

The AER Voice



Welcome to the April 2023 Issue of AER The Voice

Volume 5, Issue 4

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-april-2023/> and/or this link: <https://www.wincalendar.com/Calendar-Canada/April-2022> for Canadian holidays to see what is being recognized and celebrated this April.

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!

As always, feel free to reach out to me at olandavi@gmail.com with any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Olaya Landa-Viala
President, AERBVI
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A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello AER! Spring has arrived for many of us, but for some Winter still has a firm grip on the weather. This past month I attended three chapter conferences and the Vision Serve Alliance CEO Summit, and experienced snow flurries in the mountains of Virginia to clear skies and fields of bluebonnets in the Texas Hill Country. Participating in AER chapter conferences has been a great experience, allowing for opportunities to meet our membership and listen to their concerns and ideas, all infused with the passion that is associated with the profession.

AER's Strategic Planning process is continuing to gain momentum. Five issues have dominated conversations: advocacy, recruitment to the field, membership growth, governance, and continuing education. The Board, chapter, and division leadership are currently meeting to discuss these issues and develop strategies to address each issue. The final step in the process will be to develop action plans of work for each specific strategy. My goal is to share the final plan with the membership in mid to late May.

At the Vision Serve Alliance CEO Summit one of the topics of side bar conversations was ACVREP's development of a certification for Occupational Therapists. This topic has been widely debated by members of the field with thoughts and opinions ranging the full spectrum. I had the opportunity to listen to many perspectives and share what I had heard from AER membership. During these conversations I became aware of a personal lack of information and understanding of the process and

development of this specific certification. If I do not have complete understanding of all aspects of the issue and process, then it is highly probable that many in the Association do not as well. I have requested information from ACVREP on this process and have been assured that I will receive information soon. When I receive this information, I will share that with the membership, along with statements from various groups within the profession. I believe that accurate information, open mindedness, and a willingness to listen are paramount in this discussion. I also believe that this is a symptom of a greater issue impacting the profession, and that AER's Strategic Plan can be the catalyst to begin addressing that issue.

I look forward to sharing updates with you soon.

Lee Sonnenberg
Executive Director, AER
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.

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

AER LIFT Save the Date

The April session (fourth session of the series) of the AER LIFT (AER Leadership Initiatives Facilitate Teamwork) will be held on April 24 at 7:00 pm (eastern).

Title: **AER Strategic Planning**
Presenters: **Lee Sonnenberg and Kathy Beveridge**

The registration information will be emailed to all AER members soon. Save the date - April 24, 2023 at 7:00 pm (eastern)!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

HumanWare

Connect 12: The smart and portable low vision magnifier, from education to employment

Looking for ways to engage your classroom. Our [enhanced Connect 12 tablet](#) accommodates low vision students and helps them succeed in



any class. Get access to enhanced features and performance for only \$1,195. You own a Connect 12? Receive a \$675 rebate. Don't wait, the offer runs through June 30.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

[Vision 2023 Denver International Low Vision Rehabilitation Conference](#)

July 24-27, 2023

[Registration](#) is Now Open

Vision 2023 Denver is bringing low vision providers from across disciplines and the globe to the US for the first time in 20 years. The International Society selected the University of Colorado Department of Ophthalmology [for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation \(ISLRR\)](#) to host the organization's long-standing low vision conference in partnership with Denver's [Anchor Center for Blind Children](#) from July 24-27, 2023.

Educators working with clients of all ages will benefit from a symposium on low vision and the brain with presentations on cognition, Cortical Visual Impairment, vision recovery, and restoration by [internationally recognized leaders in vision rehabilitation](#).

Stand-out courses include:

- "Low-Vision Reading Then and Now: Personal and Scientific Perspectives" [Gordon Legge, PhD](#)
- "Assessing Visual Perceptual Dysfunction in Early Brain-based Visual Impairment." [Lotfi Merabet, OD, PhD, MPH](#)
- "CellSight - Ocular Stem Cell and Regeneration Research Program" [Natalia Vergara, PhD](#) & M. [Valeria Canto-Soler, PhD](#)
- "Dry Eye and the Low Vision Patient - Maximizing Vision and Comfort" [Kaleb Abbott, OD, MS, FAAO](#) and [Darren Gregory, MD](#)

ACVREP CE's will be offered.

"The professionals who work with the visually impaired are very passionate about what they do. It will be exciting to gain different perspectives from across the world and professions so we can all do a better job of helping others," says [Kara Hanson, OD, FAAO](#), director of the [Low Vision Rehabilitation Service](#) at the [Sue Anschutz-Rodgers Eye Center](#) and project manager for the Vision 2023 conference. Find Additional details and registration information on the [conference's website](#).

Submitted by AER Member Erika Anderson Ko

OIB-TAC April 2023 Update

Navigating Finances for Older Individuals With Vision Loss

April 21, 2:00 pm (Central)

Description:

Join us for a webinar with Penny Forward on how older blind individuals can continue to manage their finances with vision loss. Our experienced panel, including Chris Peterson, Liz Bottner, and Moe Carpenter, will guide you through small changes your clients can make to adapt to their changing vision, low-tech solutions that are still effective, and high-tech solutions that can make managing their finances easier than

ever before. We'll discuss how self-advocacy is critical to maintaining your clients' independence. Plus, learn about Penny Forward, a nonprofit organization that offers accessible financial education and counseling for individuals with vision loss. Don't let vision loss hold your clients back from managing their finances with confidence. Join us for this informative and empowering presentation.

[Click here to register!](#)

In collaboration with ICEVI, WBU and other stakeholders, Royal Dutch Visio is spearheading an effort to reach out to young people with visual impairments (blind and low vision) to determine their wishes and concerns related to the future. This letter provides you with information about our proposed survey and explains how you can help us reach as many young people as possible.

[How do young people with a visual impairment see their future?](#)

Let's ask them and let them talk about this subject.

<https://youtu.be/cL24hITbOHE>

In this video, five young adults in The Netherlands with visual impairments talk about their future dreams (audio is Dutch with English subtitles). Their video was posted on the Project Aspiro website as a resource for others with vision loss and sowed the seeds for further discussions into how young people with visual impairments see their futures. The video was also part of the Vision congress 2022.

The initiators of the survey believe that all young people with visual impairments worldwide have the right to education and participation in society. Everyday parents and concerned adults do as much as possible to ensure success for young people with visual impairments. However, there remain obstacles in education and employment. We would like to know what young people themselves consider these to be.

What we need from you:

1. Please link to our survey if you are between the ages of 18 and 30 years old and have a visual impairment using one of the following links:

- **English:** <https://forms.office.com/r/MsGe3j4HzN>
- Dutch: <https://forms.office.com/r/6ejfuvd0qB>
- Spanish: <https://forms.office.com/r/CW2PWBkBsX>
- French: <https://forms.office.com/r/przCfFCzNR>
- Arabic: <https://forms.office.com/r/aGzAcU5Eha>

2. If you know anyone between the ages of 18 and 30 years old who has a visual impairment, please forward this letter with the links to the individual.

3. If you are an agency or organization representative, teacher, counsellor, or other professional, please disseminate our survey to anyone you know between the ages of 18 and 30 years old who has a visual impairment.

The survey is fully accessible as a Microsoft form and the link to our digital questionnaire, will be active from March 8th until April 14th, 2023. If you have any questions, please contact: Judith Wijnen: judithwijnen@visio.org or Klaske van Zandbergen: klaske.vanzandbergen@student.hu.nl

What we will do to follow up:

- We plan to organize two international meeting days on Wednesday (June 28, 2023) and Thursday (June 29, 2023) based on the results of the survey. The meeting on June 29 will be held physically for those who can be present at the Visio board office in Huizen. Meeting day details with information on how to get to the venue will be sent to anyone who expresses an interest in attending.
- To accommodate international participants and those unable to attend in person, we are offering time slots for digital participants. On 28 June there will be a time slot from 13:00 PM GMT/UTC to 15:00 PM GMT/UTC. On 29 June there will be a time slot from 07:00 AM GMT/UTC to 09:00 AM GMT/UTC.
- The agenda items for these meeting days will emerge from the survey. At the

end of the questionnaire, it is possible to register for your preferred meeting day. The meetings will be held in English.

- A report of the research and the meeting day will be sent to anyone who is interested.

Submitted by AER Member Karen Wolffe, Ph.D.

This year the Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) felt as if we had turned the corner with 10,000 attendees. It was closer to the 12,000 to 14,000 people that typically attend TRB. A diverse group of international and domestic attendees traveled to Washington DC.

Some prevailing themes and associated presentations included the Intersectionality of Health and Mobility, Integrating Health Equity into Pedestrian Safety, and Integrating Health Equity into Pedestrian Safety Through Interagency Collaboration. Twenty-twenty-three was the inaugural year for the [TRB Committee on Transportation and Public Health \(AME70\)](#).

Although these topics focused on a broad array of issues related to health, access to health care, and opportunities for physical activity they could overlap with challenges experienced by some individuals with visual impairments and total blindness.

One presentation by Lieutenant David J. Ederer, PhD, MPH Integrating Health Equity into Pedestrian Safety Through Interagency Collaboration discussed several programs that are a collaborative effort between Federal agencies and local governments promoting health equity. Understanding how these programs work and determining if these programs are active in your geographic area could expand opportunities to increase accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. One program [Providing Active Transportation, Health, and Safety \(PATHS\)](#) provides information about policies, plans, projects, and health equity. A blog [Measuring Walking Access to Parks | Healthy Places by Design](#) goes into detail about how to determine walking access to parks. Could this information be used to advocate for accessible built environments that have walking paths that can be used by all vulnerable road users ?

Under the umbrella of the [Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity \(DNPAO\)](#) are resources such as a link to [State and Local Programs](#) which provides an overview of the State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN), High Obesity Program (HOP), and Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) programs.

The [State Physical Activity and Nutrition \(SPAN\) Program](#) supports 16 states that support evidence based nutrition and physical activity programs. If you reside in one of these states this might be an avenue to start a conversation about making physical activity accessible to all users. The Pennsylvania Department of Health is one recipient, their comprehensive strategies include " 3) places that implement community planning and transportation interventions that support safe and accessible physical activity; and 4) implementation of nutrition and physical activity standards in early care and education systems." You can read about other recipients here: [SPAN 1807 Recipients | DNPAO | CDC](#).

Both the [High Obesity Program \(HOP\)](#) and [Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health \(REACH\)](#) programs have a list of recipients whether it is a university ,community, or individual. Here are links to review information in detail: [HOP 1809 Recipients | DNPAO | CDC](#) and [REACH Lark Galloway-Gilliam Awards for Advancing Health Equity Challenge | DNPAO | CDC](#).

Some final thoughts, sometimes we need to think outside our comfort zones to make connections and increase access to the built environment for individuals with visual impairments, whether that is at the local, state, or Federal level. How can these [Community Champions and Built Environment: NCCDPHP's Program Successes | CDC](#) be expanded to be accessible in the built environment for all individuals with visual impairments. Let's find ways together to celebrate inclusivity.

Submitted by AER Member JoAnne Chalom

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 NEWS

New York AER

New York State AER 2023 Conference, Harnessing the Power of Assessment
November 5-7, 2023

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.

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.](#)

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/1nyQ1y64f5sIsGptJdib0zdWh1ULkvSEySmTkly2QrJc/edit>

Looking forward to seeing you there!

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

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

[College Success Coach / Assistant Director, College Success \(depending on experience\)](#)

Remote, National
Perkins School for the Blind

[Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist](#)

Alamogordo, New Mexico
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

[Vision Rehabilitation Specialist](#)

Cincinnati, Ohio
Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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.



Visit our website

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