

The Bulletin

Number 3, Friday 25th February 2016

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Professional Development 2016

Please find fliers and further information about upcoming events on the SVRC website.

- **New Visiting Teacher Orientation Day:** Monday 29 February
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Tuesday 1 March (see below)
- **Including Students with Vision Impairments in PE & Sport:** Wednesday 9 March
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Wednesday 16 March (see below)
- **Family Futures Forum @ SVRC:** Saturday 19 March
- **Educational Support for VI Students with Additional Impairments:** Tuesday 19 April
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Wednesday 4 May (see below)
- **Art4Kids with VI?:** Wednesday 11 May
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Tuesday 17 May (see below)
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Wednesday 1 June (see below)
- **Skill Power Workshops:** Tuesday 14 June (see below)

From 1st March, online registrations for our Professional Learning days including Skill Power sessions will be open for business – please see the website!

Upcoming Skill Power Sessions (Terms 1 and 2, 2016)

Tuesday 1 March

9:30-11:00 JAWS for beginners – Lea Nagel

11:30-1:00 Audacity with JAWS – Glen Morrow

1:30-3:00 Quick Tac, Duxbury, Tactual Graphics – Lea Nagel

Wednesday 16 March

9:30-Braille Music first steps – Lea Nagel

11:30-1:00 VCE Special Provisions – Lyn Robinson

1:30-3:00 iPad (iOS) with Pages – Glen Morrow

Wednesday 4 May

9:30-11:00 Reformatting: what, when, how – Lea Nagel

11:30-1:00 BrailleNote basics – Lea Nagel

1:30-3:00 Organise your life with braille: Labelling with Garry Stinchcombe

Tuesday 17 May

9:30-11:00 Sony QX10 with iPad iOS file management and storage – Lyn Robinson

11:30-1:00 New iPad Plus – Glen Morrow

1:3- 2:30 Teaching iPad gestures – Lyn Robinson

Wednesday 1 June

9:30-11:00 Braille Music first steps – Lea Nagel

11:30-1:00 Victor Reader – Garry Stinchcombe

1:30-3:00 TBA

And if you can't find what you are looking for, please make a suggestion!

Wayfinding Inside Buildings: Coming to a building near you?

Have you heard of indoor navigation for people with vision impairments?

Low energy Bluetooth beacons are being set up within buildings to assist people with vision impairments to independently travel within buildings. iPhones and other devices can be used to listen to the information that is made available from the beacon via an app. The beacons are set up inside buildings – for example a beacon at each end of a corridor – and can be programmed to recognise the location of the iPhone holder and give them audio information about the physical environment as they walk down the corridor. BlindSquare BPS is one such app.

BlindSquare BPS stands for BlindSquare Beacon Positioning System. It is an indoor navigation system that can be used with BlindSquare, the popular GPS app for iOS devices developed for people who are blind or have low vision. It is used in more than 130 countries by more than 10,000 people.

The BPS consists of iBeacons installed in the building. These are small, low energy Bluetooth devices. Each of them broadcasts a unique ID that can be received by smartphones. The smartphone can detect the distance to an iBeacon by the strength of the signal being received. It will be strong if the smartphone is close to the iBeacon and weak when it is further away. In BlindSquare BPS several messages can be associated with an iBeacon. When the user launches BlindSquare, it will check for information about iBeacons near the user's location and, if available, download it to the user's device. When the iPhone receives the signal of an iBeacon, BlindSquare will read out to the user one of the messages associated with that iBeacon. If several messages are linked with an iBeacon, it will depend on various factors which of them is read out. These may be the user's walking direction, the direction they are pointing their device in, or the iBeacons that have been detected earlier. This helps BlindSquare BPS to be context aware. If the user leaves an underground station, an iBeacon can inform them that there is a shopping mall nearby. If the user leaves the shopping mall, the same iBeacon can direct them to the underground station.

BlindSquare BPS can be installed in any building to make it more accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. In a shopping centre, it can assist visually impaired people to find businesses or restaurants. Installed in a museum, it can not only help them to navigate the building, but also make the exhibits more accessible by providing audio information that is usually only available in print. If busses are equipped with iBeacons, they can announce their arrival to blind and low vision passengers, helping them to make sure they get onto the right bus.

iBeacons are battery powered. This ensures that BlindSquare BPS will also be available in the event of a power outage. Depending on the settings of the individual iBeacon, a battery may last two to four years.

For more information, see <http://blindsquare.com/indoor/>. This link includes video of a woman wearing bone-conducting headphones (so she can still hear environmental sounds) navigating a shopping centre based on the audio instructions.

10 Things You Probably Don't Know About Braille

Source: <http://www.perkins.org/stories/blog/10-things-you-probably-dont-know-about-braille>

Braille is named after its creator, Louis Braille, and uses combinations of raised dots to spell out letters and punctuation. Around the world, people who are blind read braille with their fingertips and can write it using devices like the Perkins Brailier.

But that's not the whole story about braille. For example...

1. Braille started out as a military code called "night writing." It was developed in 1819 by the French army so soldiers could communicate at night without speaking or using candles. Fifteen-year-old French schoolboy Louis Braille learned about the code, and eventually developed the more usable, streamlined version of the braille alphabet we know today.
2. There's an asteroid named Braille. In 1999, NASA's Deep Space 1 probe flew past an asteroid while on its way to photograph the Borrelly comet. NASA named the asteroid "9969 Braille" in honour of Louis Braille.
3. Braille takes up more space than the traditional alphabet, so braille books are much larger than their print counterparts. "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" is 10 volumes in braille, the "New American Bible" is 45 volumes and "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary" is a shelf-hogging 72 volumes.
4. Braille is not a language. It's a tactile alphabet that can be used to write almost any language. There are braille versions of Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Hebrew and many other languages.
5. Most people who are blind don't know braille. In 2009, National Federation of the Blind cited statistics indicating that only 10 percent of Americans with blindness can read braille. That number has been falling as more people with visual impairments use audio books, voice-recognition software and other technology to read and write. However, the same study found that braille-literate people are more likely to attain higher levels of education and be employed.
6. There's a braille "Olympics." It's the annual Braille Challenge (see above) for students who are blind, sponsored by the Los Angeles-based Braille Institute. More than 1,400 students from the U.S. and Canada test their braille skills in categories like reading comprehension, proofreading and spelling. Winners in each age group walk away with monetary prizes – and braille bragging rights for a year.
7. Just because you're blind doesn't mean you don't have to learn math. Along with foreign languages, Mathematics can also be written and read in braille!
8. Braille is the surprise plot twist in the 2010 movie "The Book of Eli." In the movie, Denzel Washington plays a loner who wanders through a violent post-apocalyptic wasteland with the last known copy of the Bible. [Ed: spoiler alert] At the end, you find out that the Bible is in braille and Washington's character is blind.
9. There are two versions of braille – contracted and uncontracted. In uncontracted braille, every word is spelled out. Contracted braille is a "shorthand" version where common words are abbreviated, much like "don't" is a shorter version of "do" and "not." Many kids start with uncontracted braille and then learn the contracted version.
10. There's a good reason why braille is on the keypad buttons of drive-through ATMs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that all ATMs must be accessible to people with visual impairments, and drive-through ATMs aren't exempt. That's so passengers who are blind, travelling in the back seat of cars or taxis, can reach the ATM and independently make a transaction without assistance from the driver.

More about braille from Perkins: <http://www.perkins.org/stories/blog/category/braille-and-literacy>

VI Apps

Braille Challenge

The Braille Challenge is open to students who use braille in the USA, but the practise app can be downloaded for students elsewhere including Australia. It is a fun, motivational app designed to help students improve their reading speed and comprehension. VTs might like to use the app to challenge their students, and even encourage some mini competition between students.

Do give it a go! <http://www.brailleinstitute.org/braille-challenge-homepage.html>

Audio Description via App

Pixar is developing an app that will provide audio description via a smartphone app. The narration app automatically syncs with films from Pixar and Disney providing additional description of what's happening on the screen through headphones. Soon to be released, careful attention has been paid to the quality of the description, ensuring that it is objective e.g. "she smiled" rather than "she looked happy". For more visit: <http://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/02/pixar-is-making-an-app-that-illustrates-movies-for.html>

HelpKidzLearn

HelpKidzLearn have created 45 educational iPad and Android apps, designed to provide high contrasting animated images and sound effects to meet a range of special educational needs including switch access for those with physical disabilities

You can find out more about HelpKidzLearn at: <http://www.helpkidzlearn.com/apps>

Math Melodies

The SPEVI list recently included information about Math Melodies (by EveryWare Technologies). It is a free app for Apple and offers children an interactive way to learn basic math skills, in six chapters. It includes a game, a story (with sounds and music) and a math workbook. The app is designed to be accessible and entertaining both for sighted children and for children with vision impairments. The use of VoiceOver is required for users who are blind.

Download from the App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/en/app/math-melodies/id713705958?mt=8>

AppleVis

AppleVis has recently released a list of recommended apps for people who are blind or have low vision. From the website: "...these apps are intended to assist with everyday tasks, increase independence and generally make things easier. The list does not include games, as it is intended to highlight those apps which offer functionality and features that are not available from mainstream apps."

Some examples include:

- AccessNote is the official iOS notetaker from the American Foundation for the Blind
- The ColorDetect iPhone app gives you the possibility to detect colours in real time using augmented reality technology
- HumanWare Communicator, the first multilingual face-to-face conversation app for deaf-blind people.
- KNFB Reader converts printed text into high quality speech to provide accurate, fast, and efficient access to both single and multiple page documents with the tap of a button on the

iPhone. Picture accuracy is facilitated by a Field of View Report, Automatic Page Detection, and Tilt Control

- Never miss a smile. LISTERINE® Smile Detector uses your camera to detect when someone is smiling at you, so even if you can't see a smile – there's another way you can still feel one.

Read more at: <http://www.applevis.com/apps/ios-apps-for-blind-and-vision-impaired>

Upcoming CMS Camps

Issue 62 of Get About has recently arrived at the SVRC and it contains lots of lovely photos of students (and staff) having a very excellent CMS time! Upcoming camps include:

- 29-31 March – Junior Mobility Camp – “Risky Business”
- 27-29 June – Junior Mobility Camp – “Mobility Olympics”
- 19-22 September – Senior Mobility Camp
- Dates to be confirmed – Family Camp

For information and to register for the camps, please contact Laura Hunt on 9854 4547.

Relaxed Performances at Arts Centre Melbourne

Source: Arts Centre Melbourne email to schools

Relaxed performances welcome children with disability, sensory and learning challenges to the theatre. The production is designed to be ‘relaxed’ with lowered lighting and sounds at certain points in the show. Theatre doors remain open, a quiet area is available and a social story can be downloaded before you visit. The atmosphere is non-judgemental, noisy enthusiasm is embraced, so young audience members are able to be themselves with friends, family and carers.

Discover the magic of Victoria Opera in a relaxed performance at Arts Centre Melbourne.

- Pete the Sheep – Relaxed performance on Wednesday 27th July at 10.30am
<https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/whats-on/education/2016/pete-the-sheep>
- Cinderella – Relaxed performance on Tuesday 19 July at 1pm
<https://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/whats-on/education/2016/cinderella>

More information about Relaxed Performances: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UpIdekQsv8>

Round Table Conference

This year, the Round Table Conference is to be held in Melbourne – and registrations are now open.

When: 14-16 May

Where: Bayview on the Park, 50 Queens Road, Melbourne

Theme: “Access and engagement with the marketplace of information, technologies and learning”

Registrations: The online registration form is available as a link from the “2016 Round Table

Registrations close: 1 April 2016

Enquiries to: Marjorie Hawkings, Administration Officer, Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities Inc.

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Walk for Monash Children's Hospital

Source: <http://www.mchwalk.com.au/event/WalkForMonashChildrens2016>

Located in the south east of Melbourne, Monash Children's Hospital is one of the fastest growing paediatric corridors in the country. Construction of the 230 bed, 5 storey hospital commenced in July 2014 and will be opened in early 2017.

Team Ophthalmology is one of the groups raising money in the "Walk for Monash Children's Hospital 2016". The walk will be held in Jells Park on Sunday 6 March. Team member Chris Chen is a fundraising hopeful. Read more here:

<https://walkformonashchildrens2016.everydayhero.com/au/christine-2>

Good News Story

A former Support Skills student who is totally blind and has a mild intellectual disability has secured a full time job at a large secondary college. Congratulations to the student!!!

As Annette Godfrey-Magee reflected, "We wonder if this employment was made possible because this school has an alumnus who happened to be blind ... (from little things big things grow ... every encounter is a potential job interview.)"

Another Good News Story: The Grammys Embrace Braille!

Stevie Wonder announced the winner of the Song of the Year at this year's Grammys. The results were provided to him in braille and before he read them out on stage, he said, "We need to make every single thing accessible to every single person with a disability."

To see this moment, visit:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2016/02/15/stevie_wonder_reading_the_envelope_in_braille_was_grammys_2016_s_most_charming.html

Finally

Editors Deb Lewis and Lyn Robinson would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, in particular Toni Chilton, Phia Damsma, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Lea Nagel, Penny Stevenson, Garry Stinchcombe and the OzApple Listserv.