

The Bulletin

Number 6, Friday 24 April 2020

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PD events at SVRC Postponed or Online: 2020

You can still register online for these activities, but we will look into either providing them later or as online modules. We will contact registrants when we have a clearer idea of when/if/how the activities will run. Click on the links to read more information and to register online. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

Tuesday April 21 [Teaching and learning with braille music](#) Cancelled

Registered participants have been notified

Wednesday May 13 [Including students who are blind or have low vision in art](#)

Happening online – registered participants will be notified of timing and link

Providing practical strategies that teachers can use in their art classes to promote inclusion and achievement for students who are blind or partially sighted. \$92

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

SVRC Support by Remote!

From: Marion Blazé (Acting Manager, SVRC)

After several weeks of working very differently, we are excited and proud to say that SVRC has not skipped a beat!

We started the term with the Transcription team very accustomed to working from home, having done so for the entire school holiday period. Thank you to Deb Lewis and the team for staying connected and productive throughout this time and beyond. Last term, we also set up several VCE students with technology at home so they can produce their own hard copy braille and tactile diagrams. Many thanks to the VTs who have coordinated this between students and schools to ensure that the necessary materials and equipment have gone home.

Deb Davidson also trialled 'Telehealth' over the holidays so that our Educational Vision Assessment Clinics can continue to get information about the vision of new students, and determine eligibility. The team conducted their first remote assessment of one student, with the EVAC team and family of the student working from home.

Our technology library continues to function. Through email and post (the DX Mail service has ceased during lockdown). Please contact Sarah at vision.tech.library@edumail.vic.gov.au if you have questions or requirements around the Technology Library.

The Support Skills Program is also continuing, but instead of students coming to SVRC, they are joining a Zoom meeting with their teachers meeting them in Virtual rooms, and with opportunities for peer contact between students in their own homes. This was trialled with SSP staff last term and the first Zoom day with the Group D students took place very successfully last Friday. You can read about 'Art by Zoom' later in this Bulletin.

Our whole staff are staying as connected as we can having 11am Zoom morning teas and meetings by Zoom or chatting through Microsoft Teams, telephone conference calls, as well as frequent emails. (Image shows one of our Zoom morning teas when some of us were still at SVRC – a big screen with several faces displayed.)



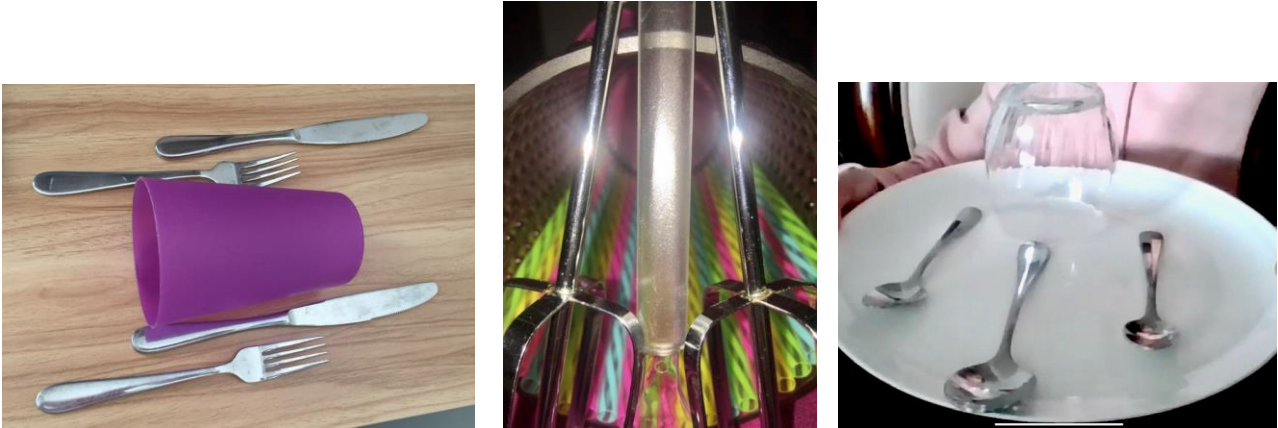
Some staff drop in to SVRC for particular tasks, but we are mostly continuing to support you and your students from our homes. Please be in touch by email if you have questions or particular requirements.

We will be very interested to learn how Visiting Teachers (Vision) are providing their students with support while Victoria is implementing stage 3 COVID 19 restrictions. We are intending to put in place two initiatives to support Visiting Teachers and school personnel in their work, so stay tuned!!

Kitchen Art on Zoom: Support Skills Online!

In the spirit of 'staying at home' and observing 'social-distancing', students were invited to create an artwork from things found in the kitchen at Support Skills. This project is partly inspired by all the social media sharing of home-made art that various art galleries and museums have invited people to do whilst their institutions are closed. If you do Instagram (the art teacher has just started), related hashtags include: [#abcmelbmasterpiece](#) [#betweenartandquarantine](#) [#gettymuseumchallenge](#) Students were presented with some artworks by well-known Australian artists, including photographer Olive Cotton and her 'Teacup Ballet' composition from 1937, before having a go with the cutlery and other bits and pieces they could find. The results were gathered via screen-shots and emailed photos from home. Well done all!

And well done, Michael!! Who would have thought one could make accessible art out of kitchen utensils!!



SVRC Writing competition

The annual SVRC writing competition usually happens in Term 4, but with most of our students in isolation at present, we are sharing the topics with you earlier, so that you can be inspired to do some writing at home.

This competition is open to any eligible student with a vision impairment who are supported by a Visiting Teacher and/or the Statewide Vision Resource Centre. You can 'write' in the format of your choice. Your writing can be creative or factual. A judging panel will award prizes at every age level of participants and an overall winner's prize.

The topics the year are:

- * If you were to be given three wishes, what would they be and why?
- * The magic of music and what it means to me.

Please include your name, age, school and contact details (for prizes and certificates).

Please email your entry to blaze.marion.g@edumail.vic.gov.au

Or post to Statewide Vision Resource Centre, PO Box 201, Nunawading 3131

SPEVI Conference 2020 – papers now online

The SPEVI 2020 Conference (Adelaide, January 2020) presentations and papers are now available on the SPEVI website for review or download - <https://www.spevi.net/conference/>

SPEVI wishes to thank the presenters for consenting to the open access publication of their papers and PowerPoints (in PDF format).

SPEVI also wishes to acknowledge the work of Lena Karam of RIDBC in contacting all presenters and ensuring the presentation files were fully accessible and uploaded to the website in a logical format.

Humanware Webinar

Connect 12 in a classroom or at home; the all-in-one solution a student needs

Tuesday April 28 at 9am

Learning objectives:

Demonstrate how to setup your Connect 12 for your students

Identify at least one way to use the Connect 12 to complete a worksheet

Demonstrate how to convert and import PDF and EPUB in Prodigy

If you have questions, please contact Nathalie.rheume@humanware.com

Form the US: Virtual ExCEL Academy

From Charlotte Cushman - Manager, [Paths to Literacy](#) and [Active Learning Space](#)
Perkins School for the Blind & Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

In the middle of March, schools around the United States began to close their doors overnight, leaving millions of children suddenly at home, with no educational plans in place, and parents scrambling to manage their own work demands, as well as child care and other household challenges. Knowing that students with visual impairments face difficulties with access to the curriculum even in the most ideal circumstances, it quickly became apparent that they would be affected by school closings even more acutely than their sighted peers.

In response to this crisis, a number of US support agencies teamed up to launch the [Virtual Expanded Core Education Learning \(ExCEL\) Academy for Students with Visual Impairments](#). The goal of this project is to offer engaging lessons for students with a variety of abilities, while also modeling ways that online learning can be used for services. This free service is not a substitute for consistent structured individualized instruction given by highly qualified Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI) or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS).

Launched on March 23, there have now been 20 lessons, ranging from Time for Tots to Multiplication on the Abacus; from Light Box Story Time to Introduction to JAWS; Infant Massage to Beginning Braille. There have been numerous lessons related to the Expanded Core Curriculum, addressing self-determination and other key areas. All sessions are recorded and are available on the [APH YouTube Channel](#). Sessions are currently scheduled through to the middle of May and the listing is available on the [Paths to Literacy website](#).

Onkyo Braille Essay Competition 2020

The World Blind Union Asia Pacific Onkyo Braille Essay competition is now open for entries. If you or someone you know is a writer who uses braille, please read the information below and share with your networks. We look forward to receiving your entries by 15 May 2020. Should you have any questions, please contact Samantha Marsh on 1800 033 660.

About the Contest:

This Braille Essay Contest is made possible through the courtesy and generous financial support of The Onkyo Corporation Ltd. of Japan, a leading manufacturer of quality audio-visual equipment. The Contest is managed by the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific (WBUAP). The Contest is open to all blind and vision-impaired persons **from the ages of 14 years and above** in the Asia Pacific Region. However, any Otsuki winners of 2018 and 2019 are not eligible to participate.

The purpose of the contest is to promote Braille literacy and encourage the reading and writing of Braille; and to encourage cultural and social interaction among blind and vision impaired persons through their writings. The top 5 entries will be sent to the WBUAP Onkyo Selection Committee for final consideration, and any winning Australian entries will be published in Blind Citizens News.

This is an annual competition, with cash prizes awarded to the best seven entries received from within the WBU Asia Pacific Region. The main prize, "the Otsuki Prize" is \$US 1000. Other prizes are for "Excellent Works" (\$US 500) and "Fine Works" (either \$US 300 or \$US 200) depending on the age group.

Participation in the contest is open to people from 14 years of age, living in the World Blind Union-Asia Pacific Region. Entries are divided into two age groups: persons between the ages of 14 and 25 years; and persons from the age of 26 years upwards.

Essay topics:

- * If Braille is still relevant for the blind today, how and what measures ought to be taken to promote its usage?
- * The people/organisations who have helped me to overcome my blindness and be a useful person.
- * If you were to be given three wishes, what would they be and why?
- * The magic of music and what it means to me.

Closing date is 15 May 2020. Winners will be notified in November 2020.

Essays must be between 700 and 1,000 words and presented in hard copy Braille or in computerized Braille if you can provide proof of your Braille literacy. This can be in the form of a letter from your Braille instructor, teacher or other professional who can vouch for your skills.

When submitting your essay to BCA, you must also provide:

An electronic photo of yourself, a cover letter stating your full name, address, and contact details, your date of birth, your status ie. student, home maker, worker. If a student state what school you are from including the name, address and email contact for your school.

Please submit entries to BCA by 15th May 2020 at: Attention: Samantha Marsh

Samantha.marsh@bca.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia, Ross House, Level 3, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000

Looking for something to watch?

We have over 1300 short films and documentaries all free to enjoy on our website. You can search via our keyword database <https://www.focusonability.com.au/FOA/search.html>

If you have any questions in regards to the 2020 festival please email them through, we would be happy to help.

In this current world environment we feel it is important to continue with the festival and give people the platform to share stories of overcoming adversity. Most of our festival is conducted online and the release of the films will provide the world with positive content, something that is very much needed. When you are filming please stay safe and follow your governments protocols.

Entries close July 31 (this date has been extended). Full details at www.focusonability.com.au



** EXTENDED CLOSING DATE **
 Entries Close **July 31, 2020**
FOCUSONABILITY.COM

Audio play app

Just heard about an audio play app called “audio play” which is free until the end of April and then \$3:00 per play. It is based on the stories of The Turners by Mick Elliot and aimed at children from 6 to 12 years. The children use lounge room props like cushions and blankets to participate in the story. It’s aimed at getting children moving and listening and not screened based.

SVRC News

Our wonderful Technology Library coordinator, Sarah Hayman has become an aunty again. Her first nephew arrived last week.

And finally...

All of us at SVRC hope you are keeping physically distant but socially connected.