

The AER Voice



Welcome to the November 2021 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 3, Issue 11

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

November, really? It's impossible that 2021 is drawing to a close. The turkeys are getting nervous, and kids of all ages are getting ready for the Holidays. If Thanksgiving is just around the corner, how far can Hanukkah, Christmas, and the New Year be?

I want to give a huge SHOUT OUT to Mark Richert, our Interim Executive Director, and the entire AER staff, Michele, Megan & Elly, without whom AER could not have accomplished all we have thus far in 2021. From accreditation to continuing education to supporting chapters and members with creative new activities and ongoing support, we are all so lucky to have dedicated professionals keeping our association strong and vital.

On the other hand, without all the volunteer AER members, Mark, Michele, Megan, and Elly could not do what they do. We are a championship team! When you realize all that goes into a webinar, a committee meeting, a chapter conference, or even a board meeting, you begin to understand the complexities in a new way. The Board of Directors has a unique perspective on what it takes to make AER what we all need it to be. If you've wondered what you can do, step up and ask. Join a committee at the chapter or international level. Get active in a division. Make your talents known to leaders at the division, chapter, or international level. Don't hold back – step up, tell someone, volunteer to help with a project. You will benefit as much or more than AER will.

Thanks to all who are already uber-involved, and I don't mean offering shared rides. So many of you do everything! Thank you, thank you, thank you! We would be lost without you. Can I hear a big round of applause for all? Now, extend your dominant hand straight out in front of you with your palm up. Now, bend your elbow and reach behind you. Pat yourself on the back, you are the strength of AER!

Gobble, gobble, and enjoy Thanksgiving!

Neva Fairchild, President, AERBVI
nfairchild@afb.org



Happy November from the APH ConnectCenter

Supporting Families Through APH FamilyConnect!

As we move into the holiday season, make sure to share FamilyConnect's wealth of resources for families navigating the holidays with a child with a visual impairment. In addition to the APH ConnectCenter's webinar ***Holiday Gifts for Children and Adults Who are Blind and Visually Impaired*** at **5:00 pm – 6:30 pm Eastern on Wednesday, November 19th, 2021;**

FamilyConnect has lots of curated articles on holiday topics for children of all ages. Families can search the website by keyword (Holiday) or age to find resources on [Babies and Toddlers](#), [Grade Schoolers](#), and [Teenagers](#). Speaking of families. Please let families know about the:

APH ParentConnect: A Parent Support Meeting – November 3rd at 7:30 PM (ET)

FamilyConnect hosts a parent meeting on the first Wednesday of each month from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm (Eastern). Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm (Eastern), APH FamilyConnect and the Chicago Lighthouse are pleased to offer this virtual support group for parents and families of children who are blind or visually impaired. These monthly sessions are for families to connect with and learn from each other about the joys, challenges, and adventures of raising children with visual impairments and blindness. These sessions are open to families and will meet on the first Wednesday of each month. **Please share with families** and have them visit the Webinars section on www.APHConnectCenter.org for details.

APH CareerConnect Invites You to Connect and Engage with Us.

APH CareerConnect is thrilled to announce we've hired a new Digital Content Manager, Richard Rueda. Richard has volunteered and consulted with CareerConnect for many years, and he will now be bringing his extensive experience in transition and rehabilitation services to the APH ConnectCenter full time! If you have a student or client starting their employment journey, make sure to check out CareerConnect's resources: blogs, Jobseekers Toolkit, CareerConnect's Transition Activity Guide, Succeed at Work Video Success Stories, and webinars for consumers, teachers and rehabilitation professionals. As career exploration and active job searching can be timely and at times challenging, APH CareerConnect addresses employment possibilities for both career-curious blind consumers and employers eager to find ways to best engage and recruit blind employees. To that end, APH CareerConnect staff, our recently created Advisory Committee, countless professionals, and job seekers themselves are contributing both at the forefront and behind the scenes to make your APH CareerConnect meaningful and empowering.

Hot off the heels of October's National Transition Conversation on Mentoring, APH CareerConnect has planned a busy November. On **Wednesday, November 10th, 2021** you can join both the ***Inclusive Mentoring and***

Employment Policy Summit 2021 (10:00 am – 1:30 pm Eastern) and **The Benefits of Working: Navigating SSI/SSDI While Seeking Employment** (at 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm Eastern). **Please share these opportunities with clients, students, and families** and have them visit the Webinars section on www.APHConnectCenter.org for details.

VisionAware Welcomes a New Website Manager and Continues to Dive into Diabetes Education for Consumers with Vision Loss

VisionAware is also thrilled to welcome Katie Frederik onboard. Katie is now the Digital Content Manager for the VisionAware website. Welcome, Katie!

In addition to the Holiday Gift Giving panel mentioned above under FamilyConnect, This month APH VisionAware is excited that Kim Ladd, RN, who has been working with APH VisionAware to ensure consumers with visual impairments, their families, and service providers learn more about managing diabetes with vision loss. *Understanding Diabetes Medications: A Three-Part Series* is available through the APH ConnectCenter offers two pre-recorded presentations on diabetes medications along with a virtual webinar Q&A “chat” with presenter and Diabetes Educator, Kim Ladd about the information she shares in Parts 1 and 2 of this series. Please register for the whole webinar series to access the pre-recorded sessions. Please view the videos before joining us for our live Q&A session on **November 17, 2021, from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm Eastern. Please share with clients and families** and have them visit the Webinars section on www.APHConnectCenter.org for details.

CONFERENCE CORNER

This is really happening: AER is excited about the upcoming 2022 Biennial International Conference, and we can barely contain ourselves. So many of us have not had the opportunity to see each other, network, and learn in person since the 2018 conference. SO IT IS ABOUT TIME!

On behalf of the AER Conference Committee, the Board of Directors, and the staff, I am happy to report to you that we will be holding our 2022 conference in downtown St. Louis, Missouri at the unique and beautiful Union Station Hotel.

AER takes pride in the quality of our conference educational sessions and our presenters. We want to offer you topics and issues that are timely for our profession, yet still provide the relevant content that provides you the maximum number of continuing education hours possible. Our field is a dynamic one with ongoing research and practice methods. We know you are doing great work and want to encourage you to share. Your efforts do matter. We invite you to submit your presentation proposals. This is where your knowledge and expertise come into play – share it with our community! We are accepting proposals until December 1, 2021, so, act quickly – and visit the Call for Speakers page here:

https://s5.goeshow.com/aerbvi/bic/2022/abstract_submission.cfm

Earlier I mentioned the Union Station Hotel – if you have not visited this historic hotel, you are in for a treat. Once a busy train station servicing the ‘gateway to the west’, today it is a stylish and modern hotel, with so much more to offer than just a room to sleep! It is the home to the St. Louis Aquarium, St. Louis Wheel, Mini Golf, Mirror Maze, Carousel, and Rope Course – all located on the property. Also, you will not go hungry – there are six restaurants to choose from. The Union Station has offered our conference attendees an affordable group rate.

You’ll be hearing more from us in January 2022 with details on conference registration, exhibitor/vendor opportunities, and sponsorship options. So, stay tuned!!

Looking forward to passing more info onto you as we get it.

Jill Brown
Chair, AER Conference Committee

NEWS YOU CAN USE

2022 AER Biennial International Conference Update: Session Proposals Deadline Extended!

The 2022 AER Biennial International Conference session proposal site deadline has been extended to **December 1, 2021!** Put in a proposal to present something you’ve been working on or sign up a presenting team to share together!

The following items are required to complete your submission:

- Presenter Biography and Headshot
- Session Title, Description, and Knowledge Level
- Topic and Type
- Presentation Summary
- Three Learning Objectives

The conference will be held in person from July 20-24, 2022, in St. Louis, Missouri.

[Submit Session Proposal](#)

[\(https://s5.goeshow.com/aerbvi/bic/2022/abstract_submission.cfm\)](https://s5.goeshow.com/aerbvi/bic/2022/abstract_submission.cfm)

AER Accreditation Program to Pursue CHEA Recognition

AER Accreditation Council is pleased to report that we have made significant progress toward the goal of being recognized by CHEA. As important as accreditation is for university personnel preparation programs as well as organizations and schools that provide direct service to people with vision impairments, it is equally important that AER’s accreditation program meets rigorous standards. CHEA is the body that offers this opportunity for self-study, continuous improvement, and independent review. Whereas AER Accreditation

Program confers accreditation of personnel programs, CHEA confers recognition of accrediting bodies.

The AER Accreditation Page on www.aerbvi.org is being updated to meet CHEA standards. It already has gotten some fresh new features:

- A page explaining how to become a Reviewer.
- An interactive map showing all the personnel preparation programs in the US and Canada.
- A listing of all AER Accredited Higher Education Programs by discipline: O&M, VRT, TVI, LVT. And when the Assistive Technology programs have been functioning for a year with at least one student, they will be eligible for the AT accreditation.
- Updated AER Policies and Procedures Manual with clearer definitions and new policies required by CHEA.
- Updated HEAC Handbook and OSAC Handbook (Organizations and Schools), synchronized with the Policies Manual.
- Easily downloadable forms and standards/self-study materials.
- Updated self-study forms with clearer instructions.
- AERAC Annual Impact Statement for 2020.

Coming Soon:

- AERAC Annual Impact Statement for 2021.
- Per CHEA Standards, Decision Reports on each program review, that show the recommendations by HEAC and the subsequent approval of those recommendations by AERAC, will be in a folder on the website open to consumers and the public.
- Per CHEA Standards, the website will post Expiration Dates for personnel preparation programs and announcements of programs who have submitted their Letter of Intent and are pursuing accreditation/re-accreditation.
- Per CHEA Standards, AER will post aggregate information on student performance for each HEAC program. Each university program that is accredited will have to meet a new standard that requires at least making a link to the AER posting from the university program's own web page, but preferably posting the results directly on its own webpage.

The Value of Accreditation to Higher Education Personnel Preparation Programs Higher Education Programs providing personnel preparation programs in Orientation & Mobility, Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments, Low Vision Therapy, and Assistive Technology Instruction benefit from AER Accreditation in multiple ways. However, universities who are accredited may wonder what value is derived in a special program at that university receiving its own accreditation.

Accreditation provides assurance of the high quality of specialized curricula.

- The primary determining factor indicating a program within an accredited university must also be accredited is the degree of specialization of the curriculum.

- A specialized curriculum requires specialized expertise in the accreditor.
- Preparation programs for individuals seeking to work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired are, by definition, using specialized curricula. The experience and knowledge of faculty and the challenges of research all are unique and specific.
- Standards used by the AER Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) are developed and reviewed by highly regarded university professionals with backgrounds in the fields of study that produce the highly skilled instructors that serve people living with vision loss.

Accreditation is a form of Consumer Protection that often is followed by government regulation.

- Students looking for a program, check to make sure the one that interests them is accredited.
- Government regulation is tied to federal funding.
- Federal and private scholarships are granted according to the accreditation of programs attended by recipients.
- A call for consumer protection invariably is followed by government regulation, which often is tied to federal funding.
- Federal and private scholarships are granted according to the accreditation of programs attended by recipients.
- States require graduation from accredited programs for individuals to sit for licensure examinations.
- VA leadership has advised AERAC that they are considering requiring that all interns must come from accredited higher education programs and the accreditation must be conferred by organizations who are themselves accredited/“recognized” by either CHEA or the US Dept of Education.

AER Accreditation Council (AERAC) operates independently of the AERBVI Board. AERAC has two Commissions: OSAC (Organizations and Schools Accreditation Commission) and HEAC (Higher Education Accreditation Commission).

Support AER!

AER welcomes support from members during the renewal process and from everyone throughout the year. You may select the [“Make a Donation”](#) option when you are in your account. Or, if not a member, [create an account](#) to make an online donation. Or, mail your donation to AER, 5680 King Centre Drive, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22315.

Choose to support AER when you shop online at Amazon through the AmazonSmile Program. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Just use the portal <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1255600> when you place your Amazon order.

The AER eLearning Center

In Case You Missed Them – Webinar Recordings Now Available to Earn CE Credit

Our AER eLearning Center has been very busy this fall with new offerings for CE credits. Check out some of the latest new recordings available at the links below:

[Reflections on Providing Low Vision Services to Persons with Albinism in Tanzania](#)

[The Impact of the Need for Closure for Students and Youth who are DeafBlind](#)
[Digital Accessibility Basics: Using Microsoft PowerPoint](#)

[Outdoor Sensory Efficiency Development with a Sprinkling of Technology](#)

[Why, When and How to Disclose A Visual Disability](#)

Looking for more? [Browse our growing library](#) of content to find just what you need.

AER 2022 Biennial International Conference: SAVE THE DATE!

AER is excited to announce that we will be holding our 2022 conference in St. Louis, MO, July 20-24 at the beautiful Union Station Hotel. The Call for Presentation is now open, and registrations will open in January!

Updates from OIB-TAC!

OIB-TAC November Webinar

Join us for our November webinar, [Computers for the Blind: A Resource for Opening the World of Information Technology](#), on Friday, November 19 at 2:00 p.m. CST. In this session, Christy Householter will discuss using Computers for the Blind as a resource to help close the technology gap for people who are blind or visually impaired. For more information and to register, visit our [website](#).

Lessons for Living Available in Print and Audio Formats

The OIB-TAC's Lessons for Living series offers adaptive strategies and techniques to accomplish everyday tasks with low vision and blindness. The series is now available in both print and audio formats. To read or listen, visit [Lessons for Living](#).

Vision Serve Alliance Update

Now Open: 2022 VSA ELC Meeting & Exposition Call for Proposals

VisionServe Alliance is looking for leaders like you to help us shape next year's critical VSA ELC as our community gathers to share solutions for powerful leadership. VSA seeks educational proposals that reflect sound adult learning principles and reflect the best thinking in the field, informed by theory, research, and practice. Read the details on how to submit your proposal below by Nov. 19, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

VisionServe Alliance - Call for Presentation Proposals

Spring 2022 Executive Leadership Conference

Venue: Westin Tampa Waterside, Tampa, FL

Theme: The Power of Leading Together

April 3 – 6, 2022

VisionServe Alliance (www.visionservealliance.org) is currently accepting presentation proposals for its spring 2022 conference until Nov. 19, 2021. Attendance at the VisionServe Alliance Executive Leadership Conference is open to any and all leaders in the field of blindness, low vision, and visual impairments. The Conference Committee is especially but not exclusively interested in proposals on the following subjects:

1. New treatments and trends in vision loss, especially those that focus on constituents' mental health and best practices to improve client and staff safety and ameliorate social isolation
2. Techniques for confronting ableism - how to have difficult conversations about ableism/racism/implicit bias
3. Implementing diversity, equity and inclusion policies and plans to advance throughout your organization
4. Creating and sustaining a healthy and engaged organizational culture
5. Strengthening and engaging your board in a virtual world
6. Fundraising strategies/successes in the new reality
7. Integrating assistive technology throughout program services and how to get access to the latest technology available
8. National advocacy/policy and legislative priorities affecting the blindness community
9. Discussing accessibility requirements with members of your community
10. Models for dramatically increasing employment opportunities for people who are BVI
11. Innovative strategies for recruiting and retaining staff
12. Reimagining the workplace in 2022
13. Best practice models for vision rehabilitation services in 2022
14. Addressing Leadership Burnout

Guidelines: This conference is planned to be in-person with the option for presentations to be recorded and also shared with a virtual audience. Please include in your proposal a plan to share your presentation virtually as well as in-person. Please include the following:

- Name(s) of presenter(s) (Panel discussions will be considered) along with title and email
- Title of proposed presentation (100 characters or less)
- Description of presentation (500 characters or less)
- Attach headshot and bio **for all presenters**
- Include online links to relevant media

How to submit your proposal: Email to info@visionservealliance.org with the subject line: ELC 2022 PRESENTATION PROPOSAL. Note: incomplete proposals will not be considered!

Deadline to submit proposals: Friday, Nov. 19, 2021 by 5pm CST

If your proposal is not selected for this event, it may also be considered for an additional VSA virtual or regional event.

Perkins E-Learning

AER members receive a 20% discount on the total cost of Perkins self-paced tutorials. Each provides an opportunity to enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities, and job performance! AER members only may use the voucher code 20aer20 to take advantage of this member benefit and earn CE hours. Click here to get started: [Perkins Discounts](#)

Instructions: Select the tutorial. Add to your cart and when checking out enter code 20AER20 in the Voucher Box. Enter re-calculate and the discount will appear.

On the next screen, sign in (if you already have an account with Perkins Learning Center or Register if you do not yet have a Perkins Learning Center account.

On the final page, enter your AER member number in the Phone Number field. Your AER member number will be verified. If you encounter any problems or have any questions, please email perkins.elearning@perkins.org.

CHAPTER UPDATES

Mississippi AER: Reconnecting for All!

Call for Presentations

The Michigan Chapter AER Board invites you to submit a proposal to present at the virtual 2022 Annual Conference -- MAER: Reconnecting for All!

This virtual conference will be taking place April 21-22, 2022.

Consider sharing your expertise, effective practices, innovative programs, employment strategies, and research results with your colleagues. Please click on the link to access the Call for Presentations application.

[Application](#)

This application must be fully completed for presentation consideration. The deadline for submission is Thursday, November 18, 2021.

If you have trouble accessing the submission form, please contact us via email at michiganaer@gmail.com.

South Carolina AER Chapter

The SC AER Board is very excited to offer another virtual conference this year on November 4th (afternoon) and 5th (all day).

It will be filled with information for working with complex learners with visual impairments both in-person and remotely. There will also be an O&M session on Friday for supporting students with visual and multiple impairments.

Finally, we are thrilled to offer online payment options this year! Use the link below to sign up and see the attached registration packet for additional details, agenda, and nomination form for SC AER Professional of the Year.

https://universityofsouthcarolina-yrckc.formstack.com/forms/scaer_2021_registration

Georgia AER Chapter

Georgia AER has scheduled our 2021-2022 Conference! This year we are joining forces with the Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training (GVEST) to host a virtual two-day conference. The next session day will be on **Friday, March 11, 2022**.

We will offer concurrent sessions that will be recorded so attendees will have the ability to earn up to 21 CEU credits (ACVREP and CRC). The two-day conference is \$75 with a discount to all AER members at the rate of \$50.

Learn more by visiting gaaer.org or gvest.org website.

Northeast AER Annual Conference: Navigating Our Way Together

November 4, 2021- November 5, 2021 Virtual Online Conference

<https://www.nercve.org/ne/aer-2021-conference>

Florida AER: 2021 FAER Future in Focus Conference

November 30, 2021 – December 1, 2021, St. Pete Beach, FL

Sharpen your image of the future at the 2021 FAER Conference!

This conference will focus on rehabilitation topics that include: employment, mental health, transition, DeafBlindness, orientation and mobility, and assistive technology.

Earn ACVREP/CRC credits, dip your toes in the Gulf, and network with other like-minded professionals while walking along the beach!

Register here:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ehlzge1p57922702&oseq=&c=&ch=>

Kentucky AER 2022 Annual Conference

Back to Berea

We invite you to share your knowledge, skills, and creativity at the 2022 KAER Conference! We are looking for presenters with various backgrounds that will give insight into technology, K-12 education, vocational rehabilitation, early

childhood, orientation and mobility, serving individuals with multiple or severe disabilities, DeafBlindness, or other topics related to working with those who are blind or visually impaired.

Due to Covid continuing to be a concern for our state, this conference may be held virtually instead of in person.

Selection:

Conference session proposals will be chosen based on the following criteria:

- Does the topic present a practical application and demonstrate effectiveness for the education or rehabilitation of visually impaired individuals?
- Is the topic important and relevant to the needs of blind or visually impaired individuals or the professionals who serve blind and visually impaired?
- Does the topic provide significant or innovative ideas or research findings that bring fresh insight or approaches?
- Does the topic present a new or expanded perspective, practice, program, or innovation?
- Has the topic been presented at a recent KAER conference?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the submission process, please feel free to contact Janell Turner, KAER Past President, JanellK.Turner@ky.gov (Members)

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who joined AER in October 2021. We are glad to have you! [Newest AER Members!](#)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the new positions that are available in the field. There are many exciting jobs that are posted via the AER Job Exchange:

[Certified Vision Rehabilitation Specialist \(CVRT\)](#)

Palm Springs, Palm Beach County, Florida
Florida Outreach Center for the Blind

[Rehabilitation Engineer/Assistive Technology Specialist](#)

Tampa, Florida
Lighthouse for the Blind and Low Vision

[Rehabilitation Engineer/Assistive Technology Specialist II](#)

Tampa, Florida
Lighthouse for the Blind and Low Vision

[International Program Coordinator](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Overbrook School for the Blind

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

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, recipes, or any updates that you would like to share with the membership, please send them to AER at

news@aerbvi.org.

The deadline for the November issue is 10/26/2021.



[Visit our website](#)