

The Bulletin

Number 12, Friday 7 August 2020

Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** PD events at SVRC online: 2020, SVRC helpline, Reminder – Applications for PSD extended, SVRC during Stage 4 COVID 19 Restrictions, VCE date changes due to COVID 19, Writing Competitions
- **From the field:** Paths to Technology, World Health Organisation instructions for wearing a non-medical fabric mask safely, Save Space Camp, Geometry Lessons Plans for Blind/Visually Impaired Learners, Student news, Usher in focus webinar series, Hear and Say Usher Syndrome Webinar

PD events at SVRC online: 2020

You can register online. Click on the links to read more information and to register online. If you have any questions, please [contact us](#).

Tuesday Aug 11 [Educational support of students who have low vision](#)

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

SVRC helpline

Please call SVRC if you have questions about our provisions or inclusion of students with vision impairments. (03 9841 0242)

Reminder – Applications for PSD extended

The following statement was in the "Message from the Secretary: Streamlining school requirements for Term 2" dated April 28, 2020. DET has extended the due date for applications for the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) to [Term 4](#).

SVRC during Stage 4 COVID 19 restrictions

From: Marion Blazé (Acting Manager, SVRC)

SVRC staff were just about to settle back in to our 'renewed' building with new carpet, lights and ceiling after asbestos removal, when we went to Stage 4 restrictions for all in Melbourne.

With even stricter restrictions, we are trying to minimise our trips to SVRC and our numbers at SVRC. Most of our services can be provided with staff working from home, but physical things such as preparing post, sorting technology requests, embossing and binding braille and tactile diagrams have to be done on-site or where the equipment is located. Thank you to Deb Lewis and the transcription team for all their amazing work.

Support Skills continues every Friday in Zoom classrooms, thanks to the skill and dedication of Lea Nagel and her talented team. EVAC continues via Tele Health and Functional Vision Assessments are conducted using Zoom. Thank you Deb Davidson, Sam Oxley and Geoff Bowen for continuing to assist families through this process.

With the challenges we are facing in Victoria, I've received a few personal emails and messages from friends in other States of Australia, but nothing beats an email from colleagues in the Alternative Format Library in Qld who very generously offered their help, should we need it. Wow! As Deb Lewis said, "it's enough to make you cry".

SVRC are continuing to host fortnightly Community of Practice Zoom meetings with Visiting Teachers (Vision). This week we looked at Vision Fatigue, an especially topical problem with everyone working on screens at home. If you are not receiving emails about these meetings, please email me – marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au. Our next C of P will be at 3pm on Tuesday August 18.

VCE date changes due to COVID 19

This year the GAT (General Assessment Test) will be on October 7.

Exams are scheduled for November 9 to December 2. It is anticipated that students will get their VCE ATAR this year.

For more information, including the exam timetable go to:

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/Key-dates/Pages/2020RevisedAdminDates.aspx>

Writing Competitions

Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition

Braille House is proud to announce that the Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition 2020 is now open for entries from all Australian residents and the theme is MOVEMENT.

The Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition is a National literary competition and is for children and adults who are blind or have low vision. There is also special "People's Choice" award that will be open to anyone (even if you are sighted) and all entries in this category will be published on the Braille House website and the audience will get to choose the winner.

Entry forms and conditions can be found here: <https://www.braillehouse.org.au/dickinson-2020/>

There are categories for all ages to enter and prize money is awarded in every category: \$350 first prize per category and \$150 second prize per category (judge's decision is final).

Prizes awarded in 6 Categories:

- Adult Short Story
- Adult Poem/Song Lyrics/Limerick
- Adult Article/Opinion eg: self-reflection, blog
- Senior Student Creative Category, eg: story, poem, song lyrics, limerick, blog
- Junior Student Creative Category, eg: story, poem, song lyrics, limerick, blog
- People's Choice Category – Short Story. (All People's Choice entries will be published online for the public to vote).

Manuscripts must be an unpublished work, not on offer for publication before the announcement of awards and not have been recognised in any other competition.

Entries close Monday August 31. Entries should be submitted in hard copy Braille, Simbraille or Duxbury-readable file or in a Word document.

SVRC Writing competition

The annual SVRC writing competition usually happens in Term 4, but with most of our students learning remotely 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 marion.blaze@education.vic.gov.au

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

Paths to Technology

From: Francis Gentle via SPEVI email list

During a recent conversation with Charlotte Cushman of Paths to Literacy fame, I discovered another Perkins eLearning website that may be of interest – Paths to Technology at <https://www.perkinselearning.org/technology>

The “About” page of the website contains the following information:

Paths to Technology is designed to assist educators and families in learning and staying current on ever-changing technology for students with visual impairments and blindness. The goal of this project is to enable students with visual impairments and blindness (VIB) to succeed in paperless mainstream classrooms and post-school opportunities for employment by achieving digital literacy and by staying current with rapidly evolving technology. Created as an interactive site, Paths to Technology will be a resource for defining and disseminating best practices, training, and support for teachers of the visually impaired, braille transcribers, other education professionals, parents and students themselves.

Paths to Technology seeks to:

- Facilitate a Community of Practice related to technology and digital literacy
- Create and curate best practices that enable braille transcribers and paraprofessionals to convert mainstream instructional materials to accessible digital materials
- Provide centralized dissemination of information about new technologies, new software/apps, and best practice teaching techniques for cutting-edge digital materials
- Provide current information about upgrades and technology updates

World Health Organisation instructions for wearing a non-medical fabric mask safely

From: Guide Dogs Victoria via Renee

We realise many of the resources available regarding the correct use of a face covering are visual instruction guides. As such, we have put together the steps below to help guide Clients through the correct use of a non-medical face mask.

Putting a mask on:

1. Clean your hands before touching the mask.
2. Inspect, smell or feel the mask for damage and cleanliness.
3. Adjust the mask to your face without leaving any gaps on the sides.
4. Ensure the mask covers your mouth, nose and chin.
5. Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.

Removing your mask:

1. Clean your hands before removing the mask.
2. Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head.
3. Pull the mask away from your face.
4. Clean your hands after removing the mask.

5. Store the mask in a clean plastic or reusable bag, if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it.
6. Remove the mask by the straps when taking it out of the bag.
7. Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day.

As masks become contaminated as soon as you touch them, think about using a spare mask to practice putting it on and taking it off before you need to use one in a real situation.

Don'ts

- Do not use a mask that looks or feels damaged. If in doubt, use a new or cleaned mask
- Do not wear a loose mask.
- Do not wear the mask under the nose.
- Do not remove the mask where there are people within 1.5 metres.
- Do not wear a dirty or wet mask.
- Do not share your mask with others.

More information about mandatory face coverings can be found on the [DHHS website](#).

Save Space Camp

As a supporter of our community, we feel it is important to let you know about the current situation at Space Camp.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has financially devastated the U.S. Space & Rocket. Weeks of complete public closure were followed by a partial opening that has seen 40 percent of typical museum attendance and 20 percent of Space Camp attendance. The fall/winter camp season will be nonexistent given pandemic-induced travel restrictions for international students and cancelled trips for American schools. Ninety percent of annual revenues are from museum and Space Camp attendance.
- To attempt to offset the losses, the Rocket Center has slashed expenses wherever possible, including cutting hundreds of jobs. However, even a 90 percent reduction in force and other cost-savings measures have been insufficient to balance expenses.
- To date, the Rocket Center/Space Camp does not qualify for federal, state or local emergency assistance. We continue to seek funding, but time is short to make a difference for Space Camp.
- Raising a minimum of \$1.5 million between now and October will enable Space Camp to open for the 2021 summer season.
- The countdown clock is running but the Space Camp we know won't be able to launch without you.

You can help us Save Space Camp. The Save Space Camp campaign is accepting donations at [SaveSpaceCamp.com](https://www.savespacecamp.com) beginning Tuesday, July 28. Your financial assistance is one very important way to help. Sharing our message is another.

Please show your support on your own social media platforms and by posting the campaign website so that others who believe in the future of exploration can also help. Just like Space Camp, we can-do when "we" includes "you." Thank you for your continuing support of Space Camp.

Geometry Lessons Plans for Blind/Visually Impaired Learners

From: ANZAGG Facebook Group Post, thanks to Leona Holloway

We have been excited to collaborate with [Dr. Yue-Ting Siu](#) of San Francisco State Graduate College of Education on the development of open-source lesson plans and a repository of 3D models for teachers of blind and visually-impaired learners. Our work is part of the [Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute "3Ps" project](#).

The lessons cover topics normally covered in middle- and high-school geometry. During the rest of 2020 and early 2021 we will be adding lessons and models, and teaching professional - development webinars for educators in partnership with our collaborators.

Coming in August 2020- The first five lesson plans, the relevant model repository and a teacher's guide will be linked here when they are available. Topics:

- Polygons, Pythagoras and Polyhedrons
- Triangles, their Types and Areas
- Congruent and Similar Triangles
- Sine, Cosine and Tangent
- Inscribed and Circumscribed Polygons

One-hour Zoom sessions to learn about the models will be scheduled periodically. Register to get the link.

[Session 1](#), introducing the first five lessons: Monday August 10, 11 AM

See <http://www.nonscriptum.com/geometry> for more information

Student news

In 2020, one of our students, Lavender Pickard, has completed the Emerging Leaders Program. This program was designed to take existing young leaders who identify as having a disability, and add to their leadership skills, knowledge and confidence. It was created by and with young people with disability, alongside the Youth Disability Advocacy Service, the Duke of Edinburgh Victoria, with support from Children and Young People with Disability Australia and the National Disability Insurance Agency.

In completing this program, graduates:

- Identified and built upon the core traits that make them a leader.
- Identified and further detailed their own leadership and project goals.
- Worked on traits, skills and knowledge needed to reach their goals.
- Developed a deeper understanding of their strongest roles in a team, through multiple activities that required teamwork with varying types of people.
- Demonstrated exceptional inclusive practice, working with and encouraging teammates of diverse gender and disability backgrounds.
- Identified and developed their most effective methods of communication, making them better equipped to lead, work in teams, and communicate concepts and instructions.
- Developed a deeper understanding of advocacy, both to help advocate for themselves with confidence, and to engage in the processes of systemic advocacy.

In addition to developing these broad skills and knowledge, Lavender's contributions were considered and valuable, and moved the teams or discussions forward. The rest of the group was able to do a lot with her input.

Congratulations Lavender, great work!

If you would like to find out more about the Emerging Leaders Program, you can go to their website: <https://www.yacvic.org.au/get-involved/are-you-12-to-25/youngleaders/>

Usher in focus webinar series

We are pleased to announce our online webinar series will take place from 14th-18th September 2020 in conjunction with celebrations for International Usher Syndrome Awareness Day on September 19th.

The webinars will include the latest updates on global clinical research efforts, clinical guidelines, how to support your Usher syndrome student in the classroom and more. You will have the option to join us live and participate in Q&A sessions, or access the recordings to watch in your own time.

With a range of Australian and International leaders in support for children with Usher syndrome joining us to present, we believe this will be a must for families and health care professionals caring for children with Usher syndrome in Australia.

The final program is now available and registrations are open!

Family Member: \$ 95

Professional: \$175

The content of these webinars has been developed in conjunction with a variety of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. See our website for more details www.usherkidsaustralia.com

Hear and Say Usher Syndrome Webinar

The Hear and Say Sunset Series brings together professionals from across the medical and allied health sectors, together with families and the community, to network and share knowledge.

Usher Syndrome: Types, Treatment and Talking with Clients

Join a live webinar with experts from DeafBlind Australia and UsherKids Australia to learn about supporting adults and children who have Usher Syndrome.

Topics include:

- Prevalence in Australia
- Types and causes
- The needs of adults and children
- Living with Usher Syndrome
- The importance of early identification
- Communication tips and techniques
- Support for people who have Usher Syndrome

Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Time: 6.00pm-8.00pm (AEST). Includes presentation and Q&A.

Cost: Professionals: \$65 | Families using NDIS funding: \$118 | Students and/or families not using NDIS funding: \$45

CPD points: Audiology Australia and AG Bell Academy endorsement currently pending.

SVRC News

We are very excited to welcome back Annette Godfrey-Magee to the SVRC team. Annette will be assisting the EVAC team by making contact with family for appointments.

And finally ...

Stay safe and well in this increasingly online world.