

# The AER Voice



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

Volume 5, Issue 3

### A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello AER! For the past few weeks, I have been focused on AER's strategic plan. I am very thankful for everyone who has participated and shared their thoughts, suggestions and ideas for improvement. My goal, from the beginning of this planning process, was to provide as many opportunities for members to participate and provide input. We have hosted focus groups, a town hall meeting, released multiple surveys and have additional meetings planned with the AER Board, Division and Chapter leadership.

The focus group participants included students enrolled in personnel preparation programs and former members of AER who were not retired. The participants shared great ideas on ways AER can recruit and retain members. The Town Hall meeting was extremely productive as members shared concerns over current issues and trends impacting the professionals in the field and suggestions on ways AER should address these issues. Surveys were distributed to the [general membership](#) of AER, directors and faculty of [personnel preparation](#) programs, and executive [management](#) of organizations employing vision professionals. The deadline to complete these surveys has been extended until March 6<sup>th</sup>, so if you haven't submitted your responses, please do so today.

In March and early April, the strategic planning consultant will meet with the AER Board, the Council of Division Chairs, and the Council of Chapter Presidents, to evaluate the information gathered, begin formulating AER's Strategic Plan, and developing action plans with measurable goals that can be implemented at all levels of the Association. Personnel shortage, technology and AER's role representing the professions have been a few of the issues that have been repeatedly mentioned.

Thank you again for everyone who has participated in the process so far, but if you have not, you still have time to submit your survey responses. As always, please email or call me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

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

### 2023 AER SCHOLARSHIP

AER is pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications for the 2023 AER Scholarship! We are proudly offering this opportunity to graduate-level students studying for a career in the field of Teacher of the Visually Impaired or Orientation & Mobility.

Three scholarships will be offered in the amount of \$2,000 each. The deadline for submitting the application is May 15, 2023 and the three recipients will be

announced on our website in the summer of 2023.

Please refer to the application for the specific eligibility criteria and for further details.

The deadline to submit the application is May 15, 2023.

Visit our [website for more information](#) or click here to view the [scholarship application](#).

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## AER LIFT

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

Title: Historical Perspectives

Presenters: Mary Nelle McLennan and Billy Brookshire

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

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### **The new ScripTalk mobile app is now available in the iOS and Android App Stores!**

ScripTalk Mobile IOS App now available. Download here

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/scriptalk-mobile/id1317698388>

ScripTalk mobile Android App now available. Download here

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mistral.scriptalkmobilev2>

Submitted by AER Member Margaret Cleary

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### **Driving Force Newsletter Submission Success Story**

We buzz into the school building, sign-in, locate the student, implement our creative lesson plan, record data, collaborate with student and adults, use the bathroom, sign-out, depart. Repeat.

As an itinerant teacher, I'm beginning to believe that interpersonal skills are the key to my effectiveness and ultimately student success. Sure, schooling and knowledge about visual impairment are important. But how far would I get if I were a steamroller of demands and unmovable ideas? Not far. Believe me, I've tried digging in my heels before and sadly, negatively altered student success.

Fortunately, interpersonal skills can constantly be enriched. I started by emulating professionals I enjoy being around. What qualities do they possess that draw me to them and help me feel better about myself? *Great question, I'd love to tell you.*<sup>1</sup>

- They talk *with* me instead of *at* me. The person I emulate seeks out nuggets of what I already know when they're explaining something I don't understand. My perspective is important to them.
- They respect my schedule. The person I emulate communicates their availability then asks which is the best time for me?
- They follow-up in writing. The person I emulate recognizes that my brain may

or may not be clearly on topic. So, they leave a clarifying note or follow-up with an email highlighting the main points of our discussion.

- They delight in laughing. The person I emulate livens the room by building-in all-inclusive fun; never inside jokes that exclude me.
- They keep the atmosphere positive. The person I emulate steers the conversation to the glass-half-full side of the situation.
- They ask me for advice. The person I emulate seeks my opinion on an issue they're struggling with. Boy – I feel valued when this happens.

We all have good and bad days, but my interpersonal track record improves when I intentionally seize these qualities. After all, it's for the students!

<sup>1</sup> Elyse Myers, "Funny Cuz It's True", <https://elysemyers.com>

Submitted by AER Member Jane Harty

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## **OIB-TAC October Update**

### **Join us for our next OIB-TAC webinar – On My Terms: Working with Visual Assistance Apps**

Date: March 17 2:00-3:00 CT

What could someone do if they had visual assistance whenever they needed it, not just when it was convenient for someone else? Banking, shopping, traveling, cooking, setting a thermostat, getting knowledgeable help with the computer – a whole range of aging-in-place tasks can be done with assistance from a smartphone app. Join Aira's Jenine Stanley and Be My Eyes' Hans Wiberg to learn more about visual interpreting and specialized help through their apps. Find out how visual assistance fits into the tools to access the world as someone who is blind or low vision.

[Click here to register!](#)

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## **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).

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# **CHAPTER NEWS**

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## **DC-MD AER**

**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](#)

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### **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!](#)

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### **Michigan AER**

#### **Michigan AER 2023 Conference, New Beginnings. Together Again!**

Delta Conference Center  
Kalamazoo, MI

Registration is open for the Michigan AER Annual Conference: New Beginnings. Together Again!

Please follow the links below for more information and to register. There is also a link to the tentative conference agenda, speaker names and information. The last day to register is April 6, 2023, the last day to secure the conference rate at the hotel is March 29, 2023.

Looking forward to seeing you in Kalamazoo!

- [Link to the registration for Michigan AER Annual Conference](#)
  - [Link to the hotel reservation](#)
  - [Link to Michigan AER Conference webpage](#)
  - [Link to tentative Conference Schedule](#)
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### **New York AER**

#### **New York State AER 2023 Conference, Harnessing the Power of Assessment**

Holiday Inn  
232 Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, NY

Our theme this year is Assessment. Concurrent session presentations are usually 90 minutes in length, but alternative session durations may be built into the schedule, as deemed necessary by the nature of the presentation.

Session formats include: lectures; demonstrations; reports of research design or results; hands-on workshops; a panel of speakers who provide views on a specific topic; or other presentation formats that focus on our theme of assessment.

Concurrent presentations will take place during all days of the conference. Some sessions are relevant to all areas of our field, while others may be targeted to a particular division (TVI, O&M VRT, or Vocational/employment groups). The Conference Workshop Committee will strive to offer a final schedule that is well-balanced that will meet the needs of all Chapter members.

The deadline for proposal submissions is May 15, 2023. Accepted presenters will be notified by May 31st, 2023.

To submit a proposal, visit our webpage at: <https://www.nysaer.org/2023Conference>

When completing the proposal form, be sure to include an abstract of the presentation and the primary learning objective(s) – these are required for ACVREP and CTLE approval. Only presentations that link directly to the assessment theme will be considered. Priority will be given to speakers who are able to present in person.

If you have any questions about the process, please feel free to reach out to the Conference Workshop Committee at [NYSAERConference@gmail.com](mailto:NYSAERConference@gmail.com).

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### **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.

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## 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.](#)

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## 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)

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## 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.

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## Wisconsin AER

### **Wisconsin AER: 2023 Collaborative Vision Conference**

May 4-5, 2023

1001 Centerpoint Dr.

Stevens Point, WI

For more information and to register, please follow this link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nyQ1y64f5sIsGptJdib0zdWh1>

Looking forward to seeing you there!

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## WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

Join us in welcoming the newest members, who [joined AER in February 2023](#). We are glad to have you!

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## 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 and Mobility Specialist – Winter Haven](#)**

Winter Haven, Florida  
Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision

**[Rehabilitation Instructor](#)**

Winter Haven, Florida  
Lighthouse for the Blind & Low Vision

**[Teacher of the Visually Impaired](#)**

Red Oak or Avoca, Iowa

**[Vision Rehabilitation Therapist](#)**

Utica, New York (RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE)  
Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

**[Vision Rehabilitation Therapist / Orientation and Mobility Specialist](#)**

Utica, New York (RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE)  
Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

**[Teacher of the Visually Impaired](#)**

Utica, New York (RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE)  
Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

**[Orientation and Mobility Specialist](#)**

Utica, New York (RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE)  
Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

**[Colorado TVI / O&M Specialist positions for 2023-2024 school year](#)**

Varying locations throughout the state of Colorado, Colorado  
Colorado Department of Education

Check out these jobs and more by visiting the [Job Exchange](#).

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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.**



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