support in both chambers of Congress shortly before the winter recess. A coalition of national advocacy groups led a cross-disabilities grassroots effort that urged the House and Senate to vote on this life-changing issue for millions of Americans with disabilities.

The ABLE Act amends Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Service Code to allow use of tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. Contributions to the new 529-ABLE accounts are made on an after-tax basis, but assets in the account grow tax-free and are protected from tax as long as they are used to pay qualified expenses. Furthermore, assets up to \$100,000 held in a 529-ABLE account are specifically excluded from the income and assets tests used to determine Federal assistance eligibility (e.g., Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid). This includes the current SSI eligibility requirements that prohibit beneficiaries from having over \$2,000 in assets at any one time.

"Some have called the ABLE Act the most significant piece of legislation affecting the disabled since passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act nearly 25 years ago," said Senator Burr. "Most middle-class families don't have the money to spend on lawyers and financial planners to set up sophisticated trusts to make sure that their disabled child will be OK long after they are gone. What's worse current federal law actually discourages parents from putting any assets in the name of their disabled child in fear of disqualifying them from federal programs down the road. It's utterly unacceptable that our current laws doom a child born with a disability to a lifetime of poverty and dependence. This is especially unfortunate when a parent or other family member has the resources and the desire to save and plan for that child's future expenses but are advised by lawyers and planners not to. The ABLE Act will take the first critical step in ending this injustice."

As with 529 accounts, each state will have its own process for establishing 529-ABLE accounts. The process should be identical to the process used to establish a 529 Education Savings Plan. Most states are expected to offer 529-ABLE account options some time in 2015.

For more information about the ABLE Act, visit Congressman Crenshaw's website at <http://crenshaw.house.gov/index.cfm/able-act>.





# AER University Review Program

**HELPING UNIVERSITIES ADEQUATELY PREPARE PROFESSIONALS TO SERVE PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN THE BLINDNESS FIELD**

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.

*"I leapt at the chance to be reviewed and recognized by our field's leading professional organization. It's so important to critically look at our program to ensure we're meeting the needs of the profession."*

- 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



Association for Education and Rehabilitation  
of the Blind and Visually Impaired

## Please contact AER to sign up your university

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Alexandria, VA 22311

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(877) 492-2708

[aer@aerbvi.org](mailto:aer@aerbvi.org)

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# Report on Disabilities and Pay Gap

## Findings indicate those with disabilities earn 37% less on average



At the end of 2014, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research in the areas of health, education, and workforce productivity, released results from a study on earnings among people with disabilities.

According to AIR's research, workers with disabilities who have at least a high school education earn 37 percent less on average than their peers without disabilities, a disparity costing federal and state governments up to \$31.5 billion in potential tax revenue.

Earnings disparities increase with higher educational attainment. Among workers with a high school degree or the equivalent, those with disabilities earned on average \$6,505 less than their peers in 2011. The gap widens to nearly \$21,000 on average among those with a master's or more advanced degree. AIR experts note that employees with disabilities face economic discrimination similar to what female employees experience; they get 37 percent less pay compared with 35 percent for women.

"Although non-discriminatory compensation is protected through the Civil Rights, Americans with Disabilities, and Rehabilitation Acts, our results show that earnings inequalities are gaping," said AIR author Michelle Yin. Co-author Dahlia Shaewitz added, "Education and employment are not enough. Equal pay is key to keeping people with disabilities economically independent and out of poverty."

State trends mirror national trends. For employees with a high school diploma or its equivalent, the highest average income inequalities are observed in

- ♦ **Vermont** (\$12,700)
- ♦ **Connecticut** (\$12,000) and
- ♦ **Iowa** (\$10,000).

Among those with a bachelor's degree, the greatest disparities are in

- ♦ **Washington, D.C.** (\$20,000)
- ♦ **Minnesota** (\$18,000) and
- ♦ **Washington** (\$17,000).

At the master's and higher level, the states with the largest gaps are

- ♦ **Nevada** (\$38,700)
- ♦ **Connecticut** (\$35,500) and
- ♦ **Hawaii** (\$33,800).

These trends are reversed in some states, but only in specific educational levels. For example, some workers with disabilities earn more than their peers in the following states

- ♦ Some college education: **North Dakota** (\$9,000), **Mississippi** (\$2,000) and **Rhode Island** (\$2,000);
- ♦ Associate's: **Utah** (\$6,500), **Wyoming** (\$1,500) and **New Jersey** (\$1,000);
- ♦ Bachelor's: **Wyoming** (\$6,000), **New Hampshire** (\$4,500) and **Alaska** (\$2,500);
- ♦ Master's or more advanced: **South Dakota** (\$16,000), **Utah** (\$15,000) and **Kentucky** (\$2,000).

Researchers also looked at broader economic impacts and found that lack of equal pay costs the U.S. economy \$141 billion, amounting to about 1 percent of gross domestic product, or about as much as the federal government allocates to education. Loss of tax revenue is another consequence, totaling more than \$25 billion for the federal government and more than \$6.5 billion for states.

*An Uneven Playing Field: The Lack of Equal Pay for People with Disabilities* used data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey. For more information about the study and its findings, go to <http://www.air.org/resource/air-index-pay-gap-workers-disabilities>.



# PHOENIX: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

2015

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**Arizona AER Annual Conference**

Renaissance Phoenix Downtown Hotel | April 9–11, 2015

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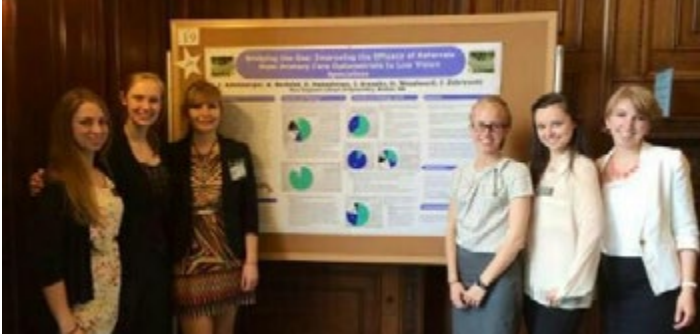


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# Definition of Low Vision Varies Widely Among Optometrists



New England College of Optometry (NECO) students present their low vision study poster at NECO's annual Poster Day.

At the American Academy of Optometry 2014 Annual Meeting in Denver, six students from the New England College of Optometry (NECO) presented a poster on how primary care optometrists and low vision specialists define low vision—and consequently, what defines a low vision referral.

The research, *Bridging the Gap: Improving the Efficacy of Referrals from Primary Care Optometrists to Low Vision Specialists*, was conducted by Anne Bertolet, Emily Humphreys, Hannah Woodward, Jessica Zebrowski, Inna Kreydin and Jenna Adelsberger, all students at NECO. They surveyed 19 primary care optometrists in Massachusetts and eight low vision specialists across the country.

“One of the major points our results suggest is that there is a discrepancy between what primary care optometrists and low vision specialists define as low vision,” reported Bertolet. “The majority of low vision optometrists use a functional definition of low vision: any visual impairment that can hinder quality of

life or daily functioning. Interestingly, we found that primary care optometrists were a lot more varied in their definition, with less than half choosing a functional definition and the rest opting for various best-corrected visual acuity-based definitions. This suggests that there are some patients who could benefit from low vision services, but are not getting referred and that developing a standardized definition would be advantageous to help normalize the referral and treatment processes.”

The students' research received national attention, garnering reviews on *MedScape Medical News* and *VisionAware*, the latter of which also offers low vision education points for consumers.

Both reviews, as well as the research poster, are available online:

Poster: [http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/Low\\_Vision\\_Accessibility\\_Academy\\_Poster.pdf](http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/Low_Vision_Accessibility_Academy_Poster.pdf).

Patients Missing Out On Low Vision Services. *Medscape*. November 27, 2014. Available online at: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/835581>.

New Research: Patients Not Referred for Low Vision Services in a Timely and Efficient Manner. *VisionAware*. December 1, 2014. Available online at: <http://www.visionaware.org/blog/visionaware-blog/new-research-patients-not-referred-for-low-vision-services-in-a-timely-and-efficient-manner/12>.

## Special Education Wins in 2014

In January 2015, Huffington Post blogger Matthew Lynch, Ed.D., wrote about three actions in 2014 that could potentially affect special education in the United States. Two of these actions came from the U.S. Department of Education—raising benchmarks that measure how well states meet the needs of their special needs students and clarifying anti-bullying protections for students with disabilities who receive services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The third promising finding came from researchers at The Ohio State University who found preschoolers with disabilities learned more in mainstreamed classrooms than those in contained classrooms.

To learn more about these actions, visit Lynch's blog post at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/3-big-wins-for-special-ed\\_b\\_6416902.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/3-big-wins-for-special-ed_b_6416902.html).

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

# 2015 Calendar of Events

For more information about upcoming events, or to have your event listed, visit our website at [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org) and click on "Calendar" in the side navigation bar.

## 2015

### February

Feb. 27–28: 2015 AER Pacific Northwest Chapter Conference, The Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA — For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://www.pnwaer.org/>. For hotel information, go to <http://www.heathmanlodge.com/>.

### March

Mar. 11-13: 2015 AER Kentucky Chapter State Conference, Best Western-Lexington Conference Center Hotel, Lexington, KY — For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://kyaer.aerbvi.org/events.htm>.

Mar. 18–20: AER Virginia Chapter Annual Conference, Sheraton Reston, Reston, VA — For more information, visit their website at <http://virginia.aerbvi.org/>.

Mar. 19–20: AER North Carolina Conference/North Carolina Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness (NCCVIB), Hilton Charlotte Executive Park, Charlotte, NC — For more info, visit the chapter website at <http://www.ncaer.net/>.

Mar. 21: AER Georgia All Day Workshop, Center for the Visually Impaired, Atlanta, GA — For more information, visit the chapter website at <https://sites.google.com/a/gaer.org/www/>.

Mar. 26-28: AER Texas Chapter 2015 Conference, Sheraton Arlington Hotel, Arlington, TX — For more information, visit the chapter website at <http://www.txaer.org/conferences.html>.

### April

Apr. 9-11: AER Arizona Chapter and American Foundation for the Blind 2015 Leadership Conference, Renaissance Phoenix Downtown Hotel, Phoenix, AZ — For more information, visit the chapter website at [http://azaer.aerbvi.org/meetings\\_events.htm](http://azaer.aerbvi.org/meetings_events.htm).

Apr. 22-24: Penn-Del AER Annual Conference, Best Western Premier Central Hotel, Harrisburg, PA — For more information, visit the chapter website at [http://www.penn-delaer.org/PennDelAER/Professional\\_Conference.html](http://www.penn-delaer.org/PennDelAER/Professional_Conference.html). For hotel information, go to <http://www.thecentralhotelharrisburg.com/index.cfm>.

Apr. 23–24: AER Michigan Annual Conference — Details forthcoming. Check the chapter website at <http://www.maerbvi.org/> for more information.

Apr. 24–25: AER Board meeting, New York Institute for Special Education, New York, NY

### May

May 13-15: AER Dakotas 2015 Conference, Grand Forks, ND — Details forthcoming.

### September

Sept. 25-26: AER Board meeting, online

### October

Oct. 24-26: AER New York State Chapter Annual Conference, Albany Marriott, Albany, NY — Details forthcoming. Check the chapter website <http://nysaer.aerbvi.org/index.htm> for updates.

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/>.

### 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

### 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

### 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!

# Welcome New Members! Sept. 30, 2014-Jan. 29, 2015

## CANADA

**British Columbia**  
Louise Gaborieau

## Ontario

Melinda Szilva

## NETHERLANDS

Eline Heppe

## UNITED STATES

### Alabama

Monica Cates  
Ashleigh Hatcher

### Alaska

Rob Buck

### Arizona

Laura Allocco  
Cyndi Davis  
Mark DeAngelis  
Christopher Muell  
Dena Vettor

### Arkansas

Debera Coleman  
Deanna Collie  
Henry Washington

### California

Kerstin Avila  
Stacey Colley  
Renee Cusano  
Rachel Hill  
Eric Hogle  
Miranda Shermann

### Colorado

Bryant Jackson

### Connecticut

Kathryn Curzi

### Florida

Diana Deacon  
Erik Kowalski

### Georgia

Deborah Lovell

### Idaho

Matthew Queen  
Linda Upton

### Illinois

Alexander Brown  
Megan Edgcomb  
Jennifer Hehner  
Megan Kessberger  
Kathryn King  
Lauralyn Randles  
Alison Schoenrock  
Kathy Spengler  
Tamera Tillman  
Shelby Yukich

### Kentucky

Patricia Cocklin

### Louisiana

Joanna Credeur  
David Eller

### Massachusetts

Melissa Mabee

### Minnesota

Timothy Greeley  
Wendy Harris

### Mississippi

Paula Jones  
Dorothy Young

### Missouri

Jessica Troester

### Montana

Michelle Cross  
Jane Garrison  
Elizabeth Heiser  
Amy Wicks

### Nebraska

Tanya Hilligoss  
Brandy King  
Wendy Mayhew  
Gayleen Moeller  
Michelle Schneider  
Rachel Zahn

### New Hampshire

Regina Mattrella

### New Jersey

Elyse Giordano

### New Mexico

Kelly Burma  
Jenilee Charley

### New York

Sylvia Balogh  
Ellen Bilofsky  
Rasheta Bunting  
Dana Chester  
Jeannette Chrisite  
Erin Codd  
Mario Fidanza  
Caitlin Graham  
Kathryn McCormick  
Valeria Paradiso  
Jennifer Ripp  
Jennelle Serwacki  
Arthur Vinnitsky

### North Carolina

Rafaella Di Giorgio  
Sarah McAuliffe  
Jermaine Milledge  
Katherine Olsen

### Ohio

Katie Frederick  
Steve Grim  
Nicole Izzo

### Oregon

Diane Paulson

### Pennsylvania

Jenessa Daum  
Nanette Korn  
Cynthia Lashinsky  
Susan Neff  
Karen Rodgers  
Miriam Warren

### Tennessee

Donald Hooks  
Nicholas Trotter  
Michael Tuttle

### Texas

Regina Carson  
Ryan Conlin  
Elizabeth Couvillon  
Barbara Crew  
Kimberly Harden  
Shannon Smith  
Machaela Zellmer

### Utah

Mary Taylor

### Virginia

Gregg Baldwin  
Denise Bremer  
Audrey Goldberg  
Jessica Shields

### Washington

Kimberly Lukehart

### West Virginia

Amy Clendenen  
Amie Cook-Smith  
Danielle Emerick-Engle  
Wendy Garrison  
Barbara Ludlow

### Wyoming

Charlene Blackburn  
Jerri Nelson



## Thank You to Our Winter 2015 Advertisers

**American Foundation for the Blind**

212-502-7600

[afbinfo@afb.net](mailto:afbinfo@afb.net)

[www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

**American Printing House for the Blind**

502-895-2405

[info@aph.org](mailto:info@aph.org)

[www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

**Forrest T. Jones & Co.**

800-821-7303

[mrwilliams@ftj.com](mailto:mrwilliams@ftj.com)

[www.ftj.com](http://www.ftj.com)

**Vanda Pharmaceuticals, Inc.**

855-856-2424

[www.non-24.com/](http://www.non-24.com/)

# Names In The News

AER Board Member **Jill Brown** was named 2015 Spungin Fellow for the American Foundation of the Blind's (AFB) 2015 Leadership Conference. The Spungin Fellow program honors **Dr. Susan J. Spungin**, retired vice president of international programs and special projects for AFB and former AER Board secretary. The AFB Leadership Conference is being held March 9 in conjunction with the AER Arizona Chapter conference.



**Sherry Cataldo**, a TVI and avid martial artist, hosted a Brazilian JiuJitsu seminar in January in Cary, N.C., in support of the Blind Judo Foundation and their efforts to empower the visually impaired through the sport of Judo.



**Rebecca Coakley** was invited to contribute a chapter to "Raising a Child with Albinism: A Guide to the School Years," published by the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation. Her chapter focuses on School Choices and Classroom Preparedness (pre-K to high school).

**Kevin Hollinger** achieved national board teacher certification and was chosen as a consultant for the Braille Institute's Cane Quest.

Several AER members are part of the new **Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals** (ACVREP) board of directors. **Mickey Damelio** was elected as chair, **Elly du Pre** as treasurer, and **Usha Kumar** as executive committee member at large. **Kevin Hollinger** was elected as a board member.

**Envision**, a not-for-profit organization that promotes advocacy and independence for those who are blind or visually impaired, completed the purchase of KFTI-FM radio station in Wichita, Kan., in December 2014. Heather Hogan, Envision's vice president of foundation and mission services, said the station will have a local format with community-based content and will help Envision fulfill its mission to provide employment opportunities and services for those who are vision impaired.

**Leader Dogs for the Blind** has been accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services (NAC) for applying best practices and delivering services that focus on positive outcomes for its clients. Leader Dog is the first guide dog organization to achieve accreditation

by NAC, which is the only international accrediting body devoted to serving organizations that provide programs for people who are blind and those with low vision.

**Mississippi State University's National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision** (NRTC) recently received a U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration Long Term Training grant for their Vision Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation graduate certificate program. Over the years, the program has served active rehabilitation personnel and graduate students from around the United States. As a result of the \$750,000 grant, the NRTC will award federal stipends to rehabilitation counselors and graduate students who want to work more efficiently with consumers with visual disabilities. For more information about the program, please visit the NRTC's website at: <http://blind.msstate.edu/training/training/vision-specialist>.

**Stacy Kelly and Sean Tikkun** at **Northern Illinois University** were awarded a Braille Training Grant from the U.S.

Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. It is a five-year project with the major objective of developing and implementing massive open online courses (MOOCs) to support the transition to Unified English Braille. For more information, please visit <http://www.facebook.com/UEBOT1>.



The Vision Studies program in the **School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at UMass Boston** received a low incidence personnel preparation grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Projects (OSEP) to prepare highly qualified orientation and mobility specialists. The five-year grant provides student support in New England's six states and assists partnership development with the vision consortium based at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., and with the University of Puerto Rico. The school received another five-year training grant from the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Agency for the preparation of O&M specialists and vision rehabilitation therapists, which also serves students in New England states and promotes partnership between the three universities. For more information about the program, please visit the UMass Boston website at: [http://www.umb.edu/academics/sgisd/grad/vision\\_studies\\_med](http://www.umb.edu/academics/sgisd/grad/vision_studies_med).





# 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](http://www.facebook.com/groups/aerbvi).**

Humans taught to use “bat-like” echolocation in recent research experiment

<http://www.betawired.com/humans-taught-to-use-bat-like-echolocation-in-recent-research-experiment/1414998/>

3D printing allows Japan's blind football team to “visualize” the championship venue for next week's games

<http://3dprint.com/24895/3d-print-blind-football/>

Argentine student invents “smart shoe” to replace cane for the blind

<http://rt.com/news/206027-shoes-blind-ultrasound-cane/>

“Seeing-eye vest” could help the blind navigate via vibration

<http://mashable.com/2014/11/17/eyeronman-vest/>

Microsoft's bone-conducting headset uses audio to help guide the blind around town

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/2843827/microsofts-bone-conducting-headset-uses-audio-to-help-guide-the-blind-around-town.html>

Wearable tech for people with disabilities

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/2014/11/20/wearable-tech-for-people-with-disabilities>

A buzzing sonar watch that helps blind people navigate

<http://www.wired.com/2014/11/buzzing-sonar-watch-helps-blind-people-navigate/>

FDA approves VisionCare telescope implant for AMD

<http://optometrytimes.modernmedicine.com/optometrytimes/news/fda-approves-visioncare-telescope-implant-amd>

A simple accessibility app can make the visual world audible

<http://www.engadget.com/2014/12/02/simple-accessibility-app-makes-the-visual-world-audible/>

Artificial retina could someday help restore vision

<http://phys.org/news/2014-11-artificial-retina-vision.html>

A 3D, talking map for the blind—and everyone else

[http://www.buffalo.edu/ubreporter/research/news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/ub-reporter-articles/stories/2014/December/idea\\_wayfinder.detail.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubreporter/research/news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/ub-reporter-articles/stories/2014/December/idea_wayfinder.detail.html)

Liquid metals help the blind see tech

<http://www.newsweek.com/liquid-metals-help-blind-see-tech-289644>

Blind students get incredible 3D-printed “yearbook”

<http://www.cnet.com/news/blind-students-get-incredible-3d-printed-yearbook>

Technology helps blind kids “see” stars

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/technology/digital-living/64498949/Technology-helps-blind-kids-see-stars>

3D-printed music scores help the blind feel every note

<http://www.engadget.com/2015/01/12/3d-printed-music-scores/>

Maps that you can hear and touch

<http://www.citylab.com/design/2015/01/making-better-maps-for-the-blind/384495>

“Braigo”: 13-year-old builds Lego braille printer, starts company

[http://www.newsadvance.com/work\\_it\\_lynchburg/news/braigo-year-old-builds-lego-braille-printer-starts-company/article\\_b406ef2e-a091-11e4-b91b-571cc3dd3303.html](http://www.newsadvance.com/work_it_lynchburg/news/braigo-year-old-builds-lego-braille-printer-starts-company/article_b406ef2e-a091-11e4-b91b-571cc3dd3303.html)

Be My Eyes pairs volunteers with blind people who need a helping hand

<http://lifehacker.com/be-my-eyes-pairs-volunteers-with-blind-people-who-need-1680750310>

App improves the safety of blind pedestrians in cities

<http://phys.org/news/2015-01-app-safety-pedestrians-cities.html>

iPad app brings braille keyboard to blind users' fingertips

<http://www.wired.com/2015/01/ibrailler-ipad-app>

Scientists map brains of the blind to solve mysteries of human brain specialization

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/01/150123081713.htm>

Sound experiments to improve films for blind people

<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-31039043>





# 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](http://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](http://www.alumnibenefits.org/aer) for details.

# 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 [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org).**

## HELP WANTED

### ARIZONA

#### **Teacher Vision Impaired Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Tucson**

##### **Qualifications:**

The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) are seeking education professionals to provide services to students with hearing and/or vision impairments from birth to age 22. Join our dynamic and enthusiastic team and help prepare our students for the future.

Career opportunities are available at our Tucson site-based school and our five regional cooperatives serving public schools in the greater areas of Yuma, Tucson, Phoenix, Flagstaff and Holbrook.

We offer a competitive salary and state benefits package.

##### **Benefits:**

Benefit eligible employees have a variety of choices for medical, dental, vision, short-term disability, supplemental and dependent life insurance. Offered plans provide exceptional value to our employees and their eligible dependents. Employees have a 31-day period from effective date of hire to elected coverage. Elected benefits could start as early as 2 weeks after hire. Benefit-eligible employees are automatically covered for basic life, non-smokers, accidental death and dismemberment and seat belt insurance. Benefit-eligible employees are automatically enrolled in the state's retirement plan and long-term disability (LTD) program. Enrollment is mandatory and is subject to a 26-week waiting period before initial enrollment. Employees may also choose to participate in a deferred compensation program to take advantage of tax-deferred retirement investments.

Benefit options also offer employee self-service, wellness, tuition discount, travel reduction, auto & home insurance, and purchase discount programs.

Visit [www.azstatejobs.gov](http://www.azstatejobs.gov) and select "School for the Deaf and the Blind" under the agency search function. You can also contact us at (520) 770-3245 or (520) 770-3269 or email [humanresources.recritment@asdb.az.gov](mailto:humanresources.recritment@asdb.az.gov). You can also visit

## HELP WANTED

our homepage at [www.asdb.az.gov](http://www.asdb.az.gov) to learn more about our programs and services.

**Salary:** \$31,250.08 - \$47,188.22

**Contact:** Phone: 520-770-3269; email: [hmr@asdb.az.gov](mailto:hmr@asdb.az.gov)

### FLORIDA

#### **Director of Program Services Lighthouse Central Florida, Inc. Orlando**

##### **Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree required; master's or doctorate preferred, in vision rehabilitation, occupational therapy, health care administration, social work administration, public administration or other related fields. Minimum of 10 years of management and supervisory experience preferred.

##### **Duties:**

Program Services Director – Growing nonprofit providing educational, rehabilitation and employment services for people of all ages who are blind and visually impaired is seeking a dynamic and charismatic leader with the following:

- Passion for our mission
- Familiarity with the kinds of services we offer
- Demonstrated experience with program design and development
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills
- Proven track record of successful nonprofit management
- Multi-million dollar program budget and grants management skills
- Arsenal of team building tactics
- Ability to affect organizational change
- Understanding of health care administration and billing
- Personnel management experience
- Donor and volunteer relationship management skills
- Affinity for collaboration with community and professional

## HELP WANTED

**Salary:** Based upon qualifications

**Contact:** Lighthouse Central Florida, Inc.

Dee Amundson

215 E. New Hampshire St.

Orlando, FL 32804

Phone: 407-898-2483 x211; email: [damundson@lcf-fl.org](mailto:damundson@lcf-fl.org)

### Teacher Visually Impaired Lighthouse Central Florida, Inc. Orlando

#### Qualifications:

Hold or be eligible for:

- TVI (teacher of visually impaired) certification
- Prefer ACVREP COMS (certified orientation & mobility specialist) as well
- Bilingual – English/Spanish preferred
- Experience working with infants and toddlers (early childhood) with visual impairment and/or multiple disabilities preferred.
- Have own transportation; local mileage reimbursement is provided
- Pass Level II background screening

#### Duties:

Provide comprehensive assessment and developmental interventions to children, birth to age five, who are visually impaired or blind, and may have additional disabilities. Activities include: assessment, establishment of individualized intervention plans and adherence to all professional and best practice standards. Provide mentoring to families and significant caregivers, for the purpose of integrating best practices leading to the optimal growth and development of each child. Services will be provided in the children's homes and/or community settings in Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties in Florida.

**Salary:** Negotiable

**Benefits:** Full-time, competitive salary based on credentials and experience. Full benefits package including medical, dental and life insurance; and eligibility for 401(k) retirement plan after one year of employment with employer match of up to 6%. Paid vacation, sick, holidays and a paid winter break (which includes New Year's & Christmas holidays)

**Contact:** Lighthouse Central Florida, Inc.

Dee Amundson, director, Human Resources Department

Lighthouse Central Florida, Inc.

215 E. New Hampshire St.

Orlando, FL 32804

Phone: 407.898.2483 ext. 211; fax: 407-843-9140; email: [jobs@lcf-fl.org](mailto:jobs@lcf-fl.org)

## HELP WANTED

IOWA

### Teacher of the Visually Impaired Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired TBD

#### Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree in education plus experience using a computer and other office equipment required. Candidates must meet State of Iowa teacher licensure requirements with an endorsement in visual impairment by the time of appointment. The ability to travel throughout a designated region within Iowa on a daily basis also required. Master's degree in education and experience working with students who are blind and visually impaired preferred.

#### Duties:

- In collaboration with area education agencies (AEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs), and using an itinerant model, the teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) provides appropriate support and/or instruction to students with visual impairments, in their local schools and home settings.
- Formulates appropriate educational objectives, activities, evaluation, goals and instruction.
- Reports student growth and programs to parents periodically.
- Participates as a member of multidisciplinary teams; involved with evaluations; educational planning; development of individualized educational plans (IEP); program implementation. Provides written reports and documentation. May lead IEP meetings.

#### Salary and Benefits:

Salary will be determined by the successful applicant's educational and teaching experience. (BA degree: \$43,000-\$67,000; MA degree: \$50,000-\$78,00). Comprehensive benefits package available, including relocation assistance.

**Position Details:** Full-time, school-year appointment. Position starts August 2015. Service region covers multiple Iowa school districts. Specific service region and office location to be determined. Criminal and other relevant background checks required.

#### Application Deadline:

Applications will be accepted beginning immediately. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

**Contact:** Send resume, credentials, copies of transcripts and cover letter to:

Human Resources

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
1002 G Avenue

Vinton, IA 52349

*Continued on p. 42*

## HELP WANTED

Additional information and job posting available at <http://www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us/>

or contact Human Resources at 319-472-5221, ext. 1226 or email: [jruegg@iowa-braille.k12.ia.us](mailto:jruegg@iowa-braille.k12.ia.us)

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired / Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. A Board of Regents, State of Iowa Program.

### NEBRASKA

#### Orientation and Mobility Specialist Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired Nebraska City

##### Qualifications:

- ACVREP certification in orientation/mobility
- Prefer possession of or ability to obtain Nebraska Teaching Certificate but consideration will be given to those with no teaching certificate.

##### Duties:

- Provide direct orientation and mobility instruction for students enrolled in the center-based program (day and residential students).
- Coordinate with other teachers, related service providers, residential staff and parents/families to ensure comprehensive and consistent instructional programing.

##### Salary:

Negotiable (based on education and experience); 185-day school contract. Benefits include full family health insurance coverage at no premium cost to employee, single dental insurance, life insurance, long term disability benefits, and Nebraska Retirement System participation.

**Contact:** Submit a cover letter and resume to:

Sally Giittinger, Campus Administrator

Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

824 10th Avenue

P.O. Box 68410

Nebraska City, NE 68410

Phone: 402-873-5513; toll free: 800-826-4355; fax: 402-873-3463; email: [sgiittinger@esu4.net](mailto:sgiittinger@esu4.net)

Be sure to visit our website at: [www.ncecbvi.org](http://www.ncecbvi.org)

## HELP WANTED

#### Outreach Consultant (2 Positions) Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired Nebraska City

##### Qualifications:

- Possession of or ability to obtain Nebraska Teaching Certificate
- Visually impaired endorsement/degree
- Teaching experience in area of blind/visually impaired

##### Duties:

- Provide statewide outreach consultation, professional development, and assessment services for students, families and educators.
- Statewide travel required.
- One position may include direct service to students in the region.

**Salary:** Negotiable (based on education and experience); 185-day school contract. Benefits include full family health insurance coverage at no premium cost to employee, single dental insurance, life insurance, long term disability benefits, and Nebraska Retirement System participation.

**Contact:** Submit a cover letter and resume to:

Sally Giittinger, Campus Administrator

Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

824 10th Avenue

P.O. Box 68410

Nebraska City, NE 68410

Phone: 402-873-5513; toll free: 800-826-4355; fax: 402-873-3463; email: [sgiittinger@esu4.net](mailto:sgiittinger@esu4.net)

Be sure to visit our website at: [www.ncecbvi.org](http://www.ncecbvi.org)

### WASHINGTON

#### TVI Music Teacher Washington State School for the Blind Vancouver

For detailed list of qualifications and job duties please go to: <http://www.wssb.wa.gov/Content/community/employment.asp>.

**Salary:** \$34,048 - \$64,174

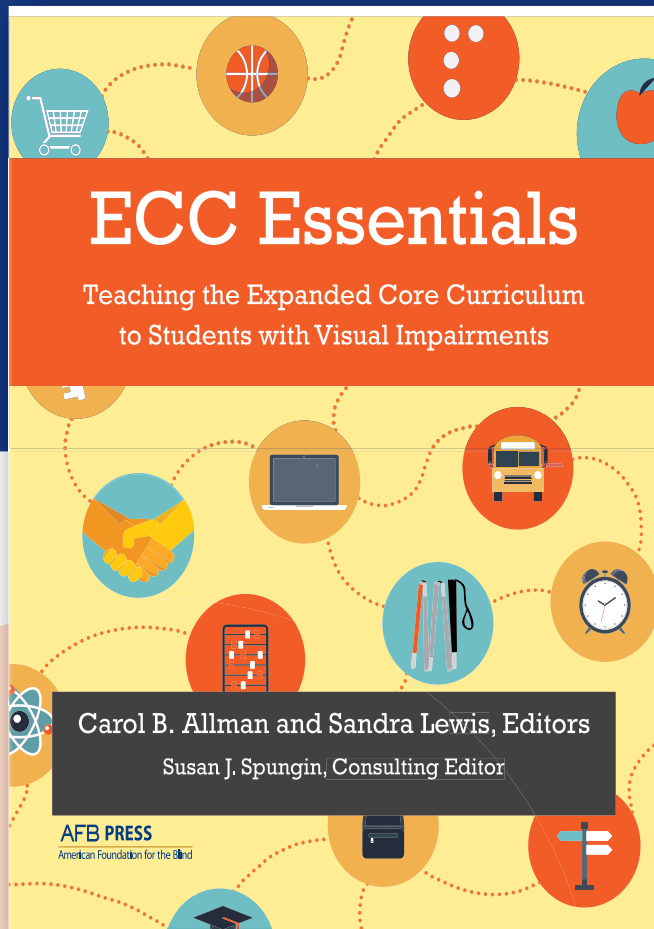
**Contact:** Washington State School for the Blind

Anne Baker

2214 E 13th Street

Vancouver WA 98661

[anne.baker@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:anne.baker@wssb.wa.gov)



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# In Memoriam

## Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga



**Dr. Natalie Carter Barraga**, professor emerita of special education at The University of Texas at Austin, died on December 29, 2014. She was 99 years old.

Born in Troy, Texas, in 1915, she earned a bachelor's degree in home economics and child development from the University of North Texas (North Texas State Teacher's College) in 1938; a master's degree in educational psychology-special education from The University of Texas at Austin in 1957, and a doctor of education from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1963, where she was honored as a distinguished alumna in 1988. She joined the faculty at The University of Texas in 1963, becoming a professor of special education in 1971 and retiring as professor emerita in 1984. In 1986, she received a Fulbright Scholarship to spend a semester doing research and lecturing at The University of Zagreb in Croatia.

During her teaching career, she conducted pioneering research in visual impairment and developed low vision assessment instruments and instructional materials for students with low vision. A respected leader in low vision and visual efficiency, Barraga taught courses, seminars and workshops for vision professionals around the world. She was active in many professional organizations that advocate for people who are blind and visually impaired, and her writings and materials are used all over the world. Her publications include books, monographs, book chapters and numerous articles in professional journals. Her autobiography, *If Anyone Can, You Can*, was published by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in 2007.

In addition to numerous mentions in *Who's Who in America and the World*, Barraga received national and international awards from the vision field's leading organizations: Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Shotwell Award in 1984); International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment; American

Foundation for the Blind; American Printing House for the Blind; National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments; Council for Exceptional Children; Delta Kappa Gamma Society International; American Academy of Optometry; and the American Optometric Association. Barraga was a member of the honor societies of Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, and Pi Lambda Theta.

Memorials may be made to the Scholarship Fund at University Christian Church in Austin, Texas; to Learning Ally; or to The College of Education-Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin.

Upon learning of her death, AER member Bill Penrod commented, "I teach about her and her accomplishments each year. She certainly left her mark!" Another member, Sharon Sacks, commented, "Natalie provided our field with insightful and grounding information used by practitioners throughout the world. She will be missed."

## Susan A. (Brinkman) Drewette

**Susan A. (Brinkman) Drewette**, 55, passed away October 7, 2014, surrounded by family and friends, at the Cleveland Clinic. A longtime, active AER member, Drewette served as an officer of the AER Ohio Chapter and on the AER Awards Committee.



Drewette was a certified O&M specialist and teacher of the visually impaired in Ohio, working in Warren City Schools for 31 years and later for the Mahoning County Educational Service Center and United Disability Services. She was also a member of the Boardman United Methodist Church, where she sang with the praise team.

Memorial contributions may be made to Angels for Animals, 4750 W. South Range Road, Canfield, OH 44406.

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