

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 7

Monday 14th May 2012

This issue was edited by Lyn Robinson, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

Professional Development Activities for Term 2, 2012

Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 BrailleNote for absolute beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC 11.30-1.00 JAWS for absolute beginners Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Braille Maths for beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 16 May
Including Students who are Blind or have Low Vision in Physical Education Programs presented by Charlie Roberts, SVRC (see issue 5 for flier)	Friday 18 May
Art4Kids with VI? presented by Michael Donnelly, SVRC (see issue 5 for flier)	Tue 22 May
VT Day – Term 2 (A flier is attached at the end of this edition of the Bulletin)	Mon 28 May
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 Electronic Magnification Marion Blazé, SVRC 11.30-1.00 Setting up the Computer for Low Vision Users Lyn Robinson, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Introducing Braille to Beginners Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 30 May
Support for Students with Vision Impairments – The Psychologist’s Role Presented by Geoff Bowen, Psychologist, SVRC	Monday 4 June
Skill Power Workshops 9.30-11.00 BrailleNote (not for absolute beginners) Ramona Mandy, Humanware 11.30-1.00 JAWS (not for absolute beginners) Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC 1.30-3.30 Braille Music for VTs and Music Teachers Lea Nagel, SVRC	Wednesday 13 June
Dot Power – Literacy-based activities for braille readers from pre-school to grade 3	Tue 19 June
25th National Braille Music Camp – NSW	23-30 June

The program for 2012 is available at: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Acalendar2012.doc>

Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day

Don't miss the Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre on Monday 28th May. Hear about Lil Deverell's PhD with Bionic Vision Australia. Her task is to develop a battery of mobility measures which will help to indicate how retinal implant surgery impacts on functional vision. A project within this brief is to find out how various vision specialists (including Visiting Teachers) recognise that someone has functional vision, particularly at the very low vision end of the spectrum. This is your chance to contribute your professional knowledge to the project so come along to this great PD Day.

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Report on PD Day - “Educational support for vision impaired students with additional impairments”

by Marion Blazé

Thank you VTs for promoting this PD day to your special school teachers - we had 20 participants at SVRC for an information-packed day. We began the day being fed yoghurt under blind-fold, moved on to vision impairments, their assessment and implications, looked at cortical vision impairment, classroom strategies, computer resources, including a heap of resources for iPads, steps to building independence and then dealing with challenging behaviours. We even shared recipes for gloop and silly putty! Comments confirmed how much the participants valued every session.

The following note on the back of an evaluation sheet, sums up how people felt: “Thank you for this professional development day. I have learnt a heap of things today. I feel re-energized to work with my vision impaired student but this time with a wealth of knowledge and resources. Just what I have been requiring! Great job!”

Blind Passion Leads Caleb to the field

Herald Sun, April 18, 2012

Footy-mad Caleb loves the game, despite not being able to see it.

The 10-year-old ran on to Herne Hill Reserve, Geelong, for his first Auskick game last night after beating a form of cancer in 2005 that blinded him.

“I really wanted to play because I love football,” he said.

His mum Danielle said it was a proud day for the family. She choked back tears as she spoke of the grace of St Joseph’s Football Club, which “accepted Caleb as a normal kid”.

Ms Neyenhuis was surrounded by family and friends, including grandparents who travelled from South Australia for the evening.



Pictured above: Caleb, in the centre, with teammates Mason, left and Branson, right.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Rally

Report by Lyn Robinson

Rallies were held around the country in support of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on Monday 30th April 2012. Melbourne has never seen so many people with disabilities and their supporters in one place. Representatives of service providers and people with all types of disabilities and impairments converged on Federation Square as Stella (presenter extraordinaire with a disability) joked about making an entrance “Hugh Jackman style” via flying fox. Luckily, she said, they couldn’t get the rigging up in time!

Politicians from all sides of politics spoke in support of NDIS. Graeme Innes, Human Rights Disability Discrimination Commissioner, gave a fact filled speech which included the statistic that 43% of people with a disability live on or below the poverty line in Australia.

To find out more about the NDIS and join the list of supporters go to:

<http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/>

Robot sensing and smart phones help blind navigate

Thanks to Emily White, Visiting Teacher, WMR for sending this article in.

ROBOTS need help navigating their surroundings and sophisticated location systems to keep track of their position. Now the same technologies are being adapted to help blind people navigate indoor and outdoor spaces independently.

One such system, being developed by Edwige Pissaloux and colleagues at the Institute of Intelligent Systems and Robotics at the Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris, France, consists of a pair of glasses equipped with cameras and sensors like those used in robot exploration. The system, unveiled at a talk at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this month, produces a 3D map of the wearer’s environment and their position within it that is constantly updated and displayed in a simplified form on a handheld electronic Braille device. It could eventually allow blind people to make their way, unaided, wherever they want to go, says Pissaloux. “Navigation for me means not only being able to move around by avoiding nearby obstacles, but also to understand how the space is socially organised – for example, where you are in relation to the pharmacy, library or intersection,” she says.

This is not the only robotics project to be re-purposed. Software that predicts how far a robot has travelled based on information from its on-board sensors is being modified to track a person’s movements based on their stride length. The low-cost system, being developed by Eelke Folmer and Kostas Bekris at the University of Nevada in Reno would help blind people navigate around buildings using just a smartphone.

The new system uses freely available 2D digital indoor maps and the smartphone’s built-in accelerometer and compass. Directions are provided using synthetic speech. To help the smartphone calibrate and adjust to a user’s individual stride length, the user must initially use touch to detect the landmarks in their environment, such as corridor intersections, doors and elevators. The system will be presented at the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation in St Paul, Minnesota, in May.

Source: <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21428625.700-robot-sensing-and-smartphones-help-blind-navigate.html>

Duxbury's Joe Sullivan Honoured

From DuxNews List.

WASHINGTON, DC – On Monday, May 7th, the White House will honor 14 individuals as Champions of Change for leading the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math for people with disabilities in education and employment.

The Champions of Change program was created as a part of President Obama's "Winning the Future" initiative. Each week, a different sector is highlighted and groups of Champions, ranging from educators to entrepreneurs to community leaders, are recognized for the work they are doing to serve and strengthen their communities.

Joseph Sullivan is president of Duxbury Systems, Inc., a small company that has specialized in software for braille since its founding in 1975, and which now employs two blind people and provides braille translation software in more than 130 languages worldwide.

Joe has also served on many braille-related committees, including the Literary Braille and Computer Braille Committees of the Braille Authority of North America, was chair of the technical design subcommittee of the Unified English Braille (UEB) project coordinator of the International Council on English Braille (ICEB), and currently serves on the UEB Maintenance Committee of ICEB.

Joe believes that braille is the key to literacy for blind persons, that literacy is the key to an informed citizenry, and that an informed citizenry is essential to civilization.

Audio Description News

The recent Federal Budget contained 1.5 million dollars to fund the ABC to trial audio description. We look forward to some audio described productions from the ABC in the near future!

Water for Elephants with Audio Description

From Janene Sadhu – Vision Australia

It's innovative, it's entertaining and it's a real bargain at a cost of \$5 per person! The Dandenong Low Vision Group in conjunction with Reading Cinemas has pleasure in presenting Water for Elephants, rated PG-13. Don't worry if you can't see the screen, the movie is fully accessible as the audio description track will be presented as part of the movie.

All you need to do is go to the Reading Cinemas, Level 2, Dandenong Plaza, enter from McCrae Street Dandenong, on Tuesday 31 July. Please arrive in good time for an 11 o'clock start then sit back and enjoy the movie.

Braille Book for PM

The Prime Minister Julia Gillard was presented with Braille and audio copies of the book "Are we there yet?" as part of the National Year of Reading

Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes presented Julia Gillard with braille and audio books of the book at a special presentation. Graeme spoke of the importance reading for all, regardless of disability or impairment. To hear the presentation go to YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=767xxgNI0Dc>

Ready for Work

Getting young people with disabilities ready for study and work: A guide for parents

This resource was developed by Michelle Hayter, Nicole Ison and Katie Hayes, of the National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) program hosted by the University of Western Sydney, through a Strategic Project Grant funded by the Australian Government.

The resource aims to support parents and carers of young people with disability through the process of transition from high school into post-secondary education, training and work. The new resource was developed to help address the gap in information available to parents and carers through this challenging phase of raising young people with disability.

The resource was developed from evidence from research and best practice. Across the country over 120 NDCOs, parents, educators and other stakeholders contributed to the design and development of the resource and we extend our thanks to those who gave their time and expertise.

The new resource includes a guidebook and a range of supplementary factsheets including comprehensive content on topics such as:

- top ten tips for parents and carers;
- explanation of the transition process and elements of good transition planning;
- advice on the positive roles parents can play during transition, navigating their changing parental roles during the process, overcoming common transition barriers; and working constructively with professionals involved;
- overall description of post-school pathways and detailed facts on each specific option, including entry processes, how to access disability support and where to find more information; and
- facts on disability and privacy rights and responsibilities of young people with disability.

The Guide, and the 13 supplementary fact sheets, are available for free download from <http://www.uws.edu.au/ndco/getreadytoptips>.

Links to Apps for Vision Impairment

Here are some websites which have reviews of apps for “Vision Impairment”.

General

Apps for Blind and Visually Impaired

<http://appadvice.com/applists/show/apps-for-the-visually-impaired>

Apps that work with VoiceOver - David Woodbridge

<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/docs/app%20store%20iOS%20VoiceOver%20friendly%20apps.rtf>

Vision Stimulation

VI and iPad Apps – Christine Roman-Lantzy

<http://vifamilynetwork.org.au/resources/ipad-apps/>

Cortical Visual Impairment

Appolutely Engaging and Educational – Eric Jerman

<http://www.perkins.org/resources/webinars/>

Arts News

Travel to London

Arts Access Australia, the British Council and Accessible Arts NSW are pleased to launch a new professional development opportunity for Australian artists and artworkers with disability.

Unlimited UK will subsidise a group of Australians to travel to London in September to attend the “Festival of the World”, part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

This international arts and disability gathering will showcase Unlimited, the largest program of work by artists with disability ever commissioned. Whilst in London, participants will also be able to attend a range of panel discussions, meetings and workshops.

Participants will then share their experiences at the Arts Activated Conference in Sydney on the 30th and 31st October 2012.

“Unlimited UK will give local artists and artworkers the chance to learn from and interact with their peers from all over the world,” said CEO of Arts Access Australia, Kate Larsen.

Unlimited UK is open to Australian artists and artworkers with disability who are involved in any area of the arts. Applications close on the 1st of June 2012.

An application form is available via: <http://ymlp.com/zFhJnL>
Phone 0478 803 920 (voice / text)

Email emma@artsaccessaustralia.org

Web <http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org>

Self Portraits from Around the World

The Kennedy Centre proudly presents a unique opportunity for student-artists with disabilities from around the world to present their artwork side-by-side in an online exhibition. A selection of artwork from the online entries will be chosen for a live exhibition at the United States Department of Education in Washington D.C.

Children with disabilities are encouraged to create a self-portrait that illustrates who they are and who they will be. Will we see a snapshot of where they are today? In their future dream profession? As a fantasy superhero or imaginative superstar? Self-portraits allow artistic freedom for children with disabilities to celebrate the unique qualities they have to share with the world!

Deadline to submit: July 15, 2012

Who may submit: Children with a disability, ages 5 to 18

Artwork specifications: Two-dimensional works only, no larger than 18 x 24 inches

For more information please visit the website at
<http://www.artsonia.com:80/museum/collections/detail.asp?coll=259>

Speaker for iPad

The following describes how to fix a “Mickey Mouse Ear” onto an iPad. Looks funny but apparently works!

How Do You Fix The iPad Speaker? With A Mickey Mouse Ear

<http://www.fastcodesign.com/1669606/how-do-you-fix-the-ipad-speaker-with-a-mickey-mouse-ear>



Staff News

Deb has arrived back from Nepal with lots of exciting stories about her travels. We hope to hear more and see some photos soon. [Note from Deb: I have returned to a workplace that has bubbled along without me – many thanks to all staff who picked up my pieces in my absence!!!]

Student News

Two exciting camps are coming up for students in the near future. Group B students James and Mohamed are going to the Braille Music Camp with Support Skills Music Teacher, Christine Casey. The students are looking forward to participating in choir, instrumental and braille music classes, not to mention the adventure of travelling up to Mittagong NSW by train.

The other camp coming up is Space Camp with two students from Group D, Zac and Brendan travelling to Huntsville Alabama. The group is well into their fund raising efforts with the fundraising concert “Shoot for the Moon” this Thursday 17th May at Chapel off Chapel. To book phone 03 8290 7000 or go to the website: <http://www.chapelloffchapel.com.au>

Herograms for Dan

Some students read about Dan Pritchard’s selection for the Australian Blind Cricket team in Bulletin 5 and have decided to send him some herograms. Here they are:

Dear Dan,

Congratulations for being selected for the Australian cricket team.

Please win for the Aussies and bowl lots of poms out.

I hope you don’t get bowled out.

From Claudia Year 4

Dear Dan

I like your story about your life and your goals you achieved. You don't have to see well to do what you love. Good luck with your studies and good luck, I hope you win for Australia.

Emily Year 5

Dear Dan

I really want you to win and get lots of wickets. Congratulations on all your awards and have a great time in England. Go Aussies go. We have the same eye condition.

Please send me a letter to tell me if you win.

Brodie Year 2

Dear Dan

I hope you win for Australia. Please win the Ashes. Good luck.

I hope you have a good look around England while you are there. The kids in your grade are probably thinking, "How did he get to play in the Ashes while we are stuck at school?"

I wish you so much luck.

Corey Year 4B

Support Skills News

From Annette Godfrey- Magee

On Friday 25th May a guest speaker from CentreLink has been organized to attend the SVRC Support Skills Program to discuss the entitlements and concessions offered to low vision and blind students. This is an initiative of the students in Group D. Perri, team leader from Box Hill CentreLink, will be speaking to the group from 1:45 - 2:45 pm. Following the students presentation a warm invitation is extended to parents and "interested others" to attend the SVRC at 2:45 when Perri will present additional information to parents and answer any questions pertaining to entitlements and concessions. This is a wonderful opportunity to have access to Centrelink personnel.

Finally

And finally thanks to everyone for their contributions to this Bulletin, especially Emily White, Marion Blazé, Annette Godfrey-Magee and Garry Stinchcombe.

If you have something you would like included in "The Bulletin" please email Lyn Robinson lynrobin@svrc.vic.edu.au

To read the Bulletin online: <http://www.svrc.vic.edu.au/Abulletin.shtml>

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day Term 2

Monday 28 May 2012
9.30am to 3.30pm

9.00	Registration
9.30	I know this child can see SOMETHING! Lil Deverell is undertaking a PhD with Bionic Vision Australia. Her task is to develop a battery of mobility measures which will help to indicate how retinal implant surgery impacts on functional vision. A project within this brief is to find out how various vision specialists (including VTs) recognise that someone has functional vision, particularly at the very low vision end of the spectrum. This is your chance to contribute your professional knowledge to the project.
10.30	Morning Tea
11.00	Using FSReader to access the Daisy books which support the Jaws Program Garry Stinchcombe, SVRC
11.30	Project Slate - Workshop on "best practice" in teaching students with VI Staff of the SVRC
12.00	Bright ideas from Western Region Emily White, VT WMR
12.30	Lunch
1.15	Educational support for VI in sunny Queensland Lea Clarke, CRT VT WMR
1.25	Quality Assurance Framework – Where are we now? Report back from Staff of the SVRC
1.45	Art and blindness: an investigation into the experience of blindness through art Erica Tandori, PhD student CERA
2.15	The importance of participation in sport and recreation for students with vision impairments Rod Pritchard (father of VI student and keen blind cricket coach) & Paul van Oosten (Coordinator, Pathways Development, Australian Paralympic Committee)
3.30	Program close

Cost: \$44.00 Registration is essential and please let us know of any dietary requirements

Phone 9841 0242, fax 9841 0878 or email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au



Parking

There is no parking available at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre or Heatherwood School. Please park **in the lower carpark** behind the Donvale Sports Centre - the building beside (to the north) of the SVRC. You can then walk through the double gates and the Statewide Vision Resource Centre is to the left.

Public Transport: Bus and train

The nearest and most accessible train station is Nunawading. Trains on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines run through this station. A bus also runs from Box Hill Central which also has good train access.

The Statewide Vision Resource Centre is serviced by **3 bus routes**.

- 902 Smart Bus, Chelsea to Airport West
- 271 Box Hill to Ringwood
- 273 Nunawading to The Pines

The 902 and 273 both leave from the Nunawading station. It is only an 8 minute trip to the SVRC.

