

The AER Voice



Welcome to the December 2022 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 4, Issue 12

A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past week I was talking with a friend about my first six months as AER Executive Director, including a few operational changes that will be implemented in the upcoming year. She made a statement that resonated with me, "Change is a coming, but not everything is changing". She is correct. 2023 will bring change to AER, but some features and characteristics of AER will never change.

Let me share a few of the changes with you. This month, the Board of Directors will begin a new Strategic Planning process. I will keep you updated as the process continues. Our goal is to share the updated Strategic Plan by early summer. The AER Staff has been evaluating Association Management Software products to upgrade our current system. We will shortly begin accessibility testing of our two finalists, with the plan to begin implementation of our new system in the spring of 2023. Either program will allow for the integration of multiple software programs into one, saving money and improving operational efficiencies. The Membership Committee is continuing their work on evaluating the value of an AER membership and identifying ways to increase that value. Be on the lookout for announcements of Town Hall meetings and requests for assistance at the Chapter level as we roll out the new membership campaign.

There are features of AER that won't change, including member access to JVIB. With a cost savings of \$48,000 per year, I have changed how AER subscribes to JVIB. The details on how members will access JVIB are still being finalized with Sage Publishing. We will update the membership of any changes before the end of December 2022.

Finally, I want to wish all of you a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year!!!

Lee Sonnenberg, Executive Director, AER
lee@aerbvi.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

November was a busy month and December promises to be just as busy! We will

have our last Board meeting of the year and finalize the budget for the next two years. In addition, we will be notifying individuals of their committee assignments all while beginning to embark on a strategic plan. Whew! All of the Resolutions from the International Conference of 2022 are up on the website. You can find them here: <https://aerbvi.org/about/aer-resolutions/> Use these resolutions to help you advocate for yourself, your profession, and the field.

Sending best wishes to all who are celebrating a holiday or special day this month! Follow this link for U.S. holidays <https://www.calendarr.com/united-states/calendarnovember-2022/> and this link: <https://www.wincalendar.com/Calendar-Canada/November-2022> for Canadian holidays to see what is being recognized and celebrated this December.

I'm looking forward to staying busy this month for you, our members. As always, feel free to reach out to me at olandavi@gmail.com or olviard@aph.org with any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Happy December!

Olaya Landa-Vialard, President, AERBVI
olviard@aph.org

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Braille Institute of America Names James P. Kales as Chief Executive Officer

Please join the Braille Institute of America in welcoming James P. Kales, who has been appointed CEO of the Braille Institute, effective December 12:



Braille Institute announced today that the Organization's Board of Directors has named James P. Kales as Chief Executive Officer. He will assume day-to-day leadership of the organization as CEO on December 12, 2022. Kales, a leader in the non-profit sector, brings more than 25 years of experience working for organizations such as United Way and Big Brothers Big Sisters. For the past 15 years, he has served as Chief Executive Officer of [Aspire](#), one of the Midwest's leading non-profits serving people with intellectual disabilities. Kales will be the seventh person to lead the 103-year-old organization.

Peter A. Mindnich, who has served as Braille Institute's President for the past 8 years will be retiring at the end of the year. "It has been an honor to serve as president of Braille Institute and I am incredibly proud of everything our team has accomplished together," said Mindnich. "I continue to believe Braille Institute's future is incredibly bright and I am confident Jim is the right person to build on the momentum we have created these past several years. Jim possesses the passion, strategic vision, and thought leadership to take Braille Institute into our next century of service."

"I am honored and humbled to be joining an organization with the legacy and impact of Braille Institute," said Kales. "I am beyond excited to be stepping into this role and look forward to working with the extraordinary team and Board of Braille Institute to

expand our reach both in Southern California and the nation. The number of individuals who are blind or visually impaired will double in the U.S. to eight million by 2050, so the need to advance our mission has never been greater, and I'm confident we can rise to the challenge."

Kales graduated summa cum laude with honors from Bucknell University and received his Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School. He is fluent in four languages, including Spanish, French and Greek. He was born in Santa Monica and spent his early childhood in Los Angeles, while his parents worked as psychiatrists in the UCLA Health system.

**Contributed by AER member Sandy Shin,
Braille Institute of America**

The American Foundation for the Blind is excited to share that planning for the 2023 AFB Leadership Conference is well on the way. The conference dates are April 19 – 21, 2023 at the Crystal City Hyatt in Arlington Virginia. Here is the link to the save the date:

AFB Leadership Conference (AFBLC) Save the Date:

<https://www.afb.org/about-afb/events-and-awards/afblc-2023-save-date>

The theme of the 2023 AFBLC is "Empowering Digital Inclusion."

We plan to launch the registration on December 15, 2022 on the Cvent platform. The cost is \$399.00 before March 1, and then \$450 after that. We have sponsorship and exhibit opportunities. To discuss sponsorships please contact Amir Rahimi at arahimi@afb.org.

Our program will include general plenary sessions and breakout sessions focused on empowering digital inclusion through leadership, education and training, research, employment, and technology. The JPMorgan Chase Tech for Social Good Team has also committed to facilitating another "ideathon" with us at the conference. If you would like to refer presenters or panelists, please contact Sylvia Perez at sperez@afb.org and/or share the [Call for Conference Proposals form](#).

Celebrating Outstanding Individuals:

We will be honoring the AFB Helen Keller Achievement Award recipients, the Honorable Anthony 'Tony' Coelho and Charter Communications Inc. at the HCAA reception on April 19, 2023. To learn more about this event contact Jasmine Kim at ljkim@afb.org.

We will hold a special awards lunch on Friday, April 21 to wrap up the conference. The cost of this luncheon is \$40.00. We will be awarding the Migel Medal, the Kirchner Award, and the Lura Gund Award.

If you would like to nominate someone for the Migel Medal, please follow this link to submit a [Migel Medal Nomination form](#). If you have any questions please contact Sylvia Perez at sperez@afb.org.

Contributed by AER member Sylvia Stinson-Perez,

Hunter College, City of University of New York, has been awarded a four-year grant from **The Lavelle Fund for the Blind** to focus on sustaining, revising, growing and evaluating our graduate programs in vision rehabilitation therapy. With this funding, we are able to form a team that will focus on the pressing question of where the field of VRT is heading. There is a critical shortage of ACVREP-certified workers nationally and our students are often hired prior to graduation, or sponsored by agencies to come to Hunter and complete their degrees. As the only VRT program in New York, and one of only a handful of programs nationally, it is important that we take on this work to ensure the sustainability of our programs.

Hunter College's Vision Rehabilitation Teaching (VRT) program was one of the first distance learning education programs in the field, starting in 2001. Hunter College has one of the oldest preparation programs for teachers of students with visual impairments (TVI), which was begun in the 1930s.

Learn more about the Hunter College graduate programs in [VRT, TVI and O&M here](#).

Be on the lookout for updates as we begin this work, seek input from the field and plan a spring conference.

For more info, contact Dr. L. Beth Brady at LBrady@hunter.cuny.edu

**Contributed by AER member L. Beth Brady, PhD
Hunter College**

On December 3, 2022, Thriving Blind Academy is hosting the biggest Succeed Without Sight Summit to date!

Our 3rd annual virtual event will be 6 hours long, jam-packed with engaging speakers in the areas of parenting blind/VI children, getting back to work, assistive technology, sports, Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), and more!

The event is FREE (limited tickets available). Grab your seat and get a sneak peak at speakers and the tentative schedule at www.ThrivingBlindAcademy.org/summit

Contributed by AER member Cori Andrews

OIB-TAC November Update

Time To Be Bold

Our Time To Be Bold (TTBB) digital marketing campaign has officially kicked off! We invite you to visit the [Time To Be Bold website](#) to find updated resources about the services available to individuals with vision loss who are 55 and older. If you follow the NRTC on social media, please be sure to like, share, and comment on the TTBB posts so that we can ensure this resource connects with friends and families. Find us on social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/theNRTC
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/MSU_NRTC
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/nrtc-blindness-lowvision

Save the Date

Our next OIB-TAC webinar, Introducing Braille, will be on January 20 from 2:00-3:00 CDT. Plan to attend and be sure to check out our webinars at

<https://www.oib-tac.org/trainings/webinars/>

**Contributed by Jennifer Ottowitz,
AER member and OIB-TAC Older Blind Specialist**

Eric Levy at VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired has received the Veronica Gilligan/Anne Yeadon Meritorious Achievement award.

Eric was nominated for his strong work in O&M with VISIONS Service for the Blind and Visually Impaired participants. Eric is an outstanding Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist that frequently goes above and beyond in his work with assigned participants. Regardless of the hour of day Eric makes himself available to provide O&M training. He has traveled 2 hours at Midnight to ensure his participants are trained in a time that works for them at work.

Please join us in congratulating Eric!

Contributed by AER member Bill Hixson, OTR/L, CVRT, COMS

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.

MEMBER BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

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. **As an AER member, you qualify to receive substantial discounts.** (Be sure to log in to receive the member rate.)

[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

CHAPTER NEWS

Penn-Del AER

Save the Date! 2023 Penn-Del AER Chapter Conference

We are happy to announce that our annual conference will be an in-person event April 19 – 21, 2023. Our nationally respected conference offers a wide range of opportunities for professionals in the field of education and rehabilitation of individuals with visual impairments. It provides experiences to enhance one's skill set, time to share expertise and experiences, and opportunities to network with professionals in the field.

When: April 19 – 21, 2023

Where: Best Western Premier Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg, PA

Format: Full in-person event

Coming Soon: The Call for Presentations for sessions, posters and exhibitors will be distributed by the end of September

Join us! We invite you to submit a call for presentations, call for poster, and/or register to be an exhibitor. Accept this opportunity to share your knowledge and expertise of innovative programs, creative techniques, employment strategies, research results or design in any area of our field.

[Learn more about the Call for Concurrent Session and Poster Presenters here.](#)

Virginia AER

Summit 2023: Better Together

Who?: Professionals in the field of Education and Rehabilitation of people with Blindness and Visual Impairments

What?: A retreat style Summit for people in our field to discuss pressing issues, new training techniques, and collaborate with colleagues

When?: March 13-14, 2023 (*Mon & Tues*)

Where?: The Natural Bridge Historic Hotel in Natural Bridge, Virginia

Why?: After a few years apart, we know that as professionals we are BETTER TOGETHER! This will be a relaxed training retreat to discuss big ideas

More information to come. **Watch your email for registration and more details.**

We welcome your input! Please use the Google form below to volunteer for the planning committee and offer suggestions for making it a valuable and enjoyable experience. <https://forms.gle/QJwFXS4ETa14QFMd7>

You can also send an email to conference@aervirginia.org

Georgia AER

Georgia AER Conference 2023, Together at the Beach!

When: March 23-24, 2023

Where: Hotel Tybee, Tybee Island, GA

[Click here for more information and to register!](#)

Texas AER

Pathways and Perspectives, March 23-25, 2023

Don't miss TAER 2023, featuring renowned artist [John Bramblitt](#) as the keynote speaker!

Please stay current and watch for more conference details on the TAER website at <http://www.txaer.org/> and our TAER Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TxAER/>.

For questions related to the conference, email: webmaster@txaer.org

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who [joined AER in November 2022](#). We are glad to have you!

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:

[Orientation & Mobility Specialist](#)

Leader Dogs for the Blind, Rochester Hills, Michigan

[Assistive Technology Specialist 1](#)

Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision, Tampa, Florida

[Adaptive Physical Education Teacher \(APE\)](#)

The New York Institute for Special Education, Bronx, New York

[Regional Director – Western Iowa](#)

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Council Bluffs, Iowa

Check out these jobs and more by visiting the [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 article submissions is the 25th of each month.



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