

The Bulletin

Statewide Vision Resource Centre

Number 6**5th May 2006**

This issue was edited by Deb Lewis, Co-ordinator, Statewide Vision Resource Centre.

PD 2006

The SVRC PD program for the rest of 2006 below. For the complete list of activities for 2006 and where available downloadable programs, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/pd2006.htm>

All activities offered by the SVRC are open to class and subject teachers, integration teachers and aides, careers teachers, therapists, parents VTs, students etc. Please register: tel (03) 9841 0242, fax (03) 9841 0878 or email svrc@svrc.vic.edu.au]

Term	Event	Date
2	Term 2 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day	Tuesday 9 May
2	“Portables” – Low Vision Options Workshop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Thursday 25 May
2	BrailleNote & ScannaR Workshop/Demo Ramona Mandy, HumanWare – 2.00-3.30pm	Tuesday 30 May
2	Educational Support for VI Students with Additional Impairments (max 60)	Monday 5 June
2	Mountbatten for Beginners Workshop – BYO Mountbatten Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Wednesday 14 June
3	Window Eyes Workshop – BYO Laptop Ramona Mandy, HumanWare – 2.00-3.30pm	Wednesday 5 July
3	JAWS Workshop – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Monday 17 July
3	ZoomText Workshop – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Thursday 27 July
3	O&M Morning - Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community Phone Alicia Madden (03) 9854 4493	Tuesday 1 August
3	Term 3 Visiting Teacher Professional Development Day	Tuesday 8 August
3	Magic Workshop – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Wednesday 16 August
3	Mountbatten for Users Workshop – BYO Mountbatten Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Monday 21 August
3	Scanning Options Workshop – BYO Laptop Trevor Boyd, Quantum Technology – 2.00-3.30pm	Monday 4 September
4	O&M Morning - Experiencing Vision Loss in the Community Phone Alicia Madden (03) 9854 4493	Thursday 26 October
4	Educational EXPO – Assistive Technology Options ALL WELCOME!!!	Friday 24 November

Inside This Issue

1	PD 2006
2	Braille Music – Why Not? (and the back page!)
3-4	Space Camp
5	Program for Students with Disabilities, Paralympic Talent Search, Arts and Disability in Australia
6	Learning Disability Forum: Doing It Better, WAM Mentoring Program, EPublications from AFB
7	Talking Tactile Images, ClearView and ClearNote, Understanding PDF files
8	On-Net/ICEVI: Teaching Maths, Social Inclusion Project, RCH Parent Seminars, Braille Pen Pals
9	Writing Opportunity, Mem Fox's 10 Read Aloud Commandments
10	How to Choose a Book – 5 Finger Method, Swish Tables, Braille Heart

Braille Music – Why Not??

From: Lea Nagel, Senior Visiting Teacher Eastern Metropolitan Region

For those who enjoy music and would be interested to know how to write braille music notation, I'd like to share my latest cheat sheet: Braille Music (attached to the print issue of The Bulletin).

As with braille mathematics, the code starts out simply, and becomes more complex as the detail in the notation increases.

In a nutshell:

The braille music code was invented by Louis Braille, and has been developed over time by users world wide. We have an international braille music code with minor local interpretations.

Braille note names do not correspond with the braille letters of the alphabet. Once you get your head around this minor confusion, the code begins to make a lot of sense. Each braille cell represents both the note and the amount of time it is played. The top four dots tell the reader the note, and the bottom two dots indicate the timing. Bars are separated by a space.

Give it a go! You will need to borrow or buy a book to get you started (available through RNIB or RNIB book suppliers), then the cheat sheet below could help once you get going. My cheat sheet covers enough of the code to transcribe a beginner recorder book, which has single lines of music, songs accompanied by music and duet parts. If my student wants to take her music further, I'll have to do some more research!

Space Camp 2006

It appears that Space Camp 2006 WILL be lifting off ☺☺☺

A group of at least four students will make the journey with chaperones Helen Young and me, Deb Lewis.

In addition to this, I recently spoke to Space Camp supremo Sherry Cunningham (Vision Australia) and she plans to take a group as well!!!

The four boys who have so far expressed interest in travelling with the DE&T group are:

Andrew – Northern Metropolitan Region

Luke – Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region

Michael – Southern Metropolitan Region

Peter – Southern Metropolitan Region

Note: places are still available for two more students – please let me know ASAP



In the mean time, let's talk about the cost...

We will try to keep the cost to \$4,500 as it has been in the past – but we won't know the final cost for quite some time. Basically this includes the air fares, accommodation/meals/ activities in Los Angeles, and Space Camp itself. If needed, here are some possible sources of funding for you to think about:

- Family resources – parents, aunts and uncles, family friends
- Blind pension or child disability allowance
- Your school (including 'Students with Disabilities and Impairments' funding)
- Sausage sizzles eg Dick Smith Powerhouse, local shopping centre etc
- Raffle – get a prize donated (make sure you are aware of the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority rules if you do this)
- Your local community group eg parish, sporting group etc
- Local businesses – look in the yellow pages (which is also on the internet)
- Local service organizations (eg Lions, Rotary etc)
- Put a collection tin in your local shop with a photo and some information
- Wash cars or do other jobs in your neighbourhood
- See if you can get your school behind you eg organise a plain clothes day, canteen or parent group fundraising
- Organise a trivia or film night
- Sell chocolates in your school or local community
- Organise a fund-raising dinner and charge a little extra
- Be creative: organise a 'non-dinner' (sell tickets for a dinner that isn't going to happen on the basis that people will be saving heaps by not going ie money for the food, drinks, dry cleaning, petrol, babysitting etc)

The payment timeline is as follows:

First payment	\$2,000	1 st June
Second payment	\$2,000	1 st August
Final payment	\$500	1 st September

If you'd like more information about Space Camp, go to: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/space/>

Also if you would like to see pictures and read a little of our adventures from previous years, go to: <http://www.visiontech.svrc.vic.edu.au/camps.htm>

If you wish to discuss financial support call Jeni Blake on 0428 134660.

And on the Subject of Space Camp... Adventures in Space

The following by Hannah Jones is reprinted from the Winter 2005/2006 issue of Blindosity SCIVIS (Space Camp for Interested Visually Impaired Students) is exactly what the name implies. Students with visual difficulties come to Huntsville, Alabama to spend a week doing the same simulations that the astronauts do before they can go up in a shuttle. First we divided into the four camps: standard space camp, space academy, aviation challenge, and my camp, advanced academy. I was on the Von Tiesenhausen team, which in my personal and very biased opinion was the best group!

When we got off the airplane we went straight to the habitats, dropped off all of our stuff, and got handed our I.D. tags.

Then to one of the best parts of the day, lunch! It was really good. I found out the next day that the only thing the cafeteria ladies couldn't make is eggs. After the all-important lunch, we went and took our belongings up to our rooms. Later that day we had a fire drill and the girls in my room and I met the rest of Von Tiesenhausen. Over the week we learned a lot about the shuttle stack, NASA, and a lot of other very cool and scientific things.

My favorite things about space camp had to be the missions and the simulators.

Over the course of the week, we did six or seven different simulators that were really fun. Plus we did four missions throughout the week. In our first mission I was on the orbiter and my role was payload specialist. To fulfill that role, I had to "clean" some filters, flip a bunch of switches, and help do an experiment (we did an iron extraction), and then go flip a whole bunch of other switches. In the second mission, I was in mission control as a mission scientist. I got to assist with the launch and help fix any problems with the space station. In my third mission, I was in the space station as Commander! I got to do all of the things that I did in the orbiter, but I had a really good title! We didn't have any problems during those missions. But in the fourth mission, things started to go wrong...

Everything was fine at first. The orbiter launched okay, but I wasn't concerned with that, my job was to be concerned about the space station. This mission was very special being that it was a 6-hour mission and we had two types of anomalies (problems) to deal with. We had "buzzer anomalies" where the computer would make a sound and as mission scientist I would have to find out how to solve the problem.

First, we had a problem with the waste water system - there were bodily secretions floating around in the air. We also had a meteor shower and then things started to get really bad. I had just been called over to the guy and was told to show the signs of a hypoglycaemic attack, and if no one noticed in half an hour, just to pass out. When I got back to my desk, a new problem had come up on my screen and the people in space station were trying really hard to get hold of me. The air pressure was decreasing and I had to find a way to deal with that and imitate the symptoms of a hypoglycemic attack.

The symptoms of hypoglycemia are agitation, and extreme hunger (it's funny because we had just eaten pizza and I was really full). I was trying to fix the space station's problem, and getting really mad at the girl I was talking to because of the "attack". I was having trouble fixing the problem with the space station and people were passing out, and it was time for me to pass out. I have no acting abilities, so I just took my microphone off and lay on the floor by my desk, while the girl on the space station was in mid-sentence. No one noticed me for half an hour, even though I was kicking a person to get her to notice. They finally noticed me when they needed me to fix the problem because people were passing out on the space station from decompression sickness.

When they finally did notice me they tried to put splints on my shoulders, and ace bandages around my arms, and a pill (actually candy). I couldn't eat it even though I wanted to. Then someone finally got smart and gave me a "shot" of something and it worked.

All in all it was a really good camp. I had a lot of fun, and I want to do it again next year.

Application Process for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2007

Source: DE&T Email S126-2006

Applications are invited for the Program for Students with Disabilities 2007 for additional resources to support new or existing students with disabilities who will be attending a government school in 2007. The closing date for students currently enrolled in Victorian government schools is Friday 14 July 2006. Applications for Preps entering school for the first time in 2007 must reach the Student Wellbeing Branch by 28 February 2007.

For more information about the Program for Students with Disabilities go to:

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/disabil/index.htm>

Paralympic Talent Search

The Talent Search Program is a new initiative of the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC). Its main aim is to identify people with physical disabilities, vision impairments or intellectual disability who display the athletic potential to one day, make it to Paralympic level competition.

The Talent Identification Day is open to people with cerebral palsy, limb deficiencies, people in wheelchairs, people with a vision impairment to name a few. The age group that is being targeted is 12 years and above.

A 2005/06 calendar incorporating 37 Talent Search Days across all states and territories of Australia has been developed.

Each Talent Search Day involves a series of testing including general measurements as well as sport specific tests. Head coaches from the targeted sports are involved in the testing process and are ultimately the “talent spotters”.

Identified participants are grouped in two tiers – Tier 1 include those targeted for 2008, and Tier – 2 for the 2012. The program aims to identify 150 potential Paralympians by the end of 2006. This is the first step in the process of identifying people with disabilities who can display the potential to make a future Australian Paralympic team. In most cases it will take years of training and preparation to reach the standards required to compete at a Paralympic level.

People who are identified as showing potential will be encouraged to take the next step in their sporting endeavours, which will vary from sport to sport and person to person.

Victoria’s Talent Search Days are as follows:

27 May 2006 – Shepparton (North East)

11 November 2006 – Warrnambool (Western)

9 December 2006 – Moe/Morwell (Latrobe Valley)

THIS IS AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY – for more details contact:

Tim Matthews tel: (03) 9614 6800

Email: tim.matthews@paralympic.org.au

Web: www.paralympic.org.au

Making the Journey: Arts and Disability in Australia

The 96 page full colour publication “Making The Journey: Arts and Disability in Australia” is now available online in pdf, html and hardcopy from the Arts Access Australia network.

Written by Mary Hutchison it provides a snapshot of what is happening in each Australian State and Territory in Australia in providing access to the arts for people with disabilities.

“Making the Journey” can be downloaded from:

http://www.ozco.gov.au/arts_resources/publications/making_the_journey/

Learning Disability Forum: Doing It Better

Source: Joanne Webber Disability Coordination Officer c/o RMIT University

- Are you interested in knowing more about Learning Disabilities?
- Do you need more information about issues currently facing individuals with learning disabilities and their educators in Australia?
- Are you wanting to be part of a group exploring how we in Australia can.....do it better!

Then mark this working forum in your diary.

What: A working forum on learning disabilities in education and employment

The forum aims to address:

- Increasing understanding of the human impact of having a learning disability
- Psychometric assessment issues
- Issues that are presented in the education sectors including curriculum, teaching strategies, support
- Access to information
- Assistive technology solutions, and
- Preparation for and transition into employment

When: 24-27 September 2006

Where: Rydges Hotel, Exhibition St Melbourne

Further information and registration form: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/events/ldc2006>

WAM: Willing and Able Mentoring Program

The Willing and Able Mentoring (WAM) Program has been developed to provide students/job seekers who have a disability, the opportunity to showcase their talents and gather essential information and experience to assist in the transition from education to the competitive world of employment.

The WAM program is designed to train and match selected students/job seekers with mentors in career areas relevant to each person's aspirations. Mentees are expected to attend several meetings (a minimum of 8 hours in total) with the mentor, who will provide advice, insight and a range of opportunities to enhance knowledge of the chosen field of work. Students/job seekers would also be required to attend a training session at the start of the program, and a debriefing and certificate presentation event at the conclusion of the program.

The training, mentoring sessions, and Certificate Presentation will be held in the student's/job seeker's locality as far as possible).

For further information on WAM and to access the application form go to:

<http://www.gradlink.edu.au/wam>

Applications to be returned preferably via email attachment to Kevin Murfitt

kevin.murfitt@deakin.edu.au, or mailed to Kevin Murfitt at: School of Psychology, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood Vic 3125.

AFB Press ePublications

ePublications - the latest option in information delivery for you is now available from AFB Press. Selected texts and individual JVIB articles are now available for purchase and access online. You can choose to buy a full text or as many or few chapters as you need then view, print, or download them as often as you wish for one full year.

Browse through the specially selected JVIB 'Classic' articles, to find articles published before the year 2000 that are of particular interest to the field of blindness and visual impairment.

To set up your online bookshelf go to: <http://www.afb.org/epublications>

Talking Tactile Images

Source: <http://www.rncb.ac.uk/t3>

T3 - A touch sensitive, multi sensory device provides instant audio feedback from tactile images. This combination of sound and touch offers a new way in which people who are vision impaired can access graphical information.

Operation is simple. The T3 is connected to a standard PC or laptop computer via a USB connection and the self-installing programme CD is inserted. To activate the system all that is needed is a T3 tactile diagram overlay to be placed on the surface of the device and touched by the operator's finger.

Depending on the CD programme content, the operator now has access to a huge volume of information on any pre-selected subject. By moving the finger around the surface area and applying touch pressure, the linked audio file recites relevant information or corresponding to the selected point of area.

By delivering visual images in a non visual format, i.e. touch and sound, T3 offers improved accessibility to all levels of education and information programmes for every lifecycle stage, from early years right through to VCE, vocational training and life long learning.

ClearView and ClearNote

Source: LiveWire, February 2006

Quantum Technology supplies a variety of products for people with low vision and two of the electronic magnification units available are:

1. **ClearView+** including -
ClearView+ Star (Black & White)
ClearView+ Spectrum (Full Colour) with either the CRT (traditional style monitor) or TFT (Flat Panel Monitor).
The TFT models have an adjustable monitor arm, which means the display can be lowered to a height suitable for the user (especially useful for shorter people who can sometimes strain their neck to see the screen).
2. **ClearNote** - designed to work using a laptop or standard computer monitor as its display. Weighing just over 2 kilos, the ClearNote easily folds away at the end of class, and the autofocus feature means a fast transition between near or distance viewing. Standard connection with the laptop (USB) and internal rechargeable batteries means an end to tripping over power cords! The unit offers 3x to 46x magnification with both reading and writing capability on a full screen. View documents in either full colour, enhanced black on white or enhanced white on black viewing modes. Alternate colours, line markers and windows also assist users when reading.
For the high-tech user there is also a Picture in Picture (PIP) feature which allows you to view both the magnified document and computer display at the same time.

Understanding PDF files

Adapted from email by George Bell from the DuxUser listserv, 17th November 2005

The subject of PDF files has been thrashed. The product has been called every bad name imaginable, and the screen reader companies have been chastised beyond belief.

Jamal Mazrui's article which can be found on the American Foundation for the Blind's web site does a beautiful job of rolling back the veil over PDF files and their inner workings. I'd recommend this article to anybody trying to figure out the ins and outs of getting a screen reader to read a PDF file efficiently and to anyone trying to figure out how best to create accessible documents.

Read the article here: <http://www.afb.org/afbpress/pub.asp?DocID=aw060604>

On-NET/ICEVI: Teaching Mathematics

Source: ICEVI Newslines, April 2006

ICEVI and the Overbrook-Nippon Network on Educational Technology recently announced the release of "Mathematics Made Easy for Children with Visual Impairment". This new publication is one that all teachers and parents of children with vision impairment will find to be an invaluable resource. Of particular interest to teachers will be the adaptive procedures for teaching nearly 500 secondary level mathematical concepts. Best of all, all proceeds from the sale of this publication will support programs to reach children in the developing world who currently are without access to education. Mathematics Made Easy can be ordered as follows:

North America/Caribbean and Latin America regions from Towers Press, Overbrook School for the Blind 6333 Malvern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151-2597 USA E-Mail: dennis@obs.org

All Other Regions: ICEVI Secretariat, IHRDC Campus, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore 641-0202 India E-Mail: sgicevi@vsnl.net or oficevi@vsnl.net

The cost of this publication is US\$35.00 plus shipping and handling.

Social Inclusion Project – Free Download

Source: Insight, Jan/Feb 2006

The Social Inclusion Project set out to identify the critical stages and key issues in the social and emotional development of children and young people with visual impairment, with particular reference to self esteem. The project considered the current range of strategies and resources used to support young people's social and emotional development; and identified the training needs of educational and mental health practitioners. The project also initiated, delivered and evaluated a range of school and community based projects (eg making a video, transition days) which aimed to support the social and emotional development and inclusion of children, young people and their families.

These aspects are described in the report alongside a list of useful resource materials and an appendix containing the questionnaire used to gather data from children and young people – a useful audit tool for a service reflecting upon this work.

A full report of the RNIB West Midlands Social Inclusion project is now available to download as a word document or PDF file from <http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/research/victar/>

RCH: Upcoming Parent Seminars

Autism Spectrum Disorders – 16th May

Behaviour and Toileting Problems in the Younger Child – 23rd May

Sexuality and Social Behaviour in the Child with a Disability – 30th May

Where: Royal Children's Hospital

Time: 7.15-9.30pm

Cost: \$15 per person or \$25 per couple

For more information: (03) 9345 5898 or education.seminars@rch.org.au

Slate Pals: Braille "Pen" Pals

Source: Future Reflections, Volume 24 Number 4

Slate Pals is a program for children from prep to year 12 that matches students who want braille pen pals. The program is available free of charge to children around the world. Slate Pals enables children who are blind to correspond with one another in braille. It also finds blind pen pals for sighted children who are interested in learning the braille code.

For more information email dkent5817@att.net or check out the ad in Future Reflections: <http://www.nfb.org/futref.htm>

Writing Opportunity...

Source: Winter 2005/2006 issue of Blindosity

I get heaps and heaps of material through my desk via mail and email but one publication that I really enjoy receiving is Blindosity which arrives as a pdf file a couple of times a year.

Blindosity is an interesting and chatty e-newsletter which is produced “by students for students who are visually impaired”. Their newsletter is open to submissions of all types from short stories to scathing editorials. If you have ideas or would like to show your work to the world, write to blindosity@hotmail.com – and wouldn’t it be great to read something written by one of the kids we know – an Aussie kid!!!?

Issue 4 (Winter 2005/2006) includes the article reprinted above “Adventures in Space”, interviews with two VI teachers, “I survived Hurricane Rita” and two other articles reflecting what it is like to have a vision impairment that I will reprint in future issues.

Where in the Movies are We?

Hannah - I have seen two movies that have people with visual difficulties. The two movies are *The Village* and *O, Brother, Where Art Thou?* Neither of the actors knew how to use the canes that they were given. The girl in the village was using hers like a walking stick, and knew the way around almost better than a sighted person. In *O, Brother*, the man was whacking everything with it, instead of the tip being on the floor the tip was on the walls and everywhere else.

Fallon - I have not seen very many movies that portray blind people. However, a movie that does come to mind is the movie *Ray*. Jamie Fox portrays the life of Ray Charles, a famous blind musician who passed away last year. Fox does such an excellent portrayal of Ray Charles in that movie that he won an Academy Award! There were some instances that Ray had to stand up for what he believed in, and those advocacy skills can carry you a long way in life.

Have you seen any movies that portray people with visual impairments? Let us know what you think. Email us at blindosity@hotmail.com (And I’ll be looking out for your contributions – Deb)

Mem Fox’s Ten Read Aloud Commandments

Source: Early Childhood Newsletter, December 2005

1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read.
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don’t be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love, over and over and over again, and always read in the same ‘tune’ for each book: ie with the same intonations on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child’s name and yours, remembering that it’s never work, it’s always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever teach reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it’s the right thing to do. This is as important for fathers as it is for mothers!

How to Choose a Book to Read: Five Finger Method

1. turn to a page in the book you are thinking of reading
2. hold out your hand, fingers extended
3. start reading
4. when you come to a word you can't work out, turn down one finger
5. if you still have some fingers up at the end of the page, you should be able to read the book

Swish Tables

Wish you had one? Not sure how to make one? Wouldn't know where to store it? Brent, who arranges Saturday Swish at Vision Australia in Kooyong, may have a solution! Brent suggests commissioning the building of a table to be shared by roster around a region. If your school would like to be on a roster to have a swish table for a month at a time, please register your interest by contacting Lea Nagel van.der.nagel.leanne.n@edumail.vic.gov.au or Deb Lewis deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au.

Brent would also love to hear from prospective Saturday Swish participants as well – there's always room for more! Swish is open to children and adults, and helps with fitness and developing friendships and networks. On-the-spot training is offered, and matches are expertly refereed by volunteer staff.

Braille Heart

Here's how to make a braille heart:

Line 1: dots 234, 15, 24, 156

Line 2: dots 126, -, -, 345

Line 3: dots -, 15, 24

Finally

Thanks to Maria Elford, Jill Keeffe, Lea Nagel, Mike Steer and Rene Williamson for contributing to this edition of The Bulletin. Thanks also to my fabulous proof-readers, stuffers and mailers.

If you have something you would like included in 'The Bulletin', please contact:

Deb Lewis (who can be emailed at deblewis@svrc.vic.edu.au).

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

Come and join the staff of the Statewide Vision Resource Centre and be part of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea - a fundraiser for The Cancer Council Australia.

25th May

More details in the next issue