

The Bulletin

Number 2, Friday 20th February 2015

Professional development activities for 2015

See the SVRC website for more information and fliers.

- Monday 2 March **New and Newish VT Day**
- Tuesday 3 March **Maria Elford's Retirement afternoon tea** from 3.00 to 5.30pm at SVRC – please RSVP or call Dianne for more information on 9841 0242
- Saturday 14 March **Cricket: World Cup Action Day**
- Saturday 21 March **Family Futures Forum** 9.30am-12.30pm
- Saturday 28 March **Big Arts Picnic**
- Wednesday 29 April **Art4Kids with VI? @ Heidi** – more information coming soon

Family futures forum – Saturday 21 March 2015

'Family Futures Forum' will provide an opportunity for families to talk with service providers.

When: Saturday 21 March from 9.30am to 12.30pm

Where: Vision Australia, Kooyong in the 'Community Centre'

Who: parents of birth to school-aged children with vision impairments

SVRC Big Arts Picnic – Saturday 28 March 2015

Join us for a picnic on day 1 of the holidays at the fabulous venue to the south east of Melbourne.

When: Saturday 28 March from 12 noon to 3.30-4.00pm

Where: McClelland Gallery & Sculpture Park, Langwarrin

Who: students with vision impairments and their families, SVRC staff and VTs



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Braille Day 2015: Report

In a slight departure from our “normal” presentation mode, we ran the Braille Day last Monday at two sites simultaneously! The main venue, with 35 participants, was the SVRC; a second group of 18 participants joined us via Polycom at the Footscray office of SWVR and were supported by local Visiting Teachers from that region.



Brainchild of Gabby Graf and in response to feedback from participants and potential participants during last year, the Footscray “mid-station” offered the opportunity for locals to get together for networking purposes AND a also saved them travel time!

We thank Gabby for being the Polycom trouble-shooter on the day and for thoroughly pre-planning with staff from SVRC and SWVR ensuring a smooth delivery for the off-site participants. SVRC staff are sure to get better and standing on one spot(!) and timing sessions to fit with a remote group

Great feedback was received from both locations including the following comments:

- Thank you for a very informative day. Good balance of listening, interaction and active participation.
- Today was fabulous. This is my first experience teaching a VI student. Today’s PD has given me direction for my student and the knowledge that she’s able to achieve just as much as the others.
- I have come away with a lot to think about and some terrific ideas I can’t wait to put in place!

Photo (above) shows the Footscray group watching the presentation via Polycom; and (below) the results of an activity under blindfold – “No David”!



Reflections: SPEVI Conference 2015

Some interesting statistics:

- 250 delegates attended
- 34 parents / family members
- 20 Victorian VTs and/or staff from SVRC
- 33 New Zealanders
- 14 delegates from other Pacific nations including Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea
- 4 keynote speakers – 2 Melbourne-based and 2 international experts
- speakers from Australia, Greece, New Zealand, Poland, Singapore, UK, USA
- 100+ papers presented including 9 which were peer-reviewed

Reflection from Frances Gentle:

A standout feature of the conference for me was the attendance of 34 parents, and the two days of parent-focussed sessions that included workshops and presentations by Susan LaVenture, Karen Wolffe, Frances Mary d'Andrea, Bob Marek and others.

The conference dinner at the Victorian Arts Centre was a lot of fun, with the masquerade theme producing some innovative costumes.

The conference was a world-class event, and all praise goes to Rachel Morgan and the Conference Organising Committee, and Marilyn Dayman and the staff of All Occasions Management.

SPEVI Office Bearers for 2015-2017:

- Frances Gentle, President
- Paul Pagliano, Immediate Past President and currently filling the position of Vice President
- Nicole Anthonysz, Secretary
- Hellen Riley, Membership Secretary
- David Rice, Treasurer
- Sue Silveira, Public Officer
- Phia Damsma, Access Coordinator, Web and List Administrator
- Karen Gilligan and Jodie Hoger, Blog Administrators
- Nicole Donaldson, Political Advocate
- Leanne Smith, Representative, Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities
- Ben Clare, ICEVI Representative on the SPEVI committee
- Sheila Klinger, Executive Member
- Brian Conway, Executive Member

Reflections from Sandy George, VI Parent Group and AFA Victorian Rep

Source: AFA Vic eNews, February 2015

A key message (from Keynote speaker, Karen Wolffe) that was repeated throughout the conference was to have high expectations for children with low vision and not allow them to do less because of their vision. Karen suggests you let kids dream without judgment - after all most kids want to be either a fireman or a ballet dancer and very few actually do – don't limit their dreams because of their vision and create an expectation that they will work. Encourage them to do all the things sighted kids do, to have responsibilities and complete jobs, ride bikes, have fun with peers and develop as many skills as they can. This way they stay in touch with social groups and are less likely to become isolated. Young VI adults who go on to successful careers often state that as children they were made to do everything their siblings did (from jobs around the house to activities and sports) and although it was sometimes difficult, they think it taught them resiliency and determination to succeed. Give them as many opportunities as possible and let them dream.

3-D printing assists blind science student

Report from VT, Deb Davidson:

Stephen Elford, a secondary school teacher of a blind student has been making some remarkable resources for his senior secondary student.

Stephen is clearly passionate about his student grasping important science and mathematical concepts, and through experimentation and persistence he has used a 3D printer to make a braille periodic table, as well as braille dice with the braille numbers embossed on the various sides, rather than simply tactile dots to represent the number as is commonly seen on tactile dice. Stephen had 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 sided braille dice to demonstrate at his presentation and explained that he had worked hard to ensure the dice were perfectly balanced and simple to read for a blind student.



While the dots on the periodic table were sharp to the touch, Stephen reported that his student was able to read the braille without difficulty and it was the most effective method that he had found to develop his student's conceptual understanding of the periodic table.

More information about the materials which Stephen is producing and selling is available from his website: www.eduelfie.com.au/

Access Technology Support for People with Dyslexia

Geoff Bowen has been researching access technology options for students with vision impairments and dyslexia, and recommends 'Assistive technology solutions for students and adults with dyslexia': www.atdyslexia.com/assistive-technology/

Content developer, Jamie Martin, notes: "Assistive technology for people with dyslexia includes text-to-speech apps, dictation software, word prediction programs, electronic graphic organizers, and numerous tools that support note taking and study skills. In addition to the integrated accessibility features of various operating systems, there are many desktop programs, web-based tools, and iOS apps that are beneficial to dyslexics."

Links are organised under the following headings:

- Text-to-speech
- Dictation
- Reading and literature
- Writing, spelling and phonics
- Word prediction
- And more

Jamie introduces iPad Apps for Dyslexia in a series of training materials webinar which can be found on his website.

Siri Commands for Dictation

Command	Action	Before	After
New line	Move to the next line		
New paragraph	Start a new paragraph		
Cap	Capitalise the next word	I like 'cap' sunshine	I like Sunshine
Caps on ... caps off	Capitalise a section of text	'caps on' twenty types of flower 'caps off'	20 Types of Flower
All caps	Make the next word all uppercase	I 'all caps' love summer	I LOVE summer
All caps on ... all caps off	Make part of what you say uppercase	I 'all caps on' love summer 'all caps off'	I LOVE SUMMER
No caps	Make the next word lowercase	I like 'no caps' Capitals	I like capitals
No caps on ... no caps off	Make sure part of what you say is all lowercase	We like the cities 'no caps' London and Sydney 'no caps off' the most	We like the cities london and sydney the most
Space bar	Prevent a hyphen from appearing in a normally hyphenated word		
No space	Prevent a space between words		
No space on ... no space off	Prevent a section of text from having spaces between words		
"Period" or "full stop"	Place a "." at the end of a sentence		
Dot	.	The number pi is three 'dot' one four	The number pi is 3.14
"Ellipsis" or "dot dot dot"	...		
Comma	,		
Double comma	,		
"Quote" or "quotation mark"	"		
"Quote ... end quote" or "quote ... close quote"	Place quotes around a section of text	She said 'quote' see you next week 'end quote'	She said "see you next week"
Apostrophe	'		
Exclamation point	!		
Question mark	?		
Ampersand	&		
Asterisk	*		

Command	Action	Before	After
Open parenthesis	(
Close parenthesis)		
Dash	-	This dash is dash my dash cheese	This - is - my - cheese (note the difference in spacing between this and when saying hyphen)
Hyphen	-	This 'hyphen' is 'hyphen' my 'hyphen' cheese	This-is-my-cheese (note the difference in spacing between this and when saying dash)
Em dash	—		
Underscore	=		
Percent sign	%		
Copyright sign	©		
Dollar sign	\$		
Cent sign	¢		
Degree sign	°		
Caret	^		
At sign	@		
Greater than sign	>		
Less than sign	<		
Forward slash	/		
Back slash	\		
"Smiley" or "smiley face" or "smile face"	: -)		
"Frowny" or "frowny face" or "frown face"	: - (
"Winky" or "winky face" or "wink face"	: -)		
E.g. (pronounced as "e g")	e.g.	'e g' when you learn to ride a bike	E.G. when you learn to ride a bike
i.e. (pronounced as "i e")	i.e.	'i e' when you learn to ride a bike	I.e. when you learn to ride a bike

Source and more tips: www.siriuserguide.com/siri-dictation-guide/

Stay Still, Squeaky!

As was recently announced at the 2015 SPEVI conference, not-for-profit Sonokids Australia has released its first Ballyland eBook for iPad and Android.

“Stay Still, Squeaky”, featuring one of Ballyland’s main characters, is available from the Apple iBooks Store. Stay Still, Squeaky is an accessible, interactive, audio eBook that does not require vision. The story and its fun effects are carried by the audio. However, like all Sonokids programs, the design is inclusive, meaning that all children can enjoy it together.

The eBook requires the child to swipe and to tap or touch the screen.

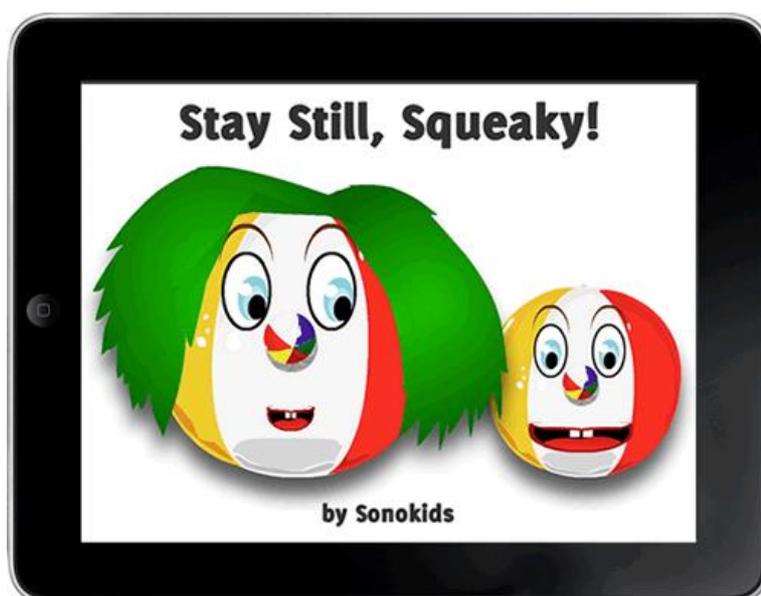
Special Features:

- Safe gesture support for independent use by young children who are blind or have low vision
- Keeping the Menu closed helps to avoid the child accidentally touching the page-selection or other Menu items on the screen
- No reading skills needed
- Spoken by well-known voice-actor
- Does not require the use of VoiceOver
- Simple and colourful line images with clear contrast
- Inclusive design
- No previous experience with touch screen devices required
- No time limit to respond
- Perfect for use in an inclusive Early Learning environment
- Theme can be easily tied in with real life activities and curriculum
- Children who have experienced playful learning with Ballyland enjoy this special story about well-loved Squeaky, adding basic technology skills on a touch screen tablet (eBook) to their prekeyboarding skills (software for Windows PC or Mac computers)

Learning outcomes:

- Introduction to use of touch screen device
- Cause-and-effect
- Social and personal skills
- Memory skills
- Anticipation – recurrent line which child can deliver
- Listening skills (“If you touch the screen when I say NOW” makes the child slow down and listen)
- Socialisation and inclusion
- Independence and empowerment

Pictured right is the cover of the eBook, showing Squeaky and his mum (who can be easily identified with her bright green hair).



For more information, visit www.ballyland.com.

App: VoiceDream Writer

VoiceDream Writer is a writing tool which gives feedback as you type. It uses voice output but will also accept voice input and alerts you when you make a mistake.

This link has a video which demonstrates how it works: www.voicedream.com/writer/

Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired

Source: VIP-I List

Semester 1 - 2015 Courses from Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired, also known as CAVI, are now available. This course offers employment strategies and skills for the blind, taught by the blind.

Courses include:

- IT Essentials
- Intro To Networking
- Building Websites With HTML 5
- Getting the most out of Word Press
- Audio Editing Fundamentals, Single Track or Multi-track
- Introduction to Linux With The Raspberry Pi
- MS Word Essentials
- More

Course schedule: <http://wiki.cucacat.org/>

Blind Cricket Catches Cricket World Cup Fever

Information from Rod Pritchard, President, Victorian Blind Cricket Association

The first ball of the 2015 Cricket World Cup will be bowled in less than ten days from now. The Victorian Blind Cricket Association is helping Blind and Vision Impaired Primary and Secondary School Students to get into the swing of things and catch some of the Cricket World Cup Action with our own World Cup Action Day on Saturday 14th March 2014.

Date: Saturday 14th March

Time: 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Venue: A central Melbourne location to be confirmed

To participate in this amazing Blind Cricketing event, simply register your expressions of interest by completing an Expression of Interest and Media Release Forms and return by email to VBCA by Monday 9th March 2014. We will then be in contact with all applicants to confirm the final details. Please note that the provision of Media Consent is a conditional requirement that must be met in order to participate in this event.

Come in the colours of your favourite Cricketing Nation and join in the celebrations and excitement of the 2015 World Cup Blind Cricket Style. Blind Cricket, a game for everyone – come see the way we play!

Q&A: Braille font

Q: How can I download the Duxbury braille font?

A: The braille font used to be a separate free download from the Duxbury website but this has been discontinued. To obtain the font, download the free demo version of DBT and the font is included. Visit www.duxburysystems.com or contact the SVRC for assistance.

Q&A: Using NVDA for Egyptian Hieroglyphics

Q: Is it possible to use NVDA to access and produce hieroglyphics.

A: If the original hieroglyphics are written as Unicode, it should be possible to add a description to be read aloud in NVDA:

1. Enter the symbol in Word, e.g. 13000 Alt-X
2. Copy the symbol.
3. In NVDA, go to Preferences, Speech Dictionaries, Default Dictionary.
4. Select Add.
5. Paste the symbol in the "pattern" field and the description you want to have voiced (e.g. "kneeling man") in the "replacement" field.
6. Click "OK" twice.

Round Table funding available

Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Inc (Round Table) has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services' National Disability Conference Initiative 2014-15 grant, administered under the Disability, Mental Health and Carers Programme. The purpose of the grant is to help offset the financial cost to self-funded individuals with a print disability wishing to attend Round Table's annual conference, which, in 2015, is to be held in Adelaide from 2 to 5 May.

For more information, or to lodge an application, contact Round Table.

Upcoming event for children and families with albinism

From Sandy George

The first AFA Victorian event for 2015 will be "Explore the Geelong Waterfront"

When: Sunday 15th March 2015

Meet at: "The Carousel" between 10.30 and 11am (1 Eastern Beach Rd)

Lunch at: "Taco Bills" between 12.00 and 2.00pm (99 Corio St)

Free time to explore further – perhaps stroll along the promenade to the wading pool, swimming enclosure, playground and café for coffee, swim and play at Eastern Beach. You could also stay in the waterfront area at a bar or café or go on to the Geelong Play Space (just off Eastern Park Circuit), a fantastic playground for all ages.

All venues are within walking distance, but there is parking available if you prefer not to walk.

Please contact Linda before Saturday 7th March to book at Taco Bills – phone Linda: 0400 456 774.

Support Skills receives cheque from MLC student fund-raiser

In October 2014, two students from Methodist Ladies' College organised a fabulous concert, with the aim of raising money especially to provide musical instruments for the SVRC Support Skills Program.

The concert turned out to be a huge success, not only in terms of the money raised, but it was also a fantastic experience with elaborate musical, theatrical and dance performances by many students from several schools. It was attended by a



small contingent of Support Skills staff: Jordie Howell, Garry Stinchcombe, Lea Nagel and Marion Blazé. We all had a surprisingly entertaining evening!

Lea and Jordie are currently working on a list of musical instruments to add to our collection – mainly percussion instruments – for use by Support Skills and Dot Power students.

News

- **Emily White** continues her work at the SVRC as a Support Skills teacher – but is also enrolled at the University of Melbourne working on her PhD.
- **Heidi Littleford** only has a few weeks of work left before she's off on Maternity Leave. **Dean Johnson** will be replacing her in NEVR.
- **Myriam Ash** is taking LSL during term 1 and will be replaced by **Hilary Frost** in metropolitan SEVR.

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Belinda McDonald, Phill McKenna and Garry Stinchcombe.