

Number 1, Friday 9 February, 2024

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PD events

We have responded to feedback that teachers are finding it increasingly difficult to set aside a day for professional learning and have made our usual Term 1 PL opportunities available **online** and **on demand**. This means that you can register and view recorded sessions in your own time. These will be available throughout 2024 on the following topics:

- Inclusion of students who are blind
- Inclusion of students who have low vision
- Inclusion of students who have vision impairments and additional disabilities
- Preparing your school for a student who reads braille

Register via the [SVRC website](#).

In Term 2, we will have our hands-on PL days **at SVRC in Donvale**:

- April 30 – Inclusion of students with VI in PE – Emily White
- May 7 – Braille music with Jordie Howell and Sarah Kelly
- June 18 – Inclusion of students with VI in maths with Charlie Roberts

Please note that registrations for the above on-site PLs have not yet opened on our website. We are unable to provide an Art PL day, but have the 2023 Art4VIKids recordings available on demand.

Message from the Manager

Source: Kim Foley and Jane Barker

Welcome back ...

Welcome to the 2024 school year. SVRC has kicked off the new year with a bang, the transcription team worked steadily throughout January producing invaluable resources for our students, support skills teachers have met and planned an exciting programme for the year ahead and EVAC had a full day of clinic this week.

Farewell

SVRC would also like to acknowledge the wonderful contribution Deb Davidson has made to our students, families, teaching staff, and schools and across the state of Victoria over the last 7 years. Her dedication and commitment to the successful coordination of the vision clinic jointly run by Department of Education and The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, EVAC has been admirable and has contributed to a standard of practice that is recognised Australia wide. We know the Visiting Teacher Service will be gaining a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of vision impairment.

SVRC Professional Learning in 2024

Make sure you look at our catalogue of online professional learning as it is packed full of practical teaching strategies.

Schools Privacy Policies

Please note a privacy reminder to check our website under "About" on the following Department of Education policies:

- Schools' Privacy policy
- Privacy and Information Sharing: Collection notices
- Photographing, Filming and Recording Students

Education Support staff with braille skills

A primary school in North East Victoria Region-Inner East is urgently seeking an ES to support a year 6 student who is blind and a braille user. Please contact SVRC if you are interested in applying for the position or may know of someone who may be interested.

National Simultaneous Storytime 2024

Source: SVRC

Every year, the Australian Library and Information Association runs "National Simultaneous Storytime". 2023 was their most successful NSS day with over 2 million kids reading the same book at the same time! Save the date for Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 12:00pm as we simultaneously read all across Australia. And the book chosen for 2024 is **Bowerbird Blues** By Aura Parker.

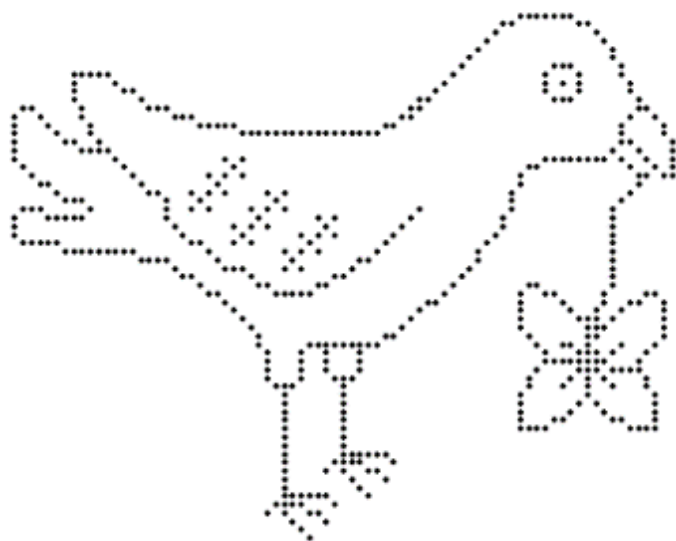
SVRC has produced this book in braille for any child to request. Please request your copy in time for May 22.

National Simultaneous Storytime 2024! Registrations are open now!

Registration for NSS 2024 is free and open to all. Register your school, school library, public library, childcare centre, community group, or even your family home. **All registrations receive an electronic version of the book on Monday, 20 May 2024**, along with a range of exclusive resources.

Head over to the [NSS website](#) to register and start planning your events! Get excited – it's going to be another big year!

For enquiries, please email events@alia.org.au or phone 02 6215 8222.



Technology Outreach

Source: SVRC

Di Bennet is now full time at SVRC and is available to support VT's and schools with technology support for braille users. Please reach out and request a Zoom meeting, if you need assistance with embosser set up or require a Duxbury introductory session. A visit to the school can be arranged. Zoom meetings are held with the VT, ES and student and are focused on student need and timetabled to coincide with VT visits. Available Monday – Thursday.

Contact Di Bennett at di.bennett@education.vic.gov.au to set up either one off or ongoing sessions.

Updates to the 3D Materials Catalogue

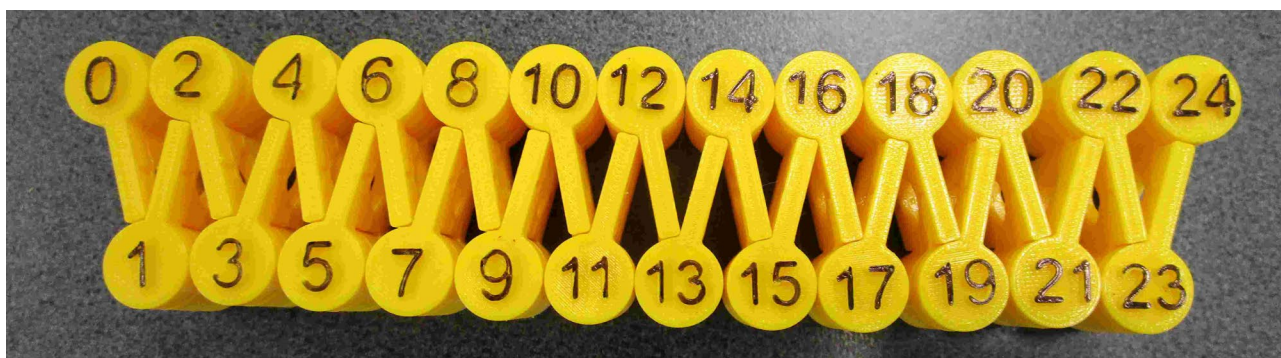
Source: Sarah Hayman, SVRC

With a new year comes new items in the 3D Materials Catalogue. You'll find several additional prints in the catalogue, as well as the old classics that may be suitable for your student in 2024.

We have two options for tactile number lines – a hinged version and a segmented version. Both can be used for different purposes, depending on the level of Maths being taught.

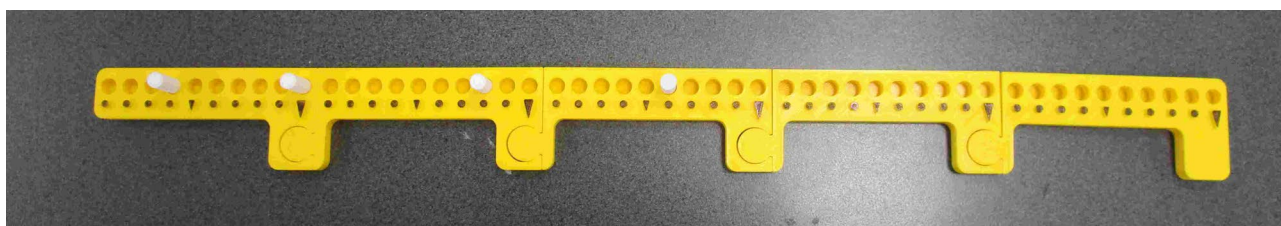
Hinged Number Line

This comes in two sizes, 12 or 24. There are print labels on one side and braille labels on the other. The hinges allow for the number line to be concertinaed for odd and even numbers, or you can make lines of different lengths to experiment with factors of 12 or 24. Most appropriate for early years students.



Segmented Number Line

The Segmented number line allows for flexibility in numbering and size. Segments of 10 "ticks" can be added to make the number line as long as you like. There are openings to put a peg in at each tick to aid in using the number line. The fifth and tenth ticks are a different shape. Labels can be included for each segment to change the "scale" of the number line. To start with you could have 10, 20, 30. Then go with 100, 200, 300 to investigate larger numbers. As student get older you could use 1, 2, 3 when introducing decimals and even -10, 0, 10 when beginning negative numbers. I can think of ways to use this from Prep to Year 7!



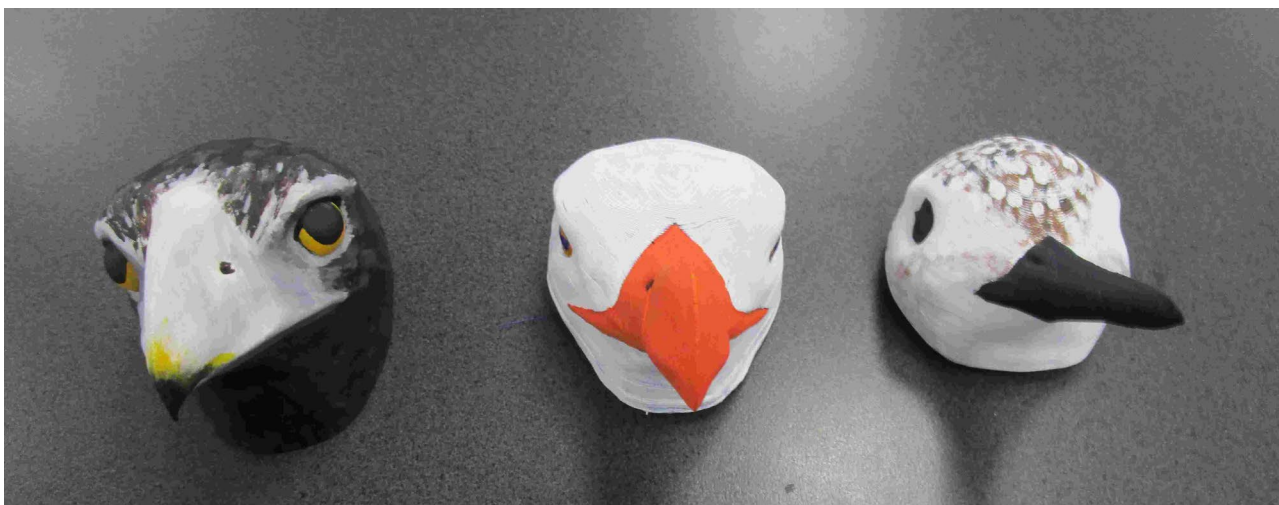
DNA Double Helix

These helps students understand the 3D structure of a DNA molecule. The four bases are labelled with braille and print, and the paired bases fit together neatly.



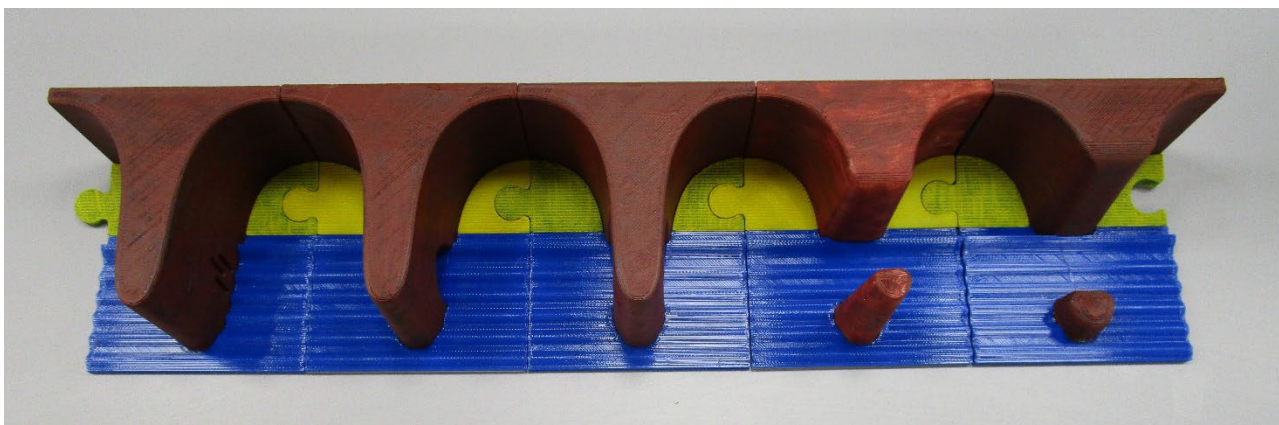
Bird Beaks

Compare the beaks of three birds. This can be used in discussions of Classification in Year 7 or in Senior Biology where students consider how different animals are suited to different environments due to their physical characteristics. The birds are a hawk, seagull and dunlin.



Stack Formation

Have you ever wondered how the 12 Apostles were formed, and why they keep disappearing? Well we have got a model for you! The Stack Formation model has five pieces which can be taken apart to look at the individual sections, and then arranged to show the progression of stack formation. From left to right in the photo, the pieces are Cracks, Cave, Arch, Stack, Stump. The ocean has a rippled texture, representing waves, and the sand and land are painted for contrast. There's braille and print labels on the back of the pieces.



To request a model for an eligible student in Victoria, make sure to use the [Alternative Format Request form](#). For those interstate or overseas, the catalogue provides links to the files for the models so anyone with a 3D printer can print them off.

Accessibility Settings on computers

Source: SVRC

New Tech Guide on the website on the [Tech Support Page](#).

There are several settings that can be changed to make computers more accessible. Some of these settings are restricted as a matter of course on school-owned devices, so IT Techs may need information on what to allow.

Windows

These settings can be found in Ease of Access

- Display (make text bigger, make everything bigger)
- Mouse pointer (change pointer size, change pointer colour)
- Text cursor (turn on text cursor indicator, choose text cursor indicator colour, change text cursor thickness)
- Magnifier (turn on magnifier, change zoom level)
- Colour filters (turn on colour filters, choose the colour filter that suits the student)
- High Contrast (turn on high contrast, choose a theme that suits the student)
- Narrator (Windows inbuilt screen reader)

More information can be found on the [Microsoft Accessibility features](#) page.

Mac

These settings can be found in Apple Menu → Settings → Accessibility

There are five categories within Accessibility, including Vision.

- VoiceOver (Mac's inbuilt screen reader)
- Zoom (magnify the whole screen or sections of it)
- Display features (change font size, pointer size/colour, colour contrast/filters)
- Customise the voice used when content is spoken

More information can be found the [macOS accessibility features for vision](#) page.

Chromebook

These settings can be found in Settings → Accessibility

- ChromeVox (Chromebooks inbuilt screen reader)
- Magnifier (magnify the whole screen or have a "docked" magnifier, where part of the screen is magnified, and part of it is not).
- Contrast (turn on colour inversion, use a "dark theme")

More information can be found on the [Turn on Chromebook accessibility features](#) page.

Tech Tid-bits

Source: Di Bennett

Braille Sense users.

- Students should use the insert date command **Enter + W** into each document they begin or continue working on as a way of keeping track of their work.
- Remember to unmount your USB using the command **Backspace + U + Enter** then select your USB and press Enter before taking out a USB key to prevent damage or loss of file information.
- Use the Read Only option when reading novels to prevent unwanted changes to your document by pressing **Space + ING** (dots 3, 4, 6) to enable to disable simply give the command again.

Q&A: The Exciting and Unplanned Adventures of a Chapter of Maths

Question: Where is our chapter of Maths?

Answer: Well, we posted it on 21 January.

Question: But it is 1 February – where could it be?

Answer: Hang on. We'll check the postal service tracking number.

... and that is when we discovered that the chapter of Maths, travelling from Donvale to a destination not 10 km away had been to Western Australia ... not once, but twice!!!

From Donvale, Victoria

→ Bayswater, Victoria

→ Somerton, Victoria

→ Perth, Western Australia

→ Somerton, Victoria

→ Welshpool, Western Australia

→ Sunshine West, Victoria

→ Melbourne North, Victoria

→ Somerton, Victoria

→ Melbourne North, Victoria

→ Preston, Victoria

→ Somerton, Victoria

→ Preston, Victoria again

→ Attempted delivery to an address in Kew ... but not delivered

→ Kew Post Office ready for collection

Happy ending??! We think/hope that this chapter of Maths will finally make it to its eager recipient!

The image shows a vertical tracking log for a parcel. It is divided into sections by blue dots. The sections are: 'We've got it' (Received by Australia Post, BAYSWATER VIC - Wed 24 Jan, 5.23pm); 'It's on its way' (Item processed at facility BAYSWATER VIC - Wed 24 Jan, 7.12pm; In transit to next facility in SOMERTON VIC Wed 24 Jan, 10.07pm; Item processed at facility Boorna Wangkiny Mia (in Perth) WA - Mon 29 Jan, 9.52pm; In transit to next facility in SOMERTON VIC Tue 30 Jan, 9.22am; Transferred WELSHPOOL WA - Tue 30 Jan, 10.40pm; Arrived at facility SUNSHINE WEST VIC - Fri 2 Feb, 11.17am; Item processed at facility MELBOURNE NORTH VIC - Mon 5 Feb, 3.32pm; In transit to next facility in SOMERTON VIC Mon 5 Feb, 3.50pm; Item processed at facility MELBOURNE NORTH VIC - Tue 6 Feb, 12.39pm; In transit to next facility in PRESTON VIC Tue 6 Feb, 2.10am; Transferred SOMERTON VIC - Tue 6 Feb, 2.51am); 'It's coming today' (Onboard for delivery PRESTON VIC - Tue 6 Feb, 11.33am); 'Attempted delivery' (Safe place not suitable KEW VIC - Tue 6 Feb, 2.12pm; In transit KEW VIC - Tue 6 Feb, 4.40pm); and 'Awaiting collection'.

Q&A: Graphic Novels for Students with Vision Impairments

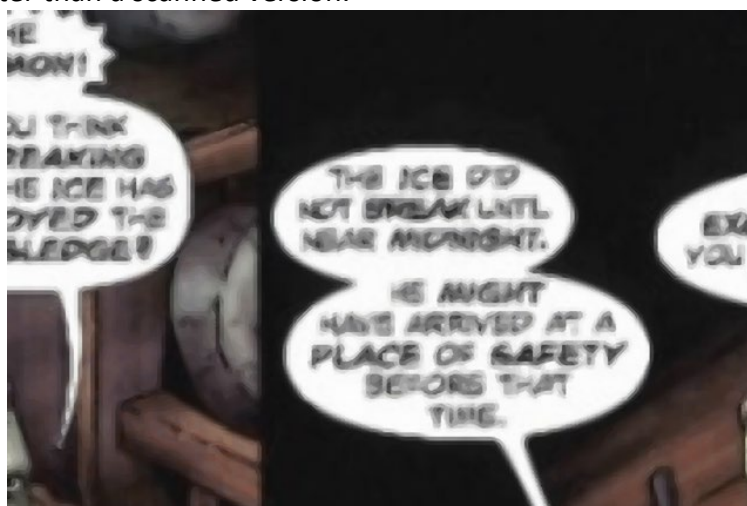
Source: SVRC, Transcription

Question: Thanks for the scanned file of *Frankenstein the Graphic Novel*. Sadly, when [student] zooms in, it goes blurry – see image below. How can [student] access this book?

Answer:

A graphic novel is understandably an accessibility challenge for students with vision impairments. One alternative would be for the student with low vision to undertake a different task that is set by the teacher but captures the same or similar learning intentions. Here are some other ideas:

- Will the text be read out in class? The student could listen along with their peers and use the enlarged scanned version, and/or teacher/student described illustrations for the visual content.
- Does the student have access to an electronic magnification unit which could be used to enlarge the graphics and the text bubbles from the print book to a suitable size.
- You may be able to purchase online a clearer PDF copy from the publisher or another source that will enlarge better than a scanned version.
- You may be able to purchase an audio version of the graphic novel which would feature different voices for the different characters.
- The student could read the text of the original version of *Frankenstein* (e.g. the Penguin Classics edition) using their technology (Fuse or JAWS or NVDA or zoom on iPad).



Interactive and multi-sensory art exhibition in Ringwood – Daniel O'Toole: Voices from the Void

Source: Maroondah city Council

Monday, 05 February 2024 | 09:00 AM to Sunday, 24 March 2024 | 05:00 PM

Come experiment with sound and movement in ArtSpace at Realm! *Voices from the Void* by artist Daniel O'Toole is an interactive installation triggered by the movement you make.

This installation features a series of custom-made black drums or voids that begin to vibrate and sing when approached, producing an evolving soundscape interwoven with field recordings of local birds. The space becomes an instrument, and the audience the players.

For more information visit the [Maroondah City Council website](http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au).

Variety Children's Charity – "Abilities Unleashed" sport events

Source: Disability Sports Australia

Exciting news, the first four "Variety Abilities Unleashed – Kids" events of the year are now open for registrations!

Children aged 5-18 years living with sensory, physical and intellectual disabilities are invited to these **FREE** events which are presented by Disability Sports Australia. Participants will be encouraged and empowered to explore local adaptive sport and recreation opportunities alongside spectating an elite level disability sport.

Upcoming Events:

Maribyrnong Variety Abilities Unleashed Kids

Tuesday 5 March, 2024, 10 AM to 1 PM

RecWest Braybrook, [Register here](#)

Hume Variety Abilities Unleashed Kids

Wednesday 6 March, 2024, 10 AM to 1 PM

Craigieburn Sports Stadium, [Register Here](#)

Dandenong Variety Abilities Unleashed Kids

Saturday 18 May, 2024, 10 AM – 1 PM

Springers Leisure Centre, [Register Here](#)

Boroondara Variety Abilities Unleashed Kids

Thursday 20 June, 2024, 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Boroondara Sports Complex, [Register Here](#)

For more information visit the [Disability Sports Australia website](#)

SPEVI Conference January 2025

Source: Ben Clare, SPEVI Secretary

Dear SPEVI members and friends,

Our organising committee for the 2025 SPEVI conference is expanding, already featuring some amazing members who will ensure a conference you'll be talking about for years, takes place next January! Don't miss your chance to become part of it! If you're a great writer, advertiser, promoter, creator, etc, we need you! Do you know how to create the ultimate fun experience for conference attendees? Can you create games that have us guessing and laughing? Do you know of the ultimate keynote speaker who will stimulate debate and conversation for years to come? Can you coordinate a display that is engaging, educational and downright exciting? If any of this is you, come join our team!

Conference dates: 13-15 January 2025.

Venue: University of Southern Queensland Brisbane.

Conference delivery: hybrid (both online and face to face.)

Conference theme: That's for you to decide when you join our committee!

Please send your expression of interest to spevi.secretary@gmail.com by COB 9 February 2024. I am planning to hold our inaugural meeting via Zoom during the week of 19-24 February.

For more information visit the [SPEVI website](#).

Round Table Conference

Source: Marjorie Hawkings, Round Table Administration Officer and Conference Planner

Dear All,

Exciting opportunities await you at the 2024 Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Inc. Annual Conference. Secure your spot today and take advantage of early bird registration discounts! Visit our website at [2024 Round Table Conference](#) to view the full agenda, speaker lineup, and registration details.

Around the conference theme "Information Equity: Empowerment through Technology, Advocacy and Collaboration", presenters will explore the ever-expanding opportunities presented to people with print disabilities in a rapidly changing landscape: opportunities for information access and creation, for communication and learning.

Don't miss our **Keynote speakers:**

- **Dr Scott Hollier**, CEO and Co-founder of the Centre for Accessibility Australia
- **Prof. Katie Ellis**, Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology at Curtin University
- **Senator Jordan Steele-John**, Senator for Western Australia, Australian Greens Party

And our **Feature speakers:**

- **Dr Frances Gentle** – Information equity: balancing the risks and opportunities of information and digital technology
- **Dr Manisha Amin** – Inclusion compass for Australia
- **David Swayn and Jonathan Craig** – Accessible procurement and the Disability Royal Commission

Dates:

- **Conference Proper** – Sunday, 19 May to Tuesday, 21 May 2024
- **Round Table AGM** – Sunday, 19 May 2024 at 4:45pm (Perth time)

In addition, the **Australian Braille Authority (ABA) Annual Meeting** will be held on Saturday, 18 May 2024.

Registrations – Early Bird Registrations are open and close on Thursday, 29 February 2024

To register please use the [on-line delegate registration form](#), which is available as a link from the [2024 Round Table Conference page](#) on the Round Table website. Please note this year we have introduced an early-bird registration which runs until Thursday, 29 February 2024. After this date general registration fees will apply.

Conference Updates

Conference updates will be posted to the [2024 conference page](#) on the Round Table website and Round Table mailing list.

Expression of Interest for Families and Educator Stories

Source: Gina Schmidt

Gina Schmidt, one of our much-loved SPEVI members and mum of three adult children who are blind (and were once supported by Victorian VTs and SVRC), is embarking on a personal venture to gather stories from families about their experience of having a child/children/grandchildren who have a vision impairment.

Please read the attached Expression of Interest letter for more information, and contact Gina Schmidt ginamarie@westnet.com.au if you are interested in participating.

EOI Letter

My name is Gina Schmidt (or Gina Marie) and the mother of three adult children who are blind. Some of you may know them.

I have been supporting and gathering families of children who have a vision impairment (of any description or reason) for nearly 30 years. I have a diploma in Community Services, and am a parent/support person member of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI).

I am embarking on a new venture, but long-held dream, to gather stories from families about their experience of having a child/children/grandchildren who have a vision impairment. My goal is to publish a book/s of these stories, whether they be about the general experience or some specific aspect of this life experience. I would like these stories to provide opportunity to bring families together, make known the community that they are already part of, and reduce the feeling of isolation. I am hopeful that this will also provide an opportunity that will be embraced by those in the medical, educational, supporting, governmental, philanthropic and other communities to be informed regarding the experience and actual needs of families and their children.

This is a personal project, not a SPEVI one (though you may have received this EOI through a SPEVI or other mail list), and my intention is to follow up interested contacts in 2024. The themes within the book will be drawn from the stories told, rather than determined by myself or any other.

This qualitative work, if received well, may be developed into other resources (e.g. audio, video) which can also be used/shared with others. This is something to be decided on at a later date, and permission for use of stories will be sought upon follow up or when new opportunities arise.

If you, or your client, would like to share some of your/their experience with me with the aim of having it published with the shared stories of others, please email ginamarie@westnet.com.au or phone 0429 970 052. My intention is to begin making contact with families around mid 2024.

I look forward to hearing from some of you – there are already families who want to be part of this project.

Gina Schmidt

And Finally ...

Did you know that tiny mites help keep your eyes safe from infections by removing dirt and debris from your eyelashes and eyebrows.