

The Bulletin

Number 13, Friday 21 August 2020

Inside this issue

Here's what you'll find:

- **From SVRC:** PD events at SVRC online: 2020, SVRC helpline, SVRC – "Silver linings", Bold line paper templates, Polaris tips when setting up Gmail
- **From the field:** YDAS Young Leaders Program, Managing the coronacoaster, Making Animated iPad Lessons and Books for Students with CVI, New Ballyland Magic Plus App

PD events at SVRC online: 2020

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

Tuesday Oct 20 [Preparing for inclusion of a student who reads braille](#)

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)

SVRC – "Silver linings"

From: Marion Blazé (Acting Manager, SVRC)

What a year! We've all learnt to work in ways that we never have before. There have been huge challenges thrown at all of us. For SVRC, our challenges have included building a new "Workforce" with the new SVRC structure for 2020, keeping in touch and working as a team while working remotely, learning new technologies for online meetings and teaching, trying to predict what restrictions are ahead and how we will need to adjust, assisting staff to care for their OH & S needs and wellbeing while working from home, translating all our usual provisions to happen from home, "moving out" for asbestos removal, keeping up with the ever-changing guidance and advice from DHHS and DET, and the list goes on!

But for SVRC staff, there have been some "silver linings".

One happened on August 11, 2020. We ran our usual PL day "Educational support for students with low vision". We always have decent numbers for this activity, which is why SVRC has for the last few years, run the same PL twice in Term 1 and once in Term 3. This time we ran it completely online. Our on-site PL days are limited to 65 participants as our venue gets a bit uncomfortable with more. Our online version last week drew 120 participants! We were also able to make this activity free, not needing to provide hard-copy handouts or catering. We have asked participants how they found this new format, because I can see us running PL like this into the future. Another huge benefit was that running this event online did not disrupt the work or our other staff, like the transcribers. The activity was very well received and even included an excellent video made by a student.

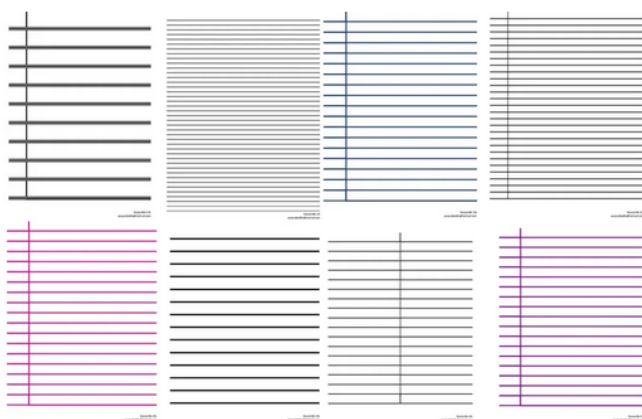
I really can't thank the SVRC team, Children's Mobility team from Guide Dogs, and that particular student enough. As one VT said, it was a marathon and "risky" undertaking because we had not run a day like this before. Special thanks to Michael Kelly who set up all the technology, helped people with their technology from home and monitored our operations during the day. Thank you also to new admin, Naomi Thompson, who managed Eventbrite and all communications with participants.

SVRC's other "silver lining" has been the opportunity to host fortnightly Community of Practice Zoom meetings for Visiting Teachers (Vision). We've had lots of positive feedback about the value of these meetings and we intend to continue them into the future.

Bold-line paper templates

Did you know that you can get templates for all sorts of bold line paper on our website? Print them off for your student with a vision impairment who is struggling writing on the usual low contrast printed lines. The templates come in various sizes and include dotted thirds and even music staves.

Go to the [Support for Teachers](#) on our website to find them



Picture shows a variety of horizontal lined template sheets, with different spacing between the lines, different colours of lines and some with a single left vertical line and one with a central vertical line.

Polaris Tips when setting up Gmail

Entering passwords accurately – to enable the password to be checked in braille:

- In the Options menu (Space + O)
- P, repeat to Hide Passwords
- Space for the NO option

To give access to email: In Gmail settings on a computer or iPad, you need to go into security and select "allow less secure apps" which will allow Polaris access to email. It is easiest to do this for the student, to do this you need their email and password.

Gmail: Use the Gmail account through the email in the main menu rather than through the Gmail App in All Apps menu as this is easier to manage and more efficient.

YDAS (Youth Disability Advocacy Service) Young Leaders Program

A big congratulations to Lavender-May from Support Skills for being accepted in the YDAS Young Leaders Program. Lavender-May participated in 4 half day workshops and received a certificate and some great learning! Lavender-May highly recommended the program to everyone at Support Skills.

Two new YDAS Young Leaders Program groups have been planned for the remainder of 2020. You'll have the opportunity to:

- develop leadership, teamwork, communication and project skills
- improve understanding of access, inclusion and advocacy
- learn from and work with other leaders with disability

Here's the [link for the YDAS Young Leaders program](#). Applications close on 25 August for the first one and 21 September for the last one.

Managing the Coronacoaster

Free Webinar for parents with Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

On Tuesday 25 August, the Department of Education and Training is presenting a free webinar for parents and carers by renowned child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, on building family resilience during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Parents and carers play a vital role in helping children feel safe through uncertain times.

Dr Carr-Gregg's webinar is aptly named Managing the Coronacoaster – Tips for building resilient families in the coronavirus era.

In this webinar, Dr Carr-Gregg provides tools and strategies for parents and carers to help manage the lockdown and remote learning. Topics include:

- your supportive role
- setting the emotional tone
- focusing on what you can control
- how to deal with disappointment
- further resources and where to get help.

Dr Carr-Gregg's presentation will run for 45 minutes. This will be followed by a 15-minute question-and-answer session in which parents and carers can ask Dr Carr-Gregg questions.

Webinar details

- **When:** Tuesday 25 August
- **Time:** 7:30pm
- **Duration:** 45-minute presentation followed by 15-minute questions and answers session
- **Format:** online via Webex
- **Cost:** free

How to register

To register and for more information visit the [Managing the Coronacoaster – Tips for building resilient families in the coronavirus era eventbrite page.](#)

For more information about the webinars, schools can contact Jeremy Cussen, via:

- Email: Jeremy.Cussen@education.vic.gov.au
- Phone: 03 7022 1871

Making Animated iPad Lessons and Books for Students with CVI

By [Colleen Johnson](#) (Paths to Literacy)

When the pandemic hit and school closed, I looked how to best serve my students with CVI (cortical visual impairment) through distance education. Many parents didn't want to do coaching or direct lessons through Zoom meetings for various reasons that are understandable. I brainstormed about how students with high Phase 2 and Phase 3 CVI could make meaningful progress on IEP goals through other distance learning opportunities. Then it hit me ... Keynote presentations! ...

To read more, follow the link to the [Paths to Literacy Website](#)

New Ballyland Magic Plus App

From: Phia Damsma, Sonokids

I'm pleased to announce the release of our latest Sonokids app: Ballyland Magic Plus.

Ballyland Magic Plus, an app that teaches children who are blind or have low vision the concepts and foundation gesture skills for VoiceOver accessibility – while they play a game! [Now available from the AppStore](#)

Ballyland Magic Plus replaces the original Ballyland Magic app. Completely re-engineered, the new app offers an improved user experience and ... more learning! On top of the double tap, single finger flick left and right, and the three-finger flick left and right, this app also introduces the finger drag gesture in combination with the so-called "split-tap".

[Visit the Sonokids website](#) to read more about the app and the rather unknown, but important "split tap" gesture.

- Eight different finger gestures
- Larger images to support students with low vision
- New, fully accessible Options Menu for educators/parents who are blind
- More adjustable Settings
- Faster user interface
- Option to save Settings per level
- Remake of the intro-song
- More animation in the Magic Show

This app is also available in a Spanish version (Ballyland Mágico).

SVRC News

We are very excited to welcome Annette Godfrey-Magee back to the SVRC team. Annette will work one day a week on family liaison, triage and appointments for EVAC. Welcome back, Annette!!

And finally...



A braille fail for your amusement that was shared between the transcription staff this week. The picture shows the corner of a fireplace door. A red sticker on the top right-hand corner of the door has text and braille on it. Both read "Hot Surface do not touch".

Stay safe and well in this increasingly online world.