

# The AER Voice



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

Volume 5, Issue 5

### A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello AER! This morning I'm sitting in the Milwaukee airport waiting to catch my flight home. The Wisconsin AER Collaborative Vision Conference was the final chapter conference for Spring 2023. I have traveled quite a bit over the last few months, speaking at 5 chapter conferences and attending the Vision Service Alliance CEO Summit, 7,804 flying miles, 2,069 driving miles, for a total of 9,873 miles. It has been an amazing time, meeting AER members from across the country, learning the unique strengths of each chapter, the systems they navigate, and the challenges faced, and successes achieved by our members daily. I look forward to the fall conference season and would enjoy the opportunity to speak to your chapter if your conference schedule allows. I still have one more trip this month, leaving tomorrow for a site visit for the 2024 conference. If the site passes the accessibility test, we will have an announcement shortly.

Our strategic planning process is nearing the finish line. The Board and AER Staff are currently working with our consultant on developing action plans for each strategy identified during the process. Once these plans are finalized, the draft copy of the strategic plan will be shared with the full AER membership for public comment. Pending no significant changes, the Board will review and approve the strategic plan at the June board meeting.

The AER staff is also currently working on migrating our database and website to a new association management system. The new system will have improved accessibility, simpler navigation, and additional opportunities for membership interaction. On the operational side, we will have stronger security features, greater reporting capabilities, and streamlined communication processes with the membership. Our launch date is scheduled for July 1, 2023.

Earlier this week, the AER Board of Directors published a resolution regarding the ACVREP development of a new certification for Occupational Therapists to provide vision rehabilitation services. I have been and will continue to be in communication with the leadership of ACVREP, sharing the concerns, requests, and recommendations of the AER Board of Directors and membership. I strongly believe that it is vital we find a way to be one community with one voice on these critical issues that impact the profession and its ability to provide quality services.

As always, please feel free to email or call me.

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

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello AER!!

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

You spoke, we listened! Check out the AER Board Resolution 2023 Concerning ACVREP's OT Certification (<https://aerbvi.org/about/aer-resolutions/>)

If you haven't done so, be sure to check out AER's e-learning offers. There are great topics and training there just waiting for you!

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-Viala**  
**President, AERBVI**  
[olvialard@aph.org](mailto:olvialard@aph.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

Thank you to those of you who attended the April session of AER LIFT! Our next AER LIFT (AER Leadership Initiatives Facilitate Teamwork) will be held on May 29 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- May 29, 2023 at 7:00 pm (eastern)!

## AER ACCREDITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS Open Volunteer Position

**According to the AER Accreditation Council Policy and Procedures Manual,** Council members have two primary responsibilities, namely to:

1. Ensure that standards are current, relevant and reflect the highest level of quality.
2. Render final accreditation decisions.

Accordingly, Council members are required to:

(1) Fully review the final reports of each pending accreditation in advance of casting an accreditation decision vote.

(2) Ensure that policy and procedures are followed and announce any conflicts of interests that might exist prior to casting an accreditation vote and, if required, agree to be recused.

(3) Review, discuss, and uphold the integrity of each standard by casting an accreditation decision vote that merits and validates adherence to quality, continuous improvement and optimal client and student outcomes.

(4) Uphold the following guiding principles: accountability, transparency, outcomes focused, and provide fair and equitable consideration.

Term members serve a 3-year term and up to 2 consecutive terms. Term members must have a minimum of 2 years of experience in the related and respective classification.

Every effort will be made to identify individuals to serve on the Council who are blind and those with low vision having experience related to administration, program management, accreditation, or certification.

Please [complete the application form](#) and submit to [elly@aerbvi.org](mailto:elly@aerbvi.org).

For more information, see the link to the AERAC Policy and Procedures Manual on the website: (<https://aerbvi.org/the-national-accreditation-council/>).



## 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!](#)

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### **APH's 155<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

October 4-6, 2023

Save The Date! The American Printing House for the Blind will hold their 155<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in October 2023. Visit their website to learn more and to submit your presentation.

<https://www.aph.org/annual-meeting/>

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### **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

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## OIB-TAC May 2023 Update

### **OIB-TAC monthly webinar Recognizing and Responding to Ageism May 19, 2:00 pm CST**

When's the last time you heard something positive about aging? Maybe you've heard about the U-curve of happiness, which shows that we get happier each decade after our 40s. Or maybe you've talked with your colleagues about how older workers bring emotional maturity to the team, and so much more. More often, people talk about aging as a one-dimensional process of loss and decline, and we hear negative stereotypes and prejudice about aging: in media, from other people, and even within ourselves. This is ageism, and research shows that these negative comments are not only wrong, they're actually harmful. The truth is, we continue to learn, develop, and grow throughout our lives—and there's a lot to celebrate about "growing up." In fact, a positive attitude about aging has been shown to improve our health and expand our life expectancy. In this webinar, we'll learn to improve our well-being by recognizing and responding to ageism, whether we find it in ourselves, in friends and colleagues, in advertisements and media, or anywhere else.

[Click here to register!](#)

#### **About the Speaker:**

Margaret McDonald is a writer, a speaker, a learning designer, and a pro-aging advocate. She's a member of the Advisory Council on Ageism and Culture with the American Society on Aging, and she's the activist behind GrowingAndOlder.com and the "Aging Is Living" campaign, which provides free artwork for yard signs, postcards, and other pro-aging gear.

In her day job, Margaret works at Hadley, helping to create workshops on daily living skills, recreation, braille, and tech topics for people with vision loss. She recently earned a graduate certificate in Training and Development from Portland State University, and she's dedicated to using her knowledge and skills to help people learn, to raise awareness of ageism, and to encourage everyone to embrace the growing part of growing older.

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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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## MEMBER BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

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### The New RE:View

In case you haven't heard the news yet... The New RE:view–A Journal of Practice (TNR) has launched! **The first issue can be found by clicking here.**

The New RE:view is intended for professionals, people with visual impairments, their families, and anyone who works with them. It follows in the footsteps of the historic journal RE:view, which was discontinued in 2008. In its new incarnation, this peer-reviewed journal will become a dynamic professional resource that will address key questions of our work.

If you have good ideas for learning but have never put them into writing, this is the time and the place! An Associate Editor working with reviewers from the field will provide feedback to ensure that your writing is effective. If your work is accepted for publication, the TNR editorial team will work with you in making your message clear.

[Click here for more information on the Call for Papers](#)

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## CHAPTER NEWS

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### Arkansas AER Conference

October 26-27, 2023  
Bentonville, Arkansas

Save the Date – more info to come soon!

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### Florida AER Conference: FAERing Well Together

November 28-29, 2023  
TradeWinds Island Grand Resort  
St. Pete Beach, Florida

### Save the Date!

Call for Presenters:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScReW4qsJ-pt6WUAGJ6jeewL37ziyHV81K3u6JLJ3WvhNRBmg/viewform>

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### 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](mailto:NYSAERConference@gmail.com).

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## **Northeast AER Conference: Strong Roots....Many Routes**

November 1-3, 2023  
Portland, Maine

Our Conferences always strive to provide exemplary professional development to all branches of our fields, and this year is no different. This year's theme, "Strong Roots...Many Routes", is the acknowledgment that with our strong professional foundations, we are all able to help our clients reach their ultimate goals even if we are coming from different directions. Ideally, we are seeking to hold sessions in the track areas: education, rehabilitation, technology, orientation & mobility, guide dogs, employment, and research. Consider topics such as assessment, teaching methods, transition, self-determination, and collaboration. This year's conference will reach out beyond our current limits and take our services to new heights!

We invite you to submit session proposals for breakout sessions or a poster session. Proposals should have a practical focus and may address a specific area of rehabilitation practices or principles. Sessions can be 60 minutes or 90 minutes in length. The conference will be designed to encourage participants to expand upon their techniques and resources.

Please consider submitting a proposal using the following google form:  
<https://forms.gle/pXHG3r35cUNZYEU97>. Additional information can be found at:

- [www.nercve.org/ne/aer](http://www.nercve.org/ne/aer)
- [www.avrt.org](http://www.avrt.org)
- Contacting us at [confprogram@neaerbvi.org](mailto:confprogram@neaerbvi.org)
- Contact conference program chairpersons directly (see below)

**Nominate, Nominate, Nominate!** Also open is the nomination packet for this year's awards which will be presented at the annual conference. It is important to celebrate the accomplishments of NE/AER members and community non-members who support our mission of supporting people of all ages who are blind or have a visual impairment. [Please click here to nominate someone deserving.](#)

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## **Northern Rockies AER Conference**

October 17-19, 2023  
Canyon Crest Event Center  
Twin Falls, Idaho

Session strands are focused on benefiting students and young adults who are

transitioning to adult life, individuals who are blind or visually impaired, special educators, teachers of students with visual impairments, rehabilitation and transition counselors, families, and orientation and mobility specialists.

Group rates! Marriott TownePlace Suites (\$129) and Fairfield Inn & Suites (\$119):

Here's your reservation link your guests can use to make reservations:

[LINK for your group rate for Northern Rockies Association of Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired](#)

Conference Rates \$200 AER members/\$275 non-members (includes two lunches and Dinner Wednesday).

Exhibitors: Please email [tina.johnson@iesdb.org](mailto:tina.johnson@iesdb.org) to reserve space!

Schedule at a Glance:

- OCT 17th 4-7 pm Registration, with a social hour to follow.
- OCT 18th 8 am-5 pm Keynote and breakout sessions. 5 pm optional tour of Evil Knieval jump site.
- OCT 19th, 8-4:30 pm breakout sessions with an optional tour of the Idaho School for the Deaf and the Blind in Gooding Idaho with social/dinner to follow.

Other travel considerations: The nearest regional airport is Twin Falls, (TWF) and the nearest Int'l airport is Boise, Idaho (BOI) which is 115 miles away.

For all inquiries, please contact planning chair Tina Johnson at

[tina.johnson@iesdb.org](mailto:tina.johnson@iesdb.org)

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## Oklahoma AER Conference

sOARing to New Heights

August 10-11, 2023

Oklahoma School for the Blind

3300 Gibson St,

Muskogee, OK 74436

Click here to learn more: <https://sites.google.com/view/okaerbvi/professional-development>

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## South Carolina AER Conference

November 3-4, 2023

Beach Cove Resort

North Myrtle Beach, SC

Visit us here for more information: <https://www.scaer.net/>

Conference Lodging Reservations:

Conference rates per night (including sales tax and resort fee) are as follows:

- One-bedroom condo: \$91.84
  - Two-bedroom condo: \$119.84
  - Three-bedroom condo: \$145.60
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## WELCOME TO THE NEWEST AER MEMBERS!

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

[Teacher of the Visually Impaired](#)

Heartland AEA, Johnston, Iowa  
IESBVI / IBSSS

[Certified Vision Rehabilitation Specialist \(CVRT\)](#)

Orlando, Florida  
Lighthouse Central Florida

[Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist \(COMS\)](#)

Orlando, Florida  
Lighthouse Central Florida

[Assistive Technology Instructor](#)

Orlando, Florida  
Lighthouse Central Florida

[Vision Therapist](#)

Overland Park, Kansas  
Alphapointe

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.**



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