



Welcome to the August 2019 Issue of The Voice

A Word from AER's Executive Director

Dear AER Members,

To quote my dear friend and former AER President Billy Brookshire, I “staggered home refreshed” this week from an inspiring, exciting, enthusiastic and exhausting AER Board meeting at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Several Board members were in attendance in Austin and others joined us via Zoom. In addition to the regular meeting held to address the business of AER, we took some time on Saturday to brainstorm, dream and envision the future of AER.

I was inspired by the vision and passion of your Board of Directors. They were engaged, full of good ideas, and excited about AER's role as our professional organization. They offered not only their ideas, but their talents, their time and their expertise. We left with a long list of action items that we believe will create an organization that is member-centric, active, creative, responsive, listening and forward thinking. One thing is certain – your elected leadership is committed to making AER the kind of organization our profession wants and needs.

Even though we'd like to have all of our great ideas completed and in place tomorrow (okay, TODAY) we do recognize that great things take time and that change must be thoughtful and strategic. Good things are coming, and I invite you to be both patient and excited about AER's new focus and direction. Our members are our most valued and valuable asset. We need you to help us make AER the most valued and valuable asset for our members.

Want to know more about how you can be involved in shaping the future of AER and the field? Let's talk!

Janie Blome, Executive Director

President's Corner

Assuming Best Intentions

Early in my teaching career, I found myself frustrated with administrators that seemed to ignore my requests for students to receive the services and materials they needed. I felt that these individuals were intentionally dismissing me. In my new-teacher mind, I was angry at them for not providing immediate validation. How could they possibly ignore ME?!?

When voicing my angst to my boss at the time, he stated something I have always remembered. It was like, "Emily, everybody wants to do what's best for kids. Nobody gets into education because they want to see kids fail." After hearing that spoken out-loud, I instantly agreed.

I read various leadership books on occasion and recently finished Dare to Lead by Brené Brown. Her Netflix special caught my attention, and I wanted to see more of her work. She wrote, "Daring leaders work from the assumption that people are doing the best they can; leaders struggling with ego, armor, and/ or lack of skills do not make that assumption." Does it take courage to assume someone is doing their best? I think yes.

For me, it was an easy out to suspect a character flaw or negligence. That meant I was being disregarded because of them, not because of me. By recognizing all of us have the best intentions for kids meant I needed to work harder. I needed to better explain our unique population and to advocate on their behalf; hoping others may come to realize that doing what's best for our kids may take more time and resources.

So, the next time we jump to conclusions about the perspective of others, let's try to remember that we all want what's best for the students and clients we serve. We all come to the table because we are engaged, and we care about making a positive impact. Regardless of our role in the process, we should dare to support and educate each other.

Emily Coleman, President

Keeping You First: Keeping You Ahead

Save the Date: July 22-26, 2020 St. Louis, MO Union Station Hotel

Themed "*Gateway to Community*," the AER International Conference 2020 is sure to be AER's best conference ever! We want a conference that reflects your needs and your interests. Are there topics that you want to have covered during the AER International Conference 2020? Is there something that you would like to learn more about during the conference? Click "[Topics &](#)

Interests” and tell us your needs and every effort will be made to have it covered! [Topics & Interests](#)

To learn more, send an email to conference@aerbvi.org



What's New AER

New York State AER Conference

Conference Theme: *Never Fear, Technology's Here: Empowering Professionals with Current Best Practices from Low-Tech to High-Tech*

Date: October 27-29, 2019

Location: Doubletree by Hilton, Syracuse, NY

Link to NYSAER website: <https://www.nysaer.org/2019-conference>

If you need any other information or need to get in touch with the chapter president, Christopher Russell or myself, Jeannine Hobbes, Conference Chair, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact us if you need more details about the conference.

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To learn more, about this and other chapter events, please visit www.aerbvi.org.

Division Updates

Orientation and Mobility Division

The Environmental Access Committee has been busy at work. Our involvement impacts the local, state, and national levels. So, what has the Environmental Access Committee been doing? We support each other by answering questions posted on a Yahoo Group for members of the EAC, we attend meetings with traffic engineers and call into meetings if they are held in faraway states; and we organize activities that have yielded success or noted challenges. [Click here](#) to read an update from the Environmental Access Committee: *Moving Toward Greater Accessibility*, submitted by JoAnn Chalom, COMS, Ed.S.

NVI Division

As Teachers of the Visually Impaired working in a school district setting, we share a unique and specific skill set that helps us empower our students with ocular visual impairment as they learn alongside their typical peers in the general education classroom. Our wide scope of practice also includes students with brain based visual impairments. The learned characteristics and environmental supports specific to students with complex needs and Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) are as unique as our students. [Click here](#) to read the full Neurological Visual Impairment Division update, submitted by Susan Sullivan.

Because You're Worth It

Health & Wellness AER: Summer Hydration

Summer is prime time for outdoor sports, family vacations, BBQs, festivals and long days in the sun. While you are enjoying those activities and the hot weather, it's easy to be hit by dehydration—and most people don't see it coming. Staying hydrated is key to performing at your best. Just like a car, your body must dissipate the excess heat generated from burning fuel. Unlike a car, your body's coolant isn't in a sealed internal system. You use it once and then it's gone and needs to be replaced. Unfortunately, we don't come with built-in gauges or indicators that tell us just how much coolant we have left in our system. We can't run a dipstick down our gullet and get a reading that says, "add a quart." But, what we do have are some simple tips for staying hydrated. So this summer, keep you and your family hydrated with these six clever hydration-boosting tips:

Buy a new water bottle. In the same way that a new workout outfit can help motivate you to go to the gym more often, refillable water bottles are gorgeous these days, with

all the bells and whistles you could ask for in terms of color, design, and features. Get one, and then bring it everywhere.

Include water-rich foods in your diet. Fruits, vegetables, broth-based soups, beans and oatmeal have high water content to help hydrate your body and give you a feeling of fullness.

Start and end your day with water. Keep a glass of water at your nightstand and bathroom vanity. Before grabbing your morning coffee, drink a glass of water first. Sip on water as you watch television or read a book before bed.

Eat and drink water. In the busyness of the day, it's easy to forget to drink water, so making sure to drink water whenever you eat is a great way to ensure you stay hydrated throughout the day.

Choose your carbs. When it comes to meal planning, ditch dry, carb heavy staples like pasta, choose zucchini noodles, or zoodles for short, which can contain about 95 percent water. When paired with a tomato sauce, which usually has about 90 percent water, this meal can pack a hydrating and healthy punch.

Freeze fruit. Feeling nostalgic about the popsicles you used to enjoy as a child? Bring back this classic treat as a delicious way to rehydrate. Blend a hydrating ingredient like watermelon and fill popsicle molds and freeze for about 1 hour. Yum and hydrating!

AER History Reflection: Building on a Solid Foundation
2014 International AER Conference, San Antonio, TX – July 2014
Authored by Richard L. Welsh, Presented by Gala Saber Brooks

Submitted by the 2018-2020 History and Memorial Committee

Today we focus on the 30th anniversary of the formation of AER. (The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.) Those of us who consider ourselves “old-timers” in this field sometimes worry that our newer members may not understand how we got to 1984. The formation of AER was not a modern version of the Big Bang Theory. AER did not happen all at once: Click [here](#) to read the AER History Reflection.

Member Spotlight

Olaya Landa-Vialard



Olaya Landa-Vialard is a Bilingual Family Engagement Coordinator for Project Reach Illinois Deafblind Services and has been in education for over 20 years with 10 of those years in visual impairment. As a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Olaya served as the Bilingual Educational Diagnostician for Students with Visual Impairments, Summer itinerant teacher birth to 22, Assistant Professor of Low Vision and Blindness at Illinois State University, assessment consultant and trainer, and adjunct professor at multiple universities across the United States. When she is not working with families and teaching, she is active in advocating for the blindness field at the local, state and federal levels, but especially enjoys her time with her daughter and all that being a mom to a tween entails. Olaya is a former President of the IL Chapter of AER, Past-Chair of Division 3: Multiple Disabilities/Deafblindness and holds a seat on AER's Board of Directors as Chairperson of the Council of Chapter Chairs.

What's Happening AER?

AER Chapter Summit

The AER Chapter Summit will be held August 21 and August 22 at 6pm Eastern. The AER Chapter Summit 2019 is a virtual summit designed to provide AER information and resources. We are striving to be the best AER; and we know that working together, we can be the best professional membership association for our members. These are new times at AER and now is our time to build upon our successes and achieve even greater outcomes. We are AER-- rejuvenated for new times.

All chapter leaders all invited and encouraged to attend one of the sessions. To learn more, send an email to aer@aerbvi.org.

To learn more about these and other events, please visit: <https://aerbvi.org/event/>

Info You Can Use

AER Listservs

The AER Listserv community is a members-only benefit that allows information sharing in 13 specialized categories. It provides the opportunity for our members to come together to communicate and share helpful information within the field. Although AER does not require an individual to submit an item for review before posting, nor do we undertake editorial control of postings, we do monitor the Listservs. Professional language is always expected. In the event that any inappropriate posting is brought to our attention, AER will take appropriate action. We encourage you to view the [AER Listserv Guidelines](#) for more details on Listserv Etiquette. It is our goal to maintain a respectful and courteous platform for all participants. Thanks for all you do to keep the Listserv community a valuable member communications portal!

If you would like more information on how to join an AER Listserv, please visit us at: <https://aerbvi.org/resources/aer-listservs/>

Welcome AER New Members!

Join us in welcoming the following members to AER who joined in the month of July: [New AER Members](#)

What's Cookin' AER

Sweet Potato Cranberry Bake

Prep time 50 minutes, Cook time 40 minutes

Ingredients

4 large sweet potatoes
2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1/2 cup orange juice

Topping

1/2 cup Quaker Oats
1/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
3 tablespoons cold butter

Directions

1. Place sweet potatoes in a Dutch oven or large pot, cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 40-50 minutes or until tender. Drain. When cool enough to handle, peel potatoes and cut 1/4-inch slices. Put half in greased, 2 1/2 quart baking dish. Top with 1/2 of the cranberries, brown sugar and butter. Repeat layers. Pour orange juice overall.
2. Cover and bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. In a bowl, combine oats, brown sugar and cinnamon and cut in butter. Sprinkle over sweet potato mixture. Bake uncovered 10 minutes or until topping is golden brown.

**Submitted by AER Member
Laura Bozeman, member since 1983**

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are available for you! Here are some of the exciting jobs that are available:

Teacher – High School Program

07/26/2019 | Philadelphia, PA
Overbrook School for the Blind

Developmental Vision Specialist – NMSBVI Infant Toddler Program

07/26/2019 | Albuquerque, New Mexico
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Infant Toddler Program

Expanded Core Curriculum Educator

07/25/2019 | Ogden, UT
Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

Teacher of the Visually Impaired

07/01/2019 | Vancouver, WA
Washington State School for the Blind

For more jobs that are available, please visit: [Job Exchange](#)

Way To Go!

On July 16th, the Kentucky chapter of AERBVI held a reception for members and potential new members at the American Printing House for the Blind. Along with KAER board members, twenty-five people were in attendance. Executive Director, Janie Blome spoke with the group about membership benefits that will be coming soon, along with the AERBVI International Conference 2020 in St. Louis.

Michael Hudson, Director of the Museum of APH, shared information on Helen Keller's desk, on exhibit now at APH. The desk was re-built, following the original plans designed by Cameron Clark, after a fire destroyed all of Helen's belongings in 1946. Interesting facts about the desk design included the bumpers that went around the desk so that Helen's belongings wouldn't fall off, and Helen typed all of her own notes on a manual typewriter. To us the desk may look like a plain desk, but to Helen, it was her place to reflect and rejuvenate.

Did you know that the APH library is the new home for the AERBVI archives? As an AERBVI member and history buff it is exciting to know that the history of our organization will be at my fingertips soon!

Not only was the reception interesting, but it was enjoyable socializing with other members. A big thank you goes out to board member Jane Thompson for organizing!

Janell Turner, KAER President

The AER Voice is a monthly newsletter that serves as an information hub for members; and offers an easy and dependable way of keeping current. This electronic newsletter includes AER updates, events, special announcements, useful tidbits and so much more. If you have news, resources, information or any updates that you would like to share with the membership, please send it to AER at news@aerbvi.org. Deadline for the September issue is 8/26/2019.



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