

The AER Voice



Welcome to the April 2022 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 4, Issue 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring has sprung! Welcome to allergy season. I don't mind suffering some to get out and smell the roses and touch the blooms. I hope you take advantage of your time outdoors to soak up some Vitamin D and refresh your spirit with the glories of nature this Spring!

We have now launched registration for the 2022 AER International Conference in St. Louis. Perhaps you have already seen the announcement? If not, check the website and your inbox frequently so you can see the amazing array of sessions being offered from July 20 through 24. A huge thank you goes to Jill Brown and her conference Committee for countless hours of work on pulling together what promises to be a world-class training conference, and my hat is off to the Division representatives who reviewed almost 200 presentation proposals. Kudos to Michele and Megan, AER Staff, who have learned to use a new conference platform, pulling in the Accessibility Committee who has gone above and beyond to make double sure that it is fully accessible to those of us who use screen enlarging or reading software. They are all Super Stars in my book. All of you have my undying gratitude for the dedication you have shown to AER through your efforts to make #AERI2022 amazing.

Our first day in St. Louis is Symposium Day (July 20, 2022), with six options to choose from! These symposiums will be full-day courses, providing you with up to 6.5 CEs. On Thursday through Sunday, we begin with Division Cluster hosted breakfasts for all attendees. You can stick around to hear about what any Division is doing or wander down to exhibits or find a colleague and catch up on what's new. The rest of each day is jam-packed with breakout sessions, awards, posters, exhibits, and all the networking you can possibly squeeze in. Our Business Meeting on Sunday morning will give you a glimpse at the new Board, help you understand the workings of AER, a chance to vote on any resolutions, as well as to express your vote on any changes to our bylaws. You just can't miss these five days of fantastic opportunities to grow in and support your profession. See you in St. Louis, Louis!

The Executive Director Search Committee is making progress toward presenting the top-ranked candidates to the Board. Applications are now closed and interviews will begin this month. It is our fervent hope to have the next Executive Director of AER chosen and in place before the conference in July. Many thanks to those AER members who are serving on the Search

Committee for their hard work and dedication. They truly have your best interest at heart.

I'm so excited to go to my first in-person events since late 2019. The Texas AER Conference and the Vision Serve Alliance Executive Leadership conference are being held the last few days of March and the first few days of April. My hope is that you will also be able to get back in person very soon. I've missed seeing my friends and colleagues for the past two years. I recharge my batteries whenever I'm around others who care about providing top-of-class services to people who are blind or have low vision. That's you! I hope to see you soon.

Neva Fairchild, President, AERBVI
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CONFERENCE CORNER!



Conference Attendee Registration is now open!

We are excited to announce to you that the registration for the 2022 AER International Conference is open. The full conference schedule is posted online, so check out the site, register, and book your hotel room early before the hotel sells out!



Exhibitor, advertising, and sponsorship opportunities can also be found on the conference website. Be sure to check it out, but if you have any questions, feel free to contact us at conference@aerbvi.org.

See you in St. Louis!

[2022 AER International Conference Website](#)

NEWS YOU CAN USE

The AER eLearning Center

Tips and Tricks from Around the Field

New webinars added this month in the AER eLearning Center share tools you can use in your current practice. Check out the titles below:

- [Voice Over 101 for Sighted iPhone Users](#) presented by Neva Fairchild, AER President
- [Using Embossers to Make STEM Content](#) presented in partnership with the Kentucky AER Chapter by William Freeman
- [Orientation Aids and Tactile Maps](#) presented in partnership with the Kentucky AER Chapter by Brian Goemmer

Learn more about [orientation and mobility](#) or other [new technology tools](#) in the AER eLearning Center!

Want to find something specific? [Email Megan Doty](#) for tailored assistance.

AER Book Store

AER publishes and distributes several books that help practitioners work more effectively and contribute to the understanding of the field of blindness and visual impairment. Please visit the [AER Store](#) to purchase these books. AER members receive substantial discounts.

[Orientation & Mobility: Techniques for Independence 2nd Edition](#) (Cat. No. A005.1)

By Steven J. La Grow and Richard G. Long

The skills, techniques, and sequence of instruction presented in this book may be required by individuals who have experienced a loss in independence following significant vision impairment and wish to regain the ability to travel independently in many environments. Human guide, self-protective, directional, familiarization, and cane techniques are described, as are strategies for indoor and outdoor travel, including those required for crossing streets, planning routes, and using public transport. (c) 2011

[Study Guide for the Low Vision Therapist Examination](#) (Cat. No, A006)

Prepares test takers of the ACVREP Low Vision Therapist Examination with the material found in the Body of Knowledge developed by the Low Vision Division of AER. (c) 2008

[Preschool Orientation and Mobility Screening 2nd Edition](#) (Cat. No. A008)

By Bonnie Dodson-Burk and Christine Roman-Lantzy

This resource is designed to catalog a child's current level of function in a basic O&M task, identify areas in need of further assessment, recognize basic programming needs, and serve as a source in providing information to identify the need for services. (c) 2012

Preparing for the Baby Boomers with Vision Loss: An Overview of Low Vision Rehabilitation: The Role of the Occupational Therapist

Many older adults are experiencing eye problems that make simple daily activities difficult and, in some cases, impossible. In those over age 65, the risk of severe eye problems has been shown to increase significantly. As we age, our vision can get worse, but vision loss is not a normal part of getting older. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 12 million people 40 years or older in the United States have vision impairment, including 1 million who are blind and 3 million who continue to have vision impairment even after correction.

The National Eye Institute estimates that over the next 30 years, the number of Americans who will experience eye health issues will double because of

aging Baby Boomers. By the year 2030, Health Services Research notes that the Baby Boomers will be aged 66-84 and will number around 61 million. Unfortunately, about 85% of those Boomers will have at least one chronic health condition, such as diabetes or arthritis. At least 62% could have multiple combinations of chronic health issues such as hearing loss and low vision. It is predicted that health care costs could rise by 25%. A 65-year-old can expect to live on average another 19 years. This is 19 more years filled with the desire to live life to the fullest and engage in daily meaningful activities. Today's health care professionals need to be prepared to meet the needs of our aging population. The occupational therapist is trained to do just that!

Occupational therapists (OTs) are uniquely trained to provide strategies and adaptations to help people "age in place". Their training is focused on the ability to study an environment or an activity and find ways to help that person achieve their daily tasks. The OT is able to evaluate the impact of various health conditions and then establish a way to minimize the impact and look for specifically tailored interventions to help that client to achieve their desired goals.

Older adults with age-related vision loss represent a specialized group of clients who receive occupational therapy services. The older adult with vision limitations often has significant limitations in their daily living that are a direct result of vision impairment. Vision loss creates limitations in the ability to read and write. Challenges with meal preparation can impact adequate nutrition. The person may have difficulty shopping or navigating through the community. Many may experience at least one accident related to vision impairment. OTs take a holistic approach by looking at the whole person in order to address not just the vision loss but the needs of aging.

OT began to provide low vision services in the early 1990s. In 2006, the American Occupational Therapy Association established a specialty certification in low vision rehabilitation. An OT must meet specific competencies to acquire the specialty designation. Specific evidence related to training and education must be provided in order to qualify. Occupational therapy is provided under the health care system, which helps create a reimbursement for services when provided by a licensed therapist. Medicare began to reimburse for low vision services provided by OT in 2002.

Low vision is defined as visual impairment that is not correctable through surgery, medication, glasses, or contact lenses. As mentioned earlier, low vision significantly impacts a person's daily living activities and is linked closely to a high risk of depression. Losing one's independence is closely connected to a decline in quality of life. The No. 1 risk for developing low vision diseases is aging. Race, gender, family history, smoking, exposure to UVA/UVB rays, and poor diets can also increase that risk.

The most common conditions causing low vision include age-related macular degeneration (AMD), glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss responsible for nearly half of all cases of low vision. The result is a loss of central vision. There are two types of AMD. Wet AMD can cause a rapid vision loss, while dry AMD causes a gradual loss. Diabetic retinopathy caused by damage to blood vessels related to high blood sugars is a major cause of blindness. The National Eye Institute reports more than 30% of individuals with diabetes have some form of diabetic retinopathy. Cataracts are caused by a clouding of the part of the eye called the lens. Vision becomes blurry and cloudy, making it difficult to drive or see well at night. More than 20 million Americans have cataracts. Glaucoma causes a decrease in the side or peripheral vision and can result in complete blindness if left untreated. With glaucoma, vision is typically lost over time and can occur without symptoms.

Often an eye care professional can identify early signs of these diseases. Early care for these eye conditions can decrease the severity of impact and vision

loss. After a diagnosis of low vision, a referral may be generated to the OT by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist. At times, the primary care provider may refer if vision loss is an established condition. The specialized OT has extensive training in available devices and strategies which can help a person regain lost independence. The client may benefit from special training by a certified orientation and mobility specialist, a certified driving rehabilitation specialist, or other professionals. The OT may also refer to services through the state's vocational rehabilitation programs for older blind and visually impaired.

Low vision can deeply affect a person's quality of life. Baby Boomers will likely represent a large portion of the population who will need low vision rehabilitation. The specialized occupational therapist is a wonderful resource for those facing vision loss. To learn more about the OT's role in health care and low vision services please visit <https://www.aota.org/About-Occupational-Therapy/Patients-Clients.aspx>.

AER Member Benefit Spotlight!

AER Listservs

As an AER member, you have access to join and participate in the AER listservs! Share your information, answer questions, and learn from each other. Access to the AER listserv is free with your AER membership. Learn more here: <https://aerbvi.org/resources/aer-listservs/>

Check out the AER listservs to choose from:

General Listservs

- AERNet General Discussion Listserv
- AER Student Listserv
- AER Canada Listserv

Special Interest Group Listservs

- Administration & Leadership Division Listserv (division members only)
- Division on Aging Listserv
- Education Curriculum Division Listserv
- Information & Technology Division Listserv
- International Services & Global Issues Division Listserv
- Low Vision Division Listserv
- Orientation & Mobility Division Listserv
- Neurological Visual Impairment Listserv
- Personnel Preparation Division Listserv
- Psychosocial Division Listserv
- Rehabilitation Counseling and Employment Division

Be sure to view the [AER Listserv Guidelines](#) concerning guidelines and to learn what is appropriate to post so that you will be respectful of others and AER resources.

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.

OIB-TAC April Webinar "Who is a Qualified Professional?"

In celebration of VRT week, the OIB-TAC is highlighting the field of vision rehabilitation therapy. What is the difference between a vision rehabilitation therapist, a living skills instructor, a rehabilitation teacher, and an independent living specialist? During this webinar, you will meet several Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRTs) and one Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind (NCRTB). Join us to learn about the field of vision rehabilitation therapy and the education and training required for qualified professionals. The webinar will be on April 13 at 2:00 p.m. CST. [Click here to register](#) or visit us at www.oib-tac.org.

2022 AER IMPORTANT UPDATES! Time Sensitive

2022 AER Awards: Nominations are now Open!

AER recognizes the outstanding achievements of individuals working in our field through our biennial Awards program. We are pleased to announce the 2022 AER Awards nomination process is now open!

The deadline to submit your nomination is April 15, 2022. Any additional documentation must be emailed to aer@aerbvi.org, with the name of the award and the nominee in the subject line.

Please use the links below to complete the nomination form and return to AER.

- [**Alfred Allen Award**](#)

Honors professionals who have spent their careers in direct service to people with visual impairments. Through the extent and quality of the services that they have provided, these professionals exemplify the character, dedication, insight, and sharing that epitomize the spirit of and commitment to direct service.

- [**Mary K. Bauman Award**](#)

Honors an individual who has made significant and outstanding contributions to the education of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired.

- [**C. Warren Bledsoe Award**](#)

Is given in recognition of a particularly noteworthy piece of literature in the field of blindness.

- [**Douglas C. MacFarland Award**](#)

Honors an individual who has provided leadership in the field of blindness and visual impairment and who made innovative, significant, or outstanding contributions to the education or rehabilitation of people who are visually impaired through either direct service, professional organizations, research, literature and/or preparation of professionals and is retired from the field. These contributions should have had an impact on a national or international level.

- **[John H. McAulay Award](#)**

Honor professionals who have contributed outstanding efforts and achievements leading to the placement of people with visual impairments in productive employment.

- **[Outstanding Chapter Award](#)**

Recognizes a chapter whose membership efforts have been outstanding. Criteria includes: an increase in the number of members; the number and quality of services and/or programs offered by the chapter; and legislative activity significantly affecting the lives of blind people.

- **[Ambrose M. Shotwell Award](#)**

Was established to honor an individual who has made significant outstanding contributions to the personal adjustment or rehabilitation of adults who are blind or visually impaired.

- **[Richard L. Welsh Chapter Leadership Award](#)**

Was established to recognize professionals who have contributed outstanding efforts in AER chapter leadership. Nominees will demonstrate activity and achievement, either past or current, in the role of AER President-Elect, President, Past-President, Secretary, or Treasurer at the chapter level.

2022 AER William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship!

AER proudly offers educational scholarships for individuals continuing their education in the field of providing services to the blind and visually impaired. The William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship is awarded every other year in even years to two selected applicants who are legally blind and are studying for a career in the field of services to persons who are blind or visually impaired.

The letters of recommendation and signed Certification of Visual Status must be emailed to aer@aerbvi.org with the name of the applicant in the subject line.

[William and Dorothy Ferrell Scholarship Application](#)

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who joined AER in March 2022. 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:

[Regional Director – Region](#)

Tucson, Arizona

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind

[Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist](#)

Newton, Massachusetts

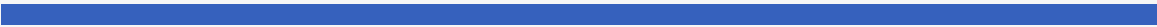
The Carroll Center for the Blind

Itinerant Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Bettendorf, Iowa

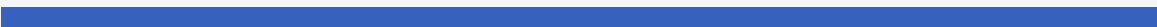
Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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 May issue is 5/25/2022.



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