

The Bulletin

Number 9, Friday 25 June, 2021

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PD events

The 2021 [Professional Learning Calendar](#) is now available on the SVRC website. Most professional learning will continue to be online. Events are now on Eventbrite.

Wednesday Aug 10 [Educational Support of students who have low vision](#)

Providing practical strategies that teachers can use in their art classes to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or partially sighted.

Tuesday Oct 19 [Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille](#)

Providing practical support for school staff preparing to welcome and include a new student who will be learning to read using braille.

Tuesday Nov 23 [EXPO: Assistive Technology for students who are blind or partially sighted](#)

Showcasing and demonstrating assistive technologies that can promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or have low vision.

From the Manager

Source: Kim Foley, SVRC

SVRC is thrilled to announce that Sam Oxley is the successful candidate for the EVAC Education Officer role. This year Sam has been working one day a week at EVAC and four days a week as a NEVR VT – Vision. As of term 3, Sam will be working from Monday to Thursday and attending a CVI Course each Friday. Deb Davidson will also decrease her time fraction to four days a week and work Monday to Thursday until the end of the year. Therefore, we are able to offer an extended contract to Annette Godfrey-Magee for two days a week to continue to support Deb and Sam by ensuring well organised weekly EVAC clinics.

Visiting Teacher Community of Practice term dates have been organised until the end of the year so VTs will have an opportunity to plan their attendance in advance. The dates will also be emailed via Outlook Calendar invitations and SVRC teaching staff are keen to hear from you with possible topics for the future presentations.

Term 3:

1. Thursday July 22 - Using technology to access print
2. Tuesday August 3 - Creating accessible documents
3. Thursday August 26 - Print or braille
4. Tuesday September 14 - TBC

Term 4:

5. Thursday October 28
6. Tuesday November 9
7. Thursday December 2

The Statewide VT Working Party Group has met four times in the last two weeks to discuss the VT Review, the implementation process, and seeking feedback. SVRC feel privileged to have representation as a member of VT Review and we look forward to submitting feedback to the facilitators.

It has been a very tumultuous time for Victoria during term 2 with extended lockdowns and restrictions. Throughout this time SVRC has continued to deliver on educational programs, timely responses to the ever increasing requests for equipment and alternative formats while working from either home or onsite. SVRC will continue to remain open over the school holidays to continue to deliver on services throughout this time. If you are planning on visiting the centre during the holidays please ring in advance to ensure there is someone available to meet you at a mutually agreed time.

We wish you and your families a non-restricted holiday over the next two weeks.

SVRC Student Programs in Term 2, 2021

As for everyone, Term 2 has been more than a little disrupted by the ever-changing virus situation.

Support Skills started the term with all hands on deck, then had to move to online provision from June 4 onwards. The ever-creative and flexible SSP team have kept the program innovative and exciting for students and visitors, under the wonderful guidance of Di Bennett who is the 'Zoom guru', among her many other talents!

This term, we were thrilled to collaborate with AFL Blind and Ned Brewer-Maiga to run AFL workshops each Friday. Ned even continued to visit when we went online (and practical workshops became impossible), to talk to the students about AFL Blind opportunities. We continue to partner with Guide Dogs Victoria, running orientation and mobility sessions, and Vision Australia OTs running Daily Living Skills sessions. The latter usually involves cooking skills, but in lockdown, Leo ran a yoga workshop, having run online yoga for his own VA clients. We had an increasing number of VTs and school staff visit the program, both on-site and on-line. We even had a visit from an ex-SSP student, now living in Broome – he found it a bit chilly! We also had Claire Prado and Natalie Chan (4th year OT students from Monash) on board all term, completing their very exciting project on the accessibility of sexuality and relationship education for students with vision impairments. Many thanks to Claire and Natalie who were great to work with and produced a wonderful handbook as a resource to VTs and families. It has been emailed to VTs and SSP families. If you would like to receive it, please let us know. And, while Michael Donnelly took some well-deserved long service leave, we had the talented Ruth Donaldson working with students in the art room. They made anything from dream catchers to alfoil sculptures and Ruth kept us all informed about outdoor art exhibitions to enjoy. Thank you, Ruth, we hope very much to have the opportunity to work with you again!

We were only able to run one of our two Dot Power Days this term, the second being prevented by the lockdown. On May 11 our younger students (prep to Year 2) enjoyed a day looking at braille numbers including exploring the new Lego Braille Bricks. Thank you to the many VTs and school staff who participated with their students. Thank you also to the wonderful Dot Power Team who developed and ran a fabulous day.

For enquiries about SVRC's Student Programs, please contact Marion Blaze - marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au

Focus on Support Skills 2021

In Term 1, 2021, the focus for Support Skills was on leadership, with students being nominated for the opportunity to be leaders and to explore what makes a good leader.

In Term 2, our focus has been on technology. Staff and students have been steadily working on developing efficient technology skills including touch typing and key commands (the subject of a recent Community of Practice for VTs), and developing some very useful checklists of technology skills.

In Term 3, our focus will be on READING. All students and teachers have been asked and will be reminded to bring something to read to Support Skills. We want to ensure that all SSP students are reading, know how to get reading materials in a format that they can access (braille, eText, audio), and that they know that adults love reading too. Please talk to your students/children about what they are reading and how they are reading it.

Twice during the Support Skills day, we intend to 'DEAR' – Drop Everything And Read. This will involve all students and SVRC staff, and any visitors, too. So if you are coming along to SSP in Term 3, please bring your reading matter!

The CBCA [Book Week](#) is August 21 to 27, 2021 with the theme, 'Old worlds, new worlds, other worlds'. Hopefully we can explore this theme and the nominated book award books for the entire term.

As part of this theme, we will be offering braille lessons to any SSP parents who want them in the first session of the SSP day their child attends.



Equipment free to a good home

There are some items that are no longer of use to the Vision Technology Library, but are still functional enough that they may be of use to one of you. Below is a list of the items and some photos of a few of them. If you'd like something, please contact vision.tech.library@education.vic.gov.au to arrange collection.

Items:

- 3 x iView Magnifier. Batteries do not work, but magnifier functions when plugged in to power.
- 2 x Victor Reader Stream (old version)
- 2 x Romeo 25 Embosser
- 1 x Wooden Slantboard
- 1 x Smartview Xtend
- 1 x Franklin Language Master



Organising your LEGO Braille Brick Kit

The LEGO Braille Brick Kits have started leaving SVRC and going out to schools. One VT has come up with a great idea for arranging the bricks using disposable food containers. The Braille letters are arranged in stacks and grouped alphabetically in 3 containers, then the symbols are in their own container. This allows students to easily locate particular letters when using the kit.



Blind Cricket Goes Statewide

From: Daniel Pritchard, VBCA

Throughout Term 3, the Victorian Blind Cricket Association will be running a number of programs with the Statewide Vision Resource Centre and the Support Skills Program. This has been made possible through partnerships with Cricket Victoria and Woolworths.

All Victorian school aged students who are blind or have low vision have the opportunity to register to be a part of an amazing Blind Cricket Prize Give Away. Also, the students at the Support Skills Program will be able to participate in a fully inclusive Woolworths Blind Blast Cricket Program. This program includes all the fun games and activities jam packed into a standard Woolworth Junior Blast or Woolworths Master Blast session run right across schools and cricket clubs in Australia but, with adaptations to cater for students with different levels of vision. Each session will be ran by an Australian Blind Cricketer and former Support Skills Student.

Some prizes that will be on offer are still being finalised for the giveaway however, we can reveal that some things on offer include signed Australian uniforms and a visit to your school by Australian and Victorian Blind Cricket representatives.

To register for the Prize Give Away or to be involved in the sessions at Support Skills, simply fill in the online form at www.vbca.org.au/sign_and_win. For further information, contact the Victorian Blind Cricket Association via email at secretary@vbca.org.au.

Registrations for the Prize Giveaway will close on Wednesday the 22nd of September, 2021.

Further information about prizes on offer will be sent out throughout Term 3.

And finally ...

Here are the answers to the questions from SVRC's Biggest Morning Tea Music Trivia Quiz:

1. Which Australian band was started by the brothers Angus and Malcolm Young? ACDC
2. Which singer had a number one hit in 1978 with a song title that is also an Emily Bronte novel? Kate Bush with her single "Wuthering Heights"
3. Which singer is the godmother to Elton John's sons? Lady Gaga
4. What is the longest running musical on Broadway? The Phantom of the Opera

How did you go?!

