

# The AER Voice



## Welcome to the February 2023 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 5, Issue 2

### A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello AER members! I hope your new year is off to a great start. AER has hit the ground running in 2023 and I invite you to lace up your shoes and join us!

In January, two programs from the early days of the Association returned to our portfolio of member benefits. *The New RE:view*, AER's practitioner-focused journal, launched on January 27<sup>th</sup> and is available online. TNR's purpose is to share practice-focused insights, personal teaching experiences, and research findings. AER LIFT, AER Leadership Initiatives Facilitate Teamwork, was relaunched in late January with our first webinar, "What you always wanted to know about AER, but didn't know who to ask." This webinar and future episodes are available on AER's eLearning platform. AER LIFT, a joint project with Division 1 Administration and Leadership, is a chapter and division leadership training program for current and future AER elected officers to strengthen the association.

Work continues on AER's Strategic Plan. In February, AER will be hosting a Town Hall meeting, multiple focus group listening sessions and surveys for specific membership categories. Feedback and insights gained from meetings and surveys will be utilized as the goals and priorities for the new Strategic Plan are established and developed. I will have more information to share in upcoming issues of *The Voice*.

The Spring Conference season is upon us. Chapters from across the country are hosting their respective annual conferences in the coming months. Check out the Events page (<https://aerbvi.org/event/>) for more information. I will be attending several conferences this Spring. I look forward to meeting with AER members and listening to their perspectives and thoughts on the Association and the professions.

If interested in becoming more involved in AER's work, at the chapter or the international level, please email me, and I'll get you connected.

**Lee Sonnenberg, Executive Director, AER**  
[lee@aerbvi.org](mailto:lee@aerbvi.org)

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello AER!! I send well 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/calendar-february-2023/> and/or this link: <https://www.wincalendar.com/Calendar-Canada/February-2022> for Canadian holidays to see what is being recognized and celebrated this February.

If you haven't done so, be sure to check out AER's e-learning offerings. There are great

topics and trainings there just waiting for you! I'm proud to announce the formation of the AER Diversity Committee. The Committee will be working on identifying people of color for whom to name an award. Lists of Committees and their members will be posted on the website soon.

Don't forget to attend the AER Town Hall coming up on Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 7-9 pm EST.

As always, feel free to reach out to me at [olandavi@gmail.com](mailto:olandavi@gmail.com) with any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

**Olaya Landa-Vialard, President, AERBVI**  
[olvialard@aph.org](mailto:olvialard@aph.org)

---

## CALL FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE AER BYLAWS

The AER Bylaws and Structure Committee announces a call for amendments to AER's 2020 Bylaws. [Access the Bylaws here.](#)

According to AER's current Bylaws, voting members have 60 days to submit suggestions to the Bylaws and Structure Committee.

Please submit your suggestions in writing (email is fine) by **March 9, 2023**, to Lee Sonnenberg at [Lee@aerbvi.org](mailto:Lee@aerbvi.org).

---

## AER LIFT Next session has been scheduled

**The February session (second session of the series) of the AER LIFT (AER Leadership Initiatives Facilitate Teamwork) will be held on February 27 at 7:00 pm (eastern).**

**Title: AER Accreditation Council – A Path for Organizations, Schools for the Blind and University Preparation Programs To Earn Trust and Build Leadership**

Learning Objectives -- Attendees will:

1. Understand how the accreditation process is managed by the AER Council through its Higher Education Accreditation Commission and its Organizations and Schools Accreditation Commission
2. Be able to communicate the benefits and importance of accreditation for their university, organization or school.
3. Know how to access the materials for preparing their university, organization or school for accreditation/re-accreditation.

**The registration information will be emailed to all AER members in mid-February. So save the date - February 27, 2023 at 7:00 pm (eastern)!**

---

## MEMBER BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT The AER eLearning Center

Have you visited our online educational platform, where members receive deep discounts on webinars? Earn those much-needed CEs in the comfort of your own home, or wherever and whenever it is convenient for you. Visit [www.aerelearning.org](http://www.aerelearning.org), log into your

AER profile, and get started!

New webinars are added regularly, and members receive a substantial discount on all sessions!

A few of the new courses added in the past two weeks include:

- The Science Behind Blind Toddlers Walking Well and Beyond Arm's Reach before the Age of Two
- AER LIFT: What You Always Wanted to Know About AER, But Didn't Know Who To Ask
- The Blind and the Community in Jordan Webinar

---

## AER Accreditation Program Needs Reviewers!

**The heart of the AER Accreditation Program is the reviewers who serve on accreditation panels.**

Over the next 12 – 18 months, thirteen organizations and seven university programs will be due for re-accreditation. Several other panels will be needed for first-time accreditation reviews. At a minimum, this means at least 40 review panel positions will need to be filled.

**Please join the 41 individuals who are qualified AER Accreditation reviewers** and worked on panels in 2021 and 2022. CLICK for the details: <https://aerbvi.org/the-national-accreditation-council/become-a-reviewer/> ... or call Elly du Pré, AER Accreditation Program Manager: 305-898-2636.

**AER members are the front-line providers of services as well as leaders of organizations and university personnel preparation programs.** That lived experience is key to AER's Accreditation Reviews. Being ACVREP certified is preferred but is not a requirement to be a reviewer; currently the roster of reviewers comprises certified professionals and licensed TVIs almost 100%. Additional skills in Blindness Prevention Services and all aspects of administration are also needed.

What all reviewers have in common is a desire to ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired receive the services they need to maintain a dignified independent life.

Besides these lofty ideals, recent reviewers enjoy the experience, saying "Thank you, I learned a lot" and "I will definitely do it again" and "Being on a panel really helped me get to know what it's all about."

**Certification and Accreditation are the gold standards our field uses to lend confidence to consumers and assure excellence to funders and the public in general.**

For agencies or schools serving the blind/visually impaired, and for university personnel preparation programs, AER Accreditation is that mark of excellence and commitment.

In recognition of this close relationship between certification and accreditation, ACVREP awards recertification points in Category 4 for serving on a panel that reviews the accreditation materials for an agency, school or university program. A total of 50 points can be earned in the 5-year term of certification, with 2 points provided for every hour served on the panel. Most panelists provide about 15 hours to a single review panel over a period of 4 months, and therefore earn 25 – 30 points on a single review panel experience.

**CLICK for the details:** <https://aerbvi.org/the-national-accreditation-council/become-a-reviewer/>

... or call Elly du Pré, AER Accreditation Program Manager: 305-898-2636.

---

## Low Vision Month Workshops

Ophthalmologists and leaders in the medical field will discuss important vision-related topics in these free online workshops.

**Monday, February 06, 2023, 1:00 – 2:00 PM PT**

### **Macular Degeneration and the Latest Research – Remote**

Learn about the latest breakthroughs, emerging treatments, and new research on Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) in a presentation by Nikolas London, MD FACS and Michael Joseph Ammar, MD from Retina Consultants San Diego.

Register here [bit.ly/3v92dOA](https://bit.ly/3v92dOA)

**Thursday, February 09, 2023, 10:30 – 11:30 AM PT**

### **Nutrition and the Eye – Remote**

Explore the importance of nutrition and its role in disease management and overall well-being. Join Shelby Yaceczko, Advanced Practice Clinical Dietitian from UCLA Health, as she gives an informative presentation about nutrition and eye health.

Register here [bit.ly/3jA4j7x](https://bit.ly/3jA4j7x)

**Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 1:00 – 2:00 PM PT**

### **Update On Clinical Trials for Low Vision Retinal Disease – Remote**

Join Dr. Shyamanga Borooah as he presents the latest stem cell research on retinal diseases with a focus on technologies that are at or near clinical trial. Dr. Borooah of Shiley Eye Institute UC San Diego is trained in the diagnosis and management of retinal diseases with specialist training in retinal and macular degenerations.

Register here [bit.ly/3jyLkdJ](https://bit.ly/3jyLkdJ)

[Check out the Low Vision Awareness Month Flyer here.](#)

For a complete list of Low Vision Month workshops, visit [brailleinstitute.org/low-vision-workshops](https://brailleinstitute.org/low-vision-workshops).

Submitted by AER Member Jane Shim

---

## LEGO Braille Bricks Survey

Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LBB2023>

Dear Colleagues,

In collaboration with the LEGO Foundation, I have been awarded a grant to independently research playful learning, and literacy development with LEGO Braille Bricks. We aim for this research project to be truly international, as such different language versions of the initial survey are being developed.

As a practitioner who may or may not use LEGO Braille Bricks, we are very interested in hearing your views and thoughts on the teaching of braille. As such, please see the link to our survey. Please feel free to send this link to your colleagues and to disseminate widely through your networks.

We hope to make this the largest study of its kind investigating braille literacy and so your support is gratefully acknowledged right from the start.

Part one of the study is to complete an online survey and the link is at the top/end of this email.

Kind regards

John Ravenscroft

Professor of Childhood Visual Impairment  
University of Edinburgh, UK.

## **2023 Hall of Fame Nominations for Leaders and Legends of the Blindness Field Now Being Accepted**

Nominations for persons who have made transformative contributions to improve the lives of those who are blind or low vision in areas including, but not limited to:

- Scholarship and practice/community development
- Public education
- Leadership, planning, organization services
- Advocacy, policy development and systems change
- Development of technology solutions or other assistance

Follow this link to learn more about the Hall of Fame and the easy electronic [nomination process](#) and submit a nominee to join the inductees today.

The nomination process will close on **Sunday, April 30**.

Nominators must submit a comprehensive nomination packet including a thoroughly completed Hall of Fame Nomination Form and three letters of support.

Please use the online electronic form to submit the nomination. The three letters of support may be emailed to Mike Hudson at [mhudson@aph.org](mailto:mhudson@aph.org). The induction ceremonies will occur during the October Annual Meeting of the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky.

If the above link does not open, use: <https://sites.aph.org/hall/nominate/>

Submitted by AER Member Paul Schroeder

---

## **OIB-TAC October Update**

The next OIB-TAC webinar is Friday, February 17, at 2:00 p.m. Central. The webinar title is **Fall in Love With OIB-TAC Resources**. With a fresh new look, our vibrant, sleeker website and an array of helpful resources are here to enhance your knowledge and quality of work. OIB-TAC's Older Blind Specialist and CVRT, Polly Abbott, will guide us on a tour of the many resources and offerings to support your work with older adults who are blind or have low vision. To register, visit our [webinar registration page](#).

---

## **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](mailto:perkins.elearning@perkins.org).

---

# CHAPTER NEWS

---

## **DC-MD AER**

### **2023 Spring Conference**

#### ***ShAERing the Road: An Interdisciplinary Approach***

**Friday, March 10, 2023**

8:30 am-5:00 pm

Maritime Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, MD

\$85 for AER members \$125 non-members

Presentations include:

Collaboration+ Modification Success

Web 2.0 Skills

O&M and PT Working Together

Using LEGO Braille Bricks

Waymaps

Collaborating While Assessing a Student with Deafblindness

Plus our luncheon and awards ceremony

[Register here](#)

---

## **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!](#)

---

## **Pacific Northwest AER**

The Pacific Northwest (PNW) Chapter of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is pleased to announce our 2023 Spring Conference, Collaboration, Innovation & Beyond, March 16-18, 2023. [Registration is now open.](#)

A vital part of the 2023 PNWAER Spring Conference, Collaboration, Innovation, and Beyond is our vendors. For the first time in three years, we will be hosting our state-wide conference in person. We are expecting over 250 vision professionals from across the state, marking our largest conference since our inception. We will be implementing a vendor passport to encourage attendees to visit all vendor booths. When an attendee fills up their passport card, they will be able to submit it for a raffle prize.

As a vendor you will be able to:

- Connect with vision professionals who utilize your products and services.
- Network with professionals from across Washington State.
- Build quality, lasting relationships with professionals.
- Showcase your company's expertise and expand your customer base.

### **Vendor/Exhibit Hall Information:**

Our dedicated exhibit hall hours for conference attendees to explore vendor booths is Friday, March 17, 8:00am - 5:00 pm. Vendor booths include access to our mid-morning and afternoon snack break stations and (2) tickets to our Awards luncheon. Set-up for vendor booths is Thursday, March 16, 4:00pm - 6:00pm or Friday, March 17, 7:00am. Vendors will receive (one) linen, skirted 8'x24"table, additional tables upon request.

To submit an application to become a vendor, please fill out this [google form](#). Applications will be reviewed upon receipt. We will inform you within two weeks if your application has been accepted. Payments will be collected through our Eventbrite registration site.

We are still looking for sponsors for our 2023 conference. If you are interested in having your business featured throughout the event, and on our social media, please contact us directly.

---

## **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.](#)

---

## **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](mailto:webmaster@txaer.org)

---

## **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

Visit [www.aervirginia.org](http://www.aervirginia.org) to learn more and to register.

---

# WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who [joined AER in January 2023](#). 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:

[Dual Certified TVI/OMS](#)

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

[Orientation and Mobility Specialist – Tampa](#)

Tampa, Florida

Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision

[Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments – Early Intervention Program](#)

Winter Haven, Florida

Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision

[Early Childhood Classroom Teacher](#)

Albuquerque, New Mexico

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Early Childhood Program

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](mailto:news@aerbvi.org).

**The deadline for article submissions is the 25th of each month.**



Visit our website

AERBVI | 5680 King Centre Dr., Ste 600, Alexandria, VA 22315

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

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data](#)



Notice

Sent by news@aerbvi.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!