

The Bulletin

Number 10, Monday 22 July 2019

Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** Dates for Your Diary, Beginning of Term 3, Dot Power Report, Support Skills Try Day 2019 and Registration Form, Ever Thought of Going to Space Camp?,
- **PD:** SPEVI Conference Registration Open, NDIS Funding for Parents to Attend SPEVI Conference
- **Alternative Format:** dAp Dots, Making Content Accessible, How to Open Your Laptop
- **Access Technology:** Beacon Technology Update, Braille Signage,
- **Activities and Recreation:** Active Teens Program – Term 3, Q&A: Blind Tennis Balls
- **From the Field:** 2019 National Awards for Disability, GDV Info Session, Brotherhood Talks – NDIS, Where to next?, Art Dealer Who Can't See

Dates for Your Diary

Here is a list of our planned PD and other activities for the remainder of 2019:

Tuesday August 13: [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

Tuesday October 15: Preparing your school for inclusion of a student who uses braille

Tuesday November 26: Assistive Technology Expo

*****Tuesday 10 December:** SVRC Christmas Morning Tea – **PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE*****

2020

12-15 January 2020: SPEVI Conference in Adelaide

[Dates for 2020 SVRC Professional Development activities coming soon!]

Note: For upcoming professional learning at SVRC along with programs, registration & online payment, visit the SVRC [professional learning page](#).

Beginning of Term 3 at SVRC

From Marion Blazé

Half way through the year, and there have been lots of changes at SVRC. Annette Godfrey-Magee (Education Officer), is on leave for the remainder of 2019 and we welcomed Sam Oxley into that role (0.5). We have also farewelled Glen Morrow (Communications and IT) and Lauren Rouse (Braille transcription). We welcome a new Administration Officer, Ange McDonnell, and are advertising for a second.

The Support Skills team (Fridays) has also undergone many changes ... Emily White is back after a PhD and the birth of baby Theo (congratulations, Emily on both achievements!), Renee Williamson is teaching on Fridays. Darren Hess is on secondment from NWVR, and will be teaching this term. Since Glen left, we have had a number of talented people stepping in on Fridays including

Christine Casey (who is back in India now), Elise Lonsdale, Garry Stinchcombe, Hilary Frost, Sarah Hayman and Olivia Muscat. Kira Young has been volunteering at Support Skills all year. Ex-SSP student, Kira, is studying to be a teacher and will hopefully be a future talent working on the program. We are very grateful to be benefitting from her talents already. Many thanks to all these people for their amazing contribution to delivering a quality program to students. And a very big thank you also, to Lea Nagel and Emma Hall who stepped in to coordinate the program when Garry retired – it's been a huge and challenging task, especially given the shifting sands!

This semester has also seen the implementation of our new tracking system which will have benefits for us and all VTs and students we support. After many months of development, we are now in the final test phase for the Statewide Vision Resource Centre's new online tracking system. This system has been developed by the Department's Information Management and Technology Division and is built within the Department's SharePoint software platform. It is a secure repository holding information on all of our students and the equipment and technology that has been lent out to schools through our Blind and Low Vision Technology Library.

The folk at SVRC wish you all a happy term 3 and look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve great outcomes for students with vision impairments throughout Victoria.

SPEVI Conference 2020: Registration is Now Open

Registration is now open for the SPEVI 2020 Conference in Adelaide, SA, from 12-15 January 2020! The Conference theme is "Creating a Clear Vision for the Future".

You can [register here for the SPEVI 2020 Conference](#) and submit an abstract until 31 July 2019. The [Conference website](#) provides important information about the conference venue, registration fees, inclusions, social events etc.

Please note that current SPEVI members enjoy a discounted rate to attend the Conference. (Re)joining SPEVI can be done at any time, through an online form on the SPEVI website. [Click here to join SPEVI.](#)

SPEVI Presidents Frances Gentle, Phia Damsma and Sharon Duncan and Members of the SPEVI Local Organising Committee look forward to welcoming you to Adelaide, for the SPEVI 2020 Conference.

NDIS Funding to Attend SPEVI 2020 Conference: For Parents

Source: Frances Gentle and Phia Damsma, Co-presidents of SPEVI

This information is for parents whose child is a participant in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and who intend to apply to use NDIS funds to pay for their (the parents') attendance at the SPEVI 2020 Conference.

SPEVI has been advised that when lodging a claim, parents need to stipulate they wish to access Support item 15 - Allied Health, Training for Carers/Parents. Support item # 15_038_0117_1_3. The child's name along with their NDIS number is also required.

Please note that SPEVI can't guarantee that your application or claim will be successful. We are simply passing on this information. Further, each state pays a different amount per hour for this area of payment.

Inquiries relating to this advice, and/or requests for an individual invoice for conference fees, can be directed to Jo Minniss, Advisory Teacher South Australian School for Vision Impaired, from the SPEVI Conference Local Organising Committee. Email: jo.minniss705@schools.sa.edu.au or phone (08) 8277 5255.

Dot Power: Pre-School and Foundation Students

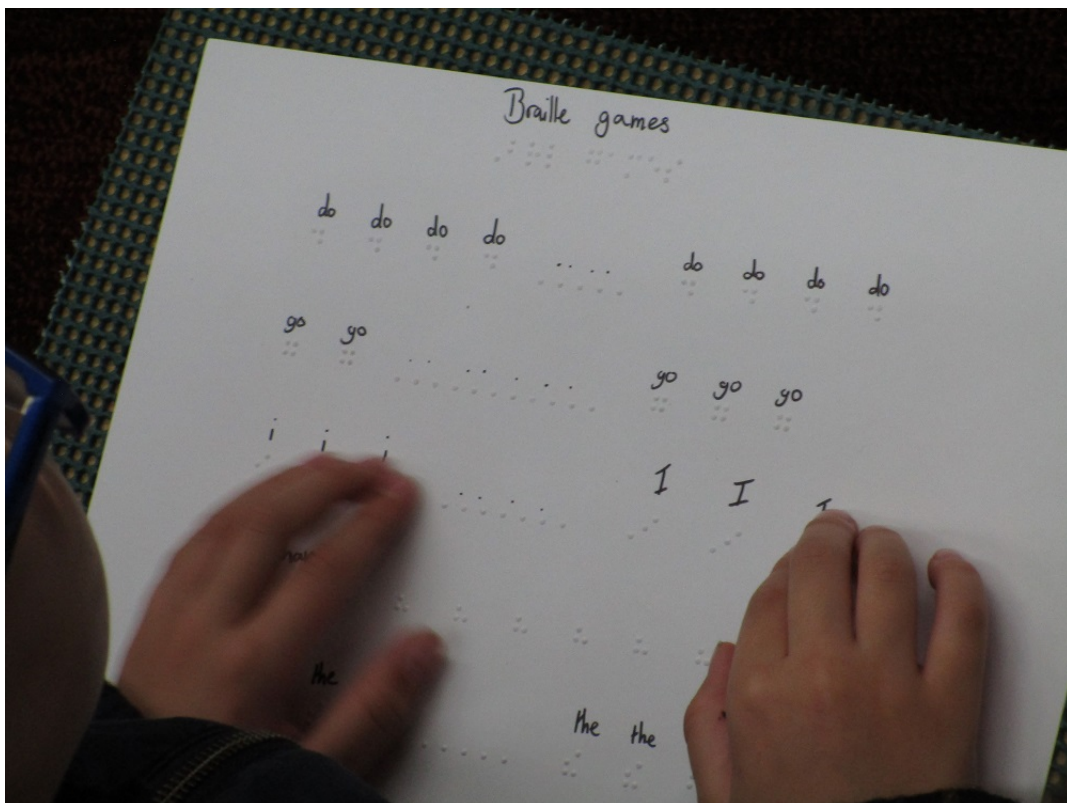
Themes: The body and how we move it; A tea party.

Eight pre-school and Foundation children who use braille came together for a fun filled day of braille immersion. Our first learning focus was the body and how we move it, comparing drawings of stick figures in different positions and how we move our body into different positions ourselves.

The children played a braille game, exploring lines of alphabet wordsigns such as 'go' and 'have' and the contraction 'the'. They took turns reading and were asked to identify whether the signs after the leader dots were the same or different to those at the beginning of the line. Here's an example:

⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	same (each sign says "do")
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	different (each sign says "go")			

The children explored a new book entitled *I Go to School*. Each page introduced a new action in braille above a tactual graphic of a person in a different position according to that action: I wake up early. I find my shoes. We noted that some images only show one leg or arm - these are side views. They sang through the book accompanied by guitar and a shaker to keep time. This facilitated fast page turning to find the next phrase and picture. We concentrated on braille contractions 'go' and 'the'.



We worked through the story a second time, acting out the positions physically as a group. Stretching up in the air, running out the door and waving to mum.

After recess, the children were given a Perkins and wrote their stories about what activities they do in the morning before going to school. Children drew pictures on the Draftsman Drawing Kit with a biro or wire boards with crayons using different colours to illustrate their stories. Every child shared their story with the group, and a favourite line from each was sung by the group with the shaker to keep in rhythm.

The second theme of the day was preparing for a tea party. We read a procedural text: a recipe for scones. Next we prepared the ingredients and the children learnt to rub butter into flour, knead the dough, flatten the dough and cut out scones with a glass. The children took home the recipe to make again at home with families.

At lunchtime the children played Swish Mini, batting the ball along a table with raised sides. They served the ball to the other team, trying to hit the ball off the table past their opponent. The Swish Mini table can be made cheaply by adding rails to the long sides of any table. The instructions can be found in [Issue 13, 2018 of The Bulletin](#). Some children and teachers invented another game involving a ball containing bells. The formed a circle and rolled the ball to each other, calling out the name of the person they were rolling to. These games can be easily adapted for play at school or kinder.

After lunch we discussed what we need for a tea party, and the children returned to the tables, now in groups of four, to eat their freshly cooked scones. They were asked to independently cut their scones in half, spread with either apricot or strawberry jam, and pour their cup of cordial using a liquid level indicator which beeps when the liquid reaches the right level. The children enjoyed eating their creations and having conversations at the tea party.

We concluded the jam and cream packed day with some singing, ending with a revisit of the bean seed song. The children sang and acted, growing up from seeds, into shoots, into flowers and then into beans.

Thanh, a year 10 student who uses braille, was volunteering at SVRC during the day. She spoke with families and helped out with the children. Thanh's mentorship was really valuable as her skills and interpersonal interactions are excellent.

We also found a moment to hear Jordie telling us about all of the jobs she does using her braille, braille music, social and orientation & mobility skills: Support Skills braille music and technology teacher; braille music transcriber; singer in a church choir.

The book, braille game and recipe were all sent home so that the children can revisit, revise and practise their braille with their families. Copies can be sent to schools or Visiting Teachers if requested. The Dot Power bag, kindly made by Di Bennet, can be brought to each Dot Power Day for the take-home materials.

Thank you to all visiting teachers, school staff and parents who came and helped during the day. We hope that you will enjoy the braille game, new book and materials from the day to practice at school and at home.



Support Skills Try Day 2019 (for 2020)

When: Friday November 15th 2019

Where: Statewide Vision Resource Centre, Donvale

Time: 9:30 to 1:15pm

Who: Students considering the Support Skills Program for 2020 and their families.

RSVP: Monday 28th October to Lea Nagel at statewide.vision@edumail.vic.gov.au

Who can attend the Support Skills Program?

- Any student who meets the eligibility criteria as partially sighted, legally blind or totally blind as determined by the Education Vision Assessment Clinic (EVAC)
- Students who will be between Grades 4 and Year 10 in 2020
- Students from Government, Catholic Education or Independent Schools
- Need to be currently enrolled in a Victorian school

Students attend the program once or twice a term. The focus of the program is on the Expanded Core Curriculum, those subject areas specifically related to their requirements as a learner with a vision impairment. These include: Assistive Technology, Braille, Vision Issues, Careers, Social and Communication Skills, Braille and large Print Music, Physical Education, Creative Art, Braille Maths and Tactual Graphics, Orientation and Mobility, Independent Living Skills, Library and Research Skills, and Study Skills. These subjects will be taught by SVRC staff and our partner organisations, such as Guide Dogs Victoria and Vision Australia.

Many students who are blind or have low vision benefit from additional opportunities to build on these skill areas and meet with other students who have similar needs. This opportunity for positive association is of great assistance for many students.

This program does not replace the classroom program, nor is it a substitute for a Visiting Teacher, rather it is a time where students can concentrate their efforts and energy on enhancing those skills and awareness which will support their inclusion in their local schools.

We are currently taking enrolments for 2020. The Come And Try Program allows students and their families to participate in the program for half a day, meet with the staff teaching in the program and have an opportunity to assess its suitability and ask questions. If families would like to explore this option for their child in 2020 then please complete the form attached or fill in the online form at <http://svrc.vic.edu.au/support-skills/enrolment>.

Please return the form to us **by Monday 28th October 2019**.

We would encourage families to speak to their child's Visiting Teacher and school to discuss the appropriateness of this program in context of their child's overall education plan.

If families, visiting teachers or school staff have any questions prior to the day or need further clarification about the program, please call and speak to either Lea Nagel, Emma Hall or Marion Blazé, SVRC Manager on (03)9841 0242.

What SSP Means To Me by Jasmine

I have to get up at 4.00 am.

It means a lot to me that my mum and dad get up so early and drive me. My favourite subject is art, PE, cooking, technology and braille. I have some friends I have kept in touch with when we are not in SSP. We are good friends.

I would very well recommend this to other blind or vision impaired people. Thank You.

Ever Thought of Going to Space Camp??

Every couple of years, SVRC supports a team of students with vision impairments, and chaperones (VTs) who fund-raise and go to Space Camp – specifically SCI-VIS or ‘Space Camp for Interested Vision Impaired Students’. A team of three students and two chaperones went in 2018. We have already had two students and their families contact us interested in going in September 2020.

Space Camp is a 6 day program in Huntsville, Alabama at the US Space and Rocket Centre. For one special week of the year, it is set up to enable students who are blind or vision impaired to access the program with assistive technology and all information in alternative formats. Our students change academically, socially and emotionally in the course of the camp but also in the lead-up and the weeks that follow. They come to be known as the kid who went to NASA for astronaut training! They are rightly proud of their achievements and become leaders in their schools and communities.

Want more information? Go to:

<http://www.scivis.org/> (Please note: SCI-VIS dates have not been set for 2020, as yet, but they usually coincide with the September school holidays.)

<https://www.spacecamp.com/>

Students wanting to attend Space Camp need a level of maturity and independence to travel overseas, representing Australia.

Please contact Marion Blazé at SVRC if your student or son/daughter is interested. Then we can form a team and start fund-raising, applying for scholarships and organising the itinerary: blaze.marion.g@edumail.vic.gov.au or (03) 9841 0242.

Beacon Technology Update

Working with PTV and Metro Trains Melbourne, Beacon technology has now gone live in Melbourne train stations: Flinders Street, Flagstaff, Parliament, Melbourne Central, Richmond and Footscray stations. The system at Southern Cross station has also been expanded.

The beacon system is easy to use, and can be accessed by downloading the free mobile app, BlindSquare Event (available to Apple phones only).

If you have any feedback about the Beacon program, please email JohnRB@guidedogsvictoria.com.au.

2019 National Awards for Disability

The 2019 National Awards for Disability are now open for nominations! Across seven categories the National Awards for Disability Leadership recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contribution and leadership shown by disabled people and our organisations in Australia today.

These Awards reflect what is important to disabled people and the ways that we are effecting change and pursuing equality for our community. They recognise outstanding achievements by individuals, or disabled people’s organisations, who have significantly contributed to advancing the status of disabled people.

You are invited to [nominate](#) a disability leader today. Nominations close midday Friday 18 October 2019.

dAp Dots

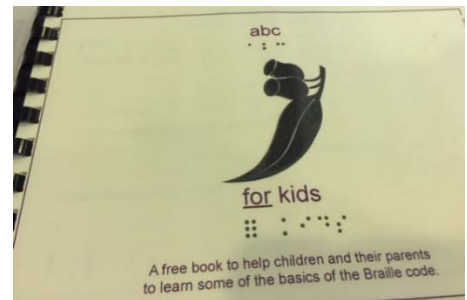
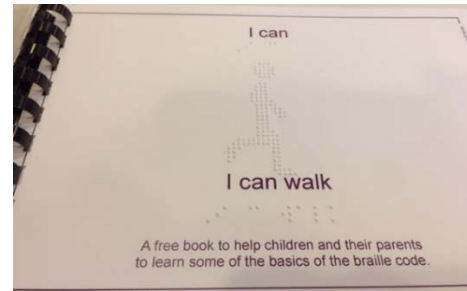
[dAp Dots](#) is a collection of braille books that help with learning and understanding the basics of the UEB braille code. They are designed to provide an effective foundation to braille literacy for parents and children. The UEB code for early braille learners and contracted braille is introduced.

Who will benefit from dAp Dots?

- Braille reading children being introduced to the braille code
- Parents/carers of braille reading children
- Teachers of early braille reading students

The resources are available for purchase as digital files to download. You can use these files to produce your own embossed or swell paper versions.

dAp Dots was developed by Tricia d'Apice (Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, Sydney), as a result of her recent research into braille literacy.



Braille Signage

Have you noticed incorrect braille on signs? Here is a comment from Leona Holloway, Correspondence Secretary, Australian Braille Authority:

Sadly, we have all noticed a lot of errors in braille signage. Australian signage standards require that braille signage use uncontracted braille and comply with ABA standards. However, there is no requirement for the braille on signage to be checked for errors. ABA did propose such a measure, however it was not incorporated in the latest standards.

We can all help in two ways:

1. If you see an error on a sign, do let someone know and urge them to pass the feedback on to their signage supplier. This can also offer an opportunity to share your passion for braille and accessibility :)
2. If you are an organisation that can offer a service to consult or check braille signage, please make this known.

Meanwhile, ABA also checks a sample of materials from sign-makers before we include them in our ABA directory of braille services and suppliers.

Making Content Accessible: A Guide to Navigating Australian Copyright Law for Disability Access

The Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative (AIPI), launched in 2016, aims to increase access to published material for people living with print disabilities in Australia. AIPI have produced a guide to navigating Australian law for disability access which sets out, in easy-to-understand text, what you need to know as a producer or consumer of materials in alternative format. Of particular interest is the Disability Access Copyright one-page checklist on the last page of the document.

Download [Making Content Accessible: a Guide to Navigating Australian Copyright Law for Disability Access](#)

Active Teens Program – Term 3

Welcome to the Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria Active Teens Programs! Social and inclusive sport and recreation programs for teenagers who are blind or have low vision. Bring friends and family to join in. These programs include everyone.

For more information and to register for the events below email: Activeteens@blindsports.org.au

Blind Tennis

Hoppers Crossing Tennis Program

When: Sundays – 18 August, 25 August and 15 September, 2.30pm – 3.30pm

Where: Hoppers Crossing Tennis Club, Corner of Hogans Road and Wootten Road, Tarneit

Cost: \$30 for the term

Football (Soccer)

Blind and low vision football program in Cranbourne:

When: Sundays from 4 August to 15 September, 3.30pm to 4.30pm

Where: Casey Stadium, Building 04, Terry Vickerman Centre, 65 Berwick Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne East

Cost: \$50 for the term

Swish

Vision Impaired Table Tennis, brought to you by VVITTA (Victorian Vision Impaired Table Tennis Association):

When: Saturdays from 27 July to 14 September, 1.00pm-3.00pm

Where: Vision Australia, Kooyong

Cost: \$2 per session.

Q&A: Blind Tennis Balls

Question: I'm wondering if you or your team can supply me with details of tennis balls (with bells?) that could be used by a student with low vision on my caseload. Reviews of tennis balls from the Braille Store/Amazon indicate that these balls don't actually bounce! Help!

Answer from Emily White: I would strongly recommend the Japan Blind Tennis Association's own blind tennis balls. We use them in the Blind Tennis Program here in Melbourne, run by Blind Sports Victoria (BSV). While the balls may be too light yellow for some with low vision to see well, they can be painted with water based acrylic paint (black and fluoro yellow stripes work well) for improved visibility. They are the size of a softball and made of dense foam rubber, with an internal table tennis ball filled with BB pellets for sound even in mid-air. The bounce and the "travel" is lovely for tennis.

(I would only use them for racquet sports, and not for games involving hard hitting like hockey, as the stick can damage the ball.)

Thanks for any suggestions you can offer!

Guide Dogs Victoria Information Session

Guide Dogs Victoria are holding a free information session with afternoon tea.

When: Friday 23 August from 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Where: Arnold Cook House, Guide Dogs Victoria, 2-6 Chandler Hwy, Kew

RSVP (if you can): lauriek@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Brotherhood Talks: NDIS, Where to next?

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence Research and Policy Centre is holding a lunchtime seminar on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at the University of Melbourne, which we thought might be of interest to you. Melbourne Disability Institute's Executive Chair and Director, Bruce Bonyhady will join Karen Dimmock, CEO of the Association for Children with Disability and John McKenna, Disability Advocate, NDIS Recruiter, Podcaster & Commentator to discuss the progress and future for the NDIS.

Please be sure to [register](#) as seating is limited!

Art Dealer Who Can't See

Influential Berlin gallerist Johann König's new memoir details how blindness taught him how to recognise good art. "How serious can you take someone who can't see the artwork they are trying to sell you?" König told the Guardian at his office inside his gallery, a converted brutalist church in Berlin's Kreuzberg district. "That fear was always in the back of my mind. I always thought someone would find me out."

But in what he calls his "coming out" memoir, published in Germany this month with the title *Blind Gallerist*, König argues his disability has been key to the success he has enjoyed since, encouraging him to develop a distinctly personal idea of what makes good art, and enabling him to navigate an industry that can bedazzle and lead people astray with flashy exteriors.

To read the article, visit: [The art dealer who can't see](#).

How to Open Your Laptop

A few laptops have recently come in to SVRC for repair because of broken hinges. After the third one in as many months, we decided to check if this was a known fault with the supplier. It turns out that it can happen with laptops as they age and is usually due to how they are opened. Here are some ways to avoid this happening:

- Always open the laptop when it is sitting on a flat surface, preferably a desk or a table.
- Don't apply pressure diagonally across the laptop. There are a couple of ways to avoid this.
 - Option 1: Hold the base of the laptop in the centre with one hand while raising the screen in the centre with the other hand.
 - Option 2: Lift the lid with both hands, on both front corners of the screen.

Many thanks from Sarah Hayman

Finally

This somewhat delayed issue of The Bulletin arrives in your inbox courtesy of several (somewhat annoying) work-arounds. Glen ... I miss you. – Deb Lewis (Ed) lewis.debra.d@edumail.vic.gov.au



Education
and Training



**REGISTRATION FORM
COME AND TRY DAY
SUPPORT SKILLS for 2020**

PO Box 201

Nunawading 3131

Tel: (+613) 9841 0242

Fax: (+613) 9841 0878

Email: svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au

Student's name: _____ DOB: _____

Name of parents / guardians: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (M) _____

Parents email address: _____

Student's email address: _____

Home Address: _____

Student's school: _____ Grade / year level 2019: _____

Visiting teacher: _____ Telephone: _____

Reading medium: Print / Braille Print Size _____ Independent reader: Yes /
No

Vision impairment: _____

Visual acuities: Right eye: _____ Left eye: _____

Medical Information:

As there must be a family member or a member of staff from your child's school present while at the Try Program, we only require general information about any medical issues or allergies your child might have. This will be shared with staff working with your child on the day. Overall responsibility will be with the parent/staff member accompanying the student.

Any additional disabilities / allergies / medical issues: _____

Who will be accompanying the student:

Name: _____ Role/Relationship to student: _____

OR: I am not able to attend but would like further information

Please forward to: Lea Nagel, Support Skills Coordinator, Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Comments - please add on a separate page.